

PPD guide

Bridging business and government

The case for institutionalised public–private dialogue (PPD) in Sierra Leone and guidance for its effective implementation

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Abbreviations and acronyms

BMO	Business membership organisation
CSO	Civil society organisation
GESI	Gender equity and social inclusion
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
MDA	Ministries, departments and agencies
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
MSME	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
MTNDP	Medium-Term National Development Plan
MoPAPA	Ministry of Public Administration and Political Affairs
PSRU	Public Sector Reform Unit
MTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NIB	National Investment Board
PPD	Public–private dialogue
SLBF	Sierra Leone Business Forum
SLCCIA	Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
SLeCAD	Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
ToR	Terms of reference
WACOMP	West Africa Competitiveness Programme

Introduction

While definitions vary, public–private dialogue (PPD) is generally considered to be a structured approach to engagement between government, private sector and other stakeholders – primarily focused on shaping economic development policy and improving the business and investment climate. It aims to generate practical policy solutions, align commercial and development objectives and support inclusive growth, competitiveness and poverty reduction. While its core application lies in economic governance, PPD principles can also be adapted to areas like infrastructure and social development. In Sierra Leone, past PPD efforts have generally been informal or short-lived, which has limited their impact. This guide and accompanying toolkit can empower Sierra Leone’s policymakers and partners to **institutionalise PPD as a permanent feature of the country’s policymaking processes**. They consolidate lessons from the UK funded Invest Salone programme and global best practices, emphasising effective **dialogue facilitation, stakeholder capacity building and sustainable structures for PPD**. By utilising this guidance, the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and its business community can embed PPD into decision-making, ensuring that real-world enterprise needs inform policies and that jointly implemented solutions are effective.

What is the ultimate goal of PPD?

PPD enables governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to jointly identify and resolve challenges that affect the business environment and policymaking through a structured and collaborative approach.¹

A common objective that emerges across all forms and practices of PPD is **to strengthen governance and facilitate collective action solutions** to address economic development challenges.

Efforts to institutionalise PPD create a formal mechanism for evidence-driven dialogue, which allows for more responsive governance and strengthens mutual accountability between the public and private sectors.

Why PPD matters for Sierra Leone

An institutionalised PPD mechanism can improve Sierra Leone's investment climate and economic governance. While consensus is ideal, some issues involve conflicting interests that make it hard to achieve. PPD works best where stakeholders can collaborate to bridge differing public and private interests such as regulatory reforms, infrastructure or trade facilitation and lead to joint solutions with broad economic benefits. It creates a forum to align public and private interests, address

bottlenecks to growth and co-create policy reforms that are inclusive and feasible. In contexts like Sierra Leone, which face varying dimensions of fragility, moving from ad-hoc consultations to a formal PPD builds transparency and trust, which helps policies reflect on-the-ground realities and boosts investor confidence. This guide aims to make PPD a **standard, valued part of Sierra Leone's governance system**.

Purpose and audience

This guide is designed primarily for GoSL ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), along with business membership organisations (BMOs), private investors and development partners involved in economic policy. It provides a flexible framework – not a one-size-fits-all model – that stakeholders can adapt to their context. By using this approach, Sierra Leone's PPD practitioners will avoid past pitfalls and apply proven strategies to facilitate more **inclusive, outcome-oriented dialogue**.

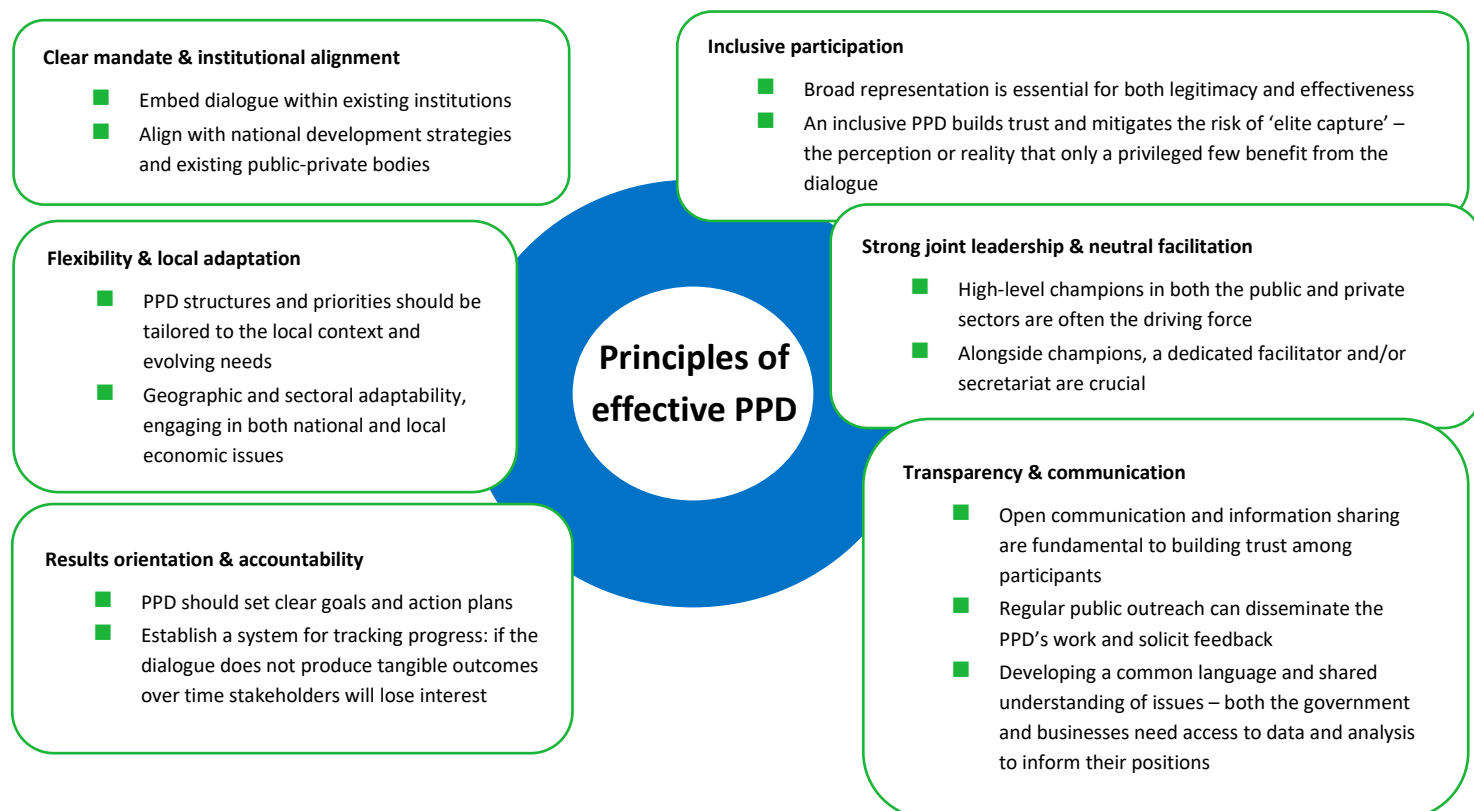
The guide and toolkit outline both structural and practical application through the key principles, roles and processes needed for effective institutionalised PPDs. This approach emphasises coordination, facilitation, building stakeholder capacity and long-term sustainability. Its main goal is to make PPD a standard and valued part of Sierra Leone's economic governance system.

