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# National Evaluation Capacity Readiness Assessment in Sierra Leone

March 2026

# Acknowledgments

This report was prepared under the joint leadership of the National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency (NaMEA) and UNICEF, with technical production by Key Aid Development.

We gratefully acknowledge the support and engagement of government counterparts and other national stakeholders, whose perspectives and contributions greatly enriched the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

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# Foreword

*By the Director-General, National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency (NaMEA)*

The **National Evaluation Capacity Readiness Assessment (NECRA)** marks an important milestone in Sierra Leone's ongoing commitment to strengthening accountability, transparency, and evidence-based governance. As the institution mandated to coordinate monitoring and evaluation across government, the National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency (NaMEA) is pleased to present this assessment, jointly developed with UNICEF and Key Aid Development through close collaboration with Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), local councils, academia, civil society, and development partners.

With the launch of the **Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) (2024–2030)**, the Government of Sierra Leone has reaffirmed its ambition to accelerate progress in human capital development, economic transformation, and public sector reform. Achieving these goals requires not only strong policies and programmes, but also a robust national evaluation system capable of generating credible evidence to inform decisions, improve implementation, and ensure that public resources deliver tangible results for citizens.

The NECRA provides a comprehensive and candid assessment of the current state of national evaluation capacity. It highlights significant progress in integrating monitoring and evaluation into national development planning, while identifying critical gaps that must be addressed to build a functional, coherent, and sustainable evaluation ecosystem. The assessment underscores the essential role of evaluation in promoting learning, enhancing service delivery, and reinforcing trust in public institutions.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all MDAs, local councils, and partners who contributed to this exercise. Your participation reflects the collective responsibility we share in building an evaluation culture grounded in national priorities and guided by shared values of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

On behalf of NaMEA, I wish to recognize the invaluable partnership of UNICEF, whose technical and financial support made this assessment possible. We also acknowledge the contributions of the Sierra Leone Evaluation Association (SLEA) and academic institutions, whose engagement strengthens the foundations of national evaluation capacity.

The findings and recommendations of this NECRA will guide NaMEA's efforts to foster stronger coordination, build the capacity of M&E units across government, strengthen the national policy environment, and promote the use of evaluative evidence in decision-making. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to translate these recommendations into concrete actions that support the realization of the MTNDP and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Dr. James Edwin**

*Director-General*

*National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency (NaMEA)*

*Sierra Leone*



# Foreword

*By the UNICEF Representative in Sierra Leone*

It is with great pleasure that I present the **National Evaluation Capacity Readiness Assessment (NECRA)** report, developed in close partnership with the **National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency (NaMEA)**. This assessment represents an important step in strengthening Sierra Leone's national evaluation system and advancing a culture of evidence-informed decision-making across government institutions.

As Sierra Leone progresses with the implementation of the **Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024–2030)**, high-quality evaluative evidence becomes even more critical. Effective evaluation systems are a cornerstone of accountable, transparent, and results-driven public administration. They help ensure that national priorities translate into measurable impact for children, families, and communities.

UNICEF is proud to be part of this important progress and remains committed to continuing its collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone in this shared endeavour.

The NECRA report provides a comprehensive analysis of existing strengths, emerging opportunities, and key areas for continued improvement in the ongoing effort to build a fully functional and sustainable evaluation ecosystem. It highlights the vital role of leadership, coordination, institutional capacity, and data systems—while reaffirming that evaluation is fundamentally a tool for learning, improvement, and the achievement of national development goals.

The findings and recommendations of this assessment offer a clear roadmap for action. UNICEF stands ready to continue working closely with NaMEA, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, local councils, academia, development partners, and the Sierra Leone Evaluation Association to advance these efforts. Together, we can strengthen national systems that enable Sierra Leone to monitor progress, generate credible evidence, and deliver results that improve the lives of every child.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all government representatives, evaluation professionals, civil society actors, and development partners who contributed their insights to this assessment. Your engagement reflects the collective commitment required to build a strong, resilient, and learning-oriented national evaluation system for Sierra Leone.

**Rudolf Schwenk**

*UNICEF Representative  
Sierra Leone*

# Executive summary

- 1. Objectives.** The Sierra Leone National Evaluation Capacity Readiness Assessment (NECRA) reviews national evaluation systems and their ability to support progress towards Development Plan objectives and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Commissioned by the National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency (NaMEA) and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) Sierra Leone, this assessment builds on previous assessments and primary data to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities within the national evaluation ecosystem.
- 2. Methodology.** The NECRA methodology used a tailor-made readiness assessment matrix, desk reviews, 27 key informant interviews, and workshops in Freetown and Makeni with a total of 70 participants. The findings aim to guide NaMEA in strengthening Sierra Leone's evaluation capacity, ensuring effective coordination and alignment with the country's development goals vis-à-vis the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP 2024–2030), and promoting a data-driven approach to public sector accountability.
- 3. National evaluation systems.** The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system in Sierra Leone has grown significantly, especially with the systematic integration of M&E into the MTNDP 2024–2030. At policy level, evaluations are recognized and valued. The implementation, however, remains a challenge mostly as a result of limited flexible and predictable pool fund for evaluation. NaMEA offers the opportunity for a centrally situated evaluation function, which can facilitate the development of a national evaluation system. The fact that NaMEA sits under the Office of the President also gives it a form of authority to better play an oversight role. Evaluation roles remain nonetheless fragmented across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and within the same MDA across different offices independently undertaking M&E of their programmes. Collaboration takes place on an ad hoc basis.
- 4. Evaluative capacities.** There are broad disparities across MDAs in terms of staff and leadership capacity to commission and undertake evaluations, contributing to an uneven national evaluation framework. Evaluation capacities are largely acquired on the job, with limited formal and sustained training opportunities. Outside of NaMEA, there is persistent limited individual understanding of the role of evaluations and evaluative evidence in policy-making and practice. The decision to conduct evaluations tends to be externally driven, with inconsistent performance targets for evaluations across MDAs. High staff turnover, pay disparities between project staff and civil servants, and misaligned recruitment practices between the former weaken the stability and effectiveness of M&E activities across MDAs. Limited IT infrastructure further hinder efficiency, with key institutions like NaMEA lacking essential analytical tools.
- 5. Data management and use.** In Sierra Leone, data management practices across MDAs are fragmented, with significant variation in systems, infrastructure and data security protocols. This inconsistency hinders the ability to share data across the evaluation ecosystem and poses a challenge to the sustainability and effectiveness of NaMEA's National Monitoring and Evaluation Management Information System (NaMEMIS).
- 6. Demand and use of evaluations.** Demand for evaluations within the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) is largely reactive and focused on accountability rather than learning, with most evaluations being initiated in response to external demands, particularly from development partners.
- 7. Conclusions.** Sierra Leone has made progress in integrating monitoring and evaluation into national development planning, particularly through the MTNDP 2024–2030, yet challenges persist in implementation, funding and institutional capacity. NaMEA plays a central role in coordinating M&E but faces political resistance, operational constraints and coordination challenges, while most MDAs rely on development partner-driven evaluations rather than nationally owned frameworks. The absence of formal training and structured M&E units weakens the system, with staff largely dependent on on-the-job learning and reactive, project-based evaluations that fail to inform decision-making effectively. Additionally, systemic barriers, including weak coordination, limited follow-up mechanisms and resistance from senior leadership hinder M&E adoption across MDAs. Without a sustainable funding model and a more integrated, proactive evaluation culture, Sierra Leone's M&E system will continue to struggle in effectively supporting national development goals and the SDGs.

## 8. Recommendations:

Recommendations	Timeframe
<b>Individual Capacity</b>	
1. Strengthen evaluation capacity across MDAs and within the overall ecosystem	
a. NaMEA, in collaboration with academia and partners, should establish a national M&E training programme	Short-term
b. NaMEA, MDAs and development partners, in collaboration with SLEA, should create internship opportunities in evaluation for university students	
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	
2. NaMEA and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED), with support from MDAs and Development Partners (DPs), should institutionalize the M&E policy, strategy and governance, and support the establishment of formal, standardized and well-resourced M&E units within all MDAs	Medium-term
3. The Ministry of Finance (MoF), in consultation with NaMEA, MoPED and DPs, should establish a dedicated national pooled M&E fund, with national and DP contributions	Medium-term
4. MDAs and DPs should ensure that M&E personnel are involved in project design	Medium-term
5. NaMEA and MoPED should jointly clarify and communicate their roles in planning, monitoring and evaluation, and organize regular awareness and review meetings with MDAs	Medium-term
6. NaMEA, MoPED and MDAs should create and enforce follow-up mechanisms for evaluation findings	Medium-term
<b>Conducive Environment</b>	
7. NaMEA should lead in promoting a culture of learning and evidence use	
8. Under NaMEA leadership, foster stronger collaboration and coordination among MDAs, development partners, CSOs and academia	Short-term
9. Invest in integrated, digital data management systems across all MDAs to facilitate real-time data collection, analysis and sharing	Long-term

# Acronyms

<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area
<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>CBNA</b>	Capacity Building Needs Assessment
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DHIS 2</b>	District Health Information System
<b>DP</b>	Development Partner
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign Direct Investment
<b>GoSL</b>	Government of Sierra Leone
<b>HRMO</b>	Human Resources Management Office
<b>IMPRESS</b>	Intermediate Moderated Programme for Evaluation Systems' Strengthening
<b>I-PRSP</b>	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>KOBO</b>	KOBO Collect (a mobile data collection tool)
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MAFS</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
<b>MBSSE</b>	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
<b>MDA</b>	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MESA</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Analysis
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information System
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MoPED</b>	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
<b>MTNDP</b>	Medium-Term National Development Plan
<b>NaMEA</b>	National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency
<b>NAMED</b>	National Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate
<b>NaMEMIS</b>	National Monitoring and Evaluation Management Information System

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<b>NECD</b>	National Evaluation Capacity Development
<b>NECRA</b>	National Evaluation Capacity Readiness Assessment
<b>NEG</b>	National Evaluation Guidelines
<b>NRS</b>	National Recovery Strategy
<b>PIP</b>	Public Investment Project
<b>PRS</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy
<b>PRSP I</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper I
<b>RAIC</b>	Right to Access Information Commission
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>Stats SL</b>	Statistics Sierra Leone
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UN DESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United National Children Fund
<b>UNSDCF</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

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# 1. Objectives & scope

National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD) is the process whereby state and non-state entities and individuals expand, reinforce and sustain national capacity to manage, produce and use evaluations.<sup>1</sup> Supporting timely evidence-informed decision-making by governments through evaluations contributes to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>2</sup> As the period of Sierra Leone's new Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2024–2030 takes effect, the National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency (NaMEA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Sierra Leone commissioned an in-depth assessment of Sierra Leone's national evaluation capacity to support the MTNDP as well as the SDGs.

The current National Evaluation Capacity Readiness Assessment (NECRA) complements and contrasts with the 2014 NECRA, conducted as part of a broader effort to strengthen the country's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework for tracking the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) III (2013–2018) progress.

