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Case Study: Sierra Leone

Strengthening National Planning Systems through Integrated Data Ecosystems



From Reporting to Performance

Strengthening National Planning Systems through Integrated Data Ecosystems

Sierra Leone – National Development Tracker (SLNDT)

Executive Summary

The Government of Sierra Leone, led by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MOPED), implemented the National Development Tracker (SLNDT) to strengthen monitoring and performance management of the Medium-Term National Development Plan. Moving from fragmented Excel-based reporting to an integrated national system, SLNDT enables real-time visibility of 600+ indicators across government. The initiative has improved coordination, accountability, and leadership engagement, while embedding data use within government processes. Designed with a focus on institutional ownership and sustainability, the system is fully government-led and serves as a scalable model for strengthening national planning systems.

1. Context and Initial Situation

The Government of Sierra Leone, through the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MOPED), is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP), with technical support from partners including UNICEF.

Prior to the introduction of the National Development Tracker, monitoring relied primarily on Excel-based reporting across Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

This approach resulted in:

- Delayed and inconsistent reporting
- Non-standardised data formats, limiting aggregation and comparability
- Limited analytical use of data for decision-making
- Low visibility for leadership and development partners

At this scale, Excel-based processes were no longer adequate for national-level monitoring.

Sierra Leone National Development Tracker (SLNDT) – At a Glance

- **Government lead:** Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MOPED)
- **Technical support:** Community Systems Foundation (CSF), with support from UNICEF
- **Coverage:** 27 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)
- **Scope:** 600+ indicators from the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP)
- **Function:** Tracks both indicators and projects aligned to national priorities
- **System:** Centralised national platform, publicly accessible
- **Use:** Supports performance monitoring, reporting, and decision-making
- **Outcome:** Strengthened coordination, accountability, and visibility of national performance

2. Intervention

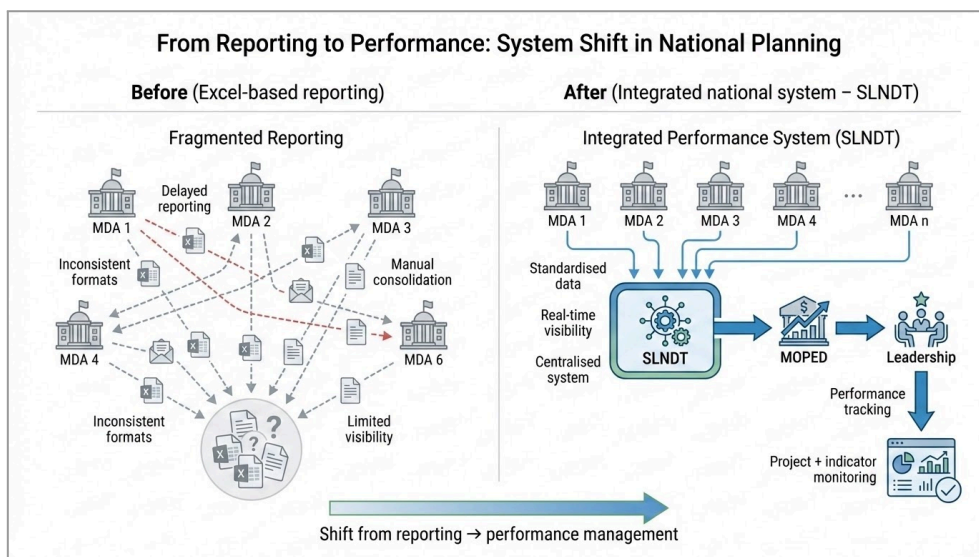
The Government of Sierra Leone, led by MOPED, drove the design and implementation of the National Development Tracker (SLNDT) as part of a broader effort to strengthen national planning and performance management systems. Community Systems Foundation (CSF) provided technical support aligned with government-defined priorities.

The intervention combined:

- A centralised platform for monitoring MTNDP indicators and projects
- Co-design with MDAs to align indicators, data flows, and responsibilities
- User Acceptance Testing (UAT) and validation workshops
- Sustained post-launch support, including training, follow-up, and technical assistance

MOPED led coordination, capacity building, and enforcement of reporting processes.

