



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY

Strategic Plan

2023-2026

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Foreword

Sierra Leone's public health lies at the heart of our nation's prosperity and well-being. The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to elevating the public health landscape and services to empower our people to achieve our nation's healthcare and development aspirations.

Central to this endeavour is the establishment of a robust National Public Health Agency (NPHA), dedicated to delivering high-quality, accessible, and efficient public health interventions. This groundbreaking initiative aims to establish a resilient public health infrastructure capable of effectively preventing, detecting, and responding to public health threats and emergencies, safeguarding the health and well-being of all Sierra Leoneans.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Health (MoH), the NPHA serves as a hub of scientific expertise, leadership, and coordination, ensuring the alignment of all public health actors. Collaborating closely with other relevant government ministries, departments, and agencies using the one-health approach, its primary focus is on evidence-based policymaking and strengthening health systems. This coordinated approach facilitates a more effective and consistent response to public health challenges, propelling our nation towards a healthier future.

The development of this strategic plan marks the culmination of a meticulous collaborative effort, drawing on the expertise of officials from various ministries, academia, community leaders, civil society organizations, and a diverse group of international stakeholders. Contributions from public health professionals and subject matter experts, including those from the World Health Organization (WHO), Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI), and ICAP at Columbia University (ICAP), have been instrumental in enriching this document.

Comprehensive stakeholder engagement, involving all relevant government entities and key partners, has ensured the validity and alignment of this strategic plan with our nation's priorities. This rigorous review has enhanced the document's coherence and effectiveness, laying the groundwork for a transformative impact on Sierra Leone's public health landscape.

On behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone, I express our deepest gratitude to the various stakeholders who have tirelessly supported diverse public health efforts, including the development of the NPHA over the past ten years. Additionally, I commend the steadfast dedication of the NPHA Technical Working Group and recognize the resolute leadership of the MoH, other government leaders, and parliamentarians for passing the Public Health Act 2022, a monumental step towards creating the NPHA for a healthier Sierra Leone.

The Government remains firmly committed to strengthening the quality of public health functions and enhancing the capacity of public health professionals, significantly contributing to the advancement of public health and the overall well-being of the people of Sierra Leone. I call upon all Sierra Leoneans and our friends to embrace this strategic document, utilizing it as a roadmap to build a healthier Sierra Leone for posterity.

Together, we can forge a brighter future for Sierra Leone, where public health thrives, ensuring the well-being of our nation for generations to come.

Brigadier (RTD) Dr. Julius Maada Bio

President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

Preface

The National Public Health Agency (NPHA) is dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of Sierra Leone's citizens. As a science-driven government organization, the NPHA stands as a beacon of leadership, expertise, and coordination, orchestrating a comprehensive response to public health challenges aligned with national imperatives and global health security mandates.

The 2023–2026 strategic plan serves as a roadmap for the NPHA's growth and impact, paving the way for a healthier and more resilient Sierra Leone. The NPHA plays a pivotal role in swiftly preventing, detecting, and responding to public health threats and emergencies. Guided by science, the NPHA acts as a central hub for leadership, expertise, and coordination, addressing public health concerns in alignment with national imperatives and global health security requirements.

This strategic plan establishes a robust organizational framework and strategies for evidence-based policymaking and public health systems strengthening. This enables a swift and consistent response to the public health threats and emergencies that impact Sierra Leone.

Developed collaboratively by the Ministry of Health (MoH), along with other relevant government ministries, departments, and agencies, and in partnership with diverse national and international partners, this strategic plan guides the government of Sierra Leone, donors, and other stakeholders in prioritizing, developing, and implementing public health threat and emergencies preparedness and response activities for a resilient public health system.

Adhering to the International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005 and supporting the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030, this plan will steer the NPHA in fulfilling its mandate of empowering Sierra Leoneans to live healthier lives for the next three years. These efforts will contribute to the country's continued development towards Vision 2035.

I commend the leadership of the NPHA and the NPHA Technical Working Group and partners, and I express my deepest gratitude for the collective efforts of all government directorates and departments involved in the development of this roadmap.

I call upon all stakeholders in the public health arena to wholeheartedly embrace this strategic plan, paving the way for a safer Sierra Leone and a healthier world.

Dr. Austin H. Demby

Minister of Health

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the National Public Health Agency (NPHA), I extend my deepest gratitude to all our valued partners for their continued commitment, support, and invaluable contributions to the development of this Strategic Plan.

The NPHA Technical Working Group, under the dedicated leadership of Dr. Mohamed A. Vandi, played a pivotal role in crafting the NPHA's vision and strategic direction, as outlined in this Strategic Plan. Their profound expertise in public health systems, resolute dedication, and insightful guidance were essential in establishing a roadmap for the NPHA's development, aligning it with the nation's aspirations for a healthier and more prosperous future.

This landmark strategic plan stands as a testament to the fruitful collaboration and exceptional commitment of a distinguished group of individuals and organizations. I am immensely grateful for the invaluable expertise, insightful guidance, and steadfast support provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC), the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI), Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), ICAP at Columbia University (ICAP), and many others.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to the diverse stakeholders, including ministries, departments, agencies, and academic institutions, who provided critical input, insightful perspectives, and unwavering support throughout the development process. Your contributions have been indispensable in shaping this strategic plan and ensuring its alignment with the nation's aspirations.

A comprehensive list of stakeholders who played a pivotal role in the development of the NPHA Strategic Plan is included in Annex 1.

I am profoundly grateful for all our partners' dedication, expertise, and steadfast commitment. Your collective dedication has been instrumental in charting a course for transforming and revitalizing Sierra Leone's public health system. I am confident that the NPHA Strategic Plan will serve as a beacon, guiding us toward realizing our shared vision of a resilient, accessible, and effective public health system in Sierra Leone.

Brig. Gen. Prof. Foday Sahr

Executive Director

National Public Health Agency

Acronyms

China CDC	Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
ED	Executive Director
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
GHS	Global Health Security
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
IANPHI	International Association of National Public Health Institutes
ICAP	ICAP at Columbia University
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDSR	Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response System
IHR	International Health Regulations
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control
IPSASs	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
JEE	Joint External Evaluation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies
MoH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandums of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPHA	National Public Health Agency
OED	Office of the Executive Director
PHEM	Public Health Emergency Management
PHEOC	Public Health Emergency Operations Center
POE	Border Health and Point of Entry
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
U.S. CDC	United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

Sierra Leone's public health infrastructure, systems, and personnel face significant challenges that impede the country's development trajectory, hinder the implementation of Agenda for Progress and Vision 2035, and compromise compliance with International Health Regulations (IHR) and the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In response to these challenges, Sierra Leone has established the National Public Health Agency (NPHA), a science-based government organization that serves as a focal point for leadership, expertise, and coordination to address public health concerns in line with national public health needs and global health security requirements. The NPHA's organizational focus on evidence-based policymaking and health systems strengthening enables a stronger and more consistent response to public health threats and emergencies.

This Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026 has been developed to address these challenges and operationalize the NPHA over the next three years. The plan outlines the NPHA's role in:

- Strengthening the public health system to predict, prevent, detect, respond, and control public health threats and emergencies
- Meeting workforce needs
- Ensuring effective coordination of government and donor funding for Global Health Security
- Predicting, planning for, and preventing endemic public health problems
- Preparing and responding to public health emergencies
- Ensuring strategic use of resources to meet national public health priorities
- More effectively integrating evidence in policy and decision making
- Ensuring functional areas are meeting national and international standards
- Meeting International Health Regulations (2005)

This Strategic Plan provides guidance to the NPHA to achieve its set objective and goals, including complying with IHR core functions.

Introduction

Purpose

This document outlines the functions and structure of the Sierra Leone National Public Health Agency (NPHA). It is intended to guide the Sierra Leone government, donors, partners, and other stakeholders in prioritizing, developing, and implementing NPHA activities over the coming three years, 2023 to 2026.

Country Context

Sierra Leone is located on the western coast of Africa, bordered by Guinea to the north and northeast, Liberia to the south and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. Sierra Leone has a total area of 71,740 km².

It is divided into the Northern, North-west, Southern, Eastern provinces, and the Western Region, which includes the capital city of Freetown. The regions are divided into sixteen districts, which have 15 local councils and 16 municipalities. The 16 districts are sub-divided into 190 chiefdoms, governed by local paramount chiefs.

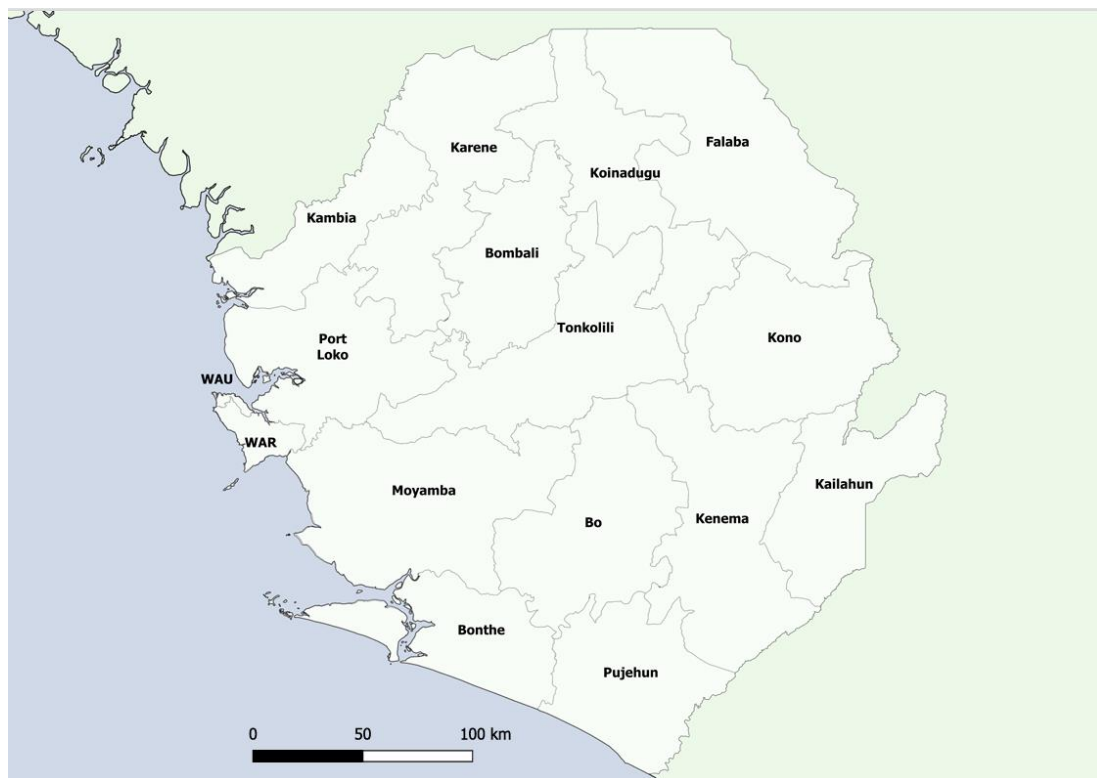


Figure 1: Districts of Sierra Leone

Public Health Background

Health Outcomes

Despite significant progress in recent years, health outcomes in Sierra Leone remain suboptimal, with a life expectancy of 60.79 years at birth and high under-five and maternal mortality rates. In 2022, the under-five mortality rate was 111 deaths per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality ratio was 1,360 deaths per 100,000 live births (UNICEF, 2023). Sierra Leone's public health system must be viewed within the broad historical context of limited resources, a high illiteracy rate (36.1%), and multiple disasters, including the civil war (1990-2002), the 2012 cholera epidemic, the 2014-2015 Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak, Lassa fever, and COVID-19. In 2022, Sierra Leone was still deemed to have major International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacity gaps.

Nevertheless, Sierra Leone has made substantial progress towards several Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets in the health and nutrition sectors, including reducing child and maternal mortality and improving coverage with essential interventions such as family planning, skilled birth attendance, and immunization. The recent National Nutrition Survey (2021) also demonstrated major improvements in nutrition levels, with a significant reduction in stunting and wasting rates among children under five¹.

Legislative and Policy Context

Sierra Leone recently reviewed and updated the 1960 Public Health Ordinance to the Public Health Act (2022), aligning it with current public health threats and international best practices. The Public Health Act (2022) defines the state's authority to regulate public health areas, including sanitation, housing, infectious disease control, and food safety. Additionally, the Public Health Act (2022) establishes the NPHA, outlining its structure, functions, and funding sources.

Also, this strategic plan has been developed in recognition of existing government policies, guidelines, protocols, and national development plans. These include the National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2021–2025, Free Health Care 2010, the Basic Package of Essential Health Services 2015–2019, and the National Health Compact 2011, which provide guidance for strengthening the health system and improving population health. Health policies, programs, and coordinating structures, such as the Health Sector Coordinating Committee chaired by the Minister of Health, exist to foster cooperation among health, environment, and development partners in the country.

Healthcare Provision

Sierra Leone's healthcare system is still recovering from the devastating impacts of the 2014-2015 EVD outbreak and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which have severely strained the country's health workforce and infrastructure. A critical general shortage of health professionals (0.3 physicians per 10,000 people) exists, and wage bill constraints limit public sector employment, despite a vacancy rate among health professionals of 54%². The few available healthcare workers are primarily concentrated in the country's urban settings, particularly in and around the capital city, Freetown.

¹ UNICEF. (2023). Sierra Leone data. Retrieved from <https://data.unicef.org/country/sle/>

² Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone. (2020). Sierra Leone National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2021-2025. Freetown, Sierra Leone.

The Ebola outbreak and COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges. Health workers suffered a disproportionately high death rate during the outbreaks due to increased exposure risks. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that in 2019, Sierra Leone had a ratio of 1,444 people per trained doctor³. Simultaneously, there was a notable reduction in health center utilization, institutional deliveries, childhood immunization, and treatment for malaria⁴.

