



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIC EDUCATION
AND DEMOCRACY (NaCCED)



REPORT ON

THE NATIONAL LAUNCH AND REGIONAL CIVIC
ENGAGEMENTS ON THE CITIZENS BUDGET

FY2026



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List of Acronyms

- I. CSO – Civil Society Organization
- II. DBOC – District Budget Oversight Committee
- III. GDP – Gross Domestic Product
- IV. GST – Goods and Services Tax
- V. LPG – Liquid Petroleum Gas
- VI. MoF – Ministry of Finance
- VII. MTNDP – Medium-Term National Development Plan
- VIII. NaCCED – National Council for Civic Education and Democracy
- IX. NSA – Non-State Actor
- X. FY – Financial Year

1. Background

After its establishment in 2018, the National Council for Civic Education and Democracy (NaCCED) have partnered with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) to promote Economic and Financial Management Education among citizens in Sierra Leone.

On the enactment of 2026 Finance Act and approval of the FY2026 National budget by the House of Parliament, the Ministry of Finance, in collaboration with the National Council for Civic Education and Democracy and with technical assistance by the Oxford Policy Management, in compliance with government policy and donor requirement, prepared the Citizens Guide to the National Budget 2026 (popularly referred to as the Citizens Budget). The Citizens Budget is a simplified version of the national budget presented in written and animated formats to enhance reading and understanding the FY 2026 budget at glance. This initiative was designed to bridge the information gap between government fiscal planning and the citizens, especially given the complexity and technical nature of the national budget document, which is typically voluminous and difficult to access, read, or understand by the average citizen.

The national launch of the FY2026 Citizens Budget took place on the 27th March 2026 at the Ministry of Finance (MoF) headquarters in Freetown, presided over by the Deputy Minister of Finance (I) – Madam Alie. the Financial Secretary – Mr. Mathew Dingie, the Director of Budget – Mr. Tasima Jah and Chairman of NaCCED – Mr. Joseph Munda Bindi. The FY2026 Citizens Budget was formally launched by the Deputy Minister of Finance (i).

2. Rationale

The public engagements on the FY2026 national budget (Citizen's Budget 2026) promote transparency, accountability, inclusivity and participatory governance through open discussions between the Government, civil society organisations, non-state actors, district budget oversight committees and local communities which aims to solicit citizens' inputs and participation in the financial management and development of the country.

The Theme for the 2026 national budget is **“Enhancing domestic Revenue Mobilization for Sustained Economic Stability and Improved Service Delivery”** which is a call to action by all Sierra Leoneans.

3. Targeted Beneficiaries/Participants

The regional civic engagements brought together the following stakeholders at the district and chiefdom levels:

- District Budget Oversight Committee (DBOC) members
- Non-State Actors (NSAs)
- Local Council authorities
- Paramount Chiefs
- Mayors
- Chairpersons of District Councils
- Women and youth groups
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- Ataya Base Community representatives.
- Pupils, University students and teachers
- Persons living with disabilities

4. Objectives

The objectives of the public civic engagements on the citizens’ budget 2026 include the following:

- Promote Transparency and Accountability.
- To provide citizens with simplified information on the FY2026 national budget in order to improve public understanding of the Budget
- Increase Public Participation in Governance
- Build Local Capacity for Budget Oversight Committee members
- To promote domestic revenue collection for national development.
- To support central and local government fiscal planning and service delivery.
- To enable citizens to monitor development activities and hold the government accountable.

- To gather public feedback through a planned toll-free line.
- To empower citizens to cascade budget information to their constituents at district and chieftdom levels thereby creating multiplier effect..

5. Methodology

The regional civic engagement was designed to be interactive and participatory; using simplified visual and audio materials, as well as translated content of the national budget, to facilitate understanding among diverse audiences. The National Council for Civic Education and Democracy (NaCCED) with supports from the Ministry of Finance delivered the FY2026 Citizens' Budget across five regional headquarters, starting with the national launch in Freetown, Kenema (Eastern Region), Bo (Southern Region), Makeni (North-Eastern Region), and ending in Port Loko (North-Western Region). At each regional civic engagement, the following activities were conducted:

- I. **Media engagement and amplification:** NaCCED collaborated with local radio stations and community media before, during, and after the regional meetings to amplify key messages from the sessions to wider audiences.
- II. **Chairman's civic education address:** The NaCCED Chairman gave a vivid explanation of NaCCED's mandate, the importance of the national budget, and the role of citizens in governance and national development.
- III. **Feedback collection:** Throughout these processes, NaCCED collected feedback and observations from participants on the budget process and delivery of services in their respective communities.
- IV. **Animated video presentation:** A simplified animated video of the national budget was shown on screen at each regional civic engagement to visually communicate key fiscal concepts.
- V. Jingle recorded in five local languages were also played to ensure proper dissemination of the message.

- VI. **Open floor discussions:** Following the presentations, open floor discussions were held to address questions, concerns, and note recommendations and suggestions for future action.
- VII. **Explanation of citizens' roles:** NaCCED Chairman explained citizens' roles in monitoring and engaging with budget implementation.

