

# Harmony in Nature: Shinan-gun's Sustainable

Journey Towards the SDGs(2016-2021)

Sunshine, wind, tidal flats, and human community







Located in the southwesternmost part of Korea, Shinan-gun is a paradise consisting of 1025 beautiful islands. It has a vast tidal flat, the largest in the country, and extensive salt fields that produce 70% of the national sea salt production. With abundant resources, numerous attractions, and pristine natural scenery throughout the year, Shinan-gun offers an exceptional experience. The seafood harvested from its clean waters and various agricultural products grown in the germanium-rich soil also exhibit excellent taste and quality.







Shinan-gun's greatest aspiration lies in the preservation of tidal flats, harnessing the power of wind and sunlight, and maximizing their economic potential. By restraining the urge for reclamation and land alteration, safeguarding and nurturing the 1,100.86 square kilometers of Shinan's tidal flats as a precious natural resource—a significant portion amounting to 15% of South Korea's total tidal flats—will serve as a pivotal landmark in the evolution of human civilization.















We envision a harmonious coexistence in Shinan-gun, where sunlight, wind, tidal flats, and humans unite seamlessly. This heralds a new era of ecological civilization, where sustainable environment, economy, and society thrive in perfect harmony, deeply embedded within the essence of Shinan-gun





## Forward

Welcome to Shinan-gun, a remarkable county comprising of 1004 islands. Here, the harsh natural environment and arduous labor shape the foundation of residents lives. It is a place where the movement of passenger ships, the lifeblood of the local population, faces severe limitations for 111 days in average each year. Moreover, the consequences of population decline are magnified due to the county's limited financial independence, making it one of the most pressing challenges we face.

Ever since I was elected as county mayor(head of a Gun) in 2006, I have been dreaming of the hope of transition toward sustainability rather than the despair of a corner of the underdeveloped area. From a place where the contradictory value of growth -that everything else can be ignored for the sake of economic growth-dominated public opinion, it has been a long journey of "constantly visiting and persuading, piecing together the big picture of hope," and the journey of our transition continues today.

Preserving tidal flats, wind and sunlight, and increasing their economic value is the greatest hope of Shinan-gun. With a total area of 1,100.86 square kilometers, which occupies 15% of the total tidal flats in South Korea, the process of preserving and valuing the tidal flats of Shinan, against the logic of land reclamation and economic development, is a milestone of the transition movement of human civilization. The transformation of the symbolic land of economic decline and backwardness into a land with a potential value of 1.5 trillion won is a key element of sustainable development.

People's rights and administrative services stipulated by the Constitution cannot be restricted just because they are on an island. I have traveled back and forth between Seoul and Shinan countless times to convince the national assembly members to change the law that prevents passenger ships from traveling at night. For citizens who are inconvenienced by the lack of buses when they arrive on the island at night, we have already implemented free buses for all citizens over 14 years by purchasing a bus company when the word "publicly operating bus system" had not been even existed. Citizen-centered social service innovation is a firm goal of the sustainable development in public administration.



“

**At its core, sustainable development policy is about persuasion, anticipation, and unwavering confidence that pave the way for a transformation of current civilization.**

”



I was elected as the 6th President of the Local Government Council for Sustainable Development of Korea in 2022, and together with 27 local governments, we are working for the sustainable development of Korean society. "Dream Globally, fit locally!", is creating a new wave of innovative and voluntary activities of local governments in a centralized administrative structure. With the Local Government Council at the center, the importance of governance created by the central government, civil society, academia, and businesses will continue to be emphasized in the future.

We hope that you will continue to support the process of transition movement towards sustainable development in Shinan-gun. Experience the wonders of Shinan-gun and become a part of our community, where your wisdom and insights are cherished.

May 14, 2023

County Mayor, **PARK Woo-Ryang**



Supporting  
the sustainable  
development of  
Shinan-gun



The president of the Local  
Sustainability Alliance of Korea  
**Jae-Yeong, Huh**

**“The leadership of Shinan-gun’s  
sustainable development is a Brand of  
Humanity's Public Good.”**

The Sustainable Development Goals are the 2030 global targets to ensure that no one is left behind. The Local Sustainability Alliance of Korea has taken note of the efforts made by Shinan-gun to achieve this goal.

We applaud the openness and transparency of the administration of Shinan-gun for promoting sustainable development policies that revitalize the environment, economy, and society through civil engagement and governance.

We look forward to seeing this policy spread across the country and become a foundational practice for human co-prosperity.

**Welcome to a report that responds to  
the needs of the times!**

In a fast-paced society, keeping up with rapid changes can be challenging. What kind of changes can we call "progress" rather than "regression"? What defines our era and how can we embrace changes that signify true progress?

The answer to these questions in our time is "sustainable development". From Agenda 21 to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs), the international community, led by the United Nations, has defined efforts to realize the value of sustainability in the process of change in our society as a public responsibility. However, the outlook for a sustainable future as we experience it is not very hopeful.

Nevertheless, if there is one spark of hope for a sustainable future, it is responsible local action. Shinan-gun's Sustainability Report marks a significant milestone in the local-level sustainable development history of Korea, demonstrating accountability to the international community and inspiring active engagement from other local governments. It serves as a catalyst for fostering global sustainability, starting from our very own homes and neighborhoods, forging new pathways that extend to the world.



Executive Director, ICLEI Korea  
**PARK Yeonhee**



# Vision of Sustainable Development of Shinan-gun

“Shinan, where sunshine, wind, tidal flats,  
and humans coexist peacefully and harmoniously.”

