



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Government
Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA)
Policy

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Government Policy regulating the provision of Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSA) and other allowances for Official local and overseas trips.

Introduction

Officials and Agents of Government (persons who are not public officials or civil servants but are selected to represent Government on special occasions), in the course of their duty, may be required to promote the Government's interest internationally or travel abroad for training and development purposes. This Policy is designed to provide all Competent Authorities authorising such persons for travel with clear and concise procedures for determining the provision of daily subsistence allowance and other applicable financial support.

The Policy of Government is to provide developmental opportunities to Public and Civil Servants fairly and equitably and to facilitate overseas travels to regional and international meetings, conferences, workshops, capacity building training activities, and study abroad. This Policy is guided by the Government of Sierra Leone's principle to exercise the strictest economy and accountability in the utilisation of public funds to finance overseas travels.

Part One: Objectives and Scope of the Policy

This Policy provides guidelines for the provision of daily subsistence allowance and related support to public and civil servants going on official missions¹abroad. The objectives of this Policy are to:

- I. Enable Government to rationalise expenditures for official overseas travel and ensure that they are adequately accounted for with appropriate justifications.
- II. Ensure that the most cost-effective use is made of Government funds or funds from any other entity for overseas travel.
- III. Guide the selection process for overseas travel, from nomination to approval, to ensure consistency, fairness, equity and optimal use of overseas travel opportunities.
- IV. Provide an established outline of procedures for use in applying for and authorising travelling on duty overseas.
- V. Provide a reference point for the formulation, review and update of any related policy and procedures.

This Policy applies to all Officials of institutions covered by the Public Financial Management Act (2016), all entities of Government established by an Act of Parliament, and any person selected and/or acting as an Agent of Government or entities that Government has controlling equity or exposure. These persons are categorised as follows:

	Official
Category A	The Speaker of Parliament, the Chief Justice, Auditor General, Commissioner (ACC), Commissioner (NEC), Commissioner, Human Right Commission
Category B	The Chief Minister, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, Ministers of State
Category C	The Secretary to the President, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of Civil Service, All Heads of Agencies under Office of the President, Advisers to the President
Category D	Ambassadors/Deputy Commissioners/Deputy High Commissioners Ambassadors/High Commissioners

¹ Missions used in this policy to describe any official overseas travel such as attend official conferences, meetings, workshops, training events etc.

Category E	All Civil Servants in Grade 14 and above
Category F	Members of Parliament, Judges of High, Appeal and Supreme Courts
Official	
Category G	Heads of State-Owned Enterprises and Agencies of Government, Chief Executive Officers or heads of entities established by an Act of Parliament and Senior Management Staff of the above, including companies for which Government has controlling authority.
Category H	All Civil Servants in Grade 11- 13, Other Members of Parliament, Heads of State-Owned Enterprises, Commissions and Agencies of Government
Category I	All Civil Servants in Grades 7-10 and Middle-level staff of MDAs, Parliament & Judiciary
Category J	All Civil Servants in Grades 1-6 and Junior level staff of MDAs, Parliament & Judiciary

In principle, where attendance to international conferences, meetings and workshops held abroad is necessary, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) would be represented by diplomats of Sierra Leonean embassies or consulates where Sierra Leone is represented. However, in exceptional cases, where the representation by diplomats of Sierra Leonean embassies or consulates is not possible, overseas missions will be determined in accordance with selection criteria for official overseas trips as provided for in Part Two of this Policy.

Part Two: Selection criteria for missions abroad

Where there is a strong justification why a trip overseas cannot be delegated to Sierra Leonean diplomats, consideration of whether there should be an official mission abroad is only done if:

- I. It is mandatory by treaty, protocol or international agreement, to which the Government is a signatory, that a particular official is required to attend and the Official's powers for signature cannot be delegated;
- II. It is a result of high-level decisions or strategic directions that the physical presence of public servant or institution is required;

- III. It requires high technical expertise that cannot be readily available among Sierra Leonean diplomats in the foreign missions;
- IV. It is for initiating or negotiating, approval or funding a vital project, either new or among priority projects for national development whereby specific skills or networks are necessary;
- V. An official in a concerned public organ has to make a declaration or commitment on behalf of the Government;
- VI. An official is required to participate in a training course;
- VII. Non-attendance by an official at a specific level may have a negative implication and where the concerned institution has well clarified such implication.

