



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY

Building Resilience to Future Health Emergencies: The Urgent Need for a National Public Health Agency and Public Health Emergency Trust Fund in Sierra Leone

2023

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Together, we can build a healthier and more prosperous future for Sierra Leone.

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List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
HIV	Human Immune Virus
ICAP	ICAP at Columbia University
JEE	Joint External Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPHA	National Public Health Agency
PHETF	Public Health Emergency Trust Fund
RAM	Risk Assessment Matrix
U.S. CDC	United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
IANPHI	International Association of Public Health Institutes
UN	United Nations
USD	United States Dollar
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

Sierra Leone has faced complex health challenges due to past crises, including civil war, landslides, flooding, food poisoning, cholera outbreaks, Ebola, and COVID-19 among others. The country still grapples with high maternal and child mortality rates, infectious diseases, and a very high risk assessment for health system vulnerabilities by the World Health Organization.

To address these challenges, the Government of Sierra Leone has established a National Public Health Agency (NPHA) and a Public Health Emergency Trust Fund (PHETF).

The NPHA will strengthen the public health system, develop a skilled and motivated public health workforce, and coordinate government and donor funding for global health security. The PHETF will provide a financial buffer for the NPHA's swift response to public health emergencies.

The NPHA will be rolled out in three phases over the first five years, focusing on strategic planning, capacity building, and partnerships. The PHETF will be semi-autonomous and will be funded through a diversified strategy, including government allocation, international support, and public-private partnerships.

The establishment of the NPHA and PHETF is a pivotal step for Sierra Leone in building a more resilient public health system and improving the health of its population.

Benefits of the National Public Health Agency and Public Health Emergency Trust Fund

The NPHA and PHETF will provide a number of benefits, including:

- Improved coordination and integration of public health programs
- Enhanced surveillance, research, and development capacity
- Promotion of health equity
- Better public health communication
- Create an enabling environment for sustainable economic growth

Phased Rollout of the National Public Health Agency and Public Health Emergency Trust Fund

The NPHA and PHETF will be rolled out in phases over the first five years. The following are the key activities that will be undertaken during each phase:

Phase 1 (Year 1)

- Conduct a situational analysis of the public health system
- Develop subsidiary documents for the NPHA
- Commence the implementation of the NPHA strategic plan
- Continue to build the NPHA workforce

Phase 2 (Years 2-3)

- Strengthen public health programs
- Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders
- Commence the construction of the permanent building of the NPHA

Phase 3 (Years 4-5)

- Evaluate the NPHA's performance
- Review and update the NPHA strategic plan and operations

Funding Mechanisms and Strategies

The NPHA and PHETF will be funded through a diversified strategy, including:

- Government allocation
- International support
- Public-private partnerships
- Fundraising events
- Innovative financing mechanisms
- Corporate social responsibility
- Public health levies
- Returns on investment

Risk Management

The following risk mitigation strategies will be implemented to ensure the success of the NPHA and PHETF:

- Address political and institutional challenges
- Ensure financial accountability
- Build capacity
- Manage public health threats
- Enhance social acceptance
- Complying with legal and regulatory requirements

Conclusion

The establishment of the NPHA and PHETF is a critical step for Sierra Leone in building a more resilient public health system and improving the health of its population. The phased rollout and robust funding mechanisms will ensure the success of these initiatives.

Call to Action

The Government of Sierra Leone calls on its development partners and the private sector to support the establishment of the NPHA and PHETF. Investing in these initiatives will help Sierra Leone build a healthier and more prosperous future for all.

1. Introduction

The Public Health Landscape in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is a country with a rich history and culture, but its public health landscape is complex and challenging. The country has experienced multiple disasters in recent years, including civil war, a cholera epidemic, an Ebola outbreak, and the COVID-19 pandemic. These events have had a devastating impact on the public health system, and the country remains vulnerable to future health emergencies.

Despite significant progress in improving health outcomes in recent years, Sierra Leone still faces challenges. For example, the under-five mortality rate of 108 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2021 is still higher than the global average of 77 deaths per 1,000 live births. The maternal mortality ratio of 717 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019 is also very high, despite a 40% reduction since 2013.

