Eco- Technical Applications of Vetiver Grass in Tanzania

A.J. Makoye[1], R.J. A. Minja[2], and F. Machange[1]

[1] Tanzania vetiver Network (TZVN), P.O. Box 31050, Dar es Salaam. TANZANIA.
[2] University of Dar es Salaam, Chemical and Process Engineering Department, P.O. Box, 35131, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Vetiver grass (*Vetiveria zizanioides* Nash) was introduced into Tanzania in the early 1900s by German settlers. Soil erosion control was the primary focus, particularly in the Northern Highlands (Lushoto) and the Eastern Highlands (Morogoro). During the 1920 -1990 period, there was a slow but growing realization of the value of this grass in land management -its effectiveness in soil and water conservation, simplicity and low cost led to its spread to over ten mainland regions.

In the past decade, through external support from TVN, DANIDA, GTZ and other donors, the spread and farmer adoption of vetiver grass picked up speed. Numerous NGOs and CBOs have launched successful vetiver growing projects and campaigns. The adoption rates were highest in the Southern Highland regions. The Tanzania Vetiver Network (TZVN) has played a major advocacy role since its establishment in 1999.

Beyond the early focus on soil erosion control in hilly farmlands, more recent and increasing attention has been directed at roadside slope stabilization, mining site rehabilitation, coastline and water ponds protection, boundary demarcation and wastewater treatment. Several departments of the University of Dar es Salaam have recently initiated research studies in collaboration with the TZVN.

The paper is aimed at highlighting the slow but increasingly successful process of new technology adoption which, given more policy thrust and resource support, has immense potential for improving Tanzania's agriculture and protecting her fragile environment. The profiles of numerous successful vetiver projects will be annexed.

***R.J. A. Minja**: rminja@cpe.udsm.ac.tz*