



Annual Report 2025



Foreword

The past year has been a defining period for the Environment Protection Agency as we navigated a landscape of both unprecedented environmental challenges and transformative opportunities. As the global community intensifies its efforts to combat climate change, our agency has remained steadfast in its mission to safeguard the nation's natural heritage while fostering sustainable development.

This 2025 Annual Report serves not only as a comprehensive record of our regulatory and environmental management achievements but also as a testament to the collective resilience of our dedicated staff and partners.

Central to our progress this year has been the integration of advanced data analytics into our Climate Analysis and Management frameworks. By leveraging real-time monitoring technology, we have significantly improved the precision of our Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventories, allowing for more targeted interventions in high-emission sectors.

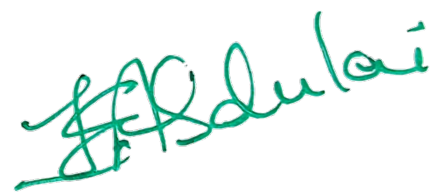
Furthermore, our focus on Natural Resources Management has seen the successful implementation of community-led restoration projects that balance ecological integrity with economic necessity.

We recognize that the health of our environment is inextricably linked to the well-being of our citizens, and as such, pollution prevention remains a cornerstone of our strategic agenda.

While the data presented in the following chapters highlight substantial gains in revenue performance and project execution, we remain transparent about the hurdles we encounter. The strategic goal for the upcoming cycle is to strengthen our public outreach and address current limitations in media collaboration to ensure environmental literacy reaches every corner of the country.

I invite you to explore the feature stories and progress markers detailed herein, which illustrate the tangible impact of our policies on the ground.

Together, we are building a foundation for a greener, more resilient future.



Mr. Jiwoh Abdulai

Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Message from the Executive Chairman

The year 2025 marks an important step forward in improving environmental governance, climate leadership, and institutional performance in Sierra Leone. As an Agency, we have continued to move from setting goals to taking action, developing systems that produce measurable results across climate, natural resources, pollution control, and compliance. The progress shown in this report reflects a collective effort by staff, partners, and stakeholders to shift environmental management from scattered efforts to a more coordinated, data-driven, and results-focused system.

This report highlights key achievements that demonstrate the extent and direction of our progress. We generated NLe 168.9 million in internal revenue, surpassing our annual target by more than 105 per cent and recording a NLe 14.9 million increase on 2024. We mobilised over USD 7.3 million in climate and environmental finance, including USD 2.28 million received during the year and USD 5.05 million secured through new awards to bolster our national project pipeline. At the global level, Sierra Leone's NDC 3.0 was finalised and launched, presenting our most comprehensive and evidence-based climate framework to date, while the First Biennial Transparency Report progressed towards completion, enhancing our systems for climate reporting and accountability under the Paris Agreement.

At the national level, enforcement and regulatory performance improved notably. We secured USD 15 million in mine rehabilitation financial guarantees from 18 mining companies, marking a historic shift towards enforceable environmental accountability. A total of 1,184 compliance inspections and audits were carried out nationwide, alongside the approval of 83 EIA licences and the execution of 25 legal enforcement actions. In protecting our natural resources, 202 illegal dredges were dismantled across major river systems, safeguarding critical water sources, ecosystems, and public health. Simultaneously, 422 companies were monitored using real-time mobile laboratory systems, establishing national pollution baselines and strengthening evidence-based enforcement.

We also strengthened the systems that enable long-term transformation. Thirteen strategic partnerships were formalised at national, regional, and global levels, fostering new collaboration on climate finance, the blue economy, research, and public engagement. Through 22 national media engagements and 7 targeted community campaigns, we increased public awareness and observed a shift from passive understanding to active environmental responsibility within communities.

Overall, these results indicate more than individual successes. They demonstrate the emergence of a more robust, credible, and effective environmental institution. Although challenges such as enforcement, infrastructure, and funding persist, the essential groundwork for ongoing progress has been laid. Going forward, our goal is to build on these achievements, enhance their impact, and further develop a system that safeguards the environment while fostering national development.

I sincerely thank our staff, partners, and everyone who continues to support the Agency's work. Together, we are building a more resilient and sustainable future for Sierra Leone.



Dr Abu-Bakar S. Massaquoi
Executive Chairman, EPA

List of Abbreviations

ASGM	Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining
AVDP	Agriculture Value Chain Development Project
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance Initiative
BOT	Build-Operate-Transfer
BOQ	Bill of Quantities
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
CEDAS	Centre for Environmental Data and Statistics
CEECOM	Chiefdom Environmental Enforcement Coordination Committees
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adapting
COEs	Centres of Excellence
COP	Conference of Parties
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EHS	Environmental Health and Safety
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
EPATS	EPA Transformation Strategy
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
ETF	Enhanced Transparency Framework
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HFC	Hydro Fluoro Carbons
ICAT	Initiative for Climate Action Transparency
ILPPW	International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LCD	Lightweight Chemical Detector
LEEP	Lead Exposure Elimination Project
MDAs	Ministries, Departments, Agencies
MMCRP	Monrovia Metropolitan Coastal Resilience Project
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
N3P	National Plan for Pollution Prevention
NPI	National Pollutant Inventory

NRG	Natural Resource Governance
ODS	Ozone Depleting Substances
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
RAC	Refrigeration and air-conditioning
RPI	Research Policy and Innovation
RUSLP	Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLCRP	Sierra Leone Coastal Resilience Project
TAP	Technology Action Plan
TEDA	Tropical Environmental Design Associates
TNA	Technology Needs Assessment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-CCC	United Nations Environment Programme - Copenhagen Climate Center
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WAP	Western Area Peninsula

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Key Areas Focus and Impact



1. Climate Analysis and Management

Overview

The Climate Change Directorate, Sierra Leone's National Climate Change Secretariat, was established to provide national leadership and coordination on climate change policy, programmes, and implementation. Its mandate includes supporting the domestication of international climate agreements and ensuring that Sierra Leone's commitments under global frameworks are translated into actionable national priorities. During the period under review, the Directorate implemented a series of strategic activities aligned with the Environment Protection Agency's Transformation Strategy (2024–2030). These interventions reflect ongoing efforts to strengthen climate governance, enhance institutional delivery, and promote resilience and low-emission development. The key activities and outcomes are presented in the feature stories that follow.

Progress Markers

- **Sierra Leone's NDC 3.0 finalised and launched internationally**, providing an enhanced national climate roadmap with clearer sectoral targets in mitigating climate change and enhancing the resilience of the country to climate change impacts, strengthening MRV systems, and an integrated climate finance and investment framework.
- **Strengthened national climate transparency and reporting.** The Agency led the development of Sierra Leone's First Biennial Transparency Report (BTR1) and launched the Initiative for Climate Action and Transparency (ICAT) to enhance climate transparency, operationalise mitigation tracking and improve MRV platform capabilities.
- **Coastal climate vulnerability and mobility risks assessed in Plantain and Yeliboya Islands**, generating evidence on displacement pressures, livelihood vulnerability, and priority adaptation actions to guide national coastal preparedness and planning.
- **Implementation of the Sierra Leone Coastal Resilience Project (SLCRP) began in five coastal districts**, with EPA-SL achieving early milestones, including training **53 officials from 31 institutions**, **conducting** safeguards and compliance assessments across project sites, and laying the groundwork for the restoration and conservation of **1,500 hectares of mangrove ecosystems**.

Feature Stories

Development and launch of Sierra Leone's NDC 3.0: The Most Evidence-based Climate Commitment Yet

Sierra Leone's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) 3.0 marks a significant advance in the country's approach to climate analysis and management. Compared with the first- and second-generation NDCs, NDC 3.0 is the most comprehensive and evidence-based climate strategy to date, demonstrating notable improvements in the application of climate science, data systems, and policy integration. It clearly outlines national priorities for addressing mitigation and adaptation challenges, supported by sectoral analyses, defined institutional roles, and a structured framework for implementation and funding. In doing so, NDC 3.0 goes beyond high-level ambitions and positions climate action as a practical, results-focused element of national development planning.

Earlier NDCs faced multiple challenges, including institutional and technical weaknesses that limited their effectiveness. Weak coordination led to fragmented ownership across ministries, departments, and agencies, undermining policy coherence and accountability. Limited stakeholder consultations reduced inclusivity and meaningful participation, thereby affecting the quality, legitimacy, and credibility of the reports. Additionally, the last NDC encountered data challenges, lacked a structured roadmap for resource mobilisation, and had an underdeveloped monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) framework. These issues restricted access to accurate, timely, and disaggregated climate data, thereby hindering the development of evidence-based targets and the monitoring of progress over time.

In contrast, NDC 3.0 directly addresses these limitations by establishing an institutional coordination mechanism and a formalised MRV system. It introduces clearer sectoral baselines, measurable targets, and phased implementation pathways, supported by an integrated climate finance roadmap to mobilise domestic and international climate resources. Through this more coherent, science-driven approach, NDC 3.0 establishes a credible foundation for enhanced transparency, accountability, and implementation under the Paris Agreement, while advancing Sierra Leone's broader objectives for resilience, inclusive growth, and sustainable development.



Strengthening Sierra Leone's Climate Transparency Agenda

The Agency, through the National Climate Change Secretariat and with support from the Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT), is strengthening Sierra Leone's national climate transparency and mitigation accountability systems. Launched in 2025, this project will help the country transition from ad hoc reporting to an operational, institutionalised framework for tracking NDC implementation and meeting the requirements of the Enhanced Transparency Framework under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement.

A key institutional achievement of the initiative is the development and operationalisation of a regular national system for collecting, managing, and validating data for greenhouse gas (GHG) projections, mitigation policy assessment, and evidence-based reporting. This will significantly enhance the country's ability to produce consistent "with measures" and "with additional measures" emissions scenarios, evaluate the effectiveness of priority mitigation actions, and inform decision-making on where mitigation investments can have the greatest impact.

Furthermore, the project will enhance Sierra Leone's national NDC 3.0 mitigation tracking system by upgrading its online MRV platform to include improved indicators and sector-specific reporting templates. This will enable EPA-SL and line ministries to systematically track implementation progress, measure mitigation outcomes, and report transparently in Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and future NDC updates.

Through targeted technical support for national data champions and sector institutions, the project is also strengthening long-term institutional capacity within government to sustain these systems beyond the project lifecycle. Overall, this initiative is a strategic investment in EPA-SL's capacity to deliver credible mitigation tracking, enhance compliance with international reporting obligations, and support the effective implementation of Sierra Leone's NDC 3.0 through robust data and accountability mechanisms.

Development of Sierra Leone's First Biennial Transparency Report (BTR)

The Agency prepared Sierra Leone's First Biennial Transparency Report (BTR1), a milestone in the country's transition to full compliance with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement. Beyond producing a single report, the BTR1 process will significantly strengthen Sierra Leone's institutional capacity to generate credible, internationally consistent climate data, track progress in NDC implementation, assess climate change impacts and adaptation, and report transparently on progress and support needs.

The BTR1 has now reached an advanced stage of development, with significant progress across all core chapters. Under Chapter I (National Greenhouse Gas Inventory), information on climate change impacts and adaptation is needed to track progress in NDC implementation, as well as support received and support needed. Various consultancies have been engaged, and draft reports have been produced. These milestones have led to improved national GHG inventory workflows, standardised Excel-based data templates, and enhanced technical competencies within the National Inventory Team, enabling more independent management of future inventory cycles. The process has also generated valuable institutional learning on data gaps, documentation requirements, and the need for stronger intersectoral coordination to sustain improvements in transparency.

Furthermore, Sierra Leone's capacity has been strengthened to communicate adaptation priorities, assess loss and damage considerations, operationalise NDC progress tracking using structured indicators and baselines, and transparently report on support needs and support received in accordance with Enhanced Transparency Framework reporting requirements.

Sierra Leone's Technology Needs Assessment for Climate Action

The Agency, with support from the Global Environment Facility through the United Nations Environment Programme - Copenhagen Climate Centre (UNEP-CCC), launched a National Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) covering both climate change mitigation and adaptation priorities. This initiative marks a strategic step towards strengthening Sierra Leone's ability to identify, deploy, and scale up technologies essential to achieving NDC 3.0 targets and advancing national climate resilience. Recruitment of national expert consultants to support implementation has been completed. The first training for the consultants was conducted by UNEP-CCC on multi-criteria analysis, technology needs identification, and prioritisation.