The most prevalent infectious diseases in Sierra Leone include malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis. These diseases are responsible for a significant proportion of deaths among children under the age of five.

The 2022 World Health Organisation (WHO) Joint External Evaluation (JEE) Risk Assessment Matrix (RAM) scored Sierra Leone 16 out of 20, indicating that the risks to its health system are very high and require immediate action. The RAM is based on five health system parameters: potential for disease outbreaks, status of healthcare infrastructure, social determinants of health, political stability and conflict, and availability of resources. Tables 1 and 2 provide a more detailed overview of the RAM assessment and findings on the five major public health parameters in Sierra Leone.

Table 1: Risk Assessment Matrix Interpretation and Management Plan

Risk Severity	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Implication (in line with health system impact)	These issues have low or no impact on the health system, and pose little risk	These issues moderately impact the health system, and can affect operations	These issues impact the health system significantly and can hinder operations	These issues impact the health system greatly and their impact could be catastrophic
Weight	1	2	3	4
Based on 5 major limitations	≤ 5	> 5 ≤ 10	> 10 ≤ 15	> 15 ≤ 20
Management plan	Accept	Manage	Change	Change

Table 2: Risk Assessment Matrix for Sierra Leone's Public Health System

Risk	Impact	Severity
Disease outbreaks	Sierra Leone is vulnerable to disease outbreaks, particularly of infectious diseases such as Ebola, Lassa fever, and cholera. Poor sanitation, limited access to safe drinking water, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure make the country particularly susceptible to disease outbreaks. The risk of disease outbreaks is further heightened by climate change, which can increase the spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever.	Very high Risk 4
Weak healthcare infrastructure	Sierra Leone has a weak healthcare infrastructure, with inadequate facilities, medical equipment, and supplies. This limits access to healthcare services and can contribute to the spread of infectious diseases. The shortage of healthcare workers, particularly in rural areas, further compounds the problem.	Very high Risk 4
Social determinants of health	Sierra Leone faces significant challenges in addressing the social determinants of health, including poverty, poor sanitation, and inadequate access to education and economic opportunities. These factors can contribute to poor health outcomes and exacerbate the impact of disease outbreaks.	Very High risk
Limited resources	Sierra Leone's healthcare system is heavily dependent on external funding, which could be affected by changes in donor priorities or global economic conditions. This can limit the availability of resources for healthcare and exacerbate existing challenges.	Medium risk 2
Political instability and conflict	Political instability and conflict can disrupt healthcare services and put the health of the population at risk. Sierra Leone has a history of political instability and conflict, and ongoing tensions could further destabilize the healthcare system.	Medium risk 2
Total		16/20

The risks associated with the weaknesses of the public health landscape are very high, and according to the risk evaluation, the only acceptable course of action is to CHANGE the situation.

Sierra Leone's public health system has both strengths and weaknesses. The country has a strong commitment from the government and international partners to improve public health. There is also a growing number of trained healthcare workers and a strong network of community health workers. Other opportunities for improvement in Sierra Leone's public health sector include the ongoing expansion of healthcare services, partnerships with international organizations and donors, and the increasing use of mobile technology to improve public health in Sierra Leone by making healthcare more accessible, affordable, and efficient.

However, there are also a number of threats to public health in Sierra Leone, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, vulnerability to disease outbreaks, limited funding and resources for public health initiatives, and challenges in addressing the social determinants of health. The limited healthcare infrastructure, a shortage of healthcare workers, low health literacy rates, and high rates of infectious diseases continue to be a threat to improving access to health services for the community. Climate change is another threat to public health in Sierra Leone. Climate change can increase the spread of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever, and can also lead to more extreme weather events such as floods and droughts, which can disrupt healthcare services and displace people.

Investing in public health is essential for Sierra Leone's social and economic development. By investing in public health, Sierra Leone can reduce its burden of disease, improve its health outcomes, and build a healthier and more prosperous future.

