

Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Support to Sierra Leone 2013/14 – 2016/17

Final Report
February 2020



The Commonwealth

EVALUATION SERIES 113

Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Support to Sierra Leone 2013/14–2016/17

Final Report
February 2020



The Commonwealth

Evaluator:
Katherine Marshall Kissoon, Monitoring, Evaluation and
Learning Adviser

Internal evaluation conducted by:
Strategy, Portfolio and Partnerships Division
Commonwealth Secretariat

© Commonwealth Secretariat 2020

All rights reserved. This publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or otherwise provided it is used only for educational purposes and is not for resale, and provided full acknowledgement is given to the Commonwealth Secretariat as the original publisher.

Views and opinions expressed in this publication are the responsibility of the author and should in no way be attributed to the institutions to which they are affiliated or to the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Wherever possible, the Commonwealth Secretariat uses paper sourced from responsible forests or from sources that minimise a destructive impact on the environment.

Published by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Acknowledgements

This evaluation was conducted by an evaluation team within the Evaluation Section of the Strategy, Portfolio, Partnership and Digital Division (SPPD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The team was led by Katherine Marshall Kisson and supported by Purvi Kanzaria. Evelyn Pedersen, Head of Evaluations, provided oversight and direction. The Evaluation Section is not involved in the delivery of programmes.

The evaluation team would like to thank all the institutions and persons who gave of their time, experience and expertise to support this evaluation. In particular, the evaluation benefited from the support of government officials, consultants, civil society and donor representatives, who consented to interviews during the country visit or by Skype or telephone. Many thanks also to Secretariat colleagues, who provided valuable insights and access to the information that informed the evaluation and supported the validation of the draft report. The evaluation team also acknowledges the kind support of colleagues in SPPD in relation to providing comments and supporting the completion of this work.

Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Acronyms	vii
Executive summary	xi
1. Introduction and context	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Evaluation objectives and methodology	2
1.3 Country context	5
1.4 Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan	8
1.5 The Secretariat's delivery context during the strategic period	10
1.6 The Secretariat's portfolio of support to Sierra Leone	11
2. Findings	18
2.1 Democracy	18
2.2 Public Institutions	25
2.3 Social Development	37
2.4 Youth	41
2.5 Economic Development	46
2.6 Small and Vulnerable States	53
3. Conclusions	54
3.1 Summary of key findings	54
3.2 Organisational lessons	55
3.3 Strategic recommendations	56
Annex 1: Terms of Reference	57
Annex 2: Key Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Tools	61
Annex 3: Sierra Leone's Participation at Ministerial Meetings and Conferences	63
Annex 4: List of Documents Consulted	64
Annex 5: Internal Stakeholder List	66
Annex 6: List of Institutions Consulted	67

Annex 7: Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Results Framework – Sierra Leone	68
Annex 8: Sierra Leone Country Indicators	73

Acronyms

AACACA	Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa
ACA	Anti-Corruption Agencies
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
AG	Accountant General
CAACC	Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre
CABOS	Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CEF	Country Evaluation Framework
CEN	Commonwealth Election Network
CFMM	Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meetings
CFAMM	Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting
CFNHRI	Commonwealth Forum for National Human Rights Institutions
CFTC	Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CHW	Community Health Worker
CMAG	Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group
CMJA	Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association
COG	Commonwealth Observer Group
COMSEC	Commonwealth Fund – Assessed Contribution
CS-DRMS	Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System
CSSO	Commonwealth Small States Office
CYC	Commonwealth Youth Council
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	UK Department for International Development

ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ERM	Enterprise Risk Management
EU	European Union
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
HDI	Human Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HRC	Human Rights Council
IAD	Internal Audit Directorate
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDSR	Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response
IMC	Independent Media Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
M&ER	Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOPED	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOYA	Ministry of Youth Affairs
NCPC	National Council of Paramount Chiefs
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NES	National Export Strategy
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDD	Project Design Document
PHE	Public Health England
RBM	Results-Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDP	Sport for Development and Peace
SLHRC	Sierra Leone Human Rights Commission
SLIEPA	Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency

SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPDD	Strategy, Portfolio, Partnership and Digital Division
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TSA	Treasury Single Account
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USA	United States of America
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
YDI	Youth Development Index

Executive summary

This report presents the findings of an evaluation conducted during November 2018 to March 2019 to assess the Commonwealth Secretariat's support to Sierra Leone. The evaluation focused on the strategic plan period of 2013/14–2016/17 but also reflected on the Secretariat's engagement with Sierra Leone prior to 2013, and on developments post-2017, as these may reflect on, and contextualise, the findings of the evaluation.

The Secretariat's country evaluations have two overarching objectives. The first is to act as an accountability mechanism to the Board of Governors, the Government of Sierra Leone and the broader Commonwealth on the performance of the Secretariat. The second is to derive lessons to improve planning, programming and results in member countries. The evaluation approach was predominantly qualitative and assessed performance guided by the evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

The evaluator conducted a robust desk review of all pertinent programme records, sectoral strategies and assessments, development partner reports and trends in development data. In addition, a one-week field mission to Sierra Leone in December 2018 enabled face-to-face interviews with Secretariat programme counterparts and beneficiary institutions as well as development partners. Outside of the field mission, interviews were also conducted with Secretariat staff, as well as with other stakeholders who were not available in-country. The Sierra Leone High Commission in London was briefed on the evaluation at its commencement and its finalisation.

The evaluation found that the national context in Sierra Leone during the review period had significantly shaped the planning, delivery and performance of the Secretariat's engagements. The strategic period 2013/14–2016/17 enveloped the catastrophic Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic in Sierra Leone. A number of other shocks further stymied the Government's development agenda, notable the mudslide in Freetown in 2017 and export price fluctuations

during 2016. A constitutional reform process in 2016 and national elections in 2018, preparations for which commenced in 2017, further shaped the context. On the Secretariat's side, an organisational restructuring led to the disbanding of a number of units, while the Secretariat's income through the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation fund declined dramatically after 2013/14.

In this context, the evaluation found that good quality outputs were delivered in the areas of anti-corruption, rule of law, public governance, local government reform, sport for development, trade competitiveness and health. However, the potential benefits of outputs delivered pre-EVD did not mature into real results in support of these sectors. A number of outputs delivered after the crisis have been well received but, given the recent change in administration (in 2018), it is too early to be certain on their long-term outcomes.

The evaluation found good practices particularly in the support to Sierra Leone's development of its Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Framework, with this work given prominence within the policy agenda of the Ministry of Finance. However, more generally, the evaluation did not find strong evidence for the sustainability of outputs. While projects were aligned with the Secretariat's Strategic Plan as well as the Government's national development strategy at that time, their design was more aligned with the expressed needs of the beneficiary institutions, communicated through formal requests for support to the Secretariat. The evaluation further did not find evidence that these requests, or the Secretariat's responses, consistently took sufficient account of the broader policy environment, the plans and actions of other development partners and the capacity of the institution.

The evaluation highlighted the importance of adaptive planning and risk management in maintaining relevance and effectiveness in countries. The evaluation also noted the need for institutional connections to undergird inter-personal relations in capacity development interventions and in the sustainability of outcomes.

Given its lack of a permanent country presence, the Secretariat needs to make greater effort to ensure that its interventions and project plans are connected into, if not integrated in, national coordination frameworks. To this end, the evaluation recommends the development of country programming frameworks that will allow for a more co-ordinated and cohesive approach to results-based programming in member countries. Country co-ordination frameworks are adaptive planning tools that can draw on programme plans while being updated annually in light of the changing country context, the Secretariat's delivery resources and reassessments of risks and assumption.

The evaluation process also demonstrated the value of knowledge management mechanisms at the Secretariat to enable better evidencing of project evaluations and the temporal coherence of country engagements. In this regard, the evaluation recommends improving project closure procedures and sustainability planning, including through providing for the sharing of follow-up contact information with counterparts.

The Secretariat is encouraged to utilise its global, regional and national network to communicate a better understanding of the Commonwealth's values and its Strategic Plan among stakeholders and beneficiaries.

1. Introduction and context

1.1 Introduction

This evaluation report presents the findings of an evaluation conducted during November 2018 to March 2019 to assess the Commonwealth Secretariat's (hereafter referred to as 'the Secretariat') support to Sierra Leone. The focus of the evaluation is the Strategic Plan period of 2013/14–2016/17. The evaluation also reflects on the Secretariat's engagement with Sierra Leone prior to 2013 as this bears on the context for interventions during the review period and because a number of interventions had overlapped from the previous strategic period. In addition, the report notes developments post-2017, as these also serve to provide the context for findings, particularly with respect to the emergence and sustainability of outcomes.

This is the ninth in a series of country evaluations conducted by the Secretariat and the fourth undertaken in the 2017/18–2021/22 Strategic Plan period.¹ It is the second formal evaluation of the Secretariat's support to Sierra Leone.²

Country evaluations are a core component of the Secretariat's monitoring, evaluation and learning strategy. They respond to member countries' need for evidence-based reporting on how countries are benefiting from the programmes and actions of the Secretariat. These evaluations not only address this accountability requirement but also harvest lessons on programme performance to inform planning and decision-making on the Secretariat's portfolio. Country evaluations supplement programme monitoring information by gathering evidence on results and deriving lessons that inform the planning and effectiveness of delivery in similar contexts. Country evaluations also directly assess the relevance of the Secretariat's strategies and programmes

to addressing the needs of Commonwealth member countries.

The Secretariat's Evaluation Plan provides for four country evaluations annually, thereby sampling sixteen member countries over the strategic period, and enabling the portfolio of completed evaluations to be representative of the membership of the Commonwealth. This basket of evaluation findings generated will supplement those from programme evaluations, and enrich organisational learning, informing the next stage of strategic planning and portfolio development.

Report structure

The evaluation is presented in three chapters. This first chapter describes the study objectives, methodology and limitations, the Commonwealth Strategic Plan and the context for its implementation at the Secretariat and in country. It also includes the Secretariat's portfolio of support and project actions in Sierra Leone. The second chapter presents and discusses the evaluation findings against each of the six programme pillars in the Secretariat's Strategic Plan. Each programme sub-section opens with a contextual overview of the Secretariat's previous engagements and other relevant developments at the country level. The sections then proceed with a description of interventions delivered, followed by their assessment against the evaluation criteria. The assessment of effectiveness is summarised in tabular form, framed by the Impact Pathway for the programme. Where there were no direct interventions during or contiguous to the strategic period, only an overview of the programme and Sierra Leone's status is presented. Each programme discussion concludes with a summary of the findings, lessons learnt and recommendations. The third chapter concludes the evaluation report by summarising the lessons and recommendations across the programmes and highlighting their strategic and operational implications for the Secretariat and the Government of Sierra Leone, as appropriate.

1 Other country evaluations undertaken under the current Strategic Plan are of Grenada (2018), Namibia (2018), Papua New Guinea (2019) and Guyana (2019 forthcoming).

2 A previous evaluation in 2007 assessed the implementation of a 1999–2005 Commonwealth Action Plan to support the country's post-conflict recovery.

1.2 Evaluation objectives and methodology

Evaluation objectives

The evaluation purpose, objectives and scope are described in a standard Country Evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR).³ This is then contextualised during the inception stage. The TOR sets out two overarching objectives for the country evaluation of the Secretariat's support to Sierra Leone. First, it aims to provide an accountability mechanism to the Board of Governors, the Government of Sierra Leone and the broader Commonwealth on the performance of the Secretariat. Second, it aims to derive lessons that can be used to improve planning, programming and results for member countries.

In defining the performance to be assessed, the evaluation used the evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Secretariat's support to Sierra Leone (see Box 1). The evaluation did not assess impact, given the relatively short time that has elapsed since the implementation of actions during the 2013/14–2016/17 strategic period and the expectation that higher-level results will require a longer period to mature.

In accordance with the TOR, the study completed the following tasks.

- Reviewed the extent to which the Secretariat's support was relevant to the stated and in-context priorities of the target institutions and Government of Sierra Leone, and consistent with intermediate outcomes of the Strategic Plan;
- Gathered evidence and assessed the results realised and the extent of, or potential for, sustainability of those results;
- Assessed the member country's contribution to the Secretariat's funds as well as the benefits realised against the expenditure outlaid, and discussed the value for money issues highlighted;
- Reviewed the efficacy of the delivery model of interventions in the member country, including communications, project management, stakeholder and partnership engagement and coordination in country;
- Identified issues and lessons learnt and made recommendations on the overall Secretariat programming.

Evaluation framework

Country evaluations are guided by a Country Evaluation Framework (CEF), which forms an annex to the TOR. The CEF describes the general and technical evaluation questions to be addressed at the contextual and programme levels. The questions were informed by the OECD-DAC criteria.

Box 1. OECD-DAC evaluation assessment criteria

Relevance is concerned with assessing whether the programme is in line with local needs and priorities. It refers to the overall goal and purpose of a programme.

Effectiveness measures the extent to which the programme achieves its purpose, or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of the outputs.

Efficiency measures the outputs in relation to the inputs. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether most efficient process has been used. This makes reference to the timeliness of response and value for money.

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether an activity or an impact is likely to continue after support has ceased.

Impact looks at the wider effects of the programme – social, economic, technical, environmental – on individuals, gender, age groups, communities and institutions.

³ See Annex 1.

The expected results of the Secretariat's support to Sierra Leone were drawn from the Strategic Results Framework (SRF) of the Strategic Plan. The SRF undergirds the six programme pillars of the Strategic Plan and includes outcomes statements and indicators.

Methodology

The evaluation approach was primarily qualitative and drew mainly on interviews, primary and secondary documentation and references to inform its findings. The methodology was contained in three stages: i) data collection; ii) analysis and drafting; and iii) validation and finalisation.

Data collection

Steps in the data collection process were as follows:

- A **desk review** of project documentation and country references, including available national strategies, policies and programme reports, was conducted. Country references were sourced online as well as through interviewees. The Secretariat's Programme Management Information System was a source for project design documents (PDDs), with their monitoring plans and results reports. Other project documentation, including back-to-office reports, research outputs and technical assistance project reports, were sourced from the respective programme teams. Publicly accessible online country databases were a source for country statistics. Annex 4 presents a list of the documentation reviewed.
- **Focus group discussions and interviews** were held with project teams within the Secretariat to better understand the programme theory and delivery strategies, to qualify and contextualise the results documented and to seek responses to specific questions that had emerged from the document review. A total of 16 internal programme staff were so engaged. See list in Annex 5.
- A **one-week field mission for in-person interviews** was conducted to Freetown, Sierra Leone during 3–7 December 2018. This mission allowed for direct engagements with key stakeholders, including representatives of beneficiary institutions and groups, development partners and other counterparts who had engaged with the interventions. A

total of 27 meetings were held in country during this mission.

- **Skype and telephone interviews** were conducted with respondents who could not be reached during the field visit. Five such interviews were completed.

Interviews were the primary method for data collection. They allowed the evaluator to triangulate the desk review findings, verify reported results and generate additional data related to the evaluation questions. Annex 6 contains a list of the institutions engaged with for the evaluations. A total of 61 persons were engaged with through interviews, 10 of whom were female. The gender imbalance largely reflected the imbalance found at the counterpart institutions and more generally across management and leadership positions in Sierra Leone.

Analysis and drafting

The analytical approach and tools applied to the evaluation are described below.

An interview summary tool provided a framework to qualitatively analyse the information drawn from interviews.

Programme performance framework: Progress in each programmatic area was assessed against the relevant Impact Pathway.⁴ The analysis sought to qualify the 'success' achieved based on the robustness of the evidence gathered, thus progress against the Impact Pathway informed the Theory of Change (TOC) within the project design. This expected results pathway was informed by the project design information, including the PDD and any relevant TOR regarding the intervention. Information evidenced on progress was then reflected against the expected path. Triangulation of findings from various data sources and documentations was used as the basis for evidencing this progress.

Progress rating: A red-amber-green rating is applied for the effectiveness evaluation criteria and aligned within the programme performance framework. The rating used a four-point scale from highly

4 Impact Pathways are defined as the sequences of cause and expected effect relationships that link Secretariat practice areas to intended results. The Secretariat's five Impact Pathways are: Consensus Building, Thought Leadership and Advocacy; Policy and Legislative Development; Institutional and Capacity Development; Networking, Knowledge Generation and Sharing; and Performance Management.

satisfactory to unsatisfactory. Annex 2 provides a description.

Validation and finalisation

The steps in this final stage of the methodology were:

- Provision of a **validation period** for project teams and key country counterparts to fact-check and comment on the findings in the draft report;
- Completion of a **peer review** of the draft report by an independent peer reviewer engaged at the inception of the evaluation;
- Submission of the **final report** to senior management, who will provide a management response;
- Publication and dissemination of the **final report**.

Limitations

Weak monitoring and evaluation framework and outcomes

- Prior to the Strategic Plan 2017/18, the Secretariat had not developed a robust SRF that included specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) indicators and targeting. Further, at project level, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity was limited, characterised by inadequate planning and sparse collection of performance data and evidence of results. As a consequence, the monitoring information contained in project documentation was very limited, with results reports often lacking high quality of evidence. Further, the quality and completeness of data across projects was uneven, dependant on the capacity of individuals in project teams. This further limited the evaluation's capacity to consistently respond to the evaluation questions and criteria across all the programmes.
- The Secretariat's SRF is focused on global goals for the Commonwealth membership and not on targeted benefits at the level of individual countries. Country programming is therefore fragmented across the various programmes. The country intervention is based within the broad programmes accessible to the entire Commonwealth

membership. While these programme designs, described in the PDDs, may identify target countries, they do not consistently include all countries that will benefit. Specific country interventions may be based on historical links to those countries and/or formal submissions for support. The country intervention portfolio (as described in Section 1.6) is therefore not established at the beginning of the Strategic Plan but emerges over the strategic period. This created a challenge when seeking to assess performance and results for a member country since the expected or targeted outcomes for that country are not defined or assembled at the beginning of the period.

- The Technical Assistance Unit of the Secretariat was responsible for the project management of all technical assistance projects during the period 2013/14–2016/17. The Unit was disbanded in 2017 as part of the organisational restructuring on-going at that time. Other relevant programme units disbanded included the Governance and Institutional Development Division. While some project records were accessible, most of the records are incomplete and the relevant persons who designed and managed the projects in Sierra Leone are no longer employed at the Secretariat.

To mitigate the impact of these limitations, the evaluation recreated the implied TOC through project information and interviews with programme staff. In this respect, the Secretariat's Impact Pathway also describes the broad expectation of performance. Nonetheless, these limiting factors affected the availability of evidence to be assessed and resulted in the evaluation's inability to assess some criteria in a number of the interventions.

Limited evaluation resources

The available human and financial evaluation resources limited the depth and scope of the field mission. Given the broad scope of the Secretariat's portfolio in country, there was limited time during the week in country to engage in depth on each area of intervention. As such, interviews were prioritised with policy-makers and those most familiar with the intervention context, emerging outcomes or impact and the Government's strategic outlook. This sometimes limited the perspectives that could be gathered as not all stakeholders (representing

the political context, operational and technical, partners and beneficiaries) could be accessed or accommodated in the available time. This approach meant that interviewees were mainly government counterparts in public institutions rather than stakeholders in the private sector or civil society. The evaluation conducted Skype and telephone interviews, thereby expanding the available timeframe, since these could be conducted from London. However, the evaluation encountered some difficulty in accessing the telephone contacts for persons in Sierra Leone since these often were mobile numbers that were not publicly listed.

Unavailability of key data sources

Given the time lapse (of as much as five years) between the commencement of the intervention and the current evaluation, a number of key personnel, both in the member country and at the Secretariat, were no longer in posts and contactable. In addition, the Government of Sierra Leone changed after the elections of March 2018 and there followed a number of new appointments into key senior positions. New appointees were largely unfamiliar with the Government's engagements with the Secretariat and in any case would have little institutional knowledge to reflect on such interventions. The evaluation sought to contact the former post holders to the extent possible.

1.3 Country context

Economic and social context⁵

Sierra Leone is a small, low-income and fragile developing country, nestled on the western coast of sub-Saharan Africa between Guinea and Liberia. The country emerged scorched from an 11-year civil conflict in 2002 and graduated from the United Nations Security Council Agenda only in 2013.

Sierra Leone's 2017 debt sustainability analysis classified it as being at moderate risk of debt distress, with total public debt climbing to 60 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017 from 35 per cent in 2014.⁶

Sierra Leone experienced a massive health epidemic with the West African Ebola Virus Disease

(EVD) outbreak in 2014. A less developed country, Sierra Leone had already ranked 183 out of 187 countries on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) in 2013. However, the country had achieved a fast growth trajectory by 2014 as a result of the significant development assistance provided and a mining sector boom enabled through idle capacity in the post-conflict period. Growth in 2013 was 20.7 per cent, but in 2014 it was projected at 11.3 per cent⁷ because of a plunge in the global iron ore price (more than 20 per cent). In the period 2014–2017, the economy grew by just 5 per cent.

The country was declared Ebola-free in March 2016 and the price of iron ore also recovered. Nonetheless, these shocks had taken their toll on an economy just beginning to find its way after the devastating civil wars. The twin exogenous shocks – the EVD epidemic and the collapse in international iron prices – had led to a contraction in the economy in 2015 by 20.6 per cent, according to the World Bank.

Sierra Leone is also prone to natural disasters, the most recent of which, a mudslide in Freetown in August 2017, claimed over 14,000 lives; this was mainly attributed to excessive rain and deforestation.

The Global Competitiveness Report 2013–2014 ranked Sierra Leone at 143 on the Global Competitive Index, out of 144 countries.⁸ There was some improvement to this ranking by 2018, when Sierra Leone had progressed to 134th out of 140 countries, but the ranking clearly highlights that the country is close to the bottom across the components assessed, including institutions, infrastructure, business efficiencies and sophistication. The Global Competitiveness Report in 2013 noted that the most problematic factors for doing business in Sierra Leone were access to financing and corruption.

The 2011 Sierra Leone Integrated Household Survey estimated that 52.9 per cent of the population was poor, compared with 66.4 per cent in 2003. Poverty has since increased: the Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019–2023 reports the overall poverty headcount

5 Statistics drawn from <https://data.worldbank.org/country/sierra-leone?> unless otherwise noted.

6 Retrieved from <https://tradingeconomics.com/sierra-leone/government-debt-to-gdp>

7 Commonwealth Trade Hot Topics, Issue 119, 2015.

8 The Report assesses the competitiveness landscape of economies, providing insight into the drivers of their productivity and prosperity.

at 57 per cent in 2018. The poverty rate remains higher in rural areas (72.2 per cent) than urban areas (18.4 per cent in Freetown). Sierra Leone's 2018 HDI ranking was 184 (out of a total of 189 countries), placing the country well towards the bottom of the low human development group.

Over half (60 per cent) of the population lives in rural areas, although, as in most modern states, this share has been declining as people seek out employment in urban centres, principally the capital, Freetown. Unemployment also increased over the strategic period, from 4.1 per cent in 2012 to peak at 4.7 per cent in 2014 before reaching 4.3 per cent in 2017. Female and urban unemployment skewed significantly higher in those categories.⁹ Only 16.8 per cent of females and 29.7 per cent of males have attained a minimum of secondary-level education, according to UNDP. Just 16.3 per cent of the labour force is classified as skilled while 74 per cent of those employed are classified as working poor.¹⁰

Life expectancy at birth in 2016 for both sexes was 53.1 (females 53.8).¹¹ The maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) in 2015 was 1,380, among the highest in the world.¹² Infant and under-five mortality are 33.5 and 110.5 per 1,000 live births.¹³

Political, human rights and the rule of law

Sierra Leone has had a multi-party democratic system since 1996 with three branches: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The current Government, under the Sierra Leone People's Party, led by President, Rtd Brig. Julius Maada Bio, came to power in April 2018. During the strategic period, the party in power was in opposition then.

In 2013, the Government commenced a three-year constitutional review process, which produced 134 recommendations, submitted by the Constitutional Review Committee to the Government in January 2017. The recommendations generally sought to enhance political participation and strengthen civil and human rights in line with international

standards. In response, the Government issued a White Paper on 10 November 2017, rejecting 102 of the 134 proposals, including all those that concerned the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles, asserting that the existing provisions were adequate (The Carter Center, 2018). Progress on debating the White Paper in Parliament was halted as the legislative body was dissolved in preparation for the March 2018 general elections.