Essential public health priorities such as immunization and the prevention of potential outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases (particularly measles) were also diverted. There was a significant surge in malaria cases and deaths, acute malnutrition, and maternal/newborn deaths due to home deliveries⁵. Restoring and scaling up essential health services in line with the basic package of essential health services remains a major challenge.

Efforts to improve the availability and accessibility of healthcare services exist through a network of about 1,500 peripheral health units and 40 primary and tertiary hospitals. Additionally, the Free Care Initiative reduces financial access barriers for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under five. However, gaps in the quality and availability of care persist.

The digitalization of reporting since 2018 has significantly improved the timeliness and completeness of reports from government-owned and assisted healthcare facilities. However, data quality, particularly data harmonization, remains a challenge. Additionally, despite several engagements, private and faith-based healthcare facilities are yet to report to the national system.

Public Health Infrastructure

Historically, public health programs in Sierra Leone have been characterized as being fragmented and siloed, which led to competition for limited resources. However, in the post-Ebola environment, Sierra Leone has made substantial progress in its upgrading of public health systems through Government and donor-funded programs that have supported:

- Updating the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response System (IDSR) to incorporate event-based and syndromic indicators.
- Creating, equipping, and training rapid response teams.
- Updating the Preparedness and Response Plan.
- Upgrading and equipping public health laboratories and training laboratory personnel.
- Establishing, equipping, training, and operationalizing the Public Health National Emergency Operations Centre.
- Updating the 1960 public health laws and legislation.
- Formulating a multi-hazard National Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response plan that addresses ports of entry and integrates cross-border collaboration.
- Developing strategies and plans for antimicrobial resistance detection and mitigation.

³ World Health Organization. (2019). Global Health Workforce Statistics 2019. Geneva, Switzerland.

⁴ Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Sierra Leone. (2016). Sierra Leone Health and Nutrition Survey 2015-2016. Freetown, Sierra Leone

⁵ Sierra Leone Recovery Consortium. (2016). Lessons Learned from the Ebola Outbreak and Implications for the Sierra Leone Recovery: A Report of the Sierra Leone Recovery Consortium. Freetown, Sierra Leone.

- Establishing a comprehensive national biosafety and biosecurity system for both human and animal health sectors.
- Setting and scaling up the Field Epidemiology Training Program to cover intermediate and advanced courses for national and district-level staff, including veterinary and laboratory staff.
- Developing a strategic plan, guidelines, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to facilitate capacity building for laboratory, syndromic surveillance, and response to chemical hazards.
- Accelerating the implementation of a One Health approach.

Although the 2023 Joint External Evaluation (JEE) found that Sierra Leone had made significant progress in its compliance with the IHR compared to the 2016 JEE findings, multiple deficits still exist, including:

- Limited human resources, particularly at the district level.
- Weak laboratory capacity.
- Inadequate funding.

One of the measures that Sierra Leone has embarked upon to address these deficits is the adoption of a One Health approach to public health issues that would benefit from a multisectoral approach to planning, prevention, preparedness, and response. Although links between ministries (particularly Health, Water Resources and Sanitation, Agriculture and Food Security, and Environmental and Climate Change) have improved in recent years, Sierra Leone will now institutionalize and operationalize these linkages to leverage the country's combined expertise on human, animal, and environmental health. The NPHA will be a key component in building on these areas, strengthening integration and decision making across human, animal, and environmental health.

Moving Forward

Moving forward, Sierra Leone aims to maintain its development trajectory, achieve the Government of Sierra Leone's vision to become a middle-income country by 2035, and secure compliance with the IHR and support the achievement of the United Nations SDG, 2030.

In 2014, the Government of Sierra Leone, with support from partners, began developing the NPHA. A draft NPHA Strategic Plan (2018-2020) was developed but never implemented, mainly due to the absence of an enabling law. Based on the current needs of the country's experience and science, the 2018-2020 strategic plan has been revised. The new 2023-2026 strategic plan builds on achievements and learnings to date and is designed to enable further health gains for Sierra Leone and guide the development of the NPHA over the next three years.

The Sierra Leone NPHA

The NPHA will incorporate and consolidate several core public health functions, currently dispersed across different Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

Definition of the NPHA

The NPHA is a science-based government organization that provides leadership, expertise, and coordination to address public health concerns in line with national public health needs and Global Health Security (GHS) requirements. It is an essential component of a strong and resilient public health system.

Benefits of the NPHA

A coordinated, science based NPHA enables the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) to:

- Comprehensively strengthen the public health system to predict, prevent, detect, respond to, and control public health threats and emergencies.
- Meet public health workforce needs.
- Ensure effective coordination of funding for GHS, aligning support behind the identified priorities of the NPHA.
- Predict, plan for, and prevent endemic public health problems.
- Ensure strategic use of resources to meet national public health priorities.
- Effectively integrate evidence in policy and decision making.
- Ensure functional areas are meeting national and international standards.
- Meet IHR requirements.

Vision and Mission

Vision:

A public health Centre of Excellence for advancing health security in Sierra Leone

Mission:

To secure the health of Sierra Leone through evidence-based and timely multidisciplinary prediction, prevention, detection, and response to public health threats and emergencies.

Core Values and Guiding Principles of the NPHA

The NPHA is committed to the following core values and guiding principles:

Core Values:

- Ethics and integrity
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Equity
- Partnership
- Quality
- Productivity
- Innovation
- Gender

Guiding Principles:

- Authority on behalf of Sierra Leone's public health system
- Evidence-based public health information
- Development of well-informed public health priorities, guidelines, policies, and programs
- Translating public health data and research into action
- Protecting and promoting the public health security of Sierra Leone
- Prioritization of programs and activities in a fair and equitable manner
- Use of data and information in the creation of better policy and programs
- Consistent political will and support
- Country ownership and strong institutional capability
- Legislative framework authorizing public health activities
- High-level champion for advocacy
- Demonstration of high value impact
- Clear evolutionary and implementation path
- Meaningful and effective engagement with stakeholders
- Strong NPHA leadership and dedicated staffing

These core values and guiding principles underpin the NPHA's mission to improve the health of Sierra Leoneans by leading, coordinating, and implementing public health programs and services. The NPHA is committed to upholding these values and principles in all aspects of its work, and to working with its partners to achieve a healthier Sierra Leone for all.

Overall goal of the NPHA

To strengthen the national health system that provides timely evidence for prediction, prevention, detection and prompt response to public health threats and emergencies in Sierra Leone using the one health approach.

Approaches

The NPHA will carry out the public health functions in this strategic plan using the following approach:

- providing leadership in identifying, coordinating, and addressing Sierra Leone's Public Health priorities;
- integrating public health laboratory, surveillance and response functions;
- leading training and operational research regarding integrated functions;
- supporting agenda development for wider public health research, and data generation;
- leading and supporting others in the analysis of data to identify trends and create evidence for action;
- serving as a repository and analytical data center for public health data, information, and research; and
- ensuring translation of data or other information into better public health policies and programs.

Organizational Structure of the NPHA

Figure 2 demonstrates the organizational structure of the NPHA. The Office of the Executive Director (OED) led by the Executive Director (ED) is the highest level of management within the NPHA. The ED is responsible for the agency's overall direction and administration.

Assisting the ED are two Deputy Executive Directors: one overseeing technical matters and the other responsible for administration and corporate affairs.

Within the OED, several officers/units support the duties of the ED, including a One Health Advisor, a Strategic Advisor, a Legal Counsel/Advisor, a Gender Advisor, a Public Relations Officer, a Partnerships, Coordination & Resource Mobilization Officer, a Compliance and Audit unit, and an International Health Regulations unit.

Below the OED, there are five directorates, each overseen by a director: (i) Biomedical, (ii) Policy Planning & Research, (iii) Finance & Logistics, (iv) Human Resources and Administration, and (v) Information & Communications Technology.

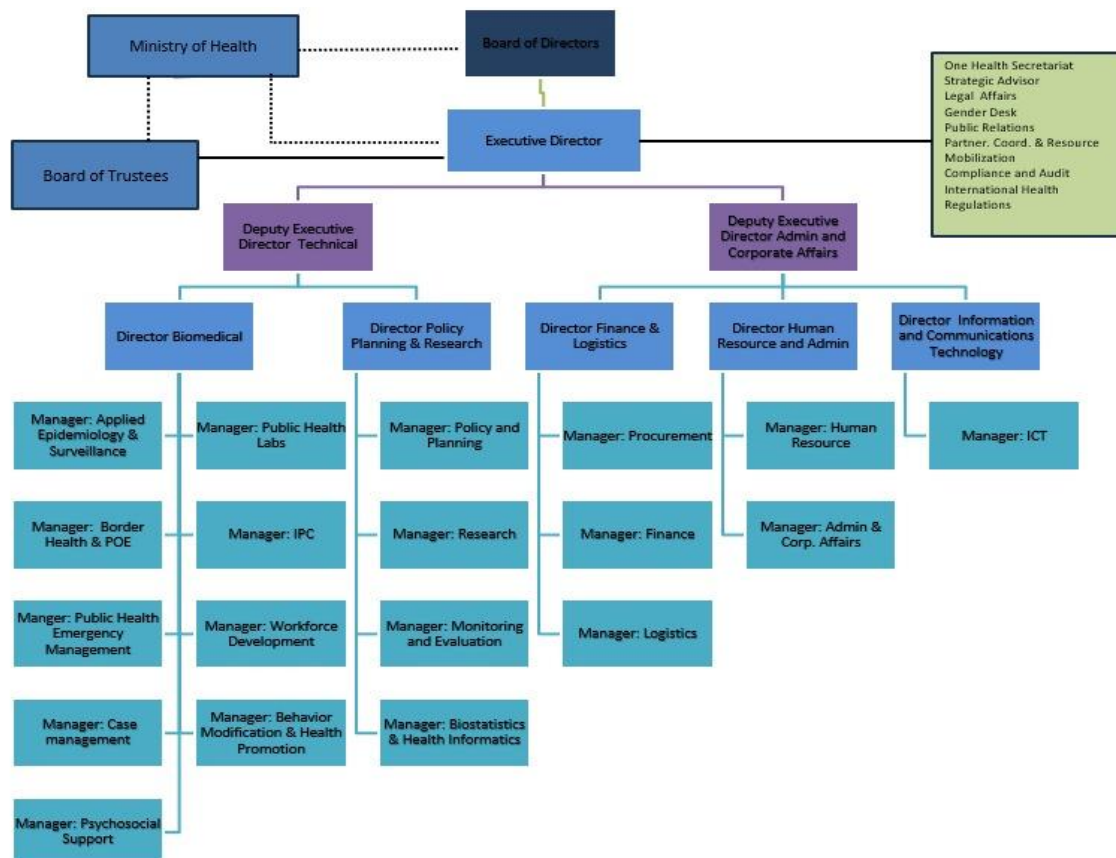


Figure 2: The NPHA Organogram

Each directorate is further divided into functional areas or sections, each led by a manager. The functional areas or sections include:

1. Applied Epidemiology and Surveillance
2. Public Health Laboratories
3. Border Health and Point of Entry
4. Infection Prevention and Control
5. Public Health Emergency Management
6. Workforce Development
7. Case Management
8. Behaviour Change Management and Health Promotion
9. Psycho-Social Support and Mental Health
10. Policy and Planning
11. Public Health Research
12. Monitoring and Evaluation

13. Biostatistics and Health Informatics
14. Procurement
15. Finance
16. Logistics
17. Human Resources
18. Administration
19. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Collaborative endeavours of the NPHA

The NPHA is a semi-autonomous agency under the Ministry of Health (MoH). This means that it has some independence from the government, but it still receives funding and guidance from the MoH. The NPHA works closely with the MoH to ensure that its work is aligned with the government's healthcare priorities and that its resources are used effectively.

The governing authority of the NPHA is the Board of Directors, which is responsible for setting the agency's strategic direction, approving its annual budget, and overseeing its performance. The ED is accountable to the Board of Directors and provides regular reports to the board. The OED works closely with the Board of Directors to develop and implement the NPHA's strategic plan. The OED also provides regular updates to the board on the NPHA's progress and achievements.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for managing and distributing the emergency response fund.

The NPHA will have a coordinating and collaborative role for the following components, among others, to ensure linkage for an effective country-wide public health response:

- Infectious diseases and programs such as immunization programs, sexually transmitted disease infections, tuberculosis, and HIV prevention.
- Health information and services such as providing information and statistics on key diseases for health professionals, health planners, and decision makers. The NPHA will also provide professional support to relevant MDAs.
- Health promotion such as prevention of non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, nutrition problems, diabetes, and geriatrics.
- Maternal, newborn, and child health
- One Health and Global Health Security

The following assumptions underlie the implementation of the NPHA's plan:

- Political stability and political leadership
- Effective public and private sector commitment to health
- Economic growth and continuity of international financial assistance
- Commitment to good governance
- Civil society and stakeholder engagement in health, especially at the community level
- Effective partnerships among stakeholders

Phased Development of the NPHA

The NPHA will develop incrementally, acquiring additional functions and staffing over time (Figure 3). The NPHA initially integrates, Epidemiology and disease surveillance and response functions, the public health laboratories, IPC, PHEM, Policy and planning, Research, Biostatistics and health information, Behaviour change management and health

promotion, along with workforce development, human resource for health, Finance, procurement, logistics, compliance, and audit, to support public health functions existing across GoSL ministries. As the organisation matures and developments within extant functions are conducive, the NPHA will incrementally absorb all core public health functions within Sierra Leone, with a view to potentially moving to develop greater delegated authority.