2. Proposed Solution

The 2022 Public Health Act established the National Public Health Agency (NPHA) to address the significant inadequacies in Sierra Leone's public health system. The NPHA is a science-based government organization focused on evidence-based policymaking and health systems strengthening to enable a stronger and more consistent response to public health threats.

With the NPHA, the government of Sierra Leone can:

- Comprehensively strengthen the public health system
- Develop a well-trained and motivated public health workforce
- Effectively coordinate government and donor funding for global health security

Over the next five years, the government of Sierra Leone is fully committed to building a functional and effective NPHA that meets national and international standards. To achieve this goal, the government will:

- Establish collaborations with public health institutions, academia, and other institutions both within and outside the country.
- Create innovative strategies to meet key benchmarks, prepare for and respond to public health emergencies, integrate evidence in policy and decision making, and ensure that functional areas meet national and international standards.

Overall, the establishment of the NPHA is critical in enabling Sierra Leone to:

- Achieve a coordinated response to public health threats
- Enhance surveillance
- Improve public health outcomes

3. Strategic Alignment, Benefits, and Impact of the National Public Health Agency

The establishment of the NPHA will have a significant impact on Sierra Leone's health system. The NPHA will work in alignment with the national health sector strategic plan to achieve its objectives and goals. Overall, the NPHA will play a critical role in strengthening Sierra Leone's public health system and improving the health of the population. Specific benefits of the NPHA include:

Improved coordination, collaboration, and standardization: The NPHA will enhance coordination and collaboration among different regions, agencies, and stakeholders in Sierra Leone, leading to evidence-based public health programs that align with the national health sector strategic plan and are adequately resourced. Improved coordination and collaboration can lead to standardized policies and practices across the country, particularly during epidemics or other public health crises.

Integration of public health programs into the overall ministry of health system: The NPHA will facilitate the integration of public health programs into the overall ministry of health system, ensuring that public health services are better linked with primary and secondary health care services. This can result in improved access to health services and better health outcomes for the population.

Improved public health surveillance: The NPHA will improve the collection, analysis, and dissemination of public health data, which can help identify emerging health threats and inform public health policies and interventions. This will promote a culture of prevention and early detection of diseases, leading to better health outcomes and reduced healthcare costs.

Increased capacity for research and development: The NPHA will support research and development of new treatments, vaccines, and diagnostic tools. This can improve the country's ability to respond to health threats and advance public health knowledge.

Promotion of health equity: The NPHA will focus on vulnerable populations, reducing health disparities, and ensuring that all people have access to quality health services. This will lead to a healthier and more equitable society.

Enhanced public health communication, health promotion, and disease prevention: The NPHA will play a key role in promoting public health through health education, awareness campaigns, and other health promotion activities. The agency will provide clear and consistent messaging to

the public about public health threats and best practices for prevention and treatment. This can help build trust, confidence, and transparency around public health interventions, and improve public health outcomes.

Improved health financing: The NPHA will help to attract foreign investment and aid by demonstrating Sierra Leone's commitment to improving public health and reducing the risk of disease outbreaks. This could help to boost economic growth in the country and increase employment opportunities. In the long term, the NPHA will help to better allocate resources for disease prevention and control and reduce healthcare costs by improving disease prevention and early detection. This could lead to a reduction in healthcare expenditures and an increase in productivity due to fewer missed workdays and fewer cases of disability.

Improved data collection and analysis: The NPHA will help in improving data collection and analysis to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the NPHA and national health sector strategic plan.

Building capacity and workforce development: The NPHA will help build capacity and develop the workforce in the public health sector, which is essential for achieving the goals of the NPHA and national health sector strategic plan.

4. Phased Rollout of the National Public Health Agency

The NPHA will be rolled out in phases. The first five years will consist of three phases (Figure 1). The phased rollout plan will ensure that the agency is built sustainably, leveraging all available resources. The total cost for the establishment of the agency in the first five years is estimated at \$25 million.

