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# Evaluation of Bangladesh WFP Country Strategic Plan 2016-2019

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# Executive Summary

## INTRODUCTION

### Evaluation features

1. The evaluation of the Bangladesh country strategic plan (CSP) was timed to provide evidence and lessons to inform the development of the next CSP for Bangladesh.
2. The evaluation covered activities carried out in 2016, prior to the CSP, as well as CSP implementation from March 2017 to December 2019, in order to assess strategic and operational continuity. It was designed to assess WFP's strategic positioning and the extent to which WFP made the shift expected under the CSP; WFP's effectiveness in contributing to strategic outcomes; the efficiency with which the CSP was implemented; the appropriateness of operational modalities for the Level 3 response to the Rohingya crisis; and factors explaining WFP's performance.
3. An independent external evaluation team conducted the evaluation, using a mixed-methods approach, drawing on monitoring data, document review, semi-structured interviews with 264 stakeholders and focus group discussions with 688 community members. Both primary and secondary data were carefully triangulated to ensure the validity of findings. Gender and social inclusion were fully integrated into the evaluation's methodological approach. Ethical standards were applied to ensure the dignity and confidentiality of those involved in the evaluation. The team did not encounter any major constraints that compromised the overall validity of the evaluation.

### Context

4. With an estimated population of 163 million, Bangladesh has a fast-growing economy, with 7.6 percent average annual growth in gross domestic product during the period from 2016 to 2019. Bangladesh achieved lower middle-income country status in 2015<sup>1</sup> and in 2018 met the criteria to graduate from the United Nations list of least developed countries in 2024.<sup>2</sup> Poverty is declining (from 85 percent in 1972 to below 9 percent in 2018)<sup>3</sup>; however, poverty reduction has been uneven, with persistent geographical disparities in income, food security, education and gender equality.
5. Bangladesh ranks 88th of 117 countries in the 2019 Global Hunger Index, with a score of 25.8 (table 1), compared to 30.3 in 2010. Bangladesh has made steady progress on improving child nutrition over the past decade, although many children suffer from micronutrient deficiencies. Social, economic and ecological factors, including ethnicity, urbanization and climate change, contribute to disparities in food security.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank, 2020. *The World Bank In Bangladesh - Overview*.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview#:~:text=Bangladesh%20reached%20the%20lower%20middle,track%20for%20graduation%20in%202024.>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2020. *The Least Developed Countries Report 2020*.

[https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/lcr2020\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/lcr2020_en.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, 2018. *Bangladesh: Reducing Poverty and Sharing Prosperity*.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2018/11/15/bangladesh-reducing-poverty-and-sharing-prosperity>.



TABLE 1: SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS		
Year	Indicator	Value
2020	Total population	163 million
2017	Life expectancy at birth	57 years
2020	Annual population growth	1.05 percent
2019	Gross domestic product per capita (based on purchasing power parity)	USD 4 950
2017	Human Development Index score	0.614
2018	Gini coefficient (income inequality)	0.32
2017	Gender Development Index score (gender gap)	0.719
2019	Global Hunger Index score	25.8
2017	Stunting	31 percent
2017	Underweight	22 percent
2018	Share of agriculture in gross domestic product	13 percent
2011	Literacy rate, population age >7 years	51.8 percent

6. Despite the rapid increase in educational attainment and policy changes in favour of women, prejudicial social and legal norms continue to impede the achievement of gender equality (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5). Gender-based violence and high rates of child marriage and adolescent pregnancy are of serious concern.
7. Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable to frequent and severe impacts of climate change that affect agricultural production and cause internal migration to urban areas. Bangladesh continues to host between 850,000 and 915,000 Rohingya refugees<sup>4</sup> from Myanmar, the majority of whom live in 34 extremely congested camps.
8. The Government of Bangladesh has a strong national policy environment with regard to development, social protection, climate change, gender and nutrition. Its seventh 5-year plan (covering 2016–2020) articulates its national development goals, including achieving upper middle-income status.<sup>5</sup> Priority thematic areas include poverty reduction, food security and hunger, health and women's empowerment.

### Country strategic plan

9. The Bangladesh CSP for the period 2017–2020 was one of WFP's first pilot CSPs and one of the first CSPs to incorporate a Level 3 emergency response. Building on earlier operations (figure 1), it focuses on five strategic outcomes, as shown in figure 2, with the aim of shifting WFP's focus from direct project implementation to technical assistance and capacity strengthening with regard to national hunger solutions.

<sup>4</sup> The joint Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees /Government registration in September 2019 recorded 914,998 refugees. However, the second registration phase – including biometric identification – recorded 854,000. [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/sitrep\\_december\\_2019\\_english.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/sitrep_december_2019_english.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Government of Bangladesh, 2015. *Seventh Five Year Plan: FY2016–FY2020*. <http://nda.erd.gov.bd/en/c/publication/seventh-five-year-plan-fy2016-fy2020>.

Figure 1: WFP operations in Bangladesh (2016–2020)

Operation	Timeframe	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
CP 200243	January 2012 – March 2017	Total requirements (2016–2017) USD 54 485 426 Total contributions received USD 12 275 315 Funded: 23 percent				
PRRO 200673	July 2014 – March 2017	Total requirements (2016–2017) USD 7 929 939 Total contributions received: USD 4 259 386 Funded: 54 percent				
CSP BD01	March 2017 – December 2020			Needs-based plan (2017–2020): USD 969 120 577 Needs-based plan funded: USD 641 426 577 Funded: 66 percent		
<b>Direct expenditures (USD)</b>		<b>190 467 392</b>	<b>46 933 286</b>	<b>183 726 999</b>	<b>124 929 197</b>	<b>N/A</b>

Abbreviations: CP = country programme; N/A = not applicable; PRRO = protracted relief and recovery operation.

Source: WFP FACTORY April 2020.

