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# **Lessons from SOE Management and Privatization**in Korea

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# Lessons from SOE Management and Privatization in Korea

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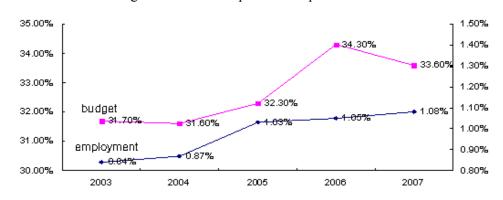
#### Abstract

This paper suggests following strategies for the success of privatization. (1) Utilize the audit office in finding inefficient management cases so that the general public understands the need of a privatization. (2) Reform the reformer first, and create a driving force that specializes in reform. (3) Set a deadline for each step towards privatization (4) If you cannot private a whole SOE, privatize function by function in each SOE. However, for a privatization to be successful, the most important factor is the political commitment.

#### 1. Definition of SOEs in Korea

As of the end of 2008, there are 305 public entities in Korea defined by the Public Entity Management Act. Public entities have two features. First, they should be government-affiliated organizations in the sense that their budgets or mandates are controlled by the government. Second, the employees in the public entities are not civil servants though many of their codes of conduct follow those of the civil servants.

The 305 public entities are very significant part of the economy. Their total 2008 budgets amount to 300 billion USD compared to a little more than 200 billion of the central government's. The level of the total budget of public entities is somewhat misleading because it includes input costs such as coal imports of Korea Electricity Power Corporation and apartment construction costs for Korea Land and Housing Corporation. The total employment of public entities is 0.26 million, which is 43% of central government's. The ratio of their total budget out of GDP is 33.6%, and their total assets are 85% of the GDP. And these shares have been increasing in the recent years as the following figure shows.



< Figure 1: relative importance of public entities >

Source: Ministry of Strategy and Finance, 2008.8.11 (modified)

An SOE is a part of the public entities. If its own revenue is more than 50% of the total revenue (own revenue + revenue from government budget), it is defined as an SOE, and if it less, it is called semi-government organization. There are 23 SOEs and 77 semi-government organizations as of 2008. A common aspect of these two types is that they all have employees more than 50. If an organization has less than 50 employees, it is called 'the other public entities', of which number reaches 204 out-numbering the total of the other two types.

The 23 SOEs are all stock-companies whose shares are owned by the government or by the Korea Development Bank, one of 77 semi-government organizations. Depending on its own revenue share among the total revenue, the SOEs are again categorized into two: Market-type SOEs with 85% or more, semi-market type with 50%~85%. All of the market-type SOEs have assets more than 2 billion USD, and generally bigger in terms of its revenue and employment than the SOEs in the semi-market type. These market-type SOEs are generally considered candidates for privatization. However, there are many SOEs in the semi-market type or even in the semi-government type that can be privatized either entirely or partially.

< Table 1: Public entities and its size as of 2008>

	Total	SOEs		Semi-government	other public
		market	semi- market		entities
number of organization	305	6	18*	77	204
employees (thousand)	259	28	60	66	105
'08 budget (billion USD)	300	50	70	100	80

Source: Ministry of Strategy and Finance, 2008.8.11 (modified)

<sup>\*</sup> After the Korea Housing Corp. and Korea Land Corp. merged Oct. 2009, the number of SOEs are now 23.

