

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTRY (NACEF)

VISION

Develop the nation's natural resources (forests, wildlife and biodiversity) sustainably, for the maintenance of environmental quality and perpetual flow of optimum benefits to all segments of society.

BACKGROUND

1. Sierra Leone recognises the interdependency of forests, wildlife and biodiversity, and the environment. Appropriate measures to optimise resource utilisation and ensure good environmental conditions, future supplies of wood and non-wood products, and to manage national forests, wildlife and other biodiversity resources so as to maintain the ecological balance and the diversity of the natural environment thus need to be revised and updated for implementation.
2. The economy of the country is highly dependent on the exploitation of natural resources – forests, wildlife and biodiversity, soil, water, land, fisheries and mineral resources. The long-term economic and social development of Sierra Leone therefore requires the effective management and use of the country's natural resources.
3. The Policy Framework for the National Commission on Environment and Forestry (NaCEF) is a major step towards balancing these competing demands on the limited natural resources; and it outlines the strategies which will guide the sustainable development of these sectors. It includes past and present policies in the light of new perceptions and sets out a comprehensive list of immediate and long term strategies to be employed towards achievement of the policy objectives.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

1. Secure and conserve for Sierra Leoneans a quality of environment adequate for their health and well-being.
2. Restore, maintain and enhance the ecosystems, ecological processes essential for the functioning of the biosphere, the preservation of biological diversity, and the principle of optimum sustainable yield in the use of living natural resources and ecosystems.
3. Manage and enhance Sierra Leone's permanent estate of forests and wildlife resources for preservation of vital soil and water resources, conservation of biological diversity and the environment, and sustainable production of domestic and commercial products.
4. Promote the development of viable and efficient forest-based industries, particularly in secondary and tertiary processing, so as to utilise fully, timber and other products from forests and wildlife resources and satisfy domestic and international demand for competitively-priced quality products.
5. Promote public awareness and involvement of rural people in environment, forestry and wildlife conservation so as to maintain life-sustaining systems, preserve scenic areas, enhance the potential of recreation, tourism and income-generating opportunities.

6. Promote research-based and technology-led environment, forestry, wildlife, and biodiversity management, utilisation and development to ensure resource sustainability, socio-economic growth and environmental stability.
7. Develop effective capability at national, regional and district levels for sustainable management of the environment, forests, wildlife, and biodiversity resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The guiding principles for NaCEF policy are based on both national needs and international guidelines and conventions. At the national level, these principles are embodied in the Constitution, the Environment policy, the Environmental Action Plan, the Forestry policy and Action Plan, as well as agreements emanating from existing projects and various studies.
2. The Sierra Leone PRSP is linked to the attainment of the MDG targets and Vision 2025. NaCEF Policy will contribute to the attainment of the 7th MGD (ensuring environmental sustainability) while Sierra Leone strives to exploit its natural endowments to enhance growth, reduce poverty, and provide social services.
3. Sierra Leone has also endorsed certain international principles including Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), Convention on Bio-safety, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Bassel Convention, Vienna Convention, and Montreal Protocol.

POLICY ACTIONS: Strategic Overview

National Commission on Environment & forestry (NaCEF)

- ✓ The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) created the National Commission on Environment and Forestry (NaCEF) in July 2005 to give the two Departments (Environment and Forestry) greater autonomy in the discharge of their responsibilities.
- ✓ Commission members together with an Executive Commissioner were announced.
- ✓ The newly created institution, as envisaged by the GoSL, should consist of portions of the existing staff complements from the Divisions of Environment and Forestry.
- ✓ It is proposed as an Executive and Policy Advisory institution, and it will be involved in project implementation, monitoring and priority setting with respect to environment, forestry and other relevant legislations.
- ✓ It would be the permanent, long-term environmental and forestry authority in Sierra Leone undertaking the day-to-day environmental management and forestry functions and would have enhanced enforcement capacity.
- ✓ In other words, it would perform many of the same functions as undertaken in other countries either by an Environment and Forestry Ministry, or Environment and Forestry Protection Agency/Authority.

