

# U.S. Country Commercial Guides



## Sierra Leone 2020

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# Doing Business in Sierra Leone

## Market Overview

Sierra Leone is a low-income country with considerable mineral, fishery, and agricultural resources. The country presents significant opportunities for investment and development. It is located on the west coast of Africa with a population of more than 7 million and a land area of 71,740 square kilometers. Sierra Leone is an agrarian economy with rich soil and plentiful rainfall, with a wide continental shelf on an extensive stretch of coastline, making agriculture, fisheries, and forestry key to the economy. However, the country is not self-sufficient in food production.

Sierra Leone made significant progress towards political and economic stability and growth after the civil war of 1991-2002. The economy grew at an average annual rate of 7.8 percent over the period 2002-2012 and became one of the fastest growing economies in the world when GDP growth hit 15 percent in 2012 and 21 percent in 2013. However, the Ebola epidemic of 2014-2015, compounded by the drop in global prices of iron ore, Sierra Leone's major export, contracted the economy by 21 percent in 2015. Domestic revenue plunged and the fiscal deficit widened with an estimated loss of \$1.4 billion. On completing a 24-month economic recovery program from 2015-2017, a massive mudslide hit the capital Freetown destroying major infrastructure and leaving more than 1,000 people dead. In the same year, authorities introduced austerity measures to improve budget management, and the IMF approved a three-year Extended Credit Facility (ECF) arrangement; however, the ECF was suspended after the first review for failure to meet program benchmarks.

President Julius Maada Bio entered office in April 2018 and vowed to transform the economic situation of the country. His administration has made efforts at domestic revenue mobilization, progress in expenditure management and control, stabilized budget arrears and public debt, and prioritized public investments. The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) re-engaged with the IMF, which approved a new 43-month ECF arrangement in November 2018. At the second review in April 2020, the IMF commended the government for making progress at meeting program benchmarks and addressing the country's vast economic needs, indicating a promising medium-term outlook. A medium-term National Development Plan 2019–2023 was launched in 2019 focusing on education, governance, and infrastructure, and supported by economic diversification in agriculture, fisheries, and tourism with four goals aligned with global and regional agendas.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously impacted the economy by disrupting domestic activities, widening fiscal gaps, and disturbing stability, with the GDP projected to contract to -2.3 percent by the end of 2020 (<https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/SLE>). The government has initiated a Quick Action Economic Response Plan to maintain macroeconomic and financial stability and mitigate the impact of the crisis on businesses and households. However, the country remains heavily dependent on foreign assistance from international development partners including the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, the World Bank, the IMF, UN agencies and China.

Basic Economic Statistics estimates:

- Population: 7.97 million in 2020 (World Population Review)
- Real GDP: \$4.08 billion in 2018 (World Bank Data)
- GDP per capita: \$533.9 in 2018 (World Bank Data)
- GDP growth: 5.1 percent in 2019 (World Bank Data)
- Inflation: 14.8 percent in 2019 (World Bank Data)
- Total Exports: \$677 million in 2018 (OEC Data)
- Total Imports: \$1,030 million in 2018 (OEC Data)
- Exports to the U.S.: \$49 million in 2018 (OEC Data)
- Imports from the U.S.: \$59 million in 2018 (OEC Data) (<https://oec.world/en/profile/country/sle/> )
- Exchange rate: \$1: Le9,746 (June 2020 Bank of Sierra Leone Mid-rate)

## **Market Challenges**

Sierra Leone currently lacks the infrastructure capabilities necessary to support effective commercial activities. Poor quality and limited infrastructure pose major challenges to investment, domestic travel, inland transport, and normal operations. Efforts at constructing major roads leading to district headquarter towns and rehabilitating feeder roads linking agricultural suppliers with urban markets remains ongoing. The customs clearance procedure was simplified to reduce clearance time and the major seaport was extended to accommodate more vessels. Yet, the government needs to continue to construct other infrastructure including seaports, airports, public utilities, and telecommunications.

Even with the above progress, challenges persist in corruption, skilled labor, accessing land, high interest rates, and contract enforcement. The local content policy instituted in 2016 requires investors to utilize local goods in place of imported goods, promote the employment of citizens, and develop the human capacity of these citizens through training. At least 20 percent of the managerial and 50 percent of intermediate positions must be held by Sierra Leonean citizens, and this ratio should be increased gradually to 60 percent for managerial and 80 percent for intermediate positions in 5 years. Furthermore, equity shares of every registered foreign entity in Sierra Leone must include 20 percent shares belonging to Sierra Leoneans for the government to grant such firms preferential treatment when competing for government contracts.

The World Bank ranked Sierra Leone 163 among 190 countries in 2020 in the ease of doing business index, a drop from 140 in 2015. The World Bank highlighted challenges in access to credit, resolving insolvency, access to electricity and construction permits, but noted improvements in payment of taxes, cross-border trade and starting a business. Investments outside of the capital city require special attention to local community needs, particularly land issues that are subject to the influence and authority of traditional leaders. While these issues do not necessarily reflect any discriminatory treatment of U.S. interests, they do underscore the challenges facing all foreign firms operating in Sierra Leone. As the government continues to inform investors that the country is open to foreign investment, it has focused on removing constraints on trade and improving the investment climate.

## **Market Opportunities**

Sierra Leone offers opportunities for investment. The country is gifted with a favorable tropical climate with a wide-ranging fertile soil advantageous for agriculture, an extensive continental shelf with numerous varieties of fishery resources, a natural environment offering tourism prospects, and vast mineral resources. The economy has potential in five main areas: agriculture, fisheries, mining, tourism, and small-scale manufacturing. Agriculture and fishing are the mainstay of the majority of the population, though much of this is subsistence farming and artisanal fishery. Mining of minerals, especially iron ore, diamonds, gold, rutile, ilmenite, and bauxite are the main sources of foreign currency, though there are exposure to external shocks. Manufacturing activities are primarily limited to the processing of raw materials and light industries for the domestic market.

Over the years, Sierra Leone has made significant reforms in easing the process of setting up a business, including establishing a one-stop shop for company registration. In 2020, the World Bank ranked the country 58 out of 190 countries with 91 percent score for easing the process of starting a business. The process combines five different steps over an eight-day period with an online facility. The government also implemented the UNCTAD ASYCUDA World System, an online system that enhances trading across borders.

Sierra Leone provides access to a market of more than 30 million people via its membership in the Mano River Union with Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Liberia, and a market of over 225 million people through its membership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In 2018, Sierra Leone also joined the African Continental Free Trade Agreement which brings together fifty-four African countries with a combined population of more than one billion in a single continental market for goods and services. Sierra Leone is also accorded duty-free access to large markets like the European Union's Everything But Arms initiative and the United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) treaty.

Foreign investors can engage in agriculture, agribusiness, fisheries, and tourism, and can undertake ventures in infrastructure like in energy (including renewables), manufacturing, construction, communication, and transportation, and in other sectors like education, finance, health and natural resources. The government seeks investment in all these sectors and engagement will potentially ignite economic growth and development. The GoSL seeks economic growth and development to be led by the private sector.

### **Market Entry Strategy**

U.S. investors wishing to do business in Sierra Leone are encouraged to contact the Economic and Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy Freetown. The Section can introduce investors to the business environment, including the legal and regulatory framework, provide guidance on the entry processes and support with commercial advocacy. Approved as a Partner Post in 2018, the section now provides the full range of branded commercial services, including the Gold Key Service, Single Company Promotion, International Partner Search, International Company Profile, and Customized Market Research.

Potential investors are also advised to visit the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency Website (SLIEPA) at [www.sliepa.org](http://www.sliepa.org). SLIEPA is the country's official agency to assist and inform investors and exporters on the opportunities and incentives provided to investors in various sectors of the economy. New businesses that wish to register as companies must register with the Corporate Affairs Commission while sole proprietorship, partnership and cooperatives register with the Office of the Administrator and Registrar General. Investors are also informed that there is established an American Business Council through the Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry (SLCCIA). Investors are encouraged to hire the services of a registered attorney to provide guidance in going through the process of registration.

## **Leading Sectors for U.S. Exports and Investment**

### **Agriculture Sector**

#### **Overview**

The agriculture sector, including livestock and forestry, is a critical component of the economy. It employs about two third of the labor force and, according to the World Bank, contributes more than 60 percent of GDP. The country is endowed with a favorable agricultural environment comprising arable land, abundant rainfall, a temperate climate, and several rivers with significant irrigation potential that could support the production of enough food to meet local consumption and for export.

It is reported that 80 percent of foodstuffs consumed in the country are imported. Yet of the estimated 5.4 million hectares of fertile arable land, 75 percent remains uncultivated. The land is suitable for the cultivation of a wide range of crops including rice (the country's staple food), cassava, maize, millet, cashew, rubber, ginger, vegetables, fruits, and sugarcane; cash crops such as cocoa, coffee and oil palm; and the rearing of livestock. The sector is dominated by smallholder subsistence farmers utilizing local traditional tools with outdated methods and limited farm inputs. However, a few commercial agricultural companies operate in the production of biofuels and energy, palm oil, timber, rice, sorghum, growing and canning pineapples, manufacturing juice concentrates and agri-machinery contracting services.

The country is one of the world's richest fishing grounds, with more than 500 kilometers of coastline and a continental shelf of 30,000 square kilometers fed by seven major rivers. The region boasts a viable commercial fish stock including shrimp, cephalopods, lobster, demersal and pelagic species. Fishery contributes over 10 percent to GDP and provides an estimated 80 percent of animal protein, with direct employment for more than 100,000 persons and indirect employment to some 500,000 persons along the coastlines. Yet, it is challenged by poor governance and management regimes, weak infrastructure and fishery support services, overfishing, and is severely impacted by illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, with the main culprits being foreign fleets whose illegal activities are confined within the Exclusive Economic Zone.

Policy actions entailed in the Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023 include diversifying agriculture, fisheries, and tourism. Government is therefore re-visiting the policies and legal framework governing these sectors to make them more attractive. To enable the environment to achieve sustainable and diversified food production, the government is focused on increasing the amount of cultivable land and introducing intensive mechanized methods in agriculture, and promoting sober commercial fishing practices, combating IUU through effective monitoring using surveillance patrols and providing the necessary infrastructure in fisheries.

In agriculture, priority actions include a Le8 trillion (\$800 million) National Agricultural Transformation Strategy 2019-2023 which plans to double production in rice, crop, forestry, and livestock.

(<https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000110108/download/>). The government also plans to increase budgetary allocation to 10 percent for the agricultural sector to align with the Maputo Accord and attract external investment to boost productivity through mechanized commercial agricultural development alongside over \$200 million funding which has been sourced from the World Bank, the Food and Agricultural Organization, the European Union and other international organizations. The government further plans to inspire mining firms to invest in agriculture in support of their mining communities, encourage banks to lend for agricultural purposes and compel politicians within the ministerial and parliamentary cadre to invest in agriculture.

In fisheries, the government in 2019 signed a \$29.8 million partnership agreement for the construction of a fish harbor complex with a reefer quay and transshipment facilities. The complex will also provide cold storage

facilities, bonded stores, ice sales, purchase of fish and fishery products for export and the maintenance of fishing and patrol vessels. A \$3.2 million partnership agreement to improve fish smoke ovens, and water, sanitation and hygiene has also been signed. A multi-purpose, surveillance, and patrol vessel to police the entire EEZ has been secured and a radar system installed to surveillance and monitor the country's waters.

