



# Vulnerability Assessment Framework

## BASIC NEEDS SECTOR DECISION TREE REVISION FOR VULNERABILITY SCORING

### BASIC NEEDS SIGNIFICANCE TO THE VAF

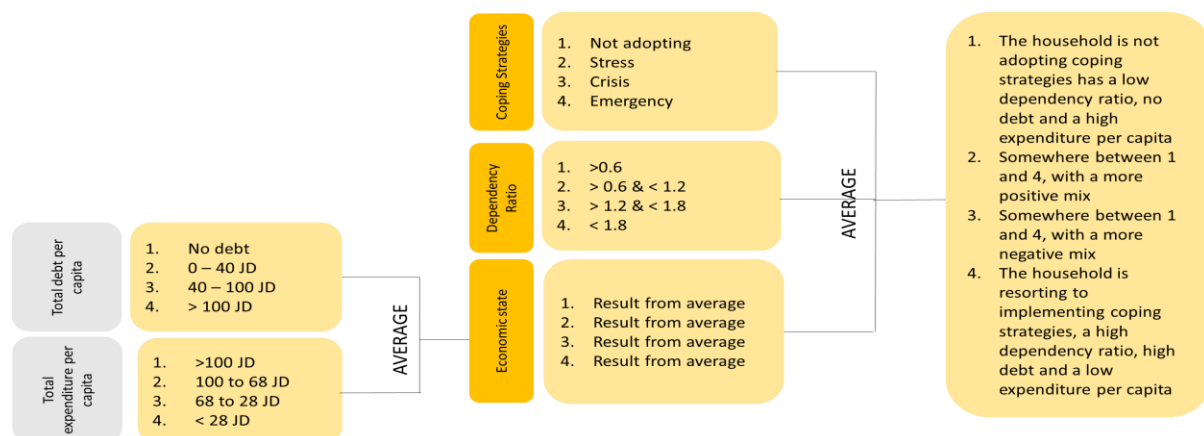
*Basic Needs are the financial and non-financial minimum standards a family needs to be able to maintain their welfare and dignity. The vast majority of Syrian refugee families have limited access to sustainable livelihood options and are in need of financial, non-financial and non-food assistance. In particular refugees living in unfurnished apartments face considerable hardship during the winter months; lacking adequate bedding, heating and floor coverings etc.*

### BASIC NEEDS SECTOR TREE V.1

The Basic Needs sector identified the use of coping strategies, high dependency ratios, high levels of debt and a low level of expenditure per capita as the critical elements contributing to a risk of increased vulnerability. Families who exhibit these characteristics are considered to be unlikely to be able to provide for their Basic Needs and would therefore be in need of sector specific assistance packages. High levels of debt per capita, low levels of expenditure per capita, high dependency ratios and the adoption of crisis or emergency coping mechanism make families vulnerable in this sector. Many families have depleted all assets and are living in unfurnished or semi-furnished apartments without access to regular income or financial support that would allow them to manage their own needs.

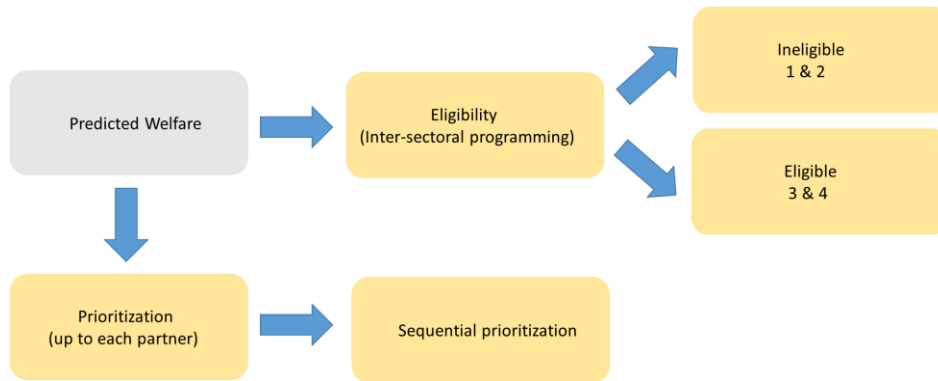
The characteristics of vulnerability for each sector were identified, for example:

- Coping strategies
- Dependency ratio
- Economic state

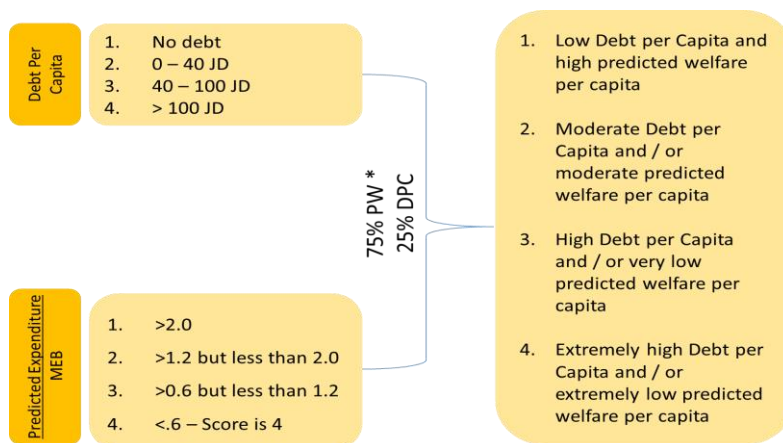


## BASIC NEEDS SECTOR TREE ALTERNATE OPTIONS

### Option 1 – Simplified



### Option 2:



The decision to review the Basic Needs scoring tree was based on two main reasons:

- Basic Needs partners felt the initial scoring tree included more information than needed and was more complicated than necessary. Moreover, reviewed the scoring tree would allow to lighten the VAF questionnaire.
- Some partners were also concerned the initial scoring tree double counted some atomic indicator such as the dependency ratio.

In order to determine if the case was able to meet its financial needs, it was determined that:

- MEB divided by Predicted Welfare tells us how financial stable the case is
- 1 is a case living at the MEB poverty line
- Below 1 means the case is below the MEB poverty line

- Above 1 means the case is above the MEB poverty line

This gives enough detail to prioritize and can be converted into a score of 1 through 4 depending on the distribution of scores. For example:

1. >2.0
2. >1.2 but less than 2.0
3. >0.6 but less than 1.2
4. <.6 – Score is 4

How precarious is the financial situation of the case?

- The Debt Ratio can be used to estimate how vulnerable the case is (high debt ratio leaving fewer options to meet needs)

Using a weighted average of the two scores (75% Predicted Welfare /MEB and 25% Dependency Ratio) gives

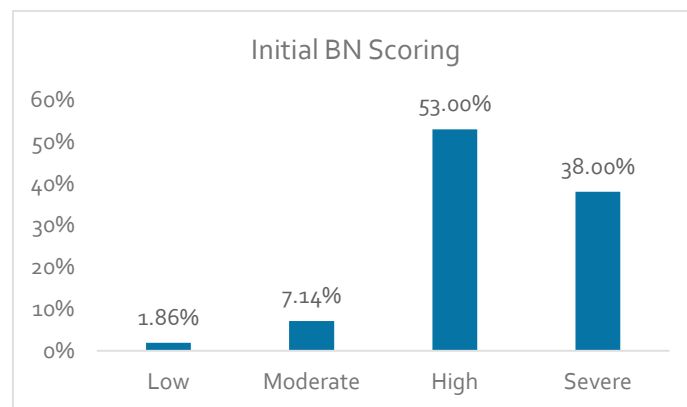
- Current and anticipated vulnerability; And,
- Finer distinction in vulnerability levels (3, 3.5, 4, for example)

Moreover, the Basic Needs Working Group partners agreed the scoring system should allow prioritizing rather than defining eligibility. The Working Group would not set firm lines for eligibility but provide guidance for agencies in making eligibility decisions on an agency by agency and project by project basis. Thus, several options were considered and discussed among the partners in order to design a new scoring tree allowing more accurate analysis of the vulnerability of the persons of concern and beneficiaries selection for partners.