Forestry Division: (Protected Areas, Wildlife & Biodiversity Management)

- ✓ NaCEF, through the Forestry Division, is responsible for:

- ✓ protecting and managing national and community forests throughout the country.
- ✓ Key roles include:
 - ✓ the development of agriculture through improvements in the bush fallow system and in agro-forestry methods;
 - ✓ forest management for industrial forestry and construction materials;
 - ✓ fuelwood and energy supply;
 - ✓ watershed management;
 - ✓ wildlife and biodiversity conservation.
- ✓ All of these critical areas are currently managed under the Forestry Division. It is proposed that this division be subdivided into three divisions as follows:
 - ✓ Forestry Division (for managing and protecting national and community forests)
 - ✓ Wildlife Division (for management of wildlife and biodiversity)
 - ✓ Industrial Forestry and Construction Materials Division.
- ✓ The species richness and diversity of these reserves have been recognised since colonial times. Five ecosystem types have been identified:
 - ✓ Lowland rainforest,
 - ✓ Savanna,
 - ✓ Montane,
 - ✓ Wetlands (freshwater, inland valley and mangrove) and
 - ✓ Marine ecosystems.
- ✓ Appendix I shows the IUCN categorization of protected area systems in Sierra Leone.
- ✓ There are a total of 48 forest reserves and conservation areas in Sierra Leone (see Appendix II).
- ✓ Most of them are inadequately protected and managed. Only two of these reserves, Outamba Kilimi National Park (OKNP) and Tiwai Wildlife Sanctuary (TWS), have been elevated to the status of national park and wildlife sanctuary, under the IUCN classification system.
- ✓ Several of the protected areas have been "proposed" as national parks, and game reserves.

Environmental Management

The Environment Division is responsible for:

- ✓ The overall coordination and monitoring of natural resources management activities of government ministries and local authorities and to act as the focal point for all national and international environmental matters relating to Sierra Leone;
- ✓ Promoting the formulation of national environmental goals and strategies;
- ✓ Promoting the formulation of national environmental standards and regulations for environmental protection;
- ✓ Coordinating and monitoring the implementation of national environmental policies, programmes and projects;
- ✓ Through NaCEF, advise the GoSL on environmental matters;
- ✓ Establishing and coordinating working groups to study specific environmental problems and issues;
- ✓ Promoting and supporting environmental education and training;
- ✓ Participating at crucial stages of the government's review of development programmes through environmental impact assessments;
- ✓ Monitoring the implementation of mitigation plans of environmental impact assessment of projects and programmes;
- ✓ Preparing and publishing the overall assessment of the state of the environment;

- ✓ Collecting and making available environmental data and information to the public or interested persons or organisations, through publications and other appropriate means;
- ✓ Encouraging community participation in environmental management programmes;
- ✓ The Environment Division currently has two sections:
 - ✓ the Natural Resources Management Unit,
 - ✓ Pollution Control Unit.
- ✓ It is proposed to create:
 - ✓ Policy and Planning Section;
 - ✓ Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Section;
 - ✓ National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) Implementation Section;
 - ✓ Enforcement and Compliance Section.

STRATEGIC SECTORAL ISSUES

National Commission on Environment & Forestry (NaCEF)

Critical constraints associated with the two departments under reference may be summarised as follows:

Across government generally the most important constraints in this context are that:

- ✓ Line ministries have conflicting and unclear mandates with regard to environmental management
- ✓ Natural resource policies and laws are fragmented and require harmonisation
- ✓ Natural resource utilisation and environmental protection in the country are inadequately regulated and unsustainable
- ✓ Insufficient and unsustainable sources of funding for natural resources management and environmental protection
- ✓ The two Departments most directly affected by the creation of the Commission have legislation that was formulated within the context of these Departments functioning within the framework of Ministries and not a Commission. Existing legislation bestows executive powers directly either to the Departments or to Ministries, and not within the framework of a consolidated and autonomous commission framework.
- ✓ The two Departments are also inadequately staffed and under-equipped.