		Importation of Rice		
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Local Production	na	na	na	na
Total Exports	na	na	na	na
Total Imports (M. Tons)	220,000	600,000	346,000*	na
Imports from the U.S.	na	na	na	na
Total Market Size	na	na	na	na
Exchange Rate: 1USD	SLL6,300	SLL7,400	SLL8,000	
*Data available for first half of the 2018				

### Leading Sub-sectors

Investing in the local production, processing and marketing of rice, oil palm, cocoa, coffee, cassava, groundnut, vegetables, fruits, and livestock are leading sub-sectors. Local production of rice, the staple food, is only a very small fraction of what is consumed annually, and the government is looking for investors to boost production and reduce the large annual imports, exhausting the limited foreign exchange. The cultivation of cassava provides for the industrial production of flour and saves its importation. U.S investors can venture into the rehabilitation of existing cocoa or coffee plantations or establish new plantations. The supply of agricultural inputs like fertilizer, improved seeds, agro-chemicals, animal feeds and veterinary inputs is another important sector. Partnerships with local farmers to expand cultivation, establish adequate storage and preservation facilities, and value addition chains are aspects that will eliminate post-harvest wastages of especially perishable crops like vegetables and fruits. Domestic production is not sufficient to meet the local demand for protein, and livestock production in cattle, sheep, goat, pig and poultry farming has a large market all year round.

### Opportunities

One of the major constraints facing the agricultural and fishery sectors is the use of modern technology and mechanized equipment in the intensive cultivation of crops and the processing and preservation of fish catch. Development partners do fund projects requiring the use of machinery and other imported equipment. Labor saving agricultural equipment like tractors, power tillers, ploughs, and harvesters are opportunities for U.S. exporters and



investors. The topography generally offers potential for irrigation and cultivation can have up to three cycles in a year, particularly for rice.

Adding value to agricultural products through processing and manufacturing presents an opportunity for U.S. investors for both the domestic and the international markets. Other cross-cutting areas like agro-logistics and packaging are useful aspects required for local manufactures for the international market. Investment opportunities also exist in fish processing and value addition, with significant economic potential for high valued exportable fish including snapper, grouper, catfish, barracuda, tuna, cuttlefish, squid, lobsters, and herring.

## **Web Resources**

- i. Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry: <http://www.maf.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 76 601492 & [info@maf.gov.sl](mailto:info@maf.gov.sl)
- ii. Bank of Sierra Leone: <http://www.bsl.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 22 226501 & [info@bsl.gov.sl](mailto:info@bsl.gov.sl)
- iii. Ministry of Development and Economic Planning: <http://www.moped.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 22 226501 & [info@bsi.gov.sl](mailto:info@bsi.gov.sl)
- iv. Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources: <https://www.mfmr.gov.sl/>.  
Contact: +232-79-453843 & [info@mfmr.gov.sl](mailto:info@mfmr.gov.sl)
- v. Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency: <http://sliempa.org/>  
Contact - +232 25 332 863 & [info@sliempa.org](mailto:info@sliempa.org)
- vi. Investing in Sierra Leone- Agriculture and Fisheries: <https://www.investingsierraleone.com/agriculture-and-fisheries/>
- vii. Medium-Term National Development Plan: <http://www.moped.gov.sl/mtndp/>

## **Mining and Mineral Resources**

### **Overview**

Sierra Leone is well known for its vast endowment in minerals which include diamonds, rutile, bauxite, gold, iron ore, limonite, platinum, chromite, coltan, tantalite, columbite and zircon, as well as promising petroleum potential. In the 1990s, the 11-year civil war funded with revenue from the minerals sector engulfed the country, resulting in widespread killing, the destruction of infrastructure and a severe contraction in the economy. The sector was also greatly affected by the dual shock of the drop in iron ore prices and the Ebola epidemic in 2014.

Mining has been the mainstay of the economy since independence and the government has remained heavily dependent on mineral resources to promote sustainable economic growth over the years. Mining contributed more than 20 percent to GDP, constituted over 80 percent of export earnings and directly employed over 30,000 people with an estimated 300,000 people benefiting indirectly from the sector in 2013. The government established the National Mineral Agency under the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources in 2012 with a mandate to implement clear policies and regulations, enhance transparency and accountability and ensure mineral resources support economic and social development. Sierra Leone became a member of the Kimberley Process in 2003 to protect the legitimate trade in rough diamonds, and in 2007 enacted the Diamond Cutting and Polishing Act to issue licenses entitling the holder to buy, deal in, export, import as well as cut, polish, crush and set diamonds for the purposes of trade. In 2006, Sierra Leone joined the Extractive Industry Transparency International (EITI) with the objective of improving governance and revenue management in the extractive sector. It was declared compliant with the EITI 2011 standards in 2014 and assessment against the EITI 2016 standards began in 2018.

In Sierra Leone, mineral licenses are available for five types of rights – reconnaissance, exploration, artisanal, small-scale, and large-scale mining, with artisanal activities reserved primarily for nationals. Licensed holders must mine in the area specified by the license, invest at least 1 percent of their gross revenue in developing the communities in

which they operate, and give preference to local products and domestically incorporated companies over others. Mining fees and renewals are subject to annual charges, and royalties are assessed on the market value of the extracted mineral. License holders agree on lease rent with the owner or lawful occupant of the land and must follow the proportion specified in the Mines Act. To commence mining, an environment impact assessment license valid for 12 months must be secured from the Environmental Protection Agency and must provide a healthy and safe working environment for workers. Following a successful bidding process, the government awarded oil drilling exploration licenses to two companies, Cluff Energy and Innoson Oil and Gas, in 2019 following the 2013 exploration awards that were abandoned in 2015 due to the crash in global oil prices.

The government's drive is to improve integrity in the mining sector and ensure the country maximizes gains from its mineral resource endowments. It established the National Minerals Agency in 2012 and the Environment Protection Agency in 2008, enacted the Mines and Minerals Act of 2009, and the Public Financial Management Act of 2016, and the Extractive Industries Revenue Act of 2018 to improve transparency and accountability in the minerals sector. In 2018, the government approved the Sierra Leone Minerals Policy, the Artisanal Mining Policy, and the Geodata Policy, and currently awaits the interpreted report of a geophysical survey that collected data in 2019 on the type, quantity and location of minerals in the country.

Importation of Machinery and Equipment				
	2017	2018	2019	2020 Estimated
Total Local Production	na	na	na	na
Total Exports	na	na	na	na
Total Imports (Million USD)	300	255	360	na
Imports from the U.S.	na	na	na	na
Total Market Size	na	na	na	na
Exchange Rate: 1 US	7,400	8,000		

### Leading Sub-sectors

Mining activities require machinery and equipment, construction, and other services, which presents the best prospects for U.S. companies as their importation is on the increase. Companies with expertise in geological and exploration services, feasibility and engineering services, equipment and plant maintenance and repair, and spare parts for mining equipment can find this sub-sector attractive and rewarding. Mining consumables including explosives, tires, and lubricants are also in high demand. Construction services are key, especially for exploration companies expected to set up the peripheries to commence work.

### Opportunities

Investment opportunities exist for U.S. companies to venture into mining using the most advanced technology to access and export minerals. Exportation of mining and construction equipment and services present an opportunity

for U.S. firms producing or involved in the marketing of such equipment. Demand for technical and engineering services is likely to increase, particularly with the release of the report of the airborne geophysical survey. With more investors expected to enter this sector, construction and the demand for construction materials will increase.

### **Web Resources**

- i. Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources: <https://www.slminerals.org/>  
(Not currently updated)
- ii. National Mineral Agency: <http://www.nma.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 79 250702 & [info@nma.gov.sl](mailto:info@nma.gov.sl)
- iii. Bank of Sierra Leone: <http://www.bsl.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 22 226501 & [info@bsl.gov.sl](mailto:info@bsl.gov.sl)
- iv. Medium-Term National Development Plan: <http://www.moped.gov.sl/mtndp/>
- v. Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency: <http://sliempa.org/>  
Contact - +232 25 332 863 & [info@sliempa.org](mailto:info@sliempa.org)
- vi. Investing in Sierra Leone – Natural Resources: <https://www.investinginsierraleone.com/natural-resources/>

### **Energy Infrastructure**

#### **Overview**

Sierra Leone is endowed with energy potential in various forms including biomass from agricultural wastes, hydro and solar power, but remains completely under-utilized. Energy consumption is largely dominated by biomass sourced from fuel wood and accounts for around 80 percent of energy used. Imported petroleum products, the next largest source of energy, is mainly for power generation and accounts for 13 percent of energy consumption. Only 15 percent of the total population and about 2.5 percent of the rural population currently has access to electricity. The power sector is small, with less than 100 MW of energy capacity connecting less than 150,000 customers with the cost for electricity heavily subsidized. The entire country lacks a stable and reliable public power supply and domestic demand remains significantly unmet.

Current electricity supply is challenged with generation capacity and seasonal variation and is disseminated using inadequate and aging transmission and distribution networks. It is delivered at very high cost with Sierra Leone having one of the highest electricity tariffs in the sub-region. There are numerous waterfalls for hydropower and abundant sunlight for solar power generation with an estimated hydro project potential of more than 1000MW, while solar opportunities are above 240 MW. The major hydropower Bumbuna Dam, with a peak of 50MW during the rains reduces to 8MW in the dry season.

The government has demonstrated strong commitment to expand the energy sector despite many major challenges over the past years. The enactment of relevant legislative reforms laid the foundation for the restructuring of the sector, which created the Electricity and Water Regulatory Commission (EWRC) in 2014, unbundled the former National Power Authority (NPA) into the Electricity Generation and Transmission Company (EGTC) and the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority (EDSA) in 2015, and enabled the development of Independent Power Producers (IPP) projects. The EWRC will focus mainly on the regulatory aspects and set tariffs for consumers and tariffs between EGTC/IPPs, while the EGTC will focus on electricity generation and transmission. EDSA will hold a monopoly as the single buyer from IPPs and the single seller to consumers.

Power Africa, a multi-partner initiative with the goal of increasing efficient electricity in sub-Saharan Africa, supported Sierra Leone in 2015 with a \$44.4 million four-year threshold program through the United States Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The program addressed three main projects – strengthening the regulatory agency, restructuring the water sector, and streamlining the electricity sector, guiding the development of a roadmap for the implementation of reforms to enhance financial sustainability and improved operational efficiency. Other initiatives undertaken by the government include the establishment of a Rural Renewable Energy

Project to support increased access to rural energy resources, a Rural Electricity Board and a Rural Electricity Fund to promote and make electrification widely available in all regions, a Renewable Energy Empowerment Project to develop a knowledge base of existing renewable energy policies. The Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia-Sierra Leone-Guinea (CLSG) interconnector project, under the West African Power Pool (WAPP) program, aims to provide increased supply of electricity to these countries to meet the growing demand and will create incentive for hydropower potentials that exist in Sierra Leone.

While the overall objective of the government has been to provide energy in sufficient quantities to all regions of the country, there has been inadequate investment and limited private sector participation in the energy sector. The government has therefore embarked on various reforms focused on improving governance and regulation to encourage private sector participation in the sector. The national Electricity Act enables the participation of IPPs in power generation and distribution, and the Public-Private Partnership Unit in the Office of the President has developed a standard power purchase agreement to simplify and expedite negotiations with investors in energy and plans to establish feed-in tariffs to harmonize the sale of power from various IPPs into the WAPP and the national grid. The government is also providing special financial incentives to investors in the renewable energy sector and intends to promote the use of Liquefied Natural Gas and Liquefied Petroleum Gas. The government is inviting private independent power producers to enter the sector and support the government in achieving this goal.

Electricity Generation				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Local Production (KW/hr)	290,000	280,000	175,000,000	220,000,000
Total Exports	0	0	0	0
Total Imports (Million USD)	0	0	0	0
Imports from the U.S.	0	0	0	0
Total Market Size	na	na	na	na
Exchange Rate: 1 US	6,300	7,400	8,000	

### Leading Sector

Despite the tremendous increase in electricity generation, consumer demand remains unmet. Electricity generation presents a future opportunity for U.S. investors, particularly in the supply of hydropower and solar energy as independent power producers to the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority for commercial and residential consumption. The WAPP CLSG interconnector project offers opportunities for investors. The expected increase in agriculture and hence increased crop production will be a valuable source of materials for biomass, an alternative source of energy. Wind energy could be effective in the coastal areas. Yet, increased generation should be accompanied with the construction of transmission and distribution lines. While the government is looking for support from multilateral development partners, potential private sector investors can invest through public-private partnerships in the transmission and distribution capacity.