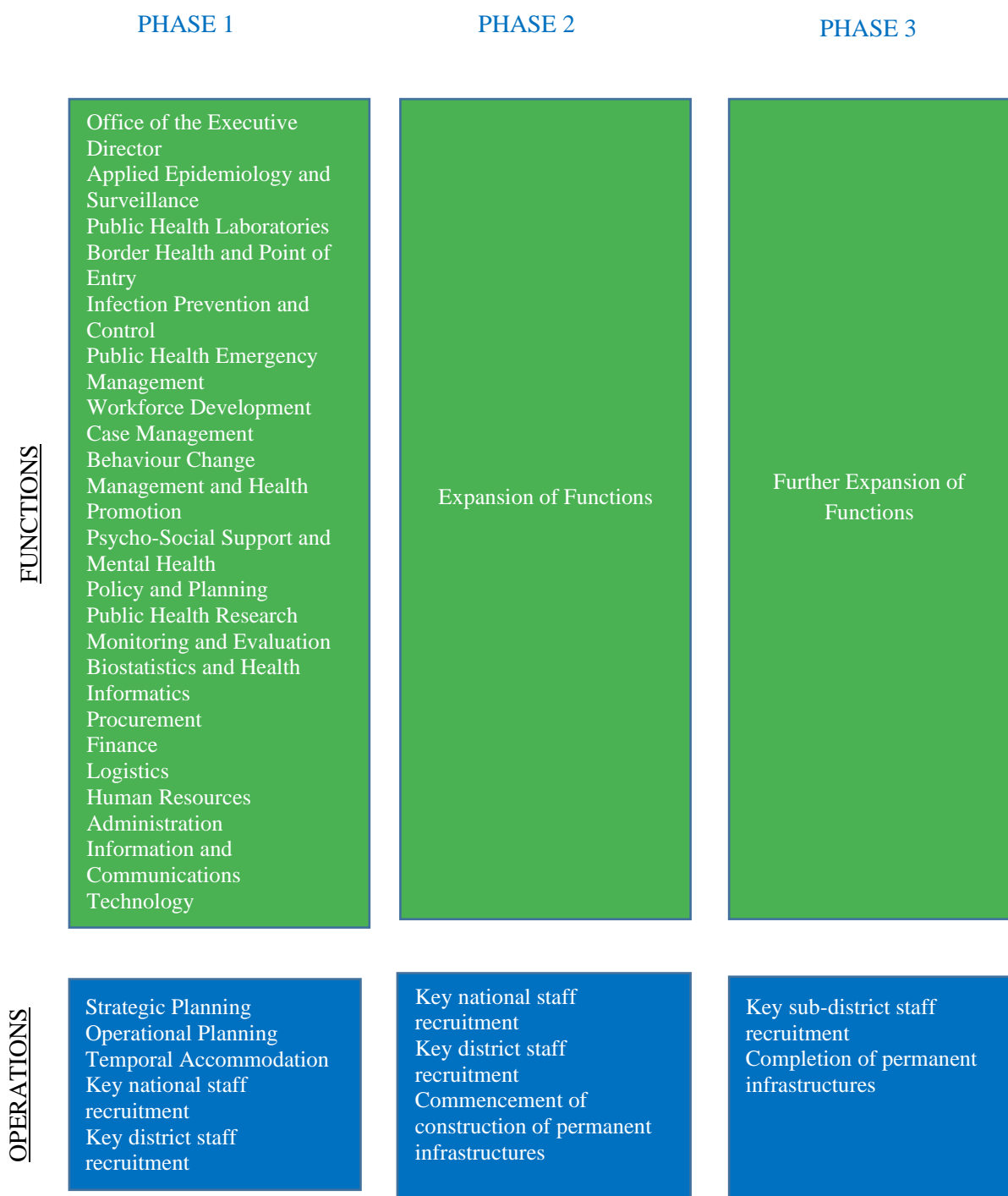


Figure 3: NPHA Functional and Operational Phases

Goals and Strategic Objectives for Each Functional Area of the NPHA

Office of the Executive Director

The OED is the highest-level office within the Sierra Leone NPHA. The ED is the head of the NPHA and has two deputies, technical and administration and corporate affairs. The OED is responsible for providing strategic direction, leadership, and governance for the NPHA to fulfill its mandate. The OED also plays a key role in mainstreaming One Health and gender issues into all the NPHA's programs and activities.

Goal:

To safeguard and enhance the public health of Sierra Leone through strategic leadership and governance of the NPHA.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Lead NPHA's strategic planning and management.

- 1.1. Develop and implement a strategic plan aligned with national health priorities and the SDGs.
- 1.2. Establish and implement performance management systems to track progress towards strategic goals.
- 1.3. Review and update the strategic plan to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

2. Support effective and efficient implementation of the NPHA strategic plan.

- 2.1. Develop and implement implementation plans for strategic goals and objectives.
- 2.2. Provide leadership and support to staff in implementing the strategic plan.
- 2.3. Monitor and evaluate implementation and make necessary adjustments.

3. Institutionalize a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

- 3.1. Encourage staff to develop and implement new and innovative ways of working.
- 3.2. Support staff learning and growth through professional development and training.
- 3.3. Reward and recognize staff contributions to NPHA's success.

4. Mainstream One Health and gender issues.

- 4.1. Develop and implement One Health and gender mainstreaming strategies.
- 4.2. Integrate One Health and gender principles into all NPHA programs and activities.
- 4.3. Develop and implement strategies to strengthen partnerships with organizations working on One Health and gender issues.
- 4.4. Implement the One Health governance manual to advance the One Health approach.

5. Strengthen partnerships and collaborations.

- 5.1. Develop and implement strategies to strengthen partnerships with the government, donors, partners, and stakeholders.
- 5.2. Develop and implement a partnership strategy for the NPHA.
- 5.3. Identify and develop relationships with key stakeholders, such as government agencies, donors, partners, and civil society organizations.
- 5.4. Collaborate with other organizations on joint initiatives and programs.
- 5.5. Share information and resources with partners.
- 5.6. Provide support and training to partners.

- 5.7. Build capacity for partnership development and management within the NPHA.
- 5.8. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships and collaborations.
- 5.9. Conduct regular reviews of partnerships and collaborations to ensure that they are effective and aligned with the NPHA's strategic goals.
- 5.10. Advocate for policies and programs that support partnerships.
- 5.11. Sign memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with key stakeholders.
- 5.12. Establish joint working groups with partners.
- 5.13. Co-host events and workshops.
- 5.14. Develop and implement joint training programs.
- 5.15. Share data and information with partners.
- 5.16. Provide technical assistance to partners.

Applied Epidemiology and Surveillance

Surveillance and epidemiology play a crucial role in public health by systematically collecting, analysing, and interpreting data on health events. These functions provide essential information for detecting and monitoring disease outbreaks, identifying risk factors, and guiding public health interventions. By strengthening surveillance and epidemiology capabilities, the NPHA can improve the early detection and response to health threats and emergencies, leading to better health outcomes for the population.

Goal:

To implement the surveillance and epidemiology functions to effectively and efficiently detect, notify, investigate, report, and respond to public health threats and emergencies using the one health approach.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Strengthen disease surveillance systems for timely predictions, detection, notification, and response.

- 1.1. Support the development of environmental surveillance and data management system.
- 1.2. Enhance the integration and interoperability of surveillance systems to facilitate data sharing and analysis.
- 1.3. Strengthen event-based surveillance system (emergency hotlines, media scanning, community-based surveillance, etc.) for early warning and response using one health approach.
- 1.4. Support the development and implement real-time disease reporting mechanisms for rapid notification and response.
- 1.5. Review and update or develop and implement SOPs for the investigation and response to disease outbreaks, and other public health events.
- 1.6. Expand the network of sentinel surveillance sites to monitor priority diseases and risk factors.
- 1.7. Strengthen laboratory surveillance capacities for timely and accurate diagnosis of diseases.
- 1.8. Conduct regular review and evaluation of the surveillance systems to identify areas for improvement.

2. Enhance epidemiological investigations and research to understand disease patterns and risk factors.

- 2.1. Conduct epidemiological studies to assess the burden of diseases and identify risk factors.
 - 2.2. Review, update or develop and implement protocols for outbreak investigations to determine the source and mode of transmission.
 - 2.3. Establish a system for timely analysis and dissemination of epidemiological findings.
 - 2.4. Strengthen the capacity of epidemiologists and field investigators through training and mentoring programs.
 - 2.5. Collaborate with academic institutions and research organizations to conduct research on emerging public health issues.
 - 2.6. Develop and strengthen partnerships for data sharing and collaboration with national and international epidemiology networks.
 - 2.7. Support publication of research findings
- 3. Support the strengthening, collaboration and sharing of surveillance and epidemiological information with key stakeholders for planning, implementing, and evaluating public health actions.**
- 3.1. Establish and strengthen coordinated surveillance and information sharing systems.
 - 3.2. Provide content for the establishment of partnerships and information-sharing agreements with government agencies and other stakeholders.
 - 3.3. Support the fostering of collaboration with international organizations for technical assistance and knowledge exchange.
 - 3.4. Participate in regional and global surveillance and epidemiology networks to stay updated on best practices and emerging and re-emerging public health threats and emergencies.
 - 3.5. Conduct regular coordination meetings and workshops with stakeholders to share information and coordinate response efforts.
- 4. Enhance capacity building in surveillance and epidemiology to improve preparedness to effectively and efficiently detect, assess, communicate, and act on potential public health threats and emergencies.**
- 4.1. Identify training needs for surveillance officers, epidemiologists, and data analysts.
 - 4.2. Develop or review training plan for surveillance officers, epidemiologists, and data analysts.
 - 4.3. Conduct routine refresher training for surveillance officers, epidemiologists, and data analysts.

Public Health Laboratories

Public health laboratories serve as the first line of defence in the fight against illnesses and other health threats. Laboratories, in collaboration with other components of the nation's public health system, provide diagnostic testing, disease surveillance, environmental and radiological testing, emergency response support, applied research, laboratory training, and other vital services to the communities they serve.

Goal:

To develop public health laboratories (human, animal, environment, and food safety) network capacity for timely prediction, detection, characterization, and storage of pathogens,

chemicals, radiation, etc to enhance prevention, preparedness, and prompt response to outbreaks or events of public health concern.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Strengthen coordination for integrated diagnostic service network within the country to enhance prevention, preparedness, and prompt response to outbreaks.

- 1.1. Collaborate with the National Laboratory Technical Working Group to support the review of existing public health laboratory policy.
- 1.2. Establish a comprehensive information on the availability of diagnostic services as per laboratory activity mapping highlighted in the National Laboratory Strategic Plan
- 1.3. Update or develop national test menu for animal, human and ecosystem laboratories.
- 1.4. Assess national laboratory capacity and develop an inventory of diagnostic facilities.
- 1.5. Evaluate regional network laboratory proficiency testing capacity.
- 1.6. Support the development of a laboratory data management platform.

2. Strengthen the public health Laboratory infrastructure at regional and national levels to perform diagnostic testing, reference testing, and disease surveillance.

- 2.1. Solicit support to develop laboratory design in compliance with international standards, for example WHO and International Organization for Standardization, among others.
- 2.2. Develop a costed laboratory infrastructure development plan.
- 2.3. Develop and implement a facility maintenance schedule.

3. Support the delivery of quality diagnostic services based on international standards and guidelines for pathogens and toxin investigation.

- 3.1. Conduct training needs assessment
- 3.2. Develop training plan.
- 3.3. Strengthen the supervision, performance monitoring and quality audit of laboratories.
- 3.4. Strengthen laboratory reporting mechanisms.
- 3.5. Develop a National Laboratory Quality Management System operational plan.
- 3.6. Conduct National Proficiency Testing
- 3.7. Subscribe to the international External Quality Assessment scheme.

4. Strengthen laboratory detection and reporting mechanisms for pathogens (with surveillance and research).

- 4.1. Build capacity to test priority diseases with potential public health implications.
- 4.2. Support investigation of public health issues: environmental health hazards and disease outbreaks etc.
- 4.3. Conduct and support the investigation and identification of all potential health hazard (biological, chemical, and radiological agents)
- 4.4. Support the development of a rapid response system for hazardous contaminants following natural or imposed disasters (waste spills, air, water, and in food poisoning outbreaks)
- 4.5. Develop a surge capacity protocol that will quickly and accurately handle a large volume of tests during emergencies.

- 4.6. Participate in national preparedness simulation exercises.
- 5. Establish a comprehensive quality system for specimen management across laboratory network.**
 - 5.1. Develop a comprehensive integrated specimen management protocol (with clear guidelines on specimen collection, transport, and repository,) with linkages to the national Biobank or specimen repository systems.
 - 5.2. Develop integrated laboratory information management system for data sharing.
 - 5.3. Develop a robust integrated sample referral system.
- 6. Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan for network activities implementation.**
 - 6.1. Develop tools and conduct baseline assessment.
 - 6.2. Develop indicators to monitor implementation progress.
 - 6.3. Conduct regular laboratory performance review and implement corrective actions.

Border Health and Point of Entry

POEs are critical gateways for disease transmission and require stringent measures to prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases across international borders. The NPHA's POE functional area aims to strengthen cross border surveillance, improve infrastructure, enhance capacity to detect, notify and respond to public health threats in compliance with IHR-2005.

