



KCC Announces its 2025 Action Plan: Key Insights and Implications

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On January 14, 2025, the Korea Communications Commission (“KCC”) unveiled its 2025 Action Plan, which outlines three (3) core objectives designed to address the evolving digital platform landscape, the integration of AI services, and the intensifying competition in the media ecosystem.

Below is a summary of the key objectives, initiatives, and their implications:

No.	Key Objectives	Initiatives
1	Building a Trusted Digital & Media Environment	(1) strengthening the foundation for digital trust (2) creating a safe digital environment (3) advancing public interest in media
2	Establishing a Vibrant Digital & Media Ecosystem	(1) establishing the foundation for digital and media innovation (2) improving broadcast regulation systems (3) expanding growth engines for digital and media
3	Realizing a People-Centered Digital & Media Society	(1) enhancing user rights in broadcasting and telecommunications (2) promoting fair and cooperative ecosystems (3) expanding universal digital and media welfare

1. Building a Trusted Digital & Media Environment

(a) Strengthening the Foundation for Digital Trust

To strike a balance between the advancement of the AI industry and user protection, the KCC plans to:

- develop a “*Comprehensive AI User Protection Plan*”;
- introduce the “*Generative AI User Protection Guideline*,” which will outline specific measures such as ensuring explainability, implementing robust technical safeguards, and establishing managerial protocols;
- propose the AI User Protection Act, which will impose tailored obligations based on the type and application of AI technologies; and
- launch a user-driven reporting portal to facilitate the identification and reporting of risks associated with generative AI systems.

► **Key Takeaways:** Unlike the Act on the Development of Artificial Intelligence and Establishment of Trust (“**AI Basic Act**”), which focuses on fostering AI industry growth, the KCC prioritizes managing the potential risks associated with AI. The proposed AI User Protection Act will include differentiated regulations based on AI types, provisions for evaluating user protection efforts, and mechanisms for dispute resolution. Drawing on legislative trends in the United States, the EU, and the United Kingdom, the KCC plans to initially encourage voluntary compliance by issuing guidelines for generative AI. However, if the need for stronger user protection arises, these guidelines could evolve into binding regulations. As such, business operators must proactively identify potential legal risks during the guideline development phase to ensure compliance and mitigate future regulatory challenges.

(b) Creating a Safe Digital Environment

The KCC will:

- streamline procedures for swiftly blocking illegal content, including materials related to drugs and gambling;
- establish legal grounds to enable the preemptive blocking of suspected illegal recordings, such as deepfake-based sexual exploitation;
- promote collaborative self-regulation between public and private sectors to address false and manipulated information; and
- strengthen measures against illegal spam, including enhanced penalties like asset forfeiture and fines, while improving AI-powered spam filtering and other technical and managerial safeguards.

► **Key Takeaways:** Business operators engaging in promotional messaging must remain vigilant to ensure compliance with relevant regulations to avoid penalties. Telecom providers and similar entities that are subject to technical and managerial safeguards must proactively implement required protective measures to minimize the risk of non-compliance. The KCC has already imposed sanctions in response to illegal spam, such as those linked to voice phishing, which cause significant financial harm. Business operators should carefully monitor ongoing KCC inspections and reassess their compliance with applicable laws. Additionally, telecom companies and SMS intermediaries must meet safeguard obligations to avoid fines and mitigate legal risks.

(c) Advancing Public Interest in Media

The KCC will:

- strengthen public interest assessments during broadcast license renewals and evaluations by incorporating programming related to low birthrate solutions and disaster prevention efforts;
- propose the enactment of the Disaster Broadcasting Management Support Act to address gaps in disaster coverage, and provide support through surveys and technical consulting to resolve broadcasting blind spots; and
- rigorously review the fulfillment of license renewal conditions and ensure broadcasters' compliance with these public interest requirements.

► **Key Takeaways:** Despite ongoing efforts to ease regulations, such as the potential abolition of the re-licensing and re-approval system for paid broadcasting in response to the shrinking market influence of traditional broadcasters, stricter public interest assessments will still be applied to certain broadcasters, including terrestrial and general programming channels. These assessments will focus on issues such as low birthrate crises and disaster prevention efforts. As a result, broadcasters must continuously monitor their compliance with license renewal conditions to minimize the risk of corrective actions or penalties.

2. Establishing a Vibrant Digital & Media Ecosystem

(a) Establishing the Foundation for Digital and Media Innovation

The KCC plans to:

- enact the Online Service User Protection Act, modeled after the EU's Digital Services Act ("DSA"), to strengthen platform accountability regarding the prevention of illegal and harmful content, algorithmic transparency, and user protection; and
- develop a unified media law that integrates both traditional broadcasting and new media, including OTT services.