<Table 2: List of 23 SOEs in Korea>

	Name	Ministry
	Incheon International Airport Corporation	MLTM
	Korea Airports Corporation	MLTM
market-	Korea Gas Corp.	MKE
type	Korea Electricity Power Corp.	MKE
	Incheon Port Authority	MLTM
	Busan Port Authority	MLTM
	Korea Container Terminal Authority	MLTM
	Korea Land and Housing Corp.	MLTM
	Korea Expressway Corp.	MLTM
	Korea National Oil Corp.	MKE
	Korea Water Resources Corp.	MLTM
	Korea District Heating Corp.	MKE
	Korea Railroad Corp.	MLTM
semi-	Korea Housing Finance Corp.	MLTM
market	Korea Workers Accident Medical Center	Ministry of Labor
type	Jeju Free International City Development Center	MLTM
	Korea Appraisal Board	MLTM
	Korea Racing Agency	MCST
	Korea Broadcasting Advertisement Corp.	MCST
	Korea Tourism Organization	MCST
	Korea Minting and Security Priniting Corporation	MOSF
	Korea Coal Corp.	MKE
	Korea Resources Corp.	MKE

MLTM: Ministry of Land, Transportation and Maritime Affairs

MKE: Ministry of Knowledge-Based Economy MCST: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

MOSF: Ministry of Strategy and Finance

#### 2. Privatization in Korea

#### 2.1 Background: The changing role of the government

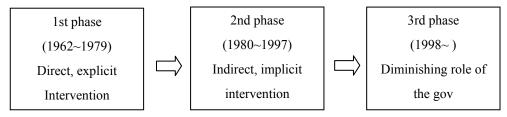
During the history of economic development in Korea in the past 45 years, the role of the

government has been replaced by the private sector. In the first phase (1963~1979), the government led the economic development either by orchestrating the private companies or by owning many SOEs. The government-led development was very effective in mobilizing labor and capital. The government not only picked leading industries but also winning companies through allocation of financial resources by banks.

In the second phase (1980~1997), the style of the government intervention changed. Excessive government intervention in the promotion process of heavy and chemical industries raised a question on the role of the government which as a result became rather indirect and implicit rather than explicit. It was more of a change in the style not in the scope or depth of the intervention. The private sector, on the other hand, rapidly grew in its size and diversity creating many business activities out of government controls especially in the financial sector.

The third phase (1998~now) made a real change in the role of government. After the economic crisis in 1997, Korea actively started reducing the role of the government based on a hard-earned lesson that the government failure could be more dangerous that the market failure. The reform is still under progress up to this moment, and there are still more miles to go.

<Figure 2: the change of government's role>



Throughout the development process, the source of growth has changed from labor and capital inputs to productivity increase. When resource mobilization is important during

60s~70s, the role of government was essential, but its role should be replaced by the private sector because companies are main players in productivity improvement, not the government. Markets are growing even in the fields where SOEs used to be the sole supplier.

#### 2.2 Reduced Roles of SOEs

There are four reasons why the government needed SOEs. Most of the reasons are losing its logical ground as the economy gets matured. First, SOEs were necessary in the past because there was not enough capital and technology in the private sector for massive investment projects. The government therefore established and have SOEs do the investment with borrowed foreign capitals. POSCO and Namhae Chemical Corporation are those examples. Those SOEs are now all privatized, and lack of capital is no longer a reason why we need SOEs.

The second motivation for establishing SOEs was to raise government revenue in the early stage of development when there is not much of tax revenue. There is no SOE in this category now after Korea Tobacco and Ginseng Corporation (currently KT&G) was privatized in 2002.

Third, SOEs are necessary in the areas where private companies are reluctant to enter into the business because of unprofitable nature of the public mandates. Most of current SOEs including Korea Land and Housing Corp., Korea Tourism Organization, fall on this category. Much of those public needs are still to be met, but a problem is that many of the SOEs are making profits in the market using either superior or monopolistic position in order to meet those public mandates. A duty-free shop in the airports run by Korea Tourism Organization is a source of its public mandate, tourism promotion. The Korea Land and Housing Corporation is supplying commercial apartments to finance their public mission, rented apartments for the needy. However, those market activities

are eroding private suppliers' market share, and should be abolished. This abolition of certain functions can therefore be regarded as privatization of function, in which case, government should fill the loss of revenue by providing budgets if they want to continue the public mandate. The privatization of function is therefore not supported by the budget office in general.

