



# Sierra Leone's Climate Change Communications Strategy Under the National Adaptation Plan

Environment Protection Agency of Sierra Leone (EPA-SL)

June 2020



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The NAP Global Network was created in 2014 to support developing countries in advancing their NAP processes, and help accelerate adaptation efforts around the world. To achieve this, the Network facilitates sustained South–South peer learning and exchange, supports national-level action on NAP development and implementation, and enhances bilateral support for adaptation and climate-sensitive sectors through donor coordination. The Network’s members include participants from more than 135 countries involved in developing and implementing National Adaptation Plans, as well as 11 donor members. Financial support for the Network has been provided by Austria, Canada, Germany and the United States. The Secretariat is hosted by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). For more information, visit [www.napglobalnetwork.org](http://www.napglobalnetwork.org)

Sierra Leone’s Climate Change Communications Strategy Under the National Adaptation Plan was developed through the United States In-Country National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Support Program in Sierra Leone, which is implemented by IISD. Any opinions stated herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of the NAP Global Network, its funders or Network participants.



## United States In-Country National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Support Program

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# **Sierra Leone's Climate Change Communications Strategy Under the National Adaptation Plan**

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# Foreword

Sierra Leone acknowledges its vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change and is taking concrete measures to adapt to these changes. Support received from the United States In-country National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Support Program, through the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), has facilitated the development of this communication strategy.

The communication strategy aims to provide short- and mid-term direction on how the Government can utilise information strategically and effectively to support the NAP process. The strategy draws from wide-ranging consultations with key government stakeholders all over the country to make it a comprehensive and realistic guide that will support Sierra Leone's communication under the NAP.

It is my firm belief that this communication strategy will not only improve awareness and education on climate change adaptation but will also stimulate positive climate behavioural change amongst the general public. It will also provide clear guidelines to address the differing roles and responsibilities amongst targeted institutions. Furthermore, it will set realistic targets and outline simple but effective communication channels to achieve national adaptation goals.

This strategy aligns well with the country's **Mid Term National Development Plan** under cluster 7, which provides for a collective approach in the fight against environmental degradation, climate change, and disaster management, leading to sustainable environmental management.

In concluding, we would like to express our most profound appreciation and recognition to the NAP Global Network, the United States Government In-country NAP Support Program (USAID), the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), and the German Government for their financial and technical support throughout this process. Special thanks go to the local consultant, Hon. Abdul Conteh, and all those who provided meaningful inputs during the development of this document.

**Dr. Bondi Gevao (PhD)**  
**Executive Chairman**  
**Environment Protection Agency – Sierra Leone**

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>EPA</b>	Environment Protection Agency
<b>M&amp;E</b>	monitoring and evaluation
<b>MDA</b>	ministries, department and agencies
<b>NAP</b>	National Adaptation Plan
<b>NCCP</b>	National Climate Change Policy

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Project Overview

The Sierra Leone National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Communication Strategy is the result of a collaborative effort between the Government of Sierra Leone, represented by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA); other line ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs); and development partners. The main development partner involved in the development of this strategy is the United States Agency for International Development through its In-country NAP Support Program in West Africa, implemented by the NAP Global Network, which is managed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

The task to develop the strategy was carried out by the Climate Change Department of the EPA. The strategy outlines a realistic plan for engaging different stakeholders effectively to enhance a better understanding of the NAP and climate change adaptation issues in Sierra Leone.

The NAP Global Network's second program of support to Sierra Leone is a follow up from the first program, which supported the development of a NAP Framework for the country.

The priority areas identified for the second program of support included:

1. **Vertical integration:** Building political momentum for the NAP process at the subnational level.
2. **Strategic communications:** Enhancing strategic communications around climate change adaptation and the NAP process at the national and local levels.

This communications strategy was developed as part of the NAP Global Network's second program of support to Sierra Leone with the aim of providing short- and mid-term guidance on how the government can use communications strategically and effectively to support the NAP process. The strategy draws from wide-ranging consultations with key government stakeholders all over the country in order to make it an inclusive and realistic guide that will support the communication of Sierra Leone's NAP.

