



Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 02-May-2023 | Report No: PIDA35829



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Sierra Leone	Project ID P180035	Project Name Sierra Leone PSSNYE Project First Additional Financing	Parent Project ID (if any) P176789
Parent Project Name Productive Social Safety Nets and Youth Employment	Region WESTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date 24-Apr-2023	Estimated Board Date 16-May-2023
Practice Area (Lead) Social Protection & Jobs	Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) The Republic of Sierra Leone	Implementing Agency National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA)

Proposed Development Objective(s) Parent

The objective is to improve access to social safety nets and income generating opportunities for targeted beneficiaries.

Components

SSN Cash Transfers and Provision of Economic Inclusion Support
 Productive Labor-Intensive Public Works and Life Skills Support for Youth
 Employment and Entrepreneurship Support for Youth
 Systems Development, Institutional Strengthening and Project Management Support
 Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC)

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	2.00
Total Financing	2.00
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	2.00
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Miscellaneous 1	2.00
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Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **Sierra Leone, like many of its comparator countries, has a large inactive youth population.** Similar to other low-income countries in the region, the unemployment rate in Sierra Leone in 2018 was generally low among youth and non-youth, at below 5 percent. However, underemployment rates were higher at above 10 percent for both youths and non-youths, rising to 17 percent for urban youth. More worryingly, the share of youth who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is considerably higher for youth (18 percent) compared to non-youth (13 percent) and NEET rates are particularly high among urban youth (22 percent), female youth (19 percent), and youth with disabilities (31 percent).¹

2. **The rising cost of living and the economic slowdown as a result of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has added to the source of frustrations among youth.** More than three-quarters of the population in Sierra Leone are below the age of 35. At current rates of population growth, the economy will need to create approximately 100,000 new jobs per year to maintain employment rates to keep up with population growth and take advantage of the demographic dividend.² However, the pace of job creation has not kept up with the number of youths entering the labor market every year. High rates of inactivity and low levels of educational attainment among youth hamper their prospects in the labor market. The secondary school completion rate among youth is just 12 percent.³ Similarly, on the demand side of the labor market, Sierra Leone’s growth episodes have not been accompanied by an increase in diversification or an expansion of employment opportunities. The youth bulge is therefore associated, in part, with low skills and frustration around unmet expectations, both potential sources of fragility. With inflation on the rise for much of 2022, and many youths already struggling to get by or support their families, the country is facing a very volatile period as evidenced by protests that turned violent in August 2022.⁴

Sectoral and Institutional Context

3. **The GoSL’s social protection delivery systems have proven to be instrumental in responding to a variety of shocks,** including COVID-19, the 2014 Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak, and the 2017

¹ Information in this paragraph is drawn based on analysis from the Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey (SLIHS) 2018 data

² World Bank. 2020. *Sierra Leone - Country Partnership Framework for the Period FY21–FY26*.

³ Data based on SLIHS 2018.

⁴ August 2022 saw violent protests in the streets of Freetown, and other cities, at the rising cost of living. See <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/aug/21/sierra-leone-protests-inflation-cost-of-living>



widespread flooding and landslides. A recent World Bank assessment, “*Scalable Social Protection in Sierra Leone: Lessons Learned from Recent Experience*” further highlighted the GoSL’s experience in responding to these shocks with social protection programs, along with the need to continuously strengthen the government’s social protection systems to better enable quick and systematic protection of households from the negative effects of future shocks.

4. **Despite demonstrated experience in shock responsive social protection, there are important gaps that remain.** First, poverty reduction has stagnated in Sierra Leone in recent years, while the food insecurity situation continues to rapidly worsen, threatening to lower already very low levels of human capital outcomes in the country. There is an urgent need to expand coverage of social protection programs, especially to protect the population believed to be in the “missing middle” of the income distribution, i.e., those who are not covered by traditional safety net programs but are vulnerable from falling back into poverty due to a shock or a disaster. Second, it is clear that the growing number of Sierra Leonean youth need access to better employment opportunities. Employment can be the biggest driver for poverty reduction. While the government has taken important steps in recent years to increase the coverage of SSNs and improve coordination in the social protection sector, there is a need to better link the agenda of social protection and youth employment. Third, Sierra Leone continues to have a dearth of good data to respond to disasters and shocks in a timely manner. While the government has improved the data coverage of disaster-prone households in recent years, information on historical disasters is often not digitized. Sierra Leone’s Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) document lists limited data and research capacity of the country to support implementation and monitoring of mitigation actions.⁵ The data gathering focus of this Additional Financing (AF) is thus in line with the NDC’s strategic action to ‘collect physical and socioeconomic data to better understand vulnerabilities and impacts.’⁶

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Original PDO

5. The objective is to improve access to social safety nets and income generating opportunities for targeted beneficiaries.

Current PDO

6. The AF and restructuring retains the original PDO: to improve access to social safety nets and income generating opportunities for targeted beneficiaries.

