

# Enhancing Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development in Sierra Leone under the Freetown WASH and Aquatic Environment Revamping Program

## Gender Assessment

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background

This Gender Assessment is a formative research input for a Green Climate Fund (GCF) funding proposal being developed by the African Development Bank, titled: Enhancing Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development in Sierra Leone under the Freetown WASH and Aquatic Environment Revamping Program.

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and the African Development Bank agreed to elaborate a proposal for accessing GCF funding for the “Enhancing Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development in Sierra Leone under the Freetown WASH and Aquatic Environment Revamping Program” Sub Program 2.

This Programme aims to improve access to and use of weather, water, and climate services in Sierra Leone by strengthening observing and monitoring capabilities, early warning and early action systems, and other environmental-related information systems while adopting a gender-responsive approach across this project. It seeks to drive a paradigm shift towards evidence-based climate-informed decision-making, planning, and response. The goal is to integrate green growth, environmental resilience, and adaptation into national development planning through effective climate information systems.

With four Results focused on enhancing climate information services delivery, establishment of impact-based multi-hazard early warning systems and early action, strengthening climate information and early warning systems (ciews) for investment and financial decisions and project management, the proposed programme can strategically contribute towards greater gender equality in the five countries by: (i) adopting gender-responsive approaches for the design of climate information services; (ii) promoting gender-balance, where possible, through technical and maintenance capacity building activities of hydro-meteorological networks, equipment and systems; (iii) establishing gender-aware policy frameworks to inform collaboration between climate service and national/regional hydro-meteorological stakeholders; and (iv) pioneering gender mainstreaming analyses and praxis with regard to, climate information, geospatial, hydro-meteorological and early warning services in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone, faces multiple risks from climate change that threaten key economic sectors and increases the potential for wider environmental degradation. Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone, faces climate induced phenomena like increasing seasonal and inter-annual variability; frequent floods; coastal erosion, inundation and salinity intrusion, attributed to sea level rise and challenges induced by climate change drainage congestion; riverbank erosion; and wider salinity in surface water, groundwater, and soil. Forestry degradation in the upper western peninsula catchment amplifies the effects of the natural hazards, through erosion and landslides. Additionally, the country faces health challenges resulting from limited provision of water and sanitation services, which condition is exacerbated by the aforementioned climate change effects.

According to the Sierra Leone Climate Action Report, 2016, the climate-sensitive agriculture sector provides livelihoods for 75% of the population and contributes more than 50% of GDP. Besides, the country is endowed with extensive natural resources which are currently under pressure. Women play an important in the agriculture and the management of natural resources and food production. They climate change effects affect men and women and other vulnerable groups disproportionately thus the need for their inclusion in the adaptation measures.

The Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) has been making enormous efforts and continues to prioritise climate action, environmental protection and water supply improvement. One of the key strategic objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP 2019-2023) is to improve disaster

management governance by building and institutionalizing a robust early warning and response system to effectively respond to disasters through reinforced governance and management architecture for national disaster-related issues.

Guidance on climate action has most recently been reflected in the initial National Adaptation Plan (iNAP), 2021. The country's iNAP also gives guidance and provides information on actions to reduce climate change vulnerability regarding water resources, agriculture and food security, public health, coastal zones, and communities across the country.

## 1.2. Gender Assessment

Gender inequality can limit the potential, inclusiveness and success of adaptive actions in Sierra Leone. Benefits of increased support and access to climate services, as well as awareness raising and capacity building, may accrue to better-off households or more mainstream groups, that are able to capitalize on n opportunities and respond better to changes ushered in by the Programme.

A 'gender lens', thus, is relevant for the project to maximize its outcomes. This is particularly for the creation and strengthening of climate information service capacities for predicting and tackling climate change impacts, natural hazards and weather variation that cannot be avoided.

Due to the importance of gender mainstreaming in climate resilient actions, a Gender Assessment and Gender Action Plan are part of the requirements for accessing GCF funding and are thus a major component of the GCF funding proposal as Annex 1 and Annex 2 respectively.

The Gender Assessment Report highlights the relevant policy, legal and institutional framework that promotes, gender equality and equity, it describes the existing situation in relation to gender and other vulnerable groups, it highlights the climate change impacts in relation to gender and other vulnerable groups, and it provides actions for mainstreaming gender in Climate Information Services.

## **2. METHODOLOGY: GENDER PRIORITIES FOR SIERRA LEONE CLIMATE SERVICES**

### **2.1. Gender Priorities**

The analytical prerogatives of this Gender Assessment and Action Plan are informed by both GCF's and African Development Bank Group's respective gender policies. The gender assessment was informed by a review of relevant information that included among others international gender policies and guidelines, Sierra Leone Housing and Population Census reports, national policies and laws that promote gender equality and equity, national reports on climate change, and Sierra Leone gender reports. This section also describes the legal and policy framework for the advancement of women's rights and gender equality in Sierra Leone. It also highlights the international and regional gender-related protocols, commitments and declarations to which the GoSL is part. The GoSL and development agencies have made commitments to support equality and equity between women and men and to use a gender perspective in different all programs and projects, including those related to climate change and resilience.

### **2.2. African Development Bank Gender Strategy (2021-2025)**

Cognizant of the important role women and girls will have to play in achieving Africa's economic and social transformation, the Bank has deemed it critical to ensure that the delivery of its High-5 priorities contributes to their socio-economic empowerment and participation in the identified development realms. Through alignment with its Ten-Year Strategy (2013–2022) and its High-5s agenda, the Bank can play a catalytic role in accelerating efforts to address gender inequality and drive inclusive economic transformation for women across Africa in multiple ways.

In addition, the Bank can advocate and promote gender equality and women and girl's empowerment across the continent due to its convening power, influence, track record and respected position as a leading African institution. This is particularly important in countries and regions affected by fragility, conflict, and violence as well as climate change where intersectional challenges exacerbate inequalities. The Gender Strategy 2021-2025 has prioritized the need to reduce gender inequalities across Africa by increasing access to finance and technical assistance, enhancing technical skills and gender-responsive infrastructure.

Key pillars include (i) empowering women through access to finance and markets (ii) accelerating employability and job creation for women through skills enhancement and (iii) increasing women's access to social services through infrastructure.

The strategy recognises that women are disproportionately affected by climate change and global health shocks such as COVID-19. Women are often responsible for gathering and producing food, collecting water, meeting hygiene needs and sourcing fuel for heating and cooking. With climate change, these tasks are becoming more difficult. Extreme weather events such as droughts and floods have a more significant impact on the poor and most vulnerable – 70% of the world's poor are women. In terms of climate change, the pressing need is around the development of gender-sensitive early warning systems and enhanced training on adaptation and mitigation strategies.

### **2.3. International and Regional Gender-related Commitments, and Declarations**

Sierra Leone has signed and ratified a number of regional and international treaties, protocols, conventions that provide for gender equality, equity, protection of human rights etc.

### 2.3.1. Paris Declaration on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2015

This Declaration was signed and ratified by Sierra Leone in 2016. The parties that signed the declaration acknowledged that to respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity, when taking action to address climate change.

They also acknowledged that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate. They further agreed that capacity-building should be guided by lessons learned, including those from capacity-building activities under the Convention, and should be an effective, iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and gender-responsive.

### 2.3.2. Green Climate Fund (GCF) Gender Policy

The Gender Policy of the GCF expresses the commitment of GCF to promote gender equality within the Secretariat, across its investment criteria, 1 and as an integrated measure of the social dividends of the overall portfolio. The Gender Policy recognizes that the impacts of climate change can exacerbate existing gender inequalities and that climate change initiatives are more sustainable, equitable and likely to achieve their objectives when gender equality and women's empowerment considerations are integrated into the design and implementation of projects.

The three major objectives of the GCF policy include: (i) to support climate change interventions and innovations through a comprehensive gender approach, applied both within the institution and by its network of partners, including accredited entities (AEs), national designated authorities and focal points, and delivery partners for activities under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme; (ii) to promote climate investments that: (i) Advance gender equality through climate change mitigation and adaptation actions; and (ii) Minimize social, gender-related and climate-related risks in all climate change actions; and (iii) to contribute to reducing the gender gap of climate change-exacerbated social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities and exclusions through GCF climate investments that mainstream gender equality issues.

Principle 2 of the GCF Policy requires that women and men be provided with equal opportunity to take an active part in stakeholder consultations and decision-making during project preparation, implementation and evaluation. Principle 4 of policy recognizes the importance of transparency, non-discriminatory access and accountability in all aspects of its operations.

The GCF Gender Policy recognizes that gender relations, roles and responsibilities exercise important influences on women's and men's access to and control over decisions, assets and resources, information, and knowledge. This Gender Policy also recognizes that the impacts of climate change can exacerbate existing gender inequalities. The Gender Policy further acknowledges that climate change initiatives are more sustainable, equitable and more likely to achieve their objectives when gender equality and women's empowerment considerations are integrated into the design and implementation of projects. Further, this Gender Policy recognizes



that women and vulnerable communities are also part of the solution to climate change and should, therefore, be effectively engaged in discussions and decisions that affect them<sup>1</sup>.

The Gender Policy is closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which make explicit commitments to gender equality, both as a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG5) and as a theme cutting across all the SDGs

### 2.3.3. Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women

The convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women I (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and described as an international bill of rights for women. Sierra Leone signed and ratified the treaty in 1988.

- Part I (Articles 1–6) focuses on non-discrimination, sex stereotypes, and sex trafficking.
- Part II (Articles 7–9) outlines women's rights in the public sphere with an emphasis on political life, representation, and rights to nationality.
- Part III (Articles 10–14) describes the economic and social rights of women, particularly focusing on education, employment, and health. Part III also includes special protections for rural women and the problems they face.
- Part IV (Article 15 and 16) outlines women's right to equality in marriage and family life along with the right to equality before the law.

