



NATIONAL DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY



NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AGENCY

September 2024



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THE WORLD BANK

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAAA	Addis Abba Action Agenda
ACC	Adaptation to Climate Change
ACMAD	African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development
AU	African Union
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CERCF	Contingency Emergency Response Fund
COP	Conference of Parties
CRF	Climate Resilience Framework
CSC	Climate Services Centre
CSOs	Civil Society Organisation
DaLA	Damage and Loss Assessment
DEOC	District Emergency Operations Centre
DISECs	District Security Committees
DM	Disaster Management
DMA	Disaster Management Authority
DMD	Disaster Management Department
DPR	Disaster Preparedness Response
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECOMOG	Economic Commission Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Commission for West African States
EMOP	Emergency Management Operational Procedures
ENSO	El Nino Southern Oscillation
EP&R	Emergency Preparedness and Response
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
EWS	Early Warning Systems
FeDURP	Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor
FERP	Freetown Emergency Response Project
FEWSN	Food Early Warning Systems Network
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GIZ	German Technical Cooperation
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDRR	International Disaster Risk Reduction
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
LDC	Least Developed Country
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MLHCP	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning
MMA	Mines and Minerals Act
MoGCA	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
MOHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MoSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MoWR	Ministry of Water Resources
MTNDP	Medium Term National Development Plan



MTNDP	Medium-Term National Development Plan
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NASCIA	National Security and Central Intelligence Act
NCCC	National Climate Change Council
NCCSAP	National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
NDCs	National Determined Contributions
NDMF	National Disaster Management Fund
NDOC	National Disaster Operations Centre
NDPRP	National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan
NFF	National Fire Force
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NHP	National Hazards Profile
NPDRR	National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
NSADP	National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan
NSCCG	National Security Council Coordinating Groups
NSR	National Situation Room
NSSG	National Strategic Situation Group
NUA	New Urban Agenda
ONS	Office of National Security
PAR	Pressure and Release Model
POA	Programme of Action
PROSECS	Provincial Security Committees
RDMC	Regional Disaster Management Committee
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces
SACCO's	Savings and Cooperatives Organisations
SADC	South African Development Community
SANDMC	Southern African National Disaster Management Centre
SASDRR	Southern African Society for Disaster Reduction
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
SLMA	Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency
SLRCS	Sierra Leone Red Cross Society
SMS	Short Message System
SOP	Standard Operation Procedures
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
TOR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Thematic Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction
UNFCC	United Nation's Framework Convention for Climate Change
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit



FORWARD

The importance of a National Disaster Risk Management Policy (NDRMP) for Sierra Leone cannot be overemphasized. Disasters disproportionately affect poor and vulnerable populations, serving as a significant impediment to poverty reduction and sustainable development. Rapid population growth and unplanned urbanization force marginalized communities to inhabit high-risk settlements, often in fragile and hazardous conditions that exacerbate their vulnerability to disasters. The Government of Sierra Leone is dedicated to employing a multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary approach to tackle the causes and effects of disasters. It is imperative that Sierra Leone introduces a revised and comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy, outlining fundamental guiding principles, strategies, mechanisms, cross sectoral issues, and an institutional framework pertinent to sustainable disaster preparedness and management.

As a nation, we recognize that various hazards increasingly impact societies due to rising levels of human vulnerability. Disasters are not isolated events; rather, they are manifestations of deficiencies and weaknesses within a society, often induced by human-determined path of development. The Government of Sierra Leone understands that preventing disasters hinges on our ability to build just and equitable social, economic and political structures and processes. Such development affirms the moral duty of all citizens to accept and fulfil their responsibilities to uphold the rights and entitlements of the poorer members of our society.

This revised policy document aligns with the 'Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024-2030), which is anchored on five big game changers seeking to boost agricultural productivity, develop human capital, create youth employment opportunities, revamp the public service, and invest in technology and infrastructure, Institutional development and strengthening for the effective discharge of duties, especially in the areas of reducing the risks of disasters and responding to them. In this context, the government remains committed to supporting the established NDMA to anchor the activities and processes of DRM in the country.

In our vision for disaster management, we aspire to create “a safer, climate-adaptive, and resilient nation in which communities, the economy, and the environment are better protected from the negative impacts of hazards through appropriate and comprehensive disaster risk management”. This vision includes a strong commitment to climate action, recognizing that the impacts of climate change pose significant risks to our communities and ecosystems. Therefore, integrating climate resilience into all aspects of disaster risk management is essential for safeguarding our future.

Moreover, the revised DRM policy emphasizes the importance of mainstreaming gender in all phases of the disaster risk management cycle. Recognizing that disasters affect men and women differently, this policy seeks to ensure that the voices and needs of women, girls, and marginalized groups are prioritized in our disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. By promoting gender equality and empowering women, we can enhance community resilience and foster more effective disaster risk management strategies.

The revised DRM policy establishes an institutional and operational framework that will drive successful implementation. Given the multidisciplinary and multi-dimensional nature of DRM, all our development and humanitarian partners are called upon to collaborate with Government in building national and community resilience to disasters within the context of sustainable development.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the experts and stakeholders who contributed to the development and review of this policy, and to the World Bank for their financial support. It is anticipated that the full implementation of this policy will significantly enhance disaster risk



management, preparedness, prevention, and response, while also contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable development in the country. Our country is on the move with this policy; we must therefore act decisively to sustain and protect our development by supporting the approval of the Sierra Leone National Disaster Risk Management Policy. Together, let us build a safer, more resilient future for all Sierra Leoneans.

His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dr. Julius Maada Bio



PREFACE

As the Director General of the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) of Sierra Leone, it is both an honor and a privilege to present this revised National Disaster Risk Management Policy (NDRMP). This document reflects our collective commitment to enhancing disaster resilience and ensuring the safety and well-being of all Sierra Leoneans in the face of increasing natural and human-induced hazards.

Disasters have profound impacts on our communities, often exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and hindering our national development efforts. The experiences of recent years have underscored the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to disaster risk management. With rapid urbanization, climate change, and socio-economic challenges, it is imperative that we adopt proactive measures to mitigate risks and enhance our capacity to respond effectively to emergencies.

This revised policy aligns with the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024-2030) and is underpinned by a holistic framework that emphasizes the importance of collaboration across sectors and levels of government. We recognize that disaster risk management is not solely the responsibility of the NDMA; rather, it requires the active participation of all stakeholders, including government ministries, local authorities, civil society organizations, the private sector, and communities themselves. Together, we can build a resilient nation that not only prepares for disasters but also adapts to the changing climate and fosters sustainable development.

A key focus of this policy is the integration of climate action and gender considerations throughout the disaster risk management cycle. We understand that climate change poses significant challenges to our country, and we must incorporate climate resilience into our planning and response efforts. Additionally, we recognize that disasters affect different segments of our population in varying ways, and it is essential to ensure that the voices and needs of women, girls, and marginalized groups are central to our disaster management strategies.

The establishment of a robust institutional framework within the NDMA will drive the successful implementation of this policy. Our commitment to capacity building, public awareness, and community engagement will empower individuals and communities to take an active role in disaster risk reduction and resilience-building efforts.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the experts, stakeholders, and partners who contributed to the development and review of this policy. Your insights and dedication have been invaluable in shaping this comprehensive framework. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the World Bank and other international partners, whose collaboration is crucial in our journey toward building a safer and more resilient Sierra Leone.

As we move forward with the implementation of this policy, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to disaster risk management. Together, we can create a safer future for our communities, protect our development gains, and ensure that Sierra Leone emerges stronger and more resilient in the face of adversity.

Rt Brigadier Brima Sesay

Director General

National Disaster Management Agency

Sierra Leone



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We extend our deepest grateful to all individuals and entities who have contributed to the development and review of the National Disaster Risk Management Policy for Sierra Leone. Your dedication, expertise, and collaboration have been invaluable in shaping this comprehensive framework that aims to enhance disaster resilience and ensure the safety and wellbeing of all Sierra Leoneans.

Special thanks to Braima Koroma, the Disaster Risk Management Policy Consultant for his exceptional leadership, guidance, and commitment throughout the policy revision process. His expertise and tireless efforts have played a crucial role in crafting a forward-thinking and inclusive policy that aligns with global best practices and national priorities.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the World Bank and the Project Management Unit of the Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project for their continuous support and resources, which have facilitated the development and implementation of the revised NDRMP.

Furthermore, we acknowledge the contributions of the technical working committee, key stakeholders, government entities, development partners, civil society organizations, research institutions, and private sectors who have actively participated in workshops, consultations, and discussions to ensure that this policy reflects the diverse needs and perspectives of all stakeholders.

Together, we have laid the foundation for a more resilient, proactive, and inclusive disaster risk management approach in Sierra Leone. Your collective efforts will significantly strengthen our capacity to mitigate risks, respond effectively to emergencies, and build a safer and more resilient future for all Sierra Leoneans.

Thank you all for your dedication and contributions to enhancing disaster risk management in Sierra Leone. Your collective efforts will significantly strengthen our resilience in the face of future challenges.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The revised National Disaster Risk Management Policy (NDRMP) for Sierra Leone is a critical response to the escalating frequency and intensity of disasters, which are increasingly exacerbated by climate change. As the nation grapples with the multifaceted challenges posed by natural hazards, this policy emerges as a comprehensive framework aimed at enhancing resilience, safeguarding communities, and promoting sustainable development. Central to this policy is the integration of gender considerations, ensuring that the unique needs and perspectives of women, girls, and marginalized groups are prioritized in all aspects of disaster risk management (DRM).

Sierra Leone is particularly vulnerable to a range of natural disasters, including floods, landslides, and droughts, which have devastating impacts on communities, infrastructure, and livelihoods. The country's recovery from the civil war and the Ebola outbreak has highlighted the importance of building resilience against future shocks. The revised NDRMP seeks to address these challenges by establishing a robust institutional and operational framework that not only responds to disasters but also proactively mitigates their impacts.

Recognizing that disasters do not affect all individuals equally; the policy emphasizes the need for a gender-sensitive approach. Women and girls often bear the brunt of disasters due to existing social inequalities, limited access to resources, and underrepresentation in decision-making processes. By embedding gender considerations throughout the DRM cycle, the policy aims to empower women, enhance their participation, and ensure that their voices are integral to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

The revision of the NDRMP was a collaborative endeavour, involving extensive consultations, workshops, and stakeholder engagements with experts, civil society organizations, and community representatives. This inclusive approach has ensured that the revised policy is not only aligned with national priorities but also reflects global frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The engagement of diverse stakeholders has been instrumental in identifying gaps, sharing best practices, and fostering a sense of ownership among all parties involved.

The revised NDRMP outlines several key focus areas that are essential for effective disaster risk management, with a strong emphasis on gender equality:

1. **Enhancing Institutional Capacity:** Strengthening the capabilities of institutions responsible for DRM is paramount. This includes targeted training programs that incorporate gender sensitivity and awareness, ensuring that all personnel are equipped to address the unique needs of women and marginalized groups during disaster situations. Capacity building will also involve the establishment of gender focal points within relevant institutions to champion gender-responsive policies and practices.
2. **Reducing Vulnerabilities:** A critical aspect of the policy is the identification and addressing of underlying vulnerabilities within communities. Comprehensive risk assessments will be conducted to understand the specific challenges faced by women and marginalized groups. Tailored interventions will be developed to mitigate these vulnerabilities, ensuring that disaster preparedness plans are inclusive and equitable.
3. **Mitigating Disaster Impacts:** The policy advocates for the implementation of proactive measures to reduce the impacts of disasters. This includes the establishment of early warning systems that are accessible to all community members, particularly women and those in remote areas. Community preparedness programs will be designed to engage women actively, providing them with the knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively to disasters.



4. **Integrating Climate Action:** Climate change poses significant risks to disaster management efforts. The revised NDRMP emphasizes the need to embed climate adaptation strategies within DRM initiatives. This includes assessing how climate-related hazards disproportionately affect different genders and ensuring that adaptation measures are inclusive and equitable.
5. **Strengthening Financial Mechanisms:** The policy outlines clear guidelines for accessing and managing funds for disaster risk management. This includes the creation of special funds as stipulated in the Disaster Management Act, with provisions to support gender-responsive initiatives. Financial mechanisms will be designed to ensure that resources are allocated to programs that specifically address the needs of women and marginalized groups.
6. **Promoting Gender Equality:** A cornerstone of the revised NDRMP is the commitment to promoting gender equality in all aspects of disaster risk management. This includes developing specific strategies to engage women in DRM roles, ensuring their participation in planning and decision-making processes, and addressing gender-based violence in disaster contexts. The policy recognizes that empowering women not only enhances community resilience but also contributes to broader societal development.

The revised NDRMP is structured into 13 sections, each addressing critical components of disaster risk management:

Section 1 provides the context and rationale for revising the DRM policy, highlighting the importance of a gender-sensitive approach. Section 2 reviews relevant legislative instruments that support disaster risk management and promote gender equality. It explores key international, regional, and local frameworks that shape policy directions, ensuring alignment with global standards and commitments.

Section 3 offers an overview of hazards, vulnerabilities, and disaster hotspots within Sierra Leone. This section identifies the factors leading to disaster events, accounts for the losses incurred, and highlights known hazard hotspots. Considering the profiling in Section 3, Section 4 analyzes the structural constraints that hinder effective disaster risk management, particularly those affecting women and marginalized groups. Recognizing these constraints is essential for addressing and mitigating their impacts during disaster situations.

Section 5 assesses past disaster management practices, identifying successes and areas for improvement. It highlights priorities that require immediate attention and emphasizes the opportunity to learn from best practices implemented in other jurisdictions, thereby informing future policies. Considering the policy revision, Section 6, articulates the policy's Vision, mission, and guiding principles, with a strong emphasis on gender equality. The strategic framework is foundational to achieving inclusive disaster risk management. Following on from that, Section 7, outlines specific actions to drive the implementation of the policy, including timelines and responsible parties. The focus is on gender-responsive actions that ensure equitable participation and benefit for all community members.

Section 8 details the policies and structures necessary for the effective operationalisation of the policy. It describes the decentralized institutional set-up from national to local levels, outlining specific roles and responsibilities to enhance accountability and coordination.

Section 9 provides a comprehensive outlines of funding sources and mechanisms that support effective DRM programming in the country. In doing so, it discusses obligations and opportunities related to the creation of special funds as stipulated in the Disaster Management Act, ensuring dedicated resources are available for gender-responsive initiatives This is followed in Section 10, defines indicators and processes for ongoing assessment for policy effectiveness, including the incorporation of gender-specific indicators to measure progress.



Section 11 offers recommendations for new regulations designed to enhance DRM effectiveness. These regulatory frameworks are essential for ensuring the policy's successful implementation and alignment with best practices. Section 12 lists the various sources and published materials that informed the policy revision process, and Section 13 includes supporting documents and data to enhance the policy framework

Sierra Leone's effort to revise the NDRMP reflects a concerted approach to creating a systematic framework for disaster risk management that promotes resilience and safeguards the livelihoods of communities across the country. By prioritizing gender considerations and fostering collaboration, capacity building, and inclusivity, Sierra Leone aims to create a safer, more resilient future for all its citizens. The revised policy not only addresses the immediate challenges posed by disasters but also lays the groundwork for sustainable development and poverty reduction.



GLOSSARY

The following definitions include definitions used in the Act and other concepts have been defined having regard to their use in the context of DRM in Sierra Leone.

Build Back Better	The use of recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and communities through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalization of livelihoods, economies and the environment ¹ .
Climate Change	A change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g. by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variabilities of its properties and that persist for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate Change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcing or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or land use.
Community	A social group with a community of association and generally defined by location shared experience or function, and with several things in common such as culture, heritage, language, ethnicity, pastimes, occupation, or workplace.
Community-based Disaster Risk Management	Promotes the involvement of potentially affected communities in disaster risk management at the local level. This includes community assessment of hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities, and their involvement in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of local action for disaster risk reduction.
Decision-makers	Individuals, groups, organizations, or entities who make an investment, spending, policy, program, legislative, regulatory, resource allocation, planning, or lifestyle decisions.
Disasters	are usually described as a result of the combination of conditions of vulnerability that are present; insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative consequences; and exposure to a natural hazard. Disaster impacts may include loss of life, injury, disease, and other negative effects on human physical, mental and social well-being, together with damage to property, destruction of assets, loss of services, social and economic disruption, and environmental degradation. The term 'natural disaster' is not quite accurate, since the conditions that lead to the catastrophic impacts of a natural hazard are linked to the prevailing socio-economic conditions which are not natural but, rather, determined by human actions and decisions.
Disaster mitigation	The lessening or minimizing of the adverse impacts of a hazardous event.
Disaster risk	The potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets which could occur to a system, society, or a community in a specific period of time, determined probabilistically as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability, and capacity.
Disaster Management	A continuous and integrated multi-sectoral, multidisciplinary process of planning and implementation of measures aimed at preventing or reducing the risk of disasters, mitigating the severity or consequences of disasters, emergency preparedness, rapid

¹ Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction. UN 2016.



	and effective response to disasters, and post-disaster recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement.
Disaster risk governance	The system of institutions, mechanisms, policy and legal frameworks and other arrangements to guide, coordinate and oversee disaster risk reduction and related areas of policy.
Disaster risk management	The term 'disaster risk management' refers to integrated, multisectoral and multidisciplinary administrative, organizational, and operational planning processes and capacities aimed at lessening the impacts of natural hazards and related environmental, technological and biological disasters. This broad definition encompasses the definition of 'disaster management' as it is used in the Disaster Management Act 2020. However, where appropriate, the more updated term 'disaster risk management' is preferred in this policy framework because it is consistent with the use of the term internationally.
Disaster relief and recovery	Disaster relief is the provision of immediate shelter, life support and human needs of persons affected by, or responding to, an emergency. Disaster recovery is the coordinated process of supporting emergency-affected communities in the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure and restoration of emotional social, economic, physical wellbeing.
Disaster response	Actions are taken in anticipation of, during and immediately after an emergency to ensure that its effects are minimized.
Disaster risk profile	The outcome of risk assessments done to determine the nature and extent of risk by analyzing hazards, vulnerabilities, and capacities that together could potentially affect exposed people, property, services, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend. The profiles form a risk analysis information system that can inform the DRM planning, contingency planning and early warning and response systems.
Disaster risk reduction	Disaster risk reduction is aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.
District Disaster Management Committee.	A district forum of people from different sectors and areas of study with diverse knowledge and skills brought together to advance, plan, advice and promote the implementation of the framework for action to prevent or mitigate disaster.
Disaster phase	A period when a disaster strike. DRM activities implemented during this period include: disseminating early warning, evacuation of risk people, conducting search and rescue operations, providing emergency relief supplies, and conducting damage and loss assessments.
Event	An event means any of the following: a flood, storm, or another natural happening; bushfire, a chemical, fuel or oil spill, an infestation, plague or epidemic etc. an event may be natural or caused by human acts or omissions.
Emergency preparedness	A state of readiness that enables ministries, departments and agencies, local and international organizations involved in disaster management, the private sector, communities and individuals, to mobilize, organize and provide relief measures to deal with an impending or current disaster or the effects of a disaster.
Exposure	Exposure refers to the location, attributes, and value of assets that are important to the various communities, such as people,



Hazard	buildings, factories, farmland, and infrastructure, and that are exposed to the hazard. Hazard means a rare or extreme event in the natural or man-made environment that adversely affects human life, property, or activity to the extent of causing disaster. A hazard is a natural or man-made phenomenon that may cause physical damage, economic losses, or threaten human life and well-being if it occurs in an area of human settlement, agricultural or industrial activity.
Human-made disasters	Disasters or emergencies where the principal, direct causes are identifiable human actions, deliberate or otherwise. Apart from 'technological' and 'ecological' disasters, this mainly involves situations in which civilian populations suffer casualties, losses of property, basic services, and means of livelihood as a result of war or civil strife, for example. Human-made disasters or emergencies can be of the rapid or slow-onset types, and in the case of internal conflict, can lead to 'complex emergencies' as well. Human-made disaster acknowledges that all disasters are caused by humans because they have chosen, for whatever reason, to be where natural phenomena occur that results in adverse impacts on people. This mainly involves situations in which the civilian population suffers casualties, losses of property, basic services and means of livelihood as a result of war, civil strife, or other conflicts.
National platform	The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction comprising persons from different sectors and areas of study with diverse knowledge and skills brought together to advocate plan, advice, and promote the implementation of the framework for action to prevent or mitigate disaster.
Natural hazards	A natural process or phenomenon that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation. Hence, in addition to the hazard, some vulnerability to the natural phenomenon must be present for an event to constitute a disaster.
Funding	The provision of financial resources, whether through a supply of money or commercial resources for a specific purpose.
Nationally significant	Considered to have significant national and cross-jurisdictional effect, impact, or influence.
Pre-disaster phase	A period before the occurrence of a disaster. DRM activities implemented during this period include; prevention, mitigation, and preparedness activities in order to eliminate or lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and related disasters.
Post disaster phase	A period after the occurrence of a disaster. DRM activities during this period focus on the provision of recovery and rehabilitation support to the affected communities and areas in order not only to restore social services, infrastructure, and economic activities but also to enable them to reduce future vulnerability to similar hazards and related disasters by applying 'building back better' principle in all recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction interventions.
Regional Disaster Management Committee	A regional forum of persons from different sectors, and areas of study with diverse knowledge and skills brought together to advocate, plan, advise and promote the implementation of the framework for action to prevent or mitigate disaster.
Recovery	The process by which the nation, communities, or groups of individuals are assisted to return to their proper level of functioning and livelihood following a disaster.



Rehabilitation	The operation and decision were taken after a disaster with a view to restoring a stricken community to its former living conditions while encouraging and facilitating the necessary adjustments to the changes caused by the disaster.
Resilience	The ability of a system, community, or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.
Risk	Risk is the probability that a hazard will occur and means expected losses due to the particular hazard. It is the product of a hazard and vulnerability.
Sectors	All sectors of society including government, industries, business, not-for-profits, communities and individuals.
Slow-onset disaster	A disaster that emerges gradually over time. Slow on-set disasters could be associated with e.g. drought, desertification, sea-level rise, epidemic disease.
Structural and non-structural measures	Structural measures are any physical construction to reduce or avoid possible impacts of hazards, or the application of engineering techniques to achieve hazard resistance and resilience in structures or systems. Non-structural measures are measures not only involving physical construction which use knowledge, practice, or agreement to reduce disaster risks and impacts, in particular through policies and laws, public awareness-raising, training and education.
Sudden-onset disaster	A disaster is triggered by a hazardous event that emerges quickly or unexpectedly. Sudden-onset disasters could be associated with e.g. flash floods, chemical exposure, critical infrastructure failure, transport accident, etc.
Vulnerability	The conditions are determined by physical, social, economic, and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, community, assets, or systems to the impacts of hazards.
Vulnerable groups	Categories of persons likely to be affected when a disaster strikes or persons with special needs, invariably defined to include: unaccompanied minors, the elderly, the mentally and physically disabled, victims of physical abuse or violence and pregnant, lactating, or single women whose precarious status needs special attention.



1.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Disasters and disaster management practices in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has been classified by the United Nation as a Least Developed Country (LDC) since 1982, with significant income inequality among its population. Despite While the country possesses substantial mineral, agricultural, and fishery resources, its economic and social infrastructure remain underdeveloped, hampering overall economic development. Furthermore, unsustainable agricultural practices, forest exploitation, and mining have led to environmental degradation, contributing to serious climate change effects and disasters that adversely affect the country's development.

The country is highly exposed to a wide range of catastrophic natural and human-induced disasters, including floods, landslides and coastal erosion, epidemics, windstorms with thunderstorms, drought/dry spells, fires, and water pollution, sea-level rise hazards, and epidemics, and extreme weather are frequent occurrences. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the country's topography, characterized by mountains, steep slopes, and low-lying coastal areas, coupled with high mean annual rainfall. The consequences of exposure to natural disasters are likely to worsen in the coming years, given Sierra Leone's susceptibility to the adverse effects of climate variability and its low capacity to cope with extreme events. For instance, in August 2017, one of the worst disasters in its history struck Sierra Leone, affecting 6,000 people and resulting in significant loss of life and property. The disaster disrupted transport flow, livelihoods, and access to essential services, leading to food insecurity among vulnerable households and economic losses of about USD 31.65 million or 0.8% of GDP in 2016. Additionally, disaster-related health risks remain a key concern, 40% of Sierra Leone's population lives in urban areas characterized by poorly constructed slums. Municipalities play a crucial role in service delivery, local development planning, and disaster risk management in urban areas, but insufficient stormwater drainage systems exacerbate the risks of drowning and the incidence of vector-borne diseases. Rapid urbanization is increasing the exposure of assets to disaster and climate risks, potentially leading to significant losses if new investments are not accompanied by measures to mitigate vulnerabilities.

Sierra Leone ranks second place in Africa (after Madagascar), and in 8th place globally in the Global Climate Risk and Vulnerability Index ranking (2019). The challenges posed by climatic changes and a rapidly increasing exposure to disasters present unprecedented obstacles to the country's development agenda. The 2021 World Risk Report ranked Sierra Leone 47th out of 181 countries regarding natural disaster losses, eight for disaster vulnerability, and risk², and sixth in terms of adaptive capacities. This elevated level of risk is evidenced by frequent adverse natural events that disrupt livelihoods and economic production, destroy physical infrastructure, and impose high public and private costs for rehabilitation, significantly contributing to increased poverty challenges in the country. Over the last four decades, Sierra Leone has experienced thirty adverse natural events that affected over 300,000 people³. In the medium to long term, the country could face annual losses of approximately US\$7.72million due to flooding alone, which represent the second highest flood annual loss from flooding in Sub-Saharan African relative to capital stock⁴.

² Day, S., Forster, T., Himmelshach, J., Korte, L., Muckle, P., Radtke, K., Thielborger, P., and Weller, D, 2019, World Risk Report 2019. Berlin: Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft

³ World Bank, 2019.

⁴ ibid

The increasing frequency and intensity of disasters in Sierra Leone necessitates urgent action to strengthen the country's resilience, preparedness, and response capacity. Currently, 13% of Sierra Leone's land area and over 35% of its population are at risk from multi-hazards, including floods, landslides and coastal erosion⁵. To effectively address disaster risk management (DRM), Sierra Leone must adopt a more holistic approach that includes establishing a robust institutional framework, proactively managing existing risk⁶, and preventing the emergence of new ones through disaster risk-informed planning and investments. The Government of Sierra Leone has prioritized reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing adaptation, preparedness, response, and resilience to disasters and climate change as essential components of its goals for accelerated economic recovery, growth, and social development.

In the last decade, the incidence and intensity of disasters has sparked significant interest and concern regarding risk management and impact reduction. In 2004, the Government established the National Disaster Management Department (DMD) within the Office of National Security (ONS), adopting disaster risk reduction (DRR) as a national priority. The DMD is tasked with identifying and assessing disaster risks, integrating disaster management into government policies, and coordinating efforts among various stakeholders, including NGOs, United Nations agencies, community-based organizations, the private sector, media and local communities. The National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (NDPRP), drafted in 2006, aimed to create a comprehensive, all-hazard approach to national disaster management activities encompassing prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Sierra Leone has aligned itself with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, recognizing the importance of managing disaster risk globally. The country has also committed to various international agreements, including the Paris Agreements on climate change, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which underscores the significance of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

In response to the escalating disaster risks, the Government of Sierra Leone has implemented pioneering measures that extend beyond mere disaster management. These initiatives focus on addressing the underlying risk drivers and enhancing inclusivity in the disaster risk reduction process. For example, community-based programs have been introduced in areas most vulnerable to flooding, allowing local populations to participate in risk assessments and response planning. Recognizing the vulnerability, the established the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) and developed legal and policy instruments to prevent, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. The approach has shifted from reactive to proactive, emphasizing a holistic and integrated disaster risk management (DRM) strategy that supports national development ambitions.

The updated disaster risk management policy has notably included gender considerations and climate action as critical components. This integration acknowledges the different vulnerabilities and capacities of men and women in disaster situations, ensuring that gender-responsive strategies are implemented in disaster risk reduction efforts. Furthermore, climate action is prioritized to enhance resilience against climate change impacts, reflecting the interconnectedness of disaster risk management and environmental sustainability. The updated policy aims to be comprehensive, addressing all known hazards while incorporating lessons learned from previous implementations. It requires coordinated efforts across multiple

⁵Over 10% of all settlements are located on either steep slopes or below sea level, which is far higher than any other city in Sub-Saharan Africa. One of the largest slums in Freetown Kroo-Bay has flooded every year since 2008.

⁶ Presently, the Office of National Security is charged with disaster management, primarily from a civil protection lens with a focus on response.



sectors, including land use, planning, infrastructure, emergency management, social policy, agriculture, education, health, community development, energy, and the environment. Improved coordination of operational procedures and strengthened policy architecture are essential for effective DRM.

Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024-2030) emphasizes the integration of DRM into national development strategies with key objectives aimed at enhancing resilience. These include establishing a rapid and efficient response mechanisms by 2030 to mitigate disaster impacts, decentralising 80% of disaster risk reduction interventions to promote local community involvement, and ensuring DRM is a core component of national policies through regular assessments of policy alignment. The plan advocates for a holistic approach that addresses prevention, preparedness, recovery, and resilience-building, alongside robust framework designed to minimize disaster impacts and reduce economic losses. While promising, these strategies face challenges such as limited funding and inadequate infrastructure, necessitating collaboration among government, civil society, and international partners to effectively achieve these goals and build a safer, more resilient Sierra Leone for future generations.

1.2 Rationale for the review of the Disaster Risk Management Policy

Following the development of the National Disaster Risk Management Policy (NDRM) and National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (NDPRP) in 2006, the Government of Sierra Leone undertook further actions to enhance DRR responses and strengthen disaster risk management (DRM) institutions in the country. The Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in 2014, the catastrophic landslide in 2017, and widespread flooding in various regions underscored the limitations of relying solely on the Disaster Management Department (DMD) within ONS as the primary disaster response body. In response, the government promulgated the Disaster Management Law in 2020, which established the Disaster Management Agency, transforming the Disaster Management Department into a semi-autonomous organization responsible for managing of disasters in Sierra Leone. The Act facilitates integrated and multi-sectoral action for disaster risk management at national, regional, district and chiefdom levels and across all sectors, monitored through a set of indicators. It also provides a framework and mechanisms for a well-coordinated, efficient, and risk-informed national response to threats with the potential to cause disasters, as well as recovery from their impacts. In this context, the updating of existing National Disaster Risk Management Policy is a timely opportunity to align institutional changes and strengthen the agency's capacity to address the growing wave of disasters both now and in the foreseeable future. In addition, draft DRM policies were developed in 2018 and 2021, reflecting ongoing efforts to adapt to evolving disaster challenges and institutional needs. These drafts serve as a critical building block for the current review, allowing for the incorporation of lessons learned and best practices from previous iterations, as well as aligning with recent developments in disaster management frameworks.

Consequently, it is critical for this policy update to focus on the underlying causal factors that contribute to disasters, moving beyond the mere persistence of hazards and their complex interactions to address the vulnerability of people. This approach aligns with the 'Pressure and Release' Models of DRR, which emphasizes that while natural hazards as trigger events, it is the progression of vulnerability within social systems that results in disasters and their impacts on communities. Understanding the social construction of disaster risk is essential for refining institutional arrangements and responsibilities in the country. The DRM policy must provide clarity on the institutions and arrangements necessary to effectively reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen capacities, and improve overall risk governance in Sierra Leone.

Moreover, the review incorporates climate change action as a central theme, recognizing that the impacts of climate change exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and increase the frequency



and intensity of disasters. Aligning the DRM policy with climate action initiatives is essential for building resilience in communities that are disproportionately affected by climate-related hazards. This includes integrating climate adaptation strategies into disaster risk management frameworks to ensure that responses are not only reactive but also proactive in addressing the underlying vulnerabilities exacerbated by climate change. Additionally, the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act 2023 must inform the policy review. The GEWE Act emphasizes the importance of gender-responsive approaches in all sectors, including disaster risk management. By integrating gender considerations into the DRM policy, the government can ensure that the unique needs and capacities of women and marginalized groups are addressed, enhancing community resilience and promoting equitable recovery efforts. This alignment will help foster inclusive disaster management practices that empower all segments of society, particularly those most vulnerable to the impacts of disasters.

Furthermore, the National Disaster Risk Management Policy reflects Sierra Leone's to supporting the implementation of global frameworks for disaster risk reduction and response. The review presents an opportunity for align with changes in international standards and best practice frameworks for DRM, specifically the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030, the UNFCCC Nationally Determined Contributions, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Agenda for Humanity (Humanitarian Outcomes) and the New Urban Agenda (Resilient cities). These global frameworks emphasize reducing risk rather than merely managing disasters, marking a shift from previous approaches. The revised policy will not only align with various international development frameworks but also national laws and guidelines, such as the Meteorological Agency Act, the National Adaptation Framework Plan, the National Land Policy 2015, and related environmental policies. This alignment will be instrumental in translating the DRM Act, promulgated in 2020, into a coherent DRM Policy and implementation strategy that reflects the interlinkages between policy and actions across all levels and all sectors of government.

In summary, the objectives of the review are to:

- Enhance existing institutional capacity to coordinate and manage disasters nationwide, which have increased in frequency, magnitude, and impact. The policy will serve as a crucial institutional capacity tool for disaster reduction at all levels and promote the use of knowledge, education, training, innovation, and information sharing to build safe and resilient societies.
- Align institutional capacity with evolving government priorities for DRM, moving towards proactive and resilient DRM systems.
- Reduce overall vulnerability among individuals and communities at risk from shocks and hazards, particularly in the context of climate change.
- Mitigate the social, economic, and environmental impacts of disasters through robust preparedness and response mechanisms.
- Integrate gender-responsive approaches in disaster risk management to ensure equitable recovery and empowerment of women and marginalized groups.
- Adapt to changes in existing legal and policy arrangements.
- Align with international standards and best practice frameworks for DRM, including the Sendai Framework (2015), the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement.
- Strengthen institutional and national visibility and funding for the DRM function.



- Enhance institutional capacity to adopt DRM technology and communication systems, including standards, guidelines, and procedures.
- Operationalize and update the draft 2006 Disaster Risk Management Policy by developing a multi-dimensional strategy that promotes disaster mainstreaming in development, strengthens the institutionalization of disaster management, enhances disaster management analytical skills and research, and develops an information system, advocacy, partnerships, and policy dialogue.

This comprehensive review will ensure that Sierra Leone is better equipped to face the challenges posed by disasters, fostering resilience and effective risk management for the future, while promoting gender equality and addressing the impacts of climate change.

1.3 Policy review and upgrading process

The revision and upgrading of the National Disaster Risk Management Policy (NDRMP) represent a critical endeavour aimed at enhancing the resilience of Sierra Leone against the increasing threats posed by disasters. This process was characterised by a systematic and inclusive approach, ensuring that the revised policy is robust, relevant, and responsive to the diverse needs and priorities of the nation. Centre to this effort was a commitment to stakeholder engagement, evidence-based analysis, and alignment with global standards.

The methodological approach to the policy review process commenced with an introductory workshop led by the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA). This workshop served as a platform to outline the objectives of the policy revision and to emphasize the importance of enhancing disaster resilience. By establishing a clear framework for the discussions that would follow, the NDMA set the stage for a collaborative and participatory process.

Following the introduction, participants were presented with the existing DRM frameworks, which highlighted key changes and proposed upgrades to policies, plans, and procedures. This presentation provided a foundational understanding of the scope of the revisions, allowing stakeholders to engage meaningfully in subsequent discussions. A dedicated question-and-answer session followed, enabling participants to clarify any uncertainties regarding the proposed frameworks. This transparency fostered an environment of collaboration and trust among stakeholders.

To facilitate deeper engagement, participants were then divided into groups for two breakout sessions. In the first breakout session, groups focused on specific components of the DRM framework, discussing strengths, areas for improvement, challenges in implementation, and strategies for effective stakeholder engagement. This division into smaller groups allowed for more focused discussions and the generation of diverse perspectives on the existing frameworks.

Building on the insights gathered in the first session, the second breakout session aimed to gather specific feedback and actionable recommendations. Participants identified gaps in the current frameworks, suggested additional resources, and explored monitoring and evaluation strategies to ensure ongoing effectiveness. This iterative process of feedback and refinement was crucial in shaping a comprehensive and actionable policy.

A panel discussion followed, featuring representatives from government entities, NGOs, and community organizations. This panel addressed the significance of stakeholder engagement in the policy implementation process, providing a platform for sharing experiences and insights. The audience was encouraged to participate in a Q&A session, further enriching the dialogue and fostering a sense of community among stakeholders.



The workshop concluded with a wrap-up session that summarized the key points discussed and outlined the next steps for implementing the revised policy based on participant feedback. This final session reinforced the collaborative nature of the process and highlighted the importance of ongoing engagement as the policy moves forward.

Throughout the review process, a comprehensive engagement strategy was employed, characterized by a participatory and inclusive approach. A diverse range of stakeholders, including government entities, development partners, NGOs, civil society organizations, research institutions, and private sector representatives, were actively involved. This broad-based participation ensured that multiple perspectives were considered, leading to comprehensive policy recommendations that reflect the collective aspirations of the nation. In addition to local consultations, a thorough review of relevant global policy frameworks was conducted. This included an examination of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Climate Change Agreement, humanitarian outcomes, and the New Urban Agenda. This review was essential for creating synergies between international drivers and the specific context of Sierra Leone, aligning the NDRMP for 2024-2030 with global priorities.

Two significant workshops were held, focusing on regional and national stakeholders. These workshops brought together key players from various locations, including Bo (Southeast), Makeni (North and Northwest including Kono District), and Waterloo (Western Area Urban and Western Area Rural). The sessions aimed to share experiences and best practices, identify gaps in policy and institutional structures impacting resilience-building efforts, and reflect on successes, challenges, and lessons learned from previous policy implementations. The discussions during these workshops ultimately led to the identification of proposed priority actions across six critical areas: mainstreaming disaster risk reduction (DRR) into sectoral development plans, improving disaster risk governance, investing in disaster risk reduction financing, enhancing preparedness, rebuilding better after disasters, recovery and reconstruction, and information and knowledge management. Notably, gender and climate action were integrated as essential priorities within this broader policy framework.

In conclusion, the policy review and upgrading process for the National Disaster Risk Management Policy has been a collaborative and evidence-based endeavour. By actively engaging a diverse range of stakeholders and aligning with global frameworks, the revised policy aims to effectively address the challenges posed by disasters in Sierra Leone. The resulting comprehensive set of policy objectives and strategies is detailed further in Section 6 of the NDRMP, reflecting the collective input and aspirations of all participants involved in the process. This collaborative approach not only strengthens the policy itself but also fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders, ensuring that the NDRMP is well-positioned to enhance the nation's resilience in the face of future challenges.



2.0 FRAMEWORKS FOR THE POLICY

2.1 Global frameworks

At the global level, the relevant frameworks are Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; Paris Agreements on Climate Change 2015, 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda 2015-2030, the Addis Ababa Action on Financing for Development, the Agenda for Humanity 2016, and the New Urban Agenda 2016. These global frameworks are closely related and mutually coherent. Disaster risk reduction is achieved through leveraging the synergies among global mandates. These instruments focus on the well-being of the world's population, poverty reduction, and a balance between development and care for the planet, but also on increasing the capacity of countries to respond to emergencies and disasters that have an impact on health and to recover from their effects quickly and effectively, which includes maintaining and restoring basic structures and functions.

These international agreements should not be seen in isolation. Sustainable development needs to be disaster resilient and be adaptive to climate change impacts. Keeping this in mind the revised policy has put special emphasis on establishing coherence between these international agreements.

2.1.1 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

The SFDRR (2015) is a global strategy and voluntary non-binding agreement for addressing disaster risk and resilience. SFDRR is fundamental to the vision and ambition of the GoSL and this requires full implementation. The framework has 13 guiding principles which primarily aim to address underlying disaster risk factors by strengthening resilience and facilitating inter-sectoral collaboration and partnerships. The Sendai Framework addresses risks of small-scale and large-scale; frequent and infrequent, and sudden and slow-onset disasters, caused by natural or man-made hazards, as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks. This framework aims to guide the multi-hazard management of disaster risk in development at all levels, as well as within and across all sectors. This outcome will be realized by the achievement of the following goal, drawing on the 'strong commitment and involvement of political leadership in every country at all levels in the ...creation of the necessary conducive and enabling environment'. To attain the expected outcome, the following goals must be pursued: *prevent and reduce existing and new disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, and institutional measures that prevent and reduce the hazard, exposure, and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience.*

The Sendai Framework notably indicates the four variables of disaster risk: exposure, vulnerability, capacity, and hazards and their characteristics; and by so doing, it offers an understanding of the scope that measures should have to address risk in all its aspects, hence its entirety. It gives a description of risks and their characteristics which are key to guide any normative effort. It states that:

'while the drivers of disaster risk may be local, national, regional or global in scope, disaster risks have local and specific characteristics that must be understood for the determination of measures to reduce disaster risk⁷. 'policies and practices for disaster risk management should be based on an understanding of disaster risk in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity, exposure of persons and assets, hazard characteristics and the environment'⁸.

⁷ See Sendai Framework (n 4) Guiding Principle 19 (i)

⁸ See Sendai Framework (n 4) Priority 1: Understanding Disaster risk para 23



And that is it important

‘to apply risk information in all its dimensions of vulnerability, capacity and exposure of persons, communities, countries and assets, as well as hazard characteristics to develop and implement disaster risk reduction policies’

The framework is built on four priority areas of action which are integrated into the goals and activities for DRM Policy (see box 1 below):

1. Understanding disaster risk
2. Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk
3. Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience
4. Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to ‘Build Back Better’ in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction

Sierra Leone is a signatory to the Sendai Framework for a 15-year, voluntary and non-binding agreement which recognizes the State as having the primary role to reduce disaster risk, but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector, and other stakeholders. DRR is a priority for Sierra Leone. As such, the GoSL, based in this direction, will take rapid and accurate measures to reduce disaster risks to ensure that the indicators of the Sendai Framework are achieved by the year 2030. Sierra Leone will make its contribution in achieving the seven global targets set by the Sendai Framework.

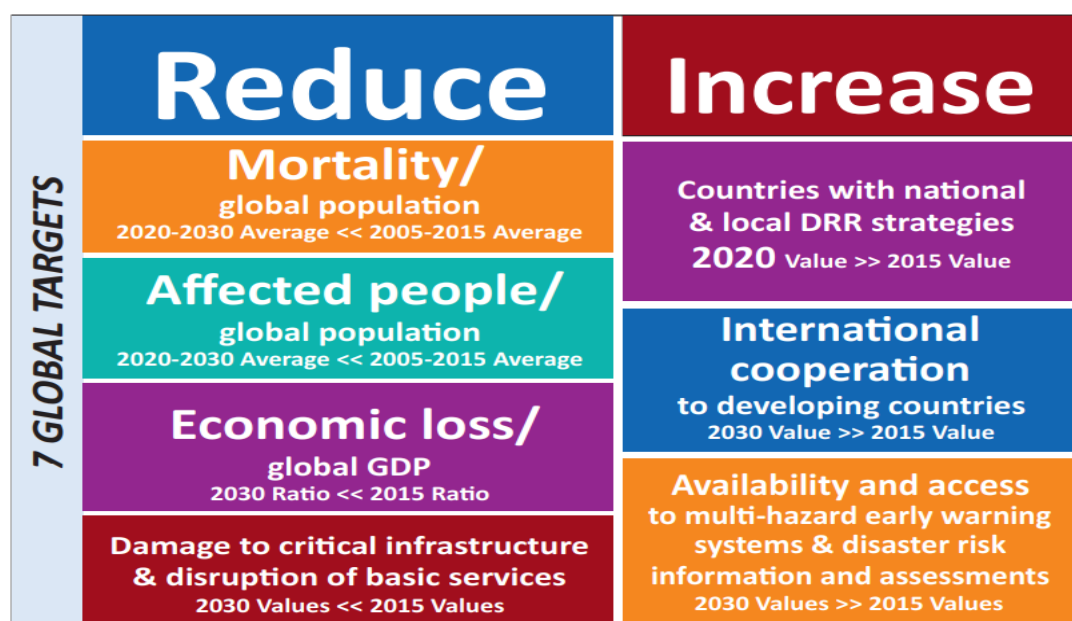


Figure 1: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – 7 Global Targets

1. Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2020, aiming to lower the average per 100,000 global mortality rates in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015
2. Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020-2030 compared to the period 2005-2015
3. Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to the global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030



4. Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030
5. Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020
6. Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the present Framework by 2030
7. Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessment to people by 2030

The Priorities for Action of the Sendai Framework will be reflected in the National Disaster Risk Management Policy 2024-2030 (hereinafter referred to as NDRMP) to show areas of commonalities and where better synergies can be achieved.

2.1.2 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a global transformative plan of action that seeks to end poverty, help the vulnerable, transform lives and protect the planet. It has at its core, the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights the need for DRR to be mainstreamed across several sectors. This is in line with the understanding that DRR is a cross-cutting issue and requires a multi-sectoral approach. The outcome document of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) says that the SDGs are unattainable without addressing the exposure and vulnerabilities of the poor.

In the global framework for sustainable development, ‘there are 25 targets related to disaster risk reduction in 10 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), firmly establishing the role of disaster risk reduction as a core development strategy’. In 17 sustainable development goals, disaster risk reduction is specifically linked for achieving specific targets of goal 1(ending poverty), goal 11 (safe, resilient and sustainable cities), and goal 13 (combating climate change). In effect, DRR for resilience is the foundation for achieving the SDGs. Each of the SDGs relies on reduced disaster impacts to meet its targets. The NDRM Policy 2024-2030 articulates the disaster-development linkages as relating to the broader national development agenda. Resilience allows safeguarding development efforts and investments from the negative impact of disasters and provides an opportunity for socio-economic, development through maximizing return on risk-informed investments, revenue and private and public sector budgets.

In concert with the SDGs, the Sendai Framework calls for the mainstreaming of the DRM in different sectors’ sustainable development plans, policies and practices and mechanisms.

2.1.3 The Paris Agreements on climate change

The Paris Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance starting in the year 2020. Adopted by consensus in December 2015, it was opened for signature in April 2016. As of October 2016, 192 UNFCCC members have signed the treaty, 89 of which have ratified it. Given the yet low levels of industrial development, Sierra Leone has the opportunity to benefit from this agreement to leapfrog into a sustainable future by investing more in renewable energy.

The Paris Agreement on global climate change points to the importance of ‘averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change’, including exposure and vulnerability to extreme weather events and slow onset events, coordination with national and local disaster risk reduction plans, and the role of



sustainable development in reducing the risk of loss and damage. The agreement laid down key principle that global climate change is a natural phenomenon that requires effective and active between and participation among all countries to collectively solve problems of climate change to prevent the severe impacts of changes in climate on the promotion of sustainable development. Climate change affects the frequency and intensity of natural hazards and more than 90% of disasters are weather-related. Coordinated and special action for DRR, therefore, needs to be factored into the process of climate change adaptation. Reducing disaster risk through effective adaptation plans at all levels, improving people-centered early warning systems, improving ecosystem management and enhancing disaster preparedness and disaster management capacities are crucial to sustainable and resilient development.

The agreements aim to mobilize \$100 billion annually by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries and help mitigate climate-related disasters. Strengthening the resilience of, and links between socio-economic and ecological systems, and adaptive capacity of more vulnerable regions such as Sierra Leone are emphasized to go with efforts to raise awareness and integrate measures into national policies and strategies. Addressing climate change is one of the 17 Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. An integrated approach is crucial for progress across multiple frameworks.

2.1.4 Agenda for Humanity 2016

The Agenda for Humanity includes 5 core responsibility areas, 24 transformations, and 32 core commitments to alleviate suffering, reduce risk and lessen vulnerability, which calls for the anticipation and prevention of disaster and crises. It consists of five core responsibilities that are essential to achieve progress to address and reduce humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability, namely: political leadership to prevent and end the conflict, leave no one behind, uphold the norms that safeguard humanity, change people's lives from delivering aid to ending need, and invest in humanity.

The Agenda for Humanity aims to reduce risk by promoting different ways of joining up action by working together to bridge the divide between humanitarian and development sectors, and to ensure that investments in sustainable development are risk-informed. This includes conducting risk and vulnerability analysis with development partners and local authorities and strengthening existing coordination mechanisms to share analysis of needs and risks, and better align humanitarian and development planning tools and interventions. This requires new and coherent approaches that address the economic, social, and political root causes of crises, conflict and disaster. The GoSL broad support to the Agenda for Humanity resonates with the existing de facto agreements and programming to support disaster risk management. But there is a weakness in the support and programming for disaster preparedness ahead of the crisis. This policy will seek to address the capacity building of DMA staff; improved stakeholder coordination mechanisms; strengthen data collection and analysis to inform decision-making and ensure sustained and predictable financing for disaster risk management.

The Agenda adopted the recommendations adopted in Sendai and a for a new way to manage and prepare for disasters, shifting from reactively managing crises to proactively managing risks and fostering risk-informed sustainable development.

2.1.5 Making cities resilient - The New Urban Agenda (NUA) 2016

The Making Cities Resilient agenda recognizes the critical place of the urban setting in both producing and mitigating disaster risk, and the growing burdens that urban residents have to bear. Urban centres in many developing contexts are the epicentres of disasters. In its vision, principles, and commitments NUA explicitly mentions DRR and resilience and promotes proactive risk-based, all-hazard and all-of-society approaches. This calls for sustainable management of natural resources in cities to promote DRR by developing DRR strategies and



assessing disaster risk periodically (para.65). Moreover, it expresses Member State commitments to improve cities' resilience to disasters by adopting approaches in line with the Sendai Framework (para 67 and 77). The synergies between NUA and the Sendai Framework provide the basis for expanded collaboration, including the UNDRR-led Making Cities Resilient Campaign and the UN-Habitat. This pursues the achievement of Target E of the Sendai Framework and the objectives of NUA, particularly on supporting cities in developing and integrating local DRR strategies into urban development plans.

2.1.6 The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA)

The AAAA is the global framework for financing sustainable development efforts by aligning all financing flows and policies with economic, social, and environmental priorities. The agreed Agenda aims at creating *'an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity'*. The AAAA covers more than 100 actions in the areas of infrastructure, technology, trade, social protection, support to enterprises and capacity building-covering practically all means of implementation – financing capacity building and technology development. With respect to urban areas, the AAAA acknowledges that investments in sustainable development need to be made at the sub-national level and promises to strengthen the capacities of municipalities and other local authorities supporting their efforts to mobilize appropriate revenues and turn their financing needs for sustainable development and investment opportunities.

The AAAA supports national and local capacities in the development of an integrated strategy and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change and resilience to disasters. AAAA encourages the consideration of climate and disaster resilience in development financing and calls for innovative financing mechanisms that allow countries to better prevent and manage risks, and to strengthen the capacity of national and local actors to manage and finance DRR.

2.2 Regional frameworks

2.2.1 Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Reduction

The Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction⁹ (2005-2010) recognizes that 'Governments need to expand the scope of national information systems to enable them to be used for both day-to-day development planning and for disaster risk reduction planning during times of crises'. The strategy brought together the various policies and strategies throughout the continents to improve the effectiveness and efficiency through a more strategic approach. The strategy further recognizes the need to strengthen disaster risk reduction information services and public communications mechanisms, including space technology and geographical information systems in a bid to enhance access to information and to expand information dissemination. It also specified that conflicts could increase the risk of natural hazard-related disasters, and the natural hazards can influence conflict characteristics (including type, onset and intensity). As such, the strategy included disasters resulting from both natural and human-induced hazards, including conflict.

Following the adoption of the Sendai Framework, the African Union align its strategy to it. The objective of the programme of action was 'to strengthen coherence and integration between risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, ecosystem management, conflict and fragility, and other development imperatives' (Africa Union Commission, 2016:7). Another objective was to strengthen gender sensitive DRR strategies that address risk drivers.

⁹ Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. Available at <http://www.unisdr.org/files/4038.africaregionalstrategy1.pdf>



2.2.2 ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction

The objective of the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) policy for Disaster Risk Reduction is to 'enhance the contribution of disaster reduction to peace, security and sustainable development of the sub-region (ECOWAS, 2006: 9). However, like the African Strategy, the policy does not authorize intervention in a situation of conflict but can be employed in complement with peace and security mechanism in situations where conflict exacerbates disasters, recognizing that 'disasters and conflict linked and are mutually reinforcing' (ibid.), conflicts affect disaster outcomes and disaster affects the type, onset, and intensity of conflicts. The policy identifies that, together, disasters and conflicts in West Africa 'undermine individual, country, regional and ecosystem security' and 'impact heavily on food security and compromise efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and other tropical diseases' (ibid., ii).

2.3 Sierra Leone's Development-related frameworks

2.3.1 Constitution

The ultimate responsibility for DRM in Sierra Leone rests with the Government. The policy capitalizes on the strong principles stated in the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone regarding the government's responsibilities to 'fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individuals' (Article 15) and 'protection of rights to life' (Article 16). Section 29 sub-section 2(d) of the constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 (No. 6 of 1991) also identifies the roles and responsibilities of government when disasters or national calamity occurs affecting the community or a section of the community in Sierra Leone. These includes:

- The protection of lives and properties of the citizens
- The protection of the country's development efforts, its socio-economic achievements, and its population and livelihoods
- Effective policy objectives and tools to promote adequate integrated multi-sectoral and cross-cutting issues that promote systematic and consistent approaches to disaster risk management
- Setting up a DRM system that allows intra-and inter-institutional coordination and the promotion of essential processes that contribute to intensifying and increasing the quality and impact of DRM efforts
- Clear align national vision for DRM to international disaster risk reduction frameworks and approaches that place greater emphasis on disaster risk reduction and community resilience
- Effective policy objectives and tools to enhance governance and accountability approach to DRM
- An effective, efficient and reliable resource mobilization mechanism that will enhance policy implementation.

