

[Basic Assistance]

1. Situation Analysis

Since 2019, Lebanon has been facing an unprecedented financial and economic crisis that is likely to rank among the top ten most severe crises globally.ⁱ This has had compounding effects on already vulnerable population groups including Lebanese, displaced Syrians, Palestinian refugees from Syria and Palestine refugees in Lebanon and has manifested in loss of jobs and income, high inflation, as well as shortages in essential services (including electricity and medications). 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.

The Lebanese Pound (LBP) has continuously depreciated since October 2019, impacting both prices of goods and services in the country while also impacting purchasing power of individuals. The informal market rate for the LBP averaged around 38,600 to the U.S. Dollar (USD) in October 2022, reaching a historical high of above 40,000 LBP/USD, compared to 26,400 LBP/USD in January of the same year. Due to Lebanon's high reliance on imports for basic goods and commodities, the fluctuation and depreciation of the local currency has a direct effect on prices in the country. The Consumer Price Index (CPI), one of the most important economic indicators used to measure inflation, recorded an annual increase of 163 per cent from September 2021 to September 2022.ⁱⁱ The Survival and Minimum Expenditure Baskets (S/MEB), baskets of basic food and non-food items and services, have also served as main indicators to monitor the costs of living in Lebanon. The price of the SMEB has increased by more than seven times by September 2022, compared to June 2020, and has increased by 50 per cent in 2022 alone.ⁱⁱⁱ These high levels of inflation, coupled with a loss in income generating opportunities as well as shortages in essential goods and services, have challenged the ability of vulnerable populations to meet their basic needs.

Findings from the 2022 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) showed that among the displaced Syrian population, 90 per cent of families need assistance to meet their basic survival needs. A large proportion of families were reducing spending on health and education as well as selling assets and one-third (30%) of Syrian households reported struggling to access menstrual hygiene items, with FHH (36%) more often facing this challenge than MHH (29%). Income generated through work was not able to compensate with the tremendous rise in prices. While average income among Syrians increased in 2022 (reached 60USD), the rate was not comparable to the national inflation rates. Male headed households had incomes that were 57 per cent higher than Female headed households, and a smaller proportion of females, in general, were part of the workforce. Additionally, larger proportions of female headed households rely on assistance and debt as main income sources^{iv}.

In 2021, more than half the Lebanese population in the country was estimated to be living below the poverty line.ⁱ Further estimations have suggested this to have increased by 9 per cent.ⁱ The household deprivation score (HDS), developed by the World Food Program (WFP) and used to assess non-monetary poverty among the Lebanese population, found that over half (53 per cent) of Lebanese households needed assistance to meet their basic needs by the end of 2021.^v During the same period, a little under three quarters Lebanese households were de-prioritizing health and education needs to save money for other expenses, 41 per cent had sold household assets and almost half (42 per cent) reported issues in accessing menstrual hygiene products. A quarter of employees were earning less than 1,100,000 LBP monthly. Lebanese families also reported taking out debts to pay for food, healthcare, education, and utility bills.^{vi}

Palestinian refugees, both from Syria and in Lebanon, have also been severely impacted by the ongoing crises in the country. UNRWA's September 2022 Crisis Monitoring Report A socio-economic survey on Palestinian refugees from Syria, showed that 93% of Palestine refugees are living below the poverty line, up from 86% in

March 2022. 87 per cent were poor and 11 per cent were extremely poor. About 22 per cent of families described themselves as “extremely poor”, 60 per cent described themselves as “poor”, and 18 per cent indicated that they were “moderately poor.” 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”.^{vii}

The dire economic situation of the country is also having negative -consequences on social stability and community relations. Like previous years, the VASyR and the UNDP/ARK Regular Perceptions Survey on Social Tensions show that the scarcity of and competition for resources and jobs is manifesting in increased tensions across the country. There is also evidence to show that assistance, and cash-based interventions specifically, is often cited as a potential driver of community tensions.^{viii}

During 2023, prices of basic goods in the country are expected to continue increasing in parallel with further depreciation of the local currency. Without support, vulnerable and poor families, and individuals, particularly women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, will continue struggling to meet their basic 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 from falling deeper into poverty while minimizing reliance on negative coping mechanisms. This is done through the provision of regular cash assistance to improve access to basic goods and services for poor households while providing additional support to socially excluded and susceptible groups, such as female headed households, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Moreover, the sector aims to support households to meet additional basic survival needs and cope with seasonal and/or emergency shocks.

