



Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket, Minimum Expenditure Basket, Gap analysis and Transfer values for Cash Programming

Technical guidance note

Iraq, 2023



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Photo front page: © Ezra Millstein/Mercy Corps. July 2017, Mosul, Iraq: Cash is ready for distribution at a Mercy Corps cash distribution in East Mosul. With the cash, families are buying food and household essentials to help set themselves up. Mercy Corps as part of the Cash and Livelihoods Consortium for Iraq (CLCI) which includes the five largest organizations working in the country, has reached over 90,000 families with cash assistance

Context and background

The Cash Working Group (CWG) has facilitated a revision of the existing Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) and, for the first time, the design of a Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) and a Gap analysis. This analysis has been conducted during the fourth quarter of 2022 under a Task Force that was created for this purpose.

In light of the current economic context in Iraq, the CWG agreed to update the SMEB value after seeing a general price inflation of basic commodities since the war in Ukraine started. Additionally, in line with the transitional context from humanitarian to development, the CWG agreed to design the MEB and to conduct a gap analysis.

The SMEB/MEB calculation requires the identification and quantification of basic needs items and services that can be monetized and are accessible in adequate quality through local markets and services. Items and services included in an MEB are those that households (HHs) in a given context are likely to prioritize, on a regular or seasonal basis. It is inherently multisectoral and based on the average cost of the items composing the basket¹. The SMEB includes the goods and services to satisfy basic survival needs in the short term while the MEB are the ones to meet basic needs and minimum living standards without resorting to negative coping strategies or compromising people's health, dignity and essential livelihood assets in the long term. Based on this, the Task Force agreed to use the SMEB for any future emergency situations in the country while the MEB will be used as the main reference value in 2023.

The SMEB/MEB is a starting point and serves as a benchmark to calculate transfer values for Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA). In Iraq, the SMEB has been used in the past years to directly set the transfer value for Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA), which targets mainly returnees and IDPs out of camps. The SMEB/MEB also provides guidance to other CVA partners to set up transfer values that cover sector-specific or multi-sectorial needs. In this exercise, a gap analysis has also been studied to understand the extent that needs can be covered by a household's income. In this sense, the gap analysis is calculated as the total need minus the needs that are met by the affected population. Therefore, in 2023, the recommended transfer value will not be equal to the SMEB/MEB value.

Since in 2023 the cash programming will be more diversified and beyond the humanitarian responses, this technical note includes recommendations for sectoral baskets and different gap values to consider depending on population groups and profiles. In this current context, it is also relevant to start looking at aligning with the existing Social Protection cash-based schemes, which include the calculation of per capita values as well. This technical note is a guidance to take as a reference when designing specific CVA programs. To facilitate these calculations, an excel sheet is included with the reference values as a calculation tool.

The CWG facilitated the design of the first SMEB in Iraq in 2016. Since then, there have been four revisions to the SMEB, in 2018², 2019³, 2020⁴ and 2021⁵, based on regular price and market monitoring and needs analyses. While the main components of each of the SMEBs remained generally consistent, there were minor modifications to the prices and quantities of specific components. The MEB has been newly designed aiming to incorporate a more rights-based approach while moving towards a more development space.

This document outlines the methodology and process of the latest revision of the SMEB and the design of the MEB and a gap analysis. The aim is to document the revision process and to provide data and tools to set transfer values for CVA programming.

¹ Definition of SMEB in the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) Network Glossary

² [SMEB guidance 2018](#)

³ [SMEB guidance 2019](#)

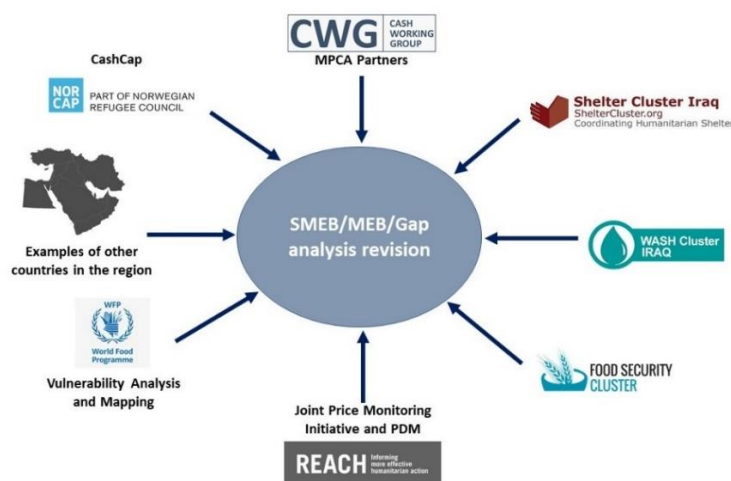
⁴ SMEB 2020: There is no guidance document because the recommendation was to use the value of the 2019 revision in USD and apply the new exchange rate to IQD.

