Executive Government

In 1948 the Government Organization Act specified that the Korean government should be divided into 3 executive ministries: Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Justice, National Defense, Finance, Education, Agriculture and Forestry. Since its inception in 1948, the structure of the Korean government has changed through the subsequent decades. The structure of President Park Geun-hye in 2013, unaltered in what was called a "New Era of Hope and Happiness." During the launch of the new administration in February 2013, Park Geun-hye’s key policy objectives were economic advancement, Economic Revival (5 strategies, 42 goals), the People’s Prosperity (6 strategies, 10 goals), and the Lifting of the Foundation for Prosperous Unification (5 strategies, 10 goals). The Park Geun-hye government has also promoted an efficient governmental system which can support what it terms as a "creative economy," and this has served as a guiding theme for economic revitalization coupled with the convergence of science and information and communication technologies. The Park Geun-hye government has established that public safety is a matter of the highest priority. The current government has been organized into 17 Ministries, 3 Ministries and 17 Offices (art. 24-[10]).

Ministry of National Defense (MND): The Ministry of National Defense shall administer military administration, military contigency and other military duties, and the Ministry is in charge of "reform, mobilization, and other duties of national defense administration."

Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs (MAGA): This ministry assumes responsibility for the "formulation, overall management and coordination of policies on science and technology, system of emerging and continuous policies, general affairs of the State Council, promulgation of Acts, subordinate ministries and treaties, government organization and prescribed number of public officials, personnel management, others and support of public officials, and coordination, government information, adminitration of efficiency, electronic government, protection of personal information, maintenance of government buildings, local government systems, support for businesses, finance and tooth of local governments, support for under-developed regions, mediation of disputes among local governments, citizens and citizens.

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MINCST): The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism shall administer the "art, rules, entertainment, publishing, sports, tourism, publicity of State affairs and Government announcements."

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA): This ministry oversees "agriculture, livestock farming, foodstuff, farming, livestock farming, promotion of food industry, development of farming villages and distribution of agricultural products."

Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MITE): This ministry supervises "commerce, trade, industry, trade relations, trade negotiation, overall management and coordination of trade regulations, foreign investment policies on the research and development of industrial technology, energy and underground resources."

Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW): This ministry is in charge of "health, taxation, prevention of epidemics, market administration, pharmaceutical administration, relief of the needy, support for self-sufficiency, social security, children (including infant care), elderly, patients, and disabled persons."

Ministry of Environment (ENV): This ministry is devoted to "the conservation of natural and living environment and the prevention of environmental pollution."

Ministry of Employment and Labor (MEL): This ministry oversees "employment policies, employment insurance, development and training of management capability, standards for working conditions, workers’ welfare, coordination of labor-management relations, industrial safety and health, industrial accident compensation insurance, and other duties concerning employment and labor."

Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MGEF): This ministry oversees "gender equality policies, employment insurance, development and training of management capability, standards for working conditions, workers’ welfare, coordination of labor-management relations, industrial safety and health, industrial accident compensation insurance, and other duties concerning employment and labor."

Ministry of Education (MOE): This ministry oversees "the planning and coordination of policies on science and technology, science and technology, energy and underground resources."

Civil servants in Korea serve in one of five main groups: the Legislative, the Judiciary, the Administration, the Constitutional Court of Korea, and the National Election Commission. In 2013, the total number of civil servants was close to 500,000. While the majority (47.7%, 245,987) of these serve the Administration, others are working in the Legislative (10.9%, 3,950), and the Judiciary (3.1%, 77,611). The National Election Commission and the Constitutional Court of Korea employ only 5,720 and 38,779 respectively.

All civil servants also fall into one of two categories: national public officials and local public service employees. The former (45.2%, 615,756) are appointed by the President and the head of each ministry; the latter (26.9%, 336,782) are called to office by the head of the local government according to the Local Officials Act (Ministry of Security and Public Administration, 2014). Almost 46.2% (244,860) of national officials work for one of the 17 Executive Ministries. The Ministry of Education has the highest percentage (35.1%) with 332,538 officials. Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning and the Ministry of Justice take up 3.4% (3,441) and 2.1% (2,217) seats respectively. The percentage of those who do not belong to government agencies other than the 17 Ministries is 15.7% (77,461).