6. Success Stories/Achievements

- I. **Nationwide Reach:** The rollout successfully covered all four regions of Sierra Leone, ensuring that citizens in both urban and rural areas received fiscal information. Over one thousand, five hundred people participated in the civic engagement sessions and hundreds of thousands were reached through radio and television engagements.
- II. **High-Level Political Support:** The engagement included active participation from the Minister of Finance, Deputy Minister of Finance, Deputy Minister of Information and Civic Education, Resident Ministers and local council authorities.
- III. **Traditional Leadership Involvement:** Paramount Chiefs, Mayors, and Council Chairpersons or their representatives attended and expressed strong support for bringing budget information to the grassroots.
- IV. **Simplified Communication:** The use of audiovisual animations and an abridged document made complex budget technicalities accessible to ordinary citizens.
- V. **Established Feedback Mechanism:** A toll-free line was announced to gather ongoing public feedback on the budget.
- VI. **Actionable Citizen Concerns:** Citizens raised issues on teacher salaries, road construction, agricultural machinery, electronic tax payments among others which were documented and committed to relevant ministries for follow-up and necessary action.
- VII. **Reintroduction of Civics in Schools:** Citizens appreciated the reintroduction of civic education in schools and reinforced long-term civic education.

Example of Local Revenue Generation: Some local councils (Port Loko District Council) were cited as a models for applying innovative methods in generating own-sourcerevenues to boost service delivery in their communities.

7. Citizens' Concerns About the National Budget 2026

During the civic engagements and discussions on the national budget, the following concerns were raised by the participants;

- Consumer Price Index (CPI) shows that inflation rate is in single digit, however, prices of fuel and other commodities are still high.
- No indicative or projected revenue from sales of timber and related products.
- Government subsidizes the electricity generation by Karpowership but the tariffs for consumers is still very high and inconsistent power supply.
- There is observed disparity and inconsistencies in the wages of public servants across all sectors.
- Inadequate information flow from the Government to the people
- Leakages in the revenue collection process either at the border crossing points and/or tax evasion by many business entities was a major concern raised by citizens .
- A good number of local councils are not generating adequate revenue to support development projects in their localities.
- The effectiveness and impact of the Feed Salone programme is a major concern to the people.
- Budget allocation to education is very high but yet there are delays in the payment of school fee subsidies to the schools.
- Increased and robust tax education and public engagement in revenue mobilization is highly necessary and NaCCED to play pivotal role in the process.

8. Challenges

During the countrywide regional civic engagements, the National Council for Civic Education and Democracy (NaCCED) in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) was very successful in bringing participants from

every district to actively engage in discussions on simplified fiscal data in the FY2026 national budget. However, the regional civic engagements did not hold without challenges. Below are some of the challenges encountered during the engagements:

I. Limited Presence of the Most Accountable Leadership;

A good number of the local council leaders were absent at the civic engagements, especially in the North-East and North-Western regions. This was attributed to the non-participation in governance by the main opposition APC Party at the time of the civic engagements.

II. Absence of Revenue Authorities:

The National Revenue Authority (NRA) personnel who could adequately respond to questions and concerns from the citizens regarding taxation and revenue generation were absent in most of the regions. , The absence of key government stakeholders to address some policy related issues raised during the civic enagaements left some technical and policy-related questions from the public unanswered.

9. Suggestions and Recommendations

The following recommendations were made by participants and reiterated by NaCCED and MoF officials:

- **Electronic Tax Payment System:** Government should implement or have the National Revenue Authority introduce an electronic payment system;
- **Receipts on purchase of goods:** Business owner/traders should generate and issue receipts for each purchase and payments made to customers to enhance transparency and accountability in tax collection.
- **Project Information Disclosure:** All information about projects implemented by local councils should be made available to citizens for better monitoring.

- **Increase Local Council Allocation:** Citizens recommended that Government should increase the percentage allocation to local councils beyond 5% to enable effective service delivery to the people.
- **Employ More Tax Collectors and Address Timber Revenue:** Government to strengthen revenue collection, including from timber, which has caused community destruction.
- **Media Engagement on Budget:** NaCCED should work with DBOCs to engage the media on the budget and tax payment importance.
- **Strengthen Border Controls:** NRA to increase its vigilance at border crossing points and reduce leakages/loopholes in revenue collection at those areas. .
- **Increase in the Number of Regional Participant:** Citizens demand that the number of participants at regional civic engagement be increased to ensure greater reach to the citizens.
- **Decentralize Agriculture:** In order to boost food production and food sufficiency, Government should decentralize agriculture and implement mechanized farming to address manpower shortages.
- **Clean Energy Alternatives:**, Government should invest in clean energy alternatives and increase energy production.
- **Animated Video of the citizens budget made available:** NaCCED to make available the explanatory animated video on the citizens budget using various channels for continued education.
- **Hold Tax Collectors Accountable:** Government must ensure integrity in tax collection and hold collectors accountable.

10. APENDIX

IMAGES IN FREETOWN



IMAGES IN THE REGIONS

EASTERN REGION – KENEMA





SOUTHERN REGION - BO



NORTH-EASTERN REGION – MAKENI





NORTH-WESTERN REGION – PORT LOKO



