ACF Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation

PROGRESS SNAPSHOT 2026

SIERRA LEONE

> **"Three years into Feed Salone, we grow more of the rice we eat, import far fewer eggs and onions, and invest four times more of our budget in agriculture than in 2023."**
>
> Dr. Henry Musa Kpaka, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security

HIGHLIGHTS

1	**Sierra Leone is transforming its food system at pace**, with severe food insecurity more than halving, from 28% in September 2023 to 13% in July 2025, as its 'Feed Salone' initiative expanded rice, onions, eggs and maize production. Rice self-sufficiency has risen from 68% in 2023 to 73% in 2025, and onion imports fell by 82% in 2025 as local production expanded.
2	**Sierra Leone is building resilience using innovation:** its first parametric weather-index insurance pilot led to a National Agricultural Insurance Policy, validated in September 2026. A new monitoring platform, developed with IDinsight, combines geospatial tools, dashboards and an AI-powered 'Ask a Metric' function, while the digital farmer registry is being linked to national identification for more accurate targeting, with 300,000 farmers targeted for registration by 2027.
3	**Sierra Leone has mobilised more than USD 1 billion in pledges for Feed Salone, 43% of it already programmed into projects, and has put real fiscal weight behind the transformation:** agriculture's share of the national budget rose from 2% in 2023 to 8% in 2025.

Headline Areas of Progress in 2026

INDICATOR	BASELINE	LATEST	DIRECTION
Severe food insecurity (lean season)	28% (Sep 2023)	**13% (Jul 2025)**	▼ Improving
National budget allocated to agriculture	2% (2023)	**8% (2025)**	▲ Improving
Rice self-sufficiency	62% (2022)	**73% (2025)**	▲ Improving
Jobs reported under Feed Salone (direct and indirect)	<10,000 (2023/24)	**22,708 (2025/26), of which 10,062 direct**	▲ Improving
Onion imports	13,013 MT (2023)	**2,195 MT (2025)**	▼ Improving
Egg imports	56 million (2024)	**31 million (2025)**	▼ Improving

Country context

Agriculture is the backbone of Sierra Leone's economy. Sierra Leone imports about a quarter of its main staple food, rice. It exports fish products, cocoa, palm oil and other commodities that generate foreign exchange.

Most farmers are smallholders and poultry is the most widely kept farm animal, with cattle mainly raised by pastoralists. The country's climate is highly favourable for agriculture, with annual rainfall ranging between 2,300 mm and 3,100 mm, making Sierra Leone one of the wettest countries in Africa.

It also benefits from an abundance of fertile land: approximately 5.4 million hectares.

INDICATOR	SIERRA LEONE	SOURCE
Top three commodities produced (2024)	**Fresh cassava 1.9 Mt; paddy 0.44 Mt; oil palm fruit 0.3 Mt**	*2025 Crop Production Survey*
GDP and agriculture as % of GDP (2025)	**USD 7.5 billion; agriculture 29.5%**	*Our world in data/ World Bank*
Prevalence of undernourishment (2023-2025)	**25.3%**	*FAOSTAT*
Global Food Security Index rank (2022)	**110th of 113**	*GFSI*
Land use for agriculture as % of total (2023)	**54.7%**	*World Bank*
Emissions from agriculture (2022)	**8,286 kt CO2e**	*FSCI*
Total population and % employed in agriculture (2025)	**8.81 million; 44% employed in agriculture**	*World Bank*



KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN 2025/26

In February 2026, the Government launched a **digital soil-health and mapping initiative**, funded by the World Bank, to update national soil maps and give farmers site-specific fertiliser advice for rice, maize and cassava. It builds on Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute's (SLARI) digital soil map, drawn from more than 10,000 soil samples.

Flagship projects that have been launched to achieve the national target of putting 30% of degraded ecosystems under restoration by 2030 include:

- **Sierra Leone Coastal Resilience Project** will restore 1,500 hectares of mangroves across 75 communities
- **Sherbro River Estuary Project** will restore 92,000 hectares of coastal habitat to generate carbon credits.
- **Freetown City Council** support 40,000+ mangroves being planted in Kroo Bay so far.
- **Conservation Society of Sierra Leone community-led restoration** (2025): 85,000 seedlings planted in Tissana community, with local monitoring groups trained.

In June 2026, Sierra Leone's Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security published the **2025 National Crop Production Survey**, which show that rice self-sufficiency has risen from 68 percent in 2023 to 73 percent while reducing rice imports by more than US$18 million.

An **Agricultural Finance Policy** was approved by Cabinet in October 2026, and a **National Agricultural Insurance Policy** validated in September 2026

In November 2025, the Government of Sierra Leone, together with the EU and UNCDF, launched the **"Salone Access to Finance" agricultural facility** to expand farmers' access to financial services and credit, aiming to support job creation across the agriculture sector. Through Vista Bank and Safe Capital Microfinance, the EUR 6 million facility had provided NLe 13.6 million in grants to 32 MSMEs, matched by an equal amount in loans.

Under Feed Salone, the Ministry is rehabilitating about **421 kilometres of feeder roads** (224 km completed) and and commissioned the Gendema and Manowa bridges, replacing ferry crossings that communities had relied on for decades, connecting farming communities to markets, schools and healthcare.

The share of locally produced rice in the **school feeding programme** increased from 10% in 2022/2023 to 40% in 2024/2025. By August 2026, about 1,000 MT of local rice had been procured for school meals, and WFP had signed about USD 2 million in supply contracts with farmer organisations, creating both a reliable market for farmers and improved nutrition for schoolchildren.

Following approval of the **National Grain Reserve Policy**, the National Grain Reserve is now buying, storing and rotating local rice. More than 10,000 bags of local rice are held in Kambia District, and in 2026 the reserve made its first sale of 450 MT through public institutional procurement.

The **Sierra Leone Agrifood Investor Summit** in October 2025 brought together more than 25 international and regional investors, including agrifood companies, DFIs and impact funds, and over 60 domestic agrifood firms. In November 2026, Sierra Leone hosts the West Africa Integration and Investment Summit, where a USD 1 billion regional Agribusiness and Rice Sovereignty Facility is to be launched.

LEADERSHIP ON FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION: CHAMPIONING ACTION ON FOOD SECURITY THROUGH THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND ECOWAS

Sierra Leone has taken food security to the centre of international peace and security, via both the UN Security Council and West Africa's regional ECOWAS grouping. Sierra Leone is also a founding co-chair of the Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation.

During Sierra Leone's Security Council term (2024–2025), President Julius Maada Bio chaired a high-level open debate on conflict and food insecurity on 17 November 2025, declaring that starvation is "not collateral damage but a crime" and setting out six actions:

- protect food systems in conflict zones
- strengthen early warning
- safeguard humanitarian access
- hold perpetrators of starvation to account
- link peacebuilding finance to agriculture
- put women and young people at the centre of agricultural value chains.

As Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government from June 2025 to July 2026, President Bio championed the regional Food Security Reserve and the ECOWARN early warning network. During the 69th Ordinary Session, hosted in Freetown in 2026, he urged ECOWAS leaders to move beyond declarations by implementing practical policies that improve the lives of citizens, calling on Member States to invest in food security, climate-smart agriculture, regional trade, disaster preparedness and accountable governance.