The TNA is a key component of Sierra Leone's broader climate policy and investment cycle, rather than a standalone study. Its results will directly inform future NDC updates, enhance the pipeline of technology-driven mitigation and adaptation projects, and support the development of bankable proposals for international climate finance entities such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and other bilateral and multilateral partners. Additionally, the assessment will identify opportunities for private-sector involvement by pinpointing priority technology pathways and the enabling conditions needed to attract investment and promote deployment. The TNA will focus on selecting and prioritising mitigation and adaptation technologies across sectors such as energy, waste management, agriculture, and transport. It will also analyse institutional, financial, regulatory, and market barriers that hinder technology development and dissemination, and propose the frameworks needed to overcome these challenges. Finally, it will develop a Technology Action Plan (TAP) detailing implementation strategy, policy measures, and investment opportunities, including project concept notes and sector policy briefs to engage donors and investors.



Investigating Climate Mobility in Sierra Leone for a Changing Future

The EPA, in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), undertook a strategic research initiative to assess the vulnerability of coastal communities, using case studies of Yelibuya in Kambia District, North-Western Region, and Plantain Island, and linking these to migration. The study provides critical evidence that climate-induced coastal erosion, flooding, and ecosystem degradation are already undermining livelihoods and driving displacement pressures, with serious implications for national disaster preparedness and coastal adaptation planning.

Key findings from the assessment reveal that both islands are experiencing accelerated shoreline retreat, recurrent inundation, and the loss of vital infrastructure, leading to household relocations and increasing the risk of planned or unplanned migration to the mainland.

The research further confirms that livelihood vulnerability is rising as fishing-dependent communities face diminishing natural buffers due to mangrove loss, damage to boats and equipment during storms, shrinking agricultural land, and freshwater scarcity caused by saltwater intrusion.

Importantly, the study highlights key adaptation measures to strengthen government responses and enhance local resilience. These include urgent mangrove restoration, community-level flood protection, early warning systems, emergency shelter planning, and the integration of risk-based land-use zoning to prevent further settlement expansion in high-risk coastal areas.

The findings provide a practical basis for integrating coastal relocation risks into national adaptation strategies, strengthening local disaster risk management, and informing future investments in resilient infrastructure and nature-based solutions.

Overall, this initiative goes beyond producing research outputs by providing the Government of Sierra Leone with actionable evidence to anticipate climate-induced mobility, prioritise adaptation measures in vulnerable coastal areas, and integrate migration considerations into national resilience and development strategies.

Implementation of the Sierra Leone Coastal Resilience Project (SLCRP)

The Environment Protection Agency Sierra Leone (EPA-SL), in partnership with Save the Children Sierra Leone, initiated the implementation of the Sierra Leone Coastal Resilience Project (SLCRP), a leading Green Climate Fund (GCF)-funded programme aimed at protecting 75 vulnerable coastal communities from the effects of climate change. The project uses a multi-part approach to boost community resilience, improve adaptive capacity, and restore vital coastal ecosystems across five operational districts.

EPA-SL plays a key role in implementation and oversight, with primary responsibility for Component 3 on ecosystem-based adaptation, particularly mangrove conservation and restoration. Additionally, the Agency provides compliance monitoring, oversight of environmental and social safeguards, and technical support across the broader project portfolio. During the reporting period, EPA-SL achieved early institutional and operational milestones that strengthen national systems for climate-resilient coastal governance.

The EPA-SL successfully held a national training workshop on climate-resilient coastal planning and management, enhancing the technical skills of 53 personnel from 31 institutions, including government departments, local councils, and civil society groups. The training achieved 49.2% female participation and recorded an average knowledge gain of 37%. This was supported by the creation of community vulnerability maps and sector-specific climate-resilient action points to guide local adaptation planning.

To support implementation readiness and safeguards compliance, the Agency completed a comprehensive assessment of community structures and safeguarding across all five operational districts (Bonthe, Moyamba, Pujehun, Kambia, and Port Loko). These field missions evaluated environmental and social safeguards (ESS) compliance, gender inclusion, and accessibility for persons with disabilities, ensuring that project interventions are delivered equitably and accountably.

EPA-SL's leadership in compliance monitoring and ecosystem restoration planning is laying a solid foundation for improved coastal resilience outcomes and sustainable community co-management structures. Overall, SLCRP implementation demonstrates EPA-SL's expanding institutional capacity to deliver climate-resilient coastal adaptation at scale, integrating safeguards oversight, ecosystem restoration leadership, and enhanced coordination mechanisms to protect vulnerable communities and advance Sierra Leone's national adaptation priorities.

2. Natural Resource Management

Overview

As part of the 2025 Annual Work Programme, the Natural Resources Governance (NRG) Directorate undertook a series of activities aligned with the Agency's Transformation Strategy, each contributing to the overall institutional goals and annual performance targets. The programmes were delivered in collaboration with other directorates and with active participation from communities, proponents, and relevant stakeholders, ensuring effective engagement and strengthened partnerships. Financial resources were primarily provided through the Government's annual allocation, supplemented by contributions from development partners through project-based interventions. Overall, these combined efforts led to the successful delivery of planned outputs and measurable progress towards the Agency's strategic objectives.

Progress Markers

- NBSAP reviewed and updated; 7th National Biodiversity draft report prepared.
- The Chiefdom Environment Enforcement Committee (CEECOM) has been operationalised.
- Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) preparatory phase initiated, including the completion of data framework and governance desk review.
- The Abidjan Convention Project was implemented to strengthen the conservation of coastal and marine biodiversity through effective management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).
- USD 15 million secured for mine rehabilitation: a landmark shift in environmental accountability

Feature Stories

Development of Sierra Leone's third NBSAP and Seventh National Biodiversity Report

Led by the EPA-SL in partnership with stakeholders, this work package focused on reviewing and updating the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and on preparing the Seventh National Biodiversity Report to ensure alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The Early Action Programme facilitated the review and alignment of national NBSAP targets, and a Biodiversity Finance Framework was developed to support implementation of the BioFIN Plan. Additionally, the project established the country's first national biodiversity monitoring system and conducted a policy coherence and alignment assessment to strengthen the policy and institutional environment.

Implementation was guided by a multi-institutional Biodiversity Technical Working Group, which strengthened coordination, partnerships, and oversight. Nationwide district-level and regional consultations were held to update the Third Volume of the NBSAP and the Seventh National Biodiversity Report, assess biodiversity strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, identify available data, and ensure alignment with sectoral policies and the Medium-Term National Development Plan.

Overall, the process strengthened national ownership, institutional coordination, and evidence-based decision-making for biodiversity conservation, while enhancing policy coherence, funding preparedness, and monitoring capacity. The draft updated NBSAP and the draft Seventh National Biodiversity Report now provide a solid, internationally aligned framework for guiding biodiversity actions and reporting at the national level.



Stakeholder consultations for the development of the NBSAP

Operationalising Chiefdom Environment Enforcement Committees (CEECOM) Nationwide.

Chiefdom Environment Enforcement Committees (CEECOMs) were established and operationalised in nine chiefdoms across five districts: Tonkolili, Port Loko, Moyamba, Kenema, and Bo, thereby strengthening decentralised environmental governance at the local level. Memoranda of Understanding were signed with participating chiefdoms to formalise enforcement roles and responsibilities. The nine committee members received training in field enforcement methods, relevant environmental laws and mandates, grievance and complaints management, budgeting and financial reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, Chiefdom Environmental Action Plans were developed and are ready for implementation by the trained committees.

Consequently, local institutional capacity for environmental enforcement and biodiversity conservation was notably strengthened, with chiefdom-level structures formally empowered and equipped to enforce national environmental laws. This intervention has enhanced community-led environmental governance, increased compliance with environmental regulations, and improved biodiversity protection through effective, decentralised enforcement mechanisms.



After signing the MOU during one of the Community engagements

Developing Sierra Leone's Foundational Framework for Marine Spatial Planning (MSP)

In 2025, the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) strengthened national Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) efforts by establishing the foundational institutional, legal, and technical structures for a unified ocean governance system. This initiative addressed fragmented marine governance and conflicting sectoral uses of coastal and offshore waters, positioning the country to sustainably capitalise on emerging blue-economy opportunities. Key results include:

- A **comprehensive desk review** has been completed, assessing existing governance structures, institutional mandates, and coordination mechanisms relevant to MSP.
- An **MSP Data Framework** has been developed to identify key datasets, data custodians, data acquisition procedures, and institutional roles necessary for MSP implementation.
- **The legal mandate for MSP is clarified and secured** by the EPA Act, 2022, which designates the EPA as the primary institution responsible for coordinating and facilitating MSP across all marine and coastal zones.

The overall outcome was the establishment of clear institutional leadership, an evidence base, and a governance roadmap for Marine Spatial Planning, which resolved jurisdictional uncertainties and provided a structured framework for coordinated, multi-sectoral marine management.

The foundation for effective and sustainable marine spatial planning has been laid, improving policy coherence, institutional coordination, and national readiness to manage marine and coastal resources in a way that balances ecological integrity, economic growth, and social and cultural priorities.

Strengthening Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation Through Improved Marine Protected Area Management

The Abidjan Convention Project enhanced Marine Protected Area (MPA) management in the Scarcies River Estuary and the Sierra Leone River Estuary through integrated baseline research, capacity building, and community engagement. During the reporting period, a comprehensive socioeconomic, environmental, and ecological assessment was conducted, providing verifiable data to inform future MPA management plans and confirming the ecological and livelihood significance of the Scarcies River estuarine ecosystems. At the national level, twenty (20) game guards received targeted training in restoration practices, surveillance, and community engagement, thereby enhancing coordination and technical capacity for effective MPA management.

In Samu Chiefdom, Kambia District, 30 stakeholders, including traditional leaders, women, and youths, were trained in MPA management and ecological restoration. They then undertook community-led mangrove rehabilitation. In collaboration with local authorities, six hectares of degraded mangrove areas were mapped and identified, and four hectares have been successfully replanted so far. Awareness sessions were also held in five communities along the Scarcies River Estuary to encourage local participation in MPA governance. Overall, these activities enhanced decision-making with evidence, increased community ownership of conservation initiatives, and helped protect and restore important coastal and marine biodiversity.



During the engagement and assessment of Marine Protected Areas

Fifteen Million USD (\$15 million) secured in Financial Assurance Through Mine Rehabilitation and Closure Bond Enforcement

As part of the ongoing rollout of the mine rehabilitation and closure bond scheme for both small- and large-scale mining operations, the Agency has advanced nationwide efforts to assess rehabilitation and closure liabilities, aiming to accurately determine mining operators' financial responsibilities.

For the first time in Sierra Leone's history, mining companies have officially committed around USD 15 million in financial guarantees specifically for mine closure and environmental cleanup. This milestone marks a decisive shift from policy intent to enforceable environmental accountability, aligning Sierra Leone's mining regulations with global best practices. Mechanisms such as bank guarantees and insurance bonds are now standard worldwide to ensure that mining operators cover the full costs of land restoration. Although these approaches have long been recognised, they have not been implemented at scale in Sierra Leone until now. The 2025 milestone reflects not only improved compliance but also a fundamental change in how mine-closure responsibilities are enforced nationwide. This progress was achieved through the Agency's comprehensive valuation of mine rehabilitation liabilities across large- and small-scale operations. By accurately assessing the real environmental costs of individual mines, the Agency shifted from arbitrary or negotiated bond amounts to evidence-based financial commitments tied to actual restoration risks. These evaluations provided the technical and regulatory basis for securing credible financial assurances from operators.

As a result, 18 mining companies (12 large-scale and 6 small-scale) were evaluated, and approved financial instruments totaling about USD 15 million were submitted. When companies failed to meet their obligations, the Agency strengthened enforcement through negotiations and legal action, reinforcing the regime's credibility and ending discretionary or unenforced mine-closure practices. This achievement marks a pivotal moment for mine closure and environmental rehabilitation in Sierra Leone. It ensures that restoration is no longer dependent on future goodwill or public funds but is supported by secured financial instruments for the State. Overall, it boosts public confidence in mining regulation, safeguards communities and ecosystems from the liabilities of abandoned mines, and creates a durable framework for responsible resource extraction.

