



THE
KING'S
FOUNDATION

RAPID PLANNING TOOLKIT

ABF x RTP Review

November 2025

The King's Foundation provides holistic solutions to challenges facing the world today. We champion a sustainable approach to how we live our lives and build our communities. Our mission is to champion harmony between the built and natural environments, and to improve the health and wellbeing of people and the planet.

The work of The King's Foundation is inspired by His Majesty The King Charles III's philosophy of harmony: that by understanding the balance, the order and the relationships between ourselves and the natural world we can create a more sustainable future.



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APPEALS BUILDING
PUBLIC ENTRANCE
THIS WAY



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Rapid Planning Toolkit (RPT), developed by The King's Foundation, is a practical, step-by-step methodology for helping rapidly growing cities manage land, respond to climate pressures, and guide spatial expansion in a structured and inclusive way. It was created specifically for regional and secondary city administrative environments where rapid growth, unclear land tenure, and weak development control enforcement produce informal and unplanned urban expansion which results in high infrastructure costs, environmental degradation, and inequitable outcomes.

For further information on the Toolkit and guidance on how to use it, please visit: www.rapidplanningtoolkit.org

The Aubrey Barker Fund (ABF) entered into an agreement with The King's Foundation to jointly review and strengthen the Toolkit implementation by integrating surveying and land management expertise more directly into its methodology. While the RPT already incorporates land-related considerations, the ABF partnership provides an opportunity to revisit the Bo pilot case study and deepen collaboration with surveyors and land administrators, whose expertise is essential for securing tenure, verifying boundaries, and ensuring the long-term protection of public land.

1.2 Toolkit Review Project Overview

The ABF-supported Toolkit Review Project follows a structured process designed to strengthen the Rapid Planning Toolkit by integrating surveying and land-management expertise at every stage of its development and application.

Stage 1 – Online Session (Q3 2025)

This phase introduced the RPT to surveyors and land managers through an online session supported by questionnaires and preparatory materials. Participants shared initial insights on land governance, tenure, and boundary issues, which helped shape the agenda and focus of the in-country review.

Stage 2 – In-Country Review (Q4 2025)

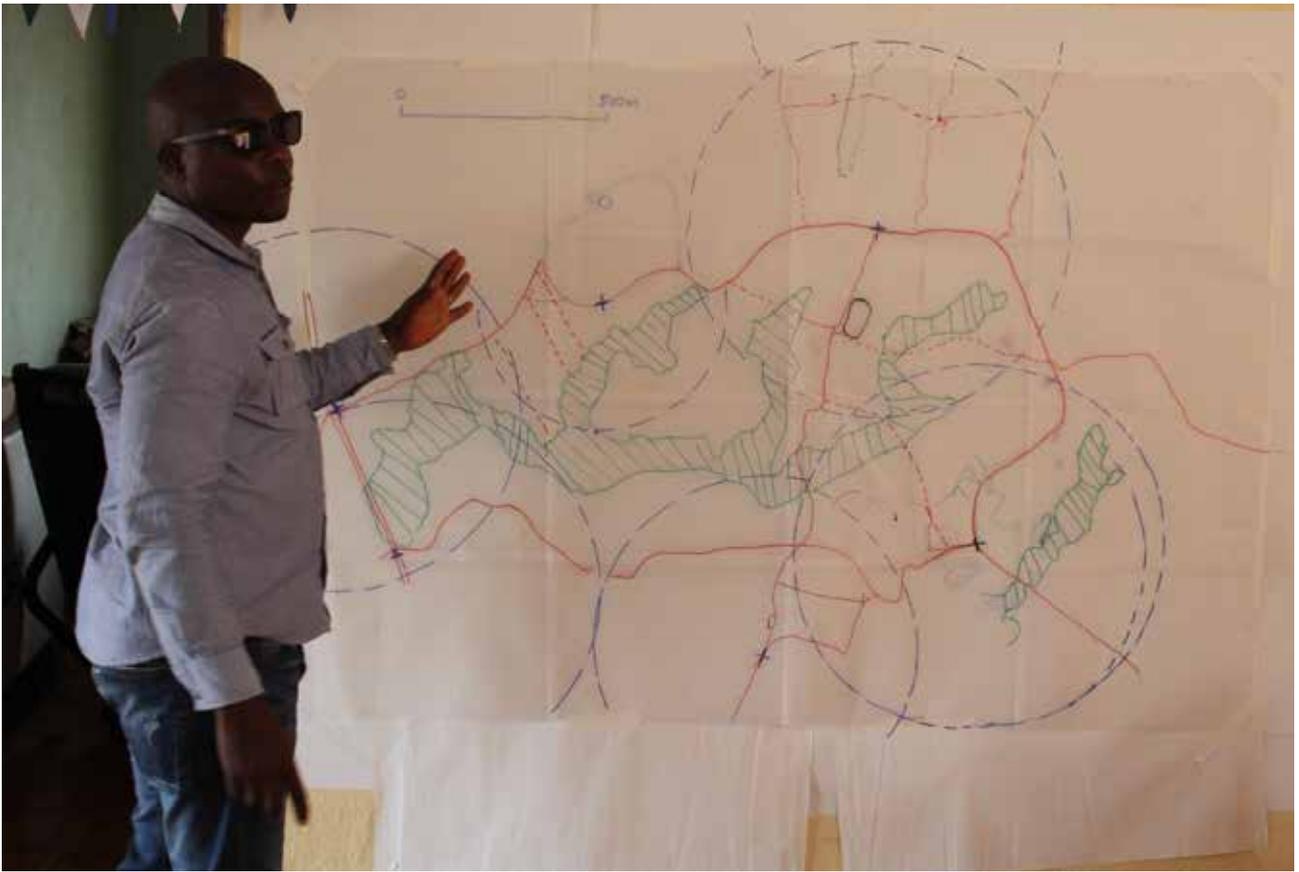
The mission to Sierra Leone (10–13 November 2025) formed the core diagnostic component of the project. It included field observations in Bo, technical meetings with national institutions, and a hands-on workshop bringing together planners, surveyors, land managers, and local and central government representatives to review the RPT in practice and identify opportunities for strengthening its land-related components.

Stage 3 - Post-Review Activities (Q1–Q2 2026)

Following the mission, the findings will be incorporated into a revised Toolkit methodology. Key activities include developing a matrix that demonstrates how surveying inputs enhance each step, updating Toolkit guidance and online resources, preparing communications, and hosting a joint ABF–CASLE online event to present the revised RPT and share outcomes from the multidisciplinary collaboration.

