



Phase 3 report: Refining the vision on the food system transition challenge ‘How to ensure that the Feed Salone Strategy contributes to healthy diets for the people of Sierra Leone?’

Sustainable Agrifood Systems Intelligence (SASI)
Science Policy Interface (SPi)

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Executive Summary

Component 3 of the SASI initiative aims to contribute to the successful implementation of the Feed Salone Strategy through a medium-term action research approach that is grounded in the realities in the field. This research has been carried out by Agrinatura and SLARI, supported by the SUN-FSCU within the OVP. It focuses on what has been identified through a series of consultations held in Sierra Leone (and in line with the country's policy agenda) as a key challenge for Sierra Leone's transition towards a more sustainable food system:

How to ensure that the Feed Salone Strategy contributes to healthy diets for the people of Sierra Leone?

This report forms the main report of the third phase of SASI-SPI Sierra Leone, with the objective to refine the vision of the transition challenge and to present the food system transition pathways that were created by the stakeholders in Kenema and Port Loko districts. It should be read together with the report on phase 2.

The methods that were used are multi-stakeholder dialogues, expert interviews (EIs) and desk review. A second round of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues (MSDs) has been conducted in the two targeted districts of Kenema and Port Loko. The dialogues sought to bring together again the different stakeholders to discuss jointly the transition challenge, but this time with a more forward-looking focus. The MSDs in Kenema and Port Loko districts were held on November 5-6 and November 11-12, respectively. The programme was roughly the same in both districts, going through the following four subsequent steps:

- Analysis of the current situation of the food system
- Defining the horizon for the vision of the desired future food system
- Defining the visions and accompanying narratives of the desired future food system
- Identifying the pathways to realise the vision of the desired future food system

Based on the results from the EI and the desk review the main elements of the food systems related policy, investments and coordination framework is describes, with the following sub-sections:

- Feed Salone strategy
- Strategy for the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sectors in Sierra Leone
- Nutrition policy framework
- School feeding policy framework
- Food systems policy framework
- Food systems coordination framework
- Decentralisation
- Trade
- Drug addiction
- EU bilateral support

The results of the second round of MSDs are then compared with Sierra Leone's 8 official food

system pathways and relevant sector policies, while identifying the interventions that are not yet well covered by the existing 8 official pathways.

Based on the combined results, a set of conclusions and policy recommendations are formulated, which mostly follow the same headings as those used for the analysis of the food systems related policy, investments and coordination framework, as listed above.

Acknowledgements

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Personal thanks are also due to the National Expert of SASI-SPI in Sierra Leone, Mr Vandy Amos Saati, who contributed in the data collection effort, and who played a key role in the organisation of the data collection mission, and the preceding phases that paved the way for this work. Acknowledgements are also extended to Mr Abu Mortay Kamara, who participated in the data collection mission on behalf of SUN&FS-CU. A big thank you is also extended to Ms Abibatu Amara of Kenema District Council, Ms Joycelyn Suale of MoHS Port Loko, and Mr Abu Bakar Kanu, District Coordinator of AAD-SL, National Coordinator of ASD-SL and Coordinator of the FNS network in Port Loko District, for their support in organising and facilitating the MSDs in the two districts.

Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|---|
| AAD-SL | Action for Advocacy and Development – Sierra Leone |
| ABC | Agri Business Centre |
| CC | City Council |
| CFSVA | Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (WFP) |
| CHW | Community Health Worker |
| CIRAD | Centre De Coopération Internationale En Recherche Agronomique Pour Le Développement / French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development |
| CW | Concern Worldwide |
| DC | District Council |
| DHS | Demographic and Health Survey |
| EI | Expert Interview |
| FBO | Farmer Based Organisation |
| FOCUS1000 | Foundation for Collaboration on Universal Socio-economic Services |
| FoRUT | Foundation for Rural and Urban Transformation |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| FSRP | Food Systems Resilience Program |
| GAFSP | Global Agriculture and Food Security Program |
| GIZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| GloPAN | Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition |
| HDSFS | Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All |
| HKI | Helen Keller International |
| ICRA | International Centre for development-oriented Research in Agriculture |
| IITA | International Institute of Tropical Agriculture |
| IRAM | Institute for Research and Applications of Development Methods |
| IE | Irish Embassy |
| MAFS | Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security |
| MBSSE | Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education |
| MFMR | Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources |
| MFMR IDAS | Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources – Institutional Data and Assessment System |
| MLGCA | Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs |

| | |
|----------|---|
| MoE | Ministry of Energy |
| MoECC | Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change |
| MoGCA | Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs |
| MoSW | Ministry of Social Welfare |
| MSD | Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue |
| MSSPRM | Multi-Sector Strategic Plan to Reduce Malnutrition in Sierra Leone |
| MTI | Ministry of Trade and Industry |
| MWRS | Ministry of Water Resources and Sanitation |
| NaFFSL | National Federation of Farmers of Sierra Leone |
| NaFRA | National Fertilizer and Regulatory Agency |
| NFNSIP | National Food and Nutrition Security Strategic Implementation Plan |
| NIMS | Nutrition Information Management System |
| PI-CREF | Presidential Initiative on Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Food Security |
| SASI-SPI | Sustainable Agri-food Systems Intelligence – Science-Policy Interface |
| SLARI | Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute |
| SLEPA | Sierra Leone Environmental Protection Agency |
| SLeCAD | Sierra Leone Chamber of Agribusiness Development |
| SLIEPA | Sierra Leone Investment & Export Promotion Agency |
| SLRA | Sierra Leone Roads Authority |
| SUN | Scaling Up Nutrition |
| SUN&FSCU | SUN and Food Systems Coordination Unit |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |
| TC | Transition Challenge |
| UNFSS | United Nations Food Systems Summit |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| VSLA | Village Savings and Loans Associations |
| WASH | Water, Sanitation and Hygiene |
| WHH | Welthungerhilfe |

1. Introduction

Building on Food Systems Assessments (FSA) and UNFSS pathways, the Government of Sierra Leone, the European Union, FAO, and Agrinatura are collaborating to implement the Sustainable Agri-food Systems Intelligence (SASI) initiative aiming to support countries in translating national goals and plans into operational programs, policies and investments that enhance the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of their agri-food systems. Sierra Leone is one of the three pilot countries of this global initiative. In Sierra Leone, Component 3 of the SASI initiative aims to contribute to the successful implementation of the Feed Salone Strategy through a medium-term action research approach that is grounded in the realities in the field. This research has been carried out by Agrinatura and SLARI, supported by the SUN-FSCU within the OVP. It focuses on what has been identified through a series of consultations held in Sierra Leone (and in line with the country's policy agenda) as a key challenge for Sierra Leone's transition towards a more sustainable food system:

How to ensure that the Feed Salone Strategy contributes to healthy diets for the people of Sierra Leone?

Alleviating hunger and malnutrition is Strategic Objectives 4 of the Feed Salone Strategy, and reaching the targets 2 and 3 of this strategic objective requires additional analysis and insights that is being provided by this Agrinatura-led action research, called Sustainable Agri-food Systems Intelligence - Science Policy Interface (SASI-SPI). Given the nature of the transition challenge, which requires working at the ministerial level at least with MAFS and MoHS, the main institutional focal point of this component is the SUN and Food Systems Coordination Unit (SUN-FSCU), within the Office of the Vice-President (OVP).

During the first phase of the project the key food system transition challenge was identified, on which the rest of the project would focus. As part of phase 1, also the target territories of Kenema and Port Loko districts were identified. These two districts were selected based on the following criteria:

- areas where oil palm and/or cassava are cultivated⁵,
- areas with contrasting situations in terms of food and nutrition security situation,
- areas where relevant government, NGO and/or private sector initiatives are ongoing
- areas with contrasting agro-ecological, social and economic conditions,
- areas with contrasting cultivation, marketing and processing practices,

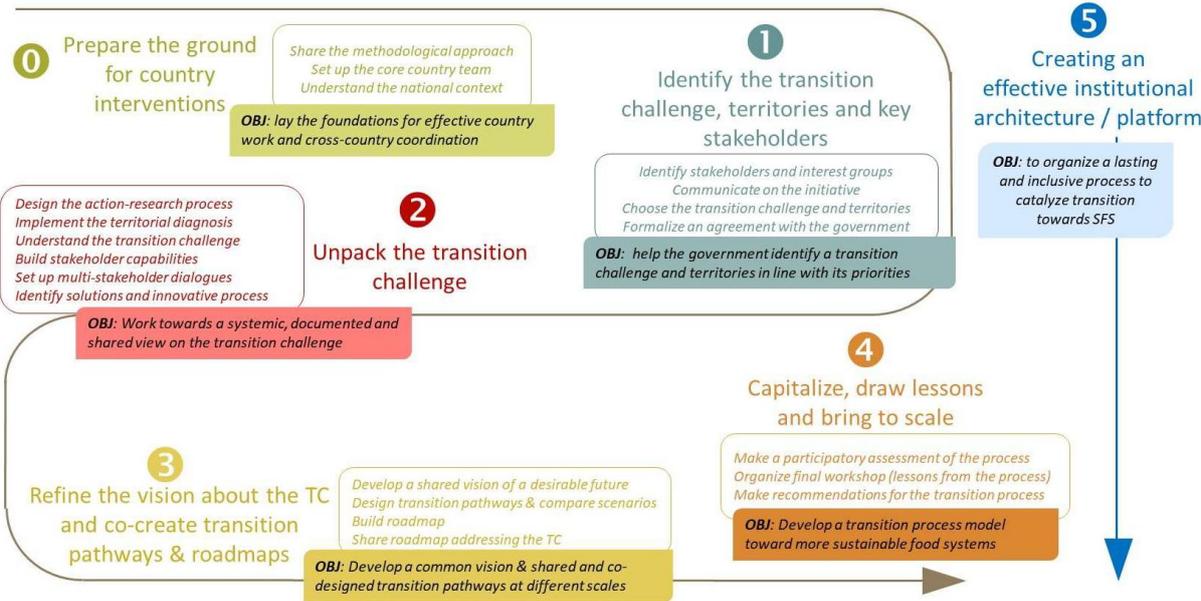
During the second phase of the project an extensive data collection effort was undertaken, aimed at deepening the understanding of the food system transition challenge. This was done by collecting data in 3 chiefdoms in each of the 2 target districts. As part of the same mission, a first round of two Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues were conducted in the capitals of the two target districts. This first round of MSDs focused on the current situation of the food systems in the two districts, again with particular attention for the food system transition challenge. The results

⁵ This criterion was included, because these are two products on which the EU's bilateral support will focus in the coming years. Even though the research focused on the food system as a whole, including all crops, livestock and fisheries, the EU as the donor of this research wanted to be sure that the findings are particularly relevant for its interventions in the cassava and palm oil value chains

of this second phase of the project were published separately in the phase 2 report⁶.

As part of the third and final phase of the project in the country, a second round of MSDs was conducted, which were forward-looking. They brought again together a wide variety of stakeholders, who agreed on a vision for their desired future food system, as well as the pathways to realise these visions. The figure below shows the methodological itinerary that is being followed by all three pilot countries⁷ of SASI-SPI, including the three phase described above.

Figure 1: Methodological itinerary of component 3 of SASI-SPI



This report forms the main report of the third phase of SASI-SPI Sierra Leone, with the objective to refine the vision of the transition challenge and to present the food system transition pathways that were created by the stakeholders in Kenema and Port Loko districts. It should be read together with the report on phase 2. The phase 2 report also contains an introduction to the relevant national context in Sierra Leone, which is not being repeated in this report.

This report continues with a description of the methodology that was used for the execution of phase 3 of SASI-SPI in Sierra Leone. After that, chapter 3 provides the results of the second round of MSDs that were conducted in Kenema and Port Loko districts. Chapter 4 focuses on the food systems policy, investment and coordination framework at the national level in Sierra Leone, based on the Expert Interviews and a desk review of relevant documents. Chapter 5 compares the food system transition pathways of chapter 3 with Sierra Leone’s official pathways, as well as relevant sector policies. Chapter 6 provides a set of conclusions, accompanied by relevant recommendations, based on the results presented in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

⁶ See: <https://www.iram-fr.org/ouverturepdf.php?file=sasi-spi-phase-2-report-final-1774278558.pdf>

⁷ Besides Sierra Leone, these are Bhutan and Colombia

2. Methodology

The methods that were used are multi-stakeholder dialogues (MSDs) and expert interviews (EIs).

2.1. Multi-stakeholder dialogues

A second round of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues has been conducted in the two targeted districts of Kenema and Port Loko. The dialogues sought to bring together again the different stakeholders to discuss jointly the transition challenge, but this time with a more forward-looking focus. The main objective was to let the stakeholders agree on a vision of the desired future food system and the pathways/scenarios that can lead there, with particular attention for the food system transition challenge that was identified for Sierra Leone: 'How to ensure that the Feed Salone Strategy contributes to healthy diets for the people of Sierra Leone?'

Both stakeholder dialogues took 2 days. The first day focused on agreeing on a vision(s) of the desired future food system. Participants were first given an introduction to familiarise them again with the project and the concepts of (sustainable) food systems and the food system transition challenge. After that the meeting broke up in four groups. Each group was composed of a mix of the different categories of stakeholders. Each of these groups first conducted a SWOT analysis of the current food system, in order to warm them up and familiarise them again with the issues in the food system in their respective district. After that, representatives of the groups reported back to the plenary. Next, participants discussed and agreed on the horizon/timeframe to be considered for the vision of the desired future food system. After the horizon was agreed upon in the plenary, each group discussed their vision for the desired future food system of their respective district, with particular attention to the food system transition challenge. During the group work, each participant first wrote down his/her own ideas for a desired future food system in 2050. After that, each group jointly discussed the different individual ideas, and combine them on a flip-chart, which included a short vision statement that reflected how they see the desired future food system, and this flip-chart was again presented briefly to the plenary meeting by one person of each group.

In the evening the facilitators merged the visions and idea clusters of the four groups, which was presented the next morning to the participants as a draft joint vision statement and accompanying narrative. The participants provided a number of comments, which were immediately addressed through modifications to the joint vision and narrative, until the participants agreed on it.

The second day focused on the pathways/scenarios that can lead to the joint vision of the desired future food system. The participants again broke down in groups, and each group jointly identified the pathway⁸ that can lead the food system of their respective district, to the desired future food system that they identified during the previous day. They did this by back-casting from the desired future food system: reasoning backwards from the final situation to identify the interventions that are required to realise the vision. The groups listed the key actions/interventions that are required to bring about the necessary change between the final destination (vision of the desired future food system) and the current situation. All the

⁸ Defined as a series of actions that can be taken in order to achieve something (source: Cambridge dictionary)

actions/interventions together make up the pathway. For each intervention/action, the groups were asked to provide details, by filling out a table with the following columns:

- What?
- How?
- When?
- Who?
- Level? (e.g. local, district, province or national)

After the group work, one person of each group presented the pathway that they had identified. The four different pathways/scenarios that were presented were again merged by the facilitators, but this was done after the dialogues, so the joint pathways in this report were not re-validated again by the stakeholders. See appendix 1 for the detailed program of the two-day Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues.

