

『2026 Promising Student Startup Team 300+』

To identify and nurture entrepreneurial talent with an entrepreneurial mindset, we hereby announce the recruitment of student startup teams to participate in the “2026 Promising Student Startup Team 300+”, which provides stage-based educational programs.

April 2, 2026

Minister of Education

I Overview

☐ Purpose

- Identify promising student startup teams nationwide and establish a foundation for their growth while expanding the startup ecosystem through stage-based education and mentoring

☐ Contents

- Identify promising student startup teams and strengthen practical entrepreneurial capabilities through student-specific curricula and peer-to-alumni mentoring
 - Tailored curricula based on growth level(Growth/Value-up)
 - Selection of promising student startup teams to advance to the integrated final of inter-ministerial startup competition『K-Startup of the year 2026』
 - ※ 『2026 Promising Student Startup Team 300+』 also serves as the preliminary round (Student League) of 『K-Startup of the year 2026』
- Priority selection system for addressing entrepreneurial capability

gaps among student startup teams

- Student startup teams from **junior colleges** (2-3-year colleges) to address regional decline and revitalize local economies
- Outstanding **international student teams** with startup ideas targeting domestic and global markets
- **Follow-up support to enhance startup survival rates**, including **alumni network**-based investment linkages, networking, and global expansion support
 - IR sessions for fundraising, follow-up acceleration programs, region-based open innovation, and support for participation in global emerging technology expos

☐ **Hosted and Organized by**

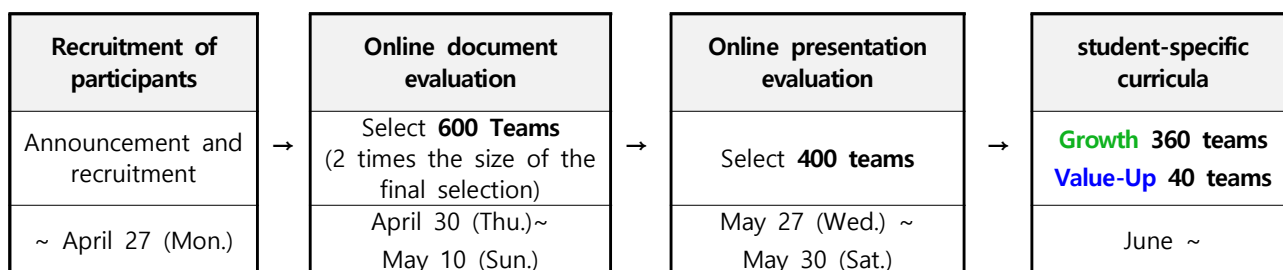
- (Hosted by) Ministry of Education
- (Organized by) National Research Foundation of Korea,
Korea Entrepreneurship Foundation

□ Application Overview

- Select 400 teams based on top scores through document evaluation and presentation evaluation

Category	Qualification		Number of Selected Teams
Growth	All team members must be elementary, middle, or high school students, out-of-school youth, or undergraduate or graduate students (Students on leave or those who have completed coursework are also eligible.)	Preliminary startup teams or Established startup teams (startups established within 3 years as of the application deadline, April 27, 2026)	360 teams (Priority Selection: 60 teams) - Teams led by a junior college (2-3-year college) student as team representative (50 teams) - Teams led by an international student as team representative (10 teams)
		Established startup teams only (startups established within 3 years as of the integrated announcement date, March 27, 2026, including those established by the application deadline, April 27, 2026)	40 teams (Linked to inter-ministerial startup competition) - Top 19 teams based on highest scores will advance to the integrated finals* * 「K-Startup of the year 2026」

□ Schedule Overview



□ Evaluation Benefits

- (Additional Points) Teams whose representative has participated in the Laboratory-Specialized Entrepreneurship Leading University Support Program
- (Exemption from Document Evaluation) Teams whose representative was a member of a team finally selected for the 2025 Growth Track (A/B)

□ Qualifications

- (Common) elementary, middle and high school students, out-of-school youth*, undergraduates (graduates)** (students on leave/students completing coursework included)
 - (Value-UP) Teams*** established within 3 years as of the announcement date(March 27, 2026), including application deadline (April 27, 2026)
- * All universities and junior colleges in Korea (including the schools subject to the university information disclosure under the Ministry of Education) including Science & Technology specialized universities (KAIST, GIST, DIGIST, UNIST)
- ** "Out-of-school youth (under 19 years old)" as defined in Article 2(2) of the "Out-of-School Youth Support Act"
- *** Start-up founder is defined with the start-up scope and business start date in accordance with Article 2, Paragraph 2 of the Small and Medium Business Startup Support Act