2.3.2 Acts and policies concerning National Disaster Risk Management Policy

Disaster risk management is a development issue aimed at reducing social, economic, and environmental disaster losses to achieve socio-economic growth in the country. Due to the crosscutting nature of the disaster risk management function, the revised policy recognizes the existence of other policy documents which directly or indirectly address the concerns that this policy seeks to address. It is important to link with these policies to maintain coherence, constituency, and synergy in government policy. Therefore, efforts will be made to link these policies, which include among others, various Government Developments, and policies such as the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023) and other social, infrastructure, environmental and natural resources policies:



Table 2: Existing DRM-related policies and plans

<p>The Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024-2030)</p>	<p>The plan seeks “to guide all development actors in the country towards achieving the sustainable development goals 2030’. The plan focuses on key areas such as food security, human capital development, job creation, ICT and institutional development. The plan aims to integrate and mainstream disaster risk management into national development plans and policies for a holistic approach to minimizing disaster impacts. By 2030, the plan aims to employ rapid and efficient response mechanisms to minimize the impacts of disasters and ensure that 80% of disaster risk reduction interventions are decentralised and ensure a robust response to national threats and emergencies.</p>
<p>Disaster Risk Financing Strategy and Implementation Plan (2024-2029)</p>	<p>This strategy focuses on improving the financial mechanisms available for disaster risk management. Its objective is to improve fiscal risk management related to disasters by integrating various ongoing and planned efforts across different sectors. The strategy includes measures for risk assessment, risk reduction, preparedness, and financial protection. It aims to ensure that adequate resources are available for immediate response and long-term recovery.</p>
<p>Decentralization Policy 2020</p>	<p>The decentralization policy guide decentralization and ensure that people actively participate in leadership and decision-making processes in their own communities and that local councils provide the services that they require. It provides a roadmap for national and international partners to complement the efforts of the Government in delivering on its commitment.</p>
<p>National Environmental Policy 1994</p>	<p>The National Environmental Policy seeks to ensure sound environmental and natural resources management throughout Sierra Leone. The objectives are to encourage and facilitate local participation in environmental governance practices; secure an environment that is adequate for the health and wellbeing of communities and ecosystems; and foster learning and knowledge exchange through public education campaigns and programs.</p>
<p>National Land Policy 2015</p>	<p>The 2015 land policy seeks to clarify the complex and ambiguous constitutional and legal framework for sustainable management of land resources; promote law reforms that will further harmonize the two separate jurisdictions of the current land tenure systems; ensure the security of tenure and protection of land rights to all legitimate landholders, regardless of their form of land tenure; and promote equitable access to land</p>
<p>Disaster Management Policy 2006 and National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (NDPRP) 2021.</p>	<p>The NDMP and NDPRP remain the national references for disaster risk reduction. They give strategic directives to the government on steps to be taken before, during and after disasters. The objectives of the draft Disaster Management Policy are to enhanced increased political commitment to disaster risk management, promote public awareness and the incorporation of disaster risk management into development planning; ensure the integration of disaster risk management into sustainable development programs and policies to ensure a holistic approach to disaster management; and ensure priority and requisite institutional capacities for disaster risk reduction at all levels; enhance the use of knowledge, education, training, innovation and information sharing to build safe and resilient societies; and improve the identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning of risks. An initial step in the implementation of the policy has been the establishment of a national platform for disaster risk reduction by the disaster management department of the office of national security</p>
<p>Disaster management measures and response plan 2006</p>	<p>This plan harmonizes vulnerability and capacity assessments jointly conducted by the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society and the Disaster Management Department in the Office of National Security. The purpose of the plan is to establish a comprehensive all-hazard approach to national incident management including preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response and recovery; provide a framework of interaction</p>



	between the state and non-state actors, and establish a mechanism to maximize the integration of incident-related prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery
The Regional Development Authorities Policy 2007	Like the Local Government Act (2004 amended in 2022), it provides for the use of local-level institutional arrangements to ensure equitable and balanced national sustainable development planning and effective natural resources management. The policy has a direct bearing on streamlining and strengthening the roles and functions of community-based structures in rural and coastal zone development and management.
National Social Protection Strategy for Sierra Leone 2022-2026	The NSPSSL aims to address social vulnerabilities and risks through a comprehensive approach. The strategy emphasizes the importance of shock-responsive social protection systems that can adapt to disasters and emergencies, strengthening social protection systems to be resilient and responsive to disasters, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive timely support during crisis, and collaboration with disaster management agencies, enhancing the overall effectiveness of both social protection and disaster risk management initiatives.
National Action Plan (NAP) for land degradation 2010	The NAP outlines a framework for understanding and addressing land degradation in various sectors and regions, including through mainstreaming and capacity building
Land degradation neutrality target setting process 2017	In the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting process, Sierra Leone's Technical Working Group identified and establish hotspots of degraded areas using the three indicators of land cover, land productivity dynamics and soil organic carbon content. The hotspots provided useful guidelines for establishing baselines of land degradation from which the national voluntary targets were set.
Climate Change Policy 2021	The policy framework for climate change includes actions: revise the already adopted draft Climate Policy into a comprehensive Climate Act; establish the enabling legislative framework to implement the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (NCCS&AP) actions; strengthen the high-level National Climate Change Council (NCCC) in the Office of the President; and establish a Sierra Leone Climate Fund to be a financing mechanism for priority climate change actions and interventions.
Intended/Initial Nationally Determined Contributions (ratified 2017)	This includes prioritized activities for the transition of a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy, information for financing adaptation actions; and monitoring and control procedures. Priority climate change response strategies in the INDC include a comprehensive assessment of vulnerability and GHG contributions, management of rangelands; restoration of degraded areas using soil and water conservation approaches; management of coastal areas and fisheries; promotion of early warning and observation systems; improvement of local adaptive capabilities through safety nets and insurance schemes; and integration of disaster management, land tenure, extractives, tourism and health matters into climate change actions and legislation.
National climate change strategy and action plan 2015	The national climate change strategy and action plan include mechanisms and frameworks for climate adaptation and resilience building at the national, district and community levels.
Coastal climate change adaptation plan 2020	Contribute towards increasing resiliency and protecting coastal ecosystems across Sierra Leone Coastal Landscape Complex (the Bonthe-Sherbro River Estuary, the Scarcies Region, the Sierra Leone River Estuary and the Yawri Bay Landscapes) and beyond. The plan calls for collective action to protect and restore critical coastal ecosystems and bolster sustainable livelihoods. This will allow practitioners and policy makers to mainstream consideration of climate change risks, vulnerabilities, and adaptation into decision-making.
Sierra Leone National Action Plan for Health Security 2018-2022	The action seeks to prevent the likelihood and reduce the consequences of outbreaks and other public health hazards; build national capacities for early detection and effective response to public



	health emergencies and other events of public health concern; foster all-sector partnerships for effective prevention, detection and response to public health emergencies and other events of public health concern; and establish a sustainable financing strategy for the attainment of national health security.
National WASH Policy 2010	The 2010 WASH Policy aims to develop a comprehensive framework for managing water resources and sustainable development of water supply and sanitation services within an effective legal and institutional framework; and address cross-sectoral interests in water resources through integrated and participatory approaches in the planning, development and management of water resources
The National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan 2010-2030	The National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan 2010-2030 identifies basic climate change characteristics, without going into the details of adaptation needs. It notably intends to develop a comprehensive policy on climate change together with regulations on the use of carbon credits to encourage reforestation and afforestation.
The Environment Protection Act 2008 (as amended 2010)	The 2008 EPA established the EPA with an overarching responsibility for dealing with matters relating to environmental protection. Its mandate includes responsibilities to coordinate and monitor actors involved in activities relating to environmental protection legislation, implement and ensure compliance with national environmental policies and regulate and monitor the processing of waste, pollution and other environmental hazards
Draft Forestry Policy and Act 2010	It set out according to similar guiding principles as the draft Conservation and Wildlife Policy and establishes a set of policy objectives around forestry land management, forest-based industry and practices, ecosystem conservation, education and awareness, research and monitoring, and capacity building. The new Act shall acknowledge the environmental role of forest areas and place emphasis on the preservation of the forest environment.
Sustainable development goals (2015-2030)	The national document for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seeks to inform the United Nations about the progress Sierra Leone has made in sensitizing stakeholders to the new goals and in adapting them to national development processes. Under Goal 15, a list of indicators has been provided to show how to progress in achieving land degradation neutrality will be measured.
National Adaptation Programme of Action (2007)	The NAPA document seeks to identify the immediate adaptation measures that need to be taken to reduce the risks posed by climate change and the possible impacts of increased severe weather events on Sierra Leone.
Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency Act 2017	The 2017 SLMA establishes the Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency as the sole authority for providing meteorological and climatological services across Sierra Leone
GEWE Act 2022	The GEWE Act 2022 aims to promote gender equality and empower women across various sectors. Key focus areas include enhancing women's economic opportunities, improving access to education, ensuring comprehensive healthcare, and strengthening protection against violence. The act also encourages women's political participation and leadership roles while addressing the diverse experiences of women based on socioeconomic status. By tackling systemic barriers, the GEWE Act seeks to create a more equitable society fostering an environment where women can fully participate and thrive in all aspects of life.
Gender mainstreaming Policy 2000	The overall goal of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy is to incorporate a gender perspective in all legislative measures, policies, programs and projects. It aims is to provide for policy makers and other actors in the development field, reference guidelines for identifying and addressing gender concerns, particularly taking decisions to address imbalances that arise from existing inequalities; to promote equal access to and



	control over economically significant resources and benefits, to ensure the participation of both men and women in all stages of development.
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Through synergies with these policies, the National Disaster Risk Management Policy will contribute to the socio-economic development of the country by mainstreaming DRM into all development planning processes and building the resilience of communities to disasters.

Linkages are also made to existing relevant national legislations and strategies including:

- The National Disaster Management Act, 2020
- The National Disaster Risk Financing Strategy and Implementation Plan (2024-2029)
- The Local Government Act, 2022
- The Environment Protection Agency Act (2008 as amended 2022)
- Education Act 2004
- Universities Act 2021
- The Sierra Leone Constitution. 1991
- Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency Act, 2017
- The Forestry Act, 1988 (as amendment) Act, 2022
- The Town and Country Planning Act, 1946 (amendment act of 2001)
- The National Water Resources Management Act, 2017
- The Public Health Ordinance Act, 2004.
- The National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan, 2006
- The National Protected Area Authority and Conservation Trust Fund Act, 2022

Other national legal instruments do not directly relate to disasters but include regulations that influence the operations of international humanitarian actors, such as procedures at customs, recognition of foreign qualifications and taxation of humanitarian organizations. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Customs (amendment) regulations Act No. 10 of 1992
- The Control of Goods Act No. 6 of 1962
- The Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act No. 35 of 1961
- The Pharmacy and Drugs Act 2001
- The Republic of Sierra Leone Visa Regulations of 1998
- The Income Tax Amendment Act of 2006
- The Medical Practitioners and Dental Surgeons (Amendment) Act of 2008
- The Police Act No. 7 of 1964
- The Sierra Leone Red Cross Act No. 9 of 1962 (amendment in 2012)
- The Finance Act No. 7 of 2023
- The Mines and Minerals Development Act, 2022
- The Petroleum Exploration and production act, 2011
- The Environment Protection (mines and minerals) Regulations, 2013.



3.0 HAZARD AND RISK PROFILE

3.1 Country profile

The Republic of Sierra Leone is located on the west coast of Africa. It has a population of 7.1 million. It has about 540 km of coastline, with a land area of 72,300 km². Bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the west, it shares a border with Guinea on the north and northeast, and Liberia on the south and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean on the west.

Figure 2: Map of Sierra Leone



Source: Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015

Table 3: Sierra Leone: General Profile

FEATURE	DESCRIPTION
Area	72,000 square kilometres (27,869 sq. miles) (7174,000 hectares)
Location	Sierra Leone is located on the Southwestern coast of West Africa. Located between latitudes 6 ⁰ 55' and 10 ⁰ ' North and between longitudes 10 ⁰ 14' and 13 ⁰ 17' west.
Borders/neighbouring countries	It is bordered to the West by the Atlantic Ocean, which is also the east-Atlantic coast in Africa. It borders Guinea to the north and northeast, Liberia to the south and southeast and the Atlantic Ocean to the West.



Major rivers	9 major rivers. Principal among these is the Sewa River (340 km approx.), Jong River (230 km), the Taia (), the Little Scarcies River (260 km), Rokel River (260 km), and Moa River (190 km) which all flows from northeast to southwest across the country and drain most of the surface of the land.
Forest	The country is estimated to have a total forest cover of approximately 2.75 million hectares (c.38.1% of the land area).
Coastline	It has about 540 km of coastline. The western coast (150km) is mainly low-lying 190km is relatively sheltered by extensive mangrove-fringed rias and mudflats, and dominated by mangrove-fringed rias and mudflats, apart from the low cliffs of the Bullom Peninsula and the mountainous Freetown Peninsula.
Population	8,420,,641 (UN 2022 mid-year estimate), with a relatively high proportion (41%) living in urban areas.
Region/District	Sierra Leone is divided into five administrative regions: Western Area (Western Area Urban (mainly the capital city Freetown) and Western Area Rural), Northwest Region (Port Loko, Kambia and Karene), Northern Region (Bombali, Tonkolili, Koinadugu, Falaba), Eastern Region (Kenema, Kailahun and Kono) and Southern Region (Bo, Pujehun, Bonthe and Moyamba). These five regions are further divided into 16 Districts
Sub-national level	446 wards managed by district councillors and 190 chiefdoms managed by paramount chiefs
Sex ratio	Male: 49% (3,490,978); Female: 51% (3,601,135) (2015 Population and Housing Census)
Population density	Sierra Leone has a relatively high population density of 108 per Km ² (280 people per mi ²).
Annual exponential population growth rate	2.1 % in 2023
Population share	Rural: 56.17% (2022) Urban: 43.83% (2022) (UN Estimate, 2023)
Languages	English, Krio (Creole language derived from English). There are up to 23 local languages, but the most widely spoken are Mende, Temne and Limba.
Economy	Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world ranked 182 out of 189, with a GDP of US\$4.558 billion (nominal, 2024 est), per capita income of US\$ 634.74 (2023), a poverty rate of 57.0%, youth unemployment at 60%, and a Human Capital Index (HCI) of 0.477 in 2021 below the world average of 0.57 (World Bank, 2019; 2020)
Climate	The climate is humid tropical, with a wet season (southwest monsoon) during May – November and a dry season during December – April. The mean annual rainfall for the whole country is around 2,500mm. the average temperature follows a seasonal cycle, with a maximum around March and a second maximum around October/November, separated by lower temperatures during the rainy season. Temperatures are lowest at the peak of the wet season (about 22 to 25oC) and high during the rest of the year (around 25 ^o C – 27 ^o C and relative humidity varying from an average of 80% in the rainy season to about 50% in the dry season. Coastal and southern areas, including Freetown, experience more severe rainfall patterns with annual rainfall between 3,000-5,000mm per year peaking to more than 800 mm of rainfall monthly in July and August, making these the wettest



parts of West Africa. Seasonal rainfall varies on inter-annual and inter-decadal timescales, in part due to the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO).

3.2 Hazard and risk profile: exposures, impact and vulnerabilities

Sierra Leone is prone to disasters induced by both natural processes and human-related activities. Over the past years, Sierra Leone has experienced several hazards, each with their own measure of destruction on human lives, property and livelihoods. The hazard experienced in Sierra Leone over the past decades can be categorised as:

- Hydro-meteorological hazards: floods, hailstorm, windstorm, and lightning
- Geological hazards: landslides, and mudslides
- Biological hazards: diseases, human epidemics and invasive species, crop pests and diseases, Livestock vectors
- Human induced hazards: accidents (roads, air, and water), fires (In situ - house and ex-situ -wildfires), artisanal mining activities and civil wars
- Environmental hazards: land degradation, wetland degradation, deforestation, pollution (water, air, and soil) and poor solid waste management

Table 4: Classification of hazards/threats for the National Disaster Risk Management Policy

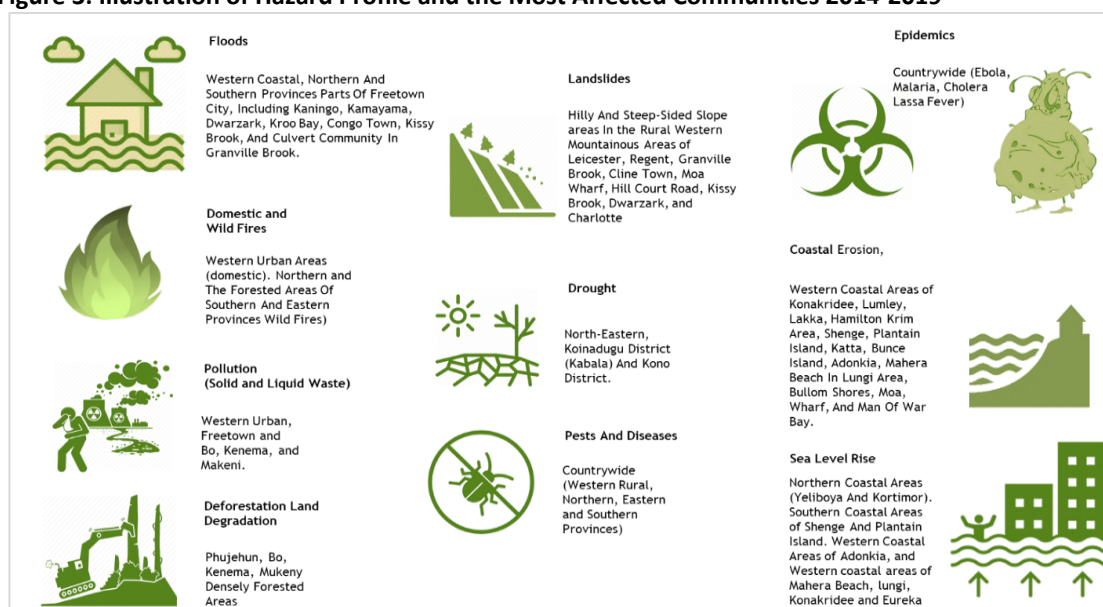
Hazard grouping		Hazard item	Remark
Natural hazard	Climatological hazard (climate change)	Rising temperature; changing frequency and intensity of storms, and lightning, flood, and drought; water shortage, sea-level rise; coastal inundation, and accelerated ecosystem degradation	Included in the NRMP
	Hydro-meteorological hazard	Windstorm and lightning, heavy rain, floods (including flash flood and inland flood), storm surge, landslide,	
	Geological/geophysical hazard	Landslide, mudslides, rockfalls	
	Ecological hazards	Bush fire, deforestation and pollution	
	Pest hazard	Insect and animal pest and livestock vectors	
	Biological hazard	Epidemic and/or widespread outbreak of contagious disease, unknown disease outbreak, epidemic (HIV/AIDS, Cholera, Malaria, Typhoid, Lassa Fever, Tuberculosis and Yellow Fever)	
	Environmental hazards	Land degradation, wetland degradation, deforestation, pollution (water, air, and soil) and poor solid waste management.	
Non-natural hazard	Human-induced/technological hazard	Environmental contamination by rubbish/polluted water, oil spill, chemical leak, fires (in situ – house and ex-situ – wildfires), major traffic accident (roads, air and water), building and infrastructure collapse (defective/substandard	



		construction/poor maintenance), unplanned settlements, artisanal mining activities drug abuse	
	Political hazard	Civil unrest, terrorism, war	Excluded from the NDRMP

In terms of their frequency and likelihood of occurrence, the most prevalent hazards are that are the recurring small-scale hazards which result in slow-onset disasters, and which have particularly affected communities and households, leading to high social-economic losses. Nearly all communities across the country, especially those settled in the Western Urban, Western Rural, Eastern, Southern and Northern districts of Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Kenema, and Pujehun had suffered the effects of at least one type of disaster. The illustration below (figure 2) is instructive and shows some of the most hazard-prone communities and what the corresponding hazards are.

Figure 3: Illustration of Hazard Profile and the Most Affected Communities 2014-2019



Source: *Sierra Leone Hazard Profile 2018*.

An assessment of the likelihood, frequency and recorded impacts of the hazard profile of Sierra Leone, leads to the critical evaluation of disaster hotspots that require targeted attention to reduce the scale and magnitude of disaster losses (See Table 5 below). The curation of hotspots also allows for any targeted interventions to be specifically aimed at reducing known and emergent vulnerabilities of communities to the catalogued hazards. Additionally, the assessment gives an indication of known hotspots that are hit by more than one hazard and throws a lens on the multi-dimensionality or the multi-hazard interactions that communities can be vulnerable to. The inclusion of the impacts in this assessment provides an additional layer of depth to the losses that have/are suffered from resultant disaster events and is instructive to consider in effective DRR planning, particularly at the lowest levels.

In this instance, the assessment draws on qualitative data and mixed data sources, including various rounds of consultations with stakeholders and representatives, to paint a broad but useful picture on frequency, scale, hotspots and impacts. The absence of robust quantitative data across the hazards profiled, and in a longitudinal, systematic manner makes the adoption of this qualitative approach a feasible step. The broad indicators of frequency/likelihood of a hazard occurrence are ranked as high, medium and low. Where the “high” refers to disaster



events happening seasonally, or at least once a year. The “medium” frequency refers to disaster events that occur occasionally or between 1-3 years intervals. And the “low” frequency refers to disaster events that occur rarely with more than 3 years interval between recorded events.



Risky hill side human settlement



Table 5: Spatial Disaggregation of Hazard Profile and Impacts in Sierra Leone.

HAZARDS/ RISKS	LIKELIHOOD/ FREQUENCY	SCALE OF IMPACT	AREA OF PREVALENCE /HOTSPOTS	ASSESSED IMPACTS
Flooding	High/ Seasonal	Geographically specific and widespread	Freetown, Pujehun, Kambia, Bonthe, Kenema, Makeni, Waterloo, Moyamba, Nongowa and lower Bambara chiefdom. (with urban dominance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2024, 7,324 hectares of farmland were affected by flooding nationwide during this rainy season. • Between 1980 and 2010, flood-affected approximately 221,204 people, with 145 casualties. Both 2015 and 2017 witnessed the largest number of people affected, around 14,000 people in 2015 and 6,000 in the combined landslide and flooding in 2017. • Recent floods experienced in August 2019 reportedly claimed at least 6 lives and affected 8000 people including lactating mothers, pregnant women and children. • In August 2023 heavy rains led to severe flooding in Freetown and other parts of the country, affecting over 10,000 people and causing significant property damage. • Loss of crop • Loss of livestock and poultry • Infrastructure damage • Disruption of water supplies and sewerage works • Deterioration of drainage systems • An outbreak of waterborne diseases, such as cholera • Severe damage to the subsistence production bases of the local population thus destroying the wage-based as well as natural resource-based livelihoods.
Fires Domestic Electrical/ind ustrial	High / Seasonal	Geographically specific / Very localised	Urban and local areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March 2021, Susan's Bay fire disaster estimated that 200 structures were lost, directly affecting more than 7,093 people from 1,597 households • In 2013, wide fires in four districts had the cumulative effect of destroying 279 houses and rendering 2257 people homeless. • the occurrence of fires between 2006 and 2015 is estimated to have affected an estimated 11,000 people. Over 30 people due to fire disasters nationwide, with almost half that number from Western Area Urban. In total, 1356 houses were destroyed and fires nationwide damage 459 houses. • In 2023 there were several significant fire incidents, particularly in densely populated urban areas, causing loss of life and property.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human casualties • Loss of assets and public infrastructure • The loss of biodiversity • The loss of pasture lands • The destruction of forests • The loss of vegetation cover resulting in soil erosion • The loss of livestock and crop fields results in food insecurity
Fires Wild/bushfires	High / Seasonal	Geographically specific / Very localized	Sub-urban areas; rural agricultural lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic loss • The loss of biodiversity • The loss of pasture lands • The destruction of forests • The loss of vegetation cover resulting in soil erosion. • The loss of livestock and crop fields results in food insecurity
Drought	High/ Seasonal	Widespread	North of Koinadugu District (Kabala) and Kono District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the water table and drought-like conditions • Crop failures, freshwater shortage, wildfire and disease outbreak contribute to dry spells.
Building collapse	Occasional	Localized	Freetown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In September 2024, 7-storey building collapsed at Kissy. Recovered a total of 24 victims and of these 16 were fatalities and 8 survived. • In August 2024, a four-storey building collapsed in Congo Town resulting in at least 2 fatalities and several injuries. Another four-storey building collapse in July 2024 in Regent led to multiple fatalities and injuries. The Wellington building collapse claimed the lives of four individuals and cause injuries to others, while the incident in Congo Town result in two fatalities and two hospitalizations. • The country recorded 167 building collapse including 27 essential infrastructures. • The economic losses include the cost of rescue operations, medical treatment for the injured, and rebuilding efforts. • Significant destruction of residential buildings and vehicles has been reported.
Sea level rise, Storms and lightning	Medium / Occasional	Geographic specific (Coastal settlements)	Kambia, Port Loko, Moyamba, Bonthe, Pujehun and some part of Freetown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea level rise is likely to be seen in the form of flooding during storms (which are also likely to increase in intensity as a consequence of climate change) • Storm surge will see more frequent inundations in vulnerable areas • Human casualties



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fires • Infrastructure damage
Epidemics	Medium / occasional	Widespread	Nationwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epidemics have killed an estimated 5,100 Sierra Leoneans and affected 28,000 between 1980 and 2017. EVD an estimated 3,955 died. • EVD outbreak has devastating impact across all spheres of life in Sierra Leone – health, education, economic and social. • Other outbreaks, Cholera in 2012, Lassa Fever (3 died in 2017 in Kenema), measles, yellow fever and influenza. However, Malaria accounts for the primary cause of death in Sierra Leone representing 20% of all under-5 deaths and affecting 2-2.8 million people a year between 2000 and 2015 (WHO, 2012; 2016). • Covid-19 pandemic affected 3939 confirmed cases and 79 deaths • Ebola, human casualties
Mud/landslides	High likelihood/seasonal	Localised	Kono District, Tonkolili, Western Area (Leicester, Regent, Granville Brook, Cline Town, Moa Wharf, Hill Cot Road, Kissy Brook, Dwazarck and Charlotte in the Mountain Rural District)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mud/landslide disasters account for 42 percent of nationally reported geophysical and geohazard mortalities between 1990 and 2014. In August 2017, a landslide disaster left over 500 people dead, some 600 missings, with about 50,000 directly or indirectly affected in the densely populated Freetown, with a massive 6 kilometres mudflow submerging and wiping out over 300 houses along the banks of the Lumley Creek. • Total economic loss estimated at US\$31.65m. • Infrastructure damage – road and pedestrian passages • Significantly impacted the populations quality of life and living conditions
Coastal erosion	High (progressive)	Geographic specific /Localised	Yeliboya and Kortimor (North Coast), Shenge and Plantain Island (South), Adonkia, Mahera Beach (Lungi), Konakridee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of housing and settlements • Loss of other physical infrastructure such a fishing landing sites/local harbours • Medium to long-term impact on livelihood activities and opportunities for on-shore residents. • Medium to long-term strain on housing stock, displacement, and forced relocation



Pest infestation	Medium likelihood/ low frequency	Typical geographically specific	Kambia, Bombali, Koinadugu, Moyamba, Kailahun, and Pujehun Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of crop • Loss of livestock and poultry • Loss of income generation • Medium to the long-term likelihood for disease vector and zoonotic disease spread.
Pollution (including Chemical waste)	High	Widespread	Predominantly urban; mining areas nationwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity loss • Spread of disease vectors and outbreak of diseases • Environmental pollution including marine pollution as a result of sewage and industrial effluent, marine litter, petroleum spill and dumped radioactive substances; freshwater pollution, and air pollution primarily causing injury to marine and aquatic animals and the spread of chemicals to the environment.
Transport-related accidents Sea transport Road transport Air transport	High	Widespread	Freetown peninsula waters and the coastal communities, Freetown to provincial areas and vice versa; Lungi International Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human casualties • Injuries • Infrastructure damage • Diversion of resources for medical expenses, funerals and insurance from the productive sector • Reduced human resource productivity
Unplanned urbanization including population movement	High (progressive)	Geographically specific	Mainly urban Sierra Leone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor sanitation • The increased trend in everyday disaster events • High densification and inadequate services; poor quality of health
Deforestation	High (progressive)	Geographic specific	Mainly Eastern and Northern Provinces, and Western Area (acute in peri-urban areas).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the water catchment area • Water shortage • Loss of productivity will have lasting adverse effects on the lives and livelihoods of future generations. • Increased erosion and the resultant sedimentation and loss of biodiversity constitute major future hazards that may produce social and economic losses of a huge magnitude. • Increase land/mudslides



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased intensity of wind storm / strong wind effects
Land degradation (Sand mining, Aggregate stone mining, Mineral mining)	Medium	Geographic specific	North, East, South, and the Western Area Rural Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human casualties • Land degradation • Coastal erosion • Food insecurity • Pollution
Climate change	High	Widespread	Nationwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased magnitude of extreme weather events • Impacts on agriculture and livestock production systems which will pose direct threats to livelihoods and food security • Severe impacts on natural resource base-sectors such as those supplying water and energy and the agriculture and fishing sectors • Coastal erosion • Overall increased magnitude of disasters caused by natural hazards that the country has been experiencing



Vulnerabilities

The vulnerabilities of Sierra Leone's population to disasters are influenced by various factors:

1. Socioeconomic vulnerabilities: high levels of poverty, unemployment, and limited access to education and healthcare contribute to the population's vulnerability. Many communities lack the resources to prepare for or recover from disasters.
2. Geographical vulnerabilities: communities located in flood-prone areas, along coastlines, or on unstable hillsides are at greater risk of experience the impacts of hazards,
3. Infrastructure vulnerabilities: inadequate infrastructure, including poor drainage systems, weak transportation networks, and insufficient emergency services, hampers disaster response and recovery efforts.
4. Health vulnerabilities: limited access to healthcare services and inadequate public health infrastructure can exacerbate the impacts of health-related hazards, making communities more susceptible to disease outbreaks.

4.0 CONSTRAINTS IN ADDRESSING DISASTER RISK ISSUES IN SIERRA LEONE

4.1 Underlying/structural drivers of disaster risk in Sierra Leone

The major underlying disaster risk factors in Sierra Leone are:

- Poverty
- Inadequate health services
- Disease/pandemic
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Poor housing
- Land and environmental degradation
- The problem of solid waste management
- Unplanned settlements
- Unemployment
- Climate change
- Poor governance
- Discrimination and inequality
- Conflict and insecurity
- Education
- Local resilience capacities

4.2 Major Constraints

4.2.1 DRM Institutional Framework

The Disaster Management Department was established in 2004 through an Act of Parliament in passed in 2002, following the NASCIA (National security and Central Intelligence Act). According to Act 10, Section 18, Sub-section IV of the act, the Office of National Security (ONS) is mandated to serve as 'the Government of Sierra Leone's primary coordinator for the management of national emergencies, preparedness planning, management and disaster assistance function'. The implementation of this Act has involved various stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, INGOs, specialized UN Agencies, community-based organizations, civil society, the private sector, the media and local communities in disaster-prone areas (such as chiefs and various committees), to effectively execute its provisions. Several national platforms have been established for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), which facilitate multi-sectoral engagement and collaboration among various stakeholders in DRR and recovery at different levels.

The Disaster Management Department which operates as a directorate within the Office of National Security (ONS), has been transformed into a separate government agency, National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA). The NDMA Act of 2020 allows for the establishment of offices at the regional, district, and chiefdom levels based on decisions made by the agency's Managing Board. The NDMA now assumes the disaster coordination roles that were previously held by ONS, including leading or serving as the secretariat for the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the National Strategic Situation Groups (which are organised around key pillars of response) and District Disaster Management Committees. Under the new National Disaster Management Act, the National Platform will continue to play its role, with the Vice President as chair, the head of the Office of National Security as vice chair, and the Director General of the NDMA serving as Secretary.



In the current institutional arrangement, decentralized representatives such as the Provincial Security Committees (PROSECs) and District Security Committees (DISECs) were established to prepare for, mitigate and respond to disasters. Functional Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) were also formed at the chiefdom level, with community-based volunteers been trained at both provincial and district levels, to serve as ‘first responders. Community-based volunteers also play a pivotal role at the local level to address emergencies, and more importantly straddle the formalised informal spaces that challenge the current operation of DRM. Even without the necessary formal recognition and allocation of resources to these community-based structures, the growing evidence of their capacity to mobilize action at the local/city level demands recognition. However, a preventative approach requires the development of an enabling legislative framework and procedures for action, endorsed by the DRM National Platform, to support organisations interfacing with local communities.