### Opportunities

Sierra Leone seeks to increase installed capacity from the current 100 megawatts to 350 megawatts by 2023 while aiming to fully utilize its potential to exploit the 1,240 megawatts capability for local consumption and export in the sub-region. The many rivers with numerous waterfalls and the abundant sunlight for solar energy create

considerable capabilities for power generation. U.S. firms command exceptional expertise in energy generation and producers of high-quality power equipment. This expertise and these products are of priority in the region and in considerable demand.

### **Web Resources**

- i. Ministry of Energy: <http://www.energy.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 76 369538 or +232 79 328817
- ii. Bank of Sierra Leone: <http://www.bsl.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 22 226501 & [info@bsl.gov.sl](mailto:info@bsl.gov.sl)
- iii. Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency: <http://sliempa.org/>  
Contact - +232 25 332 863 & [info@sliempa.org](mailto:info@sliempa.org)
- iv. Medium-Term National Development Plan: <http://www.moped.gov.sl/mtndp/>
- v. Investing in Sierra Leone - Energy: <https://www.investinginsierraleone.com/energy/>
- vi. Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority: <https://www.edsa.sl/>

## **Construction Sector**

### **Overview**

The construction sector comprises infrastructure, residential and business structures. Sierra Leone's development is handicapped by the poor state of infrastructure which suffered during the civil war of 1991-2002. On assuming office in 2018, the administration of President Julius Maada Bio established the Presidential Infrastructure Initiatives (PII), supervised by the Office of the President, to provide leadership and prioritize vital infrastructure that can enhance the socio-economic development of the country, creating jobs through public-private partnerships. PII will work towards attaining the infrastructure required to transform the economy into middle-income status and self-sufficiency by 2035.

The Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019 identified major projects to be undertaken under the direction of the PII. The Lungi bridge meant to connect the capital, Freetown to the international airport at Lungi, about 8 km, is a major priority infrastructure the government is pursuing. The bridge, revised from six to four lanes, will enhance the economic and tourism potentials of the country, and end the logistical challenges facing travelers arriving and departing Lungi. The project, now estimated at \$1.1 billion and expected to be completed in five years, anchors other major infrastructure projects including:

construction of a new city and tourist hub at Lungi.

- the establishment of a free trade zone and industrial park for light manufacturing and transshipment at Lungi.
- construction of a new Freetown City.
- construction of a new state house and a new conference center in Freetown.
- construction of new government office towers in Freetown.
- construction of a new Freetown shopping mall.
- construction of a Freetown coastal road to relieve traffic congestion in and out of Freetown.
- construction of a new international seaport and the development of an industrial free trade zone at Nitti to serve the south and east of the country.
- construction of a hydropower dam at Bikongor hydro site to supply 85 MW and a transmission line to hook up with the West African Power Pool transmission line.
- construction of low- and middle-income houses.
- construction of additional classrooms and schools.

- construction of interconnecting roads for each district and township roads.
- Undertake major energy and water supply projects.

There are other ongoing construction works. The government already approved \$19.8 million for the construction of an ultra-modern National Diagnostic and Radiotherapy Cancer Treatment Center with modern facilities and has provided funding for the reconstruction of water supply systems in seven district headquarters. Funds have been secured for the construction of the damages caused by the mudslide in 2017, the construction of six technical/vocational institutes and for improvement of the water supply infrastructure in Freetown. A state-of-the-art 104-bedroom Myohaung Officers' Mess is under reconstruction with plans underway to construct appropriate housing and billets for young soldiers. A modern entertainment complex will soon be constructed to showcase the talent of local artists. The European Union recently approved grants for priority investments in four districts which are being directed to the construction of major facilities including markets, student hotels, water facilities, bridges, and guest houses.

### **Leading Sectors**

The government is pursuing establishing the requisite infrastructure to successfully transform the country into a middle-income economy by 2035. Major infrastructure projects funded by development partners are among the best opportunities for U.S. companies. As more mining companies are expected in the near future, construction services and materials will be in high demand for companies to access their concessions. The quality and superiority of U.S. goods command a competitive advantage over many other goods in the market and are the priority of most mining companies.

### **Opportunities**

As the government pursues its development proposals and other infrastructure projects, there will be high demand for construction services and materials over the near term. Providing the required services and supplying the materials creates opportunities for U.S. companies, particularly those in the areas of infrastructure consultancy, construction of roads, bridges and real estate, energy generation and supply of electrical material, drainage systems, and water supply services.

### **Web Resources**

- Presidential Infrastructure Initiative – Project Briefs: <https://www.facebook.com/137094527059219/posts/presidential-infrastructure-initiative-project-briefs-spv-1-cluster-1-lungi-brid/465307757571226/>
- Ministry of Development and Economic Planning: <http://www.moped.gov.sl/>
- Contact: +232 22 226501 & [info@bsi.gov.sl](mailto:info@bsi.gov.sl)
- Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency: <http://sleipa.org/>
- Contact - +232 25 332 863 & [info@sleipa.org](mailto:info@sleipa.org)
- Investing in Sierra Leone- Infrastructure: <https://www.investingsinsierraleone.com/infrastructure/>
- Medium-Term National Development Plan: <http://www.moped.gov.sl/mtndp/>
- New Seaport for Sierra Leone: <https://politicosl.com/articles/new-seaport-sierra-leone>

### **Tourism Infrastructure**

Sierra Leone's tourism potentials remain largely untapped. The diverse ecosystem offers attractive white sandy beaches, a tropical forest, scenic mountains, and interesting wildlife. There are also historic islands with a wide range of activities around swimming, bird watching, sport fishing, and hiking.

The decade long civil war severely impacted the tourism sector and destroyed infrastructure. With some levels of peace and stability, the sector experienced consistent annual growth averaging 28 percent between 2003 and 2013 driven largely by the re-emergence of iron mining. However, international arrivals declined significantly with the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic in 2014. Nevertheless, the sector quickly re-bounded when the country was declared Ebola free in 2015 and arrivals increased by more than 500 percent in 2018.

The sector is challenged by a poor regulatory environment, weak policy framework, an outdated tourism master plan and registry, poor institutional capacity, limited access to finance, poor service delivery, inadequate infrastructure, and poor maintenance of tourist sites and corruption. There is a need to rehabilitate historical attractions, rebuild the country's image, provide sector-specific training, and address issues relating to deforestation, desertification, sand mining, encroachment on sensitive areas, poor sewage and disposal systems, and the dwindling wildlife population, all damaging the beauty and tourism opportunities of the country.

Despite these challenges, opportunities exist to stimulate and attract investment in this sector. Having identified tourism as one of the diversifying growth sectors alongside agriculture and fisheries, the government formulated a national tourism policy and a national ecotourism policy to serve as blueprints for the sustainable development of the sector and seeks to attract 20,000 international and 30,000 domestic ecotourism visits by 2025. While the government now provides visas on arrival and has reviewed the high costs of travelling to the country, the airport infrastructure has been upgraded, arrival facilities expanded and security improved. The private sector could engage in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of existing hotels, as well as the construction of new large-scale hotels, both in the beach areas and in the tropical forests. The overall government objective is to increase revenue and jobs from tourism by promoting the international image and cultural heritage of the country, improving on the policy and legal environment, developing historic sites, skills and infrastructure, promoting marketing, diversifying tourism products, and above all, attracting investors into the sector.

Tourist Arrivals				
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Departures	na	na	na	na
Total Arrivals	53,700	47,500	56,500	63,000
Arrivals from the U.S.	na	na	na	na
Total Market Size	na	na	na	na

### Leading Sector

There is significant potential for growth in the tourism industry as the country showcases its tourist sites and natural resources. Building human capacity in tourism and hospitality industry provides prospects for investment in this sector.

### Opportunities

U.S. companies can invest in building resorts, hotels, and restaurants along the stretch of white sand beaches and providing tourism services including touring, sport fishing, bird watching, hiking, and other adventures.

### **Web Resources**

Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs: <http://www.tourism.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 123 456789 & [info@tourism.gov.sl](mailto:info@tourism.gov.sl)

Bank of Sierra Leone: <http://www.bsl.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 22 226501 & [info@bsl.gov.sl](mailto:info@bsl.gov.sl)

Ministry of Development and Economic Planning: <http://www.moped.gov.sl/>  
Contact: +232 22 226501 & [info@bsi.gov.sl](mailto:info@bsi.gov.sl)

National Tourist Board: <https://ntb.gov.sl/>.  
Contact: +232 78 649519 or +232 76 627335 & [info@ntb.gov.sl](mailto:info@ntb.gov.sl)

Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency: <http://sleipa.org/>  
Contact - +232 25 332 863 & [info@sleipa.org](mailto:info@sleipa.org)

Investing in Sierra Leone- Infrastructure: <https://www.investingsierraleone.com/infrastructure/>  
Medium-Term National Development Plan: <http://www.moped.gov.sl/mtndp/>



## **Customs, Regulations and Standards**

### **Trade Barriers**

Among Sierra Leone's few trade barriers is the Sierra Leone Customs and Excise tariff. There are currently no specific sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) related restrictions, prohibitions, or barriers to foreign trade in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone has not notified the WTO of any technical regulations under the WTO agreement on technical barrier to trade (TBT) or its SPS legislation. However, the phytosanitary legislation [Agricultural Act of 1946, the Plant Phytosanitary (Import) Rules of 1974 & 1976] lists plants that are the object of prohibition. Generally, a phytosanitary certificate is required for the international movement of any plant material or product. The phytosanitary control unit operates at entry points where such consignments are inspected and issued phytosanitary certificates, clearance certificates, or import permits. Animals are subject to livestock inspections and the Director of Fisheries is empowered by the fisheries sanitary regulations of 2006 for fisheries products.

### **Import Tariffs**

The Sierra Leone Customs and Excise Tariff is based on the Common External Tariff of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which uses the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) to classify goods. It is a five-band regional tariff categorized as follows: zero percent for basic social goods; 5 percent for basic goods, raw goods, and capital goods; 10 percent for inputs and semi-finished goods; 20 percent for finished goods; and 35 percent for specific goods for economic development. For most imports, taxes are assessed based on the Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) value while others are specific, mostly based on the weight, volume, and quantity. Excise duty is also levied on imports depending on the nature of the goods. Excise are either ad valorem or specific and are levied on juice, energy drinks, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, luxury cars and petroleum products, among others.

Imports are generally subject to import duty, goods, and services tax, import excise duty, ECOWAS levy for non-ECOWAS originating goods and a declaration processing fee. Tariff exemptions are extended to several imports based mainly on the importer, several of whom are diplomatic or United Nations institutions. As a member of the ECOWAS community, Sierra Leone grants duty-free preference to products originating from ECOWAS members, where they were wholly produced, sufficiently transformed or with 35 percent value addition.

## **Import Requirements and Documentation**

Sierra Leone replaced its pre-shipment inspection with a destination inspection scheme in 2009. The scheme assesses the quality, quantity, value, and the customs classification for imports to be declared for clearance and recommends their classification and valuation opinion for the attention of customs. Imports exempted from this scheme include arms, ammunition, weapons and implements of war, gold and other precious stones, explosive and pyrotechnic products, live animals, scrap metals, crude oil, personal and household effects, supplies for diplomatic missions and United Nation Organizations, and frozen fish caught by Sierra Leone owned vessels.

Customs, in 2010, introduced the UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA ++ ) at the Port of Freetown, then expanded it to Lungi International Airport and to the Gbalamuya Border Post with the Republic of Guinea. The system was upgraded to the ASYCUDA World, a web-based system improving the processing and reducing the clearance times.

## **Labeling and Marking Requirements**

Product labeling or marking requirements are meant to provide basic information about the product. The Ministry of Trade and Industry requires that products be labelled in English to show basic information regarding name, weight, manufacture dates, expiration dates, ingredients, origin, and price. However, the ministry lacks the mechanisms to effectively enforce labeling and marking requirements.

