
Communications Strategy of the Justice Sector of Sierra Leone 2021-2025



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The effectiveness of communication is not defined by the communication, but by the response.

Milton Erickson



**Justice Sector
Coordination Office**

Enhancing Justice Delivery



Creating a Culture
of Justice

International Development
Law Organization

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Abbreviations

ASJP	Access to Security and Justice Programme
DFID	Department for International Development
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HRCSL	Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone
IEC	Information, Education and Communications
IPCB	Independent Police Complaints Board
JSCO	Justice Sector Coordination Office
JSRSIP	Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan
JSDP	Justice Sector Development Programme
LAB	Legal Aid Board
LNP	Local Needs Policing
LPPB	Local Police Partnership Board
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ONS	Office of National Security
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLFF	Sierra Leone Fire Force
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1. Introduction

The Government of Sierra Leone's renewed commitment to supporting the delivery of justice through the respective institutions is an ideal opportunity to tackle challenges in the justice and security sectors amidst the gains already made. To continue to strengthen the rule of law and human rights, and to further consolidate peace and ensure a safe and just society, the Government through the Justice Sector Coordination Office (JSCO), developed the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (JSRSIP) IV (2019-2023). To meet the current growing demand for justice, the strategy is aligned to the Government of Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (2019-2023), which is also aligned to the Sustainable Development Goal 16+. The goal of the JSRSIP IV (2019-2023) is to have '*A Sierra Leone with an effective Justice Sector enabling increased access to justice, the expedition of justice, and the protection of human rights and opportunities for economic development*'.

Over the years, there has been widespread criticism among the people about the state's general administration of justice. Many people, through several media platforms, have expressed profound discontent about the work of the country's justice sector institutions. A factor accountable for these increasing sentiments has been the failure of the justice sector to meaningfully engage the public about its work. Where there have been attempts to do so, the public's feelings have not received coordinated responses broadly due mainly to the lack of a coordinated approach to communications delivery within the justice sector.

Notably, the justice sector has recorded meaningful progress in the implementation of its strategic investment plans and other interventions from non-state actors. However, despite the gains made in raising awareness on the interventions within the sector, public sentiment is still at its lowest ebb, and the sector continues to suffer criticisms and negatively judged in the media and other public fora. This has been attributed to poor communication systems that stems from weak stakeholder engagement which culminated to the lack of confidence in the justice system. These negative consequences do not only have the potential to weaken national cohesion, political stability and economic development but also has the tendency to further dampen the relationship between the sector and the public.

Currently, there are more than ten Sierra Leonean justice sector institutions, and they include the:

- ✓ Justice Sector Coordination Office (JSCO)
- ✓ The Judiciary
- ✓ The Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice
- ✓ Law Reform Commission
- ✓ Legal Aid Board (LAB)
- ✓ Sierra Leone Law School
- ✓ Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone (HRCSL)

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- ✓ Office of the Ombudsman
 - ✓ Office of the Administrator & Registrar General
 - ✓ Office of National Security (ONS)
 - ✓ Sierra Leone Police
 - ✓ Sierra Leone Correctional Services
 - ✓ Independent Police Complaints Board (IPCB)

Other key actors include the Ministries of Social Welfare and Gender and Children's Affairs, Sierra Leone Bar Association, civil society institutions and the media houses.

Some of these do not have communications officers to educate the public about their work. Those who have do not provide adequate and regular updates to the public about their work. Improving stakeholder engagement and communication in the justice sector with the public has the potential to strengthen unity and ensure a peaceful, just, and inclusive society. Importantly, it will be able to reliably inform the public about government's interventions in terms of service delivery by showcasing efforts been made in actualising government's policy priorities for social services and other welfare issues including the fight against corruption. It also aims at building the national spirit of cultural voluntarism for increased public acceptance and participation in national socio-economic development programmes in the sector and building citizens' confidence in state institutions that provide services to the general citizenry.

Essentially, the JSRSIP IV required the JSCO to 'develop and roll out a comprehensive Justice Sector Communications Strategy'. This existing gap was filled with the support of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands through the International Development Law Organisation (IDLO), which provided the financial support required for the development of this strategy. This strategy will be the communications plan to be followed and implemented by all justice sector institutions in Sierra Leone. It is expected that this strategy will improve on stakeholder engagement and communication with the public to strengthen national cohesion, political stability and economic development, thereby transforming the general image of the country's justice sector.

In a changing policy and security environment, the effectiveness of the justice sector will depend on its ability to communicate clearly, precisely, and coherently in a coordinated manner across various layers of society (i.e., at the local, national, and international levels) with the goal of attracting and maintaining visibility, credibility, respect and partnership. The Justice Sector Coordination Office Communications Coordinator will, therefore, have a key role in the management of public relations, supporting sector actors to deliver on key aspects of the strategy while facilitating reflections and evaluating communications methods. S/he will work in collaboration with the leadership and staff of the sector to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to communications, with a consistent focus on informing, promoting best practice, monitoring, and tracking image representation of the sector in the media, identifying communication gaps, and providing feedback to the relevant stakeholders.

The strategy consists of five sections. Section 1.1. presents the methodology used in developing the strategy, Section 2 analyses the context within which the strategy is developed. Section 3. provides the purpose of the strategy, its objectives, principles, audience, messages, and methods. Section 4 presents the strategic priorities of the plan. Sections 5 and 6 present the risks and mitigation matrix and the logframe. Section 7 provides an indicative budget for the implementation of the strategy.

