

THE THAILAND VETIVER NETWORK

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ABSTRACT

The Office of the Royal Development Projects Board (ORDPB) established the Thai Vetiver Network (THVN) in 1997 to coordinate the activities on vetiver conducted by around 40 agencies in Thailand. The activities of THVN are more or less overlapped with that of ORDPB. These include: (i) publication of a newsletter; (ii) publication of technical bulletins; (iii) publication of technical manuals; (iv) organization of training courses; (v) technical supports to other countries; and (vi) and setting up a website.

Keywords: ORDPB, CODPUV, Bhumivarin Anurak, technical bulletins, training, handicraft making, website.

1. INTRODUCTION

The vetiver activities in Thailand started from the work initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. From 1991, His Majesty conducted his own experiments and also advised the staff of the Royal Development Study Centers, the royal project's stations, and various institutions which he visited to do experiments on vetiver for the purpose of soil and water conservation. Realizing the fact that vetiver is most effective for soil erosion control, various institutions began to implement this technology. The Office of the Royal Development Projects Board (ORDPB) established the Thai Vetiver Network (THVN) in 1997 to disseminate the knowledge on the utilization of vetiver in various aspects through different media such as newsletter, technical bulletins, and web site.

2. OBJECTIVES

Thirathorn and Pasiri (2002) described the objectives of THVN as follow:

- (i) collect information regarding vetiver research and development in Thailand,
- (ii) provide information on the application of vetiver system in Thailand to interested persons and organizations, both in Thailand and abroad,
- (iii) coordinate activities with other vetiver networks, and
- (iv) disseminate the information on vetiver, especially works conducted in Thailand in the form of electronic database and websites.

3. MEMBERSHIP

The members of THVN are all governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in the implementation of vetiver projects as well as the use and utilization of vetiver in Thailand.

Present members amount to about 40 organizations with more than 300 scientific and extension staff members. All staff members and their organizations are automatically registered as the THVN's members.

1. ORGANIZATION

4.1 Office:

The secretariat office of THVN is located at ORDPB whose address is as follow:

78 Rajadamnern Nok Avenue

Dusit, Bangkok 10300,

Thailand

Tel.: (662) 280 6103, 280 6200

Fax: (662) 280 6234

Email: vetiver@rdpb.go.th

Website: <http://thvn.rdpb.go.th>

4.2 Staff:

There is no full-time staff working for THVN. The person in charge is Ms. Suwanna Pasiri, Director, Project Coordination Division 4. It is supported by the Sub-Committee for Scientific, Evaluation and Monitoring of the Vetiver Promotion Program of the Committee on the Development and Promotion of the Utilization of Vetiver (CODPUV)

Other staff members of the Planning and Foreign Affairs Division of ORDPB and other institutions (e.g. implementing organizations and universities) also assist in the operation of THVN. As the expert on vetiver of ORDPB, the author voluntarily acts as the acting Coordinator for THVN at present.

4.3 Budget:

All operational costs of THVN are met by the government budget allocated to ORDPB.

5. ACTIVITIES

The activities of THVN are more or less overlapped with that of ORDPB. These include:

5.1 Collection of Information:

Information on vetiver has been compiled and published. These include the following:

- ❖ Manual on Vetiver Cultivation (7 chapters, 3 editions)
- ❖ Manual on International Training Course on the Vetiver System
- ❖ Manual on the National Training Course on the Vetiver System
- ❖ Factual Tips about Vetiver
- ❖ His Majesty the King of Thailand's initiatives

5.2 Newsletter:

A Thai-language newsletter, "Bhumivarin Anurak", has been published since THVN's inception in 1997. Although it was originally planned to issue quarterly, a total of 23 issues have so far been published. The Editor together with a few staff members have been provided by the Department of

Land Development since 2007. It is expected that “Bhumivarin Anurak” would be published on a more regular basis of every four months, or three issues per year, starting in 2008.

5.3 Technical Bulletins:

So far, three occasional technical bulletins have been published. These are all in Thai language. Details of the three bulletins are given below:

- ❖ “The use of vetiver for soil erosion prevention in cassava fields in Thailand” by Somsak Suriyo and Wilawan Wongkasem, Field Crops Promotion Division, Department of Agricultural Extension, October 2002.
- ❖ “Utilization of vetiver as construction material for paddy storage silo” by Pichai Nimityongsakul and Thammanoon Hengsadeeikul, School of Civil Engineering, Asian Institute of Technology, January 2004.
- ❖ “A decade of promotion of vetiver cultivation according to His Majesty’s Initiatives of the PTT Public Co.”, by PTT Public Co. Ltd., July 2007.

