



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM UNIT (PSRU)



**FINAL REPORT
MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW OF**

THE SIERRA LEONE HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSION

MAY, 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings and recommendations of the Management and Functional Review of the Sierra Leone Health Service Commission. The Functional Review was commissioned by Sierra Leone Health Service Commission (SLHSC) to understand the challenges and institutional effectiveness of the commission and to position it as the Environmental Manager of the National Health Service workforce. The need for a Management and Functional Review of the Commission is long outstanding, given the fact that it was established by the Sierra Leone Health Service Commission Act of 2011. At the time of its formation, much was not done to ensure that the Commission had an effective organizational structure, systems and processes to successfully deliver on its mandate. This was compounded by the fact that the development of the Act was not informed by a policy document.

Although the preliminary Act No. 5 of 2011 specified the mandate and functions of the Commission, it was the duty of the pioneers to have established robust systems and processes to expedite the sustainable implementation of the Commission's mandate.

The primary mandate of the Commission as stated in its Act is to **“assist the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in the delivery of affordable and improved healthcare service to the people of Sierra Leone and other Healthcare Human Resources Management related matters”** which is a very significant task to carry out for a country like Sierra Leone, with a fragile healthcare system.

Consistent with its design and approach, the MFR started with an inception meeting with the leadership and staff across the cadre of the Commission to discuss the scope, methodology/approach, timelines/action plan, focal persons and resource requirements for the successful and timely completion of the exercise.

Given the commitment of the Government of Sierra Leone to re-position the Commission to effectively and efficiently deliver on its mandate, the Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU) was requested by the leadership of the Commission to conduct a Management and Functional Review (MFR). The key objective of this exercise is to reposition the Commission as the lead environmental manager for the entire public health workforce in Sierra Leone. The review would also seek to analyse the current organizational structure, administrative systems and processes, and further redefine the role of the Commission to better capacitate it to effectively deliver on its mandate.

In general, the findings stated in this report reflect the challenges that the Commission faced during the course of implementing its activities as a result of the existing parallel structures, overlap of functions and mandates with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the Human Resource Management Office.

The review also focused on analysing the health sector's existing tripartite human resources management arrangement to examine its existing challenges and proffer recommendations. This

effort has the potential to strengthen institutional coordination and collaboration to enhance the operations (systems and processes) of the Commission. The review further proposed an organizational structure that will support the repositioning of the Commission to enhance its productivity.

The MFR processes employed a mixed method including Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) amongst others. Consistent with practice, the MFR process kicked off with an inception meeting with SLHSC during which the two institutions discussed and agreed on the scope, road map, timelines and key focal person. As a core outcome of the review and deep-dive analysis done on the Commission's management and functional competencies to deliver optimally on its mandate, the Review Team has identified the undermentioned as the most mentionable findings and recommendations.

SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents a summary of critical gaps and challenges affecting the management and operational functions of the Sierra Leone Health Service Commission with recommendations proffered to help enhance its productivity. The Review Team has identified a range of systemic and structural gaps across the Commission as well as its Tripartite Human Resource (HR) management arrangement. To address some of these gaps and challenges documented, the Review Team has proffered the following recommendations informed by their findings:

Statutory Framework

Findings: The review revealed that the core mandate of the Commission as stated in its act is not clearly defined, which has resulted in an overlap of functions with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MOHS) and the Human Resources Management Office (HRMO).

Recommendation: The review team recommends that all obsolete laws and regulations governing the operations of the Commission be reviewed, updated and made relevant to the needs of the Commission. The Review Team is of the professional view that there is a need to develop a policy to guide the review of the SLHSC Act 2011.

Finding: The review revealed that the human resources management function of the public health sector which happens to be one of the Commission's key responsibilities **is being complimented by existing parallel structures (the tripartite arrangement).**

Recommendation: The Technical Review team recommends that the Commission in collaboration with MOHS should fast-track the formulation of the following policies and strategies to support the management and operations of the health sector human resource management system;

1. National Health Workforce Promotion and Career Development Policy
2. The Sierra Leone Health Sector Recruitment Policy

3. The Sierra Leone Health Workforce Codes of Conduct
4. National Health service retention and Deployment policy

Findings: The review indicates that the Commission is not an Executive Commission. Most of the current Commissioners of the Commission are core staff of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation which creates a conflict of interest in the exclusive implementation of the Commission's mandate. This has been one of the weaknesses of the Commission in making objective decisions.

Recommendation: The review team recommends the immediate transformation of SLHSC into an Executive Commission, with the Executive Chairperson serving as the Political Head assisted by the Executive Secretary serving as the Administrative Head and vote controller of the Commission and the respective Directors. The team further **recommends** that the Commission's operations be overseen by the Proposed Board of the Commission.

