



Castor oil proudly South Africa

From an R1 Bottle to an Industry:
Growing South Africa's Castor
Economy

Irene Tsele

Co founder, TUMAI / Business Development Manager
at Harsom Castor Farm/ qualified accountant and
farmer.

Castor oil introduction



There I learned castor's full scope. It's used in more than 700 industrial products: lubricants, biofuels, paints, medicines, inks, plastics, cosmetics, and more.

So when we talk about castor in SA, we're talking about a multi-billion rand industrial crop. Not just a bottle on a shelf."

In the beginning



My journey started in my cousin's village. One day she asked me to buy a 300ml bottle of castor oil for R1 from the granny next door. That granny was extracting castor beans using traditional know-how. That R1 bottle taught me: Healing and enterprise can come from the soil. From knowledge our grandmothers carried. That was the first seed of Tumai.

Training on processing at NWU



20XX



Pitch deck title

From Know-How to Science: NWU Innovation Highway*

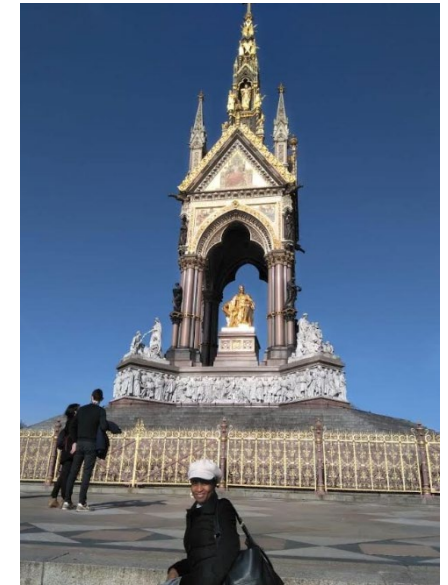
"A former accounting student introduced me to NWU's Innovation Highway. I told them: 'I have castor oil made by know-how.'

Dr Marais from Acupham Compounding Pharmacy in Potchefstroom helped me formulate 5 products: Body Wash, Body Lotion, Hair Shampoo, Hair Food, and Emafutsa Jelly. NWU selected us for the Royal Academy of Engineering in the UK, 2019 – Leadership in Innovation Fellowship. 2 weeks of commercialisation training, sponsored by TIA."

Training programme in UK



20XX



Pitch deck title

Back to the farm

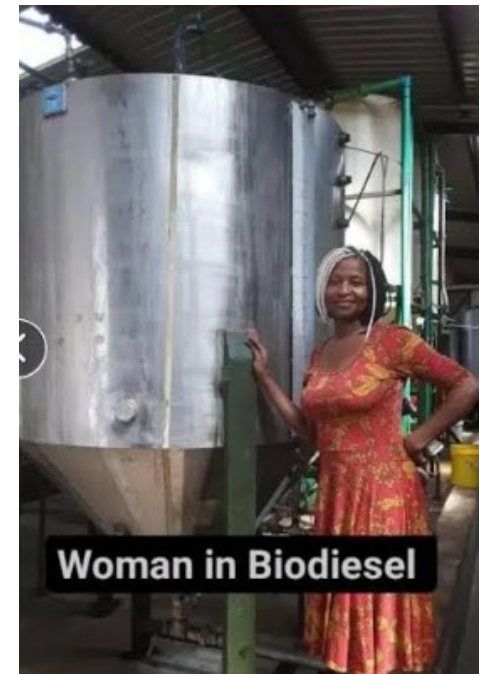
I returned and started picking wild castor in Mpumalanga and North West. In 2022 I cultivated 1 hectare from veld seeds. First harvest: 900kg.

In 2023 the University funded me to manufacture my own products. We are now seed-to-shelf

In 2025 I joined Harsom Castor Farm as Business Development Manager.

There I learned castor's full scope. It's used in more than 700 industrial products: lubricants, biofuels, paints, medicines, inks, plastics, cosmetics, and more.

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Training at WITS



Trade shows and exhibitions



The Challenge: Growing in a Red Tape Field

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"But to grow this economy, we need a permit.

We submitted our castor permit in December 2024. We are still waiting.

In South Africa castor is Category 2 Invasive, so it's illegal for smallholder farmers to cultivate it.

Without funding and without a permit, we cannot scale — even though we have land, knowledge, and global demand



India =90% Brazil and rest =10% vs South Africa – The Policy Gap



"India is the world's largest castor producer. They support smallholder farmers because castor is drought-tolerant and grows on marginal land. It underpins 700+ industries.

In South Africa, we treat the same plant as a threat.

