



# Sierra Leone

*Women, Business and the Law 2022* (WBL2022) presents an index covering 190 economies and structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (Freetown). Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions so local legislation should be reviewed. Based on this approach, **Sierra Leone scores 72.5 out of 100**. The overall score for Sierra Leone is higher than the regional average observed across Sub-Saharan Africa (71.5). Within the Sub-Saharan Africa region, the maximum score observed is 89.4 (Mauritius).

## Sierra Leone - Scores for *Women, Business and the Law 2022*



### Relative Strengths

When it comes to constraints on freedom of movement, constraints related to marriage, and constraints on women starting and running a business, Sierra Leone gets a perfect score.

### Areas for Improvement

However, when it comes to laws affecting women's decisions to work, laws affecting women's pay, laws affecting women's work after having children, gender differences in property and inheritance, and laws affecting the size of a woman's pension, Sierra Leone could consider reforms to improve legal equality for women.

For example, one of the lowest scores for Sierra Leone is on the indicator measuring laws affecting women's work after having children (the WBL2022 Parenthood indicator). To improve on the Parenthood indicator, Sierra Leone may wish to consider making paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers, making the government administer 100% of maternity leave benefits, making paid leave available to fathers, making paid parental leave available, and prohibiting the dismissal of pregnant workers.

### Recent Reforms

During the past year (October 2nd, 2020 – October 1st, 2021), Sierra Leone made access to credit easier for women by prohibiting gender-based discrimination in financial services.



Further data details for Sierra Leone are available at:

<https://wbl.worldbank.org/en/data/exploreconomies/sierra-leone/2022>



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	QUESTION	ANSWER	LEGAL BASIS
Mobility	Can a woman choose where to live in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman travel outside her home in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman apply for a passport in the same way as a man?	Yes	Passport application procedures
	Can a woman travel outside the country in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
Workplace	Can a woman get a job in the same way as a man?	Yes	Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, Sec. 18
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in employment based on gender?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2019, Sec. 3
	Are there criminal penalties or civil remedies for sexual harassment in employment?	Yes	Criminal: Sexual Offences Act 2019, Sec. 3 Civil: No applicable provisions could be located
Pay	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman work at night in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Can a woman work in an industrial job in the same way as a man?	No	Employers and Employed Act, Secs. 2 and 47-48
Marriage	Is there no legal provision that requires a married woman to obey her husband?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
	Can a woman be head of household in the same way as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Is there legislation specifically addressing domestic violence?	Yes	Domestic Violence Act 2007
	Can a woman obtain a judgment of divorce in the same way as a man?	Yes	Matrimonial Causes Act, Art. 5
Parenthood	Does a woman have the same rights to remarry as a man?	Yes	No restrictions could be located
	Is paid leave of at least 14 weeks available to mothers?	No	Commercial Employers Association Collective Agreement of 2011, Art. 18
	Does the government pay 100% of maternity leave benefits?	No	Commercial Employers Association Collective Agreement of 2011, Art. 34
	Is paid leave available to fathers?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
Entrepreneurship	Is there paid parental leave?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Does the law prohibit discrimination in access to credit based on gender?	Yes	Directives on Provision of Financial Services on a Non-Discriminatory Basis of August 5, 2021
	Can a woman sign a contract in the same way as a man?	Yes	Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, Sec. 18
Assets	Can a woman register a business in the same way as a man?	Yes	Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, Sec. 18
	Can a woman open a bank account in the same way as a man?	Yes	Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, Sec. 18
	Do men and women have equal ownership rights to immovable property?	Yes	Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, Sec. 18
	Do sons and daughters have equal rights to inherit assets from their parents?	Yes	Devolution of Estates Act, Secs. 7 and 8
Pension	Do female and male surviving spouses have equal rights to inherit assets?	Yes	Devolution of Estates Act, Sec. 6
	Does the law grant spouses equal administrative authority over assets during marriage?	Yes	Registration of Customary Marriage and Divorce Act, Sec. 18
	Does the law provide for the valuation of nonmonetary contributions?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits the same?	Yes	Women: National Social Security and Insurance Trust Act, Art. 39. Men: National Social Security and Insurance Trust Act, Art. 39
	Is the age at which men and women can retire with partial pension benefits the same?	Yes	Women: National Social Security and Insurance Trust Act, Art. 40. Men: National Social Security and Insurance Trust Act, Art. 40
	Is the mandatory retirement age for men and women the same?	Yes	Women: No applicable provisions could be located. Men: No applicable provisions could be located
	Are periods of absence due to childcare accounted for in pension benefits?	No	No applicable provisions could be located

