



Access to Seeds  
Index

## Access to Seeds Foundation Annual Plan and Budget 2019

Discussed and approved by the Supervisory Board at its meeting of 10 December 2018

Amsterdam, 10 December 2018

# Content

Content.....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
2. Where we stand .....	4
3. Publication Access to Seeds Index 2019.....	5
4. Roundtable conferences .....	6
5. Integration into, cooperation with World Benchmarking Alliance .....	7
6. Fundraising.....	8
7. Budget 2019 .....	9
8. Informing the Supervisory Board on operational progress.....	10

# 1. Introduction

The year 2019 starts as the publication of the 2019 Access to Seeds Index is ongoing. The Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia, benchmarking the 24 leading seed companies in the region, was published in November 2018. With coverage by Reuters, Devex and over 150 national, regional and industry media outlets, the response has been overwhelming.

The other rankings that are part of the 2019 Access to Seeds Index, for global seed companies and leading companies in Eastern and Southern Africa and Western and Central Africa, will be published in January, February and March respectively. A final report scheduled for May 2019 will provide a synthesized overview of all insights gathered by the four rankings.

The second half of 2019 is dedicated to the dissemination and discussion of the findings of the 2019 Index. Presentations at several congresses are scheduled or under discussion. Also, three roundtable events will be organized to discuss the findings with farmers' organizations in each region.

Meanwhile, the integration into the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) is ongoing. Cooperation in research activities that started in 2018 will be followed by a full integration of the research staff and facilities into WBA in 2019. Also, integration of the Access to Seeds Index into the WBA Food and Agriculture benchmarks will be further explored the coming year.

Although WBA has the ambition to include smaller and regional companies in their scope in due time, the priority in the first years will be to focus on bigger - and primarily listed - companies in the food value chain. This means that the assessment of the leading global seed companies will become part of the scope of WBA but the regional seed companies will not be included in the first period.

Therefore, the Access to Seeds Foundation aims to secure funding in 2019 for a third Index Cycle (2020-2022) to maintain the regional indexes in anticipation of a complete integration into WBA in the future. Although the required budget will be reduced thanks to the synergies achieved through working together with WBA, securing the required budget will be challenging as the Gates Foundation has notified that the Access to Seeds Index does not longer fits within its funding strategy.

Continued funding by the Dutch government is also insecure as it aims to move away from funding separate index initiatives, as it prefers to channel all its corporate benchmarking support through WBA. Based on the results of fundraising efforts in 2019, the Supervisory Board will decide in December 2019 whether the Access to Seeds Foundation can continue with its regional work in South and Southeast Asia or whether it has to stop and liquidate these activities.

The four main activities for 2019 are highlighted in this report

- I. Publication of the Access to Seeds Index 2019
- II. Roundtable events
- III. Integration into, cooperation with World Benchmarking Alliance
- IV. Fundraising for third Index Cycle (2020-2022)

## 2. Where we stand

The Access to Seeds Index has grown into a unique resource on how the seed industry is supporting smallholder farmer productivity, a key target in the SDG agenda. The Access to Seeds Foundation served as an incubator for the World Benchmarking Alliance. WBA brings opportunities to increase the impact of benchmarks, but also requires rethinking of the Access to Seeds Index's positioning.

### **A unique resource on the seed industry**

- The Access to Seeds Foundation (ATSF) was set up to develop an industry benchmark to track and improve the seed industry's performance in supporting smallholder farmer productivity.
- After a preparation period (2011-2013) the Access to Seeds Foundation has facilitated two Index Cycles, resulting in the publication of two editions of the Access to Seeds Index.
- The first Access to Seed Index (2016) included an evaluation of global seed companies as well as a pilot benchmark focused on regional seed companies in Eastern Africa.
- The regional scope proved to add value. On various indicators, the smaller regional companies set an example for the whole industry; some outperformed their global peers overall.
- The 2019 edition introduced regional benchmarks for South & Southeast Asia (SSEA) and Western & Central Africa (WCA), resulting in the doubling of the number of companies (60) covered.
- In addition, regional landscaping studies have identified 100 other national seed companies as well as 50 seed-producing cooperatives in West Africa.
- This makes the Access to Seeds Index a unique resource on private actors in the seed industry and for encouraging a dialogue on how it can support achieving the SDGs.