Goal:

To establish and implement a robust, effective, and efficient multisectoral POE system by 2026 to enhance public health surveillance, disease prevention, and response at international borders and ports using the One Health approach.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

- 1. Strengthen the infrastructure and capacity at designated Points of Entry to enhance public health surveillance, disease prevention, and response.**
 - 1.1. Assess existing infrastructure and identify areas for improvement and integration.
 - 1.2. Construct new facilities at designated points of entry.
 - 1.3. Renovate and upgrade existing POE facilities to meet international health standards.
 - 1.4. Install necessary equipment and technology for surveillance, screening, and testing.
 - 1.5. Establish quarantine and isolation facilities at designated POE.
 - 1.6. Identify training needs for POE staff on IPC measures.
 - 1.7. Develop and implement integrated SOPs for health screening and surveillance at POEs.
 - 1.8. Ensure the availability of IPC materials for staff at POEs.
 - 1.9. Conduct regular inspections and audits to assess the functionality and readiness of POEs.
- 2. Strengthen the surveillance and early detection of diseases at Points of Entry for prevention of transmission in emergency context.**

- 2.1. Review and strengthen implementation of an integrated disease surveillance system at POEs.
 - 2.2. Conduct refresher training for POE staff on disease surveillance and reporting protocols.
 - 2.3. Establish effective communication channels between POEs, Surveillance and lab.
 - 2.4. Conduct regular supportive supervision to designated POEs.
 - 2.5. Collaborate with international partners and neighbouring countries to enhance cross-border disease surveillance.
 - 2.6. Support the development and implementation of protocols for rapid response to suspected or confirmed cases of diseases at POEs.
- 3. Enhance screening and referral measures at Points of Entry to prevent importation or exportation of a communicable disease of public health concern.**
- 3.1. Develop and implement standardized screening protocols for inbound and outbound travelers.
 - 3.2. Conduct refresher training for POE staff on screening procedures and techniques.
 - 3.3. Ensure the availability of necessary equipment and supplies for screening and referral.
 - 3.4. Ensure there is a system for rapid and accurate testing of high-risk individuals.
 - 3.5. Strengthen coordination at POEs with national laboratories to facilitate the timely processing and transportation of samples.
 - 3.6. Strengthen data management systems to track and monitor screening and testing results.
 - 3.7. Conduct regular quality assurance and quality control activities for screening and referral processes at POEs.
- 4. Improve coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders at Points of Entry to efficiently prevent importation or exportation of a communicable disease of public health concern.**
- 4.1. Establish and maintain strong partnerships with relevant government agencies, including immigration, customs, security, and transportation authorities.
 - 4.2. Collaborate with international organizations, such as the WHO and the International Organization for Migration, to enhance POE capacity.
 - 4.3. Conduct regular coordination meetings with stakeholders to share information, address challenges, and coordinate response efforts.
 - 4.4. Participate in joint training programs and exercises with relevant stakeholders to improve preparedness and response capabilities.
 - 4.5. Establish mechanisms for sharing information and data among stakeholders.
- 5. Conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of Point of Entry activities to identify challenges and take corrective actions.**
- 5.1. Develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the performance and effectiveness of POEs.
 - 5.2. Conduct regular inspections and assessments of POE operations, infrastructure, and staff compliance with protocols.
 - 5.3. Evaluate the efficiency and accuracy of disease detection and response processes at POEs.
 - 5.4. Use monitoring and evaluation findings to identify areas for improvement and implement corrective actions.

- 5.5. Provide regular feedback and recommendations to POE staff and management based on evaluation results.

Infection Prevention and Control

IPC is crucial in reducing the spread of infectious diseases, both within healthcare facilities and the wider community, including the prevention of zoonotic diseases. The NPHA will focus on implementing evidence-based strategies, promoting adherence to infection prevention practices, and building capacity for surveillance and response to outbreaks using the One Health approach. By improving IPC measures, the NPHA aims to protect an integrated workforce from healthcare-associated infections and community-acquired infections as well as combat antimicrobial resistance.

Goal:

To establish and strengthen an effective IPC system that reduces the risk of transmission of infections within healthcare settings and communities.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

- 1. Develop and implement IPC policies and guidelines to reduce the risk of transmission of infections within healthcare settings and communities.**
 - 1.1. Conduct a review of existing national IPC policies and guidelines.
 - 1.2. Establish mechanisms for regular review and revision of IPC policies and guidelines.
 - 1.3. Develop and disseminate updated IPC policies and guidelines based on best practices.
 - 1.4. Conduct training sessions to educate human, animal and 16environmental health workers on the updated policies and guidelines.
 - 1.5. Develop and implement a system for monitoring compliance with IPC practices.
- 2. Strengthen healthcare-associated infection surveillance to inform public health decision-making and response.**
 - 2.1. Establish a national healthcare-associated infection and other community acquired infections surveillance system.
 - 2.2. Train healthcare workers on the identification, reporting, and management of healthcare-associated infections.
 - 2.3. Conduct regular data analysis and reporting on healthcare-associated infections and other occupational associated infections at the national level and facility level.
 - 2.4. Develop and implement protocols for investigating outbreaks of healthcare-associated infections and other occupational associated infections.
 - 2.5. Strengthen the capacity of facility IPC teams to investigate and respond to outbreaks of healthcare-associated infections and other occupational associated infections.
 - 2.6. Improve the reporting and feedback mechanisms for healthcare-associated infections and other occupational associated infections data.
- 3. Promote IPC practices in healthcare and animal facilities to reduce the risk of transmission of infections.**

- 3.1. Develop and implement educational campaigns to raise awareness among healthcare workers, animal health workers, patients, and community about IPC measures.
 - 3.2. Conduct training sessions on IPC standards for healthcare workers
 - 3.3. Provide healthcare and animal facilities with essential IPC supplies, such as hand hygiene products, cleaning materials and personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - 3.4. Conduct regular audits and assessments of IPC practices in healthcare and animal facilities.
 - 3.5. Provide technical support to healthcare and animal facilities to address gaps in IPC practices.
 - 3.6. Establish a system for recognizing and rewarding healthcare and animal facilities that demonstrate exceptional IPC practices.
 - 3.7. Establish regional sites for local production of hand hygiene consumables for all healthcare and animal facilities in Sierra Leone.
- 4. Strengthen IPC in community settings through campaigns to raise awareness among the general population.**
- 4.1. Develop educational materials and conduct campaigns to raise awareness among the general population about infection prevention measures.
 - 4.2. Provide training and support to community health workers and animal health workers on IPC practices.
 - 4.3. Collaborate with local community organizations to disseminate IPC messages and resources.
- 5. Promote research in IPC to provide the necessary data and insight for innovation.**
- 5.1. Support research studies on IPC strategies and interventions.
 - 5.2. Establish partnerships with academic institutions and research organizations to conduct research on IPC.
 - 5.3. Promote the adoption of innovative technologies and practices for IPC.
 - 5.4. Share research findings and best practices through publications and conferences.
 - 5.5. Source funding to support research and innovation in IPC.
- 6. Implement a robust waste management system to ensure the safe disposal of medical and hazardous waste.**
- 6.1. Develop and implement guidelines for the proper segregation, collection, and disposal of medical and hazardous waste.
 - 6.2. Establish partnerships with waste management companies or organizations to facilitate the proper disposal of waste.
 - 6.3. Provide training to staff members on waste management practices and IPC measures.
 - 6.4. Conduct regular monitoring and auditing of waste management practices to ensure compliance with regulations and guidelines.
 - 6.5. Promote public awareness and education on proper waste management practices to prevent environmental contamination and health risks.

Public Health Emergency Management

The IHR request that States Parties develop, strengthen, and maintain their capacity to respond promptly and effectively to public health threats and emergencies of national and international concern. The PHEM, through the Public Health Emergency Operation Center (PHEOC),

facilitates the assembly of PHEM personnel, to coordinate information and resources for strategic management of public health events and emergencies.

The PHEM Program will provide technical and operational guidance, be resilient and responsive to any shocks, and build capacities to prepare and respond to threats and emergencies. At the same time enhance the health system to continue delivering essential services during public health emergencies. This will include the implementation of evidence-based interventions, foster collaborations, and coordination of permanent and surge staff capacities.

Goal:

To strengthen and maintain adequate PHEM capacities to efficiently and effectively prepare for and swiftly respond to public health threats, in the context of One Health.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Support the development of effective and efficient policies and plans to support a resilient public health emergency preparedness and response systems.

- 1.1. Support the development of subsidiary legislation to operationalize all NPHA functional areas, surveillance, public health laboratories, IPC, and PHEM among others.
- 1.2. Support the development of a Training and Simulation Exercises Program to enhance PHEM operations.
- 1.3. Regularly review the Multi-Hazard Plan and carry out Hazard Risks Assessment to reflect the current All-Hazard threats to the country.
- 1.4. Review and update the Concept of Operations in line with the objectives of the NPHA.
- 1.5. Establish mechanisms to regularly review and update SOPs and MOUs.
- 1.6. Support the development of policies to provide seamless mechanisms to interact with other networks of emergency operation centers (EOCs) both nationally and internationally.
- 1.7. Review, update and maintain a public health risk register and occupational Health Risk for NPHA Staff.
- 1.8. Provide support for the development of an emergency fund and hazard pay policy.
- 1.9. Provide support for the development of a comprehensive emergency response logistics policy, including stockpile essential resources for emergency response at the national and district level.
- 1.10. Support the development of a comprehensive Policy on information management, ICT Infrastructure, and safety for PHEM operations.

2. Strengthen the PHEOC co-ordination mechanism for multisectoral public health emergency preparedness, response, and resilience systems.

- 2.1. Ensure the establishment and implementation of robust PHEOCs at all levels of the country.
- 2.2. Provide support to enhance the effective and efficient operation of PHEOCs to Coordinate and supervise preparedness and response at all levels.
- 2.3. Coordinate with EOCs from other MDAs to ensure potential public health threats from outside the jurisdiction of NPHA are safely managed.

- 2.4. Ensure the establishment of efficient and effective regular Emergency Management meetings at all levels, such as regular Emergency Preparedness Resilient Response Group, National Public Health Emergency Management Committee and other equivalent meetings.
- 2.5. Develop mechanisms to act on recommendations from districts EOCs.

3. Support the establishment of public health emergency management monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to identify successes and areas for improvements.

- 3.1. Carry out regular internal assessments and produce corresponding reports.
- 3.2. Conduct regular supportive supervision to ensure compliance to basic standards of operations.
- 3.3. Conduct Simulation Exercises on a regular basis to test the emergency preparedness and response systems at all levels.
- 3.4. Conduct PHEM reviews on a regular basis at all levels.
- 3.5. Collaborate with other parties, at national and international levels to standardize the operation of PHEM.
- 3.6. Develop regular recommendation following evaluation exercises for implementation.
- 3.7. Establish an assessment process to monitor the attainment of a center of excellence.
- 3.8. Collaborate with the One Health platform to conduct Intra- and After-Action Reviews

Workforce Development

Human resources play a crucial role in the success of any organization, and the NPHA is no exception. Building a competent and motivated workforce is essential for implementing public health interventions, delivering quality services, and driving positive health outcomes. The NPHA must develop and prioritize strategies for employee training, development opportunities, and continuing education.

Goal:

Develop and maintain a skilled, motivated, efficient, and diverse public health workforce that is accorded with psychosocial support within the NPHA.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Enhance workforce development capacity within the NPHA to enhance technical leadership and managerial skills.

- 1.1. Develop and implement proper accreditation standards for public health training institutions.
- 1.2. Develop and implement clear training curriculum for the different public health roles.
- 1.3. Provide professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance their leadership and managerial skills.

2. Identify, select, and admit trainees to diverse public health training programs to enhance job performance at individual and organization levels.

- 2.1. Establish partnerships with academic institutions for recognition and certification of trainees.

- 2.2. Enhance the NPHA's training branding to attract top scholars.
 - 2.3. Implement flexible training programs and work-study balance initiatives.
 - 2.4. Maintain a workforce training database.
- 3. Develop and implement a comprehensive training and development program to advance the workforce knowledge and skill sets to enhance job performance.**
- 3.1. Identify training needs and priorities through a systematic assessment of staff competencies.
 - 3.2. Develop a short-term and long-term training curriculum that covers essential public health skills and knowledge.
 - 3.3. Provide opportunities for staff to attend external training programs and conferences.
 - 3.4. Establish partnerships with local, regional, and international academic institutions and public health training organizations to offer specialized training programs.
 - 3.5. Support the development of standard curricula and accreditation processes for public health training institutions.
 - 3.6. Provide mentoring and coaching programs to support professional growth and development.
 - 3.7. Implement a knowledge-sharing platform to facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned.
 - 3.8. Support staff members in pursuing advanced degrees or certifications relevant to their roles.
- 4. Enhance capacity building in surveillance and epidemiology to improve preparedness to detect, assess, communicate, and act on potential public health threats and emergencies effectively and efficiently.**
- 4.1. Develop, review and implement training programs for surveillance officers, epidemiologists, and data analysts.
 - 4.2. Provide continuous professional development opportunities to enhance skills in surveillance and epidemiology.
 - 4.3. Establish mentorship programs to support the professional growth of surveillance and epidemiology staff.
 - 4.4. Strengthen the capacity of district, community health/animal workers, and environment officers in public health surveillance and reporting.
- 5. Support the establishment of a strong Public Health Emergency Management multidisciplinary workforce with the capacity to anticipate, prevent, prepare for, detect, respond to, control, public health threats and lead recovery to minimize the socio-economic consequences of public health threats.**
- 5.1. Develop and implement strategies as contained in the PHEM workforce policy.
 - 5.2. Ensure there is recruitment and training of competent staff to undertake various PHEM functions.
 - 5.3. Ensure there is regular training and simulation exercises in place for emergency management staff, both permanent and surge.
 - 5.4. Support the development of surge staff utilization policy and SOPs in collaboration with relevant authorities.
 - 5.5. Support the development of mechanisms to request assistance from other institutions to provide trainings for permanent and surge staff.

