

# **TWENTY YEARS OF CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE TVNI GLOBAL VETIVER CHAMPION AWARD WINNER**

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## **Abstract**

Since 1991, the author has been involved in vetiver research and development, as well as in the organization of the International Conferences of Vetiver (ICVs) since the first one up to the present. He continuously coordinates the activities of the Pacific Rim Vetiver Network (PRVN). The present paper briefly describes his 20 years of contributions in all ICVs, namely, as the initiator of the ICVs and as the Chairman of the Continuing Committee of ICV, and in the organization of ICV-1 to 5. His role in the coordination of the Pacific Rim Vetiver Network (PRVN), such as the birth of PRVN and the activities of PRVN, will also be discussed.

**Keywords:** Initiator of ICVs, ICV Constitution, Continuing Committee, Business Meeting, Pacific Rim Vetiver Network, Vetiverim.

## **1. Introduction**

Although the author has worked on vetiver which he introduced from Indonesia since 1971, the said work was limited to planting vetiver on sloping highland for essential oil extraction from its dried roots, which culminated in severe soil erosion caused by heavy rain after its harvest. That was the end of the project on vetiver for essential oil production on the highland of Northern Thailand. Twenty years later, His Majesty, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, after carefully studying the World Bank's report on vetiver, has been quick to see the value of vetiver for soil and water conservation by starting a testing program in 1991. He later expressed his belief to the World Bank representative that vetiver could well be the answer to stabilizing Thailand's fast eroding lands while reducing excess runoff and the problems that this runoff causes.

As the Plant Production Officer of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN), the author paid a great interest in the vetiver project for soil and water conservation. He was instrumental in the introduction of vetiver from several countries. As a member of the Organizing Committee, he provided financial support from FAO to enable 11 participants from developing countries to attend the "International Conference on Vetiver: A Miracle Grass", held in Chiang Rai, Thailand, during 4-8 February 1996. Since then, he played a key role as an active member of the Vetiver Committee of the Office of the Royal Development Projects Board (ORDPB), as well as the Secretary, and later as the Chairman of the Continuing Committee of the International Conferences on Vetiver from the very beginning up to the present. He also continuously coordinates the activities of the Pacific Rim Vetiver Network, as well as the

Thailand Vetiver Network. The following sections briefly describe all the activities on vetiver that the author has been involved in during the past 20 years.

## **2. Contribution to the International Conference on Vetiver**

### **2.1 Initiator of ICVs**

**2.1.1 Agreement to Organize ICVs on a Regular Basis:** During the International Conference on Vetiver under the theme “Vetiver: A Miracle Grass” in 1996, an evaluation questionnaire was distributed to all participants. It was revealed that the Conference was an instant success and proved to be highly beneficial for all participants. The author then convened an *ad hoc* meeting among the key persons in the vetiver circle who participated in this Conference. The said meeting reached a unanimous decision that research and studies on vetiver must be continued, that the discussions provided a clear definition for the drafted guidelines on studies of the Vetiver System in order to meet the optimal requirements for its utilization, and that the next International Conference, on the theme “Vetiver and the Environment”, be held during the year 2000 in South Africa, while it was agreed the present Conference to be renamed as the First International Conference on Vetiver (ICV-1).

**2.1.2 Drafting of ICV Constitution:** During the above *ad hoc* meeting, the author distributed a draft he prepared in advance of the Constitution of ICV for adoption during the meeting. Unfortunately, there was not enough time for an official adoption but the meeting suggested its use as a guideline for the next ICV.

**2.1.3 Setting Up of the Continuing Committee for the International Conference on Vetiver (CC/ICV):** During ICV-2, the author convened a Business Session with the main purpose of setting up the CC/ICV.

### **2.2 The Role CC/ICV**

**2.2.1 Selection of Members of CC/ICV at the Business Meeting:** During the Business Session of each ICV, members of CC/ICV were nominated to represent the key regions of vetiver activities, namely: Region 1 – Southeast Asia, Region 2 – East Asia and the Pacific, Region 3 – South Asia and the Middle East, Region 4 – Europe and Africa, and Region 5 – the Americas and the Caribbean. Two members were representing each region, and an Ex-Officio member was the President of the immediate past ICV. The Chairman was selected from the members of CC/ICV.