- The coordination mechanism among technical stakeholders is ineffective, lacking clarity, tools, and organizational arrangements within individual institutions concerning focal points, authority, obligations, needs, and mandates.
- The Disaster Management Department (DMD), being situated within the security-focused ONS is ill-prepared for non-security disasters. Additionally, as a directorate it cannot mobilize other stakeholders during a disaster (UNISDR (2008) United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Geneva).
- Insufficient resources to support national emergency and disaster responses limit efforts aimed to achieve effective and efficient emergency responses. The DMD is severely understaffed and ill-equipped.
- DRM stakeholders have limited knowledge of the current DRM framework. The authority and responsibilities of different levels within the DRM administrative structures are poorly defined and misunderstood, particularly by international organizations and non-security sector stakeholders.
- The coordination mechanism for technical stakeholders’ within the NPDRR is not yet fully functional.
- Decision making within the current national security system is swift, however, many concerned ministries lack full participation, ownership, and membership in the NSCCG and NSC processes.
- Not all DRM stakeholders are aware of the existing DRM coordination framework.
- The definitive links between structures responsible for DRM at various levels (central and decentralized) are not clearly understood by the majority of DRM stakeholders.

4.2.2 DRM Legislation

The existing law under the National Security and Central Intelligence Act (2002) was the de facto disaster management law which directed DRM coordination in Sierra Leone and providing an institutional framework and monitoring mechanisms through a DMD. New developments locally and internationally in the areas of DRM were stipulated, but with no updates of the existing legal framework since 2002. However, in 2020 a National Disaster Management Act was passed by an Act of Parliament meant to institutionalise and strengthen existing DRM and EP&R capacity, as well as bridge the existing coordination gaps in DPR process. In the absence of sufficient institutional mandates, powers and authority, execution of some DRM mandates has been increasingly difficult due to a number of bureaucracies subject to current institutional arrangements. Despite attempts to amend the DRM law, the current NDMA 2020 are still short of some critical DPR/EP&R laws specifically, the law was inexplicit of some legal provisions including:

- Some mandates, roles and responsibilities of some key stakeholder entities as well as administrative levels e.g. institutional arrangements with clear roles and responsibilities for the monitoring and management of DPR and DRM Funds and institutional arrangement for the resettlement of disaster victims;



- Some guidelines, principles, and protection for inclusion of gender, vulnerable groups and disaster victim's especially children, people with disabilities, pregnant and lactating mothers
- Provision for disaster risk financing strategies to enable access to the funding streams in an efficient and timely manner, with adequate safeguards to ensure transparency and accountability e.g clear stipulations on National and Local Budget allocations for Disaster Risk Financing Fund Administration at different levels of government, special funds or reserves for disaster situations, such as emergency or contingency funds. Risk based disaster risk financing initiatives through Public Private arrangements such as disaster risk insurance, re-insurance, or risk mitigation incentive schemes. Resource mobilisation and accountability for local and international monetary DRM and DPR transfers.
- Financial commitment and administrative monitoring protocols for emergency operations
- Frameworks for victim displacement and planned relocation which was cause for delays in completion of victim relocation and resettlement projects
- Facilitation of effective early warning and early action.

Furthermore, there are several national rules, policies, contingency plans and laws that are not disaster specific but deal with the protection of the environment to reduce the risk of national disasters occurring. These include the Mines and Mineral Development Act (MMA) 2022 as well as other legal instruments that do not directly relate to disasters but include regulations that influence the operations of international humanitarian actors and their organizations.

4.2.3 Hazards and risk profile

As has been pointed out earlier, Sierra Leone is exposed to a range of natural and man-made hazards. The exposure of people to recurrent or persistent localized hazard conditions of low to moderate intensity has the potential in time, to lead to debilitating cumulative disaster impacts. Such conditions have been particularly evident in urban and rural settings being exposed to recurring localized floods, landslides, storms, or drought. Sierra Leone's vulnerability is the result of climatic and geographic specificities, as well as high poverty rates combined with insufficient land use planning and environmental management systems. Especially in urban areas, vulnerability has been exacerbated by the recurrent internal migration which increased markedly during ten years of civil war (1991-2002). Currently, urban areas in Sierra Leone concentrate 40% of the total population, of which the majority live in illegally prohibited settlements (classified as slums), which are increasingly exposed to harmful hazards.

4.2.4 Risk assessment

Risk assessment is a process of identifying existing hazards, exposure and vulnerabilities. Sierra Leone has made significant progress in identifying, profiling and mapping potential hazards. The National Hazard Profile (NHP) addresses nine major natural hazards: landslide, flood, drought, epidemic, coastal erosion, sea-level rise, storm surge, tropical storm, and lightning and thunder. Geographical coverage, frequency, duration, scale, and historical data are included for each in the NHP.

The national hazard profile has three categories of hazards. The first category consists of events that are imminent and require an immediate response. The second consists of events that will occur if mitigation measures are not put in place quickly. The third consists of events that can be prevented by a longer-term preventive strategy.



Hazards have also been identified and grouped according to their typology. These include hydrological hazards like flooding; geological hazards such as erosion (coastal and upland), earth movements, landslides, rock fall and mud slips; climatic hazards involving drought, tropical storms, lightning and thunderstorms; ecological hazards such as deforestation, wild fires, waste, pollution and pests; and social hazards such as accidents, poverty and unemployment, civil strife, and population movement (including internally displaced persons and refugees).

Over the years, significant progress has been made including spatial GIS analysis for participatory, local and scientific assessment, hazard profiles of three cities – Freetown, Makeni and Bo. National disaster risk profile funded by the UNDP and a limited number of risk assessment across some sectoral risk.

In spite of the progress made, Sierra Leone remains weak in risk assessment. Reasons include:

- Only a small part of a complete risk assessment exercise has been accomplished. Sectoral risk assessments (limited to a hazard, an activity, or an area) have been completed, but probabilistic risk assessments have not;
- Results from vulnerability capacity assessment exercises are not structured and relevant as they have been undertaken as isolated exercises and are not incorporated in local planning processes;
- No scientific risk assessment covers all potential key hazards, and no governmental authority is conducting a systematic risk assessment;
- There is an absence of participation and ownership of roles by specialized national institutions (excluding Environmental Impact Assessments); and
- There is an absence of a governmental mechanism or system for undertaking such assessments systematically or regularly.

4.2.5 Early warning systems

The Government has developed an Early Warning System (EWS) that involves several ministries and departments. They include the National Security Council, which collects information related to the security of the country, and the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS), which has developed a telephone/GSM -based system that enables transmission of information from community level to central level (i.e., to DMD in ONS). The NWRA 2017 provides the overall governance for the water sector. The Act recognises the implications of climate change for health, sanitation and water resource management. The National Water Resource agency is responsible for the coordination of all hydrological and surface flow surveillance and monitoring systems in Sierra Leone.

The Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMA) is responsible for the weather and climate monitoring and warning of extreme events. Important efforts have been made to rehabilitate SLMET with assistance from UNDP. SLMET provides weather and climatologic services, including climatic data and daily forecast weather information, to different institutions including the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFFS) in the Food Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET). In collaboration with DMD/ONS, it also issues weather warnings to the media. The capacity of the SLMA needs to be strengthened to provide good quality information and services. The agency has linkages with local and international partners notably the EPA, MoWR, and the DMD of the ONS. The major way of collaboration is by providing information and services on weather, climate related issues, and participation in the activities of stakeholders for example in the new projects on strengthening climate information and early warning. There is also significant scope for the Agency to partner with local research institutions and academia to harness the value of local expert knowledge and data in this DRM endeavour. As well a regularly scout for new partnerships as a result of growing local research



expertise and institutions on climate modelling, meteorology, data science, environmental management, climate, climate change etc.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) is in charge of public health and is responsible for epidemic risk monitoring and warning of extreme events. The Health Information Management and Surveillance System within the MoH is responsible for capturing data from health facilities. The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for environmental monitoring and database management and the Food Early Warning Network (FEWSNET) provides early warning and analysis on food insecurity. Where national hydrological monitoring and forecasting does not exist, at-risk communities depend on local flood early warning systems where volunteers play a key role. Volunteers are also important in monitoring other hazards.

However, challenges remain for the EWS in Sierra Leone. They include:

- Coordination of early warning systems between responsible institutions is a challenge. Rather, EWS actors seemingly works in isolation with no clear laws or standards to guide their coordination and interactivity. This has affected the effectiveness of the EWS systems and active linkages at the national, district, community, and transboundary regional level. There is significant scope for the key responsible institutions to play a leading role in steering the cross institutional coordination. For example, the National Meteorological Agency and National Water Resource Management Agency, together with academic and research institutions could collaboratively streamline climate data management systems and their utility to enhanced DRM.
- The disaster early warning and monitoring systems are still weak and fail to cover all the critical hazards. Risk monitoring is not comprehensive and is not institutionalized.
- The Alert dissemination and communication that have to be packaged in a manner/format that is easy to interpret/implement based on the nature of the disaster need to be strengthened.
- The EWS has limited financial resources to support continuous monitoring and forecasting capacity. For instance, SL-MET still requires specialized equipment and logistical support to produce even routine forecasts.
- EWS institutions to produce impact-based early warning information and clear messages for community utilization. These messages should be accessible to all, especially vulnerable groups.
- To date, there is no adequate national Early Warning System covering all-natural and man-made hazards faced by the country.
- A suitable early warning system ensuring adequate “Alert dissemination and communication” does not exist.
- A suitable early warning system ensuring adequate “Alert reception and utilization” does not exist.
- Engagement of private media houses to disseminate early warnings upon request and at no charge.
- There seemed to be no standards for the systematic collection, sharing and dissemination of risk information and data relating to hazards, exposure, vulnerability and capacity to act.
- Incorporation of indigenous community early warning and early action mechanisms should be considered as relevant constricts of the EWS system, which is not considered with existing laws.

4.2.6 Disaster preparedness

A National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan (NDPRP) and the Emergency Preparedness and Response Capacity Needs Assessment (2020) have been adopted but are yet adopted by the government. Contingency plans for catastrophic events such as fires, civil unrest, health hazards and windstorms, as well as elections, have been prepared by



DMD/ONS in collaboration with national stakeholders and international partners, particularly NGOs. Institutional capacity is tested using simulation exercises.

However, the capacity of national disaster preparedness and readiness remains weak in Sierra Leone despite efforts made by DMD and the highest level of State. Specifically, clarity is necessary at all levels in ascribing roles, autonomy, recognition of institutions among stakeholders, cross-sectorial coordination, and capacity to collect and use disaster information and adaptive management.

At the community level, preparedness is addressed mainly through education and sensitization. Many NGOs conduct interventions at the grassroots level to prepare people to deal with hazards. For example, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) carries out community training for cholera preparedness.

However, despite willingness and effort, preparedness is still limited. Reasons include:

- Lack of financial resources for community sensitization;
- Some key stakeholders lack knowledge and ownership of their roles in the disaster management value chain;
- Community-based local disaster preparedness mechanisms are weak.
- framework and tools guiding preparedness and response interventions are not operational and adequate;
- Plan testing is not systematically undertaken and is very limited (in number);
- limited knowledge and know-how of preparedness planning and implementation;
- lack of ownership of some key stakeholders;
- weak community-based local disaster preparedness mechanism and organization;
- weak capacity (material, technical, financial) of key responders at all levels; and
- There were no Regional Level Preparedness Arrangements between Sierra Leone and members of the Mano River Union, although Sierra Leone is a member of the current no binding bilateral or multi-lateral agreements on the management of cross-border emergency preparedness and response issues between Sierra Leone and her neighbouring countries.

4.2.7 Disaster response

Response planning activities, which are the responsibility of key ministries and NGOs operating under the coordination of DMD, are inadequate. The NDPRP mandates that community leaders are active in coordinating community resources to address the full cycle of preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. This includes communication with the community, helping local people businesses and organizations cope with the impact of disasters, and mobilizing community volunteers as first responders. National and International NGOs have significantly increased the scale of their activity with disaster management over the years. This was shown in the 2014 Ebola crisis, particularly regarding response and recovery activities. But there is also a strong permanent presence within the country that contributes to disaster management activities across all the disaster response (preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation) at both a national and city-scale.

The need for a greater coordination and systematic emergency preparedness and response systems remains apparent. A comprehensive approach based on the Ready2Respond framework, for instance, introduces rigour in the development of sustainable, dedicated responses and strengthening procedures and capacities for the management of disaster risks. Consequently, the response capacities should be adequately covered by (1) Legal and Institutional Frameworks; (2) Information; (3) Facilities; (4) Equipment; and (5) Personnel.



Firstly, the basic legal framework for emergency preparedness and response is in place through the DRM act 2020. However, further introduction of specific regulations is needed in order to strengthen the legal framework and overall compliance in the management of disaster risk and disaster events (see proposals of regulations in Section 11). It is also important that, these regulations and any subsequent hazard specific plans that may be introduced are finalised and endorsed as soon as possible, to break the tendencies of having draft and unproved instruments that are of no effect.

Secondly, Sierra Leone currently suffers from the absence of well-structured and strategically integrated information and early warning systems. There are no clearly defined and standardized mechanisms, methodology and tools for pre and post-disaster needs assessments (for both emergency and recovery needs assessment). Insufficient information-sharing currently hampers a collective development of early warning systems, and the required capacity for shared analyses is also very limited. It is important for Sierra Leone to invest into the development of an integrated Disaster Information Management Systems (DMIS), with capacities of institutions built to adequately contribute to the system. The use of appropriate technology for rapid information sharing is also a critical consideration. These will support the overall systematic and programmatic push that will improve public engagement, both of communities and individuals, in disaster response initiatives

Thirdly, basic facilities like an Emergency Operations Centres, warehouses, shelters and other logistical infrastructure are underdeveloped, despite references in legal documents, and consequently hamper the effective response capacities in the country, both in urban area, and in rural and less developed areas. Currently, the country depends heavily on the logistical capacities of the international support agencies and NGOs in cases of crises. There is therefore the need for a dedicated investment into logical infrastructure such as networked supplied warehouses (across the regions and districts), and pre-identified open spaces such as parks, vacant land or green spaces that are designated as temporary shelter for displaced people in case of an emergency.

Fourthly, the equipment for disaster management such firefighting equipment is mostly old, un-standardized and not interoperable, and partly unreliable and overall insufficient in terms of quantity. The situation is particularly dire in rural areas and in informal settlements with limited access roads. As a result, the safety of the general population, and even the emergency responders cannot be sufficiently guaranteed in the event of a disaster because of inadequate or insufficient equipment. The reliance on donations and ad hoc agency support has also meant that there hasn't been a significant investment in the development of strategic plans for improving the inventory of equipment and subsequent maintenance.

Finally, emergency and disaster response personnel capacity in Sierra Leone is insufficient in terms of quantity and quality. For instance, firefighting capacity is at a bare minimum and the knowledge and skills to handle complex operations in the event of large disasters such as extraction of persons, specialized search and rescue skills etc are limited. Again, there is a strong dependence on support agencies and NGOs to provide manpower in disaster response efforts. Furthermore, there is also an over-reliance on individual, community and social networks for emergency response, which are inadequate and also leave vulnerable populations unsupported. There needs to be a concerted effort to systematically improve number of personnel, provision of continuous training, and capacity development



5.0 LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PAST DISASTER MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

This section serves to present a succinct account of the main lessons learnt from the analysis of the current implementation of DRM policy and landscape, and to provide early indications of the potential pathways of improvement that need to be considered in the revised disaster risk management policy instrument. The lessons learnt are categorized as firstly 'instrumental' and secondly as 'operational/institutional'. These are fully elaborated below:

5.1 Instrumental

The term 'instrumental' here is used to refer to the critical assessment of the DRM 'instruments' (Laws, policies, programme, protocols, etc) and draw sub-lessons that relate to this specific inquiry. The focus on the instruments allows for an in-depth and cross-cutting appraisal of what exists as it were on paper, and how through this study and the proposal for amendments can be improved. In this regard, the lessons drawn are summarized as follows:

5.1.1 Legislative basis:

The lack of a binding legal instrument that served as the basis of concerted DRM action, was a limitation to the progress over the years. In Sierra Leone's post-civil war dispensation, the de facto legal instrument dealing with disaster management was the National Security and Central Intelligence Act No.10 of 2002, through the Office of National Security (ONS) was established. Although this gave some clear responsibility of disaster management to the Disaster Management Department (one of the seven departments under the ONS). The lack of comprehensive disaster management law in place meant that subsequent institutional and regulatory interventions to support disaster management lacked the legislative basis, strength and reference. It was consequently difficult to execute its mandate due to inconsistencies in the legal framework or in the absence of powers and authority defined in law (essentially disaster management was not the core focus of the National Security and Central Intelligence Act that encapsulated the DMD). This inherent weakness has been strengthened by the introduction of a new DRM law which serves as the reference for policy, planning and regulation. This suggest that the policy and regulatory improvements have a direct reference and framework that allows for its compatibility and support by the law.

5.1.2 Policy Coherence

The overarching challenges observed the apparent piecemeal approach to the development of DRM policies and programmes. Most of the existing framework was developed in the last two decades; however, they appear scattered and developed in a compartmentalized manner. A lot of the policy instruments also remain in draft form or took significantly longer for them to be ratified making them lose their relevance, support, and adoption. The recommendation on this note is to ensure that the revised DRM policy has sufficient political will and back to push through the process of adoption and legislative/parliamentary accent. This will then give it the necessary drive for its subsequent operationalization. Similarly, the regulations that will be proposed need first and foremost a coordinated approach to ensure that they are fully written out by the relevant government agencies and accelerated through the process of approval to make them relevant and useful.

Another useful consideration that is linked to this lesson is the need for the DRM policy to be responsive and account for the significant changes the country has seen in its disaster outlook and profile (notably the Ebola epidemic of 2014/15 and the ongoing COVID-19). A responsive DRM policy should show recognition of these catastrophic threats and find alignment within its provisions to speak to them.



More broadly, there needs to be the acknowledgment that the current DRM Act as a crucial part of the country's legal framework needs to address disaster risks, in conjunction with other sectoral laws and regulations that are in existence, and which also have implications for DRR. One of such sectors is housing and country planning where building codes and land use and spatial planning laws are used to regulate physical development in the country have in the process, worked to reduce underlying vulnerabilities in places including, reducing the occurrence of new hazards and disaster risks. It is important to ensure that structures that are constructed meet set standards and safety requirements. Building codes allow government officials to assess whether a construction project has met the relevant condition to be granted a building permit. A key challenge however is that despite issuing out building permits for decades, Sierra Leone's current codes and regulations are old and require updating. The Ministry also faces significant resource and capacity constraints which limit the staff from providing effective oversight responsibility for building and construction. Therefore, the inspection regime is rare. Besides, the building codes are inaccessible to the public and so, there is a gross lack of understanding of the codes.

5.1.3 Policy advocacy

Additionally, there are a plethora of other disaster-related programmes and protocols that have been subsequently rolled out e.g. flood response plan, Action Plan for Land Degradation, etc which aren't anchored in any regulatory framework or adequately complement previous efforts. There is a semblance of the multiplicity of efforts without necessarily realizing the critical value of the suites of programmes. Furthermore, there is apparent skew on the hazards that have received more dedicated policy response e.g. the national flood response plan as they are typical examples of large-scale disaster risk, although this is commendable in part, it also demonstrates the need for a more comprehensive and systematic approach to address the multi-hazard profile of the country. The DRM policy on paper identified eleven (11) focus areas for disaster risk management. These focus areas relate to the overall DRM and preparedness, response, and coordination mechanism, and reflect the complete DRM cycle phases covering pre-disaster, during a disaster and post-disaster periods, and key specific supportive cross-cutting elements required for all DRM phases. Namely, DRM Legal and Strategic Framework, Institutional and Organisational Framework; Risk Assessment, Monitoring and Early Warning; Disaster Preparedness, Emergency Response, and Post-Emergency Recovery; Disaster Risk Prevention and Mitigation; Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Mainstreaming; Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Adaptation to Climate Change (ACC); DRM Financing; Data and Information Management; and Knowledge and Capacity Development.

Bearing this in mind, the adequacy of the current policy lies in the imbalanced focus in these priority areas. The imperative for disaster response is overwhelming and the driving force for its creation, however, there is a need to elevate the need for preparedness and pre-disaster scenarios. And the other side of the equation highlight and strengthens the provisions for post-disaster recovery that 'builds back better'. The ethos of 'building back better' as mentioned earlier is critical to ensuring that the DRM policy contributing to also shaping the resilience of the country's systems, processes, and communities. This sums up the recommendation from the study, and the proposed revision of the policy will critically address this resilience. Also, there is a need for further clarity on how the other provisions of the policy e.g. relating to financing and data management are cross-cutting and envisaged to work.

For instance, making land-use planning work for the urban poor will make a useful contribution to DRM especially in urban areas like Freetown where most of the slum-like informal settlements are located. Besides, given the vulnerability (social and economic) of residents in informal settlements to natural hazards and other health and safety risks, the need for upgrading especially in the form of physical development of the locations, improvements in housing, provision of services (water, sanitation, waste collection) and infrastructure (drainage



ways, access roads) and the regularization of security of tenure would have to be given serious attention. Already, the 2015 National Land Policy recognizes that specific prevention measures are desired to address the precarious urban conditions in which they live. A resettlement policy can also be introduced for settlements in extremely risky locations or that are too precarious with the option of systematic resettlement through consultation with the residents and with due consideration of their human rights.

There is also a need to embed DRM in relevant environmental management laws in the country. While these laws exist in different forms with some applying to some specific issues, a few are more cross-cutting, applying to a series of issues. In spite of this, nearly all the laws focus on the prevention of the natural environment and humans from man-made hazards including the conservation of the environment. As well as highlighting the crosscutting nature of climate change as a major DRM concern. The current requirement of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) prior to any major development work, has in practice a skew on ecological issues with the intent to ensure environmental balance and, less on hazard risk (both man-made and natural) and the impact on human safety. It would therefore be critical that DRM principles incorporated into environmental management laws are clarified as part of the criteria for EIAs.

5.2 Operational/institutional

The operational dimension of the lessons learnt presents an elaboration on key aspects of the operationalization of the DRM policy. In short, it seeks to advance the lessons from the enquires on the levels of ownership and what accounts for the gaps in progress made in the DRM policy uptake. The operational discussion goes hand in hand with the concerns of institutionalization of the DRM policy and as such are considered simultaneously in the elaborations below. The lessons in the section which form the basis of the recommendations to be made for the amendments to the policy again draws on textual analysis of pertinent literature, and more importantly from the analysis of information gathered from the key informants. The details are as follows:

5.2.1 Coordination

There was a strong indication from the inquiries that there was a need to improve the coordination mechanism of the DRM policy, particularly between the mandated actors/institutions, and their link and relationships to the focal institution (DMD). Although the legal framework provided some prescribed mandates, roles and responsibilities of multi-sector institutions and stakeholders responsible for Disaster Preparedness and Response at the National level, in practice the coordination and operationalization have been patchy. Two cardinal observations and areas that need refinement include the fact that: (1) There are not clearly defined and standardized mechanisms, methodology and tools for pre- and post-disaster needs assessments (for both emergency and recovery needs assessment); and (2) There are no clearly defined, formal mechanisms for the implementation of both post-disaster emergency response and post-emergency recovery.

The key stakeholders engaged also indicated that their activities were not properly coordinated due to the lack of standard operating procedures. They suggested that more needs to be done to enhance understanding and exchange of information between relevant actors so as to maximize the cooperation between them. Furthermore, there were competing interests across government departments and agencies for dealing separately with DRR issues (such as climate change, agriculture, and/or environment management) – although this should rather be viewed as a positive contribution to multi-layered governance. The segmented approach does not allow for proper coordination of DRM and its adequate integration (as highlighted below). There is a need for improved cross-sectoral and agency collaboration and communication in the implementation of DRR related regulation. For instance, land use planning regulations and environmental laws are the responsibility of more



than one ministry, and the need for cross-sectoral coordination with the NADRM and for mainstreaming the DRR principles in the laws and institutions could greatly build the efficacy of the DRR potential of such laws (See Section 11 below).

Considering the aforementioned, and the focus on institutional challenges of DRM integration in Sierra Leone, a good example from the African region is Kenya which has recently been able to streamline its disaster management and preparedness operations and could serve as a lesson for Sierra Leone especially as the country moves to institutionalize a Disaster Management Agency and has adopted some useful practices. Kenya has fully institutionalized DRR in the country with National Disaster Emergency Operations Centre (NDEOC) fully dedicated to coordinating all aspects of disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response in the country. It has a vibrant multi-stakeholder national DRM platform that meets quarterly to share experiences and lessons on various DRR aspects. The DRR platform annually conducts a National DRM Symposium, which runs back-to-back with the IDRR day in the month of October. The various stakeholders are involved to show case their innovations and experiences and topical papers are presented relevant to the year's theme. Planning for the two events starts back in July to search for key speakers, solicit relevant presentations and resources to fund the symposium and the IDRR day.

5.2.2 Integration

There is a problem of integrating disaster risk management into national development planning frameworks at provincial and local levels. One of the key reasons accounting for this is the fact that there is also limited cross-sectoral understanding of DRR, even within local communities, as disaster risks evolve due to a range of complex, interacting social, economic, political and environmental factors. Also important is the lack of broad-based representation in disaster management processes. For this, it is recommended that there needs to be a change in the current over-emphasizes of a top-down implementation, given that the current approach limits the involvement of civil society groups, which in turn, limits accountability and transparency. A key challenge at the subnational level is that local government agencies prefer to follow national guidelines than using initiatives to align national policies and plans with the local context. Consequently, the needed shift from DRM to an efficient DRR regime has not yet happened in Sierra Leone as there remains a weakness in the support and programming for disaster preparedness ahead of a crisis. Decentralization, especially at the district level, remains very weak, while the structures at provincial levels lack adequate operational and human resources capacity and the DRM needs to speak specifically to the need to strengthen the bottom-up approaches for coordination and integration. A good example of a well-coordinated DRM structure that also allows for the integration of the Sendai Framework has worked well as seen in the case of Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has promoted a risk-sensitive approach to development planning and elevated DRM as a development issue. And consequently, it advocates for systematic integration of disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures in development planning and investments. This has led to the development of a Sri Lanka Community Resilience Framework (CRF) which aims to guide this process from both directions - a bottom-up hierarchical approach from community to sub-national level and a top-down policy implementation approach from the national state mechanisms to sub-national levels. It acknowledged that the operationalization of the Community Resilience Framework through the implementation of risk-sensitive development actions begins with good planning not only at the national level but also at the community and local government levels.

There is also room for the policy to integrate and operationalize the principles and best practices drawn from international frameworks on DRM that Sierra Leone is a party to such as the Sendai Framework, especially also considering its widespread ratification on the continent. The AU and the UNDRR office for Africa have led the adoption of a Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa (PoA) which tracks progress. From the reports (the 2018 first “biennial report



on DRR”) on the POA for instance countries like Ghana, South Africa and Mali were the only three that had a 100% rate of decentralization of DRM strategies, defined as the number of local government authorities with had strategies as compared to the total number of local government authorities available. This is not an absolute measure of effectiveness as there will be other factors at play, but it an important step towards decentralization of DRM and Sierra Leone has room for improvement. Sierra Leone in that regard was yet to have decentralized strategies in 6 of its 16 local governments.

Additionally, there is a need for a change in the current top-down implementation systems and structures, to one that promotes the involvement of civil society groups in particular. There is considerable scope for civil society participation and research academics in DRM in Sierra Leone. A good practice that can be cited is that of South Africa where the DRM framework and responsible agency have provided an avenue of institutionalizing civil society activity. The Southern Africa Society for Disaster Reduction (SASDiR – see www.sadir.org) which was established in 2010 serves that purpose. This Society is a community of practice in DRR and brings together civil society, governments and academia through a biennial conference. SASDiR also documents its practices and publishes an internationally accredited academic journal in DRR (Jámbà: Journal of Disaster Risk Studies – see www.jamba.org.za) on the African continent with direct financial support from the South African National Disaster Management Centre.

There are also other areas of improvement and clarity that remain. For instance, there is an opportunity to better tie in the efforts of disaster preparedness and management and those of climate change, and at the policy, level strengthen the relevance through the INDC mechanisms. As well as recognize and take a better account of the spatial distribution and geographic diversity in the light the peculiarities of Sierra Leone. For instance, there needs to be an express recognition of the critical place of the urban setting in both producing and mitigating disaster risk, and the growing burdens that urban residents must bear. There is significant evidence that the urban centres are the epicentres of disasters, and the projected urban trend will only result in further conditions of overcrowding, inadequate planning, and the accentuation of disaster events. The critical question that remains is how the DRM policy anticipates and addresses this dire prediction.

5.2.3 Technical Capacity

There are challenges with the development of technical and scientific capacities for monitoring, assessing, and reporting on disaster risk and vulnerabilities, and a lack of capacities for public education and increased awareness to enhance resilience-building at national and community levels. The challenge also relates to the need to be able to attract and retain technical talent with the constituent offices and provide a framework for continuous learning and professional development. There are gaps in the understanding of disaster (social) science, the underlying causal factors and related multidisciplinary approach of understanding the role of management, preparedness, and response.

