

NATIONAL REVENUE AUTHORITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Prepared by:

MONITORING, RESEARCH AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MARCH 2024

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List of Acronyms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A-CIP | Anti-Corruption and Integrity Promotion Programme  |
| ASU | Anti-Smuggling Unit  |
| ASYCUDA | Automated System for Customs Data |
| ATAF | African Tax Administration Forum |
| AYV | African Young Voices  |
| BCM | Border Controls and Management |
| BMS | Block Management System  |
| C&FA | Clearing and Forwarding Agencies  |
| CESW | Customs Electronic Single Window  |
| CG | Commissioner-General |
| CIF | Cost, Insurance and Freight |
| CIP | Compliance Improvement Project  |
| CIT | Corporate Income Tax |
| CSD | Customs Services Department |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organizations  |
| D&M | Design and Monitoring  |
| DCG | Deputy Commissioner-General |
| DIPS | Domestic Tax Integrity Perception Survey |
| DMU | Debt Management Unit  |
| DTD | Domestic Taxes Department |
| DTIS | Domestic Tax Information System |
| DTMM | Digital Transformation Maturity Model |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| ECR | Electronic Cash Register |
| EDSA | Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority |
| EIRU | Extractive Industry Revenue Unit |
| F&B | Finance and Budget |
| FCDO | Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office |
| FIU | Financial Intelligence Unit |
| FOB | Free on Board |
| GST | Goods and Services Tax |
| HRD | Human Resource Department  |
| HS | Harmonized System |
| IAU | Internal Affairs Unit |
| ICA | Internal Controls and Audit |
| ICT | Information, Communication Technology  |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund  |
| ITAS | Integrated Tax Administration System |
| L&CS | Legal and Corporate Services |
| LTO | Large Taxpayers Office |
| MDAs | Ministries, Departments and Agencies |
| MoF | Ministry of Finance |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MRP | Monitoring, Research and Planning |
| MTNDP | Medium-term National Development Plan  |
| MTO | Medium Taxpayers Office  |
| MTRS | Medium-Term Revenue Strategy |
| NACS | National Anti-Corruption Strategy  |
| NaTCA | National Telecommunications Authority  |
| NRA | National Revenue Authority |
| NTR | Non-Tax Revenue  |
| NYC | National Youth Commission  |
| OARG | Administrator and Registrar General  |
| OMCs | Oil Marketing Companies  |
| OSIWA | Open Society Initiative for West Africa  |
| PATE | Public Affairs and Tax Education  |
| PAYE | Pay-As-You-Earn |
| PCA | Post Clearance Audit |
| PESTEL | Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environment |
| PIOs | Public International Organisations  |
| PIT | Personal Income Tax |
| RIID | Revenue Intelligence and Investigations Department |
| RMC | Risk Management Committee  |
| RUC | Road User Charges |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| SICPA | Société Industrielle et Commerciale de Produits Alimentaires  |
| SLBC | Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation |
| SLRSA | Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority |
| SME | Small and Medium Enterprise |
| SMT | Senior Management Team  |
| SMTO | Small and Medium Taxpayers Office |
| SOE | State Owned Enterprise |
| SOPs | Standard Operating Procedures |
| STA | Swedish Tax Agency |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats |
| TIN | Taxpayer Identification Number  |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| TSA | Treasury Single Account |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| VAPT | Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing  |
| VIPS | VAT Integrated Processing System |
| WAMA | West African Monetary Agency Building  |
| WAN | Wide Area Network |

# FOREWORD BY THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL

I am proud to present the 2023 Annual Report of the National Revenue Authority (NRA). As the authority charged with domestic revenue mobilisation and trade facilitation, the NRA plays a central role in supporting Sierra Leone’s economic development. We are tasked with raising the resources needed to fund the government’s vision and ensure the efficient movement of goods across borders. This report reflects the collective efforts of all departments in the NRA in 2023, it describes the strategic initiatives undertaken, revenue outcomes, challenges faced, and the steps taken in response. The report reaffirms our commitment to transparency, accountability, and service delivery.

A key milestone in 2023 was the commencement of implementation of the NRA’s Strategic Plan for 2023–2027 and the Medium-Term Revenue Strategy 2023-2027. Thie Strategic Plan articulates the Authority’s vision, mission, values, and objectives for the next five years, notably, it details the NRA’s focus on institutional reform and revenue performance improvement. The MTRS on the other hand not only outlines the revenue administration reforms for the medium term but also articulates the tax policy options slated for the same period, making tax policy more predictable.

Domestic revenue collection in 2023 was NLe10.1 billion, with NLe 4.691 billion in the first half of the year (January - June) and NLe 5.409 billion, a 15% increase, in the second half of the year (July-December). While this was marginally below the target of NLe10.562 billion, it shows resilience in a challenging year, host to disruption around national elections, high inflation rates, fiscal pressures and global economic instability such as the continued Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Beyond revenue, there was significant organisational development in 2023. The completion and operationalisation of the Data Warehouse System which integrates data from our core revenue systems, boosted capacity in reporting and data analytics. We also expanded the NTR Mobile App to more government agencies and prepared for its rollout to SMEs and customs points. Furthermore, we increased our engagement with key stakeholders, pushing for improved collaboration and shared accountability.

Looking ahead, we will intensify our focus on enhancing compliance, operationalising provisions in the Finance Act 2024, expanding digital integration, and strengthening taxpayer services. These initiatives, aligned with our strategic plan, seek to increase revenue and grow the national economy.

I wish to extend my gratitude to the Ministry of Finance, the NRA Board of Directors, the Senior Management Team, to all NRA staff, and development partners. Together, we will continue to strengthen revenue and customs administration and drive development in Sierra Leone.

**Sincerely,**
*Mrs. Jeneba J. Bangura*

*Commissioner-General*

*National Revenue Authority*

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The National Revenue Authority (NRA) was founded in 2002 under the National Revenue Act (as amended in 2022) as part of governmental reforms aimed at enhancing revenue administration and collection. According to the NRA Act of 2002, its primary role is to assess and collect tax and non-tax revenues as mandated by law on behalf of the Government. Additionally, it is responsible for overseeing and enforcing revenue laws. The NRA's core mandates encompass the following:

* Assessing and collecting revenues for the government.
* Enhancing compliance by ensuring timely filing of returns and payments.
* Improving trade facilitation and border security.

The year 2023 marks the inaugural year of the implementation of a five-year Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027 is the third structured NRA Strategic Plan which focused on leveraging modern technology to guide the operations of the Authority through the next five years and leveraging on the gains made in the last Strategic Plan. It draws from the Medium-term National Development Plan (MTNDP), SDGs and MTRS, and feeds into annual departmental focused work plans where a more detailed activities and performance measures are determined.

The previous Strategic Plan from 2018 to 2022 was notable for its intensified strategies targeting effective and efficient revenue collection. This included the implementation and integration of five key operational information systems nationwide—AYCUDA World, Customs Electronic Single Window (CESW), Integrated Tax Administration System (ITAS), Electronic Cash Register (ECR), and a Mobile Payment App for NTR payment. Additionally, efforts were made to bolster staff capabilities and expand the tax base by registering small and medium-sized taxpayers.

During the fiscal year 2023, the Authority continued to expand and enforce recently implemented reforms. This report serves as an update on the Authority's performance, as mandated by the NRA Act of 2002. It is structured into five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 covers the Authority's background, including its corporate statement, strategic planning, and governance structure, while Chapters 2 and 3 offer analyses of revenue and non-revenue performance, respectively. Other relevant statistics are analysed in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 outlines forthcoming strategies and prospects for meeting revenue targets in 2024.

## 1.1: NRA CORPORATE STATEMENT

The vision, mission and mandate of the NRA are expressed in Figure 1.

***Figure 1:*** ***The Vision, Mission, and Mandate of the NRA***

The efficient and sustainable administration of revenue and trade facilitation to enhance Government fiscal space for national development.

The assessment and collection of national revenue, amendment and enforcement of specific laws relating to revenue, trade facilitation, and the modernisation of the tax administration.

To be a modern institution of excellence and global reference in public and revenue Administration

**OUR MANDATE**

**OUR VISION**

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

The activities of the NRA are guided by the following core values highlighted in Figure 2.

***Figure 2: NRA’s Core Values***

## 1.2: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENT

The National Revenue Authority's activities fall under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Finance, while the Board of Directors oversees the management of the NRA. This Board, led by a chairperson, holds the pivotal role of providing strategic guidance to the Authority's management. It shapes and formulates policies aimed at strengthening the corporate governance framework of the institution.

As per the NRA Act of 2002 (as amended in 2022), the Board of Directors comprises:

* A chairperson
* The Financial Secretary
* The Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone
* The Commissioner-General
* The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry
* A tax specialist
* An economist
* A legal practitioner

The Bank Governor, the Financial Secretary and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of trade and Industry automatically become members of the Board, while the rest of the Board members are appointed by the President of Sierra Leone. Except for the Governor, the Financial Secretary, the Commissioner-General, and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Chairperson and the other members of the Board can serve for a period of three years and may be re-appointed by the President for not more than one term for a period of 3 years.

The day-to-day operations of the Authority are overseen by the Commissioner-General, who heads the Senior Management Team (SMT). This team includes two Deputy Commissioner-Generals, Commissioners/Directors, and Deputy Commissioners/Directors. The Board appoints the Deputy Commissioner-Generals to serve as principal assistants to the Commissioner-General. Commissioners/Directors, their Deputies, and Assistants are appointed by the Commissioner-General, subject to the Board's approval, as outlined in the NRA Act of 2022.

***Figure 3: NRA Organogram***

**Board of Directors**

***Board***

**Board Secretariat**

**Commission-General (CG)**

**Internal Audit**

***CGs Office***

**Anti-Smuggling**

**Deputy Commission-General (DCG) 1&2**

**Internal Affairs**

**Procurement**

***Operations***

**Non-Tax Revenue Department (NTRD)**

**Domestic Tax Department (DTD)**

**Customs Services Department (CSD)**

**ICT**

**Monitoring & Research**

**Legal & Corporate Services**

**Finance & Budget**

***Support***

**Welfare**

**Modernisation**

**Human Resource**

**Revenue Intelligence & Investigations**

**Admin**

As depicted in Figure 3, there is an Office of the Commissioner-General (that comprises three units), three operational departments primarily engaged in domestic revenue collection, and eleven support departments, which include Internal Controls and Audit. The functions of the Internal Controls and Audit Department are overseen by the Board.

## 1.3: SIERRA LEONE ECONOMIC SITUATION

The Sierra Leone economy has been on a slow recovery trajectory following setbacks from the Ebola epidemic and a decline in iron-ore prices between 2014 and 2015, with the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2019 further impeding progress. The country faces macroeconomic challenges such as exposure to external shocks, high inflation rates, exchange rate depreciation, unemployment, an undiversified economy, and fiscal pressures. Global uncertainties, particularly from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, introduce additional risks.

In 2022, the economy experienced modest growth at 3.5%, and projections for 2023 anticipate a moderate growth of 2.7%. The growth is influenced by activities in mining, agriculture, and economic diversification efforts. However, global economic uncertainties and high food and energy prices continue to pose challenges.

Inflation remained a concern in 2023, increasing to 54.5% in September from 37.1% in December 2022, attributed to imported inflation, domestic disruptions in food supply, fuel price adjustments, and exchange rate depreciation.

Exchange rate stability was a challenge in 2023 due to depreciation, impacting trade and foreign investment.

Projections from the Ministry of Finance for 2024 and 2025 anticipate growth rates of 4.7% and 5.2%, respectively, driven by increased investments in agriculture and mining, along with a recovery in the services sector. Efforts to contain inflation include tight monetary policies and prudent fiscal strategies, supported by an anticipated decline in global food and energy prices and increased domestic food production. Forecasts also predict a reduction in the current account deficit to 4.2% of GDP in 2024 and 2.9% in 2025 due to a decrease in the trade deficit. While the exchange rate depreciation is expected to ease, the Sierra Leone economy remains vulnerable to various risks, including geopolitical tensions, potential escalation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, economic fragmentation, weakening of the Chinese economy, continuous exchange rate depreciation, downturns in key export commodities, and a decline in international donor support.

## 1.4: NRA STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

The year under review marks the commencement of the NRA's five-year strategic plan. The 2023-2027 Strategic Plan is rooted in the Authority's pivotal role in aligning with national policy objectives such as the MTNDP and MTRS, global agendas such as SDGs, and the previous 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. This strategic framework highlights six primary goals:

1. Sustainable mobilisation of revenue to strengthening government fiscal capacity.
2. Maintenance of a professional workforce and the development of institutional capacity.
3. Enhancement of trade facilitation and border management.
4. Establishment of fully digitalized, integrated, and sustainable business processes and procedures.
5. Improvement of public trust and credibility, and
6. Enhanced taxpayer services and education.

In addition, the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan outlines seventeen strategic objectives aimed at attaining these overarching goals:

1. Maximizing revenue collection.
2. Strengthening tax compliance and enforcement.
3. Expanding the tax base.
4. Sustaining active involvement in tax policy formulation and implementation.
5. Attracting, developing, and retaining top talents.
6. Implementing a results-based governance model.
7. Modernizing and expanding infrastructure.
8. Securing funding and optimizing resource allocation.
9. Strengthening trade facilitation and border management.
10. Enhancing security and efficiency in the international flow of goods and individuals.
11. Modernizing, sustaining, and integrating ICT infrastructure and business systems.
12. Optimizing business processes and procedures.
13. Enhancing the institutional image.
14. Improving internal controls, institutional risk management, and integrity mechanisms.
15. Expanding tax education and taxpayer services.
16. Reinforcing communication and institutional relations.
17. Cultivating a culture conducive to change.

## 1.5: PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2023 NRA OPERATIONAL PLAN

The formulation of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan was a collaborative endeavour, characterised by workshops, consultations, and engagements with the NRA's SMT, staff, stakeholders, and development partners. This inclusive approach aimed to foster consensus and ownership among all stakeholders. Through this participatory approach, the plan outlines the vision, mission, core values, goals, strategic objectives, and outputs envisioned for the next five years. Furthermore, it establishes key performance indicators (KPIs) with defined targets and activities to realise the outlined outputs and outcomes. Notably, situational analyses such as PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environment) and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) assessments informed the strategic formulation process, considering both external and internal factors shaping the operational landscape.

The annual operational plan serves as a detailed roadmap, outlining strategic goals, objectives, and activities for the fiscal year. This document is essential in guiding the Authority toward achieving its strategic aspirations and operational milestones. Regular reviews and updates ensure adaptability to evolving circumstances, enabling the NRA to remain aligned with its strategic trajectory. Extracted from the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the Strategic Plan, the operational plan lists activities scheduled for each year until the plan's final implementation year.