The approach focused on - establishing standardised data structures, clear reporting processes, and institutional ownership. The shift introduced by SLNDT is illustrated below.



The transition was not only technological, but institutional—from fragmented reporting to an integrated performance management system driving accountability and decision-making.

3. System Functionality

The SLNDT provides a unified platform to:

- Track 600+ MTNDP indicators across all MDAs
- Monitor projects aligned to national priorities
- Assess progress against targets over time
- Compare performance across sectors
- Visualise budget allocation across districts and priorities
- Align indicators with SDGs and regional frameworks
- Map development partner contributions to national results

The platform is publicly accessible and serves as a single reference point for national development performance.

4. Results, Impact and Sustainability

The introduction of SLNDT has resulted in clear institutional improvements:

4.1 Improved Reporting and Standardisation

- Increased frequency and consistency of reporting across MDAs
- Standardised data structures enabling aggregation and comparison
- Elimination of manual Excel consolidation processes

4.2 Strengthened Coordination

- Clearer roles and responsibilities across MDAs
- Improved alignment between ministries through a shared reporting framework

4.3 Increased Leadership Engagement

- Senior leadership actively uses the system to review performance
- Increased accountability of MDAs for timely data submission
- Performance tracking is now part of regular decision-making processes

4.4 Enhanced Transparency and Partner Confidence

- Government is able to consolidate and communicate results in a structured manner
- Improved visibility of progress against national priorities
- Clear linkage between development partner contributions and national outcomes

4.5 National Ownership

- The solution is anchored to policy with links to MTNDP reporting requirements
- Partners are supporting institutionalization (budget, staffing, mandates)
- MOPED fully leads system use, coordination, and capacity building
- MDAs actively engage with the platform
- The system is embedded within government processes rather than operating as a parallel tool

4.6 Sustainability

- The system is institutionally embedded within MOPED and national reporting frameworks
- Government staff are trained to manage, update, and maintain the system
- The platform leverages existing infrastructure, minimizing recurring costs
- No parallel systems—SLNDT replaces fragmented processes rather than adding new ones

The platform is now widely used as a reference point for national progress, including at senior leadership level. What's left is to observe and document evidence of behavior change.

5. Key Success Factors

The following elements were critical to the success of the initiative:

- Strong government leadership, with MOPED in a central coordinating role
- Early alignment on indicators, data flows, and responsibilities through co-design
- Iterative validation through UAT and stakeholder workshops
- Sustained post-launch engagement, including regular follow-up and hands-on support
- Focus on data structures, governance, and workflows, not only technology

6. Replicability and Scalability

The approach adopted in Sierra Leone has been successfully applied in multiple country contexts, including: Malawi, Jamaica, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Tunisia, and Algeria

The model is replicable due to:

- Use of modular and configurable digital platforms
- Established methodologies for institutional alignment and co-design
- Ability to adapt to different planning frameworks and governance structures

It supports:

- Rapid deployment
- Reduction of duplication across systems
- More efficient use of existing resources

7. Strategic Relevance

Strengthening national planning systems is increasingly critical in a context of:

- Constrained public financing
- Increased demand for accountability
- Alignment with global and regional development frameworks

Systems such as SLNDR enable governments to:

- Track implementation in a structured and timely manner
- Improve coordination across institutions
- Strengthen evidence-based decision-making
- Provide a foundation for advanced analytics and future AI applications

8. Conclusion

The Sierra Leone experience demonstrates that strengthening national planning systems is fundamentally an institutional reform, not just a technological upgrade. With MOPED at the center, the National Development Tracker (SLNDR) is fully embedded within government processes, enabling consistent reporting, stronger coordination, and routine use of data for decision-making. This government-led approach has ensured sustainability by building internal capacity, aligning with national frameworks, and eliminating parallel systems. As a result, Sierra Leone is better equipped to monitor performance, allocate resources effectively, and demonstrate results. The model provides a practical, scalable pathway for other countries seeking to transition from fragmented reporting to integrated, performance-driven planning systems.