The intervention logic is summarized as follows:

- If poor and socio-economically vulnerable households will benefit from unconditional, unrestricted cash assistance grants, then their basic survival needs will be met.
- If households or individuals with additional, specific needs, that cause additional financial burdens will benefit from unconditional, unrestricted cash grants, then their specific basic needs will be met.
- If populations affected by seasonal hazards and/or emergencies will receive cash grants and/or in-kind assistance, they will be able to secure additional needs, without compromising expenditures on basic needs.
- If Humanitarian assistance under the Sector is aligned, to the extent possible, to national social assistance and protection systems, services will be delivered effectively and efficiently.

The Sector’s focus on cash-based interventions stems from evidence that cash offers households the flexibility to determine and prioritize their needs, empowers, and promotes dignity of choice for recipients while stimulating local markets and achieving economies of scale (compared to in-kind modalities)^{ix}. While the on-going economic, banking, and financial crisis in the country has made the provision of cash assistance challenging, the experience from cash actors over the past three years has shown that cash transfers remain relevant and feasible. This is evident in high redemption rates of over 95 per cent¹ and scarce reports of any

¹ Redemption rates from the Lebanon One Unified Inter-Organizational System for E-cards (LOUISE).

serious risks redeeming and spending assistance (97 per cent of beneficiaries stating that they were able to safely assess cash assistance).^x Moreover, vulnerable families, including Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, have continued to voice a preference in receiving support through unrestricted cash.^{xi}

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, particularly in a tailored response to an individual, household, or community level emergencies. In-kind assistance, which includes the distribution of non-food items such as blankets, mattresses, sleeping mats, clothes, 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 programs under the sector and national social assistance responses, including the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) and Emergency Social Safety Net Program (ESSNP), as well as the national social grant programs under the National Social Protection Strategy. Strong coordination between humanitarian assistance and national social assistance programs will allow for a more effective and sustainable approach to service delivery. This particularly includes linkages with the Social Assistance Pillar of the National Social Protection Strategy.

Assumptions and risks

The expected deterioration of the economic and social stability in the country in 2023 will inevitably pose further challenges and barriers to the delivery of basic assistance. 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 sustain this modality. While many partners have shifted to provide cash-over-counter rather than through ATMs, a large bulk of cash assistance under the Sector continues to be delivered through ATMs, and thus with a heavy reliance on key functionalities of the banking sector.

Another key factor linked to economic instability in the country that is expected to further deteriorate in 2023 is the affordability of goods and services. Sector achievements at the outcome and impact levels are very much tied to the ability to provide a meaningful assistance package with regards to the transfer values of the cash grants. The volatility in markets and prices poses a risk on the stability and consistency of the cash transfers, affecting the real value of amounts transferred to assisted families. The sector will maintain an evidence-based approach to determine adequate transfer values while remaining cognizant of conflict sensitive and protection considerations. *Availability* of funding is also an influencing factor when it comes to keeping up with the increasing cost of living. In 2023, funds available for regular and emergency/seasonal cash assistance under the Sector are expected to decline, with the increasing level of needs across populations, maintaining a high coverage of families while scaling up transfer values may not be possible.

In 2023, the cash disbursement under the sector is likely to remain under a dual-currency system, with some actors providing assistance in USD and others in LBP. This poses challenges in the harmonization of transfer values across the sector. The sector has developed guidance on the calculation of transfer values in both currencies to ensure harmonization of methodologies across partners. The sector will continue to coordinate currency disbursement discussions under the framework set forth by the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator in 2021, laying out a suggested two phased approach to the shift in currencies².