Stage 4 - CHOGM 2026 (Q3–Q4 2026)

The project will culminate in the presentation of the revised methodology and the Sierra Leone experience at the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities side event during CHOGM 2026, highlighting the strengthened role of surveyors and land-governance expertise in sustainable urban development.







2.0 REVIEW BACKGROUND

2.1 RPT in Sierra Leone

The RPT was piloted in Bo City, the secondary capital of Sierra Leone, with Steps 1 to 3 of the methodology being applied between 2020 and 2022, and step 4 currently under consideration to commence imminently.

Sierra Leone faces the same pressures affecting many rapidly growing secondary cities across the Global South: fast urbanization, complex land-tenure systems, limited enforcement capacity, and increasing climate-related risks. These dynamics often result in informal expansion, loss of public land, and high infrastructure and service delivery costs.

Against this backdrop, The King's Foundation introduced the Rapid Planning Toolkit (RPT) as a practical, four-step methodology designed to help cities plan growth quickly, collaboratively, and in a way that aligns land, people, and infrastructure. The Toolkit was piloted in **Bo City, Sierra Leone's secondary capital**, where **Steps 1 to 3** were implemented between 2020 and 2022, with Step 4 (the demonstration phase) under active consideration.

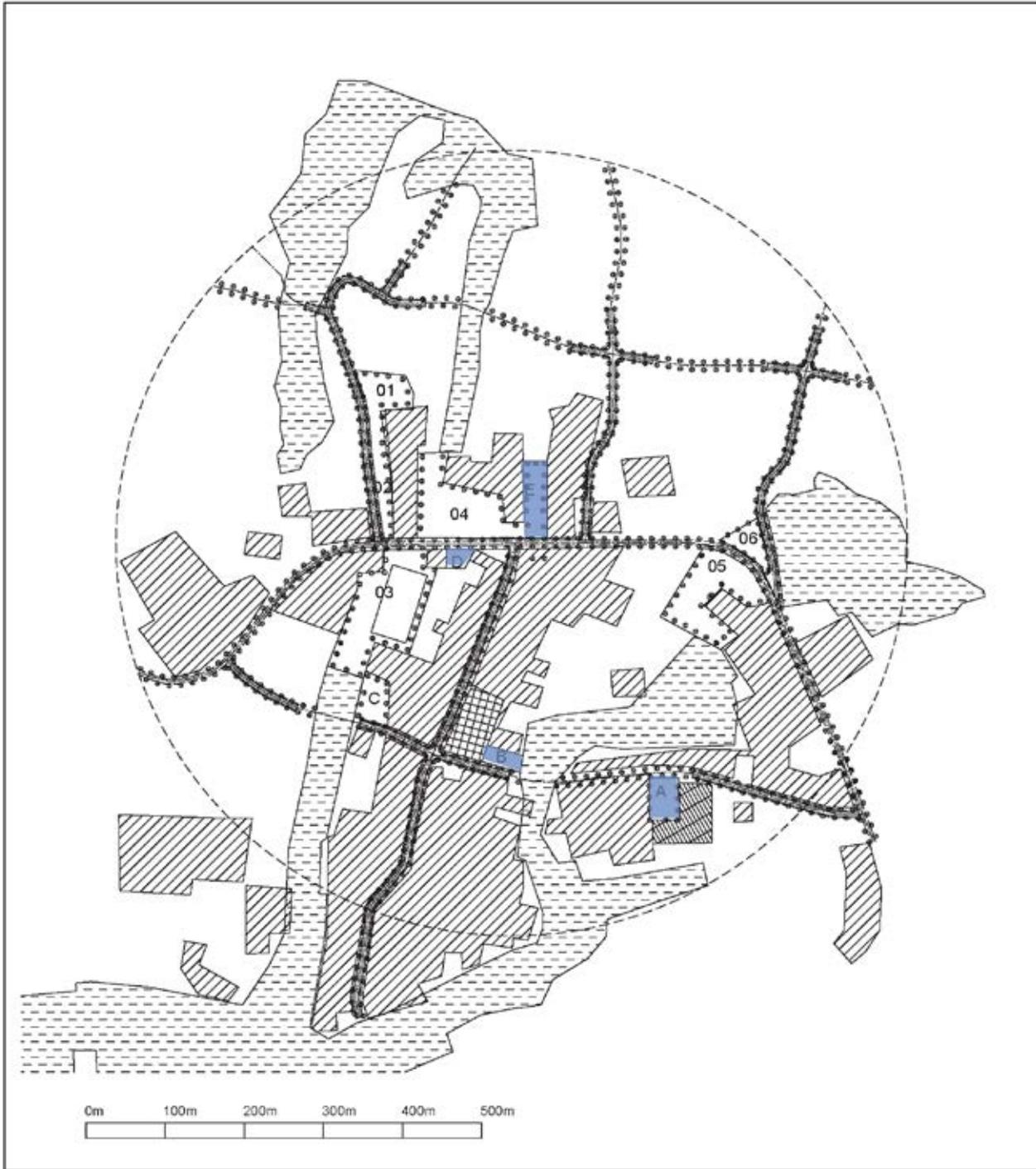
Key Achievements of the Bo Pilot

The pilot applied the RPT's community-led, evidence-based planning process and produced the following:

- A shared city vision developed through multi-stakeholder engagement
- A mapped understanding of physical and environmental constraints, including wetlands, flood-prone areas, and agricultural land
- Identification of Growth Areas suitable for phased city expansion
- A proposed road and access structure to organize future mobility and protect rights-of-way
- A neighborhood-scale demonstration site, selected through negotiation with local communities and land-owning families

The pilot not only produced spatial outputs but also **strengthened local planning capacity**, introduced new techniques for participatory mapping, and increased coordination between the Bo City Council and national line ministries. It demonstrated that secondary cities can rapidly produce credible, community-owned plans when provided with the right tools and facilitation.

However, subsequent changes observed in Bo, such as encroachment into wetlands, blocked access corridors, and the loss of public spaces, **highlighted a key challenge: planning outputs require formal land-management mechanisms to remain enforceable over time**. This insight formed the basis for the present collaboration with the Aubrey Barker Fund.



