

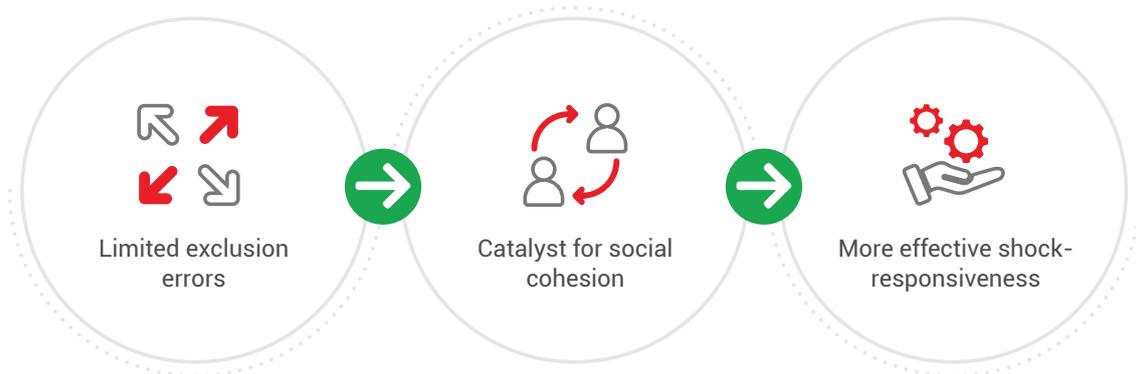


SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The aim of the social assistance pillar is to have a system which consists of streamlined and well-coordinated programs that provide direct income support to households to tackle rising vulnerability and income/food insecurity, promote socio-economic inclusion and life in dignity, as well as preserve human capital/ productivity. The system will rely on a combination of core lifecycle income-support benefits to address vulnerabilities/ contingencies in childhood, working age, and old age (social protection floor), and programs providing cash benefits for households that remain in a state of extreme poverty (social safety nets).

Furthermore, social assistance programs will adopt shock-responsive social protection program design, such that they can “scale up” by temporarily increasing benefit levels to existing beneficiaries and “scale out” by temporarily providing benefits to affected households during times of acute need that were not previously included as beneficiaries.

A multi-pronged system that focuses on both poverty and life-cycle vulnerabilities is the most appropriate course of action for multiple reasons:



POLICY OUTCOMES

Accordingly, the following policy outcomes are proposed:

P1.01:

All vulnerable individuals are provided with direct income support to prevent and alleviate poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion and reduce overall inequality.

P1.02:

The level of social assistance transfers is sufficient to attain adequate standards of living and mitigate the impact of multi-faceted lifecycle risks.

P1.03:

The national social assistance infrastructure allows for effective, efficient and transparent service delivery, and facilitates coordination and integration of social assistance programs within the broader social protection system.



STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS AND INITIATIVES

Strategic Orientation 1:

Progressively expand adequate direct income support to households and individuals facing poverty and life-cycle vulnerabilities.



Initiative 1.1:

Strengthen and complete the planned emergency expansion of the social safety nets for households in extreme poverty.



Initiative 1.2:

Introduce and roll-out inclusive Social Grants, as a foundation for a social protection floor to address different lifecycle vulnerabilities.

Strategic Orientation 2:

Ensure coordination and alignment between different social assistance interventions as part of a national social assistance system, including along the humanitarian-development nexus.



Initiative 2.1:

Establish a social assistance coordination unit or mechanism which integrates and consolidates program design and operations across all institutions.



Initiative 2.2:

Establish unified or coordinated approaches for eligibility and transfer value determination across all interventions in the social assistance system, following rigorous analysis and periodic review.



Initiative 2.3:

Until the return of the displaced Syrians, advance towards aligning existing social safety nets for Palestinian refugees and displaced Syrians, funded, and implemented by the international community, with the national social assistance system under development for Lebanese nationals.

Strategic Orientation 3:

Link social assistance with complementary services and programs that address multi-dimensional vulnerabilities.



Initiative 3.1:

Fully develop linkages and referral systems between social assistance programs and other programs that provide opportunities for social inclusion.



Initiative 3.2:

Increase case management services and specialized care for vulnerable groups with multi-dimensional vulnerabilities.



Initiative 3.3:

Link social assistance to public TVET for reskilling/upskilling in addition to livelihood opportunities and other life skills capacity building.



Initiative 3.4:

Ensure proper linkages between social assistance and access to affordable and inclusive housing.

Strategic Orientation 4:

Develop the social assistance infrastructure and the capacity of ministries and mandated national institutions in providing integrated social assistance.



Initiative 4.1:

Establish fully government owned payment and delivery mechanisms within the unified institutional framework of the Social Assistance Coordination Unit that can ensure enrollment, onboarding and delivery of cash to recipients on a regular, reliable and accessible basis.



Initiative 4.2:

Enhance system capacity to respond to crises by embedding shock responsiveness in existing (and future) schemes, including enabling environment, program design, and delivery systems.



Initiative 4.3:

Invest in outreach and communications initiatives consistently to ensure that intended beneficiaries (particularly vulnerable groups) and the public are informed of the objectives of SA programs, target population, and benefit entitlements, including those in rural and remote areas.



Initiative 4.4:

Strengthen integrated grievance and redress mechanisms for complaints and appeals, as well as queries at the national and local levels.



Initiative 4.5:

Establish and maintain a nationally owned management information systems at the program level and ensure their integration as part of a national single registry for the social protection sector.

