



# INTEGRATED SDG INSIGHTS REPORT SIERRA LEONE

This report provides analysis and insights in preparation for the SDG Summit and the foundation for effective policy implementation in the second half of the 2030 Agenda.



# SDG MOMENT: SIERRA LEONE

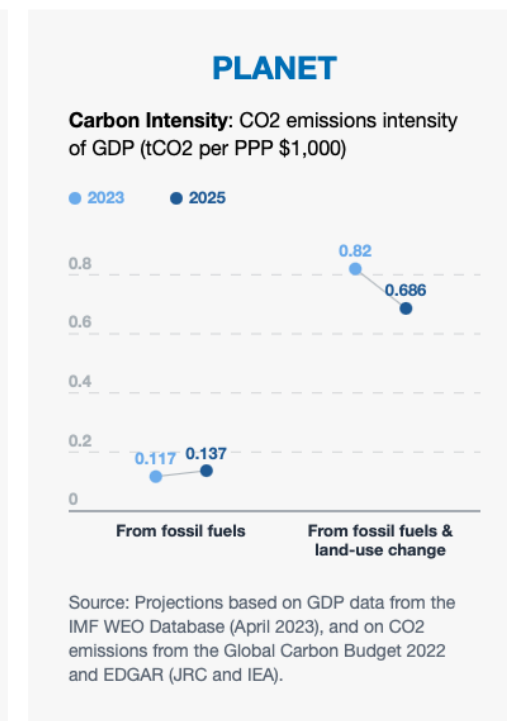
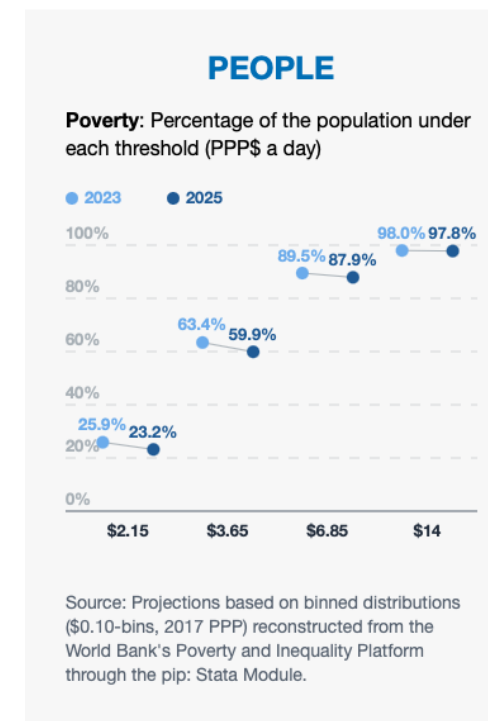
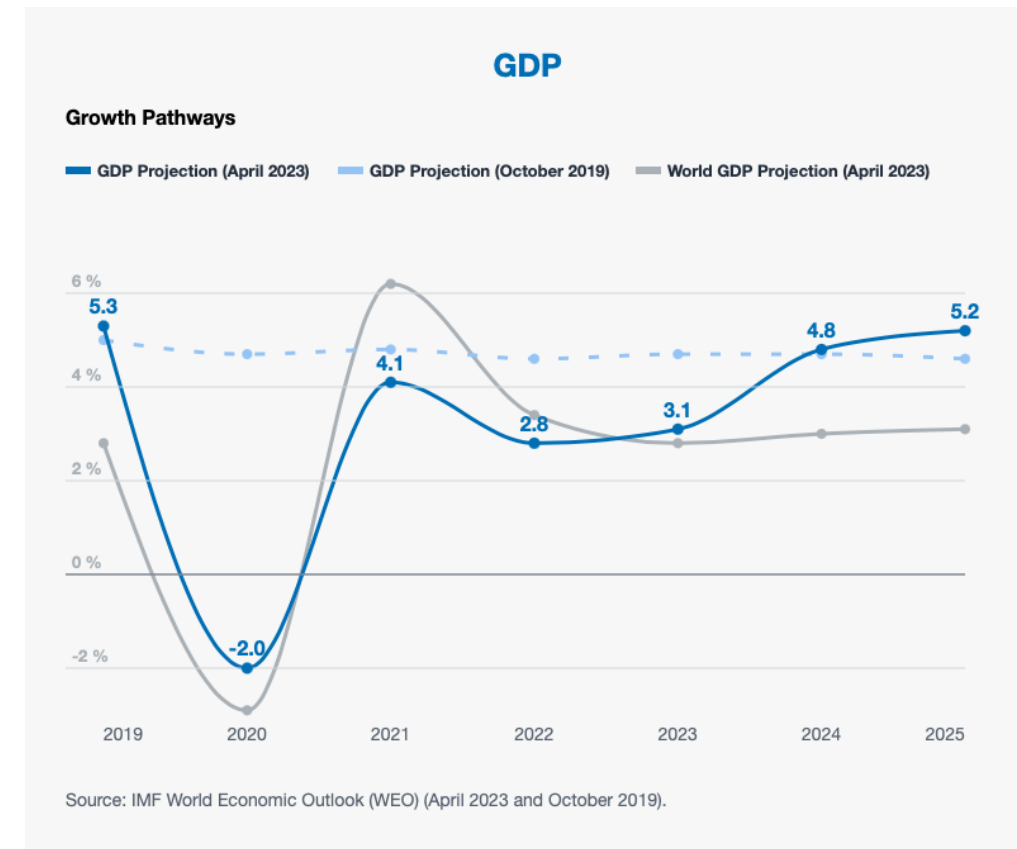
Economic growth serves as an enabler for the SDGs in the short term, while over time **the SDG agenda itself becomes a catalyst for pathways to inclusive and low-carbon growth.**

