ifa ECP Monitor Country Report

South Korea





1. External cultural policy objectives in geopolitical context

The twentieth century was a turbulent time for the Korean Peninsula, with Japan's colonization followed by the separation of North and South Korea. South Korea (hereafter Korea) has successfully transformed from a militarized autocracy to the liberal democracy of today through major civic movements such as the Gwangju Uprising in 1980. Over the past thirty years, it has risen rapidly to its current position as the 12th largest economy in the world through export-oriented industrialization. While Korea, with a population of fifty million and a total area equivalent to a quarter of Japan, is not among the great powers of the world like its East Asian neighbors, it nevertheless adopts middle power diplomacy such as *Hallyu* (the Korean Wave) to strengthen its position in international affairs.

Table 1: The geopolitical and geo-economic position

	2019	2015	
Hard power rank	6 ^{th (2021)}	-	-
World trade rank (\$ million)	7 ^{th (Export)} , 9 ^{th (Import)} / 1,045,435	6 ^{th (Export)} , 9 ^{th (Import)} / 963,240	\
Soft power rank	19 th / 63.00	20 th / 54.32	↑
Diplomacy rank	13 th	12 ^{th (2016)}	Ψ

South Korea has a plethora of organizations and mechanisms involved in cultural diplomacy and international exchange. This is partly the result of bureaucratic fragmentation and inter-departmental competition in central government, and it has contributed to an absence of cohesive strategic goals. South Korea's cultural diplomacy thus adopts both explicit and implicit approaches. The explicit approach is the government's top-down planning through its major cultural policy plans such as the annual Culture and Arts Policy White Paper (문화예술정책백서) and public diplomacy five-year master plans published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). The implicit approach is the policy space flexibly interpreted by subsequent administrations and external actors, including private companies, artists, and cultural institutions abroad.

Table 2: Economy of South Korea

	2019	2015
Population (millions) / ranking	51.7 / 28 th	51.0 / 27 th
GDP ranking	12 th	11 th
GDP per capita (\$)	31,847	28,732
Cultural economy (%GDP)	0.16	0.14
Education economy (%GDP)	5.1 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	5.4
R&D economy (%GDP)	4.0	4.6
Media economy (%GDP)	-	-

Sources: World Bank, OECD, MCST

In 2019, the budget for culture and arts policy was 322 billion KRW (€246 million), 9.5% of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) budget. In 2021, this budget did not change much and remained at 309 billion. In particular, 8.7 billion (€6.5 million) goes to support international cultural policies, 2.1 billion (€1.5 million) to institutions that engage in international cultural exchange, and about 13.3 billion (€10.2 million) to support the spread of the New Korean Wave through cultural cooperation.

It is claimed that MCST's budget for 2022 has surpassed 7 trillion KRW (€ 5.2 billion) for the first time in September 2021 (3.4 trillion KRW in 2019). The ministry will inject 170 billion won (€ 126 million) into a fund for Hallyu production, spend 49 billion won (€ 36 million) toward international cooperation and export of cultural content and invest 30 billion won (€ 22 million) in cultural content.³

Table 3: Government spending on ECP fields as a % of total outlays

	2019	2015
Culture ⁴	1.26	1.33
Education ⁵	12.3 (2018)	13.2
R & D	4.1	5.0
Media	0.20	0.19

Sources: OECD, MCST, MOEF

According to the 2018-2022 Budget Allocation Plans of the Ministry of Economy and Finance by area, the government's expenditure for education is 70.9 trillion KRW (€ 52.5 billion), which is about the annual expenditure of the MOE and 15% of the total expenditure for FY2019, excluding grants to local governments. The Ministry of Education (MOE) budget for ECP mainly includes support for overseas Korean education operations such as Korean Education Centers and Korean Schools, whose budget is 71 billion KRW (€ 54.4 million) for FY 2019. The actual budget for education ECP is bigger than this, considering the budgets for promoting international education cooperation (102 billion KRW; € 75.6 million), active development, and utilization of Korean-style online open lecture contents like MOOC (11.4 billion KRW; € 8.4 million).

¹ Refer to 2019 Art Policy Office Budget (general, special) business plan (2019 년도 예술정책관 예산(일반,균특)사업계획).

² Refer to 2021 Cultural Policy Office Budget and Fund Status (2021 년도 문화정책관 예산·기금 현황).

³ http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210901000819.

