



Access to Seeds
Index



Progress Report Q4 2017

October – December 2017

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

Amsterdam, 4 January 2018



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

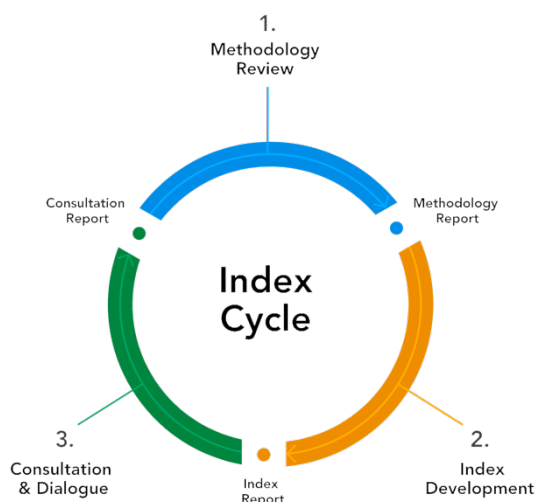
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General Project Data	
Project Name	Access to Seeds Index 2018
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1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the activities, milestones and progress in developing the Access to Seeds Index 2018 in the period October - December 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. As a 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. Progress Overview Q4 2017

This section provides an overview of activities and milestones in the period October - December 2017. The main goal of this period was finalizing the methodology development and landscaping for new regional indexes.

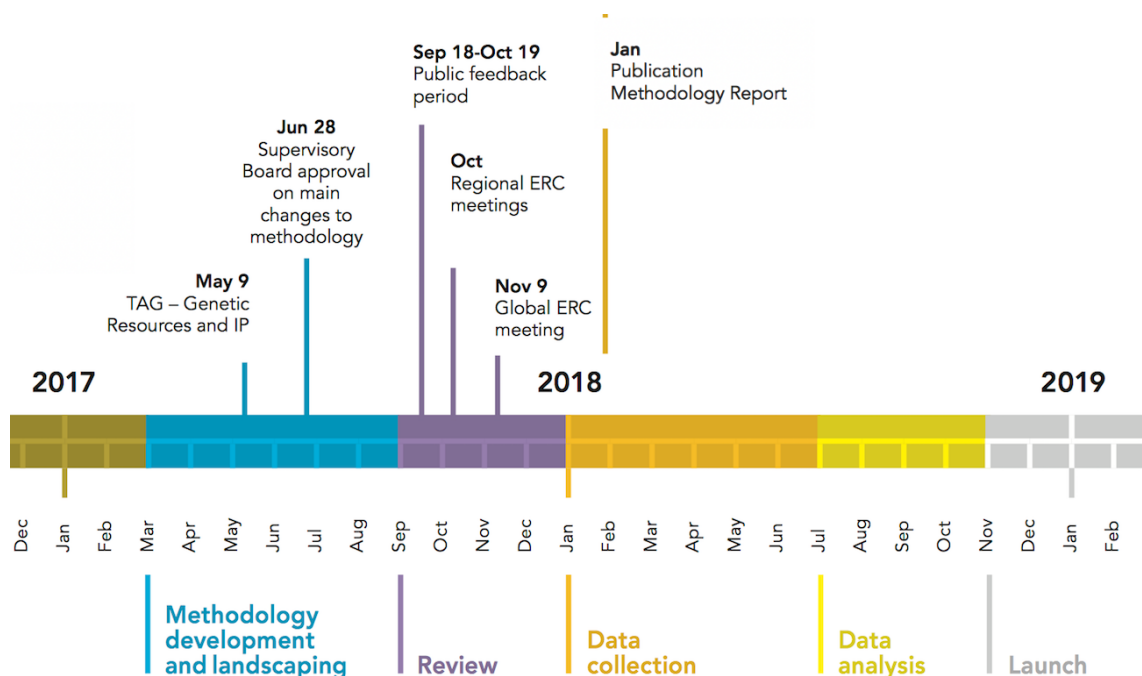


Illustration: Project timeline

1. Public consultation period completed

From 18 September to 19 October, stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on the draft methodology of the 2018 Access to Seeds Index. To this end, the start of the consultation period was announced via the quarterly newsletter, social media and direct invitations to companies, experts and stakeholders. Over 20 responses were received from seed companies, global institutions like FAO and World Bank and farmer cooperatives. Overall feedback was positive with recommendations to add or revise indicators. An overview of the feedback was discussed by the Global Expert Review Committee (ERC) at its meeting on 9 November. Some of the suggestions have been incorporated in the final methodology.

2. ERC for Western and Central Africa provided recommendations for regional index

On 10 October, the Expert Review Committee (ERC) for Western and Central Africa convened in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire to discuss the proposal to develop a regional index for that region. The outcome of the landscaping study, identifying 20 leading seed companies in the region, was presented by regional consultant Yacouba Diallo. The ERC recommended two additional validation steps before finalizing this list, which resulted in the addition of two leading seed companies. The ERC also recommended exploring whether the Access to Seeds Index could also address the role of farmer cooperatives in West and Central Africa, as they play a major role in making seeds available to smallholders in the region.

