

Situation Analysis

Exploring the Impacts of Lebanon’s Crises on Food Security and Agriculture

The protracted impacts of the Syria crisis on Lebanon continue to hinder the ability of vulnerable refugees and host communities to meet their immediate food needs and livelihoods in a context exacerbated by soaring food prices, lack of income sources and dwindling supplies. A succession of recent shocks and stressors (economic and financial collapse, COVID-19, Beirut port explosions) have incapacitated state institutions to deliver on essential services, plunged ever greater numbers into poverty and vulnerability and increased people’s reliance on humanitarian assistance to make ends meet. In 2022, the Food Security and Agriculture sector is stepping up its support to ensure the food, nutritional and livelihood needs of some 2 million vulnerable individuals—among Lebanese host communities, displaced Syrians, Palestinian refugees from Syria, Palestine refugees in Lebanon and refugees of other nationalities—are adequately met.

The 2021 Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees (VASyR) in Lebanon estimates that nine in ten Syrian refugee households currently live in extreme poverty, with the highest concentrations in Akkar, Baalbek-El Hermel and Bekaa.¹ The World Bank estimates that more than half of the Lebanese population lives below the poverty line,² with over a third estimated to be extremely poor—or ‘food poor’. Poverty rates among Palestinian refugees from Syria and Palestine refugees in Lebanon are 87 and 65 per cent, respectively.³

The crises have touched every aspect of people’s lives, with access to food as one of the most pressing. The decline of employment opportunities and decrease of incomes, coupled with soaring prices mirroring the depreciation of the Lebanese Pound (LBP),⁴ have made the purchase of staple food and other basic goods unaffordable. This has pushed 34 per cent of Lebanese, 50 per cent of Syrian refugees and 33 per cent of refugees of other nationalities into food insecurity.⁵ In 2021, almost half of the Syrian refugees had unacceptable food consumption, with the highest levels recorded in the North (53%), Mount Lebanon (51%) and Bekaa (49%). Between January and September 2021, the percentage of severely food insecure Lebanese households tripled from 1.6 per cent to 5.7 per cent.⁶ Based on the WFP’s Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI),⁷ which ranks households’ deprivation across dimensions such as food, health, education, shelter, livelihoods and employment, 46 per cent of Lebanese households were severely deprived as of September 2021. Based on the UNDP/ARK Perception Survey (August 2021), two-in-three Lebanese and four-in-five Syrian households now say they are worried about food supplies. Over the previous three and a half years, the percentage of Lebanese expressing worry about access to food ‘often’ or ‘all the time’ has risen from 8.9 per cent in 2018 to 31.5 per cent in August 2021.⁸

Between October 2019 and October 2021, the national currency lost more than 90 per cent of its value. By October 2021, the price of the basic food Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket⁹ had recorded an increase of 725 per cent, reaching 439,006 LBP per person (2,195,030 LBP per family), equal to 424 per cent of a household’s monthly average income.¹⁰ The progressive discontinuation of subsidies is having disastrous consequences, as the country lacks a robust social protection system to cushion their inflationary repercussions on the households of poor and vulnerable Syrian refugees and Lebanese host communities. Between the beginning of 2021 and the beginning of November 2021, the cost of a large package of bread had increased by 533 per cent, while the cost of gasoline had increased by 1,095 per cent. Food availability in

¹ In 2021 88 per cent of Syrian refugee households live below the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (490,000 LBP) and 91 per cent below the Minimum Expenditure Basket (553,000 LBP)

² World Bank (2021). Lebanon Economic Monitor, Spring 2021

³ UNRWA, 2020

⁴ As of November 2021, the LBP has a rate of 23,000

⁵ Based on the VaSyR: Half of Syrian refugees are food insecure (moderate or severe—highest in the North and Bekaa), 46 per cent had unacceptable (poor or borderline) food consumption (highest in the North and Mount Lebanon); 90 per cent reported having difficulties purchasing food and 34 per cent of Lebanese households are food insecure (highest in the North, Akkar, Baalbek El Hermel and El Nabatieh)

⁶ WFP. (2021) Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (Aug-Sep 2021) Forthcoming

⁷ The MVI looks at poverty not only as lack of income and consumption but also as deprivation of education or employment, poor health or living standards and food insecurity. These deprivation profiles are analysed to identify who is poor and then used to construct a multidimensional vulnerability index.

⁸ UNDP/ARK Perception Survey, August 2021

⁹ The revised SMEB food basket is based on a monthly ration per person of 7.02 kg of bread, 1.8 KG of pasta, 1.95 KG brown bulgur, 2.4 KG of rice, 2.1 KG of potatoes, 0.75 KG of lentils, 0.3 KG of white beans, 0.9 KG of chickpeas, 0.6 KG of powder milk, 0.51L of sunflower oil, 0.6 KG of sugar, 0.6 KG of tomato paste, 0.45 KG of eggs, 2.7 KG of cabbage, 1.5 KG of apples, 0.12 KG of salt, 0.12 KG of tea, 0.6 KG of carrots and 0.45 KG of canned sardines.

¹⁰ VASyR 2021 results - Syrian Refugees household average income reached 517,564 LBP

Lebanon is also at peril. Lebanon's low foreign currency reserves have hindered food imports, with direct implications on the replenishment of supplies, as the country depends on imports for 80 per cent of its food needs. While retailers and suppliers have managed to navigate these operational challenges, their ability to continue doing so in the future is at risk.

With their buying power decimated, Syrian families are forced to resort to harmful coping mechanisms to meet their food and nutritional needs, including withdrawing children from school, selling productive assets, reducing non-food essential expenses and purchasing food on credit.¹¹ Based on 2021 VASyR data, the share of households applying emergency and crisis coping strategies increased by seven percentage points between 2020 and 2021. Dependency on debt has also skyrocketed, with the average level of debt per household at 3,430,000 LBP, a threefold increase since 2020. The purchase of food, rent and other essential non-food items are the main reasons for debt, with borrowing money to buy food reported by over 93 per cent of Syrian households.¹²

Maternal, Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices (IYCFP) and nutrition have also been compromised, and the risk of malnutrition among vulnerable groups is on the rise.¹³ Preliminary findings from the 2021 National Nutrition 'SMART' Survey (forthcoming), conducted by the Ministry of Public Health, indicate that wasting is low across all surveyed groups,¹⁴ stunting is low nationally, medium in Beirut and Palestinian camps and high in informal settlements (25%—an eight percentage point increase since 2013). Findings indicate that IYCFP practices are suboptimal, with an estimated 800,000 children not meeting minimum acceptable diets. Anaemia is a public health concern nationally and severe thresholds have been identified among non-pregnant women and children. Despite the lack of evidence on micronutrient deficiencies, their prevalence is likely to increase given the high rates of anaemia and diet inadequacies.