[&]quot;Refer to Table 2-4-2 Changes in Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism's Financial Share in Relative to Government Finance (정부재정대비 문화체육관광부 재정 점유율 변화) of the 2019 Culture and Arts Policy White Paper (2019 문화예술정책백서).

⁵ Refer to the Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure (2018) excluding R&D for Korean of the OECD Education at A Glance 2018 & 2021. However, according to 2016 & 2020 budget proposal published by MOEF, the total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure is 26.8 (for FY 2019) and 24.6 (for FY 2015). These two figures include expenditures of 1) Education and 2) Education Grants to Local Government.

⁶ Refer to 2020 Budget Proposal (MOEF Press Release).

2. External cultural policy: an overview

Among the main objectives listed by MCST for 2021, there is an emphasis on promoting cultural industry and the continuous spread of the New Korean Wave.⁷ One of Korea's cultural diplomacy priorities is to take advantage of the global interest in the Korean cultural products and sustain the export income generated by the Korean Wave, including Korean TV dramas, pop music, films and video games.

Since the early 2000s, within a framework of state-led cultural policy, public-private collaboration has been an established development model for cultural diplomacy in South Korea. For example, the Korean Wave, an overarching strategy, is implemented by the government and decentralized into a wide range of ministries and private institutions. According to the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange's (KOFICE) *Hallyu* Impact Research Report 2020, Korean Wave exports came to US\$12.3 billion in 2019, up 22.4% from the previous year (Lee, 2019).

Compared to Japan's Cool Japan branding, Korean Wave communicates more clearly with its targeted audience and aims to create an internationalist image. Korean Wave is supported by almost every ministry, and official reports and whitepapers are published annually by agencies such as the KOFICE. The Korean Wave initiative also penetrates the entire entertainment, music, television, film industries of Korea. For these reasons, Korea can offer more innovative products and methods than Japan, and Korean Wave naturally has gathered more popularity and attention (Lux, 2021).

In addition, Korea hosted the PyeongChang Olympic Games in 2018. It earned more digital views than any other Olympic Winter Games in history—124 percent more than Sochi (2014) and 870 percent more than Vancouver (2010). It also enjoyed the widest broadcast coverage in the history of the Olympic Winter Games (Choi, 2019). Notably, North Korea leader Kim Jong Un dispatched 22 athletes to compete under a unified flag with the South. By building on past achievements and reinforcing the existing legal, financial and organizational infrastructures, the public diplomacy of Korea is on the rise.

Table 4: Key ECP Statistics for South Korea

	2019
Number of countries with ECP activities	over 41
Total number of institutions abroad	over 101
Total number of FTE staff engaged in ECP activities	Personnel in the exchange department: 28,143 International cultural exchange specialists: 11,388
ECP freelance & local contract staff	-
Government financial support (€ million)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (cultural diplomacy): 16.22 Ministry of Foreign Affairs (public diplomacy): 460.32 Korea Foundation: 115.21 Korean Culture and Information Service: 95.72

⁷ http://www.mcst.go.kr/english/policy/businessPlan.jsp

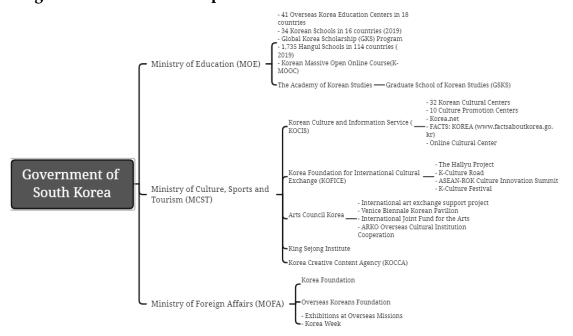
Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism: 118.89

Financial scale of all ECP activities (€ million)	4,911.52
Comparative ECP ranking	major

According to MOFA's public diplomacy report 2019, its five-year plan (2017-2021) includes six strategic goals with a budget for 2019 alone of €460 million (85% goes to ministries and Korea Foundation, 15% goes to 17 local governments). In particular, the MCST's share accounts for 52%, MOE 10%, Korea Foundation 7%. The two most invested strategic goals—"Improving national prestige and strengthening national image by utilizing rich cultural assets" and "Spreading the right awareness and understanding of Korea" focus on two-way cultural exchange and promoting Korean education abroad. These areas of focus correspond to the roles played by MCST, MOE, and Korea Foundation.