## ESG Strategies



### Eco leadership

Conservation of  
Nature and Green  
Leadership



### Social service innovation

Resident-centered  
innovative  
social services



### Governance of efficiency

Good governance

South Korea's Leading Model for Sustainability, Shinan-gun



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS





# General Information

Area of Tidal flats **1,100.86**km<sup>2</sup>

Twice big the area of Seoul



**1,000,000** birds

stopping by the islands of Shinan every year



**5,120** tidal flat species

One of the most diverse ecosystems in the country

**2,590**species

Species found in the island area of Shinan-gun



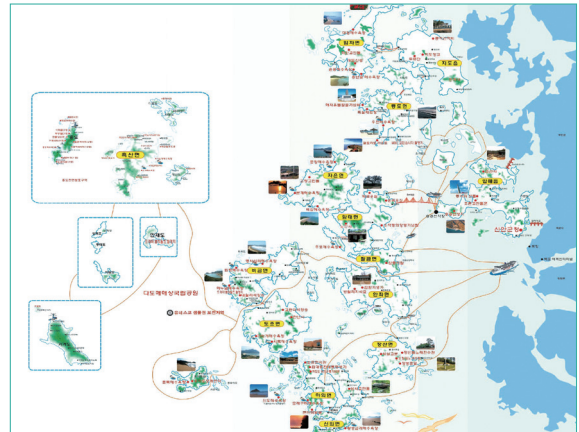
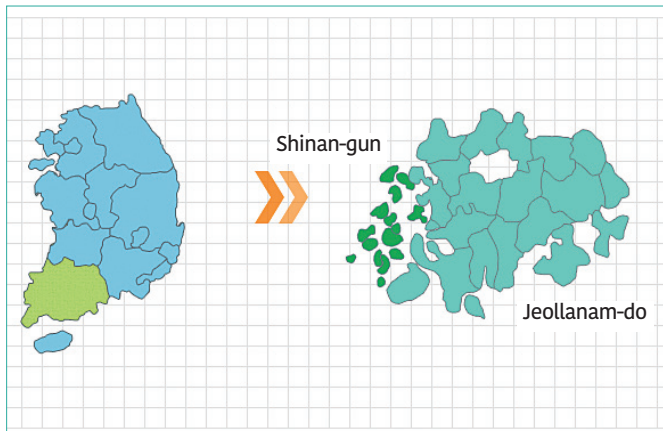
- The area designated as a biosphere reserve is **3,238.74**km<sup>2</sup>, five times the size of Seoul.
- 140,000 tons of salt, **79.5%** of the nation's salt production, is produced in Shinan-gun(2020)
- **4,437** ha, 25 percent of the total agricultural land area is covered by eco-friendly farming methods (2020)
- **1,618,446** visitors to major tourist attractions in 2022
- **788.84**m<sup>2</sup> of green space per capita, 3.5 times the average in Korea
- Traffic accidents per 1,000 cars in Shinan: **0.8** in 2021, 6.4 in Jeollanam-do



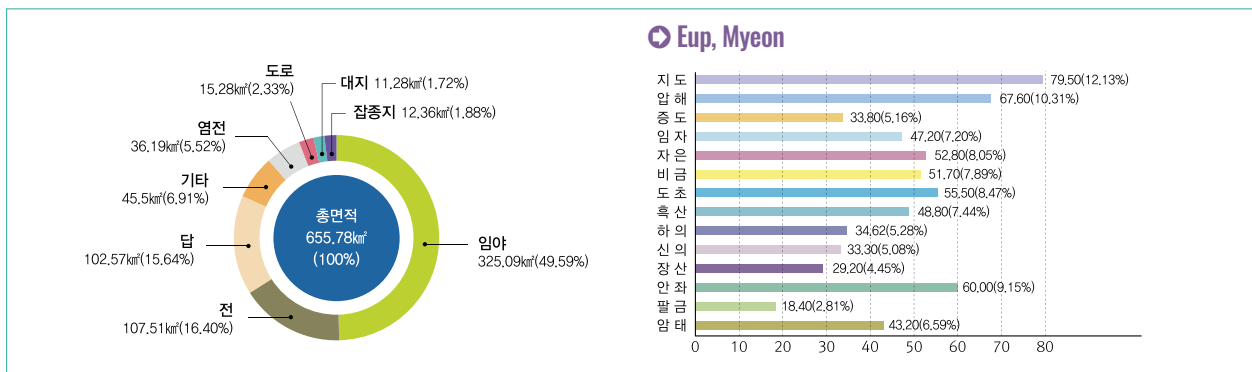
The Sea of archipelago, a sea of many islands,  
Positioned as the ultimate haven with minimal COVID-19 cases and vast greenery for every species, Shinan-gun stands out as the safest and most comfortable sanctuary for travelers, offering a sustainable destination that ensures a fair and secure experience.

