

# Korea

## **National Assembly Budget Office (NABO)**

**Established:** 2003.

**Enabling legislation:** National Assembly Act 1948 (amended 1991, 2005, 2011, and 2014) and National Assembly Budget Office Act 2003.

**Mandate:** To provide the National Assembly with objective budget analysis and evaluation.

**Budget:** USD 13.6 million (2015).

**Staff:** 138 (2015).

## 1. Context

The establishment of the National Assembly Budget Office (NABO) in 2003 was linked principally to political developments rather than to a need for an independent body to monitor fiscal imbalances. Indeed, Korea has persistently followed a prudent fiscal stance. Even at the time of the Asian crisis in 1997-98, the consolidated fiscal balance for general government remained in surplus.<sup>1</sup> When NABO was being established, general government gross debt was less than 25 per cent of GDP.

In the 1990s, Korea was deepening the democratisation process that had begun in 1987 under the sixth republic. In 1992, the country's first civilian President in 30 years was elected. The parliament was strengthened and given new capacity including the National Assembly Legislative Budget Office, established in 1994 and part of the parliamentary service. In 2000, this office was reorganised into a Legislative Counselling Office and a Budget Policy Office. Then in 2003, NABO was formally established by law as an independent office.

The main impetus for establishing NABO in 2003 stemmed from the political situation. In December 2002 a candidate from the Democratic Party won the presidency for the first time. However, in the National Assembly, the Grand National Party still held the majority of seats. With divided government, the National Assembly majority had a strong interest in creating an independent budget office to scrutinise the new President's draft budgets. Nevertheless there was broad cross-party consensus for the establishment of NABO and NABO continues to enjoy cross-party support today.

Although divided executive and legislative power in 2003 was the major reason why NABO was formally created, the legislature also struggled with a lack of transparency in the government's budgetary data. The Asian crisis had revealed the problems associated with having a segmented budget system. General and special accounts were presented to the National Assembly, but public funds were outside the purview of the parliament in 1997/98. While efforts had been made to broaden the coverage of the annual budget, in 2000 there was still a need to rationalise extra-budgetary funds and special accounts (which had been growing), to integrate all central government fiscal activities into the budget and to publish consolidated data for general government in a timely manner (IMF, 2001). There was also a debate at political level on the size of public debt, especially as to whether government-guaranteed debt should be included in the definition of public debt.

Korea looked to the United States Congressional Budget Office (CBO) as a model for its legislative budget office and certain similarities between the two are evident. For example, NABO serves only the legislature and has similar functions and internal structures. However, NABO has an evaluation role that is unique among PBOs in the OECD countries.

## 2. Relationship with the executive and the legislature

NABO exclusively serves the National Assembly. The House Speaker appoints NABO's director. The NABO Act 2003 indicates that NABO must prepare reports for committees and

members of the National Assembly. However, the law does not contain specific reporting requirements, which provides NABO with some discretion. In practice, each year NABO provides extensive budget-related documents to the National Assembly. Although NABO's main means of communicating with the legislature is by written documents, the NABO chief provides evidence before the two budget-related committees mentioned in Box 1 below.<sup>2</sup> Appearances of senior NABO staff before parliamentary committees are rare, in part because the committees have their own staff to respond to their budget-related questions.

Both the Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) (which is also an independent institution under the executive<sup>3</sup>) and NABO prepare evaluations of government programmes and projects. However, the BAI and NABO do not typically co-operate on this work, since the BAI focuses on financial audits of government programmes, whereas NABO focuses on describing specific government programmes, analysing their effectiveness and, in some cases, making policy recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

In its operational work, NABO is entirely independent of the executive. For example, NABO's medium-term fiscal projections are prepared completely separately from those of the government. Nonetheless, NABO communicates with government departments to obtain information for its analytical work.

#### **Box 1. Role of the legislature in the budget process**

Korea has a presidential system of government. The presidential and legislative elections are on non-synchronised cycles. The National Assembly is unicameral and 245 of the 299 seats are elected by direct representation (54 seats are filled by proportional representation).