Apart from top-down organized public diplomacy policies, plenty of entities and organizations are involved in cultural diplomacy in Korea, and their expenses go far beyond governmental budgets. According to the 2020 Survey on International Cultural Exchange that targets 1,659 businesses in the public sector, which involves in international cultural exchange, the most three common forms taken are performance/game/display (31.7%), festival (18.4%), and academic/research (15.3%).

Figure 1: Institutional map of Korean ECP



3. Fields of ECP

There are a number of international players involved in South Korea's cultural diplomacy and exchange. The most important ones are the Ministry of Culture, Sports & Tourism (MCST) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). However, the distinction between them in the division of labor on international cultural relations is blurred. The MCST has an International Cultural Affairs Division and an in-house Korea Cultural Information Service (KOCIS) that oversees international cultural exchanges. It is also responsible for Korean Cultural Centers internationally and the Kim Sejong Institutes abroad. MCST also financially supports the Korea Arts Management Service, which provides mobility funds and other international services and Arts Council Korea, whose work includes an international dimension. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a Public Diplomacy and Cultural Affairs Bureau, with oversight of the Korea Foundation and Korean embassies.

3.1. Culture and the arts

Table 5: Key statistics on culture and the art

	2019	2015
Number of countries present	33	-
Number of institutes	Korean Cultural Centers: 31	Korean Cultural Centers: 28
Number of cultural agreements	21	-
Number of artists in exchange programs	236	-
Budget (€ million)	34.29	29.15
Expenditure (€ million)	MCST: 77.98 KF: 9.30	MCST: 87.48 KF: 8.30

As mentioned above, MOFA's chief agent for cultural exchange is the Korea Foundation, and its network of offices seeks to promote a greater understanding of South Korea via cultural, educational, and intellectual exchange. KF's expenditure for cultural exchange and support for media is € 9.3 million in 2019, which is 8% of its overall expenditure for FY 2019. In 2019, KF supported Korean film screenings organized by 42 Korean diplomatic missions in 39 countries and distributed DVDs to 14 diplomatic missions. In total, people watched Korean films at 282 events conducted with support from the KF. Films have become an important aspect of South Korea's cultural diplomacy as the film *Parasite*, a peak moment of the Korean Wave, turned into a global success (Lee, 2021).

Arts Council Korea (ARKO) is an adjunct of MCST, although it operates on a quasi-independent basis. Its role is to support Korean artists and organizations domestically. Still, it also supports some international engagement, including Korean participation in the Venice Biennale and artist-in-residence programs in South Korea and abroad. Its budget for cultural exchange in 2011 was KRW 5.5 billion (€ 3.4 million). As of 2022 March, ARKO is in cooperation with 33 overseas cultural institutions in 21 countries, including Goethe-Institut and

Federation of Arts Council & Cultural Agencies (IFACCA). § In addition, the KOCIS under MCST is responsible for Korean Cultural Centres, which disseminate information on and promote engagement with Korean culture and life.

3.2. Language

Table 6: Key figures on language promotion

	2019	2015
Number of countries	Hangul Schools: 115 Local Language Schools: 30 King Sejong Institutes: 60	Hangul Schools: 121 Local Language Schools: 28 King Sejong Institutes: 54
Number of students		
In class	Hangul Schools: 102,444	Hangul Schools: 106,382 King Sejong Institutes: 43,408
Online	Nuri Kim Sejong institutes: 200,916	-
Number of candidates for English language qualifications	TOPIK: 155,969 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	174,882
Number of language teachers and trainees	Hangul Schools: 15,971	Hangul Schools: 15,331
Budget (€ million)	MOE: 54.83 MSCT: 24.40 KF: 11.24	MOE: 49.49 MSCT:14.32 KF: 9.87

Several main actors come to support Korean language education abroad. At a primary and secondary level is Hangul schools established by MOE. It offers Korean history and national education in addition to Korean language classes. In 2019, there is a total of 102,444 students enrolled in Hangul Schools in 115 countries. At a tertiary level, the Korea Foundation is heavily involved in promoting Korean language studies. It offers employment opportunities at internationally prominent universities and dispatches visiting professors, and it also supports fellowships of undergraduate and graduate students for Korean-related activities. In 2019, Korea Foundation supported 875 courses at 185 universities in 69 countries. Its expenditure for supporting Korean studies overseas was €11.24 million in FY 2019, 9.8% of its overall expenditure.

