



Ministry of Agriculture,
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The Current Status of the Progress in the Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Responding to Declining Rural Areas and the Future Plan

Sejong, 28 February 2025 — On 25 February 2025 at the Ministerial Meeting on Economic Affairs, the Korean government announced the current status of the progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Responding to Declining Rural Areas, as well as the future plan. In March 2024, the Korean government established the Strategic Plan for Responding to Declining Rural Areas. The plan lays out three main strategies and 66 specific projects for implementation of those strategies.

The current status of the progress in the implementation of the

strategic plan, as well as the future plan

1. In terms of revitalization of rural economy and creating jobs in rural areas

Easing the regulation of controlling the entry of facilities into farmland

The Korean government has improved the regulations on the use of farmland. Accordingly, vertical farms are now allowed to be built on farmland. With regard to cancellation of small-sized leftover farmland's status as an agricultural promotion area, the central government notified local governments of the examination results about the cancellation, and the administrative process for the cancellation is underway.

Since 1992, local governments have designated an agricultural promotion area to efficiently use and preserve farmland through an approval of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA). However, in the case that small-sized farmland is left over after farmland has been developed for diverse purposes such as roads, housing sites, industrial complexes, etc., such leftover farmland has a low efficiency in the use. Accordingly, there has been an increasing demand for cancelling such leftover farmland's status as an agricultural promotion area and thus using it for other purposes benefiting residents such as cultural facilities, welfare facilities, sports facilities, etc.

Support for starting a business in rural areas as well as for the growth of the agro-industry

The Korean government will also provide support (KRW 450 million for the

year 2025) for young people to start a business in rural areas by taking advantage of tangible and intangible rural resources. An “innovation belt” where industries with forward- and backward-linkages with agriculture cluster together will also be built from 2025 to 2028.

- An agro-industry means an industry with forward- and backward-linkages with agriculture and agri-food products, as well as crop and livestock farming.

2. In terms of increasing a living population and a related population

- A living population means, but is not limited to, persons visiting and staying in a specific region for the purpose of commuting to work or school, touring, resting and leisure, business, regular exchanges, etc.
- A related population means a population having a relationship with a specific region, but not living there.

Expansion of spaces for rural sojourn

As part of the efforts to increase a living population and a related population, the Korean government has improved related regulations in a way to allow a temporary stay-in-facility for rural sojourn to be built on farmland, and will create a complex for rural sojourn composed of diverse functions such as residential facilities, vegetable gardens for farming experience, and programmes of connecting a tour of rural areas and rural cultural resources.

Promotion of regeneration of unoccupied and derelict rural houses

To promote regeneration of unoccupied and derelict rural houses, the government completed the enactment of the related law in July 2024 under

which owners of unoccupied and derelict rural houses receive tax incentives for their voluntary improvement or maintenance of such rural houses of their own or penalties are imposed on such owners for not following the government order of demolishing such rural houses.

The government will also build a platform for providing information or transacting a business deal on unoccupied and derelict rural houses to promote the selling and buying of such houses, and will expand support for regeneration of abandoned rural houses.

3. In terms of bringing innovation to the quality of life of a rural population

The Korean government will provide support for expansion of the functions of local public hospitals that offer secondary medical care and comprehensive health and medical services for public interest. The government will also expand outreach medical services for a rural population. In addition, the service of selling daily necessities and food on a mobile market truck will be provided for rural communities out of the reach of transportation services and with no grocery stores.

A self-regulating innovation district programme

In the meantime, the Korean government will introduce a “self-regulating innovation district programme.” A self-regulating innovation district programme means that local governments can decide autonomously the range of special exception cases concerning regulation of the use of farmland in their rural areas to meet the characteristics of their rural areas.

A self-regulating innovation district programme aims to reach the goal of creating an innovation hub in rural areas through the use of rural resources and thus enhancing rural vitality. If a local government and the private sector present a plan to create a self-regulating innovation district in a rural area under its jurisdiction, the central government implements a package of measures to revitalize the local economy.

Specifically, the central government will (a) ease the regulations concerning the ownership, leasing, and use of farmland inside the innovation district; (b) discuss diverse ways to provide support (e.g. improvement of related regulations, provision of tax incentives, etc.) to attract companies and private investments to the innovation district; (c) establish a related legal basis; and (d) provide a comprehensive and intensive support for creation of the innovation district and the revitalization of the rural area. Such support would include building industrial facilities, construction of residential infrastructure, R&D, technology verification, etc.).