MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

CONSULTANCY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SIERRA LEONE NATIONAL EXPORT POLICY

PROCUREMENT NUMBER: MTI/OSPS/EOI/SLNEP/NCB/001/2026

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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Sierra Leone's economy remains heavily reliant on the export of a narrow range of primary commodities, principally minerals such as rutile, iron ore, diamonds and bauxite, alongside limited volumes of agricultural produce including cocoa, coffee, cashew and cocoa by-products. This narrow export base exposes the country to significant terms-of-trade volatility, constrains foreign exchange earnings, and limits the domestic value addition and employment gains that a more diversified export economy could generate. Strengthening export diversification therefore requires not only expanding access to international markets but also positioning Sierra Leonean enterprises to participate more effectively in regional and continental value chains and markets.

The Government of Sierra Leone, through the Ministry of Trade and Industry, has articulated an ambitious trade and economic transformation agenda under the National Trade Strategy 2025–2030, National Export Strategy 2025-2030, Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan, and its commitments as a State Party to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). At the regional level, Sierra Leone's participation in the ECOWAS common market provides opportunities to strengthen intra-regional trade, develop regional value chains and build the productive and export capacity of Sierra Leonean enterprises as a pathway to greater participation in continental markets under the AfCFTA. Complementary institutional reforms, including the establishment of the National Investment Board and its Investment and Export Promotion Directorate (successor to the former Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency, SLIEPA), the Finance Act 2025, and ongoing work of the Sierra Leone Local Content Agency, have begun to reposition the country as a more competitive investment and trade destination.

Despite this progress, Sierra Leone does not currently have a single, coherent National Export Policy that consolidates export diversification priorities, identifies strategic value chains with potential for regional, continental and international market integration for public and private investment, addresses binding supply-side and trade facilitation constraints, and sets out a coordinated institutional architecture for export promotion. In the absence of such a policy, export promotion initiatives risk remaining fragmented across ministries, departments and agencies, with limited coherence, sequencing, or measurable results.

It is against this background that the Ministry of Trade and Industry with technical and financial support from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), seeks to engage a qualified consultant or consulting firm to lead the development of a comprehensive, evidence-based National Export Policy for Sierra Leone.

2. RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION

The development of a National Export Policy is justified on the following grounds:

- Sierra Leone's continued dependence on a narrow range of primary exports exposes the economy to price shocks and constrains sustainable growth in foreign exchange earnings and government revenue.

- Sierra Leone's participation in the ECOWAS regional market, the entry into force of AfCFTA and its participation in the Guided Trade Initiative create new market access opportunities that require a deliberate national strategy to identify and prioritise export-ready and export-potential products and value chains.

- Institutional responsibility for export promotion, quality standards, trade facilitation and value chain development is currently distributed across multiple agencies; a National Export Policy will provide the coordinating framework needed to align these mandates.

- A clear, costed and time-bound policy strengthens Sierra Leone's ability to attract private investment and development partner support for export infrastructure, value addition and trade facilitation.

- A National Export Policy will provide the evidentiary and institutional basis for Sierra Leone to negotiate and implement preferential trade arrangements, including under AfCFTA, ECOWAS, and other bilateral and multilateral trading relationships, from a position of clearly defined national interest.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

3.1 Overall Objective

To develop a comprehensive, evidence-based National Export Policy that diversifies and strengthens Sierra Leone's export base, enhances the competitiveness of priority value chains, and positions the country to maximise the benefits of AfCFTA, ECOWAS and other trade arrangements.

3.2 Specific Objectives

1. Conduct a diagnostic assessment of Sierra Leone's current export performance, competitiveness, and structural constraints, including analysis of trade data, revealed comparative advantage, and binding supply-side, infrastructure, and trade facilitation constraints affecting participation in regional, continental and international markets.

2. Identify and prioritise strategic export value chains, both traditional (minerals, cocoa, coffee, cashew) and non-traditional (agro-processing, fisheries, light manufacturing, services and creative industries), based on rigorous economic criteria including growth potential, employment generation, value addition opportunities, regional and continental value-chain linkages, and market demand.
3. Define strategic pillars, policy objectives, and priority interventions for export diversification, value addition, quality infrastructure, export finance, and trade facilitation.

4. Assess and make recommendations on export incentives, tax and non-tax measures, and their alignment with the Finance Act, Local Content Agency Act, and investment promotion framework administered by the National Investment Board.

5. Develop an institutional coordination mechanism clarifying the roles of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, National Investment Board, Sierra Leone Standards Bureau, Sierra Leone Revenue Authority (Customs), Bank of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

6. Produce a costed implementation roadmap (2026–2030) with clear indicators, sequencing, and resourcing requirements, aligned to the National Trade Strategy 2024–2030.

7. Design a monitoring and evaluation framework, including baseline export performance indicators disaggregated by product, destination market, and enterprise size.

8. Facilitate validation of the draft policy through structured consultations with the public sector, private sector and exporter associations, development partners, and civil society.

4. POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT

The National Export Policy shall be developed in demonstrable alignment with, and shall not duplicate, the following instruments and frameworks. The consultant shall produce an explicit alignment matrix as part of the deliverables:

4.1 National Trade Strategy 2024–2030

The National Export Policy shall operationalise the export diversification and competitiveness priorities already articulated in the National Trade Strategy 2024–2030, translating high-level strategic direction into a detailed, sequenced policy instrument with defined institutional ownership.

4.2 AfCFTA Agreement and Sierra Leone's Regional Commitments

The policy shall reflect Sierra Leone's tariff offer schedules, rules of origin obligations, and participation in the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative, and shall identify concrete measures to help Sierra Leonean exporters meet AfCFTA market access requirements, including within the Mano River Union and wider ECOWAS market.