Sierra Leone’s economy is muddling through in 2023, but it is expected to transition into acceleration mode by 2024-2025.<sup>1</sup> This pace of growth is characterized by being 46% higher, on average, than that of the world, and projected to surpass the country’s growth trajectory forecast before the pandemic. Accordingly, Sierra Leone is committed to achieving the SDGs by transforming the country from a fragile state into a stable and prosperous democracy.

This pace of economic growth is expected to exert a positive effect on reducing poverty at \$2.15 and \$3.65 a day, although challenges remain given the long periods of internal conflict, military interventions, disease outbreaks and natural disasters. The economic expansion, on the other hand, would be increasingly dependent on carbon emissions, as the country’s carbon emissions intensity of GDP is expected to increase at an annual rate of 8.6% due to fossil fuel usage.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The economic cycle is determined by adjusting the country’s current GDP growth forecasts (April 2023) by their gap relative to the forecasts made before the pandemic and subsequent crises (October 2019). If the adjusted rates (not shown) are below 2% the economy is considered in mitigation; it is muddling through if the adjusted rates range between 2%-4%, and it is in acceleration if they are above 4%.

<sup>2</sup> CO2 emissions intensity of GDP is computed as tonnes of CO2 per \$1,000 (2017 PPP).



# SDG TRENDS

Understanding how Sierra Leone performs against the SDG targets provides a baseline landscape against which to build SDG policy pathways. SDG progress tracking follows [UN Stats](#) standards and [methodology](#), and is aligned with country profiles.



**Trends in detail:**  
<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/SLE/sdg-trends>

# SDG PRIORITIES

Sierra Leone’s national priorities are generated using machine learning to reveal the most prominent SDGs referenced in national policy documents. This analysis uses a custom-built model for SDG classification. It considers 100k+ terms, including phrases and expressions.



**Priorities in detail:**  
<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/SLE/current-priorities>

- Key documents for analysis:**
1. Sierra Leone Medium-term National Development Plan 2019-2023

