



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD SECURITY

2023 – 2024

FEED SALONE

ONE YEAR REPORT







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MINISTER'S FOREWORD

October 16 marks not only the celebration of World Food Day but also the first anniversary of Feed Salone, President Bio's flagship program for his second term. Launched to transform Sierra Leone's agri-food systems, Feed Salone aims to foster inclusive economic growth, create jobs, ensure food security, and build climate resilience. Over the past year, we have established a strong foundation for sustained progress and made significant strides toward achieving our ambitious goals.

This report, covering the period from August 2023 to September 2024, marks the first annual update on the Feed Salone progress. It outlines key achievements made in relation to our five strategic objectives and the interventions implemented under the strategic pillars. The report offers insights into how these interventions are shaping Sierra Leone's agri-food systems.

I believe that promoting transparency and accountability to our citizens, farmers, and stakeholders regarding our interventions will continue to strengthen trust and foster civic engagement in achieving the President's vision of a food secure and prosperous Sierra Leone. Through this commitment, we aim to inspire collective participation in making our country's food systems more resilient and efficient.

As we reflect on the achievements of the first year, while significant progress has been made, there is still more work to be done. In the upcoming year, Feed Salone will prioritize the effective implementation of its initiatives, focusing on further investment in infrastructure to boost competitiveness and de-risking the sector to encourage greater private-sector participation. A key emphasis will be placed on AgTech, with the National Farmers Registry providing a foundation for more informed policymaking.

Feed Salone's first year has laid a solid foundation for transforming Sierra Leone's agriculture sector, demonstrating that farming can be a profitable and sustainable business. These efforts are helping to reposition agriculture as a viable and rewarding livelihood, attracting more goodwill and support from international partners. With targeted interventions and continued investments in key areas, Sierra Leone is on track to build a robust, self-sufficient agricultural sector that will drive prosperity for current and future generations.

Let us continue to build on these successes.



DR. HENRY MUSA KPAKA
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

ACRONYMS

ACF	Agricultural Credit Facility
AfDB	African Development Bank
AgTech	Agricultural Technology
ATO	Agriculture Transformation Office
AVDP	Agricultural Value Chain Development Project
BADEA	Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
CAMIP	Sierra Leone Connectivity and Agricultural Market Infrastructure Project
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DFIs	Development Financial Institutions
DPs	Development Partners
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EWASME	Empowering West African Women Small & Medium Enterprises
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FSRP	Food System Resilience Project
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HGSFP	Home Grown School Feeding Program
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
IVS	Inland Valley Swamps
KAFACI	Korea-Africa Food and Agriculture Cooperation Initiative
LLDP	Livestock and Livelihood Development Project
MAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MAFRA	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (South Korea)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOPED	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
NAFSL	National Association of Farmers of Sierra Leone
NAT	National Agricultural Transformation Program
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIN	National Identification Number
NU	Njala University
OFID	OPEC Fund for International Development

OFSP	Orange Flesh Sweet Potato
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QFFD	Qatar Fund for Development
SCADeP	Smallholder Commercialization and Agribusiness Development Project
SLeSCA	Sierra Leone Seed Certification Agency
SLARI	Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute
SLARIS	Sierra Leone Agribusiness and Rice Value Chain Project
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SMP	Seed Multiplication Program
SATF	Salone Access to Finance
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WFP	World Food Program
WPF	World Poultry Foundation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the successful implementation of the Feed Salone initiative over the past year. This progress reflects the collective efforts of numerous individuals, institutions, organizations, and communities dedicated to transforming Sierra Leone's food systems.

First, we thank His Excellency, President Julius Maada Bio, for his visionary leadership and commitment to achieving food sovereignty. His relentless advocacy for food systems transformation has laid the foundation for sustainable growth and self-reliance in food production—a vision that has resonated well beyond our borders.

We also extend our appreciation to the Office of the Chief Minister, whose leadership and dedication have been critical in advancing Feed Salone. We are grateful to our sister Ministries, whose collaboration has been indispensable in addressing agricultural challenges in a systemic and coordinated manner. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the Presidential Initiative for Climate Change, Renewable Energy, and Food Security and the important role played by research institutions such as the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute, Sierra Leone Seed Certification Agency and International Institute of Tropical Agriculture.

We express gratitude to our international partners, including the United Nations, European Union, World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, World Food Program, African Development Bank, Tony Blair Institute, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and others whose collaboration has been instrumental to our progress.

Furthermore, we extend our sincere appreciation to the private sector, local communities, and, above all, the farmers across Sierra Leone and the National Federation of Farmers of Sierra Leone. Your success is our success, and without your dedication and hard work, our ambitious goals would be impossible to reach.

Lastly, we express our gratitude to the countless local and international stakeholders, particularly the Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation, and its country members for the knowledge sharing, motivation and shared ambition to transform together, bolder and faster.

Thank you for joining us on this journey to Feed Salone.



PRESIDENT'S CALL TO TRANSFORM OUR FOOD SYSTEMS

The President's leadership has been instrumental in laying a foundation for a successful delivery of Feed Salone. Leading by example, he has shown strong commitment to the initiative, encouraging the nation to engage in the agriculture sector and treat it as a business. His hands-on approach and personal engagement have inspired coordinated efforts across government and stakeholders, ensuring that his vision is translated into tangible actions on the ground.

The President's Feed Salone has set the stage for a comprehensive approach to agricultural transformation, focusing on enhancing productivity, reducing dependence on imports, and positioning agriculture as a sustainable engine for growth. Through active leadership, he has not only secured significant investments but also motivated communities to take ownership of the program.

“*Transforming our food systems is more than just a goal—it's a national priority. Through the Feed Salone program, we are not only increasing productivity and reducing our dependence on imports but also creating sustainable opportunities for all Sierra Leoneans.*”

His Excellency

Dr. Julius Maada Bio

PRESIDENT | REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This first-year progress report for Feed Salone highlights the achievements, lessons learned, and future plans of the President's flagship program. Feed Salone targets achieving food security and equitable economic growth and building resilient food systems through five strategic objectives: reducing import dependency, boosting export earnings, job creation, alleviating hunger and malnutrition, and fostering climate resilience.

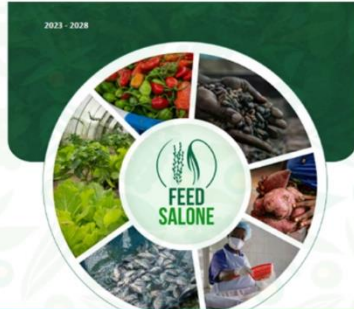
Laying the Foundation: Feed Salone began by aligning its food systems agenda with national priorities and adopting a whole-of-government approach. This involved setting up the Presidential Council and a Technical Secretariat; this structure supported the development of the strategy targeting key value chains, with a strong emphasis on rice, poultry, and onions during the first year. Targeted policy measures were introduced to streamline its implementation and ensure alignment with the broader goals of transforming Sierra Leone's agriculture sector, especially to make the rice value chain more competitive. Thanks to President Bio's efforts on the international stage, the initiative mobilized over USD 1 billion in pledges to support its objectives. Other foundational measures included investments in infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, to improve connectivity and market access for farmers. Strategic partnerships with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Korea-Africa Food and Agriculture Cooperation Initiative and OCP Africa provided access to technical expertise. Efforts also focused on creating soil suitability maps for key crops, streamlining project management, enhancing stakeholder coordination, and aligning timelines with agricultural cycles, ensuring efficient delivery of support to farmers across Sierra Leone.

Achievements: Key achievements include a 35% increase in paddy rice production from 2022 to 2023, driven by expanding the cultivated area and boosting yields. During 2024 planting season, MAFS supported 91,982 farmers (43.73% women), with timely access to inputs and machinery. Infrastructure improvements included building 200 km of feeder roads and four rural bridges. Other achievements include launching several agricultural finance instruments worth more than USD 28 million, such as the USD 10 million Bank of Sierra Leone credit facility at 10% interest; formulating Seed Systems Roadmap with SLARI, investing in seed multiplication of high-yielding varieties and ensuring that – for the second year – no rice seeds were imported. Soil mapping was also completed to guide planning and decision-making by the GoSL and investors. In parallel, nutrition initiatives introduced more nutrient food to school feeding programs, addressed food safety with the upcoming establishment of an Aflasafe Laboratory and the first national Food Consumption and Micronutrient Survey. These efforts contributed to reducing import dependency, making the sector more competitive and empowering women and youth entrepreneurship in agriculture.

Looking Ahead: As Feed Salone enters its second year, the focus remains on scaling up interventions across key areas, including infrastructure development, expanding irrigation, and Inland Valley Swamps (IVS) to boost sustainable production and reduce rice-related deforestation. The initiative will strengthen seed systems, support agri-businesses through an Agriculture Lending Fund, and enhance mechanization. It also aims to implement multi-million-dollar livestock and cassava industrialization projects, diversifying agricultural output and reducing import dependency while creating more economic opportunities for Sierra Leone's farmers, particularly women and youth. New policies will be introduced to enhance the sector's competitiveness and profitability, including measures to facilitate land access, poultry feed subsidies, and expanded school feeding programs, with a focus on protein intake.



1 YEAR HIGHLIGHTS



Formulated and launched the Feed Salone Strategy to deliver President's vision of food secure Sierra Leone.



Developing irrigated rice agro-industrial clusters in key rice hubs across the country.



Ensured timely and efficient distribution of agricultural inputs, tools and machines to farmers.



Mobilized more than USD 1bn in funding and technical support to implement key initiatives.



Completed national soil suitability maps for rainfed upland rice, oil palm, maize, onion, and cassava.



Constructing four rural bridges in Tomparie, Manowa, Mattru, and Gendema.



Partnerships: leveraged global expertise and best practices to invest in research and innovation.



Nutrition: invested in orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and yellow-fleshed cassava for school feeding programs.



Increased Access to Agriculture Finance by over \$28 millions, with a \$10m Credit Facility at 10% interest.



Developing policy measures to transform the cocoa sector and meet international regulations (EUDR).



Passed innovative policies to transform the rice value chain & boost home-grown feeding programs.



Developing policy measures to transform the poultry sector, including feed subsidies.



1 YEAR HIGHLIGHTS



Growing high-yielding crop varieties in Technology and Innovation Park in Portloko with SLARI.



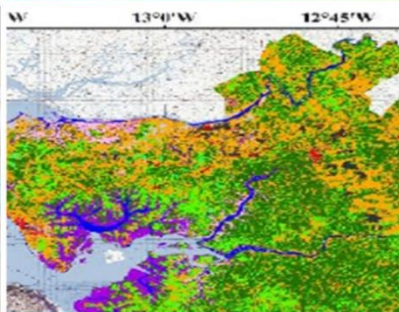
The President commissioned The SABCO Sardine Factory - all ingredients sourced locally.



Developing the biometric National Farmers' Registry linked to National Identity Number.



Piloting 12 fish ponds for youth in 8 districts with the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Youth.



Developing digital soil mapping with precise information about soil types and nutrient levels.



Seed Business Summit 2024: Developed Seed System Transformation Roadmap.



Implementing the Rural Telephony project with MoCTI to increase connectivity for farmers in remote



Seed Multiplication with SLARI: 6 Tons of Soybean and 4 Tons of Maize Foundation Seeds for SLARI (IITA)



Commissioned the first Waterloo Women's Cashew Processing Factory in Newton



Capacitating SLARI: 14 PhD Scholarships Awarded to SLARI Staff



Launched the Agriculture Transformation Office with African Agricultural Transformation Initiative.



