GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY
CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DATA AND STATISTICS

Sierra Leone's Nature Promise

The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2026 to 2035: what the country commits to protect, restore and use wisely, and how progress will be tracked



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Protect and restore
Forests, wetlands, coasts

Use wisely
Farming, fishing, forestry

Include everyone
Rights, benefits, voice

Finance and track
Money and results

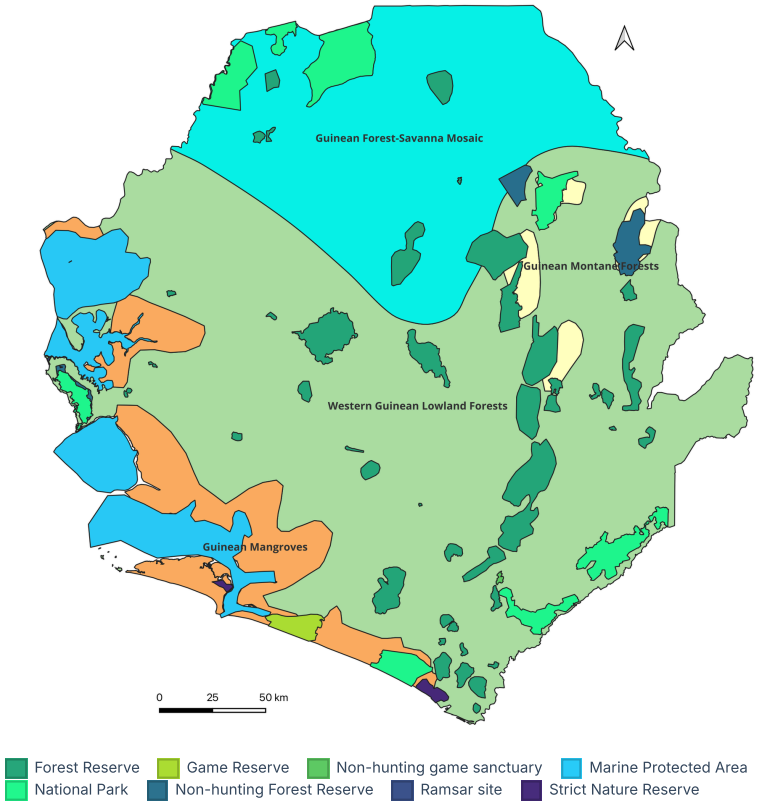
Based on the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2026 to 2035 as validated and adopted in 2026, including its policy, legal and institutional review (Annex B3) and its spatial analysis (Annex B2). The plan is available online: see the closing page.

01 WHY BIODIVERSITY MATTERS

Sierra Leone sits in a global biodiversity hotspot, and people depend on its forests, wetlands, coasts and rivers every day

Four ecological regions

Colours show the regions; the green and blue shapes are protected areas



Western Guinean Lowland Forests

South and centre of the country. Among the most species-rich forests in Africa; Sierra Leone keeps some of the most intact blocks in the region, though much is now fragmented.

Guinean Forest–Savanna Mosaic

North and north-centre. A patchwork of woodland, grassland and farms shaped by fire and cultivation, home to species suited to disturbance.

Guinean Mangroves

Atlantic coast, around the Sierra Leone, Sherbro and Scarcies river estuaries. Support fisheries, protect shorelines and store carbon.

Guinean Montane Forests

Small areas in the north-east, in the Loma and Tingi Hills. Distinct plants and animals, and important for water catchments.

What people get from nature

Food

Fertile soils, pollination, crop and livestock diversity, fish and mangrove nurseries

Fisheries and coasts

Productive estuaries and nearshore waters feed coastal communities

Water and health

Healthy watersheds and wetlands keep water clean and flows steady

Protection from hazards

Forests, wetlands and mangroves buffer floods, mudslides, storms and erosion

Livelihoods

Farming, fishing, forest products and small enterprises, especially in rural and coastal areas

8,500 ha
of priority degraded mangroves, in the Scarcies and Sherbro estuaries

Hotspot
Upper Guinean Forest: one of the world's biodiversity hotspots

Words used in this atlas

NBSAP National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

KM-GBF Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the global plan with 23 targets for 2030

KBA Key Biodiversity Area: a site of global importance for nature

OECM Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure: conservation outside formal protected areas

IPLC Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

FPIC Free, prior and informed consent

CEPA Communication, education and public awareness

MEAL Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning

BIOFIN Biodiversity Finance Initiative, which builds the finance plan

30×30 Conserve at least 30% of land and sea by 2030

Beyond parks Much of Sierra Leone's biodiversity lives outside protected areas, in farms, wetlands, coasts and forests that people use, so protecting nature means planning land and sea use, not only fencing parks.

Sources: NBSAP 2026–2035 (Parts I to II); Annex B2 spatial analysis (ecological regions). Map: Diva-GIS and regional consultations, November 2025.

02 NATURE UNDER PRESSURE

Land cover has swung from loss to gain and back to loss since 2000, and the pressures behind it build on each other

Vegetation cover, 2000 to 2025

Satellite map analysis of loss and gain; the direction of change, not measured area

2000 to 2010 ⬇️

Widespread loss

Loss across all four ecological regions, strongest near Freetown, other urban centres and main roads. The period followed the conflict, as farming, charcoal, logging and mining grew with limited enforcement.

2010 to 2020 ⬆️

Net gain

Gain exceeded loss across large parts of the country, with some gain in and near protected areas. Part of it is fallow, tree crops and regrowth, so it is not all recovery of native forest.

2020 to 2025 ⬇️

Renewed loss

Loss returned and is more concentrated, especially in the Western Area and the Freetown Peninsula, on steep watershed forests and around the edges of the city.