Shipping markings and labeling are important for customs verification and clearance. Information such importer/exporter name, consignee, flight/vehicle details, place of discharge, number of packages, container identity, description of goods, air waybill number/bill of lading, and country of origin/destination, when labelled on packages/containers enhances the customs clearance process.

## **U.S. Export Controls**

The United States imposes export controls to protect national security interests and promote foreign policy objectives. BIS's Export Enforcement (EE) is responsible for the enforcement of the EAR. BIS works closely with U.S. embassies, foreign governments, industry, and trade associations to ensure that exports from the United States are secure. In accordance with the EAR, BIS officials conduct site visits, also known as End-Use Checks (EUCs), globally with end-users, consignees, and/or other parties to transactions involving items subject to the EAR, to verify compliance.

An EUC is an on-site verification of a party to a transaction to determine whether it is a reliable recipient of U.S. items. EUCs are conducted as part of BIS's licensing process, as well as its compliance program, to determine if items were exported in accordance with a valid BIS authorization or otherwise consistent with the EAR. Specifically, an EUC verifies the *bona fides* of recipient(s) of items subject to the EAR, to include: confirming their legitimacy and reliability relating to the end use and end user; monitoring their compliance with license conditions; and ensuring such items are used and/or re-exported or transferred (in-country) in accordance with the EAR.

BIS officials rely on EUCs to safeguard items subject to the EAR from diversion to unauthorized end uses/users. The verification of a foreign party's reliability facilitates future trade, including pursuant to BIS license reviews. If BIS is unable to verify the reliability of the company or is prevented from accomplishing an EUC, the company may receive, for example, more regulatory scrutiny during license reviews or be designated on BIS's Unverified List or Entity List, as applicable.

BIS has developed a list of "[red flags](#)", or warning signs, intended to discover possible violations of the EAR.

Also, BIS has "[Know Your Customer](#)" guidance.

BIS provides a variety of training sessions to U.S. exporters throughout the year. These sessions range from one to two-day seminars and focus on the basics of exporting as well as more advanced topics. Check a [list of upcoming seminars and webinars](#).

BIS also provides [online training](#).

The EAR does not regulate transactions involving all U.S. goods, services, and technologies. Other U.S. Government agencies regulate more specialized exports. For example, the U.S. Department of State's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls has authority over defense articles and services. A list of other agencies involved in export control can be found on the [BIS website](#) or in Supplement No. 3 to Part 730 of the EAR.

The EAR is available on the [BIS website](#) and on the [e-CFR](#) (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations).

The [Consolidated Screening List](#) (CSL) is a list of parties for which the United States Government maintains restrictions on certain exports, reexports or transfers of items. The CSL consolidates a number of smaller lists of restricted parties that are maintained by a variety of U.S. Government agencies, including the Department of Commerce, as an aid to industry in conducting electronic screens of potential parties to regulated transactions.

### **Temporary Entry**

Temporary entry is meant for goods that are imported for a specified period without payment of duty. The intent is to re-export or destroy the goods after a certain period not exceeding the date given by the customs authority, usually three months from the date of importation. Failure to re-export or destroy the goods in accordance with the customs regulation will result in liquidated damages. Goods that qualified for temporary entry and the regulations concerning temporary entry procedures can be found at Section 44 of the Customs Act No 9 of 2011 at [www.nra.gov.sl/sites/default/files/Cutoms-Act-2011.pdf](http://www.nra.gov.sl/sites/default/files/Cutoms-Act-2011.pdf).

### **Prohibited and Restricted Imports**

The importation and exportation of certain goods are prohibited, and some others are subject to restrictions to protect the safety and lives of humans, animals, and plants, safeguard national security, or protect artistic, cultural, or intellectual property. Examples include the importation of certain food products, drugs, pharmaceuticals, environmentally hazardous products, seeds, weapons, explosives, and antiques. For the most current information on Sierra Leone's Prohibited and Restricted Import and Export List, please refer to the Customs Act No 9 of 2011 at [www.nra.gov.sl/sites/default/files/Cutoms-Act-2011.pdf](http://www.nra.gov.sl/sites/default/files/Cutoms-Act-2011.pdf).

### **Customs Regulations**

The customs department is a revenue collecting department under the National Revenue Authority (NRA). The authority was established in 2002 as an independent, semi-autonomous authority principally responsible for the collection of government revenue. The department has the major function of collecting and accounting for all import and export related duties and taxes. The department also collects trade statistics, facilitates trade, and protects society from illegal imports and exports. It further implements bilateral, regional, and international trade arrangements, and prevents smuggling.

All goods must be declared to the customs department for verification, tax assessment and release. Import goods must comply with the destination inspection scheme. All containerized goods must go through an x-ray scanning facility to check whether the contents match the cargo description or detect the presence of illegal cargo. Sierra Leone operates a destination inspection program which applies to all consignments and is subject to a fee of 1% of their f.o.b. value.

### **Standards for Trade**

The Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB) is the authority in charge of standards, certification, and accreditation. It collects and disseminates information on standards and related matters, verifies weights and measures, calibrates industrial and laboratory equipment, and authorizes and validates the use of the metric system of measurement in Sierra Leone. Funded mainly by the Government, SLSB gets technical assistance and capacity-building support from international and regional organizations, including ISO and ARSO.

SLSB has five technical committees (the National Codex Committee, the Industrial Standards Board, the Metrology Committee, the Food and Agriculture Committee, and the Engineering Technical Committee) and all base their standards on those of international or regional organizations, though it will develop its own guidelines in the absence of international standards for indigenous products. It follows ISO/IEC directives, and the procedural manual of the codex alimentarius in the development of national standards. A developed standard, once submitted to Parliament and published in the *Gazette*, will become a technical regulation after 60 days. Currently, there are 100 standards and 33 technical regulations.

Sierra Leone has no mutual recognition agreements in place. The SLSB may inspect all imports at the borders, in collaboration with the regulatory authorities and customs. The SLSB checks the certificate of conformity and labelling requirements and may perform field tests before issuing clearance to customs for the release of the goods.

### **Trade Agreements**

Sierra Leone is a member of the Mano River Union (MRU), which includes Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire. Sierra Leone is also a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which includes fifteen countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. ECOWAS is in the process of developing a customs union among its members, allowing for the free flow of goods and services between member nations and the use of a single currency.

Sierra Leone has preferential trade agreement with European Union's Everything But Arms, bilateral agreement with the United States African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Treaty, and a multilateral agreement with the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, a trade agreement between 55 African Union member states with the goal of creating a single market and a single currency union.

### **Licensing Requirements for Professional Services**

Professions in Sierra Leone are required to be licensed locally before providing services for the public. Such professions include bankers, medical professionals, engineers, lawyers, accountants, auditors, and architects.

### **Selling U.S. Products and Services**

#### **Distribution & Sales Channels**

In Sierra Leone, goods are distributed from the manufacturer through wholesalers to retailers, though some manufacturers do sell directly to retailers. Generally, wholesalers import goods in bulk from the manufacturers, clear the goods through customs and transport them to their stores, from which they then distribute to the retail market. Some wholesalers operate both as a wholesale and as a retail operation with chains of small shops serving as retail outlets including supermarkets.

#### **eCommerce**

E-Commerce is still at an early stage of development in Sierra Leone. Nearly all transactions are carried out in cash, though mobile money platforms supported by mobile phone companies are becoming more popular. ICT infrastructures are generally inadequate and even the use of debit or credit cards is highly limited. ATMs have been introduced by some banks but are not widely in use countrywide. There is a growing demand for online goods but those who shop online pay expensively for DHL delivery.

#### **Selling Factors & Techniques**

Sierra Leonean consumers react positively to American products. All sales materials should be in English and the name and address of the manufacturer, the country of origin and the product expiration date should be indicated

clearly on the product/packaging. Local distributors of imported products look forward to suppliers for advertisement and promotional support, particularly when introducing a new product or brand name.

## **Trade Financing**

It is difficult to obtain funding locally through Sierra Leonean banks and other institutional investors. Financing for large projects is funded with a mixture of debt and equity from commercial and or development banks. Private sector funding, provided by commercial bank loans, attracts very high lending rates which makes commercial loans expensive. Most commercial banks limit their activities to short and medium-term finance.

Funding for larger projects or business expansions can be found through international lenders and development banks. Bilateral/multilateral donors and international organizations have financed major development projects in agriculture, health, education, and infrastructure through grants or loans. Multilateral Development Banks, including the African Development Bank and the World Bank lend billions of dollars to developing countries on projects aimed at accelerating economic growth and social development by reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and education, and advancing infrastructural development. The Commercial Service Liaison Office (<http://www.export.gov/afdb> & <http://export.gov/worldbank>) can help U.S. businesses get involved and can advocate on behalf of U.S. bidders.

The West African Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank also finance public infrastructure projects. Furthermore, American institutions like the U.S. Trade and Development Agency provide financing for feasibility studies; the U.S. Export-Import Bank supports the export of U.S. goods; and Development Finance Corporation (formerly the Overseas Private Investment Corporation) provides insurance against political risks and financing for U.S. investments.

## **Protecting Intellectual Property**

Sierra Leone is a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO). Sierra Leone is a member of the WTO and is therefore bound by the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Sierra Leone has not ratified the WIPO Copyright Treaty or the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Rights. Despite its recognition of international standards, Sierra Leone's protection of intellectual property is limited. Laws dating back to the colonial era mean that patents and trademarks registered in the United Kingdom can be extended to Sierra Leone. Efforts to update the country's legal framework have thus far included the Copyright Act 2011, the Patents and Industrial Design Act 2012, and the Trademark Act 2014. Nonetheless, legal protections remain outdated and incomplete, and government enforcement is minimal due to resource and capacity limitations. Customs screening for counterfeit goods is weak, and the government publishes no known statistics about seizures of counterfeit goods.

## **Selling to the Public Sector**

The laws allow foreign firms to use agents, partners, or distributors to register a business or a subsidiary of a foreign firm in Sierra Leone. Inasmuch as it is recommended that U.S. firms conduct due diligence before engaging agents, partners, or distributors that are familiar with the business environment including the regulatory framework, investment laws, tax procedures and customs processes, it is also advisable that U.S. firms ensure such arrangements are done with local legal representation. As a Partner Post, the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy provides a range of fee-based services to help U.S. firms identify suitable agents, partners, or distributors within the country. Please contact the commercial section at [Freetown-Econ@state.gov](mailto:Freetown-Econ@state.gov).

Government procurement is carried out by a bidding process determined by the National Public Procurement Authority, established, and mandated by the Public Procurement Act No. 70 of 2004 and Act No. 10 of 2016. These acts provide the overall rules to be followed as the National Public Procurement Authority coordinates all government procurements. The standards, policies and procedures to be followed in the procurement of goods,

works and services within the public sector, and also guidance on asset disposal procedures can be found at <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/sl/sl010en.pdf> and [www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2016-01.pdf](http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2016-01.pdf).

U.S. companies bidding on Government tenders may also qualify for U.S. Government advocacy. A unit of the U.S. Commerce Department's International Trade Administration, the Advocacy Center coordinates U.S. Government interagency advocacy efforts on behalf of U.S. exporters bidding on public sector contracts with international governments and government agencies. The Advocacy Center works closely with our network of the U.S. Commercial Service worldwide and inter-agency partners to ensure that exporters of U.S. products and services have the best possible chance of winning government contracts. Advocacy assistance can take many forms but often involves the U.S. Embassy or other U.S. Government agencies expressing support for the U.S. bidders directly to the foreign government. Consult [Advocacy for Foreign Government Contracts](#) for additional information.

