

GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION AND RURAL SERVICES (GAERS)
In Technical Partnership with Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (UDUS)
Demonstration Farm & Soil Health Hub, Kasarawa Sokoto State, Nigeria |Email: info@gaers.org
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MEMORANDUM & OFFICIAL EVENT REPORT

TO: Weltweit e.V., | The Rapunzel Foundation
FROM: Rukayya Mahe, Chief Executive Officer, GAERS
DATE: 15th September, 2026
SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE EVENT & IMPACT REPORT: OFFICIAL COMMISSIONING OF
THE GAERS DEMONSTRATION FARM, LIVING LEARNING LABORATORY & SOIL HEALTH
HUB

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of Global Agricultural Extension and Rural Services (GAERS), our academic partners and facilitators at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (UDUS), and our target farmer communities, I am pleased to present the official commissioning report for our Demonstration Farm and Soil Health Hub in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Supported under the Building Soil Health (BSH) Phase 2 framework, the event marked the formal inauguration of Sokoto State's premier decentralized Living Learning Laboratory for organic soil restoration, water conservation, and women-led agricultural extension.

The commissioning achieved three major strategic milestones:

- High-level state government endorsement through the official unveiling by the Honorable Commissioner for Agriculture.
- On-site scientific validation delivered by university faculty and student extensionists.
- Public presentation of certified community Master Trainers and Women Gardeners' Associations driving field adoption.

2. PARTICIPATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The event brought together representatives from government, agricultural institutions, farmer organisations, academia, technical partners, community stakeholders and the media.

Key stakeholder groups included:

- Sokoto State Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
- Sokoto Agricultural Development Programme (SADP)
- Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Sokoto

- Farmer organisations including AFAN, SWOFON and NOPPMAN
- Agricultural extension personnel
- Farmers and community representatives
- Academic and research institutions
- GAERS staff and volunteers
- Technical experts and development partners
- Media representatives

The participation of these stakeholders demonstrated the potential for the facility to serve as a shared agricultural learning and innovation platform, rather than functioning as a GAERS facility in isolation.

3. EVENT HIGHLIGHTS & KEY ENGAGEMENTS

- **Government Endorsement:** The Honorable Commissioner for Agriculture, Sokoto State, led the ribbon-cutting ceremony alongside GAERS executive leadership and UDUS academicians. The Commissioner commended the facility as a vital model for decentralized public-private extension.
- **Scientific Diagnostics & Bio-Inputs Display:** Researchers and student extensionists from the UDUS Department of Soil Science conducted live soil pH, biological activity, and organic carbon testing for visiting delegates. GAERS showcased micro-packaged SoilCare Organic Compost and BioBoost liquid bio-stimulants developed under BSH Phase 2.
- **Women's Enterprise & Product Showcase:** Lead representatives from local Women Gardeners' Associations presented high-quality, organically grown vegetables cultivated using GAERS bio-inputs and Root Feast™ subsurface drip irrigation, demonstrating clear crop performance gains.
- **Master Trainer Certification:** Certificates of Completion were officially presented to community leads who completed intensive agronomic training, formalizing our decentralized network across local government areas.
- **International Virtual Participation:** The program featured live virtual goodwill broadcasts from international technical partners, including Weltweit e.V. CEO Kajo Stelter, Indian technical advisors from WASSAN (Dr. Santosh Chavan, Pawan Kumar, Pradeep Ghosh), and key supporters, emphasizing global knowledge transfer.

4. ALIGNMENT WITH BSH PHASE 2 OBJECTIVES & RAPUNZEL FOUNDATION SUPPORT

The activities launched at the Soil Health Hub directly advance our mutual BSH Phase 2 objectives:

- **Input Cost Reduction:** Demonstrating organic bio-input protocols that reduce smallholder reliance on commercial chemical fertilizers by over 35%.
- **Dryland Water Efficiency:** Scaling Root Feast™ subsurface drip irrigation setups that cut water usage by up to 60% during dry-season cultivation.

