

보도시점 2026. 1. 6.(화) (배포 후 즉시) 배포 2026. 1. 6.(화)

# **Further Strengthened Korea-China Environmental Cooperation, Agreement to Take a Comprehensive Approach to Climate Change and the Circular Economy**

- Revised the “Memorandum of Understanding on Korea-China Environmental and Climate Cooperation” for the first time in 12 years on the occasion of the Korea-China summit, redefining it as the highest-level document for Korea-China environment and climate cooperation encompassing the full spectrum of environmental issues, including climate change, the circular economy, and nature conservation

The Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment (MCEE, Minister Kim Sungwhan) announced that Minister Kim attended the 7th Korea-China Environment Ministers’ Meeting held in Beijing, China, on January 5, where he discussed measures to implement the revised “Memorandum of Understanding on Korea-China Environmental and Climate Cooperation” with Chinese Minister of Ecology and Environment Huang Runqiu, thereby further strengthening environmental and climate cooperation between the two countries.

Korea and China are neighboring countries that not only share the atmosphere and seas, but also bear joint responsibility for protecting migratory wildlife such as migratory birds. As global challenges that require collective action, such as the climate crisis and the circular economy, continue to intensify, the importance of cooperation between the two countries is greater than ever.

Building on this shared understanding, the environment ministers of the two

countries signed the revised “Memorandum of Understanding on Korea–China Environmental and Climate Cooperation” in the presence of the leaders of both countries later that afternoon.

This marks the first revision in 12 years since the previous amendment in 2014. While the earlier revision was made on the occasion of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s visit to Korea on July 3, 2014, this revision is significant in that it reorganizes the scope and framework of cooperation on the occasion of the Korean President’s visit to China.

Through this revision, the two countries expanded their cooperation, which had previously focused on air quality issues such as fine particulate matter and yellow dust, to encompass the broader environmental agenda, including climate change, the circular economy, and nature conservation. Accordingly, they plan to gradually develop cooperation plans across various environment and climate fields, including the existing air quality cooperation initiative, the “Cheongcheon (Clear Sky) Plan.”

The framework for cooperation has also been clarified. The revised agreement specifies the annual convening of the Korea–China Environment Ministers’ Meeting as the highest-level consultative body in the environment and climate fields, and defines the roles of director-general-level policy dialogues and the Korea–China Environmental Cooperation Center. Through this, cooperation plans are expected to move beyond discussion and translate into tangible outcomes on the ground.

The environment ministers of the two countries also exchanged views on concrete measures to implement the memorandum of understanding. Going beyond the existing cooperation centered on air pollution, they agreed to expand the scope of cooperation by promoting joint research on substances that simultaneously affect air pollution and climate change. They also agreed to share the outcomes of such cooperation with other countries facing urgent air quality challenges, thereby jointly disseminating the achievements of Korea–China

environmental cooperation.

The two sides also shared policy cases in new areas of cooperation, including climate change impact assessment\* and responses to noise and light pollution\*\*. In particular, the climate change impact assessment system, introduced by Korea in 2022, has contributed to achieving carbon neutrality goals by reviewing and consulting on more than 300 plans and projects, drawing strong interest from the Chinese side. The two countries agreed to continue discussions to identify new areas of cooperation across the broader climate and environmental agenda.

\* A system that promotes climate change adaptation and greenhouse gas mitigation by conducting advance assessments of climate change impacts for major national plans or large-scale development projects

\*\* “The Fifth Comprehensive Plan on Noise and Vibration (2026–2030)” and the “Comprehensive Plan for the Prevention of Light Pollution (2024–2028),” etc.

Meanwhile, on the morning of January 6, Minister Kim Sungwhan held a bilateral meeting with Liu Guohong, Administrator of China’s National Forestry and Grassland Administration (National Park Administration), at the Administration’s headquarters in Beijing, China. In accordance with the “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in National Park Management” signed the previous day (January 5, 2026), the two sides agreed to pursue the establishment of sister park relationships between China’s Yellow River Delta Nature Reserve and national parks in Korea. Through this, they agreed to continue cooperation to promote the sustainable use of protected areas, including ecotourism based on national parks. The two countries also reviewed the outcomes of their panda cooperation and agreed to further deepen cooperation going forward.

Minister Kim Sungwhan stated, “Through this Korea–China Environment Ministers’ Meeting, we have further solidified the foundation for climate and environmental cooperation between the two countries toward a global decarbonized green civilization.” He added, “We will continue to faithfully advance Korea–China environment and climate cooperation so as to deliver tangible outcomes that the public can truly experience.