



# Victoria Seeds

**Corporate data**  
Headquarters: Kampala, Uganda  
Ownership type: Private  
Group revenue (2017): N/A  
[www.victoriaseeds.com](http://www.victoriaseeds.com)

Access to Seeds  
Index

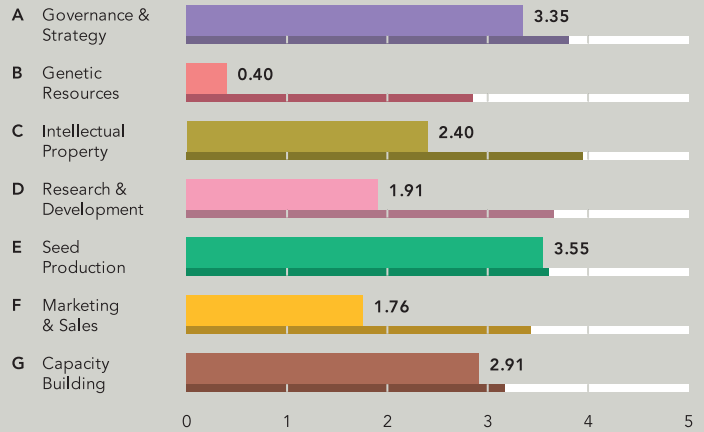
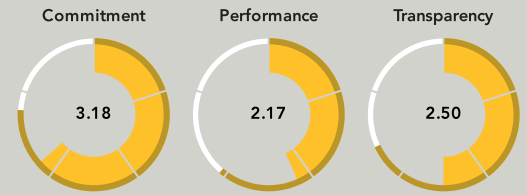
Victoria Seeds Ltd (Victoria Seeds) was founded in 2004 in Uganda. The company sells hybrid and open-pollinated varieties of field crops and vegetables as well as crop protection products, in its home market of Uganda. It markets predominantly maize seed in Rwanda and South Sudan. In 2016, Victoria Seeds discontinued its breeding programs in Uganda. It operates three processing plants with an annual capacity of 10,000 metric tons of seed. The company has a core mission to empower women farmers.

**6**  
rank out of 22  
score 2.29

## Eastern and Southern Africa

Victoria Seeds ranks sixth in the Eastern and Southern Africa Index, four places lower than in 2016. Since the previous index, the company has scaled back its breeding activities and now offers only maize and rice as crops outside its home market, Uganda, which is reflected in lower scores in both

Research & Development and Marketing & Sales. The company performs well in Governance & Strategy, where its corporate commitment to women smallholder empowerment references Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (Gender Equality) and remains a clear leader among its regional peers. It performs best in Seed Production, thanks to a corporate policy to engage smallholder farmers and the provision of comprehensive and protective contracts. The company's commitment to women smallholder empowerment extends to Capacity Building, where it reports achieving a 70% female inclusivity rate within its extension services. Victoria Seeds' lowest score, in Genetic Resources, is attributable to its lack of demonstrable activities related to conservation and benefit-sharing.



## Leading practices

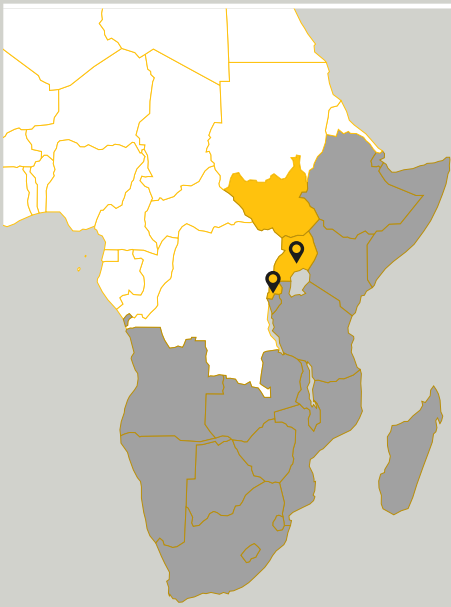
Victoria Seeds demonstrates a leading focus on women smallholder empowerment, referencing SDG 5 in its mission to guarantee Ugandan women farmers market access and providing training to transform them from subsistence to commercial farmers. The company reports that 70% of the smallholders it reaches through capacity building are women. It furthered its gender mainstreaming policy by committing to recruit at least 50% women farmers within its seed production chain, which involves over 1,000 farmers annually.

