

## [Basic Assistance]

### 1. Situation Analysis (1-page)

Since 2019, Lebanon has been facing an unprecedented financial and economic crisis that has had compounding effects on Lebanese and displaced persons, driving them deeper into poverty. The landscape of increased needs and vulnerabilities coupled with grave strains on the banking and financial sector in the country has shaped the way the Basic Assistance sector supports poor and vulnerable families and individuals.

Lebanon's financial and economic crisis is likely to rank in the top 10 most severe crisis episodes globally, since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>i</sup> The devaluation of the Lebanese Pound (LBP) has caused a severe deterioration of the population's purchasing power, coupled with rising prices and inflation. The informal market rate for the LBP reached a historical high in November 2021, trading near 25,000 LBP per U.S. Dollar (USD). The Consumer Price Index (CPI), one of the most important economic indicators used to measure inflation, recorded an annual increase of 174 per cent from October 2020 to October 2021, the highest annual increase in 2021.<sup>ii</sup> The Basic Assistance Sector has been monitoring the Survival and Minimum Expenditure Baskets (S/MEB) since the start of the crisis as a main indicator of the cost of living for displaced Syrians in Lebanon. The SMEB has increased by 170 per cent between June 2020 and September 2021.<sup>iii</sup> These changes, in addition to shortages in essential goods and services, have had an immense impact on the ability of vulnerable populations to meet their basic survival needs.

The World Bank has estimated that more than half the population of the country is living below the poverty line.<sup>i</sup> A phone survey conducted by WFP and the World Bank showed that Lebanese households are facing increasing challenges accessing basic needs, with 47 per cent of families facing this challenge in March-April 2021. During the same period, more than 60 per cent of households were resorting to crisis coping strategies, which include reducing expenditure on health and education, withdrawing children from school and selling productive assets.<sup>iv</sup> Female-headed households were more likely to adopt crisis and stress coping strategies compared to their male counterparts.

Findings from the 2021 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) showed that among the displaced Syrian population, 91 per cent continue to live in poverty, with 88 per cent living in extreme poverty. Ninety-seven per cent of families reported resorting to asset-depleting coping strategies to meet their needs.<sup>v</sup> Similar findings were noted through UNHCR's Protection Monitoring, where refugee families are increasingly struggling to meet their basic needs and are having to resort to negative coping mechanisms due to financial struggles. In the second quarter of 2021, protection risks and prevalence of harmful coping strategies, including engaging in child labour and child marriage, were reported at record highs, indicating that families are becoming increasingly vulnerable to exploitation.<sup>vi</sup> Female-headed households are more likely to borrow food from family and friends, have school-aged children involved in income generation and, on average, have far lower household income than their male counterparts. Additionally, the 2021 VASyR results show that refugees are at heightened protection risks, including risk of eviction due to the inability to pay rent, stemming from socio-economic vulnerability.

Palestinian refugees, both from Syria and in Lebanon, have also been severely impacted by the ongoing crises in the country. A socio-economic survey on Palestinian refugees from Syria, conducted by UNRWA in 2020, showed that 87 per cent were poor and 11 per cent were extremely poor.<sup>vii</sup> The crisis-monitoring report for Palestine refugees in Lebanon from July 2021 showed that almost three quarters (73 per cent) of the population is living in poverty. Moreover, 56 per cent of surveyed individuals reported that they categorize themselves as "poor" while 23 per cent self-reported as "extremely poor".<sup>viii</sup>

The dire economic situation of the country also has negative consequences on social stability and community relations. Both the 2021 VASyR and the Regular Perceptions Survey on Social Tensions Throughout Lebanon

show that the scarcity of and competition for resources and jobs manifests in increased tensions across the country. As of August 2021, a total of 85 per cent cited access to cash as a main tension driver in their community. Tensions are triggered around the perception of aid bias in relation to targeting, currency of disbursement and transfer values between refugees and Lebanese as well as within Lebanese populations. Differences in targeting and transfer values could further increase the high perceptions of aid bias and lead to tensions between various groups.<sup>ix</sup> Reports from partners in the field have indicated that the current fuel crisis, which has led to increased transportation costs, has a negative impact on safe access to cash and in-kind assistance for women, persons with disabilities and older persons.

The COVID-19 outbreak has had compounded effects on already existing and strained socio-economic vulnerabilities. While Lebanon currently stands at a Level 4 community transmission, if the country moves towards strict movement measures and lockdowns, like those implemented at the start of 2021, the negative burdens are likely to fall again on the most vulnerable groups.

More issues have emerged in recent months, such as shortages in fuel, electricity, and medications as well as the gradual removal of subsidies. The progression of these issues will continue to further impact the ability of vulnerable families and individuals to meet their needs in a dignified and safe way.

## **2. Overall Sector Strategy -**

### **Theory of Change**

The Basic Assistance sector aims to prevent socio-economically vulnerable households, including socially excluded groups such as female-headed households, children, older persons and persons with disabilities, from falling deeper into poverty and increasingly resorting to negative coping mechanisms. This is done through the provision of regular or seasonal cash and in-kind assistance to improve access to basic goods and services and support households to meet their basic survival needs and cope with seasonal and/or emergency shocks.