## The 2014 National Evaluation Capacity Readiness Assessment

The 2014 National Monitoring and Evaluation Mapping and Capacity Assessment focused on identifying gaps in M&E systems within ministries, local councils, NGOs and other development actors. It found that while international partners and NGOs had more robust M&E frameworks, government sectors and local councils lacked the necessary infrastructure, skills and resources to implement effective M&E practices. The findings highlighted critical weaknesses in data collection and management, with systems relying heavily on basic tools and manual processes. The assessment underscored the need for a standardized national M&E policy, improved coordination and a targeted capacity-building strategy to enhance M&E across all sectors.

This assessment set the foundation for the ongoing development of M&E systems and strategies in Sierra Leone, highlighting the critical importance of embedding M&E into national development plans for better governance and accountability.<sup>3</sup>

The current NECRA also feeds on the Capacity Building Needs Assessment (CBNA)<sup>4</sup> conducted for NaMEA, which explored its human and institutional capacities. The assessment identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to NaMEA's capacity to fulfil its mandate. As such, aspects such as gaps in governance structure, insufficient financial resources, staffing and limited training opportunities were identified along with NaMEA's opportunity for growth founded in its policies, staff and partnerships.

In light of the MTNDP 2024–2030, the current NECRA evaluates the readiness and capacity for evaluation in Sierra Leone. It provides actionable insights to support coordinated, data-driven approaches to national development and public sector accountability by scoping strengths, weaknesses and opportunities within the evaluation ecosystem.

**Objectives.** The overall objective of this National Evaluation Capacity Readiness Assessment is to enable NaMEA to take stock of strengths and weaknesses as well as gaps and opportunities within the evaluation ecosystem. The assessment findings serve as a roadmap to enhance evaluation processes in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), including NaMEA, while fostering collaboration with development partners, Sierra Leone Evaluation Association (SLEA) and academia.

More specifically, the readiness assessment objectives are to:

- **Map** the evaluation functions, systems, and key policies and frameworks within government, as well as the overall evaluation landscape in-country that support the evaluation needs feeding into the national development plan.
- **Assess** the capacities of ministries, NaMEA and academia to undertake evaluations by using a tailor-made analytical framework (see Annex 3 Assessment Matrix).
- **Inform** the costed National Evaluation Capacity Development Plan and the National Evaluation Guidelines.

**Audience.** The main audience for the final assessment report is NaMEA. Secondary users include UNICEF Sierra Leone Country Office, the Sierra Leone Evaluation Association, as well as other MDAs, UN agencies and Development Partners.

**Scope.** The assessment discusses evaluation and touches on monitoring in relation to how it feeds into evaluation. The assessment mainly focuses on the central level in Freetown, while at the same time engaging local councils and stakeholders in Makeni to broaden the understanding of evaluation capacities. The assessment looks at the whole Government, with a particular attention to MDAs engaged in development efforts and regularly engaging with development partners.

## 2. Background

In 2002, the end of the civil war<sup>5</sup> marked a clear transition towards democratic governance through the setting up of multi-party elections, decentralization of government, establishment of rule of law and creation of state institutions.<sup>6</sup> The 2004 Local Government Act empowered elected local councils and emphasized the participation of citizens in governance processes through elections.<sup>7-8</sup> This act was amended with the Local Government Act of 2022, which extended the period for local council elections from four to five years along with the tenures of the chairpersons and councillors, with the intention of aligning the period with other elective public offices and reducing budget costs.<sup>9</sup>

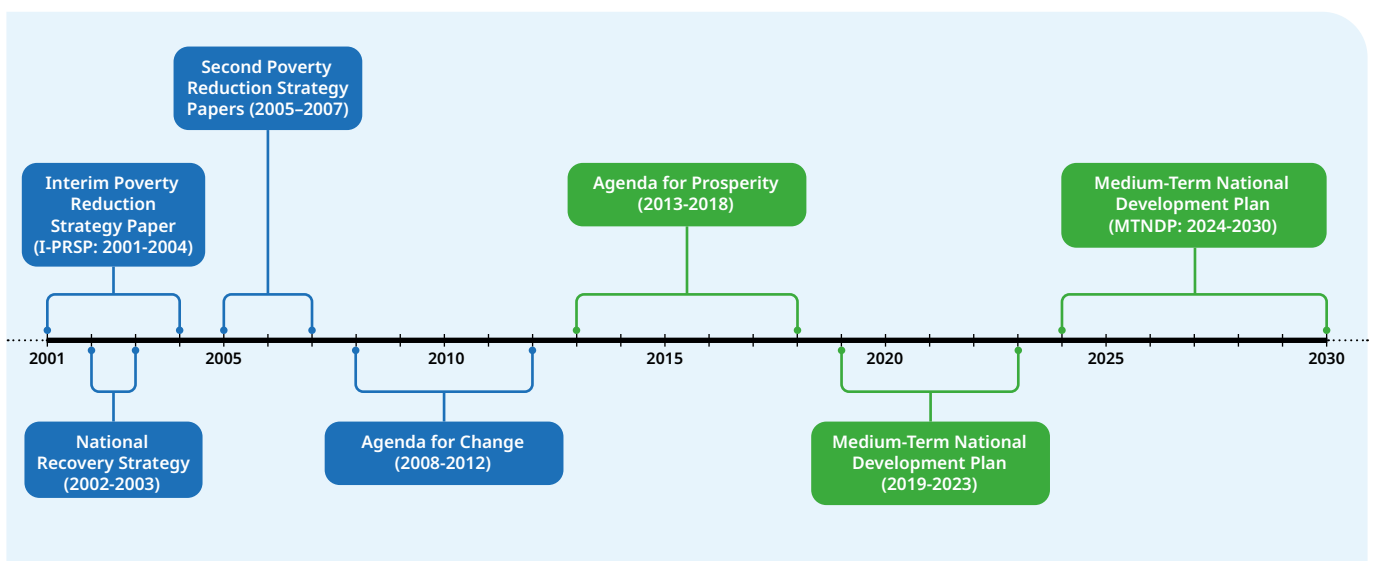
These changes collectively had a profound impact on national development plans starting from the 2002–2003 National Recovery Strategy (NRS).<sup>10</sup> The changes fostered a supportive environment that enabled the government and state institutions to design localized recovery strategies, thereby enhancing community participation.

Since 2002, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) developed and implemented four comprehensive development plans focusing on national recovery and medium- to long-term development objectives:

- the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP: 2005–2007);
- the Agenda for Change (PRSP: 2008–2012);
- the Agenda for Prosperity (PRSP: 2013–2018);
- and the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP: 2019–2023).<sup>11</sup>

As of 2024, the GoSL is undertaking its fifth medium-term national development plan covering the period 2024–2030, with a focus on food security, human capital development, technology and infrastructure, job creation as well as public service improvement. (See [Annex 2](#) for detailed History of development planning in Sierra Leone.)

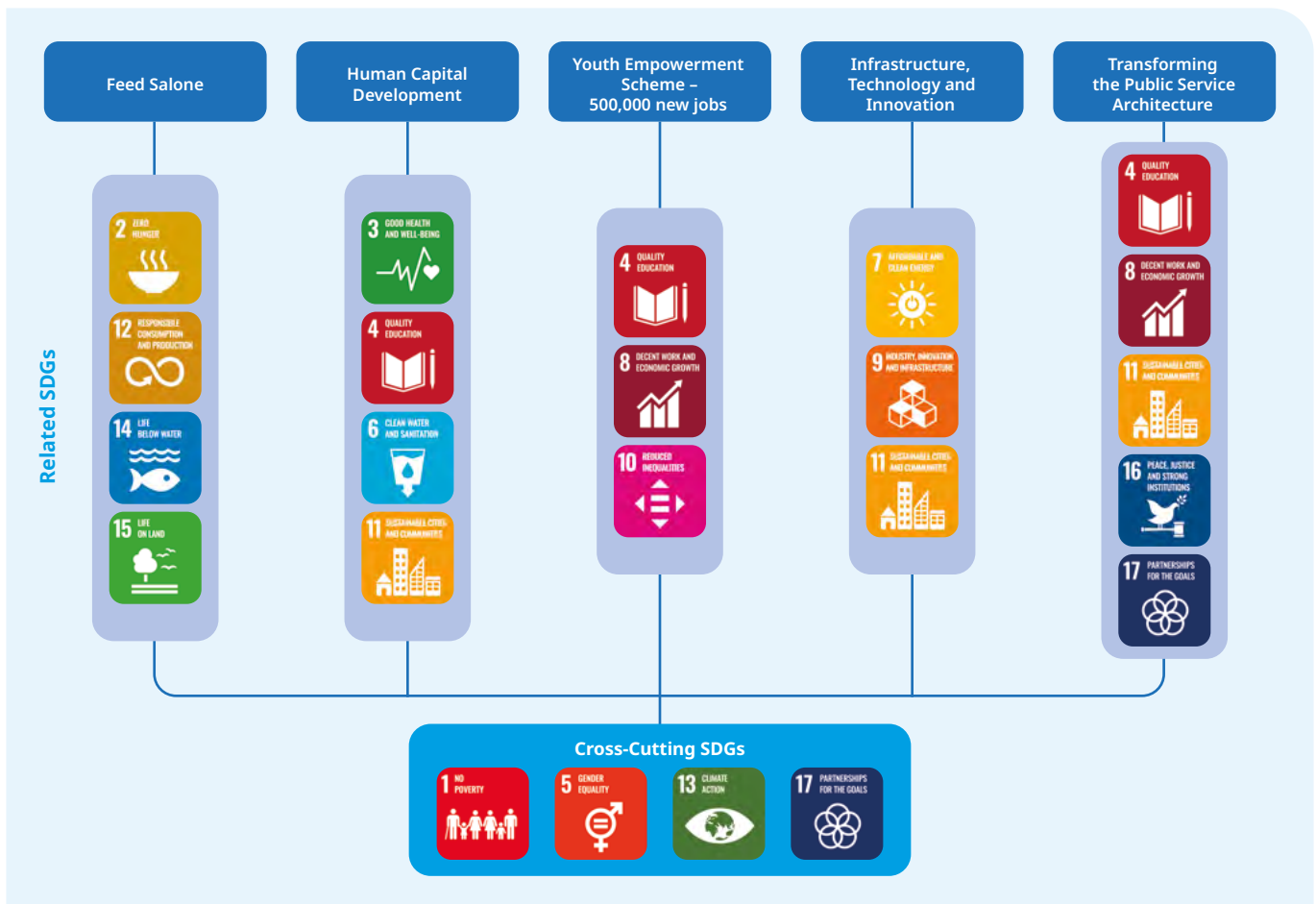
Figure 1: History of National Development Plans in Sierra Leone



The MTNDP 2024–2030 recognized the limitation posed by aligning the plans with political term limits vis-à-vis long-term development implications and thus extended the timeline to cover seven years, simultaneously aligning with international

frameworks such as the SDGs and the African Union’s Agenda 2063. The plan set out five strategic points dubbed the “Big Five Game Changers for 2030.” (See *Figure 2 in the following page*)

Figure 2: Big 5 Game Changers<sup>12</sup>



These include: Feed Salone, which aims to boost agricultural productivity, improve food security and economic growth; Human Capital Development; Youth Employment Scheme; Infrastructure, Technology and Innovation; and Transforming the Public Service Architecture.

