GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM UNIT

(PSRU)

MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW OF SIERRA LEONE NEWS AGENCY (SLENA)

FINAL REPORT

AUGUST, 2021

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GLOSSARY

ABC	Attitudinal and Behavioral Change Secretariat
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission of Sierra Leone
AP	Associated Press
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
FP	France Press
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CIU	Central Cyber Security Unit
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GPD	Government Printing Department
H.E.	His Excellency
HR	Human Resources
HRMO	Human Resource Management Office
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
IPAS	Individual Performance Appraisal System
MDAs	Ministries, Department and Agencies
MIC	Ministry of Information and Communication
MFR	Management and Functional Review
NATCOME	National Telecommunication Commission
ONS	Office of National Security
PANA	Pan-African News Agency
PSRU	Public Sector Reform Unit
SALPOST	Sierra Leone Postal Services
SLBC	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
SLBS	Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service
SLENA	Sierra Leone News Agency
WIPSEL	Women in Sierra Leone Media

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings and recommendations from the Management and Functional Review (MFR) conducted by the Public Sector Reform Unit (hereinafter referred to) PSRU. This MFR process was triggered by the Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA) as part of efforts to enhance its management and functional capabilities to deliver effectively on its mandate and align its operations and functions with the National Medium Term Development Framework. More specifically, the conduct of this MFR was also requested so that the institution's Mandate, functions; organizational structure, administrative processes and procedures will be objectively and technically assessed to ascertain SLENA's management and functional fitness and wherewithal to effectively deliver on its mandate of providing effective information and high-quality digital services delivery to the citizens of Sierra Leone.

Consistent with the MFR process, the Review Team examined the institution's management and functional capability, organizational structure and functions and prescribed recommendations for enhanced institutional productivity and output. The review team notes that whilst SLENA has the committed leadership to contribute towards the transformation of the communication landscape of the country, there is significant room for improvement should it transition to the high performing government institution that has its operations and functions neatly aligned with the New Direction Agenda.

The MFR process started with an inaugural consultative inception meeting which the two institutions discussed and agreed on the: scope, road map, timelines and key focal person.

Additionally, this meeting enabled the Review Team to establish a baseline understanding of SLENA's overall operations, structure and management and functional dynamics that will ensure the diagnostics is more invasive. The team is desirous for this MFR process to include field engagements that will ensure it is not only invasive, but holistic as well.

As a core outcome of the thorough review and deep-dive analysis done on SLENA's management and functional competencies to deliver optimally on its mandate, the review team identified the undermentioned findings and recommendations.

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1.1.   Summary of Findings and Recommendations

1.1.1. Human Resource/Administrative Unit

The review process revealed several human resources challenges that continued to hinder the growth, efficiency and progress of the Agency, the most mentionable being the:

- Lack of job specifications for the professional wing to guide their operations.

- The Individual Performance Aappraisal system (IPAS) is yet to cascade to junior staff.

- Lack of proper accommodation for junior staff in the provinces.

- Lack of fair and equitable processes relating to leave, evident by the practice of junior staffs proceeding on leave without their leave allowances.

- Absence of a succession Plan and clearly defined career growth pathways resulting in low staff morale and a general sense of uncertainty. These feelings, respondents claimed, were fuelled by the fact that they are neither clear-eyed about what their career growth trajectory is, nor certain about what mechanism are in place for growth / upward mobility.

- Lack of a well-structured and methodical staff development process that includes the development of an Annual Training Needs Assessment plan that informs the staff training and development processes. Consequently, trainings are ad-hoc and not customised.

- Lack of a functional records management system both at the Headquarters and regional offices.

1.1.2 Logistics and Accommodation

a) The review revealed that the Agency is seriously challenged with office accommodation to comfortably house all its staff. The limited space available is poorly ventilated and un-conducive for even the limited staff available.

b) The review revealed that the Agency lacks pool vehicles and motor bikes to facilitate on-time and effective execution of critical official duties.

c) The review further revealed that staffs are compelled to either walk or use their meagre personal funds to cover government functions.

1.1.3 Procurement/Account Unit

- The review revealed the absence of Procurement and Accounting Units in the Agency. The absence of these critical units violates the principle of accountability and transparency.

- The review also notes that the Agency is one of the least funded Government agencies, explaining why its efficiency and impact is minimal because it lacks the resources to procure bare essentials such as office supplies and stationery. This situation is made worse by the fact that SLENA has lost vendor/supplier confidence due to their lateness to honour invoices.

- The review subscribes to the need for the procurement of ICT related equipment to support and enhance staff productivity and efficiency, especially for the technical wing of the Agency.

1.1.4 Information,Communication and Technology

- The review of the internal systems and processes exposed the Agency's lack of a well-developed internal and external communication strategy or plan that guides the implementation of the Agency's mandate.

- The Agency's website according to the review, is awash with outdated information. Even when the website was resuscitation in June 2020 most of the information that were uploaded no longer have relevance and are out of context.
- The review revealed that the Agency's internet bandwidth is grossly insufficient to support its operations and enhance its internet connectivity for more efficient service provision.

Recommendations

In view of the findings identified, the review team has proffered recommendations that can support the strategic and structural repositioning of the Agency. The recommendations proffered below have been thematised according to findings of the management and functional review;

1.1.5 Human Resource/ Administrative Unit

- The team recommends that the professional wing of the Agency should be staffed with the right number of personnel, and with the requisite experience, skills and qualifications.

- The team recommends that the institution must ensure that the new organizational structure that is developed and adopted by this review is implemented to ensure a clear career path for all its employees.

- The team recommends that the institution should engage HRMO and the other stakeholders to ensure a robust training plan is designed for staff of the new Units. In addition to the trainings coordinated by HRMO, the Agency should conduct an in-house training to enhance the effectiveness of its staff.

- The team recommends that Human Resource Unit must ensure that employees that are efficient and effective in delivering their task should be recognized as a motivational mechanism to enhance productivity.

- The team recommends that as a matter of urgency, the Agency should start the full implementation of the Individual Performance Appraisal (IPAS) system.The Human Resource Unit must ensure that there is a fair and transparent appraisal mechanism to rate staff performance against set targets.

- The team recommends that the Admin unit is provided with the requisite tools and equipment (computers, cameras, recorders,Printers, Internet Routers) in order for the Agency's staff to function effectively.