² 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 high risks:

- **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. These risks are more evident in some regions where coverage of cash assistance is high and redemption points are limited. The Sector will continue to prioritize discussions around different cash modalities and the advantages and disadvantages of each, with point of redemption playing a large role in the assessment of risks. (Impact: high; Probability: high)
- **Inter and intra communal tensions.** These include tensions linked to disbursed transfer values, currency of disbursement, as well as overall potential decline in coverage of families. As funding is expected to decline, a larger gap is likely to be created between those assisted and those not receiving assistance (including those who may be discontinued), potentially leading to a heightened intra-communal tension risk. If tensions across nationality groups (particularly between Lebanese and Syrians) continue to rise, and risk, including protection risks, are not mitigated through a comprehensive communication plan, partners' ability to continue or scale up transfer values and coverage may be compromised (Impact: medium; Probability: high)
- **Loss of value for money due to discrepancies in exchange rates.** The ability of partners to minimize loss of value in money has been heavily reliant on agreements with Financial Service Providers to secure preferential exchange rates that follow the exchange rate in the informal market. For partners who have maintained LBP cash disbursements, misalignment between preferential rates and the informal rate will have consequences on the value of funds received. (Impact: high; Probability: medium)
- **Changes in official exchange rates impacting prices, purchasing power and value of money.** Several parallel exchange rates are in existence in the country currently, including the official USD rate which has been maintained at 1,515LBP, the *Sayrafa* rate, rates for imports, rates used for subsidy coverage, rates for withdrawing USD for personal bank accounts, and the market rate. Any change in these rates will have a direct impact on both prices and availability of commodities and services in the country, directly affecting cash-based interventions under the Sector aimed at supporting families meet a variety of basic needs. (Impact: high; Probability: medium)

Sector partners have taken several steps to mitigate some key risks including staggering of uploads, expanding ATM networks, and introducing or switching to other forms of delivery (ex. voucher or cash over the counter). Through strong collaboration with the Protection and Social Stability sectors, key risks to be monitored throughout 2023 include protection risks to communities, the risk of inter-group or intra-group confrontations, incidents, and tensions. Over the past year, partners have been able to successfully negotiate appropriate exchange rates to minimize loss of funds due to misalignment of exchange rates, other actors have shifted to provide assistance in USD to mitigate this risk. The Sector will continue advocating for alignment of transfer values with costs of living and providing guidance on meaningful assistance, using regular price monitoring and reviews of the SMEB to inform transfer values. The sector has also 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 Gender Based Violence (GBV)³. The Sector will continue to work

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

³ Discussed in more detail in the Mainstreaming section of the sector strategy.

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 monitoring and sharing of identified protection risks through 2023.

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, in particular for women, girls, older persons and persons with disabilities. From a do-no-harm perspective, the sector will work closely with gender and GBV focal points to identify methods of identification, prevention as well as assessments on different cash modalities.

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, food, rent and health and education-related expenditures, 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

Engagement, coordination and alignment with national programs and strategies (including the NPTP and the National Social Protection Strategy) will increase the coverage and effectiveness of interventions, reaching more vulnerable populations with basic assistance. These improved mechanisms are intended to facilitate the transfer of social value towards vulnerable populations, thus contributing to achieving Impact 3. This is achieved under outcome 3 of the Basic Assistance sector.

Expected results

The sector's planned outputs, and interventions feed in to three outcomes:

Outcome 1: Strengthen the ability of vulnerable households and individuals, including female-headed households, 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 to cover costs of basic needs.

The sector achieves this outcome through the provision of regular unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance under two categories. Poverty targeted cash assistance for basic needs to Lebanese, displaced Syrians, and Palestinian refugees supports poor families meet survival needs as defined through the SMEB. Other, complimentary social assistance programs provide cash grants to persons and families that face additional financial barriers to securing basic needs, including, but not limited to, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Through these interventions, vulnerable families and individuals have increased access to cash liquidity and are better able to prioritize and meet their needs.

Cash assistance for basic needs⁴ This 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 unrestricted and unconditional multi-purpose cash transfer. Through socio-economic vulnerability profiling, the poorest households are targeted and assisted.

The cash provided aims to bridge the gap between economic capacity that households are able to achieve and the defined survival expenditure level, based on the SMEB, which estimates monthly expenditures on essential items and services including food items, basic household assets, hygiene items (including menstrual hygiene items), rent, water, health, communications, transportation, and others.^{xii} The value is calculated based on the non-food component of the basket and is intended to be complementary to food assistance (cash for food or food e-cards) provided under the Food Security and Agriculture sector. Due to the high level of poverty across population groups, some partners may decide to support families with cash for basic non-food needs and food assistance separately to spread assistance to a larger number of poor families. However, the overlap these two programs will ensure that households are fully supported and have strengthened ability to meet their basic food and non-food needs.