## 1.2 Linking Climate Change Policy to the Communication Strategy

There is an increasing acknowledgement in Sierra Leone of the reality of climate change resulting from the emission of greenhouse gases connected to human activities. Like other vulnerable countries, the country has gradually experienced high temperatures, inconsistent weather patterns, recurrent storms, floods, mudslides, rising sea levels, coastal erosion, poor water quality and scarcity, changes in ecosystems, biodiversity loss, disease and pest outbreaks (Rwanda Environment Management Authority, 2014). There have been widespread impacts such as damage to infrastructure, low food production, undernourishment, economic instability, loss



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of livelihoods, social disturbances, high illness and death rates, interrupted hydropower supply, displacement of communities, relocation to unplanned settlements, seaweed emergence along the coast and saline water invasion.

Sierra Leone's policy response to climate change is driven by the need to urgently climate-proof the country's economy and society as well as its physical environment. This will entail efforts to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen adaptation to climate change in all sectors and at all levels, as well as to develop and implement mitigation initiatives for a low-carbon and high-growth development path (Government of Sierra Leone, n.d.).

The mission of the National Climate Change Policy is to strengthen national initiatives to adapt to and mitigate climate change in a participatory manner that involves engaging all sectors of Sierra Leone society with appropriate and adequate consideration for women, youth, the aged, the poor and other vulnerable groups within the overall context of advancing sustainable socioeconomic development in Sierra Leone (Government of Sierra Leone, n.d.).

In response to the policy's requirement, this strategy is geared toward a clearly defined roadmap for effective communication of the NAP and climate change issues in Sierra Leone. The strategy seeks to further emphasize the following aspects:

- What **information** needs to be disseminated and when.
- The key **audience** that the Government of Sierra Leone needs to address.
- The relevant **changes in knowledge, opinions or behaviour** that need to be implemented.
- The most effective **messages and channels of communication** to be used.
- The **sharing of communications-related responsibilities by different government actors** in order to foster better internal coordination.

This strategy builds on the EPA's and other relevant stakeholders' ongoing efforts in communicating about climate change coupled with best international practices in incorporating strategic communications into NAPs.

This strategy is essential for creating awareness, influencing behaviour change and fostering coordination in tackling climate change. It will facilitate an exchange of information among the key stakeholders: within MDAs, the private sector, the public and other stakeholders. The strategy recognizes the diversity in the different sectors and emphasizes that an all-out effort is needed to effectively combat climate change.

Finally, the strategy seeks to elucidate the clear role that strategic communications play in support of the NAP and identify a variety of communication tactics that will be utilized by the Government of Sierra Leone to successfully achieve its national adaptation goals.

**The main goals of the strategy are to:**

- Improve awareness and understanding of the Government of Sierra Leone's climate change adaptation initiatives and the NAP process through effective communication, education and training.
- Promote an inclusive and participatory approach to adapting to climate change so that the Government of Sierra Leone can unite under a common vision and speak with one voice on the issue of addressing climate change impacts.



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- Generate support and political commitment among key decision-makers for the NAP process and for prioritizing, managing and resourcing efforts to address climate change adaptation issues.
  - Persuade the general public and the private sector of the need for a significant and timely investment in climate change adaptation from both public and private sources within and outside of Sierra Leone.
  - Encourage Sierra Leoneans to collectively embark on activities to strengthen the country's resilience to climate change.

This strategy begins with a synopsis of Sierra Leone's NAP process, followed by a situation analysis and the main components of the communications strategy. The strategy concludes with a range of proposed actions for implementation. That list is not exhaustive, and it should be noted that the communications strategy, as well as the NAP process itself, will go through relevant modifications over time.

## 1.3 Sierra Leone's NAP

Sierra Leone has finalized its National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) but has yet to finalize an adaptation plan that may propose the institutional reforms needed to enhance coordination of climate change adaptation and mitigation by all governmental, statutory, non-governmental and civic entities. However, the government has formulated a series of increasingly ambitious policy plans on climate change adaptation that have formed the basis of the NAP.

The Sierra Leone NAP builds on the foundation laid by the NCCP, the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and the National Adaptation Programmes of Action. Additionally, the NAP is borne out of the adaptation component of the Nationally Determined Contributions that Sierra Leone submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat.

