

UNIMAK

Banking in Sierra Leone

Banking in Sierra Leone consists of a [Central Bank](#), the [Bank of Sierra Leone](#), and a number of commercial banks, and six community banks:

The [Civil War](#) destroyed many of the [branches](#) of the country's commercial banks and as of 2005 there were 34 commercial bank branches, the majority in the major towns.^[2] Procedures for obtaining loans have been assessed as very complicated and there is a relatively low ratio of private

Community banks play the role of extended [financial services](#) to local communities which are not able to access the commercial banks. They are also designed to help development within Sierra Leone by supporting the government's [microfinancing](#) program and by empowering local communities

The arrival of western banking in West Africa

Bank of British West Africa was a British Overseas bank that was important in introducing modern banking into the countries that emerged from the UK's West African colonies. In 1957 it changed its name to **Bank of West Africa**, and in 1965 was acquired by [Standard Bank](#).

History

- 1891 [Elder Dempster](#) shipping magnate [Alfred Lewis Jones](#) (born in [Carmarthen](#), Wales in 1845) and [George William Neville](#) (born at [Richmond](#), near London in 1852), the local agent of [Elder Dempster & Co.](#) of [Liverpool](#), attempted to develop a banking operation along the [Guinea coast](#)
- 1892 [African Banking Corporation](#) acquired Elder Dempster's banking operations in [Lagos](#), [Nigeria](#). Within a year they wished to close it down. Instead, they sold the operation to A.L. Jones and Elder Dempster
- 1893 Elder Dempster helped form Bank of British West Africa (BBWA) which took over the ex-ABC operation in [Lagos](#). Eventually, BBWA established branches in Liverpool, London, and Manchester.
- 1894 Elder Dempster Co, were appointed agents in [Freetown](#), [Sierra Leone](#) and [Bathurst](#), [The Gambia](#) for BBWA. BBWA also took over ABC's [Tangier](#) branch.
- 1896 BBWA established a branch in [Accra](#), [Ghana](#). Its main business then was the distribution of silver coins, of which it was the sole supplier. As the only bank in the country at the time, it came to play a unique role in the economy, acting as the Central Bank. In 1902, it opened another branch in [Sekondi](#). It opened an agency in [Obuasi](#) in 1905, which it raised to the status of a branch in 1909. In 1906 it opened a branch in [Kumasi](#). British Bank of West Africa expanded its network to cover most of the main business centres in the [Gold Coast](#) and went on to dominate commercial banking in Ghana
- 1898 BBWA established a branch in [Freetown](#), [Sierra Leone](#)
- 1902 BBWA established a branch in [Bathurst](#), [The Gambia](#)
- In about 1910 BBWA established a branch in [Tenerife](#), in the [Canary Isles](#)

- 1912 BBWA took over the activities of Bank of Nigeria, which local merchants had established in 1899 or 1902 to create a competitor to BBWA
- 1915 BBWA established a branch in [Douala](#), The [Cameroons](#), following the Anglo-French invasion
- 1916 BBWA closed its branch in Douala following Douala's transfer to French administration, but opened an agency in [New York City](#)
- 1918 BBWA opened a branch in [Alexandria](#), [Egypt](#)
- 1919 [Lloyds Bank](#) and three other banks became shareholders in BBWA
- 1912 BBWA re-opened a branch in Douala, French Cameroons, and in [Cairo](#)
- 1923 [Standard Bank of South Africa](#) took over BBWA's New York agency. [Lloyds Bank](#) acquired Cox & Co, which had branches in Egypt, but was itself a shareholder in BBWA. To avoid competing with itself, Lloyds had BBWA transfer its Egyptian business to Lloyds Bank. In 1926 Lloyds transferred its operations in Egypt to the [National Bank of Egypt](#)
- Between 1930 and 1940 BBWA closed most of its branches it had established in [Morocco](#), the [Canary Islands](#) and [Fernando Po](#)
- In 1937 or so, BBWA established a branch in [Hamburg](#), Germany
- 1953 BBWA lost its central banking functions in Ghana. The Ghanaian government established the [Bank of the Gold Coast](#) to combine commercial banking activities and central banking functions
- In 1954 or so BBWA closed its Hamburg branch, which presumably had been in abeyance during World War II and reopened thereafter
- 1957 Bank of British West Africa changed its name to Bank of West Africa (BWA)
- 1963 BWA closed its branch in Tangier
- 1965 Standard Bank acquired BWA, and renamed it Standard Bank of West Africa. SBWA acquired the Liberian and Nigerian branches of [Chase Manhattan Bank](#) in return for Chase taking a 15% stake in Standard Bank, a stake that it sold in the late 1970s. BWA still operated one branch each in the French and British Cameroon Mandates, and in Morocco
- 1969 Standard Bank merged with [Chartered Bank](#) to form [Standard Chartered Bank](#). SBWA spun off Standard Bank of Ghana, Standard Bank Nigeria, and Standard Bank of Sierra Leone, which went on to have separate histories
 - On 1 January 1985 the Ghanaian operation became Standard Chartered Bank Ghana, under which name it continues to operate
 - In 1971, Standard Bank of Nigeria placed 13% of its share capital with Nigerian investors. After the end of the [Nigerian Civil War](#), Nigeria's military government sought to increase local control of the retail-banking sector. Standard Chartered Bank's investment in Standard Bank Nigeria fell to 38%, and the bank changed its name to [First Bank of Nigeria](#) in 1979. Standard Chartered sold its remaining shares in First Bank of Nigeria in 1996. The present Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria, therefore, traces its presence in Nigeria only to 1999, when the bank re-entered Nigeria with a new, wholly owned subsidiary