Sierra Leone is party to seven out of the nine core human rights treaties (it is not yet a party to the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families or the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances).¹⁴

Sierra Leone's record on corruption has been a challenge, measured as it is by Transparency International at 30 on a scale of 0–100 (2015–2018), with 0 being *most corrupt*.¹⁵ In 2013, Sierra Leone ranked 119th out of 177 countries. The Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance describes a declining Overall Governance trend for the period from 2013 to 2017. However, indicators for *Participation and Human Rights* and *Safety and Rule of Law* showed a positive trend over the same period. The new Government has targeted reduction of corruption as one of its main policy focuses and is already reviewing measures to strengthen the legislative environment with regard to anti-corruption. In January 2019, the Government launched a Commission of Inquiry aimed at fighting corruption.

Gender equality

Sierra Leone has a weak record on gender equality, in part because of customary and traditional norms. Women lag significantly across most development indicators, including education and health, as well as economic opportunities and political participation and representation. In 2012, the 30% Gender Party Quota Bill was tabled in Parliament but did not pass into law. In 2017, Sierra Leone ranked 150th of 179 countries on UNDP's Gender Inequality Index, compared with 139th of 148 in 2013.¹⁶

9 Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?end=2019&locations=SL&start=1991&view=chart>

10 US\$3.10 purchasing power parity per day. Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SLE>

11 Retrieved from <https://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.cco.ki-SLE>

12 Retrieved from https://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/sle.pdf

13 Ibid.

14 Retrieved from https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/AfricaRegion/Pages/SLSummary2018_2019.aspx

15 Retrieved from <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

16 Gender Inequality Index: a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievement between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market.

The Government ratified a Domestic Violence Act in 2007. Despite this, violence against women and girls is prevalent in Sierra Leone. As many as four out of ten women in Sierra Leone experience intimate partner violence (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2018). Child marriage and female genital mutilation are also practised, with 62.3 per cent of women likely to be married before 25, compared with 20.2 per cent of males (WEF, 2018). Women have a high unmet demand for family planning, and this is particularly pronounced among girls in the 13–18 age group. These practices deprive women of self-determination, good health and access to economic opportunities.

Parliament passed the Safe Abortion Act in December 2018 but subsequently put this on hold as a result of opposition from some religious groups. Current legislation allows abortion in cases where the women's health is at risk. As noted before, Sierra Leone has the worst maternal mortality ratio in the world, and complications from unsafe abortion procedures contribute 10 per cent of these deaths.

Women are underrepresented in corporate and political leadership and the workforce in general. The number of women in Cabinet positions was 23 per cent in May 2018 (11 of 47), compared with 20.6 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa in 2017 (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2018; UNDP, 2018a). Women hold 12 per cent of seats in Parliament compared with 23 per cent average among other countries classified as low income¹⁷. As of 2018, women for the first time since 2002 held two of the 12 parliamentary seats for paramount chiefs. Sierra Leone fares better than the rest of the region for women in corporate management positions, at 16.9 per cent, compared with 15.6 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa. There is also a more noteworthy presence of women in civil society in Sierra Leone compared with in the rest of the region, at a ratio of 0.88 for Sierra Leone against 0.67 (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2018a).¹⁸

The current Government has made gender equality a key priority. In February 2019, Parliament debated and approved, with some dissenting voices, a presidential proclamation on the commission of rape against women, girls and babies in the country.¹⁹

17 Retrieved from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/31706> and <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS?locations=XM>

18 Indicators range from 0 to 1, with 1 being women's capacity to engage in civil society.

19 www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/sierra-leone-parliament-approves-state-of-public-emergency-on-rape/

Youth

The revised National Youth Policy of 2013 defines youth in Sierra Leone as being between the ages of 15 and 35, in line with the Commonwealth definition. Using this definition, the youth population in Sierra Leone was 39.4 per cent of 7 million in 2015.²⁰

The Ministry of Youth Affairs (MOYA) was established by the former President of Sierra Leone in 2013 with the approval of Parliament. Youth representation is through a National Youth Commission, established by Act in 2009, as well as the National and District Youth Councils, which are supervised by MOYA.

As is true for all aspects of Sierra Leonean society, the protracted conflict affected youth development outcomes. Children lost out on eight to nine years of schooling during that time, and this generation is now seeking employment and economic opportunities. The youth literacy rate was just 58 per cent in 2015 (male 65.9 per cent, female 48.7 per cent).²¹ Young people are under-skilled and have limited opportunities for skills development, which affects their productivity. Most young people seek employment in the informal sector or as entrepreneurs, but access to financing is a formidable barrier. Youth unemployment, at 70 per cent, is a security threat and a human rights issue.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Youth Development Index is 0.54 for Sierra Leone, placing the country 106th out of 170 assessed countries. Youth in Sierra Leone scored particularly highly on the volunteerism measure. Interviewees credited youth in Sierra Leone with having played a key role during the EVD crisis in sharing information, including on preventative measures, mobilising community action and volunteering as community health workers. Overall, Sierra Leone has strong social capital and a vibrant civil society, which bodes well for youth empowerment and participation.

National planning and programme co-ordination

Sierra Leone's Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MOPED) is mandated to formulate national development plans and lead on M&E of the implementation of these.

20 <https://sierraleone.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Demographic%20Dividend%20Fact%20Sheets.pdf>

21 Ibid.

During the strategic period being evaluated, Sierra Leone's national development effort was expressed through its third generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, titled, *The Agenda for Prosperity: Road to Middle Income Status, 2008–2013*. This set out an agenda for achieving the vision of a green, inclusive, middle-income economy by 2035. It committed to, among other goals, strengthened legal protection, governance, gender equality, accountability and transparency. The strategy describes a complex system for co-ordination and M&E, with responsibilities spread across the Office of the President, MOPED, the Ministry of Finance and government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) responsible for implementation.

The EVD outbreak led to the Agenda for Prosperity being put on hold. In its place, the Sierra Leone Recovery Plan 2015–2017 was developed, with five priority areas: Health, Education, Social Protection, Private Sector and Delivery Assurance.

The Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019–2023 focuses on *Improving People's Lives through Education, Inclusive Growth and Building a Resilient Economy*.

Co-ordination of national planning and implementation has been a challenge in Sierra Leone in the past, with a number of MDAs playing various roles in strategic management, but with very little leadership and consistency in approaches across sectors. This has also been a challenge for donors working in Sierra Leone, in co-ordinating among themselves as well as with the Government, while ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in delivery.

Development partners and international relations

In addition to the Commonwealth, Sierra Leone is a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Five main donors contribute more than 80 per cent of total development assistance to Sierra Leone: the UK, the USA, the EU and concessional financing through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The Global Fund and the

African Development Bank are also among the top 10 donors. Development aid peaked during the internationally co-ordinated response to the EVD crisis in 2015.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) staff attended a Diplomats Induction in London in 2015/16.

1.4 Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan

The Commonwealth Secretariat is the principal inter-governmental agency of the Commonwealth. The Strategic Plan 2013/14–2016/17 was developed after extensive consultation with member governments and reflected their priorities. It describes three strategic goals and six strategic outcomes to be pursued over the four years. The Strategic Plan was revised after the mid-term review in 2015 and a number of amendments were made to streamline the strategy and pave the way for more measurable results.

The three longer-term strategic goals were:

1. Strong democracy, rule of law, promotion and protection of human rights and respect for diversity;
2. Inclusive growth and sustainable development; and
3. A well-connected and networked Commonwealth.

The six strategic outcomes are as below. Each is further realised through intermediate outcomes, which reflect programmatic objectives, under which projects are designed and interventions delivered to member countries.

1. **Democracy – greater adherence to Commonwealth political values and principles**

The promotion of democracy is a core principal of the Commonwealth. The focus of this strategic outcome was to support member countries in adhering to the Commonwealth's fundamental political values in line with the agreed Charter of the Commonwealth. The democracy programme is delivered to realise four intermediate outcomes, which address the operations of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), the functioning of the Secretary General's Good Offices, the conduct of fair

and inclusive elections in member countries and the promotion of values of respect and understanding.

2. **Public Institutions – more effective, efficient and equitable public governance**

Well-performing public institutions are critical to establishing and sustaining democracy, good governance and development. In this result area, the Secretariat targeted intermediate outcomes in human rights, public governance, rule of law administration, justice delivery and judicial independence and public administration. The Public Institutions programme leverages the commonality of the foundation of Commonwealth public institutions in English common law to deliver legal and technical advisory services to member countries while also convening member countries around common challenges and advocating for change at the national and global levels.

3. **Social Development – enhancing the positive impact of social development**

The Secretariat's Social Development programme focused on strengthening national health and education policies and frameworks, mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and building capacity for social development. Global education and health goals are particularly significant to Commonwealth nations with collectively high burdens of poverty-related health diseases and inequalities in education outcomes. The Secretariat delivered technical expertise and utilised its convening power to enable countries to collectively deliberate strategies for national policy formulation and implementation and also to advance consensus positions globally.

4. **Youth – youth are more integrated and valued in political and development processes**

The Secretariat has leveraged its networks, trusted relationships and convening power, together with over 40 years' experience in youth development, to build a strong global reputation as a youth advocate. Over the course of the strategic period, the Secretariat sought to achieve two intermediate outcomes in this programme area: facilitating national and

pan-Commonwealth frameworks to advance the social, political and economic empowerment of young people; and empowering young people to lead and participate meaningfully in their own initiatives. To this end, the Secretariat delivered technical assistance for youth-relevant policies and enabling environments; utilised its convening power to bring together youth policy leaders and representatives; supported the establishment and growth of youth networks; advocated for increased political and economic spaces for young people if so requested by member countries; advocated for investing in youth ministries and programmes; and developed tools, frameworks and model policies to build capacity at the national, regional and global levels.

5. **Development (pan-Commonwealth) – more inclusive economic growth and sustainable development**

The Strategic Plan described four intermediate outcomes to be targeted within the overall Economic Development programme. These addressed advocating for and supporting member countries within the global trading system, advancing Commonwealth principles and value in international financing, facilitating effective national debt management and the sustainable management of marine and other natural resources. The Secretariat delivered to these outcomes mainly through the provision of economic, legal and technical advisory services and research advocacy, the convening of member countries around critical issues and the promotion of the Commonwealth position at the international level.

6. **Development (Small States and Vulnerable States) – strengthened resilience of small states and vulnerable states**

The majority of the Commonwealth's membership during 2013–2017 – 32 of 54 – comprised small states. Over the Strategic Plan period, the Secretariat sought to realise three intermediate outcomes for its small states: ensuring that international policies, mechanisms and rules were more responsive to their development strategies and resilience needs; enabling better participation in global decision-making

processes; and improving climate finance frameworks on behalf of small states. The Secretariat delivered its work through research and analysis; the development of policy toolkits; convening member countries for consensus-building; the formulation of Commonwealth positions in key global policy fora; and advocating for the uptake of Commonwealth ideas in strategic international decision-making bodies.

7. *Enabling Outcomes*

The Strategic Plan identified four enabling outcomes that collectively support the delivery of the programmatic pillars described above. These cover the Secretariat's convening services and global advocacy, the delivery of its technical assistance programme, partnerships, promotion of the Commonwealth profile and knowledge management.

8. *Internal Outcomes*

The Strategic Plan's Internal Outcomes aimed to ensure an efficiently run organisation that promoted the effective delivery of the enabling and intermediate outcomes. The internal outcomes were addressed by the Secretariat's corporate services in human resources, financial and non-financial services and the strategic management of its portfolio, including its planning, M&E and reporting.

Commonwealth Secretariat Impact Pathways and Delivery Strategies

Impact Pathways are defined generally as the sequences of cause and expected effect relationships that link Secretariat practice areas and delivery modalities to intended results.

Impact Pathways are developed for each of the practice areas that the Secretariat specialises in, as follows:

1. Consensus Building, Thought Leadership and Advocacy;
2. Policy and Legislative Development;
3. Institutional and Capacity Development;
4. Networking, Knowledge Generation and Sharing;
5. Performance Management.

The programmatic TOC articulates the programme team's understandings of the problem to be addressed; how change may be brought about (among beneficiaries) through selecting actions among the five practice areas above; and the assumptions and risks therein that must be monitored and managed.

The Impact Pathway and TOC concepts are therefore closely interlinked, with the former being a singular results chain focused in one practice area and the latter a more complex results relationship drawing on a different but interlocked practice areas. These two concepts are key to the Secretariat's delivery strategies and inform the monitoring, evaluation and reporting (M&ER) on its results.

Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the Strategic Plan

A ME&R framework was developed with the Strategic Plan to guide the Secretariat in assessing results and reporting on progress in achieving the agreed outcomes. The SRF was initially developed with the Plan in 2013 to elaborate the intermediate outcomes through the development of indicators. After the Mid-Term Review in 2015, a more robust SRF was developed with SMART indicators. Baselines and targets were also determined.

The Secretariat commenced six-monthly results reporting in 2016 – a corporate practice that placed a demand on performance and results information at the project and programme levels. The Secretariat reported annually to the Board of Governors on results achieved against the Strategic Plan.

1.5 The Secretariat's delivery context during the strategic period

During the strategic period, the Secretariat went through an organisational review and reform process brought on by a number of external drivers and internal changes.

Transition into the new Strategic Plan: The Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan 2013/14–2016/17 was the first to be explicitly based on a results-based management (RBM) approach. Its development and approval process was particularly protracted as the Secretariat and the Board of Governors sought to put into practice new RBM principles. The process of

consultation, development, finalisation and approval took two years, and required a year's extension of the previous Strategic Plan (University of Wolverhampton, 2017)²². Implementation was therefore delayed by four months into the first year of the strategic period, as a new template for results-based work planning and budgeting was developed and finally approved by the Board on 31 October 2013. During the Strategic Plan development consultations, it was determined that a number of on-going projects from the previous Strategic Plan were to be discontinued where the Secretariat did not have a comparative advantage.²³

Monitoring and evaluation: The RBM system introduced at the Secretariat at the beginning of the Strategic Plan period advanced over the following years. A new system for measuring and reporting on progress was instituted and supported by the Programme Management Information System. A technical team to support RBM capacity-building was established to support programmes. All projects were designed with M&E plans. However, with no additional budget allocated and limited technical capacity on teams, there was very slow and limited generation of monitoring information.²⁴

Reduction in Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation: There was a significant reduction in CFTC funding during this period, which led projects to be either put on hold or cancelled. The Strategic Plan was developed assuming a continued 'zero real growth' financial climate based on the 2012/13 budget. By 2015/16, CFTC funding had decreased by £6 million, from £31.8 million in 2012/13. The overall budget decline reflected the reduced CFTC voluntary contributions, as well as a 'zero nominal growth' for contributions from the other two funds. This financial outturn had significant implications for programming. Recruitment was halted, reducing capacity to deliver. There was also limited Secretariat commitment in longer-term engagements in member countries.

Organisational reform and restructuring: The Strategic Plan envisioned a number of fundamental changes in the way the Secretariat delivered its work, including greater use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), strategic partnerships, promotion of collaboration between member countries and referral elsewhere for requests for work that the Secretariat itself was unable to provide. There was an extensive organisational restructuring in 2013, with a new organogram revealed. Further, the leadership of the Commonwealth changed in 2016, bringing in a new vision and direction for the organisation. The new Secretary-General prioritised reform and implemented a refocus on delivery and a new senior management structure to drive performance. These changes took place within an uncertain financial environment, and combined with this to cause some slowdown in the pace of programme delivery.

Audits and evaluations: Two independent audit reports were completed by KPMG prior to the start of the Mid-Term Review in 2015. The Secretariat received ratings of substantial assurance for its strategic and business planning as well as for its project outcomes and delivery. A Mid-Term and End-Term Evaluation was also completed.

1.6 The Secretariat's portfolio of support to Sierra Leone

The SRF describes expected results across the Commonwealth membership and does not specify, at the outset of the Strategic Plan, the individual countries expected to benefit. Specific country beneficiaries may be identified during project designs but generally staff highlight the country beneficiary only after confirming the Secretariat's response to a request for support, and this only after completion of a scoping process at the inception stage of delivery. As such, the Portfolio of Support to a member country is not planned at the time of programme and project design but has to be retrospectively developed based on interventions actually implemented. The following discussion reflects this.

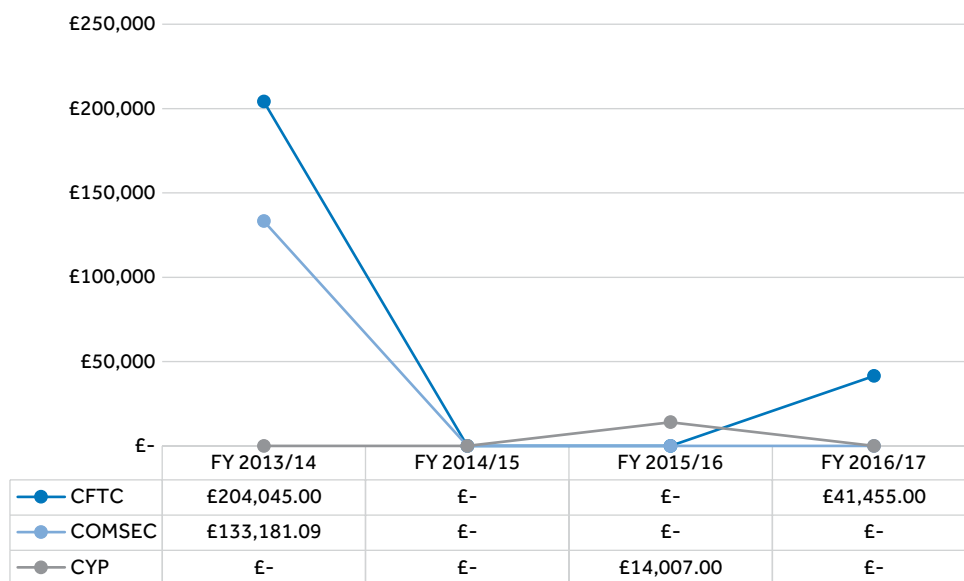
Sierra Leone is assessed for contributions to the core Commonwealth Secretariat Fund, the Commonwealth Secretariat Assessed Contribution Fund (COMSEC), on an annual basis. This assessment takes into account Sierra Leone's development status and ability to pay. The Secretariat also facilitates the member country's

22 Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2013/14 – 2016/17 Ella Haruna and Kimberly Kane, Centre for International Training and Development, University of Wolverhampton, January 2017.

23 These included projects in disaster management, science and technology, industrial development, export market development, tourism and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

24 Since 2017/18, under the current Strategic Plan, the Secretariat has programmed a dedicated M&E budget for supporting the implementation of monitoring plans.

Figure 1. Sierra Leone's financial contribution by fund



voluntary contributions to CFTC and CYP. These contributions allow the country to benefit from support funded through those pools. The level of spend available to member countries is, however, not aligned with their level of contribution but rather based on their needs in accordance with the technical co-operation agreement.

Over the course of the strategic period, Sierra Leone was unable to meet its Fund pledges with respect to one or more of the three funds (Figure 1). This resulted from its inability to meet its assessed and voluntary contributions after the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic, which put tremendous fiscal pressure on the Government. A smaller contribution was made to CYP and CFTC in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Sierra Leone's total contribution over the four financial years amounted to £392,668. Figure 1 shows the yearly financial contribution across the funds.

Figure 2 below reflects the total programme spend over the strategic period and illustrates that Sierra Leone is a net financial beneficiary of the Secretariat.²⁵

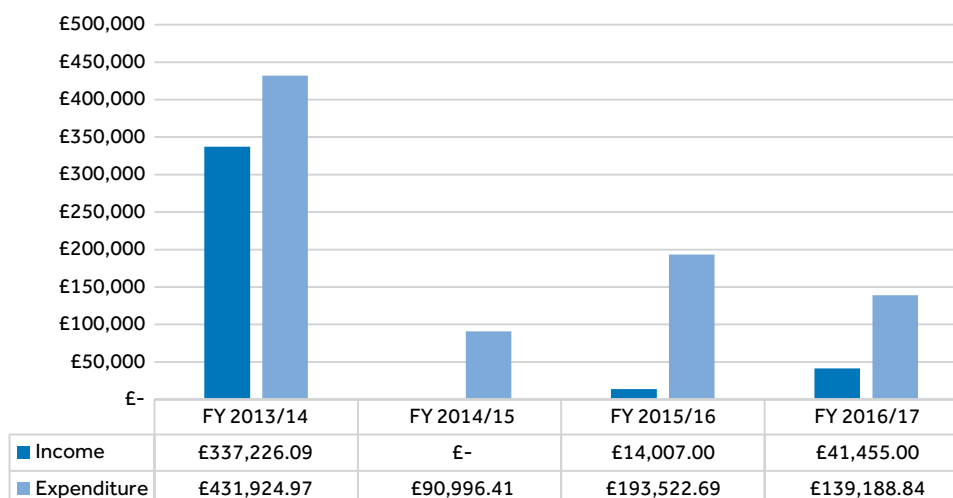
Direct programme expenditure excludes the salaries of established staff who design and

deliver project actions as well as co-ordinate and facilitate technical assistance to the country. Therefore, lack of direct spend in an area does not imply that no work was done or output delivered, since support could have been delivered by Secretariat technical staff. The expenditure total also does not include support provided to Sierra Leone through regional and pan-Commonwealth programmes, such as convening meetings and forums. This is particularly the case for COMSEC, from which such spend is generally funded. The Financial Management Information System also aggregates expenditure only where the country has been specifically identified as the destination of the spend. Where Sierra Leone has benefited from programmes delivered in other countries, such spend would be ascribed to those countries and vice versa.

Nonetheless, Figure 2 demonstrates a sharp decline in contributions and expenditure after 2013/14. As noted above, not only contributions but also programming was affected in the wake of Ebola, as there was a travel advisory in place with respect to countries in the West Africa region. Also, the Government's limited capacities were singularly focused on the health epidemic, meaning that all other non-essential projects were suspended.

The decline in expenditure also echoes the overall decline in the Secretariat's CFTC funding during the same period.

²⁵ While this expenditure data is illustrated to provide a sense of the scale of support to Sierra Leone, it is not intended to represent a full picture of the total value of the investment in the country. The expenditure data here represents the funds spent in Sierra Leone on inputs (e.g. staff travel, in-country activities, expert placements in country) rather than the value of the outputs delivered.

Figure 2. Total income and direct programme expenditure by year

Figures 2 and 3 show the total of £855,633 expended on direct programme inputs over the strategic period and across the three funds. Figure 3 highlights particularly the low engagement with COMSEC and CYP and the dominance of CFTC funding in the programme of support to Sierra Leone.

Figures 4 and 5 below provide the programmatic perspective on the expenditure data. They clearly show a significant focus of spending under *enabling outcomes*. Specifically, this outcome area includes the technical assistance and referral programme, which is responsible for the placement of long-term experts in member countries.

Figure 4 demonstrates that a large volume of the support provided to Sierra Leone was through the placement of short- and long-term technical experts funded through CFTC. It also demonstrates that no direct programme spend was recorded for work delivered under the Democracy and Small States programme pillars. However, given the manner of accounting, spending on these outcome areas could also be recorded under Enabling Outcomes if executed by CFTC experts.

Table 1 overleaf summarises the key activities and total expenditure under each pillar of the strategic plan.