MCST also supports Korean language education overseas through the King Sejong Institutes (formerly called Korean Language Centres). Different from Hangul schools, the King Sejong Institutes play a role that is similar to that of China's Confucius Initutes and Germany's Goethe Institutes. The Sejong Institutes establish partnerships with universities overseas to offer Korean language education, and they also provide the education institutions with qualified

⁸ https://www.arko.or.kr/eng/international/cooperation#asia.

teachers. Some are also located in Korean Cultural Centres. As in 2021, there are 234 Kim Sejong institutes in 82 countries, and the figure steadily increases every year.⁹

3.3. Primary and secondary education

Table 7: Key figures on primary and secondary education

	2019	2015
Number of countries	16	15
Number of schools	34	32
Number of students	14,040	13,337
Number of staff / teachers	1,249	1,293

The budget for Korean schools overseas overlaps with those of the Korean Education Centres and local Korean language schools. In 2019, the total budget for the three is €54.8 million, according to the settlement report of MOE. Notably, in Uzbekistan, the first experimental kindergarten was reconstructed following Korean standards, and instructors received training from specialized Korean institutions (Varpahovskis, 2019). It is not surprising that Korea continues to expand cooperation with Uzbekistan in education sectors, considering that 200,000 Koreans are still living in Uzbekistan. ¹⁰ One of Korea's universities abroad, Korean International University in Ferghana (KIUF), is also located in Uzbekistan.

3.4. Tertiary education and science

Table 8: Key figures on tertiary education and science

	2019	2015
Number of countries (Fulbright)	>18	-
Number of universities / colleges abroad	3	-
Number of students		
Inbound	160,165	91,335
Outbound	213,000	214,696
Budget (€ million)	10	-
Government financial support (€ million)	Global Korea Scholarship: 40.58	Global Korea Scholarship: 44.94

⁹ https://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/Culture/view?articleId=199342.

¹⁰ For more information, refer to NGO Guidance Uzbekistan published by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA): https://www.gcs.or.kr/_data/board_list_file/11/2021/2104061621251.pdf.

South Korea runs an international scholarship program with explicit public diplomacy objectives, having benchmarked Fulbright. The Global Korea Scholarship targets international undergraduate and graduate students and covers all expenses. Students are supposed to complete a language course in Korea and then obtain an academic degree from one of the selected Korean universities. One of the program's main goals is to generate a pro-Korean international network around the world that would further contribute to Korea's diplomatic success in foreign countries. However, the long-term economic gains for Korea cannot be ascertained yet.

The number of international students receiving Korean Government Scholarship significantly increased from 133 in 2007 to 745 in 2008 and remained around 800 for the last decade. As of 2018, there are currently 2,475 students from 147 countries. The largest group of students is from Indonesia (3.3%), Vietnam (3.1%), Mongolia (2.7%), and China (2.7%), all of which are East Asian countries with which Korea has close trade ties (Ayhan, 2021).

	2019	2015
Number of countries	51	-
Number of institutes	80	-
Number of projects	299	322
Budget (€ million) (The National Research Foundation of Korea)	54.33	58.80
Number of countries	51	-
Number of institutes	80	-

In general, South Korea is not yet a key player in international science diplomacy. However, its potential is large. For example, South Korea is one of the founding parties of the International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC), which is an intergovernmental organization based in Kazakhstan.¹¹ In 2012, Korea successfully launched the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), transforming it from a domestic think tank to a treaty-based intergovernmental organization. The Korea-EU Research Center was established in 2013 under the influence of Korean Ministry of Science, Technology and ICT and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF). As of 2021, EU has a total of 133 projects that involve Korea. ¹² From 2014 to 2020, a total of 59 joint projects were concluded under Horizon 2020.

¹¹ https://www.istc.int/en/about.

¹² https://cordis.europa.eu/search?q=contenttype%3D%27project%27%20AND%20(programme%2Fcode%3D%27H2020%27)%20AND%20(%27korea%27)&p=2&num=10&srt=Relevance:decreasing.

