



World Food Programme

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief

February 2020

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

Bangladesh is expected to formally transition to a middle-income country in 2024 if it meets all the eligibility criteria in 2021. The country is also making significant advances on the nutrition and food security front. According to the World Economic League Table, Bangladesh is set to enter the top 25 economies by 2033.

Facing critical levels of poverty and undernutrition, exacerbated by high population density, Bangladesh strives to continue with consistent socio-economic growth in the future. Prevalence of child marriage, adolescent pregnancies and undernutrition in mothers and adolescent girls are considerable impediments to these goals. This is compounded by high rates of stunting in children under the age of five, which is a hindrance to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Bangladesh.

WFP has been present in Bangladesh since 1974 and transitioned to a Country Strategic Plan (CSP) in April 2017. The CSP reinforces WFP's commitment to strengthening the capacities of government counterparts, providing food assistance in emergencies, and creating evidence on innovative approaches to resilience.

Furthermore, in response to the unprecedented influx of the Rohingya population in August 2017, the CSP was amended to facilitate WFP's tailored response to the refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar. Presently, WFP is providing food and nutrition assistance to over 880,000 refugees besides implementing a range of livelihood programmes for both the host and refugee communities.



Population: 164 million

2018 Human Development Index: 135 out of 189

Income Level: Least Developed Country

Chronic malnutrition: 36% of children between 6-59 months

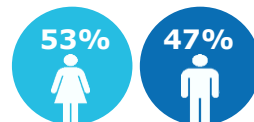
In Numbers

7,572 mt of food distributed

US\$ 5.15 million cash-based transfers made

US\$ 71.5 million six months (March 2020 - August 2020) net funding requirements, of which US\$ 64.8 million is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response

1.69 million people assisted in February 2020



Situational Updates

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina held a bilateral meeting on 5 February with her Italian counterpart Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in which Conte pledged to provide an additional €1 million (approximately US\$ 1.1 million) for the Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh.

According to the [Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey \(MICS\) 2019](#), conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and UNICEF, there has been a sharp decline of chronic malnutrition for children under the age of 5 in Bangladesh as measured by stunting levels, which fell from 42 percent in 2012-13 to 28 percent in 2019. The prevalence of moderate and severe underweight in this age group also dropped from 31.9 percent in 2012-13 to 22.6 percent in 2019.

Operational Updates

In February, WFP assisted 894,950 refugees with general food assistance: 395,087 refugees received in-kind food and 499,863 received e-vouchers. With e-vouchers families can buy their staples and fresh produce using a WFP Assistance Card (holding US\$10 per person per month) for up to 20 food items at 33 shops in 15 e-voucher outlets inside the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar. WFP plans to transition all beneficiaries to the e-vouchers modality by mid-June 2020.

The [2020 Joint Response Plan: Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis \(January-December 2020\) - Bangladesh](#) was published with a total budget of US\$ 877 million of which the food security sector requires US\$254.6 million.

WFP and the Government of Bangladesh signed an agreement on 25 February for a US\$ 35 million World Bank funded project for public works and community services for refugees. The contract was signed by the Secretary of the Minister for Disaster Management and Relief and WFP Country Director with the World Bank present.

WFP alongside FAO, IOM and the Government of Bangladesh renewed the [Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus \(SAFE Plus\)](#) project at a signing ceremony held at the Planning Commission in Dhaka, 16 February. The SAFE Plus project aims to mitigate deforestation and improve livelihood opportunities in Cox's Bazar.

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Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
969.12 m	627.53 m	71.5 m

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable groups in rural and urban settings are supported by enhanced national actions to improve their nutrition indicators in line with the national targets by 2020.

Focus area: *Root causes*

Activities:

- Act 1 Technical assistance and advocacy to enhance the food security and nutrition impact of selected safety nets.
- Act 2 Technical assistance and advocacy for improved nutrition.
- Act 3 Technical assistance and advocacy for scaling up post-harvest rice fortification.
- Act 4 Policy advice and technical assistance to scale-up school feeding.

Strategic Result 1: Access to Food

Strategic Outcome 2: The most vulnerable population of Cox's Bazar, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and disaster-stricken areas have enhanced food security and nutrition.

Focus area: *Crisis response*

Activities:

- Act 5 Deliver an integrated assistance package in Cox's Bazar.
- Act 6 Deliver an integrated assistance package in Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- Act 7 Deliver food assistance in emergencies.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: Innovative approaches to enhance the resilience of food insecure households exposed to climate-related shocks and stresses are validated by 2020.

Focus area: *Resilience building*

Activities:

- Act 8 Evidence creation on innovative approaches to enhance resilience.
- Act 9 Implement the Nobo Jatra programme.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDG

Strategic Outcome 4: The humanitarian response system for large-scale natural disasters in Bangladesh can respond with reduced cost and lead time.

Focus area: *Resilience*

Activities:

- Act 10 Capacity strengthening for emergency response.
- Act 11 Lead the logistics cluster and co-lead the food-security cluster.

Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology, strengthen global partnership to support country efforts to achieve the SDG

Strategic Outcome 5: Humanitarian and development partners in Bangladesh have access to reliable services in the areas of supply chain, emergency telecommunication, site maintenance and engineering project crises.

Focus area: *Crisis response*

Activities:

- Act 12 Coordinate the LS/C and provide efficient common logistics services to support the humanitarian community's response.
- Act 13 Coordinate the ETS/C and provide efficient common services to support the humanitarian community response.
- Act 14 Site Maintenance and Engineering Project (SMEP).

Under the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP), an orientation session on the research project conducted by IFPRI, "Joint Interventions to Improve Birth Outcomes and Nutrition", was held on 20 February at the Department of Women Affairs (DWA). The Director General of DWA and the Women Affairs Officers from six *upazilas* joined this session to discuss the research objectives, methodology, and the implementation plan.

WFP organized a workshop on 26 February for Grameen Euglena. The aim of the workshop was to review 2019 activities and develop a workplan for 2020 to support market linkages between Bangladeshi smallholder farmers and WFP food assistance programme.

WFP supported the OCHA communications mission which took place in Bangladesh from 9 to 14 February. The team visited areas and communities that were targeted by WFP during the 2019 floods with UN CERF funding.

On 26 February, a validation workshop for the 'Building Resilience to Achieve Zero Hunger (BRAZH)' project took place in Kurigram Sadar *upazila*. The aim of this workshop was to identify local needs through community-based participatory planning (CBPP). The results were then shared with the *upazila Nirbahi Officer* (subdistrict Executive Officer), the *upazila* chairman, and local Government officials.

WFP prepared the launch of the [Building Blocks](#) (BB) pilot 1 March in Cox's Bazar. BB will be piloted at the D5 e-voucher outlet located in the refugee mega-camp. WFP will organize a roundtable with all donors to provide a briefing on the WFP BB project.

COVID-19

The UN Country Team has setup a COVID-19 Task Force to coordinate and develop emergency preparedness measures for business continuity and staff well-being. WFP also launched an internal task force for COVID-19. Currently, there are three reported cases in Bangladesh.

Voices from the community

Yonchi is one of 90,000 children across 4,100 schools in the Chittagong Hill Tracts who receive food from the Government of Bangladesh and WFP, to fight malnutrition. Read her story [here](#).

Donors

Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, European Union, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Việt Nam

Contributions were also received from UN CERF, UN Pooled Funds, Multilateral and Private Donors.