## 1004 Island, Shinan-gun

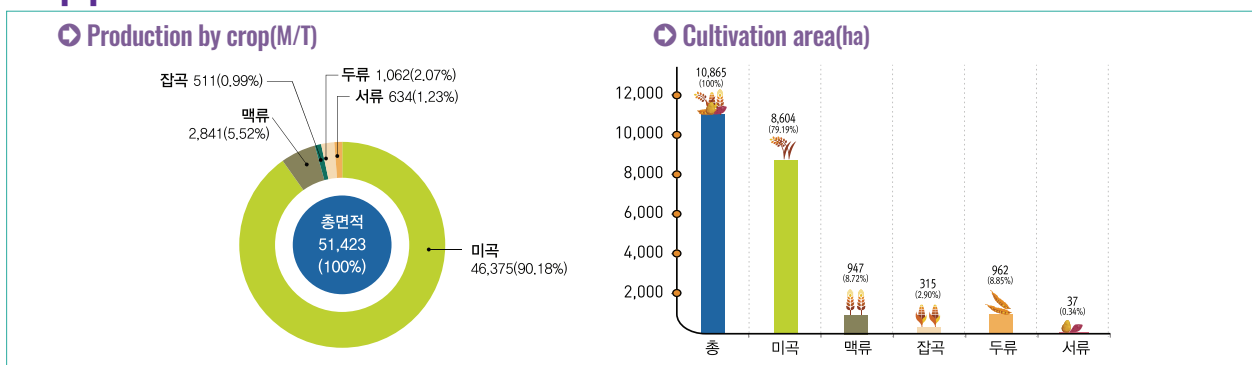
### Location



### Land Use



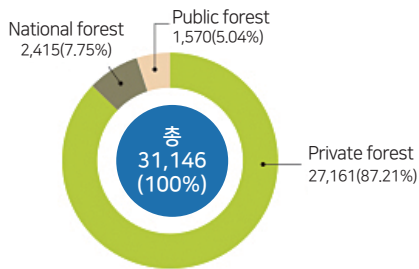
### Crop production



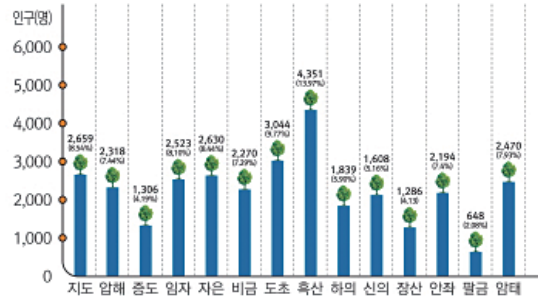


## Forestry

Area by Ownership(ha)



Area by township(ha)



## Fishery

Fishery population

- ▶ Fishery household : 8,549
- ▶ Fishery population : 12,468

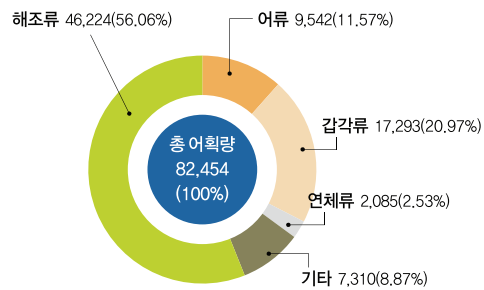


남자 : 7,115명  
(57.06%)



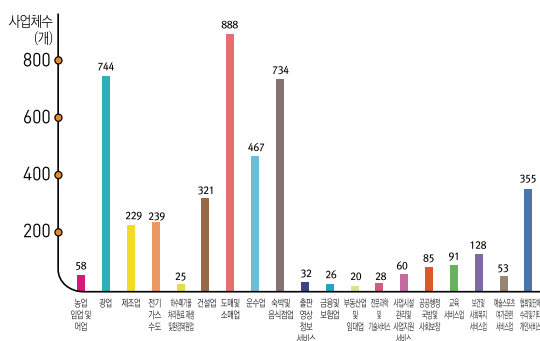
여자 : 5,353명  
(42.94%)

Catch

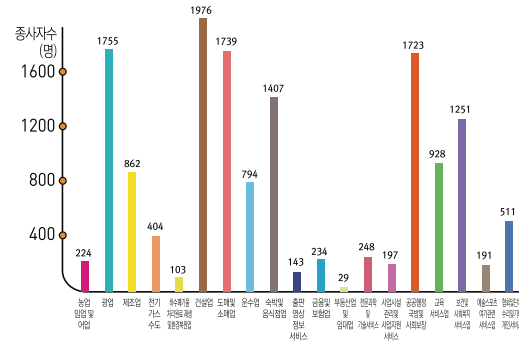


## Business

Number of Business(3,104)

