

Summary

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has been operating the KOICA Multilateral Cooperation Officer Program (KMCO) since 2013. It was designed and expected to enhance cooperation between KOICA and international organizations, maximize the efficacy of multilateral projects and establish stable and permanent communication channels between them. As of December 2020, the number of officers who have been seconded to international organizations under the KMCO program reached around 100. It is undeniable that the KMCO program has helped KOICA to enhance its competence in multilateral cooperation as well as the expert knowledge of secondees. However, a comprehensive review of the KMCO program is necessary at the current stage to maximize its benefits. This needs to include the way in which the KMCO program is implemented, how it cooperates with multilateral institutions, pay and welfare provided to secondees and their career development, as well as the review mechanism of the program.

The aim of this study is threefold. First, while recognizing the achievements of the KMCO program, it identifies the goals and remit of the KMCO program and makes proposals for the potential future direction of its institutional and operational improvements. Second, it identifies and explores domestic and overseas programs comparable to the KMCO program and proposes lessons for future improvements and potential connectivity to other projects. Third, it seeks additional ways of contributing to job creation by exploring and enlarging the opportunities for global talent to work at international organizations.

A wide range of research methods has been employed for this study, including literature review, surveys, interviews with various stakeholders of the KMCO and an analysis of comparable programs.

First of all, it has diagnosed loopholes in the KMCO program and drafted remedies aimed at institutional and operational improvements. It has analyzed the UN human resources management system, which is a major point of reference for other international organizations and came up with a proposal for how the KMCO program can improve and finetune its own system. At the same time, it has identified the best practices and activities of the KMCO program with a view to differentiating it from other institutions and further strengthening its competitiveness. Based on this, it has traced the KMCO program participants' involvement in these best practices to identify their contributions to the program. From these multi-layered researches and analyses, it has derived a proposal for the general direction that KOICA should undertake as well as a set of detailed recommendations for improvement in terms of the implementation and post-implementation management of the KMCO program.

In conclusion, this study has offered a total of 6 recommendations for operational improvements and 17 detailed recommendations. The study has proposed that KOICA switch from its current 'Direct Dispatching Program' to a 'Delegated Program to Host International Organizations (IOs))' whereby international organizations are delegated to manage the Program. As part of its detailed recommendations, it has also suggested that the KMCO program be merged with the IOs' Consultant Dispatch Program by establishing a KMCO Trust Fund. It has further proposed that if the implementation of a 'Delegated Program to Host IOs' is not feasible, lessons for further improvements should be derived from a thorough analysis of the concrete experiences of the participants of the KMCO program.