⁵ [SMEB and MPCA Transfer Value technical note 2022](#)

Methodology

The CWG facilitated this exercise with voluntary participants. The process started in September 2022 with a desk review and data analysis from different data sources. A Task Force has been created with CWG members: Action Contre la Faim (ACF), CESVI, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Organization of Migration (IOM), International Rescue Committee (IRC), People In Need (PIN), REACH-Initiative, UNHCR, Welthungerhilfe (WHH). Separated meetings took place in October and November to discuss the most suitable data sources and values for each component.

The whole process has been supported by multiple actors, including MPCA partners: ACF, Cash and Livelihoods Consortium for Iraq (CLCI), PIN and UNHCR provided data from vulnerability assessments and Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM); Relevant Clusters, including Food Security, WASH and Shelter; the World Food Programme that contributed with data from the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) and REACH Initiative providing the data of the Joint Price Monitoring Initiative (JPMI) and the Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment round 10 (MCNA) and doing the whole data analysis of the vulnerability assessments and Post-Distribution Monitoring; Examples and references with other country operations in the region have been also used.



The SMEB in Iraq is traditionally calculated at a national level and based on the average household size of six individuals, which is the national average for IDPs living out of camps and returnees based on MCNA data. Therefore, there is one single value as a reference. In this exercise, the MEB follows the same logic, and a value per capita has also been studied, looking at aligning the values with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) cash-based Social Assistance.

To calculate the values, different data sources have been used to inform prices, expenditures and other relevant information to determine the components of the baskets. The table on page 5 shows a summary of the data sources and how they have been used. The specific methodology applied for each of the components is detailed in each section.

Currency used for calculations

The calculation has been done in Iraqi Dinar (IQD) for the following reasons:

- The prices in the local markets are in IQD and people receiving cash assistance normally use this currency for their everyday purchases.
- Price monitoring initiatives used for this SMEB/MEB calculations also collect their data in IQD.
- Monitoring in IQD allows better identification of potential variations of prices in the local markets.
- The current fluctuation of the exchange rate between IQD and USD has been relatively stable the past year, although this should be continuously monitored to identify potential inflation of local prices.

Data sources

Several data sources have been used to inform the values of each of the SMEB/MEB components and the gap analysis. The participatory approach during the process led to the agreement on which source is more suitable to be used for each of the components.

The data sources used during the process are:

Data source	Description	Data type	Data collection period	Coverage
Joint Price Monitoring Initiative (JPMI)	JPMI is the harmonized price monitoring tool developed by the CWG and REACH. Data collection occurs bi-monthly by CWG partners in their project locations. Key findings are published in a Dashboard . This is district-level data aggregated to the country level.	Price data	April – October 2022 to reflect the impact on prices as a result of the war in Ukraine	Areas where MPCA is implemented
Vulnerability Analysis Mapping (VAM)	VAM is a tool developed by the WFP to analyse and monitor market prices. Data are collected monthly in the capital of each governorate in Iraq. This is district-level data aggregated to country-level.	Price data	April – October 2022	Capitals of all governorates
Socio-Economic Vulnerability Assessment data	Datasets shared by CWG partners (ACF, CLCI, PIN, UNHCR) with vulnerability assessment data, including only eligible HHs for MPCA, which represent the most vulnerable population using the Proxy Means Test targeting model. The datasets contain data on beneficiary priority needs, income, registration in Social Protection and debts and it has been used mainly for the gap analysis.	Beneficiary data	January – September 2022	13,528 HH in conflict-affected governorates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,133 using ISEA • 2,481 using SEVAT • 8,914 using UNHCR SEVAT
UNHCR PDM Data	UNHCR is one of the largest CVA actors in Iraq with an extensive database of information collected from beneficiaries. The PDMs contain data on beneficiary expenditures, priority needs and incomes. PDMs are used mainly to inform expenditure data, considering that households have received cash assistance and can have expenditures more aligned with their needs. Findings adhered to a minimum 95% confidence level and a +/-5% margin of error at the national level and a 95% confidence level and a +/-10% margin of error at the governorate level.	Beneficiary expenditure data	21-31 July 2022	966 HH interviews with out-of-camp IDPs and returnees in nation-wide.
Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (MCNA) round 10 (2022)	The MCNA is conducted yearly and over the past years was the primary source to inform the Humanitarian Needs Overview. It contains data on needs, expenditures, and other relevant indicators. Findings of the representative with a 95% confidence level and a +/-5% margin of error at the national level.	Expenditure data and other relevant indicators	June-August 2022	12,839 HH interviews: in-camp and out-of-camp IDP, returnee and HC nation-wide.

Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket

The SMEB value will be used in 2023 as the reference value for cash programming in only emergency responses.

The main SMEB components remain the same to be consistent with the previous revisions and because these continue to be the priority needs reported in data sources. The revision of the SMEB consisted in revising and updating the prices of the items of the existing SMEB.

The main components of the SMEB are:

Food Security	WASH	Shelter	Water
Electricity	Transportation	Communication	

Food Security

The food security component is calculated in coordination with the Food Security Cluster, and based on the recommended minimum consumption of 2,100Kcal per person per day. The items and quantities of this component remain the same as in previous revisions, but the unit price of each item has been adjusted.

Prices are calculated based on averages between the JPMI and the VAM, from April to October 2022 in order to reflect the impact of price inflation as a result of the war in Ukraine, and across the country. Using these two data sources combines the advantages of each, as the JPMI collects the prices in project locations while VAM collects the prices in the capitals of each governorate. The combination of both allows greater coverage of data and information. The prices have also been aggregated across the months to better incorporate the impact of seasonality.

SMEB Food Basket				
Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit price	Total (IQD)
Bulgur	kg	5	1,403	7,015
Lentils	kg	10	2,003	20,033
Rice	kg	15	1,716	25,747
Salt	kg	0.75	654	490
Sugar	kg	5	1,280	6,398
Vegetable oil	Litre	4.55	3,213	14,617
Wheat flour	Kg	30	1,119	33,558
TOTAL				107,858

This value represents an increase of 18.2% compared to the value in the previous revision for 2022, in line with the inflation of prices observed in the past months.

WASH Non-Food Items

NFI items in the WASH component have been revised in coordination with the WASH Cluster. This component consists of consumable hygiene items, of which all items and quantities remain the same as in the previous revision. However, prices for each item have been adjusted for inflation.

Prices are calculated on the average collected in the JPMI and VAM from April-October 2022, in order to reflect the impact of price inflation as a result of the war in Ukraine, and across the country. The price of hand sanitizer was not previously included in the JPMI and VAM, and this was calculated on a rapid assessment in 20 shops located in 5 districts in November 2022.

SMEB WASH NFI Basket				
Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit price	Total (IQD)
Bath soap	125ml	6	280	1,680
Detergent	1 kg	1	1,047	1,047
Garbage bags	Pack of 20	1	2,920	2,920
Sanitary napkins	1 napkin	32	144	4,595
Shampoo	500ml	1	1,863	1,863
Toothbrush adults	1 brush	3	692	2,076
Toothbrush children	1 brush	3	692	2,076
Toothpaste	75ml	1	1,258	1,258
Disinfectant solution	500ml	1	1,755	1,755
Hand sanitizer	100ml	2	1,132	2,263
TOTAL				21,533

This value represents an increase of 16% compared to the value in the previous revision for 2022, in line with the inflation observed the past months.

Shelter

The shelter component was informed by the Shelter Cluster and by data collected by CWG partners. In the previous revision, this component included two different calculations: one for out-of-camp IDP HHs, which are spending on rent, and one for returnee HHs, that have other shelter expenditures e.g., shelter repair or NFIs. For this revision, the calculation has considered additional indicators for the discussion.

