

New Access to Seeds Index reveals differences in how seed companies meet the needs of smallholders



Access to Seeds has launched its latest Index, evaluating and ranking 24 seed companies according to their efforts to improve access to quality seeds of improved varieties for smallholder farmers. The results of the South and Southeast Asia (SSEA) Index were announced during the Asian Seed Congress last week.

Understanding the seed industry

Access to Seeds, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, seeks primarily to identify leadership and good practices, shedding light on where and how the seed industry can step up its efforts.

The 2019 SSEA Seed Index was officially released by Ido Verhagen, Access to Seeds Foundation's Executive Director, and Coosje Hoogendoorn, Senior Research Lead.

"The Index is vital in providing a better understanding of the



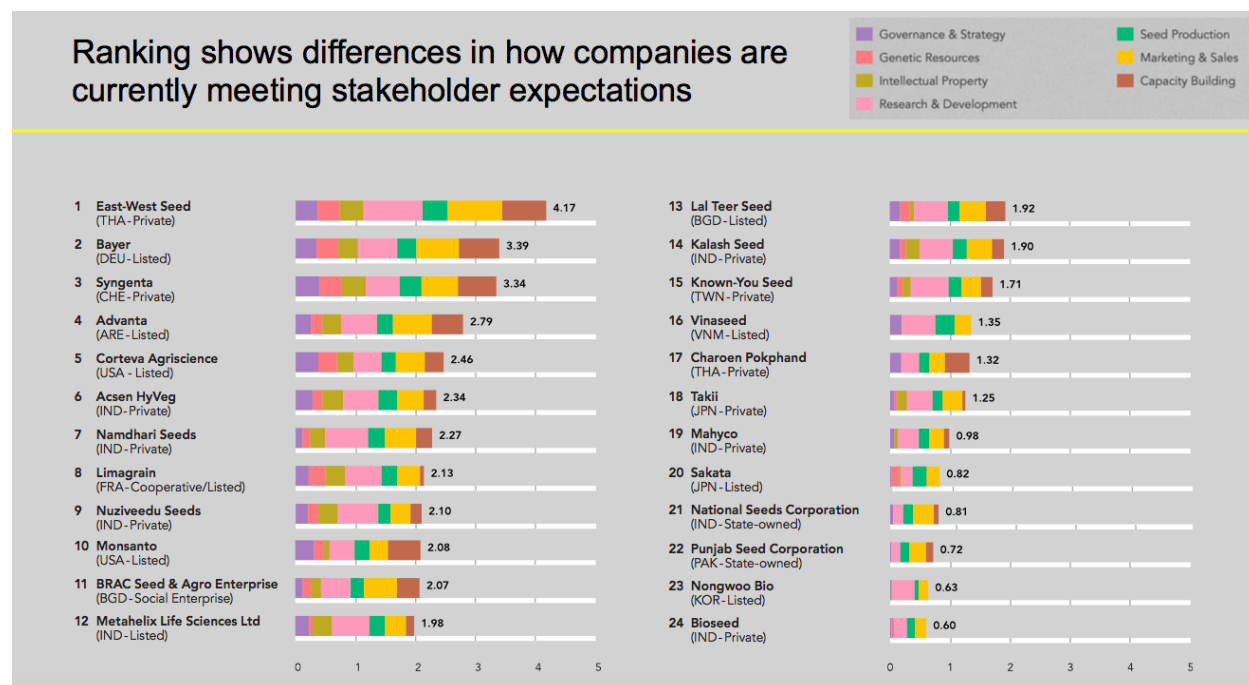
seed industry,” said Ido Verhagen, Executive Director of the Access to Seeds Index. “Seed companies play a key role in supporting smallholder farmer productivity. By measuring and comparing their performance, companies can see where improvements can be made to serve farmers better. Research agencies or investors interested in reaching smallholders use our research to identify companies to partner with.”

“We congratulate East-West Seed on their ranking in the South and Southeast Asia regional index and their continued commitment to serving smallholder farmers around the world,” he said.