3. Pollution Prevention/Reduction

Overview

In 2025, the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Directorate undertook several activities aligned with the Environment Protection Agency Transformation Strategy (EPATS) 2024–2030. To achieve these, effective involvement and stronger collaboration were encouraged through active participation by communities, proponents, and stakeholders in these initiatives, which were implemented alongside other directorates. The government's annual budget provided most of the funding, with contributions from development partners through specific programmes providing supplementary support. Overall, these initiatives achieved their intended outcomes and made significant progress towards the Agency's strategic objectives.

Progress Markers

- Three paint manufacturers signed a declaration of conformity and committed to reformulation; a roadmap was developed to prevent lead poisoning from paint in Sierra Leone.
- 65 data collectors trained in sampling and analytical techniques for the development of the National Pollutant Inventory (NPI)
- Launched nationwide data collection of point and non-point pollutant sources from 422 EIA licensed companies using the Mobile Lab.
- 30 Environmental Officers and 1 Chemical Expert trained in Environmental Monitoring Tools, Data Collection Techniques, and Chemical Weapons Safety.

Feature Stories

XRF Secured to Advance Lead Poisoning Prevention in Sierra Leone

In October 2025, three major paint manufacturers, including Rainbow Paints and Chemicals, Lintex Royal Paints, and Lion Paints, signed the declaration of conformity and committed to reformulation. To raise awareness of the environmental and health effects of lead exposure from paint, particularly in children, and to inform stakeholders, including schoolchildren, about the new regulations on lead in paint, stakeholders were engaged nationwide during the 2025 International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (ILPPW). In-person meetings, radio, and TV discussions were held. The Lead Exposure Elimination Project (LEEP), a British non-governmental organisation, visited the Agency and conducted two training sessions on enforcement monitoring. To enhance the effective implementation of regulations, the Agency and LEEP signed a loan agreement to provide X-Ray Fluorescent (XRF) equipment and developed a roadmap for lead testing and prevention.



Celebration of the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week.



Radio discussions during awareness raising on Lead in paint

National Pollutant Inventory (NPI) Development Launched

The NPI aims to serve as a national system for systematically identifying, quantifying, and tracking pollutant releases, understanding how pollutants move through the environment, and exploring the opportunities this information offers for prevention and risk reduction. The NPI initiative responds to growing environmental pressures linked to urban growth, population shifts, expanding economic activity, agriculture, energy consumption, and changing consumption patterns across the country.

The NPI will be structured around three interconnected components, designed to work together as a unified, coherent system: pollutant releases (from both point and non-point sources), pollutant transfers, and the development of a National Pollution Prevention Plan (N3P). This will translate data from release and transfer analyses into targeted, preventive, and risk-informed actions. Collectively, these components aim to document pollution and support informed decision-making, particularly in Public Health and proactive environmental management.

Diffuse, cumulative, and cross-sectoral processes are gradually shaping environmental contamination in Sierra Leone, rather than isolated industrial emissions. Air, land, and water are affected simultaneously by complex mixtures of pollutants arising from household waste generation, informal waste management, transport emissions, agricultural runoff, legacy contamination, and coastal interactions. At the same time, institutional facilities and formal industrial operations continue to emit at point sources, requiring ongoing regulatory oversight. In Sierra Leone, traditional regulatory frameworks that focus solely on permits and compliance monitoring often prove inadequate, particularly where informal operations dominate and environmental monitoring infrastructure remains insufficient. To address this gap, the NPI will integrate activity data, emission variables, spatial analysis, environmental modelling, and existing measurements. By adopting an integrated approach, EPA-SL can identify sources of formal and informal pollution, assess cumulative effects, and prioritise actions based on risk and exposure rather than visibility alone.

Sixty-five data collectors have undergone two practical training sessions on sampling and analytical methods. Data collection in the field and technical analysis are continuing.



After the NPI training



Sampling and data collection practical exercise



Training on the use of equipment

Environmental Health Monitoring Plan Launched with Nationwide Pollution Data Collection from 422 EIA Licensed Companies Using the Mobile Lab

The Agency received a mobile laboratory from the World Bank via the Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project (RUSLP). To ensure effective use of the mobile laboratory, the Agency developed and implemented a monitoring plan that has significantly enhanced its operational capabilities. This has enabled on-site, real-time analysis of air and water quality, improving the efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness of environmental monitoring.

The mobile laboratory has been crucial for monitoring and auditing 422 EIA-licensed companies for air pollution, particularly in industrial and urban areas. This real-time data collection has enabled rapid responses to pollution complaints from factories and other sources and has established baseline data by creating an initial dataset on pollution-prone areas across the country. It has also strengthened enforcement by providing irrefutable evidence to take action against non-compliant industries (Agriculture, extractive, and manufacturing sectors, etc.).

The mobile laboratory has also transformed the Agency's capacity to test water quality, enabling the immediate analysis of various water quality parameters.

The Agency's on-site capabilities are now vital for protecting water bodies, reducing sample analysis time from several days to just hours, improving accuracy by lowering the risk of sample contamination or degradation during transport, strengthening enforcement with real-time, verifiable data collected by the mobile laboratory, and boosting public trust.



Handing over and use of the Mobile Laboratory



30 Officers and 1 Chemical Expert Trained on Monitoring, Data Collection, and Chemicals Weapons Safety

To enhance analytical capabilities, environmental equipment, including 4-in-1 environmental noise meters, metallisers, pH meters, air quality meters, an air monitoring trailer, and physicochemical meters, was acquired with support from AVDP, RUSLP, IOM, OPCW, and UNDP. Additionally, 30 environmental officers received training in the use of the newly acquired monitoring equipment.

The objective of the training was to equip staff with practical knowledge and improve their ability to operate this equipment in the field to collect precise, high-quality data for environmental reports.

In another development, a chemical expert from the Agency contributed to the interdisciplinary OPCW Associate Programme to help Member States better manage the peaceful uses of chemistry in the chemical industry while complying with the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). To support the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Sierra Leone also received a Lightweight Chemical Detector 3.3 (LCD 3.3) device. This equipment can be used to identify chemical warfare agents and to train first responders. This donation is a result of Sierra Leone's significant contributions to OPCW's capacity-building programmes and its active, dedicated participation.



Associate Programme 2025 Graduates and Handing Over of Light Weight Chemical Detector

4. Innovation, Research, and Technology

Overview

In 2025, the Research Policy & Innovation Directorate (RPI) made significant progress towards its strategic goals. The RPI's responsibilities include strengthening institutional capacity, fostering innovation, and digitising the Agency's processes. Through the RPI, the Agency has supported improved environmental governance and management across Sierra Leone by introducing targeted training programmes, launching new initiatives, and upgrading technology.

Progress Markers

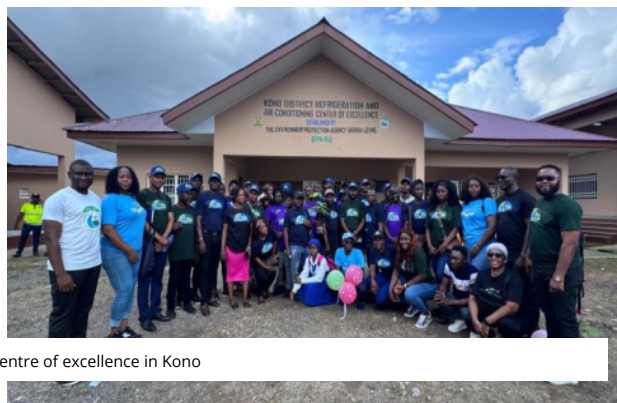
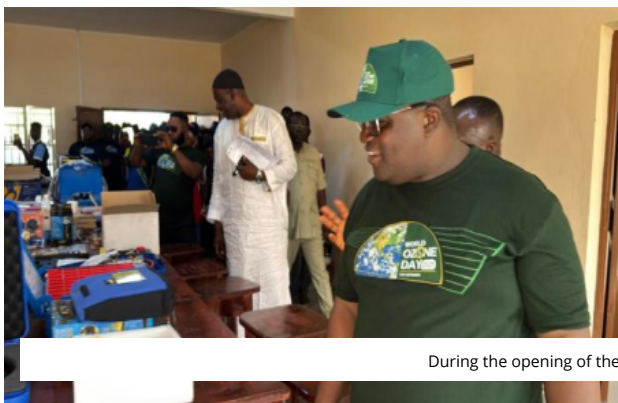
- Establishment of a 3rd Centre of Excellence for training in Refrigeration and air-conditioning (RAC), conducting research, and capacity building for technicians, master trainers, and industry professionals within the Kono District in line with the Kigali implementation plan for Sierra Leone. The centre also supports the shift to energy-efficient RAC systems.
- Digitisation and expansion of the OneEPA database, covering the payroll management system, human resources system, project manager, and laboratory database management system, to ensure effective service delivery, comprehensive data management, and policy formulation.
- The implementation of a pilot project on "Shift to Electric Mobility" has increased public awareness of the benefits of moving away from internal combustion engines. It has also supported the development of a gender-sensitive e-mobility strategy, creating a platform for gender equity within the sector. Additionally, it introduced a battery recycling scheme, drafted e-mobility regulations, established charging and swapping stations, and piloted 15 e-keke units, thereby creating job opportunities for women and youth.
- Operationalising the Centre for Environmental Data and Statistics (CEDAS) involves collecting, analysing, and interpreting credible environmental data, supporting environmental research, and collating fragmented data from various sectors in Sierra Leone. This initiative will improve the centralisation and accessibility of environmental data, serve as a training facility for professionals, raise public awareness, and support the development of sound environmental policies.

Feature Stories

Establishment of the Kono District Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Centre of Excellence

A Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning (RAC) is a specialised institution focused on training, research, and capacity development for technicians, trainers, and industry professionals in the RAC sector. It aims to support national and regional initiatives to adopt environmentally friendly, energy-efficient,

and safe cooling technologies in line with the Montreal Protocol and its Kigali Amendment. The regional CoE's goal is to deliver high-quality RAC training, technical certification, and innovative solutions, thereby aiding ozone layer protection, climate change mitigation, and sustainable cooling. In September 2025, the Sierra Leone government, through the Environment Protection Agency, with support from partners including the Multilateral Fund Secretariat of the Montreal Protocol, UNIDO, and GIZ (which constructed the facility), launched a state-of-the-art CoE at the Government Technical Institute Doma Campus in Koidu City, Kono District, Eastern Region. The initiative aligns with the Kigali Implementation Plan developed for Sierra Leone in 2023. The opening of the CoE took place during the commemoration of International Ozone Day 2025, under the theme "From Science to Global Action." The event was attended by over 300 stakeholders, including political leaders, government representatives, RAC technicians, academics, civil society members, journalists, and members of the public.



During the opening of the centre of excellence in Kono

Digitisation and Expansion of the OneEPA Database

Over the years, the Agency has faced significant challenges in managing public grievances, ensuring access to its services and products, and handling fragmented environmental data and records. Much of this data was held in diverse formats, including paper files, spreadsheets, and isolated systems or databases across institutions nationwide. Access to credible, timely environmental data remained a major obstacle, undermining the Agency's capacity to support policy development and evidence-based decision-making. For a long time, these issues were seen as a serious threat to effective environmental governance, especially in a rapidly changing global landscape where environmental challenges are becoming increasingly complex and data-driven. In response, the concept of a digitised OneEPA System was developed. The OneEPA System was envisaged as a unified framework, "one agency, one database, one source of records", designed to promote evidence-based decisions and strengthen environmental protection and management. Its main aims were to consolidate environmental data and records, minimise human intervention in the Agency's operations, facilitate real-time monitoring of projects, reduce the time needed to obtain Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) licences and other permits, ensure complete system ownership by the Agency, eliminate recurring software service payments, and improve the grievance redress mechanism. What started as an ambitious vision by the Agency's management has now become a reality with the establishment of the OneEPA System, comprising several integrated digital platforms. The system has markedly improved the tracking of the Agency's activities and projects, enhanced access to real-time data and information, reduced the workload, and increased staff efficiency. It has also improved public access to the Agency's services and products, supported research and academic pursuits, strengthened regulatory compliance and enforcement, and aided the development of sound environmental policies and informed decision-making. Moreover, the system has bolstered institutional resilience, as records are now protected from loss, damage, or misplacement. By digitising and centralising its operations, the Agency has connected its work more effectively to the global community, enabling access to its systems and services from anywhere in the world.

