



SIERRA LEONE JUDICIARY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2016-2021

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Judiciary of the Republic of Sierra Leone
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Acronyms

A4P	Agenda for Prosperity
ASJP	Access to Security and Justice Programme
CPA	Criminal Procedures Act
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	Department for International Development
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FTCC	Fast Track Commercial Court
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	German Development Agency
HRMO	Human Resource Management Office
JSRSIP	Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan
MFR	Management and Functional Review
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PFM	Public Financial Management
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLCS	Sierra Leone Correctional Services
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Preface

It is my pleasure to share this Strategic Plan developed by the Judiciary of Sierra Leone as part of its reform process.

This Strategic Plan reflects our journey to-date and our vision for a more efficient and effective Judiciary capable of delivering fair justice for all. Over the last year, we have reflected on our inherent challenges and envisioned what steps we will need to take to fulfil our mission. This reflection included case backlog clearing in Freetown, Kenema and Makeni, learning from our experience in improving the pilot courts in Kenema and Makeni, the management and functional review of the Judiciary, and the Judicial Conference.

This Plan lays out strategic priorities for the Judiciary for the next five- years, and includes foundational processes for institutional independence, in line with the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Sierra Leone. A key provision will be a review of structures, systems and a move towards subvention.

This Strategic Plan is the Judiciary's guiding document for reform, and should also be used by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Judiciary's development partners in shaping their support. Implementation of the Strategic Plan will be led by the Judiciary Reform Committee; and progress in the implementation of the Plan will be reviewed annually with the participation of key stakeholders.

I would like to thank the Reform Committee for spearheading the process of developing the Strategic Plan and other members of the Judiciary who participated in the drafting and finalisation process. Special thanks go to the Ghana Judiciary, for technical insight and support throughout the strategy formulation process. Many thanks to Timap for Justice, a local CSO, who provided special insights and perspectives into the Plan. Finally, I would also like to thank the Government of the United Kingdom, who provided invaluable support to the development and publication of the Strategic Plan in the form of technical assistance and funding through the Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP).

Succeed We Must.



Honourable Mr Justice Abdulai Hamid Charm
Chief Justice of Sierra Leone

1. Executive Summary

This first Judiciary Strategic Plan was supported by the Department for International Development through the Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP).

It aims to consolidate gains made by the Sierra Leone Judiciary and provide a clear and systematic roadmap to implement reforms. It focuses on reforms in systems, structures and processes to enable the Judiciary become more effective and efficient in delivering justice.

Over the last year, the Judiciary has identified key challenges hindering its delivery of justice. These include administrative failures, lack of financial independence, lack of competent judicial support staff, inadequate staff numbers, and a lack of systems to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

This plan builds on recommendations of the Management and Functional Review 2015, which highlighted the need for subvention, resolutions from the 2016 Judicial Conference, which led to the formation of an eight person Reform Committee by the Honourable Chief Justice, and lessons from the backlog clearing process in Kenema and Makeni High Courts.

The development of this plan was done through a consultative and reflective process that was led by the Reform Committee with technical support from the Ghana Judiciary and ASJP. The validation process involved select judges, Judicial support staff and partners from the Law Officers Department, the Sierra Leone Correctional Services (SLCS), the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and civil society partners.

The vision for the Judiciary is **Accessible, fair and expeditious justice for all in Sierra Leone.**

The mission is **To uphold the Constitution and rule of law, adjudicate over matters civil and criminal, in order to sustain national peace, security and development.**

The Judiciary's core values are **Independence; Impartiality; Equality; Accountability and Integrity.**

Over the next five years, the Judiciary will focus on five strategic areas. These include;

- **Strategic priority 1:** Justice is expedited, fair and accessible
- **Strategic priority 2:** Effective and efficient case management systems
- **Strategic priority 3:** Commercial law and justice
- **Strategic priority 4:** Judicial training and continuing professional development
- **Strategic priority 5:** Justice is delivered with respect for rights and accountability

Details on the each of the strategic areas and what specific initiatives the Judiciary will undertake to achieve these priorities, are on pages 15-28.

In 2016-2017, the Judiciary will focus on improving administrative and court management systems and the move towards full subvention, by building systems and processes for financial independence. Key initiatives the Judiciary will implement include;

- Public Financial Management (PFM) – including the development of realistic and appropriate budgets and building financial systems and monitoring processes
- Strengthening governance structures and management systems
- Filling of critical vacancies and continued mentoring, and professional staff development
- Improving court systems
- Implementation of court administration systems and processes
- Strengthening of records and case management processes

Details on Year 1 priorities are on pages 30-31. An addendum to this plan will be developed and will include a resourcing, implementation, and operational plan.

