

# Access to Seeds Index Evaluates Seed Companies Best Positioned to Support the Productivity of Smallholder Farmers

By Access to Seeds Index

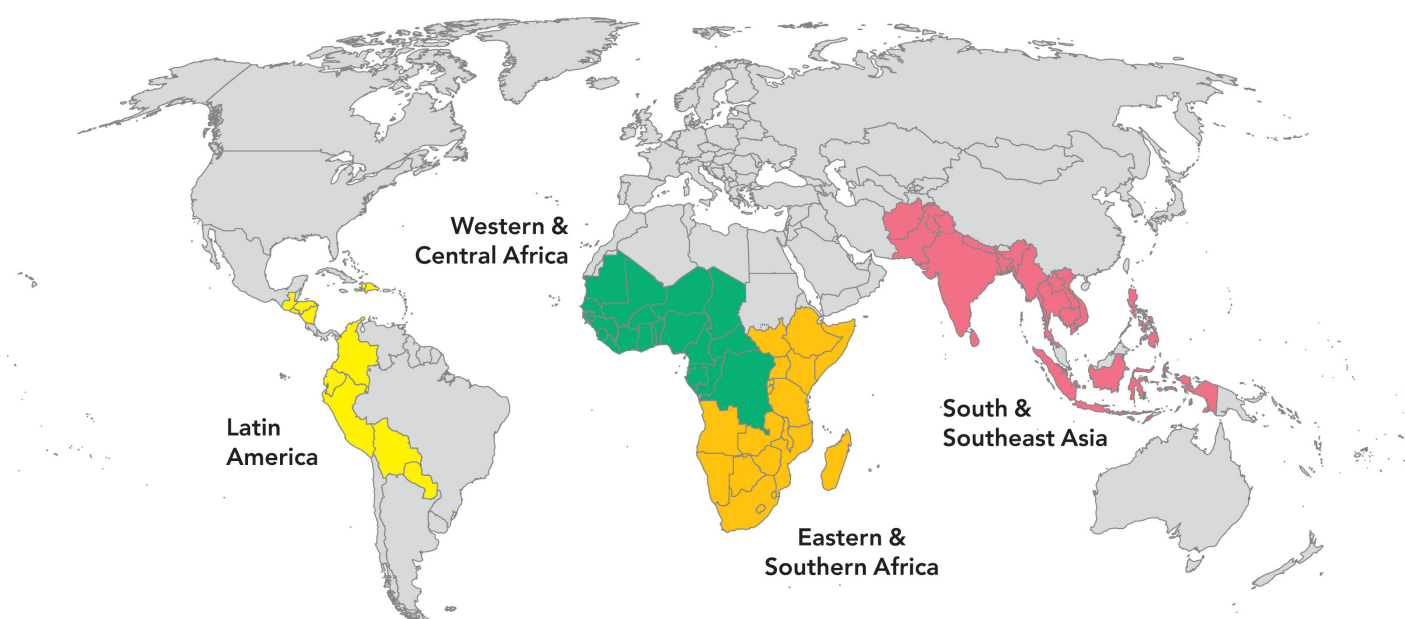
193 Member States of the United Nations have adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 which are the priorities for the world up to 2030. There are 17 SDGs in total with each goal having their own specific targets. Improving the productivity of smallholder farmers is one of the main targets on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals agenda (SDGs). "Smallholder farmers need to not only produce more food, but at the same time adapt their agricultural practices to changing weather conditions caused by climate change. By improving access to quality seeds, seed companies can

make a vital contribution in supporting smallholder farmers with overcoming this challenge," says Ido Verhagen, Executive director of the Access to Seeds Index.

The Access to Seeds Index, an initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the government of the Netherlands, aims to encourage seed companies to step up their efforts to support smallholder farmer productivity. "By benchmarking seed companies, the index gives credit to companies that show leadership and encourages others to follow their example," says Mr. Verhagen. "It also provides valuable information for governments, research institutes and

donors interested in building partnerships with seed companies." The Index is not the first index to examine the ways in which an industry can help to solve a global challenge. It is, however, the first to assess regional companies alongside their global peers.

The Index has identified four regions with (1) a food security challenge, (2) smallholder farmer presence and (3) agricultural potential: Latin America, Western and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, and South and Southeast Asia and provides for the first time a comprehensive picture of what the industry is doing in those regions.



The Index seeks to explore the possible contribution of seed companies to the six dimensions (availability, affordability, suitability, capability, profitability and autonomy) of access to seeds identified by farmers and other stakeholders. It assesses the companies' strategies, whether they handle their genetic resources and intellectual property in ways that does not limit access to seeds. Also it looks at activities in breeding, production, marketing and adoption and how they are tailored to smallholder farmers. The performance of companies is compared with each other rather than against an absolute, ideal state. As such, companies set and raise the bar.