1.1.6 Procurement Unit, Budget, Audit and Finance

- The team recommends that there should be a procurement and Accounts units to enhance internal coordination and processing of relevant documents needed as compliance measures in procurement activities and disbursement of funds. These units must be supported by Procurement and Budget Committees constituted to foster transparency and Accountability in the Agency

1.1.6 Information, Communication and Technology

- The team recommends that the ICT unit of the Agency is adequately supported with the development of an efficient and effective updated Web site capable enough to capture information relevant for public consumption.

- **The team recommends that** the Agency develops a communications strategy that serves as the blueprint for the Agency's internal and external communications and enhances its visibility, public engagement and brand.

- The review revealed that the Agency needed to enhance its ICT capacity and improve its ICT infrastructure being that it is critical to its overall operations (administrative and technical). **The team further recommends** that Agency approaches both the Ministries of Finance and Information and Communication to discuss possibilities and funding options to improve its ICT infrastructure especially its local area network (LAN) and wireless access. Efforts must be made to ensure an uninterrupted and sustained internet connectivity within the facility for timely service delivery.

- Every thriving news agency must have the right kind of equipment and technology to effectively deliver on its mandates. The emergence of new technology has made data gathering and dissemination faster and credible. **The team recommends that the** Agency is adequately supported with the procurement of computers, recorders, cameras, and printers etc. to enhance its operations.

- **The team recommends that** the Agency addresses the shortage of modern work equipment, especially critical gaps in its ICT infrastructure. This calls for new technologies and a purposeful human capacity drive. This will also require a continued dedication to coordination and collaboration with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), particularly so with the Ministry of Information and Communications.

2. INTRODUCTION

As part of the Mandate of the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU), the Unit provides leadership, co-ordination and strategic guidance in the design, implementation and monitoring of Public Sector Reform initiatives. Its Mission is to create a lean, performance-oriented, highly motivated, modern and efficient Public Service that delivers high quality services to the people of Sierra Leone in a timely and cost-effective manner. Its Strategic objective is to ensure that systems and organizational structures are aligned with the National Development Agenda, providing technical backstopping to MDAs and strengthening engagement with other policy environments within the wider Public Service.

PSRU undertakes Management and Functional Reviews (MFRs) as an entry point to identify capacity, systems and process challenges affecting the performance of MDAs. The key objective of the MFRs is to ensure that systems and organizational structures are aligned with the National Development agenda. Since its inception, PSRU has undertaken MFRs for all MDAs, which can be viewed at www.psru.gov.sl.

The Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) commenced the MFR on the September 2020. From inception, the review team set the necessary plan in place to address the challenges discussed during the consultative meeting with the leadership and staff of the Agency. Most significant of all was the need to develop a modern structure, accompanied by qualified staff component; review the legal and regulatory instrument establishing the Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA); examine human resource development and career planning; as well as the development of effective data management and information dissemination systems.

Addressing these challenges will require support from the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU), Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) Ministry of Finance (MoF), and the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC). Some of the recommendations with minimal or no cost implications could be implemented immediately, while those with financial implications, may be addressed over time. Although this report is in response to the request of the Managing Director of SLENA, the Public Sector Reform Unit takes full responsibility for the views and recommendations proffered herein.

2.1. METHODOLOGY

The Review started in September 2020, with an inception meeting with the Review Team held at the office of the Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA). The Managing Director (MD) and various senior staff representing the professional wing of the Agency were in attendance. This meeting led to an agreement that an MFR was required and a focal person was nominated in order to solicit information within the Agency. During the Inception meeting, a presentation of the MFR methodology was introduced. Sufficient information was gathered through regular status updates and desk review to make an initial assessment and identify key findings. The objective was to solicit their views, suggestions and to critically assess the structure, functions and processes of SLENA. Information was collected on workloads, staffing (numbers and vacancies) and Financial Statements within the Agency, as well as relevant reports and documents that could assist with the review.

Whilst appreciating the fact that SLENA's key operations are undertaken at its Headquarters in Freetown, the team underscored the significance of field engagements with the regional outposts to ensure the MFR process is both invasive and holistic; which reduces its reliance on triangulations/inferences.

Once the draft report is submitted for their review and concurrence, it is the responsibility of the senior management team to ensure it is methodically reviewed by all relevant staff and their comments and clarifications synchronized and sent back to PSRU for finalization after final bilateral meetings.

2.2. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The scope of this MFR is limited to doing a holistic and invasive diagnostics of SLENA with particular attention being paid to assessing its Management and functional capabilities to deliver on its mandate and provide Public Services in an efficient and timely manner. It is worth noticing that the scope also extends to regional engagements (as funds could permit), after which recommendations are proffered, as-needed technical backstopping provided and strategies for effectively implementing same devised. To be specific, the review will focus on the following:

- SLENA's Mandate, role, responsibilities and functions.

- SLENA's organizational structure and staffing of the institution to determine whether or not they reflect the current functions and responsibilities of the institution.
- Whether there are functional overlaps between SLENA and constituent agency(ies) to mitigate duplicity and wastages
- SLENA's administrative procedures, processes, facilities and reporting relationships to determine efficiency and effectiveness in delivering on its Mandate and Mission and its relations with other institutions.

2.2.1. Authoritative Documents Contacted
- Current Staff List

- Current Payroll List

- Job Descriptions for Management Staff

2.3.   OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Accompanying the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 was the vision of post-colonial era African leaders to establish PAN-AFRICAN NEWS AGENCIES amongst member states as they strove to form a continental international organization.

The fervent belief of the African leaders who formed the OAU was that a Pan African News Agency to collect and disseminate news, would correct the biases, imbalances and distortion prevalent in the western media by giving greater depth and more relevant perspective to African news and information. This dream of setting up national news agencies   to feed, support and help break the monopoly of Western agencies was only realized in 1983, 20 years after it was envisioned.

As tangible evidence of his commitment made by African leaders, the then President Stevens on June 3 1977, echoed the theme in his presidential address to parliament urging Third World Countries like Sierra Leone to be less dependent on Western multinational news agencies for the collection and dissemination of news about our countries. He observed that the distorted image of Third World Countries in the outside world is caused by the distortion misrepresentation of news by Western News Agencies.

It was against this backdrop that SLENA was established to pioneer the collection and dissemination of news as a commodity and to the full extent that its resources permit, develop and enhance its workload to provide sierra Leonean and Foreign users with exact, impartial and trustworthy information on a regular and uninterrupted basis.

SLENA is a semi-autonomous agency created by an act of Parliament and headed by a Managing Director. It was established in 1987 with the aim of increasing access to information with the use of modern communications device and techniques. The institution, at its inception, was determined to develop free and pluralistic media, aimed at promoting democracy and the development of the News Agency across Africa.