Five direct pressures

They often act together and add up

Land-use change
Farming, mining, roads and growing settlements

Overuse of resources
Timber, wildlife and fish taken faster than they recover

Pollution
Agrochemicals, mining, solid waste and untreated effluents

Invasive alien species
Harm to ecosystems, farms and fisheries; data are limited

Climate change
Shifting rain, floods, droughts and coastal impacts

Five underlying causes

Why the pressures keep happening

Fragmented mandates
weak coordination and enforcement

Insecure land tenure
unclear resource rights

Short-term incentives
markets reward extraction

Limited capacity
people, skills and money

Data gaps
incomplete inventories and monitoring

Where it shows most

Western Area and Freetown Peninsula
High biodiversity value, ecosystem services and development pressure meet here

Woodfuel and charcoal
Heavy demand in towns wears down forests and woodlands bit by bit; mangroves are cut for fuel and fish smoking

Shifting cultivation
Shorter fallows and market-driven land use are changing a system that once kept land resilient

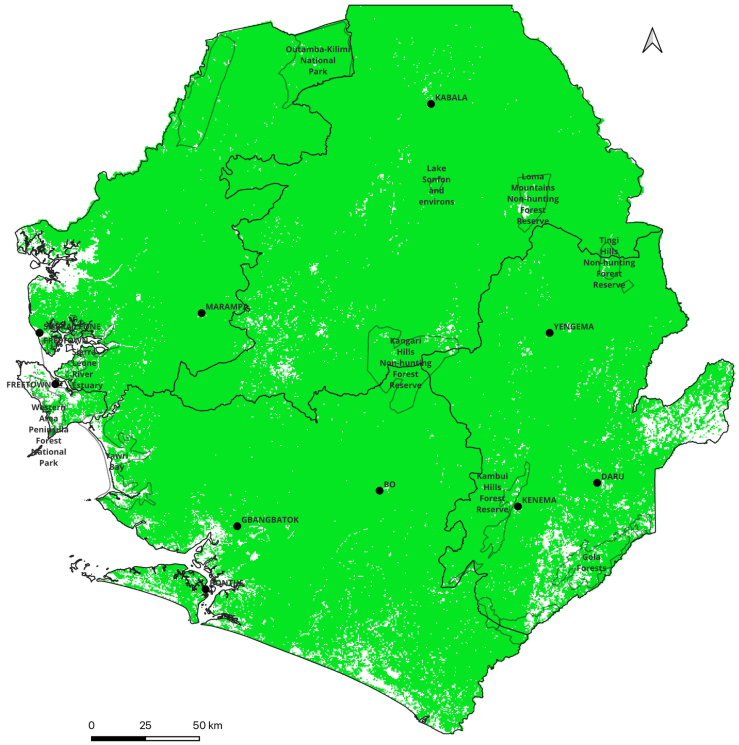
Sources: Annex B2 spatial analysis (sections 4 and 5); NBSAP 2026–2035 (section 4). Hotspot patterns are map-based and the analysis notes that driver attribution is evidence-informed rather than definitive.

03 FOREST COVER AND TREE LOSS

Vegetation still covers most of the country, but tree cover loss since 2013 has been large

Where vegetation remained in 2025

Satellite classification; vegetation includes farms, grassland and shrubland, not only forest



Presence of vegetation, 2025 — Vegetation loss (white gaps on the map)

How the land-cover maps were made

1. Satellite images
Landsat 8 for 2020 and 2025; Landsat 7 for 2000 and 2010. One median image per year, built in Google Earth Engine

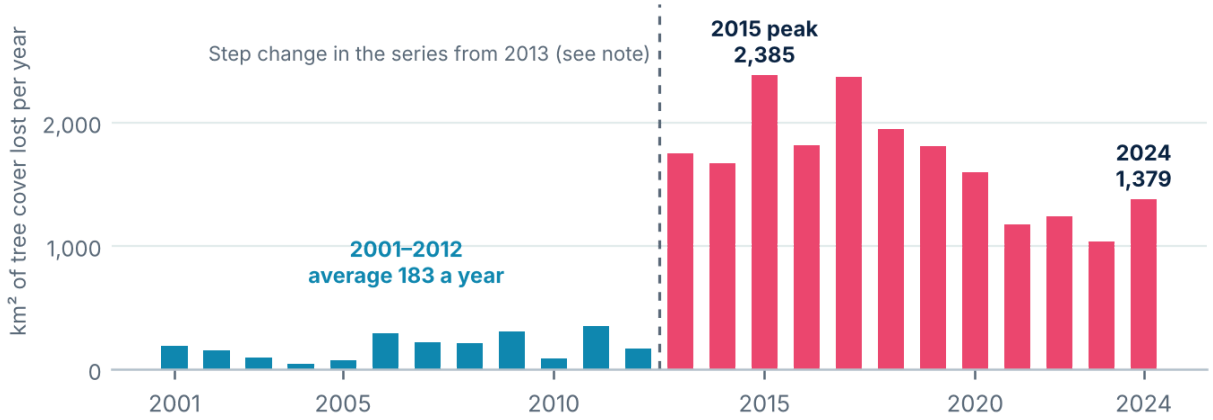
2. Training areas
Sample areas for eight classes: settlement, agriculture, forest, bare ground, water, wetland, shrubland, grassland. A quarter held back to test

3. Classification
Random forest with 100 trees on six bands: blue, green, red, near-infrared and two shortwave-infrared

4. Limits
Landsat 7 has scan-line gaps after 2003. Accuracy scores were not in the files supplied, so none are shown

Tree cover lost each year, 2001 to 2024

Square kilometres a year, from the tree-loss data supplied



22,370 km²
lost over 24 years, 30.9% of the file's area

90%
of it lost from 2013 on: 20,172 km² against 2,197 km² in 2001–2012

2,385 km²
in the peak year, 2015; 2017 was close at 2,371

-42%
from the 2017 level to 2024, though 2024 rose 33% on 2023

Gross loss, not net change
Regrowth and replanting are not subtracted, so tree-crop harvests and fallow cycles in shifting cultivation count as loss too.

A step in 2013
Annual loss jumps about tenfold between 2012 (166 km²) and 2013 (1,752 km²). The file does not name its source, and a change in satellite data or method can cause a jump like this, so compare the two periods with care.

Why it differs from the previous page
The 2010 to 2020 land-cover comparison shows net gain across large areas, while this series shows heavy gross loss in the same years. They measure different things: net change between snapshots, and loss each year.

What the file adds up to
Yearly losses sum to 22,370 km², the file's total area (72,496 km²) minus its "no-data" area (50,127 km²). The atlas reads "no-data" as area with no recorded loss.