Technical and comprehensive reviews of the expenditure baskets (MEB and SMEB) have taken place annually since 2020 following the release of the VASyR results. The costs of respective components in the baskets are monitored monthly relying heavily on WFP retail price data, the CPI, and UNHCR protection monitoring data. The sector recommends a transfer value based on the changes in prices of the non-food SMEB and estimated economic capacity of households, while maintaining a conflict sensitive approach to the provision of cash assistance. This is achieved through regular risk monitoring (as part of the sector protection risk assessment). Done within the sector core group, a detailed methodology for monitoring and updating transfer values has been developed. In this document, a 20 per cent threshold of change in transfer value coverage, relative to the SMEB, triggers an update in the value provided to families. Partners must also weigh other factors when deciding to update transfer values, including available fundings and social stability considerations. As of November 2022, the majority of assisted Syrian families were receiving 1,000,000LBP per month, only around 40 per cent of the recommended value⁵. Social concerns, as well as funding limitations, prevented some partners from further increasing the value. Several partners, with relatively smaller coverage, have been able to provide the full recommended value in USD (ranging from \$100 to \$150 in 2022). Continuous advocacy to increase transfer values to meet market prices is vital to curb harmful coping mechanisms and ensure households and individuals can meet their basic needs. In 2023, the sector will engage in detailed discussions around meaningful assistance packages and how to mitigate the negative impacts of decreased values.

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 programs, targeting more specific needs under different sectors (ex. Protection, Shelter, Education). Ensuring families can meet their basic survival needs through cash assistance will allow for the maximization of the impact of other sectoral cash interventions, which may be otherwise diluted. Additionally, as the Basic Assistance sector aims to increase families' access to specific services, through the provision of cash assistance, understandings around the functionality and accessibility of specific services that are intended to be covered through the cash transfers remains a priority. 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 services made available (ex. fee waivers for education or health) for a more holistic

⁴ Commonly referred to as Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)

⁵ Provided by UNHCR and WFP. The food assistance transfer value provided by WFP was 500,000 per person, capped at six people per household.

approach to supporting 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. This would also include better understanding referral pathways from the Basic Assistance sector to other sectors, to increase beneficiary knowledge and ability to access specific services.

Other Social Assistance Programs

These programmes also aim to strengthen the ability of families to meet their basic needs through regular unrestricted cash transfers but are based on understanding inherent vulnerabilities of specific groups of individuals. . This includes specifically targeting and supporting children, older persons, and persons with disabilities or other medical conditions, knowing that these groups incur additional expenses, have lower income generating capacities, and/or whose needs in the household may be de-prioritized when faced with financial strife. In most cases, the cash transfers are coupled with the provision of other services to address specific vulnerabilities and enhance service delivery.

The main distinction between social assistance programs under the Basic Assistance sector and other potentially similar sectoral cash-based programs is the unconditionality of the cash transfers intended to alleviate poverty and address socio-economic vulnerability 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 programs, to avoid duplication and ensure full complementarity of the different assistance packages through proper outcome monitoring and clearly distinguished indicators. The sector will also maintain and ensure intersectoral cash coordination with the Cash Working Group.

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 review of previously developed 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. Direct assistance provision under this Outcome encompasses both cash and in-kind assistance, under two distinct outputs.

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

During specific times in the year, or when households face unexpected shocks, needs may increase while capacity to keep up decreases. In most cases, these additional needs can be covered through purchase of goods and access of services in the local market, making a cash-based response relevant.

In winter, needs and vulnerabilities are heightened, and households are faced with compounding challenges to secure additional basic needs that range from purchasing of heaters, winter clothes, blankets, and securing enough fuel for heating. In parallel, income generating opportunities (particularly in agriculture and construction) are decreased in the winter, adding additional barriers for already poor families. 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, reviewed on an annual basis to maintain relevance.⁶ The basket includes both a non-food item (NFI) component as well as estimations for heating costs. The non-food items component includes 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 is 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, expected coverage while also considering the best use of received assistance.

