



Access to Seeds
Index



Progress Report Q2 2017

April – June 2017

This report provides an overview of the activities, milestones and progress involved in developing the Access to Seeds Index 2018 in the period April – June 2017.

Amsterdam, 25 September 2017



Bridging the gap between the
world's leading seed companies
and the smallholder farmer

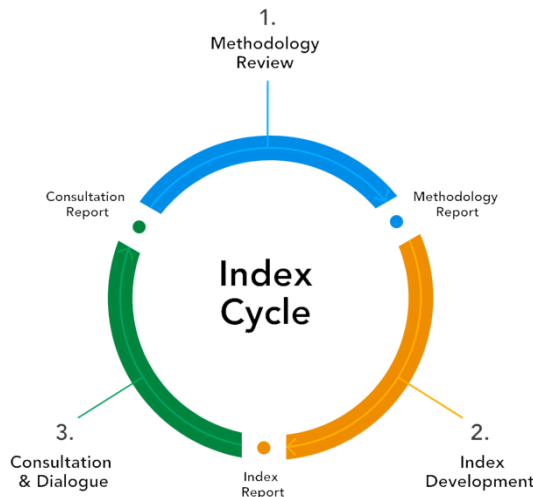
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General Project Data	
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1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the activities, milestones and progress involved in developing the Access to Seeds Index 2018 in the period April 2017 – June 2017. This period is part of the first step, methodology review, of the Index Cycle that guides the development of each Index.



This Index Cycle consists of three steps. During the first step, the methodology for the Access to Seeds Index is developed, after consultation with stakeholders and experts. In the second step, company performance is analyzed, resulting in an Access to Seeds Index. After publication, the third step of dialogue and consultation starts in order to discuss the Index's findings and insights.

After this final stage, the cycle starts again, using insights from the consultation phase to review the methodology.

2. About the Access to Seeds Index

The Access to Seeds Index evaluates and compares seed companies according to their efforts to improve access to quality seeds of improved varieties for smallholder farmers. The Index seeks primarily to identify leadership and good practices, providing an evidence base for the discussion on where and how the seed industry can step up its efforts.

Private sector engagement is at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015. By creating a better understanding of the seed industry's performance, the Index aims to contribute to the achievement of these goals.

Hunger is a daily reality for almost one billion people around the world. The global population is expected to grow by a further two billion in the coming decades, precisely in those regions that are currently considered food insecure. Improving access to seeds for farmers in those regions is key to meeting future food demands. This is where the seed industry can play a crucial role.

Based on how important stakeholders – farmers, governments, scientists, NGOs and the industry itself – view the role and responsibility of the seed industry, a methodology was developed with clearly defined criteria. After publication of each Index, the methodology is reviewed and updated. Using this iterative approach, the Index aims to monitor progress over time.

The Access to Seeds Index is published by the Access to Seeds Foundation, an independent, non-profit organization based in The Netherlands. The Access to Seeds Foundation is part of the Index Alliance, a group of foundations dedicated to establishing industry benchmarks measuring corporate performance towards the SDG-agenda.

3. Framework of Theory of Change, Objectives and Deliverables

Theory of Change

Small-scale farming dominates the agricultural landscape in regions that currently struggle with food security challenges and where the population is predicted to grow the most in the coming decades. As most of their food is produced locally, increasing smallholder farmer productivity in these regions is thus a key solution of SDG2 #ZeroHunger.

Sufficient access to quality seeds is one of many constraints smallholder farmers face. But it is a fundamental one, as seeds play a major role in determining crop yield and quality. The efficiency of other measures, such as the introduction of advanced agricultural practices, depends on the types of seeds used.

Serving millions of smallholders, all in different circumstances and with a variety of needs and demands, requires market-based approaches. The seed industry is best positioned to improve and provide access to quality seeds, every season, in the right place, at the right time and in the right quantities.

By shining a light on good practice and identifying leadership in the industry, the Access to Seeds Index aims to clarify the role seed companies can play and provide an evidence base for the conversation of where and how companies can step up their efforts. As a benchmarking tool, it aims to encourage companies to improve their performance over time. By providing insights on performance, portfolio and presence of individual seed companies, the Access to Seeds Index aims to contribute to establishing partnerships with seed companies.