1.1. Methodology

Methodologically, the process of developing the strategy adopted four approaches. Firstly, a strategy development workshop was held with officials of the communications units of the respective partners of the justice sector including the SLCS, ACC, HRCSL, IPCB and the SLP. The workshop was aimed at setting the framework, methods, activities, and other components of the strategy. The workshop ensured that the content of the strategy was produced collectively, with the participants brainstorming on the details, to make sure that they own and use the outputs that will be delivered. Secondly, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with a wide range of actors including those from the justice sector, development partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Irish Aid, AdvocAid, civil society organisations, members of the public and institutions such as the Ministry of Finance, the ONS, IPCB, LAB and ACC to have their buy-in and eventual support for the implementation of the strategy. The JSCO assisted with the setting up of interviews with the relevant actors. Thirdly, an integrated and inclusive process was used to draft the strategy. After collecting all relevant information, the consultant worked with the staff of the JSCO in drafting the strategy to ensure that the output delivered meets the expectations of the sector. On completion of the draft, it was sent to IDLO and the JSCO for their feedback and inputs, which helped to further strengthen the document. Fourthly, a stakeholder consultation workshop was organised on the 8th of July 2021 in Bo, with participants from justice sector institutions in the regions taking part in it. This was followed by a validation workshop organised in Freetown on 16 July 2021.

2. Context Analysis

Since independence, Sierra Leone has had a chequered history characterised by socio-economic challenges such as corruption. Coupled with this, for decades, the security and justice sectors were instrumentalised by political elites for the oppression of political opponents, civil society, and the media.¹ These factors contributed to the eruption of an eleven year (1991 to 2002) civil war which led to the death of over 60,000 people, with more than a million becoming refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The conduct of the security actors during the conflict further undermined the faith and confidence of the public in the security and justice sectors. For instance, the military was labelled ‘Sobels’, meaning ‘soldiers behaving as rebels’ and justice and security actors were identified and killed by people seeking revenge or by members of insurgency groups.²

At the end of the conflict in 2002, significant resources were invested in reforming both the security and justice sectors, with the British government championing the process. Thus, programmes such as the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) was established in 2005 and it supported the reform process that had ensued, with it providing direct technical and financial support to most of the justice and security institutions, especially the Sierra Leone Police, the newly established Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), the Ministry of Justice and the Judiciary.³

The transformation process succeeded in strengthening the relationship between the security and justice sector actors and the public. In addition to this, the police introduced a Local Needs Policing (LNP) programme that strengthened community policing and strategically positioned itself as a people centred force. The establishment of institutions such as the ACC, HRCSL), LAB and IPCB between 2004 and 2013, succeeded in changing the face of the sector. Coupled with this, the country implemented three generations of JSRSIPs and held three successful presidential and parliamentary elections (2002, 2007 and 2012) which also signalled the sustainability of the peacebuilding process that the country was going through.⁴

In 2012, the JSDP transitioned into a smaller programme, the Access to Security Justice Programme (ASJP) and the British government gradually stopped its support to justice sector reform in the country. This immediately presented immense challenges for the sector as the government lacked the resources needed to replace those provided by the British and there was no donor willing to provide the much-needed support.

Apart from the lack of funds, it became obvious that one of the least funded components of the justice reform process was the communications component. That component denied people the

¹ Koroma, A.K. 1996, ‘Sierra Leone: The Agony of a Nation’, s.l.: Freetown, Sierra Leone: Andromeda Publications.

² TRCSL 2004, ‘Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Reports’, Volumes I, II and III, Sierra Leone.

³ Kabbah, Ahmad Tejan, 2010, ‘Coming Back from the Brink in Sierra Leone: A Memoir’. Ghana: EPP Books Services.

⁴ Bangura, I. 2016, ‘An Assessment of Orthodox Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone’, Center for Security Governance, Canada.

possibility of getting to understanding the functions and activities of the respective institutions in the sector. As such, the sector remains mysterious and largely inaccessible to the bulk of Sierra Leoneans, who normally turn to traditional means of justice, or abandon the quest for justice because of the costs involved or the lack of knowledge on how to pursue justice. In addition to this, the lack of information on the workings of the legal and justice systems and mechanisms, information on laws, cost of accessing justice- fees, transport costs; mystified procedures and processes in courts-language etc; are all contributory factors to people not seeking justice within the formal system. Traditional/customary system though widely used especially for the rural populace though with some advantages including being closer to the people- simple processes, language and knowing the adjudicators still do have disadvantages especially relating to women, children and other special/vulnerable groups. Additionally, even when there are justice institutions outside of Freetown, they operate mostly at the regional and district levels and they usually lack the human and financial resources they required to function.

Alongside the points above, there has been very limited coordination, collaboration, and cooperation among the justice sector actors, which limited their ability to deliver essential services efficiently and effectively to the public. Thus, there has been the need to have a strategy that will help mobilise all the actors in the sector and help them shape the interaction between them and the public.

3. Approach of the Strategy

This section presents the purpose of the strategy, its objectives, principles, audience, messages, and methods.

3.1. Purpose of the Strategy

Effective ongoing stakeholder engagement and communication will be essential for the success of the Justice Sector and the effective delivery of its programmes and activities in Sierra Leone. The Communications Strategy outlines the approach that will be used to engage stakeholders. It summarises the overall communication objectives and establishes principles to which communications will adhere.

