

Republic of Korea National Action Plan Open Government Partnership

INTRODUCTION

With increasing demands from the public for more transparent and accountable government, the Government of the Republic of Korea has made continued efforts to provide a two-way communication channel, to which citizens can have easy access, as well as continuous consultations with the civil society.

Korea's central government ministries utilize various means including SNS, web blogs and online portals to enhance communication with citizens. Through such interactions with the public, Korea is committed to creating an open government, in turn, contributing toward not only establishing democracy, but also improving the efficiency and effectiveness of government.

During the Presidential Speech at the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic of Korea, President Lee Myung-bak emphasized "Creating a fair society", by declaring open and innovative government as one of key national agenda. In this context, Korea continues to build good governance through open government, which it believes to be a critical component of national competitiveness. In this regard, various policies to achieve the open government are being developed.

With a goal to improve public services, increase public integrity and effectively manage public resources, the Korean government is formulating a national plan to enhance the transparency, citizen participation and accountability of government. Moreover, we are making ceaseless efforts toward realizing an open government and ultimately, an advanced nation.

KOREA'S OPEN GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DATE

The Korean Government has implemented various policies to promote transparent national administration, active citizen participation and better public access to government information. In this regard, Korea has endeavored to pursue an open government by engaging

in dialogues with the public through the utilization of world-class information communication and technologies (ICT) and e-government. As a result, significant progress has been made in enhancing the three abovementioned areas.

1. Improved Transparency

- Information Disclosure System has been introduced to improve public access to government information and disclose information in advance to satisfy people's right to know. Through the Information Disclosure System, agencies receiving the requests for information make decision on the necessary measures, thus improving transparency and reducing any possible corruption in the process.
- Furthermore, to ensure integrity and transparency within the civil service, as well as to gain public trust in government, civil service ethics policy has been revised and implemented as strict measures for further enhancing transparency in the civil service. For example, the Civil Service Ethics Act has been enacted and revised to institutionalize the registration of personal assets and require senior civil servants to disclose their registered assets to the public on a regular basis.

2. Active Citizen Engagement

- The Proposal System has been established to encourage greater citizen participation in the decision-making process in order to improve services eliminating problematic elements and unnecessary burdens. Citizens' creative and diverse ideas incorporated into this system enable the policy to be formulated and implemented in more open and democratic environment.
- e-People (www.epeople.go.kr), Korea's online government portal, integrating services such as petitions, proposals and policy discussions, enables citizens to submit proposals and receive notifications of their submission status via text messages and emails. This one-stop portal provides prompt and user-friendly services and active public engagement in policy making.

3. Accessibility

- Since 2002, the Korean Government has provided numerous online public services through a website called ‘Minwon24’, to which citizens can have easy access. They can request and obtain many civil affairs documents without visiting related agencies, ensuring more prompt and efficient services.
- Furthermore, citizens’ convenience is further promoted by expanding access to government information with government-wide public information disclosure. In 2011, a website for data sharing (Data.go.kr) began its service to provide citizens with better access to public information.
- In terms of public procurement, Korea’s Online Procurement System, a single gateway, was formed by digitalizing government procurement procedures and integrating related services. Through the Online Procurement System, entire procurement procedure is processed online and information on participating agencies is disclosed to the public. With a one-time registration, all agencies can take part in any bidding processes, ensuring greater administrative efficiency and transparency in procurement transactions.
- Above all, citizen engagement is the most important aspect for the efficient management of public resources. The Korean Government has recognized accessibility as a precondition for more active citizen participation and monitoring budget affairs. In this connection, an online portal for making reports on budget waste was established in January 2012, integrating 300 budget waste report centers for more efficient handling of filed reports and easier access to the system for citizens. Furthermore, the budget waste report application for smartphone users has been introduced to make the reporting more convenient.

OGP COMMITMENTS

In recent years, the Korean Government has pursued a “SMART GOVERNMENT” as a new national strategy, reflecting the changing landscape of information technology (IT) and introduction of various mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet PCs. The “SMART GOVERNMENT” is expected to achieve even more transparency in government by engaging with citizens in the decision making, anytime, anywhere. Initiatives that we implement are clear reflections of public opinions, which are conducted through continuous consultations

with citizens, the private sector and civil society. Such process will be the base for our country in taking the next steps toward creating an open government.

1. Open Government for Enhancing Public Services

With the development of IT and wide spread of smartphones, there is a constant demand from the public for more online public services. To actively respond to such needs, initiatives that prioritize citizen participation and convenience will be developed for implementation, which will in turn contribute to meeting the needs and boosting satisfaction of service users.

1-1. Creating a Communication Channel for Government and Citizens

In terms of improving public services, public service itself first needs to be defined and we should identify the areas for improvement and needs of citizens. In this context, the Korean Government plans to provide wider opportunities for greater citizen engagement and expand communication channels to reflect their needs and creative ideas in the decision-making process.