LEGEND

EXISTING CONDITIONS

-  Existing school
-  Existing Government Technical Institute (Vocational Training Centre)
-  'Occupied' land according to Bo City Council 2020
-  Wetlands / agriculture / natural green

COI

- 01 |
 - 02 |
 - 03 |
 - 04 |
 - 05 |
 - 06 |
- ROADS**
- walkable neighbourhood boundary
 -  Road to be graded 2021
 -  Road to be graded by others
 -  Centre line of proposed road

B L

C C

D M

E M

2.2 ABF Role & Review Objective

The Aubrey Barker Fund (ABF) is a registered charity dedicated to supporting professional education and capacity building in surveying and land management in developing countries. Its mission is closely aligned with the core needs of rapidly urbanising secondary cities, where secure tenure, accurate boundaries, and effective land governance are essential foundations for sustainable planning.

Recognising the importance of these competencies, ABF and The King's Foundation established the RPT Toolkit Review Project, a partnership designed to:

- Strengthen the RPT methodology by integrating surveying and land-management expertise directly into its structure
- Develop new modules, tools, and workflows that clarify the roles of surveyors, planners, land managers, and local authorities in each step of the Toolkit
- Support cross-sector collaboration with institutions such as RICS, CASLE, MLHCP, MLGCA, and local councils
- Promote knowledge-sharing across Sierra Leone and the wider Commonwealth
- Position the strengthened Toolkit as a model for multidisciplinary planning ahead of the 2026 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)

The review in Bo has been made possible with the funding support of the Aubrey Barker Fund (ABF) and is being carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning (MLHCP), the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs (MLGCA), and the leadership and administration of the Bo City Council in Sierra Leone. This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to improving how land is understood, managed, protected, and allocated in rapidly growing cities.

The Toolkit Review Project aims to ensure that land governance, surveying practice, and tenure security are embedded more systematically within the RPT framework. Its objectives are to:

- Strengthen the Toolkit's approach to land management and tenure.
- Engage surveyors, planners, and land managers directly in the review process.
- Promote cross-sector collaboration between technical experts, government, and academia.
- Produce recommendations for policy and legal reform to improve urban growth management.
- Promote knowledge sharing and capacity building through engaging local and/or regional representatives in the process, building and strengthening relationships and a platform for regional/Commonwealth collaboration.
- Showcase the review's findings and recommendations at the 2026 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

These objectives are not only methodological but also institutional—building bridges between professions, clarifying roles, and ensuring that the RPT becomes a tool that supports both **community planning and formal land-administration systems**.







3.0 REVIEW STAGE 1

3.1 Online Session: 2 October 2025

Purpose

The online session introduced the RPT project to stakeholders in Sierra Leone, provided an overview of the methodology, and initiated discussions on how to better integrate land surveying and land management expertise into the Toolkit. Questionnaires and a worksheet were circulated beforehand to help the attendees prepare.

Participation

While strong interest was expressed prior to the meeting - with 22 professionals including the Director of Surveys & Lands as well as the regional directors from the Ministry and their teams confirming their interest - only a few participants were able to join.

- The KF hosted the session, and ABF representatives were in attendance
- Dr. Charles Turay, NELGA Focal Point at the University of Makeni, participated in the session
- Haja Halimah Lukay, Development Planning Officer represented Bo City Council

Despite the modest turnout, the discussion and submitted questionnaires yielded valuable insights for the project's next phase.

Summary of Session Takeaways

- Six participants completed the pre-session questionnaire, providing valuable feedback for inclusion in future project reporting.
- The RPT's purpose - to deliver credible, participatory city plans within nine months - was reaffirmed.
- The Bo City Council case study demonstrated how the RPT supported the creation of a shared city vision and neighbourhood plans despite limited local capacity.
- Surveyors' roles were identified as essential to prevent encroachment, manage tenure, and strengthen governance.
- Participants agreed that legal and regulatory frameworks for land management in Sierra Leone remain outdated and need significant reform.
- The session underlined the importance of community engagement and the need to strengthen local institutions and technical education.

A video recording of the session is available upon request.

3.2 Questionnaire Insight

Ahead of the online introductory session, a structured questionnaire was circulated to surveyors, planners, land managers, and local government representatives to capture early reflections on land governance challenges and their experience with planning processes in Sierra Leone. Six completed responses were received, providing valuable preliminary insights to guide the in-country review. The questionnaire explored themes such as tenure clarity, boundary disputes, land allocation practices, enforcement capacity, data availability, and the relationship between planning decisions and land administration systems.

Key Findings from the Questionnaire

- Tenure ambiguity and unclear parcel boundaries were consistently identified as major constraints to effective planning and development control.
- Respondents highlighted the frequent overlap of customary and statutory land rights, creating uncertainty for both communities and government officers.
- Several participants noted that planning outputs are difficult to enforce when land information is incomplete or not formally recorded.
- Many respondents called for closer collaboration between planners and surveyors to improve the accuracy and reliability of spatial data used in decision-making.
- Participants emphasised the need for standardised tools and definitions, particularly for identifying wetlands, buffers, road reservations, and public land.
- There was strong support for aligning planning processes with the ongoing systematic land registration programme (SLLAP) to improve long-term security and reduce encroachment.

Role of the Questionnaire in the Review Process

The questionnaire served as a diagnostic tool, helping to identify priority issues before the in-country mission. The themes raised particularly around tenure, boundary verification, rights-of-way, and enforcement, were incorporated into the agenda for the Bo workshop and informed the structure of subsequent discussions with MLHCP, MLGCA, the National Land Commission, and SLLAP.

These early insights helped ensure that the in-country review was grounded in the lived realities of land practitioners across Sierra Leone and allowed the ABF review to focus on the areas of greatest need within the RPT methodology.





4.0 REVIEW STAGE 2

4.1 Trip Itinerary

Monday 10th November

MLGCA Conference Room, Freetown

1100 High Level Stakeholder Coordination & Round Table Meeting

1330 Meeting with Dr Cham, Director of Planning Ministry of Lands, SLLAP Coordinator

Tuesday 11th November

Bo City Council Hall, Bo

0530 Travel from Freetown to Bo

1100 Site Walk in Reservation, Bo

1300 Toolkit Review Workshop

1700 Depart Bo for Freetown

Thursday 13th November

Radisson Blu, Freetown

1100 Meeting with Martha Gbom-Alieu, Project Manager Ministry of Local Government & Community Affairs

4.2 Day 1: Stakeholder Meetings

4.2.1 High Level Stakeholder Coordination Meeting

Date: Monday, 10 November 2025

Time: 11:00–13:30

Location: Ministry of Local Government & Community Affairs (MLGCA), Conference Room, Freetown

Chair: Hon. Tamba John Lamina (Minister, MLGCA)

A high-level coordination meeting was held at the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs (MLGCA) to clarify the scope, governance and next steps of the Rapid Planning Toolkit (RPT) work in Sierra Leone. The session brought together senior representatives from the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning (MLHCP), the Sierra Leone Land Administration Project (SLAP), the World Bank, Bo City Council, and The King's Foundation.