In MCNA, population groups have indicated shelter as one of their top priority needs and, similarly to the previous revision, data shows that 68% of IDPs are renting housing compared to only 14% of the returnees. However, both population groups are living in housing with non-good conditions, representing 62% of the IDPs and 68% of returnees.

For out-of-camp IDPs, the majority of the households (73%) in the MCNA are paying rent. For returnees, in the UNHCR vulnerability assessments, the majority of the households (81%) are spending on shelter NFI and a very small percentage are spending on shelter repair. Knowing that 68% of the returnee households are living in poor housing conditions and this has been reported as one of the priority needs, it is assumed that there is no more expenditure on shelter repair because of a lack of resources.

Because shelter repairs and NFIs are not recurrent needs, it has been agreed to not consider these in the shelter component of the SMEB/MEB. However, since returnees are also in need of shelter, the value has been calculated based on the MCNA average amount spent on rent by both population groups with a balance between IDP and Returnees.

Shelter		
Item	Analysis	Value (IQD)
Rent	Based on shelter priority needs; Large proportion of the population of interest live in non-good housing; The average expenditure on rent for all population groups.	82,045

Water

The water component has been designed in collaboration with the WASH cluster. The calculations for the quantity of water are based on the minimum standards of 7 litres per person per day for consumption and 43 litres per person per day for domestic use.

Based on MCNA data, an analysis has carried out to identify the different water sources that populations are using. This determined the quantities of water that require purchasing (e.g. bottled or trucked water) and the ones that are freely available (e.g. well or municipal piped water). The cost of bottled water and water trucking is calculated using JPMI data collected from April to October 2022. For bottled water, however, it is considered only those who purchase it because of a lack of an alternative (and not personal preference).

	L/P/D	Monthly quantity per HH	Median price	Maximum cost/month/HH
Bottled water	7	7 x 6 (average family size) x 30.5 (days) = 1,281 litres	281 IQD / litre	359,961 IQD
Water trucking	43	43 x 6 (average family size) x 30.5 (days) = 7,869 litres	4,578 IQD / 500 litres	72,048 IQD

Primary Sources

Improved network private	60%
Improved bottled water*	16%
Improved network community	15%
Unimproved water trucking	5%
Improved borehole	2%

** Of this 16%, 75% reported drinking bottled water for personal preference, while 25% reported that it was because of a lack of alternative sources*

Water

	% Purchased	Maximum HH Cost/Month	HH Cost/Month (IQD)
Bottled Water*	4%	359,961	14,398
Water Trucking	5%	72,049	3,602
Average Cost/HH/Month			18,001

**Based only on the 4% reporting their primary source of drinking water was bottled water due to a lack of alternative sources, which is in line with SMEB/JPMI methodology to account for the cheapest available source*

Compared to expenditures in PDM data, the median expenditure on water is 15,000 IQD, which is similar to this calculation.

Electricity, transportation and communication

Electricity is intended to cover regular house expenditures for the purposes of lighting, communication devices, or water pumps. The cost of electricity is calculated based on expenditure data only, with a median of 40,000 IQD reported in the PDM.

Transport is intended to cover basic needs related to access to education, health facilities, markets and livelihood opportunities. The cost of transportation is calculated based on expenditure data only, with a median of 40,000 IQD reported in the PDM.

Communication is intended to cover the cost of phone credit/bills and other essential communication channels. In this revision, instead of basing the calculations on household expenditure, the reference value has been obtained from the cheapest package that the mobile phone companies offer, being 15,000 IQD for 3GB of Internet data and 240 minutes of phone call to any operator.

Component	Electricity	Transportation	Communication
Value (IQD)	40,000	40,000	15,000

Value of the SMEB

The total value of the SMEB is the sum of all the components, which is the following:

TOTAL SMEB	
Component	Value (IQD)
Food Basket	107,858
WASH NFI	21,533
Shelter	82,045
Water	18,001
Electricity	40,000
Transportation	40,000
Communication	15,000
TOTAL	324,437

Minimum Expenditure Basket

The CWG agreed to design for the first time the MEB in line with the transition from humanitarian to development and increase the right-based approach. The MEB value will be used in 2023 as the main reference value for cash programming.