SLENA used to function as a news wire service by gathering and selling information to deserving organizations i.e. international organizations such as Associated Press (AP), United Press International Agency (UPIA), France Press (FP) and Reuters. SLENA also supplied news to the Pan African News Agency (PANA) to enable the latter to disseminate news and information aimed at correcting what was then perceived as biases, imbalances and distortions prevalent in the Western Media against Africa.

SLENA's professional independence is guaranteed through its structural relationship with the Ministry; the head of SLENA is recruited by the Public Service Commission. Although the agency receives financial support from and shares information with the Ministry, it does not have to account to the Ministry for any of its publications. The Managing Director is indeed a Civil Servant but has complete responsibility for the running of the agency like any other press house. This is designed to ensure that unlike the GIS which gathers and disseminates government information, SLENA gathers and disseminates information on all sectors of life providing an unbiased and politically neutral perception of things in Sierra Leone. Its news items are supposed to be bought by International News Agencies, foreign missions and Non-Governmental Organizations but this rarely happens.

The News Agency is determined to provide journalism that helps each Sierra Leonean better understand how their country is governed, and take actions that challenge, unite, and inspire positive change – in times of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond

2.3.1 Agency's Mandate/Mission/Vision

SLENA's mandate is to increase access to information with the use of modern communications devices and technology.

MISSION

To provide journalism that helps each Sierra Leonean better understand how their country is governed, and take actions that challenge, unite, and inspire positive change – in times of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

VISION

SLENA is uniquely placed both in terms of its mission and global capacity to combat misinformation and propaganda by using its global reach and network of local and African media affiliates to provide accurate and fact-based information, innovative programming and content, enhanced fact-checking, and media tools to increase connectivity and circumvent censorship.

2.3.2. Strategic Objectives of SLENA

- To be the model for high quality journalism in the 21st century, strengthening the cultural, civic and social fabric of our democracy

- To be the preferred source of news and information in Sierra Leone, Africa and the world.

- To build on the heritage as reporters and storytellers on our intimate relationship with audience, readers/viewers and on our capacity for innovation in order to create a space where audiences congregate, connect and contribute to a shared understanding of the wider world.

2.4. KEY STAKEHOLDERS OF SLENA

The Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA) as a critical outfit of government operates under the supervision of the Ministry of Information and Communication and abides by the regulatory measures of the Independent Media Commission. The programmes and mandate of SLENA cannot be implemented without having critical stakeholders' interventions. Each of these stakeholders has a critical mandate that relates to the operation of SLENA.

This review has carefully outlined below each of the critical stakeholders' mandates and how they help to support the work of SLENA:

2.4.1. Ministry of Information and Communication

The Ministry of Information and Communication is one of the oldest Ministries of the Government of Sierra Leone, dating back to the colonial period. It was established to gather and disseminate information on Government activities and programmes. In 2007, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was renamed "The Ministry of Information and Communication" in a bid to widen its scope and activities to include ICT. Following this development, the Ministry was re-branded, its scope widened and activities regenerated to include Information, Communications and Technology. With the emergence of ICT as the engine of growth in modern day economy, the Ministry has grown in scope and importance.

The Ministry is the primary stakeholder of ICT related policies and is tasked with overseeing the development, review and implementation of the Government's information and communication agenda. The Ministry has mandated the preparation of ICT Policy document and is responsible for its regular review and update.

As Government business and the need for increased service delivery grew, the capacity of the Ministry to effectively perform the expanded functions became questionable. New institutions and management structures had to be developed, resulting in the hiving-off of some of the functions originally performed by the Ministry.

2.4.2. The Independent Media Commission (IMC)

The media in Sierra Leone are regulated by the Independent Media Commission (IMC). Since 2002, the Independent Media Commission (IMC) in Sierra Leone has been charged with registration of all media, allocation of licenses to publish and broadcast, management of a media complaints function, and the stimulation of media quality and coordination of journalist training. The IMC is established by law, funded by the state and its commissioners are ultimately appointed by the President and approved by Parliament.

Its members are appointed by the President "acting on the advice of SLAJ and subject to the approval of parliament," according to the Independent Media Commission (Amendment) Act of 2006. The IMC provides an alternative to pressing charges under the Public Order Act; aggrieved parties can register complaints with the commission, which grants them a hearing. If the IMC agrees that a complaint of libel, defamation, or falsehood is valid, it can request that the offending media outlet publish a retraction and an apology, or it can levy a fine on the outlet. The IMC can also summon editors at its own discretion.

2.4.3. Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ)

Another important organization in the media landscape is Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ), organizing almost all professional journalists in the country. As a major actor in the development of the media sector, SLAJ nominates commissioners to IMC and board members to SLBC. SLAJ affiliate bodies are the Guild of Editors (GoE), Sierra Leone Union of Reporters (SLRU), and Women in Media in Sierra Leone (WIMSAL).

It aims to strengthen media's role through accurate information and by upholding the independence and ideals of professional journalism. SLAJ developed its latest Code of Conduct in 2001 which was to be upheld by its Disciplinary Committee. However, the Committee did not deal with all cases, and after some years ceased to function. Consequently, there is a real need for SLAJ as a respected professional association to become an effective self-regulatory body able to process and solve most cases before they reach IMC and eventually the Courts.

Based on the above analysis, the key recommendations are that:

- The Parliament removes paragraphs (Part 5) involving media in the Criminal Libel Law – Public Order Act No. 46 of 1965, aligning Sierra Leone media regulation with international standards.
- The Civil Libel Law – Defamation Act No. 32 of 1961 is reviewed but maintained.
- The Independent Media Commission Act No. 12 of 2000 is reviewed and adapted to strengthen the independence of its commissioners and to provide mechanisms to ensure the implementation of its incentives and punitive measures related to the Code of Practice.

3. THE CURRENT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE OF THE AGENCY

SLENA is headed by the Managing Director, who is assisted by a Deputy Director and supervised by the Ministry of Information and Communication. The Ministry is the primary stakeholder of ICT related policies and is tasked with overseeing the development, review and implementation of the Government's information and communication agenda. The Ministry has mandated the preparation of ICT Policy document and is responsible for its regular review and update.