These goals, like those of the previous MTNDP, will be supported by the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2025–2030 to ensure their attainment.<sup>13</sup> The UNSDCF 2025–2030 focuses on several key areas: poverty reduction; sustainable economic growth; healthcare; education; gender equality; climate action; and good governance. The framework emphasizes fostering an inclusive economy, ensuring sustainable development and achieving the SDGs. It plans to enhance social protection systems, support youth employment and ensure climate resilience through various initiatives. The UN supports the integration of SDG targets into the country's national frameworks and strengthens governance systems, contributing to long-term poverty alleviation and inclusive development, in line with the strategic priorities set in Sierra Leone's MTNDP.<sup>14</sup>

With the new development plan, the GoSL aims to address climate challenges and its reliance on imported energy and food by scaling up climate-friendly approaches. A focus is given towards harnessing the country's blue economy and better

exploitation of its ocean resources as well as the reduction of dependence on imports. Furthermore, the MTNDP aims to improve international trade and investment by creating a foreign direct investment (FDI) friendly environment as well as through the scaling up of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The plan also emphasizes the implementation of the country's integrated national financing framework by exploring innovative financing approaches such as climate finance and financial inclusion strategies.<sup>15</sup>

Evaluative functions in Sierra Leone. The National Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (NaMED) was formed by the GoSL in line with the MTNDP 2019–2023. NaMED's original goal was to lead M&E-related processes to i) track progress towards development objectives; ii) guarantee transparency and iii) coordinate the MTNDP's implementation across sectors.<sup>16</sup>

In 2024, NaMED became the NaMEA.<sup>17</sup> With the Parliamentary Act that allowed for the transformation, NaMEA's mandate was made broader to encompass M&E efforts funded by Development Partners (DP) and includes feeding the work of different ministries and local councils to a centralized M&E system. Illustrative of the political will and senior level interest in evaluation, NaMEA is a semi-autonomous agency directly reporting to the Office of the President.<sup>18</sup> Beyond its oversight role, NaMEA also carries out baseline studies, mid-term reviews and evaluations.<sup>19</sup>

## 3. Methodology

**Analytical frame.** Evaluation capacity is a combination of individual and organizational factors within a conducive environment. The evaluation team developed a readiness assessment matrix (Annex 3) with seven building blocks and corresponding indicators capturing different dimensions of evaluation capacity. The report is then structured as per the Global Evaluation Initiative's Monitoring and Evaluation Systems Analysis (MESA) tool.<sup>20</sup> (Annex 3 for correspondence between MESA and the building blocks)

**Methods.** The assessment was conducted using a mix of participatory qualitative methods, pulling its data from the literature review, key informant interviews and consultative workshops.

**Desk review.** The assessment team examined a total of 51 documents throughout the assessment process. Integrating results into the inception report and the final report. The resources used to produce this report are referenced in the [Bibliography](#).

**Key informant interviews (KII).** A total of 26 KIIs took place face to face and online between 26 November 2024 and 28 January 2025. These included 19 KIIs (15 men, 4 women) who work within MDAs where some are, in parallel, involved in SLEA; 6 (4 men, 2 women) who work with Development Partners (DP); 1 (woman) who works with the private sector and 2 (men) with academia. A combination of purposive sampling and snowball sampling was used. (Annex 1 for the list of consulted actors)

**Workshops.** Two consultative workshops were conducted in Freetown and Makeni city in Sierra Leone. Participants for these workshops were purposively sampled by NaMEA staff and the assessment team, ensuring representation from a broad range of relevant sectors as well as district and city councils. In Freetown, the workshop included 40 participants covering a diverse group from MDAs, as well as representatives from NGOs and academia. This composition ensured that both governmental and non-governmental perspectives were represented, alongside input from the academic sector. The Makeni workshop had 30 participants and was focused on local council representatives, it also included representation from devolved sectors such as the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food

Security (MAFS). Additionally, Civil Society Organizations (CSO), academia and other relevant stakeholders were included, ensuring a comprehensive coverage of local government and development sectors.

**Limitations.** The NECRA process faced the following limitations, none of which affected the robustness of the findings:

- **Delayed start of data collection.** The postponement of data collection led to a compressed timeline for gathering primary data. This shortened timeframe reduced opportunities for follow-up interviews and collaborative validation of preliminary findings. To mitigate this limitation, the team employed alternative data sources, including secondary data and stakeholder reports, to supplement primary data.
- **Delayed mapping of relevant stakeholders.** The list of key informants to be engaged during the in-country data collection partially took place before the start of the data collection. However, the large majority took place during data collection as a sufficient list was not provided beforehand. As a result, significant effort went into determining relevant key informants during the period of data collection. While the team made efforts to ensure the relevance of key informants, access to higher-level stakeholders might have been limited as a result.
- **Limited availability of key informant interviews.** The accessibility of key informants was constrained due to scheduling conflicts, organizational changes and availability issues. Some key stakeholders could not be reached, while others provided limited input due to time constraints. As a result, the assessment might not fully capture diverse perspectives, particularly from critical informants whose insights could have enriched the analysis. To mitigate this limitation, the team deployed efforts to re-engage key informants through flexible scheduling and virtual interviews.
- **Late access to key documents.** Access to relevant documents (e.g., the 2014 NECRA) was delayed beyond the submission of the inception report, affecting the study's initial assumptions and scope, and leading to potential gaps in background analysis. In some cases, the late receipt of documents required adjustments to the research approach. The team adopted an iterative analysis process to integrate documents received late.

## 4. National Evaluation Systems

This section presents the evolution and current state of Sierra Leone's national evaluation system, focusing on vision and framework, policy articulation, implementation plans, and funding and financial planning. It highlights Sierra Leone's progress in integrating M&E into development plans, from early frameworks to the current MTNDP as well as the role of actors in the evaluation system that feed towards the development plan.

### 4.1 Policy and framework

#### Key Findings 1

At policy level, evaluations are recognized and valued. With each iteration of the country's development plans, the GoSL has gradually improved its M&E integration and vision. The implementation, however, remains a challenge mostly as a result of limited flexible and predictable pool fund for evaluation.

The integration of M&E in the development plans of Sierra Leone has progressed significantly from the time of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP [2001–2002]) and the National Recovery Strategy (NRS [2002–2003]) to the current MTNDP (2024–2030). The major significant leap in integrating M&E frameworks and setting up of a coordination mechanism in Sierra Leone occurred with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper I (PRSP I [2005–2007]) through the inclusion of indicators for each stage of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) programme cycle, as well as trackers for government reforms and economic growth.<sup>21</sup> Alongside the global move towards result-based management and performance budgeting approaches,<sup>22</sup> the M&E system in Sierra Leone moved from basic output monitoring to structured and data-driven evaluation of poverty reduction efforts (see Annex 2: History of Development Planning in Sierra Leone).

The MTNDP 2019–2023 institutionalized M&E through the creation of the then NaMED to progressively make M&E central to development progress.<sup>23</sup> Through NaMED, the MTNDP also allowed for the creation of a National M&E policy aimed at creating an efficient, effective and coordinated system for tracking the progress of government development projects.<sup>24</sup> This was further supported by the M&E strategy that was later established in order to translate the policy's goals into actionable steps integrated across government bodies.<sup>25–26</sup>

As of 2024, the implementation of the M&E policy remains inconsistent across MDAs. NaMEA team members surveyed as part of the 2024 CBNA champion the policy, with 100 per cent self-reporting awareness of the national M&E policy.<sup>27</sup> On the

contrary, outside of NaMEA, MDA staff are often unaware of or do not actively engage with the national M&E policy and guidelines.<sup>28</sup> Many ministries also follow DP-driven M&E frameworks that are not always aligned with the national policy but more tailored to specific projects or programmes and DP guidelines.<sup>29</sup> As per the MTNDP 2024–2030, the integration of the plan's M&E results framework within MDAs as it relates to Public Investment Projects (PIP) is planned to be improved year by year between 2024 and 2029. This is anchored in the national M&E policy and strategy and is intended to be done under the leadership of NaMEA through the capacity-building of MDA M&E units, adaptation of M&E frameworks to reflect the MTNDP targets and indicators, and annual joint reviews.<sup>30</sup> As of the timing of the NECRA, this process is in its starting phase.

Since the last 2014 NECRA, NaMEA has built a yearly strategic plan to guide national M&E activities and translate policies into practice. In principle, the national M&E strategic plan denotes that 2.5 per cent of any PIP of over US\$1 million should be transferred to NaMEA by the Ministry of Finance. Funding against this plan to date is, however, not centralized and is scattered across MDAs and development partners. As a result, NaMEA often has to scale down the scope of the evaluations they conduct, based on funding available.

MDAs also have limited financial resources to contribute to the operationalization of NaMEA's evaluation plan and tend to conduct ad hoc DP-funded and commissioned project- or programme-driven evaluations, without having their own evaluation plan. Where financing is limited, MDAs reported having to sideline evaluation and prioritize monitoring activities, hence falling short of the evaluation ambitions established in the MTNDP. This is a recognized issue noted in the National M&E policy itself, which notes that budget allocations rarely take M&E needs into account.<sup>31</sup>

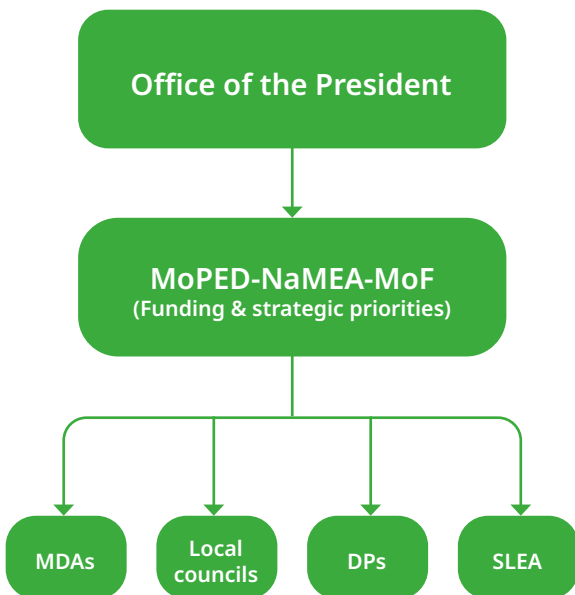
National financial planning rarely integrates evaluation needs, as a result of MDAs' M&E staff not being involved into planning exercises. The current M&E policy stipulates that the Ministry of Finance is tasked with allocating sufficient resources to NaMEA and the M&E functions of MDAs along with capacity-building efforts on effective use of allocated funds.<sup>32</sup> However, neither the M&E policy nor the Public Finance Management Reform Strategy (2023–2027) incorporates the participation of MDA M&E personnel in core budgeting processes. Evaluations funded and commissioned by development partners remain the primary source for evaluations. While these evaluations provide valuable insights, their funding is largely earmarked towards project- or programme-specific, accountability-focused evaluations that show limited contribution to the evaluation of progress towards development plans. Such rigidity in funding towards evaluations also hampers coordination between NaMEA and MDAs in conducting project- or programme-focused evaluations.