The purpose of this Communications Strategy is to facilitate awareness, understanding and commitment towards the delivery of justice services in Sierra Leone. This Communications Strategy identifies the stakeholder groups and corresponding communication needs. It also identifies key the audience, messages together with some specific deliverables and communication channels. It is envisaged that the strategy will contribute to increased access to and the expedition of justice, which will contribute to the transformation of the sector and the enhancement of the trust and confidence of the public in the sector.

This Communications Strategy is closely aligned with the JSRSIP IV, the Medium-Term National Development Plan, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goals 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and is developed to support the institutions in stakeholder engagement and communications planning to promote the goals of the Justice Sector.

3.2. The Objectives of the Strategy

This Communications Strategy is designed to promote the objectives of the JSRSIP IV (to improve stakeholder engagement). The key communication objectives are to:

I. Engage and Communicate:

- Proactively elevate the importance of communications, facilitate awareness, understanding and commitment to the Justice Sector and its goals.
- Ensure that internal and external stakeholders understand the vision, milestones, key activities, challenges, and opportunities for the justice sector within the current context in Sierra Leone.

II. Capacity Building and Training

- Provide capacity building support for actors within the justice sector.
- Provide capacity building support for CSOs and other actors that will support the delivery of justice sector services in Sierra Leone.
- Foster awareness raising and awareness among the public to enable them to know and defend their rights.

III. Enhance an Integrated and Collaborative Approach:

- Promote an integrated and collaborative approach, with all key internal and external audiences fully informed and engaged with justice related activities.
- Improve the management of stakeholder expectations and facilitate knowledge and awareness on the work/programmes of the sector to improve public perception on the sector.

IV. Drive Best Practice Care:

- Drive continuous improvement of best practices and policy innovations in legal empowerment services using data where possible to facilitate reflection, sharing of knowledge and key lessons.

V. Monitor, Evaluate and Act:

- Create opportunities to identify and address local variation at the national and local levels, while developing data collection capacity.
- Make use of innovative and communications channels and techniques to maximise awareness of and promote understanding of sector activities.
- Ensure that each communication tool used is consistent with the principles focusing on continuous information sharing and reinforcement with a view to reducing uncertainty, misunderstanding and rumours and monitor and measure feedback.

3.3. Principles

The following principles guide the approach to stakeholder engagement and communications in this strategy:

- **Clarity and Visibility:** Make the purpose, vision, and objectives of the justice sector clear and accessible to all stakeholders by using appropriately tailored messages, methods, and

channels. It is important that simplicity, precision, and conciseness are employed in delivering communication. There is need for jargon free communication and without ambiguity, but clear short messages should be the norm.

- **Consistency and Accuracy:** Use key messages to build awareness and prevent misunderstanding. In other words, information should be up to date and consistent, and should reflect the justice sector's goals and activities accurately making use of a wide range of communication methods and channels.
- **Efficiency and effectiveness:** Use communications channels and mechanisms known to be effective in reaching target audiences. Information must be available when it is needed, and the right information must be provided, using the right methods and to the right people, avoiding duplication and overload.
- **Comprehensive and Focused:** Communications should address all the issues that audiences are likely to want information about and specific to the current context and environment of the justice sector.
- **Utilisation:** Use existing justice sector resources that are tailored to audiences at strategic, local, community and service levels. In the absence of existing justice sector resources: create new pathways, tapping into identified good practices utilised by other actors in the country or elsewhere.
- **Engagement:** Genuinely involve and collaborate with key stakeholders through multiple and two-way communications. It is essential that there is provision for feedback so that audiences can ask questions and raise issues of concern.
- **Local Ownership:** Ensure local ownership of the process of rolling out the strategy. This calls for effective inclusive and participation of all local stakeholders in the implementation of the strategy.

3.4. Audience

This section identifies some of the key audiences that will be targeted by the Justice Sector in its communications over the next five years as it implements and promotes the implementation of the JSRSIP IV and other related national and international laws, policies and practices that are related to justice and the rule of law in Sierra Leone. The main audiences are as follows:

i. Policy Makers: The strategy must be owned and used by policy makers for it to be of significance and promote the expected changes. Policy makers in this strategy broadly includes those in the executive arm of government who formulate the policies, the parliamentarians who approve the policies and pass all laws that have to do with the security and justice sectors, and the judiciary. Their understanding of the challenges of the justice sectors may help shape the laws made and the need to enforce them. It will also help to have the policy makers and passers implement the JSRSIP IV. Thus, as the principal duty bearer of human rights in Sierra Leone, policy makers will not only be engaged to understand the roles that they need to play in strengthening justice service provision in Sierra Leone, but they will also be engaged to have them own and lead the implementation of the strategy.

ii. The Public: The key audience of this strategy is the public. The strategy will use multiple methods and means of engaging and communicating with the public. As indicated earlier, the public has overtime lost confidence and trust in the justice sector and several reports, especially the public perception studies done by UNDP, Institute for Governance Reform, and the Campaign for Good Governance, have concluded that the sector remains mysterious to the public and people are generally unaware of how to access services when they need to. Thus, this strategy will seek to change this lack of awareness to have approaches that will have the public fully engaged and updated on the activities of the sector and to have the public understand how they can also support the sector and meaningfully contribute to what it does.