Lebanon's multiple crises have also hit the agriculture and agri-food sectors, which have now moved to a low-input system resulting in a decline in yields and marketable production. Lebanese small-scale farmers have been particularly affected by high agricultural input costs and low output prices, limited access to traditional forms of credit and reduction of sales due to lower purchasing power. Farmers are increasingly unable to sustain their farming practices, putting at risk the agricultural seasons for 2022. This could lead to a loss of income-generating activities for both vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees, who rely on agriculture as one of the three sectors in which they are legally allowed to work.¹⁵ In 2020, suppliers of inputs and agriculture services contractors were reporting a 40 per cent average decrease in sales, reflecting how farmers are adopting cost-reduction strategies. These have involved cancelling planned investments, decreasing cultivated areas or increasing areas dedicated to lower-cost crops, such as wheat. Estimates suggest a 10 to 15 per cent reduction in cultivated areas and even more with temporary crops under greenhouses. This is leading to an overall production reduction in addition to the adoption of crops requiring less irrigation or using gravity irrigation. In light of fuel shortages and an increase in fuel prices, irrigation places an additional burden on farmers' input costs. Meanwhile, some Lebanese landowners are turning to subsistence farming to increase their profits. In 2021, the second most recorded reason for collective evictions (five households or more) in northern Lebanon, was the result of land re-appropriation for agricultural purposes, leaving Syrian refugees without alternative shelter options. As subsistence farming appears to be more profitable than the rent collected from informal settlements, it is likely that this trend may continue in 2022.

Lebanon's compounded crises do not affect everyone equally. According to the 2021 VASyR, female-headed households (FHH), households with members with chronic diseases and those who are unemployed are found to be more food insecure. Twenty-two per cent of severely food insecure households are women-headed, up by seven percentage points compared to 2020 (15%). FHH are consuming a less diverse diet than their male

¹¹ Based on 2021 VaSyr data, indicators related to food coping strategies saw an increase in the number of households relying on less preferred and less expensive food (93% compared to 88% in 2020), reducing the size of meals (71% compared to 65% the previous year) and the number of meals eaten per day (67%). Households applying livelihood-based coping strategies bought food on credit or borrowed money to purchase it (75%), reduced health expenditure (54%) and education expenditure (29%).

¹² VASyR 2021 results

¹³ According to the World Health Organization, malnutrition refers to deficiencies or excesses in nutrient intake, imbalance of essential nutrients or impaired nutrient utilisation. The double burden of malnutrition consists of both undernutrition and overweight and obesity, as well as diet-related noncommunicable diseases. Undernutrition manifests in four broad forms: wasting, stunting, underweight and micronutrient deficiencies.

¹⁴ Syrian refugees and refugees of other nationalities and Lebanese households

¹⁵ Syrians have traditionally been hired by Lebanese farmers as workers. According to VASyR findings, 27 per cent declared agriculture as their main sector of employment in 2021 (32% in 2020) and 8 per cent (same as in 2020) as their main source of income.

counterparts and more likely to seek help from friends and relatives to access food, as their average income per capita has plummeted and unemployment rates have increased (42% for women vs. 27% for men). Women's ability to generate income and improve their livelihoods has also been affected, with the share of job losses among women notably higher than those among men.¹⁶ Inequalities are also deepening in the agricultural sector where the majority of employed Syrian women refugees work, and where Lebanese women, despite their role in agriculture production, typically have reduced access to land and resources (loans, credits) and earn approximately half of what their male counterparts earn.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) has registered an increase in sexual exploitation by employers, including in the agricultural sector. Owing to the fuel crisis, vulnerable groups, including women, older persons and persons with disabilities, have increasing difficulties accessing food and tools, which make them more reliant on 'intermediaries' and potentially more exposed to abuses and exploitation.

Overall Sector Strategy

Combating food insecurity amid Lebanon's compounding crisis

The Food Security and Agriculture sector aims to respond to the urgent needs of vulnerable host Lebanese and refugees by **improving food security and nutrition, strengthening agricultural productivity and enhancing livelihood capacities**, in alignment with government priorities and national commitments towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Achieving these objectives addresses two main challenges:

- **First, food insecurity, like poverty and vulnerability, has worsened in Lebanon.** The protracted effects of the Syria crisis and the accumulation of other shocks and stressors have severely affected the coping capacities of vulnerable women, men and children. It is a paramount priority to ensure that food insecure Lebanese and refugees have predictable access to nutritious, safe and adequate food throughout the year.
- **Second, the agricultural and agri-food sectors have moved to a low-input system, leading to a decline in yields, marketable production and income-generating opportunities for Lebanese and Syrians alike.** Lebanon's internal crises, amplified by regional dynamics, are accelerating the sector's deterioration with potential irreversible repercussions on labour markets, food production and exports. Small sustainable holdings linked through cooperative organisations that produce food for local markets are also at risk of extinction. Enhancing the agriculture sector's sustainability and resilience will be decisive to ensure it continues to provide critical livelihood opportunities and food security for the country's most vulnerable.

To this end, the sector's **Theory of Change** is as follows:

Provision of cash-based food assistance, complemented by in-kind food support, including through the expansion of the government National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP).¹⁸ The assistance will ensure that vulnerable Lebanese host communities and refugees can meet their basic food and nutritional needs as well as survival and minimum living standards, without resorting to negative coping mechanisms or strategies that compromise their health, dignity and essential livelihood assets. Cash transfers, the sector's largest intervention in terms of number of persons reached and value, will improve access to food and alleviate cash-flow constraints by freeing up households' resources towards other expenditures (e.g. basic goods, health, education). Under the NPTP, cash transfers will ensure predictable support to vulnerable Lebanese households and continuity of service delivery through strengthened national social protection systems. Cash transfers will also partially mitigate underlying tensions between host and refugee communities that are linked to 'economy-based conflict', characterised by a lack of access to basic commodities and a sense of uncertainty about the future.¹⁹ In 2022, cash-based food assistance programmes will reach an estimated 1.382 million refugees—1.320 million Syrians, 51,000 Palestinians from Syria and from Lebanon and 12,686 refugees of other nationalities—and 633,000 vulnerable Lebanese (including 420,000 assisted through the NPTP), for a total estimated value of 800 million USD in cash transfers. As part of the Emergency Response Plan (ERP), an additional 400,000 vulnerable Lebanese are currently being supported through the sector's coordinated cash

¹⁶ World Bank/UN Women (2021) *The Status of Women in Lebanon*

¹⁷ FAO (2021) *Country Gender Assessment of the Agriculture and Rural sector*

¹⁸ The NPTP is Lebanon's first poverty-targeted social assistance programme in Lebanon with the objective to "provide social assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable Lebanese households, based on transparent criteria that assess each household's eligibility to receive assistance, given available public resources". The NPTP is based on a proxy-means testing (PMT) targeting mechanism.

