





# sierra leone

## trade on the ground

There's a trade path being signposted across the country.

Trade is speeding across Freetown on the backs of motorcycles weaving around the Cotton Tree down to Kissy Road enveloped by street vendors' cries. The national dance troupe's drum rhythms make the perfect soundtrack on a ride upcountry to Bo, green shrubs lining the roadside, preceding the rows of diamond sellers in town.

Trade is making waves at white sand scenes in River No. 2 where the community rents out rainbow beach umbrellas and day-trippers picnic on cassava leaves with chilli pepe. Nature is in charge along the river at Tiwai Island as colobus monkeys dart across swaying treetops, and Mama Lucy and the chimpanzee group invite you to get up close performing their daily routine in Tacugama Sanctuary.

Trade is being printed onto African fabrics as women in fashion designs and neon colours move through the market labyrinth and workers head out to take on the buzzing night-lights reflected in the water down in Central Freetown.

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*“We have tried to improve an atmosphere for doing business. Our role has been to mobilize ministries, departments and agencies. We hope as part of our agenda to move from aid to trade, we strengthen the domestic private sector.”*

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Richard Konteh, former Minister of Trade and Industry

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## trade journey

Trade is opening up opportunities countrywide. In local communities, eco-tourism ventures that are protecting the environment are boosting incomes; in laboratories, agricultural samples are tested for quality to access new markets, and growth centres are connecting SMEs to value chains across the country.

## getting trade to work for development

Making strides in building a better business environment for stronger growth has meant a hard look at getting the regulatory environment right and making governance work better – with the country being labelled a leading reformer. Improving major infrastructure gaps and boosting social development, after a legacy of insecurity, now needs to be tackled head on. Helping the country to move beyond the past with a new brand, attracting visitors so that local communities benefit, is part of this growth vision. The third Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Agenda for Prosperity 2013-2017, has a new strong focus on trade through the chapter on International Competitiveness as well as on Economic and Export Diversification. At the same time, important gender and environmental concerns have been taken into account.

The Diagnostic Integration Study Update (DTISU) led by the World Bank (WB) together with the National Trade Policy and Action Plan are mapping out the next steps. The DTISU is looking at agriculture, fisheries and tourism alongside

## trade snapshot

In the Bennimix factory, workers mix rice, sesame and pigeon peas brought in by farmers as women stand in line to stock up on the nutrition formula’s bright bags.

At the National Standards Bureau, teams in white lab coats use sterilized equipment to test food samples on ECOWAS scales, noting measurements.

Tourists recline in Tacugama’s eco-lodge hammocks as sunrise falls behind the trees while visitors learn about community outreach and education programmes.

At Newton’s Export Processing Zone, pineapples are moved from trucks, tops removed by hand before juice is extracted and blended by high-tech machines.

The Petty Traders Association meets in its headquarters in Freetown’s city market and brainstorms plans to increase access to finance for stallholders.

In the Hotel and Tourism Training College (HTTC), supervisors run through a role-play with students as they lay a table and provide customer service with a smile.

On Tiwai Island, overseas researchers and guides track the pygmy hippopotamus through the forest, as they tell of local legends linked to fire and diamonds.





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*“We tried to use budgetary resources well to enhance and facilitate sectors dealing with trade. We are going to increase our allocation of domestic resources to this. We are looking at bringing all parties involved to ensure activities positively impact on trade.”*

Mohammed K. Warritay, Deputy Director, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

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trade facilitation and the regional angle. Against this backdrop, a medium-term programme is being developed to translate trade actions into long-term impact. With EIF backing, the EIF National Implementation Unit’s (NIU) professional team have prepared technical trade-related papers and boosted the capacity of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. It’s led to supporting the third Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and laid strong policy foundations. In turn, it’s helped advance the National Trade Policy and Action Plan, the National Export Strategy and areas on copyright, consumer protection and competition and local content policy. Now the team’s activities are part of a Performance Tracking Table monitored by the Strategic Policy Unit in the Office of the President.

Communications on trade has had a high profile with awareness-raising workshops engaging project stakeholders countrywide as well as radio discussions taking place in the four regions. It’s being used as a tool to build stakeholder understanding of issues and to spread the results and impact achieved on trade nationwide. Through consultations, people are being informed about trade linkages. There’s a dedicated EIF webpage hosted on the Ministry of Trade’s website, and projects such as those on tourism are being highlighted on TV through the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, showing its potential for job creation and youth prospects.

### joining up stakeholders on trade

The scope of partners countrywide that need to be part of the trade and development dialogue demands a bold set of interventions. With EIF support,

the NIU has deepened the involvement by opening up information channels. The National Steering Committee (NSC), chaired by the Minister of Trade and Industry, has wide-ranging participation from line ministries including Finance, Agriculture and Tourism alongside agencies, Parliamentarians, the private sector and civil society with the Civil Society Movement and Petty Traders Association.

