



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM UNIT

(PSRU)

**MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL DRUGS LAW
ENFORCEMENT AGENCY**

FINAL REPORT

FEBRUARY, 2022

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West Africa State
ED	Executive Director
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FQE	Free Quality Education
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRMO	Human Resource Management Office
IDCC	International Drugs Control Convention
IPAS	Individual Performance Appraisal System
KII	Key Informant Interview
MDAs	Ministry, Department and Agencies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFR	Management and Functional Review
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MRU	Mano River Union
MTNDF	Medium Term National Development Framework
NCRA	National Civil Registration Authority
NDC	National Drugs Control
NDCA	National Drugs Control Agency
NDLEA	National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency
NFF	National Fire Force

NGO	Non - Governmental Organization
ONS	Office of the National Security
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSRU	Public Sector Reform Unit
RMS	Records Management System
SLCS	Sierra Leone Correctional Service
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
UN	United Nations

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) solicited the expertise of the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU), which is the government institution mandated to reform and modernize the Public Sector to conduct a Management and Functional Review (MFR). The impetus for this MFR was NDLEA’s desire to reposition itself, recalibrate its systems processes and procedures and realign its organization structure to make it more functions oriented and in line with the Medium-Term National Development Framework (MTNDF 2018-2023). The triggering of this MFR, underlines the fact that NDLEA is committed to undertaking a holistic and systems analysis/review with implementable recommendations/plan of corrections for improved Service delivery.

Consistent with best practice, PSRU undertook this MFR process in collaboration with its key partners the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) and Public Service Commission (PSC). The review process started with an inception meeting with the Leadership of the agency and staff across cadre, to effectively discuss the scope, methodology, focal person and timelines for the entire exercise. This was immediately followed by the implementation of the agreed-on methodology: 1. Administration of questionnaires 2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) 3. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).

The review team ensured that even absent field data collection exercises, as the Agency is yet to have satellite office in the regions, the MFR process was as holistic and systemic as possible to ensure it is evidence-based. Whilst it is true that this MFR will not be the panacea to the Agency’s inherent and emergent management and functional challenges, the concomitant truth is that it will prove critical to ensuring it is structurally realigned, functioning at optimal capacity and delivering optimally on its mandate.

The analysis revealed the clear mismatch between NDLEA’s broad mandate which is to: control and prevent the abuse of narcotic drugs; implement the provisions of the International Drug Control Conventions, and provide for other related matters and resources available to implement same. Though this trend is generic to Public Sector institutions, the surge in domestic, regional and global drug trafficking and abuse, evident by the spikes in drug abuse and its accompanying mental health related illnesses, makes NDLEA a priority institution for government and development partner support/intervention. This study posits that the rise in deviant behaviors, criminal activities and activities that undermine public peace could be

partially attributed to weaknesses in the drug enforcement and regulatory mechanisms. The importance and timeliness of this MFR process, can therefore not be overstated.

1.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section underlines the critical gaps and challenges the Agency is faced with and proffers smart recommendations, which if implemented, will transform the Agency into an efficient and high-performing institution.

At the macro-level, the review team identified a range of systemic and structural gaps across the Agency's management, functional, operational and HR systems that are deterring its ability to function optimally and effectively deliver on its mandate. To address some of these most acute challenges synoptically mentioned, the review team recommends:

- That a new organizational structure be proposed that will be functions-oriented, has clear career growth path, reflects the Agency's repositioning and recalibration efforts (expansion), and aligns with the MTNDF
- That the National Drugs Control (NDC) Act of 2008 be reviewed, enhanced and aligned with Sub-Regional Drug Enforcement instruments/laws like the ECOWAS Plan of Action, the African Union and UN Drug Action Plans
- The strengthening of the Agency's coordination and collaboration mechanism, so that collaboration and coordination between the Agency and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and by extension its constituent Agencies is enhanced.
- The development of a centralized Records Management system within the outfit of the Agency to enable easy access of data or information both internally and externally.