The Reform Committee will lead the review, monitoring and evaluation of this Strategic Plan and will share progress made in Year 1 at the annual Judicial Conference in 2017.

2. Background

Section 120 (1) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991 (the 1991 Constitution), vests judicial power in the Judiciary, with the Chief Justice as the head. Section 120 (3) gives the Judiciary the authority and mandate to exercise its judicial functions while being subject only to the Constitution and any other law, but not subject to control and direction from any other person or authority.¹

The Superior Court of Judicature consists of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court of Justice and the inferior Courts consist of the Magistrate and Local Courts. Administratively, Magistrates Courts should be operational in each district, and there should be at least one local court in each of the 149 chiefdoms of Sierra Leone. The Local Courts Act No 10 of 2011, integrates the Local Courts within the Judiciary.

Although the constitution is clear about the independence and mandate of the Judiciary, in recent history, the Sierra Leone Judiciary has been perceived as unable to dispense justice in an independent, neutral and impartial manner.

The failure of the Judiciary as an institution, is said to have contributed to causing the 1991 civil war.² The Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) found that years of greed, corruption, bad governance and influence from the Executive, systematically weakened the Judiciary, and undermined its independence.³ In addition, there was no meaningful access to the Courts for Sierra Leoneans and judges failed to uphold the rule of law. Over 15 years after the war, the Judiciary still struggles to gain credibility.

In addition, the Judiciary is faced with chronic underfunding, case backlog, administrative failures, limited coverage, lack of public confidence and inadequate staffing in terms of numbers and competencies. There is one professional judge/magistrate to about 143,000 Sierra Leoneans, compared to the sub-Saharan average of 1 Judge/Magistrate to about 22,000-33,000 people.⁴ In 2016, the Judiciary has a total of 25 Judges, 22 Magistrates and 164 support staff.

The need for the Sierra Leone Judiciary to re-build credibility and public confidence is recognized in the Government of Sierra Leone's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2002-2007, Agenda for Change 2007-2012 and the subsequent medium term plan, the Agenda for Prosperity (A4P) 2012-2017. Within the A4P, the vision for the Judiciary is "An independent and accessible judiciary enjoying the confidence of the people".⁵ To achieve this vision, and promote justice, the rule of law, and good governance, judicial reform and restructuring is highlighted as critical.

Over the last few years, the government has undertaken legal reforms, and supported the enactment of new laws and a review of old ones. These include the Legal Aid Act 2012, which provides for a national legal aid scheme for indigent persons, the Local Courts Act 2011 which repositions local courts under the Judiciary; and the Sexual Offences Act 2012, which consolidates all sexual offences into one legislation, making it easier to report and prosecute cases. The Judiciary and its Justice Sector partners have developed strategies to improve access to justice. The Justice Sector Reform Strategy

and Investment Plan (JSRSIP) 2011-2014, laid out priority areas for reform and investment in the areas of access to justice, the rule of law, safe communities and justice service delivery. The latest version of this strategy (JSRSIP III: 2015 -2018), was endorsed by Cabinet in July 2015.

With support from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the German Development Agency (GIZ), the Judiciary undertook a number of initiatives to address these inherent challenges. These include; the construction of two new court buildings in 2010, and in 2015, a special court session to clear case backlogs i.e., the Makeni and Kenema Special Backlog Session,⁶ which led to a 58% decline in case back log in the Kenema High Court in 2015. The Judiciary also held Saturday Courts, which focused on the prosecution of the increasing numbers of sexual and gender-based violence cases. However, these special court sessions have been discontinued due to lack of continued funding.

The Judiciary also undertook an Institutional and Management Functional Review (MFR) aimed at conducting an in-depth review of its organisational structures and systems, with particular emphasis on staff, administration, budget and management. The MFR made several recommendations, including an institutional restructuring, and reorganisation,⁷ and reforms in management systems and processes to make the Judiciary effective and efficient.

In April 2016, the Judiciary held its first Judicial Conference. Over two days, over 180 participants from the Judiciary, related MDAs, Justice sector actors, including The Bar Association, civil society, and donor agencies, deliberated on critical issues affecting the Judiciary and made concrete

recommendations to improve case management, court management, commercial law and justice, law reporting, and judicial training and continuing professional development.

The Judicial Conference resolutions, the lessons from the Kenema and Makeni backlog clearing exercises, the MFR, and reports from several internal reflection meetings, have been used to inform and direct this Strategic Plan. This plan aims to consolidate gains made over the last year, and provide a systematic, coherent and sustainable way for the Judiciary to implement its reform strategies. It lays out priority areas for the next five years and provides an annual resourcing plan to enable the Judiciary and its partners focus on specific and achievable short term plans.

