



**SLARi**

**SIERRA LEONE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL  
COMMITMENT PLAN (ESCP)**

**August, 2025**

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## INTRODUCTION

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors remain crucial for assessing a company's commitment to sustainability and ethical behaviour. These non-financial metrics are used by investors, consumers, and regulators to evaluate a company's performance and long-term potential, making ESG a key driver for continuous improvement and innovation.

## PILLARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE

The ESG is built on three core elements:

- **Environmental:** This looks at a company's impact on the planet, focusing on areas like carbon emissions, resource use, waste management, and pollution. It encourages sustainable resource use, lower emissions, and better efficiency.
- **Social:** This examines a company's relationships with its staff, customers, suppliers, and communities. It includes labour standards, human rights, diversity, and community engagement. Social sustainability means managing people and suppliers ethically, ensuring fair employment, equal opportunities, work-life balance, and respect for human rights.
- **Governance:** This assesses SLARI's leadership, executive pay, audits, internal controls, and shareholder rights. It covers board structure, employee pay, customer satisfaction, supply chain resilience, business ethics, and transparency.

## IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE

The growing importance of ESG is driven by more awareness among consumers and investors, who now demand greater corporate responsibility for social and environmental impacts.

Institutional investors are putting ESG factors into their investment decisions, seeing good ESG performance as a sign of long-term success. Governments are also introducing regulations, such as the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), which requires detailed climate-related-reporting.

## ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The environmental aspect of ESG is about a company's impact on the planet. Key environmental factors include:

- **Climate change:** Companies are expected to measure and cut greenhouse gas emissions, invest in renewable energy, and adapt to climate risks.
- **Resource depletion:** Using resources efficiently, cutting waste, and using circular economy models are vital for mitigating resource depletion.
- **Pollution:** Minimizing air, water, and land pollution with cleaner technologies is key.

The Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute can improve its environmental impact by:

- Setting emissions reduction targets in line with the Paris Agreement.
- Investing in renewable energy sources like solar and wind power.
- Improving energy efficiency to reduce consumption.
- Promoting sustainable supply chains by working with environmentally responsible suppliers.
- Reducing waste and encouraging circularity.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The social side of ESG focuses on a company's relationships with its stakeholders. Key social aspects include:

- **Labour standards:** Upholding fair labour practices, including safe working conditions, fair pay, and progression opportunities.
- **Human rights:** Respecting human rights throughout operations and supply chains, avoiding child labour, forced labour, and discrimination.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** Promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce where all staff are valued.
- **Community engagement:** Supporting local projects and contributing to community well-being.

The Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute can boost its social responsibility by:

- Implementing fair labour practices providing training and development opportunities.
- Carrying out human rights due diligence to spot and address potential risks.
- Implementing policies that promote diversity and inclusion.
- Getting involved in philanthropy, volunteering, and partnerships to support local communities.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE

The governance side of ESG assesses SLARI's leadership and decision-making. Key governance factors include:

- **Board structure:** Having a diverse and independent board of directors.
- **Executive pay:** Aligning executive pay with the company's long-term interests.
- **Transparency:** Transparent reporting and disclosures to give stakeholders accurate ESG performance data.
- **Ethics:** Having a strong code of ethics and encouraging ethical behaviour.

- **Accountability:** Companies must be accountable to stakeholders for their ESG performance.

Good governance ensures sound decision-making, promotes ethical behaviour and builds trust. This is vital for long-term sustainability.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE INVESTMENT

The investment in ESG means integrating environmental, social, and governance factors into investment decisions alongside financial considerations.

The primary function is to help investors align their work with sustainable values and make a positive global impact. The ESG investing provides competitive financial returns; helps reduce risks, such as the long-term impacts of climate change.

## ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE REPORTING AND FRAMEWORKS

The main goal is thoroughly disclosing SLARI's environmental, social, and governance performance, giving stakeholders insight into sustainability efforts, risks, and opportunities. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) frameworks helps create sustainability reports covering environmental, social, and economic factors, helping organizations understand their impacts. Increased stakeholder demand, regulatory needs, and the competitive edge of good ESG reporting are driving its growth. The major ESG reporting frameworks and standards include:

- The GRI: The most used standards for sustainability reporting.
- The Sustainable Accounting Standards Board (SASB): Provides industry-specific standards, focusing on issues important for financial performance.
- Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD): A framework for disclosing climate-related risks and opportunities.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE

Implementing and reporting on ESG presents both hurdles and benefits for businesses.

- Challenges include the lack of standardized metrics, the complexity of data collection and management, integrating ESG into business strategy, the risk of greenwashing, and multiple reporting frameworks.
- Opportunities include a better reputation, reduced risk, improved financial performance, more innovation, and attracting and keeping talent. A comprehensive analysis shows the positive relationship between ESG systems and financial performance.

## THE FUTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND GOVERNANCE

The future holds great potentiality of environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and good governance in SLARI. On the one hand is more backlash; on the other, more regulation. Either way, boards have a lot of thinking to do to ensure they keep stakeholders happy.

The prioritization of environmental sustainability, social responsibility, and good governance by SLARI will enable the institute to be well-placed for long-term success. Integrating ESG enhances reputation, attracts investment, reduces risks, and creates value.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT PLAN**

The Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) (hereinafter the Recipient) shall implement its respective parts of the West Africa Food System Resilience Program (FSRP) (hereinafter the Project), Phase 1 project, (the Project), with the involvement of the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) established and functioning within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, as set out in the Financing Agreement. The International Development Association (Association) has agreed to provide financing for the Project, as set out in the referred agreement.

The Recipient shall ensure that the Project is carried out in accordance with the Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs) and this Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), in a manner acceptable to the Association. The ESCP is a part of the Financing Agreement] [Grant Agreement] [and the Project Agreement]. Unless otherwise defined in this ESCP, capitalized terms used in this ESCP have the meanings ascribed to them in the referred agreement(s).

Without limitation to the foregoing, this ESCP sets out material measures and actions that the Recipient shall carry out or cause to be carried out, including, as applicable, the timeframes of the actions and measures, institutional, staffing, training, monitoring and reporting arrangements, and grievance management. The ESCP also sets out the environmental and social (E&S) instruments that shall be adopted and implemented under the Project, all of which shall be subject to prior consultation and disclosure, consistent with the ESS, and in form and substance, and in a manner acceptable to the Association. Once adopted, said E&S instruments may be revised from time to time with prior written agreement by the Association.

As agreed by the Association and the Recipient, this ESCP will be revised from time to time if necessary, during Project implementation, to reflect adaptive management of Project changes and unforeseen circumstances or in response to Project performance. In such circumstances, the Recipient through the Project Implementation Unit and the Association agree to update the ESCP to reflect these changes through an exchange of letters signed between the Association and the SLARI. The Recipient shall promptly disclose the updated ESCP.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT PLAN (ESCP) – [name] Project**

<b>MATERIAL MEASURES AND ACTIONS</b>		<b>TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE ENTITY</b>
<b>MONITORING AND REPORTING</b>			
<b>A</b>	<b>REGULAR REPORTING</b> Prepare and submit to the Association regular monitoring reports on the environmental, social, health and safety (ESHS) performance of the Project, including but not limited to the implementation of the ESCP, status of preparation and implementation of E&S instruments required under the ESCP, stakeholder engagement activities, and functioning of the grievance mechanism(s) including those related to GBV/SEA/ SH and Project workers, and the SEA/SH Prevention and Response Action Plan.	Submit quarterly reports to the Association throughout Project implementation, commencing after the Effective Date. Submit each report to the Association no later than 5 days after the end of each reporting period.	Project Implementation Unit (PIU)
<b>B</b>	<b>INCIDENTS AND ACCIDENTS</b> Promptly notify the Association of any incident or accident related to the Project which has, or is likely to have, a significant adverse effect on the environment, the affected communities, the public or workers, including, inter alia, cases of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), sexual harassment (SH), and accidents that result in death, serious or multiple injury. Provide sufficient detail regarding the scope, severity, and possible causes of the incident or accident, indicating immediate measures taken or that are planned to be taken to address it, and any information provided by any contractor and/or supervising firm, as appropriate. Subsequently, at the Association's request, prepare a report on the incident or accident and propose any measures to address it and prevent its recurrence.	Notify the Association no later than 48 hours after learning of the incident or accident and no later than 24 hours for fatalities and SEA/SH incidents. Provide subsequent report to the Association within a timeframe acceptable to the Association	PIU
<b>C</b>	<b>CONTRACTORS' MONTHLY REPORTS</b> Require contractors and supervising firms to provide monthly monitoring reports on ESHS performance in accordance with the metrics specified in the respective bidding documents and contracts and submit such reports to the Association.	Submit the monthly reports to the Association as annexes to the reports to be submitted under action A above throughout the implementation of the project.	PIU