Statutory Framework

The NDLEA derived its normative grounding from the National Drugs Control (NDC) Act of 2008, being an Act to control and prevent drug abuse and trafficking and also implement the provisions of the International Drug Control Conventions (IDCC).¹

The review however revealed that the said Act is not in conformity with that of counterparts in the sub-region, especially in the area of fines/levies. In particular, the comparative analysis revealed that Sierra Leone's drug enforcement instruments imposes disproportionately lesser

¹ NDC Act. 2008

finest/levies in juxtaposition to those in compliance with the ECOWAS Plan of Action which imposes stricter fines/levies. **The Review Team recommends** the immediate review of the existing NDC Act of 2008 to ensure Sierra Leone's levies are compliant with the guidelines set in the ECOWAS Plan of Action.²

Human Resource/Administrative/Logistics

The review revealed that Cocaine, kush and other synthetic drugs are smuggled mainly through shipping containers and the airport. Cannabis trafficked across the porous border points between Liberia and Guinea is exchanged for commercial Motor Bikes (Okadas) and for synthetic and pharmaceuticals such as tramadol which is used mostly by commercial bike riders and other youths.

The **Review Team recommends** that government invests the requisite resources both human (skilled and well-trained staff) and material (detective equipment/sniffing devices) that will enhance the Agency's work at the border crossings and drastically clamp down on illicit drug and contraband good peddling.

The Review Team observed the Agency's equipment and logistics were grossly inadequate for staff to effectively carry out their duties.

The Review Team therefore **recommends** that Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and Donor Partners increase NDLEA's subvention to allow them to invest in upgrading their equipment and logistics including the purchase of vehicles and motor bikes to facilitate their movement especially at the border crossing points.

Reinforcing this point, is the fact that there are grossly inadequate detectors, sniffing devices/dogs and other required equipment at the Lungi International Airport and the Seaport, hampering the Agency's ability to intercept illicit drugs and effectively tackle the surge in illicit drug trafficking and consumption in the country.

The **Review Team** therefore **recommends** that GoSL provides the Agency with the essential tools to effectively carry out its mandate, including detectors and devices known to enhance the scrutiny and detection of cargos and luggage at the main Lungi International Airport (the main port of entry) and the Seaport.

The review revealed that the Agency has no succession plan in place to replace the five (5) staff that are in the retirement age bracket 60 years.

Therefore, **the Review Term recommends that** the Agency collaborate with HRMO which has the expertise to develop a cutting-edge succession plan that will mitigate the adverse

² ECOWAS Plan of Action

impact of retirements and ensures a seamless transition between retirees and their replacements.

An analysis of the Agency's staff strength indicated the Agency is understaffed, and that the available skeletal staff are overworked, overstretched and performing at sub-optimal capacity.

The team therefore recommends that the Agency, with technical support from HRMO develops a Manpower Plan that informs their staffing requirements and ensures they have the right skills mix and staff strength to effectively carryout the Agency's broad mandate.

The team also analyzed whether the agency had a clear career growth path and promotion policy. It was revealed that the Agency lacks career growth path and that staff morale was low evident by the low staff morale from staff that have stagnated in positions, sometimes for periods exceeding 10 years.

The Review Team recommends that the Agency follows the career growth structure in the proposed organization structure. **The Team further recommends that** the Agency, with technical backstopping from HRMO, develops a promotion policy that will inform/guide all promotion decisions.

It was noted that the Agency lacks a comprehensive and fit-for-purpose staff development plan from which an annual staff training plan and Training Needs Assessment plan is derived. As such staff trainings and capacity development efforts are unstructured and unpredictable.

The review team consequently recommends that the Agency develops a comprehensive staff capacity development plan that serves as the blueprint for the Agency's staff development processes.

The Review of the Agency's staff performance and evaluation mechanism indicated that the Agency lacks effective performance management benchmarking tool. The review likewise revealed that the lack of an effective accountability mechanism at through which staff are held to account for non-compliance and underperformance is impeding the Agency's ability to optimize productivity and deliver effectively on its mandate.

The Review **Team consequently** recommends that the Agency as a stop-gap measure utilizes the Independent Performance Appraisal System (IPAS) which is the performance evaluation tool used in the Civil Service and across the Public Sector. The Team further **recommends** that the Agency collaborates with the HRMO which is the environmental manager of the Civil Service to develop a customized performance management/evaluation/benchmarking mechanism that is fair, predictable, and consistent and allows for staff feedback. The team also **recommends** that the Agency considers investing in electronic clocking systems that will track staff attendance and movement of personnel.

