



Enhancing SLECAD Advocacy Strategy (2022 – 2025)

Advocacy and Policy Dialogue Services for Agribusiness Competitiveness

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This document has been written by ITC consultants, Ms. Famke Schaap and Mr. Harold Macarthy, in close consultation and cooperation with SLECAD staff, Mr. Ahmed Nanoh (Executive Secretary - SLECAD), Henry King (Programme Officer – SLECAD) and Mr. Saidu Issa Kamara (IT and training officer - SLECAD). The ITC Office for Africa contributed to the overall supervision of the activities. It is sponsored by the Sierra Leone West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) funded under the 11th European Development Fund of the European Union.

1. RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES FOR SLECAD ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE SERVICES

At SLECAD, there is a strong organizational commitment for dialogue and advocacy. This is clear from the organization's strategy and ambitions, as expressed in the recently approved SLECAD Strategic Plan (2022-2025, final version), as well as from the website and social-media postings.

As part of **SLECAD Strategic plan** (developed with support from ITC/SheTrade Programme), Advocacy and multi-stakeholder engagement is acknowledged as one of the key areas of intervention, under the strategic objective of 'Visibility and Influence' (Objective 3).

This document provides building blocks for SLeCAD's advocacy strategy which will serve as a basis to pursue key thematic areas and advocacy actions plan that will prioritize investments in (human and other) resources required to implement the advocacy strategy. In addition, the draft Advocacy Strategy when finalized may serve to attract funding from external partners, including corporate partners, development partners, donors, bilateral and multilateral donor organizations.

1.2 ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE: CENTRAL ROLE IN SLECAD EXISTENCE AND PORTFOLIO OF SERVICES

For SLeCAD, the need for continuous engagement with Government and liaising / partnering with a broad range of stakeholders and organizations, inter alia through advocacy and policy influencing, is central to the **organization's objectives**, which are¹;

- 1. To play the role of principal private sector partner of the Government for promoting foreign and domestic private investment in agriculture in Sierra Leone.
- 2. To engage in advocacy, research and promotional activities into all problems and opportunities relating to the agricultural sector generally and private agricultural enterprises in particular, in Sierra Leone.
- 3. To collaborate with the Government in developing strategies, policies and programmes for promoting, facilitating and supporting private investment in agricultural development and the implementation of these strategies, policies and programmes at the national and international levels.

However, a dedicated strategy for 'advocacy and policy dialogue services' has not yet been developed, which is needed to strategize for outcomes and impact, and prioritize actions with

¹ Source: USAID SLeCAD TSI Assessment

(broad) approval to be gained from SLeCAD member-base.

1.3 STRENGTHS: TRACK-RECORD AND INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

Over the years, SLeCAD has built up a **substantial track-record** and solid reputation in representing the interests of the agricultural sector in Sierra Leone through targeted (policy) advocacy efforts inter alia through engagement in public-private dialogues, communication of positions through statements, workshops, position papers, press and media.

Building on years of experience of SLeCAD management in advocacy and policy dialogue, across a wide variety of thematic areas relevant for the agriculture sector, the organization has built in the past and can continue to build on a strong institutional memory on policy design, development and implementation in Sierra Leone. Often, policy-makers request the opinion of SLeCAD management on policy matters that are key to the agriculture sector. In addition, the network of contacts with key stakeholders is equally strong, providing leverage to exercise influence.

1.4 LOOKING BACK: SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS IN SLeCAD ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE UNTIL 2022

Over the past years, SLeCAD's efforts in the area of Advocacy and Partnership reflect a continuation of advocacy efforts on *existing* and *new* policy initiatives, in key core focus issues. At the same time, SLeCAD invested in laying the building blocks for a long-term and strategic approach to Advocacy and Partnerships services.

Examples of successful initiatives and advocacy campaigns that have positively impacted upon policy reform and/or policy implementation in Sierra Leone since 2015 cover a wide range of thematic issues, often pursued over a longer period of time.

1.4.1 ADVOCACY EFFORTS TO IMPROVE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING POLICIES: ACCESS TO FINANCE - ACCESS TO FINANCE

Addressing the key challenge of limited agricultural lending as result of overly stringent lending conditions, lack of information, short term lending, no grace period, shading and bureaucratic operations and high interest rates, SLeCAD set-up a dedicated advocacy campaign in 2012. Inter alia, SLeCAD successfully advocated for improved lending conditions, establishment of an Apex bank and community banks and FSA's throughout the country. Additionally, SLeCAD championed with the support of Government, MAF, FARA, MTI, FAO, Commercial Banks the establishment of the Innovation Fund for Agricultural Transformation (IFAT). One of the key successes include the reduced lending interest rates down to single digit rates.