The Civil Service Act prescribes the size of national public officials and local public service employees per every 10,000 people by region in terms of the regional distribution of the GNP which are concentrated in Seoul (32.3%), Gyeonggi-do (13.1), the Gyeongbuk Special City (6.9) and Daegu (5.8), respectively. The Gyeongbuk Special City Concentration Area in particular has the highest rates in the nation (22.1), followed by Daegu (21.1) and Incheon (22.1). The Gyeongnam Province has the lowest rates (6.8) in Incheon (6.8) and Gyeongbuk (6.7) provinces. In Gyeongnam Province the lowest rates in the urban areas while the Gyeongbuk region (17.2) and the Gyeong (17.5) lower.
The current number of public educational officers is 140,488 (Ministry of Education and Planning, 2013). The national average of those who hold undergraduate, graduate, and middle school levels is 74.0%, but the size of secondary staff in higher education is 4.8% per every 10,000 people. Non-teaching staff offers slightly more.

Since the introduction of the Local Municipal Police System in 1995, police officers are operated by both national and local governments in 2013. The majority, 118,348 officers, belong to the central government, and the rest work for the local authorities. There are 4,936.9 officers on average working in the police stations of cities and provinces. Among them, some officers are in major cities and local provinces: Seoul, Busan, Gyeonggi-do, Gyeongbuk-do, and Gyeongnam-do. There are 1,730 officers working in local emergency management agencies. It is estimated that the average number of police officers is about the national average in Seoul, Busan, and Gyeonggi-do. While the majority of police officers are hired by the central government, most fire fighters belong to local governments. Only 30,957 work for the National Emergency Management Agency and the National Fire Service headquarters (National Emergency Management Agency, 2016). On average, 177.6 staff members work in each local emergency management agency. Some agencies in Seoul, Gyeonggi-do, Busan, Daejeon, and the Sejong Special Autonomous City, Gyeongbuk-do, and Gyeongnam-do received the average. Regionally, there are 2,166.5 police officers or 3,158.2 firefighters on average working in the field. They are also more concentrated in the following cities and provinces such as Seoul, Busan, Gyeonggi-do, Gyeongbuk-do, and Gyeongnam-do.

As of 2012 the number of prosecutors was 20,313 in Korea (Prosecutor’s Office), and there were also 5,524 officers who work at the National Police Agency. There are 3,308.9 staff members working at each local emergency management agency. Some agencies in Seoul, Gyeonggi-do, Busan, Incheon, the Sejong Special Autonomous City, Gyeongbuk-do, and Gyeongnam-do. There are 10,397.8 prosecutors on average working in the police stations of cities and provinces across the country. There are 1,958.2 prosecutors or 1,678.5 officers working at the Supreme Prosecutor’s Office in Seoul and the High Prosecutor’s Offices in Seoul, Daegu, Gyeonggi-do, and Gyeongnam-do. There are 10,397.8 prosecutors on average working in the police stations of cities and provinces across the country. There are 1,780.6 officers working at the Supreme Court in Seoul, Gyeonggi-do, Busan, Incheon, and Gyeongnam-do. Prosecutors are more concentrated in the following cities and provinces such as Seoul, Busan, Gyeonggi-do, Gyeongnam-do, and Gyeongnam-do.

In terms of regional distribution, the Seoul metropolitan area was once home to three-quarters (234, 74.4%) of Korean public institutions: 174 (60.4%) of state-owned companies and quasi-governmental institutions in 2012. The Seoul metropolitan area accounted for no more than 3% of public institutions distributed across the country. At the same time, the number of public institutions peaked at 431,442 in 2012. The central government is home to a vast array of public institutions with a strong national presence.

The number of public institutions in Korea is categorized by type: state-owned companies (market-based public corporations) and quasi-governmental institutions (fund-management-based governmental institutions and commissioned service-based quasi-governmental institutions) and finally quasi-market-based public institutions. Among 2,656 institutions in total, 78 state-owned companies and 83 quasi-governmental institutions account for 9.7% and 26.0% of the public institutions, respectively. The number of non-classified institutions is 1,773 (61.7%).

In 2013, there were 10 institutions in total, 78 state-owned companies and 83 quasi-governmental institutions account for 9.7% and 26.0% of the public institutions, respectively. The number of non-classified institutions is 1,773 (61.7%).

As of November 2014, 73 public institutions have already been relocated, and the transfer will be mostly completed in 2015. The two maps above show the change in the municipal structure to a more balanced regional distribution. Once completed, the concentration rate of the agencies in the central capital area will decrease from 75.4% (2012) to 40.4% (2015). Therefore, it seems clear that the relocation of public institutions is a key factor in helping to resolve the longstanding regional economic imbalance.