Fourth, there are cases that government established SOEs to prevent private monopoly. Typical examples can be found in network industries such as electricity, gas supply, telecommunication etc. As the economy gets matured, however, the possibility of natural monopoly decreases thanks to expanded domestic markets and multiple potential private suppliers. The privatization Korea Telecommunication was an example.

Fifth, there are cases that the government had to take over bankrupted private companies shouldering their debts. Though those companies' major shareholder is the government, they are not quite SOEs in its true sense of the word. Rather, they are in the temporarily custody of government, and will be privatized soon as the Korean government announced August 2008.

#### 2.3 Overview of Privatization History

Privatization has been a continuous effort since late 1960s though not all those efforts were successful. The most important privatization drive in the recent years was made under President Kim Dae-Jung (1998~2003) right after the economic crisis of 1997. President Roh (2003~2008), however, stopped many of reform measures that were planned under his predecessor. The privatization plans of electricity, gas, heating, railroad were stopped or postponed under President Roh. President Lee (2008~2013) revived many of President Kim's plan, and is very active in privatization. But many of his initial ambitious privatization plans were toned downed after the candlelight vigil or demonstration touched off by government's hasty decision of the beef import from the

<Table 3: Privatization Efforts in Korea>

phase	what has been done	main objective and evaluation
1st Phase ('68~73)	*privatization of 11 SOEs Korea Machinery Korea Transportation Korea Shipping Korea Ship-building Incheon Heavy Manufacturing Korea Steel / Korea Airline Korea Mining Refinery Korea Saltern / Commercial Bank Korea Fishery Development	<ul> <li>Birth of private companies → market economy</li> <li>successful privatization</li> </ul>
2nd Phase ('78~83)	Privatization of 7 SOEs     Daehan(Korea) Reinsurance     Daehan(Korea) Oil     Daehan(Korea) Dredging Corp.     Hanil Bank / Jale(First) Bank     Seoul Trust Bank / Choheung Bank	•financial market promotion •Since government's intervention did not stop, the objective of the privatization was not fulfilled.
3rd Phase ('87)	Privatization of Korea Stock Exchange Reducing government share in SOEs KEPCO(Korea electricity Corp.) POSCO(Pohang Steel Corp.)	•Maintains gov. influence even up to now •Redistribution policy: Sale of gov share to individuals rather than companies • It was not a privatization.
4th Phase ('93~'97)	<ul> <li>Privatization</li> <li>Daehan(Korea) Tungsten</li> <li>Kookmin Bank / Housing Bank</li> <li>Other 7 subsidiaries of SOEs</li> <li>Reduce gov share of 22 SOEs</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Original target: privatization of 58 SOEs except some infrastructure-related SOEs such as telecom, electricity etc.</li> <li>Only partially successful (Conglomerate's dominance was an issue.)</li> </ul>
5th Phase ('98~'02)	<ul> <li>Privatization of 8 SOEs (original plan was 12 SOEs)</li> <li>Privatization of 67 subsidiaries of SOEs (original plan was 77)</li> <li>Restructuring and downsizing</li> </ul>	•Extensive privatization plan to reduce public sector after the economic crisis ('97) •4 network industries are not privatized yet. (Electricity, Gas, Railroad, Heating)
6th Phase ('08~'10)	<ul><li>Privatization of many subsidiaries</li><li>Privatization of functions</li></ul>	• still under progress

Source: Ministry of Strategy and Finance, 2008.8.11 (modified)

#### 3. Issues in Privatization

#### 3.1 Problems of SOEs

#### **Inefficiency**

It is a cliche to say that the SOEs are not efficient as private companies. From the labor union's point of view, more staffs means less work and more union members. A private company cannot sustain such inefficiency, but SOEs can because they have no possibility of bankrupt. A survey by the government shows that per capita value addition has increased by annual average 1.8% during 2002~2007 whereas per capita personnel cost has jumped by 6.6% for 35 big SOEs and semi-government organizations in Korea. The fact that a labor union strongly resists to any privatization plan shows that there are some compensation differentials for SOEs.