¹⁹ SIPRI (2021). The World Food Programme's contribution to improving the prospects for peace in Lebanon.

and in-kind interventions.²⁰ With the upcoming roll-out of the World Bank’s funded Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) programme, with which the sector is closely coordinating, it is anticipated that some 1.5 million Lebanese in need will be reached through these different frameworks.

Provision of emergency cash and voucher support aimed at restoring agricultural livelihoods and productive capacities and build households’ resilience to future shocks. Vouchers will be provided to small-scale farmers for the purchase of inputs to help them maintain and enhance their production capacities and outputs. Vulnerable households will also receive short-term conditional cash-based transfers aimed at improving their livelihoods and resilience. Interventions will build human capital and provide support to communities through activities geared towards protecting, restoring, creating or enhancing key assets and basic infrastructure. Lebanese host communities and refugees living in the municipalities where these activities are implemented will benefit from new and/or rehabilitated long-term environmental and agricultural assets that contribute to the livelihoods of the wider community. In 2022, opportunities will be sought to link these programmes to national social protection systems to ensure a more comprehensive package of long-term support to vulnerable households. In 2022, some 35,000 small-scale farmers (19% of which are women) will be assisted through cash and voucher programmes and approximately 90,000 through livelihood interventions.²¹

Strengthen Lebanon’s agriculture production capacity and the value chain and livelihoods that sustain it, to foster recovery and sustainable growth as well as to ensure food security and the resilience of crisis-affected households. This will be achieved through a comprehensive food system framework²²—encompassing food production, transformation and consumption—that will create and promote income and livelihood opportunities, strengthen food systems and advance natural resource management and community asset creation, with a focus on enabling gender-balanced economic opportunities.²³ In terms of food production, targeted strategies and investments will increase local production capacities and food availability, boost productivity and incomes and ultimately expand employment opportunities for both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese. Given the impacts of the Syria crisis on the environment²⁴ and the increasing climate risks faced by the Lebanese agriculture sector, investments will also be channelled to strengthen climate-smart agricultural production,²⁵ climate adaptation practices and the rehabilitation of agricultural infrastructure and assets. Under food transformation, the sector’s strategy will promote the production, transformation and marketing of Lebanese agricultural products by adopting innovative postharvest management approaches to reduce food wastage and losses and by enhancing agri-food processing, packaging and marketing. Sector partners will strengthen the capacities of agricultural Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and agricultural cooperatives, particularly those whose members are women, to make value chains in agriculture and food production more competitive and profitable. The sector will also promote and create seasonal and casual agricultural job opportunities in support of Lebanese private agriculture investment, in consideration of demand by local agricultural businesses and cooperatives. In the case of displaced refugees, the sector will create opportunities for employment as temporary agricultural workers, in accordance with Lebanese laws and regulations. These short-term opportunities will provide a cushion for the rural population in the context of the unemployment and underemployment crisis and a means to partially filling existing food gaps. With regards to food consumption, targeted interventions will consider increasing needs of food insecure households and will promote better nutrition practices. The sector will coordinate nutritional education and awareness campaigns, including IYCFP and food preservation, to promote dietary diversity as well as increase nutritional intake. The sector will also promote food safety and quality to ensure the consumption of safe and nutritious food and ensure the ability of Lebanese agriculture exporters to market locally and in countries where stringent food safety practices are in place.

Strengthening Institutional Capacities and Localisation

²⁰ The Emergency Response Plan (ERP) is a time-bound, 12-month plan strictly of humanitarian nature that addresses the needs of the most vulnerable among Lebanese and migrants affected by Lebanon’s compounded crisis, in complement to the LCRP.

²¹ Through its Food For Assets and Food For Training programmes, WFP will target 12,500 participants/households across Syrian and Lebanese caseloads. These modalities will benefit some 62,500 beneficiaries of the effects of cash-based transfers (household size x 5).

²² Food systems are networks of relationships that encompass the functions and activities involved in producing, processing, marketing, consuming and disposing of goods from agriculture, forestry or fisheries.

²³ Introducing stronger gender mainstreaming to the sector’s interventions and reversing the persistent limited access to agricultural livelihoods is important to enlarging the recognition of women in agriculture, who account for 43 per cent of the rural workforce. (FAO, 2012)

²⁴ In 2014, the Ministry of Environment assessed the environmental impact of the Syria crisis, which showed an increase in water and soil contamination directly affecting the quality of agricultural produce.

²⁵ Through assessments of resilient crops and plants and provision of seasonally appropriate agricultural inputs.

In 2022, the sector will continue to support government institutions—at the national and decentralised levels—to strengthen their service delivery capacities in food security, agriculture and social protection. Support will include strategic guidance, technical assistance and policy and operational support to improve current and future interventions. At the national level, support will be provided to the Ministry of Agriculture, lead ministry for the sector, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Energy and Water and the Ministry of Environment to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes through the revision of plans and processes, on-the-job training and provision of equipment to augment staff operational capacities. With an increasing number of Lebanese falling under extreme poverty and the ongoing expansion of the NPTP,²⁶ the sector will continue to work with the Ministry of Social Affairs to ensure systems and processes can absorb additional temporary caseloads of newly identified vulnerable Lebanese across the social protection system’s delivery chain (enabling environment, targeting, data and information management systems, delivery mechanisms, grievance redress mechanisms and monitoring). Moreover, the sector’s partners will also contribute towards expanding social protection coverage to rural farmers in Lebanon and support the Ministry of Agriculture in developing a legal and institutional framework required for the establishment of a farmers’ register. At the decentralised levels, the sector will continue to strengthen local social protection and agriculture institutions’ capacities (e.g. Social Development Centres, General Directorate of Cooperatives, the Green Plan, Ministry of Agriculture’s agricultural centres) through direct operational support, including training, provision of equipment and day-to-day technical support across programmes.

National Priorities

The sector strategy will be implemented in line with the Ministry of Agriculture’s National Agriculture Strategy (NAS) 2020-2025, the Ministry of Social Affairs’ development and poverty-reduction goals and Lebanon’s commitments towards the achievement of SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). The sector will align to relevant national priorities and plans, as new government structures are established and strategies rolled out to improve the socioeconomic conditions of vulnerable groups.