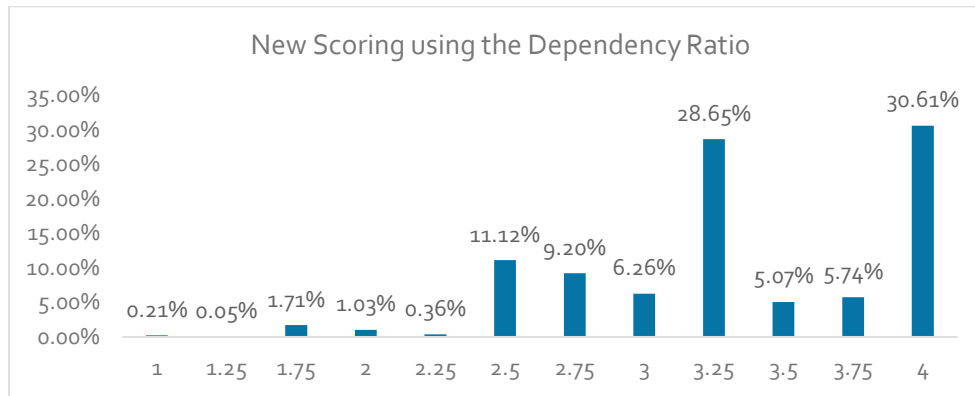
## SECTOR TREE REVISION METHODOLOGY

The first option considered was to use the Predicted Welfare alone. In order to do so, the Predicted Welfare was compared with the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) to give a measurement if the households are spending more or less than the MEB and falling above or below the poverty line. This exercise gave a static view of the situation as it exist for the households but it did not necessarily capture the vulnerability of the households to future shocks and risks they faced. As a result, this methodology was not considered relevant as it does not take into account enough parameters. It was decided to factor in at least one additional indicator that as a measurable impact on the vulnerability of the households.

Two options came up at this stage, using the dependency ratio or the debt per capita. Calculations were run based on a sampling of 1934 households identified through outreach work in the communities. Using the initial Basic Needs scoring tree, this sampling led to the following ranking:



Looking at the options presented above, the dependency ratio did not give a clear picture of differences in vulnerability between households because the ranges forced almost all of them into level 3 and 4. Levels were artificial and forced rather than being an indicator of how the dependency ratio would really impact of the degree of vulnerability of the households.



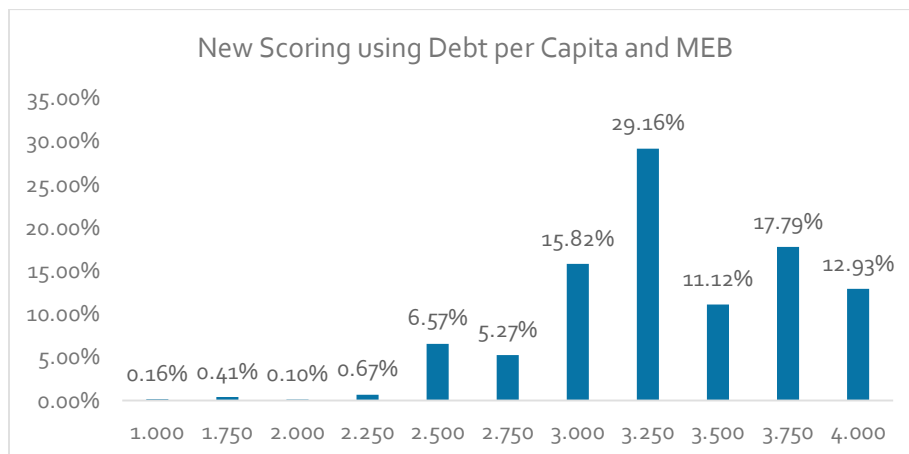
Moreover, the dependency ratio is also used as a stand-alone indicator to measure the general vulnerability of households. As a result, it was decided to drop this parameter.

