

Crisis response revision of Bangladesh country strategic plan (2017–2020) and corresponding budget increase

	Current	Change	Revised
Duration	March 2017– December 2020	January 2021– December 2021	March 2017– December 2021
Beneficiaries	3 853 158	1 554 442	5 407 600
	<i>(USD)</i>		
Total cost	969 120 577	398 585 943	1 367 706 520
Transfer	812 772 483	340 244 528	1 153 017 011
Implementation	61 986 133	15 045 217	77 031 350
Adjusted direct support costs	34 824 535	18 969 357	53 793 891
Subtotal	909 583 151	374 259 102	1 283 842 252
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	59 537 427	24 326 842	83 864 268

Gender and age marker code*: 2A

* <http://gender.manuals.wfp.org/en/gender-toolkit/gender-in-programming/gender-and-age-marker/>.

Rationale

1. This revision requests a 12-month extension in time of the Bangladesh country strategic plan (CSP), as well as the corresponding budget increase, to adjust WFP operations in Bangladesh in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The start date of the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework has been delayed to January 2022. In the interim, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework has been extended. Extending the current CSP will ensure alignment with United Nations and government planning.
3. WFP support to the national COVID-19 response is aligned to the Bangladesh preparedness and response plan for COVID-19, especially the logistics and procurement pillar, in which WFP has a convening and technical assistance role. WFP will also align its COVID-19 response to the immediate socioeconomic response plan (July 2020–December 2021), particularly the social protection and basic services pillar and the social cohesion and community resilience pillar. The WFP response to the refugee crisis continues to be aligned with the humanitarian joint response plan. The medium-term programmatic framework, the corporate approach of WFP to the global development emergency posed by COVID-19, will inform the response.
4. While the full impact of COVID-19 on Bangladesh remains to be seen, it already affects economic growth,¹ with recovery efforts expected to stretch beyond 2021. Food prices spiked during the general holiday imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and have not fully returned to their prior levels.² At the same time, employment and earnings dropped. Although employment has begun to recover, household income in June and July 2020 remained on average 42 percent

¹ Asian Development Bank. 2020. Asian Development Outlook 2020.

² WFP. 2020. July 2020 Market Monitor, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.



below the pre-pandemic levels.³ Household food expenditure has not fully recovered and 30 percent of households surveyed report they have reduced their food consumption.⁴

5. Urban areas, especially urban slums, are of particular concern. While overall there was a drop in incomes across the country from February to April 2020, a 75 percent per capita daily income drop was observed in urban slums.⁵ Social safety net reforms have seen less progress for the urban poor than for other groups.⁶ Over 85 percent of Bangladesh's employment is outside the formal sector,⁷ and informal workers face a lack of reliable wages and employment protections. Households in urban areas faced challenges affording healthy, nutritious diets before the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A healthy diet in urban areas is slightly more expensive than in rural areas, an acute problem in slums: before the pandemic, only about 1 percent of women in the Dhaka slums consumed adequately diverse diets.⁸ Also, according to the most recent available data micronutrient deficiencies are significantly worse in urban slums than in urban areas overall, or in rural areas.⁹
6. The third Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVA 3), based on data collected before the impact of the pandemic and published in April 2020, found that 94 percent of the refugee population depended on humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs, up from 88 percent in 2018 and 80 percent in 2017, attributable to depletion of refugees' assets and a lack of livelihood opportunities. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, vulnerability in Bangladeshi communities in areas with refugee camps remained comparable to levels in 2017–2018,¹⁰ but findings from WFP assessments show an increase in vulnerability due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting loss of income.¹¹ WFP market analysis finds that increasing food prices coupled with reduced household income has eroded purchasing power.¹²
7. With a series of targeted food assistance for assets activities, WFP has been providing self-reliance opportunities for the refugees while creating assets that increase the liveability and environmental resilience of the camps as well as building transferrable skills in the refugee community. A new community workfare and services programme funded by the World Bank provides an opportunity to strengthen the resilience of refugees more systematically. Under the e-voucher programme, which has expanded to 95 percent of the refugee population, beneficiaries have better dietary diversity and choice.¹³ The programme also provides opportunities for linkages with Bangladeshi smallholder farmers and traders.

