

Inaugural round of customized compatriot settlement projects with 12 provincial governments

OKA supports 13 projects of 12 metropolitan and regional organizations, including Gwangju and Ansan

The Overseas Koreans Agency announced on Jan. 21 that it has selected 12 local governments as project delivery subsidiaries for the “2025 Regional Overseas Korean Resettlement Support Project” to provide customized resettlement support for overseas compatriots living in Korea.

This year, 13 metropolitan and local organizations made 16 project applications, and among them, 13 projects in 12 local governments were selected, including Gwangju metropolitan city and Ansan city, which are areas with a high concentration of overseas compatriot residents. The selection criteria for the projects included ▲ Practical effects of the support, ▲ Support for social and emotional adaptation, ▲ Improvement in awareness that can be felt by the public, ▲ Support for economic self-reliance capacity and ▲ Equity by region.

With the number of overseas Koreans living in Korea recently exceeding 860,000 and continuing to grow, this is the first time since the establishment of the OKA that it is supporting compatriots living in Korea through local governments.

The OKA launched the project to strengthen the capacity of overseas compatriots living in Korea to settle down early and stably as members of Korean society, and contribute to national development in the face of the declining birthrate and rural depopulation crisis facing Korean society. The agency expects the project will increase social interest in and awareness of overseas compatriots, as well as create a stable environment for compatriots returning to Korea.

“We look forward to providing practical help to our compatriots residing in Korea and will continue to collaborate with local governments,” OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said.

In addition, the OKA is recruiting private sector organizations until Feb. 7 for “Support for organizations related to compatriot residents in Korea 2025” and will also release a tender for a research service early next month regarding “Development of a customized curriculum for overseas Koreans living in Korea.”

Meanwhile, on Dec. 6, the agency held an academic forum on overseas Korean policy at the CCMM Building in Yeouido, Seoul,



Participants pose for a photo at the Academic Forum on Overseas Korean Policy at the CCMM Building in Yeouido, Seoul, on Dec. 6, 2024.

with the theme of “Dialogue with Government, Academia and Civil Society Organizations on the 2024 Domestic Korean Policy.” The forum marked the one-year anniversary of the establishment of the Korean Refugee Agency and was significant in that it was the first academic forum for a new agenda and paradigm for the agency, which has so far viewed only compatriots living abroad as policy targets but also considers compatriots living in Korea as important policy targets.

The Academic Forum on Overseas Korean Policy was held at the CCMM Building in Yeouido, Seoul, the same day under the theme of “2024 Dialogue with Government, Academia and Civil Society Organizations on Overseas Korean Policy.” The forum marked the first anniversary of the establishment of the agency, and was significant in that it was the first academic forum for a new agenda and paradigm, which also focuses on compatriots living in Korea as important policy targets, in addition to the focus until now, which was only on compatriots living abroad.

“For the first time, the OKA has reflected expenses in the 2025 budget to develop customized programs for the stable settlement of Korean compatriots in Korea and to provide necessary support for each region,” Lee said in his remarks. “From the new year, the agency will collaborate with local governments and private organizations to support the settlement of overseas compatriots in Korea.” 