However, despite Sierra Leone's ratification of the CEDAW treaty, discrimination and violence against women in the country still persist.

### 2.3.4. The Maputo Protocol

The Maputo Protocol (Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa) is an international human rights instrument established by the African Union and went into effect in 2005. Sierra Leone signed the Protocol in 2003 and ratified it in 2015. The Protocol provides for the elimination of discrimination against women, the right to dignity, elimination of harmful practices e.g. female genital mutilation; the right to participation in the political and decision-making process, the right to life, integrity and security of a person, the right to education and training, the right to food security, the right to a healthy and sustainable environment, and the right to sustainable development etc.

### 2.3.5. Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5)

The Agenda provides for “reforms to give women the same rights to economic resources, as well as access to land ownership and control and other forms of ownership, financial services, inheritance and natural resources.

### 2.3.6. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981

Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in the present Charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-gender-policy.pdf>



### 2.3.7. Convention on the Rights of a Child

Sierra Leone signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1991 to which it is now legally bound and has enacted into law through the national Child Rights Act 2007. The Act spells out the rights of children.

### 2.3.8. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is an international human rights treaty, which exists to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all disabled persons. It was adopted in 2006 and entered into force in 2008. Sierra Leone signed and ratified it in 2007 and 2010 respectively. The treaty prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and promotes full participation of persons with disabilities in all spheres of life.

### 2.3.9. African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention), 2009

One of the obligations of the states in relation to internal displacement is to devise early warning systems, in the context of the continental early warning system, in areas of potential displacement, establish and implement disaster risk reduction strategies, emergency and disaster preparedness and management measures and, where necessary, provide immediate protection and assistance to internally displaced persons. The States are also obliged to protect internally displaced persons against sexual and gender-based violence in all its forms.

### 2.3.10. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1967

Sierra Leone ratified this treaty in 1996. Article 3 of the Covenant requires States to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the Covenant.

## 2.4. National Policy and Legal Framework

The last decade has seen Sierra Leone enact several policies, strategies and policies to promote gender and gender equality. While some of the laws and policies are not specifically about gender, they are gender-sensitive in that they provide for gender concerns that affect women such as affirmative action, women's rights and gender-based violence. The relevant laws, policies and strategies summarized below.

### 2.4.1. The Constitution, 2013

The Constitution promotes the following: equality for all regardless of sex, equal rights and adequate educational opportunities for all citizens by safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups, such as children, women and the disabled, care and welfare of the aged, young and disabled, agriculture to ensure self-sufficiency in food production, the protection of natural resources, such as mineral, marine, forest and other resources of Sierra Leone, the protection from discrimination by race, tribe, sex, place of origin, political opinions, colour or creed.

### 2.4.2. National Policy on Gender Mainstreaming

The overall goal of this policy is to mainstream gender concerns in the national development process in order to improve the social, legal, civic, political, economic and cultural conditions of the people in Sierra Leone, in particular women.

### 2.4.3. National Adaptation Plan, 2021

The INAP notes that Women comprise 51% of the population and suffer from gender inequality and discrimination. Sierra Leone stands historically in the bottom 10 of the Gender Development Index (UNDP, 2020<sup>2</sup>). Inequalities are apparent in terms of literacy rates, per capita GDP, access to land, and legal protection. Inequalities are apparent in terms of literacy rates, per capita GDP, access to land, and legal protection. Increased poverty among women in Sierra Leone results from a combination of factors, including limited skills and knowledge, unfriendly market structures that concentrate women in lower-paying work and restrict their access to capital and credit, traditional family structures perpetuating gender inequality through patriarchal norms of property ownership and inheritance, discrimination in the public domain, and weak and unequal trade and economic patterns<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of the National Adaptation Plan is to integrate climate change adaptation measures into national development processes, strategies, climate-smart policies, programs and budgeting. The iNAP vision is to reduce vulnerability by half by 2030 through increased risk awareness, improvements in rule compliance, increased institutional capacity and an integrated gender-responsive approach to adaptation in development policies and programmes across sectors and scales. Gender equality and social inclusion is a cross-cutting priority that was identified in the NAP. This focuses on the youth, women, elderly and persons with disabilities.

### 2.4.4. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment policy (GEWE)

The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment policy aims at mainstreaming gender into all development and political processes in Sierra Leone to ensure livelihood and social protection for women, men, boys and girls for sustainable peace and economic growth. It ensures that men, women, girls and boys benefit equally from all development interventions in all sectors and that inequality and discrimination of any type are not perpetuated at the national and local levels.

### 2.4.5. Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023

The objectives of this plan are 1) to build a diversified, resilient green economy, 2) improve public health, empowerment and education, 3) improve fairness, cohesiveness, security and peacefulness, and 4) to build a competitive economy with sound infrastructure.

Cluster 5 of the Plan provides for empowering women, children, and persons with disability. It strategic include: to promote the overall empowerment of women in the political, social, economic, and cultural spheres; to ensure a 'children first' approach for the survival, protection, and development of children, including disabled and vulnerable children, as well as to prioritize the best interests of children at all times, with a special focus on addressing sexual violence, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, orphans, vulnerable children, child trafficking, child labour, and juvenile justice.

### 2.4.6. National Policy on the Advancement of Women

The goals of the National Policy on the Advancement of Women are to:

- Fully integrate women in the development process, to empower them, enhance their capacities as agents of economic, social and political development and in this way ensure the full development of human resources for national development.

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<sup>2</sup> (2020). Human Development Reports 2020. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SLE>

<sup>3</sup> USAID (2016). Climate Risk Profile Sierra Leone. <https://www.climatelinks.org/resources/climate-risk-profile-sierra-leone>.

- Achieve national awareness and respect for women's rights as citizens and as agents and beneficiaries of development.
- Ensure that all forms of discrimination against and abuse of women are eliminated.
- Ensure the elimination of attitudinal, cultural, traditional, legal and religious constraints to greater recognition of and respect for and improvement of the status and situation of women.
- Ensure that ingrained legal, cultural, religious, political, customary and economic practices that present obstacles to the advancement of the status of women are removed.

#### 2.4.7. National Male Involvement Strategy for The Prevention of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Sierra Leone

The strategy adopts a socially transformative approach that focuses on the participation of men and boys as change agents and champions for protecting women and girls in their families, communities, schools and work places.

#### 2.4.8. Domestic Violence Act (2007)

The Domestic Violence Act (2007) criminalizes domestic violence, addressing issues of sexual, physical, emotional, psychological and economic violence perpetrated against an individual in a domestic setting. The acts of violence covered under the Act are commonly committed against women and children.

#### 2.4.9. Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act (2009)

The Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act (2009) legalizes all marriages taking place under the customary law, civil laws, Islamic and Christian beliefs. The act aims to protect women who were married by customary marriage but were neglected because their marriages were considered to be invalid.

#### 2.4.10. Devolution of Estates Act (2007)

The Devolution of Estates Act (2007) protects women from being denied access to their deceased spouse's property, guaranteeing the right of children born in and out of wedlock to own their deceased father's property. The act ensures proportionate distribution of property according to the number of years a woman has lived in her matrimonial home prior to the death of her deceased spouse.

#### 2.4.11. Gender in Agriculture Policy, 2020

The Sierra Leone Gender in Agriculture Policy is a guiding document with a strategic framework for action to influence and support the integration of gender issues in agriculture policies, strategies, projects and programmes.

#### 2.4.12. National Land Policy, 2015, Version 6

Some of the policy's implementing strategies include the protection of the rights of women including: (i) enforcing existing laws and establishing a clear legislative framework to protect the rights of women in issues of access/inheritance to land and use of land-based resources and to exercise their tenure rights in general; (ii) enhancing and guaranteeing women's access to land and their security of tenure (iii) making provision for joint spousal and adult titling registration and documentation of land rights, and for joint spousal consent to land disposals, applicable for all

forms of tenure; and (iv) securing access/inheritance rights of women, especially unmarried daughters in accordance with the law.

#### 2.4.13. Persons with disability Act 2011

The Persons with Disability Act, 2011 seeks to prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities, achieve equalization of opportunities, establish the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities and to provide for other related matter

#### 2.4.14. The Sexual Offences Act, 2012

The Act makes provision for various categories of sexual offences and covers persons with mental disabilities, children and married women. It prohibits forced sex in marital relationships.

### 2.5. Institutional Framework

Over the years, several government entities have been established to support gender equality, protect the rights of women and other vulnerable groups and to implement climate adaptation actions. These include among others the following:

#### 2.5.1. Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) is the key ministry charged with the responsibility of responding to the social needs pertaining to Gender inequalities, social depravity of groups like the disabled, women rights, child rights, and religious rights.

Other institutions that are responsible for the protection of women's rights and other vulnerable groups' rights include: The Human Rights Commission, The Family Support Unit in the Sierra Leone Police, The Legal Aid Board, The National Youth Commission, The Children's Commission, The National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Labour and Social Security and Non-Governmental Organisations providing gender-based services.

They key ministries and agencies that implement this program are: Meteorological Agency (Ministry of Transport and Aviation), Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, National Disaster Management Agency, Ministry of Energy. These will ensure engendering of the activities in Sub Program 2.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs will monitor to ensure that gender aspects are incorporated in activities of Sub Program 2.

### 3. GENDER ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. Introduction

In this section, the results of the gender analysis are presented. The purpose is to contextualize the Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development in Sierra Leone under the Freetown WASH and Aquatic Environment Revamping Program in terms of gender and social inclusion.