### **Financing of Projects**

Outline how major projects are financed and give examples where relevant. If your country is a borrower from a Multilateral Development Bank, **insert the following text** (otherwise skip this section):

**Multilateral Development Banks and Financing Government Sales.** Price, payment terms, and financing can be a significant factor in winning a government contract. Many governments finance public works projects through borrowing from the Multilateral Development Banks (MDB). A helpful guide for working with the MDBs is the [Guide to Doing Business with the Multilateral Development Banks](#). The U.S. Department of Commerce's (USDOC) International Trade Administration (ITA) has a Foreign Commercial Service Officer stationed at each of the five different Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs): the African Development Bank; the Asian Development Bank; the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the Inter-American Development Bank; and the World Bank.

Learn more by contacting the:

- Commercial Liaison Office to the [African Development Bank](#)
- Commercial Liaison Office to the [World Bank](#)

## **Business Travel**

### **Business Customs**

Business customs tend to follow the western business dress code comparable to that in the United States. Western suits and local traditional attire are appropriate all through the year. It is courteous to greet people when you meet with them and address them by their professional titles. Business appointments can be made through personal calls, emails, cell phone conversations, text messages, or even hand delivered notes. Sierra Leoneans are not always punctual at meetings and events do not always start on time. It is also advisable to confirm appointments well before attendance.

English Language is the official administrative language in Sierra Leone. All correspondences are prepared in English. Business cards are welcome.

An umbrella is necessary during the May to October rainy season. A current yellow fever vaccination record is required for entry.

### **Travel Advisory**

Travelers are encouraged to check the information provided by the State Department at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/sierra-leone-travel-advisory.html> & <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/SierraLeone.html>.

### **Visa Requirements**

All visitors entering Sierra Leone must possess a valid passport. A visa is required from all except citizens of ECOWAS member states. It is advisable for U.S. travelers to make visa enquiries at Sierra Leonean Embassies and Consulates prior to travel, but you can now get a visa on arrival at either the port or at the land borders. U.S. travelers could obtain the latest information and details from the Embassy of Sierra Leone at 1701 19th Street, NW Washington, DC 20009, USA or via website at <https://embassyofsierraleone.net/>. Other overseas inquiries should be made at the nearest Sierra Leonean embassy or consulate. Visit the Embassy of Sierra Leone website for the most current visa information: <https://embassyofsierraleone.net/visa-and-consular-services/general-visa-information>.

### **Currency**

The local currency of Sierra Leone is the Sierra Leonean Leone (SLL or Le). The notes come in denominations of Le10,000, Le5,000, Le2,000, and Le 1,000, and coins in Le500, Le100 and Le50. Sierra Leone is generally a cash economy and operates a floating exchange rate system. The U.S. dollar can be exchanged for local currency relatively easily at local banks and numerous licensed foreign exchange bureaus in the country. Travelers are however advised to avoid non-licensed bureaus, and individuals selling on the “black market” who change currencies on the roadside. There are thirteen commercial banks with several branches operating in various parts of the country. A number of these banks offer credit/debit and ATM facilities. However, these cards and traveler’s checks are not usually accepted by some hotels. Those that do accept traveler’s checks, often have unfavorable rates. Travelers are therefore advised to carry some amount of U.S. dollar denominations though large sums must be transmitted via bank or other financial instruments. In August 2019, the Bank of Sierra Leone restricted individuals and entities from holding or traveling with more than USD \$10,000 or its equivalent in cash or outside the banking system.

### **Telecommunications/Electric**

The International direct country code for Sierra Leone is + 232 or 00 232. Fixed-line telecommunications services are provided by Sierratel but are not widely in use. Mobile penetration rate is high with four major mobile phone operators (Orange, Africell, Sierratel and QCell). Mobile phones are generally preferred over land lines and many Sierra Leoneans carry two or three mobile phones at a time. Direct international telephone calls can be made on all phone lines. Internet penetration continues to improve. The country is connected by an undersea fiber optic cable, which has significantly improved internet connection speed. All the major mobile phone companies provide data services (3G and 4G) that allow reasonably good internet connection. High-speed internet connections and Wi-Fi are available at hotels. Facebook and WhatsApp Mobile social media platforms are important communication tools. Several data transfer companies have established networks and are serving banks and other institutions.

Sierra Leone's electrical standard is 220 volts, a three-pronged British style plug is used almost exclusively, and adaptors are available at local electronic stores.

## **Transportation**

Despite the improvements made in the road network within the capital and connecting key district headquarter towns, more roads still require upgrading to allow easy and safe access to major towns and villages. Passenger transportation options include buses, vans, taxis, motorcycles, and ferries, outboard powered boats, and self-propelled local boats. Taxis are common in Freetown and major cities, though some are inadequately maintained. Privately operated public transport vans referred to as "Poda poda" are often risky and overloaded and must be avoided. Cars with drivers are also available for hire through hotels and car rental agencies and use of those services is a recommended alternative to taxis. For ease of movement in the city and to the provinces, it is advisable to hire a car and driver for reasons of safety, security, and reliability. Four-wheel-drive vehicles with drivers for in-country travel are available at some hotels for hire. Fares should be negotiated before boarding, particularly to and from the airport. Travelers should always carry copies of their passports while travelling within the country. Driving after dark outside of Freetown or other major cities is not recommended due to the lack of adequate street lighting, number of disabled vehicles blocking the roadside, presence of animals and pedestrians and the proportion of local drivers who do not habitually make use of their headlights.

Freetown International Airport in Lungi is Sierra Leone's main airport. The airport is separated from the capital, Freetown, by an estuary, the Rokel River. Water taxis have agents at the airport to take passengers across to the capital. Ferries are also available but require a taxi to the terminal to board. Alternatively, one can hire a vehicle from the airport to drive to Freetown, which takes approximately three hours and traverses a toll road.

## **Language**

English is the official language in Sierra Leone, and the second language for many Sierra Leoneans who also speak Krio, the lingua franca, and/or several indigenous languages including Temne, Mende, Limba, and Loko. There are 16 tribes, each with its own tribal dialect that is spoken mainly amongst family members, kinsmen or tribal groups. Business travelers will find that most government officials and businesspeople speak English well.

## **Health**

Many infectious tropical diseases are prevalent in Sierra Leone. Malaria, typhoid, and diarrhea are common. Malaria, the major tropical infection, is spread by the *anopheles* mosquito. Visitors must protect against its bite by using mosquito repellants, mosquito nets, and wearing long-sleeved clothing and pants at night. A regular use of anti-malarial drugs is strongly recommended, and dosing should begin prior to arrival in Sierra Leone. There are infrequent outbreaks of cholera. Visitors should consult their physician about the appropriate measures to take to maintain their health and the current vaccinations recommended before a visit to Sierra Leone. Vaccinations for



malaria, cholera, typhoid, tetanus, meningitis, and protection against hepatitis are also strongly suggested. A vaccination certificate for yellow fever required to enter Sierra Leone. Pharmacies are mostly stocked with medications manufactured primarily in India and China. Prices are generally cheaper than in the United States. However, supplies sometimes vary and counterfeits are pervasive. It is therefore strongly recommended to bring a good supply of any needed medications. Visitors with chronic medical conditions must bring supplies and medications sufficient for their length of stay.

Medical facilities are available in Sierra Leone, but outside Freetown, there are fewer opportunities for health care, particularly in remote regions. Foreign business visitors normally restrict themselves to private clinics which are mostly available in large urban areas. Many common household medicines and some prescription drugs are locally available, but the business traveler is encouraged to carry an ample supply of any special medications required and only use reputable pharmacies when purchasing medicines. Generally, medical facilities are limited and are not up to U.S. or European standards. Doctors and hospitals will expect immediate cash payment for medical care.

The climate in the dry season (October to April), is hot and humid and excessive sun exposure should be avoided to prevent excessive fluid loss and dehydration from perspiration. There can be water shortages in the Freetown area, especially during the dry season. Bottled water (Grafton and Megram are the most popular locally bottled brands) is widely available and safe to drink. Sanitary conditions are generally poor so always ensure uncooked and non-peelable vegetables, salads and fruits are washed and disinfected, fresh fish and seafood are properly sanitized, and meat thoroughly cooked before eating. Swimming in the ocean is safe, but swimming in rivers and in non-moving fresh water is not.

Sierra Leone was one of the affected countries in the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The epidemic severely overwhelmed the country's healthcare system. Many medical facilities became dysfunctional and have not fully recovered. The WHO declared Sierra Leone Ebola-free in November 2015. Sierra Leone, currently confronting COVID-19, has in place a raft of measures to contain its spread and swift actions have been taken by the government to combat the crisis.

## **Local Time, Business Hours, & Holidays**

The time zone is Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Business institutions and government offices usually open from 0800 to 1700 Monday through Friday, closed 1300-1400 for lunch. However, because of the novel coronavirus outbreak, the time has been officially restricted to 0900 to 1600. Some businesses are open on Saturday. Some offices close Friday afternoons in observance of mosque attendance. It is usual for many government offices and businesses to hold staff meetings on Monday and Friday mornings. The executive arm of government often holds meetings on Wednesdays. Holidays falling on Saturdays and Sundays are observed on Mondays. Muslim holidays do not have specified dates but are observed as announced by the government.

The following are confirmed holidays for 2020:

January 1	New Year's Day
February 18	Armed Forces Day
March 9	International Women's Day
April 10	Good Friday
April 13	Easter day
April 27	Sierra Leone Independence Day
May 1	International Workers Day
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	Boxing Day

### **Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings**

Sierra Leone allows the temporary entry of traveler's personal belongings subject to customs inspection. The personal baggage of a visitor is admitted free of duty. Duty is not charged on items for personal use, including clothing, household items and electrical goods, and instruments/tools meant for professional use. No customs duty is required for visitors carrying portable computers/laptops and cellular telephones for their own use. However, customs will levy duty on non-allowable personal effects and on those that are in excess of the allowable quantity. Unaccompanied personal and household effects must be declared as such and are subject to duties at the time of their arrival. Illicit drugs, ammunition and pornographic materials etc. are prohibited. Currency declaration is required upon arrival.

## **Investment Climate Statement**

### **Executive Summary**

Sierra Leone, with an estimated population of over 7.9 million people (World Population Review), is located on the coast of West Africa between the Republic of Guinea in the north and northeast, the Republic of Liberia in the south and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean on the west, and a land area of 71,740 square kilometers. Since the civil war ended in 2002, the country has been largely politically stable with significant religious tolerance among its people. Sierra Leone presents opportunities for investment and engagement. The current President, Brigadier (Retired) Julius Maada Bio, took office in April 2018. His “New Direction” administration promised a comprehensive reform agenda to revamp the economy and overturn imbalances on the current account, currency depreciation, high inflationary pressure, untenable debt distress, and high unemployment.

The 2014-15 Ebola outbreak and global slump in commodity prices severely impacted Sierra Leone’s economy. As the country continued to seek significant budget support from foreign donors, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in June 2017 approved a three-year Extended Credit Facility (ECF) to help address macroeconomic weaknesses including low revenue, elevated inflation, high public debt and inadequate foreign exchange reserves. However, the ECF was suspended in December 2017, as development partners withheld budgetary support in advance of the 2018 national elections. In November 2018, The IMF approved a 43-month ECF totaling approximately US\$172.1 million.

President Bio’s administration launched the medium-term National Development Plan 2019–2023, with four goals aligned with global and regional agendas and investments in education, governance, and infrastructure. The plan, focused on human capital development and supported by economic diversification and competitiveness in agriculture, fisheries, and tourism, seeks to facilitate Sierra Leone’s transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. According to the government, this initial five years is part of a 20-year long-term national development commitment aimed at achieving middle-income status by 2039.

The investment climate in Sierra Leone presents challenges. In 2020, the World Bank ranked Sierra Leone 163 among 190 countries for the ease of doing business, a drop from 140 in 2015. The World Bank highlighted challenges in access to credit, resolving insolvency, access to electricity, and construction permits but noted improved performance in payment of taxes and cross-border trade, with significantly improved performance in starting a business. The current administration is publicly tackling corruption: for the first time in five years, the country progressed 10 places up in the global Transparency International Corruption ranking, from 129 out of 180 in 2018 to 119 out of 180 in 2019. Sierra Leone passed the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s (MCC) Control of Corruption indicator in 2018 and 2019, after failing in 2017.