The evaluation of the 2023 NRA operational plan, as depicted in Table 1, reveals six strategic goals and a total of 197 planned activities distributed across respective departments. Of these, 53 activities were completed (27.3% of the total), 84 were partially completed (42.6%), and 60 were not achieved (30.5%). Activities not completed in 2023 were carried over to the 2024 fiscal year.

***Table 1: 2023 NRA Operational Plan Activities Analysis***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Activity Status | Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 | Goal 4 | Goal 5 | Goal 6 | Total | Share |
| Completed Activities | 16 | 13 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 12 | 53 | 26.90% |
| Partially achieved/Ongoing | 27 | 21 | 5 | 13 | 12 | 6 | 84 | 42.64% |
| Not Done  | 14 | 17 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 20 | 60 | 30.46% |
| TOTAL | **57** | **51** | **13** | **19** | **19** | **38** | **197** | **100%** |

*Source: MRP Department*

An assessment of departmental performance (Table 1) underscores varying completion rates, with RIID recording the highest at 52.9%, followed by the MRP Department (51.0%). It should be noted that some activities necessitate collaborative implementation involving multiple departments. Consequently, the total number of planned activities outlined in Table 2 (260) surpasses the figure indicated in Table 1 (197). It can be seen that the distribution of activities for 2023 was not uniform. The MRP Department had the highest number of planned activities at 51, followed by L&CSD with 36, the HR Department with 28 and then the DTD with 27.

***Table 2: Departmental analysis of the 2023 Operational Plan***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Department | Planned Activities | Completed Activities | Percentage Completion | Partially Completed/Ongoing | Not Implemented |
| MRPD | 51 | 26 | 50.98% | 20 | 5 |
| L&CSD | 36 | 7 | 19.44% | 9 | 20 |
| HRD | 28 | 4 | 14.29% | 13 | 11 |
| DTD | 27 | 3 | 11.11% | 12 | 12 |
| CSD | 24 | 7 | 29.17% | 10 | 7 |
| ICA | 18 | 4 | 22.22% | 8 | 6 |
| RIID | 17 | 9 | 52.94% | 5 | 3 |
| NTRD | 15 | 5 | 33.33% | 9 | 1 |
| ADMIN | 14 | 0 | 0.00% | 3 | 11 |
| ICTD | 11 | 2 | 18.18% | 7 | 2 |
| Welfare | 9 | 2 | 22.22% | 4 | 3 |
| IAU | 6 | 0 | 0.00% | 6 | 0 |
| Modernisation | 4 | 2 | 50.00% | 2 | 0 |
| TOTAL | **260** | **71** | **27.31%** | **108** | **81** |

*Source: MRP Department*

Evaluation of KPIs for 2023 reveals that while the Authority met 11 KPIs and made progress on 12, it missed out on 3. However, updates on 27 KPIs (50.9% of the total) were unavailable.

Numerous obstacles, stemming from both internal NRA dynamics and external factors, impeded the seamless implementation of the Strategic Plan. Internally, issues like inadequate departmental budgetary allocation, delay in the procurement process, slow implementation of provisions in the 2023 Finance Act, and limited media and public outreach posed significant obstacles. Externally, factors such as the 2023 national elections, administrative leadership changes within the NRA, demonstration by some quarters of the public, the failed coup attempt, and security concerns further complicated the implementation of planned activities.

# CHAPTER TWO: REVENUE AND DUTY-WAIVER PERFORMANCE

In this chapter, the performance of revenue and duty waivers is examined, covering various aspects. A comparative analysis of revenue performance between 2022 and 2023 is conducted, alongside an examination of quarterly revenue collection trends throughout the fiscal year. Additionally, the evaluation of revenue performance against targets and the exploration of challenges faced in revenue mobilisation aim to unveil the underlying reasons for the observed performance.

Furthermore, this chapter delves into a comparative analysis of duty-free performance between 2022 and 2023, identifying shifts and trends. To provide a comprehensive understanding, the 2023 revenue performance is contextualised within a broader historical perspective, assessing revenue performance over the past five years.

## 2.0 OVERVIEW OF REVENUE TARGETS IN 2023

In the original national budget speech of 2023 presented by the Minister of Finance, Parliament approved an annual revenue target of NLe9.346 billion.

Given the sixth & seventh review of the country’s Extended Credit Facility (ECF) programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and following the presentation of a supplementary budget to parliament in early July 2023 following the end of national elections, the revenue target was revised upwards to NLe10.562 billion, representing an increase of NLe1.216 billion (or 13.0%).

The increase of the target was largely coming from:

* Implementation of the tax policy provisions of the Finance Act 2023.
* Implementation of selected revenue administration reforms.
* Upwardly revised GDP growth rates.
* Reversal of the Sierra Rutile Reset agreement.
* Liberalisation of the petroleum pump prices starting in July 2023.

Following delays in the implementation of the Finance Act 2023 and other policy proposals that informed the increase in the supplementary budget target, the IMF, during the 8th and final review of the ECF programme estimated that domestic revenue by the end of 2023 would be NLe10.277 billion representing a reduction of NLe285 million largely on account of underperformance in CIT and petroleum revenues – RUC specifically.

## 2.1 REVENUE PERFORMANCE IN 2023

**2.1.1: Quarterly Trend in FY2023 Revenue Collection**

From Figure 4, domestic revenue had illustrated a positive trend across the quarters, showing a steady increase from Q1 through Q4. Despite this steady quarterly growth, the increase in Q4 from Q3 is seen to be the most inclined as we realise increased import activity and domestic consumption due to festivities during this period. Also, the advance payment by Kingho Ltd and the increased collection effort in December following change in the administrative leadership at the NRA ensured Q4 collection was highest in the year.

Usually, and considering seasonality, collection in Q3 is supposed to be lower than Q2 and typically the lowest in the year because of limited activity during this period of heavy rainfall. In FY2023 however, Q3 collection was higher than both Q1 and Q2 as it represented a post-elections era and collection effort also seemed to have been intensified despite failure to implement tax policy provisions and measures during this quarter.

**2.1.2: Revenue Performance in FY2023 Relative to Target**

Total domestic revenue collected in FY2023 totalled NLe10.1 billion, with Domestic Tax department accounting for 60.3%, Customs Service Department 17.5% and NTR 20.2%. Collection from Road User Charges accounted for 2.0% of the total collection.

Revenue collection in the second half of the year (July to December 2023 reached NLe5.409 billion representing an increase of NLe718 million (or 15.3.%) compared to the first half.

Relative to the revised target agreed with the IMF during the 8th and Final Review of the ECF Programme in October 2023, the collection of NLe10.1 billion emerged to be only marginally short of the target by 1.7% (Table 3).

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 3: 2023 Quarterly Domestic Revenue Collection Relative to IMF Target (NLe Thousand)** |
|   | **Q1 Act** | **Q2 Act** | **Q3 Act** | **Q4 Act** | **2023 Q1-Q4 Act** | **2023 Q1-4 Proj** | **Variance** | **% Var** |
| **TOTAL DOMESTIC REVENUE** | **2,335,516** | **2,355,472** | **2,485,006** | **2,924,470** | **10,100,463** | **10,276,797** | **(176,333)** | **-1.7%** |
| **DOMESTIC TAX DEPARTMENT** | **1,355,400** | **1,357,686** | **1,576,615** | **1,798,038** | **6,087,739** | **6,091,893** | **(4,154)** | **-0.1%** |
| **Income Tax**  | **875,088** | **930,705** | **969,837** | **1,215,494** | **3,991,124** | **3,949,458** | **41,666** | **1.1%** |
| CIT | 281,063 | 338,502 | **365,363** | **439,766** | 1,424,693 | 1,468,647 | (43,953) | -3.0% |
| PIT | 594,025 | 592,203 | **604,475** | **775,728** | 2,566,431 | 2,480,812 | 85,619 | 3.5% |
| **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** | **480,312** | **426,981** | **606,778** | **582,544** | **2,096,615** | **2,142,435** | **(45,820)** | **-2.1%** |
| Import GST | 245,829 | 248,491 | **292,826** | **307,130** | 1,094,276 | 1,176,316 | (82,040) | -7.0% |
| Domestic GST | 234,482 | 178,490 | **313,952** | **275,415** | 1,002,340 | 966,119 | 36,221 | 3.7% |
| **CUSTOMS SERVICE DEPARTMENT (CSD)** | **310,971** | **386,049** | **426,403** | **640,398** | **1,763,821** | **1,827,655** | **(63,833)** | **-3.5%** |
|  Import Duties | 240,398 | 278,436 | **334,818** | **341,075** | 1,194,727 | 1,176,316 | 18,411 | 1.6% |
| Excise on Petroleum | 52,142 | 67,226 | **76,286** | **270,630** | 466,284 | 516,229 | (49,945) | -9.7% |
| Other Excise | 18,431 | 40,386 | **15,299** | **28,693** | 102,810 | 135,109 | (32,299) | -23.9% |
| **NON TAX REVENUE DEPARTMENT (NTR)** | **610,363** | **552,326** | **435,690** | **443,854** | **2,042,234** | **2,250,049** | **(207,815)** | **-9.2%** |
| **Mines Revenue** | **170,900** | **214,862** | **142,635** | **143,076** | **671,472** | **699,111** | **(27,639)** | **-4.0%** |
| *Royalty on Rutile* | 6,734 | 4,739 | **5,667** | **13,294** | 30,434 | 136,726 | *(106,292)* | -77.7% |
| *Royalty on Bauxite* | - | 2,216 | **-** | **2,343** | 4,560 | 27,629 | *(23,069)* | -83.5% |
| *Royalties on Diamond and Gold* | 31,551 | 39,158 | **53,287** | **33,504** | 157,500 | 208,847 | *(51,347)* | -24.6% |
| *Royalty on Iron Ore*  | 39,212 | 116,050 | **69,722** | **38,895** | 263,880 | 147,633 | *116,247* | 78.7% |
| *Licences* | 93,403 | 52,697 | **13,959** | **55,040** | 215,100 | 178,277 | *36,822* | 20.7% |
| **Other Departments** | **439,463** | **337,464** | **293,055** | **300,779** | **1,370,761** | **1,550,938** | **(180,177)** | **-11.6%** |
|  *Royalty on Fisheries etc* | 15,156 | 49,580 | **21,274** | **32,142** | 118,151 | 113,060 | 5,091 | 4.5% |
| *Parastatals (Cargo Tracking)* | 144,338 | 56,057 | **57,299** | **54,706** | 312,400 | 251,795 | 60,605 | 24.1% |
| *Other Revenues* | 279,969 | 231,828 | **214,482** | **213,931** | 940,210 | 1,186,083 | (245,873) | -20.7% |
| *o/w TSA* | *234,402* | 216,170 | ***183,741*** | ***192,793*** | *827,107* | *960,426* | *(133,319)* | -13.9% |
| *o/w Timber* | *-* | - | ***11,786*** | ***6,072*** | *17,858* | *25,000* | *(7,142)* | -28.6% |
| *o/w Other MDAs* | *45,566* | 15,657 | ***18,955*** | ***15,066*** | *95,245* | *200,657* | *(105,413)* | -52.5% |
| **RUC** | **58,782** | **59,411** | **46,297** | **42,179** | **206,669** | **107,200** | **99,469** | **92.8%** |

Key revenue streams such as Income Tax, Import Duties, Parastatal Dividends and RUC met an exceeded their annual revised targets. It is important to also note that even those that missed their targets only missed marginally and include GST (-2.1%), Mines Revenue (-4.0%), Petroleum Excise (-9.7%) and TSA (-13.9%).

For revenue streams that missed their annual target, the following were reasons associated with the shortfall::

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Revenue Stream | Associated reasons for shortfall |
| CIT | Non-implementation of MAT provision of FA 2023 |
| Import GST | Non-implementation of GST provisions in the FA 2023 that removed many exemptions |
| Petroleum Excise | Delay in full liberalisation of the fuel pricing formular until September 2023 |
| Import Excise | Non-implementation of the excise harmonisation and specific duties as per FA 2023 |
| Mining Royalties and Licences | Non-reversal of the Sierra Rutile Rest Agreement |
| TSA | Earlier and full payment of key annual license fee prior to elections. |
| Other MDAs | Non-implementation of key provisions in the FA 2023 including vehicle circulation levy |

Relative to the original target set by Parliament, the collection of NLe10.1 billion in FY2023 met and exceeded that target by a margin of NLe755 million or 8% (Table 4). This implies, even though the revised targets may have been missed, the original target was comfortably surpassed by a significant margin.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 4: 2023 Domestic Revenue Collection Relative to Original Target (NLe Thousand) |
|   | **2023 Q1-Q4 Actual** | **2023 Original Target** | **Balance** | **% Bal** |
| TOTAL DOMESTIC REVENUE | **10,100,463** | **9,345,667** | **754,796** | **8%** |
| DOMESTIC TAX DEPARTMENT | **6,087,739** | **5,529,382** | **558,357** | **10%** |
| Income Tax  | **3,991,124** | **3,690,035** | **301,090** | **8%** |
| Goods and Services Tax (GST) | **2,096,615** | **1,839,347** | **257,268** | **14%** |
| Import GST | **1,094,276** | **1,091,934** | **2,341** | **0%** |
| Domestic GST | **1,002,340** | **747,413** | **254,926** | **34%** |
| CUSTOMS SERVICE DEPARTMENT (CSD) | **1,763,821** | **1,667,458** | **96,363** | **6%** |
|  Import Duties | **1,194,727** | **1,092,238** | **102,490** | **9%** |
| Excise on Petroleum | **466,284** | **470,112** | **(3,827)** | **-1%** |
| Other Excise | **102,810** | **105,109** | **(2,299)** | **-2%** |
| NON TAX REVENUE DEPARTMENT (NTR) | **2,042,234** | **1,950,888** | **91,345** | **5%** |
| Mines Revenue | **671,472** | **576,805** | **94,667** | **16%** |
| Other Departments | **1,370,761** | **1,374,084** | **(3,322)** | **0%** |
|  *Royalty on Fisheries etc* | **118,151** | **178,837** | **(60,685)** | **-34%** |
| *Parastatals (Cargo Tracking)* | **312,400** | **196,032** | **116,368** | **59%** |
| Other Revenues | **940,210** | **999,215** | **(59,005)** | **-6%** |
| *o/w TSA* | ***827,107*** | ***801,515*** | ***25,592*** | **3%** |
| *o/w Timber* | ***17,858*** | ***-*** | ***17,858*** |  |
| *o/w Other MDAs* | ***95,245*** | ***197,700*** | ***(102,456)*** | **-52%** |
| RUC | **206,669** | **197,938** | **8,731** | **4%** |

Based on the original target, most revenue streams met their annual targets including Income Tax, GST, Import Duties, Mines Revenue, Parastatal dividends, TSA and RUC. Only Fisheries and ‘Other MDAs’ missed their original target by a notable margin. The shortfall in Petroleum Excise collection (-1%) and Import Excise (-2%) were only marginal.