Recommendation: The review team recommends the establishment of the Health Service Commission Board with the following composition;

Permanent Members:

- I. Chairperson SLHSC Serving as Chair to the Board
- II. Chairperson PSC serving as Co-Chair to the Board
- III. Permanent Secretary MoHS
- IV. Director General HRMO
- V. CEO WCC
- VI. Chief Medical Officer
- VII. Financial Secretary MoF
- VIII. Executive Secretary SLHSC to serve as Secretary to the Board with no voting right.

Co-Opted Members

- I. Representative from Allied Health Professional – Rotational
- II. Representative from CSOs – Rotational
- III. Representative of nurses and midwife council.
- IV. The Chair of Health Development Partners

The SLHSC should have its autonomy and therefore PSRU technically observed that bringing in too many players may result in bureaucratic bottlenecks in the management of the health workforce. **Therefore, the review team further recommends** that the timely implementation of the proposed Board will enhance corporation and collaboration within the tripartite arrangement.

Mandate and Functions

Findings: the review revealed that the mandate of the Commission as stated in the SLHSC Act 2011 is not precisely stated and its functions are not fully implemented by the Commission.

Recommendations: The review team recommends that the commission adopts the proposed mandate as indicated; **The Health Service Commission shall be mandated to manage the professional human resources of the health sector for the effective and efficient delivery of affordable and improved healthcare services to the people of Sierra Leone and other human resources for health-related matters.**

The review team **recommends** this Mission Statement of the Commission;

“Building resilient health workforce that is delivering cost-effective, evidence-based, and high-quality health care services that are equitable and accessible to the people of Sierra Leone.”

Vision:

“To build a fundamentally strong and competent Human Resource base for efficient and effective delivery of Healthcare Services”. It is therefore important that the SLHSC implements systems aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in the Human Resources Management for health.

Core Values:

The Review team **recommends** that these should be adopted as the core values of the Commission;

- a. **Partnership:** The Commission shall operate in partnership and collaboration with other stakeholders within the tripartite arrangement, relevant MDAs and Key health development partners.
- b. **Merit:** The Commission shall recruit and gives appointment to candidates on merit.
- c. **Integrity:** The Commission shall operate with a high sense of moral and ethical standards in all its dealings.
- d. **Professionalism:** The Commission shall seek to accomplish its mandate professionally. It shall recruit professionally qualified and competent personnel. Tasks shall be performed at the highest professional standards to guarantee the quality of results.
- e. **Transparency and Accountability:** The Commission shall operate openly. The use of resources (funds and human resources) will be subjected to lay down procedures for accountability.
- f. **Confidentiality:** The Commission shall be discreet with the confidential information it handles in the course of executing its mandate.

Tripartite HRM Arrangement/ Strategic Coordination and Collaboration:

The team critically identified the need for the Sierra Leone Health Service Commission to maintain its tripartite human resource arrangement and further strengthen corporation and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders within the tripartite arrangement. The Health Sector is a critical component of the Civil Service, HRMO being the environmental manager of the Civil Service and the role played by the HR unit in the Ministry is also critical, therefore effective collaboration partnership should be the watchword of stakeholders within the tripartite arrangement.

Finding: The review revealed that the SLHSC is the mandatory body for the recruitment of all Healthcare personnel and hence must be allowed to perform that role without interference.

Recommends: The review recommends that the SLHSC must carry out its mandate to recruit its staff and the healthcare workforce without interference. The Commission should equally allow other key stakeholders within the tripartite arrangement to perform their roles.

Finding: The review revealed that the commission's role within the current tripartite HRM arrangement has been undermined by the fact that there are no clear roles and responsibilities of stakeholders within the tripartite arrangement.

Therefore, the review team recommends the creation of the SLHSC Board with representation from all relevant stakeholders, which ensures and distinguishes all players within the tripartite arrangement and further enhances coordination and collaboration at the strategic level.

Staffing and Recruitment

Findings: The review revealed that the Sierra Leone Health Service Commission lacks the requisite staff strength and capacity to effectively deliver on its mandate as stated in Section 9, subsection 2 (pages 5 and 6) of the Sierra Leone Health Service Commission Act of 2011.

The under subscription of the Commission's staff capacity is a major challenge that seriously undermines the efforts of the Commission to boost its service delivery capabilities. The Team further observed that the commission is visibly absent in all the regions.

Recommendation: Therefore, the review team recommends that the Commission as a matter of urgency recruits qualified and experienced staff to fill in the critical vacancies stated in the proposed organizational structure to fully implement its mandate.