Part Three: General Provisions for Consideration of requests for missions abroad

When considering requests for missions abroad, the following points must be taken into consideration:

- I. The Competent Authority is required to make every effort to minimise the cost of official overseas travel. Therefore, all forms of alternate means of communication, such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing, must first be explored to minimise costs.
- II. In choosing the person to attend a mission, the function level of the Official is assessed, and the basis of such a choice should be indicated.
- III. The principle of the choice of the Official to attend a mission is to give priority to technicians and middle-managers in the related fields while senior managers attend in cases where the events require only their level.
- IV. Selection of officials should be based on: the benefits to be derived, the obligation to be satisfied, or whether the Agent's or Official's presence is critical to the outcome of the meeting, conference and the like.
- V. No official should be selected for 'back to back' or multiple overseas events such as training and workshops unless he is a focal point or attending in the capacity of an expert or resource person. Notwithstanding, considerations shall be given to the availability of other suitable officials or Agents. An exception to this rule would be when the training course is part of a series to be completed by one Official or Agent.
- VI. Requests for attending overseas courses, meetings, workshops, conferences and training, should not be approved unless it is essential to the effective performance of an Official's duties and required to meet the

Ministry, Department or Agency's needs; or there is a benefit to be derived by the State.

- VII. The Competent Authority must assess the duration of the mission and the cost of the absence in the office of the person concerned;
- VIII. The Competent Authority must assess the cost of the mission, including transport facilitation, travel insurance and per-diem;
- IX. The Competent Authority must assess the source of funding either from the Government budget or any external funding.
- X. There will be cost-sharing arrangements for Agents where an external agency does not fully fund such travel.
- XI. The Competent Authority must confirm that there is approved budgetary provision to cover the overseas trip.

Part Four: Preparation of a plan of official missions abroad

Before the beginning of each fiscal year but not later than 30th November, every Ministry, Department and Agency prepares a plan of official overseas travel to be submitted for approval to the authority competent to authorise official missions abroad. A copy of the travelling plan is provided to the Office of the President, the Office of the Chief Minister, the Ministry of Finance and the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) (in cases of Civil Servants training) or Board of Directors or Commissions as the case may be.

The plan of official mission abroad must be aligned with the annual budget and serve as a basis to identify which missions are to be attended, who will attend and the related cost. However, not having a mission on the plan of official missions abroad does not prevent the competent authority, in his/her discretion, to authorise a necessary unforeseen official mission abroad.

Part Five: Competent authorities to authorise official overseas travel

Selection of civil servants below grade 11 to go on official travel abroad should be done by the head of Institution or Vote Controller in the institution and submitted to the competent authority for approval. The employing MDA requests for a public or civil servant selected for an official mission abroad through the Ministry of Finance for financial concurrence and a duly authorised permission issued by the competent authority.

For State-Owned Enterprises and institutions governed by special statutes with their own special regulations on sending public servants on missions abroad, the selection is made by the senior management, application submitted through the Ministry of Finance and permission duly issued by the competent authority.

The application for the permission must reach the competent authority at least fifteen (15) days before the expected date of departure to allow consideration and approval and take advantage of ticket purchase discounts.

For clarity, the competent authorities to authorise official missions abroad are the following:

Category	Competent Authority	Official
A	HE, The President	By Consultation- the Speaker of Parliament, the Chief Justice, Auditor General, Commissioner (ACC), Commissioner (NEC), Commissioner, Human Right Commission
B	HE, The President /Cabinet	The Chief Minister, Ministers and Deputy Ministers
C	HE, The President	The Secretary to the President, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of Civil Service, All Heads of Agencies under Office of the President, Advisers to the President
D	HE, The President/Minister of Foreign Affairs	Ambassadors/DeputyAmbassadors/High Commissioners/Deputy High Commissioners
F	Speaker/Chief Justice	Members of Parliament, Judges of High, Appeal and Supreme Courts
E, H, G	Minister	All Civil Servants in Grade 11 and above; Heads of State-Owned Enterprises and Agencies of Government, Chief Executive Officers or heads of entities established by an Act of Parliament and Senior Management Staff of the above, including companies for which Government has controlling Authority; Directors, CEOs & Deputy C.E.Os, Members of Boards
I, J	Vote Controllers /CEOs	All Civil Servants in Grades 10 and below, Middle and Junior staff of MDAs, Parliament

		and Judiciary, Heads of State-Owned Enterprises, Commissions and Agencies of Government
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Part Six: Approval Procedures for Overseas Travel

