



**SIERRA LEONE WATER COMPANY (SALWACO) STRATEGY ON
GENDER AND SOCIAL MAINSTREAMING**

**“ACCELERATING GENDER AND SOCIAL EQUALITY FOR A
SUSTAINABLE, RESILIENT, AND INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY”**

(2024-2027)

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1. Introduction

The Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO) is committed to ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation services across its operational areas. This strategy on Gender and Social Mainstreaming outlines our commitment to promoting gender equality and social inclusion within our operations, with a focus on accelerating sustainable, resilient, and inclusive service delivery from 2024 to 2027. Our goal is to integrate gender and social considerations into all aspects of our work to enhance the well-being of all citizens, particularly women and marginalized groups who are disproportionately affected by water scarcity and inadequate sanitation (UN Women 2017 Gender Equality, Water and Sanitation Hygiene). This Strategy also aim to integrate gender-sensitive approaches in the SALWACO service delivery with reference to the Sierra Leone Gender Empowerment Act 2021 which mandates reserving 30% of elective and public office positions for women. To align with this legislative priority, this Strategy will ensure that at least 30% of leadership roles within SALWACO, including senior management positions, are occupied by women. This will promote gender equity and diverse perspectives in decision-making processes.

2.0 Gender and Role of Women

2.1 Gender and Human Rights

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, essential for the achievement of sustainable development goal five. SALWACO recognizes the importance of addressing gender disparities and ensuring that both women and men have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from our services.

2.2 Role of Women

Women play a critical role in water management and use at the household and community levels. Despite their significant contributions, they often face barriers to participation in decision-making processes and access to resources. Enhancing women's involvement in the water sector not only improves service delivery outcomes but also contributes to broader societal benefits such as health, education, and economic development.

Thus the Strategy aims to integrate gender concerns into programming as well as ensure that the working environment is gender sensitive, guaranteeing equal opportunities and treatment to both men and women.

3. Problem Analysis

3.1 SALWACO Overview

SALWACO is responsible for the provision of water supply and sanitation services to the provincial urban and rural communities in Sierra Leone. Our mandate includes the development, operation, and maintenance of water supply systems, and the promotion of hygiene and sanitation practices. While significant progress has been made, challenges remain in ensuring that these services are inclusive and equitable.

SALWACO is committed to ensuring that gender and social inclusion are integral components of its operations and service delivery. This strategy outlines the company's vision and approach to mainstream gender and social equality from 2024 to 2027, aiming to create a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive water service for provincial communities in Sierra Leone.

3.2 Institutional Problems Identified in SALWACO

3.2.1 Gender Disparities

There is a noticeable gender disparity in the workforce and leadership positions within SALWACO. Women are underrepresented, particularly in technical and decision-making roles, which limits diverse perspectives in the planning and implementation of projects. As it stands, there is one female Director (Company Secretary) within the company, six female Managers and two Assistance Manager.

See the index (table 8.1) for SALWACO gender disaggregated staff data in Section 8 7 below.

3.2.2 Lack of Gender-Sensitive Policies

There are no existing policies and practices to adequately address the specific needs and contributions of women and marginalized groups. This gap hinders the effectiveness of service delivery and exacerbates inequalities.

3.2.3 Limited Awareness and Capacity

There is a need for increased awareness and capacity building within the company operation regarding gender and social inclusion issues. Staff at all levels requires training to understand and implement gender-sensitive approaches effectively. To address this, a comprehensive strategy focusing on education, training, and capacity building is essential.

1. Comprehensive Training Programs: Staff training programs need to be developed and implemented to raise awareness about gender and social inclusion. These programs should cover fundamental concepts of gender equality, the importance of inclusivity in water management, and

practical approaches to integrate these principles into daily operations. Training should be mandatory and tailored to different roles within the organization to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

2. Leadership Commitment: Leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of gender sensitivity. Senior management must demonstrate a commitment to gender mainstreaming by participating in training sessions, promoting gender equality initiatives, and setting clear organizational goals related to social inclusion. Visible commitment from the top can motivate all staff members to take gender mainstreaming seriously.