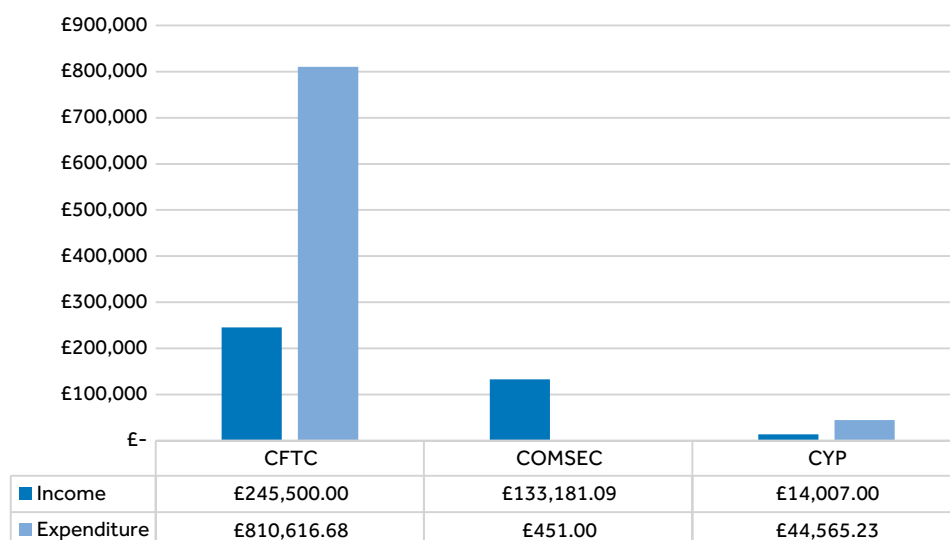
Figure 3. Total income and direct programme expenditure by fund, 2013/13–2016/17

Figure 4. Total expenditure by outcome

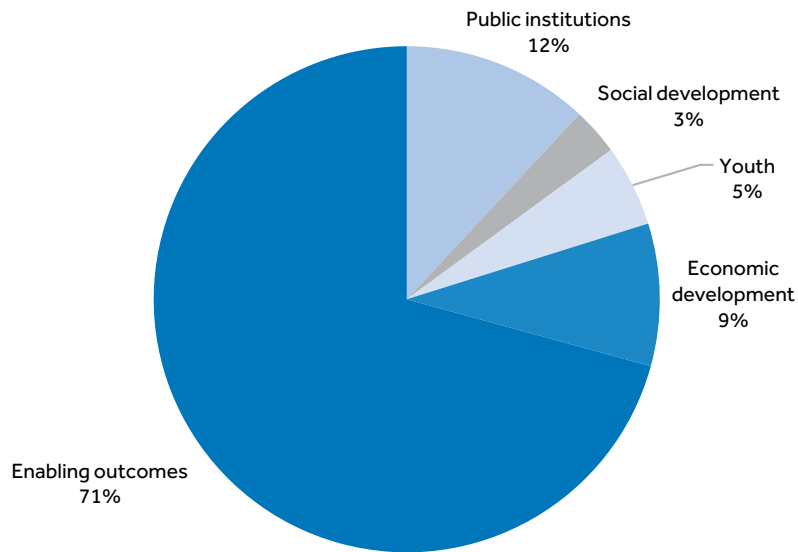


Figure 5. Total expenditure by outcome

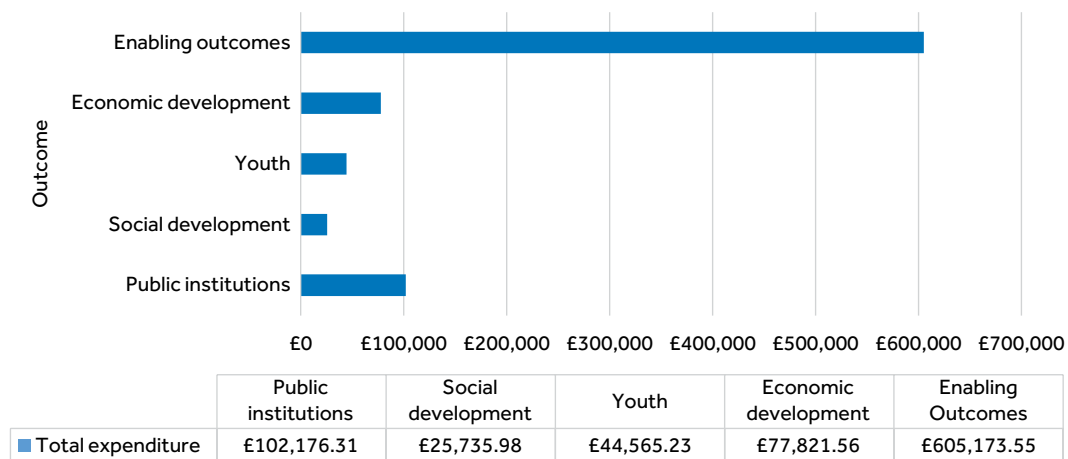


Table 1. Commonwealth Secretariat support to Sierra Leone under the Strategic Plan 2013/14–2016/17

Total	£855,472.63
Enabling Outcomes	£605,173.55 (71%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of Long-term Technical assistance managed through the Technical Assistance Programme. Descriptions are within the respective programmes below. 	
Democracy	Total non-staff expenditure: Nil
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sierra Leone participated in the Junior Elections Professional Training in New Delhi in October 2013. • Sierra Leone attended Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting convened in 2013 and 2015. • Sierra Leone participated in all Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meetings during the strategic period. • Meetings of the Commonwealth Electoral Network allow for peer exchange, networking and capacity-building among election management bodies of the Commonwealth. 	

Public Institutions	Total non-staff expenditure: £102,176.31 (12%)
<i>Human Rights</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Sierra Leone mission was a tenant of the Geneva Small States Office until 2016.</i> • <i>The Secretariat worked with the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions to provide for peer exchange and learning among member countries.</i> 	
<i>Rule of Law</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Technical assistance was provided to the judiciary for the placement of two high court judges in 2012–2014 and a consultant to the registrar in 2011–2014.</i> • <i>Ten national judges received training on special judicial areas at the Judicial Institute at Warwick University during September 2013 and January 2014.</i> • <i>A Legal Knowledge Management Portal reached completion in October 2017 for government officials to access laws of Commonwealth countries and exchange information on technical assistance projects.</i> • <i>The advancement of the Latimer House principles has been enriched through close collaboration and sharing of expertise with the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association, the Latimer House Working Group, the Commonwealth Legal Forum, the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law and the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers.</i> • <i>Commonwealth Law Ministers and Senior Officials Meetings were convened annually.</i> 	
<i>Anti-Corruption</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Technical assistance was provided through placement of a special prosecutor and consultant to the Anti-Corruption Commission during March 2011–March 2014.</i> • <i>A manual on the substantive law (the Digest of Jurisprudence) was developed as a reference tool for prosecutors and investigators at the Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission.</i> • <i>Establishment/operation of the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre in Botswana enabled networking and capacity development of African anti-corruption agencies (ACAs).</i> • <i>The Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Network provided a regional platform for convening, learning and networking.</i> • <i>The Secretariat organised an Annual Forum for Heads of ACAs and Integrity Commissions in Africa and the Caribbean, in partnership with regional ACA associations established by the Secretariat, to peer review reports/strategies and share transferable experiences.</i> • <i>Biennial regional conferences were held for the 18 African ACAs.</i> • <i>Sierra Leone's study tour to Tanzania facilitated the development and institutionalisation of the Service Charters by its ACA.</i> 	
<i>Public Governance – Local Government Reform</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Technical assistance was provided through expert placement during May 2009–March 2015 to strengthen local government and build capacity of local chiefdoms and district level.</i> • <i>Public Administration</i> • <i>Technical support was provided to Sierra Leone on Strengthening Internal Audit.</i> • <i>With Secretariat support, Sierra Leone's Ministry of Finance developed a new Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Framework, which is awaiting Cabinet approval.</i> • <i>Public Procurement and Internal Audit Inaugural Regional Networks were established in Africa in 2017.</i> 	

Social Development	Total non-staff expenditure: £25,735.98 (3%)
<i>Health</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In collaboration with Public Health England (PHE) assisted Sierra Leone to draft a National Public Health Strategy.</i> • <i>PHE assigned a public health lab technician to Sierra Leone for six weeks to continue the improvement of laboratory systems.</i> • <i>Technical assistance was provided through expert placement (July 2015–July 2017) to assist the Ministry of Health and Sanitation to strengthen the public health system for effective prevention, control and management of disease outbreaks, in the wake of the EVD outbreak.</i> • <i>Annual convening of the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meetings occurred.</i> 	
<i>Education</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Convening of the Biennial Commonwealth Education Ministers meetings occurred.</i> 	
<i>Improved Capacity Building for Social Development</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A one-year extension of the expert placement in local government was put in place.</i> 	
Youth	Total non-staff expenditure: £44,565.23 (5%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regional Youth Ministers Meetings convened by the Secretariat in Africa and the Caribbean included national youth leaders, and reached consensus on youth policy priorities including youth employment, post-2015 development framework, national youth policy design and implementation and professionalisation of youth work.</i> • <i>Sierra Leone National Youth Councils were established and support was given to the establishment of District Youth Councils.</i> • <i>Capacity for evidence-based youth policy-making was expanded in Africa and the Caribbean through regional workshops in partnership with UNDP, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, UN-Habitat and the Caribbean Community, resulting in prioritisation of youth policies and requests for assistance to review national youth policies.</i> • <i>Sierra Leone has access to participation in youth networks:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network;</i> ◦ <i>Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs;</i> ◦ <i>Commonwealth Youth Health Network;</i> ◦ <i>Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network;</i> ◦ <i>Commonwealth Youth Sports for Development and Peace Committee.</i> • <i>The Commonwealth Youth Development Index was published.</i> • <i>An Action Plan for the Sierra Leone National Sports for Development and Peace Strategy was developed and support was given to its implementation.</i> • <i>Sierra Leone was a member of the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport in 2016–2018.</i> • <i>The Sierra Leone Sports and Peace Delegation was supported on a one-week partnership development mission to London in 2016</i> • <i>Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings were convened, with the last held in Uganda in 2017.</i> 	

Economic Development	Total non-staff expenditure: £77,821.56 (9%)
<i>Trade</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support was provided to improve national trade competitiveness in global markets through development of a gender-sensitive action plan for Sierra Leone's packaging industry. • Thirty member states, including Sierra Leone, were represented at regional capacity-building events that prepared members to engage effectively in the WTO's 2017 conference in Argentina (Pacific – 8 countries; Africa – 14 countries; Caribbean – 8 countries). 	
<i>International Financial System</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Convening of Commonwealth Finance Ministers and Central Governors Meetings occurred. • The COMSEC Publication 'Innovative Finance for Development' was published and shared at the 2014 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting/Senior Officials Meeting in Washington DC, attended by Sierra Leone. 	
<i>Debt Management</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Secretariat Advisory Mission made recommendations on local Bond Market Development. • Sierra Leone is a users of the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording Management System, version 2.1 • The new e-learning course on external debt was developed and piloted across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific and subsequently scaled up in 2016/17. 	
Small States	Total non-staff expenditure: Nil
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening of the Global Biennial Conference on Small States occurred. 	

2. Findings

2.1 Democracy

Greater Adherence to Commonwealth Political Values and Principles

Context

The Secretariat participated in negotiations for the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement, which brought an official end to the decade-long conflict in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone emerged from the conflict in 2002. As a member of the Commonwealth since 1961, Sierra Leone reached out for support in making the transition to democratic governance. The Secretariat responded with a six-year support programme from 1999. The Secretariat also established a Task Force on Sierra Leone to ensure a comprehensive and focused package of assistance to the country in the immediate post-war environment.

As part of the Commonwealth Action Plan, the Secretariat assigned a long-term expert to the National Electoral Commission (NEC) for three years from 2001. The Commonwealth expert provided technical advisory services, resulting in the passage of the new Electoral Law Act of 2002. This legislation was applied in the first democratic elections in 2002 and has been applied in all subsequent elections.

Presidential and parliamentary elections are held in Sierra Leone at least every five years, under universal adult suffrage and proportional representation. The president forms a government and appoints a cabinet. The legislature has a total of 124 members, comprising 112 directly elected – 8 in each of 14 constituencies – and 12 paramount chiefs.

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth conducted one official visit to Sierra Leone in 2002. Sierra Leonean Heads of Governments have attended all of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) in recent years.¹

The Secretariat observed the 1996 and 2002 general elections, the 2004 local government elections and the 2007 and 2012 presidential

and parliamentary elections. It also deployed an Expert Team to Sierra Leone to observe the July 2008 local government elections. Each of the Commonwealth Observer Groups (COGs) concluded, of the elections of 2002, 2007 and 2012, respectively, that the organisation and conduct of the elections had met international standards and benchmarks for free and transparent multi-party elections.

The Secretariat invested technical support to strengthen the capacity of the NEC during 2001–2004. NEC functions include conduct of election and referenda; registration of voters; demarcation of constituencies with parliamentary approval; and making regulations for the efficient performance of its functions. Capacity-building interventions were targeted particularly at the Legal Department. A number of other development partners, including UNDP and the EU, have also supported the institutional strengthening of the NEC. This enhanced capacity was tested during the elections of 7 March 2018, when the sitting government challenged the election result, leading to a run-off presidential election on 31 March of the same year.

Given its electoral timetable, Sierra Leone did not have scheduled national elections during the strategic period 2013–2017. The Secretariat therefore delivered no project actions during this period with respect to election observation, hence the absence of expenditure under the Democracy programme. However, given that elections in 2012 and 2018 bracketed the strategic period, interventions implemented are reviewed below – as their preparations, follow-up and monitoring had implications for programming during the review period.

During the strategic period, support under the Democracy programme was led by the Political Division of the Secretariat working with the Secretary-General's office and in collaboration with other programme teams as required.

In 2018, the Democracy programme delivered targeted technical assistance to the NEC, provided political mediation through the Secretary-General's Good Offices facilities conducted election observation.

¹ See Annex 3 for a list of consensus meetings and Sierra Leone's participation.

Total non-staff expenditure: Nil

- Sierra Leone participated in the Junior Elections Professional Training in New Delhi in October 2013.
- Sierra Leone attended the CHOGMs convened in 2013 and 2015.
- Sierra Leone participated in all Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meetings during the strategic period.
- Meetings of the Commonwealth Electoral Network allow for peer exchange, networking and capacity-building among election management bodies of the Commonwealth.

2.1.1 Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group

Commonwealth member countries agree to abide by Commonwealth fundamental political values, as enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter. Leaders reiterated this commitment during the CHOGM. CMAG acts as the custodian of the Commonwealth's fundamental political values. This high-level ministerial mechanism plays a constructive role in supporting member countries that are facing challenges in their efforts to uphold their commitments to these political values.

Sierra Leone previously benefited from CMAG support in the post-conflict period, paving the way for the transition to democratic rule. However, the country has not been involved in the agenda of CMAG since that time.

2.1.2 Good Offices of the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General's Good Offices aim to prevent and resolve political tensions and disputes through the provision of institutional support for the development of policy options and programmed activities. The Good Offices approach is often exercised through intensive engagements under the auspices of the Secretary-General, and seeks to resolve immediate or on-going disputes or crises before they deteriorate into serious and persistent violations of Commonwealth values. The Good Offices function is delivered directly by the Secretary-General or by special envoys and high/level special advisers.

During the strategic plan period, the Good Offices function was not activated for Sierra Leone. However, in the wake of the 2018 national elections, the COG, led by former President of Ghana John Dramani Mahama, adopted a Good Offices function during the post-election conflict to facilitate dialogue between the main parties and support the

NEC in taking forward its mandate. This intervention was credited with encouraging acceptance of the results and a peaceful transition to a new administration in April 2018.

2.1.3 Election Management

The Secretariat's election observation programme is designed to meet the intermediate objective that 'Member states conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections.' In this regard, the Strategic Plan aimed to enhance the Secretariat's attention to the pre-electoral environment and encourage the implementation of COG recommendations. This latter is an important indicator of member countries' political will and commitment to democratic reforms. The Secretariat further supports the strengthening of electoral processes through technical and capacity-building support to election management bodies, including through facilitation of peer-to-peer learning through the Commonwealth Election Network (CEN) and the training of junior election professionals.

The Secretariat did not deliver any actions under this programme during the strategic period. However, a number of actions before and after, consistent with the Sierra Leonean electoral cycle, point to the country's benefits of the Secretariat's overall support.

The 2012 COG, led by Mr Olara Otunnu, the then President of the Uganda People's Congress, observed elections in November 2012 to elect the president, Parliament and local councils. The COG Report identified 17 recommendations covering the participation of women and youth, the legal framework, campaign financing and the media and voting (see Table 2).

The Sierra Leone 2018 general and presidential run-off elections fell outside the evaluation period but are relevant in demonstrating the maturity

of democratic processes in the country. The Secretariat deployed a COG to observe the 7 March general elections and the 31 March presidential election run-off. In the run-up to and during the national elections in 2018, the Secretariat also deployed technical assistance to the NEC to:

- Develop user-friendly Electoral Complaints and Disputes Resolution Guidelines and Procedures for the NEC and a programme for the establishment of an Electoral Complaints and Disputes Tribunal embedded in the Election Management Body;
- Support social media engagement during the general elections of 2018.

A follow-up COG mission was conducted in October 2018 to mobilise support for the establishment of multi-stakeholder mechanisms and an action plan to address the recommendations of all the election observation reports.

The NEC participated in the October 2018 Commonwealth Election Professionals Initiative Africa region training event, held in Abuja, Nigeria, alongside representatives from 17 other regional Commonwealth election management bodies. Participants shared good practice, as well as challenges and solutions developed in mitigation, in relation to topical issues such as strategic planning, financing elections, ICT, election management bodies and new media, and gender equity.

Relevance

Secretariat support to Sierra Leone during the period was relevant but limited to the provision of convening services, specifically through CHOGMs and Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meetings (CFAMMs). As a low-income country affected by various national crises during the strategic period, Sierra Leone had limited financial and human resource capacity to participate in Commonwealth events but attended all the annual CFAMMs and biennial CHOGMs held during the period (Annex 3).

The COG Report recommendations of 2012 (Table 2) set out priorities for strengthening election management. These actions would have been relevant to Secretariat support but were not addressed in the strategic period. The engagements on elections in 2012 and 2018 and technical assistance to the NEC were aligned with the country's needs.

Effectiveness

The strategic objective of the Democracy programme was to safeguard adherence to the political values and principles of democracy. Sierra Leone's attendance at CHOGMs and CFAMMs over the period affirmed its commitment to these. These convening meetings provide opportunities for countries to engage as equals, developing bilateral relations and strengthening alliances and partnerships. There was international consensus that Sierra Leone had grown as a democracy (The Carter Center, 2018; UNDP, 2018, EU, 2018). The Secretariat's engagement with Sierra Leone since 2002 has contributed to this growth, which was validated in the March 2018 elections process. Voter turnout in the 2018 elections was 84 per cent and the country successfully navigated political hurdles to transition peacefully to a new administration.

However, as Table 2 shows, the most relevant indicator of the Government's commitment to strengthened electoral processes – the share of COG recommendations implemented – presents a mixed picture of progress in strengthening the institutional capacities for electoral management over the years of the Strategic Plan. As shown below, the evaluation review identified progress in the implementation of five of seventeen recommendations. No information was found to assess progress on another five.

From the standpoint of institutional development, it was evident that the NEC had grown in capacity and credibility over the years. The NEC currently has a well constituted Legal Department – the main target for technical assistance delivered in segments during 2001–2018 – though there is still a reliance on external lawyers in the defence of actions and election petitions where the NEC is sued as a party. While the Secretariat contributed to laying the foundations for this capacity growth in the early 2000s, its engagement was more limited after that time to election observation and some short-term technical support in 2018.

The more recent technical support contributed further to strengthening the legislative framework around the resolution of election disputes. The current legislation provides for the adjudication of electoral disputes through the existing Electoral Offence Courts with dedicated judges appointed by the chief justice. This approach contrasts with the 2012 method, whereby local-level courts were

Table 2. Recommendations of the 2012 Commonwealth Observer Group Report

Recommendation	Status of Implementation
1. Introduce legislation that allows for quotas to be set for women and youth, to increase their numbers in Parliament and local councils.	Not implemented. Recommendation repeated in COG Report 2018.
2. Review the Public Electoral Act 2012 and identify areas where amendments may be necessary to further strengthen the electoral process.	NEC recommended revisions in 2016 but not accepted by Parliament. Recommendation repeated in COG Report 2018.
3. To alleviate concerns regarding the secrecy of the vote, remove the serial number from the ballot paper. However, for accounting purposes, the serial number should remain on the counterfoil.	No information.
4. Amendments should be made to provide for the continuous registration, updating and maintenance of the Voters' Register.	Review of Sierra Leone's multiple civil and voter registration mechanisms and laws, culminating in a comprehensive civil registration policy paper published in 2014. UNDP project implemented to support development and implementation 2015–2017. NEC used first voter registration list in 2018.
5. The NEC should put in place a consultative process with political parties and other stakeholders, including women, youth and disability groups, to arrive at a reasonable nomination fee before the next electoral cycle.	Not implemented. Recommendation repeated in COG Report 2018.
6. Strengthen existing provisions in the Public Electoral Act 2012 that limit the use of state resources for campaigning.	Not implemented.
7. Establish a regime that regulates campaign expenditure.	Not implemented.
8. Allow for greater participation of new and emerging parties by establishing a system of state funding for political parties.	Not implemented.
9. The Independent Media Commission (IMC) should be empowered to enforce strict adherence to the established Media Code of Practice for all media.	A Media Code of Practice, which includes provisions on fairness in political reporting, is the self-regulating instrument enforced by the IMC, which can impose fines, suspensions, and closures. Unclear whether the IMC is now sufficiently empowered in this regard.
10. Freedom of Information Bill should be passed into legislation.	Done. The Right to Access Information Law was passed in 2013.
11. Concerted measures should be taken to ensure journalists are adequately trained in political and election coverage.	No information found by the evaluation to assess this recommendation.
12. A comprehensive and wide-reaching voter education programme should be developed and implemented well in advance of polling day.	Not implemented. NEC limited in its financial capacity to develop and run voter education programmes in a timely manner.

(Continued)

Table 2. Recommendations of the 2012 Commonwealth Observer Group Report (Continued)

Recommendation	Status of Implementation
13. The NEC, in consultation with relevant representative bodies, should provide more suitable infrastructure at polling stations to provide for the aged and persons with disability.	In 2015, the NEC adopted a disability policy for ensuring the right to election participation for persons with disability. Tactile ballot folders provided to facilitate blind voters for the 2018 elections. Accessibility at polling stations remains an issue.
14. The NEC should assess the impact of vehicle restrictions on vulnerable groups for future elections.	Not implemented. The Vehicular Plan has remained in place despite opposition also from political parties.
15. As originally proposed by the NEC, poll closure should be brought forward to allow counting to start early.	No information found by the evaluation to assess this recommendation.
16. The NEC needs to clarify arrangements regarding party agents accompanying the vehicles transporting the election material after the count at the polling stations.	No information found by the evaluation to assess this recommendation.
17. Review the length of time between completion of vote tabulation and the announcement of results.	No information found by the evaluation to assess this recommendation.

established and used, with inconsistent results. The High Court will also hear petitions filed within 21 days of final results being announced. An Appeals Court is also available to petitioners. Proposed legislation will allow for the establishment of a Dispute Resolution Tribunal providing for more timely resolutions.

Given the limitations on print media circulation in Sierra Leone, the NEC was able to leverage the Secretariat's short-term technical support in March 2018 and more effectively utilised social media to quickly share information and dispel misinformation during the election period; communicate with NEC staff quickly; and maintain an open engagement with political parties and stakeholders. Social media presence and information-sharing allowed the NEC to safeguard its credibility at a crucial time in the elections and transition process, increasing the public's confidence in the outcome of the elections.

The weight of attribution for the NEC's growth and success lies with the professionalism of its leadership, particularly as the NEC still has budgetary dependency on the administration. Other development partners were also more consistently engaged than the Secretariat over the period. For example, UNDP provided three long-term experts to the NEC during 2016–2018, who

worked alongside it and the Secretariat's experts in meeting capacity-strengthening requirements in the areas of legal, gender and inclusion.

Efficiency

The Secretariat does not outlay additional costs for ensuring Sierra Leone's attendance as countries fund their participation in the CHOGMs and CFAMMs. Sierra Leone's participation therefore improves the cost-effectiveness of the Secretariat's provision of these services.

The placement of short-term technical assistance to the NEC in March 2018 should have occurred earlier to allow the experts to better contribute to preparatory measures for the elections. A lengthening of the time beyond April 2018 would also have provided more space for capacity-building, allowing the legislative expert to engage more constructively with counterparts in the Legal Department. However, given that the request for support was received in August 2017, a turnaround deployment time of six months is evidence of the Secretariat's agility in deploying technical assistance.