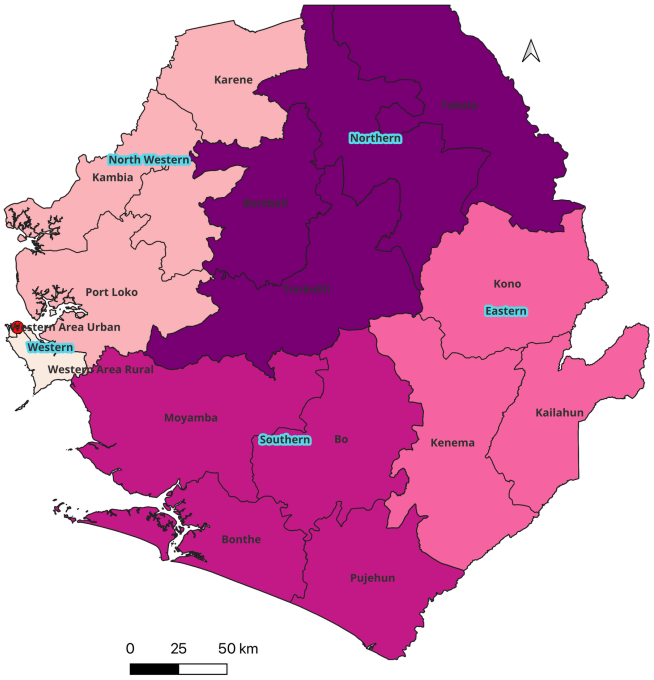
Sources: tree-cover-loss file supplied (annual loss 2001–2024; source not named in the file); Landsat classification script for Sierra Leone land cover, Google Earth Engine. Vegetation map: Diva-GIS, December 2025.

04 WHERE THE PRESSURES FALL

Threats differ by region and by district; Western Area Rural scores highest, ahead of Kono and Kenema

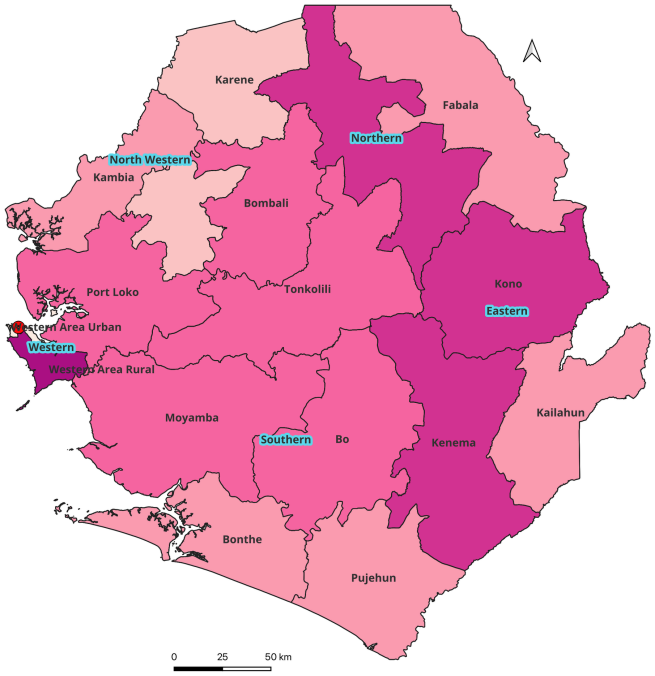
Main threats by region

Mapped from regional consultations



Threat score by district

Scores 2 to 9, as shown on the source map



Reading the district scores

2 4 5 6 7 9

lower higher

Western Area Rural: 9

The highest score of any district. Its region faces settlement expansion, mangrove cutting, sand mining and charcoal

Kono and Kenema: 7

Both in the Eastern Region, where mining, timber extraction, farming and settlement growth overlap

Western Area Urban: 2

The lowest score; the capital district is largely built up

How to read these maps

The source map does not say how the score is built, so treat it as a relative ranking of districts, not a measurement. Scores come from regional consultations rather than monitoring data.

District colours are not the same as region colours: a region can contain districts with quite different scores.

What drives the pressure in each region

Western	Western Area Urban, Western Area Rural	Settlement expansion and mangrove cutting, with multiple resource exploitation (sand, charcoal)
North Western	Kambia, Karene, Port Loko	Burning (charcoal, wildfire), tree cutting and improper fishing practices
Eastern	Kailahun, Kenema, Kono	Mining and timber extraction, with agriculture and settlement expansion
Southern	Bo, Bonthe, Moyamba, Pujehun	Pressure on coastal ecosystems (mangrove cutting, sand mining), with mining and timber extraction
Northern	Bombali, Falaba, Koinadugu, Tonkolili	Resource exploitation (timber, charcoal, mining), with wildfire and climate change impact

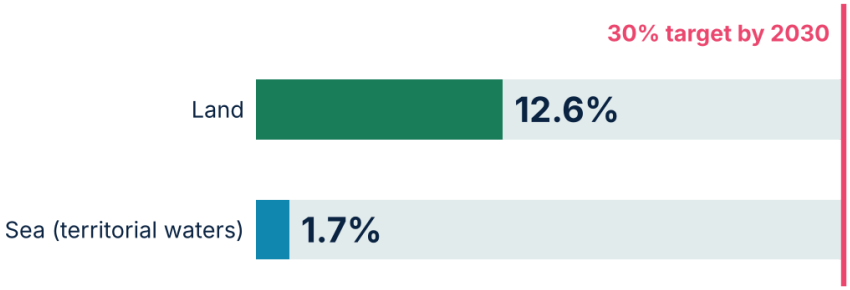
Sources: threat maps from Diva-GIS and regional consultations, November 2025. District names are those on the source maps; Koinadugu is unlabelled there and is placed in the Northern Region.

05 PROTECTED PLACES AND WHERE THEY ARE

Protected areas are the backbone of conservation, but coverage is uneven and well below the 30% goal

How much is protected?

