

Tailored Support to Nurture Global Water Champions...

Applications Open for 7th Innovative Water Companies

- MCEE to designate 10 promising companies through public call from March 3 to April 10

The Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment (MCEE, Minister Kim Sunghwan) announced that it will designate 10 companies as the 7th cohort of Innovative Water Companies through a public call for applications from March 3 to April 10, and will provide focused support to help Korean small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the water sector grow into globally competitive companies.

Since 2020, the government has annually designated 10 outstanding water SMEs with strong research and development (R&D) and export performance as “Innovative Water Companies,” and provides each designated company with up to approximately KRW 500 million over five years to support R&D, commercialization, and overseas expansion.

As of 2025, the Innovative Water Companies and Innovative Water Companies Plus* (a total of 55 companies) designated to date have achieved tangible results, including securing 26 new overseas national projects and carrying out 13 overseas pilot and demonstration projects since their designation. In addition, five companies**, including USOL Co., Ltd., which possess innovative technologies and services, have been listed in the Company Profiles of Global Water Intelligence (GWI), a leading global water industry organization, thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of the support program.

* Five companies selected through evaluation (in 2025) from among those whose support

period as Innovative Water Companies had ended

** USOL Co., Ltd., Welltec Co., Ltd., Yucheon Enviro Co., Ltd., SC Solution Global Co., Ltd., TASET Co., Ltd.

Interested firms wishing to be designated as Innovative Water Companies may review the announcement and submit their applications through the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment website (mcee.go.kr) or the Korea Water Partnership website (kwp.or.kr).

Eligible applicants for designation as Innovative Water Companies are SMEs engaged in the water industry as defined under the Act on Development of Water Management Technologies and on Promotion of Water Industry. Applicants must meet at least two of the following criteria based on the average of the past two years relative to total sales: an R&D expenditure ratio of 3% or higher, an export ratio of 5% or higher, and possession of overseas certifications.

The MCEE plans to conduct a preliminary review, a first-round document evaluation, a second-round presentation evaluation, and a final designation review by the Water Industry Technology Evaluation Committee before selecting the 7th cohort of Innovative Water Companies.

In particular, during this year's first-round document evaluation, additional points will be awarded to companies possessing high-potential technologies and to companies that actively contribute to workforce development in the water industry.*

* Companies that possess technologies selected at the Water-Ojakgyo Technology Development Project presentation, and companies that participated in the Water Industry Specialized Workforce Development Program in the previous year (1 point each).

Designated Innovative Water Companies may receive tailored, close support based on their specific needs by selecting from a range of assistance options, including: business diagnostics and R&D strategy development, improvement of research facilities, standardization of product manufacturing, on-site testing and

technology verification, customized prototype production for overseas markets, acquisition of international certifications and registration as a supplier in export destination countries, joint overseas R&D, and development of overseas water market channels.

Kim Ji-yeong, Director General for Water Use Policy Bureau at the MCEE, stated, “The Innovative Water Company program has established itself as a key initiative for discovering and fostering strong domestic water companies.” She added, “We will continue to identify water companies with outstanding technological capabilities and export competitiveness, and support innovation and growth in the domestic water industry through step-by-step, tailored assistance from R&D to overseas market expansion.