

South Korea

Overview

The Korean Government adopted the ISO 9000 system (modified as the KSA 9000) as the official standard system in April 1992. The Korean Agency for Technology and Standards (KATS) continues to work to make Korean standards similar to international standards. The Korean Industrial Standardization Act requires 60 days' notice before implementing new standards. Whenever there is a change in standards, the government is required to notify the WTO's Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

Details regarding standards and import regulations for food and agricultural products can be found in on Foreign Agricultural Service website in the [Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\)](#) report for Korea.

Standards Organizations

The Korean Agency for Technology and Standards (KATS) develops standards for most industrial products in Korea. The agency consults with other private organizations to develop standards and certification requirements.

The Korean Food and Drug Administration (KFDA) establishes standards for research, new product evaluation, test method development, product monitoring for food, medical devices, pharmaceuticals and radiation technology distributed within Korea.

The Telecommunications Technology Association (TTA) covers telecommunications, information technology, radio communications and broadcasting. The Association establishes industry standards and has been instrumental in creating the current Korean Information and Communication Standards. TTA also collaborates with international and national standards organizations such as the ITU and other organizations.

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>.

Conformity Assessment

KATS establishes guidelines for government and private sector institutes to perform reliability assessment and certification. It also performs market surveillance on KCmarked products and penalizes products that do not meet KC requirements.

Korea is a signatory to the GATT Standards Agreement. As such, Korea must apply open procedures for the adoption of standards, announces recommended standards, provide sufficient information on proposed standards or alterations in standards, and to allow sufficient time for countries and other stakeholders to comment on proposed standards implementation.

Product Certification

KATS issues certification marks for new technologies and recognizes quality products manufactured by Korean companies mainly to promote exports and also imports into Korea. On July 1, 2009, KATS began issuing the KC mark for items that fall under its jurisdiction. Information related to the KC mark in English can be seen at the American

National Standards Institute (ANSI) website at: http://www.standardsportal.org/usa_kr/e/conformity_assessment/ca_marks_used_in_korea.aspx. The KC mark is to reduce and minimize repetitive testing at various ministries and agencies. [The consolidation of these marks ensures that companies, both Korean and foreign agencies, will save time and cost due to reduced redundancies introduced into this new system.

Accreditation

Established in December 1992, the Korea Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (KOLAS) is the government accreditation body under the KATS Department of Technology and Standards Planning. Additional information and accreditation bodies can be found under the KOLAS website at <http://www.kolas.go.kr/english/>

Publication of Technical Regulations

Revised or new standards or technical regulations are published by the Korean Agency for Technology and Standards (KATS) and made available at http://www.kats.go.kr/en_kats/. The articles, more frequently than not, are published only in Korean. All proposed or newly revised/established technical regulations are consolidated at this site.

Proposed revisions or establishment of regulations in Korean are made to the Director of Technical Regulations via the website at http://www.kats.go.kr/en_kats/. A public meeting consisting of lawmakers as well as relevant private/public industry organizations is held to comment on proposed regulations. Contact the [U.S. Embassy, Commercial Section](#) for assistance with revised or new standards

Contacts

Korean Agency for Technology and Standards (KATS)

<http://www.kats.go.kr/english/index.asp>

Korean Food and Drug Administration (KFDA)

<http://eng.kfda.go.kr/index.php>

Korean Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (KOLAS)

www.kolas.go.kr

Trade Agreements

The Republic of Korea and the United States will implement the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement on March 15, 2012. The trade agreement is the largest FTA negotiated by the United States since NAFTA.

The Republic of Korea is a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. One goal of APEC, as outlined in its 1994 declaration, is to establish a Free Trade Area among its member countries by the year 2020. Substantive principles of the APEC forum include investment liberalization, tariff reduction, deregulation, government procurement, and strengthening IPR protection. Korea was the host country for APEC in 2005.

Korea has Free Trade Agreements with Chile, Singapore, European Union and the European Free Trade Association (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein). More information on EU-Korea FTA can be found on the European Union website at <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/bilateral-relations/countries/korea/>

Korea also signed a framework agreement with the Association of South East Asian

Nations (ASEAN) that led to an FTA in goods by the end of 2006 and other areas by the end of 2008.

Korea also negotiated a FTA with the United States and was ratified by the national assemblies of the two countries in November 2011. The KORUS-FTA promises to remove significant trade and investment barriers and increase access to the Korean market for U.S. businesses. For additional information on the KORUS-FTA please see the following website at <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-tradeagreements/korus-fta>.

The Republic of Korea is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and has signed subsidiary agreements including TRIPs (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property) and the Government Procurement Agreement. Korea has been a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) since December 1996.

Web Resources

U.S. Department of Commerce, Commercial Service Korea

<http://export.gov/southkorea/>

U.S. Agricultural Trade Office in Seoul

www.atoseoul.com

U.S. Department of Agriculture

<http://www.usda.gov>

USDA Agriculture Exporters Guide

http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/exporter_assistance.asp

USDA Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

www.aphis.usda.gov

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations_&_Policies/Republic_of_Korea_Requirements/index.asp

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (Attaché reports)

www.fas.usda.gov

American Chamber of Commerce Korea

<http://www.amchamkorea.org/about/about.jsp>

Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security

<http://www.bis.doc.gov/>

Annual National Trade Estimate Report

http://www.ustr.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/reports/2010/NTE/2010_NTE_Korea_final.pdf

Korean Agency for Technology and Standards (KATS)

<http://www.kats.go.kr/english/index.asp>

Korea Customs Service

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<http://english.customs.go.kr/>

Korean Food and Drug Administration (KFDA)

<http://eng.kfda.go.kr/index.php>

Korean Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (KOLAS)

<http://www.kolas.go.kr/english/>

Telecommunications Technology Association (TTA)

<http://www.tta.or.kr/English/index.jsp>