

## Overview

As Lebanon faces another challenging winter, the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) partners are preparing to meet both regular winter needs and the expanded demands resulting from recent hostilities and subsequent displacement. Vulnerable populations of all nationalities, already grappling with severe socio-economic conditions, now confront additional hardships amid political instability and deteriorating security. This year, while maintaining a holistic approach, the scope of the 2024-2025 winter response has been broadened to address the rising needs driven by evolving conditions. Expanded interventions will support both local institutions and vulnerable populations across displaced and host communities, with a focus on high-altitude and conflict-affected areas where winter's impact will be most severe.

Building on valuable lessons from previous years and taking emerging needs into account, the 2024-2025 response leverages established preparedness actions at both household and community levels while scaling up assistance for newly displaced populations. These enhanced measures emphasize the timely distribution of essential resources, infrastructure support, and rapid mobilization to address emerging needs amidst ongoing displacement. Strategic planning and collaborative partnerships remain central to mitigating the compounded risks of winter and conflict, ultimately reinforcing the dignity, well-being, and safety of vulnerable communities across Lebanon.

The total cost for winter preparedness and response in 2024-2025 is \$83 million, which includes \$50.9 million for emergency response due to the conflict and \$32.1 million for regular LRP activities. Of the \$50.9 million required for emergency needs, \$24.7 million was originally allocated under the LRP budget and has been reprioritized for emergency response (i.e., activities adjusted to focus on internally displaced persons/conflict-affected caseloads), \$9.2 million was budgeted in the Flash Appeal, and an additional \$17 million in new funding is required in funds not budgeted neither under the LRP nor the Flash Appeal. This estimate excludes operational fuel costs, noting that the Government of Lebanon intends to cover fuel supplies for prioritized collective shelters.

This paper outlines a holistic approach encompassing both standard winter response initiatives and the expanded support required to meet escalating needs, highlighting critical interventions essential for a comprehensive and inclusive winter response in Lebanon.



Figure 1. Blanket distribution in Baalbek El Hermel, the Bekaa Valley. © Medair





Figure 2. Core Relief Items (CRIs) prepositioned in a safe warehouse and ready to be distributed in preparation for winter. © Medair

## Winter Preparedness

Lebanon faces severe winter conditions marked by heavy rains, snow, high winds, and thunderstorms, leading to blocked roads, flooding, landslides, and damage to substandard shelters, especially in informal settlements. Infrastructure damage from recent airstrikes, coupled with restricted access to conflict-affected areas, adds significant barriers to effective winter response efforts. This year, Lebanon's winter response is expanding significantly under the LRP to address the urgent needs arising from recent displacements due to intensified hostilities. This expansion covers both traditional winter needs and additional, acute requirements for the influx of displaced populations, especially in high-altitude areas above 500 meters, where winter conditions are most severe.

These harsh winter conditions exacerbate Lebanon's already fragile situation, with a large portion of the population struggling amid the ongoing economic crisis. Widespread power cuts make heating and electricity increasingly unaffordable, placing basic needs at serious risk. This year, escalating hostilities and a surge in displacement have intensified these vulnerabilities, straining Lebanon's response capacity. Local institutions, municipalities, and civil defense are facing growing financial constraints, limiting their ability to prepare for winter and respond to emergencies. Critical funding gaps persist for essentials like fuel, canal cleaning, waste management, and equipment maintenance, weakening the community's resilience against the compounded challenges of severe weather and economic hardship.

The expanded winter response spans multiple sectors—including Basic Assistance, Shelter, Site Management and Coordination, WASH, and Social Stability—through the LRP. Partners are working to support vulnerable and displaced populations of all nationalities, along with local institutions, by providing winter cash and in-kind assistance, implementing municipal support projects, enhancing site infrastructure, conducting winter shelter repairs, supplying collective sites with hot water, and distributing essential winter items and clothing. These efforts aim to mitigate the impact of severe weather, despite the mounting challenges of the current crisis.