MATERIAL MEASURES AND ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
<b>ESS 1: ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS</b>		
<p>1.1 <b>ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE</b> Establish and maintain within a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) with qualified staff and resources to support management of ESHS risks and impacts of the Project including an environmental specialist. The Terms of Reference (TORs) and qualifications of the candidate will be subject to the Association's no objection.</p>	<p>Establish and maintain a PIU as set out in the Financial Agreement. The social specialist has been hired and this position will be maintained throughout Project implementation. The SLARI Social specialist will work jointly with the Ministry of Environment safeguard specialist and / or the specialists hired by partner organizations and will jointly implement E&amp;S activities and produce expected E&amp;S reports.</p>	<p>PIU</p>
<p>1.2 <b>ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL INSTRUMENTS</b> 1. Adopt and implement an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), and corresponding Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) for each activity under the Project for which the ESIA/ESMP is required, consistent with the relevant ESSs. 2. Adopt and implement an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for the Project, consistent with the relevant ESSs.</p>	<p>1. Adopt the ESIA and SMP prior to launching the bidding process for the respective Project activity that requires the adoption of such ESMP, and thereafter implement the ESIA and ESMP throughout Project implementation. 2. The ESMF has been adopted prior to Appraisal and will be implemented throughout Project implementation.</p>	<p>PIU</p>
<p>1.3 <b>RELEVANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL</b> Incorporate the relevant aspects of the ESCP, including, inter alia, the relevant E&amp;S instruments, the Labour Management Procedures, and code of conduct, into the ESHS specifications of the procurement documents and contracts with contractors and supervising firms. Thereafter ensure that the contractors and supervising firms comply and cause subcontractors to comply with the ESHS specifications of their respective contracts.</p>	<p>As part of the preparation of procurement documents and respective contracts. Supervise contractors throughout Project implementation.</p>	<p>PIU</p>

<b>MATERIAL MEASURES AND ACTIONS</b>		<b>TIMEFRAME</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE ENTITY</b>
1.4	<b>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</b> Ensure that the consultancies, studies (including feasibility studies, if applicable), capacity building, training, and any other technical assistance activities under the Project are carried out in accordance with terms of reference acceptable to the Association, that are consistent with the ESSs. Thereafter ensure that the outputs of such activities comply with the terms of reference.	Throughout Project implementation.	PIU
<b>ESS 2: LABOUR AND WORKING CONDITIONS</b>			
2.1	<b>LABOUR MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES</b> Adopt and implement the Labour Management Procedures (LMP) for the Project, including, inter alia, provisions on working conditions, management of workers relationships, occupational health, and safety (including personal protective equipment, and emergency preparedness and response), code of conduct including relating to SEA and SH), forced labour, child labour, grievance arrangements for Project workers, and applicable requirements for contractors, subcontractors, and supervising firms.	The LMP has been adopted prior to Effective Date, and will be implemented throughout Project implementation period	PIU
2.2	<b>GRIEVANCE MECHANISM FOR PROJECT WORKERS</b> Establish and operate a grievance mechanism for Project workers, as described in the LMP and consistent with ESS2.	Establish grievance mechanism prior to engaging Project workers and thereafter maintain and operate it throughout Project implementation.	PIU
<b>ESS 3: RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT</b>			
	Not relevant		
<b>ESS 4: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>			
	Not relevant		
<b>ESS 5: LAND ACQUISITION, RESTRICTIONS ON LAND USE AND INVOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT</b>			
	Not relevant		
<b>ESS 6: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF LIVING NATURAL RESOURCES</b>			
	Not relevant		