Joined the Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation with Norway, Brazil, Rwanda and Cambodia.



LAYING THE FOUNDATION
FOR DELIVERING FEED SALONE

LAYING THE FOUNDATION



Meeting of the Presidential Council for Delivering Feed Salone chaired by The President

The Feed Salone Strategy identified several critical enablers that are essential for the successful implementation and sustainability of the Feed Salone program. These enablers provide the support systems and conditions necessary for the food systems transformation of Sierra Leone and are vital for the successful execution of the Feed Salone strategy, ensuring that the program has the resources, infrastructure, and targeted policies to achieve its ambitious goals

POLITICAL WILL

- **Increased budget allocation to the agriculture sector from 2% to 7%**, aiming to reach at least 10% next year, in line with the Malabo Declaration.
- Leveraged the President's political capital to advocate for additional resources which resulted in unlocking **more than USD 1 billion in finance for** Feed Salone.
- Sierra Leone, together with 133 countries, covering 70% of the world's land, have signed **the Emirates Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action**, committing to integrate food into their climate plans by 2025.
- Sierra Leone became the co-chair and a founding member of **the Alliance of Champions for Food Systems Transformation**, together with Rwanda, Brazil, Norway and Cambodia.

INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP AND DELIVERY

The Presidential Council

Chaired by the President, the Council is crucial to the effective execution of Feed Salone and is a manifestation of a **whole-of-government** approach when addressing food systems challenges. The Presidential Council provides strategic leadership and high-level oversight, bringing together Ministers of key sectors: Finance, Agriculture, Transport, Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Health and others.

Feed Salone Technical Secretariat

The Secretariat supports the Presidential Council by providing strategic cross-sector advice and ensuring efficient delivery of Feed Salone's objectives. Together, they form a powerful governance structure that drives policy implementation and stakeholder collaboration across government.

Presidential Initiative on Climate Change, Renewable Energy and Food Security (PI-CREF)

PI-CREF was established by The President to leverage additional resources and partnerships for addressing climate change, improving access to renewable energy, and enhancing food security.

Agriculture Transformation Office (ATO)

In September 2024, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) in partnership with the African Agricultural Transformation Initiative (AATI), launched the Agriculture Transformation Office (ATO) for Sierra Leone. The ATO is designed to drive agricultural innovation and transformation by enhancing the Ministry's delivery mechanisms.

Additional field staff

During the first year, The Ministry of Finance (MoF) granted approval for the hiring of 1,000 additional field staff to support the implementation of Feed Salone on the ground. These new hires will help fill critical roles in agricultural extensions, livestock services, data collection, and monitoring.



RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Through coordinated whole-of-government efforts and President Bio's advocacy, Sierra Leone has successfully mobilized over USD 1 billion in pledges to drive transformation in the agricultural sector under the Feed Salone initiative, for example:

Vienna Energy and Food Security Roundtable hosted by the OPEC Fund *(June 2024)*

The government has mobilised over USD 800 million to support sustainable energy transition and its food security efforts. A major contribution from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) includes a USD 250 million pledge to establish the Integrated Rice Industrial Complex in Tormabum, aimed at increasing local rice production, creating jobs, and building necessary infrastructure. The OPEC Fund pledged USD 230 million for energy transition and food security.

Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF) in Kigali *(September 2024)*

Following the presentation of Sierra Leone's investment opportunities in the agriculture sector during the Country Deal Room, the African Development Bank (AfDB) pledged USD 100 million for the development of rice clusters in Sierra Leone. In September, the AfDB delegation conducted an inception mission in Sierra Leone to outline the project components and validate clusters' locations in the Kambia District.

Sierra Leone Connectivity and Agricultural Market Infrastructure Project (CAMIP)

In collaboration with the Ministry of Transport and Aviation, CAMIP was launched, with a USD 74 million World Bank grant secured to enhance agricultural productivity and market access. CAMIP focuses on the construction and upgrading of climate-resilient transport and market infrastructure, significantly improving connectivity for rural communities and reducing post-harvest losses. The project is expected to generate new employment opportunities and support agricultural value chains by facilitating the efficient transportation of produce from farm to market.

Other Contributions

Sierra Leone has also secured support from key international partners to drive agricultural innovation and capacity building as part of the Feed Salone initiative. This includes:

- Korea-Africa Food and Agriculture Cooperation Initiative (KAFACI): USD 7 million grant for research and capacity-building initiatives with the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI).
- Islamic Development Bank (IsDB): USD 60 million secured for the industrialization of the cassava value chain.
- The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID): collectively secured a total of USD 100 million to support the growth of the livestock sector in Sierra Leone.



Vienna Energy and Food Security Roundtable, hosted by the OPEC Fund.



The Minister of Agriculture and the Chief Minister presenting during the Sierra Leone Country Deal Room, AFSF 2024

POLICY INTERVENTIONS

Rice

On the policy front, the government has enacted policy measures to make rice production competitive and to reduce rice import gap, in addition to introducing a 5% duty on rice imported from outside the continent.

- **Rice Importers Policy** requires rice importers to participate in the rice value chain in Sierra Leone in exchange for their licenses. It outlines key strategies aimed at reducing rice imports and boosting local production through the participation of rice importers in domestic value chain activities, including cultivation, processing, and marketing.
- Home-grown **Institutional Feeding Policy** aims to gradually decrease the imports of rice for the diets of government institutions such as schools, correctional services, and military and to support local procurement and cultivation of rice.

Poultry

The MAFS, in collaboration with Smallholder Commercialization and Agribusiness Development Project (SCADEP), developed the Sectoral Policy on Poultry and Poultry Products in Sierra Leone. This policy focuses on reducing food imports by strengthening the poultry value chain and recognizing the sector's role in nutrition, rural livelihoods, job creation, and economic growth. It aims to create a sustainable, competitive, and self-sufficient poultry industry that meets both international standards and domestic needs. The policy includes strategies to enhance productivity, promote innovation, and improve market access, supported by a roadmap to address sector challenges with key stakeholders.

Cocoa

The MAFS, with support from the Smallholder Commercialization and Agribusiness Development Project (SCADEP), revised the national cocoa policy to enhance competitiveness, governance, and sustainability in the sector. This revision aimed to increase smallholder farmer participation, improve value addition, and strengthen market linkages while promoting climate-smart practices.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure development is a critical component of the Feed Salone initiative, directly impacting agricultural transformation and market accessibility.

- Significant progress has been made in identifying and mobilizing funds for the development of agro-industrial clusters, including ongoing investments in roads and bridges, and planned in electricity access and storage facilities.
- MAFS is enhancing market connectivity through the development of new feeder roads. This includes an additional 400 km of roads, such as the Bauya, Bendu-Cha, Koribundu-Tormabum, and Samu-Kychum roads. These infrastructure improvements aim to improve access to markets, thereby supporting farmers in better connecting with buyers and enhancing the distribution of agricultural products throughout Sierra Leone. This effort is crucial for facilitating agricultural trade and reducing transportation costs.
- The construction of four rural bridges in Tomparie, Manowa, Mattru, and Gendema is underway, aimed at improving connectivity and accessibility for remote farming communities. These bridges are a key part of efforts to enhance market access and facilitate the transport of agricultural products, helping to reduce logistical challenges for farmers.



Ongoing construction of the Tomparie bridge

PARTNERSHIPS

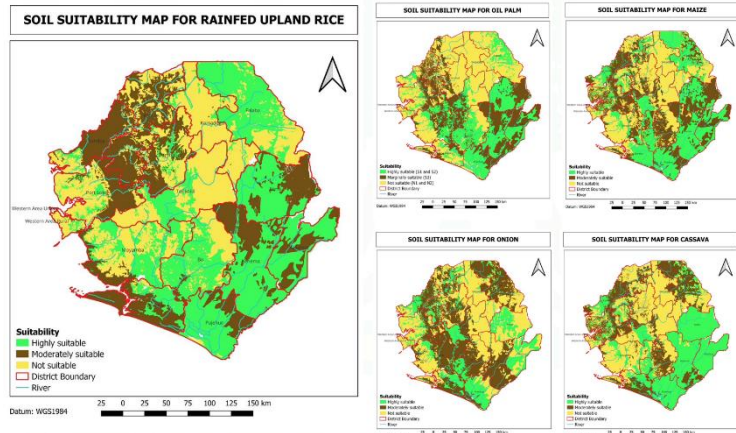
The partnership with **the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)** has been instrumental in Sierra Leone’s agricultural transformation under Feed Salone. IITA provided critical support in developing the Seed System Transformation Roadmap in 2023 and continues to focus on research and capacity-building initiatives. This includes providing foundation seeds like cassava, maize, soybean, and rice, as well as technical support for establishing an Aflasafe laboratory to promote safer, nutrition-rich crops such as groundnut, maize, and sesame. IITA also supports SLARI, MAFS, and SLeSCA with scientific expertise.

Highlights

OCP Africa: The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) has formed a strategic partnership with OCP Africa to improve soil health and enhance farmers' productivity in Sierra Leone. This collaboration focuses on conducting soil nutrient trials, producing specialized fertilizers, and creating a digital decision-making platform for soil health management. Building on the **first national soil mapping in over 40 years**, the partnership will streamline input delivery, establish integrated model farms, and deploy demonstration trials, ultimately promoting agricultural resilience, sustainability, and inclusivity. This partnership was formalized through an MOU signed by OCP's SVP for West Africa, Mehdi Filali, and Minister Musa Kpaka.



Minister Kpaka signing the MoU with OCP's SVP



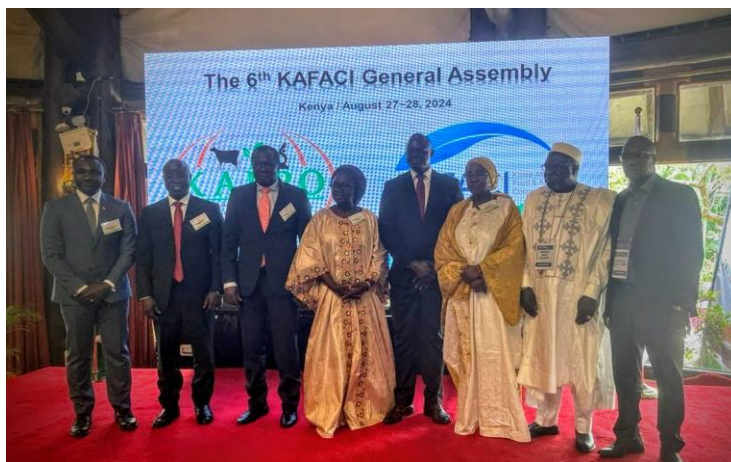
Government of China: Partnership with the **Government of China** is exploring a potential USD 20 million investment for the development of rice clusters; the concept is currently under review.

The K-Rice Belt Project. This initiative is part of a strategic partnership with South Korea which will boost the country's rice production by introducing high-yielding, climate-resilient rice varieties. Following comprehensive pre-feasibility studies conducted by Korean experts, the project is set to begin full-scale implementation in 2025. The Project will integrate smallholder farmers into larger production clusters, creating jobs and increasing domestic rice yields.

