

Need for Reform and Governance Capacities in Asia

Country Report South Korea



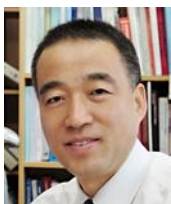
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Executive Summary

There have been few institutional changes in South Korea's system of governance during 2010 and 2011. In March 2008, the conservative President Lee Myung-bak took office after winning the presidential elections in a landslide victory, despite a historically low election turnout. Two months later, his conservative Grand National Party (GNP) won the majority of seats in the National Assembly for the legislative term, which continues until the next election in April 2012. Together with other conservative parties, the GNP has a clear conservative majority in the unicameral parliament that makes it much easier for the government to implement its policies than was the case for Lee's predecessor, Roh Moo-hyun (2003 – 2008), who lacked or had only unstable majorities. During the second half of his tenure, the Lee administration became increasingly unpopular, losing most by-elections. In October 2011, civil activist and critic of the president Park Won Soon won the important Seoul mayoral election. Opposition to the Lee administration strengthened within its own conservative party under the leadership of new party head Park Geun Hye. Seeking to distance itself from the unpopular president, the party renamed itself in February 2012, becoming the Saenuri Party.

Among the Lee administration's strong points have been the handling of the global economic and financial crisis since 2008. After an initially slow response, the government introduced a substantial fiscal stimulus package equivalent to 6.1% of GDP, the OECD's largest fiscal stimulus package relative to the size of the local economy. The government was also successful in negotiating a dollar swap agreement with the United States, which restored foreign investors' confidence and arrested the massive outflow of capital from Korea during the financial panic. South Korea benefited from relatively strict financial regulations for mortgages and the presence of risk-averse banks that retained debt on their books stemming from the financial crisis of 1997 – 1998. The government prevented the bursting of the domestic real estate bubble in Korea, although inflated real estate prices remain a major potential source of financial instability and social inequality. Finally, pragmatic currency policies that allowed a dramatic depreciation of the South Korean currency helped Korean exports, playing the most important role in the nation's recovery. Since the crisis, "green growth" has taken prime place as one of the government's new slogans, and President Lee can be credited for shifting attention to environmental issues that had long played no role in Korean politics. Aside from goals such as support for environmentally friendly technology, this drive also includes controversial projects such as the expansion of nuclear energy and huge construction projects such as river restoration and dams.

President Lee also extended the previously narrow foreign policy focus on North Korea, the United States and China. He formulated the goal of "Kukgyuk" (literally, a country with a good character), aiming to promote South Korea's reputation and soft power in the world by hosting international events such as the G20 meeting in November 2010 and the OECD High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011. South Korea has also substantially increased spending for development assistance. Obviously, Korea's search for a global role is also the result of increasing Korean business interests abroad. Access to resources ("resource diplomacy") and the expansion of Korean businesses to developing countries was a high priority for the Lee administration. He has continued the free-trading policies of his predecessor and has achieved the ratification of the EU trade agreement that came into effect in 2011 in addition to the controversial trade agreement with the United States that came into effect in March 2012.

The country's relationship with North Korea deteriorated dramatically as the Lee administration reduced aid to the north, including most of its humanitarian aid. The government in Seoul accused North Korea of sinking the South Korean Navy corvette Cheonan in March 2010, which resulted in the deaths of 47 sailors. The South Korean government remained successful in preserving peace on the peninsula and quickly de-escalated the situation after various provocations from North Korea, including the shelling of the South Korean Yeonpyeong Island by Northern artillery. The South Korean government received huge support from the international community for its measured response to the North's unpredictable and provocative behavior.

Lee's governance style is usually compared by his supporters to that of a corporate chief executive officer (CEO), while being deemed authoritarian by his opponents. Initially, his decisiveness seemed to resonate well with South Koreans. Critics, however, point out that his administration is unwilling to acknowledge criticism unless it overwhelms, as was the case during the protests against U.S. beef imports. He is also criticized for trying to suppress opposition, for example by influencing the personnel policies at public corporations and broadcasting companies, and by changing the law to allow (conservative) newspapers and other corporations to expand into the broadcasting sector. In December 2011, four new cable channels run by major newspapers went on air.

The Lee administration is often credited for streamlining the bureaucratic system by merging and sometimes downsizing ministries and government agencies. These policies of "advancement" (Seonjinwha) have the goal of building a smaller but more effective public sector, which is modeled after the management of a private company and impedes private business initiative as little as possible. Over time, however, the government seems to have reverted back to an economic governance style that is attempting to copy some of the features of the authoritarian developmental state of the 1970s and 1980s. For example, the government has pushed companies to stress "corporate social responsibility" in particular by leaving certain government-assigned markets to small and medium sized enterprises and advocating fair treatment of suppliers. The government has also implemented major infrastructure projects, including the controversial "four river project," that have proven to be very expensive for taxpayers without delivering any major advantages. Although official government debt is low, there are concerns that huge amounts of unofficial government debts exist in state-owned companies and agencies. Local governments have been involved in even worse, investing money in controversial prestige projects like the "floating islands" in Seoul or the suspended Incheon monorail. On a positive note, since 2011 the discussion has shifted from stimulating the economy through subsidies that are vulnerable to corruption to implementing a broader welfare system for all citizens.

Civil society organizations have lost significant influence over the last two years, a trend that has contributed to an erosion of democratic quality. Democratic processes have been weakened, under the justification that pro-growth policies must be quickly and efficiently implemented. Political discussions and civil society consultations have taken a back seat as the government has dramatically cut spending and abandoned consultations with NGOs. The government is particularly hostile towards labor unions.

Outlook

With parliamentary elections in April and presidential elections in December, 2012 is an important year for South Korea. The lame duck period, in which loyalty for the president fades as lawmakers and parties prepare for the presidential elections, began in early 2012. It is therefore unlikely that the Lee administration will achieve anything major during its remaining tenure. It is, however, likely that criticism of the administration will grow and scandals involving government officials will come to light. Despite this, neither an impeachment nor early elections are likely.

Whether or not the conservative party will prove able to distance itself enough from the unpopular President Lee and continue its five years of rule through the 2012 elections is unclear. By renaming her party from Hanaradang to Saenuridang and changing its banner color from blue to red (which used to be taboo because of its association with North Korea), the conservative party's new leader Park Geun Hye has been able to distance her party from President Lee. Ms. Park has also been very smart in asserting new political goals such as welfare state policies as a means of attracting low-income voters. The opposition parties have been caught off guard by these political shifts and have not been able to propose alternatives to Park's conservative welfare policies that promise to support the poor, but lack concepts to reduce social inequality. Economic democratization is now floated as an alternative concept, but liberal and progressive opposition parties have thus far failed to develop comprehensive concepts. The welfare debate will prove crucial as the Korean economy opens further and, as a result, grows increasingly vulnerable to economic shocks and increasing inequality. Furthermore, an increasingly top-heavy age distribution requires sound health care and pension systems. The prospects for institutional or structural changes that deepen democracy in Korea is less promising. The influence of money on politics, the regional character of parties and the personalization of politics represent the biggest obstacles to any deepening of South Korea's relatively young democracy. It is also worrisome that Ms. Park, a possible candidate for the presidential election, has not clearly distanced herself from the policies of her father, President Park Chung Hee, who ruled Korea as a military dictator from 1961 to 1979.

Economically, Korea faces major uncertainties derived from the ongoing global economic crisis, which has affected Korea's export-dependent economy. Domestically, household debt connected to a real estate bubble poses a significant challenge. The real estate market remains frozen and there are growing fears that the real estate bubble could burst after the December 2012 presidential election. Other major problems include a comparably low employment rate, a high rate of precarious employment, high youth unemployment and increasing social inequality. The largely company-based labor unions have continued to focus on bread-and-butter issues for the core workforce while failing to provide political alternatives for a more just society.

Another ongoing challenge is South Korea's divided economy in which huge export-oriented business conglomerates (chaebol) thrive at the expense of small businesses in the service sector and suppliers. The current government has tried, albeit with little success, to persuade the chaebol to engage in corporate social responsibility, support small suppliers and leave certain markets to small companies. It is unclear if the next government will prove able to act more forcefully in limiting economic concentration and facilitate greater transparency and accountability among the primarily family-owned conglomerates through new laws and regulations.

Korean businesses benefit from trade agreements with the EU and the United States, but the government has so far not translated these benefits to the broader population and consumers are still waiting for a greater choice in products and lower prices. Korean companies now enjoy easier access to the two largest markets in the world, which should give Korean business some advantages over Chinese competitors which have begun to close the productivity and quality gap in relation to Korea. Consumer price inflation remains a major problem, with high costs for education being a particularly big concern. The limited benefits that most Koreans see in trade agreements has led the liberal opposition to demand a renegotiation of the trade agreement with the United States and even threaten an end to the agreement should they come to power..

The unpredictable and confrontational behavior of the North Korean regime remains a major threat to South Korea. The shift in North Korean leadership from Kim Jong Il to his son, Kim Jong Eun, exacerbates these uncertainties. During the Lee administration, the relationship between the two countries deteriorated dramatically as the South Korean government has largely abandoned any meaningful engagement with North Korea that does not offer immediate economic benefits for the South. It is almost certain that any new government will have to resume some policy of engagement, although the small but influential extreme right will aim to maintain a confrontational stance.

The future of Korea's global engagement, which is afforded high priority by the current administration, remains unclear. If the liberal Democratic Party wins, more resources are likely to be shifted toward engagement with North Korea, which might come at the expense of official development assistance to other low-income countries. On the other hand, Korea is locked into international institutions like the OECD-DAC, the World Bank, the UN and various trade treaties, which will make it difficult for the country to reduce spending on development cooperation or withdraw from other globally relevant issues. The growing presence of Korean businesses abroad will also mean that the Korean government will need to promote and protect Korean interests globally. The development of a maritime force with four light carrier-led battle groups indicates that South Korea does not intend to focus on national matters alone.

Status Index

Quality of Democracy

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- S 2 Access to Information
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- S 4 Rule of Law



S 1 Electoral Process

S 1.1 Candidacy Procedures

How fair are procedures for registering candidates and parties?

Everyone has equal opportunity to become a candidate for election. The registration of candidates and parties may be subject to restrictions only when in accordance with law and if deemed reasonably necessary in a democratic society. This includes protecting the interests of national security or public order, public health or morals, or protecting the rights and freedoms of others.

Legal regulations provide for a fair registration procedure for all elections; candidates and parties are not discriminated against. **10** ☐
9 ☐

A few restrictions on election procedures discriminate against a small number of candidates and parties. **8** ☒
7 ☐
6 ☐

Some unreasonable restrictions on election procedures exist that discriminate against many candidates and parties. **5** ☐
4 ☐
3 ☐

Discriminating registration procedures for elections are widespread and prevent a large number of potential candidates or parties from participating. **2** ☐
1 ☐

All election affairs are managed by the National Election Commission (NEC), an independent constitutional organ. Registration of candidates and parties for national, regional and local levels is done in a free and transparent manner. Individual candidates without party affiliation are allowed to participate in national (excluding party lists), regional and local elections. Candidates can be nominated by political parties or by registered electors. Civil servants are not allowed to run for elected offices and must resign from their post if they want to become a candidate. Although the National Security Law (NSL) allows state authorities to block registration of “left-wing,” pro-North Korean parties and candidates, there is no evidence that this had a real impact in the 2012 parliamentary elections, the 2010 local elections or the important Seoul mayoral election of 2011. However, ages of eligibility for office are relatively high, as are deposit requirements for persons applying as candidates. For example, deposits for presidential candidates are KRW 300 million, KRW 50 million for local government level candidates and KRW 15 million for parliamentary candidates.

Citation: Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2012, Bertelsmann Foundation, www.bertelsmann-transformation-index. Public Officials Election Act, Act No. 9974, Jan. 25, 2010 Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2009, New York: Freedom House

S 1 Electoral Process

S 1.2 Media Access

To what extent do candidates and parties have fair access to the media and other means of communication?

Every candidate for election and every political party has equal opportunity of access to the media and other means of communication, which allows them to present their political views and to communicate with the voters. Access to the media may not be restricted or refused on grounds of race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

All candidates and parties have equal opportunities of access to the media and other means of communication. All major media outlets provide a fair and balanced coverage of the range of different political positions. **10** ☐
9 ☐

Candidates and parties have largely equal opportunities of access to the media and other means of communication. The major media outlets provide a fair and balanced coverage of different political positions. **8** ☐
7 ☐
6 ☒

Candidates and parties often do not have equal opportunities of access to the media and other means of communication. While the major media outlets represent a partisan political bias, the media system as a whole provides fair coverage of different political positions. **5** ☐
4 ☐
3 ☐

Candidates and parties lack equal opportunities of access to the media and other means of communications. The major media outlets are biased in favor of certain political groups or views and discriminate against others. **2** ☐
1 ☐

Candidates' ease of access to the media depends on the type of media. South Korea's print media sector remains dominated by three big conservative newspapers with a clear political bias. However, smaller newspapers that support the opposition do exist. Access to TV and radio broadcasters is more equitable, although government intervention increased under the Lee Myung-bak administration. In 2011, Freedom House downgraded Korea's press freedom status from "free" to "partly free." In early 2012, reporters for the three main TV channels KBS, YTN, and MBC went on strike to protest political interference. The strike is continuing as of mid-June 2012.

Blogging and social network services have in recent years played an important role in Korean politics and in the nation's broader Internet culture. The immensely controversial National Security Law (NSL) also applies to online media. Nevertheless, the country's is one of the world's most Internet-active societies with almost universal access to the Internet and an increasing shift from the use of print media to online media, especially among the younger generations. The obvious conservative bias of mainstream newspapers is increasingly less relevant as a factor in assessing fair media access during election campaigns.

However, one particular shortcoming of free media access is the opaque character of the Korean election law concerning support for candidates during the election period of up to 180 days before the election. Article 93 states that "No one shall distribute, post, scatter, play, or run an advertisement, letter of greeting, poster, photograph, document, drawing, printed matter, audio tape, video tape, or the like which contains content supporting, recommending or opposing a political party or candidate (including a person who intends to be a candidate) or showing the name of the political party or candidate with the intention of influencing the election, not in accordance with the provisions of this Act, from 180 days before the election day to the election day." According to some interpretations of Article 93, public support for candidates or parties is illegal during that period. On December 29, 2011, the Korean Constitutional Court ruled that Article 93 is unconstitutional in restricting expression of opinions on the Internet and social network services, although it is not clear how this ruling would effect other media or campaigning in general.

Citation: S.Korea lawmaker challenges election limits on Twitter use, Business Report online, March 25, 2010, accessed May 25, 2010. Open Net Initiative, South Korea, report issued May, 10, 2007, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/south-korea>, accessed April 20, 2010.

"South Korea's media. No news is bad news. Reporters complain of being muzzled", The Economist 3rd of March 2012

South Korea Country Profile 26.12.2010, OpenNet Initiative, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/south-korea>

"Ban on SNS campaigning overruled. Law prohibiting online politicking before elections called unconstitutional", Korea Joong Ang Daily, 30th of December 2011

S 1 Electoral Process

S 1.3 Voting and Registration Rights

To what extent do all citizens have the opportunity to exercise their right of participation in national elections?

To participate in national elections, every adult citizen must have the right to access an effective, impartial and non-discriminatory procedure for voting and voter registration. Voting rights also apply to convicts and citizens without a permanent residence in the country. No eligible citizen shall be denied the right to vote or disqualified from registration as a voter, otherwise than in accordance with objectively verifiable criteria prescribed by law, and provided that such measures are consistent with the State's obligations under international law. Every individual who is denied the right to vote or to be registered as a voter shall be entitled to appeal to a jurisdiction competent to review such decisions and to correct errors promptly and effectively. Every voter has the right of equal and effective access to a polling station or alternative voting method, including a feasible absentee voting option.

All adult citizens can participate in national elections. All eligible voters are registered if they wish to be. There are no discriminations observable in the exercise of the right to vote.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The procedures for the registration of voters and voting are for the most part effective, impartial and nondiscriminatory, although occasional.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
Citizens can appeal to courts if they feel being discriminated.	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
While the procedures for the registration of voters and voting are de jure non-discriminatory, cases of discrimination occur regularly in practice.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The procedures for the registration of voters or voting have systemic discriminatory effects. Groups of adult citizens are de facto excluded from national elections.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

All adult citizens 19 years of age or older are eligible to vote, and voter registration is fair and effective. Citizens can appeal to the National Election Commission and the courts if they feel they have been discriminated against. Citizens who are currently serving prison time, certain violators of election laws and those who committed specified crimes while holding a public office are excluded from this right. Since 2009 overseas citizens over 19 years of age are able to vote in presidential elections and in National Assembly general elections. Overseas citizens are defined as Korean citizens residing in foreign countries who are permanent residents or short-term visitors.