## Sectoral Emergency Preparedness and Response

Ahead of winter, partners engage in thorough cross-sectoral coordination to review and reinforce contingency stocks. This year, a significant portion of stocks typically pre-positioned for winter had to be repurposed for immediate relief due to escalating displacement needs, which has impacted long-term winter preparedness. Inter-Sector coordination now involves joint planning efforts to bolster readiness for the season ahead, including updating the geo-split approach and positioning Emergency Rapid Needs Assessment (ERNA) teams strategically across regions to assess needs in collective shelters. These teams, refined from last year's RNA models, stand ready to respond to substantial storm events requiring coordinated, multi-sector action to assist affected households.

To streamline communication, practical channels have been established, including emergency WhatsApp groups connecting the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) unit, and Inter-Sector partners. These channels facilitate rapid coordination during emergency responses. Partners are also conducting post-distribution monitoring across regions to ensure that relief effectively meets family needs, with collected data guiding future emergency preparedness measures.

Building on lessons learned from previous winter seasons, there is a continued focus on preventing duplication through adherence to the geo-split model, thorough mapping of collective sites and informal settlements, and precise partner alignment. The rapid assessment tools are adapted as needed to reflect contextual changes, and contingency planning has been heightened to strengthen preparedness across all sectors. Capacity-building initiatives are being coordinated among partners to reinforce a collaborative approach, and advocacy efforts are intensifying to secure necessary funding to sustain these efforts.

The projected cost of winter preparedness and response for the 2024-2025 season is \$83 million, with \$50.9 million directed toward the emergency response to the conflict's impact. This includes \$24.7 million reprioritized from the LRP budget, \$9.2 million from the Flash Appeal, and \$17 million in additional requirements not included in either the LRP or the Flash Appeal. Securing additional funding remains critical to support municipal assistance, weatherproofing, cash support, and site improvements essential for effective winter response. Advocacy for these funds continues through the emergency Flash Appeal and the International Conference in Support of Lebanon's People and Sovereignty that took place October 2024 in Paris.

### Basic Assistance Sector

Under the Basic Assistance sector, winter cash assistance is provided to vulnerable households to help them purchase essential winter items such as heaters, warm clothing, blankets, and fuel for heating. While cash transfers remain the preferred modality to meet basic needs, the sector also maintains a limited distribution of in-kind Core Relief Items (CRIs) when necessary. In-kind assistance supports families in both preparing for the winter season and recovering from incidents like floods, fires, evictions, or forced relocations.

This year, the Basic Assistance sector faces mounting challenges in delivering robust winter assistance. The recent wave of displacement, coupled with an ongoing economic crisis, has stretched resources, leading to significant funding shortfalls that threaten the sector's ability to meet growing needs. Vulnerable populations from all nationalities are at risk of reduced coverage, especially those recently displaced from conflict-affected areas in southern Lebanon. To address this, the sector is actively engaging with a wide range of organizations, including those involved in the IASC scale-up, to mobilize additional resources for winterization support and cash assistance.

The sector is currently operating with at least 18 partners prepared to deliver CRIs and cash-based support, assuming



Figure 3. Blanket distribution in Baalbek El Hermel, the Bekaa Valley. © Medair

adequate funding and supply. However, existing CRI stock remains insufficient to fully meet projected needs, especially given the scale of the internal displacement crisis. The LRP provides some funding for a limited caseload, but additional funding is necessary to address the needs of recent Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

In preparation for winter, the sector has developed a targeted assistance package and guidance under the LRP. Strategic planning includes a detailed mapping of cadaster areas by

In preparation for winter, the sector has developed a targeted assistance package and guidance under the LRP. Strategic planning includes a detailed mapping of cadastral areas by elevation, allowing partners to prioritize high-altitude regions, above 500 meters, where cold weather is more severe. This mapping optimizes resource allocation and directs support to the most affected communities.

This year, all displaced individuals in colder, high-altitude regions will be targeted with tailored assistance. IDPs located outside collective shelters will receive cash assistance to cover three months of heating costs and other winter needs. Where cash assistance is not feasible, and particularly in collective shelters, winter-specific in-kind packages will be provided to meet critical needs, excluding non-winter items like mattresses.

## Shelter Sector

The Shelter sector employs a range of interventions to improve living conditions for vulnerable households, particularly those living in substandard shelters, especially Informal Settlements (IS) and collective shelters. These efforts include weatherproofing and minor repair activities through the provision of in-kind shelter materials, fire-fighting equipment, and technical guidance on shelter maintenance practices. In flood-prone regions, site improvements prioritize preventive measures such as river cleaning, constructing French drains, and graveling to reduce flooding and water inundation risks. These interventions have proven particularly effective in areas with high concentrations of informal settlements, such as the Bekaa, North Lebanon, and Akkar.