**2.2.2 Amendment of the ICV Constitution:** Also during the last Business Session, amendment of the ICV Constitution was made (Chomchalow, 2010b). The latest version of the ICV Constitution is presented in Appendix 1. The nomination of members of the Continuing Committee (CC) for ICV-5 is presented in Appendix 2.

### **2.2.3 Nomination and Selection of the Hosts of ICVs:**

**2.2.3.1 Host of ICV-2:** During the *ad hoc* meeting of ICV-1 in 1996, it was agreed that ICV-2 would be held in South Africa in the year 2000. Unfortunately, when the time was coming closer, the representative of South Africa sent a message to the author, who acted as the Secretary of the Interim Committee for ICV-2, that it was not possible for South Africa to host ICV-2 due to various technical problems. The author consulted many Thai authorities and in order to maintain ICV, and by an auspicious occasion – Thailand was to celebrate His Majesty’s Sixth Cycle Birthday Anniversary, it was unanimously agreed by all concerned authorities that Thailand would host ICV-2 in place of South Africa. Thailand was then selected as a host of ICV-2 after obtaining the approval of the Interim Committee for ICV-2.

*2.2.3.2 Host of ICV-3:* The CC/ICV-3 session that was convened during the Business Meeting of ICV-2 selected China as the host of ICV-3. However, it so happened that two cities in China volunteered to host ICV-3, namely, Guangzhou in Guangdong and Fuzhou in Fujian. Dr. Sumet Tantivejkul, then Chairman of CC/ICV, and the author as the Secretary of CC/ICV went to evaluate the potential of both cities and concluded that Guangzhou should be the host of ICV-3.

*2.2.3.3 Host of ICV-4:* The CC/ICV-4 session which was convened during the Business Meeting of ICV-3 selected Venezuela as the host of ICV-4. Prior to the conference, the author, as the Chairman of CC/ICV went to Venezuela to evaluate the potential of Venezuela to host ICV-4. Upon his return from Venezuela, he submitted a report and a recommendation that Venezuela could be the host of ICV-4. The said recommendation was unanimously approved by the members of CC/ICV-4.

*2.2.3.4 Host of ICV-5:* The CC/ICV-5 session which was convened during the Business Meeting of ICV-4 selected India, South Africa, and Hawaii, in that priority, to be the host of ICV-5. As in the cases of ICV-3 and ICV-4, the author went to Lucknow, India, and evaluated the potential of India to be the host of ICV-5. All members of CC/ICV-5, upon receiving the report from the author, gave a green light for India to host ICV-5.

## **2.3 Organization of ICVs**

### **2.3.1 ICV-1:**

*Venue:* Dusit Resort and Polo Club, Chiang Rai, Thailand.

*Date:* 4-8 February 1996.

*Theme:* Vetiver: A Miracle Grass.

*Sub-theme:* Towards the year 2000: An era of practical and economic methods of vetiver utilization for soil and water conservation.

*Organizer:* The Royal Development Projects Board, in cooperation with the Chaipattana Foundation and the Mae Fah Luang Foundation, with the support from the World Bank and the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

*Participants:* 400, 100 of which were foreigners from 41 countries.

### **2.3.2 ICV-2:**

*Venue:* Dusit Resort and Polo Club, Cha-am, Phetchaburi, Thailand.

*Date:* 18-22 January 2000.

*Theme:* Vetiver and the Environment.

*Sub-theme:* "Towards the New Millennium – An Era of Practical and Economical Methods of Vetiver Utilization for Environmental Conservation and Protection.

*Organizer:* The Royal Development Projects Board, in cooperation with the Chaipattana Foundation.

*Participants:* 400, 100 of which were foreigners from 31 countries.

### **2.3.3 ICV-3:**

*Venue:* Guangdong Hotel, Guangzhou, Guangdong, China.