- 5.6. Ensure there is established collaborative partnership with academic and other Institutions (locally and internationally) for training and mentorship opportunities.
- 5.7. Establish a mechanism for setting up a multisectoral subject matter experts committee for comprehensive Risk Assessment.
- 5.8. Support the establishment of a PHEM professional development certification training in emergency management at basic, intermediate, and advanced levels in collaboration with relevant institutions.

6. Foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation to improve individual and organizational performance.

- 6.1. Encourage staff members to engage in ongoing professional development activities.
- 6.2. Establish cross-functional teams and encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- 6.3. Foster a learning culture through regular training sessions, seminars, and workshops.
- 6.4. Encourage staff involvement in research, publications, and evidence-based practice.

Case Management

Effective case management is essential for delivering comprehensive healthcare services during epidemics, ensuring timely and appropriate interventions, and maintaining continuity of essential services. It can also improve overall health outcomes.

The Case Management Functional Area of the Sierra Leone NPHA is committed to working with relevant stakeholders to build the capacity of the health system to provide optimal care coordination for individuals, ensuring their access to essential services and resources while focusing on improving their health status.

Goal:

To establish and implement robust case management processes to deliver efficient and client-centred healthcare services while promoting health equity and ensuring the availability and accessibility of essential resources.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Streamline and improve the efficiency of the case management process during outbreaks.

- 1.1. Develop standardized case management workflows to ensure consistency and accuracy in service delivery.
- 1.2. Develop and implement digital case management tools to enhance efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and improve coordination with healthcare providers and community organizations.
- 1.3. Establish clear performance metrics to monitor and evaluate case management effectiveness.

2. Enhance the client-centered approach to case management during outbreaks.

- 2.1. Train case managers in empathetic communication and cultural competency to provide compassionate and client-focused care.
 - 2.2. Develop and implement a client feedback mechanism to continuously assess and improve the client's experience with case management services.
 - 2.3. Develop SOPs for the provision of culturally sensitive and language-appropriate services for diverse populations.
- 3. Promote health equity through case management during outbreaks.**
- 3.1. Identify and address social determinants of health in the case management process to reduce health disparities.
 - 3.2. Develop strategies to reach underserved and marginalized populations and improve their access to case management services.
 - 3.3. Collaborate with community-based organizations to support clients in overcoming barriers to healthcare access.
 - 3.4. Quantify, construct/refurbish/procure medical facility physical infrastructure, medical equipment and tools, PPE, medical supplies, and medicines to ensure they are available and accessible to all patients, regardless of their location or socioeconomic status.
 - 3.5. Develop preparedness plans and starter stocks of essential supplies to ensure that the healthcare system is able to respond to an epidemic effectively, even in the event of a disruption to the supply chain.
- 4. Enhance data collection and analysis for informed decision-making during outbreaks.**
- 4.1. Implement electronic health records and data management systems to collect and store case management data efficiently.
 - 4.2. Analyze case management data to identify trends, outcomes, and areas for improvement.
 - 4.3. Utilize data-driven insights to adapt case management strategies and enhance service delivery.
 - 4.4. Collect and analyze data on medical facilities physical infrastructure, medical equipment and tools, PPE, medical supplies, and medicines to identify gaps in preparedness and ensure that resources are allocated where they are most needed.
- 5. Strengthen the capacity of case management staff.**
- 5.1. Identify training needs for case managers and support staff.
 - 5.2. Develop a comprehensive training program to improve case management skills and competencies.
 - 5.3. Provide opportunities for professional development and continuous learning.
- 6. Collaborate with healthcare providers and community organizations before and during outbreaks.**
- 6.1. Establish strong partnerships with healthcare facilities to ensure seamless transitions of care for clients.
 - 6.2. Collaborate with community-based organizations to expand the reach and impact of case management services.
 - 6.3. Create referral networks to connect clients with necessary healthcare providers and support services.
- 7. Monitor and evaluate case management services during outbreaks.**

- 7.1. Develop a comprehensive evaluation framework to assess the impact of case management on health outcomes.
- 7.2. Conduct regular client satisfaction surveys to gather feedback and insights.
- 7.3. Utilize evaluation results to adapt and refine case management strategies.
- 7.4. Monitor and evaluate the availability and accessibility of medical facility physical infrastructure, medical equipment and tools, PPE, medical supplies, and medicines, and make adjustments to preparedness plans and starter stocks as needed.

Behaviour Change Management and Health Promotion

Health promotion and behaviour change management plays a vital role in safeguarding public health security and emergencies. Through evidence-based strategies, interventions, and programs of the NPHA will empower individuals and communities to make informed decisions about their health and adopt healthier behaviours. This functional area centers on creating awareness, fostering behaviour change, and establishing support systems to enable individuals to lead healthier lives.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) are recognized as one of the 19 technical areas of the IHR. Hence, RCCE are recognized as critical components in effectively and efficiently managing risks and ensuring public health preparedness and response at the national and international levels. Incorporating these strategies into the NPHA's initiatives can strengthen its ability to communicate effectively, engage communities, and improve behaviour change and inform decision-making.

Goal:

To build capacity of individuals, communities, and stakeholders to actively protect, respond, effectively and efficiently to public health threats or emergencies.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Develop and implement evidence-based health promotion interventions and programs to promote health and prevent disease among the population.

- 1.1. Conduct a situational analysis to identify key multisectoral health promotion priorities.
- 1.2. Develop comprehensive risk communication and community engagement strategies based on the identified priorities.
- 1.3. Design and implement targeted health promotion interventions addressing priority health issues.
- 1.4. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment of health promotion interventions with national policies and strategies.
- 1.5. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of health promotion interventions to inform continuous improvement.

2. Strengthen health education and communication strategies to change people's knowledge, attitudes, and/or behaviors.

- 2.1. Develop culturally appropriate health education materials and resources for different target populations.
- 2.2. Disseminate health education materials through various channels such as community outreach programs, schools, workplaces, and digital platforms.

- 2.3. Conduct health education and communication campaigns targeting specific health issues or behaviors.
- 2.4. Establish partnerships with media outlets to promote health messages through mass media channels.
- 2.5. Utilize social media platforms and digital technologies for health promotion and behaviour change communication.
- 3. Build capacity in behaviour change management to change people's personal habits and attitudes, to prevent disease.**
 - 3.1. Provide training programs on behaviour change theories and techniques for health professionals and community health workers.
 - 3.2. Develop a cadre of certified behaviour change specialists within the NPHA.
 - 3.3. Incorporate behaviour change principles and techniques into health promotion interventions and programs.
 - 3.4. Conduct regular workshops and seminars on behaviour change strategies for stakeholders and partners.
- 4. Foster community engagement and participation in health promotion to achieve positive health impact and outcomes.**
 - 4.1. Establish multisectoral health committees or similar structures to facilitate community involvement in health promotion activities.
 - 4.2. Conduct community needs assessments to identify health priorities and tailored interventions.
 - 4.3. Support community-led initiatives promoting healthy behaviour and lifestyles.
 - 4.4. Organize community events, health fairs, and awareness campaigns to engage the public in health promotion activities.
 - 4.5. Promote partnerships with local organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community leaders to leverage resources and enhance community participation.
- 5. Collaborate with other sectors to address social determinants of health by 2026.**
 - 5.1. Develop cross-sectoral partnerships with relevant government ministries, NGOs, and private sector organizations to address social determinants of health.
 - 5.2. Advocate for policies and initiatives that promote healthy environments, such as creating smoke-free public spaces, increasing access to nutritious foods, and promoting physical activity.
 - 5.3. Integrate health promotion principles into other sectors' programs and policies, including education, urban planning, and workplace wellness.
- 6. Conduct research and evaluation on health promotion interventions to collect evidence about the efficacy of the interventions, identify ways to improve practice, justify the use of resources, and identify unexpected outcomes by 2026.**
 - 6.1. Support research studies on the effectiveness of health promotion strategies and interventions.
 - 6.2. Evaluate the impact of health promotion programs and interventions on behaviour change and health outcomes.
 - 6.3. Disseminate research findings to inform evidence-based health promotion practices and policies.
 - 6.4. Foster a culture of learning and continuous improvement by using evaluation data to refine and enhance health promotion initiatives.

Psycho-Social Support and Mental Health

Recognizing the critical importance of psycho-social support and mental health in the overall well-being of individuals and communities, the Sierra Leone NPHA is committed to providing accessible, effective, and compassionate mental health services. The Psycho-Social Support and Mental Health Functional Area of NPHA aims to address the mental health needs of the population and promote psychological well-being.

Goal:

To provide psycho-social support and mental health services to improve the mental well-being of individuals and communities during emergency in Sierra Leone between 2024 - 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Expand access to psycho-social support and mental health services by 2026.

- 1.1. Increase the number of mental health facilities and trained professionals in underserved areas, with a focus on reaching rural and marginalized populations.
- 1.2. Develop and implement community-based mental health programs to improve accessibility and reduce stigma.
- 1.3. Promote awareness of available services through public education and outreach campaigns, targeting diverse populations and using inclusive language.

2. Strengthen the quality of mental health care by 2026.

- 2.1. Ensure that mental health services adhere to evidence-based practices and international standards, including respecting human rights and promoting client autonomy.
- 2.2. Provide ongoing training and professional development for mental health practitioners, including culturally competent care and trauma-informed practices.
- 2.3. Establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the quality and effectiveness of mental health care, using data-driven insights to improve service delivery.

3. Promote mental health awareness and reduce stigma by 2026.

- 3.1. Develop and implement public awareness campaigns to reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues, targeting diverse populations, and using inclusive language.
- 3.2. Educate communities and individuals about the importance of mental well-being and seeking help when needed, through school-based programs, workplace initiatives, and community outreach.
- 3.3. Advocate for mental health policy changes that support the rights and dignity of individuals with mental health conditions, including access to quality care and social support.

4. Integrate mental health into primary healthcare by 2026.

- 4.1. Collaborate with primary healthcare providers to integrate mental health services into routine healthcare, including screening for mental health conditions and providing basic mental health interventions.
- 4.2. Establish referral systems between primary healthcare facilities and specialized mental health services to ensure seamless transitions of care.
- 4.3. Develop training programs to equip primary healthcare providers with basic mental health knowledge and skills.

5. Enhance crisis intervention and emergency response by 2026.

- 5.1. Establish a crisis helpline and emergency response teams for individuals in immediate distress, ensuring 24/7 availability and accessibility.
- 5.2. Provide specialized training to first responders and crisis intervention teams on mental health crisis management and post-crisis follow-up.
- 5.3. Develop protocols for effective crisis management and post-crisis follow-up, including referral to appropriate mental health services.

6. Support mental health research and data collection by 2026.

- 6.1. Promote research on mental health issues and the effectiveness of mental health interventions, including research on underserved populations and marginalized communities.
- 6.2. Create a centralized mental health data collection and analysis system to track trends, outcomes, and gaps in services.
- 6.3. Utilize research findings and data-driven insights to inform mental health policies, strategies, and service delivery.

7. Foster partnerships and collaboration for mental health by 2026.

- 7.1. Collaborate with mental health organizations, NGOs, international agencies, and other relevant stakeholders to leverage resources and expertise, and promote integrated and comprehensive mental health care.
- 7.2. Establish partnerships with schools, workplaces, and community organizations to promote mental well-being and reduce stigma.
- 7.3. Share best practices and learnings with other regions and countries to enhance global mental health efforts.

8. Monitor and evaluate mental health programs to ensure that services are responsive to the needs of the community by 2026.

- 8.1. Develop a comprehensive evaluation framework to assess the impact of mental health services on the community, including on health outcomes, quality of life, and social functioning.
- 8.2. Conduct regular client feedback surveys to gather insights and improve service quality.
- 8.3. Utilize evaluation results to adapt and refine mental health strategies, ensuring that services are responsive to the needs of the community.

Policy and Planning

Policy and planning play a crucial role in shaping and guiding integrated multisectoral public health interventions, programs, and initiatives. The policy and planning department is responsible for developing public health policies, strategies, and plans that align with national health priorities and international best practices. These policies, strategies and plans serve as guiding documents for decision-making, resource mobilization, resource allocation, and implementation of public health interventions. By ensuring evidence-based approaches and stakeholder engagement, the department aims to promote effective and efficient public health practices in Sierra Leone.

Goal:

To develop and implement evidence-based policies and strategic plans to guide integrated multisectoral public health interventions in Sierra Leone by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

- 1. Develop and review integrated multisectoral national public health policies and strategies to ensure inclusiveness and incorporate evolving public health needs and best practices by 2026.**
 - 1.1. Conduct a comprehensive review of existing multisectoral public health policies and strategies.
 - 1.2. Engage key stakeholders, including government ministries, civil society organizations, communities, and partners, in the policy development process.
 - 1.3. Set national public health priorities based on review outcome.
 - 1.4. Develop evidence-based policies and strategies that address current and emerging public health threats.
 - 1.5. Establish a transparent and inclusive policy review process, including soliciting feedback from relevant stakeholders.
 - 1.6. Regularly update policies and strategies to reflect evolving public health needs and best practices.
- 2. Strengthen the integration of multisectoral public health priorities into national development plans for socioeconomic development by 2026.**
 - 2.1. Collaborate with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, and other relevant MDAs to integrate public health priorities into national development plans.
 - 2.2. Conduct advocacy and provide evidence to demonstrate the linkages between public health and socioeconomic development.
 - 2.3. Establish mechanisms for regular coordination and information sharing between the NPHA and other government agencies involved in national development planning at all levels.
 - 2.4. Facilitate the inclusion of public health indicators in monitoring and evaluation frameworks for national development plans.
- 3. Develop and implement a national public health research agenda to inform policy and practice by 2025.**
 - 3.1. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of public health research needs and priorities in Sierra Leone.
 - 3.2. Collaborate with researchers, academic institutions, and other stakeholders in the development of the research agenda and prioritization.
 - 3.3. Develop resource mobilization strategies for research.
 - 3.4. Establish a transparent and competitive process for research funding allocation.
 - 3.5. Promote collaboration between researchers and public health practitioners to facilitate the translation of research findings into policy and practice.
 - 3.6. Monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of research projects funded under the national research agenda.
- 4. Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and impact of public health initiatives, interventions, policies, and programs by 2025.**
 - 4.1. Develop monitoring and evaluation frameworks for public health initiatives, interventions, policies, and programs.