Korea-Africa Food and Agriculture Cooperation Initiative (KAFACI): this partnership aims at strengthening research and innovation in seed systems. SLARI is currently conducting trials on improved, climate-resilient seed varieties, aiming to address critical issues such as low productivity and seed quality.



The K-Rice Belt Initiative, launched by South Korea, will enhance Sierra Leone's rice production capabilities based on their experience and success in rice cultivation and agricultural technology.



The 6th KAFACI General Assembly and Sierra Leone joining the initiative.

PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector is essential in driving agricultural transformation by providing investment, innovation, and employment opportunities that complement government efforts. It plays a critical role in increasing productivity, enhancing value chains, and boosting food security. Through collaboration with private entities, Sierra Leone's agricultural sector aims to scale up sustainable practices, improve market access, and reduce reliance on food imports. Private-sector-led initiatives also stimulate job creation, particularly for women and youth, and contribute to economic growth by developing agro-industries and expanding local processing capacities.

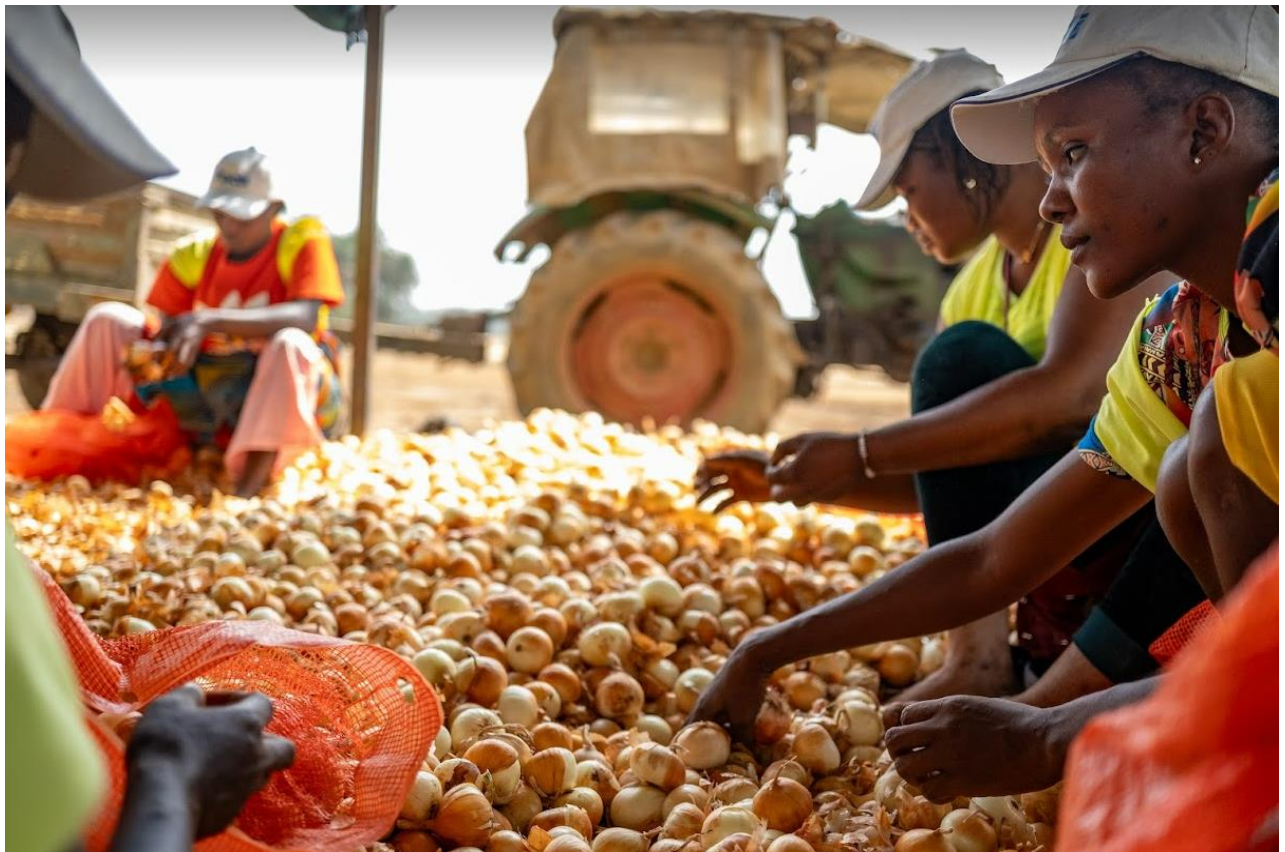
2024 Highlights

The SABCO Sardine Factory, inaugurated by the President this year, represents a strategic shift from a supermarket chain to a **fishing enterprise**. The facility uses locally sourced ingredients to produce sardines, offering fish processing and smoking services that boost the availability of nutrient-rich foods. Beyond enhancing local food production, the factory generates employment opportunities and expands operations into the fishing hub of Kissy. It also acquired eight fishing vessels from partners to better meet market demands and increase production capacity.

The **first state-of-the-art cashew processing factory** in Sierra Leone was commissioned in Newton, developed in collaboration with the EU and Solidaridad. The facility processes over 800 kilograms of raw cashew nuts daily and about 200 MT annually and employs over 300 women and youth from the Waterloo Cashew Processors and Sellers Association. This initiative provides substantial economic benefits to local communities while introducing safer, more efficient methods compared to traditional, hazardous processes like open fire roasting.

Leecon Hatchery, located in Makeni, is Sierra Leone's **first large-scale hatchery**, producing 10,000-day-old chicks weekly, with an annual capacity of 5 million. The locally produced chicks are priced significantly lower than imported alternatives, helping to reduce the country's reliance on imports. Developed with support from the World Poultry Foundation, Qatar Fund for Development, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the hatchery features advanced technology for consistent chick supply. The Qatar Fund for Development funded the state-of-the-art equipment, while the World Poultry Foundation provided expertise for setup and training.

Pee Cee and Sons Ltd (PCS), one of Sierra Leone's largest importers of onions, has evolved into the country's top **producer of onions**. Supported by the MAFS and IFAD, PCS has significantly increased local onion production using innovative technologies. The company has mechanized its operations in Mathen village, Lokomasama Chiefdom, cultivating more than 30 hectares of onions during the last cycle, and planning to do over 80 hectares during the next two cycles. PCS has also invested in cultivating 60 hectares of maize to support local poultry farmers with feed.



From upper left: Cashew processing factory, the SABCO Sardine factory inauguration by the President and onion and maize farms at PC & Sons.



ACHIEVEMENTS

PROGRESS UNDER PILLARS

STRATEGIC PILLARS

Six strategic pillars guide the implementation of the Feed Salone Strategy. These pillars were designed to address specific challenges in the agricultural sector and beyond, forming the foundation of the Strategy, and helping to streamline efforts toward achieving its objectives.

Important progress has been made across all the Six Strategic Pillars during the first year.

PILLAR 1: MECHANIZATION & IRRIGATION



1. **Towards rice self-sufficiency:** Rice cultivation across the country has expanded significantly during the first planting season under the Feed Salone initiative, with a total of **607,207 hectares** of rice planted nationwide. This figure includes all forms of cultivation carried out across the country, both government-supported and privately managed.

Within this broader context, **government-supported cultivation** has seen a significant increase, driven by the enhancement of mechanization services, improved input distribution, and targeted interventions. In 2023, the area cultivated with government support stood at 15,320 hectares, but by 2024, this figure had grown to 27,688 hectares, marking an 81% increase in cultivated land.

2. **Irrigation infrastructure:** Work is ongoing on the development of irrigation infrastructure in essential rice zones. A total of 5,200 hectares of land is currently being equipped with essential water management systems to boost crop yields and ensure year-round cultivation. This transformative project includes 4,400 hectares in Tormabum, a key hub for rice production, and an additional 800 hectares in Gbondapi.
3. **Inland Valley Swamps (IVS):** MAFS rehabilitation efforts have restored **1,950 hectares of IVS**, which are crucial for sustainable rice farming. These efforts have not only increased rice productivity but have also contributed to reducing deforestation due to rice cultivation. By focusing on IVS development, the initiative promotes efficient land use and supports the transition to more environmentally sustainable agricultural practices.

4. **Machine distribution to farmers:** The MAFS and NaFFSL handed over essential agricultural machinery to farmers, including rice dryers, over one hundred combined rice mills with a 4MT/day capacity, mini tillers/weeders, fertilizer applicators, and three heavy-duty landing crafts for riverine areas, facilitating efficient transportation of agricultural equipment and produce and improving logistics.



Highlights of the first successful harvesting (2023) and rice planting season under Feed Salone (2024)

PILLAR 2: SEEDS AND INPUTS SYSTEMS



Highlights: MAFS, SLARI, SLESCA and partners such as IITA transforming the seed system in Sierra Leone

1. **Seed System Summit:** In collaboration with key partners like the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), the Sierra Leone Seed Certification Agency (SLeSCA), and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), MAFS developed a **Seed System Transformation Roadmap** during the Seed System Summit 2023. This roadmap aims to improve the quality, availability, and distribution of seeds across Sierra Leone, ensuring that farmers have access to high-quality seeds for enhanced productivity and sustainable agricultural practices.
2. **Seed Multiplication with SLARI and the AATI:** MAFS, in partnership with the SLARI and the IITA, has emphasized seed multiplication to enhance crop productivity. This collaboration enabled the acquisition of 6 metric tons of soybean and 4 metric tons of maize foundation seeds for multiplication and distribution to increase access to quality, high-yielding seeds for farmers nationwide.
3. **Soybean Vegetative Growth Demonstration Plots:** To encourage best practices and optimize yields, the MAFS and SLARI set up soybean demonstration plots across eight districts. These plots demonstrate effective cultivation methods and showcase improved soybean varieties, providing practical insights for local farmers.
4. **Technology and Innovation Park with SLARI:** The Feed Salone initiative established a Technology and Innovation Park in Komrabai Village, serving as a testing ground for improved crop varieties and sustainable agricultural practices. Additional parks are planned for 2025, aiming to further drive innovation and best practices within the sector.

5. **Developed the soil suitability maps:** the maps highlight areas across Sierra Leone that are best suited for different crops, aiming to maximize agricultural productivity. The maps provide insights into regions with high, moderate, or low suitability for cultivating rainfed upland rice, oil palm, maize, onion, and cassava. These visual guides support informed decisions for crop production, ensuring efficient land use and enhancing food security by aligning agricultural practices with the natural capabilities of the land.
6. MAFS has made significant investments in **capacity building** for the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI). This includes awarding 14 fully funded PhD scholarships to SLARI staff. These scholarships are part of a broader effort to enhance technical expertise and research capabilities
7. Constructed a **National Seed Testing Laboratory** at Mile 91 in Tonkolili and a Soil Science Building at Njala Mokonde in Moyamba.



From upper left: Seed System Summit, IITA support with 6 Tons of soybean and 4 Tons of maize foundation seeds, PhD scholarships granting and soybean demonstration plots.