Sustainability

Sierra Leone has made significant progress in advancing democratic governance, and a number of enabling factors bode well for sustainability. With

the change in administration in the wake of the 2018 elections, the Government has continued to commit to these political principles. Sierra Leone also has an active civil society that plays a key role in supporting the electoral process, through voter education, peace and conflict prevention, voter registration, election campaign and election day monitoring.

In the new Strategic Plan 2017/18, the Secretariat has committed to an enhanced election observation programme under Revised Guidelines approved by Heads of Government. These Revised Guidelines provide for enhanced electoral process monitoring and follow-up. The Secretariat has already enacted them for Sierra Leone, conducting a follow-up post-election mission in October 2018 to support a multi-sectoral forum to address implementation of agreed recommendations of election observation reports (not only that of the COG). Notwithstanding, at the time of reporting, no follow-up taskforce or recommended committees had yet been set up. The NEC made specific references to the recommendations of observer missions in its own work planning but can address only those within its remit.

Delays in the review and implementation of recommended reforms to the Public Elections Act 2012 also threaten sustainability, as the identified gaps and weaknesses in the legislation remain. There is a continuing need to strengthen the

regulatory framework for the conduct of elections to implement a more rule-based system thereby safeguarding the integrity of the process (The Carter Center, 2018).

The NEC continues to lobby the Government for the legal and financial space to execute its mandate effectively. Without these changes, there continues to be a risk to the sustainability of progress at the NEC and to the electoral process in Sierra Leone.

Table 3 represents progress in the area of Democracy along the Secretariat's Impact Pathway.

Gender mainstreaming

The evaluation did not find any evidence that gender considerations were emphasised in the Secretariat's technical engagements and outputs. The Drafted Guidelines and Regulations for the establishment of an Electoral Complaints and Disputes Resolution Tribunal does contain reference to the need for gender balance in the Bar Association and the Tribunal.

The Secretariat launched a checklist for gender and elections in July 2017 with both African and Caribbean Commonwealth stakeholders. A Gender and Election Handbook was produced for Commonwealth Africa in 2018. However, it is unclear how these publications informed the COGs or technical support in 2018. While the COG 2018

Table 3. Democracy programme performance

	Output	Short-term Outcome 1	Short-term Outcome 2	Intermediate Outcome
Impact Pathway	<p><i>Pre-election observation mission conducted</i></p> <p><i>Election observation mission conducted</i></p> <p><i>Follow-up of election recommendations</i></p> <p><i>Capacity-building support to the NEC</i></p> <p><i>Technical assistance to strengthen the legislative framework for electoral dispute resolution</i></p>	<p><i>National engagement and consultation on election observation report</i></p> <p><i>National action plan drawn on implementation on election recommendations</i></p> <p><i>Public confidence in the credibility and competence of the NEC</i></p>	<p><i>National action plan on implementation of election recommendations implemented</i></p> <p><i>Legislative framework for elections strengthened</i></p>	<p><i>Strengthened electoral processes</i></p>
Progress rating				

mission had gender parity in its composition, it is unclear whether these resources have informed the TOR of COGs. In addition, no references were made to these publications in the NEC/UNDP gender assessment of the 2018 elections.

Nonetheless, the NEC has been making efforts to provide for a more inclusive electoral process with UNDP support. A Disability and Gender Unit was established in 2015, headed by a chief of gender and disability, who reports to the director of human resources, gender and disability. In addition, in 2015, the NEC published its Disability Policy.

2.1.4 Advancing Values of Respect and Understanding

The Secretariat targeted the advancing of values of respect and understanding during the strategic period through a school-based project implemented in partnership with the British Council. In the new Strategic Plan of 2017/18, the Secretariat is furthering this objective through the Countering Violent Extremism programme. Sierra Leone has not been a participating country in either of these interventions.

Conclusions

Conclusion: The evaluation found that the Secretariat's project actions in support of democracy were relevant, efficient and effective but limited in scope during the period, weakening the emergence of outcomes. While there is evidence of strong political will and institutional capacity, there are outstanding risks to sustainability.

The Secretariat played a key role in supporting the growth of democratic principles and practices in Sierra Leone during the period 1996–2004. The Secretariat contributed to the development of the legislative framework and the NEC's legal capacity. By 2018, the increased institutional capabilities of the NEC in Sierra Leone were well demonstrated in its management of the electoral process and particularly the presidential run-off elections, as well as in the public's acceptance of the results and the peaceful transition to a new administration.

The Secretariat's support to Sierra Leone during the strategic period was limited to consensus engagements as well as the engagement of NEC commissioners in observing other member countries' elections in the region.

Nonetheless, the NEC continues to function under a limiting legislative and regulatory remit, which poses a risk to the on-going maturing of democracy in the country. Key issues of concern to the electoral process raised in the COG Report of 2012 remain outstanding. More sustainable management of reforms around the electoral cycle remains outstanding.

Challenges

- Secretariat follow-up on election observation reports was non-existent during the period.
- Technical engagements outside of the election observation missions were deficient in the area of gender mainstreaming. While the Secretariat delivered relevant publications at the Commonwealth level, the operational linkages to delivery in country were not made.
- Sierra Leone had limited capacity to engage in and benefit from Commonwealth convening events during the period, owing in part to the impact of EVD, the country's fiscal constraints and also limited technical capacities to domesticate the recommendations and commitments reached.
- Notwithstanding the activation of the Revised Guidelines on Observance of Elections through the post-election mission in 2018, the Secretariat's capacity to engage countries on moving forward with an electoral reform agenda is limited owing to its lack of country presence and weak institutional co-ordination with stakeholders and development partners on the ground.

Lessons learnt

- Continual engagement with countries and beneficiary institutions is critical to ensure that interventions are well timed, contextually relevant and scoped, that developing capacities are embedded and that long-term goals remain in focus.
- In addition, policy reforms, including in electoral processes, require long-term attention and commitment.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All technical support should be delivered within a clearly mapped policy framework to ensure technical reports and recommendations address pertinent policy issues. They should also be accompanied by advocacy and partnership measures to ensure they are favourably reflected on by decision-makers. • The Secretariat's responsiveness to requests for support should take into account the timeliness of the provision in order to ensure value for money.
Recommendation(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future COG TORs should include a summary of the status of implementation of past COG recommendations in order to ensure the engagement builds on previous efforts. • The programme team should coordinate electoral assistance with other donors, particularly with respect to gender and legislative reforms, and should establish institutional partners on monitoring and supporting the Government's electoral reform agenda. • All Secretariat policy and legislative development work should be scoped to address gender concerns in its analysis and recommendations.

2.2 Public Institutions

More Effective, Efficient and Equitable Public Administration

Context

The 11-year civil conflict significantly eroded the capacities of public institutions, as most professionals migrated during the period. Since the return to democratic rule in 2002, the country has been making concerted efforts to rebuild its institutions. However, the civil service continues to be characterised by under-skilled staff, weak performance management, donor-funded advisers in senior positions and an unfair pay structure.

In the post-conflict decade, the Government and development partners prioritised anti-corruption, decentralisation and local government, security and public sector reform.

Sierra Leone has ratified key international treaties with respect to human rights, the treatment of women, persons with disabilities and migrants and with regard to adapting international standards against corruption.

Sierra Leone's Anti-Corruption Act was passed in 2008, strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and granting it full prosecutorial powers.

Under the 2009–2012 Strategic Plan, the Secretariat provided long-term technical assistance to Sierra in institutional strengthening as follows:

- In 2009, the Secretariat provided an adviser to assist the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) to lead the decentralisation process.
- In 2010, a Secretariat adviser was seconded to Sierra Leone as the chief of staff of the Office of the President, helping take forward the country's first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 'Agenda for Change'.
- In 2011, a long-term expert was placed as a special prosecutor to the ACC.
- In 2011, a consultant to the registrar of judicial affairs was placed to support the operational effectiveness of the main law courts.
- In 2012, a Commonwealth adviser assisted with the development and tabling before Cabinet of a revised Public Procurement Act.
- In 2012, two judges were placed at the High Court.

Sierra Leone established its Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva in 2011 in the Commonwealth Small States Office, focusing initially on trade matters before expanding its advocacy to human rights issues.

A number of the recommendations from a 2010 conference organised by the Secretariat and the Public Sector Reform Unit to strengthen political-administrative relations in the Government of Sierra Leone have been carried forward, in particular with regard to the establishment of a performance-based management system.

	Total non-staff expenditure: £102,176.31 (12%)
Human Rights	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sierra Leone mission was a tenant of the Geneva Small States Office until 2016. • The Secretariat worked with the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions to provide for peer exchange and learning among member countries.
Rule of Law	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance was provided to the judiciary for the placement of two high court judges in 2012–2014 and a consultant to the registrar in 2011–2014. • Ten national judges received training on special judicial areas at the Judicial Institute at Warwick University during September 2013 and January 2014. • A Legal Knowledge Management Portal reached completion in October 2017 for government officials to access laws of Commonwealth countries and exchange information on technical assistance projects. • The advancement of the Latimer House principles has been enriched through close collaboration and sharing of expertise with the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association, the Latimer House Working Group, the Commonwealth Legal Forum, the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law and the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers. • Commonwealth Law Ministers and Senior Officials Meetings were convened annually.
Anti-Corruption	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance was provided through placement of a special prosecutor and consultant to the ACC during March 2011–March 2014. • A manual on the substantive law (the Digest of Jurisprudence) was developed as a reference tool for prosecutors and investigators at the Sierra Leone ACC. • Establishment/operation of the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre in Botswana enabled networking and capacity development of African anti-corruption agencies (ACAs). • The Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Network provided a regional platform for convening, learning and networking. • The Secretariat organised an Annual Forum for Heads of ACAs and Integrity Commissions in Africa and the Caribbean, in partnership with regional ACA associations established by the Secretariat, to peer review reports/strategies and share transferable experiences. • Biennial regional conferences were held for the 18 African ACAs. • Sierra Leone's study tour to Tanzania facilitated the development and institutionalisation of the Service Charters by its ACA.
Public Governance – Local Government Reform	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance was provided through expert placement during May 2009–March 2015 to strengthen local government and build capacity of local chiefdoms and district level.
Public Administration	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support was provided to Sierra Leone on Strengthening Internal Audit. • With Secretariat support, Sierra Leone's Ministry of Finance developed a new Enterprise Risk Management Policy and Framework, which is awaiting Cabinet approval. • Public Procurement and Internal Audit Inaugural Regional Networks were established in Africa in 2017.

2.2.1 Human Rights

The evaluation of the Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2013/14–2016/17 endorsed the Human Rights programme as one of the Secretariat's comparative advantages. The programme targets the establishment and strengthening of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and provides technical support to member states in their engagement with the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). Further, the Secretariat supports peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing and learning through its support to the Commonwealth Forum for National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI), which regularly convenes countries to advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Sierra Leone Human Rights Commission (SLHRC) attained Paris Principles Grade A status in 2011 and was reaccredited with Grade A in 2016.² SLHRC was established by law in 2004 and is a member of the CFNHRI. Since its establishment, it has expanded in scope to address specific human rights issues, including resettlement, decent work and pay, right to form unions and human resources for health.

In 2012, following Sierra Leone's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a new national Commission for Persons with Disabilities, previously a part of SLHRC, was established.

During the strategic period, the SLHRC did not benefit from direct technical interventions from the Secretariat but participated in meetings of the CFNHRI and the CFNHRI Working Group on Business and Human Rights. Most recently in March 2018, its Permanent Representative to Geneva moderated and co-panelled a Commonwealth side event on Disability Inclusion in the Workplace, in the margins of the 37th session of the HRC. The leadership of the SLHRC acknowledges the benefits of access to peer networks and knowledge, including through online resources supported by the Secretariat.

The UPR is a unique mechanism of the HRC and consists of a process through which the human rights records of member states of the UN are peer reviewed and assessed. Sierra Leone participated in two cycles of reporting in 2011 and 2016, aligned with the accreditation of its human rights commission.

The Secretariat provided technical support to the Sierra Leone Commonwealth Small States Office resident mission between 2013 and 2015. From 2015 onwards, Sierra Leone's Permanent Mission continued to benefit from support provided on a rotational basis by the Human Rights Unit in London. Gradually, Sierra Leone strengthened its voice in the HRC and other mechanisms and was (and remains) highly regarded as one of the strongest advocates in Geneva on the human rights issues and challenges facing small states. In 2016, the Permanent Mission moved from the Commonwealth Small States Office to its own premises, with enhanced capacity to represent the country in Geneva. Since then the Human Rights programme has been using the experiences of Sierra Leone as a case study with other small states.

2.2.2 Rule of Law

Robust rule of law, accountable governance, efficient and responsive public institutions and fluent access to justice are at the heart of a well-functioning democracy and good governance. The Secretariat's Rule of Law programme seeks to promote these values in member countries through improving the knowledge and capacity of practitioners, development of legal tools and guidelines, provision of technical assistance and advisory services to member countries and convening of legal practitioners and policy leaders to advocate around critical rule of law issues in the Commonwealth.

During the strategic period, the Secretariat's support comprised Sierra Leone's access to convening meetings and short-term technical training of 10 judges through a study visit to the University of Warwick. Three technical placements in the judiciary drew to a close at the threshold of the new Strategic Plan or extended early into the new plan period.

The Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association (CMJA) is a Commonwealth-accredited organisation that brings together judicial officers from across the Commonwealth

2 At the time of the delivery planning for 2018/19, just over half of Commonwealth member countries had NHRIs. Of those that do have NHRIs, a number are not yet fully compliant with the Paris Principles, the international gold standard of reference for this kind of institution. The Paris Principles establish benchmarks for independence and effectiveness of NHRIs.

annually to share knowledge and discuss legal and judicial developments, all in support of Commonwealth fundamental values, effective administration of justice, independence of the judiciary and separation of powers. The advancement of the Latimer House principles has been enriched through close collaboration and sharing of expertise within the CMJA, the Latimer House Working Group, the Commonwealth Legal Forum, the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law and the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers. The Secretariat also convenes a Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting annually to discuss issues pertinent to the rule of law in the Commonwealth.

A Legal Knowledge Management Portal was launched at the Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in October 2017. This tool was intended to provide government officials with access to the laws of Commonwealth countries and the facility to exchange information on technical assistance projects. Justice sector interviewees during the evaluation were aware of the tool but had not yet accessed and used it.

Relevance

Sierra Leone's 2009 Agenda for Prosperity notes that 'Sierra Leone's desire to promote inclusive green growth, scale up human development whilst ensuring prudent management of mineral revenues will not be achieved if there is not equivalent emphasis placed on enhancing access to justice and promoting the Rule of Law.'

Rule of Law programme interventions in Sierra Leone therefore aligned well within the Government's national development plans.

In 2010, the judiciary in Sierra Leone comprised just 14 judges to serve the population of 5 million. The workload and growing backlog of cases was a tremendous cause for concern, and the Government requested technical support to address the operational effectiveness of the judiciary and reduce the backlog of cases. This request came from the chief justice after careful consideration of the needs through the long-term Secretariat expert placed as a consultant to the registrar of the judiciary.

The Secretariat's expert worked closely with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and, through the Joint Sector Coordination Office, with other donors, ensuring the outputs aligned with the Government's strategic plans for the sector as well as with other development assistance.

These placements were therefore highly relevant and timely given the state of staffing in the judiciary at that time.

Effectiveness

Table 4 sets out the implied Impact Pathway for the Rule of Law programme in Sierra Leone. The evaluation revealed satisfactory delivery of outputs and significant short-term outcomes for the judiciary. However, there was little evidence of long-term change emanating from the outputs delivered.

Table 4. Rule of Law programme performance

	Output	Short-term Outcome 1	Short-term Outcome 2	Intermediate Outcome
Impact Pathway	<p>Extended staffing of the High Court by two judges for six-months stints each</p> <p>Technical assistance to the High Court in addressing the administration of justice</p> <p>Training judges through one-week study tour</p>	<p>90% reduction in backlog of cases</p> <p>Effective case management</p> <p>Local judges with improved knowledge to discharge responsibilities effectively and expeditiously</p>	<p>Improved operational effectiveness of judiciary</p>	<p>National Institutions effectively facilitating the administration and delivery of the rule of law and justice</p>
Progress rating				

Key results realised were as follows:

- In 2016, 10 national judges received training on special judicial areas at the Judicial Institute at Warwick University. This intervention was highly appreciated by the participating judges as a unique personal experience and professional learning opportunity. The judges trained received further coaching as trainers and were able to share learning through the Judicial and Legal Training Institute. However, the training was not connected with a longer-term capacity-building plan and has not led to improved capacity in the judicial system or strengthened administration of justice.
- The placement of two High Court judges, each with at least 18-month stints, enabled the successful disposal of 37 per cent (69) of backlog criminal cases. Successful disposal of regular criminal cases and civil cases numbered 117 (49 and 68, respectively). Overall, the targeted reduction of 90 per cent was not met.
- The Secretariat's consultant to the registrar was appointed as the Master of the Courts, and completed a number of key improvements during a four-year stint from 2011 to 2014:
 - Staffing and equipping of new court infrastructure under a DFID programme;
 - Built up the judiciary's capacity on anti-corruption issues, by improving case management and court administration procedures, as well as ensuring that wider reform processes – including interventions of major development partners (including DFID, the EU and German co-operation) – were implemented effectively.
 - Mentorship of local judges through informal interactions, values, ethics, habits and quality of judgements;
 - Established and operationalised the Judicial and Legal Training Institute, where key staff were trained on case management and judicial administration;
 - Established appropriate systems, procedures and user guides within the High Court Registry;
- Updated and implemented the Bail Policy;
- Supervised the Fast Track Commercial Court and Special Gender Violence Court.
- The longer-term four-year placement was highly beneficial with respect to value for money as a number of key procedural changes were made that continued beyond the placement. Two judges identified to take on the responsibilities of Master and Deputy Master of the Court were trained and mentored to this end.
- The placements of the two High Court judges led to immediate short-term gains as this reduced the workload of other judges and closed a gap in the understaffed judiciary at that time. However, while the judges were intended to build capacity through training and mentorship, they were not presented with opportunities to follow through on this. Their reports pointed to a cultural issue of judges not being receptive to training delivered by other judges they consider their equals.
- The backlog of cases continues to be a challenge for justice in Sierra Leone despite the number of judges increasing to 22 (2017). The project reports characterised the issue of backlog of cases as a reflection of weak administration and the work culture among judges rather than a factor of the number of judges.

Judicial officials have access to Commonwealth resources, including the convening services, online knowledge portals and the CMJA. However, most in Sierra Leone may have only limited access to, or no knowledge of, the online resources. The evaluation could not find evidence that the Legal Knowledge Management Portal was functional and accessible in Sierra Leone. Convening invitations also tended to target senior officials and policy leaders.

Efficiency

Sierra Leone made a further request for technical assistance for the placement of judges in 2014. However, the Secretariat, based on its analysis and understanding of the root cause of backlogged cases, and also likely taking into consideration the limited availability of CFTC funding, did not respond positively to this request and instead made an

alternate recommendation to the Government on how the Secretariat could better support its goals in the judiciary. This recommendation was not taken up but was subsequently addressed through a UNDP project under implementation during the same period, 2013–2014 (Langan, 2016).

The evaluation found that the leadership of the judiciary continued to see great value in the placement of Commonwealth judges despite the Secretariat's reluctance to continue this practice. Foreign judges are perceived to be unbiased and not subject to the work culture of the Sierra Leone judiciary. They are therefore perceived to be more effective and to be able to deliver more acceptable judgements. The value of these placements is improved access to justice for the most vulnerable populations in Sierra Leone.

The TORs of the judicial placements were wide-ranging and covered capacity-building, advisory support, addressing the backlog of cases and delivering policy and legislative outputs. This scope proved to be too broad. In posts, the judges were appreciated only in the roles where they were most needed – addressing the adjudication of cases.

The question of how to most cost-effectively support the judiciary in Sierra Leone remains. The cost of various options of support must be assessed in light of the presence of development partners with more substantive resources and country presence, which allows them to be more effective in pushing through slow-moving policy and legislative reforms.

Sustainability

As the above notes, very little evidence of long-term outcomes could be discerned related to interventions of the Secretariat in the area of rule of law. The EVD crisis likely also affected the retention of judges and the policy focus to reform the sector. The final reports of the judicial placements also sounded an alarm for sustainability, pointing to the need to update the legal framework as well as reforms to address the incentives and performance management of judges.

This echoes the conclusion of a 2016 UNDP report on its 2013–2014 Access to Justice programme: *'Despite the sustained support of UNDP and other donors in the justice sector in Sierra Leone since 2009, significant capacity and sustainability gaps continue to exist that will require innovative approaches, appropriately balanced*

supply side/demand-side engagement and significant advocacy and coordination by the United Nations and international donor community at the political level.'

Interventions addressed immediate capacity bottlenecks but did not successfully lead to transference of capacity to the local system. However, a number of the improved processes and guideline implemented continued to be used, including the updated Bail Policy and case management and tracking systems.

2.2.3 Public Governance and Administration

The Commonwealth's Public Administration programme has two main components: the Commonwealth Anti-Corruption Centre and Public Governance. The Public Governance project takes a centre of government approach and aims to assist member countries to attain and sustain accountable, effective and transparent public institutions.

Public Sector Governance – Local Government Reform

The Secretariat's long-term placement from 2009 to 2015 supported donor co-ordination, the monitoring of local authorities, stakeholder consultations and addressing the gender balance. The adviser helped clarify the roles of traditional chieftain administrations and local authorities. The technical capacity of MLGRD was enhanced through mentoring and skills transfers. The adviser contributed to the final drafting of the National Decentralisation Policy and helped facilitate its adoption by Cabinet in August 2010.

This project made good contributions to establishing an effective, efficient and equitable public governance system at the district level in Sierra Leone. This includes the development and dissemination of the Ministry's Decentralisation Strategy and the extensive training and mentoring of officials at the Ministry and throughout the local government sector, including chiefdoms. The assistance enabled the Ministry to effectively lead the co-ordination of donor support to and engagement with the sector itself and removed the need for the complex and counter-productive parallel governance systems that had previously existed; enhanced governance at the chieftaincy level through the January 2014 Revision to the

Guidelines for the conduct of the paramount chieftaincy elections under the 2009 Chieftaincy Act 2009; and developed and disseminated the Local Government Service Delivery Handbook.

Very little information was found to further assess the evaluation criteria for this programme, as it was one of the more affected by staff changes through the Secretariat's restructuring.

Public Sector Governance – Anti-Corruption

The Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre (CAACC) in Botswana sits at the heart of the Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa (AACACA), a network of ACAs convened through Secretariat support. The Commonwealth Secretariat provides an annual subscription to CAACC and contributes technical expertise to deliver training, convene peers in ACAs across Africa and support the activities of the networks towards knowledge-sharing and peer-to-peer learning.

The Secretariat also convenes an annual Meeting of Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa. This is a focal point for AACACA to promote collaboration and peer learning. It provides a platform for discussion and sharing of national experiences and allows agencies to strengthen ties, forge partnerships and co-operate beyond the week-long meeting.

In addition to providing Sierra Leone access to a functional anti-corruption network in Africa, the Botswana centre is also supported in providing training to enhance the investigatory and prosecutorial capacities of African ACAs.

Technical assistance provided through the placement of a special prosecutor during 2012–2015 delivered the following key outputs.

- Submission of draft operational guidelines to promote efficient and streamlined calendaring of procedural orders, court dates, scheduled tasks, case tracking and deadlines;
- Provision of counsel, mentorship and capacity development of investigators and junior prosecutors. A number of lawyers trained in trial and appeals advocacy, including the preparatory work for the conduct of trials and appeals, such as identifying legal and evidentiary issues; legal research and preparation of legal argumentation; evaluating and presenting evidence; appearance in court

for the delivery of oral submissions; and the technical skills related to preparing written arguments on appeal;

- A manual on the substantive law governing trials under the Anti-Corruption Act (digest of jurisprudence);
- A manual on a proposed improved system of case management.