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women<sup>4</sup>. Gender Analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls and boys in certain situations or contexts. The assessment examined how gender affects Climate Information Systems for Resilient Development in Sierra Leone and how it can be mainstreamed in the project. Gender mainstreaming is a comprehensive process in which any planned action or project makes the needs of women, as well as men, an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects, policies, and programmes, in all areas and at all levels, so that men and women can benefit equally<sup>5</sup>.

The analysis was based on review of secondary information, Focus Group Discussions with women, men and vulnerable groups, Key Informant Interviews with government officials at different administrative units and a socio-economic household survey for randomly selected respondents in the areas most prone to climate change hazards. Household survey questionnaires were administered to a total of 107 respondents of which 62 were from the Western Urban District and 45 were from the Western Rural urban districts. The towns included in the household survey include Freetown, Angola Town, Badadorie, Bay Community, Congo Town, Crab Town, Goderich-Funkia, Jui Wharf, Regent and Wellington Wharf.

Out of those included the household survey, 53 were females (49.5%) and 54 were males (50.5%). Trained enumerators with knowledge of the English and local languages were used to collect the data. The presented findings are disaggregated by gender.

The assessment covered among others the gender dimensions, legal status of women, beliefs, perceptions, and stereotypes related to gender, gender division of labour and participation in the economy, gender vulnerability and adaptability to climate change, gender inequalities, access and management of resources, access to information and opportunities and participation in decision making.

#### 3.2. Brief about Freetown

Freetown is the capital and largest city of Sierra Leone located on the Atlantic Ocean in the Western region of the country. The Western region is located around the Peninsula and is divided into two districts i.e. the Western Area Rural and the Western Area Urban. Freetown serves as the administrative headquarters of both the Western Area and the Urban District. The Western Area Urban District exclusively comprises the entire city of Freetown. The city's economy revolves largely around its harbour which occupies a part of the estuary of the Sierra Leone River in one of the world's largest natural deep-water harbours. The geographical location of Freetown and its urban nature are risk factors for vulnerability to climate change.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: UN Women, [OSAGI Gender Mainstreaming - Concepts and definitions](#)

<sup>5</sup> Source EBRD Guidance Note Gender 1

### 3.3. Gender Dimensions in Sierra Leone

**Population:** Sierra Leone's population was estimated at 7.4 million (2018). Its growth rate has increased rapidly from 1.8% between 1985 and 2004 to 3.2% between 2004 and 2015. This has led to a 40% increase from about 5 million in 2004 to more than 7 million today. At the current rate of growth, the population will reach 10 million people by 2026 (GoSL, 2019). 40% of Sierra Leone's population are youth. There is high unemployment among low and semi-skilled youth, most of whom were unable to complete their education due to the civil war (INAP 2021). The females constituted 50.8% and males 49.2% of the population. The sex ratio was 96.8 males per 100 females. This will be a critical factor in project design.

**Maternal and infant mortality rates:** The maternal mortality rate in Sierra Leone is the highest in the world with 1,360 mothers dying in every 100,000 live births. Maternal deaths account for 36% of all deaths amongst women aged 15-49 years. The leading direct causes of maternal mortality in Sierra Leone are obstetric hemorrhage (46%), hypertension (22%), obstructed labor (21%) and sepsis (11%). Causes of neonatal deaths are prematurity (30 per cent), asphyxia (27%), sepsis (23%), pneumonia (7%), congenital (7%) and others (7%). New-born conditions (29%), malaria (20%), acute respiratory infection (ARI) (12%) and diarrhoeal diseases (10%) are responsible for more than 70 percent of the under-five deaths. Many of these deaths are preventable if managed timely by skilled health providers

According to Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey (2019), the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) was estimated at 75 deaths per 1,000 live births. The child mortality rate (under 5 years) was estimated at 122 deaths per 1,000 live births. Infants/children are the most vulnerable to climate change and the project component of climate information system contributes to a reduction in IMR. These staggering figures represent the real and pervasive challenges women and children face in Sierra Leone with poor healthcare practices and sub-standard and ill-equipped health care facilities. Climate change is likely to exacerbate MMR due to the increased prevalence of diseases like malaria. Climate information will contribute to a reduction in MMR (UNICEF 2022).<sup>6</sup>

**Life expectancy:** The current life expectancy for Sierra Leone in 2022 is 55.55 years, a 0.67% increase from 2021. The life expectancy for Sierra Leone in 2021 was 55.18 years, a 0.68% increase from 2020. The life expectancy for Sierra Leone in 2020 was 54.81 years, a 0.68% increase from 2019. According to SLPHC 2015, life expectancy was 51.3 years for women and 47.6 years for men<sup>7</sup>. UNDP (2019) estimated Sierra Leone's life expectancy at birth as 52.2 years. The life expectancy for females was higher at 52.8 years compared to 51.6 years for males. Women live longer than men and as such are likely to experience longer effects of climate change.

**Age:** According to the 2015 SLPHC, 55.3% of the total population was aged 15-64 years. There were slightly more females (55.7%) compared to males (55%) within this age group. The young children 0-14 years comprised of 41.2% of the total population; the proportion of male children was slightly higher (41.6%) than that of female children (40.8%). The elderly population (65 years and above) comprised of 3.5% of the total population of which the proportion of elderly females was slightly higher (3.5%) than the male elderly population (3.4%). The extremely elderly population (80 years and above) comprised of 0.8% of the total population. The proportion of the extremely aged female population was higher (1%) than the male proportion (0.8%). Young children (0-14 years) and the extremely elderly (80 years and above) usually suffer the most from

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/sierraleone/maternal-neonatal-and-child-health#:~:text=The%20challenges,in%20every%20100%2C000%20live%20births.>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/SLE/sierra-leone/life-expectancy>



the effects of climate-related disasters. However, the population within the productive years (14-64) are valuable contributors to climate action and are agents of change.

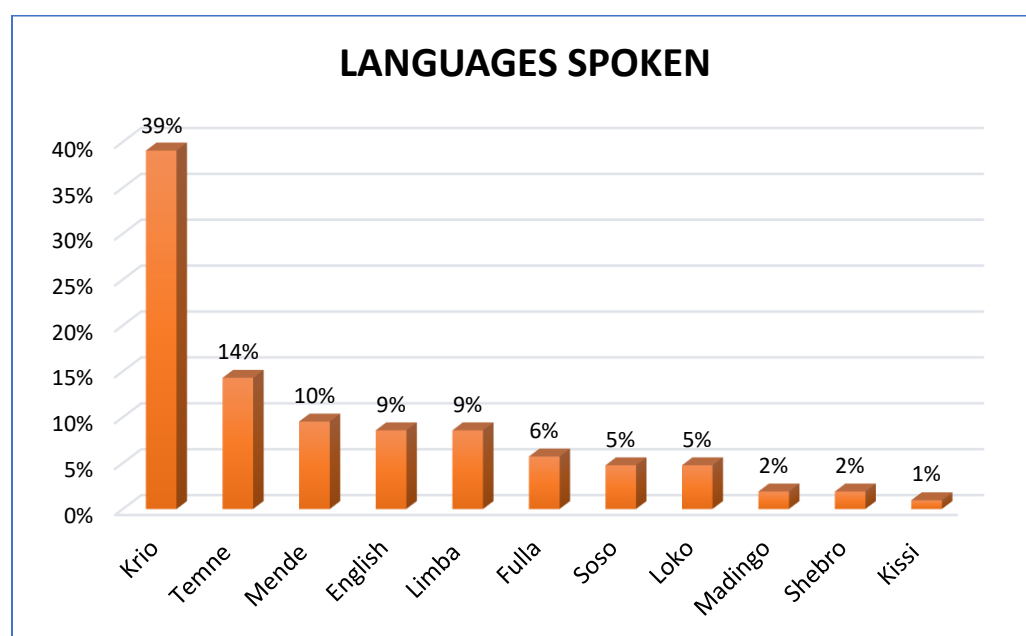
The average age of the respondents included in the household survey was 39 years with the youngest being 22 years and the eldest 72 years.

The majority (98%) of the population included in the survey was aged 18-64 years and still considered energetic. The proportion of the female population in that age group was slightly higher (54.2%) than that of the male population (45.8%). The elderly comprised of 2% of the interviewed population with the males and females having the same proportions.

**Gender of Household Head:** Out of those interviewed, 77.6% (83No) were household heads. Of these, 39.8% (30No) were female household heads and 60.2% (50No) were male household heads. Other respondents interviewed 22.4% (24No) were other members of a household e.g. spouses, adult children, and relatives. These are all critical when responding to climate related hazards.

**Ethnic Composition:** The most commonly spoken language nationally was Mende, spoken as the main language by 29.2 percent of the total population. This is followed by Temne (26.6 percent) and Krio (18.2 percent). (2015 Sierra Leone Population and Housing Census). In the Western Area Urban (Freetown), Krio was the dominant language spoken by 69% of the people in the area, followed by Temne (14.2%), Mende (4.6%) and a diversity of other languages spoken by 12.2% of the people in the area. For effective communication of climate-related information, the languages to be used will put into consideration the main languages of the intended recipients.

The household socio-economic findings showed that predominant languages spoken among area of study were Krio (39%), Temne (14%), and Mende (10%). Other languages spoken are English (9%), Limba (9%), Fulla (6%), Soso (5%), Loko (5%), Madingo (2%), Shebro (2%), Kissi (1%) as indicated in [Figure 3-1](#).



*Figure 3-1: Languages spoken in Western Urban and Western Rural Districts*

**Education:** According to the Government of Sierra Leone 2021 annual school census, the total enrolment in 2021 was 3,131,440 of which 49% were boys and 51% were girls. This may be



because 51% of the population of Sierra Leone are females and hence more girls in schools than boys. [Table 3-1](#) presents indicators of access to education by girls and boys in Sierra Leone.