Technology and Innovation Park in Komrabai Village, Maforki Chiefdom, Portloko District

PILLAR 3: AGGREGATION, PROCESSING & MARKET LINKAGES

1. **Pillar 3 Implementation Plan:** It has been developed in collaboration with FAO. By 2028, the MAFS expects a significant increase in rice milling capacity, enhancement of quality standards, establishment of strategic grain reserves, and expansion of onion and poultry production. The plan seeks to improve infrastructure, particularly energy and transportation, and promote key value chains like rice, onion, poultry, cassava, cocoa, and cashew, aiming for significant increases in production and processing capacity.
2. **Rice Clusters with accompanying infrastructure:** The MAFS designed its flagship agriculture investment project and is currently developing rice agro-industrial clusters in **Tormabum, Gbongbadi, and Kambia** (see Appendix).
3. **Sierra Leone Connectivity and Agricultural Market Infrastructure Project (CAMIP):** The MAFS launched and operationalized a USD 74 million initiative with the World Bank (WB) aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and market access by upgrading **climate-resilient transport and market infrastructure**, vital for linking rural farmers to market centers, reducing post-harvest losses, and improving overall agricultural supply chain efficiency. Key components include:
 - Constructing **feeder roads** to enhance the transportation of goods, reduce travel time, and improve market access for farmers.
 - Building new bridges in **Tomparie, Mattru Jong, Gendema, and Manowa** to connect agricultural communities to key market centers, supporting the efficient movement of goods.



Highlights: Construction of the four rural bridges, feeder roads and ensuring better processing and storage.

PILLAR 4: AG FINANCE



Launch of the BSL credit facility at 10% interest, FSRP Matching Grant and Salone Access to Finance Program with the EU

1. **USD 10 million credit facility by the Bank of Sierra Leone:** The Ministry in collaboration with Bank of Sierra Leone has introduced a USD 10 million credit facility aimed at supporting established businesses in rice, onion, and poultry sectors. This facility offers loans through commercial banks at a significantly reduced interest rate of 10%, compared to the current market rate, which exceeds 30%. This initiative is designed to enhance access to affordable credit, reduce the financial burden on businesses, especially for women and youth. In the first six months of implementation, the Bank of Sierra Leone's has approved more than USD 3.5 million in loans for five agricultural enterprises.
2. **The Food System Resilience Program's (FSRP) USD 7.8 million matching grant:** With support from the World Bank, MAFS launched a USD 7.9 million Matching Grant under the Food System Resilience Program (FSRP) for agribusinesses specializing in rice, cassava, and livestock. Contributions for each project range from USD50,000 to USD150,000, with a 70:30 matching for small businesses and 50:50 matching for medium and large businesses.
3. **Rural Finance and Community Improvement Program (RFCIP):** In collaboration with IFAD, the government has disbursed NLE 130,770,757.00 in loans to farmers nationwide through the Rural Financial Networks, which include Apex Banks, Community Banks, and Financial Services Associations since the start of the second phase of the RFCIP project.
4. **Salone Access to Finance project (SATF):** This project is a five-year, USD 12 million initiative funded by the European Union under its Jobs and Growth initiative, implemented by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in collaboration with GoSL. The project focuses on supporting agro-MSMEs and creating jobs through four key pillars: Investment, Insurance, Digital Finance, and Business Environment.
 - i. **Investment:** establishing a matching grant facility for agricultural MSMEs, to be rolled out in Q1 2025. The facility will match loans from participating financial institutions and provide technical assistance to strengthen both MSMEs and financial institutions.

- ii. **Insurance:** SATF is piloting climate risk insurance aimed at protecting farmers from climate-related risks. The target is to sell 4,000 policies through Activa International, alongside a campaign to raise awareness among farmers.
 - iii. **Digital Finance:** SATF has partnered with Rokel Bank and GT Bank to roll out an Agri agency banking model, aiming to establish 900 financial access points by 2026. It has also launched a pay-as-you-go smartphone solution in partnership with Africell Mobile Money, targeting 6,000 vulnerable households.
 - iv. **Business Environment:** SATF is collaborating with the Bank of Sierra Leone and the Sierra Leone Insurance Commission (SLICOM) to conduct market gap analyses, improve the regulatory framework for agricultural finance and insurance, and build industry capacity in digital financial services (DFS) reporting.
5. **Unconditional Cash Transfer Initiative:** MAFS, through FSRP, has implemented an unconditional cash transfer program aimed at supporting vulnerable households across Sierra Leone. The initiative provided critical financial assistance to 12,000 households for three consecutive months benefiting an estimated 72,000 people, of which 75% were women. This intervention has been instrumental in providing immediate relief to the most vulnerable populations, ensuring food security, and helping to uplift women in rural communities.

PILLAR 5: AG TECH & CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE

1. **Biometric National Farmers' Registry linked to the National Identity Number (NIN):** Building a first-ever comprehensive digital system that records and identifies farmers across Sierra Leone by linking their information to the National Identification Number (NIN), with the support from the World Bank. This registry will enable accurate and reliable data collection on farmers, their crops, and their farming activities, facilitating better targeting of resources, improved policy-making, and increased access to government services, subsidies, and financial support.
2. **A poultry database:** This database was created to provide consistent and reliable data on poultry production in Sierra Leone, facilitating better-informed decisions and enhancing the efficiency of the poultry value chain across the country.
3. **The Rural Telephony Project:** With the Ministry of Communications, Technology and Innovation (MoCTI), extended digital connectivity to underserved rural communities. A mobile tower providing 3G coverage within a 5 km radius was commissioned in Moyamba District as part of the Rural Telephony Project. Additionally, 100 smartphones were distributed to farmers to boost agricultural productivity. Four more districts are set to benefit from this initiative, helping to bridge the digital divide and support innovation in agriculture.
4. **Developing digital soil mapping:** MAFS, in collaboration with SLARI and the EU, has carried out a nationwide soil mapping project. This effort has now been digitized through the creation of a Soil

Database and Information System, an integrated online platform that consolidates all soil-related data. This system allows for the generation of soil maps, crop suitability recommendations, and detailed analysis to support agricultural planning and decision-making. Surveys and laboratory work have been completed in all districts, and the data is currently being populated into the system to provide critical soil and agricultural information.

5. **The Sierra Leone Data Ecosystem Mapping (DEM):** Released under the 50x2030 Initiative, assesses the agricultural data landscape in Sierra Leone. Published in May, the report analyses the current and desired state of agricultural and rural data use, identifying constraints to effective data application. Additionally, it maps key stakeholders and their communication networks using a mapping tool to better understand relationships and data-related practices. This effort is part of the broader roadmap to improve data-driven agricultural development by 2030.
6. **The Agriculture Innovation Challenge** was launched to promote and accelerate youth-led agri-businesses in Sierra Leone. At the first-ever Sierra Leone Innovate Tech Summit, President Bio awarded a total of USD 60,000 to support Ag-tech innovation. The Agriculture Innovation Award, personally funded by the President with USD 30,000, was given to the winning project. An additional USD 30,000 was distributed between two runners-up.



Highlights: Rural telephony project with the Ministry of Communication, Technology and Innovation, Sierra Leone's first-ever tech summit and President Bio's Ag Innovation Challenge awards.

PILLAR 6: EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUTH

Pillar 6 focuses on empowering women and youth, which is a cross-cutting pillar integrated into the program's other pillars. It emphasizes creating economic opportunities for these groups, recognizing their vital role in agricultural transformation. Many interventions from different pillars, such as increasing access to finance, target women and youth.

1. **The Empowering West African Women Small & Medium Enterprises (EWASME) program:** Implemented by the UNDP, in partnership with IsDB and the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative, this program is dedicated to empowering women entrepreneurs and strengthening their businesses in the rice sector. It was launched to specifically support women-owned and women-led SMEs and MSMEs in the rice value chain and aims to boost the participation of women in agriculture by providing access to finance, capacity-building, market linkages, and mentorship opportunities.
2. MAFS through the FSRP initiative **sponsored 20 youth farmers to Brazil and Nigeria for specialized training in cassava and maize value chains.** This training, conducted in partnership with the Brazil Africa Institute (IBRAF), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), and the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), focuses on production, value addition, and post-harvest processing. Upon completion, the trained farmers will bring critical expertise back to Sierra Leone, supporting sustainable agricultural development and enhancing local value chains.
3. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, in partnership with the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the Ministry of Youth, is **piloting the development of 12 fish ponds** across 8 districts. This initiative is specifically aimed at engaging youth in sustainable aquaculture practices, offering them an opportunity to diversify their income sources and improve their livelihoods. The project supports both economic empowerment and food security



Highlights: Launch of the fish ponds pilot with the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources and the Minister of Youth

A wide-angle photograph of an onion field during harvest. The ground is covered with rows of harvested onions, some still in their soil. Several workers wearing hard hats and safety vests are visible in the distance, working in the field. The sky is clear and blue. The image has a brown curved border at the top and bottom.

IMPACT

ONE YEAR OF FEED SALONE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Feed Salone initiative aims to transform Sierra Leone's agriculture sector by achieving five key objectives: reducing reliance on food imports, boosting export earnings for key cash crops, creating jobs for women and youth, alleviating hunger and malnutrition, and building climate-resilient food systems.

Objective 1: Import Substitution of Key Food Items

In its first year, the program prioritized three critical value chains for import substitution: rice, poultry products, and onions. These value chains were selected for their potential to increase domestic production, improve food security, and reduce the country's import dependence. Significant efforts were focused on expanding rice cultivation, enhancing policies for poultry farming, and boosting onion production by mobilizing private sector investment.

RICE

The rice value chain is a critical component of Sierra Leone's agricultural landscape, serving as a foundation for food security and economic development. The annual report highlights the transformative efforts made to achieve the targets by 2028.

Feed Salone Targets

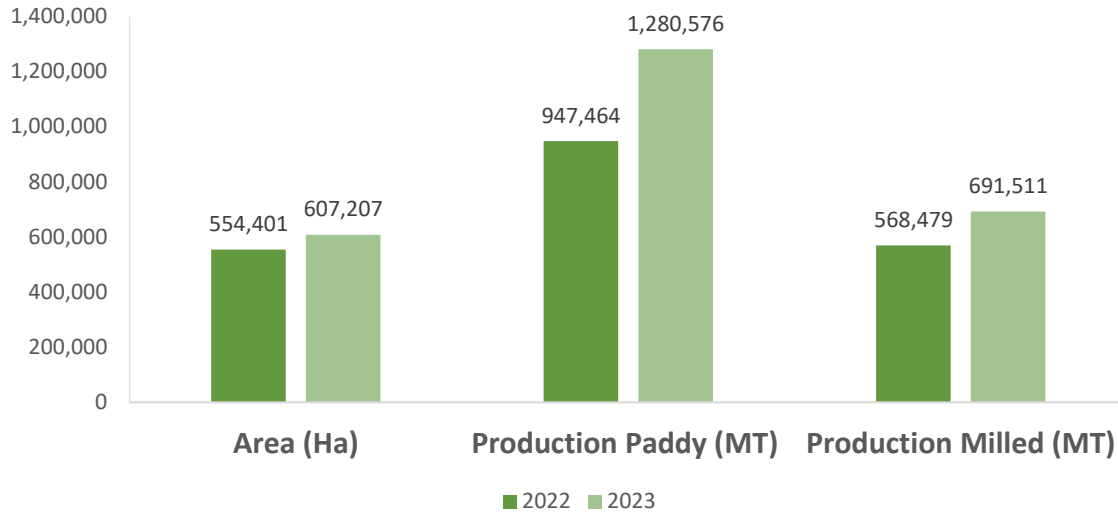
Feed Salone Strategy established to close Sierra Leone's rising rice import gap by 2028 by following three targets:

1. Increasing the area under rice production through mechanization with a target of 73,000 ha of low-land rice ecologies.
2. Improving yield from the average 1.9 MT to 4.0 MT over the five-year period.
3. Reduce post-harvest loss through investment in processing.