*Date:* 6-9 October 2003.

*Theme:* Vetiver and Water.

*Sub-theme:* An Eco-Technology for Water Quality Improvement, Land Stabilization, and Environmental Enhancement.

*Organizers:* Guangdong Academy of Agricultural Sciences, South China Institute of Botany, South China Agricultural University, and Guangdong Association of Grass Industry and Environment.

*Participants:* 250, 90 of which were foreigners from 28 countries.

#### **2.3.4 ICV-4:**

*Venue:* Polar Foundation, Caracas, Venezuela.

*Date:* 22-26 October 2006.

*Theme:* Vetiver and the Environment.

*Sub-theme:* A Green Investment for Sustainable Development.

*Organizers:* Polar Foundation, Faculty of Agronomy Central University of Venezuela, Soil Science Society of Venezuela, the Vetiver Network International, Latin America Vetiver Network, Venezuela Vetiver Network, and Aragua Conservation Society.

*Participants:* 250, 100 of which were from 15 countries.

#### **2.3.5 ICV-5:**

*Venue:* Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Lucknow, India.

*Date:* 28-30 October 2011.

*Theme:* Vetiver and Climate.

*Sub-theme:* A Green Investment for Sustainable Development.

*Organizers:* Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP).

*Participants:* (Expected) 250, 100 of which will be from 15 countries.

### **3. Contribution to the Pacific Rim Vetiver Network (PRVN)**

#### **3.1 The Birth of PRVN**

As the Organizer of ICV-1 held in Chiang Rai on 4-8 February 1996, ORDPB has been requested by the President of TVNI, Mr. Richard Grimshaw, to act on behalf of Thailand as the core of its regional network for the Pacific Rim with the primary objective of serving as the center to collect and disseminate information on the use of vetiver for the benefit of the member countries. ORDPB, with the full support and agreement from His Majesty, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, has agreed to the request. The network, with the name of the Pacific Rim Vetiver Network (PRVN), started to work in July 2007, with the author acting as the Coordinator since then, up to the present.

#### **3.2 The Activities of PRVN**

**3.2.1 Coordinating Role:** PRVN, operated by ORDPB, is a network of 20 member countries located in the Pacific Rim, namely: Australia, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Fiji, Guam, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Taiwan, Thailand, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Vietnam (Chomchalow, 2010c).

#### **3.2.2 Information Release:**

**3.2.2.1 Publication of the quarterly newsletter (*Vetiverim*):** One of the responsibilities of PRVN is to publish a quarterly newsletter as a means of information exchange among scientists of the member countries. The first issue was published in July 1997. It was first named “*Vetiveria*” (Chomchalow 1997), but was later changed to “*Vetiverim*” to avoid a duplication of its name with the one issued by the Vetiver Network of the Philippines. The new name is derived from “*Vetiver*” and the area covered, “*Pacific Rim*”, by PRVN. Bound volumes were assembled on the occasions of the International Conferences on Vetiver. So far, 4 bound volumes were produced (300 copies each), as follows:

Volume 1: Numbers 1 – 11 (July 1997 – January 2000), distributed in ICV-2.

Volume 2: Numbers 12 – 26 (April 2000 – October 2003), distributed in ICV-3.

Volume 3: Numbers 27 – 38 (January 2004 – October 2006), distributed in ICV-4.

Volume 4: Numbers 39 – 58 (January 2007 – October 2011), distributed in ICV-5.

**3.2.2.2 Publication of Occasional Technical and Special Bulletins:** One of the immediate activities of PRVN is to disseminate information about the VS, especially those techniques that are adaptive to the local conditions of developing countries in the Pacific Rim. In this connection, the PRVN Secretariat is publishing a series of technical bulletins (TBs) that provides useful information about the VS to readers who are active members of the PRVN. It was started in 1998 and about 2-3 TBs have been published annually (See the list in Appendix 3). A special bulletin on “Vibrant Versatile Vetiver: An Archive of Useful Information on Vetiver, World’s Vetiver Networks, World’s Vetiver Awards, Conferences, Meetings, etc., on Vetiver, Vernacular Names of Vetiver, and Glossary of Vetiver Terms” was published in 2003 (Chomchalow, 2003).