**2.1.3: Revenue Performance in FY2023 Compared to FY2022**

Compared to FY2022 (Table 5), the collection of NLe10.1 billion in FY2023 emerged to be NLe2.918 billion (or 41%) higher, which by all indications means a significant improvement in domestic revenue collection in FY2023 compared to FY2022 despite the many disruptions in the year (National Elections in June, Change of administrative leadership at the NRA in July, Demonstration by businesses in October, and failed attempted Coup in November) which affected taxpayer compliance, implementation of tax policies and revenue administration reforms and ultimately revenue mobilisation.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 5: Domestic Revenue Collection: 2023 versus 2022 (NLe Thousand) |
|   | **2023 Act** | **2022 Act** | **Variance** | **% Var** |
| TOTAL DOMESTIC REVENUE | **10,100,463** | **7,182,686** | **2,917,777** | **41%** |
| DOMESTIC TAX DEPARTMENT | **6,087,739** | **4,325,052** | **1,762,687** | **41%** |
| Income Tax  | **3,991,124** | **2,904,694** | **1,086,430** | **37%** |
| Goods and Services Tax (GST) | **2,096,615** | **1,420,358** | **676,257** | **48%** |
| CUSTOMS SERVICE DEPARTMENT (CSD) | **1,763,821** | **1,238,079** | **525,742** | **42%** |
|  Import Duties | **1,194,727** | **848,543** | **346,184** | **41%** |
| Excise on Petroleum | **466,284** | **310,696** | **155,588** | **50%** |
| Other Excise | **102,810** | **78,840** | **23,970** | **30%** |
| NON TAX REVENUE DEPARTMENT (NTR) | **2,042,234** | **1,447,323** | **594,910** | **41%** |
| Mines Revenue | **671,472** | **414,292** | **257,180** | **62%** |
| Other Departments | **1,370,761** | **1,033,031** | **337,730** | **33%** |
|  *Royalty on Fisheries etc* | **118,151** | **100,762** | **17,389** | **17%** |
| *Parastatals (Cargo Tracking)* | **312,400** | **176,332** | **136,068** | **77%** |
| *Other Revenues* | **940,210** | **755,937** | **184,273** | **24%** |
| *o/w TSA* | ***827,107*** | ***613,272*** | ***213,835*** | **35%** |
| *o/w Timber* | ***17,858*** | ***58,830*** | ***(40,972)*** | **-70%** |
| *o/w Other MDAs* | ***95,245*** | ***83,835*** | ***11,410*** | **14%** |
| RUC | **206,669** | **172,231** | **34,438** | **20%** |

Besides Timber Export revenue (for which there was a ban on its export), all revenue streams showed significantly higher collection in FY2023 compared to FY2022. Revenue heads such as Domestic GST, Petroleum Excise, Mines Revenue, Parastatal Dividend, and ‘Other MDAs’ showed higher increases in collection in FY2023 at rates higher than the estimated average inflation rate for the year (45.6%).

**2.1.4: Challenges of Revenue Mobilisation in FY2023**

* **Panic, associated with the June 2023 elections** week and the week after, created fear in businesses to open to the public, but to also visit the banks for payments of due taxes. A total of NLe150 million was lost during this period,
* **Non- resetting of the SRL agreement** – with the effect of losing the USD10 million targeted for second half of the year.
* **Delay in implementation of the policy provisions of the FA 2023** from which a substantial portion of the target for 2023 emanated from - due to the non-configuration of the new FA 2023 rates in the NRA systems (ASYCUDA, ITAS, ECR).
* **Delay in liberalisation of Petroleum Excise** in Q3 – leading to loss of NLe59 million in July and August 2023.
* **Delay in implementation of the Safe habour scheme** as well as N-Soft and SICPA projects which were expected to bring in significant revenues in 2023 from mineral and GST.
* **Non-Compliance of GST registered businesses in the use of ECR machines** for GST collection
* **Non-compliance in payment of GST from EDSA** – NLe79.1 million was accumulated as arrears in 2023.

### 2.1.4 Historic Revenue Performance (2019 – 2023)

Figure 5 illustrates the trajectory of domestic revenue collection from 2019 to 2023, presented in nominal terms. Notably, there has been a consistent upward trend in total domestic revenue since 2019. Except for 2020 and 2022, each subsequent year witnessed an increase of more than one billion new Leones, with the most significant rise occurring in 2023, registering an increment of close to three billion new Leones, representing approximately a 40.6% increase. The slight increase in total domestic revenue in 2020 and 2022 can be attributed to the adverse impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, respectively.

***Figure 5: Revenue Performance in the Past Five Years***

*Source: MRP Department*

Further analysis of Figure 5 reveals that the Domestic Tax Department has consistently emerged as the highest contributor to total domestic revenue collection, consistently accounting for over half of the total collection, and surpassing 60.0% in 2022 and 2023. Notably, the Non-tax Revenue Department surpassed the Customs and Services Department as the second-highest contributor to total domestic revenue between 2021 and 2023, accounting for over one-fifth of the total domestic revenue. In addition, there was a decrease in both CSD revenue and non-tax revenue in 2022, with CSD revenue also experiencing a decline in 2020. However, DTD revenue has shown a consistent increase since 2019.

### 2.2: COMPARATIVE DUTY WAIVER PERFORMANCE, 2023 AND 2022

On the amount of tax/duty waived, total duty waiver granted in 2023 increased by 50.0% from NLe 704 million in 2022 to NLe 1.055 billion in 2023 as shown in Table 6. This surge in duty waivers carries significant implications for government revenue, representing a potential loss that could have been allocated to more productive projects. Had these waivers not been granted, total domestic revenue might have demonstrated higher performance levels than what was reported for 2023.

The primary contributors to the 2023 total duty waiver granted were waivers extended to Government MDAs, as well as the private sector, with Public International Organisations (PIOs) also featuring prominently. Duty waivers granted to government MDAs saw the highest amount waived in 2023, totaling NLe 415 million, reflecting an increase of 19.3% over the previous year. Waivers extended to the private sector constituted the second highest amount, witnessing a substantial increase from NLe 189 million in 2022 to NLe 404 million in 2023, marking a remarkable rise of 114.0%. Meanwhile, waivers granted to PIOs experienced the most significant increase, soaring from NLe 45 million in 2022 to NLe 108 million in 2023, reflecting a surge of 142.2%. Only the Mining and Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) sectors witnessed a decrease in waivers, declining by 20.8% and 4.2%, respectively. The reduction in duty waivers for the mining sector can be attributed to the elimination of waivers on plants and machineries, as stipulated in the 2023 Finance Act.

***Table 6: Duty Waiver by Category of Exemption, 2023 and 2022 (NLe Million)***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CATEGORY | 2023 | 2022 | Variance | % Variance |
| Embassy | 31,062 | 16,590 | 14,472 | 87.23% |
| Government | 414,602 | 347,594 | 67,008 | 19.28% |
| Mining | 21,182 | 26,736 | -5,554 | -20.77% |
| NGO | 75,850 | 79,158 | -3,308 | -4.18% |
| PIO | 108,096 | 44,636 | 63,460 | 142.17% |
| Private | 404,340 | 188,925 | 215,415 | 114.02% |
| TOTAL | **1,055,132** | **703,639** | **351,493** | **49.95%** |

*Source: MRP Department*

Analyzing the sectoral distribution of waivers (Table 7), it is evident that waivers are predominantly allocated to the energy, manufacturing, health, diplomatic, and agricultural sectors. Notably, in 2023, these sectors accounted for significant portions of the total duty waivers granted, with the energy, manufacturing, health, and agricultural sectors representing 24.7%, 22.4%, 13.7%, and 7.9% respectively of the total amount waived, signaling a heightened government focus on these areas. Manufacturing companies saw a significant increase of NLe 117 million in waivers, while the energy sector received NLe 94 million more in waivers, and the agricultural sector received NLe 39 million more. The education sector, on the other hand, witnessed a notable decrease of 69.5% in exemptions granted, dropping from NLe 14 million in 2022 to NLe 4 million in 2023.

***Table 7: Duty Waiver for 2023 and 2022 by Sector Analysis in (NLe Million)***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SECTOR | 2023 | 2022 | Variance | % Variance |
| Agricultural | 83,586 | 44,725 | 38,861 | 86.89% |
| Civil Registration | 13,606 |   | 13,606 |   |
| Communication | 4,998 | 1,277 | 3,721 | 291.39% |
| Construction | 36,064 | 49,737 | -13,673 | -27.49% |
| Diplomatic | 36,665 | 38,364 | -1,699 | -4.43% |
| Education | 4,228 | 13,879 | -9,651 | -69.54% |
| Energy | 260,754 | 167,082 | 93,672 | 56.06% |
| Environment | 282 |   | 282 |   |
| Financial | 237 |   | 237 |   |
| Fishery | 1,048 | 216 | 832 | 385.19% |
| Health | 144,305 | 135,283 | 9,022 | 6.67% |
| Justice |   | 88 | -88 | -100.00% |
| Internal Affairs | 102 |   | 102 |   |
| Local Government |   | 868 | -868 | -100.00% |
| Manufacturing | 236,113 | 118,902 | 117,211 | 98.58% |
| Migration |   | 59 | -59 | -100.00% |
| Mineral | 20,973 | 26,736 | -5,763 | -21.56% |
| Minister | 171 |   | 171 |   |
| NCRA |   | 2,236 | -2,236 | -100.00% |
| Office of the President | 18,582 | 2,464 | 16,118 | 654.14% |
| OIL | 13,624 | 636 | 12,988 | 2042.14% |
| Parliament | 304 | 563 | -259 | -46.00% |
| Privatisation |   | 37 | -37 | -100.00% |
| Security | 3,307 | 1,290 | 2,017 | 156.36% |
| Social Welfare | 35,953 | 48,037 | -12,084 | -25.16% |
| Sports | 22,787 | 13,355 | 9,432 | 70.63% |
| Tourism | 442 |   | 442 |   |
| Trade | 3,362 | 4,137 | -775 | -18.73% |
| Transport | 13,821 | 26,525 | -12,704 | -47.89% |
| UN Agency | 96,176 |   | 96,176 |   |
| Water Resources | 3,645 | 7,143 | -3,498 | -48.97% |
| TOTAL | **1,055,132** | **703,639** | **351,493** | **49.95%** |

*Source: MRP Department*

#

# CHAPTER THREE: KEY NON-REVENUE ACHIEVEMENTS

This chapter provides a comprehensive update of non-revenue achievements in 2023, spanning multiple functional areas such as taxpayers’ and stakeholders’ engagement, revenue intelligence and investigations, corporate governance, human resources management, staff integrity, business facilitation, risk management, ICT and other modernisation reforms.

## 3.1: TAXPAYER AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Public Affairs and Tax Education Unit (PATE), operating within the Legal and Corporate Services Department, assumes the critical responsibility of educating taxpayers, stakeholders, and the broader public on tax matters and the activities undertaken by the Authority. Collaborating closely with various departments and stakeholders, PATE ensures the seamless dissemination of accurate and timely information, aimed at curbing noncompliance and bolstering domestic revenue collection. A summary of the key activities carried out or facilitated by the PATE Unit during the reporting period are provided below:

**Stakeholders' Engagement with Tax Consultants on the Finance Act 2023**- A meeting convened with tax consultants and audit firms centered on fostering comprehension and generating strategies for the effective implementation of provisions outlined in the Finance Act 2023, particularly concerning affected sectors.

**Meeting with the National Telecommunications Authority (NaTCA**)- Deliberations were held with NaTCA leadership to finalise the implementation timeline for surcharges on cellular services, as stipulated in the Finance Act 2023.

**Stakeholders Dialogue with Financial Institutions**- Financial institutions, including banks and insurance companies, were briefed on the commencement of GST imposition on all financial transactions, as mandated by the Finance Act 2023.

**Dialogue with the Hospitality Sector on the Finance Act 2023**- The hospitality sector was engaged in a session with NRA Senior Management to provide guidance and advice on the application of the 2% Tourism Levy, in accordance with the Finance Act 2023.

**Weekly Radio and Television Programs**- A series of televised discussions were conducted on African Young Voice (AYV) and the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) Television, alongside radio broadcasts on the Society for Radio Democracy, totaling seven television programmes and eight radio sessions. These platforms served as forums for discourse on tax administration reforms and pertinent issues related to NRA’s operations and the Finance Act 2023.

**The Commissioner General’s Dialogue with the Business Sector** - Stakeholder dialogues were convened with representatives from various sectors, including general merchandise trading, hospitality, financial institutions, mining companies, and State-Owned Enterprises, facilitating interaction with the Commissioner-General to underscore the importance of tax compliance.

**Media Engagement on GST Charge on Mobile Money Transactions**- Media appearances featuring the Senior Commissioner-DTD and the Assistant Commissioner LTO were arranged to address queries regarding GST on Mobile Money Transactions, disseminated through SLBC TV, AYV TV, and Radio Democracy FM 98.1.

**Blue Ribbon Solutions Sponsored Radio and Television Programmes**- Blue Ribbon Solutions, an ICT company contracted for the design of NTR's Mobile Payment App, sponsored two radio discussion programmes on Radio Democracy FM 98.1, two programmes on Voice of Peace and Development (VoPAD) in Waterloo, two television programmes on the SLBC, and two programmes on AYV Television to augment the NRA's public awareness initiatives.

## 3.2: UPDATE ON 2022 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Throughout 2023, requests for Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives followed their typical trend. However, owing to the challenges encountered in revenue collection during 2023, the Authority opted to allocate funds primarily toward revenue mobilisation efforts and staff welfare.

Nevertheless, certain requests deemed instrumental in bolstering government programmes, particularly those pertaining to education, agriculture, urgent medical assistance for the underprivileged, and breast cancer awareness campaigns, were considered in alignment with our Corporate Social Responsibility policy.

## 3.3: COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

##

Throughout the reviewed period, the NRA engaged in collaborative efforts with various stakeholders to fulfill its mandate. This section highlights select activities carried out by the Authority in partnership with stakeholders.

### Société Industrielle et Commerciale de Produits Alimentaires (SICPA)

Ongoing collaboration with SICPA continues in preparation for the forthcoming implementation of the new Excise Tax Stamp. Multiple meetings were facilitated with SICPA, the Petroleum Regulatory Authority, Ministry of Trade and Industry, importers, manufacturers, and other pertinent stakeholders. These engagements aimed to ensure the seamless and effective implementation of the Excise Tax Stamp and other Fuel Markings, slated to commence in early 2024.

### N-SOFT

In collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, the Legal and Corporate Services Department signed the N-SOFT agreement, which was ratified by the Parliament of Sierra Leone, and has been fully implemented in conjunction with mobile companies.

### Swedish Tax Agency Study Tour

The Authority organised a study tour to the Swedish Tax Agency (STA), specifically focusing on their revenue administration practices. The NRA delegation, comprising the Commissioner General, Senior Director of MRP Department, Senior Commissioner of DTD, Director of HRD, and Director of Legal and Corporate Services Department, visited the STA. While impressed by the Authority's Digital Transformation Maturity Model (DTMM), the STA expressed interest in future collaboration with the Authority. Potential areas of cooperation include change management, legal support, and human resources development.