Citation: National Election Commission, Right to Vote and Eligibility for Election,
[http://www.nec.go.kr/nec_2009/engli sh/](http://www.nec.go.kr/nec_2009/english/) National Election Commission, NEWS No.7,

S 1 Electoral Process

S 1.4 Party Financing

To what extent is private and public party financing and electoral campaign financing transparent, effectively monitored and in case of infringement of rules subject to proportionate and dissuasive sanction?

This question refers to the obligations of the receiving entity (parties and entities connected with political parties) to keep proper books and accounts, to specify the nature and value of donations received and to publish accounts regularly.

Please note that this question also includes an assessment of how effectively funding of political parties and electoral campaigns is supervised (monitored by an independent body such as electoral or parliamentary commission, anti-corruption body, audit institution etc. with checking, investigative, sanction and regulatory powers) and infringements are sanctioned (taking into account administrative, civil and criminal liability).

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| The state enforces that donations to political parties are made public and provides for independent monitoring to that respect. Effective measures to prevent evasion are effectively in place and infringements subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions. | 10 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| The state enforces that donations to political parties are made public and provides for independent monitoring. Although infringements are subject to proportionate sanctions, some, although few, loopholes and options for circumvention still exist. | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| The state provides that donations to political parties shall be published. Party financing is subject to some degree of independent monitoring but monitoring either proves regularly ineffective or proportionate sanctions in case of infringement do not follow. | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| The rules for party and campaign financing do not effectively enforce the obligation to make the donations public. Party and campaign financing is neither monitored independently nor, in case of infringements, subject to proportionate sanctions. | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> |

Party and campaign financing is a controversial topic in Korea. Due to the relatively low rate of membership in political parties, candidates in elections have to spend huge amounts of money to hire supporters and place advertisements. Parties receive public subsidies according to their share of the vote in the last-held elections. However, a larger amount of campaign financing comes from private donations. Although election laws strictly regulate political contributions, efforts to make the political funding process more transparent have met with only limited success. After nearly every election, several violations of the political funds law are revealed, and many officials or parliamentarians lose their seats as a result of these violations. The heavy penalties associated with breaking the political funds law seem to have had only limited effect on the actual behavior of politicians. Breaking the election law seems to carry little stigma, as can be seen in the case of current President Lee, who lost his parliamentary seat due to an election law violation in 1996 but was elected to be Seoul's mayor in 2002 and president in 2007. While no slush-fund scandals of the type seen in the 1990s have recently emerged, party finance reform as well as strict and just enforcement of existing laws remain pressing issues in Korean party politics.

S 2 Access to Information

S 2.1 Media Freedom

To what extent are the media independent from government?

This question asks to what extent are the media subject to government influence and the influence of actors associated with the government. The question focuses both on media regulation and government intervention. The rules and practice of supervision should guarantee sufficient independence for publicly owned media. Privately owned media should be subject to licensing and regulatory regimes that ensure independence from government.

Public and private media are independent from government influence; their independence is institutionally protected and respected by the incumbent government. 10 ☐
9 ☐

The incumbent government largely respects the independence of media, but the regulation of public and/or private media does not provide sufficient protection against potential government influence. 8 ☐
7 ☐
6 ☐

The incumbent government seeks to ensure its political objectives indirectly by influencing the personnel policies, organizational framework or financial resources of public media, and/or the licensing regime/market access for private media. 5 ☐
4 ☒
3 ☐

Major media outlets are frequently influenced by the incumbent government promoting its partisan political objectives. To ensure pro-government media reporting, governmental actors exert direct political pressure and violate existing rules of media regulation. 2 ☐
1 ☐

In the 2011/12 Press Freedom Index, published by Reporters Without Borders, Korea placed 44th out of 179 countries. This represented a fall of two places compared to 2010, but a rise of 25 places compared to 2009. Korea also remains on the list of “countries under surveillance” for Internet censorship. The report criticizes the prosecution of journalists from the MBC program PD Diary. Journalists were accused of exaggerating the danger of mad cow disease, an issue that triggered massive protests against the import of U.S. beef in 2008. The makers of the program were acquitted of prosecutors’ accusation that they had “defamed government officials and obstructed businesses involved in importing U.S. beef.” Another case criticized by the report is the arrest of Internet blogger “Minerva” (whose real name was Park Dae-sung), “on the grounds that he affected ‘foreign exchange markets’ and the ‘nation’s credibility’ through his posts on the financial crisis in a discussion forum.” He, too, was acquitted of the charges against him. In April 2009, South Korea’s Act on the Promotion of Information and Communications Network Utilization and User Protection was amended. The amendment requires all websites with at least 100,000 (previously 300,000) visitors per day to identify their users by their real names, a change that was criticized as a limit on the freedom of speech. The government was also accused of replacing or influencing the replacement of chief executives of several major public broadcasters and media companies, including the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), Korean Broadcasting Advertising Corporation, Arirang TV, Sky Life and Yonhap Television Network (YTN). Some of the new appointees are believed to be supporters of the government. Amnesty International also reported that “protests against the appointment of the new YTN President Ku Bon-hong, a former aide to President Lee Myung-bak, resulted in Ku Bon-hong suing 12 trade union journalists and firing six journalists for ‘interfering’ with business.” There are also accusations that the early replacement of the president of broadcaster MBC in February 2010 was politically motivated. MBC labor unions went on strike in early April 2010 to protest the change. In 2011, Freedom House downgrade Korea’s media freedom status from “free” to “partly free.” Since March 2012, reporters for KBS, MBC and YTN have been on strike (as of 17 April 2012) to protest government interference with the media.

Citation: Joong Ang Daily, 21 January and 20 February 2010.

The Hankyoreh 10 April 2009

Reporters without Borders, Report South Korea, <http://en.rsf.org/report-south-korea,59.html>

Amnesty International Korea Report 2009

Korea Herald 6 April 2010

Freedom House, South Korea, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2011/south-korea>

“South Korea’s media Reporters complain of being muzzled”, The Economist, 3rd of March 2012,

To what extent are the media characterized by an ownership structure that ensures a pluralism of opinions?

This question does not assume that the predominance of either private or public ownership guarantees a pluralism of opinions. Rather, the underlying assumption is that a diversified ownership structure is likely to best represent the views and positions existing in society.

Diversified ownership structures characterize both the electronic and print media market, providing a well-balanced pluralism of opinions. Effective anti-monopoly policies and impartial, open public media guarantee a pluralism of opinions. **10** ☐
9 ☐

Diversified ownership structures prevail in the electronic and print media market. Public media compensate for deficiencies or biases in private media reporting by representing a wider range of opinions. **8** ☐
7 ☐
6 ☐

Oligopolistic ownership structures characterize either the electronic or the print media market. Important opinions are represented but there are no or only weak institutional guarantees against the predominance of certain opinions. **5** ☒
4 ☐
5 ☐

Oligopolistic ownership structures characterize both the electronic and the print media market. Few companies dominate the media, most programs are biased, and there is evidence that certain opinions are not published or are marginalized. **2** ☐
1 ☐

The quality of media pluralism depends on the type of media. The print media is dominated by three major newspapers: Chosun Ilbo, Donga Ilbo and Joong Ang Ilbo. The combined market share of these three outlets in 2006 was 62.3%. Smaller alternative newspapers also exist. The major newspapers are politically conservative and business-friendly, partly because they depend to a very large degree on advertising revenues. For example, major newspapers and websites did not review or accept advertisements for the bestselling book of former Samsung chief counsel Kim Yong-chul, "Think Samsung," in which he accuses Samsung and Samsung Electronic Chairman Lee Kun-hee of corruption. However, as newspaper subscription rates continue to decline – dropping by almost 50% between 1996 and 2006 alone – the Internet has increasingly become one of, if not the most important source of information for South Koreans, especially among younger generations. There is more pluralism in the broadcasting sector, due to the mix of public and private media. However, the diversity of political opinions in this arena is threatened by government influence over broadcasters' personnel policies (see "media freedom"). In December 2011, in a controversial change of rules, the major newspapers were allowed to start their own cable TV programs. Channel A was founded by Dong-A Ilbo, TV Chosun by Chosun Ilbo, JTBC by JoongAng Ilbo as well as MBN that was founded by Maeil Business Newspaper. To date, it remains unclear how the new cable channels will affect media plurality, but there is a concern that the concentration underway within the newspaper sector will spread to TV broadcasters as well.

Citation: Chung, Jongpil, Comparing Online Activities in China and South Korea: The Internet and the political regime, Asian Survey, September/October 2008, Vol. 48, No. 5, Pages 727–751.

"New cable channels off to shaky start", Korea Herald, 5 December 2011

S 2 Access to Information

S 2.3 Access to Government Information

To what extent can citizens obtain official information?

To assess the accessibility of government information, you should examine

(1) whether a freedom of information act exists or equivalent legal regulations exist,

(2) to what extent do the rules restrict access to information (e.g., exemptions, deadlines for responding to requests etc.) and justify these restrictions, and

(3) whether mechanisms for appeal and oversight exist to enforce citizens' right to access information (e.g., administrative review, court review, ombudsman, commission etc.) You may consult www.freedominfo.org for information specific to your country.

Legal regulations guarantee free and easy access to official information, contain few, reasonable restrictions, and there are effective mechanisms of appeal and oversight enabling citizens to access information. 10 ☐ 9 ☐

Access to official information is regulated by law. Most restrictions are justified, but access is sometimes complicated by bureaucratic procedures. Existing appeal and oversight mechanisms permit citizens to enforce their right of access. 8 ☐ 7 ☐ 6 ☐

Access to official information is partially regulated by law, but complicated by bureaucratic procedures and some restrictions. Existing appeal and oversight mechanisms are largely ineffective. 5 ☒ 4 ☐ 3 ☐

Access to official information is not regulated by law; there are many restrictions of access, bureaucratic procedures and no or ineffective mechanisms of enforcement. 2 ☐ 1 ☐

The Act on Disclosure of Information by Public Agencies regulates the access to government information. The Korea Public Information Disclosure System makes available all documents described by the act. Information can also be accessed online at the Online Data Release System. If a person makes a request for the disclosure of information, the agency in possession of the information must make a decision on the petition within 15 days. Excluded from disclosure are all documents related to national security. While this is a reasonable level of exception in theory, interpretations of “national security” in Korea are often afforded a very wide scope. Despite the sound legal regulations for information disclosure, there are many complaints about the policy’s practical implementation. Freedominfo.org reports that rejections of information disclosure requests without proper explanation are common. Complaints and litigation following a failure to disclose information are possible. In a recent survey, Korean newspaper Hankyoreh and the Open Information Center for a Transparent Society found that each of 20 surveyed public institutions failed to disclose relevant information about their activities and a list of available information on their websites, even though they are required to do so by law.

Citation: Korea Public Information Disclosure System, https://www.open.go.kr/pa/html/eng_main.htm
“Twenty governmental institutions currently in violation of Information Disclosure Law” , The Hankyoreh, 3 March 2010, <http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/engl>
Freedominfo, South Korea, <http://www.freedominfo.org/regions/east-asia/south-korea/>

S 3 Civil Rights

S 3.1 Civil Rights

To what extent does the state respect and protect civil rights and how effectively are citizens protected by courts against infringements of their rights?

Civil rights contain and limit the exercise of state power by the rule of law.

Independent courts guarantee legal protection of life, freedom and property as well as protection against illegitimate arrest, exile, terror, torture or unjustifiable intervention into personal life, both on behalf of the state and on behalf of private and individual actors. Equal access to the law and equal treatment by the law are both basic civil rights and also necessities to enforce civil rights.

All state institutions respect and effectively protect civil rights. Citizens are effectively protected by courts against infringements of their rights. 10 ☐
9 ☐

Infringements present an extreme exception.

The state respects and protects rights, with few infringements. Courts provide protection. 8 ☐
7 ☐
6 ☐

Despite formal protection, frequent infringements of civil rights occur and court protection often proves ineffective. 5 ☒
4 ☐
3 ☐

State institutions respect civil rights only formally, and civil rights are frequently violated. Court protection is not effective. 2 ☐
1 ☐

Basic civil rights are protected by the constitution. Although courts have been reasonably effective in protecting civil rights, and a Human Rights Commission was established in 2001, a number of problems remain. Moreover, observers tend to agree that the human and civil rights situation has worsened somewhat since 2008. The National Security Law (NSL) remains in place, outlawing activities that could be interpreted as “benefiting or praising” North Korea. In August 2008, members of the Socialist Workers League of Korea, including an economics professor at Yonsei University, were arrested without an arrest warrant for “forming an anti-state group.” Applications for warrants were turned down by the Seoul Central District Court a day after the arrest. In its 2011 report, Amnesty International criticized that “The government increasingly used vaguely worded national security, defamation and other laws to harass and suppress its critics.” The report also criticized the handling of peaceful protests against the G20 summit in Seoul in November 2010 and the deportation of a Filipino activist trying to enter the country for a civil society forum.

Among the most serious issues are the inadequate rights enjoyed by migrant workers, the widespread physical abuse of sex workers, the imprisonment of conscientious objectors, and the continuing use of the NSL to detain and imprison individuals believed to be sympathetic to North Korea’s communist ideology. On a more positive note, a moratorium on executions announced in late 1997 has remained in place. However, the attempt to abolish the death penalty altogether failed in parliament in February 2010. In February 2010, the Constitutional Court ruled that the death penalty is constitutional. Excessive use of police force is another subject of often-voiced complaint, as during the protests against U.S. beef imports, or the 2009 “Yongsan disaster” in which six people were killed during a clash between riot police and tenants refusing relocation during a construction project.

Citation: Amnesty International, Report on Korea 2009, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/south-korea/report-2009>. National Human Rights Commission Act, Act No. 6481, May 24, 2001 (Established) Korea Times, 30 December 2009.

Amnesty International, Report on Korea 2011, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/south-korea/report-2011>

Bertelsmann Stiftung, “South Korea,” Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2010, text of the press statement delivered by the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Mr. Frank La Rue, after the conclusion of his visit to South Korea, May 17, 2010, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

S 3 Civil Rights

S 3.2 Political Liberties

To what extent does the state concede and protect political liberties?

Political liberties constitute an independent sphere of democracy and are a prerequisite of political and civil society. They aim at the possibility of the formulation, the presentation and the equal consideration of citizens' preferences and are embodied in the codification and unlimited validity of every individual's right to speak, think, assemble, organize, worship, or petition without government (or even private) interference or restraints.

All state institutions concede and effectively protect political liberties.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
All state institutions for the most part concede and protect political liberties.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
There are only few infringements.	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
State institutions concede political liberties but infringements occur regularly in practice.	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Political liberties are unsatisfactory codified and frequently violated.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Political liberties are protected by the constitution, but infringements do take place. The freedoms of opinion and of the press are constitutionally guaranteed, but recent illiberal trends give cause for concern (see also “media freedom”). The freedoms of association and assembly are respected in principle. However, South Korea has not signed four of the basic conventions of the International Labor Organization, including two on the freedom of assembly. The government has repeatedly denied selected groups of employees – most recently migrant workers – the right to form unions. It is very difficult to call a strike that would be legal by official definitions. Demonstrations also require approval, which can be hard to come by as anti-government protestors learned in spring and early summer 2008. Indeed, demonstrations are often declared to be illegal when they disrupt traffic or business. According to Amnesty International, the use of force by police at the candlelight protests against the import of U.S. beef was excessive. Labor unions are allowed to operate in the private sector, but remain restricted in the public sector. However, labor union members are frequently imprisoned and fined for organizing “illegal strikes” or for “obstruction of business.” Businesses also sue labor unions for compensation for “lost profits” during strikes. Civil servants are also limited in their political freedom. On May 23, 2010, 183 teachers (most of them members of the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union, KTU) were dismissed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for allegedly joining the Democratic Labor Party (DLP), an opposition party, based on the fact that the individuals made private donations to the DLP. The authorities interpreted these contributions as membership fees, despite the protests of the individuals concerned to the contrary. Another issue already discussed above is the very opaque and vague election law that limits political activities 180 days before elections.

Citation: Bertelsmann Stiftung, “South Korea,” Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2012, www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de

“South Korea: Arbitrary dismissal of 183 teachers forces hunger strike,” Education International, <http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/show.php?id=1266&theme=rights&country=korea> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2010, New York: Freedom House.

How effectively does the state protect against discrimination based on gender, physical ability, ethnic origin, social status, political views or religion?

This question evaluates policies of state institutions aimed at preventing discrimination. Such an evaluation should refer to the measures taken by these institutions and their impact. The extent of observable discrimination may be used as an indicator for the efficacy of anti-discrimination policies.

Please note that this question also includes an assessment of how effectively the state protects the rights of disadvantaged persons or persons belonging to minorities by positive discrimination measures, special representation rights or autonomy rights.