The intervention logic is summarized as follows:

- By refining the targeting mechanisms, the most relevant poor and vulnerable households and individuals will benefit from unconditional, unrestricted cash assistance grants which will enable them to meet their basic survival needs;
- When populations affected by seasonal hazards and/or emergencies receive cash grants and/or in-kind assistance, they have a higher chance of securing additional basic survival needs;
- Aligning humanitarian assistance with national social assistance and protection systems will enable effective and efficient service delivery, ultimately supporting vulnerable and extremely poor Lebanese.

The aim of maintaining cash interventions stems from evidence that cash offers households the flexibility to determine and prioritize their needs, empowers and promotes dignity of choice for recipients, stimulates local markets and achieves economies of scale (compared to in-kind modalities). While the landscape stemming from the banking and financial crisis in the country has made the provision of cash more challenging in recent years, evidence continues to suggest that cash transfers are relevant and feasible. Redemption rates of cash beneficiaries are maintained at above 95 per cent for some of the largest cash programmes under the sector.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Redemption rates from the Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organizational System for E-cards (LOUISE) September 2021

While reports of challenges in accessing cash have increased, most beneficiaries do not report any serious risks from redeeming and spending assistance.<sup>x</sup> Furthermore, this assistance modality increases access to cash liquidity for households in need of regular, yearlong support. It also offers support on a seasonal basis and during unexpected shocks/events in a way that allows households to meet their basic survival needs through purchasing items and accessing available services.

While cash transfers remain the preferred modality for supporting families to meet their basic needs, the sector will continue to maintain in-kind assistance, on a smaller scale than cash, when needed. In-kind assistance, which includes the distribution of non-food items such as blankets, mattresses, sleeping mats, kitchen sets, jerry cans and solar lamps, supports families to recover after having lost basic household assets due to floods, fires, evictions, and/or relocation.

The Basic Assistance sector will work towards strengthening linkages between humanitarian programmes under the sector and national social assistance frameworks, including the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP), the new national social grant programmes and the national social protection strategy. Strong coordination between humanitarian assistance and national social assistance and social protection plans and strategies will allow for more a more effective and sustainable approach to service delivery. This includes the Basic Assistance sector's alignment with the Social Assistance Pillar of the National Social Protection Strategy, gradually transitioning to broader social assistance initiatives.

### **Assumptions and risks**

The economic and social instability in the country is expected to deteriorate further in 2022, posing further challenges and barriers to the delivery of basic assistance. Moreover, the sector's strategy to maintain and scale up cash-based assistance relies on the assumption that the banking sector in Lebanon will remain conducive to sustaining this modality. While some partners have shifted to provide cash-over-counter rather than through ATMs, through the second half of 2021 most cash assistance under the Sector continues to be delivered through ATMs.

The ability to provide a meaningful assistance package remains a key assumption for the sector. The transfer value of the regular cash assistance programmes is very much affected by inflation currently linked to the lifting of the fuel, food and medicine subsidies as well as the exchange rate. The LBP resumed depreciation and is estimated to accelerate in the coming period, as forecasted, due to the Central Bank reducing provision of foreign currency for fuel imports, even at market informal rates and delayed payment of subsidized invoices in LBP. This situation poses a risk to the stability and consistency of the cash transfers, potentially affecting the value of amounts transferred to assisted families. The sector will maintain an evidence-based approach to determine adequate transfer values while remaining cognisant of conflict-sensitive considerations, including the alignment of transfer values provided under the NPTP and assistance provided outside that system.

Currently, some actors under the sector are providing assistance in USD while others are maintaining assistance in the national currency, posing challenges in the harmonisation of transfer values across the sector. In 2021, the sector developed guidance on the calculation of transfer values in USD, stemming from data collected in LBP in an effort to ensure harmonisation of methodologies across partners. The sector will continue to coordinate currency disbursement discussions under the framework set forth by the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, laying out a suggested two-phased approach to the shift in currencies.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The two-phased approach proposes that the first phase of shift in disbursement to USD focuses on programmes targeting Lebanese, Palestinians, and smaller interventions across nationalities. The second