□ Disqualifications

- If it falls upon any of the disqualification criteria, the team will not be able to participate in the competition

< Disqualifications >

- ① A person(company) or item that has infringed on intellectual property rights such as patents and utility models of others, or is in the process of trial, such as litigation related to the infringement
- ② Entrepreneurship items of antisocial nature, such as raising speculative behavior or environmental pollution, and industries excluded from entrepreneurship under Article 4 of the Enforcement Decree of Korea's 「SUPPORT FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE ESTABLISHMENT ACT」
- ③ Award winners (including team members) or items (excluding special prize winners) at inter-ministerial start-up competition "Challenge! K-Startup Grand Final 2016-2025, 'King of Kings'"
- ④ A person (team) who has received more than KRW 30 million in accumulated prize money in other

startup competition

- ※ Other startup competitions include all 'startup competitions' and 'startup idea contests' hosted by private, public, and academic institutions.
- ※ Prize money is limited to 'miscellaneous income' and is separate from funding provided for commercialization purposes such as technology development and demonstration.
- ※ The award winning records will be checked for the 'Team Representative' (excluding team members) for prospective startup teams, and the award winning records will be checked for the 'Representative' and 'Startup' for established startup teams.

⑤ Teams (companies) with a cumulative investment attraction that has exceeded the amount of KRW 3 billion as of the announcement date

⑥ For the teams participating in the Value-Up, those (teams) advancing to the following programs with the same or similar items are **not allowed to participate**.

- ※ Other ministry leagues in 「K-Startup of the Year 2026」 (Ministry of SMEs and Startups, Ministry of Science and ICT, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, etc.)
- ※ The Integrated Main Competition of the 2026 「Pan-Government Public Data Utilization Startup Competition」 hosted by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety

- ※ Participants who are found to have violated the qualification criteria after the competition will be **subject to disqualification and/or prize forfeiture**

☐ About Apply · Submit

- (How to Apply) Apply online on website (www.u300.kr)
- (Deadline) April 27, 2026 (Mon.) 17:00

1. Check and download application documents on the announcement board of notice.
 2. Application is available after registration on the website (u300.kr)
- ※ The applicant must be the team representative.
All team members must register after selected from document screening evaluation.
 - ※ Please be advise that access to the website may not be smooth or error may occur due to excessive traffic on the date of deadline, so it is recommended that make application 2-3 days in advance.
Registration can be modified before the application deadline.

☐ Submission Documents

- Application form · consent form for collecting and using personal information: Replaced by the online application system
 - ※ For established teams, business registration number is required.
 - ※ For international students, alien registration number is required.
- Business Plan: Fill out, according to the format (Pictures and tables can be inserted) (Submission in PDF)
- Additional Documents: Required only for applicable teams

< Additional Documents >

1. Additional Points(3 Points) from Evaluation

- Teams whose representative has participated in the Laboratory-Specialized Entrepreneurship Leading University Support Program

2. Exemption from Document Evaluation

- Teams whose representative was a member of a team finally selected for the 2025 Growth Track (A/B)

- (Note) Upon passing the document evaluation, submission of team member-related documents(e.g., team member registration, certificate of enrollment/leave of absence, business registration certificate) will be required

< Notes on Certificate of enrollment or leave of absence >

1. The team representative submits the required documents online via the official website (u300.kr).
2. Certificates of enrollment/leave of absence must bear the official school seal; documents without the seal will not be accepted.
3. For elementary, middle, and high school students, a certificate of enrollment or a copy of a student ID may be submitted.
4. For out-of-school youth, a consent form from a legal guardian or a designated staff member of the "Out-of-School Youth Support Center" may be submitted.
5. International students must submit proof of foreign nationality (alien registration card or a copy of passport)

☐ Precautions [※Must-read]