Fig.1 - Dashboard of the OneEPA System (Integrated Modules within the OneEPA Database)

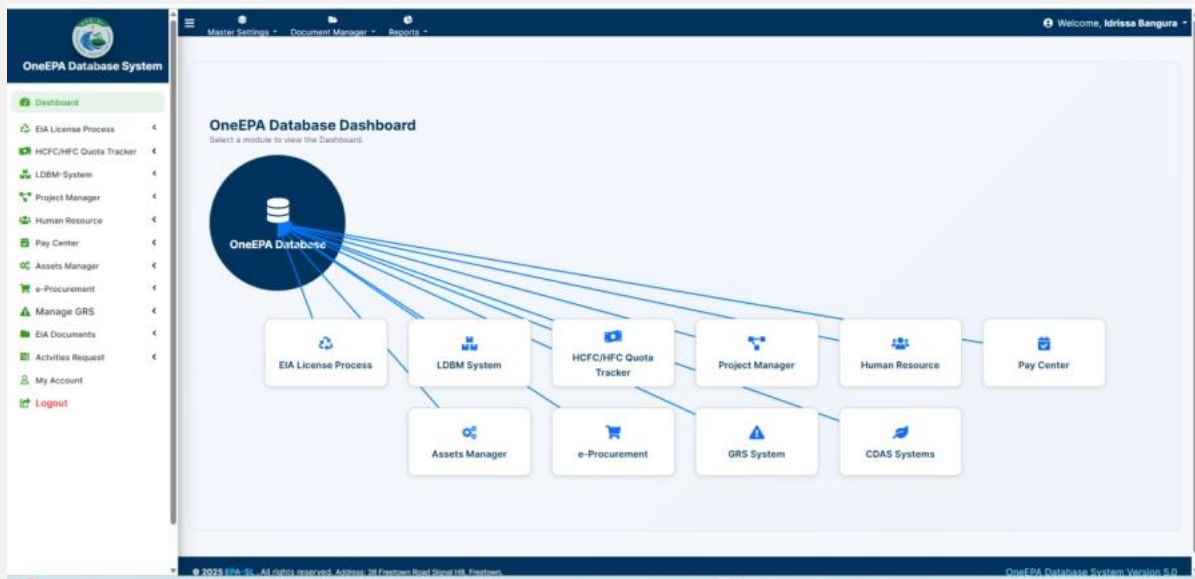


Fig.2: - Human Resources (HR) System: A complete HR information system managing employee data, recruitment, leave, internal processes, and staff records.

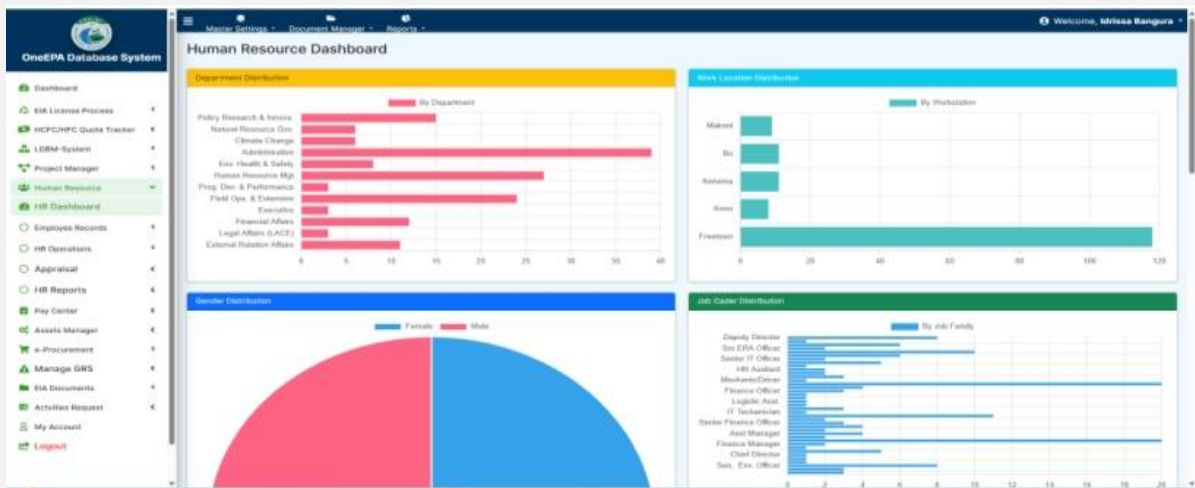


Fig.3: - Payroll Management System: Automates monthly payroll processing, deductions, allowances, NASSIT, PAYE tax bands, and payroll reporting.

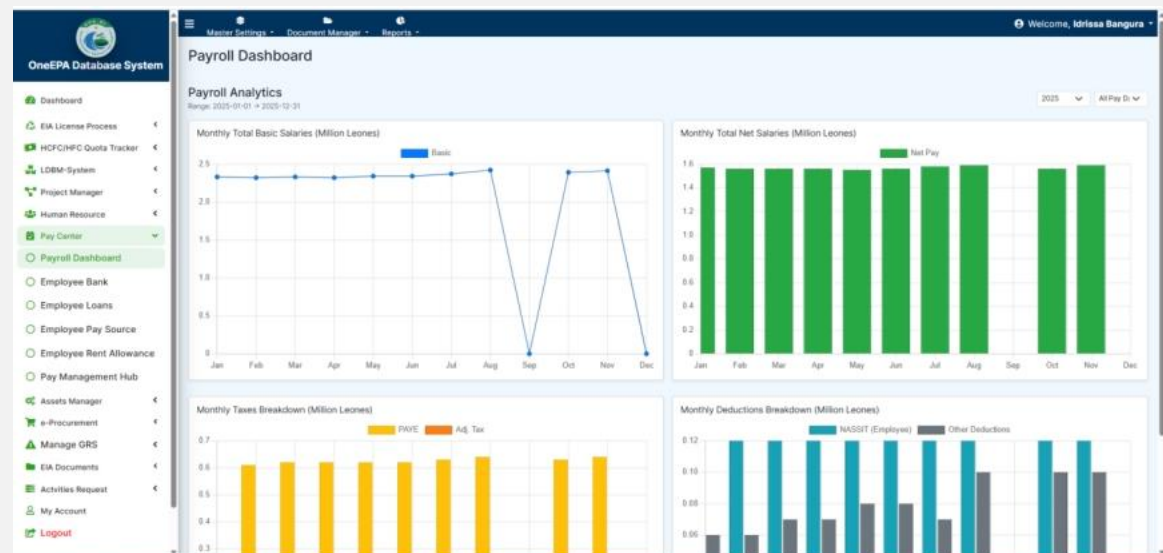


Fig.4: - Laboratory Database Management System (LDBM): Tracks samples, laboratory analysis, and environmental monitoring data for Air, water, Noise, Soil and Waste Quality, and lab reports. This module is now fully integrated into the OneEPA

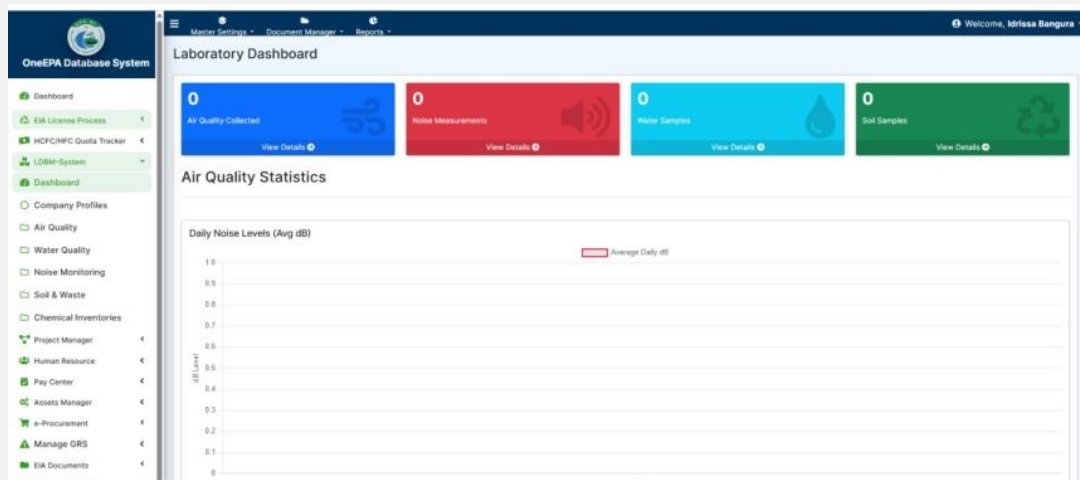


Fig.5 - The EIA Navigator System Dashboard: A system managing Environmental Impact Assessment workflows:

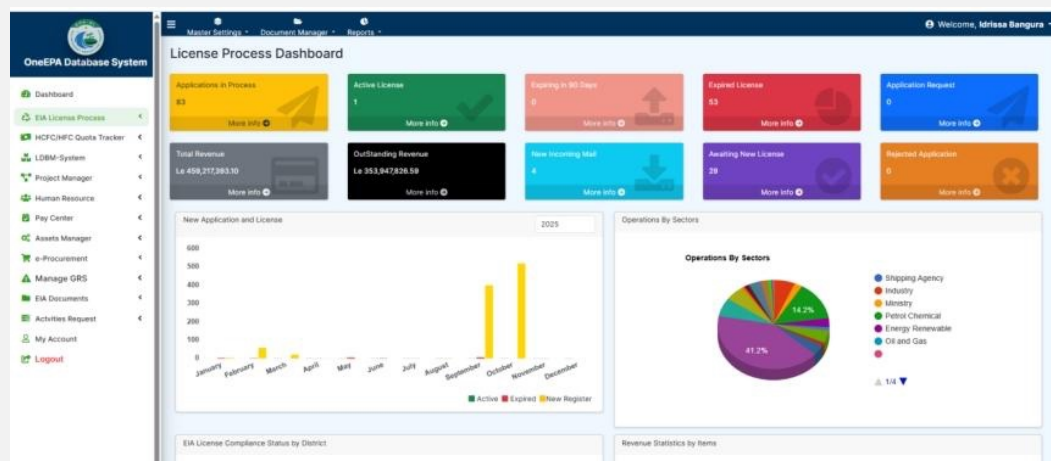
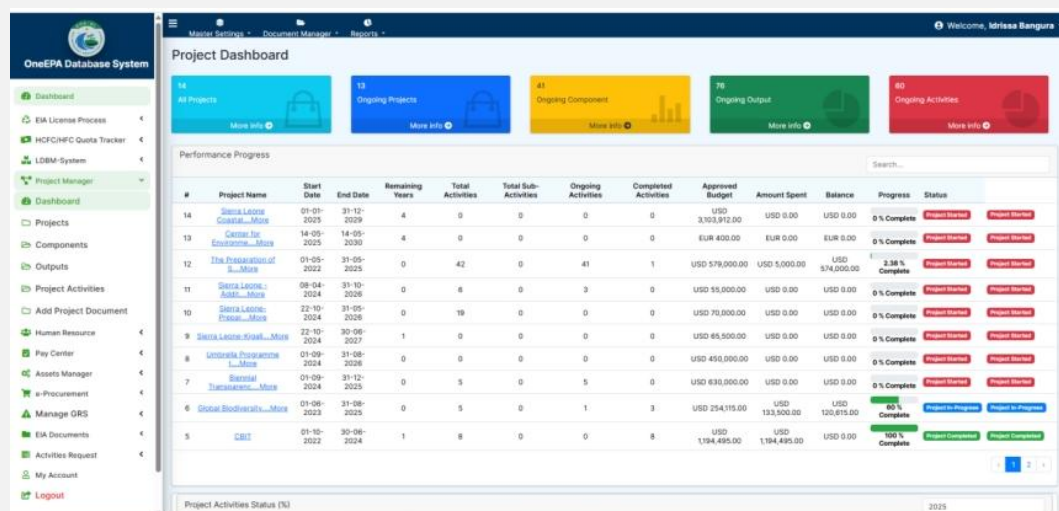


Fig.6 – Project Manager Module: Monitors project activities, indicators, outputs, budgets, implementing partners, and project timelines. This module is now fully integrated into the OneEPA Database.