SOEs are relatively slow in adapting themselves to the changing environment. In many cases, they have weak incentive to change, and when they want to, it takes a long time since the change should be discussed with the government and stakeholders and even with the legislature for a possible need for revision of laws.

The collusion between the CEO and labor union is another source of inefficiency of SOEs. The goal of a CEO of an SOE will be one of the following three: good performance, longer terms in office, next position. A conflict with the labor union could be a hindrance to achieving his goals. In order to attract labor union's support, a CEO tends to be generous to union's request since the budget comes from the government not from his pocket.

#### **Eroding private sector**

To finance the public mandates, many SOEs are making profits eroding the private

market. In order to protect its monopolistic power in the market, SOEs ask the government to levy regulations. The government grants their wish because it will save the government budget to support the market erosion of SOEs. The collusion between the government and SOEs victimizes the private sector.

#### **Political decision**

Some of SOEs in Korea have serious debt problems. For instance, the Korea Land and Housing Corp. is now incurring a debt every year by almost 18 billion USD. It is because the government makes SOEs issue bonds .rather than gives them enough budget. The government has a tendency to start a big project without much deliberation when it is done by SOEs, for it does not need a budget. As a result, there are many SOE projects that are politically motivated. An investment decision in a private company is mainly based on the profit prospects, but that of an SOE is in many cases relies on political decision. Many under-utilized airports in Korea are examples of such political intervention.

Low pricing for many services provided by SOEs such as electricity, water, gas is aggravating the financial status of SOEs. The low pricing is also a result of political decision. The current generation is enjoying lower rates, which will have to be financed by future generation's tax anyway. In this respect, this is another form of collusion among the government, SOEs and the current generation victimizing the future generation.

#### 3.2 Defending Arguments for Privatization

#### Possibly higher price for the public service

The strongest argument from the anti-privatization group is that privatization will

increase the price of the service or goods provided by SOEs. We need to think about whether the low price is beneficial to the economy. First, a low price is applied to all the people regardless of their income level. A low electricity price, for instance, is enjoyed by the rich and the poor. Though there is a progressive nature in the pricing scheme, heavy users are subsidized by the other people. Second, a low price brings about a waste of resource as we can see in the case of water consumption in Korea. There is a Korean expression that shows how wastefully Korean people use water: spend money as if it is water meaning spend money too lavishly. Third, a low price is one of the background of the heavy debt of SOEs, and it is a way of passing current generation's burden to the next generation.

However, a lower price level can also be achieved through privatization. A privatized company can reduce input costs, and increase revenue by more active marketing. If there is still a need for a low price after the privatization, the government can maintain the price regulation even after the privatization.

#### Protect the needy

Some people say that a profit-driven company may neglect the protection to the needy. In principle, however, the protection should be provided by social welfare policy not by SOEs. One example is a train station in a remote area which has only around 20 customers every day. There are people saying that if the Korea Railroad is privatized, the station will be shut down, which will be most likely true. For the government, however, it is much more efficient 'protection' to the people to offer a bus service than to maintain the station and to suffer from lower average train speed. Protecting the needy is an important policy goal, but it is the role of the social policy, not of SOEs.

#### **Foreign Ownership**

When SOEs are turned over to the hands of foreign capital, it may create a problem of economic dependency. This worry is not groundless especially when it comes to key industries such as electricity. Therefore, one can put on a regulation for foreign capitals such as ceiling of share allowed to foreigners in some industries. The U.S. also imposes such restriction on foreign capital in the nuclear industry. Of course, the government should understand that more restriction will make the privatization less attractive to foreign investors.