Other important issues include the following:

- ✓ Institutional frameworks are weak across government
- ✓ Regulatory frameworks, standards and guidelines are underdeveloped, or where they do exist, are not adequately enforced.
- ✓ There is inadequate attention paid to the environmental consequences associated with the key natural resource-based revenue sources (such as mining, logging and fisheries)
- ✓ There are inadequate monitoring and implementation capacities across the government entities whose mandates have an environmental component

Forestry Division: (Protected Areas, Wildlife & Biodiversity Management)

- ✓ The creation of the three divisions (forestry, wildlife, and Industrial Forestry and Construction Materials) will be mainstreamed.
- ✓ The normal development, management and utilisation activities of the Division will continue as prescribed.

- ✓ After a careful analysis of its natural heritage, which included an in depth study of the potential threats to, and causes for environmental degradation as well as socio-economic and ecological significance of the protected area system in the country, the government of Sierra Leone has selected eight of the protected areas as a representative sample of the protected area system in the country for systemic focus over the short term. These reserves are:

Western Area Peninsula Forest (WAPF)

Yawri Bay

Gola Forest

Kangari Hills

Mamunta-Mayosso Wildlife Sanctuary

Loma Mountains

Tingi Hills

Outamba-Kilimi National Park

Summary descriptions of each of these reserves is provided in APENDIX II

Environmental Management

- ✓ Mainstream the creation of:
 - ✓ Policy and Planning Section;
 - ✓ Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Section;
 - ✓ National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) Implementation Section;
 - ✓ Enforcement and Compliance Section.
- ✓ To use available land in such a way that its quality is conserved so as to enhance its potential for continuous productivity and to prevent degradation.
- ✓ To ensure adequate and acceptable water quality and quantity for domestic, industrial, transportation, agricultural and fisheries needs.
- ✓ To ensure the preservation of Biological Diversity through the development of long-term strategies for sustainable utilisation to promote economic, social and cultural development.
- ✓ Map a way forward for the development of a biotechnology policy for Sierra Leone.
- ✓ To ensure planned and rational use of space in the development of human settlements and the provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and amenities conducive to the protection of human health and the promotion of the quality of human life and the preservation of the environment.
- ✓ To provide an enabling environment that would ensure the Sierra Leone population enjoys an adequate and sustainable quality of life through the fulfillment of basic needs and provision of amenities through appropriate strategies.

PROPOSED PROGRAMMES

SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM ACTIVITIES

National Commission on Environment & Forestry (NaCEF)

- ✓ Review and update of existing policies
- ✓ Harmonisation of the legislative, policy and institutional framework for natural resource management, and environmental protection in Sierra Leone.

- ✓ Capacity building for the National Commission on Environment and Forestry (NaCEF) and other stakeholders for natural resource management and environmental protection in the country.
- ✓ Establish a website for natural resource management and utilisation, and environmental protection in Sierra Leone.
- ✓ Establish a databank on natural resource management and utilisation, and environmental protection in the country.
- ✓ Resource mobilisation and management
- ✓ Consolidation of on-going global projects
- ✓ Liaise with a network of donors to facilitate natural resource management and utilisation, and environmental management in the country.
- ✓ Establish a trust fund, initially for management of the 8 selected PAs, and ultimately expanding this fund gradually to cover all PAs.

Forestry Division: (Protected Area, Wildlife & Biodiversity Management)