¹ Definition adapted from State of Play: Public-Private Dialogue. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/432741467989538233> and Bettcher, K. E., Herzberg, B., & Nadgrodkiewicz, A.

(2015). Public-Private Dialogue: The Key to Good Governance and Development. Centre for International Private Enterprise & World Bank Group. <http://www.cipe.org/publications/detail/public-private-dialogue-key-good-governance-and-development>.

Core principles of effective PPD²

Successful PPDs around the world share common principles that ensure dialogue is **goal-oriented, inclusive and sustainable**. These principles create a framework for designing and managing effective PPD initiatives – which are based on the internationally endorsed *Charter of Good Practice in Using PPD* – to maximise their impact. Those illustrated in the diagram below are proposed to be the most applicable in Sierra Leone to promote real collaboration, which contributes to measurable and impactful outcomes.



■ Clear mandate and institutional alignment

Demonstrating a clear purpose that fits with existing public structures is found to be a necessary prerequisite for an effective PPD process. In Sierra Leone, this means anchoring dialogue mechanisms in national development strategies (e.g. the Medium-Term National Development Plan, MTNDP), relevant government ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Trade and Industry, MTI) and institutions (the National Investment Board, NIB), to lend legitimacy and continuity to these efforts. A clear government mandate (e.g. cabinet directive) signals high-level commitment, ensuring PPD survives political transitions and is taken seriously by all parties.

² Adapted for the Sierra Leone institutional environment: Benjamin, H., & Andrew, W. (2015). The PPD Handbook: A Toolkit for Business Environment Reformers, Charter of Good Practice in Using Public-Private Dialogue for Private Sector Development. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/632151468779696618/pdf/391150PPD0handbook01PUBLIC1.pdf>; ICR (2024) Business Environment Reforms through Public-Private Dialogue: Lessons Learned from the ICR Facility. [240710 ICR Reform-1.pdf](#)

■ **Inclusive participation**

Dialogues must represent the full spectrum of the private sector – from large firms to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), women and youth-led enterprises, informal traders and rural businesses. Applying gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) considerations helps to identify and address inequalities affecting these groups, while also prevents elite capture and builds legitimacy. In Sierra Leone, inviting voices beyond Freetown (such as district traders and agribusiness cooperatives) is essential so that PPD outcomes reflect diverse needs, not just those of a few powerful actors.

■ **Flexibility and local adaptation**

PPD designs must be tailored to Sierra Leone's context. Global best practices provide a template, but the format (such as national vs. district dialogues, sector or subsector-specific working groups) should flex to local conditions. Whether addressing agriculture or mining, or operating at the national or provincial level, the country's dialogue processes should be adapted to evolving needs and constraints and owned by local institutions. This adaptability increases the likelihood of PPD's success in Sierra Leone's dynamic political economy.

■ **Strong joint leadership and neutral facilitation**

PPD thrives when there are committed 'champions' from both government and business driving the process. A respected public-sector leader (e.g. a minister) and a prominent business leader should co-chair or visibly support the dialogue. Equally important is the presence of an impartial facilitator or secretariat to manage day-to-day coordination and administration. The facilitator ensures meetings stay on track, all voices are heard and follow-ups are monitored. In Sierra Leone, anchoring this facilitation function in an institution (while maintaining neutrality) could provide continuity beyond individual personalities.

■ **Results orientation and accountability**

Dialogues must lead to action, not just talk. Each PPD forum should focus on solving specific problems and agree on concrete reform actions with responsible parties and timelines. Tools like reform matrices, dashboards or action trackers should be used to record decisions and monitor implementation. Quick wins can evidence impact and keep people engaged. In Sierra Leone, visible results are critical to maintain stakeholder interest, legitimacy and momentum.

■ **Transparency and communication**

Trust is built through openness, and PPDs should be transparent about their structure, activities and decision-making. This can be achieved by publishing meeting agendas, outcomes and progress updates. Regular communication (via newsletters, media or online portals) lets the wider business community and public know what is being discussed and achieved. In Sierra Leone's low-trust environment, proactive communication and information-sharing will counter scepticism and invite broader input.

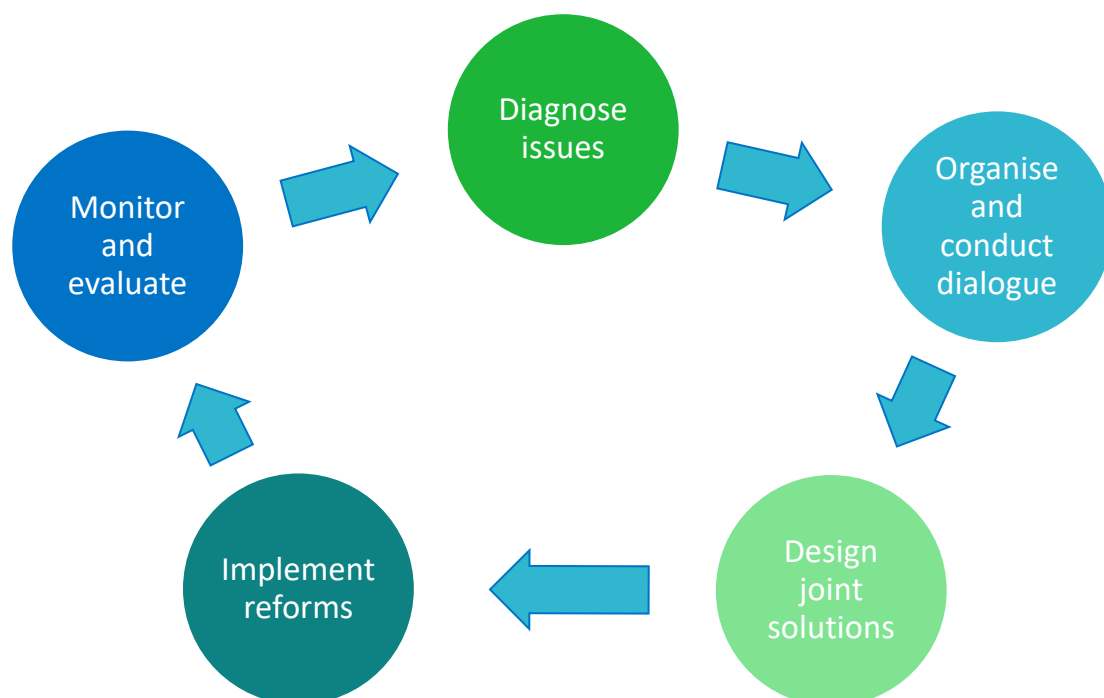
These principles create a foundation for designing PPD initiatives that are inclusive, credible and impactful. They directly reflect the lessons from Sierra Leone's past efforts (e.g. the need for formal mandates and broad inclusion) and mirror what has worked in other countries. By adhering to them, Sierra Leone's stakeholders will meet international standards while avoiding common pitfalls, such as politicisation, exclusion or a lack of follow-through.

