

Backing K-Beauty's Entry into the Saudi Market

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS) and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Saudi Arabia (Ambassador Kang Shin-Chul) are opening applications from June 29 for the K-Beauty Saudi Market Entry Support Program, designed to help small and mid-sized K-beauty brands break into the Saudi market.

Saudi Arabia has drawn growing attention as a market with strong potential for K-beauty companies, driven by recent open-door policies and the expanding role of women in society. At the same time, a lack of information and networks, along with demanding regulations, has long made it a difficult market for smaller brands to enter on their own.

The program is designed to ease exactly these challenges by working with local distributors that have established sales and retail networks across Saudi Arabia. Small and mid-sized brands selected for the program will have the chance to visit local retail stores and government agencies in Saudi Arabia, with support for getting their products into online and offline stores, product promotion and marketing, and consultations on navigating government regulations.

More than 20 local distributors have expressed interest in taking part, including Whites, Saudi Arabia's largest beauty and wellness retailer. Once applications close, these companies will visit Korea to review applicants' documents, hold interviews, and select the supported brands themselves.

Any SME holding a Cosmetics Responsible Distribution Business registration certificate or a Cosmetics Manufacturing Business registration certificate is eligible to apply. Applications are open through July 23.

(Companies designated as K-Export Strategic Items in 2024 and 2025 are exempt from the document review.)

"To accelerate the global expansion of K-beauty – which remains the top export item among SMEs – efforts to diversify exports, including winning new customers, are essential," said Shim Jae-Yoon, Director General for Global Growth Policy at MSS. "We hope this support for entering the Saudi market will serve as a springboard for the K-beauty boom to spread across the wider Middle East."

"In Arabian culture, which loves beauty as fervently as its desert sun is hot, there is a saying that 'true beauty goes beyond appearance,'" said Ambassador Kang Shin-Chul. "The reason K-beauty is loved in Saudi Arabia is precisely this spirit – the pursuit of a healthy, confident way of life that goes beyond simply enhancing one's looks. I hope this program will expand K-beauty's presence in Saudi Arabia and, with it, the spread of K-culture."

Further details on the program are available on the SME Overseas Exhibition Portal (www.smes.go.kr/sme-expo). MSS and the Embassy also plan to hold a pre-program briefing to share recent trends in the Saudi beauty market, program details, and how to apply.

(Briefing: July 2, 2:00-3:30 p.m., Startup Branch Pitching Center, COEX, Gangnam, Seoul)

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<https://www.linkedin.com/company/mss1357>