- 4.2. Establish data collection systems and indicators to track the progress and impact of public health interventions.
- 4.3. Conduct regular evaluations to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of public health initiatives, interventions, policies, and programs.
- 4.4. Use evaluation findings to inform public health policy adjustments and program refinements.
- 4.5. Disseminate evaluation results to stakeholders and the public to promote transparency and accountability.

5. Strengthen capacity in public health policy analysis and development within the NPHA for evidence-based policy formulation by 2025.

- 5.1. Identify training needs and ensure professional development opportunities for staff involved in policy analysis and development.
- 5.2. Establish partnerships with academic institutions and “Policy Experts” to enhance capacity-building initiatives.
- 5.3. Facilitate knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices in public health policy analysis and development.
- 5.4. Collaborate with the research unit to support evidence-based policy formulation.

6. Foster collaboration and partnerships with national and international stakeholders in public health policy and planning by 2026.

- 6.1. Engage with government ministries, departments, and agencies to promote intersectoral collaboration in policy development and implementation.
- 6.2. Collaborate with appropriate national and international organizations to exchange knowledge and best practices in policy and planning.
- 6.3. Establish partnerships with civil society organizations, community leaders, and other non-governmental stakeholders to ensure inclusivity, community involvement and ownership in policy development and implementation.
- 6.4. Participate in regional and global forums on public health policy and planning to contribute to and learn from international experiences and perspectives.

Public Health Research

Research is one of the core functions of the NPHA to enable detection, prediction, prevention, preparedness, and prompt response to public health threats and emergencies. The 2014/2015 Ebola outbreak demonstrated the capacity of Sierra Leone to provide leadership in the development of a research agenda to address important questions regarding prevention and treatment of the disease as well as a better understanding of the long-term health consequences in survivors.

The NPHA will establish a research agenda that includes operational and applied research leading to inform evidence-based actions on public health threats and emergencies. Research will be undertaken collaboratively, with national and international partners, enhancing the quantity, quality, types of data collected and utilization. Along with state and non-state actors, NPHA will endeavour to explore mechanisms and opportunities for resource mobilization.

Goal

To develop a strong and coordinated multidisciplinary public health research capacity that informs policies, strategies, and decision making by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Develop a research agenda based on the health needs of humans, animals, and the environment by 2025.

- 1.1. Establish a research review committee to ensure ethical considerations and quality control in research studies.
- 1.2. Develop an integrated multidisciplinary research agenda that informs policy formulation and decision making.
- 1.3. Operationalize and support the functioning of the NPHA Research Committee

2. Facilitate, collate, and disseminate research findings to support evidence-based public health policy and practice by 2026.

- 2.1. Develop research capacity in each of the NPHA functional areas.
- 2.2. Promote the development of a public health research community across sectors and levels.
- 2.3. Develop technical capacity for data analysis and synthesis to advise on policy.
- 2.4. Collate and periodically share research findings with key stakeholders.
- 2.5. Originate propositions to establish research funding mechanisms.
- 2.6. Establish budgetary provision for seed fund to promote research.
- 2.7. Develop capacity to access and manage research resources.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are essential for ensuring that the Sierra Leone NPHA's programs, policies, and interventions are achieving their intended outcomes and impact. The M&E Functional Area is committed to building a robust M&E system to support NPHA's continuous improvement and public health impact.

Goal: To develop and implement a comprehensive M&E framework to assess the effectiveness and impact of public health programs and interventions by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Establish a standardized M&E framework across all NPHA programs and interventions, aligned with international best practices by 2025.

- 1.1. Develop and implement M&E plans for all programs and interventions, with clear indicators, targets, and data collection methodologies.
- 1.2. Implement data collection and management systems that ensure data accuracy, consistency, security, and accessibility.
- 1.3. Strengthen the capacity of NPHA staff and partners in M&E best practices, including data collection, analysis, and reporting.

2. Promote evidence-based decision-making grounded in best available data and information to enhance program and policy effectiveness by 2026.

- 2.1. Foster a culture of using data for decision-making at all levels of the organization.
- 2.2. Facilitate the dissemination of M&E findings to inform program planning, implementation, and course correction.
- 2.3. Encourage program managers to use data to adjust strategies and improve program performance.
- 2.4. Regularly assess program impact against predefined indicators and targets.
- 2.5. Use evaluation findings to identify areas for improvement and innovation, and to align program strategies with evidence-based practices.

- 2.6. Promote the integration of M&E findings into policy development and implementation.
- 3. Promote open sharing of information and data related to a program's implementation, results, and impact on stakeholders to improve accountability and transparency by 2026.**
 - 3.1. Develop and implement mechanisms for accountability at all levels of the organization, including clear roles and responsibilities for M&E.
 - 3.2. Share evaluation results with the public to build trust and confidence in NPHA's work and ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively.
- 4. Strengthen M&E data collection and analysis capacity for reliable and secure data collection data management for decision-making by 2026.**
 - 4.1. Invest in technology and training to improve data collection, storage, and analysis.
 - 4.2. Develop and implement data collection and reporting guidelines to maintain consistency and quality.
 - 4.3. Enhance the capacity of staff in data interpretation and data-driven decision-making.
- 5. Foster a culture of continuous improvement that systematically seeks to achieve incremental changes to improve efficiency and quality by 2026.**
 - 5.1. Encourage ongoing feedback and learning within the organization, including from program beneficiaries and partners.
 - 5.2. Establish mechanisms for incorporating lessons learned into future program planning and implementation.
- 6. Promote M&E knowledge sharing and collaboration to remain up to date on M&E best practices by 2026.**
 - 6.1. Collaborate with other public health organizations and institutions to share M&E methodologies and findings.
 - 6.2. Participate in national and international M&E networks and conferences to learn from others and contribute to the field.
 - 6.3. Develop partnerships with academia and research institutions to access additional resources for large-scale evaluations.
- 7. Conduct regular program evaluations and impact assessments to inform programmatic improvements and resource allocation by 2026.**
 - 7.1. Prioritize periodic impact assessments to measure the long-term effects of NPHA programs on health outcomes and other key indicators.
 - 7.2. Assess the cost-effectiveness of programs and interventions.
 - 7.3. Use impact assessments to inform strategic decisions and resource allocation.

Biostatistics and Health Informatics

Biostatistics and health informatics play a critical role in public health by providing accurate and timely data analysis, interpretation, and reporting. A strong biostatistics and health informatics system is essential for evidence-based decision-making, surveillance, research, and program evaluation. The NPHA will focus on building the capacity of its staff, enhancing

data collection, data management processes, and leveraging on technology to optimize data utilization and dissemination.

Goal:

To establish and implement a robust biostatistics and health information system to support data-driven decision-making, research, and evaluation within the NPHA of Sierra Leone by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Strengthen the capacity of the NPHA staff in biostatistics and health informatics to translate data into meaningful information that can be used to make logical and beneficial public health decisions by 2026.

- 1.1. Identify training needs on biostatistics and health informatics.
- 1.2. Facilitate staff participation in external training and conferences related to biostatistics and health informatics.
- 1.3. Establish partnerships with academic institutions and research organizations to provide specialized training and mentorship opportunities.
- 1.4. Support HR to develop career pathway for biostatisticians and health informatics professionals within the NPHA.
- 1.5. Collaborate with research unit to create a knowledge-sharing platform for staff to exchange best practices, research findings, and innovative approaches in biostatistics and health informatics.

2. Enhance data management processes to ensure data quality by 2026.

- 2.1. Support the review and updating of data collection tools and methodologies to ensure quality and reliability.
- 2.2. Support the development of standardized tools, protocols, and guidelines for data collection across various public health programs.
- 2.3. Support the development and implementation of digital and streamlined data management systems.
- 2.4. Establish data quality assurance processes, including regular data audits and validation checks.
- 2.5. Collaborate with the ICT department to develop and maintain a centralized data repository for secure storage and easy access to public health data.
- 2.6. Collaborate with the ICT department to improve data integration and interoperability between different health information systems.
- 2.7. Foster collaboration with key stakeholders to share data and promote data-driven decision-making.
- 2.8. Utilize advanced statistical methods and modelling techniques for data analysis and interpretation.

3. Develop health informatics strategy and support the infrastructure for evidence-based practice by 2025.

- 3.1. Conduct a needs assessment to identify technology requirements and infrastructure gaps.
- 3.2. Formulate a health informatics strategy that aligns with the NPHA's overall goals and objectives.

- 3.3. Collaborate with the ICT department to upgrade existing health information systems to ensure compatibility, security, and scalability.
 - 3.4. Establish data standards and interoperability frameworks to facilitate data exchange and sharing.
 - 3.5. Implement data analytics tools and platforms to enable real-time data monitoring and visualization.
 - 3.6. Develop and maintain a health informatics governance framework to guide data management and privacy practices.
 - 3.7. Promote the use of mobile health (mHealth) and digital health solutions to enhance data collection and health service delivery.
 - 3.8. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to leverage existing health informatics initiatives and platforms.
- 4. Support research and evaluation activities to meet informatics needs and answer pressing research questions public health by 2026.**
- 4.1. Provide technical support for research design, sampling, and statistical analysis.
 - 4.2. Foster collaborations with academic institutions and research organizations to conduct research projects.
 - 4.3. Facilitate the dissemination of research findings through publications, conferences, and knowledge-sharing platforms.
 - 4.4. Implement data sharing agreements and protocols to ensure data privacy and confidentiality.
- 5. Support accessibility and communication of data in concise manner to facilitate data-driven decision-making by 2026.**
- 5.1. Develop user-friendly dashboards and data visualization tools to present public health data in a concise and accessible manner.
 - 5.2. Establish routine data reporting mechanisms to provide timely and relevant information to key stakeholders.
 - 5.3. Develop data briefs, infographics, and other communication materials to facilitate data-driven decision-making.
- 6. Monitor and adapt to emerging trends in biostatistics and health informatics by 2026.**
- 6.1. Stay updated on the latest advancements in biostatistics, health informatics, and data science through continuous professional development and participation in relevant conferences and workshops.
 - 6.2. Foster collaboration and knowledge exchange with international biostatistics and health informatics organizations and networks.
 - 6.3. Proactively explore emerging technologies and innovations to enhance data collection, management, and analysis processes.
 - 6.4. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of biostatistics and health informatics activities and make necessary adjustments to optimize outcomes.

Procurement

The NPHA requires a robust procurement system to acquire the goods, services, and works necessary for its operations. By establishing transparent and accountable procurement processes, the NPHA can ensure value for money, promote fair competition, and maintain integrity in all procurement activities. Effective procurement practices will enable the NPHA

to meet its organizational needs while adhering to applicable laws, regulations, and ethical standards.

Goal:

To establish and implement a procurement system within the NPHA that is transparent, efficient, effective, and accountable for timely and cost-effective acquisition of goods, services, and works while adhering to ethical, legal standards, and economic principles by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Develop and implement procurement policies and procedures that comply with national procurement laws and regulations by 2024.

- 1.1. Review and update NPHA's procurement policies in accordance with national procurement laws and regulations
- 1.2. Develop, review and update the NPHA's procurement procedures in accordance with national procurement laws and regulations.
- 1.3. Publish the NPHA's procurement policies and procedures on the official website for transparency and accessibility.
- 1.4. Establish a Procurement Review Committee to oversee the procurement process and ensure compliance with procurement policies and regulations.
- 1.5. Conduct training sessions for NPHA staff on procurement policies and procedures.
- 1.6. Conduct periodic internal audits to assess the effectiveness of procurement processes and identify areas for improvement.

2. Strengthen procurement processes to ensure timely and cost-effective acquisition of goods and services by 2025.

- 2.1. Develop and implement a transparent and competitive procurement system.
- 2.2. Conduct regular market assessments to identify reliable suppliers and negotiate favourable terms and prices.
- 2.3. Implement electronic procurement systems, where feasible, to streamline and automate procurement processes.
- 2.4. Monitor procurement activities to ensure adherence to procurement plans, budgetary constraints, and quality standards.
- 2.5. Develop and maintain a database of prequalified suppliers to expedite procurement processes.
- 2.6. Enhance collaboration with relevant stakeholders to leverage resources and strengthen procurement capabilities.
- 2.7. Develop a platform for donations of medicines, medical supplies and vaccines based on expressed Public Health needs in compliance with the National Donation Guidelines.
- 2.8. Explore opportunities for joint procurement and resource sharing to optimize resources and reduce costs.

3. Strengthen supplier and contractor management to ensure reliable and high-quality procurement services by 2025.

- 3.1. Develop and implement a vendor performance evaluation system to assess the quality and reliability of suppliers and contractors.
- 3.2. Conduct periodic supplier and contractor assessments to ensure compliance with contractual obligations and quality standards.