1.4.2 ADVOCACY EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE NEW POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK - ACCESS TO INPUTS

Input access has been a huge challenge for farmers due to its unavailability in a timely manner at the farm gates, high cost of products, and above all lack of knowledge to apply the fertilizers, agrochemicals and seeds. Government was the only input supplier and crowded out the private sector instead of improving the business environment to improve affordable

and timely access to inputs. This impacted low yield and productivity of farmers thereby making farming non-profitable and less attractive to private sector operators. SLeCAD advocated for the government to get-out of the input business and allow the private sector players to take over and improve timely access by farmers. Due to that engagement today, the government has established Fertilizer Agency and Seed Certification Agency to work with the private sector and ensure the affordable and timely supply of inputs to farmers.

1.4.3 PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- The government agencies and private sector BSOs coordination was weak to improve on the existing business environment. In 2017, SLeCAD with the support of the World Bank established PPD where the public and private sector players were brought together to dialogue on policy issues affecting the business environment and make recommendation for joint implementation that will enhance improved business climate for Sierra Leone.
- In 2012, SLeCAD successfully advocated for the establishment of Innovative Funds for Agricultural Transformation (IFAT) which was jointly accomplished with the support of MAFF, MTI, African Union, ECOWAS, NUFAO, IFAD etc. designed to support farmers, agribusiness companies, and SMEs innovative access to finance with grace period of six month and long term lending of single digit interest rate of 9%. This enhance increased private sector investment in the agriculture sector then where agribusiness marketing and large processing companies like Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Company (SLPMC), Mountain Lion Limited, Arul Trading Company etc. were targeted to link up with smallholder farmers as outgrowers and contract farmers and build their knowledge, skills and economic capacity to supply raw materials at an agreed market price that increased income of farmers, created jobs and reduced poverty in the targeted rural communities. SLeCAD also advocated for the establishment of financial services in the rural communities that will increase farmers access to other forms of innovative access to finance. To date this has led to the establishment of Community Banks and FSAs in the rural communities with the support of IFAD, FAO and MAF
- In 2013, SLeCAD successfully advocated for improved access to inputs by farmers, SMEs and agribusiness companies who were crowded-out by government free input supplies which was inadequate and of low quality. The effort of the Chamber then influenced policy change where the Government of Sierra Leone agreed to initiate policy shift from centralized Government inputs systems to decentralized input distribution systems that encouraged range of agro-dealers and input suppliers to invest in the input sector and reach out to farmers in the rural communities before farming period. This advocacy effort encouraged the input dealers private sector players to provide inputs to farmers at an affordable price and on timely basis, This improved production and productivity of farmers. This successful result convinced the government to work with SLeCAD to develop an ACT for Fertilizer and Seed Access which were passed Parliament, that led to the birth of the two input agencies the Sierra Leone Seeds Certification Agency (SLeSCA) and National Fertilizer Regulatory Agency (NaFRA).
- SLeCAD also drive the change and influence the revision of the tariff matrix of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that significantly cuts down operational cost for agribusiness companies and SMEs. The Chamber advocacy attracted the support of World Bank and EU to fund an international consultant's review of the EPA charged matrix and third schedule. The exercise if completed will improve the private sector operators understanding of EPA charges and disaggregate the matrix to be sector specific.

1.5. WEAKNESSES: LACK OF ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES AND LONG-TERM STRATEGIC FOCUS

Effective implementation of the advocacy and policy dialogue services demands the organizational capacity, including strategy, human skills and resources, as well as clear processes, to drive effective advocacy campaigns and guarantee continuous and constructive dialogue with key stakeholders.

However, it is fair to say that SLECAD's **ambitions in the area of advocacy have been severely held back as result of resource constraints**². Dedicated staff could not be retained beyond donor-funded projects, which has complicated the long-term perspective needed to successfully engage with key stakeholders and achieve the desired outcomes and policy-change.