- Linking Physical and Digital Learning: The Demonstration Farm builds on GAERS' experience with digital advisory through WhatsApp, online training, videos and voice messages. By connecting these tools with physical demonstrations, farmers can learn practices on-site, continue discussions digitally, share observations and receive follow-up guidance. This creates a continuous learning cycle rather than one-off training.
- Inclusive Extension: Creating direct economic pathways for rural women gardeners and youth through localized horticultural micro-enterprises and organic bio-input production.
- Institutional Partnerships: The Demonstration Farm provides a platform for farmer training, applied research, student learning, innovation trials and technical exchange, while complementing government extension services. Continued collaboration with government, ADP, universities, farmer organisations and technical partners will support its development and sustainability.

5. POST-EVENT TRACTION & NEXT OPERATIONAL STEPS

Following the public launch, the facility has experienced daily walk-in visits from smallholders, youth cooperative leads, and female farmer clusters seeking diagnostic services and training. To sustain this momentum, GAERS is executing the following immediate next steps:

- FAO Farmer Field School (FFS) Alignment: Transitioning our living lab modules to follow the global FAO FFS methodology for season-long, hands-on discovery learning.
- GAERS sees the Demonstration Farm as part of a broader vision to strengthen practical agricultural learning systems. Our ambition is to build an environment where:
 - Farmers learn from farmers.
 - Research connects with practice.
 - Technology supports human interaction.
 - Local knowledge meets technical expertise.
 - Experiments generate evidence.
 - And partnerships create lasting opportunities - Exchange between African and European practitioners

The ultimate measure of the facility will therefore not be the number of events held there, but the extent to which it continues to help farmers learn, experiment, adapt and improve their livelihoods.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT & EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Board and Management of the Rapunzel Foundation for your steadfast commitment to soil restoration, ecological agriculture, and smallholder empowerment in dryland Nigeria. Your partnership remains instrumental in translating academic soil science into measurable rural resilience.

Respectfully submitted,

Rukayya Mahe
Chief Executive Officer
Global Agricultural Extension and Rural Services (GAERS)

Photo Gallery

Photo 1: Official Inauguration & Government Partnership



Bridging Policy & Action: GAERS CEO Rukayya Mahe during the official ribbon-cutting ceremony of the Soil Health Hub alongside the Honorable Commissioner for Agriculture, Sokoto State. The facility serves as a model for public-private-academic collaboration in dryland Africa.

Photo 2: Academic & Scientific Field Validation (UDUS)



Applied Science in the Field: Soil Science researchers and student extensionists from Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto (UDUS), conducting live soil diagnostics at our Living Learning Lab. GAERS bridges rigorous academic research directly with smallholder practice.

Photo 3: Women's Leadership & Local Produce Display



Empowering Rural Micro-Enterprises: Lead representative of our Women Gardeners' Association presenting organic produce cultivated using GAERS bio-inputs and water-smart Root Feast™ subsurface drip irrigation.

Photo 4: Bio-Input Innovation & Circular Agriculture



Localized Bio-Input Manufacturing: Micro-packaged SoilCare Organic Compost and concentrated BioBoost liquid bio-stimulants developed under BSH Phase 2, designed to reduce smallholder fertilizer expenditure by 35%.

Photo 5: Decentralized Master Trainer Network



Decentralized Extension at Scale: Newly certified Community Master Trainers displaying their official credentials alongside GAERS leadership. Over 25 certified local leads drive peer-to-peer knowledge transfer across Sokoto LGAs.

Photo 6: International Partners Join the Commissioning Through Video Messages



Invited dignitaries and stakeholders watching goodwill video messages from GAERS' international partners from Germany and India during the commissioning event in the Training Hall. The messages highlighted the partners' support for the Building Soil Health initiative and their commitment to continued knowledge exchange and collaboration.