Through the development of the sector Protection Risk Analysis (PRA), the Risk and Mitigation Matrix developed by the Cash Task Force with regards to USD cash disbursement and discussions with key stakeholders, the sector has identified several key priority risks that require attention in the coming period. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Tensions at ATMs and other distribution and redemption sites.** This specifically concerns reported challenges in safely accessing ATMs, with partners reporting incidents of physical and verbal harassment of women at ATM sites. (Impact: high; Probability: high)
- **Increased fuel prices.** This particularly affects transportation costs for beneficiaries traveling to cash-redemption points. There has been an increase in the number of reports indicating that beneficiaries are increasingly relying on a third party (i.e., someone outside their immediate household) to withdraw cash on their behalf, putting them at a potentially increased risk of exploitation. (Impact: medium; Probability: high)
- **Inter and intra communal tensions linked to perceptions of aid distribution.** These includes tensions linked to disbursed transfer values as well as the currency of disbursement and, specifically, perceived differences between different nationality groups. (Impact: medium; Probability: high)
- **Loss of value for money due to discrepancies in exchange rates.** Throughout the third and fourth quarters of 2021 several partners, namely those under the LOUISE<sup>3</sup> platform, have achieved exchange rates increasingly in line with the market value. Other actors have also managed to negotiate higher exchange rates, relying on the *Sayrafa* platform or market rate (by providing cash over the counter), while a smaller number of other partners have not been as successful. This will remain a challenge in 2022 for actors continuing to disburse assistance in LBP at less than market value exchange rates. (Impact: medium; Probability: medium)
- **Perception bias linked to aid provided by humanitarian agencies versus political aid.** With up-coming elections in the country in 2022, the sector must remain aware of any potential risks related to aid misperceptions in the context of elections. Clear and transparent communication with local communities is key to mitigating the impacts. (Impact: low; Probability: low)

Sector partners have taken several steps to mitigate some key risks, including (as mentioned above) staggering of uploads, expanding ATM networks and introducing or switching to other forms of delivery (e.g. voucher or cash over the counter). Moreover, LOUISE agencies have used in-person ATM monitoring since 2020 to help mitigate tensions and overcrowding at ATMs. The sector will also continue to push for more advocacy from the humanitarian community in support of smaller agencies to access better exchange rates. The sector has been working closely with the Protection sector to identify mitigation measures specifically linked to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) as well as Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)<sup>4</sup>. The sector will continue to work towards developing concrete mitigation measures for prioritized risks, linking with other sectors (namely Food Security and Agriculture and Protection) when needed, as well as enhancing the monitoring and sharing of identified protection risks through 2022.

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phase will include interventions exclusively targeting Syrians, in order to help to mitigate protection and tensions risks.

<sup>3</sup>The Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organizational System for E-card (LOUISE) is an innovative operational model set up with the intention of streamlining the operational coordination of sectoral and multi-sectoral cash and voucher assistance in Lebanon. The model was born out of a formalized collaboration between UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF.

<sup>4</sup> Discussed in more detail in the Mainstreaming section of the sector strategy.

The sector's activities consider women's and men's ability to safely access cash assistance and mitigate the risks of exploitation and fraud at cash points. Monitoring during and post distribution will be further focused on risks associated with cash withdrawal, particularly for women, girls, older persons and persons with disabilities. From a do no harm perspective, the sector will recognize and mitigate any potentially negative effects of assistance on intra-household dynamics, including risk of GBV, specifically when households are discontinued or excluded from assistance. The sector will work closely with gender and GBV focal points to identify methods of identification and prevention.

### **Sectors Results: LCRP impacts, Sector Outcomes, Outputs**

The interventions under the Basic Assistance sector contribute to two of the LCRP's impact and strategic objectives:

*Strategic Objective 2: Provide immediate assistance to vulnerable populations*

*Impact 2: Immediate humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations are met*

Regular and seasonal/emergency cash or in-kind assistance represents a primary source of income for the poorest and most vulnerable households in Lebanon. Cash received through these programmes (to be achieved through Outcomes 1 and 2) is primarily used by beneficiaries to cover rent and health and education-related expenditure as well as fuel for winter heating. In-kind assistance covers the distribution of core items to families in immediate need.

*Strategic Objective 3: Support service provision through national systems*

*Impact 3: Vulnerable populations have equitable access to basic services through national systems*

The sector has an established partnership with the NPTP to transfer assistance modalities and systems and will work on strengthening engagement of partners providing basic assistance to Lebanese under the LCRP and national social assistance programmes. This engagement will increase the coverage and effectiveness in reaching more vulnerable populations with basic services. Additionally, sector partners have been engaging in broader discussions related to the development of an institutionalized social protection strategy in Lebanon. These improved mechanisms are supposed to facilitate the transfer of social value towards vulnerable populations, thus contributing to achieving Impact 3.

### **Expected results**

The sector's planned outputs and interventions feed into three main outcomes:

***Outcome 1: Strengthen the ability of vulnerable households and individuals, including female-headed HHs, persons with disabilities and children, to meet their basic survival needs.***

*Output 1.1: Poor and vulnerable households and individuals benefit from unconditional, unrestricted cash assistance grants.*

Regular assistance through multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) to Lebanese, displaced Syrians, and Palestinian refugees, makes up the bulk of interventions under this output. Other social assistance programmes targeting persons at heightened risk, including but not limited to, children, older persons and persons with disabilities and other chronic conditions, also contribute to the overall outcome. Through these interventions, vulnerable families and individuals have increased access to cash liquidity and can better prioritize and meet their needs.

#### Multipurpose cash assistance

MPCA is the largest type of yearlong assistance under the Basic Assistance sector. Serving as a lifeline to assisted women, girls, men and boys, this programme aims to strengthen households' ability to meet their basic needs through a monthly cash transfer. Through socio-economic vulnerability profiling, the programme targets and assists the poorest households.