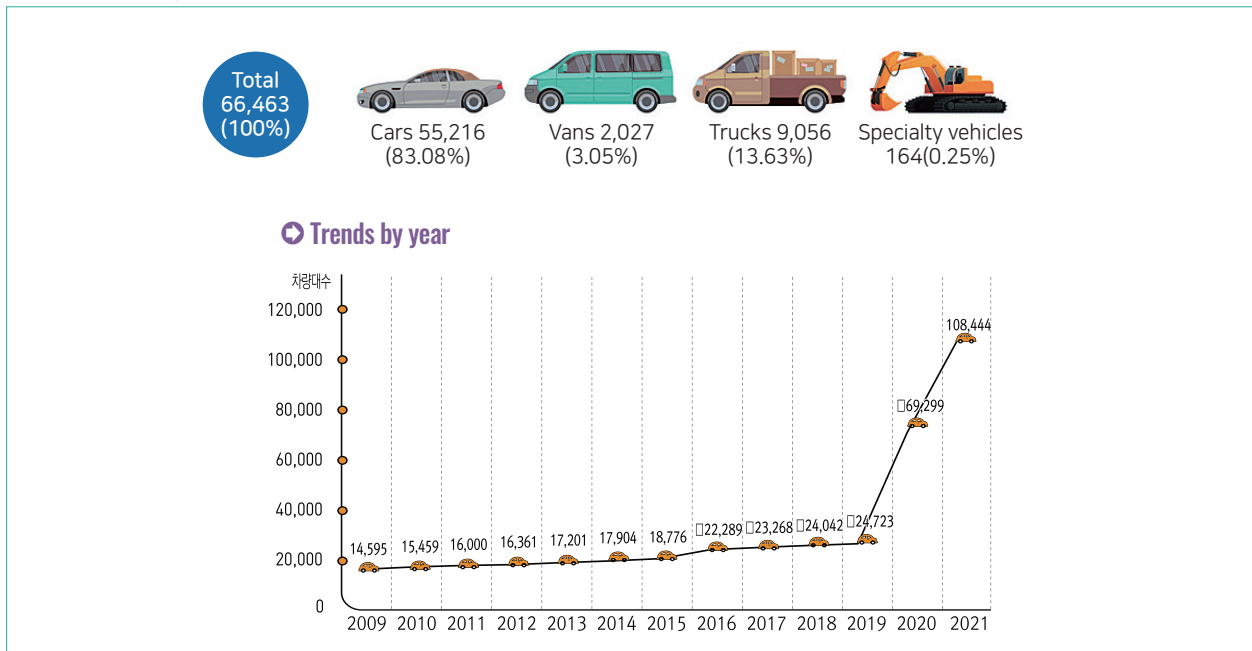


Number of employees(10,464)

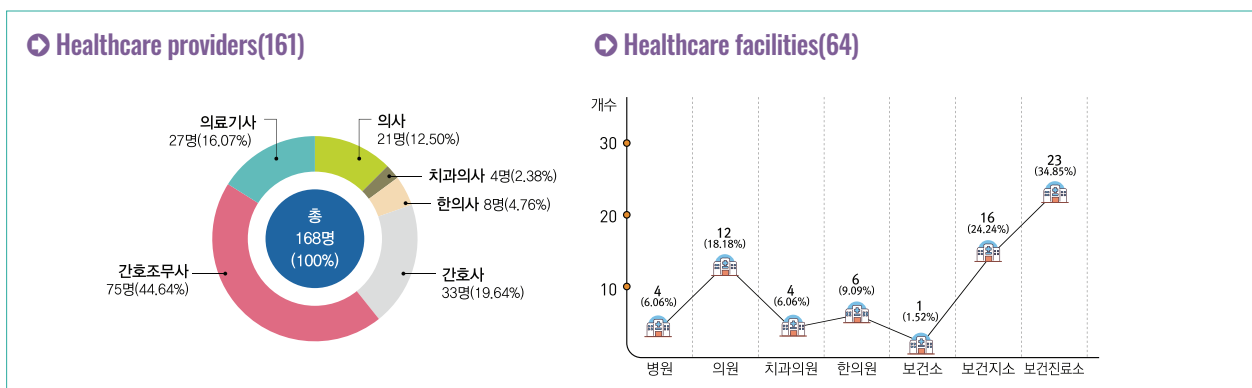




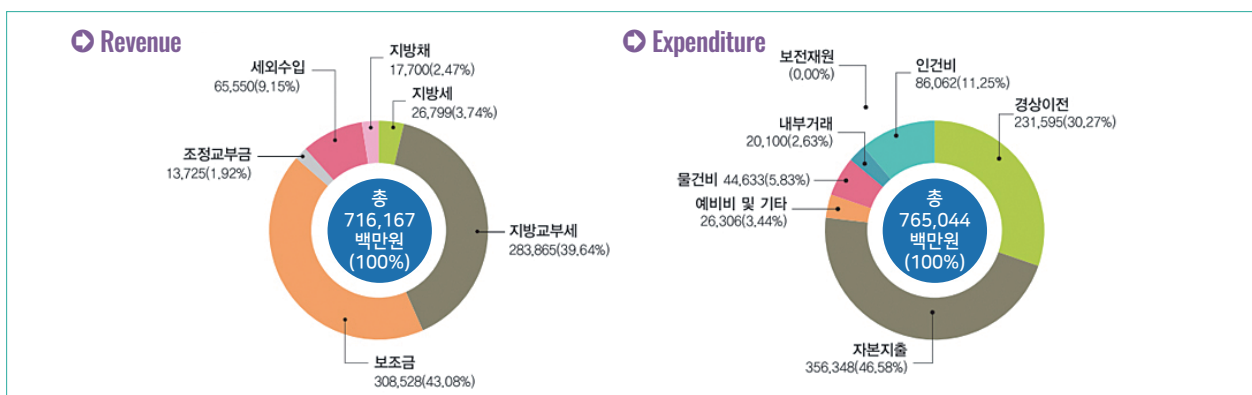
## Vehicle Registration



## Healthcare services



## Fiscal status





# Sustainable Management Strategies

## Eco leadership

A municipal philosophy that prioritizes ecosystem value and environmental protection

## Social service innovation

Climate change responses that create an opportunity to improve residents' quality of life

## Governance of efficiency

An active networking with domestic and international organizations that helps establish new governance





## Major Sustainable Development Goals

**13** CLIMATE ACTION



Our dedication to preserving pristine tidal flats stands as a solution to the climate crisis.

**Performance indicator :**

Permanent preservation of 1,100.86 km<sup>2</sup> of UNESCO World Natural Heritage tidal flats

**7** AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



Pioneering the way in climate crisis responses, we expand solar and wind energy to pave a sustainable path.

