

OKA awarded grand prize in Policy Empathy by Korean Association for Policy Studies

Recognized for introducing and effectively implementing policy to improve public's experience of civil services.

The Overseas Koreans Agency has been honored with a top policy award from Korea's most prestigious academic organization ahead of its second anniversary.

The agency was honored with the top prize in the Policy Empathy category at the 14th Korean Association for Policy Studies (KAPS) Grand Prize Awards Ceremony held at the Seoul LW Convention Center in Jungnim-dong, Jung-gu, Seoul on Friday.

KAPS said it selected the OKA for the award because of its "high level of specificity and effectiveness," recognizing it has introduced and effectively implemented policies to improve the public's experience of civil service requests, such as ▲ Improving overseas Koreans' access to civil service systems, ▲ Expanding the online-based counseling system and ▲ Introducing a customized response system.

A representative policy that the OKA has been promoting is the Overseas Korean Authentication Center service, which was launched Nov. 28 last year. Overseas Koreans can now use various online services, including e-financial services, without having to visit an overseas diplomatic mission, as they can verify their identity non-face-to-face, even if they do not have a mobile phone in Korea.

Until now, citizens living abroad had to travel long distances to overseas embassies to obtain a financial certificate to use domestic online services, and even after obtaining the certificate, they were required to verify their identity with a domestic mobile phone to actually use the service, which was cumbersome.

The Overseas Korean Authentication Center service is the first project in the world to establish and operate a non-face-to-face identity verification system for overseas citizens based on e-passports and overseas residence information, and can be seen as one of the best and most innovative projects for digital platform governments.

Additionally, in December last year, a branch of the OKA Unified Civil Service Support Center was established at Incheon International Airport to help overseas Koreans arriving and departing from overseas to easily obtain various certificates. In March, a dedicated window was opened at the Gwanghwamun Service Support Center to help Korean adoptees find their family



OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk (R) receives an award from President Park Hyung-jun of the Korean Association for Policy Studies and takes a commemorative photo at the 14th KAPS Policy Awards Ceremony at the Seoul LW Convention Center in Jungnim-dong, Jung-gu, Seoul, on April 25.

members, including birth parents, and consult on their grievances and difficulties.

The agency plans to continue to expand a variety of one-stop digital civil affairs services for overseas Koreans to experience practical convenience.

OKA Commissioner Lee Sang-duk said in his acceptance speech, "As seen in the achievements of the 23rd World Korean Business Convention in 2025, where we declared this year as the first year of establishing the global Hansang Economic Zone and achieved export contracts worth \$50 million, the OKA will continue to expand civil services so that our compatriots can experience them even more and also will continue to actively implement realistic policies for our compatriots." 