

## Pairing Technopark Labs with University Experts to Help Regional SMEs Commercialize

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS) launched the Technopark-University Partnership Program for SME Innovation and Growth at a meeting in Daejeon on July 1, joined by the Korea Technology and Information Promotion Agency for SMEs (TIPA), two technoparks (Chungnam and Jeonbuk), KAIST, Jeonju University, and regional SMEs.

The program helps regional SMEs solve technical problems and get their products to market by combining the research facilities of technoparks with the expertise of university specialists. Together, these partners diagnose a company's technical problems and carry it through equipment testing, technology verification, and R&D planning.

### Closing a Long-Standing Gap

Regional SMEs have long found it hard to access the specialized equipment and technical support they need to refine products and move into new lines of business. The right equipment and experts were difficult to find, and even after running tests and analyses, companies often could not translate the results into real technology development. Technoparks held plenty of research equipment and years of experience supporting companies, but there was no reliable channel to keep university experts connected to what those companies actually needed.

MSS designed the program to close that gap. Technoparks and universities form consortiums that diagnose a company's technical problems and move it from shared equipment use and technical advice through to technology verification and the planning of commercialization R&D. Where a company needs an R&D project to resolve its problem, the program carries it through to the completion of preliminary research.

### Two Consortiums, 60 Companies

Two consortiums will run this year's program: Chungnam Technopark with KAIST, and Jeonbuk Technopark with Jeonju University. From July 2026, each will work with around 30 promising regional SMEs, offering equipment use, prototype production, process improvement, performance verification, testing and certification, and expert technical advice.

At the launch meeting, the two consortiums laid out what their programs will cover in the second half of the year and how they will operate. Participating companies, in turn, spoke about the development hurdles they face and how they would like to see the programs run.

"For regional SMEs, few things matter more to their innovation and growth than having a partner to solve technical problems with and pursue commercialization together," said Hwang Young-Ho, Director General for Technology Innovation Policy at MSS. "We will study the results of this program and feed them into the industry-academia-research cooperation program (K-ILP) now being planned as a national policy initiative."

For more news and updates on Korea's SME and startup policies, follow the Ministry's official **LinkedIn** page:

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