Findings: The review further identified that the Commission lacks smart staffing and recruitment policies for the Commission and the wider health sector and procedures on recruitment and selection.

Recommendation: The Rreview team recommends that the Commission should develop a comprehensive Human Resource Management policy in collaboration with MoHS that deals with the holistic welfare of the healthcare workforce of Sierra Leone.

The **Review Team also recommends** that the Commission adopt the proposed organogram with staff recruited specifically for the professional and technical positions stated in the proposed structure to strengthen staff capacity and to ensure that the Commission has the right staff mix to effectively deliver on its Mandate.

The **Review Team further recommends** that the Commission collaborates and involves the PSC and HRMO in the conduct of interviews to ensure transparency and accountability during the recruitment process.

Proposed Structure of the Commission

Finding: The review revealed that the current organizational structure of the Commission does not have clear career growth paths and reporting lines are not indicated. It was further revealed that the current organogram carries nominal titles rather than functional titles. Thus the review team recommends that the current organizational structure needs restructuring to enable it to discharge its mandate and functions effectively and efficiently and further strengthen institutional collaboration. The existing structure lacks the machinery for effective human resources for health planning and policy development.

The review team recommends that the Commission implement the proposed organizational structure with the relevant functional structures:

- Directorate of Healthcare Workforce Development and Performance Management
- Directorate of Policy, Research and Planning
- Directorate of Cooperate Affairs
- Directorate Human Resource, Employee Relations and staff Welfare
- Directorate of Regional Services
- Head of Finance

The review team also recommends that each Directorate be headed by a Director and assisted by a Deputy Director. However, the Commission shall assign Assistant Deputy Regional Directors in each of the regions to oversee the operations of the Commission with support from their regional team.

Conditions of Service and Health Sector Payroll Management

Finding: The review revealed that management of the health sector payroll is one of the most critical functions to be performed by the proposed Wages and Compensation Commission (WCC) which is currently managed by the Human Resources Management Office (HRMO). The review further revealed that the provisions of the SLHSC Act 2011 do not clearly state the mandate of the Commission and such functions related to payroll management for health sector employees. However, the Review further reveals that the Commission does not have the required capacity in place at the moment to perform payroll administration functions for the health sector.

Recommendation: The review team, therefore, recommends that the Human Resources Management Office (HRMO) continues to manage the health sector payroll until the Wages and Compensation Commission (WCC) comes into being and takes over the Payroll from the HRMO.

Job Description/Scheme of Service

The **review team recommends** that based on the proposed new structure; SLHSC should develop or request technical backstopping support from PSRU for the development of job descriptions for each proposed position including the required qualifications and years of experience.

The team also **recommends** the Health Service Commission review the existing Scheme of Service for the respective positions within the health sector to enhance the upward mobility of all healthcare workers and the Commission.

The review also **recommends** that the Commission develops a Human Resource Manual for the Commission which should be made available to all staff and ensure that they are orientated on it.

Misplacement of Staff

Findings: The review revealed that the Human Resources Officers (HROs) at hospitals and District Medical Teams (DHMT) are assigned by MoHS, which the review team consider to be a complete misplacement.

Recommendations: Therefore, the review team **recommends** that the Commission assign Human Resources Officers (HROs) in all Regional and District referral hospitals in consultation with the Ministry of Finance that will be carrying out the mandates of the Commission in all public health facilities.

The team **recommends** that the Commission in partnership with HRMO and MoHS conduct regular nationwide human resources and payroll audits of the public healthcare workforce for a better placement, deployment and development of health personnel.

Accommodation

The review noted that a friendly working environment has a significant contribution to the Commission's productivity and thus enhances the Commission's ability to carry out its primary functions and complements its desire to expand.

The review team **recommends** that as a matter of priority, the Commission must engage the Ministry of Works and Public Assets to address the office space issue, as the current office space cannot accommodate the present workforce of the Commission and the newly proposed Directorates thus there is a need for a more spacious office space.

The team also **recommends** that the Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) provides office furniture, fittings and equipment and repairs/maintenance to those that are faulty. The team further recommends that the Commission ensure the timely establishment of its regional offices to enhance the Commission's productivity.

Communication with Stakeholders

The review team **recommends** the development of a comprehensive Communication Strategy inclusive of both internal and external communications, which should be revised annually to keep pace with emerging internal and external communications realities of the Commission.

We also recommend that the Commission develops a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Information and Communication, and local radio and TV stations to air out its activities regularly to enlighten the general public on the mandate and activities of the Commission.