### Global Forum

The NRA, in collaboration with the MoF, became a member of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes. This international organisation comprises 171 members working collectively to combat tax evasion by enhancing transparency and information exchange.

### Proposed Revenue Court

The Legal and Corporate Services Department conducted multiple meetings with the Chief Justice to establish the Revenue Court. The former special court facility was identified as the venue for court proceedings. Subsequently, the Chief Justice met with the then-Commissioner-General, Mr. Swarray, to discuss funding for the rehabilitation of the special court facility. However, a consensus regarding funding for the refurbishment of the deteriorated facility is yet to be reached by the office of the Chief Justice and the NRA.

## 3.4: PUBLIC RECOGNITION AND TRUST

The National Revenue Authority was presented with a Certificate of Achievement by the Anti-Corruption Commission for its adherence to the National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2019-2023 following monitoring of the 3rd and 4th Quarters of 2021. This commendable recognition was conferred by the Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Chairperson of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy Steering Committee.

Furthermore, the Authority was honored with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces for its contributions and support towards various humanitarian endeavours. Despite encountering financial constraints in 2023, the Authority's commitment to fostering human capital development through its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives is underscored by such acknowledgments.

## 3.5: HUMAN RESOURCE AND STAFF WELFARE MANAGEMENT

The Human Resources Department collaborates closely with the Board and SMT, operating under the oversight of the Commissioner-General to develop and enact strategic human resources policies aligned with the Authority’s strategic objectives. Its primary responsibilities encompass the recruitment, training, development, and retention of personnel to meet the needs of all departments. The HRD's overarching functions are facilitated through three specialized units: the Recruitment and Staff Appraisal Unit, the Salary and Records Management Unit, and the Training, Manpower Planning, and Capacity Development Unit. The Staff Welfare Department was initially a Unit within the Human Resources Department, that transitioned into an independent Department in 2021, with the primary objective of enhancing the management of staff welfare.

This section provides an analysis of the key activities undertaken by the HRD and the Staff Welfare Department during the reporting period in line with goal two (2) of the NRA’s strategic plan for 2023-2027. Goal two emphasises the "Maintenance of a professional workforce and the development of institutional capacity".

### Staff Strength

Table 8 presents a comparative analysis of the Authority's staff composition by gender for the years 2022 and 2023. The total staff count for the Authority saw an increase of 26 individuals in 2023, rising from 810 to 836 employees. Further examination of Table 8 reveals that the total number of male staff increased by 18, while the number of female staff increased by 8 during the same period. Despite males comprising 74.9% of the total staff population in 2023, the increase in the recruitment of female staff underscores the management's dedication to gender mainstreaming initiatives.

***Table 8: Staff Strength by Gender 2023 and 2022***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2023 | 2022 |   | 2023 | 2022 |   |
|  DEPARTMENT | **MALE** |  **MALE** | **VARIANCE** | **FEMALE** | **FEMALE** | **VARIANCE** |
| CG’s OFFICE | 10 | 11 | -1 | 13 | 10 | 3 |
| RIID | 8 | 9 | -1 | 7 | 8 | -1 |
| HUMAN RESOURCE | 11 | 8 | 3 | 25 | 24 | 1 |
| STAFF WELFARE | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| ADMIN | 150 | 132 | 18 | 6 | 7 | -1 |
| CUSTOMS | 162 | 177 | -15 | 47 | 45 | 2 |
| NTR | 35 | 31 | 4 | 22 | 19 | 3 |
| F & B | 13 | 13 | 0 | 9 | 6 | 3 |
| MRP | 12 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ICT | 26 | 30 | -4 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| ICA | 9 | 10 | -1 | 3 | 4 | -1 |
| L&CA | 10 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| BOARD SECRETARIAT | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| MODERNIZATION | 15 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| DTD | 160 | 152 | 8 | 64 | 66 | -2 |
| TOTAL | 626 | 608 | 18 | 210 | 202 | 8 |

*Source: HRD*

**Staff Separation**

Table 9 presents a comparative overview of staff separations by department between the years 2022 and 2023, while Figure 6 outlines separations by category. Throughout 2023, a total of 32 staff members concluded their tenure with the Authority, a total consistent with the preceding year. Notably, the Administrative Department experienced the highest number of separations, with 8 staff members departing, followed by the DTD and CSD, each with 7 staff members leaving their positions. In contrast, CSD accounted for the highest number of separations in 2022, with 9 staff members, followed by the Administrative Department, with 7 staff, and NTR and DTD, each with 4 staff members departing.

***Table 9: Staff Separation by Department, 2023 and 2022***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| DEPARTMENT | 2023 | 2022 |
| CGO | 2 |   |
| ADMIN | 8 | 7 |
| CSD | 7 | 9 |
| NTR | 2 | 4 |
| F & B | 2 | 2 |
| ICT | 1 | 3 |
| MRP | 1 |   |
| DTD | 7 | 4 |
| STAFF WELFARE | 1 |   |
| BOARD | 1 |   |
| RIID |   | 1 |
| ICA |   | 2 |
| TOTAL | **32** | **32** |

*Source: HRD*

Analysis of Figure 6 reveals that retirement and resignation emerged as the primary reasons for staff separation in 2023, with 11 occurrences of each, followed by 4 instances of departure due to death. Similarly, in 2022, retirement and resignation constituted the most common reasons for staff separation from the Authority, with 14 and 12 instances respectively.

***Figure 6: Staff Separations by Category, 2023 and 2022***

*Source: HRD*

### Staff Recruitment, Confirmation, Promotion and Engagement

In 2023, the NRA recruited a total of 71 staff members (Table 10). Among these recruits, the Administration Department welcomed the largest number of new staff, comprising 29 individuals, followed by CSD with 11, DTD with 10, and the CGs Office with 8. Recognising outstanding performance and dedication among its workforce, the Authority promoted a total of 60 staff members from various departments to higher positions. Of these promotions, CSD saw the highest number of promotions, with 27 staff promoted, followed by the ICT Department with 9, and the L&CA Department with 5. Additionally, 40 staff members were formally confirmed in their respective positions after their probation period, with CSD again leading with 17 confirmations, followed by the ICT Department with 12, and the Admin Department with 5. Furthermore, the Authority augmented its workforce by engaging the services of 58 individuals, including 47 contracted staff, 6 interns, and 5 youth corps from the National Youth Commission.

***Table 10: Staff Recruitment, Confirmation and Promotion, 2023***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Department | Recruitment | Promotion  | Confirmation  |
| CG’s OFFICE | 8 | 2 | - |
| RIID | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| HRD | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| STAFF WELFARE | - | - | - |
| ADMIN | 29 | 4 | 5 |
| CSD | 11 | 27 | 17 |
| NTR | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| F & B | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| MRP | - | 3 | - |
| ICT | 2 | 9 | 12 |
| ICA | - | - | - |
| L&CA | - | 5 | - |
| BOARD SECRETARIAT | 1 | - | - |
| MODERNIZATION | - | - | - |
| DTD | 10 | - | - |
| TOTAL | **71** | **60** | **40** |

*Source: HRD*

### Staff Capacity Development Initiatives

The NRA is committed to fostering opportunities for the professional growth of its workforce, with a focus on attracting and retaining highly qualified individuals. In pursuit of this objective, the HR Department facilitated sixteen (16) internal and six (6) external training programmes for a total of 369 staff members. It is noteworthy that the total number of participants includes individuals who benefited from multiple training courses throughout the year. Among the 369 participants, 231 (62.6%) were male, and 138 (37.4%) were female, reflecting a gender-diverse approach to capacity building. Moreover, of the total participants, 357 underwent internal or local training initiatives, while 12 benefitted from external training opportunities, underscoring the Authority's commitment to both in-house and external development for its staff.

Table 11 shows a breakdown of training participants by department. Of the 369 staff that benefited from the various training programmes, the DTD accounted for the highest number of beneficiaries with 113 staff, followed by CSD with 70 staff and then HRD with 30 staff members. These figures are reflective of the respective departmental staff sizes.

***Table 11: Number of Training Participants by Department***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Department | No. of Staff |
| CG’s OFFICE | 28 |
| RIID | 22 |
| HUMAN RESOURCE | 30 |
| STAFF WELFARE | 3 |
| ADMIN | 13 |
| CSD | 70 |
| NTR | 13 |
| F & B | 5 |
| MRP | 13 |
| ICT | 24 |
| ICA | 6 |
| L&CA | 12 |
| MODERNIZATION | 17 |
| DTD | 113 |
| TOTAL | **369** |

*Source: HRD*

### Staff Medical Scheme

The Staff Welfare Department, in collaboration with the MRP Department, conducted a comprehensive survey on staff medical options in 2021. This survey aimed to evaluate the efficacy of the previous medical scheme involving the National Insurance Company (NIC). The subsequent report presented to the Board served as a basis for deliberation. Following the Board’s decision, the Authority opted to establish an in-house medical scheme. While awaiting final approval of the in-house medical scheme policy, the Finance and Budget Department has been directed to provide monthly medical allowances to staff.

### Biometric Attendance Management

The Authority has installed a total of fourteen (14) biometric machines, which have been instrumental in monitoring staff attendance and have significantly contributed to the improvement of staff attendance. In early 2023, breakdowns were reported by the Staff Welfare Department for some of these machines, prompting a designated team to investigate and document the issues. Currently, the Procurement Unit is in the process of procuring necessary materials for the maintenance of these devices. Furthermore, approval from the CG has been secured for the Staff Welfare Department's request to engage the services of a technician for the maintenance of the biometric devices, with the Procurement Unit entrusted with this task.

### Facilitation of Health and Safety

With the aim of enhancing health and safety among staff, the Staff Welfare Department, in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society submitted a proposal in 2023 to the CG for the provision of first-aid kits along with staff training. This initiative is currently awaiting approval for implementation.

### Management of Sick Leave and Death Benefits

The Staff Welfare Department oversees the administration of sick leave, granting a total of 38 leaves in 2023. Additionally, the Department facilitated the payment of 34 death benefits to bereaved staff during the same period.

## 3.6: UPDATE ON REVENUE INTELLIGENCE AND INVESTIGATIONS

The Revenue Intelligence and Investigations Department (RIID) remains dedicated to enhancing compliance to optimise revenue collection. Central to its responsibilities are information gathering, intelligence processing, and investigations. The Department's reports and findings serve as pivotal resources for revenue recovery, identification of irregularities, disciplinary measures, and, when necessary, legal actions. Additionally, the RIID plays a crucial role in integrity management and the detection of tax fraud, both internally and externally. Legislative responsibilities pertaining to the licensing of Customs Clearing and Forwarding Agencies (C&FAs) also fall within the purview of this Department, which works in tandem with operational departments to enforce tax regulations.

The RIID operates through two distinct units: the Investigations Unit and the Intelligence Gathering and Analysis Unit. Throughout 2023, the Department engaged in numerous intelligence operations, risk assessments, and investigations, often collaborating with other Departments. Furthermore, enforcement activities were executed by a specialized task force within the Department known as the Enforcement Task Force.

Outlined below are the key initiatives undertaken by the RIID in 2023:

### Foreign Currency Declarations

Collaboration with NRA/Customs personnel at Lungi International Airport facilitated the collection and subsequent submission of foreign currency declaration data to the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) on a monthly basis.

### Completed Investigations

Several investigative activities were concluded in 2023, including:

* Outstation Monitoring
* Verification of customs site examinations
* Analysis of customs credits
* Analysis of Customs warehouse data
* Investigations into specific entities such as Hong Peng Resources SL Ltd, Brilliant Company SL Ltd, China Henan International Cooperation Group SL Ltd, and Home Leone Ltd.

As a result of these investigations, the RIID successfully recovered revenues along with associated penalties totaling NLe2.690 million. Several cases have been carried over to 2024 for further investigation, including inquiries into Maersk Line regarding GST on local purchases, analysis of GST returns and payments, monthly back-end analysis of ECR data, customs warehouse data analysis, customs credit analysis, periodic or quarterly outstation revenue investigations, and monitoring compliance of ECR installation.

## 3.7: UPDATE ON 2023 STRATEGIC PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED

The Authority, with assistance from development partners, commenced the implementation of multiple projects during the period in review. Presented in this section is an overview of the progress of these projects, along with the obstacles faced during their implementation. The first four out of the nine projects listed below are projects in the current 2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan, while the remainder are carried over from the preceding Strategic Plan.

### Data Warehouse System Project

* The data warehouse system completed for the three revenue systems (ITAS, ECR and ASYCUDA).
* Data integration between ITAS and ECR completed.
* Dashboards for ECR, TAS and SYCUDA developed and are up and running.
* Input GST (local purchase) functionality developed in the ECR dashboard and integrated with ITAS and ASYCUDA dashboard.
* Data warehouse system handed over to the NRA.
* Documentation on system functionality for the data warehouse prepared and handed over to the NRA by the consultant.

*Challenges*

* No data is available for the ITAS audit module, risk analysis, revenue forecasting, and exemptions as the roll-out of these modules is still pending.
* Abnormal figures are showing in the dashboards that require cross-checking with source data.
* Data quality in the ECR systems is increasingly getting low with primary concern including zero amount invoices, unchecked refunds, no corresponding refunds invoice on sales, and buyer name not indicated.
* There is no plan on how to approach taxpayers to ensure compliance and ensure the ECR usage and data entry are aligned with the NRA guidelines.
* Third party data sources yet to be integrated.

### Compliance Improvement Project (CIP)

* The IMF’s Fiscal Affairs Department had commenced a mission on development of CIPs for major taxes for special taxpayers and training of NRA staff.
* Comprehensive digital taxpayer education plan has been prepared and costed.
* Engagements have commenced with the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) for funding of this digital taxpayer education plan.

*Challenges*

* Non-establishment of project team.
* Low commitment of relevant staff to the development of the CIPs.
* Non-confirmed funding for implementation of the plans when they should have been developed.

### Mobile Payment App Expansion Project

* Rolled out to NCRA; OARG; Births and Death; Law Court; and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning.
* The project team in collaboration with Blue Ribbon initiated a meeting with the Executive Director of SLRSA on plans to commence vehicle and motorbike registration in the Freetown and the provincial areas using the App platform option.
* There is an ongoing plan to expand the mobile payment app to SMEs to facilitate payment of taxes.

*Challenges*

* The poor internet connectivity for most MDAs in the provinces poses a challenge.
* The utilisation of the Mobile Payment App by SMEs depends on the integration with ITAS and ASYCUDA, which is pending.
* The NRA is still awaiting a response from the Executive Director of SLRSA.

### Small and Micro Enterprise Project (Formalization Project)

* Block registration of businesses and taxpayers conducted in the Western Area in 2020.
* Containerised offices installed with support from the UNDP and handed over to serve as taxpayer service centres in Freetown.
* Concept Note prepared for the Block Registration exercise in the regional cities.