State institutions effectively protect against and actively prevent discrimination.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cases of discrimination are extremely rare.	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
State anti-discrimination protections are moderately successful. Few cases of discrimination are observed.	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
State anti-discrimination efforts show limited success. Many cases of discrimination can be observed.	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
The state does not offer effective protection against discrimination.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discrimination is widespread in the public sector and in society.	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discrimination remains a big problem in Korea. Women remain underrepresented in almost all important fields in Korea. The wage gap between men and women is on average 38%, the biggest such gap in the OECD. The unequal treatment of Korean women is reflected in various UNDP data compilations. While South Korea ranked 25th in the UNDP's 2006 Human Development Index (HDI), and 26th in the 2006 Gender-Related Development Index (GDI), the country ranked only 68th (out of 108 countries) with respect to the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which focuses on women's roles in economic and political life. Discrimination against gay and lesbians remains pervasive. Discrimination against irregular workers and migrant workers is also frequent. In addition to discrimination at the workplace, many migrant workers have to submit to an HIV test in order to get a work visa. Discrimination against people with handicaps has improved, although barrier-free entrances to buildings and public transportation services remain rare. The government has tried to address discrimination based on gender and other characteristics, but with little effect. The establishment of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in 2001 under the presidency of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kim Dae-jung was an important step, but this organization is not part of the executive branch, and has no direct enforcement authority. The enactment of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in April 2008 constituted another important step toward better protection against discrimination. According to official data from the NHRC, a total of 1,390 cases pertaining to disability discrimination have been filed with the commission since the DDA took force, accounting for up to 50% of the total number of discrimination cases filed. The number has increased dramatically compared to the 14% share of previous years, as the DDA was expected to be relatively strictly enforced. Barrier free access for the handicapped is a big problem for many buildings, busses and public spaces.

Citation: OECD, Gender Brief, March 2010, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/31/44720649.pdf> The Disability Discrimination Act Marks the 2nd Anniversary [2010-04-30], The National Human Rights Commission of Korea, http://www.humanrights.go.kr/english/activities/view_01.jsp

S 4 Rule of Law

S 4.1 Legal Certainty

To what extent do government and administration act on the basis of and in accordance with legal provisions to provide legal certainty?

This question assesses the extent to which executive actions are predictable (i.e., can be expected to be guided by law).

Government and administration act predictably, on the basis of and in accordance with legal provisions. Legal regulations are consistent and transparent, ensuring legal certainty.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Government and administration rarely make unpredictable decisions.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
Legal regulations are consistent, but leave a large scope of discretion to the government or administration.	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Government and administration sometimes make unpredictable decisions that go beyond given legal bases or do not conform to existing legal regulations. Some legal regulations are inconsistent and contradictory.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Government and administration often make unpredictable decisions that lack a legal basis or ignore existing legal regulations. Legal regulations are inconsistent, full of loopholes and contradict each other.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

There have been few changes in terms of legal certainty in the last two years, and signs of both improvement and deterioration can be found. On the one hand, there are fewer complaints from investors and businesses about government intervention, a trend that reflects the government's generally business-friendly attitude. On the other hand, the unpredictability of prosecutors' activities remains a problem. Unlike judges, prosecutors are not independent, and there have been cases when they have used their power to harass the political opposition even though independent courts later found accusations to be groundless. In South Korea's "prosecutorial judicial system" this is particularly important, because it is the public prosecutor who initiates legal action. The most prominent case in recent years, in which critics argued that the prosecutor's office acted as a "political weapon" of the executive branch, was the case against former President Roh Moo-hyun. Roh committed suicide in March 2009, deeply shamed by accusations of corruption within his family, following a 13-hour session of questioning by state prosecutors. Prosecutors never provided proof for their accusations.

Citation: Joong Ang Daily 9 April 2010

S 4 Rule of Law

S 4.2 Judicial Review

To what extent do independent courts control whether government and administration act in conformity with the law?

This question examines how well the courts can review actions taken and norms adopted by the executive. To provide effective control, courts need to pursue their own reasoning free from the influence of incumbent governments, powerful groups or individuals. This requires a differentiated organization of the legal system, including legal education, jurisprudence, regulated appointment of the judiciary, rational proceedings, professionalism, channels of appeal and court administration.

Independent courts effectively review executive action and ensure that the government and administration act in conformity with the law.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Independent courts usually manage to control whether the government and administration act in conformity with the law.	8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Courts are independent, but often fail to ensure legal compliance.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Courts are biased for or against the incumbent government and lack effective control.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The South Korean judiciary is highly professionalized and fairly independent, though not totally free from governmental pressure. In February 2012 a controversy arose about the dismissal of judge Seo Ki-hoi of the Seoul Northern District Court who had posted critical remarks about President Lee on his Twitter and Facebook accounts. The judge was allegedly dismissed because he failed a performance review, but many judges protested the move and suspected political interference. State prosecutors are from time to time ordered to launch investigations (especially into tax matters) aimed at intimidating political foes or other actors not toeing the line. The Constitutional Court has underlined its independence through a number of remarkable cases in which courts have ruled against the government. For example, a court acquitted the blogger "Minerva" (see "media freedom"), who was accused by the government of damaging the nation's credibility and destabilizing the currency market. In another case, the makers of MBC's PD Diary television program, which led to the protests against U.S. beef imports, were found not guilty of defamation. Courts have also thrown out many (but not all) of the cases against protesters accused of organizing illegal protests. However, there have also been cases that call the independence of the courts into question. For example, Korean Supreme Court Justice Shin Young-chul used his position to influence the decisions of subordinate courts during the trials against protesters who had demonstrated against the import of U.S. beef in 2008. Justice Shin was referred to the court's ethics commission, but did not step down. Under South Korea's version of centralized constitutional review, the Constitutional Court is the only body with the power to declare a legal norm unconstitutional. However, in cases having to do with ministerial and government decrees, and with regard to the decisions of lower courts, the Supreme Court has also demanded the ability to rule on acts' constitutionality. This has several times contributed to legal battles between the Constitutional and Supreme courts. Nevertheless, the Constitutional Court has become a very effective guardian of the constitution since its establishment in 1989. In February 2010, by a 5-4 vote, South Korea's Constitutional Court upheld the constitutionality of the death penalty. Still, the court cannot be considered to hold an exclusively conservative judicial ideology or values, but rather aims to decide cases based on the merits. This was demonstrated in the court's ruling of May 27, 2010, in which it stated that "human embryos left over from fertility treatment are not life forms and can be used for research or destroyed." Strongly criticized by many Christian churches and denominations, this ruling saved South Korea's thriving stem-cell research sector.

Citation:

Korea Times 24 September 2009

Joong Ang Daily 2 April 2009

Korea Times 20 April 2009

Korea Times 20 January 2010

Croissant, Aurel (2010) Provisions, Practices and Performances of Constitutional Review in Democratizing East Asia, in: The Pacific Review (forthcoming).

Kim, J. (2009) „Government Reform, Judicialization, and the Development of Public Law in the Republic of Korea', in T. Ginsburg and A. H. Y. Chen (eds) Administrative Law and Governance in Asia: Comparative Perspectives, New York: Routledge, pp. 101-127.

„Constitutional Court upholds the death penalty" , The Hankyoreh, 27 February 2010, <http://asiadeathpenalty.blogspot.com/2010/02/south-korea-news-report-on.html>

„Embryos are not „life forms," South Korea court rules", AFP, May 27, 2010. "Judges hold rare meeting following dismissal of liberal judge", Yonhap News Agency February 17, 2012

S 4 Rule of Law

S 4.3 Appointment of Justices

To what extent does the process of appointing (supreme or constitutional court) justices guarantee the independence of the judiciary?

This question regards supreme or constitutional courts' sufficient independence from political influence as a prerequisite of a functioning democratic system. The appointment process is a crucial factor which determines judiciary independence.

The prospect of politically "neutral" justices increases accordingly with greater majority requirements and with the necessity of cooperation between involved bodies. A cooperative appointment process requires at least two involved democratically legitimized institutions. Their representative character gives them the legitimacy for autonomous nomination or elective powers. In an exclusive appointment process, a single body has the right to appoint justices irrespective of veto points; whereas in cooperative procedures with qualified majorities independence of the court is best secured.

When answering the question take also into account whether the process is formally transparent and adequately covered by public media. If your country does not have a supreme or constitutional court, evaluate the appointment process of the appellate court that is responsible for citizens' appeals against decisions of the government.

Justices are appointed in a cooperative appointment process with special majority requirements.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Justices are exclusively appointed by different bodies with special majority requirements or in a cooperative selection process without special majority requirements.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Justices are exclusively appointed by different bodies without special majority requirements.	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
All judges are appointed exclusively by a single body irrespective of other institutions.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The appointment process for Constitutional Court justices generally guarantees the court's independence. Justices are exclusively appointed by different bodies without special majority requirements. Three of the nine justices are selected by the president, three by the National Assembly and three by the judiciary, and all are appointed by the president. By custom, the opposition nominates one of the three justices appointed by the National Assembly. The head of the court is chosen by the president, with the consent of the National Assembly. Justices serve renewable terms of six years (except for the chief justice). The process is formally transparent and adequately covered by public media, although it seems fair to say that judicial appointments are not a top issue of public attention in South Korea. Courts below the Supreme Court are staffed by the national judiciary. Judges throughout the system must pass a rigorous training system including a two-year program and two-year apprenticeship. The Judicial Research and Training Institute performs all judicial training; only those who have passed the National Judicial Examination may receive appointments.

Citation: Article 111 of the Korean Constitution

Croissant, Aurel (2010) Provisions, Practices and Performances of Constitutional Review in Democratizing East Asia, in: The Pacific Review.

S 4 Rule of Law

S 4.4 Corruption Prevention

To what extent are public officeholders prevented from abusing their position for private interests?

This question addresses how the state and society prevent public servants and politicians from accepting bribes by applying mechanisms to guarantee the integrity of officeholders: auditing of state spending; regulation of party financing; citizen and media access to information; accountability of officeholders (asset declarations, conflict of interest rules, codes of conduct); transparent public procurement systems; effective prosecution of corruption.

Legal, political and public integrity mechanisms effectively prevent public officeholders from abusing their positions.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Most integrity mechanisms function effectively and provide disincentives for public officeholders willing to abuse their positions.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Some integrity mechanisms function, but do not effectively prevent public officeholders from abusing their positions.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Public officeholders can exploit their offices for private gain as they see fit without fear of legal consequences or adverse publicity.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Corruption remains a major problem in Korea, and government attempts to curb the problem are seen as mostly ineffective by the population. Korea ranked 43rd out of 183 countries in the 2011 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, down four spot from 2010. It ranked 13th out of 28 countries in the Transparency International Bribe Payers Index of 2008. In the 2010 Global Corruption Barometer Survey 32% of Koreans said that corruption has increase in the past three years, while 24% it has declined. Vigilant civil society organizations regularly conduct surveys of how parliamentarians fulfill their duties. "Blacklisted" candidates running for office face problems in parliamentary elections. Though far from perfect, the blacklisting system has helped to increase voters' awareness of problems. However, lawmakers who have been convicted for illegal fundraising and other illicit activities sometimes benefit from the presidential amnesties that are granted every year – as was the case in August 2009, when President Lee pardoned 341,000 executives, politicians and bureaucrats convicted of crimes that included fraud and embezzlement. In December 2009, President Lee pardoned Samsung Electronics Chairman Lee Kun-hee, who had been convicted of tax evasion. Transparency International has also criticized the Lee administration's business-friendly policies for undermining anti-corruption measures. On February 29, 2008, the Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission (ACRC) was launched by the merger of the Ombudsman of Korea, the Korea Independent Commission against Corruption and the Administrative Appeals Commission. However, ACRC commissioners are entirely appointed by the president, a provision that critics argue undermines its independence.

Citation:

Korea Times 24 March 2010

Transparency International, Corruption Perception Index 2011, Bribe Payers Index 2011, Global Corruption Barometer 2010, <http://www.transparency.org/>

Act on Anti-Corruption and the Foundation of the Anti-Corruption & Civil Rights Commission, 2008, http://www.acrc.go.kr/eng_index.html Korea Times, Korea Ranks 39th in Global Corruption Index, 11-17-2009, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/05/117_55667.html

Status Index

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How successful has economic policy been in providing a reliable economic framework and in fostering international competitiveness?

This question addresses the existence of a government's general strategy to support the future-oriented development of its economy through regulatory policy. Sound economic policy is expected to adhere to the following principles: clear-cut assignment of tasks to institutions, refraining from unnecessary discretionary actions, frictionless interlinkage of different institutional spheres (labor market, enterprise policy, tax policy, budgetary policy) and the coherent set-up of different regimes (e.g. dismissal protection, co-determination rights, efficiency of anti-monopoly policies, income taxation). Countries following these principles are able to increase overall productivity, become more attractive for internationally mobile factors of production and thus raise their international competitiveness.

When answering the question, focus on the use and interplay of different regimes with regard to the aims of economic policy.

Economic policy fully succeeds in providing a coherent set-up of different institutional spheres and regimes, thus stabilizing the economic environment.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
It largely contributes to the objectives of fostering a country's competitive capabilities and attractiveness as an economic location.	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
Economic policy largely provides a reliable economic environment and supports the objectives of fostering a country's competitive capabilities and attractiveness as an economic location.	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
Economic policy somewhat contributes to providing a reliable economic environment and helps to a certain degree in fostering a country's competitive capabilities and attractiveness as an economic location.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
Economic policy mainly acts in discretionary ways essentially destabilizing the economic environment. There is little coordination in the set-up of economic policy institutions. Economic policy generally fails in fostering a country's competitive capabilities and attractiveness as an economic location.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

President Lee Myung-bak was elected as an “economic” or “CEO president,” which represented a stark contrast to previous elections in which economic policies played little role. According to OECD data, South Korea showed one of the OECD group’s strongest recoveries from the 2008 global recession, laying the foundation for solid subsequent growth even if cuts are made in government spending. At the core of Lee’s economic revitalization policy was his so-called Korea 747 plan – to ensure 7% economic growth during his term, to raise Korea’s per capita income to \$40,000 and make Korea the world’s seventh-largest economy. Moreover, a major strategic change under the Lee administration has been to foster innovation in the “green economy.” Thus, the government is supporting innovations in fields it considers green, such as river restoration, solar energy, LED lighting, electric vehicles and nuclear power. Lee’s economic policies can be described as business friendly, with a focus on large companies and economic stimulus through construction projects. The government has also stimulated exports by allowing a dramatic devaluation of the Korean currency against the dollar, totaling almost 40% between early 2008 and early 2009. In 2008, ten years after the Asian financial crisis, the global financial crisis and the dramatic devaluation of the Korean won almost led to a new debt crisis. But while the government was initially hesitant, it quickly followed the lead of international attempts to provide liquidity to the financial system, implementing a large stimulus package of 6.1% of GDP in 2008, the largest such stimulus in the OECD. The government maintained an expansionary economic policy stance leading to the important election year 2012 where a new parliament (April) and a new president (December) is elected. With respect to macroeconomic policy, inflation became a concern amid increasing consumer prices. In 2011, consumer price inflation rose to 4% despite a government change in method to calculate inflation (with the old method inflation would have been 4.4%). Despite inflation concerns, there have been no attempts to introduce tighter

monetary and fiscal policies. Instead, the government chose a corporatist strategy by attempting to persuade big companies to lower their prices. The government has also done little to arrest real-estate speculation or high real-estate prices, both of which remain sources of substantial concern in Korea. The focus on an export-oriented and construction-driven recovery remains risky. This strategy makes Korea vulnerable to protectionist backlashes, and prevents an adjustment of the country's oversized construction sector. To counter these threats, the Korean government has signed trade agreements with the European Union and the United States that came into effect in 2011 and 2012.

Citation: OECD, Employment Outlook 2009 – How does KOREA compare?

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/34/43707086.pdf>

Bloomberg Businessweek, South Korea's Economy Expanded More Than Estimated, June 3, 2010,

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-06-03/south-korea-s-economy-expanded-more-than-estimated-update1-.html>

"Gov't struggling to find anti-inflation steps that stick", The Korea Times, Jan 10, 2012

S 6.1 Labor Market Policy

How effectively does labor market policy in your country address unemployment?

This question addresses a government's strategies to reconcile the following objectives: unemployment reduction and job security, and balancing supply and demand on the labor market by providing sufficient mobility of the labor force according to the needs of potential employers. To assess labor market policy comprehensively, special emphasis should be placed on the positive or detrimental effects resulting from labor market regulation (e.g., dismissal protection, minimum wages, collective agreements) and from the modus operandi of unemployment insurance.