#### **Concentration of economic power**

It is a reality that only a big company can afford to buy SOEs. There are people who say that privatization will widen the gap between companies by making the big even bigger. There is also a public opinion that a buyer of an SOE is to get some special favor from the government. With a view to avoiding the political burden, the government may consider mass privatization: share-holding by many individuals without making a dominant holder. However, we need to understand that the mass privatization method creates a private company without the owner, which may not be as efficient as the one with an owner. Therefore, the issue of economic concentration and favoritism is not challenging the privatization itself, but privatization methods.

#### Possibility of employment cut

A possibility of downsizing is the main reason why the labor union is such strongly against the privatization in every country. Some even say that SOEs need to alleviate unemployment problem, which is true in the short run. In the long run, however, if public sector absorbs much of the eligible human resource which is very scarce in most of developing countries, the over-employment in SOEs will undermine the growth of the private sector.

The magnitude of the employment adjustment will vary depending on the nature of each industry. A privatization of financial institutions will entail significant employment cut since personnel cost is a dominant part of input. However, infrastructure or network industries may not need such a serious downsizing because for such industries facility-running costs are relatively more important and also because they may have higher demand induced by more active marketing and diverse price scheme after the privatization. Many private companies guarantee employment protection around 3 years after the M&A. The SOEs to be privatized may consider such bargaining chips when they negotiate with labor union.

#### 3.3 The Benefits of Privatization

Though there are contrasting views on the benefits of privatization, the Korean experience supports pro-privatization arguments. During 1998~2002 right after the economic crisis, the privatization drive under Kim Dae-Jung administration introduced additional revenue of 15 billion USD together with higher country rating, which significantly helped Korea overcome the crisis. On top this macro effects, there are several micro-level benefits in the case of POSCO, National Textbook Corporation, Korea Technology Finance, Korea Oil Pipeline, Korea Heavy Corporation, which were privatized around year 2000.

First, the prices were either lowered or maintained at the pre-privatization level thanks to cost minimization and process innovation. The POSCO and National Textbook Corporation were the examples. Second, their core activities became more competitive. Korea Heavy Corporation enjoyed drastic rise in volume of orders after privatization, and Korea Oil Pipeline has higher market share after privatization. Third, the service has been improved as in the case of POSCO who reduced the lead time thanks to the new integrated system established after privatization, and National Textbook's product was better received in terms of consumer satisfaction after privatization. Fourth, the profit has

increased as a result of more active marketing activities and cost cuts. All four privatized companies turned from the negative to positive profits after the privatization. POSCO couldn't quite reach to the positive profits, but reduced the deficits significantly whereas the other competitors in the U.S. and Japan had to face more deficits. Fifth, all five privatized companies showed a more sound financial standing after privatization. It is not surprising that the stock prices have been doubled on average reflecting their better performance in various aspects.

#### 4. Recommendation for Developing Countries

#### 4.1 Privatization strategy

Among those arguments opposing privatization, transfer of ownership to foreign capitals is a more serious problem in developing countries than in Korea. It makes a sense to say that infrastructure-related industries and network industry should not be privatized for some time in many developing countries. If these industries are to be privatized, foreign capital's dominance in the economy will be much more serious. For developing countries, encouraging domestic capital accumulation is an essential policy objective.

Privatization of those neither infrastructure nor network industries will benefit the economy in many ways. Even when there seems to be no such domestic buyer, and when the foreign capital is the only viable option left, we still need to private SOEs because the benefit of higher efficiency from privatization outweighs the costs of transferring ownership to foreign capital.

For a privatization to be successful, the most important factor is the political commitment. It is better not even try to consider privatization without strong political determination. If there is a political will, there are some of the strategies that developing countries want to

apply.

First, the most serious resistance against the privatization comes from the trade union's concern about their job security. Temporary guarantee of employment for 2~3 years after the privatization can be a compromise between the labor union and the government. However, without a flexibility of reducing employment, we won't be able to find any prospect buyer.