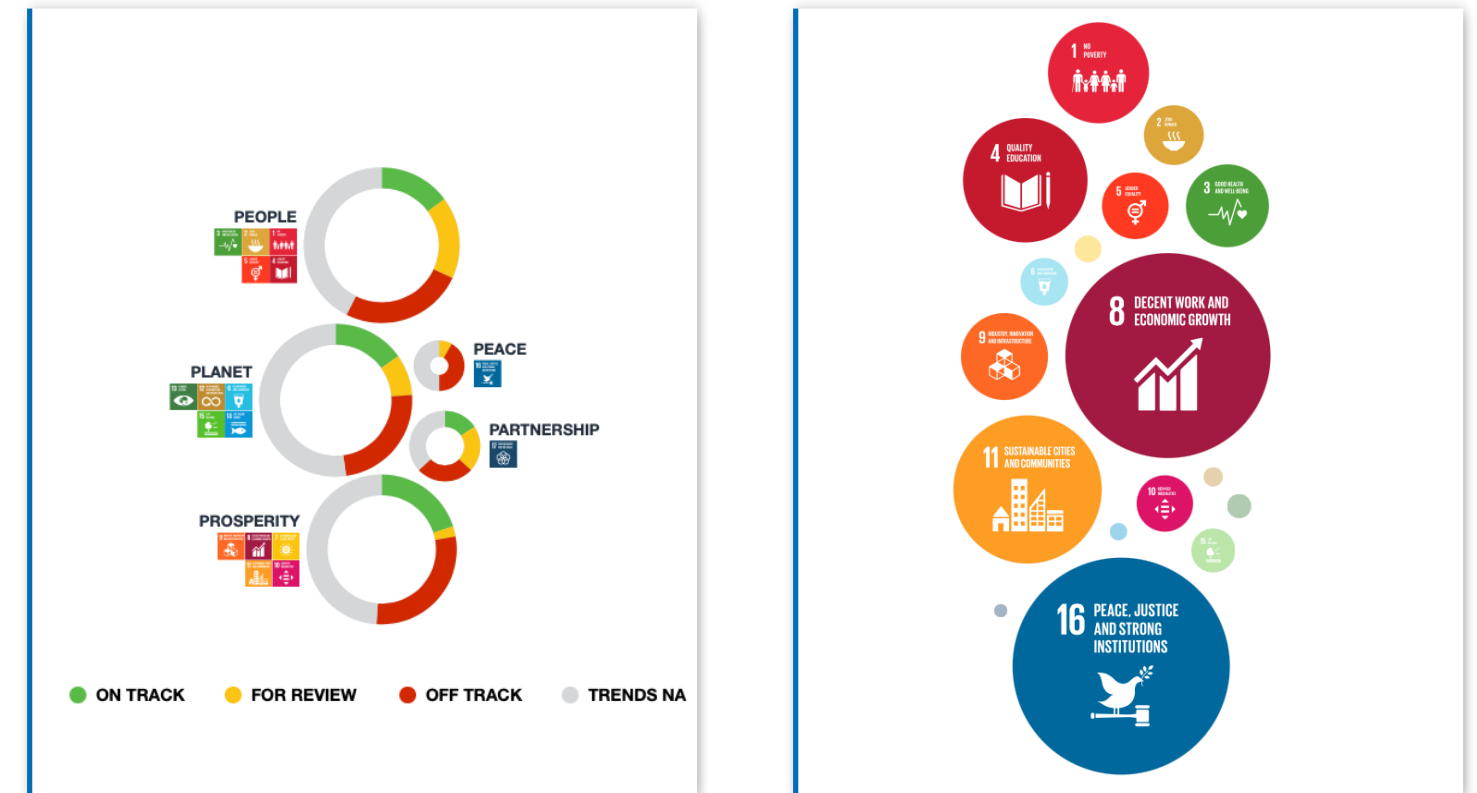
# SDG INTERLINKAGES

SDG Interlinkages reveal how actions directed towards one SDG can impact others. Uncovering and understanding these interactions can help Sierra Leone to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and navigate trade-offs.

Based on a global framework for interlinkages, Sierra Leone’s SDG progress is colour-coded at the target level. Building from national priorities, the following pathways reflect policy investments with the most potential to accelerate the SDGs for Sierra Leone:

- Target 8.5: Full employment and decent work with equal pay
- Target 11.2: Affordable and sustainable transport systems
- Target 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions

Note that the guidance for Member States is to identify a set of priority areas for investment and policy change that will help secure maximum progress across the SDGs. The 3 targets could form a basis for this. The other two include: setting a national benchmark for reducing poverty and inequality, and an overview of planned adjustments in national planning and institutional frameworks that will better support achieving the SDGs.



## ACCELERATION PATHWAYS



# SDG INTERLINKAGES

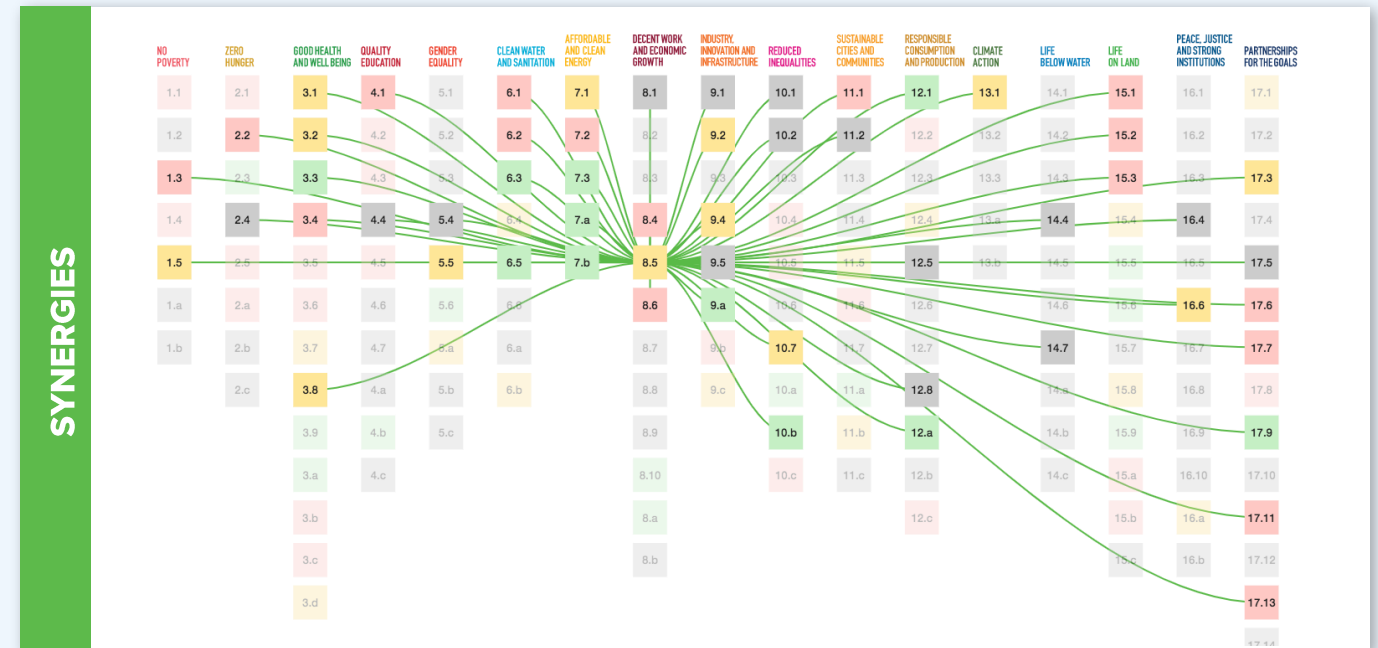
## 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

Sierra Leone has chosen to invest in its people as a pathway to attaining a middle-income status. That means nurturing a citizenry that is productive and contributing to the transformation of the country after long periods of internal conflict. It is not only about earning, it is also about dignity.