Successful strategies ensure unemployment is not a serious threat.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Labor market policies have been more or less successful.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Strategies against unemployment have shown little or no significant success.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Labor market policies have been unsuccessful and unemployment has risen.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Labor market policies have successfully kept the unemployment rate at about half the OECD average, although the jobless rate edged up to 3.7% in 2010 and youth unemployment remains relatively high at 9.8%. However, the increase in unemployment during the global economic crisis was lower in South Korea than in most other OECD countries. This comparatively good performance can be attributed to the effects of a massive fiscal stimulus package (the largest in the OECD), export competitiveness due to massive currency devaluation, and corporatist arrangements that traded wage restraints for job security. On the other hand, labor market policies have been less successful in preventing the proliferation of precarious working conditions and irregular employment. This problem is particularly severe for young college graduates, who have been dubbed the “88 generation” because they cannot get regular jobs, and their first irregular job or internship typically pays about KRW 880,000 (approximately \$800 dollars) a month. The government actively supports an internship program for college graduates, but these internships are unlikely to open paths to regular employment. The rate of work-related accidents in Korea is also among the highest in the OECD, pointing to lax enforcement of security standards by the government. The overall employment rate of 58% remains below the OECD average, due to low levels of employment among women and the lack of effectiveness of government measures designed to address this problem. Consequently many of the unemployed are discouraged and stop looking for jobs, exiting the labor market altogether.

Citation:

OECD, Employment Outlook 2009 – How does KOREA compare?

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/62/34/43707086.pdf>

OECD, Employment Outlook 2011,

http://www.oecd.org/document/46/0,3746,en_2649_33729_40401454_1_1_1_1,00.html

S 7.1 Enterprise Policy

How successful has enterprise policy been in fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and economic competitiveness, and in stimulating private investment?

Private investment includes not only the acquisition of capital stock, but also entrepreneurial transactions aimed at investment, such as developing human capital, the restructuring of companies, establishing new companies, etc.

Enterprise policy has been successful in achieving the objectives of fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and economic competitiveness, and stimulating private investment. **10** ☐

9 ☐

Enterprise policy has largely achieved these four objectives. **8** ☐

7 ☐

6 ☒

Enterprise policy has partly achieved these four objectives. **5** ☐

4 ☐

3 ☐

Enterprise policy has not achieved the objectives of fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and economic competitiveness, and stimulating private investment. **2** ☐

1 ☐

Enterprise policies have been partly successful in achieving their objectives, as a wave of bankruptcies of large companies, as took place during the Asian financial crisis, has thus far been prevented. The large fiscal stimulus and the devaluation of the currency proved particularly beneficial to large companies with strong exports. On the other hand, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were struck very hard by the crisis, and bankruptcies were rampant. Thus, the already huge gap between big companies and SMEs is widening. More generally, the dominance of large conglomerates impedes entrepreneurship and the foundation of new companies. Since the mid-2000s, various administrations have attempted to facilitate productivity enhancements in the SME sector through the use of investment tax credits. In his 2010 liberation day speech, President Lee announced the goal of a “fair society” in which chaebol give SMEs breathing space. His administration has also actively pressed the chaebol to exit some business areas designated as suitable for SMEs. As a result some conglomerates have closed baked good subsidiaries and wine import businesses. In addition, generous personal and corporate income tax deductions were offered in an attempt to nurture the establishment of SMEs outside the Seoul metropolitan area, but without much success. Corruption and unaccountable corporate governance remains a big problem in South Korea. In the last two years, numerous corporate scandals involving family controlled conglomerates (chaebols) have come to light. In a recent article, *The Economist* blamed bad corporate governance for the continuous “Korea discount,” that is, Korean companies’ low stock market value in relation to their profits. Others, however, argue that it is exactly the swift decisions made by family owners not slowed by accountability mechanisms that have allowed Korean technology companies to prosper. The government also uses the entry of foreign competitors to force domestic companies to innovate. For example, it waived telecom regulations to allow the Apple iPhone into the Korean market in early 2010, seeking to force Korean cell phone makers to improve their own smartphone technology. Yet despite strong efforts by the government, the oligopolistic structure of the Korean market renders the investment climate for foreign direct investment (FDI) difficult.

Citation:

“Chaebol not giving SMEs breathing space”, Korea Joong Ang Daily, Feb 29, 2012

“Bakers and chaebol in South Korea. Let them eat cake. A half-baked effort to curb the conglomerates”, *The Economist*, Feb 4th 2012.

“Is transparency possible in chaebol?”, *The Korea Times*, March 17, 2012

“Chaebol heads at the root of the problem”, *The Hankyoreh*, March 16, 2012

“The Korea discount. Minority report. Corporate governance explains South Korea’s low stockmarket ratings”, *The Economist*, Feb 11, 2012

To what extent does taxation policy realize goals of equity, competitiveness and the generation of sufficient public revenues?

The objectives of justice and allocative efficiency suggest that taxation policies do not discriminate between different groups of economic actors with similar tax-paying abilities, such as corporate and personal income taxpayers (horizontal equity). Tax systems should also impose higher taxes on persons or companies with a greater ability to pay taxes (vertical equity). Tax rates and modalities should improve or at least not weaken a country's competitive position. However, tax revenues should be sufficient to ensure the long-term financing of public services and infrastructure. "Sufficiency" does not assume any specific ideal level of public expenditure, but refers only to the relationship between public revenues and expenditures.

Taxation policies are equitable, competitive and generate sufficient public revenues.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Taxation policies fail to achieve one of the three principles.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Taxation policies fail to achieve two of the three principles.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Taxation policies fail to realize the following three principles: equity, competitiveness and the generation of sufficient public revenues.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The Korean tax system is fairly effective in generating sufficient public revenues without weakening the competitive position of the national economy. Tax instruments are used to nurture FDI, R&D and human resources development. Its main weakness, however, is equity. Compared to other OECD countries, the tax burden in Korea is very low. As of 2009, tax revenue was about 20% of GDP (this rises to 27% if social security contributions are included). Tax revenue has been growing slowly, and is likely to increase further, as social security contributions have increased relatively fast since the middle of 1990 and will likely continue to do so. In comparison with other OECD countries, Korea also has a low tax burden on labor income. The average tax wedge (average income tax plus employee and employer social security contributions minus cash transfers, as a percentage of total labor costs) was below the OECD average for all households in 2009. As of 2009, there were 14 national taxes and 15 local taxes. Local tax represents about 20% of total tax revenue. Direct tax (personal income taxes (PIT) and corporate income taxes (CIT)) revenue share is about 40%; indirect taxes (especially VAT) are responsible for about 55% of national tax revenues. The share of total taxes accounted for by personal income taxes and social security contributions is the lowest among OECD countries, but Korea's corporate income tax share is among the highest. Distribution of the PIT tax burden in Korea is comparable to that in the United States. CIT payment is fairly concentrated, with about 1,000 companies (0.3% of the total) paying 75% of the country's total CIT. Taxes raise revenues adequate to the government's needs, and do not impede competitiveness. Korea has one of the lowest tax rates in the OECD. Although taxes on business are relatively high compared to personal income taxes, they do not seem to reduce overall competitiveness. The strong reliance on the value added tax gives the tax system an inequitable, regressive nature and lessens its ability to improve equity. One of the major reasons for the weak income tax base is the relatively high number of self-employed individuals, and the low levels of income tax paid by this group; another is the sizable income-tax deduction for wages and salaries. However, in the last four years, the Lee administration has further weakened the ability of the tax system to achieve equity by reducing progressive income taxes and real-estate taxes paid by the relatively wealthy. Since late 2011, the discussion has slightly shifted as the government failed to further deliver on tax reductions for the wealthy due to opposition. In January 2012, the parliament increase taxes on those earning more than KRW 300 million (\$259,000) and, despite opposition among many ruling party members and the government, also passed the "Korean Buffett Tax." Taxes on problematic items such as energy or cigarettes remain relatively low, and the government has so far failed to even address environmental tax reform.

Citation:

National Tax Service 2009 (Statistical yearbook of national tax), Korea.

OECD, 2006, Tax Administration in OECD and Selected Non-OECD Countries. Comparative Information Series.

Kim, Jyunghun, 2008: Tax policy in Korea: Recent changes and key issues, Seoul: Korea Institute of Public Finance, unpublished paper.

OECD 2009, Reforming the tax system in Korea to promote economic growth and cope with rapid population ageing, http://www.oecd.org/topicdocumentlist/0,3448,en_33873108_33873555_1_1_1_1_37427,00.html

"Korean Buffett tax` passed despite ruling party chief's opposition", The Dong-A Ilbo, Jan 2, 2012

"Tax cuts for wealthy shelved", The Korea Times, Sep 7, 2011

To what extent does budgetary policy realize the goal of fiscal sustainability?

This question focuses on the aggregate of public budgets and does not assess whether budgets reflect government priorities or induce departments to manage efficiently. Sustainable budgeting should enable a government to pay its financial obligations (solvency), sustain economic growth, meet future obligations with existing tax burdens (stable taxes) and pay current obligations without shifting the cost to future generations (inter-generational fairness).

Budgetary policy is fiscally sustainable.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Budgetary policy achieves most standards of fiscal sustainability.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Budgetary policy achieves some standards of fiscal sustainability.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Budgetary policy is fiscally unsustainable.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Korea's budget policies appear to remain sound, at least on the national level. Among the OECD countries, Korea has one of the lowest levels of public debt and public expenditure. The official debt-to-GDP ratio in Korea is only 32%. Some researchers, however, argue that huge amounts of government debt are hidden in state-owned companies and, according to estimates by the Naumann Foundation in Seoul, government debt could total three times the official figure.

The government has been remarkably pragmatic in abandoning what traditionally had been very conservative fiscal policies, implementing the OECD's largest fiscal stimulus during the global economic crisis in an attempt to sustain economic growth. The country's budgetary soundness was favorably assessed in the OECD's March report "Preparing Fiscal Consolidation." The year 2009 was the only year since the beginning of the global economic crisis in 2008 that Korea recorded a budget deficit, and it is projected to run surpluses in 2012 and 2013. On the other hand, low overall government spending raises the question as to whether the South Korean government, given the country's maturing economy and aging society, is prepared to assume greater responsibility for issues such as social security and education. The recent shift in government spending toward construction projects might also create short-term growth at the expense of long-term debt burden. Indeed, criticisms of major construction projects like the "four river restoration" as a waste of taxpayer money have grown in the last two years.

On the local level, budget problems have worsened mostly due to prestige construction projects without much economic benefits. In 2010, the municipal government of Seongnam city was the first to declare a moratorium on its debt payments. In early 2012, Incheon, Korea's third largest city, also ran into financial difficulties.

Citation:

OECD 2010, Preparing fiscal consolidation, Paris,

http://www.oecd.org/document/23/0,3343,en_2649_34595_44829143_1_1_1_1,00.html

OECD, OECD Economic Outlook No. 87, May 2010.

"In financial pinch, Incheon under pressure to downscale Asiad plan", The Korea Times, April 4, 2012

Klitz, Walter, "Korea kaempft mit dem Defizit", Naumann Stiftung Seoul,

http://www.freiheit.org/files/62/N_8_Korea_kaempft_mit_dem_Defizit.pdf

How effective and efficient are health care policies in your country?

Public health care policies should aim at providing high-quality health care for the largest possible share of the population and at the lowest possible costs.

Of the three criteria – quality, inclusiveness and cost efficiency – efficiency should be given less weight if the first two criteria can be considered fulfilled.

Health care policies provide high-quality health care for a majority of the population and services are efficiently organized.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Health care policies provide high-quality health care for a majority of the population, but services are inefficiently organized.	8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Health care policies provide poor-quality health care for a majority of the population and services are inefficiently organized.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Health care policies provide poor-quality health care for a majority of the population. Health care services are underfinanced, overloaded, unreliable and inefficiently organized.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

There were no major changes in the health care system during the period under review. Korea has a high-quality and inclusive medical system, and has the OECD's highest increase in life expectancy, a rise of 27 years since 1960. This success was achieved despite the second-lowest ratio of doctors per capita ratio, and a nurse per capita ratio far below the OECD average, although the latter situation has improved in recent years. Health spending per person has grown significantly over the past decade, but at 6.9% of GDP remains lower than OECD average (9.5%). The public sector provides slightly more than half of all health care funding. The universal health insurance system has relatively low premiums but high copayments. Koreans can freely choose doctors, including service at most privately owned clinics, but the scope of coverage of medical procedures is narrower than in most European countries. Out of pocket payments account for 32% of all health expenditure. High copayments have the problematic effect that access to medical services depends on personal wealth.

Citation: OECD Health Data 2009 - Country notes Korea, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/10/38979986.pdf>

OECD Health Data 2011 - Country notes Korea, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/46/10/38979986.pdf>

To what extent does social policy in your country prevent exclusion and decoupling from society?

Reducing the various risks of social exclusion is a core task of social policy. The prevention of poverty and the provision of enabling conditions for equal opportunity in society are essential elements of such a policy. In addition to poverty, please take also into account additional dimensions of exclusion like the experience of marginalization and the desire to be appreciated when evaluating socioeconomic disparities.

Policies very effectively enable societal inclusion and ensure equal opportunities.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
For the most part, policies enable societal inclusion effectively and ensure equal opportunities.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
For the most part, policies fail to prevent societal exclusion effectively and ensure equal opportunities.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Policies exacerbate unequal opportunities and exclusion from society.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The gap between rich and poor has widened further during the last two years, and criticism of the government's lack of action on this issue is growing in strength. The Korean welfare system is not designed to reduce inequality, and the very low level of social transfer payments limit its capacity to prevent poverty. These small payments force unemployed individuals to accept any job offer, even for wages much lower than their previous employment. This explains why Korea has the highest share of working poor in the OECD. The welfare system also depends on family-based security, in which parents are willing to support their children even after completion of a university degree. In Korea, it is also common that the more well-off members of a group (e.g., colleagues, friends, high school alumni, etc.) invite less-fortunate members to participate in social activities. However, in Korea's increasingly money- and consumption-oriented society, poverty is becoming a source of shame, which partly explains the low levels of life satisfaction in Korea. In the past two years, the Lee administration has shown little enthusiasm for the previous government's plan to transform Korea into a modern welfare state. Rather, Lee has sought to solve social problems through high growth rates and job creation linked to public work programs and infrastructure projects. Since 2011, however, the discussion has slowly evolved in the run-up to the 2012 elections. Unsurprisingly, Park Geun Hye, the new leader of the renamed governing party (Saenuri) and likely presidential nominee, has put welfare high on the governing party's agenda.

South Korea has worrisome problems integrating the recent massive influx of destitute North Korean defectors into its workforce. Available data on the integration of North Korean defectors and other indicators underscore this group's marginalization in the primary labor market.

Citation:

Bidet, Eric, 2009: Social Capital and Work Integration of Migrants: The Case of North Korean Defectors in South Korea, *Asian Perspective* 33(2), 2009

To what extent do family support policies in your country enable women to combine parenting with participation in the labor market?

Traditional family patterns confine mothers to opt out of gainful employment and focus on household and child care work, a division of roles that has lost acceptance among an increasing number of women. This question is based on the assumption that an optimal system of family support should enable women to decide freely whether and when they want to remain full-time mothers or take up full- or part time employment.

Family support policies effectively enable women to combine parenting with employment.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Family support policies provide some support for women who want to combine parenting and employment.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Family support policies provide only few opportunities for women who want to combine parenting and employment.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Family support policies force most women to opt for either parenting or employment.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

As with preceding governments, the Lee administration has not been very effective in enabling women to combine parenting with participation in the labor market. This can be seen in the country's low fertility rate as well as in women's low labor-market participation rate. The traditional Confucian family values that view women as mothers and housewives remain strongly influential. High housing and education costs are the most important factors in young couples' decision not to have children. In recent years, the government has been alarmed by the dramatic drop in fertility, and various policies are under way or under discussion; however, most policies adopted thus far have proved inadequate in helping women combine employment and parenthood. For example, the government is currently discussing the introduction of a child benefit system and hand out vouchers for kindergarden fees to parents. As a result of the discussion, the kindergarden industry is booming in Korea right now. There have also been more controversial reactions to the low fertility rate. For example, the government has started cracking down on abortions, which are illegal in South Korea but had been tolerated since the 1970s, when Korea was trying to bring down its birth rate.

Citation:

New York Times, 5 January 2010

Kim Sangmook, 2008, Women and family-friendly policies in the Korean government, *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 74, No. 3, 463-476.

To what extent does pension policy in your country realize goals of poverty prevention, inter-generational equity and fiscal sustainability?

An optimal pension system should prevent poverty among the elderly due to retirement and should be based on distributional principles that do not erode the system's fiscal stability. It should ensure equity among pensioners, the active labor force and the adolescent generation. These objectives may be achieved by different pension systems: exclusively public pension systems, a mixture of public and private pension schemes, or publicly subsidized private pension plans. Accumulating public and private implicit pension debt is undesirable.