The cash provided aims to bridge the gap between what households receive in the form of cash for food assistance and estimated income to reach a survival expenditure level, based on the SMEB, estimating monthly expenditures on essential items and services such as food, non-food items, basic household assets, hygiene items, rent, water, health, communications, transportation and others.<sup>xi</sup> The MPCA value is calculated based on the non-food component of the basket and is intended to be complementary to food assistance provided under the Food Security and Agriculture sector.<sup>5</sup> The overlap of these two programmes will ensure that households are fully supported and have the strengthened ability to meet their basic food and non-food needs through the direct provision of assistance.

Technical reviews of the expenditure baskets have taken place in 2020 and 2021, following the release of the VASyR results each year. The baskets are then monitored and updated monthly using WFP retail price data and data from the CPI. While the sector aims to provide a transfer value equal to the gap in the SMEB, accounting for the cash for food assistance and income, social stability considerations are also considered. From January 2021 to August 2021, the MPCA transfer value provided to families was set at 400,000 LBP. Political concerns stemming from the fear of fueling tensions between Lebanese and Syrians prevented an increase in the value to match the rising prices and costs in the country. In September 2021, after strong advocacy and price monitoring, the MPCA transfer value was increased to 800,000 LBP per family per month, covering 70 per cent of the recommended value, an increase from around 40 per cent in August.<sup>6</sup> This increase has been vital to curbing harmful coping mechanisms and ensuring households and individuals can meet their basic needs. It has also maximized the impact of other sectoral interventions.

The assistance is planned and implemented, taking into consideration other complementary interventions and services available within different sectors and responding to other types of needs and vulnerabilities. These include cash for food assistance provided under the Food Security and Agriculture sector and other cash programmes, targeting more specific needs under different sectors (e.g. Protection, Shelter, Education). Additionally, as the Basic Assistance sector aims to increase access to specific services through the provision of cash assistance, understandings around the functionality and accessibility of specific services intended to be covered through cash transfers will be strengthened. The sector will increase efforts to work with the relevant sectors, who may have components covered under the objectives of the basic assistance cash transfers, to better monitor and assess other available services (e.g. fee waivers for education or health) for a more holistic approach to helping families meet their needs. This will include clearly defining the expectations and objectives under each sector in relation to the Basic Assistance sector to ensure complementarity and harmony of interventions.

#### Other Social Assistance Programmes

Other cash programmes under the sector fall into a separate category due to the nature of the interventions aimed at addressing specific vulnerabilities including, but also beyond, the socio-economic. Similar to MPCA,

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<sup>5</sup> Due to the drastic increase in the number of people in need over the past two years and to mitigate potential tensions between unassisted and assisted families (findings from the 2021 VASyR showed that 31 per cent of Syrian families reported real or perceived discrimination of aid delivery as a main factor for community tensions), in some instances MPCA and cash for food assistance have been provided to families separately to increase coverage of assistance.

<sup>6</sup> In parallel, the food assistance transfer value was increased from 100,000 LBP per person per month to 300,000 LBP per person per month.

these programmes aim to strengthen the ability of families to meet their basic needs through regular unrestricted cash transfers but are based on an integrated multi-dimensional understanding of vulnerability. This includes specifically supporting children, older persons, and persons with disabilities or other medical conditions. In most cases, the cash transfers are coupled with the provision of other services to address specific vulnerabilities. This is done through direct implementation of these services or a strong referral system to further re-enforce individuals' abilities to meet basic needs and live in dignity.

The main distinction between social assistance programmes under the Basic Assistance sector and other potentially similar sectoral programmes is that they offer transfers unconditionally while re-enforcing the availability of other services for specific outcomes. The sector will coordinate closely with the Protection and Education sectors, which provide specific protection emergency, and education cash assistance programmes, to avoid duplication and ensure full complementarity of the different assistance packages.

Other key activities linked to this output include the annual review of the targeting system to identify poor Syrian households; developing guidance for targeting Lebanese host communities and streamlining efforts for harmonized methodologies within the sector; contributing to research and learning; regular and consistent reviews of the potential impact of risks and the evolving context; and the development of post-distribution and outcome monitoring tools.

***Outcome 2: Strengthen the ability of populations affected by seasonal hazards and emergencies to secure additional basic survival needs.***

Building on Outcome 1, Outcome 2 strives to ensure that households do not fall deeper into poverty when faced with shocks or additional contextual challenges outside of their control. Two outputs will contribute to this outcome:

***Output 2.1 - Population affected by seasonal hazards and emergencies benefits from cash grants.***

During the winter, needs and vulnerabilities are heightened, and households and individuals are faced with compounding challenges to securing additional basic needs. Seasonal cash assistance is provided to vulnerable households in response to the increased expenditures identified during the winter period, a time during which income-generating opportunities become less available (for example in key employment sectors such as agriculture and construction). These needs include purchasing of heaters, winter clothes, blankets, and fuel for heating. Vulnerable households and individuals who receive seasonal cash assistance are able to better cope with seasonal shocks and have an increased ability to meet their needs, without having to resort to negative coping mechanisms or de-prioritize other essential needs.