*Table 3-1: Access to Education by Gender*

Indicator	Boys	Girls	Both
Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) <sup>8</sup>			
<b>Primary</b>	149%	154%	152%
<b>Senior Secondary</b>	73%	72%	73%
Gross Intake Rate (GIR)			
<b>Primary</b>	206%	215%	211%
<b>Senior Secondary</b>	66%	64%	65%
Gross Completion Rate (GCR)			
<b>Primary</b>	94%	89%	90%
<b>Senior Secondary</b>	91%	89%	90%
Retention Rate (RR)			
<b>Primary</b>	40%	40%	40%
<b>Senior Secondary</b>	128%	129%	129%

However, the Sierra Leone Population and Housing Census (SLPHC) 2015, painted slightly a different picture with regard to access to education as presented below. (i) Gross Enrolment Rates for Primary 105.4%. Males 102.8% and females 108.1%. (ii) Net Enrolment Rates for Primary Level 65.3%. Males 63.5% and 67.1% (iii) Gross Enrolment Rates for Senior Secondary 48.1%. Males 55.8% and females 40.4% and (iv) Net Enrolment Rates for Senior Secondary 14.3%. Males 14.9% and females 13.6%. These statistics show that more girls enrol at the primary school level than boys. However, at the Senior Secondary school level, more boys enrol than girls partly because of the high dropout rate for girls.

Results from the socio-economic household survey showed that 38.3% of the interviewed people never went to school, 20.6% attained O-level, 17.8% attained a degree or its equivalent, 4.7% attained postgraduate qualification, 3.7% attained A-Level/BTEC, 2.8% attained vocational training and 12.1% attained other forms of education e.g. NPSE, JSS etc. A larger proportion of the females (49.1%) compared to the males (38.3%) never attained any education. The proportion of females who attained a degree or its equivalent was lower (9.4%) compared to the males (25.9%). [Table 3-2](#) shows the levels of education among the study population. The design of the information to be disseminated to the masses should take into consideration the education levels of the information recipients.

*Table 3-2: Education Levels among the Study Population by Gender*

Level of Education	Female		Male		Total	
None	26	49.1%	15	27.8%	41	38.3%
WASSCE/GCSE/O-Level	12	22.6%	10	18.5%	22	20.6%
A-Level/Higher/BTEC	1	1.9%	3	5.6%	4	3.7%
Degree or equivalent	5	9.4%	14	25.9%	19	17.8%
Postgraduate qualification	1	1.9%	4	7.4%	5	4.7%
Vocational/NVQ	2	3.8%	1	1.9%	3	2.8%

<sup>8</sup> Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is defined as total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education

Level of Education	Female		Male		Total	
Others	6	11.3%	7	13.0%	13	12.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Primary data

**Adult literacy rate:** Sierra Leone's literacy<sup>9</sup> rate is relatively low. Almost half of the population is illiterate. According to SLPHC, the adult literacy rate was 51.4%. The rate of literacy was high among males (59.4%) than females (43.9%). 51.6% of male and 69.8% of female household heads had no formal education. In urban areas, 31.3% of male and 51.3% of female-headed households had no formal education. The literacy rate has implications for the design of the Climate Information System for resilient development in terms of communication channels and materials.

The socio-economic household survey findings showed that 43% of the interviewed people did not know how to read and write in any language, 31.8% knew how to read and write in both the local and the English language, 15.9% reported knowing how to write and in the official language and 9.3% reported knowing how to read and write in the local language only. The official language in Sierra Leone is English. A higher proportion of women did not know how to read and write, and higher a proportion of men reported knowing how to read and write and the local and English language (Figure 3-2). The languages to be used in the dissemination of information will take this into consideration.

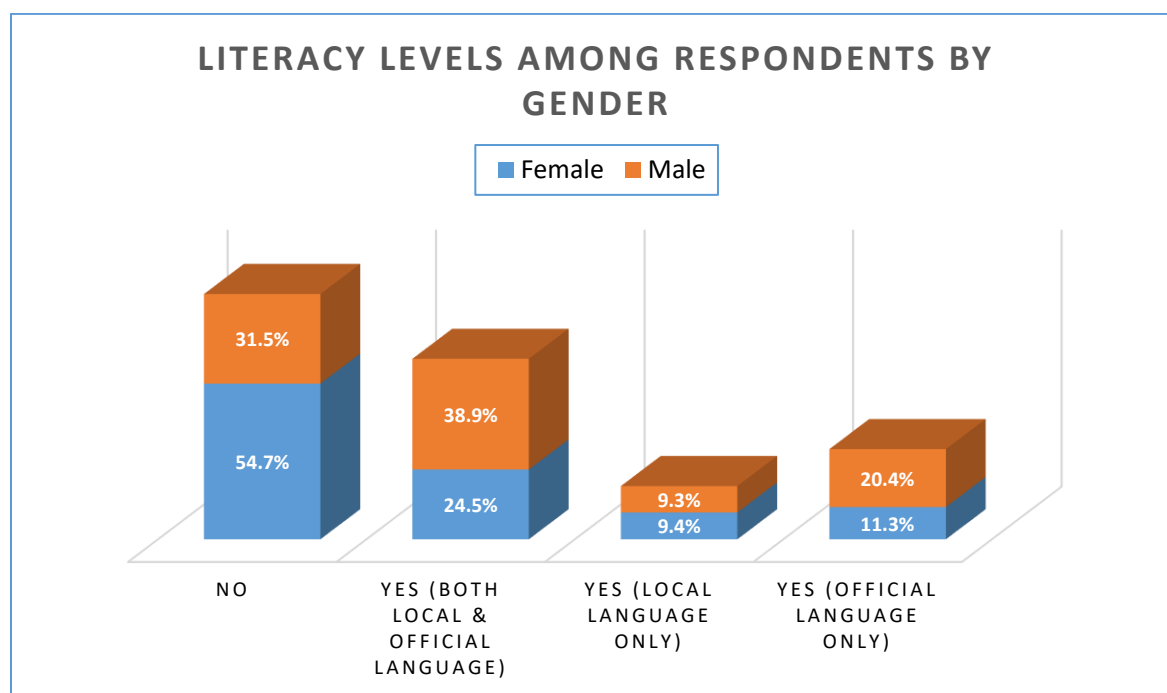


Figure 3-2: Literacy Levels among the Respondents by Gender

<sup>9</sup> The SLPHC 2015 Census defined literacy as "the ability to read and write in any language"

**Poverty rate:** The incidence of poverty in Sierra Leone is high. More than half of the population lives below the poverty line. According to UNDP Human Development Index Report for Sierra Leone (2019), the incidence of poverty was 57% and 10.8% of the population was living in extreme poverty. The report indicates that female-headed households were somewhat less likely to be poor than male-headed households. The incidence of poverty in male-headed households was 57% and extreme poverty was 11.6%. The incidence of poverty in female-headed households was 55% and extreme poverty was 7.9%. Wealth index quantile of the poorest 64.1% were women and 9.8% were males. The richest quantile 48.6% were females and 26.6% were males. The poor, the majority of whom are women are disproportionately affected by climate change partly because they do not have the necessary information to prevent, mitigate or adapt.

**Labour force participation:** The labour force participation rate is calculated as the labour force divided by the total working-age population<sup>10</sup>. The labour participation rate in 2015 for Sierra Leone was 0.55<sup>11</sup>. Labour participation by gender was 0.587 for males and 0.571 for females. There was a slight difference in labour participation in rural and urban areas in the Western Area where the project is located. In rural areas labour participation was 0.61 and in urban areas 0.71. The labour force participation of the youth was 55.8 percent in 2016<sup>12</sup>.

**Employment rate:** According to the Labour Force Survey (World Bank and ILO, 2015) the working-age population in Sierra Leone was slightly more than 3 million. 65.4% were employed, and the rest (more than one-third) were not gainfully employed. Out of those who were not employed, 26.8% were not available for work, 3% were looking for work and 4.8% were not looking for work. According to SLPHC 2015, the overall employment rate was 91.4%. There was no major difference between the employment rate for males (91.5%) and females (91.3%). There was a slightly higher proportion of women in the working population of Sierra Leone (ages 15-64 years) with 56.4% compared to males (54.8%). 15.2% of the males were in paid employment compared to 6.3% females.

**Unemployment rate:** The unemployment Rate in Sierra Leone is expected to reach 4.40% by the end of 2022, according to trading economics global macro models and analysts' expectations. Sierra Leone unemployment rate for 2020 was 5.20%, a 0.55% increase from 2019. In the long-term, the Sierra Leone Unemployment Rate is projected to trend around 4.30% in 2023, according to econometric models.

The findings of the socio-economic household surveys indicated that 39.3% of the households were not employed, 44.9% were employed in the informal sector, and only 15.9% were employed in the formal sector. The proportion of women (41.5%) not employed at all was higher than that the men (39.3%). More women (44.1%) were employed in the informal sector compared to the men (44.9%). The formal sector had more men compared to the women as indicated [Table 3-3](#).