Nearly 60 percent of employed individuals aged 15 to 64 work in agricultural self-employment and formal well-paid manufacturing and services jobs are virtually non-existent.

Value added across all sectors and raising productivity in sectors where most of the labour force is found are critical avenues to advance full employment and decent work with equal pay. In addition, tracking sources of jobs and their drivers will enable the country to make the necessary adjustments.

● ON TRACK ● FOR REVIEW ● OFF TRACK ● TRENDS NA



Explore the interlinkages at:

<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/SLE/synergies-and-tradeoffs>



# SDG INTERLINKAGES

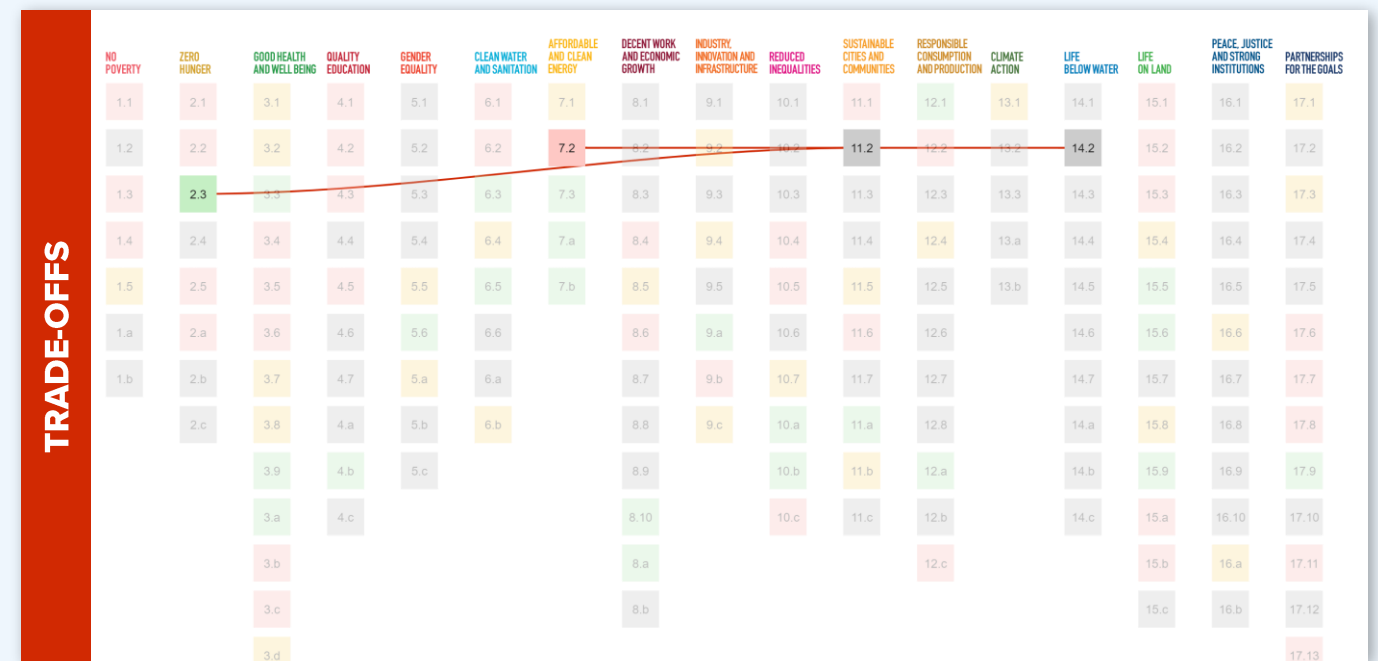
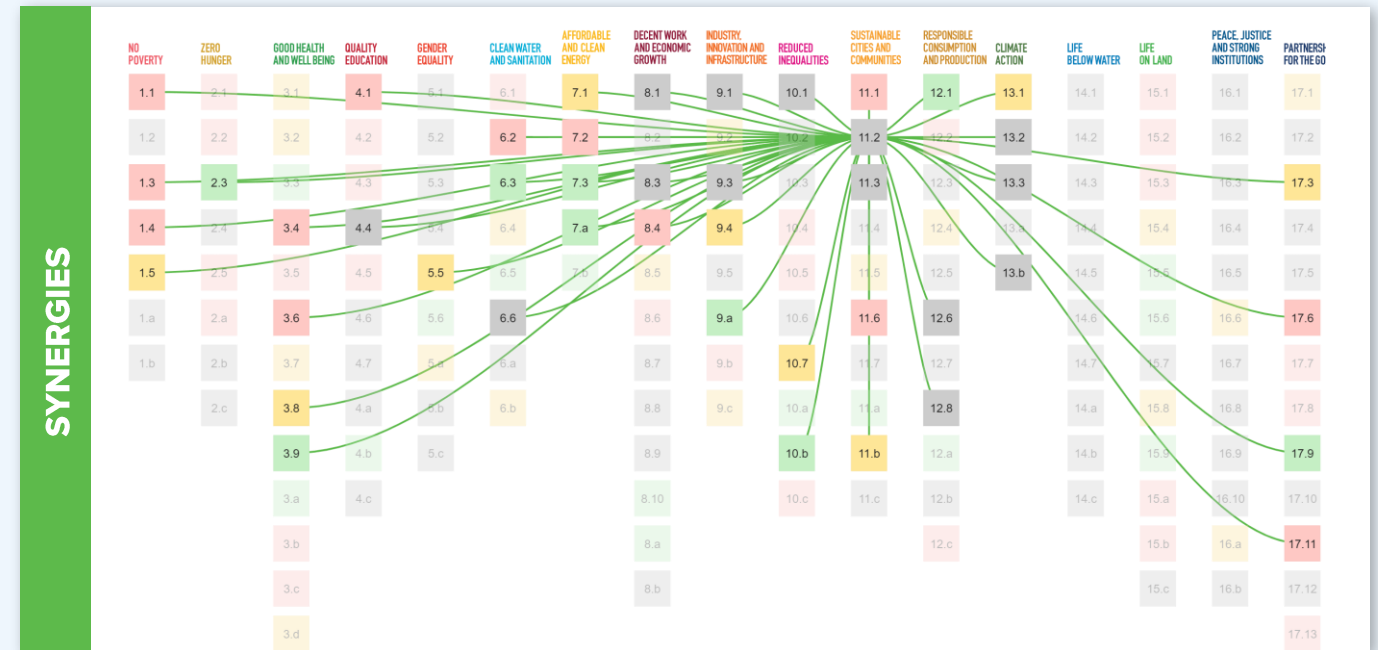
**11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons**