1.6. OPPORTUNITIES: SOLID BASIS FOR ROLLING OUT ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE SERVICES, BACK-UP FROM SLECAD'S MEMBER-BASE, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Our advocacy strategic platform and thematic pillars will serve as a medium and platform to translate and amplify members' interests and build their profile through confidence and assurance of SLeCAD's dedication and commitment to advocacy drive and mouthpiece of the voiceless to influence policy change and improve trade and business environment to be more competitive.

It will attract greater interest and public participation from stakeholders and general business climate to foster trade and competitiveness locally, across regional borders and internationally

It will enhance members' awareness on trade related issues and stimulate interest groups to support and enlarge SLeCAD's power base for advocacy and dialogue

This will also attract development partners' interests and support to an all-inclusive private sector development drive to foster change and better business environments.

2. BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SLECAD ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE STRATEGY

2.1. OUR APPROACH TO ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE SERVICES: BUILDING BLOCKS

Through our advocacy and policy dialogue services, we communicate on behalf of our member-base and the Sierra Leone agribusiness industry with key stakeholders to ensure policies are developed, implemented, and enforced in the interest of our membership and the wider agribusiness sector.

Our approach to **advocacy and policy dialogue services** entails the following **building-blocks**:

1. **Insights**: Issue clarification and data-driven research

² J. Nene-Osom Azu, I. Nii-Attoh Armah, "Organizational Capacity Assessment of the Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development (SLeCAD) Report", December 2017. This study was developed thanks to the support from USAID under the framework of the programme Africa Lead.

2. **Strategize:** Strategy design for targeted advocacy campaigns (using tools including policy process mapping, and stakeholder mapping);
3. **Deliver:** Preparing and delivering Advocacy messages to target audiences
4. **Monitor:** Policy-monitoring and evaluation
5. **Skills and know-how:** Training and capacity building for enhanced insights on domestic and international policy reforms

2.2. IMPLEMENTING OUR DRAFT STRATEGY FOR ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE SERVICES: AVAILABLE TOOLS AND SOLUTIONS

Though this document, SLECAD clarifies its objectives and strategic priorities in advocacy and policy dialogue, for the period 2022-2025. In addition, an overview of available tools and instruments is provided that will guide implementation.

The following components and tools have been developed, and will be employed to implement the draft Advocacy and Policy Dialogue Strategy.

2.2.1. STRATEGIZING

- **SLECAD Strategy on Advocacy and Policy Dialogue Services:** Development of **SLECAD Advocacy Strategy (2022-2025)**, guided by two UN/ITC consultants, in close collaboration with SLECAD management.
- **List of priority themes and topics** (Annex 1): Preliminary identification of focus issues developed through consultations with membership and stakeholders (Workshop held July 2022, supported by UN/ITC through EU-funded WACOMP Sierra Leone)
- **Issue articulation:** With support from ITC (WACOMP SL), our team developed the 2 **Issue Research Note templates** as basis for Advocacy Strategy, including:
 - a. **Template 1: Issue research note:** allows to deepen the problem- and solution-analysis for priority issues
 - b. **Template 2: Implementing your advocacy campaign:** helps to select advocacy tools, and to summarize your what/where/how of the issue-specific advocacy campaign
- **Stakeholder mapping:**
 - a. **Mapping of cooperatives** (supported by UN/ITC through EU-funded WACOMP Sierra Leone)

2.2.2. IMPLEMENTING

- **Targeted advocacy outcomes in 2021 / 2022:** a set of three thematic background papers were developed in 2021/2022 as part of SLECAD advocacy work, with support from ITC (WACOMP SL):
 - a. (Dec 2021) The publication ‘A guide to identify opportunities and challenges towards trade competitiveness and a conducive business environment for Sierra Leone’s agri-business sector’
 - b. (June 2022) Background paper ‘Perspectives on Sierra Leone agriculture sector challenges: access to inputs: seeds, fertilizers, machinery’(forthcoming)

- c. (June 2022) Background paper ‘Perspectives on Sierra Leone agriculture sector challenges: the need to review CAP185 functioning and effectiveness’ (forthcoming)
- **Training and awareness raising materials**
 - a. **Training materials: ‘Policy and trade for agriculture competitiveness’:** Understanding policy change, business environment and trade for agriculture competitiveness (1-day workshop). Target group: business, Government and/or TSI staff
 - b. **Training materials: ‘Advocacy skills and processes’:** Key knowledge regarding policy processes, advocacy tools and instruments and how to implement an advocacy strategy (1 or 2-day workshop). Target group: TSI staff (or Government or business with some adaptation)
 - c. Others development partners and donor support organizations (World Bank, AfDB, ILO, IOM, USAID, EU, IFAD, FAO DFID etc.)