Showcasing Sierra Leone's E-Mobility Pilot Successes at COP30

In 2025, Sierra Leone made a decisive shift from e-mobility planning to the early stages of implementation. The country launched its first fleet of electric kekes, introduced a solar-powered battery-swapping station, finalised the 2024–2035 National E-Mobility Strategy, and integrated electric mobility into NDC 3.0. This progress attracted international attention at COP30 in Belém, where Sierra Leone showcased its pilot results and received strong support from global partners.

The programme has established a clear pathway for scaling up. The national strategy aims for 33% electric vehicle sales by 2035 and commits to deploying 10,000 electric kekes and 100 electric buses. Draft regulations on EV imports, fiscal incentives, and battery recycling are reducing regulatory uncertainty and enhancing investor confidence. Early pilot results also demonstrate strong technical and developmental potential. The first 15 electric kekes are performing well, with daily ranges of 80 to 120 km, energy efficiency of 0.08 to 0.09 kWh/km, and partial reliance on solar charging. The pilot indicates lower operating costs, reduced exposure to fuel price shocks, cleaner urban air, and promising gains in inclusion, with women comprising around 60% of riders. Collectively, these achievements show that e-mobility in Sierra Leone is no longer merely a policy ambition but an emerging, market-ready transition opportunity.



Establishment and Operationalisation of the Centre for Environmental Data and Statistics (CEDAS)

The Agency has established and now manages the Centre for Environmental Data and Statistics (CEDAS) to address long-standing gaps in environmental data management nationwide. This effort addresses past issues with environmental data reporting that have hampered effective policymaking and decision-making. CEDAS serves as a centralised platform for environmental information, facilitating the monitoring of environmental conditions, the evaluation of impacts, the informing of policy choices, the raising of public awareness, the reduction of data inconsistencies, the support of environmental research, and the provision of early warning systems.

To support the operational setup of the Centre, the Agency constructed a temporary building to accommodate all CEDAS functions. Specific officers have been assigned to the centre, and a three-year strategic plan has been developed. The plan covers upcoming research activities, the technologies required for effective data management, and key capacity-building needs. A formative workshop for CEDAS, held from 14 to 15 May 2025, was vital in identifying key elements, including the data inventory, gaps, needs, and the CEDAS roadmap. Additionally, a pilot study on risk analysis for fuel stations and depots has been undertaken, alongside ongoing research into riverbed hotspot mining along the Pampana and Jong rivers in the northern and southern regions.



During the formative workshop



Meeting with community stakeholders

Assessment Report Completed on Strengthening Waste Management Governance and Legal Frameworks in Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leone Government, through the Environment Protection Agency, has collaborated internationally to enhance its waste management strategies, particularly through the Fifth Montevideo Programme for Environmental Law development and review. This effort aims to establish environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive waste practices, incorporating safeguards for informal waste workers. To inform legal and regulatory reforms with reliable evidence, the project used a systematic approach that included reviewing current policies and laws, conducting stakeholder interviews and field visits in affected communities, and analysing municipal solid waste data from UN-Habitat's Waste Wise Cities Tool. This comprehensive approach ensures that the recommendations are tailored to the country's specific context and local conditions.

The assessment finds that although Sierra Leone has existing policies and broad legal instruments relevant to waste management—most notably Sierra Leone's National Plastics and Plastic Waste Management Policy (2023), the Environment Protection Agency Act (2022), and the Public Health Act (2022)—waste management in Freetown and across the country remains highly challenged. These difficulties arise from poor public attitudes towards waste, rapid population growth and urbanisation, poverty, weak infrastructure, outdated and limited technologies, inadequate service coverage, fragmented institutional and governance arrangements, and severely limited public and private financing. Enforcement and implementation of current laws and policies are weak, and many anticipated standards, guidelines, and regulations remain undeveloped. Consequently, waste is largely unmanaged throughout its lifecycle, from generation and transportation to treatment and disposal. Existing frameworks also do not sufficiently define and classify waste, incorporate core waste management principles, or address specific waste streams, labour issues, and the vital roles of informal workers and waste pickers. The lack of a dedicated, comprehensive waste management law has led to unregulated practices, poor coordination among institutions, and limited accountability.

This report highlights the necessity of comprehensive legal and institutional reforms, backed by ongoing investment and behavioural change, to close these gaps. It emphasises developing a dedicated waste management framework law with regulations that define waste types, follow the waste hierarchy, establish standards at all management stages, and embed principles like extended producer responsibility, polluter pays, and penalties for violations. Improving governance and coordination among national and local bodies, formally protecting informal waste workers, and empowering communities and the private sector are key steps to better outcomes and harnessing economic opportunities such as recycling and waste-to-energy projects. The report also stresses the need for better impact assessments, strong data collection, public education, community engagement, increased infrastructure and institutional capacity, and diverse, sustainable financing. Together, these actions can help Sierra Leone shift from disorganised, ineffective waste practices toward a clear, enforceable, resource-efficient system that benefits the environment, public health, and the economy.

5. Compliance and Enforcement

Overview

To meet the Agency's mandate to ensure full compliance with the EPA Act of 2022—promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction in Sierra Leone—the Field Operations, Extensions, and Legal Affairs Compliance and Enforcement directorates conducted various audits, including quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reviews. In fiscal year 2025, a total of 1,184 monitoring and audit exercises were completed nationwide for EIA-licensed companies.

Progress Markers

- Demolition of 202 illegal river dredges
- Approval and issuance process for 83 EIA licenses.
- 1,184 monitoring inspections and annual audits carried out
- Twenty-five (25) Civil enforcement actions and court orders issued
- Legislative Development and Review
- Fifty (50) law officers trained on tackling the illegal trade of controlled substances in relation to the Montreal Protocol.

Feature Stories

Crackdown on Illegal River Mining to Protect Water Sources, Ecosystems, and Public Health

The raids along key river systems across the country primarily targeted dredging, alluvial mining, and related illegal mining activities that continue to threaten Sierra Leone's environment and public wellbeing. These operations were carried out in response to escalating ecological damage, particularly the severe pollution of rivers caused by mercury and other hazardous chemicals often used in illegal gold mining. In many affected areas, increased turbidity from dredging and sediment runoff has rendered river water unsafe for drinking, cooking, and other domestic uses, putting downstream communities at risk, particularly those that rely directly on these rivers as their primary water source.

The raids also addressed the widespread destruction of aquatic ecosystems caused by riverbed excavation and dredging. These activities harm fish breeding and nursery grounds, disrupt the natural flow and sediment balance of rivers, and lead to the loss of vital aquatic biodiversity, including fish, crustaceans, and plant species. Simultaneously, the removal of vegetation along riverbanks to establish mining camps and access routes has contributed to riverbank erosion, habitat destruction, floodplain degradation, and the weakening of essential ecosystem services. In many areas, this has led to the widening of river channels and increased environmental instability.

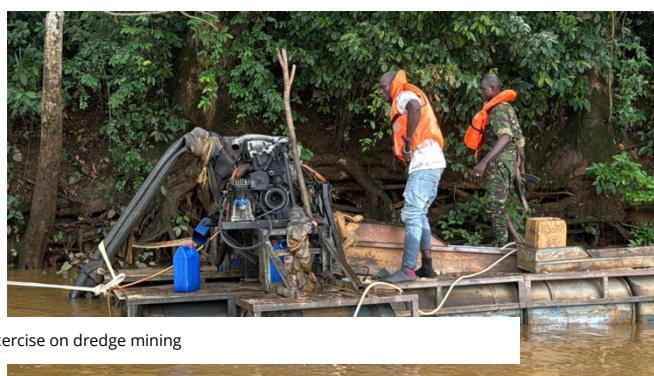
Beyond the ecological impacts, these activities have also posed significant public health risks. Chemical pollution of river systems increases exposure to contaminated water and heightens the risk of waterborne diseases in

nearby communities. Abandoned and stagnant mining pits also provide breeding sites for malaria-carrying mosquitoes, while the long-term build-up of mercury in fish poses a serious health risk to people who depend on river-based food sources.

Against this backdrop, enforcement raids were carried out in Masanga Village along the Pampana River, the Binkolo-Bumbuna axis along the Rokel River, Yele along the Pampana River, and Semabu on the Menie River in Penguia Chiefdom near the Sierra Leone-Guinea border. These operations achieved notable successes, especially in disabling and burning illegal dredges and arresting dredge operators. However, the work also revealed ongoing challenges, including diplomatic sensitivities and environmental risks caused by cross-border mining activities. Tackling these threats will require stronger legal and enforcement frameworks, deeper community engagement, and a more coordinated multi-stakeholder response to safeguard Sierra Leone's rivers and ecological future.

Below is the breakdown of the prevalent chiefdoms, districts, and regions where illegal dredge mining is occurring regularly in Sierra Leone

Region	District	Chiefdom	Community	River + Tributary	Number of dredges destroyed	Month of the Raid (2025)
Eastern Region	Kailahun	Peje Bongay	Sainah and Follah	Moa	9	August
	Kailahun	Penguia	Semabu	Menie River		Augus
	Kono	Gbane	Levuma	Maleh	15 5	August October
Southern	Bo	Kakua	Bambawo	Sewa	5	August
			Baina	Sewa	3	August
			Konta	Sewa	3	August
Northern	Tonkolili	Simira	Masanga	Panpana	60 45	August October
	Tonkolili	Gbongelekeh	Yele	Taia	15 13	August October
	Tonkolili	Kalasongaia	Bumbuna	Rokel	29	August
TOTAL					202	



During a raid exercise on dredge mining

EIA Licensing Gains Momentum as 83 Projects Secure Approval in 2025

In 2025, the Board of the Environment Protection Agency Sierra Leone approved 83 projects following the successful completion of the Environmental Impact Assessment licensing process. These approvals demonstrate the Agency's ongoing commitment to ensuring that development across the country is guided by appropriate environmental safeguards, transparency, and regulatory diligence.

Each approved project underwent the full EIA process, including screening, technical review, public consultation, and disclosure meetings at the respective project sites. This reflects the Agency's focus on inclusive decision-making and underscores the importance of enabling affected communities and stakeholders to engage with proposed developments before final approval. The process also ensured that environmental and social risks were identified early and that suitable mitigation measures were incorporated into project planning and execution.

The approved projects were reviewed across four Board meetings held during the year. In March 2025, 25 projects received approval. This was followed by 15 approvals in May 2025, 26 in August 2025, and 17 in December 2025. Together, these totals brought the year's approved projects to 83.

This level of activity underscores both the growing pace of investment and development in Sierra Leone and the central role of the EPA in regulating that growth responsibly. By ensuring that projects undergo thorough environmental assessment before approval, the Agency continues to bolster public confidence in the country's environmental governance system and to promote sustainable development outcomes. The 2025 approvals therefore represent not only an administrative achievement but also a clear indication of progress in balancing national development priorities with environmental protection.

