



Japanese businesses seek JV With 20 Thai SMEs, says JETRO

- Use innovative Japanese craftsmanship to develop products for export worldwide
- Activity under DARUMA project implemented by DITP and JETRO, participated by over 100 flood-affected SMEs from 22 provinces
- Goal is to create value, improve productivity and boost export, with Thai & Japanese businesses as equal partners

Bangkok (Sept 3, 2012) – Japanese businesses are looking for joint-venture deals with 20 Thai SMEs who are selected out of a pool of over 100 companies by Japanese specialists to join the *Tokyo International Gift Show – the largest international gift and souvenir show in Japan* – from September 5-7, 2012.

The products to be showcased are lifestyle products such as textiles, furniture and decorative items aiming to find potential Japanese partners to help exploit innovative Japanese craftsmanship to create better design, function and quality. Then both sides will together export the products to the world market which is expected to bring in more revenues to both countries.

Mrs. Nuntawan Sakuntanaga, Director-General of the Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP), Ministry of Commerce, said “Thai lifestyle products are very popular in the international markets thanks to their good function and the quality standard appreciated and accepted among foreign customers. We believe that the export of lifestyle products should see an upward trend in the last quarter of this year. We are now implementing a multi-pronged strategy to assist Thai exporters, such as looking to new markets, helping Thai business operators and designers to develop their skills, promoting and publicizing the image of the Thai products, as well as working actively with JETRO Bangkok to support Thai exporters.

Mr. Tetsuo Shibata, Director of Trade Cooperation Department, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO Bangkok), said “The activity is a part of the DARUMA project, an initiative of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Investment of Japan (METI) to assist Thai businesses affected from flooding last year to reclaim lost ground. The cooperation model between Thailand and Japan comprises value creation and productivity through innovative Japanese craftsmanship and export promotion through international trade shows and business matching events. Our survey

result states that **39%** of the SMEs joining the DARUMA program need support in the area of design, **35%** in production, and **54%** in marketing [multiple answers].

“The products will be manufactured in and exported out of both Thailand and Japan. Under this Thailand-Japan Business Partnership framework, Japan can also seek the possibility to penetrate the new markets with Thai businesses as equal partners. For example, Thai designers have competitive advantages in the EU market these days, so by this business partnership, both Thailand and Japan will enjoy mutual benefits to advance after the previous natural disasters,” concluded **Mr. Shibata**.

On January 11, 2012, Thai and the Japanese government representatives signed a joint statement to initiate recovery programs, for example, consultation, funding and employment for Thai and Japanese businesses affected from flooding in 2011.

The DARUMA project, under the said cooperation framework, aims to provide support to Thai SMEs in food product, lifestyle product and hospitality service industries. The food products were promoted at *THAIFEX* event last May, while the lifestyle products will be presented at *Tokyo International Gift Show* in September, *BIG & BIH* in October and international trade shows overseas such as *Maison* later on, and the hospitality services at *World Spa & Well-being Convention 2012* in September and *Thailand Health & Beauty Show* in July next year. Over one hundred companies from 22 provinces joined the program. The screening criteria is that the businesses should have a potential for success, judging from the feasibility study submitted by the companies and interviews by Japanese specialists.

DARUMA is a Japanese doll that symbolizes perseverance and is seen as a gift of encouragement. The eyes of the Daruma doll are left blank when given to a person, who will later make a wish for a certain achievement, fill in one eye of the doll, so every time the person sees the doll, he or she will realize that the goal is left unfinished and will work hard towards it. The other eye will be filled in after the goal is accomplished. DARUMA Project is a gift of encouragement from the Japanese government to Thailand.