The participants in the MSDs were excited to participate in the MSDs and keen to receive the results. The flip charts and presentations from the group work were compiled and shared with participants the next day or the day after. Reports of the two MSDs were prepared and shared with the participants.

2.2. Invited stakeholders

The multi-stakeholder dialogues were conducted with more or less the same group of stakeholders that participated in the first round of MSDs. Representatives from the following categories of stakeholders were invited and participated in the events:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| - Farmers | - International organisations |
| - Women | - Inter-religious councils |
| - Youth | - Research and academia |
| - Local government authorities | - Nutrition practitioners (lead mothers from Mother Support Group (MSGs) and Community Health Worker (CHWs)) |
| - Private sector (including drivers) | |
| - NGOs | |

2.3. Expert interviews

Expert interviews were conducted with key people at the national level in Freetown within SUNFSCU/OVP, MAFS, MoHS, PI-CREF and the EU delegation. These meetings were in particular aimed at better understanding the implementation of the Feed Salone strategy so far, the implementation of the EU's bilateral support to Sierra Leone in the framework of the Feed Salone Strategy, the implementation of the EU's ongoing budget support for MAFS, and the current status of Sierra Leone's engagement in the UNFSS process and the related national Food Systems Coordination Strategy that is being prepared. Tailored semi-structured questionnaires were prepared for each expert interview.

2.4. Mission debriefing

At the end of the data collection mission, SUN&FS-CU organised a mission debriefing meeting for national-level stakeholders in the Office of the Vice-President on Friday, 14 November 2025, which was well attended. Participants were interested to learn the preliminary results.

3. Second round of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues/Stakeholders' views on food system transformation

The second round of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues were held on were organised in Kenema and Port Loko districts on November 5-6 and November 11-12, respectively. The programme was roughly the same in both districts, going through the following four subsequent steps:

- Analysis of the current situation of the food system
- Defining the horizon for the vision of the desired future food system
- Defining the visions and accompanying narratives of the desired future food system
- Identifying the pathways to realise the vision of the desired future food system

The detailed programme of the MSDs can be found in appendix 3. The sub-sections below will discuss the results of the four steps.

3.1. Current situation of the food system in Kenema and Port Loko districts

The current situation of the food system in Kenema and Port Loko districts was analysed by the participants of the two Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues. This was done as part of group work in the form of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analyses. Each of the four groups in each MSD presented their analysis of the current situation of the food system in their respective districts, to the plenary meeting. During the MSDs the analyses from the four groups were not merged into a joint analysis of the food system. But in the two reports on the two MSDs, the analyses by the four groups were merged into one, joint SWOT analysis of the food system in their respective districts. Below are these two joint SWOT analyses of the current situation of the food systems in Kenema and Port Loko districts.

Table 1: Merged SWOT analysis food system of Kenema district

| Strengths: | Weaknesses: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability/access to fertile land (lands are given to farmers on a lease basis to both men and women), including adequate IVS for rice and vegetable cultivation - Availability of viable seed - Availability of water through favourable weather conditions, with over five months of rainfall - Strong demand for agricultural products, including in local markets - Willingness to engage in farming, especially among women - Crop diversity potential - Possibility of adopting varying agricultural practices - All structures that deal with the food system are present (MAFS, transporters, processors, producers, nutritionists, marketers, consumers, NaFFSL, Community Animal Health Workers, etc) - Emerging programs supporting youth and women involvement in food system - Medial (Radio, social media) involvement in propagating agricultural messages. - Government (in particular MAFS), development partners and private sector (technical) support, including extension services and Farmer Field Schools - Strong political will with government policies geared to support food security, nutrition, and value addition (in particular Feed Salone strategy) - Strong coordination among stakeholders, including at district and chiefdom levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rural -Urban migration by youth - Limited access to agricultural inputs and credit facilities - Lack of appropriate equipment and (modern) tools - Lack of manual labour, as most of the able-bodied youth have engaged themselves in drug abuse (in particular kush) - Poor road network within the district - Inadequate transportation for farmers to transport their goods - Dependence on rain fed agriculture and lack of irrigation and water conservation facilities to support year-round farming - Effect of climate change on farming systems - Poor/limited storage facilities, in particular at chiefdom and community levels - Weak value addition (few agro-based industries) - Limited knowledge and training on (recent) agricultural and food processing technologies and innovations, inadequate extension services, and limited adoption of new technologies by farmers - Low level of education of farmers - Land tenure system - Inadequate energy supply - Limited access to finance for farmers |

Opportunities:

- Agricultural transformation
- Food diversification
- Improved seeds
- Investments in irrigation
- Climate smart agricultural practices
- Readily available market
- Availability of credit facilities for farmers
- Community led initiatives can fill gap in food systems and foster cooperation
- Private sector investment in agriculture
- Link smallholder farmers to markets
- Strong political will, leading to government and development partners' support for food security and nutrition
- Strong food system and nutrition coordination among stakeholders in the district
- Regulatory laws and policies
- Kenema is part of Sierra Leone's global partnerships
- Supportive donor community, including United Nations agencies (UN-Women, FAO, FSRP, AVDP, ILO, UNDP, WFP, UNICEF)
- Existing technical universities
- Growing population

Threats:

- Climate change, including change in rainfall patterns
- Bush fires
- Biodiversity loss and deforestation
- Unstable Market
- Importation of foreign food
- Lack of incentive for the value addition of our produce
- Break out of pests and diseases
- Inadequate infrastructures, including limited agro-based, post-harvest and storage infrastructure
- Lack of industries for value addition
- Theft
- Drug abuse, in particular by the youth population
- High involvement of the youth in motor bike riding
- Political Instability
- Inflation
- Poor regulations and safety on use of agro-chemicals.
- Non-effective implementation of the regulatory laws and policies
- Food safety issues
- Technology advancement, including lack of adequate mechanisation, post-harvest, preservation and processing technologies, also due to their high costs
- Lack of knowledge (little or no knowledge on diet patterns) and consumer misinformation
- Population growth
- Competition from other economic activities (mining, bike riding, drug trade)
- Corruption
- Inclusion gaps
- External shocks like a global pandemic

Table 2: Merged SWOT analysis food system of Port Loko district

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of fertile land/favourable agricultural ecologies (both IVS and uplands) - Production of different varieties of crops - Availability of local knowledge/technical strength - Local tools - Periodic market available in all chiefdoms - Strong partners support in the district - Availability of labour (80% of the population are engaged in agriculture) - Community structure - Government support - Coordination mechanisms | <p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of improved seeds, leading to farmers getting low yields - Late supply of agricultural inputs to farmers/FBOs - Lack of technical skills and knowledge (many farmers lack the technical skills and knowledge to produce quality produce, leading to a lot of food waste) - Limited extension services due to human resources - Limited mechanisation due to high cost of machines / Lack of modern farm tools - Limited infrastructure, like ABCs - Lack of post-harvest management techniques (lots of food gets wasted, because some foods perish easily) - Market availability (due to lack of standard markets, many produce perish) - Lack of capital - Lack of labour (including due to rural-urban migration) - Drug abuse - Poor road network (in particular connection of production sites) - Food security risk (affordability, accessibility and utilization) |
| <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land availability - Favourable soil and weather conditions - Public private partnerships - Trainings from partners (including for farmers) - Improvement of farm tools/availability of machine equipment - Market linkages (including availability of periodic markets) - Availability of financial institutions, providing loans to farmers - Youth and women involvement in agriculture - Job creation (self-employed) - Availability of locally produced food - Government policies that favour increase in production (in particular Feed Salone initiative) - Support from NGOs | <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land disputes/conflicts - Climate change, including erratic weather conditions - Non-viability of seeds - Pest and disease outbreaks (in particular fall army worm) - Limited private sector involvement - Trade barriers - Poor road system - Closeness to the border - Low level of education - Pandemics and disease outbreaks - Drugs - Rural-urban migration - High incidence of theft |

3.2. Horizons for the visions of the desired future food systems in Kenema and Port Loko districts

Before starting the group work on the identification of the vision for the future, desired food system of the district, participants were asked to discuss and agree on the horizon (or timeline) to apply to their vision. Participants in both MSDs finally agreed on the year 2035, because it was considered that the ten-year period until 2035 was needed, given the magnitude of the challenges that will have to be addressed. A vision that would go beyond 10 years, participants considered to be too long, because they considered it would delay adequate action being taken. Therefore, the year 2035 was chosen, as a compromise between not too soon and not too far off.

3.3. Visions and narratives of the desired future food system of Kenema and Port Loko districts

During the first day of the two MSDs, participants discussed in 4 separate groups each the vision and narratives of the desired future food system in their respective district, which representatives from each group again presented to the plenary meeting. In the evening the facilitation team merged these 4 visions and narratives into one, joint vision and narrative for each district. At the beginning of the second day these merged visions and narratives were presented to the participants, and they were asked to verify and correct or complement it if needed. Following some adaptations and additions, the participants agreed on the following visions of the desired food system of Kenema and Port Loko districts in 2035.

Box 1: Kenema district joint vision and narrative of the desired food system in 2035

Vision: *By 2035, Kenema's food system is sustainable, with climate resilience and diverse, nutritious, and safe food chains, ensuring that the people are food and nutrition secured with balanced diets, based mostly on locally produced food.*

Narrative: In 2035, Kenema District will be largely self-sufficient for its nutritious food consumption. Households in Kenema will be aware of the importance of balance diets and all household members, including vulnerable women and children, will consume diverse foods, by eating very regularly from the 6 food groups. A significant part of the food on the market will be biofortified or fortified otherwise, particularly complementary foods. Foodstuffs are safe for consumption through hygienic practices, which is guaranteed by effective standards, testing and certification. All households will have access to safe water and improved sanitation.

Farmers and livestock holders will produce diverse agricultural products, through climate-smart agricultural practices. Farmers and livestock breeders will use improved technologies, including improved planting materials and improved breeds that produce higher yields. Fish farming is taking place year-round in IVS, facilitating better access to animal protein.

Food producers and processors in all chiefdoms will have access to, and the capacities to operate, inclusive, modern, gender-friendly agricultural tools, machinery and processing equipment, enabling high-quality food production with high added value and with less labour input. There will be important food processing industries in Kenema, which buy and process the agricultural products. Farmers will have good links to traders and processors, allowing

them to obtain a fair price for their products.

Kenema will have a significantly improved road network throughout the district, enabling adequate, low-cost transportation of agricultural products with appropriate means of transportation. Farmers will have access to clean energy, and they will have access to appropriate, specialised food storage facilities, which will reduce food waste and ensure supply and price stability. Financial institutions will be supporting farmers and other value chain actors, through loans with low interest rates.

Women, youth and disabled have been enabled to play a crucial role in the food chains

Box 2: Port Loko district joint vision and narrative of the desired food system in 2035

Vision: By 2035, Port Loko District has a resilient, largely self-sufficient, inclusive food system based on mechanisation, ag-tech, environmentally friendly agriculture, adequate post-harvest management, improved nutrition, infrastructure, strong policies and institutions, and active women, youth and private sector participation along the value chains.

Narrative: High quality agricultural inputs (including seeds) will be available on time through seed multipliers and agro-input dealers in all chiefdoms. Veterinary clinics will be available throughout the district. Farmers and livestock holder will have access to loans to invest in their production activities. Farmers will have the skills and knowledge on improved, climate-smart farming techniques, and they will be applying those skills and knowledge, allowing them to obtain better yields. Farmers will plant both productive and non-productive trees to reverse deforestation. Many farmers will have integrated fishponds in their IVS as an additional source of protein and a source of income. All viable IVS near communities in Port Loko will have been developed for effective irrigated crop cultivation. Irrigation from boreholes will be powered by solar systems for both vegetable and rice production on uplands and boli lands.

By 2035, farmers will use adequate farm machinery and ag-tech. There will be significantly less food wastage, through proper pre- and post-harvest handling, including proper storage. There will be a significantly improved road network, with feeder roads connecting production areas to markets. There will be adequate processing, storage and marketing of high-quality food products, including for export markets, through formal trade over roads with neighbouring countries. Women and youth will be fully involved along the various value chains.

Port Loko district will be largely food self-sufficient and thus significantly reduce its food imports. All schools in Port Loko district will be providing school feeding, with school meal ingredients produced and procured from the local communities, FBOs and school gardens. All foods for the police and the correctional centres in Port Loko will be grown by themselves and/or sourced from local producers, processors, traders, FBOs and cooperatives. All vulnerable persons in the district (especially the disabled) will have access to conditional social safety nets, through which they will be trained to develop their skills.

All communities in the district will be trained in the transformation of their local food system, and they will be fully involved in producing their own, diversified foods. The people will be

targeted by Social and Behavioural Change Communication on nutrition and hygiene to reduce malnutrition, minimize thefts and restore people's dignity. All people will benefit from access to safe drinking water and adequate latrines. All the people will be consuming balanced, nutritious, healthy, chemical residue free diets throughout the year, mostly based on diverse food products that they grow themselves, including in backyard gardens and community gardens. Children will eat three times a day, child malnutrition will have ended, and maternal deaths will be significantly reduced.

3.4. Pathways to realise the visions of the desired future food system of Kenema and Port Loko districts

The pathways that were identified and then presented by the four groups during the two MSD have also been merged into one, joint pathway for each district. This was done at a later stage by the co-facilitators when the reports of the two meetings were drafted.

The pathways of Kenema and Port Loko districts converged to a large extent in the issues that they identified. Both pathways focused on healthy diets, WASH, food diversification, access to inputs, mechanisation, sustainable, climate-smart agricultural practices, IVS development, aquaculture, post-harvest management, market linkages, processing, value addition, storage, roads, electricity, and access to finance. Notable differences between the two pathways were that Kenema's pathways also focused on (bio)fortification, whereas Port Loko's pathway focused more on veterinary services and borehole irrigation.

Although it was not discussed as part of the identification of the pathways (or the vision and pathways, in the discussions after the formal program of the MSDs, drug abuse (in particular 'kush') was discussed frequently. Reference is made to section 4.9 for more information on this.