Sierra Leone, endowed with substantial natural resources, has long relied on its mineral industry, dominated by numerous miners of iron ore, diamonds, rutile and bauxite. Minerals account for more than 80 percent of exports and contribute 2.7 percent of the GDP. President Bio’s government has reviewed mining contracts signed during the previous administration and is considering changes aimed to derive more public revenue from natural resources, a promise he made during his campaign. The government canceled the mining licenses of two major iron ore companies—the China-owned Shandong Iron & Steel Company and the U.S.-owned Gerald Group’s SL Mining Company—reportedly over payment irregularities; the SL Mining dispute remains before an international tribunal. Meanwhile, in 2020, local police arrested five and detained one expatriate SL Mining staff; though police later released most of them on bail, charges have yet to be filed. There are also reports of commercial disputes with other foreign investors within the mining, finance, security, and energy sectors. In some cases, the government has failed to abide by international arbitral rulings. Investments outside of the capital city, Freetown, require special attention to local dynamics and community needs, particularly due to the influence and significant authority of traditional leaders, such as village elders and the Paramount Chiefs.

Sierra Leone benefits from duty-free access to the Mano River Union market, and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, the European Union’s Everything But Arms initiative, and the United States’ African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Achieving sustained economic growth will depend on Sierra Leone’s ability to diversify its economy, promote sectors including agriculture, tourism, and fisheries, and manage the country’s natural resources responsibly.

Measure	Year	Index/Rank	Website Address
<b>TI Corruption Perceptions Index</b>	2019	119 of 180	<a href="http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview">http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview</a>
<b>World Bank’s Doing Business Report</b>	2020	163 of 190	<a href="http://www.doingbusiness.org/en/rankings">http://www.doingbusiness.org/en/rankings</a>
<b>Global Innovation Index</b>	2019	Not rated of 129	<a href="https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/analysis-indicator">https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/analysis-indicator</a>
<b>U.S. FDI in partner country (\$M USD, stock positions)</b>	2018	13 Million USD Amount	<a href="https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/sierra-leone">https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/sierra-leone</a>
<b>World Bank GNI per capita</b>	2018	490 USD amount	<a href="http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD">http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD</a>

## **Openness To, and Restrictions Upon, Foreign Investment**

### **Policies toward Foreign Direct Investment**

The Government of Sierra Leone has a favorable attitude toward foreign direct investment (FDI), which it sees as critical to revitalizing the country’s economic growth.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry oversees trade policies and programs, and supervises the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA), the government’s lead agency in implementing initiatives to stimulate exports and investments, improve the investment climate, and promote the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The government has a variety of initiatives to remove constraints on trade and improve the investment climate. In recent years, Sierra Leone has constructed major roads leading to district headquarter towns and rehabilitated a network of trunk and feeder roads, linking agricultural suppliers with urban markets in mainly district headquarter towns. The government has also prioritized improvements to the country’s trade facilitation infrastructure, including simplifying the customs clearance procedures at ports and land borders, and extending the major seaport to accommodate more vessels.

While the government’s message is that the country is open to foreign investment, investors perceive corruption as a primary obstacle. The Bio administration has taken efforts to address corrupt practices affecting procurements, land rights, customs, law enforcement, judicial proceedings, and other governance and economic sectors. The legal

system generally treats foreign investors in a non-discriminatory fashion, although investors have noted that the judicial application of the laws is often subject to financial and political influences. The legal framework is largely in place, but consistent enforcement is a challenge. Moreover, the government has failed to abide by international arbitral rulings related to a U.S.-owned mining company.

### **Limits on Foreign Control and Right to Private Ownership and Establishment**

Foreign and domestic private entities have the right to establish and own business enterprises and engage in all forms of remunerative activities. Foreigners are free to establish, acquire, and dispose of interests in business enterprises. However, foreign investors cannot invest in arms and ammunition, cement block manufacturing, granite and sandstone excavation, manufacturing of certain consumer durable goods, and military, police, and prison guards' apparel and accoutrements. Furthermore, there are limits to land ownership by foreign entities and individuals; the limitations vary depending on the location of the land being used and are discussed below in the "Real Property" section.

### **Business Facilitation**

Sierra Leone has made progress in recent years in simplifying its business registration process. The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) now manages the registration of limited liability companies and provides a "one stop shop" including an online business registration system. The entire process involves five steps and takes on average ten days. Additional information is available from the CAC's website at <http://www.cac.gov.sl/>. SLIEPA also provides useful guidance on starting a business, sector-specific business licenses, mining licensing and certification fees, and marine resources and fisheries at <http://slepa.org/starting-a-business/>.

### **Outward Investment**

Sierra Leone has no program to promote or incentivize outward investment, but also places no restrictions on such activity.

### **Bilateral Investment and Taxation Treaties**

Sierra Leone has bilateral investment treaties with Germany, in force since 1966, the United Kingdom, revised in 2001, and with China, signed in 2001, though the agreement has not yet entered into force. As a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Sierra Leone also benefits from the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement signed in 2014 with the United States. Sierra Leone does not have a bilateral taxation treaty with the United States.

### **Legal Regime**

#### **Transparency of the Regulatory System**

Sierra Leone's regulatory system is not fully consistent with international norms. The Government of Sierra Leone develops laws and regulations at the national level, but the public and business community have few opportunities to provide input into proposed laws and regulations. The Constitution requires publication of proposed laws and regulations in a government journal, the Gazette, for a period of 21 days. However, stakeholders report that they often do not receive notice of relevant regulatory changes, and proposed regulations may automatically take effect unless overturned by Parliament. The Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture represents the business community, but the private sector and civil society have limited roles in pushing for regulatory changes.

In recent years, Sierra Leone has taken various steps to promote and improve regulatory transparency. The Right to Access Information Act 2013 makes government records and information available to the public. However, since its establishment in 2014, the Right to Access Information Commission has been largely ineffective due to funding constraints. In 2018, the Bio administration appointed a new head of Commission in an effort to improve its services, while the World Bank launched the Proactive Disclosure Scheme for information to be released before it is requested.

Sierra Leone joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2014. Over the last decade, the Office of the Auditor General produced comprehensive and credible annual audits. Although the audits identified numerous serious deficiencies and challenges, most of the Auditor General's recommendations have remained unimplemented by the responsible MDAs. Parliament has not penalized MDAs for failure to implement the audit recommendations. Sierra Leone joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in 2008, became EITI compliant in 2014, and having made meaningful progress in implementing the 2016 EITI Standards, is to review the legal framework and prepare recommendations for Beneficial Ownership Disclosure reform. The enactment of the Public Financial Management Act in 2016 reformed the budget process and improved transparency in the expenditure of public funds, and the Fiscal Management and Control Act of 2017 directed government MDAs to transfer revenues and all other monies they receive into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. One of the first executive orders of President Bio in April 2018 was to order all MDAs to transfer their residual funds into the Treasury Single Account (TSA), a key IMF condition to improve governmental budgetary oversight and controls.

### **International Regulatory Considerations**

Sierra Leone joined the General Agreement of Tariff and Trade (GATT) in May 1961 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in July 1995. Sierra Leone has never been a party to a dispute case before the WTO, and it has not notified the WTO of any measures that are inconsistent with the WTO's Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) obligations. As a member of the World

Customs Organization (WCO) since November 1975, Sierra Leone acceded to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures in June 2015. Otherwise referred to as the Revised Kyoto Convention, Sierra Leone successfully completed the WCO Time Release Study in support of the country's commitments to the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation in 2016, and finally notified the WTO of acceptance of the WTO amendment of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation in May 2017.

### **Legal System and Judicial Independence**

The legal system is derived from the English common law system, but outside of the capital, Freetown, local courts apply customary law to many disputes. The courts provide a venue to enforce property and contract rights. The country does not have a consolidated written commercial or contractual law, and numerous, disparate pieces of legislation sometimes lead to uneven treatment of commercial disputes.

The Superior Court of Judicature consists of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, and the High Court. Commercial disputes brought before the High Court are generally heard by the Commercial and Admiralty Division. In 2010, Sierra Leone created a Fast Track Commercial Court with the aim of reducing the duration of commercial cases from two-three years to about six months. To date, the court has had minimal effectiveness due to resource limitations. In 2017, Sierra Leone hosted a commercial law summit to address gaps in the justice system, resulting in concrete recommendations in key areas, including arbitration, anti-corruption and bribery, public-private partnerships, and reform of the court process. There is now a draft Arbitration Bill which when passed into law will bring arbitration proceedings in Sierra Leone up to international standards. Though it is generally purported to be independent, there are indications the executive wields influence over the judiciary. Although foreign investors have equal access to the judicial system, in practice the system is slow and often subject to financial and political influences.

### **Laws and Regulations on Foreign Direct Investment**

Sierra Leonean law generally ensures that foreign investors may compete on the same terms as domestic firms. The Investment Promotion Act 2004 protects foreign entities from discriminatory treatment. The law creates incentives, customs exemptions, provides for investors to freely repatriate proceeds and remittances, and protects against expropriation without prompt and adequate compensation. The law establishes a dispute settlement framework that allows investors to submit disputes to arbitration in accordance with the rules of procedure of the UN Commission

on International Trade Laws (UNCITRAL). Export licenses are required only for certain goods and materials. While the export of gold and diamonds must comply with internationally accepted standards such as Kimberley Process certification, the permits required to export goods such as cocoa and coffee are issued automatically, and legally, at no cost.

Foreign companies may own or invest in Sierra Leonean entities, with limited exceptions. Small mining investments require a minority partnership with a Sierra Leonean company. The Sierra Leone National Carrier Ratification Agreement of 2012, and amended in 2014, provides preferential treatment in shipping to the Sierra Leone National Shipping Company. The Petroleum Exploration and Production Act 2001 restricts licenses for petroleum exploration and production to companies registered or incorporated in Sierra Leone. The Government of Sierra Leone has also identified certain restrictions on foreign investment in its Schedule of Specific Commitments to the General Agreement on Trade in Services, from August 1995, which established limited restrictions on business services, financial services, and the maritime and airport sectors. Businesses providing such services must establish local partnerships or joint ventures. The Local Content Policy, adopted in 2012, promotes the utilization of locally produced goods and locally provided services, and the employment of Sierra Leonean nationals. While failure to follow the policy previously resulted only in a denial of investment incentives, the Sierra Leone Local Content Agency Act 2016 requires compliance. More information is available below in the “Performance and Data Localization Requirements” section.

Sierra Leonean authorities do not screen, review, or approve foreign direct investments. Companies must register to do business in Sierra Leone, and there are no reports that the registration process has blocked investments or discriminated against investors. In the case of investment guarantees, the government established certain procedures with the U.S. government in agreements signed on December 28, 1962 and November 13, 1963, whereby Sierra Leone authorities grant approval for external investment guarantees in Sierra Leone. Additional information about the laws and regulations applicable to foreign investments is available on the website of SLIEPA at <http://sliempa.org/>.

### **Competition and Antitrust Laws**

Sierra Leone does not have a competition law. The European Union (EU) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have supported the Ministry of Trade and Industry’s attempt to develop a competition policy, but the parliament has not yet adopted the relevant legislation.

### **Expropriation and Compensation**

There is currently no history of expropriation in Sierra Leone, though the government has threatened such action against a foreign investor following a dispute under arbitration in an international tribunal. The Constitution authorizes the government to expropriate property only when it is necessary in the interests of national defense, public safety, order, morality, town and country planning, or the public benefit or welfare. In such cases, the Constitution guarantees the prompt payment of adequate compensation, with a right of access to a court or another independent authority to consider legality, determine the amount of compensation, and ensure prompt payment.