① Application and Reception of The Nurture Program

- **Participation can be done in team units (a team of 3 to 5 members including the team representative), and each person can apply for participation. with only one team.**
 - ※ In the case of college (graduate school) students, enrolled students, students on leave of absence, and students who completed the coursework can all apply, but graduates cannot apply.
 - ※ The finalists of 2016 - 2025 'Promising Student Startup Team 300' can apply.
 - ※ When a team composed of students (enrolled/on leave) from multiple schools applies, **the team participates in the region of the school where the team representative's school is located.**
- **Only one business(item) can be applied for per participating team** in this competition.
- The contents of the application form, such as the participating team name **cannot be changed after the deadline.**
 - ※ The certification of 'Promising Student Startup Team 300+' (issued by the Minister of Education) will be issued based on the list of registered team members.
- (Value-Up) Selected participants **are not allowed to participate** in other 『K-Startup of the year 2026』 Ministry leagues (Ministry of SMEs, Ministry of Science and ITC, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, etc.) **at the same time.**
- If the application form and business plan are falsely written, all support benefits will be canceled and refunded, and participation in the project will be banned for the next three years.
- **If the submitted documents are incomplete or do not qualify for participation,** the applicant will be excluded from the evaluation without further announcement. Please strictly follow the submission form and make sure to check your eligibility. All submitted documents will not be returned.
- **PDF file recommended for submission** (※ The operating institution is not responsible for broken fonts or designs.)

② Selection and Evaluation

- **All business plan announcements** made during the course of the competition **must be carried out by the team representative.**
 - ※ **Deductions (5 points) are given** in the evaluation if a team member other than the team representative makes presentation.
- Presentation materials must be submitted in advance for presentation evaluation.
 - ※ Submitted presentation materials are used as proof of participation in the evaluation and as reference materials for the evaluation committee, and applicants may be disqualified if not submitted.
 - ※ Submitted presentation materials will be used as materials for a white paper after the competition ends.
 - ※ The responsibility for securing copyrights and any related legal liability arising from the use of copyrighted materials — including designs, fonts, and images — included in the submitted presentation materials lies solely with the applicant.
- The judges participating in each evaluation are university start-up fund officials or venture investment experts such as AC/VC.
- Teams with a female student as team representative are planned to account for at least 20% of the total final selections.
 - ※ If the final selection falls below the target ratio, additional selections may be made.
- If the number of participating teams for each track is less than the No. of teams of the final selection, the recruitment period may be extended.

③ Competition Operation

- All details of schedule are subject to change depending on circumstances.
- **The prize money from this competition will be paid to the team representative and the taxes and public charges should be borne by the representative.**

④ Others

- Applicant him/herself should be responsible for **disadvantages and responsibilities arising from not understanding the contents of the announcement, not checking or not reading the announcement on the competition website, etc.**
- **All civil and criminal responsibilities arising from copying other people's ideas, technologies, and intellectual property rights lie with the team representative.**
- Guidance on "Claim for Exception to Disclosure of Ideas" in Korea