**Performance indicator :**

Total annual renewable energy production capacity of 4,106.5MW

**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



By channeling profits from renewable energy production back to residents, we foster the growth of the social economy.

**Performance indicator :**

KRW 6 million per person per year by renewable energy dividends

**13** CLIMATE ACTION



With proactive measures such as blue and green carbon, we actively address the global climate crisis.

**Performance indicator :**

220 million tons of carbon reduction per year

**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



We prioritize improving transportation to meet the needs of our residents.

**Performance indicator :**

22 electric buses adopted, expansion of electric vehicles on the island.

**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



By employing resident-centered color marketing and rejuvenating the local sense of place, we enhance housing and neighborhood conditions.

**Performance indicator :**

Expanding color marketing to 43 villages by 2030



# Eco leadership

In the early stages of industrialization, vast tidal flats represented a harsh labor and a sense of being left behind. However, Shinan-gun now safeguards these tidal flats, once seen as symbols of a challenging natural environment and arduous work, with optimism and assurance. At the heart of the county's sustainable management lies the preservation and sustainable utilization of these tidal flats, recognized as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site, crucial for both ecosystem and livelihoods.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Our dedication to preserving pristine tidal flats stands as a solution to the climate crisis.

**Performance indicator :**

Permanent preservation of 1,100.86 km<sup>2</sup> of UNESCO World Natural Heritage tidal flats





## The efforts of Shinan-gun's Wetlands Protection

- On July 26, 2021, the Korean Tidal Wetlands(Getbol), which includes Shinan-gun, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List at the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee. The 'Korean Tidal Flats' inscribed at the 44th session of the Committee include four areas: Shinan Tidal Flat(Shinan-gun), Boseong-Suncheon Tidal Flat(Boseong-gun and Suncheon-city), Gochang Tidal Flat(Gochang-gun), and Seocheon Tidal Flat(Seocheon-gun). Among them, Shinan Tidal Flat has the largest area(1,100.86km<sup>2</sup>), about 85% of the total heritage area.
- Shinan Tidal Flat has many unique features that are hard to find anywhere else in the world, including large and small tidal channels that pass between islands and islets, extensive tidal flats surrounding the islands, muddy wetlands up to 40 meters deep, and unusual sand deposits on the tidal flats. In addition, the tidal flats are globally valuable as they are visited by more than 54,000 waterbirds of 90 species, including 14 IUCN Red List species\*.
- Shinan-gun is the only county in South Korea to designate and manage the entire county as a biosphere reserve.
- For biosphere reserves, Shinan-gun hosted the 12th East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network(EABRN) Conference and signed a biosphere reserve MOU with Vietnam's Gap Ba National Park for cooperation and information exchange among biosphere reserves in East Asia.

\* The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is an assessment of the risk of extinction of species worldwide. It is assessed in nine categories: Extinct (EX), Extinct in the Wild (EW), Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Least Concern (LC), Data Deficient (DD), and Not Evaluated (NE).





# Eco leadership

Within Shinan-gun, the islands and wetlands serve as vital resting spots and breeding ground for migratory birds, hosting an impressive array of species, including over 100,000 Spoon-billed Sandpipers, Swinhoe's Storm Petrels, Black-headed Plovers, Kentish Plovers, and additional 380 bird species. Our commitment to eco-friendly practices, such as organic farming and reducing land-based pesticide and plastic usage, contributes to the flourishing biodiversity of Shinan-gun. Furthermore, we actively engage in ongoing collaboration with the international community through our participation in the UN Biodiversity Network, establishing a robust network of cooperation.

14 LIFE  
BELOW WATER



Preserve the tidal-flat wetlands for both climate change and biodiversity

**Performance indicator :**

1. Over 100,000 migratory birds stopping by
2. Expansion of eco-friendly farming area to 4,437ha

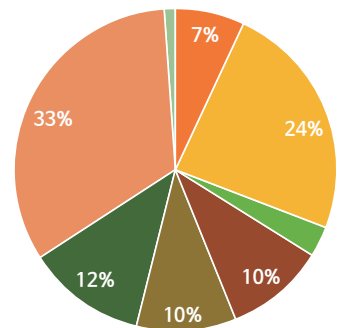


In our endeavor to effectively manage the ecosystem, we conduct comprehensive and systematic biodiversity surveys, establishing the most comprehensive and extensive natural ecology database in Korea.

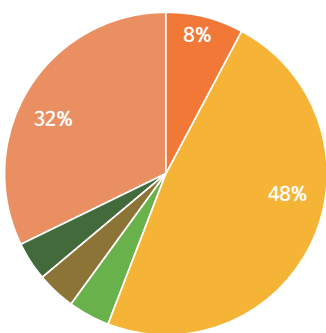
Shinan-gun takes pride in surveying 76 species(28.4%) of the total 267 endangered wildlife species on the Korean Peninsula, including 13 species(21.7%) categorized as Class I endangered wildlife and 63 species as Class II endangered wildlife. Notably, 46 out of the surveyed endangered species in Shinan-gun are birds, constituting a significant 73% of the total 63 endangered wildlife species. Additionally, Shinan-gun is home to 75 climate change indicator species, representing 75% of the total 100 climate change bioindicator species. This highlights its crucial role in assessing the impacts and vulnerabilities of climate change. To safeguard biodiversity, Shinan-gun has established dedicated departments responsible for continuous monitoring and research.