iii. Community, Religious and Traditional Leaders: Community, religious and traditional leaders will be a key set of actors that the strategy will use multiple forms of messages to mobilise and fully integrate them into the process of implementing the strategy. It is important to note that customary law is recognised in Sierra Leone's plural legal system and traditional/religious leaders are involved in customary and informal justice mechanisms. Often, these mechanisms overstep their mandates and deal with issues outside their scope of legitimacy and most often involve women's rights, children, and other special needs groups. Thus, these actors need to be constructively engaged and their buy-in, ownership and leadership of the process will go a long way in ensuring the success of the implementation of the JSRSIP IV and other justice related strategies and policies. They are also an essential social capital, and they are usually the first point of call by community members when human rights abuses or violations occur. Additionally, they are listened to, trusted, and respected by their community members and thus, a shift in their mindset and their appreciation of and ownership of an approach that fosters a deeper understanding of the justice sector and what it does, will have a multiplier effect as they can easily pass on the messages and awareness, they will get from engagements with them.

iv. Civil Society and the Media: Civil society organisations and the media are critical partners that the strategy will mobilise and fully engage on two fronts. Firstly, the strategy will seek to strengthen their awareness and knowledge on the activities of the sector. Secondly, they will be engaged and

mobilised to support the implementation of the activities in the strategy. It is important to note that these two actors are also part of the sector and the activities of the sector will never succeed without their full support and involvement in the implementation of the activities of the sector. They are key in providing support to individuals and community seeking redress. They also serve as the bridge between the sector and the people and for instance, civil society organisations undertake Alternative Dispute Resolution activities and are an integral part of the justice chain. Organisations such as AdvocAid, NAMATI, Rainbo Initiative, LAWYERS and Centre for Accountability and the Rule of Law (CARL) have contributed immensely to promoting access to justice for a wide range of actors across Sierra Leone and as such it is vital that they are fully integrated into the implementation of the strategy.

v. Academic Institutions and Think-Tanks: Over the years, academic institutions and think-tanks have been less active than they use to be, in terms of producing evidence-based research that informs policy developments and practices related to the justice sector in Sierra Leone. This has limited their roles and contribution to society and has further undermined the transformations that society could have enjoyed if the academics were much more proactive. This could have been especially in relation to them engaging with policy makers and practitioners on the real questions that the Sierra Leonean society is contending with. Thus, this strategy will engage academics, strengthen their awareness of the activities of the sector and what their potential contributions to enhancing the activities of the justice sector.

vi. International Community: The International Community has for more than two decades heavily supported the reformation of the justice sector and at present, they continue to fund most of the activities implemented by institutions within the sector. However, it has been realised that support for the sector has significantly dwindled over the years and this could be attributed to the growing lack of interest in the sector. As such, one of the aims of this strategy is to engage international actors to provide the socio-political capital that they use to provide especially policy makers in relation to reform processes within the sector. In addition to this, they will also be engaged with the aim of having them provide technical and financial resources that are very much needed to upscale the activities of the sector actors. Importantly, effective engagement of development partners that provide support to the justice sector will build synergy and facilitate coordinated approach to providing support- avoid duplication of effort and could allow for valuable partnerships formed to tackle the myriad justice sector needs.

vii. Political Parties: Political parties are key actors as they are key decision makers in the country and their manifestoes inform their approach to governance, should they win an election. A collaborative approach among political parties to working on strengthening the justice sector will go a long way in helping to strengthen the activities of the respective actors. The availability of political will is central to having a sector that functions efficiently and effectively. Thus, the strategy will seek to engage political parties and political actors to own the strategy and support its implementation.

viii. The Private Sector: The private sector will be targeted with specific messages on the need to support the promotion and protection of human rights within the sector and to support the activities of the sector. Additionally, the private sector should also be targeted and engaged to support/fund access to justice initiatives- legal aid schemes etc This is a largely untapped source of support. As such, specific messages will be developed that will target private sector actors.

The Role of the Communications Coordinator-JSCO

Communications is an art and is an academic discipline that comes with its own set of skills. It is easily assumed that having knowledge of something makes it easier to communicate it. This erroneous assumption too often leaves very intelligent people making gaffs and faux pas on radio and tv channels as they lack some of the skills and etiquettes required for public communications. Therefore, among others, there are four key roles envisaged for the Communications Coordinator of the JSCO, who will lead the implementation of the strategy:

Coordination of Activities

The Communications Coordinator of JSCO will be principally responsible for the mobilising and working with the respective actors in the sector to undertake communications related activities. These activities will be tied to the strategy, with feedback mechanisms established to provide sectoral activities with the data they require to improve on their activities.

Capacity Building

The role of the Communications Coordinator therefore will be to facilitate the smooth implementation of the communications strategy by supporting the process of building the capacity of the relevant actors to have the skills and resources to enable them better undertake communications related activities.

Visibility

The Communications Coordinator takes the lead in ensuring that the Justice Sector is favourably visible, recognised, and accessible through making sure that knowledge about it and its activities are widely available and accessible i.e., through its website and partner websites, billboards, features on online advertisement boards (like Facebook and YouTube) and marketing events. This function can also include packaging information leaflets, brochures and newsletters.

Public Relations

The Communications Coordinator takes the lead in responding to information inquiries and requests from external parties relating to the Centre. These may include but not limited to drafting and publishing press releases, managing communication events or riding on activities such as seminars, training, and workshops to enhance the visibility and positive image of the Centre.

The Communications Coordinator will be required to work with all relevant actors.