Transforming transportation systems is one way in which Sierra Leone wants to achieve the objective of developing quality infrastructure for economic competitiveness and socio-economic development. It is also compatible with the long-term agenda of becoming a middle-income country. Investments in critical infrastructure and transport systems to bolster private sector development are, however, stymied by the current fiscal strains.

While several policy actions are proposed, two seem to be low-hanging fruits: improving governance and strengthening oversight and coordination; and integrating and properly coordinating transportation infrastructure. Creating the right incentives to achieve these will likely drive improvement in affordable and sustainable transport systems.

Transport systems also provide another opportunity for Sierra Leone to green the transportation systems, which will also create jobs and drive the economy.

● ON TRACK ● FOR REVIEW ● OFF TRACK ● TRENDS NA



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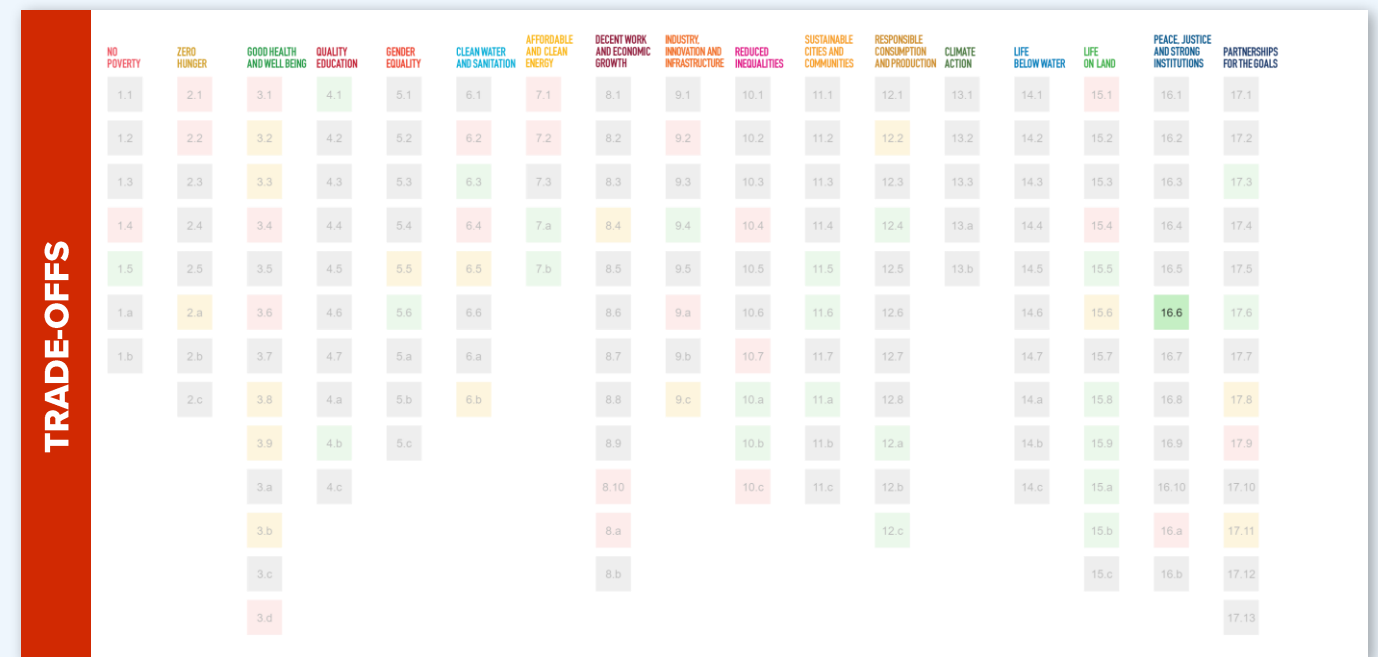
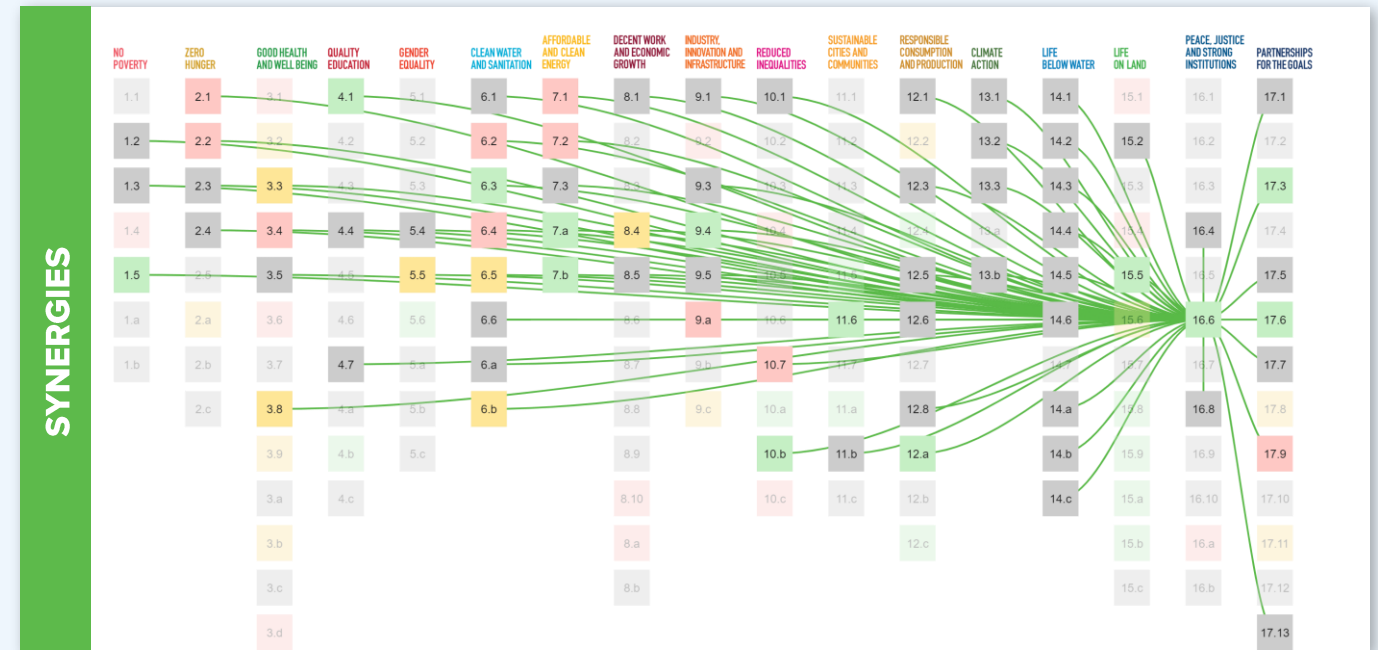
# SDG INTERLINKAGES

## 16.6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

Indeed, according to the Medium-term National Development Plan, the public service of Sierra Leone is the bedrock for the implementation and delivery of the government’s ideas and plans. A strong and capacitated public service is critical to achieving the nation’s development aspirations.

It is the target of Sierra Leone to improve the quality of social service delivery is available to every Sierra Leone. In view of its ambition to attain a middle-income status, it is important to expand this to other services that the nation deems will fasten its attainment. One of the key policy actions is to establish a National Civil Service Capacity Enhancement scheme. Its design to support the ambition of the nation will be critical, and will likely enable the accelerated delivery of Agenda 2063.

