

Seoul Metropolitan Government

Country	South Korea
Population	22,2 millions
World region	Asia and The Pacific

● Context

Within the administrative division of South Korea, Seoul holds a unique status as the only Special Metropolitan City (*Teukbyeol-si*). In 1962, the Act on Special Measures for the Administration of the Seoul Special Metropolitan Government established this distinct status, placing the city directly under the Minister of Home Affairs and granting the mayor a seat at the national cabinet. A definitive shift toward local self-governance came with the reinstatement of the Local Autonomy Act in 1991, which granted the Seoul Metropolitan Government broad administrative and financial independence, including a directly elected mayor.

● Economic profile

World Bank income group: High

Major economic activities

Seoul's economy is predominantly service-based. Key sectors include wholesale and retail trade, finance and insurance, business services, tourism, telecommunications, real estate, and public administration.

Own source revenues

The metropolitan government and its 25 districts collect local taxes under the Local Tax Act, split into municipal tax (9 categories) and district tax (2 categories). Tax types and rates are set by national law; local ordinances cover collection procedure and limited rate flexibility, not the creation of new taxes.

● Governance structure

Year of constitution: 1991

Type of metropolitan government: Metropolitan Government

Legal framework

The Local Autonomy Act defines two tiers of local government in South Korea: upper-level entities — comprising the Special Metropolitan City, Metropolitan Cities, *Do* (Provinces), and the Special Autonomous Province — and lower-level entities such as *Si*, *Gun*, and *Gu*. Separately, the Act on Special Cases Concerning the Administration of Seoul Special Metropolitan City prescribes the status, organization, and specific operational exceptions applicable to Seoul, as authorized under Article 174 of the Local Autonomy Act. This dual framework reflects Seoul's distinct position as both a local government and the national capital.

Administrative structure

The Seoul Metropolitan Government is headed by the mayor and two deputy mayors, who manage public affairs through metropolitan agencies. It also has a legislative body: the metropolitan council, with 110 members. The city is divided into 25 wards, each with its own administration and mayor. The mayor and council members are elected by direct vote every four years.

Annual revenue, expenditure and sources

For the 2025 fiscal year, the SMG allocated 48 trillion won (approximately USD 34.7 billion), with expenditure directed to eight core areas: society and welfare, culture and tourism, industry and economy, public safety, urban planning and housing redevelopment, transportation and traffic, parks and environment, and education and district support.

Number and type of administrative units
25 districts.

KEY STRATEGIC PLAN



Resilience

Plan for Carbon Neutrality and Green Growth



Strategic

Seoul 2040 Comprehensive Plan



Innovation

Smart City and Informatization Master Plan