Second, utilize the audit office in finding inefficient management cases so that the general public understands the need of a strong reform including privatization. The investigation of the audit office should be of course widely publicized through news media.

Third, form a temporary team that consists of both civil servants and experts from the private sector under the SOE governance body. SOE reform should be a responsibility of the SOE governance body, not that of line ministries nor of the Ministry of Finance in charge of national assets. When the team formulates a privatization plan, let the team talk with the line ministries. But we should make it clear that the final decision should be made in SGC not by the line ministries. It is therefore very important to staff the temporary team with reformative experts from the private sector.

Fourth, the plan may take phased approach, but the final step should be completed within the President's term. Each step proposed in the plan should have a clear deadline and measures to judge whether or not one step is over. It is a good idea to make a privatization of a certain SOE clearly stated in a law.

Fifth, create a driving force within a relevant line ministry, and make them accountable to the SOE governance body. The government should be ready to punish the line ministry for a possible delay. Providing an incentive for the line ministry is a good strategy. One example could be to establish a new policy department within the line-ministry after privatization.

Sixth, if you cannot private a whole SOE, privatize each function SOEs have. When an SOE has both market and public functions, it argues that it should remain as a SOE to serve the public function. Privatization of such an SOE as a whole is in fact not feasible, and we should pursue privatize function by function.

Seventh, EBO (employment buyout) or MBO (management buyout) is not an ideal way of privatization because it makes restructuring after privatization difficult. When the labor union wants EBO, let them understand the risk involved after privatization.

Eighth, try to create tangible effects out of privatization as quickly as possible, and share them with the public. Quick win is always important as Kotter (1996) says. Announce the effects of privatization widely to gain public support for privatization.

#### 4.2 Driving force for SOEs Reform

It is advised to establish SOE Governance Council (SGC) which has wide range of authority to reform SOEs. Here are some of the features that a reform driver needs to have.

First, its mandate should be focused on reform, not anything else. In the history of privatization in Korea, Planning and Budget Commission (PBC) under President Kim was the most powerful and effective driving force. It was directly under the President, and its mission was to formulate fiscal planning and government reform. With a help of the fiscal planning function, the reform could be more easily implemented. Since PBC was free from day to day issues, it could concentrate its energy on the government reform.

Second, the reform driver should have wide spectrum of responsibility and better to have staff composition mixed of private and public sector people. PBC's work scope was 'government reform' which was very wide enough to cover privatization of SOEs, integration of ministries, reducing teachers' retirement age, e-government, handling complaints to the government etc. The legislature and judiciary were outside of the coverage of PBC, but almost every aspect of the administration and its branches was within PBC's coverage. GRO also recruited many people from the private or quasi-government sector. This mix of staffs generated both competition and synergy.

Third, the privatization should be led by an organization that does not have incentive not to privatize. Before 1997, privatization was driven by the co-work between the relevant line ministries and Ministry of Finance (MOF) who was in charge of managing national assets. MOF had little incentive to privatize SOEs because they viewed privatization as a policy to reduce national assets. The line ministries of course had no incentive to privatize SOEs under their umbrella because privatization meant loss of their policy tools and employment opportunity after retirement. This institutional arrangement was one of the reasons why privatization was slow in Korea during 80s~90s.

Fourth, there should be a SOE Governance Council that consists of members from the line ministries and the private sector to make it a final arena for significant decision making. Since privatization was trans-ministrial work, PBC established SOE Privatization Committee (SPC) chaired by the Minister of PBC. As a face-saving gesture, the vice chairmanship was given to the Vice-Minister of MOF. Members of the SPC were Vice-Ministers of relevant ministries, an advisor to the President. Two experts in the private sector were also invited as members as a way to provide a neutral view.