● ON TRACK ● FOR REVIEW ● OFF TRACK ● TRENDS NA



Explore the interlinkages at:

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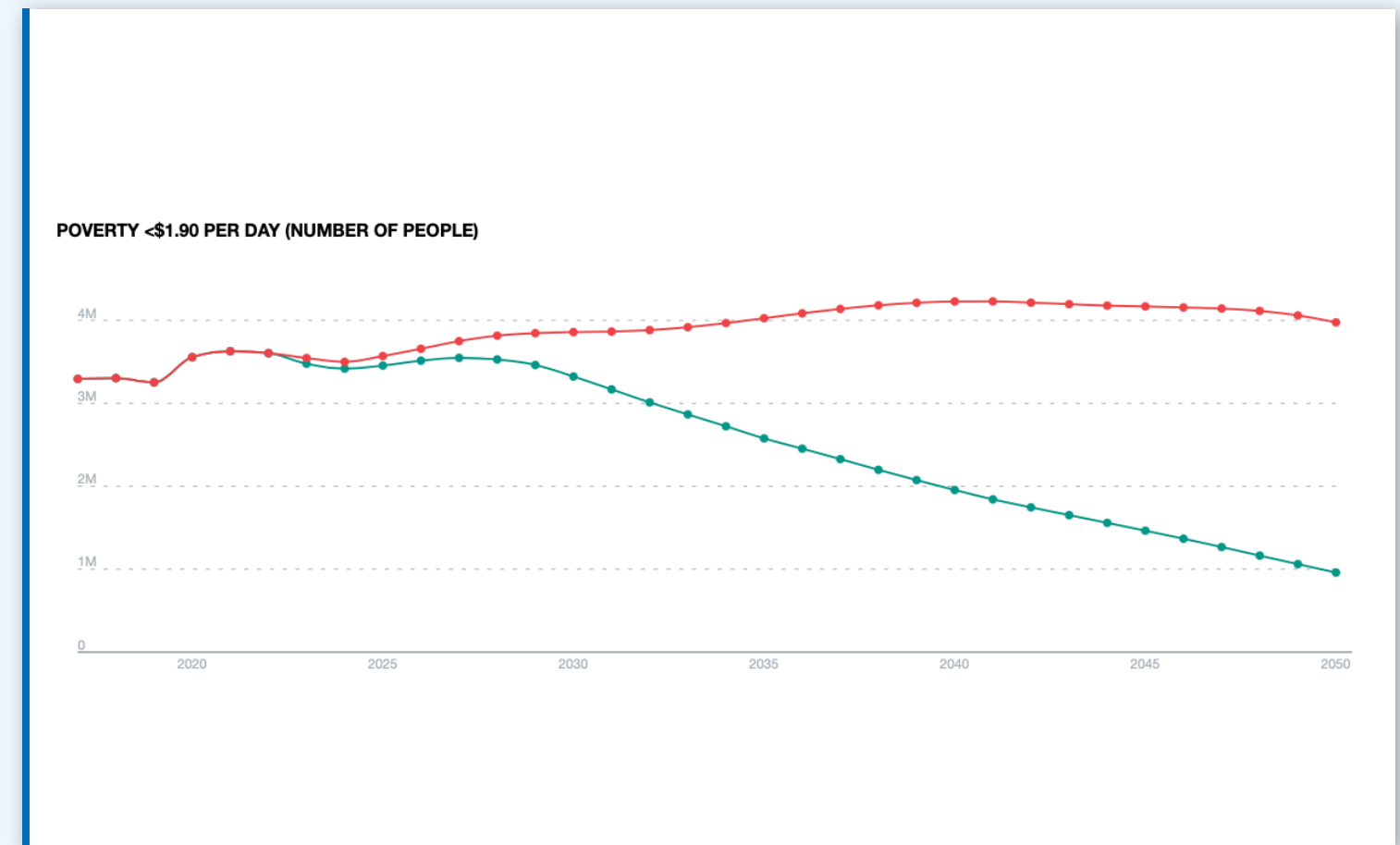
# THE SDG PUSH - FUTURES SCENARIOS

## Achieving the SDGs is possible.

The ‘SDG Push’ is a futures scenario based on 48 integrated accelerators in the areas of Governance, Social Protection, Green Economy and Digital Disruption. It uses national data to explore the impact on human development by 2030 and by 2050 across key SDG indicators.

Incorporating ‘SDG Push’ accelerators into development interventions in Sierra Leone can reduce the number of people living in poverty over time.

People living in poverty	By 2030	By 2050
Without the SDG Push	3,900 000	4,000 000
With the SDG Push	3,300 000	960.000



Explore SDG Futures Scenarios at:

<https://data.undp.org/sdg-push-diagnostic/CPV/future-scenarios>



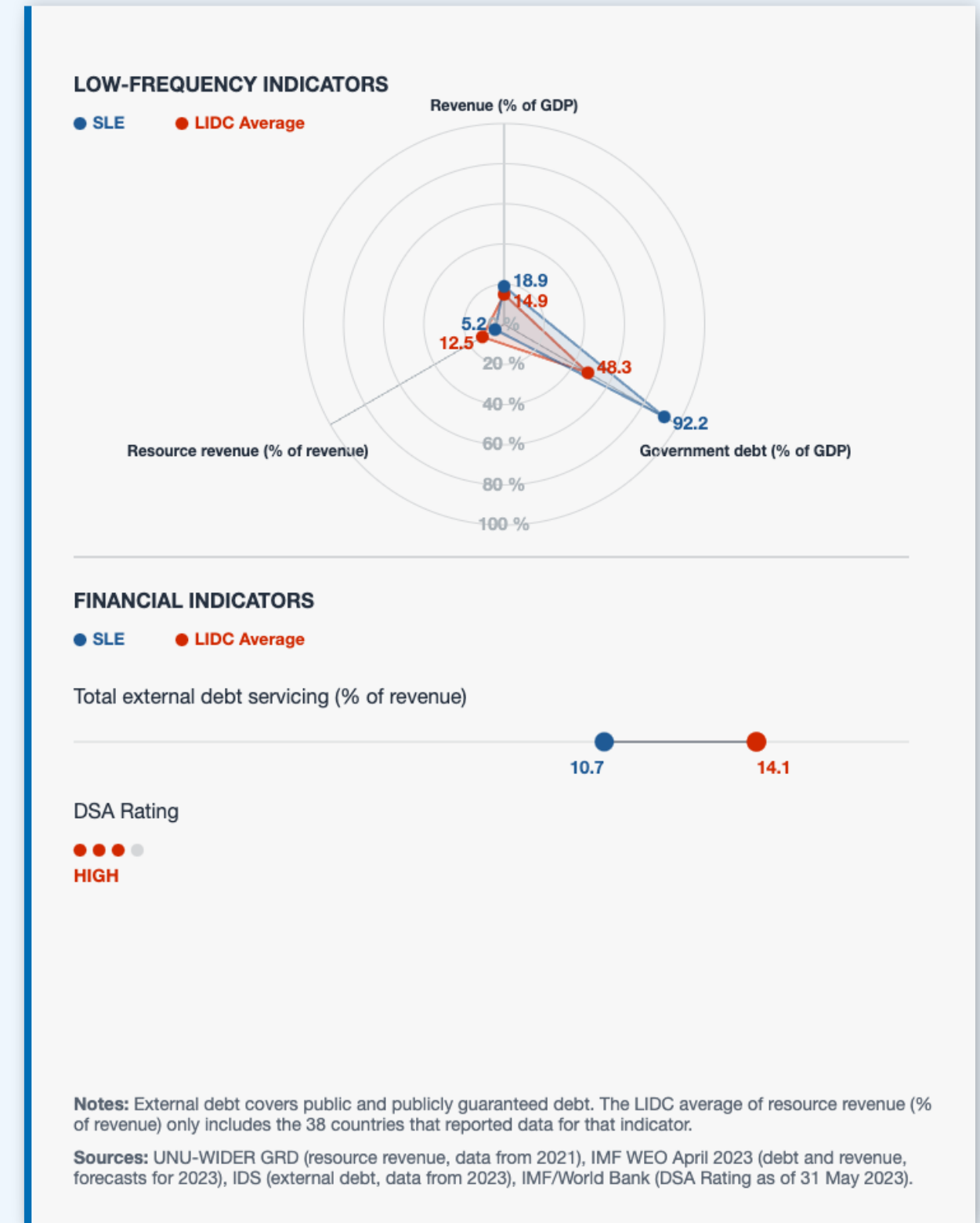
# FISCAL AND FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

The radar diagram shows low frequency data points linked to government revenue and debt as a proportion of GDP as well as the natural resource share of total revenue. The financial indicator graphs show external debt servicing relative to revenue as well as the country's latest Debt Sustainability Assessment (DSA) risk rating.

Sierra Leone's gross government debt is expected at 92.2% of GDP in 2023, which is close to double the low-income developing countries (LIDC) average of 48.3%. The country is expected to collect 18.9% of GDP in revenue this year, thus 4 percentage points (pp) more than the LIDC average of 14.9%.

Sierra Leone's public external debt servicing this year is expected to reach 10.7% of revenue, which is 3.4 pp below the LIDC average of 14.1%. Due to tight fiscal space and Sierra Leone's reliance on reserves to service debt and import fuel and food, the latest World Bank and IMF DSA from July 2022 rated the country as 'in high risk of debt distress'.

Sierra Leone is using an Integrated National Financing Framework to address key fiscal and financial constraints and build a more sustainable financial architecture at the national level. Priority areas of action have been identified in the areas of domestic revenue mobilization and tax administration including boosting audit capacity for large taxpayers, revising levies and departmental charges, and publishing tax expenditure reports; private investment promotion, including promoting pension investments in infrastructure, and long-term lending to businesses; and remittances, reducing transfer costs for remittance inflows.



# SDG STIMULUS

Countries are facing a reduced fiscal space and high debt levels, rising interest rates and increasing exposure to climate-related shocks. The acceleration pathways here identified need the appropriate means of implementation to move from aspiration to reality. The [SG's SDG Stimulus Plan](#) lays out a blueprint as the means to implement them through four key actions:

- Providing liquidity to support recovery in the near term
- Enhancing debt relief for vulnerable countries
- Providing better leverage lending
- Aligning financial flows with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, according to country-level priorities and needs, for example through the roll-out of the UN Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF).

Given the projected fiscal and financial constraints faced by Sierra Leone possible funding options for the investments derived from the identified interlinkages are as follows:

- Tax and revenue reform
- Debt for SDGs
- Climate finance
- Blended and public-private finance
- SDG-aligned business environment and investment
- Accessing financial markets and insurance
- Remittances, philanthropy and faith-based financing

