

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	10768
Project Name:	Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project
Countr(ies):	Sierra Leone
Implementing Agency:	World Bank

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project

Country

Sierra Leone

GEF ID

10768

Implementing Agency

World Bank

Executing Entity

Freetown City Council, Fiscal Decentralization Division in
Ministry of Finance, National Disaster Management Agency,
Western Area Rural District Council, Bo City Council

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

9/9/2026

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2026 , 5th PIR

Objective

To improve integrated urban management, service delivery, and disaster emergency management in
Western Area and secondary cities of Sierra Leone

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Moderately Satisfactory

Development Objective

Moderately Satisfactory

Overall risk

Substantial

Project Financing

7,332,716.00

Cumulative Disbursement

2,860,304.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

6/3/2021

Agency Approval

6/25/2021

Implementation Start 6/25/2021	First Disbursement 9/21/2021
Expected MTR	Actual MTR 3/22/2024
Expected Completion 6/30/2028	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

Component 1a – Strengthening Integrated Urban Planning and Spatial Data Infrastructure (GEF-7: US\$0.6M): Progress is advancing across all supported councils. Urban and land use planning frameworks, flood risk assessments, and climate action plans are under preparation. To date, 106 staff have been trained in urban planning, and a consulting firm is being recruited to support additional capacity building and achieve the end target of 150 trained staff. Seven structure plans have been completed, exceeding the target of four local councils with new planning frameworks. The Freetown Structure Plan, zoning guidelines, and Western Area Capacity Plan are at the final review stage, while the Western Area Rural District Development Plan was completed and launched in January 2025. The National Country Planning Act (NCPA) has been approved, with implementing regulations under preparation and expected to be adopted by October 2026.

Component 2a – Neighborhood Upgrading and Greening in Freetown (GEF-7: US\$3.8M): Urban greening activities have significantly exceeded targets. A total of 493 hectares of forested land are under improved management against a target of 300 hectares, and approximately 990,000 trees have been planted, surpassing the original target. Estimated GHG reductions from tree planting have reached 33,990 metric tons, exceeding the target of 27,000 metric tons. The #FreetownTheTreeTown digital platform is operational and has helped mobilize external financing for continued greening efforts. However, neighborhood upgrading investments, including roads, drainage, and WASH infrastructure, remain at the design and procurement stage, with contracts yet to be awarded. The draft ESIA and RAP for Moyiba, Coconut Farm, and Portee-Rokupa received conditional clearance from the RSA in June 2025 and are progressing toward finalization.

Component 2b – Solid Waste Management Upgrading in Freetown and Secondary Cities (GEF-7: US\$2.0M): The planned landfill investment was cancelled due to persistent land acquisition and site suitability challenges. As part of the 2025 project restructuring, approximately US\$17.5 million was reallocated within Component 2. Alternative solid waste management investments are being identified and scoped under the revised project design, with progress to be reported in the next reporting period.

Component 4 – Project Management (GEF-7: US\$0.33M): The project grievance redress mechanism (GRM) is fully operational through a web-based platform, WhatsApp channel, and hotline. Eighty percent of registered grievances have been resolved within agreed timelines, meeting the project target. A Mid-Term Review was conducted in February-March 2024, followed by a project restructuring that extended the closing date by 24 months to July 31, 2028, revised the results framework, adjusted indicators, and reallocated funds.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

Component 1a: Although structure plans have been completed for seven councils, formal adoption of the Freetown Structure Plan and associated zoning guidelines is still pending. Finalization and gazetting of the NCPA regulations by October 2026 will be critical to operationalizing the new planning framework and sustaining the institutional reforms supported under the project. Any delay could weaken progress toward improved urban planning and management. Female participation in urban planning training has also remained below expectations and will be a focus of the upcoming capacity-building program.

Component 2a & 2c: Neighborhood upgrading and market infrastructure investments remain significantly behind schedule. Delays in procuring works contractors and supervision consultants have shortened the implementation timeframe, while land acquisition challenges and the preparation of safeguards instruments (ESIAs and RAPs) have slowed readiness for civil works. During the reporting period, the Environmental and Social (E&S) risk rating was downgraded due to delays in safeguards implementation, weak inter-agency coordination on E&S compliance, and capacity constraints within the PMU's E&S team.