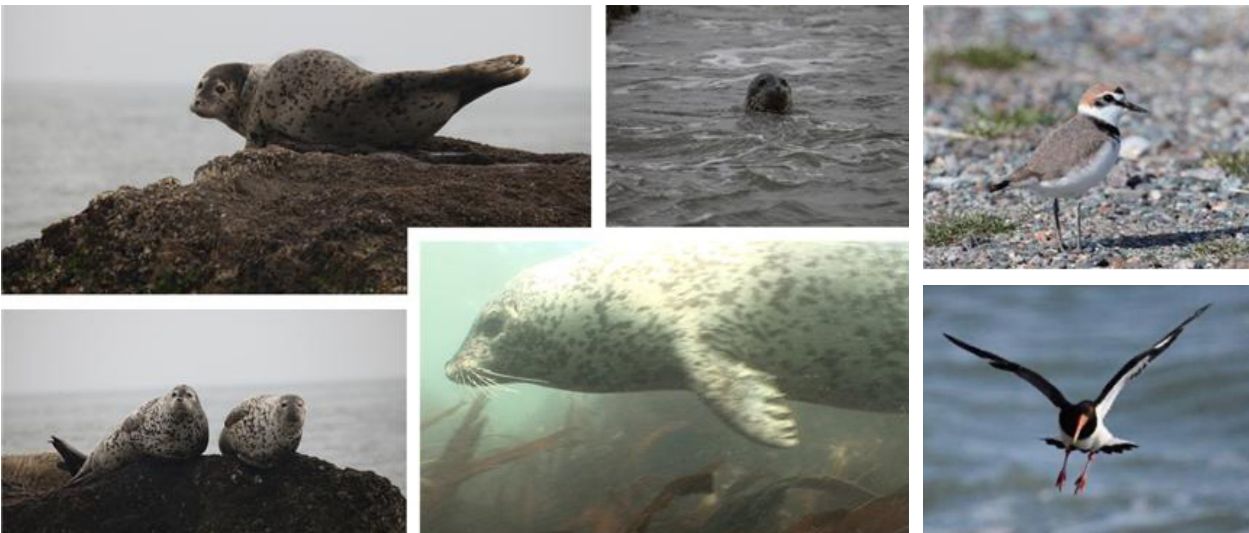
National Endangered Species  
Distribution Rate



Distribution rate of endangered species  
in Shinan-gun



- Mammal ■ Birds ■ Amphibious reptiles ■ Fish ■ Insects ■ Invertebrates
- Land plants ■ Seaweed higher fungi





## World Heritage Bureau

- Shinan-gun has the only World Heritage Bureau at the local level in South Korea. The World Heritage Bureau is responsible for protecting endangered species, conducting biological surveys, developing management plans for biosphere reserves, and restoring tidal flat ecosystems, as well as supporting the management of natural parks.
- The first mountainous wetland discovered on the island through efforts with World Heritage Bureau was recognized in 2003, and was designated as a wetland reserve by the Ministry of Environment in 2004, followed by Korea's third Ramsar Site in March 2005.
- There are the Jeungdo Tidal Flat Museum, Jangdo Mountain Wetland Exhibition Center, Migratory Bird Museum, Bird Crafts Museum, Gageodo Marine Reserve Management Center, and Shinan Native Plant Museum to exhibit, educate, and publicize the ecological resources of Shinan. In addition, the Shinan Ecological Education Center Exhibition Hall is operated as an educational facility that many people love to visit.



람사르 습지로 인증된 장도



람사르 습지 인증서



신안 자생식물 뮤지엄



신안 철새박물관



## International Migratory Bird Symposium organized by '1004 Islands' Shinan-gun (2007~2022)



## Shinan-gun's Birds(Publicity materials)





# Eco leadership

Harnessing the abundant sunlight and powerful winds, Shinan-gun embraces a smart utilization. Through its green and blue carbon initiatives, the county is undergoing a remarkable transformation, turning from a remote location in Korea into a globally recognized city at the forefront of climate change response.

**7** AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



Pioneering the way in climate crisis responses, we expand solar and wind energy to pave a sustainable path.

**Performance indicator :**  
220 million tons of carbon reduction per year





Shinan-gun's carbon neutrality policy encompasses two key approaches: green carbon, which involves establishing gardens and forests to enhance residents' living environment on land, and blue carbon, which involves creating tidal flats and artificial wetlands to sequester carbon. Leveraging the unique geographical conditions of Shinan-gun, we are actively transforming into a significant hub for carbon reduction while prioritizing the preservation of both land and marine ecosystems. Through the implementation of our green carbon policy, we achieve an annual reduction of 75,000 tons of carbon, while our blue carbon policy further contributes to a remarkable reduction of up to 250,000 tons of carbon each year.







Shinan-gun consists of 1004 islands blessed with abundant sunlight and strong winds. A critical need for energy independence posed life-threatening challenges since the access to fossil fuels had been very limited.

The people of Shinan-gun are very familiar and friendly with the use and spread of renewable energy. This is precisely why Shinan-gun has emerged as the epicenter of South Korea's renewable energy production and response to the climate crisis. Ambitious plans are in place to generate 8.2 GW of offshore wind energy and 10 GW of photovoltaic power generation by 2030.

The expansion of renewable energy policies in Shinan-gun holds the potential to reduce carbon emissions by an impressive 217 million tons annually, while also delivering a substantial economic value of 62 trillion won through carbon reduction initiatives.