**3.2.3 Organization of the Training Courses:** With the financial support from the Heineken Breweries Co. Ltd., the International Training Course on the Vetiver System was organized during 19-30 November 2000 by ORDPB on behalf of the Chaipattana Foundation. There were altogether 31 trainees from 15 countries of all continents. At the end of the TC, the author prepared two publications, viz. the “Manual of the International Training Course on the Vetiver System” (Chomchalow, 2000a) and the “Report of the International Training Course on the Vetiver System” (Chomchalow, 2000b).

**3.2.4 Organization of the Study Tours:** Several Study Tours for members from the PRVN regions have been organized, e.g., along with the International Training Course on the Vetiver System during 22-26 November 2000 (Chomchalow, 2000b).

## References

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## APPENDIX 1

### CONSTITUTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VETIVER

(Amended during Business Meeting of ICV-4)

**1. ORGANIZATION NAME:** International Conference on Vetiver (ICV).

**2. PURPOSE:** The purpose of the ICV is to promote interchange of research and development (R&D) on vetiver. The period between the following ICV's is left to the next host country to decide, usually it should be around 3 to 4 years. The purpose is to discuss R&D progress since the previous ICV, and opportunities for development in the future.

**3. MEMBERSHIP:** Attendance at the ICV is open to all that are interested in any aspect of R&D of vetiver in any country of the world. The membership (registration) fee shall be set by the host institution in consultation with the Continuing Committee (CC) (see Section 6). There shall be two types of membership:

**3.1 Full Members (with voting rights):** Payment of the full registration fee gives the individual voting rights at the Business Meetings held during the ICV. The host institution has the right to waive the membership fee of persons invited to address the ICV. Persons whose membership fee is waived will have full voting privileges.

**3.2 Associate Members (without voting rights):** Associate members are persons who are charged a fee that is less than the full registration. This includes persons who register on a daily basis, students, and family members.

**4. VOTING PROCEDURES:** For the purpose of conducting Conference Business, only full members of the ICV are entitled to cast one vote for each issue for which an election is held. Voting will be by a show of hands, unless a ballot is specified by the Chair of the CC. Evidence of voting eligibility may be required by the CC. The CC shall maintain a permanent record of all elections that are held.

**5. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION:** Proposed amendments to the Constitution may be made by any individual who was a Full Member of the immediate past ICV. They must be sent in writing to the Chair of the CC at least six months before the ensuing ICV. The CC will decide by a simple majority if the amendment should be brought to vote at the next ICV. The proposed amendments will be announced by the Chair of the CC at the first Business Meeting and the final decision for adoption will be made by voting at the final Business Meeting of the same ICV. Two-thirds of the total valid votes must be affirmative for the amendment to be adopted. Any amendment that is passed will come in force at the end of the ICV in which it was adopted.

**6. CONTINUING COMMITTEE (CC):**

**6.1 Members of the Continuing Committee:** The CC will have 13 members. It shall include the immediate the past President of ICV as an Ex-Officio (EO/CC) member, and two vetiver specialists from each of the following six regions as Regional Representatives (RR/CC).

- Region 1: Southeast Asia (SEAS)
- Region 2: East Asia, Oceanic and the Pacific (EAOP)
- Region 3: South Asia (SOAS)
- Region 4: Middle East, Europe and Africa (MEEA)
- Region 5: Sub-Saharan Africa (SSAF)
- Region 5: The Americas and the Caribbean (AMCA)

**6.2 The Term of Office:** The term of office for the EO/CC is one term of ICV, and that for the RR/CC is two consecutive terms of ICV. A term is defined as the period between the close of the final Business Meetings of two consecutive conferences.

**6.3 The Procedure of Election:** The procedure of election shall be as follows: Each of the ten members shall nominate three candidates (only one per any country) from his/her own region (total of six from each region) and shall submit all names (total of 30) for election by the Full Members during the ICV.