Table 3: Joint pathway to realise the vision of the desired future food system of Kenema district

| No. | WHAT? (intervention) | HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE? | WHEN? (time period) | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? | LEVEL? |
|-----|---|--|------------------------|--|---|
| 1. | Provision of improved planting materials (seeds, seedlings, cutting, suckers etc) and livestock breeds to small farmers and companies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and development - Establishment of seed bank - Establishment of nurseries - Germination tests | 2026-2028 | SLARI, MAFS, Private Sector, Universities, INGO's/NGO's/CBO's, farmer organisations, agro-dealers | National (for policy oversight), district, chiefdom and community level |
| 2. | Soil Profiling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting soil test and research | 2026 - 2027 | MAFS, NGOs, SLARI, Eastern Technical University | National (for policy oversight), district, chiefdom and community level |
| 3. | Adoption of climate-smart and environment-friendly agricultural practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building of farmers and other stakeholders on climate smart agricultural practices - Environmental impact assessments - Afforestation and reforestation of degraded and mining sites (ref EU deforestation regulations) - Keeping farmers informed on weather information, including early warnings - Capacity building of farmers and other stakeholders on weather patterns - Planting of Economic | 2026-2035 | MAFS, SLARI, Ministry of Environment, Meteorological Agency EPA, AVDP, FSRP, WFP, WHH, JICA, IFAD, Kenema District Council, universities, private sector, NAFFSL | National (for policy oversight), district and chiefdom level |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|---|-------------|---|---|
| | | trees (e.g. Orange, Mango, Plantain, Avocado) | | | |
| 4. | Development and rehabilitation of IVS with irrigation facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of irrigation - Training of farmers on IVS development and water conservation | 2026 - 2027 | MAFS, SLARI, NGOs | National (for policy oversight), district, chiefdom and community level |
| 5. | Mechanisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of inclusive and gender friendly agricultural equipment (e.g. power tillers, planters, combine harvesters, threshers, winnowers, rice haulers with destoning) | 2026-2028 | MAFS, AVDP, SCADeP, MoF, FAO, WFP and Private Sector | National (for policy oversight), district and chiefdom level |
| 6. | Road infrastructure and transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction and rehabilitation of feeder roads, connecting farms to bigger roads with community involvement - Construction and rehabilitation of trunk roads connecting rural communities (where most foods are grown) with markets, with community involvement | 2026-2035 | RMFA, SCADeP, SLRA, MAFS, AVDP, Kenema District Council, International Organizations (EU, AfDB, Islamic Development Bank, World Bank), INGOS, communities | National (for policy oversight), district, chiefdom and community level |
| 7. | Promoting agricultural input supply, processing, and marketing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of inclusive, gender friendly, specialised stores for farming groups (cooperatives, private sector,) - Development of agro-based industries, and marketing centers (including capacity building on packaging and labelling, | 2026-2032 | MAFS, International Organisations (EU, AfDB, Islamic Bank, World Bank), INGOS, Kenema District Council, communities | District |

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|--------------|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - food safety, and HACCP principles) - Encourage processing industry, promote | | | |
| 8. | Improved value chains for food crops and cash crops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide support to farmers and private sector through training and inputs - Introduction of agro-tech - Innovative post-harvest practices to increase the shelf-life of perishable produce - Promotion of dry floors | 2026-2035 | MAFS, SLARI, Local Government, Private Sector, INGO's, NNGO's, CBO's, and Universities & Agencies. | District |
| 9. | Food diversification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of cultivation of diverse food crops and rearing of farm animals, and related processing and marketing. | 2026 to 2035 | MAFS, KDC, private sector, MoHS/DFN, farmers | District, chiefdoms and major communities levels |
| 10. | Sustainable energy supply | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The government is to engage development partners to provide uninterrupted clean energy. - The government is to encourage development partners and research institutions to provide alternative energy sources | 2026 to 2027 | Ministry of Energy, private sector, MCC Energy compact. | District and chiefdom level |
| 11. | Construction and maintenance of modern storage facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of improved, inclusive, gender-friendly storage facilities (including solar systems, cooling systems, standby generators | 2026-2028 | MAFS,-IFAD/AVDP, SCADeP, MoF, FAO, WFP, NGOs, Kenema District Council, CBOs, FBOs, Private Sector, FSRP | National (for policy oversight), district and chiefdom level |
| 12. | Provide access to finance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The government is to revamp FSA and the community banks for them to provide agricultural | 2026-2030 | Ministry of Finance, Bank of Sierra Leone, APEX bank, MAFS, IFAD/AVDP | National (for policy oversight), |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|-----------|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> loans with low interest rate. - Provision of government grants | | microfinance providers, private sector, Kenema District Council | district and chiefdom level |
| 13. | Raising awareness on food diversification, food safety and balanced diets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of vulnerable communities with high rates of malnutrition - Sensitisation (community engagement, house to house sensitisation, theatres, radio jingles and discussions, flyers, training of champions etc.) - Community cooking demonstrations - Promote backyard gardens | 2026-2035 | MoHS/DFN & DHMT, MAFS, Standard Bureau, Agencies, Universities, UNICEF, WFP, (I)NGO's (e.g. WHH and other implementing nutrition related interventions), CBO's, SLARI, Kenema District Council, and private sector, community champions, Mother Support Groups, Community Health Workers. | National (for policy oversight), district and chiefdom level |
| 14. | Introduction and enforcement of legislation and regulations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National and Local Laws, on food production and safety - Laws and regulations on the introduction of planting materials and tools used within the value chain | 2027-2030 | MAFS, Kenema District Council | National/District |
| 15. (Based on plenary discussions) | Social Safety Nets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conditional social safety nets (not totally free) for the people of Kenema district (For instance, youths and women to brush or sweep the streets for a designated fee.) This will serve as a job and also improve the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable people in the district | 2026-2035 | NaCSA, KDC | National/district |
| 16. (Based on plenary | School gardens/farms (IVS rice, fish, and vegetable, and poultry). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School gardens/farms to be established in every school across the district | 2026-2035 | MBSSE, MAFS, KDC | National/district |

| | | | | | |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| discussions) | | which ensures a sustainable source of rice, animal protein, and fresh vegetables, that are directly integrated into the daily school meals that enriches the pupils' diets. (This will also help reduce dependency on external food supplies.) The combination of gardening experience and structured nutrition education will encourage pupils to make informed food choices even for their families at home. | | | |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

Table 4: Joint pathway to realise the vision of the desired future food system of Port Loko district

| No. | WHAT? (intervention) | HOW SHOULD IT BE DONE? | WHEN? (time period) | WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? | LEVEL? |
|-----|---|---|------------------------|---|---|
| 1. | Increase access to agricultural inputs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase number of agro-dealers - increase certified seed companies - | 2026-2035 | private sector, Councils (District and City) farmers, MAFS (NaFF-SL) CSOs, Health and Water Resources | District, Chiefdom, Community |
| 2. | Enhance farm mechanisation by increasing accessibility and affordability of agricultural machines and equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction, procurement and hiring of modern farming equipment (tractors, tillers, threshers) and locally manufactured tools and machines - Establish mechanisation centers at chiefdom level - Train local youth and others as machine operators and technicians | 2026-2035 | MAFS, NGOs, Local Councils, Youth Groups, and Private Sector (in particular Agro-businesses) | National, District, Chiefdom, Community |
| 3. | Increase irrigation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of irrigation engineers - Construct irrigation systems for year-round farming (including irrigation dams and boreholes) - Develop IVS and crop growing ecologies | 2026-2033 | MAFS/PLDC, private sector, NGOs | District, Chiefdom, Community |
| 4. | Improve agricultural infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use public-private partnership (PPP) model - Engage local communities in maintenance - Integrate climate-resilient infrastructure | 2025–2033 | Local Councils, Ministry of Works, Donors, Chiefdom Authorities | At all levels |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|-----------|---|-------------------------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build and rehabilitate storage facilities and drying floors - Construction/maintenance of feeder roads and other rural roads | | | |
| 5. | Improve animal treatment and vaccination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase number of veterinary officers and provision of stipends to them - Availability of veterinary clinics across Port Loko district - Increase awareness raising programs on the presence of veterinary clinics - Procurement of assorted drugs and equipment | 2026-2035 | MAFS, FAO, NGOs, private sector, district council, local councils | At all levels |
| 6. (Based on plenary discussions) | Promotion of fishponds in all chiefdoms | | | | |
| 7. (Based on plenary discussions) | Enhancing afforestation and reforestation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Among others promote trees that can be harvested after only 3 years | | | |
| 8. | Improve Post harvest and value addition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of value chain actors - Increase post-harvest and | 2026-2034 | MAFS/PLDC, Ministry of trade and industry, private sector, NGOs | District, Chiefdom, Community |

| | | | | | |
|-----|--|--|------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| | | value addition facilities, including through establishment of agro-business centers by identifying clusters communities, e.g around periodic markets) | | | |
| 9. | Installation of solar power | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of beneficiaries (communities) with high production potentials - Identification of service providers | Sep. to December, 2028 | MAFS, development partners, private sector, NGOs and ministry of Water Resource and local council | Community and chiefdom levels |
| 10. | Increase access to finance, in particular for youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase community banks - Provide soft loans for farmers with minimal interest - Partner with financial institutions and training centers - Provide startup grants or revolving funds for youth - Showcase youth success stories to inspire others - Introduction of VSLAs | 2026-2035 | MoHS, MAFS, NGOs, youth-led CBOs/FBOs, Women's Groups, Schools clubs, private sector, community members | At all levels |
| 11. | Improve knowledge and skills of farmers (in particular youth and women) and other value chain actors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the number of block extension officers - Support block extension officers with their mobility - Access to and effective use of modern farming techniques by farmers, including on the appropriate fertiliser to use - Conduct skills training and start up kits for youth and women | 2026-2033 | MAFS, Ministry of Youth, NGOs, private sector | At all levels |

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|-------------|---|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building of value chain actors | | | |
| 12. | Weather forecast affections for information sharing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Send text messages through community radio station | 2026 - 2035 | Metrological department, EPA, Ministry of environment, MAFS NDMA and Ministry of information | At community, chiefdom and district levels |
| 13. | Awareness raising on healthy diets and nutrition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio talk show, focus group discussion, face to face engagements at community level - Collaborate with health facilities and schools. - Engage community health workers and conduct awareness campaign on the importance of balanced diets. - Increase vegetable production - Improve access to protein rich foods | 2026-2035 | MoHS, MAFS, NGOs, youth-led CBOs/FBOs, Women's Groups, Schools clubs, community stakeholders and members | At all levels |
| 14. | Policy advocacy and governance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With stakeholders at district level through engagement - Preparation of budget and reading out development partners - Hold policy dialogues with authorities - Draft and validate district policy framework - Set up monitoring committees | 2026-2035 | MoHS, MAFS, WFP, FAO, UNICEF, Sunsec, NGOs, District council, city council, civil society, traditional leaders, community stakeholders, and farmers | At all levels |
| 15. | Resources mobilization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare concept notes, one-to-one interface with duty bearers | 2027-2028 | Councils (District and City) farmers, MAFS (NaFF-SL) | At all levels |

| | | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--------------|---|--------------------------------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Letters to key ministries, parastatals, stakeholders to private sectors - Meeting on update of resources mobilization with all partners at district level. - Tasks be assigned to selected members | | CSOs, Health and Water Resources | |
| 16. | Monitoring, supervision, feedbacks and reports writing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With all partners at chiefdom level through field visitation. - With all partners through digital (video, audio and pictorial evidence) means and sharing of reports to partners | 2029-2035 | Councils (District and City) farmers, MAFS (NaFF-SL) CSOs, Health and Water Resources | At district and chiefdom level |
| 17. | Sustainability of the implemented project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select five members in each chiefdom as FMC. Community Animators and train them on repairs and maintenance. | 2035 onwards | Facility Management Committee (F.M.C), Community Animators | Chiefdom Level |

4. Food systems policy, investments and coordination framework

This chapter describes the main elements of the food systems related policy, investments and coordination framework, based on information gathered through Expert Interviews and desk review.

4.1. Feed Salone strategy

The Feed Salone strategy⁹ is one of the five government flagship initiatives that were identified after the re-election of President Julius Maada Bio in 2023. Feed Salone is identified in the Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) as the most important among the 'Big Five Game Changers'. The strategy is organised around five objectives and six pillars as presented below.

Box 3: Objectives and pillars of the Feed Salone Strategy (Source: MAFS, 2023)

Objectives:

- i. Reducing the import bill for staples to address rising import bills.
- ii. Generating higher earnings from export commodities to address dwindling foreign exchange earnings.
- iii. Creating jobs in the agriculture sector.
- iv. Reducing the high rates of hunger and malnutrition.
- v. Significantly boosting climate resilience.

Pillars:

Pillar 1: Mechanization and Irrigation

Pillar 2: Seeds and Inputs System

Pillar 3: Aggregation, Processing and Marketing

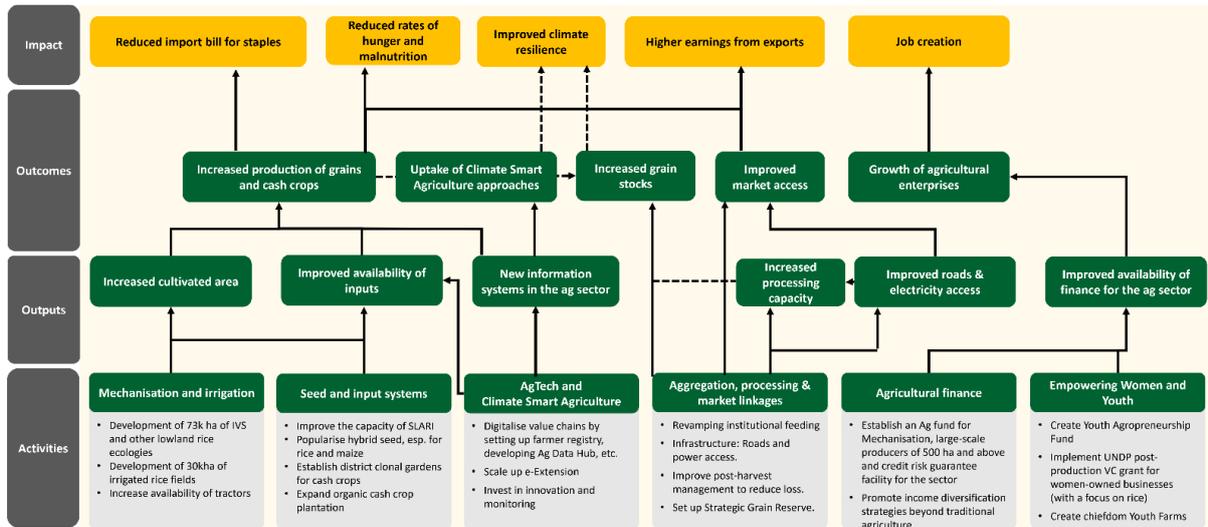
Pillar 4: Access to Finance

Pillar 5: Agricultural Technology (AgTech) and Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)

Pillar 6: Empowering Women and Youth

⁹ See <https://feedsalone.gov.sl/>

Figure 2: Feed Salone Theory of Change (Source: MAFS, 2023)



Initially it seemed that the first objective of reducing food imports, and notably rice, was the most important objective and motivation for the development of the Feed Salone strategy as a very prominent government flagship program. However, lately the fourth objective that focuses on reducing hunger and malnutrition seems to be gaining in prominence, with references by the President and other political leaders to the need to not just ‘feed Salone’ but also to ‘nourish Salone’.