- As public voice is considered a critical element in policy formulation, citizens' opinions have become central in the decision making and policy implementation. Therefore, greater policy discussions will take place through the e-People to promote more public input in future policy development by reviewing relevant policy agenda and inconveniences experienced by citizens.
- Moreover, the Korean Government will actively promote the Proposal System to encourage greater citizen engagement for obtaining public opinions. This will be done not only in the form of document submission, but also through mobile applications, making public participation available, anytime, anywhere.

1-2. Better Communication Channel between Government and Citizens at All Levels of Administration

President Lee Myung-bak believes that "Policy consumers have the solutions to challenges we face in policy implementations." Emphasizing the government efforts in incorporating public opinions by listening to what citizens say about various policies and strategies, central government ministries plan to conduct 'Field Administration', for the provision of quality

administrative services to meet their expectations.

- Moreover, a field administration manual will be developed to further strengthen communication between the government and public, thus embracing different voices of society in the decision-making process. This procedure is expected to address more pragmatic solutions and minimize potential conflicts through reaching consensus with various stakeholders and identify any problems in advance. A ‘One-stop Problem Solving Field Administration’ will be implemented with government officials at all levels making field visits, conducting direct contact with local residents and stakeholders to find appropriate solutions.

1-3. Improved Accessibility with Online Government Portal

As mentioned earlier, the Korean Government strives to improve the online government portal by providing user-friendly services and promoting convenience in service delivery.

- To enhance users’ convenience, relevant agencies will continue to work on simplifying online civil affairs application forms through reflecting the opinions of users.
- In addition, we plan to refine the system into more user-friendly one, revising the online Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sections and changing administrative terms into more familiar words for citizens to enhance their understanding.
- Service improvement not only for individuals, but for corporate organizations is also being planned. Customized online services for business will be introduced, offering mobile based “Online submission of civil affairs documents for businesses.” This system ensures service users to submit various civil affairs documents to corporate organizations more conveniently by utilizing online and mobile applications.
- “Online Civil Affairs Hub” is planned to be established by linking the 24-hour public online services (Minwon24) and civil affairs websites of each government agency, allowing real-time processing of civil affairs and enhanced customer satisfaction.

1-4. Provision of Diverse Public Services

The Korean Government continues to reform existing public services and reflect citizens’

ideas to provide diverse and high quality services to the public.

- As a good example, there have been considerable public demands recently for effective measures to prevent crimes committed against women and children. In response to this, the Korean Government (Ministry of Public Administration and Security) has introduced the “SOS Public Relief Service”, a new crime prevention system, which utilizes the latest information technology, allowing a silent call to the police from a mobile device for automatic location tracking and rescue. The new initiative, currently available in selected metropolitan areas, will be expanded nationwide by the end of 2012. Feedback from service providers (police) and users (citizens) will be taken into consideration for the improvement of this service.

2. Open Government to Increase Public Integrity

To make the government more transparent and accountable, government at all levels are pursuing policies to realize an open government. As a very first step to become a transparent government, we have been sharing appropriate national information with the public and will strengthen information disclosure to promote public integrity and ultimately make our society corruption-free.

2-1. Strengthening Information Disclosure

More government information will be available publicly by disclosing critical information in advance for the daily life of the public. The information for advanced disclosure will be about food, environment, education, and other areas. Prior to the disclosure, engaging with civil organizations and monitoring groups will enable relevant information to be opened. Provision of information from citizens’ perspectives and communication between the government and civil society will also be reinforced and the information will also be available via mobile devices.

2-2. A Corruption-free Society

To reduce corruption, asset disclosure for public servants will be strengthened to ensure more transparency in the civil service. Restrictions on post-public employment will also be strictly monitored to further promote the culture of civil service integrity.

3. Open Government for More Effective Management of Public Resources

In recent years, the number and amount of public resources, which can be useful for the public, are increasing and the demands for such information are also growing. In this context, the Korean Government will concentrate more on disclosing and sharing additional information by creating a web portal to promote more efficient management and utilization of public resources.

3-1. Active Use of Data Sharing Portal

We will improve the management of public information and resources, and provide upgraded everyday services especially related to the citizens' daily life. It will be realized through the expansion of available information provided, reflecting the needs from the public and consideration of the citizens' convenience.

- Public information with high demands from the private sector, will be verified and registered on the data sharing portal through research and analysis. For the efficient use of information, online counselors and consulting will be available to reduce the time taken for information search.
- The Korean Government will endeavor to improve the efficiency of public administration and management by using public resources more wisely and engaging with citizens in the administrative and budget processes.

3-2. Strengthening Citizens' Monitoring of Government

We will also enhance the one-stop budget waste portal, by not only integrating services on budget waste of central government ministries but also those of metropolitan and local governments.

CONCLUSION

The Republic of Korea, recognized for its excellence in e-government services, hopes to play an active role in the international community in pursuing an Open Government through continuous consultations with the civil society.

In order to accomplish this goal, the Korean Government will continuously develop and improve this Action Plan for Open Government through ongoing interactions with citizens. We firmly believe that the Open Government Partnership (OGP) will be the stepping stone toward realizing its open government initiatives and will continue to engage in greater dialogues with our people to reach our goal.