3. Environmental Analysis

This external analysis highlights the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal (PESTEL) environment that the Sierra Leone Judiciary operates in and their implications for its independence, delivery of justice and public confidence.

3.1 Political Environment

While the Constitution balances power and responsibility between the Judiciary, the Legislature and the Executive as the three pillars of state, in practice, the institutional relationship is not balanced. For example, budgetary allocations are controlled by the Executive, making it difficult for the Judiciary to recruit the right support staff and remain operationally independent and impartial.⁸ Without full control of its human resources and budgets, it is challenging for the Judiciary to remain independent, implement reforms and build a culture of transparency and accountability.

The ongoing constitutional review process is a defining moment. It provides a once-in-a-lifetime window of opportunity for constitutional changes that should contribute to independence, speedy trials, efficient management of cases, and more control of budgetary processes that will impact the Judiciary in the long term.

3.2 Economic Environment

In 2014, Sierra Leone's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 7.1%, and 1.0% excluding iron ore production, compared to the pre-Ebola forecast of 11.3% and 6%. Coupled with the closure of the

mining sector due to decline in international market prices, the Ebola outbreak adversely affected several sectors of the economy. In 2015, the economy was expected to contract by a substantial 24%. Higher imports and deterioration in mineral exports will affect the trade balance and have devastating consequences on employment and livelihoods.⁹ In 2016, the economy is projected to grow by 2.8%.¹⁰

An estimated 70% of youth in Sierra Leone are underemployed or unemployed. In addition, approximately 800,000 youth are actively seeking employment, in a country where young people aged 15-35 years comprise one third of the population.¹¹

The government of Sierra Leone has adopted several measures to improve public sector performance, including a management and functional review of 14 ministries, and a records management improvement program. A Public Financial Management (PFM) Strategy seeks to address weaknesses in budget execution and improve cash flow management, and a new PFM bill has been approved by Cabinet. Once enacted, the PFM Act, will replace the Government Budgeting and Accountability Act 2005, and hopefully contribute to the, efficient, effective, and transparent use of public financial resources throughout the public sector.¹²

3.3 Social Environment

Sierra Leone has a dual legal justice system: the formal system and customary system. The Local Courts Act, 2011 established Local Courts in all 149 chiefdoms. Local Courts administer customary law, and preside over matters of marriage, divorce, succession, and land tenure in the provinces. Local Courts remain the most accessible form of justice for the majority of the population due to their wide reach, location within the chiefdoms, expeditious process and low cost compared to the formal justice system.¹³ Nevertheless, Local Courts are predominantly led by men, which contributes to the entrenchment of gender inequality. The patriarchal, elite-driven structure of these courts has been a contested point for women and youths, who often receive unfavourable local court decisions.¹⁴

The Local Courts provide an opportunity for the Judiciary to improve its reach to the ordinary people, and change the negative public perception. However, they are potentially a risk to the current weak organizational structure and systems. The Judiciary will need to develop and adopt a separate and clear strategy to effectively provide oversight over the Local Courts.

In 2014, Sierra Leone ranked 140th out of 188 countries on the Gender Inequality Index, 13% of parliamentary seats were held by women, and only 9.5% of adult women had reached secondary or higher level of education compared to 20% of their male counterparts.¹⁵ The ongoing Constitutional review process has recommended a 30% quota for women in Local Councils. At the national level, there are several initiatives (e.g. the Gender Equality and Empowerment Bill) which highlight the need to

increase the number of women in both elected and appointed positions.

3.4 Technological Environment

Currently, all Judicial processes and systems are manual, with the exception of those of the Fast Track Commercial Court (FTCC). In all the registries, files are held in paper folders and stacked by year. Retrieving a file requires manually sorting through hundreds of files, which takes an enormous amount of time, and creates an immense opportunity for destruction and loss of documents. In addition, the Judiciary has no legal secretaries or stenographers in all courts, except the FTCC. Judges write down their own judgements, and hand them over to Copy Typists, leaving a lot of room for error and interference. This has led to delays in the processing of cases, contributing to chronic backlog and ineffective justice service delivery.

The Judiciary has an opportunity to exploit information and communication technologies, to improve its functioning and provide expeditious justice for all. This will require an overhaul of the records management system, and a carefully planned and executed migration towards automation and e-justice.