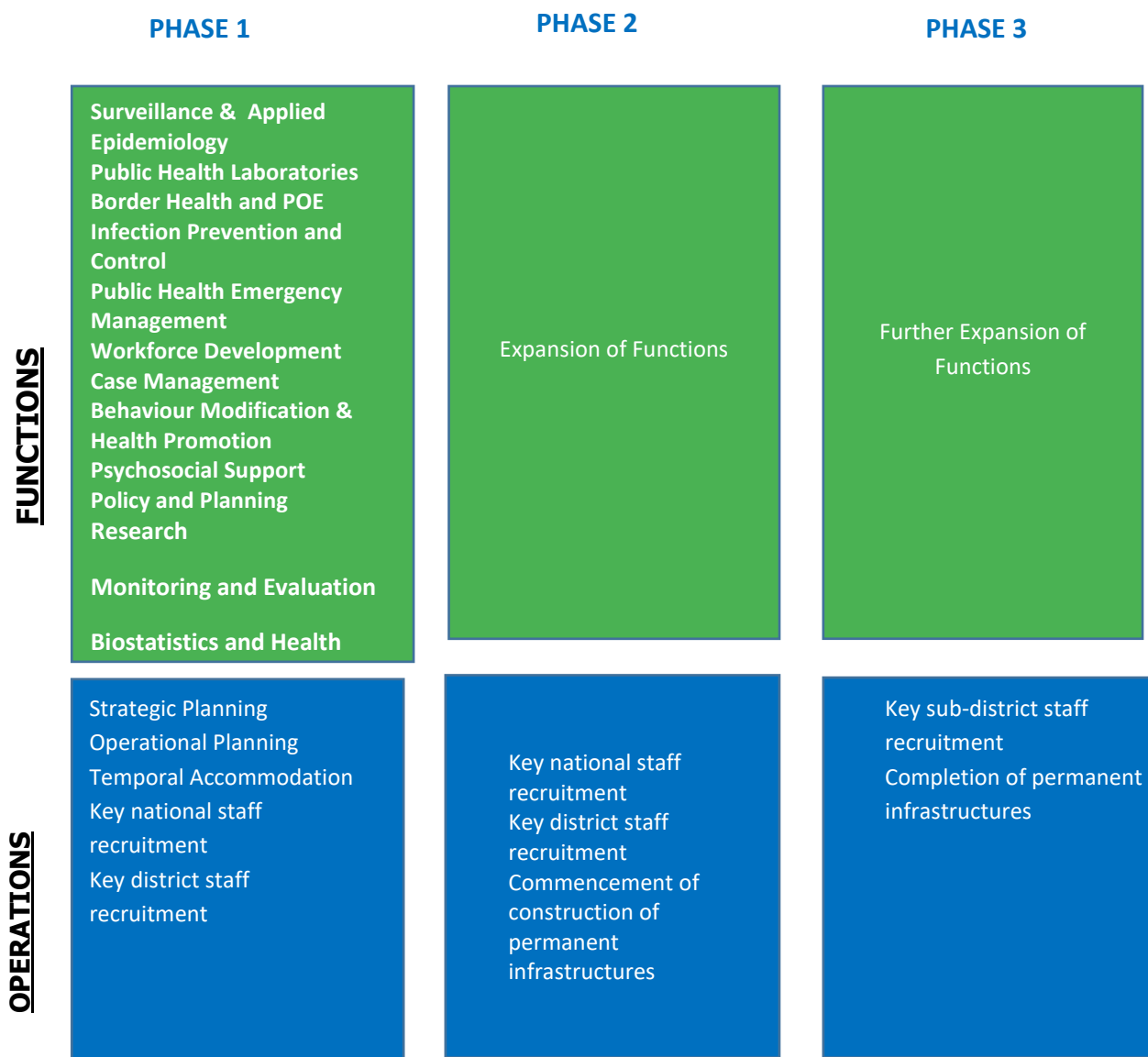


Figure 1: National Public Health Agency Roll-out Plan

Phase One (2 years, \$10 million)

The first phase of the NPHA's development will focus on:

- Developing a comprehensive public health policy framework with strategic and operational plans, engaging relevant stakeholders such as government agencies, civil society organizations, and development partners.
- Carefully transition existing qualified personnel, and outbreak preparedness and response and systems from relevant government ministries, departments, and agencies to the NPHA, ensuring readiness to effectively respond to public health emergencies from inception. This would help to minimize disruption and ensure that the NPHA is able to build on the strengths and expertise of existing government agencies.