Overall objectives

1. Increase transparency on current strategies and activities of seed companies to improve access to seeds for smallholders and contribute to the SDG-agenda.
2. Provide an evidence base for the conversation within and with the seed industry on how they can step up their efforts.
3. Encourage companies to continue increasing transparency and performance in relation to their efforts to improve access to seeds for smallholder farmers.
4. Provide insights on performance of individual companies to enable other stakeholders to cooperate or build partnerships with seed companies.
5. Strengthen the position of the Access to Seeds Foundation through a global alliance with other index initiatives and affiliation with established global organizations.

Deliverables

1. Global Index of globally operating seed companies
2. Regional Index of leading seed companies in Eastern and Southern Africa
3. Regional Index of leading seed companies in Western and Central Africa
4. Regional Index of leading seed companies in South and Southeast Asia

Activities contributing to each deliverable

1. Landscaping study: to identify companies to include in each ranking
2. Methodology report: presenting the indicators for company assessment
3. Index report: presenting the results of the company assessments
4. Conversation report: presenting the outcomes of the dialogue activities

This report provides an overview of activities in the period April – June 2017 and how they contribute to the objectives and deliverables above.

4. Progress Overview Q2 2017

This section provides an overview of activities and milestones in the period April – June 2017. The main goal of this period was methodology development and landscaping for new Regional Indexes.

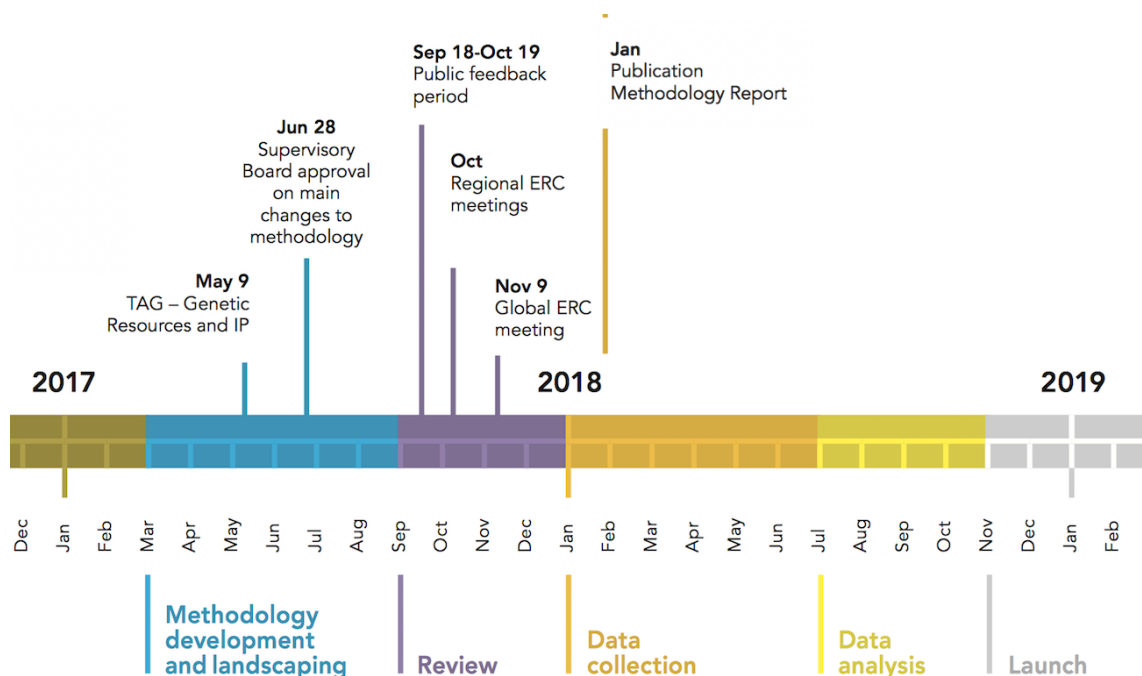


Illustration: Project timeline

1. Landscaping studies for new regional indexes started

The 2016 Regional Access to Seeds Index for Eastern Africa underlined the critical role regional companies play in improving access to seeds for smallholder farmers. Following this example, the ambition is to develop two additional regional indexes for the 2018 edition.