The NAS reflects both the immediate and long-term priorities of the agri-food sector in Lebanon. Its long-term vision is to make the agri-food system a main contributor to the achievement of food security and a key driver of resilience and transformation of the Lebanese economy into a productive economy. The NAS suggests a comprehensive national approach in various sub-sectors of agriculture and agri-food in production, trade, social protection, environmental sustainability, adaptation and mitigation to climate change and rural development. Its core structure is built around five strategic pillars structured in programmatic areas of interventions. The Food Security and Agriculture sector strategy mirrors the five pillars of the NAS, presented below:

- **Pillar 1:** Restoring the livelihoods and productive capacities of farmers and producers
- **Pillar 2:** Increasing agricultural production and productivity
- **Pillar 3:** Enhancing efficiency and competitiveness of agri-food value chains
- **Pillar 4:** Improving climate change adaptation and sustainable management of agri-food systems and natural resources
- **Pillar 5:** Strengthening the enabling institutional environment

Building on several years of support to the country’s national safety net system, both in terms of expansion of the NPTP and capacity strengthening, the sector is also aligned with the Ministry of Social Affairs’ strategy for social action and inclusion, whose pillars are:²⁷

- Respond to the basic needs of groups most in need
- Decentralisation of social work development and balanced development of geographical regions
- Integration and partnership between the public and private sectors

²⁶ WFP started its scale-up of the NPTP in 2018, increasing the total number of households reached by the country’s social safety net programme from 5,000 households to 35,000 households by 2021. In 2022, WFP aims to reach a total of 75,000 of the most vulnerable Lebanese families (about 420,000 people). WFP is also working with the World Bank and the Government of Lebanon to launch the Emergency Social Safety Net programme.

²⁷ Ministry of Social Affairs. <http://www.socialaffairs.gov.lb/en/MSASubPage.aspx?parm=9&parentID=1>

The sector will also align with the upcoming National Social Protection Strategy Framework, which aims to strengthen social assistance programmes through a combination of core lifecycle income-support benefits that address vulnerabilities and the provision of cash benefits for households that continue to fall below a nationally defined poverty threshold.

Assumptions and risks

The first assumption is that **food insecurity will continue to be a severe concern for refugees and host communities**. As such, the sector's strategy and interventions will remain agile to address the multiple drivers of food insecurity in a rapidly changing and deteriorating context. The second assumption is that **there will be enough operational space for partners to implement their programmes**. This, however, has been challenged in recent years by an increase in tensions related to the provision of aid, including for cash/in-kind food support. Furthermore, there has been an increase in eviction threats and actual evictions in informal settlements due to land re-appropriation by owners for agricultural purposes. These episodes remain isolated to certain areas, but a further deterioration of the situation could lead to a wide-spread acceleration of tensions and violence, with potential impact on access. The third assumption is that the **sector's interventions will continue to be resourced and delivered**. However, owing to the current sector's funding gap and mounting humanitarian needs, accessing timely, predictable and adequate resources will be key to achieving a proportionate needs-based response that can reduce suffering and ensure food security.

The Food Security and Agriculture sector's strategy foresees several risks that could undermine the scope of its interventions in 2022. The rapidly deteriorating economic and financial situation could **push hunger among refugees and the host community to record highs**, exacerbating harmful coping mechanisms and putting further **strain on food access and availability**. The sector will aim to mitigate this risk to the extent possible through regular data collection, monitoring, analysis and advocacy, through the scale-up of its interventions and greater complementarity with other sectors' programmes to ensure households' needs are adequately met. Tied to this risk is the **challenge to properly resource partners' interventions**, as they strive to meet an increasing number of needs. Partners could also be put under pressure by external actors to modify their programmes to favour certain target groups. To mitigate these risks, partners will advocate for increased funding, strengthen community engagement and work closely with local authorities and other sectors to strengthen the overall response. The adverse impact of the **removal of food subsidies** is another major risk, as it would amplify food insecurity and put a significant strain on households' purchasing power. This risk requires government-led mitigation measures beyond the sector, as it is crucial that Lebanon moves into a more targeted subsidy system that can continue to serve those most in need. To this end, the sector will advocate for policy dialogue and high-level discussions at the institutional, developmental and humanitarian levels, and provide analysis on the impact of subsidies on food security to inform decision-making. At the same time, the sector's partners will take mitigation actions such as adaptive programming and prioritisation of resources.

Another risk is related to rising **social tensions**. In 2021, the main immediate contributors to inter-communal tensions were access to cash (75% respondents of the UNDP-ARK perception surveys) and competition for lower-skilled jobs (53%). In addition, there is a growing aid perception bias within and between communities, meaning most communities feel that one group of beneficiaries is better serviced over another group. There is also a misperception that cash assistance to refugees is and has been provided in USD. While this is not the case, it has caused social stress among Lebanese. Several incidents of violations against women and girls related to receiving services and dollarisation were reported. These tensions represent a risk for vulnerable groups and communities at large, for partners' programme implementation and for the safety of frontline humanitarian staff. Mitigation measures will include strengthening conflict sensitivity, SGBV, protection and accountability for affected populations and PSEA mainstreaming. These measures will also include do no harm approaches in programme planning, design and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation, beneficiary sensitisation and community outreach and operational adjustments for the delivery of cash and in-kind assistance. Some effective actions in 2021 are staggering disbursements, strengthening safe distribution practices (e.g. home deliveries, outside camps), increasing the number of operational ATMs and maintaining flexibility to switch between modalities as needed.

Another risk lies with the **impact of climate and weather stressors** that affect agricultural production. To mitigate this risk, the sector will work with its partners to strengthen the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices. Risk mitigation actions will include the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices and

integrated pest management to reduce agrochemical pollution, increase water use efficiency and ensure sustainable withdrawals and capacity building on sustainable natural pasture management, including innovative pasture rehabilitation and grazing management.