3.5 Environmental Context

In 2012, the mineral sector accounted for about 71% of Sierra Leone's total export revenues (mainly from exports of diamond, iron ore, and rutile concentrate), although it employed only about 3% of the total workforce. Agriculture remains the mainstay of the economy, contributing to about 42% of GDP and employing an estimated 70% of the country's

total workforce.¹⁶ This underscores the need for environmental protection, to ensure that land remains available for food production and livelihoods of future generations and that air and water resources are free from pollution.

Sierra Leone's heavy reliance on mining has adversely affected the environment. In diamond rich regions, many abandoned sites have left large portions of uncultivable land, and continue to pose a health and safety risk. The abandoned pits represent a significant loss of potentially viable agricultural land,¹⁷ and contribute to the pollution of water resources. Open cast rutile extraction is also leading to significant land degradation and destruction of productive land.

The Environmental Protection Agency Act 2008, requires all extractive industries to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) prior to commencing any activities. It also creates a framework and sets standards for the protection of water resources, management of waste and reduction of pollution.¹⁸ There are doubts however, on the enforcement of the Act.

The Judiciary has an important contribution to make in ensuring that cases related to the protection of the environment go through due process in a transparent and accountable manner. Finally, the next few years, provide an opportunity for the Judiciary to pilot new technology that reduces the reliance on paper and manual systems, conserves energy and protects the environment.

3.6 Legal Environment

The Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No 6 of 1991 guarantees freedom, equality and justice for all citizens. Over the last few years, old laws have been reviewed and new laws enacted to respond to the changing environment and meet the needs of the people. These include the Local Courts Act 2011, the Gender Laws, Legal Aid Act 2012, and the Access to Information Act 2013. The Criminal Procedures Act 1965 is in the process of being reviewed.

While Sierra Leone has many laws, there are conflicts and some laws are unclear, which makes it challenging for magistrates and judges, to remain consistent in their decisions, which undermines access to justice. There is need to review and harmonize all the laws and develop a consolidated set of statutes.

The ongoing constitutional review process reveals the government's openness to a new legal dispensation that would enshrine the rule of law and promote democratic governance and accountability.

4. SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis below was developed using feedback from staff during a judicial tour of the Law Courts building, conducted by a Justice of the Ghana Court of Appeal in March 2016, feedback from the Judicial Conference and a review of background documents. It considers the internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats) factors that affect the Judiciary's efficiency and effectiveness, and its relationship with its clients, and partners.

4.1 Strengths

- **Clear mandate;** As provided by the Constitution.
- **New leadership:** The new leadership comes with a vision for change, a readiness to face the challenges within the Judiciary and an openness to listen to dissenting views.
- **Commitment and willingness;** Staff are committed and willing to embrace change
- **Basic infrastructure for dispensing justice in place;** The Law Courts building, Pademba Road Court, Ross Road Court and Guma and Roxy building in Freetown house the Superior and Inferior Courts, while the regional provincial headquarters each have a High Court, and a Magistrates Court.
- **Reasonable number of staff to function;** Currently the Judiciary has a total of 25 Judges, and 22 Magistrates. With a functioning system, the current staff can process a significant number of cases.
- **Local Courts now under the Judiciary,** by the Local Courts Act 2011; There are Local

Courts in 149 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone, bringing justice closer to the people

- **Diversity of cases handled by the Courts;** The courts handle a wide range of cases, from civil to criminal cases

4.2 Weaknesses

- **Vacancies in critical posts:** e.g. Some Judges and critical judicial staff are on contract, while there a vacancies for Judicial and support staff.
- **Inadequate staff;** While the current staff numbers allow the Judiciary to meet some of its basic functions, they are inadequate to enable the Judiciary to be fully effective and efficient and fulfil its mandate
- **Judiciary not sub-vented;** The Judiciary still depends on the HRMO for recruitment of support staff, has no authority to fire incompetent staff and depends on MoFED for financial support and systems. The Chief Justice is not a vote controller.
- **Structural deficiencies;** As highlighted in the MFR, structural challenges make it

difficult to manage performance and promote transparency and accountability.

- **Limited professional development;** Currently there is no systematic process for ongoing professional development, mentoring and coaching staff or a merit based promotion system
- **Inadequate funding;** Currently MoFED struggles to meet budgetary requirements, while the Judiciary lacks an effective system to ensure timely requests and liquidation. By April, 2016, the Judiciary had still not received its quarter 1 (January- March) finances. Sporadic and unpredictable funding makes it difficult for the Judiciary to develop long term plans.
- **Weak organisational systems:** Finance, human resources, court management processes are currently not streamlined and systematic.
- **Inadequate coverage:** Although the Court Act 1965, Section 4 requires that there should be a Magistrate for all judicial districts in the country. Currently, this is not the case.
- **Low staff productivity:** Support staff have low capacity to perform their duties.
- **Poor public perception:** Stemming from historical challenges as well as the Judiciary's deficiencies in justice service delivery and poor public relations.
- **Lack of specialized courts and judges** e.g. family courts and lands tribunals.
- **Inadequate terms and conditions of service for judges** e.g. Conditions of Service for Judges, Act No 12 1983, No 3 of 1986 is not implemented fully in terms of its provisions not being provided as of now.