The rationale for capacity-building initiatives is that they should generate a greater sustained capability to plan for and undertake DRM so that the risk to lives and livelihoods from disaster is reduced. Sierra Leone, like many other developing contexts, also appears to have a ‘missing middle’ in terms of DRM capacity, with the limited conspicuous capacity-building programmes focusing on either the national or the community level. Much less attention is currently being paid to building capacities at the sub-national government level. The challenge that this pose is that capacities, policies, and procedures at one level ideally need to correlate with those at lower and higher levels.



5.2.4 Data

Despite some recent efforts at collecting data, there is an overwhelming lack of capacity to gather, analyze and use data to inform decision-making and this needs to change the disaster preparedness and response in Sierra Leone. The issue of data and technical use of data is critical to the development of effective early warning systems. In Sierra Leone, national hydrological monitoring and forecasting do not exist, and there is scope for this to be developed to support at-risk communities and deployed more widely. There is significant scope for the involvement of researchers and academics to be involved in the collection, curation and analysis of data that is useful in that regard. The National Meteorological Agency should work closely with academic institutions to generate useful and usable data for DRM and early warning. For example, in Botswana, there is a 'Severe Weather and Flood Warning' system that disseminates information from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Climate Services Centre (CSC). The critical consideration is not merely the availability of credible climate data, as Sierra Leone could also draw on the African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD) and its own national meteorological agency for data. But what remains cardinal in the need for early warning systems and for which Botswana is a good example, is the additional communication processes must be put in place to adequately communicate early warning information to those most in need of such information. Botswana has an "SMS Mass Communication" system that uses the infrastructure of mobile phone providers to share multi-hazard warnings to the whole population. This is an avenue that can be looked into for the benefit of Sierra Leone.

5.2.5 Financing

Critical to all the above is the issue of funding. Sierra Leone relies heavily on international development support, thus making it difficult for implementing agencies to adequately budget for and fund DRM measures. The lack of sustained and predictable financing for disaster risk prevention and management remains a major impediment to more coherent programming.

There is therefore the need for increased political commitment to local actions and commensurate budget allocations cannot be overemphasized as much of the gaps in appropriately addressing disaster risk in Sierra Leone boils down to the absence of a fully resourced and decentralized approach of DRM at the lowest level of governance even where the policy stipulates so. Furthermore, there is no appropriate costing and budgeting of the actual DRM targets and actions and processes that account for the DRM needs of the country. This needs to be addressed as it has a proportional relationship to the current DMD's ability to draw on creative fundraising, and more importantly, inform the plans for the post-disaster recovery effort. The calls for resilience and building back better demand appropriate costing and budgetary allocations. One clear recommendation on the backdrop of this is the need for the institutional autonomy of the DMD, through its current effort into becoming an 'Agency'. This will set it away from the very important but resource-heavy 'National Security Agenda' that it tied under the ONS. The autonomy is a necessary step to secure and draw on dedicated budget and chart its own fundraising potential. There are several cases of African DRM agencies that can leverage their autonomy to form viable partnerships with donor and development partners, for funding and technical assistance. Across the continent, donor funds have become an essential part and support of DRM programmes and interventions, and when properly leveraged are able to support long-term programming. For instance, in Ghana, the "Greater Accra Climate Resilient and Integrated Development Project" is funded by the World Bank and the GIZ to create a holistic climate risk management approach for Ghana. There is significant scope for the new and autonomous Sierra Leone disaster management agency to draw on targeted fundraising for DRM programmes.



6.0 POLICY VISION, MISSION, OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE REVISED POLICY

6.1 Policy vision

To establish a safer, climate-resilient, and adaptive nation where communities, and the environment are safeguarded from the adverse impacts of disasters through integrated and comprehensive DRM strategies that prioritize climate action and gender inclusivity.

6.2 Policy mission

To implement a holistic and inclusive DRM approach that emphasizes risk identification, prevention, reduction, and preparedness, while ensuring effective response and recovery from disaster impacts. We aim to build resilient communities by integrating climate action and gender considerations, enabling them to 'build back better' after emergencies and disasters.

6.3 Policy objectives

In alignment with the National Disaster Risk Management (NDRM) Policy goals for Sierra Leone, the following seven policy objectives have been identified. These objectives are in harmony with the priorities set forth in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreements, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing for Development, the New Urban Agenda, and the Agenda for Humanity:

Policy objective 1: Integrate and mainstream disaster risk management into sustainable development programmes and policies, ensuring alignment with climate change adaptation efforts to promote a holistic approach to disaster risk management

Policy objective 2: strengthen disaster risk governance for DRM by institutional frameworks that support accountability, transparency, and inclusivity, ensuring that gender perspectives are integrated into all governance structures.

Policy objective 3: reduce the underlying risk and vulnerability factors by improving disaster risk management applications at all levels, with a particular focus on marginalized and vulnerable communities.

Policy objective 4: enhance disaster preparedness by establishing effective practices for , response and recovery practices that incorporate climate resilience and gender-sensitive strategies at all levels

Policy objective 5: implement a systematic and efficient national level multi-hazard early warning system that prioritizes timely identification and monitoring of risks, ensuring that alerts are accessible and actionable for all community members, especially women and vulnerable groups.

Policy objective 6: foster the use of knowledge, education, training, innovation and information sharing to build safe and resilient societies, emphasizing the importance of gender-responsive education and training programs in DRM.

6.4 Guiding principles for Disaster Risk Management

The policy is anchored in the following guiding principles

- **Strong Governance Framework:** Effective disaster risk management necessitates a robust **governance framework** with clear policies and legislation, accountability, and institutional arrangements that connects all levels of government, sectors and communities, while integrating gender perspectives.
- **Comprehensive Approach: Adopt a comprehensive, all hazards, all agencies approach** by achieving the right balance of prevention, mitigation, preparedness,



response and recovery, through establishing partnerships that prioritize climate action and gender inclusivity.

- **Mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction: Integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation** into sustainable development policies, planning, programmes, and financing at all governance levels, ensuring that gender considerations are embedded throughout.
- **Defined Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities across between different layers of government and actors at central and decentralized levels, fostering a **multi-sectoral and cross-cutting approach to DRM planning and implementation.**
- **Community Empowerment: empower communities, particularly women and marginalized groups, to address their risks** through capacity building, knowledge sharing, and support for local involvement in developing and implementing disaster management strategies.
- **Human-Centered Approach:** prioritize risk reduction, the provision of basic needs, and the protection of human life and dignity, while minimizing dependency on relief assistance and **adopting a decentralized and gender responsive approach in DRM**
- **Adequate Resource Allocation:** ensure adequate resources are allocated to all levels of government, **promoting partnership and enhancing community participation and resilience, particularly for gender-focused initiatives.**
- **Data and Information Management: Recognise data and information management** as key to DRM, integrating climate change issues and ensuring international and regional cooperation, with a focus disaggregated data to highlight gender disparities.
- **Gender and Vulnerability Considerations: Acknowledge that gender and the needs of vulnerable groups are centre to disaster risk, ensuring their perspectives are integrated into all aspects of DRM.**
- **Capacity Building Across Sectors: Enhance the capacity of all sectors to address major risks,** from epidemics to natural disasters and technological hazards, by building on existing expertise and fostering collaboration.
- **Multi-Sectoral Responsibility: Recognise that risk reduction, disaster preparedness, response, and recovery are collective responsibilities at all national actors, with ministries serving as lead agencies alongside NGOs, the private sector, communities, and donors.**
- **Minimizing Dependency on Relief: strive to minimize dependency on relief assistance by fostering resilience and self-sufficiency within communities.**
- **Risk Analysis Foundation:** Use risk analysis as the foundation of DRM, emphasizing the importance of data and knowledge in informing strategies and actions.
- **International Collaboration:** At the international level, Sierra Leone will **seek the collaboration with development agencies,** especially those with mandates focused on managing risks and promoting disaster preparedness at a multi-sectoral context.



7.0 POLICY DIRECTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

To effectively achieve the policy goals and objectives outlined in section 6 of the National Disaster Risk Management Policy, six policy direction areas have been identified through extensive consultation with stakeholders at the national, regional, and local levels. These policy direction areas relate to (i) the comprehensive coordination of DRM across various government agencies and institutions in alignment with the guiding principles of the policy, (ii) an integrated approach to the complete DRM cycle covering pre-disaster, during a disaster and post-disaster periods, and (iii) essential cross-cutting elements that support all DRM phases. Implementing agencies must collaborate with supporting agencies to ensure the effective execution of action items.

Policy Priority 1: Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in sustainable development programmes

Policy Priority 2: Strengthening Disaster risk governance

Policy Priority 3: Disaster Risk Management Financing and investing in resilience

Policy Priority 4: Disaster preparedness and emergency response

Policy Priority 5: Recovery and reconstruction

Policy Priority 6: Knowledge and information management

Table 6: Disaster Risk Management Classification

Stage		Disaster Risk Management Item
Every stage	Disaster Risk Governance	Policy and legal framework (legal framework, policy and plan)
		Institutional arrangements (risk communication, collaboration and coordination, risk evaluation and assessment, capacity development)
		Management of DRM measures (financing and investing, integration of DRM measures, management of DRM measures)
	DRM Measures	Structural measures (Disaster risk control measures, safer school and hospital, evacuation building, afforestation, relocation, disaster proofing of infrastructure)
		Non-Structural Measures (system/instrument of disaster risk information, humanitarian, and awareness-raising activities)
Pre-disaster	Preparedness (structural measures including mitigation and non-structural measures)	
During disaster	Emergency response (EWS, relief, and rescue)	
	Recovery (Humanitarian response, finance/livelihood assistance)	
Post-Disaster	Reconstruction (reconstruction plan, Build Back Better)	

7.1 Policy priorities and strategies for action

Building on the outlined policy priorities, it is critical for the DRM policy to guide and shape operational directions aimed at minimizing the impacts of natural hazards while simultaneously creating opportunities to reduce risk by addressing vulnerability and exposure. This strategic positioning transcends mere management of disaster events; it fundamentally focuses on strengthening sustainable development in Sierra Leone.

The strategic directions outlined in this policy emphasizes the central role of the NDMA and highlight the essential involvement of all sectors of society, including government entities, non-governmental organizations, and both professional and private sectors. The national action



plan has been developed in alignment with the national strategies based on the priority areas outlined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR).

To ensure alignment with international standards and commitments, this policy explicitly outline strategies for integrating global best practices into the national disaster risk management framework. Specific emphasis will be placed on harmonizing efforts with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By doing so, Sierra Leone will maximise synergies among international agreements, enhancing the coherence and effectiveness of its national policies. This integration will ensure that national efforts are aligned with global initiatives and are responsive to current and emerging disaster risk challenges.

The national action plan includes specific strategic activities for these priority areas, with designated lead agencies responsible for implementing the identified activities. Additionally, key supportive agencies will collaborate to ensure the effective execution of these initiatives. All lead agencies are required to formulate their respective institutional-level disaster management plans in accordance with the directives of the strategic activities outlined in this policy for the period from 2024-2030. This comprehensive approach aims to foster cohesive and coordinated efforts across all sectors, ensuring that disaster risk reduction is integrated into broader development objectives and that Sierra Leone is better prepared to face the challenges posed by natural hazards.

The strategies advocate for a people-centred, multi-sector approach that builds resilience to multiple, cascading and interacting hazards, fostering a culture of prevention and resilience. This approach integrates both top-down institutional changes and bottom-up community-based initiatives, ensuring that local knowledge and needs are prioritized.

Addressing underlying drivers of risk

The DRM strategies are specifically designed to reduce the underlying drivers of risk in Sierra Leone, which are largely rooted in poor economic and urban development choices, environmental degradation, poverty, inequality, and climate change. These factors create and exacerbate conditions of hazard, exposure and vulnerability. The policy will target these structural drivers, referred to as constraints, as elaborated in section 4, and the development of comprehensive revised DRM policy is a significant step toward addressing these constraints.

Key strategies to address constraints

The DRM strategies will focus on addressing major constraints, including:

- Management of pre-existing risks: develop frameworks and guidelines to manage pre-existing risks effectively while avoiding the construction of new risks through unsustainable practices. This includes integrating climate action and gender considerations into risk assessment and planning processes.
- Re-distribution: establish mechanisms for equitable redistribution and spreading of risk to prevent disaster losses, ensuring that vulnerable populations, particularly women and marginalized communities, are prioritized in risk-sharing arrangements.
- Multi-sectoral engagement: foster multi-sectoral engagement in disaster risk reduction and recovery at various levels, ensuring that all sectors-including health, education, environment, and infrastructure-collaborate to create a cohesive and effective DRM strategy that incorporates climate resilience and gender equity.
- Development of early warning systems: implement comprehensive early warning systems that are accessible and understandable to all community members, with special attention to the needs of women and vulnerable groups. Ensure that communication channels effectively disseminate timely and actionable information regarding climate-related risks.



- **Capacity Building:** invest in building the capacities of national and sub-national disaster preparedness and readiness, including training programs that emphasize gender-sensitive approaches to disaster response and recovery. Empower local communities, particularly women, to take active roles in preparedness initiatives.
- **Adequate Response Structures:** Establish and maintain adequate structures that facilitate rapid response to, and recovery from disasters. This includes ensuring that response plans are inclusive and consider the specific needs of women and other vulnerable populations, incorporating climate adaptation strategies into recovery efforts,

Implementation of strategies

The strategies detailed above will systematically flesh out the priorities collectively developed through cross-stakeholder consultations. Additionally, they lay out a suite of corresponding actions proposed to support the efficient operationalisation of this DRM policy. This action will include:

- **Regular training and capacity building:** conduct ongoing training sessions that incorporate climate action and gender perspectives into all aspects of DRM, ensuring that all stakeholders are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills.
- **Community engagement initiatives:** develop community engagement initiatives that empower local populations, particularly women, to actively participate in DRM planning and implementation processes.
- **Monitoring and evaluation frameworks:** establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of DRM strategies, ensuring that gender and climate action outcomes are tracked and reported.

Gender considerations in disaster risk management policy

Recognizing the critical importance of gender inclusion, especially the empowerment of women, this policy identifies gender as a key area within DRM that requires focused attention. DRR serves as an essential mechanism for addressing gender disparities and enhancing gender equality by emphasizing inclusive participation and the empowerment of women in all aspects of DRM.

In acknowledgement of the differentiated impact that disasters have on various gender groups, this policy will incorporate gender-responsive strategies across all phases of disaster risk management. By addressing the unique challenges faced by women and marginalized populations, the government will establish mechanisms for their active representation in decision-making processes related to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

To achieve these objectives, the government will promote the creation of gender-sensitive assessment tools. These tools will identify the specific needs and vulnerabilities of diverse gender groups, facilitating the design of interventions that are inclusive and tailored to enhance community resilience. The policy will also foster initiatives aimed at empowering women through training and capacity-building programs that prepare them for leadership roles in disaster management. By providing opportunities for women to engage in local disaster risk reduction committees, will ensure that their voices are heard in policy dialogues at all levels.

By embedding these gender-responsive strategies within the DRM framework, will aim to create a more equitable and just approach that values the contributions of all community members. This commitment will lead to more effective disaster management outcomes, addressing the unique needs of women and marginalized groups and thereby enhancing overall community resilience in the face of disasters.



To achieve this, a national program will be established to mainstream gender considerations into disaster risk reduction policies, legal frameworks, planning processes, institutional structures, and operational practices. The program will prioritise for key areas aimed at:

- a. Strengthening capacity for gender-sensitive risk assessment.
- b. Promoting gender-inclusive disaster risk governance,
- c. Reducing gender-based risks and vulnerabilities, and
- d. Institutionalizing gender-responsive emergency response and recovery efforts.

Specific activities that will support the nation program include:

- a. Implementing educational programs on gender rights to raise awareness within communities.
- b. Create gender-inclusive DRM databases and risk indicators as part of the national DRM information system
- c. Integrating gender considerations into national disaster risk management planning and legal frameworks for equitable representation and resource allocation.
- d. Incorporating a gender profile component into Emergency Relief Assessment (ERA) frameworks to address the needs of all community members during emergencies.
- e. Establish a comprehensive program to integrate gender into DRM operations across relevant national and local agencies.



THE WORLD BANK

7.1.1 Policy Priority 1: Mainstreaming DRR in sustainable development programmes

7.1.1.1 Policy Objective 1:

The integration/mainstreaming of disaster risk management into sustainable development programmes and policies to ensure a holistic approach to disaster risk management

Strategy	Activity/actions	Expected Outcomes	Timeframe	Relevant SDGs	Lead Agency	Other Key Agencies
Mainstream DRM and climate change adaptation in relevant sectors.	Establish DRM units in Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) with adequate funding, capacity building, and dedicated personnel.	Improved capacity for DRM implementation at the institutional level.	2024-2026	SDG 11, SDG 13	National Disaster Management Agency	All MDAs, Ministry of Finance
This shall be achieved through cross-agency collaborations in DRM mainstreaming and the development of cross-sectoral development plans with prioritise and embed DRM into development agenda.	Establish DRM Focal Points in ministries, departments, and agencies for coordination of disaster-related activities.	Enhanced coordination and collaboration among sectors.	2024-2025	SDG 17	National Disaster Management Agency	Relevant Ministries
	Develop local DRM strategic plans and review Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in all districts based on the new National Disaster Management Act (NDMA).	Effective local DRM strategies tailored to respective districts.	2024-2027	SDG 11	Local Government Authorities	National Disaster Management Agency
	Impose disaster risk assessment regulations under the new NDMA, similar to environmental impact assessment	Mandatory disaster risk assessments increase project resilience.	2024-2028	SDG 11	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	National Disaster Management Agency

	regulations for large-scale projects.					
	Promote a risk-sensitive approach in development planning and investments from national to sub-national levels.	Integration of DRM into development planning and investments.	2024-2029	SDG 11, SDG 13	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning	Various MDAs
	Develop investment strategies on CCA/DRM in urban areas, aligned with existing investment plans on infrastructure (water, waste, energy, etc.).	Enhanced urban resilience through focused investment strategies.	2024-2028	SDG 11	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning	Country Planning Department and Local Government
	Strengthen and improve land-use and forest management plans in line with disaster risk assessments.	More sustainable land use and natural resource management.	2024-2028	SDG 15	Ministry of Agriculture and Food security	Environmental NGOs, Local Authorities, National Protected Area Authority
	Develop an environmental management plan to enhance sustainable use and management of ecosystems and implement integrated environmental and natural resources management.	Strengthened ecosystem management with integrated DRM and CCA.	2024-2029	SDG 15, SDG 13	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	Environment Protection Agencies



7.1.2. Policy priority 2: Strengthening risk governance for DRM

7.1.2.1 Policy Objective 2:

To strengthen the governance of disaster risk at local level and fostering institutional capacities and arrangements at sub-national and national levels.

Strategy	Activity	Expected Outcomes	Timeframe	Relevant SDGs	Lead Agency	Other Key Agencies
<p>Strengthen decentralization of disaster risk reduction interventions.</p> <p>This shall be achieved through the adoption of DRM practices across all sectors, at all levels of governance, and across the private and public sectors to ensures an integrated, multi-dimensional, and comprehensive risk platform that transcends any existing organizational mandates and “silos”.</p>	Map and assess roles, functions, and mandates of stakeholders in disaster risk management (DRM).	Clear understanding of stakeholder roles in DRM.	2024-2025	SDG 11, SDG 16	National Disaster Management Agency	Local Governments, Civil Society Organizations
	Undertake inter-ministerial coordination to develop sectoral policies and capacity building relating to DRM protocols, including water management.	Integrated policies and improved protocol implementation.	2024-2027	SDG 11, SDG 6	Office of the Chief Minister	Relevant Ministries (Planning, etc.)
	Establish operational policies, strategies, and frameworks to reduce risk and strengthen resilience at local levels.	Strengthened local risk reduction frameworks.	2024-2029	SDG 11	Local Government Authorities	National Disaster Management Agency
	Create a platform for exchanging risk management information among multiple stakeholders,	Enhanced communication and collaboration on DRM issues.	2024-2026	SDG 17	National Disaster Management Agency	Legislative Bodies, NGOs



	including politicians and legislators.					
	Review public regulations, standards, and codes to incorporate DRM considerations.	Updated regulations that reflect current DRM needs.	2024-2027	SDG 16	Ministry of Justice	National Disaster Management Agency
	Enact and enforce building codes that adapt to current disaster risks and climate change, including training for architects and builders.	Improved resilience of structures against disasters.	2024-2028	SDG 11, SDG 13	Ministry of Works and Public Assets	Sierra Leone Institute of Architects, Sierra Leone Institute of Engineers, NGOs
	Establish an institutional reporting arrangement on national and local disaster risks and emergency responses.	Improved reporting and response coordination.	2024-2026	SDG 16	National Disaster Management Agency	Local Governments
	Strengthen coordination mechanisms for regional DRM, including transboundary cooperation.	Enhanced regional collaboration on disaster management.	2024-2029	SDG 17	National Disaster Management Agency	Neighbouring Countries (Guinea and Liberia), Regional Organizations (MRU, ECOWAS)
	Strengthen capacity-building initiatives for local government officers on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and DRM.	Improved local government capacity to address DRM issues.	2024-2029	SDG 11, SDG 13	Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs	Training Institutions



	Operationalize an institutional framework with required authority, capacity, resources, and tools for effective DRM.	Well-equipped institutions for effective DRM execution.	2024-2028	SDG 16	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Finance
	Increase gender sensitivity within disaster risk reduction policies and programs.	More inclusive DRM strategies that address gender-specific risks.	2024-2027	SDG 5	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs	Gender-Led Organizations
	Train civil servants to support vulnerable groups (children, people with disabilities, pregnant mothers) using search and support equipment.	Enhanced support for vulnerable populations during disasters.	2024-2028	SDG 10, SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
	Train DRM trainers at national, local, and community levels to ensure consistency in training.	Enhanced capacity for knowledge transfer in DRM.	2024-2028	SDG 4	National Disaster Management Agency	Educational Institutions
	Engage hydrology experts to manage observations and analyze hydro-meteorological data for effective DRM planning and measures.	Improved data analysis for disaster preparedness.	2024-2027	SDG 13	Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency	National Water Resources Management Agency, Academic Institutions, Research Bodies
	Increase participation of local actors,	Strengthened community	2024-2029	SDG 11, SDG 16	National Disaster	Youth Organizations,



	including youth, in DRM activities.	engagement in DRM initiatives.			Management Agency	Local Community Groups
	Invest in risk reduction within the private sector through dialogue and engagement with stakeholders.	Enhanced private sector contribution to resilience efforts.	2024-2028	SDG 8, SDG 11	Ministry of Trade and Industry	Private Sector Associations, NGOs

7.1.3. Policy priority 3: Financing and investing

7.1.3.1 Policy objective 3:

To enhance disaster resilience by increasing public and private investment to support effective DRR and DRM programming

Strategy	Activity	Expected Outcomes	Timeframe	Relevant SDGs	Lead Agency	Other Key Agencies
Strengthen revenue mobilization capacity and channels for dedicated DRM programming. This shall be achieved through a renewed focus on National financing efforts and the establishment of a DRM and DRR financial plans and instruments led by the DMA and in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. It shall also encourage and solicit for public and private investments in DRM both nationally and locally which are fundamental to	Establish a Disaster Management Trust Fund at various levels (National, Regional, District, Local) for resource mobilization.	Increased financial resources for DRM initiatives.	2024-2025	SDG 1, SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Finance, Local Governments
	Assess fiscal impacts of disasters on government budgets.	Better understanding of financial vulnerabilities post-disaster.	2024-2026	SDG 8	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
	Establish and operationalize a DRM investment plan and framework.	Structured investment framework to support DRM projects.	2024-2027	SDG 11, SDG 13	National Disaster Management Authority	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
	Review national policies to include DRM Trust Funds.	Integrated DRM considerations in	2024-2026	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Relevant Sectoral Ministries



achieving the overall objective of the DRM policy.		national policy frameworks.				
	Promote safety net mechanisms (e.g., disaster risk transfer, insurance, and financial protection).	Enhanced financial protection for public and private investments.	2024-2028	SDG 1, SDG 8	Ministry of Finance	Insurance Companies, Financial Institutions
	Set up contingent financing mechanisms for quick liquidity post-disaster.	Rapid response capability for immediate disaster relief.	2024-2025	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development Agencies
	Establish and strengthen the National Disaster Management Fund (NDMF).	Improved funding and resource deployment for disaster management.	2024-2026	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Finance, Local Governments
	Investigate financial options such as private sector investment and insurance for DRM.	Diversified funding sources for resilience initiatives.	2024-2028	SDG 8, SDG 9	Ministry of Finance	Private Sector Partners, Mining sector
	Increase disaster risk considerations in sector development strategies and investments.	Comprehensive risk integration in developmental policies.	2024-2030	SDG 8, SDG 11	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development	Sectoral Development Strategies of MDAs
	Propose laws/regulations to incentivize private sector investments in micro-finance and micro-insurance.	Increased private sector engagement in disaster risk financing.	2024-2027	SDG 8, SDG 9	Ministry of Finance	Financial Regulatory Agencies
	Strengthen flood management policies	Increased resilience to	2024-2030	SDG 11, SDG 13	National Disaster Management	Local Government



	and programs (e.g., river management and urban drainage).	flooding and associated disasters.			Agency, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	Agencies, Community Groups
	Strengthen disaster recovery and reconstruction subsidy programs for disaster victims.	Enhanced support for recovery of affected individuals.	2024-2028	SDG 1, SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Social Welfare
	Establish disaster relief programs aimed at poverty reduction in post-disaster recovery.	Sustainable livelihood restoration for vulnerable populations.	2024-2030	SDG 1, SDG 10	Ministry of Social Welfare	NGOs, Community Organizations
	Promote a community-based DRM approach with a Trust Fund.	Empowered communities with financial resources for DRM initiatives.	2024-2028	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Local NGOs, Community-Based Organizations
	Establish a collective relocation subsidy program for residents in hazardous areas.	Improved safety and reduced vulnerability for at-risk populations.	2024-2029	SDG 11	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning	Local Authorities, Community Leaders
	Develop a disaster insurance program for disaster victims to aid livelihood assistance.	Financial support for rebuilding livelihoods after a disaster.	2024-2028	SDG 11, SDG 1	Ministry of Finance	Insurance Companies, NGOs
	Create a mechanism for allocating public donations for DRM-use and develop guidelines.	Transparent and effective use of donations for DRM efforts.	2024-2026	SDG 17	National Disaster Management Agency	Charitable Organizations, Community Foundations
	Adopt an 'all hazards' approach to recognize	Comprehensive disaster risk management	2024-2030	SDG 11, SDG 13	National Disaster Management Agency	Research Institutions, Environment



	linkages between different hazards.	across multiple hazards.				Protection Agency
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7.1.4. Policy priority 4: Disaster preparedness and emergency response

7.1.4.1 Policy objective 4:

To strengthen the de-centralised operationalisation of disaster preparedness for effective response and recovery practices at all levels. Also, to ensure systematic and effective identification and monitoring of advanced and early warnings of disaster risk, and disaster event communication in the most timely and efficient manner at both national and local levels.