The feed Salone strategy has been successful in attracting international donor attention and funding, with a number of new or pending funding commitments. The government has also directed a significant part of its own resources to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) for the implementation of the Feed Salone strategy. Existing big international donor projects and programmes such as the Food Systems Resilience Project (FSRP) financed by the World Bank (WB) and the Agricultural Value Chains Development Project (AVDP) financed by IFAD, started before the development of the Feed Salone strategy, but were realigned to fit with the strategy. These two projects have a very wide geographical scope, with activities being implemented in practically all districts. Nevertheless, it seems to be the perception in MAFS itself that the main implementation of Feed Salone strategy is conducted through the Sierra Leone Rice Agro-Industrial Cluster project (SL-RAIC)¹⁰, funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB), which focuses on rice production and processing in a few targeted areas (Torma Bum in Bonthe District and Gbondapi in Pujehun District) (Freetown Daily, 2025) with particularly favourable conditions for rice farming. The similar Sierra Leone Rice Special Agro-Processing Zone (SAPZ) project¹¹, also financed by AfDB, has started more recently and is focusing on Port Loko and Kambia districts (AfDB, 2025).

4.2. Strategy for the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sectors in Sierra Leone

This strategy by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) corresponds to the

¹⁰ <https://mapafrica.afdb.org/en/projects/46002-P-SL-AA0-021>

¹¹ <https://www.afdb.org/fr/documents/sierra-leone-sierra-leone-rice-special-agro-industrial-processing-zone-sleraz-project-p-sl-aa0-026>

second element of the Feed Salone Big Game Changer as it is identified in the MTNDP (GoSL, 2024). The vision and mission of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sectors strategy are included in the box below, and the strategic framework in the figure below.

Box 4: Vision and mission of the Strategy for the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sectors in Sierra Leone (Source: MFMR, 2025)

Vision:

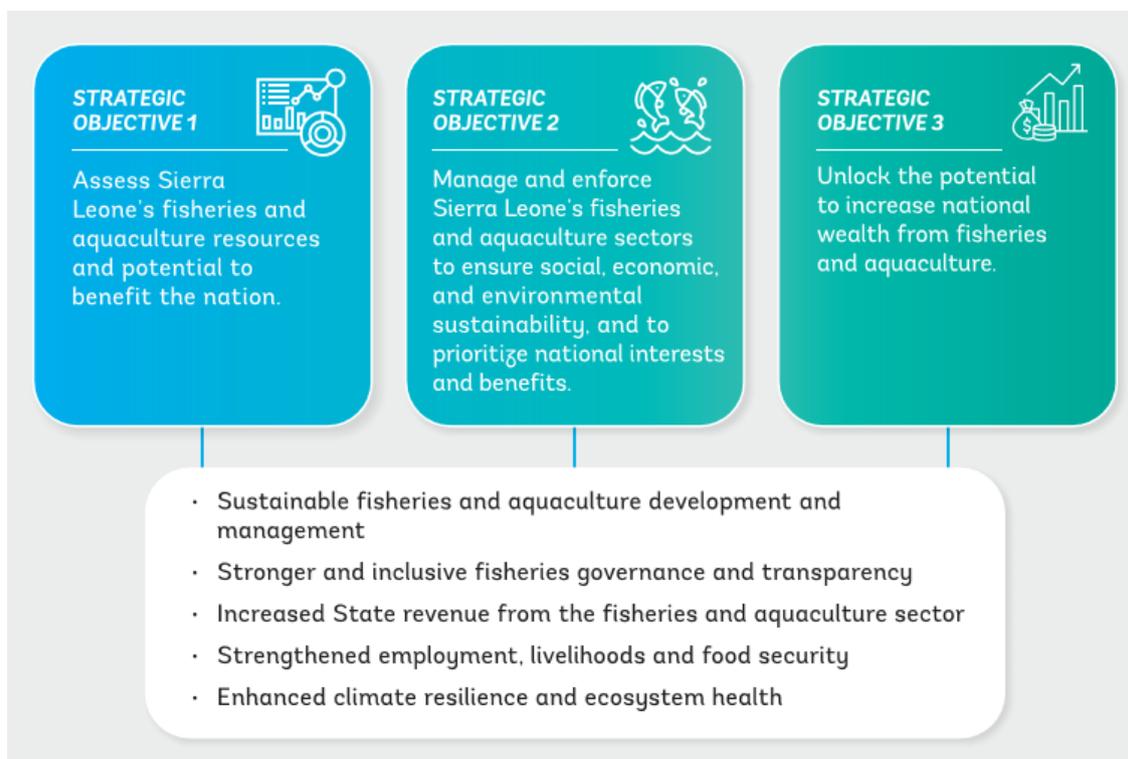
By 2035, Sierra Leone will be a regional leader in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, setting a benchmark for ecological stewardship, economic efficiency, and innovation while promoting a prosperous blue economy that directly benefits the people of Sierra Leone through sustainable livelihoods, food security, and inclusive economic growth.

Mission:

In support of the Vision, this Strategy has identified the following national priorities for the fisheries and aquaculture sector between 2025 and 2035:

- Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development and management
- Stronger and more inclusive fisheries governance and transparency
- Increased state revenue from the fisheries and aquaculture sector
- Strengthened employment, livelihoods, and food security
- Enhanced climate resilience and ecosystem health.

Figure 3: Strategic framework for Sierra Leone’s fisheries sector (Source: MFMR, 2025)



Similarly to the Feed Salone strategy of MAFS, the strategy of MFMR also has dual objectives on increasing the macro-economic contribution of the sector on the one side, and increasing the contribution to livelihoods and food security on the other side. In terms of fresh water aquaculture development, the main activities identified in the Strategy for the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sectors, are shown in the table below.

Table 5: Activities focused directly on freshwater aquaculture in the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sectors strategy (Source: MFMR, 2025)

| Activity | Description |
|----------|--|
| 1.5* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate Sierra Leone’s aquaculture potential based on an assessment of: (i) biogeographical suitability, current capacity, and future training needs; (ii) its existing legislative, institutional, and investment environments, (iii) infrastructure requirements; and (iv) alignment with national objectives, including improved food and nutrition security outcomes. • Conduct a gap analysis relative to the Feed Salone strategy and aquaculture scenarios, including subsistence production (based on nutritional value), supplementary aquaculture production, and commercial production for domestic and export markets. |
| 3.2* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with fisheries stakeholders to identify the critical infrastructure needed to unlock the potential of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. For the aquaculture sector, build on findings from Activity 1.5. |
| 3.11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and finance an infrastructure development program linked to national priorities for the aquaculture sector. This activity should build on Activity 1.5 and Activity 3.8. |

*Priority or first phase activities

The majority of the activities are mostly aimed at marine fisheries and marine aquaculture. Aquaculture, including freshwater aquaculture falls under the competence of MFMR. It is noted in the MTNDP (GoSL, 2024) that there are not sufficient extension workers to enhance proper fishpond management and fish farming. This constraint is also mentioned (among others) in a WorldFish publication from 2018 (Sankoh et al, 2018).

4.3. Nutrition policy framework

Nutrition is the primary responsibility of the Ministry of Health (MoH) among the ministries. The main policy framework in terms of nutrition is the Multi-Sector Strategic Plan to Reduce Malnutrition in Sierra Leone (MSSPRM) or National Food and Nutrition Security Strategic Implementation Plan (NFNSIP) 2019-2025, which was developed with overall guidance by the SUN secretariat within the the Office of the Vice-President (OVP)¹². The SUN secretariat evolved later into the Scaling Up Nutrition and Food Systems Coordination Unit (SUNFS-CU)

¹² A Technical Working Group provided technical guidance. Among others, the process was supported notably by REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition) through the United Nations Network (UNN) and Irish Aid.

and is responsible for coordination between the different ministries in the fields of nutrition and food systems. As mentioned already in the phase 2 report, the MSPRM or National Food and Nutrition Security Strategic Implementation Plan (NFNSIP) includes ‘nutrition-sensitive’ interventions in which MAFS, MWRS¹³, MBSSE and MoSW¹⁴ need to be involved. It also includes interventions to ensure ‘functional multisectoral platforms at community level’¹⁵. The box below shows the goal, objectives and intermediate result of the plan.

Box 5: MSSPRM/NFNSIP goal, objectives and intermediate result

| |
|---|
| <p>Goal</p> <p>To contribute to the African Union’s Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (2015-2025), the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and the UN Global Strategy for Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (2016-2030) by accelerating and scaling-up nutrition action across all sectors in Sierra Leone</p> <p>Objectives & Intermediate Result</p> <p>Strategic Objective SO1: By 2025, to reduce the prevalence of stunted children under 5 years of age (U5C) to 25% from 2017/18 baseline levels.</p> <p>Strategic Objective SO2: By 2025, to reduce the prevalence of wasting among children under 5 years of age (U5C) to less than 5% from 2017/18 baseline levels.</p> <p>Strategic Objective SO3: By 2025, to reduce by 20% the prevalence of iodine and vitamin A deficiencies in U5C, adolescents, PLW25 & WRA from 2017/18 baseline levels.</p> <p>Intermediate Result²⁶: To create an enabling environment for central and district multi-sectoral coordination, promotion and action</p> |
|---|

The implementation of the plan is monitored through a Results Monitoring & Evaluation Framework (RMEF). And the indicators from this framework are also tracked online through the Nutrition Information Management System (NIMS) that was launched in 2025 by the SUNFS-CU. Although clearly identified in Sierra Leone’s Medium-Term National Development Plan, it is less perceived to be part of Big Game Changer 1 Feed Salone than the Feed Salone strategy of MAFS.

The contents of the MSSPRM/NFNSIP 2019-2025 seem to correspond closely with the contents of the third element of the Feed Salone Big Game Changer as it is identified in the MTNDP (GoSL, 2024). However, it seems that in the general perception MSSPRM/NFNSIP is not part of the Feed Salone initiative, probably also because the document was already developed before the start of the second term of President Julius Maada Bio. As the MSSPRM/NFNSIP 2019-2025 has expired since the start of 2026, SUN&FSCU and MoH are

¹³ In particular SD3: Improve household food security especially of households with multiple overlapping factors influencing their food security status

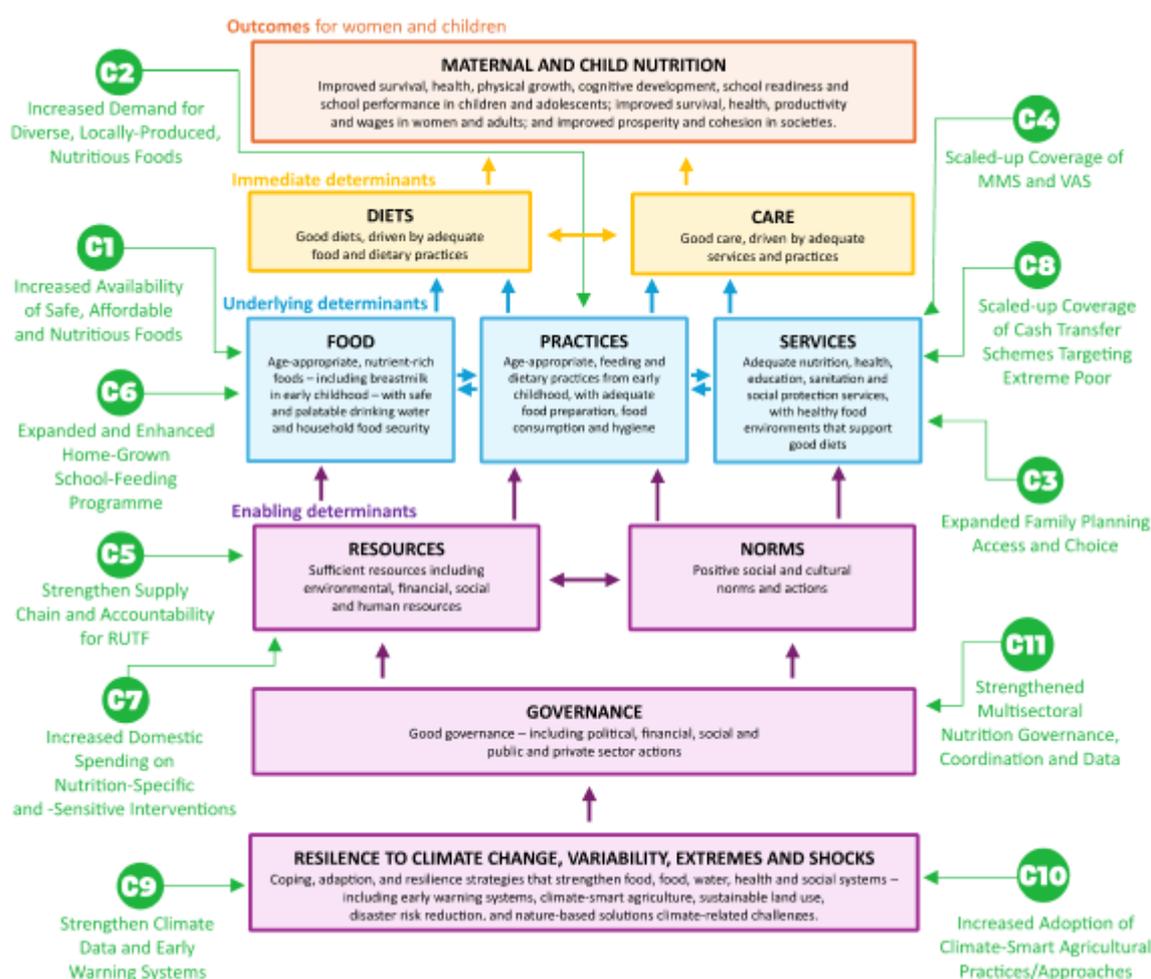
¹⁴ In particular SD 4: Rapidly increase access to adequate nutrition among target groups by leveraging existing efficient education and social sector service delivery platforms

¹⁵ Key Action 3.4.1

planning to develop a new version of the document.

In 2025 the government also adopted the National Nutrition Commitments Framework 2025-2030, which consolidates the commitments that Sierra Leone made during the Nutrition for Growth summit in Paris in March 2025. The figure below shows in green the National Nutrition Commitments (NNCs), and their link to the conceptual framework on maternal and child nutrition.

Figure 4: Sierra Leone’s NNCs and their primary entry and impact point on a Conceptual Framework on Maternal and Child Nutrition (Source: GoSL, 2025)



A food consumption and micronutrients survey had been planned in 2025 by SLARI, with support from IITA, and supported by a number of other organisations, including MAFS, MoH, SUN&FSCU and UNICEF. However, only preliminary preparatory activities have been conducted so far. The main survey is on hold pending the required funds having been raised.