2.2.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- **Advocacy monitoring sheet:** includes a summary of advocacy objectives for key matters of policy advocacy strategy
- **Stakeholder monitoring sheet:** allows to monitor and track key interests and actions of stakeholders for priority issues

2.3. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: OUR NEEDS

SLeCAD's advocacy and policy dialogue services are central to our organization's being. In order to implement and follow-up on our advocacy strategy, organizational capacity we strive to maintain solid organizational capacity. We have assessed the needs for additional investments required to implement our advocacy and policy dialogue services for the years 2022 – 2025.

These can be summarized as follows:

- Funding:
- Staffing and leadership
- Skills
- Infrastructure
- Visibility

2.4 OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

SLeCAD, outreach and engagement are primary strategy used to interface with farmers Agribusiness companies, SMEs, donors, and policy makers. Our outreach platform has helped the Chamber to identify challenges and understand the agribusiness private sector environment in the country. The Chamber outreach and engagement activities to has never a waste of time or resources because our membership has always benefit, our employees find enjoyment and fulfillment, and customers and future customers have more easily align with the Chamber and its mission.

Our outreach activities help to increase the organisation brand image and recognition, facilitate the promotion, and boost revenue from membership dues. The essential idea is to promote business and market linkages where members buy goods or services from other chamber members. Outreach market linkages allows for mutually beneficial cooperation for

both parties.

Our outreach and engagement activities are done through website, social media, newsletter, billboard, poster and banners. The intrinsic utilization of the website, social media, newsletters and poster have triggered the increase in our membership and promoted both local and international trade.

Above all SLECAD outreach and engagement with the government, donors and development partners has helped to influence policy change, improve the business environment, and ensure improved impact on the business of our members.

The Chamber community engagement on policy issues enables government and public decision-making organizations to listen and, in turn, demonstrate the impact of community contribution. Community engagement, then, builds deeper, stronger and more trusting relationships between public organizations and communities. Our meaningful community participation extends beyond physical involvement to include generation of ideas, contributions to decision making, and sharing of responsibility.

With this strategy, SLeCAD will ensure policy dialogue provides an avenue for improving mutual understanding, identifying priorities, enhancing ownership and participation, finding common ground, building constituencies and resolve for change, and influencing policy change that will enhance improve business environment and ensure economic growth.

2.4.1 WEBSITE

SLeCAD will use its website to publish position papers, engage in new policy discussion, establish business linkages as a going concern, communicate our services, brand value proposition to convey professionalism in service delivery. It also extends our reach to anyone in the world which would be used to facilitate trade, products linkages and enrich the understanding in interest groups about our policy, processes and the way we operate.

Living in the digital world, our website will be crucial for business like ours. Our website could be used to accomplish many different marketing strategies not only to help the business of members grow but to ensure that position papers on policies are made known to the public. SLECAD will also use our website to advertise the business of our members to the international market place.

Our website helps to establish credibility as a business provide a map and directions to SLeCAD offices for visitors to find their location easily the scope to represent our members, why they should trust us and the testimonials and facts to back up those opportunities by building a website. We will use our website to influence the international markets about Sierra Leone products or service before purchasing. Through this means they will know about the brand, features, price, size, colour and process and policies involved to do business through our website.

2.4.2 SOCIAL MEDIA & SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

SLECAD will use the social media attract members, get members/customer feedback and build membership loyalty. It will also be used to ensure policy engagement and dialogues, create market linkages, promote trade, increase our market reach, including international markets. We will also be used to do market research and reduce marketing costs, increase revenue by building membership/customer networks and advertising

SLECAD will also use social entrepreneurship to advocate policy that will improve trade and

the business environment. The Chamber will work with local and international musicians to develop good music that will appeal to the policy makers, donors, development partners and that private sector to work as one to review bad policies that will enhance free and good participation of the private sector player to improve local and international trade and ensure productive and sustainable business environment that will enhance economic growth.