Figure 2: Bangladesh country strategic plan “line of sight”

STRATEGIC RESULT 2: NO ONE SUFFERS FROM MALNUTRITION SDG TARGET 2.2	STRATEGIC RESULT 1: EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO FOOD SDG TARGET 2.1	STRATEGIC RESULT 4: FOOD SYSTEMS ARE SUSTAINABLE SDG TARGET 2.4	STRATEGIC RESULT 5: COUNTRIES HAVE STRENGTHENED CAPACITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE SDGS SDG TARGET 17.9	STRATEGIC RESULT 8: SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE, EXPERTISE AND TECHNOLOGY, STRENGTHEN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT TO COUNTRY EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THE SDGS (SDG TARGET 17.16)
STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1: VULNERABLE GROUPS IN RURAL AND URBAN SETTINGS ARE SUPPORTED BY ENHANCED NATIONAL ACTIONS IN LINE WITH THEIR NUTRITION INDICATORS IN LINE WITH NATIONAL TARGETS BY 2020 USD 51.25 MILLION	STRATEGIC OUTCOME 2: THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS OF COX'S BAZAR, THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS AND DISASTER-AFFECTED AREAS HAVE ENHANCED FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION USD 808.75 MILLION	STRATEGIC OUTCOME 3: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ENHANCE THE RESILIENCE OF FOOD-INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS EXPOSED TO CLIMATE-RELATED SHOCKS AND STRESSES ARE VALIDATED BY 2020 USD 36.39 MILLION	STRATEGIC OUTCOME 4: THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE SYSTEM FOR LARGE-SCALE NATURAL DISASTERS IN BANGLADESH CAN RESPOND WITH REDUCED COST AND LEAD TIME. USD 15.23 MILLION	STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS IN BANGLADESH HAVE ACCESS TO RELIABLE SERVICES IN THE AREAS OF SUPPLY CHAIN, EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS, SITE MAINTENANCE AND ENGINEERING PROJECT SERVICES. USD 57.3 MILLION
Capacity development	Implementation	Innovation	Capacity development	Service delivery
Budget: USD 15.49 million Activity 1: Technical assistance and advocacy to enhance the food security and nutrition impact of selected safety nets. CS/F/CBT 9	Budget: USD 769.47 million Activity 5: Deliver an integrated assistance package in Cox's Bazar. F/CBT 1	Budget: USD 11.26 million Activity 8: Creation of evidence related to innovative approaches to enhancing resilience. CS/CBT 3	Budget: USD 13.49 million Activity 10: Capacity strengthening for emergency response. CS 17	Budget: USD 12.13 million Activity 12: Coordinate the Logistics sector/cluster and provide efficient common logistics services to support the humanitarian community's response. SD 17
Budget: USD 6.7 million Activity 2: Technical assistance and advocacy for improved nutrition. CS/F/CBT 9	Budget: USD 16.75 million Activity 6: Deliver an integrated assistance package in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. F/CBT 1	Budget: USD 25.13 million Activity 9: Nono Jatra. SD/CBT 6	Budget: USD 1.74 million Activity 11: Lead the logistics cluster and co-lead the food-security cluster. CS/SD 17	Budget: USD 4.12 million Activity 13: Coordinate the Emergency Telecommunications Sector/Cluster and provide efficient services to support the humanitarian community response. SD 17
Budget: USD 5.89 million Activity 3: Technical assistance and advocacy for scaling up post-harvest rice fortification. CS 9	Budget: USD 22.53 million Activity 7: Deliver food assistance in emergencies. F/CBT 1			Budget: USD 41.25 million Activity 14: Site Maintenance and Engineering Project SD 17
Budget: USD 23.17 million Activity 4: Policy advice and technical assistance for scaling up school feeding. CS/F/CBT 9				
ROOT CAUSES	CRISIS RESPONSE	RESILIENCE BUILDING	RESILIENCE BUILDING	CRISIS RESPONSE

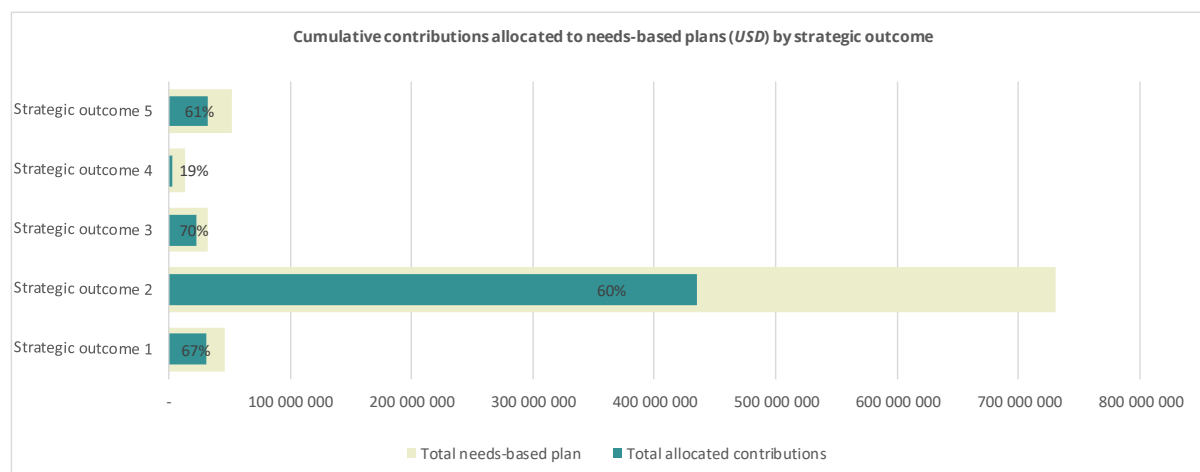
● Corporate activity number     ● Modality (underlined if dominant): F (food), CBT (incl. comm. vouchers), CS (capacity strengthening), SD (service delivery)

Source: WFP Bangladesh country office.



10. The CSP budget was initially USD 202 million in 2017 and, through a series of revisions, reached USD 969 million in 2019.<sup>6</sup> The revisions were mainly aimed at extending operations for the response to the Rohingya crisis (strategic outcome 5)<sup>7</sup> and covered activities that included in-kind food assistance and a transition to e-vouchers, as well as an additional activity related to the humanitarian crisis. WFP’s ability to mobilize adequate resources to finance the CSP decreased over time. Contributions covered 142 percent of the needs-based plan in 2017, decreasing to 94 percent in 2018 and 60 percent in 2019 (figure 3).

**Figure 3: Total contributions to needs-based plans by Bangladesh CSP strategic outcome (2017–2019)**



Source: WFP, Integrated Road Map analytics.

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

### To what extent are WFP’s strategic position, role and specific contribution based on country priorities and people’s needs and rights, as well as WFP’s strengths?

#### Relevance and strategic positioning

11. The design of the CSP is relevant, appropriate and consistent with national policies, plans, strategies and goals related to food security and nutrition, including the Government’s seventh 5-year plan, covering 2016–2020.
12. The shift in focus from direct implementation towards capacity strengthening for government systems aligns with the national goal of enhancing national nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes; in practice, however, a focus on capacity-building per se rather than enhancing national systems affected WFP’s ability to influence the safety net programmes.
13. The CSP objectives for building the long-term resilience of disaster-stricken populations are well-aligned with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief’s disaster management plan for 2016–2020.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> WFP, 2019. *Crisis response revision of Bangladesh country strategic plan (March 2017–December 2020) and corresponding budget increase*, revision 5.