All three bulletins have been supervised and edited by the author.

5.4 Organization of Training Courses:

Several training courses have been organized, both nationally and internationally, and domestically and abroad, on various topics. So far, about ten courses have been conducted. Examples of these training courses are:

- ❖ International Training Course on the Vetiver System, 19-30 November 2000.
- ❖ Thai National Training Course on the Vetiver System, 12-15 December 2000.
- ❖ International Training Courses on Vetiver Handicraft Making:
 - The First International Training, 17-28 October 2005, for 3 Venezuelan and 1 El Salvadorian trainees, in Bangkok, Thailand.
 - The Second International Training, 1-11 May 2007, for 2 Indian trainees, in Bangkok, Thailand.
 - The Third International Training, for 20 Chinese trainees, 23 October – 3 November 2007, in Guilin, Guangxi Province,

5.5 Technical Supports:

These include, among others, the followings:

- ❖ June 1999: Providing assistance to FAO-executed project to introduce vetiver grass to solve the problem of soil erosion in Shan State. Three Thai vetiver experts, Dr. Narong Chomchalow, Dr. Weerachai NaNakorn and Dr. Uthai Charanasri, were recruited to undertake the project whose mission was to: (i) advise and oversee the introduction of 200,000 vetiver plantlets to Myanmar, (ii) train senior project officials in conducting trials to address diverse erosion control requirements, (iii) train project extension staff on the vetiver system.

- ❖ September 2000: Providing experts to help Madagascar to rehabilitate FCE Railway hit by the cyclone. Two Thai vetiver experts, the late Mr. Diti Hengchaovanich and Dr. Uthai Charanasri, were recruited on a voluntary basis to advise the FCE Railway to rehabilitate the cyclone hit area. VS was introduced to eliminate erosion and/or landslide causing agricultural practices while improving soil fertility and enhancing farmers’ income. Three years later, the train line again operates properly and is protected from future cyclone damage by more than 2.6 million vetiver plants.

- ❖ November 2007: Arranging the staff of T.I.G.E.R (Tiger Initiative Group for Earth Revival) to visit the Department of Industrial Promotion and a fiber board factory. T.I.G.E.R. is an

NGO in India whose objective includes planting of vetiver near a tiger conservation park called Bandhavgarh, a prime tourist attraction, in India. In order to stop villagers around the area from poaching in the park, T.I.G.E.R believes that the local people have to be strengthened culturally and economically. Hence the purpose of the visit was to explore the possibility of growing vetiver to use its root for essential oil, its leaves for handicraft making, and its dry part as fiber board, in order to provide extra income to the local people who live around the area.

❖ December 2007: Providing DNA analysis to Danida agency in Ghana for 10 clones of vetiver to find the distinction between them and recommend the proper clones for the target area in Ghana.

5.6 Provision of Plant Materials:

Vetiver grass planting materials have been provided free- of-charge on various occasions to the following countries: Myanmar, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Timor Leste.

5.7 Website: The present THVN website (<http://thvn.rdpb.go.th>), updated by ORDPB, contains the following information in Thai languages:

- ❖ His Majesty the King of Thailand's initiatives
- ❖ The Committee on the Development and Promotion of the Utilization of Vetiver (CODPUV)
- ❖ The Master Plans of the Development and Promotion of the Utilization of Vetiver
- ❖ Factual Tips about Vetiver
- ❖ Implementing Agencies
- ❖ Vetiver researches
- ❖ Publications
- ❖ Bhumivarin Anurak (Thai-language Vetiver Newsletter)
- ❖ Vetiver news
- ❖ Articles
- ❖ Related Websites
- ❖ Members
- ❖ Website Administrator

The information in the website has been updated from time to time.

6. CONCLUSION

Although not being officially designated with no budget of its own, THVN has served the objectives since its inception. Unlike other vetiver networks, there has never been full time staff of THVN. All the works by THVN were accomplished by the staff of ORDPB and voluntarily by vetiver experts of other cooperating agencies.

7. REFERENCES

Thirathorn, A. and Pasiri, S. 2002. The Thailand Vetiver Network. Proc. ICV-2, pp. 198-9. ORDPB, Bangkok.
Website <<http://thvn.rdpb.go.th>>