The PPD process cycle and stakeholder roles

Effective PPD is not a one-off event, but an iterative cycle. This framework breaks the PPD process into five key stages, each with specific objectives and activities. For each stage, the roles of the government, the private sector and supporting actors are clarified, so everyone knows their responsibilities in moving from dialogue to reform implementation. This section describes a general PPD process that can be applied to any sector and is informed by proven PPD practices relevant to Sierra Leone that have been found effective in fragile and conflict-affected situations.³

PPD cycle⁴: The overview

The design of the PPD process, illustrated in the diagram below, comprises several stages of an ongoing cycle that promotes public–private collaboration to achieve outcomes. It begins with government and business stakeholders coming together to identify key issues and build trust. From there, they contribute to designing and implementing solutions depending on their role and responsibilities at the differing stages. Once these solutions are put into action, their impact needs to be monitored and evaluated. The findings that are gathered during this stage provide new insights that can be incorporated into the dialogue. What emerges is a cyclical process that aims to facilitate ongoing learning and effective reform.



³ World Bank Group. (2014). Public-Private Dialogue in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations: Experiences and Lessons Learned. World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/108301474484504825>

⁴ The IFC describes PPD in four similar steps: (1) Diagnostic, (2) Solution Design, (3) Implementation, and (4) Monitoring & Evaluation

Stage 1: Diagnose issues and build trust

The distinction between a reactive and a proactive approach needs to be considered and is critical to ensuring PPD effectiveness, especially in challenging institutional environments such as Sierra Leone.

Reactive approach: A reactive approach addresses issues as they arise, typically in response to immediate crises, usually related to regulatory changes or market shocks. Quick fixes can be realised. The challenge though, is achieving long-term stability with the ongoing use of this method, as it often focuses on symptoms rather than tackling the underlying systemic issues. Stakeholders are engaged only when specific obstacles emerge, such as infrastructure gaps or bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Proactive approach: A proactive approach anticipates challenges and encourages ongoing dialogue, even in the absence of immediate constraints. It employs research and political economy analysis to identify risks, opportunities and emerging trends – enabling pre-emptive action rather than reactive responses. Meanwhile, setting up continuous dialogue and consistent communication channels for collective engagement between the government and private sector development stakeholders can uncover latent concerns and improve investor and business confidence.

Initiation and diagnostic	Mode of delivery – ‘the how’
Depending on a reactive or proactive approach, the PPD process begins with jointly identifying and prioritising the business climate issues to address - whether through research or as a response to situation-specific events. Quick, low-conflict issues (potential ‘quick wins’) are often tackled first to build relationships and confidence. The government’s role is to acknowledge issues and commit to a collaborative approach. Private sector actors (through BMOs or coalitions) mobilise evidence of constraints and propose initial ideas.	• Pre-planning and informal sessions: smaller group meetings can be held in preparation for the PPD - representatives (government agencies, business associations, development partners etc.) discuss ‘pain’ points – for example, cumbersome licensing, unreliable utilities or policy gaps. • Stakeholder mapping: At this formative stage, it’s crucial to map stakeholders and engage a diverse group from the start (including typically underrepresented groups like informal traders or women entrepreneurs). Ideally, the relevant MDA should lead this process - either in partnership with a development partner or business association - or it can be conducted through a dedicated PPD facilitation body. • Government and private-sector champions are identified to spearhead the initiative. • A neutral facilitator or interim secretariat often conducts stakeholder mapping and convenes preliminary meetings to lay ground rules and encourage mutual understanding.

Stage 2: Organise and conduct dialogue (PPD ‘in action’)

Action-oriented PPD	Mode of delivery – ‘the how’
In this stage, the PPD mechanism becomes operational. Regular forums, working group meetings or workshops are held to discuss priority issues in depth. The dialogue should be well-structured, with clear agendas, background briefs and an agreed code of conduct. Government participants provide policy context and data, while private sector participants share on-the-ground experiences and jointly brainstorm solutions. A neutral moderator ensures balanced participation, mediates between different viewpoints and keeps the discussion focused on shared objectives.	• Facilitation by a neutral moderator and a secretariat function can help manage meetings, conduct research and ensure follow-up on agreed-upon actions. • The PPD can take various forms, which include regular forums, workshops, sector-specific roundtables and annual or biannual events. • By the end of this stage, the dialogue should produce concrete outputs such as a list of agreed reform actions, an action plan or position papers summarising consensus and differing views. All parties should clearly understand who will do what after the meeting.

Stage 3: Design joint solutions

Solution design	Mode of delivery – ‘the how’
After broad dialogue, smaller joint working teams often form to develop detailed reform proposals for the prioritised issues. This may involve technical analysis, consulting wider stakeholders and drafting policy or regulatory changes.	• Government role: assign technical staff or inter-ministerial groups to work with the private sector on co-creating solutions (e.g. drafting a revised regulation, designing a new support programme). • Private sector role: contribute expertise, data and feedback to ensure solutions are practical and business-friendly. For instance, the Sierra Leone Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (SLCCIA) might co-draft a new investment policy paper with the ministry. • Facilitator/Secretariat: coordinates these working sessions, provides research support and documents the proposed solutions. Transparency remains important – the PPD secretariat should communicate progress to the broader stakeholder community, so the process stays inclusive and trustworthy. At this stage, high-level political support may be needed to validate that the ideas being developed have a pathway for approval (e.g. a Minister indicating willingness to champion a policy change).

