



Access to Seeds
Index



Progress Report Q4 2018

Oct – Dec 2018

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

Amsterdam, 21 December 2018



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

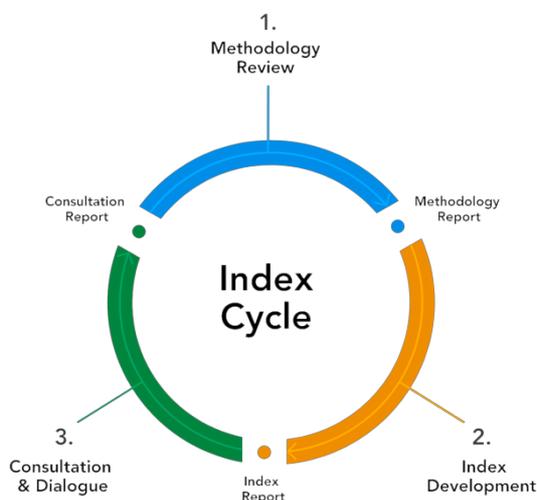
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General Project Data	
Project Name	Access to Seeds Index 2018
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Funding Period	1 January 2017 – 31 December 2019
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1. Introduction

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 Q4 2018

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

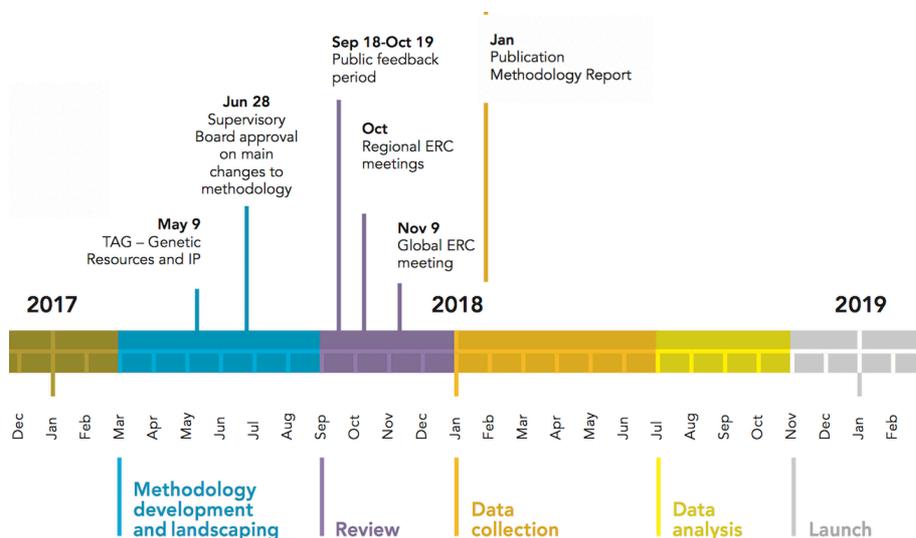


Illustration: Project timeline

1. Panel discussion seed-producing cooperatives at FAO

A panel discussion was organized at FAO during the COAG meetings on 3 October. Representatives of seed-producing cooperatives from the Niger and Nigeria were invited to share their experiences. Also representatives of CORAF and AgriCord were present to shine their light on the role of cooperatives in the West African seed sectors.

2. Company consultations at World Food Prize / Borlaug Dialogue

An excellent occasion to consult the US-based seed companies is the annual Borlaug Dialogue in Des Moines, Iowa. For the first time a representative of the Access to Seeds Index participated in this event. It resulted in new contacts with relevant organizations such as Devex and EAT Foundation.

3. Company feedback calls

Before the publication of each Index, companies are sent their scorecard for fact-checking purposes. Companies are invited to have a call with the research team to provide background on the scores and final results. With fifteen of the 24 companies (71%) a call was scheduled. Some calls resulted in companies providing additional portfolio and presence information to complete the information in the scorecards.

4. Launch of Access to Seeds Index – South and Southeast Asia

The results of the first Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia were presented at the APSA congress in Manila to an audience of seed company representatives on 15 November. A few days before the results and findings were published on a dedicated website.

5. Renewed online presentation of Index findings

Rather than publishing the results in a printed report or online pdf publication, all results and findings of the Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia have been published online. It improves the accessibility of the results and allows visitors to scan the findings or

go deeper where needed. A new addition was also profiles of countries with company presence and an overview of their seed sectors.

6. Launch strategy results in media coverage by over 150 media outlets

The media strategy guiding the launch of the first Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia resulted in over 150 publication in various online and printed outlets. Specific strategies focusing on key markets such as India, Thailand and The Philippines resulted in broad coverage in national newspapers. On a global level, publication by Reuters and Devex were picked up by various media worldwide.

7. External audit approves ranking and scoring process

Marcelo Tyszler, Senior Advisor Sustainable Economic Development at KIT Royal Tropical Institute was asked to audit the scoring and ranking process for the 2019 Index and provide a report for the Supervisory Board. Main focus of the audit was the application of the scoring guidelines and the quality of the ranking tool. The audit concluded that the process has been run according to and remained within the scope of the Supervisory Board guidance.

8. Supervisory Board appoints new chair

During its meeting on 10 December, the Supervisory Board of the Access to Seeds Foundation appointed a new chair: Ann Tutwiler, currently Director General of Bioversity International. She succeeds Arnoud Kuijpers who finished his two terms as member of the board and acting chair. Also, Anna Nijdam was appointed as new board member with specific attention for finance and governance.

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					
Panel discussion seed-producing cooperatives at FAO		■			
Company consultations at World Food Prize / Borlaug Dialogue			■		
Company feedback calls		■	■		
Launch of Access to Seeds Index – South and Southeast Asia	■	■			
Renewed online presentation of Index findings	■	■		■	
Launch strategy results in media coverage by over 150 media outlets	■	■			
External audit approves ranking and scoring process					■
Supervisory Board appoints new chair					■

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.

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.