Key Results

7. The original PDO is kept since the emergency cash transfer supported by the Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) is included under the first PDO outcome of “improve access to social safety nets”. In the results framework, beneficiaries under Emergency Cash Transfers (ECTIII) are counted under “improve access” PDO outcome. Furthermore, the outcome of the Digital Public Works (DPW) is already included in the original PDO statement. To account for beneficiaries of ECTIII, there already is an outcome indicator to track ‘beneficiaries of social safety net programs (CRI)’ and a

⁵ GoSL (Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone). 2021. Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). July 2021. <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-06/210804%202125%20SL%20NDC%20%281%29.pdf>

⁶ Ibid.



breakdown of the indicator to include ECTIII beneficiaries has been added. An intermediate indicator is added to capture the number of youth supported through DPW.

D. Project Description

8. **This Project proposes an additional financing (AF) of US\$2 million grant to Sierra Leone’s Productive Social Safety Nets and Youth Employment (PSSNYE) project (P176789) funded by the Global Risk Financing Facility.** The PSSNYE project tackles key constraints faced by different segments of the population. Component 1 targets current or previous extreme-poor households, who mostly reside in rural areas, and are highly likely to be in areas further affected by climate change and provides cash transfers and economic inclusion support. Component 2 targets eligible youth ages 18–35 from extreme-poor, poor, and climate-vulnerable households in urban and rural areas to provide income and employment support through public works activities that are aimed at improving climate resilience. Component 3 targets eligible youth ages 18–35 in urban areas from poor and non-poor households with some level of education to provide them business training and grants and to connect them with relevant opportunities for employment and empowerment through a youth portal. Finally, Subcomponents 1C and 5 target the segment of the population that is increasingly vulnerable to climate change-induced natural disasters and other types of shocks and support them through emergency cash transfers.

9. The AF will primarily finance the scale up of component 2 (Labor-Intensive Public Works and Life Skills Support to Youth) whereby a new subcomponent 2C (*Provision of digital public works (DPW) in urban areas*) will be piloted. With the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) as the implementing agency, this subcomponent will provide youth in urban areas with short-term employment opportunities to collect and digitize information to improve post-disaster needs assessment and emergency response in disaster prone urban areas. The disasters are as defined by the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA). This subcomponent will target semi-skilled youth, including women, and persons with disabilities. The subcomponent is expected to reach 2,000 urban youth ages 18–35 with productive digital public works opportunities.

10. This document also proposes restructuring of the PSSNYE project to reallocate US\$2.1 million for emergency cash transfers to vulnerable households in response to rising food and fuel prices in 11 district towns.

Legal Operational Policies	
	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No
Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	



11. Key environmental and social risks and impacts associated with the AF project activities under

Component 2: Employment opportunities to youth in urban areas through DPW will generate some hazardous waste material through the purchase of smartphones and computers for the DPW, but the amount produced is anticipated to be minimal. These environmental risks can be mitigated through measures described in the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs). Labour Intensive Public Works may lead to the exclusion and discrimination of some categories of vulnerable people including youth, in particular women, persons with disabilities, people in hard-to-reach communities with poor digital connectivity. Tensions resulting from misunderstanding on eligibility and selection criteria, and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) are expected. Occupational health and safety risks including COVID-19 spread during execution of task are anticipated. The description of these risks at this stage is generic but will be detailed when information on the targeted beneficiaries become available during implementation. The interest and concerns of stakeholders will be factored into the AF project design and consultations will continue during project implementation.

12. On the social side, the proposed AF activities will not involve land take or restrictions on land use given the interventions to be supported. However, there could be exclusion of female youth, persons with disabilities and people in geographical isolated communities as they seek to participate in the DPW programs. Digital accessibility could limit participation of youth in hard-to-reach areas in difficult terrains affected by flood and land slide in Freetown. SEA/SH are also anticipated.

13. The relevant Environmental and Social Standards (ESS) that apply to the AF are: ESS1, ESS2, ESS3, ESS4, ESS6, ESS8 and ESS10.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

14. NaCSA will be the primary implementing agency for the parent PSSNYE project and the new subcomponent 2C. NaCSA will implement the DPW in partnership with the Freetown City Council (FCC). Training will be provided prior to implementation to ensure participants have minimum digital skills needed to perform required tasks. The implementing agencies will leverage existing lists of youth that applied to participate in FCC's Transform Freetown and Green Public Works initiatives for targeting. Further, the Implementing Agency may partner with academic institutions to source applicants and conduct required trainings. NaCSA will be supported on anti-corruption and grievance redress measures by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and on matters related to data collection and targeting by Statistics Sierra Leone. The ACC has put in place a community-level structure for more presence and immediate grievance resolution by establishing independent community monitors, thereby enhancing citizen engagement. Independent community monitors receive complaints and directly contact the call centre by dialling a toll-free number (515) to have the complaints immediately recorded in the GRM database. The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities and Sierra Leone Union on Disability Issues will continue to support on matters related to persons with disabilities. National Youth Commission, under the supervision of Ministry of Youth Affairs, will support the design of the digital skills training modules for youth. As the lead agency during disaster response, NDMA has provided NaCSA with a list of disaster-prone areas, which will serve as the basis for the geographic targeting. Existing mechanisms



under the parent project including the presence of the National Social Protection Secretariat at the technical level and Inter-Agency Forum, chaired by the Vice President, at the ministerial level, which will be leveraged to ensure overall coordination in keeping with mechanisms under the parent project. In terms of support from development partners, UNICEF supported with the pilot disaster prone area registration that informed the 2022 registration of households in disaster prone areas.

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APPROVAL

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