The pension policy is fiscally sustainable, guarantees inter-generational equity and effectively prevents poverty caused by old age.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The pension policy fails to realize one of these three principles.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The pension policy fails to realize two of these three principles.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The pension policy is fiscally unsustainable, does not effectively prevent old-age poverty and fails to achieve inter-generational equity.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The average age of Korea's population is rising much faster than is the case in many other OECD countries. The share of the population 65 years old or more will increase from 7% in 2000 to 37% in 2050. This relatively quick demographic shift is taking place in part because Korea has been very successful in reducing infant mortality rates and increasing life expectancy, while failing to maintain birth rates near the replacement rate. Since 1996, the fertility rate has dropped from 1.6 babies per woman, just below the OECD average, to 1.15 children per woman. Korea now has the lowest birth rate of any OECD country and one of the lowest in the world. Old age remains a major source of poverty in Korea, as pension payments are low and most older people today lack coverage under a pension system that did not cover a large share of the working force until expansion of the program in 1999. The government has also failed to enforce mandatory participation in the system, and many employers fail to register their employees for participation. The pension system is currently fiscally sustainable and needs only small subsidies. This is because the pension system is organized in the form of a pension fund, and contributors currently far outnumber pension recipients. However, given the risks involved in pension funds, it is not clear what level of subsidies the fund will require once the contributors who have entered since 1999 retire. Three older and much smaller pension funds for government employees, military personnel and teachers are already running deficits and have to be subsidized by the government. Given the low fertility rate and the aging of Korea's society, the country's pension funds will almost certainly need more subsidies in the future. Korea's pension funds also seem to be vulnerable to government interference. For example, in 2008 the government told the National Pension Fund to invest a larger share of its assets in Korean stocks, seeking to stabilize the stock market during the global financial crisis.

How effectively do policies in your country support the integration of migrants into society?

This question covers integration-related policies comprising a wide array of cultural, education and social policies insofar as they affect the status of migrants or migrant communities in society. The objective of integration precludes forced assimilation but favors integration by acquisition of nationality.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Cultural, education and social policies effectively support the integration of migrants into society. | 10 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| Cultural, education and social policies seek to integrate migrants into society, but have failed to do so effectively. | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| Cultural, education and social policies do not focus on integrating migrants into society. | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| Cultural, education and social policies segregate migrant communities from the majority society. | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> |

Since the 1990s, South Korea has attracted increasingly more immigrants and become a migration destination country rather than a source of out-migration. Driven by increasing demand for cheap labor, generational change and a shortage of women in rural areas, the number of foreign residents has increased considerably. In 2010, 82,000 foreign nationals moved to Korea and the total number reached 1.2 million overseas nationals. Most migrants came from China, followed by Vietnam, the United States, Uzbekistan and Cambodia. In August 2005, parliament passed the “Public Official Election Act,” a suffrage law that allowed foreign residents to vote in local elections alongside Korean citizens. South Korea currently remains the only Asian country which grants voting rights to non-citizens. In recent years, Korea has made it easier for migrants to receive permanent resident status and even citizenship, particularly for highly skilled migrants. In the 2012 parliamentary election, 110,000 naturalized citizens were allowed to vote and Jasmin Lee (Saenuri), became the first naturalized member of the Korean parliament.

To apply for Korean citizenship, an individual must have resided in Korea for more than five consecutive years, be legally an adult, have displayed good conduct, have the ability to support himself or herself on the basis of his or her own assets or skills (or be a dependent member of a family) and have basic knowledge befitting a Korean national (i.e., an understanding of Korea’s language, customs and culture). In April 2010, the Korean parliament also passed a law that allows dual citizenship. Another relatively serious integration issue concerns the societal exclusion experienced by the foreign-born wives of Korean men (often from China, Southeast and South Asia). This population has drastically increased in recent years (about 10% of all marriages in South Korea today are international, in the sense that either bride or groom is non-Korean) and often faces cultural discrimination. Furthermore, cultural, education and social policies have yet to adapt to the fact of increasing immigration levels. While ethnic Koreans with foreign passports, foreign investors and highly educated foreigners are welcomed and treated favorably, Amnesty International reports that migrant blue-collar workers are often treated as “disposable labor.” From a legal perspective, migrant workers have very similar rights to native Korean employees, but these rights are routinely neglected by employers. While courts have offered some protection to migrant workers, the government has not pursued active enforcement measures against employers that exploit this population’s precarious status. In the early days of the global economic downturn, in September 2008, the new Korean government announced it would deport about half of all migrant workers with precarious (“irregular”) work contracts until 2012.

Citation:

Korea Times, Garibong-Dong Has Largest Number of Foreigners, 28/2/2010

“Jasmin to help Seanuri lure naturalized voters”, The Korea Times, April 8, 2012

National Statistics Office, International Migration in 2010,

<http://kostat.go.kr/portal/english/news/1/9/index.board?bmode=download&bSeq=&aSeq=249164&ord=3>

How effectively does external security and defense policy in your country protect citizens against security risks and safeguard the national interest?

This question rests on the assumption that the aims of protecting citizens against security risks and safeguarding the national interest can be achieved by many different ways and combinations of security and defense policies. In addition a combination of various domestic and external policies can achieve an effective protection against new security risks arising from threats like terrorism. On the one hand the effectiveness of these policies depend on the relation between the aims and strategies of the defence policy and the way the military forces are financed, fitted with high-tech and state-of-the-art equipment and supported by a national consensus on the desired defense policy. On the other hand the membership in collective security alliances/organizations/treaties, the internal integration of domestic intelligence communities and their cooperation with regional/international counterparts, the promotion of neighbourhood stability, conflict prevention and assistance/risk containment for failed states are necessary pre-conditions to a successful security policy. Whereas military expenditures alone say little about the effectiveness of external security policy, they have to be taken into account in order to assess the cost/benefit-ratio of these policies.

External security policy protects citizens against security risks and safeguards the national interest very effectively.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
External security policy protects citizens against security risks and safeguard the national interest more or less effectively.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
External security policy does not effectively protect citizens against security risks and safeguard the national interest.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
External security policy exacerbates the security risks and does not safeguard the national interest.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Korea's security situation remains precarious due to the lack of a peace treaty with North Korea, despite the signing of the armistice ending the Korean War 57 years ago. The militaristic and extremely nationalistic regime in North Korea remains a major threat to South Korea's security. The death of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in December 2011 and the transition of power to his son have made the situation even more unpredictable. In this environment, successive Korean governments have been relatively successful in preserving peace, albeit under clear leadership by the United States, which retains command over the Korean military in times of war. The Korean armed forces are well funded, with defense spending totaling 4.3% of GDP, the third-largest such share in the OECD. South Korea's security still depends on the presence of U.S. forces and U.S. security guarantees. The other major partner in the country's trilateral security cooperation is Japan. In the last two years the security situation has arguably weakened due to the deteriorating relationship with North Korea, North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and the northern neighbor's tests of long-range missiles. In reaction to U.N. sanctions following one of these missile tests, North Korea pulled out of the six-party talks that had been the only functional regional mechanism allowing negotiation with the communist state. The Lee administration has canceled most aid for North Korea, and suspended a tourism project after a South Korean tourist was shot by a North Korean guard for trespassing. In turn, North Korea is questioning the future of the Kaesong Industrial Park, a package of South Korean investments in North Korea. As a result, trade between the two Koreas is declining. The weakening economic ties with its northern neighbor have in turn substantially limited the South Korean government's leverage. The sinking of the South Korean corvette Cheonan in March 2010, which resulted in the deaths of 47 sailors, offered another test of the South Korean government's ability to preserve peace and stability in the region. The South Korean government and a South Korean-led international investigation group concluded that the ship was sunk by a North Korean torpedo. The exact circumstances of the sinking remain contested. The Cheonan incident has deepened concerns about the capacity of the South Korean armed forces to deal with a crisis situation. In November 2010, North Korean artillery shelled the Island of Yeonpyeong and killed two marines and two civilians. In

both cases, the vast majority of the international community showed full support for South Korea and applauded the government for its efforts in preventing further escalation.

South Korea has taken steps to initiate military exchanges with China in an effort to adapt to a changing security environment. Beyond the Korean peninsula, the South Korean government also actively participates in international cooperative efforts targeting terrorism and organized crime, and participates actively in U.N. peacekeeping missions. South Korea is also building a maritime force that includes four carrier-led battle groups capable of protecting trade routes in deep waters far from the Korean coast.

Citation: OECD, OECD Factbook 2009

How effectively does internal security policy in your country protect citizens against security risks?

This question rests on the assumption that the aims of protecting citizens against security risks like crime, terrorism and similar threats that are more and more internationally organized can be achieved by many different ways and combinations of internal security policies. For example, an effective policy includes objectives such as the internal integration of domestic intelligence and police communities and their regional cross-border cooperation with regional/international intelligence and police communities, the domestic strategy of intelligence and police communities and so on. Whereas expenditures on public order and safety alone say little about the effectiveness of internal security policy, they have to be taken into account in order to assess the cost/benefit-ratio of this policy.

Internal security policy protects citizens against security risks very effectively.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Internal security policy protects citizens against security risks more or less effectively.	8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Internal security policy does not effectively protect citizens against security risks.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Internal security policy exacerbates the security risks.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

While police statistics show a small increase in both violent crime and street crimes over the last few years, the crime rate in South Korea is low by international standards. The country has very strong gun control laws, making crimes involving firearms rare. There is no known terrorist activity in South Korea. A major concern in Korea that has not yet been effectively addressed is the spread of cybercrime, whose perpetrators take advantage of Korea's excellent broadband infrastructure and lax online security measures. Pickpocketing in tourist areas and crowded markets exist, but are much less prevalent than in Europe. Criminal perpetrators are usually deterred by the risk of confrontation and engage principally in crimes by stealth. The lax enforcement of traffic laws remains another major concern, as Korea continues to have among the OECD's highest road-fatality statistics.

Citation: OECD, OECD Factbook 2009

How effectively does environmental policy in your country protect and preserve the sustainability of natural resources and quality of the environment?

This question covers a government's activities aimed at safeguarding the environment and thereby securing the prerequisites for sustainable economic development.

Environmental policy effectively protects, preserves and enhances the sustainability of natural resources and quality of the environment.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Environmental policy largely protects and preserves the sustainability of natural resources and quality of the environment.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Environmental policy insufficiently protects and preserves the sustainability of natural resources and quality of the environment.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Environmental policy has largely failed to protect and preserve the sustainability of natural resources and quality of the environment.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental policies in South Korea are inadequate in protecting the environment or ensuring the sustainability of resources. In the last two years, contradictory trends concerning environmental policies have emerged. On the one hand, the current Lee administration has put “green growth” at the center of its agenda, and environmental policies have entered the political mainstream. The government is strongly supporting new technologies and is helping Korean companies to develop “green” products such as hybrid and electrical vehicles and LED-based lighting and displays.

On the other hand, much of this so-called green growth can be seen as simply a new name for industrial and infrastructure policies. A considerable amount of investment associated with the drive for green growth has been earmarked for the Four Rivers Project, a highly controversial project that includes the construction of artificial waterways and dams. In addition, large amounts of public funds are also being used to develop, build and export new nuclear power technology. South Korea is therefore one of the few countries that has dramatically expanded investment in nuclear power since the 2011 Fukushima catastrophe.

The Seoul government has expanded bike paths, although most of these are slated for recreational use and will therefore not reduce commuter traffic by much. Public transportation is also steadily improving, with new subway lines and a high-speed railway to the airport under construction. And although recycling, for example, is common in South Korea, other environmentally friendly practices and conservation efforts are stalling. Cars continue to be given top priority in mobility concepts, buildings tend to be poorly insulated, and the government continues to subsidize energy use. Since 2010, the government has launched an effort to reduce over-heating in the winter and over-cooling in the summer, which seems to work in public buildings and transportation, but has so far failed to facilitate a more environmentally friendly lifestyle overall.

When environmental policies conflict with business interests, environmental concerns clearly take a back seat. Despite the need to account for the costs of environmental degradation in energy prices, the Korean government actually lowered the gasoline tax in 2008 following the international rise in oil prices. South Korea has shown the OECD's largest increase in CO₂ emissions since the 1990s. Despite announcing plans in 2009 to reduce or slow the country's increase in CO₂ emissions, the government has done little to live up to this claim and join the Annex 1 parties of the Kyoto Protocol.

To what extent does research and innovation policy in your country support technological innovations that foster the creation and introduction of new products?

This question comprises subsidies and incentives for research institutions conducting basic and applied research, as well as subsidies and incentives for establishing start-up companies that transfer scientific output into products and enhanced productivity. Bureaucratic impediments to research and innovation should also be taken into account.

Research and innovation policy effectively supports innovations that foster the creation of new products and enhance productivity.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Research and innovation policy largely supports innovations that foster the creation of new products and enhance productivity.	8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Research and innovation policy partly supports innovations that foster the creation of new products and enhance productivity.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Research and innovation policy has largely failed to support innovations that foster the creation of new products and enhance productivity.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The Korean government invests heavily in research and innovation, particularly in those fields that can be directly commercialized. The green growth policy is a good example of the government's willingness to support domestic industry's research and development of new products or production techniques. The government also engages in protectionism, helping Korean companies develop indigenous technologies without facing competition. One example of this infant-stage technology protection is the requirement that all mobile phones sold in South Korea must support a particular Korean Internet platform. Such trade barriers have resulted in the complete dominance of Korean mobile phone makers in the Korean market, because it is too expensive for foreign companies to design special models just for the Korean market. In November 2009, the Korean government granted an exemption from the local requirement rule for the Apple iPhone, but the rule otherwise remains in place. The government began investing in modern telecommunication infrastructure early, although it has seemed to lose its competitive edge as other countries catch up. The ever-increasing dominance of large business conglomerates (chaebol) impedes the rise of small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as the startups that are often the source of new innovations (as opposed to incremental ones). Other weaknesses include a lack of top-notch fundamental research that is not commercially feasible. Addressing this problem, the government began funding new Institutes of Basic Science (IBS) in 2012. More generally, public R&D spending has increased substantially in the past years and accounted for 1% of GDP in 2010.

Citation: OECD, OECD Review of Innovation Policies Korea 2009
Institute of Basic Science, <http://www.ibs.re.kr>

To what extent does education policy in your country deliver high-quality, efficient and equitable education and training?

This question assesses the extent to which a government's education policy facilitates high-quality learning that contributes to personal development, sustainable economic growth and social cohesion. Your response should focus on the following, irrespective of the education system's organization: the contribution of education policy towards providing a skilled labor force, the graduate output of upper secondary and tertiary education, and (equitable) access to education. While the latter pertains to issues of fairness and distributive justice, it also has implications for a country's international competitiveness as unequal education implies a waste of human potential.

Education policy effectively delivers efficient and equitable education and training.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Education policy largely delivers high-quality, efficient and equitable education and training.	8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Education policy partly delivers high-quality, efficient and equitable education and training.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Education policy largely fails to deliver high-quality, efficient and equitable education and training.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Koreans are well known for their focus on education and good performance on tests such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The country's tertiary education enrollment rate is very high. Education policies are hotly debated, and are an important priority for the government. About 16% of the general government budget is earmarked for education, considerably more than the 13% OECD average. However, the Korean government budget is small compared to other OECD countries; thus, education spending accounts for a 4.5% share of GDP, as compared to an OECD average of 4.9%. Government spending on university education is particularly low, supporting only about 10% of the student population. By contrast, private education expenditure is 2.9% of GDP, by far the highest level in the OECD and about three times the OECD average. Thus, much of the success of Korean education can be attributed to parents' willingness to pay for education rather than to public policies. Almost all parties involved in the field of higher education agree that a change in the Korean system is both necessary and of high priority. There are many complaints about the curriculum content and the authoritarian teaching styles at Korean schools and universities. A particularly controversial issue focuses on entrance exams, which critics see as a major cause of weak analytical and debating skills. Often, cramming is favored over analytic skills, discussion and creativity.

Citation:

OECD, OECD in figures 2009

OECD, Government at a Glance 2009

Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (2009), South Korea, The Hague.

