



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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ANNEX 3 - MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

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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.

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 Appraisal 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 resuscitated 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.

• 5. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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- 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.

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- **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);