Sectors Results: LCRP impacts, Sector Outcomes, Outputs

The 2022 Food Security and Agriculture sector strategy contributes to the achievement of the LCRP strategic objectives and impacts by linking humanitarian and stabilisation interventions as follows:

- **LCRP Strategic Objective 1: Ensure protection of vulnerable populations.** Through its Outcomes 2 and 4 (food access and stabilisation), the sector will contribute to the achievement of a safe protective environment for vulnerable populations. This will be achieved through systems put in place by partners on accountability to affected populations, grievance redress mechanisms, complaint feedback mechanisms and referrals to ensure the safe, dignified delivery of assistance and do no harm approaches. The sector's support of national and local institutions and specific interventions on child labour and decent working conditions in agriculture will also contribute to the achievement of this strategic objective.
- **LCRP Strategic Objective 2: Provide immediate assistance to vulnerable populations.** Through its Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 (food access, availability and utilisation), the sector will meet the immediate food security and nutritional needs of vulnerable groups. These will be achieved through the provision of 1) cash-based food assistance that empowers participants while supporting local markets; 2) in-kind assistance as a complement to cash-based food assistance and contingency for ad-hoc/time-bound emergencies; and 3) the enhancement of agricultural livelihoods and income opportunities, while mitigating the risk of malnutrition through the promotion of optimal nutritional, food safety and quality practices.
- **LCRP Strategic Objective 3: Support service provision through national systems.** The sector's Outcome 4 (food stabilisation) will ensure that vulnerable populations have access to improved services and programmes through strengthened national systems. The sector will support government institutions—at the national and decentralised levels—to enhance their service delivery capacities in food security, agriculture and social protection through strategic guidance, technical assistance and policy and operational support to improve current and future interventions.
- **LCRP Strategic Objective 4: Reinforce Lebanon's economic, social and environmental stability.** The sector's Outcomes 1, 2 and 4 (food availability, access and stabilisation) will help mitigate the deterioration of vulnerable groups' economic condition, the erosion of inter-communal social stability and the environmental impact of the Syria crisis. The sector will strengthen households' income and food security by scaling up its cash transfers support, which will benefit the local markets and enhance stability. Agriculture and income-generating interventions will support local production and generate employment opportunities, thus boosting households' resilience. These interventions also enable individual participation in livelihood activities, which can enhance social cohesion through the creation of spaces for intergroup contact between Lebanese and Syrian communities. Furthermore, the mitigation of the environmental impact of the Syria crisis will be framed along national strategies through the support of sustainable and climate-smart food production and conservation of natural resources.

The Food Security and Agriculture sector and the Basic Assistance sector will complement their respective workstreams on the provision of cash assistance by strengthening targeting processes, common referral systems and deduplication of caseloads and by collaborating towards the harmonisation of transfer values and impact monitoring tools. The sectors will also coordinate assistance for emergency humanitarian needs during winterisation and Ramadan through immediate and temporary food assistance interventions. The sectors will coordinate preparedness activities through the assessment of contingency stocks and emergency capacity in line with the central coordination and management arrangements currently in place.

The Food Security and Agriculture sector will continue to work closely with the Livelihoods sector to complement activities, minimise duplication and/or underreporting and coordinate agricultural livelihoods strategies and programming. In 2022, the sectors will continue to share information and results on agricultural

value-chains development and coordinate support to agricultural cooperatives, including the updating of the joint livelihoods dashboard which provides a snapshot view of partners' projects implemented under both sectors. Building on good practices and achievements in 2021, the common thematic group to support agriculture cooperatives and the technical working group on agricultural value chains will continue to inform joint interventions in coordination with key institutional partners such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate General of Cooperatives and the Ministry of Economy and Trade, among others.

The Food Security and Agriculture sector will strengthen its collaboration with the Health, Education and Protection sectors to ensure the food security, nutrition and dietary needs of vulnerable groups are adequately addressed through tailored food assistance interventions (e.g. cash-based and in-kind, school feeding meals/snacks or take-home rations provided to children, messaging on healthy and nutritious diets, food quality and standards, strengthening national policies) and a comprehensive package of longer-term support. The sector will continue its engagement for the coordination of school feeding activities, reported under the Education Sector, aimed at enhancing school attendance and retention rates, addressing short-term hunger and nutritional intake and enhancing the social protection of children enrolled in schools.

Expected results

The Food Security and Agriculture sector, under leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and in coordination with other LCRP line ministries and sectors, will coordinate humanitarian, recovery and development-oriented interventions that provide both immediate life-saving food assistance and appropriate medium- and long-term solutions in the face of Lebanon's protracted and mounting crisis. This will be achieved by tackling all dimensions of food security – **availability, access, utilisation and stabilisation** – through gender-, conflict- and environmentally-sensitive strategies and actions at the individual, community and institutional levels that account for the differential needs of women, men, girls and boys of all ages, abilities and diversities.

OUTCOME 1

IMPROVED FOOD AVAILABILITY THROUGH IN-KIND FOOD ASSISTANCE AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE VALUE CHAIN

Output 1.1 – Vulnerable individuals have access to nutritionally balanced in-kind food assistance.

In 2022, in-kind support will continue to complement cash-based food assistance as a contingency measure extending support to vulnerable families affected by COVID-19 and seasonal shocks (e.g. winter storms)²⁸ as well as to mitigate the risks of market volatility and threats to food availability and access. Building on the work initiated in 2021, the sector will continue to promote linkages between cooperatives, MSMEs and local producers and partners implementing in-kind programmes, to improve the inclusion of fresh produce in the composition of food parcels. This approach will support local producers and facilitate the adoption of good agricultural and sustainable practices. Special attention will be paid to the needs of households with pregnant and lactating women and girls, older persons and persons with specific needs, who are more at risk of food insecurity and micronutrient deficiencies and have more limited livelihood opportunities. Application of the sector's guidelines on the composition of food parcels will ensure that the quantity and quality of food provided corresponds to the recommended nutritional standards, that household members have access to minimum and balanced nutritional content (including culturally acceptable foods) and that dry food rations are supplemented with fresh produce, including vegetables with a long shelf life. The optimal basket covers the gap in energy/caloric needs for a family of five for one month, with 50-60 per cent of the requirements in staples. This is to be complemented with fresh food products, which are the main source of micro-nutrients and must be provided daily.

²⁸ Lebanon is vulnerable to several seasonal shocks, such as flooding, snowstorms and storms that, in combination with the current refugee crisis, have compounded effects on vulnerable populations. The sector will continue to coordinate the responses from partners, in consultation with other sectors, to provide for seasonal/one-off assistance to address temporary needs in such small and medium emergencies.

Output 1.2 – Lebanese small-scale farmers have strengthened capacities in agricultural value chains, in reduction of food waste/losses, sustainable and climate-smart practices and in plant pest and transboundary animal diseases measures.

Lebanese small-scale farmers will receive agricultural inputs for sustainable agriculture and livestock production, and wide-range capacity building opportunities and training to support their production, livelihood and business management capacities. Sustainable management of land and water resources – such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) – will contribute to preventing contamination and will improve soil and water conservation. Activities under this output will also include capacity building and interventions to control the spread of transboundary animal diseases and plant pests during emergencies (e.g. vaccination campaigns). Together, interventions will strengthen the overall agricultural production and mitigate climate risks and shocks.