*Challenges*

* Containerised offices yet to be operationalised.
* The delay in the conduct of the Block Registration in the regional cities due to nonavailability of funding.

### Change Management Enhancement Project

* Some NRA staff (Change Champions) have been assigned to act as liaisons between the Change Management Project Team and all staff of the Authority to coordinate change management activities within departments.
* Town hall meetings have been initiated in the provinces.

*Challenges*

* Preparation of a Change Management Plan and Timetable to provide feedback to stakeholders.

### Revenue Systems Integration and Security Project

* Documentation for integration of the NRA systems prepared.
* Developed NRA digitalisation road map partly involving the integration of revenue systems.
* Working with world bank to confirm funding.
* Conducted a Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing (VAPT) to check security of current systems.

*Challenges*

* Lack of confirmed funding.
* Lack of internal capacity to undertake integration.
* Non-establishment of a project team.
* Recommendations from VAPT yet to be implemented.

### Infrastructural Development/Enhancement Project

* Contract awarded for the construction of the proposed administrative headquarters of the NRA (Revenue House) on Wilkinson Road.
* The land has been cleared to commence construction work.

*Challenges*

* Lack of confirmed funding.

### Centralized Data Analytics Project

* Functional Data analytic team constituted, trained, and equipped with high-end laptops and data analytics reports are being produced periodically.
* Job descriptions relating to the proposed Unit developed and distributed to staff to guide their work.
* Terms of Reference (TOR) and Board Concept Note developed for approval to transform the Data Analytics Team into a centralized Unit under the MRP Department.

*Challenges*

* Training in advanced data analytics needed for the team.
* Limited access to statistical software and tools.
* Delay in the Board’s approval of the centralised Data Analytics Unit and organogram.

### Excise Stamp and Product Marking Project

* Excise stamp and other markings (for fuel) regulations ratified by Parliament.
* Benchmarking visit to Uganda conducted.
* All known local production lines have been visited and assessments made.
* Training for targeted importers and manufacturers delivered, and sensitisation workshops conducted.

*Challenges*

* SICPA excise duty stamp awaiting full implementation and rollout nationwide.
* Procurement of duty stamps pending.

## 3.8: ICT ACTIVITIES UPDATE

The ICT Department, as a vital support Department of the Authority, is entrusted with the crucial task of delivering responsive, effective, and efficient ICT services to the NRA and its stakeholders in fulfilment of the NRA’s core mandate of domestic revenue mobilisation and collection. The following are the key achievements of the department's various units during the fiscal year 2023:

### Software Unit:

* Supported the extension of the NTR Mobile Payment App rollout to additional MDAs, including the Ministry of Lands, Immigration, Small Arms Commission, and Law Courts in various districts.
* Supported the development of the NRA data warehouse, enabling the extraction of information from operational business systems, and successfully launched dashboards for ECR, ITAS, and ASYCUDA.
* Supported the introduction of the N-soft solution for gathering GST information from the Telecoms sector.
* Aided in implementing the Product Tracing System (PTS) to gather information on Domestic Excise.
* Supported in implementing the NLe10 processing fee for ITAS returns filing.
* Contributed to devising a roadmap for the comprehensive digitalization of revenue payment processes.
* Managed the administration of IT Business Systems, including ITAS, ASYCUDA World, ECR, NTRS, Microsoft Dynamics GP, and the NTR Mobile Payment App.

### Helpdesk Unit:

* Provided efficient first-level and routine support to NRA staff and other ICT end-users.
* Managed Office 365 packages effectively.

### Infrastructure Unit:

* Expanded the NRA's wide area network (WAN) to the Waterloo office and established a local area network (LAN) within the office premises.
* Supported the deployment of N-Soft connectivity and Server Infrastructure.
* Enhanced the NRA WAN for VPN and internet connectivity by implementing the Metro link across all Freetown offices, including data centers.
* Extended the NRA’s WAN connectivity to the new Freetown International Airport.
* Implemented a redundant Orange VPN link at the Freetown West office.

### Security Unit:

* Conducted security reviews on various ICT systems.

Despite these commendable accomplishments, the Department grapples with several challenges, including:

* Limited IT staff training to adequately support the ICT systems.
* Unstable power supply at data centres and other critical locations.
* Inadequate infrastructure at stakeholder sites for effective interfacing/integration.
* High turnover rate among ICT staff, impacting departmental capacity.
* Outdated network devices/equipment hampering performance.
* Insufficient staffing to support new implementations and ICT expansion, particularly in provincial offices.
* Inadequate security tools for securing the Authority's information systems effectively.
* Reluctance of software vendors to provide comprehensive technical details for implemented systems.
* Lack of post-implementation support from UNCTAD for ASYCUDA World.
* High maintenance and support costs proposed by ITAS vendor.

## 3.9: UPDATE ON CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION OF NRA OFFICES

One of the primary responsibilities of the Administration Department within the NRA is to create a conducive work environment for staff and the public. During the year under review, the Administration Department oversaw various property-related activities, including rehabilitation of office buildings, and replacement and repair of equipment. These included the following:

* Rehabilitation of Customs House and Administrative Buildings at Cline Town.
* Completion of construction of four containerised offices for the BMS project at four locations in Freetown such as Jui junction, PMB Junction at Wellington, Hillside Bypass Road by Winners Chapel, and Hill Station by Old School.
* Minor rehabilitation work by the landlord of 18 Wellington Street Office that was affected by water leakage, broken tiles, and cracks on the walls.
* Development of the land for the proposed administrative building (Revenue House) on Wilkinson Road, Freetown commenced in 2023 with clearing of land which is now ready for construction.

Additionally, efforts were made to replace and repair generator plants to ensure consistent power supply, although some generators in specific locations such as Freetown West Tax District, Gbalamuya Customs Border Post, Kono tax office, and Bathurst Street office still require attention.

# CHAPTER FOUR: SPECIAL RELEVANCE STATISTICS

This chapter provides a comprehensive examination of pertinent statistics, offering crucial insights into fundamental aspects of tax administration and revenue management. It commences with a focus on updates regarding taxpayer registration to demonstrate efforts to broaden the taxpayer base. Additionally, another section is dedicated to an analysis of planned and completed tax and customs audits, as well as tax compliance and enforcement statistics to provide valuable insights into compliance status. Updates on tax and revenue arrears shed light on outstanding liabilities. Furthermore, a comparative analysis between 2022 and 2023 is then conducted to unveil trends in import dynamics, declaration statistics by lane, and container and vehicle statistics, facilitating an understanding of trade dynamics.

## 4.1: UPDATE ON TAXPAYER REGISTRATION

Taxpayers are required to register with the National Revenue Authority (NRA) for taxation purposes, receiving a unique identifier called a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN). However, not all TINs are designated for business purposes. In the reviewed year, 14,499 TINs were issued, a decrease from 21,410 in 2022.

The distribution of TINs by tax office in 2023 and 2022 is detailed in Table 12. The Medium Taxpayers Office (MTO) in Freetown issued the highest number of TINs in both years, followed by the DTD head office at the West African Monetary Agency (WAMA) building in Freetown, and the Freetown Central Office. TINs issued from the CSD office are primarily for imports and exports purposes.

***Table 12: Number of TIN Issued by Tax Office in 2023 and 2022***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tax Office | 2023 | 2022 |
|  Medium Taxpayers Office  | 4,674 | 7,087 |
|  WAMA Individual Taxpayer  | 3,473 | 3,217 |
|  Freetown Central  | 2,262 | 2,366 |
|  Makeni Taxpayers Office  | 940 | 1,364 |
|  CSD Importers and Brokers  | 838 | 2,203 |
|  Freetown West  | 619 | 1,579 |
|  Kenema Taxpayers Office  | 556 | 901 |
|  Bo Taxpayers Office  | 531 | 974 |
|  Kono Taxpayers Office  | 287 | 404 |
|  Freetown East  | 267 | 1,232 |
|  Extractive Industry Revenue Unit  | 44 | 60 |
|  Large Taxpayers Office  | 8 | 23 |
|  TOTAL | **14,499** | **21,410** |

*Source: ITAS*

Figure 7 illustrates the breakdown of TINs by tax type in 2023 and 2022. More than half of the TINs were issued for Personal Income Tax (PIT) in both years, with other tax categories each comprising less than 10.0% of the total issued TINs, except for Capital Gains Tax (CGT), which accounted for 12.1% of the total TINs issued in 2023.

***Figure 7: TIN Issuance by Tax Type in 2023 and 2022***

*Source: ITAS*

Furthermore, Figure 8 presents the share of TIN by application purpose for the top ten categories, revealing that over half (58.1%) of the TINs were issued for business/trading purposes.

***Figure 8: Purpose for TIN Issuance in 2023***



*Source: ITAS*

## 4.2: TAX COMPLIANCE (FILING ANALYSIS) AND ENFORCEMENT

Table 13 shows the average filing compliance rates by tax office for the years 2023 and 2022. Filing compliance rate refers to the proportion of taxpayers who file their tax returns on time among the total active taxpayers. In 2023, large taxpayers exhibited the highest level of compliance, with a rate of 79.3%, surpassing the previous year's rate of 69.9%. Large taxpayers also had the highest filing rates in the previous year. The second and third highest compliance rates in 2023 were observed among Makeni taxpayers (60.2%) and medium taxpayers (54.6%) respectively. Similarly, in 2022, the second and third highest compliance rates were recorded among taxpayers in the extractives sector (67.3%) and medium taxpayers (66.7%) respectively. Among the tax districts in Freetown, the Freetown East tax district had the highest compliance rates in 2023, exceeding the previous year's rate of 40.5%.

Furthermore, among provincial tax districts, Makeni taxpayers demonstrated the highest compliance rate in 2023 and the second highest in 2022, achieving rates of 60.2% and 48.1% respectively. However, Bo taxpayers displayed the highest filing compliance rate in 2022 at 49.9%, which increased to 52.5% in 2023. Remarkably, Kono showed a significant improvement in 2023, with a compliance rate of 35.2%, compared to only 5.0% in the preceding year. On average, compliance rates improved in 2023 compared to 2022, although there is still much work needed to enhance these rates.

***Table 13: Average Compliance Rate by Tax Office in 2023 and 2022***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tax Office  | Compliance Rate (%) |
| **2023** | **2022** |
| Large Taxpayers  | 79.27% | 69.90% |
| Makeni Taxpayers  | 60.16% | 48.10% |
| Medium Taxpayers  | 54.58% | 66.70% |
| Bo Taxpayers Office | 52.52% | 49.90% |
| Extractive Industry  | 51.69% | 67.30% |
| Kenema Taxpayers  | 49.32% | 34.30% |
| Freetown East | 43.06% | 40.50% |
| Freetown Central | 42.06% | 48.70% |
| Freetown West | 41.01% | 56.60% |
| Kono Taxpayers Office | 35.22% | 5.00% |
| WAMA Individual  | 23.77% | 22.20% |

*Source: ITAS*

Figure 9 displays the average filing compliance rate across three major tax types. In both 2023 and 2022, GST accounted for the highest filing rate. Conversely, withholding tax showed the lowest filing rates (35.8%) among the three in 2023 but had the second highest filing rate (55.78) in the previous year.

***Figure 9: Average Compliance Rate by Tax Type in 2023 and 2022***

*Source: ITAS*

## 4.3: DTD PLANNED AND COMPLETED TAX AUDIT

The DTD conducts three categories of tax audits, targeting large taxpayers, medium taxpayers, and entities in the extractive industry. These audits are conducted through field audits, desk audits, or a combination of both approaches. The Design and Monitoring (D&M) Unit within the DTD assumes the responsibility of risk profiling and formulating an audit plan, which delineates the selection of taxpayers subject to audit by respective units within the DTD.

The table provided (Table 14) outlines the number of planned DTD audits for the fiscal year 2023. A total of 577 audits were scheduled, comprising 507 field audits and 70 desk audits or issue-specific audits, the determination of which rested with the Senior Director of the DTD. Notably, the MTO was tasked with auditing the largest number of taxpayers, amounting to 352 entities. The actual number of audits completed in 2022 amounted to 330, reflecting a 74.9% variance from the planned audits for 2023.

***Table 14: DTD Planned Tax Audit 2023***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| AUDIT | LTO | MTO | EIRU | TOTAL |
| Number of field audits to be completed  | 136 | 322 | 49 | **507** |
| Desk audit/Issue audit/specific audit (To be approved by the Snr. Commissioner of DTD) | 30 | 30 | 10 | **70** |
| Total audit to be completed in 2023 | **166** | **352** | **59** | **577** |
| Total field audit completed in 2022 | 150 | 150 | 30 | **330** |

*Source: DTD*

###

### LTO Completed Tax Audit and Liability 2023 and 2022

Table 15 illustrates the tax audit liabilities categorised by tax type, along with the number of audits conducted and taxpayers audited in 2023 and 2022. In 2023, a total of 96 audits were completed, involving 88 taxpayers, as opposed to 102 completed audits and 97 audited taxpayers in 2022. The number of completed audits in 2023 fell short of the targeted audits by 70 and show a decrease of 6 taxpayers audited compared to the previous year. The LTO Audit Unit identified a total combined tax liability of NLe 53.596 million for 2023, in contrast to NLe 28.523 million recorded in 2022. Notably, GST tax constituted the highest amount in 2023, followed by corporation tax, penalties, and withholding tax obligations.

***Table 15: LTO Tax Audit Liability 2023 and 2022 in NLe***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| LTO Audit Liability | 2023 | 2022 |
| Corporation Tax | 14,551,735 | (4,696,957) |
| Personal Income Tax | 545,438 | 540,813 |
| Withholding Tax | 8,546,000 | 14,359,835 |
| PAYE | 3,886,594 | 11,318,037 |
| Payroll Tax | 220,000 | 147,000 |
| GST | 14,807,931 | 4,821,269 |
| Interest | 373,504 |  |
| Penalty | 10,665,147 | 5,637,812 |
| Tax Paid/Tax Credit |  | (3,637,906) |
| Retained Earnings |  | 32,610 |
| TOTAL  | **53,596,349** | **28,522,513** |
| No. of taxpayers  | 88 | 97 |
| No. of completed audits  | 96 | 102 |

*Source: LTO, DTD*

### SMTO Completed Tax Audit and Liability 2023 and 2022

Table 16 displays the tax audit liability by tax category, alongside the number of audits conducted and taxpayers audited in 2023 and 2022. In 2023, there were a total of 124 completed audits involving 111 taxpayers, whereas in 2022, there were 79 audits finalized, involving 75 taxpayers. The completed audits in 2023 fell short of the targeted audits by 228 and shows a decrease of 36 audited taxpayers compared to the preceding year. The SMTO Audit Unit identified a combined tax liability of NLe 10.062 million for 2023, compared to NLe 7.065 million in 2022. Corporation tax accounted for the highest sum in 2023, followed by GST and withholding tax obligations.

