



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM UNIT

(PSRU)

**MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW OF
THE MINISTRY POLITICAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (MPPA)**

FINAL REPORT

APRIL, 2021

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ABBREVIATIONS

APRM	–	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	–	African Union
CSOs	–	Civil Society Organisations
EU	–	European Union
FGD	–	Focus Group Discussion
HRMO	–	Human Resource Management Office
HRCSL	-	Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone
ICT	–	Information Communication Technology
JDs	–	Job Descriptions
KII	–	Key Informant Interviews
MoF	-	Ministry of Finance
M&E	–	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFR	-	Management and Functional Review
MLGRD	–	Ministry of Local Government and
MoU	–	Memorandum of Understanding
MPPA	–	Ministry of Political and Public Affairs
NaCCED	-	National Council for Civic Education and Development
NPRC	–	National Provisional Ruling Council
NPPA	–	National Public Procurement Authority
NCD	-	National Commission for Democracy
NEC	-	National Electoral Commission
NEW	-	National Elections Watch

NGOs	–	Non Governmental Organizations
NPRC	-	National Provisional Ruling Council
ONS	-	Office of National Security
PET Forms	–	Public Expenditure Tracking Forms
PPRC	-	Political Parties Registration Commission
PSRU	-	Public Sector Reform Unit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ministry of Political and Public Affairs (MPPA) of the Republic of Sierra Leone expressed its commitment to strengthen its oversight, monitoring and supervisory functions. To achieve this overarching goal, the Ministry solicited the thematic expertise of the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) with the complimentary support of the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) to conduct a Management and Functional Review with critical attention if possible, to review the functions of the Ministry with a view to avoid duplicity with other institutions that performs similar roles and to create a “Research, Policy and Planning unit” within the Ministry.

The mission of the Ministry is to “monitor government policies and project implementation through research and engage citizens on issues that are geared towards promoting democracy, good governance and development in Sierra Leone”. However, the research aspect of the Ministry’s mission has not been functional since its establishment; therefore, citizens’ perception surveys relating to the performance of the government are not conducted regularly and with empirical evidence. In most cases, these surveys are conducted by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the outcome of these surveys hardly made available to the government. In light of these challenges, the proposed Research, Policy and Planning Unit will create a platform for citizens and service providers to interface and jointly identify problems, as well as, find solutions to these issues. Furthermore, topical issues brought to the fore by citizens are processed, analyzed and brought to the attention of the relevant authorities by the Researchers for action. It is therefore imperative that a comprehensive review of this nature is conducted, given the importance and relevance of the Ministry. The creation of the proposed Research, Policy and Planning unit would have a meaningful impact on governance in Sierra Leone.

This report provides the findings and recommendations deduced from the Management and Functional Review (MFR) conducted. After critical assessment of the proposed changes to the operational function of the Ministry of Political and Public Affairs, the review report has affirmed that the suggested restructuring to including the establishment of the Research, Policy and Planning unit will be useful for effective and efficient policy implementation of the Ministry. PSRU came to

this conclusion having identified the gaps and challenges, as well as the opportunities to strengthen its functions in terms of clarity of objectives, coherence, priorities, roles and relationships, with other institutions of Government under its supervision.

This review has also helped to gain an increased insight into the administrative and operational functions of the Ministry, whilst also analyzed its structure and constituent departments; as well as the suitability and sustainability of the proposed units for delivering its mandate with optimum efficiency and effectiveness. PSRU was also particularly able to review key administrative procedures, communication and coordination mechanisms, work schedules, approval processes for optimum efficiency and effectiveness of the Ministry.

With a mixed method adopted, PSRU held a preliminary consultative meeting with MPPA during which, the two institutions noted with keen interest the institutional challenges and concerns expressed by the leadership of the Ministry for which the proposed changes will help to address. Such a request is not surprising since the Ministry provide oversight, monitoring and supervisory functions to institutions that are towards improving democracy, good governance and economic development in Sierra Leone.

In doing so, the review team paid keen attention to operational efficiency and programmatic effectiveness that are inextricably linked to help redirect the attention of the Ministry to what it can do better. In view of the above, the team was able to justify the need to establish the Research, Policy and Planning Unit; and the review of its functions with a view to effectively delivered on its mandates.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Findings:

- We noted that a number of critical functions of the Ministry are missing, notably, Policy Development and Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Research and Statistics among others. These functions are central to the operations of the Ministry.
- And the present organizational structure of the MPPA is based on the traditional Civil Service structures, procedures, and conditions of service is disorganised and inadequately

resourced (human and capital) to drive the Ministry in the new direction required to fulfil its purpose. Underlying this dysfunctionality is the ambiguity in the role of the MPPA in an effective policy process. This has critically weakened strategic analysis and planning the latter being almost nonexistent leading to an inability to deliver the appropriate coordination and integration of an effective service response across the sector. Where planning and policy making exists it is ad hoc, reactive and does not provide direction or support for the senior tier and political leadership of the Ministry. An appropriate organizational structure has been recommended for adoption by the Ministry. The qualities and characteristics of the recommended structure have been outlined and discussed with the top echelon of the Ministry who has accepted its merits. Furthermore, the recommended structure complies with the Civil Service architecture. The recommended structure moves the MPPA to a single Directorate system with four units. These are the Administrative Unit, Political and Public Affairs Unit, Governance and Complaint Unit and Research Policy and Planning Unit, the main core function for service co-ordination and policy development.