- Recruiting and re-training and training staff in the 19 functional areas essential for outbreak prevention, detection, and response.
- Procuring equipment and supplies.
- Developing the agency's infrastructure, ensuring that the NPHA is built on the One Health platform from its inception.

Phase Two (2 years, \$10 million)

The second phase will focus on:

- Fast-tracking the implementation of the NPHA's public health interventions, including deploying staff to various parts of the country to conduct health assessments and provide technical assistance.
- Ramping up surveillance of vertical programs and environmental health, while continuing to monitor and control other known infectious diseases, such as Ebola, as well as non-communicable diseases like hypertension and diabetes.
- Relocating the NPHA to a permanent office space and planning for integration across the agency.

Phase Three (1 year, \$5 million)

The third phase will focus on:

- Integrating and expanding the NPHA's operations to other functional areas and to reach more remote and underserved areas of the country, including through the establishment of regional offices and the recruitment and training of additional staff.
- Developing and implementing health education campaigns that promote healthy behaviors and practices.

Concurrent Activities

Wherever feasible, complementary activities across phases will be carried out concurrently, potentially shortening the rollout period.

5. Public Health Emergency Trust Fund

A Public Health Emergency Trust Fund (PHETF) will be set up to support the NPHA. The PHETF will provide a buffer for public health emergencies, helping to improve public health outcomes, reduce the impact of emergencies, and enable a more rapid and flexible response to emerging health threats.

The PHETF for Sierra Leone's NPHA will be set up as a semi-autonomous entity with its own governance structure to ensure transparency and accountability. The initial funding for the trust will be USD 10 million, and it will be used to provide a 30-day buffer in the event of a public health emergency, without any injection of funds.

5.1. Setting-Up the Public Health Emergency Trust Fund

The PHETF will be set up in three phases, within the first year of operations of the NPHA, as follows:

Establishment of a legal framework: This phase will involve the drafting of legal documents, including the trust deed and any relevant agreements, by a legal team. The documents will define the trust's objectives, governance structure, investment policy, and distribution rules. This phase will last 3 months.

Initial capital injection and fundraising: The government of Sierra Leone will commit USD 1 million to kickstart the fund, while the remaining USD 9 million will be raised through donations from individuals, organizations, and corporations. A fundraising committee will be set up to oversee the process. This phase will last 6 months.

Operationalization: Once the fund reaches its target of USD 10 million, the management committee will oversee the fund's investments, disbursements, and reporting. This phase will last 3 months.

5.2. Governance Structure of the Public Health Emergency Trust Fund

The government of Sierra Leone will establish the PHETF as a semi-autonomous entity, with its own bank account. The PHETF will be governed by a board of trustees, trustee officers, investment committee, and advisory committees as follows:

Board of Trustees: The governing board will have overall responsibility for the PHETF, including approving the trust deed and any amendments, setting the investment policy, and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. The board will consist of nine members, including the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health, a representative from the WHO, and six members appointed by the President of Sierra Leone. Members of the board will have relevant experience in public health emergencies, finance, and governance. The PHETF will also establish a code of conduct for its trustees, which will require them to avoid conflicts of interest and act in the best interests of the trust fund.

Trustee Officers: The PHETF will be managed by a professional team of staff, including a Fund Manager, Finance Officer, and Program Officer. The staff will be responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the fund, including the processing of funding requests, disbursement of funds, reporting, monitoring of projects, and financial management.

Investment Committee: An investment committee will be established to oversee the management of the trust's investments. The committee will be responsible for developing investment strategies, monitoring investment performance, and making investment decisions.

Advisory Committees: Advisory committees may be appointed, from among board members, to provide guidance and expertise in specific areas related to the trust's mission. These committees can focus on and include experts in fields such as finance, law, and public health, depending on specific needs at various times.

