

SIERRA LEONE

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Sierra Leone is a unitary republic. The country acknowledges a single tier of local self-government: the district. Since 2018, there are 22 local councils, including 15 district councils and 7 city councils. In terms of administrative organization, it is divided into 3 provinces (the Northern, Southern, and Eastern Provinces) and a region known as the Western Area.¹



Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).²

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

Sierra Leone has remained strategic in pursuing the SDGs, with a special focus on its accelerator SDGs projected to the UN in 2019: SDG 4 (inclusive education) and SDG 16 (justice, peace and inclusive society). The two are still leading dimensions to the transformational agenda of the state. Education is also at the heart of the **Government's Human Capital Development flagship programme**, flanked by healthcare and nutrition in the programme, noting further that the country's **MTNDP (2019-2023)** is titled "Education for Development".

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The **Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED)** ensures SDG coordination. Regional Planning Offices of the Ministry have been installed. All development stakeholders in the national planning processes—within and between central and local government, drawing in local traditional authorities, CSOs/NGOs, the private sector, the academic, schools, the media and development partners—are involved in the arrangement for the implementation of the SDGs.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The **Ministry of Planning and Economic Development** coordinated the 2021 VNR process. All relevant stakeholders, including local councils,³ participated in consultations at national and local/district levels, provided data, took part in data analysis and in the preparation of a range of field reports feeding into the VNR. A One-Day Intensive General Stakeholder Technical Session was held to provide status updates to participants in the VNR process, and to discuss the roles and responsibilities of all in the data collection.

1.3 MONITORING

The existing institutions for SDG coordination are also in charge of monitoring SDG implementation, but no specific reference is made to a specific monitoring system.

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

According to the 2019 VNR, all SDGs have been integrated into local council plans, facilitated by the Department of Local Government Finance in the Ministry of Finance. Local councils coordinate implementation of the SDGs at district level. Before the resuscitation of the Regional Planning Offices, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has worked closely

1. See: https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles_DEC2019_UPDATES.pdf

2. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10720sierraleone.pdf> (2016);

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23378Sierra_Leone_VNR_FINAL.pdf (2019);

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/279542021_VNR_Report_Sierra_Leone.pdf (2021)

3. More specifically: representatives from the 22 Local Councils covering the 16 districts of Sierra Leone participated in the One-Day Intensive General Stakeholder Technical Session (see VNR, 2021, 23).

with the Ministry of Finance's Local Government Finance Department and the Ministry of Local Government's Decentralisation Secretariat to engage local councils in the implementation and reporting on the SDGs at district level. Implementation and follow-up at district level will be intensified when Regional Planning Offices of MoPED become fully operational, in collaboration with those aforementioned line departments.

The 2021 VNR states that the government will be establishing Chiefdom Development Coordination Units, counterpart to the **District Development Coordination Committees (DDCCs)** at district level to strengthen sub-national development coordination.

2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

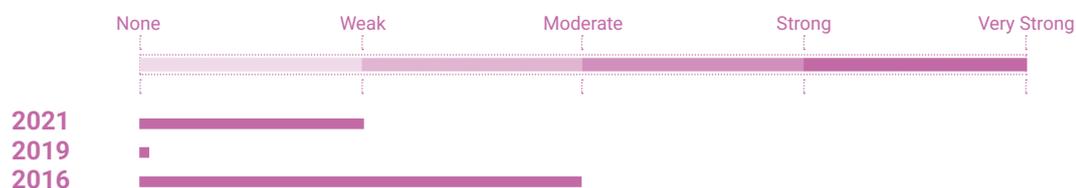
► In the VNR process



Comments: In 2019, a nationwide training and sensitization was conducted on the expected role and contribution of all actors to achieving the SDGs. Local government councils were heavily involved in these sessions, and in the general implementation of the global agenda.

In 2021, there was no involvement of the Local Councils Association of Sierra Leone (LoCASL) in the reporting process. However, according to the VNR, local councils participated in a consultation day.

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: In 2021, the District Development Coordination Committees (DDCCs) were re-established.