- **Internal politics and strife;** Internal politics threatens the Judiciary's achievement of reforms.

4.3 Opportunities

- **Reform environment:** The Government of Sierra Leone is undertaking public sector reform, which makes the call for change within the Judiciary timely and acceptable. The Constitutional Review process presents an opportunity to review and amend laws that will contribute to the development of a more efficient and effective Judiciary.
- **Collaboration** with other justice sector MDAs, especially the MoJ, SLP, SLCS.
- **Political will** and government support for judicial reform: The need for reform within the Judiciary is recognized and supported by the government, and justice sector partners.
- **Collaboration** with CSO's and NGOs: In the provision of paralegal services and monitoring implementation of due justice.
- **Local Courts** provide an opportunity for the Judiciary to increase its coverage and accessibility, especially for the ordinary citizens.
- **Stable political and social environment;** no war allows for long term planning and implementation.

4.4 Threats

- **Influence from the Executive and others:** There is currently an institutional imbalance in the relationship between the Judiciary and the Executive.
- **Inadequate funding:** Budgetary provisions are inadequate and disbursement is unpredictable, thereby hampering operational planning and implementation of routine activities. This in turn impacts negatively on service delivery.
- **Dwindling support from development partners to support reform:** The number of donors supporting the sector has declined.

- **Impending elections** could destabilise the socio-political landscape: The elections in 2018 may present an increase in election related cases before the Judiciary, overwhelming an already “overloaded” system.
- **Local courts dispensation:** While the addition of the Local Courts to the Judiciary provides an opportunity to expand its coverage and bring justice closer to the people, without effective and efficient systems, processes, and adequate staff, it threatens to adversely impact the functioning of the Judiciary.

5. Mission, Vision, Values

5.1 Vision

Accessible, fair and expeditious justice for all in Sierra Leone

5.2 Mission

To uphold the Constitution and rule of law, adjudicate over matters civil and criminal, in order to sustain national peace, security and development.

5.3 Core Values

The values of the Sierra Leone Judiciary are;

- Independence: To be subject only to the constitution and the law
- Impartiality: To apply the law fairly and without fear or favour
- Equality: We believe all people are equal before the law. We will have respect for all
- Accountability: We shall act in a transparent manner and shall at all times be accountable to the people of Sierra Leone
- Integrity: We shall be above reproach at all times

6. Strategic Priorities, Goals, Objectives

Over the next five years, the Judiciary shall strive to carry out reform in five strategic priorities.

Below is a summary of the strategic priorities, goals and objectives.

Strategic Priority 1: Justice is expedited, fair and accessible

This priority focuses on streamlining and strengthening the Judiciary's organisational functions, structure and management, (specifically the human resource, procurement and finance) and ensuring court management processes are able to deliver expeditious justice for all.

- Strategic Goal 1: Strengthened justice delivery structures and organisational capacity of the Judiciary
- Strategic Objective 1: To create an organisational structure and management systems that will enable the Judiciary to effectively carry out its institutional mandate

Strategic Priority 2: Effective and efficient case management systems

This priority, focuses on building a case management system that is reliable, effective and efficient and leads to faster processing, adjudication and speedy hearing of criminal and civil cases.

- Strategic Goal 2: Improved capacity to conduct criminal and civil cases and the process of bail implementation
- Strategic Objective 2 To strengthen existing systems and introduce new systems that enable effective and efficient delivery of justice

Strategic Priority 3: Commercial law and justice

This priority focuses on strengthening and expanding the FTCC.

- Strategic Goal 3: Improvement and integration with broader justice
- Strategic Objective 3: To redefine the roles of the divisions of the High Court and ensure improved handling of commercial justice issues

Strategic Priority 4: Judicial training and continuing professional development

This strategic priority focuses on building processes and a curriculum for mentoring, coaching and training judicial staff

- Strategic Goal 4: Strengthened justice delivery structures and organisational capacity of the Judiciary
- Strategic objective 4: To implement systematic planned professional development of Judiciary staff so as to improve the quality of justice service delivery

Strategic Priority 5: Justice is delivered with respect for rights and accountability

This priority focuses on ensuring the Judiciary has systems that foster a culture of transparency and accountability both internally and externally