Strategy	Activity	Expected Outcomes	Timeframe	Relevant SDGs	Lead Agency	Other Key Agencies
Strengthen decentralized structures for DRM preparedness and response To strengthen pre-hospital care for timely provision of effective emergency care to prevent disability and deaths through effective pre-hospital care governance structure, management and quality of pre-hospital care service, improve Turn-Around-Time (TAT) for Ambulance activation, and strengthening the capacity of emergency responders for ambulance services. This shall be achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the inclusion of DRM in development strategies at local, national, and sub-national levels. 	Integration of DRM in broader development plans.	2024-2026	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Local Governments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the capacity of local councils in disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction. 	Enhanced local governance and emergency response capabilities.	2024-2028	SDG 11	Local Councils	Civil Society Organizations, NGOs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilize and coordinate civil society organizations, NGOs, and local communities for better disaster preparedness and response. 	Increased community engagement and preparedness.	2024-2027	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Community-Based Organizations, NGOS, Local Government Authorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policies and programs for emergency 	Improved safety and preparedness for	2024-2028	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Environment and



through a refined approach to DRM as part of a 'whole-of-society' undertaking, which emphasises how both individuals and organizations have responsibilities to reduce disaster risk. And an appreciation of the different roles and responsibilities (of individuals, communities, local government, private and public sector etc).	preparedness and response to human-induced disasters.	human-induced disasters.				Climate Change, Private Sector
	Improve and maintain drainage networks in cities and towns.	Reduced inland flooding and improved urban resilience.	2024-2029	SDG 11, SDG 13	Ministry of Works and Public Assets	Local Government, Sierra Leone Roads Authority, Road Maintenance Fund
	Strengthen referrals and cross-referral systems in disaster situations.	Streamlined emergency response services.	2024-2026	SDG 3	Ministry of Health	National Health Emergency Services
	Review and strengthen pre-hospital care services aligning with international best practices.	Improved quality of pre-hospital emergency care.	2024-2027	SDG 3	Ministry of Health	International NGOs focused on Health
	Plant mangroves and construct sea walls as climate change adaptation and disaster risk	Enhanced coastal resilience to erosion and storm surges.	2024-2028	SDG 13	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (NPAA)	Environmental NGOs, Research Institutions, Local Councils



	management measures.					
	Promote construction of safer schools resilient to hazards.	Safer educational environments for children.	2024-2027	SDG 4, SDG 11	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education	Community Stakeholders, Local Contractors
	Promote construction and retrofitting of evacuation centers in disaster-prone areas.	Improved safety and shelter availability during disasters.	2024-2029	SDG 11	Local Government Authorities	NGOs, Community Organizations
	Enhance national and regional capacities to respond to transboundary disasters.	Coordinated cross-border disaster response efforts.	2024-2030	SDG 17	National Disaster Management Agency	Regional Bodies (MRU, ECOWAS), Neighbouring Countries (Guinea and Liberia)
	Develop multi-hazards early warning systems installed in the Meteorological Agency.	Improved early warning for various disaster types.	2024-2028	SDG 13	Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency	Universities and Research Institutions
	Standardize telecommunication services to strengthen mobile networks for disaster risk governance.	Enhanced communication capabilities during disasters.	2024-2026	SDG 9	National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority	Private Sector Telecom Companies
	Establish an integrated communication network to strengthen local preparedness and response.	Improved communication during emergencies.	2024-2027	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Telecommunication Providers
	Develop an Emergency Communication	Efficient communication between	2024-2028	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Local Government, National Telecommunication



	Network using various communication tools.	emergency operation centers and communities.				Authority, Emergency Services
	Improve GIS and ICT networks utilized for emergency response.	Enhanced situational awareness during disasters.	2024-2026	SDG 9	Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation	Technology Firms, Research Institutions
	Develop and assess national and local DRM plans.	Continuous monitoring and improvement of DRM strategies.	2024-2029	SDG 16	National Disaster Management Agency	Local Governments, Civil Society, NGOs
	Strengthen forecasting and early warning systems for various hazards.	Timely and accurate disaster warnings.	2024-2027	SDG 13	Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency	National Disaster Management Agency
	Set up disaster loss and damage assessment mechanisms.	Systematic evaluation of disaster impacts.	2024-2028	SDG 1	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Finance
	Conduct multi-hazard risk mapping using GIS technology.	Comprehensive understanding of disaster risks.	2024-2029	SDG 9	National Disaster Management Agency	Universities and Research Institutions
	Establish an emergency supplies sharing system.	Efficient resource allocation during disasters.	2024-2028	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Local Governments, NGOs
	Promote regular disaster response exercises within communities.	Increased community preparedness and resilience.	2024-2026	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Community-Based Organizations
	Formulate sector-wide preparedness measures and drills for critical infrastructure.	Enhanced resilience of critical infrastructure during disasters.	2024-2029	SDG	National Disaster Management Agency	All sectors



7.1.5. Policy priority 5: Recovery and Reconstruction

7.1.5.1 Policy objective 5:

To improve the effectiveness of responses through stronger disaster risk preparedness and reconstruction post-disaster, which progressively minimises the vulnerability and exposure of people and communities to disaster risk. And reduces the overall impact of disaster events.

Strategy	Activity	Expected Outcomes	Timeframe	Relevant SDGs	Lead Agency	Other Key Agencies
Use rapid and efficient response mechanisms to minimize disaster impacts. This shall be achieved through appropriate mechanisms to measure the impact of different hazard events, which also makes it possible to establish detailed plans for better response to disasters that can ultimately reduce the severity of adverse natural events.	Set up a mechanism to conduct Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) to evaluate, record, share, and publicly account for disaster losses.	Comprehensive understanding of disaster impacts.	2024-2025	SDG 1, SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Statistics Sierra Leone (SSL)
	Enhance recovery schemes to provide psychosocial support and mental health services for disaster-affected individuals, especially those with PTSD.	Improved mental health and well-being of disaster survivors.	2024-2027	SDG 3	Ministry of Health	NGOs, Mental Health related NGOs/. Ministry of Social Welfare
	Promote technical and financial assistance based on the Build Back Better principle for reconstructing infrastructure and public facilities.	Resilient and sustainable infrastructure restoration.	2024-2028	SDG 9, SDG 11	Ministry of Works and Public Assets (SLRA)	International Development Partners, Private Sector
	Set up a mechanism to restore biodiversity and ecosystems damaged by hazards.	Enhanced ecosystem recovery and resilience.	2024-2028	SDG 15	Ministry of Environment and climate change (NPAA)	Environmental NGOs, Research Institutions



	Develop an early/medium/long-term recovery and rehabilitation strategy inclusive of gender, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.	Equitable recovery for marginalized groups.	2024-2029	SDG 5, SDG 10	National Disaster Management Agency	Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, Local Governments
	Promote a progressive relocation scheme for residents in disaster-prone areas.	Reduced vulnerability of communities in hazardous zones.	2024-2030	SDG 11	Local Government Authorities	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning
	Create market and value chain facilities to support community enterprises and provide alternative livelihoods in disaster hotspots.	Improved economic resilience and sustainability for communities.	2024-2029	SDG 8, SDG 11	Ministry of Trade and Industry	Microfinance Institutions, NGOs, Community Cooperatives
	Establish financial instruments including recovery compensation packages or loans for housing reconstruction and alternative employment generation.	Financial support for recovery and economic stability.	2024-2028	SDG 1, SDG 8	Ministry of Finance	Banks, Insurance Companies



7.1.6. Policy priority 6: Knowledge & Information Management

7.1.6.1 Policy objective 6:

To enhance the use of knowledge, education, training, innovation and information sharing to build safe and resilient societies and systems.

Strategy: build Capacities, knowledge, and skills for effective DRM programming

Strategy	Strategy Activity	Expected Outcomes	Timeframe	Relevant SDGs	Lead Agency	Other Key Agencies
<p>Build capacities, knowledge, and skills for effective DRM programming.</p> <p>This shall be achieved through an incremental process that requires a sustained effort, constant nurturing, evaluation, revision and learning, and capacity building. Whilst ensuring that systematic efforts are also made at the local level with sufficient financial and capacity development support. These efforts will be underpinned by using appropriate technology and tools that enhance the ease and efficient use of information in disaster management.</p>	<p>Develop Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials for DRM, including PSS manuals and safe school protocols.</p>	<p>Enhanced community awareness and preparedness.</p>	<p>2024-2025</p>	<p>SDG 4, SDG 11</p>	<p>Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education</p>	<p>NGOs, Community Organizations</p>
	<p>Establish Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and disaster week in schools to promote awareness.</p>	<p>Increased student engagement in disaster resilience education.</p>	<p>2024-2026</p>	<p>SDG 4</p>	<p>Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education</p>	<p>Environmental NGOs, Local Governments</p>
	<p>Establish an institution for providing meteorological and hydrological data services for researchers, businesses, and development planners.</p>	<p>Improved access to critical data for disaster planning.</p>	<p>2024-2028</p>	<p>SDG 9</p>	<p>Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency</p>	<p>Universities, Research Institutions, National Water Resource Management Agency</p>



	Develop advanced technical textbooks and standardized manuals on disaster risk evaluation, response, and management.	Enhanced knowledge base for DRM practitioners and stakeholders.	2024-2027	SDG 4, SDG 11	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education	Relevant Research and Academic Institutions (Universities)
	Create school textbooks on science and technology that include content on disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction.	Improved educational materials integrating DRM content.	2024-2025	SDG 4	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School Education/Technical and Higher Education	Educational Publishers
	Develop community-based DRM training tools for daily operations and assessments by DRM and conservation officers.	Increased capacity of local DRM officers.	2024-2026	SDG 11, SDG 13	National Disaster Management Agency	Local Government Authorities
	Establish a disaster information management system using remote sensing, GIS, and open-source technology for public access.	Enhanced public access to disaster information.	2024-2028	SDG 9	National Disaster Management Agency	Technical Institutions, IT Companies
	Strengthen the national health system to enhance the capacity of	Improved disaster medical care and health	2024-2029	SDG 3	Ministry of Health	Health NGOs, Medical Schools (COHMAS, Njala University)



	health workers in disaster medical care and risk understanding.	worker readiness.				
	Implement SMS mass communication systems for disseminating multi-hazard warnings through mobile networks.	Increased public awareness of disaster risks.	2024-2027	SDG 9	National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority	Mobile Network Operators (Africel, Orange, QCell etc)
	Increase national and community-level awareness to enhance resilience building.	Greater community engagement and resilience to disasters.	2024-2026	SDG 11	National Disaster Management Agency	Community-Based Organizations, Local leaders/chiefs,
	Improve CCA/DRM broadcast programs in partnership with relevant agencies to raise public awareness on hazards and risks.	Strengthened community involvement in DRM activities.	2024-2028	SDG 4	National Disaster Management Agency	Broadcasting Services (radio, TV), NGOs
	Promote the involvement of civil society groups in organizing a biennial conference for the community of practice in DRM.	Enhanced collaboration and sharing of best practices in DRM.	2024-2030	SDG 17	National Disaster Management Agency	Civil Society Organizations, Academic/research Institutions





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8.0 POLICY, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

8.1 Approval of the National Disaster Risk Management Policy

The approval of this NDRMP will establish the foundational institutional and legal framework for Disaster Risk Management in Sierra Leone.

8.2 Sierra Leone National Disaster Risk Management Legislation Framework

The legal framework for disaster reduction and resilience in Sierra Leone is primarily governed by the National Disaster Management Act 2020. This Act serves the current legal foundation, approved by parliament, and includes provisions for:

- The establishment of an autonomous National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) and associated Disaster Management Structures and Committees.
- Defining the powers, roles, relationships, functions and funding mechanisms for the NDMA.
- Developing disaster management plans at the regional, district, and chiefdom levels to ensure immediate assistance to disaster victims, even in the absence of a former disaster declaration.

8.3 Sierra Leone National Disaster Risk Management Institutional Framework

Part II 2. (1) (A) and Part III 12. (1) The bill stipulates the establishment of the National Disaster Management Agency as the central government body responsible for managing disasters and similar emergencies and the development of the capacity of communities to manage and respond effectively to disasters and emergencies throughout Sierra Leone. Through this policy, an autonomous, NDMA will be established with the following mandates and responsibilities:

- To implement government policy on disaster prevention, disaster risk reduction and climate risk management; and national, regional, district and chiefdom disaster management plan
- Prepare, coordinate, monitor, evaluate and update disaster management plans
- Identify, manage, and monitor hazards and natural disasters
- Disseminate interventions and conduct public education on human activities most likely to cause disasters in Sierra Leone; the hazards and natural disasters likely to affect any region, district, or chiefdom in Sierra Leone; action to be taken in the event of a disaster; the control and relief measures to be taken by the government in the event of a disaster; and public cooperation with designated authorities in the event of a disaster.
- Advise government on matters relating to disaster and emergency prevention rules and regulations and their correlative sanctions.
- Facilitate the development of communities and community-based organisations to respond effectively to disasters, and improve social mobilisation, employment generation and poverty reduction.
- Collate and preserve data on disasters in Sierra Leone
- Stockpile, manage, coordinate and supervise the distribution of disaster relief items:
- Analyse and disseminate relevant information on disasters to the public
- Ensure the effective flow of information on disasters between national, regional, district and chiefdom levels of government
- Organise and equip disaster volunteer groups for disaster management and income generation
- Sensitize and motivate communities to serve as a voluntary organ to assist in managing disasters

- Provide the first-line response in the events of a disaster.
- Organise disaster response simulation exercises
- Ensure the provision of adequate facilities for technical training in disaster preparedness; educational programmes to create awareness of disasters and the required response; and the establishment of early warning systems.
- Investigate reports and analyse the nature of hazards, vulnerability, and risk situations in particular areas
- Ensure the operational preparedness of disaster management committees in vulnerable and risk-prone areas.
- Co-ordinate response and reconstruction efforts of local and foreign collaborators
- Cooperate with other countries and relevant institutions in disaster prevention, mitigation and search and rescue operations
- Conduct research on matters relating to disasters and emergencies in Sierra Leone and
- Perform any other function ancillary to the object of the Agency.

8.4 Key national level DM Institutions

8.4.1 National platform for disaster risk reduction

The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction plays a critical role in coordination, prioritization and generating coherence between disaster risk reduction, adaptation, and development issues (World Bank, 2018). The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) is the highest level (Platinum) of disaster management in the country. It is chaired by the Vice President or in their absence, the National Security Coordinator. The NPDRR provides a foundation for fostering multi-sectoral and role-player engagement in disaster risk reduction and recovery at various levels. The platform was developed in line with the Emergency Preparedness and Response concept and comprehensive all-hazard institutional response mechanism. During emergencies, it brings together the highest national expertise to oversee the national response. According to Part 2 (Section 3) of the Disaster Management Agency Act 2020, the NPDRR serves as a 'governing body responsible for the control and supervision of the agency'. The NPDRR reports to the Chairman of the National Security Council. The functions of the national platform for disaster risk reduction will be to:

- Control and supervision of the agency, including overseeing the sound and proper financial management of the agency providing policy guidance and advice to ensure the effective implementation of the functions of the agency to enhance the overall performance of the agency.
- Stimulate and strengthen multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral partnerships and networks for Disaster Risk Reduction at all levels.
- Ensure that there are appropriate and adequate facilities for rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery in the event of any disaster throughout Sierra Leone
- Liaise with public institutions, non-governmental organisations and donor agencies for financial support and the provision of logistics for the management of disasters throughout Sierra Leone, and
- Performs any other functions incidental to the functions of the National Disaster Management Committee.
- Collaborate with relevant government agencies, public or private institutions in the management of national disasters.

Membership of the National platform is drawn from Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Municipal Councils, humanitarian organisations, NGOs specializing in disaster management or environmental issues, CBOs, professional institutions, the private sector, media and the local communities on DRR and DRM. The platform will work closely with the Directorates within Disaster Management Agency.



Institutions responsible at the national level include the following:

- a) Office of National Security
- b) National Fire Force
- c) Ministry of Health and Sanitation
- d) Security Agencies (SLP, RSLAF)
- e) Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- f) Sierra Leone Red Cross Society
- g) Ministry of Information and Communication
- h) Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning
- i) Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
- j) Relevant Non-Governmental Organisations
- k) Media
- l) Freetown City Council
- m) Specialised agencies of the United Nations
- n) National Commission for Social Action
- o) Ministry of Finance
- p) Ministry of Social Welfare
- q) Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs

8.4.2 The National Strategic Situation group

The National Strategic Situation Group (NSSG) is activated during a Level Two or Level Three emergency. NSSG has a core NDMA staff but will also bring together representatives from MDAs, including the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the Ministry of Finance (MoF), and Ministry of Health (MoH), , Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW), Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs (MoGCA), Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD), and partners relevant to the emergency. Representatives are the technical leaders from their respective organisations.

Depending on the scale of the event the Silver (tactical) response will be led by the Disaster Management Committee (DDMC). The NSSG is supported by the National Situation Room (NSR). NSSG is expected to meet as often as is required. Eleven pillars have been identified to support the implementation of an emergency response. Each pillar has a lead MDA as well as participating members. In many instances, the lead MDA is supported by the relevant UN Agency. Table 7 summarizes these pillars and their respective leads.

Table 7: Emergency response pillars

Pillar	Government-lead	UN support
Coordination	National Disaster Management Agency	
Logistics	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces co-led by Ministry of Finance	
Protection and psychosocial	Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs	UNICEF
Health and burials	Ministry of Health	WHO
Security and safety	Sierra Leone Police Co-led by Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces	
Social mobilisation and communication	NDMA co-led by the Ministry of Information and Civic Education, Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation	
Food and nutrition	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	WFP
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation	



Registration	Ministry of Social Welfare Co-led by Statistics Sierra Leone/National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA)	UNFPA
Shelter	National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA). Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning (MLHCP)	
Social Protection	National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA)	

8.4.3 The National Emergency Operations Centre and Incident Command System

The NEOC shall deal with sudden onset of both natural and human-induced emergencies in the country. The EOC will serve as a central facility for early warning and the close coordination of emergency and crisis response and recovery action involving multi-stakeholder institutions such as the SLP, SLRCS, Hospital Emergency Units, multilateral agencies, international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

The NEOC is established under the National Disaster Management Agency. It shall be equipped with early warning systems, response facilities, specialised professionals and consultants. It will also receive and analyse appeals for assistance from disaster affected communities and serve as a hub to support coordination at various levels. Primarily, the NEOC provides and disseminate early warning information, establish mechanisms for the effective coordination and emergency services integration, and recovery assets and resources, support the assignment of responsibilities and establishment of procedures to safeguard the lives and properties of the population in-case of emergencies or disasters through organisational, planning, training activities designed to enhance the countries preparedness and response capabilities in conjunction with the decentralised Regional Disaster Management Committee and the Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC). All the agencies will be coordinated by the NEOC and the respective REOC that assists the Commander of Operations in the coordination, command and control of operations, and streamlined communications and operational support during and after an emergency. The EOC will also feed into education and awareness programmes for citizens about vulnerability and exposure to disasters over time.

The NEOC will be supervised and directed by the Director General of the NDMA and will be headed by the Deputy Director General and supported by the operations, communications public information, finance, administration and logistics support teams. Therefore, a budget item for NEOC maintenance and exercises should be included in the NDMA annual budget along with other administrative requirements.

At full activation, the NEOC will function 24/7 during the peak of a disaster event, on a rotating three shift basis. During partial activations, and in the non-disaster time, it will operate on normal office hours.

Operation levels

Level 1: No emergency/disaster has occurred and no alert or warning has been issued. The personnel who man the EOC during activation perform their regular duties. During the pre-disaster period, the NDMA with all DM Committees, relevant partners such UN agencies, the private sector, NGOs and media should be engaged in preparedness activities such as rehearsing and periodic reviewing the Plan, and training and educating the public for purposes of continued readiness.

Level 2: A potential or actual emergency/disaster, which may require the activation of the EOC, is imminent. This is typically an early warning monitoring phase triggered by a potential event such as storm or a minor emergency, which does not require activation of the EOC. And DMCs are notified of the possible need for establishing DEOCs and conducting



the emergency response. The NDMA are also notified of the possible need of NEOC staffing for monitoring operations.

Level 3: This refers to an emergency/disaster that may require activation of full-scale emergency operational activities and may also require large-scale involvement of either DEOC members and possible national assistance. All disaster management teams of national, district and community levels are informed and an incident Command Post is set up. The EOCs are partially or fully activated.

Level 4: an emergency/disaster that requires continuous involvement of all sectors and Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) is ongoing. The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) is fully activated with 24-hour staffing. DEOCs are activated. The Plan is activated and national assets for response and recovery activities are deployed.

The NEOC will carry out the following functions:

- i. Gather, receive and analyse and disseminate early warning information to responsible MDAs, local governments, communities and other stakeholders.
- ii. Maintain a national disaster database of stakeholders and trained response individuals and volunteers for first response in the event their expertise is necessary.
- iii. Provide guidance to various organisations and stakeholders on the handling of an emergency/disaster
- iv. Coordinate disaster response, search, rescue and evacuation operations with such REOCs as may be established
- v. Provide the public with evacuation guidelines and ensure the establishment and management of reception centres
- vi. Establish and coordinate emergency rapid disaster response teams
- vii. Develop and ensure the implementation of standard operating procedures for early warning and emergency management
- viii. Systematize and coordinate existing emergency operations centre throughout the country
- ix. Develop and conduct disaster simulation exercises for enhanced preparedness and response to emergencies
- x. Equip, facilitate, and link Regional and District EOC to provide coordinated response. This may require ordering and arranging delivery of equipment and materials from contractors.
- xi. Maintain the inventory and stockpile at strategic locations essential emergency response equipment and logistics.
- xii. Monitor public information sources including TV, radio, and wire services to gather information on incidents and determine accuracy of public information

The NDMA shall establish a proper chain of command for effective management of disasters and coordination of all agencies responsible for disaster risk management in the country tactical level by the Incident Command System.

The Incident Command System will provide combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures and communications operating within a common organisational structure with responsibility for the management of resources to effectively accomplish stated objectives pertinent to an incident and close coordination with the Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC), and late, if it is necessary, with the National Emergency Operations Centre NEOC.



8.5 Sub-national levels institutions

8.5.1 Regional Disaster Management Committee (RDMC)

The RDMC should be a forum for disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation activities in the regions and an essential link between national objectives and local priorities. The responsibilities of RDMC will include the following:

- Prepare in respect of the region plans for the prevention of disasters and for mitigating the effects of disaster.
- Coordinate the preparation and implementation of regional disaster management plans,
- To act as a clearinghouse of information related to early warning
- Participate in Risk Analysis and Vulnerability Assessments
- Coordinating regional level multi-sectoral input into the disaster management plans
- Mobilizing regional resources for the implementation of mitigation, prevention, preparedness, and response activities.
- Collecting and disseminating information on regional disaster management issues,
- Acting as a channel for information and resources between central government and districts,
- Promoting and implementing disaster management training at the regional level and ensuring that training programs are carried out at the district level,
- Promoting public awareness at regional and district levels,
- Promoting emergency operations for the region in times of disasters, and
- The RDMC committee shall identify and co-opt members as the need arises upon consultations with the general membership.
- Perform other functions relevant to the regional Disaster Management Committee

The Regional Disaster Management Committee comprises of the following:

- a) Resident Minister (Chairman)
- b) Provincial Security Coordinator, ONS
- c) Provincial Secretary
- d) The Brigade Commander, RSLAF
- e) The Regional Police Commander
- f) The Regional Commander, National Fire Force
- g) The Mayor of the Municipality
- h) The Regional Coordinator, National Commission for Social Action
- i) The District Medical Officer in the regions
- j) The Sierra Leone Red Cross
- k) The Regional Head, Environment Protection Agency
- l) The Paramount Chiefs who reside in the region
- m) The Regional Information Officer
- n) A representative from the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning
- o) The Regional Coordinator of the NDMA

8.5.2 The District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC)

Sierra Leone has embarked on a process of devolution and regional and district governments have responsibilities for disaster preparedness and response. The District Disaster Management Committees were established at the district level as multi-organisational groupings, which exists within each district, bringing together District Council Leaders, sector departments, security representatives, key local; representatives, the health organisations and any active international partners agencies (such as the Red Cross, United Nations and NGOs) within the area to coordinate Disaster Preparedness Plan. Coordination of disaster preparedness and response operations is devolved from the national level with operational



functions at the national, regional and district levels. It meets on a regular basis to support disaster management preparations and risk assessments and will operate on a 24-hour basis during an emergency. At the operational level, a response is led by the District Emergency Operations Centre (DEOC). This links to the DDMC. DDMCs are responsible for district-level preparedness activities, such as the development of a district disaster management and response plan and support the coordination of any disaster response activities as well as communicating risk evaluations to the national level. The District Disaster Management and Response Plans are expected to identify key hazards affecting districts (such as disease outbreaks, windstorms, fires, pollution, road accidents, or conflict); and the potential role different sectors and organisations should play in mitigating crises and/or supporting a response. Under the new National Disaster Management Act 2020, the agency will build on the existing structures, and the capacity of the District Disaster Management Committees will be enhanced.

Their responsibilities will include the following:

- Prepare plans for the district to prevent and mitigate disasters in its area of authority
- Maintain a close liaison with the Regional Disaster Management Committee in drawing up its plans and
- Preparing and updating district multi-sectoral disaster preparedness, prevention, and mitigation plans for slow-and rapid-onset disasters
- Coordinating and mediating actions between national and local levels.
- Mobilizing resources for district disaster management and preparation of budgets
- Implementing public information and public awareness programs in the district.
- Participate in the preparation of risk maps and vulnerability profiles, developing and implementing contingency plans, supplying essential inputs, proposing and supporting livelihood diversification, disseminating early warning messages, preparing immediate needs assessments and providing relief.
- Local administration, implementation of disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery and livelihood development programme.
- To act as a clearing house for information relating to early warning.
- Support the dissemination and institutionalisation of byelaws to curb the triggers of disasters in accordance with the guidelines for the establishment of DDMCs, and engagements within the districts on issues beyond disaster risk and emergencies, e.g land conflicts, epidemics, floods and deforestation.
- Perform in the district, the functions directed by the Platform or the Director-General.

The Regional Disaster Management Committee will foster linkages with sectoral ministries, NGOs and local authorities. They will work with individuals and volunteers, who have experience and/or interest in disaster management.

The DDMC comprise of the following:

- a) The District Council Chairman
- b) The District Security Coordinator, ONS
- c) The Senior District Officer
- d) The Battalion Commander, RSLAF
- e) The Local Unit Commander, SLP
- f) The Regional Commander, National Fire Force
- g) The District Coordinator, NaCSA
- h) The District Medical Officer
- i) The District Head, Environment Protection Agency
- j) The Chairman, Council of Paramount Chiefs
- k) The District Information Officer
- l) The District Director of Agriculture, MAFFS
- m) The Branch Manager, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society



- n) A representative from the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning
- o) The District Youth Chairman, District Youth Council
- p) A representative from the CSO specialising in disaster management or environmental issues
- q) The District Coordinator, NDMA

8.5.3 The Chiefdom Disaster Management Committee

At the community level, the Chiefdom disaster management offices and chiefdom disaster Management Committees (CDMCs) are to serve as the lowest administrative level of disaster management in Sierra Leone. At the chiefdom level, there are chiefdoms DRM representatives, including a chiefdom security coordinator and other members. The responsibilities of the Chiefdom Disaster Management Committee include the following:

- Prepare plans for the chiefdom to prevent and mitigate disasters in its area of authority
- Maintain a close liaison with the District Disaster Management Committee in drawing up its plans and
- Perform in the chiefdom, the functions directed by the Platform or the Director-General.

The CDMC comprise the following:

- a) The Paramount Chief – Chairman
- b) The Community Health Officer
- c) The Company Commander, RSLAF
- d) The Officer in Charge, SLP
- e) Chiefdom Security Coordinator, ONS
- f) The Representative of the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society
- g) The Chiefdom Youth Chairman
- h) CSO Specialising in Disaster Risk and Environmental Issues, Chairman
- i) The Councillor per Chiefdom
- j) Member of Parliament
- k) Co-opt members

The role of community volunteers must be strongly recognized and prioritized in preparedness planning efforts, as they service at the first responders during community-level emergencies. In Freetown, Community-Based Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs) are regarded as essential 'volunteer groups' for DRR initiatives. The membership is mainly constituted by youth from informal settlements and members of existing local networks, such as the Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDURP). CDMCs play a significant role in fostering ownership of disaster preparedness, response and prevention in their communities. They are actively involved in local hazard risk diagnosis and vulnerability assessments, raising awareness of risks, and promoting practical and affordable preparedness, response, and coping measures. Their activities also include maintaining public infrastructure and housing, preparing evacuation plans, establishing rescue and volunteer committees, and providing shelter, food, water, and other vital assistance during emergencies. Additionally, they contribute to restoring livelihoods after a disaster.

The formalisation or institutionalisation of chiefdom or community-based disaster management committees, along with community volunteers as formal coordination structures, is crucial for strengthening the first response capacity for EP&R within the community.

8.6 Role of other stakeholders in Disaster Risk Management

For the purpose of this policy, stakeholders include Non-Governmental Organisations, development partners, agencies, donors, the private sector and the individual community



members. The government, through the NDMA, will play a coordinating role in integrating the contributions of these diverse stakeholders before, during and after emergencies.

At the beginning of each fiscal year, stakeholders are required to submit their work plans and budgets, including resources and their sources, to the government through the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED). This process will enable the NDMA to capture comprehensive information related to mitigation, prevention, preparedness, and response activities. Consequently, the agency will gain insights into the types and scales of interventions undertaken, as well as the resources necessary for their implementation.

8.6.1 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and CSOs

NGOs play a pivotal role in supplementing efforts of the NDMA in implementing this policy. They are encouraged to provide timely and appropriate relief and early warning information. Effective collaboration with NGOs will be promoted at all levels of disaster management and mitigation framework. These organisations are actively involved in disaster prevention, mitigation preparedness, response, and recovery programs across various sectors at national, district, and community levels. The government and NGOs will forge strong partnerships to serve the needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population and the communities affected by disasters.

8.6.2 The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS)

The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) was established by an act of Parliament in 1962, amended by an act of Parliament No.74 of 2012, as a Voluntary Aid Society and an auxiliary to the Government of Sierra Leone. It operates under principles of Conventions and Additional Protocols, delivering high-standard humanitarian services. As an affiliate of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (IFRC), the SLRCS adheres to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the Sphere standards.

The SLRCS plays a crucial role in complementing the GoSL's efforts in disaster risk reduction, volunteer management, first aid, and capacity building for communities. Its activities include conducting search and rescue operations, Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments, community-based prevention, and control, and implementing the Global Restoring Family Links (RFL) Strategy deals reunite families separated by crises. The NDRM policy recognises the SLRCS vital role and facilitates unimpeded access to delivering humanitarian assistance disaster-affected populations. Additionally, the SLRCS is instrumental in mobilizing both internal and external resources for disaster risk management.