An official mission clearance should contain at least the following:

- The names of the person sent to the mission and his/her employing organ;
- The purpose and benefit of the proposed travel;
- The place of the mission;
- The duration of the mission;
- Whether the Official or Agent has complied with the requirements of previous overseas official travel, including but not limited to the preparation of reports and the delivery of training to other Officials and other stakeholders.
- Funding source and whether there is budgetary provision if expenses are to be borne by Government; and
- The signature of the authority sending the person on a mission.

Part Seven: Sources of Funding for Overseas Travel

All funding agencies should be identified and disclosed transparently for the information of the Cabinet. Possible sources of funding are:

- I. The Government itself;
- II. Approved International and Regional Agencies and to which new agencies may be added from time to time. If a Regional or International Agency is funding an Official or Agent's travel on duty, overseas care must be exercised to ascertain the level of funding to ensure an Official or Agent will not be out of pocket. Where there is a shortfall, consideration should be given to whether Government can top-up the external funding, thereby ensuring the official trip is fully funded; or whether the Official or Agent may be reimbursed accordingly; or whether the Official or Agent will finance this shortfall;
- III. A hybrid source of funding which may consist of a government and approved regional and international agencies covering areas such as airfare, hotel accommodation, per diem and incidentals; Funding from a

Promotion Investment Fund or any variant thereof which the Government may establish; and

IV. Self-financing on the part of the Official or Agent.

Part Eight: Allowances for official missions abroad

A person travelling abroad for an official mission is entitled daily to:

- An accommodation allowance;
- Meals allowance;
- Transport facilitation;
- Costs for communication; ▪ Other incidental costs.

Officials and Agents wishing to travel on duty overseas must ensure that they satisfy all entry requirements, including obtaining the correct visa to enter and remain in the Country. The Government will incur the cost of visas for only those persons holding Diplomatic or Official Passports. All other persons are required to fully cover the cost of a visa unless it is granted gratis.

In case the costs of accommodation, meals, transport and communication are covered from other sources, the person on official mission is entitled to a contingency allowance equivalent to fifty US dollars (50 US\$) per day for which no expenditure justification is required.

However, the provisions of Paragraph 2 of this Article shall not apply to a senior official or a public servant who is entitled to an advance for contingencies provided for in Article 26 of this Order.

Part Nine: Computation and payment of Per Diem / DSA

Upon consultation with the Minister of Finance, the Cabinet will determine allowance rates for official overseas travels depending on the living costs in the host country or city. Allowances for an official overseas trip will be calculated in accordance with the Daily Subsistence Allowance rates² for a period of travel. This period does not include travel days of the Official but includes the day of arrival in the host country of the event.

² Rates are based on those published by International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and utilized by the United Nations. The DSA rates are established on the basis of data supplied by designated agencies for duty stations around the world. The rates are intended to relate to good commercial hotels and restaurants. Website: <https://icsc.un.org/>

- I. If an official covered by the Policy spends a night on an official mission, he/she is entitled to ordinary allowances for mission abroad provided for by this Policy.
- II. A non-public servant sent on an official mission abroad by Government is entitled to a mission allowance subject to his prescribed status.
- III. Without prejudice, an expenditure justification is required for contingency allowances spent, and the remaining amount is reimbursed to the institution that sent the beneficiary in an official mission consistent with the PFM Act 2016.

Allowances for official overseas travels will be processed after the beneficiary has shown an original copy of the travel clearance duly signed by the competent authority. In addition, the Official must disclose if partners fund any part of the journey and whether any allowances are provided.