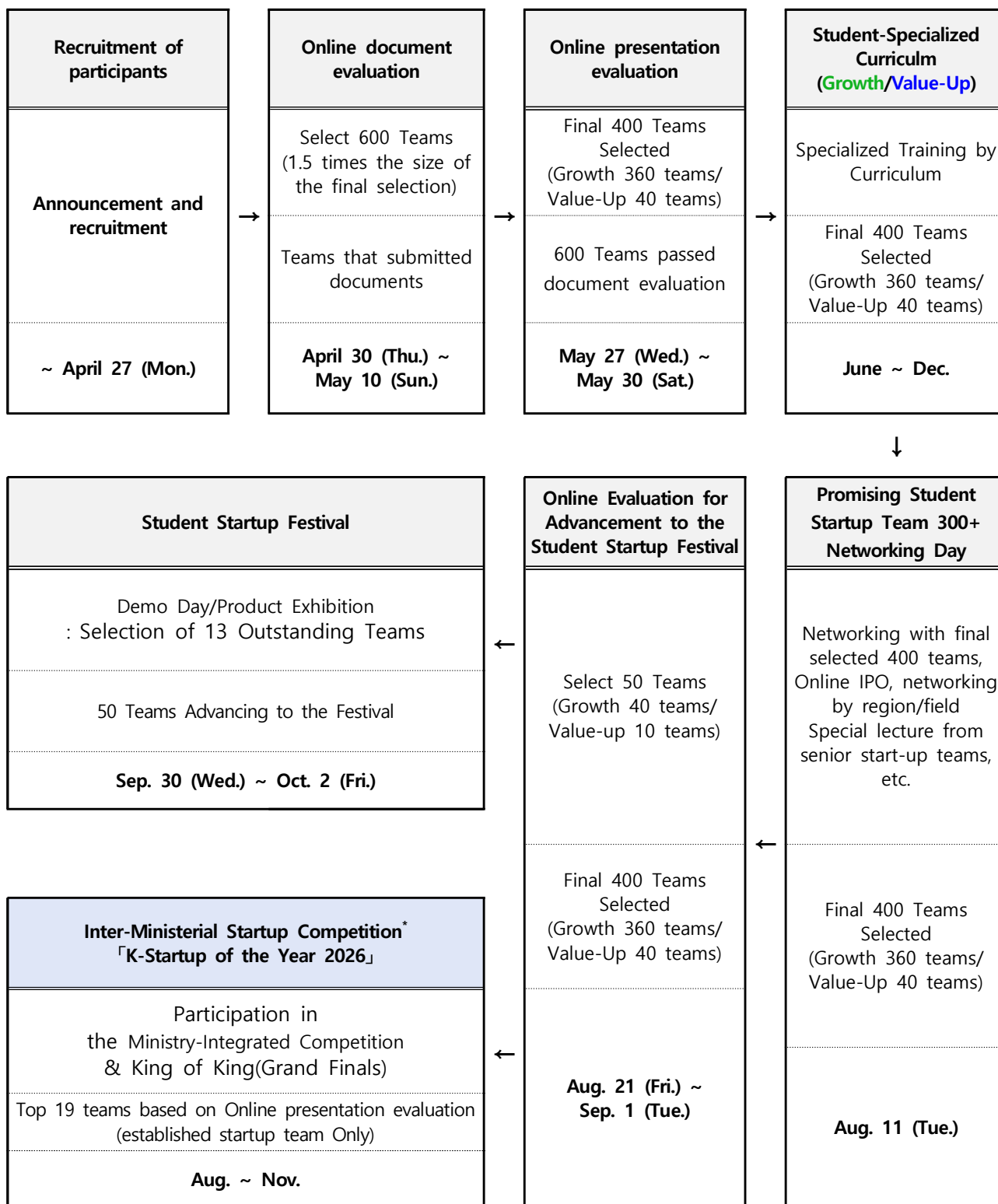
A an idea provider may obtain a patent or license in accordance with Article 30 of the Patent Act (in the case of an invention that has not been publicly announced) or Article 5 of the Utility Model Act (in the case of an invention that has not been publicly notified) **within 12 months from the time the idea is announced or disclosed.** A design application can be filed with Article 8 of the Design Protection Act (an exception to loss of novelty) within 6 months from the time when the competition is announced or published.

- **Whether a team is considered an established startup will be determined as of the application deadline, April 27, 2026.**
 - ※ Those who establish their startup after April 27, 2026 will be considered as preliminary start-ups
- If there is a violation of the announcement and related regulations or false entries or omissions in the business plan, you may be subject to disadvantageous measures such as cancellation of selection and refund of prize money.
- In case of receiving subsidy with false application or fraudulent measure, it may be subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years or a fine of up to KRW 100 million in accordance with the 「Subsidy Management Act」
- Disadvantages may be applied in the evaluation if the act of causing social controversies, such as wage arrears, tax evasion, industrial accidents, unfair practices, etc is detected.
- For inquiries other than the information in the announcement, contact us through the '**Kakao Channel**' (**Channel Name: Promising Start-up Team 300**, https://pf.kakao.com/_xiAyNd)

IV

Details of Schedule

□ Schedule Overview



* Only 19 teams from "2026 Promising Student Startup Teams 300+ Nurturing Program (Value-Up)" are eligible to participate in the Inter-Ministerial Startup Competition.