<sup>7</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh country strategic plan, revision 1*.

<sup>8</sup> Government of Bangladesh. 2017. *National Plan for Disaster Management (2016–2020): Building Resilience for Sustainable Human Development*. [https://modmr.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/modmr.portal.gov.bd/policies/0a654dce\\_9456\\_46ad\\_b5c4\\_15d9fd8c4c0d/NPDM\(2016-2020\)%20-Final.pdf](https://modmr.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/modmr.portal.gov.bd/policies/0a654dce_9456_46ad_b5c4_15d9fd8c4c0d/NPDM(2016-2020)%20-Final.pdf).

14. The WFP response to the Rohingya crisis was both relevant and appropriate. It involved incorporating a fifth strategic outcome into the CSP framework and classifying the response as a Level 3 emergency.

### ***Coherence and alignment***

15. The CSP did not set sufficient strategic direction for WFP on how it should align with United Nations and other humanitarian actors. While the design of the CSP was fully aligned with the United Nations development assistance framework for 2017–2020, the CSP objectives were not well reflected in the framework.
16. WFP used its comparative advantage to position itself as a United Nations agency that was engaged in the response to, but not directly implicated in the politics of, the Rohingya crisis. The speed and sheer scale of WFP's operations in Cox's Bazar are a testimony to its ability to deliver rapid, large-scale responses. However, WFP did not demonstrate adequate alignment with other humanitarian actors within the broader institutional and humanitarian policy context and the CSP missed opportunities to strengthen attention to protection and inclusion.

### ***Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable***

17. The CSP design is appropriate for the immediate needs of the most food-insecure people but does not pay adequate attention to exclusion and inclusion based on gender, disability or other factors. The gender analysis underpinning the CSP identifies significant gender inequality that would have warranted a stronger strategic focus on gender equality and women's empowerment.
18. There are mixed findings concerning WFP's ability to address exclusion and inclusion appropriately. WFP strategies aimed at reaching the poorest refugees in Cox's Bazar were effective in reaching women but were less focused on other disadvantaged groups such as the disabled.<sup>9</sup>
19. Vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) was used to inform targeting and inclusion strategies; however, its effectiveness was affected by a reliance on outdated government poverty maps; lack of a single national system for mapping and verifying beneficiaries; and sub-optimal use of data and evidence by staff to adapt programmes.

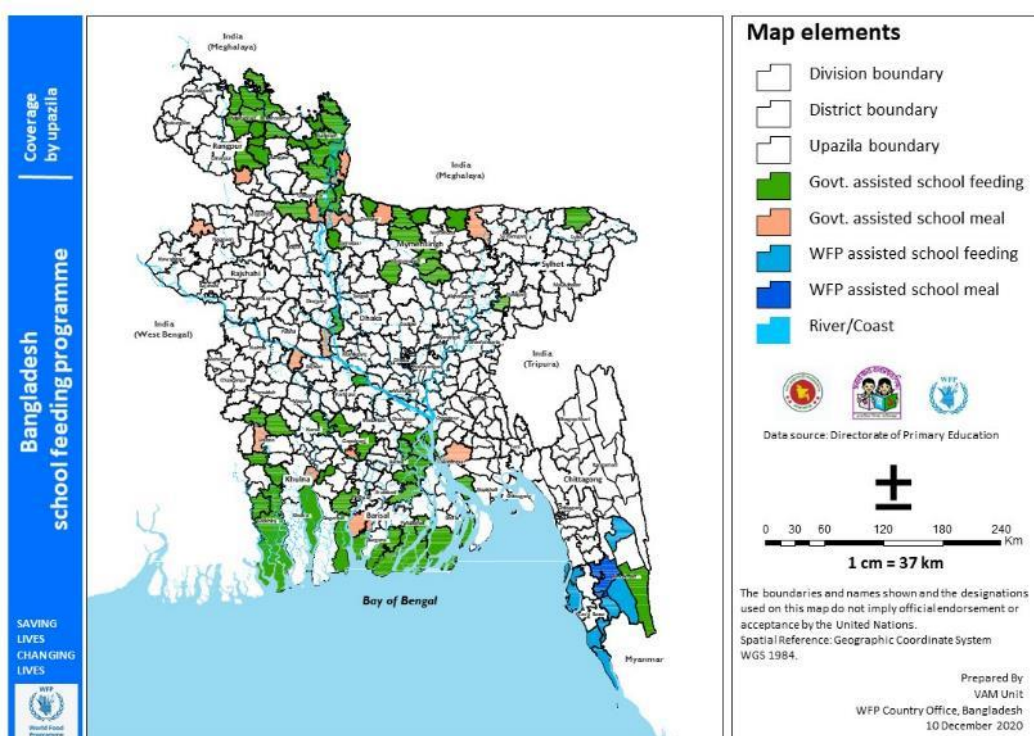
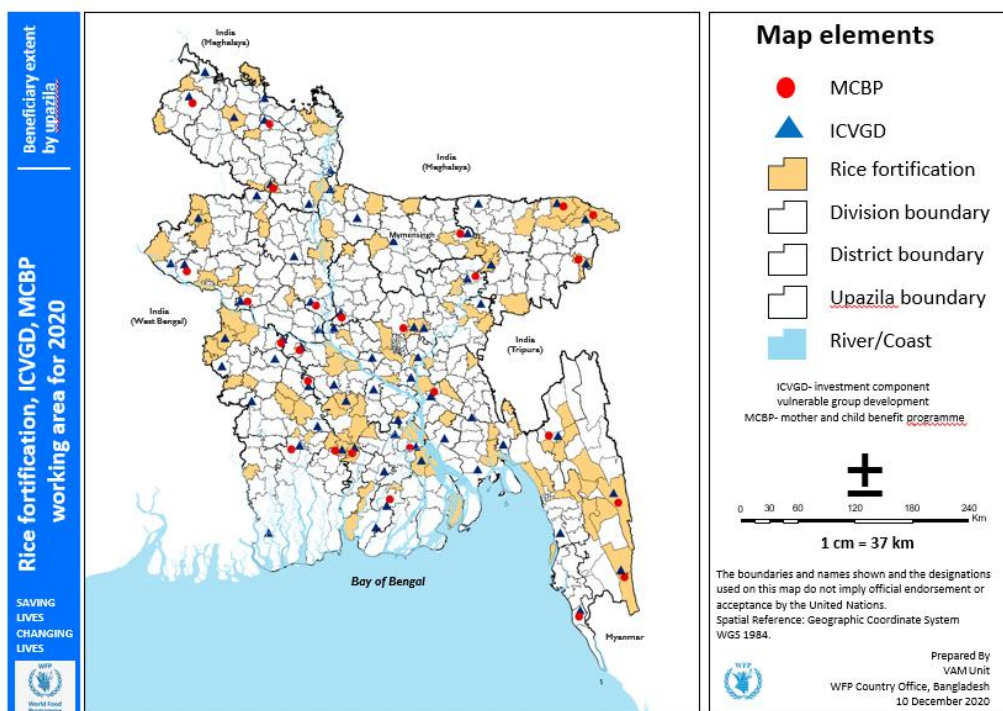
### ***Coverage and scale-up***

