

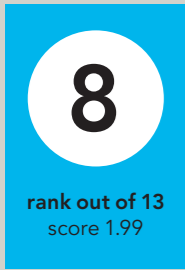
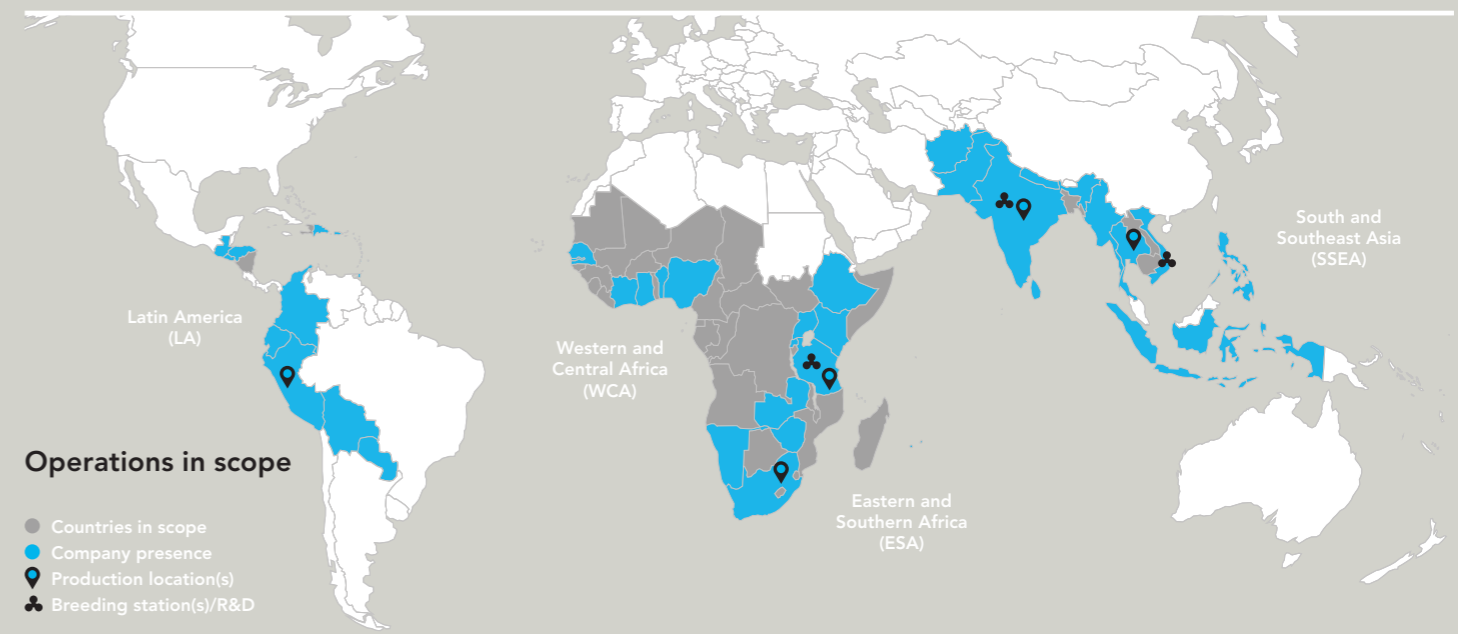


# Rijk Zwaan

Corporate data  
Headquarters: De Lier, The Netherlands  
Ownership type: Private  
Group revenue (2017): EUR 420,000,000  
www.rijkszwaan.com

Access to Seeds Index

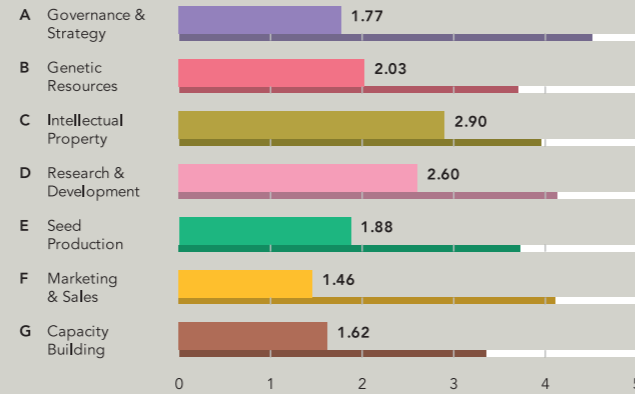
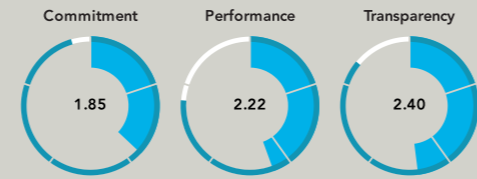
Rijk Zwaan Zaadteelt en Zaadhandel BV (Rijk Zwaan) is a family-owned vegetable breeding company founded in 1924. The company has sales offices and breeding and production facilities all over the world. Melon, tomato and lettuce are its main crops in Eastern and Southern Africa, Latin America and Western and Central Africa; lettuce, cucumber and sweet pepper are its main crops in South and Southeast Asia. Smallholder farmers constitute the company's main clientele in some markets.



