

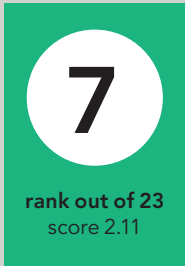


Seed Co

Access to Seeds Index

Corporate data
Headquarters: Johannesburg, South Africa
Ownership type: Listed
Group revenue (2017): USD 135,000,000
www.seedcogroup.com

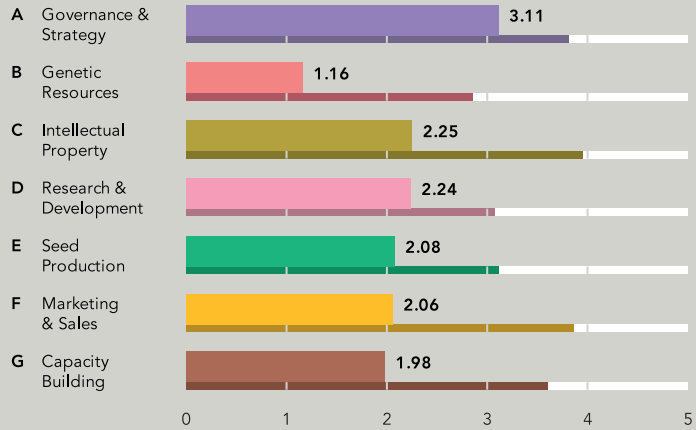
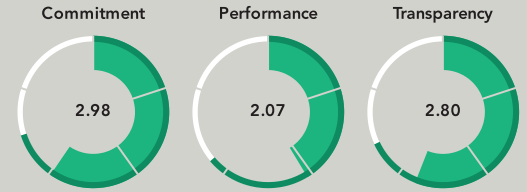
Seed Co Ltd (Seed Co) was founded in 1940 as the Seed Maize Association (SMA) of Zimbabwe. In 1983, SMA merged with Crop Seeds Association to form Seed Co and has since grown to have a presence throughout Africa. The company breeds, produces and markets hybrid field crops. As of 2017, Limagrain owns a 30.2% share in Seed Co. In collaboration with HM Clause, a business unit of Limagrain, Seed Co breeds and distributes vegetable seeds under the brand Prime Seed. Originating in Zimbabwe, the company recently moved its headquarters to South Africa. It has extensive operations in Eastern and Southern Africa and is expanding in Western and Central Africa.



Western and Central Africa

Seed Co ranks seventh in the 2019 Index for Western and Central Africa. The company has a wide distribution network and various testing locations in the region. It performs strongly in Governance & Strategy, having invested in extension services operating in tandem with demonstration plots in

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Ghana. With regards to Capacity Building and Research & Development, Seed Co bases most of its activities in Ghana. Overall, it is evident that the company is expanding its scope in the region, and it can broaden and extend its activities and reach across all measurement areas in all countries it is active.



Leading practices

Seed Co has a target to reach 40 million smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa by 2025. It also tracks its progress toward this target and shows the methods it uses to reach smallholders as customers. Moreover, it has a nascent, internal sustainability strategy linking its breeding, capacity building and sales activities to several specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDGs 2 (Zero Hunger), 5 (Gender Equality), 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land).

The company has developed a wide distribution network across the region tailored to reaching smallholder farmers. It uses village-based sales agents, ambassador farmers and bike field officers to reach remote areas, and promotes the concept of buying groups to enable farmers to obtain seed at more favorable prices. The company further tailors its maize packaging with pictograms of various animals (Rabbit, Monkey, Zebra, Lion, Elephant and Giraffe) to visually demonstrate variable maturity ranges. This helps illiterate smallholder farmers recognize relevant varieties.

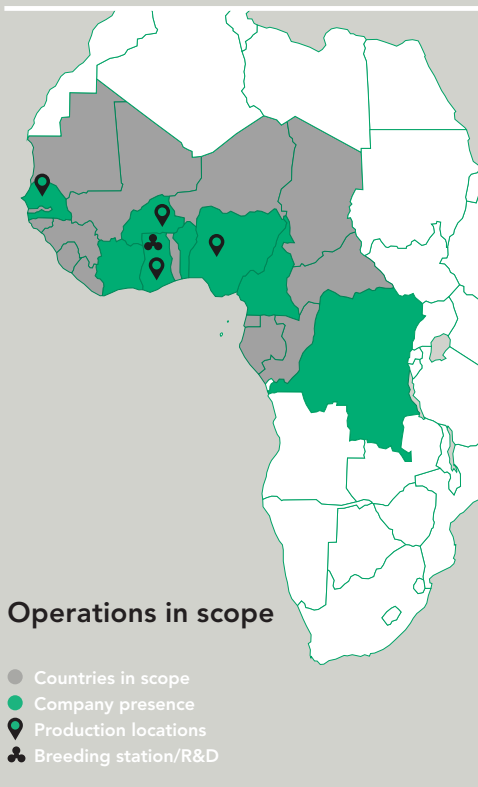
Areas for improvement

Seed Co is a member of seed trade associations in Ghana and Nigeria. While the company contributes to policy harmonization through the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and plays an active role in the African Seed Trade Association, it is encouraged to build on these experiences and leverage them throughout Western and Central Africa.

Through its country offices, the company is engaged in policy discussions around access and benefit-sharing. It is also encouraged to engage in policy development and activities for improving genetic conservation and use in Western and Central Africa.

The company has improved public disclosure of its activities significantly since the 2016 Index. Building on its stated aim to become more transparent, the company is encouraged to improve its transparency around policies and company positions on issues pertaining to intellectual property protection of its seed products.

The company is encouraged to clarify how it enforces social and labor standards within its seed supply chain and how quality management in all its seed production activities is maintained.



Operations in scope

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

Notable findings

- Seed Co uses financial and non-financial resources to improve access to seeds for smallholder farmers, demonstrating a corporate-wide commitment. The company states that it is investing resources in demonstration plots in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Ghana.
- The company does not use contracts or other mechanisms to prevent further breeding of its varieties, nor does it prohibit the practice of farm-saved seed by smallholder farmers.
- The company has variety testing locations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Nigeria and a breeding location in Ghana.
- In Ghana, women constitute 50% of the smallholder farmers participating in promotional and awareness-raising activities such as field days hosted on the company's demonstration plots.
- The company is collaborating with insurance institutions such as the Ghana Agricultural Insurance Programme and other relevant partners in the region to encourage smallholder farmers to insure their crops, in addition to negotiating with banks in Ghana to provide credit to smallholder farmers.
- The company supports next-generation farmers by involving young people in agronomic training on its demonstration fields. It also partners with MBC Africa, an regionally operating NGO based in Ghana with a mission to equip African entrepreneurs with the business solutions and support services, to offer agribusiness training to youth.

Portfolio information

Index crops in portfolio

Field crops	Vegetables
Beans, dry	Cabbage
Cowpea	Cucumber
Groundnut	Eggplant
Maize	Green bean
Soybean	Green pea
Wheat	Lettuce
	Melon
	Okra
	Onion
	Pepper (hot)
	Pepper (sweet)
	Squash
	Tomato
	Watermelon