The 1948 constitution requires the draft budget to be presented to the National Assembly 90 days before the start of the fiscal year and adopted 30 days before the new fiscal year begins. This provides the National Assembly with 60 days for scrutinising and debating the President's draft budget. The constitution does not allow the National Assembly to introduce amendments to the budget that increase any expenditure item or create a new expenditure item without the consent of the executive. In contrast, the National Assembly can amend revenue proposals without any restriction.

The National Assembly Act 1948 established a Special Committee on Budget and Accounts, with 50 members, whose role is to review the draft annual budget, the draft fund management plan and all budget-related matters. Currently, sectoral committees make recommendations to the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts, which accepts or rejects the recommendations after reviewing them, although this may change somewhat to reflect the National Assembly's wish to institute a more "top-down" format. A Finance and Economy Committee examines tax proposals. Some reports of these two committees are published. Committee meetings where the budget is discussed are generally open to the public. The two budget-related committees have 20 to 30 full-time staff working for them.

In Korea, there are autonomous think tanks that publish studies on budget-related issues and whose reports are complementary to those of NABO. Examples include: the Korea Institute of Public Finance, which analyses tax and expenditure policies and publishes various fiscal studies; and the Korea Development Institute (KDI), which researches economic and social issues. The KDI has analysed public finance issues

(e.g. medium-term expenditure frameworks) and provides independent forecasts. Since these institutions were set up by the government, they are seen as primarily serving the executive, not the National Assembly.

### 3. Legal basis for establishment

Two laws underpin NABO's creation. First, the National Assembly Act 1948 was amended in July 2003 to establish NABO's autonomy within the National Assembly. Second, the National Assembly Budget Office Act, also adopted in July 2003, elaborates on the duties and organisational arrangements for NABO.

### 4. Mandate

NABO has a broad mandate for budget analysis and evaluation. According to Article 22-2(1) of the amended 1948 legislation, NABO is "to research, analyse and appraise matters concerning the settlement of the budget, and the management of funds and finances of the state as well as to support parliamentary activities". The NABO Act 2003 further identifies five specific duties: budget analysis, costing, forecasting, evaluation, and research. In 2014, the National Assembly Act was amended to strengthen NABO's costing role.<sup>5</sup> The institutional coverage of NABO's activities in the NABO Act is stated to be the budget and funds.<sup>6</sup>

The National Finance Act 2006 and its subsequent amendments specified new documents that the government must submit to the National Assembly. These include a National Fiscal Management Plan and a Fund Management Plan. Both plans require medium-term and long-term projections. This has expanded NABO's mandate since NABO has a duty to analyse the documents that the government prepares on these issues. NABO has therefore extended the projection period for its own baseline fiscal projections, and analyses more fully the management of autonomous government funds and long-term structural fiscal issues (e.g. future pension fund spending).

### 5. Functions

The 2003 NABO Act identifies five main functions: budget analysis, costing, forecasting, evaluation and research. More specifically, under Article 3, NABO is mandated to conduct:

- research and analysis on the budget bill, the final accounts of the budget, draft plans for the administration of funds and the final accounts thereof;
- estimation of the costs required by bills and other matters involving expenditure from the budget or funds;
- analysis of and prospects for macroeconomic trends and the administration of national finance;
- analysis and evaluation of major national projects and analysis of medium-term and long-term financial requirements; and
- research and analysis on any matters required by a committee or member of the National Assembly.

NABO strives to ensure that its analysis is provided to the National Assembly in a timely manner. For example, for the FY 2011 budget, after the President submitted the draft budget to the National Assembly on 2 October 2010, NABO released its analysis of the budget on 20 October. Similarly, to assist the National Assembly to analyse medium-term

budget soundness, NABO presented its own projections for revenues, expenditure (both discretionary and mandatory), the fiscal balance and government debt. NABO's medium-term projections covered the same five-year period and used the same conceptual framework as the government to facilitate direct comparison, especially the differences in revenue, expenditure and structural fiscal budget projections, and its analysis of "budget soundness".