The main components of the MEB are the same as the SMEB with the inclusion of Health and adjusting specific items of each of the components:

Food Security	WASH	Shelter	Water
Electricity	Transportation	Communication	Health

Food Security

Similarly to this component in the SMEB, the calculation is based on the recommended minimum consumption of 2,100Kcal per person per day. The items and quantities of this component are aligned with the WFP basket with a more diverse basket compared to the SMEB existing one. The prices have been calculated with the same methodology as in the SMEB.

MEB Food Basket				
Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit price	Total (IQD)
Bulgur	Kg	9	1403	12,626
Lentils	Kg	7.2	2003	14,424
Rice	Kg	27	1716	46,344
Salt	Kg	0.9	654	588
Sugar	Kg	5.94	1280	7,601
Vegetable oil	Litre	5.4	3213	17,348
Wheat flour	Kg	36	1119	40,270
Chicken	Kg	5.4	5941	32,081
Eggplant	Kg	3.6	777	2,798
Milk powder	Kg	1.44	8785	12,650
TOTAL				186,730

WASH NFI

This component consists of consumable hygiene items with the base of the SMEB items and complementing it aligned with the WASH kits that the cluster recommends.

The prices have been calculated with the same methodology as in the SMEB, except the price of hand sanitizer, shaving cream, razors and dishwasher liquid that were not previously included in the JPMI and VAM, and these were calculated on a rapid assessment in 20 shops across 5 districts in November 2022. The price of disposable diapers was recommended by the WASH cluster.

MEB WASH NFI Basket				
Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit price	Total (IQD)
Bath soap	125ml	12	280	3,360
Detergent	1kg	2	1,047	2,094
Garbage bags	Pack of 20	1	2,920	2,920

Sanitary napkins	1 napkin	32	144	4,595
Shampoo	500ml	1.5	1,863	2,795
Toothbrush adults	1 brush	3	692	2,076
Toothbrush children	1 brush	3	692	2,076
Toothpaste	75ml	1	1,258	1,258
Disinfectant solution	500ml	1	1,755	1,755
Hand sanitizer	100 ml	2	1,132	2,263
Disposable diapers	Pack 30-32	2	7,300	14,600
Shaving cream	100ml	1	1,338	1,338
Razor	Pack of 3	1	1,109	1,109
Dishwasher	500ml	2	769	1,538
TOTAL				43,778

Shelter

The shelter component of the MEB follows the same structure as in the SMEB. For more details, please, refer to this component in the SMEB.

Shelter		
Item	Analysis	Value (IQD)
Rent	Based on shelter priority needs; Large proportion of the population of interest live in non-good housing; Average expenditure on rent for all population groups.	82,045

Water

The water component follows a similar methodology as in the SMEB, but the quantity of water is calculated on the average of the minimum standard litres required for summer and for winter.

	Consumption water (Litres/person/day)	Domestic water (Litres/person/day)
Summer	7	43
Winter	10	70
Average	8.5	56.5

	L/P/D	Monthly quantity per HH	Median price	Maximum cost/month/HH
Bottled water	8.5	8.5 x 6 (average family size) x 30.5 (days) = 1,281 litres	281 IQD / litre	437,096 IQD
Water trucking	56.5	56.5 x 6 (average family size) x 30.5 (days) = 7,869 litres	4,578 IQD / 500 litres	94,668 IQD

Based on the percentage of households reporting their primary source for drinking water (4%) and for water trucking (5%):

Water			
	% Purchased	Maximum HH Cost/Month	HH Cost/Month (IQD)
Bottled Water*	4%	437,096	17,484
Water Trucking	5%	94,668	4,733

**Based only on the 4% reporting their primary source of drinking water was bottled water due to a lack of alternative sources, which is in line with SMEB/JPMI methodology to account for the cheapest available source*

Electricity, transportation and communication

Electricity and transportation have been calculated with the same methodology as in the SMEB, based on beneficiary expenditure data.

Communication is calculated similarly to the SMEB but taking the second cheapest package that the mobile phone companies offer, being 20,000 IQD for 4GB of Internet and 360 minutes of phone call to any operator.