5.3. Transparency and Accountability of the Public Health Emergency Trust Fund

The PHETF will be subject to regular audits, with results presented to the board, and annual reports published on its website. The Trustee Officers will provide quarterly updates to the board, with a full report submitted annually. The PHETF will also be subject to external oversight by the WHO and other relevant bodies, ensuring that it complies with international best practices.

5.4. Emergency Response Plan

The PHETF secretariat will work with the NPHA to develop an emergency response plan that outlines how the trust fund will be utilized in the event of a public health emergency. The plan will also include procedures for requesting and approving expenditures from the trust fund.

5.5. Funding Mechanisms

It is crucial to ensure that the funding plan is flexible and can adapt to changing circumstances and needs. The NPHA and PHETF secretariat will regularly review and update their funding plans to ensure that they have adequate resources to support their operations and respond to emerging public health challenges.

6. Funding Mechanisms and Strategies for the National Public Health Agency and Public Health Emergency Trust Fund

The NPHA and PHETF will require significant financial resources to support their operations and achieve their objectives. To ensure their sustainability and success, a diversified funding strategy is essential. This strategy will leverage all available resources, including:

Government Budgetary Allocation: The government will allocate funds from its annual budget to finance the establishment and operationalization of the NPHA and PHETF. The NPHA and PHETF will make a strong case for funding from the government's annual budget, demonstrating the urgent need for their services and the potential impact on the country's health and economy.

International Support: International support from organizations such as the World Health Organization, United Nations, and other bilateral and multilateral agencies can provide financial and technical support for the establishment and operation of the NPHA and PHETF. The NPHA and PHETF will engage with these agencies to secure funding and technical support, and leverage partnerships with them to enhance their capacity and visibility.

Public-Private Partnerships: Public-private partnerships will be established with private sector companies to finance and support the operationalization of the NPHA and PHETF. This can involve the provision of financial resources, technical expertise, and other resources to support their mandates. The NPHA and PHETF will also negotiate terms for cost-sharing, resource sharing, and revenue-sharing agreements to ensure sustainability.

Fundraising Events: The NPHA and PHETF will organize fundraising events such as charity runs, auctions, pledging events, and other community-based fundraising activities to generate financial resources to support their operations. They will also engage with local communities, NGOs, and other stakeholders to create awareness and garner support for their missions.

Innovative Financing Mechanisms: The NPHA, PHETF, and other relevant stakeholders will explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as debt swaps, social impact bonds, and other mechanisms to mobilize private capital to support public health initiatives. For example, businesses could make annual contributions to the PHETF based on a percentage of their profits.

Corporate Social Responsibility: Private sector companies will be engaged to provide financial support through their corporate social responsibility programs. This support can include donations, sponsorships, volunteer support, and other forms of support that can enhance the NPHA and PHETF's capacity and impact.

Public Health Levy: Development partners and NGOs in the health, agriculture, and environment sectors could be levied a specific amount of their budgets as annual contributions to the NPHA.

Investment Returns: The PHETF will generate returns from its investment portfolio, which can be used to finance its operations and support public health initiatives.

Additional Considerations for Ensuring Sustainable Funding

In addition to the mechanisms and strategies listed above, the NPHA and PHETF will also consider the following:

Sustainability: The NPHA and PHETF will develop sustainable funding models that will enable them to continue operating and achieving their objectives in the long term. This may involve diversifying their funding sources, developing innovative financing mechanisms, and building partnerships with private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Transparency and Accountability: The NPHA and PHETF will be transparent and accountable in their use of funds. This includes publishing regular financial reports and submitting to external audits.

Coordination: The NPHA and PHETF will coordinate their funding efforts to avoid duplication and ensure that resources are used efficiently.

Through a multifaceted and enduring funding strategy, the NPHA and PHETF will effectively secure the financial means to discharge their vital responsibility of fortifying Sierra Leone's public health system and elevating the health status of its population.

7. Risk Management Considerations for Sierra Leone's National Public Health Agency and Public Health Emergency Trust Fund

The establishment of the NPHA and PHETF is a complex and ambitious undertaking, and there are a number of risks that could impact the successful implementation of these initiatives. Table 3 depicts some of the key implementation risk management considerations that need to be addressed.