Regarding long-term forecasting, since NABO prepares an analysis of the MOSF's updates of the medium-term National Fiscal Management Plan and the Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) prepares long-term fiscal projections (the 2006 National Budget Act requires the MOSF to prepare such projections), NABO has begun to prepare 50-year projections using the long-term demographic projections of the National Statistics Office. These projections are being refined with a view to publishing long-term fiscal scenarios in 2012. NABO's intention is to update its long-term projections every two to three years. NABO does not, however, cost policies promised in pre-election manifestos of major political parties.

The 2003 NABO law does not restrict it from making recommendations. However, "the independence of NABO's duties must be respected" (Article 2) and making policy recommendations is not one of NABO's explicit duties. In its macro-fiscal analysis, NABO limits itself to general suggestions on the overall fiscal stance, to changes in budget processes or to technical issues. For example, in its 2011-14 Economic and Fiscal Outlook, NABO recommended that an expenditure-based fiscal rule would be needed to restore budget soundness and to reach the government's fiscal objective of achieving a "managed budget" surplus by 2014.<sup>7</sup>

NABO prepares a wide range of evaluations each year, from infrastructure projects to government assistance to autonomous public institutions.<sup>8</sup> Evaluations often make recommendations for improving a programme's operations and effectiveness. Some evaluations have led to handbooks on a specific issue<sup>9</sup> to assist the National Assembly in its future budget deliberations. In many countries, such evaluations are performed by the supreme audit institution or by ministries' internal audit units. The main reason for the establishment of a strong evaluation function in NABO is that the BAI, although independent, is perceived by the legislature to be under the government. However, since the BAI focuses on financial audits, the potential for overlap is small.

NABO conducts research and analysis on major taxation issues and suggests appropriate directions for tax policies and revenue systems. To this end, NABO has developed various techniques for estimating tax revenues over five years. These serve as the basis for analysing tax reform bills proposed by members of the National Assembly.

NABO has seen a steady rise in requests from members for cost analyses. For example, the average number of bills accompanied by NABO cost estimates stood at 62 in 2004 and 865 in 2013. Until recently, cost estimates for bills proposed by members could be carried out by the office of the relevant member or by NABO. This led to several problems as staff in the members' offices often lacked the necessary skills to carry out this task and exploited a loophole which allowed them to instead submit a "Statement of Reasons for No Cost Estimate Attached" when costs were deemed too technically challenging to estimate.<sup>10</sup>

In February 2014, the National Assembly Act was revised to:

- give NABO sole authority to prepare cost estimates for bills introduced by members,<sup>11</sup>
- strengthen requirements for bills amended or replaced during committee deliberations to be submitted with revised cost estimates prepared by NABO; and

- allow Members proposing legislation to seek opinions from NABO on the costs associated with enforcing that legislation while it is being deliberated in committee.

It is expected that these changes will ensure that costings are objective and reliable and that parliamentary debates will be better informed as to potential fiscal consequences of legislation.

Table 1. **Legislative proposals with cost estimates: Trends 2004-14**<sup>12</sup>

	Proposed by NA members			Proposed by the government			Proposed by NA committees			Total		
	Numbers	Cost estimates attached	%	Numbers	Cost estimate attached	%	Numbers	Cost estimates attached	%	Total	Cost estimates attached	%
2004	807	149	18.5	201	-	-	50	-	-	1 058	149	14.1
2007	1 476	513	34.8	319	150	47	192	6	3.1	1 987	669	33.7
2010	2 439	906	37.1	406	108	26.6	166	-	-	3 011	1 014	33.7
2013	4 934	1 258	25.5	256	90	35.2	297	-	-	5 487	1 348	24.6
2014	3 707	867	23.4	309	88	28.5	330	-	-	4 346	955	22.0

It appears that NABO's advisory functions will continue to evolve. Specifically, there has been an initiative to align the National Assembly's budget review process with the top-down budgeting process followed by the government. The plan is to move from a system in which the budget is debated in the relevant standing committees before being forwarded to the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts to a system where the totals for the budget and the national debt are decided by the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts before deliberation in the standing committees. Second, since 2012, the Korean government has prepared a national fiscal management plan with separate categories for mandatory and discretionary spending which lays the groundwork for a pay-as-you-go ("PAYGO") system for mandatory spending (an area of the budget that is expected to grow rapidly in the coming years<sup>13</sup>). NABO is working to improve its cost estimates for bills subject to the PAYGO system and to further assist in parliamentary debates through real-time scorekeeping.