20. WFP's approach to increasing the coverage and scale of interventions with the Government was broadly successful, resulting in expanded coverage of a range of national programmes, as highlighted in figure 4. WFP made significant contributions to the national mother and child benefit and vulnerable group development programmes, and coverage of the national school feeding programme increased significantly under the CSP. The rice fortification initiative scale-up was successful in strengthening both the demand for and supply of fortified rice, with distributions reaching over 2 million beneficiaries in 2019 (compared to 30,000 in 2013).

### **Figure 4: Maps showing coverage of national programmes in Bangladesh**

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<sup>9</sup> WFP. 2019. *WFP Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2019–2020*.



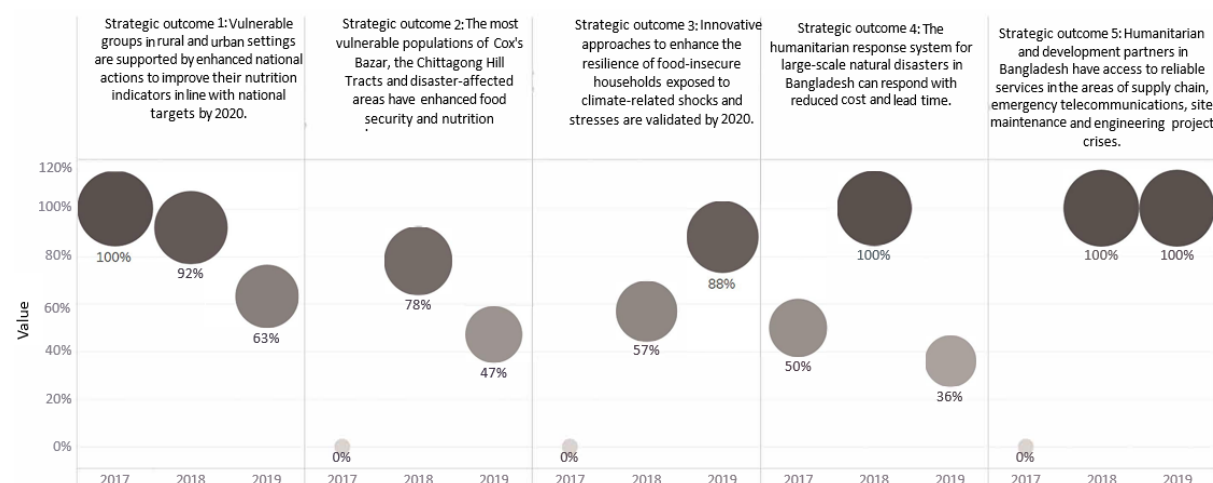
Source: WFP Bangladesh country office (top map) and Directorate of Primary Education, Government of Bangladesh (bottom map). Prepared by WFP Bangladesh country office, 10 December 2020.

## What is the extent and quality of WFP's specific contribution to CSP strategic outcomes in Bangladesh?

### Outputs

21. WFP has made progress and experienced successes in delivering its expected strategic outcomes, although some activities have progressed more than others (figure 5). In 2017 progress was slow, largely as a result of CSP systems being established while the country office scaled up its refugee response.

**Figure 5: Percentage of output indicators that reached or surpassed annual targets, by strategic outcome**

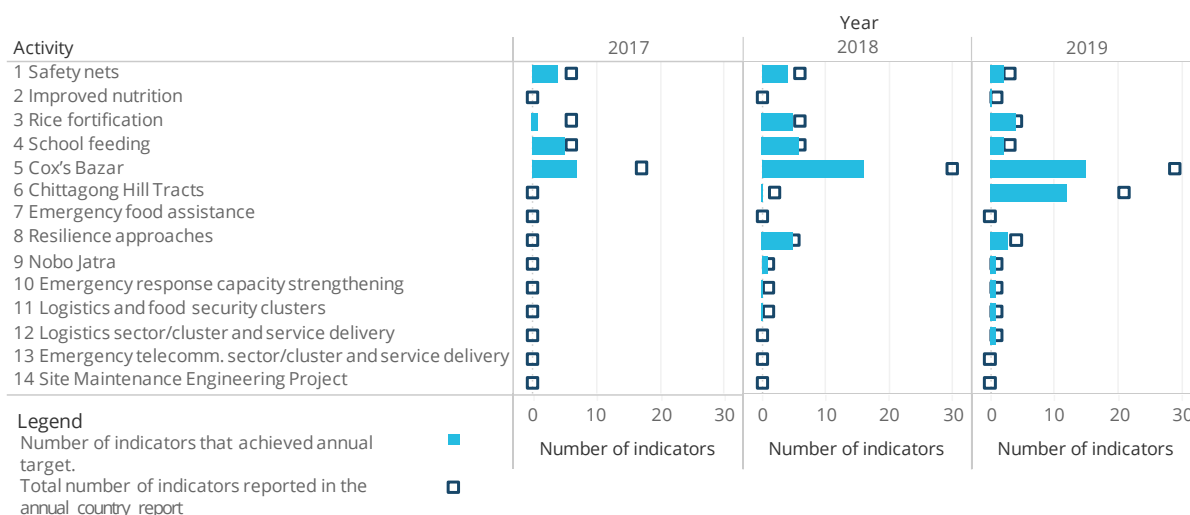


Source: WFP Bangladesh annual country reports for 2017, 2018 and 2019.

### Contribution to higher-level results

22. Progress towards achieving CSP outcomes varies widely between activities (figure 6). Achievement rates were inconsistent and sometimes low. The rates were affected by the differing numbers of indicators reported on per activity combined with changes to the CSP logical framework and variable reporting processes, however, hence low target achievement rates do not necessarily reflect a poor performance by the country office.