In the Business Meeting of ICV, there shall be an agenda for the final election of the CC from the list submitted.

In order to have a continuity of the RR/CC members, the terms of office shall be arranged such that there shall be a rotation of half of the members at each ICV. Thus a new set of five RR/CCs will be elected during each ICV. Regional representation will be maintained by the replacement of RR/CC members with the candidates from the region nominated by the outgoing RR/CC members.

If a member of the CC cannot serve the full term, the Chair shall solicit names of at least two candidates from the same region. The CC shall vote on the candidates and the individual with the majority shall be elected to complete that term.

**7. Organization and Responsibilities of the CC:** The CC shall elect from among its members a Chair. For the purpose of electing a new Chair, the out-going Chair will convene the CC after the final Business Meeting and hold the election either by raising hands or written ballot. The newly elected Chair of the CC will assume his/her responsibilities immediately after being elected.

The outgoing Chair shall submit to the new Chair a review of the activities of the CC during his/her term of office.

The CC shall:

- ensure that action is taken on all the resolutions adopted at the past Conference,
- conduct any other necessary affairs that require attention between ICVs,
- select a substitute if the original host is unable to proceed with an ICV,
- serve as an advisory committee to the host for planning the forthcoming ICV.

The Chair shall receive invitations from potential hosts of the next ICV at least three months before the forthcoming ICV. The Chair shall put the names of the potential hosts to vote by the members of the CC before or during the ICV. The potential hosts will provide details of the personnel and facilities that they can offer. If one potential host receives more than half of the votes, it will be elected to hold the next ICV. If no potential host receives over half of the votes, the Chair shall put the names of the two potential hosts receiving the highest number of votes before the CC. The potential host with the majority in the second election will be declared the host for the next ICV. The Chair of the CC shall declare the result at the final Business Meeting of the CC.



The Chair shall maintain a list of members of at least the past two ICVs and of other interested persons to whom the host should send the first circular regarding the forthcoming ICV.

The Chair shall preside over the Business Meetings at the ICV and convene the CC after the final Business Meeting for the purpose of electing the new Chair.

#### **8. HOST AND ICV PRESIDENT:**

- The host shall have the authority to appoint the President of the ICV. The ICV President should preferably be a vetiver specialist.
- The host and ICV President will be responsible for planning and implementing the ICV.
- The CC will provide guidelines to the host.
- The collection, disbursement, and accounting of funds to support the ICV will be the responsibility of the host. Any surplus funds available at the completion of the ICV will be disbursed at the discretion of the host.
- At the completion of the ICV, the host and ICV President should provide as much information as possible to the host of the next ICV.
- After completion of the ICV, the out-going ICV President will become a member of the CC for one term or shall appoint a representative, but cannot submit name of the candidate for new CC members.

**9. ICV SESSIONS:** At the beginning of the ICV, the first Business Meeting shall be called by the Chair of the CC. Details of this meeting will be determined by the Chair in consultation with the ICV President. The final Business Meeting will be held near the end of the ICV.

**10. ICV PUBLICATIONS:** The host will be responsible for providing abstracts of invited and contributed papers for distribution at the ICV. The proceedings will be distributed by the host within one year after the ICV is completed. The abstracts and the proceedings in the preceding clauses can be in the forms of publications, handouts, or CD-ROM. The content of the abstracts and proceedings have no copyrights and can be copied and used widely without getting permission from the authors. However, the acknowledgement of the source should be made.

In addition to the abstracts and the proceedings, the host should add all activities that occur during the conference such as the pictures from the field trip and personal pictures, in the CD-ROM so that the participants will have a complete set of the conference event.