Below is SLENA's current organizational structure which was reviewed and analyzed by the review team as being overly vertical:

- Managing Director

- Deputy Managing Director

- Assistant Managing Director

- Senior News Editor

- News Editor

- Reporter

- Assistant News Editor

- Sub-Editor

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┌─────────────────────┐
│  Deputy Managing    │
│      Director       │
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│  Assistant Deputy   │
│  Managing Director  │
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│  Senior News Editor │
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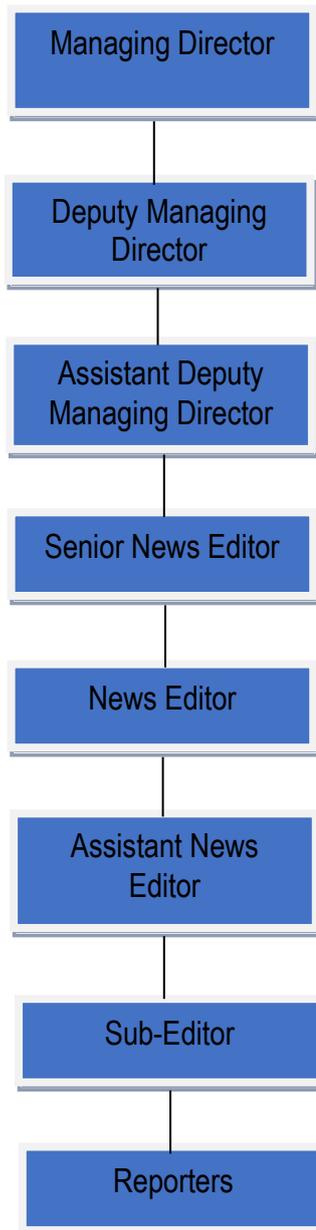
3.1. FUNCTIONS OF UNITS

MANAGING DIRECTOR –The role holder is responsible for supervising the technical and administrative activities of the Agency to facilitate the dissemination of information to the public

- Develop operational strategies and policies for the Agency and provide supervision for the administrative activities of the Agency in line with its mandate. This includes supervising the assignment of press officials for the coverage of government and other official functions.

- Supervise and vet news items for publications.

- Oversee the production of news bulleting and serve as editor in chief.

- Liaise with relevant MDAs and institutions for the development of contents for publication.

- Review news items from private print and electronic media houses and provide advice to MDAs for rejoinders.

DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR – The job holder is responsible to assist in supervising the technical and administrative activities of the Agency to facilitate the dissemination of information to the public.

- Assist in developing operational strategies and policies for the Agency and provide supervision for the administrative activities of the Agency in line with its mandate.

- Assist in supervising and vetting news items for publication.

- Participate in the production of journals for public consumption.

- Assist in liaising with relevant MDAs and institutions for the development of contents for publication.

- Participate in the preparation of annual budgets and work plan for the Agency.

ASSISTANT DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR – The job holder is responsible for assisting in the supervision of the technical and administrative activities of the Agency to facilitate the dissemination of information to the public.

- Assist in supervision of staff of the Agency in performing their daily activities.

- Participate in the vetting of news items for publication.

- Participate in the production of journals for public consumption.

- Participate in the preparation of annual budgets and work plan of the Agency.

SENIOR NEWS EDITOR – The job holder is responsible for supervising the writing and editing of news items about government and governance related activities for publication in the relevant media.

- Write or review news items, advertisements and counter any negative report about the assigned MDA.

- Collaborate with other officers and stakeholders to confirm news items and reports from relevant media in order to ensure fair and accurate report.

- Ensure that activities are properly covered for accurate reporting.

- Prepare and publish periodic magazines and newsletter for relevant institutions.

- Review newspapers and identify issues of interests for dissemination and necessary action by the relevant authority.

NEWS EDITOR – The jobholder is responsible for writing and editing news items about government and governance related activities for publication in the relevant media.

- Write or review news items, advertisements and stories for publication in the media. This includes preparing and reviewing designs, illustrations and photographs.

- Collaborate with other officers and stakeholders to confirm news items and reports received for fair and accurate reportages.

- Ensure activities are properly covered for accurate reporting.

- Assist with the publication of periodic magazines and newsletter for relevant institutions.

- Review newspapers and identify issues of interest for dissemination and necessary action by the relevant authority.

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR – The job holder is responsible for providing daily news coverages on identified issues of interest for publication.

- Write news items and seek for adverts for publication.

- Collaborate with other officers and stakeholders to confirm news items and reports from relevant media for fair and accurate report.

- Ensure that news activities are properly covered for accurate reporting.

- Assist in the production of news journal in the form of proof reading.

- Identify issues of interests for dissemination and necessary action as requested.

SUB-EDITOR – The job holder is responsible for gathering information and news on Ministries, Departments and Agencies and editing for publication.

- Gather and process the information and news on MDAs.

- Proof read and review contents to make sure that the information are accurate.

REPORTER – The job holder is responsible to gather and report news on government institutions and other news items for publication.

- Review news leads and news tips.

- Cover news items and convey information for publication.

- Edit news and send to headquarter in Freetown.

- Attend meetings, seminars, workshops etc.

4. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CURRENT STAFF STRENGTH

In order for SLENA to deliver effectively on its mandate, its Human Resource which happens to be the institution's greatest asset has to be leveraged and their potential optimized. Cognizant of the crucial importance of the HR functions to the organizations overall management and functional fitness, the review team did a deep-dive analysis of SLENA's staff strength informed by the following documents; Man Power Plan, Training Needs Assessment, Succession Plan, HR Manual etc.

The review also revealed that Out of an initial 40 staff strength, SLENA now have only 7 permanent staff and 21 youth corps.
Sierra Leoneans quest for quality news is undeniable but SLENA is facing an existential threat. More than ever before, the agency is reliant on support from public and private partners to support its existence. The review also noted that staff are appraised using the IPAS which set targets/objectives at the start of each year, and typically reviewed in June to check variance between target set and those achieved.