**Figure 6: CSP outcome indicators for which annual targets were achieved**



Source: WFP Bangladesh annual country reports for 2017, 2018 and 2019.

23. Under strategic outcome 1, WFP has focused on strengthening government capacity. Social safety nets, rice fortification and school feeding activities have been successful in providing support for numerous enhancements to the national programmes; however, nutrition was the least funded activity of the CSP, resulting in slower progress and poorer results.
24. Work under strategic outcome 2 has been largely successful. Large assistance packages are being successfully delivered in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong Hill Tracts and disaster-affected areas. WFP assists more than 837,000 refugees through a combination of food and e-voucher transfers, as well as livelihood support and treatment and prevention of malnutrition for pregnant and lactating women and children under 5. By the end of 2019, WFP had achieved 90 percent progress or better on most indicators under activities 5 and 6, suggesting good progress on achieving the overall goal of enhancing food security and nutrition.
25. Strategic outcome 3 was pursued through a series of interventions. Piloting of the forecast-based financing mechanism and implementation of the disaster risk reduction pillar of the Nobo Jatra project have demonstrated success in testing new approaches.
26. Strategic outcome 4 has also seen success. Emergency preparedness and response support has been cost-effective despite challenges. In 2017 WFP was instrumental in establishing the Bangladesh national logistics cluster, which under the co-leadership of WFP and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief seeks to improve the long-term coordination of supply chain functions for the whole country. In Cox's Bazar WFP supported the coordination of inter-agency emergency preparedness and response activities across various sectors. An emergency operational dashboard was developed and emergency simulation exercises were conducted to build the capacity of government counterparts, particularly the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.
27. Strategic outcome 5 was a successful addition to the CSP, enabling WFP to provide the humanitarian community with access to reliable common services for logistics, emergency telecommunications and food security for a coordinated response to the large-scale and complex Rohingya crisis. All activities met their output indicator targets.

### **Gender, protection and accountability to affected populations**

28. Within the country office there is a high level of awareness of, and commitment to, the cross-cutting priorities related to gender equality, protection and accountability to affected populations.

29. Positive gender actions have been developed by staff, but these are not part of a country-office-wide strategic approach. Furthermore, there is limited evidence of systematic monitoring and reporting on gender across the CSP. A more nuanced understanding of how women (and other groups) access and engage with WFP interventions, and how this relates to intra-household and social roles, is lacking.
30. Understaffing of the gender and inclusion unit, a lack of a dedicated budget, weak lines of accountability and limited corporate guidance on how to operationalize gender equality and women's empowerment, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and inclusion at the country level represent significant challenges for the country office in such a dynamic operating environment.
31. In principle, protection, gender and inclusion feature strongly in the coordinated United Nations Rohingya refugee response, and a number of respondents commended WFP for its contribution to advocacy on issues of protection and inclusion; however, the impact on the ground has been frustrated by a number of factors, including the conservative culture of the Rohingya population and the Majhi<sup>10</sup> system, which limits interaction with the refugee community.
32. Accountability to affected population mechanisms are in place and operational but are confined to raising people's awareness and alerting them rather than the systematic incorporation of their views on their rights and entitlements into programmes. The extent to which affected populations, especially women, feel empowered to use these feedback mechanisms is unclear.

### **Connectedness and sustainability**

33. Efforts to forge linkages between emergency response and long-term resilience have been made through the rice fortification interventions. Successful efforts were made in the response to the Rohingya refugee crisis, through livelihoods support for the host population and the SAFE (safe access to fuel and energy) project jointly conducted by WFP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Organization for Migration. There is widespread criticism among donors and partners that WFP did not engage in efforts to lobby the Government to provide cash for refugee populations, considered pivotal for connectedness and to provide recipients with the freedom to build their own assets.
34. Despite these efforts, the institutional take-up of interventions by the Government and other partners necessary for connectedness to be sustainable is not yet in place and the level of relationship-building required to ensure sustainability has yet to be achieved.

## **To what extent were WFP's systems, structures and resources marshalled efficiently in support of CSP outputs and strategic outcomes?**

### **Resource mobilization**

35. WFP struggled to maintain a resource mobilization strategy that yielded flexible resources adequate to finance the entire CSP, reducing its ability to facilitate the envisioned strategic shift. The earmarking of most donor contributions (table 2) resulted in the underfunding of certain activities, notably those with a long-term vision, while resource utilization for other activities was lower than expected.<sup>11</sup> Mobilization of financial resources was further hampered by the absence of a dedicated country-wide communications strategy for demonstrating results.

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<sup>10</sup> Mahjis are government-appointed refugee representatives in camps.

<sup>11</sup> WFP, 2019. *Bangladesh Annual Country Report 2019*.



TABLE 2: FLEXIBLE FUNDING AND PRIVATE DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CSP, BY YEAR					
Flexible funding			Private donors		
Year	Allocated contributions (USD)	Share of needs-based plan (%)	Year	Allocated contributions (USD)	Share of needs-based plan (%)
2017	11 215 555	12.6	2017	13 813 492	15.6
2018	21 057 728	6.5	2018	8 948 879	2.8
2019	6 562 327	2.1	2019	12 436 587	3.9

Source: WFP FACTory, April 2020.

### Oversight, accountability and leadership

36. The CSP mechanisms for reporting and reviewing performance across the country office and sub-offices, while useful in monitoring general progress, do not actively support CSP implementation. Oversight is maintained at an activity and strategic outcome level and there is little cross-strategic-outcome sharing of information. Limited evidence of systematic reporting on gender mainstreaming was found and no specific budget provisions for gender are in place.
37. The country office has aligned the CSP with WFP's 2018 enterprise risk management policy and strengthened risk management decision making procedures, including by creating a specific risk register for the Rohingya crisis response.
38. WFP leadership generally improved with the introduction of the CSP, with improved communications between senior and more junior staff. In the initial phases of CSP implementation, staff would have benefited from clearer direction and guidance on how to operationalize the CSP.

### Internal capacity and alignment

39. Managing the capacity of staff to implement the CSP while adapting human resource needs for responding to the Rohingya crisis presented some operational challenges. The Cox's Bazar office quickly increased the number of staff, reaching 350 by January 2020; however, recruitment and training of new country office staff since 2017 did not provide the necessary expertise to support the shift to institutional capacity strengthening.
40. The establishment of a protection, gender, disability and inclusion unit during CSP implementation is a positive development, but the unit requires increased resources and capabilities.<sup>12</sup> In Cox's Bazar there is a gender team with separate protection advisers. This has contributed to raising the profile of gender equality support for humanitarian activities.
41. Despite women occupying 60 percent of positions in leading units (e.g. finance, administration, VAM, sub-offices), they are not represented in senior positions across the country office.

