

SLREN | Sierra Leone Research & Education Network

Connecting Sierra Leone to the Regional and Global Research and Education Network

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Throughout the globe there has been a fast-growing trend for universities to organize their Internet access and connectivity to each other through centralized organizations called National Research and Education Networks (NRENs). These include GÉANT in Europe; [Janet](#) in the UK, [Orion](#) in Canada; [Internet2](#) in the USA. Similar regional RENs exist in Asia. In Africa, the [UbuntuNet Alliance](#) covers the Eastern and Southern belts and the West & Central Africa Research & Education Networks ([WACREN](#)) for the West and Central Africa region.

In Sierra Leone, the status of NREN is in the early planning phase (Level-2). The origin of the Sierra Leone Research and Education Network (SLREN) can be traced back to 2015 when the idea started. With support from the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), WACREN and key stakeholders in the Sierra Leone research and education community, Ministries, Departments and Agencies, telecom providers, donor agencies and colleagues from Liberia gathered in Njala University for a workshop to discuss the establishment of the SLREN on 26th April 2016. The successful event led to the adoption of the “**Njala Declaration**” to establish and develop the Sierra Leone Research and Education Network (SLREN). A Steering Committee was established with the mandate to operationalise the SLREN.

SLREN formally became a member of West and Central Africa Research and Education Network (WACREN) and was incorporated as a legal entity on October 31st 2016. SLREN shall operate as a non-profit making organisation and draws its legal mandate from the Universities Act 2021 and the Corporate Affairs Commission Act No. 5 2009 Company Limited by Guarantee without a Share.

VISION

The vision of SLREN is to build and operate high quality Network infrastructure and services for all Sierra Leonean research and education community to support teaching, learning, research and community service and to connect its members to the Global Research and Education Network.

MISSION

The SLREN mission of the SLREN is to develop advanced Network infrastructure and services, promote collaboration among the national research and education communities and build the capacity of the RENs community.

GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The organs of SLREN shall be a BOARD; the CEO, and the Secretariat. The details of roles and responsibilities are established in the bylaws/constitution of SLREN.

BOARD

The SLREN has 9 members Board Chaired by a former Vice Chancellor of the University of Sierra Leone, Professor Jonas Redwood-Sawyers. Institutional representation on the board includes the Ministries of Technical and Higher Education, the Tertiary Education Commission, Conference of Vice Chancellors and Principal, (CVCP) of Sierra Leone, Council for Independent Universities, the Ghana Employers Association and the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences. A governance expert from KPMG and a private IT consultant are also on the board.

The Board was inaugurated on the **XXXXX** to oversee the activities of the SLREN for 2 Years. The members of the board include:

1. **Professor Jonas Redwood-Sawyerr** - Chairman
2. **Professor Edwin Momoh**- Member Representing Committee of Vice-Chancellors
3. **Prof Miriam Conteh-Morgan** - Member Representing Sierra Leone Library Consortium
4. **Victor A Sesay** - Member Representing the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
5. **Mohamed Jalloh** - Member Representing the Ministry of Information Communications
6. **Michala Mackay**, Member Representing the Directorate of Science Technology & Innovation
7. **Mr Tamba Lamin** - Member (IT Consultant)
8. **Mr Lansana Senesie** - Member (Governance Expert, Chartered Accountant)
9. **CEO, SLREN, (Secretary)**

MEMBERSHIP

The primary target beneficiaries are the entire players in the education sector in Sierra Leone upon formal application. These include but are not limited to universities, libraries, research institutions, colleges, secondary and primary schools. The current active members are:

1. Njala University (NU)
2. The University of Sierra Leone (USL)
3. The University of Makeni (UNIMAK)
4. Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology (EBKUST)
5. Milton Margai University of Science & Technology (MMUT)
6. Freetown Teachers Polytech (FTC)
7. Eastern University of Science and Technology
8. Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI)
9. All new Universities and Colleagues

CORE ACTIVITIES

Specific activities in the area of connectivity and services:

- Negotiate and secure rights in the name of its members with no authority to undertake obligations or liabilities in their name, unless so instructed by an explicit authorization from the members concerned;
- Associate with and promote objectives of the West and Central Africa Research and Education Network (WACREN) and establish relationships with other associations, organizations and institutions with objectives similar to those of SLREN;
- Establish and promote national focus groups to undertake research on matters of significance to the scientific, social and economic development of Sierra Leone;
- Publish the proceedings of conferences and other research undertaken under the auspices of SLREN; and
- Undertake any other activities aimed at advancing the objective of SLREN.

PROPOSED SERVICES

- Operate a national gigabit backbone that connects campus networks to each other and to other RENs regionally and globally, and, through contracts with commercial operators, to the commodity Internet, ideally through a local Internet Exchange (IX), thus keeping local traffic local. If a local IX does not exist, SLREN could help establish one.
- Begin by leasing bandwidth from a local operator, and eventually, as the SLREN matures, lease and operate its own backbone links from dark-fiber and/or transmission circuit providers on an annual or IRU basis.
- Run its own NOC to monitor and report on network performance and manage incidents and fault resolution on the network.
- Ensure a security policy is implemented and maintained on the network.
- Offer discretionary services such as eduroam, edugain; videoconferencing bridging; Higher Education Management Information Systems (HEMIS).