Another import policy development in the field of nutrition is that in 2025 a joint Ministry of Finance–SUN & FSCU directive was adopted, requiring Ministries, Departments & Agencies (MDAs) to tag nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive investments, starting with their fiscal year 2026 budgets. (SUN&FS-CU, 2026)

4.4. School feeding policy framework

The school feeding policy framework exists of the National School Feeding Policy framework¹⁶ from 2021, and the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan 2022 - 2026¹⁷. Both documents date from before elections in 2023, and are therefore probably not completely up to date anymore. The Education Sector Plan 2022 – 2026 refers to school feeding under Outcome 3.2: ‘Targeted support provided to vulnerable and struggling learners’, with a priority activity to ‘provide school meals to all pre-primary and primary students in vulnerable communities’ (MBSSE, 2022). SASI-SPI’s phase 2 report provides already a detailed description of the realities of Sierra Leone’s school feeding policies in its sections 5.3.6 and 5.7.1.

A recent initiative not yet covered is the daily provision of one locally produced egg to children aged 3 to 6 years, as part of the school feeding efforts of MBSSE, and in collaboration with MAFS. The initiative was approved by the cabinet on 15 May 2025 and is also considered to be part of the ‘broader Feed Salone agenda’. The program’s dual objectives are to improve children’s health, and to stimulate local egg production. (Daily Scope, 2025)

There are also plans to procure more domestically produced products for institutional purchasing, like for the police, the army, and correctional facilities.

As will be discussed in sub-section 3.10.6, a variable tranche of the EU’s budget support is also linked to school feeding.

4.5. Food systems policy framework

Sierra Leone’s food system policy framework consists mainly of the food system transition pathways that were identified in 2021 in the context of the first UN Food Systems Summit in 2021. Different versions of the Sierra Leone’s pathways document (FSS-TWG, 2021a and b) identified 17 or 18 pathways, but in the pre-recorded statement by President Julius Maada Bio (GoSL, 2021), only 8 prioritised pathways were mentioned. These eight pathways are shown in the box below.

Box 6: Food system transition pathways of Sierra Leone (Source: GoSL, 2021)

1. Increase agricultural productivity using climate smart agricultural approaches, especially among the rural smallholders who constitute the poorest segment of society. This includes a variety of support measures on the agricultural value chain, from pre-planting to marketing;
2. Establish private sector supply chains for inputs such as fertilizers, integrated pest management and high yielding seed varieties, irrigation facilities and the enhancement of agro-processing marketing and distribution points;
3. Promote commercial agriculture through private sector participation by creating an enabling environment that is attractive for private sector investment;

¹⁶ https://mbsse.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/National-School-Feeding-Policy_May2021.pdf

¹⁷ <https://mbsse.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Sierra-Leone-Education-Sector-Plan-2022-2026.pdf>

4. Improve access to rural credit through the establishment of community banks and financial services associations to support rural farmers;
5. Improve agricultural research and extension delivery systems backed up by a social National Agricultural Research and Extension policies, including strategies and programs;
6. Effectively manage Sierra Leone's fishery and marine resources. This will involve specific focus on providing adequate surveillance capabilities, facilitating the lifting of the ban on fish exports to EU markets, improving the infrastructure and support services for commercial fishing, and, providing adequate extension support for artisanal fishermen.
7. Manage Sierra Leone's forestry resources to enhance water cycle regulation and environmental protection.
8. Restructure and strengthen the capacity of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Secretariat in the Presidency to ensure multi-sectoral coordination of the food systems and the implementation of the Action Plan.

In 2024 a relevant study¹⁸ was conducted by the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition with funding from the Irish government, with Sierra Leone as one of the three target countries. In Sierra Leone the study was executed in collaboration with the Presidential Initiative on Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Food Security (PI-CREF). One of the study's recommendations that is being implemented by PI-CREF is the development of a climate smart and nutrition smart investment plan.

It should also be noted that Sierra Leone is a member of the Alliance of Champions for Food System Transformation (ACF)¹⁹, which was launched during the COP28 summit in Dubai in 2023. In addition, Sierra Leone is a member of the Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All (HDSFS)²⁰, which was set-up in the framework of the UNFSS summits.

4.6. Food systems coordination framework

The presidential council on agriculture is considered to be the main policy coordination framework in Sierra Leone in the domain of food systems. Among others it guides the implementation of the Feed Salone strategy (MAFS, 2026a). Therefore, it is also often referred to as the Presidential Council on Feed Salone. Not only representatives from different government entities participate in this council, also relevant representatives from the (indigenous) private sector and NGOs are invited. (State House, 2025) In fact the presidential council exists at the political level and at a technical level. The meetings at the political level are first prepared at the technical level. A number of other committees also feed into presidential council on agriculture/Feed Salone, including the National Food and Nutrition

¹⁸Building resilience and enhancing nutrition in Africa's food systems' https://www.glopan.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/ResilienceReport_WebVersion.pdf

¹⁹ <https://allianceofchampions.org/>

²⁰ <https://www.unnutrition.org/coalition-action-healthy-diets-sustainable-food-systems-children-and-all-hdsfs>

Security / SUN Inter Ministerial Steering Committee (chaired by the Vice President). MAFS holds the secretariat of the council, which meets quarterly, and sometimes ad hoc. SUNFSCU, supported by GIZ/Capacity for Nutrition (C4N), is preparing a food systems coordination strategy, which includes proposals to reorganise the food systems related coordination framework.

In addition to the 'policy' coordination framework as described above, there is the 'activity' coordination framework, which was already described in the phase 2 report of SASI-SPI in Sierra Leone. It is useful to recall though that there are two 'activity' coordination platforms: the Food Security Working Group managed by MAFS, with support from FAO, and the SUN coordination platform managed by SUN&FSCU, which is linked to the National Food and Nutrition Security Steering Committee and Technical Committee. Both platforms ensure coordination notably between the government and NGOs (both national and international NGOs). At the district level there are also Food and Nutrition Security Committees. However, many of these district level committees depend on donor funding for their functioning and therefore are not always very operational.

It should also be noted that PI-CREF is developing a Community of Practice on climate smart and nutrition sensitive agriculture, in order to allow various actors to share best practices. However, this is considered not to be a coordination effort as such, and therefore not in duplication of other coordination efforts. The setting up of this Community of Practice is the operationalisation of a recommendation that was provided by the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (GloPAN) as part of its 'Building resilience and enhancing nutrition in Africa's food systems' project²¹, financed by Irish Aid.

4.7. Decentralisation

Sierra Leone's decentralisation policy dates from 2010²², with a fiscal decentralisation policy and strategy by the Ministry of Finance dating from 2025. According to the website of the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs (MLGCA), the aim of the decentralisation policy is 'to make public services more equitable and inclusive across the country'. It also states that 'this policy devolves responsibility for many government functions to the Local Council level'. (MLGCA, 2025) However, it seems that the implementation of this policy is still incomplete. Sector ministries like MAFS and MoH retain control over their district level offices. Parts of project related financing, which often forms the majority of the funds available, are still managed centrally by the line ministries, while leaving little space for the district councils to influence the process. The line ministries sometimes issue detailed instructions to their district level offices on how the project related funding needs to be implemented. Among other obstacles, the issue of central line ministries retaining control over local expenditure, is described in detail in a WB report of 2014, and makes a direct link to poor local service delivery. Probably significant progress has been made since 2014, and the fiscal decentralisation policy and strategy from 2025 will probably address part of the remaining obstacles.

²¹ For more info on this project see: <https://www.glopan.org/brief/africaresilience/>

²² The Hill Valley Declaration from 2013 is also an important policy document in the area of decentralisation (WB, 2014)

4.8. Trade

International trade policies with relation to rice imports were already discussed in the phase 2 report in section 5.6.2 on policy coherence.

4.9. Drug addiction

Drug addiction didn't feature directly in the discussions during the MSDs on the vision of the desired, future food systems and the pathways to reach there. However, in the SWOT analyses of the current food systems conducted in both Kenema and Port Loko districts, drug addiction was mentioned as a threat. Also, in the discussions on the sidelines of the MSDs, drug abuse of in particular 'kush' was frequently mentioned. Addiction to kush of mostly young people was considered a threat to them being able and willing to work in agriculture. In addition, addicted people are expected to be less likely to follow behavioural change advice on healthy diets. And a longer-term impact for the food system may be that young people are less likely to start families and have children. The issue was also discussed in the phase two report in section 5.1.7 on demographic drivers.

4.10. EU bilateral support

4.10.1. Value chains

An important part of the EU's current bilateral support in the agricultural sector in line with MAFS' Feed Salone strategy, and in particular its pillar 3 on aggregation, processing and marketing, are its interventions in support of value chain development in 4 key value chains:

- Infant food
- Palm oil
- Cassava
- Cocoa

Contracts have been signed with 3 different organisations for the implementation of projects in the infant food, palm oil and cassava value chains. TVET activities are integrated in these projects. The cocoa sector was added only later, and therefore intervention in this value chain is still under preparation. In the subsection below the envisaged interventions in the 4 value chains are discussed in more detail.

Infant food

The four-year project on the infant food value chain is being implemented by WFP and is called: Strengthened Agricultural Value-chain through Infant Nutrition for Growth (SAVING). A contract was signed end of 2025 and implementation has started at the beginning of 2026. A central output of the project is to construct and equip a medium-sized complementary (weaning) food processing facility in Makeni, Bombali district, and upgrade four existing production centres in Kambia, Moyamba and Pujehun districts. (WFP, 2025) These complementary food production centres produce 'Nyam Nyam Pap', a weaning food company that was set up earlier by WFP, with support from the French government. The different production centres operate as independent franchises.

Under output 1.4 'WFP will provide a month's supply (3Kg) of Nyam Nyam Pap on referral through Peripheral Health Units (PHUs), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health' in order to improve the nutritional status of children at-risk of malnutrition. Under the same output, WFP will also 'assist pre-schools with a termly cash transfer, which can be used to procure Nyam Nyam Pap for the youngest children for whom it is difficult to eat large quantities of rice and beans' in order to meet the nutritional needs of pre-school children and create a guaranteed market for the Nyam Nyam Pap. (WFP, 2025)

The total number of direct beneficiaries is estimated at 25,465²³. From the perspective of wider benefits of the project, outputs 1.6, 2.5 and 3.3 seem to be the most relevant. However, the number of indirect beneficiaries of output 3.3 to 'conduct a mass media campaign to promote age-appropriate infant feeding' is not identified and there is no impact/outcome indicator that will measure the effectiveness/impact of this activity.

The sustainability of the production centres after the project comes to an end seems a crucial point, even though the sustainability of the project is well explained in the relevant section of the project document

Palm oil

The three or four-year project on the palm oil value chain is being implemented by MAFS with FAO support and is called: Oil Palm Value Chains Improvement Project. A contract was signed end of 2025 and it will be implemented between the 1st of November 2025 and the 1st of November 2028. The target districts will be four major oil palm producing districts: Kenema, Port Loko, Pujehun and Bonthe. (FAO, 2025b) The table below provides a summary of the results framework of the project.

Table 6: Summary of results framework of the Oil Palm Value Chains Improvement Project (Source: FAO, 2025b)

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Impact | To strengthen sustainable and climate resilient agri-food systems in Sierra Leone. |
| Outcome 1 | Improve sustainability, efficiency and inclusivity of oil palm value chains using climate smart approaches to production while facilitating decent green job creation |
| Output 1.1 | Sustaining oil palm plantation by replacing over-aged oil palm trees with improved climate resilient seedlings |
| Output 1.2 | Enhanced adoption of climate resilient agronomic practices through the supply of inputs, research and extension support services. |
| Output 1.3 | Enhanced capacity and skills of the youth for green jobs in farm <i>management</i> for increased farm productivity |
| Output 1.4 | International collaboration for climate change adaptation |
| Outcome 2 | Enhanced capacity of farmer based institutions including FBOs, ABCs, Cooperatives and Associations for value chain development, |

²³ 8,455 women, 3,144 men, 7,205 girls and 6,651 boys.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| | including the promotion of climate resilient practices, aggregation, standards, testing and certification and market linkages |
| Output 2.1 | Improved Capacity of Industry Associations |
| Output 2.2 | Enhanced capacity and skills of the youth for green jobs in oil palm processing for improved quality and higher yields |
| Output 2.3 | Increased product certification opportunities for skills required to engage in value chain upgrading |
| Output 2.4 | Improving Traceability and standards in the Oil Palm Value chain |
| Outcome 3 | Promoting Nutrition and food security through diversification of locally produced agricultural products |
| Output 3.1 | Dietary diversification and fortification |
| Output 3.2 | School community Feeding menu diversified |
| Output 3.3: | Public Awareness and Policy Support |

Whereas attention for nutrition is important, the activities under Outcome 3 seem to go a bit far for a palm oil value chain project. It is not clearly described that the project will collaborate with MoH for the implementation of these activities.

Cassava

The four-year project on the cassava value chain is being implemented by GIZ with co-financing from BMZ and is called: Sustainable Food and Agricultural Value Chains Development in Sierra Leone. A contract was signed end of 2025 and it will be implemented from the beginning of 2026 until the end of 2029. Part of the project will be country wide, but there will be specific focus on Bo and Bombali districts and additional target districts will be identified during the first year, based on the potential for cassava cultivation. The results framework of the project is identical to the results framework of the EU's overall intervention framework in the three value chains. So even though it mentions also palm oil and infant food, the project will only focus on the cassava value chain. And the other major component of the project focus on TVET, not limited to the cassava value chain, but rather aimed at the agricultural sector as a whole. (GIZ, 2025)

The project document mentions cassava as an alternative ingredient for yellow-fleshed sweet potato²⁴. And it mentions that intercropping with legumes for infant food, and oil palm will be promoted. Activities under output 1.5 will focus on the nutritional value and benefits of cassava, which is indicated to 'go beyond the use of cassava as an ingredient in infant food, but rather focus on a more balanced diet, including leafy vegetables (cassava leaves), and substituting rice more often with cassava products such as gari. The project document doesn't mention (bio-)fortification of cassava, nor yellow-fleshed cassava. (GIZ, 2025)

²⁴ Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP) and yellow fleshed cassava are bio-fortified with provitamin A. Possibly, the document meant to refer to replacing OFSP.

Cocoa

The cocoa value chain was identified at a later stage as an additional value chain to be targeted by EU value chain support. No contract has been signed so far. Currently a value chain analysis is being conducted by Agrinatura (independent from the SASI-SPI project, but as part of the Value Chain Analysis for Development/VCA4D project).

4.10.2. Access to finance

The five-year project on access to finance is being implemented by UNCDF and is called: 'Salone Access to Finance' (SATF) project. It is being implemented between April 2023 and March 2028. (UNCDF, 2025) The table below provides a summary of the results framework of the project.