3.5. Messages and Methods

The strategy will ensure that specific and tailor-made messages are developed for each audience and will be done by communications experts within the communications units in the institutions. Each activity will have its specific message(s) to ensure good understanding and effective communication. Thus, this component of the strategy provides details on information and messages that are critical for the targeting of each of the actors listed above. However, messages would be tailored and directed to meet the specific needs and demands of each audience, to ensure relevance, clarity, and a positive outcome. Below are generic areas from which messages would be tailored:

No.	Audience	Message	Source of Information
1.	Policy Makers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The vision of the strategy ✓ Strategic priorities ✓ Resource mobilisation priorities and the areas of support by government ✓ Complementary relationship between the strategy and the JSRSIP IV ✓ Inter-agency and inter-sectoral networking and partnerships and collaboration ✓ Promoting gender mainstreaming in justice service delivery ✓ Strengthening justice service provision for vulnerable groups such as the People with Disability (PwD), children and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communication strategy ✓ JSRSIP IV ✓ Website of the sector ✓ Flyers and brochures ✓ Meetings/Workshops, seminars/conferences
2.	The Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The institutions in the justice sector ✓ The priorities and activities of the respective institutions ✓ Services provided to the public ✓ Strengthening justice service provision for vulnerable groups such as the People with Disability (PwD), children and women ✓ The areas of collaboration with the public ✓ Accessibility and platforms for engaging the respective institutions ✓ Accountability and transparency mechanisms ✓ Contact details (address, email, location etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Website of the Justice Sector ✓ Brochure ✓ Staff of the Justice Sector ✓ Radio/TV programmes ✓ Community engagements, especially with the use of popular arts ✓ Workshop/seminars/conferences
3.	Community, Religious and Traditional Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The institutions in the justice sector ✓ The priorities and activities of the respective institutions ✓ Services provided to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Community engagements, especially with the use of popular arts

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The role of community leaders in identifying and report human rights abuses and violations ✓ The development and use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms ✓ Accessing and engaging justice sector institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Brochure ✓ Staff of Justice Sector ✓ Town hall meetings, local celebrities ✓ Radio/TV programmes targeting local communities
4.	Civil Society and the Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strengthening cooperation and collaboration between state actors and CSOs on justice related issues ✓ Strengthening an integrated approach to justice sector service provision ✓ Improved access to information and data to enhance the popularisation and propagation of factual and credible information ✓ The development of people centred approaches to justice service delivery ✓ CSOs and justice service delivery at the primary and secondary levels ✓ The promotion of ADR ✓ Promoting gender mainstreaming in justice service delivery ✓ Strengthening justice service provision for vulnerable groups such as the People with Disability (PwD), children and women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communication strategy ✓ JSRSIP IV ✓ Website of the sector ✓ Flyers and brochures ✓ Meetings/Works hops, seminars/conferences
5.	Academic Institutions and Think-Tanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The role of academic institutions in promoting human rights and the rule of law in Sierra Leone ✓ The contribution of academics to policy development related to justice service delivery in Sierra Leone ✓ The establishment of human rights and rule of law clubs in secondary schools and tertiary institutions ✓ Establish government funded research centres on the justice sector with particular focus on justice delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communication strategy ✓ JSRSIP IV ✓ Website of the sector ✓ Flyers and brochures ✓ Meetings/Works hops, seminars/conferences
6.	International Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strategic priorities of the sector ✓ Key expertise within the sector ✓ Resource needs and partnership opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communication strategy ✓ JSRSIP IV ✓ Website of the sector

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Impact/publications and engagements of justice sector institutions ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Flyers and brochures ✓ Meetings
7.	Political Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The role of political parties in promoting justice service provision in Sierra Leone ✓ The inclusion of political parties in the activities of justice sector institutions ✓ Political parties and their role(s) in parliament to promote human rights and the rule of law ✓ Actively involve their public relations unit and youth representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communication strategy ✓ JSRSIP IV ✓ Website of the sector ✓ Flyers and brochures ✓ Meetings/Works hops, seminars/conferences
8.	The Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strategic priorities of the sector and its institutions ✓ Key expertise within the sector ✓ The private sector and its role in promoting justice service provision in Sierra Leone ✓ Resource needs and partnership opportunities. ✓ Impact/publications and engagements of justice sector institutions ✓ The priv 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communication strategy ✓ JSRSIP IV ✓ Website of the sector ✓ Flyers and brochures ✓ Meetings/Works hops, seminars/conferences

The Justice Sector will embrace a range of traditional and new methods of communication to deliver its strategic communication objectives. Such methods will be determined by the specific audience, message, and context. Depending on the need, messages can be communicated using multiple channels and tools simultaneously.

It is worthy to note that the use of both traditional and non-traditional media would be essential in educating stakeholders on the activities of the institutions within the sector. A survey on media use, conducted by Foundation Hironnelle, identified radio as the most frequently used source (78%) of accessing media information on current affairs for Sierra Leoneans, followed by mobile phones (18%), and TV (8%). Community radios play an integral role in disseminating information and they are widely listened to in local communities. The growing use of mobile phones and access to internet has become a major source of collecting, accessing, and disseminating information. This cuts across all age brackets and is very effective, especially as electricity and internet connection becomes accessible in the interior of the country. Tied to this, is the fact that the social media presents one of the most effective and less costly opportunities to target the younger populations (students) and development actors and other policy makers within the country.

Interpersonal communication was also cited as an important and reliable source of information. Other traditional media tools like posters, flyers and leaflets which are more likely to provide basic information in a concise manner. The focus in the short term is to create visibility using such approaches, while in the medium terms (when it is anticipated that a conducive environment would have been created for research), seminars, training and other workshops will be used. Other innovative communication tools such as street theatres utilising skits that are interesting and impactful, visually entertaining and language spoken within communities should also be considered- especially in rural/provincial areas.

The establishment of a website that is dynamic and regularly updated will be a major tool to facilitate more formal enquiry and engagement with major international development, policy and research institutions. A well-established website will add significant value to the credibility, respect, and visibility of the sector.