In 2016, the first index was published which assessed the activities of global seed companies in the four regions and those of regional seed companies in Eastern Africa. It became evident that regional companies go a step further in addressing the needs of smallholder farmers than their global peers. Regional companies are active in domains generally neglected by global companies, notably breeding for local crops and marketing

varieties from public research institutes. Also, these companies demonstrated practices that go beyond their global peers in adoption strategies and inclusion of smallholder farmers in the seed value chain. The publication resulted in coverage in over 170 media outlets, new initiatives by policymakers and discussions around the globe at events hosted by organizations including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Bank and African Union.

The 2019 Index is scheduled for publication between November 2018 and April 2019. This index will more than double the number of companies assessed – from 25 to more than 60 – as regional seed companies in South and Southeast Asia and Western and Central Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa are now also part of the scope. In addition to evaluating 13 global seed companies for their business in all four regions, the Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia will evaluate 24 seed companies while the Access to Seeds Index for Eastern and Southern

Africa and the Access to Seeds Index for Western & Central Africa will evaluate the efforts of 22 leading seed companies each in respective regions. The selection of the companies was based on company business models, track record and regional presence.

To conclude, the index provides a unique insight into the seed industry's current efforts. Company scorecards enumerate the efforts at the individual company level while the rankings provide insight into leadership at both the global and regional level, including the differences and similarities in the roles global and regional companies play in reaching smallholder farmers. "Since its publication, the 2016 Index has been widely discussed with farmer organizations, seed companies and policymakers in all four index regions. Although it seems obvious that achieving food security requires ongoing cooperation and coordination between these parties, it has become clear that these are often lacking. We hope that the evidence base provided by the index will help to fill this gap" says Mr. Verhagen.

Company	Country
1 Advanta	ARE
2 Bayer	DEU
3 Bejo	NLD
4 DowDuPont	USA
5 East-West Seed	THA
6 Enza Zaden	NLD
7 Groupe Limagrain	FRA
8 KWS	DEU
9 Monsanto	USA
10 Rijk Zwaan	NLD
11 Sakata	JPN
12 Syngenta (ChemChina)	CHE
13 Takii	JPN

Company	Country
1 Capstone Seeds	ZAF
2 Darusalam Seed Co	SOM
3 Demeter Seed	MWI
4 DowDuPont	USA
5 East African Seed	KEN
6 East-West Seed	THA
7 Ethiopian Seed Enterprise	ETH
8 Equator Seed Co	UGA
9 FICA Seeds	UGA
10 Hygrotech	ZAF
11 Kenya Seed Company	KEN
12 Kenya Highland Seed	KEN
13 Klein Karoo Seed Marketing	ZAF
14 Monsanto	USA
15 NASECO	UGA
16 Pop Vriend Seeds	NLD
17 Seed Co	ZWE
18 Starke Ayres	ZAF
19 Syngenta (ChemChina)	CHE
20 Technisem	FRA
21 Victoria Seeds	UGA
22 Zamseed	ZAM

Company	Country
1 AGRIPUS	MLI
2 AINOMA	NER
3 BILOHF	CIV
4 Da-Allgreen Seeds	NGA
5 DowDuPont	USA
6 East-West Seeds	THA
7 Faso Kaba	MLI
8 GAWAL	CHN
9 Heritage Seeds	GHA
10 Maslaha Seeds	NGA
11 Monsanto	USA
12 NAFASO	BFA
13 Pop Vriend Seeds	NLD
14 Premier Seed	NGA
15 Seed Co	ZWE
16 SEDAB	SEN
17 SEMAGRI	CMR
18 Soprosa	MLI
19 Syngenta (ChemChina)	CHE
20 Technisem	FRA
21 Tropicasem	SEN
22 Value Seed	NGA

Company	Country
1 Acsen HyVeg	IND
2 Advanta	ARE
3 Bayer	DEU
4 Bioseed	IND
5 BRAC	BGD
6 Charoen Pokphand	THA
7 DowDuPont	USA
8 East-West Seed	THA
9 Groupe Limagrain	FRA
10 Kalash Seeds	IND
11 Known-You Seed	TWN
12 Lal Teer Seed	BGD
13 Mahyco	IND
14 Monsanto	USA
15 Namdhari Seeds	IND
16 National Seeds Corporation	IND
17 Nongwoo Bio	KOR
18 Nuziveedu Seeds	IND
19 Punjab Seed Corporation	PAK
20 Rallis/Metahelix	IND
21 Sakata	JPN
22 Syngenta (ChemChina)	CHE
23 Takii	JPN
24 Vinaseed	VNM