Relevance

Anti-corruption is a critical development issue for Sierra Leone and interventions in this regard align with the Strategic Plan as well as with the Government's priorities, of both the prior and the current administration.

The Sierra Leone National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2014–2018 overlapped the period of the Strategic Plan and targeted a three-pronged approach to address corruption through:

1. Prevention – systemic, institutional, legislative and administrative reforms and public education and awareness-raising, aimed at building democracy, creating political competition, poverty reduction and delivery of public goods and services;
2. Enforcement – improvement in the legal and institutional arrangements for the detection, investigation and prosecution of corruption;
3. Suppression – the regular and systematic measuring of the nature, causes and extent of corruption through reliable and verifiable data collection, analysis and co-ordination.

The Secretariat's technical assistance aligned well with this strategy in addressing the investigation and prosecution of corruption. The strategy does not explicitly reference capacity-building, though a large share of the Secretariat's support is targeted to this Impact Pathway.

The anti-corruption commissioner interviewed noted that there was an ongoing need for prosecutorial support, but request for this from the Secretariat had not had a positive outcome. Overall direct support had notably declined in recent years, reflecting in part the Secretariat's declined pool of CFTC funding and the uncertain financial status during 2015–2017.

Effectiveness

Table 5 presents the implied Impact Pathway for the intervention in anti-corruption in

Table 5. Anti-Corruption programme performance

	Output	Short-term Outcome 1	Short-term Outcome 2	Intermediate Outcome
Impact Pathway	<p><i>Placement of long-term technical adviser 2011–2014</i></p> <p><i>ACC has access to peer learning networks through AACACA</i></p> <p><i>ACC has access to training at Botswana Centre</i></p>	<p><i>Staff and lawyers have improved knowledge and competence</i></p> <p><i>ACC has updated tools and guidelines in use to strengthen its case management and prosecutorial and investigative capacities</i></p>	<p><i>Increased convictions of corruption cases</i></p> <p><i>Improved enforcement of anti-corruption laws</i></p>	<p><i>Improved public administration through improved capacity of the national ACA</i></p>
Progress rating				

Sierra Leone. The evaluation found that the Secretariat's support was effective in delivering the intervention's objectives.

The evaluation visit to the ACC in Sierra Leone revealed that in 2018 it came under a new commissioner with a fresh mandate to address anti-corruption. There was very limited institutional recall of the support provided by the Secretariat since 2013. Nonetheless, there is some evidence that outputs previously delivered through the long-term technical assistance benefited the work of the ACC:

- Secretariat project records note that convictions in 2012 (22) surpassed the total number in 2011 (10) under the placement of the special prosecutor.³
- There were also more acquittals, and a decline in the ratio of acquittals to convictions from 10/2 to 22/18.
- Counterparts mentored, including the current deputy commissioner, are now in lead roles in the ACC.
- The Digest on Jurisprudence delivered in 2014 is in use although it is currently in need of updating.

While conviction rates improved, the ACC was unable to secure the sentencing and assets recovery in accordance. Nonetheless, the improved Transparency International Corruption Perception Index ranking over the same period suggested that the increased convictions reflected positively on the ACC: Sierra Leone in 2011 ranked 134 of 182 countries with a score of 2.5; these measures had improved by 2013 to 119 and 3.0, respectively.

The ACC valued the access to training and to the peer networks provided through AACACA and the Botswana Centre. Ten officials of the Sierra Leone ACC participated in training at the Botswana Centre in the years covered by the Strategic Plan.⁴ One of these officers was subsequently promoted to a higher post.

Overall, international indicators of progress on anti-corruption in Sierra Leone are trending in a positive direction. The United States 2019 Millennium Challenge Corporation scorecard for Sierra Leone showed that the country had met two out of the three requirements (including the control of corruption indicator) and passed at least nine out of the twenty indicators overall. The control of corruption indicator was 79 per cent in 2019, compared with 49 per cent in 2018 and 47 per cent in 2014.⁵

³ While the special prosecutor worked with the ACC, he did not directly try cases. Commonwealth High Court judicial placements did discharge anti-corruption cases in court.

⁴ The new commissioner (current) participated in a course on senior leadership and management in Mauritius on 27–31 August 2018.

⁵ Retrieved from https://www.mcc.gov/who-we-fund/scorecards?fwpscorecard_country=6127

Efficiency

The placement of a long-term adviser to the ACC lost some traction in its inception as a result of the change in commissioner very soon after the technical adviser came into post. The new commissioner at that time was unfamiliar with the memorandum of understanding (MOU) in this regard. This breakdown in communication meant that close to a year of delivery time was lost. While the technical assistant worked to deliver *ad hoc* tasks as required, he was not effectively working towards the objectives of the MOU during that time. This matter was resolved during a mid-term monitoring visit by the Secretariat programme team, and the second half of the placement was more productive with respect to the expected project outcomes.

The ACC contributes the cost of staff travel and a per diem towards trainings received through the Botswana Centre. While the ACC stated that this cost-sharing was unfavourable to poorer countries, it nonetheless promotes improved value for money as staff trained are carefully selected and there is a greater expectation of returns.

Sustainability

The new National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2019–2023 notes that implementation of previous strategies and their effectiveness was hampered by lack of political will and capacity to plan and deliver. It suggests that past failures highlight the need to deepen political commitment and public sector ownership in implementation of the Strategy. It indicates that anti-corruption continues to be a core development issue for Sierra Leone, which ranks high on the agenda of the new Government.

As such, recent gains in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone look likely to continue. The Government is targeting improved accountability and transparency as part of its transformation agenda. There is strong political will to take forward reforms, including advancing the legislative changes needed. The ACC and the Ministry of Justice are taking forward amendments to the Anti-Corruption Act of 2008 to provide for increased penalties, to strengthen protection of those who assist the ACC and to avail the ACC with alternatives to prosecution. The ACC reports directly to Parliament, although its budgetary resources are funnelled through the Office of the President. The 2019 budget provision showed an

increase for the agency, although this still falls short of what the commissioner estimates is needed. The revitalised ACC under its new leadership is enjoying public and donor support and has already made significant gains in High Court cases.

The national anti-corruption agenda has strong support from development partners: DFID funded a national Pay No Bribe campaign until 2018, targeting citizen education. The EU is supporting the Government on the development and implementation of the new Anti-Corruption Strategy.

These positive changes to the overall policy, administrative and legislative environment for anti-corruption bode well for the sustainability of the Secretariat's efforts to support anti-corruption in Sierra Leone.

Public Sector Governance – Internal Audit

During 2015, the Secretariat facilitated two key forums in which Sierra Leone officials participated. In particular, the participation of the Sierra Leone director of internal audit in the Regional Internal Audit and Public Procurement Meeting for Commonwealth Africa in London in November 2015 stimulated a keen interest and recognition of the value of an Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) system for the country. This interest quickly developed into a formal request from the Government of Sierra Leone through the minister of finance for support in developing and implementing an ERM policy and framework in the Ministry and across Government.

In response, the Secretariat public administration adviser directly provided technical support towards development of an ERM policy and framework for Sierra Leone. The Secretariat completed a number of country missions, training 19 Sierra Leonean officials and contributing to the formulation of the draft policy and framework (see Box 2).

Relevance

The ERM policy and framework was born out of peer learning among Commonwealth public administrators. It was explicitly targeted in the Secretariat's Strategic Plan but was not an identified as a priority of the Government before the internal audit director championed it. Nonetheless, given on-going support to public sector reforms through other donors, including the World Bank and the EU, there was an enabling environment for progressing with this project.

Box 2. Chronology of engagement in the establishment of ERM in Sierra Leone

- 13–15 July 2015 – 12th Forum of Heads of African Public Service Tanzania
- 17–19 November 2015 – Regional Internal Audit and Public Procurement Meeting for Commonwealth Africa in London
- 9–13 May 2016 – Internal Audit Exchange Study Visit to Botswana
- 26 May–8 June 2016 Public Financial Management Oversight – Internal Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Mission to Sierra Leone
- 18–30 May 2017 Internal Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Mission to Sierra Leone

has been established and has developed the Implementation Plan. The progress made owes in part to the readiness of the policy environment: the technical leadership expressed a clear demand and was prepared and equipped to carry the policy development process forward. Government counterparts also applauded the competency and accessibility of the Secretariat's technical adviser, noting that they had ready access to advice and usually received swift responses even to *ad hoc* queries. The ERM policy and framework has since been tabled before Government but has not yet been approved for implementation, frustrating the outcome indicator of ensuring *coverage by five key line ministries and co-ordination by Internal Audit within twelve months*. The delay may owe partly to the change in administration in 2018, with the new policy leadership at the Ministry of Finance still assessing and prioritising its policy reform agenda. Nonetheless the new Government mentioned the commitment to ERM reform in its budget speech of 2018, which bodes well for its eventual implementation.

Effectiveness

The provision of technical support towards the development of an ERM policy and framework has been successful in the short term and continues to hold strong potential for realising the objective of establishing and implementing the system in country. An ERM Coordinating Committee

Table 6 presents the implied Impact Pathway for the intervention in public administration in Sierra Leone. The evaluation found that the Secretariat's support was effective in delivering the intervention's objectives.

Efficiency

As noted, progress in this review was attributable to a conducive policy environment, a committed

Table 6. Internal Audit programme performance

	Output	Short-term Outcome 1	Short-term Outcome 2	Intermediate Outcome
Impact Pathway	<p>Engaging of regional institutions to enable peer learning and knowledge exchange</p> <p>Technical support to train Internal Audit Directorate (IAD) staff and stakeholders in preparing for the ERM system</p> <p>Support to IAD in developing the policy and framework</p>	<p>Draft ERM policy and framework developed</p> <p>Risk champions and other implementing mechanisms initiation</p> <p>IAD has capacity to implement</p>	<p>ERM policy and framework approved by Cabinet for implementation</p>	<p>Improved public administration through strengthened internal audit function</p>
Progress rating				

champion in the IAD director and accessibility and expertise of the Secretariat adviser.

The Secretariat's support was delivered remotely and through regionally convened meetings. These factors enabled a significant amount of progress in a short period of time and with limited financial outlay, representing good value for money.

Sustainability

There is good potential for sustainability of the outcomes achieved to date. The IAD has the capacity to initiate the policy implementation and has also been key in engaging a cadre of public officials who are sensitised and trained. A number of other government departments have already indicated interest in being forerunners and risk champions. The IAD is also benefiting from other development partner programmes, including in operationalising government-wide audit committees.⁶ Nonetheless, risks and challenges to progress have also been identified. The roll-out of the ERM policy will add a work burden to already stretched staff. Also, budgetary resources have not yet been committed. The IAD has limited capacity to deliver training, although it noted with appreciation the training resources contributed by the Secretariat.

The Government has also indicated its intention to transfer the IAD into an agency – which would enhance its independence. A bill to the effect has been drafted and is with the deputy minister of finance for review.

Public Administration

In 2013, the Ministry of Finance requested the Secretariat's support to the establishment of a wage commission. Specifically, the request highlighted the need for technical assistance in the development and implementation of a public sector pay strategy. In 2014, the Secretariat approved the project to deliver the following through short-term expert placements:

- Development of a legal and policy framework on public sector wages, salaries and compensation for Cabinet approval;
- Development of an operational framework for the implementation of the harmonised pay and grading structure in the public service.

Implementation was aborted as a result of escalation of the Ebola crisis in 2014. However, the World Bank in this same period, 2012–2015, implemented a US\$17 million project with the Government to improve competitiveness in pay, performance management and accountability of the civil service. The Secretariat's PIN, though developed after the start of this project, does not refer to related work undertaken by the ministry with another development partner, but staff were aware of engagements between the Government and the World Bank. In this context, the Secretariat's withdrawal was a sound decision. The World Bank project also failed to meet its objective, in part because of the Ebola crisis and the lack of fiscal space and political focus the epidemic caused (World Bank, 2019a).

6 World Bank Public Financial Management and Improvement Consultation Project – resources being made available to support Audit Committees; EU: State Building Fund.

Conclusions

Conclusions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of a Paris Principle-compliant NHRI is one indicator for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 and bodes well for promoting access to justice and transparent, accountable institutions in Sierra Leone. • Technical assistance placements in the judiciary were well received and effective in the short term in improving access to justice for Sierra Leoneans through the addressing of backlogged case. • As the assistance to the judiciary was essentially gap-filling, overall sustainability of outcomes did not materialise. • Development of an ERM policy and framework is a good example of the value and potential of peer learning among Commonwealth institutions as this significant reform was born out of peer learning from Botswana and Tanzania. • The ERM support is also a sound example of cost-effective country-led technical assistance.
Challenge(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for technical assistance from countries often do not provide the depth of clarity on the policy context that is required for decision-making. While this is addressed somewhat through scoping missions, these can be expensive and challenging for a small programme team to undertake in each case. • The EVD crisis placed a demand on the Secretariat's capacity to adaptively manage its delivery. The refocusing of the work of the long-term expert placement in local government is a good example of this agility in practice, although the TOR change merely formalised the adjustment that had already taken place in the field. • Further assessment is needed to better understand the best delivery method for long-term technical assistance. The Secretariat operates two mechanisms – through long-term consultant placements and through long-term engagement from Secretariat technical staff. It is still unclear which of these delivers better results in which context.
Lessons learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countries have a greater understanding of their needs in context as they often are making decisions in the midst of political and cultural dynamics that may be difficult to communicate externally. There is therefore a need for continuous engagement to monitor these dynamics and improve agility. • There is a need for broader policy engagement around the technical issues being addressed through technical assistance or policy support interventions. • Responses to request for assistance must take into account the full context, including other development assistance projects and their deliverables and co-ordination mechanisms.
Recommendation(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A desk-based scoping of request should include engagement with other development partners working in the same policy area to clarify how the proposed intervention will align with the deliverables, schedules and outcomes of other projects. • There is a need for appropriate risk management plans to be agreed with the counterpart so there is shared responsibility for risk management. • There is a need for further evaluation on the delivery of long-term technical assistance – what works, for whom, how and under what conditions?

2.3 Social Development

Enhanced Positive Impact of Social Development

Context

The EVD epidemic waged in Sierra Leone during 2014 to 2016 had a devastating impact on all aspects of the country's development and at every level of society. By its end, 14,124 cases had been recorded and 3,965 Sierra Leoneans had lost their lives – a higher mortality and morbidity than had been experienced by neighbouring Guinea and Liberia.⁷

The international response to the health crisis was tremendous and included the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), DFID, the United Nations Children Fund, Public Health

England (PHE), the International Organization for Migration and many others.

All health-related strategies and plans were affected by the EVD epidemic, including the prevailing National Health Strategy 2013–2018.

The responsibility for health surveillance within the Ministry of Health and Sanitation sat with the Directorate of Disease Prevention and Control, under the Office of the Chief Medical Officer. The Directorate leads a multi-stakeholder Working Group on Surveillance and Information that develops strategies and key interventions and co-ordinates input needs for disease prevention and control, and Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR).

Apart from EVD, Sierra Leone is also vulnerable to other contagious diseases, including cholera and measles.

Total non-staff expenditure: £25,735.98 (3%)	
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with PHE, the Secretariat assisted Sierra Leone to draft a National Public Health Strategy. • PHE assigned a public health lab technician to Sierra Leone for six weeks to continue the improvement of laboratory systems. • Technical assistance was provided through expert placement (July 2015–July 2017) to assist the Ministry of Health and Sanitation to strengthen the public health system for effective prevention, control and management of disease outbreaks, in the wake of the EVD outbreak. • Annual convening of the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meetings occurred
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening of the Biennial Commonwealth Education Ministers meetings occurred.
Improved Capacity Building for Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one-year extension of the expert placement in local government was put in place.

2.3.1 Health

The Secretariat's engagement with Sierra Leone on health was marshalled in 2015 to support the national response to Ebola. Prior to the outbreak, Sierra Leone was not identified as a priority country for direct technical assistance and the Secretariat's engagement was intended mainly to support its participation in regional and pan-Commonwealth health forums.

In response to the Government's request for support, the Secretariat fielded a mission and

deployed a long-term expert who was attached to the Ministry of Health Chief Medical Officer's Office from July 2015 to July 2017. The primary purpose of the technical assistance was to advance the Ministry's efforts to establish a comprehensive and Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response System, with the overall outcome being a strategic environment that enables the Ministry to effectively curtail and manage incidences of viral diseases, including EVD, in future. The expert gave 80 per cent of his time to directly supporting the Ebola emergency response, including supporting the

7 Commonwealth Secretariat Mid-Term Project Review, TAU.

director of the Directorate of Disease Prevention and Control, and 20 per cent to providing management and technical support to the chief medical officer in carrying out his leadership role during this crisis period. The Secretariat supplemented this engagement with three monitoring and supervisory missions.

The Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting in May 2016 saw ministers welcome the development of the Commonwealth Health Systems Framework and Health Protection Toolkit. The Toolkit, which identifies countries' prioritised needs towards universal health coverage and health security through the control of communicable diseases, emergency preparedness and environmental health, was piloted in Sierra Leone through the then post-EVD technical assistance project.

Relevance

The technical assistance provided to Sierra Leone was strategic and responsive to the needs of the country during the EVD crisis. Involvement emerged through the Commonwealth Action Committee on Health, which considered how the Secretariat could contribute during the crisis. The Secretariat's expert was the only donor-funded personnel with direct access to the leadership of the Ministry, ensuring regular feedback and flow of information on progress and priorities and that the Ministry was continually kept updated and changes could be quickly relayed and implemented. This local embedding reduced the visibility of the Secretariat in the Ebola international response in Sierra Leone as the expert was seen as staff of the Ministry. However, it engendered the effectiveness of the intervention, ensuring enhanced capacity in the Ministry.

The expert also supported the Ministry to be more strategic in its partnerships with the many donor stakeholders operating in the country. He also worked in partnership with a number of donors, as the key government counterpart, and therefore supported the overall co-ordination of policy and programmatic initiatives. As an example, the expert worked in partnership with WHO to establish and systematise improved standard operating procedures (SOPs) for infectious disease early warning systems. He also supported the design of a six-year US\$330 million World Bank-Government Regional Disease Surveillance Systems Enhancement Programme/Project to improve surveillance and disease detection, reporting and emergency preparedness and response in the sub-region.

Effectiveness

Specific results delivered are summarised below:

- Establishment of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), including requirements at national and district levels, notably an organogram that reflected the leadership and channels of communication at national and district levels;
- Implementation of a new eIDSR system and its integration into the District Health Implementation Software 2 platform;
- Technical support to develop IDSR documentation – tools, policies, guidelines, SOPs in public health – to address future emergency needs;
- Establishment of the National Public Health Management Committee and Functional Coordination Structure (Organogram) through the One Health approach to improve integrated health security and protection;
- Capacity-building to staff to enable them to understand tasks and responsibilities, particularly through one-on-one on-the-job training and mentorship of the national surveillance programme team;
- Provided advocacy and support to change management;
- Drafting of a functional organogram of the Ministry of Health for the minister;
- Support to international reporting through joint evaluation documents (to CDC/WHO) including providing key technical support to planning and evaluation for the Joint External Evaluation that assessed International Health Regulations/Global Health Security Agenda core capacities in the country;
- Providing technical support to the establishment of a community-based surveillance system in nine of the fourteen districts;
- A total of 8,400 community health workers (CHWs) trained and provided with guidance in support of the operations of the community-based surveillance system.

'Commonwealth initiatives have not been visible but the outcomes have been remarkable.'
Minister of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone

The EOC, including the surveillance system developed, remains fully functional, providing timely

Table 7. Health programme performance

	Output	Short-term Outcome 1	Short-term Outcome 2	Intermediate Outcome
Impact Pathway	<p>Technical assistance provided to strengthen the public health system for effective prevention, control and management of disease outbreaks</p> <p>Annual convening of the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meetings</p> <p>Draft Health Protection Policy Toolkit</p>	The Ministry's efforts to establish a comprehensive and IDSR system are advanced	A strategic environment is established that enables the Ministry to effectively curtail and manage incidences of viral diseases including EVD in future	Strengthened national policy framework and policies improve health outcomes (with particular regard to early warning and reporting capacities, improved responses and effective infectious disease mitigation)
Progress rating				

responses and connecting districts to the national offices, with operations that reflect good adherence to the SOPs. The CHW programme relies on community factors for its success and sustainability, particularly given the decision to pay CHWs, making it no longer a voluntary role.

The Ministry expressed satisfaction with the performance of the technical adviser and requested extension of the initial one-year placement by another year. Overall, Sierra Leone's public health service system for the effective prevention, control and management of disease outbreaks has improved: effective early warning and response systems are now in place.

During his placement, the expert co-hosted two workshops with the Secretariat Health programme team.

1. On the development of a Public Health Toolkit for Sierra Leone (March 2016);
2. On 28–29 June 2017: Day 1 on Leadership, Organisational Structure of the Ministry (79 staff attended) and Day 2 to develop a Public Health Protection Policy for Sierra Leone based on the Secretariat's Draft Toolkit on Health Protection Policy (109 participants representing various health sector stakeholders and development partners).

Development of the Public Health Protection Policy was not advanced beyond the workshops. Full achievement of the intermediate outcome will also require strengthened health governance, which continues to be a challenge in Sierra Leone.

Table 7 presents the implied Impact Pathway for the intervention in health in Sierra Leone. The evaluation found that the Secretariat's support was effective in delivering the intervention's objectives.

Efficiency

The placement of a long-term expert in Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis represented good value for money. The estimated total cost of this intervention (£150,000) compares well with the benefits derived, although it is substantially less than what other donors provided. The key strategic role the expert played also served to enable better harmonisation of the international assistance to the sector, therefore adding value to the efforts of other partners.

The project was managed by the Technical Assistance Unit, with oversight provided by the Health team. This supported three monitoring visits during the placements and ensured that the TORs remained aligned with the evolving needs of the Ministry. There was some concern about the expert being side-lined by being overly involved with operational issues facing the Ministry. In addition, there were additional requests for additional administrative support that the Secretariat did not meet.

Sustainability

The Ministry of Health took control of the EOC after the two-year contract. However, the transition to national ownership was not well managed or planned for. Nonetheless, the Government was able to secure DFID funding to continue to maintain the EOC. Other strategic and policy-level engagements, including in

addressing governance in the sector, remain under-resourced.

The Ministry is heavily funded from external sources, particularly since the crisis, but a significant share of funding is tied to external projects and therefore non-discretionary. The Ministry has limited means and calibre of human resources to further its own priorities away from donor funding.⁸ Reforms required with regard to health system strengthening continue to be under-resourced, including on health statistics, drugs procurement and supply chain management, decentralisation of health services and infrastructure and policy development, according to the minister. These deficiencies present a continuing risk to the sustainability of the results gained in health surveillance.

The outcome of training provided to the EOC was sustained as a result of the ample supportive resources provided, including guidelines and documentation but also mentorship, which were simultaneously delivered.

The Secretariat expert is now employed within the Office of the Chief Medical Adviser and is continuing to take forward some initiatives in that capacity.

2.3.2 Education

During the strategic period, the Secretariat did not directly engage Sierra Leone under its Education programme. Sierra Leone attended the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in 2015 but not in 2018.

2.3.3 Capacity Building for Social Development

As part of the Secretariat's response to support Sierra Leone during the EVD crisis, the Secretariat extended the placement of the expert in local government by one year. The aim of the project was to re-orient the focus of the existing project (see Section 2.2.3 above) in order

to assist MLGRD to effectively plan and manage the wide range of essential services needed to support individuals, families and communities affected. Prior to the extension, the expert had already commenced supporting the local chiefdoms in this regard and had completed the following:

- Preparation of by-Laws for the prevention of Ebola and other diseases;
- Preparation of MLGRD/National Council of Paramount Chiefs (NCPC) strategy and operational plan for the prevention of Ebola;
- Papers and proposals on Breaking the Chain of Transmission of Ebola in All Chiefdoms of Sierra Leone (NCPC lead, with MLGRD);
- Co-ordinating and facilitating regular meetings between NCPC and district officer in order to share experience, learn lessons and make recommendations to the minister of emergency operations;
- Liaison with partners and donors to increase understanding and share information, including good practice lessons learnt from local communities (e.g. Koinadagu – no cases; Kailahun – safe burial) (in particular DFID, the International Security Advisory Team (UK Ministry of Defence) and various international non-governmental organisations);
- Representing MLGRD on security sector meetings to prepare SOPs for community response.