Strengthening Compliance Through Nationwide Monitoring and Environmental Audits

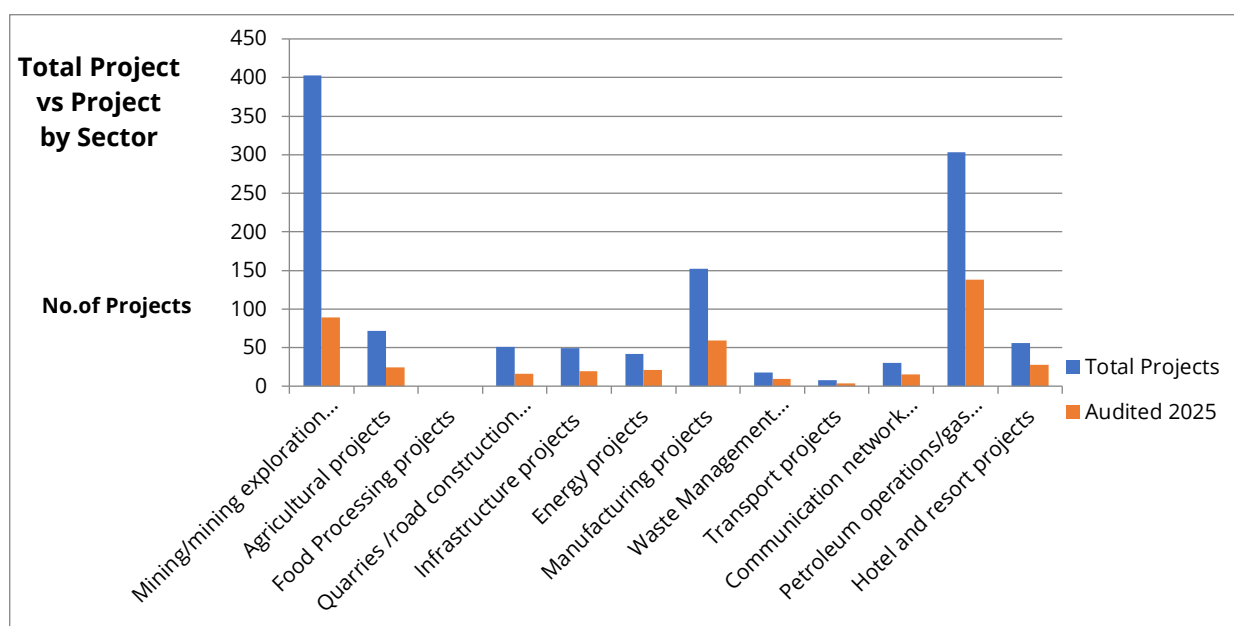
In the 2025 financial year, the EPA-SL, through the FOE and LACE Directorates, conducted and coordinated 1,184 quarterly monitoring visits, biannual monitoring exercises, and annual environmental audits for EIA-licensed companies across the country. These activities formed a significant part of the Agency's compliance and enforcement efforts, ensuring that licensed companies continued to operate in accordance with approved environmental standards, licence conditions, and broader regulatory requirements.

The monitoring and audit activities spanned a wide range of sectors and provided the Agency with a stronger basis for identifying compliance gaps, tracking environmental performance, and taking action where necessary. Beyond inspection and oversight, the process also fostered regular engagement with key actors across sectors, leading to a shared understanding of regulatory expectations and sector-specific environmental risks. Such sustained engagement contributed to improved performance in sectors such as mining, hotels and tourism, petroleum, agriculture, and others.

Overall, these efforts have significantly strengthened regulatory oversight and compliance across the country. The effects of this more focused approach are also evident in sector performance trends, including a decline in activities of concern in the energy and waste sectors, indicating that consistent regulation, closer monitoring, and constructive engagement are beginning to yield positive governance outcomes.

The Table showing analysis of Annual Audit, Q1 – Quarter 1, Q2 – Quarter 2, Q3 – Quarter 3, BA – Bi-Annual and CM - Compliance Monitoring EIA licensed companies

Category	Total	Q1	Q2/BA	Q3	Audited 2025	CM
Mining/mining exploration projects	403	140	95	73	89	6
Agricultural projects	72		48		24	
Food Processing projects						
Quarries /road construction projects	51	10	12	6	16	7
Infrastructure projects	49		30		19	
Energy projects	42		21		21	
Manufacturing projects	152		87		59	6
Waste Management /recycling projects	18		9		9	
Transport projects	8		4		4	
Communication network projects	30		15		15	
Petroleum operations/gas stations projects	303		165		138	
Hotel and resort projects	56		28		28	2
Total	1,184	150	514	79	422	21



The bar chart shows uneven audit coverage across sectors, indicating that inspection efforts are driven by compliance risks rather than being evenly distributed. Sectors with greater environmental exposure, particularly mining, energy, petroleum, and manufacturing, tend to attract more intensive audits due to their stronger links to land disturbance, pollution, emissions, hazardous substances, and broader public safety hazards. Conversely, sectors such as transport, communications, and certain waste recovery activities display lower audit volumes, aligning with their generally smaller or more contained environmental footprints. Overall, this pattern reflects a risk-based regulatory approach, with oversight focused on areas with the highest likelihood and impact of non-compliance, thereby enhancing the efficiency and credibility of environmental governance.



Taking Environmental Offenders to Court and Defending the Agency's Mandate

In 2025, the Agency enhanced environmental accountability through a more assertive use of legal enforcement to tackle non-compliance and safeguard the public interest. Through its Legal Department, it initiated a series of civil actions aimed at compelling regulated entities to fulfil their environmental duties. These actions included garnishee proceedings, recovery measures, and court-ordered payment processes against 10 companies, reflecting a clear shift towards stricter enforcement where administrative engagement alone proved inadequate. This legal work played a crucial role in strengthening the credibility of the Agency's regulatory system. By pursuing formal legal remedies, the Agency signalled that environmental compliance is not optional and that failure to meet licensing conditions or financial obligations can result in tangible legal and financial consequences. This has helped reinforce deterrence, enhance regulatory discipline, and foster greater seriousness among operators across regulated sectors.

Simultaneously, the Legal Department defended the Agency in three separate cases where it was sued. These cases were important not only because they tested the Agency's legal readiness but also because they addressed broader issues of institutional authority and the regulator's right to act in defence of environmental protection. By successfully managing these cases, the Agency helped uphold its operational mandate, protect regulatory integrity, and demonstrate readiness to both enforce the law and defend its decisions in court when needed.

Two Landmark Regulations Enacted to Protect Public Health and the Environment

In 2025, the Agency achieved a significant regulatory milestone with the enactment of two landmark environmental regulations that greatly strengthen Sierra Leone's legal framework for managing pollution and chemical hazards. For the first time, the country now has enforceable national controls on ozone-depleting substances and lead in paints. These regulatory developments represent an important step forward in aligning national practices with international environmental commitments while also tackling long-standing domestic public health issues.

The Protection of the Ozone Layer and Substances Covered under the Montreal Protocol Regulations, 2025, introduced a formal control system for importers, distributors, technicians, and users of regulated substances. The regulations set out licensing, reporting, and compliance obligations, bringing the entire supply chain under clearer regulatory oversight. This provides the legal foundation needed to reduce harmful emissions, better control imports, and combat illegal trade in controlled substances. It also strengthens Sierra Leone's ability to meet its obligations under the Montreal Protocol and related commitments.

The Lead in Paint Regulations, 2025 address a vital regulatory gap by establishing a legally binding framework for paint manufacturers, importers, and distributors. The regulations set mandatory limits on lead content in paint, require reformulation and conformity testing, and lay the groundwork for enhanced market surveillance and enforcement. Their public health significance is particularly high, given the risks of lead exposure to children and other vulnerable groups. Sierra Leone is now among the first 15 countries worldwide to adopt such comprehensive legislation. Early signs of compliance were evident in 2025, with Rainbow Paints and Chemicals, Lintex Royal Paints, and Lion Paints signing Declarations of Conformity in October, ahead of formal enforcement beginning in March 2026.

National Lead Awareness Campaigns Build Momentum for Safer Paints

Following the enactment of the Lead in Paint Regulations, the Agency quickly supported implementation through public education and awareness initiatives. During International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week 2025, it launched its first national lead awareness campaigns across the Western Area, Northern Region, and Southern Region. These campaigns marked an important step in translating the regulation into public understanding and practical readiness.

The awareness campaign combined community outreach and radio engagement to reach a wide range of the public, including households, traders, manufacturers, and local stakeholders. The campaigns highlighted the health risks associated with lead exposure, the importance of safer paint alternatives, and the new responsibilities that regulated actors would need to meet under the law. This strategy helped position the new regulations not just as enforcement measures, but as part of a broader public health and prevention effort.

These efforts also laid the groundwork for more effective regulatory implementation by raising awareness early, before enforcement begins. Public understanding is crucial in areas such as lead regulation, where market behaviour, consumer choices, and producer compliance all play a role. By creating space for dialogue and information-sharing, the Agency enhanced its capacity to secure compliance through both education and enforcement, while also drawing greater national attention to an issue that had previously received limited public discussion.

Partnership with LEEP Strengthens Lead Regulation Delivery

To reinforce the enforcement of the Lead in Paint Regulations, the Agency formalised a strategic partnership with the Lead Exposure Elimination Project. This collaboration aimed to strengthen the technical and operational foundations needed for the effective implementation of the new legal framework. In practical terms, it offers access to expertise, testing support, and implementation guidance to help translate regulatory intent into measurable outcomes.

LEEP's technical visit to Sierra Leone in 2025 provided vital early support for the national process. The engagement helped identify practical needs in product testing, compliance systems, and enforcement readiness, and supported the Agency's understanding of the steps required to operationalise the regulations effectively. This was particularly valuable in a context where the technical infrastructure for monitoring hazardous substances is still being developed.

The partnership aims to create long-term value by enhancing the Agency's institutional capacity in a specialised area of environmental health regulation. Beyond immediate support for implementation, it also opens up opportunities for knowledge transfer, setting technical standards, and building stronger connections to global best practices on lead exposure prevention. In this way, the partnership with LEEP is not just a project activity but a strategic investment in the country's ability to maintain and enforce a modern lead safety regime.

Sierra Leone Advances Marine Leadership through the BBNJ

In 2025, Sierra Leone strengthened its leadership in regional and global marine governance by actively participating in the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction. The country played a prominent role in efforts to accelerate ratification of the Agreement across West Africa, underscoring its growing profile in coastal and marine environmental diplomacy. Sierra Leone joined Nigeria as co-chair of the West Africa BBNJ Ratification Committee, a regional platform established to support ECOWAS member states in advancing the Agreement.

At the national level, Sierra Leone established a National BBNJ Ratification Committee, bringing together relevant ministries, departments, agencies, and civil society organisations. This created an institutional platform for coordination, awareness-raising, and policy engagement regarding the importance of the Agreement. The committee helped expand understanding of the connections between the BBNJ framework and issues such as marine conservation, equitable benefit-sharing, sustainable ocean use, and national development. It also supported a more inclusive national dialogue on Sierra Leone's role in shaping the future governance of marine biodiversity.

These efforts culminated in Sierra Leone's ratification of the Agreement on 19 September 2025. This marked a significant policy and diplomatic achievement, reaffirming the country's commitment to marine conservation and sustainable ocean governance. With the Environment Protection Agency serving as the focal point, the next phase is now implementation. This will require institutional coordination, technical readiness, and sustained policy attention, but it also presents a major opportunity to strengthen marine governance, protect ocean ecosystems, and expand Sierra Leone's role as a serious actor in regional environmental leadership.

Training Customs and Law Enforcement to Tackle Illegal Trade in Controlled Substances

Effective environmental regulation depends not only on sound laws but also on the frontline institutions responsible for enforcement. In 2025, the Agency therefore prioritised training for customs and law enforcement officers as part of its efforts to strengthen Sierra Leone's implementation of the Montreal Protocol and its Kigali Amendment. This work recognised that border control is a crucial line of defence against the illegal import, export, and trade in ozone-depleting substances and their alternatives.

The training programme aimed to enhance understanding of the newly enacted ozone regulations and to increase awareness of Sierra Leone's commitments under the Montreal Protocol. It emphasised practical enforcement issues, such as licensing procedures for imports and exports, identification of controlled substances, the use of refrigerant identifiers, and the significance of accurate data collection and reporting. The programme also aimed to strengthen coordination among institutions, recognising that illegal trade frequently exploits gaps between regulatory, customs, and enforcement systems.

To support these objectives, four training sessions were held in March 2025 across Koinadugu, Falaba, and Kailahun Districts. A total of 50 participants attended, enhancing national capacity at key enforcement points. These training sessions are a valuable investment in compliance readiness and institutional coordination. They also help ensure that Sierra Leone's new ozone protection framework is supported not only by law but also by a more capable and informed enforcement system that can detect and respond to violations more effectively. This training for Customs and law enforcement officers is essential to uphold global progress under the Montreal Protocol. Strong enforcement helps curb illegal ODS/HFC trading and guarantees adherence to phase-down and phase-out timelines. It promotes the shift to climate-friendly cooling solutions under the Kigali Amendment. Enhancing these skills directly aids ozone layer preservation and climate change mitigation.



During the training of Customs and law officers

6.Environmental Risk Knowledge Creation

Overview

In 2025, the EPA, through the External Relations Advocacy (ERA), significantly improved public engagement and understanding of environmental risks. Through extensive social media outreach on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn, the Agency disseminated environmental themes to a wide range of users. Community outreach through the village-to-village initiative boosted community-level awareness.