Their insights were essential to situating the ABF work within Sierra Leone's current governance landscape.

Across these meetings, a clear message emerged: **land administration and planning cannot function in isolation.** Officials described challenges such as:

- fragmented responsibility between ministries
- weak enforcement capacity
- difficulty protecting public land
- rapid growth occurring outside formal planning systems

These discussions confirmed the relevance and urgency of the ABF project. The Toolkit, in its current form, is valued as a participatory mechanism, but the lack of formalised land information, boundary verification, and tenure clarity has limited the long-term effectiveness of its outputs.

This meeting created strong ministerial support for the ABF-funded refinement of the RPT, especially for the development of new land-focused tools, definitions, and workflows. This includes exploring synergies with the social tenure domain model and other tools being developed under the Sierra Leone Land Administration Project (SLLAP), so that data collection for the Toolkit can directly support, and be supported by, national land administration efforts.

The current mission to Sierra Leone is primarily funded under this project and aims to use Bo as a “living laboratory” to review lessons learned, identify gaps, and co-design new Toolkit modules on surveying and land data.



Land Administration and Planning Reforms: Alignment Opportunities

Representatives from MLHCP, SLLAP project provided an update on ongoing reforms and planning work, highlighting significant opportunities for alignment with the RPT.

Structure Plans

Structure plans have been prepared for the Western Area (including the proposed future Lungi city) and for several secondary cities, with stakeholder engagement already completed and no objections issued by the World Bank. These plans will sit under a new Town and Country Planning Act and associated regulations currently being finalised. The RPT is viewed as a practical, community-facing vehicle to support implementation of these plans by guiding land use decisions, growth area identification, and infrastructure layout at a local level.

Transition from deeds to title and digital land information systems

- SLLAP is overseeing a major transition from deed-based land documentation to a title-based system, underpinned by new legislation and the establishment of the National Lands Commission.
- Work is underway to digitise land records and create a national Land Information System, enabling online transactions and a one-stop-shop approach to land administration.
- A national geodetic network has been established to improve surveying accuracy across the country, with provisions to train para-surveyors who can collect certain categories of spatial data to defined accuracy standards.

These reforms are expected to significantly reduce land disputes, improve tenure security and provide a robust spatial framework for urban planning.

The King's Foundation noted that these initiatives are highly complementary to the RPT, which relies on locally collected planning and land-use data, participatory mapping of growth areas, and clear definitions of environmentally sensitive land, farmland and developable land. The Toolkit could provide a structured methodology for community-level data collection and spatial planning that feeds directly into national land systems and structure plans.

Testimony from Bo City Council – Value of the Toolkit

Haja Halima Lukay, the Bo City Council Development and Planning Officer shared a powerful testimony of how the RPT had transformed the council's approach to planning and stakeholder engagement:

Prior to the Toolkit, Bo City Council had limited planning capacity and limited experience convening cross-sectoral stakeholders. The RPT introduced a step-by-step, multi-sectoral planning process, bringing together land-owning families, ministries, councillors, communities and other sectoral actors (e.g health and education). The process helped identify a government reservation site for a pilot project, improve coordination between the Council and the Ministry of Lands, and promote more rational, connected road layouts and service locations. The capacity building provided by The King's Foundation helped Bo City



Council to be recognised by the Commonwealth Association of Planners for outstanding performance in planning in West Africa.

Haja stressed that the Toolkit is not only about land allocation but about locating services and infrastructure so that neighbourhoods are safe, walkable and inclusive, particularly for women and vulnerable groups. She argued that, with the new planning laws in place, municipal councils across Sierra Leone now “need the Toolkit as a nation” to operationalise these laws. She also underlined the need to scale up planning capacity (“more Hajas in the room”) among planners and surveyors across the country and encouraged The King’s Foundation and partners to continue seeking funds for training and capacity building.

4.2.2 Sierra Leone Land Administration Project (SLLAP) Meeting

Date: Monday, 10 November 2025

Time: 13:30–15:00

Location: Ministry of Local Government & Community Affairs (MLGCA), Conference Room, Freetown

Dr. Alphajoh Cham, Director of Planning & Project Coordinator (SLLAP)

Leslie Ohomele, The King’s Foundation

Lea Haddad, The King’s Foundation

The meeting with Dr. Cham, provided a comprehensive overview of Sierra Leone’s ongoing land registration reforms and explored strategic opportunities for aligning these efforts with the King’s Foundation’s Rapid Planning Toolkit (RPT). The discussion centred on the challenges of land transfer and informal development in the country, the national transition toward systematic land registration, and the potential for integrating cadastral data with community-led planning processes. The meeting also discussed the need for enforcements of land use regulations and the importance of community awareness and participation in land management.

Context and Rationale

The King’s Foundation outlined lessons learned from the Toolkit’s implementation in Bo, where rapid informal land occupation often undermined agreed community plans. Land identified for public use or development corridors was quickly fenced or occupied, making enforcement difficult. This highlighted the need for a legally recognised, secure method of demarcating and managing land, built on accurate data and community ownership of the process.

To address these challenges, the RPT team has begun exploring ways to strengthen the link between participatory planning and the formal land administration system: particularly through collaboration with the Ministry of Lands and the surveying profession.

National Land Registration Reform

Dr. Cham described the Government’s shift from informal, oral-based systems of land ownership to a formalised, legally mandated land registration framework, the first such requirement in the provinces. Key elements include:

- Systematic registration of all legitimate land rights, covering both individual and community holdings.
- Establishment of a national geodetic network, resolving historic inaccuracies in surveying and creating a reliable reference system for parcel boundaries.
- A fit-for-purpose methodology, allowing large rural parcels (acres) to be mapped with general

boundaries, while urban areas adopt more precise surveying standards.

- Community-level boundary negotiation, facilitated with Paramount Chiefs and landholding families to resolve overlaps before registration.
- Development of a draft operational manual, supported by pilots in Bombali and Port Loko, with Bo and Kenema scheduled next.

This process is expected to create a secure, nationally recognised cadastre that strengthens tenure security and underpins future planning and development control.