Management Index

Executive Capacity

Steering Capability

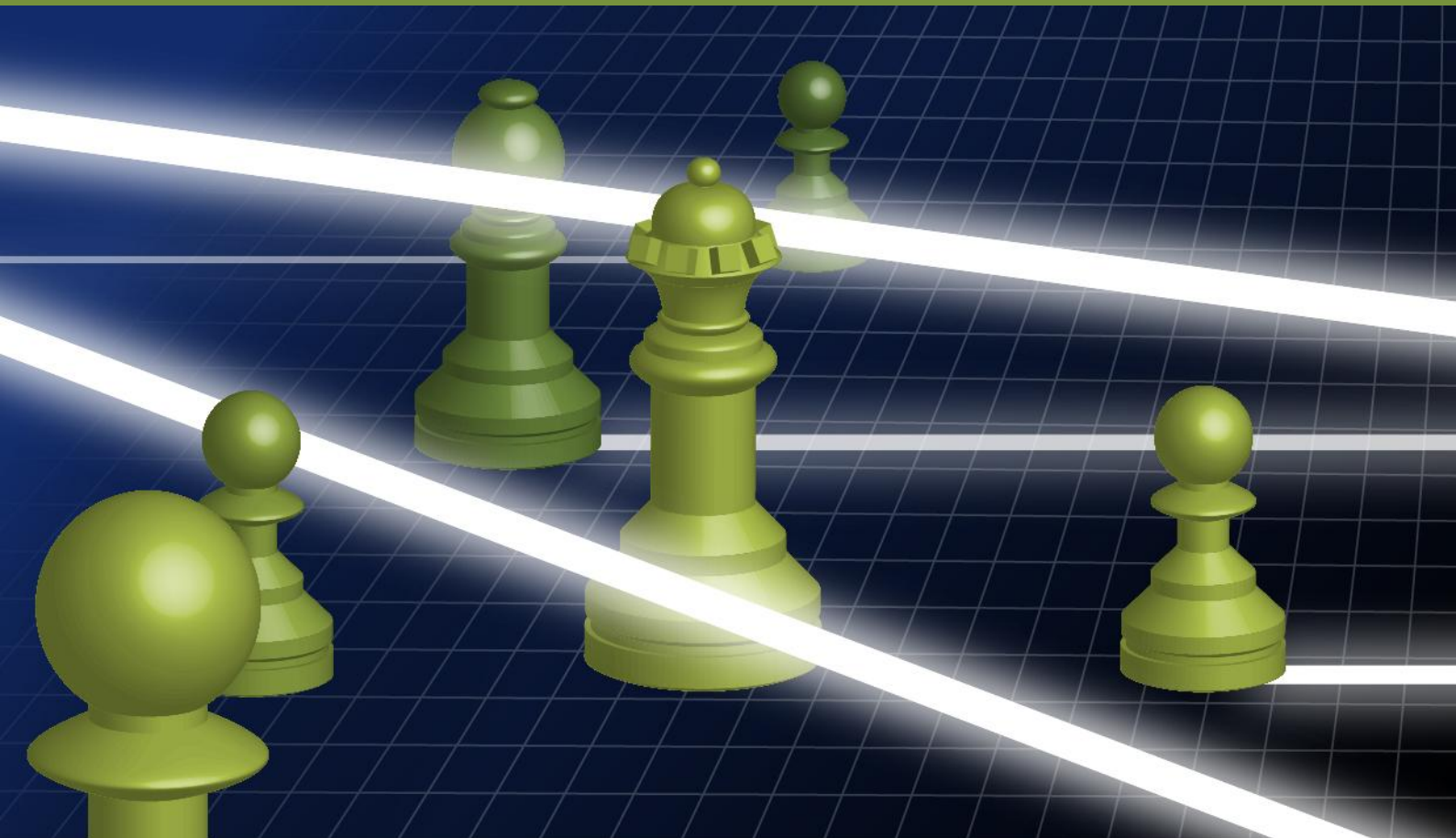
- M 1 Strategic Capacity
- M 2 Inter-ministerial Coordination
- M 3 Evidence-based Instruments
- M 4 Societal Consultation
- M 5 Policy Communication

Institutional Learning

- M 7 Adaptability
- M 8 Organizational Reform Capacity

Policy Implementation

- M 6 Effective Implementation



How much influence does strategic planning have on government decision-making?

Organizational forms of strategic planning include planning units at the center of government and personal advisory cabinets for ministers or the president/prime minister or extra-governmental bodies.

An indicator of influence may be the frequency of meetings between strategic planning staff and the head of government. Please substantiate your assessment with empirical evidence.

Dominant influence.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Considerable influence.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Modest influence.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
No influence.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Strategic planning remains an important factor in Korean governance. The content of this strategic planning has changed dramatically, from an earlier concentration on democratization, market-oriented reforms and the expansion of social security to a focus on economic growth, business-friendly policies and “green growth.” Given the strengthened position of the president and his comfortable majority in parliament, the political context for strategic planning has improved as compared with that facing the Roh administration. Compared to previous administrations, the Lee government is much more pragmatic, but also much more short-term oriented. Instead of being concerned with long-term goals, President Lee views the government as operating in a similar manner to a company, reacting pragmatically to challenges in order to remain competitive in the process of economic globalization. Within the Presidential Office, there is a Secretary to the President for Executive Planning and Management as well as a Senior Secretary to the President for National Future.

Citation:

Office of the President, Policy Goals, <http://english.president.go.kr/government/goals/goals.php>

Office of the President, Special Policies, <http://english.president.go.kr/government/special/special.php>

How influential are non-governmental academic experts for government decision-making?

An indicator of influence may be the frequency of meetings between government and external academic experts. Please substantiate your assessment with empirical evidence.

Dominant influence.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Considerable influence.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Modest influence.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
No influence.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Nongovernmental academic experts have considerable influence on government decision-making. Most observers believe that the influence of expert commissions has decreased somewhat, as President Lee has abolished many of the expert commissions established by his predecessors. However, he also created many new commissions, with a different focus. For example, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was disbanded in 2010, as planned when it was created in December 2005. However, critics claimed that the commission is being shut down because the current government is uncomfortable with scrutiny of the country's past. Others, including the commission's current president, argue that it has not been cost effective and therefore should cease work. The closure of the commission means that thousands of incidents, ranging from executions to the wartime killing of refugees, may remain uninvestigated, and that South Koreans wrongly accused of crimes against the government may lose their only chance to clear their name. On the other hand, new commissions have been empanelled, such as the G20 task force assigned the job of preparing for the G20 summit. The selection of scholars is very narrow and exclusive. The process of naming experts remains politicized, and expert commission reports and results seem to be utilized according to their political rather than their scholarly value. Beyond their work in commissions, scholars are often tapped to serve in government positions.

Citation:

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Korea, <http://www.jinsil.go.kr/English/index.asp>
Time running out on South Korea's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Stars and Strips, January 19, 2010, <http://www.stripes.com/news/time-running-out-on-south-korea-s-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-1.98156>
Truth in danger in South Korea, The Sydney Morning Herald, January 23, 2010, <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/truth-in-danger-in-south-korea-20100122-mqq5.html>

Does the government office / prime minister's office (GO / PMO) have the expertise to evaluate ministerial draft bills substantively?

This question examines whether the government office (referred to in some countries as the prime minister's office, chancellery, etc.) has capacities to evaluate the policy content of line ministry proposals. In case this question does not fully apply to the structure of relevant institutions in your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents.

The GO / PMO has comprehensive sectoral policy expertise and provides regular, independent evaluations of draft bills for the cabinet / prime minister. These assessments are guided exclusively by the government's strategic and budgetary priorities.

10 ☐9 ☐

The GO / PMO has sectoral policy expertise and evaluates important draft bills.

8 ☐7 ☒6 ☐

The GO / PMO can rely on some sectoral policy expertise, but does not evaluate draft bills.

5 ☐4 ☐3 ☐

The GO / PMO does not have any sectoral policy expertise. Its role is limited to collecting, registering and circulating documents submitted for cabinet meetings.

2 ☐1 ☐

South Korea's presidential system has a dual executive structure, with the president serving both as head of state and head of government. The prime minister is clearly subordinate to the president and is not accountable to parliament. Political tradition, constitutional rules, the government's organizational structure and the de facto distribution of political power among the two offices allow the president and the president's office to be the dominant center of executive decision-making. The Office of the President (known as the Blue House) has the power and expertise to evaluate line ministries' draft bills. As the real power center of the Korean government, the Blue House has divisions corresponding with the various line ministry responsibilities. The Blue House is supported in its oversight role by the Prime Minister's Office and its Government Performance Evaluation Committee, as well as by public institutions such as the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA). After taking office, President Lee dramatically reduced Blue House staff, potentially weakening the office's expertise. However, many of the initially abolished positions were reinstated over time, as problems with GO expertise and implementation emerged.

Citation:

Government Performance Evaluation Committee, <http://www.psec.go.kr>

The Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA), <http://www.kipa.re.kr>

Can the government office / prime minister's office return items envisaged for the cabinet meeting on the basis of policy considerations?

Please assess whether the GO/PMO is de facto, not only legally, able to return materials on the basis of policy considerations. In case this question does not fully apply to the structure of relevant institutions in your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents.

The GO/PMO can return all/most items on policy grounds.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The GO/PMO can return some items on policy grounds.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The GO/PMO can return items on technical, formal grounds only.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The GO/PMO has no authority to return items.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The president is very powerful in the Korean constitutional system. There is extensive coordination between ministries, the prime minister's office and the Blue House in the course of planning cabinet meetings. Compared to the Roh government, President Lee concentrated more power in the Blue House, which weakened the role of the Prime Minister Office. The president presides over regular cabinet meetings and can legally and de facto return any items envisaged for the meetings as he wishes. In practice this competence is limited only by the expertise of the Blue House and the relatively smaller size of the Blue House bureaucracy. Thus, the de facto ability to return issues depends on their political importance for the president.

To what extent do line ministries have to involve the government office/prime minister's office in the preparation of policy proposals?

Please assess whether line ministries involve the GO/PMO de facto, not only legally, in the preparation of policy proposals. In case this question does not fully apply to the structure of relevant institutions in your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents.

There are interrelated capacities for coordination in the GO/PMO and line ministries.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The GO/PMO is regularly briefed on new developments affecting the preparation of policy proposals.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Consultation is rather formal and focuses on technical and drafting issues.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Consultation occurs only after proposals are fully drafted as laws.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The Korean political system has become more hierarchical in the last four years. There is less autonomy of line ministries and the relative position of the Blue House has been strengthened. Many line ministries have lost influence, been downsized or merged. The large majority of issues are settled between the line ministries and the Blue House before cabinet meetings. Cabinet meetings are limited in their function to an exchange of information, while most strategic decisions are made in the Blue House.

Citation:

Korea Times, 9 March 2009

How effectively do ministerial or cabinet committees prepare cabinet meetings?

This question studies whether cabinet committees (composed exclusively of cabinet members) or ministerial committees (composed of several ministers and individual non-cabinet members) effectively filter out or settle issues so that the cabinet can focus on strategic policy debates.

Please assess whether ministerial or cabinet committees are de facto, not only legally, able to prepare cabinet meetings. In case this question does not fully apply to the structure of relevant institutions in your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents.

The large majority of issues are reviewed and scheduled first by/for the committees.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Most of the issues are prepared by committees. Or: Issues of political or strategic importance are reviewed and scheduled by/for the committees.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
There is hardly any preparation of cabinet meetings by committees.	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
There is no preparation of cabinet meetings by committees. Or: There is no ministerial or cabinet committee.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The cabinet plays a relatively small role in the political process, as all important issues are discussed bilaterally between the Blue House and the relevant ministry. Committees are either permanent, such as the National Security Council, or created at need in response to a particular issue. Most experts believe that coordination between ministers is too weak, although the Blue House plays an increasingly active role in ensuring cooperation.

How effectively do senior ministry officials prepare cabinet meetings?

This question examines whether senior ministry officials (leading civil servants or political appointees including junior ministers below the cabinet level) effectively filter out or settle issues so that the cabinet can focus on strategic policy debates.

Please assess whether senior ministry officials are de facto, not only legally, able to prepare cabinet meetings. In case this question does not fully apply to the structure of relevant institutions in your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents.

Most issues arrive in time to be reviewed and scheduled first by/for the senior ministry officials (i.e., more than 70 percent of cabinet agenda items are prepared).	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Many of the issues are prepared by senior ministry officials (i.e., 50-70 percent of cabinet agenda items are prepared).	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
There is some preparation of cabinet meetings by senior ministry officials (i.e., less than 50 percent of cabinet agenda items are prepared).	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
There is no or hardly any preparation of cabinet meetings by senior ministry officials.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Most day-to-day government business is handled by senior ministry officials, who prepare most items for cabinet meetings in an effective way. However, as mentioned above, the cabinet's role in the political process is relatively small, as all important issues are discussed bilaterally between the Blue House and the relevant ministry.

How effectively do line ministry civil servants coordinate policy proposals?

This question refers to administrative coordination and examines to what extent civil servants of individual ministries effectively coordinate the drafting of policy proposals with other ministries so that political coordination bodies and the cabinet can focus on strategic policy debates.

In case this question does not fully apply to the structure of relevant institutions in your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents.

Most policy proposals are effectively coordinated by civil servants.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Many policy proposals are coordinated by civil servants.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
There is some coordination of policy proposals by civil servants.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
There is no or hardly any coordination of policy proposals by civil servants.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

There is some coordination between civil servants of different ministries but much of this cooperation is informal. A departmentalist attitude within ministries functions as an obstacle to coordination. Different ministries compete with their policies for support and approval from the Blue House. There is also a clear hierarchy delineating the ministries. Civil servants in important ministries such as the Ministry of Strategy and Finance look down on civil servants from ministries they see as “second-tier,” such as the Labor Ministry or the Environmental Ministry.

How effectively do informal coordination mechanisms work?

This question examines whether there are informal coordination mechanisms (examples: coalition committees, informal meetings within government or with party groups, informal meetings across levels of government) which effectively filter out or settle issues so that the cabinet can focus on strategic policy debates?

Most policy proposals are effectively coordinated by informal mechanisms.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Many policy proposals are coordinated by informal mechanisms.	8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
There is some coordination of policy proposals by informal mechanisms.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
There is no or hardly any coordination of policy proposals by informal mechanisms.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Most coordination between ministries is informal. However, it is not very effective due to the hierarchical government system. There is also a clear hierarchy structuring the ministries. Staffers at the newly created Ministry of Strategy and Finance see themselves as the elite among civil servants, and look down on other ministries. In addition, informal coordination processes tend to be plagued by nepotism and regional or peer-group loyalties (particularly among high-school and university alumni).

Does the government regularly assess the potential socioeconomic impact of the draft laws it prepares (regulatory impact assessments, RIA)?

If RIA activities are not centrally registered, please try to obtain exemplary information that is representative of the situation in your country. **Please Note: If RIA are not applied or do not exist, please give your country a score of “1” for this question AND for M3.2 and M3.3.

In case this question does not fully apply to your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents and substantiate your answer.

RIA are applied systematically to new or existing regulations, but are limited to those matching defined criteria.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
RIA are not applied systematically to study the impact of regulations.	8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
RIA are applied randomly.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
RIA are not applied or do not exist.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

There were no changes in regulatory impact assessment (RIA) policy in the period under review. RIA has been mandatory for all new regulations since 2005, and for older regulations should they be strengthened in any way. RIAs assess proposals' socioeconomic impacts and provide cost-benefit analyses. An often heard criticism is that RIA committees are not fully autonomous and often influenced by specific political and economic interests.

M 3 Evidence-based Instruments

M 3.2 Needs Analysis

To what extent do RIA analyze the purpose of and need for a regulation?

This question seeks to assess the analytical depth of RIA. Please try to obtain exemplary information that is representative of the situation in your country. In case this question does not fully apply to your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents and substantiate your answer.

RIA define the purpose of and need for a regulation in a clear, concise and specific manner.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
RIA mention the purpose of and need for a regulation, but the specification is not sufficiently clear, concise and/or well-defined.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
RIA mention the purpose of and the need for a regulation, but do not specify.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
RIA do not analyze the purpose of and the need for a regulation.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

RIAs mention the purpose and need for regulation, but focus on cost-benefit analysis of the proposal.

To what extent do RIA analyze alternative options?

This question seeks to assess the scope of RIA.

Please try to obtain exemplary information that is representative of the situation in your country. In case this question does not fully apply to your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents and substantiate your answer.

RIA analyze alternative options (including “do nothing”) and quantify the costs and benefits of the different alternatives.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
RIA highlight alternative options and consider the pros and cons of each option.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
RIA consider some alternative options.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
RIA do not analyze alternative options.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

RIAs are focused on a cost-benefit analysis of proposed regulations. They do analyze alternative options and discuss potential pros and cons, but experts say that in practice these alternatives play little role in the drafting of final regulations.

To what extent does the government consult with trade unions, employers' associations, leading business associations, religious communities, and social and environmental interest groups to support its policy?

This question assesses how successfully the government consults with economic and social actors in preparing its policy. Successful consultation is conceived here as an exchange of views and information that increases the quality of government policies and induces economic and social actors to support them.

The government successfully motivates economic and social actors to support its policy. 10 ☐
9 ☐

The government facilitates the acceptance of its policy among economic and social actors. 8 ☐
7 ☒
6 ☐

The government consults with economic and social actors. 5 ☐
4 ☐
3 ☐

The government hardly consults with any economic and social actors. 2 ☐
1 ☐

Societal consultation has deteriorated substantially since President Lee took office in 2008. The Lee administration governs in a much more hierarchical and authoritarian “CEO” style than did its predecessor, explicitly rejecting the Roh administration’s vision of a “participatory democracy.” To some extent, this is a consequence of the deepening polarization between conservatives and progressives, with NGOs and civil society groups viewed by the government as “progressive” anti-government forces. Government support for NGOs has decreased substantially, and the government has pursued a confrontational approach toward labor unions. On the other hand, individuals now have greater opportunity to register complaints and the number of complaints processed through the government’s online petition platform (www.epeople.go.kr) is steadily increasing.