### Cost-effectiveness

42. Measures were taken to implement more cost-effective means of delivering activities under strategic outcome 1, through the provision of technical assistance.

<sup>12</sup> At the time of the evaluation, one member of the two-person protection, gender, disability and inclusion unit was on sick leave.

43. The WFP supply chain and logistics services were efficient and cost-effective, providing local and international sourcing of a high volume of food and non-food items within the national programme and the Rohingya response operation (Table 3).

<b>TABLE 3: FOOD COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION AND VALUE OF GOODS AND SERVICES PROCURED, BY YEAR AND BY ACTIVITY</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Food commodities distributed (mt)</b>	<b>Goods and services procured (USD)</b>
2017	35 826	4 452 881
2018	148 269	8 359 354
2019	111 103	4 851 830
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Food commodities distributed (mt)</b>	<b>Goods and services procured (USD)</b>
Activity 5 (Cox's Bazar)	291 498 (99%)	-
All others	3 701 (1%)	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>295 198</b>	<b>17 664 065</b>

Source: WFP Bangladesh annual country reports for 2017, 2018 and 2019; country office supply chain data.

44. Moreover, WFP was able to provide cost-effective and timely emergency food assistance at the start of the Rohingya crisis due to pre-assigned agreements with the Government. Outsourcing the provision of refugee food assistance to local market retailers through the e-voucher programme in Cox's Bazar also appears to be more cost-effective than in-kind assistance.

45. An overall cost-comparison between food and cash-based transfers was not possible. Analysis of WFP beneficiary and expenditure data provides a rough cost estimate and shows that costs of food versus cash-based transfers and commodity vouchers varied by activity, and over time (table 4).

<b>TABLE 4: FOOD VERSUS CASH-BASED TRANSFERS AND COMMODITY VOUCHER COMPARISON OF COUNTRY OFFICE EXPENDITURE, NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES AND COST PER BENEFICIARY, BY ACTIVITY</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>Expenditure (USD)</b>		<b>Number of beneficiaries</b>		<b>Cost per beneficiary (USD)</b>	
	<b>Food</b>	<b>CBTs and commodity voucher</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>CBTs and commodity vouchers</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>CBTs and commodity vouchers</b>
<b>Activity 4 - Policy advice and technical assistance for scaling up school feeding</b>						
2017	1 683 555	196 944	272 995	16 444	6.17	11.98
2018	1 649 540	203 680	102 791	15 047	16.05	13.54
2019	736 212	178 641	14 165	14 165	51.97	12.61
<b>Activity 5 - Deliver an integrated assistance package in Cox's Bazar</b>						
2017	14 906 606	4 421 550	1 170 424	66 400	12.74	66.59
2018	96 070 757	30 051 858	1 513 777	423 452	63.46	70.97
2019	73 742 268	61 686 105	1 502 917	932 881	49.07	66.12

**TABLE 4: FOOD VERSUS CASH-BASED TRANSFERS AND COMMODITY VOUCHER COMPARISON OF COUNTRY OFFICE EXPENDITURE, NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES AND COST PER BENEFICIARY, BY ACTIVITY**

Year	Expenditure (USD)		Number of beneficiaries		Cost per beneficiary (USD)	
	Food	CBTs and commodity voucher	Food	CBTs and commodity vouchers	Food	CBTs and commodity vouchers
<b>Activity 6 - Deliver an integrated assistance package in the Chittagong Hill Tracts</b>						
2017	480 145		64 886		7.40	
2018	1 310 203	523 806	61 338	6 240	21.36	83.94
2019	1 793 223	733 728	90 566	29 467	19.80	24.90
<b>Activity 7 - Deliver food assistance in emergencies</b>						
2017	423 526	1 529 677	334 000	48 035	1.27	31.85
2018	460 569	18 434				
2019	397 915	850 949	266 680	75 000	1.49	11.35
<b>Activity 8 - Creation of evidence related to innovative approaches to enhancing resilience</b>						
2017						
2018		161 224		16 900		9.54
2019		314 954		22 070		14.27
<b>Activity 9 - Nobo Jatra</b>						
2017		1 294 462		82 060		15.77
2018		7 676 656		169 070		45.41
2019		4 708 915		142 365		33.08

Abbreviation: CBTs = cash-based transfers.

Source: WFP country office tool for managing effectively (COMET); Bangladesh annual country reports for 2017, 2018 and 2019.

## What are the factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the CSP?

### Use of data

46. The CSP design was informed by relevant data, including data from the WFP 2016 Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Bangladesh, which led to the strategic shift in approach from direct service delivery to institutional capacity strengthening and shaped the school meals programme and the design of refugee assistance packages, among other things. During implementation, however, there was limited use of evidence, including evidence generated through VAM assessment, to inform strategic decisions and adapt programming.

47. Lack of alignment of monitoring and evaluation systems between different activities hampered systematic monitoring and optimal use of data to improve performance. WFP was more strategic in

utilizing data to inform the Rohingya crisis response through the 2019 refugee influx emergency vulnerability assessment for Cox's Bazar, which led to a shift from in-kind food assistance to hybrid solutions, including vouchers.

### ***Shift to capacity strengthening***

48. Despite the efforts outlined above, WFP's ability to effect the strategic shift to capacity strengthening has been inconsistent and is not yet institutionalized or embedded in its organizational culture. Technical assistance provided to the Government consisted mostly of training and exposure visits rather than engagement in broader policy discussions on issues such as embedding nutrition in existing social safety net programmes.

### ***Strategic partnerships***

49. Throughout CSP implementation, WFP engagement with a wide range of partners positively influenced performance. A whole-of-society approach was adopted through partnerships with local non-governmental organizations in, for example, the school feeding programme and rice fortification. The WFP office in Cox's Bazar effectively leveraged synergies with other United Nations bodies, including FAO, the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Organization for Migration, to respond to the humanitarian crisis and address host community needs, including through expanded use of WFP's SCOPE digital beneficiary information and transfer management platform. Throughout the implementation of the CSP, WFP worked with various government ministries and agencies, and there was some concern on the part of some stakeholders that WFP should have worked more strategically with other ministries to expand its reach and coverage.
50. Due to its central position within the United Nations system, and particularly in the Rohingya crisis response, WFP is seen as having the convening power to link its work with that of other development actors in areas such as disaster risk reduction and resilience. WFP was not, however, able to use its leverage effectively to forge the strategic linkages needed to pursue its dual mandate of humanitarian and development work at the national level.
51. WFP has endeavoured to strike a delicate balance to uphold respect for the humanitarian principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and operational independence while working under the auspices of government-managed interventions; however, it is clear that this poses challenges to the operational independence of WFP, as exemplified by the Rohingya crisis response.