Mapping, Data Collection, and the Toolkit Process

The KF team presented the Toolkit methodology, which begins with a Community Charter and a participatory mapping exercise to create a growth plan, where the community identify and map constraints and potential growth areas.

Both sides recognised the significant potential to overlay ownership data and cadastral boundaries onto this process in the future. As systematic registration advances, the Toolkit's maps could reflect verified parcels and ensure that growth area plans are aligned with formal tenure systems. This combined approach would:

- Improve community confidence in the plan
- Support better development control
- Reduce future encroachment
- Create legally defensible land use frameworks

Community Participation and Governance

A central theme of the discussion was the importance of community-led decision-making. Both the Toolkit and the land registration programme rely on:

- Consensus-building among landowners
- Transparent documentation of claims and rights
- Participatory mapping
- Boundary negotiation

Dr. Cham emphasised that communities increasingly understand the value of secure tenure. Free registration during pilots provides a strong incentive for resolving disputes early, as future private registration will be costly.

Enforcement and Development Control

The meeting highlighted ongoing challenges in enforcement, especially in rapidly expanding urban environments. Key issues included:

- Construction on land unsuitable for development (e.g., swamps)
- Pressure on landowners to sell for short-term gain
- Historic lack of enforcement capacity at the council level
- Buildings completed without permits

Under the new land registration and planning laws, councils now have devolved enforcement powers. Survey plans must be checked against environmental restrictions, protected forests, swamps, and other classified areas before approval. Both parties agreed that:

- Surveyors may need professional practice standards requiring them to verify land use restrictions before preparing plans.
- Development control officers need clear reference materials linking registered parcels to land use designations.
- The Toolkit could facilitate this through its Growth Area Plan, which functions as an early, community-led land use plan.



4.3 Day 2: Site Walk & Workshop

4.3.1 Introduction

The workshop at the Bo City Council Hall was the primary ABF deliverable for this mission. The agenda for the day was to commence with a site walk in the Reservation Toolkit pilot implementation area led by the Bo City Council DPO, followed by a workshop session to review and assess the Toolkit implementation, share the challenges faced during and after the implementation, and to consider the potential areas for improvement. The workshop session focused on three ABF review questions:

1. Where does the current RPT methodology fail to adequately address land, tenure, or boundary issues?
2. What surveying principles and land-governance steps must be woven into the Toolkit?
3. How can the Toolkit produce spatial outputs that are both community-owned and legally defensible?

4.3.2 Site Walk: Reservation Area Community Project, Bo

Road Grading

During the site visit, it became clear that the evolution of the road network within the pilot area has been mixed, with both losses and improvements since the original RPT plans were produced: Several planned corridors have been blocked, including the road leading to the bridge connecting two communities, which is now obstructed by new private construction. Some pedestrian pathways identified during the pilot have disappeared entirely, including the original RPT pathway that has been destroyed and rendered unusable.

At the same time, other roads that were previously narrow community tracks have been significantly widened or upgraded, reflecting local demand for improved access. Additionally, a new graded road has been constructed, altering the original movement pattern and introducing new pressures on land that was previously protected or designated as non-development.

These changes, both positive and negative, demonstrate the dynamic nature of growth in the area and highlight the need for RPT outputs to be formally adopted, protected, and integrated into municipal enforcement mechanisms to preserve intended corridors.





Bridge

A major concern observed on site was the complete destruction and disappearance of the **pathway** created during the original RPT work. The path had previously linked neighborhoods and provided safe circulation within the Growth Area.

Additionally, the **bridge linking two communities**, which had been part of the original access system and was built to provide a crossing during the rainy season and the flooding of the wetlands, is now effectively unusable:

- The road leading to the other side has been entirely **blocked by new private construction**
- The corridor that was originally protected through community agreements has been removed or built over;

This severance has eliminated access between the two communities and undermined the connectivity gains achieved through the RPT. This illustrates a broader pattern: **without formal protection or consistent enforcement, the planned spatial structure has been overridden by piecemeal development.**

Trees & Demarcations

During the site walk, the team observed that the **tree-planting and boundary demarcation exercises** previously carried out by The King's Foundation as part of the RPT pilot have not been maintained. These measures that were intended to secure future road corridors, protect public spaces, and signal areas reserved for community infrastructure, were implemented with the community's agreement and involvement, and funded directly by KF to provide a low-cost, locally understood method of marking the Growth Area structure. However, the site walk revealed that:

- Many of the planted trees have been cut down or removed, often replaced by new private fencing or informal structures.
- Boundary markers and beacons originally installed to indicate road alignments and non-development zones were missing, displaced, or rendered ineffective by subsequent construction.
- In several cases, new buildings or plot extensions had encroached precisely where tree lines had once defined future access routes or public land.

These observations underscore a critical lesson for the RPT Review: **informal or symbolic demarcation techniques, such as tree planting alone are insufficient to secure land in fast-changing urban environments without formal recognition and enforcement mechanisms.** The removal of trees and markers reflects broader systemic issues including rapid land pressure and competing claims, lack of statutory designation of RPT outputs, absence of a unified enforcement framework and limited integration with land administration and cadastral processes.

This reinforces the need for the Toolkit to incorporate **more reliable and legally supported methods of protecting Growth Areas**, including surveyed boundaries, registered corridors, and formally adopted land-use designations. As land values rise and informal development accelerate, these formal mechanisms become essential to safeguard the community infrastructure foreseen in the RPT, such as roads, health facilities, schools, drainage corridors, and public open space.

The loss of planted trees and physical markers in Bo therefore provides strong real-world evidence for the ABF-funded review: **future iterations of the Toolkit must embed clearer, enforceable land-protection measures that go beyond community agreements and temporary demarcation techniques.**

Encroachment & Diversions

The team observed multiple **new constructions within designated non-development zones**, particularly on wetland areas that had been mapped and protected during the pilot. These include:

- Recently built private houses encroaching into wet, environmentally sensitive land;
- Boundary walls redefining private plots in areas explicitly reserved as green or flood-mitigation zones
- Progressive infilling and draining of wetland areas despite the RPT's environmental guidance.
- removal of trees and beacons (signposts)

These developments indicate that Toolkit's **spatial plan has partially lost its authority**, as the absence of formalised protection (e.g., title registration, gazettelement, enforcement) has left these public and environmental reserves vulnerable to informal occupation.



Implication for the ABF Review

These conditions validate the central purpose of the ABF partnership: the Toolkit must incorporate clearer surveying standards, stronger land-management tools, and formal verification steps to prevent erosion of its spatial logic. Bo provided a lived example of why this refinement is essential.

