



Pharo Edible Oil Plant

*Capturing Value at Home,
Competing on the Global Stage*



The Pharo Edible Oil Plant is one of Pharo Ventures' flagship agribusiness investments and a critical driver of our mission to build a dynamic, locally anchored African private sector. Located in Kotu near Debre Birhan, the plant has a 50-ton-per-day processing capacity and is designed to convert locally grown, ethical oilseeds into high-value, premium-certified edible oils. By producing for international export markets, the project creates jobs, strengthens local supply chains, and demonstrates that African enterprises can compete at world-class standards.

The Problem

Ethiopia is one of the world's top producers of oilseed crops, yet it captures only a fraction of the value. Most sesame, flax, and niger seeds are exported raw, limiting farmer incomes and Ethiopia's share of global earnings. This dependency on unprocessed exports also fuels heavy reliance on imported edible oils, leaving domestic markets exposed.

Our Response

The Pharo Edible Oil Plant, strategically located in Kotu, near Debre Birhan, Amhara, is designed to transform Ethiopia's role in the global oilseed market by capturing more value at home. With a 50-ton-per-day processing capacity and advanced expeller pressing technology, the first of its kind in the region, the plant represents a step-change in domestic value addition.

Our vision combines sustainable sourcing, premium product certifications, and data-driven transparency to meet international standards and create long-term opportunity. By anchoring processing capacity locally, the factory ensures that profits, jobs, and knowledge remain in Ethiopia, rather than being lost through unprocessed exports.



Facts & Figures

- ▶ **50 MT/day oilseed processing capacity**, the first plant of its kind in the region.
- ▶ **250 smallholder farmers engaged** in 2025, with a target of more than 2,000.
- ▶ **40+ direct jobs** created, alongside many more indirect jobs across logistics and supply chains.
- ▶ **International standards:** pursuing FSSC 22000 Food Safety, EU Organic, USDA-NOP, and JAS Organic certifications.

Spotlight: Outgrower Programme

Alongside the plant itself, Pharo Ventures is piloting an outgrower programme to secure a sustainable supply of high-quality seed while boosting farmer incomes. In 2025, we partnered with more than 250 smallholder farmers, with plans to scale to over 2,000 in the coming years.

Through a contract farming model supported by Farmforce digital traceability, farmers gain access to improved inputs, agronomic support, and guaranteed offtake. Early pilots in the South West and Gambela regions showed that with targeted support, farmers can transition to higher-quality seed and organic practices, improving yields and incomes while providing reliable supply for the plant.

Though modest in scale today, these pilots have evolved into the concept for a new farmer productivity programme, soon to be launched as a non-profit initiative to boost smallholder productivity and resilience, while reinforcing the success of the edible oil venture at its core.



A Story of Resilience

During early sourcing efforts in Metema, Amhara region, our team faced security disruptions that forced a pause in operations. Instead of halting progress, we pivoted to Gambela, where we quickly rebuilt momentum by working with hundreds of farmers committed to organic, sustainable cultivation. This adaptability has defined the venture, underscoring how pioneering industrial investments in fragile regions demand resilience and how determination can turn setbacks into opportunities.