Table 7: Summary of results framework of the Salone Access to Finance project (Source: UNCDF, 2025)

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Overall Objective | To contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development and job creation, in particular in the agricultural sector |
| Pillar 1 | Investment |
| Output 1.1 | Provide pre and post Investment Support to LFIs and MSMEs. |
| Output 1.2 | Establish a matching grant facility for Agric MSMEs (Sierra Leone Agribusiness Promotion Facility) |
| Output 1.3 | Develop a digital or an Automated Credit scoring Platform to facilitate reporting, and development of predictive models |
| Pillar 2 | Insurance |
| Output 2.1 | Support Insurance Commission, MAF and Insurance Association in capacitating the industry |
| Output 2.2 | Innovative insurance and agricultural innovative products were implemented; lessons learned were documented. |
| Output 2.3 | Promote the instruments of the External Investment Plan |
| Pillar 3 | Digitalization |
| Output 3.1 | Improved access to Digital Financial Services (DFS) in rural areas for payment, deposits, and banking through agency banking support to financial services providers |
| Output 3.2 | Improved access to inputs, markets, and weather information |
| Output 3.3 | Enhanced financial literacy and education, most especially in rural areas. |
| Pillar 4 | Business Environment |
| Output 4.1 | Promote regulatory adjustments for an enabling and inclusive financial environment |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Output 4.2 | Strengthened policies intersecting the financial and agriculture sector |
| Output 4.3 | Enhance sustainable agriculture finance policies through public-private dialogue |

As part of the project, in collaboration with Activa International Insurance, in April 2025 Sierra Leone's first Weather-Index Insurance was launched, which will automatically compensate farmers based on rainfall deviations. In addition, the project is rolling out a \$6 million matching-grant program in collaboration with banks to support 1,000 agribusinesses throughout the country, with disbursements planned to start early 2026. (MAFS, 2025, UNCDF, 2025)

4.10.3. Soil information system

The EU (among other partners) also contributed to the establishment of the National Soil Information System (NaSIS) - Sierra Leone. 'NaSIS is an integrated, centralized, geospatial digital platform that turns raw soil data into useful, interactive tools, maps, and insights. NaSIS was established to ensure that the results of the National Comprehensive Soil Survey (NCSS) and related soil data going forward are accessible, usable, and impactful.' (MAFS, 2026b)

4.10.4. Biodiversity and livelihoods

The EU also finances the 'Nature Nourishes Territorial Approach for Local Development (NN-TALD) project, which is being implemented by WFP in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. It is a three-year project 'aimed at reducing biodiversity loss while improving the sustainable quality of life for communities living around key forest landscapes in Sierra Leone. This multi-sectoral action combines policy-level support with grassroots engagement to promote environmentally friendly practices, expand livelihood opportunities, and strengthen inclusive public service delivery. The project targets smallholder farmers, women, youth, and marginalized groups living near critical ecosystems, with an estimated 75,000 beneficiaries.' Among others the project aims to 'strengthen land-use governance and natural resource management in conservation areas, enhance access to green economy and climate-resilient livelihoods for all community members, and improve infrastructure, service delivery, and social protection in targeted communities'. (EU, 2025a)

4.10.5. Waste management

The EU has recently launched a call for proposals on civil society and waste management, including organic waste, which includes three lots. The objectives and priorities of the call are presented in the table below.

Table 8: Objectives and priorities of EU Call for Proposals 'Civil Society Organisations as actors of good governance and development in Sierra Leone' (Source: EU, 2025b)

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Global Objective | To strengthen local Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) engagement as actors of good governance and development at country level through increased enabling environment, stronger participation in policy and decision making in Sierra Leone. |
| Specific Objective | To empower local CSOs to engage in climate action (adaptation and mitigation), including environmental protection, green transition, |

| | |
|--|---|
| | gender equality and youth inclusion especially strengthening capacity of local women's and youth CSOs. |
| Priority of Lot 1 - Plastic Waste Value Chains | To strengthen CSO-private sector partnerships in plastic waste prevention, collection, sorting, recycling and market development, enabling sustainable circular economy opportunities and creating green employment for youth and women. |
| Priority of Lot 2 - Organic Waste & Organic Fertiliser Value Chains | To advance the development of sustainable value chains for organic waste, compost, biogas and organic fertilisers, ensuring strong participation of private sector actors and youth-led enterprises, and aligning with relevant standards on organic fertiliser quality |
| Priority of Lot 3 - Youth Sounding Board | To set up a local Youth Sounding Board (YSB) to ensure that EU development cooperation is more participatory, relevant and effective for young people. |

4.10.6. Budget support

The EU also provides so called ‘budget support’²⁵ to the Sierra Leonean government, including in the areas of agriculture and school-feeding. In August 2024 the Ministry of Finance signed an agreement with the EU, which includes 65 million euros in direct budget support over a four-year period. The main objectives of the agreement are environmental protection, enhancing education, promoting sustainable agriculture, decentralisation, and public financial management (PFM) reforms. (MoF, 2025) The current progress indicators in the area of agriculture are mainly linked to rice production.

²⁵ ‘Budget support is different from specific project funds, which are tied to projects, but rather go directly into the consolidated fund to be used by the government to fund critical pro-poor programmes on education, health, agriculture, and transfers to vulnerable groups’ (MoF, 2025)

5. Comparing the results of second MSDs, with the policy, investments and coordination framework

The table below compares the results of the second round of MSDs with Sierra Leone's 8 prioritised food system pathways, the earlier long list of 18 food system pathways, and relevant sector policies. In green are marked the interventions from sector policies and the interventions identified during the MSDs, which appear to be well-covered by the existing 8 prioritised pathways and sector policies. In red are marked interventions from sector policies and MSDs that seem to be not well-covered by the existing 8 prioritised pathways and/or MAFS' Feed Salone strategy.

Table 9: Comparison of food system pathways, sector strategies, and pathways identified by MSDs in Kenema and Port Loko

| Prioritised food system pathways identified in 2021 (source: GoSL, 2021) | Food system pathways identified in 2021 (long, draft list before prioritisation) (source: FSS-TWG, 2021b) | Relevant sector policies | Kenema MSD | Port Loko MSD |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| 1. Increase agricultural productivity using climate smart agricultural approaches, especially among the rural smallholders who constitute the poorest segment of society. This includes a variety of support measures on the agricultural value chain, from pre-planting to marketing; | 1. Increasing agricultural production and productivity (intensification and diversification) among the rural poor smallholders, who constitute the poorest segment of society, through a variety of support measures along the entire agricultural value chain, from pre-planting to marketing. | Feed Salone Strategy: Pillar 5: Agricultural Technology (AgTech) and Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA): Leveraging technology, supporting agricultural research, promoting digitization and building robust data systems to inform decisions while safeguarding against climate change. | 2. Soil profiling 3. Adoption of climate-smart and environment-friendly agricultural practices 9. Food diversification | 6. Promotion of fishponds in all chiefdoms* 11. Improve knowledge and skills of farmers (in particular youth and women) and other value chain actors* 12. Weather forecast affections for information sharing |
| 2. Establish private sector supply chains for inputs such as fertilizers, integrated pest management and high yielding seed varieties, irrigation facilities and the enhancement of agro-processing marketing and distribution points; | 2. Establishment of supply chains for inputs such as fertilizers, integrated pest and diseases management equipment, irrigation facilities, high yielding seed varieties and livestock breeds, agro-processing and marketing equipment and distribution points by private sector actors. | Feed Salone Strategy: Pillar 1: Mechanization and Irrigation: Expanding rice production areas, including Inland Valley Swamps and irrigated rice fields, augmented by tractor and other mechanised services. Pillar 2: Seeds and Inputs System: Using research to ensure high-quality inputs for optimal yields for key value chains. Pillar 3: Aggregation, Processing and Marketing: Streamlining processes for maximized profitability. | 1. Provision of improved planting materials (seeds, seedlings, cutting, suckers etc) and livestock breeds to small farmers and companies 4. Development and rehabilitation of IVS with irrigation facilities 5. Mechanisation (inclusive and gender friendly) 7. Promoting agricultural input supply, processing, and marketing 8. Improved value chains for food crops and cash crops 11. Construction and maintenance of modern storage facilities | 1. Increase access to agricultural inputs 2. Enhance farm mechanisation by increasing accessibility and affordability of agricultural machines and equipment 3. Increase irrigation 4. Improve agricultural infrastructure* 5. Improve animal treatment and vaccination* 8. Improve Post harvest and value addition 9. Installation of solar power 11. Improve knowledge and skills of farmers (in particular youth and women) and other value chain actors* |

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|--|--|---|--|--|
| 3. Promote commercial agriculture through private sector participation by creating an enabling environment that is attractive for private sector investment; | 3. Promoting commercial agriculture through private sector participation by creating an enabling environment that is attractive for the private sector to invest. | National Energy Compact 2025-2030 | 10.Sustainable energy supply | |
| | 4. Promoting the elimination and minimization of post-harvest losses through the provision of storage facilities both by government and private sector in the form of storage, drying floors, rice mills, threshers, animal feed mills and abattoirs through loans, grants, and cost-sharing arrangements. | | | |
| 4. Improve access to rural credit through the establishment of community banks and financial services associations to support rural farmers; | 5. Improving access to rural credit through establishment of Community Banks and Financial Services Associations, cooperatives, and other traditional credit schemes. | Feed Salone Strategy: Pillar 4: Access to Finance: Tailoring financial instruments and solutions for the sector's unique needs, especially for women & youth. | 12.Provide access to finance | 10.Increase access to finance, in particular for youth |
| | 6. Increasing investment both by government and private sector for building and rehabilitation of feeder and trunk roads, and community markets infrastructure to facilitate movement of goods to marketplaces. | | 6.Road infrastructure and transportation | 4.Improve agricultural infrastructure * |
| | 7. Reorganizing and training of food systems - based organizations to engage in productive commercial food systems activities and link to the market economy. | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| 5. Improve agricultural research and extension delivery systems backed up by a social National Agricultural Research and Extension policies, including strategies and programs; | 8. Improving agricultural research, technology and innovations and extension delivery systems | | | 5.Improve animal treatment and vaccination* 6.Promotion of fishponds in all chiefdoms* |
| | 9. Formation of coalitions to support the consumption of healthy diets through implementation of nutrition sensitive agriculture. | | | |
| | 10. Promoting and enhancing food environments following international best practice to increase accessibility, affordability of healthy foods. | | | |
| | 11. Support programmes and actions directed to eliminate all forms of malnutrition in the country. | MSSPRM: SD 1: Intensify promotion of optimal care practices affecting nutritionally-vulnerable groups SD 2: Strengthen health and community development systems to ensure a holistic and responsive delivery of services in conducive and safe environments SD3: Improve household food security especially households with multiple overlapping factors influencing their food security SD 4: Rapidly increase access to adequate nutrition among target groups by leveraging existing efficient education and social sector | 13.Raising awareness on food diversification, food safety and balanced diets | 13.Awareness raising on healthy diets and nutrition |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| | | service delivery platforms SD5: Prioritize action to strengthen district capacity in nutrition: National Health And Sanitation Policy 2021: SO 2. Improve the physical environment, sanitation and hygiene | | |
| | 12. Promoting capacity strengthening along the food production, processing, marketing and consumption value chains through massive nutrition education targeting the general population on healthy foods and healthy diets. | | | |
| | 13. Setting up an appropriate and robust food waste management systems to enhance a cleaner and healthier environment. | | | |
| | 14. Promoting efficient and effective sector resource management systems, including the establishment of a database for agricultural statistics as well as creating a sector coordination mechanism. | | | |
| 6. Effectively manage Sierra Leone's fishery and marine resources. This will involve specific focus on providing adequate surveillance capabilities, facilitating the lifting of the ban on fish exports to EU markets, improving the infrastructure | 15. Providing adequate surveillance capabilities, facilitating the lifting of the ban on fish exports to EU markets. | Strategy for the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sectors: -Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development and management -Stronger and inclusive fisheries governance and transparency | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| and support services for commercial fishing, and, providing adequate extension support for artisanal fishermen. | | -Increased State revenue from the fisheries and aquaculture sector -Strengthened employment, livelihoods and food security | | |
| | 16. Improving the infrastructure and support services for commercial fishing. | | | |
| | 17. Providing adequate extension support for artisanal fishermen and strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Marine Resources. | | | |
| | 18. Establishing sustainable financing mechanisms to support the food systems. | | | |
| 7. Manage Sierra Leone's forestry resources to enhance water cycle regulation and environmental protection. | | National Climate Change Policy 2021, Policy Goals: - Reduce climate related loss and damage across all productive sectors thereby protecting livelihoods, food security and standard of living -Promote community development and redirecting economic activity away from vulnerable areas -Promote a clean and healthy environment for all -Transition to climate resilient infrastructure and integrated physical land use plans EPA Transformation Strategy 2024 – 2030 Pillars: -Natural resources -Climate change | | 7.Enhancing afforestation and reforestation |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| | | -Environmental health | | |
| 8. Restructure and strengthen the capacity of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Secretariat in the Presidency to ensure multi-sectoral coordination of the food systems and the implementation of the Action Plan. | | MSSPRM SD6: Urgently undertake legislative, governance and executive actions to create the necessary enabling environment in support of multi-sectoral nutrition | 14.Introduction and enforcement of legislation and regulations | 14.Policy advocacy and governance 15.Resources mobilization 16.Monitoring, supervision, feedbacks and reports writing 17.Sustainability of the implemented project |
| | | Feed Salone Strategy: Pillar 6: Empowering Women and Youth: Ensuring their indispensable role in agricultural development is reflected and elevated across all Strategic Pillars. | | |
| | | National Social Protection Strategy for Sierra Leone 2022-2026 | 15.Social Safety Nets | |
| | | National School Feeding Policy framework 2021 Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan 2022 – 2026: Outcome 3.2: Targeted support provided to vulnerable and struggling learners / provide school meals to all pre-primary and primary students in vulnerable communities | 16.School gardens/farms (IVS rice, fish, and vegetable, and poultry). | |

*Interventions identified by participants to MSDs in Kenema and Port Loko districts that are relevant for two or more of the official UNFSS pathways

6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Multi-stakeholder dialogues to identify pathways and interventions towards sustainable food systems

The second round of Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues (MSDs) that were conducted in November 2025 in both the two target districts of Kenema and Port Loko under WorkStream 3 of the EU financed SASI-SPi project in Sierra Leone, were successful in identifying a vision (accompanied by a detailed narrative) for a future food system and a pathway to realise the vision. The horizon that the participants chose for their visions and pathways was 2035 in both cases. The visions and pathways of the two districts converged to a large extent but also contained a few clear differences. SUN&FSCU within the OVP and SLARI played a key role in the execution of the process.

Recommendation 1: SUN&FSCU is recommended to consider using the methodology that was used for the conduct of the second round of MSDs, for decentralised stakeholder consultations that may have to be conducted in the framework of reviewing Sierra Leone's official food system pathways²⁶ that were identified in 2021 in the context of the United Nations Food Systems Summit.²⁷

The pathways clearly list the priority issues that need to be addressed according to the stakeholders, as well as the interventions that should be employed to do so. However, the exact planning and implementation of these measures will have to be reviewed and worked out in more detail.