## 6. Work programme

NABO's draft annual work plan is prepared by NABO on the basis of each division's work plan and projected workload. The NABO Chief presents the draft work plan to the Speaker of the National Assembly who provides comments and recommendations prior to approving it. Suggested changes to the draft work plan tend to be relatively minor.

Although not specifically required by legislation, NABO produces a number of reports that are provided to the National Assembly budget-related committees in time for the discussion of the draft annual budget and medium-term fiscal framework. Each year, NABO also produces other reports, primarily for the National Assembly. NABO also prepares cost estimates of some proposed legislation. NABO assesses how the new legislation would affect government revenues and expenditures during the coming five years. Also annually, NABO updates its plans for conducting evaluations of major programmes and other specific government policies.

Any committee or individual member of the National Assembly can request NABO to conduct studies that have an impact on the budget. NABO does not refuse such requests, e.g. on the grounds that their impact on the budget is minimal or that the issue is "too

political”. Since the National Assembly’s budget-related committees’ requests have higher priority, individual members’ requests to NABO may be placed on a waiting list which, at times, is quite long (especially during the annual budget discussions in the National Assembly). Although NABO has the freedom to undertake research at its own initiative, nearly all of its work is in response to requests coming from the National Assembly.

## 7. Budget

NABO’s budget is part of the overall budget of the National Assembly, which is appropriated independently in the national budget (Article 23 of the National Assembly Act 1948). To this end, the Speaker prepares a written budget request and presents it to the government after it goes through an examination by the House Steering Committee (the committee concerned with the National Assembly’s operations and management). Before 30 April of each year, the MOSF provides guidelines to the National Assembly for preparing its budget. By 30 June, the Speaker transmits the National Assembly budget to the MOSF, but only for consolidation purposes. The National Assembly secretariat also provides to the MOSF a medium-term plan that includes new projects to be executed over a five-year period. In these medium-term projections, expenditures are indicative, not binding ceilings.

The publicly available annual budget and medium-term project plans contain the various subcomponents of the National Assembly’s administrative budgets, notably those of NABO, the National Assembly’s General Secretariat, the Library and the parliamentary Research Service. For NABO, a draft budget is prepared internally and submitted to the Secretary General of the National Assembly, who in turn submits it to the House Steering Committee for approval. Later, when the MOSF submits the consolidated draft budget to the National Assembly, the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts examines the National Assembly’s own budget during its budget deliberations, before the budget is approved by the National Assembly in plenary session. In general, the NABO budget is approved at its various stages with little modification.

Since its creation, NABO’s annual budget has increased significantly in real terms, mainly reflecting the increase in full-time staff. For example, the budget increased from USD 8.9 million in 2008 to USD 13.6 million in 2015.

## 8. Staffing

### 8.1. Leadership

The National Assembly Act (Article 22-2) indicates that NABO “shall have one director and other necessary staff. The director is appointed and dismissed by the Speaker of the National Assembly with the consent of the House Steering Committee.” The NABO Act 2003 requires the Chief of NABO to be a public official in political service<sup>14</sup> and that “in performing his/her duties, the Chief shall have expertise and maintain neutrality”. Article 4 of the NABO Act also specifies the Chief’s remuneration is to be the same as that of a vice-minister.