To this end, three landscaping studies are being conducted for (1) extension of Eastern Africa towards Southern Africa; (2) Western & Central Africa, (3) South & Southeast Asia to determine the feasibility of a regional index for these regions and to identify companies to include in each regional assessment. Based on these studies, two regions will be selected to be featured in a regional index.

To perform these landscaping studies, contracts have been established with three consultants in the region. They conduct the studies, through a network of national focal points, in each country within the scope of the Index:

1. Eastern & Southern Africa: Dr. Claid Mujaju
2. Western & Central Africa: Yacouba Diallo
3. South and Southeast Asia: Mordor Intelligence

2. Expert consultations for methodology review conducted

In July 2016, the Access to Seeds Foundation's Supervisory Board agreed on an Agenda for Methodology Review that has since guided the consultations with stakeholders on possible

revisions of the methodology. The general objective was to strengthen focus, reduce complexity and extend the reach of regional indexes towards other regions.

Following stakeholder feedback, the 2018 Index will dedicate more attention to seed production, handling of genetic resources and handling of IP by seed companies.

To develop indicators for these last two areas, an expert consultation meeting was held on 9 May 2017, which included representatives from research, NGOs and the seed industry.



Photo: participants expert meeting 9 May 2017

3. First step of methodology review completed

On 26 June 2017, the Supervisory Board of the Access to Seeds Foundation convened again to discuss progress of the methodology review. The methodology is revisited in three steps (1) stakeholder and expert consultations; (2) public consultation period; (3) final expert review.

At this meeting, the Board approved the proposed changes, which completed the first step. The next step is compiling a report that will be placed online for public consultation in September 2017.

4. WorldBank seminar on seed companies and nutrition

The Access to Seeds Index was invited by the World Bank to present findings on the role seed companies can play in addressing nutrition challenges during a webinar on 13 April 2017. The Index's Executive Director Ido Verhagen presented insights alongside a presentation with practical experiences by Mary Ann Sayoc, managing director of East-West Seed in The Philippines.

5. Governance model for Index Alliance finalized and approved

To strengthen cooperation and leverage synergies between the various indexes, such as the Access to Seeds Index, the Access to Medicine Index, the Access to Nutrition Index and the Corporate Human Rights Benchmark, the Access to Seeds Foundation has initiated the creation of an 'Index Alliance'. Based on various conversations with the Dutch Tax Authorities, a top structure was created which allows for flexibility and tailored governance models for each Index, while at the same time facilitating cooperation. The Supervisory

Board of the Access to Seeds Foundation approved the proposed model at its meeting in June 2017.

In parallel, the project organization Index Initiative, hosted by the Access to Seeds Foundation, which explores the feasibility of new industry benchmarks measuring corporate performance toward the SDGs, was invited to participate in a new initiative: The World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA). The WBA was created following advice by the UN Business and Sustainable Development Commission (BSDC), which was presented in January 2017.

6. Communication strategy reviewed and implemented

To support the overall objectives of the Access to Seeds Index, the communication strategy has been thoroughly reviewed. One main goal is to facilitate an ongoing conversation about the Index’s findings. Through a quarterly newsletter, storytelling via the website and social media, as well as presentations at international events, the Access to Seeds Foundation aims to encourage ongoing attention for the Access to Seeds Index, its findings and the challenges it aims to address.

