Ministry of SMEs and Startups

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Korean Micro Enterprises Expand Exports and Reach New Markets with MSS Support

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS) announced on November 10 that businesses participating in its Global Micro Enterprise Development program had increased their exports and expanded into new markets.

Introduced in 2026, the program helps micro enterprises with promising consumer products prepare for overseas sales. Its support includes export training, up to KRW 100 million for developing and commercializing products for international markets, and participation in overseas consumer goods trade fairs.

Of the 100 businesses selected this year, 92 recorded exports totaling USD 7.06 million through September 2026, up 56.3% from USD 4.52 million in the same period last year. Their export destinations increased from 44 to 75 countries, including 31 new markets. Businesses expanded beyond their established markets in East Asia and the United States to destinations including Russia and countries in Eastern Europe and Africa.

Six participants that had no exports last year also made their first overseas sales, demonstrating progress both in helping businesses begin exporting and in opening new markets.

Among the participating businesses, Samon, led by CEO Son Sohee, develops healthy snacks using by-products from red ginseng manufacturing. The company recorded its first exports in 2026, worth approximately USD 11,000. Dermis, led by CEO Park Hyunsin, develops cosmetics using functional ingredients derived from salmon. Its exports rose from approximately USD 38,000 in 2024 to USD 270,000 in 2026.

Both companies received ministerial awards at K-Micro Enterprise Insight Day, held on November 6 as part of the first Local Startup Festa in Jeju. Samon won in the Frontier category and Dermis in the Step-up category, recognizing their export achievements and potential for further growth.

The three-day festival, held from November 4 to 6, attracted around 1,000 participants, including local entrepreneurs, micro enterprise owners, investors, overseas buyers and representatives of business support organizations. Each day focused on a different aspect of business growth: brand development and investment, local shopping districts, and international expansion.

The event introduced Korean micro enterprises' products and brands to overseas buyers and highlighted export contracts worth a combined KRW 1.6 billion secured by seven local businesses. Buyers from China and Hong Kong also presented letters of intent to purchase products, signaling interest in further business partnerships.

Meetings among participating businesses, investors and support organizations provided opportunities to explore partnerships and new sales channels. MSS plans to connect participants with relevant support programs to help these discussions lead to follow-up meetings, export sales and investment.

"With growing international interest in Korean consumer products, we will strengthen support to help innovative micro enterprises bring their products to global markets," said Kim Jeongju, Director General for Micro Enterprise Policy at MSS.

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