Component	Electricity	Transportation	Communication
Value (IQD)	40,000	40,000	20,000

Health

Health has been added as a new component to the MEB based on the high levels of needs reported in the assessments. In the SMEB, this was not included because, according to the regulations of the Federal Ministry of Health, basic health services are provided free of charge at the public Primary Healthcare Centres for IDPs and returnees. Where these population groups were not able to access services, humanitarian health actors would cover the gap. However, with the phase out of the humanitarian response, the provision of services will decrease considerably and in many areas of Iraq, the required services are not available in the public sector. For this reason, together with the Ministry of Health and the Health Cluster, it was agreed to incorporate this component to the MEB.

Health		
Item	Analysis	Value (IQD)
Health expenses	Based on 81% of households reporting expenditures on health in the PDM and calculated using the Median expenditure in MCNA	50,000

Value of the MEB

The total value of the MEB is the sum of all the components, which is the following:

TOTAL MEB	
Component	Value (IQD)
Food Basket	186,730
WASH NFI	43,778
Shelter	82,045
Water	22,217
Electricity	40,000
Transportation	40,000
Communication	20,000
Health	50,000
TOTAL	484,770

Gap Analysis

The gap analysis has been designed for the first time to understand what part of the SMEB and MEB households can cover themselves. This is also in line with the phase out of the humanitarian response and considering potential linkages with Social Protection schemes. In this section, a standard gap value is provided to consider as an average to set up for transfer values. Additionally, a list of recommendations for specific population groups and profiles is provided to take into consideration when designing transfer values for specific cash programming.

The gap analysis considers income sources from income-generating activities and Social Protection. Any source of income that is considered a negative coping strategy, has not been taken into consideration as a household contribution.

Considerations

Data analysis has been carried out to further understand household dynamics and profiles to study the gap analysis. PDM data of UNHCR shows that even after receiving CVA, only 16% of the beneficiaries are able to meet more than half of their basic needs. Looking at MCNA, 97% of the interviewed HH are relying on, at least, with one negative coping strategy to cope with their basic needs.

Relying on debts is one of the most common strategies to access financial resources, with 23% of out of camp IDPs, returnees and host communities reporting that taking debts and loans was their primary source of income in the past 30 days. Based on MCNA, 64% of households reported having debt, with a median total incurred debt of 1,000,000 IQD. In the PDM, out-of-camp IDPs and returnee households reported a median total debt of 1,600,000 IQD. Also in PDM, 42% of the HHs reported having taken a loan during the previous month compared to the 53% reported in the UNHCR vulnerability assessment. This difference is assumed that it is because of the additional income received from the provision of cash assistance. In the UNHCR vulnerability assessment 47% of the households repaid debts.

Considering these data that reflect the still persistent vulnerabilities of the target population, cash assistance is still needed to support access to basic needs. However, in line with the current transition to development and also the decrease of the level of funding, a gap value should be considered when setting the cash transfer values.

Income sources

Vulnerability assessments (ISEA) indicate that 2 out of 3 households have at least one adult working or contributing to HH income, with 68% of households having temporary employment and 22% with regular work.

Retirement allowance or pension is also considered as part of income, as it is regularly provided by the government. However, other types of Social Protection are not considered for the standard gap value because, out of the 38% of households reporting that are registered in any type of Social Protection assistance, including the universal Public Distribution System (PDS), only 18% of the HHs reported receiving it on time and 9% in full.

Regarding the PDS, Social Protection actor mentioned that in 2022 the food ration has been provided more consistently across the country thanks to the increase of the oil revenues. Therefore, the previous data can be affected depending on when the assessments have been conducted. For example, PDM data collected in July 2023 show that 72% of the HHs have received the PDS, compared to the around 25% of HH reported in the vulnerability assessment.

Standard gap value

The standard gap value has been calculated considering the average income from the relevant sources of income: Temporary employment, regular employment and retirement pension. The average also includes the households that do not have these sources of income (income is 0), in order to capture and balance the most

vulnerable population. In this regard, 88% of the households in the vulnerability assessments have an income less than 440,000 IQD, which is the MPCA reference transfer value used in 2022. This reflects that the calculation includes the income of the most vulnerable population.

Standard Gap value		
Item	Analysis	Value (IQD)
Gap value	Based on the average income of vulnerable population (households eligible for MPCA) from temporary and regular employment, retirement pension and no-income.	100,000

Other Gap values

It is also recommended to use other gap values in case the cash assistance targets specific population groups and profiles⁶. The differentiation of gap values is appropriate when at least 90% of the target population belongs to one of the below categories -in this case, it is recommended to use the same adjusted value for all beneficiaries - or when a case management approach is dedicated to the identification of vulnerabilities -in this case beneficiaries can receive different amounts according to their needs-.