The contract extension enabled this work to progress, and specified supporting the MLGRD and local government leadership role in management of the Ebola emergency; facilitating the transmission of lessons to inform national and local programmes, future policy and capacity planning; and data-gathering.

⁸ For example, the issue of health governance, management and leadership and prevention was highlighted as a significant gap.

Conclusions

Conclusion: The Secretariat's interventions in this programme were the most focused in responding to the EVD crisis in the country.

Two key outcomes emerged from the Secretariat's support to the health sector: a sound IDSR system implemented through a strengthened EOC as well as a coherent and technically responsive Ministry able to better engage with development partners in the sector. The outcome of the Secretariat's support to Sierra Leone health sector was a significant boost to the national effort to respond to the EVD crisis and ensure early warning systems and appropriate response mechanisms were in place to withstand any future contagion. The support was initiated at the height of the crisis and was well received by the Ministry and its partners.

The redesigning and extension of the local government expert placement is a good example of agile project management and was an appropriate and timely response to needs in Sierra Leone. The evaluation found that this shift was country-led and already in progress before the project was formally redesigned.

Challenge(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though the sector is well resourced, the health system continues to have significant gaps. Given the broader capacity challenges in the public sector, these gaps continue to present a risk to sustainability. • Expert placements are a welcome resource to under-resourced ministries and can play a key technical leadership and gap-filling role. However, broader connectivity to a strengthened policy environment needs to be established if outputs are to gain traction and the expected outcomes are to emerge.
Lessons learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term TORs need to be reviewed through monitoring and supervisory missions to ensure they continually align with the needs of beneficiaries and the expert in place continues to be best placed to deliver.
Recommendation(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the Strategic Plan's intermediate goal to address policy frameworks, the completion of the EVD response work should be seen as creating an opportunity for the Secretariat to continue to support health system strengthening in Sierra Leone. • Consider measures to increase the visibility of expert placements, including assigning them a temporary 'commonwealth.int' address, issuing them with Secretariat business cards and attaching branding to their emailing.

2.4 Youth

Youth Are More Integrated and Valued in Political and Development Processes

Context

The Secretariat was instrumental in setting up the Commonwealth Youth Council (CYC), which was launched in November 2013 with the election of the first executive at the Commonwealth Youth Forum in Sri Lanka. An autonomous body representing the 1.2 billion young people of the Commonwealth, and comprising representatives from national youth councils and groups, the CYC promotes and facilitates youth voice and youth-led development.

The Commonwealth Youth Development Index (YDI) was developed in 2015 and is disseminated to all Commonwealth members. In 2018, the Secretariat supported the African Union to develop youth development indicators to monitor progress on youth development in Africa, helping fulfil the African Youth Charter Decade Plan of Action mandate to produce a biennial report on the Status of African Youth.

A three-year Youth Work Diploma was implemented 2002–2005 at the University of Sierra Leone through a partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone that saw the Secretariat providing 50 per cent of the funding.

Total non-staff expenditure: £44,565.23 (5%)

- *Regional Youth Ministers Meetings convened by the Secretariat in Africa and the Caribbean included national youth leaders, and reached consensus on youth policy priorities including youth employment, post-2015 development framework, national youth policy design and implementation and professionalisation of youth work.*
- *Sierra Leone National Youth Councils were established and support was given to the establishment of District Youth Councils.*
- *Capacity for evidence-based youth policy-making was expanded in Africa and the Caribbean through regional workshops in partnership with UNDP, the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, UN-Habitat and the Caribbean Community, resulting in prioritisation of youth policies and requests for assistance to review national youth policies.*
- *Sierra Leone has access to participation in youth networks:*
 - *Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassadors Network;*
 - *Commonwealth Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs;*
 - *Commonwealth Youth Health Network;*
 - *Commonwealth Youth Human Rights and Democracy Network;*
 - *Commonwealth Youth Sports for Development and Peace Committee.*
- *The Commonwealth Youth Development Index was published.*
- *An Action Plan for the Sierra Leone National Sports for Development and Peace Strategy was developed and support was given to its implementation.*
- *Sierra Leone was a member of the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport in 2016–2018.*
- *The Sierra Leone Sports and Peace Delegation was supported on a one-week partnership development mission to London in 2016.*
- *Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meetings were convened, with the last held in Uganda in 2017.*

2.4.1 Empowerment of Young People

The Commonwealth Youth programme convenes young people and youth leaders to network and share experiences, and also facilitates their access to engage with policy- and decision-makers at every level. During the strategic period, youth leaders and youth representatives of Sierra Leone participated in the following meetings.

- The Africa Region Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, convened in Cameroon in February 2015. The first of its kind at Africa regional level, this brought together ministers with responsibility for youth affairs, senior government officials, youth representatives and other invited stakeholders from Commonwealth countries in Africa.
- The Second Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work, on 2–10 March 2016, in Pretoria, South Africa. This led to agreement to set up the Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers' Associations and formal agreement

with universities (including the University of Sierra Leone) attending pre-meetings to be partners in the Degree Consortium for Youth Work Education and Training.

- The Ninth Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting in Kampala, Uganda, on 31 July–4 August 2017. This was convened under the theme 'Resourcing and Financing Youth Development: Empowering Young People'.
- The Third Youth Workers Conference was convened by the Secretariat in partnership with the Government of Malta in November 2018.

The Secretariat conducted a mission to Sierra Leone in 2015 to deliver the following actions:

- Support to the establishment of Youth Councils;
- Promotion of youth entrepreneurship;
- Establishment of the Youth Work Diploma.

Relevance

The National Youth Programme 2014–2018 targeted youth employment, participation and social cohesion, gender equality and improved youth services in education, health and social protection. The Secretariat's interventions therefore aligned with these objectives. However, as for other policies and strategic plans, the EVD derailed full implementation of the national programme.

Sector policy leaders recognise that the Secretariat has a wealth of experience in this sector, to professionalise and build the needed policy synergies to move forward. The Secretariat also provides access to a strong community of practice. The Youth programme is, however, wide-ranging, and requires engagement with multiple counterparts both in and out of Government. Where there is no clear strategic focus or co-ordinating mechanism in country, this can lead to lack of clarity and confusion with regard to ownership of the results being targeted by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat worked in partnership with UNDP in establishing Youth Councils.

Effectiveness

The evaluation found that Commonwealth support contributed to mobilising and empowering young people in Sierra Leone post-Ebola. The Secretariat successfully established the National Youth Council in 2015, which structure continues to exist but has not been functioning as required. District Youth Councils were activated in 16 districts with UNDP support. Youth members elected a chair of the National Youth Council but this position was granted to a ministerial appointee. Conflicts in this outcome led to some cooling in the relationship between stakeholders, which remained unresolved given the Ebola crisis and elections that unfolded over the next two years. The Ministry of Youth Affairs further moved the Youth Council structure into the Ministry, reducing its independence. Request for support to the Secretariat could not be responded to positively.

Sierra Leone participated in the June 2018 conference convened by CYP. A University of Sierra Leone representative developed a roadmap for implementation of a youth work degree in communication with the education adviser at COMSEC. The curriculum development

benefited from the full package of resources from the Secretariat and is currently being reviewed before being finalised. The University of Sierra Leone hoped to revive the CYP Diploma in Youth Development, starting with the previous modules and eventually using the modules developed for the BA course in a simpler and adapted version for the Diploma course. No funding was provided for this and it has since not taken off, as a result of a number of challenges. The Youth Work Diploma implemented up to 2005 at the university is also no longer offered.

The evaluation found that the fragmented outputs delivered, particularly against the backdrop of the unfolding crises in Sierra Leone, were insufficient to generate the expected outcomes (Table 8). Further, loss of momentum owing to the governance issues with the Youth Councils led to a cooling in young people's interest and engagement, particularly among those with apolitical interests.

Sustainability

The current administration for youth affairs in Sierra Leone has indicated that the Secretariat-supported youth reforms will again be taken forward from 2018. Addressing issues for youth is a key pillar in the National Development Plan 2019–2023.

While the overall strategic focus on youth is evident at the national level, this does not guarantee the sustainability of all the Secretariat's outputs. The Youth Work degree programme is at risk of non-implementation owing to lack of technical resources to support the completion of its development and its delivery. University-level education is prohibitively expensive for most Sierra Leonean youth. Without external funding, it is unlikely there will be sufficient subscriptions to the programme to justify its offering. The Government's education programme, on the other hand, is focused on delivering on its commitment to free quality education at primary and secondary levels.

The evaluation found the sector to be fragmented and uncoordinated, with a number of institutions involved in youth development unaware of each other's role or actions. Progress is at risk as a result of this fragmentation, lack of clarity in sector governance and the high level of politicisation. In addition, there is limited technical expertise in local institutions, leading to an over-reliance on external support.

Table 8. Youth programme performance

	Output	Short-term Outcome 1	Short-term Outcome 2	Intermediate Outcome
Impact Pathway	<p>Technical support provided in the drafting of the National Youth Policy</p> <p>Support provided to establishment of Youth councils</p> <p>Support provided to the professionalisation of youth work</p>	<p>Young people supported to participate meaningfully</p> <p>Member countries develop policies and plans</p> <p>Capacity-building of relevant ministries and institutions</p> <p>Youth workers access youth work training and qualifications</p>	<p>Member country takes action to establish or strengthen the policy environment for youth empowerment</p> <p>Member country takes action to further the professionalisation of youth work</p> <p>Young people empowered to take forward youth-led initiatives</p>	<p>National frameworks advance social, political and economic empowerment of young people</p>
Progress rating				

2.4.2 Youth and Sport

The Secretariat provided technical assistance during March 2015 to March 2016 towards development of a National Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) Strategy to support the development of a new National Sport Policy, which also provided for the establishment of a Sport Authority.

Sierra Leone was a member of the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport Membership (CABOS) from 2017 to 2018. CABOS advises the Commonwealth Secretary-General and member governments on sport policy issues, particularly related to SDP and protecting the integrity of sport.

The Secretariat hosted a Sierra Leonean delegation to London for one week in July 2016 to facilitate meetings with potential partners and funders for the National SDP Strategy implementation.

The Sport programme also convenes biannual Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meetings. Sierra Leone's minister of sport represented the country in 2014, 2016 and 2018.

Effectiveness

Secretariat outputs to support the development and implementation of the National SDP Strategy in Sierra Leone were well received. The Ministry of Sport took a number of key counterpart and follow-up actions in 2015–2016.

- Established a national steering committee to facilitate collaboration with other ministers;
- Generated a database of SDP-related organisations;
- Reviewed national policy and a codes of ethics to reflect SDP;
- Established a National Sport for All Commission in 2016 tasked with the responsibility for promoting physical exercise and sport for all programmes;
- Following the London meetings in 2016, forging of some links with other youth sport association seeking funding from the International Olympic Committee for a SDP project in Sierra Leone;

The National SDP Strategy has provided a sound knowledge tool for sharing with other countries seeking to develop their own strategies.

'We have benefited tremendously from organisations we met with in London since our official delegation in 2016. Fight for peace is supporting eight SDP-related organisations in Sierra Leone since November 2019 and I am monitoring these projects. Who's Got Game, Youth Sport Trust and UK Sports have been supportive.' Former Sierra Leone representative to CABOS and current staff of the National Sports Authority

Table 9. Sport programme performance

	Output	Short-term Outcome 1	Short-term Outcome 2	Intermediate Outcome
Impact Pathway	<p><i>Technical support provided to the development of the National SDP strategy and Action Plan</i></p> <p><i>Convening of regional and Commonwealth youth leaders</i></p> <p><i>Support to the convening of CABOS</i></p> <p><i>Support to Sierra Leone in accessing youth partnerships and networks</i></p>	<p><i>Member country adopts Strategy and develops country-owned Action Plans</i></p> <p><i>Member countries participate in convening opportunities</i></p>	<p><i>Member country resources the implementation of the Strategy and ACTION PLAN including through budgetary resources, identification of institutions responsibilities for delivery and identification of dedicated personnel</i></p>	<p><i>Member country adopt sport as an intentional policy in advancing development and peace</i></p>
Progress rating				

Notwithstanding this progress, the 2018 change in administration in Sierra Leone led to a break, with a new minister of sport and a collective pause as the new Government focused on defining and prioritising its national development agenda. The evaluation had limited engagement with key persons in the administration with which the Secretariat worked. The meetings held highlighted that there had been no progress towards outcomes in the sector with respect to what was delivered (Table 9).

The National SDP Strategy provided for the National SDP Steering Committee to review and update the Strategy every two years and for the National Sport Council to monitor progress in the implementation of the Action Plan. These follow-ups have not carried out in the past two years.

The National Sport Policy also needs revisiting to clarify roles, powers and responsibilities between the minister and the Board of the Sport Authority. Implementation of the National SDP Strategy could not advance without these clarifications.

Efficiency

The intervention was efficient as it was delivered mainly by Secretariat technical personnel and allowed for a long-term engagement with stakeholders as the National SDP Strategy and

Action Plan progressed to implementation. Sierra Leone also benefited from its engagement in CABOS, which helped bring the attention of partners and other countries to the innovations and provided an opportunity for developing partnerships.

Sustainability

The issue of sustainability of results in sport are similar to those in the youth work component. The sport sector has seen a number of changes of key policy leaders. Specifically, there have been three changes to the minister post since initiation of the technical assistance on the National SDP Strategy, in addition to a change in project lead within the Secretariat.

While there was strong ownership of the National SDP Strategy when it was delivered, the loss of momentum since 2018 has eroded this, since key personnel and policy leaders have changed and the Strategy and Action Plans have not been embedded in the institutions. For example, agreements reached on the National Steering Committee, the role of the ministry and Sport Councils and other mechanisms to implement the Strategy need to be revisited in the context of the priorities of the new administration.

Sustainability is also challenged by the lack of funds in the sport sector to support the implementation of youth-led initiatives and projects envisioned in the Strategy. Internal evaluation of the sport programme

also supports this finding. This was compounded by the lack of capacity at country and Secretariat level to support resource mobilisation. Further, the challenges

with the governance arrangements at country level noted above also negatively affected the formation of internationally oriented partnerships.

Conclusions

Conclusions: Interventions in youth and sport had a number of early wins but momentum was subsequently lost and the gains were not developed or sustained. The evaluation found that youth stakeholders were disillusioned at the status of progress of reforms that had been initiated. The sector needs to clarify its governance arrangements and provide an apolitical space for young people to engage.

Challenge(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The politicisation of youth development led to a cooling of youth engagement developed in the wake of youths' mobilisation during the EVD epidemic.</i> • <i>Resource mobilisation capacity is a challenge to developing and sustaining youth-led initiatives.</i> • <i>Fragmented governance of the sector and the Secretariat's programming was a challenge to realising outcomes.</i>
Lessons learnt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Individually driven reform, such as in the Sport programme, can be championed by committed leaders/partners. However, without institutional ownership, this carries the risk of failure when that individual is no longer at the helm.</i> • <i>Low-income countries are under-resourced in youth and sport and need the Secretariat's global partnership brokerage and CYP facilitation to develop fledgling projects to motivate stakeholders and allow reforms to mature.</i> • <i>The sectors require on-going and long-term support to drive through policy and reforms in favour of youth empowerment and SDP priorities.</i>
Recommendation(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Institutional ownership should be targeted as part of project planning as a risk mitigation and sustainability measure.</i> • <i>Further Secretariat support to the sector must be aligned behind clear national priorities and a co-ordinated national approach.</i>

2.5 Economic Development

More Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

Context

The Secretariat's support to the economic agenda of Sierra Leone has been delivered primarily through the provision of technical assistance in the area of improving trade competitiveness and trade facilitation, supporting its debt management and engaging the country as part of Commonwealth Africa through capacity-building and convening events.

On 21 March 2018, the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement was established along with three Protocols: Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Rules of Procedures for the Settlement of Disputes.

This was signed by 44 African countries in Kigali. Sierra Leone ratified the agreement on 29 April 2019.

The Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council was established in 2014 as a membership organisation with a mandate to promote trade and investment across the Commonwealth, and has business and national members. The organisation works with the Secretariat to convene trade ministers from across the Commonwealth to discuss trade and investment co-operation.

Sierra Leone has in place a five-year Medium Term Debt Management Strategy (from 2013) – a requirement of the Public Debt Management Act 2011. Prior to the commencement of the Strategic Plan, the Debt Management Unit had delivered the following technical support to Sierra Leone.

- Joint West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management/COMSEC regional workshop on developing a public debt bulletin (2010);
- In-country Debt Sustainability Analysis for Sierra Leone and Country Review Mission 2011;
- Advice on domestic debt market development in 2012.

Total non-staff expenditure: €77,821.56 (9%)	
<i>Trade</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support was provided to improve national trade competitiveness in global markets through development of a gender-sensitive action plan for Sierra Leone's packaging industry. • Thirty member states, including Sierra Leone, were represented at regional capacity-building events that prepared members to engage effectively in the WTO's 2017 conference in Argentina (Pacific – 8 countries; Africa – 14 countries; Caribbean – 8 countries). 	
<i>International Financial System</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Convening of Commonwealth Finance Ministers and Central Governors Meetings occurred. • The COMSEC publication 'Innovative Finance for Development' was published and shared at the 2014 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting/Senior Officials Meeting in Washington DC, attended by Sierra Leone. 	
<i>Debt Management</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Secretariat Advisory Mission made recommendations on local Bond Market Development. • Sierra Leone is a users of the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording Management System, version 2.1 • The new e-learning course on external debt was developed and piloted across Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific and subsequently scaled up in 2016/17. 	

2.5.1 Participation in the Global Trading System

Trade Negotiations

The Secretariat's International Trade Policy programme supports Commonwealth member countries to put in place effective policy mechanisms for their integration and participation in the global trading system. The programme's delivery strategies include a combination of analytical work and research to support and advance informed policy-making; capacity-building in certain specific areas such as negotiating trade deals; and consensus-building in support of development-friendly trade outcomes.

The expected outcomes of the programme are improved understanding of multilateral and regional trade policies by member countries; increased visibility, representation and recognition of trade issues affecting the Commonwealth; improved pan-Commonwealth collaboration in facilitating effective exchange of information,

ideas and successful experiences; and improved trade negotiation skills and capacity of relevant stakeholders.

The Secretariat's engagement with Sierra Leone on trade negotiations during the strategic period was principally through the Hubs and Spokes programme and through regional capacity-building events.

The Secretariat managed the EU-funded Hubs and Spokes II programme 2013–2015, which deployed five regional advisers to regional economic organisations in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, and twenty advisers to national trade institutions. While Sierra Leone did not benefit from a national adviser, it did see the successful conclusion of Phase 1 of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement negotiations, which started in 2015. The Hubs and Spokes programme contributed to this outcome through technical, legal and trade advisory services provided to a number of African countries and Regional

Economic Communities as well as the African Union Commission.

In financial year 2016/17, 30 member countries were represented at regional capacity-building events, which prepared them to engage effectively in the 11th Ministerial Conference of the WTO in 2017 in Argentina (Pacific – 8 countries; Africa – 14 countries – including Sierra Leone; Caribbean – 8 countries). The event in May 2017 allowed participants to exchange views and perspectives on topical trade and trade-related issues affecting Africa; to discuss and identify regional and multilateral policy priorities for sub-Saharan African countries; and to propose concrete recommendations in the lead-up to the Ministerial Conference. The meeting furthermore provided a platform for African member countries to assess various trade policy options, including UK-Africa trade relations post-Brexit, advancing African integration through the Continental Free Trade Agreement and priority issues for the Sixth Global Review of Aid for Trade in July. Past and present trade negotiators also convened to discuss a proposal to establish an informal Commonwealth African Trade Negotiators Network.⁹

The country was a tenant of the Commonwealth Small States Office during 2014–2016 but now engages with the WTO through its own mission office in Geneva. The country has developed a five-year trade facilitation action plan to guide its modernisation efforts, with support from the World Bank Group's Trade Facilitation Support Programme.

Trade Competitiveness

The Sierra Leone National Export Strategy (NES) 2010–2015 was designed with technical assistance from the Secretariat in 2009. In 2013, the Government requested support to reactivate the NES, which had stalled in the preceding years, and to facilitate its implementation through a reworked Action Plan. The export packaging industry was identified as one of the key cross-cutting issues in the NES, requiring intervention in order for Sierra Leone to achieve an expanded and diversified export base.

The project was to be delivered through two phases: Phase I – Needs Assessment for Export Packaging in Sierra Leone; and Phase II – Strategic

Action Plan to support the creation of a professional packaging industry with well-articulated and compliant quality standards. The project team comprised a Secretariat trade adviser and technical consultants working with the Sierra Leone Import and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

At its completion, the project delivered:

- A Strategic Action Plan that identified four strategic pillars and an implementation strategy that emphasised inter-institutional collaboration, capacity development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and increased sensitisation and awareness among policy principles and potential development partners;
- Gender as a key consideration in the development of the Strategic Action Plan that addressed agro-products and agro-processing, a sub-sector where women are more represented;
- A three-day experiential learning session (31 August–2 September 2016) to 23 SME representatives in agro-processing and light manufacturing who had participated in all stages of the development and validation of the packaging Strategic Action Plan.

Relevance

Trade is critical to Sierra Leone's development agenda and formed a part of its International Competitiveness pillar within the 2013–2018 Agenda for Prosperity. Its strategies recognise the need to address poor standards and quality assurance in order to improve exports. However, trade negotiations were more focused on participation within the ECOWAS trade liberalisation scheme rather than the global trading system.

The Secretariat's support to the export packaging sector followed an in-depth scoping mission to clarify the project purpose. Nonetheless, a reassessment in the post EVD environment, prior to further action on the Strategic Action Plan, may have been necessary to confirm there was still a national commitment and capacity to expand the export packaging industry.

Effectiveness

Soon after initiation of the export packaging technical support project in early 2014, the EVD epidemic unfolded in Sierra Leone. The institutional

⁹ Outcomes Document: Commonwealth African Consultation on Multilateral, Regional and Emerging Trade Issues InterContinental Resort, Balaclava, Mauritius, 25–26 May 2017.

capacity constraints that ensued resulted in a 16-month delay in implementation and also affected engagement and co-ordination with key stakeholders. After delivery of the training in 2016, the election period of September 2017 to April 2018 further put any decision-making on next steps on hold (Table 10).

In the project inception, the Secretariat recognised the challenges of poor co-ordination across the relevant public entities and the limited technical capacity of the Ministry of Trade and Industry as key inhibitors in the progress of the project. These risk factors had impacts on the effectiveness of the project and particularly on scaling up from the initial pilot intervention. While the Ministry holds political responsibility for the project and is the direct counterpart of the Secretariat's support, SLIEPA provided the technical lead and co-ordination. This arrangement may have resulted in disengagement and loss of ownership on the side of the Ministry. This was compounded by changes in leadership at both the Ministry and SLIEPA.

Training participants reported satisfaction with the training but disappointment at the lack of follow-up actions to support them in implementing the new knowledge. Sierra Leone did not have a budget for implementation of the follow-up actions articulated in the Strategic Action Plan. The Government and SLIEPA were hopeful that DFID funding could be mobilised but this did not materialise.

Efficiency

Efficiency was affected by the EVD crisis, as time was lost after the scoping mission. As noted above, loss of momentum and changes in personnel affected the benefits from the initial scoping mission that had resulted in broad agreement across the stakeholders on the way forward.

'Staff of the Commonwealth Secretariat developed strong personal relationship with me during my tenure at SLIEPA, which was quite beneficial in the implementation of the packaging project.' Former head

Sustainability

The project's proposal identified that its sustainability required public institutions and service providers to have demonstrable capacity to implement recommended changes to raise standards at a competitive price, as articulated in

the proposed Strategic Action Plan. Additionally, the ability to upgrade or develop a quality-driven export packaging industry will require investment from yet unidentified investors.¹⁰ These factors were not successfully addressed and as a result the initial outcomes of improved knowledge among SME participants did not extend into actions beneficial to their businesses or the industry.