***Table 16: SMTO Tax Audit Liability 2023 and 2022 in NLe***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tax Type | 2023 | 2022 |
|  Corporation /Trades Tax  | 3,778,565 | 2,502,730 |
|  Withholding Tax  | 1,772,060 | 1,588,507 |
|  PAYE  | 479,044 | 449,597 |
|  Payroll  | 465,000 | 133,351 |
|  GST  | 2,145,316 | 978,599 |
|  Penalty | 1,421,524 | 1,412,636 |
| TOTAL  | **10,061,509** | **7,065,420** |
| No. of taxpayers  | 111 | 75 |
| Total completed audits  | 124 | 79 |

*Source: SMTO, DTD*

### EIRU Completed Tax Audit and Liability 2023 and 2022

In 2023, the EIRU concluded a total of 9 tax audits, falling short of the targeted number by 50 and also exhibiting a decrease of 2 audits compared to the previous year's total completed audits Table 17). Among the audits conducted in 2023, the EIRU identified a combined tax liability amounting to NLe 2,596 million and USD 69,962 within the mining sector, in contrast to NLe 2,904 million and USD 1,464 recorded in 2022. Notably, tax liabilities stemming from PAYE obligations accounted for the highest liability, both in local currency and in USD, for both the years 2023 and 2022, followed by withholding tax obligations.

***Table 17: EIRU Tax Audit Liability (2023 and 2022) in NLe and USD***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tax Type | 2023 | 2022 | Difference |
| **Currency** | **Currency** |
| **NLe** | **USD** | **NLe** | **USD** | **NLe** | **USD** |
| PAYE | 1,247,476 | 49,088 | 1,482,161 | 906,316 | (234,685) | (857,228) |
| Payroll Tax | 295,000 | 2,500 | 61,500 | 29,304 | 233,500 | (26,804) |
| Withholding Tax | 714,500 | 12,014 | 744,481 | 315,517 | (29,981) | (303,503) |
| Corporation Tax | 114,061 | - | 23,338 | - | 90,723 | - |
| Royalty |  | - | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Gains Tax |  | - | - | - | - | - |
| GST |  | - | 40,898 | - | (40,898) | - |
| Deemed Dividend |  | - | - | - | - | - |
| Penalty | 225,065 | 6,360 | 551,423 | 212,559 | (326,358) | (206,199) |
| TOTAL | **2,596,102** | **69,962** | **2,903,800** | **1,463,697** | **(307,698)** | **(1,393,735)** |

*Source: EIRU, DTD*

## 4.4: CSD POST CLEARANCE AUDIT (PCA) ACTIVITIES IN 2023

The primary function of the PCA is to perform audits, to verify the accuracy of import documentation, including Customs declarations, accounting records, and other pertinent commercial data maintained by individuals or entities involved in cross-border trade, either directly or indirectly. These activities are characteristic of modern Customs administrations and are designed to enhance Customs revenue collection and expedite processing times by minimising intrusive inspections through a risk-based audit approach.

The PCA Unit works in collaboration with the CSD Risk Management Unit (RMU) to develop an annual Risk Register for profiling purposes and provides feedback to the Trade and Tariff Unit. Its activities encompass both desk and field audits, as well as joint examinations with the ASU and Risk Management Units.

Starting from 2018, the PCA's audit target was adjusted from 120 to 150 audits per year. During the reporting period, the PCA conducted and completed 138 audits, resulting in the recovery of NLe3.836 million.

## 4.5: DTD ARREARS STATUS UPDATE AND RECOVERY

An overview of DTD arrears, categorized by tax type and office, is presented in Table 18 for the review period. The total sum of DTD arrears stood at NLe 510 million, with arrears owed by State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) representing 94.0% of the total reported arrears. This persistent trend mirrors that of the previous year, wherein SOEs accounted for 97.6% of total DTD arrears. Large taxpayers constituted the second-highest proportion of arrears, comprising 5.5% of the total liability share.

These statistics underscore the imperative for collaborative efforts between the National Revenue Authority (NRA) and state-owned enterprises to ensure the timely collection of revenue owed to the state. Furthermore, they highlight the necessity for the audit units to fortify its audit capabilities and operations.

***Table 18: DTD Arrears by Tax Type and Office, 2023***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tax Type/Unit | Amount (NLe) | % Share of Total |
| SOEs-LTO | 478,695,702.70 | 93.95% |
| Audit Liability-LTO | 18,109,677.68 | 3.55% |
| Corporate Income Tax-LTO | 10,043,313.67 | 1.97% |
| Audit Liability-MTO | 1,357,449.01 | 0.27% |
| Corporate Income Tax-MTO | 1,334,338.91 | 0.26% |
|  TOTAL | **509,540,481.97** |  |

*Source: DTD*

Table 19 shows the revenue recovered by the Enforcement Units of both MTO and LTO in 2023. In 2023, the MTO Enforcement Unit recovered NLe 3,520 billion, an increase from NLe 2,700 billion in 2022. Similarly, the LTO recovered NLe 12,081 billion in 2023, which was lower than the NLe 13,380 billion recovered in the previous year.

***Table 19: DTD Revenue Raised from Enforcement Activities, 2023***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TAX TYPES | LTO | MTO |
| PIT | 4,832,476 |  |
| CIT | 2,416,238 |  |
| PAYE | 1,812,178 | 1,726,260 |
| GST | 1,208,119 | 1,417,109 |
| WHT | 1,449,743 | 111,864 |
| PAY ROLL | 362,436 |  |
| AUDIT LIABILITY |  | 265,123 |
| TOTAL | **12,081,189** | **3,520,356** |

*Source: DTD*

## 4.6: CUSTOMS DEBT RECOVERY AND MANAGEMENT

The CSD Debt Management Unit (DMU) is tasked with overseeing all credits by handling their processing, monitoring, and ensuring timely repayment for individuals or entities involved in import trade. Requests for such credits are submitted and approved through the Commissioner-General’s Office or its authorised representatives.

In 2023, the DMU, in conjunction with customs management, significantly reduced the number of creditors by implementing effective recovery methods. The DMU processed a total of 15 credit requests (compared to 27 requests in 2022) through the Commissioner-General’s Office, of which 7 are overdue for payment and 8 are not yet due (Table 20). The total liability for CSD credits processed in 2023 amounted to NLe 200.898 million, with an outstanding credit balance of NLe 170.714 million.

***Table 20: CSD Credit Liability 2023***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | APRROVED AMOUNT | AMOUNT UTILISED | AMOUNT PAID | OUTSTANDING | COMMENT |
| 1 | 510,633 | 510,633 | 204,313 | 306,321 | Overdue |
| 2 | 17,600 | 17,600 | 12,110 | 5,490 | Overdue |
| 3 | 9,299,374 | 9,299,774 | 6,548,301 | 4,781,588 | Overdue |
| 4 | 216,109 | 216,109 | 0 | 216,109 | Overdue |
| 5 | 100,000,000 | 100,000,000 | 8,476,256 | 91,523,744 | Overdue |
| 6 | 2,030,115 | 2,030,115,10 | 1,421,291 | 608,824 | Overdue |
| 7 | 773,645 | 773,645 | 0 | 773,645 | Overdue |
| 8 | 7,600,000 | 7,600,000 | 250,000 | 7,350,000 | Not Due |
| 9 | 50,000,000 | In Progress | 0 | 50,000,000 | Not Due |
| 10 | 1,173,202 | 1,173,202 | 150,000 | 1,023,202 | Not Due |
| 11 | 6,579,082 | 6,579,082 | 3,816,165 | 2,762,918 | Not Due |
| 12 | 6,579,082 | 6,579,082 | 3,816,165 | 2,762,918 | Not Due |
| 13 | 4,886,615 | 4,886,615 | 2,280,487 | 2,606,128 | Not Due |
| 14 | 3,415,992 | 3,415,992 | 1,594,196 | 1,821,796 | Not Due |
| 15 | 7,816,465 | 7,816,465 | 3,644,849 | 4,171,616 | Not Due |
| TOTAL | **200,897,916** | **148,868,201** | **32,214,133** | **170,714,298** |  |

*Source: CSD*

The DMU employed various strategies to recover Customs debts, including reminding debtors of their obligations through phone calls and written correspondence. Additionally, the Unit conducted joint operations, particularly with the ASU, to recover Customs debts, which sometimes involved issuing strong warnings to defaulters or even sealing off their business premises. These operations yielded largely positive results in debt recovery.

## 4.7: UPDATE ON CUSTOMS RISK MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Effective risk detection and management play a pivotal role in customs operations, which is why the creation of the Risk Management Unit (RMU) was imperative. The RMU's primary objective is to identify risks and propose measures to mitigate them, ensuring declarants comply with customs obligations. Unit personnel are tasked with continuously monitoring all declarations in real-time to pinpoint 'High Risk' declarations related to valuation, classification, currency codes, CVC inputs, and general documentation, among others, and promptly notify operational units for corrective actions.

### RMU Risk Profiling

Another vital task undertaken by the RMU is Risk Profiling, which involves categorising importers and brokers based on the risks they pose to revenue and the supply chain. This process contributes to trade facilitation and enables effective risk analysis. Profiling occurs quarterly and utilizes data generated by ASYCUDA, Post Clearance Audit (PCA) activities and reports, Anti-Smuggling Unit (ASU) interdictions and penalties, and information from the Query and Amendment Unit. This data is analysed to evaluate importers' and brokers' compliance levels, determining their placement into one of three selective lanes: red, blue, or yellow. The results of profiling are then submitted to the Risk Management Committee for management approval.

As shown in Table 21, during the period under review, a total of 229 importers were profiled. Among them, 213 importers (93.5%) were recommended for the Blue Lane, 10 importers (4.3%) for the Yellow Lane, and 6 importers (2.7%) for the Red Lane.

***Table 21: Number of profiled Importers by Selectivity Lane in 2023***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quarter | Blue Lane Importers | Yellow Lane Importers | Red Lane Importers | Total |
| Q1 | 41 | 5 | 5 | 51 |
| Q2 | 74 | 2 | - | 76 |
| Q3 | 47 | 2 | 1 | 50 |
| Q4 | 51 | 1 | - | 52 |
| TOTALS | **213** | **10** | **6** | **229** |

*Source: CSD*

Furthermore, the unit completed the profiling of 324 declarants/brokers during the same period. Of these, 273 brokers (84.2%) were considered compliant (Blue Lane), 24 (7.4%) were categorized as moderately compliant (Yellow Lane), and 27 brokers (8.4%) were identified as non-compliant (Red Lane).

### Additional Revenue Generated through RMU Interventions

In the reporting period, a total of 17 declarations were flagged as 'High Risk' for potential revenue loss. Vigilant monitoring and proactive measures led to the generation of additional revenue totaling NLe 1.958 million. Table 22 provides a breakdown of the additional revenue generated along with their corresponding risk factors. According to the table, the largest portion of additional revenue resulted from incorrect HS code usage, accounting for 47.3%, followed by inaccurate goods descriptions at 35.7%, and incorrect valuation of goods at 7.7%.

***Table 22: Revenue Raised by the Risk Management Unit, 2023***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Suspected Risk  | Additional Revenue  | % Share |
| 1 | Value Issues | 151,053 | 7.71% |
| 2 | Wrong CVC Input | 105,895 | 5.41% |
| 3 | Wrong Description | 699,391 | 35.71% |
| 4 | Wrong HS Code | 925,302 | 47.25% |
| 5 | Freight Infringement | 66,674 | 3.40% |
| 6 | Under Declaration | 10,078 | 0.51% |
|   | **TOTAL** | **1,958,395** |  |

*Source: CSD*

## 4.8: CUSTOMS VALUATION, GOODS CLASSIFICATION, AND TAX ASSESSMENT

The Trade and Tariff Unit within the CSD is responsible for conducting customs valuation, goods classification, and documentary verification to ensure accurate tax assessment. Its activities are geared towards ensuring that import assessments are calculated based on transaction value and that correct commodity descriptions and applicable rates are applied. The Unit handles the processing and assessment of IM4 (import for home consumption), IM7 (imports for warehousing), and IM8 (transit and transshipment) declarations flagged for inspection in the Red and Yellow Lanes. The table provided (Table 23) illustrates the additional revenue generated by the Trade and Tariff Unit through adjustments made to the values provided by the Integrated Trade Services (ITS), the government-authorized valuator, during the reporting period. A total of NLe 5.158 million was collected after the Unit confirmed the precise value of imported goods during the review period.

***Table 23: value uplift and the corresponding additional revenue generated by the Trade and Tariff Unit, 2023***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Month | Previous CIF ( $ ) | New CIF ( $ ) | Recoveries (NLE) |
| JANUARY | 792,970.39 | 939,673.11 | 613,544.39 |
| FEBRUARY | 742,404.00 | 871,273.79 | 961,560.38 |
| MARCH | 263,235.25 | 309,901.87 | 267,274.74 |
| APRIL | 118,683.92 | 226,427.07 | 620,721.03 |
| MAY | 233,960.74 | 237,597.35 | 116,853.02 |
| JUNE | 18,367.45 | 19,470.37 | 13,923.36 |
| JULY | 436,909.17 | 470,208.69 | 455,695.66 |
| AUGUST | 256,845.38 | 291,636.53 | 466,393.02 |
| SEPTEMBER | 514,918.08 | 538,621.72 | 565,982.70 |
| OCTOBER | 267,451.08 | 330,943.60 | 777,142.88 |
| NOVEMBER | 17,212.81 | 19,628.54 | 50,064.22 |
| DECEMBER | 122,957.38 | 116,463.40 | 249,178.56 |
| TOTAL | **3,785,915.65** | **4,371,846.04** | **5,158,333.96** |

*Source: CSD*

## 4.9: CUSTOMS RECOVERIES FROM ADJUSTMENTS AND AMENDMENTS

The Query and Amendment Unit provides essential support to the Trade and Tariff Unit in rectifying violations. This Unit manages assessments leading to alterations in monetary value and necessary corrections.

In 2023, the Trade and Tariff Unit processed a total of 19,567 declarations, encompassing IM4, IM7, and IM8 categories. Of this figure, 3,892 declarations (19. 9%) were flagged for various customs-related infractions and subsequently amended, resulting in a recovery of NLe 12.817 million. Among the most common offenses identified were incomplete declarations, incorrect quantities, discrepancies in collections, undervaluation, erroneous freight charges, inaccuracies in foreign currency exchange rates, and incorrect classifications. Telecommunications equipment, mixed items, auto spare parts, and raw materials for factories were identified as the types of goods posing the greatest risks to customs revenue during the year.

## 4.10: IMPORT STATISTICS (2023 AND 2022)

Statistics on dutiable and non-dutiable imports were extracted from ASYCUDA World and are presented in Tables 24 and 25 respectively. Total imports in 2023 increased by Le 12.763 billion (an increase of 57.3%). Of the total imports in 2023, dutiable imports accounted for 77.4%, experiencing an increase of 62.5% from Le 16.697 billion in 2022. Similarly, total non-dutiable imports increased in 2023 by 41.8% from Le 5.575 billion in 2022.