The Basic Assistance sector, through consultations with the core and working groups, has developed a winter basket to outline winter-specific needs and their respective costs in the market in 2021. The basket included both a non-food item (NFI) component and heating costs. The non-food items component included heaters, blankets, mattresses, mats and clothing kits for various age groups and genders. Heating costs were estimated for three different fuel costs- diesel, gas and wood, using averages across the different regions. Seasonal cash assistance can be provided as a monthly cash transfer or as a one-off transfer, preferably at the start of the winter season to help families prepare. The determination of the method and timing of disbursement should be based on the determined transfer value and expected coverage while also considering the best use of received assistance.

The sector recommends a range for the monthly transfer value and the exact value is determined by agencies depending on available funds and targeted groups. The lower end of this range covers only heating costs for three months and excludes NFIs. The upper end of the range includes heating costs for five months and coverage of the medium NFI basket. Based on prices in October 2021, the lower end of the recommended

monthly transfer value for seasonal cash assistance was 1,037,933 LBP per household (or around 50 USD using the average market exchange rate for that month), while the upper end was 2,295,854 LBP (115 USD).<sup>7</sup> The winter basket is updated annually just before the winter season to accurately reflect needs in a dynamic context.

Targeting for seasonal cash assistance for displaced persons follows a blanket approach where all households living in poverty are targeted for assistance. The targeting of Lebanese households for winter has occurred through partner outreach, including liaising with local authorities (e.g. municipalities) as well as prioritizing families that receive MPCA with a top-up. In 2022, the sector will work towards developing and streamlining more concrete guidance for targeting Lebanese communities with seasonal cash assistance.

Addressing seasonal needs requires a multi-sectoral approach. While monetized winter assistance for basic needs is intended to cover increased expenses faced during the season, the impact of the programme may be diluted if families prioritize other critical unmet needs (for example gaps in shelter weatherproofing or in food assistance).

*Output 2.2 - Population affected by seasonal hazards and emergencies benefits from in-kind assistance.* In-kind assistance is provided to households affected by seasonal hazards and/or emergencies on an ad-hoc/needs basis. Activities under this output include maintaining and monitoring contingency stocks, identification of households and distribution of core household items. The added value of providing in-kind assistance in these cases is that the specific basic needs of families can be met. This follows a household-level assessment to determine which households' assets are needed and cannot be secured by the family due to socio-economic constraints.

Targeting for in-kind assistance during the winter typically follows a geographical and needs-based approach to providing assistance to families living in areas that have been affected by adverse weather leading to a loss in households assets. It is important that the sector maintain the capacity to deliver in-kind assistance in the event of an unprecedented emergency that may require a higher level of in-kind response.

The sector will coordinate with the protection sector in relation to the provision of emergency assistance which responds to shocks. Specifically, in response to evictions, this is done in close coordination with the protection sector, including for the referral of individuals/households in need of further protection support and in line with the individual eviction guidance note developed jointly with the Protection and Shelter sectors to promote a cross-sector response to eviction.

***Outcome 3: Effective and efficient service delivery through strengthened linkages with national social safety net programmes and social protection systems.***

Two outputs are contributing to the achievement of the outcome

*Output 3.1 - Linkages between partners supporting vulnerable and extreme poor Lebanese are strengthened.*

This will be achieved through establishing relationships between Basic Assistance partners and the NPTP, including exploring the feasibility to allow for unified assistance, cross-checking between the different interventions, as well as the potential to leverage partner assessment data to feed into the NPTP database.

This includes developing clear guidance on the different interventions to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication, understanding the degree to which the NPTP overlaps with other forms of targeting under the

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<sup>7</sup> It is important to note that following implementation of the winter cash assistance programmes, fuel subsidies were gradually removed resulting in a 57 per cent increase in fuel prices by mid-November 2021 (as compared to October 2021).



Basic Assistance sector, as well as contributing towards the alignment of existing social safety nets for refugees with the emerging national social assistance system for Lebanese nationals.

While the sector will not rely solely on the NPTP for targeting Lebanese households, partners under the sector will be encouraged to use resources available through the NPTP to target extreme poor Lebanese households, to maintain capacity and confidence in the national system as well as to ensure the most efficient use of resources. Linkages will be strengthened between the NPTP and partners targeting extreme poor Lebanese outside the national social protection system to foster learning as well as ensure the optimal use of resources across responses.

Likewise, Social Grants are identified as a key priority in Lebanon for the expansion of social assistance to households that face lifecycle vulnerabilities as outlined above.<sup>8</sup> It will be important for Basic Assistance actors to ensure linkages with these programmes as relevant and to support their roll-out and expansion.

Activities under the output include providing regular updates and briefings on the NPTP and social grants to sector partners at the national and field level; setting up a system and method for tracking emergency or regular assistance within the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) / The Government of Lebanon (GoL); explore methods to increase efficiency of resources across the different responses and explore ways in which Lebanese targeted and assisted through sector partners with humanitarian and emergency support could be integrated into regular and national social assistance programmes.

