



Ministry of Land,  
Infrastructure and Transport

## **NEOM, A 170 km of Glass Tunnel City? Korea-Saudi Arabia Housing Cooperation Forum**

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*Minister of Municipal, Rural Affairs and Housing from Saudi Arabia visits  
Korea to strengthen bilateral cooperation on housing by sharing visions of  
smart cities like the NEOM*

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MOLIT, Minister WON Hee-ryong) announced that H.E. Majed bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Hogail, Minister of Municipal, Rural Affairs and Housing from Saudi Arabia is paying a visit to Korea from November 28th to 30th to call on various interested companies in the field of smart city and housing construction and to hold Housing Cooperation Forum as part of efforts to expand housing and smart city cooperation diplomacy with Korea.

The MOLIT supports the Saudi delegation's visit to Korea, and jointly opened the "1st Korea-Saudi Housing Cooperation Forum" at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday 29 November at Lotte Hotel World in Seoul to share housing and smart city visions and technologies between the two countries.

This Forum was initially proposed as a cooperation platform between the two countries by Minister Won earlier on 6 Nov. when he visited the Ministry of

Municipal, Rural Affairs and Housing (MOMRAH), which is in charge of housing and smart cities in the Saudi government. The event was surprisingly decided to be held on the occasion of the Saudi Arabia's visit to Korea.

This is the first housing and smart city cooperation platform between the Korean and Saudi governments and the event is more meaningful in that it is the first event held by the two countries after the recent visit of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Korea to form a consensus on expanding cooperation.

In this event, which was attended by about 200 people from governments, related organizations, companies, and experts, including ministers from both countries, policies and technologies related to housing and smart cities of each country were introduced.

First, in the Saudi session, Ali Rajhi, Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation & Smart Cities introduced Saudi Arabia's 'Smart Municipalities & Artificial Intelligence Program' through various cases and technologies. In addition, together with Abdulrahman Altawil, Deputy Minister for Residential Supply Stimulus & Real Estate Development, and Rayyan Alaql, Vice President of National Housing Company (NHC) introduced the NHC and present major projects promoted by them.

In the Korean session, MOLIT, Korea Land & Housing Corporation (LH), Korea Housing & Urban Guarantee Corporation (HUG), and Korea Water Resources Corporation (K-water) presented Korea's urban development and housing policies and cases, and then five companies from 5 fields (i.e., modular housing, smart cities, IT, and smart construction) introduced Korea's technologies and capabilities.

POSCO E&C introduced smart modular construction technology and cases, and Hyundai E&C presented a vision for the utilization of smart construction technology such as construction automation and digital construction technology.

Naver Labs presented Naver's New Building 1784, which combines digital technologies related to smart cities and smart buildings, robots, AI, 5G, and IoT technologies, and KT presented its smart city project that provides integrated city management solutions.

In addition, Zigbang, a proptech company, demonstrated a mobile model house, a smart home that transforms our residential life into a technology-centered residential life by combining hardware and software.

In particular, modular housing and smart city fields were expected to attract attentions from the attendees as an MOU\* that had been signed between the two countries on the occasion of the Crown Prince's visit to Korea.

\* Modular Housing Cooperation MOU: (Korea) Samsung C&T ↔ (Saudi) Sovereign Wealth Fund Smart City Cooperation MOU: (Korea) YDNS ↔ (Saudi) Digital Artificial Intelligence Agency

In his welcome address, Minister Won stated, “In 2016, when Minister H.E. Majed bin Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Hogail first visited Korea, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on housing cooperation. Thereafter the housing cooperation program as an action plan was prepared last year, which led to the Housing Cooperation Forum. Minister of MOMRAH has made a great contribution to the growth of housing cooperation between the two countries.

Minister Won also suggested, “Today’s forum is an important momentum for cooperation between the governments and businesses of the two countries, and I would like to propose the future smart city initiatives such as NEOM City as well as housing cooperation to be regularized as an expanded cooperation platform for both countries to work together.”

In response, Minister of MOMRAH said, “I am very happy to visit Korea at an important time when the bilateral housing cooperation platform is operating for the first time.”

He also emphasized, “The information, technology and experience shared between the governments and companies of the two countries today will be an important foundation for us to create a new global city and housing cooperation model together.”

In particular, the two Ministers agreed to extend the scope of the existing housing

cooperation MOU to housing and smart cities and re-sign it in order to strengthen cooperation in the future new industry sector, which has started in earnest on the occasion of this forum.

Meanwhile, Minister of MOMRAH, who arrived in Korea on 28 Nov. visiting Naver on the following day to discuss and share Korea's digital twin and other service technologies for urban issues such as transportation, public order, and hygiene, as well as housing and building management, also called on Pangyo Techno Valley to listen to a briefing on the current status of Pangyo New Town.

He will be having a meeting with key figures such as the mayor of Seoul, the president of Samsung C&T, and the president of LG CNS on 30 Nov. and visiting major sites such as the Raemian Gallery and LG Science Park to experience the sites related to housing and smart cities and carry out activities to strengthen the basis for cooperation.

The MOLIT has continuously laid a foundation for cooperation with the Saudi government through guiding Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (17 Nov.), dispatching “One Team Korea” to Saudi Arabia (4-9 Nov.), and holding a cooperation meeting by inviting Manar Al Moneef, NEOM CIO (GICC Global Infrastructure Cooperation Conference on 30 Aug.), etc.

Minister Won also said, “We will continue this momentum of cooperation in areas such as mobility and energy, and through this, we will faithfully play a role as a bridge so that Korean companies can win many projects in Saudi Arabia.”

Moreover, MOLIT will actively promote policy support for Korean companies' bid's winning activities, such as forming an overseas construction order support group at the government level within the year and strengthening financial support through the policy fund of the Korea Overseas Infrastructure & Urban Development Corporation (KIND).