As shown in Table 24, all dutiable products recorded an increase in imports value except for products under Section 1A. Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes (Section 4) recorded the highest increase of 232.0%, followed by machinery and transport equipment (Section 7) with an increase of 94.7%, and then miscellaneous manufactured articles (Section 8) with an increase of 88.2%. Products categorised under Section 3 contributed the highest to dutiable imports at 33.8%, followed by products under Section 7 (20.3%), and then Section 0 (19.0%).

***Table 24: Dutiable Imports CIF Value 2023 and 2022 (NLe)***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  SITC CATEGORY | 2022 | 2023 | VARIANCE | % VAR  |
| SECTION 1B - TOBACCO | 189,206,355 | 290,493,047 | 101,286,692 | 53.53% |
| SECTION 0 - FOOD AND LIVE ANIMALS | 3,894,001,730 | 5,161,943,978 | 1,267,942,248 | 32.56% |
| SECTION 7 - MACHINERY AND TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT | 2,831,645,570 | 5,514,299,723 | 2,682,654,153 | 94.74% |
| SECTION 8 - MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES | 918,664,269 | 1,728,910,357 | 810,246,088 | 88.20% |
| SECTION 1A - BEVERAGES | 95,485,121 | 77,404,390 | -18,080,731 | -18.94% |
| OTHER ITEMS | 80,995,563 | 127,175,257 | 46,179,694 | 57.02% |
| SECTION 4 - ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE OILS, FATS AND WAXES | 1,558,746 | 5,175,458 | 3,616,712 | 232.03% |
| SECTION 2 - CRUDE MATERIALS, INEDIBLE, EXCEPT FUELS | 179,141,395 | 246,356,143 | 67,214,748 | 37.52% |
| SECTION 6 - MANUFACTURED GOODS CLASSIFIED CHIEFLY BY MATERIAL | 2,192,932,351 | 3,327,259,404 | 1,134,327,053 | 51.73% |
| SECTION 5 - CHEMICALS AND RELATED PRODUCTS, N.E.S. | 969,833,813 | 1,487,933,800 | 518,099,987 | 53.42% |
| SECTION 3 - MINERAL FUELS, LUBRICANTS AND RELATED MATERIALS | 5,343,114,150 | 9,160,572,726 | 3,817,458,576 | 71.45% |
| TOTAL | **16,696,579,063** | **27,127,524,283** | **10,430,945,220** | **31.00%** |

*Source: ASYCUDA World*

Analysis of Table 25 reveals a decline in the imports value of products classified under Sections 1B, 1A, Section 7 and “Other Items”. Beverages (Section 8) recorded the highest increase, followed by products under Section 3. Machinery and Transport Equipment (Section 7) constituted the highest value in non-dutiable imports at 26.5% in 2023, followed by products under Section 8 (22.3%) and Section 5 (17.2%) respectively.

***Table 25: Non-Dutiable Imports CIF Value 2023 and 2022 (NLe)***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  SITC CATEGORY | 2022 | 2023 | VARIANCE | % VAR  |
| SECTION 1B - TOBACCO | 1,946,682 | 61,878 | -1,884,804 | -96.82% |
| SECTION 0 - FOOD AND LIVE ANIMALS | 231,117,854 | 346,577,692 | 115,459,838 | 49.96% |
| SECTION 7 - MACHINERY AND TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT | 2,358,661,595 | 2,094,592,801 | -264,068,794 | -11.20% |
| SECTION 8 - MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES | 486,521,208 | 1,760,376,428 | 1,273,855,220 | 261.83% |
| SECTION 1A - BEVERAGES | 77,703,177 | 17,228,893 | -60,474,284 | -77.83% |
| OTHER ITEMS | 39,411,345 | 31,714,711 | -7,696,634 | -19.53% |
| SECTION 4 - ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE OILS, FATS AND WAXES | 93,167,884 | 177,782,906 | 84,615,022 | 90.82% |
| SECTION 2 - CRUDE MATERIALS, INEDIBLE, EXCEPT FUELS | 53,813,919 | 104,144,732 | 50,330,813 | 93.53% |
| SECTION 6 - MANUFACTURED GOODS CLASSIFIED CHIEFLY BY MATERIAL | 854,289,600 | 1,160,351,258 | 306,061,658 | 35.83% |
| SECTION 5 - CHEMICALS AND RELATED PRODUCTS, N.E.S. | 1,103,210,430 | 1,357,660,094 | 254,449,664 | 23.06% |
| SECTION 3 - MINERAL FUELS, LUBRICANTS AND RELATED MATERIALS | 274,953,760 | 856,529,757 | 581,575,997 | 211.52% |
| TOTAL | **5,574,797,454** | **7,907,021,149** | **2,332,223,695** | **41.84%** |

*Source: ASYCUDA World*

Table 26 provides an overview of the top ten exporting countries to Sierra Leone based on CIF value. Notably, among the top ten exporters to Sierra Leone in 2022, Senegal has been replaced by the Republic of South Africa in 2023. The top ten exporting countries to Sierra Leone in 2022 accounted for 78.1% of Sierra Leones total imports compared to 81.8% in 2023. While Switzerland remains the predominant exporter to Sierra Leone in both 2022 and 2023, its primary export comprises petroleum products, distinguishing it from other exporting countries with a more diversified range of export products constituting a higher percentage of their total exports to Sierra Leone.

***Table 26: Major Imports Origin\* 2023 and 2022 (NLe)***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| NO. | 2022 | 2023 |
|   |  **ORIGIN COUNTRY**  | **CIFVALUE** |  **ORIGIN COUNTRY**  | **CIFVALUE** |
| 1 | SWITZERLAND  | 4,201,570,289 | SWITZERLAND | 7,781,654,841 |
| 2 | CHINA  | 3,426,879,516 | CHINA | 5,380,794,641 |
| 3 | INDIA  | 2,054,416,401 | INDIA | 4,569,618,843 |
| 4 | TURKEY  | 1,940,734,244 | UNITED KINGDOM | 1,783,055,690 |
| 5 | UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  | 1,374,551,700 | FRANCE | 1,771,147,772 |
| 6 | FRANCE  | 1,281,616,995 | UNITED ARAB EMIRATES | 1,731,925,101 |
| 7 | UNITED STATES  | 923,325,567 | UNITED STATES | 1,580,351,787 |
| 8 | BELGIUM  | 921,622,263 | BELGIUM | 1,453,966,182 |
| 9 | UNITED KINGDOM  | 636,142,347 | REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA | 1,416,797,088 |
| 10 | SENEGAL  | 622,826,767 | TURKEY | 1,196,027,856 |

***\*****IM4 (Imports for home consumption), SD4 (Simplified Declaration), PP4 (Percel Post), and PB4 (Passenger Baggage). Source: ASYCUDA World*

## 4.11: CONTAINER INSPECTION/EXAMINATION UNIT

In 2023, the Container Unit processed and cleared a total of 13,979 declarations, marking a notable increase of 31.2% compared to the previous year's figure of 10,653 (Table 27). Notably, in 2023, 96.0% of these declarations underwent processing under the Red Selectivity Lane, a significant rise from 80.8% observed in 2022. In addition, the total number of containers examined and cleared also experienced a surge in 2023, with an increase of 3,134 from 20,866 reported in 2022.

It is worth mentioning that while conducting physical inspections and verification procedures, the Container Unit identified discrepancies leading to the recovery of additional revenues amounting to NLe 1,149 million. This figure represents a decrease of 21.6% compared to the NLe 1,466 million recovered in the previous year.

***Table 27: Containers Examined and Released 2023 and 2022 by the Container Unit***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | 2023 | 2022 | Variance |
| TOTAL SCDs PROCESSED | **13,979** | **10,653** | **3,326** |
| Red Lane | 13,421 | 8,376 | 5,045 |
| Green Lane |  | 254 | -254 |
| Blue Lane |  | 2,023 | -2,023 |
| Yellow Lane | 558 |  | 558 |
| TOTAL CONTAINERS | **24,000** | **20,866** | **3,134** |
| 20’ft  | 12,800 | 12,298 | 502 |
| 40’ft  | 11,200 | 8,568 | 2,632 |
| RECOVERY | **1,148,987.94** | **1,466,383.08** | **-317,395** |

*Source: CSD*

## 4.12: PORT BAGGAGE UNIT

Table 28 presents a summary of the total declarations, containers, and packages processed and released in 2023 compared to 2022 by the Baggage Unit. The total number of declarations processed by the Baggage Unit increased by 611, reaching 6,837 in 2023. In 2023, a total of 4,883 containers underwent examination and clearance by the Unit, with 97.1% of them being 40-foot containers. However, there was a decrease of 618 containers released by the Unit in 2023 compared to 2022, when the figure stood at 5,501. Additionally, the Baggage Unit examined and released a total of 1,849 packages or pallets in 2023, with 75.6% of them being dutiable packages.

During the physical examinations and verification processes conducted by the Baggage Unit, discrepancies were detected, resulting in the recovery of additional revenues totaling NLe 323.663 thousand. This amount represents a decrease from the NLe 982.854 thousand recovered as additional revenue in the previous year.

**Table 28: Number of Containers Examined and Released 2023 and 2022 by the Baggage Unit**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CATEGORY | 2023 | 2022 | VARIANCE |
| Total SCDs Processed | **7,448** | **6,837** | **611** |
| Total Containers | **4,883** | **5,501** | **(618)** |
| 40’ft Conts. | 4,741 | 5,375 | **(634)** |
| 20’ft Conts. | 142 | 126 | **16** |
| Total Packages | **1,849** | **1,312** | **537** |
| Dutiable | 1,397 | 792 | **605** |
| Duty-Free | 452 | 520 | **(68)** |

*Source: CSD*

## 4.13: VEHICLE CLEARANCE UNIT

The Vehicles Valuation Unit is tasked with evaluating the values of imported vehicles, motorcycles, machinery, and boats. During the year under review, the Unit processed a total of 9,522 declarations, slightly lower than the 9,603 declarations processed in 2022. However, it managed to generate a significantly higher revenue of NLe 357,243 million from various vehicle types, compared to the NLe 156,194 million collected in 2022, as indicated in Table 29. Additionally, in 2023, a total of 3,610 declarations were reassessed, resulting in the recovery of NLe 87.451 million in additional revenue.

***Table 29: Number of Declarations and Revenue Collection by the Vehicle Unit in 2023 and 2022 (NLe)***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description | 2023 | 2022 |
| **No. Of Declarations** | **Revenue Collected** | **No. Of Declarations** | **Revenue Collected** |
| Cars | 2,910 | 29,391,242 | 2,839 | 19,904,475 |
| Jeeps | 4,283 | 49,254,500 | 4,036 | 47,061,095 |
| Vans | 1,712 | 18,318,400 | 1,619 | 12,128,442 |
| Buses | 102 | 1,122,347 | 400 | 4389824 |
| Motorcycles | 114 | 112,410,124 | 430 | 61342084 |
| Machines | 248 | 145,242,130 | 276 | 11250016 |
| Boats | 1 | 32,150,.76 | 3 | 118454 |
| Trailer Tails | 42 | 294,230 | - | - |
| Trailers | 110 | 1.210,450.23 | - | - |
| TOTAL | **9,522** | **357,243,425** | **9,603** | **156,194,390** |

*Source: CSD*

## 4.14: SCANNING UNIT

The Scanning Unit examines containers and luggage to identify contained objects by generating images using scanning machine. Subsequently, reports are dispatched to the Physical Inspection Unit for further action. These reports can either be satisfactory, indicating compliance with declared contents, or unsatisfactory, signifying discrepancies requiring detailed inspection by the Physical Inspection Unit.

Table 30 presents a comparison of the total number of containers scanned by the Unit in 2023 and 2022 on a monthly basis. Notably, there was a decline of 5,616 containers scanned in 2023 compared to 2022, with the number of scanned import containers increasing marginally by 71 (0.2%), while the number of scanned export containers decreased by 5,687 (39.0%).

***Table 30: Number of Scanned Containers (Import and Export), 2023 and 2022***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Month | Total Scanned | Total Import | Total Export |
| **2023** | **2022** | **Difference** | **2023** | **2022** | **Difference** | **2023** | **2022** | **Difference** |
| January | 3,269 | 7,180 | -3,911 | 2,623 | 2,593 | 30 | 646 | 4,587 | -3,941 |
| February | 2,944 | 3,461 | -517 | 2,284 | 2,370 | -86 | 660 | 1,091 | -431 |
| March | 3,584 | 3,980 | -396 | 2,721 | 2,626 | 95 | 863 | 1,354 | -491 |
| April | 2,887 | 3,437 | -550 | 2,266 | 2,039 | 227 | 621 | 1,398 | -777 |
| May | 3,783 | 4,051 | -268 | 3,133 | 2,745 | 388 | 650 | 1,306 | -656 |
| June | 3,140 | 3,156 | -16 | 2,535 | 2,489 | 46 | 605 | 667 | -62 |
| July | 3,515 | 3,015 | 500 | 2,744 | 2,407 | 337 | 771 | 608 | 163 |
| August | 3,963 | 3,476 | 487 | 3,042 | 2,746 | 296 | 921 | 730 | 191 |
| September | 3,595 | 3,944 | -349 | 2,803 | 3,276 | -473 | 792 | 668 | 124 |
| October | 3,610 | 3,397 | 213 | 2,817 | 2,690 | 127 | 793 | 707 | 86 |
| November | 3,375 | 4,111 | -736 | 2,547 | 3,275 | -728 | 828 | 836 | -8 |
| December | 3,527 | 3,600 | -73 | 2,769 | 2,957 | -188 | 758 | 643 | 115 |
| Total | **41,192** | **46,808** | **-5,616** | **32,284** | **32,213** | **71** | **8,908** | **14,595** | **-5,687** |

*Source: CSD*

Furthermore, Table 31 delineates the distribution of scanned containers by size in 2023. Of the total scanned containers, 22,595 (54.9%) were 20ft containers, while the remaining 18,597 (45.1%) were 40ft containers. Import containers (both 20ft and 40ft) accounted for 78.8% of the total scanned containers, suggesting a higher import rate than export for Sierra Leone.