For effective Justice Sector communications, depending on the objective and message and audience a mix of both modern and well-established communication channels, tools and materials will be used. These will include the website, social media, press releases and newsletters, public relations events and campaigns, involvement of mass media, print products, and multimedia, among others.

4. Strategic Priorities 2021-2025

This five-year strategy seeks to promote a departure from business as usual, especially in relation to how the sector has handled its communication with the public and other stakeholders. Thus, this section of the strategy provides very clear and precise strategies that the sector will use to ensure that concrete steps are taken to strengthen the implementation of the JSRSIP IV and other justice and security related policies and practices in Sierra Leone. The strategy will promote cooperation, collaboration, and coordination among the respective actors, with the aim of mitigating duplication of efforts and enhancing complementarity. Thus, three strategic priority areas have been developed and could be found below:

- i. Communication Units Established and Decentralised in the Respective Institutions in the Justice Sector;
- ii. Improved Communications and Interactions with the Public;
- iii. Improved Visibility, Coordination, Collaboration and Complementarity among Justice Sector Actors

4.1. Communication Units Established, Strengthened and Decentralised in the Respective Institutions in the Justice Sector

One of the factors that have been responsible for the challenges related to the lack of an effective approach to communication in the justice sector, is the lack of communications units in the respective institutions. Even in institutions in which they exist, there is usually one person in the unit and that person usually covers a wide range of issues and normally even lacks the equipment and training they require to carry out their daily activities. Coupled with this, it is usually the headquarters of the institution that has a communications officer and there is no decentralised structure that will cover the other parts of the country. This leaves Sierra Leoneans in the rural areas largely unattended and unable to access justice, which leads to the continuous and persistent abuse and violations of human rights and the rule of law across the country. In addition to this, the miscarriage of justice and social injustices and the failure on the part of victims, as they do not know what to do and where to go to seek redress undermines peace, security, and stability in the country. As such, this strategy seeks to support the establishment and strengthening of communications units across the different institutions in the sector. Where such units exist, the strategy will seek to have

them strengthened and decentralised through mobilising resources from the government and its development partners to have the units established and maintained. Below are the activities that will be undertaken under this strategic area:

a. Establish or Strengthen Communications Unit in Institutions where they do not exist

The JSCO will commission a capacity and needs assessment in relation to communications for all the institutions within the sector. Through this assessment, they will be able to conclude on the capacity of partners and ascertain those who have communications units or not. In cases where they exist, the existing capacity and the gaps that exist will be determined. The report will be used to engage government and its development partners on supporting the process of establishing communication units within the respective institutions. Central to this, government will be encouraged to absorb the costs of recruiting essential staff and supporting their activities and functions within the respective institutions. For clarity, this strategy will seek to have each institution recruit communication officers to work within the units to be established where they do not exist.

In addition to the above, strengthening existing communication unit does not only improve stakeholder's communications, but it can also increase employee engagement, build stronger teams but also improve the general output of an institutions. For institutions that have a Communications Unit, the focus should be on providing the requisite training and equipment to enhance the output of the unit.

b. Decentralise Communications Units

It is important for the government to undertake a gradual upscaling of justice related services in the country as the current demand for services far outweigh the supply. As such, key to this will also be the need to have communications units embedded in all the regional and district offices of the respective institutions. The existence of such units will go a long way in expanding services and in promoting awareness and learning in relation to the availability of justice services. They will also serve as platforms to have feedback from the public in relation to service provision and the performance of the actors in the sector.

The decentralisation of the units will attract significant financial costs, however, the need for justice service delivery and the promotion of good and effective governance within the sector should be the focus of the government and its development partners, as it will help to strengthen the fundamental rights and freedoms of Sierra Leoneans.

c. Capacity Building of Staff in the Sector

Capacity building activities will be undertaken to provide staff of the respective institutions to familiarise them with national and international good practices and the new laws and policies emerging within the sector and on how to engage the end users on them using the tools available.

Capacity building will also involve the design and implementation of training on communicating laws and policies and the strategic plans of the respective institutions. The staff should be able to fluently articulate them and constructively engage the public on their implementation. These training will be jointly organised by the communications team, led by JSCO.

d. Embed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system into the Implementation of the Strategy

The M&E units within the respective institutions in the sector will work with the communications units to make sure that their internal implementation of the strategy is done as planned. The M&E units will support the annual conduct of perception surveys as a means of gauging progress made or not in not only the implementation of this strategy. The results from such survey will feed into the process of evaluating the JSRSIP IV. Furthermore, the use of an effective M&E system within institutions and at the central level with the coordination of JSCO will help to have data on engagements with the public and the perception of the public of the services provided and the dynamics between the two.

4.2. Improved Communications and Interactions with the Public

One of the core aims of this strategy is to demystify the justice sector, make it accessible to the public, have it become people centred, and provide platforms and avenues through which the institutions within the sector and the public can freely and openly interact on justice related issues. As such, several methods and platforms will be used at the rural and urban areas to reach the public and engage them on justice related issues and services. Fundamental to this will be the use of both old and new media as described above, with the most practical means decided on based on the actor and their needs.