4.3.3 Workshop

Following the site visit, participants gathered in the Bo City Council Hall for the workshop. The session opened with remarks from the Mayor of Bo and the Minister of Local Government, who thanked attendees for travelling and reaffirmed the strong commitment to strengthening planning and urban governance. They emphasized that the presence of councils, technical officers, and national partners reflected a shared dedication to improving how cities plan and manage growth.

The King's Foundation introduced the RPT as a four-step, context-sensitive planning methodology designed for rapidly urbanising, low-capacity environments. The presentation outlined global challenges associated with unplanned growth—rising infrastructure costs, environmental degradation, and inequality—and demonstrated how the Toolkit supports cities to structure growth, map constraints, identify serviced land, and translate planning into early implementation.



Bo City Council shared its experience as the original RPT pilot city, describing how the process united stakeholders to identify wetlands, flood-prone areas, and suitable growth zones, and how simple interventions such as road grading and tree planting helped initiate orderly development. The Council also highlighted persistent challenges, including encroachment, blocked corridors, and the loss of public spaces, which underscored the need for formal adoption of plans, statutory backing, and stronger enforcement mechanisms as the Toolkit evolves.



Discussions and Q&A

The Q&A session focused on the practical challenges of land governance, enforcement, and institutional coordination. Participants shared concerns about unauthorized construction, even in wetlands or government reservations, and described situations where private actors continued building despite lacking legal documents, with courts sometimes reluctant to intervene. This highlighted systemic issues: enforcement teams face resistance, land ownership is often unclear, and councils lack the statutory authority or resources to stop illegal development. Speakers stressed that establishing **reliable land registries, clear ownership records, and statutory provisions** is essential for councils to act decisively and defend public land.

The need for robust legal frameworks and a coordinated registry system was emphasized to ensure planning decisions can be enforced. Inspectors must be empowered to prevent development in restricted areas, protect natural ecosystems, and uphold development controls. Community engagement was also identified as crucial, as communities who participate in the planning process are more likely to help monitor and protect public land. Reliable databases, updated regularly and coordinated across agencies, were described as foundational to better urban planning.

Challenges in land acquisition were also discussed outlining the difficulty government faces in securing land for infrastructure and public facilities, stressing the importance of long-term national planning and timely land identification. Regional surveyors are working to map government-owned land, but councils require financial support to acquire and protect strategic sites. Participants noted that without a national framework guiding local development, cities risk losing critical land to uncontrolled construction.

Across interventions, speakers repeatedly identified coordination and communication as the greatest systemic gaps. Multiple agencies carry pieces of the planning mandate yet often work in isolation. It was noted that many practitioners are not fully aware of their powers, limitations, or dependencies, leading to fragmented and sometimes contradictory actions. The RPT was recognized as a tool that can help align stakeholders around shared priorities such as access roads, drainage corridors, green networks, and community facilities. The session concluded with agreement that strengthening the legal and policy framework, combined with improved coordination, stronger enforcement, clearer land-registration systems and shared learning through the Toolkit, will be essential to achieving long-term, sustainable urban development.

Key Outcomes:

- Surveyors recommended developing standardised parcel typologies, measurement conventions, and environmental buffer definitions within the Toolkit.
- Participants stressed the need for a clear workflow that links community agreements to formal boundary verification processes.
- Councils emphasised the need for maps that align with official cadastral layers.
- Multiple cities requested early inclusion of training on surveying basics for local technical staff.
- There was strong consensus that the RPT's Growth Area Plans should be designed in formats that can be adopted by councils and integrated into the forthcoming national registration system.

Significance for ABF Deliverables

The workshop produced technical insights, stakeholder perspectives, and consensus necessary to guide the Toolkit revision stage. It represents the **practical, multidisciplinary review** that the ABF project set out to achieve









AGENDA

- Welcome, Session Outline & Objectives
- NPT Overview: Steps 1-4
- Why Land Professionals Matter
- Q&A and Next Steps

5.0 OBSERVATIONS

BCC/OSR/F/019
19

5.1 Rapid Planning Toolkit Review

Reviewing the RPT alongside surveyors, land managers and technical experts produced some of the most important insights of the mission. There was a genuine honesty in the discussions, a shared acknowledgement that despite the goodwill and enthusiasm seen during the Bo pilot, **community agreements and tree planting alone cannot protect land**. The encroachment observed in Bo: blocked corridors, loss of public space, and occupation of wetlands, offered a clear and painful reminder that spatial plans remain vulnerable unless anchored in **formal land systems**, including registered parcels, verified boundaries, and enforceable land-use designations.

The ABF-funded RPT review revealed significant opportunities to strengthen the Toolkit by integrating **surveying standards, tenure principles, and land governance processes**. Engagements with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning, the National Land Commission, and the World Bank-funded Sierra Leone Land Administration Project (SLLAP) confirmed that the lack of formal land documentation and inconsistent boundary recognition remain major drivers of encroachment and unplanned development, alongside uncoordinated strategic planning and poor development control procedures and enforcement.

The workshop highlighted that formalising land, through systematic registration, verified parcel boundaries, and statutory recognition of spatial plans, is essential for the Toolkit's long-term effectiveness. Lessons from Bo demonstrated that even strong community engagement and collective agreements cannot protect corridors, wetlands or public spaces without legal backing and consistent enforcement.

Stakeholders observed that aligning the RPT implementation with, for example, SLLAP's systematic **registration schedule would produce mutually reinforcing benefits**:

- Community-led spatial planning would guide registration.
- Formal registration would legally secure the spatial logic of the Growth Area Plans.

The evolving national land-administration reforms offer a unique opportunity. The transition from deeds to title registration, the establishment of a national geodetic network, and the digitization of land records provide a foundation for embedding RPT outputs within a legally recognized framework. Because both SLLAP and the Toolkit rely on community mapping, negotiated boundaries, and transparent documentation, integration is not only feasible, it is **necessary for sustained impact**.

5.2 RPT Recommendations

The workshop clearly identified that the RPT needed to evolve from a primarily community-driven planning methodology into a hybrid planning–land administration model. This includes reviews and revisions in several areas:

1. Strengthen Step 1 (Vision & Constraints):
 - Incorporate preliminary tenure mapping and boundary identification.
 - Engage surveyors early in community mapping sessions.