Changes

Strategic orientation

8. No changes to the strategic outcomes of the CSP are planned under this revision.

³ Rahman, Hossain Zillur et al. 2020. PPRC-BIGD Rapid Response Research: Livelihoods, Coping and Recovery During Covid-19 Phase II Findings.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Rahman, Hossain Zillur et al. 2020. PPRC-BIGD Rapid Response Research: Livelihoods, Coping and Support During COVID-19.

⁶ Mid-term Review of the National Social Security Strategy (2019). Policy Research Institute.

⁷ United Nations. 2020. Bangladesh common country analysis.

⁸ WFP. 2019. Fill the Nutrient Gap Report.

⁹ WFP. 2019. Fill the Nutrient Gap Report. The 2011–2012 National Micronutrient Survey provides the most recent data.

¹⁰ WFP. 2020. Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment 3 (REVA 3).

¹¹ WFP. 2020. Cox's Bazar Urban Vulnerability Assessment.

¹² WFP. 2020. July 2020 Market Monitor, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh and June 2020 Market Monitor, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

¹³ WFP. 2020. Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment 3 (REVA 3).



9. There have been five previous revisions: revision 1 adapted the CSP to the 2017 refugee influx and added a fifth strategic outcome focused on service delivery,¹⁴ two revisions substantially expanded assistance to refugee and Bangladeshi communities as the response evolved¹⁵ and two were technical revisions.¹⁶
10. Budget revision 5 (February 2019) assumed a 25 percent reduction in needs for the refugee response in 2020. The continuing high needs identified in REVA 3, however, call for a continuation of assistance at the same level until 2021. Therefore, the budget of Activity 5 will increase to accommodate this extension.
11. Additionally, COVID-19 response interventions, primarily targeting urban areas, will be accommodated under Activity 7. They include top-ups to national safety nets, capacity strengthening for fresh food supply chains, emergency school feeding and support to households in self-isolation.
12. Implementation of root causes and resilience building activities under strategic outcomes 1, 3 and 4 has been adjusted to the context of COVID-19.
13. The funding and operational landscape for the *Nobo Jatra* project (Activity 9), in which WFP acts as an implementing partner in a consortium, has changed. WFP will no longer implement this Activity, concluding its role in accordance with the original agreement without any time extension.

Strategic outcomes

Targeting approach and beneficiary analysis

14. *Strategic outcome 2, Activity 5.* To mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP will provide special food and cash support to 526,000 Bangladeshi community members in subdistricts close to, or hosting refugee camps through September 2020, based on selection criteria from government social safety nets and existing WFP programming.
15. *Strategic outcome 2, Activity 6.* The nutrition support component of this activity, which has not begun, will be removed as it is unlikely to proceed, given the current funding and operational landscape. Other components of the activity will continue, adjusted for the COVID-19 context and complemented by programming under Activity 7 for the COVID-19 response and by WFP support to national safety net programmes under Activity 1.
16. *Strategic outcome 2, Activity 7.* The COVID-19 response predominantly targets beneficiaries in urban centres, in line with the results from WFP and partner vulnerability assessments, with a view toward reaching 750,000 people. The assistance will include support to households in self-isolation as well as a limited emergency school feeding programme.

Transfer modalities

17. *Strategic outcome 2, Activity 5.* The transition of the refugee caseload from in-kind general distributions to e-vouchers will resume when conditions permit. For refugees who already receive e-vouchers, this modality has temporarily shifted to commodity vouchers in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission at e-voucher outlets.
18. *Strategic outcome 2, Activity 7.* WFP assistance in response to COVID-19 will augment national social safety nets through vertical and horizontal expansion. This includes cash transfers to urban

¹⁴ Revision 1, USD 142 million, Revision 1, USD 142 million, Executive Director (ED)/Director General (DG)-Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) approval in October 2017.

¹⁵ Revision 3, USD 188 million, ED/DG-FAO approval in June 2018 and revision 5, USD 438 million, ED/DG-FAO approval in February 2019.

