



East-West Seed

Access to Seeds Index

Corporate Data

Headquarters: Nonthaburi, Thailand
Ownership type: Private
Group revenue (2014): USD 136,272,641

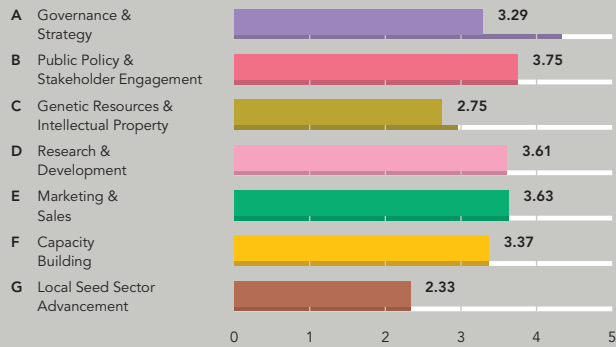
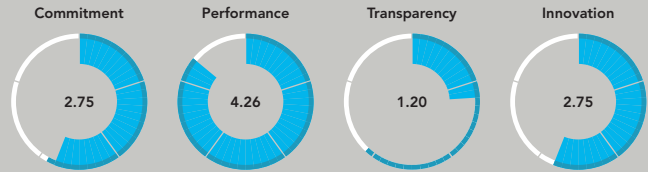
East-West Seed Company Ltd. (East-West Seed) is a vegetable seed company that originally focused on breeding and marketing varieties in Asia. It was founded in the Philippines in 1982 but moved its headquarters to Thailand shortly afterwards. More recently, the company has expanded its operations to other tropical and sub-tropical parts of the world. The company is family-owned.

1
rank out of 10
score 3.27

Global Index – Vegetable Seed Companies

Topping the Global Index of Vegetable Seed Companies, East-West Seed's ranking is driven by strong performance across all measurement areas, with programs and initiatives supporting access to seed for smallholder farmers and the commitments and policies to

back them up. The company performs particularly well in Marketing & Sales and Research & Development. It has an extensive distribution network, and develops packaging and labeling that addresses smallholder farmers' needs. Its quality management system includes a system for collecting and handling feedback and grievances from smallholder farmers. Due to the nature of its business model, in which smallholder farmers are the primary customers, the company has developed a robust governance & strategy system around access to seeds. It prioritizes the needs of smallholder farmers in the development of both local and global crops. Finally, the company leads in innovation in several areas.



Leading Practices

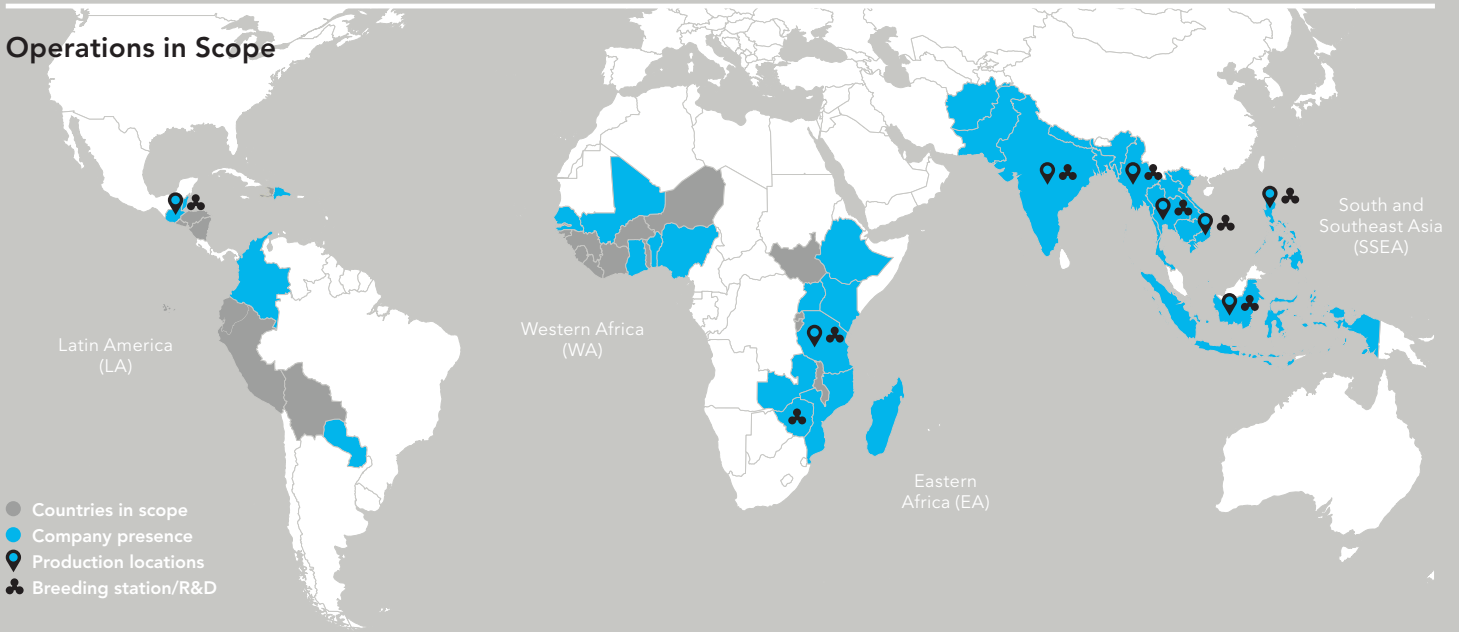
- East-West Seed has extensive programs and activities that support smallholder farmers throughout its value chain. It outperforms its peers in all measurement areas except Governance & Strategy and Genetic Resources & Intellectual Property. It also outperforms its peers in the categories Performance and Innovation.
- The company demonstrates a strong commitment to access to seeds for smallholder farmers and discloses a supporting strategy. In its mission statement, the company articulates the importance of farmers and how it intends to serve them in a manner that 'improves their livelihoods and income'. It is also committed to employing a variety of tools and methods to fulfill this mission such as developing local breeding, extension and marketing capabilities. The company considers 90% of its customer base to be smallholder farmers.
- East-West Seed has a strong governance system in place to support its access to seeds commitments and strategy. Supervision is in the hands of the supervisory board and management board. The company also sets targets to measure its progress and to integrate these targets across the business, engaging all of its core business units. Company goals are translated into management goals, which are monitored via an online performance management system.