2.4.3 NEWSLETTERS

SLECAD use newsletter to produce important news and updates that will make the audience aware of the good and bad policies, engagements with stakeholders, membership brand or products and other significant information. The chamber will use newsletters as imperative tools to advocate policies, improve business environment, create market linkages, promote international trade, processes that take membership brand marketing to the next level.

The Chamber will use newsletter as a cost-effective media tool for building relationships and maintaining regular contact with government, policy makers, development partners, members, clients, customers and business partners.

SLECAD newsletters with our target members, government and development partners in mind provide valuable, informative and helpful information on policy environment, position papers, local and international markets for the benefit of our constituents to increase the profitability of businesses.

2.4.4 BI-ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS FOR MEMBERS

SLECAD will use membership consultation as a vital important tool in the policy advocacy, development and implementation process. This will allow the evidence base to be built, secondly, it engenders transparency in the process, and thirdly it gives stakeholders ownership of the ultimate outcome to ask their opinion (e.g. by 'floating' a proposal) to learn their intentions. We will use the membership consultative processes to get their agreement to what we want, plan together, develop a proposal on weak policy environment or advance an argument to get better outcome to improve the profitability of our members.

SLECAD will use the membership consultation as a useful tool of engagement and constructive exercise in promoting understanding and problem solving between government (state actors) and the private sector actor in ensuring the improvement in trade and business environment.

2.4.5 POSTERS, HAND BILLS, AND BILLBOARDS

SLECAD intends to use posters hand bills, and billboards to increase our outreach, ensure policy advocacy, publish position papers and create market linkages, and improve trade locally and internationally. SLECAD will use posters to showcase the business's signature colours and logo of the Chamber and its wider membership that will makes it easier for customers to recognize our organisation and members.

The Chamber will use vibrant posters that utilize cutting-edge graphic design to engage in policy dialogue, publish position papers, improve business environment, and ensure effective and efficient trade facilitation locally and internationally that will leave a lasting impression in the minds of our wider audience.

The Chamber will use posters and flyers as an efficient tool to influence the public opinion on policy and trade.

3. POSSIBLE ELEMENTS TOWARDS SLECAD ADVOCACY STRATEGY PROMOTION

3.1. SLECAD AS AN AGRIBUSINESS PRIVATE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

SLECAD as an agribusiness private business association and forum representing the voice of the business community, embarks on advocacy actions towards improving the business environment in order for agribusinesses, SMEs, farmers and Cooperatives businesses to be competitive, locally and internationally. The Chamber work to achieve its advocacy objective by engaging government, development partners, donor community and other stakeholders working along various value chains to build consensus on programs and issues that will enhance business and economic growth for its members and the country.

At SLECAD, we are committed to continuous and structural dialogue and policy engagement to advance Sierra Leone's agribusiness development and competitiveness. Through our advocacy and dialogue services, it is our aim to represent our members' interests towards domestic and international policy institutions on a wide range of matters that are crucial to agribusiness success, at home and abroad.

SLECAD's advocacy strategy is based on the following pillars: a) issue-based; links; and technology-based issues. Advocacy issues are determined from members' concerns inhibiting their business growth as well as economy issues which are properly reviewed through a robust methodology that discern the merits and demerits of such issues

To ensure that agriculture production and trade in Sierra Leone works as a driver for economic growth, our members (producers, farmers and cooperatives as well as SME's and large enterprises) need an enabling business environment at home, as well as the intelligence, human skills and productive capacities to capitalize on new opportunities created on domestic, regional and international markets.

Our efforts often focus on ensuring the consistent application of **existing policy and measures**, avoiding barriers to business and trade, as well as providing inputs into **new policy initiatives** in such a manner that they avoid market distortions and (trade barriers), and contribute to a strengthening the national (and regional) production, investment and trade (imports and exports) in the agribusiness industry.