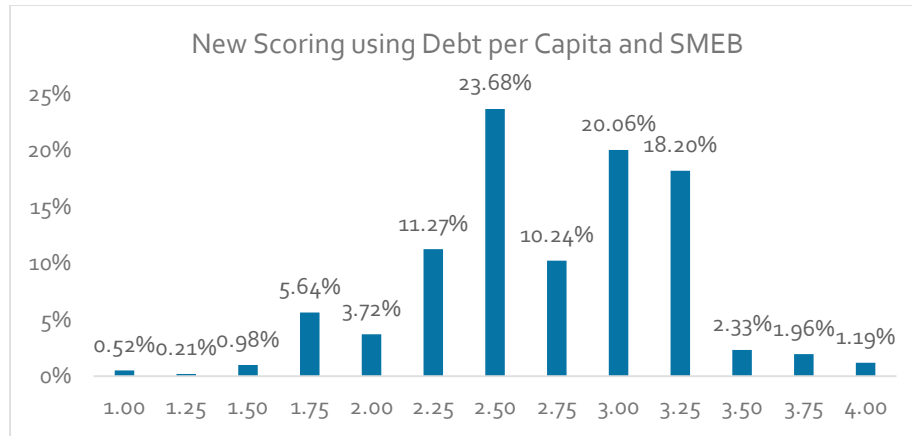
Debt per capita was considered because it is a very clear measurable indicator of how much flexibility a household has to adapt to financial constraints; i.e. households with less debt have more flexibility when they have a financial situation. The debt per capita was factored into the Basic Needs score using a weighted average of 75% predicted welfare and 25% debt per capita. This helped to clarify the level of vulnerability from one household to another much more than the predicted welfare on its own. This methodology provides a clear tool for prioritization as well as advocacy and informed decisions on eligibility.

In addition, this new scoring system is accompanied by more distinctions inside the levels themselves with 0.25, 0.5 and 0.75. This allows for more specific analysis and prioritization for the agencies while starting from the assumption that all households reaching 3 and above find themselves below the poverty line and with a significant debts burden.

The question of using the MEB or the SMEB was also discussed and calculations were run comparatively as illustrated below.

The use of the predicted welfare over the SMEB gave a more normal distribution of households but it led to only 44% of households scoring 3 and above. This did not seem to capture enough households actually living below the poverty line who should be considered for support. On the other hand, using the MEB led to 87% of the households ranking 3 and above with 13% reaching 4. This second option captures all persons living below the poverty line who should be considered for support while allowing agencies to prioritize their selection based on the ranking inside the levels.

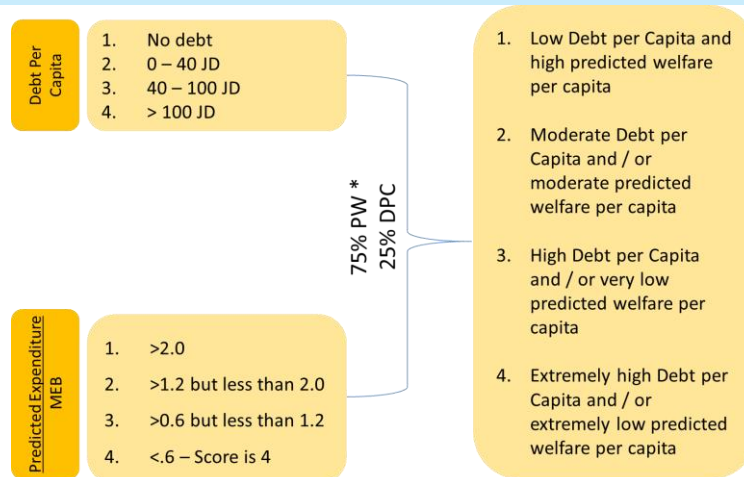




In conclusion, the partners agreed on using the following formula and final tree. It appeared as the best option to capture all households living below the poverty line, assess their vulnerability more closely, and allow for agencies to prioritize their selection depending on their projects.