- The Ministry has reduced to such an extent that policies and practices in human resource and records management have fallen into disrepair. We have stressed that records and information management are critical issues that cut across the Ministry and its agencies. We have recommended the need for revamping records keeping systems with assistance from the HRMO; and the introduction of a data collection and central information management strategy; as part of the Research Policy and Planning Unit, and the Governance and Complaint Unit respectively, to assist in coordinating and drawing together an integrated strategy for the sector.
- The current operating staffing structure is limited to a handful of senior professional/administrative staff supported by junior support staff with limited calibre and skills through lack of development who are underutilized as a consequence.

A full summary of our recommendations on strengthening the Ministry's own internal administrative apparatus is presented below and includes the following in priority order:

Recommendations:

Job Descriptions

- **We therefore recommend that** following the establishment of the new structure, the Ministry should consult HRMO to develop standard JDs to reflect the work of the Ministry

Mandate

- **We therefore recommend** that the Ministry and the various institutions under its aegis work collaboratively in defining their respective roles and responsibilities to facilitate the implementation of projects, programmes and policy directives.
- **We also recommend** that the relationship between the Ministry, NCD and the other democratic governance institutions should be based on strengthening collaboration and coordination. In other words direct control should be avoided, but should be tailored on the platform of supervision with a room for operational autonomy.
- Furthermore, **we recommend** that it is but fitting for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be signed between MPPA and the MLGRD to foster collaboration in engaging citizens in the rural areas especially in the dissemination of government activities in their respective communities. The MoU will be guided by the desire to strengthen comprehensive cooperation between MPPA and the MLGRD in an organized and coordinated manner.

Vision and Mission Statements

- **We therefore support** the present vision and mission of the Ministry but suggest that the senior management team, should consider how they encourage the staff who are going to be placed within the newly created Research, Policy and Planning Unit to aspire to the 'ideals' expressed.

Functions

- **We recommend** the adoption of the Horizontal Review Report proposed architecture of Government blueprint for a Ministry to provide for a clear definition of roles and

responsibilities. This is shown as the proposed organizational structure for the Ministry in figure-2 above. We have also start on the next to recommended a grading structure for the new positions however, this would require further analysis and discussion with HRMO before finalization.

- **We have also recommended** that a Research Policy and Planning Unit (RPPU) be established to lead the Ministry forward. As we have suggested earlier this entity would have specialist liaison points for the establishment of policy and strategy as well as maintaining a continuous monitoring and evaluation with a clear oversight role which enables the MPPA to provide a comprehensive policy and service delivery framework on behalf of Government. Particularly important in this is the access to data collection and information dissemination. **We therefore recommend** the integration of a data collection and Information dissemination strategy, incorporating a research and statistics facility to provide the basis for policy and briefing.
- **We further recommend** that the Unit is filled with staff with the requisite skills and competences on planning, research and policy formulation to gauge the views of the public with regards to the performance of government and provide feedback for informed decision making.

Human Resource Management

- **We recommend that** MPPA should contact HRMO to prepare job descriptions for each post that will include the qualification and experience requirements.
- **We also recommend that** MPPA should also work with HRMO for the preparation of a Scheme of Service for the respective positions that will ensure upward mobility for staff.
- **We further recommend that** urgent action should be taken through HRMO for the development of the HR Manual, distribute to staff and ensure that they are sensitised on its content. This is very important as the absence of it affects staff retention as staff members are always looking out for job opportunities.

Staffing

- **We therefore recommend** that MPPA should seek the assistance of the HRMO to prepare a human resource plan to determine the requirements for recruitment/placement of suitably qualified staff for the new structure.
- **We also recommend that** potential surplus staff be identified and seek assistance from the HRMO to retain or reallocate them accordingly.

Age Profile and Succession Planning

- **We recommend that** the Ministry with the help of HRMO develop a Succession Plan.

Recruitment

- **We therefore recommend** that the HRMO and those in charge of recruitment should ensure that once positions are discussed and agreed at the manpower hearings, they should ensure that it is executed without further delays when the MDAs are ready for recruitment.

Training

- **We therefore recommend** that the Ministry should seek assistance from the HRMO to prepare a training policy and plan.
- **We recommend** that the Ministry should seek assistance from the HRMO to prepare a comprehensive training needs assessment for both professional and support categories of staff.
- **We also recommend** that the Ministry engage HRMO and other stakeholders to ensure that a robust training plan is designed for staff of the new Unit. In addition to the trainings coordinated by HRMO, the Ministry should conduct in-house training where necessary to enhance the effectiveness of its staff.

Communication and Collaboration

- **We recommend** the development of a Communications Strategy inclusive of both internal and external communications. Also, radio/TV programmes, 'Meet-the-Press' sessions to be

organized by the Ministry on a regular basis to enlighten citizens on the performance of Government activities and to enhance relationship with the public.

- **We therefore recommend that** the Ministry identifies priority areas and devises a strategy for relationship management.
- **We also recommend that** the Ministry should embed the public relation office into the Governance and Complaint Unit of the Ministry to deal with issues emanating from the public and other stakeholders.

Accommodation

- **We recommend that** the Ministry continues its engagement with the Accommodation Committee at the Ministry of Works and Public Assets for the provision of adequate office space, in order for staff to be housed in more conducive/suitable working environment.
- **We also recommended that** the Commission should secure adequate office accommodation for all its regional offices.

Logistic and Equipment

- **We recommend that** the Ministry should be provided with the necessary logistics including vehicles and office equipment to enable its staff to do its work. This should be clearly stated in the Budget, justified in the Procurement Plan, and reflected in the Government's allocation and disbursements to the Ministry.