Age profiling of staff

50%   37%

13%

■ 39-45 ■ 46-54 ■ 55-60
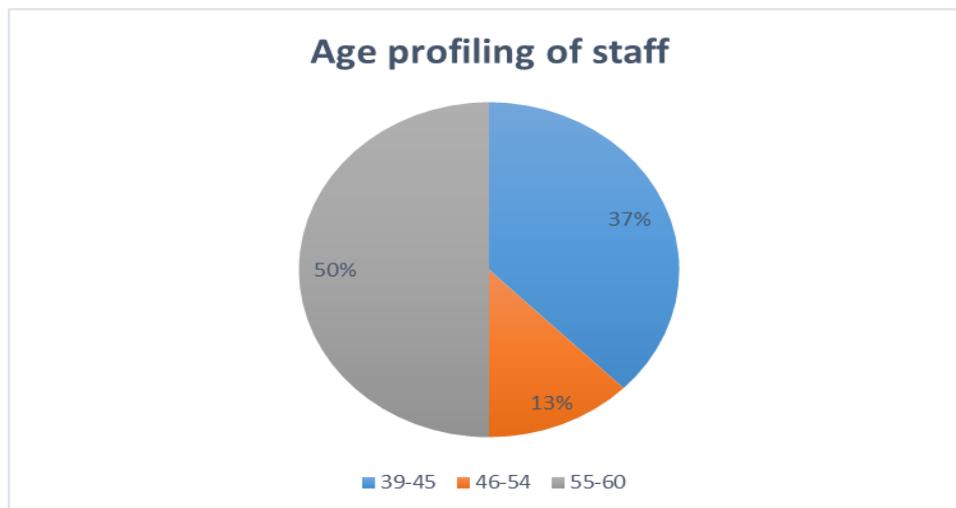
Source: Staff list of the Agency

In analyzing the current staff strength against the expected output of the Agency, the review team is of the strongest technical view that a succession plan is needed for an urgent replacement of 50% of staff identified to be on the verge of retirement.

4.1.   Staff Qualification

The audit of staff records revealed that, of the 7 staff reviewed, only 3 indicated their qualifications on the staff list submitted. The review further notes that of the 7 staff, only 1 had postgraduate degree, 2 had bachelor's degrees and 4 are undergraduates

4.2.   Job Description

The review observed that of the 8 staff in the Agency 6 had Job Descriptions (JDs), whilst 2 (Audio Visual Technician and Accountant) had Schedule of Duties. The review also indicated the absence of an HR Manual and a Scheme of Service which establishes standards for recruitment, training and development, and advancement within the Agency on the basis of qualifications, knowledge, merit and ability as reflected in work performance and results. The review revealed that the lack of a functional scheme of service and HR manual prevents SLENA from optimize its HR potential.

5. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report is presented with details of the analysis and recommendations as an outcome of the management functional review conducted for the Sierra Leone News Agency. The recommendations proffered are specific to the findings revealed during the review exercise, which if fully implemented will help to address the challenges that hinder the growth and development of the Agency.

5.1. Structural and Human Resource Needs

The Review Team noted that the existing Organizational Structure of the Agency needs to be modified. The modification as already described in the proposed organogram will change the nomenclature of the Agency's technical and administrative head from 'Director-General' to 'Managing Director'. This modification is consistent with the original establishment framework of the Agency.

Further observation on the organisational structure was also affirmed by staff of the Agency during which dissatisfactions were also expressed regarding the operational and administrative system of the Agency. Most of the comments were directed at the lack of an effective structure and the need to recruit more competent staff. The review team also noted that the Agency has not been able to fill critical positions to ensure effective implementation of programmes.

To address some of the operational and structural challenges identified above, the review revealed that the proposed organogram be implemented and reinforced with excellent management and operational system that will help to ensure recruitment of competent staff, foster effective reporting lines and team building, promote vertical and horizontal coordination as well as timely monitoring of policy implementation. The review emphasized the creation of new units and new positions to ensure the effective functioning of the Agency. The organizational structure proposed below will help to support the implementation of the Agency's mandate in line with the Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP);

PROPOSED BLOCK DIAGRAM OF THE SIERRA LEONE NEWS AGENCY

	Office of the Managing Director

Administrative Unit	Accounts Unit	Editorial Unit	Advertisement Unit	Printing Unit	Circulation Unit	Stores Unit	ICT Unit