3. ERC for Eastern and Southern Africa approved revised company list

On 12 October, the Expert Review Committee (ERC) for Eastern and Southern Africa convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, to discuss the proposal to extend the geographical scope of the Regional Index for Eastern Africa towards Southern Africa. A landscaping study clarified that, from a seed industry perspective, these can be regarded as one region. The landscaping study also identified four new companies to include in the regional ranking. The ERC approved all proposals presented by regional consultant Claid Mujaju.



*Regional ERC West & Central Africa,
Abidjan, 10 October 2017*



*Regional ERC Eastern & Southern Africa,
Johannesburg, 12 October 2017*



*Regional ERC South and Southeast Asia,
Hyderabad, 24 October 2017*



*Global ERC,
Amsterdam, 9 November, 2017*

4. Index presented at World Food Prize / Borlaug Dialogue

Dow Dupont invited Executive Director Ido Verhagen to present the Access to Seeds Index at its yearly 'Seed Security for Food Security' Seminar, a side event of the Borlaug Dialogue International Symposium in Des Moines Iowa. Tim Glenn, vice president of Global Seeds for the Agriculture Division of Dow DuPont, opened the seminar stating, "you cannot adequately address a problem without accurate measurement". For this reason, Dow Dupont gave the floor to both TASAI and the Access to Seeds Index to explain how these complementary initiatives provide clarity on the role of governments and the private sector in improving access to quality seeds for smallholder farmers.

5. ERC for South and Southeast Asia approved proposals for regional index

On 24 October, the Expert Review Committee (ERC) for South and Southeast Asia convened in Hyderabad, India, to discuss the proposal to develop a regional index for that region. A landscaping study performed by regional partner Mordor Intelligence resulted in the identification of twenty leading seed companies in the region. Following recommendations by the ERC, one company was deleted from the list and four companies were added.

6. Global ERC advised positively on revised methodology

The Global Expert Review Committee convened in Amsterdam, The Netherlands on 9 November for a final discussion on the methodology for the 2018 Index. Recommendations resulting from the public consultation period and the regional ERCs were discussed. The ERC advised that the methodology was ready for final approval by the foundations' Supervisory Board.

7. Access to Seeds Index introduced to Asian seed companies at APSA Congress

Around 1,500 participants attended the annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Seed Association (APSA) in Bangkok from 13 to 17 November. The team of the Access to Seeds Index used this occasion to meet with seed companies selected for the Regional Index for South and Southeast Asia to familiarize them with the initiative.



8. Supervisory Board approves methodology and roadmap for 2018

As the final step of the methodology review process for the second Access to Seeds Index, the Supervisory Board discussed the results of all ERC meetings at its annual meeting in Amsterdam on 6 December. At this occasion, the Supervisory Board approved the methodology as well as the roadmap for 2018, which includes building up in-house research capacity for data collection and analysis.

9. Budget awarded for farmer cooperative study by AgriCord/ADF

The ERC for Western and Central Africa advised the Access to Seeds Index to explore the feasibility of including an evaluation of the role of farmer cooperatives in making quality seeds available to smallholder farmers in their region. AgriCord agreed to provide the necessary funds (received from Agence Française de Développement) to this end. This study is an addition to the original plan, which was approved by the Supervisory Board on 6 December. It underlines the guiding principle that regional indexes are tailored to the requirements of each region, and the key role regional ERCs play in providing the advice needed to do so.

4. Contribution of Activities to Objectives and Deliverables

A detailed overview of the Theory of Change, overall objectives and deliverables of the Access to Seeds Index was provided in an earlier quarterly report (Q2 2017). The overview below indicates how the activities and milestones of Q4 contribute to the overall objectives of the Access to Seeds Index.

Overall Objectives

1. Increase transparency on current strategies and activities of seed companies to improve access to seeds for smallholders and their contribution to the SDG-agenda.
2. Provide an evidence base for the conversation within and with the seed industry on how it can step up their efforts.
3. Encourage companies to increase transparency and performance of 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 relation with established global organizations.

	Overall objectives				
	Increase Transparency	Enable Dialogue	Encourage Companies	Enable Partnerships	Strengthen Foundation
Activities and Milestones Q4 2017					
Public consultation period completed					
ERC Western and Central Africa provided recommendations					
ERC Eastern and Southern Africa approved revised company list					
Index presented at World Food Prize / Borlaug Dialogue					
ERC South and Southeast Asia approved proposals for regional index					
Global ERC advised positively on revised methodology					
Index introduced to Asian seed companies at APSA Congress					
Supervisory Board approves methodology and roadmap for 2018					
Budget awarded for farmer cooperative study by AgriCord/ADF					

5. Progress Overview

This project works towards four deliverables following the Index Cycle of (1) methodology review (2) index development (3) conversation and dialogue. The four deliverables are created following the steps below. The project is currently on schedule.

The four deliverables are

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

Activity	Due date	Progress
Identify regional partners	31 March 2017	Completed
Landscaping studies finalized	30 Sept 2017	Completed
Public consultation methodology	30 October 2017	Completed
Expert Review Committee meetings	30 November 2017	Completed
Methodology finalized	31 January 2018	Approved 6 December
Design Research Process ready	31 March 2018	On track, Feb 2018
Methodology Report published	31 March 2018	On track, Jan 2018
Index Alliance created	31 May 2018	Finalized end of 2017
Publication Index Reports	31 March 2019	
Regional Roundtables	30 November 2019	
Consultation Report	31 December 2019	

6. Variation from the Original Plan

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