Table 3: Risk Mitigation Strategies for the Sierra Leone National Public Health Agency and Public Health Emergency Trust Fund

Risk	Description	Mitigation
Political and Institutional Risks	The establishment of the NPHA and PHETF requires political and institutional support, and there may be risks associated with changing existing structures and power dynamics. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the agency has strong governance structures, including independent oversight mechanisms and clear lines of authority.	Develop a strong governance structure for the NPHA and PHETF that includes independent oversight mechanisms, clear lines of authority, and political support. Engage with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, and the private sector, to build consensus and support for the establishment of the public health agency and trust fund.
Financial Risks	Setting up the NPHA and PHETF requires significant financial resources. There may be risks associated with the management of the trust fund, including ensuring the funds are appropriately invested, avoiding fraud and mismanagement, and ensuring that the funds are used effectively to achieve the intended public health goals.	Develop clear investment guidelines and a robust risk management framework for the trust fund to minimize the risk of fraud and mismanagement. Conduct regular audits and assessments of the trust fund to ensure compliance with financial regulations and identify and address any potential issues proactively.
Operational Risks	Establishing the NPHA will involve complex operational considerations, such as developing policies, establishing partnerships, and building technical	Develop policies and procedures for the public health agency that reflect international best practices and are tailored to the Sierra Leone context.

	<p>capacity. There may be risks associated with implementing these activities, such as lack of staff capacity, inadequate technical expertise, and challenges with coordination and communication.</p>	<p>Invest in staff training and technical capacity building to ensure that the agency has the necessary skills and expertise to carry out its mandate effectively.</p> <p>Establish partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including international organizations, local NGOs, and academic institutions, to leverage resources and expertise.</p>
Health Risks	<p>Sierra Leone faces significant health risks, including infectious diseases, environmental hazards, and the impact of climate change. The public health agency and trust fund should be designed to mitigate these risks by investing in research, surveillance, and preparedness activities.</p>	<p>Develop a comprehensive health risk management plan that includes surveillance, research, and preparedness activities.</p> <p>Invest in building and strengthening the public health infrastructure, including laboratories, surveillance systems, and health facilities.</p> <p>Develop contingency plans for outbreaks and other public health emergencies, including protocols for case detection, contact tracing, isolation, and treatment.</p>
Social Risks	<p>The success of the public health agency and trust fund depends on social acceptance and trust. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the public health agency engages in transparent, inclusive, and culturally sensitive communication and engagement with communities and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Develop a robust communication and engagement strategy that includes transparent, inclusive, and culturally sensitive communication with communities and stakeholders.</p> <p>Invest in building and strengthening community-based health systems to enhance social acceptance and trust.</p>
Legal and Regulatory Risks	<p>Establishing a public health agency and trust fund requires compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks, including the Constitution, Public Financial Management Act, and other relevant laws and regulations. It is essential to ensure that the agency and trust fund comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements to avoid legal and reputational risks.</p>	<p>Conduct a thorough review of relevant legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.</p> <p>Establish a legal and compliance unit within the public health agency to oversee compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Engage with legal and regulatory experts to ensure that the public health agency and trust fund comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements.</p>

8. Immediate Actions

- Mobilize funding for the establishment of the NPHA to ensure its success and sustainability.
- Set up a semi-autonomous PHETF with its own governance structure to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Develop partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders to build a functional and effective NPHA that meets national and international standards.

9. Conclusion

The establishment of the NPHA and PHETF is a critical step towards building a stronger public health system, developing a well-trained and motivated public health workforce, and effectively coordinating donor funding for global health security. The phased roll-out of the NPHA will ensure that it is built sustainably, leveraging all available resources.

The PHETF will provide a buffer for public health emergencies, improve public health outcomes, reduce the impact of emergencies, and enable a more rapid and flexible response to emerging health threats. With the establishment of the NPHA and PHETF, Sierra Leone is better equipped to achieve a coordinated response to public health threats, enhance surveillance, and improve public health outcomes for all.