Share of land and territorial waters, against the 2030 goal



+340,000 ha

formal protected area planned by 2030, taking land from 7.2% to 15%

+15% OECMs

additional territory targeted; 30% of territorial waters as marine protected areas

What counts as protected

Designations in the national network

- National parks
- Forest reserves
- Non-hunting forest reserves
- Strict nature reserves
- Marine protected areas
- Ramsar wetlands

Where the gaps are

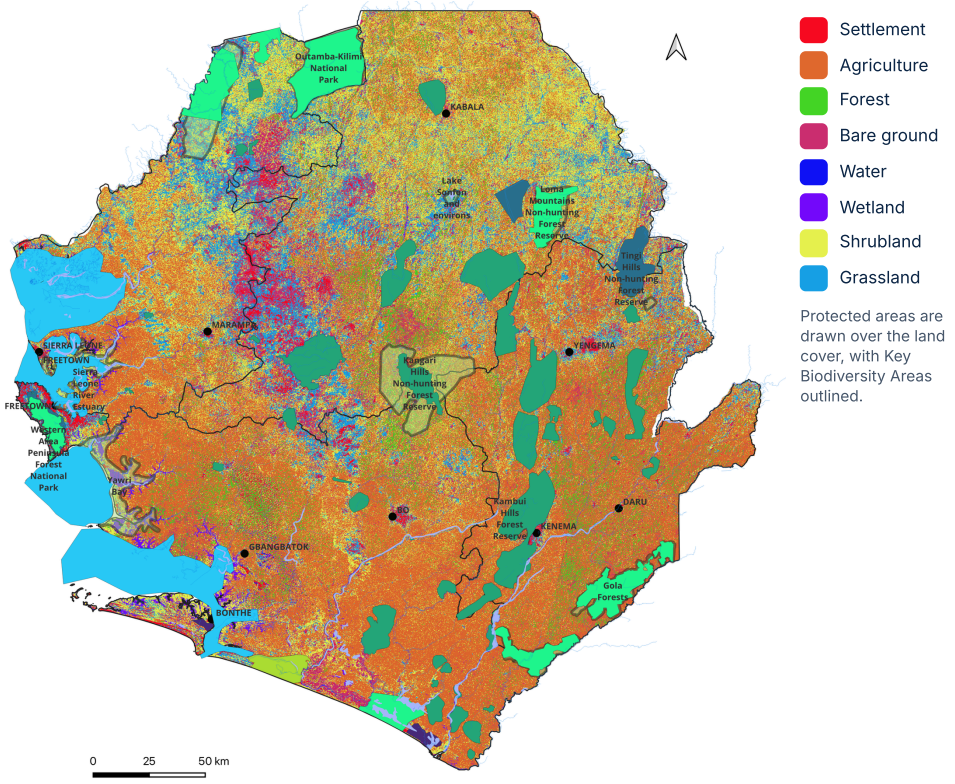
Under-represented
Lowland forests are only 4.5% protected, against 22% of mangroves and 31% of montane forests; forest–savanna mosaics and inland wetlands also lag

Important sites outside parks
43% of threatened species have no documented occurrence in protected areas, and many Key Biodiversity Areas lie outside them: an opening for OECMs

Pressure inside parks
Encroachment, illegal logging, mining, farming, hunting and fishing; 65% of protected areas have compromised connectivity

Land cover in 2025 and named conservation sites

Protected areas and Key Biodiversity Areas outlined on satellite land cover



Protected areas are drawn over the land cover, with Key Biodiversity Areas outlined.

Named on the map

Outamba-Kilimi National Park · Western Area Peninsula Forest National Park · Loma Mountains and Tingi Hills Non-hunting Forest Reserves · Kangari Hills Non-hunting Forest Reserve · Kambui Hills Forest Reserve · Gola Forests · Sierra Leone River Estuary · Yawri Bay · Lake Sonfon and surroundings

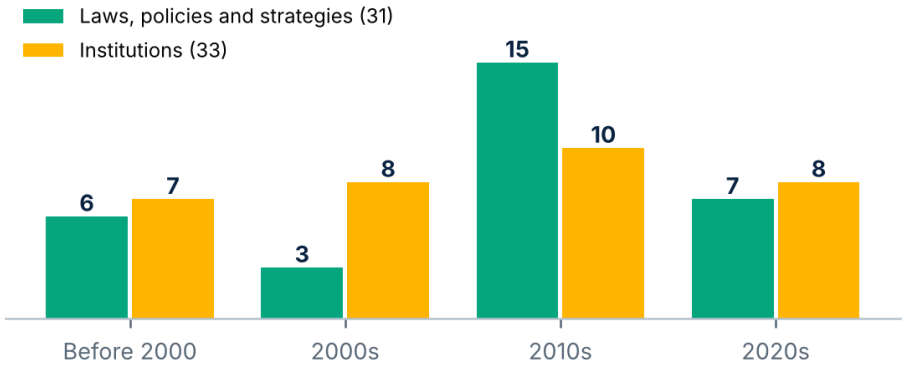
Sources: Annex B2 spatial analysis (sections B2.6.1 and B2.6.2: 7.2% land and 1.8% marine coverage today; expansion targets). Land cover: random-forest classification of Landsat 8 images, 2025 (see page 3). Map: Diva-GIS, December 2025.

06 LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS

The legal base is stronger than it was, but gaps remain in key areas and enforcement is uneven

Laws and institutions by decade

Instruments and agencies listed in the policy and institutional review



Fit with the global framework

Policy review rating of how national instruments match the 23 KM-GBF targets



High 19 targets, including restoration, protected areas, species, sustainable use, invasive species and finance

Medium 4 targets: planning (1), pollution (7), business (15) and consumption (16), where ambition, implementation or indicators fall short

Key laws behind biodiversity action

2022
Environment Protection Agency Act
Tighter EIA licensing, compliance and sanctions; chemicals and hazardous substances control

2012
National Protected Area Authority and Conservation Trust Fund Act
Anchors area-based conservation and a trust fund

2022
Customary Land Rights and National Land Commission Acts
Modernise tenure, embed free, prior and informed consent, enable spatial governance

2017
National Water Resources Management Agency Act
Basin-scale levers for freshwater ecosystems

2018
Fisheries and Aquaculture Act
Licensing, monitoring and surveillance, and action against illegal fishing

2022
Mines and Minerals Development Act
Stronger licensing, community agreements and environmental duties

Eight gaps to close

Forestry Act
Finish the revision of the 1988 Act

Pesticides law
A comprehensive control law and regulations

Invasive species rules
Border biosecurity, pathways, early detection and ballast water

Biosafety law
Primary legislation to carry out the Cartagena Protocol

Access and benefit-sharing law
Competent authority, consent and agreed-terms procedures, checkpoints, digital sequence information

Wildlife and parks package
Update the Wildlife Conservation Act: scheduling, offences, CITES alignment

Strategic assessment
SEA for plans and programmes, and stronger EIA monitoring plans

Coordination
A statutory steering committee and joint permitting and incident-response protocols

Key message The challenge is not legislative absence but systemic under-implementation: secondary regulations are incomplete, enforcement is uneven and biodiversity is not yet embedded in fiscal and performance systems (Annex B3).