Table 1: Allowances for Official Overseas Travel

Category of Beneficiary	Allowances for Conferences and meetings (<i>if fully paid by GoSL</i>)	Allowances for training and workshops (<i>if fully paid by GoSL</i>)	Allowances if flight, accommodation and group meals sponsored by partners	Travel Aviation Classes
Category A, B, C, D, E, F	The UN DSA rates and a 45% top-up.	UN DSA Rate	\$100 per day	Business Class
Category H, G	The UN DSA rates and a 35% top-up.	UN DSA Rate	\$75 per day	Business Class if the total travel time more than 6 hours subject to availability of funds
Category I	The UN DSA rates and a 25% top-up	UN DSA Rate	\$ 60 per day	Economy
Category J	Not applicable	UN DSA Rate	\$ 50 per day	Economy

Use of Electronic Cards for Payment

It has been observed that payment of per diem / DSA to Government officials in foreign currency by cash poses two risks - a risk to the travelling official in moving around with large amounts of cash but also puts pressure on the foreign exchange reserves held at the Central Bank. Therefore, the payment of per

diem/DSA for all Government Officials from Grade 7 (Graduate Entry Point) will be processed electronically, and the beneficiaries will be used with electronic bank cards.

Part Ten: Other Responsibilities of Government Officials

- I. **Communication with Government Offices when Overseas:** Officials and Agents shall ensure that they can be reached by the Government at all times, where possible, while travelling on duty.
- II. **Communication with Governmental Overseas Offices:** To facilitate proper coordination of Sierra Leone's interests and activities overseas, an Official or Agent travelling to a destination where there is a Sierra Leone Embassy or Consulate shall, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, inform the relevant Embassy or Consulate of the imminent official overseas travel. If assistance is needed from an Embassy or Consulate, the Official or Agent shall make such a request through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the first instance. The itinerary and other helpful information on the official overseas travel are to be provided to the Embassy or Consulate, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, before departure from Sierra Leone.
- III. **Safety:** It is the responsibility of the Official and Agent to take all necessary precautions to remain safe while travelling on duty overseas. If Officials or Agents become aware of any safety or security risk while on such travels, they should notify the nearest Sierra Leone Embassy or Consulate within or outside the Country of travel.
- IV. **Vaccinations:** Officials and Agents are to seek proper medical advice before travelling on duty overseas. If an Official or Agent requires vaccination or preventative medication for such travel and these are not available at a Government-owned entity, an Official or Agent can obtain the immunisation and preventative medication privately and have it administered at a Government-owned medical facility. In such a case, the Government will not absorb the cost of these vaccinations or preventative medicines.
- V. **Baggage:** The Government will not incur any expenses for excess baggage. The Government shall not pay any reimbursement for excess baggage claims. It is the responsibility of the Official or Agent undertaking official overseas travel to take every reasonable step to ensure that no excess baggage charges are incurred. Personal excess baggage shall be paid for by the Official or Agent.

Part Eleven: DSA for Local Travel

Daily Subsistence Allowance rates for official local travels will be calculated as follows:

Category	Old Rates (Le)	New Rates (Le)
Ministers	400,000	1,000,000
Officers in Grades 14 and upper	400,000	1,000,000
Officers in Grades 11-13	350,000	800,000
Officers in Grades 7-10	300,000	700,000
Officers in Grades 6 and below	150,000	500,000

Part Twelve: Official Reporting and Monitoring of Travel

All Government institutions must ensure that their staff provides reports of official missions abroad/ locally.

- I. A person who returns from an official mission must submit a mission report to the authority that authorised his/her mission within a period not exceeding eight (8) working days after his/her return and provide a copy of the report to her/his employing institution.
- II. The mission report indicates the proceedings of the mission, recommendations and points requiring follow-up and responsible persons /institutions.
- III. Where an Official or Agent is a member of a multi-member delegation attending one event, only one report is required. However, for training purposes, the multi-member delegation must collaborate on preparing training reports.
- IV. Where an Official considers that the report or any section contains information that should not be made public, this should be noted. The reasons for keeping the section(s) confidential should be clearly stated. Officials or Agents who have travelled on duty overseas involving legal or sensitive matters are not required to detail these issues in their written reports. Instead, they should be the subject of briefings with the relevant and competent authority, Head of Department, Permanent Secretary or Minister of Government.