- 3.3. Provide capacity-building opportunities for suppliers and contractors to enhance their understanding of procurement requirements and best practices.
 - 3.4. Establish clear communication channels with suppliers and contractors to facilitate smooth procurement processes and address any issues or concerns.
 - 3.5. To safeguard against economic loss, NPHA should establish a performance bond threshold and retention money for works, goods, and services.
- 4. Implement a transparent and competitive bidding process for procurement activities by 2026.**
- 4.1. Develop standard bidding documents and templates for different types of procurement activities.
 - 4.2. Advertise procurement opportunities through widely accessible platforms, including the NPHA website, public notices, and relevant procurement portals.
 - 4.3. Conduct pre-bid conferences to provide potential bidders with a clear understanding of procurement requirements and answer any queries they may have.
 - 4.4. Monitor and evaluate the bidding process to identify any irregularities or potential risks of corruption.
 - 4.5. Ensure bid protests appeals and other grievances are fairly and impartially resolved.
- 5. Promote sustainable procurement practices that prioritize environmentally friendly and socially responsible products and services by 2026.**
- 5.1. Develop and incorporate sustainability criteria into procurement policies and procedures.
 - 5.2. Raise awareness among NPHA staff and stakeholders about the importance of sustainable procurement practices.
 - 5.3. Promote the use of environmentally friendly products and services through preferential treatment in procurement decisions.
 - 5.4. Collaborate with suppliers and contractors to identify and promote sustainable alternatives.
 - 5.5. Monitor and evaluate the environmental and social impact of procurement activities and report on progress made in sustainable procurement.
- 6. Enhance procurement capacity through training and professional development to foster efficient use of public funds by 2026.**
- 6.1. Identify training needs and develop a comprehensive training program for NPHA staff involved in procurement processes.
 - 6.2. Provide training on procurement laws, regulations, and best practices to enhance staff knowledge and skills.
 - 6.3. Facilitate staff participation in external procurement training workshops and conferences.
 - 6.4. Support staff to pursue professional certifications in procurement and supply chain management.
 - 6.5. Establish a knowledge-sharing platform to exchange experiences and best practices in procurement among staff members.
- 7. Monitor and evaluate procurement processes to ensure compliance and continuous improvement by 2026.**

- 7.1. Conduct regular internal audits of procurement activities to assess compliance with policies, regulations, and best practices.
- 7.2. Establish a procurement performance monitoring system to track key performance indicators and measure the efficiency and effectiveness of procurement processes.
- 7.3. Implement feedback mechanisms to collect input from NPHA staff, suppliers, and contractors on procurement processes and identify areas for improvement.
- 7.4. Analyze procurement data to identify trends, risks, and opportunities for cost savings and process optimization.
- 7.5. Use M&E findings to inform the development of strategies and action plans for continuous improvement in procurement practices.

Finance

The finance unit plays a critical role in ensuring the smooth and efficient functioning of NPHA's operations and initiatives. It is responsible for managing financial resources, budgeting, financial planning, accounting, and reporting. Effective and efficient financial management is essential to ensure that funds are allocated appropriately, expenditures are monitored, and financial controls are in place to prevent fraud and mismanagement. The use of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSASs) will help the NPHA's achieve its goals and objectives in a more streamlined and effective manner.

Goal:

To establish robust systems that ensure effective and efficient financial management, transparency, and accountability through the use of IPSASs by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive financial management system to mitigate risks by 2026.

- 1.1. Design and implement an updated financial policy and procedure manual.
- 1.2. Establish internal controls to ensure compliance with financial regulations and guidelines.
- 1.3. Implement a robust financial information system to improve financial reporting and analysis.
- 1.4. Develop and implement a risk management framework to identify and mitigate financial risks.
- 1.5. Enhance financial transparency through regular financial reporting and dissemination of financial information.
- 1.6. Establish a centralized financial database to streamline data collection, storage, and retrieval for efficient financial management.
- 1.7. Implement a cost allocation methodology to ensure accurate allocation of expenses across different programs and activities.
- 1.8. Integrate sustainability principles into financial management practices, considering long-term financial viability and environmental impact.
- 1.9. Forecast cash flow and ensure the availability of funds.
- 1.10. In collaboration with programme managers, prepare comprehensive funding proposals and applications to secure additional financial resources.
- 1.11. Establish effective financial monitoring and reporting mechanisms for externally funded projects.

- 1.12. Contract a fiduciary agent for the management of financial resources for a period of one year.
- 2. Optimize budget planning and monitoring processes to enforce accountability related to spending by 2026.**
 - 2.1. Develop a budgeting manual and guidelines to standardize budget preparation.
 - 2.2. Collaborate with program managers to develop realistic and evidence-based program budgets.
 - 2.3. Conduct regular budget reviews and monitoring to track expenditure against budgeted amounts.
 - 2.4. Implement a budget variance analysis system to identify and address budget deviations.
 - 2.5. Ensure timely and accurate financial reporting to support decision-making and accountability.
 - 2.6. Implement a participatory budgeting process that involves relevant stakeholders in the development and review of program budgets.
 - 2.7. Integrate performance-based budgeting to link financial allocations with the achievement of specific public health outcomes. Explain reasons for financial variance as related to programmatic deviations.
 - 2.8. Establish a mechanism for real-time budget tracking and expenditure monitoring to enable timely adjustments and informed decision-making.
 - 2.9. Conduct regular budget impact assessments to evaluate the financial implications of new programs and initiatives.
- 3. Enhance financial accountability and transparency to ensure that resources are used efficiently, ethically, and in alignment with the mission and goals of the NPHA by 2026.**
 - 3.1. Establish a robust financial reporting framework to provide accurate and timely financial information.
 - 3.2. Establish an independent financial oversight committee to review financial reports, audits, and compliance with financial policies.
 - 3.3. Implement a financial code of conduct to promote ethical financial practices.
 - 3.4. Conduct regular financial reviews and audits to ensure compliance with financial regulations and policies.
 - 3.5. Publish financial reports and statements on the NPHA website to enhance transparency and partner confidence.
- 4. Build capacity in financial management and reporting to enable the NPHA to pursue its mission and fulfil its roles by 2026.**
 - 4.1. Support regular financial training for staff members involved in financial management.
 - 4.2. Support professional development opportunities for finance staff to enhance their skills and knowledge.
 - 4.3. Establish a mentoring and coaching program to support the professional growth of finance staff.
 - 4.4. Promote knowledge sharing and collaboration among finance staff through regular meetings and workshops.
 - 4.5. Enhance the capacity of finance staff in utilizing financial management software and tools effectively.

- 4.6. Provide financial training and guidance to program managers on budget management.
- 4.7. Support regular training sessions for staff members and partners on financial accountability, transparency, and ethical financial practices.
- 5. Enhance financial sustainability and resource allocation to ensure the NPHA's fiscal health by 2026.**
 - 5.1. Develop a long-term financial sustainability plan to ensure the NPHA's fiscal health.
 - 5.2. Analyze funding trends and make recommendations for resource allocation optimization.
 - 5.3. Implement cost-effective financial management practices to maximize resource utilization.
 - 5.4. Monitor and assess the financial impact of NPHA's programs and initiatives.
 - 5.5. Conduct financial forecasting and scenario analysis to inform strategic decision-making.
 - 5.6. Advocate for the importance of financial sustainability and accountability.
- 6. Foster strategic financial leadership and governance to drive positive changes within the NPHA by 2026.**
 - 6.1. Establish a Finance Committee or Board to oversee financial matters and governance.
 - 6.2. Develop and implement policies for financial risk assessment and mitigation.
 - 6.3. Provide financial leadership and guidance to senior management and department heads.
 - 6.4. Collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to align financial strategies with organizational goals.

Logistics

A well-functioning logistics system is crucial for the successful implementation of public health programs and services. The logistics functional area within the NPHA ensures the availability, accessibility, and timely distribution of essential resources, equipment, and supplies. It plays a critical role in supporting disease prevention, surveillance, response, and overall public health interventions. By establishing and maintaining a strong logistics system, the NPHA can enhance its operational capacity and contribute to improving health outcomes in Sierra Leone.

Goal:

To develop and maintain a robust logistics system to ensure that the right products are delivered to the right place at the right time, in the right quantity, and at the right cost by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

- 1. Develop and implement a comprehensive logistics management plan for the NPHA to achieve short-term long-term goals by 2025.**
 - 1.1. Assess current logistics practices and systems within other MDAs and partner organizations.

- 1.2. Develop a logistics management plan outlining key strategies, processes, and responsibilities.
 - 1.3. Develop SOPs for logistics operations, including procurement, inventory management, warehousing, and distribution.
 - 1.4. Train staff members on the logistics management plan and SOPs.
 - 1.5. Regularly review and update the logistics management plan to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.
- 2. Optimize inventory management to ensure the availability of essential resources and supplies by 2026.**
- 2.1. Conduct regular inventory assessments to determine stock levels, identify gaps, and forecast future needs.
 - 2.2. Implement a robust stock management system to track inventory, expiration dates, and storage conditions.
 - 2.3. Establish stock control mechanisms, such as reorder points and minimum stock levels, to prevent stockouts and excesses.
 - 2.4. Develop and implement a system for the efficient storage and handling of goods, including proper labelling and categorization.
 - 2.5. Strengthen the capacity of staff involved in inventory management through training and continuous professional development.
 - 2.6. Support the development and implement electronic logistics and inventory management systems, to streamline and automate logistics management processes.
- 3. Enhance transportation and distribution systems to ensure safe and timely delivery of goods and services by 2026.**
- 3.1. Assess transportation needs and develop a transportation plan to optimize delivery routes and modes of transport.
 - 3.2. Support the establishment of partnerships with reliable transportation providers and negotiate competitive rates.
 - 3.3. Implement an electronic tracking system to monitor the movement of goods and provide real-time visibility of shipments.
 - 3.4. Develop contingency plans for emergency situations, including alternative transportation routes and backup suppliers.
 - 3.5. Regularly maintain and service vehicles used for transportation to ensure their reliability and safety.
 - 3.6. Conduct training for logistics staff on best practices for transportation and distribution management.
- 4. Strengthen information management systems for logistics operations to provide insights into logistics performance and inform decision-making by 2026.**
- 4.1. Support the development and implement a logistics information management system to capture and analyze data related to logistics operations.
 - 4.2. Establish data collection mechanisms to track key performance indicators, such as procurement lead times, inventory turnover, and distribution timelines.
 - 4.3. Generate regular reports and dashboards to provide insights into logistics performance and inform decision-making.
- 5. Foster collaboration and partnerships to leverage resources and enhance logistics capabilities by 2026.**

- 5.1. Support and maintain collaborative relationships with government agencies, international organizations, and private sector entities involved in logistics and supply chain management.
- 5.2. Participate in relevant forums, conferences, and working groups to share experiences, best practices, and lessons learned in logistics management.

Human Resources

Human resources play a crucial role in the success of any organization, and the NPHA is no exception. Building a competent and motivated workforce is essential for implementing public health interventions, delivering quality services, and driving positive health outcomes. The NPHA must develop and prioritize strategies to attract, recruit, retain, and build a diverse pool of talented individuals who can contribute to the agency's goals and objectives.

Goal:

To recruit and retain a diverse, skilled, motivated, effective, and efficient workforce in Public Health, Administration, Finance, Procurement, and Human Resources by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Enhance human resources management capacity within the NPHA to perform precise tasks and responsibilities by 2026.

- 1.1. Identify critical capabilities and skills required for achieving organizational goals.
- 1.2. Develop a comprehensive human resources policy and procedure manual that aligns with organizational goals.
- 1.3. Develop a comprehensive human resource plan for public health.
- 1.4. Conduct regular performance appraisals for all staff members.
- 1.5. Develop and implement a talent management program to identify and nurture high-potential employees.
- 1.6. Establish clear career progression pathways and succession planning mechanisms.
- 1.7. Develop and implement a staff development and training plan aligned with organizational needs.
- 1.8. Implement an effective performance management system to monitor individual and team performance.
- 1.9. Develop and implement a reward and recognition program to motivate and retain high-performing employees.
- 1.10. Conduct periodic employee satisfaction surveys to assess the work environment and address any concerns.
- 1.11. Establish an Employee Assistance Program to support the well-being of staff members.

2. Recruit and retain a diverse and skilled workforce to foster creativity and innovative solutions by 2026.

- 2.1. Develop and implement a recruitment strategy to attract qualified candidates.
- 2.2. Establish partnerships with academic institutions to promote public health career paths and recruit graduates.
- 2.3. Enhance the NPHA's employer branding to attract top talent.
- 2.4. Implement fair and transparent recruitment processes.
- 2.5. Provide competitive compensation packages and benefits to attract and retain skilled professionals.

- 2.6. Implement flexible work arrangements and work-life balance initiatives.
 - 2.7. Develop strategies to promote gender and ethnic diversity within the workforce.
 - 2.8. Foster a culture of inclusivity and equal opportunities for all employees.
- 3. Foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation to remain competitive by 2026.**
- 3.1. Encourage staff members to engage in ongoing professional development activities.
 - 3.2. Establish cross-functional teams and encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing.
 - 3.3. Create an enabling environment for staff to experiment with new ideas and innovative approaches.
 - 3.4. Foster a learning culture through regular training sessions, seminars, and workshops.
 - 3.5. Establish a platform for staff to provide feedback and suggestions for process improvement.
 - 3.6. Encourage staff involvement in research and evidence-based practice.
- 4. Ensure effective workforce planning and management to ensure the NPHA has the right people, with the right skills in the right positions at the right time to fulfill its mandate.**
- 4.1. Conduct regular workforce needs assessments to determine staffing requirements.
 - 4.2. Develop a workforce planning strategy aligned with the NPHA's strategic goals.
 - 4.3. Implement effective workload management systems to optimize staff productivity.
 - 4.4. Monitor and analyze workforce data to inform decision-making on staffing levels and distribution.
 - 4.5. Develop and implement a succession planning framework to address key positions and potential retirements.
 - 4.6. Provide professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance their leadership and managerial skills.
 - 4.7. Foster a culture of accountability and performance excellence.
 - 4.8. Develop ethical standards for the public health workforce.
 - 4.9. Implement HR policies that align with organizational goals.
- 5. Promote employee health and well-being to drive employee performance by 2026.**
- 5.1. Implement workplace wellness programs to promote physical and mental well-being.
 - 5.2. Provide access to healthcare services and health insurance coverage for employees.
 - 5.3. Establish policies and practices that support work-life balance.
 - 5.4. Create a supportive and inclusive work environment that values diversity and respects individual differences.
 - 5.5. Offer employee assistance programs and counselling services for staff members facing personal, mental, and emotional challenges.
 - 5.6. Develop a comprehensive human resource plan for public health (roles, skill mix, location, impact of migration, attrition, age, and future trends)
 - 5.7. Establish clear career progression pathways and succession planning mechanisms.