The NABO Act (Article 5) elaborates on the appointment process. Prior to requesting the consent of the House Steering Committee, “the Speaker shall receive recommendations from a Recommendation Committee that is composed of persons who have expertise concerning NABO’s duties, maintain political neutrality and make fair recommendations.” The members of the seven-person recommendation committee are respected public policy experts who are neither members nor public officials of the National Assembly and who are selected particularly for their objectiveness and non-partisanship. When considering

choices for a new Chief, the recommendation committee considers around five candidates and then proposes a shortlist of two people to the Speaker, who makes a choice. Apart from “being in political service”, “having expertise” and “maintaining neutrality”, there are no other written criteria or restrictions (e.g. minimum age, academic qualifications, years of prior experience in public finance, nationality) to guide the committee and the Speaker in making their choices.

There is no defined term or term limit for the NABO Chief. Under the National Assembly Act (Article 9), the Speaker changes every two years, even though parliamentary elections are on a four-year cycle. In practice, every two years the NABO Chief resigns when there is a change of Speaker. A new House Speaker could reappoint the “resigning” NABO Chief for a further two-year period. However, since NABO’s creation in 2003, no chief has stayed on for two complete two-year terms. The current practice creates considerable uncertainty as to who will be the new Chief when the House Speaker changes every two years. The House Speaker also has the power to dismiss the Chief. This happened in 2005 when the first NABO Chief was dismissed by the Speaker less than two years into NABO’s operations on the grounds that the first Chief was unable to provide the non-partisan stance needed for NABO’s activities.<sup>15</sup>

## 8.2. Staff

The National Assembly has an independent parliamentary service with its own entrance examinations and its own salary scales. The majority of NABO staff are part of the parliamentary service, although many staff are recruited on fixed-term contracts.<sup>16</sup> According to the NABO law, staff above Grade V (division chiefs) are appointed and dismissed by the Speaker of the National Assembly, whereas other NABO staff are appointed and dismissed by the NABO Chief. For mid-career recruitments, NABO requires strong academic background as well as work experience. Such recruitment is based on open competition and vacancies are posted on the NABO website and in newspapers. In its early years, NABO experienced considerable turnover of staff under fixed-term contracts although this has decreased recently. NABO’s younger recruits often enter directly into the parliamentary service from university and make a career in NABO. Candidates for professional positions should have a PhD or equivalent education, expertise in their field and a recognised research and publication record. During job orientation sessions for newly hired staff (and in job performance evaluations as well), NABO’s Assistant Chiefs emphasise NABO’s non-partisan stance.

NABO has a two-track system for remuneration. Those employed under the parliamentary service are paid according to the seniority-based system, whereas those under fixed-term contracts follow an annual merit-based salary system. NABO’s base salaries are broadly similar to those of the government’s civil service, although NABO has different allowances to those of the government. It is infrequent that civil servants with experience in, for example, the Ministry of Strategy and Finance would transfer “to the other side” and join NABO staff. Similarly it is infrequent for a NABO staff member to be recruited by a government ministry.

With 138 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in 2015, and potential to grow, NABO is the second largest parliamentary budget office in the world in terms of staff (the CBO in the United States is the largest). In 2000, when the Budget Policy Office (BPO) was split off from the Legislative Counselling Office, the BPO had a staff of 41 (FTE). Substantial recruitment took place when NABO was created in 2003: 92 positions were approved and filled in 2004.

During 2005-08, the number of NABO staff increased very slowly. During 2009-11 the growth of new positions accelerated, to nearly 10% per annum.<sup>17</sup> Administratively, NABO has four main divisions: the Budget Analysis Division (with 51 staff); the Economic Analysis Division (34 staff); the Programme Evaluation Division (30 staff); and the Planning and Management Division (20 staff).<sup>18</sup> NABO also makes extensive use of outside consultants for its work.

## 9. Access to information

The NABO Act 2003 permits the NABO Chief to request state organs to submit any materials necessary to perform their duties with the permission of the Speaker. Entities that receive such a request are required to comply, unless there is a special reason such as national security concerns. In practice, NABO receives all requested expenditure-related information from the government in a timely manner. However, there have been cases where revenue-related data was not provided in a timely way.

## 10. Transparency

All of NABO's regular analytic reports are published, in both printed and electronic form and are freely available for download on NABO's website. NABO's published documents are particularly useful for the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts and the Finance and Economy Committee, which are NABO's main "clients" in the National Assembly. In 2011, the following macro-fiscal documents were published (NABO, 2012b):

- Medium-term (2011-15) Economic Outlook
- 2011-15 Total Revenue and Fiscal Analysis
- Analysis of Tax Revision Bill
- Analysis of the 2011-15 National Fiscal Management Plan
- Analysis of 2012 Tax Expenditure Budget
- Budgetary Issues on 2012 Revenue Budget Proposal
- Comprehensive Review

The most important reports (e.g. those that analyse the administration's proposed medium-term macro-fiscal strategy and the annual budget) are translated from Korean into English and made available on NABO's English-language website. NABO also publishes the methodology and assumptions that underlie its own fiscal projections.

Each year, NABO publishes over 100 budget analysis reports.<sup>19</sup> In addition, NABO typically prepares 400 to 500 cost estimates each year of various bills discussed by the National Assembly and makes about 200 estimates of tax proposals by members of the National Assembly. These estimates are not made public immediately. However, after about 25 days NABO asks for the cost estimates to be published. This request is usually granted by the relevant committee of the National Assembly. NABO also publishes annually a "casebook" of selected costings. Finally, NABO also prepares over a thousand on-demand research and analytical notes for individual members of the National Assembly each year. These notes are not published, as the elected members prefer to keep them confidential.<sup>20</sup>

The NABO relationship with the media has been cautious. NABO does not have a dedicated press officer to respond to questions from the media, although it monitors the frequency with which NABO is reported in the media.<sup>21</sup> When NABO analysis is published, it is accompanied by a written Press Report. The published reports are designed to "speak

for themselves”. Nonetheless, the NABO Chief or senior NABO staff communicate directly with the media on occasion. For example, in August 2011, in an interview with the media, the NABO Chief highlighted various future spending risks (ageing population, low birth rate, possible reunification, etc.) and stated that “the nation needs to restore its fiscal position to balanced finances as soon as possible”.<sup>22</sup>

Members of the National Assembly prefer to be at the forefront in direct relations with the media. When members of the National Assembly are interviewed by the media on budget-related matters, NABO may provide them with unpublished background briefing notes. However, NABO has recently initiated “grand conferences” on budget issues which have increased NABO’s visibility in the media. These conferences, which are open to the public, have been attended by some 300 people, including members of the National Assembly, government ministries, the public and the media.

## **11. Governance, advisory support, monitoring and evaluation**

NABO has a panel of outside advisors composed of one chairperson and 14 members. All are acknowledged experts in public finance and economics from universities, research institutes, government offices or the media. Members of the panel have two-year renewable terms. The panel’s main role is to advise the NABO Chief (rather than NABO as an institution) on NABO’s duties or other topics of concern.

NABO conducts annual internal audits of its activities. Regarding external oversight, the National Assembly Steering Committee may inspect NABO during its annual investigation of National Assembly activities. In examining the annual settlement of the budget of the legislative branch, the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts and the National Assembly review NABO’s budget outcome. NABO is also audited annually by the Board of Audit and Inspection.

## **12. Concluding remarks**

NABO celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2015.<sup>23</sup> Over the years, NABO has established itself as a well-respected independent institution both nationally and internationally with a reputation for providing objective high-quality analysis. In its deliberations, the National Assembly uses NABO analysis of the government’s draft budget as well as NABO costings, programme evaluations and other analysis. NABO’s voice is heard and it has influenced the assumptions underlying the government’s budget projections. NABO makes key analyses available to the public and has increased media and public outreach through news releases and, more recently, through conferences on the public finances which are open to the public. Indeed, media coverage of NABO’s work has continued to increase over time.

One of the potential challenges faced by NABO is that the NABO Chief does not have a fixed term limit. The current practice of NABO chiefs resigning voluntarily every two years (when House Speakers are changed) is unusual when compared with other countries. There is a risk that the leadership of NABO may become subservient to, or be perceived as subservient to, the wishes of the Speaker and the political interests that he/she represents.

