



Vetiver grass: an innovative technique for soil stabilisation

Erosion is a major problem for the city of Brazzaville in the Congo. Frequently exposed to heavy rains and victim of uncontrolled urbanisation, its sandy soils are regularly washed away.

This is why Egis has been mandated by the Congolese Government to overcome the erosion problem. Taking an innovative approach, the company integrated the use of vetiver grass with the conventional solutions for combating erosion, which are complex to implement (concrete) and costly.

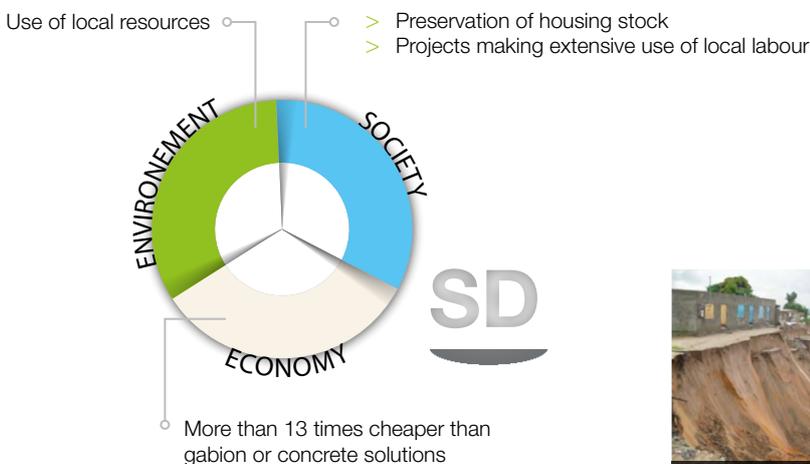
VETIVER: A SUSTAINABLE PLANT

By integrating vetiver with the conventional methods of combating erosion (gabion, concrete, drainage, terracing, etc.), Egis is proposing a sustainable solution.

IMPLEMENTATION SITES

The project was implemented at three sites:

- > Boukeni: 300 houses already destroyed by erosion.
- > Casis: around 1,000 houses destroyed and potential threat to N2 road.
- > Pylon: threat to the electricity transmission pylon between Brazzaville and the north of the country.



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VETIVER GRASS: HOW DOES IT WORK?

Closely planted vetiver shoots grow into dense hedges that reduce the speed of flow of runoff and favour its infiltration. Deep roots give the plant firm anchorage (3 to 4 m) even in unstable soils. Vetiver is resistant to wind and sandstorms, a morphology allowing it to stop or slow erosion.

PROCESSUS



ISSUES AT STAKE

- > A solution to a major problem for the Congo.
- > Introduction into the country of a new technique that is less costly, socially beneficial and sustainable.
- > Planted areas improve the living environment.
- > Creation of employment, since the programme makes intensive use of local labour. It combines jobs in plant nurseries, on work sites and during maintenance.

In 2013, the Vetiver Programme received the Caisse Des Dépôts' Innovation and Sustainable Development Trophy in the «ecological transition» category.

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