3.5. Foreign Media

Table 9: Key figures on foreign broadcasting, including social media statistics

TV: KBS World Number of countries broad- casted to Number of languages 11 - Number of channels - Audience / weekly (million) - Digital & social media audience -	
casted to Number of languages 11 - Number of channels Audience / weekly (million)	
Number of channels Audience / weekly (million)	
Audience / weekly (million)	
Digital & social media audience	
(million)	
Budget (€ million) KOCCA: 20.95 - International Broadcasting: 2.11	
Radio	
Number of countries broad	
Number of languages 11 -	
Number of channels 10 -	
Audience / weekly (million)	
Digital & social media audience (million)	
New Media: Korea.net	
Social networks following	
Number of languages 9 -	
Audience / unique visitors 7.7 million page views - (monthly /million) 2 million visitors	
Budget (€ million)	

Korea has many broadcasting media that export cultural content to other countries, many of which are privately funded. An important governmental agency is the Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) situated under MCST. It was established in May 2009 by integrating five related organizations, including Korean Broadcasting Institute, Korea Culture & Content Agency, and Korea Game Agency, and it oversees and coordinates the promotion of the Korean content industry. According

to KOCCA data gathered from nine of South Korea's domestic broadcasters, 102 K-formats have been exported to 204 channels in 65 countries over the past decade. Another major international broadcasting service owned by the government is Korean Broadcasting System. Its KBS WORLD channel is being aired in 140 million households in 113 countries. It is also available to watch at 1,719 hotels in 46 countries.

According to an online survey conducted by the Korea Creative Content Agency (2019) on the use of videos and music, which are primary *Hallyu* content types, the consumption of Korean broadcast content tends to follow the consumption habits of the general public (TV > online streaming > online download). While Korean dramas are the top export of the Korean Wave, they are primarily accessed through over-the-top (OTT) platforms like YouTube and Netflix. Therefore, OTT media services, which are offered directly to users via the internet, are becoming ever more crucial for Korea to export cultural content. Within Korea, there are a number of private broadcasting companies engaging in content exporting. For example, Wavve, an OTT streamer co-joined by three terrestrial broadcasting stations, signed a partner-ship with the American media giant, NBCUniversal, in 2019 to distribute Korean films and dramas. Netflix also established a private limited company, Netflix Entertainment Korea, in 2020 to focus on content creation, acquisition, and investment in the Korean market, with a planned injunction of \$500 million for studio production.

4. Challenges and future outlook

In September 2013, South Korea, together with Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey, and Australia, launched themselves as a new consultative international body of middle-power countries seeking to bridge developed and developing countries. Through MIKTA (the acronym these countries have adopted), the current South Korean administration seeks to deploy 'middle-power diplomacy' as part of a new international order.

In 2017, South Korea launched the New Southern Policy (NSP) to open a new chapter in Seoul's relations with ASEAN and India. The NSP represents Seoul's regional ambition to seek greater strategic autonomy by taking on greater international responsibilities. However, South Korea, as a middle power, still faces external geopolitical constraints, such as its worsening relation with Japan and the China-US rivalry. Cultural diplomacy has become even more indispensable for South Korea. Indeed, despite widespread anti-Korean sentiments in the 2010s in Japan, South Korea's soft power reached new heights in 2020, driven by everything from its model pandemic response to cultural staples like chart-topping BTS albums.

Comparatively speaking, it is unusual for South Korea to have many decentralized organizations and mechanisms involved in international cultural diplomacy and exchange. On the one hand, decentralization provides many channels for diplomacy that are not strictly restricted in contents and forms. On the other hand, it contributes to a lack of consistent overall strategies. Therefore, one of South Korea's challenges is how the government can take advantage of the popularity gathered around Korean popular culture while controlling the messaging it wants to present internationally and domestically.

¹³ https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/south-korea-entertainment-and-media

¹⁴ https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/art/2022/02/688_287732.html?KK

¹⁵ https://thediplomat.com/2021/08/netflix-and-sk-broadband-battle-over-who-pays-in-south-korea/

Digital diplomacy has also taken an interesting turn in Korea. On the one hand, the South Korean digital environment is ranked in the top of connectivity, internet speed, smartphone ownership, and social media usage. And Korea has been cited as No. 1 in the digital opportunity index (DOI) by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for the last three consecutive years, winning over Japan and the United States. ¹⁶ However, its core agencies for public agencies such as MOFA and MOE, the public channels of which, like Twitter and Facebook, are all in Korean. The English language equivalents, such as the MOFA English language Facebook page or Twitter account, are severely limited in content depth and frequency and attract little interest (Robertson, 2017). In this regard, South Korea will still need to harness its digital assets, including branding its digital products and culture, to leverage its position as a hub of global innovation and better engage global audiences.

¹⁶ The DOI the tracking and comparison of countries in different aspects of the Information Society. It measures countries' ICT capabilities in infrastructure, access path and device, affordability and coverage, and quality. For more information, please also refer to https://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/doi/index.html.

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