Sierra Leone Opportunities for Business Action, a DFID-funded programme, produced market system analyses, sector strategy and recommendations for next steps for the packaging sector, and was a keen partner in moving forward reforms. However, the programme ended in 2017 without concrete steps and connections made.

Nonetheless, there is some evidence of interest in the current Government, and a new minister, in engaging donors in SME investment and exports. There are plans in place to establish an SME agency. Meetings at the Ministry of Trade confirmed the Government's intention to develop a packaging policy, recognising that packaging is a key priority in improving the competitiveness of small, export-ready businesses. A number of donors are working with the Government on these objectives and on a National Trade Strategy.

2.5.2 Global Development and Financing

The Secretariat's Economic Development programme delivers annual Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meetings, which also include Senior Officials Meetings and Commonwealth Central Bank Governors Meetings as well as the annual Commonwealth-La Francophonie G20 Dialogue. These meetings are held in the margins of the IMF/World Bank Annual and Spring Meetings. They provide member countries with the opportunity to share their perspectives on G20 priorities and initiatives, and at the same time allow successive G20 presidencies a platform for country engagement. This 'Outreach' has the main goal of facilitating a more inclusive global policy dialogue and, in tandem, closing gaps between developing and developed countries and forging trusted relationships between advanced and developing countries.

Key outputs delivered to countries through these meetings have included publications and discussion papers on relevant issues for developing economies and small states, including innovative finance for

¹⁰ Project Concept Note November 2013.

Table 10. Trade programme performance

	Output	Short-term Outcome 1	Short-term Outcome 2	Intermediate Outcome
Impact Pathway	<p>Needs assessment report of identified sector/industries</p> <p>Strategic Action Plan developed for the SME export packaging industry</p> <p>Training delivered to SMEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase knowledge and understanding of packaging concept and applications • Encourage SMEs to invest in improved packaging solutions for increased market access 	<p>Government commitment to take action to implement the Strategic Action Plan</p> <p>Work with package designers to ensue use of communication elements and barcodes that increase market access of their products</p> <p>Make informed-decisions on choice of improved packaging materials</p> <p>Make informed-decisions in choice of packaging equipment to match specified products and packaging materials</p> <p>Invest in appropriate packaging solutions to produce export-ready packaged products</p>	<p>Effective implementation of the Strategic Action Plan including through the allocation of resources and the development of robust partnerships</p> <p>Improved packaging in the export-ready light manufacturing and agro-processing SME sector</p>	<p>Improved export competitiveness through improved good quality, reasonably priced export packaging</p>
Progress rating				

development, implications of Brexit, climate finance access, fintech (from 2018) and de-risking.

Sierra Leone participated at the 2014 and 2017 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meetings.

2.5.3 Debt Management

The Secretariat's Debt Management programme supports member countries in effectively managing their debt portfolios to achieve sustainable debt. It is delivered through advisory support, capacity-building and provision of and support to public debt management systems, notably the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System (CS-DRMS).

The first e-learning course on external debt was developed and deployed to Commonwealth members in 2009. A total of 164 debt managers from across Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean have since been trained using the

eLearning tool, which delivers courses in domestic and external debt management and debt recording in CS-DRMS.

Technical support was provided to Sierra Leone in the development of a Treasury Single Account (TSA) at the Central Bank – a single account that consolidates all government cash balances into one account. This support followed the recommendation of an IMF report and was delivered through consultancies in partnership with the IMF. Most treasury management functions fall into the Accountant General's (AG) department. The AG is the authority for executing warrants that release resources from the Consolidated Fund to the relevant bank accounts of the spending units. It is responsible for the management and published accounts of all main central government accounts, including the Consolidated Fund, the payment of public sector salaries and other Trust Funds. The AG faces difficulties in reconciling data on domestic

Table 11. Debt Management programme performance

	Output	Short-term Outcome 1	Short-term Outcome 2	Intermediate Outcome
Impact Pathway	<i>Servicing and support to the installed CS-DRMS</i> <i>Provision of e-learning training</i> <i>Support for improved public financial management through the establishment of a TSA</i>	<i>Country effectively uses CS-DRMS</i> <i>TSA effectively implemented</i>		<i>Improved and effective debt management</i>
Progress rating				

debt payments to holders and, in some instances, external debt payments.

Relevance

Sierra Leone's public debt structure is 72 per cent external and 28 per cent domestic. Domestic debt servicing had built up in 2013 to more than 19 per cent of revenue (compared with 9 per cent for external debt) and was a major fiscal challenge for the Government.

Effectiveness

The Government of Sierra Leone uses CS-DRMS for recording and managing its public debt as well as private sector external debt. The system is installed at the Ministry of Finance as well as at the Bank of Sierra Leone. In March 2013, the Government requested support to establish an automated link between the CS-DRMS Securities module and the Securities Auctioning Systems in use by Sierra Leone. This exercise created a public debt database, reducing the need for manual and duplicate inputting, and also provided a more holistic view of debt information for the purpose of analysis and reporting.

Prior to 2016, Secretariat support to CS-DRMS was facilitated through IT support personnel within the Central Bank, where the database was managed. After this staff left the employ of the Central Bank communications with the Secretariat became defunct. Partly as a result of this, Sierra Leone did not receive regular version updates and, at the time of the evaluation, was still using version 2.1 (the most recent system version was 2.3).

The Sierra Leone Debt Management Unit benefited from provision of the e-learning courses.

A number of the recommendations made in 2012 on the development of the domestic debt market were not implemented. In 2013, the Government did restructure the domestic debt portfolio by reallocating from 91-day Treasury Bills to 182- and 364-day instruments with a policy of a zero ceiling on new borrowing. This reduced the interest cost on 91-day Treasury Bills from 19 per cent in December 2012 to 6.32 per cent in May 2013 and that on 182-day Treasury Bills from 24 per cent to 9.74 per cent over the same period.

A proposed implementation plan for the TSA and cash management system was accepted by the AG, the minister of finance, the governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone and all other stakeholders. The Government implemented the TSA in 2018 through executive order. The first phase of its establishment was completed in 2018, and saw the identification of potential savings to the Government of over 4.5 billion leones (€713,550). An agreement was reached between the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Sierra Leone to reinforce the provisions of Section 53 of the Bank of Sierra Leone Act and establish the structure of bank accounts and connectivity between the two organisations. The agreement will accelerate the centralisation of over 1,114 bank accounts owned by MDAs at commercial banks.

Table 11 presents the implied Impact Pathway for the intervention in debt management in Sierra Leone. The evaluation found that the Secretariat has made some progress in the short term outcomes, however no progress in delivering the intervention's objectives.

Sustainability

The loss of communications with the CS-DRMS support service put Sierra Leone behind on upgrading its debt management system to the new Secretariat system, Meridian. A recent visit from the Ministry of Finance to the Secretariat in 2018 is a first step in resolving this.

To support sustainability, there is a need to engage more debt officers, including IT support, in the system. There are indications of political support for reforms in addressing domestic debt, including through the recent visit of the minister to the Secretariat.

The Ministry is also working with the West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management (part of ECOWAS also supported by IMF/World Bank), which provides regular training. The three partners are also providing assistance in updating the Medium-Term Debt Management Strategy.

2.5.4 Sustainable Management of Marine and Other Natural Resources

The Secretariat has had a long engagement with Sierra Leone on natural resource management. However, the most recent intervention was in 2011.

During 2009–2011, the Secretariat provided advisory assistance to a review of the fiscal and

legislative framework for the petroleum sector, and in particular in revision of the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act 2001 and the petroleum fiscal regime and review of the model petroleum agreement. This engagement culminated in the new Petroleum Policy 2010 and the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act 2011.¹¹ The Secretariat followed up in 2011 to deliver a two-day capacity-building workshop for government and non-government stakeholders on the proposed legislative reforms in the upstream petroleum sector. The new petroleum framework enabled the country in subsequent years to attract foreign direct investment into the petroleum sector and improve governance through the establishment of modern institutional structures, including the new Petroleum Directorate.

The Secretariat participates in the New Petroleum Producers Discussion Group – a joint initiative with Chatham House and the Natural Resource Governance Institute involving over 30 countries, half of which are Commonwealth member countries.

The Fifth Annual Meeting of the New Petroleum Producers Discussion Group was held in Suriname in October 2017 and included training sessions on designing fiscal regimes, assessing environmental impacts and understanding the effect of evolving global climate policy on petroleum projects

Conclusions

Conclusions: Across the Debt Management and Trade Competitiveness programme, the quality of work delivered was very high and mostly responsive to the expressed needs at the time of scoping. However, the Secretariat's interventions struggled to find the right institutional footings and fell out of step with the Government's active policies.

Challenge(s)

- Institutional connections were not established and maintained to provide effective support to the debt management system.
- The Secretariat is challenged in leveraging small volumes of resources to assist countries to address intricate policy issues. This environment requires a high level of co-ordination, which is often inadequate at the national level.

Lessons learnt

- Institutional connections are critical for maintaining relevancy and achieving sustainability in interventions.
- Economic management is intricately interconnected and all interventions need to be co-ordinated in order to be coherent with the economic policy priorities of the Government.

Recommendation(s)

- Programmes need to establish and maintain institutional connections to triangulate the commitments made by individuals and ensure the programme intervention engages the institution not just individuals.

¹¹ <http://pd.gov.sl/overview/>

2.6 Small and Vulnerable States

Strengthened Resilience of Small States and Vulnerable States

Context

Of the 53 member countries of the Commonwealth, 31 are small states. Small states are defined as sovereign countries with a population of 1.5 million people or fewer. The Commonwealth also designates some of its larger member countries – Botswana, Jamaica, Lesotho, Namibia, Papua New Guinea and Sierra Leone – as vulnerable states because they share many of the characteristics of small states.

The Commonwealth's Small and Vulnerable States programme recognises that these countries face major challenges: limited global influence; weak technical capacity; limited access to affordable finance; and disproportionate impact of natural disasters and climate change. The Secretariat works to ensure international policies, mechanisms and rules are more responsive to small states' development strategies and resilience needs.

The Secretariat's main delivery mechanism for support to small and vulnerable states is through its convening and advocacy work to mainstream their concerns and solutions in the issues prioritised before finance ministers.

Total non-staff expenditure: Nil

- *Convening of the Global Biennial Conference on Small States occurred.*

2.6.1 Small and Vulnerable States Development

Sierra Leone did not benefit from any project action of the Secretariat during the Strategic Plan period in this area.

In financial year 2017/18, Sierra Leone participated in a pilot exercise of the Secretariat's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Data Project, which sought to support small and vulnerable states in addressing data gaps and challenges related to implementation of the SDGs. In this regard, Sierra Leone also participated in a workshop on 'Toolkits for Effective SDG Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals', held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in May 2018. The workshop introduced the Commonwealth's SDG Implementation Toolkit, which is under development. Sierra Leone expressed an interest in working with the Secretariat once the toolkit has been completed.

The second phase of the project will see the toolkit customised and implemented in member countries requesting support. In an effort to maximise complementarity and avoid duplication, the project relies on close partnerships with the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the New Partnership for Africa's Development – key international bodies championing the 2030 Agenda.

2.6.2 Small States Participation

The Commonwealth Small State Office in Geneva provides subsidised office space for Commonwealth small states' diplomatic missions to aid their participation in the discussions of the many international organisations in Geneva. It also supports other Commonwealth small states not physically present in Geneva that need assistance in representing their issues. Sierra Leone was a tenant of the Office from 2011 to 2016.

3. Conclusions

3.1 Summary of key findings

A number of significant shocks and change processes affected the implementation and results of the Secretariat's programme of support to Sierra Leone. The strategic period 2013/14–2016/17 enveloped the catastrophic EVD epidemic in Sierra Leone. The crisis had impacts on the Government's capacity to remain engaged with and progress on policies and strategies that were not directly pertinent to the EVD response and recovery efforts. A number of other events in the wake of the crisis further stalled the development agenda, notable among these the mudslide in Freetown in 2017, export price fluctuations during 2016, a constitutional reform process in 2016 and then the elections of 2018, preparations for which commenced in 2017, resulting in a change of administration.

It is in this national context that the Secretariat provided support to Sierra Leone on adhering to democratic principles, strengthening public institutions for anti-corruption and internal audit. It also supported improving access to justice, strengthening the public health system, empowering youth, promotion of SDP, improving trade competitiveness among SMEs and enabling effective public debt management.

The programme of assistance to Sierra Leone was broadly aligned with the country's national development agenda in 2013 and also with the Secretariat's Strategic Plan, although this alignment became irrelevant as the country was affected by, then sought to recover from, the EVD outbreak. In addition, Sierra Leone's 'Agenda for Prosperity' was necessarily put on hold after the EVD outbreak in 2014. Sector-specific strategies, and some concurrent donor programmes, were similarly affected. This implies that there was a clear shift of national priorities during the period from 2014 to 2016.

The evaluation did not find any evidence that the Secretariat's assistance across all programmes had taken sufficient cognisance of these changes in the national context, despite a strategic-level statement of support by the Secretary-General. Where implementation was affected, as in the case for the trade competitiveness, the project stalled

then reconnected when the opportunity arose. There was no evidence that the Secretariat had taken account of the Sierra Leone 2016 Recovery Plan, a transitional plan to realign the country with its development agenda. Without a specific risk management plan at that time, the Secretariat's programming provided no guidance on engaging the country during and after the crisis.

PDDs do not contain detail on what will be delivered to target countries. Planned outputs are therefore developed out of scoping missions and direct engagements between the programme team and the beneficiary institution following a request for support. These subsequent plans are not integrated back into the PDD. In general, the Secretariat's support therefore reflected a range of discrete outputs without coherence, internally or in country.

The evaluation found that, during the strategic period under review, the Secretariat satisfactorily delivered planned outputs across four of the six programme pillars – in the programme areas of Anti-Corruption, Internal Audit, Rule of Law, Health, SDP and Trade Competitiveness. Successful delivery of outputs occurred in the pre-2014 or post-2016 periods. However, contextual challenges during the period affected the uptake of these. As a result, the evaluation found that in most cases the policy environment was not conducive to realising the expected capacity development and policy progression. This was particularly true for delivery that took place pre-Ebola.

Where project plans were able to adapt to address the pressing needs of the country during the EVD outbreak, efforts in local government reform and health proved more successful at embedding long-term results. However, Sierra Leone's IAD successfully developed an ERM Policy and Framework with Secretariat support in 2016/17, providing an exceptional example of progress despite the ongoing Ebola crisis. This was attributable to a conducive policy environment and leadership and to the institution-led nature of the engagements.

Sierra Leone was a net beneficiary of the Secretariat's funding. The Secretariat expended £855,633 in the country over the strategic period, which compares favourably with the member

country's contribution of £392,668. The largest portion of this spend, approximately 70 per cent, was through the technical assistance programme, and this took place mainly during the 2013/14 financial year, pre-Ebola. Overall, the spend in Sierra Leone was mainly for long- and short-term technical assistance delivered through external consultants placed in Sierra Leone and through Secretariat staff.

The Secretariat found limited policy context and programmatic support for long-term placements.

Long-term technical placements in Sierra Leone supported rule of law and local government interventions. These placements all commenced before the start of the Strategic Plan and concluded in its first year. As a result, there was limited programmatic support after the placements concluded, to follow up and assess their impact or plan for their sustainability. In addition, the evaluation found the Secretariat had made limited connection between the long-term placements and broader policy reform in the sector.

The evaluation found that, where Secretariat staff had maintained effective engagement over a long period of time, this had facilitated positive results,

as in the development of the National SDP Strategy and the ERM Policy and Framework. The evaluation did not have access to detailed project costings, to assess efficiency. However, it follows that the EVD crisis also cost through a loss of time, which resulted in a loss of momentum and a disconnect with the results delivered before 2014.

Overall, the sustainability of the Secretariat's results was found to be unsatisfactory.

This was partly as a result of the factors above, notably the national context and limited technical capacity, but also reflected a lack of risk management and planning for sustainability on the part of the Secretariat.

The evaluation found limited engagement of Sierra Leone in the Secretariat's convening events around sector-specific issues and generally limited visibility of the Commonwealth at the sector level.

While some of this may owe to the EVD outbreak, there was also some indication from interviewees of a disconnect with the Commonwealth. Respondents, including those with responsibility for national co-ordination and programming, had limited knowledge of the breadth

of support available under the Strategic Plan. Conversely, a number of interviewees noted that requests for support had been denied in a number of instances. This was partly because of the decline in CFTC funding to the Secretariat. However, this was often not communicated as the reason for the decline. Comparatively, and reflecting its level of dependence on official development assistance, Sierra Leone's engagement with traditional development partners (the EU, the UN, the World Bank) is much more visible at the sector level than its Commonwealth engagements.

'MDA and policy coordination is a major challenge in Sierra Leone especially for development partners. Co-ordinating mechanisms are weak or non-existent made difficult by an over politicisation of the public sector and misplaced priorities over the last decade.' Public sector interviewee

3.2 Organisational lessons

Adaptive programme planning: Programme planning and management needs to be undertaken in a risk-sensitive, context-specific and adaptive manner. Plans for delivery should be reviewed on a periodic basis to take account of changing factors in the context, particularly as these are likely to affect not only effective delivery but also expected outcomes and their sustainability. Project plans need to identify and plan for risk management, not only at the programme level (within the PDD) but also at country project level. Adaptive planning helps mitigate against risks by providing the opportunity and rationale for the project manager to change the design or course of implementation.

Institutional connections: Establishing institutional connections is critical to sustainability and achieving value for money. Personal connections between peers or the programme teams and counterparts is immensely beneficial to building a relationship with the institution in question and to ensuring clarity around priorities and needs such that the project satisfies the expectations of the recipient. The connection needs to be further built and established at the institutional level to mitigate against the risk of discontinuity with a change in personnel. This would be true on the Secretariat as well as on the counterpart side. At the institutional level, the engagement can then be broadened to the

institutional leaders and partners, again increasing the likelihood that the intervention will be fit for purpose and will be embedded and sustained.

National co-ordination and programme

coherence: At the national level, programme co-ordination ensures that information is shared among partners and stakeholders working towards common objectives. This not only addresses the risk of duplication, ensuring there is coherence among partners and at beneficiary institutions but also provides a space for learning and the development of partnerships. This is particularly important for the Secretariat, which does not have a country presence and for which the existing mechanism of a point of contact at MOFA is not effective or even functional. In the case of Sierra Leone, the challenge is also that weak national co-ordination results in duplicate co-ordination structures at the sector level and among donors working on various issues. The Secretariat needs to consider options, which may differ across countries, for ensuring it has an 'ear to the ground' and can benefit from periodic updates through the active mechanisms in place.

Knowledge management: The evaluation encountered challenges in accessing project information for past projects, particularly where the programme team had been disbanded and where Secretariat staff were no longer in the role. The Secretariat needs a knowledge management structure that allows for the archiving of project details for at least two strategic planning periods. Proper documentation of records against projects should form part of the project closure procedures that need to be put in place.

Getting to results-driven delivery: Given the relatively limited financial resources available to Secretariat staff and the absence of specific project/intervention plans, interventions are often niche, discrete activities that lack depth and a policy context. As a result, there are very low expectations of longevity in outcomes. Technical assistance needs to be scoped with a view to the enabling environment for embedding capacities and sustaining results. In this regard, the policy context needs to be monitored continually and corroborating interventions or engagements made with a view to enabling the realisation of the project's objectives. There is value in in-country engagement with development partners that goes beyond sharing of information towards deeper collaboration that better maximises the comparative strengths of each partner.

3.3 Strategic recommendations

Country programming: A country programming framework has previously been recommended as a mechanism to achieve coherence at the national level, improving the results focus of the Secretariat's portfolio of support to the member country and also providing a basis for on-going communications with institutional and development partners.¹ The benefits of such a framework are clear through this country evaluation.

Internal co-ordination and adaptive planning: The Secretariat should reflect an adaptive approach to planning that takes greater cognisance of the dynamics of the country context and incorporates risk mitigation actions. Further, provision should be made for the continuity of project actions that overlap strategic years. The Secretariat should improve its project closure procedures and sustainability planning, including through providing for the sharing of follow-up contact information with counterparts.

Development co-operation: Co-ordination among donors at the national level is not only an effective strategy for delivery but also a principle of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.² Most member countries, including Sierra Leone, have endorsed the principles as a preferred approach to delivering aid. As an inter-governmental organisation, the Secretariat does not align with the definitions of 'donor'. However, it should be guided by these principles when planning and delivering in countries.

Improving visibility and increasing understanding of the Commonwealth and Commonwealth values:

The Commonwealth has a global presence, identity and reputation. However, at the national level, there is lack of clarity, even among beneficiary institutions, of its work. For example, in its Democracy programme, the Secretariat's engagement is broader than election observations. However, its work in improving gender equality in political representation and participation is limited. There needs to be a greater visibility of the Strategic Plan at the national level. The Secretariat should look for and exploit opportunities to communicate its values, plans and strategies among stakeholders.

1 Strategic Plan Evaluation; Evaluation as a Lever for Change, Workshop Report, April 2018.

2 Harmonisation: donor countries co-ordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's support to Sierra Leone 2013/14 – 2016/17

1. Introduction

The Commonwealth Secretariat is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1965 with 53 member countries across the globe, bringing together 2.2 billion citizens. The Organisation promotes democracy, rule of law, human rights, good-governance, social and economic development and is also a voice for small states and youth empowerment. The Secretariat work is guided by its Charter that affirms the core commonwealth principles (of consensus and common action, mutual respect, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, legitimacy, and responsiveness) and by its Strategic Plan.

In response to the evolving development context and demands of member states and other stakeholders, the Secretariat has adopted an increasingly results-oriented approach. Guided by the Strategic Plan and Evaluation Plan, a select number of independent evaluations and country evaluation are commissioned each financial year to respond to member states demands for accountability as well as the Secretariat's need for learning and organisational improvements.

The overall aim of the Evaluation function is to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of a programme, policy, or project so as to incorporate lessons learned into the decision-making process. As such it requires gathering, analysing, interpreting and collating information. To be effective, evaluations must be well designed, meet accepted standards for data gathering, quality and analysis and be well managed.

The Evaluation Section of the Secretariat have designed Country Evaluations to fulfil a number of functions:

- An instrument of accountability to member governments, providing an assessment of effectiveness, relevance, impact and

sustainability in delivering results of Secretariat's projects, programmes and special activities in member countries;

- Guides policy and planning decisions by providing feedback on the performance and quality of the Secretariat's portfolio of development and democracy work;
- Provides an opportunity to identify and disseminate organisational lessons to guide the future work of the Secretariat in a particular country or region and generally across its membership;
- Assesses the flow of contributions and benefits between the member state and the Secretariat.

2. Context

The Strategic Plan 2013/14 – 2016/17 evaluation noted that the Secretariat should do more 'evaluative monitoring' to reduce its reliance on costlier external evaluation. As the Secretariat matures in the monitoring function, it is anticipated that the evaluation function will endeavour to bridge the outcome monitoring gap through evaluative monitoring. As outcomes take a long time to materialise, outcomes of projects implemented in the 2013/14–2016/17 strategic plan will only be realised in the next strategic period (2017/18 – 2020/21).

Building on the Secretariat's 'Impact Pathway' approach to results based planning, monitoring and evaluation, an evaluation framework that applies qualitative evaluative monitoring methodologies such as outcome mapping, outcome harvesting and case studies will be applied.