Preemptive distribution of shelter kits plays a vital role in helping families in ISs fortify their shelters against winter conditions. However, the recent displacement surge has led to a high demand for shelter kits, where many kits initially intended for winterization have already been utilized for emergency needs. Although stock levels have not yet reached critical scarcity, there is an increasing risk of shortages that require immediate attention. Concurrently, the sector is engaged in discussions with key donors and lead agencies to replenish shelter kit stocks.

The Shelter sector's capacity and interventions for the 2024-2025 season encompass various targeted initiatives to address the needs of vulnerable households. Outside of Collective Shelters, the sector plans to distribute shelter kits to those who have relocated to ISs. For those residing in inadequate or unfinished shelters or are in hard-to-reach areas in damaged homes, approximately 10,000 households are expected will need sealing-off kits, although current capacity only meets half of the demand, leaving a gap of 5,000 households and a funding

Additional challenges include determining the feasibility of individual heating solutions if needed within collective shelters, and securing an effective modality for heating support outside collective shelters where cash is not viable.

The estimated funding required for the Basic Assistance sector's winter initiatives is \$27.4 million. To bridge anticipated funding and coverage gaps, the sector is fostering open communication with partners and donors. By highlighting the urgent need for winter support, the Basic Assistance sector aims to mobilize resources, drive collaboration, and ensure comprehensive support for vulnerable communities. This coordinated effort is essential to mitigate the impacts of winter, particularly given the heightened needs arising from recent displacement and economic challenges.



Figure 4. Implementation of shelter rehabilitation activities in Akkar. © PU-AMI

shortfall of \$1.5 million. Within Collective Shelters, where high-altitude locations expose around 80,000 IDPs to harsh winter conditions, the sector will explore and implement thermal insulation improvements to ensure adequate protection, with an estimated funding requirement of \$2.4 million for this critical intervention.

The total estimated funding required for the Shelter sector's winter preparedness and response is \$3.9 million. This funding is essential not only to sustain immediate conflict-response needs but also to fulfill planned winterization activities, including site improvements and the provision of shelter and sealing-off kits.

The Shelter sector's strategy involves close collaboration with partners, efficient procurement planning, and securing essential funding to navigate the challenges posed by the winter season. Through these coordinated efforts, the sector aims to protect vulnerable families, ensuring that they have adequate shelter and insulation to withstand the harsh winter conditions.



## Site Management and Coordination Sector

The Site Management and Coordination sector newly established this year considering the emergency, plays a pivotal role in ensuring coordinated, dignified, and life-saving conditions for the most affected displaced population living in collective sites. With national-level coordination already in place, the sector is strengthening its coordination mechanism at regional level, currently mobilizing operational partners to meet the emerging needs of displaced populations. Assistance efforts focus on supporting authorities with safe relocation activities, enhancing community communication within collective sites, and establishing robust communication channels with relevant authorities to ensure consistent, harmonized assistance. This coordination extends to increasing risk mitigation measures within collective sites, providing essential operational inputs, and conducting minor community repairs. Additionally, the SMC sector assessed the energy requirements for each collective site to support fuel provisions for the winterization period, recognizing that the Lebanese authorities will cover the fuel costs for 450 GoL collective sites over a four-month period.

Ongoing coordination with key stakeholders is crucial for preparedness, yet significant challenges remain. Limited funding, with an estimated gap of \$3 million, restricts the sector's capacity to implement a fully comprehensive response. Access to remote and hard-to-reach areas adds to the complexity, alongside the need to mobilize partners and manage any newly identified collective sites that may arise following sudden IDP influxes. Despite these challenges, the Site Management and Coordination sector is committed to enhancing site-level conditions and fostering safe, sustainable environments for displaced communities amid Lebanon's current crisis.

## WaSH Sector

The WaSH sector is essential to Lebanon's winter preparedness, focusing on secure water access and improved wastewater management to protect health and maintain dignity in vulnerable and displaced communities.

