



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief May 2020



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**

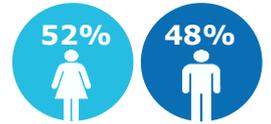
In Numbers

4,386 MT of food assistance distributed

US\$ 8.1 million cash-based transfers made

US\$ 38.9 million six months (June - November 2020) net funding requirements, of which US\$ 23.25 million is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response

1.1 million people assisted in May 2020



Situational Updates

- The nationwide lockdown will end on **30 May**. From 31 May, all government and private offices will reopen on a limited scale.
- On 3 May, the Government **quarantined over 300 refugees on Bhasan Char Island**. The refugees were rescued by the Bangladesh Navy after being stranded at sea in the Bay of Bengal for weeks. In response to the UN Secretary General appeal to move the refugees to the camps, the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that the refugees will most likely live on Bhasan Char Island until they return to Myanmar.
- Across the country, the Government is working on a proposal to implement the zone-based lockdown system to effectively manage the COVID-19 pandemic. From 6 June to 20 June, the Cox's Bazar Municipality has been declared a **Red Zone** to effectively contain the COVID-19 pandemic, with gathering and transport banned.

Operational Updates

- In May, WFP provided **food assistance** to 863,849 refugees: 684,565 through e-vouchers, and 179,284 through in-kind food distributions. As a result of COVID-19 cases in the camps, WFP is looking at alternative options to provide in-kind food for refugees who are unable to visit e-voucher outlets. Across six districts, WFP extended its support to 4,500 individuals at the isolation centres and 70,000 households.
- WFP assisted the Directorate General of Health Services in identifying critical items required for the next three months for the COVID-19 response in a **National Action Plan**, including items required to support the refugees. Of the total amount required, critical items are estimated to cost over **US\$ 217 million**.
- Cyclone Amphan made landfall on May 20 and caused damages of about **US\$ 1.2 billion** in 19 districts in Bangladesh. In preparation for Cyclone Amphan, WFP prepositioned a contingency stock of 490 mt of high-energy biscuits to provide food assistance to 90,500 families during three days as needed.

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Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
969.12 m	730.25m	38.39 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).

- Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP):** WFP repurposed and distributed food rations (10 kg of rice, 3.5 kg of lentils and 1 litre of soybean oil) to over **3,000 pregnant women in six Upazilas**. In addition, WFP supported the Department of Women's Affairs to distribute three-month cash benefits to 19,191 pregnant and lactating mothers under the programme by providing technical support to organize virtual training workshops to scale up the programme from eight to 18 Upazilas.
- The Logistics Sector,** with the support of WFP, is leading the construction of a common hub in Cox's Bazar town that will be managed by HI/Atlas Logistique.
- Site Maintenance Engineering Project (SMEP)** activities are focused on the construction of e-voucher outlets in the camps. As part of monsoon preparedness, SMEP is also performing critical engineering works in the camps.
- Resource Innovation:** While field-level activities are suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions, WFP developed **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** for forecast-based financing and climate risk insurance targeting for the upcoming flood season. During the flood season, the SOP can be activated to support 30,000 individuals through cash transfers in case of high threat level.
- Livelihoods Programmes:** In the host communities of Cox's Bazar, WFP, in cooperation with partners, have started mask production in 8 skills development centres. More than 40 female participants are producing up to 60 facemasks daily.
- Rice Fortification:** WFP continues to support the Government to distribute fortified rice to **1.5 million beneficiaries across 110 sub-districts** under the Food Friendly Programme and Vulnerable Group Development programmes.
- Nobo Jatra:** WFP supported the conditional monthly cash transfers for critical support to extremely vulnerable women. Through the Nobo Jatra programme, **4,590 women** received cash transfer to support their access to nutrition.

Donors

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.