Stage 4: Implement reforms

Implementation	Mode of delivery – ‘the how’
This stage moves from dialogue to action. The agreed solutions or reforms move into implementation - new policies are adopted, regulations or administrative procedures are revised, or pilot initiatives are launched.	• Government takes the lead on policy implementation – for example, drafting a bill, changing a regulation or improving a service – and is expected to respond to private-sector feedback as implementation unfolds. • Private sector stakeholders support implementation by complying with new rules, spreading awareness among businesses, or even co-investing in solutions (for instance, a business association helping roll out a new business registration system to its members). • During this phase, the PPD secretariat plays an oversight and support role: tracking progress on each reform action, helping resolve bottlenecks (by convening quick problem-solving meetings if needed), and keeping all stakeholders informed. Maintaining momentum is critical – regular check-ins or updates ensure that reforms don’t stall. Any delays or obstacles should be reported back to the dialogue forum for troubleshooting rather than allowing them to derail the process.

Stage 5: Monitor and evaluate outcomes

Monitoring, evaluation and learning	Mode of delivery – ‘the how’
To close the loop, the PPD mechanism must monitor whether the implemented reforms achieved the desired impact and evaluate the dialogue process itself. This stage creates a feedback loop: measuring results and gathering stakeholder feedback to improve future dialogues. This stage is crucial for accountability – it prevents the PPD from becoming a ‘talk shop’ by clearly showing what was achieved or highlighting gaps that need to be addressed. Finally, the insights from monitoring and evaluation inform a new cycle of dialogue (Stage 1), enabling the PPD to continuously learn and adapt.	• Government (with support from the secretariat or an MDA monitoring and evaluation function) should track key outcome indicators – e.g. reduction in time/cost to start a business if that was a reform, changes in investment flows, job creation or other metrics linked to the PPD objectives. • The private sector and other stakeholders should be surveyed or consulted on their satisfaction with the reforms and with the PPD process. The PPD secretariat typically compiles a reform outcomes report or dashboard: listing each issue raised, the action taken, its implementation status and any measured results. They may use simple tools like Excel or an online system to track and publicly report this information. In addition, process indicators are tracked to ensure the dialogue mechanism is functioning well.

Finally, the PPD process must include monitoring and evaluation of both the reforms' impact and the dialogue process itself. This stage creates a *feedback loop* – assessing whether implemented reforms have achieved the desired outcomes and identifying any new challenges that have arisen. It also evaluates how well the PPD mechanism is functioning. Monitoring and evaluation prove to be an effective tool for demonstrating the PPD's performance and values. Responding to the findings from these actions informs adjustments to the structure or process of PPD initiatives. These efforts lead back into a new round of diagnostic discussions, showcasing an iterative dialogue cycle.

Note: The above stages build on international principles and best practices for PPD in Sierra Leone. Importantly, conducting PPD is not a one-off event – it is a *continuous process*. Following Stage 5, the cycle returns to a new diagnostic phase to address the next set of issues or to reevaluate ongoing concerns. These reiterative stages establish a continuous process for collaborative problem-solving between the government and the business sector. By adhering to this cycle, a framework PPD can be instituted which over time enables stakeholders to adjust to emerging priorities as they arise.

Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders

The PPD process depends on clearly defined roles and shared responsibilities among the government, the private sector and development actors, who serve as catalysts for formalisation in Sierra Leone. Institutional clarity, mutual accountability and cultural alignment are critical to maintaining momentum and trust. The diagram outlines the primary actors and their roles and responsibilities within Sierra Leone's PPD ecosystem. It provides recommendations on how their roles can be integrated into institutional frameworks for sustainability.

Stakeholders	Role in PPD	Key responsibilities	Embedding strategies
Government: GoSL MDAs and officials	Policy owners and reform implementers	• Provide leadership and legitimacy to the process, supply data and policy information, commit to reform actions, and implement agreed changes • High-level political support (e.g. President, Ministers) should visibly endorse the PPD to secure buy-in across government • Technical officials must follow through on actions within their mandate • Act on agreed recommendations	• Integrate PPD into sector strategies and budgets, allocating resources (staff time, budget) to support the PPD structure as a sign of ownership • Link to key performance indicators • Build PPD capacity of MDAs • Appoint PPD focal points
Government: Ministry of Public Administration and Political Affairs (MoPAPA) - Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU)	Public service reform and PPD capacity anchor	• Institutionalise PPD practices across MDAs • Monitor reform implementation	• Include PPD in reform roadmap (2024–2030) • Embed in performance management systems
Government: Office of the President / Cabinet	High-level convener and enabler	• Political bodies (like parliament committees) can be linked to PPD to ensure reforms feed into legislation and oversight • Mandate national PPD platforms • Appoint political champions • Ensure cross-sector coordination	• Issue official PPD endorsements • Integrate into Cabinet and inter-ministerial processes
Private Sector: (BMOs, Chambers)	Private sector mobilisers and advocates	• Articulate the concerns and priorities of businesses in a structured way. Chambers like SLCCIA or sector associations (e.g. agribusiness, traders) coordinate input and aggregate issues from their members • To represent diverse business interests, business representatives must participate consistently, share data and constructive proposals, and assist in monitoring implementation on the ground • Advocate policy reforms	• Private sector engagement in PPD should reflect diverse business interests, as common challenges like regulation, finance and infrastructure require collective solutions. Ensuring representation of MSMEs, women- and youth-led firms and upcountry businesses strengthens both the legitimacy and impact of dialogue outcomes • Serve as formal representatives in dialogue structures, they can also co-chair working groups or even the main platform to ensure joint ownership • Elicit advocacy training

Private sector: (individual firms & entrepreneurs)	Contributors and reform beneficiaries	• Share lived business challenges • Engage in technical working groups • Support implementation	• Encourage broad participation from SMEs and informal traders • Use model firms as champions
Development partners (donors/projects)	Technical assistance and resource providers	• Early on, international partners can provide technical assistance, facilitation expertise and funding to kick-start the PPD platform. In Sierra Leone, programmes like Invest Salone and now an EU-funded action programme, play a catalyst role • Fund PPD pilots and training • Provide global expertise • Support institutional development	• Co-create with national actors • Plan for sustainability and local ownership. Donors should focus on building local capacity and structures that can be sustained – for example, funding a secretariat only while gradually transitioning costs to local sources • They may also offer comparative experience from other countries (bringing in experts or best-practice knowledge)
Civil society organisations (CSOs), media and academia	Knowledge contributors and ‘Reform watchdogs’	• Media and civil society can play a supporting role by disseminating information and injecting broader public interest perspectives (like consumer or community considerations) into the dialogue to drive action-oriented reform • Promote transparency and accountability • Contribute research and evidence • Support inclusivity	• Serve on oversight committees • Act as neutral observers and validators • In an inclusive PPD, space can be provided for civil society or academia to contribute research and advocacy on cross-cutting issues (e.g. corruption, gender inclusion in business)

Laying out the PPD cycle and stakeholder roles equips Sierra Leone’s practitioners with a clear roadmap of what to do and who is responsible for each step. Past initiatives often faltered due to role confusion or because they failed to move beyond dialogue to implementation.