Sources: Annex B3 of the NBSAP (Tables 22 to 24) and the full policy and institutional review behind it, from which the counts, dates and the eight gaps are taken. Counts are of the instruments and agencies listed in that review.

07

PROMISES ALREADY MADE

Global, African and regional commitments set the ambition the national plan must meet

Global agreements Sierra Leone has joined

Dates as recorded in the policy review

1994
UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
Ratified 12 December; basis for marine zones, protection and fisheries

1995
Convention on Biological Diversity
Party since 12 March; the source of every NBSAP

1997
Convention to Combat Desertification
Party since 25 September; land degradation neutrality targets adopted

2016
Paris Agreement
Ratified 1 November; nature-based solutions in the NDC

2017
Nagoya Protocol
In force 30 January; fair sharing of benefits from genetic resources

2020
Cartagena Protocol
In force 13 September; safe handling of living modified organisms

2025
Agreement on the high seas (BBNJ)
Ratification deposited in September; reaches beyond national waters

Other global agreements

23 targets
The Kunming–Montreal framework sets 23 global targets for 2030. Sierra Leone has adopted 23 national targets aligned to them.

3 treaties
Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam conventions on hazardous chemicals and wastes cut toxic pressure on species.

2 more
CITES controls trade in wild plants and animals, and the Plant Treaty covers crop genetic resources.

Regional and African frameworks

ECOWAS plans
Regional Climate Strategy 2022–2030, Environmental Action Plan 2020–2026 and the agricultural policy (ECOWAP)

Abidjan Convention
Pollution control, habitat protection and cooperation along the Atlantic coast

Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission
Shared stocks, monitoring and action against illegal fishing, with six other West African states

Mano River Union
Transboundary work in the Upper Guinea Forest, including the Greater Gola Landscape and Outamba–Kilimi–Madina Oula with Guinea

Maputo Convention
African convention on nature and natural resources, signed in 2003 but not yet ratified

Wildlife crime strategy
The African strategy on illegal wildlife trade (2015) and the ECOWAS regional strategy

Nature and climate NBSAP Target 8 brings the nature-based solutions in NDC 3.0's land-use mitigation and adaptation strategies into biodiversity delivery, so climate and nature plans pull the same way.

Sources: full policy and institutional review behind Annex B3 (chapter 4); NBSAP 2026–2035 (Target 8, means of implementation).

08 LESSONS FROM THE 2017–2026 PLAN

Progress was real but uneven: the main challenge was implementation, not vision

What worked

A clear home in EPA-SL
Anchoring biodiversity coordination in EPA-SL gave continuity and a focal point

Projects delivered
Funded projects produced results in protected-area management, community conservation and awareness

Nature and climate linked
Growing recognition that ecosystems underpin resilience and adaptation

Communities on board
Where used, community engagement built local ownership and conservation effectiveness

Working groups
Technical working groups and inter-agency collaboration tackled problems more efficiently

What did not work

No priorities
A long list of actions with no sequencing between high-impact priorities and long-term aspirations

Not financed
Actions were not costed or built into national and sector budgets, so the plan leaned on external projects

Weak mainstreaming
Biodiversity was not consistently built into sector plans, investment decisions or public finance

Overlap and capacity limits
Overlapping mandates, thin coordination and limited capacity reduced delivery

Monitoring gaps
Monitoring was under-resourced and not fully operational, which limited learning and accountability

Six lessons built into the new plan

Focus and sequence
A few high-impact actions beat a long unfunded list

Finance enables
Cost and finance the plan from the start

Mainstream to scale
Outcomes depend on agriculture, fisheries, mining, infrastructure and land

Strong institutions
Clear roles, coordination and sustained capacity

Credible monitoring
Working reporting wins learning and political support

Include people
Participation, gender and secure tenure improve results

Sources: NBSAP 2026–2035 (section 9 and Annex B4, review of the 2017–2026 plan). Annex B4 finds that fewer than one in ten planned actions were fully implemented.

09 THE STRATEGY: VISION, PRINCIPLES AND PATHWAY

From a broad aspiration to a prioritised, programme-based plan

Vision 2050

Sierra Leone lives in harmony with nature, where biodiversity is conserved, restored and sustainably used to underpin inclusive growth, resilient livelihoods, food security, climate adaptability and well-being.

Mission 2030

Halt and reverse biodiversity loss through coordinated, inclusive and well-financed action that builds biodiversity into planning, strengthens institutions, secures community rights and delivers measurable results.

Two horizons

2026 to 2030 · Recovery and acceleration

- Reduce the key drivers of loss
- Strengthen policy coherence, institutions and coordination
- Prioritise high-impact actions and places
- Mobilise and align finance
- Set up monitoring and accountability

2031 to 2035 · Consolidation and transformation

- Scale up successful models and partnerships
- Deepen mainstreaming across sectors
- Strengthen restoration and connectivity
- Improve benefit-sharing and livelihoods
- Sustain progress toward the 2050 vision

Seven guiding principles

- **Whole of government and society:** coordinated action across sectors and levels
- **Rights-based and inclusive:** gender, youth and community rights, with consent
- **Landscape and seascape approach:** beyond park boundaries, with connectivity
- **Prevention and precaution:** loss is often irreversible
- **Integration and mainstreaming:** in plans, sectors, investment and rules
- **Equity and benefit-sharing:** costs and benefits shared fairly
- **Adaptive management:** evidence, monitoring and learning

Five result pathways: how change is expected to happen

If governance, mainstreaming, finance and rights are strengthened, pressure falls and nature recovers

1. **Enabling conditions strengthened**
   policies, institutions, coordination, rules and enforcement
2. **Mainstreaming and risk management**
   biodiversity in planning, sector investment and EIA/SEA
3. **Site-based conservation and sustainable use**
   priority ecosystems, species and landscapes managed well
4. **Equity, rights and livelihoods secured**
   fair benefits, fewer conflicts, more compliance
5. **Monitoring, learning and accountability**
   systems for adaptive management and reporting

Sources: NBSAP 2026–2035 (executive summary; sections 10.1 to 10.4).