Key activities that will be undertaken will be community outreach programmes, radio/TV discussion programmes, establishment of websites and databases,

a. Community Outreach Programmes

To reach a wider audience, community outreach programmes will be organised. As the goal of the plan is not only reaching the public but also motivating their participation, extra effort will be put

into organisation of several activities, by the individual institutions or coordinated by the JSCO, on the justice sector. That will be done by organising customised meetings targeting specific portion of the public, town hall meetings, workshops and the use of popular arts that will raise awareness and answer any issues key audiences might have when it comes to the justice sector. Additionally, popular arts such as comedy, skits, music, graffiti, paintings will be done to send messages and attract attention to the work of the sector, especially in local communities.

In addition to the above, mobile outreach programmes will be organised, with the different actors in the sector, engaging communities on their activities and creating the awareness that has been lacking for a long time on the sector. It is believed that the creative approaches proposed will go a long way in creating awareness and enhancing the confidence and trust of the public in the sector.

b. Radio and TV Discussion Programmes

The strategy will seek to have key stakeholders participate in local and national radio and television programmes. These programmes can include paid talk shows and unpaid programmes involving senior staff appearing as guests and providing expert commentary on policy and service delivery related issues. However, it is important that before such opportunities are created, staff receive training in basic public communications skills and etiquettes (dos and don'ts). In communication, one must appreciate the fact that while people can easily express themselves in English or other local languages, it is important to note that 'public communication' requires certain skills and 'etiquettes'. Such skills need to be provided to staff of sector institutions to empower them in delivering the communication objectives of the sector. These programmes will focus on sharing information on the services provided by the sector, their activities and other relevant information while also showcasing the work and expertise of the sector.

c. Website and Database

A functioning website will be crucial in strategically positioning the sector as a viable and credible institution and will provide a major reference point for local and international development partners, funding agencies, potential partners, media institutions and the public to seek information on the sector. The website will provide a simplified version of important information and where necessary in graphic and informatics formats. It will also serve as a repository for members to access documents and information on the respective institutions and their activities. A website will help to reinforce the image of the sector, strengthen its brand presence and credibility across the country and internationally. The website can serve as a medium to announce upcoming events and update and showcase innovation from the field. It will be regularly updated, with the content tailored to be relevant, appropriate and easy to read. The website will also have visual content that will be useful to the public.

d. Establish Social Media Coverage

Social media platforms (such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp) are critical to keeping the sector engaged with the public generally in Sierra Leone and beyond. Key activities will be posted in the form of news reports and photos. Thus, the sector, coordinated by JSCO will establish several social media platforms that will be used to engage the public and ensure that feedback and information are collected from the public. Through social media, the public will also easily access the institutions, thereby mitigating the challenge of lack of access and information. Messages will be apolitical and will focus on justice related issues.

e. Media Coverage and Press Conferences

The justice sector will fully mainstream the media into all its activities as they are critical to the success of the sector. It is vital that the media owns and leads the activities of this strategy, as communications are within their domain and they can provide essential support to the actors in the sector. With their support, it will be ensured that major activities are covered in print (newspaper), electronic (radio and television) and social media. This way, the sector can become a recognised brand and reach out to a wide variety of audience through its activities and programmes. Regular coverage on local and national media is essential to the success of its communication strategy. Additionally, the strategy will provide training/capacity building initiatives to media personnel to investigate challenges within the sector, highlight successes/good practices and effectively share information to the public and stakeholders.

e. Publication of Quarterly News Letters and Bi-Annual Reports and Newsletters

A newsletter will be established to provide regular update on the activities of the sector ensuring that key stakeholders and the public are informed. It will provide a major opportunity to establish a brand presence for the sector, as well as help inform readers and get people interested in community legal empowerment work. Through the newsletter also the sector can motivate performance, promote coordination and improving morale among staff in the sector. There will be simplified versions of the bi-annual reports and the newsletters and they will be made accessible to all stakeholders.

4.3. Improved Visibility, Coordination, Collaboration and Complementarity among Justice Sector Actors

This strategic priority will seek to enhance the visibility of the sector, through undertaking specific activities that are geared towards ensuring that the different actors in the sector are known and the work that they do is made available or known to the public.

In line with visibility, there will be a strong focus on promoting coordination, collaboration, and complementarity of efforts among the partners. Now, institutions work in silo and they are very much disconnected from each other. There is a good understanding that some institutions like the ACC, the Law Officers Department, the Judiciary etc. mostly classify the work that they do, and that need for security and privacy will be enhanced. Despite this, all institutions within the justice chain need to work together on having a collaborative focus towards delivering justice related services. This priority will support key activities that are elaborated below to make sure that duplication of efforts is avoided, and effective collaboration and coordination of efforts is ensured among partners in the justice sector.

a. Monthly Communication Team Meetings

Monthly meetings will be organised by the JSCO with the aim of bringing together all partners including the media and civil society, with the aim of promoting regular and good interfacing (collection, organisation, and dissemination of information on various activities of Justice Sector institutions) and information sharing on various institutional activities to map out strategies for effective communications to the public. Dedicated representatives will be provided by the actors in the sector to be part of the communications network and that core team led by JSCO will be responsible for the successful implementation of the strategy. They will be reporting to the Technical Working Group of the Justice Sector, which in turn will provide details of their activities to the Leadership Group of the Justice Sector. The meetings will be intermittently rotated and held in the respective regions in the country, to avoid centralisation in Freetown.

b. Publication and Dissemination of Information, Education and Communications (IEC) Materials

Printed posters, leaflets and flyers will be regularly developed by the communications team to complement other communication activities by disseminating concise and precise information on key aspects of the work of the sector. These could reach a wide range of actors including the public, donors, and policy makers. It is an accessible means of knowing about the sector, its services, expertise, and needs. Additionally, there will be billboards at strategic locations on justice sector institutions and their services. This will also help give visibility to the sector and make it easy for stakeholders, partners, and others to reach the respective institutions. It will also help reinforce the

image and credibility of the sector. Additionally, it will be ensured that the institutions adhere to the messages they publicise.