By following the cycle from issue diagnosis to monitoring and by assigning responsibilities, this guide helps ensure that dialogues are systematically translated into reforms and tangible outcomes. This structure also makes the process repeatable and scalable (including at sector or district levels), which makes the PPD process a continuous feature rather than a one-off event.

Facilitating inclusive and outcome-oriented dialogue

Establishing a PPD structure is a necessary first step – **how** the dialogue is conducted will determine the path to successful outcomes. This section provides practical guidance on facilitation techniques and engagement strategies to make PPD meetings in Sierra Leone both inclusive and results-

focused. The goal is to build trust among participants and maintain a productive dialogue, especially in the context of low institutional trust and capacity constraints.

Note: This section is included because **effective facilitation and inclusive engagement are the linchpins of a successful PPD**. Even with a great structure on paper, poor meeting management or a lack of trust can derail the process. By providing GoSL staff and other facilitators with concrete techniques (agenda setting, inclusive facilitation methods, conflict resolution and tracking tools), the guide supports efforts to build local capacity to run dialogues that produce results. This focus directly addresses known weaknesses in Sierra Leone's prior dialogues – such as dominance by a few voices, lack of follow-up and politicisation – thereby making the new PPD efforts more likely to succeed and be sustained. It empowers the people 'in the room' with the know-how to make each dialogue session count.

Common pitfalls to avoid

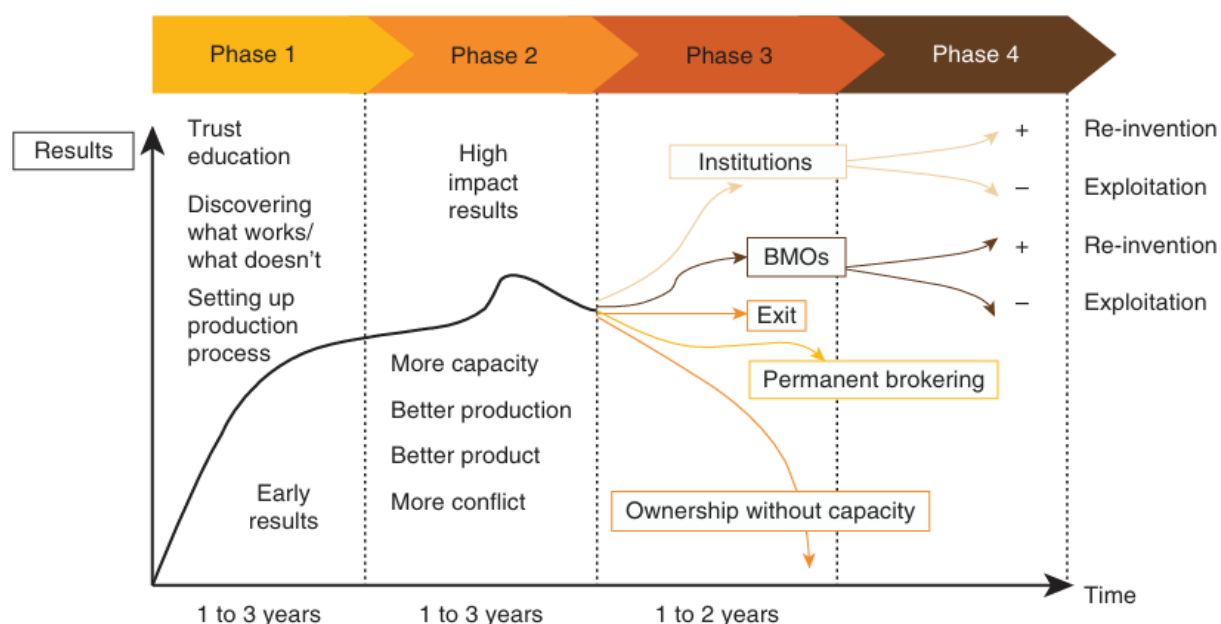
By being aware of common pitfalls – politicisation, elite capture, duplication, dependence on individuals, unsustainability, lack of follow-through and poor communication – the coordinators of the PPD can take preventative action. This might include diversifying participants, aligning with existing institutions, building contingencies in leadership, securing multi-year funding commitments, instituting rigorous follow-up routines and always maintaining openness. In the context of Sierra Leone, actively avoiding these pitfalls will help ensure that the renewed PPD efforts do not repeat past mistakes (such as the lapses that led to the Sierra Leone Business Forum decline) but instead become a robust, trusted mechanism for economic policymaking. Each challenge, if addressed proactively, can be turned into an opportunity to strengthen the PPD process and its outcomes.

Overall, **effective PPD is as much about how to avoid failure as it is about how to achieve success**. Keeping these warnings in mind will help Sierra Leone's PPD practitioners steer the dialogue on a steady course, thereby maximising its positive impact on the country's development goals.

Pitfall	Summary	Mitigation Strategies
Politicisation and partisanship	PPDs lose credibility when linked to a single political group or administration. Leadership changes can derail progress.	Ensure political neutrality, rotate leadership roles and institutionalise the PPD to survive political transitions.
Elite capture & exclusion	A narrow group of powerful actors dominate sidelining SMEs, women and informal traders.	Proactively include diverse stakeholders, hold regional sessions and ensure that venues and materials are accessible.
Duplication & institutional rivalry	Multiple uncoordinated platforms create confusion and fatigue.	Map existing mechanisms and clearly integrate or differentiate them. Build synergies, not competition.
Over-reliance on individuals	Dependence on one champion risks collapse if they leave or lose influence.	Build coalitions, distribute leadership, mentor second-tier leaders and institutionalise roles.
Sustainability and funding gaps	Donor-funded PPDs risk collapse without long-term support or government ownership.	Plan for sustainability early, secure co-funding and embed in national systems and policies.
Lack of monitoring & follow-through	Dialogue becomes a 'talk shop' if outcomes are not tracked or implemented.	Establish clear monitoring and evaluation frameworks, track reforms, publish updates and hold stakeholders accountable.
Poor communication & Information withholding	Limited transparency breeds mistrust and disengagement.	Effective reform outcomes demand strengthened communication across and within sectors, public–private as well as: • public–public dialogue (intra-governmental) • PPD (intra-industry). Communicate regularly, publish minutes and updates, use simple language and involve media to build legitimacy.
Strategic stakeholder composition	PPDs can be ineffective if the wrong participants are involved. Dialogue loses impact when attendees lack the authority, relevant expertise or stake in the issue, leading to unproductive discussions with limited follow-through.	Be strategic about who participates, use stakeholder mapping to include those with authority, relevant expertise and a vested interest. Regularly review and adjust the participant list to ensure continued relevance and capacity for action.