2. Reframe Step 2 (Growth Area Identification):
 - Use cadastral and geodetic data to validate proposed growth areas.
 - Standardise definitions of environmental buffers and protected zones.
 - Require verification of road and corridor alignments.
3. Rework Step 3 (Land Allocation & Implementation):
 - Introduce workflows that prepare RPT outputs for registration.
 - Include templates for council adoption, gazettelement, and enforcement.
 - Add procedures for documenting negotiated boundaries.
4. Introduce New Cross-Cutting Tools:
 - Parcel classification guidance
 - Wetland and buffer verification checklists
 - Boundary negotiation protocols
 - A registration-ready mapping format
5. Align Implementation with National Systems:
 - Pair Toolkit rollout with SLLAP's systematic registration timeline.
 - Ensure that Growth Area Plans can be directly imported into national land information systems.

Together, these recommendations have the potential to transform the RPT into a methodology that not only creates a plan for growth and land use, but that also secures it. ensuring that the spatial structure agreed by communities and councils is durable and achievable, enforceable, and legally recognized.



5.3 Conclusion

The ABF-supported review has demonstrated, unequivocally, that the Rapid Planning Toolkit sits at a pivotal intersection between community planning and formal land administration in Sierra Leone. Across meetings, fieldwork, and the Bo workshop, a unified message emerged: **plans alone cannot secure land: only the combination of community ownership, verified boundaries, and statutory backing can protect the spatial structure required for orderly, resilient, and inclusive urban development.**

The mission validated the core hypothesis underpinning the ABF partnership: **the long -term success of the RPT depends on embedding surveying standards, tenure principles, and land-governance processes directly into its methodology.** Experiences from Bo, (where community-endorsed roads, pathways, and protected areas were later lost to unregulated development) provided powerful evidence of why this integration is both urgent and essential. The observations made on site highlighted systemic pressures that overwhelm informal agreements, and demonstrated that without legal protection, registered parcels, and consistent enforcement, even the most collaborative planning processes remain vulnerable.



The review also reinforced the value of the RPT as a unifying platform. It brings together surveyors, planners, land managers, and communities around a shared process and a shared future vision. The workshop in Bo demonstrated that practitioners across Sierra Leone's secondary cities recognize the need for clearer standards, more reliable data, and integrated workflows that link planning outputs to legally recognized processes. This multidisciplinary collaboration is precisely what the ABF project set out to achieve.

Looking ahead, the next phase of work represents a decisive moment. The insights gathered during this mission will now be translated into concrete methodological updates, strengthening each step of the Toolkit, introducing new land-admin tools, and creating registration-ready formats that can be used by councils and national agencies. The revised Toolkit, to be presented at CHOGM 2026, will reflect not only technical refinements but also a broader institutional transformation: a shared commitment to sustainable, well-governed urban development across Sierra Leone and the wider Commonwealth.

In this sense, the mission has achieved more than a review. It has laid the foundation for a next-generation Toolkit: **planning instrument that is practical, collaborative, and legally robust, capable of helping secondary cities manage growth** today while safeguarding the spatial, environmental, and public assets that will define their future.

5.4 Next Steps

According to the ABF Project Plan, and following the publication of this Report, the next steps for the RPT Review are:

Q1 2026

- Review the recommendations and submit Report and briefing to the ABF Board of Trustees.
- Develop integration matrix identifying surveying inputs to the RPT methodology
- Prepare media release and joint communications strategy
- Share & publish workshop outputs and Report excerpts online and on social media

Q2 2026

- Finalise joint paper for presentation at suitable opportunities (World Bank Land Conference, UN-Habitat World Urban Forum 13, Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting 2026 etc)

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Stage 1 Questionnaire

This worksheet/questionnaire supports the Rapid Planning Toolkit Surveying Review being carried out by The King's Foundation and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning and sponsored by the Aubrey Barker Fund. It is intended to prompt feedback on the RPT implementation in Bo City, as well as organize views on surveying practice and licensing, land management, data collection and registry/cadaster, legal issues and workflow so that the online introductory session is practical and informative.

The context of the RPT Surveying Review is to:

- assess the legacy/impact of the Rapid Planning Toolkit ("RPT") [1] deployment in Bo City, Sierra Leone [2]
- open the floor for lessons learnt from the RPT as it then was
- take soundings on the development potential for the RPT
- set realistic goals for the further impact and resource availability emanating from a widening of the scope of the RPT

Estimated completion time: 8–12 minutes. Responses will be treated as confidential and used solely for this review.

1. www.Rapidplanningtoolkit.org
2. WeTransfer link to download the evaluation report: <https://we.tl/t-HbgxB1Rks6>

* Required

Section A - About you

1. Full Name *

2. Role/ Title *

3. Organization: *

4. Region/ District *

5. Email and Phone number *

6. Years of professional practice *

- 0-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10+

7. Licensed surveyor? *

- Yes
- No

8. Professional affiliation: **RICS** / **CASLE** / Other (specify) / None. (If RICS please provide member #.) *

Section B: Current Workflow

9. At what stage are surveyors typically engaged in public projects? (tick all)

*

- Scoping
- Base-mapping
- Parcel/ROW definition
- Field verification
- QC/validation
- Final sign-off
- Registry handover

10. Who signs off parcel/ROW plans today? *

11. Top 3 bottlenecks to timely, accurate surveys (ranked list). *

12. Quality control currently used: (tick all) *

- checklists
- peer review
- random checks
- none
- Other

13. Is the current path to becoming licensed clear, timely and fair? Yes/No — what's missing or should change? *

Section C: Data & Cadaster practice

14. Core datasets you use/maintain. (tick all) *

- legacy cadastral plans
- GNSS control
- orthophotos
- satellite
- parcel index maps
- ROW inventory
- registry extracts
- customary tenure maps
- SL-LAP datasets
- Other

15. % of your workflow digitized: *

- 0-25
- 26-50
- 51-75
- 76-100

16. Coordinate reference system(s) most used: *

Section D: Legal & institutional touchpoints

17. To what extent do **CLRA 2022** provisions align with your daily surveying work? *

www.sierrali.gov.sl/akn/sl/act/2022/20/eng%402022-09-23?