To respond effectively, the WaSH sector remains adaptable, adjusting its strategies as needed based on partner availability and site accessibility to ensure timely support in critical areas. This season, the sector will prioritize IDP collective shelters, installing hybrid (solar/electric) water heaters to ensure consistent access to hot water—a fundamental human right for displaced persons facing Lebanon's harsh winter. This initiative targets all IDP families across over 1,000 shelters, aiming to reach over 190,000 individuals.

However, the estimated funding gap for this activity currently stands at USD 1.7 million, which includes the cost of the heaters and installation but excludes the operational costs of the water heaters. Additionally, a major cross-sectoral challenge is securing a reliable energy source for collective shelters across Lebanon, especially for water heaters during the winter months.

Working in alignment with the Ministry of Environment's safeguards, the sector prioritizes vulnerable areas and high-risk issues, especially in informal settlements prone to flooding. Key emergency response activities include supporting relocated families to address immediate water, sanitation, and hygiene needs. This year, the WaSH sector adopted a data-driven approach to winter preparedness, leveraging the WASH Assessment Platform to identify settlements with frequent flooding over the past three years. Based on these insights, a priority list of high-risk collective sites was shared with



Figure 5. Water testing at Aarqa 073 Site. © Solidarités International

partners, prompting targeted interventions such as community-led drain cleaning and other proactive measures to mitigate winter-related risks. However, the ongoing escalation has complicated site access and strained human resources, challenging the sector's capacity to effectively support informal settlements.

Through proactive, data-informed planning and adaptive response measures, the WASH sector aims to build resilience within communities, mitigate water-related risks, and uphold the dignity and health of Lebanon's most vulnerable populations during the winter season.

## Social Stability Sector

The Social Stability sector is at the forefront of Lebanon's winter preparedness strategy, focusing on supporting institutions, municipalities, civil defense, local authorities, and communities. This year, the sector's initiatives target critical areas such as water drainage, stormwater canal maintenance, and road rehabilitation to fortify communities against the challenges of winter storms. Key activities include cash-for-work programs, equipment support, and resource mobilization efforts across vulnerable municipalities.

For the 2024-2025 winter season, support to Lebanon's Civil Defense at national and sub-national levels is a top priority, with an estimated \$9 million allocated for essential daily working suits, tools, and equipment. Additionally, the sector plans to support 30 municipalities and Unions of Municipalities (UoMs) with \$3 million in equipment, including 14 skid steer loaders, seven backhoe loaders, seven septic trucks with water jetting, and bulldozer rentals for snow removal, among other necessary tools. The replacement of missing rainwater manhole and trench covers is also planned to strengthen infrastructure, especially in areas prone to flooding.

Maintenance of waterways and drainage systems is another focal point, with an estimated \$1 million allocated for cleaning river streams, stormwater channels, and canals in areas like Akkar, Bekaa, North, South, and Mount Lebanon. Road rehabilitation and cleaning in Bekaa and the South are similarly prioritized to ensure accessibility during adverse weather conditions. To support these efforts, each UoM will require approximately 600 liters of diesel to sustain winter operations.



Figure 6. Construction of Stormwater Canals in Daraya. © UNDP



## Cross-Sectoral Consideration

Winter preparedness in Lebanon necessitates an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to address overlapping needs and mitigate compounded challenges arising from the economic crisis, conflict, and increased displacement. Key areas of focus span Education, Protection, Health, Energy, and Conflict Sensitivity, each contributing to a comprehensive response for vulnerable populations.

### Education:

The use of schools as temporary shelters for displaced populations has had short-, medium-, and long-term impacts on school infrastructure, disrupting educational services for both Lebanese and Syrian children. To restore schools to their primary educational function, substantial winterization, rehabilitation, and operational support are needed. An estimated \$450,000 is required to prepare 50 public schools (10% of the 493 currently used as shelters), covering costs for heating, winterization, and general operational needs (\$3,000 per month per school for three months). Key challenges include finding alternative shelter solutions for displaced families currently housed in schools and securing adequate funding for school rehabilitation to minimize disruptions in education.

### Protection:

Protection needs are particularly acute for women and children who are disproportionately impacted by displacement and winter hardships. Cross-sectoral coordination is essential to ensure access to safe and warm shelters, prevent exposure to gender-based violence, and provide essential support services. This requires consistent collaboration between the Shelter, Protection, and Health sectors to ensure safe spaces and prioritize protection services across all displacement sites, particularly collective shelters.