MATERIAL MEASURES AND ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	
<b>ESS 7: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED TRADITIONAL LOCAL COMMUNITIES</b>			
Not relevant			
<b>ESS 8: CULTURAL HERITAGE</b>			
Not relevant			
<b>ESS 9: FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARIES</b>			
Not relevant			
<b>ESS 10: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION DISCLOSURE</b>			
10.1	<b>STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION</b> Adopt and implement a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) for the Project, consistent with ESS10, which shall include measures to, inter alia, provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable, and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination, and intimidation.	The SEP has been adopted before Project Appraisal and will be implemented throughout Project implementation.	PIU
10.2	Establish, publicize, maintain, and operate an accessible grievance mechanism, to receive and facilitate resolution of concerns and grievances in relation to the Project, promptly and effectively, in a transparent manner that is culturally appropriate and readily accessible to all Project-affected parties, at no cost and without retribution, including concerns and grievances filed anonymously, in a manner consistent with ESS10.  The grievance mechanism shall be equipped to receive, register, and facilitate the resolution of SEA/SH complaints, including through the referral of survivors to relevant gender-based violence service providers, all in a safe, confidential, and survivor-centered manner.	The grievance mechanism has been established and will be maintained and operated throughout Project implementation.	PIU

MATERIAL MEASURES AND ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
<b>CAPACITY SUPPORT</b>		
<p>CS1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target Group: The RCU, the Steering Committee, the heads of the technical departments involved in implementation of the Project</li> <li>- Training modules: Environmental and Social Risk Management</li> <li>- New environmental and social framework of the Bank,</li> <li>- Identification and engagement of stakeholders,</li> <li>- Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP),</li> <li>- Content of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)</li> <li>-Environmental and Social Risk Monitoring, Reporting and Coordinating</li> <li>-Consultation practices and GM oversight and reporting</li> <li>-Risk management in the workplace</li> </ul> <p><b>Complaint Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Grievance mechanism, including filing and handling of complaints</li> <li>- Awareness of the risks of SEA / SH/ VAC/; SEA/SH prevention and response action plan, including CoCs.</li> <li>-Awareness and capacity building on SEA/SH grievance mechanism</li> </ul> <p>Roll-out plant for SEA/SH and GBV risk mitigation measures oversight across implementing countries.</p>	<p>At the start of project activities and thereafter at regular intervals.</p>	<p>PIU</p>

MATERIAL MEASURES AND ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY
<p>CS2 <b>Target Group:</b> Suppliers/service providers/subcontractors</p> <p><b>Training Modules:</b></p> <p><b>Environmental and Social Risk Management</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Risk management in the workplace</li> <li>2. Prevention of accidents at work</li> <li>3. Health and safety rules</li> </ol> <p><b>-Complaint management</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grievance mechanism including filing and handling of complaints</li> <li>2. Procedure for addressing SEA/SH related complaints</li> <li>3. Mechanism for addressing labour complaints</li> <li>4. Complaints settlement procedure</li> <li>5. Documentation and handling of complaints</li> </ol> <p><b>- Employment and Working Conditions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Terms and conditions of employment under ECOWAS legal and policy guidelines</li> <li>2. Codes of conduct for suppliers/service providers and subcontractors</li> <li>3. Workers' organizations</li> <li>4. Child Labour and Minimum age for children</li> </ol>	<p>Prior to the start of Project activities and periodically until the end of the project</p>	<p>PIU, Service providers, suppliers, and contractors</p>

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