Rice production and area cultivated (2022-2023)

In 2023, Sierra Leone saw an increase in rice production and cultivated area. The area under rice cultivation expanded by 9.5%, growing from 554,401 hectares in 2022 to 607,207 hectares. This expansion resulted in a 35.2% rise in harvested paddy, from 947,464 MT to 1,280,576 MT. The yield also improved, growing from 1.9 MT per hectare to 2.1 MT per hectare. Furthermore, milled rice output increased from 568,479 MT to 691,511 MT, reflecting improved post-harvest processing efficiency.

Figure 1: Rice production and area cultivated (2022-2023)

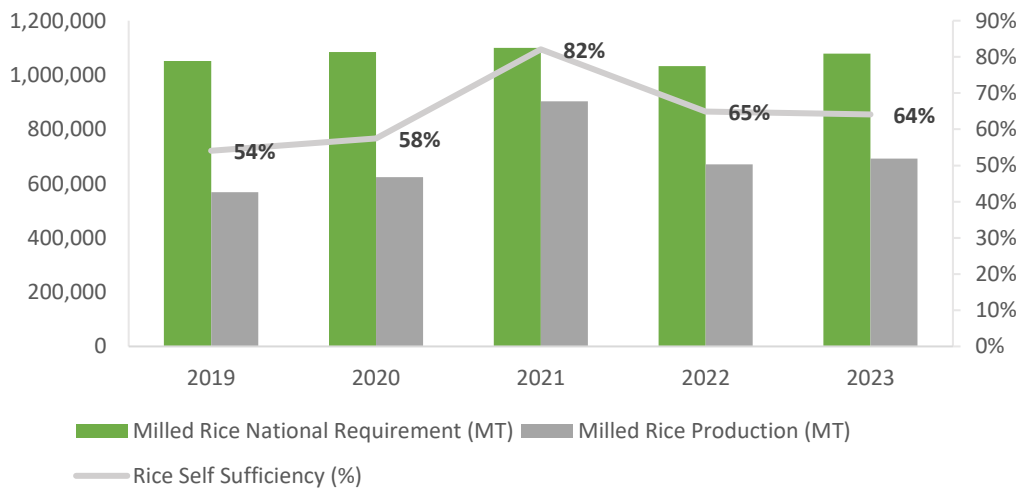


Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, 2024

Rice Self-sufficiency

Sierra Leone is advancing toward rice self-sufficiency, largely thanks to the initiatives of the Feed Salone program. With the current self-sufficiency rate at approximately 64%, the country has made notable progress while facing a gap between its rice production and the national requirements. This presents a crucial opportunity for ongoing investment and targeted support, enabling Sierra Leone to close this gap within the next four years.

Figure 2: Rice self-sufficiency (2019-2023)



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, 2024

Driving Feed Salone Success



In 2024, the MAFS, alongside its partners, supported the cultivation of 27,688 hectares of rice, a significant increase from the 15,320 hectares cultivated in 2023. This represents an 81% increase in the area under cultivation in one year, demonstrating the impactful efforts of the Feed Salone initiative.

These interventions for rice benefited 91,982 farmers, of whom 43.73% were women. The substantial increase in hectares cultivated and the number of beneficiaries reinforce the crucial role of MAFS in leading the rice transformation efforts in Sierra Leone (See Appendix 1).

The Government of Sierra Leone, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, has prioritized rice production as a key pillar of the Feed Salone strategy. One of the core initiatives driving this effort is the Ministry's E-voucher scheme, which has provided rice farmers with access to essential inputs such as fertilizers, improved seeds, and mechanization services. In particular, ploughing services have been made available exclusively to rice farmers in lowland areas, especially the bolilands and riverine grasslands, maximizing the cultivation potential of these fertile regions.

In addition to ploughing services, the Ministry has distributed improved varieties of rice seeds, as well as seeds for maize and soybean, and seedlings for tree crops like cocoa and cashew. Cuttings of cassava and sweet potato have also been provided. These high-yield, disease-resistant varieties have been developed locally in collaboration with international research institutions and adapted to Sierra Leone's agricultural environment. By introducing these improved varieties, farmers have benefited from increased yields, shorter growing cycles, enhanced disease resistance, and better nutritional and culinary attributes. The Sierra Leone Seed Certification Agency continues to play a vital role in ensuring that quality seeds are available to farmers across the country.

To fully unlock the potential of these improved crop varieties, the government has made fertilizers available to rice and maize farmers, focusing on blends rich in essential nutrients such as Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium (NPK). These blends are supplemented with urea to meet the high nitrogen demands of cereals like rice. The National Fertilizer Regulation Agency (NAFRA) ensures that only quality fertilizers are used, boosting productivity while safeguarding the environment.

Despite the continued use of indigenous seed varieties, which tend to yield lower outputs and are more susceptible to pests, the Ministry is actively promoting the adoption of improved, high-yield rice varieties. Alongside this, the introduction of new crop accessions adapted to local conditions helps identify the best performers for further expansion in rice production.

A significant aspect of the government's support for rice farmers is the distribution of agricultural machinery. Essential equipment such as rice dryers, over 100 combined rice mills with a capacity of 4MT/day, mini tillers/weeders, fertilizer applicators, and heavy-duty landing crafts for riverine areas have been handed over to farmers. This machinery is improving the efficiency of post-harvest processing, transportation, and logistics, empowering farmers to scale up rice production and contribute to national food security.

Imports

Figures 3 and 4 present a notable decline in rice imports from 2021 through August 2024. In 2021, rice imports stood at approximately 380,000 MT, peaking at 430,000 MT in 2022, before dropping to below 250,000 in 2023. In the first eight months of 2024, rice imports have further declined by over 60% compared to 2022 levels. This decrease highlights the increasing self-sufficiency in rice production within Sierra Leone.

Similarly, the total value of rice imports in USD shows a significant decrease in line with the volume trends. The estimated value was over USD 160 million in 2021 and peaked at around 180 million USD in 2022. By 2023, the total import value had dropped by around 25%.



Figure 3: Rice imports (2021-2023), MT

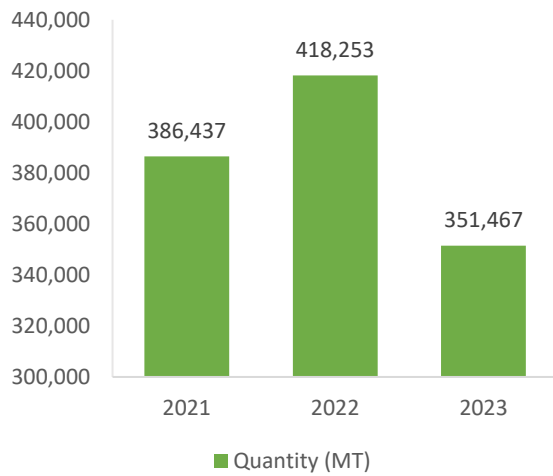
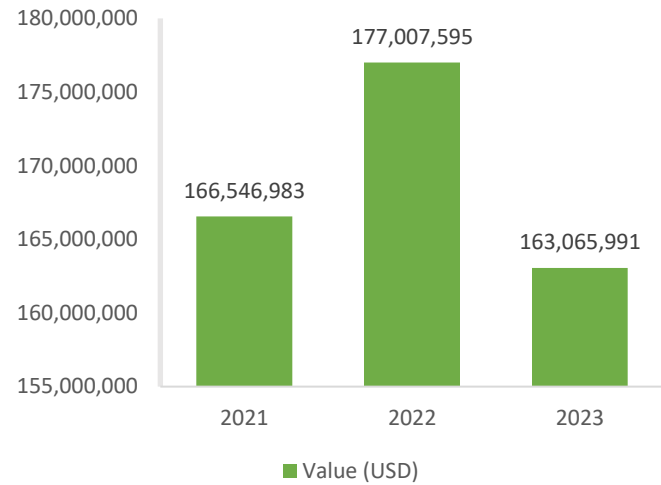


Figure 4: Rice imports (2021-2023), USD



Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2024

Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2024



POULTRY

The poultry value chain is essential as it significantly contributes to food security, nutrition, and economic development. The Feed Salone initiative focuses on all stages of poultry production, including breeding, rearing, processing, and distribution. The annual report shows the progress made in improving the poultry value chain.



Feed Salone Targets

Feed Salone aims to close Sierra Leone's poultry products import gap by following a three-pronged approach involving:

1. Enhancing feed production, improving poultry breeds, and increasing access to high-quality day-old chicks to increase productivity in the poultry value chain.
2. Improving the resilience of poultry farming for disease management by increasing access to veterinary services, vaccines, and medications.
3. Increasing the area under commercially oriented maize and soybean production.

CHICKEN

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the quantity of chicken imported into Sierra Leone from 2021 to 2023, measured in MT. In 2021, imports reached over 16,000 MT, marking a peak. However, by 2022, imports had dropped by nearly half to around 8,000 MT. The trend continued in 2023, with imports stabilizing at approximately 7,000 MT. This reduction in imports indicates progress in domestic poultry production.

Figure 5: Chicken imports (2021-2023), MT

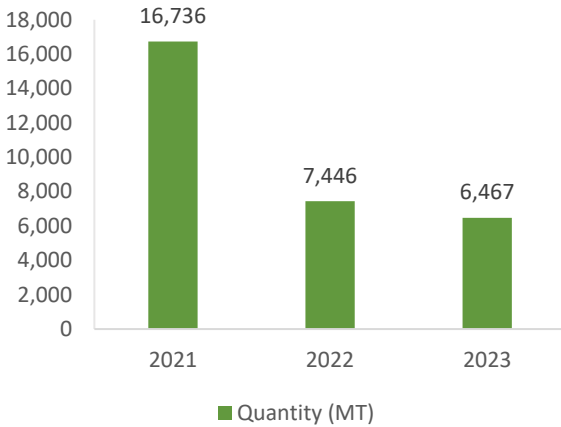
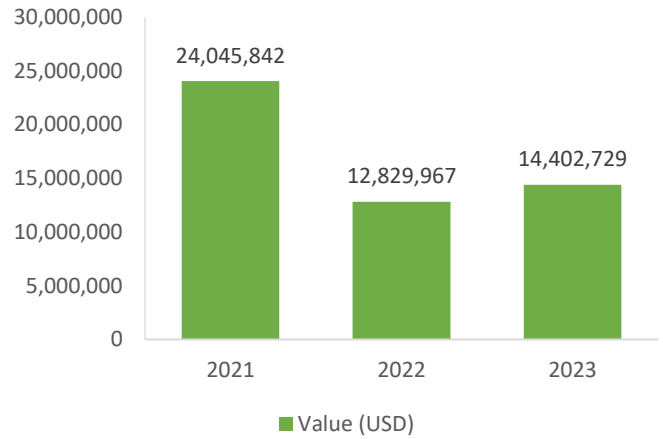


Figure 6: Chicken imports (2021-2023), USD



Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2024

EGGS

Figures 8 and 9 depict egg imports in Sierra Leone from 2021 to 2023, showing both quantity (MT) and value (USD). In 2021, imports peaked at over 500 MT. However, this trend shifted dramatically, with imports declining to around 200 MT by 2023. The monetary value of these imports also decreased, from over USD6,000,000 in 2021 to approximately USD 2,000,000 recently. This decline highlights the effectiveness of the Feed Salone initiative in promoting local poultry production and enhancing food security.