### **Dispute Settlement**

#### *ICSID and New York Convention*

Sierra Leone has been a party to the *International Convention on the Settlement of Investment Dispute (ICSID)* since 1966, but not a party to the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (the New York Convention). Sierra Leone was not an independent state but a colony of Britain when the convention was negotiated and adopted in June 1958. Though Parliament in November 2018 approved a motion authorizing Sierra Leone as a state to accede to the convention, Sierra Leone is yet to domesticate the provisions of the New York Convention in its legal system. Section 13 of the Arbitration Act 1960 allows foreign arbitral awards to be registered

in Sierra Leonean courts and enforced in the same manner as a domestic judgment or court order. However, registration of foreign arbitral awards is not automatic but instead left to the discretion of the presiding judge.

#### *Investor-State Dispute Settlement*

Investment disputes in Sierra Leone can take a long time to resolve, given heavily centralized decision-making, the slow pace of bureaucracy, and substantial court backlogs. In 2016, the Embassy received multiple reports of cases where U.S. companies experienced challenges in asserting their investment interests. One company reported that the previous government denied regulatory approval for the firm's acquisition of a Sierra Leonean entity in part because preference should be given to Sierra Leonean buyers. However, in 2018, the new administration overturned the decision and granted regulatory approval for the U.S. company to take over.

#### *International Commercial Arbitration and Foreign Courts*

The Arbitration Act 1960 allows investors to arbitrate disputes, but the procedures set forth in the law are outdated and not in compliance with international standards. The country does not have a central arbitral institution, and instead arbitration is conducted on an ad hoc basis, including through pre-trial settlement conferences and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms before the Commercial and Admiralty Division of the High Court. The Investment Promotion Act 2004 allows investment disputes to be referred to arbitration in accordance with UNCITRAL procedures or the framework of any applicable bilateral or multilateral investment agreement. Judgments of foreign courts can be enforced under the Foreign Judgments (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act 1960, provided the country has a bilateral or reciprocal enforcement treaty with Sierra Leone. The Public Private Partnership Act, 2014 also provides for international arbitration in Sierra Leone. The recent cancellation of two iron ore mining company licenses over disputed royalty payments and non-compliance with mining laws has resulted in referral of the government to international arbitration.

### **Bankruptcy Regulations**

The Bankruptcy Act 2009 establishes a process of bankruptcy for individuals and companies. Bankruptcy is a civil matter, but it may disqualify an individual from holding certain elected and public offices and from practicing certain professions. The Bankruptcy Act 2009 also encourages and facilitates reorganization as an alternative to liquidation. The World Bank ranked Sierra Leone 162, with a score of 24.7, in the ease of resolving insolvency in 2020. While the country's regulatory framework for bankruptcy is relatively strong, on average secured creditors receive only 11 cents on the dollar (compared to 20 cents average throughout sub-Saharan Africa) and the proceedings cost approximately 42 percent of the estate's value.

Following the passing of a Credit Reference Act in 2011, Sierra Leone established a Credit Reference Bureau within the Bank of Sierra Leone, mandating all financial institutions to pass all information regarding loan applications for credit history checks. The credit history checks will detail all outstanding loans, when and where a loan was taken, and the repayment history guiding financial institutions in their loan decision. The Bureau now operates a digital identification system to control credit information and ensure citizens have secure and complete ownership of their personal data and information thereby transforming the financial inclusion landscape.

### **Industrial Policies**

#### **Investment Incentives**

The Investment Promotion Act 2004 creates various incentives for foreign and domestic investors, and SLIEPA compiles information about the benefits and incentives available in various sectors. In particular, these are investment and employment, research and development, value-added manufacturing and training expenses incentives; incentives provided for businesses engaged in agriculture, airlines, fish farming, infrastructure, liquefied petroleum gas and cookers, mineral and petroleum, petroleum refinery, pharmaceuticals, photovoltaic systems, poultry, tourism; and income tax deductions for disabled persons, women and youth employments and skills development, and social services like schools and hospitals etc. SLIEPA provides details of these investment



incentives at <http://slicpa.org/investment/why-sierra-leone/investment-incentives/>. However, in April 2018, the government suspended all duty and tax waivers to organizations, agencies, companies and contractors except for organizations that fall under the relevant Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, as President Bio called for a complete review of all investment incentives, yet to be published. In May 2019, the National Revenue Authority provided details on tax incentives at <https://www.nra.gov.sl/sites/default/files/Final%20Magazine%20MRP%2029-5-19.pdf>.

## **Foreign Trade Zones/Free Ports/Trade Facilitation**

In conjunction with First Step, a subsidiary of U.S.-based development organization World Hope International, the government established a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in 2011 on 50 acres near Freetown. According to the Sierra Leone SEZ policy of 2013, businesses operating in this zone enjoy tax holidays for ten years in the first instance, renewable for another five years at the discretion of the Sierra Leone SEZ Authority. The government further provides these businesses with import duty exemptions and expedited government services including customs, immigration, and registration.

## **Performance and Data Localization Requirements**

The Sierra Leone Local Content Agency Act 2016 promotes foreign investors' utilization of the domestic private sector. The act applies in the mining, petroleum, manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, maritime, aviation, tourism, public works, fisheries, health and energy sectors.

The local content policy targets several issues:

- Employment of nationals: Sierra Leoneans should be given “first consideration” for employment and training. The policy establishes a minimum of 50 percent staffing for Sierra Leonean nationals among an enterprise’s managerial and intermediate employees and limits the employment of expatriates as junior employees.
- Use of local goods and services: Firms should give preference to Sierra Leonean goods when they are of equal or comparable value. Companies must use certain amounts of local materials in key sectors (including 10 percent of domestically produced units in manufacturing, 10 percent of domestically available granite in cement, and specific percentages of locally produced fabric and furniture in tourism). In the event there is inadequate local capacity to meet the law’s target, the Ministry of Trade and Industry may issue a waiver.
- National preferences in contracts: The policy gives first consideration to Sierra Leonean companies for mining and petroleum awards and licenses, as well as public works contracts. The policy also gives domestic firms a preferential margin in government and private procurements.

The local content policy is enforced by the Local Content Agency. Companies are required to submit local content plans to demonstrate compliance, and violations are subject to fines, the loss of investment incentives, and civil forfeiture. Post is unaware of any Government of Sierra Leone requirement for companies to turnover source code, provide access to surveillance information, or maintain data storage within the country.

## **Protection of Property Rights**

### **Real Property**

There are two systems of land tenure in Sierra Leone. The Western Area, the former British colony of Sierra Leone which includes Freetown, operates under a freehold system. Outside the Western Area, in the provincial areas, land is governed under a leasehold system where local communities retain ultimate control. Foreigners cannot own land under either system but can lease land for terms of up to 99 years. In leasehold areas, local Paramount Chiefs control the land, and may enter joint ventures with investors to develop or use the land in ways that serve the interests of the indigenous and local communities.

The Constitution protects property rights, but the rule of law is fragile and uneven across the country. In the absence of an effectively functioning legal framework, property rights and contracts are not adequately secure. Mortgages and liens are possible but rare, and generally involve high interest rates and short loan periods. There is no land titling system, and traditional tribal justice systems still serve as a supplement to the national government's judiciary, especially in rural areas. In 2020, the World Bank Doing Business Report ranked Sierra Leone 169 in the world for ease of registering property, as the process takes approximately 56 days with seven procedures and costs about 11 percent of the property's value.

The Government of Sierra Leone's 2019–23 medium term National Development Plan recognizes land ownership rights and obligations are determined as necessary to attract foreign investment. The World Bank has aided in this area, and proposed reforms include a comprehensive land use policy that modernizes the land registry, revises urban planning policies, and ensures that women have equal access. In 2017, cabinet approved a comprehensive national land policy meant to improve upon and strengthen land laws and administration within the differentiated land tenure systems in the Western Area and the provinces. The policy, which awaits parliamentary action, is intended to enhance the abilities of institutions to be able to acquire land for responsible investment and promote sustainable socio-economic development.

Currently, the Land Administration system inhibits effective and successful problem resolution, as the National Land Policy is not implemented, many existing laws and regulations are outdated, property unit formation and survey system is manual, land survey technologies are outdated and inaccurate, the number of specialists is insufficient and the existing specialists do not meet the required qualifications, and there is no unified or reliable system for Land data registration and storage. Property management procedures are long, unreliable (many decisions are verbal), expensive and do not guarantee the protection of the rights of the property user and/or owner. The new National Lands Policy of Sierra Leone aspires to gradually formalize land transactions while respecting the customary systems. Mandatory land transaction recording and registration could be an effective step towards the implementation of land related policy.

## **Intellectual Property Rights**

Sierra Leone has been a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) since 1986 and a member of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), the common intellectual property body for English-speaking African countries, since 1980. As a member of the WTO, Sierra Leone is bound by the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Sierra Leone has not ratified the WIPO Copyright Treaty or the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Rights. Despite its recognition of international standards, Sierra Leone's protection of intellectual property is limited. Laws dating back to the colonial era mean that patents and trademarks registered in the United Kingdom can be extended to Sierra Leone. Efforts to update the country's legal framework have thus far included the Copyright Act 2011, the Patents and Industrial Design Act 2012, and the Trademark Act 2014. Nonetheless, legal protections remain outdated and incomplete, and government enforcement is minimal due to resource and capacity limitations. Customs screening for counterfeit goods is weak, and the government publishes no known statistics about seizures of counterfeit goods.

For companies who may wish to seek advice from local attorneys who are experts in Sierra Leonean law, go to [http://photos.state.gov/libraries/adana/5/Consular/Lawyer\\_sList-2016.pdf](http://photos.state.gov/libraries/adana/5/Consular/Lawyer_sList-2016.pdf) for a list of local lawyers.

Sierra Leone is not listed on the USTR's 2017 Out-Of-Cycle Review of Notorious Markets, or in the 2018 Special 301 Report. For additional information about treaty obligations and points of contact at local IP offices, please see WIPO's country profiles at <http://www.wipo.int/directory/en/>.

## **Financial Sector**

### **Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment**

Limited capital market and portfolio investment opportunities exist in Sierra Leone. The country established a stock exchange in 2009 to provide a venue for enterprise formation and a market for the trading of stocks and bonds, but the exchange initially listed only one stock, a state-controlled bank. In early 2017, the exchange had three listings that expressed willingness to trade their shares at the exchange.

Sierra Leone acceded to the IMF Article VIII in January 1996, which removed all restrictions on payments and transfers for current international transactions. The regulatory system does not interfere with the free flow of financial resources. Nonetheless, foreign, and domestic businesses alike have difficulty obtaining commercial credit. Foreign interests may access credit under the same market conditions as Sierra Leoneans, but banks loan small amounts at high interest rates. Foreign investors typically bring capital in from outside the country.

### **Money and Banking System**

Sierra Leone's banking sector consists of 13 commercial banks, 56 foreign exchange bureau, 17 community banks, 15 credit-only microfinance, three deposit-taking microfinance, two discount houses, a mortgage finance company, a leasing company, 59 financial service associations, an Apex bank, three mobile financial services providers, and a stock exchange. More than 100 bank branches exist throughout the country, with activity concentrated in Freetown. The banking system currently has seven correspondent banks. The commercial banking sector is characterized by poor performance and has significant financial vulnerability. While the country's banks are profitable, the government restructured two state-owned banks impacted by non-performing loans.

Foreign individuals and companies are permitted to establish bank accounts. The usage of mobile money is taking a central place in money transfers. Other electronic payments and ATM usage are available in urban areas but limited in rural settings, while the Bank of Sierra Leone is set to roll out a "national payment switch" to facilitate connectivity among different banks' electronic systems. Telecommunications companies are upgrading to specifically enhance mobile money services and ecommerce.

As part of structural reforms in the banking sector under the ECF, the Bank of Sierra Leone pledged to establish a special resolution framework for troubled financial institutions, establish a deposit insurance system, strengthen its capacity to supervise and oversee the non-bank financial institution sector, and facilitate the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) both internally and across the financial sector.

