

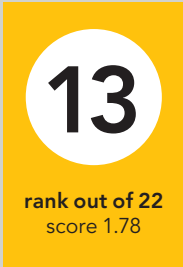


Demeter Seed

Access to Seeds Index

Corporate data
Headquarters: Lilongwe, Malawi
Ownership type: Private
Group revenue (2017): USD 3,000,000
www.demeterseed.mw

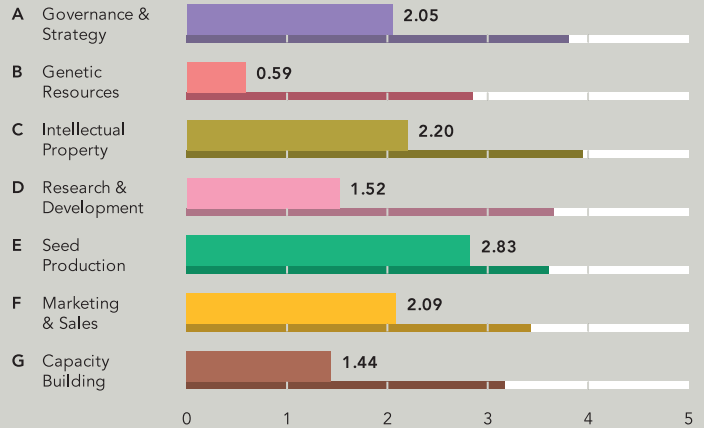
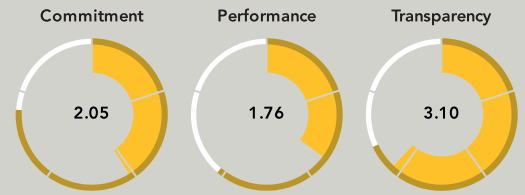
Demeter Agriculture Ltd (Demeter Seed) is a certified seed supply company established in 2004. The company is part of the Mauritius-based Meridian Group, which specializes in delivering agriculture commodities in the region. Demeter Seed focuses on dry beans, soybean and maize seed grown both on the company's farm and by outgrowers. Seed is processed, treated and packaged at the main facility before being distributed through the company's own network of outlets as well as distributors outside Malawi. Maize, dry beans and groundnut are the company's main crops in the region.



Eastern and Southern Africa

Ranking 13th in the Eastern and Southern Africa Index, Demeter Seed falls slightly since 2016 but demonstrates relative strengths in Seed Production and Marketing & Sales. Genetic Resources is the main area for improvement. In Seed Production, the

company has extensive quality management systems. Its demonstration and promotion strategies using various platforms such as advertising and conducting road shows is notable in Marketing & Sales. The company states that its policies related to commitments to Governance & Strategy, Genetic Resources, Research & Development and Capacity Building are currently under development. The company can improve its Commitment and Performance scores by publicly articulating a comprehensive policy on improving access to seeds for smallholder farmers.



Leading practices

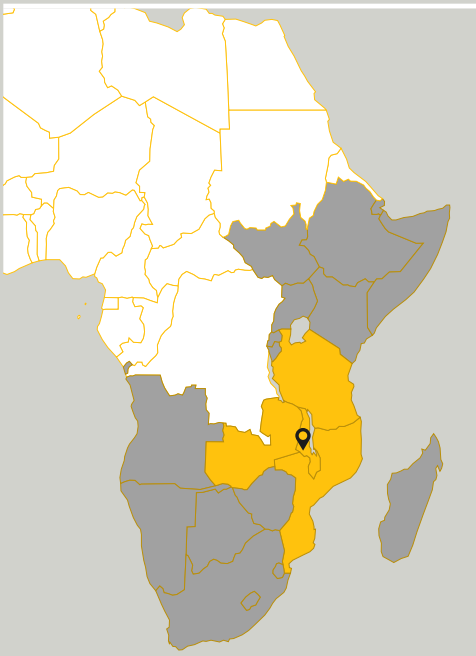
Demeter Seed, through parent company Meridian, operates a Farm Services Unit in Malawi through which 60 extension officers ('agronauts') demonstrate to smallholder customers the potential of fertilizers, adapted seed and good agricultural practices to increase profitability and productivity.

Areas for improvement

Demeter Seed assigns responsibility for setting and achieving access to seeds targets at the CEO/board level and an accompanying policy statement is currently under development. The company is encouraged to include clear access to seeds targets and a tracking mechanism in the finalized policy.

A policy statement that addresses the conservation and use of crop genetic diversity is also under development. Further, the company states that it has not supported or collaborated with public gene banks. It is encouraged to articulate a commitment regarding the conservation and use of crop genetic diversity with accompanying activities.

The company complies with Malawi's laws on labor and social standards in its seed production activities. However, it is unclear whether these laws cover aspects such as child labor, living conditions and minimum wages during seed production, both when seed production is carried out by the company itself or through a licensed third party. The company is encouraged to be transparent about the application of labor and social standards throughout its seed supply chain.



Operations in scope

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

Notable findings

- Demeter Seed states that it allows the practice of farm-saved seed for private and non-commercial use, as per the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) and Malawi Seed Act.
- The company is involved in collaborative research with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and national agricultural research systems to develop and produce suitable varieties for smallholder farmers in Malawi.
- Seed production is carried out on Demeter Seed's farms as well as through contract growers. All crops are registered with the Ministry of Agriculture for certification of the final seed produced.
- Demeter Seed is one of the five companies active in Eastern and Southern Africa that offers open-pollinated varieties for all crops in its portfolio.
- The company follows Malawi's variety release and registration process, which is aligned with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Further, the company states that it is fully committed to the International Seed Testing Association standard for maintaining the quality and safety of varieties and seed.
- The company participates in the Farm Input Subsidy Program, a Malawian government scheme that provides subsidized maize and legume seed and fertilizer to farmers. Through the program, smallholder farmers receive coupons that can be redeemed at agro-dealers. The company is involved in the supply of certified maize and legume seed and states that it makes its seed available to nearly 900 agro-input shops countrywide to ensure seed availability.
- Demeter Seed distributes its seed through Farmers World, Agora and other selected agro-dealers. The company offers its agro-dealers technical support and promotions through advertising, road shows, leaflets, dealer signs and field days. Using this approach, the company has built an extensive seed distribution network that also includes shop outlets and small local dealers in order to reach remote locations in Malawi.

Portfolio information

Index crops in portfolio	Sales				Seed type			Source		
	MWI	MOZ	TZA	ZMB	Hybrid	OPV	GM	Own breeding program	Public research institute	Licensed from other company
Field crops										
Beans, dry	●	●	●	●		●			●	
Cowpea	●					●			●	
Groundnut	●					●			●	
Maize	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	
Pigeon pea	●					●			●	
Soybean	●					●			●	
Vegetables										
Cabbage	●					●			●	
Carrot	●					●			●	
Eggplant	●					●			●	
Onion	●					●			●	
Tomato	●					●			●	

Angola (AGO), Botswana (BWA), Burundi (BDI), Eswatini (SWZ), Ethiopia (ETH), Kenya (KEN), Lesotho (LSO), Madagascar (MDG), Malawi (MWI), Mozambique (MOZ), Namibia (NAM), Rwanda (RWA), Somalia (SOM), South Africa (ZAF), South Sudan (SSD), Tanzania (TZA), Uganda (UGA), Zambia (ZMB), Zimbabwe (ZWE)