The business-friendly Lee naturally has closer relationships with business interests. In May 2008, he announced the opening of a hotline for 108 selected businesspeople (including six foreign firms with domestic investments) and business associations, which they could use to call the president 24 hours a day. However, such personalized contact can hardly be termed societal consultation, even in the case of business associations.

Citation:

Korea Net, 12 May 2008, <http://www.korea.net/detail.do?guid=23383>

E-People, <http://www.epeople.go.kr>

To what extent does the government implement a coherent communication policy?

The government effectively coordinates the communication of ministries; ministries closely align their communication with government strategy.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government seeks to coordinate the communication of ministries through consultation procedures. Contradictory statements are rare, but do occur.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The ministries are responsible for informing the public within their own particular areas of competence; their statements occasionally contradict each other.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Strategic communication planning does not exist; individual ministry statements regularly contradict each other.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The government seeks to coordinate communication between ministries, but government agency statements nonetheless contradict each other frequently. The communication policies following the sinking of Korean Navy corvette Cheonan in March 2010 were subject to considerable criticism in Korea. The Coast Guard and the Ministry of National Defense gave conflicting versions of events, and contradictions were evident even within the ministry itself. Several observers, civil society activists and opposition parties criticized the government for withholding information from the public.

Citation:

JoongAng Daily 12 April 2010

To what extent can the government achieve its own policy objectives?

This question seeks to evaluate a government's implementation performance against the performance benchmarks set by the government for its own work. The assessment should therefore focus on the major policy priorities identified by a government and examine whether declared objectives could be realized.

The government can largely implement its own policy objectives.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government is partly successful in implementing its policy objectives or can implement some of its policy objectives.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government partly fails to implement its objectives or fails to implement several policy objectives.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government largely fails to implement its policy objectives.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

There are conflicting views as to the efficiency of the Korean government during the last two years. Some say that efficiency has increased due to the more authoritarian and hierarchical character of the new government as compared to the discursive and ultimately hesitant approach of Lee's predecessors. Given the strong majority held by conservatives in parliament, the government able to pass bills through parliament more easily. On the other hand, others argue that the Lee administration's accomplishments pale in comparison to his original plans. The NGO Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ) conducted an expert survey of the Lee administration's accomplishments in early 2012 in which the experts concluded that the administration accomplished "less than 40% of its promises."

More importantly, many of Lee's major policies, such as the "Grand Canal Project," have triggered substantial criticism and opposition. In the case of the new administrative city (Sejong City) that was built in South Chungcheong Province, Lee initially supported then opposed the project. He eventually supported it once again under pressure from his own party. Ministries are scheduled to move to the new city beginning in 2012.

Citation:

"Lee administration gets a failing grade on governance. Analysis by experts find Lee campaign made many empty promises", The Hankyoreh, 6 March 2012

To what extent does the organization of government ensure that ministers do not seek to realize their self-interest but face incentives to implement the government's program?

Organizational devices providing incentives for ministers include prime ministerial powers over personnel, policies or structures, coalition committees, party summits, comprehensive government programs/coalition agreements and cabinet meetings. In case this question does not fully apply to your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents and substantiate your answer.

The organization of government successfully provides strong incentives for ministers to implement the government's program.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The organization of government provides weak incentives for ministers to implement the government's program.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The organization of government partly prevents ministers from realizing departmental self-interests.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The organization of government fails to prevent ministers from realizing departmental self-interests.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Ministers in Korea do not have their own political base, and depend almost solely on support by the president. The president appoints and dismisses ministers, and cabinet reshuffles occur frequently. The average tenure of a minister in Korea is about one year, which allows ministers little independence.

How effectively does the government office / prime minister's office monitor line ministry activities?

This question assumes that effective delegation from the core executive to ministries is reflected in the monitoring of line ministry activities by the administration of the core executive. While such monitoring is not sufficient to prevent line ministries from prioritizing sectoral over government interests, the presence or absence of monitoring is taken here as a proxy of effective delegation policies. In case this question does not fully apply to your country, please answer this question according to possible functional equivalents and substantiate your answer.

The GO / PMO effectively monitors the activities of line ministries.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The GO / PMO monitors the activities of most line ministries.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The GO / PMO shadows the activities of some line ministries.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The GO / PMO does not monitor the activities of line ministries.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The offices of the president and the prime minister effectively monitor line ministry activities. The Korean government utilizes e-government software (the “policy task management system”) to monitor the implementation of policies in real time. Ministries have little leeway in policy areas that are important to the president, such as the Four Rivers Project or finance policies. In general, the Korean bureaucracy is organized in a very hierarchical way, but independence is stronger in areas that are comparatively less important for the president.

How effectively do ministries monitor the activities of executive agencies?

An effective implementation may be constrained by bureaucratic drift. To ensure that agencies act in accordance with government policies, this question assumes that ministries and their leading officials should monitor the activities of semi-autonomous executive agencies in their task area.

In federal states with few executive agencies at the central level of government, the assessment should also consider regional-level decentralized agencies acting on behalf of the federal government.

The ministries effectively monitor the activities of all executive agencies.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The ministries monitor the activities of most of the executive agencies.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The ministries monitor the activities of some executive agencies.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The ministries do not monitor the activities of executive agencies.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The ministries effectively monitor the activities of all executive agencies, and the minister is responsible for compliance. Once again, the top-down structure of the Korean government allows for effective monitoring. Agencies generally have autonomy with respect to day-to-day operations, but even these can occasionally be the subject of top-down interventions.

To what extent does the central government ensure that tasks delegated to subnational self-governments are adequately funded?

A high or low degree of decentralization as such does not constitute a meaningful indicator of executive capacity. Rather, this question focuses on the delegation problem associated with decentralization.

If the central government delegates a public task to lower levels of government (as a rule: regional self-government and in unitary states without regional self-government, local self-government), the central government needs to ensure that such tasks are adequately funded. The absence of corresponding funding sources (“unfunded mandates”) indicates a lack of responsibility and strategic design. Funding may be provided through grants (shares of centrally collected taxes) from the central budget or by endowing subnational self-governments with their own revenues.

Please note that subnational self-government refers to directly elected subnational administrative authorities with considerable discretion. The broad concept of “delegation” applied here is taken from principal-agent theory and includes independent powers of subnational self-government enshrined in the constitution. Thus, no difference is made between independent powers and those central government powers that have been delegated by laws or executive regulations to subnational self-government.

The central government enables subnational self-governments to fulfill all their delegated tasks by funding these tasks sufficiently and/or by providing adequate revenue-raising powers.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The central government enables subnational governments to fulfill most of their delegated tasks by funding these tasks sufficiently and/or by providing adequate revenue-raising powers.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The central government sometimes and deliberately shifts unfunded mandates to subnational governments.	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The central government often and deliberately shifts unfunded mandates to subnational self-governments.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

While South Korea remains a unitary political system, a rather elaborate structure of provincial, district and neighborhood governments has been in place since 1995. Local and state governments play an important role in providing services to the citizens, and account for about 15% and 45% of government spending respectively (as of 2008, the latest available data). However, local and state governments have relatively little ability to raise their own revenue. As their own sources account for only 17% and 22% of national revenues respectively, most subnational governments need substantial support from the central government, particularly outside the Seoul region. In addition, local administrations lack sufficient manpower; central government staff is often therefore delegated to subnational authorities.

Citation:

OECD, Government at a Glance 2009

OECD, Government at a Glance 2011

To what extent does central government ensure that substantial self-governments may use their constitutional scope of discretion?

As a high or low degree of decentralization as such does not constitute a meaningful indicator of executive capacity, this question takes the constitutional scope of regional self-government or, in unitary states without regional self-government, local self-government autonomy, as a point of reference.

Central government institutions are assumed to enable subnational self-governments to use this autonomy fully. Subnational autonomy may be curtailed by legal, administrative, fiscal or political measures of the central level. Such de facto centralizing policies may be deliberate or unintentional, unconstitutional or in accordance with the constitution.

The central government enables subnational self-governments to use their constitutional scope of discretion fully.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central government policies inadvertently limit the subnational self-governments' scope of discretion.	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
The central government formally respects the constitutional autonomy of subnational self-governments, but de facto narrows their scope of discretion.	5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
The central government deliberately precludes subnational self-governments from making use of their constitutionally provided autonomy.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

While autonomous local governments are protected by the constitution, there is no constitutional specification of their competencies and rights. Due to the very high dependence on transfer payments, most regional and local governments are vulnerable to interference by the central government. The reality of inadequate budgetary and functional authority in many local areas, as well as the disproportionate influence of city and provincial authorities, often leaves local administrators and governments short on revenue and effective governing capacity.

M 6 Effective Implementation

Category: Policy Implementation

M 6.3c National Standards

To what extent does central government ensure that subnational self-governments meet national standards of public services?

This question seeks to assess how central government ensures that the decentralized provision of public services complies with standards (rules, performance figures, etc.) agreed upon and set on the national level.

Central government effectively ensures that subnational self-governments meet national standards of public services.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Central government ensures largely that subnational self-governments meet national standards of public services.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Central government ensures that subnational self-governments meet national minimum standards of public services.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Central government does not ensure that subnational self-governments meet national standards of public services.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The Ministry of Public Administration and Security (MOPAS), created through a merger of predecessor agencies, is in charge of ensuring that local governments maintain national minimum standards. However, many local governments, particularly in rural areas, have a much lower professional standard than the city government of Seoul or the central government. While the provision of basic services is similar in all regions, there is a huge difference between rich (i.e., self-sufficient) regions like Seoul or in the southeast and less prosperous (i.e., dependant on transfer payments) regions in the southwest in the provision of additional services such as recreation facilities.

To what extent does the government respond to international and supranational developments by adapting domestic government structures?

Government structures include the organization of ministries, the cooperation among ministries and in cabinet, the center of government and relations with subnational levels of government. This question asks whether these structures have been adapted to address inter / supranational developments and their effects for policy formulation and policy implementation.

Please note that structural reforms are also studied in view of their role in institutional learning (question M 8.2).

The government has appropriately and effectively adapted domestic government structures to international and supranational developments.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government has largely adapted domestic government structures to international and supranational developments.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government has partly adapted domestic government structures to international and supranational developments.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government has not adapted domestic government structures.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

International and supranational developments that affect Korea directly can trigger rapid and far-reaching change. For example, Korea has reacted to the global financial and economic crisis with decisive action and massive government intervention. Global standards play a crucial role for the Korean government. Reports and criticism issued by international organizations such as the OECD or the IMF, or by partners such as the United States or the European Union, are taken very seriously. The degree of adaptability, however, depends to a large extent on compatibility with domestic political goals. For example, the Korean government is relatively less responsive to global standards in the field of labor rights or the reduction of nontariff barriers.

To what extent does the government participate in the international coordination of joint reform initiatives?

This question evaluates whether the government actively collaborates in reform initiatives promoted by international fora or organizations. The underlying assumption is that – given the transnational integration of modern states – executive capacity increasingly depends on whether a government is able to actively participate in international institutions and in shaping international policies.

Joint reform initiatives concern challenges or problems that cannot be mastered unilaterally by an individual country and that aim to facilitate international cooperation in fields such as international security, economic development, social progress, human rights issues or environmental protection.

The government actively participates in the international coordination of joint reform initiatives as often as possible.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government often participates in the international coordination of joint reform initiatives.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government selectively and sporadically participates in the international coordination of joint reform initiatives.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government does not participate in the international coordination of joint reform initiatives.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

One of the main goals of the current government is to improve South Korea's prestige in the world (Kukgyuk), and to build its soft power. The government has become considerably more active in international organizations. Korea has increased its contributions to the World Bank and the IMF, and is an active participant in the G20. In 2010, Korea chaired the G20, and organized the leaders' G20 meeting in Seoul in November 2010. Korea is also increasing its efforts in development cooperation, and became a member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 2009. In 2011, Korea hosted the OECD High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan. The country participated actively in the Copenhagen conference on climate change in 2009, although its actual commitments to reduce greenhouse gases remain weak. The Korean government has also shown little enthusiasm for G20 initiatives proposing the international coordination of financial sector regulation and taxation.

Citation:

Kalinowski, Thomas and Hyekyung Cho. 2012. Korea's search for a global role between hard economic interests and soft power. *European Journal of Development Research* 24 (2):242-260. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2012.7>.

To what extent do actors within the government monitor whether institutional arrangements of governing are appropriate?

Institutional arrangements include the rules of procedure and the work formats defined there, in particular the cabinet, the office of the head of government, the center of government, the portfolios of ministries, the advisory staffs of ministers and the head of government as well as the management of relations with parliament, governing parties, ministerial administration and public communication.

The institutional arrangements of governing are monitored regularly and effectively.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The institutional arrangements of governing are monitored regularly.	8 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The institutional arrangements of governing are selectively and sporadically monitored.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
There is no monitoring.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The Lee Myung-bak administration came to office with a clear goal of streamlining the Korean government and bureaucracy. Old institutions, procedures and attitudes were evaluated, and there was harsh criticism of real or perceived inefficiencies within the bureaucratic system. Margaret Thatcher was seen as a role model for a “small government, leaving it to the market” approach. Due to tight oversight by the Blue House, it is likely that existing institutional arrangements will remain subject to re-evaluation when they represent an obstacle to the president’s goals.

Citation:

Korea Times, 25 March 2008

To what extent does the government improve its strategic capacity by changing the institutional arrangements of governing?

For a list of institutional arrangements, see question M 8.1. Strategic capacity is the capacity to take and implement political decisions which take into account the externalities and interdependencies of policies, are based on scientific knowledge, promote common goods and represent a long-term orientation.

The government improves considerably its strategic capacity by changing its institutional arrangements.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government improves its strategic capacity by changing its institutional arrangements.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government does not improve its strategic capacity by changing its institutional arrangements.	5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The government loses strategic capacity by changing its institutional arrangements.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

There have been massive institutional reforms in the last four years, with the goal of creating a smaller and more efficient government. Many agencies and ministries have been merged, renamed and downsized. For example, through the merger of the Ministry of Finance and Economy and the Ministry of Planning and Budget, President Lee created a new superministry, the Ministry of Strategy and Finance. However, it is too early to say whether the goal of creating a “small and efficient government” will be successful or not. Some of the reforms proved not to be successful; the reorganization and downsizing of Blue House staff, for example, ultimately led to the reinstatement of several previously abolished positions (such as the senior officer for public relations). However, most experts believe that the merger of ministries and agencies will yield some synergies.

Management Index

Executive Accountability

Citizens

M 9 Citizens' Participatory Competence

Legislature

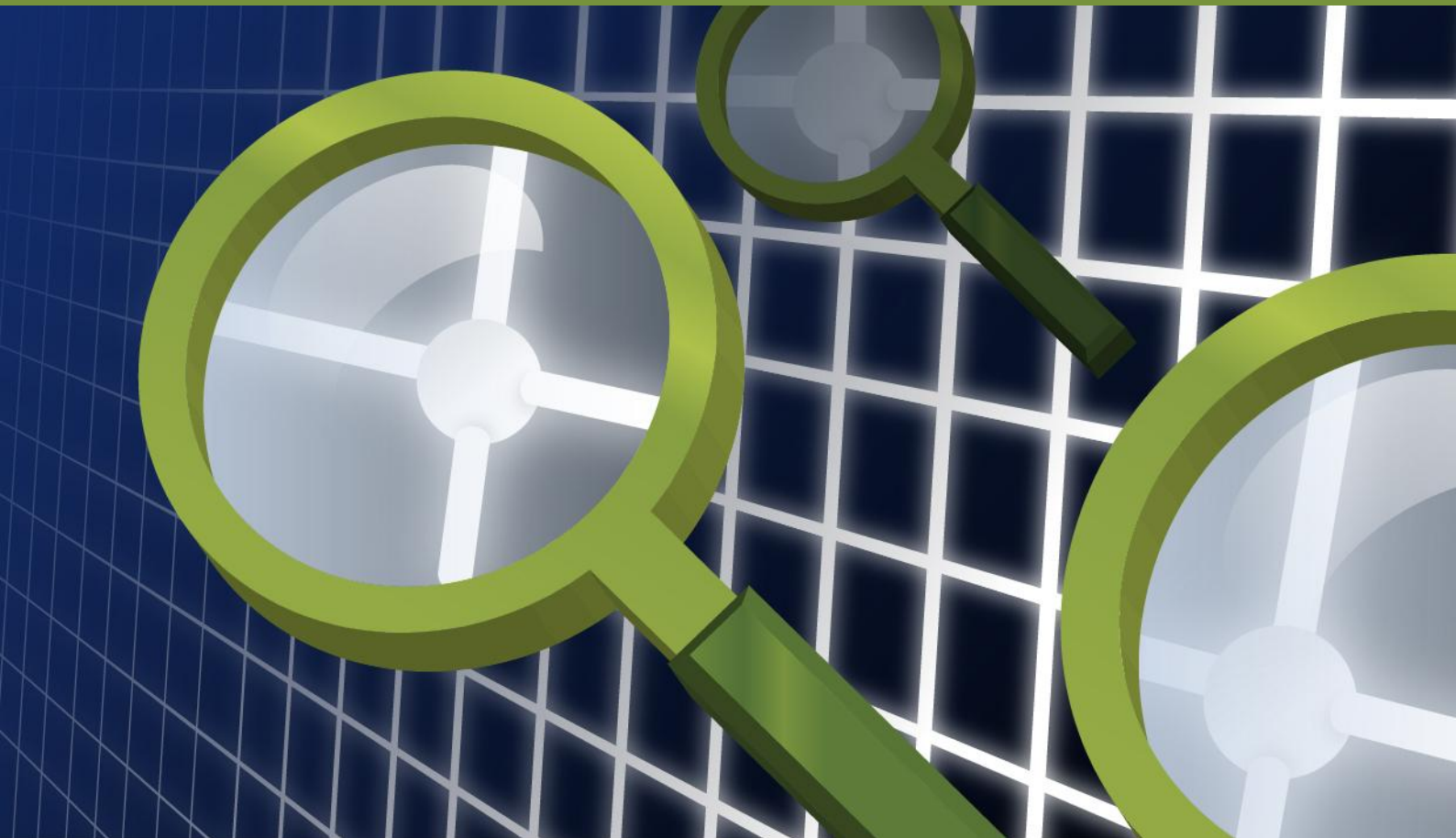
M 10 Structures and Resources of Parliamentary Actors

M 11 Parliamentary Accountability and Oversight

Intermediary Organizations

M 12 Media

M 13 Parties and Interest Associations



To what extent are citizens informed of government policy-making?

