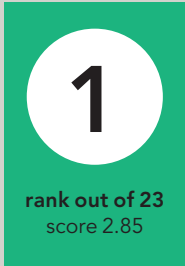




# Value Seeds

**Corporate data**  
Headquarters: Zaria, Nigeria  
Ownership type: Listed  
Group revenue (2017): USD 3,280,251  
[www.valuseedsltd.com](http://www.valuseedsltd.com)

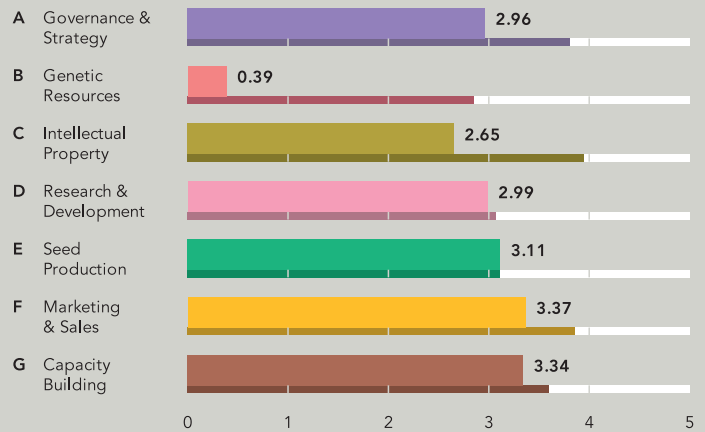
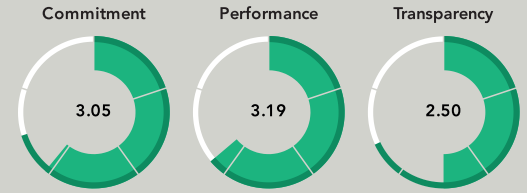
Value Seeds Ltd (Value Seeds) is a field crop and vegetable seed company incorporated in 2009. Grant-based support from Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa in 2014 enabled the company to intensify its outreach to smallholder farmers and to develop 'value kits' for maize and rice, all-in-one input packages for farmers. Active only in its home market Nigeria, the company primarily engages in seed production and distribution but it is increasingly focusing on research and development. The company's portfolio mainly consists of open-pollinated varieties, while offering hybrid varieties for a few crops, including maize. Its main crops are maize, rice and soybean. The company partners with multiple international and national organizations in research and development.



## Western and Central Africa

Value Seeds tops the ranking for the 2019 Index for Western and Central Africa. With robust programs across all measurement areas, the company's collaborations with national and international non-governmental entities, governments and investors

have enhanced its capacities and offerings. The company has a wide distribution network in Nigeria, the only country where it is active. Its collaboration with the Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn, funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), has provided inputs and technical assistance to over 4,867 women smallholder farmers and youth, resulting in notable scores in Capacity Building. Value Seeds is one of the few index companies to provide linkages to output markets for smallholder farmers, by aligning with feed and rice mills, food processors and poultry farms, among others. The company also aims to reach 10 million smallholder farmers by 2035, a target reflected in its Governance & Strategy score. Similarly, Value Seeds demonstrates a high level of transparency compared to its regional peers. Although it is currently developing improved varieties of maize, the company can enhance its activities in Research & Development, broadening the scope of crops in its pipeline and develop activities related to the conservation and use of Genetic Resources.



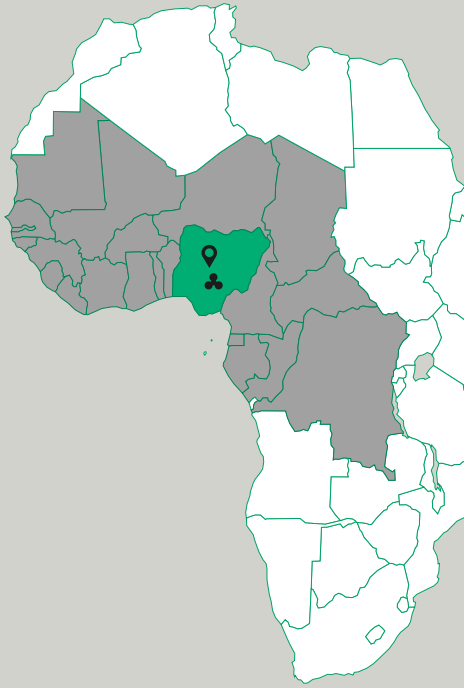
## Leading practices

- Building on its growth since its incorporation, Value Seeds aims to reach 10 million smallholder farmers by 2035, bridging the gap to this customer group through innovative technologies and by making seed more readily available to its target communities.
- The company services remote areas by distributing seed at village markets, placing mini kiosks in rural farming communities and collaborating with agro-dealers, farmer groups and governmental and non-governmental organizations. Further, the company distributes seed directly to farmers during visits to rural markets.
- The company includes pictograms on its seed packages to accommodate illiterate smallholder farmers. Further, the company offers 'value kits' for maize and rice. These include all the inputs farmers need for crop production on a quarter hectare of farmland, facilitating adoption of high-yielding varieties, notably by women and next-generation smallholder farmers looking to grow crops for sale.