A NAP Framework for Sierra Leone has been developed, outlining the government's vision for and approach to its NAP, but there is still more to be done in order to move the process forward by building political support for the NAP itself. The country's vision for the environment and climate change adaptation is clearly stated in cluster 7 of Sierra Leone's Medium-term National Development Plan (2019–2023) (Government of Saint Lucia, 2019). As a result of this, political commitment and support for the NAP process are very significant because the government will be indirectly addressing cluster 7 of the development plan, which deals with issues relating to climate change and the environment.

The NAP will serve as an all-encompassing roadmap for adaptation planning in Sierra Leone. In other words, it will present the adaptation plans of the country covering a specific time frame. Established earlier under the Cancun Adaptation Framework (2010), NAPs ascertain medium- and long-term adaptation needs and define the strategies and programs required to address these needs. Significantly, they are driven by the countries themselves, indicating their clear priorities and needs. These documents vary over time as the knowledge of climate change deepens, and resources are deployed to react to the impacts (Government of Saint Lucia, 2018).

The NAP process consists of three concrete steps: planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E)—all of which take place at national and subnational levels (Government of Saint Lucia, 2018). The achievement of each of these steps largely depends on a few

supportive factors, including institutional arrangements that facilitate constructive discussions and collective action, information sharing among key stakeholders, and capacity development to provide the relevant skills and resources to enhance effective delivery on adaptation plans (Dazé & Dekens, 2017).

**Figure 1.** An overview of the NAP process



Source: Dazé & Dekens, 2017.

By early 2020, Sierra Leone will have completed the development of the NAP, but specific priority sectors for adaptation have already been identified, including but not limited to agriculture, fisheries, health, tourism and biodiversity. Another priority area for the NAP is climate-induced loss and damage and improved knowledge and learning for adaptation and the future environmental protection of the country.

# 2.0 Situation Assessment and Analysis

## 2.1 Overview

This chapter briefly outlines the current climate change communication approach in Sierra Leone. Although the country has been ranked as the third most vulnerable nation to the adverse effects of climate change, after Bangladesh and Guinea Bissau (Africa Adaptation Initiative, 2017), there are still clear indications of low public consciousness about the hazards of climate change and how they can be tackled. It is against this backdrop that the government realized the need to formulate more comprehensive medium- and longer-term strategic responses to adaptation to the impacts of climate change through the development of the country's NAP.



Since strategic communications are an integral part of the NAP, both a situation assessment and an analysis of climate change communication in Sierra Leone were necessary. The assessment was carried out, and the findings clearly indicated that, though there are many gaps, they can be addressed with the available opportunities. The assessment and analysis were derived from a thorough literature review (policy documents, action plans, reports and other related materials to climate change in Sierra Leone) and focus group discussions and interviews with potential audiences during the NAP workshops for journalists, government communicators and parliamentarians.

**Table 1. SWOT analysis for climate change communication in Sierra Leone**

<b>STRENGTH (Internal)</b>	<b>WEAKNESS (Internal)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EPA is responsible for the protection of the environment and other related matters.</li> <li>• The NAP and other climate change adaptation and mitigation information are readily available to the public.</li> <li>• The government has several channels of communication at its disposal.</li> <li>• The public is willing to change attitudes and behaviours if they receive the appropriate climate change education and communication.</li> <li>• There is technical personnel with the capacity to implement climate change communication initiatives.</li> <li>• There is evidence of political will to support climate change adaptation and communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low public awareness about national climate change policies and legislation.</li> <li>• Inadequate access and usage of climate change data by decision makers.</li> <li>• Low budget allocation for climate change adaptation initiatives among MDAs.</li> <li>• Climate change issues are yet to form major parts of the government's plans and budgets.</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES (External)</b>	<b>THREATS (External)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are funding opportunities to support capacity-building initiatives on climate change communication in Sierra Leone.</li> <li>• Development partners are committed to supporting climate change-associated initiatives in the country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the general public is still in denial about climate change.</li> <li>• Some politicians, religious and cultural leaders still miscomprehend facts about climate change.</li> <li>• Excessive use of scientific terminology and technical information in communicating climate change.</li> <li>• Limited positive change in behaviours, attitudes, perceptions and practices.</li> </ul>

# 3.0 Communication Strategy

## 3.1 Introduction

This communication strategy presents a realistic set of actions aimed at achieving specific objectives toward the effective communication of the NAP process and other climate change adaptation initiatives to the general public. The strategy has been developed in order to minimize the information and communication gap in Sierra Leone, where there are clear indications of low levels of awareness and understanding of climate change impacts and vulnerability among the general public.

