



East-West Seed

Corporate data

Headquarters: Nonthaburi, Thailand
Ownership type: Private
Group revenue (2017): USD 150,000,000
<https://www.eastwestseed.com>

Access to Seeds Index

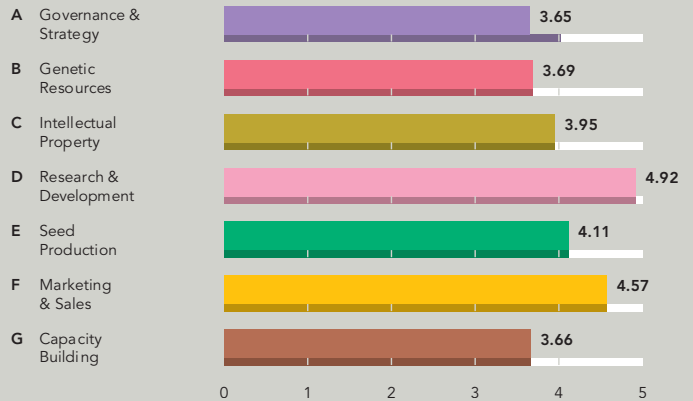
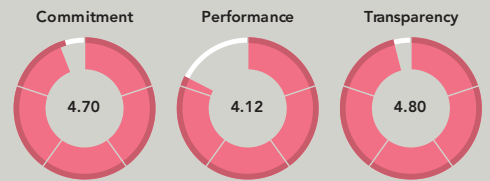
East-West Seed Company Ltd (East-West Seed) was founded in 1982 in the Philippines with a mission to improve the income of farmers through high-quality vegetable seeds. It led the 2016 Access to Seeds Global Index for vegetable seed companies as well as the Regional Index for Eastern Africa. East-West Seed's main clientele in South and Southeast Asia are smallholder farmers. Its portfolio contains a wide variety of hybrid and open-pollinated varieties; its main crops in the region are bitter melon, cucumber and hot pepper. Now headquartered in Thailand, East-West Seed has about 5,000 employees and R&D sites in six index countries.

1
rank out of 24
score 4.17

South and Southeast Asia

East-West Seed leads the South and Southeast Asia Index. It performs strongly across all measurement areas, with a variety of programs, initiatives and projects to improve access to seeds for smallholder farmers across the region. The company's business model is centered around smallholder farmers.

As such, the company has put in place a company-wide strategy and mission statement around access to seeds for smallholder farmers. It has extensive distribution channels in all countries in which it makes its entire vegetable seed portfolio available, resulting in leading scores in Marketing & Sales. In Research & Development, the company shows leadership for having a breeding program for a high number of local crops. Its high score in Seed Production can be attributed to its collaboration with smallholder farmers, who account for 95% of its production.



Leading practices

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'. The company considers 90% of its customer base to be smallholder farmers.

For many years, East-West Seed has actively supported the development of the seed sector in Myanmar. In December 2017, the company facilitated a visit by government

officials from Myanmar to the Philippines to gain insight into the seed sector development and regulatory framework there. East-West Seed also helped to establish the Myanmar Seed Association.

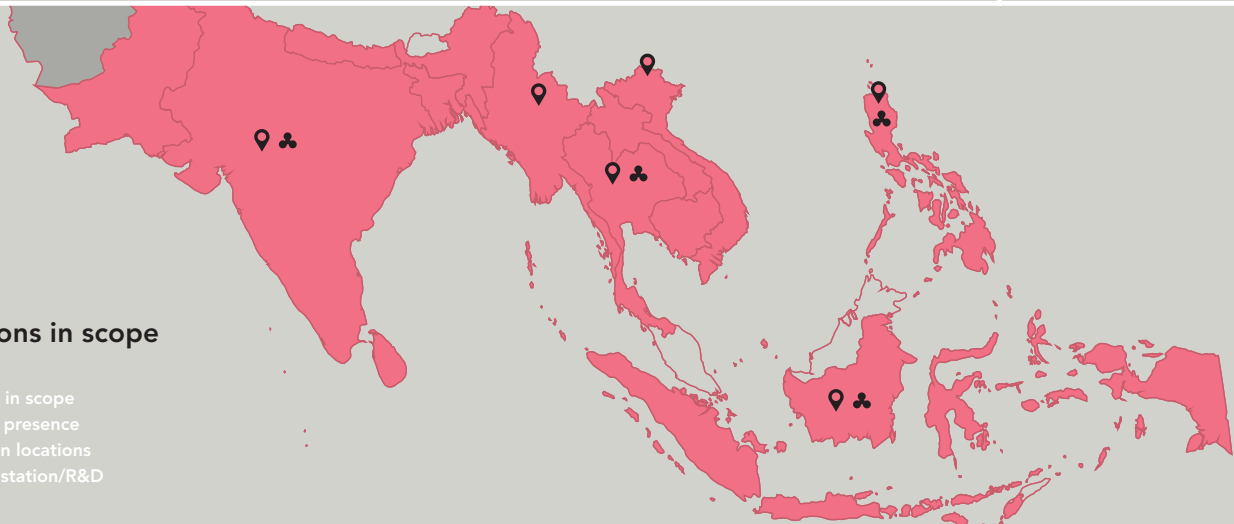
The company demonstrates leadership in public policy advocacy, participating in multi-stakeholder initiatives and engaging in public and industry dialogue that supports smallholder farmers and access to seeds. It discloses several initiatives covering many countries in South and Southeast Asia and involves senior leadership in some of these initiatives.

