



# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief April 2020

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



## Operational Context

Bangladesh is among the five fastest growing economies in the world with an average growth rate of 6.5 percent. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to weaken this growth significantly. The latest South East Asia Economic Focus released by the World Bank estimated that regional growth will fall to a range between 1.8 and 2.8 percent in 2020.

The Government of Bangladesh enforced a national lockdown beginning March 26 to minimize the spread of COVID-19 resulting in the closure of businesses and markets and causing a loss of employment for many in the informal sector. On April 16, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced a USD 11.6 billion stimulus package worth 3.5 percent of the country GDP, with approximately USD 300 million allocated to distributions of rice and wheat to 25 million people.

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 855,000 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

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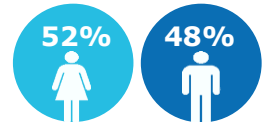
## In Numbers

6,540 mt of food distributed

US\$ 6.62 million cash-based transfers made

US\$ 26.65 million six months (May 2020 - October 2020) net funding requirements, of which US\$ 19.7 million is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response

1.17 million people assisted in April 2020



## Situational Updates

The Government of Bangladesh has extended its nationwide lockdown throughout April (although essential services remained available). The Government is currently organising the mass distribution of food rations to particularly vulnerable groups, including the urban poor.

Donors have committed over US\$137 million to the Government of Bangladesh for the COVID-19 response. This includes US\$100 million from the World Bank for health services and US\$26 million from the UK Department for International Development for humanitarian services to refugees and host communities.

## Operational Updates

In April, WFP provided **food assistance** to 858,401 refugees: 684,561 through e-vouchers, and 173,840 through in-kind food distributions. WFP successfully established standard physical distancing measures and reduced person-to-person contact at e-voucher outlets. In order to limit visits and crowds at e-voucher outlets, the value vouchers have been replaced with fixed commodity baskets of 11 items equivalent to 2100 kcal per person per day, at a value of US\$11 per person.

WFP delivered hot meals to government **quarantine facilities** in Cox's Bazar for 3,000 people three times a day; and dry food rations to 1,500 patients in isolation facilities.

WFP and FAO presented the impact of the national lockdown and COVID-19 crisis on food security in Bangladesh, to the **Local Consultative Group**. The **Food Security Cluster**, co-chaired by WFP and FAO, also launched an Emergency Response Tracker to identify country-level coverage gaps and harmonize COVID-19 assistance. The cluster also produced guidelines on cash and food assistance packages best suited to different (urban and rural) contexts.

WFP released a **Special Support to Host Communities appeal** for US\$ 22 million to provide food assistance to host communities in Cox's Bazar combining cash (USD 54 per household) and food (High Energy Biscuits and rice) to vulnerable households.

WFP worked with the **Needs Assessment Working Group** in Bangladesh on an [analysis](#) on the impact of the lockdown on food security.

WFP assisted the Directorate General of Health Services in **developing standard operating procedures for the testing and visual inspection of personal protective equipment (PPE)**. WFP plans to organise air transport for relief material (including prefabricated containers and mobile storage units) to be brought to Bangladesh to support the humanitarian response to COVID-19.

## Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
969.12 m	729.78m	26.65 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).

**School feeding:** WFP is providing technical support to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to deliver high-energy biscuits to the homes of three million school children across Bangladesh, starting with Cox's Bazar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

**Nutrition:** WFP is supporting the Government to revise its food packages for the COVID-19 emergencies, recommending a more nutritionally balanced package. **In Cox's Bazar,** WFP is providing refugees and host communities with a two-month nutrition package to limit person-to-person contact and decongest nutrition sites. Targeted and supplementary feeding programmes are continuing in refugee and host communities.

The **Logistics Sector,** with the support of WFP, launched the **Humanitarian Access Project** to support the Government, military, and police, in managing movement in and out of the camps. This [press release](#) was picked up by 20 publications.

WFP's **vulnerability analysis and mapping** unit published a [flash market survey](#) analysing the market impact of COVID-19; this forms a base for price negotiations with local retailers.

WFP's **site maintenance engineering project** activities are focused on monsoon preparedness and establishing handwashing stations at all WFP sites in the refugee camps.

WFP is working with the refugee-led **Communications with Communities (CwC) Working Group** in camps to effectively communicate with beneficiaries, disseminating messages through loudspeakers on "tom-toms" (auto rickshaws) and engaging community volunteers and leaders.

**Livelihoods programmes** in the host communities of Cox's Bazar have reoriented to conducting COVID-19 health awareness sessions. WFP continues to provide 35,000 households in these programmes with a monthly subsistence and in-kind food support.

**Rice Fortification:** WFP is working towards supporting the Ministry of Food to distribute fortified rice in two city corporations (Dhaka North and Dhaka South) through the Open Market Sales social safety net programme to reach vulnerable urban households during COVID-19. In addition, WFP continues to support the Government to distribute fortified rice in 220 sub-districts under the Food Friendly Programme and Vulnerable Group Development programme, which are both reshaped towards addressing the COVID-19 impact. Social distancing is maintained in the distribution lines, and the use of personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves, is a requirement for factory staff.

## Donors

Recent contributions to the COVID-19 response are from the US, UK, Canada, Germany, and Switzerland.

Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, European Union, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vietnam.

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