*Output 3.2 - Strategy developed for coordination and alignment between humanitarian assistance and different social assistance interventions as part of a national social assistance system and social protection strategy.*

The Social Protection Strategy for Lebanon includes shock-responsive elements dedicated to enabling the cabinet and all stakeholders to respond to the multi-layered crises the country is currently facing. Additionally, it proposes a vision and a way forward that guarantees social justice, social cohesion and economic inclusion in society. The Strategy aims to provide immediate and longer-term solutions to growing poverty, vulnerability and risks within the population of Lebanon, as well as to address the sizeable gaps and weaknesses in the existing system. The Basic Assistance sector shall specifically ensure linkages and involvement with the Social Assistance Pillar of the Social Protection Strategy which includes plans for cash-based assistance through the NPTP as well as the roll-out of social grants (including the Child Grant and the Disability Allowance, targeting Lebanese and non-Lebanese individuals). To ensure strong coordination between the two streams, a roadmap for coordination and alignment needs to be organized through a multi-stakeholder discussion. Additionally, the sector will work on documenting best practices of existing examples of the alignment of humanitarian assistance and national social assistance and social protection strategies in different contexts, in an effort to inform relevant processes moving forward.

Sector efforts to strengthen these linkages contributes to a wider effort driven by a capacity-development strategy transcending the LCRP. These efforts are complementary and designed in close collaboration with other responses falling outside the LCRP.

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<sup>8</sup> See: 3RF; UN position paper on social protection; and National Social Protection Strategy draft

## Identification of sector needs and targets at the individual/HH, community and institutional/physical environment level<sup>9</sup>

### Displaced Syrian households

Economic vulnerability is measured by a household's expenditure level. The MEB and SMEB serve as thresholds to estimate the proportion of the population in poverty. The VASyR estimates that 88 per cent of the displaced Syrian population is living below the SMEB and 91 per cent under the MEB.<sup>10</sup> Using these proportions, and based on the Government of Lebanon's estimate of 1.5 million displaced Syrian people in the country, 1,365,000 individuals are estimated to be living under the MEB and 1,320,000 individuals are under the SMEB (273,000 and 264,000 households respectively).<sup>11</sup>

Specific identification of poor families is done through an econometric model that builds off the data gathered through the VASyR and then applied to the UNCHR database, which houses data on all Syrian refugees known to UNHCR in the country. In 2022, UNHCR and WFP, who lead the development of the econometric model with the support of Development Analytics, will conduct a pilot study in which four distinct vulnerability indicators will be used to assess the effectiveness of a two-layer approach to targeting cash transfers in Lebanon. The approach involves two steps for scoring and prioritization of localities and households. This includes starting with an econometric model that predicts expenditure for each household.<sup>12</sup> Then, using data from the VASyR, district-level shares across four commonly used vulnerability indicators are calculated. This includes expenditure per capita as well as the reduced coping strategies index, food consumption score and a multi-dimensional deprivation index, across the districts. Following simulated district-level caseloads and calculation of thresholds based on each of the above-mentioned indicators, households are assigned, randomly, to one of the four vulnerability indicators. Final scores, used for household-level targeting, are expressed in expenditure but adapted based on geographic allocation and the alternative measures of vulnerability. The order of the ranking within each district follows the expenditure, with resources allocated first to the households with the lowest predicted expenditure within a district. This pilot approach will allow for an unbiased comparison of the welfare implications of each of the four vulnerability indicators. It will also inform future targeting systems and cycles, beyond looking solely at expenditure per capita. The adapted scores that result from the modelling exercise are available to other actors in the sector to identify and target families for MPCA or seasonal cash.

In addition, UNHCR and WFP also rely on an alternative inclusion pathway, the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), to identify and assist families who fall under certain vulnerability profiles and have been excluded from the targeting model. The GRM is a refugee-driven approach to inclusion whereby vulnerable families submit a claim to be re-considered for assistance following the yearly eligibility announcements.

Due to the high levels of vulnerability in the country, categorical targeting layers are often used to prioritize families for MPCA, specifically among agencies with smaller (less than 2,000) caseloads. Individuals receiving

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<sup>9</sup> This can include Governorates, Districts, Cadastres, villages ...etc.

<sup>10</sup> Estimated using data from June 2021- Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket: LBP490,028/capita/month and Minimum Expenditure Basket: LBP553,753/capita/month.

<sup>11</sup> At an average household size of five.

<sup>12</sup> In previous years, the model and subsequent targeted were based primarily on predicted expenditure, with layers for geographical allocation, in some instances.

Social Grants (such as the Child grant and Disability Allowance) are identified in collaboration with civil society and the Government of Lebanon.

### **Lebanese Households**

The number of persons targeted under the sector reflects the planned and estimated interventions in 2022. This includes individuals targeted through the NPTP, other social assistance and MPCA interventions as well as seasonal cash.<sup>13</sup> The total number of targeted individuals amounts to 682,500. Individual targeting for MPCA or seasonal cash is done through partner-level household assessments or through the NPTP. In 2022, the sector will prioritize developing guidance on targeting and eligibility for targeted Lebanese, leveraging the experience and expertise of partners to date. Individuals receiving Social Grants (such as the Child grant and Disability Allowance) are identified in collaboration with civil society and Government of Lebanon.