## 4.2 Institutional structure

### Key Findings 2

NaMEA offers the opportunity for a centrally situated evaluation function, which can facilitate the development of a national evaluation system. The fact that NaMEA sits under the Office of the President also gives it a form of authority to better play an oversight role. Evaluation roles, however, remain fragmented across MDAs and within the same MDA across different offices independently undertaking M&E of their projects / programmes. Collaboration takes place on an ad hoc basis.

Figure 3: Hierarchy diagram



This NECRA found unanimous recognition of the importance of the NaMEA, as a central body tasked with coordinating the M&E functions across MDAs. NaMEA’s structure is clear; its organizational chart, available publicly, defines roles and responsibilities related to national evaluations. For MDAs, local councils and DPs alike, NaMEA provides much-needed structure to what was previously a fragmented and underdeveloped M&E system. Some degree of fragmentation, however, persists as MDAs tend to conduct M&E activities in silos as a result of project- or programme-driven M&E frameworks as well as distinct mandates relating to their contribution to the development plan<sup>33</sup> and political resistance, which comes about as a result of perceiving evaluation as a surveillance activity or an activity that reveals inefficiencies and weaknesses.

NaMEA’s transition to an independent agency under the Office of the President is seen as a key step in strengthening its credibility and autonomy. However, this shift has raised concerns among some MDAs about its ability to fully serve as the central body for M&E and provide direct support to them. Similarly, the 2024 CBNA highlighted that while its placement under the Office of the President shows strong political support, it also raises questions about its independence.<sup>34</sup> This, however, underscores the need for more awareness-raising about NaMEA’s positioning, as its current set-up aligns with standard M&E structures that ensure independence.

The increased mandate of NaMEA promoted the creation of SLEA, which was officially formed following the drafting of the National Evaluation Guidelines (NEG), which called for such an entity. SLEA is intended to promote the culture of evaluation within the country, and while membership drive is still ongoing, M&E staff within different MDAs are intended to be members automatically. This has yet to take place, however, as most MDA staff report not yet being members or are unaware of the ongoing drive. Nonetheless, membership is open to wider M&E professionals, ranging from those freelance workers to academia. Although SLEA is at the early stages of its inception, it has a finalized constitution that is expected to be widely circulated and the association is intended to collaborate with NaMEA in providing advice and recommendations, particularly around government reforms and the establishment of M&E units in MDAs.

Across Sierra Leone’s MDAs, there is inconsistency in the organizational structure dedicated to M&E functions. Some MDAs, such as the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED), have clearly defined M&E units. Others, have either no dedicated M&E units or poorly structured ones that mix M&E with other functions (e.g., audit), creating challenges in distinguishing specific evaluation responsibilities. Informants felt that resistance to establishing clear M&E structures is a prevalent issue, stemming from the fear of robust evaluations unwantedly exposing weaknesses or inefficiencies.

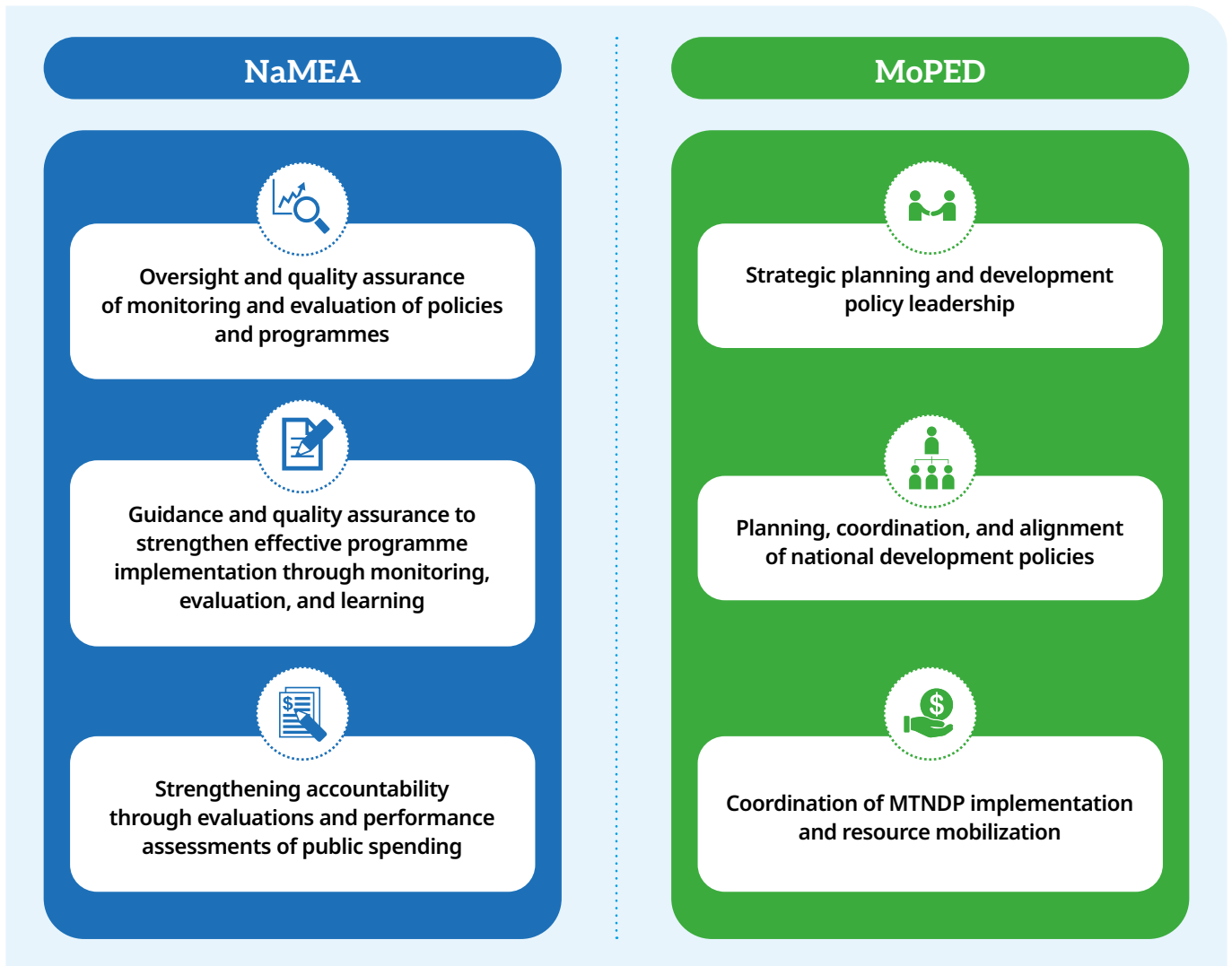
M&E function is clearly defined within local councils, who are responsible for tracking district-level development projects or programmes, as well as providing monitoring data to respective ministries at central level. Local councils have M&E units with clear reporting lines in line with the mandates given to them by the Local Government Act.<sup>35-36</sup>

Clarity around the respective roles of NaMEA and MoPED, in charge of planning and managing national development projects and programmes, remains a challenge. As in the 2014 NECRA,<sup>37</sup> MDAs interviewed for this review expressed confusion about the division of responsibilities between NaMEA<sup>38</sup> and MoPED. While presently, there seems to be a negotiated division of roles between the two bodies themselves, this clarity has still not yet been diffused down fully. While both bodies play

complementary roles, they nonetheless have distinct mandates. The MoPED has a more strategic focus vis-à-vis the planning and coordination of development policies, the implementation of the MTNDP and resource mobilization. In contrast, NaMEA

has an operational focus through the monitoring and evaluation of the policies and projects / programmes to ensure effective implementation as well as improving accountability through assessments on the use of mobilized resources.

Figure 4: NaMEA vs MoPED Roles (Side-by-side comparison)



Collaboration on evaluation across ministries and with DPs remains fragmented. While there are some positive examples of collaboration, for instance, NaMEA's efforts to engage MDAs on national evaluation priorities per the MTNDP results framework, most evaluation activities remain driven by DP requirements or individual MDA initiatives for projects or programmes linked to DP funding. Some sectors have collaborated on broader data or research efforts, but these are not always linked to evaluation or coordinated through a national framework. Moreover, some MDAs report challenges in collaborating with other MDAs due to concerns over data sharing, resistance to scrutiny and differing priorities.

The lack of structured communication and coordination across MDAs often leads to inefficiencies. In some cases, MDAs have adapted and resorted to informal communication channels, such as WhatsApp groups, to facilitate coordination. While these forms of communication channels are useful for day-to-day coordination and efficacy, these informal tools have the capacity to drive meaningful systemic change and contribute to systematic documentation and record-keeping that sustainably supports a coordinated evaluation ecosystem.

## 5. Evaluative Capacity

This section presents evaluative capacity at individual and organizational levels.

### 5.1 Individual capacity

#### Key Findings 3

There are broad disparities across MDAs in terms of staff and leadership capacity to commission and undertake evaluation, contributing to an uneven national evaluation framework. Evaluation capacities are largely acquired on the job with limited formal and sustained training opportunities.

M&E functions are more established where development partners' funding is most significant and within core governmental MDAs that garner political support, such as within the MoH or the MoF. These MDAs have dedicated teams and technical capacity to lead evaluations independently. Similarly, the 2024 CBNA showed that by 2019, NaMEA had already hired 70 per cent of its required staff, which increased to 87 per cent by 2021.

Figure 5: Growth in NaMEA staffing

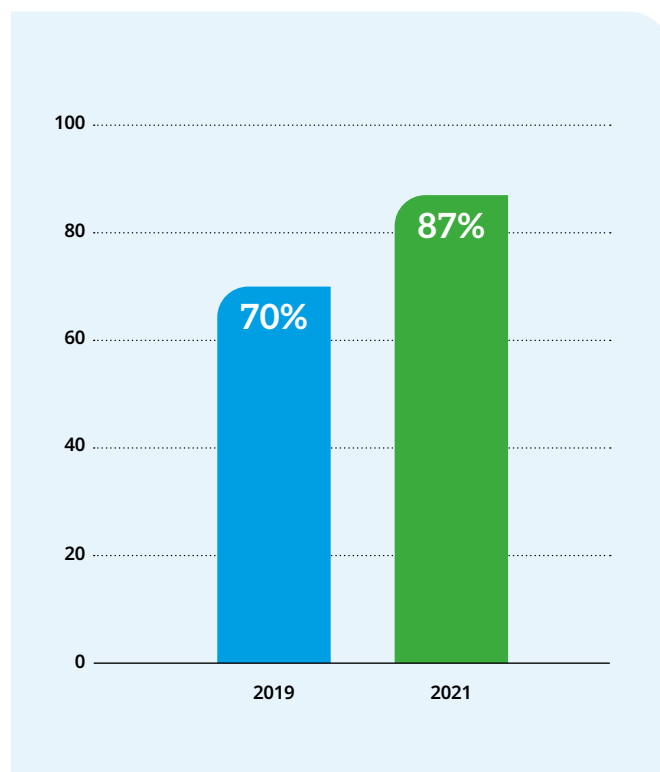


Figure 6: Uneven M&E capacity across MDAs<sup>1</sup>

MDA / Organization	Qualified teams / expertise	M&E staff available	Access to training / capacity building	Statistical tools / modern methodologies
Ministry of Health (MoH)	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MOPED)	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFS)	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Limited
Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE)	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Local Councils	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Other MDAs	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited

<sup>1</sup> Ratings are indicative and derived from the NECRA qualitative analysis, reflecting relative capacity across Ministries, Departments and Agencies in terms of staffing, skills, training access, and use of modern analytical tools.

