

Field survey on the implementation of vetiver and agroforestry project

A group from China Vetiver Network visited the project site on 4-7 June 2007. A field survey was conducted, accompanied by officials of Guilin City, Longshen County, and Sishui Township Government. This trip was organized to investigate the project implementation in the first few months and to get ready for the next project implementation. At first Mr. Qin, an official of County Agriculture Bureau and responsible for the project implementation in Zhoujia Village, led the group to investigate economic tree planting in Zhoujia Village. People were pleased to see that economic trees and vetiver grass all grew up. Both trees and the grass had new leaves and shoots. Vetiver grass formed a hedge at the edge of the terraces. After 80 days since planting, vetiver grass reaches 80-110 cm in average, with the maximum of 140 cm. Few tillers start to produce splits. The only problem is that weeds need to be cleaned to ensure vetiver grass grow well. Then little fertilizer needs to be applied amounting 10-15 kg/km hedge.

Besides, to increase early profit farmers inter-cropped Lohanguo *Siraitia*, a medicine liana plant, formed one agroforestry system: fruit tree-medicine-vetiver hedge. In this way farmers can get early profit. They planted Lohanguo for 60-120 plants each Mu (15 Mu = 1 hectare), that can produce 6000-8000 fruits, generating 2500 - 4000 Yuan (about USD5000-USD8000/ha/yr). At the same time the terrace land can be fully used and covered and erosion be reduced.

Later the group visited Batan Village. The farmers planted vetiver on the new road embankment to fix the slope and control erosion. One picture showed that few meters vetiver hedge stopped soil collapsing on the cut above the road. However, the slope below the vetiver hedge slide. The picture showed that vetiver grass could play an important role in slope stabilization just 3 months after planting. The highway administration wish to test vetiver in larger area. However, there still exist problem. The vetiver was planted in in-correct spacing, i.e. the row space was too narrow (usually should be 2 m), while the distance between clumps in a row was too far. Such planting should influence the function of slope stabilization.

Another key goal of the trip was to prepare an international vetiver handicraft training course. In the recent years, China Vetiver Network pay more attention to agricultural development through introduction of vetiver system to farmers and local governmental officials and help farmer to cultivate high quality economic trees with vetiver contour hedges, at same time to conserve water and soil. The present EED/KED supporting project titled Poverty Reduction and Resource Protection in a Guangxi Province Minority Area has implemented in Longshen of Guangxi province of China since the beginning of 2007.

However, since the benefit from erosion control may not be obviously showed in a short time, some farmers are less interested in vetiver. To solve this problem we need to help farmers earn direct income from vetiver pruning, which can be achieved in just 3 months after planting.

Thailand did an excellent job in this field supported by The King of Thailand, Department of Industrial Promotion of Royal Thai Government, and Office of the Royal Development Projects Board. To help people from other countries to grasp vetiver handicraft technology, Thailand and The Vetiver Network (international) organized international training courses in November 2000 and October 2005 in Thailand respectively. Unfortunately, caused by language problem no Chinese farmers could attend the course. To solve this problem, it is planned that three woman Thai technicians (including one Thai-Chinese translator) will be invited as trainers to train Chinese farmers on vetiver handicraft in Longshen of Guangxi Province, the project sites.

During the visit, the Group asked local people to get ready to organize such training course. On one hand, vetiver grass should be well managed in order that the grass can grow well and produce long leaves.

On the other hand, most prospective participants should be selected. Through discussion, the local officials realized that such training course can not only help farmers get direct income from selling vetiver handicrafts, but also can promote fruit marketing because at present farmers sell fruits without any package, that influence tourists to buy fruits since fruits can not be well kept during the travel. Therefore, farmers should be very happy to participate in the training because it can bring them both direct and indirect profit. To ensure the training course to be more successful, The participants should be:

- Woman with age 20-45.
- Persons who plant and manage vetiver grass well should have priority.
- The participants should have enough time to participate in the training course from the beginning to the end and should follow the working timetable.
- Minority women will have priority. At least 55% should be minorities.
- People who have already planted fruit trees and will produce fruits and wish to use vetiver to produce fruit-basket may have priority.
- People who already have handicraft experience will have priority.

Besides, the preparation of the training course should be processed in advance. For example: Production of training materials. It is expected that the training course can be organized in late October 2007.

During the visit, China Vetiver Network checked the distribution of fertilizers, discussed next step of the project, i.e. the construction of mini-irrigation systems. Request the local government to prepare detailed design based on the field survey on landform and land use patterns. Also, it is inquired that all original bills should be well kept.



Vetiver up to 140cm in 80 days



Vetiver hedges established



Vetiver protects fish pond



Vetiver stopped slope slide.



Vetiver protected Loquet- Lohanguo AF system



Slope was tentatively fixed in 80 days