We are blocking rural jobs, women's cooperatives, and indigenous manufacturing.

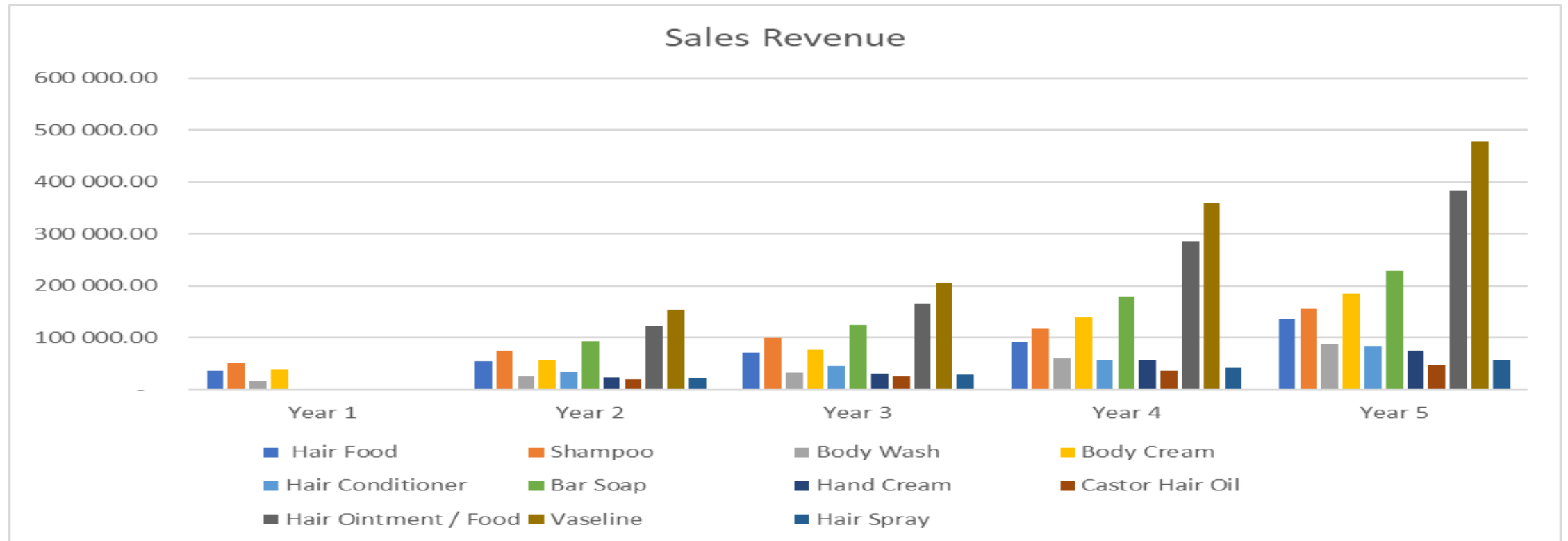
Tumai and Harsom prove we have the skill. What we need is policy that lets us grow



Global Sales Forecast

Forecasting for success

Revenue by year



Training small farmers activities

Cultivating castor oils at Rietvlei





Seminars and conferences

Recognized as role player and speaker at SAAFFI and others



Meet the team



Irene Tsele

Founder

She is a Irene Tsele is the founder and 100% shareholder of Tumai (Pty) Ltd.

She is currently a final year B.Com Accounting student at the NWU at Potchefstroom.



Ketlareng Polori

Advisor
Commercialization Specialist

Ketlareng Polori (MTech Microbiology, MBA) is a Senior Commercialisation Specialist at the NWU Technology Transfer and Innovation Support office. She leads the commercialization support to Tumai.



Johann Marais

Advisor
Consulting Pharmacist

Johann Marais (MPharm and various diplomas) assisted in refining the formulations. He is an Integrative, Compounding and Formulating Pharmacist with special interests in natural medicines and cosmetics, and is based in Potchesfstroom.



Kgaugelo Maripane

Advisor:
Financial Modelling

Kgaugelo Maripane (B.Com Accounting and Informatics) is a Commercialization Analyst at the NWU Technology Transfer and Innovation Support office. He does financial modelling and commercialisation assistance for Tumai.



Call to action

My journey went from an R1 bottle, to a lab in Potchefstroom, to a hectare in Mpumalanga, to an industry role at Harsom.

If South Africa wants more black women in agri-processing and bio-economy, we must fund us, permit us, and trust our know-how.

Because when we are allowed to grow castor, we don't just make products. We help a nation prosper. Thank you.

Thank you
for your attention

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