## 3.2 Guiding Principles of the Strategy

The communication strategy is based on a development communications approach, with key principles geared toward creating awareness, influencing changes in behaviour, disseminating information and knowledge, practice, and inclusiveness and involvement.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: AWARENESS CREATION**

The strategy aims to create maximum awareness of climate change and adaptation among the general public and other specific stakeholders in Sierra Leone.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: INSPIRE BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE**

The strategy focuses on activities that will inspire behavioural change with positive effects on the general public.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: SHARE INFORMATION AND FOSTER KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT**

The strategy will create a platform for information sharing, as well as the development of knowledge and materials on climate change adaptation, among key stakeholders and the general public.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: ENCOURAGE PRACTICE**

The strategy aims to capacitate and encourage Sierra Leoneans to embark on climate change adaptation activities.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE 5: PROMOTE INCLUSIVENESS AND INVOLVEMENT**

The strategy enhances inclusiveness and involvement among key target groups at all levels (local and international). The strategy also caters to the relevant information, education and communication requirements of all key audiences.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLE 6: PROMOTE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This strategy is in line with Sierra Leonean laws and clearly signifies the government's pledge to uphold and maintain the democratic values of good governance and accountability.

### 3.3 Structure of Communications Strategy

This communications strategy is structured around five key areas: (a) setting realistic objectives and internal organization and coordination of stakeholders; (b) identifying key target audiences (internal and external); (c) developing clear and consistent messages; (d) selecting the most effective channels for communication of messages; and (e) developing appropriate mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the outcome of various communication activities.

#### 3.3.1 Communication Objectives

A clearly defined communication strategy must be developed to ensure an effective NAP process (Antwi-Agyei et al., 2018). Strategic communication is vital, especially when the main objective is to strengthen Sierra Leone's NAP and increase awareness on climate change adaptation issues. Such an objective can only be achieved when communication is fully incorporated in all the three stages of the NAP process.

First, the planning stage of the NAP process requires the Sierra Leone government to **unanimously agree** on the type of climate change threats, determine the level of action and mobilize the required resources to effectively implement the plan. At this stage, communications will focus on raising awareness about the scientific aspects of climate change and other relevant information about current and future impacts that every Sierra Leonean needs to consider, as well as the imperative to adapt to these climate impacts.

Secondly, the implementation stage requires active participation and effective **coordination** among key government stakeholders, as well as non-government stakeholders in civil society and the private sector. At this stage, the focus of communication is to strengthen alliances that will help to **persuade stakeholders** to disseminate messages that will trigger the required behavioural change among the general public.

Finally, the M&E stage involves the **gathering and sharing** of quantitative and qualitative information about the progress of the entire process. The focus of communication at this stage is to ensure that lessons learned and other relevant feedback reach the right target audience in a timely manner.

**Table 2. Communication objectives**

Stage in the NAP process	Communication objective	Notes
<b>PLANNING</b>	Promote an inclusive and participatory approach to foster collaboration, coordination and networking among all stakeholders involved in the NAP process and climate change adaptation initiatives.	Various stakeholders across the different sectors and levels in Sierra Leone are already involved in making meaningful contributions in previous and ongoing consultative processes to identify NAP priorities.
<b>PLANNING</b>	Enhance understanding of Sierra Leone’s climate change hazards among key government and non-government stakeholders.	The EPA has been consistent in providing key stakeholders and the general public with up-to-date information on climate change adaptation and the NAP process.
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Unite under a common vision and speak with one voice on the NAP process and climate change adaptation issues.	A well-defined strategy is needed to serve as a broad framework for what needs to be communicated to the right target audiences using the appropriate communication tools. The government will use this strategy in the NAP planning and implementation.
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	Stakeholders to utilize relevant information and implement activities that will help build resilience to climate change.	The strategy will seek to increase access and utilization of climate change information, knowledge and learning to influence behaviour change with actions necessary to build resilience to climate change.
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Political support and commitment gained in order to ensure that Sierra Leone’s climate change adaptation policies improve over time. An appropriate M&E system should be constituted to monitor and evaluate the NAP process.	The climate change secretariat within the EPA could serve as a repository of information about climate change projects, including their objectives and impacts for those who need to monitor progress (i.e., government entities with climate change adaptation projects).



