

ARVO International Advocacy Toolkit: South Korea

1. Which organization(s) are significant sources of research funding? (e.g., national/local governments; private funding/foundations/charity groups; large non-governmental organizations (NGOs); industry/pharmaceutical companies)

National government

The most important sources of research funding are government organizations such as—

- Ministry of Health and Welfare
- Ministry of Science and ICT
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy
- Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency
- Ministry of Food and Drug Safety

Each organization sets the direction for research and development by developing policies, plans and strategies.

Industry

Some pharmaceutical companies provide funding on specific topics.

2. What does the normal science funding/policy decision-making process look like?

Which groups/committee/person within the funding/policy-decision making process look like?

The decision-making is usually based on a peer review process. Reviewers who are experts in the proposed research area are invited.

What are the criteria the funding/policy organization(s) use to make their decisions?

The decision mostly depends on the scientific quality/innovation, relevance, impact on the research area, feasibility, expertise and research environment.

3. Which patient advocacy groups, if any, are active in the area?

Patient advocacy groups are uncommon in South Korea. Some patient groups for specific diseases such as age-related macular degeneration and retinitis pigmentosa exist, but they are rarely involved in promoting research and advocating for research funding.

4. Are there existing national/regional organizations that work towards improving research funding/policy?

Each government organization mentioned above makes its own plan to improve research funding and policy. The Korean Ophthalmological Society is the major professional body for ophthalmologists in South Korea and actively communicates with each government organization.

5. How do scientists currently contribute to the existing funding/policymaking/advocacy process, if at all?

Scientists participate in the peer review process as expert panels. They can also provide insight into the current research funding landscape through relevant survey.

6. When are science funding/policy decisions made?

Generally, decisions are made annually. Each government organization also has its own mid- and long-term research funding plan.

7. What kinds of opportunities exist for scientists to interact with funders and policymakers?

Can scientists invite decision makers to their lab/institution to see their work firsthand?

There are very few such cases.

Do the funding/policy organizations hold open meetings or solicit comments from the public that researchers can participate in?

This is not a common practice.

Contributor:

Ki Ho Park, MD, PhD (Korean Ophthalmology Society)