



# The Transforming Agriculture digest



World Food Day Celebration in Kambia, Sierra Leone

## World Food Day 2025: Advancing Food Systems Transformation in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone commemorated #WorldFoodDay in Kambia on 30-31 November, reaffirming its commitment to food security and agricultural transformation under the Feed Salone agenda.

The commemoration brought together national leadership, farmers, and development partners to reflect on progress toward food self-sufficiency. H.E. President Julius Maada Bio reaffirmed the Government's commitment to strengthening local food production, noting increased consumption of domestically produced food and encouraging young people to view agriculture as a pathway to opportunity and national development.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Dr. Henry Musa Kpaka, emphasized that Feed Salone is a national movement, driven by collaboration across government institutions, farmers, development partners, and the private sector to build a resilient agrifood system that creates jobs and supports sustainable growth.

The event also marked the presentation of the Feed Salone Year Two Report, alongside the launch of new initiatives aimed at strengthening livestock systems and rural livelihoods. Development partners reaffirmed their continued support for farmer-led growth, inclusive value chains, and delivery-focused implementation.

World Food Day in Kambia underscored the importance of strong political will, effective coordination, and partnership in turning agricultural ambition into tangible results for farmers — particularly women and youth — and rural communities across Sierra Leone.



TWG Committee

## Advancing Evidence-Based Agriculture under Feed Salone

Sierra Leone is set to roll out the 2025 Crop Production Survey, following the successful completion of a national crop listing presurvey conducted in late October 2025. Led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) through the Planning, Evaluation, Monitoring and Statistics Division (PEMSD), the survey will generate reliable, policy-relevant data to support planning and delivery across the rice value chain.

An inter-institutional Technical Working Group (TWG)—bringing together government and development partners, approved the methodology, sampling strategy, classification of rice ecologies, and crop-cutting methodologies. The TWG also validated the survey tools to ensure data quality and consistency.

Fieldwork for the crop-cutting survey will commence in early 2026, producing geo-referenced yield measurements, district-level production estimates, and nationally representative results. These insights will inform annual production estimates, strengthen routine crop monitoring, and support evidence-based decision-making under the Feed Salone agenda.

This effort is supported by the Agricultural Transformation Office-Sierra Leone (ATO-SL), with funding from the African Agricultural Transformation Initiative (AATI), reinforcing national capacity for credible and timely agricultural statistics.



Knowledge sharing event for financial institutions, 2<sup>ND</sup> December, Free Town

## Laying the Foundations for a Special Purpose Vehicle to Unlock Agricultural Finance

Access to affordable finance remains one of the most binding constraints facing farmers and agribusinesses in Sierra Leone. To address this gap, the Government of Sierra Leone—through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS)—is advancing the design of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to support agricultural lending at scale.

The SPV is being developed in close coordination with key stakeholders, including the Bank of Sierra Leone, World Bank, IMF, and African Development Bank, to ensure alignment with national agricultural priorities and the country's broader macroeconomic recovery agenda.

Through the Agricultural Transformation Office (ATO) Salone, AATI has provided targeted technical and delivery support to MAFS to advance this agenda. This support has included:

- Drafting the Terms of Reference for a high-level coordination committee overseeing the design and implementation of the agri-finance intervention;
- Reviewing the draft National Agricultural Finance Policy and preparing a policy advisory brief;
- Conducting a comparative analytical study of financing options to assess trade-offs and recommend a fiscally affordable and sustainable model;
- Preparing the background study underpinning the national agricultural finance policy;
- Drafting a Cabinet Paper to advance government consideration and approval of the SPV; and
- Developing stakeholder presentations to support consultation and alignment.

Together, these efforts aim to create a credible, well-governed financing mechanism that can crowd in private capital, reduce risk for lenders, and expand access to finance for farmers and agribusinesses—supporting productivity, value addition, and jobs under the Feed Salone agenda.



## Strengthening Delivery through Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen delivery and accountability, the Agriculture Transformation Office (ATO) continues to invest in robust Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems that support effective planning, execution, and evidence-based decision-making.

### ATO Internal MEL Systems

Within ATO, internal MEL mechanisms have been established to enable low-burden monitoring of the workplan and improve delivery performance. These include:

- Weekly review meetings across each investment area to present weekly plans and track progress against agreed milestones; and
- End-of-month review sessions, where investment leads assess overall progress, identify implementation bottlenecks, and agree on strategies to strengthen delivery going forward.

These structured review processes are strengthening coordination, accountability, and responsiveness across the program.

### Feed Salone MEL Framework

In partnership with IDinsight, ATO Salone is supporting the development and institutionalization of the Feed Salone MEL framework. While IDinsight is leading the technical design—covering the Theory of Change, indicator development, and data systems—ATO is overseeing the institutionalization process to ensure alignment with national priorities and implementation realities.

The MEL framework is currently under development and is expected to be finalized by June 2026, alongside the deployment of a dedicated data management system led by IDinsight. To support operationalization, the ATO has developed a detailed roadmap outlining key stakeholders, timelines, and milestones. A validation workshop planned for early December will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to review, provide feedback on, and endorse the proposed indicators and implementation roadmap.

### Technical Support to the ATO M&E Framework

The AATI Central Unit has provided technical support to refine results measurement tools, clarify outcome pathways, and strengthen reporting practices aligned with national and programme-level transformation priorities. AATI in collaboration with the ATO implemented their workplan and was monitoring the progress through Monday.com, a cloud-based work operating system to centralize reporting data, automate updates with visual insights for more informed decisions. This has enhanced accountability and performance tracking.

This support has contributed to more coherent measurement approaches among implementing partners, improved data quality, and stronger analytical capacity enabling more informed decision-making and greater delivery efficiency.



## AATI Transitions to AGRA, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026



As the African Agricultural Transformation Initiative (AATI) approaches the end of its hosting arrangement within IFAD, a new chapter begins. Effective 1 January 2026, AATI will transition to AGRA's stewardship, marking an important milestone in the evolution of delivery-led agricultural transformation across sub-Saharan Africa.

Over its foundational phase, AATI demonstrated that strong delivery systems embedded within government institutions can accelerate agricultural transformation. Despite implementation delays arising from both internal and external factors, the Initiative exceeded its original ambition — successfully establishing three delivery mechanisms rather than the planned two: two Agricultural Transformation Offices (ATOs) and one Food Security War Room.

These achievements, combined with early progress in strategic planning, performance monitoring, and knowledge exchange, provide a strong proof of concept for the delivery model.

Three key institutional lessons have emerged. First, early and strategic alignment with governments is essential to build ownership and ensure delivery mechanisms are effectively integrated into national systems. Second, flexibility and adaptive procedures are critical in navigating political transitions, administrative processes, and recruitment constraints. Third, cross-country learning and capacity building — demonstrated through initiatives such as the Nairobi learning retreat and the upcoming comparative study on agricultural transformation models — have proven powerful in accelerating delivery and strengthening institutional maturity.

Looking ahead, the transition to AGRA creates an opportunity to consolidate and scale these gains. Priority areas under AGRA's stewardship include deepening implementation of the Agriculture Master Plan in Tanzania, operationalizing flagship initiatives under Sierra Leone's Feed Salone Strategy, expanding the use of digital dashboards and monitoring tools, and strengthening resource mobilization and institutional partnerships to support delivery at scale.

As AATI transitions to AGRA, this work enters a new, African-led chapter — grounded in country ownership, strengthened by learning, and built to endure. The foundations laid over the past years affirm a clear lesson: with political commitment, strong delivery capability, and shared learning, agricultural transformation is not only possible — it is already underway.



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