This question assesses the extent to which citizens have information and knowledge enabling them to evaluate government policy-making adequately. The question focuses on policies, not the personnel or political composition of government or the power struggles that often dominate government. A high level of information about policies presupposes that citizens understand the motives, objectives, effects and implications of policies.

Please rely on local opinion survey data to substantiate your evaluation.

Most citizens are well-informed of a broad range of government policies.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Many citizens are well-informed of individual government policies.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Few citizens are well-informed of government policies; most citizens have only a rudimentary knowledge of policies.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Most citizens are not aware of government policies.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Many citizens are well informed of the details of a few hotly debated government policies. However, the level of public knowledge is much lower when it comes to many other important policy fields, particularly in the economic and social realms. The quality of information available is often limited, because political questions are often personalized, and thus interpreted as power struggles between ambitious individuals. The political spectrum remains very narrow, limiting the scope of political discussion and making it hard for citizens to develop their own opinion. The low trust in government announcements and in the mainstream media provides fertile ground for the spread of rumors. There are generational differences: The generation that grew up during the Korean War filters information through an anticommunist lens. The generation socialized during the struggle for democracy is highly politicized and has a general mistrust of the government, while the younger generation is less politicized and less informed about political issues.

M 10 Structures and Resources of Legislative Actors

Category: Legislature

M 10.1 Number of Committees

How many parliamentary committees are there?

The underlying assumption is that a parliament with a sufficient number of committees is better able to discuss bills, whereas too many committees may lead to fragmentation. Based on comparative studies, 12 – 18 committees are considered optimal. Please consider only regular parliamentary committees, not committees established ad hoc to investigate specific questions.

Total parliamentary committees:

*No information
available*

How many members does a parliamentary (sub-)committee have on average?

It is assumed that parliamentary committees can best respond to their task of control if they have neither too many nor too few members. Based on comparative studies, 13-25 committee members are considered optimal.

Please consider only regular parliamentary committees, not committees established ad hoc to investigate specific questions.

Average number of committee members:

*No information
available*

Where subcommittees exist, average number of subcommittee members:

*No information
available*

M 10 Structures and Resources of Legislative Actors

Category: Legislature

M 10.3 Pro-Government Committee Chairs

How many committee chairpersons nominated by the governing party (or parties) are appointed?

This question addresses the influence of governing parties in parliament. Please consider only regular parliamentary committees, not committees established ad hoc to investigate specific questions.

Total nominated / appointed committee chairpersons:

*No information
available*

M 10.4 Deputy Expert Staff

How large, on average, is the deputy's expert support staff?

This question seeks to measure the capacities of parliamentary deputies.

Expert support staff size:

*No information
available*

M 10.6 Legislature's Expert Staff

How many expert support staff members work for the legislature (including legislature's library)?

This question seeks to measure the capacities of the parliament.

Total parliamentary expert support staff:

*No information
available*

M 11.2 Obtaining Documents

Are parliamentary committees able to ask for government documents?

Please assess whether parliamentary committees are de facto, not only legally, able to obtain the documents they desire from government. Specify if you consider the rights of committees limited. This question considers regular parliamentary committees only, not committees established ad hoc to investigate specific questions.

Parliamentary committees may ask for most or all government documents; they are normally delivered in full and within an appropriate time frame.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The rights of parliamentary committees to ask for government documents are slightly limited; some important documents are not delivered or are delivered incomplete or arrive too late to enable the committee to react appropriately.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The rights of parliamentary committees to ask for government documents are considerably limited; most important documents are not delivered or delivered incomplete or arrive too late to enable the committee to react appropriately.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Parliamentary committees may not ask for government documents.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Parliamentary committees are able, legally and in practice, to obtain documents they desire from the government. The government is required to deliver these documents within 10 days of a request. However, documents pertaining to commercial information or certain aspects of national security can be withheld from the parliament.

Are parliamentary committees able to summon ministers for hearings?

Please assess whether parliamentary committees are de facto, not only legally, able to summon ministers to committee meetings and to confront them with their questions. Please specify if you consider the rights of committees limited. This question considers regular parliamentary committees only, not committees established ad hoc to investigate specific questions.

Parliamentary committees may summon ministers. Ministers regularly follow invitations and are obliged to answer questions.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The rights of parliamentary committees to summon ministers are slightly limited; ministers occasionally refuse to follow invitations or to answer questions.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The rights of parliamentary committees to summon ministers are considerably limited; ministers frequently refuse to follow invitations or to answer questions.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Parliamentary committees may not summon ministers.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The parliament has the constitutional right to summon ministers for participation in hearings. This right is frequently exercised. Regular investigation of government affairs by the parliament is effective in monitoring ministers.

M 11.4 **Summoning Experts**

Are parliamentary committees able to summon experts for committee meetings?

Please assess whether parliamentary committees are de facto, not only legally, able to invite experts to committee meetings. Please specify if you consider the rights of committees limited. This question considers regular parliamentary committees only, not committees established ad hoc to investigate specific questions.

Parliamentary committees may summon experts.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The rights of parliamentary committees to summon experts are slightly limited.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
The rights of parliamentary committees to summon experts are considerably limited.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Parliamentary committees may not summon experts.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

Parliamentary committees are able, legally and in practice, to invite experts to hearings. In fact, expert hearings are quite frequent.

To what extent do the task areas of parliamentary committees and ministries coincide?

If the task areas of parliamentary committees match the task areas of ministries, each parliamentary committee may focus on monitoring the activities of its corresponding ministry, thereby increasing the control capacity of the legislature. There are two possible ill-fitting constellations between committee and ministerial portfolios. If there are fewer committees than ministries, the committees may be overburdened with monitoring ministerial activities. If there are more committees than ministries, control responsibilities are split and the parliament may act non-cohesively.

This question considers regular parliamentary committees only, not committees established ad hoc to investigate specific questions.

The task areas of parliamentary committees and ministries fully coincide.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parliamentary committees monitor ministries effectively.	9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
The task areas of parliamentary committees do not fully correspond to the task areas of ministries. Parliamentary committees are largely capable of monitoring ministries.	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
The task areas of parliamentary committees do not correspond to the task areas of ministries. Parliamentary committees fail to monitor ministries effectively.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
The task areas of parliamentary committees differ widely from the task areas of ministries. Parliamentary committees frequently fail to monitor ministries effectively.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

The task areas of parliamentary committees and ministries mostly correspond, but the parliament is not fully able to monitor ministries. While the parliament can summon and question ministers, the role of the minister in the Korean system is relatively weak. The professional bureaucracy in Korea is trained to be loyal to the president as the head of the government. The capacity of the ministerial bureaucracy is also vastly larger than that of the parliament. Consequently, parliamentary oversight is sufficient in fields that are hotly debated issues in the public, and are thus of interest for the parliament; however, oversight is weak in the vast majority of policy fields that fall outside the mainstream debate.

To what extent is the audit office accountable to the parliament?

This question assesses the extent to which the parliament can rely on its own auditing capacities.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| The audit office is accountable to the parliament exclusively. | 10 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| The audit office is accountable primarily to the parliament. | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| The audit office is not accountable to the parliament, but has to report regularly to the parliament. | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| The audit office is governed by the executive. | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> |

The audit office is a constitutional agency that is accountable to the president. It regularly reports to the parliament.

M 11 Legislative Accountability

Category: Legislature

M 11.7 Ombuds Office

Does the parliament have an ombuds office?

This question asks whether parliaments have institutions that listen to the concerns of citizens, publicly advocate the issues raised by citizens and initiate governmental action to address them.

The term “ombuds office” is used here as a label representing these functions and may be institutionalized in different organizational formats. Please also consider possible functional equivalents and substantiate your answer.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| The parliament has an effective ombuds office. | 10 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 9 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| The parliament has an ombuds office, but its advocacy role is slightly limited. | 8 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| The parliament has an ombuds office, but its advocacy role is considerably limited. | 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | |
| The parliament does not have an ombuds office. | 2 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 1 <input type="checkbox"/> |

The Korean parliament does not have an ombuds office. Under the Lee administration, the government’s ombuds office was merged with the civil rights and anticorruption agency into the Anticorruption and Civil Rights Commission of Korea. This commission is accountable to the president.

To what extent do the TV and radio stations in your country provide substantive indepth information on decisions taken by the government?

This question seeks to assess the extent to which the media provide contextualized information, analysis and background information that enables the broader public to evaluate the government's decisions. For reasons of comparability and simplicity, the question focuses on:

(1) your country's main TV and radio stations (excluding all other electronic and print media as well as pure news channels) and

(2) decisions taken by the government (and not political issues or the political process in general). A lack of in-depth information is not tantamount to a complete lack of information but to the dominance of "infotainment programs" framing government decisions as personalized power politics and diverting attention from the substance of decisions to entertaining events and stories.

The main TV and radio stations every day produce high-quality information programs analyzing government decisions. 10 ☐
9 ☐

The main TV and radio stations produce a mix of infotainment and quality information programs. Programs with in-depth information on government decisions comprise between five and seven hours a week. 8 ☒
7 ☐
6 ☐

The main TV and radio stations produce many superficial infotainment programs. In-depth information on government decisions is limited to programs lasting between three and five hours a week. 5 ☐
4 ☐
3 ☐

The main TV and radio stations are dominated by superficial infotainment programs. In-depth information on government decisions is limited to programs lasting between one and three hours a week. 2 ☐
1 ☐

Measured against the three-dimensional understanding of democratic media that takes into account not only freedom of the press/media, but also media pluralism and media quality, the main problem with the media landscape in South Korea is the low quality of many media outlets in terms of their ability to serve as facilitator of a public sphere or “civic culture.” Part of the problem here is the country’s strong commercialism and associated weakness in political journalism. The main TV programs produce a mix of infotainment and quality information about government policies. Beginning in 2009, President Lee has instituted a biweekly radio address in which he explains government policies from his point of view.

Evening news programs are extensive, but a large portion is devoted to various scandals and scoops. Though rarely found in television, in-depth analysis of information is offered, in particular on public radio stations such as KBS 1. In the last four years, TV and radio organizations have shifted their programming in the direction of entertainment and infotainment. Political programs have either been replaced or their teams shuffled. In December 2011, four new cable channels run by Korea’s main newspapers went on the air. As commercial broadcasters, they tend to favor infotainment. On the other hand, however, their connection with major newspapers might give provide them the potential to produce quality information. It is too early to determine whether new channels will improve the quality and diversity of information programs.

M 13 Parties and Interest Associations

Category: Intermediary Organizations

M 13.1 Party Competence

To what extent do the electoral programs of major parties in your country propose plausible and coherent policies?

This question seeks to assess the quality of parties' policy proposals by analyzing the electoral programs of parties. It is assumed that programs document a party's capacity to formulate policies and to engage in a programmatic competition with rival parties.

Two criteria of quality are given: a proposal is plausible if its underlying problem diagnosis, the suggested policy instruments/measures, policy objectives and expected policy impacts are reasonably linked with each other; a proposal is coherent if it does not contradict other proposed policies.

Your evaluation will imply an assessment about whether proposed policies are likely to work, although the question is more focused on the plausibility of policy proposals. Please avoid an assessment of objectives pursued by individual parties, their appropriateness, desirability etc. "Major" parties are conceived here as parties supported by more than ten percent of the voters in the last national elections.

Most electoral programs propose plausible and coherent policies.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Many electoral programs propose plausible and coherent policies.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Few electoral programs propose plausible and coherent policies.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Most electoral programs do not propose plausible or coherent policies.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

There is almost universal agreement among political scientists, political observers, politicians and the general public that the political parties are one of the weakest links in Korean democracy. In addition to their inchoate nature and lack of internal democracy, political parties generally fail to produce meaningful party manifestos, political programs or alternative policy proposals. In Korea's personalized political system, party programs have little relevance and party competence is low. In general, parties are very weak because they are formed around powerful individuals. Parties are frequently renamed, split and merged. In the preparation for the 2012 parliamentary election, the conservative party renamed itself from Hanaradang (GNP) to Saenuridang (NFP). The Democratic Party merged with the Citizens United Party to become the Democratic United Party (DUP) and the Democratic Labor Party merged with parts of the New Progressive Party to become the Unified Progressive Party (UPP). Programmatic unity is stronger in the conservative Saenuri party and the UPP as compared to the main opposition party DP, which suffers from a lack of party loyalty. The election platforms of individual candidates tend to be more important than party programs, but often avoid proposing coherent policies in favor of promises to achieve certain goals and secure certain benefits for the candidate's electoral district. The strong regionalism in Korea further undermines the ability to form platforms based on political goals.

M 13 Parties and Interest Associations

Category: Intermediary Organizations

M 13.2 Association Competence (Business)

To what extent do economic interest associations propose reasonable policies?

“Reasonable” policy proposals identify the causes of problems, rely on scholarly knowledge, are technically feasible, take into account long-term interests and anticipate policy effects. These criteria are more demanding than the criteria used to evaluate party programs as interest associations can be expected to represent a specialist, substantive policy know-how.

The assessment should focus on the following interest associations: employers’ associations, leading business associations, trade unions.

Most interest associations propose reasonable policies.	10 <input type="checkbox"/>
	9 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Many interest associations propose reasonable policies.	8 <input type="checkbox"/>
	7 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Few interest associations propose reasonable policies.	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>	
Most interest associations do not propose reasonable policies.	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

The business associations (the Korean Employers Federation (KEF) and the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI)) and labor-union umbrella groups (the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) and the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU)) have some expertise in developing policy proposals. They are supported by think tanks that provide scholarly advice. However, all these groups are relatively weak compared to the influence of individual businesses and company-level trade unions. Some individual businesses, such as Samsung, LG and Hyundai, have their own think tanks that produce high-quality research and are able to analyze and provide alternatives to government policies.

M 13 Parties and Interest Associations

Category: Intermediary Organizations

M 13.3 Association Competence (Others)

To what extent do non-economic interest associations propose reasonable policies?

“Reasonable” policy proposals identify the causes of problems, rely on scholarly knowledge, are technically feasible, take into account long-term interests and anticipate policy effects. These criteria are more demanding than the criteria used to evaluate party programs as interest associations can be expected to represent a specialist, substantive policy know-how.

The assessment should focus on the following interest associations: social interest groups, environmental groups and religious communities.

Most interest associations propose reasonable policies.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
Many interest associations propose reasonable policies.	8	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
Few interest associations propose reasonable policies.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
Most interest associations do not propose reasonable policies.	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

The rise of civil society organizations is one of the most important political trends observed in South Korea during the last decade. Some of the largest NGOs, such as the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM), the Citizen Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ) and the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), have build up considerable expertise in specialized fields such as environmental policies, election reform and human rights. They provide reasonable policy proposals and are supported by a large group of scholars and professionals. The majority of smaller NGOs remain focused on service provision and do not develop policy proposals. However, as previously mentioned, civil society and NGOs – especially those on the left of the center – have found it difficult under the Lee administration to have any influence on the political decision-making process.

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