- Strategic Goal 5: Strengthened rule of law
- Strategic Objective 5: To install systems that strengthen institutional accountability and improve public confidence

6.1 Strategic Priority 1: Justice is expedited, fair and accessible

- **Strategic Goal:** Strengthened justice delivery structures and organisational capacity of the Judiciary
- **Strategic Objective:** To create an organisational structure and management systems that will enable the Judiciary to effectively carry out its institutional mandate

Thematic actions	Timeline
Organisational mandate, functions and structure	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional mandate and supporting legislation and regulations reviewed and updated • Functions, composition and structure of the Judicial and Legal Services Commission reviewed • Organisational structure of the Judiciary reviewed (Judiciary Support Services and the Undersheriffs) • Job descriptions developed • Strategic Plan implemented to guide service delivery • High Court Registry restructured • Appellate court registries restructured • Under-sheriffs department restructured <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and support between Undersheriff's Office and the Police • Support (create a budget line) for logistical support to the Undersheriff's department • Service of court processes • Filing and other fees structures reviewed 	
Court management processes and systems	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations of the Chief Justice Support staff reviewed and restructured • Court administration strengthened <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralization of Judicial Court administration at regional level with clearly defined (roles and responsibilities of Judiciary staff clearly spelt out) • Statutory Instrument to expand Circuit Court <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Adequate coverage of magistrates ensured) • Oversight and supervision mechanisms strengthened • Regular management meetings facilitated and documented • Manual for Court processes and procedures developed and implemented • Effective and efficient case management systems implemented 	

Human Resources	Timeline
Staff attraction and retention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR audit of the Judiciary Support Service functions of the Judiciary, including staffing needs analysis carried out (HR, Finance, Procurement, Estates etc.) • Existing (Approved) established vacancies filled • Vacancies of critical judicial posts identified, established and filled (including Judges, Magistrates and support staff. Also Research Assistants, ICT) • Roles and responsibilities defined for all staff including regional and district courts • HR policy developed and implemented, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff orientation policy and procedures developed and implemented • Staff conditions of service reviewed and HR manual compiled • Staff retention and attraction policy developed and operationalized • Staff structure reviewed to ensure adequate staffing • Conditions for Judges and Magistrates reviewed and improved 	2016 onwards
Staff capacity building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff capacity needs assessment carried-out • Performance appraisal system used to identify capacity development needs • Integrated training programme developed and implemented • Ongoing staff capacity development action plan developed including coaching, mentoring, supervision etc. 	2017 onwards
Enforcement of disciplinary procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judiciary code of conduct revised and enforced • Staff disciplinary structures set up and operationalized (authority to handle staff- hire and fire) • Application of disciplinary processes regularly monitored 	2017 onwards
Performance Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management system implemented • Merit driven reward system implemented and monitored • Clear career paths developed and implemented • Audit of support staff conducted (Opinion of judges sought, etc.) 	2017 onwards

Resources and Procurement	Timeline
Funding	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative to ensure Judiciary is a fully sub vented institution undertaken • Annual budget developed with support from Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) • Retention revenue raised <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of fees 	
Financial management systems	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public financial management system implemented • Appropriate financial management structures are developed and implemented • The right staff with the right capacities for effective financial management recruited and deployed • Roles and responsibilities of financial staff developed and adopted • Staff trained on public financial management system • Public financial management system operationalized • Systems for payment of fines and fees developed and implemented 	
Financial reporting/auditing	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly management financial reports generated • Annual audits conducted • Annual financial statements and reports generated through the Auditor General's office 	
Procurement	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public procurement systems implemented • The National Public Procurement Act implemented 	
Asset management	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory of all judiciary assets conducted • Assets registers established and regularly updated • Frequent inventory reviews and assets assessments carried out 	

Materials and facilities	2017 onwards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Estate department supported to be more functional• Office and space utilization reviewed and restructured• Courts, offices, and residences constructed and or renovated• Security of the Law Courts building enhanced• Adequate operational equipment and power – IT, internet• Maintenance plan for buildings and equipment developed and implemented• Judiciary website resuscitated and maintained

6.2 Strategic Priority 2: Effective and efficient case management systems

- **Strategic Goal:** Improved capacity to conduct criminal and civil cases and the process of bail implementation
- **Strategic Objective:** To strengthen existing systems and introduce new systems that enable effective and efficient delivery of justice