1. Mainstream the creation of the three divisions (forestry, wildlife and biodiversity, and Industrial Forestry and Construction Materials).
2. Continue the normal development, management and utilisation activities currently under the Forestry Division as prescribed.
3. In the short to medium term, introduce sustainable wildlife and biodiversity management operations in the 8 selected PAs, as well as exploring the ecotourism potential of the various locations, and implementing these where possible. Essential activities to be undertaken on the various PAs may be summarised as follows:
 - ✓ Sensitisation programmes, which will be broadly community-based for effective awareness creation on the environmental hazards that may result from the destruction of the forest.
 - ✓ Demarcation of reserve boundaries to prevent encroachment and illegal settlement.
 - ✓ Conduct a (re-)assessment of the biodiversity of all the reserves to establish reliable data for future studies and management planning.
 - ✓ Formulate participatory management plans for all the 8 PAs and implement them.
 - ✓ Integration of local communities into PA management and ensure equitable distribution of benefits.
 - ✓ Establish greenbelts and fuelwood plantation programmes around reserves to stem degradation, where appropriate.
 - ✓ Make law enforcement more effective by strengthening the field staff within Forestry and the Wildlife Conservation Branch (WCB), and improve working relationships with the police. The police training programme should be expanded to include community policing; and both police and Forestry Division field officers should be empowered to effectively enforce forest protection regulations.
 - ✓ Explore the ecotourism potential of the various reserves within the context of a multipurpose management plan. The communities should be trained and encouraged to be involved in managing ecotourism activities.
 - ✓ Upgrade the status of the various PAs as necessary to ensure sustainable management.

Environmental Management

- ✓ Create the following sections:
 - ✓ Policy and Planning Section;
 - ✓ Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Section;
 - ✓ National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) Implementation Section;
 - ✓ Enforcement and Compliance Section.
- ✓ Development and harmonisation of environmental standards
- ✓ Research and baseline data collection on the state of the environment
- ✓ Strengthening partnership for environmental action for sustainable development
- ✓ Development of a National Action Plan on land degradation
- ✓ Empowerment of Environment Officers for the enforcement of EIA procedures and guidelines
- ✓ Development of a National Land use Plan
- ✓ Pollution Assessment and Monitoring

MEDIUM TO LONG TERM ACTIVITIES

National Commission on Environment & Forestry (NaCEF)

- ✓ Incorporate traditional methods of resource management in national strategies where appropriate.
- ✓ Promote the need for appropriate legislation in harmony with laws concerning related sectors and for policy revision in the light of changing circumstances and updated information.
- ✓ Undertake necessary resource planning and investment in natural resource staffing for the protection and management of the environment and forest resources.
- ✓ Institute legal reforms, institutional capacity building, community forest management, environmental protection, and improved application of laws in various ecosystem areas.
- ✓ Create mechanisms for retaining a share of financial benefits from resource utilisation should be retained to fund the maintenance of resource production capacity and the benefit of local communities.
- ✓ Revise forest and wildlife fees and taxes to encourage more rational and less wasteful utilisation according to market forces, and particularly to increase production of value-added wood products for export.
- ✓ The timber industry should be transformed from a high volume, low value business to a low volume, high value trade based on sustainable forest management.
- ✓ Award of timber rights on the basis of competitive bidding and periodic audit of forest utilisation operations to ensure compliance with forest management specifications and environmental protection standards.
- ✓ Regular review of forest and wildlife fees to reflect the economic value of the resource and to recover optimum revenues for supporting the cost of sustainable resource management and development.
- ✓ Extend the establishment and management of a network of National Parks and protected area categories in order to conserve representative samples of the country's biotic communities;
- ✓ Establish competitive industries based on local raw materials and pay close attention to international trade.

- ✓ Inclusion of unreserved forests under Forestry Department's management system for regulation of uncontrolled harvesting, expeditious collection of relevant fees and ultimate conformity with criteria for sustainable resource development.
- ✓ Revision of resource management standards and techniques for preparation of detailed prescriptions and plans to guide the sustainable management of forest reserves and wildlife protected areas, as well as unreserved forests.
- ✓ Promote the importance of national accounting for the costs of resource depletion and impact on the environment.
- ✓ Enforcement of specifications prescribed in resource management plans, utilisation contracts and logging manuals to ensure compliance of authorised users with approved harvesting practices and controls.
- ✓ Integrate the rights of people to have access to natural resources for maintaining a basic standard of living and their concomitant responsibility to ensure the suitable use of such resources.
- ✓ Promote maintenance of economic reforms which recognise the private sector as the engine of growth should be promoted.
- ✓ The nation's viability is dependent on the wise use of the forest and wildlife resources as part of an integrated land use policy, because of their contribution to the economy in maintaining vital ecology and life-sustaining processes and conserving pools of genetic material that promote scientific, cultural and educational advancement. These activities should be promoted.
- ✓ The success of sustainable resource management is directly related to continued political support at the highest levels, as well as provision of strong incentives to encourage responsible use, e.g. long-term concessions, equitable access, appropriate fees. Such support should be actively sought.
- ✓ The need for economic and development incentives to stimulate private enterprise and encourage respect for regulations, thus offsetting real and perceived costs imposed by loss of access or restriction on use will be promoted.