The NDRM Policy establishes mechanisms for coordinating and integrating the contributions of SLRCS with other disaster risk management stakeholders in Sierra Leone through the national disaster management platform and similar multi-stakeholder platforms at regional and local levels.

8.6.3 Development partners/agencies

Under this policy, development partners and humanitarian agencies will engage in disaster management through relevant committees to complement national efforts. They will provide essential information and resources, including financial and technical support for preparedness, planning, Early Warning Systems, and response throughout the Disaster Management Cycle. These partners can facilitate the coordination of international relief assistance to reduce vulnerabilities, enhance capacity, and mitigate disaster impacts while increasing resilience to future shocks.



Development partners will mobilize support from additional stakeholders in critical areas of Disaster Preparedness and Response (DPR) and Disaster Risk Management (DRM), fostering relationships to promote training for government officials on DRM and DPR issues. They will also report periodically on the impacts of their contributions within their own reporting frameworks.

The NDRM Policy provides mechanisms for coordinating and integrating the contributions of development partners and agencies with those of other disaster risk management stakeholders in Sierra Leone through the national disaster management platform and similar multi-stakeholder platforms at regional and local levels.

8.6.4 Private Sector: Corporate bodies and individuals

The policy acknowledges the essential role of the private sector and individuals in managing disaster risk. Companies, the media, professional bodies, and individuals are expected to contribute financial resources, human capital, technical expertise, and equipment during disaster events. They also play a significant role in advocacy, risk modelling, research and innovation, knowledge management, information sharing, awareness-raising, education, and development of normative instruments, quality standards, policies, and plans that enhance the resilience of critical services, facilities and infrastructure.

The private sector is responsible for preventing disasters by promoting human, industrial, and environmental safety within the jurisdiction, as well as providing frontline responses to disasters in their areas. The National Disaster Management Agency will collaborate closely with the private sector to mainstream disaster management through education, development planning, and awareness-raising initiatives. This approach aims to cultivate a disaster-literate society, empowering individuals to participate effectively in disaster risk management. The private sector can contribute to disaster risk reduction in various ways, including improving logistical capacities at airports during crises and supporting field-based emergency telecommunications.

8.6.5 Media

Media organisations, particularly public and private radio and television stations, play a crucial role in raising public awareness and disseminating early warning information related to disasters. They are instrumental in promoting disaster risk management programs across the country.

Informed public communication about disaster risk management initiatives and achievements enhances public awareness and support, especially following a disaster. National, regional, chiefdoms, and community-based disaster risk management committees must establish and manage ongoing relationships with relevant national and local media to maximize the impact of media coverage on disaster risk management activities.

8.6.6 Universities and research institutions/organisations

Universities and research institutions play a vital role in enhancing disaster management through training and knowledge advancement. They contribute to understanding the costs and consequences of disasters and developing cost-effective mitigation measures, enabling decision-makers to take the effective actions in planning, preparedness, response and recovery. Through research, including data collection and analysis, these institutions can generate innovative ideas for better disaster mitigation and response strategies.

The NDMA should engage with tertiary institutions in Sierra Leone to identify collaborate research priorities that promote disaster risk reduction. The National Disaster Management Fund must allocate resources for disaster risk management research, and the NDMA should



actively support this research, including the publication and dissemination of findings. The NDMA should prioritize integrating disaster risk management research into other developmental programs, particularly those focused on poverty reduction and environmental management.

8.7 Lead sector ministries/agencies and private sector

Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) will be assigned specific roles and responsibilities related to hazards and disasters pertinent to their sectors. They will be accountable for activities ranging from monitoring to response, with dedicated structures established within these institutions to carry out these tasks.

At regional level, institutions will take a leading role in leading role in addressing hazards and disasters relevant to their sectors, with the following key responsibilities:

- Coordinate and promote response operations for disasters affecting multiple regions or districts when local capacities are exceeded.
- Manage response operations for disasters that are likely to spread rapidly across large areas.
- Ensure operational services and business continuity for public and private sectors by identifying priority services, establishing response coordination mechanisms, and maintaining communication with staff and partner organizations.

The following are lead institutions and hazards and related disasters they are responsible for:

Table 8: Roles and responsibilities of lead sector ministries/agencies and private sector

Sector	Roles and responsibilities
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	Focuses on agriculture-related hazards and associated disasters such as livestock diseases and crop pests and diseases as well as regarding disaster induced shortages of animal feed and crop seed supply
Ministry of Finance	Manages the central government budgets. They have the financial responsibility for the Management of National Disaster Management Trust Fund
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	Focuses on climate change and environmental pollution related to hazards and associated disasters
Ministry of Health	Human epidemics associated with disasters. Provide comprehensive emergency management, enabling the health sector to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters. Implementing resilience and continuity programs for hospital facilities, such as 'safe hospitals. Ensure vulnerable persons have protected and reliable access to sufficient, safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities
Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation	Flood and other water supply, and water dams related hazard and associated disasters
Ministry of Transport and Aviation	A lead institution with respect to transport service-related hazards and associated disasters
Ministry of Defence	Responsible for search and rescue, maintaining order and providing support to emergency, recovery and rehabilitation interventions in times of disasters as required.
Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning	Responsible for urban infrastructure and building and other constructions related hazards and associated disasters and other urban disasters, flooding



Ministry of Education (Basic and Senior Secondary School) and Technical and Higher Education)	Measures necessary to be taken before, during and after the disaster period to prevent any hazards and related disasters from interrupting the normal learning process as well as regarding mainstreaming of disaster risk management into school curricula and integrating it into studies and research conducted by research and higher education institutions. Implementing resilience and continuity programs for 'safer schools' and awareness of safer school's framework and policy. Build a culture of safety around school communities.
Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs	Ensure that national, regional and district disaster plans have adequate consideration for the particular needs of women and children. Facilitate participation of men and women informal and informal education, training, public awareness campaigns and decision-making in disaster management.
Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs	The ministry will ensure every district establishes all structures as defined by the Act. MLGRD will ensure that every district captures the major natural and human-induced risks and hazards that regularly affect the district in its annual work plan and budget. The local government at levels develop disaster preparedness plans for their area.
Ministry of Information and Civic Education, Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation	Provide media with disaster information in real-time and keep updating, train media on vulnerability assessment, risk identification, reporting and communication during disaster events; prioritize public awareness and disaster risk education programme. Raise the profile of DRM and provide information sharing among agencies before, during and after a disaster.
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Search and rescue in a disaster situation; develop measures for crowd control, firefighting and security; provide technical assistance and communications equipment
Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs	Build and increase the capacity of the Tourism sector to be adaptive, responsive and able to prepare and recover more quickly from the impact of climate change and natural disasters.
Ministry of Justice	Build and promote the coherence and further development of national and local frameworks of laws, regulations and public policies for disaster resilient Sierra Leone.
Ministry of Energy	Ensure safe, secure and viable energy supply and safety infrastructure assets before, during and after disasters.
Business, professional associations/organisations, and private sector financial institutions	Play an importance in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, resource mobilisation, assistance and technical input, public awareness and education activities, influence safe work practices and conduct risk and vulnerability assessment and mainstream DRM

Each of these ministries, department and agencies will appoint a senior officer to serve as the sectoral focal point, whose responsibilities will include mainstreaming disaster risk management in the Ministries annual work plan and budget, the promotion, coordination and monitoring of disaster risk management activities among stakeholders of the sector.



9.0 FINANCING THE POLICY

9.1. Introduction

Effective disaster risk management (DRM) in Sierra Leone is paramount to building resilience and minimizing the impacts of disasters on communities and the economy. As a nation vulnerable to both natural and man-made disasters, Sierra Leone recognizes the necessity of a sustainable financial mechanism that supports disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. This policy outlines the strategic approach for financing the National Disaster Risk Management Policy emphasizing the importance of resource mobilization, the establishment of a national Disaster Management Fund, and the integration of various funding sources to ensure a comprehensive and effective response framework.

9.2. Sources of funding

Effective DRM in Sierra Leone requires sustainable and diversified funding sources to ensure preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities are adequately supported. This section outlines the primary sources of funding for DRM in Sierra Leone, aligning with the vision of establishing a safer, climate resilient, and adaptive nation. Recognising that inadequate financial resources can severely undermine the operation of DRM mechanisms, particularly during emergencies or disaster situations, this policy aims to establish a sustainable and nationally self-reliant system for disaster management.

9.2.1. Government budget allocations

The GoSL shall allocate a designated portion of the national budget specifically for disaster risk management activities. This allocation will encompass:

- Preparedness and mitigation programs: funding shall be directed towards the development and execution of comprehensive disaster preparedness plans, early warning systems, and community education initiatives aimed at enhancing resilience.
- Emergency response operations: financial resources will be earmarked for the establishment of rapid response capabilities, including training for first responders and procurement of essential emergency supplies.
- Recovery and reconstruction efforts: allocated funds will facilitate prompt recovery of affected communities, including infrastructure repairs and social support systems.
- Capacity building and training for DRM stakeholders; Investment in human capital shall enhance the skills and knowledge of government officials, NGOs, and community leaders in effective DRM practices.

9.2.2. Contingency Funds

The establishment of a National Disaster Contingency Fund, pursuant to the National Disaster Management Agency Act, 2020, is a cornerstone of Sierra Leone's disaster risk management strategy. The fund shall provide immediate financial resources in the event of a disaster, ensuring that the government can respond swiftly and effectively to emergencies.

To maximize its effectiveness, the fund shall:

- Facilitate rapid mobilization of resources: the fund shall ensure that financial resources are readily available for emergency response and recovery efforts. This will enable the government to mobilize resources quickly to address the needs of affected communities.
- Be replenished annually: the fund shall be replenished on an annual basis to maintain a robust financial buffer. This consistent funding will ensure that the government is always prepared to respond to disasters without delay.
- Be managed by the NDMA: the NDMA shall oversee the administration of the fund, ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency in fund allocation and utilization.



This will include regular audits and public reporting mechanisms, which will foster accountability and build public trust in the management of disaster funds

- Earmark budgets within various ministries and local councils: specific budget allocations within key ministries and local councils shall be earmarked for disaster risk expenditures. This will ensure that critical sectors, such as health, education, and infrastructure, have the necessary resources to respond to and recover from disasters.
- Ensure adequate recurring financing: the government shall prioritize adequate recurring financing to sustain the operational capacity of the NDMA. This will enable the agency to fulfil its mandate effectively and coordinate disaster response efforts across various sectors.
- Align mandates with sectoral ministries: the fund shall facilitate alignment between the NDMA's mandates and those of sectoral ministries that are essential for crisis response. this collaboration will enhance the overall effectiveness of the disaster management framework.
- Conduct regular assessments: the fund shall be subject to regular assessments to identify funding gaps and adjust allocations based on evolving needs. This adaptive management approach will allow the government to respond proactively to emerging threats and changing circumstances.
- Support capacity building initiatives: the fund shall also allocate resources for capacity building initiatives aimed at enhancing the preparedness and resilience of communities and local governments in disaster-prone areas.
- Promote community engagement: the fund shall encourage community involvement in disaster risk management by supporting local initiatives and projects that enhance resilience and preparedness.

9.2.3. International aid and grants

International aid and grants will play a significant role in financing disaster risk management efforts. The GoSL shall actively pursue financial support from a diverse array of international donors, including:

- Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies: engaging with countries and organisations committed to disaster risk reduction.
- International financial institutions: collaborating with entities such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to secure loans and grants specifically designated for DRM initiatives.
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Humanitarian Organisations: partnering with NGOs to leverage their expertise and resources for effective disaster response and community resilience programs.

9.2.4. Risk transfer mechanisms

To mitigate the financial impacts of disasters, the government shall implement innovative risk transfer mechanisms including:

- Parametric insurance policies: these policies will provide timely payouts based on specific, measurable triggers, such as the magnitude of the amount of rainfall. By ensuring rapid financial support during emergencies, parametric insurance helps communities recover quickly and reduces the financial burden on governments.
- Catastrophic bonds: by transferring risk to capital markets, these bonds will facilitate immediate funding in response to specified disaster conditions, thereby enhancing the government's financial resilience. Best practices from countries like the Caribbean nations, which have successfully utilized the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), will be examined to inform the design of similar initiatives in Sierra Leone. These bonds allow governments to access large sums of money quickly, facilitating rapid disaster response and recovery efforts.



- Weather-indexed insurance: Particularly beneficial for the agricultural and other vulnerable sectors, such insurance products will protect farmers against adverse weather conditions, thus stabilizing livelihoods and food security. By providing financial support when specific weather thresholds are met, these products help farmers manage risks associated with climate variability.

9.2.5. Public-Private partnerships (PPPs)Sector

The government shall promote robust public-private partnerships to enhance resource mobilisation for DRM. These partnerships will focus on:

- Investment in resilient infrastructure projects: collaborating with private sector entities, including mining companies, are essential for financing resilience building projects. These collaborations can lead to the development of infrastructure capable of withstanding disasters, such as flood-resilient roads or other critical infrastructures, thereby reducing future recovery costs. By pooling resources and expertise, PPPs can enhance the effectiveness of DRM initiatives.
- Collaboration on risk assessment and data sharing: engaging private firms in risk assessment initiatives to improve data accuracy and accessibility.
- Development of innovative financial products for disaster risk reduction: encouraging the private sector to develop tailored financial solutions that address specific disaster risks. This can include creating insurance products that cater to local vulnerabilities or financing mechanisms that support community-level resilience initiatives.

9.2.6. Community-based funding

Local communities shall be empowered to establish community emergency funds and microinsurance schemes, supported through:

- capacity building and technical assistance: The government will facilitate capacity-building initiatives to empower communities in fundraising and financial management, drawing on successful models from countries like Bangladesh, where community engagement has significantly enhanced disaster preparedness.
- Matching grants from the Government and International Donors: encouraging local contributions by providing financial matching to community initiatives.
- Integration with local development plans: ensuring that community funding mechanisms align with broader development goals to enhance sustainability.
- Microfinance and savings groups within communities will be leveraged to provide financial support during emergencies, enhancing local resilience.

9.2.7. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the mining sector

The mining sector has a crucial role in supporting disaster risk management through effective corporate social responsibility initiatives. These initiatives can be directly linked to funding sources for DRM by:

- financial contributions to DRM initiatives: mining companies are encouraged to allocate a portion of their CSR budgets to support local disaster preparedness and recovery efforts, thereby directly contributing to the national DRM funding framework.
- Community Infrastructure development: investments made by mining companies in community infrastructure, such as roads, schools and health facilities, can enhance resilience against disasters, reducing the burden on government resources during emergency situations.
- Capacity building and training: mining companies can fund training programs that prepare local communities for disaster response, ensuring that they are equipped to handle emergencies effectively. This investment not only strengthens community resilience but also aligns with national DRM goals
- Partnerships with local governments/councils: by collaborating with local councils on CSR initiatives focused on disaster risk reduction, mining companies can help leverage



additional funding and resources for DRM efforts, creating a more comprehensive approach to disaster preparedness.

9.2.8. Disaster risk financing strategy

The Disaster Risk Financing Strategy and Implementation Plan (2024-2029) shall serve as a comprehensive framework guiding the mobilization and management of financial resources for DRM. Key components shall include:

- Establishing a comprehensive risk assessment framework: this framework will inform funding priorities and ensures resources are allocated where they are most needed.
- Diversifying financial instruments and mechanisms: exploring various funding sources, including CSR contributions from the mining sector, to create a resilient financial portfolio for DRM.
- Ensuring transparent and accountable use of funds: implementing stringent oversight mechanisms to guarantee that funds are utilized effectively and for their intended purposes.

Box 1: Cost-effectiveness of early response

There is significant international evidence regarding the cost-effectiveness of an early response. With sudden-onset disasters, such as landslides, the importance of supporting households in the immediate aftermath of the shocks is obvious. But even in slower-onset disasters, evidence shows that an early response can be cheaper and more effective.

A five-country study looking at Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, and Niger found that early response could save billions of dollars. For example, Kenya could save US\$21 billion over a 20-year period.

Such an approach often makes use of triggers to identify early signs of a crisis and to automatically launch a response with the risk that a response might be 'falsely triggered' for a crisis that does not unfold. Although this is a risk inherent to an early response approach, evidence shows that an early response could be taken 2-6 times in response to false positives before the costs would outweigh a late response.

Source: Sandford et al., 2020: 33

9.2.9. Innovative financing strategies

To enhance the financial resilience of Sierra Leone, the NDMA shall consider incorporating innovative financing initiatives to attract predictable and sustainable funding flows inspired by successful modes from Malawi, Mozambique, and from other countries. These include:

- Sovereign risk transfer products: exploring options for purchasing sovereign risk transfer products from insurance and capital markets to effectively manage financial impacts from disasters.
- Layered risk financing: implementing a layered approach that combines ex-ante (pre-disaster) and ex-post (post disaster) financial instruments, ensuring quick access to funds during emergencies.
- Crisis and disaster risk finance diagnostic: conducting regular diagnostics to evaluate financial preparedness, identify gaps, and continuously improve financial strategies.
- Social safety nets: developing and strengthening social safety net programs that can be rapidly scaled in response to disasters, providing immediate financial assistance to affected populations and reducing vulnerability.

Other strategic approaches that NDMA will use in resource mobilization include:



- *Making a Stronger Case:* Presenting compelling evidence of the effectiveness of DRM investments and the governance of mobilized resources, similar to the approach taken by Japan, which has successfully integrated disaster risk reduction into national budgeting processes. This will involve developing impact assessments that quantify the benefits of DRM initiatives.
- *Maintaining Relationships:* Strengthening both new and existing relationships with non-traditional financiers, as seen in the Philippines, where the government has successfully engaged with private sector stakeholders to fund disaster resilience initiatives. The NDMA will conduct outreach programs to build partnerships with businesses and philanthropic organisation to enhance resource mobilization.
- *Developing a Partnership Framework:* Establishing a partnership framework based on a deeper understanding of the identities and priorities of key decision-makers in identified funding partner agencies, akin to the collaborative models used in countries like Mexico, which has effectively mobilized public-private partnerships for disaster risk financing. This framework will facilitate collaboration and resource sharing among various stakeholders.
- *Implementing Risk-Spreading Schemes:* Promoting the culture and expansion of insurance and increasing financing for post-disaster recovery and reconstruction through public-private partnerships, similar to the CCRIF, which provides rapid financial support to the governments in the wake of disasters. This can include innovative insurance products tailored to local contexts.
- *Engaging in Multi-Lateral Forums:* actively participating in multi-lateral forums to improve partnerships and establish multi-year resource support agreements with disaster risk financing partners. The NDMA will prioritize attendance at international conferences to engage with potential donors and collaborators.
- *Increasing Risk-Reducing Investments:* Encouraging risk-reducing investments in sector strategies, as seen in Australia, which integrates disaster risk assessments into urban planning. The NDMA will work with sectoral ministries to ensure that DRM considerations are embedded in all relevant policies and programs.
- *One-on-One Engagement:* Conducting one-on-one engagement with potential partners to develop, establish, maintain, and nurture new and existing non-traditional partnerships, including private sector actors. This approach has proven effective in fostering collaboration in countries like Canada, where local businesses are actively involved in community resilience planning. The NDMA will develop tailored engagement strategies for different stakeholders to maximise participation.
- *Leveraging Broader Funding Opportunities:* Utilizing a broader range of funding opportunities in bilateral and multilateral development aid frameworks and assistance programs by mainstreaming DRM into development processes and instruments. This can be achieved by aligning DRM objectives with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This will involve integrating DRM considerations into national development plans and sectoral strategies.
- *Attending Multi-Lateral Conferences:* Actively participating in multi-lateral conferences, meetings, and forums that may involve potential donors, with a view to establishing contact with them. Through this engagement, the NDMA will also develop concept notes to secure additional funding from potential donors to meet its development objectives.
- *Monitoring and evaluation:* establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of funding strategies. This framework will include performance indicators and regular reporting to ensure transparency and accountability in fund utilisation.

By adopting these strategies and addressing potential challenges, Sierra Leone can enhance its funding mechanisms for disaster risk management, ensuring a more resilient and prepared environment nation capable of effectively addressing future challenges. This comprehensive



approach will not only safeguard the livelihoods of its citizens but also promote sustainable development in the face of increasing disaster risks.

Table 9: Sources and types of financing

National and Local Budgets	Clear stipulations on national and local budget allocations for disaster risk financing. Law to establish mandates the allocation of funding from the annual government budget for a disaster situation Allocate sufficient funding of the national and local budget allocations to meet, as a minimum, the ongoing cost of institutional arrangements and low-level disaster risks Identify special funds for preparedness and response, allocate or require local governments to allocate funds; and allocate funds for use by communities including a wide range of community Emergency Preparedness and response stakeholder groups
Special funds	Create funds or reserves for disaster situations, such as emergency or contingency funds Create a central disaster EP and Response fund and/or encourage line departments to actively budget for EP and R within their yearly budgeting process.
Private Financing	Establish risk-based / disaster risk financing initiatives through public-private arrangements such as disaster risk insurance, re-insurance, or risk mitigation incentive schemes.
External / international Funds	Funding and financial assistance from INGOs Source International funds aimed at promoting resilience and DRM (grants, loans, and contingent credit and procedures) Participation in international risk financing schemes such as risk pooling or re-insurance schemes, requiring comprehensive disaster and risk analysis as a pre-requisite for participation in international risk financing schemes and ensuring robust to robust financial management, accountability, reporting and audit systems.

9.2 Responsibilities of Ministries, Departments and Agencies

The responsibilities of Ministries, Departments and Agencies in disaster risk management are critical to the successful implementation of the National Disaster Risk Management Policy in Sierra Leone. Each entity plays a critical role in ensuring that disaster risk management (DRM) is integrated into their sectoral mandates and that adequate resources are allocated for preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. This policy framework outlines the responsibilities of MDAs in relation to disaster risk management. Incorporating best practices and lessons learned from other countries to enhance the effectiveness of our policy approach.

To facilitate effective management of disaster funds, the GoSL will mandate that each sectoral ministry allocate at least 1.5% of its annual budget to disaster risk management initiatives. This allocation will supplement stand-alone funding for the NDMA and will be integral to the development of a central disaster emergency preparedness and response fund. This fund will be designed to last for a minimum of three months and will align with the country's long-term development goals and the provision of essential services. Each ministry will be required to submit an annual report detailing the utilization of the allocated funds, including specific



projects funded and their outcomes. The NDMA will review these reports to ensure compliance and effective use of resources.

In addition to budgetary allocations, it is imperative that line ministries incorporate disaster risk reduction into their planning and budgeting process. This integration will ensure that disaster preparedness and management are embedded within the core functions of each ministry. District-level implementation requires districts to embed disaster preparedness into their development plans and budgets, enhancing local resilience. Each ministry will develop specific performance indicators related to disaster risk management, such as the number of disaster risk assessments conducted, the percentage of project's incorporating risk reduction measures, and community engagement levels in planning processes. These metrics will be reported annually.

Recognizing that government assistance cannot fully compensate for massive losses incurred during disasters, the GoSL will promote the use of innovative financial tools such as risk assurances, micro-finance and insurance. These instruments will be incentivized through fiscal measures to cover such losses experienced by individuals, communities and the corporate sector. A dedicated task force will be established to explore and implement disaster risk insurance programs, drawing lessons from Mexico's successful model. This task force will include representatives from relevant ministries, private sector stakeholders, and community organisations.

Community engagement and capacity building are critical components of effective disaster risk management. The GoSL shall encourage the strengthening of Savings and Credit Cooperatives Organisations (SACCOs) to support disaster victims during emergencies. The NDMA will develop and implement training programs for MDAs and community organizations focused on disaster risk management, emergency response, and financial literacy. These programs will be designed to enhance the capacity of local stakeholders to effectively manage disaster risks. Community-led recovery initiatives such as communities in high-risk prone areas should also support SACCOs with sound policies and bylaws to scale up growth utilization and uptake. In addition, the policy shall support or encourage incentives for disaster risk insurance in high-risk sectors or industries, risk management and transfer, and a risk-sharing mechanism to reduce damage and loss after a disaster.

The National Disaster Risk Management Policy will explore the establishment of partnerships at all levels to implement risk mitigation schemes that spread out risk, reduce insurance premiums, and expand coverage. These partnerships will include both public and private sectors, enhancing financing for post-disaster reconstruction and rehabilitation. A stakeholder engagement framework will be established to facilitate regular consultations with community members, NGOs, and private sector actors. Feedback gathered from these consultations will inform policy adjustments and program implementation.

To further promote resilience, the Government shall encourage the creation of incentives for disaster risk insurance in high-risk sectors or industries. This includes implementing risk management and transfer mechanisms to reduce damage and loss following a disaster. The government will work with financial institutions to incorporate disaster risk assessments into mortgage lending practices and warranties for newly constructed houses. This approach aims to incentivize safe construction practices and enhance overall community resilience.

A robust risk assessment framework will be established to identify, analyze, and mitigate disaster risks. Each ministry will be responsible for conducting regular risk assessments



relevant to other sectors, which will be compiled into a national risk profile. Annual risk analysis reports will be generated and made publicly available, detailing identified risks, vulnerabilities, and recommended mitigation strategies. The transparency will foster accountability and encourage community involvement in risk management.

To ensure the sustainability of disaster risk management initiatives, the GoSL will develop a long-term strategic plan that outlines funding sources, capacity-building efforts, and community involvement strategies. The NDMA will conduct regular evaluations of DRM initiatives to assess their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. These evaluations will include stakeholder feedback and will be reported publicly to maintain transparency.

9.3 Administration of the National Disaster Management Funds

The NMDA shall be entrusted with the responsibility for the effective management of the National Disaster Management Funds. This mandate will empower the agency to pursue policies aimed at achieving the fund's objectives, which include the formulation of innovative financial strategies to generate revenue. The NDMA will also be tasked with monitoring and evaluating the development and operations of disaster management programs funded by these resources, ensuring accountability and transparency in all financial dealings. The agency will provide a clear guideline for the rapid disbursement of funds, facilitating access to pooled resources for EP&R activities

To enhance operational efficiency, the NDMA will oversee the acquisition of essential EP&R equipment, resources, and relief aid, subject to the approval of the relevant oversight platform. This centralized approach to fund management will enable the agency to identify special funds dedicated to preparedness and response initiatives. Additionally, the NDMA will allocate or require local councils to allocate financial resources for disaster management efforts, ensuring that communities are adequately equipped to respond to emergencies. The agency will also allocate funds for use by various community stakeholders involved in EP&R, fostering a comprehensive and inclusive approach to disaster management.

In line with best practices observed in other countries, such as the Philippines, the NDMA will establish and maintain contingency relief reserves categorized by different levels of response. These reserves will be based on realistic estimates of potential response and recovery operations, ensuring that resources are available and mobilized effectively at each level of government. The Philippines has implemented a disaster risk reduction and management fund that provides local governments with access to contingency funds, allowing them to respond quickly to emergencies. Sierra Leone can establish a similar fund to empower local councils with the resources they need for immediate response efforts.

Furthermore, the agency will facilitate the use of anticipatory finance, incorporating forecast-based triggers for the early release of funds prior to the onset of disasters. This proactive approach will enable timely interventions, minimizing the impact of disasters on vulnerable populations. In Bangladesh, for example, the Red Cross has successfully implemented anticipatory action financing that allows for the early release of funds based on weather forecasts. By adopting similar mechanisms, Sierra Leone can enhance its capacity to respond to impending disasters before they occur.

Recognizing the importance of social protection mechanisms, the NDMA will adapt existing programs to channel assistance effectively before and after disaster events, with a particular



focus on meeting the needs of vulnerable groups. This strategy aligns with global best practices, such as those implemented in countries like Bangladesh, where anticipatory financing has proven effective in providing timely support to at-risk communities. Also, in Mexico, social protection programs are integrated with disaster response efforts, allowing for rapid financial assistance to vulnerable populations during disasters. Sierra Leone can explore similar integration to ensure that support reaches those most in need.

The management of the National Disaster Management Funds shall adhere strictly to the country's financial regulations, including the guidelines set forth by the Ministry of Finance and the provisions of the Finance Act. By ensuring compliance with these regulations, the NDMA will uphold standards of accountability and transparency, fostering public trust in the management of disaster-related resources. Many countries have established rigorous financial oversight mechanisms for disaster funds, including independent audits and public reporting. Sierra Leone can adopt similar measures to enhance accountability and public confidence in fund management.

Through these measures, the NDMA will enhance its capacity to respond effectively to disasters, ensuring that the needs of affected communities are met in a timely and efficient manner. The NDMA will also implement a robust monitoring and reporting structure to track fund allocation and usage, providing regular reports to stakeholders, including government entities, donors, and the public. The monitoring and reporting framework will include performance metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of fund management and disaster response initiatives. This will involve regular public consultations and workshops to gather input from community stakeholders, ensuring that the fund management process remains transparent and accountable.