Recommendation 2: The district councils of Kenema and Port Loko districts are recommended to consider the visions and pathways that were developed for their respective districts, in the framework of their district development plans and possible revisions/updates of these plans.

6.2. Feed Salone strategy

The main objective behind the Feed Salone strategy of MAFS seemed to be to reduce imports of rice and other food products, in order to save on foreign exchange. The objective to reduce hunger and malnutrition seemed to be of lesser importance at the start of the Feed Salone's implementation period, but it has rightfully gained in political prominence, with calls by President Julius Maada Bio to not just 'feed Salone', but also to 'nourish Salone'. Reducing food imports is also a valid objective, and impressive progress has been made towards that objective during the first two years of the Feed Salone strategy. Giving at the same time also more attention to reducing malnutrition, will multiply the success of the Feed Salone strategy of MAFS, as part of Big Game Changer 1 Feed Salone. Significant progress has been made already towards the objective of reducing hunger and malnutrition, but the progress rates need to be maintained or increased in order to meet the targets that were set for MAFS' Feed Salone

²⁶ The 'Food Systems Pathways Review' conducted recently, recommends that 'Sierra Leone's food system transformation pathways should undergo a comprehensive and inclusive review' (FAO, 2025a).

²⁷ See also recommendations 7, 8 and 10.

strategy.

Recommendation 3: For the second half of its implementation period, it is recommended that the Feed Salone strategy places a stronger focus on its objective to reduce hunger and malnutrition. Malnutrition has various causes, but MAFS' mandate enables it to work mainly on food diversification, as one of the main causes of malnutrition. For this it is recommended that the implementation of projects and programmes with wide geographical coverage, such as FSRP and AVDP, as well as the reinforcement of MAFS extension services in communities not covered by these programmes, should be considered as the central element of the Feed Salone strategy, because they have wide geographical coverage that is required to bring about significant improvements. At the same time these projects and programmes should be reviewed to make them more nutrition sensitive²⁸, and collaboration with MoH should be reinforced. In line with this, it is also recommended that the Mid-Term Review of the Feed Salone strategy doesn't focus primarily on the AfDB financed projects on rice production and processing in a few areas, but that the review also²⁹ prioritises the majority of the areas that have not benefited from these concentrated efforts in the rice sector.

The comparison of the pillars of the Feed Salone strategy with the interventions that were identified by the participants of the second round of MSDs in Kenema and Port Loko districts, show that they largely converge. This suggests that the pillars of MAFS' Feed Salone strategy were generally well chosen, even though a few gaps were identified.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the contents of the respective pillars of MAFS' Feed Salone strategy are reviewed as part of its Mid-Term Review, in the light of the following recommendations that follow from the comparison between the Feed Salone pillars and the interventions identified during the MSDs in chapter 5:

- Pillar 1 and 2: Include a stronger focus on diversification of food products produced by households.
- Pillar 1: Efforts on mechanisation should focus more on 'inclusive and gender friendly agricultural equipment'
- Pillar 1: Focus more on extension and veterinary services that will help to improve livestock production practices and vaccination.³⁰
- Pillar 1: Focus more on extension services that can support farmers to develop aquaculture activities within or in the vicinity of their rice fields. Activities to develop and rehabilitate IVS should also take aquaculture into consideration when designing their interventions.
- Pillar 3: The installation of solar panels to run agricultural processing units should be considered as a reliable source of power

²⁸ Including a stronger focus on crop and food diversification

²⁹

³⁰ It is expected that this recommendation will already be covered in big part through the sizeable projects on livestock that are currently being prepared

Other concrete recommendations that follow from analysing the policy framework:

- An additional, new (cross-cutting) pillar or 'architrave' should be added, which focuses on integrating nutrition considerations in the interventions of the five pillars, to make sure that all of MAFS' Feed Salone interventions under pillars 1 to 5 are nutrition sensitive.³¹
- Pillar 1: The e-voucher system that has been set-up should be further developed to make it possible for farmers to obtain subsidised inputs from local agri-input stores, whilst giving them the freedom and the diversified offer to choose not just synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, but also organic fertilisers and pesticides, small scale machinery, and diversified seeds. This will be beneficial for resilience to climate change, limiting the foreign exchange spent on imports of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, and farmers and consumers' health.
- Pillar 6: The areas of intervention of this pillar seem to be part of the other five pillars, so it is in fact more of a cross-cutting issue that needs to be addressed in each pillar. Nevertheless, the status of pillar provides for well-merited prominence and attention in the Feed Salone framework. Maybe a status as 'cross-cutting pillar' or 'architrave' should be assigned to this pillar, to clarify that it should be integrated within the interventions of the five other pillars.

6.3. Strategy for fisheries and marine resources

The 'Strategy for the Fisheries and Marine Resources Sectors in Sierra Leone' by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) corresponds to the second element of the Feed Salone Big Game Changer as it is identified in the MTNDP. Similarly to the Feed Salone strategy of MAFS, the strategy of MFMR also has dual objectives on increasing the macro-economic contribution of the sector on the one side, and increasing the contribution to livelihoods and food security on the other side. The majority of the activities of the strategy are mostly aimed at marine fisheries and marine aquaculture. Currently, there are not sufficient extension workers to enhance proper fishpond management and fish farming.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that MFMR tries to steer international donors towards projects and programmes to support artisanal fishing communities in procuring more modern fishing equipment, with the construction of (solar powered) cooling facilities, and improving their access to markets (including cold chain transportation). If these fishing communities can preserve their catch in cooling facilities, this will reduce the cutting of mangroves for firewood for the smoking of fish. Such projects and programmes should also collaborate with MoH to make sure that the communities do receive the required nutrition messages, to make sure that enhanced incomes also translate into healthier diets.

³¹ In order to operationalise this, as an obligatory step in their preparation, all new project and policies should be reviewed with a nutrition lens to make them more nutrition sensitive. MAFS' gender and nutrition unit, the Food and Nutrition Directorate of MoH, and SUN&FSCU could jointly take care of such reviews.

6.4. Nutrition policy framework

The nutrition policy framework has recently been enlarged with the formulation of Sierra Leone's National Nutrition Commitments Framework 2025-2030. At the same time Sierra Leone's Multi-Sector Strategic Plan to Reduce Malnutrition (MSP) 2019-2025 has recently expired, and is due for the formulation of a new phase.

Recommendation 6: Given that the current government's term will end in 2028, and that the envisaged food consumption and micronutrients survey still hasn't been conducted, it is recommended that the current Multi-Sector Strategic Plan to Reduce Malnutrition (MSPRP) is extended until 2028, as part of a nutrition policy umbrella that is called 'Nourish Salone' as part of Big Game Changer 1 Feed Salone, combining both the NNCs and the MSPRP. The intention would be to formulate another single policy framework on nutrition end of 2028 by the then new government, which combines again both the Multi-Sector Strategic Plan to Reduce Malnutrition and the Nation Nutrition Commitments.

6.5. School feeding policy framework

The school feeding policy framework exists of the National School Feeding Policy framework³² from 2021, and the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan 2022 - 2026³³. A recent addition to the school feeding program is the daily provision of one locally produced egg to children aged 3 to 6 years.

There are also plans to procure more domestically produced products for institutional purchasing, like for the police, the army, and correctional facilities.

Recommendation 7 includes a specific element on school feeding. Reference is also made to the recommendations on school feeding in the phase 2 report.

6.6. Food systems policy framework

The current food systems policy framework consists mainly of the 8 prioritised food system pathways that were identified in 2021 in the context of the UN Food Systems Summit. When comparing these 8 pathways with the interventions that were identified as part of the pathways identified during the MSDs in Kenema and Port Loko districts, a few policy areas and interventions seem to be underrepresented.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended to adjust Sierra Leone's food system pathways as follows, in order to make sure that all of the most relevant ministries have at least one pathway that they are mainly responsible for:

- Add a pathway that focuses on food diversification and nutrition, with MoH as the main custodian
- Add a pathway that focuses on the provision of safe drinking water and adequate latrines

³² https://mbsse.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/National-School-Feeding-Policy_May2021.pdf

³³ <https://mbsse.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Sierra-Leone-Education-Sector-Plan-2022-2026.pdf>

- Add a pathway that focuses on improving road infrastructure, with SLRA as the main custodian
- Add a pathway that focuses on school feeding³⁴, with MBSSE as the main custodian
- Add a pathway that focuses on social safety nets, with MoSW as the main custodian³⁵
- Add a pathway that focuses on international trade policies that help in the transition to a more sustainable food system, with the Ministry of Trade and Industry as the main custodian³⁶

And the following adjustments, in order to improve the existing pathways:

- Pathway 1: Increase the scope for it to clearly include also livestock and aquaculture, and for it to not only focus on climate-smart approaches, but also nutrition sensitive approaches.
- Pathway 3: Clarify that reliable energy supply is a key element of the enabling environment for private sector investment
- Pathway 5: Similarly increase the scope for it to clearly include also livestock and aquaculture

The recently conducted Food Systems Pathways Review recommended that Sierra Leone's current food system pathways 'should undergo a comprehensive and inclusive review'. And that this process 'should engage both central and regional governance stakeholders'. (FAO, 2025a)

Recommendation 8: Given that the current government is in the middle of its term, with policy implementation having gained strong momentum, in order to prevent the government from being distracted from the policy implementation effort, it is recommended that the government doesn't embark on a complete food systems review exercise with district level consultations at this point in time, but that it makes preparations to do so end of 2027. That will allow for the results to be used for the formulation of the policy frameworks of the next administration. However, it is recommended that a rapid, limited review of the pathways is conducted, in order to provide a strong food systems umbrella policy framework that supports the successful implementation of Big Game Changer 1 Feed Salone.

As mentioned already under recommendation 1, whenever the government decides to

³⁴ School gardens and school farms could be included in this pathway as well, but it should be made clear children's participation in school gardens and/or farms should not keep them away from learning

³⁵ As is already the case in many other countries, social safety nets in Sierra Leone have the potential to become an important instrument to address the food and nutrition security of the most vulnerable people, including children. The current social safety net activities in Sierra Leone seem to be mostly focused on urban areas. It would be relevant to provide them also in rural areas, but an efficient and fair delivery framework would have to be established first.

³⁶ The recommendation for this additional pathway didn't follow directly from the comparison between the official pathways and the interventions identified during the second MSDs in Kenema and Port Loko, but the importance of international trade was identified in the phase 2 report

conduct a decentralised review of Sierra Leone's pathways, it should consider using elements of the methodology that was employed for SASI-SPI's second round of MSDs in Kenema and Port Loko districts.

6.7. Food systems coordination framework

The presidential council on agriculture/Feed Salone is the highest level policy coordination framework within the Sierra Leonean government in the food systems domain, with various other relevant committees and working groups feeding into it. Even though progress reporting on the MSPRM is also feeding into the presidential council, the main focus seems to be on MAFS' Feed Salone strategy.

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that the presidential council on agriculture/Feed Salone slightly enlarges its scope by putting equal focus on the three elements of Big Game Changer 1 Feed Salone as identified in the Medium Term National Development Plan (GoSL, 2024), which are:

1. Accelerating productivity and commercialisation of the agricultural sector
2. Accelerating productivity and sustainable management of fisheries and the marine sector
3. Availability, access, and consumption of diverse, safe and nutritious foods'

At the same time, the presidential council could coordinate food systems governance at large, helped by a revised set of Food Systems Pathways as recommended in the previous section on the food systems policy framework. In order to mark the slight shift in focus of the presidential council it could be renamed the presidential council on Feed and Nourish Salone / Food Systems. The adjustment of the presidential council in this way would be a strong case in point that proves the importance the Sierra Leonean government attaches to the transformation towards sustainable food systems, and the whole of government approach that it has pledged to use for that.

With support from the EU financed Capacity for Nutrition (C4N) initiative, implemented by GIZ, SUN&FSCU has developed a 'Food Systems Coordination Strategy', which focuses only on the coordination aspects of food systems governance. SUN&FSCU also intends to identify indicators linked to the different food system pathways, which in turn would be monitored through its online monitoring platform 'Nutrition Information Management System' (NIMS).

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the draft 'Food Systems Coordination Strategy' be enlarged to become, or be complemented by a 'Sustainable Food Systems Strategy and Action Plan', in line with food systems pathway 8³⁷. The document would list the (revised) pathways and the corresponding indicators, and identify the sector ministries that bear either primary or contributory responsibility for the implementation of the respective pathways through their respective sectoral policies. Only a summary of the

³⁷ 8. Restructure and strengthen the capacity of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Secretariat in the Presidency to ensure multi-sectoral coordination of the food systems and the implementation of the Action Plan. (GoSL, 2021) / Pathway 8: Restructure and strengthen the capacity of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Secretariat in the presidency to ensure multisectoral coordination of the food systems and the implementation of the Action Plan for Sustainable Food Systems (FAO, 2025a)

coordination efforts identified in the coordination strategy document, would be included. The indicators that would be chosen should as much as possible already be part of the relevant sector policy frameworks.

6.8. Decentralisation

Sierra Leone's decentralisation policies aim to devolve more responsibilities to the district level authorities. However, the implementation of these policies remains incomplete, with line ministries like MoH and MAFS retaining central control over parts of project funding.

Recommendation 11: Significant progress has been made, but still more collective efforts need to be made in devolving responsibilities to the district level and creating the conditions for that process to be successful. In addition, MAFS and MoH can make concrete efforts by themselves, by issuing instructions for the local implementation of project funding, that leaves more space for their district level offices to work out the details in collaboration with the district council and other line ministry district offices. In so doing, MAFS and MoH should encourage their district level offices to reciprocally seek more collaboration with each other, resulting in more nutrition sensitive agricultural activities and more 'agriculture-sensitive' nutrition activities.

6.9. Trade

International trade policies with relation to rice imports were already discussed in the phase 2 report in section 5.6.2 on policy coherence.

Recommendation 12: Recommendation 26 in the phase 2 report already provides recommendations related to rice imports. It is recommended to also reconsider import duties on processed food products, with the objective of both reducing foreign exchange being spent on food imports, as well as discouraging the consumption of unhealthy (over-) processed foods, which is a threat in particular for the urban population. Higher import duties on unhealthy foods should be accompanied by other policies to discourage their consumption. For an overview of such policies, reference is made to IFPRI's 2024 Global Food Policy Report on Food Systems for Healthy Diets and Nutrition. MoH has already made an important start with the adoption of Sierra Leone's dietary guidelines, which encourages people to consume whole grains and to limit the consumption of salt and sugar. However, more tailored awareness raising activities are probably needed to advise clearly against the overconsumption of unhealthy snacks and sugary drinks, in particular for children. Also, labelling requirements and domestic tax policies could be employed to discourage the consumption of unhealthy foods and drinks, regardless of whether they are imported or produced domestically.

