



WFP Bangladesh Country Brief August 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 has ended the national lockdown which had been in place from 26 March until 30 June, resulting in the closure of businesses and markets and causing a loss of employment for many in the informal sector. Wearing facemasks while outside remains compulsory to contain the spread of COVID-19.

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

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 approximately 860,000 refugees besides implementing a range of livelihood programmes for both the host and refugee communities.



Population: 167 million

2019 Human Development Index: 135 out of 189

Income Level: lower middle-income country

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

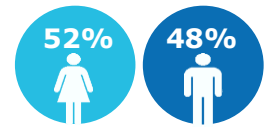
In Numbers

8,486 mt of food assistance distributed in August.

US\$ 12.3 million cash-based transfers made.

US\$ 51.4 million six months (September 2020 – February 2021) net funding requirements, of which **US\$ 35.4 million** is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response.

1.4 million people assisted in August 2020.



Situational Updates

- The Directorate General of Health Services is leading the **community support team intervention** in Dhaka North City Corporation, partnering with several UN agencies (WFP, FAO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP) and volunteer organizations. The goal is to preserve hospital capacity by slowing down disease spread at the community level through targeted home isolation and family quarantine for symptomatic individuals, combined with the promotion of public mask-wearing. WFP provides confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases with two weeks of food rations to enable them to comply with the quarantine requirements. The community support team is planning to expand the programme to the Dhaka South City Corporation.

Operational Updates

- On 19 August, WFP reached a **data sharing agreement with UNHCR**, the first of its kind globally, **for biometric data transfer**. The agreement will enable the two agencies to align beneficiary data and provide life-saving services more accurately.
- In August, WFP provided **food assistance** to 854,483 refugees: 750,978 through e-vouchers, and 103,505 through in-kind food distributions. Of the 17 e-voucher outlets, **Building Blocks** (a software based on blockchain technology) is operational in eight outlets; the others still use SCOPE.
- WFP has taken on the **coordination of logistics and procurement to assist the Government** in the procurement of medical supplies. By the end of August, WFP delivered **400 mt** through the COVID-19 Supply Chain System, and is planning to facilitate delivery of an **additional 100 mt over the next months**. Under the Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility project funded by World Bank, WFP has delivered **60 high flow nasal cannulas to hospitals and procured 57,120 test kits** (RT-PCR) for the Directorate General of Health Services.
- As part of COVID-19 programmatic adaptations, WFP is implementing the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme across all **45 nutrition sites** in the camps and **106 community clinics** in the host community. The blanket supplementary feeding programme (BSFP) for children under five is integrated into general food assistance modalities, facilitated by the SCOPE platform.

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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)
969.1 million	806.9 million	51.4 million

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).

* The Bangladesh CSP is going through a budget revision to extend it by one year in line with the new timeline for the UN Cooperation Framework, due to the pandemic.

- School Feeding:** WFP works with the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to support distribution of nutritious snacks and school meals for pre-primary and primary school children in poverty-prone areas. Since May, over **145,446** children have received micronutrient fortified biscuits at home, with distributions still ongoing. This includes **96,496** children in host communities in Cox's Bazar.
- Mother and Child Benefit Programme:** WFP provides technical support to this programme and is currently supporting the Government with the enrolment of beneficiaries into the mother and child benefit programme through self-enrolment and an online verification process. In August, **34,782 women** benefited from the programme in 23 upazilas.
- Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT):** WFP aims at providing an integrated package of assistance in the most vulnerable areas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The **Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) programme supports 10,000 people with a special focus on 2,000 women** through income-generating cash support, training and market linkages.
- Livelihoods in the host communities and camps:** WFP livelihoods programming continues to distribute a monthly subsistence allowance to nearly 20,000 households in the host communities in Ukhiya and Teknaf. As of 29 August, over **221,000 facemasks** have been produced by WFP self-reliance Rohingya beneficiaries (livelihoods in the camps), including 114,000 child size facemasks. In addition, over 14,000 masks were made by 30 women enrolled in the WFP livelihoods programme.
- Anticipatory Actions:** In the third quarter of 2020, one third of Bangladesh has been affected by flooding, with over 200 deaths reported and an estimated four million people severely affected. WFP reached **35,000 households** with forecast-based financing ahead of severe flooding in five of the worst-affected districts in northern Bangladesh.
- Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus (SAFE Plus) project:** Through the SAFE Plus inter-agency project, WFP, IOM and FAO provide liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders and cooking stoves to the refugees. IOM continues to use SCOPE wallets to distribute LPG, reaching 53 percent of the refugee population in the camps in August.
- WFP conducted a **gender webinar on "The Hidden Pandemic: Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) during COVID-19"** in August. Around 60 WFP colleagues attended and actively engaged in the interactive discussion around how GBV can be mainstreamed in WFP operations.
- Nobo Jatra:** WFP's participation in the five-year Nobo Jatra (New Beginning) programme will be phased out as a result of a funding reduction to WFP. This is due to the consortium's decision to reprioritize funding. WFP implementation of the programme will end in September 2020.

Donors (in alphabetical order)

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

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