OUTCOME 2

IMPROVED FOOD ACCESS THROUGH CASH-BASED FOOD ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS

Output 2.1 – Vulnerable populations receive cash-based food assistance and have improved access to food.

Cash-based food assistance will increase beneficiaries' purchasing power, enabling them to meet their basic food needs in a dignified and empowering manner while supporting local markets. Beneficiaries will be able to redeem their entitlements at contracted and non-contracted shops or through direct ATM withdrawals using different delivery mechanisms, such as electronic cards and food vouchers. Other delivery mechanisms will be explored in 2022 to expand the reach and effectiveness of programmes – including mitigating risks associated with crowding at distribution points and power shortages affecting banking operations.

The Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) will be used to determine an adequate transfer value to cover food needs. Regular market monitoring will inform adjustments to the value of the transfers to ensure it consistently provides the right level of assistance amid unpredictable exchange rate fluctuations and market disruptions. The level of transfers will be coordinated through joint efforts across other sectors with cash interventions (e.g. Basic Assistance, Livelihoods), accounting for inflationary trends. While some partners are currently providing entitlements in both USD and LBP,²⁹ most of the sector cash transfers are disbursed in Lebanese Lira. In the context of the proposed dollarisation of direct cash assistance,³⁰ the sector will work closely with its partners and the broader humanitarian and development community to find feasible and appropriate solutions centred around vulnerable populations and their interests, partners' capabilities to deliver and accounting for operational and protection risks. This includes strengthening monitoring and reporting on protection risks that may arise from partners' interventions and developing appropriate solutions in partnership with the protection sector. Meanwhile, the sector comparative advantage will continue to be leveraged to negotiate favourable exchange rates that can enable partners to reach more beneficiaries and maximise the value of their contributions.³¹

To verify and/or enrol programme participants, partners will continue to employ a variety of coordinated targeting, registration and selection approaches to allow for the prioritisation of finite resources and assistance to those most in need. These include community outreach, referrals, vulnerability and needs assessments³² and the use of existing beneficiary databases, such as the one housed at the Ministry of Social Affairs for the NPTP. The NPTP assists extremely poor Lebanese households and will be further expanded in 2022 in coordination with the planned roll-out of the World Bank's funded ESSN project. In collaboration with other sectors, targeting and deduplication of caseloads will be harmonised and strengthened to improve efficiencies and reduce overlaps, including with cohorts of Lebanese and migrants assisted through the 2021-2022 ERP, to which the sector is also contributing.

²⁹ In September 2021, WFP began distributing cash assistance in US dollars under the National Poverty Targeting Programme, whereby beneficiaries can withdraw their entitlements from ATMs in USD or LBP at a preferential rate.

³⁰ Donors have recommended the preferred solution of dollarising humanitarian direct cash assistance owing to the urgent need to neutralise the impact of currency fluctuations and exchange rate spreads on humanitarian contributions and the associated grave losses in shares of contributions coming in for beneficiaries, the macroeconomic impact of the continued disbursement of cash assistance in LBP in large quantities and the grave legal and compliance issues donors are faced with in the absence of a transparent and systematic exchange rate framework.

³¹ In late 2021, LOUISE agencies (WFP, UNHRC, UNICEF) were able to secure 98 per cent of the street market rate and 180 per cent of the Sayrafa rate.

³² For the targeting of refugees, partners rely on the joint assessment and targeting system, based on the annual Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees, Vulnerability Assessment for Refugees of Other Nationalities and an econometric formula, to identify and rank beneficiaries by vulnerability. An econometric approach which is used and updated annually, applies a nationwide "bottom up" approach that targets its assistance to those with the lowest score.

Sector guidance will be provided to partners on how to address overlaps to improve complementarity and coverage, and to ensure that households receive a diverse package of assistance that meets their differential needs. Intersectoral strategic planning as it relates to the identification and selection of Lebanese members of host communities and the determination of their needs will be strengthened through advocacy, joint planning, assessments, targeting and monitoring. This joined-up approach, noted in the 2021 strategic review of the LCRP, is recognised as an urgent priority and a major gap to be addressed.

Output 2.2 – Farmers’ associations, cooperatives and agricultural MSMEs have increased capacities in production, transformation and governance along the value chain and have improved agricultural livelihoods. Interventions will provide tailored financial, technical, material support and capacity building to improve agricultural livelihoods. Focus will be placed on adding value in production and transformation, including supporting linkages to markets. Activities under this output will be coordinated with the Livelihoods sector to enhance coordination and collaboration among all partners and institutions working/supporting agricultural cooperatives.

Output 2.3 – Lebanese small-scale farmers have access to emergency, recovery and/or long-term support (materials, financial, technical) that promotes agricultural investment. Lebanese small-scale farmers will receive emergency short-term support through cash and voucher programmes to help them resume production. Financial (e.g. matching or cash grants to support their businesses) and technical support, on areas such as land reclamation, efficient irrigation/water management and/or agricultural inputs such as seeds, livestock and equipment, will also be provided. This will enhance private agriculture investments, which will ultimately improve incomes and agricultural livelihoods. Trainings on food production, handling and agri-food processing, as well as on conservation techniques and other functions of the food system will continue to be delivered in 2022 to expand livelihood opportunities, strengthen businesses and improve production.

Output 2.4 – Youth aged 15 to 25 years have access to improved agricultural technical education and vocational training. Improvements to the agriculture sector will be accompanied by strategies to build the skills and competencies of youths (15-25 years of age), who will receive technical trainings in agricultural schools, agricultural vocational skills training (internship, on-the-job training /apprenticeship) and literacy and numeracy skills training (non-agriculture related skills) to enhance their employability in the labour market.

Output 2.5 – Vulnerable individuals have improved opportunities to access temporary, seasonal and casual labour in agriculture and related sectors, in exchange for cash assistance to increase their access to food and to agricultural infrastructure and assets. Selected participants will engage in programmes that rehabilitate/build agricultural productive infrastructure and communal assets (agricultural roads, irrigation networks, forests, hill lakes, water reservoirs), increasing opportunities to access temporary, seasonal or casual labour in agriculture and related sectors, in exchange for cash-based food assistance that increases their access to food.

Output 2.6 - Vulnerable individuals have strengthened technical and operational capacities to access temporary, seasonal and casual labour, in exchange for cash-based assistance that increases their access to food. Selected participants will receive trainings and inputs that develop their skills and competencies and have more opportunities to access temporary, seasonal and casual labour in exchange for cash-based assistance that increases their access to food.