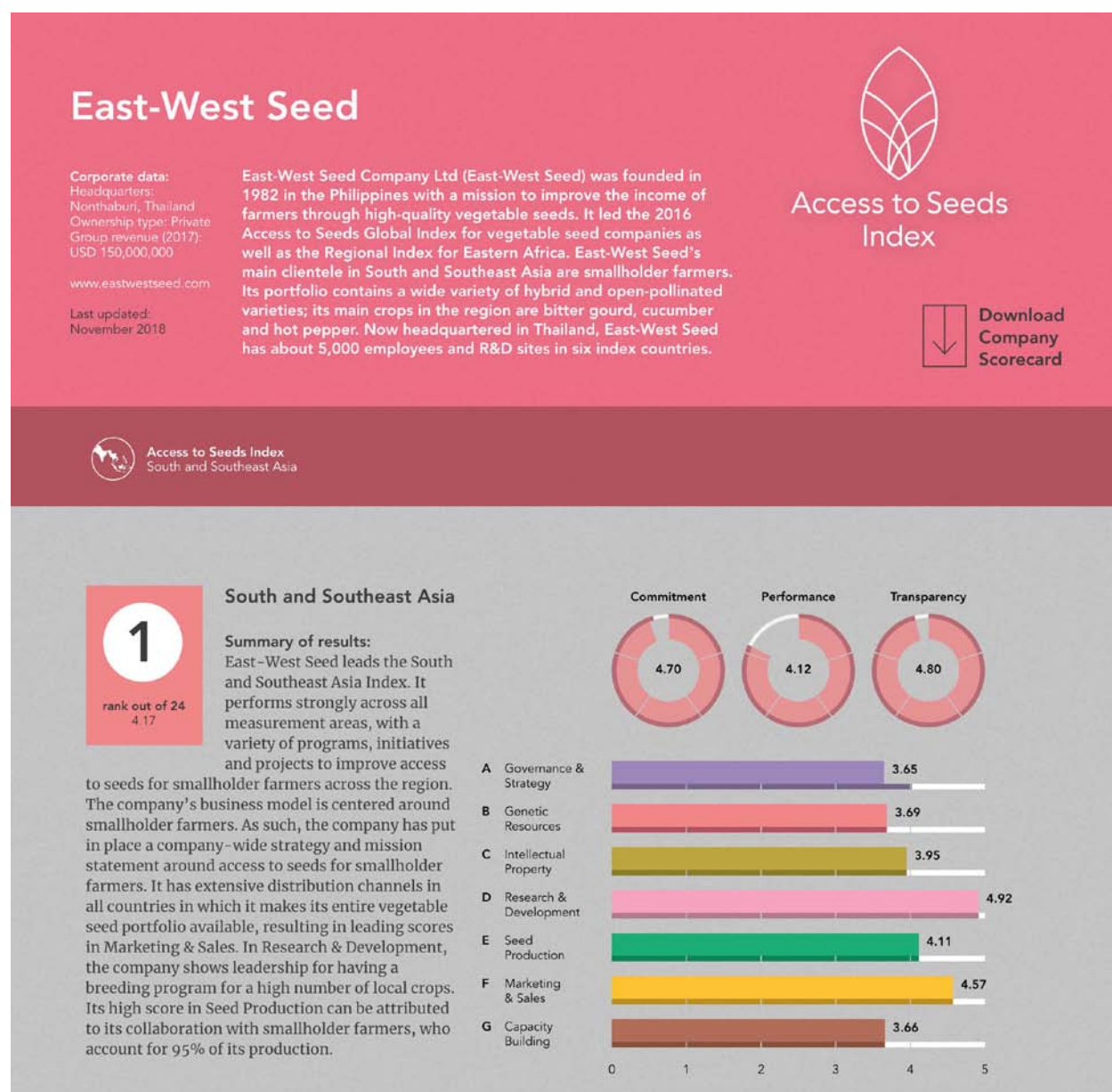
“We see a growing attention for enabling smallholder farmers to cope with the effects of climate change. This makes the Index very timely because seed companies play a key role in delivering new tools and technologies in the hands of smallholder farmers. Findings presented by the Index feed the dialogue on how the seed industry can support a growing food production in the world while remaining within planetary boundaries and reduce climate change impact,” said Ms Hoogendoorn in a previous interview with [Asian Seed](#).

She added, “we are clearly linking company actions for smallholder farmers with the UN's global Sustainable Development Goals issues such as climate change, nutrition, agro-biodiversity, sustainable intensification, and women farmers.”



#1 in South and Southeast Asia

The 2019 Index evaluated 24 companies who operate in the South and Southeast Asia region. Tropical vegetable seed company East-West Seed leads the pack, sustaining the company's good performance in 2016, when the first Seed Index was released and where East-West Seed was also ranked #1 in the Global Vegetable and East Africa indices.



Out of 24 companies, East-West Seed garnered the highest score which takes into account the indicators of Commitment, Performance, Transparency and Leadership for 7 measurement areas: Governance & Strategy, Genetic Resources, Intellectual Property, Research & Development, Seed Production, Marketing & Sales, and Capacity Building. (Graph from Access to Seeds Index)

“EWS performs strongly across all measurement areas, with a variety of programs, initiatives and projects to improve access to seeds for smallholder farmers across the region,” the ATSI report says.

East-West Seed’s Marketing & Sales rating of 4.57 out of 5, which was the highest score within the region, was driven by its distribution channels in all countries in which it makes its entire vegetable seed portfolio available.

The report states that EWS also “shows leadership” within Research & Development, for having a breeding program for a high number of local crops.

“[EWS] high score in Seed Production can be attributed to its collaboration with smallholder farmers, who account for 95% of its production,” the ATSI report said.

Index Crops in Portfolio																				
	Sales													Seed type			Source			
	AFG	BGD	KHM	IND	IDN	LAO	MMR	NPL	PAK	PHL	LKA	THA	VNM	Hybrid	OPV	GM	Own breeding program	Public research institute	Licensed from other company	
Vegetables																				
Cabbage																				
Carrot																				
Cauliflower																				
Cucumber																				
Eggplant																				
Gourd																				
Green bean																				
Lettuce																				
Melon																				
Okra																				
Onion																				
Pepper (hot)																				
Pepper (sweet)																				
Pumpkin																				
Squash																				
Tomato																				
Watermelon																				

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[How East-West Seed supports the development of the seed industry](#)

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