

# Seoul launches smart city award to bridge urban digitization gap

By Ko Dong-hwan  
aoshima11@koreatimes.co.kr

With a new award kicking off this year, the World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization (WeGO) declared, Tuesday, that it will encourage and help cities around the world to adopt emerging technologies and help them do it.

At a conference in Seoul, the global smart city promotion organization said it has launched the Seoul Smart City Prize. The award is to recognize and showcase ongoing or planned smart city projects. The prize was launched jointly by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, which launched WeGO in 2010 with 50 member cities and has since been its chair city government.

The award program has been conceived to promote innovative and inclusive smart city models supporting the vulnerable in the digitalized era, according to WeGO.

Winners of the program will be acknowledged during the Seoul Smart City Prize Ceremony during the World Cities Summit (WCS) Mayors Forum 2023 to be hosted by Seoul. Recognized municipalities will also be given a chance to participate in a capacity-building training program designed to enhance human-centered city development.

The city government will demonstrate to the selected finalists how their projects would unfold in reality by conducting a feasibility study for each of the winning projects. The study includes a pilot program, triangular cooperation and a collaborative demonstration, based on develop-



Officials from the Seoul Metropolitan Government and professors specializing in transforming urban communities into smart cities, as well as foreign ambassadors to Korea, participate in the 2023 Activities Kick-Off Event by World Smart Sustainable Cities Organization at Seoul Global Center, Tuesday. Courtesy of WeGO

ment stages of the finalists' projects.

"It is undeniable that the fast digitalization we are experiencing is bringing numerous benefits to cities, but it also comes with new threats and challenges," WeGO Secretary-General Park Jung-sook said. "Our role is to prepare the decision makers to adapt to these inevitable changes, to create a global platform for knowledge and skills

exchange and cross-collaboration. We are also determined to promote the importance of the concept of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) for smart city development."

Themed under "human-centered," the 2023 Activities Kick-Off Event at Seoul Global Center in downtown Seoul showed the organization will realize the theme by incorporating

ESG's impact on smart city development.

Last year, the organization published the WeGO Smart Cities Index that analyzed member cities in terms of how "smart" their urban development has been so far by collecting local data from them. The findings, according to WeGO, enable the member cities to understand how well their smart concepts performed

in terms of ESG. The report also prompted the cities to benchmark the world's best practices.

"The role of cities is tremendously important in all countries. We have to invest in them to help create smarter solutions to facilitate them better," said EU Ambassador to Korea Maria Castillo Fernandez, who attended the event. "Cities' international cooperation is key and

that's what we have been doing in the last 10 years. For example, we have put together Rotterdam with Busan to introduce a better shared mobility and ports that are smart and sustainable. We have also put together Seoul and Dublin."

To better understand the smart city index in different cities in a more human-centered sense, WeGO has partnered with the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland. "With the people-centric index, WeGO member cities and partners can assess their development stages, benchmark their performances and study other cities," said the Seoul-based organization.

The exclusive event on Tuesday saw a list of guests from across the world. Kim Jin-man, director-general of Digital Policy Bureau under the Seoul city government, was among the dignitaries, as well as Seoul Smart City Prize Committee Chairman Yim Sung-bin and ambassadors from the UAE, the Philippines, Peru, Thailand and Kazakhstan.

WeGO, named after its original title of World e-Governments Organization, has been building up a global network in search of regional offices in Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Latin America. The regional offices — Chengdu in China, Beyoglu in Turkey and Abuja in Nigeria — are a "vital extension" to boost their global presence, according to the organization. The member cities and their representatives are to gather for the 7th WeGO General Assembly in 2026.

# POSCO International continues grain shipment from Ukraine despite war

By Kim Hyun-bin  
hyunbin@koreatimes.co.kr

POSCO International's grain terminal continues to successfully operate despite the ongoing war in Ukraine. The food sector is one of the seven strategic businesses of POSCO Group along with secondary battery materials, energy and lithium, according to the company, Tuesday.

POSCO International announced that it will complete the shipment of a total of 16,000 tons of inventory remaining at the grain terminal by next month.

The volume of goods handled by

Ukraine Terminal Corp. last year was 310,000 tons, down by more than half from 760,000 tons in 2021. Terminal operations were suspended temporarily due to port blockades immediately after the start of the war, but have continued exporting corn, rye and barley to Europe and Africa over land since last May.

Fighting continues in southeastern Ukraine, including in the port city of Kherson near the terminal, but the grain terminal located in Mykolaiv has not been affected so far. Foreign employees are working remotely in Poland, and the terminal is operated by 30 to 40 local personnel.



POSCO International's Mykolaiv Grain Terminal in Ukraine. Courtesy of POSCO International

"The farmers who returned from evacuation continue to sow and harvest grain despite the war," said

Pavel Linnik, head of the operations department in charge of the field at the Mykolaiv Grain Terminal. "We

are grateful to the company, which continues to operate the terminal amid the war."

POSCO International continues to operate the terminal even during wartime to respond to shipment demand from customers, as well as hire Ukrainian employees whose daily lives have been disrupted by the war.

POSCO International has exported about 2.5 million tons of grain to Asia, the Middle East and Africa from 2019 when it started operating the grain terminal up until the war.

POSCO International decided to strengthen exchanges and cooperation by selecting promising local

agricultural companies in order to expedite the expansion of the value chain amid the war, while preparing for normalization through emergency terminal operations.

The company plans to seek additional investments in inland storage facilities to advance into the grain processing industry, where demand is increasing, and to expand grain imports to Korea.

POSCO International plans to actively participate in national reconstruction projects in addition to the agricultural sector by taking advantage of being the only asset investment company in Ukraine.

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