OUTCOME 3

IMPROVE FOOD UTILISATION THROUGH FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION PRACTICES (PROMOTION OF CONSUMPTION OF DIVERSIFIED/QUALITY FOOD AND IYCF PRACTICES)

Output 3.1 - Individuals and households more vulnerable to food insecurity (female-headed households, households with pregnant and lactating women and children under five, households with individuals over 65 years old) adopt optimal nutrition practices through the promotion of consumption of diversified/quality food and IYCF practices, of nutrition awareness and of small-scale production of diversified nutritious food.

Output 3.2 - Individuals have improved capacity on food safety and quality to improve their practices, through trainings on good practices and promotion of policies supporting the local production of high-value nutritious foods.

OUTCOME 4

PROMOTE AND STABILISE FOOD SECURITY THROUGH SUPPORT/CAPACITY BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR DECENTRALISED SERVICES

Output 4.1 - National and decentralised institutions working in food security, agriculture and social protection have strengthened capacities to improve service delivery for vulnerable populations. Strategic, technical and operational support will be provided to national and local institutions to strengthen their capacities in delivering services and programmes.

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

Using a needs-based and prioritisation approach, partners will ensure that their assistance is directed to the most vulnerable refugees and members of host communities and that it complements assistance provided by other organisations. Partners will make considerable efforts to maximise inclusion of vulnerable persons and reduce inclusion errors. Lebanon's compounded crises have pushed the number of people in need of assistance to an estimated 3.018 million across all population cohorts – Syrian refugees, Palestine Refugees in Lebanon, Palestinian Refugees from Syria and refugees of other nationalities as well as Lebanese host communities. Of this total, the sector will target some 2 million vulnerable women, men and children with both humanitarian and stabilisation support, using one or a combination of different targeting approaches, namely socio-economic (based on proxy means testing), categorical (e.g. youths aged 15 to 25 years, farmers) and geographical. Gender-based vulnerabilities and considerations will be included throughout the targeting process.

Syrian Refugees

The sector will reach approximately 1.320 million displaced Syrians currently living under the SMEB, using a country-wide targeting approach based on the Proxy Means Test (PMT). PMT uses socioeconomic data to estimate the welfare level of individual households and to produce a wealth ranking. Programmes establish a cut-off point. Households with an estimated welfare score lower than the cut-off point are accepted into the programme. The PMT is recalibrated annually and retargeting is conducted with a “bottom-up” approach. Ranking variables are mostly demographic with a statistical correlation with the VASyR 2021 results on economic vulnerability and food insecurity. The variables relate to households' characteristics (including but not limited to household size, gender, education level, presence of members with disabilities as well as working family members). New inclusions will be based on the ranking in combination with an appeal mechanism to minimise formula errors.

Lebanese host communities

Based on WFP's Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, which ranks households' deprivation across different dimensions, such as food, health, education, shelter, livelihoods and employment, there are an estimated 780,000 Lebanese who are severely and moderately deprived and some 450,000 Lebanese who are severely deprived. The overall LCRP population-in-need figure for Lebanese is 1.5 million. Based on the sector's partners' ongoing and planned interventions and confirmed capacities, the total number of vulnerable Lebanese – including in host communities – supported through cash-based and in-kind food assistance and agricultural livelihood interventions in 2022 will be 633,000 individuals. This includes 420,000 Lebanese living in extreme poverty who are supported through the ongoing expansion of the NPTP (a two-fold increase of the initial caseload established in 2021). As part of the ERP an additional 400,000 vulnerable Lebanese are being supported through the sector's coordinated cash and in-kind interventions. With the upcoming roll-out of the World Bank's funded ESSN programme, with which the sector will also be closely coordinating, it is anticipated that some 1.5 million Lebanese in need will be reached through these different frameworks.

The selection of farmers is based on the Ministry of Agriculture's 2010 census database, with prioritisation informed by farms' size (cultivated areas) or number of livestock, total annual sales, farmers having only agricultural activities and other selection criteria, which are refined by ongoing assessment and the programme's impact monitoring. Livelihoods projects apply a combination of geographical targeting and simple proxy-means testing to make sure activities benefit those most in need, particularly for direct short-term job creation activities. Geographical targeting is applied particularly for interventions that seek to

improve levels of income and employment in local communities. Vulnerable Lebanese households from host communities and refugees are identified using a Livelihood Vulnerability Assessment. The Assessment is a simple proxy-means test that looks at key household vulnerability indicators (e.g. female-headed household, household size, number of dependants and livelihood coping strategies). Balance is sought to maintain a 50 per cent Syrian and non-Lebanese and 50 per cent Lebanese for livelihoods interventions under the sector. Specific geographic location may exceed this balance for practical constraints, however.

Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) and Palestine Refugees in Lebanon (PRL)

Protracted displacement, deteriorating socio-economic conditions aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic and protection concerns continue to affect Palestinian refugees from Syria and Palestine refugees in Lebanon. According to UNRWA some 29,000 PRS in Lebanon are in need of emergency support.³³ Their needs will be addressed, as well as those of an additional 22,602 PRL prioritised for assistance in 2022, through different sector interventions, including cash and in-kind assistance and income-generating activities.

Refugees of Other Nationalities

Refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities are also bearing the brunt of the Syria crisis and Lebanon's socioeconomic collapse and are facing increased difficulties in meeting their food needs. As of August 2020, there are 6,608 registered refugee families, 33,040 individuals, from countries of origin other than Syria. Just over half the population is comprised of Iraqis (54%) and one quarter are Sudanese (26%). Other countries of origin include Ethiopia, Egypt, Yemen and others. In 2022, based on the 2020 Vulnerability Assessment of Refugees of Other Nationalities in Lebanon data, partners will assist a total of 12,686 refugees of other nationalities living below the MEB, to ensure their food needs are met.