¹⁶ Revision 2, which reduced the indirect support cost rate to 6.5 percent, and revision 4, which simplified the country portfolio budget structure.



ultra-poor not currently covered by national safety nets and assistance for their self-enrolment. WFP will work with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and cooperating partners to increase access to fresh food in targeted urban locations, strengthening linkages and supply chains between farmers, wholesalers, and local vendors and, where possible, using innovative digital approaches to facilitate delivery to beneficiaries. In addition, WFP will support the inclusion of fortified rice in open market sales of subsidized rice.

Country office capacity

19. As part of its business continuity plan, WFP has established an alternate office location in Dhaka for essential staff. The working modality for each office location in country will be reviewed regularly. The capacity to provide quarantine and medical support to staff in country has been augmented.

Supply chain challenges

20. COVID-19 and subsequent impacts have caused disruptions to the supply of food and non-food items, including low imports as well as higher transaction costs in food markets.
21. *Strategic outcome 2, Activity 5.* Anticipating disruptions in the global supply chain and challenges related to the movement of specialized nutritious foods (SNF), WFP is in the process of identifying local suppliers for producing SNF for prevention of malnutrition and will moreover continue to explore opportunities for nutritious foods, fresh as well as processed or fortified, to diversify diets of the people it supports.

Monitoring and evaluation

22. In light of current movement restrictions due to COVID-19, WFP has expanded the use of remote monitoring through mobile phone surveys, which will continue to be used in place of on-site monitoring for post-distribution and outcome monitoring where advisable and feasible. Although this allows for quick interviews with a large number of beneficiaries, it cannot fully replace on-site monitoring by WFP staff. Monitoring and evaluation activities are complemented by the use of WFP's corporate digital beneficiary and transfer management platform (SCOPE) and the pilot WFP Building Blocks platform which enable near-real-time understanding of purchasing behaviour and retailer performance.

Accountability to affected populations, protection risks, restrictions of gender and disabilities

23. COVID-19 safeguards will be enforced across all activities requiring WFP or partner interaction with beneficiaries. Special attention will be given to groups particularly vulnerable to COVID-19: for example, additional porter services for refugee households with elderly members or persons with disabilities. WFP will advocate for government distribution systems to be adapted in accordance with social distancing protocols, objectives regarding the full and active participation of women, and protection concerns according to beneficiaries' sex, age and vulnerability to COVID-19. Recommendations from a recently finalized Privacy Impact Assessment will guide data protection in Cox's Bazar and are informing improvements to other programming as well, including through awareness-raising sessions with staff and partners. To address the risk of increased gender-based violence (GBV) associated with the pandemic, WFP will include messaging and conduct awareness-raising sessions for beneficiaries. A GBV referral system is planned in collaboration with the GBV subsector in Cox's Bazar, along with staff training. WFP has strengthened the communication with communities in the refugee camps including through perception surveys and the complaints and feedback mechanism.

Proposed transition/handover strategy

24. WFP activities to strengthen national social safety nets through horizontal and vertical expansion in response to COVID-19 will contribute to greater sustainability and national ownership.

Risk management



25. Principal risks include spreading COVID-19, further disruptions to markets and access to nutritious food as a consequence of movement restrictions, as well as lack of partner capacity. Mitigation measures include redesigned protocols for beneficiary interactions, prepositioning of contingency stocks, preparedness for a changing operational environment and advocacy for sufficient financing for the broader humanitarian response.

Beneficiary analysis

26. Most of the increase in beneficiaries (Table 1) reflects the COVID-19 response: under Activity 5 for special support to Bangladeshi communities in Cox's Bazar and under Activity 7 for new urban interventions. The increase under Activity 7 additionally reflects contingency planning for emergency responses in 2021.