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<sup>10</sup> OECD (2022), Labour force participation rate (indicator). doi: 10.1787/8a801325-en (Accessed on 15 November 2022)

<sup>11</sup> UNDP 2019. *Sierra Leone 4<sup>th</sup> National Human Development Report 2019*

<sup>12</sup> Preliminary data from the 2015 Labour Force Survey (Stats SL, World Bank and ILO, 2015)

*Table 3-3: Employment Status of Respondents in the Study Area by Gender*

Employed?	Female		Male		Total	
No	22	41.5%	20	37.0%	42	39.3%
Yes, formal sector	5	9.4%	12	22.2%	17	15.9%
Yes, informal sector	26	49.1%	22	40.7%	48	44.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Primary data

The main occupation of the respondents included trade (37.4%), fishing (14%), professional (teacher, nurse etc.) – 12.1%, and casual labour (9.3%). Other occupations included skilled labor, restaurant/hotels, and others (security, pension) as indicated in Table 3-4. Analysis by gender shows that the proportion of women in trade was higher (62.3%) than that of men (13%). Men were noted to be more in fishing, skilled labour and professional occupations.

*Table 3-4: Main Occupation of Respondents by Gender*

Occupation	Female		Male		Total	
Trade	33	62.3%	7	13.0%	40	37.4%
Fishing	2	3.8%	13	24.1%	15	14.0%
None	5	9.4%	10	18.5%	15	14.0%
Professional (teacher, nurse etc)	4	7.5%	9	16.7%	13	12.1%
Casual labour	4	7.5%	6	11.1%	10	9.3%
Skilled laborer (Mechanic, Electrician etc.)	1	1.9%	7	13.0%	8	7.5%
Restaurant/hotels	2	3.8%	1	1.9%	3	2.8%
Others specify	1	1.9%	1	1.9%	2	1.9%
Trade, Professional (teacher, nurse etc)	1	1.9%	0	0.0%	1	.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Primary data

**Political participation rate:** There are huge disparities in the political participation of women and men. Sierra Leonean women are under-represented in parliament, political parties, Government, national and local committees as leaders<sup>13</sup>. Women account for 51% of the population of Sierra Leone but occupy less than 20% of elective positions in government. Only 12.4% (26) of Parliamentary seats are occupied by women (UNDP, 2019). At present, there are 16 female MPs (11.6 percent of legislators). Some of the constraints to women's participation in politics include high illiteracy, entrenched customs and traditions, political violence and reprisals and lack of financial resources.

### 3.4. Legal Status of Women

The legal status of women in Sierra Leone was enshrined in the 1991 Constitution which provides for the equal enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms by men, women, girls and boys everywhere in Sierra Leone and at all times. Article 15 states that every person in Sierra Leone is entitled to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual, regardless of race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, colour, or sex. Various laws have been enacted to

<sup>13</sup> Sierra Leone Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy.

ensure the protection and promotion of the rights of women and children including the Domestic Violence Act (2007), Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act (2009), Devolution of Estates Act (2007); Child Rights Act (2007), and the Sexual Offences Act (2012). Other laws include the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2005), the Sierra Leone Citizenship Amendment Act (2006), the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS Act (2007). The Local Government Act (2004) provides for a statutory 50/50 gender balance for Ward Committees.

### 3.5. Gender-related Beliefs, Perceptions, and Stereotypes

In Sierra Leone, cultural beliefs, practices, and stereotypes are a major barrier to gender equality and fuel gender inequalities in the social, economic, and political participation of men and women, boys, and girls. Pure and applied sciences, technology, law, and political science are believed to be the domain of men, while women dominate areas such as home economics, social work, teaching, and nursing, in line with their perceived role as caregivers.

Gender-based discriminatory cultural practices and beliefs extend to the public sphere such as separate dress codes for women to enter courthouses and buildings housing Government of Sierra Leone offices (GEWEP, 2019). The patriarchal nature of African society limits the role of women to being wives, mothers and caregivers under the dominion of men. Bride fees does not only give husbands and their families, limitless rights over wives but also determine their participation in household or family decision-making<sup>14</sup>. Cultural beliefs that wives are considered as ‘strangers’ and daughters are considered as ‘leavers’ meaning that they will join another family through marriage. These beliefs exclude women from having the right to own or inherit land<sup>15</sup>.

### 3.6. Existing gender inequalities

Gender inequality remains a significant barrier to resilience building and sustainable development in Sierra Leone. Gender inequality limits the ability of women and girls to fully participate in and benefit from development.

According to UNDP (2018), Sierra Leone’s Gender Inequality Index (GII) was 0.645, ranking it 150 out of 160 countries. This was worse than the Sub-Saharan Africa average of 0.569. The key drivers of the high GII are a high maternal mortality rate, a high adolescent birth rate of 112.8 births per 1,000 women of ages 15-19 compared to 101.3 for Sub-Saharan Africa; a low percentage of parliamentary seats held by women (12.4 percent) compared with 23.5 percent for Sub-Saharan Africa; and 19.2 percent of women with at least some secondary education compared to 32.3 percent for the males.

In 2017 the Human Development Index for Sierra Leone was 0.389 for females and 0.446 for males. The Gender Development Index was 0.872. This means that in Sierra Leone women enjoy 87.2 percent of what their male counterparts enjoy in health, education and standard of living<sup>16</sup>.

### 3.7. Gender Participation in the economy

According to the World Bank’s development indicators for Sierra Leone, women account for over 53% of labour in the crop farming subsector and 52% in the poultry subsector. While women constitute the majority of the agricultural workforce, they have never had full access to or control of land or property in Sierra Leone.<sup>17</sup> In many parts of the country, women can access land only

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<sup>14</sup> Maseray N. R. 2021. *Women, Politics and Decision Making in Sierra Leone*

<sup>15</sup> *The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*

<sup>16</sup> UNDP 2019. *Sierra Leone 4<sup>th</sup> National Human Development Report 2019*

<sup>17</sup> The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) available online at: <http://genderindex.org/country/sierra-leone>

through their husbands or other male family members and are vulnerable to losing their access to land in cases of divorce or widowhood.<sup>18</sup> Besides, even though women are the major agricultural labour force, they have fewer decision-making powers regarding the selling of foodstuffs, spending money from the sales and food allocation. In addition, women have less access to training opportunities, modernised farm inputs, and credit thus affecting agricultural production and productivity and contributing to food insecurity.

From the socio-economic household surveys, women contribute to the economy largely through the informal sector.

### 3.8. Access to Resources

There is also unequal access to production resources like land, training and loans by women compared to that available for men. “Economic growth is driven heavily by agricultural and mineral production both of which are dependent on access to land.” Despite this, most traditional laws in Sierra Leone do not allow ownership of land by women. In some communities, women can access but not own land. Studies show that if women farmers have the same access as men to productive resources such as land and fertilizers, agricultural output in developing countries could increase by as much as 2.5 to 4 percent (FAO, 2011). Control over land and property is vested mainly in men. Property and land titles are inherited by male lineage<sup>19</sup>. Women’s rights to own and use property are deeply encumbered throughout most of the country. Even within the Western Area where the project is located, women are facing severe challenges around property and land rights. The application of customary law in Sierra Leone continues to disadvantage and discriminate against women in relation to their land and property rights<sup>20</sup>.

### 3.9. Information Communication Technology (ICT)

According to SLPHC (2015), 13% had internet access. In terms of gender, 16% of males and 10% of females had access to an internet connection. Of those who use the internet, the majority use it at home (72.9%). This shows that most people in Sierra Leone lack access to the internet. According to the Sierra Leone Demographic Health Survey (2019), the most commonly found item in all households was a mobile phone (73%); 93% of urban and 58% of rural households own a mobile phone. 43% of the women and 64% of the men had mobile phones. 93% of the households in urban areas and 57.6% in rural areas had mobile phones. 55.2 % of the household had radios. In urban areas, 70.7% and in rural areas 43.8% had radios. 20.4% of households had Televisions (TVs). In urban areas 45.8% and in rural areas 1.8% had TVs. 5.2% of households had computers. In urban areas 11.5% and in rural areas 0.5% had computers.

The same survey found that the main source of information for women was radio (30%) and TV (11%). Only 5% got information about family planning from mobile phones and 2% from newspapers. Given the low literacy rate among women, radio will be a vital source of information on Climate Change.

Below is a presentation of the results of the socioeconomic household survey on information communication.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

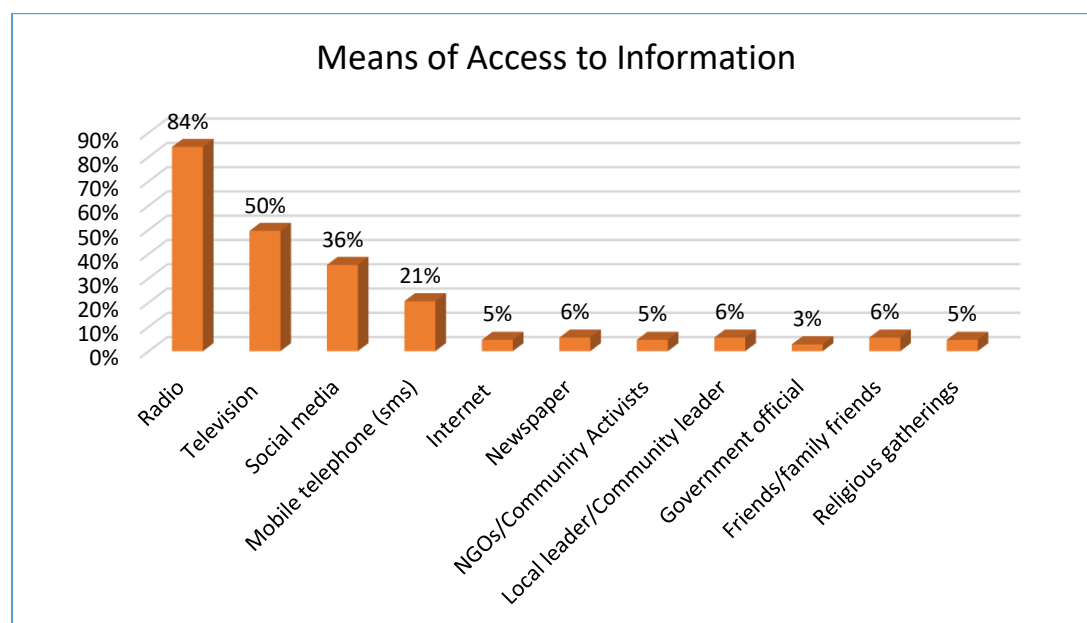
<sup>19</sup> UN Women. 2017. ‘Sierra Leone Steps It Up for Gender Equality

<sup>20</sup> *The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*



**Receipt of information from Sierra Leone Meteorological Services (SLMS) and Hydrological Services Department:** The findings of the socio-economic household survey showed that 70% of the male respondents received climate information from the Sierra Leone Meteorological Services (SLMS) and Hydrological Services Department and 30% did not. 51% of the female population also reported to have received this information while 49% did not. The nature of information received included weather forecasts, early warning about potential climate hazards, prevention of disasters, avoidance of disaster-prone areas, climate change and its effects, and mitigation measures in disaster prone areas.