3. Development of Gender-Sensitive Policies: SALWACO needs to develop and implement gender-sensitive policies and guidelines. These policies should address recruitment, career advancement, and workplace behavior, ensuring that they promote equal opportunities and respect for all genders. Additionally, policies should outline procedures for addressing gender-related grievances and ensuring a safe and inclusive work environment.

4. Creation of Gender Focal Points: Establishing gender focal points within the organization can facilitate the integration of gender perspectives in all activities. These focal points should be trained experts responsible for monitoring, advising, and supporting gender mainstreaming efforts. They can also serve as a resource for staff, providing guidance and answering questions related to gender issues.

5. Regular Monitoring and Evaluation: To ensure the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming efforts, SALWACO should implement a system for regular monitoring and evaluation. This system should track progress, identify areas for improvement, and measure the impact of gender-sensitive initiatives. Feedback from staff and stakeholders should be incorporated into the evaluation process to continuously refine and enhance gender mainstreaming strategies.

6. Awareness Campaigns: In addition to formal training, awareness campaigns can help reinforce the importance of gender equality and social inclusion. These campaigns can include workshops, seminars, newsletters, and posters that highlight success stories, best practices, and the benefits of a gender-sensitive approach. Engaging staff through various communication channels can help keep gender issues at the forefront of organizational priorities.

7. Collaboration with Gender Experts and Organizations: Partnering with gender experts, NGOs, and other organizations that specialize in gender and social inclusion can provide valuable insights and resources. These partnerships can offer external training opportunities, access to research and best practices, and support for developing and implementing effective gender mainstreaming strategies. Table 3.1 Budget *Summary*

NO.	Activity	Cost (NLe)
1	Gender and Social Mainstream Capacity Building	233,620
2	Gender and Social Mainstream Awareness Campaign	85,635
3	Monitory and Evaluation	79,814
4	Leadership and Governance	63,851
5	Feedback Mechanism	9,577,650
6	Incentive and Recognition	159,628
	GRAND TOTAL	10,200,198

3.2.4 Inadequate Gender Disaggregated Data Collection

The lack of gender-disaggregated data and social impact assessments hampers our ability to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our programs from a gender and social inclusion perspective.

4.0 Concept of Gender and Social Mainstreaming

4.1 Gender and Social Mainstreaming

Gender and Social Mainstreaming is a strategy for institutionalizing and integrating gender perspective into the mainstream and all aspect of life. It was initiated as a response to the increase recognition that men and women do not have the same equal legal, social and economic rights. Adopted by the United Nations in 1997 and defined as: *“The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated”* It is a gendered tool for ensuring equitable and sustainable human development and has the potential for promoting women empowerment.

The concept for SALWACO's gender and social mainstreaming strategy is built on three core pillars:
Empowerment: Enhancing the capacity and opportunities for women and marginalized groups within the organization and in the communities served.

Equity: Ensuring equitable access to water services for all, regardless of gender, socio economic status, or location.

Engagement: Promoting active participation and leadership of women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes related to water management and service delivery.

4.2 Rationale

Table 4.1 Mission and Vision

Component	Description
Vision	Achieve gender and social equality to ensure sustainable, resilient, and inclusive water service delivery.
Mission	Mainstream gender and social considerations into all aspects of water service provision to enhance equity and improve outcomes for all stakeholders.

4.3 Gender and Social Mainstreaming Targets

Table 4.2. Strategic Pillars

Strategic Pillars	Key Actions	Expected Outcomes
Policy and Governance	- Develop and implement gender-sensitive policies and regulations.	- Policies and regulations that promote gender and social inclusion.
Capacity Building	- Conduct training programs to build capacity on gender and social inclusion for staff and community members.	- Enhanced skills and knowledge on gender and social inclusion among staff and community members.
Community Engagement	- Facilitate inclusive community participation in water management decisions.	- Increased involvement of women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes.
Service Delivery	- Ensure equitable access to water services, prioritizing marginalized and vulnerable populations.	- Improved access to water services for all, especially for marginalized groups.
Monitoring and Evaluation	- Establish systems to monitor and evaluate gender and social inclusion impacts.	- Regular reports and data on gender and social inclusion progress, guiding continuous improvement.

