

# EXPANDING COLLABORATIVE ALLIANCES BETWEEN KOREA, SPAIN AND IBEROAMERICA FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

## SMEs and Water Management

### CONCEPTUAL NOTE

We believe that the interrelationship between sustainability, investment, innovation and productivity is the most appropriate formula for promoting Ibero-American development. The challenge of empowering an innovative and resilient Ibero-America, based on the double transformation needed to overcome the economic, sustainable and digital crisis, must be taken up.

Ensuring access to digital technology is essential to address the production gaps. In the context of the pandemic, it is said that in six months we fulfilled the forecasts for the digital transformation of companies for three years, but this was an experience that did not occur homogeneously and in many cases increased a typology of gaps according to company size, region, sector, age, gender and socio-economic level. To face these inequalities, public policies for the digital transformation of the productive sectors become meaningful. What are the main characteristics of these public policies for digital transformation? What are their future prospects?

Experiences such as Korea's are an internationally recognized case in terms of the development of an innovation system that involves both large companies and their SME network and addresses both the creation and scaling of digital technology companies and also their adoption by more traditional industries. What are the main characteristics of the Korean innovation ecosystem? What are its support policies that stand out?

Entrepreneurs are playing a key role in overcoming the crisis. A world-class type of technological entrepreneur is emerging in Iberoamerica, competing in international scenarios and generating high quality employment. The region already has some 1,000 knowledge-intensive companies employing more than 250,000 people. The Ibero-American community currently has 55 "unicorn" companies, valued at more than one billion dollars, 42 of them from Latin America. How is this phenomenon expressed in the so-called "climate tech" companies?

The ecological transition without digital progress is impossible. Only through digital tools that enhance productivity and improve competitiveness objectives can be achieved. The smart use of clean digital technologies can act as a key enabler for sustainability.

Water is a fundamental element of life, but also one of the most threatened by climate change. Extreme events such as floods and droughts make it difficult to predict its availability and reduce its quality. It is essential to protect its quality and economize its use, in harmony with the environment and other natural resources.



The digitalization of water supply improves knowledge and monitoring of the impacts of climate change on water resources and the development of adaptation strategies. Tools such as data analytics, cloud computing, augmented intelligence and blockchain give us new capabilities to analyze, automatize, correct in real time, predict and minimize risks. In the same way, it enables service companies to tackle many of the challenges they face, such as extending the useful life of aging assets, reducing leaks, attacks and other anomalies in the distribution network, improving water quality, service levels and supply reliability, promote water conservation or increase revenues through operational efficiencies.

Without any doubt, digitalization is an excellent lever to accelerate the transition to a circular economy, accompanied by new materials, new energy sources and new methodologies. It is also a source of opportunities that inspire new business models. Although there is an increase in digital adoption in water, there is still a long way to travel. What are the experiences and lessons learned to be taken into account?

The Ibero-American General Secretary promotes the digitalization of the productive sector from a sustainable perspective, accompanying the governments of the region and business associations with recommendations, peer-to-peer learning spaces to share best practices and the development of regional initiatives.

The Government of Korea actively participates in the Ibero-American space as an observer country of SEGIB and encourages cooperation with its countries, with special emphasis on productive innovation, digital transformation and entrepreneurship, three key axes that explain its important performance in the international productive scene.