Progress Markers

- Held 22 national Media Engagements
- Celebration of World Environment Day
- Produced and aired eight (8) EPA unpacked explainer videos
- Seven (7) community outreach (Village-to-village) sensitisation held.

Feature Stories

22 Broadcasts Driving Nationwide Awareness

The EPA Hour featured 22 national media engagements, including 5 television and 17 radio discussions, reaching audiences in Freetown and surrounding areas. Each session included technical experts from the Agency and partner organisations, helping make complex environmental issues understandable to the public. The programme maintained consistent visibility of EPA's work while enhancing transparency and institutional accountability. The results are clear in increased public engagement. More listener feedback, direct enquiries, and community responses show a move from passive awareness to active interest. The programme now serves as a key behavioural change tool, supporting SDG 12.8 by providing citizens with accessible knowledge to promote sustainable practices across the country.



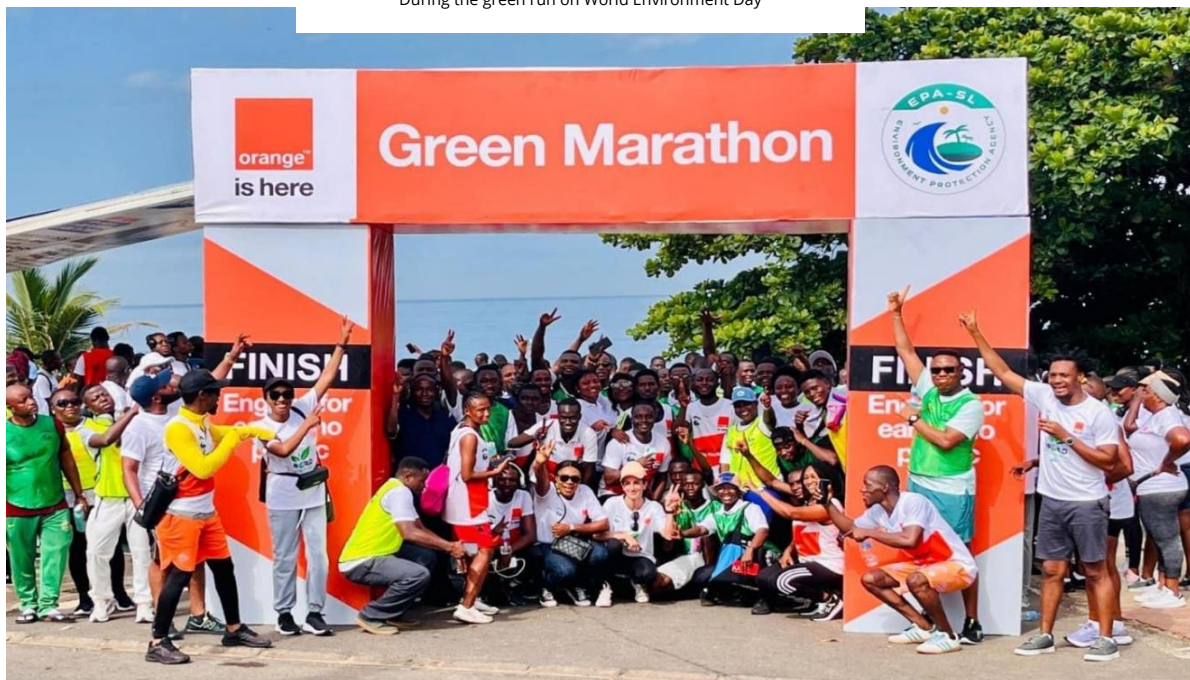
During one of the media engagements on World Environment Day

Four (4) Major Activities to Mark World Environmental Day Nationwide

World Environment Day 2025 was marked by four major national activities, including a Green Run, media campaign, school debate, and student field engagement, all aligned with the theme Beat Plastic Pollution. These activities mobilised public participation while reinforcing national messages on reducing plastic waste. The integrated approach broadened both the reach and depth of involvement. The Green Run generated significant public visibility, while media and school-based initiatives ensured sustained awareness across various groups. The outcome was not merely a celebration but a measurable national engagement that fostered behavioural change and environmental responsibility.



During the green run on World Environment Day



Ten (10) Schools Engaged in and, 1 Champion Emerged from National Debate

A total of 10 senior secondary schools took part in a national debate competition focused on ending plastic pollution. The event formed part of the EPA's wider environmental education programme, delivered through school nature clubs nationwide.

The competition showcased strong analytical skills among students, with Ahmadiyya Muslim Senior Secondary School emerging as the national winner. Beyond the award, the exercise boosted youth engagement, positioning students as future environmental leaders and promoting long-term behavioural change through education.



Students witnessed Coastal Ecosystem Risk Analysis

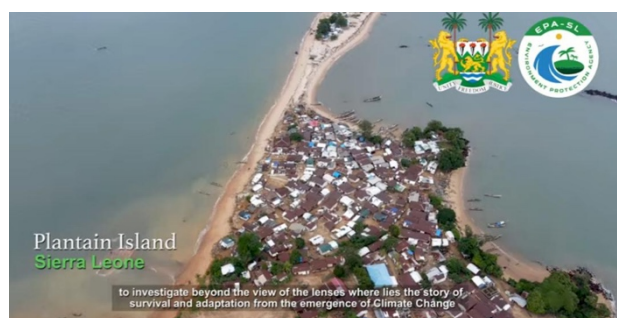
Over 100 pupils from secondary-school nature clubs took part in a field-based environmental learning exercise at Sella Water in Goderich. The initiative provided direct insight into coastal degradation, pollution, and ecosystem vulnerability.

This practical engagement enhanced understanding of environmental risks beyond classroom theory. By linking observation to guided learning, the programme deepened students' awareness and fostered a stronger sense of responsibility to protect marine and coastal ecosystems.



EPA Unpacked Videos Expanding Digital Reach and Understanding

The EPA Unpacked series was created and shared on YouTube and other social media platforms to clarify the Agency's mandate in a clear, accessible way. Each video featured staff-led explanations of key functions, projects, and regulatory actions. The series has enhanced public understanding and boosted digital engagement. By making policy communication clearer and more accessible, the videos are designed to encourage behavioural change and to establish the Agency as a transparent and responsive organisation in environmental governance.



Community Campaigns Reaching High-Impact Environmental Zones

A total of seven (7) village-to-village sensitisation campaigns were conducted across key regions, targeting communities engaged in high-impact activities such as dredge mining, farming, and charcoal production. Locations included Darakuru, Diang Chiefdom, Lolbanka, Baoma Station, Tinkonko, and Moyamba. These campaigns directly addressed the link between livelihoods and environmental degradation. By engaging communities in dialogue rather than relying solely on enforcement, the initiative is supporting gradual behavioural change, strengthening local awareness, and laying the foundation for more sustainable practices at the source.



7. Financial Performance

Revenue Performance

In 2025, total revenue amounted to **NLe168,857,721.59**, exceeding the estimated annual revenue target of NLe160,800,000 by more than 105%. This represents an increase of NLe14,855,311.59 over the NLe154,002,410 generated in 2024. Revenue was derived from EIA licences and monitoring fees, application and screening fees, ground truthing, and other sources, including consultancies, refrigerant permits, and penalties.

APPENDIX 1: REVENUE PERFORMANCE IN 2024 AND 2025

NO.	REVENUE STREAMS	Estimated Revenue 2024	Annual Revenue 2024	Estimated Revenue 2025	Annual Revenue 2025
		AMOUNT (SLE)	AMOUNT (SLE)	AMOUNT (SLE)	AMOUNT (SLE)
1	EIA Licensing fees	67,880,000.00	120,307,748.52	90,360,000.00	123,547,867.87
2	EIA Monitoring fees	12,660,000.00	28,013,646.00	18,072,000.00	29,661,966.97
3	Screening & Application fees	50,200.00	4,481,170.79	50,442,500.00	14,500,509.59
4	Ground Truthing Fees	486,900.00	729,695.00	634,500.00	322,171.90
5	Other Income - Fines, Public Disclosure, Refrigerant permit / Certification etc	1,231,000.00	470,149.69	1,291,000.00	825,205.26
	TOTAL	82,308,100.00	154,002,410.00	160,800,000.00	168,857,721.59

Project Performance

The agency received grant funding totalling **NLe10,426,417.66**, mainly from UNDP, UNICEF, and AVDP, for the implementation of various projects, including Natural Resource Management, Climate Change, Adaptation and Disaster Resilience, and the Western Area Peninsula (WAP) Projects.

Moreover, the agency received project funds totalling **USD 2,283,549.21** from multilateral donor partners, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), GEF/Conservation International, Save the Children, and the Abidjan Convention, for project implementation. These funds were largely spent on implementing activities related to Ozone, National Biodiversity (NBSAP), Biennial Update Transparency (BTR), the Fourth National Communication project, the Coastal Resilience project, Enhancing the Formalisation and Mercury Reduction in Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining (ASGM), and Strengthening Conservation and Effective Governance of Sierra Leone's Critical Forests in the Gola Forest Landscape project, among others.

New Awards

During FY2025, the agency submitted bankable project proposals and secured new awards totalling approximately **US\$5.05 million** from UNEP and UNOPS to implement the Zero Waste Ecosystem Restoration project and the Initiative for Climate Action Transfer (ICAT) projects across the country. These projects are scheduled to commence in 2026.

TABLE 2: PROJECTS FUNDS RECEIVED FROM DONORS IN 2025

No.	Project Description	Donor	Revenue Mobilized in 2025	
			NLe	US\$
1	Natural Resource Management, Climate Change, Adaptation And Disaster Resilience Portfolio	UNDP	536,474.00	
2	UNDP/NRG - Western Area Peninsula (WAP) Project - (New Project)	UNDP	9,161,485.20	
3	Supporting Sierra Leone with the Shift to Electric Mobility Project	UNEP		62,000.00
4	Ozone Project	UNEP		226,437.00
5	Conservation of Biodiversity Project (CBD)	UNEP		27,950.00
6	Agriculture Value Chain Development Project (AVDP)	AVDP	515,098.46	
7	GOLD PLUS PROJECT (New Project)-conservation International	GEF/CI International		307,166.21
8	National Bioiversity (NBSAP) Project	UNEP		360,000.00
9	Tropical Biological Association (TBA) Project	UNEP		27,400.00
10	Gola Forest Project	GEF/CI International		555,000.00
11	BIENNIAL UPDATE TRANSPARENCY (BTR) - UNEP (New Project)	UNEP		200,000.00
12	UNEP-Waste Management Project	UNEP		15,000.00
13	4th National Communications for SL (NC4)	UNEP		220,000.00
14	Abidjan Convention SSFA	Abidjan Convention		46,780.00
15	S/L Coastal Resilience Project	Save the Children International		141,275.00
16	legislative framework, stakeholder consultation & policy assessment	AFRIPAC		5,000.00
17	UNICEF support for NDC stakeholders consultations	UNICEF	213,360.00	
18	Early Action Project	UNEP		21,623.00
19	SSFA Support towards the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol	UNEP		27,000.00
20	SSFA Support towards the implementation of the NAGOYA Protocol	UNEP		27,000.00
21	Leap Project	UNEP		13,918.00
	TOTAL		10,426,417.66	2,283,549.21

8. Systems and Infrastructure

Overview

In 2025, the EPA, through the External Relations Advocacy (ERA), significantly improved public engagement and understanding of environmental risks. Through extensive social media outreach on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), and LinkedIn, the Agency disseminated environmental themes to a wide range of users. Community outreach through the village-to-village initiative boosted community-level awareness.

Progress Markers

- Award of contract for the construction of Bo Regional office
- Resumption of the construction of the Freetown Office
- Fleet enhancement
- Staff development and training

Feature Stories

Bo Office Breaks Ground with NLe 8.55 Million Investment

In a significant step to strengthen national environmental infrastructure, the Environment Protection Agency awarded a contract worth NLe 8,546,866.85 to build its first fully funded provincial office in Bo. The contract was signed on September 3, 2025, with completion expected in June 2026. This project marks a major milestone in decentralising environmental governance and expanding the Agency's reach beyond Freetown. The groundbreaking ceremony on September 6, 2025, officially launched what will become a vital hub for environmental monitoring and data-based decision-making in the southern region.

