

## Concept Note 1

### Infrastructure for Access to Market

#### **A. Strategic context of the project**

The Government of Sierra Leone launched its second Poverty Reduction Strategy paper for 2008-2012 (PRSP II) the “Agenda for Change,” with a focus on four key priorities: energy; transportation; agriculture; and human development. Following the commencement or completion of several large road and energy infrastructure projects, agriculture has been identified as the President’s top priority. This has been reflected in steadily increasing public investment in the sector, with a budget allocation at 9.9 percent in 2010 and expected to increase to 10 percent in the near future. In September 2009, the Government launched NSADP, the Country Compact under the CAADP. The vision of the NSADP is to make agriculture the engine for socioeconomic growth and development through commercial agriculture. More specifically, its aim is to provide short, medium and long term Investment Programmes to increase commercialisation of the sector and promote “farming as a business.” The Smallholder Commercialisation Programme (SCP) is identified as the priority to delivery this goal.

9. In addition to the CAADP and NSADP, the Government has in place a number of other policies to support the agriculture sector. The Decentralisation Policy has been revised and the Local Government Act (2004) approved into law, to accelerate the transfer of power to local communities and chiefdoms, and enhance service delivery to small farmers through an ongoing process of devolution of technical and financial resources. With a view to supporting small farmers to make the transition toward commercialisation, the Government’s Private Sector Development Strategy has been put in place, focusing on (i) improving access to finance; (ii) improving the legal and regulatory framework; (iii) promoting and supporting entrepreneurship; (iv) making markets work better; and (v) improving physical infrastructure. Agriculture is also one of the key target growth sectors in the National Export Strategy (2010-2015), including through the mobilisation of Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIPA). The Government has also made significant efforts to support its young population through establishing a number of initiatives to promote employment, such as the Youth Agricultural Farm Scheme.

10. Over the last decade, donor activity has been making a transition from post-conflict and emergency relief to longer-term development. After the war, donors and NGOs were primarily focused on resettlement and rehabilitation of farming land and rural communities, using project-based approaches. More recently donors shifted to more programmatic designs, and refocused activities towards building rural infrastructure including feeder roads.

#### **B. Justification**

28. The National Road System (NRS) includes 8,202 km of infrastructure. 6,038 km of feeder roads have been identified by the Ministry of Agriculture as agriculturally viable feeder roads that are required to be rehabilitated. Feeder roads are usually gravel/earth roads in rural areas connecting towns and villages to secondary and primary road systems and chiefdom headquarter towns. Physical infrastructure suffered heavily from the war, especially in the rural areas. For the past decade and a half, only 1,460 km of the classified feeder roads were

rehabilitated. In addition, only about 50 percent of the country's feeder roads have received some road maintenance over the past 10 years that would lead to meeting required standards.

29. The effectiveness and sustainability of past programmes for rural roads have been hampered by the lack of a coherent policy framework and institutional focus for planning, funding and maintenance. Through the provision of EU funds, the Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA), the responsible government agency for roads, has recently contracted consultants to prepare a National Feeder Roads Policy to set common standards for construction and rehabilitation. There is increased awareness of the critical importance of road transport to a productive agricultural sector. Increasing funding for the country's feeder road system will not only bring immediate and direct benefits to the farming population, but will generate increased private investment in the sector.

16. There are multiple constraints commercialising smallholder production. Higher levels of agricultural technology are not affordable due to low economic returns from commodities. There are a lack of rice milling facilities, feed mills and mechanics to ensure that farmers can benefit from sales of their final products and use of mechanized technologies. Fertilizer use at 4kg/ha compared to 9kg/ha for sub-Saharan Africa is low due to high prices and lack of commercial markets for fertilizable commodities such as rice. With some exceptions, these farmers produce low value commodities which have experienced declining real prices over the past decades and increasing competition from medium to large-scale producers. As such, the majority of smallholder families are trapped in a low-intensified production cycle, whereby many farmers produce the same commodities, using traditional, low input/output systems and invest little to gain greater productivity levels and profits.

### **C. Potential intervention zones and target groups**

Potential intervention areas include major lowland rice growing areas in Southern and Northern Regions of Sierra Leone – Port Loko, Kambia, Bombali, Tonkolili, Pujehun, Bonthe, Moyamba.

### **D. Main Objectives of the Project**

**Global objective:** To improve the ability of smallholders, market-oriented farmers and agribusinesses (including ABCs) to physically access to markets and to operate in a profitable way through the rehabilitation and effective maintenance of priority feeder roads.

#### **Specific Objectives:**

- To enhance marketing of rice
- To enhance movement of goods and services to and from production areas

### **E. Description of the Components, Outputs and Activities**

Component 1: Rehabilitation and construction of feeder roads

Component 2: Capacity building of communities in feeder roads development works

<b>Component</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1. Rehabilitation and construction of feeder roads	500 km feeder roads rehabilitated/constructed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Assess and identify priority feeder roads.</li><li>2. Develop bill of quantities.</li><li>3. Award contracts.</li></ol>
2. Capacity building of communities in feeder roads development works	Community members trained	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Organized training at national and regional levels in collaboration with SLRA</li><li>2. Provision of working tools for earth works</li></ol>

### **G. Implementation Strategy of the project**

The implementation strategy encompasses the following general considerations: (i) priority would be given to full rehabilitation and spot improvement of existing feeder roads instead of new construction; (ii) favouring labour-based methods (LBM) -combining use of labour and light machinery- wherever it is technically and economically feasible. (iii) rehabilitation and improvement feeder roads should reach the standard of all-weather road; (iv) attention would be given to capacity building of specialised contractors using LBM -both through refresher technical training for existing ones and training of new contractors (v) rehabilitation works

would be subject to agreements reached with District councils and concerned ward/communities with regards to the selection, organization and oversight. (vi) provision will be made to finance regular mechanized maintenance works (spot improvement) two to three years after rehabilitation works are carried out.

## **H. Project Organization and Management**

- MAFFS assumes overall responsibility for the project implementation
- SLRA provides technical support to the project
- District councils will provide oversight

## **I. Monitoring and Evaluation**

SLRA will provide quarterly technical report.

The District Agricultural Officers will produce monthly reports based on submissions of M&E officers in the District.

Local councils to carryout independent assessment of progress and report appropriately.

## **J. Risks**

- Willingness of the communities to participate fully in the project
- Favourable political climate for the implementation of the project
- Timely release of funds
- Contract award and service procurement are done on time
- Staff of various institutions are well motivated to participate in the project

Project/Program	Objectively Verifiable indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions/ Risks
1. Global objective:			
To improve the ability of smallholders, market-oriented farmers and agri-businesses (including ABCs) to physically access to markets and to operate in a profitable way through the rehabilitation and effective maintenance of priority feeder roads.	Amount of commodity and services reaching communities  Amount of produce reaching markets Post-harvest loss	Feeder roads developed  Production output  Farmer income increased	Quantity of rice reaching markets will increase by 30 – 40% for every 100 km feeder road developed
2. Specific Objective			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance marketing of rice</li> <li>• To enhance movement of goods and services to and from production areas</li> </ul>		Progress reports	Funds are made available
3.Outputs/Results			
<b>Component1: Rehabilitation and construction of feeder roads</b>			
1. . Assess and identify priority feeder roads.		Progress reports	
2. Develop bill of quantities.		Progress reports	
3. Award contracts		Progress reports	
<b>Component 2: Capacity building of communities in feeder roads development works</b>			
1. Organized training at national and regional levels in collaboration with SLRA			
2. Provision of working tools for earth works			