This disparity across MDAs contributes to an uneven national evaluation framework, in which some are better able to generate robust evidence than others. A few sectors benefit from skilled teams and robust evaluation processes, while the majority of MDAs struggle to integrate evaluation into their planning and operations with staffing for M&E departments severely low compared with what is needed / planned for.<sup>39</sup>

Several MDAs report that their leadership teams, while capable of managing day-to-day M&E processes, lack the deep technical knowledge needed to address more advanced evaluation challenges, particularly with regard to the use of modern statistical tools and methodologies.

There is limited structured professional development programmes or academic courses on M&E. Few MDA staff possess academic qualifications related to evaluation or have received formal training in M&E, those that have for instance mostly sit with the MoH and MoF. Only the Njala University and University of Makeni have M&E sub-units within their established planning and research departments. There are no specific M&E curricula taught in Sierra Leone, as M&E courses are often nested under broader topics such as project design and management. The lack of specialized M&E professional in Sierra Leone presents a circular issue as existing academic institutions themselves struggle to recruit personnel who can provide full-fledged M&E curricula and training.

M&E skills across MDAs are often acquired through informal, on-the-job training or mentorship. NaMEA and DPs provide training sessions, such as UNICEF's Intermediate Moderated Programme for Evaluation Systems' Strengthening (IMPrESS) initiative. DPs further involve both MoPED and NaMEA in the UNSDCF M&E processes by way of collaborating on framework development and data collection and management, hence providing opportunities to sustain capacities.<sup>40</sup> Sector-specific capacity-building initiatives also occasionally take place as part of project or programme components such as within the health sector, through the collaboration of the MoH and the World Bank to improve data collection, analysis and reporting capacities.<sup>41</sup> SLEA, while still in its inception stages, is also expected to engage in building evaluation capacity through running internal capacity-building sessions. While SLEA currently engages with DPs and UN agencies like UNICEF and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for support, the lack of formal evaluation education in universities and the tendency to treat M&E as part of project or programme management rather than a distinct process, remain barriers. On the other hand, some ministries, such as the MAFS, have access to training sessions provided by external providers in the form of consultancies and ad hoc training on a project or programme basis.

These opportunities are often insufficient and not coordinated well enough to build long-term M&E capacity. Training sessions are frequently one-time events, which fail to result in lasting skills development. This approach is not deemed to foster the

sustained growth of M&E expertise within the government that is necessary for a well-functioning national evaluation system.

Limited formal and consistent training hinders the ability and confidence of MDAs staff to perform complex M&E tasks, such as developing evaluation matrix, conducting analysis or producing reports. Accordingly, some M&E units acknowledge gaps in their technical capacity, noting that, while they can manage routine M&E tasks, they require more specialized training to handle evolving evaluation needs. These skill gaps are not unique and point to a need to develop in-house expertise, the shortage of which often leads to a reliance on external consultancies to fill the void.

#### Key Findings 4

Outside of NaMEA, there is a persistent limited individual understanding of the role of evaluations and evaluative evidence in policy-making and practice.

Across most MDAs, there is a limited understanding of the role of evaluation vis-à-vis the national development plans. Evaluation is often perceived as a secondary or supplementary activity to monitoring. MDA personnel noted that, although evaluations are recognized as important, they are often perceived as costly and unnecessary, further deterring integration into internal processes and planning activities.

Evaluations are often still seen as "box-ticking" exercises, particularly for DP-driven evaluations conducted by external evaluators. NaMEA's efforts are often undermined by resistance from MDAs, which view evaluation as an additional burden rather than a tool for learning. Moreover, the perception that evaluations may expose inefficiencies or mismanagement leads to resistance to evaluations from MDAs with weaker M&E systems. The perception that M&E units are "surveillance" bodies rather than facilitators of improvement has led to a lack of senior-level engagement in M&E meetings, further hindering collaboration and effective M&E implementation.

## 5.2 Organizational capacity

#### Key Findings 5

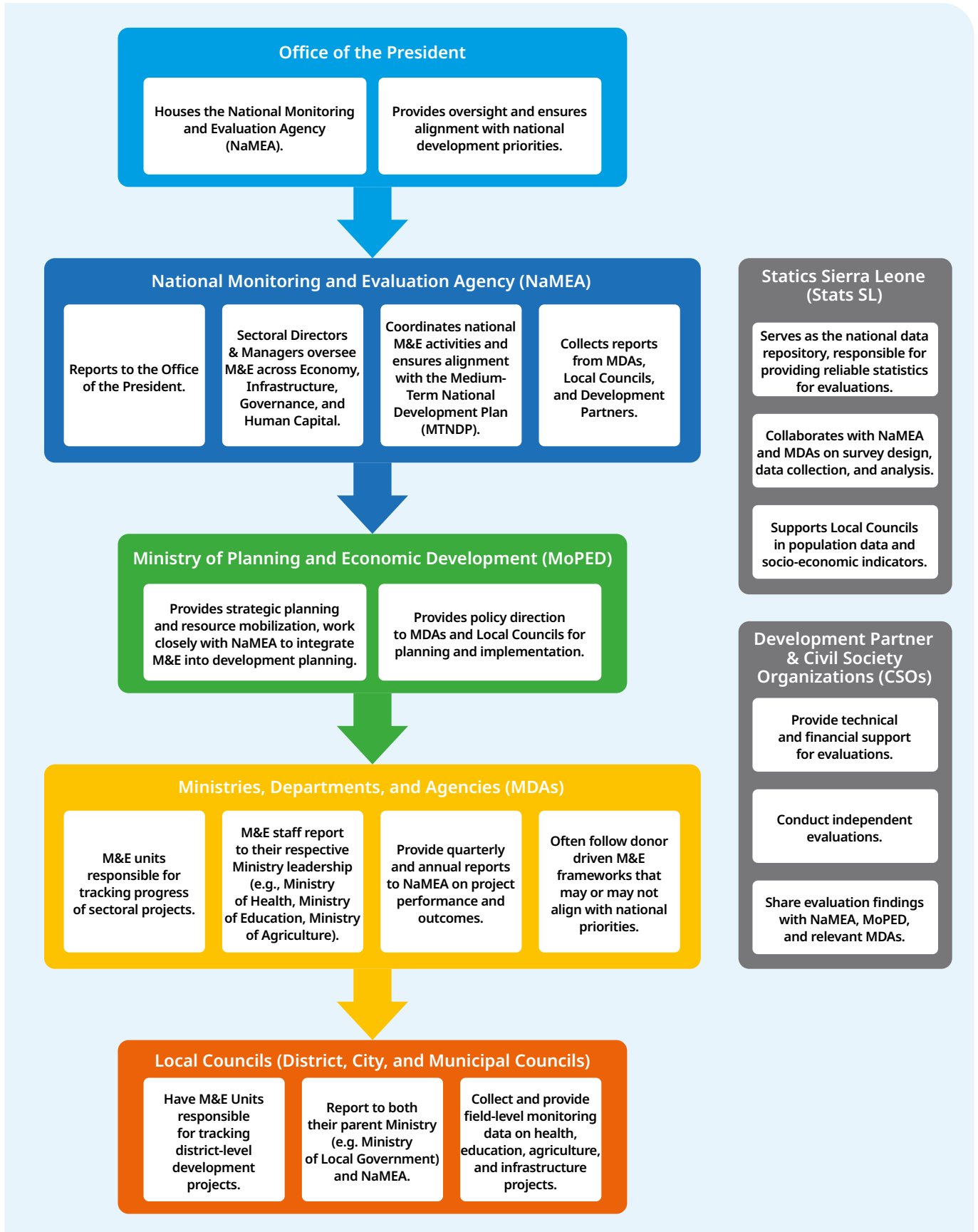
The decision to conduct an evaluation tends to be externally driven, with inconsistent performance targets for evaluations across MDAs.

The decision to initiate an evaluation varies widely across MDAs. NaMEA has structured, centralized decision-making processes<sup>42</sup> and procedures for initiating evaluations, which are en-

forced through its mandate and strong political backing from the Office of the President. Other MDAs, however, lack similar political backing, limiting their ability to initiate evaluations

independently. In Ministries such as Agriculture, Health, and Youth Affairs, the decision to conduct an evaluation is mostly triggered by contractual requirements from DPs.<sup>43</sup>

Figure 7: M&E flow across the National System



Overall, the M&E flow across the national system is as follows:

The implementation of performance targets is also inconsistent, with NaMEA setting quantitative goals, such as conducting 50 assessments per year, although financial challenges have affected the quality and progression of these efforts.

Many MDAs do not establish clear evaluation targets, prioritizing planning and monitoring instead. DP-funded and commissioned projects or programmes tend to have more defined evaluation goals. This reactive approach to evaluations by MDAs further reinforces the need for a centralized and cohesive strategy to ensure consistent and effective evaluation practices across all MDAs.

### Key Findings 6

High staff turnover, pay disparities and inconsistent recruitment practices weaken the stability and effectiveness of M&E activities across MDAs. Limited IT infrastructure further hinder efficiency, with key institutions like NaMEA lacking essential analytical tools.

Staff turnover remains a critical issue for many MDAs, particularly among M&E personnel. Frequent staff changes worsen the skills gap and disrupt M&E activities. New recruits often lack institutional knowledge and the technical expertise needed to contribute effectively, leading to inefficiencies and delays in evaluations. Some MDAs note that even when they have qualified staff, low motivation and better job opportunities elsewhere result in high attrition rates, further weakening M&E continuity. NaMEA, in collaboration with the Human Resources Management Office (HRMO), have established an M&E cadre

within MDAs and this is outlined in the M&E policy. This cadre, in principle, offers a classification of roles ranging from entry to senior level, such as M&E manager and director roles.

In addition to turnover, disparities in pay and working conditions between civil servants and non-civil servants hired by DPs create inequities within the M&E workforce. This affects morale, as civil servants may feel undervalued compared with their counterparts on DP-funded projects or programmes.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, M&E recruitment across MDAs lacks consistency, as some MDAs rely on internal hiring through the HRMO on a civil servant basis, while others recruit externally through DPs for roles such as project/ programme attached M&E officers. This inconsistent approach makes it difficult to build a strong and cohesive M&E workforce.

Most MDAs lack adequate IT systems and equipment to effectively support M&E functions, leading to delays and inefficiencies in M&E processes, such as the persisting reliance on paper-based data collection methods. Institutions such as Statistics Sierra Leone (Stats SL) have relatively better IT infrastructure. Stats SL's engagement in modernization efforts to improve data-driven decision-making in data collection and initiatives such as "Data for Now", which specifically looks at infrastructure improvement, contribute to this.<sup>45</sup> In contrast, most MDAs struggle with significant gaps. For example, NaMEA, the central M&E coordinating body, does not have specialized software tools such as Stata, which are in line with the capacity of staff for data analysis and the production of high-quality evaluation reports. While the use of open-source tools could fill these gaps, it requires specialized training as well as replicability and adaptability across MDAs. This limitation vis-à-vis specialized software particularly affects NaMEA in its ability to conduct and oversee evaluations that meet technical standards.