**Means of access to information:** Radio was the most common mode of access to information for 84% of the respondents (both men and women), followed by television (50%), social media (36%), and mobile telephone – SMS (21%) as indicated in [Figure 3-3](#). These were available to both men and women.



*Figure 3-3: Means of Access to Information*

Those who did not get information cited factors such as the lack of a radio, television, telephone and lack of time due to a busy schedule.

**Usefulness of the information:** The majority (76.6%) of the respondents found the information disseminated to them useful. 83.3% of the men found the information useful and 69.8% of the women found the information useful. Those who found the information useful gave the following reasons: they plan better for the rainy season and other seasons, they plan for the mitigation measures in case of any hazards, they put in place preventive measures, and they are more aware of the impacts of climate change than before.

Those who did not find the information useful pointed out the following reasons: the information was inaccurate, it was not provided early enough, the time it was disseminated was not favourable, it was disseminated in a language they did not understand, and it was not disseminated frequently enough.

When asked about the frequency of receiving information, both men and women reported to receive it on a weekly, quarterly and monthly basis. A higher proportion of men reported to receive



it daily, while a higher proportion of women reported to receive it annually (Figure 3-4). It therefore important that the masses receive climate information frequent enough to enable them plan better for any eventualities that may arise.

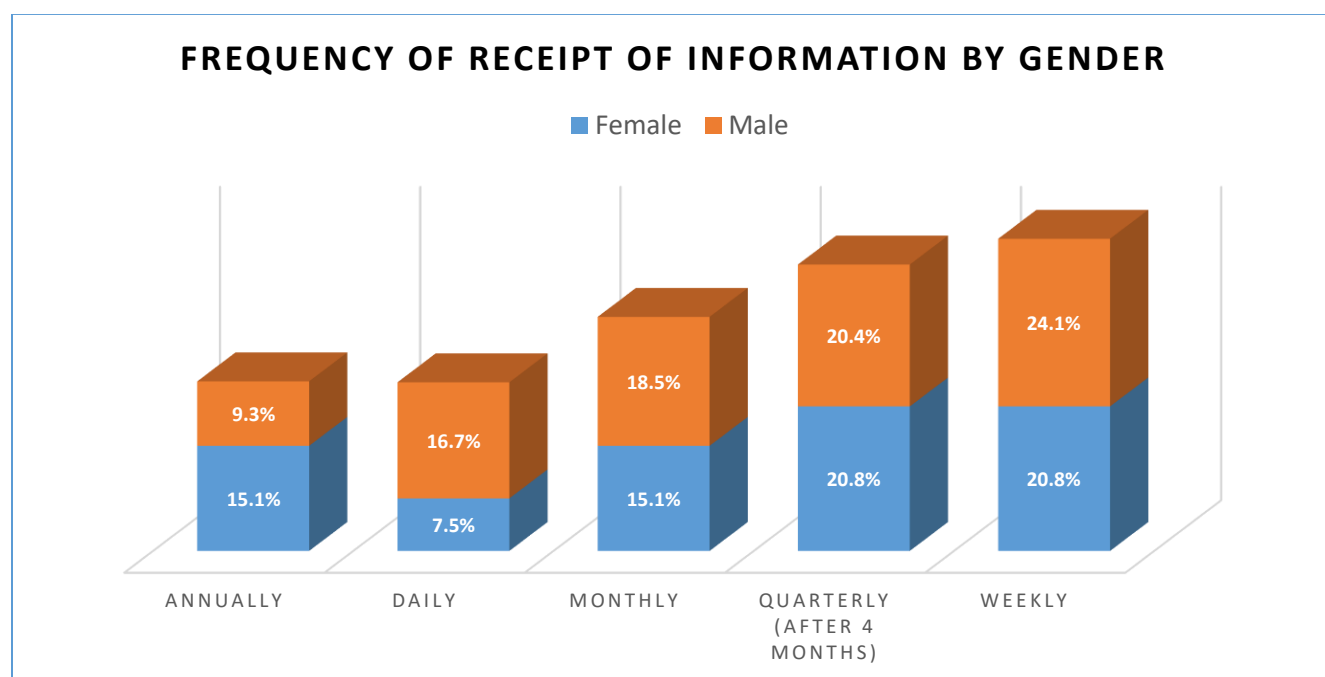


Figure 3-4: Frequency of receipt of information

**Preferred times to receive information:** The preferred time for both men and women to receive information is evening hours, followed by morning hours. Women also preferred receiving information in the night before 8.00pm while men preferred receiving information in the night after 8.00pm (Figure 3-5) Very few men and women preferred receiving information in the afternoon. The preferred time of disseminating early warning climate information should take into consideration the preferred time by the recipients.

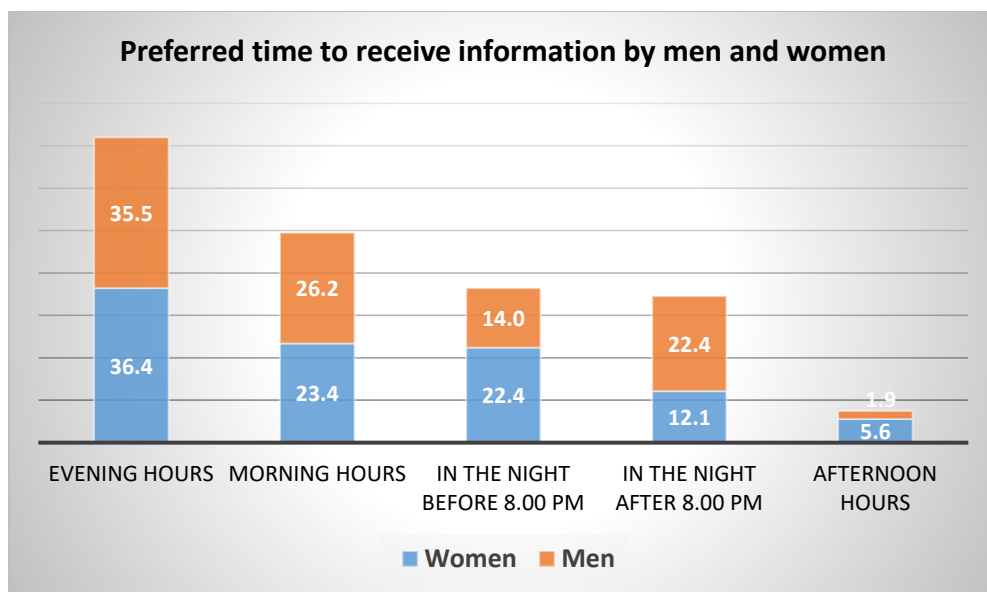


Figure 3-5: Preferred time to receive information by gender

**Level of understanding of Climate change and its effects:** Regarding the level of understanding of climate change and its effects, the findings of the socio-economic household survey showed that the population (both male and female) had a good and moderate understanding of climate change and its effects as indicated in Figure 3-6. More awareness to both men and women is encouraged to empower the communities to mitigate the negative effects of climate change.

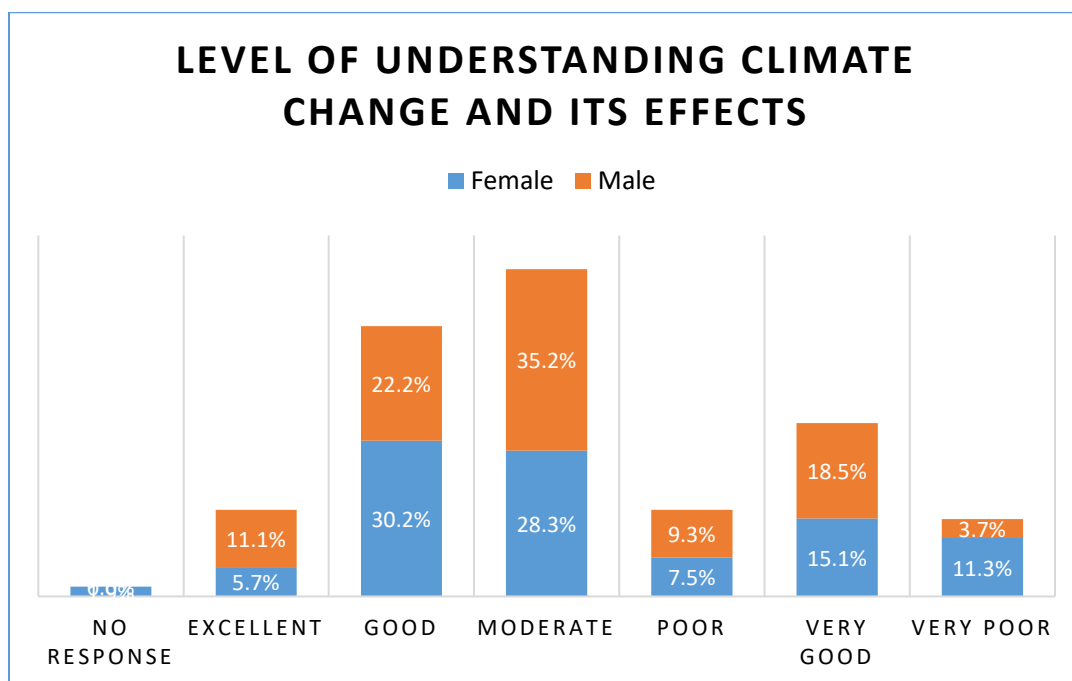


Figure 3-6: Level of Understanding Climate Change and its Effects

Floods were the most the most hazards, followed by heavy rainfall, pests and diseases, windstorm, air pollution, thunderstorm, fog and erosion. Climate change effects reported by the respondents included destruction of property (crops, structures etc), food shortage, lack of adequate water, high temperatures, displacement of families and an increase in mosquitoes which cause malaria.