Basic privatization plans prepared by PBC were consulted with the relevant ministries. GRO tried to accommodate comments suggested by the line ministries but not all. Vice-Ministers in line ministries could express their opinions in SPC, but in fact it wasn't

easy for them to do so in front of the chairman of PBC and the advisor of the President both of whom already agreed upon every agenda forwarded to the SPC. Two experts from the private sector were also in line with the PBC. Since SPC was fully empowered by then President Kim, it made controversial consensus building process much easier. Though the labor union was not happy with this swift process, the social pressure right after the economic crisis of 1997 made them relatively silent through the process.

#### 4.3 SOE Management System

I would like to suggest an annual evaluation system for SOEs that links the result to the bonus for employees in each SOE. In Korea, there are three management mechanisms for SOEs facilitated by the government: direct supervision by the Operation Committee for Public Entities (OCPE), internal checking system, monitoring by NGOs and media. The OCPE is to determine all the important decisions for public entities including SOEs chaired by the Minister of the Strategy and Finance with vice ministers in relevant ministries and experts in the private sector.

< Table 4: The Management Scheme for Public Entities by the Government>

		Coverage			
		23 SOEs	77 semi- government bodies	204 other public entities	
	management direction	0	0	×	
	evaluation	0	0	Δ	
supervision by OCPE	evaluation on auditor performance	0	Δ	×	
	dismissal request for directors	0	0	×	
	review for a new establishment	0	0	0	

	function adjustment	0	0	0
Internal	Board meeting	0	0	×
checking	selection process for board directors	0	0	×
Monitoring by NGOs and media	public notice for corporate information	0	0	0
NGOS and media	consumer satisfaction survey	0	0	0

Source: Ministry of Strategy and Finance, 2008.8.11 (modified)

One important management scheme by the OCPE is the evaluation for public entities. Every year, the OCPE organizes evaluation board that consists of around 100 experts in the private sector. The board evaluates CEOs and SOEs separately. Some people think that the evaluations on CEO and SOE are redundant, and should be integrated. The SOE evaluation is divided into quantitative and qualitative evaluation. The qualitative evaluation is again categorized into leadership and strategies, major performances, and management efficiency. The consequence of the evaluation is rather harsh: the ones with the worst CEO evaluation will have to resign, and the bonus level ranges 100~500% of each employee's monthly salary depending on the result of SOE evaluation.

The SOE governance scheme has been changed over the years in Korea. Before 1984, SOEs were controlled by each line ministry. Two government officials one from budget ministry and the other from line ministry participated in the board meeting. In 1984, the evaluation system for SOEs was first introduced. It was only year 2004 that semi-government bodies and the other public entities got started to be evaluated by the government, and in 2007, the law was enacted to manage all the public entities under one law on Public Entity Operation. By OCPE, the division of labor between the Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) and the line ministries are cleared: management supervision by OCPE chaired by the MOSF Minister, and project supervision by corresponding line ministry.

Transparent information sharing on SOEs is also very important means to better manage the SOEs. An important scheme in Korea is the Internet-based Information Open System for Public Entities called Alio (<a href="www.alio.go.kr">www.alio.go.kr</a>), which mandates public entities to open 27 information through the Internet, which is accessible to everyone. The 27 information includes staff number, number of division, personnel costs, important financial indexes, major performance indicators, even minutes for board meetings and consumer satisfaction survey result etc. The MOSF reviews the adequate provision of information on an annual basis, which is reflected in the SOE evaluation which again is linked to bonus compensation. The number of Internet connection to (<a href="www.alio.go.kr">www.alio.go.kr</a>) reached over 2 million in the year 2008.

#### **4.4 Other Reform Measures**

#### Corporitization

There are other measures of reforming SOEs than privatization. Some of government branches can better serve their functions if they are turned into SOEs. It should be noted that corporatization is a stepping stone for privatization. For instance, Korea Railroad Corp. used to be a government agency under Ministry of Transportation, but it has turned into a SOE in 2005. The privatization plan for Korea Railroad has been postponed by the Roh administration (2003~2008). It is expected that the privatization process will be resumed soon. KT&G (Korea Tobacco and Ginseng Corporation) also used to be a government agency, which became a SOE, and was privatized. KT (Korea Telecom) followed the same foot-step with KT&G.