## 6. Data Management and Use

### Key Findings 7

In Sierra Leone, data management practices across MDAs are fragmented, with significant variation in systems, infrastructure and data security protocols. This inconsistency hinders the ability to share data across the evaluation ecosystem and poses a challenge to the sustainability and effectiveness of NaMEA's National Monitoring and Evaluation Management Information System (NaMEMIS).

Data management practices across Sierra Leone's MDAs vary significantly, with some MDAs using advanced systems, while others still rely on basic tools such as Excel files. The MoH, for

example, uses the District Health Information Software (DHIS 2) platform, which enables real-time data collection and sharing for health-related evaluations. This system allows for efficient data analysis and access, particularly for health facilities.

However, many other MDAs, rely on Excel files stored on personal laptops, which lack robust back-up systems. This creates significant data security risks, especially when these devices are lost or damaged. Overall, little progress has been made on this end since the 2014 NECRA, which noted similar issues. With the lack of improvements since then, some MDAs have reported cases of data loss during a manual back-up process, underscoring the vulnerability of such systems.

Across several MDAs, data back-up practices are inconsistent.

Many institutions store data on personal laptops and rely on external drives or cloud services for back-up. While the latter provides some measure of security, it is not a formalized or consistent system. There is recognition that the absence of centralized back-up systems and standardized data management practices exposes data to the risk of loss or corruption, as well as potential sensitive data leaks, which undermines the reliability and accessibility of data for evaluations.

Some MDAs, such as NaMEA and Stats SL, have adopted cloud-based systems to improve data security and ensure easier access. However, the limited accessibility of centralized data systems remains an issue. For example, the MoH and Stats SL have established centralized servers, but access is restricted to a small number of staff, which limits the sharing and integration of data across MDAs. While restrictions on access to sensitive data are justified, they present a limitation in cases that do not involve sensitive data.

With regard to data protection, there is a general recognition of its importance across many MDAs, especially within NaMEA and Stats SL, which have implemented more structured data management systems. For example, Stats SL has clear policies for personal data collection, storage and consent protocols. However, inconsistent practices prevail in many other MDAs, where personal data are managed informally. Regarding this, some MDAs report a lack of specific guidelines for the collection and protection of sensitive data, relying instead on general M&E protocols.

Some MDAs also face challenges in digital tool usage and training for staff, which further exacerbates data protection concerns. Many MDA staff members are not adequately trained on how to securely handle personal data or use digital tools, such as KoboToolBox, for data collection, leading to unsecured data storage on laptops or flash drives.

Despite efforts by NaMEA to establish a centralized Management Information System (i.e., NaMEMIS) to streamline data collection and sharing, it remains underused across several MDAs. While there is awareness of the system in some MDAs, it is not actively used due to issues with functionality and system updates, as well as pending training on how to use it. This lack of integration hinders the potential for cross-ministerial data-sharing and reduces the overall efficiency of the national evaluation system. However, it should be noted that this system is still in its piloting phase as of the timing of this NECRA, and capacity-building / refresher training sessions are yet to be done with MDA and local council staff who will be tasked with populating data on it.

DPs have played a key role in strengthening the data systems in Sierra Leone, though challenges remain in the coordination and integration of efforts. For instance, UNDP and the African Development Bank (AfDB) have supported projects and programmes aimed at improving socio-economic data and health

data systems, but these efforts often occur in silos, with limited integration across MDAs. Additionally, while UNDP has been instrumental in supporting the development of data systems, concerns about sustainability persist, particularly regarding the long-term ownership and maintenance of these systems. In this regard, several MDAs have benefited from DP-funded systems for managing data, including the setting up of Information Management Systems. These systems often face sustainability challenges once the DP-funded project or programme concludes. For instance, the MAFS MIS, which was developed with DP support, is no longer functioning due to lack of funding and ongoing maintenance. Recommendations from the UNSDCF evaluation (2020–2024) highlight the need to provide sustained support towards data management and for a move towards increased collaboration with NaMEA by UN agencies and the use of NaMEMIS to centralize data from UN, government and the private sector.<sup>46</sup> This provides a clear opportunity that can be leveraged. Moreover, the above echoes the need for better collaboration among DPs, as each agency needs to concert efforts to avoid duplication and ensure continuity in the improvement of data management practices.

MDA actors as well as DPs note that access to data for evaluations remains a challenge in Sierra Leone, particularly within government institutions. Several DPs, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF, have supported initiatives aimed at improving data collection and capacity-building within different sectors. There have also been instances of overarching support by agencies, such as the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) supporting workshops on data management within the context of the National Data Governance Framework, as well as by the World Bank,<sup>47</sup> AfDB,<sup>48</sup> as well as others. Notwithstanding these efforts, access to internal data systems for evaluations remains restricted. For instance, in the health sector, while population data from external DP-commissioned surveys are publicly available, internal data collected by the health system require specific permissions, which can delay the evaluation process. This delay further impacts the timeliness and reliability of evaluations by limiting triangulation points.

Moreover, some MDAs are still reliant on manual data entry and paper-based systems for data collection, which further hampers the efficiency of data use in evaluations. In the same vein, local councils responsible for collecting sector data at district level and feeding them to the central level, note that the lack of standardized data collection tools and the bureaucracy surrounding the access to and sharing of collected data are major challenges. Moreover, local councils stress that the overly broad scope of data collection tools limits the use of the data that is collected and available. To this end, they point out that standardizing and simplifying data collection tools, coupled with capacity-building and proactive stakeholder engagement, could be pathways towards improved access to usable monitoring data that could effectively feed into evaluations.

## 7. Demand and use of evaluations

This section examines how evaluations are being used by the GoSL and evaluates the level of demand for evaluations across MDAs and DPs, focusing on the factors influencing both demand and use.

### Key Findings 8



Demand for evaluations within the GoSL is largely reactive and focused on accountability rather than learning, with most evaluations being initiated in response to external demands, particularly from DPs.

NaMEA is mandated to raise awareness of the importance of evaluations and has taken key steps to do so. Its approach is, however, still largely informal and negotiation based, relying on relationships rather than a formal, systematic strategy to engage MDAs. The lack of a robust evaluation culture within

MDAs, coupled with resource constraints, has led to limited awareness-raising efforts about the importance of evaluations. The issue is further compounded by resistance to evaluation processes, especially among senior officials who fear that evaluations might expose inefficiencies or corruption, leading to potential accountability concerns. This fear of exposure often leads to reluctance in embracing evaluations as tools for learning rather than punishment.

The demand for evaluations within the GoSL is largely reactive and focused on accountability rather than learning, with most evaluations being initiated in response to external demands, particularly from DPs. Many MDAs do not proactively assess their evaluation needs or initiate evaluations independently. Instead, evaluations are often driven by DPs or external project / programme requirements. This situation is compounded by capacity gaps, where many MDAs lack the internal expertise or systems to manage or conduct high-quality evaluations.

Figure 8: Reactive vs. Proactive Evaluation Demand

DIMENSION	 REACTIVE	 PROACTIVE
Who initiates?	↘ Initiated at the request of development partners	↗ Internally planned evaluations
Why?	↘ Response to project obligations; focus on accountability	↗ Focus on improvement
How aligned?	↘ Limited autonomous initiative from MDAs	↗ Systematic alignment with national priorities
Culture	↘ Compliance-driven approach	↗ Learning culture

The lack of institutional capacity to foster a demand-driven evaluation culture in government is evident. Even though DPs strive to align their projects and programmes as well as their respective evaluations with national priorities<sup>49</sup> and provide technical assistance, MDAs often struggle to fully integrate evaluation findings into their own work. As a result, the demand for evaluations remains sporadic, influenced more by external requirements than by a national culture of evaluation.

DPs, such as UNFPA and UNDP for instance, have made concerted efforts to embed evaluations within policy frameworks

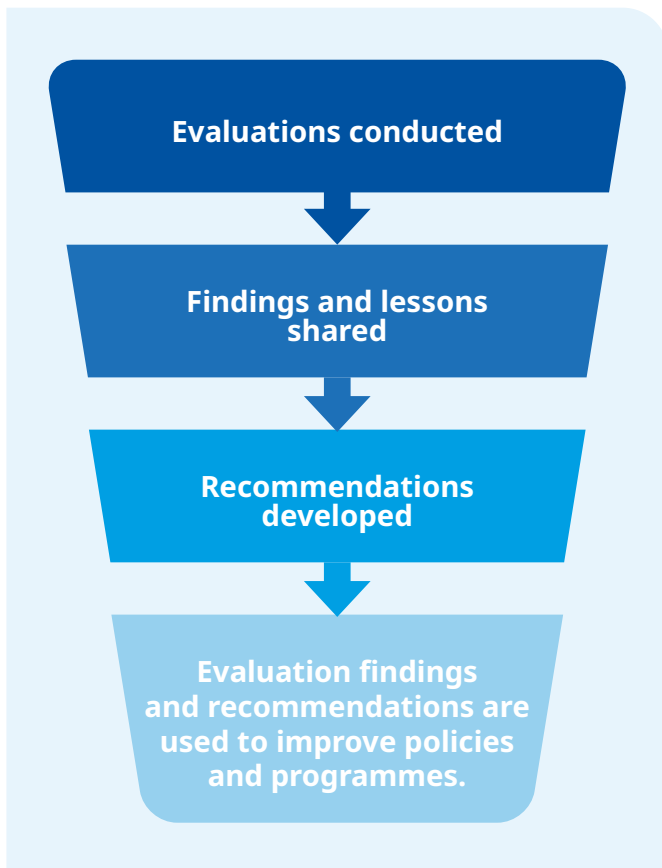
and programme strategies of supported projects / programmes. These organizations work with MDAs to develop Terms of Reference (ToR) for evaluations, ensuring that the process is aligned with government priorities. However, despite this alignment at the policy level, the integration of evaluations into national decision-making remains inconsistent and the involvement of government entities in the evaluation process is often limited to participation in the design phase or data collection, but they fail to take an active role in driving change or policy adaptation.

Evaluations commissioned by DPs are often available on their websites for public access, unless findings pertain to confidential matters. Overall, a look at evaluations conducted by DPs and other key players shows a tendency towards evaluating country programmes, as well as a broader focus on health, education, peacebuilding as well as broader humanitarian assistance.<sup>50-51-52</sup>

**Key Findings 9**

Evaluations within MDAs are often conducted in isolation, with limited integration into policy and decision-making processes. While NaMEA and MoPED support evaluation planning for national strategies, there is no formal system to ensure findings are systematically applied.

**Figure 9: Evaluation Use Funnel**



While DP-funded and commissioned evaluations are conducted within several MDAs as part of specific projects / programmes, their integration into broader policy and decision-making processes remains limited. Evaluations are frequently viewed as stand-alone activities rather than part of a continuous learning cycle. This lack of integration is exacerbated by inconsistent practices across different MDAs and

insufficient follow-up mechanisms to ensure lessons are applied to future strategies and operations.