### **Growing support and recognition**

- The launch of the Access to Seeds Index has not gone unnoticed. Actors, such as GAIN, CG institutes and other organizations interested in partnerships with seed companies, are reaching out.
- Actors in specific regions working on seed sector development (TASAI, USAID, Asian Development Bank, regional offices FAO) have also shown interest in cooperating.
- Interestingly, while global companies gave push back at the start, regional companies and cooperatives appreciate the index as a form of recognition and a platform to increase visibility.

### **New opportunities as ally of the World Benchmarking Alliance**

- In the meantime, the Access to Seeds Foundation also played a role as incubator for Index Initiative, now evolving into the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA).
- WBA brings together a great variety of organizations with the aspiration to increase the private sector's contribution towards achieving the SDGs via industry benchmarks.
- One of the main priorities of the WBA is to develop industry benchmarks that support a change of the global food system to a more sustainable system, in line with the SDG agenda.
- As an alliance, WBA aims to build upon and amplify the work done by allies such as Access to Seeds Index and Access to Nutrition Index in this domain.
- WBA will, as a start, focus on the bigger players in the food system. For the seed sector, this means the global companies with revenues over 1 billion US-dollars.
- This leaves room for the Access to Seeds Index as a dedicated spotlight on the challenge of the productivity of small farmers and the performance of regional and national seed companies.

### 3. Publication Access to Seeds Index 2019

In Q1 and Q2 the publication of the Access to Seeds Index 2019 will continue in a series, supported by a targeted media approach and social media strategy. The aim is to present each index at a relevant industry or agriculture-related event.

#### Release of results in a series

The 2019 Access to Seeds Index is published in a series. This way, the regional rankings can be published simultaneously with annual seed industry meetings such as APSA in Manila (November 2018) and AFSTA in Mombasa (March 2019). The final report will be published shortly before the ISF World Seed Congress and conversations are ongoing with ISF and companies to present the index at that occasion.

Publication	Publication date	Present at event
Access to Seeds Index – South and Southeast Asia	12 November 2018	APSA Manila (12-15 Nov)
Access to Seeds Index – Global seed companies	29 January 2019	<i>See final report</i>
Access to Seeds Index – Eastern and Southern Africa	28 February 2019	AFSTA Mombasa (5-7 Mar)
Access to Seeds Index – Western and Central Africa	2 April 2019	Under discussion with CORAF
Access to Seeds Index – Final report	27 May 2019	Under discussion: FAO Family Farming (27 May) ISF Nice (3-5 Jun) FAO Conference (24 June)

#### Targeted media approach

In cooperation with FleishmanHillard Hong Kong, a targeted media approach has been developed focusing on specific national, regional and/or global media that have an interest in the findings of that specific ranking. Media briefings are organized in each region in priority countries. For the Global ranking and the final report, dedicated attention will be given to global Tier One media as well as Dutch media. Dutch embassies and agricultural councilors in selected countries have offered support to reach out to relevant media in their respective countries.

Publication	Goal	Media briefings
ATSI South and Southeast Asia	Global media Regional media National media Industry media	Manila Bangkok New Delhi
ATSI Global Seed companies	Global media (Guardian, BBC, SciDev.net, WSJ, Reuters, FT) Dutch media (Volkskrant)	-
ATSI Eastern and Southern Africa	Global media Regional media National media Industry media	Nairobi Johannesburg
ATSI Western and Central Africa	Global media Regional media National media Industry media	Lagos Abidjan/Dakar
ATSI Final Report	Global media (Guardian, BBC, SciDev.net, WSJ, Reuters, FT) Dutch media (Volkskrant)	-

#### Social media strategy

The results of each ranking are published in so-called online longreads that provide an overview of the key findings and give easy access to dedicated company scorecards and country profiles. An ongoing 7-month social media approach will draw attention to specific findings and parts of the website. As an experiment, Facebook and Instagram are added to the approach as these are potentially effective platforms to reach seed company employees.