10

THE 23 TARGETS IN SIX PROGRAMMES (1 OF 3)

Each target has a baseline, a 2030 milestone and lead institutions

PROGRAMME 1 · TARGETS 1 AND 11

Biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and safeguards

Integrate biodiversity into land- and sea-use planning, marine and coastal zoning, infrastructure siting and investment decisions

1 Plan with nature in mind

2030 Biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning institutionalised in national and sub-national planning and applied across priority sectors and high-biodiversity landscapes and seascapes

Lead: EPA-SL; MLHCP; MoPED; local councils · KM-GBF 1

11 Biodiversity in every government plan

2030 Biodiversity values, risks and ecosystem services systematically embedded across priority sectors, public investment decisions and sub-national plans

Lead: EPA-SL; Ministry of Planning; sector ministries · KM-GBF 14

What Programme 1 will do

Spatial layers: embed biodiversity layers in planning and screening procedures

EIA and SEA: improve the quality and consistency of biodiversity considerations

Mitigation hierarchy: apply avoid, minimise, restore, offset consistently

Safeguards: apply safeguards and FPIC; build capacity for spatial analysis and cumulative impact assessment

PROGRAMME 2 · TARGETS 2, 3, 5 AND 6

Protected, conserved and connected ecosystems and species recovery

Secure biodiversity through protected areas, OECMs, restoration, connectivity and targeted species recovery

2 Expand and manage protected areas

At least 30% of land, inland waters, coast and sea by 2030 (Annex D1)

2030 A larger, ecologically and effectively managed protected area network contributing measurably to ecosystem integrity and species recovery

3 Recognise OECMs

2030 A national policy and operational framework for OECMs, with identified and documented sites contributing to conservation objectives

Lead: EPA-SL; sector ministries; traditional authorities; local councils · KM-GBF 3

5 Restore degraded ecosystems

Annex D1 sets 30% of degraded ecosystems to be restored by 2030

2030 Restoration implemented across nationally prioritised ecosystems and landscapes, improving ecosystem function, carbon storage and resilience

Lead: EPA-SL; Forestry Department; MoECC; local councils; CSOs · KM-GBF 2

6 Species recovery

2030 Measurable improvement or stabilisation of priority threatened species through recovery plans, habitat management and threat mitigation

Lead: EPA-SL; wildlife authorities; research institutions; CSOs · KM-GBF 4

PROGRAMME 3 · TARGETS 4, 16, 17, 18 AND 20

Sustainable use and biodiversity-positive production

Promote sustainable use of wild species and move key sectors to biodiversity-positive practices, strengthening livelihoods and food security

4 Use wild species sustainably

2030 Management systems operating for priority wild species and resource sectors: stronger rules, science-based plans, compliance and community co-management

Lead: EPA-SL; MFMR; Forestry and wildlife authorities; local councils · KM-GBF 5

16 Sustainable production

2030 Biodiversity-positive practices adopted across priority sectors and landscapes, backed by guidelines, extension and compliance

Lead: EPA-SL; sector ministries; producer organisations · KM-GBF 10

17 Sustainable consumption

2030 Sustainable consumption standards, awareness and procurement policies across priority value chains

Lead: EPA-SL; trade and consumer authorities; private sector · KM-GBF 16

18 Business accountability

2030 Biodiversity risk management, mitigation and disclosure built into private sector operations, licensing and financial decisions

Lead: EPA-SL; Ministry of Trade; financial regulators · KM-GBF 15

20 Sustainable value chains

2030 Biodiversity-friendly value chains strengthened, certified where appropriate and scaled through market access, finance and partnerships

Lead: EPA-SL; trade authorities; private sector; CSOs · KM-GBF 15 and 19

Sources: NBSAP 2026–2035 (Part III, Tables 8 to 12; Part IV, programmes 1 to 3). Target numbers follow Parts III and IV; Annexes D1, D2 and H1 number some targets differently. MLHCP lands, housing and country planning; NPAA National Protected Area Authority; MFMR fisheries and marine resources; MoECC environment and climate.

10

THE 23 TARGETS IN SIX PROGRAMMES (2 OF 3)

Programmes 4 and 5: reducing pressures, and the capacity, rights and knowledge that make delivery work

PROGRAMME 4 · TARGETS 7, 8, 9 AND 10

Pollution reduction, climate resilience and ecosystem services

Reduce pollution and invasive species, and sustain ecosystem services through ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions

7 Cut pollution

2030 Measurable falls in pollution loads in priority ecosystems and sectors, with stronger compliance monitoring, waste management and EIA/SEA safeguards

Lead: EPA-SL; sector ministries; local councils · KM-GBF 7

8 Stop invasive species

2030 Priority pathways identified and managed, with monitoring, coordinated inter-agency response and stronger border and biosecurity controls

Lead: EPA-SL; Forestry and Agriculture ministries; border agencies · KM-GBF 6

9 Nature for climate

2030 Ecosystem-based climate and disaster risk solutions embedded in climate policy, NDC implementation and sub-national planning

Lead: EPA-SL; climate and environment institutions; planning authorities · KM-GBF 8 and 11

10 Keep nature's services flowing

2030 Ecosystem service values built into spatial planning, sector strategies, public investment screening and finance for priority ecosystems