The LCRP overall estimation for persons in need (1,500,000) is used to define the larger population in need for the sector.

Gaps in knowledge and information surrounding Lebanese and host communities remain a challenge in properly understanding the needs of these communities. The sector will look towards upcoming assessments in 2022 to fill these gaps and gain a more comprehensive understanding of these needs. Moreover, the sector will strive to take pro-active steps to fill information gaps to ensure that assistance being channeled to Lebanese under the sector is relevant and efficient. This will include working with sector partners on needs-assessment plans in 2022, encompassing more clearly defined targeting and eligibility methods.

### **Palestinian refugees from Syria**

Based on the high levels of vulnerability among this population, all Palestinian refugees from Syria are targeted for basic assistance. This includes 29,000 individuals who are registered with UNRWA.

### **Palestine Refugees in Lebanon**

Estimations of people in need are based on the Crisis Monitoring Report conducted by UNRWA in 2021, indicating that 73 per cent of Palestine refugees in Lebanon are living in poverty.<sup>viii</sup> This is applied to the total population figure of 180,000, resulting in 131,400 individuals in need. Individuals and families are targeted through the UNRWA's Social Safety Net programme, in addition to identification of families with specific needs and vulnerabilities (persons with disabilities, children, persons with chronic disease and older persons).

### **Strengthening referral pathways**

Strengthening linkages and supporting referral processes of individual cases in and out of the Basic Assistance sector will be prioritized, noting the limitations of key Basic Assistance partners to respond to referrals due to the targeting mechanism in place. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Protection and Livelihood sectors, in particular, on the need to define referral pathways more clearly between the sectors. This will be further explored in 2022. Additionally, the Basic Assistance sector can leverage experience from partners with integrated service provision in their cash and social assistance interventions to make linkages with the larger inter-sector referral system, upholding minimum standards for referrals.

## **1. Total sector needs and targets**

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<sup>13</sup> Seasonal cash targets are based on 2021 coverage.

Population Cohorts	Total Population	Total Population in Need Persons	Total Population Targeted Persons	Total Population In Need Households	Total Population Targeted Households	2022 Total Population Targeted									
						# Female	# Male	% Female*	% Male*	# Children (0-18)	% Children*	# Adolescent (10-19)	% Adolescent* (10-19)	# Youth (20-24)	% Youth (20-24)
						Lebanese	3,864,296	1,500,000	682,500	267,857	121,875	352,003	330,497	51.58%	48.42%
Displaced Syrian	1,500,000	1,365,000	1,365,000	273,000	273,000	698,027	666,973	51.14%	48.86%	774,294	56.72%	320,215	23.46%	112,768	8.26%
Palestine Refugee from Syria (PRS)	29,000	29,000	29,000	9,667	8,450	15,022	13,978	51.80%	48.20%	11,600	40.00%	4,988	17.20%	3,613	12.46%
Palestine Refugee in Lebanon (PRL)	180,000	180,000	131,400	45,000	32,850	71,219	60,181	54.20%	45.80%	38,632	29.40%	24,546	18.68%	11,156	8.49%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>5,573,296</b>	<b>3,074,000</b>	<b>2,207,900</b>	<b>595,524</b>	<b>436,175</b>	<b>1,136,271</b>	<b>1,071,629</b>			<b>1,047,551</b>		<b>461,521</b>		<b>189,788</b>	

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**Mainstreaming of Gender and SGBV, Protection, Conflict sensitivity, PSEA, Environment and COVID-19 -1 pages max.**

**1. Gender and SGBV**

The Basic Assistance sector has made specific efforts to include gender experts and SGBV focal points identified through the Protection sector in the sector’s Monitoring and Evaluation Taskforce. In this way, efforts will be made to ensure that assessments conducted under the sector (for regular monitoring or context analysis) will be approached with a social/gender component. This includes a gender analysis component as part of any rapid assessment, leading to a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of women and men within households and communities while also assessing specific needs of women and girls, including the need for hygiene products.

The sector will also explore working more closely with women’s organizations on topics including gender-sensitive communication and messaging, monitoring, identification of risks and mitigation measures, establishment of gender-responsive mechanisms and other relevant gender considerations linked to Basic Assistance programming.

With support from the GBV Mitigation Committee, the Basic Assistance sector rolled out a survey to partners in late 2020 to better understand priorities linked to SGBV mitigation. Recommendations include the need for trainings on practical implementation aspects of SGBV risk mitigation for partners under the sector, the need to create better linkages between the SGBV sector/partners (specifically those providing case management) and ensuring participation in Safe Identification and Referrals trainings