With the DTISU feeding into the PRSP cycle, there's ongoing assistance to build deeper inter-ministerial coordination at Cabinet level. This is going to be matched by stronger development partner coordination on trade assistance. Plus there's backing in the pipeline to develop the public-private sector dialogue, supporting the Sierra Leone Business Forum and Chamber of Commerce. With EIF support, it will build the know-how of Government ministries as well as NSC members. Thanks to the PRSP's focus on trade, more development partners are coming on board, helped by the set-up of a dedicated Trade Sector Working Group. And now, more Government resources are going to priority trade areas.

UNDP as the former EIF Donor Facilitator (DF) has been active in the NSC and is providing support to build the Aid for Trade (AfT) database, with DFID having now taken over the DF role. Support by development partners is going to develop the National Export Strategy (Commonwealth Secretariat); the National Coordination Committee on Trade (ECOWAS); public financial management (AfDB); rural and private sector development (WB); simplification of tax (IFC); and fisheries and trade negotiations (European Union).

## seeing trade results nationwide

Building on earlier IF support to develop the tourism industry and boost trade policy capacity, new EIF projects are up and running. A project on eco-tourism is giving assistance to five destination sites across the country: Tacugama, River No. 2, Tiwai Island, Banana Island and Wara Wara Hills. The project has been developed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs and is being carried out by the National Tourist Board (NTB). All together it aims to produce an Eco-tourism Policy and Action Plan, update

the 1990 Tourism Act, develop the sites and promote and market eco-tourism as well as build up the necessary skills.

Earlier assistance under the IF led to a long-term strategic tourism development plan, a marketing programme with 64 tour guides being trained in new skills and a Tour Guide Association being set up, as well as over 200 front desk personnel being trained in customer skills. What's more, tourism assets nationwide were documented, and there were seminars and workshops on beach safety while the NTB was able to monitor and supervise hotels countrywide.

The goal is for local communities to be actively engaged in the process and to generate funds to maintain the business model, preserve the sites and use the income to meet social development needs. At the same time, it's supporting research and innovation. This responsible tourism approach to attract high-end visitors means focusing on improved service delivery and facilities is essential. It's going to be helped via the HTTC, which will get support for training, equipment and expanding the curriculum, while the training centre will be refurbished with 10 classrooms and 24 bedrooms.

Another focus for EIF support is going to improve quality standards in the country with the National Standards Bureau. Currently, there are 66 national standards, over half of them in food, and there are plans to build a sound infrastructure for the country to export in the region and globally. Already, the metric system has been adopted, and there is now a need to harmonize efforts with neighbouring countries. To bring on board the SMEs, assistance is planned to build know-how in business development and in value addition with processing, labelling and marketing.

## planning the future on trade

Sierra Leone's new brand is gaining confidence. There are plans to graduate to middle income status building on the solid macroeconomic framework. Taking on the challenges of youth unemployment and trade facilitation is rightly ambitious.



The priorities mapped out with EIF and partner support are joining up the trade agenda, and ECOWAS and regional integration offer up even greater possibilities. The One-Stop Shop and Special Economic Zone in place have been important developments. Tapping into models of community development with eco-tourism will boost foreign exchange. Giving hope to SMEs through help with low-cost finance will mean bringing on board the petty traders and improving market links. Through SPS standards being met, agriculture can move up the value chain alongside fisheries and match the natural resources boom.

Now with EIF support, the focus on building up know-how, capacity and skills across Government, agencies and institutions, the private sector, civil society and communities will determine just how far the country can move ahead. Development partners need to match this commitment with investment to help put the country on the map and make progress to step into the trading future.

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*“Support of EIF helped development partners in aligning efforts supporting national priorities, in definition of priorities. The Donor Facilitator plays an important role at technical level working with the Ministry of Trade and Industry.”*

**Benjamin O. Maturu,**  
former EIF Donor  
Facilitator representative,  
UNDP

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## trading high

### making trade matter:

A Trade Sector Working Group has been set up as a Government-Donor consultation platform	The National Export Strategy 2010-2015 has been developed, and trade is linked to private sector development and in agriculture, tourism, fisheries and infrastructure
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### support to trade:

EIF total support equals US\$3,790,000	
EIF support of US\$2,990,000 is going alongside the Government's contribution of US\$300,000 to support efforts to rebrand the country's image and build an eco-tourism community model and develop five eco-tourism sites to preserve flora and fauna, while adding value through research, training and innovation	EIF support of US\$600,000 and Government support of US\$494,700 follows on to earlier assistance of US\$908,859 to build national capacities, competitiveness and manage Aid for Trade
EIF support of US\$200,000 to back national trade studies with the World Bank (WB)	