Figure 7: Eggs imports (2021-2023), MT

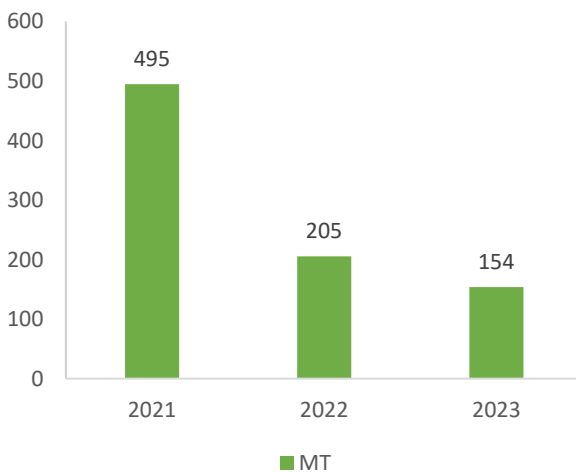
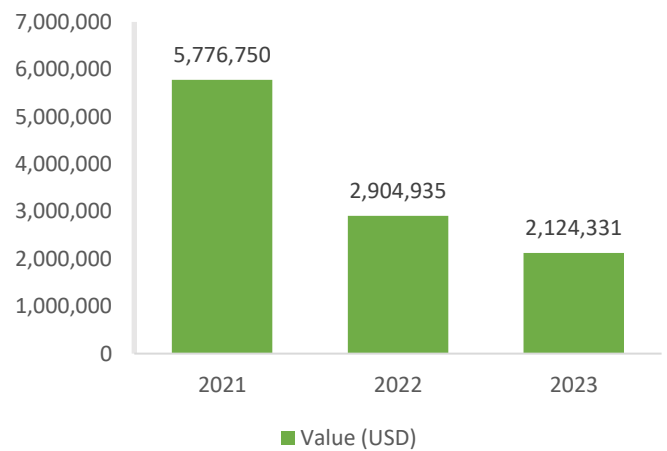


Figure 8: Eggs imports (2021-2023), USD



Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2024

Driving Feed Salone Success

In 2024, Sierra Leone's poultry sector achieved significant progress with the establishment of its first large-scale hatchery, significantly boosting local production and reducing reliance on imports. With a capacity to produce millions of day-old chicks annually, the facility contributes to food security and strengthens the domestic poultry industry.

Complementing this, government initiatives like the Smallholder Commercialization and Agribusiness Development Project (SCADeP) have enhanced production capacity, introduced modern farming technologies, and developed a national poultry database to streamline operations and improve productivity. This includes supporting poultry businesses in the Western Area and Bo and increasing their production capacity to 12,705 layers, while other farms expanded their broiler operations. The introduction of battery cage systems for layers, egg tray production machines to address packaging issues, and the development of a national poultry database to track production are all critical components of the government's efforts to boost productivity and streamline operations in the sector.

Through its interventions, SCADeP increased maize production from 1,500 hectares to 4,206 hectares in 2024. This expansion plays a crucial role in supporting the poultry industry by providing a reliable source of feed, thereby reducing dependency on imported feed ingredients.

The Poultry sector will be further supported by targeted policy measures in 2025.



ONIONS

Onions are not only a staple ingredient in Sierra Leonean cuisine but also a key agricultural product with substantial potential for local farmers. Recognizing the country's significant onion import gap, the Feed Salone initiative aims to empower farmers and enhance production through a targeted four-pronged strategy.

Feed Salone Targets

Feed Salone aims to close Sierra Leone’s import gap by following a four-pronged approach involving:

1. Increasing the area under commercially oriented onion production by 4,000 hectares.
2. Linking farmers to quality seeds and inputs for onion production.
3. Improving post-harvest processing and handling segments of the value chain.
4. Organize smallholder farmers by linking them to large-scale commercial producers in an outgrower scheme model.

Figure 10 and 11 presents the trend of onion imports in Sierra Leone from 2021 to 2023, highlighting both quantity (MT) and total value (USD). Onion imports peaked in 2021, reflecting high demand, but have since declined significantly in 2022 and 2023. By 2023, imports stabilized at a low level, indicating a positive shift toward increased local production and self-sufficiency. Correspondingly, the total value of imports has also decreased, underscoring the effectiveness of Feed Salone in promoting domestic onion production. This shift not only reduces reliance on imports but also enhances food security and economic resilience within the agricultural sector, reflecting progress toward self-sufficiency in onion production.

Figure 9: Onion imports (2021-2023), MT

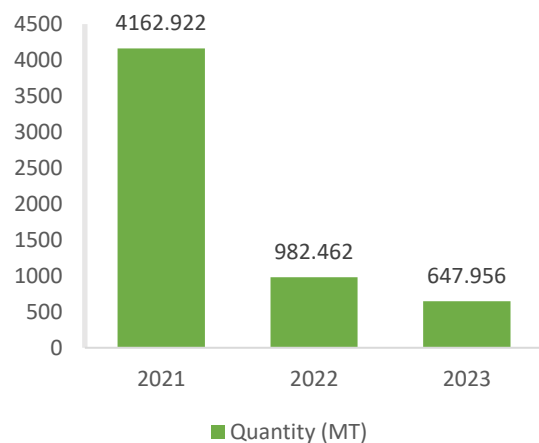
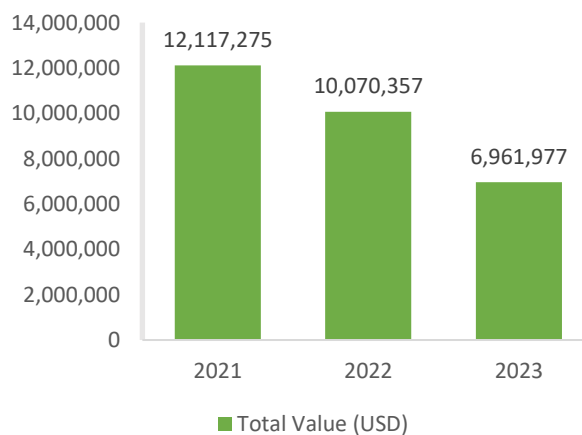


Figure 10: Onion imports (2021-2023), USD



Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2024

Driving Feed Salone Success

During the first year, The MAFS increased its support to local vegetable farmers, emphasizing the cultivation of onions. As a result, in 2024, a total of 898 hectares of onions were cultivated encompassing government support and private farms.

Recognizing the importance of the private sector, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security signed an agreement with the largest importer of onions in Sierra Leone. This agreement marked a major shift, positioning the importer to transition from being the biggest onion importer to the largest producers of onions in the country. The company launched a mechanized onion cultivation in Lungi, with an out-grower scheme of over 1,100 farmers, including women and youth, while contributing to the reduction of onion imports by an estimated 10% this year.



The President at the onion harvest ceremony at PC & Sons.

Objective 2: Boosting Export Earnings from Agriculture

This objective focuses on expanding Sierra Leone's agricultural exports by increasing the productivity and value of key cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, and cashew. By enhancing the quality and marketability of these crops, the initiative seeks to strengthen the agricultural value chain, increase foreign exchange earnings, and promote economic growth in rural areas, especially for women and youth.

Feed Salone Targets

Increasing the productivity of existing plantations for key cash crops through a gradual rehabilitation program.

1. Support farmers in replacing old plantations.
2. Expanding national production through the development of new cash crop clusters.
3. Establish cooperatives to help organize smallholder farmers to secure better prices and promote branding of these crops.

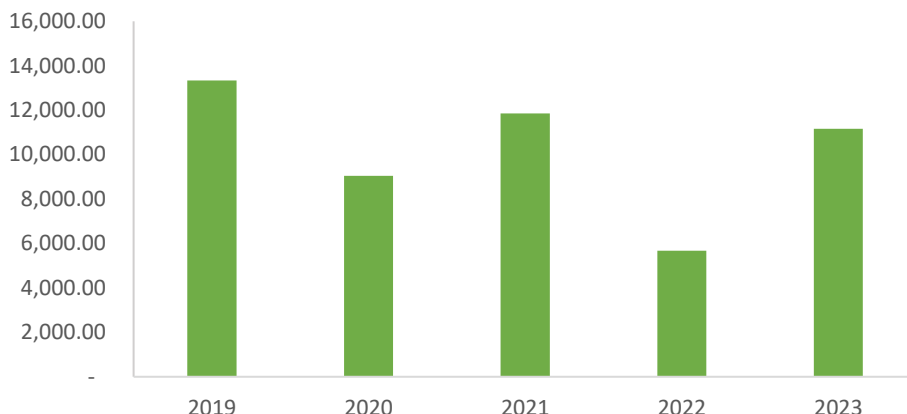
COCOA

The cocoa value chain offers significant potential for economic growth and job creation in Sierra Leone, making it a key focus of the Feed Salone Strategy. This comprehensive approach spans all stages of cocoa production, from cultivation and harvesting to primary processing and export. By integrating these elements, the strategy aims to boost productivity, enhance the quality of cocoa, and improve market access. This not only supports local livelihoods but also strengthens Sierra Leone's position in international markets.

Exports

In 2019, cocoa exports peaked at nearly 16,000 MT, reflecting strong global demand for Sierra Leonean cocoa. However, exports declined in 2020 due to supply disruptions and market challenges. The following year, cocoa exports rebounded to levels similar to those in 2019, indicating a recovery in the sector. In 2022, exports saw another drop, suggesting a renewed focus on boosting local cocoa production and enhancing quality. By 2023, exports increased again, signaling a positive trend toward stabilizing the cocoa supply chain. Throughout 2024, the government has taken significant steps to review sectorial policies and the governance structure of the cocoa value chain with the aim to introduce new policy measures to make the sector more competitive and to meet international standards such as the EUDR.

Figure 11: Cocoa exports (2019-2023), MT



Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2024

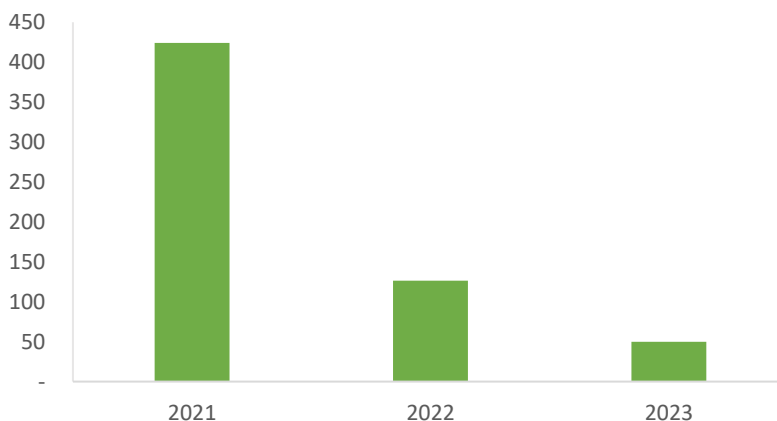
CASHEW

The cashew value chain is vital to Sierra Leone's agricultural transformation and offers substantial potential for economic growth.