4.3 Investment, Local Content and Finance Legislation

The policy shall align with the mandate of the National Investment Board and its Investment and Export Promotion Directorate, the Local Content Agency Act 2016, and relevant provisions of the Finance Act, ensuring that export incentives and local content requirements are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory.

Where the consultant identifies gaps, overlaps, or inconsistencies between the mandates of export-related institutions, or between existing legal instruments as they affect exporters, the policy shall include specific, actionable recommendations for institutional or legal harmonisation, for consideration by the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

5. SCOPE OF WORK AND METHODOLOGY

The assignment shall be delivered through the following phased methodology:

Phase 1: Inception (Weeks 1)

- Desk review of the National Trade Strategy 2024–2030, AfCFTA Agreement, trade and export performance data, and relevant World Bank, AfDB, IMF, WTO, UNCTAD and ITC reports and diagnostics.

- Submission of an Inception Report, including refined methodology, stakeholder map, consultation plan, and detailed work plan.

Phase 2: Diagnostic and Value Chain Analysis (Weeks 2–3)

- Quantitative analysis of export performance, market concentration, and revealed comparative advantage across traditional and non-traditional sectors.

- Value chain assessments for priority sectors, including agro-processing, fisheries, minerals beneficiation, and light manufacturing.

- Consultations with exporters, producer associations, financial institutions, port and customs authorities, and relevant ministries, departments and agencies.

- Preparation of a Diagnostic and Value Chain Prioritisation Report.

Phase 3: Policy Formulation (Weeks 4–6)

- Drafting of policy pillars, objectives, and priority interventions across export diversification, quality infrastructure, trade finance, and trade facilitation.
- Development of the institutional coordination mechanism and costed implementation roadmap.
- Design of the monitoring and evaluation framework and baseline indicators.
- Submission of a Draft National Export Policy for internal Ministry review.

Phase 4: Validation and Finalisation (Weeks 6–7)

- Facilitation of a multi-stakeholder validation workshop with public and private sector representatives.
- Incorporation of feedback and submission of the Final National Export Policy, together with an Executive Summary Brief for ministerial and Cabinet-level use.

6. KEY DELIVERABLES

No.	Deliverable	Timeline
1	Inception Report with methodology, work plan and stakeholder map	End of Week 1
2	Diagnostic and Value Chain Prioritisation Report	End of Week 3
3	Draft National Export Policy	End of Week 4
4	Validation Workshop Report	Week 6
5	Final National Export Policy, Costed Implementation Roadmap, M&E Framework and Executive Summary Brief	End of Week 7

7. CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE

The Ministry seeks a Lead Consultant (individual or firm) with the following minimum qualifications:

- Advanced degree (Master's or higher) in International Trade, Economics, Development Studies, or a closely related field.
- Minimum of ten (10) years of professional experience in trade and export policy, with demonstrated experience developing national export strategies or policies for a government or regional body.
- Strong technical grounding in value chain analysis, trade competitiveness diagnostics, and export promotion institutional design.
- Demonstrated familiarity with the AfCFTA Agreement, ECOWAS trade regime, and West African trade and investment environment; direct experience in Sierra Leone is an advantage.
- Excellent facilitation, stakeholder engagement, and report-writing skills in English.
- Prior experience working with the AfCFTA Secretariat, World Bank, AfDB, ITC, UNCTAD, or ECOWAS Commission is an added advantage.

8. REPORTING AND SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS

The Consultant will report to the Ministry of Trade and Industry in collaboration with the assigned ECOWAS focal point and UNDP focal point from the country.
The Consultant shall also work under the technical oversight of a National Export Policy Steering Committee. A Technical Reference Group comprising representatives of the National Investment Board, Sierra Leone Standards Bureau, Sierra Leone Revenue Authority, Bank of Sierra Leone, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, and the Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce and Industry shall review all deliverables prior to their approval by the Ministry.

9. DURATION AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The assignment shall be completed within fourteen (6) weeks of contract signature. Payment shall be made in tranches linked to the achievement and formal acceptance of deliverables, as follows:

- 15% upon submission and approval of the Inception Report.
- 25% upon submission and approval of the Diagnostic and Value Chain Prioritisation Report.

- 30% upon submission and approval of the Draft National Export Policy.
- 30% upon submission and approval of the Final National Export Policy, Roadmap, M&E Framework and Executive Summary Brief.

10. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Criterion	Weight

Relevant qualifications and technical expertise in trade and export policy	25%
Demonstrated experience in value chain analysis and export strategy development	25%
Quality, clarity and feasibility of proposed methodology and work plan	20%
Familiarity with Sierra Leone's trade, investment and institutional environment	15%
Financial proposal and value for money	15%

11. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Interested consultants and firms should submit the following to the Ministry of Trade and Industry by the deadline specified in the accompanying request for expressions of interest:

- Technical proposal, including understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology, and work plan.
- Curriculum vitae(e) of the Lead Consultant and any proposed team members.
- At least two references and samples of previous, comparable assignments.
- Financial proposal, inclusive of all professional fees and reimbursable expenses.
- A Copy of Valid Business licence
- A copy of NRA Tax Clearance certificate
- A Copy of Valid NASSIT Clearance

Interested Service provider may obtain detail information from the Acting Director Foreign Trade and Regional Integration, Ministry of Trade and Industry 6th floor Youyi Building Freetown e-mail….marktambanyuma2015@gmail.com starting 16th September, 2026 between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm Mondays to Fridays.

The seal EOI must be delivered to the address below on or before 29th September, 2026

Note:

Late EOIs will be rejected and returned unopened.

The Procurement Department
Ministry of Trade and Industry
6th floor Youyi Building Freetown
Sierra Leone.
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