#### **Integration**

Other than privatization, integration of SOEs could be an effective measure to enhance productivity and quality of service. Integration is a big shock to relevant SOEs, and the

government can implement massive restructuring taking integration as an opportunity. Integration, of course, entails many side effects such as creating a dinosaur SOE, internal conflicts after integration, chaos before and after the integration. These costs are, however, rather temporary considering the permanent benefits of integration, which as follow.

First, when continuous business procedures are performed by two separate SOEs, integration of those two will reduce loss of information in the course of procedure shifts between two SOEs. A typical example is the Land Corporation and the Housing Corporation. The integration of two SOEs, which became in effect from October 1st 2009, will reduce the construction period and costs. Another example is the integration of Korea Workers Accident Medical Center and Korea Workers Compensation & Welfare Service.

The second case is when two or more SOEs are conducting similar functions, in which case integration of those will bring about economies of scope. One example is three promotion agencies for Internet, Information Protection, International IC Cooperation respectively. Another example is three promotion agencies for cultural contents, game industry, and media & movies. The employees working those organizations have a lot either in common or in complementariness in terms of their specialties, therefore, can benefit each other when the organizations are integrated.

Third, there are even cases where much of two SOEs' functions are redundant. Some people defend the redundancy mentioning possible competition between SOEs. However, competition is a productive pressure only when the result of the competition has serious impact on the winner and the loser, which is not the case in SOEs. One example is the National Computing Agency and the Government Computing Center which are now integrated, and another example is the Land Corporation and Housing Corporation in the field of the housing estate development.

#### Other efficiency measures

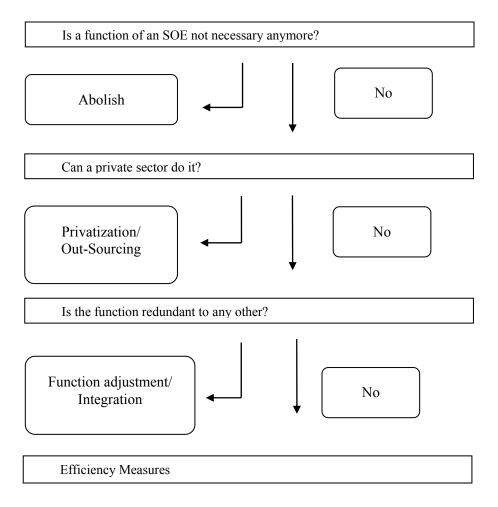
All SOEs' function should be analyzed, and adjusted as follows. First, sales of unnecessary asset should be applied to all SOEs. Some of Korea's SOEs own golf courses, sports center, duty-free shops etc. These facilities are making revenue which is used for the public cause. However, as we have discussed previously, these business should be conducted by the private sector.

Some of SOEs' function should be transferred to the other SOEs for a more clear division of labor. The export promotion by SMEs has been performed by three organizations in Korea: KOTRA (Korea Trade and Investment Agency, a semi-government organization), Small and Medium Business Administration (SMBA, a government agency), IC International Cooperation Promotion Agency (export promotion for SMEs in the field of ICT, a semi-government organization). The overlapping roles have been cleared last year: export-promotion within Korea is by the SMBA and that outside of Korea is by KOTRA.

Many SOEs are trying to start a new business while maintaining the old, which results in bloated public sector. Differentiating core functions from the less important functions, therefore, is an important first step in streamlining the public sector. The second step is of course to discriminate resource allocation to those core and none-core functions.

Finally, The efficiency measures should be applied to all SOEs include downsizing, out-sourcing, streamlining local branches, privatization of subsidiary companies of SOEs, performance management. These efforts will enhance the market value when sold.

< Figure 3: Flow Chart of SOE Reform>



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