In these cases, the following values are recommended to be deducted from the SMEB and MEB values:

Category	Description	Value
<i>Regular income from temporary employment, regular employment and pension</i>	After conducting the vulnerability analysis, if the majority of the eligible households (more than 90%) have income from these sources. The value is calculated based on the median income of households having income from these three sources. This would be the value to deduct from SMEB and MEB when providing cash assistance for basic needs.	220,000 IQD
<i>Temporary employment</i>	After conducting the vulnerability analysis, if the majority of the eligible households (more than 90%) have income from temporary employment. The value is calculated based on the median income of households having income from temporary employment. This would be the value to deduct from SMEB and MEB when providing cash assistance for basic needs.	200,000 IQD
<i>Households receiving PDS</i>	PDS is the universal scheme provided by the government. In the past years this has not been provided consistently but recently, there has been better coverage. However, it is still early to consider that this is the new trend and that all people in Iraq are receiving this assistance. It is also important to consider that PDS is received in the places of origin and the IDPs have limitations in accessing it. Once the vulnerability analysis is conducted, if the majority of the population (more than 90%) is receiving the PDS, the recommendation is to only include 20% of the total value of the food basket. The calculation is based on the rationale that the PDS items are meant to cover 1,998 Kcal per person per day, similar to the 2,100 Kcal that are included in the SMEB and MEB. However, the PDS kit includes less diversified items compared to the SMEB and MEB. This 20% will allow HHs to access other items that are not included in the PDS and ensure a more diversified diet. This would be the value to deduct from SMEB and MEB when providing cash assistance for basic needs and for food assistance in particular.	SMEB: 21,571 IQD MEB: 37,346 IQD
<i>MoLSA Social Assistance</i>	If the majority of the HHs are receiving regularly or will be referred to the MoLSA Social Assistance, it can be considered to not provide cash assistance for basic needs.	N/A

⁶ It is important to consider the particularities of the undocumented population, which have more limitations to accessing any of the Social Protection schemes. Therefore, the PDS and MoLSA Social Assistance will not be considered for this specific population profile.

Transfer values

The transfer values take the total SMEB/MEB value as the main benchmark and it is calculated for a family size of 6 individuals, which is the average family size for IDP out of camp and returnees based on the MCNA data. From this value, the specific gap value is deducted to obtain the final transfer value⁷.

$$\text{Transfer value} = \text{SMEB/MEB Value} - \text{Gap value}$$

The following table shows the possible transfer values recommended for different cash assistance programs and different population and profile groups.

Please, note that for regular Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance and following a harmonised approach, the recommended transfer value is 300,000 IQD (US\$ 205).

Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance for regular responses	
The value is calculated based on the MEB value (484,768 IQD), deducting the gap value for general population groups (100,000) and the recommendation to cover 78% of the total value to be in line with the MoLSA Social Assistance values for HHs of 4 and above members: The average between Male HoHH (275,000 IQD) and Female HoHH (325,000 IQD)	300,000 IQD (US\$ 205)
Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance for regular responses – Per Capita values	
The per capita values ⁸ are calculated when the assistance is provided to be aligned with the MoLSA Social Assistance. The values are calculated based on the MPCA value for regular responses for a HH of 6 members and following the same proportion of decrease that MoLSA uses depending on the number of family members. In this case, because the MPCA and MoLSA values are aligned, the per capita values are also aligned with the average amounts between male and female HoHH.	1 member: 125,000 IQD (US\$ 85) 2 members: 187,500 IQD (US\$ 128) 3 members: 250,000 IQD (US\$ 171) 4 and above: 300,000 IQD (US\$ 205)
Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance for emergency responses	
The value is calculated based on the SMEB value (325,000 IQD) and deducting the gap value for general population groups (100,000 IQD)	225,000 IQD (US\$ 154)

⁷ The values are calculated in IQD. The exchange rate used for the USD value is 1 USD = 1,460 IQD

⁸ Please, refer to the next section “Linking cash programming with Social Protection”, for more details.