REVISED PROPOSED SLENA
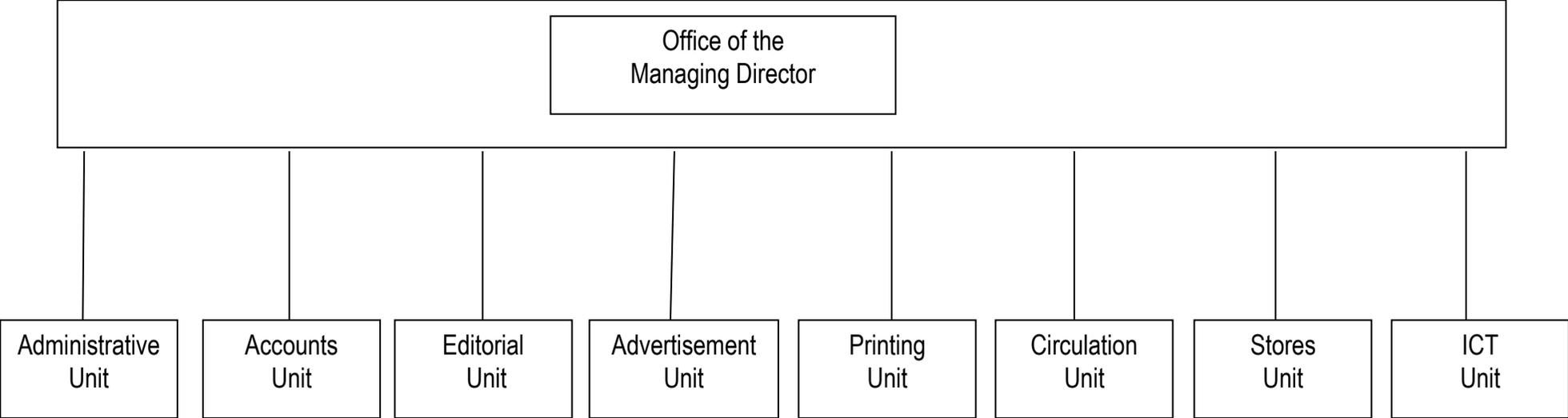
Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA)
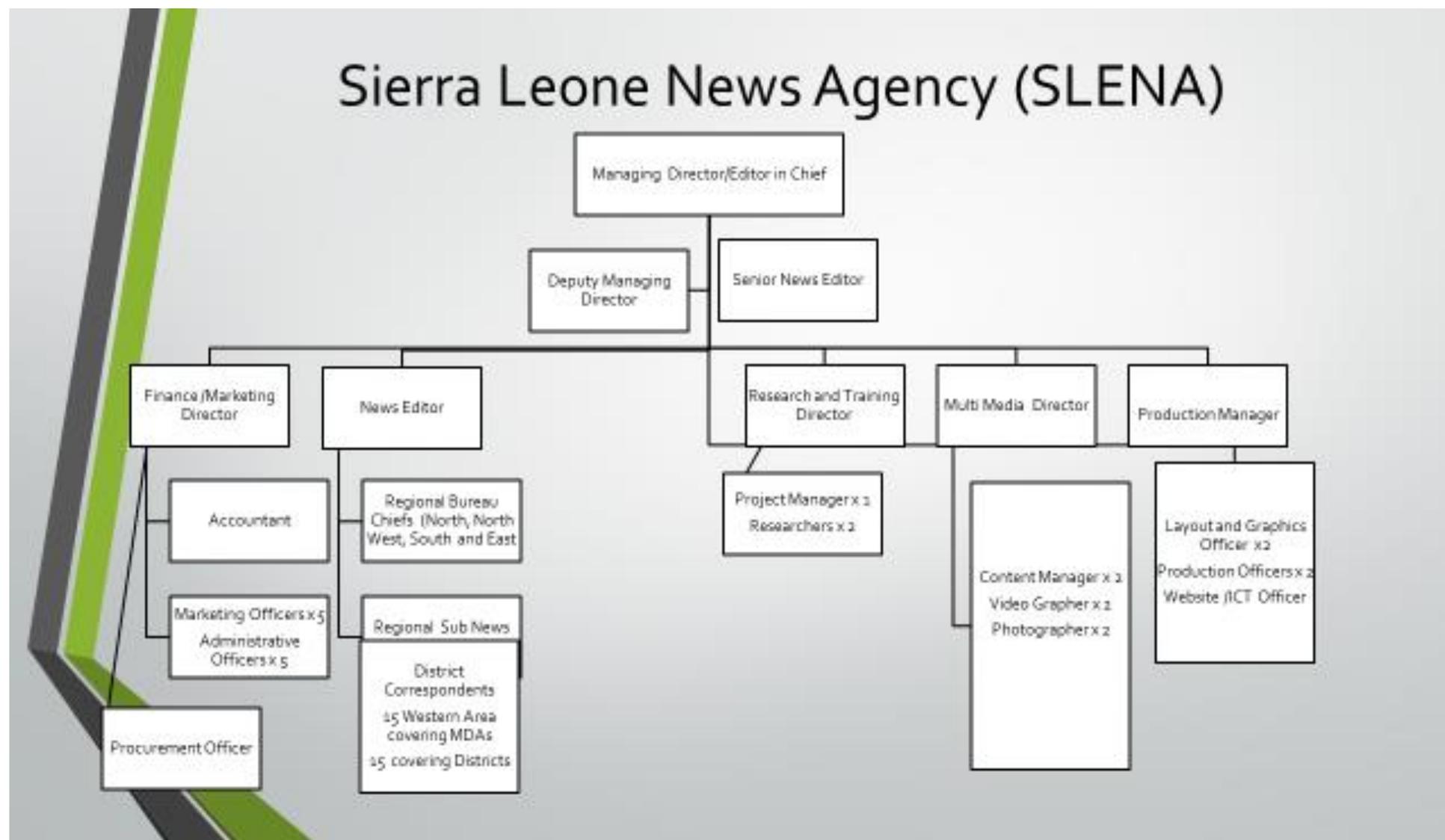
REVISED PROPOSED ORGANOGRAM PSRU

Managing Director/ Editor in Chief

Deputy Managing Director/Senior News Editor

Finance and Admin Manager

Multi-Media Manager

News Editor

Production and Marketing Manager

Research and Training Manager

Administrative Officer

Accountant

ICT Officer

Procurement Officer

Regional Bureau Chiefs (North, North West, South and East)

Assistant News Editor

Layout and Graphics Officer

Production Officers

Marketing Officers

Research Officers

Content Officers Videographers Photographers

District Correspondents

Sub Editors

Reporters

5.2. Staff Career Progression

The team also observed that the current structure of the Agency does not make provision for career path for employees. Most of the staff expressed their dissatisfaction over the stagnation in growth with any promise for upward mobility. The review observed that the poor performance and structural deficiencies of the Agency are reinforced by the following;

- Lack of job specifications for the professional wing to guide their operations.
- Absence of an Individual Performance Appraisal system in place for both senior and junior staff.
- No proper accommodation for junior staff in the provinces.
- Junior staffs proceed on leave without any leave allowance.

It is against these challenges that the review team recommends that the professional wing of the Agency should be staffed with the right number of personnel, and with the requisite experience, skills and qualifications.

The review team is also making a case that the filling of critical vacancies is reinforced with a new organizational structure already proposed by this review team, which if fully implemented create a clear career path for all its employees.

The Human Resource Unit must ensure that employees that are efficient and effective in delivering their task should be recognized as a motivational mechanism to enhance productivity.

The review revealed that as a matter of urgency, the Agency starts to fully implement the Individual Performance Appraisal (IPAS) system for all category of staff. The Human Resource Unit must ensure that there is a fair and transparent appraisal mechanism to rate staff performance against set targets.

5.3. Capacity Building Strategy

The information and communication landscape is vastly evolving. New technologies and techniques are introduced on almost daily basis. Any institution that desires to survive and

sustain its gains in this highly competitive space must be exposed to regular capacity developments specific to the tasks. Because of the lack of capacity development on the use of new technology and record management, the review team recommends that Agency technical support from HRMO for the development of a Capacity Development Strategy. The Capacity Strategy must be specific to the required and knowledge of the Agency.

The review revealed that the Agency addresses the shortage of modern work equipment and well-trained staff. This call for new technologies and a purposeful human capacity drive. This will also require a continued dedication to coordination and collaboration with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), particularly so with the Ministry of Information and Communications.

The review revealed that the Agency solicits the expertise of HRMO and PSRU to develop a robust training plan that informs all its capacity building and training decisions.

5.4.   Logistics and Accommodation

It was observed by the review team that the Agency is seriously challenged with office accommodation to comfortably house all its staff. The limited space available is poorly ventilated and un-conducive for even the limited staff available. We therefore recommended that the Agency is supported by the Ministry of Finance or Development Partners to relocate to a facility that is ventilated and spacious enough to accommodate its current and potential staff.

The review team also observed that the discomfort suffered by staff over the limited office space is even further compounded by the total lack of pool vehicle and motor bikes to transport staff on official assignments. The constraint of staff having to trek or even use their own money to cover government functions is noted as a critical challenge that should be urgently addressed.

