



SNAPSHOT

Trainings Inspire Oil Processors to Join Forces

Working together, former competitors create new oil processing company capable of large-scale export production.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Hasshim Swal had a vision to form a new business with his former competitors after attending the USAID-CIAFS training on collaborating to achieve common goals.

“There are opportunities for all of us to develop and improve if we work together.”

Hasshim Swal

Owner, Nile Edible Oil

Hasshim Swal, a 30-year-old small business owner, was skeptical of the benefits of investing in quality improvement for his sunflower and niger seed cooking oils. But after attending agribusiness trainings on competitiveness, training, and leadership held by USAID’s Capacity to Improve Agriculture and Food Security (CIAFS) project, Hasshim was convinced of the importance of quality products and cooperation for entrepreneurial success, and made changes that revolutionized his business.

After attending the January 2012 training on quality standards and processing and labeling requirements, Hasshim began investing in new inputs and equipment to attain a higher level of quality.

Guided by the Ethiopian Standards Agency, he selected higher quality seed for production, which improved the texture, taste, appearance, and acidity level of his oil. He followed the proper guidelines for packaging and labeling and received certification from the Ethiopian Conformity Assessment Agency, which allowed him to market his products as quality compliant.

Hasshim’s business is expanding rapidly. His monthly sales volume has risen 400 percent, from about 400 liters of oil before the changes to 1,600 liters today. With the additional income, he hired four additional employees, tripling the size of his company.

Hasshim attended a second round of USAID-CIAFS leadership and entrepreneurship training in May 2012 that focused on strategies for collaboration and streamlining operations. He left the training with a vision to establish a shared company with other small-scale oil producers.

After two months of research, planning, and lobbying, Hasshim led 30 oil producers – previously his competitors – in forming a new company, Nile Edible Oil. By pooling assets to invest in mechanization and increase their production, the company can reach export markets that are inaccessible to small processors. They are currently constructing a large oil processing plant capable of processing up to five tons of seeds a day.

USAID-CIAFS continues to provide follow-up and additional training to enable Hasshim and other private sector business leaders to apply new knowledge and skills to improve their businesses, services, incomes, and livelihoods.