From Dec. 5 to 6, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE) and KOTRA hosted the Global Art & Consumer Goods Collaboration Expo at COEX. The event sought to boost the exports of premium consumer goods created through collaboration between Korean SMEs and artists. It also aimed to generate jobs in the arts sector. More than 300 Korean firms and 170 buyers from 18 countries received export consultation at the event. The Korea Arts Management Service (KAMS) and several relevant organizations also took part to share their experience and expertise regarding art collaboration.

"Art collaboration is an effective marketing tool that improves brand image and adds value to consumer goods," said Jaehong Kim, president and CEO of KOTRA. "It also creates jobs for artists." Kim explained that KOTRA will continue to support art collaboration projects so that more Korean businesses and artists can successfully enter the global market.

On Dec. 8, the Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS), the Small & Medium Business Corporation (SBC) and KOTRA jointly held the opening ceremony of the Bangkok Export Incubator Center at Bhiraj Tower, Bangkok. The new center will play a crucial role in helping Korean SMEs break into the Thai market. Many promising companies that have long prepared for global market entry, such as Global Donglim and Sejin Tube Tech, joined the center.

"Located at the focal point of Indochina, Thailand has been leading the ASEAN community. It is also likely to expand economic cooperation with Korea," said Kijun Kim, KOTRA’s regional director general for Southeast Asia. He added that the new center will serve a bridging role between Korean SMEs and the Indochina market.

On Dec. 14, KOTRA hosted the Korea-China Economic & Trade Partnership event on the sidelines of President Moon Jae-in’s state visit to China. The event aimed to enhance economic cooperation between Korean and Chinese businesses and was attended by 174 Korean and 751 Chinese firms. A variety of programs were offered, including export consultation sessions and showcases for premier consumer goods. There were also booths that promoted Korean companies as well as their CSR activities.

"Startups are essential for Korea’s innovative growth, and they need to go global to gain competitiveness," said Dooyoung Kim, executive vice president for strategic business. According to Kim, KOTRA will further serve as a global business platform for Korean startups by helping them join global startup conferences.

Slush is a non-profit event organized by a community of entrepreneurs, investors, students, and festival organizers. Located in Helsinki, it has grown into one of the leading events of its kind from a 300-person conference in 2008. Since 2015, Slush has also run events throughout the world, including Slush Tokyo, Slush Shanghai and Slush Singapore. In 2017, 1327 registered investors and 2500 startups participated.

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At the event, Korean SMEs were given opportunities to learn more about the Chinese market through one-on-one business meetings and three consultation sessions, each specialized for startups and cultural content producers. There were also seminars on global partnering strategies, and ways to become a vendor for ecommerce companies. At the opening ceremony, President Moon delivered his remarks to encourage Korean exporters and further enhance bilateral cooperation with China.