**Under Embargo Until: April 16th, 9:00 AM CEST**

**OlsAro raises €2.5m seed round to expand AI-enabled climate smart crop breeding platform**

**GOTHENBURG, Sweden; April 16, 2024 –** OlsAro, a Swedish agtech startup developing crop varieties that are resilient to environmental stressors, has raised a €2.5 million seed round led by Future Food Fund and PINC, the venture arm of Paulig, with participation by AgFunder, FLORA Ventures, Mudcake, and current investors. OlsAro’s journey is also supported by early backers including the founders of Oatly.

[Demand for food is estimated to rise by 50% by 2050,](https://research.wri.org/wrr-food#:~:text=As%20the%20global%20population%20grows,foods%20by%20nearly%2070%20percent.) while climate change is steadily [reducing agricultural productivity](https://www.epa.gov/climateimpacts/climate-change-impacts-agriculture-and-food-supply) and the lack of arable land for cultivation. OlsAro seeks to address this challenge with climate adapted crops developed using its proprietary AI-enabled forward genetics platform.

OlsAro’s first product, a salt tolerant wheat, has shown a 52% increase in yield compared to a moderately salt tolerant variety in saline conditions in Bangladesh, enabling farming on otherwise unfarmable land.

*“The investment will enable us to expand our geographical reach, refine our proprietary tech platform and continue our journey towards discovery of crops that can thrive in challenging climate conditions, boosting food security and resilience in the global food system,”* says OlsAro CEO Elén Faxö.

**Making unfarmable land farmable again**

Wheat stands as [one of the world’s largest crops](https://www.statista.com/topics/1668/wheat/#topicOverview), a nutrient-dense staple food integral to the diets of billions and a cornerstone of food security. Over the last several years, wheat supply has faced unprecedented threats from climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing war in Ukraine, and tensions in the Middle East.

A [growing percentage](https://www.fao.org/3/cb7247en/cb7247en.pdf) of arable land is being degraded by salinity, with over 830 million hectares affected globally. This is a problem exacerbated by climate change, flooding and cyclones, and irrigation with brackish or saline water. Saline soils restrict plant growth, significantly reducing yields.

OlsAro’s salt tolerant wheat enables farmers to grow on otherwise unfarmable land during the dry season, giving families increased incomes and contributing to local food supplies.

**Food security through diversity and AI**

OlsAro’s AI platform enables wheat varieties to be developed three times faster than traditional methods. The technology builds on over a decade of research and a proprietary wheat collection with very high genetic diversity, serving as the foundation for identification of traits tailored to withstand harsher climatic conditions, increase nitrogen efficiency, and potentially improve the nutritional qualities of the wheat.

*“Our platform, enriched by a decade of research and a unique genetic diversity, empowers us to introduce wheat varieties designed to thrive under adverse conditions. This funding is a catalyst for us to broaden our technological capabilities and extend our impact on a global scale. It’s an exciting time for OlsAro, as we harness AI and plant biotechnology to forge a path towards sustainable food systems that can withstand the challenges ahead,”* says OlsAro CTO Henrik Aronsson.

OlsAro currently has a commercial contract in place for the Bangladesh market as well as ongoing field trials in Pakistan, Kenya, Oman and Nepal for their salt tolerant wheat. The next step is to target Australia, India, and other regions affected by salinity degradation of agricultural land.

**A collaborative effort for a food-secure future**

OlsAro’s investors’ collective expertise, networks, and strategic insights will bolster OlsAro’s pioneering work towards global scalability and impact, says Jaap Strengers, Managing Partner at Future Food Fund.

*“This investment highlights our commitment to fostering solutions that support the transition into more resilient food systems globally. We are excited to join OlsAro on their journey, supporting their push towards agricultural innovation that’s set to redefine the resilience of crops worldwide.”*

**About OlsAro**

OlsAro is a high-impact Swedish agtech startup focusing on solutions to meet the challenges of a growing population and decreasing arable land. By leveraging AI and cutting-edge plant biotechnologies, OlsAro specializes in developing wheat varieties that are resilient to environmental stressors, with an initial focus on salt tolerant wheat. OlsAro has also initiated development of additional traits in wheat such as heat tolerance and nitrogen use efficiency. OlsAro’s breakthrough solutions could potentially introduce an additional growing season for local farmers by making otherwise unfarmable land farmable again.

OlsAro’s broader ambition is to adapt its technology for a variety of crops, addressing the broader challenges posed by climate change.

OlsAro is a spin out company from Lund University and the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, backed by many years of research by professors Henrik Aronsson (CTO) and Olof Olsson (tech advisor). Investors include GU Ventures, Vasa Angels, Öste Ventures and Kaponjären.

For more information about OlsAro:

• Visit our website www.olsaro.com

• Follow us via Linkedin OlsAro: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/olsaro/?originalSubdomain=se>

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