Institutionalising PPD in Sierra Leone: Options and models

PPDs can take various forms, including formal, informal, time-bound and those with or without a secretariat. This guide focuses on structured PPDs designed for institutionalisation. The diagram illustrates how structured PPD initiatives can be framed as a life cycle of phases, with the document's annexes offering additional resources to explore transition strategies from direct donor support to self-sustaining institutionalised models⁵. For Sierra Leone, the key challenge is embedding PPD as a permanent, effective mechanism within government and private sector structures, with sustainable funding and formal recognition. This section outlines practical models to help decision-makers select or combine approaches that are best suited to the national context.



Source: PPD Dialogue Continuum, Sustainability of Public–Private Dialogue Initiatives (2016)

⁵ Herzberg, B., & Sisombat, L. (2016). Sustainability of Public-Private Dialogue Initiatives: Practical Note to Ensure the Sustainability of Dialogue Partnerships. <https://hdl.handle.net/10986/24559>

Institutionalising PPD in Sierra Leone matrix: Options and models

(A full version of the matrix is provided in Annex 3)

Options	Description	Governance structure	Institutionalisation mechanism	Pros	Challenges	Suitability
Option 1: Government-led PPD entity (public-sector anchor)	Government-Led PPD Entity (Public-Sector Anchor) Under this model, the GoSL formally establishes a National PPD Council or similar body by policy or legislation.	Governance Structure: This Council could have an inter-ministerial steering committee to coordinate government inputs and subcommittees for different thematic issues.	The key feature is a government mandate. By institutionalising via government order, PPD becomes an official part of policy formulation.	Strong government ownership can ensure ministries participate and follow-up on reforms. The formal status can help the PPD survive changes in administration (it's a standing body). It can also be easier to secure public funding for a government-anchored entity than the other models.	A purely government-led platform risks being perceived as government-dominated, which might discourage honest private sector feedback (if not carefully managed). There's also risk of politicisation – if seen as an initiative of one regime or partisan in composition.	This option could be appropriate if the new administration is keen to take charge and signal a break from past inaction. It aligns with recommendations to formalise PPD via a Cabinet directive or legal framework.
Option 2: Private sector-led platform with Government endorsement	This model flips the anchoring – a coalition of private sector actors (Chambers and BMOs) leads the establishment of a PPD platform, which the government formally recognises and participates in.	Governance Structure: The platform could take the form of a Business Council or forum managed by an umbrella BMO or a newly created non-profit organisation. It would have a governing board dominated by private sector representatives and the chair would likely be from the private sector.	Here, the institutionalisation is achieved via public-private partnership (in the institutional sense). The private sector drives it but seeks official backing. The government could institutionalise its support by, for example, issuing a Cabinet statement that ministries shall participate in the 'National Business Forum' and treat its decisions as advisory inputs to policy.	A private-led model can increase ownership and sustainability from the business community. Since it's their platform, they are more likely to invest time and even money into it. It might also be more insulated from political shifts – if government changes, the private platform can still stand and invite the new officials.	The private sector in Sierra Leone currently faces capacity and resource constraints. Expecting them to run a national dialogue platform single-handedly is ambitious unless capacity is first strengthened. Funding is another concern – without donor support or government subvention, a private-led platform might struggle financially (the previous Sierra Leone Business Forum - SLBF).	This option may be viable as the private sector grows more organised. It reflects the lesson that PPD fails without strong private sector ownership. If key bodies like SLCCIA and the Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development (SLCAD) are ready to take on a leadership role, this model empowers them to do so. It could also work in tandem with Option 1.

Option 3: Hybrid co-hosted PPD platform	In this model the PPD platform is jointly hosted by an MDA and a lead private sector institution.	This design proposes a multi-tier structure: A high-level Steering Committee, several Thematic Working Groups, a permanent Secretariat, importantly, a co-chairing arrangement: for example, the Minister of GoSL and the President of SLCCIA co-chair the Steering Committee	This hybrid platform would be institutionalised by both policy endorsement and integration into existing institutions.	The hybrid model arguably strikes a balance: the government is fully engaged (as a co-owner), so its commitment is high, and the private sector has an equal say, preventing the platform from becoming a government rubber stamp or drifting off into purely public-sector priorities. This model helps build mutual accountability – each side holds the other to account for agreed actions.	Co-management can be complex. It requires very clear governance rules to avoid confusion: the roles of the Ministry vs. Chamber (or other host) must be delineated. From a sustainability perspective, there's a risk that if donor support ends too soon and the government or private sector don't fulfil funding promises, the secretariat could falter.	This model directly addresses the fragmentation identified by the EU's WACOMP mapping (West Africa Competitiveness Programme) – by consolidating efforts under one national platform. It is well-suited to Sierra Leone's context where neither government nor private sector alone has successfully sustained PPD.
Option 4: Decentralised and sectoral dialogues under a national umbrella - complementary framework	In addition to the primary models above, Sierra Leone might consider a hybrid approach where PPD is institutionalised at multiple levels. This is less a standalone model and more a framework that can complement options 1–3.	The idea is to have a national umbrella platform (whether government-led, private-led, or co-hosted) and underneath it, sector-specific or regional PPD forums that feed into the national platform. For example, an Agriculture PPD Working Group in the provinces, or a Mining Sector Taskforce, which are permanent forums for those areas/issues are formally linked to the national PPD.	Why consider this: Sierra Leone's PPD landscape has several sectoral platforms (cocoa/coffee, oil palm, trade facilitation committee, etc.), but many operate in isolation and lack influence on broader policy. Institutionalising a two-tier structure would integrate sector dialogues with national reform agendas. It also ensures issues that are too specific for the top-level forum still get attention and solutions.	In this model, institutionalisation happens not only at the capital level but also down to where businesses operate across the country. Each such forum should have a clear mandate and link. Meanwhile, representatives from these sectoral dialogues would sit on the national PPD working groups or steering committee to ensure the flow of information.	Donors or government programmes could initially support some of these sectoral/regional dialogues. Under a coordinated framework, however, even when specific projects end, the national platform can decide to continue strategically important ones and possibly reallocate resources or seek new support. Embedding PPD in local structures is another way to institutionalise at that level.	This complementary model acknowledges Sierra Leone's diversity and avoids an overly centralised approach. It is suited to ensure inclusivity (voices from agriculture, provinces, etc., are heard) and to prevent duplication – rather than dozens of unconnected dialogues, all run under one umbrella with shared standards and tracking.