3.2 PRIORITY ISSUES OF THE SLECAD'S ADVOCACY AND DIALOGUE STRATEGY (2022-2025)

Our priority issues as part of SLECAD's Advocacy and Dialogue strategy (2022-2025) include:

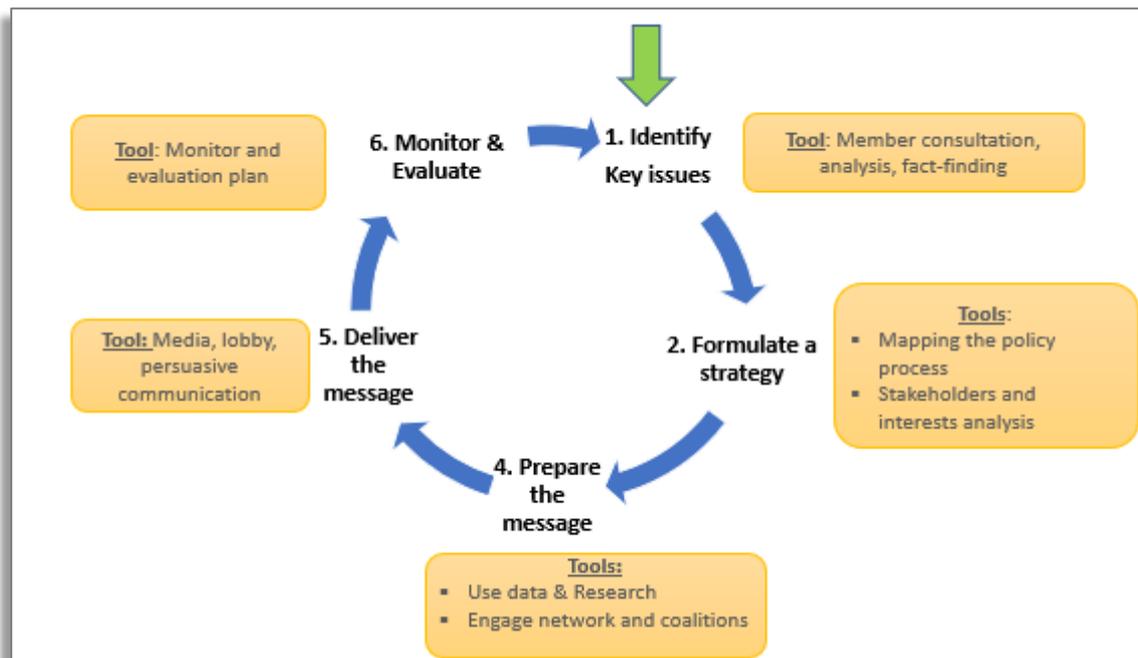
- I. Access to finances
- II. Access to inputs
- III. Import and export processes and duty
- IV. EPA
- V. Standards and quality issues (measurement, packaging, etc.)
- VI. Markets and trade related issues (local, cross borders and international trade)
- VII. Technology and agriculture

This Advocacy Strategy serves to guide our advocacy and policy dialogue services by setting our ambitions, goals and objectives on policy advocacy and related stakeholder engagement in order to secure an enabling business environment and optimal conditions for our member-

base to produce and trade agriproduce through competitive businesses.

3.3 OVERVIEW OF OUR STRATEGY PROCESS FOR ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE

At SLECAD, our advocacy and policy dialogue services are based on a careful selection of strategies and tactics to monitor and influence political decisions and processes. Below, a visual overview of the advocacy process depicts the different steps and instruments employed by our organization.



3.4 BUILDING-BLOCKS FOR OUR ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE SERVICES

Through our advocacy and policy dialogue services, we communicate on behalf of our membership and the Sierra Leone agribusiness industry at large with key stakeholders to ensure policies are developed, implemented and enforced in the interest of our membership and the wider agribusiness sector.

Our approach to **advocacy and policy dialogue services** entails the following building blocks:

- **Insights:** Issue clarification and data-driven research;
- **Strategize:** Strategy design for targeted advocacy campaigns (using tools including policy process mapping, stakeholder mapping etc);
- **Deliver:** Preparing and delivering Advocacy messages to target audiences
- **Monitor:** Policy-monitoring and evaluation
- **Skills and know-how:** Training and capacity building for enhanced insights on domestic and international policy reforms

Our key stakeholders include Sierra Leonean Government institutions (Ministries, agencies), regional and international organizations and donor agencies, as well as financial institutions and civil society.

Our key efforts comprise different types of instruments, including: policy papers and

briefings, personal meetings, public meetings, letter writing campaigns, roundtable discussion and workshops, network events, awareness raising through website and emails, as well as radio and tv and newspapers.

3.5 OUR ISSUE PRIORITIZATION

As part of the SLECAD advocacy strategy development process, we held consultations with stakeholders throughout 2021 and Q1 2022, in order to collect inputs on issue prioritization. In addition, in-house discussions were held and training inputs were gathered during WACOMP Sierra Leone workshops, and research was undertaken by ITC International Consultant.