NaMEA plays a central role in supporting the use of evaluations, particularly in collaboration with the MoPED. For major evaluations linked to national strategies, such as the MTNDP, NaMEA helps guide and facilitate evaluation planning. However, despite these efforts, there is still a lack of formal systems to systematically incorporate evaluation lessons into broader planning and decision-making across MDAs. MoPED has recognized the need for greater transparency and uses media channels to communicate evaluation results, yet this approach has not translated into a structured application of evaluation findings for improving future policies.

Notably, most MDAs engaged in the NECRA reported having no self-funded or commissioned evaluations conducted apart from assessments and field monitoring. This indicates a gap in evaluation culture within these ministries, where the absence of regular evaluations limits opportunities for learning and programme improvement. In contrast, other MDAs, such as the MoH, demonstrate positive examples of evaluation use. For example, an evaluation of community health workers led the ministry to make operational adjustments, such as introducing peer supervisors and enhancing capacity-building to resolve workload conflicts, showcasing the effective application of evaluation findings.

However, in other cases, evaluations are conducted, but their use is either superficial or non-systematic. Some MDAs provided examples where evaluations occurred for DP-funded projects, but it was unclear how lessons from these evaluations were used to influence future policies or improve internal practices. These instances suggest that, while evaluations are undertaken, there is a lack of structured processes to integrate their findings into ongoing government activities. This is reported to be contributing to the loss of the GoSL's institutional memory, as successes and lessons learned from past initiatives are not systematically carried forward.<sup>53</sup> Many MDAs lack structured processes, such as management responses, to ensure that recommendations from evaluations are acted upon or incorporated into future programming.

At the national level, while there exists a Mid-Term Review that was conducted with the support of UNDP and UNICEF, the absence of an evaluation for the previous MTNDP 2019–2023 underscores key areas that require strengthening in terms of the country's evaluation culture and capacity to conduct and use evaluations. The strengthening of robust institutional frameworks, enhanced coordination and dependable financial allocations, along with the development of broader evaluation skill sets, are key to create an evaluation culture that feeds into the continuous learning and improvement of the design of development plans to come.

## 8. Conclusion

The NECRA findings highlight significant progress and substantive challenges in the national M&E system. Over recent years, the GoSL has made recognizable steps towards integrating M&E into its national development plans, especially with the MTNDP 2024–2030. Nonetheless, there is still inconsistency in the implementation of the national M&E policy, with most MDAs operating on DP-driven frameworks and treating evaluation as an afterthought to monitoring.

In view of its mandate, NaMEA plays a critical role in coordinating M&E, but it still faces political resistance from some MDAs, as well as operational capacity and coordination challenges due to fragmented approaches to evaluation across MDAs. NaMEA's shift to a semi-autonomous agency enhanced its credibility. Notwithstanding this, its roles and responsibilities in relation to that of MoPED are not entirely clear to MDAs regarding the operational vs. strategic roles of the two bodies. Furthermore, funding remains a prevalent challenge, as most MDAs depend on DP support as opposed to the national budget, which undermines the sustainability of the M&E system.










In terms of structuring, most MDAs operate without specialized leadership for evaluations, formal training or institutionalized M&E units. An over-reliance on informal, on-the-job training constrains the ability of MDA staff to conduct complex evaluations, while keeping up with recent innovations in using digital

tools in data collection. Poor planning and inconsistent financial resource allocation further fragment the M&E practices, and all too often, the system evaluates reactively towards DP requirements and on a project or programme basis, with findings not being fully integrated into the government's decision-making process.

These are further exacerbated by systemic barriers: a lack of mechanisms to follow up on findings from evaluations, weak coordination across MDAs and resistance from senior leadership towards evaluations across MDAs. Some DPs have supported data management and evaluation capacity-building. However, without a coherent national strategy and funding model for evaluations, the sustainability of these initiatives is not secured.

Overall, although Sierra Leone has taken some steps towards establishing its M&E system, challenges lie ahead in institutionalizing and fully using evaluation as a learning and decision-making tool in the country. Addressing gaps in leadership, capacity-building, funding and coordination will be key to strengthening the national evaluation framework. A more integrated and proactive evaluation culture, supported by a sustainable funding model, is therefore needed in order to make effective use of evaluations to feed into national development goals and the SDGs.

**Table 1: Comparative analysis between 2014 national M&E mapping and capacity assessment, and 2024 NECRA**

Themes	Status of progress	Justification
Integration of M&E into Development Plans	 Improved	M&E integration into the MTNDP and related frameworks has been more formalized but remains inconsistent across MDAs.
National M&E Policy Implementation	 Partially improved	While an M&E policy has been put in place, there is continued inconsistency in the implementation of the national M&E policy, with some MDAs still not fully adopting it.
M&E Organizational Structure in MDAs	 Stagnated	Some MDAs have established M&E units, but many others still lack clarity or have integrated M&E with other functions like auditing.
Capacity for M&E Leadership	 Stagnated	While leadership exists in some ministries like Health and Finance, most MDAs still lack specialized M&E leadership, hindering implementation.
Capacity for M&E Staff (Training and Retention)	 Stagnated	M&E training remains inconsistent, and most MDAs still rely on on-the-job mentorship instead of formal, structured training programmes.
Collaboration between MDAs and NaMEA	 Partially improved	While some progress in collaboration has been made, MDAs still primarily work in silos with sporadic and non-institutionalized collaboration with NaMEA.
Data Management Systems	 Partially improved	Data management practices have improved slightly with the adoption of cloud systems in some institutions but remain fragmented.
Use of Evaluations in Government	 Stagnated	Despite efforts by NaMEA, evaluations in MDAs are often ad hoc, disconnected from strategic planning and fail to systematically influence decision-making.
Demand for Evaluations in Government	 Stagnated	Evaluations are mostly reactive and DP-driven with MDAs not proactively assessing their own evaluation needs.

## 9. Recommendations

Recommendations	Timeline
<b>Individual Capacity</b>	
<p>1. <b>Strengthen evaluation capacity across MDAs and within the overall ecosystem</b></p> <p>a. NaMEA should collaborate with academia, development partners and international organizations to establish or support the establishment of a national M&amp;E training programme. The programme could be set up to provide foundational and advanced M&amp;E courses, along with mentorship opportunities and certification programmes, tailored to different levels of government officials. Focus areas of the programme could include advanced M&amp;E skills, with a particular focus on evaluation; including data analysis, the use of modern digital tools (e.g., Kobo Collect, Stata) and reporting techniques.</p> <p>b. NaMEA, MDAs, as well as development partners, should put in place internship opportunities specially for evaluation roles so that university students with relevant profiles could get early hands-on experience. The scope for these internships and their impact on creating an interest in evaluation could be piloted and followed up on in association with SLEA.</p>	Short-term
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	
<p>2. <b>Institutionalize the M&amp;E policy, strategy and governance, and support the establishment of formal, standardized and well-resourced M&amp;E units within all MDAs</b></p> <p>a. Given that NaMEA has already developed a national M&amp;E policy, it should ensure that every ministry, local council and sectoral agency is sufficiently equipped to align their planning processes with national evaluation priorities. Formal evaluations should be part of annual work plans for MDAs and integrated into the budgeting process to ensure sustainability. To this end, NaMEA and MoPED specifically, as well as other MDAs and DPs, should support the standardization and formalization of M&amp;E units that are resourced according to commonly agreed-upon minimum standards, to ensure that these units play integral roles in national planning and decision-making processes. NaMEA, in tandem with the MoPED and MDAs, should work to institutionalize these units across the board, with clear mandates, budgets and staffing plans.</p>	Medium-term
<p>3. <b>Establish a dedicated predictable pool funded for M&amp;E activities that aligns with long-term evaluation needs</b></p> <p>a. MoF, in discussion with NaMEA, MoPED and development partners, should consider setting up a national M&amp;E fund. This fund should be set up with the intention of providing a consistent allocation for M&amp;E activities across MDAs. NaMEA should also assist MDAs in developing detailed costed plans for evaluations, ensuring that they include both national and DP funding sources. To this end:</p> <p>b. The allocation of a fixed percentage of the national budget to an M&amp;E fund should be operationalized as per the M&amp;E strategy.</p> <p>c. DP-funded projects should allocate a proportion of their budget to the M&amp;E fund.</p> <p>d. Clear guidelines for the allocation and use of the fund should be developed.</p>	Medium-term
<p>4. <b>Ensure the involvement of MDA M&amp;E personnel in project design</b></p> <p>a. All projects, whether they are institutionally (from the national budget) or DP-funded, should involve the respective MDA M&amp;E personnel during the design phase to determine implementation sites and agree on deliverables, before registration with the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED). This should apply particularly to DP-funded projects where DPs might, at times, go straight to MoPED, and the projects are subsequently sent to MDAs as implementing partners.</p>	Medium-term

Recommendations	Timeline
<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	
<p>5. <b>Clearly define and formalize the respective roles of NaMEA and MoPED in managing and coordinating M&amp;E across the government</b></p> <p>a. While there are respective mandates and a mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities between NaMEA and MoPED, the NECRA findings show that this understanding is not uniform across other MDAs. Thus, the two bodies should collaboratively clarify their respective mandates with regard to their responsibilities in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national development projects and programmes. This should be accompanied with awareness-raising among MDAs regarding the lines of coordination between the two bodies. To sustain this, regular inter-organizational workshops and joint review meetings should be established to ensure ongoing collaboration.</p>	Medium-term
<p>6. <b>Create and enforce follow-up mechanisms for evaluation findings</b></p> <p>a. NaMEA should work with MoPED and MDAs to design and implement a formal tracking system for evaluation recommendations. To this end, a central database could be created to monitor the status of each recommendation relative to how the recommendations fit or contribute to the national development plan. Towards this, regular review meetings should be held to ensure that actions are taken by concerned parties. This should include the creation of an Evaluation Action Plan, with timelines and assigned responsibilities for each recommendation. This could be modelled after platforms used by the UNDP, UNICEF, etc.</p>	Short-term
<b>Conducive Environment</b>	
<p>7. <b>Promote a culture of learning and evidence use</b></p> <p>a. NaMEA should lead campaigns to demonstrate the value of evaluations as tools for policy and programme enhancement, and engage senior leadership in driving the use of evaluations in decision-making. Best practices and success stories from evaluations should be shared widely within the government to encourage the uptake of evaluations for decision-making. In tandem, NaMEA should develop the capacity of evaluation champions, both individuals and M&amp;E units, to play a 'knowledge broker' role.<sup>54</sup> Development partners should support exposing decision makers to the experiences of others, for example through attendance at National Evaluation Capacity conferences, by organizing in-country or supporting the participation of key M&amp;E personnel internationally, when possible.</p>	
<p>8. <b>Foster stronger collaboration and coordination among MDAs, development partners, CSOs and academia</b></p> <p>a. NaMEA should establish an M&amp;E coordination platform that includes representatives from all relevant stakeholders. This platform should aim at ensuring that evaluations are planned, implemented and reviewed in a collaborative manner. This platform can also facilitate joint funding for evaluations and ensure that development partners' evaluations are aligned with national priorities.</p>	Short-term
<p>9. <b>Invest in integrated, digital data management systems across all MDAs to facilitate real-time data collection, analysis and sharing</b></p> <p>a. Given that NaMEA has put in place the National Monitoring and Evaluation Management Information System (NaMEMIS), it should spearhead in coordinating efforts by DPs to strengthen data management systems across MDAs by linking to the centralized platform that integrates data from various MDAs, local councils for cross-sectoral evaluations. To this end, NaMEA should facilitate the uptake of the NaMEMIS by completing ongoing trainings across MDAs and pushing for the modernization of data management practices.</p>	Long-term

