

Linking Science to Socio-economic Development: Science and Technology Policy of the New Government of Korea

Sungchul Chung

Research Fellow Emeritus,
Science and Technology Policy Institute (STEPI), Korea

Abstract

The new government of Korea has put forward a vision for national development, the essence of which is to make Korea “an affluent, compassionate and strong nation” within the coming decade. As has been the case with the preceding governments, the new government considers science and technology the key to unlocking the prosperous Korea and has taken several important actions to better harness the potential of science and technology toward that end. In terms of organization, they combined the former Minister of Science and Technology (MOST) and the former Ministry of Education and Human Resources into a single ministry (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology: MEST) with a view to strengthening the linkage between research and education, while at the same time, creating the Ministry of Knowledge Economy (reorganized from the former Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy) as a central agency responsible for supporting industrial R&D and innovation.

As operational guidelines for science, technology and innovation policies, the new government has formulated a set of new plans and programs. The most recent one is “the Science and Technology Framework Plan of the Lee Myoung Bak Government in Pursuit of an Advanced Korea” which was presented to the public last August under the title of “The 577 Initiative.” Before that, the new government formulated and presented “The National R&D Investment Strategy of the New Government” (May 2005) and “The Mid- and Long-term Strategy for National R&D” (July 2008). These policy documents reflect not only the new government’s perspective on science and technology but also its responses to the changes in social, economic and political environments surrounding the Korean society.

This presentation will provide an overall introduction to the new developments taking place in Korea in the areas of science, technology and innovation policy.