This chapter entails a broad range of issues, grouped around 5 key thematic, that are relevant to SLECAD members to produce and trade agri-produce in a competitive and sustainable manner.

The proposed issues were met with broad approval by cooperatives and other members of SLECAD, and validated by SLECAD management team in May 2022.

3.5.1 CRITERIA USED FOR ISSUE PRIORITIZATION

On a 6-monthly basis, our organization reconsiders the prioritization of issues for advocacy. For this exercise, our organization departs from the following criteria, which are revisited on a yearly basis.

Criteria used by SLECAD to narrow down the list of priority issues, included that the issues:

- are relevant to a **significant number of association members**;
- concern flaws of particular policies, law, or regulations (as opposed to isolated incidents not necessarily resulting from them);
- **can be resolved by specific policy proposals that have a reasonable chance of success** in the short term (avoid issues that require an overhaul of the constitution or of the entire regulatory system);
- are backed **by the majority of association members** and board members (avoid controversial issues);
- are both **proactive and reactive**;
- are **not strongly opposed by powerful groups** or legislators or the general public;
- and **will not damage your association's image or reputation**.

3.5.2 PRELIMINARY ISSUE PRIORITIZATION FOR SLECAD ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE SERVICES

For the period 2022-2025, SLECAD has grouped the focus in advocacy and policy dialogue into the following 5 themes, with their sub-topics, which are considered crucial in advancing Sierra Leone agri-sector competitiveness, at home and abroad.

3.5.2.1 SHORT-TERM PRIORITY MATTERS (DEMANDING ATTENTION FOR 2022 THROUGH SLECAD POLICY ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE SERVICES)

Enabling domestic business environment

- Investment **incentives and attraction**
- Revision and update of **CAP185** and role of Govt (incl 2.5% export value going to PMB and standards bill)
- **Fiscal regime** for agro-based products

Access to finance and inputs

- Access to finance
- Access to **seeds and fertilizers** (inputs)
- Access to machinery
- Reliable internet infrastructure supporting e-farming

Trade competitiveness for trade success

- Leveraging **trade agreements (FTA's)** to promote exports to regional (**AfCFTA, ECOWAS**) and international markets
- Awareness and capacity support for compliance with international standards (SPS, TBT, Sustainability)

Sustainable and inclusive management of agribusiness

- **Revision of Environment Protection Agency (EPA) environmental matrix and rates**
- Government support towards **sustainable investments and management of production facilities**, with focus on **Environment, Social and Governance (ESG)** matters.
- Support policies and processes that are inclusive, gender-responsive and advance the role of women and youth in Sierra Leone's agribusiness sector.

3.5.2.2 MEDIUM TO LONG TERM PRIORITY MATTERS (REQUIRING A MIX OF AWARENESS AND POLICY MONITORING AND ADVOCACY)

Business competitiveness

- Access to information regarding Sierra Leone business processes, including through a One stop shop for key procedures (registration, declaring goods, customs procedures, other procedures)
- Access to information regarding (African and foreign) market conditions
- Access to funding and Government support for capacity building

3.6 OUR ADVOCACY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (2022 – 2025)

Amongst the many insights from the past years of Ebola and Covid-19 crises, one of main insights is the need to adapt and re-invent approaches through continuous dialogues, advocacy and forging of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

In addition, the rapid evolution of the agri-food sector, responding to challenges and opportunities, increasingly demands a strong and collective voice built on alliances between the farmers, producers and big and small businesses.

At SLECAD we have built our advocacy strategy on the basis of **concrete goals and**

objectives, which allow us to design tailor-made campaigns. As much as possible, we formulate **SMART objectives** for our advocacy strategy and each of our advocacy campaigns, which are specific, measurable, achievable and time-focused. These objectives serve as important test when we are making strategic decisions along the way, and will allow for monitoring progress.

As part of our advocacy plan for 2022, we formulated SMART goals and objectives on the key issues on which we engage and advocate pro-actively for policy change. In addition, we identified the major risks to achieving our campaign goals, and how to possibly mitigate them

ANNEX I: SLeCAD KEY CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS ON PRIORITY ISSUES

The below overview with priority issues provides additional information on general perspectives by SLeCAD's on key priority issues, major challenges faced and to be addressed, and key advocacy objectives pursued.