□ Details of Schedule

No.	Category	Schedule	Contents										
1	Online Document Evaluation	April 30 (Thu) ~ May 10 (Sun)	· (Targets) Teams that submitted the documents · (Details) <u>600 teams, 1.5 times the final recruitment size, are selected</u> through online evaluation using the submitted documents by experts such as university start-up funds and venture investors. ※ (Exemption from Document Evaluation) Teams whose representative was a member of a team finally selected for the 2025 Growth Track (A/B) ※ (Additional points) Teams whose representative has participated in the Laboratory-Specialized Entrepreneurship Leading University Support Program										
2	Online Presentation Evaluation	May 27 (Wed) ~ May 30 (Sat)	· (Target) 600 teams that passed the document evaluation · (Details) <u>400 teams selected in the finals(Growth 360 teams/ Value-up 40 teams)</u> through online presentation evaluation by experts such as university start-up funds experts and venture investors ※ Top 40 teams of established startup teams selected for 'Promising Student Startup 300+ teams Nurturing Program (Value-Up)' * Top 19 established teams by score will advance to the Integrated Main Competition of 「K-Startup of the Year 2026」 ** In the event of ineligibility, the next-ranked team will advance. ※ Priority selection of 60 teams that meet the following criteria for the 'Promising Student Startup 300+ Teams Nurturing Program (Growth)' * Teams led by a junior college student serving as the team representative (50 teams) ** Teams led by an international student serving as the team representative (10 teams)										
3	Student-Specialized Curriculum (Growth)	Jun. ~ Nov.	· (Target) 360 Teams Selected for the 'Promising Student Startup Teams 300+ Nurturing Program (Growth)' · (Method) In-person group training and 1:1 pitching mentoring · (Details) Training to enhance entrepreneurial capabilities <table><tr><th>Category</th><th>Training Details</th></tr><tr><td>Entrepreneurship Capability Enhancement Training</td><td>Business Model Canvas (BMC) development; market validation and customer interviews; startup practice-related topics (e.g., intellectual property analysis and acquisition, tax and accounting management); and prototype development support training.</td></tr><tr><td>Senior-Junior Mentoring</td><td>Insights on the startup ecosystem landscape and current status; sharing expertise from experienced entrepreneurs.</td></tr><tr><td>Startup Strategy Training</td><td>Training on collaboration processes and contact points with established companies; sharing insights on the characteristics of corporate venture capital (CVC) and investment practices</td></tr><tr><td>Mentoring</td><td>Individual IR pitching mentoring and feedback session</td></tr></table> ※ The program content is subject to change	Category	Training Details	Entrepreneurship Capability Enhancement Training	Business Model Canvas (BMC) development; market validation and customer interviews; startup practice-related topics (e.g., intellectual property analysis and acquisition, tax and accounting management); and prototype development support training.	Senior-Junior Mentoring	Insights on the startup ecosystem landscape and current status; sharing expertise from experienced entrepreneurs.	Startup Strategy Training	Training on collaboration processes and contact points with established companies; sharing insights on the characteristics of corporate venture capital (CVC) and investment practices	Mentoring	Individual IR pitching mentoring and feedback session
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No.	Category	Schedule	Contents											
4	Student Startup Team-Specialized Curriculum (Value-Up)	Jun. ~ Nov.	· (Target) 40 Teams Selected for the 'Promising Student Startup Teams 300+ Nurturing Program (Value-Up)' · (Method) In-person group training and 1:1 pitching mentoring · (Details) Training to enhance IR Pitching capabilities											
			Category	Training Details	Startup Teams Competence Assessment	Set the education direction by team level based on competency assessment	peer-to-alumni mentoring	Insights on the startup ecosystem landscape and current status; sharing expertise from experienced entrepreneurs, etc.	Enhancing Investment Readiness	Competency assessment-based business items, team composition, and business models	IR Deck Advancement	Develop an evidence-based pitch structure, including business model, market size, and competitive analysis	Mentoring	Individual IR pitching mentoring and feedback session
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Mentoring	Individual IR pitching mentoring and feedback session													
※ The program content is subject to change														
5	Promising Student Startup Team 300+ Networking Day	Aug. 11 (Tue)	· (Target) 400 teams finally selected · (Location) Exhibition Hall 2, aT Center (Yangjae), Seoul · (Details)											
			Program	Description	Official Events	- Offline ceremony to celebrate the final selected teams - Certificate presentation and special lectures by experienced startup teams	Networking by region/field	- Regional and industry-based networking with experienced entrepreneurs and investment professionals	Events Program	- Networking activities among startup teams, such as business card exchange events				
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4	Online evaluation for Teams Advancing to Student Startup Festival	Aug. 11 (Fri.) ~ Sep. 1 (Tue.)	· (Target) 400 teams finally selected · (Details) Selection of teams to advance to the student startup festival linked to the '2026 Industry-Academia-Research Cooperation EXPO' (40 Teams from Growth / 10 teams from Value-up) through evaluation · (Selection Process) Separate evaluations conducted for each Track - (Growth) Online evaluation based on submitted materials (pitch deck and a 2-minute recorded presentation video) - (Value-up) Online live presentation evaluation based on submitted pitch deck / 5-minute presentation and 5-minute Q&A											
			Participants Target	Submission Period	Evaluation Period(Process)	Growth	Aug. 11-19, 2026	Aug. 21 – Sep. 1, 2026 (Online video-based evaluation)	Value-Up	Aug. 27-28, 2026 (Online live presentation evaluation)				
			Participants Target	Submission Period	Evaluation Period(Process)									
			Growth	Aug. 11-19, 2026	Aug. 21 – Sep. 1, 2026 (Online video-based evaluation)									
Value-Up	Aug. 27-28, 2026 (Online live presentation evaluation)													