## The launch of a renewable energy dividends, 'Solar Harvest Community Benefit'



For the initial payout, Shinan-gun provided renewable energy dividends ranging from \$100 to \$420 per individual

<뉴스시스 NEWSIS>

# Social service innovation

Shinan-gun allocates 30% of its renewable energy revenue to residents through the Solar Harvest Community Benefit, fostering a social economy that prioritizes the welfare of its residents while effectively tackling the global climate crisis. This initiatives also enables the expansion of social services in line with community needs.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



By channeling profits from renewable energy production back to residents, we foster the growth of the social economy.

Performance indicator :

KRW 6 million per person per year from the renewable energy revenue





## **Climate crisis responsive social economy system Community Benefit Sharing Program for Renewable Energy Projects**

Amidst the climate crisis era, numerous local governments in South Korea face challenges regarding opposition and complaints from residents when it comes to implementing renewable energy infrastructure. However, Shinan-gun has effectively addressed this issue by establishing an agreement that benefits residents, ensuring a smooth installation process for renewable energy facilities. This proactive approach not only saves time and money for companies but also prevents unnecessary expenditure due to complaints. Shinan-gun's commendable "Community Benefit Sharing Program for Renewable Energy" sets an exemplary standard for addressing the pressing global climate crisis, as it enables residents to receive renewable energy profits as a form of pension.

Since April 2021, a substantial 7,434 residents have already benefited from this program. Looking ahead, the county has ambitious plans to expand the initiative to 300 billion won by 2030. Additionally, this program serves as a compelling factor for attracting new residents, combating population decline, and revitalizing the area with increased vitality.



## Publicly operated bus system



# Social service innovation

Shinan-gun has introduced the nation's first "fully publicly operated bus system" that manages its own buses.

It prioritizes route reliability and convenience over profitability, and even operates routes for residents living in remote areas.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



We prioritize improving transportation to meet the needs of our residents.

**Performance indicator :**

22 electric buses adopted, expansion of electric vehicles on the island.





**Constant dialogue and persuasion play a crucial role in Shinan-gun's pursuit of sustainable development, as they serve as the key to enhancing the quality of life for its residents.**

In a span of six years, the Shinan government successfully acquired 14 struggling private bus companies while concurrently engaging in discussions and persuasions with those who initially opposed the idea due to financial concerns. At a time when a publicly operated bus system was non-existent in Korea, we assumed responsibility for all 22 buses, optimizing their routes for resident convenience and enhancing overall service quality. Within just two years of implementation, the bus system experienced remarkable growth, with triple the number of residents utilizing the buses and a doubling of operating revenue. Additionally, the introduction of the publicly

operated bus system has played a significant role in expanding local commerce, attracting more residents to reside in town and village centers, and attracting an increased number of tourists. Notably, Shinan-gun's bus fare system has become a benchmark for 90 municipalities, leading to its widespread adoption. Looking ahead, Shinan-gun has ambitious plans to replace all 22 city buses with electric buses and transition all government vehicles in the county to electric vehicles. This commitment aligns with our ongoing efforts to integrate transportation and energy policies by promoting electric vehicles and expanding infrastructure across the island areas.





# Governance of efficiency

Shinan-gun's color marketing reimagines the perspective and method of island development based on sustainability

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



By employing resident-centered color marketing and rejuvenating the local sense of place, we enhance housing and neighborhood conditions.

Performance indicator :

Expand color marketing to 43 villages by 2030





**Valuing ecological and natural resources is essential for the sustainability of islands, as it fosters a sense of locality, which in turn drives economic revitalization.**

The Purple Bridge has become a must-see attraction in South Korea. It is also known as the Angel Bridge because it was first built as a wooden bridge to fulfill the wish of the old lady KIM Mae-geum, a resident of Bokji Island, to "walk on two feet and come out onto the mainland." Purple, the pinnacle of Shinan-gun's color marketing, is a humanistic and sociological interpretation of the inclusion and healing of island village communities in the era of rural de-population, as well as the recovery and regeneration of Shinan-gun's natural beauty in the era of climate crisis. With 34 villages in 12 districts of Shinan-gun participating, the color marketing will continue to expand, with each island utilizing native plants to the island or unique colors.





CNN, USA(2021.2.8)



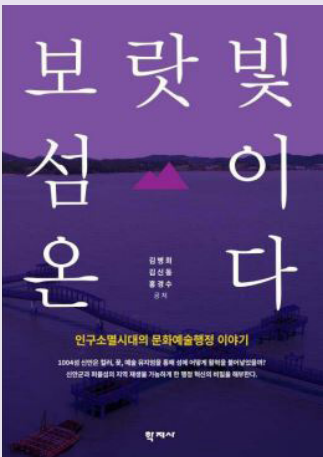
Fox News, USA(2021.2.19)



ABS-CBN News, Philippines(2021.3.16)



Even a small island's sustainable color story has the power to captivate the global community.



Al Jazeera, Qatar (2021.5.25)



WION, India(2021.3.15)



# Governance of efficiency

In an effort to expand cultural sustainability, Shinan-gun has organized an art project aimed at building a cultural museum on every island. This initiative eventually enhance local cultural and leisure opportunities, leveraging the ecological benefits offered by the islands.

11

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Expanding cultural sustainability to ensure residents have access to the highest quality cultural experiences.