TABLE 1: DIRECT BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME, ACTIVITY AND MODALITY

Strategic outcome	Activity	Modality	Food/CBTs	Current			Increase/Decrease			Revised		
				Girls/women	Boys/men	Total	Girls/women	Boys/men	Total	Girls/women	Boys/men	Total
1	1	Allowance to mothers and children (child benefit programme)	Both	45 110	17 290	62 400	0	0	0	45 110	17 290	62 400
	4	WFP school feeding	Both	146 900	141 100	288 000	0	0	0	146 900	141 100	288 000
2	5	General food distributions	Food	530 158	455 047	985 205	0	0	0	530 158	455 047	985 205
		Special support for host population (COVID-19)	Both	0	0	0	268 421	257 894	526 315	268 421	257 894	526 315
		WFP school feeding	Both	278 000	267 400	545 400	13 260	12 740	26 000	291 260	280 140	571 400
		Nutrition support	Both	436 327	242 393	678 720	0	0	0	436 327	242 393	678 720
		Livelihoods support	CBTs	161 640	138 360	300 000	0	0	0	161 640	138 360	300 000
		Self-reliance (cash-for-training)	CBTs	37 130	31 870	69 000	0	0	0	37 130	31 870	69 000
	Disaster risk reduction	CBTs	139 104	119 396	258 500	78 341	75 268	153 609	217 445	194 664	412 109	
	6	WFP school feeding	Both	34 000	32 600	66 600	16 139	15 573	31 712	50 139	48 173	98 312
		Nutrition support*	Food	8 385	5 016	13 401	(4 107)	(3 294)	(7 401)	4 278	1 722	6 000
		Livelihoods support	CBTs	3 900	3 600	7 500	0	0	0	3 900	3 600	7 500
7	Emergency assistance	Both	634 088	585 312	1 219 400	560 951	626 106	1 187 057	1 195 039	1 211 418	2 406 457	



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Strategic outcome	Activity	Modality	Food/CBTs	Current			Increase/Decrease			Revised		
				Girls/women	Boys/men	Total	Girls/women	Boys/men	Total	Girls/women	Boys/men	Total
3	8	Evidence creation	CBTs	10 400	9 600	20 000	0	0	0	10 400	9 600	20 000
	9	Livelihoods support	CBTs	36 400	33 600	70 000	0	0	0	36 400	33 600	70 000
		Cash-based transfers	CBTs	59 000	59 000	118 000	0	0	0	59 000	59 000	118 000
Total (excluding overlap)				2 151 918	1 701 240	3 853 158	797 533	756 909	1 554 442	2 949 451	2 458 149	5 407 600

* Removal of the nutrition support component of Activity 6 will result in no beneficiaries being reached under that component. The removal of nutrition support component will be effective from 2020 plan onwards as retroactive reduction is not applicable.



Transfers

TABLE 2: FOOD RATION (g/person/day) OR CASH-BASED TRANSFER VALUE (USD/person/day) BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY

	Strategic outcomes 1 and 2			Strategic outcome 2										Strategic outcomes 2 and 3				
	Activity 1	Activities 4, 5, 6	Activities 4, 6	Activity 5	Activities 5 and 6	Activities 5 and 6	Activities 5 and 6	Activities 5 and 7	Activity 7	Activity 5	Activity 5	Activity 5	Activity 5	Activity 7	Activities 5, 6, 8, 9	Activities 5, 6, 8, 9	Activity 5	
Beneficiary type	Households	School children	School children (hot meal)	School children (once a year)	Pre-school children	PLW	Children under 5	Households	Households	Households (makeshift sites/new influx)	Nutrition (Children under 5) ¹	Refugee households in camps/ makeshift sites/new influx ²	Households	Women (monthly subsistence allowance)	Women (cash grant)	Households (food assistance for assets)	Households (food for training)	
Cereals	450		90						450	400								
Pulses	60		25						60	120								
Oil	25		12			20			25	38								
Fortified biscuits		75			50			250										
Super Cereal						225												
Super Cereal Plus							200											
Dates				400														
Total kcal/day	2 046	375	516	980	250	1 035	787	1 250	2 046	2 100								
Cash-based transfers (USD/person/day)	0.33		0.13 ³								0.10	0.33	0.33	0.09	38	0.62	0.17	
No. of feeding days per year	180	240	200	One-off	288	365 ⁴	365 ⁵	3	90	365	365	365	300	365	One-off	150	150	



¹ This planned cash-based nutrition intervention in 2021 for children 3–5 years old in the refugee settlements will take place only if conditions permit.