MEL framework design

A dynamic, participatory MEL approach is ideal – involving both government and private sector in defining the indicators and collecting data, so it's a shared exercise. The guide recommends a simple yet comprehensive MEL framework that is tailored to the PPD. It should:

- Align with national development monitoring to stay relevant. For example, aligning PPD outcome metrics with targets in the MTNDP ensures the dialogue contributes to broader goals
- Combine both process indicators (measuring how well the dialogue mechanism is functioning) and outcome indicators (measuring what the dialogue is achieving in terms of policy or business impact)
- Integrate both qualitative (e.g. stakeholder perceptions, case narratives) and quantitative (e.g. number of reforms implemented) data
- Be co-owned by government and private sector stakeholders, coordinated by a PPD secretariat or designated lead entity.

Note: Where institutional data systems are weak, MEL should leverage existing sector monitoring frameworks, development partner assessments and routine feedback from business associations to inform its approach.

Indicators and outcome metrics

Key indicators:⁶ The guide provides a menu of indicative metrics. Some examples are included below.

Dimension	Sample indicators
Dialogue process	• Number of PPD sessions held • Diversity of stakeholders engaged (gender, sector, region - e.g. % of participants who are women, or from outside Freetown) • Frequency and timeliness of meetings (e.g. adherence to planned quarterly forums).
Transparency & participation	• Percentage of meeting minutes published within a set time (as a transparency metric) • Proportion of PPD members contributing active.
Policy and reform outcomes	• Number of policy proposals generated through PPD • Percentage of reforms adopted/implemented by the GoSL • Feedback from businesses on whether specific issues (tax delays, licensing hurdles, etc.) have improved.
Institutional impact	• Improvements in business environment indices (for instance, Sierra Leone's scores on the new Business Ready (B-READY) assessment – World Bank)

⁶ Indicators should be disaggregated where relevant (by gender of business owner, by region, by sector) to ensure inclusivity is measured. They provide tangible criteria to evaluate if the PPD is working beyond anecdotal evidence.

	• Reduced regulatory burden as reported by firms.
Satisfaction and trust indicators	• Stakeholder satisfaction rating with the PPD process (measured via annual surveys) • Perception of trust between public and private (qualitative, from interviews) • Index of government responsiveness (e.g. a scorecard where the private sector rates the timeliness and adequacy of government follow-up).

Tracking tools: A core component of MEL is a **reform or PPD tracker** database or dashboard. The recommended approach is to establish an electronic or Excel-based tracker, managed by the secretariat or facilitator, to log every reform issue raised through PPD. This tracker should be regularly updated and used in meetings to review progress. Ideally, a **public-facing dashboard** could be created) to allow any interested party to view the reform progress in real time, enhancing transparency and external accountability. Tools such as an online reform status tracker have been used in countries like Jordan and can significantly boost confidence in the PPD by showing that it does not let issues fall through the cracks.

Feedback mechanisms: Monitoring should not be one-way. This guidance encourages periodic feedback loops: for instance, conducting an Annual PPD Stakeholder Survey where all participants (government, private sector, civil society) anonymously rate how well the dialogue is progressing. Another idea is to have a quick feedback session at the end of key meetings (participants place a sticky note or digital poll response about what went well and what to improve). Additionally, creating channels for businesses at large to send feedback – e.g. an email hotline or a web portal where any business can submit a policy obstacle or comment – can broaden input. While not all such submissions can be addressed immediately, the secretariat can compile them to inform agendas or at least acknowledge receipt, making the PPD more participatory beyond formal members.

Institutionalising MEL: To make MEL sustainable, it should be embedded in the mandates of the public and private sector institutions involved. For example, monitoring and evaluation functions of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, NIB, PSRU or SLCCIA could incorporate PPD indicators into their routine reports, or Statistics Sierra Leone might include questions related to business-government dialogue in annual surveys. Building capacity for MEL is also key – training the secretariat and relevant government analysts in data collection and analysis, so they can handle MEL without always relying on external consultants. The option of forming a small **MEL working group** can be explored (perhaps a subset of the Steering Committee), who are responsible for reviewing monitoring data and commissioning any evaluations. Over time, the goal is a locally owned MEL system that continuously justifies the existence of the PPD by demonstrating results.

Learning and adaptation: MEL is not just about accountability but also learning. The PPD platform should periodically reflect on MEL findings to adapt the strategy. For example, if the data indicates that very few issues raised by SMEs are being addressed on the agenda, then the PPD mechanism might decide to establish an SME-focused working group or adjust its stakeholder mapping to include more SME representatives. If an annual review finds that recommendations in one sector consistently stall at implementation, the platform could decide to engage a higher authority for that

sector or reprioritise easier wins. Essentially, MEL enables **evidence-based management** of the PPD process itself. Publishing annual PPD performance reports (with statistics such as the number of reforms passed and stakeholder satisfaction rates) can also institutionalise learning and demonstrate impact to political leaders and the public.

Note: This section is critical for making this approach a **practical, outcome-driven guide** rather than a theoretical exercise. By providing concrete MEL tools and indicators, we respond to the need for **accountability and proof of concept** – common concerns among PPD stakeholders. Government officials want to know if the dialogue will lead to measurable improvements, and the private sector wants assurances that their time investment yields results. Including MEL guidance addresses both: it arms the PPD coordinators with methods to track progress (ensuring the platform doesn't lose credibility through inaction), and it helps institutionalise the practice by linking it with national systems (so PPD achievements become part of official performance metrics). For Sierra Leone, where transparency and follow-through have been weak in the past, a strong MEL component is indispensable to build trust in the new PPD mechanism. This content makes the toolkit component of this guidance especially useful for PPD secretariat staff and policymakers tasked with justifying and improving the dialogue process.

Conclusion

Institutionalising an effective PPD initiative in Sierra Leone is a **strategic investment in the country's economic future**. By bringing government and business together in a structured and inclusive way, Sierra Leone can accelerate reforms, improve the business climate and ensure that development policies truly meet the needs on the ground. This designed guidance – ‘Bridging Business and Government’ – provides Sierra Leone's policymakers and partners with a clear roadmap, practical tools and adaptable models to make PPD a sustained success.

The focus on **dialogue facilitation and capacity building** acknowledges that at the heart of any PPD are people and relationships; hence, improving skills and trust is as important as creating new institutions. The multiple **institutional options** presented offer the GoSL and stakeholders flexibility – whether they choose a government-driven council, a private-led forum or the hybrid co-management approach, this guidance supports them with global insights and local lessons to implement their chosen approach effectively.