6.10. Drug addiction

Drug addiction was mentioned as a threat to the current food system, but didn't feature in the visions of the desired, future food systems and the pathways to reach there. Addiction to kush in particular youth is a threat to young people being able and willing to work in agriculture. In addition, addicted people are expected to be less likely to follow behavioural change advice on healthy diets. And a longer-term impact for the food system may be that young people are

less likely to start families and have children.

Recommendation 13: Although drug addiction is not considered to be an issue that is part of the food system, it still potentially has strong impacts on the food system. Therefore, it is recommended that drug addiction is being addressed with the highest priority in the relevant policy frameworks.

6.11. EU bilateral support

6.11.1. Value chain interventions

Infant food project

A four-year project on the infant food value chain is being implemented by WFP and is called: Strengthened Agricultural Value-chain through Infant Nutrition for Growth (SAVING). Support will be provided to complementary food production centres that produce 'Nyan Nyan Pap', a weaning food company that was set up earlier by WFP. Part of the project is that health centres can refer mothers of children at risk of malnutrition to receive a month's supply of Nyan Nyan Pap. In addition, pre-schools will receive funding to procure Nyan Nyan Pap for 3–5-year-olds. The project will also provide support to the government to develop regulatory standards and guidelines for the production of (fortified) complementary food. Finally, the project also has a mass-media component, however the number of beneficiaries of that campaign are not identified and there is no corresponding impact/outcome indicator. The sustainability of the production centres after the project comes to an end seems a crucial point, even though the sustainability of the project is well explained in the relevant section of the project document.

Recommendation 14: The EU and WFP are recommended to keep a close watch on the sustainability of the production centres, and make sure that they are well prepared to stand on their own feet after the project comes to an end. Questions could be asked as to whether subsidising school feeding Nyan Nyan Pap to 3-5 year olds is necessary and cost-effective. For the mass media campaign, it is recommended that a smart impact/outcome indicator is identified with a suitable target, because this activity has the potential to reach considerably more beneficiaries than the direct beneficiaries of the production centres. This activity should not be biased towards promoting Nyan Nyan Pap, and should provide unbiased awareness raising on providing appropriate IYCF, including the option for mothers and other caregivers to provide this complementary food themselves with locally available ingredients, which still seems to be the most feasible option for the poorest households that are most at risk of malnutrition.

Palm oil

The Oil Palm Value Chains Improvement Project is being implemented by MAFS with FAO support and started in November 2025. The target districts will be four major oil palm producing districts. Whereas attention for nutrition is important, the activities under Outcome 3 ('Promoting Nutrition and food security through diversification of locally produced agricultural products') seem to go a bit far for a palm oil value chain project. It is also not clearly described that the project will collaborate with MoH for the implementation of the activities under this output.

Recommendation 15: MAFS, and FAO are recommended to review the activities under output 3 of the project together with MoH and MBSSE, to agree on an approach that is compatible with MoH and MBSSE’s practices, and to agree on a suitable division of tasks. At the same time the four entities should discuss the possibility of replacing imported palm oil used for school feeding, with domestically produced palm oil, ideally locally produced palm oil from small-holder farmers. If the project can contribute to that, it will also reduce school feedings funding flowing abroad.

Cassava

The four-year project on the cassava value chain is being implemented from the beginning of 2026 by GIZ with co-financing from BMZ. The project also has major component focused on TVET, not only limited to the cassava value chain, but rather aimed at the agricultural sector as a whole. The project document mentions cassava as an alternative ingredient for yellow-fleshed sweet potato. And it mentions that intercropping with legumes for infant food, and oil palm will be promoted. Activities under output 1.5 will focus on the nutritional value and benefits of cassava, which is indicated to ‘go beyond the use of cassava as an ingredient in infant food, but rather focus on a more balanced diet, including leafy vegetables (cassava leaves), and substituting rice more often with cassava products such as gari. The project document doesn’t mention (bio-)fortification of cassava, nor yellow-fleshed cassava.

Recommendation 16: GIZ is recommended to coordinate with MoH on the nutrition messaging that the project provides to the project’s beneficiaries. It is not sure that promoting replacement of yellow or orange fleshed sweet potatoes with cassava, even if the cassava is yellow-fleshed³⁸, is desirable. It is also not sure that replacement of rice with gari is desirable, although less processed forms of cassava may be of equivalent nutritional value as rice.

Cocoa

The cocoa value chain was identified at a later stage as an additional value chain to be targeted by EU value chain support. No contract has been signed so far. Currently a value chain analysis is being conducted in preparation of the project.

Recommendation 17: The EU is recommended to design a project for intervention in the cacao value chain that takes more of an integrated, food systems approach³⁹, in the sense that the project not only focuses on cocoa, but on the farming systems as a whole, including the production of nutritious foods that are important for the food diversity of the beneficiaries,

³⁸ Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP) and yellow fleshed cassava are bio-fortified with provitamin A.

³⁹ Reference is made to IFPRI’s 2024 Global Food Policy Report, page 16: ‘A food systems approach for sustainable healthy diets offers many promising opportunities, but also entails a set of difficult challenges (Chapter 2). Success will require a truly multisectoral approach that tackles the need for sustainable healthy diets from multiple directions and with “multi-duty” tools that address different forms of malnutrition and consider the wide range of factors that shape diets and their contributions to nutrition and health outcomes. Achieving optimal consumption of diverse food groups to support healthy diets in various contexts and populations will also require a range of context-specific policies and initiatives that focus on demand, food environments, and supply.’

accompanied by well-designed behavioural change messaging on nutrition, including healthy diets and hygiene. For this project it is also recommended that the project takes more of territorial approach, with a meaningful role for the local authorities. It is also recommended that the project builds on the experience of international and national NGOs that are already active in the cocoa sector.

6.11.2. Budget support

The EU also provides budget support to the Sierra Leonean government, including in the areas of agriculture and school-feeding. The current progress indicators in the area of agriculture are mainly linked to rice production.

Recommendation 18: For a possible next phase of budget support linked to the agricultural sector, it is recommended that the progress indicators include an indicator linked to food diversity. The most appropriate indicators for food diversity seems to be the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) at the household level, for children between 6 and 24 months and for pregnant and lactating women but may be too complicated. The household Food Consumption Score (FCS) is an indicator, which is also heavily based on food diversity, and is already defined and used as a progress indicator linked to Strategic Objective 4 'Alleviating Hunger & Malnutrition' of the Feed Salone strategy.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 – Programme of SASI-SPI's second round of MSDs in Kenema and Port Loko districts

Day 1

- 9:00 Opening prayers
- 9:05 Self introductions of participants
- 9:20 Welcoming address by the (deputy) chief councillor or (deputy) mayor
- 9:25 Purpose of the meeting
- 9:45 Statement by the District Council (Deputy) Chief Administrator
- 9:50 Group photo
- 10:00 Group discussions: SWOT analysis of current food system in the district
- 10:45 Group presentations
- 11:15 Discussion on the horizon for the desired future food system
- 11:30 Group discussions: Identification of vision of district's desirable future food system
- 12:30 Lunchbreak
- 1:30 Group presentations and plenary discussion on vision of the district's desirable future food system
- 3:00 Conclusions of day 1
- 4:00 End of day 1

Day 2

- 9:00 Opening prayer
- 9:30 Presentation and discussion around the proposed joint vision of desired future food system and narrative
- 10:30 Group discussions: Identification of the transition pathway to the vision of the district's desirable future food system
- 11:30 Group presentations and plenary discussions on transition pathways
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:30 Conclusions and next steps
- 2:00 Video SASI-SPI
- 4:00 End of day 2

Appendix 2 – Merged idea clusters second round of MSDs Kenema and Port Loko

Kenema

In addition, they agreed with the following merged idea clusters:

Food and Nutrition Security

In 2035, Kenema District will be largely self-sufficient for its nutritious food consumption.

Food Diversification

Households in Kenema will be aware of the importance of balance diets and all household members, including vulnerable women and children, will consume diverse foods, by eating very regularly from the 6 food groups.

Food Fortification

A significant part of the food on the market are biofortified or fortified otherwise, in particular complementary foods.

Food safety

Foodstuffs are safe for consumption through hygienic practices, which is guaranteed by effective standards, testing and certification.

WASH

All households will have access to safe water and improved sanitation.

Sustainable, climate resilient food production and productivity

Farmers and livestock holders will produce diverse agricultural products, through climate-smart agricultural practices. Farmers and livestock breeders will use improved technologies, including improved planting materials and improved breeds that produce higher yields.

Aquaculture

Fish farming is taking place year round in IVS, facilitating better access to animal protein.

Mechanisation, post-harvest management, processing and value addition

Food producers and processors in all chiefdoms will have access to, and the capacities to operate, inclusive, modern, gender-friendly agricultural tools, machinery and processing equipment, enabling high quality food production with high added value and with less labour input. There will be important food processing industries in Kenema, which buy and process the agricultural products.

Road infrastructure and transportation

Kenema will have a significantly improved road network throughout the district, enabling adequate, low-cost transportation of agricultural products with appropriate means of transportation.

Sustainable Energy Supply and storage

Farmers will have access to clean energy and they will have access to appropriate, specialised food storage facilities, which will reduce food waste and ensure supply and price stability.

Market linkages

Farmers will have good links to traders and processors, allowing them to obtain a fair price for their products.

Finance

Financial institutions will be supporting farmers and other value chain actors, through loans with low interest rates.

Inclusion

Women, youth and disabled have been enabled to play a crucial role in in the food chains.

Port Loko

Agricultural inputs

High quality agricultural inputs (including seeds) will be available on time through seed multipliers and agro-input dealers in all chiefdoms.

Veterinary services

Veterinary clinics will be available throughout the district.

Finance

Farmers and livestock holder will have access to loans to invest in their production activities

Improved farming techniques

Farmers will have the skills and knowledge on improved, climate-smart farming techniques, and they will be applying those skills and knowledge, allowing them to obtain better yields. Farmers will plant both productive and non-productive trees to reverse deforestation.

Aquaculture

Many farmers will have integrated fishponds in their IVS as an additional source of protein and a source of income

Irrigation

All viable IVS near communities in Port Loko will have been developed for effective irrigated crop cultivation. Irrigation from boreholes will be powered by solar systems for both vegetable and rice production on uplands and boli lands.

Mechanisation

By 2035, farmers will use adequate farm machinery and ag-tech

Post harvest-management

There will be significantly less food wastage, through proper pre- and post-harvest handling, including proper storage.

Road infrastructure

There will be a significantly improved road network, with feeder roads connecting production areas to markets.

Processing, storage and marketing

There will be adequate processing, storage and marketing of high-quality food products, including for export markets, through formal trade over roads with neighbouring countries.

Women and youth

Women and youth will be fully involved along the various value chains.

Food self sufficiency

Port Loko district will be largely food self-sufficient and thus significantly reduce its food imports.

Home-Grown School Feeding

All schools in Port Loko district will be providing school feeding, with school meal ingredients produced and procured from the local communities, FBOs and school gardens.

Procurement of food for the police and prisoner services within the district

All foods for the police and the correctional centres in Port Loko will be grown by themselves and/or sourced from local producers, processors, traders, FBOs and cooperatives.

Conditional Social Safety Nets

All vulnerable persons in the district (especially the disabled) will have access to conditional social safety nets, through which they will be trained to develop their skills.

Community Engagement

All communities in the district will be trained in the transformation of their local food system, and they will be fully involved in producing their own, diversified foods.

Social and Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC)

The people will be targeted by Social and Behavioural Change Communication on nutrition and hygiene to reduce malnutrition, minimize thefts and restore people's dignity.

WASH

All people will benefit from access to safe drinking water and adequate latrines.

Healthy diets

All the people will be consuming balanced, nutritious, healthy, chemical residue free diets throughout the year, mostly based on diverse food products that they grow themselves, including in backyard gardens and community gardens. Children will eat three times a day, child malnutrition will have ended, and maternal deaths will be significantly reduced.

Appendix 3 - Suggestion for a starting point for a revised set of food system pathways

The pathways listed below are a suggestion for a starting point for a revised set of food system pathways that could be used until a more thorough revision of Sierra Leone's official food system pathways is conducted. This suggestion integrates the recommendations on the modification of the existing pathways as provided under recommendation 7. Text marked in black are the existing pathways, text marked in red is newly suggested.

| Pathway | Ministries and agencies primarily responsible |
|--|---|
| Pathway 1: Increase agricultural (including livestock and aquaculture) productivity using climate-smart, nutrition-sensitive agricultural approaches, especially among rural smallholders, who constitute the poorest segment of society. This includes a variety of support measures along the agricultural value chain, from pre-planting to marketing | MAFS |
| Pathway 2: Establish private sector supply chains for inputs such as fertilizers, integrated pest management and high-yielding seed varieties, irrigation facilities and the enhancement of agroprocessing marketing and distribution points | MAFS |
| Pathway 3: Promote commercial agriculture through private sector participation by creating an enabling environment that is attractive for private sector investment, including reliable energy supply | MAFS, SLIEPA, MoE |
| Pathway 4: Improve access to rural credit through the establishment of community banks and financial services associations to support rural farmers | MAFS |
| Pathway 5: Improve agricultural (including livestock and aquaculture) research and extension delivery systems backed by social and national agricultural research and extension policies, including strategies and programmes | MAFS |
| Pathway 6: Facilitate the development of the road network, enabling communities to better access markets and other services, and enabling farmers to transport their farming inputs and agricultural products more easily to and from their lands | SLRA |
| Pathway 7: Conduct well-adapted and long-term behavioural change campaigns on healthy diets, nutrition and hygiene that reach all people, and in particular mothers and other caregivers | MoH, MWRS |
| Pathway 8: Facilitate the installation of adequate and safe drinking water facilities and latrines in all communities | MWRS |
| Pathway 9: Provide nutritious, locally sourced, home-grown school meals to all vulnerable children. | MBSSE |

| | |
|---|-------|
| Pathway 10: Provide effective, productive social safety nets for vulnerable people, in particular those with children | MoSW |
| Pathway 6 11: Effectively manage Sierra Leone's fishery and marine resources. This will involve a specific focus on providing adequate surveillance capabilities, facilitating the lifting of the ban on fish exports to EU markets, improving infrastructure and support services for commercial fishing, and providing adequate extension support for artisanal fishers | MFMR |
| Pathway 7 12: Manage Sierra Leone's forestry resources to enhance water cycle regulation and environmental protection | MoECC |
| Pathway 13: Enact import duties on rice, onions, chicken meat and other major food imports, in order to favour domestic production, with the proceeds of the levies being used to support development of the domestic agricultural sector. | MTI |
| Pathway 8 14: Restructure and strengthen the capacity of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Secretariat in the presidency to ensure multisectoral coordination of the food systems and the implementation of the Action Plan for Sustainable Food Systems | OVP |