² There is a gradual shift from general food distribution to cash-based transfers. Therefore, 365 days will be reduced depending on the actual rate of shift.

³ School children will receive cooked meals at a value of USD 0.13/day (supporting the purchase of the fresh food) for 200 days. They will receive biscuits for the remaining 40 days.

⁴ 365 days for blanket supplementation, but 120 days for moderate acute malnutrition treatment supplementation.

⁵ 365 days for blanket supplementation, but 90 days for moderate acute malnutrition treatment supplementation.



Food type/cash-based transfer	Current budget		Increase		Revised budget	
	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Cereals	221 527	91 758 071	44 730	22 006 668	266 256	113 764 739
Pulses	36 090	22 716 236	11 678	6 386 744	47 768	29 102 980
Oil and fats	13 441	10 891 782	3 886	5 184 810	17 327	16 076 592
Mixed and blended foods	68 269	58 019 973	15 520	16 275 634	83 789	74 295 607
Other	1 044	1 590 012	688	1 588 473	1 732	3 178 485
Total (food)	340 370	184 976 074	76 503	51 442 329	416 873	236 418 403
Cash-based transfers		357 912 233		218 530 438		576 442 671
Total (food and CBT value)	340 370	542 888 308	76 503	269 972 766	416 873	812 861 074

Cost breakdown

	Strategic Result 2/ SDG Target 2.2	Strategic Result 1/ SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 4/ SDG Target 2.4	Strategic Result 5/ SDG Target 17.9	Strategic Result 8/ SDG Target 17.16	Total
Strategic outcome	1	2	3	4	5	
Focus area	Root causes	Crisis response	Resilience building	Resilience building	Crisis response	
Transfer	6 342 418	318 722 519	2 668 047	3 131 578	9 379 966	340 244 528
Implementation	(637 187)	14 527 074	860 731	51 701	242 899	15 045 217
Adjusted direct support costs						18 969 357
Subtotal						374 259 102
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)						24 326 842
Total						398 585 943

27. Table 4 outlines the cost changes by strategic outcome. The increases reflect the costs associated with a one-year extension of activities and the expansion of Activity 7 to accommodate the COVID-19 response.
28. In addition to the costs of extending full assistance through 2021, Activity 5 is being increased to reflect an augmented e-voucher transfer value due to increased food costs, identified through routine market assessments.¹⁷ The revision also includes a World Bank-supported community workfare and services project.

¹⁷ Including, for example: WFP. June 2020. Market Monitor, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

29. In addition to the cost of the one-year extension, the budget of Activity 12 (Logistics Sector) increases due to increased provision of services to partners in the context of COVID-19.
30. In addition to the cost of the one-year extension, the budget of Activity 13 (Emergency Telecommunications Sector) increases to reflect higher costs for providing telecommunications services, including a landmark wireless network covering the Cox's Bazar camps.

TABLE 5: OVERALL CSP COST BREAKDOWN, AFTER REVISION (USD)						
	Strategic Result 2/SDG Target 2.2	Strategic Result 1/SDG Target 2.1	Strategic Result 4/SDG Target 2.4	Strategic Result 5/SDG Target 17.9	Strategic Result 8/SDG Target 17.16	Total
Strategic outcome	1	2	3	4	5	
Focus area	Root causes	Crisis response	Resilience building	Resilience building	Crisis response	
Transfer	46 140 576	999 797 045	30 780 833	16 217 757	60 080 799	1 153 017 011
Implementation	5 680 458	63 648 012	5 500 050	718 543	1 484 287	77 031 350
Adjusted direct support costs	2 271 980	46 652 618	1 570 432	702 443	2 596 419	53 793 891
Subtotal	54 093 014	1 110 097 675	37 851 315	17 638 743	64 161 505	1 283 842 252
Indirect support costs (6.5 percent)	3 591 487	72 419 937	2 511 541	1 159 064	4 182 238	83 864 268
Total	57 684 502	1 182 517 612	40 362 856	18 797 808	68 343 743	1 367 706 520

Acronyms

CBT	Cash-based transfer
CSP	country strategic plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBV	gender-based violence
REVA	Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal