

**KOREAN WAVE (*HALLYU*) IN SINGAPORE:
POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

LIM Wen Xin, LIM Tai Wei & PING Xiaojuan

EAI Background Brief No. 1065

Date of Publication: 1 October 2015

Executive Summary

1. Over the past decades, South Korea's media conglomerates developed many cultural products and expanded the exportation of these products to mainly East and Southeast Asia.
2. The increasing popularity of the Korean Wave or *Hallyu* has enhanced South Korea's national image and public diplomacy. More significantly, it creates positive spill-over effects to other industries.
3. The success of *Hallyu* has been well recognised by the South Korean government which is quick in capitalising on its success; it provides public funds as well as implement relevant policies to facilitate the development of the industry.
4. Singapore is one of the early recipient countries of K-drama (Korean TV drama) and K-pop due to its cultural, political and economic proximity with South Korea as two of the four tiger economies with proactive state roles in their economic developmental histories.
5. Other than being an important consumer market, Singapore offers Korean and K-pop companies the opportunities to test reactions to their products in a multicultural setting, springboard into the regional Southeast Asian market and invest in an important commercial, technological and trading hub in the region.
6. Besides serving as a model for Singapore, the success of K-pop offers Track II cultural diplomacy potential for the two countries to cooperate in this field.
7. Singapore's tourism sector gets to benefit from increased interest in K-pop related events as well. For example, Singapore was picked as the host for the first ASEAN K-pop Dance Cover Festival held on 22 November 2014.
8. The Singaporeans' consumer interest in Korean popular culture has drawn South Korean companies to the island state.

9. There are however limitations to soft power, commercial successes and reach of any popular culture. Popular culture itself inherently tends to be subjected to changing trends and fashions.

10. To be successful and sustainably so, Korean popular culture and its creative producers may need to constantly rejuvenate themselves and continue with the spirit of innovation to produce new products for its domestic and Asian audiences.