Targeting for seasonal cash assistance for displaced persons follows a blanket approach where all households living in poverty are targeted for assistance. In 2022, all Syrian families living in poverty were targeted for winter assistance, in order to optimize on limited resources, agencies prioritized families that do not receive regular assistance with larger assistance packages for winter than for families who do receive regular assistance. For Lebanese households targeted for winter has occurred through partner outreach, including liaising with local authorities (ex. municipalities) as well as providing families that receive regular cash assistance for basic needs with a top-up. In 2023, as funds are expected to decline, the sector will engage in comprehensive discussions with partners to define any needed prioritization strategy including discussions on prioritization of families based on geographic location, regular assistance states, poverty, and categorical targeting.

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).

Outside the winter season, poor families may be susceptible other economic shocks that compromise their ability to meet their basic needs. In 2023, the basic assistance, working closely with the protection sector who also provide emergency cash assistance for protection related emergencies, will work towards clearly defining different types of economic shocks that may warrant cash intervention over a short term as well as defining complementarity and gaps across the different programmes.

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 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 a certain degree of capacity to deliver in-kind assistance in the event of an unprecedented emergency that may require a higher level of in-kind response. In 2022, the sector has begun developing a guidance note for in-kind assistance to ensure rationale and methods are streamlined across partners. In 2023, the sector will work closely with regional partners to ensure that in-kind assistance is properly coordinated, and gaps are identified in a timely and efficient manner. Work will also be prioritized to focus on conflict-sensitive considerations for in-kind support, particularly for large scale distributions.

⁶ 2022 Winter Cash Guidance note can be found here: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/97368>

The sector will coordinate with the protection sector in relation to the provision of emergency assistance, specifically, in response to evictions, 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: Outcome 3: Effective and efficient service delivery through strengthened linkages with humanitarian basic assistance outside government-led programs, 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 in to the NPTP database.

This includes developing clear guidance on the different interventions targeting vulnerable Lebanese to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication, understanding the degree to which the NPTP overlaps with other forms of targeting under the Basic Assistance sector, as well as contributing towards the alignment of existing social safety nets for the displaced and refugees with the emerging national social protection strategy.

Partners under the sector are encouraged to use resources available through the NPTP, including eligibility lists and data on vulnerable households, to target extreme poor Lebanese, to maintain capacity and confidence in the national system as well as 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, with a focus on ensuring information is trickled down to partners across the regions.

Likewise, Social Grants are identified as a key priority in Lebanon for the expansion of social assistance to individuals and households that face lifecycle vulnerabilities as outlined above.^{xiii} It will be important for basic assistance actors to ensure linkages with these programmes as relevant and to support their roll-out and expansion where feasible and needed.

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 outside and within the Ministry of Social Affairs/The Government of Lebanon; 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 programs.

Output 3.2 - Priorities defined for coordination between humanitarian basic assistance outside government-led programmes and national 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 and proposing a vision and a way forward in a way that guarantees social justice, social stability, and economic inclusion in society. The Strategy aims to provide immediate and longer-term solutions to growing poverty, vulnerability, and growing risks within the population in 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). The sector will work on documenting best practices of existing cooperation of humanitarian assistance and national social assistance systems and social assistance protection strategies.

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

Identification of sector needs and targets at the individual/HH, community and institutional/physical environment level⁷

Displaced Syrian households

Economic vulnerability is measured by a household's economic capacity, which includes expenditure and consumption. The MEB and SMEB serve as thresholds to estimate the proportion of the population in poverty and extreme poverty, respectively. The 2022 VASyR estimates that 91 per cent of the displaced Syrian population is living below the minimum expenditure basket⁸. Using this proportion 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 in poverty and are thus in need and targeted by the sector.

The first Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) for acute food insecurity in Lebanon was conducted in September 2022. Results revealed that for the projected period (January- April 2023), 790,000 Syrian refugees will face high acute food insecurity. In particular, 121,000 Syrian refugees are classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) and 678,000 Syrian refugees are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). Population classified in IPC Phase 3 and above require urgent humanitarian action to reduce food gaps, protect and restore livelihoods and prevent acute malnutrition.