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## 3.4 General Desired Results (Key Issues and Activities, Attitudes and Practices)

1. Policy-makers that are well equipped to make key decisions and improve on the implementation of climate change adaptation initiatives.
2. A very motivated target audience that is fully conscious, involved and well-behaved with the right mindset, positive actions and enthusiasm to complement the government's efforts on climate change adaptation.
3. An enabling environment for target audiences to access, use and disseminate climate change information and communication products.

### 3.4.1 Key Audiences

All Sierra Leoneans will be targeted—in different ways—with the strategy, as the NAP calls for real participation—at all levels—in the decision-making process. All stakeholders are responsible for participating effectively in all the stages of the NAP because a participatory approach fosters long-lasting consensus and stakeholder buy-in and ownership—all critical to the NAP's successful implementation (Antwi-Agyei et al., 2018). Inasmuch as everyone is a key audience, this communication strategy classified the key audiences into two categories: primary and secondary.



## 3.5 Primary Target Audiences

Climate change issues are cross-cutting in nature and require a collaborative effort to address them. That is why key stakeholders with high-level political authority are critical to the planning and implementation of the NAP. Many sector MDAs have diverse roles to play in the coordination, planning, implementation and monitoring phases of the NAP process in Sierra Leone. These include:

- **Political leadership:** Offices of the President and Vice President, cabinet ministers and members of Parliament.
- **MDAs:** Ministry of Lands, Housing and Environment; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources; Ministry of Energy; Ministry of Water Resources; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Transport and Aviation; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Information and Communication; Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education; Ministry of Technical and Higher Education; EPA; Office of National Security (Disaster Management Department); National Protected Area Authority; etc.

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## 3.6 Secondary Target Audiences

These are influential stakeholders who will be very instrumental in disseminating the message about climate change impacts to the general public (i.e., journalists, educators, celebrities, civil societies and artists), as well as to those sector-specific stakeholders (i.e., farmers and fishermen) that need information to build their own resilience to climate change impacts.

- **Media:** The media (print, broadcast and social media) will be involved in the dissemination of this NAP and embark on climate change journalism to help build resilience.
- **Civil society organizations (CSOs):** The Government of Sierra Leone sees CSOs as strategic partners for development. The NAP process in Sierra Leone will actively engage the CSOs in planning, advocacy, education and awareness-raising, evidence-based research, and M&E of adaptation efforts at various levels in the country.
- **Academia and research institutions:** This group can conduct research on different aspects of climate change adaptation and resilience, including improving the understanding of climate change attribution in Sierra Leone.
- **Private sector:** Large, medium and small businesses, whose operations, value chains and livelihoods are affected by climate change and need to take steps to protect themselves, can support a business case for private sector investment in adaptation.
- **Celebrities:** Celebrities from across the cultural and artistic spectrum that are passionate about environmental and social causes could become ambassadors of climate change adaptation.
- **Development partners:** International collaborations and partnerships are key to successful adaptation actions in any country. Sierra Leone's NAP process recognizes the role of the international community, especially development partners, as critical for resource mobilization, capacity development, and technology development and transfer for current and future adaptation actions.
- **Traditional and religious leaders:** These are custodians of our traditional laws and moral guarantors, respectively. They command huge respect in society and can serve as major agents of influence in promoting climate change adaptation practices.
- **Public:** The general public has a vital role to play in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the NAP and adaptation interventions in order to enhance their adaptive capacity and resilience to climate shocks.