This assessment is based on the information collected in the VNRs and in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments' annual survey on the localization of the SDGs.

2.2 VNR REFERENCES

The 2021 VNR has a specific subsection called "Strengthening local service delivery system" describing how the government and development partners have continued to provide support to local councils. This subsection also shows a renewed determination to decentralize ownership of National Development Plans in Sierra Leone during the period 2019-2020, having as principal outcome the re-establishment of the District Development Coordination Committees (DDCCs) to regularly, functionally and sustainably follow-up on and reporting on the implementation of the national development plans and the SDGs.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► The **Local Councils Association (LoCASL)** has organized workshops to streamline the SDGs into local development programmes. This alignment process has also been supported by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, both of which have encouraged the 22 local councils to integrate the SDGs into their district and municipal development plans.

► The EU is currently providing a huge programme of support to six provincial local councils, principally including **Bombali District, Kenema, Pujehun** and **Kambia**. The newly established districts of **Falaba** and **Karene** were also considered in extended assistance.

► The **Wan Fambul National Framework** is an inclusive local governance development framework principally focused at catalyzing the placement of people at the centre of development through promoting village/chiefdom level planning (sub-district development system), coming up with plans and projects by the people and led by the people. It is essentially meant to deepen the **decentralization** system to enhance the localisation of the national development plan and the SDGs.

2.4 VOLUNTARY SUBNATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL REVIEWS (VSRs / VLRs)

Not applicable.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The **Local Government Finance Department (LGFD)** works closely with the local councils to ensure that they have sufficient resources and support to contribute to the country's development aspirations.

On partnerships and financing for development (SDG 17), a range of initiatives have been pursued, largely informed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Among them, the government is currently implementing a **strengthening domestic resource mobilization for SDGs financing project** aimed at driving innovation in domestic revenue collection and management at central and local levels and financial sector capitalisation through deploying digitalisation and financial literacy. Issues of integrated national financing for the SDGs took a centre stage in the implementation of the SDGs in the last two years, following the conduct of a comprehensive Development Finance Assessment and the design of an **Integrated National Financing Framework** for the country.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: As the third VNR of Sierra Leone, the 2021 report is highly evaluative. It showcases the policy impact of strategic state initiatives undertaken in pursuit of SDGs 4 and 16, first and foremost, and then the rest of the SDGs prioritized by the UN for the 2021 edition of the HLPF.

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

2 out of the 7 mayors in the 22 local councils of the country are women, constituting 28.5%; while 1 out of the 21 Chairpersons in these councils are women, constituting 4.7%. And 90 out of the 479 local councillors across the country are women, constituting 18.7%. This is against Section 95 (2c) of the Local Government Act (2004), which provides for a **mandatory 50-50 gender parity** at Ward Committee levels. It states that "in addition to the councillor and paramount chief in the chiefdom, the ward committee shall consist of not more than 10 other persons at least 5 of whom shall be women."

3.2 COVID 19

The government had to put in place two key emergency response/recovery programmes during the pandemic: a Quick Action Economic Recovery Programme (QAERP), and a Health Preparedness and Response Plan, that were more socially focused than having direct impact on private economic investment. COVID-19 Behavioral Change Support of **Freetown City Council** includes:

- ▶ #MaskUpFreetown Campaign produced and distributed facemasks to residents
- ▶ Improving markets to encourage social distancing
- ▶ Market COVID-19 prevention monitoring
- ▶ Food supplies to vulnerable populations ahead of lockdown.

COVID-19 preparedness and response plan of the **Freetown City Council** includes:

- ▶ Supplementary food support to quarantine homes
- ▶ Establishment of 180-bedisolation center for asymptomatic patients.

4. SDG INDICATORS⁴

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		18.2 (2018)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	13 (2020)
	Rural	9 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	20 (2020)
	Rural	10 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		59.1 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		-
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		54.3 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-

4. The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDG/IndDatabasePage>. More information on the country's progress towards the SDGs here: <https://country-profiles.unstatshub.org/sle>