



Access to Seeds  
Index



# Progress Report Q1 2019

Jan – Mar 2019

This report provides an overview of the activities, milestones and progress in developing the Access to Seeds Index 2019 in the period January – March 2019.

Amsterdam, 30 June 2019



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

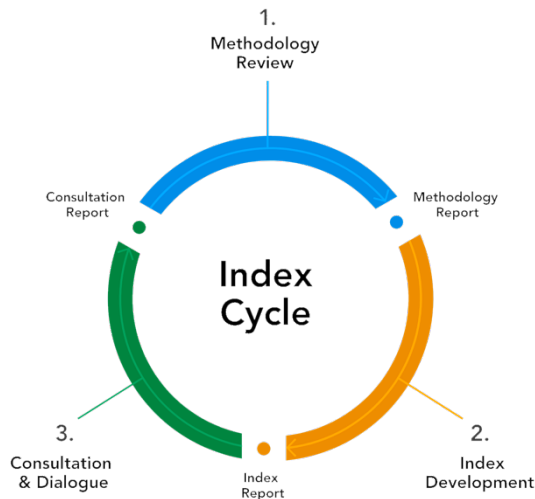
## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. About the Access to Seeds Index .....	3
3. Progress Overview Q1 2019.....	4
4. Contribution of Activities to Objectives and Deliverables .....	5
5. Progress Overview .....	6
6. Variation from the Original Plan.....	6

<b>General Project Data</b>	
Project Name	Access to Seeds Index 2018
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Organization	Access to Seeds Foundation Mauritskade 63 1092 AD Amsterdam The Netherlands
Contact Person	Ido Verhagen Executive Director Tel: +31 6 290 576 22 Email: iverhagen@accesstoseeds.org

# 1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the activities, milestones and progress in developing the Access to Seeds Index 2018 in the period January – March 2019. In this period, the second step of the Index Cycle was finalized with the publication of the Access to Seeds Index for Global Companies, for Eastern and Southern Africa and Western and Central Africa.



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.

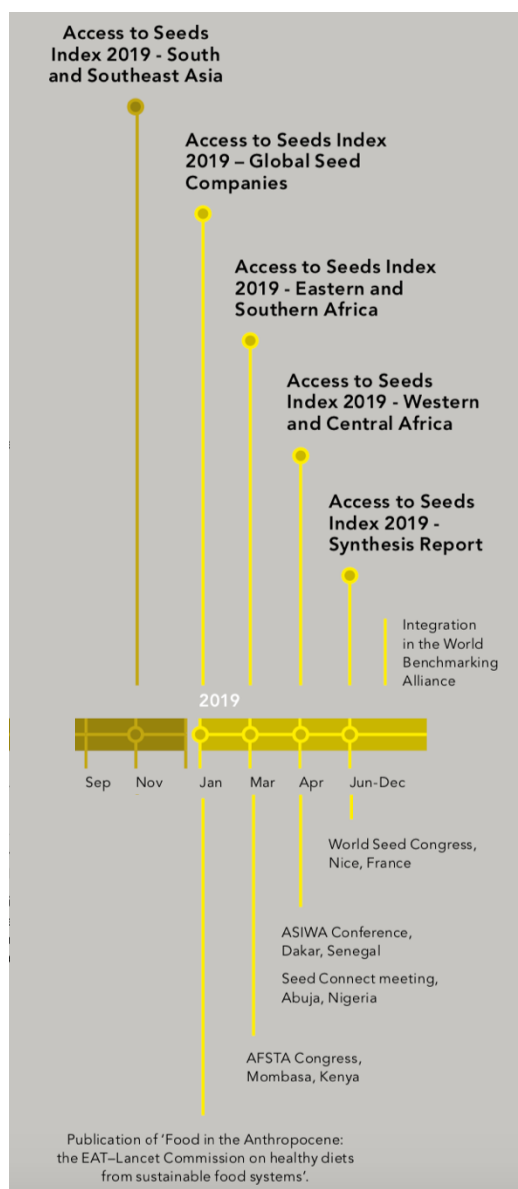
Private sector engagement is at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015. By creating a better understanding of the seed industry's performance, the index aims to contribute to the achievement of these goals.

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 Q1 2019



This section provides an overview of activities and milestones in the period January to March 2019. The main goal of this period was publishing the Access to Seeds Index for Global Seed Companies, and the Indexes for Eastern and Southern Africa and Western and Central Africa.

#### 1. Access to Seeds Index for Global Seed Companies

On 25 January the second edition of the Access to Seeds Index for Global Seed Companies was published. Contrary to the 2016 Index, this was a combined list of field crop companies and vegetable seed companies. For the second time, East-West Seed from Thailand topped the ranking.

#### 2. Access to Seeds Index for Eastern and Southern Africa

On Monday 4 March the Senior Research Lead Sanne Helderma presented the 2019 Access to Seeds Index at the Stanley Hotel in Nairobi. The Kenyan company East African Seed ranked first, just before Seed Co from Zimbabwe. Mr. Jitu Shah, CEO of East African Seed also addressed the press at the presentation.

#### 3. Recognition by FoodTank

In March 2019, Food Tank published a list “recognising 23 inspiring individuals who are working tirelessly to fix the food system.” Executive Director Ido Verhagen was listed as one of the ‘Food and Agriculture Leaders to Watch in 2019’.

#### 4. Access to Seeds Index presented at National Science and Technology Conference in Bangkok

Thailand’s National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), held its Annual Conference from 25 to 28 March at the Thailand Science Park, north of Bangkok. At this seminar organised in the morning of Tuesday 26 March 2019, Coosje Hoogendoorn, senior research lead of the Access to Seeds Index presented lessons for the Thai seed industry which she drew from the 2019 Access to Seeds Index but also from her experience as seasoned advisor of Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam.

#### 5. Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa

The publication of the first Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa was postponed from March to April 2019, when the opportunity came up to launch the study at the meeting of the Alliance for the Seed Industry in West Africa (ASIWA) Dakar, Senegal (11, 12 April). The next week the results were presented at the SeedConnect Conference in Abudja, Nigeria.

## 6. Press conferences to promote media coverage

Press conferences were organized in Nairobi, Johannesburg, Dakar and Lagos to promote media coverage in national and regional media. Highlights of the coverage were items in the national TV news of Kenya and Senegal and coverage in all main newspapers in Kenya and Nigeria. The coverage by the Nigerian Guardian stood out with a two-page spread on the Index and the relevance of good seed for food security.

## 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 Q1 2019 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
<b>Activities and Milestones Q2 2018</b>					
Access to Seeds Index for Global Seed Companies					
Access to Seeds Index for Eastern and Southern Africa					
Recognition by FoodTank					
Access to Seeds Index presented at National Science and Technology Conference in Bangkok					
Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa					
Press conferences to promote media coverage					

## 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	Finalized April 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. The publication of the Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa was postponed to April 2019 so the results could be launched in that month at regional conferences in Senegal and Nigeria.