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# Annexes

## Annex 1: List of Consulted Actors

MDAs	Development Partners	Private sector	Academia
1. National Monitoring and Evaluation Agency	17. UNICEF	23. Dalan Development Consultants	24. Njala University
2. Sierra Leone Evaluation Association	18. AFDB		25. Fourah Bay College / University of Sierra Leone
3. Ministry of Planning and Development	19. UNDP		
4. National Youth Commission	20. UNFPA		
5. Parliament	21. WHO		
6. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	22. UNRCO – Sierra Leone		
7. Decentralization Commission			
8. Ministry of Social Welfare			
9. Statistics Sierra Leone (Project)			
10. Ministry of Basic and Senior Education			
11. Ministry of Higher Education			
12. Ministry of Health			
13. Ministry of Youth Affairs			
14. Right to Access Information Commission (RAIC)			
15. Ministry of Finance			
16. Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education			

## Annex 2: History of Development Planning in Sierra Leone

As a lead up to the development of the first comprehensive national development plan (PRSP: 2005–2007), the government had initially implemented the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) with the intention of addressing challenges relating to the transition from war to peace. The I-PRSP was implemented in two phases covering the periods 2001–2002 and 2003–2004 respectively, with the former emphasizing re-establishing security, governance and basic services, and the latter on good governance, restarting the economy and social development.<sup>55</sup>

During a consultative group meeting held between the GoSL and its development partners in November 2002 in Paris, the agenda of the I-PRSP was revised to pave the path of transitioning from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. This revision recognized the importance of having a national recovery strategy to address the post-conflict period as a foundation towards national development plans.<sup>56</sup> As such, with the intent of addressing the immediate needs of the country following the end of the civil war, the **National Recovery Strategy (NRS: 2002–2003)** was launched with four pillars consisting of the Restoration of State Authority; Rebuilding Communities; Peace Building and Human Rights; and Restoration of the Economy. The short-term plan focused on rebuilding government institutions, the reintegration of war-affected populations, restoration of infrastructure and essential services along with the revamping of key sectors to stimulate economic growth. In effect, this strategy was intended to pave the way for longer-term development efforts.<sup>57</sup> During the same time, a longer-term development framework was set up in the form of the **Sierra Leone Vision 2025** document, also known as “Sweet Salone.” This document was intended to frame all the government’s poverty alleviation strategies.<sup>58</sup>

Following the National Recovery Strategy [NRS] (2002–2003), the GoSL developed a more comprehensive long-term development plan dubbed the **Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper [PRSP I] (2005–2007)**.<sup>59</sup> The plan was built on lessons learned from the implementation of the I-PRSP and the NRS, as well as in adherence to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). PRSP I sought to address challenges in food security and job

creation through embracing broad-based economic growth, providing essential services and infrastructure to the poor and improving governance.<sup>60</sup> **The second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper [PRSP II] (2008–2012)**, dubbed the **“Agenda for Change,”** built on the first previous strategy, while emphasizing a focus on improving the energy sector, transportation and overall quality of life. PRSP II further focused on government reforms aimed at improving accountability and transparency.<sup>61</sup>

With the then revision of Sierra Leone’s vision to become a middle-income country by 2035, **the third Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper [PRSP III] (2013–2018)** or the **“Agenda for Prosperity”** was subsequently launched. Drawing on successes from the previous plan, PRSP III was built around eight pillars of diversified economic growth, managing natural resources, accelerating human development, international competitiveness, labour and employment, social protection, governance and public sector reform, as well as gender and women’s empowerment.<sup>62</sup>

The subsequent **Medium-Term National Development Plan [MTNDP] (2019–2023)** was similarly centred around achieving middle-income status. However, the previous objective of reaching the target by 2035 was moved to 2039. Moreover, this development plan was further aligned with the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as demonstrated by its focus on improving access to education, inclusive growth and building of a resilient economy. The plan set out to address priorly noted challenges, such as coordination between sectors, effective implementation issues, as well as resource allocation challenges. Towards this, it outlined eight policy clusters on human capital development; diversifying the economy and promoting growth; infrastructure and economic competitiveness; governance and accountability for results; empowering women, children and persons with disability; youth employment, sports and migration; addressing vulnerabilities and building resilience; and a cluster on the implementation of the plan itself.<sup>63</sup> As the term of the MTNDP (2019–2023) has ended, it has been replaced by a new longer-term plan covering the duration 2024–2030.

## Annex 3: Assessment matrix

Core area	Assessment Indicators
<b>Vision &amp; Framework</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a shared understanding of how evaluations can contribute to the Mid-term Development Plan (2024 - 2030) and the achievement of SDGs</li> <li>2. The rationale for the existence of an evaluation agency across the MoPD and MDAs is formalized</li> <li>3. There is a clear articulation between evaluation-related policies, M&amp;E guidelines and evaluation agency / unit's expected outputs and outcomes</li> <li>4. There are yearly implementation plans to achieve the desired evaluation objectives</li> <li>5. Evaluation agency / unit activities are geared towards achieving their objectives</li> </ol>
<b>Leadership &amp; staff</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Heads of evaluation agency / units have the skills and experience to effectively drive the operationalization of the evaluation vision</li> <li>7. Heads of evaluation agency / units collaborate across ministries on a regular basis</li> <li>8. Staff of evaluation agency / units have the skills and experience to implement the agency / unit's objectives</li> <li>9. There is an adequate number of staff to achieve the agency / units' objectives</li> <li>10. There is a clear recruitment process to bring in new talents in the evaluation agency / units</li> <li>11. Leadership and staff deem themselves satisfied and motivated in their work</li> </ol>
<b>Funding</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. There is a clear and up-to-date financial plan to achieve the evaluation vision</li> <li>13. Budget allocation is predictable and aligned with the ambitions of each agency / unit</li> <li>14. Financial plan is used to make operational decisions regarding evaluations</li> </ol>
<b>Business processes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Evaluation Agency / units and internal processes for planning and review exist and are consistently used</li> <li>16. Performance targets are in place in terms of number and quality of evaluation implemented</li> <li>17. There are clear processes for decision making towards evaluations</li> <li>18. Data and files are backed up, secure and accessible by the staff</li> <li>19. Personal data collected is protected and addressed under effective frameworks or policies in M&amp;E processes.</li> </ol>
<b>Infrastructures and organizational structures</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20. In each agency / unit, there is a clear organizational structure with a complete organizational chart</li> <li>21. Physical infrastructure (office space) is well tailored to current and medium-term evaluation needs</li> <li>22. IT systems, equipment and software are adequate to achieve the agency / unit's evaluation objectives</li> </ol>
<b>Evaluation supply</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23. External allies to achieve evaluation targets (e.g. training institute, evaluation firms, etc.) are mapped</li> <li>24. There is a clear planning process to implement evaluations</li> <li>25. Evaluations produced are used to improve future evaluation approaches</li> </ol>
<b>Evaluation demand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26. Evaluation needs are regularly assessed and acted upon</li> <li>27. Evaluation agency / units regularly raise awareness across ministries on the added value and potential use of evaluations</li> <li>28. Knowledge created via evaluations is widely disseminated</li> <li>29. Evaluations produced are used to inform policies and objectives of the different ministries</li> </ol>

Table 1: Added Umbrella Categories and the Seven building blocks of the NECRA

Added umbrella categories	NECRA building blocks
10. Evaluation systems at the national level	2. Vision and Framework ( <i>what are we trying to achieve?</i> ) 3. Funding ( <i>what do we need to get there?</i> )
4. Government capacity to manage, commission, and undertake evaluations	5. Leadership and Staff ( <i>what do we need to get there?</i> )
6. Government capacity to manage and coordinate an evaluation system	7. Infrastructure and Organizational Structure ( <i>how are we organized and supported to deliver?</i> )
8. Capacity to undertake evaluations in civil society/ academia/ the private sector	9. Evaluation supply ( <i>how will we work together?</i> )
10. Systems/ incentives for ensuring that evaluation is acted upon	11. Business processes ( <i>how are we organized and supported to deliver?</i> )
12. Use of evaluations by government	13. Evaluation demand ( <i>how will we work together?</i> )

# Endnotes

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- 2 UNICEF, "Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF," 2018, <https://www.unicef.org/media/54816/file>.
- 3 Baimba Abdulai Koroma and Momoh Thomas Bockarie, "Sierra Leone National Monitoring and Evaluation Mapping and Capacity Assessment," 2014.
- 4 GOPA PACE, "Capacity Building Needs Assessment for National Monitoring & Evaluation Agency (NaMEA)," October 2024.
- 5 From 1991 to 2002, Sierra Leone went through a violent civil conflict, which was the most significant period of instability, resulting in significant social turmoil, economic collapse and the disintegration of institutions. "UNAMSIL: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone - Background," accessed October 18, 2024, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/unamsil/background.html>.
- 6 International Monetary Fund, "Sierra Leone: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper," IMF Staff Country Reports 05, no. 191 (2005): 1, <https://doi.org/10.5089/9781451834505.002>.
- 7 Vivek Srivastava and Marco Larizza, "Decentralization in Postconflict Sierra Leone: The Genie Is Out of the Bottle," n.d.
- 8 The Act was further amended in 2022 to extend the tenure of local council elections and office terms of chairpersons and councilors from four to five years to align with other elective public offices. The Act also further strengthened the decentralization and devolution of functions and powers.
- 9 Government of Sierra Leone, "The Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2022," 2022, [https://www.parliament.gov.sl/uploads/acts/THE%20LOCAL%20GOVERNMENT%20\(AMENDMENT\)%20ACT,%202022.pdf](https://www.parliament.gov.sl/uploads/acts/THE%20LOCAL%20GOVERNMENT%20(AMENDMENT)%20ACT,%202022.pdf).
- 10 International Monetary Fund, "Sierra Leone."
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- 27 2024 NaMEA CBNA found that 43% and 57% of NaMEA staff were "very aware" and "aware" of the national M&E policy GOPA PACE, "CBNA."
- 28 KII across MDA.
- 29 Both the M&E policy and M&E strategy touch on lack of M&E coordination leading to disparity in M&E frameworks. The M&E Policy states, for example, that MAF and MoH (through the support of DPs) developed M&E frameworks without recourse to national standards or guidelines. In line with this, KIIs have noted that M&E frameworks in sectors like Health and Agriculture have often been project or programme-specific and based on donor reporting requirements using external indicators and templates that do not always integrate with national priorities and data systems managed by NaMEA or Stats SL.
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- 43 Evaluations are often a condition embedded in project / programme agreements or funding contracts, requiring MDAs to assess project performance for accountability and learning purposes.
- 44 At times, DP funded projects or programmes hire M&E staff to support the project follow-up and reporting. M&E officers hired for this, are non-civil servants and are hence often better remunerated than their civil-servant counterparts.
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