***Table 31: Total Number of Containers (Import & Export) in 2023***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MONTH | 20’FTIMPORT | 20’FTEXPORT | 20’FTTOTAL(A) | 40’FTIMPORT | 40’FTEXPORT | 40’FTTOTAL(B) | TOTALSCANNED(A+B) |
| January | 1,132 | 472 | **1,604** | 1,491 | 174 | **1,665** | **3,269** |
| February | 1,087 | 521 | **1,608** | 1,197 | 139 | **1,336** | **2,944** |
| March | 1,363 | 726 | **2,089** | 1,358 | 137 | **1,495** | **3,584** |
| April | 1,216 | 543 | **1,759** | 1,050 | 78 | **1,128** | **2,887** |
| May | 1,621 | 592 | **2,213** | 1,512 | 58 | **1,570** | **3,783** |
| June | 1,276 | 548 | **1,824** | 1,259 | 57 | **1,316** | **3,140** |
| July | 1,483 | 729 | **2,212** | 1,261 | 42 | **1,303** | **3,515** |
| August | 1,424 | 796 | **2,220** | 1,618 | 125 | **1,743** | **3,963** |
| September | 1,296 | 625 | **1,921** | 1,507 | 167 | **1,674** | **3,595** |
| October | 1,292 | 649 | **1,941** | 1,525 | 144 | **1,669** | **3,610** |
| November | 954 | 661 | **1,615** | 1,593 | 167 | **1,760** | **3,375** |
| December | 989 | 600 | **1,589** | 1,780 | 158 | **1,938** | **3,527** |
| Total | **15,133** | **7,462** | **22,595** | **17,151** | **1,446** | **18,597** | **41,192** |

*Source: CSD*

Additionally, Table 32 illustrates the number of unsatisfactory scan reports and the corresponding additional revenue generated per month. In 2023, a total of 384 unsatisfactory scan reports were recorded, resulting in additional revenue amounting to NLe 1.503 million, compared to 84 unsatisfactory reports in the previous year, yielding additional revenue of Nle 189 thousand. Notably, 265 (69.0%) unsatisfactory scans were associated with containers containing personal effects, generating NLe 354 thousand in additional revenue, while 119 (31.0%) were linked to containers containing merchandise goods, yielding NLe 1.149 million in additional revenue.

***Table 32: Monthly Summary of Additional Revenue Generated from Unsatisfactory Scanned Reports, 2023 (NLe)***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | PERSONAL EFFECTS CONTAINERS | MERCHANDISE CONTAINERS |  |
| MONTH | **No. of Unsatisfactory Reports** | **Additional Revenue (A)** | **No. of Unsatisfactory Reports** | **Additional Revenue (B)**  | **Total Additional Revenue****(A+B)** |
| JAN | 7 | 40,454 | 2 | 19,311 | **59,765** |
| FEB | 52 | 59,268 | 3 | 28,966 | **88,234** |
| MAR | 14 | 30,845 | 6 | 57,923 | **88,769** |
| APRIL | 5 | 8,250 | 3 | 28,966 | **37,216** |
| MAY | 40 | - | 40 | 386,214 | **386,214** |
| JUNE | 25 | 55,662 | 15 | 144,830 | **200,492** |
| JULY | 22 | 32,952 | 19 | 183,452 | **216,404** |
| AUG | 17 | 32,952 | 6 | 57,932 | **90,885** |
| SEPT | 11 | 38,677 | 4 | 38,621 | **77,298** |
| OCT | 19 | 55,221 | 5 | 48,277 | **103,498** |
| NOV | 27 | - | 8 | 77,243 | **77,243** |
| DEC | 26 | - | 8 | 77,243 | **77,243** |
| TOTAL | **265** | **354,282** | **119** | **1,148,979** | **1,503,261** |

 *Source: CSD*

## 4.15: CUSTOMS BOARDING UNIT

The Boarding Unit oversees the inspection of all commercial cargo ships within Sierra Leone's territorial waters. Figure 10 illustrates the number of ships that docked in 2022 and 2023. According to the ship rotation data, 399 vessels arrived in 2023 compared to 414 in 2022, indicating a decrease of 15 vessels. However, despite the higher number of arrivals in 2022, the import revenue in 2023 surpassed that of 2022. This increase can be attributed to the higher value of the shipments and the commercial nature of the vessels.

***Figure 10: Monthly Number of Vessels 2023 and 2022***

*Source: CSD*

## 4.16: REVENUE PERFORMANCE OF CUSTOMS OUTSTATIONS / BORDER POSTS

In addition to the main Freetown Customs post, Sierra Leone maintains several strategically positioned outstation posts across the country. Among these, the three largest are located at Lungi Terminal, Gbalamuya (on the Guinea border), and Jendema (on the Liberia border). These outstation posts play a significant role in the overall collection of Customs revenue. Additionally, smaller posts such as Bo/Kenema, Gbagbatok, Kono, Dogolia, Kailahun, Makeni, Susans Bay, and Port Loko are strategically situated to combat smuggling and prevent the illicit importation/exportation of contraband and drugs.

Figure 11 illustrates the annual revenue performance of the three largest Customs posts. A total of NLe 120.516 million was collected from these posts, with the Lungi CSD post contributing over half (52.1%) of the total collection. The Gbalamuya Customs post accounted for 40.9% of the revenue, while Jendema contributed the least (7.0%) to the total collection.

***Figure 11: Collection from Three Key Customs Outstations, 2023***

*Source: CSD*

# CHAPTER FIVE: PROSPECT AND CHALLENGES/RISK GOING FORWARD 2024

**5.0. FY2024 DOMESTIC REVENUE OUTLOOK**

**5.1 FY2024 Domestic Revenue Target**

The domestic Revenue Target for FY2024 is set at NLe14.972 billion, representing 48% increase compared to the actual collection in FY2023 (Table 6). This increase is based on the following assumptions:

* Nominal GDP growth of 28.4%
* Full implementation of Finance Act 2024 and 2023
* Implementation of selected tax administration reforms
* Other revenue mobilisation measures
* Stable global economy leading to increased and steady import volumes.

The FY2024 revenue target also represents 14.8% of GDP being a notable increase of 1.9 percentage points compared to the 12.9% of GDP realised in FY2023.

|  |
| --- |
| Table 33: 2024 Domestic Revenue Target (NLe Thousand) |
|   | **2023 Actual** | **2024 Target** | **Increase** | **% Growth** |
| TOTAL NRA REVENUES | **10,100,463** | **14,972,330** | **4,871,866** | **48%** |
| TOTAL NRA REVENUES (Excluding RUC) | **9,893,794** | **14,842,987** | **4,949,193** | **50%** |
| DOMESTIC TAX DEPARTMENT | **6,087,739** | **8,809,916** | **2,722,176** | **45%** |
| Income Tax  | **3,991,124** | **5,358,885** | **1,367,761** | **34%** |
| CIT | **1,424,693** | **1,985,131** | **560,438** | **39%** |
| PIT | **2,566,431** | **3,344,754** | **778,323** | **30%** |
| Other Taxes | **-** | **29,000** | **29,000** |  |
| Goods and Services Tax (GST) | **2,096,615** | **3,451,030** | **1,354,415** | **65%** |
| Import GST | **1,094,276** | **1,968,781** | **874,505** | **80%** |
| Domestic GST | **1,002,340** | **1,482,249** | **479,909** | **48%** |
| CUSTOMS SERVICE DEPARTMENT (CSD) | **1,763,821** | **3,148,753** | **1,384,932** | **79%** |
|  Import Duties | **1,194,727** | **1,818,781** | **624,054** | **52%** |
| Excise on Petroleum | **466,284** | **1,065,094** | **598,810** | **128%** |
| Other Excise | **102,810** | **264,878** | **162,069** | **158%** |
| NON TAX REVENUE DEPARTMENT (NTR) | **2,042,234** | **2,884,318** | **842,084** | **41%** |
| Mines Revenue | **671,472** | **856,570** | **185,098** | **28%** |
| *Royalty on Rutile* | **30,434** | **15,540** | **(14,894)** | **-49%** |
| *Royalty on Bauxite* | **4,560** | **22,031** | **17,472** | **383%** |
| *Royalties on Diamond and Gold* | **157,500** | **257,204** | **99,704** | **63%** |
| *Royalty on Iron Ore*  | **263,880** | **330,744** | **66,864** | **25%** |
| *Licences* | **215,100** | **231,051** | **15,952** | **7%** |
| Other Departments | **1,370,761** | **2,027,748** | **656,987** | **48%** |
|  *Royalty on Fisheries etc* | **118,151** | **223,559** | **105,408** | **89%** |
| *Parastatals (Cargo Tracking 2023)* | **312,400** | **154,402** | **(157,998)** | **-51%** |
| *Other Revenues* | **940,210** | **1,649,787** | **709,577** | **75%** |
| *o/w TSA (incl Cargo Trking 2024)* | ***827,107*** | ***1,338,309*** | **511,202** | **62%** |
| *o/w Timber* | ***17,858*** | ***-*** | **(17,858)** | **-100%** |
| *o/w Other MDAs* | ***95,245*** | ***311,478*** | **216,234** | **227%** |
| RUC | **206,669** | **129,343** | **(77,326)** | **-37%** |

The Domestic Tax Department (DTD) is targeted to collect NLe8.8 billion (representing 59%), Customs Service Department (CSD) to collect NLe3.1 billion (representing 21%), and NTR to collect NLe2.9 billion (representing 19.1%) of the total 2024 Domestic Revenue Target (Table 33). Collection from Road User Charges (RUC) is estimated at NLe129 million (about 0.9% of total 2024 domestic revenue collection).

**5.2 Revenue Measures for 2024**

* Configure NRA Revenue Systems with the policy provisions of the Finance Act 2024 and go live with implementation.
* Implement a robust tax education programme including on implementation of the FA 2024 to enhance compliance.
* Follow up on identified uncollected revenues in the 2022 Audit Report
* Identify anniversary dates for annual licences due for renewal in Q1 in the telecoms, mining and fisheries sectors and ensure payment.
* Monitor the use of the ECR registers and issuance of receipts to help improve on GST collection. We have profiled the non-compliant businesses based on ECR dashboard and now will send enforcement letters to notify them.
* Reignite effort at integrating ECR devices with accounting systems of taxpayers.
* Audit EDSA’s GST declarations and enforce collection.
* Configure the NTR Mobile App for collection of annual circulation fee.
* Follow up on full implementation of N-soft project to enhance tax revenues from telecoms.
* Fast-track implementation of the Excise Tax Stamps, which will not only help increase Excise Tax collection, but more so on GST collection due to improved availability of reliable data on domestic production and importation of exercisable goods.
* Undertake regional block registration exercise to capture unregistered businesses in the regional cities.
* Fast track the implementation of the safe harbour scheme for more accurate declaration and valuation of minerals.
* Expanding the audit plan to cover a higher proportion of large taxpayers and taxpayers in the extractives industry.
* Setting up and operationalising the Revenue Court to deal with tax defaulters and other revenue offences.
* Extension of NTR Mobile app to collect tax payments from SMEs and Customs Borders.
* Undertale data analytics exercise to expand the tax base, identify risky taxpayers and taxpayer behaviours, and track non-compliance.
* Develop and implement compliance improvement plans for large taxpayers, Extractive and High Net Worth Individuals.
* Implement the World Bank Digitalisation plan for the NRA including the integration of NRA internal Systems for better reconciliation of revenue and taxpayer assessment.
* Initiating reviews and audits of cross-border transactions with a view to identifying and deterring tax evasion through transfer pricing fraud
* Exploring approaches that leverage sources of information about tax obligations of self-employed regulated professionals.
* Extension of NTR Mobile app to collect tax payments from SMEs and Customs Borders,
* Completion of the ECOWAS Regional Transit monitoring project,
* Implementation of the fuel marking scheme
* Strengthening Customs Valuation through acquiring *a Price Reference Database* to support the valuation module and fully operationalise the module in ASYCUDA World and *exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to track and detect issues of technical smuggling.*

# APPENDIX

## ABRIDGED VERSION OF THE 2021-2023 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE NRA

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2023** | **2022** | **2021** |
|  | **Le.'000** | **Le.'000** | **Le.'000** |
| **INCOME** |  |  |  |
| Revenue | 277,360,000 |  191,130,000  | 207,171,235 |
| Other Operating Income | 17,455,869 |  5,394,119  | 7,259,575 |
| **TOTAL INCOME** | **294,815,869** |  **196,524,119**  | **214,430,810** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **EXPENDITURE:** |  |  |  |
| Governance Costs | 10,915,184 |  6,468,860  | 9,262,118 |
| Staff Costs | 167,171,247 |  144,416,424  | 128,554,442 |
| Communication Costs | 6,135,661 |  5,846,930  | 6,841,728 |
| Promotion Costs | 1,062,735 |  2,087,319  | 1,495,949 |
| Establishment Costs | 18,794,838 |  15,169,875  | 17,237,847 |
| ICT Maintenance Costs | 10,776,868 |  7,690,274  | 11,274,060 |
| Repairs & Renewals Cost | 7,611,050 |  10,114,063  | 9,095,986 |
| Legal & Professional Cost | 2,398,841 |  3,536,165  | 2,272,319 |
| Taxpayer Costs | 21,457,948 |  10,018,479  | 16,021,171 |
| Other Costs | 1,849,500 |  3,522,643  | 2,220,749 |
| Finance Cost | 654,853 |  3,486,119  | 3,456,741 |
| Depreciation & Amortisation | 13,074,384 |  5,352,680  | 5,183,571 |
| **Total Expenditure** | **261,903,109** |  **217,709,831**  | **212,916,681** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Result for the Year** | **32,912,760** | **(21,185,712)**  | **1,514,129** |

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assets** | **2023** | **2022** | **2021** |
| **Tangible Non-Current Assets:** |  |  |  |
| Property Plant and Equipment | 110,342,115 | 90,810,073 | 81,765,666 |
| **Intangible Non-Current Assets:** |  |  |  |
| Intangibles Software | 194,146 | 498,313 | 986,474 |
| **Total Non-Current Assets** | **110,536,261** | **91,308,386** | **82,752,140** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Current Assets:** |  |  |  |
| Inventory | 1,250,081 | 2,021,274 | 2,258,585 |
| Receivables & Prepayment | 6,682,640 | 17,960,711 | 17,448,115 |
| Cash and Cash Equivalent | 5,910,260 | (2,634,113) | 16,127,259 |
| **Total Current Assets** | **13,842,981** | **17,347,872** | **35,833,960** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total Assets** | **124,379,242** | **108,656,258** | **118,586,100** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Funding and Liabilities:** |  |  |  |
| Accumulated Fund | **10,327,573** | **(22,152,826)** | **(967,114)** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Non-Current Liabilities:** |  |  |  |
| Capital Fund | 1,212,709 | 1,212,709 | 1,212,709 |
| Provision for terminal Benefit | 60,784,204 | 60,502,561 | 57,082,052 |
| **Total Non-Current Liabilities**  | **61,996,913** | **61,715,270** | **58,294,761** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Current Liabilities:** |  |  |  |
| Income Tax Liabilities | 1,304,637 | 1,304,637 | 1,304,637 |
| Other Payables | 50,750,119 | 67,789,177 | 59,953,816 |
| **Total Current Liabilities:** | **52,054,756** | **69,093,814** | **61,258,453** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total Funding and Liabilities** | **124,379,242** | **108,656,258** | **118,586,100** |