### 3.6.1 Key Messages (General and Sector-Specific)

This strategy will use simple, compelling and memorable messages to point out the effects of climate change in Sierra Leone and what role the NAP will play in response to those climate effects. There will be general and sector-specific messages designed to inspire action among the audiences in order to embark on adaptation activities. In other words, some messages will be cross-cutting for all audiences (general), while other messages will target specific stakeholders.

#### NARRATIVE

To disseminate effective climate change messages to various target audiences, the Government of Sierra Leone will use a narrative frame that will help to ensure that messages are read, understood and remembered more quickly. The narrative frame should be built around the two aspects below:

1. **That climate change affects every Sierra Leonean** – adaptation requires active participation and the total involvement of everyone in society.

- 
2. **That all Sierra Leoneans must unite in adapting to climate change.** The Government of Sierra Leone should inspire citizens through the NAP to build their resilience against climate change.

The main idea behind the use of this narrative frame for messaging by the Government of Sierra Leone is to strongly position climate change adaptation in the minds of citizens and to get them to embrace the NAP.

## **TONE**

The Government of Sierra Leone will use a tone that signals the need for immediate action in the messaging. The government is aware that it has a vulnerable population with low capacity to adapt to climate change; hence, there must be a sense of urgency in the message to empower citizens to act now.

## **GENERAL MESSAGES**

These are messages that are designed to target all audiences, be they primary or secondary, local or international. The messages outline the problems as well as solutions, and this will enable the target audiences to clearly understand and respond positively.

## **SECTOR-SPECIFIC MESSAGES**

Climate change is a cross-cutting developmental issue that has uneven effects on different sectors. Different sectors of the economy are engaged with various adaptation interventions and are faced with different climate change impacts; therefore, the government will also have to develop tailored messages designed for sector-specific audiences. This process follows a familiar pattern of first identifying the problem and then developing and communicating the sector-specific solution. The following are examples of sector-specific messaging.

### **Tourism**

The tourism sector has a major impact on Sierra Leone's economic growth. However, the effects of climate change, such as storms and flooding, could endanger wildlife, damage infrastructure and dampen the spirits of tourists to visit the country.

Key messages:

- Protect wildlife and promote tourism
- Preserve your culture and protect the environment
- Stop littering on the beaches to promote tourism

### **Agriculture**

Sierra Leone has abundant fertile agricultural land that could transform the national economically if properly utilized. However, inconsistent weather patterns have had adverse effects on current harvesting activities. The livestock sector is also experiencing difficulties as a result of the same climatic inconsistency, thereby making pest and disease outbreaks more common than ever before (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2012). The threat of climate change is imminent.

Key messages:

- Timely planting gives better yields
- Get involved, stop deforestation

- 
- Food security starts with seed security
  - Cut a tree and plant two

### **Fisheries**

Marine life, like terrestrial life, depends on an unchanging climate; any slight change will affect the movement and activities of the various marine communities (Government of Sierra Leone Ministry of Transport and Aviation, 2007). The rise in sea level and water temperature in Sierra Leone has an adverse effect on fisheries and the economy as a whole. Hence, the sector needs to adapt.

Key messages:

- Fish is wealth, grow more fish
- Together we can stop illegal fishing
- Stop water pollution

### **Water**

Sierra Leoneans can have access to good quality drinking water when there is a collective responsibility to clean and protect waterways regularly. By so doing, flooding and other water disasters can be prevented during heavy rainfall.

Key messages:

- Water is life, use it wisely
- Clear waterways and stay safe
- Drought is disaster, harvest rainwater
- Avoid deforestation to protect water catchments for your tap to run

### **Works and Infrastructure**

Building climate-resilient homes and other infrastructure (offices, roads, bridges) in Sierra Leone is timely. Citizens must avoid construction in disaster-prone areas with high flood and landslide risks.

Key messages:

- Plan your house in a better and safer way
- Live in orderly settlements, avoid disaster-prone areas
- Plan your town and city well

### **Forestry and Wetlands**

There is a decrease in forest and wetland covers. Overexploitation of wood resources, clearing for settlements and cultivation, wildfires, charcoal burning and over-harvesting of wetland resources have all led to forest as well as wetlands degradation.

