

Korea, a World Leading ICT Powerhouse

Numerous global indices have proven Korea's status as the nation with the world's best digital infrastructure. Korea ranks first in ICT distribution, and it topped the e-participation index of the UN e-government survey. In fact, Korea was also agile in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic based on its digital technologies and infrastructure.

Let's find out more about the nation's achievements.



In the age of the COVID-19 pandemic where contact-free engagement has become the new normal, digital infrastructure is now emerging as a critical source that substantially contributes not only to economic development but to societal benefits and even disease prevention and control efforts.

Harnessing its highly advanced ICT infrastructure and technological capabilities long established, Korea has shown a data-driven pandemic response in combination with contact-tracing applications to track new infections and data-sharing platforms through which citizens can gain access to real-time information on where and when to buy face masks in the midst of the crisis. In addition, by swiftly transitioning face-to-face classrooms to online learning in schools, the country has successfully taken a proactive approach to a new way of life where contactless services take place of in-person transactions.

According to the World Economic Forum, Korea ranked first in the ICT Development Index, topping the list for two consecutive years. Additionally, Korea also maintained the top spot in the list of countries








for smartphone penetration rate, fixed broadband subscription rate (per 100 people) and 4G download speed as of 2019, boasting the world's best digital infrastructure. More recently, being first in the world to launch commercial 5G service in April 2019, Seoul has proved once again that it's the world's leading tech innovator.

Based on its top-notch ICT resources, the Korean government unveiled the "Digital New Deal" in July 2020 as part of the Korean New Deal, which lays out a grand plan instituted to well respond to the post-pandemic economy and to move toward the digital economy. Overall, the authorities proposed spending nearly KRW 58.2 trillion over the next five years on 12 detailed tasks entailing four separate segments: the development of a digital ecosystem underpinned by D.N.A. (an acronym standing for data, network and artificial intelligence) technologies, digital transformation in education, transition to a contact-free economy, and digitization in social overhead capital (SOC).

ICT Adoption Index (2019)

1st		Korea
2nd		UAE
3rd		Hong Kong
5th		Singapore
6th		Japan
18th		China
27th		U.S.
28th		France
31th		UK
36th		Germany

Fibre Internet Subscriptions Rate (2019)

1st		Korea	31.9%
3rd		Hong Kong	27.8
4th		UAE	27.7
5th		Sweden	24.1
6th		China	23.9
7th		Japan	23.8
8th		Singapore	22.3

Source: World Economic Forum (WEF), "Global Competitiveness Report 2019"

Smartphone Penetration Rate (2019)	Households with Internet Access (2019)	4G Download Speed (2019, Mbps)	Active Social Network Penetration Rate (Jan. 2020)
1st Korea 95%	1st Korea 99.7%	1st Korea 52.4 Mbps	1st UAE 99%
4th Sweden 86%	2nd Netherlands 98.4%	2nd Norway 48.2	2nd Taiwan 88%
6th U.S 81%	2nd Norway 98.4%	3rd Canada 42.5	3th Korea 87%
8th Germany 78%	6th UK 95.8%	4th Netherland 42.4	4th Malaysia 81%
13th Japan 66%	10th Germany 94.8%	5th Singapore 39.3	5th Singapore 79%
21st Brazil 60%	15th France 90.2%	6th Australia 37.4	6th Hong Kong 78%
28th India 24%	28th U.S 79.9%	7th Switzerland 35.2	7th Argentina 76%

Source : World Economic Forum (2019), Pew Research (2019), Open Signal (2019), Statista

< The Digital New Deal's 12 Tasks in 4 Sectors >

Strengthening of the D.N.A. Ecosystem	Digital Transformation in Education Infrastructure	Promotion of Contact-Free Services	Digitization in Social Overhead Capital (SOC)
① Build, open and utilize data assets	⑤ Create digital-based education infrastructure in elementary, middle and high schools.	⑦ Develop smart infrastructure for medical and care services	⑩ Establish digital management systems for core infrastructure in four major fields
② Extend 5G and AI convergence to all industrial applications		⑧ Encourage a remote working culture among SMEs	⑪ Promote digital innovation in urban/ industrial complex spaces
③ Promote 5G-AI-based smart government	⑥ Promote e-learning across universities and vocational schools nationwide	⑨ Support online businesses for small enterprises	⑫ Build smart logistics systems
④ Develop K-cyber quarantine system			

Source: Press release(July 15, 2020)"Digital New Deal, leading the digital transition after COVID-19", Ministry of Science and ICT

Korea's E-Government System Exported Worldwide

Korea has taken the lead twice in a row in terms of the United Nation's E-Participation Survey, which presents the state of digital services facilitated in a member country. In another indicator, the E-Government Development Index (EGDI), Korea placed second among other members. With such outstanding performance, Korea has started to export its digital government services, which reaffirms the government's strong commitment to gearing up for digitalization and its prowess in digital infrastructure.

Korea, a global ICT powerhouse, will become one of the most attractive investment destinations for many foreign investors looking for new growth opportunities

in the post COVID-19 world. In the February issue, Invest Korea will cover "Korea's Innovation Capacity: Why Korea is Asia's most innovative country."

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E-Government Development Index (2020)

1		Denmark
2nd		Korea
5		Australia
7		UK
9		U.S.
11		Singapore
14		Japan
21		UAE
25		Germany
28		Canada
45		China

E-Participation Index (2020)

1st		Korea
1		U.S.
1		Estonia
4		Japan
4		New Zealand
6		UK
9		China
16		Canada
18		Brazil
29		India
36		Spain

Source: 2020 UN E-Government Survey (July 10, 2020)