The company supports the Philippines' National Plant Genetic Resources Laboratory by regenerating its old germplasm collection, characterizing some accessions that have not yet been documented and conducting conservation-related research and training. The objective is to contribute to varieties specifically adapted to the needs of the region.

Smallholder farmers produce 95% of the company's seed. In addition, the company is encouraging young farmers in Indonesia to become successful seed producers.

Areas for improvement

East-West Seed can improve its positions by articulating its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and linking its business activities to specific SDGs, as well as setting measurable targets.



Operations in scope

- Countries in scope
- Company presence
- Production locations
- Breeding station/R&D

Index crops in portfolio

| | Sales | | | | | | | | | | | | | Seed type | | | Source | | |
|-------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------|-----|----|----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | AFG | BGD | KHM | IND | IDN | LAO | MMR | NPL | PAK | PHL | LKA | THA | VNM | Hybrid | OPV | GM | Own breeding program | Public research institute | Licensed from other company |
| Vegetables | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cabbage | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | | ● |
| Carrot | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | | | ● |
| Cauliflower | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | | ● |
| Cucumber | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | |
| Eggplant | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | |
| Gourd | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | |
| Green bean | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | | | ● |
| Lettuce | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | | | ● |
| Melon | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | |
| Okra | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | |
| Onion | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | ● | | |
| Pepper (hot) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | |
| Pepper (sweet) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | |
| Pumpkin | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | |
| Squash | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | | ● |
| Tomato | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | | ● | | |
| Watermelon | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | | ● | | |

Local crops in portfolio

Amaranth | Bush sitao | Choisam | Heading & leaf mustard | Kailaan | Kangkong | Mungbean | Pea eggplant | Tinda | Winged bean | Yardlong bean

Notable findings

■ East-West Seed's code of conduct, called '7 essentials', addresses various topics including anti-corruption and social and labor standards. It contains an online quiz with real-life case studies to test employees' knowledge of the code. However, there is no evidence that the code is based on external certification.

■ The company partners with Universitas Gadjah Mada in Indonesia, providing support on germplasm conservation.

■ The company's R&D efforts also focus on local crops, with a high number in its breeding program for South and Southeast Asia. The company tries to conserve and introduce rare indigenous crops on the brink of disappearance.

■ As a company focused on tropical agriculture, East-West Seed pays particular attention to regional pests and diseases in its breeding program. For instance, to fight a polerovirus attacking bitter melon in the Philippines, East-West Seed developed a hybrid with a high level of resistance to the disease.

■ With the exception of Afghanistan, the company conducts variety trials in all index countries.

■ In India, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, East-West Seed works directly with smallholder farmers in its seed production activities, formalizing farmers' involvement with contracts. In the Philippines, cooperatives set up by East-West Seed are in charge of seed production. In Indonesia, a decentralized system exists of 'key farmers' who liaise and guide smallholder farmers in seed production while taking care of postharvest treatment and payments.

■ East-West Seed puts particular emphasis on India under its No Child Labor initiative, although its child labor policy is applicable to all of its subsidiaries. The company organizes meetings and awareness campaigns in villages and schools to discuss standards and education. Audits are carried out to ensure compliance with this policy. In addition to child labor, East-West Seed has standards and monitoring systems addressing health and forced labor under its five-step 'Social compliance program in seed production'.

■ The company has established distribution channels in all index countries in South and Southeast Asia, even serving remote areas through individual 'promoters' or its foundation, Knowledge Transfer. Typically, its distribution channels are structured around agro-dealers and sub-retailers.

■ The company introduced innovative 'Go Grow' packages in Thailand and the Philippines. The packages feature instructions in the form of pictograms for illiterate farmers as well as a QR code that links to Plant Doctor Online, a website that allows farmers to obtain information to identify plant diseases and pests.

■ The company spends the equivalent of 8% of its seed sales on field demonstrations and related marketing campaigns, making this the core of its marketing strategy. In Thailand, the largest field day attracted 13,000 people in 2017.

■ The company's foundation, Knowledge Transfer, is in charge of most extension services and capacity building activities, particularly in pre-commercial areas. As an example, Knowledge Transfer established two projects in Cambodia to support young farmers: with USAID to transform the local vegetable sector, and with non-profit organization World Vision to train young farmers to become agronomic and technical experts within their cooperatives.