

Guidance Note

Basic Assistance Sector: 2022/23 Winter Cash Assistance

Under Outcome 2 of the Basic Assistance Sector, the sector aims to strengthen the ability of populations affected by seasonal hazards and emergencies to secure additional basic survival needs. One of the main activities under this outcome is the provision of seasonal cash assistance. During the winter (typically five months from November to March), needs increase as cold temperatures across the country require families to incur added expenses related to securing adequate heating. Additional expenses at the start of winter also include the potential purchase of non-food items including blankets, mats, heaters, and clothing. Winter and seasonal hardship also comes at times where casual labour opportunities tend to decrease and therefore income generated by households with working members is reduced.

Winter Basket and Transfer Values

Throughout the year, the sector relies on the Survival Minimum Expenditure Baskets (SMEB) to define basic needs. The SMEB is also used to determine transfer values for monthly multi-purpose cash assistance.

For Winter, the Basic Assistance Sector has developed a Winter Basket to outline winter specific needs and their respective costs in the market. The basket includes both a estimated heating costs as well as a non-food items (NFIs) component. The non-food items component includes heaters, blankets, mattresses, mats, and clothing kits for various age groups and genders. Heating needs and costs are estimated for diesel, wood and gas.

- **Non-food items**

The table below summarizes the costs of a variety of core winter items, through prices provided by the UNHCR Supply team. Prices were sourced in U.S. Dollars (USD) and converted to Lebanese Pounds (LBP) using the average unofficial exchange for September 2022¹.

Table 1: Winter Specific Non-Food Items, costs in LBP and USD, September 2022/23

	Quantity	Cost per unit, USD	Total cost, USD	Cost, LBP
Mat synthetic sleeping	5	\$ 2.10	\$ 10.50	LBP 383,106.96
Blanket, synthetic (fleece) 1.5 x 2 m, high thermal	5	\$ 6.55	\$ 32.75	LBP 1,194,928.85
Mattress, foam, light	5	\$ 15.00	\$ 75.00	LBP 2,736,478.29
Heaters	1	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	LBP 2,189,182.63
Thermal under cloth	2	\$ 15.00	\$ 30.00	LBP 1,094,591.32
Male/female Unisex, warm sweater	2	\$ 11.00	\$ 22.00	LBP 802,700.30
Male/Female, Warm winter trouser, denim or cotton	2	\$ 13.50	\$ 27.00	LBP 985,132.19
Male/female Woolen Hat, Gloves and Scarf Set	2	\$ 6.50	\$ 13.00	LBP 474,322.90
Woolen/warm socks	5	\$ 4.50	\$ 22.50	LBP 820,943.49
1 clothing set for Baby	1	\$ 10.50	\$ 10.50	LBP 383,106.96

Three combinations of NFIs are proposed for the winter basket, prioritized depending on funding and vulnerability. The medium basket excludes mattresses, mats, and heaters under the assumption that these would not need to be secured every year and could potentially remain with the household throughout different winter seasons. The small basket further prioritizes items, excluding adult winter clothes, under the same assumption. Several partners are also involved in the distribution of these items throughout the winter. Although in-kind assistance is not provided through a blanket approach to all households, if families face severe weather shocks and become in additional need of these items, they might be secured through in-kind distributions.

¹ Average exchange rate covering September 1st through 23rd, 2022



Table 2: NFI winter basket combinations, winter 2022/23

Full basket (all NFIs)	\$303.25	LBP 1,064,493.90
Medium Basket (without heaters, mattresses, and mats)	\$ 157.75	LBP 5,755,726.01
Small Basket (without heaters, mattresses, mats, and adult clothing)	\$ 65.75	LBP 2,398,979.30

- **Heating costs**

The basket for fuel costs below includes the average national cost of three sources of heating:

- Diesel
One family is estimated to require 60 liters of Diesel per month. This was estimated through consumption surveys carried out in Syria and compared to data collected through Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) in Lebanon in previous years, which yielded similar figures. Official fuel prices are used to estimate this cost.
- Wood
Wood types, costs and estimated needs were compiled through consultation with UNHCR field offices. An average across regions is used to estimate a national price for the winter basket.
- Gas
One family is estimated to require one gas tank (10kg) for month for heating. This excludes the cost of gas for cooking, which is included in the SMEB. Official fuel prices are used to estimate this cost.

The table below lists the different monthly heating costs, per source as well as the average total estimated cost in USD and LBP. Prices for heating sources were obtained in LBP and converted to USD using the average unofficial exchange for August to date.

Table 3: Estimated heating costs per source per month and average monthly cost in USD and LBP

	Quantity	Price/Unit (average)
Diesel	60	LBP 39,500.00
Wood		\$ 103.00
Gaz- Cooking /Heating (10Kg bottle)	1	LBP 350,000.00
Total heating cost per month, average across types, LBP		LBP 2,159,365.62
Total heating cost per month, average across types, USD		\$ 59.18

Recommended Transfer Value

Winter cash assistance can be provided as a monthly cash transfer or as a one-off transfer, preferably at the start of the season to help families prepare.

The sector recommends a range for the monthly transfer value (TV) and the exact value determined by agencies depending on available fund and targeted groups. The lower end of range covers only heating costs while the upper end of the range includes heating costs for five months and coverage of the medium basket. These are outlined in the below table.

Table 4: recommended transfer values for Winter cash assistance, 2022/23

	USD	LBP
Min. Monthly Transfer Value to cover heating costs	\$ 59.18	LBP 2,159,365.62
Max. Monthly Transfer Value to cover heating costs and medium basket	\$ 90.73	LBP 3,310,510.82