



Media Outreach - Access to Seeds Index 2019

Access to Seeds Index 2019

The Access to Seeds Index measures the efforts of the world's leading seed companies to improve access to field crop and vegetable seeds for smallholder farmers. The first index was published in 2016. The 2019 Index is made up of four rankings, one that assesses companies active at a global level and three that assess companies active in a certain region, namely South and Southeast Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa and Western and Central Africa. In June 2019, a Synthesis Report was published that reflects on the seed industry's progress since the 2016 Index and the remaining challenges against a changing global backdrop.





2019 Index publications	Date of publication
 Access to Seeds Index <u>South and Southeast Asia</u>	November 2018
 Access to Seeds Index <u>Global Seed Companies</u>	January 2018
 Access to Seeds Index <u>Eastern and Southern Africa</u>	March 2018
 Access to Seeds Index <u>Western and Central Africa</u>	April 2018
Access to Seeds Index 2019 <u>Synthesis Report</u>	June 2018

Media coverage – over 450 outlets featured 2019 Index

Over 450 international, regional, national and local media featured the 2019 Index. These included mainstream and specialized media, such as seed magazines, agriculture news outlets and business and financial online and print publications. The media coverage increased compared to the 2016 Index, indicating a stronger interest from journalists and the broader public in the seed industry and its role in developing regions. With greater focus by governments, development actors and others on the importance of inputs, such as seeds, for the sustainable intensification of food production and renewed attention for nutritious diets, this interest is likely to continue growing.

Media coverage for the Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia was the highest of the four indexes, closely followed by the Access to Seeds Index for Global Seed Companies, the Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa and the Access to Seeds Index for Eastern and Southern Africa. The Synthesis Report was not shared with the media, although it is freely accessible on our website and its release was promoted via our digital newsletter and on social media.

Media coverage

 Access to Seeds Index South and Southeast Asia	128 press clippings
 Access to Seeds Index Global Seed Companies	120 press clippings
 Access to Seeds Index Eastern and Southern Africa	110 press clippings (37 in French)
 Access to Seeds Index Western and Central Africa	104 press clippings

An important lesson learned is that sending out press releases does not generate a lot of publicity. We found that by customizing and translating the message for a specific country, media are much more likely to pick up the news and even create their own news stories. As such, we organized press briefings and invited specialized journalists, especially in those countries where we could tell a strong story, for example because the company that leads the ranking is based there (Nigeria) or because the country as a whole plays a central role in the story (like India and Nigeria being considered regional seed hubs).

Media coverage that deserves a special mention

The Access to Seeds Index team appeared on prime-time television in all three index regions.



In November 2018, Ido Verhagen, Executive Director of the Access to Seeds Index, was a guest on ANC News' morning show in the Philippines.



Kenya's KBC One covered the Access to Seeds Index for Eastern and Southern Africa in March 2019, interviewing Sanne Helderma, Senior Research Lead of the Access to Seeds Index, and Jitu Shah, CEO of East African Seed, which topped the index.



The Senegalese evening news (RTS1) covered the Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa in April 2019. The segment with Timothée Pasqualini, Data Analyst of the Access to Seeds Index, was broadcast across Western Africa (in French).

Top-tier media

The index also received extensive coverage in top-tier newspapers, including a double-page spread in The Guardian Nigeria dedicated to the Access to Seeds Index for Eastern and Southern Africa. The piece was accompanied by an extended background article.



In November 2018, Devex published an article titled 'Which seed companies are looking out for Asia's smallholder farmers?' and the Thomson Reuters Foundation wrote 'Millions of small Asian farmers miss out on seeds resilient to climate change'.

An overview of the media coverage of the 2019 Index can be found on our website.

Seed companies proudly share their position

Companies themselves are increasingly promoting their position at or near the top of the index.



East African Seed, which ranked number one in the Access to Seeds Index for Eastern and Southern Africa, used the 2019 AFSTA Congress in Mombasa, Kenya as an opportunity to highlight its leading performance.

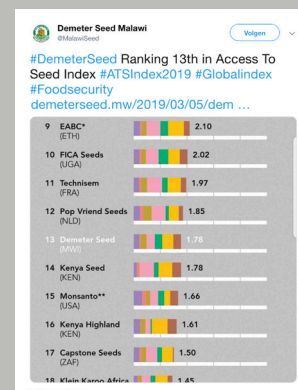


Value Seeds, which topped the Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa, tweeted: 'Wow! The first ever Access to Seed Index Ranking for Western and Central Africa, we came first among 23 seed companies.'