³³ UNRWA 'Syria Regional Crisis Emergency Appeal 2021'

Total sector needs and targets

| Population Cohort | Total population | PIN | TARGETS | | POPULATION TARGETED BY SEX AND AGE | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | | Total population in need | Total Population Targeted | # Targeted Households | # Women | % Women | # Men | % Men | # Children (0-19) | % Children (0-19) | # Adolescent (12-17) | % Adolescent (12-17) |
| Lebanese | 3,864,296 | 1,500,000 | 633,846 | 126,769 | 327,065 | 51.6% | 306,781 | 48.4% | 197,760 | 31.2% | 78,597 | 39.8% |
| Displaced Syrians | 1,500,000 | 1,360,000 | 1,320,000 | 264,000 | 673,200 | 51.0% | 646,800 | 49.0% | 700,920 | 53.1% | 176,880 | 25.2% |
| Palestinians from Syria (PRS) | 29,000 | 29,000 | 29,000 | 9,063 | 15,022 | 51.8% | 13,978 | 48.2% | 11,049 | 38.1% | 3,393 | 30.8% |
| Palestinians from Lebanon (PRL) | 180,000 | 117,000 | 22,602 | 7,063 | 11,708 | 51.8% | 10,894 | 48.2% | 8,611 | 38.1% | 2,644 | 30.7% |
| Refugees of other Nationalities | 33,040 | 12,686 | 12,686 | 2,537 | 6,343 | 50.0% | 6,343 | 50.0% | 4,186 | 33.0% | 1,459 | 34.8% |
| Total | 5,606,336 | 3,018,686 | 2,018,134 | 409,432 | 1,033,337 | 51.2% | 984,797 | 48.8% | 922,527 | 45.7% | 262,973 | 28.5% |
| INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Type of Institutions | Targeted | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Ministry of Agriculture | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Ministry of Social Affairs | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Social Development Centers | 120 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Ministry of Agriculture Regional Services | 11 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Agricultural Centres (MoA) | 34 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute | 3 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | General Directorate of Cooperatives | 8 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Green Plan | 9 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Municipalities | 10 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cooperatives | 192 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Total | 389 | | | | | | | | | | |

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

In the context of Lebanon's mounting crisis and the associated needs of an ever-growing population of impoverished, vulnerable and food insecure refugees and Lebanese host communities, it is essential that the sector ensures the following mainstreaming elements are taken into account in all of its interventions:

Gender and SGBV – Ensure gender-sensitive programming by strengthening the targeting, delivery and monitoring of interventions that take into consideration the differential needs of women, men, girls and boys. Assessments and monitoring surveys will collect data disaggregated by gender and age, promoting gender and age analysis and participation of all groups in programme design and implementation. Special focus will be placed on female-headed households, women of reproductive age and pregnant and lactating women to ensure inclusive, adequate and commensurate responses to their specific needs. Protracted crises can create and/or exacerbate different forms of GBV, resulting in illness, injury, stigma and discrimination. Sector's partners will continue to abide by the Global Food Security Cluster and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines for integrating gender-based violence considerations into their interventions. Agriculture is a critical sector for women's livelihoods, and the sector's strategy will continue to strengthen women farmers' capacities and inclusion in its programmes.

Protection/PSEA³⁴ – Strengthen the safe identification and referral of persons with specific needs and individuals at risk. The sector will contribute to improving the understanding of barriers to safe and dignified access, accountability and participation in relation to food security and agricultural interventions and to identify mitigation measures to strengthen these components considering rapidly evolving challenges. Good practices will be promoted to ensure inclusive programming models for persons with disabilities. Accountability to affected populations will continue to be the backbone of partners' work in 2022 and be guided by interagency minimum standards on complaint and feedback mechanisms. In addition, given the large number of women and adolescent girls working on agricultural sites across Lebanon, and the exploitation and protection risks for women and girls linked to the provision of cash and in-kind assistance, the sector will continue to inform and raise awareness related to PSEA. The sector will also ensure that partners are reporting on main protection risks, incidents or patterns in relation to their activities and operations for both protection and non-protection referrals and programme adjustments. Based on lessons learned from 2021, the sector will also continue to work with the Livelihoods and Child Protection Working Groups to address child labour in agriculture through the formulation of integrated programmes, trainings and awareness sessions that can inform child labour reduction measures in partners' agricultural activities and programme design.

Conflict Sensitivity – Strengthen conflict sensitivity and do no harm approaches in partners' capacities and operations through guidance, training, monitoring and linkages with other sectors. The sector will work closely with its counterparts at the governmental, interagency and operational levels to strengthen the capacity for and use of conflict-sensitive programming approaches in their efforts to implement the current Food Security and Agriculture response plan. This collaboration would cover, but would not be limited to: strengthening the capacity for conflict/context analysis related to key areas of the response plan, supporting the design and implementation of humanitarian and development interventions to be informed by risks. Additionally, the collaboration would support available mitigation measures relevant for a conflict-sensitive practice and collaborate to shape MEAL frameworks that integrate conflict-sensitive programming relevant indicators.

Working together to measure and monitor the existing/potential stabilizing effects that cash-based and in-kind interventions can have on inter-communal stability and overall social cohesion will make it possible to identify the most relevant conflict sensitivity lessons learned and best practices for future programme cycles. Programme adjustments (including changes in value and distribution arrangements, selection and identification of participants) will be accompanied by clear outreach and communications strategies to ensure beneficiaries and other operational and strategic counterparts are informed about programmatic changes impacting their participation in programme activities and redistribution of benefits, and the reasons behind these changes. The ongoing expansion of the NPTP—targeting poor Lebanese households—is likely to further

³⁴ The Food Security and Agriculture sector is part of the PSEA network group through the PSEA focal point representing the sector.

reduce tensions related to perceived aid perception bias amongst host community members. Together with the Social Stability sector, the Food Security and Agriculture sector will finalise conflict sensitivity guidelines with a view to expand them to include food assistance and agricultural livelihoods interventions.

COVID-19 – Ensure safe food security programming and strengthen support to affected households. With the ongoing pandemic and emergence of new variants, the sector will continue to operate according to its Business Continuity Plan, strengthen preparedness measures and coordinate flexible approaches to enable the continuous implementation of safe and effective food security and agriculture interventions. Measures will be adopted to help prevent transmission of the virus among partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. This includes reinforcing the implementation of good hygiene practices and social distancing at cash/in-kind distribution points, during the implementation of livelihood, capacity building and technical assistance interventions, and by adapting the design and delivery of assistance to account for lockdown measures and other COVID-19 related restrictions. Coordination and linkages between partners, sectors and frameworks will be strengthened to ensure COVID-19 cases are referred for assistance and their needs are met. Guidance notes, lessons learned and operational documents will be updated/disseminated to support partners' programmes.

Environment - Strengthening capacities in mainstreaming environmental concerns and in mitigating the impact of climate change, particularly on agricultural interventions. To this effect, the sector will work closely with the Environment Task Force led by the Ministry of Environment and will support its efforts in the application of environmental safeguards to agricultural activities by ensuring that sector partners adopt environmental markers when planning their projects. Efforts will be deployed to ensure management of soil and water resources, application of integrated pest and crop management, protection of agro-biodiversity and agro-ecosystems and avoiding further deterioration of the natural eco-system and of long-term sustainability. The sector will also coordinate with its partners to ensure interventions are conducted in line with the National Agriculture Strategy with regards to improving climate change adaptation and sustainable management of agri-food systems and natural resources.