## 2019 Index - Global Seed Companies

Ranking eighth in the 2019 Index, Rijk Zwaan achieves average scores in most measurement areas, including Genetic Resources and Seed Production, although it performs well in Intellectual Property and Research & Development. Afrisem, the company's breeding program in Tanzania, focuses on developing varieties

not only of index vegetables but also local vegetables and is leading in the industry. Since the 2016 Index, the company has developed a position on smallholder farmers, which is reflected in higher scores in Governance & Strategy. The company lags in Marketing & Sales, with no strategic focus on smallholder farmers.



## Operations in scope

## Index crops in portfolio

### Vegetables

- Cabbage | Carrot | Cauliflower | Cucumber | Eggplant | Green bean | Lettuce | Melon | Pepper (hot) | Pepper (sweet) | Squash | Tomato | Watermelon

## Local crops in portfolio

- African hot pepper | African kale | African eggplant

## Notable findings

- Rijk Zwaan is a partner in the Seeds of Expertise for the Vegetable Industry of Africa (SEVIA), a public-private partnership that includes East-West Seed and Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands.
- The company has breeding locations in South and Southeast Asia and Eastern and Southern Africa, where it also trains local plant breeders. Its breeding locations in Europe also cater to the needs of smallholder farmers in index regions.
- The company is developing mobile-based applications to provide information to farmers about its varieties. Farmers can then use M-PESA, a well-known mobile app to transfer money in, among others, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania, to pay for varieties prior to dispatch.
- The company actively contributes to creating a supportive enabling environment for the seed sector as a member of industry and trade associations in Guatemala, South Africa, Tanzania, India and Vietnam.
- The company strongly condemns child labor and monitors compliance with its labor standards by conducting external audits of its production locations. Further, the company states that together with other breeding companies and local partners, it engages with local communities to discourage child labor.
- Rijk Zwaan is a long-standing partner in the Amsterdam Initiative against Malnutrition (AIM), which is being implemented in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and South Africa. Through the initiative, the company shares its knowledge and expertise to transform subsistence farming in Africa into a market-oriented production system, with the aim of improving food and nutrition security.
- The company collaborates with gene banks globally and reports that it contributes to agrobiodiversity preservation by providing financial support to multiple gene banks for collecting and safeguarding genetic resources.
- The company cooperates with the industry's Anti Infringement Bureau and has agreements with local dealers to prevent the distribution of counterfeit and expired seed in index countries.
- In countries where on-farm seed saving is legal, the company states that it does not limit the practice of farm-saved seed by smallholder farmers.
- Given its strong emphasis on developing varieties suitable for the regions in which it operates and its aim to have a presence in all index regions, the company is encouraged to develop a marketing and sales policy with an explicit focus on smallholder farmers.
- The company states that it reaches 40,000 smallholder farmers through its training or extension services in index countries. However, none of these services specifically target women smallholder farmers. The company is encouraged to develop a strategy to engage this group in its programs and activities.

## Leading practices

With the aim of providing African vegetable growers with quality seed at an affordable price, Rijk Zwaan's Afrisem breeding program in Arusha, Tanzania introduced its first African eggplant varieties for the African market in 2017. In addition to developing varieties of local vegetables, such as African kale and African hot pepper, and regionally adapted tomato, the company collaborates with multiple partners in Africa to scale up its activities and access local knowledge.

## Areas for improvement

Rijk Zwaan reports that a corporate policy formulating its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals is under development. The company is encouraged to develop a policy incorporating measurable corporate targets, thereby increasing its accountability regarding its contribution to the goals.

The company states that the responsibility for policies and targets related to access to seeds for smallholder farmers in index countries is handled at a level below board level. Further, the company does not periodically report on progress toward these targets, an area in which there is clear room for improvement.