Priority Theme and Issues	Key Challenges for SLeCAD Members	Objectives for Policy Advocacy (2022-2023)	Objectives for 2023-2025	SLeCAD Lead Contact Person:
Sustainable engagement and outreach activities	Lack organizational capacity, including strategy, human skills, and resources	To enhanced coordination to improve agribusiness trade facilitation and competitiveness in the business environment at the district levels	To improve coordination and agribusiness trade and facilitation and competitiveness at the national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahmed Nanoh - ES Henry King - PO Saidu Issa Kamara – ICT Officer
Effective use of outreach and engagement tools to build membership capacity through information dissemination, education in priority topics on advocacy platforms for policy change and policy dialogues	Lack of skills, knowledge and clear processes, to drive effective advocacy campaigns and guarantee continuous and constructive dialogue with key stakeholders	To Improve membership skills, knowledge and understanding of processes of how to drive effective and impacted oriented advocacy at the district levels	To improve membership skills and knowledge and understanding and ensure impact-oriented advocacy at the national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahmed Nanoh - ES Henry King - PO Saidu Issa Kamara – ICT Officer
Revision of Environment Protection Agency (EPA) environmental matrix and rates	Lack of clear understanding of EPA processes, generalized matrix used to charge fees and rates and the law to close down businesses	Improve membership understanding of how EPA fees and rates are charged and review of EPA matrix to focus on sector specifics	Improve on coordination between EPA and agribusinesses where fees and rates are discussed and preventive measures are taken to reduce errors in environmental issues that reduces charges and ensure acceptable rates and fees by all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahmed Nanoh - ES Henry King – PO EPA, MAF & BSOs Saidu Issa Kamara – ICT Officer

Leveraging trade agreements (FTA's) to promote exports to regional (AfCFTA, ECOWAS) and international markets	Lack of understanding of how to utilize and benefit from AfCFTA	Improve understanding of how to utilize and benefit from AfCFTA	Mobilize membership agribusinesses to utilize and get the benefit of AfCFTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed Nanoh - ES • Henry King – PO • EPA, MAF & BSOs • Saidu Issa Kamara – ICT Officer
Access to seeds, fertilizers and essential machineries (inputs)	Fragmented input market, where government dominating the sector and crowding out the private sector	Encourage increase private sector investment in the input market and discourage government to pull out of the sector to ensure organized and assured market between farmers and input dealers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed Nanoh - ES • Henry King – PO • EPA, MAF & BSOs • Saidu Issa Kamara – ICT Officer
Revision and update of CAP185 and role of Govt (incl 2.5% export value going to PMB and standards bill)				
Access to finance	High interest rates, Short Term Lending, Bureaucracy, Lack of Grace Period for Borrowing, Cumbersome and igh cost of processes for, forex, LC and APGs	improve access to finance that will ensure low interest rate, long term lending, no bureaucracy with brace period and low cost of process for forex, LC ad APGs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahmed Nanoh - ES • Henry King – PO • EPA, MAF, MoF, BSL & BSOs • Saidu Issa Kamara – ICT Officer

ANNEX II: SLECAD ADVOCACY AND POLICY DIALOGUE SERVICES MONITORING SHEET

	Key (sub)problem statement	Main position	Main structure dealing with topic	Current stage of issue in policy process	Upcoming moments for policy influence	Main influence grounds	Main allies	Main opponents	Key advocacy actions / tools	When is the policy advocacy a success?
Issue #1			<i>[Govt Departments, committees, parliament, sector meetings, shareholders meeting]</i>	<i>[Brainstorm, design, pre-decision, formal decision, implementation, evaluate]</i>						
• Awareness raising actions										
• Policy influencing actions	High tariffs on crucial seeds import constitute a barrier to trade competitiveness.	Unilateral lowering of import tariffs	National trade policy committee							When the National Revenue Authority puts forward an adjustment of the rate for seeds as part of external customs tariff of the country.
Issue #2										
• Awareness raising actions										

• Policy influencing actions										
Issue #3										
• Awareness raising actions										
• Policy influencing actions										
Issue #4										
• Awareness raising actions										
• Policy influencing actions										

ANNEX III: SLECAD DISTRICT OFFICES CONTACT POINTS (OUTSIDE FROM FREETOWN)

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