Exports

Figure 13 illustrates the trend in cashew exports from 2021 to 2023. In 2021, cashew exports peaked, surpassing 400 MT. However, by 2022, exports significantly decreased to just over 150 MT. This trend continued into 2023, when exports further dropped, falling below 50 MT. This decrease over the three years suggests challenges in the cashew value chain that are being addressed by the Feed Salone initiative.

Figure 12: Cashew exports (2021-2023), MT



Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2024

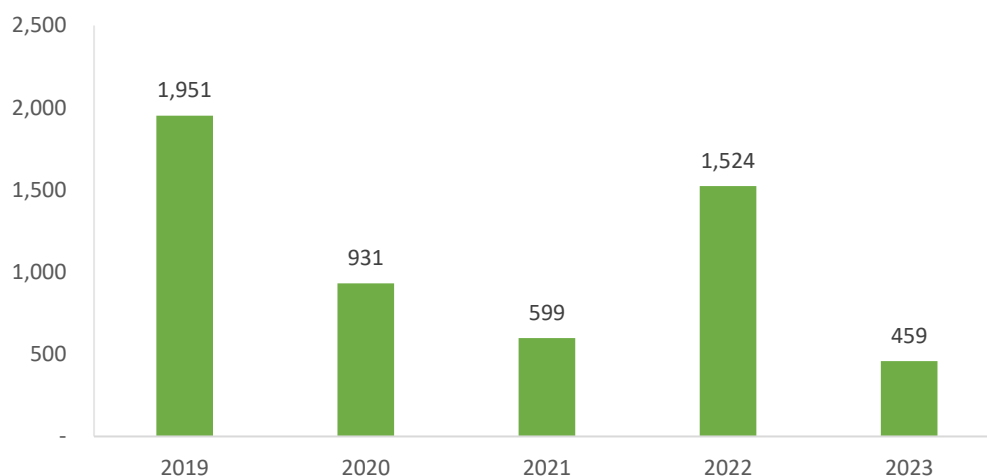
COFFEE

Coffee remains a key agricultural commodity for Sierra Leone, providing income for smallholder farmers and contributing to the country’s foreign exchange earnings.

Exports

Figure 14 illustrates the trend in coffee exports from 2019 to 2023. In 2019, coffee exports were strong, reaching over 2,000 MT. However, in 2020, exports dropped to around 1,000 MT. This declining trend continued into 2021, with exports falling to just above 500 MT. A recovery was seen in 2022, with exports increasing to over 1,500 MT, nearly reaching 2019 levels. In 2023, however, exports declined again, dropping to approximately 500 MT.

Figure 13: Coffee exports (2019-2023), MT



Source: Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2024

Driving Feed Salone Success

Expanding Cocoa Production

Between 2023 and 2024, the MAFS made significant efforts in advancing Sierra Leone’s cocoa sector. Through the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (AVDP), **4,800 hectares of new cocoa farms** were established across the Eastern and Southern regions, with **3,200 hectares in Kailahun and Kenema**, 800 hectares in Kono, and 900 hectares in the Bo and Pujehun districts. Additionally, 15 hectares of cocoa

clonal seed gardens were developed in Pendembu and Kpuwabu. Complementing these efforts, the Smallholder Commercialization and Agribusiness Development Project (SCADEP) contributed an additional 8,000 hectares, bringing the total expansion to 12,500 hectares. This growth is a critical component of the Feed Salone initiative, promoting increased production, economic growth, and job creation within the cocoa value chain.

In tandem with these efforts, private sector cultivation across the country has also scaled up significantly, contributing to higher export figures for cocoa. This collaboration between public and private sectors is driving substantial growth in the cocoa value chain, increasing production capacity and bolstering Sierra Leone's presence in international markets.

Expanding Cashew Production

In March 2024, the Waterloo Women Cashew Processing Factory was commissioned by the Minister of Agriculture in collaboration with the EU and Solidaridad. This modern facility processes 1 MT of cashew nuts daily, employing over 300 youth, with a focus on women-led operations. The factory plays a crucial role in expanding Sierra Leone's cashew production, alleviating women from hazardous traditional processing techniques, and empowering them economically through job creation. Building on this success, a second cashew processing factory is under construction at Rogbere Junction in Port Loko District, also in partnership with the EU and Solidaridad. This new facility is expected to process 1-2 MT of cashews daily, targeting cashew farmers and processors in Port Loko, Kambia, Bombali, and Tonkolili districts, with a focus on empowering women. The Rogbere Junction facility is set for completion in December 2024, with operations beginning by March 2025. Additionally, through the Developing an Inclusive and Sustainable Cashew Agroforestry Value Chain (DISCA-VC) project, over 3,700 farmers have been supported to cultivate 4,000 acres of polyclonal cashew in key districts, promoting sustainable farming practices and improving access to high-quality cashew processing, thereby bolstering income generation for farmers.

Advancing Coffee Cultivation

Initiatives to revitalize Sierra Leone's coffee sector have resulted in the establishment of 500 hectares of coffee farms within seven communities surrounding the Gola Forest, led by Welthungerhilfe (WHH). This approach follows a model of one hectare per farmer, directly benefiting 500 farmers in the region. Each hectare provides these farmers with the opportunity to improve their livelihoods while contributing to sustainable agricultural practices near the Gola Forest.

Simultaneously, the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) has been actively engaged in research and seedling production for coffee. Focused on areas such as Pendembu, SLARI's research aims to enhance the quality and yield of coffee crops by developing high-quality coffee seedlings, supporting the expansion and long-term sustainability of the coffee sector.



Cocoa clonal gardens

Objective 3: Job Creation and Income Generation for Women and Youth

Feed Salone puts an emphasis on empowering women and youth by creating economic opportunities in the agriculture sector. By prioritizing their involvement in key value chains like rice, onions, cocoa and poultry, the Strategy seeks to enhance their participation in the agricultural workforce and boost their income. This aligns with the broader Feed Salone goal of increasing productivity and creating jobs. Through targeted investments, increased access to finance, capacity-building, and entrepreneurship support, the initiative ensures that women and youth gain access to essential resources and opportunities.

Feed Salone Targets

1. Increasing the production of small ruminants and high-value horticulture crops, such as chili peppers, onions, and tomatoes to create 35,000 jobs for women and youth.
2. Improving the performance of critical dimensions of chili peppers, onions and tomatoes value chains.

Driving Feed Salone Success

Training in the establishment of Cooperatives

The MAFS has taken critical steps in organizing smallholder farmers into cooperatives, particularly in the rice, cassava, vegetables and poultry sectors. These cooperatives are essential for securing better prices, promoting collective branding, and building stronger market linkages for Sierra Leonean agricultural products. The MAFS conducted training sessions for 180 participants, including smallholder farmers, SMEs, and Agricultural Business Centers (ABCs), in cassava, rice, vegetables, and poultry farming. These trainings are critical to the formation of cooperatives and building the capacity needed for branding and structuring value chains for rice, cassava, vegetables and poultry sectors.

Empowering West African Women Small & Medium Enterprises (EWASME)

EWASME program, launched in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), will uplift women entrepreneurs in Sierra Leone. By focusing on 200 women-led SMEs and Very Small Enterprises (VSEs), EWASME seeks to revolutionize post-production processes in key rice-growing regions such as Kambia, Bonthe, and Tonkolili. The program addresses major challenges faced by women, including post-harvest losses and lack of access to financial resources, with the ultimate goal of building a sustainable and efficient rice value chain that supports both food security and economic growth in the country.

The program has already shown promising progress. So far, 99 women-led SMEs have been shortlisted for grant support, with 40 businesses undergoing due diligence in the Bonthe District. These businesses will receive comprehensive business development services from experienced consultants, equipping them to

create bankable proposals, which will open doors to additional financial resources. With a budget of USD2.4 million USD, EWASME is set to generate significant economic impact, creating an estimated 2,000 direct jobs and 4,000 indirect jobs. The initiative aims not only to strengthen post-production efficiencies in the rice sector but also to enhance the quality of rice for local and export markets. As the program evolves, continued support from IsDB and UNDP will ensure that these women-led businesses become key drivers of Sierra Leone's economic transformation, fostering inclusive growth, gender equity, and poverty alleviation.

Job Creation through Youth Engagement in Agricultural Value Chains

As part of the objectives of the AVDP Project, 1,764 youth contractors (50% females) were trained and employed at the community level to implement farm management practices across various key value chains. This initiative focused on empowering young people and creating sustainable livelihoods within the sector. The youth were deployed across different value chains, with 500 involved in Inland Valley Swamp (IVS) rice development, 800 working in the cocoa sector, and 464 engaged in the oil palm value chain. This approach not only contributes to job creation but also enhances agricultural productivity and community development. Additionally, through SCADEP, 363 formal jobs were created in the cocoa processing value chain,

Objective 4: Alleviating Hunger & Malnutrition

This objective focuses on alleviating hunger and malnutrition by increasing the availability of locally produced, nutritious food such as fish, pulses, and tubers: cassava and orange flesh sweet potatoes.

Feed Salone Targets

1. Improving the performance of critical dimensions of the cassava, orange flesh sweet potatoes, and pulses value chains.
2. Increasing Sierra Leone's acceptable Food Consumption Score to 65%.
3. Cut chronic hunger by half, child stunting by 30% and significantly reduce micronutrient deficiency among children by 2030.
4. Contributing and aligning policies to enhance the aquaculture sector.

Driving Feed Salone Success

As part of the MAFS commitment to improving health and nutrition outcomes, the government has launched several key initiatives aimed at enhancing the nutritional quality and safety of the food supply in Sierra Leone. These efforts are not only designed to tackle malnutrition but also to promote long-term health benefits for the most vulnerable populations, particularly children and rural communities.

School Feeding Programs

The School Feeding Program has proven to be a key intervention in addressing hunger and malnutrition among school children. By ensuring that over 500,000 students had access to nutritious meals during the 2023-2024 academic year, the program significantly contributed to increased school attendance and enhanced academic performance.

As part of the MAFS ongoing efforts to improve nutrition, the Ministry is collaborating in 2024 with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Korea and the WFP. This partnership has resulted in an in-kind donation of over 2,400 MT of rice, benefiting 106,000 schoolchildren in 500 schools across Sierra Leone throughout the academic year. This contribution ensures that children receive nutritious meals that are vital for their cognitive and physical development.

In addition to the rice donation, WFP also provided USD 43,452 to 207 schools in five districts. These funds are designated for purchasing fresh vegetables from smallholder farmers, many of whom are women. This initiative not only improves the quality and nutritional value of meals served to children but also fosters local economic growth by supporting women farmers. Integrating local agricultural products into school meal programs contributes to income generation and strengthens the link between nutrition and local agricultural production.

Further support for school feeding under the FSRP initiative provided 1,855.763 MT of nutritious food commodities to 131,659 school pupils across 584 schools, ensuring 126 feeding days during the year. This intervention, reaching 51.5% female students, continues to be a cornerstone in addressing malnutrition and supporting the educational development of schoolchildren.

The School Feeding Programs have been further enhanced by incorporating orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP) and yellow-fleshed cassava, which are rich in Vitamin A. These nutrient-dense crops are vital for addressing deficiencies in essential vitamins and improving the overall nutrition of school-aged children.