Component 2b: Cancellation of the planned landfill investment due to unresolved land acquisition and ownership disputes has significantly affected achievement of the subcomponent's solid waste management objectives. While alternative investments are being explored, these have yet to be finalized.

Component 4: Project implementation has been constrained by weak contract management and oversight, limited PMU capacity, and persistent procurement delays across components. As a result, both PDO and IP ratings were downgraded to Moderately Unsatisfactory in December 2023 and July 2024. Following the Mid-Term Review, project restructuring, and implementation of corrective measures, both ratings subsequently improved but will require close monitoring and implementation support to sustain.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement continues in line with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan submitted at CEO Endorsement. Key stakeholders include the Ministry of Lands, the Environment Protection Agency, the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), Freetown City Council and secondary city councils, local communities in project areas, and development partners. Community consultations have been conducted in relation to neighborhood upgrading areas and market sites. The interactive GRM system is operational and citizen engagement websites are being developed for five city councils to enhance information sharing and community feedback. The Rainbo Initiative has been recruited as the NGO partner for GBV/SEA action plan implementation, including the design and management of GBV-related grievance channels.

D. Gender Equality

Gender-responsive measures are embedded in the project results framework and GBV action plan. The closing target for female staff trained in urban planning methods has been revised downward from 50 to 30 at MTR, with 21 female staff trained to date. The women traders target for upgraded markets was similarly revised downward from 6,000 to 2,800, reflecting the adjusted scope of works. Women have been actively involved in tree-planting programs under the urban greening activities. The GBV/SEA action plan is in place and being implemented by the Rainbo Initiative. Female-disaggregated indicators for access to resilient infrastructure, WASH beneficiaries, and citizen satisfaction remain at zero pending commencement of civil works, with results expected following construction completion.

E. Knowledge Management

The #FreetowntheTreetown digital platform is operational and serves as a knowledge and communications tool for urban greening activities, tracking tree planting data and mobilizing external funding. Citizen engagement websites under development for five councils will serve as ongoing platforms for community transparency and feedback. The MTR Aide Memoire documents lessons learned from implementation,

including the importance of early land acquisition resolution, stronger contract management, and dedicated E&S staffing. Good practices emerging from the NCPA approval process and cleared structure plans are being documented as replicable models for integrated urban planning reform in the region.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	The results framework was revised following the Mid-Term Review (February–March 2024). Key adjustments include: (i) reduction of the closing target for female staff trained in urban planning methods from 50 to 30; (ii) reduction of the women traders target for upgraded markets from 6,000 to 2,800, reflecting the revised scope of market upgrading works; (iii) revision of the PDO indicator target for increased municipal own-source revenue; and (iv) addition and adjustment of intermediate results indicators to reflect the revised component scope, including the cancellation of landfill activities and the expanded neighborhood upgrading program.
Components and Cost	Component 2 (Resilient Municipal Infrastructure Investment and Urban Greening) was restructured following the cancellation of the landfill construction sub-activity, which was dropped due to persistent land acquisition and site suitability challenges. Approximately US\$17.5 million was reallocated within Component 2 to finance expanded neighborhood upgrading, market upgrading, and greening investments in Freetown and secondary cities. Total project financing envelope and GEF grant amount remain unchanged.
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	The project closing date was extended by 24 months, from July 31, 2026 to July 31, 2028, to allow sufficient time for completion of civil works under Components 2 and 3, including neighborhood upgrading, market upgrading, and the Emergency Operations Center, following delays attributable to land acquisition, procurement, and safeguards compliance challenges.
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	

Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Bonthe	7.5291	-12.5056	2409914

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Bo District	7.9547	-11.7293	2410021

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Kenema District	7.8639	-11.2043	2407781

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Sierra Leone	8.4223	-11.8375	2403846

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Koidu	8.6389	-10.961	2407656

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Makeni	8.8802	-12.0495	2406407

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Waterloo	8.331	-13.0624	2403094

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Port Loko	8.7702	-12.7869	2404433

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Western Area-Rural	8.2781	-13.0859	9179950

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Western Area-Urban	8.4366	-13.2364	9179949

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Freetown	8.4554	-13.2243	2409306

Location Description:

Activity Description:

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Title
M and E Document	10768-P173676-P168608-2026-PIR-WB-Sierra Leone