Once completed, the facility will house a central laboratory and serve as a regional hub for the Centre for Environmental Data and Statistics (CEDAS), enhancing real-time environmental analysis and regulatory response capacity. The investment directly supports the Agency's long-term transformation agenda by establishing technical infrastructure at the subnational level, enabling faster inspections, better data collection, and improved service delivery. This is not merely a building project but a structural shift towards a more responsive, decentralised, and systems-driven environmental regulator.



Progress of the Bo Office Building

Freetown Headquarters Moves Back to Completion Path

In 2025, the Agency took decisive steps to revive and advance completion of its long-delayed nine-storey headquarters in Freetown, transforming a stalled project into a strategic national asset under development. Following the establishment of an Infrastructure Committee in November 2023, the Agency conducted a comprehensive technical and contractual review of legacy arrangements with SCS and TEDA, identifying key bottlenecks and resetting the delivery pathway. By 28 October 2025, a revised Bill of Quantities had been requested to ensure completion planning proceeds without compromising quality or standards. The updated project cost is estimated at USD 47500,035, from KAM enterprise, a drastic reduction compared with the USD 11, 004,859.41 quoted by SCS. Once completed, the facility will house modern administrative offices, a state-of-the-art conference hall, and integrated systems, including solar energy, rainwater harvesting, and advanced ICT infrastructure. The building is designed not only as office space but also as a national platform for environmental governance, enabling stronger coordination, improved service delivery, and enhanced stakeholder engagement. Its completion will mark a critical shift towards a modern, fit-for-purpose institutional backbone capable of supporting Sierra Leone's growing environmental and climate agenda.



Independent audit of the 9-storey headquarter office with probable financiers

Fleet Strengthening Enhances Nationwide Regulatory Enforcement

To enhance operational coverage and responsiveness, the Agency increased its field capacity in 2025 by acquiring eight Toyota Land Cruisers, supplied under the UNDP-supported service delivery framework. This investment directly improves the Agency's ability to conduct inspections, monitoring, and enforcement activities nationwide, particularly in remote and high-risk areas where environmental violations are most prevalent. The expanded fleet is already improving inspection frequency, response times, and regulatory visibility on the ground, reinforcing a shift towards more consistent, risk-based enforcement. However, demand for coverage continues to rise, underscoring the need for further investment in mobility to fully address the scale of national environmental challenges. Nonetheless, this step clearly strengthens the Agency's operational backbone, ensuring that regulatory presence is no longer constrained by access or logistics.

Training, Investing in Skills, Integrity, and Staff Wellbeing to Build Institutional Strength

Alongside infrastructure and enforcement, 2025 saw targeted investment in strengthening the Agency's human capital through training programmes aimed at improving performance, integrity, and staff welfare. All staff received training on ethics, office management, and corruption risk management, delivered in collaboration with the Anti-Corruption Commission, thereby reinforcing accountability as a core institutional value.

This was complemented by specialised training in ICT and data management for regional staff, improving communication, reporting, and operational efficiency across decentralised offices. At the same time, the Agency demonstrated its commitment to staff wellbeing through a dedicated Breast Cancer Awareness and Screening Programme on 29 October 2025, which combined health education with free medical screening. Together, these interventions strengthened the Agency not only as a regulator but also as a professional, resilient, and people-centred institution capable of delivering sustained impact.



EPA staff during corruption risk management training



Training on breast cancer awareness



During training sessions with the regional office staff

9. Partnerships and Collaborations

Overview

In 2025, the Agency formed thirteen (13) strategic partnerships to improve coordination of environmental efforts, enhance technical collaboration, and access new funding sources. These agreements aim to shift from sporadic interactions to organised, long-term cooperation at national, regional, and international levels. The partnerships focus on key areas, including climate resilience, blue economy development, environmental research, public engagement, and climate finance mobilisation.

Progress Markers

- 13 Strategic Partnerships Achieved
- First Collaborating, Learning & Adapting (CLA) Conference Successfully Hosted
- Regional Peer Learning Exchanges Successfully Conducted
- Advancing Climate Finance and Developing Pipelines

Feature Stories

Thirteen (13) Strategic Partnerships Formalised to Enhance Environmental Action

The Agency made progress in cultivating alliances and teamwork, which are essential to advancing the country's environmental goals. Securing funding and assistance for a range of projects, fostering closer ties with regional and global organisations, and implementing significant initiatives across multiple environmental sectors are among the major accomplishments.

Some of these partnerships are already producing tangible results. A three-year MoU with EPA Liberia was developed and signed; a framework for joint efforts on coastal and transboundary management, including staff peer learning and co-developing cross-border climate proposals. A five-year partnership with the DOTCAN Institute will enhance capacity in the blue economy through training, mentorship, and technical exchanges. The three-year collaboration with SEND Sierra Leone has already resulted in a comprehensive national study on environmental loss and damage, helping Sierra Leone strengthen its evidence base for climate policy and international engagement. Meanwhile, the partnership with Trocaire and CliCNet delivered Sierra Leone's NDC Scorecard, providing a validated tool for monitoring climate action and guiding NDC updates.

Additional agreements with UNICEF, the Green Climate Fund, UNEP, the Methodist Church Sierra Leone, and Radio Maria will expand the Agency's reach in financing, policy support, and public engagement. These partnerships are strengthening institutional capacity, improving programme delivery, and enhancing Sierra Leone's position within global climate and environmental governance. The overall impact is a more connected, better resourced, and strategically aligned system for delivering national environmental priorities at scale.



MoU signing between EPA Sierra Leone and EPA Liberia during COP30 in Belém, Brazil



CLA 2025 Conference Convened to Align National Environmental Action

The Agency hosted its **first Collaborating, Learning and Adapting (CLA) Conference** on **26–27 March 2025** at the New Brookfields Hotel in Freetown, bringing together **key stakeholders**, including government institutions, development partners, civil society organisations, and academic actors. The conference provided a structured platform for open dialogue on environmental priorities, institutional expectations, and opportunities for coordinated action across the sector. It marked a deliberate shift towards more integrated and partnership-driven environmental governance.

The conference achieved clear operational results. Discussions concentrated on enhancing collaboration, improving communication of EPA priorities, and pinpointing specific areas for joint action. Participants agreed on the necessity to move beyond isolated efforts towards a coordinated approach, especially in climate resilience, pollution control, and biodiversity protection. The event also clarified expectations between the Agency and its partners, reducing duplication and boosting accountability across programmes.

The broader impact lies in institutional change. The CLA Conference established a new working model centered on continuous learning, structured collaboration, and adaptive delivery. It also laid the foundation for institutionalising the CLA as an annual national platform, ensuring that environmental governance evolves through feedback, shared learning, and strengthened partnerships rather than through isolated interventions.



Collaborating, Learning & Adapting (CLA) Conference 2025

5 Day mission to Liberia for strengthened Coastal Resilience and Defence

The Agency, with support from UNDP, conducted a five-day peer-learning mission to Liberia, focusing on coastal resilience and environmental management. The mission engaged directly with partners of the Monrovia Metropolitan Climate Resilience Project (MMCRP), providing practical exposure to large-scale coastal protection infrastructure, climate risk management systems, and implementation strategies in a comparable West African context. The mission offered valuable technical insights into a proposed defence for the Freetown Coastal landscape.

Participants reviewed **climate information systems, early warning mechanisms, project design frameworks, and community engagement models**. This enabled the team to assess what works in practice, including how infrastructure, data systems, and institutional coordination can be integrated to address coastal vulnerability. It also highlighted implementation challenges and offered lessons that can be adapted to Sierra Leone's specific context. The outcome is already influencing national planning. The mission strengthened **regional cooperation between Sierra Leone and Liberia** and directly informed the design of Sierra Leone's coastal resilience initiatives. It has also created opportunities for future joint projects between the two EPAs, positioning regional collaboration as an effective way to accelerate climate adaptation.



Sightseeing at the project site of the Monrovia Metropolitan Coastal Resilience



3-Day Bo Retreat Delivered Climate Finance Pipeline and GCF-Ready Idea Note

The Agency advanced its climate finance agenda through a **three-day strategic retreat in Bo, held from 2-4 October 2025**, with support from UNDP. The retreat focused on strengthening Sierra Leone's climate finance pipeline and project development, particularly in coastal defence and resilience, which remains a national priority.

The retreat produced tangible outcomes. These included a draft Idea Note on Coastal Defence and Resilience, clearly defined result areas and priority activities, and mapped roles for key stakeholders involved in delivery. Participants also developed a shared understanding of the structure and requirements for a full GCF proposal, ensuring alignment with international financing standards and national adaptation priorities.

This work marks a vital step towards unlocking climate finance. The retreat's outputs now form the foundation for a comprehensive GCF proposal, enhancing Sierra Leone's preparedness to access international funding. Beyond the immediate deliverables, the process has improved institutional coordination, sharpened strategic focus, and positioned the Agency to move from concept development to bankable project implementation.

Challenges

Financial Obligations due to Inherited Liabilities:

The 9-story unfinished building at New England has huge financial obligations. This is bound to affect the Agency's revenue while posing a significant challenge to its resources. This has been a huge challenge, as several engagements with SCS and TEDA were made to develop a revised BOQ at a more realistic cost, allowing the Agency to finance the project in phases. However, progress remains constrained by competing funding priorities. The project's financial obligations place a substantial strain on the Agency's resources. Recently, however, the Agency engaged the NPPA and the Attorney General's Office for technical and legal advice, respectively. The Agency is also implementing mechanisms to identify potential financiers to support the structure's full completion.

Financial Constraints:

Another pervasive issue is the severe and often inadequate funding allocated, which directly hinders the effective execution of crucial planned activities. This financial shortfall affects everything from operational costs and human resources to technological upgrades and project implementation, ultimately restricting the scope and impact of intended initiatives.

The Implications of Some Provisions in the Finance Act, 2023:

The Finance Act 2023 allows MDAs to forgo EIA fees on all Government projects, thereby undermining the EPA's capacity to generate additional funds. This situation further limits the Agency's ability to adequately and in a timely manner monitor government projects for compliance with environmental standards across the country. The Agency has engaged the Ministry of Finance on several occasions regarding the implications of this Act and has sought its reversal; however, no concrete action has been taken to date.

River and wetland degradation:

A critical environmental concern is the widespread and alarming rise in illegal mining along riverbanks and within riverbeds. This, combined with unauthorized housing construction encroaching on vital wetlands, is causing severe and irreversible environmental degradation in crucial catchment areas and other ecologically sensitive areas. This degradation leads to biodiversity loss, altered hydrological regimes, and compromised ecosystem services vital for environmental health.

Limited Media Collaboration:

Some media houses show low interest in covering environmental issues compared to political or social topics. This reduces the reach of the Agency's messages and weakens public discourse on environmental protection.

Limited Cooperation from Community Stakeholders Regarding Dredging and Illegal Mining:

There has been limited cooperation from some communities involved in dredging and mining across the country's major rivers. The Agency, with support from the Sierra Leone Police and the Armed Forces, has faced community resistance in some communities along the Panpana and other river bodies. These communities sometimes try to vandalize the Agency's vehicles, mainly after the destruction of dredges in their communities. They sometimes deliberately sink the dredges to avoid their destruction by the Agency.

Poor road network:

Practical challenges include a poor road network, which poses substantial enforcement constraints, particularly in geographically isolated and remote mining areas. The lack of well-maintained and accessible infrastructure makes it extremely difficult for field staff to conduct regular inspections, monitor compliance, and respond promptly to environmental infractions, creating zones of limited oversight and potential environmental malpractice.

Stakeholder involvement in environmental degradation activities:

A complex impediment often arises from undue interference by influential stakeholders in the impartial and objective enforcement of environmental laws. Such involvement can manifest as lobbying, political pre- or direct obstruction, ultimately undermining the integrity and efficacy of regulatory actions and creating loopholes for non-compliance.

Weak Institutional Coordination:

A fundamental systemic weakness is the insufficient and often fragmented coordination among governmental agencies, departments, and other relevant institutions responsible for environmental governance and enforcement. A lack of synchronised efforts, shared data, and clear lines of communication leads to duplicated efforts, gaps in oversight, and an overall diminished capacity to address complex environmental challenges effectively.



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