Records Management	Timeline
Filing of court processes	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing files, other court documents and exhibits sorted and properly stored <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of position of exhibit manager to take custody of property • Files reproduced in triplicate. Two judges chambers, one in Registry • Filing and other fees reviewed and restructured- logbook created for receipt of files etc. • System for receipt, endorsement and filing of court document developed and implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person who signs on receipt takes custody and is responsible for release of the document. It will be a temporary measure until more permanent solutions • An alternate workday schedule for staff of the filing rooms to prevent overworking • Decentralised assignment of cases at the Magistrates Court • Filing process automated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current systems reviewed to understand number of cases 2016 onwards 	
Manual movement of court documents	2016-2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A log-book system (with inbuilt timelines) to track cases established • Regular update of cases and tracking system established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An automated system in place • Alternative workday schedule for staff in filing room implemented 	
Automated movement of court documents	2016-2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause book at the Registry (where events and processes are entered on a special page) is fully completed, • A monitoring system to hold judges and all staff to account implemented • Judges meetings chaired by the CJ are held, and returns are made on due dates 	

Returns	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly returns prepared by judges and magistrates (defined to include all the different stages) • Monthly update from registry- (separate logbook for the registry) • Training/mentoring on court filing and processes carried out • Judicial database established • In- built defined timelines for depositions enforced • Monitoring system for returns and depositions implemented 	

Records Management	Timeline
Stenographers and recordings instituted in courts	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stenographers and recordings instituted in courts • Training and (re)hiring, mentoring done 	
Bail granting/refusal	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bail and sentencing guidelines developed and institutionalized • Practice Direction issued and implemented • Learning forums and peer review sessions organised 	
Bail processes	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific officers designated to process and monitor bail • Systems for expediting bail process developed and implemented 	
Witness management (prosecution and defence)	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective systems for notifying and tracking witnesses/accused developed and implemented • Logistical support for witnesses provided • Witness protection system established • New budget line for witness protection created 	

Records Management (continued)	Timeline
Service of processes	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistical support for bailiffs to serve court processes provided • Resources for court processes (MoJ vs Judiciary) allocated • Roles of the Undersheriff’s Department defined and office restructured 	
Jury and assessors	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summoning procedures as per the CPA implemented by the registry • Empanelling of Jurors implemented • Conditions for the jurors/assessors reviewed 	
Inmate welfare	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jail delivery system to monitor welfare of inmates enforced • Regular visits by the court enforced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for inmates to raise welfare concerns with judges in court provided • Access to medical facilities monitored • Mechanisms for collaboration with ministries including MSWGCA, MIA, MLG, regarding reintegration of released inmates, implemented 	
Proceedings	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Direction for adjournments issued by Chief Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter adjournments and day-to-day adjournments • Overall number of adjournments reduced • Closer collaboration with officers tied to Witness support 	
Support staff (researchers)	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistants for judges- (Clerks) hired. Learned legal researchers (Lawyers between 1-3 years call) • Legal researchers introduced as part of the Pupillage process (a constant stream of resources) 	

6.3 Strategic Priority 3: Commercial law and justice

- **Strategic Goal:** Improvement and integration with broader justice
- **Strategic Objective:** To redefine the roles of the divisions of the High Court and ensure improved handling of commercial justice issues

Thematic actions	Timeline
Jurisdiction of the Commercial Court	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial Court processes reviewed and implemented • Commercial Division divided into sections 	
Law Reform	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory instrument • Formation of a sub-committee to review the commercial and Admiralty Court rules 2010 to take care of existing gaps • Rules, fees and structure reviewed and implemented 	
Systems and processes	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automation and case management systems reviewed • Implement the proposals for review of court fees 	
Judges competencies in commercial law	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competencies of judges reviewed and training programs developed and implemented • FTCC remains a specialized court with judges trained in commercial law and mercantile law • ICT infrastructure upgraded • Number of resident judges at the FTCC increased to avoid using judges from other divisions 	

6.4 Strategic Priority 4: Judicial training and continuing professional development

- **Strategic Goal:** Improved staff performance
- **Strategic Objective:** To implement systematic planned professional development of Judiciary staff so as to improve the quality of justice service delivery

Thematic actions	Timeline
Judicial training and continuing professional development	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of JLTJ redefined to focus on Judicial training • Permanent structure and mandate of the JLTJ in place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent committee responsible for JLTJ should consist of 7 (2 Supreme Court judges, 1 Court of Appeal, 1 High Court Judge, 1 Magistrate, 1 representative from Law Officers, 1 representative from Bar Association) • Strong curriculum for judicial staff developed and implemented • Deliberately programmed professional training development organised for judicial staff • Work with other partners to develop training for partners such as MoJ, SLP, Correctional Services, (non- judicial staff) • Judicial learning forums organized • Training on new rules and processes conducted • System for rotation of judicial staff implemented 	

