# ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Trend analysis of public debt-to-GDP performance

## Sierra Leone: 2017 | 2023 | 2025

Strategic objective: prudent, efficient, effective and transparent use of public funds aligned with the PFM Act 2016 and PFM Strategy 2023-2027.
Designed for IGR Scorecard Development.

| 2017 | 2023 | 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| 59.5% | 88.9% | 44.4% |
| Debt/GDP | Baseline | After rebasing |

# Trend Analysis Summary

The PFM scorecard indicator tracks Sierra Leone's public debt-to-GDP ratio against the MTNDP 2024-2030 objective to reduce public debt to 70% of GDP in nominal terms and 55% in present value terms by 2028. The trend shows a deterioration from 2017 to 2023, followed by a sharp ratio improvement by 2025, largely linked to GDP rebasing and stronger nominal GDP growth.

**2017**

**59.5%**

Public debt-to-GDP

Debt level was below the later MTNDP baseline, but vulnerabilities remained around debt composition and fiscal space.

**2023**

**88.9%**

MTNDP baseline

Debt pressure had increased significantly, reflecting shocks, fiscal strain and exchange-rate pressures.

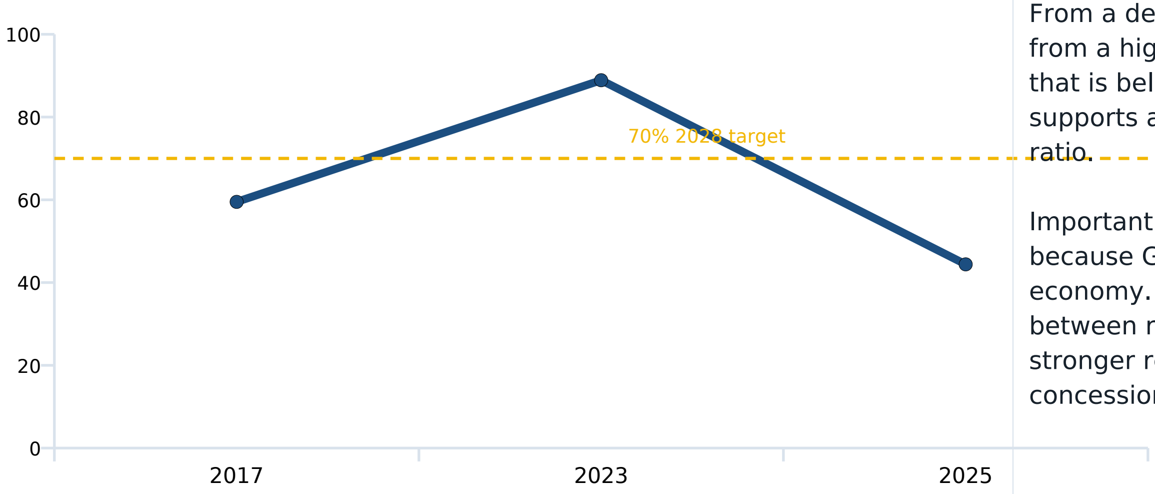
**2025**

**44.4%**

Latest reported ratio

The ratio fell sharply after GDP rebasing and improved nominal GDP, though debt distress risk remains a policy concern.

**Public debt-to-GDP ratio trend**




Scorecard reading

From a delivery perspective, the indicator has moved from a high-risk baseline in 2023 to a debt-to-GDP ratio that is below the 2028 nominal target of 70%. This supports a positive scorecard assessment on the headline ratio.

Important caveat: the improvement is partly statistical because GDP rebasing expanded the measured size of the economy. The scorecard should therefore distinguish between ratio improvement and the continuing need for stronger revenue mobilisation, expenditure control, concessional borrowing and debt-service management.

**Status: Strong Progress**

The headline public debt-to-GDP ratio is now below the MTNDP 2028 nominal target, but the underlying fiscal risk should remain under close monitoring.

# IGR Scorecard Infographic Output

| Year | Indicator value | Trend position | PFM interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2017 | 59.5% | Moderate debt level | Public debt was sizeable but below the later MTNDP baseline. The fiscal position required prudent debt management and improved revenue performance. |
| 2023 | 88.9% | High stress baseline | Debt ratio increased substantially. This became the MTNDP baseline for the target to reduce debt toward 70% nominal GDP by 2028. |
| 2025 | 44.4% | Improved headline ratio | The ratio fell sharply after GDP rebasing and stronger nominal GDP. This is positive for scorecard reporting, but sustainability risks remain important. |

## Narrative for the scorecard

Sierra Leone's economic and public financial management trend shows a mixed but improving picture. The public debt-to-GDP ratio rose from 59.5% in 2017 to 88.9% in 2023, indicating a period of worsening debt pressure and reduced fiscal space. By 2025, the ratio is reported at 44.4%, meaning the headline target has moved below the MTNDP 2028 benchmark. For scorecard purposes, this can be classified as strong progress on the indicator. However, the analysis should make clear that the improvement was influenced by GDP rebasing and should be complemented by evidence on debt service, arrears clearance, revenue mobilisation and expenditure discipline.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Delivery signal<br>Headline ratio is below the 70% nominal GDP target. | 2. Risk signal<br>Debt distress risk and debt-service pressure should still be monitored. | 3. Policy signal<br>Sustain progress through fiscal discipline, transparent debt reporting and concessional borrowing. |

## Suggested IGR scorecard classification

| Indicator | Assessment | Reason |
|---|---|---|
| Public debt-to-GDP reduction | Strong Progress / On Track | The 2025 reported ratio of 44.4% is below the 2028 nominal target of 70%, though the result should be caveated because GDP rebasing contributed materially to the lower ratio. |

## Sources used in the scorecard

- Sierra Leone Public Debt Management Bulletin 2017: reports end-2017 public debt at Le16 trillion, or 59.5% of GDP.
- Sierra Leone Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024-2030: sets the debt reduction target and uses a high 2023 baseline for public debt-to-GDP.
- IMF / World Bank Debt Sustainability Analysis and IMF Country Report No. 26/40: reports total public debt at 44.4% of GDP, linked to strong nominal GDP growth and GDP rebasing effects.