Table 4.3 Enabling Factors

Enabling Factors	Key Actions	Expected Outcomes
Leadership and Commitment	- Secure commitment from top management to support gender and social mainstreaming initiatives.	- Strong leadership driving gender and social equality objectives.
Funding and Resources	- Allocate adequate resources for gender and social inclusion programs.	- Sufficient funding and resources to implement gender and social mainstreaming activities effectively.
Partnerships and Collaborations	- Collaborate with NGOs, international organizations, and government bodies to enhance gender and social initiatives.	- Strengthened partnerships that enhance the effectiveness and reach of gender and social inclusion efforts.

Table 4.4 Accountability Mechanisms

Accountability Mechanisms	Key Actions	Expected Outcomes
Transparent Reporting	- Implement transparent reporting mechanisms for gender and social inclusion metrics.	- Increased transparency and accountability in gender and social mainstreaming efforts.
Feedback Systems	- Establish feedback channels for employees and community members to voice concerns and suggestions on gender and social inclusion in service delivery and project implementation.	- Active feedback loops that inform continuous improvement and responsiveness to stakeholder needs.
Performance Incentives	- Create incentives and recognition programs for departments and individuals who excel in promoting gender and social equality.	- Motivated staff and departments working towards achieving gender and social inclusion goals.

5. Shaping the SALWACO 2024-2027 Gender and Social Strategy

To shape the 2024-2027 strategy, SALWACO will focus on the following key areas:

Table 5.1 SALWACO Ambition 2024-2027

Year	Outcome	Drivers of Change	Internal Accountability
2024	Increased awareness and initial implementation of gender and social mainstreaming strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building workshops and training for staff on gender and social inclusion - Initiation of gender-sensitive policy formulation - Engagement with stakeholders on gender and social issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of a Gender and Social Inclusion (GSI) task force - Introduction of internal monitoring and reporting mechanisms on GSI progress
2025	Strengthened institutional frameworks for gender and social equality Increase the proportion of women in technical and leadership roles within SALWACO by 30%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development and implementation of gender-responsive budgeting - Enhanced partnerships with local and international gender -focused organizations - Public awareness campaigns on gender equality in water services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular internal audits and evaluations on GSI initiatives - Setting up of departmental GSI targets and performance indicators
2026	Embedded gender and social inclusion in all service delivery processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration of gender and social inclusion criteria in all project planning and execution - Expansion of community engagement programs to include women and marginalized groups - Continuous professional development on gender and inclusion for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacitation of a dedicated GSI unit within SALWACO - Annual reviews and public reporting on GSI achievements and challenges
2027	Sustainable and inclusive service delivery with measurable gender and social impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data-driven decision making using gender-disaggregated data - Strengthening feedback mechanisms from beneficiaries, focusing on women and marginalized communities - Policy advocacy for gender and social inclusion at national level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institutionalization of GSI policies and practices across all levels of SALWACO - Performance-based incentives for achieving GSI goals

6. Implementing the Gender Strategy

The implementation of SALWACO's gender and social strategy will involve a comprehensive and systematic approach to ensure effective integration and measurable progress. The following steps outline the core components of this implementation:

6.1 Leadership and Governance

- **Establish a Gender and Social Inclusion Committee:** Form a dedicated committee responsible for overseeing the implementation and progress of the gender and social inclusion strategy. This committee should include representatives from various departments and levels within the organization to ensure diverse perspectives and comprehensive oversight.
- **Ensure Senior Management Accountability:** Hold senior management accountable for achieving gender and social inclusion goals by incorporating these objectives into their performance evaluations and organizational key performance indicators (KPIs). Leadership should actively champion and support gender inclusion initiatives to set a positive example.

6.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Develop a Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:** Create a robust framework to track the impact of gender and social inclusion initiatives. This framework should include specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) indicators to assess progress.
- **Conduct Regular Assessments:** Implement regular assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy and identify areas for improvement. These assessments should involve both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews.
- **Publish Transparent Reports:** Ensure transparency by regularly publishing reports on gender and social inclusion metrics. These reports should be accessible to all stakeholders, including employees, management, and the public, to foster accountability and trust.

