

## — OVOP: learning from Japan and Thailand —

**T**he workshop on Integrated Community Development for the Mekong Region: “One Village, One Product” Movement in CLMV Countries was conducted in Oita, Japan, and Bangkok, Thailand, 13–23 December 2006, with coordination by the Oita OVOP International Exchange Promotion Committee and Thailand Productivity Institute. Twenty-four participants from the four CLMV countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam and four local and four APO Japanese resource persons attended.

The workshop was designed with a preparatory and a follow-up phase. In the preparatory phase, a distance-learning session in collaboration with the World Bank Global Development Learning Network with Dr. Morihiko Hiramatsu, an advocate of OVOP and former Governor of Oita prefecture, provided basic information on 25 October 2006. The workshop itself consisted of a study visit to Oita and the workshop in Bangkok. In the follow-up phase, the participants are expected to organize national seminars on OVOP, with APO support.

Oita prefecture is the origin of the OVOP movement and is recognized as one of the most successfully revitalized rural regions in Japan. After an overview by Senior Managing Director Tadashi Ando, Oita OVOP International Exchange Promotion Committee, workshop participants visited Tokiwa Industry (OVOP marketing), Oita Prefectural Bamboo Craft and Training Support Center (governmental support in capacity building), Matsumoto Community of Ajimu (participatory community development and agrotourism), Atelier Toki (sustainable use of local resources), Mushroom Center (linkage with production and tourism), and Milk Mura (creative agroprocessing). The three main principles of



*Participants examining wooden kitchenware at Atelier Toki*

the Oita movement are: 1) local yet global; 2) self-reliance and creativity; and 3) human resources development.

In Bangkok, where the movement is known as One Tambon, One Product (OTOP), resource speakers explained OTOP, including institutional requirements, role of various parties, and limitations to facilitate participants' brainstorming sessions before formulating national action plans. A visit was made to the concurrent OTOP City event and to OTOP villages in Ayudhaya province for firsthand observation of the movement in action. Subsequently, one and one-half days were devoted to devising action plans for OVOP or similar rural industrialization efforts in CLMV countries. 🌀