Inadequate supervisory oversight of financial institutions, weak regulations, and corruption have made Sierra Leone vulnerable to money laundering. While the country's anti-money laundering (AML) controls remain underdeveloped and underfunded, the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) completed a national risk assessment in 2017 and is currently working with the Economic Crime Team of the Office of Technical Assistance, U.S. Department of the Treasury to enhance its capacity with a series of technical visits in 2018 and 2019, and others scheduled for 2020 with the FIU. The GIABA (a French acronym for Groupe Intergouvernemental d'Action contre la Blanchiment d'Argent en Afrique de l'Ouest, which in English is, 'The Inter-Government Action against Money Laundering in West Africa) and the EU also funded a workshop on designated non-financial business and professions on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing Terrorism (AML/CFT) preventive measures.

There is no history of hostile takeovers in Sierra Leone.

### **Foreign Exchange and Remittances**

Sierra Leone has a floating exchange rate regime and the currency, the Leone, has depreciated slowly over the years mainly due to the increasing demand to finance current consumption and a decreasing inflow of foreign currency resulting from decreased exports and remittances.

#### *Foreign Exchange*

In August 2019, the government mandated the exclusive use of the Leones for all contracts and payments in Sierra Leone. The directive also prohibited individuals, business entities and organizations from holding more than \$10,000 or its equivalent in any foreign currencies. Traveling individuals or organizations must declare foreign currencies of more than \$10,000 or its equivalent. Any contravention of these directives is punishable by law as stipulated in the Bank of Sierra Leone Act of 2019.

The Investment Promotion Act 2004 guarantees foreign investors and expatriate employees the right to repatriate earnings and the proceeds of the sale of assets. There are no restrictions placed on converting or transferring funds associated with investments, including remittances, earnings, loan repayments, or lease payments for as long as these transactions are done through the banking system.

With the approval of the Bank of Sierra Leone, investors can withdraw any amount from commercial banks and transfer the funds into any freely convertible currency at market rates. Availability of foreign currencies is often limited in practice, and foreign-controlled businesses outside of Freetown have reported challenges in dealing with local banks. The exchange rate is market determined, as the national currency fluctuates based on the forces of demand and supply in the market. Nonetheless, the Bank of Sierra Leone sometimes conducts weekly foreign exchange auctions of U.S. dollars. Only commercial banks registered in Sierra Leone may participate. Sierra Leone is a party to the ECOWAS Common Currency, the ECO, and efforts to introduce this common currency is now being given serious consideration, though it has repeatedly been delayed.

### *Remittance Policies*

The law provides that investors may freely repatriate proceeds and remittances. The Embassy is not aware of any recent complaints from investors regarding the remittance of investment returns, or of any planned policy changes on this issue.

### **Sovereign Wealth Funds**

Sierra Leone does not maintain a sovereign wealth fund.

### **State-Owned Enterprises**

Sierra Leone has more than 20 state-owned enterprises (SOEs). These entities are active in the utilities, transport and financial sectors. There is no official or comprehensive government-maintained list of SOEs. However, notable examples include the Guma Valley Water Company, the Sierra Leone Telecommunication Company (Sierratel), the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority (EDSA), the Electricity Generation and Transmission Company (EGTC), the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, Rokel Commercial Bank, the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank, the Sierra Leone Housing Corporation, and the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Company.

Sierra Leone is not a party to the Government Procurement Agreement within the WTO Framework. SOEs may engage in commerce with the private sector, but they do not compete on the same terms as private enterprises, and they often have access to government subsidies and other benefits. SOEs in Sierra Leone do not play a significant role in funding or sponsoring research and development.

### *SOE Privatization*

The National Commission for Privatization was established in 2002 to facilitate the privatization of various SOEs. With support from the World Bank, the commission has focused on privatization of the country's port operations, and currently seeks investments in public private partnerships (PPPs) for port security, telecommunications, and other infrastructure projects. Privatization processes are open to foreign investors, and could be integrated into plans for better capitalizing the stock exchange in Freetown via new equity listings

### **Responsible Business Conduct**

The government encourages companies to engage in responsible business conduct, and the SLIEPA seeks investors who will undertake corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects. Sierra Leone does not have a set of standards or policies for CSR, but the law provides various incentives. For example, the Finance Act 2011 created a tax deduction for expenditures on social services that are outside the scope of the investment, such as the construction of schools and hospitals for community use. Community leaders generally expect businesses operating in areas outside of Freetown and the Western Area, where local Paramount Chiefs control the land, to engage in projects to support the communities' social and economic well-being, human capital development, and physical infrastructure. Throughout the country, there is limited awareness of the impacts that corporate activities might have on human rights and environmental protection.

### **Corruption**

Corruption poses a major challenge in Sierra Leone. The country ranked 119 out of 198 countries with a score of 33/100 on Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index. Corruption is endemic in government procurement, the award of licenses and concessions, regulatory enforcement, customs clearance, and dispute resolution. Sierra Leone signed the UN Convention against Corruption in 2003 and ratified it in 2004. The country is not a party to the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), established in 2000, has the authority to investigate and prosecute acts of corruption by individuals and companies. The Anti-Corruption Act of 2008 makes it criminal to offer, solicit, or receive a bribe, and this law applies to all appointed and elected officials, close family members, and all companies whether foreign or domestic. The Commission launched a "Pay No Bribe" campaign in 2016, which encouraged citizens to report corruption in the public sector.

President Bio established a 12-member Governance Transition Team (GTT) to conduct an immediate stocktaking of government MDAs in April 2018. The report documented a high level of fiscal indiscipline and alleged extensive corruption by the former government of President Ernest Koroma. The report recommended a commission of inquiry of all MDAs to establish how the former government utilized public assets and funds, and for the supreme audit authority to carry out forensic audits of specific sectors. These sectors included agencies relating to energy, telecommunications, the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (*NASSIT*), and roads.

The Anti-Corruption Amendment Act of 2019 increased the powers of the ACC in the fight against graft, increased penalties for offences under the Act and strengthened the witness protection regime. Since then the ACC has steadily pursued arrests, repayments, and convictions in both the private and public sectors. As of April 2020, the ACC had recovered millions of dollars in misappropriated funds, and prosecuted corruption cases leading to convictions of present and former public officials and private citizens. The Chief Justice established a Special Court to adjudicate corruption cases while the ACC has signed several information sharing agreements with key government institutions, including the Audit Service Sierra Leone and the FIU.

MCC approved a USD\$44 million four-year threshold program for Sierra Leone signed in November 2015. The country passed the "Control of Corruption" indicator on MCC's annual scorecards in 2019 and 2018, after failing in 2017.

## **Resources to Report Corruption**

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## **Political and Security Environment**

Sierra Leone is a constitutional republic with a directly elected president and a unicameral legislature. In March 2018, the opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) presidential candidate, Julius Maada Bio, won the presidential elections. The Sierra Leone Police (SLP), which reports to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is responsible for law enforcement and maintaining security within the country, but it is poorly equipped and lacks sufficient investigative and forensic capabilities. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) is responsible for external security but also has some domestic security responsibilities to assist police upon request in extraordinary circumstances. The RSLAF reports to the Ministry of Defense and the Office of National Security. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the security forces.

There is tension between social, political, and cultural institutions over power and resources. Policies and positions are sometimes sought for the purposes of control over public finances. Sierra Leone's relations with the neighboring countries of Guinea and Liberia are peaceful. There have been isolated incidents of politically motivated violence during and after the 2018 national and local elections.

## **Labor Policies and Practices**

Sierra Leone's labor force is informal, unregulated, and lacking in specialized skills. Approximately 90 percent of laborers work in the informal sector, predominantly in subsistence or other small-scale agriculture. Sierra Leone's labor force was devastated by the country's civil war of 1991-2002, and the formal employment sector has yet to recover to pre-war levels. The war led to significant migration out of the country and destroyed the nation's education system. In a country where educational institutions once earned the moniker "the Athens of Africa," adult literacy is estimated at 48.1 percent (2015 est.), and businesses identify significant shortfalls in skilled professionals due to limited vocational training. While the government is developing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs, foreign investors find it difficult to recruit and train sufficient numbers of laborers.

Youth unemployment is persistently high and will continue to grow due to high birth rates and changing demography.

The national minimum wage was reviewed upward by the Minister of Finance in November 2019 from Le500,000 to Le600,000 Leones (approximately USD\$60) per month, and applies to all workers, including in the informal sector. The law requires paid leave and overtime wages, but enforcement is ineffective and there is no prohibition on excessive compulsory overtime. Employers can dismiss workers with limited notice and severance. Foreign employees must obtain work permits from the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, and most countries' nationals must have visas. Additional information is available from the Embassy of Sierra Leone in the United States and at <http://travel.state.gov>. Government policies regarding the hiring of Sierra Leonean nationals are described above in the "Performance and Data Localization Requirements" section.

The law allows workers to join independent unions of their choice without prior authorization, to conduct legal strikes, and to bargain collectively. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security estimates that approximately 35-40 percent of workers in the formal economy are unionized, including agricultural workers, mineworkers, and health workers. The law allows unions to conduct their activities without interference, and the government generally respects this right. However, in some private industries, employers have reportedly intimidated workers to prevent them from joining a union, and there is no legal protection against employers' discriminating against union members. Unions have the right to strike, although the government can require 21-day prior notice. Collective bargaining is widespread in the formal sector and most enterprises are covered by collective bargaining agreements on wages and working conditions.

Labor issues are governed by the Employers and Employees Act 1960, the Regulation of Wages and Industrial Relations Act 1971, and regulations adopted by the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. Legal requirements are outdated and poorly enforced. In particular, child labor remains a widespread problem. The law limits child labor, allowing light work at age 13, full-time nonhazardous work at age 15, and all work at age 18. The law against child labor is not effectively enforced. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security attributes the ineffective enforcement to a lack of funding and the inherent difficulties of monitoring child labor in the informal sector. In addition, the International Labor Organization has identified discrepancies between provisions in the Child Rights Act 2007 and provisions of the Employers and Employer Act 1960.

### DFC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

The U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC), formerly the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), operates in Sierra Leone pursuant to a bilateral agreement from 1961. OPIC provided a loan guarantee in 2011 to an investment fund with agricultural projects, committed funds to support upgrade and expand mobile networks. The passage of the BUILD Act and restructuring of U.S. government development finance has the potential to create new investment resources for ventures in Sierra Leone.

### Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Portfolio Investment Statistics

Table 2: Key Macroeconomic Data, U.S. FDI in Host Country/Economy

Economic Data	Host Country Statistical Source		USG or International Statistical Source		USG or International Source of Data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other
	Year	Amount	Year	Amount	
Host Country Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (M USD)	N/A	N/A	2018	\$4.085 Billion	<a href="https://data.worldbank.org/country/sierra-leone?view=chart">https://data.worldbank.org/country/sierra-leone?view=chart</a> or <a href="https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Sierra-Leone/">https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Sierra-Leone/</a>

Foreign Direct Investment	Host Country Statistical Source		USG or International Statistical Source		USG or International Source of Data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other
U.S. FDI in partner country (M USD, stock positions)	N/A	N/A	2018	\$13 Million	<a href="https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/sierra-leone">https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/sierra-leone</a>
Host country's FDI in the United States (M USD, stock positions)	N/A	N/A	2018	N/A	<a href="https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/sierra-leone">https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/africa/west-africa/sierra-leone</a>
Total inbound stock of FDI as % host GDP	N/A	N/A	2017	14.83%	<a href="https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Sierra-Leone/">https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Sierra-Leone/</a>

*Table 3: Sources and Destination of FDI*

IMF Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey data are not available for Sierra Leone.

*Table 4: Sources of Portfolio Investment*

IMF Coordinated Portfolio Investment Survey data are not available for Sierra Leone.

### **Contact for More Information**

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## **Political Environment**

For background information on the political and economic environment of the country, please click on the link to the U.S. Department of State website at <https://www.state.gov/countries-areas/sierra-leone/>