No.	Category	Schedule	Contents								
7	Student Startup Festival	Sep. 30 (Wed) ~ Oct. 2 (Fri.)	· (Target) 50 Teams Advancing to the Festival · (Details) Participation in the Student Startup Festival linked to the “2026 Industry-Academia-Research Cooperation EXPO” and awards for outstanding teams based on on-site evaluation results.								
			<table><tr><th>Programs</th><th>Details</th></tr><tr><td>Product Exhibition</td><td> - Product exhibition and on-site evaluation by experts for outstanding teams(40 from Growth / 10 from Value-Up) - Awards and prize money for 13 outstanding teams </td></tr><tr><td>Demo Day</td><td> - IR presentations and online streaming by 10 outstanding teams from the 'Promising Student Startup Teams 300+ Nurturing Program (Value-Up)' </td></tr><tr><td>Events Program</td><td> - Evaluation result prediction activities and on-site visitor engagement events </td></tr></table>	Programs	Details	Product Exhibition	- Product exhibition and on-site evaluation by experts for outstanding teams(40 from Growth / 10 from Value-Up) - Awards and prize money for 13 outstanding teams	Demo Day	- IR presentations and online streaming by 10 outstanding teams from the 'Promising Student Startup Teams 300+ Nurturing Program (Value-Up)'	Events Program	- Evaluation result prediction activities and on-site visitor engagement events
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Events Program	- Evaluation result prediction activities and on-site visitor engagement events										
8	Inter-Ministerial Startup Competition – Integrated Finals	Oct.	· (Participants) Top 19 teams selected from the 'Promising Student Startup Teams 300+ Nurturing Program (Value-Up)' · (Method) Evaluation conducted as part of the inter-ministerial integrated finals hosted by KISED								
9	Inter-Ministerial Startup Competition – King of King (Grand Finale)	Dec.	· (Participants) Top 20 teams selected from the Integrated Finals · (Method) Final selection of outstanding teams through an offline demo day								
10	Post-Program Support	-	· Accelerating to follow up on seed investment attraction and other support projects								

Category	Items	Description
Problem Recognition	Motivation for developing the item	- Motivation for developing of products and services by the (prospective) team for this project - Analysis on inconveniences due to the absence of products and services, downside of the Korean and Global market, and specificity of feasibility
	Purpose and necessity of the item	- Purpose of realizing the start-up item and degree of understanding of the needs of Korean and global markets and target customers for the products and services to be developed through this project - Awareness of problems and vulnerabilities of products and services suggested by consumers or experts in the field
Feasibility	Strategies for commercialization of the item	- Feasibility of the project, such as the development (manufacturing) period and production method (in-house*, outsourcing, etc.) considering the current status of product, service, and business model(BM). * In the case of in-house, include relevant experience or technology - Feasibility and adequacy of the business plan (goal and achievement plan)
	Market analysis and ways to secure competitiveness	- Details of superiority factors and differentiation strategies of the products and services in various aspects such as function, utility, ingredients, design, and style - Specific improvement plans for problems and weaknesses of the products and services suggested by consumers or experts in the field
Growth Strategy	Funding and procurement plan	- Specificity of funding and input plan based on the stage of commercialization of the start-up team - Appropriateness of required funds forecast based on sales estimation - Feasibility of milestone (schedule) for financing required based on government funds (R&D and policy funds, etc.) and investment funds (angel investment, VC, etc.)
	Market entry and performance creation strategies	- Product (service) positioning and market(Korean and global) entry and sales strategy(distribution channel, timing, sales amount, etc.) for Korean and global market entry (expansion) - Preliminary Start-up Team: Specificity and the feasibility of advancement plan - Start-up team: Achievements in the market and capabilities (core personnel), feasibility of entry(expansion) plan]
Team Composition	Competencies of representatives and team members	- Expertise (technical skills, know-how) owned by the representative and team members and compatibility with the duties in charge to the development (production) and commercialization of the products and services - Preliminary Start-up Team: Specificity of the personnel plan for hiring, the number of additional employees (planned), and the appropriateness of the main responsibilities of personnel and the timing of recruitment (team composition: representatives and team members) - Start-up team: Review the current status of HR possessed by the representative and the specificity and feasibility of the additional (planned) employment - Details of the business network status and major cooperation matters of the relevant start-up team with commercialization promotion