The team further notes there are inherent office space issues owing to the fact that NDLEA and NCRA are sharing the same building, with NCRA having a disproportionality bigger share of the space. The review team also notes that the working condition and work environment are not conducive and impeding high productivity from staff.

The **Review Team recommends** the relocation of NDLEA to an office of their own and the provision of office furniture and equipment that will make the working condition/environment conducive and enhance productivity.

Inter-Agency Partnership

The *stakeholder mapping exercise* which formed part of this review process identified *Office of National Security (ONS); Transnational Organized Crime Unit (TOCU); Sierra Leone Correctional Services (SLCS); Sierra Leone National Small Arms Commission; Immigration Department; National Fire Force (NFF) and The National Civil Registration Authority; the National Revenue Authority (Customs) and the Sierra Leone Pharmacy Board have partnerships with the NDLEA.* The analysis of the Agency's partnership building, coordination and collaboration functions, revealed weak interface and loose coordination between NDLEA and its constituent institutions/stakeholders.

Therefore, the Review Team recommends that the Agency strengthens its partnership building and strengthening mechanisms as well as its coordination and collaboration function to enhance inter-agency coordination and collaboration.

The team notes that amidst challenges, the Agency has been making strides to strengthen its partnership building and strengthening function and has likewise been making tremendous efforts to engage its strategic partners and work out modalities for better collaboration and coordination. The most noteworthy of these efforts is the Agency's engagement with the Attorney-General's office to explore opportunities to collaborate on the review and revision of the Agency's establishing legislation so that it will have enforceability powers.

The Review Team **recommends** that the Agency and its critical stakeholders trigger the necessary pre-legislative/legislative and lobbying processes that will culminate in the development of an enhanced legislation that will give the Agency the oomph and wherewithal required to effectively execute its mandate.

Structural and Operational System and Processes

The review revealed critical gaps in the Agency's organizational structure and administrative and operational processes and systems. In particular, the review indicated challenges in the areas of recruitment and selection, understaffing, succession planning, performance management/evaluation processes aligning its organizational structure with its mandate and MT-NDF amongst others.

Therefore, the Review Team **recommends** the realignment of the Agency's organizational structure with its mandate, functions and the national development agenda. The team also recommends the recalibration of the Agency's systems/processes and procedures including the development of effective manpower/succession/annual training plans and the strengthening of performance management mechanism. **The team further recommends that** the Agency requests the placement of Civil Service as an immediate stopgap measure to mitigate the adverse impact grossly inadequate staffing on the Agency.

Administrative Systems and Processes

The review revealed that the Agency lacks a communications strategy though it has the critical task of coordinating national, regional and international multi-agency efforts aimed at increasing public awareness on drug-related issues.

Therefore, the **Review Team recommends** that the Agency finalizes its draft communications strategy that will guide the Agency's internal and external communications.

Records Management

The review revealed the Agency's poor Records' Management systems organization are weak evident by the fact that the Agency's data storage, transfer, synchronization and retrieval systems are weak. The review in particular noted that as a result of the Agency's unsynchronized records management system, there are snags and glitches in the Agency's records management system with adverse impact on effective service delivery.

Recommendations

*We **recommend** that the Agency recruits a qualified **Records Management Officer** to spearhead reforms and upgrades relating to records management at the Agency. We also **recommend** that the Agency creates a Centralized Information Management System and develops an internal records management policy that will facilitate the Agency's transition from paper-based records management to digital We **further recommend that** the Agency strengthens its staff's capacity across cadre in records management. **The team further recommends that** records management best practices be institutionalized and operationalized.*

Visibility/Rebranding

The Agency is struggling to rebrand and increase its visibility indicative by the fact that it lacks essential tools such as an effective and functional website and a rebranding strategy. Considering the importance of functional websites to real-time public education, research

and visibility enhancement, the Review Team recommends that the Agency overhauls its website and develops one that is user-friendly and optimally functional.