- The company demonstrates leadership in public policy advocacy, participating in multi-stakeholder initiatives and engaging in public and industry dialogue that supports smallholder farmers and access to seeds. It discloses several initiatives covering many Index countries and involves senior leadership in some of these initiatives.
- The company has a comprehensive R&D program that prioritizes the needs of smallholder farmers. It carries out R&D for all Global Index vegetable crops in its portfolio as well as seven local crops in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. It leads the way in breeding crops that are tailored to smallholder farmers' needs, with priority breeding objectives of disease and insect resistance, heat tolerance, off-season adaptation, improved transportability, shelf life and higher yields.
- The company's collaboration with Rijk Zwaan in the Afrisem breeding program is innovative due both to the focus on local crop development for Eastern Africa and the fact that two competitors are working on this development together.
- The company considers the needs of smallholder farmers throughout its marketing & sales activities, including package sizes, distribution channels, promotion of agricultural inputs and after-sales support.
- Local smallholder farmers are involved in the company's production activities, with 90% of farmers participating in seed production being smallholders.

Areas for Improvement

- Despite its strong performance, East-West Seed discloses a limited amount of information publicly, providing most information only on engagement. The company can improve its Transparency score by disclosing more information publicly, especially on its governance and accountability, marketing & sales, local seed sector advancement and R&D activities.

Operations in Scope



Index Vegetable Crops in Portfolio

	Sales				Breeding Focus			
	LA	WA	EA	SSEA	LA	WA	EA	SSEA
Broccoli			●	●			♣	
Cabbage		●	●	●		♣	♣	♣
Carrot		●	●	●			♣	
Cauliflower			●	●			♣	
Chili pepper	●		●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣
Cucumber	●	●	●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣
Eggplant	●	●	●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣
Gourd	●	●	●	●	♣		♣	♣
Green bean			●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣
Lettuce	●	●	●	●	♣		♣	♣
Melon	●		●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣
Okra		●	●	●		♣	♣	♣
Onion			●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣
Pumpkin	●	●	●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣
Spinach				●				
Squash					♣	♣	♣	
Sweet pepper	●		●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣
Tomato	●	●	●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣
Watermelon	●	●	●	●	♣	♣	♣	♣

■ Through its marketing, packaging and labeling practices, the company attempts to accommodate the needs of smallholder farmers. It has created both small pouch and value pack sizes and made packaging available in local languages. It also offers open-pollinated varieties (OPVs) and different grade seeds.

■ The company has implemented several programs to encourage the adoption of suitable varieties for smallholder farmers: it promotes a peer-learning approach, which involves supporting key farmers who showcase profitable and sustainable cultivation techniques; its extension services advise on all aspects of crop production from land preparation to harvest, and it has demonstration farms that are used for village training events.

■ The company has in place a strong system for tracking customer feedback and grievances. The system includes contracting surveyors to conduct market research, collecting feedback from its field promoters and local dealers, and managing complaints through its complaint-handling system.

■ The company has a strong commitment to building the capacity of smallholder farmers. One of the company's strategic objectives is knowledge transfer and it commits to equipping farmers with knowledge to leverage improved seeds.

■ The company supports farmer organizations in 75% of the countries where it is active, especially since its demonstration farms and programs enable the establishment of informal community groups.

■ In 2014, 90% of the 16,000 farmers it employed to produce seeds were considered smallholder farmers.

■ The company actively supports government efforts to improve registration and certification systems in six of the countries where it is active. Activities include providing training and advisory services to government departments and staff, and participating in roundtable discussions and working groups addressing these matters.

Notable Findings

■ East-West Seed has dedicated resources and programs for improving smallholder farmers' access to seeds, including reinvesting 3% of its global sales into farmer training and a budget of 3% of company revenue for knowledge transfer and extension. These resources are distributed across several countries, among them Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Tanzania and countries in Western Africa.

■ The company is involved in setting up a gene bank in Bogor, Indonesia for the purpose of conserving local germplasm. It is envisaged that this gene bank will operate in the public domain with open access. The company has also provided non-financial support to a public gene bank in Thailand.

■ The company develops and markets a significant number and range of local crops, including amaranth, black nightshade, spider plant, African kale, kangkong, palak, tinda and roselle.

■ The company is engaged in several collaborative research projects with local public or private partners in at least five of the Index countries where it is active. For example, it works with the Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center and several universities (including in India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand) to develop new tomato varieties, and with peer Rijk Zwaan and Wageningen University and Research Centre in the Netherlands on the Seeds of Expertise for the Vegetable Industry of Africa (SEVIA) project in Tanzania.

■ The company has established distribution channels in over half of the Index countries and leverages direct and indirect channels to supply seeds to dealers and sub-dealers in small towns and villages. Through an extensive sub-dealer network, it is able to reach remote areas. It also markets 100% of its Index crop varieties in the 30 countries where it is active, and on several occasions has collaborated with public research institutes to market their varieties.