Lead: EPA-SL; sector ministries; local councils · KM-GBF 11

PROGRAMME 5 · TARGETS 14, 15, 21 AND 22

Governance, rights, inclusion, knowledge and institutional capacity

Make delivery inclusive, rights-based and accountable through participation, capacity, knowledge and communication

14 Skills and enforcement capacity

2030 Stronger technical, institutional and enforcement capacity at national and sub-national levels, through training, staffing and operational systems

Lead: EPA-SL; training institutions; local councils · KM-GBF 20

15 Better data and knowledge

2030 Integrated national knowledge and data systems linked to the MEAL framework, spatial data platforms and CBD reporting

Lead: EPA-SL; research institutions; data agencies · KM-GBF 21

21 A voice and access to justice

2030 Inclusive, rights-based participation across all NBSAP programmes, with documented safeguards, FPIC and grievance redress

Lead: EPA-SL; local councils; CSOs; traditional authorities · KM-GBF 22

22 Awareness and education (CEPA)

2030 A coordinated national CEPA strategy delivering outreach, education and public awareness that support behaviour change

Lead: EPA-SL; education and information ministries; media · KM-GBF 21

Reading the targets Annex D1 gives each target a 2026 baseline, interim milestones for 2026 and 2028, and the 2030 milestone; Part III names the lead institutions.

Sources: NBSAP 2026–2035 (Part III, Tables 10, 11 and 13; Part IV, programmes 4 and 5). Part IV also links targets 9 and 10 to Programme 1. CEPA communication, education and public awareness; CSOs civil society organisations.

10

THE 23 TARGETS IN SIX PROGRAMMES (3 OF 3)

Programme 6 pays for and tracks everything else; the plan in numbers

PROGRAMME 6 · TARGETS 12, 13, 19 AND 23

Finance, implementation, monitoring and accountability

Mobilise and align finance, coordinate institutions, and build monitoring, reporting and accountability systems

12 Work together, held to account

2030 Cross-sector coordination platforms, clear institutional roles and stronger compliance and oversight at national and sub-national levels

Lead: EPA-SL; justice and oversight institutions; sector ministries · KM-GBF 15

13 Mobilise money

2030 Sustainable, diversified financing: stronger domestic allocations, expenditure tracking and private sector engagement aligned with the targets

Lead: EPA-SL; Ministry of Finance; private sector · KM-GBF 19

19 Reform harmful incentives

2030 Incentives reviewed and adjusted in priority sectors, with biodiversity-positive fiscal and market incentives operating and monitored

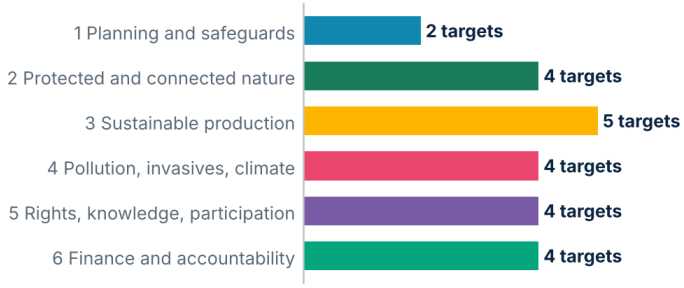
Lead: Ministry of Finance; EPA-SL; sector ministries · KM-GBF 18

23 Deliver and report

2030 A fully operational, institutionalised MEAL system for adaptive management, cross-sector reporting and CBD-compliant national reports

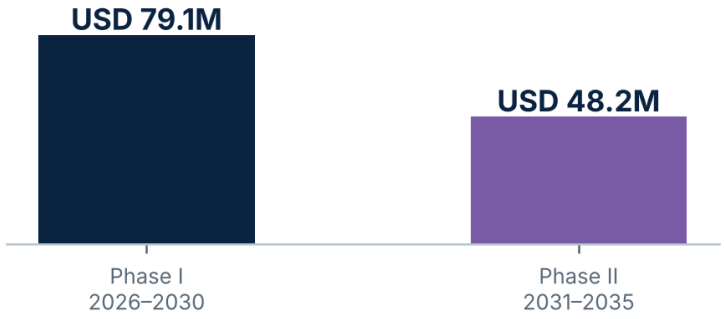
Lead: EPA-SL; sector ministries; statistics and oversight bodies · KM-GBF 23

Targets per programme



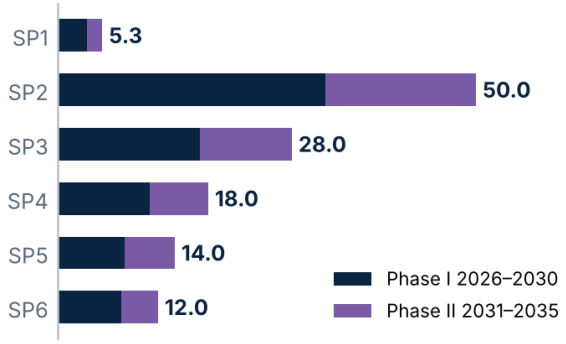
Costing by phase, USD million

Phase I is about 62% of the total



Cost by programme, USD million

Total USD 127.3 million, 2026 to 2035



Where the money is expected to come from

Estimated need USD 127.3 million, of which Phase I (2026 to 2030) USD 79.1 million and Phase II (2031 to 2035) USD 48.2 million; financing gap about USD 55 to 65 million

Domestic public, 25%
About USD 32M; strengthens national ownership

International, 45%
About USD 57M from GEF, GCF and the Adaptation Fund

Private and blended, 15%
About USD 19M; risk-sharing and ESG alignment

Trust funds, innovative, 10%
About USD 13M; trust fund, ecosystem service payments

Community co-financing, 5%
About USD 6M; builds local ownership

Also planned: a Biodiversity Finance Plan under the BIOFIN framework, a stronger Conservation Trust Fund, reform of subsidies that harm biodiversity, and engagement of banks and businesses in managing biodiversity risk and investing in nature.

Sources: NBSAP 2026–2035 (Part III, Tables 11 to 13; Part IV, programme 6; Annex F1, Tables 43 and 44; Annex F2, Tables 48 to 50). Costs are indicative investment envelopes, not budget appropriations.