### **Notes**

1. General government consolidates central and local governments and social security funds. Public enterprises are excluded. During the Asian crisis years, the fiscal surpluses of social security funds and local government surpassed the central government deficit. Government-guaranteed debt is

excluded from debt data. For details, see IMF WEO database, [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2011/01/weodata/index.aspx](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2011/01/weodata/index.aspx).

2. This is typically less than ten times a year.
3. The BAI is composed of seven commissioners, including the chair, who is appointed by the President with the consent of the National Assembly. The other commissioners are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the chair.
4. For example, in September 2011, NABO examined the impact of the social welfare subsidy on local governments' finances and made three specific policy recommendations (NABO, (2012a).
5. See amendments to Article 66 and Article 79-2.
6. There are two types of funds: "special accounts" and "public funds". Since 2001, the distinction between them has lessened since the revenues and expenditures of both types of funds are now required to be approved by the National Assembly. For further details, see Lienert and Jung (2004).
7. The government had a target of balancing the central government budget deficit (excluding social security funds) by 2013. NABO (2011) and IMF (2011) called for fiscal rules to achieve medium-term budget targets.
8. See "Program Evaluation Division" for the fields of work of evaluations carried out by five teams. The summary of 29 evaluations prepared in 2011 has been published in English. See NABO (2012a).
9. In 2010, NABO published handbooks on: the Government Grants Programme, the Government Loans Programme, the Government Investment Programme (in specific ministries), Public-Private Partnerships in Infrastructure, Programme Budget Projects, Government Subsidies to Local Government and Finance Programmes in Standing Committees.
10. As noted in a recent NABO publication, for the period between 2008 and 2012, National Assembly Members introduced 3 198 bills. NABO provided cost estimates for about 30% of them, or 973 bills; Members' offices provided cost estimates for 69.6% or 2 225 bills. Of the 2 225 bills costed by Members' offices, 85.4%, or 1 900 bills, were proposed without cost estimates attached (NABO, 2014).
11. This was in line with a recommendation from the final report of the National Assembly's Special Committee on Budget and Finance Reform.
12. Cook, 2014.
13. According to NABO's Fiscal Outlook, Mandatory spending is expected to grow at an average annual rate of 7% from 2013 to 2017 (NABO, 2014).
14. Being a "public official in political service" can require previous experience in the parliamentary service. This is the case with Chief Kyung Bok Cook, for example, who was Senior Staff Director of four parliamentary committees, including the Special Committee on Budget and Accounts. He was also a Professor in the Parliamentary Training Office and an adjunct professor at two Korean universities. Among the final four candidates for the fourth chief, only two have previous work experience relating to the parliament.
15. The dismissal was associated with the results of the by-elections in 2005 when the Grand National Party lost its majority in the National Assembly.
16. In February 2012, 68 NABO staff were employed under parliamentary service rules and 54 staff were on fixed-term contracts.
17. The largest increase was in 2010 when two new units (11 positions) were created: a Tax Counsel and a Public Institutions Evaluation Unit. See information on the April 2010 NABO restructuring.
18. There are also four staff members in the NABO Chief's Office. See NABO's Organisation Chart on their website for the full structure.
19. A summary of NABO's publications in 2011 is contained in NABO (2012a).
20. A survey of satisfaction of the National Assembly members is conducted annually. In the surveys, a majority of members have expressed the view that NABO should not publish on-demand research notes.
21. For example, the number of television and newspaper reports on NABO in 2009 and 2010 amounted to 1 363 and 1 233 respectively.
22. See "Korea Needs to Return to Balanced Finances" (25 August, 2011, News and Events, NABO website).
23. A special publication commemorating NABO's first decade, Ten Years of the National Assembly Budget Office, provides a detailed history in Korean.

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**Legislation**

- National Assembly Act 1948 amended by Act No. 6930, 18 July 2003.
- National Assembly Budget Office Act No. 6931, 18 July 2003.