### Health:

The Health sector faces heightened risks of diseases with outbreak potential (e.g. Cholera, Polio), especially with the confirmation of a cholera case in Akkar, and very high potential risk of the disease spread particularly in overcrowded and under-resourced collective shelters and in informal settlements. Efforts to ensure safe water access, improved sanitation, and hygiene education, risk communication and community engagement are essential to reduce transmission risks. Strengthening the coordination and multisectoral collaboration is critical, and fundamental to controlling cholera outbreaks and other communicable diseases, especially in collective shelters and informal settlements.

### Energy:

Fuel shortages remain a critical concern affecting heating, cooking, and operational capacities across sectors. Reliable access to fuel is vital to maintain heating in collective shelters, educational facilities, and health centers. Cross-sectoral efforts are focused on advocating for donor support to secure sufficient fuel supplies and exploring alternative energy solutions to sustain heating needs through winter, despite limited funding for these resources.

### Conflict Sensitivity:

In light of ongoing hostilities, conflict sensitivity is central to winter response planning. Ensuring that aid distribution and resource allocation do not exacerbate communal tensions is essential for fostering social stability. This requires careful collaboration among sectors to address the needs of both displaced and host communities fairly and transparently, while proactively monitoring and mitigating potential conflicts over scarce resources such as fuel, shelter, and food assistance.

By mainstreaming Conflict Sensitivity across involved sectors—Education, Protection, Health, Energy —Lebanon's winter preparedness efforts aim to address the diverse needs of vulnerable populations more effectively. This holistic approach seeks not only to provide essential services but also to build mitigate risks to social stability across communities during the challenging winter season.

## Area Based Winter Preparedness & Response

The winter preparedness and response strategy in Lebanon includes tailored interventions across specific regions—North and Akkar, Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel, Beirut, and Mount Lebanon (BML), and the South and Nabatieh—to address the unique challenges presented by winter conditions, recent hostilities, and increased displacement. These area-specific operational considerations highlight prioritized needs and localized challenges for the 2024-2025 winter season. Each region’s operational considerations reflect Lebanon’s adaptive, area-based approach to winter preparedness, which combines pre-positioned supplies, targeted risk mitigation, and coordination with local authorities and LRP partners. This approach addresses localized vulnerabilities while ensuring a cohesive response strategy that is responsive to the compounded challenges of winter weather, conflict, and resource limitations.

### *North and Akkar*

In the North, the primary concern remains flooding, particularly in areas around the Al Kabir and El Oustouwan rivers, where overflow risks are exacerbated by limited capacity of local authorities. Efforts in northern Lebanon focus on cleaning river channels to prevent blockages and mitigate flood risks in villages, informal settlements, and high-risk locations. Challenges include limited municipal resources, which affect the ability to carry out consistent preventive maintenance on drainage systems and roads. Coordination with partners is ongoing to bolster local response capacity and support cleaning operations. Winterization activities for informal settlements are also a priority, with updates to the RNA tool facilitating improved partner response capabilities and enabling effective preparedness in the North.

### *Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel*

In the Bekaa and Baalbek-El Hermel regions, severe winter conditions, such as heavy snowfall and icy roads, are expected to hinder accessibility. Partners are advised to preposition supplies and complete early distributions, especially in high-elevation areas and flood-prone zones. However, access challenges are further complicated by ongoing conflict, particularly in north and west Bekaa, prompting coordination with Access Working Group to secure convoy routes. Prioritization remains on substandard shelters and collective sites, where limited partner capacity affects coverage, particularly in remote northern Bekaa areas. The region also faces shortages in heating fuel, stoves, and sufficient electricity for collective shelters, a concern already noted by collective shelter managers.