- The present Standard Chartered Bank Sierra Leone traces its corporate history back to BBWA's commissioning the Elder Dempster as its agents in Freetown in 1894
- Between 1969 and 1974, Standard Bank also closed the branches ([Douala](#) and [Victoria](#)) in Cameroon that it inherited from BWA
- By 1974 SBWA had only two branches, both in The Gambia, and in 1978, SBWA transferred these two branches to Standard Bank Gambia Ltd. Until 2002, by then Standard Chartered Bank Gambia remained the only bank in The Gambia.

The British West African Currency Board

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/RP%20171%20texts%203%20rev%20table.pdf>

The history of the Standard Chartered Bank

<https://www.sc.com/en/about-us/our-history.html>

The British in West Africa

<http://courses.wcupa.edu/jones/his312/lectures/brit-occ.htm>

Collusion and Competition in Banking – British West Africa

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/economicHistory/pdf/Austin/Collusion%20and%20Competition%20BHR%20Spring%202007%20published.pdf>

Building British West Africa

<http://www.bl.uk/west-africa/articles/building-west-africa>

The De-colonisation of Barclays Bank

http://eprints.aston.ac.uk/18555/1/Decolonising_Barclays_Bank_DCO.pdf

The Banking Act of 2011

http://www.bsl.gov.sl/pdf/acts/banking_Act_2011.pdf

As of 30th November, 2016 the banking sector consisted of:

Commercial banks

1. [Sierra Leone Commercial Bank](#)

2. [Standard Chartered Bank \(Sierra Leone\)](#)
3. [Rokel Commercial Bank](#)
4. [Guaranty Trust Bank \(Sierra Leone\)](#)
5. [Union Trust Bank](#)
6. [First International Bank](#)
7. [First Bank of Nigeria](#), formerly [International Commercial Bank](#)
8. [Access Bank Sierra Leone](#)
9. [Ecobank](#)
10. [Skye Bank](#)
11. [United Bank for Africa](#)
12. [Zenith Bank](#)

Community banks

1. [Marampa Masimera Community Bank](#)
2. [Matru Community Bank](#)
3. [Segbwema Community Bank](#)
4. [Yoni Community Bank](#)

A brief outline of the banking sector in Sierra Leone – the site is rather dated.

<https://www.mbendi.com/indy/fsrv/bank/af/sl/p0005.htm>

The official site of the Bank of Sierra Leone

<http://www.bsl.gov.sl/>

An essay on the evolution of banking in Sierra Leone

<http://www.studymode.com/essays/The-Evolution-Of-Banking-In-Sierra-884699.html>

History of the Leone

<https://www.oanda.com/currency/iso-currency-codes/SLL>

A brief history of the Bank of Sierra Leone

<http://www.bsl.gov.sl/background.html>

Money and Banking in Sierra Leone

<http://www.worldcat.org/title/money-and-banking-in-sierra-leone/oclc/25949265>

The Financial Sector

https://books.google.com.gh/books/about/The_Sierra_Leone_Financial_System.html?id=Adf55EDzrmUC

Individual Banks

Standard Chartered

<https://www.sc.com/sl>

FBN Bank

http://www.fbnbank.co.uk/about_us/our_history.php

Rokel Bank

<http://rokelbank.sl/>

Union Trust Bank

http://www.utb.sl/utbsl_aboutus.aspx

Skye Bank

http://www.skyebanksl.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=250

Zenith Bank

<https://www.zenithbank.com/>

The Sierra Leone Commercial Bank

<http://www.european-times.com/sector/finance-consulting/sierra-leone-commercial-bank/>