10.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring, evaluation, and review are integral to the effective implementation of disaster risk management. The DRM policy mandates that the roles and responsibilities of DRM-related institutions and stakeholders be clearly defined and documented in an operational guide and legal framework. This approach will facilitate the effective implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of DRM processes and activities, ensuring that the system remains responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

As robust M&E system is essential to ensure that the objectives of the DRM policy are met. As part of this M&E system, key performance indicators (KPIs) will be established, tracked, and reported on an annual basis. These KPIs will be monitored and evaluated to assess the progress of policy implementation and will serve several crucial purposes:

- Effectiveness assessment: evaluate the effectiveness of the policy implementation strategy and action plan.
- Benchmark establishment: set clear benchmarks for evaluating progress against the defined objectives.
- Impact measurement: measure the impact of policies, strategies, and programs to inform future policy development.
- Accountability clarification: clarify agency accountability and responsibility for each performance indicator.
- Improvement identification: identify areas for improvement to enhance the overall disaster management system.

Data collection will be a collaborative effort, requiring each ministry, sector, and sub-national entity – including local councils and districts - to integrate DRM into their annual work plans. This integration ensures that DRM becomes a fundamental part of their development activities.

At the regional and district levels, designated coordinators will initiate, lead, and manage reviews and evaluations of DRM policy implementation. They will provide structured feedback to the respective District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs) to inform their strategic decisions.

The NDMA shall compile comprehensive annual progress reports detailing DRM achievements. This national report will rely on contributions from various ministries, sectors, regions, districts and chiefdoms. Importantly, the annual progress report on policy implementation will be submitted to the Office of the President, ensuring high-level oversight, accountability, and transparency in the DRM process.

10.1 Future policy review

The DRM policy will undergo a comprehensive review every five years to ensure alignment with national contexts, priorities, and international obligations. To address specific policy issues that may arise during the implementation phase, necessary adjustments can be made at any time.

The process for making changes to the policy document will adopt a participatory approach, engaging multi-stakeholder consultations at both central and decentralized levels. This approach will ensure diverse stakeholder representation, including community members, local authorities, civil society organisations, and private sector actors.



To ensure continuous improvement, a systematic schedule for regular policy review will be established. These reviews will be conducted iteratively, drawing from evaluation outcomes, stakeholder feedback, update best practices and emerging risks related to climate change, socioeconomic factors, and other relevant issues that may impact disaster risk management efforts. By embedding these mechanisms into the policy framework, the country will enhance its capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and effectively address the diverse needs of its communities in the face of disaster risks.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation system, the review of the NDRMP will be categorized into three distinct phases over the long-term period from 2024 to 2030.

- Phase 1 (2024-2026): The initial phase will focus on establishing baseline data, implementing action plans, and conducting annual monitoring reports to assess initial progress. Specific timelines for each action plan will be detailed to ensure accountability and timely execution.
- Phase 2 (2025-2027): A mid-term review will evaluate strategic implementation efforts, utilizing findings from annual monitoring reports and stakeholder feedback to make necessary adjustments. Feedback will be collected through surveys and community forums, ensuring that stakeholders have a voice in the evaluation process.
- Phase 3 (2028-2030): This final phase will involve a comprehensive review of policy strategies, assessing overall impact and effectiveness, and preparing recommendations for the next policy cycle. This phase will also include an evaluation of the capacity-building initiatives implemented in previous phases to measure their effectiveness and impact on stakeholder performance.



Figure 4: Monitoring and Review Timeline

12.2 Monitoring Climate Action and Gender Integration in DRM

Monitoring and evaluation activities will ensure that the DRM system at all levels effectively addresses gender and other cross-cutting issues, such as livelihoods, social protection, land use planning, and management, sustainable environmental management, health, and food security. Integrating gender considerations into the DRM framework is crucial to guarantee



equitable access to resources and decision-making processes, particularly for vulnerable populations.

To maintain responsiveness to emerging challenges, a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework will be established. This framework will integrate specific gender-responsive indicators and climate adaptation metrics to facilitate the comprehensive assessment of progress and impact.

The M&E framework will utilize the following strategies:

1. **Gender-Responsive Indicators:** Development of indicators to measure the participation of women and marginalized groups in disaster risk management initiatives and their subsequent impact on livelihoods and well-being. Examples include:
 - Percentage of women participating in disaster response planning.
 - Proportion of female-headed households receiving support during recovery efforts.
 - Changes in community resilience scores among women-headed households.
 - Accessibility of emergency services for women and marginalized groups.
2. **Climate Adaptation Metrics:** establishment of metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of climate adaptation strategies within the DRM policy, ensuring alignment with national climate action plans. These metrics may include:
 - Number of communities implementing climate-resilient practices.
 - Reduction in climate-related vulnerabilities among at-risk populations based on comprehensive climate risk assessments.
 - Effectiveness of early warning systems in reaching vulnerable groups.
3. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaboration with gender-focused organizations and climate advocacy groups to integrate their perspectives into the monitoring and evaluation processes, achieved through:
 - Regular stakeholder workshops for input on M&E processes.
 - Establishment of a stakeholder advisory committee for oversight of M&E activities.
4. **Capacity Building Evaluation:** Implementation of evaluation methods for capacity-building initiatives, including:
 - Assessment of training programs on stakeholder performance in DRM.
 - Collection of participant feedback for continuous improvement of training sessions.
5. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishment of feedback mechanisms to gather insights from local communities on the effectiveness of DRM initiatives via:
 - Surveys and community forums for data collection.
 - Analysis of feedback to inform policy adjustments, ensuring a dynamic and responsive M&E process.
6. **Data and Technology Integration:** Leverage technology to enhance M&E processes and strengthen DRM capabilities by:
 - Implementing a digital platform for real-time data reporting to improve situational awareness.
 - Utilizing GIS tools for mapping disaster risks and monitoring progress to enhance planning and resource allocation.



- Prioritizing remote sensing technologies for continuous environmental monitoring.
- Developing robust training program to equip staff with skills necessary for effective data and technology use in decision-making.

By implementing these strategies, Sierra Leone can create a more inclusive and effective disaster risk management system that addresses immediate disaster risks while contributing to long-term resilience and sustainable development. This integrated approach aims to empower all communities to actively participate in and benefit from disaster risk reduction efforts, ultimately fostering a safer and more resilient nation.



11.0 DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT RELATED LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The Disaster Management Act 2020 serves as the primary legal instrument for disaster risk management (DRM) practices and governance in Sierra Leone. This Act is complemented by various other laws, regulations, notifications and directives related to disaster risk management.

Below is a comprehensive overview of the main legal instruments that relevant to Sierra Leone's DRM efforts, which the country is a party to:

11.1 Disaster Risk Management Instruments

Disaster Risk Management instruments refer to the policies, strategies, and frameworks that guide the implementation of DRM activities. Key instruments include:

1. Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer 1985. Signed on 27 November 2001.
2. Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer 1987. Acceded to on 29 August 2001.
3. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 1992. Ratified on 22 June 1995.
4. The Kyoto Protocol (1997) Signed on 11 February 1993 and ratified on 7 June 2005, as a result of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
5. Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD). Signed on 11 November 1994 and ratified on 25 September 1997.
6. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. This framework has inspired the review and updating of the National Disaster Risk Management Policy in Sierra Leone

11.2 Regional (African) Instruments

Sierra Leone is part of a broader regional framework for disaster risk management in Africa. Key regional instruments include:

1. The African Union constitutive Act: Sierra Leone was the 43rd member state that sign the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) on 11th of July 2000 in Lome, Togo. One of the AU's objectives is to collaborate with international partners for the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health across the continent. Notably Article 13 mandates the Executive Council to coordinate and make decisions on policies related to environmental protection, humanitarian action, and disaster response and relief.
2. Protocol relating to the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution Peacekeeping and Security (December 1999). This protocol addresses disasters, disaster relief, and related issues. It provides for intervention in support of humanitarian disasters and establishes a sub-regional and zonal observation system for early warnings. There are four designated zones, each with a capital: Banjul (Gambia), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Monrovia (Liberia), and Cotonou (Benin).
3. ECOWAS Disaster Risk Reduction Policy of 2006. Although not legally binding, this policy focuses on reducing disaster risk through development interventions. It emphasizes the establishment of National Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Platforms in ECOWAS member states. An ECOMOG standby force is designated to provide assistance during humanitarian disasters, which can be initiated at the request

of a member state or by the civilian department of the ECOWAS standby force responsible for humanitarian interventions.

4. African Union Agenda 2063: This agenda envisions a prosperous and integrated Africa, emphasizing the need for resilience against climate change and disasters as part of sustainable development.
5. Sub-Regional Strategic Plan of Action for Lassa Fever Prevention and Control, 2004-2008. This plan aims to enhance collaborative efforts in managing and controlling Lassa Fever outbreaks.
6. Collaboration in patient management. This includes developing common treatment guidelines, logistics, and support for emergency preparedness, fostering regional cooperation in health management during disasters.

11.3 DRM relevant national laws and policies

Sierra Leone has established a range of national laws, policies, contingency plans, and regulations that, while not exclusively focused on disaster risk management, play a crucial role in environmental protection and the reduction of risks associated with national disasters. The following legal instruments are particularly prominent in this context:

1. The Environmental Protection Act No. 2 of 2022: This Act establishes a framework for environmental governance, including the assessment, management, and mitigation of environmental impacts, thereby contributing to disaster risk reduction.
2. Public Health Authority Act, 2022 (Act No.17 of 2023): this act provides guidelines for managing health emergencies and outbreaks, ensuring that public health considerations are integrated into disaster risk management. The Act replaces the older Public Health Act of 1960 and introduces several key provisions: protection from public health risks, infectious disease control, community participation and early detection and response.
3. Local Government Act 2022: This act empowers local councils to engage in disaster risk management, promoting community participation and local-level planning.
4. The Mines and Minerals Development Act No. 5 of 2022: the Act mandates the protection of the environment and requires an environmental impact assessment (EIA) prior to the granting of a mining lease (except for leases for building and industrial minerals).
5. Fisheries and Aquaculture Act, 2018 (Act No. 10 of 2018): This act provides a comprehensive rule for both commercial and artisanal fishing, as well as aquaculture. The Act includes provisions aimed at sustainable management and conservation of fisheries resources, which is vital for maintaining ecological balance and preventing disasters related to overfishing and habitat destruction.
6. Forestry Act No. 7 of 1988: This Act governs forest management and conservation, playing a critical role in maintaining biodiversity and preventing environmental degradation that can lead to disasters such as flooding and landslides.

10.3.1. Relevant local legal instruments, regulations, and directives

In addition to the Acts, the following local legal instruments, regulations, and directives also have significant implications for the DRM landscape in Sierra Leone:

- Customs (Amendment) Regulations Act No. 9 of 2011: this act regulates the import and export of goods, which can influence the availability of disaster relief supplies.
- Control of Goods Act No. 6 of 1962: This Act governs the regulation of goods in the country, impacting the management of resources during disaster situations.
- Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act No. 35 of 1961: This Act provides the legal framework for diplomatic missions, which can play a role in international disaster response efforts.
- Pharmacy and Drugs Act 2001: This Act regulates the pharmaceutical sector, ensuring the availability of essential medicines during health emergencies.



- Republic of Sierra Leone Visa Regulations of 1998: These regulations facilitate the entry of foreign aid workers and responders during disaster situations. Citizens of ECOWAS member states do not require a visa for stays up to 90 days.
- Income Tax Amendment Act of 2006: This Act may influence funding mechanisms for disaster response through tax incentives or deductions for donations.
- Medical Practitioners and Dental Surgeons (Amendment) Act of 2008: This Act governs the medical profession, ensuring that healthcare providers are equipped to respond to health crises following disasters.
- Police Act No. 7 of 1964: This Act outlines the responsibilities of law enforcement, which is critical during disaster response and recovery.
- Sierra Leone Red Cross Act No. 9 of 1962: This Act formalizes the role of the Sierra Leone Red Cross in humanitarian assistance and disaster response.
- Finance Act No 7 of 2024: This Act may include provisions for funding disaster management initiatives.
- Mines and Minerals Development Act 2022: An updated version of the 2009 Act, reinforcing environmental protections related to mining activities
- National Social Security and Insurance Trust Act 2001: This Act provides social safety nets that can be vital during disaster recovery.
- National Fire Force Act, 1980 (Act No.8 of 1980): This Act establishes the National Fire Force, responsible for fire prevention and control throughout Sierra Leone. The Act outlines the structure, duties, and powers of the Fire Force, including fire safety inspections and emergency response.
- Sierra Leone Maritime Administration Act, 2000 (Act No.11 of 2000. The Act covers the registration of ships, licensing of maritime personnel, and the regulation of maritime safety and environmental protection. It was amended in 2007 to update financial provisions and other administrative aspects.
- Town and Country Planning Act 2001 (under review): This Act governs land use and development, which is crucial for disaster risk reduction through proper urban planning. The update provisions related to the declaration of planning areas and the involvement of local authorities in planning processes.
- Local Government Act 2022: This Act empowers local authorities to engage in DRM activities, enhancing community resilience.
- Refugees Protection Act, 2007: The Act provides a framework for the protection of refugees, including during disaster situations.
- National Protected Area Authority and Conservation Trust Fund Act, 2022: This Act establishes a framework for the conservation of protected areas, which can mitigate environmental risks.

11.4 Current DRM relevant regulations:

In addition to the established laws, Sierra Leone has a range of regulatory provisions and policies that, while not classified as laws themselves, draw on legislative powers to provide specific guidance and directives for DRM in the country. These regulations can be broadly categorized into two domains; those focused on regulating the built environment and those aimed at managing the natural environment.

The following table outlines the sectoral distribution of current DRM relevant regulations, along with recommendations for future development:



Table 10: Sectoral distribution of current DRM relevant regulations

SECTOR	POLICY/PLAN	Current regulations	Recommended regulations to be developed	Rationale
Agriculture	National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan 2010			Specific regulations lacking
Health	National Action Plan for Health Security 2018-22	The Public Health Ordinance Act 2004	Environmental health requirement	Future development of health emergency preparedness and response regulations is recommended to enhance readiness for health crises
Energy	National Energy Policy Document 2009 National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2015-2030		Fire safety regulation	Enhanced fire safety should be developed to address modern challenges
Land and forest	National land policy 2015 Forestry Policy 2010	Town and country planning (amendment act of 2001)	Land-use regulation Building and Spatial planning regulations	Recommended for integrated land use management regulations aim to ensure sustainable land practices.
Water	National Water and sanitation policy 2010	National Water Resource Management Act, 2016 National Protected Areas Authority and Conservation Trust Fund, 2022 Petroleum Exploration and Production Act, 2011 EPA-SL Act of 2022, Mines and Mineral Development Act 2022; Merchant Shipping Act 2003	Urban water and flood management Rivers and water courses in rural and urban areas	To ensure safe and water access
Coast and sea	Climate change adaptation plan for coastal landscape complex 2020		Fisheries Impact assessment regulation	To protect marine and coastal ecosystems
Disaster management and security	National security and central	National Disaster Management Act 2020	Disaster risk Assessment Regulation	Provide a legal framework for DRM and to



	intelligence act 2002 A national platform for DRR			ensure effective recovery efforts post-disaster
Environment	National Environmental Policy 1995	Environment Protection Agency Act 2010 (amendment act of 2022)	Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation	the development of comprehensive environmental management regulations is necessary to address emerging environmental challenges.

11.5 Assessment of Regulatory landscape in relation to Hazard profile:

The regulatory landscape in Sierra Leone needs to be assessed in relation to the specific hazards the country faces. In the light of the review of the DRM policy, a comprehensive assessment of the current legal and regulatory landscape in Sierra Leone is essential for the effective management of the identified hazards. This assessment facilitates a deeper understanding of the core regulatory provisions that are critical for addressing the primary hazards faced by the country. It also evaluates the institutional responsibilities and roles associated with the implementation of these regulatory provisions.

The following assessment aims to provide a clear overview of how effectively hazards are regulated in Sierra Leone, identifying specific Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) responsible for these regulations. Additionally, the assessment highlights existing gaps in the regulatory framework and the need for further regulations to enhance hazard management.

Importance of enforcement measures

A significant challenge in the regulatory landscape is the need for adequate enforcement measures. Effective enforcement is universally recognised as a critical component of DRM and is encouraged through various strategies, including streamlined institutional arrangements, improvements in staffing and capacity, and enhanced financing mechanisms. The availability of robust legislation and regulatory instruments mapped onto the country's hazard profile is a fundamental step in this assessment. Furthermore, insights gathered from consultations with DRM practitioners and representatives from relevant MDA will inform recommendations for the development of additional regulations required in the near future. This collaborative approach ensures that regulations are not only comprehensive but also practically applicable in the context of Sierra Leone's unique challenges.

Table 11: Legal instruments for the management of major disasters risk

Type of disaster	Main disaster risk management legislation	Specific regulation/ notification/directives supporting disaster risk management	Responsible MDA for enforcement
1. Flooding	Sierra Leone Maritime Administration Act, 2000 (Act No. 11 of 2000)	Flood Response Plan	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning Ministry of Environment



	National Disaster Management Act 2020; Environment Protection Agency Act 2022		
2. Fire	National Fire Force Act, 1980	Fire safety policy	Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
3. Building collapse	Town and Country Planning Act, 1946 (Amendment Act 2001 Disaster Management Act 2020 Draft Building Code		Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning
4. Chemical hazards/ hazards associated with hazardous substances		Explosive ordinance	Ministry of Environment Ministry of Trade and Industry
5. Maritime disasters – maritime accident, marine pollution caused by oil spills, sea rescue	Sierra Leone Maritime Administration Act of 2000	Fisheries Regulations	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Ministry of Environment Ministry of Transport and Aviation
6. Human communicable disease hazard			Ministry of Health and Sanitation
7. Epidemic hazard			Ministry of Health and Sanitation
8. Outbreaks of pest and animal diseases			Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
9. Drought			Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Ministry of Lands, housing, Country Planning, Ministry of Environment
10. Deforestation	Environment Protection Act 2010 (amended 2022) National Protected Area Authority and Conservation Trust Fund Act, 2012 (amended 2022) The Forestry Act of 1988		Ministry of Environment National Protected Area Authority Forestry Commission



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11. Coastal erosion			Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture
12. Mudslides/landslides			Ministry of Environment Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Transport and Aviation, Ministry of Works and Public Assets, Ministry of Defence, UN Agencies and NGOs, Research institutions, community and private sector,
13. Land degradation (Sand mining, 14. Aggregate stone mining, 15. Mineral mining)	Mines and Mineral Development Act 2022 Environment Protection Act 2008 (amended 2010)		Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
16. Climate Change			Ministry of Transport and Aviation (SL-MET), Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (EPA)
17. Refugee crisis			Ministry of Social Welfare, National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA)

This assessment underscores the necessity of establishing a cohesive regulatory framework that addresses the diverse hazard faced by Sierra Leone. By identifying existing legal instruments and assigning responsibilities to specific MDAs, the evaluation provides a roadmap for enhancing the management of disaster risks.

11.6 Recommended list of required regulations.

In view of the assessment of the legal and regulatory landscape of Sierra Leone concerning DRM, the following is a list outlines future regulatory domains and areas that could significantly enhance the overall effectiveness of DRM in the country. This list has been developed not as exhaustive compendium but rather from a nuanced perspective that refines the current DRM policy. It reflects areas of urgent collaborative efforts among the technical expertise of the technical working group and stakeholders from various MDAs involved in shaping this policy revision exercise. Institutions



The recommended regulatory improvements and additions are categorized into two main domains.

1. Regulations pertaining to the built environment and inherent sources of disaster risk.
2. Governance regulations addressing human interactions with the natural environment.

Recommended regulations

In response to the multifaceted changes posed by urbanisation, environmental degradation, the country has recognized the need for regulations that govern various aspects of land use, environmental management, disaster risk management, and public health. These regulations are essential to ensure sustainable development, protect natural resources, and enhance the resilience of communities against disasters and environmental hazards.

The regulatory framework encompasses a wide range of areas, including building and spatial planning, fire safety, informal settlement regulation, urban development planning, urban water and flood management. It also addresses critical issues such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, waste management, biodiversity conservation, and public health emergency response. By establishing clear guidelines and standards, these regulations aim to promote responsible governance and sustainable practices across all sectors.

To effectively implement these regulations, a collaborative approach involving various institutions and agencies is crucial. Key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), and the Ministry of Health, play pivotal roles in the enforcement and monitoring of these regulations. Local Government Authorities, community-based organizations, and other relevant entities are also integral to the specific needs of local communities.

These regulatory frameworks not only aim to safeguard the environment and public health but also seeks to enhance community resilience, particularly in the face of increasing climate variability and disaster risks. Through effective implementation mechanisms and the active participation of all stakeholders, the country strives to create a safer, healthier, and more sustainable future for its citizens.

Domain 1: Regulations pertaining to the built environment and inherent sources of disaster risk.

1. Building and spatial planning regulation: establish comprehensive standards for construction and land use that ensure resilience against disasters, including specific requirements for materials, design, and location. *Implementation mechanism:* create a regulatory framework that mandates regular inspections and compliance checks, drawing inspiration from South Africa's National Building Regulations, which enforce safety and sustainability standards. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, City Councils, Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre, Architect and Engineering Associations.
2. Fire safety regulation (domestic and wildfire): Develop and enforce regulations requiring fire safety measures in residential and commercial buildings, as well as management practices for wildfire prevention. *Implementation mechanism:* Introduce mandatory fire risk assessments for all new developments and regular training programs for community members in the prevention and response, similar to Australia's comprehensive fire management strategies. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Fire Force, Insurance Companies
3. Regulation of Informal and precarious settlements: implement regulations that address the risks associated with informal settlements, promoting secure tenure, improved infrastructure, and access to essential services. Lessons from Brazil's Upgrading



Program can inform effective approaches to managing informal housing. *Implementation mechanism:* establish a framework for upgrading informal settlements, inspired by Brazil's Favela Upgrading Program, which includes community participation in planning and execution. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, City Councils/Local Government Authorities, Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre.

4. Urban development planning: formulate regulations that integrate DRM principles into urban planning processes, ensuring that new developments consider disaster risks through zoning laws and land-use policies. *Implementation mechanism:* mandate the inclusion of disaster risk assessments in all urban development proposals, utilizing the City of Cape Town's Integrated Development Plan as a model for effective urban planning. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Agency, Sierra Leone Urban Research Centre, and relevant stakeholders.
5. Urban water and flood management: Establish regulations for effective urban water management systems, including flood mitigation strategies and sustainable drainage systems. *Implementation mechanism:* develop a regulatory framework that mandates the use of green infrastructure solutions, taking cues from the Netherlands' integrated water management policies that successfully mitigate flood risks. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation, Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO), National Disaster Management Agency, National Water Resources Management Agency, City Councils, NGOs
6. Insurance for disaster indemnities: Develop a regulatory framework that promotes insurance products specifically designed for disaster risk, enhancing financial resilience for individuals and businesses. *Implementation mechanism:* encourage the establishment of public-private partnerships to create affordable insurance schemes, referencing Kenya's index-based insurance models that provide timely payouts based on predetermined weather indicators. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* National Insurance Company, Ministry of Finance.
7. Land use zoning regulations: establish land use zoning regulations that restrict development in high-risk areas, such as floodplains, landslide prone zones, or areas vulnerable to coastal erosion. This can help prevent construction in areas that pose significant risks to human-life and property. *Implementation mechanism:* conduct land use assessment, engage communities in zoning processes, and create an enforceable legal framework. South Africa's Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act emphasizes community participation for resilient urban development which can be adapted to local context. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, Local Councils/Government Authorities.
8. Disaster-resilient infrastructure standards: Introduce standards specifically for disaster-resilient infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and public facilities, focusing on materials and design that can withstand extreme weather events. Given the increasing frequency of extreme weather due to climate change, this regulation can significantly reduce vulnerability. *Implementation mechanism:* collaborate with civil engineers to develop standards, require compliance for public projects, and provide funding for local governments. Best practice example from the Philippines could provide lessons we can learn from as they have implemented a 'Build Back Better' initiative focusing on resilient infrastructure post-disasters. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* Ministry of Works and Public Assets (including Sierra Leone Roads Authority, Road Maintenance Fund, Architecture and Engineering Associations), Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, National Disaster Management Agency
9. Community-based disaster management regulations: mandate the formation for community-based disaster risk management committees that engage local populations in planning and preparedness activities. This participatory approach can enhance local knowledge and responsiveness to disasters. *Implementation*



mechanism: establish community disaster risk management committees, provide training, and facilitate regular drills. Bangladesh's comprehensive Disaster Management Programme empowers communities in disaster preparedness. Responsible Institutions/Agencies: National Disaster Management Agency, Local Councils and Local Government Authorities

Domain 2: Governance regulations addressing human interactions with the natural environment

1. Environmental management and protection: strengthen regulations governing environmental management to mitigate disaster risks associated with environmental degradation and unsustainable practices. Implementation mechanism: implement a robust Environmental Management Act similar to Uganda's, which includes clear guidelines for the sustainable use of natural resources and penalties for non-compliance. Responsible Institutions/Agencies: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (Environment Protection Agency), Environmental NGOs
2. Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation as a DRM and DPR tool: Mandate comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for new developments, ensuring that potential disaster risks are evaluated and addressed. Implementation mechanism: require that EIAs include specific disaster risk assessments, following the approach used in Tanzania, which integrates environmental and disaster risk considerations into development planning. Responsible Institutions/Agencies: Environment Protection Agency in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Agency, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning.
3. Forest management and exploitation: implement regulations that ensure sustainable forest management practices to reduce the risk of landslides and other hazards associated with deforestation. Implementation mechanism: establish a regulatory framework based on the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) initiatives in West Africa, which emphasizes community involvement and sustainable practices. Responsible Institutions/Agencies: National Protected Area Authority
4. Regulation of rivers and watercourse in rural areas: establish regulations governing the management of rivers and watercourses to prevent flooding and ensure sustainable water use and conservation. Implementation mechanism: Implement Integrated River Basin Management approaches, as seen in Ethiopia to promote collaborative management if water resources among stakeholders can be adapted for local contexts. Responsible Institutions/Agencies: Ministry of Water Resources (NWRMA), Environment Protection Agency
5. Climate change adaptation and mitigation: Develop regulations that promote climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies across sectors, ensuring that development plans are aligned with climate resilience goals. Implementation mechanism: establish a Climate Change Act similar to the United Kingdom, which provides a robust framework for integrating climate considerations into national policy and sets largely binding targets for emissions reductions and mandates regular reporting on progress. Responsible Institutions/Agencies: Environment Protection Agency (National Climate Change Secretariat), Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency, National Disaster Management Agency, Ministry of Transport and Aviation.
6. Waste management and pollution control regulations: develop regulations for solid waste management and pollution control to prevent environmental degradation that can exacerbate disaster risks. Poor waste management can lead to flooding and health risks, making effective waste management critical for disaster risk reduction. Implementation mechanism: develop a waste management strategy, establish a regulatory body for enforcement, and launch public awareness campaigns. Lessons from Rwanda who has successfully implemented a nationwide ban on plastic bags and community clean-up campaigns could be of help. Responsible Institutions/Agencies: Environment Protection Agency, Local Government Authorities.



7. Biodiversity conservation regulations: implement regulations aimed at conserving biodiversity and protecting ecosystems that provide natural defences against hazards (e.g. mangroves for coastal protection). Healthy ecosystems can mitigate the impacts of disasters, making biodiversity conservation vital for resilience. *Implementation mechanism:* create protected areas in consultation with communities and monitor biodiversity indicators. We can learn from the Kenya's Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies who involve local communities in wildlife conservation for economic benefits. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* National Protected Area Authority
8. Community forestry regulations: establish regulations that promote community-based forest management practices, allowing local communities to manage and protect forest resources sustainably. This can help reduce deforestation and promote reforestation, which are essential for mitigating landslide risks and promoting environmental health. *Implementation mechanism:* develop a legal framework for community management of forests, provide training and establish compliance monitoring. Ghana's Community Resource Areas empowers locals to sustainably manage forest resources could provide guidance. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* National Protection Area Authority (NPAA), Local Government Authorities (District and City Councils, Traditional leaders/chiefs), Community groups/CBOs
9. Climate resilience in agriculture regulations: create regulations that promote climate-smart agricultural practices, including crop diversification, soil conservation, and sustainable water management. As agriculture is a significant of Sierra Leone's economy, enhancing resilience in this sector can reduce vulnerability to climate impacts. *Implementation mechanism:* collaborate with agricultural services for climate-smart practices and provide financial incentives. We can have a cue from the Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy that promotes sustainable agriculture through training and support. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security/Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), Environment Protection Agency (Climate Change Secretariat), National Water Resources Management Agency, NGOs and international partners
10. Public health and emergency response regulations: develop regulations that establish protocols for public health responses to disasters, including disease outbreak prevention and management. Ensuring public health safety during and after disasters is crucial for overall disaster risk management. *Implementation mechanism:* develop a national public health emergency response plan that outlines roles and responsibilities for various agencies. Conduct training for healthcare providers and emergency responders on disaster-related health risks and response strategies. Establish communication protocols for disseminating public health information during disasters. Sierra Leone can learn from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the US who has established comprehensive emergency protocols and training programs for healthcare providers, ensuring coordinated responses during public health emergencies. *Responsible Institutions/Agencies:* Ministry of Health, National Public Health Authority, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society.



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