

## — Mekong Nations bank on the One Village, One Product movement —

**"T**hink globally, act locally; independence and creativity; and foster human resources" are the three principles on which Dr. Morihiko Hiramatsu, former governor of Oita prefecture, based the One Village, One Product (OVOP) movement, the main rural development policy of the prefecture. OVOP, initiated in Japan in the 1960s, was enormously successful thanks to the commitment of farmers' groups and support from local government. That success was replicated throughout Japan and in other countries, notably the One Tambong, One Product (OTOP) movement in Thailand. Integrating the OVOP model into its Integrated Community Development (ICD) Program, in 2005 the APO launched a five-year project for the Mekong region with financial support from the Japanese government.

Over the last three years, this ICD-Mekong project has focused on encouraging Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam to learn from successful cases studies in Japan and Thailand. This year's workshop in Cambodia, 18–22 August, was a mid-term review of the progress and outcomes of OVOP programs in the ICD-Mekong Program. It was jointly implemented by the National Productivity Center of Cambodia and Cambodia OVOP Committee Secretariat. The workshop highlights were the presentations by Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, and Thailand. The Cambodian participants introduced the national policy for the OVOP movement and detailed information on the OVOP National Committee chaired by Prime Minister Hun Sen. The OVOP movement, although known in Cambodia some years back, was officially launched in 2007 with strong government backing.

In 2003, the Lao PDR government also played a leading role in instituting the One District, One Product (ODOP) movement. Two ODOP pilot projects were launched in Savannakhet and Saravane provinces in 2008 with assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The Vietnamese presentation detailed the overall development process, policy support for the One Village, One Trade (OVOT) movement and three OVOT pilot projects: lacquerware in Phu Tho; community-based tourism in a craft village; and ethnic handicrafts.



*Crafting silver houseware in the village of Kom Pong Luong*

Thailand's successful OTOP movement has inspired many, including Mekong region countries. The Thai presentation covered the background and expansion of OTOP as well as case studies of three farm women's groups that enhanced the quality of life of their community via OTOP. Experiences from the Institute of Food Research and Product Development, Kasetsart University, in OTOP training for rural agencies and communities were also presented.

Participants visited five OVOP venues in Cambodia and conducted SWOT analysis for practical suggestions for improvements. "Those communities, still at the initial stage of OVOP development, have a lot of room for improvement. However, if they make continuous efforts in the current direction, in five or 10 years, they will reach a high level of success," commented JICA Expert in Makassar, Indonesia, Kazuhisa Matsui, who was one of four resource speakers. The workshop concluded with the creation of action plans for the future development of the OVOP movement in each country, for which the APO will provide the necessary support to make local efforts self-sustainable. 🌀