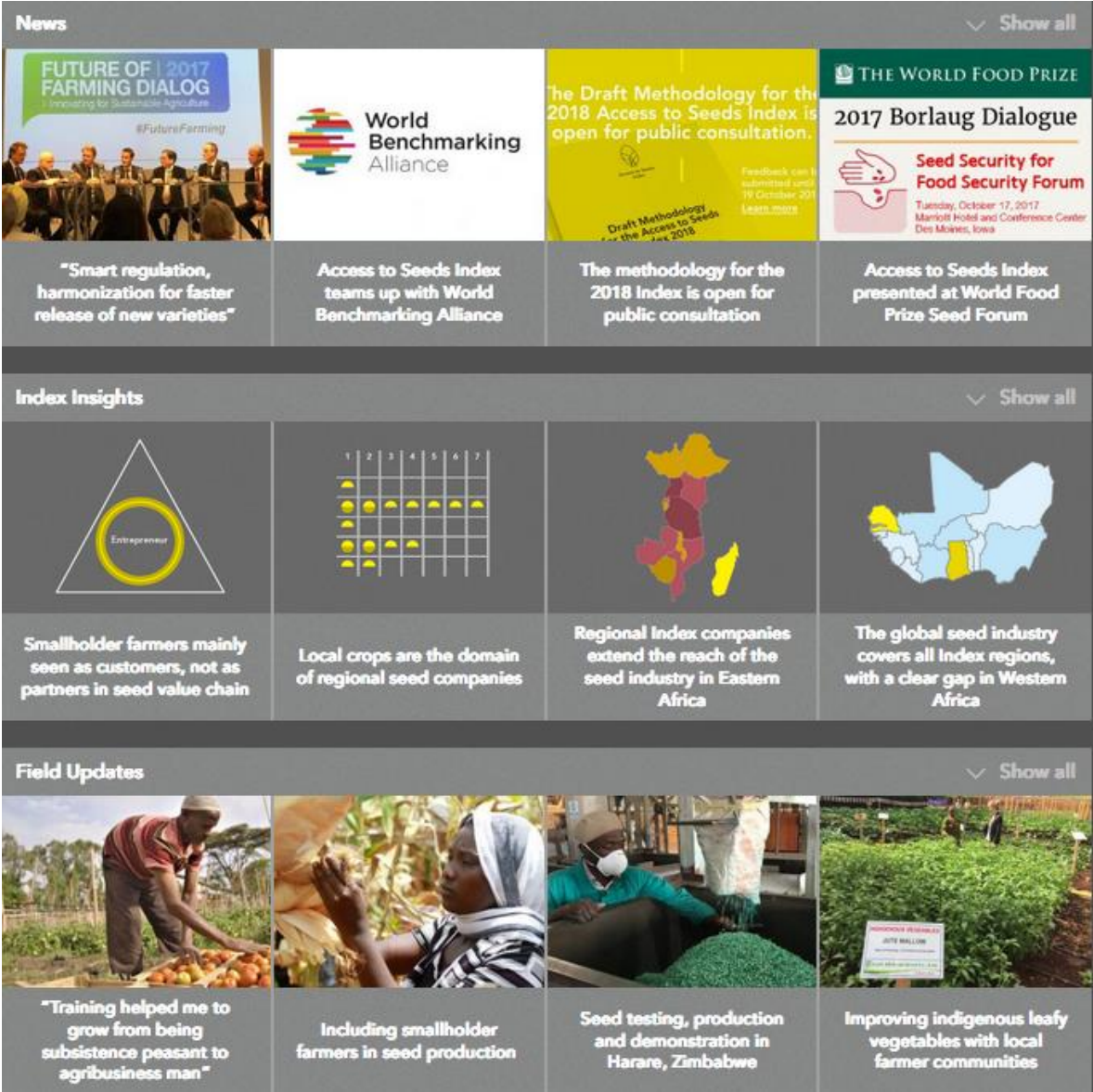


Illustration: storytelling via Access to Seeds Index website

The website features 'Index Insights' as well as best practices examples from farmers and seed companies. These are continuously updated and communicated through a quarterly e-newsletter, Twitter and Facebook. A storytelling strategy via images has been implemented through the use of Instagram and Flickr. A blog with index insights by Ido Verhagen will also be featured every three months on an expert blog page hosted by Bayer Cropscience.

5. Contribution of Activities to Objectives and Deliverables

Although the main priority of this period was making progress in methodology development and landscaping studies, all activities mentioned contribute to the overall goals of the Index.

The methodological improvements are aimed at increasing transparency on certain topics. Communication activities exemplify how the Foundation, also in this period, is active in promoting the dialogue of the role of seed companies. The landscaping studies focus on expanding the number of companies to include in the Index. And finally, the Index Alliance focuses on strengthening the organization itself.

	Overall objectives				
	Increase Transparency	Enable Dialogue	Encourage Companies	Enable Partnerships	Strengthen Foundation
Activities and Milestones Q2 2017					
Landscaping studies for new regional Indexes started					
Expert consultations for methodology review conducted					
First step of methodology review completed					
WorldBank seminar on role seed companies in nutrition					
Governance model Index Alliance finalized					
Communication strategy reviewed					

6. Variation from the Original Plan

In this period, all activities were conducted according to plan. No changes were made.