6.3 Employee Feedback Mechanisms

- **Create Channels for Employee Feedback:** Establish multiple channels for employees to provide feedback on gender and social inclusion initiatives. These channels could include anonymous surveys, suggestion boxes, focus groups, and regular town hall meetings.
- **Use Feedback for Continuous Improvement:** Actively use employee feedback to refine and adapt the gender and social inclusion strategy. Ensure that feedback loops are closed by communicating how the feedback has been used to make changes and improvements.

6.4 Incentives and Recognition

- **Introduce Reward Systems:** Implement reward systems that recognize and celebrate departments and individuals who significantly contribute to gender and social inclusion

objectives. These rewards could include bonuses, public recognition, promotions, and other incentives.

- **Celebrate Successes and Share Best Practices:** Regularly celebrate successes and milestones achieved in gender and social inclusion. Share best practices and success stories across the organization to inspire and motivate employees, and to highlight effective strategies and initiatives.

6.5 Capacity Building and Training

- **Provide Training Programs:** Offer regular training programs and workshops on gender sensitivity, unconscious bias, and inclusive practices to all employees. Ensure that training is ongoing and evolves with emerging issues and best practices.
- **Develop Leadership Skills:** Focus on developing leadership skills among women and underrepresented groups through mentorship programs, leadership training, and professional development opportunities.

6.6 Policy and Practice Review

- **Review and Update Policies:** Regularly review and update organizational policies to ensure they promote gender equality and social inclusion. This includes policies related to recruitment, retention, promotion, and work-life balance.
- **Integrate Gender and Social Inclusion into All Practices:** Ensure that gender and social inclusion principles are integrated into all organizational practices, including project planning, decision-making, and resource allocation.

6.7 Stakeholder Engagement

- **Engage with External Stakeholders:** Collaborate with external stakeholders, including Government agencies, Development Partners, International and Local NGOs and community groups, to support and enhance gender and social inclusion efforts. Engage with these stakeholders to share knowledge, resources, and best practices.
- **Promote Public Awareness:** Raise public awareness about SALWACO's commitment to gender and social inclusion through communication campaigns, community outreach, and public events.

7. Conclusion

SALWACO's strategy for gender and social mainstreaming aims to accelerate progress towards gender and social equality, ensuring that water services are sustainable, resilient, and inclusive. By addressing historic and ongoing challenges, leveraging a robust conceptual framework, and implementing targeted actions, SALWACO is committed to creating an environment where all individuals have

equal access to opportunities and services. This strategy not only aligns with National Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy (2021), National Medium Term Development Plan (2024-2030) and international gender and social inclusion goals but also positions SALWACO as a leader in promoting equitable service delivery in Sierra Leone.

8.0 Index

Table 8.1 SALWACO Staff Disaggregated Gender Data

Category	F	M	Total	Female %	Male %
Management	8	28	36	22.2	77.8
Officers/Engineer	22	35	57	38.6	61.4
Assist./Billing Clerk	8	14	22	36.4	63.6
Technicians	1	17	18	5.6	94.4
Plumbers	1	11	12	8.3	91.7
Drivers		21	21	0.0	100.0
Laborers/Cleaners		10	10	0.0	100.0
Security		3	3	0.0	100.0
Total	40	139	179	22.3	77.7