- 1 – Very low alignment
- 2 – Low alignment
- 3 – Moderate alignment
- 4 – High alignment
- 5 – Very high alignment

18. To what extent do **NLC Act 2022** provisions (e.g., National Land Registry) align with your workflow? *

<https://www.parliament.gov.sl/uploads/acts/THE%20NATIONAL%20LAND%20COMMISSION%20ACT%2C%202022.pdf?>

- 1 – Very low alignment
- 2 – Low alignment
- 3 – Moderate alignment
- 4 – High alignment
- 5 – Very high alignment

19. Which regulations (survey standards, plan approval, registration rules) most need updating to support rapid, fair implementation? *

Section E — RPT and Bo legacy

20. Have you heard about the Rapid planning toolkit, if yes explain: *

21. What worked well/poorly in prior Bo exercises (methods, timing, etc)? *

22. Describe the impact of the RPT deployment in Bo City in 2020 *

23. What more can be done/could be done to secure the legacy and empower participants further? *

24. What do you see as Legal and Regulatory Enablers to an Inclusive Planning Process? *

25. What do you see as Legal and Regulatory Barriers to an Inclusive Planning Process? *

26. Have any of the following had an impact on creating a better environment in which an inclusive planning process can exist/operate?

- a. Customary Land Act 2022
- b. Land Commission Act 2022
- c. SOLA – Solutions for Open Land Administration
- d. World Bank initiatives
- e. UN Initiatives *

27. How do you foresee the recent World Bank Sierra Leone Land Administration Project (SLLAP) initiative helping? *

28. The Proposal is to add a Land Surveying Element to the Toolkit. Which of these statements do you agree with? Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree *

	1	2	3	4	5
Surveying is essential to the proper working of the toolkit	<input type="radio"/>				
The RPT is enough to get going -the enforcement is always likely to require further thought	<input type="radio"/>				
Restricting RPT to situations where surveyors are involved will restrict its application further due to their scarcity	<input type="radio"/>				
Stakeholder engagement only gets you so far in the face of market forces, lack of investment and self-interest	<input type="radio"/>				

29. What, practically, could a surveyor do to supplement and augment the RPT process? What role could technology play? *

30. What opportunities do you see for follow up actions or collaboration after this roundtable to ensure ongoing impact of the RPT? *

Section G — Availability & consent

31. I will attend the online intro **Thu 2 Oct 2025, 14:00 UK / 13:00 SL:** *

Yes

No

32. Consent to use responses for the purposes of this review: *

Yes

No

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Microsoft Forms



Appendix B: High Level Stakeholder Coordination Meeting

Attendance

Government of Sierra Leone

- Amb. Tamba Lamina, Minister, MLGCA
- Alfred Moi Jamiru, Deputy Minister, MLGCA
- Phylis Komoh, Deputy Minister, MLHCP
- Tamba S Dauda, Ag. Professional Head / Director of Surveys & Lands, MLHCP
- Joe Tucker, Senior Assistant Secretary, MLHCP
- Alusine Sesay, Deputy Permanent Secretary, MLHCP
- Alusine Joaque, Deputy Permanent Secretary, MLGCA
- Rosaline S Fayia, Senior Assistant Secretary, MLGCA
- Clifford S Metzeger, Assistant Secretary, MLGCA
- Alusine Sesay, Deputy Permanent Secretary, MLGCA
- Brima N Combey, Director Local Government, MLGCA
- Dr. Alphajoh Cham, Project Coordinator, Sierra Leone Land Administration Project (SLLAP), MLHCP
- Martha Gbouma-Alieu, Capacity Building Officer, MLGCA

Bo City Council

- Haja Halima Lukay, Development / Planning Officer, BCC

The King's Foundation (KF)

- Leslie Ohomele, Associate Director, International Projects, TKF
- Lea Haddad, Programme Manager, Rapid Planning Toolkit, TKF

Agenda

- Opening Prayer
- Welcome & introductions
- Minister MLGCA statement
- Minister MLHCP statement
- Purpose of the visit
- Programme context and expectations
- Land/structure plan and legislation updates (MLGCA, MLHCP, RUSLP, SLLAP)
- KF briefing: Funding, timelines, roles/responsibilities
- Bo field visit & in country workshop plan
- Decisions, actions & next steps



Appendix C: Review Workshop in Bo

Attendance

Central Government – Ministry of Local Government & Community Affairs (MLGCA)

- Amb. Tamba Lamina – Minister
- Marta Gbom-Alieu – Capacity Building Officer
- Alison Ayudi – Deputy Secretary

Ministry of Lands, Housing & Country Planning (MLHCP)

- Phylis Kormoh – Deputy Minister
- Dr. Alphajoh Cham – Director of Planning, SLLAP Coordinator
- Tamba S. Dauda – Acting PH/DSL
- Yayah Kamara – Assistant Director
- John Sinnah – Acting Regional Director

National Land Commission (NLC)

- Mohamed A.S. Koroma – Commissioner (Bo)
- Susan M. Rogers – Deputy Commissioner-General

Bo City Council (Host City)

- Kobba Musa – Mayor
- Hawa Campbell – Deputy Mayor
- Henry Powell – Chief Administrator
- Rashid Robert – Clerk of Works
- Mohamed Barrie – IT Officer
- Haja Halimah Lukay – Development Planning Officer
- Princess Turay – Resident Technical Facilitator (RTF)
- Angella Sesay – Internal Auditor
- Moinina Koroma – Volunteer
- Fatmata Sammoh – Accountant

Other Municipal Councils (Secondary Cities)

Kenema City Council

- Sahr E. Yambasu – Chief Administrator
- Joseph Kargbo – Development Planning Officer

Makeni City Council

- Daniel Kpukumu – Chief Administrator
- Yusufu Tejan Kamara – Development Planning Officer

Port Loko City Council

- Alie Badara Tarawallie – Mayor
- Julia T.F. Amara – Chief Administrator
- Santigie I. Kamara – Development Planning Officer

Koidu New Sembehun City Council

- Komba Sam – Mayor
- Augustine B. Amara – Chief Administrator
- Aiah A.Y. Aroauci – Development Planning Officer

Freetown City Council

- Komba Mansa Musa – Development Planning Officer

Western Area Rural District Council (WARD C)

- Kasho J. Holland-Cole – Chairman
- Christiana I. Samura – Climate Change Officer

King's Foundation (Project Team)

- Leslie Ohomele – Associate Director for International Projects
- Lea Haddad – Rapid Planning Toolkit Programme Manager

Workshop Agenda

1. Welcome remarks
 - Minister of Local Government and Community Affairs
 - Mayor of Bo City Council
 - The King's Foundation
2. Site walk to the growth area plan
3. Presentation on the Rapid Planning Toolkit (RPT) - by the King's Foundation team
 - Rationale for the Toolkit
 - Overview of the four steps
4. Bo Case Study Presentation -By Haja Halimah Lukay, Development Planning Officer, Bo City Council
5. Discussion and Q&A

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