'We did it again!' East-West Seed declared in a news item it published on its website after finding out it had maintained its leading position in the Access to Seeds Index for Global Seed Companies as well as topping the first Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia.

Moreover, lower scoring companies are sharing their performance because inclusion in the index already identifies them as an industry leader.



Malawi-based Demeter Seed, which ranked 13th in the Access to Seeds Index for Eastern and Southern Africa, tweeted: '#DemeterSeed Ranking 13th in Access to Seed Index'.

Social media – increase in followers

The 2019 Index was promoted across four social media channels: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. We announced the publication of each index and its key findings and shared relevant news articles and background stories. This strategic and consistent approach saw the number of followers increase on all our social media channels. Our Facebook audience is the largest and grew the most. Facebook has also proven to be the ideal medium to reach and engage with seed company employees and other stakeholders. LinkedIn and Twitter, which both saw a significant growth in follower numbers, are clearly the channels where the professional debate takes place. The number of followers on Instagram grew only marginally, indicating it is not the most relevant channel to target.

Social media channel	Followers in June 2019	Increase since November 2018
Facebook	2189	+353
LinkedIn	578	+285
Twitter	1320	+242
Instagram	211	+50

In addition to continuing to build our follower base, our future focus will be on increasing the engagement of our target audiences by encouraging relevant organizations and influencers to share and like our posts more than they do now. To achieve this, we are considering paid social media campaigns.

Website

The 2016 Index was published as a printed report and downloadable pdf. The 2019 indexes can all be viewed on our website. Only the Synthesis Report is available as a downloadable pdf.

Website visitors

Between the publication of the Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia in November 2018 and the release of the Synthesis Report in June 2019, our website received almost 24,000 visitors. More than 85% of these were new visitors, indicating that we were able to reach and appeal to a broader public.

Since the 2019 Index was published on different dates over a period of several months, peaks in visits to the website are evident. The highest peak was for the publication of the Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia, which attracted 1,300 visitors in a single day, followed by 1,100 visitors for the publication of the Access to Seeds Index for Global Seed Companies, 290 visitors for the publication of the Access to Seeds Index for Eastern and Southern Africa, and 265 visitors for the publication of the Access to Seeds Index for Western and Central Africa in Francophone countries and 213 visitors for the publication in Anglophone countries.

Almost 20% of our website visitors are based in India, followed by the United States (16%), the Netherlands (8%), the Philippines (5%), Kenya (4%), Uganda (3%), Thailand (2.5%) and the United Kingdom (2.5%).

Behavior/page views

Between the publication of the Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia in November 2018 and the publication of the Synthesis Report in June 2019, our website had 97,235 page views. On average, visitors spent almost two minutes on each page.

Top ten most visited pages	URL	Page views	Page views in %
Access to Seeds Index 2019 – South and Southeast Asia	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/index/south-southeast-asia/	10,726	11.29%
Homepage	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/	9,300	9.79%
Access to Seeds Index 2019 – Global Seed Companies	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/index/global-seed-companies/	8,463	8.91%
2019 Index	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/the-index/	6,443	6.78%
2019 company scorecards	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/companies/	3,554	3.74%
Access to Seeds Index 2019 – Eastern and Southern Africa	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/index/eastern-southern-africa/	2,865	3.02%
2019 company scorecard East West Seed (South and Southeast Asia)	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/index/south-southeast-asia/company-scorecards/east-west-seed/	2,347	2.47%
AgroPages news item on the top 20 global seed companies	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/top-20-global-seed-companies-in-2017-based-on-sales/	2,341	2.46%
Access to Seeds Index 2019 – Western and Central Africa	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/index/western-central-africa/	2,052	2.16%
2019 country profiles	https://www.accesstoseeds.org/countries/	1,994	2.10%

Newsletter

The publication of each index was accompanied by a newsletter. More than half of our subscribers opened these newsletters. The best read newsletter was the one announcing the publication of the Access to Seeds Index for South and Southeast Asia, which was opened by almost 60% of subscribers.

Following the introduction of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into effect on May 25, 2018, the number of subscribers to our newsletter dropped from 1,588 to 421. Since then, 141 new subscribers have signed up, bringing our total audience to 562.