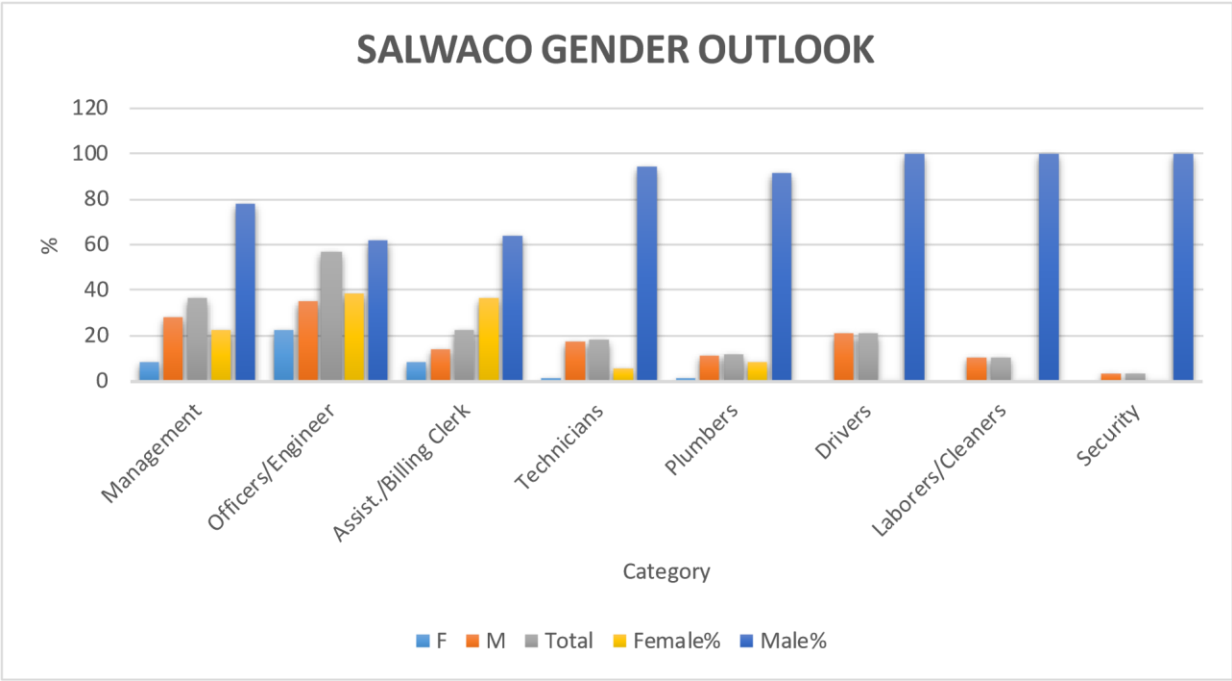


Figure 8.1 SALWACO Gender Outlooks

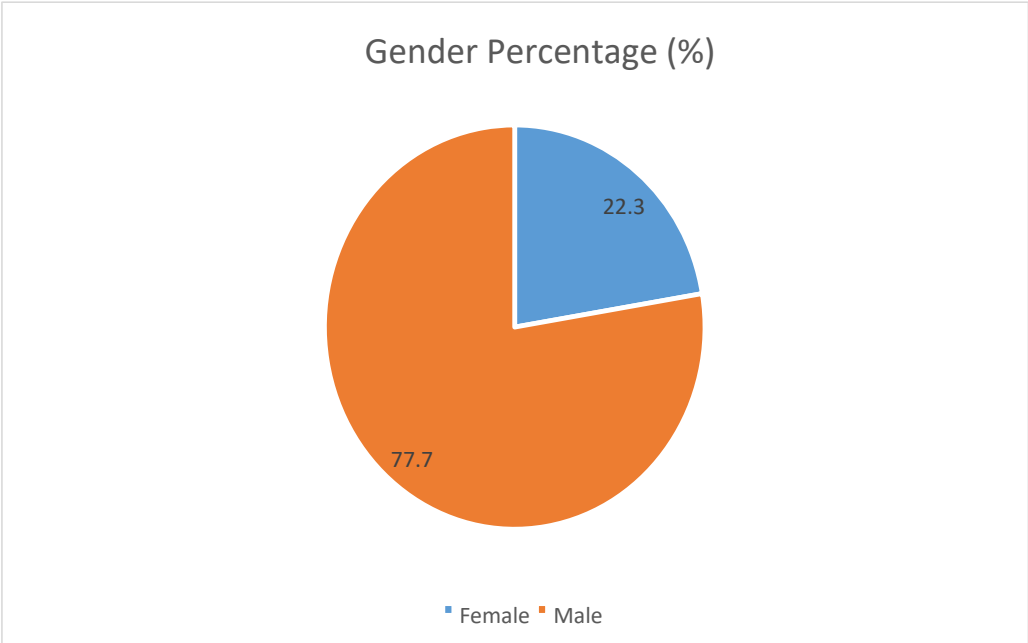


Figure 8.2 SALWACO Gender Percentages

Signed:

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 Chairman, Board of Directors
 Ing. Mohamed A Jalloh

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 Managing Director
 Ing. George Lamin Vand