► **Key Takeaways:** Business operators should prepare for potential alignment with the DSA's stringent requirements, including content removal obligations, algorithm transparency, and the submission of transparency reports. Failure to comply could result in significant penalties, with fines reaching up to 6% of revenue for "Very Large Online Platforms" (VLOPs) found in violation. Given the KCC's intention to adopt aspects of the DSA tailored to the domestic context, business operators should closely monitor developments related to the Online Service User Protection Act and take proactive steps to mitigate regulatory risks.

(b) Improving Broadcast Regulation Systems

The KCC aims to reduce regulatory burdens on broadcasters by:

- publicizing the principles and rationale for imposing conditions on permits and approvals;
- extending the validity period of permits and approvals; and
- easing regulations on ownership, cross-ownership, advertising, and programming.

(c) Expanding Growth Engines for Digital and Media

To promote the global distribution of broadcasting content, the KCC will:

- strengthen international collaborations, including signing co-production agreements with countries such as Canada; and
- support domestic OTT platforms in expanding into foreign markets by providing market insights and organizing international forums.

3. Realizing a People-Centered Digital & Media Society

(a) Enhancing User Rights in Broadcasting and Telecommunications

Following the repeal of the Mobile Device Distribution Act, the KCC will:

- revise regulations to ensure tangible reductions in consumer telecom costs;
- develop comprehensive measures to address unfair practices in device distribution and protect users from exploitation; and
- take strong action against deceptive practices, such as dark patterns and hijacking, in key online platforms such as shopping, delivery, and education services.

► **Key Takeaways:** Online platform operators must address dual regulatory risks from both the KCC and the Korea Fair Trade Commission (“**KFTC**”). Compliance with transparency and fair trade practices is essential.

Even after the repeal of the Mobile Device Distribution Act, unfair discrimination in subsidies based on factors such as region, age, or physical condition remains prohibited under the Telecommunications Business Act (“**TBA**”). The KCC plans to amend the Enforcement Decree of the TBA to establish grounds for penalizing user discrimination through unequal subsidies. Therefore, operators should review and align their internal sales policies to avoid regulatory penalties.

In addition to the KFTC’s efforts to regulate dark patterns through the Act on Consumer Protection in Electronic Commerce (“**E-Commerce Act**”), the KCC has also imposed sanctions on misleading practices under the TBA, such as failure to disclose key information, false or exaggerated claims about paid memberships, and unclear communication of fees and service terms. Given these dual regulatory risks, online platform operators must proactively manage compliance across both agencies to mitigate potential legal issues.

(b) Creating a Fair and Cooperative Ecosystem

The KCC will:

- develop a regulatory framework addressing prohibited practices across various platform transaction types; and
- increase fines for violations to align with global standards and strengthen enforcement mechanisms for foreign business operators, including improvements to the domestic agent designation system.

► **Key Takeaways:** Foreign companies operating in Korea must stay informed about potential changes to the domestic agent system. As the KCC plans to enhance post-regulation measures for platforms, including strengthening the domestic agent system for foreign business operators, there could be significant changes. For example, future amendments may require companies to designate their domestic entities as domestic agents under the TBA, or expand the scope of businesses subject to the domestic agent requirement. To mitigate legal risks, business operators should closely monitor these regulatory developments and take proactive steps to ensure compliance.

(c) Expanding Universal Digital and Media Welfare

The KCC will:

- develop tailored TV services and quality evaluation systems for visually and hearing-impaired users; and
- establish media education centers and expand the deployment of “Media Sharing Buses” to underserved areas, including rural and mountainous regions, as well as for individuals with disabilities.

By proactively engaging with these initiatives, business operators can effectively navigate regulatory challenges and seize opportunities in Korea’s dynamic digital and media landscape. Strategic preparation and adherence to compliance will be essential for long-term success.

[\[Korean version\]](#) 『2025년 방송통신위원회 업무계획』 발표 및 시사점

Key Contacts

Sinook Kang

Senior Partner

+82-2-316-4059

sokang@shinkim.com

Jong Kwan Lee

Advisor

+82-2-316-4480

jkwlee@shinkim.com

Joe Juneyoung Jang

Partner

+82-2-316-4985

Jeong Ho Ahn

Partner

+82-2-316-2891

jyojang@shinkim.com

Jin Hong Noh

Partner

+82-2-316-1639

jhnoh@shinkim.com

Chang Jun Park

Partner

+82-2-316-1660

cjpark@shinkim.com

Jieun Lee

Senior Researcher

+82-2-316-1720

jeunlee@shinkim.com

Soonyoung Heo

Foreign Attorney

+82-2-316-1837

syheo@shinkim.com

jhahn@shinkim.com

Junghyun Hwang

Partner

+82-2-316-1775

jhhwang@shinkim.com

Ho Sang Yoon

Partner

+82-2-316-2584

hsyoon@shinkim.com

Eugene Kim

Senior Foreign Attorney

+82-2-316-4770

eugenekim@shinkim.com