11 PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE

Inclusion, gender equality and rights are conditions for success, not optional extras

Who depends on nature, and what holds them back

Women

Role and strength

- Different roles in farming, fisheries, forest products, household energy and resource management
- Hold significant ecological knowledge

What holds them back

- Unequal access to land, credit, inputs and advice
- Few seats in formal decision-making
- Heavy labour collecting fuelwood and water
- More exposed to degradation and climate impacts

Youth

Role and strength

- A large and growing share of the population
- Bring innovation, enterprise, monitoring and stewardship

What holds them back

- Few jobs, limited land access and skills gaps
- Can drift into unsustainable resource use or disengage from conservation

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Role and strength

- Custodians of significant areas of biodiversity
- Deep ecological knowledge and customary governance

What holds them back

- Insecure tenure and unclear resource rights
- Customary institutions often missing from formal decisions
- Risk of exclusion from benefits or bearing the costs
- Little access to grievance and redress

Participation and safeguards at every stage of the plan

Written into the implementation arrangements, risk framework and monitoring system

1 Planning
Inclusive, participatory planning; community land and resource rights considered; consent sought

2 Delivery
Benefits targeted fairly by gender and group; safeguards for tenure, livelihoods and cultural heritage

3 Monitoring
Indicators split by sex, youth, district and ecosystem to track who benefits

4 Accountability
Transparent decisions and open information, with accessible grievance and redress

Social risks the plan is designed to avoid

- **Restricted access to resources**
- **Loss of livelihoods**
- **Capture of benefits by elites**
- **Marginalising vulnerable groups**

Why it matters Inclusive approaches that secure tenure, participation and benefit-sharing improve conservation results, livelihood resilience and public legitimacy.

Sources: NBSAP 2026–2035 (section 8; guiding principles). Role and constraint descriptions follow the NBSAP's gender, youth and IPLC analysis.

12 MAKING IT HAPPEN

Who leads, how institutions coordinate, and the first steps for 2026 and 2027

Who does what

EPA-SL
Leads and coordinates; convenes platforms; national focal point for monitoring and reporting

Sector ministries and agencies
Build biodiversity into sector plans, budgets and programmes

Finance and planning
Mobilise finance, align budgets, reform incentives and subsidies

Local councils
Land-use planning, local enforcement, community engagement and local delivery

Communities (IPLCs)
Partners and rights-holders in conservation, restoration and monitoring

Civil society, academia and business
Innovation, capacity, finance, monitoring and accountability

How they coordinate

Built on existing structures, not parallel ones

Inter-ministerial platforms
one for each strategic programme

Technical working groups
to solve problems and share learning

Sub-national mechanisms
linking national priorities to local delivery

Multi-stakeholder platforms
for transparency and accountability

First steps, 2026 and 2027

Short-term reforms for 2026 to 2028 (Annex B3, Table 24; Part V)

1. Formalise the inter-ministerial coordination mechanism and coordinate the justice chain
2. Embed biodiversity in the MTNDP through budget tagging
3. Draft the access and benefit-sharing policy and bill
4. Draft and adopt the Biosafety Act
5. Agree a finance reform roadmap for biodiversity finance instruments
6. Clarify biodiversity mandates for local councils
7. Prepare reporting-ready targets and indicators for the 7th national report (NR7)

Focus Priority governance reforms improve existing systems rather than create new institutional layers: coordination, enforcement, budgeting, spatial safeguards and a fully working MEAL system.

Sources: NBSAP 2026–2035 (section 14, implementation strategy); Annex B3 reform matrix (Table 24); Box 14.1 priority governance reforms.

13 TRACKING PROGRESS, AND SOURCES

One monitoring system serves national planning and international reporting

The results chain

Aligned with the Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024 to 2030

Impact
Halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030

Outcomes
Achievement of the 23 national targets

Outputs
Delivery of the strategic programmes and actions

Activities
Annual and multi-year implementation actions

Three tiers of indicators

Headline
High-level signals of national biodiversity trends

Component
Sector and theme performance measures

National complementary
Sierra Leone measures reflecting national priorities and capacity

Who handles the data

Data producers
Ministries, agencies, district and municipal councils and authorised partners generate the data

Data custodian: EPA-SL
Validates, consolidates, stores and quality-checks the data

National reporter: EPA-SL
Synthesises and submits to the planning ministry and the CBD, with Statistics Sierra Leone supporting

When progress is reviewed

Review	Timing
Routine performance monitoring	Annual
Thematic and sector reviews	Every two years or as needed
Mid-term review of the NBSAP	2027 (D3); 2028–2029 (E2)
End-term evaluation	2030 (D3); 2035 (E2)

Reporting, nationally and globally

National

MTNDP annual and mid-term reports, sector assessments, Cabinet and Parliament briefings, and district and municipal reviews

International

The 7th and later national reports to the CBD, through its Online Reporting Tool, and inputs to global biodiversity assessments

Sources

1. Sierra Leone National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2026 to 2035, validated and adopted in 2026 (https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/sie248208.pdf). 2. Annex B3: Policy, legal and institutional review, and the full review report behind it. 3. Annex B2: Spatial analysis and priority biodiversity areas, with the biodiversity status, trends and spatial analysis report. 4. Annexes F1 and F2: Biodiversity Finance Plan and costing summary by programme and phase. 5. Maps: Diva-GIS (WDPA and WDOECM), Sentinel imagery and regional consultations, November and December 2025, as included in the NBSAP.
Note: target numbers follow Parts III and IV of the NBSAP; Annexes D1, D2 and H1 number some targets differently. Each indicator is defined with its unit, disaggregation (sex, youth, district, ecosystem), data source, responsible institution and reporting frequency.

Sources: NBSAP 2026–2035 (Part V, sections 14.6 and 14.7; Annexes D3, E2, E3 and H).

GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY
CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DATA AND STATISTICS

Read the full NBSAP online

Scan the code to open the Sierra Leone National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2026 to 2035, validated and adopted in 2026, with all its annexes.

Web address

https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/sie248208.pdf

Hosted on FAOLEX, the FAO legislative and policy database.

Scan to open the NBSAP 2026–2035

Sierra Leone's Nature Promise: an atlas of the NBSAP 2026 to 2035. Environment Protection Agency, Sierra Leone.