5.5.   Procurement/Account Unit

The review team observed the absence of Procurement and Accounting Units in the Agency. The absence of these critical units violates the principle of accountability and transparency.

Therefore, the review revealed that for the creation of a procurement and Account units to enhance internal coordination and processing of relevant documents needed as compliance measures in procurement and disbursement of funds. These units must be supported by Procurement and Budget Committees constituted to foster transparency and Accountability in the Agency

The review also observed the Agency is one of the least funded by the Ministry of Finance. It was revealed that the Agency has been suffering from embarrassment and to a large extent total neglect from suppliers to get stationaries as the least of item among its so many procurement needs to facilitate its operations.

The review emphasized the need for the procurement of ICT related equipment to support and enhance staff productivity and efficiency, especially for the technical wing of the Agency. The Agency must ensure that the requisite tools and equipment (computers, cameras, recorders,Printers, Internet Routers) needed for staffs to function well in order to achieve the mandate of the Agency must be available, accessible and in a good working condition at all times.

5.6. Information, Communication and Technology

The review of the internal systems and processes revealed that the Agency does not have a well-developed internal and external communication strategy or plan that guides the implementation of the Agency's mandate.

The review of the Agency's website shows that up-to-date and current information have not been uploaded into the website since it was resuscitation. Most of the information posted on the website are outdated. The review noted that the ICT unit of the Agency is adequately supported with the development an efficient and effective updated website capable enough to capture information relevant for public consumption.

The bandwidth allocated to the Agency is inadequate for its operations. An Agency of this nature cannot survive without a uninterrupted internet connectivity, which serves as the backbone for service delivery. Therefore, the review revealed that the Agency explores the

opportunity from both Ministry of Finance and the Ministry Information and Communications to be supported with a wider internet bandwidth for excellent service delivery.

The review team encourages the Agency to develop a communications strategy that speaks to the mission and vision of the Agency. The recommended communications strategy should have well-developed models of enhancing both internal and external communications. Public engagement mechanism through social media on government functions should be captured in the Communications Strategy.

Every thriving news agency must have the right kind of equipment and technology to promote its work. The emergence of new technology has made data gathering and dissemination faster and credible. The review revealed that the Agency is adequately supported with the procurement of modern ICT equipment and tools, including, computers, recorders, cameras, and printers etc. to enhance its operations.

6. CONCLUSION

The Review Team from PSRU have been able to identify gaps and challenges and proffer recommendations with reform-oriented options to build on the institutional strength having identified gaps and challenges with respect to administrative and operational directives of the institution. PSRU is hopeful that the findings and recommendations will help to foster effective management arrangements and decision-making processes of the institution.

The review team is also of the view that the process of reinvigorating the institution will have to address the severe shortage of qualified, well-trained and well-remunerated personnel. It requires effective internal and external communication strategies, logistic and equipment, as well as a purposeful human capacity drive. It will also require a continued dedication to coordination and collaboration with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs.

Despite the challenges noted so far, recent development has shown that the Government is committed to ensuring that communication services are improved upon to contribute significantly towards the country's development. This is owing to the reality that the country has seen information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a necessary foundation to sustain, long-term socio-economic development. This is evident by the recent policies, regulations and strategies introduced to harness the potential of ICT as an auxiliary function towards the realisation of five-year development plan of the Government of Sierra Leone.

ANNEX 1 - LIST OF PEOPLE CONSULTED

NO	NAME	DESIGNATION	PHONE NUMBER
1	Mrs Yeama Thompson	Managing Director	+23279107752
2	Alimatu Fofanah	Senior News Editor	
3	Luciana Bassie	Admin Assistant	+23278184580
4	Fayia Jnr Moseray	Journalist/Reporter	+23279510272
5	Kabiru Bangura	Journalist	+23288977460
6	Ibrahim Kamara	Production Officer/Journalist	+23277616795
7	Sulaiman Bundu	Reporter	
8	Esther Messie Jibao	Reporter	+23276968208
9	Musa Kamara	Journalist	+23277291810
10	Amara Kargbo	Correspondent	+23288754839

ANNEX 2 - MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Senior Management Officers

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the nature of the overall strategy and structure of the MDA to enable the MFR team to identify key issues and determine the approach to further research and interview. Please complete questions as thoroughly as possible. A member of the Review Team will be available to answer questions and assist as necessary. Please use additional paper to provide answers if necessary.

NAME OF MDA:…………………………………………………………………………………...

NAME OF POST HOLDER: …………………………………………………………………......

DEPT/ UNIT: ………………………………………………………………………………………

JOB TITLE:……………………………………………………………………… …......

LOCATION:……………………………………………………………………… …......

DATE: ………………………………………………………………………………......

TEL (MOB/LAND): ………………………………………….................….....

EMAIL……………………………………………………………………………...........

Please answer the following questions as comprehensively as possible. If there is insufficient space to answer fully any question, please record your name and relevant additional comments on the last page or on a separate sheet of paper and attach it with you name and number.

<u>SECTION A: MANDATE, MISSION AND VISION</u>

1. How is your mandate helping to address the current and foreseeable challenges with respect to service delivery?

   _____

   _____

2. To what extent is your mandate in line with the development priorities of the GoSL?

   _____

   _____

3. What are the issues and concerns that requires urgent attention with respect to your mandate?

_____

_____

SECTION B: FUNCTIONS

4. Please list the main functions of the department, division or unit within the MDA for which you are responsible. (Add additional sheets if necessary).

     a.   _____

     b.   _____

     c.   _____

     d.   _____

     e.   _____

     f.   _____

     g.   _____

5. How is the annual work plan developed and monitored? (Please use additional sheets if necessary)

_____

_____

6. Please state any operational problem(s) encountered in carrying out the functions of your department, division or unit within the MDA.

_____

_____

7. How could procedures, processes and systems be improved upon to address these problems and improve performance and service delivery?

_____

_____

SECTION C: COORDINATION AND INTERNAL RELATIONS

8. Which other departments/divisions/units within the MDA you collaborate with in the performance of your functions?

_____

_____

9. What is/are the difficulties (if any) do you experience (including overlaps or duplications of effort).

_____

_____

10. What can be done to improve areas of collaboration with other

departments/divisions/agencies/units:

_____

_____

11. Do you/or your department/agency have regional offices? Yes /No
     If yes, please indicate?

_____

_____

12. Please explain your recruitment process.

_____

_____

13. What are the general human resource issues or problems your dept/unit is experiencing?
     (staff strength, retention, turnover, capacity etc).