## **To what extent were the operational modalities (structure, systems and processes) the right ones to allow WFP to respond effectively to the Level 3 emergency in the context of a CSP?**

### ***Scale-up of a principled emergency response***

52. The scale, speed and coverage of the WFP response to the Rohingya refugee crisis since 2017 have been widely commended by the international community. By the end of 2019, 880,000 refugees were receiving monthly food assistance, either in-kind or through e-vouchers via SCOPE, and almost 20,000 women from host communities were benefitting from livelihoods and resilience-building programmes.<sup>13</sup> WFP's SCOPE registration process was recognized as successful in terms of both rapidly enrolling people and assisting them in making the transition (ongoing) from in-kind general food distribution to a multi-wallet e-voucher system.
53. While the CSP did not have an adverse impact on the speed or scale-up of the WFP response to the Rohingya crisis, the CSP systems and structures in place were not the most effective. Updating the CSP with an additional strategic outcome for the Level 3 emergency response was a pragmatic and effective

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<sup>13</sup> WFP, 2019. *Bangladesh Annual Country Report 2019*.

solution that allowed an appropriate and rapid scale-up; however, the Level 3 response was run as a separate operation, largely delinked from other WFP activities in the country.

54. Protection, accountability, gender and inclusion feature in successive joint response plans. Other agencies commend the WFP approach to gender, accountability and inclusion, despite cultural and contextual barriers that reduce its impact. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse remains a concern, especially with the shift from in-kind provision to e-vouchers, and it is unclear how WFP intends to manage the risks entailed.

### **Coordination**

55. WFP sustained strong leadership in the food security, logistics and emergency telecommunications sectors. It provided systematic coordination and shared services that contributed to an effective joint humanitarian response by improving inter-agency emergency telecommunications services at the start of the Level 3 response; conducting several assessments (with FAO) that were used to increase the local market capacity of refugees and the reach of the e-voucher system and increase cash-based assistance; and supporting the logistics sector in the effort to deliver assistance to the humanitarian community effectively. While the logistics coordination with the Government improved, there is a need for better integration of the work by the logistics sector and the Government.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

56. The evaluation found WFP's overall performance under the CSP to be broadly aligned with the plan's stated outcomes and objectives and largely consistent with national policies and humanitarian interventions in Bangladesh. WFP was adept in responding to critical issues during CSP implementation. Expanding the CSP activities and adding a fifth strategic outcome while managing the Level 3 response through several revisions of the CSP presented many challenges. Despite this, the WFP country office was effective in responding to the expansion of needs in the country.

### **Quality of strategic outcomes**

57. WFP was unable to fully capture the results of its interventions or their contribution to progress on the various SDGs. Clearer linkages between CSP activities and intended outcomes would have facilitated CSP adaptation to a changing context and enhanced alignment with government efforts to achieve SDG 2 and SDG 17 targets.
58. During the initial phase of CSP implementation, underfunding and a lack of flexible funding affected the country office's ability to achieve its strategic aim of capacity strengthening. This was compounded by the absence of a clear vision of how activities under strategic outcome 1 would contribute to the intended outcome.

### **Emergency response operational modalities**

59. The CSP was primarily and appropriately designed to strengthen the linkages between humanitarian and development interventions. Forging these linkages and related structures and processes, however, often requires extensive lead-in time and new resource mobilization strategies to secure and maintain appropriate resources.
60. The shift to the Level 3 response modalities contributed to a disruption in the strategic direction of the CSP, affecting progress towards ongoing development initiatives. Although the design of the CSP anticipated that WFP might need to respond to a sudden-onset emergency, there was a disconnect between an effective strategy and operational systems for scale-up and integration into collaborative action by the Government and United Nations agencies.
61. In the event of worst-case climate change scenarios, food insecurity among an increasing number of vulnerable people is likely to be a recurring problem in Bangladesh. WFP is well placed to continue in its trusted role, using the effective fast response mechanisms in place and supporting and strengthening national development programmes to mitigate the long-term impact of disasters on vulnerable groups.

## Gender and social inclusion

62. The CSP rightly identifies key cross-cutting linkages, gaps and challenges; however, a more concerted effort is required to mainstream commitments and obligations across the full range of interventions, and cross-cutting issues need to be sufficiently mainstreamed and thus routinely reflected in all office practices and systems.
63. The CSP defined a clear operational focus on the most vulnerable women, men and children, but this was not consistent across all outcome areas. Importantly, the CSP did not adequately consider sector-wide linkages or best practices in the context of international humanitarian policy architecture and protection. In responding to the Rohingya crisis, WFP was effective in reaching the poorest refugees; however, inadequate attention was paid to rights and gender implications and to assessing the risks of exclusion.

## Institutional capacity strengthening – embedding new ways of working

64. Despite best efforts, there are clear challenges concerning WFP's ability to embark on the organizational shift to institutional capacity strengthening. The approach so far has been inconsistent, largely as a result of ineffective communication with staff and a lack of investment in understanding the capacity support needs of WFP's key partners. Country office staff require essential skills to complement and support institutional system strengthening at the various government levels.

## Enhancing partnerships

65. The CSP was intended to result in more effective partnerships spanning the humanitarian and development contexts. This proved difficult because there was no shared institutional understanding of what strategic partnerships entailed or reassessment of the organization's strategic positioning vis-à-vis its longstanding relations with counterpart government ministries.
66. The value of the CSP framework as a new and effective strategic partnership tool is yet to be fully appreciated within WFP and among its external partners. Further effort will be required to ensure that the country office takes a partnership approach to inform the design of the next CSP.

## LESSONS LEARNED

67. The CSP demonstrates the value of beginning with a shared institutional understanding of what strategic partnerships entail. To better manage performance and track results, future CSPs would benefit from an overarching theory of change that determines the causal pathways and assumptions underpinning CSP interventions.
68. The CSP was not originally set up to provide the most effective mechanism for delivering a Level 3 emergency response; however, introducing a strategic outcome to CSPs to enable a response to an emergency without compromising overall strategic and programmatic coherence is a pragmatic solution, especially in highly disaster-prone countries like Bangladesh.
69. In the light of shifting priorities and given its longstanding experience in supporting government social safety net programmes, there may be a case for WFP to reprioritize and reposition itself if it intends to stay engaged with the evolution of national nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes at a strategic level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

70. In its key findings, lessons learned and conclusions, the evaluation reveals the many positive changes brought about by the CSP process, as well as opportunities to shape the strategic and operational direction of future CSPs. The six recommendations, three of which are strategic and three operational, will need to be considered systematically to address key issues for the next CSP and respond to the urgent challenges presented by the coronavirus disease pandemic in Bangladesh.