Specific identification of poor families is mostly done through an econometric model that builds off the data gathered through the VASyR and then applied to the UNHCR database, which houses data on all Syrian refugees known to UNHCR in the country. The model identifies the strength of household's observable characteristics that act as predictors of expenditure levels. It generates welfare scores at case level used to rank the Syrian population from the most to the least economically vulnerable. Households with a score below the SMEB are considered severely vulnerable. Since 2021, UNHCR and WFP, who led on the development of the econometric model with the support of Development Analytics, complement scoring with district-level geographical quotas to balance proportion of assistance allocated to each district. Based on a study conducted in 2022 by Development Analytics, the multi-dimensional deprivation index has proven effective in targeting economically and multidimensionally deprived families and is used as an indicator in the geographical quota adjustment for 2022 expenditure-based scoring. Due to the high levels of vulnerability in the country, often, categorical targeting layers are added to the socio-economic scoring to prioritize families cash assistance for basic needs.

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

⁷ This can include Governorates, Districts, Cadasters, villages ...etc.

⁸ This figure excludes expenditure of households achieved through the receipt of assistance in order to estimate poverty levels of the population not taking into account the large number of families who receive cash based assistance.

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.

In 2023, UNICEF aims to rollout social grants including the child grant and national disability allowance to support vulnerable individuals throughout their lifecycle, Targeting of Syrian and Palestinian individuals is done in coordination with UNHCR and UNRWA. Targeting for these social grants, provided by UNICEF or other partners, follows a categorical approach, identifying individuals with specific lifecycle vulnerabilities.

Lebanese Households

In September 2022, the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Insecurity Analysis was undertaken in Lebanon, led by the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO and WFP. The IPC is a common evidence-based global scale to classify food insecurity through consolidation of wide-range evidence. According to the IPC results, 1,460,000 Lebanese are expected to be facing high acute food insecurity from January to April 2023⁹. In fact, a total of 233,000 people are classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), which reflects severe lack of food access. Moreover, 1,229,000 Lebanese residents are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). Given the strong correlation between food insecurity and socio-economic vulnerability, the IPC food insecurity classification results are used to determine the number of Lebanese in need under the Basic Assistance sector.

The number of persons targeted under the sector reflects the planned and estimated interventions for 2023. This includes individuals targeted through the NPTP, other non-food cash interventions (through NGOs and social grants), as well as estimations for seasonal support¹⁰. The total number of individuals targeted amounts to 762,500. Individuals targeted for cash assistance for basic needs or seasonal cash is done through partner level household assessments or through the NPTP. In 2023, the sector will prioritize developing guidance on targeting and eligibility for Lebanese, leveraging the experience and expertise of partners to date. The Sector will also work closely with the Food Security and Agriculture Sector under the LCRP and the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) to ensure efforts are complementary. Like for Syrians, individuals are targeting for Social Grants through categorical targeting and are identified in collaboration with civil society and Government of Lebanon.

While efforts over the past year filled in several gaps in knowledge and information surrounding Lebanese, the sector will look towards more detailed upcoming assessments in 2023 to fill further gaps and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the needs, vulnerabilities, and poverty levels of this population.

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 31,400 individuals who are registered with UNRWA.

Palestine Refugees in Lebanon

Like Palestinian refugees from Syria, a blanket approach is also considered for Palestine refugees in Lebanon where the total population is targeted (180,000 individuals). Individuals and families are targeted through 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). The Sector

⁹ The IPC analysis covered two time periods: the current phase estimated food insecurity levels from September to December 2022, while the projected phase analysis covered January to April 2023.

¹⁰ Seasonal cash targets are based on 2022 coverage

will also work closely with the Food Security and Agriculture Sector under the LCRP and the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) to ensure efforts are complementary.

1. Total sector needs and targets

REFER TO EXCEL

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 effort to include gender experts and GBV focal points identified through the Protection sector in the sector's Monitoring and Evaluation Taskforce who had developed post distribution and outcome monitoring tools in 2022. In this way, efforts have been made to ensure that assessments conducted under the sector (for regular monitoring or context analysis) are approached with a social/gender component.

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 GBV mitigation. Recommendations include the need for trainings on practical implementation aspects of GBV risk mitigation for partners under the sector, the need to create better linkages between the GBV sector/partners (specifically those providing case management) and ensuring participation in Safe Identification and Referrals trainings. The sector has also ensured to include a set of "GBV-specific" risks within the sector's Protection Risk Assessment to ensure that these risks are captured and well-monitored for potential action. In 2023, the BA sector members will continue to participate in Gender in Humanitarian Action capacity building initiatives both at national and field level.