Forestry Division: (Protected Area, Wildlife & Biodiversity Management)

- ✓ Implement the sub-divisioning of the department
- ✓ Reduce the rate of deforestation to levels where a balanced ecosystem capacity can be maintained.
- ✓ Increase the area of forest cover to levels where optimum agricultural production and environmental stability are maintained.
- ✓ Support conservation and rational utilisation of non-wood forest products (raffia, rattan, bush meat etc)
- ✓ Encourage development and use of alternative sources of energy other than wood, and improve on the use of wood energy.
- ✓ Protect forest and other ecosystems from wild fires.
- ✓ Conserve indigenous wildlife species and genetic diversity as part of the natural heritage; and identify and designate areas of aesthetic, recreation, scientific or educational value, and provide for their protection and management by promoting in – situ (national parks, game reserves etc.) and ex – situ (botanical gardens, gene banks etc.)

- ✓ Strengthen programmes for the identification and study of the national heritage in fauna and flora.
- ✓ Prepare updated national inventory of forest resources and economic activities and conduct audits from time to time for the preparation of resource management plans.
- ✓ Intensify reforestation activities and budget for the provision of incentives/payments as reimbursements to NGO and private sector complementing reforestation efforts, especially in the regeneration of encroached areas of high hardwood forests.
- ✓ Develop forestry utilisation standards applicable to all forests for the operations of forest based industries.
- ✓ Raise monies through licenses, rents, and fees from the exploitation of the national forests estates
- ✓ Increase support for non-governmental organisation (NGO) and community tree-planting programmes.
- ✓ Encourage/assist the private sector to establish wood lots and industrial plantations, forest products, cottage industries, non-wood and lesser-known wood species industries, by providing the sector with technical assistance, information on export possibilities and seeds/seedlings.
- ✓ Provide technical assistance for the mapping of community forests, carry out periodic audits of forest resources and assist in the development of management plans
- ✓ Strengthen already existing community forests policing mechanisms at the Chiefdom level
- ✓ Commission studies relating to bio-prospecting; with a view to enacting legislation that will govern/regulate and supervise bio-prospecting in all areas within the borders of Sierra Leone.

Environmental Management

- ✓ Implement the creation of:
 - ✓ Policy and Planning Section;
 - ✓ Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Section;
 - ✓ National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) Implementation Section;
 - ✓ Enforcement and Compliance Section will be mainstreamed.
- ✓ Other subsequent activities will include the following:
 - ✓ Rehabilitation and restoration of mined out areas
 - ✓ Assessment of the impact of sand mining along the Freetown Peninsula areas and other sites in the Western Areas
 - ✓ Development of an early warning system on climate change
 - ✓ Development of a Rapid Response System on disaster management
 - ✓ Promotion of Solid Waste Disposal and Environmental Sanitation
 - ✓ Environmental training programmes and empowerment for women, community groups and local authorities for sustainable environmental management
 - ✓ Incorporation of environmental education in the formal education system of Sierra Leone
 - ✓ Nationwide study on water contamination
 - ✓ Development of an Integrated Coastal zone land use and Management Plan
 - ✓ Topographical Survey and Cadastral mapping
 - ✓ Payment of financial contributions to environmental multilateral agreements