

264 High Performance GPUs to Flow to Korean SMEs and Startups Under National AI Project

Korea's small and medium-sized manufacturers and startups are set to receive a significant boost to their AI capabilities, with 264 units of the high-performance B200 GPU earmarked exclusively for their use under the government's National AI Project.

The allocation stems from a decision made at the 6th Science and Technology Minister's Meeting, through which the Ministry of Science and ICT designated approximately 3,000 of the 10,000 GPUs procured through the 2025 supplementary budget for distribution across ministry-level programs. Having submitted two project proposals – both of which were approved – the Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS) secured a combined total of 264 GPUs to support AI adoption among SMEs, venture companies, and startups.

All GPU resources will be delivered through a cloud-based model via NHN Cloud, a private data center partner, allowing selected companies to access the computing power remotely – free of charge through the end of the year. Applications and selection evaluations are scheduled for April through May, with support commencing in June.

1. Multi AI Agent Development for SME Manufacturing (64 GPUs)

- The first project targets consortiums of technology firms and manufacturing companies, providing end-to-end support – from R&D through to on-site deployment – for AI solutions designed to optimize production processes and quality control on the manufacturing floor. Participating consortiums will be able to apply GPU resources to AI training on manufacturing process data, dataset development, and technology validation. The initiative is expected to accelerate AI transformation (AX) in Korea's SME manufacturing sector and lay the groundwork for a more sustainable manufacturing innovation ecosystem.

2. Deep-tech Incubator Program for Startup (200 GPUs)

- The second and larger allocation targets startups across three distinct tracks
 - a. Strategic AI Development (85 GPUs): Supports the development of advanced AI by combining the specialized expertise of universities and government-funded research institutes with the proprietary technologies of startups – creating “strategic AI” with genuine competitive depth.
 - b. Industry-Specific AI Solutions (85 GPUs): Enables inter-company collaboration to develop tailored AI solutions for specific industrial domains, fostering a cooperative approach to sector-focused innovation.
 - c. Startup for All (30 GPUs): Thirty GPUs are set aside specifically for aspiring entrepreneurs who want to build AI-based ventures. Access to high-performance computing has long been one of the most prohibitive barriers to entry for early-stage AI founders. This track directly addresses that challenge, and pairs GPU access with a one-stop support package covering AI incubation, mentorship from experienced founders, and investment linkage – giving the next generation of AI entrepreneurs a running start.

For many of Korea's smaller companies and first-time founders, the cost of AI computing infrastructure has been a persistent obstacle to innovation. By channeling national-level GPU resources directly to SMEs and startups – and pairing them with targeted R&D and commercialization support – the initiative reflects a broader policy commitment to ensuring that AI transformation is not the exclusive domain of large corporations.