



Access to Seeds  
Index



# Progress Report Q3 2019

## Jul – Sep 2019

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

Amsterdam, 1 December 2019



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

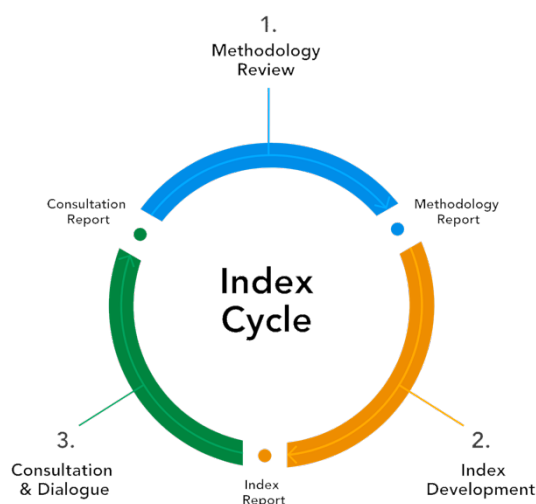
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<b>General Project Data</b>	
Project Name	Access to Seeds Index 2018
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Organization	Access to Seeds Foundation Mauritskade 63 1092 AD Amsterdam The Netherlands
Contact Person	Ido Verhagen Executive 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 2019 in the period July - September 2019. In this period, activities focused on dissemination of results, securing funding for the third cycle and preparation of the farmer roundtables in November 2019.



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 Q3 2019

This section provides an overview of activities and milestones in the period July - September 2019. The main goal of this period was dissemination of results, securing funding for the third cycle and preparing the farmer roundtables in 2019.

#### 1. New partnerships with Agriterra and SUN Business Network for Farmer Roundtables

In June 2019, AgriCord notified the Access to Seeds Foundation that it could not meet its commitment to co-fund and co-organize the farmer roundtables. Fortunately, Agriterra was willing to step in and identified over the summer of 2019 partners in Nepal (NACCFL) and Kenya (EAFF) to co-host the farmer roundtables. Also, following a Nutrition for Growth Summit, Executive Director Ido Verhagen agreed with SUN Movement coordinator Gerda Verburg to collaborate in the farmer roundtables SUN Business Movement so the Access to Seeds Foundation could meet the expectations for farmers at the 2016 roundtables to also invite business around the table in the next editions.

#### 2. Access to Seeds Index informs global conservation and use strategies.

CIAT, the Global Crop Trust and the Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), invited the Access to Seeds Index for an expert review meeting on metrics underpinning strategies for the conservation and better use of the world's food and agriculture crops. The meeting took place on 24, 25 July 2019 at FAO, Rome. The invitation, after an earlier invitation to speak at FAO in May 2019, underlined the broad acknowledgement among policy makers that the Access to Seeds Index provides unique insights into seed industry activities in the global south, for smallholder farmers and for global food security.

#### 3. Access to Seeds Index features in OECD report.

In its Agricultural Outlook, the OECD highlights the relevance of plant breeding innovations for raising agricultural production while remaining within planetary boundaries such as land use. It also flags that providing farmers with access to breeding innovation remains a challenge, based on the Access to Seeds Index estimate that 'the 13 leading global seed companies together reach no more than 10% of the world's 500 million small farms'. Throughout 2019, the Access to Seeds index has been used as a source in reports by the European Union, African Union, Asian Development Bank, AGRA and OECD, further underlining the establishment of the Index as source on seed industry activities.

#### 4. Access to Seeds Index presented to Indian seed industry.

At the request of the Indian Council for Food and Agriculture, Access to Seeds Index executive director presented the findings of the 2019 Access to Seeds Index at the Seed World Congress in Bangalore in September 2019. The conference focused on enhancing South-South trade and the Index found that there are many opportunities to connect the Indian and African seed industries. In 2019, the Access to Seeds Index had been invited by The Netherlands, Nigeria, India and Thailand to contribute to national policy discussion, again an indication of growing recognition of the Access to Seeds Index as valuable resource.

#### 5. Farmer consultation Aurangabad.

As child labor was flagged as a remaining point of concern in seed production value chains, the Access to Seeds Foundation organized a field trip to seed production farmers around Aurangabad including a town meeting in the village of Aurangabad. This was an additional activity with the roundtable in Dakar (April) and upcoming consultations in Kathamandu and

Nairobi, four farmer consultations will have been organized on the Access to Seeds Index in 2019, one more than the three farmer roundtables committed to in the original plan.

## 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 Q2 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</b>					
New partnerships farmer roundtables Agriterra and SUN Business Network					
Access to Seeds Index informs global conservation and use strategies.					
Access to Seeds Index features in OECD report.					
Access to Seeds Index presented to Indian seed industry.					
Farmer consultation Aurangabad.					

## 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	One organized (Dakar, April) One additional (Aurangabad, September)
Consultation Report	31 December 2019	

## 6. Variation from the Original Plan

In this period, all activities were conducted according to plan. The farmer consultation in Aurangabad was an additional activity, as well as the participation in the FAO meeting in July and the Bangladesh congress. As they all contributed to the objectives of the project and only required a small travel budget, the activities were approved by the executive board after consulting the chair of the Supervisory Board.