Aflatoxin Control and the Aflasafe Laboratory

To safeguard the health of the population, the GoSL is prioritizing food safety by addressing the issue of aflatoxins in major staple crops such as maize, groundnuts, and sesame. Aflatoxins pose a significant health risk, particularly in food-insecure communities. An analysis of aflatoxin levels in these crops has been initiated, with plans underway to establish Sierra Leone's first-ever Aflasafe Laboratory. This will be a critical step toward reducing the risk of aflatoxin contamination and ensuring the safety of the national food supply.

Sierra Leone's First Food Consumption and Micronutrient Survey

Recognizing the importance of data-driven approaches to improving nutrition, a partnership with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) has been established to develop a comprehensive food consumption database. This database serves as a foundational step in preparing for Sierra Leone's first-ever Food Consumption and Micronutrient Survey, scheduled to take place in 2025-2026.

Training Farmers and Introducing Micronutrient-Rich Vegetables

To diversify the food basket and improve the nutritional status of rural communities, farmers are being actively trained in seed development, product profiles, and food processing. Additionally, the adaptability of 11 vegetable types introduced by the National Horticultural Research Institute (NIHORT) and six varieties from the World Vegetable Centre, all rich in essential micronutrients, are being evaluated. The most promising varieties from these accessions will be officially released, providing a wider range of nutritious food options, especially for rural communities.

Scaling Up the Mushroom Value Chain

In partnership with SLARI, we are scaling up efforts to advance the mushroom value chain under the EU-funded project. Mushrooms are a highly nutritious food source and can play a significant role in improving dietary diversity and the economic well-being of rural communities.

Objective 5: Building climate resilient food system

This objective focuses on enhancing Sierra Leone's agricultural sector's capacity to adapt to climate change while ensuring sustainable food production. Through the adoption of climate-smart technologies and practices, this objective aims to reduce environmental degradation, promote agroforestry, and increase green cover through crops like cocoa and cashew.

Feed Salone Targets

1. Adopt smart climate technologies and approaches in our farming systems.
2. Improving the performance of critical dimensions of agroforestry for climate resilient food systems.
3. Increasing the green cover with cocoa and cashew.
4. Introducing policies and incentives to reduce slash and burn cultivation practice.

Driving Feed Salone Success

Introducing climate-smart technologies and approaches

The Ministry is implementing several projects introducing climate-smart technologies and approaches that promote resilience, sustainability, and efficiency in response to changing environmental conditions.

The following approaches have been adopted through these projects:

- I. **Improved Seed Varieties and Certified Seed Multiplication:** The seeds provided to farmers are carefully selected to enhance productivity while adapting to local conditions. These include flood-resistant, drought-tolerant, pest- and disease-resistant, and salt-tolerant varieties.
- II. **Crop Rotation:** Rotating crops helps improve soil fertility and reduce pest and disease pressure, ensuring sustained productivity under changing climate conditions.
- III. **Integration of Trees and Crops (Agroforestry):** Agroforestry systems combine trees with crops and/or livestock, offering benefits such as shade, wind protection, improved soil fertility, and carbon sequestration.
- IV. **Water Management and Irrigation Technologies:** Implementing efficient irrigation systems delivers water directly to plant roots, reducing water waste and enhancing productivity, particularly during dry seasons. Additionally, the construction of water management structures (bunds, dikes, and weirs) aids in flood control.
- V. **Building Resilience in Priority Landscapes:** This involves the application of climate-smart technologies for floodplain restoration, erosion control, land and watershed restoration, and soil fertility management.



Alliance of Champions for Food System Transformation (ACF)

The government is aligning its Feed Salone Strategy with the goals of the Alliance of Champions for Food System Transformation (ACF), co-chaired by Sierra Leone, Brazil, and Norway, and launched at COP28. Supported by AGRA and ACF, the MAFS is working to integrate the ACF’s ten action areas into national planning. This effort includes collaboration with other ministries and updating the national pathways towards food systems transformation, with a focus on sustainable farming, water efficiency, deforestation reduction, and climate resilience (see below), and creation of an agriculture investment plan which will bring this plan into life.

ACF’s ten priority intervention areas





LOOKING AHEAD

2025 FOCUS

LOOKING AHEAD: SECOND YEAR OF FEED SALONE



President Bio's continued advocacy efforts to mobilise resources & transform food systems



Developing of 16,000 ha of IVS with processing and storage facilities



Implementing the \$60 million cassava industrialisation project



Implementing the \$100 million Livestock Project to revive the sector



Implementing the rice cluster project in Tormabum, Gbondapi and Kambia



Leveraging the \$480 million MCC Compact to improve energy access for farmers and businesses



Multiplying & distributing Soybean and Maize Foundation Seeds with SLARI and IITA



Implementing feed subsidies for poultry farmers & policy measures to increase protein intake for children



Enhancing seedling health and productivity with new plant health clinics & phytosanitary laboratories

Second Year of Feed Salone

Looking ahead to Feed Salone's second year, the initiative will scale up transformative projects across multiple sectors. To enhance our pathways towards rice self-sufficiency, key efforts include developing 16,000 hectares of Inland Valley Swamps (IVS) to boost sustainable rice production, and continuing rice cluster projects in Tormabum, Gbondapi, and Kambia, and expanding into other rice-growing regions, among others. Infrastructure remains a critical component of Feed Salone, with the planned expansion of 200 km of feeder roads, rural bridge completion, and improving energy access in agricultural hubs through partnerships like the MCC Compact, BADEA and OPEC Fund.

Beyond rice, Feed Salone will supercharge efforts for key value chains with the \$100 million livestock project and the \$60 million cassava industrialization project. Policies to enhance competitiveness include land access facilitation, feed subsidies for poultry farmers, new policy measures for the cocoa sector, with a special focus on EUDR, and integrating protein-rich foods into school feeding programs.

Access to finance will be strengthened by establishing an Agriculture Lending Bank with at least USD 80 million in funding, and new insurance policies will protect farmers against climate risks. Additionally, the National Farmers Registry will be deployed, linking farmers to essential services, inputs, and finance, ensuring more efficient resource distribution.

Seed systems will be further strengthened, multiplying and distributing key crops like rice, soybean and maize. Enhanced seedling health and productivity will also be prioritized, working through partnerships with SLARI and others.

The MAFS is addressing critical gaps in extension services by hiring and deploying 1,000 additional field workers in 2025. These new hires will play a vital role in strengthening agricultural extension services, livestock support, data collection, and monitoring. By filling these gaps, the initiative ensures that farmers receive timely technical assistance, improved access to inputs, and support for adopting best agricultural practices.

President Bio's continued advocacy, along with a whole-of-government approach, will play a key role in mobilizing additional resources and ensuring coordinated implementation to drive the Feed Salone initiative forward and make Sierra Leone's agriculture sector more competitive and resilient.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: FLAGSHIP AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT PROJECT

Development of Rice Clusters

The Development of Rice Clusters in Sierra Leone is part of a broader effort by the Government to enhance agricultural productivity and promote rural development. These clusters focus on improving rice production through large-scale, competitive farming. By creating infrastructure tailored to key rice-producing areas, the initiative aims to increase yields and streamline operations across the value chain. This strategy is designed to boost rice self-sufficiency, reduce import dependency, and create economic opportunities in rural communities while promoting sustainable farming practices.

Establishment of Rice Clusters

The Rice Clusters Project is a key initiative to achieve rice self-sufficiency and enhance Sierra Leone's agricultural sector. The project focuses on large-scale rice production, addressing critical challenges such as infrastructure gaps, limited market access, and smallholder productivity. The Ministry, in collaboration with partners like the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the governments of China and South Korea, seeks to create rice production hubs that attract investment, foster technology transfer, and integrate local farmers into a competitive rice value chain.

The project aims to significantly boost local rice production, reduce import dependency, and improve food security while promoting economic growth in rural areas through job creation and income improvement for smallholder farmers. Ultimately, the project positions Sierra Leone to not only meet domestic rice demand but also to become a potential exporter.

The Rice Clusters Project will be developed using a public-private partnership (PPP) model, designed to attract private sector investment while ensuring essential government support for critical infrastructure. This model will create a collaborative environment where both public and private stakeholders work together to build and operate the clusters efficiently. The rice clusters will serve as a one-stop solution for farmers, providing access to key services such as machinery rentals, processing facilities, and other agricultural inputs. By centralizing these resources, the project will streamline rice farming operations, increase productivity, and enable smallholder farmers to scale their businesses more effectively, ultimately contributing to national food security and economic growth.

Rice Clusters have been identified in geographical zones with high agricultural potential. These clusters focus on rice and are designed to concentrate government resources and private sector investments for maximum productivity.

The identified clusters include major rice-producing regions in Sierra Leone:



Identified rice clusters under Feed Salone

The Rice Clusters Project has made significant progress in its early stages and continues to advance according to the objectives outlined.

Conceptualization and Formulation of Rice Clusters concept:

The MAFS team has prepared technical project documents for resource mobilization. These materials are now being used to showcase the Rice Clusters concept to potential investors and partners, aiming to secure the necessary funding and support for large-scale implementation.

1. Unlocking Arab Coordination Group Funding for the Tormabum Rice Industrial Cluster

A key focus has been preparing the Tormabum Investment documentation for presentation at the Vienna Energy and Food Security Roundtable hosted by the OPEC Fund.

The GoSL secured USD 800 million in pledges from partners to support sustainable energy transition and food security in Sierra Leone. BADEA alone committed USD 250 million for Feed Salone and the development of the integrated Rice Industrial Complex in Tormabum to increase local rice production, create jobs, and transform the rice sector in Sierra Leone. OPEC Fund committed USD 230 million for energy and clusters development.

In September, an aide-memoire was signed with BADEA, outlining the project breakdown, financing, and implementation plans. Additionally, Terms of Reference (ToRs) for feasibility studies on power access and irrigation infrastructure are being developed, ensuring that critical support systems for the Tormabum Cluster are addressed.

2. Securing African Development Bank Support for Rice Cluster Development

During the Africa Food Systems Forum in Kigali in September 2024, the Sierra Leonean delegation secured a USD 100 million pledge from the African Development Bank (AfDB) to support the development of key rice clusters. Following this, MAFS engaged with AfDB to refine the project details and design an implementation plan that aligns with Sierra Leone's broader agricultural transformation goals.

This ambitious project aims to establish an agro-industrial zone for the northern clusters of Kambia and Port Loko, focusing on infrastructure development that will create an enabling environment for private sector investment. By attracting private companies to lead large-scale rice production and processing, the project seeks to transform Kambia and Port Loko into vibrant hubs of agricultural activity. The planned infrastructure will include irrigation systems, storage facilities, and transportation links, all of which are essential for supporting high-volume production and ensuring efficient market access.

3. Unlocking Chinese Funding and Technology for Rice Production:

An MOU has been developed and reviewed between the Government of Sierra Leone (MAFS) and the Government of China (MAFRA). In addition, a USD 20 million project proposal for rice cluster development is under review by Chinese authorities. This collaboration aims to secure funding and technological support to scale up rice production in line with the clusters project.

4. Leveraging South Korea's Expertise for R&D in Rice Production:

Project documents for the K-Rice Belt initiative have been finalized, and similar documents have been developed for Korea Africa Food & Agriculture Cooperation Initiative (KAFACI). The MAFS is also working closely with Korean technical teams to set up an implementation framework, which will focus on boosting rice productivity through research and development.

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