Social media platform	Target audience	Frequency
e-newsletter	ATSI relation database	Send out on each publication date
Twitter	Professional audience	Tweets three times a week
Facebook	Employees, general audience	Posts three times a week
Instagram	Employees, general audience	Posts three times a week

## 4. Roundtable conferences

To ensure involvement of farmers' representatives and organization in the development of the Access to Seeds Index, the Access to Seeds Foundation has worked closely together with Agriterra and AgriCord since 2013. A first farmers' roundtable was organized in Addis Ababa in 2013 which informed the methodology development of the Access to Seeds Index. In 2016, three farmers' roundtables were organized in Hanoi, Johannesburg and Ouagadougou to discuss the regional indexes with farmers from each region.

For 2019, three more farmers' roundtables are scheduled to discuss the findings of the Access to Seeds Index with farmers in each region. Until now, each roundtable has been opened by an agricultural councilor of The Netherlands in each region. The goal is to continue cooperation with Dutch embassies in 2019.

### **Additional fundraising**

The Access to Seeds Foundation has secured enough funds to organize roundtables following the model of 2016. However, the ambitions for 2019 are higher. While in 2016 the roundtable only involved farmers' organization, the 2019 ambition is to facilitate a dialogue between farmers and seed company representatives.

The goal is also to use these roundtables not only to discuss the Access to Seeds Index but also to discuss the WBA's ambitions for a food system transformation benchmark. A broader setup for roundtables would require additional out-of-pocket costs as the number of participants will be higher and may potentially require a multi-day event. For additional funds, organizations in each region (such as USAID in West Africa) are being approached. The go-no go decision for roundtables with a broadened structure is beginning in June 2019.

Roundtable conference	Global partner	Regional partners
South and Southeast Asia	AgriCord	AsiaDHHRA
Eastern and Southern Africa	AgriCord	SACAU, EAFF
Western and Central Africa	AgriCord	ROPPA, CORAF, USAID Accra

## 5. Integration into, cooperation with World Benchmarking Alliance

The Access to Seeds Foundation played a major role as an incubator for Index Initiative, now evolving into the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA). In fact, it has been the only Index Foundation that has acted on the desire of funders like the Gates Foundation and the Dutch government to create an alliance of indexes. As of the end of 2018, support staff has been integrated. In 2019, further steps to cooperate and integrate will follow.

### **Integration of research staff and facilities**

The Access to Seeds Index has developed an online data collection platform in cooperation with WBA in 2018. This platform will be used in 2019 by the WBA benchmark Seafood Stewardship Index. In March the research staff of the Access to Seeds Foundation will be transferred to WBA.

### **Integration in WBA Food System Transformation Benchmarks**

One of the main projects of WBA is to develop benchmarks that will guide industries in the food sector towards a more sustainable global food chain in line with the SDGs. The seed sector is a key industry in the global food chain and is vital to achieve multiple sustainability targets and to reduce environmental pressures.

However, in its first phase, WBA will only focus on keystone actors (bigger players) in the food value chain, meaning it will only incorporate the bigger global players in the seed sector. This means that nearly 45 regional seed companies, vital for supporting smallholder farmer productivity in Africa and Asia, will not initially be part of the scope of WBA's work.

Together with WBA, the Access to Seeds Foundation aims to develop a working model in 2019 in which relations with global seed companies are transferred to WBA, while the Access to Seeds Foundation will maintain its relations with regional companies and its regional benchmarks in the meantime, awaiting full integration of the Access to Seeds Index into the scope of WBA in the future.

### **Cooperation in fundraising**

The required budget for the third Index Cycle of the Access to Seeds Index (2020-2022) is reduced, likely around 900.000 euro on an annual basis, to maintain the regional benchmarks of the Access to Seeds Index. The Access to Seeds Foundation and WBA will align their fundraising strategies and activities. Potentially the funds needed for the Access to Seeds Foundation can be achieved by topping up budgets provided to WBA by its funders.