Food assistance	
The values are calculated based on 2,100 Kcal per person per day and the monthly consumption for a family of 6 members. For the SMEB the very basic items are included while the MEB contains a more diversified basket.	Regular: 186,729 IQD, rounded to 185,000 IQD (US\$ 127) Emergency: 107,857 IQD, rounded to 110,000 (US\$ 75)
MPCA for population receiving PDS consistently	
The value is calculated using the MPCA value for regular and emergency responses and following the recommendation of deducting 80% of the food basket, which is covered by the PDS distribution.	Regular: 183,601 IQD, rounded to 185,000 IQD (US\$ 127) Emergency: 138,151 IQD, rounded to 140,000 IQD (US\$ 96)
Populations with more than 90% of HH with regular income from temporary/regular employment or pension	
The regular value is calculated based on the MEB value (484,768 IQD), deducting the gap value for this population profile (220,000) and the recommendation to cover 78% of the total value.	Regular: 206,521 IQD, rounded to 200,000 IQD (US\$ 137)
The emergency value is calculated based on the SMEB value (324,436 IQD) and deducting the gap value for this population profile (220,000).	Emergency: 104,437 IQD, rounded to 105,000 IQD (US\$ 72)
Populations with more than 90% of HH with regular income from temporary employment	
The regular value is calculated based on the MEB value (484,768 IQD), deducting the gap value for this population profile (200,000) and the recommendation to cover 78% of the total value.	Regular: 222,121 IQD, rounded to 220,000 IQD (US\$ 151)
The emergency value is calculated based on the SMEB value (324,436 IQD) and deducting the gap value for this population profile (200,000).	Emergency: 124,437 IQD, rounded to 125,000 IQD (US\$ 86)

Linking Cash Programming with Social Protection

In line with the transitional context and the emphasis on linking cash assistance with Social Protection, the value of the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance that aims to support families to access basic needs is recommended to be aligned with the existing cash-based Social Assistance run by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). This governmental program targets households living under the poverty line with a special focus on people living with disabilities and widows and divorced women above 65 years old and orphans below 18.

The MoLSA cash assistance is provided with the following values:

Male Head of Household	Female Head of Household
1 member: 125,000 IQD	1 member: 125,000 IQD
2 members: 175,000 IQD	2 members: 200,000 IQD
3 members: 225,000 IQD	3 members: 275,000 IQD
4 and above: 275,000 IQD	4 and above: 325,000 IQD

Following this approach, the MPCA transfer values for regular responses in 2023 have been calculated using the MEB value (484,768 IQD), deducting the gap value for the general population (100,000 IQD) and the recommendation to cover 78% of this value, resulting to a total value of 300,000 IQD, which is the average between the Male HoHH and Female HoHH for a family of 4 and above in the MoLSA Social Assistance. This is the main recommended transfer value when providing MPCA to the general vulnerable population.

MPCA Transfer Value		MoLSA Social Assistance Transfer Value (for 4 and above members)	
MEB Value	484,768 IQD	Male HoHH	275,000 IQD
Gap Value	- 100,000 IQD	Female HoHH	325,000 IQD
Total Value	384,768 IQD	Average	300,000 IQD
78% coverage	300,119, rounded to 300,000 IQD (\$US 205)		

Per capita values

For programs that are particularly focused on engaging with MoLSA and supporting a horizontal expansion of the Social Protection scheme, it is recommended to follow the per capita values. These values are calculated based on the MPCA value for regular responses for a household of 6 members and following the same proportion of decrease that MoLSA uses. In this case, because the MPCA value is aligned with the MoLSA value, the per capita values are also aligned with the average amounts between male and female HoHH.

MPCA Transfer Value Per capita	
1 member	125,000 IQD (85USD)
2 members	187,500 IQD (128USD)
3 members	250,000 IQD (171USD)
4 members and above	300,000 IQD (205 USD)

List of Acronyms

CLCI	Cash and Livelihoods Consortium for Iraq
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
CWG	Cash Working Group
HH	Household
HoHH	Head of Household
IDP	Internal Displaced Population
IQD	Iraqi Dinar
JPMI	Joint Price Monitoring Initiative
MCNA	Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment
MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basket
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MPCA	Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance
NFI	Non-Food Items
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
PDS	Public Distribution System
SMEB	Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
WFP	World Food Programme