



Access to Seeds  
Index



# Progress Report Q2 2018

## April – June 2018

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

Amsterdam, 30 June 2018



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

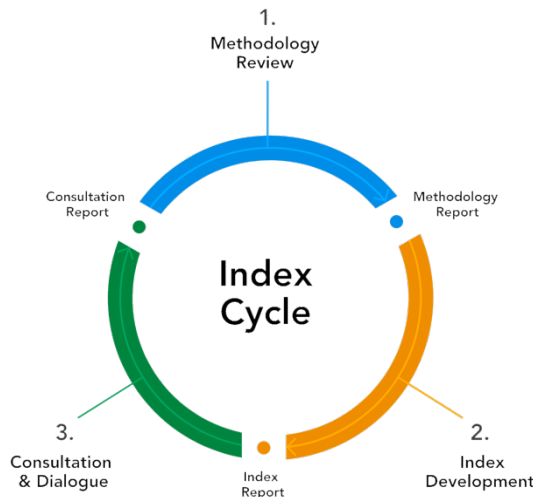
## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. About the Access to Seeds Index .....	3
3. Progress Overview Q1 2018 .....	4
4. Contribution of Activities to Objectives and Deliverables .....	5
5. Progress Overview .....	6
6. Variation from the Original Plan .....	6

<b>General Project Data</b>	
Project Name	Access to Seeds Index 2018
Grant Reference Number	4000000140
Funding Period	1 January 2017 – 31 December 2019
Organization	Access to Seeds Foundation Mauritskade 63 1092 AD Amsterdam The Netherlands
Contact Person	Ido Verhagen Executive Director Tel: +31 6 290 576 22 Email: iverhagen@accesstoseeds.org

# 1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the activities, milestones and progress in developing the Access to Seeds Index 2018 in the period April – June 2018. In this period, the first step of the Index Cycle was finalized with the publication of the Methodology Report and the second step, Index development started.



The 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 Q2 2018

This section provides an overview of activities and milestones in the period April – June 2018. The main goal of this period was finalizing the data collection for the first Index for South and Southeast Asia and for the second Global Access to Seeds Index, as well as finalizing the study on seed-producing cooperatives in Western and Central Africa.

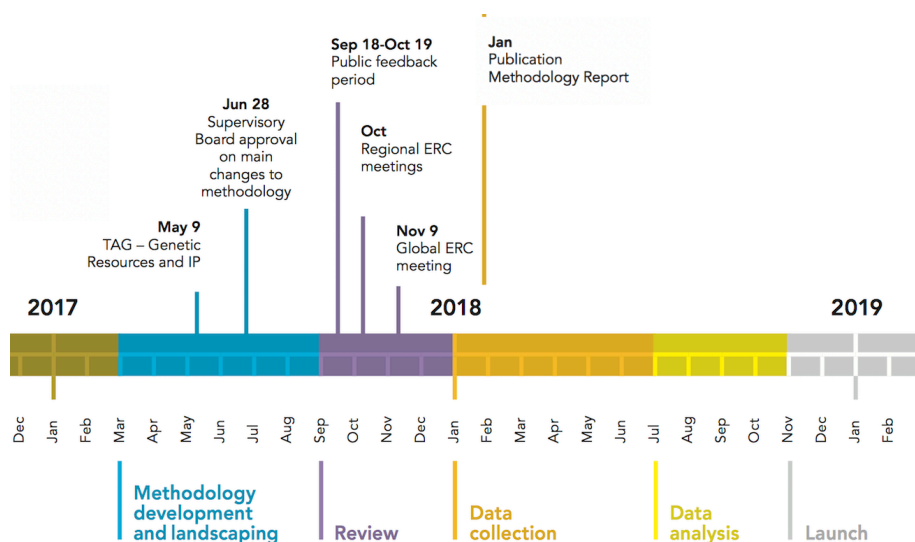


Illustration: Project timeline

#### 1. Landscaping study on seed industry in Asia published

For the selection of seed companies to include in the first Access to Seeds Index in Asia, a landscaping study performed by research agency Mordor (Hyderabad, India) evaluated 70 seed companies across 13 countries in South and Southeast Asia. This resulted in the selection of 24 companies best positioned to support the productivity of smallholder farmers. The study was published in May 2018 and shines a light on the current state of the seed industry in all countries across the region. Various media outlets in the region published the findings of the study.

#### 2. Research on seed-producing cooperatives in West & Central Africa completed

A new study by the Access to Seeds Index, made possible with the support of AgriCord and Agence Française de Développement (AFD), reviewed the activities of over 50 seed producing cooperatives in 20 countries in the region. It shows a rise of seed-producing cooperatives in nearly all countries. The study will be published in July 2019.

#### 3. Meeting Expert Review Committee for Western and Central Africa

A first draft of the cooperative study was discussed by regional experts in Accra on 17 April 2018. According to one of the experts, the study highlights ‘the indigenous power of the seed sector in Western and Central Africa.’ One of the reasons for this study was to explore the feasibility to include cooperatives in the Access to Seeds Index in the region. The experts concluded that business models of cooperatives and companies are too different to compare. They agreed that other mechanisms such as a dashboard for cooperatives could help to raise the level of seed-producing cooperatives across the region.

#### 4. Data collection Asian seed companies completed

The data collection period for the Access to Seeds Index for Asia ran from April until June 2018. A total of 24 companies have been selected for the Index. 17 companies (71%) provided data, four companies declined and three asked for extra time. For a first edition,

the participation rate of 71% is very high. This number can go up when the last three companies that asked for extra time submit their data.

#### **5. Pre-population for African seed companies started**

The data collection period for the Access to Seeds Indexes for Africa is scheduled for August until October. A total of 22 companies have been selected for the Regional Indexes for Western and Central Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa respectively. The online data platform is currently being pre-populated by analysts with publicly available information. . 17 companies (71%)

#### **6. Workshop on Food System Transformation Benchmark organized**

During the annual EAT Congress in Stockholm, the World Benchmarking Alliance and the Access to Seeds Index organized a workshop on how industry benchmarks can contribute to a transformation of the global food system, that will produce enough nutrients for all while remaining within the planetary boundaries. Various existing benchmarks, NGO's and agencies like the WorldBank participated. Responses were positive and aim is to present an approach and methodology during the 2019 EAT Forum.

#### **7. Scoring guidelines and scoring process approved**

The Supervisory Board of the Access to Seeds Foundation discussed the scoring guidelines and scoring process during its June meeting (conference call, 25 June 2018). The board approved both. The scoring process includes a role for an external auditor who will oversee the process and application of the scoring guidelines and will report to the board at its meeting in December 2018.

#### **8. Landscaping study on seed industry in Western and Central Africa published**

For the selection of seed companies to include in the first Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa, a landscaping study performed under supervision of Yacouba Diallo evaluated over 100 seed companies across 20 countries in the region. This resulted in the selection of 22 companies best positioned to support the productivity of smallholder farmers. The study was published in June 2018 and shines a light on the current state of the seed industry in all countries across the region. Various media outlets in the region published the findings of the study.

## **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 Q2 2018 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
<b>Activities and Milestones Q2 2018</b>					
Landscaping study on seed industry in Asia published					
Research on seed-producing coops in West & Central Africa completed					
Meeting Expert Review Committee for Western and Central Africa					
Data collection Asian seed companies completed					
Pre-population for African seed companies ongoing					
Workshop on Food System Transformation Benchmark organized					
Scoring guidelines and scoring process approved					
Landscaping study Western and Central Africa published					

## 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	Completed
Design Research Process ready	31 March 2018	Completed
Methodology Report published	31 March 2018	Completed
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.