



Access to Seeds
Index



Progress Report Q3 2018

July – Sept 2018

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

Amsterdam, 28 November 2018



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

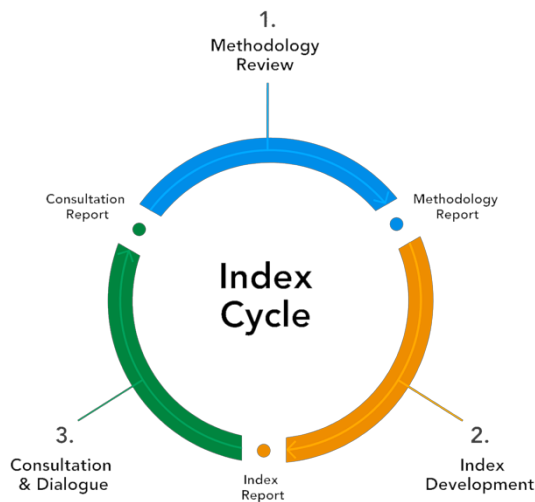
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General Project Data	
Project Name	Access to Seeds Index 2018
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Funding Period	1 January 2017 – 31 December 2019
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1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the activities, milestones and progress in developing the Access to Seeds Index 2018 in the period 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 Q3 2018

This section provides an overview of activities and milestones in the period July to September 2018. The main goal of this period was analyzing the collected data for the first Index for South and Southeast Asia and for the second Global Access to Seeds Index, and starting up data collection for the Index for Western and Central Africa.

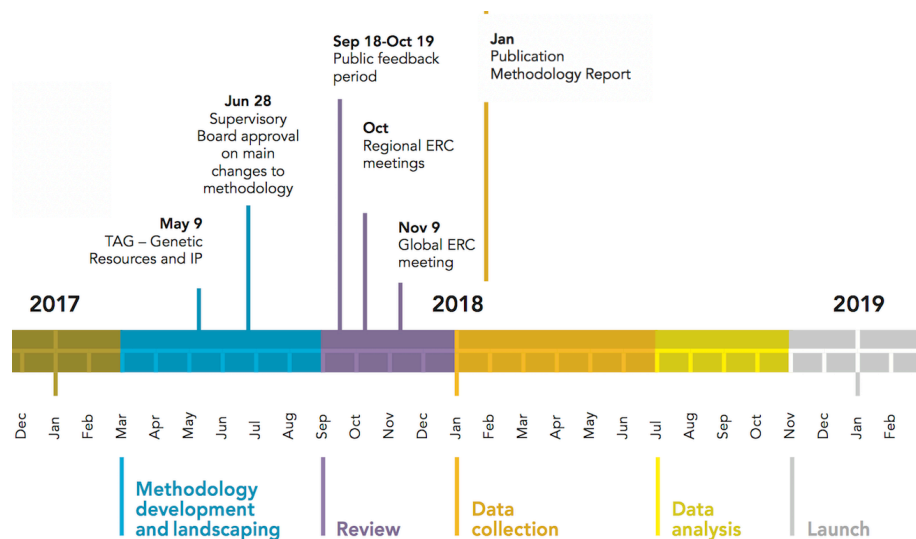


Illustration: Project timeline

1. Study seed-producing cooperatives in Western and Central Africa published

Following the consultation on the feasibility of a Regional Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa, a landscaping study was done to clarify the role of seed-producing cooperatives in Western and Central Africa. Objective of this study was to identify whether these cooperatives can be included in the Index. The study found that cooperatives play an important role in the regions seed sector, but differences between business models of cooperatives and companies would result in an unfair comparison. Other ways to measure and compare the performance of cooperatives should be explored.

2. Access to Seeds Index presented at Wageningen SDG conference

Sanne Helderma, senior research lead, presented the Access to Seeds Index in Wageningen where international guests met to discuss progress on the Zero Hunger agenda. The Access to Seeds Index participated in one of the sessions on ‘closing the yield gap in Ethiopia’ where through the insights of the Index the role of the private sector could be addressed.

3. Data collection for African indexes started

In August the online data collection platform opened for companies selected for the regional Indexes for Western and Central Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa. For each region a total of 22 seed companies have been selected following a landscaping exercise. The 2015 data collection process resulted in a 80% participation ratio. Goal is to match or exceed that number in this period.

4. Analysis Asian seed companies completed

The data collected for the South and Southeast Asia Index has been analyzed and verified. Part of the analysis step is scoring and ranking of companies. The quantitative results guide the writing of company scorecards, country profiles and key findings.

5. 1000 followers on Twitter reached

As part of the communication strategy of the Access to Seeds Index, increasing the number of followers on social media is a main priority for 2018. Social media is used as one of the channels to reach clients and employees of seed companies. They form an important lever for encouraging the conversation with and within seed companies on their role to achieve the SDGs. Apart from Twitter, the Access to Seeds Index is active on LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram.

6. Exploratory study for global food system benchmark completed

Via a temporary assignment, Niko Woytina supported Ido Verhagen, executive director in a first exploration for outlining the scope and design of the global food system benchmark. The World Benchmarking Alliance has asked Verhagen to take the lead in developing this benchmark. As part of this exploration various companies, such as Syngenta, Nestlé, and stakeholders, such as Solidaridad, EAT and WBCSD have been consulted.

7. World Benchmarking Alliance launched

The WBA was officially launched in the New York Public Library on 24 September 2018. The Access to Seeds Foundation is proud to be one of the main contributors to the development of the WBA. It has hosted the Index Initiative, one of the WBA founders as a project, provided technical support and expertise and financial backing when needed. The Access to Seeds Foundation encourages other Index initiatives to follow its example of providing active support to the WBA.

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 Q3 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
Activities and Milestones Q2 2018					
Study seed-producing cooperatives in Western and Central Africa published	■			■	
Access to Seeds Index presented at Wageningen SDG conference		■			
Data collection for African indexes started	■				
Analysis Asian seed companies completed	■				
1000 followers on Twitter reached		■	■		
Exploratory study for global food system benchmark completed					■
World Benchmarking Alliance launched				■	■

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.