Key messages:

- Stop bush burning, plant trees
- Stop encroachment, restore wetlands
- Plant a tree, stop a landslide

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## Health

Increasing incidences of disease outbreaks such as cholera linked to a lack of proper sanitation and hygiene and warmer temperatures caused by climate change will mean increased risks to the health of Sierra Leoneans.

Key messages:

- Clear stagnant water where mosquitoes breed
- Be healthy, live in a safe environment
- Use clean and safe water

## Energy

There is predominant use of biomass energy (firewood, charcoal) and very limited use of alternative renewable energy sources in Sierra Leone. All of these factors ignite climate change and directly affect development.

Key messages:

- Stop using charcoal, save the environment
- Protect water catchment areas
- Turn off the light when you don't need it

## Transport

Climate change hazards such as flooding and landslides have threatened transport infrastructure such as roads and bridges in Sierra Leone. These are clear indications that the sector needs to adapt to climate change.

Key messages:

- Safe roads, better lifestyles
- Use environmentally friendly transport
- Walk where possible to be healthy and save the climate
- Climate-smart roads save lives

The development of these key messages is just a starting point to encourage other government institutions to formulate specific messages around climate change adaptation in line with their various sectors.

### 3.6.2 Channels of Communications

Sierra Leone's media landscape has expanded in recent years, with an increase in new radio and TV stations, multiple newspapers and the vast use of mobile phones and the Internet. Radio remains the best way to reach a broad audience, since, in 2015, 81% of Sierra Leoneans had access (BBC Media Action, 2018). However, no single station can boast a country-wide reach; instead, a large number of broadcast partners will need to be leveraged to gain national coverage.

A 2017 Multiple Indication Cluster Survey 6 by Statistics Sierra Leone showed that 65% of men and 45% of women owned mobile phones. A BBC Media Action survey conducted in 2015 also showed that mobile phone access was high, achieving a reach as high as radio: 83% of people reported having access to a mobile phone. More than half of mobile phone owners (52%) had a basic feature phone (BBC Media Action, 2018). This shows that there is significant potential

for leveraging this reach to distribute content and information to Sierra Leone audiences. Alongside these developments is the increase in the use of social media, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, among the younger generation.

Taking into consideration the multiple audiences that need to be informed and engaged in climate change adaptation in Sierra Leone, there is a need to utilize all forms of media (traditional and new) to effectively communicate the country’s NAP and its adaptation initiatives. Television and radio are so far the best means to reach large audiences, while social media (Facebook and WhatsApp) allow for better and effective targeting.

Finally, the Government of Sierra Leone will engage celebrities drawn from across the arts, sport and culture, alongside religious and traditional leaders, in communicating about the NAP and climate change adaptation initiatives. Celebrity messengers that are respected and admired by the target audience or that can appeal to, or effectively target, a particular sub-set or grouping, will make a considerable impact. The religious and traditional leaders who are moral guarantors and custodians of our traditional laws, respectively, will also play defining roles in influencing behavioural change among their followers.

**Table 3. Connecting audience, communication tools, channels and sources of information**

<b>Primary target audience</b>	<b>Communication tools and materials</b>	<b>Channels of communication</b>	<b>Source of information</b>
Policy-makers (MDAs) Political leaders	Policy briefs, press releases, flyers, banners, reports, posters, calendar, brochures, guides, handbooks, stickers, infographics, pictures, documentaries, stories, drama, animations, talk shows, announcements, adverts, notices	Television and radio, printed materials, outdoor displays, social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.), community outreach and town hall meetings, mobile phone (call, SMS, apps), websites	MDAs, CSOs, development partners, research institutes, private sector, online databases, websites
<b>Secondary target audience</b>	<b>Communication tools and materials</b>	<b>Channels of communication</b>	<b>Source of information</b>
Media, CSOs, the private sector, development partners, academic and research institutions, youth, women, farmers, vulnerable groups	Policy briefs, press releases, flyers, banners, reports, posters, calendars, brochures, guides, handbooks, stickers, infographics, pictures, documentaries, stories, drama, animations, talk shows, announcements, adverts, notices	Television and radio, printed materials, outdoor displays, social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.), community meetings, mobile phone (call, SMS, apps), websites	MDAs, universities, lead agencies (e.g., projects), research institutes, enforcement agencies, online databases, websites, mobile apps, policy and law



# 4.0 Implementation Plan

## 4.1 Implementing the Strategy

Largely, the significant task of coordinating and implementing the strategy falls under the purview of the EPA with support from relevant MDAs. The focal point within the EPA will facilitate the creation of proper collaborations and the required arrangements in the implementation process.