- V. Where the Official or Agent is required to conduct follow-up training or any prescribed activity as a condition of his/ her attendance at the Government-sponsored training course, this should be done within two (2) months of his/ her resumption of duties, or such time approved by the Permanent Secretary or Head of Department, prior to his/ her departure from Sierra Leone.
- VI. A copy of the visa and stamp confirming the stay of the person in the host country must be annexed to the mission report.
- VII. Ministers and other Agents of Government shall report on the achievements and follow-up matters emanating from their travels on duty overseas to the Cabinet and their management teams.
- VIII. A summary of official overseas travel undertaken by Officials in each Ministry/ Department must be prepared and published monthly by the Cabinet Secretariat (repository of all approved overseas travel). In addition, publications must be given to each Permanent Secretary or Head of Department to assist him/ her in maintaining a travel register. The reports must clearly indicate the missions attended abroad, their outcomes and the budget spent on them.
- IX. The publication in VIII above shall also be submitted to the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO). All such information may be used to identify potential trainers in specific disciplines or areas of competence within the Public Service and hold Public Officials benefitting from Government-sponsored training courses accountable for improved performance.

Part Thirteen: Implementation Arrangements

The Office of the President, the Secretary to the Cabinet President and Head of the Civil Service, the Minister of Finance, and the Director-General of the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) are entrusted with implementing this Policy.

Any breach of this Policy may result in disciplinary proceedings being instituted by the Public Service Commission, or a Permanent Secretary/ Head of Department, as the case may be.

Table 2: Role and Responsibilities

Person/ Institution	Responsibility
Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approve recommendations for Officials or Agents to travel on duty overseas and the associated costs.
Cabinet Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be the repository of all approved overseas travel-related matters. ▪ Prepare and publish a monthly list of all official overseas travel.
Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By way of circular, inform all Officials and employees in their respective Ministry/ Department of this Policy. ▪ Monitor the application of this Policy to ensure compliance with the provisions and that it is fairly applied. ▪ Brief the relevant Minister on matters of overseas travel and training that will come before the Cabinet for consideration. ▪ Seek the approval of the Cabinet for Officials and Agents to travel on duty overseas and the associated expenditure. ▪ Ensure preparation of technical and policy briefs for Ministers, Permanent Secretaries/ Heads of Department, Senior Management, and Agents of Government who are travelling on duty overseas. ▪ Maintain an official Overseas Travel Register. ▪ Manage the performance of the conditionalities of the award or the Official's attendance at the workshop and the like. ▪ Submit reports to the Public Service Commission via HRMO where officials have breached the Policy or institute disciplinary action against an official/employee in breach of this Policy, as the case may be.

HRMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grant leave to Officials for travel on duty overseas.
All Line Managers and Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief all members of staff on the provisions of this Policy. ▪ Apply this Policy in a consistent, fair and equitable manner. ▪ Manage the performance of the conditionalities of the award. ▪ Report any Official in breach of Policy to the Permanent Secretary/ Head of Department. ▪ Maintain an official Overseas Travel Register for his/ her Unit/ Division. ▪ Identify and recommend Officials for short-term awards and fellowships.
Official or Agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comply with the requirements of this Policy. ▪ Attend and fully participate in all training courses, workshops and the like, for which selected. ▪ Represent Sierra Leone well and promote its interest overseas. ▪ Provide written reports and, where applicable, conduct follow-up training activities in the specified time.
Ministry of Finance and HRMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold consultations with stakeholders on the provisions of this Policy. ▪ Seek approval from Cabinet for this Policy. ▪ Promulgate this Policy. ▪ Seek the approval of the Cabinet for Officials and Agents to travel on duty overseas and authorisation of the associated expenditure. ▪ Monitor the application of Policy to ensure that it is applied fairly and consistently. ▪ Evaluate the impact of the training. ▪ Review and modify Policy, as appropriate, to ensure continued relevance.
Ministry of Health and Sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support official overseas travel by providing relevant advice on health matters and administering vaccinations, as necessary.
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Notify Embassies and Consulates of Public Officials and Agents travelling on duty overseas. ▪ Facilitate the visa application process of Officials and Agents to travel on duty overseas
Embassies and Consulates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide necessary assistance to Public Officials and Agents of Government while travelling on duty overseas.

Part Fourteen: Repealing and Commencement

This Government Daily Subsistence Allowance Policy regulating the Government's provision of DSA and other allowances for official local and international travel as commencing on this 16th day of December 2021 hereby repeals any existing similar policies.