$$(\text{PE/MEB Score}) * 75\% + (\text{Debt per Capita Score} * 25\%)$$

## BASIC NEEDS SECTOR TREE V.2



## 2016 MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET

Jordan October 2016												
MONTHLY MEB (in JOD) - ABSOLUTE POVERTY LINE												
Sector	Items	Item in Survival MEB? (Y/N)	Family Size							Data Type	Data Source	2016 Action
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
Shelter / BN	Rent	Y	108.00	127.00	133.00	143.00	145.00	148.00	169.00	VAF data (All HV's)	Source all assessed VAF data - reported rent by governorate and FS	Updated
	Utilities	N	7.00	9.80	15.20	16.70	19.70	20.40	22.10	VAF baseline data	Sept/ Oct VAF Baseline data reported expenditure by family size	Updated
	Basic HH items	N	3.40	4.30	6.80	7.90	8.60	8.90	10.00	VAF baseline data	Sept/ Oct VAF Baseline data reported expenditure by family size	Updated
Food	Rice	Y	4.90	9.80	14.70	19.60	24.50	29.40	34.30	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Bulgur Wheat	Y	5.54	11.08	16.62	22.16	27.70	33.24	38.78	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Pasta	Y	1.67	3.34	5.01	6.68	8.35	10.02	11.69	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Lentils	Y	1.38	2.76	4.14	5.52	6.90	8.28	9.66	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Vegetable oil	Y	1.49	2.98	4.47	5.96	7.45	8.94	10.43	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Sugar	Y	0.68	1.36	2.04	2.72	3.40	4.08	4.76	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Salt iodized	Y	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.12	0.14	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Poultry	Y	2.05	4.10	6.15	8.20	10.25	12.30	14.35	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Egg (hen, fresh)	Y	1.01	2.02	3.03	4.04	5.05	6.06	7.07	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Cheese	Y	1.35	2.70	4.05	5.40	6.75	8.10	9.45	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Leaves, Medium Green	Y	0.40	0.80	1.20	1.60	2.00	2.40	2.80	Sector Standard	Food Basket documented in Food Security MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Access to Education (Transport)	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education	Uniforms	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Supplementary school supply	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Daily allowance	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health	Primary, secondary OPD and dental care	N	2.52	5.04	7.56	10.08	12.60	15.12	17.64	Calculation by Sector	As documented in Health MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Hospitalisations	N	0.40	0.80	1.20	1.60	2.00	2.40	2.80	Calculation by Sector	As documented in Health MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
	Catastrophic expenditure	N	1.25	2.50	3.75	5.00	6.25	7.50	8.75	Calculation by Sector	As documented in Health MEB 2016 Guidance Note	Updated
	Delivery	N	0.39	0.78	1.17	1.56	1.95	2.34	2.73	Calculation by Sector	As documented in Health MEB 2016 Guidance Note	Updated
	Baby Kit	N	0.05	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.25	0.30	0.35	Calculation by Sector	As documented in Health MEB 2016 Guidance Note	No change advised by sector
WASH	Water (network, tanker, dislodging, bottled etc.)	Y	3.20	4.70	7.20	7.00	8.90	9.70	10.50	VAF baseline data	Sept/ Oct VAF Baseline data reported expenditure by family size	Updated
	Hygiene items	N	3.40	4.30	6.80	7.90	8.60	8.90	10.00	VAF baseline data	Sept/ Oct VAF Baseline data reported expenditure by family size	Updated
Protection	Transportation	N	6.40	6.50	10.10	10.20	9.60	13.40	11.90	VAF baseline data	Sept/ Oct VAF Baseline data reported expenditure by family size	Sept/ Oct VAF Baseline data
	Communication	N	3.50	3.50	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	UNICEF POM Findings	Assessments conducted in June, August and November 2015	Updated
<b>Total</b>			<b>160</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>594</b>			
			per capita	160	120	106	97	90	86	85		

See: Jordan Minimum Expenditure Basket 2016<sup>1</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

The qualities of each of those characteristics are described for what it means to be 'Low vulnerability' and to be 'Severely vulnerable'.

1	Low	Low debt per capita and high predicted welfare per capita
2	Moderate	Moderate debt per capita and/or moderate predicted welfare
3	High	High debt per capita and/or very low predicted welfare
4	Severe	Extremely high debt per capita and/or extremely low predicted welfare

The above Basic Needs revised sector tree has been reviewed, tested and endorsed by the sector. For more information on this process please contact Fanny Marchand [jor.progco@pu-ami.org](mailto:jor.progco@pu-ami.org) or Elizabeth Barnhart [barnhart@unhcr.org](mailto:barnhart@unhcr.org); or Olivia Cribb [cribb@unhcr.org](mailto:cribb@unhcr.org).

<sup>1</sup> <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/download.php?id=12277>