## APPENDIX 2

### CONTINUING COMMITTEE OF THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VETIVER (CC/ICV-5)

#### **Nomination of Members of the Continuing Committee (CC) for ICV-5**

According to the amended ICV Constitution, the following 13 members have been elected during the Business Meeting of ICV-4 in Caracas, Venezuela, on 24 October 2006:

#### ***Ex-Officio Member: (President of the immediate past ICV)***

Dr. Graciela Pantin from Venezuela, President of ICV-4

#### ***Regional Representatives:***

##### *Region 1: Southeast Asia*

Dr. Narong Chomchalow, Thailand\*

Dr. Tran Tan Van, Vietnam

##### *Region 2: East Asia, Oceania and the Pacific*

Prof. Liyu Xu, China

Dr. Paul Truong, Australia

##### *Region 3: South Asia*

Dr. Umesh Lavania, India

Mr. P. Haridas, India

##### *Region 4: Middle East, North Africa and Europe*

Dr. Criss Juliard, Mediterranean

Mr. Nabil El Chowk, Morocco\*\*

##### *Region 5: Sub-Saharan Africa*

Prof. Johnnie van den Berg, South Africa

Mr. Roley Nöffke, South Africa

##### *Region 6: The Americas and the Caribbean*

Dr. Dale Rachmeler, USA

Dr. Oscar Rodriguez, Venezuela

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\* *Was also nominated as the Chairman of CC/ICV-5.*

\*\* *Mr. Nabil El Chowk from Morocco has been nominated by Dr. Criss Juliard to be the second member of Region 4: Middle East, North Africa and Europe which was vacant during the time the Business Session was convened at ICV-4. Mr. Chowk is a vetiverite, researcher and agriculturalist. He has been working with vetiver for over ten years with both Dr. Dale Rachmeler and Dr. Criss Juliard. He has conducted research and trial with vetiver mycorrhiza, vetiver multiplication, phytoremediation and land stabilization. He has also tested and planted vetiver in Dubai and Lebanon.*

### APPENDIX 3

#### LIST OF TECHNICAL BULLETINS (TB) PUBLISHED BY PRVN

1. “Vetiver Grass Technology for Environmental Protection” by Paul Truong and Dennis Baker (TB 1/1998).
2. “Vetiver Grass for Slope Stabilization and Erosion Control” by Diti Hengchaovanich. (TB 1/1999).
3. “Vetiver Handicrafts in Thailand” by the (Thai) Department of Industrial Promotion (TB 2/1999).
4. “Vetiver Grass Technology for Mine Rehabilitation” by Paul Truong (TB 3/1999).
5. “The Use of Vetiver Grass System for Erosion Control and Slope Stabilization along the Yadana Gas Pipeline Right-of-Way” by the Petroleum Authority of Thailand (TB 4/1999).
6. “Techniques of Vetiver Propagation with Special Reference to Thailand” by Narong Chomchalow (TB 1/2000).
7. “The Utilization of Vetiver as Medicinal and Aromatic Plants with Special Reference to Thailand” by Narong Chomchalow (TB 1/2001).
8. “Vetiver System for Wastewater Treatment” by Paul Truong and Barbara Hart TB 2/2001).
9. “The Development of the Vetiver System in Guangdong, China” by Hanping Xia (TB 3/2001).
10. “The Role of the Private Sector in Disseminating the Vetiver System with Special Reference to China” by Hanping Xia (TB 1/2002).
11. “The Use of Vetiver for Soil Erosion Prevention in Cassava Fields in Thailand” by Somsak Suriyo and Wilawan Vongkasem (TB 2/2002).
12. “Vetiver Root - Oil and Its Utilization” by U.C. Lavana (TB 1/2003).
13. “Vetiver Victorious: The Systematic Use of Vetiver to Save Madagascar’s FCE Railway” by Diti Hengchaovanich and Karen Schoonmaker Freudenberger (TB 2 /2003).
14. “Utilization of Vetiver as a Construction Material for Paddy Storage Silo” by Pichai Nimityongskul and Thammanoon Hengsadeeikul (TB 1/2004).
15. “Rehabilitation of Ravine on the Congolese Floodplain” by Alain Ndona, Paul Truong, and Dale Rachmeler (TB 1/2006).
16. “Vetiver Phytoremediation for Heavy Metal Decontamination” by Nualchavee Roongtanakiat (TB1/2009).