

Korea-China Startup Challenge Brings Promising Startups Together in Shenzhen

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS), led by First Vice Minister Roh Yong-Seok, who is serving as Acting Minister, held the final round of the 2026 Korea-China Startup Challenge in Shenzhen on September 3. The event was organized in partnership with Tsinghua University Science Park (TusPark).

The Challenge is a pitch competition for promising Korean and Chinese startups, created to foster closer ties between the two countries' startup ecosystems.

The initiative grew out of the Korea-China Venture and Startup Summit, held in Shanghai in January 2026, where participants explored ways to strengthen connections between the two startup communities and create new opportunities for collaboration.

Following the summit, an MSS delegation visited TusPark to learn about its startup incubation, technology transfer and support programs. The Korea-China Startup Challenge was subsequently launched to turn those discussions into a concrete joint initiative. The Korean entrants were drawn from startups that had participated in the January summit, giving them an opportunity to build on the relationships established there.

Ten companies – five from Korea and five from China – advanced to the final after preliminary and semifinal rounds held in July and August. The finalists presented their technologies and business models to a panel of six judges, with three from each country.

Mok Seung-Hwan, Deputy Minister for Startup and Venture Innovation at MSS, presented the Minister of SMEs and Startups Award and prize money to the two first-place companies. He also commended all the participating entrepreneurs for taking on new challenges and helping strengthen ties between the two countries' startup communities.

First place went to Korea's JH Global Co., Ltd. and China's Guangdong Gudong Intelligent Technology Co., Ltd., both of which received the Minister of SMEs and Startups Award.

Korea's InnoPharma Co., Ltd. and China's Lingyan Technology (Shanghai) Co., Ltd. finished second and received the President's Award of the Korea Institute of Startup & Entrepreneurship Development. Third place went to Korea's Linkis Co., Ltd. and China's Qingyuan Zhixin (Shenzhen) Biotechnology Co., Ltd., which received the TusPark President's Award.

Beyond the competition, the event gave startups and investors from both countries an opportunity to meet potential partners and discuss cooperation aimed at entering each other's markets.

Before the final, the participating Korean companies visited leading Chinese businesses and startup organizations in Shenzhen, including UBTECH Robotics and TusStar Shenzhen. They also held one-on-one meetings with major companies and investors to explore business opportunities and establish connections that could support their expansion into China.

“When we visited TusPark in January, we saw firsthand the energy of China’s startup scene and the considerable potential for Korean and Chinese startups to work together,” said Deputy Minister Mok. “I am pleased to see those initial discussions take shape here in Shenzhen. I hope this challenge will lead to lasting partnerships and contribute to the continued growth of both countries’ startup ecosystems.”

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