6.5 Strategic Priority 5: Justice is delivered with respect for rights and accountability

- **Strategic Goal:** Judicial mechanisms for accountability and transparency developed and implemented
- **Strategic Objective:** To install systems that strengthen institutional accountability and improve public confidence

External accountability mechanisms	Timeline
Establish complaint mechanism	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics Committee strengthened • Code of Conduct for Judicial officers developed and enforced • Orientation of staff on Code of Conduct 	
Performance monitoring	Timeline
Monitoring and evaluation	2017 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance score cards • Design an appropriate M & E system for the Judiciary 	
Community interface and interactions (communication)	Timeline
Community reintegration	2016 onwards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints mechanism publicized • Judicial Service Charter developed and widely circulated • User committees set up • Information desks created • Judicial Public Relations office created • Annual Report • Website • Periodic bulletins • Publicity and outreach 	

7. Implementation and Resourcing of the Strategic Plan

7.1 Operational Planning and Performance Review

The Strategic Plan identifies strategic priorities over the five-year period 2016-2021. In order to ensure effective implementation and provide flexibility to respond to the operating environment, the Judiciary will institute annual priority identification and operational planning. Operational plans will be developed at all levels of the organisation, and action plans will be developed at the individual level. In addition reform projects will be identified for suitable initiatives, and appropriate structures and plans will be developed to implement them with tighter timeframes. Organisational structures with strategic planning and reform responsibility will be created to support the Office of the Chief Justice in championing the implementation of the strategy and reforms.

Formalised regular performance reviews will be instituted at all levels and periodic assessment will be carried out for critical operations. Organisational units with monitoring and enforcement responsibility, such as Internal Audit and Monitoring and Evaluation, will be created to assist the executive in enforcing compliance and assessing progress. Data will be collected and analysed, and the information generated will be used to inform decision and to evidence progress.

7.2 Resourcing Implementation

With the guidance of the Budget Office of the Ministry of Finance, the 2016/17 budget proposals will be developed based on the priorities, objectives and activities in the Strategic Plan. Subsequent budget proposals will also be based on the Strategic Plan to ensure alignment between operations and funding. Through better planning and improved performance, and linking contribution more closely with the Agenda for Prosperity and the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan III (JSRSIP III,) the Judiciary intends to advocate for increased funding.

The Judiciary will also seek to strengthen resourcing by working towards full subvention status and by retention of fees to bolster funding for operation.

8. Annexes

8.1 Annex (a) Year 1 Priorities

1. Institutional Reform (the process towards full subvention)

- Public financial management (PFM) – including the development of realistic and appropriate budgets and building financial systems and monitoring processes
 - Engage MoFED to support Judiciary's 2017 budgeting process
 - Recruitment of professional staff to manage financial systems and budgets
 - Implement and maintain appropriate financial management systems
 - Train and mentor staff on financial management and reporting
- Strengthening governance structures and management systems
 - Implement revised and approved organisational structure
 - Develop and implement operational policies (HR, Administration, Procurement, audit, financial)
 - Develop an implement a court administration system, including decentralization, with clearly defined standards and roles
 - Develop and implement M&E systems
 - Institute internal and external accountability mechanisms auditing, performance management, reporting and communications)
 - Judicial Conference 2017
- Filling critical vacancies and continued mentoring of key staff and professional staff development
 - Review staff structure and staffing needs including registries
 - Implement approved job descriptions
 - Fill in critical vacancies (professional and support staff)
 - Develop and implement staff training and development plan
- Develop an implement a court administration system, including decentralization, with clearly defined standards and roles
- Strengthening of records and case management processes
 - Institute record management structures and systems (filing, endorsement, reproduction, assignment, tracking, monitoring)
 - Institute stenographers and recording systems in the courts
 - Develop and implement Practice Direction on bail and sentencing
 - Implement regular coordination partners
 - Review current filing system and develop appropriate case management system including tracking and monitoring system
 - Develop plan to move towards automation
- Continued support to the pilot courts in Kenema and Makeni (and the associated circuit courts in Kono and Port Loko)
 - Roll out learning from existing pilot courts to Bo and Clinetown
 - Support circuit courts in Kono and Port Loko, Bo
 - Implement CPA
- Expansion of the FTCC model to Regional Courts and Clinetown Court
 - Continued support to Freetown FTCC
 - Revise court rules
 - Pilot FTCC in regional headquarter towns and Freetown

8.2 Addendum to the strategic plan: operational plan and resourcing plan

These will be developed separately on an annual basis, but are accompanying documents of the Strategic Plan

2. Improved Court Systems

- Implement court administration systems and processes

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