- 5.8. Develop and implement a recruitment strategy to attract qualified candidates to the different training programs.
- 5.9. Implement fair and transparent recruitment processes.
- 5.10. Develop strategies to promote gender and ethnic diversity within the workforce.
- 5.11. Foster a culture of inclusivity and equal opportunities for all employees.

Administration

Efficient and effective administration is essential to the Sierra Leone NPHA's mission of protecting and promoting public health. The Administration Functional Area plays a crucial role in supporting the agency's programs and services by streamlining administrative procedures, enhancing resource allocation and management, improving human resources management, enhancing facilities and infrastructure, strengthening financial management and accountability, promoting technology integration and data management, enhancing communication and coordination, ensuring compliance with relevant regulations, and providing excellent customer service.

Goal:

To establish and optimize administrative systems and processes to enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of NPHA's public health initiatives by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Streamline administrative procedures by 2026.

- 1.1 Review and update administrative policies, procedures, and guidelines to ensure clarity, consistency, and efficiency.
- 1.2 Support the development and implementation of digital solutions to streamline administrative workflows and reduce paperwork.
- 1.3 Develop and implement a user-friendly knowledge base for staff to easily access and retrieve administrative information.

2. Enhance resource allocation and management by 2026.

- 2.1 Work with management to develop a budget management system that allows for efficient and transparent allocation of resources across NPHA programs and services.
- 2.2 Support the implementation of cost-effective procurement and inventory management systems.
- 2.3 Implement the system to ensure that resources are allocated in alignment with public health priorities and performance metrics.

3. Improve human resources management by 2026.

- 3.1 Support the development and implementation of a staff development plan to enhance skills and capacities, aligned with NPHA's strategic goals.
- 3.2 Foster a culture of inclusivity and diversity within the organization.
- 3.3 Support the development and enforcement of human resources policies that prioritize employee well-being, work-life balance, and job satisfaction.

4. Enhance facilities and infrastructure by 2026.

- 4.1 Assess and upgrade NPHA's physical infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of public health programs and services.
- 4.2 Implement systems and processes to ensure that facilities are well-maintained, accessible, and equipped for the efficient delivery of services.
- 4.3 Implement measures to enhance workplace safety and security.

5. Enhance communication and coordination by 2026.

- 5.1 Establish a centralized communication system to facilitate intra-agency communication and collaboration.
- 5.2 Develop and implement communication and engagement strategies to foster collaboration with other functional areas within NPHA, as well as external partners.
- 5.3 Promote transparency and accountability by regularly communicating NPHA's performance and progress to stakeholders.

6. Ensure compliance with relevant regulations by 2026.

- 6.1 Stay up to date with national and international regulations that pertain to public health administration.
- 6.2 Develop and implement a system for tracking and ensuring compliance with all applicable administrative laws and standards.
- 6.3 Conduct regular internal compliance audits to identify and address any gaps.

7. Provide excellent customer service by 2026.

- 7.1 Train administrative staff to deliver courteous, efficient, and responsive service to internal and external customers.
- 7.2 Establish mechanisms for receiving and addressing feedback from clients and partners.
- 7.3 Develop and implement service-level agreements for timely responses to requests and inquiries.

Information and Communications Technology

The ICT Department of the Sierra Leone NPHA plays a pivotal role in the modernization and optimization of the agency's operations. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and data-driven, harnessing the power of technology has become essential for enhancing public health services, information management, and communication strategies. By embracing technological advancements and optimizing information management, the department aims to enhance the efficiency, and effectiveness of the NPHA's initiatives.

Goal:

To leverage cutting-edge technology and effective communication strategies to strengthen the agency's overall capacity to improve and transform public health services by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

- 1. Develop digital infrastructure to ensure secure seamless communication, data management, and information sharing within the NPHA and other relevant organizations and partners by 2026.**

- 1.1 Assess the current state of NPHA's digital infrastructure, identifying gaps and areas requiring improvement.
- 1.2 Develop and maintain a robust digital infrastructure that supports and secures seamless communication, data storage, and information sharing within the NPHA and other relevant organizations and partners.
- 1.3 Design and implement a secure network architecture that ensures seamless communication and data sharing across NPHA departments and partner organizations.
- 1.4 Identify, quantify, and specify necessary hardware components for procurement which includes servers, routers, switches, and firewalls, to establish a robust digital ecosystem.
- 1.5 Develop data center facilities with proper climate control, backup power, and redundancy mechanisms to ensure data integrity and availability.
- 1.6 Implement data encryption and security protocols for network traffic and stored data to safeguard sensitive health information.
- 1.7 Establish Virtual Private Networks for remote access, enabling authorized personnel to securely connect to the network from different locations.
- 1.8 Regularly update and patch network systems to address vulnerabilities and ensure optimal performance and security.
- 1.9 Conduct routine audits and security assessments to identify potential weaknesses and areas for improvement in the digital infrastructure.
- 1.10 Identify training needs for NPHA staff on proper network usage, cybersecurity, best practices, and data handling procedures.
- 1.11 Collaborate with external experts to ensure adherence to industry standards and emerging practices in digital infrastructure management.
- 1.12 Develop and maintain software for different units (e.g., procurement, logistics, finance etc.)

2. Integrate modern technology solutions in the functions of the NPHA to improve communication, productivity, data accessibility, and use by 2026.

- 2.1 Identify existing workflows and processes that can benefit from technology integration.
- 2.2 Integrate modern technology solutions, such as electronic health records, standalone web applications and mobile applications, into the agency's workflows. This integration will streamline processes, reduce paperwork, and improve the accessibility of health information.
- 2.3 Link electronic health records to laboratory information systems and diagnostic equipment to facilitate effective and efficient test result tracking.
- 2.4 Establish standardized protocols and guidelines for key processes to ensure consistency and reduce variations in care delivery.
- 2.5 Provide Digital tools and communication platforms to help streamline administrative tasks, reduce paperwork, and improve communication among healthcare team members.

3. Develop, establish, and implement data security and privacy protocols and mechanisms to safeguard digital information, protect it from corruption, theft, or unauthorized access by 2026.

- 3.1 Conduct a comprehensive cybersecurity assessment to identify vulnerabilities and potential threats to sensitive health data.

- 3.2 Implement robust cybersecurity and data privacy measures to protect sensitive health data from breaches and unauthorized access.
- 3.3 Develop and implement robust firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and antivirus solutions to prevent unauthorized access and cyber-attacks.
- 3.4 Encrypt stored and transmitted health data to ensure confidentiality and protection against data breaches.
- 3.5 Establish access controls and user authentication mechanisms to restrict data access based on roles and permissions.
- 3.6 Develop and enforce data privacy policies and procedures in compliance with relevant data protection regulations and healthcare standards to ensure alignment and compliance.
- 3.7 Conduct regular security audits to identify vulnerabilities and address potential weaknesses in the digital environment.
- 3.8 Develop an incident response plan to effectively manage and mitigate cybersecurity incidents and breaches.
- 3.9 Evaluate the security practices of vendors and third-party partners that handle public health data.
- 3.10 Support the establishment of contractual agreements that outline data security requirements and responsibilities.
- 3.11 Conduct Privacy Impact Assessment to assess the potential privacy risks of new projects, technologies, or processes involving public health data to mitigate identified risks before implementation.

4. Provide continuous training and capacity-building initiatives to equip NPHA staff with the necessary ICT skills, ensuring their proficiency in utilizing technology tools for various tasks by 2026.

- 4.1 Assess ICT skill gaps among NPHA staff.
- 4.2 Develop a comprehensive capacity-building program tailored to address identified skill gaps.
- 4.3 Ensure regular training sessions, workshops, and webinars on various ICT topics, including software usage, data analysis, and cybersecurity.
- 4.4 Provide hands-on training on the use of specific software applications, tools, and platforms relevant to public health tasks.
- 4.5 Establish a mentorship program that pairs experienced ICT staff with colleagues seeking to enhance their technical skills.
- 4.6 Provide support of certification opportunities for staff to validate their acquired ICT skills and expertise.
- 4.7 Encourage staff to share their knowledge through internal knowledge-sharing sessions and workshops.
- 4.8 Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and outcomes.

5. Collaborate with local and international partners, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations to leverage shared resources, expertise, and best practices in utilizing ICT for public health advancement by 2026.

- 5.1 Establish collaborative relationships with governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, and private sector entities.
- 5.2 Participate in working groups, committees, and task forces related to ICT and public health to share knowledge and best practices.

- 5.3 Collaborate on joint projects and initiatives that leverage shared resources and expertise to advance public health goals.
- 5.4 Host and participate in workshops, seminars, and conferences to foster cross-sectoral collaboration and learning.
- 5.5 Share successful ICT initiatives and experiences with partner organizations to encourage replication and innovation.

6. Provide ICT tools and equipment for effective employee functioning by 2026.

- 6.1 Provide ICT tools (computers, phones, internet, data storage, software, and other ICT items)
- 6.2 Provide stationary materials including scanners, printers and photocopy machine.
- 6.3 Provide vehicles for transportation.

Compliance and Audit

Internal audit and compliance is crucial for maintaining transparency, accountability, and the efficient use of resources within an organization. The NPHA requires a robust internal audit and compliance function to assess and monitor its operations, identify areas of improvement, and ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and organizational policies. By establishing effective internal audit processes, the NPHA can enhance its governance structure and foster a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Goal:

To establish an effective internal audit and compliance system to ensure adherence to policies, procedures, regulations, and best practices within the NPHA by 2026.

Strategic Objectives and Activities:

1. Develop and implement internal audit and compliance policies and procedures to provide a framework for compliance with regulatory requirements and organizational policies by 2026.

- 1.1 Develop a Policies and Procedures Manual that outlines the processes, roles, responsibilities, personnel, and every aspect of the NPHA to ensure compliance and effective monitoring.
- 1.2 Develop and establish an Internal Audit Charter that defines the purpose, authority, and independence of the internal audit function.
- 1.3 Develop and implement an annual internal audit plan based on risk assessments and organizational priorities.
- 1.4 Conduct regular internal audits to assess the effectiveness of internal controls, financial management, and compliance with policies and regulations.
- 1.5 Develop and implement a tool for documenting and tracking internal audit findings, recommendations, and management responses.
- 1.6 Provide regular reports to management and the Board of Directors on internal audit activities, findings, and recommendations.

2. Enhance compliance with laws, regulations, and organizational policies by 2026.

- 2.1 Conduct periodic compliance reviews to ensure adherence to relevant laws, regulations, and policies.
- 2.2 Develop and implement a compliance monitoring framework to track compliance with key regulations and policies.
- 2.3 Provide guidance and training to staff on compliance requirements and best practices.

- 2.4 Establish a mechanism for reporting and addressing potential compliance violations or concerns.
 - 2.5 Collaborate with other functional areas to ensure integration of compliance considerations into their processes and activities.
 - 2.6 Monitor changes in laws, regulations, and policies and provide timely updates to relevant stakeholders.
 - 2.7 Conduct regular internal audits of procurement processes to ensure compliance with procurement regulations and guidelines.
- 3. Strengthen internal controls risk management practices within the NPHA by 2026.**
- 3.1 Develop and implement a risk management framework to identify, assess, and mitigate risks across the organization.
 - 3.2 Conduct regular risk assessments to identify key risks and prioritize mitigation strategies.
 - 3.3 Establish processes for monitoring and reporting on identified risks and mitigation actions.
 - 3.4 Provide training and guidance to staff on risk management principles and practices.
 - 3.5 Integrate risk management considerations into decision-making processes and operational planning.
 - 3.6 Collaborate with other NPHA functional areas to ensure a coordinated approach to risk management.
- 4. Foster a culture of ethics, integrity, and accountability by 2026.**
- 4.1 Develop and implement a code of conduct and ethics for NPHA staff.
 - 4.2 Provide training on ethical standards and expectations to all staff members.
 - 4.3 Establish mechanisms for reporting and addressing ethical concerns or misconduct.
 - 4.4 Conduct periodic ethics and integrity assessments to monitor compliance and identify areas for improvement.
 - 4.5 Identify and recommend units/departments with ethical practices and integrity within the organization.
 - 4.6 Foster open communication channels to encourage reporting of potential fraud, waste, or abuse.
- 5. Monitor and support the implementation of audit recommendations by 2026.**
- 5.1 Establish a process for tracking and monitoring the implementation of audit recommendations.
 - 5.2 Provide support and resources to facilitate the implementation of audit recommendations.
 - 5.3 Conduct follow-up audits to assess the progress and effectiveness of implemented recommendations.
 - 5.4 Share lessons learned and best practices from audit recommendations across the organization.
 - 5.5 Provide regular updates to management and the Board of Directors on the status of audit recommendations.
- 6. Build capacity and expertise in internal audit compliance by 2026.**
- 6.1 Provide training and professional development opportunities for internal audit staff.
 - 6.2 Foster knowledge sharing and collaboration among internal audit professionals.

- 6.3 Stay abreast of best practices and emerging trends in internal audit compliance.
- 6.4 Collaborate with external audit organizations and professional associations to leverage resources and expertise.

Annexes

Annex 1: Contributions to the Development of the NPHA Strategic Plan

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