- With the Partnership to Engage, Reform and Learn (PERL-ARC), funded by DFID, the company provides agricultural inputs and technical advice for women and next-generation smallholder farmers to help improve productivity and sustainable use of inputs.
- The company's subsidiary, Manoma Integrated Links Ltd, offers extension services to smallholder farmers, which include agronomic and crop protection advice. So far, 10,000 smallholders have been reached, 2,900 of them women.

## Areas for improvement

- While the company has an in-house code of conduct that covers policies on anti-corruption, and social and labor standards, it is encouraged to also include the company's stance on lobbying activities, and consider further aligning its policies with external standards or certification, and include regular training and monitoring of compliance. Value Seeds is further encouraged to make its codes of business conduct publicly available.
- Building on its recently started breeding efforts, the company is encouraged to introduce commitments and activities that support genetic conservation and use, for example in its home country Nigeria. It is further encouraged to develop a track and trace system for the genetic resources it uses in its breeding program.



## Operations in scope

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

## Notable findings

Value Seeds is a member of the Technical Committee of the Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria, which steers the activities of seed companies in the country. The company states that it is responsible for advocacy activities with key partners and governments on behalf of the association.

The company refrains from using contractual clauses or other provisions to prohibit the use of commercial genetic material for further breeding, and mechanisms that prevent the practice of farm-saved seed by smallholder farmers.

The company tailors its pricing schemes in Nigeria by offering first-time customer pricing discounts as an initial outreach strategy to help smallholders to adopt improved seed, in addition to offering various other discounts on its products.

The company works with the following research institutes from which it obtains varieties, which it subsequently multiplies for sale: AfricaRice, the national Institute for Agricultural Research, the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the National Cereals Research Institute (NCRI). The company collaborates with IITA and CIMMYT to develop maize that is resistant to fall armyworm, a significant pest specific in the region. The company has set up a breeding program to develop improved maize varieties for the Nigerian market.

The company partners with IITA and HarvestPlus on improving nutrition-sensitive agriculture by developing and commercializing provitamin A and quality protein maize varieties in Nigeria.

Value Seeds states that it elicits feedback from smallholder farmers, including women, to better tailor its varieties to the needs of specific customer groups. As such, smallholder farmers are engaged in the company's variety trials.

The company collaborates with smallholder farmer groups as well as large-scale farms (so-called Asma farms), local seed growers (such as Abhal Ltd) and farmer organizations (like the cooperative Ummusa Agro) on seed multiplication and production.

The company has a seed testing laboratory where seed is tested to ensure purity, germination capacity level, vigor and viability. The percentage benchmark for acceptability is 98%. These percentages are written on the company's and the National Seed Council's tags that are inserted in the packaging.

The company provides input loans to women smallholder and next-generation farmers, and allows farmers to pay back the loan in the form of harvested produce.

Value Seeds reports that in the last five years it has witnessed increasing changes in climate conditions, making it increasingly difficult for farmers to predict weather during the growing season. Through its partnership with CIMMYT, IITA and AfricaRice, the company reports facilitating the commercialization of drought- and flood-tolerant crop varieties alongside early and extra early varieties to provide resilience to early droughts. The company also aims to support farmers in dealing with climate change through improved farmer practices.

In collaboration with AfricaRice, Value Seeds uses the RiceAdvice app to collate information on rice-focused farming projects. RiceAdvice is a bilingual (French and English) Android app that advises rice farmers how to increase their production based on local conditions. Depending on the location, environmental conditions, rotation, cropping practices, expected sowing dates, available on-farm nutrients, desired yield increase, cost of fertilizer and expected rice market price, the app can help farmers maximize yields and/or profits and get assistance with linking to output markets.

## Portfolio information

Index crops in portfolio	Seed type			Source		
	Hybrid	OPV	GM	Own breeding program	Public research institute	Licensed from other company
<b>Field crops</b>						
Cowpea		●			●	
Maize	●	●			●	
Millet		●			●	
Rice, paddy		●			●	
Sorghum		●			●	
Soybean		●			●	
Wheat		●			●	
<b>Vegetables</b>						
Cabbage	●					●
Carrot		●				●
Cucumber		●				●
Lettuce		●				●
Okra		●				●
Onion		●				●
Pepper (hot)		●				●
Pepper (sweet)		●				●
Tomato	●	●				●
Watermelon		●				●

## Local crops in portfolio

Amaranth | Cassava