Country-focused evaluative monitoring take a holistic approach to the Secretariat's engagement in the selected country in assessing outcomes and

impact. These internal evaluations are conducted by Secretariat's Evaluation Team. The selection criteria used for the countries to be evaluated include:

- a. An adequate geographic balance of nations;
- b. No previous country evaluation conducted;
- c. The size (number and value) of activities supported by the Secretariat;
- d. A balance between small nations and others;
- e. A balance between varying levels of development;

3. Purpose and scope of assignment

The Country Evaluation is an internal evaluation led by Strategy, Portfolio and Partnership Division. The purpose of Country Evaluations is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the Secretariat's support to the target member state. The study will cover the four-year period of the strategic plan 2013/14 – 2016/17 as the common base for all country evaluations. However, depending on when the evaluation takes place, information collected should be up-to-date to the time of the study that will include the current strategic plan period 2017/18 – 2021/22. The evaluation will provide an independent opinion on the design, performance and results of the Secretariat's programme in the targeted member state. It will also make recommendations from both the strategic and operational perspectives to optimise the utilisation of resources in achieving sustainable impact. Specifically, the evaluation will:

- Review the extent to which the Secretariat support was relevant to the priorities of the targeted member country, and consistent with intermediate outcomes of the Strategic Plan;
- Assess outcomes and impact achieved over the evaluation period and the level of sustainability of the results;
- Assess member state contribution to Secretariat's funds and the benefits realised over the review period and conduct a contribution-benefit analysis, assessing value for money for the member country;
- Review the delivery model of programmes in the member state, including communication and programme coordination

in-country, highlighting lessons and areas for improvements;

- Identify issues, challenges and lessons learned and make recommendations on the overall Secretariat's programming.

4. Approach and methodology

One of the primary focus of the Country Evaluations is to assess if there has been any outcomes or impact that can be attributed to the contribution of the Secretariat to the member state. It is very difficult to assess the contribution of the Secretariat in the midst of different development players, and in some cases where the Secretariat's contribution has been limited. In that regard, a mix of qualitative methodologies will be used to try and ascertain the changes that have occurred and evidence their links to the Secretariat. Some of the methodologies that will be used include the Secretariat's developed 'Impact Pathway', outcome harvesting, outcome mapping and case studies.

Based on the above evaluation methodologies informing the questions and tools development, the Evaluation Team will include the following key steps in the conduct of the evaluation for information collection, analysis and report writing during the study.

- National country documentations, including strategy documents and reports available publically will be reviewed to provide context and address the general evaluation questions;
- Desk review of all projects and interventions delivered in the target country. Project design documents with their monitoring plans and results reports will be reviewed. All key documentations including BTORs, research reports, progress reports from Consultancies etc. will be reviewed to address the specific evaluation questions;
- Focus group discussions and interviews will be held with project teams to better understand the programme theory, qualify/contextualise the results documented and seek responses to specific questions that will emerge from the literature review;
- Field visits will be conducted to the target country to meet key stakeholders, boundary partners, beneficiaries and others who may have engaged with the interventions. These

visits will allow the evaluation team to triangulate desk findings, verify results information and collect raw data on the evaluation questions in the evaluation framework. Where possible, focus group discussions will be held with teams/beneficiaries directly engaged with the Secretariat's programmes;

- Specific engagements will be conducted with national level monitoring and evaluation units, planning and statistical units to aggregate national information and also verify national statistics and policy positions;

In order to maximise access to key stakeholders, where possible, the timing for these studies will coincide with any country, regional or Pan-Commonwealth meetings or events taking place in the target country. Evaluation Teams, where possible, can also hold side review meetings alongside these meetings/events.

5. Deliverables

- **Inception report** incorporating the revised TOR and Country Evaluation Framework and data collection tools
- **Evaluation Report:** The report, following the desk review, interviews, survey and field work, will include all the findings, analysis, lessons and recommendations. Case studies will be used in the representation of the some of the information
- **Impact Stories:** These will be a core output of each of the field visit. They will be stand-alone case studies where there is strong evidence of impact. These will be published separately with photos where appropriate. The impact stories will be used to supplement progress reports and published for wider access;
- **Synthesis Studies Themes:** Emerging themes from completed country evaluations and impact stories will be identified for further analysis and synthesis to provide a regional or Pan-Commonwealth picture;
- **Dissemination seminar** presenting and validating the evaluation findings and recommendations;
- **Evaluation summary report;** A short document that highlights key findings and can be easily accessible and used for decision making.

6. Schedule and level of effort

The study is planned to commence in June 2018. It is estimated that at least a team of two staff will be involved led by a team member of Strategy, Learning and Innovation. The study is to be completed within three months from inception. Travel and Daily Subsistence Allowance expenses related to country field visits will be covered by the Country Evaluation budget in line with the Secretariat's Travel Policy.

7. Technical requirements

The Evaluation Team should demonstrate the following:

- Substantive knowledge and experience in undertaking reviews, evaluations and critical research;
- Knowledge and experience of policy and programming matters as well as challenges and issues in global and national development and democracy;
- Ability to handle and analyse big datasets, and conduct multi country reviews;
- Excellent communication skills, both spoken and written English, including experience in the production of clear and concise reports for international/inter-governmental institutions, and delivery of messages to a diversified audience;
- In-depth understanding of the work of the Commonwealth; and,
- Familiarity with Sustainable Development Goals and the international governance architecture.

8. Evaluation team selection criteria

To be selected to participate on the Country Evaluation Team, the staff member should:

- Be objective and able to view the progress or lack of it from a learning perspective;
- Be balanced, critical and able to independently lead and facilitate discussions with both internal and external stakeholders;
- Not be a part of the programme team for projects being evaluated in the targeted country;

- Be able to engage with and represent the Secretariat at key meetings, present and defend the evaluation findings to external and internal stakeholders;

9. Evaluation team

The Country Evaluation Team is composed of the following:

- **Head of Evaluation and Learning – Team Leader:** Accountable for the overall evaluation study; Lead the evaluation study, including preparation of evaluation tools, desk review, data/information collection, analysis and reporting; Lead the team on the field visit; Lead the preparation and presentation of the evaluation report;
- **Programme Officer:** Support desk review; Support data collection; Support communication with internal and external stakeholders; Circulate data collection tools; Schedule interviews; Facilitate field visits logistics; Support analysis and reporting; Participate and prepare minutes for meetings, including presentation of report and follow-up meetings.
- **Consultant:** Conduct desk review; Conduct interviews and participate in field visits; Facilitate focus group discussions as required; Conduct analysis of data and information; Support preparation of evaluation report; Support presentation of the evaluation findings.

Annex 2: Key Evaluation Questions and Evaluation Tools

	Evaluation Questions
Context	What has been the Secretariat's engagement with the Institution? What issues/ problem was being addressed by the Secretariat? Did the Secretariat fully understand the problem within the broader context? What was delivered by the Secretariat? When was this delivered?
Relevance	Were the activities and outputs of the programme responsive to the problem/ issue that were identified? Was the Secretariat support relevant to the priorities of the Institution? Was this support consistent with intermediate outcomes of the Strategic Plan?
Efficiency	What was the delivery mechanism? How efficient was the delivery? Were costs economised without affecting the quality of delivery? Were issues of equity considered in the achievement of programme outcomes?
Effectiveness	Were the planned results of the programme achieved? What factors contributed to the achievement or non-achievement? Was the Secretariat responsive to the issues? How effectively have the outputs and outcomes been monitored?
Impact	What changes (positive and/or negative) have you seen? Can this change be directly attributed to the support provided by the Secretariat? Who are the other players contributing to this change? How has this change impacted on women and men differently if any? Or could the change potentially be experienced differently between men and women? Are there any unplanned changes that happened as a result?
Sustainability	Can these results be sustained over a long period? What needs to be put in place to ensure that the programme is sustainable?
Value Added	Could this programme have been delivered by another partner? What distinct value does the Commonwealth Secretariat add?
Challenges	What challenges were experienced and what areas could be improved?
Lessons	What lessons can be drawn? What could the Secretariat do differently?
Recommendations	How can the programme be improved to be better meet the needs?

Interview Tool

Area of Focus	Question Guide
General Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Role • Length of time in the position
Experience of the Secretariat interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was done/when? • Who delivered and how? • What are some noted outcomes, results? • Other engagements with the Secretariat? Meetings etc?
Status/trends/country context related to the intervention/ programme/policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the status of the programme area at present? • Challenges in getting progress/results • Government policy/programmes/priorities? • What's next...? sustainability?
Reflections on the Commonwealth Secretariat's Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the other donors working in the programme area? • How does the Secretariat/the Commonwealth compare to working with other organisations? • What have you learnt of working with the Secretariat – impressions, perceptions? <i>Prompts: flexibility? responsiveness? Technical expertise? understanding of the local context? Cost effectiveness? Communications?</i> • What does the Secretariat do really well? What does the Secretariat not do so well? • What can the Secretariat do better in the future as it continues to engage with the country? • How can the Secretariat continue to support your agency's objectives? • Have there been any Gender considerations or reflections in the Secretariat's engagements?

Rating Descriptors for the Evaluation Criteria

Rating – Effectiveness	Definition
4 Highly Satisfactory	All result targets met or exceeded
3 Satisfactory	Outputs delivered as expected and good progress evidenced on realisation of outcomes.
2 Moderately satisfactory	Same outputs delivered as expected, but good progress in realisation of related outcomes.
1 Unsatisfactory	Output not delivered or insufficiently delivered.
0 Non-evaluable	Criteria not assessed due to insufficient information/evidence

Annex 3: Sierra Leone's Participation at Ministerial Meetings and Conferences

2013/2014

1. Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, UN Headquarters, New York, 26 September 2013
2. Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting, Washington DC, 9 October 2013
3. Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 15–17 November 2013

2014/2015

1. 7th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting, Glasgow, Scotland, 21 July 2014
2. Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, UN Headquarters, New York, 25 September 2014
3. Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting Washington DC, 8 October 2014
4. The Regional Youth Ministers Meeting at Ministerial level

2015/2016

1. Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, UN Headquarters, New York, 24 September 2015
2. Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting, Lima, Peru 6–7 October 2015
3. Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Malta, 27–29 November 2015

2016/2017

1. 8th Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 4 August **2016**
2. Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, UN Headquarters, New York September 2016
3. Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting, Washington DC, USA 6–7 October 2016

2017/2018

1. 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting 31 July–4 August 2017, Kampala, Uganda.

Annex 4: List of Documents Consulted

The Evaluation reviewed all available project documentation including project design documents, concept notes and proposals, mission requests and responses and M&E reports including experts' periodic reports and end-consultancy reports.

Christiana O'Reilly, Annetta Flanigan, Kate Sullivan
Women Use Your Power, A Gender Assessment of the 2018 Elections

DFID **Operational Plan 2011–2015 Sierra Leone Updated** June 2013

European Union Election Observation Mission Republic Of Sierra Leone Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council Elections, Final Report 2018

Ministry of Finance **Sierra Leone – One Year of Economic Management In The New Direction**, April 2018–April 2019, Ministry of Finance 2018 Annual Review

Ministry of Youth Affairs, Sierra Leone **A Blue Print for Youth Development** Sierra Leone's National Youth Programme 2014–2018

National Youth Commission, & Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports. **Sierra Leone Status of the Youth Report** 2012

OECD Sierra Leone **Aid at a Glance**. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org/countries/sierraleone/aid-at-a-glance.htm>

Government of Sierra Leone, 2019 **Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan** 2019–2023

Government of Sierra Leone **The Agenda For Prosperity Road To Middle Income** Status, Sierra Leone's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2013–2018

Government of Sierra Leone & Statistics Sierra Leone **Integrated Household Survey** 2011

Government of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Health & Sanitation, **National Health Sector Strategic Plan**, 2017–2021

Government of Sierra Leone, **National Ebola Recovery Strategy for Sierra Leone** 2015–2017

Government of Sierra Leone **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development: Advanced Draft Report On Adaptation Of The Goals In Sierra Leone**. Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, July 2016

Richard H Langan II **Evaluation Report UNDP Sierra Leone (Irish Aid) Improving Rule of Law & Access to Justice Programme** (2013–2014, NCE 30th June, 2015) Revised Final: 29 APRIL 2016

Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission **National Anti-Corruption Strategy** (Sierra Leone) (2014–2018)

Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission Sierra Leone **National Anti-Corruption Strategy** (2019–2023)

Sierra Leone **Truth and Reconciliation Report, Executive Summary**

The Carter Center **March 7, 2018, Presidential And Parliamentary Elections In Sierra Leone**, March 23, 2018, Final Report

The Commonwealth Secretariat, Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat Programme of Assistance To Sierra Leone 1999–2005, Evaluation Series No. 81, Author: Isla Paterson November 2007

The Commonwealth Secretariat, Evaluation of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2013/14–2016/17, Evaluation Series No. 105. Authors: Ella Haruna and Kimberly Kane, Centre for International Training and Development, University of Wolverhampton, January 2017

The Commonwealth Secretariat, **Trade Hot Topics, The Ebola Crisis in West Africa: Implications for Trade and Regional Integration** Issues 119, 2015

The Commonwealth Secretariat, **Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group Sierra Leone National and Local Council Elections** 17 November 2012

The Commonwealth Secretariat, **Gender Equality in the Commonwealth**, Vol 1, 2017/18

The Commonwealth Secretariat **Commonwealth Governance Handbook 2012/2013**

Strengthening Governance in Sierra Leone
Nicholas Broadbridge, Programme Co-ordination
Unit, GIDD

The Commonwealth Secretariat **Sport for Development and Peace A Case Study of Sierra Leone**, 2015

UNDP, National Commission for Persons with Disabilities **An Assessment of Access to the Electoral Process for Persons with Disabilities in Sierra Leone**, 2018

UNFPA **Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth** (Presentation)

World Bank Implementation and Completion Report **Sierra Leone Public Sector Pay And Performance Project** March 2019 Report No: ICR00004522

World Bank – **Sierra Leone, Country Policy and Institutional Assessment** – CPIA 2016, 2018

World Bank Group Sierra Leone, **Doing Business 2019**

World Economic Forum, Insight Report, **The Global Competitiveness Report 2014–2015 & 2017–2018**

Annex 5: Internal Stakeholder List

No	Position
1.	Adviser, Health – Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
2.	Human Rights Adviser, Governance and Peace Directorate
3.	Human Rights Officer, Governance and Peace Directorate
4.	Adviser and Team Leader (IT Systems), Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
5.	Legal Adviser (Natural Resources), Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate
6.	Head of Sport for Development and Peace, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
7.	Adviser and Head, Economic Policy and Small States, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate
8.	Interim Adviser and Head, Public Sector Governance, Governance and Peace Directorate
9.	Adviser, Public Financial Management, Governance and Peace Directorate
10.	Adviser, Public Sector Governance, Governance and Peace Directorate
11.	Programme Officer, Political, Governance and Peace Directorate
12.	Programme Assistant, Political, Governance and Peace Directorate
13.	Legal Adviser, Rule of Law, Governance and Peace Directorate
14.	Adviser Trade Competitiveness, Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate
15.	Political Adviser, Governance and Peace Directorate
16.	Head of Social Policy Development, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development Directorate

Annex 6: List of Institutions Consulted

No	Institution
1.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Multilateral and International Affairs
2.	Ministry of Finance – Accountant Generals Department
3.	Internal Audit Directorate, Ministry of Finance
4.	Ministry of Finance – Deputy Minister of Finance
5.	Anti-Corruption Commission
6.	Ministry of Health and Sanitation – CMO
7.	Ministry of Health and Sanitation – Emergency Operations Center
8.	National Youth Commission
9.	Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
10.	Ministry of Sports
11.	EU Delegation in Sierra Leone
12.	Public Debt Management Division, Ministry of Finance
13.	University of Sierra Leone
14.	Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency
15.	Ministry of Trade & Industry
16.	National Public Procurement Authority
17.	National Electoral Commission
18.	UK-Department for International Development
19.	Supreme Court
20.	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
21.	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development – Decentralisation Secretariat
22.	Campaign for Good Governance (CGG)

Annex 7: Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Results Framework – Sierra Leone

No	Result	Indicators	SL
DEMOCRACY			
1.1	<i>CMAG is well-informed and supported to protect and promote Commonwealth values and principles</i>	<i># of member states engage with CMAG under the enhanced mandate to respond positively to and implement CMAG's recommendations</i>	N/A
1.2	<i>Member states engage with and benefit from the strengthened Good Offices of the Secretary-General</i>	<i># of identified member states engaged in Good Offices capacity that implement policy changes that reflect the advice from the Secretary-General and his/her Envoys and Advisers</i>	2018
1.3	<i>Member states conduct fair, credible and inclusive elections</i>	<i># of member states whose electoral framework has been strengthened to meet national, regional and Commonwealth standards, as indicated by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Legal and constitutional frameworks in place</i> • <i>Institutional capacity and independence</i> • <i>Procedures in place</i> 	Yes
		<i># of member states where at least 10% of COG recommendations are in the process of being implemented within 12 months of the election taking place</i>	No (ref 2012, 2018)
		<i># of member states adopting best practises and principles emerging from the CEN in enhancing their national electoral processes</i>	N/A
		<i># of national electoral management bodies that embed best practices and principles emerging from the CENs in enhancing their electoral processes</i>	N/A
1.4	<i>Values of 'respect and understanding' advanced</i>	<i>% of student participants in the Commonwealth Class Programme who report that their learning about the Commonwealth has improved their understanding of global issues</i>	N/A

No	Result	Indicators	SL
PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS			
2.1	<i>Effective institutions and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights</i>	<p># of targeted member states with new or more effective national human rights institutions as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling legislation adopted and compliant with Paris Principles • Fully operational • Movement towards 'A' status 	YES
2.2	<i>Improved and constructive engagement of member states in the UN's UPR process</i>	<p># of targeted member states that engage constructively with the UN UPR as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality reporting to UNHRC • Undergoing examination in a constructive manner • Implementing accepted recommendations 	YES
		<p># of key regional human rights issues progressively addressed by Commonwealth Parliamentary Human Rights Groups</p>	N/A
2.3	<i>Effective mechanisms ensuring the autonomous and harmonious operation of three branches of government and strengthened independence of the judiciary</i>	<p># of member states with issues on the separation of powers that reform their constitutional and statutory provisions in order to uphold the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles</p>	NO
		<p># of member states with issues on the appointment and removal of judges that establish procedures which provide for the appointment, discipline and removal of judges in accordance with the Commonwealth (Latimer House) Principles</p>	
		<p># of member states without continuous judicial education and adequate resources for the judicial system that institute reforms to strengthen the cognitive and institutional aspects of the independence of the judiciary</p>	NO
2.4	<i>National institutions effectively facilitating the administration and delivery of the rule of law and justice</i>	<p># of member states with weak capacity and judicial institutions using Secretariat guidelines, tools and model laws/ regulations to strengthen the administration and delivery of justice</p>	NO
		<p>% of member states without the relevant constitutional and statutory provisions make substantial progress in creating legal frameworks for the (i) effective delivery of justice and (ii) promotion of reforms conducive to sustainable development</p>	YES
		<p># of member states where justice and law enforcement institutions are weak effect administrative reforms to strengthen those institutions</p>	YES

No	Result	Indicators	SL
2.5	Improved public administration	<p># member states with effective, accountable and transparent targeted public institutions in the efficient delivery of services as indicated by the existence and functioning of at least 5 of 9 institutions outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Policy Coordination and Implementation Unit • Public Service Commission • Ministry of Establishment • Public Procurement Regulatory Agency • Internal Audit Department • Supreme Audit Institution • Public Accounts Committee • Finance Committee of Parliament • Anti-Corruption Agencies 	YES (ACC, IAD)
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT			
3.1	Strengthened national frameworks and policies improve health outcomes	Member states with up-to-date policies and regulatory mechanisms to meet international health care delivery standards	YES
3.2	Strengthened national policies and frameworks improve education outcomes	Member states with up-to-date policies, regulatory mechanisms and standards for the implementation of quality teaching and learning systems	N/A
3.3	Gender equality and the empowerment of women effectively mainstreamed into member state policies, frameworks and programmes and Secretariat's projects	Policy formulation and planning processes of member states reflect and demonstrate gender equality and empowerment	N/A
3.4	Improved capacity building for social development	Member states have the ability to formulate policy and planning processes for social development priorities	YES
YOUTH			
4.1	National and Pan-Commonwealth frameworks advance social, political and economic empowerment of young people	# of member states implementing reform actions to establish or strengthen the policy environment for youth empowerment	YES
		# of member states taking action to further the professionalisation of youth work	YES
		<p># of member states adopting sport as an intentional approach to advancing development and peace as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific policy instruments • National coordination and cross sectoral mechanisms 	YES

No	Result	Indicators	SL
4.2	Young people empowered and supported to participate meaningfully and to take forward youth-led initiatives	# of national, regional and Pan-Commonwealth youth-led networks and platforms set up or strengthened	N/A
		# of targeted national, regional and international institutions and individuals demonstrating increased impact in youth development and youth-led programming	N/A
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
5.1	Effective policy mechanisms for integration and participation in the global trading system	Member states that effectively formulate trade policy, negotiate and implement international trade agreements	YES
		Member states that implement export development and competitiveness strategies	NO
5.2	Commonwealth principles and values advanced in global development and financing decisions	Commonwealth position on global development and financing decisions recognised at G-20 and post-2015 MDG framework, among others	N/A
5.3	National frameworks facilitate effective debt management	Member states that reform their management of public debt	YES
		Member states effectively utilise the Secretariat's debt management systems to proactively manage their debt	NO
5.4	Strengthened, equitable and sustainable management of maritime and other natural resources	The degree of integration between policies and legislation in member States for the management and governance of natural resources	N/A
		# of reformed/established governance frameworks and institutional arrangements in member States that promote and support the sustainable management of natural resources	N/A
		# of maritime boundaries delimited by Commonwealth member states in accordance with international law, including through joint development and other provisional arrangements	N/A
		# of broad-based mechanisms for effective, transparent and integrated management of marine resources implemented by member states	N/A
SMALL STATES			
6.1	International policies, mechanisms and rules are more responsive to small states development strategies and resilience needs	# of targeted international conferences that acknowledge the sustainable development needs of small states	N/A
		% of small states that effectively participate in targeted international processes related to their sustainable development needs	YES

No	Result	Indicators	SL
6.2	<i>Small states enabled to effectively participate in international decision-making processes</i>	<i>% of small states constructively engaging with trade for a and human rights mechanisms in Geneva via small states office</i>	YES
		<i># of small states engaging effectively with the UN General Assembly and other forums in New York via the small states office</i>	N/A
6.3	<i>Improved climate financing frameworks</i>	<i># of Commonwealth member states that report improved access to climate finance arising from Commonwealth influenced tools or policies.</i>	N/A

Annex 8: Sierra Leone Country Indicators

	2013–2015	2017–2019
Governance and Competitiveness		
<i>Democracy Index (EIU)</i> ¹	4.64 out of 10	4.66 out of 10
<i>Doing Business Rank</i> ²	142 of 185	163 of 190
<i>Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (Scale of 0–Most Corrupt to 100–Least Corrupt)</i> ³	30 (Rank:119 of 177 countries)	30 (Rank:130 of 180 countries)
<i>Global Competitiveness Index (WEF)</i>	3.0 (2013-144 out of 148 countries)	38.8 (2018-134 of 140 countries)
<i>Share of seats in Parliament held by women (UNDP)</i>	12.4%	
<i>Overall Governance score (Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance)</i>	52.5 out of 100	50.9 out of 100
<i>Safety and Rule of Law (Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance)</i>	60.3 out of 100	59.9 out of 100
<i>Participation and Human Rights (Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance)</i>	59.6 out of 100	62.2 out of 100
<i>Internet users, total (% of population)</i> ⁴		9.0
Economic and Social Development		
<i>Population, mid-year (millions)</i>	6.1	7.4
<i>GDP per capita (US\$)</i>	784	491.5
<i>Debt to GDP Ratio</i> ⁵	30.5	57.9
<i>Exports and imports/GDP</i> ⁶	87.5	74.1
<i>Human Development Index/Rank</i>	0.419/183 out of 187	0.438/181 out of 189
<i>Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of population)</i>		52.9
<i>Life expectancy at birth (years)</i>		54.3
<i>Literacy (% of population age 15+)</i>		43.0 34.5 (Female) 51.6 (Male)
<i>Employment to population ratio (% ages 15 and older)</i>		55.6
<i>Population with at least a secondary level of Education (UNDP)</i>	16.8 Female 29.7 Male	

1 <http://country.eiu.com/sierra-leone>

2 <https://tradingeconomics.com/sierra-leone/ease-of-doing-business>

3 https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017

4 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SLE>

5 <https://tradingeconomics.com/sierra-leone/government-debt-to-gdp>

6 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/133206>

Commonwealth Secretariat

Marlborough House, Pall Mall
London SW1Y 5HX
United Kingdom

thecommonwealth.org



The Commonwealth