Performance indicator :  
1004 museums across all islands







The revisitation of the slogan "Practicing Global Sustainability Locally" is underway in Shinan-gun. With the islands' unique characteristics and an aging population, a concrete strategy for sustainable development is being implemented through the creation of museums on each island. These museums will showcase the works of global artists, providing residents with enhanced cultural experiences and a boost in self-esteem. Shinan-gun, consisting of 1004 islands, recognizes that establishing museums on every island and fostering a "relational population" approach in policymaking, which establishes connections with the visitors (referred to as pilgrims locally) who come to the islands, is crucial for the region's sustainable development.





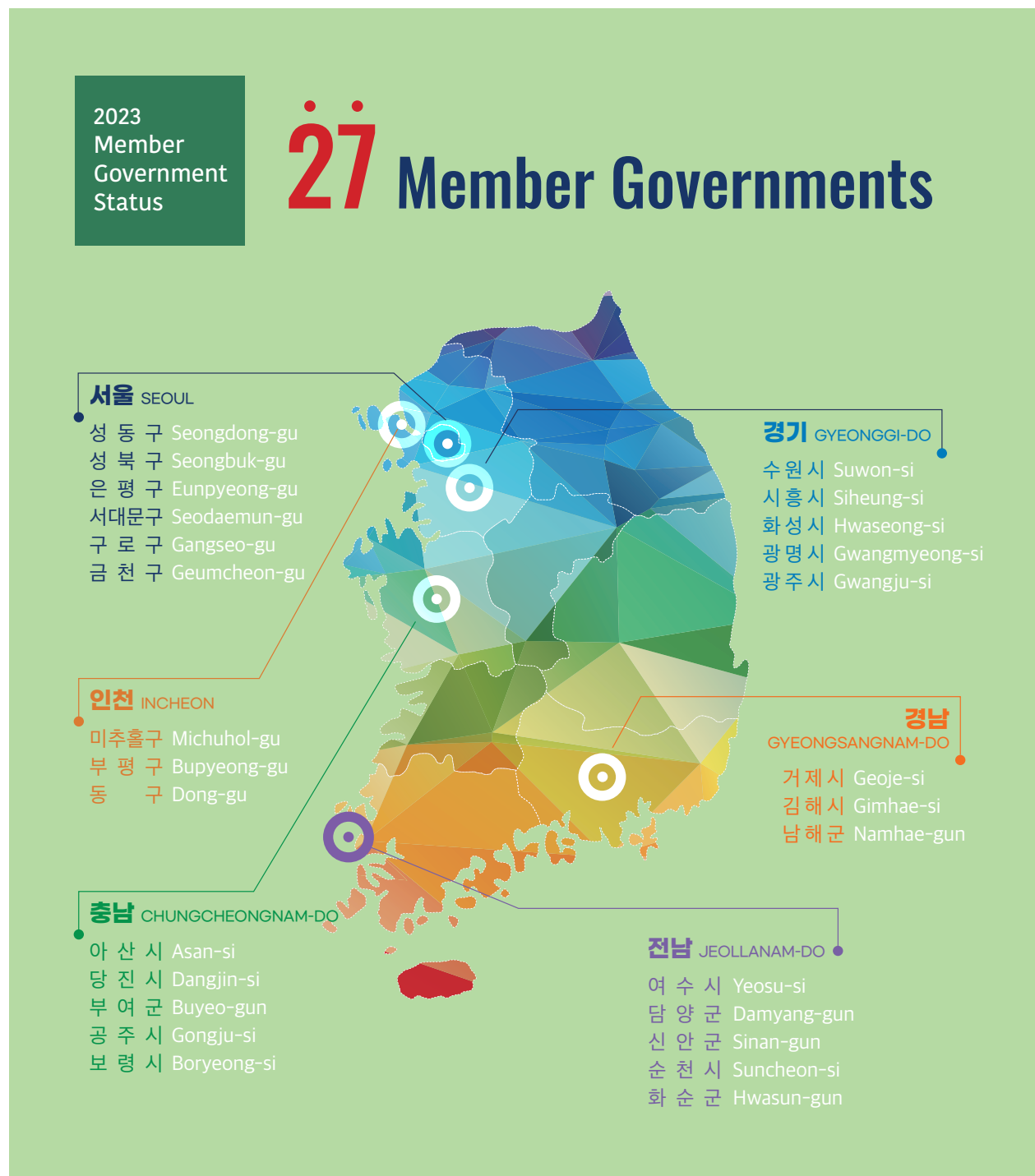
**Governance  
led by local  
governments**

**Embark on a journey towards a new era of  
sustainable governance in Shinan-gun,  
with the local government leading the way.**





Shinan-gun is the local government that represents a council of 27 members of local governments in South Korea committed to sustainable development.







**Shinan-gun is evolving into a hub for global engagement, encompassing areas such as biodiversity, Slow City movement, Ramsar Convention, and the International Migratory Bird Symposium.**



# “Dream Global, Fit Shinan”

Join us as we pave the path towards a sustainable future.  
You will be the first to feel the sustainability of South Korea.



Getbol(Tidal flat) Field Trip



Landscape Discovery Expedition



Cultural Policy Tours



Transportation Policy Tours



Net Zero Tours



International Cooperation Visits

Our policy tours as  
above are led by the  
best guides.

**Policy Tour** Shinan-gun World Heritage Bureau

**Domestic Cooperation** Association of Local Governments for Sustainable  
Development

**International Cooperation** ICLEI Korea





ESG Excellence at the Heart of Local Government

1004<sup>년</sup> 신안

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Local Governments for Sustainable Development)  
Editor **KOH Kyung-Nam**(Assistant Director, World Heritage Bureau)