c. Popularisation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy & Investment Plan (JSRSIP IV) and other Justice Related Strategies

As the blueprint responsible for the successful implementation of justice sector reform initiatives, this document aims at addressing existing justice sector issues and improving the public's perception of judicial neutrality, independence, and impartiality in the sector. It is important that the justice sector communications team in collaboration with other key stakeholders disseminate the content, benefits and specific justice sector reform initiatives articulated in the JSRSIP IV and other related justice sector strategies. Key actors that will be targeted will be the International Community, the public and policy makers. A simplified version of the document will be developed to ensure accessibility and easy reading of the document.

5. Risks and Mitigation Matrix

This section presents the risk analysis framework, that takes into consideration risks that may have the potential of undermining the efficient and effective implementation of the strategy. To pre-empt and address the potential risks, mitigation measures are also provided and will be monitored and updated throughout the implementation of the strategy.

Risk	Likelihood (Scale: 1 – 5)	Impact on the project (Scale: 1 to 5)	Mitigation Measures
The lack of political will to support the full implementation of the strategy	L = 4	I = 5	All relevant government actors will be fully mainstreamed into the process of rolling out the strategy and they would be allowed to own and lead the implementation process. This will enhance political will and maximise the support of government actors to ensure the full implementation of the strategy.
The persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequent effects on the priorities of the GoSL and its development partners	L = 4	I = 5	JSCO and the other actors in the justice sector will continuously engage the national and international partners on the need to continue supporting the implementation of the strategy. The rolling out of the strategy also has positive effects on the human rights and justice related issues that have to do with the COVID-19 pandemic.
Unwillingness on the part of some institutions within the justice sector to fully cooperate and work with the other actors to roll out the implementation of the strategy	L = 3	I = 3	An integrated approach will be used to mainstream all relevant actors in the justice sector into the process of implementing the strategy. As such, they will all own the process of planning and implementing it. This open, transparent and accountable approach will strengthen the buy-in and ownership of the process by all actors.

6. Strategy Implementation Plan

This section presents the implementation plan of the strategy, with details on timelines and institutions responsible.

Strategic Priorities	Activities	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Institution Responsible
Communication Units Established and Decentralised in the Respective Institutions in the Justice Sector	Establish or strengthen communications unit in institutions where they do not exist						JSCO and partners
	Decentralise communications units						Respective partners with the support of JSCO
	Organise capacity building exercises for staff of the institutions in the sector						JSCO and partners
	Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system and plan as a key component of the implementation process of the strategy						JSCO and partners
Improved Communications and Interactions with the Public	Design and implement community outreach activities						JSCO and partners
	Organise monthly Radio and TV discussion programmes on						JSCO and partners

	justice related issues-with sectoral partners participating on general issues and those that are specific to their organisations						
	Design a website and database for the sector						JSCO and partners
	Establish social media coverage for the sector						JSCO and partners
	Publication of Quarterly News Letters and Bi-annual Reports and Newsletters						JSCO and partners
Improved Visibility, Coordination, Collaboration and Complementarity among Justice Sector Actors	Organise monthly communication team meetings						JSCO and partners
	Publication and dissemination of Information, Education and Communications (IEC) Materials						JSCO and partners
	Design and implement activities related to the popularisation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy & Investment Plan (JSRSIP IV) and other Justice Related Strategies						JSCO and partners

7. Budget Proposal

Strategic Priorities	Activities	Cost-USD 2021	Cost-USD 2022	Cost-USD 2023	Cost-USD 2024	Cost-USD 2025	Total in USD
Communication Units Established and Decentralised in the Respective Institutions in the Justice Sector	Establish or strengthen communications unit in institutions where they do not exist	80,000	82,000	84,800	89,480	90,300	426,580
	Decentralise communications units	5,000	5,500	6,050	6,655	7,320.5	30,525.5
	Organise capacity building exercises for staff of the institutions in the sector	8,000	8,800	9,600	10,648	11,712.8	48,760.8
	Establish a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system and plan as a key component of the implementation process of the strategy	12,000	14,000	16,000	15,000	16,000	73,000
Improved Communications and Interactions with the Public	Design and implement community outreach activities	10,000	11,000	12,100	13,310	14,641	61,051
	Organise monthly Radio and TV discussion programmes on justice related issues-with sectoral partners participating in general issues and those that are specific to their organisations	15,000	16,500	18,150	19,965	21,961.5	91,576.5
	Design a website and database for the sector	15,000	19,500	14,450	17,000	19,000	84,950
	Establish social media coverage for the sector	1,500	2,000	2,500	3,000	3,500	12,500
	Publication of Quarterly News Letters and Bi-annual Reports and Newsletters	1,500	2,000	2,500	3,000	3,500	12,500

Improved Visibility, Coordination, Collaboration and Complementarity among Justice Sector Actors	Organise monthly communication team meetings	2,000	2,000	2,500	2,500	3000	12,000
	Publication and dissemination of Information, Education and Communications (IEC) Materials	3,000	3,300	3,630	3,993	4,392.3	18,315.3
	Design and implement activities related to the popularisation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy & Investment Plan (JSRSIP IV) and other Justice Related Strategies	9,000	9,900	10,890	11,979	13,176.9	54,945.9
TOTAL							926, 705