Households including both for male and female household heads cope with the effects of climate change through improved ventilation, stocking of food, use of pesticides and insecticides, constructing barriers and house entrance to reduce the effects of flooding, seeking family, neighbours and community support, support from NGOs, and relocation to other areas etc.

### 3.10. Training in climate change related matters

Training in climate change related matters empowers the people to put in place sustainable mitigation measures for climate change. Among the people included in the household survey, only 5.6% reported to have received climate-related training, the majority of which men. The training received was about preventive measures to manage climate change such as tree planting and the effects of deforestation. The results indicated that all members of the household were recommended for this training. 31.7% of the respondents however recommended training both husband and wife, 18.7% recommended the husband, 14% recommended the wife, 15% recommended training all adult members of the household, 11.2% recommended adult male children, 9.3% recommended adult female children and the rest recommended

## 4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### 4.1. Introductions

Stakeholders' consultations involved Focus Group Discussions, Key Informants Interviews and a socioeconomic study. Nine (9) focus group discussions were conducted comprising of 3 for women, 3 for men, 1 mixed men and women and 2 for the youth. Eight (8) Key Informants Interviews were conducted comprising 5 men and 3 women. [Figure 4-1](#) shows sample pictures of the engagements with some of the stakeholders.



*Figure 4-1: Engagements with different stakeholders*

### 4.2. Knowledge of Climate Information

Climate change was understood in terms weather related disasters particularly frequent floods, drought, strong winds, and heatwave. There was slight difference in understanding of climate disasters between men and women which was associated to their livelihood activities. Women associated climate change to frequent floods and droughts which affect their outdoor businesses, crops and water supply. Men on the other hand associated climate change to rising sea level, strong winds and heatwave which affect fishing activities.

In all the groups, there was acknowledgement of gaps in knowledge of climate change and awareness creation was suggested as one of the interventions the project design should consider. Local leaders observed that there was need for deliberate effort to sensitize people about climate change as it was done for HIV/AIDS.

### 4.3. Effects of Climate Change

Communities reported that they were experiencing extreme weather events especially torrential rainfall, heatwave, strong winds and drought. Floods damage houses and property, cut of roads and destroy outdoor/ road side businesses owned largely by women. Diseases spread fast, child pregnancies increase because children do not go to school due to roads being cut off and looking for survival.

During dry season, crops dry up and food becomes very expensive. Drinking water becomes scarce and women and girls have to wake up very early in the morning in searching for water at the risk of being raped and/or killed. The heatwave is unbearable making it difficult to sleep at night because majority of the households cannot afford air conditioning. Strong winds affect fishing which is the main source of livelihood for the bottom of the pyramid because the sea becomes risky and the winds blow the fish far away in the deeper waters.

It was reported that these extreme weather events were increasing in frequency but the communities do not adequately prepare for them because of lack of information on when they will happen and what they should do to mitigate the advance impacts. The weather information provided on TVs and radio was not reaching the vulnerable people who cannot afford these facilities or have no electricity to operate them. Women were the said to be the most affected because majority of them live in informal settlements, poorly drained, lack piped water and cannot afford to relocate.

### 4.4. Access to Climate Information

Access to climate information varied by gender, age and social class. Consultations with the women revealed that majority of the women did not have access to climate information especially those who live in climate disaster prone areas.

Majority of men said they get weather information from listening to news on the radio or TV (AYV TV). The youth said they get weather information from social media platforms. The affluent get their information from televisions. The poor and vulnerable get their information from mobile megaphones and friends. Some NGOs and environment agencies like EPA disseminate information on climate change once in a while.

The languages used to disseminate climate information is Krio and English which are understood by the majority of the local people. The type of information disseminated is rainfall forecast, wind speed and temperatures.

**Barriers to access to climate information:** Stakeholders highlighted the following as the barriers to access to climate information:

- Lack of dedicated weather broadcasting station (radio or TV). Commercial stations do not dedicate adequate time to weather information.
- Unreliable electricity/ power outages makes it difficult to power TVs, radio and phones to get news.

- Majority of the people cannot afford TVs, radio and smart phones to access weather information.
- Unreliable internet limit access to climate information through social media

**Preferred** channels of communication of climate information were radio for those who can afford, mobile megaphone announcements for those without radios. The youth preferred phone alerts and social media. There were gender differences in the preferred time for disseminating climate information. Men preferred morning hours before they leave home because evening hours were for watching football. Women preferred evening hours when they are at home. The best day for disseminating information was a Sunday when majority of the people are at home.

#### 4.5. Use of Climate Information

The use of weather information was basic. Those who get said they used it for putting some stones on the roofs of their houses such that wind does not blow them off and to switch off electronic appliances to avoid being damaged by lightening. Others said that they relocate movable property away from flood prone areas, construction flood barriers to protect their houses using sand and stone bags.

The major barrier to use of climate information is lack of awareness of what to do. Women reported being discriminated against by not allowing them to participate workshops where climate information is disseminated.

The discussions revealed that weather information was not being adequately used to mitigate the effects of floods, drought, heatwaves or strong winds. This is one of the areas to the project will address in terms of providing guidance information to the communities on how to mitigate the impacts of the extreme weather events.

#### 4.6. Gender in Decision Making

Generally, men and women were involved in decision making at household and community levels. At community level, the Head man and his committee comprises 6 men and 4 women. There were women who were leaders in the community.

However, the extent of involvement differs based on the different types of decisions to be made. For example, women complained that they were not consulted on what to do when disasters like floods occur but instead, they are asked to contribute towards repairs of damaged roads.

The major barrier to women's participation in decision making was culture whereby society is male dominated. Majority of women lack confidence and their rights are denied by their husband. Men limit their wives in participating in community meetings where decisions are made. Women also lack money to compete for elective decision-making positions.

#### 4.7. Access and Control of Resources

Men and women are free to own resources like land by law. Women can acquire land through purchase, inheritance or co-ownership with the husband. It depends on the financial capacity of the woman. However, in the rural areas, women's ownership of land is limited. Some cultures do



not sell land to women, they can acquire it through their husbands. Allocation of public land is biased towards men because they are perceived to be physically strong to cultivate the land.

Decisions regarding land are made largely by men. Sometimes it is a joint decision between the husband and wife with regard to the use of land. In the family, it is the boys who make decisions regarding use of land inherited from their fathers as illustrated below.

“After the death of our father, decision regarding the use of land is made by the eldest brother in consultation with younger brothers.” Women focus group.

Access to capital is challenge for women because they lack the required documents and collateral security. Some financial institutions require husbands to guarantee their wives for a loan. This forces women to resort to expensive sources of finance like microfinance institutions and informal sources such as “osusu”.

Limited access to land and capital constrains women’s ability to respond to climate related disasters. This is exacerbated by lack of climate information. Gender empowerment through provision of information will be critical in this project.

#### 4.8. Gender Considerations in the Project Design Proposed by the People

The gender considerations proposed by the people consulted are outlined below.

- **Gender equality:** At least 50% of the participants in the project activities should be women at all levels. The justification is (i) to ensure gender balance and (ii) women are the most affected by climate change disasters.
- **Capacity building** through training and awareness creation with regard to access and use of climate information. The justification is that the majority of people are not aware of the importance of climate information and how they can use it to mitigate disasters. Children should be educated on climate change so that they are guided on how to avert future disasters.
- **Climate Information** should be simplified for everybody to understand and tailored to the needs of women, men, and children. The justification is that the weather information is not understood and used by the majority of the people. It is not tailored to the specific weather information needs of the different groups. Research on the climate information requirements of the different groups should be conducted at the beginning of the project.
- **Youth involvement:** The youth have been volunteering to disseminate climate and environment information to vulnerable populations. They move door to door delivering the message in a form understood by the community. Some of them use mobile megaphones for food-making announcements. The project should train these youth to disseminate information in slums and rural areas with limited access to the media. The justification is that it will increase coverage/access to climate information among the vulnerable population. These youth live within the same communities and might continue after the expiry of the project.



- **School curriculum:** Climate information should be incorporated into the school curriculum. The justification is to create awareness among learners about climate change and to mobilize them to advocate for action against climate change.
- **Weather stations:** Modern weather stations should be installed to ensure the information is accurate and reliable. The justification is that some of the weather stations are old and may not be capturing accurate data.

**Affirmative action:** The Meteorology Agency is dominated by men. Ensure gender balance by training more girls in climate courses. Recruit more girls to carry out climate information extension work.

## 5. GENDER MAINSTREAMING, AND CLIMATE INFORMATION SERVICES

Using the above gender baseline as the point of departure, sectoral issues in relation to gender mainstreaming for climate information services have been identified for the programme design and planning.