Cooperation area	Deadline
Support staff	Realized in 2018
Shared offices	Realized in 2018
Research staff and facilities	March 2019
Integration in Food System Transformation Benchmark	Scope and cooperation model ready in Q4 2019
Cooperation in fundraising	Start in Q1 2019

## 6. Fundraising

In 2019 the Access to Seeds Foundation needs to secure funding for a third Index Cycle to maintain the regional benchmarks while integrating the global benchmark into WBA's Food System Transformation Benchmarks. In addition, (smaller) funds need to be secured for additional out-of-pocket costs for a broadened structure to the regional roundtables.

Activity	Deadline
Finalize budget 2020-2022	February 2019
Finalize fundraising strategy and targets	February 2019
Approach potential funders	March 2019 – December 2019
Approach regional funders roundtable events	February 2019 – June 2019
Cooperation in fundraising	Start in Q1 2019

The fundraising plan will be developed in Q1 and discussed with the chair of the Supervisory Board on 15 February 2019.



## 7. Budget 2019

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has topped up the budget for 2019 with 375.000 euro to fill the gap that was left after the Gates Foundation unexpectedly informed the Access to Seeds Foundation in February 2018 that it had no intentions to provide the second installment of its funding for the second Index Cycle (as was put in prospect). Thanks to this additional budget (and the synergies realized in cooperation with the WBA) the Access to Seeds Foundation can completed all activities as planned in 2019.

<b>ACCESS TO SEEDS FOUNDATION</b>	
<b>Statement of Income and Expenses 2019</b>	<b>Budget 2019</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Grants and subsidies	920.000
Financial income	-
Exchange difference	-
<b>Total income</b>	<b>920.000</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Salaries and wages	354.290
Social security and pension contributions	62.408
Other personnel expenses	13.376
Depreciation of plant, property and equipment	3.869
Travel expenses	56.000
Financial expenses	1.000
Housing expenses	28.948
Consultancy expenses	393.199
Supplies and similar expenses	6.910
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>920.000</b>
Net Result	0
<b>Grants and subsidies</b>	
Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	775.000
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Bridge financing)	-
AgriCord	145.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>920.000</b>
<b>Grants and subsidies unsecured funds</b>	
Additional funding for broader setup three roundtables	200.000
<b>Total</b>	<b>200.000</b>

## 8. Informing the Supervisory Board on operational progress

To inform the Supervisory Board on the progress made on activities mentioned in the operational plan, the following agreements have been made at the board meeting of 10 December 2018. Two board meetings will be scheduled in 2019: in June and December.

<b>Publication Access to Seeds Index</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Discuss</b>
A. Overview of results publication (media exposure, feedback, responses)	Q1/Q2	Board 06/19
<b>Further develop Access to Seeds Index</b>		
B. Rethink the positioning of the Access to Seeds Index in relation to the World Benchmarking Alliance and the benchmarks it intends to produce	Q1/Q2	Board 06/19
C. Advance collaborations with other initiatives working on seed sector development and measuring seed sector performance	2019	Board 12/19
D. Develop a proposition for organizations interested to use data provided by the Access to Seeds Index for building partnerships	Q1/Q2	Board 06/19
E. Develop partnerships with organizations that can create a follow-up after the release of the index, increasing its impact (answering the 'Now what?' question').	2019	Board 06/19
<b>Cooperation with WBA</b>		
F. Ensure a careful transfer of current ATSF researchers to WBA per 1 March 2019	Q1	Update March
G. Develop a (contractual) working relationship between ATSF and WBA, including exchange of staff	Q1	Board 06/19
<b>Budget 2019</b>		
H. Secure funding for out-of-pocket costs for broader setup roundtable events (proposals have been submitted)	Q1/Q2	Update May
I. Inform Board by May 2019 on funding for roundtables to take go/no go decision	Q1/Q2	Update May
<b>Index Cycle 2020-22</b>		
J. Develop a detailed plan and budget for 2020-2022 cycle	Q1/Q2	Board 06/19
K. Explore support for broadening (Latin America) and deepening (coops, countries) of index scope	2019	Board 12/19
<b>Funding 2020-2022</b>		
L. Secure funding of 3,0 million euro before 1 January 2020	2019	Board 12/19
M. Develop a fundraising strategy, with propositions and targeted organizations (Jan, Feb 2019)	Q1	Board 06/19
N. Align fundraising strategy with WBA	Q1	Board 06/19