Within its seed production activities, the company engages smallholders and offers extensive contracts. The contracts contain price arrangements and protect the farmer in the event of natural disaster or a lack of technical support on behalf of the company, with the company stating that it does not request repayment in such cases.

## Areas for improvement

Victoria Seeds acknowledged a lapse in its quality assurance mechanisms in a 2017 press release. In response to accusations of supplying rotten sorghum seed, the company stated that it had procured 1,000kg of seed from an authorized agent to cover end-of-season shortages in the Gulu district. Without verifying the quality of the seed at the point of purchase or on arrival at the branch office, government officials discovered the substandard lot upon delivery. The company is encouraged to implement a more rigorous and robust quality assurance system to reduce the risk of similar occurrences in the future.

The company gains credit for its transparent reporting on its mission of women smallholder empowerment. However, it can improve its overall Transparency score by disclosing information related to other key criteria for access to seeds, particularly its activities in Genetic Resources and its stance on Intellectual Property.



## Operations in scope

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

## Notable findings

■ The company's managing director, through the Ugandan Seed Trade Association, advocated fast tracking a national seed policy to promote a better enabling environment and a more robust seed system.

■ In 2017, Victoria Seeds became the first seed company identified as an implementing partner for the third Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, a government-driven initiative to improve the income and food security of communities affected by the civil war, which ended in 2007. The memorandum of understanding includes a mandate that at least 50% of farmers trained are women, with the company providing seed technology, extension support and access to output markets.

■ Victoria Seeds promotes a standard seed price in all sales outlets for smallholders across Uganda, typically 10%-20% lower than for larger commercial farmers, and ensures that the company meets the delivery cost.

■ Since the 2016 Index, Victoria Seeds' maize breeding program has been discontinued. Instead, the company relies on varieties from the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMY), with AATF varieties well adapted to the Ugandan market thanks to their high striga resistance. The company has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Rwandan Agricultural Board to identify appropriate maize varieties.

■ The company uses farmer field days to receive local feedback on key attributes for smallholder farmers, resulting in the uptake of yellow maize following specific farmer interest. It also uses feedback from women smallholders to determine nutritional aspects of new varieties, such as fortified maize with high levels of vitamin A.

■ The company uses mobile shops/tuk-tuks to deliver certified seed to 42 northern districts in Uganda, specifically targeting remote villages with accessibility issues.

■ The company tailors its packaging for each market, including local languages Kinyarwanda in Rwanda and Luganda in Uganda.

■ Victoria Seeds promotes the adoption of rhizobia (an inoculant) to increase crop yields for soybean farmers. While most farmers intercrop with maize, the use of rhizobia improves fertility for sustainable land use, particularly when considering fertilizer affordability issues for smallholder farmers.

■ The company aims to tackle the issue of counterfeit seed by importing packaging materials from India to increase the difficulty of duplication.

■ Victoria Seeds collaborates with agritech company Akorion to promote its seed and crop protection products on the company's EZY AGRIC mobile app. The app also includes extension information related to agronomic practices and advice on major regional pests, particularly fall armyworm.

## Portfolio information

### Index crops in portfolio

	Sales			Seed type			Source		
	RWA	SSD	UGA	Hybrid	OPV	GM	Own breeding program	Public research institute	Licensed from other company
<b>Field crops</b>									
Beans, dry			●					●	
Cowpea			●		●			●	
Groundnut			●		●			●	
Maize	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Millets			●		●			●	
Rice, paddy	●		●		●			●	
Sorghum			●		●			●	
Soybean			●		●			●	
<b>Vegetables</b>									
Cabbage			●	●	●				●
Carrot			●		●				●
Cauliflower			●		●				●
Cucumber			●	●	●				●
Eggplant			●	●	●			●	●
Green bean			●		●				●
Lettuce			●		●				●
Melon			●	●	●				●
Okra			●		●			●	
Onion			●		●			●	●
Pepper (hot)			●		●				●
Pepper (sweet)			●		●				●
Pumpkin			●	●	●				●
Squash			●		●				●
Tomato			●	●	●			●	●
Watermelon			●	●	●			●	●

## Local crops in portfolio

Amaranth

African eggplant

Hairy nightshade

Jew's mallow

Spider plant

- 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)