☐ Promising Student Startup Team 300⁺ Nurturing Program (Growth)

Target	Benefits
360 Teams finally Selected	· (Training) peer-to-alumni mentoring, idea validation, and 1:1 mentoring for prototype development · (Certificate) A "Promising Student Startup Team 300+" certificate issued by the Minister of Education ※ Issued to teams that complete the specialized training program and participate in networking events · (Others) Additional points and preferential treatment given when selected for start-up-related support programs by the host organization, providing opportunities to connect with private and other ministry projects (KDB Startup Program, IP Stepping Stone, etc.)
40 teams advanced to Student Start-up Festival	· Opportunities to assess market response and commercialization potential through product exhibitions · Participation support funding for the Student Startup Festival advanced team (KRW 1 million per team) · (Awards) - Grand Prize (Minister of Education Award, KRW 8 million) – 1 team - First Prize (Minister of Education Award, KRW 3 million) – 2 teams - Second Prize (KRW 1.5 million) – 2 teams - Third Prize (KRW 1 million) – 3 teams

※ Selected outstanding teams will be supported to participate in global emerging technology exhibitions (e.g., CES 2027)

☐ Promising Student Startup Team 300⁺ Nurturing Program (Value-up)

Target	Benefits
40 Teams finally Selected	· (Training) 1:1 mentoring to enhance fundraising readiness, combined with peer and alumni mentoring · (Certificate) A "Promising Student Startup Team 300+" certificate issued by the Minister of Education ※ Issued to teams that complete the specialized training program and participate in networking events · (Integrated finals) Advance to the integrated finals (19 teams) · (Others) Additional points and preferential treatment given when selected for start-up-related support programs by the host organization, providing opportunities to connect with private and other ministry projects (KDB Startup Program, IP Stepping Stone, etc.)
10 teams advanced to Student Start-up Festival	· Provide opportunities for IR pitching and fundraising · Opportunities to assess market response and commercialization potential through product exhibitions · Participation support funding for the Student Startup Festival advanced team (KRW 1 million per team) · (Awards) - Grand Prize (Minister of Education Award, KRW 15 million) – 1 team - First Prize (Minister of Education Award, KRW 7 million) – 1 teams - Second Prize (KRW 3 million) – 1 teams - Third Prize (KRW 1.5 million) – 2 teams

※ Selected outstanding teams will be supported to participate in global emerging technology exhibitions (e.g., CES 2027)

□ Purpose

- Host an inter-ministerial startup competition to identify and reward promising startup teams with outstanding business ideas, thereby fostering a pro-startup culture.

