ACF Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT:
SIERRA LEONE

Section 1: National Food System Snapshot

Category	Sierra Leone
Top three commodities produced (2023)	Cassava, fresh – 2.3MT Rice – 1.4MT Oil palm fruit – 0.4MT
GDP and agriculture as % (2024)	$7.5 billion (of which agriculture is 25.43%)
Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total (percent) (3-year average) (2022-24)	89.8%
Prevalence of undernourishment (3-year average) (2022-24)	24%
Land use for agriculture as % (2023)	54.7%
Agri-food systems greenhouse gas emissions (2022)	8.2MT
Total population and % employed in agriculture (2023-2024)	8.6 million (43% employed in agriculture)



A cassava farm, Sierra Leone

Section 2: Membership Criteria Progress

National Pathways	As Sierra Leone continues to implement Feed Salone (its flagship food systems initiative) with the ACF's ten priority action areas now integrated, significant strides continue to be made in advancing the transformation of its food system.
NDCs & NBSAPs	Sierra Leone's NDC3.0, launched at COP30, adopts a food-systems approach aligned with Feed Salone strategy and national food security, energy access, and climate resilience goals. NDC 3.0 references food systems and promotes climate-smart, nutrition-sensitive agriculture through sustainable livestock management, agroforestry, soil carbon restoration, and mangrove protection, directly linking agricultural productivity with adaptation and emission reduction. It also includes measures to reduce organic waste, advance innovation and gender parity and improve rural livelihoods.
Reporting	Sierra Leone's full progress report covering action against all ten ACF priority action areas can be found in the Progress Framework accompanying this Snapshot.

Section 3: Priority Action Areas Highlights

10 Priority Action Areas	Flagship initiatives/ activities
3. Build and enhance the resilience of food systems	In 2025 Sierra Leone launched a new parametric insurance product to protect smallholder farmers against certain climate-related risks. Payouts are based on objectively measured weather thresholds rather than individual damage assessments. Ministry of Agrculture and Food Security (MAFS) projects supported the rehabilitation and development of farmland and irrigation systems, particularly inland valley swamps, for rice cultivation. Over 24,000 hectares are being supported in 2025. Irrigation infrastructure is being developed across 5,000 hectares in southern Sierra Leone to enable large-scale, year-round rice production and enhance water management for climate resilience.
5. Protect & Restore Nature	Policies guided by the National Protected Area Authority and the 2022 Environment Protection Agency Act and Land Commission Act are resulting in large-scale restoration initiatives that integrate environmental recovery with sustainable livelihoods and food security. In July 2025, Sierra Leone secured recognition for the Gola Rainforest National Park and Tiwai Island Wildlife Sanctuary as its first UNESCO World Heritage Site. This designation promotes biodiversity conservation while providing opportunities for ecotourism and sustainable livelihoods for local communities.
8. Reduce food loss and waste	Sierra Leone is making significant ongoing reductions in food loss and waste across key value chains, strengthening food security and sustainability via infrastructure investments including: • Investment in additional drying floors, seed storage units and irrigation schemes to support ongoing rice intensification efforts by enhancing post-harvest management; • A new $75m project, co-financed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the OPEC Fund, which will modernize the rice value chain through the development of new processing hubs, with support for 30,000 hectares of climate-smart agriculture; • A new $45m investment from the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) that will establish four cassava processing hubs equipped with modern machinery, utilities, and post-harvest infrastructure. 87km of feeder roads will connect farms to hubs and markets, enhancing efficiency and reducing losses.

Section 4: Collaborations

1. A new $105m livestock partnership with IFAD, launched in November 2024, will boost productivity, market access and resilience, benefitting more than 370,000 smallholder farmers (of whom 40% are expected to be women, and 30% youth).

2. A €35m financing agreement signed in January 2025 with the EU is promoting sustainable and climate-resilient value chains for oil palm, cassava and infant foods. The programme is strengthening smallholder participation, expanding technical and vocational training for women and youth, and supporting inclusive agribusiness models that advance the SDGs on decent work, responsible consumption and climate action.

3. In March 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, the EU and the United Nations Capital Development Fund launched the Salone Access to Finance Project. By expanding credit and improving access to finance, insurance and digital tools for up to 500,000 farmers and agri-SMEs, the project supports investment readiness and resilience across priority value chains.

4. A partnership with the World Food Programme and Njala University is strengthening research and innovation in food systems, supporting postgraduate research on inland valley swamp rehabilitation, aquaculture integration and crop diversification.

Section 5: Priorities for Further Work

Through Feed Salone, Sierra Leone is continuing to build a more resilient, inclusive and market-driven agri-food economy, shifting from short-term production gains to a systems approach that integrates sustainability, nutrition and climate adaptation. Priorities include:

- Strengthening key enablers such as access to finance, digitalisation, extension and research capacity.
- Embedding nutrition and food safety as cross-cutting objectives across agriculture, health and education.
- Diversifying and upgrading value chains, including rice, cassava, oil palm, livestock and horticulture, to boost competitiveness and employment.
- Expanding climate-smart agricultural practices through irrigation, soil and water conservation, and sustainable land management.

Section 6: Priority Areas for Investment

Sierra Leone has already secured over $1 billion in external financing pledges for Feed Salone since its launch in 2023. Two years into implementation, over $280 million of these pledges have already been programmed into transformative projects now under delivery – with major investments in agro-processing zones, infrastructure, home grown school feeding programmes and more. Building on this success, the government will continue to scale blended financing to deliver food-systems transformation, with a particular focus on:

- Climate-resilient and sustainable production systems.
- Inclusive market systems, value addition and rural infrastructure.
- Nutrition, food safety and dietary diversification.
- Enabling environment, institutions and human capital.
- Innovation, digitalisation and private-sector investment mobilisation.