### *Beirut and Mount Lebanon (BML)*

In BML, the winterization response is complicated by shelter shortages and anticipated displacement pressures. The majority of shelters are functioning at full capacity, and some, including schools, are privately owned and at risk of eviction, further limiting the number of secure spaces available. The response to winter is further complicated by the lack of shelter options, especially for refugees, who remain largely without secure accommodation. Despite considerable efforts, few solutions have been provided, leaving displaced families in a precarious situation as winter approaches. For existing shelters, efforts focus on equipping facilities with heaters, winter-proofing, and water heaters for showers. A notable challenge is the rising electricity costs for collective shelters, exacerbated by increased heater usage, which burdens limited resources. Additionally, there is persistent flooding in many areas due to limited resources and capacity for maintaining drainage systems, leading to blockages from accumulated debris. This leaves communities at risk each rainy season, as clogged drains and overwhelmed systems struggle to handle rising water levels, contributing to recurrent flooding challenges in the region. Due to the topography, many sewage systems, gray water, and rainwater naturally flow through the Southern Suburbs of Beirut, one of the most affected areas in Lebanon. While it is challenging to assess potential damages at this time, special attention will need to be given to this area in terms of WASH to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. The BML response includes strategic prioritization of areas based on elevation and shelter conditions, with efforts to streamline coordination among sector partners to manage electricity and heating needs effectively.


### *South and Nabatieh*


The South and Nabatieh regions are significantly impacted by ongoing hostilities, which have strained local resources and affected partners’ ability to access high-risk areas, particularly in Nabatiyeh, Marjayoun, Hasbaya, Bent Jbeil, Tyre districts as well as communities near the Blue Line. In addition to general infrastructure damage, fuel shortages in remote, high-altitude areas like Marjayoun and Hasbaya compound the challenges of winter preparedness. Local authorities in these districts face critical capacity constraints, limiting their ability to address infrastructure issues such as waste management, stormwater control, snow removal, removing debris to prevent flooding, in addition to supplying fuel to collective shelters. To address these needs, the response strategy focuses on supporting local authorities with equipment for waste and stormwater management, as well as diesel provisions to meet heating demands in hard-to-reach areas. Additional efforts are underway to ensure that collective shelters in conflict zones have adequate supplies, such as solar or gas heaters, winter clothing and blankets, and winter clothing, to support the well-being of displaced families.





## Challenges & Gaps in the 2024-2025 Response


Winter preparedness and response efforts this year face a uniquely complex array of challenges, underscored by the escalation of hostilities, deepening economic crisis, and a significant increase in displacement. Each of these factors introduces additional needs that add layers of complexity to an already strained response system, demanding highly coordinated and strategic interventions across all sectors.


 **Funding Shortfall:** The persistent lack of adequate funding remains a significant barrier, limiting the scope of necessary interventions and compromising the effectiveness of winter preparedness. Developing sustainable funding solutions and cultivating partnerships are essential to address this financial gap.

 **Impact of Conflict:** The conflict escalation since late September has diverted resources, disrupting plans and shortening the timeframe for scaling up winterization efforts to meet the urgent needs of newly displaced populations. Mitigating these impacts requires rapid mobilization and adaptive resource management.

 **Unpredictable Stock and Supply Chain Disruptions:** Lebanon's economic instability impacts the availability and price of essential winter supplies, creating gaps in stock levels that delay or limit distribution to those most in need.

 **Fuel at Site and Community Levels:** Fuel shortages at both the site and community levels pose significant challenges to heating and energy provision, especially as winter temperatures drop. Ensuring adequate fuel supplies is vital to safeguard the health and well-being of affected communities.

 **Source of Energy:** A lack of funding for fuel, shortage in supply, operation and maintenance, and sustainable energy solutions is a critical issue, as many donors remain hesitant to support these areas. Addressing this reluctance in discussions with donors is essential to secure consistent, sustainable energy for winter operations.

 **Capacity of Municipalities & Civil Defense:** Municipalities and Civil Defense units face critical resource and operational limitations that hinder their ability to respond to preparation for winter in terms of clearing channels of debris and solid waste and ultimately responding to winter-related emergencies effectively. Investing in training, equipment, and enhanced coordination mechanisms is crucial to strengthening local response capacities.


 **Access to War-Affected Areas:** Providing assistance in conflict-impacted regions remains difficult due to restricted access routes and adverse winter conditions. Overcoming these barriers requires specialized logistical planning and security measures to reach those in need.



Figure 7. The Al Kabir North River, marking the border between Lebanon and Syria in Akkar, faces high flooding risks due to insufficient basin management and solid riverbanks, threatening adjacent agricultural lands, infrastructure, and shelters. © UNDP