By sharing the learning from the Invest Salone programme's efforts and augmenting them with best-practice content on institutional frameworks and tools, this guide remains grounded in what has worked while adapting to current opportunities. It is structured for practical use: with clearly defined sections and step-by-step guidance that a policymaker or BMO leader in Sierra Leone can quickly reference when designing or running a PPD session. Ultimately, the framework and toolkit's content is justified by one goal – **to make PPD useful and transformational for Sierra Leone's development**. Every section, from principles to MEL, is aimed at helping stakeholders create a dialogue mechanism that delivers real and tangible outcomes: a healthier investment climate, better policies and a more collaborative public-private relationship that can drive the country's future prosperity.

Annexes: Practical tools and templates

This PPD guidance also includes practical tools and templates which complement the guidance found in the main sections. PPD practitioners in Sierra Leone can either use or modify these resources which are provided as annexes for ease of reference:

- Annex 1: PPD Stakeholder mapping template. This tool helps identify and prioritise stakeholders (such as those from the government, private sector or civil society actors) for inclusion in dialogue. It helps map each stakeholder's influence, interest and potential roles to enable broad and balanced representation. Also, The World Bank (2016a) has developed a practical guide for stakeholder analysis in PPD using the Net-Map method. [Access here](#).
- Annex 2: Concept note template. This is a standard template for preparing concept notes to guide PPD sessions. It ensures that dialogues are well-structured, purposeful, and credible by clarifying objectives, participants, expected outcomes, budget, and communications. Consistent use of concept notes promotes transparency, accountability, and stakeholder buy-in across different PPDs. [Access here](#).
- Annex 3: Dialogue Agenda template. This standard template is a practical tool for structuring dialogue sessions in a clear, inclusive, and outcome-oriented way. By setting out objectives, agenda items, and time allocations, it ensures discussions remain focused and productive. [Access here](#).
- Annex 4: Dialogue Facilitator tips. This tool provides practical tips for managing PPD sessions effectively. It supports facilitators to create an inclusive, balanced, and focused discussion, ensuring that all voices are heard and that the session remains results-oriented. The guide helps maintain neutrality, manage time, and steer the dialogue towards agreed actions. [Access here](#).
- Annex 5: Dialogue rapporteur tips. It offers guidance on capturing PPD discussions clearly and accurately. It helps rapporteurs structure notes, highlight key points, and record commitments with assigned responsibilities. By ensuring consistency and completeness, the guide supports transparency and provides the foundation for post-PPD reports and action tracking. [Access here](#).
- Annex 6: Dialogue report/minutes template. The template provides a short, structured record of each dialogue. It captures the objectives, participants, key discussion points, and—most importantly—the agreed actions with responsible institutions, focal persons, and timelines. As the official record shared with all participants, it serves as the authoritative reference point for accountability and is the primary source for updating the reform action tracker. [Access here](#).
- Annex 7: Dialogue action after review (AAR) template. The AAR is a simple reflection tool for MDAs and BMOs to use internally after a PPD session. It encourages organisations to assess whether the dialogue met its objectives, what worked well, what could be improved, and whether the right people were present. It also prompts reflection on the internal actions needed to deliver on commitments. By building lesson learning and self-accountability, the AAR complements the shared post-PPD report and strengthens the overall effectiveness of the dialogue process. [Access here](#).
- Annex 8: Dialogue reform action tracker. A template (e.g. Excel-based) for tracking the status of each reform proposal emerging from the PPD. [Access here](#).

- Annex 9: Institutionalising PPD in Sierra Leone: Options and models. A matrix presents practical options for institutionalising PPD in Sierra Leone and outlines different models, highlighting their structures, advantages, challenges and suitability to Sierra Leone's context. [Access here.](#)
- Annex 10: Monitoring & evaluation indicators list. A detailed list of suggested PPD performance indicators (process and outcome), along with definitions and potential data sources. It also provides a sample format for a PPD *scorecard* or dashboard that could be published quarterly to show progress (e.g. number of reforms implemented, stakeholder satisfaction scores). [Access Annex 10a here](#), and [Annex 10b here](#).
- Annex 11: Training of trainers (ToT) manual and handbook. This tool is practical guide for PPD trainers. It draws on best practices in dialogue training and is tailored to likely scenarios in Sierra Leone's context. It contains supplementary materials intended only for use by institutions hosting the PPD Guide. This training of trainers (ToT) manual and handbook equips trained facilitators and participants with the knowledge and tools to deliver PPD training within their organisations and sectors. It provides structured guidance on core concepts, interactive methods, and practical exercises that build capacity for effective dialogue. By strengthening local trainers, the ToT materials help embed skills, promote consistency, and ensure the sustainability of PPD practices across institutions. It is not designed for general distribution and should be accessed only by trained facilitators and participants. [Access here.](#)
- Annex 12: Sample ToR and governance documents. Examples of ToRs for key elements of the PPD platform, which can be adapted: e.g. ToR for the PPD Steering Committee (outlining its mandate and membership), ToR for the PPD secretariat (defining its functions, staffing, and reporting duties), and ToR for Thematic Working Groups. Also included is an example MoU between government and private sector – this can serve as a template for formalising the partnership, clearly stating commitments. [Access here.](#)
- Annex 13: PPD reference materials. A directory of additional resources for those who want to learn more. This includes the full text of the PPD Charter of Good Practice, relevant excerpts from the World Bank's PPD Handbook and any other global case studies or how-to manuals. It also lists key local documents for context. These can help champions make the case for PPD and find more in-depth guidance. [Access here.](#)
- Annex 14: Directory of PPD stakeholders in Sierra Leone. This directory provides an overview of key stakeholders that should be engaged in Sierra Leone's PPD efforts, covering actors at the national, regional and district levels. It includes stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, development partners and civil society, along with details on their roles in PPD and areas of focus. This compilation serves as a reference for the PPD framework and toolkit, identifying who should be involved in dialogue processes to improve the business environment and drive inclusive economic development in Sierra Leone. [Access here.](#)

Note: Each of these tools is meant to make the work of PPD coordinators and participants easier and more standardised. Users of the guide can adopt them wholesale or adapt them to their needs. By having templates on hand, Sierra Leone's PPD stakeholders won't have to start from scratch in designing forms, trackers or charters – they can leverage these tried-and-tested tools to initiate the dialogue process in a structured and professional manner. Ultimately, these annexes turn the

guidance into **actionable instruments**, reinforcing the practical value of its toolkit component to facilitate **inclusive, sustained and outcome-oriented dialogue** in Sierra Leone.

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