*"The Government has cognisance of the need of the private sector. We are working in tandem with the development of the Standards Bureau and Pharmacy Board. They have to grow with us before we can grow."*

Joseph Zed Bahsoon, Managing Director, Bennimix Food Company

## tourism:

EIF support is going to build the capacity of institutions including the Hotel and Tourism Training Centre to be refurbished with 10 classrooms and a 24-bedroom facility	With IF support, 64 tourist guides were trained, a Tour Guide Association was set up, and 200 front desk staff were trained in customer care with tourist assets nationwide documented alongside training seminars on beach safety
Through this project, the National Tourist Board was able to monitor and supervise hotels and facilities countrywide. The following brochures were produced: the Official Visitor's Guide 2012-2013, the Tourism Handy Guide 2012-2013, a Sierra Leone Tourist map and Sierra Leone Destination brochures. Sierra Leone was showcased at the World Travel Market in London in 2012	Tourism regulations have been reviewed and upgraded to meet global best practices, and Government reforms are underway to further facilitate tourism investments, including guidelines with the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion
Tourism contributed US\$36.9 million in 2011 (a 36.2% increase in a year); global investments and partnerships are coming up including with the Hilton and the Savoy Hotels	

*"Standards promote trade, so we look at what the industries want, their needs to improve competitiveness. The support of EIF will give us to reach that potential, so that we can facilitate and develop our national economy."*

Amadu Jogor Bah, Deputy Executive Director, National Standards Bureau

### eco-tourism:

EIF support is going to five tourism sites to spread out benefits to local communities in Tacugama, Tiwai Island, River No. 2, Banana Island and Wara Wara Hills	An Eco-tourism Policy and Action Plan is going to be developed and the Tourism Act reviewed
Tacugama is locally owned and operated, and it is home to over 250 bird species and over 80 rescued and abandoned chimpanzees; Tiwai Island has 11 species of primates and over 135 bird species and is home to the rare pygmy hippopotamus	The country has 360 km of white sand beaches, 18 national heritage sites and 31 protected areas with wildlife (chimpanzees, jungle elephants and birds)

### standards:

Currently, 66 national standards are in operation, over half related to food	The metric system is now adopted, and there are plans to link up to regional models
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*“EIF is supporting national priorities through an update to the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study focused on sectoral coverage and led by the Government. Implementing the findings brings us further down the road.”*

Cyrus P. Talati, Senior Economist, The World Bank

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### regional integration:

The EIF National Implementation Unit serves as the focal point for the roll-out of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme
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### doing business:

EIF work with the Sierra Leone Business Forum is underway to support the private sector and look at developing a Small and Medium Enterprise Policy to help add value to products	A One-Stop Shop and a Special Economic Zone are in place to ease business
The World Bank's 'Doing Business' ranking was 140 in 2013 up from 148 in 2012; the country has been a top reformer since 2005 in improving business regulation for domestic firms, property registration and getting credit	

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*“EIF created the enabling environment to take stock of trade. The National Steering Committee is there to guide stakeholders in focusing attention to sectoral development. Total involvement of all stakeholders is critical.”*

Ahmed Akar Ahmed, Chief Director and Professional Head, Ministry of Trade and Industry

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## trade story

*"All the community people are fully involved because they are deriving many benefits from tourism, from the project, from researchers and income generated."*  
Minah Conteh, Community Liaison Officer, Tiwai Island

Minah takes a break from chairing the lively meeting in the brightly painted community centre and gestures enthusiastically giving the floor to the women. His white cut-off shirt reflects against the forest green and brown earth tones. It's community-based tourism and a benefit-sharing approach. *"The two premier chief leaders came together to preserve this place as a sanctuary."* Eco-tourism is making headway in this wildlife reserve and has led to the first local school. Minah's community is counting on tourism to grow handicrafts skills in weaving baskets and dyeing *batik* and bring about better healthcare and transport links. Now the community's inclusive growth model to protect the environment is being taken up countrywide. It's an inspiring way of doing business. *"People are hiking, taking people up river, giving them history. We can put our ideas together to improve Tiwai."*

It's not surprising that the petty traders' shoe repair stalls are in demand in Sierra Leone. Getting connected and mobility is big news. Busy Airtel offices in Freetown offer cheap airtime, time-pressed travellers catch the speedboat over the airport ferry. Moving upcountry is where potential lies in unexplored tourism, and it will mean adding new national sites to the painted murals at the Ministry of Tourism's Hall of Fame. It's about renovating a torn image, so that Minah's community and others nationwide can take part in colouring in the bold new outlook on trade.

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*"I see great future in tourism. We have seen an increase in the number of hotel beds to 2,600. It is critical that we identify areas that bring in better livelihood, income and understanding among communities."*

Cecil J. Williams, General Manager, National Tourist Board

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