**2. Protection**

The Protection Risk Assessment (PRA) was initiated in 2019 and updated in 2020 and 2021 to reflect critical protection risks stemming from Basic Assistance sector programmes and to agree on priority mitigation measures to implement in 2022. Risks identified include strengthening the availability of information to at-risk groups, strengthening safe identification and referrals especially from and to the Protection sector, addressing shortfalls in complaint and feedback and addressing and mitigating tensions. These fall into four main themes: meaningful access to assistance, safety, dignity and do no harm in relation to tensions, improved participation, empowerment and accountability in relation to enhanced consultation, monitoring and evaluation and complaints and feedback. The sector commits to reviewing the PRA on a bi-annual basis to measure progress on defined actions as well as to identify any emerging risks. The sector will also work to improve disaggregation of outcome and output level indicators by gender, age and disability. This will be done through inclusion of

specific guidance on collection and analysis of these variables (particularly on disability) in sector-level monitoring tools with the support of the Protection sector. Furthermore, in 2022, sector partners will monitor the safe provision of cash assistance through the sector logframe. In this respect, it will be important in 2022 to regularly review/identify protection risks and develop and implement concrete mitigation measures to avoid causing harm to women, men, girls and boys. The sector also commits to, at a minimum, reporting on outcome level indicators by gender, age and disability.

### **3. Conflict sensitivity**

Given the rising reports of conflict and tension between and within communities, specifically as it relates to cash assistance, the sector will work to build stronger linkages with the Social Stability sector. Proposed measures include quarterly updates to the working group, prioritization in attending conflict sensitively and do no harm trainings and workshops where guidance/checklists will be chosen accordingly and setting up consultations on specific topics with the Core Group. The Sector will also ensure partner access, knowledge and use of the Tension Monitoring System Dashboard, which provides updates on perception surveys regarding inter and intra communal relationships. Additionally, the sector will explore and monitor partner consideration for conflict-sensitive procurement for in-kind assistance to avoid local market disruption. The sector will also prioritize reviewing and increasing partner access to the Conflict Sensitivity Guidance Notes by UNDP Lebanon and House of Peace.

Enhancing communications with vulnerable Lebanese communities about the kind of assistance and support available to them under the LCRP and specifically focusing on existing support systems, such as the NPTP, may help mitigate misperceptions around assistance to displaced persons, with a specific focus on existing support systems. Decisions to increase transfer values while remaining evidence-based will be coupled with careful monitoring of community tensions and perceptions to ensure that any increase in the value of assistance provided does not pose any additional threat to those benefiting.

### **4. PSEA**

As vulnerabilities increase, so does the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse due to the increase in negative coping mechanisms undertaken by families and individuals as they struggle to meet their needs. The sector will pay specific attention to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). In 2021, the Basic Assistance sector rolled out a survey on PSEA to identify needs among partners. The main recommendations included developing training packages on PSEA, developing a brief guidance note outlining measures to be taken during recruitment to mitigate the risks of PSEA, guidance on conducting PSEA risk analysis and engaging with organizations that do not have any SEA risk mitigation measures.

### **5. Environment**

In Lebanon, seasonal assistance (both monetized and in-kind) aims to support households in meeting and minimizing domestic energy needs. This intervention is meant to minimize other concerns, such as alleviating associated conflict with host communities over the use of natural resources and decreasing indoor air pollution through the introduction of good quality thermal clothing and blankets. Furthermore, monetization of assistance under the Basic Assistance sector reduces energy costs and consumption related to in-kind distribution, transportation and storage.

Due to increased costs of fuel for heating, following the gradual removal of subsidies, specific attention is paid to environmental risks during the winter season, namely the risk of exploitation of natural resources through cutting trees for heating. The Sector will work with the Environmental Task Force, based at the Ministry of Environment, around potential mitigation measures and systematic monitoring of these risks, including discussions around programme-specific modifications that can minimize the risk and impact.

## 1. Covid-19

In early 2020, Covid-19-related lockdown measures across the country posed a challenge to the sector both in terms of organizing distributions and in terms of barriers on beneficiaries' access to redeeming cash assistance. The sector will fall back on lessons learned during that time if restrictive movement measures are newly implemented and enforced. Additionally, the sector will work with other relevant sectors where guidelines for safe in-kind distributions have been developed to ensure this learning is brought to basic assistance distributions.

## 6. Logframe

Attached in excel

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<sup>i</sup> World Bank (2021). Lebanon Economic Monitor, Spring 2021

<sup>ii</sup> Central Administration of Statistics (2021), Consumer Price Index

<sup>iii</sup> Basic Assistance Sector (2021), SMEB online dashboard (2021)

<sup>iv</sup> WFP and World Bank (2021). Lebanon m-VAM Vulnerability and Food Security Assessment, March April 2021

<sup>v</sup> UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP (2021), Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees

<sup>vi</sup> UNHCR (2021), Protection Monitoring 2021 Quarter 2 2021

<sup>vii</sup> UNRWA (2020), Socio-economic Survey on Palestinian Refugees from Syria living in Lebanon

<sup>viii</sup> UNRWA (2021), Crisis Monitoring Report

<sup>ix</sup> UNDP/ARK (2021), Perception Survey, August 2021

<sup>x</sup> UNHCR (2021), Post Distribution Monitoring Multi-purpose cash assistance, September 2021

<sup>xi</sup> Review of the Survival and Minimum Expenditure Baskets in Lebanon - Updated SMEB and MEB Components and Costs, September 2020