□ Qualifications

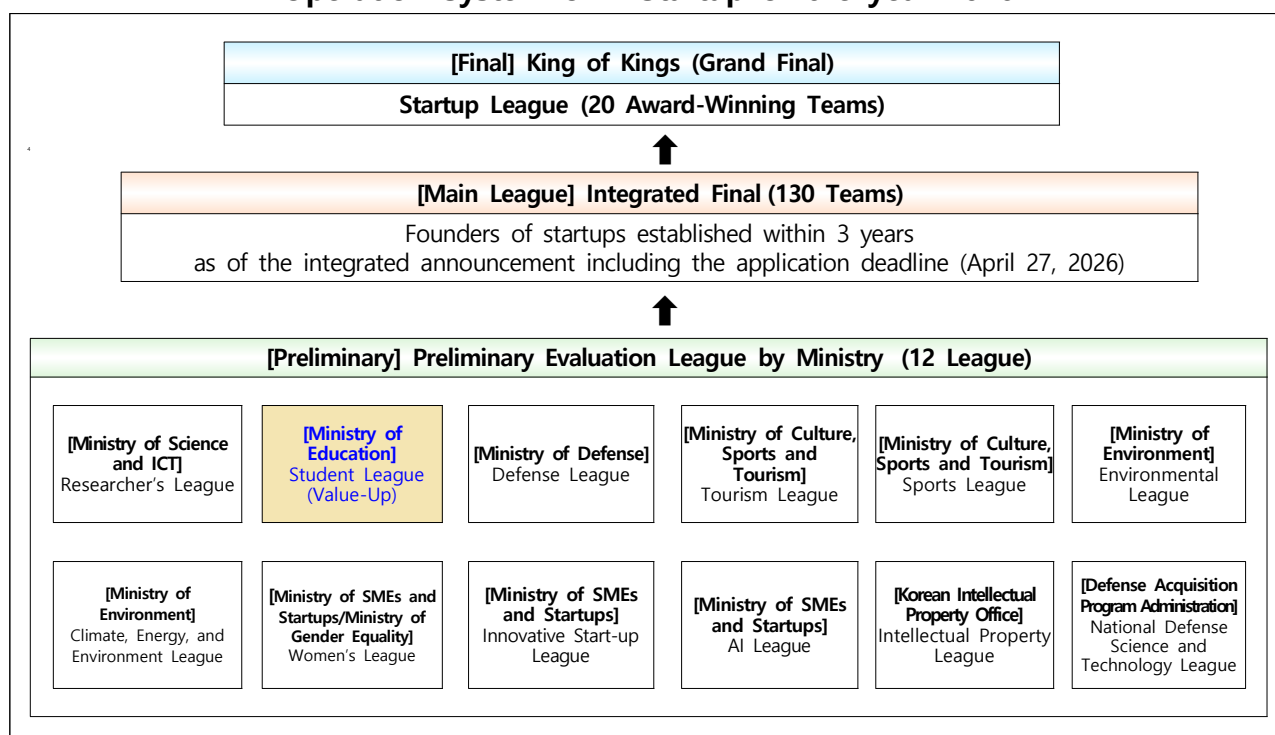
- Founders of startups established within 3 years as of the integrated announcement date (March 27, 2026), including those established by the application deadline (April 27, 2026)

□ How to Operate

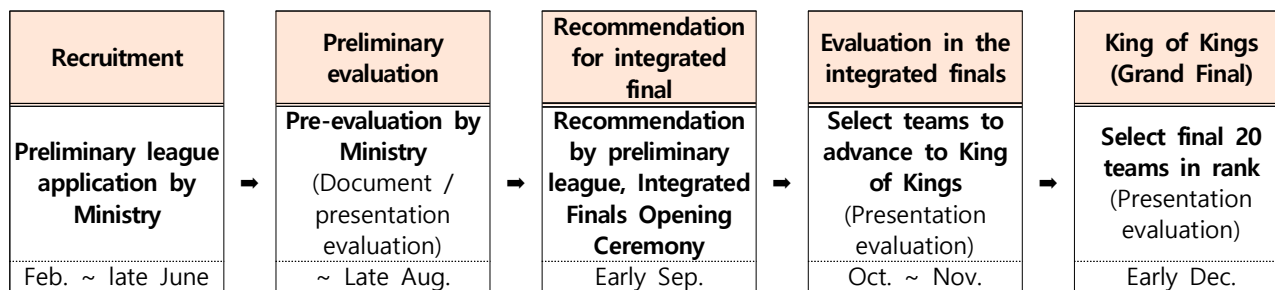
- Select start-ups with promising items from the preliminary league of each ministry and decide the final winner through the evaluation in the final round and King of Kings

※ From the Integrated Finals stage, teams will be recommended based on their startup status (as of the integrated announcement date) and categorized into the Startup League and the Preliminary Startup League.

< Operation System of K-Startup of the year 2026 >



□ Operating Schedule



* Tournament schedules are subject to change. For details, check the detailed announcements for each preliminary league.