## 4.2 Funding the Strategy

The Government of Sierra Leone shall raise the required resources for the successful implementation of the strategy. Together with other key strategic partners, the government will champion the initiative of mobilizing the much-needed financial, human and physical resources from domestic as well as international sources.

## 4.3 M&E

There are many tools that can determine whether a communications strategy is having its intended impact, as well as where changing circumstances (for example, a shift in public opinion on an issue) requires a corresponding change in the communications plan. These include:

- **Media monitoring:** Systematic tracking of media coverage of the NAP process and climate change adaptation activities will reveal whether the communication strategy is working effectively. It also provides invaluable insights into how the issue is being framed by media outfits, and who in civil society and the private sector is actively engaged in the issue—both in support of and against reforms.
- **Website analytics:** The EPA website serves as an important repository of information about government policy and plans around climate change adaptation—both for the public and more targeted audiences. As a part of the website strategy, an analytics dashboard will be set up, which will allow for the tracking and evaluating of key indicators, including the number of visitors to the site, bounce rates, etc.
- **Periodic public surveys:** The communications strategy will seek changes in knowledge, opinions and sometimes behaviour. At the beginning





of the strategy, surveys and polls will provide insights into existing habits, and follow-up surveys will reveal whether these have changed. While changes will not necessarily be attributable solely to the communications strategy, a well-targeted strategy should be able to take at least part of the credit.

- **Evaluations:** Evaluations from participants will signal whether these communications activities are viewed positively by participants, while also gathering ideas on improvements going forward. There are a variety of opportunities to ask for feedback on communications activities. The most obvious are events, like workshops and seminars.

**Table 4. Main institutions and stakeholders**

No	Institutions and stakeholders	Functions in communicating climate change information
1	Parliament, MDAs	Produce information; serve as a reliable hub of information; create suitable communication channels; interpret; control and roll out policy commitments; serve as consumers; observe and assess.
2	Local councils and traditional rulers	Produce and reproduce information at the local council level (district, chiefdom, ward, village); be a reliable disseminator of information, content and resources; develop proper communication channels; interpret; control and fulfill policy commitments at lower councils; serve as consumers and end-users.
3	Development/donor partners	Redevelop information; be a supportive and dependable resource for information; establish suitable communication channels; identify and package information for special target groups; serve as consumers and end-users.
4	CSOs	Stimulate information; provide a supportive and concrete database for information, content and resources; develop suitable communication channels; identify information for special target groups; serve as consumers and end-users.
5	Private sector	Revitalize information; serve as a reliable source of information, content and resources; develop suitable communication channels; identify and package data for specific audiences; serve as consumers and end-users.
6	Media	Reinforce information; serve as a dependable information platform for content and resources; establish suitable communication channels; identify and package information for special target groups; serve as consumers and end-users.
7	Academic and research institutions	Information production; serve as a knowledge repository for content and resources; create suitable means of communication; translate; regulate and fulfill policy commitments; serve as consumers and users
8	Cultural and religious leaders	Provide a pool of local knowledge; expand information, distribution and utilization.
9	Youth, women, farmers, vulnerable groups, schools	Make use of relevant information, education and communication products; inspire constructive changes in attitudes and behaviours in the implementation of climate change adaptation initiatives.

# 5.0 Conclusion

Ultimately, the implementation of this strategy will result in increased awareness and mobilization at all levels to address climate change issues that could negatively affect Sierra Leone's sustainable growth and development. The time is ripe for Sierra Leoneans to harness the growing attention focused on the challenges of adaptation in creating sustainable economic growth and development. A coordinated, multi-sectoral response is crucial. This strategy provides a platform for that coordination and aims to achieve lasting changes that will improve the lives of Sierra Leoneans for generations to come.



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