_____

_____

14.   Do you have grievance reporting Mechanism? If yes/no, please explain…..

_____

_____

Staff Training, Promotion and Career Development

15.   What mechanism do you have in place for promotions and career development?

_____

_____

16.   Do you have a training and capacity building policy? If yes; please briefly state what the policy says about staff training and capacity development,

_____

_____

17. How do you identify employee training and development needs?

_____

_____

18. Please provide a list of training(s) you or staff within your dept/unit or the institution in the past 3 years

_____

_____

19. How do you appraise the performance of staff?

_____

_____

20. How many people have gone on retirement since the past twelve months? (Aggregate by gender)

_____

_____

21. How many people have been recently promoted in line with your career development plan?

_____

_____

Records Management

22. What system do you have in place for Records' Management?

_____

_____

23. How is this system helping to ensure institutional productivity?

_____

_____

24. What other challenges are you experiencing with respect to Records Management?

_____

_____

25.   What do you think should be done to ensure effective Records' Management system contribute to institutional productivity and service delivery?

_____

_____

SECTION F: ICT, AND STAKEHOLDER/CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

26. Current IT Equipment Capacity in your unit/dept

Essential Equipment		Current Condition				
Type	**Available**	**Good**	**Needs Repair**	**Obsolete**	**Not Available**	**Number Needed**

27. What IT facilities do you need to ensure operational efficiency?

_____

_____

28. Please provide a justification for additional IT facilities?

_____

_____

29. Do you have an effective communication strategy? If yes, please provide…

_____

_____

30. Do you perform oversight function to other Agencies? If yes, explain…

_____

_____

31. Please provide the list of the Agencies under your supervision…..

_____

_____

32. How can communication be improved upon to enhance service delivery?
   a. Internally

   _____

   _____

   b. With other MDAs

   _____

   _____

   c. With your key clients/ primary beneficiaries

   _____

   _____

   d. With the general public?

   _____

   _____

33.   How does the public communicate their interest and/or concerns to your MDA?

   _____

   _____

34.   Please state any challenges in your interaction with any of your stakeholders/partners/ clients/general public.

   _____

   _____

   35. How can communication be improved upon to enhance service delivery?

e. Internally

_____

_____

f. With other MDAs

_____

_____

g. With your key clients/ primary beneficiaries

_____

_____

h. With the general public

_____

_____

SECTION G: FINANCE, BUDGETING AND PROCUREMENT

36. Please state any sources of revenue generation by your unit/dept

_____

_____

37. Do you set annual revenue target? Yes/no (if yes, please state).

_____

_____

38. If yes, how much have you been able to generate for the past three (3) years?

_____

_____

39. How do you normally account for the revenue generated?

_____

_____

40. Is your Agency/Commission part of the Annual Budgetary process organized by Ministry of Finance? Yes/no

_____

_____

41.   If no, explain the budget formulation process including any challenges your unit/dept have experienced in the past?

_____

_____

42.   Explain the processes used for procuring goods, equipment, and services in your unit/dept

_____

_____

SECTION H: ACCOMMODATION AND OFFICE SPACE

43.   How spacious is the Office?

_____

_____

44.   How many officers to an office?

_____

_____

45.   What other general issues and challenges with respect to accommodation do you have?

_____

_____

PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT COULD HELP THE REVIEW TEAM TO UNDERSTANDYOUR MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS

Thank you very much for your cooperation

ANNEX 3 - MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Junior Management Officers

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the nature of the overall strategy and structure of the MDA to enable the MFR team to identify key issues and determine the approach to further research and interview. Please complete questions as thoroughly as possible. A member of the Review Team will be available to answer questions and assist as necessary. Please use additional paper to provide answers if necessary.

NAME OF MDA:………………………………………………………………………… …........

NAME OF POST HOLDER: …………………………………………………………….......

DEPT/ UNIT: ………………………………………………………………………………......

JOB TITLE:………………………………………………………………………… …....

LOCATION:………………………………………………………………………………… …....

DATE: …………………………………………………………………………….…......

TEL (MOB/LAND): …………………………………………………….........……....

EMAIL………………………………………………………………………………….....

Please answer the following questions as comprehensively as possible. If there is insufficient space to answer fully any question, please record your name and relevant additional comments on the last page or on a separate sheet of paper and attach it with you name and number.

SECTION A: FUNCTIONS

1. Please state your job description/job roles and responsibilities.

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. Please state any operational problem(s) you often encounter in carrying out the functions of your department, division or unit within the MDA.

    _____

    _____

3. How could procedures, processes and systems be improved upon to address these problems and improve performance and service delivery?

_____

_____

SECTION B: COORDINATION AND INTERNAL RELATIONS

4. What is/are the difficulties (if any) do you experience (including overlaps or duplications of effort) with other division or units within the MDA.

_____

_____

5. What can be done to improve areas of collaboration with other departments/divisions/ agencies/units:

_____

_____

SECTION C: ORGANISATION/ OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

6. In terms of supervision, who do you report to?

_____

_____

7. Who report to you? If there is any?

_____

_____

SECTION D: STAFF PROMOTION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

8. *What are the opportunities offered to you in the past three years?*

_____

_____

9. How many trainings have you undergone in the last three years?

_____

_____

10. How were your capacity development needs identified?

_____

_____

11. How was your performance over the year/years appraised?

_____

_____

12. How many years have you spent in your current position?

_____

_____

13. Have you had any promotion since the past five-ten years? If no, please explain…

_____

_____

14. Have you benefited from any grievance reporting mechanism? If yes/no, please explain….

_____

_____

SECTION E: RECORDS MANAGEMENT

15. What system do you have in place for Records' Management?

_____

_____

16. How is this system helping/enhancing your productivity?

_____

_____

17. What other challenges are you experiencing with respect to Records Management?

_____

_____

18. What do you think should be done to ensure effective Records' Management system contribute to institutional productivity and service delivery?

_____

_____

SECTION F: ICT

19. What IT facilities do you need to perform effectively?

_____

_____

20. How effective is your internet connectivity?

_____

_____

SECTION H: ACCOMMODATION AND OFFICE SPACE

21. How spacious is your Office?

_____

_____

22. How many of you to an office?

_____

_____

23. What other general issues and challenges with respect to accommodation do you have?

_____

_____

PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT COULD HELP THE REVIEW TEAM TO UNDERSTANDYOUR MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONAL FUNCTIONS

Thank you very much for your cooperation