### 5.1. Mainstream Gender within Climate Information Services

Sierra Leone is uniquely vulnerable to aggregate shocks from both economic and environmental stressors due to the inherent geographic, economic and socio-political features. Given the lacuna in data, impacts of climate-related risks, hazards and natural disasters in the backdrop of limited climate information services, cannot be empirically quantified but can be postulated to not generate uniformly distributed impacts within a population. The impacts and exposure compound with current prevalence of hardship, gender inequality and lack of access to social safety networks to disproportionately affect the poorer and more vulnerable demographics –determined by the needs, opportunities and risks facing men and women.

Gender-responsive climate information services will play a unique and positive role in increasing adaptability and resilience of communities towards climate-related risks and hazards, bolstering national meteorological and hydrological services (NMHS) and climate data collection, analysis and interpretation; and strengthening early-warning services.

At the outset, mainstreaming gender in climate information services will involve the consideration of the following factors in activity design: division of labour (activity/place); visibility of labour (formal/informal sector); poverty levels; human development factors including nutrition pattern, literacy levels, health, recourse to legal protection (inheritance/land rights); access to information; supply of information; access to finance and influence over decision-making processes. The project will analyse and address the impacts of gender inequalities in the implementation of relevant sub activities. This will inform the design of gender-responsive Early Warning Systems (EWS) organisational and decision-making processes and differential access and control of resources will be assessed for the identification of appropriate communication channels for women, youth and the elderly in the development of localised communications.

The Programme will minimise the risk of increasing gender-based violence (GBV) through adopting a gender-sensitive and responsive approach to EWS. Based on awareness and understanding of the specific ways in which gender relates to EWS and the differential impacts of the EWS on gender groups, the project will ensure that disaster preparedness, response and contingency planning proactively consider gender and respond to the specific needs, concerns and capabilities of different gender groups. For the four key elements of EWS this implies:

- Risk Knowledge: risk assessments will include questions on what gender-related factors make specific groups of women, men, girls and boys at greater risk during different types of crises.
- Monitoring and Warning Service: the project will assess which specific groups of women/men/boys/girls have access to which types of observational information and how each group can be leveraged for this information to help monitor for early warning signs of impending crises.
- Dissemination and Communication: the project will assess gender and age differences related to communication of warnings and develop a strategy that takes these into account.
- Response Capability: The project will consider women and children as potential change agents and not just as vulnerable groups. Planning will take this factor into account and also ask women at the community level what factors need to be addressed to ensure their priority

needs are also taken care of during different types of crisis and in the post-crisis recovery period.

Gender mainstreaming will focus on addressing the gender inequalities with regard to access to climate information and decision making at various levels of hydromet and disaster risk response services. **Access to climate information:** Inclusive access to climate information will be achieved through addressing barriers such as media, language, lack of awareness, inappropriate timing among others as elaborated in section 3. The interventions will include (a) Awareness creation on climate information; (b) translating climate information into local dialects/languages; (c) Using a variety of communication channels/ media to disseminate climate information including nontraditional media like social media, small text messages (sms), community climate activists and champions and peer groups leaders; (d) improving the messaging of climate information to include forecast of likely impacts and response measures; (e) using gender sensitive IEC materials; (f) establishing community climate information centres; and (g) Issuing climate information bulletin for learning institutions/ schools.

**Decision making:** Inclusive decision making with regard to hydromet and disaster risk response will be attained through addressing the barriers such as limited capacity, stereotypes and prejudices against women, discriminatory policies, laws and customs, and education. The interventions will include (i) capacity building of women and girls in hydromet and DRR services including training, mentorship and apprenticeship programs in climate information system; (b) Awareness creation and empowerment of women; (c) Mandatory requirement of women holding one of the key management/ leadership positions at all levels of project management (d) Mandatory requirement of equal gender representation in project meeting, workshops and activities; (e) Gender disaggregated reporting; and (f) gender sensitive scheduling of meeting and trainings.

## 5.2. Climate services products towards end users in climate-vulnerable sectors

In order to address differential exposure patterns, climate service products, such as impact-based forecasting (analysing and disseminating implications of the forecast and specific uses of the forecast information) and nowcasting (short range weather forecasting, particularly from ground based remote sensing systems, radars, wind profilers) etc., have to be geared towards end users, particularly those with low access in vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, fishing, pearl farming.

In the project design phase, consultations held in each Programme country provided insight into end user-relevant climate information services.

From the stakeholder consultations, the common needs of different customers and end-users of hydrometeorological services were identified as: (i) twenty four hour warnings of rainfall intensity (ii) sector-specific tailored products, based on a better understanding of the needs of end-users (ii) better and more location-specific timely weather forecasts of different hydrometeorological parameters and air-quality, for shorter (“nowcasting”) and longer (more than 7-10 days) periods (iii) seasonal and annual climate outlooks (iv) more real-time hydrometeorological and environmental data, including radar data (v) better and more location-specific analyses on climate variability and extremes (vi) local-scale studies on impacts of climate change (averages, extremes, variability) for different socioeconomic sectors in different time frames (vii) improved awareness of hydrometeorological applications and services (viii) better dialogue with the NMHSs (ix) public-private partnerships and (x) an integrated decision and information system to forecast severe hydrometeorological and environmental events, and to provide advance warnings to commercial, municipal and government organizations.

At the start of Programme implementation, a deep dive into these identified community contexts in collaboration with key stakeholders will be conducted, which will improve understanding of the current gender stakeholders and the roles that they perform. This study will help in designing gender responsive climate information products and early warning services for greater end-to-end value and effectiveness functions, in tandem with gender-responsive mapping of users and stakeholders. These processes, in the context of Sierra Leone, have to specifically target women because they are often excluded from decision-making spheres, and lack access to information and communication channels due to cultural traditions leading to lack of investment in gender-relevant climate content development at the local level.

### 5.3. Utilise Community Information Channels and Local Knowledge

The creation of user-friendly and gender-responsive climate service products can be done through sourcing local knowledge, and traditional know-how to inform these outputs. Despite the vulnerability of Sierra Leone to disaster and climate change variability, men and women of in the communities have been successfully using knowledge of their surrounding environments to mitigate impacts and risks for generations. Through a variety of traditional practices and unique coping mechanisms maintained through informal education across generations, communities in Sierra Leone have managed climate and disaster loss burdens. These methods include both community-based practices: traditional systems of exchange/warning, management of natural resources, weather pattern interpretation and information dissemination, and intra-household practices: food preservation, housing construction, etc.

Conducting mapping exercises, informed by participant observation and consultative approach, will be key to understanding how local information and warning systems work; identifying community engagement and decision-making groups; and, investing in gender-relevant or women's groups. These exercises will assist in empowering women in their roles as key actors in climate-vulnerable sectors; encourage active participation and involve them as information producers; and draw out valuable inputs for the design of climate information products. By introducing new technologies into traditional networks and means of communication, climate information providers such as field workers from met services, may be able to extend the reach of their climate information services and help more vulnerable communities to adapt to environmental changes.

### 5.4. Create Opportunities for Women to Overcome Gendered Barriers

Section 3 presents different statistics related to poverty and hardship, labour and education, and health and social indicators to demonstrate the gendered realities of Sierra Leone under the purview of this project. To further the analyses, it will be important to consider the intra-household dynamics between men and women pertaining to culture- and faith-based socioeconomic practices

Gender based violence (GBV) takes various forms including sexual, physical, psychological, economic, and structural violence and harmful traditions like female genital mutilation/cutting and widowhood rites. Unequal power relations between men and women, with men having control over women's and girls' lives fuel GBV. According to the Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey (2019), 61% of women aged 15-49 experienced physical violence since age 15 and 7% experienced sexual violence. 83% of women aged 15-49 had been circumcised. 30% of ever-married women who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence had sustained injuries. The drivers of GBV include economic hardships that create strains on families increasing the risk of GBV.

With the increasing frequency and intensity of climate related hazards and risks, GBV can be expected to witness an upward trend, reiterating the importance of resilience mechanisms through climate information services.

### 5.5. Key Performance Indicators

It is t important to establish high level key performance indicators that will guide the overall monitoring and evaluation of the proposed strategies to ensure gender inclusiveness during implementation. These include among others the following:

1. Gender disaggregated data/reports.
2. Percentage of managerial and leadership positions held by women.
3. Percentage of women accessing and using climate information.
4. Number of girls trained in climate related courses.
5. Gender sensitive messaging and communication materials

## 6. CONCLUSION

This Gender Assessment has identified and illustrated both explicit and implicit gender and socioeconomic issues that could be addressed through the project results.

The findings from the Assessment also form the basis for the Gender Action Plan which specifies this proposal's desired results, corresponding actions, indicators, timelines, roles and responsibilities and cost implications, through the results framework.

This assessment is based on gender analysis of literature and data collected through a desk-review of secondary literature. It will form a basis for a medium dive into gender aspects relevant for the Programme at the start of the implementation period. The proposed in-country deep dive study on gender and community stakeholders will flesh out the indicative suggestions made by this gender assessment and will contextualise the results areas for greater gender impact and results. The Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the project will be refined on the basis of the study, paying specific attention to gender differences and gaps in coping mechanisms, resources and information availability to design appropriate indicators that will monitor the gender-responsiveness of Programme implementation.

As gender equality gains priority in the GCF's, and the Bank group's portfolios, this Programme partakes in the international conversation on gender mainstreaming and gender responsive planning in climate change adaptation efforts, particularly through strengthened climate information services.

If implemented effectively, this project has the potential to become a good practice gender-mainstreaming guide for future interventions in the other coastal states in west africa.