2. Protection

The Protection Risk Assessment (PRA) was initiated in 2019 and was updated in 2020 and 2021 to reflect critical protection risks stemming from Basic Assistance sector programs, and to agree on priority mitigation measures. Risks identified, which 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 an annual basis to measure progress on defined actions as well as to identify any emerging risks. The sector will work closely with the protection sector to define the most efficient way to lightly review the PRA annually while also setting up systems to integrate the risk monitoring and response within the Sector's regular work.

In 2022, the sector worked to improve disaggregation of outcome level indicators by gender, age, and disability. This was 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. Outcome level indicators were also integrated into the Activity Info platform to encourage partners to report against these indicators, with appropriate disaggregation. Moreover, the inclusion of a safety focused indicator has been included under outputs 1.1 and 2.1, after consultation with the Protection Sector in an effort to support streamlining of safety level indicators across cash-based interventions and related outputs.

3. Conflict sensitivity

Given the high level of tensions between and within communities, specifically as it relates to access to services, good and cash, the sector will work to build stronger linkages with the Social Stability sector. Priority actions include quarterly updates to the Basic Assistance working group, prioritization in attending conflict sensitively

and Do No Harm trainings and workshops and setting up consultations on specific topics with the Core Group. The Sector will also work with the Social Stability sector to toll out the implementation of relevant Conflict Sensitivity guidance notes and checklists, including on conflict sensitive cash assistance. The sector will also work towards incorporating regular updates on key social stability and protection indicators during monthly meetings, given the high importance and interest in the subject.

The sector also commits and is willing to take a more pro-active role in mitigating misperceptions around assistance to displaced person by 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. Work done under Outcome 3 of the sector objectives will feed in to ensuring assistance to Lebanese is provided in an efficient and effective way, as well as ensuring information on available assistance is accurate.

Decisions to increase transfer values, while remaining evidence-based will also 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. Likewise, conflict sensitive approaches to in-kind distributions and support will be explored and advocated for under the sector.

4. PSEA

Acknowledging that as vulnerabilities increase, as 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. Since then, a PSEA focal point has been appointed under the Sector to support in moving these priorities forward.

In 2023, the sector will work to ensure that complain, feedback and response mechanisms including protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and child safeguarding are known, accessible and responsive in relation to Basic Assistance services. Building on existing platforms and infrastructure the sector will continue its efforts to support partners to improve collective accountability to affected populations, including PSEA and child safeguarding. There will be a particular emphasis on strengthening gender- and child-sensitive complaint, feedback, and response mechanisms (CFRM) with the aim of ensuring that trends inform sector interventions and modalities. The sector will promote the Inter-Agency minimum standard on complaint and feedback and opportunities for training on accountability for affected populations (AAP). Sector members will also engage in the work of the PSEA network and promote training and mentorship opportunities.

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 program specific modifications that can minimize the risk and impact.

6. Logframe

REFER to EXCEL

ⁱ World Bank (2021). [Lebanon Economic Monitor, Spring 2021](#).

ⁱⁱ Central Administration of Statistics, Consumer Price Index, September 2022

ⁱⁱⁱ World Food Program, Market Monitor, October 2022

^{iv} UNHCR, UNICEF, WFO, Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees, 2022

^v World Food Program, Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis of Lebanese Residents, July 2022

^{vi} REACH, Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment, September 2022

^{vii} UNRWA (2021), Crisis Monitoring Report

^{viii} UNDP-ARK Group (May 2022) Regular Perception Surveys on Social Tensions throughout Lebanon Wave XIII

^{ix} Shannon Doocy and Hannah Tappis, The Effectiveness and Efficiency of Cash-Based Approaches in Emergencies: A Systematic Review, 2015

^x UNHCR (2022), multi-purpose cash assistance program 2021-2022 Mid Term Post Distribution Monitoring, September 2022

^{xi} REACH, Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment, September 2022

^{xii} Basic Assistance Sector (2022), 2022 Non-Food SMEB Update Summary - October 2022

^{xiii} 3RF; UN position paper on social protection; and National Social Protection Strategy draft