No.	Recommendation	Type	Who	Priority	When
1	<p><b>Enhance strategic partnerships</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>1.1 enhance and strengthen planning processes for developing the next CSP and actively engage with key stakeholders in shaping the strategic direction of the CSP;</p> <p>1.2 ensure that staff across the country office actively participate in the development of the next CSP by identifying and understanding the roles and operational parameters of key partners;</p> <p>1.3 develop a clear operational strategy that sets out how the next CSP will sustain government efforts to achieve SDG targets, focusing on:</p> <p>a. United Nations reform efforts through the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework to set clear targets for 2030; and</p> <p>b. strengthening and supporting government governance and institutional reform systems engagement</p> <p>1.4 identify financial resources and development partners willing to invest in multi-year development interventions and resilience building efforts with communities affected by humanitarian crisis; and</p> <p>1.5 assess experiences and lessons learned from other country offices on CSP design processes to achieve the most effective strategic outcomes.</p>	Strategic	Country office, supported by the regional bureau and headquarters (Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division; Strategic Partnerships Division)	High	Mid 2021
2	<p><b>Improve the effectiveness of emergency preparedness, readiness and response mechanisms</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>2.1 ensure that an additional strategic outcome area is retained within the CSP for anticipating and mobilizing supplementary resources for immediate response to emergencies, including large-scale (Level 3) sudden-onset emergencies;</p> <p>2.2 actively engage with the Government to promote implementation of appropriate shock-responsive climate adaptation systems within national social protection programming and use WFP leverage to facilitate cooperation among stakeholders to sustain linkages between humanitarian-development programme interventions and emergency response</p>	Strategic	Country office, with specialist support from the regional bureau and headquarters (Emergencies Operations Division;	High	2021

No.	Recommendation	Type	Who	Priority	When
	<p>mechanisms;</p> <p>2.3 invest further financial and human resources in supporting and complementing the work of the Government, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organization networks on embedding global standards on protection, accountability to affected populations and gender in emergency response mechanisms; and</p> <p>2.4 develop ready-to-apply plans anticipating responses to disaster events, both in the current context and for future scenarios.</p>		Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division)		
3	<p><b>Strengthen support for nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>3.1 re-evaluate its added value and contribution to the Bangladesh social protection and nutrition arena, assessing strategic opportunities with relevant government ministries to complement the development of the national social protection policy framework mapping for the next phase of the national social security strategy;</p> <p>3.2 improve strategic relationships with key government actors to consolidate its role in promoting nutrition-sensitive interventions through national social safety net programmes;</p> <p>3.3 enhance, develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation strategy to facilitate evidence-based decisions for sharing with government policymakers and development partners; and</p> <p>3.4 develop and strengthen partnership ties with key social protection development partners to enhance linkages between nutrition-sensitive and adaptive shock responsiveness aspects of existing social protection programmes.</p>	Strategic	Country office, supported by headquarters (Social Protection Unit) and the regional bureau	Medium	2021–2022
4	<p><b>Enhance capacity strengthening strategy and interventions</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>4.1 ensure that the country capacity strengthening strategy is aligned with the revised corporate capacity strengthening strategy, underpins all CSP strategic outcome areas and effectively links up with other operational focus areas;</p> <p>4.2 ensure that the country office receives technical support for effectively linking programme operations and compliance with WFP global policy directives; this support should include:</p>	Operational	Country office  Headquarters (Technical	High	2021

No.	Recommendation	Type	Who	Priority	When
	<p>a. a training and development programme for selected staff tasked with implementing capacity strengthening objectives that takes into consideration WFP's niche areas and technical comparative advantage; and</p> <p>b. skills audits to determine the specific competency requirements for key staff for effectively and strategically engaging with government partners;</p> <p>4.3 reassess and evaluate the principles of the country capacity strengthening strategy to ensure clarity of purpose regarding how to effectively engage with the Government to support its capacity strengthening strategic goals in line with SDG commitments.</p>		<p>Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service)</p> <p>Country office</p>		
5	<p><b>Strengthen gender equality and social inclusion interventions</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>5.1 fully integrate gender into thematic programming and CSP design to form the basis of a strategy for engaging with partners and stakeholders to ensure that WFP's position on gender is effectively communicated;</p> <p>5.2 strengthen the design, implementation and qualitative monitoring of gender equality and social inclusion, including by commissioning studies, to shift the focus from quantitative aspects of gender, equity and social inclusion mainstreaming to a set of transformative actions embedded in activities and tracked across strategic outcomes;</p> <p>5.3 ensure that gender advisers and support units fully embed the principles and policy obligations that underpin WFP's global position on gender transformation commitments in the CSP design process;</p> <p>5.4 build sufficient technical capacity in the gender, VAM and monitoring and evaluation units to support programme teams in operationalizing and mainstreaming gender considerations throughout the CSP period; and</p> <p>5.5 revisit recruitment and training strategies for redressing gender imbalances and ensure that adequate training is part of induction and continuous job performance and appraisal processes.</p>	Operational	Country office, supported by headquarters (Gender Office) and the regional bureau	High	2021
6	<p><b>Strengthen performance management strategy, processes and systems</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p>	Operational	Country office (Monitoring	High	2021

No.	Recommendation	Type	Who	Priority	When
	<p>6.1 develop a performance and knowledge management strategy to promote evidence-informed intervention design and implementation across CSP strategic outcome areas. The strategy should aim to build on best practice principles of the WFP monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning approaches; the research, assessment and monitoring model; and the three-pronged approach;</p> <p>6.2 encourage closer integration of the monitoring and evaluation, VAM and programme units to better capture lessons across CSP strategic outcomes and enhance field-level staff functions to go beyond distribution and process monitoring to provide contextual information (design) and connection to beneficiary experience (monitoring and evaluation);</p> <p>6.3 enhance qualitative research to inform nutrition-sensitive evidence generation and develop monitoring and evaluation cross-cutting mechanisms – including strategies for engaging with and promoting the voices of poor and vulnerable groups in decision making – to inform policy and programmatic planning and to influence processes in dialogue with government partners; and</p> <p>6.4 ensure that all CSP activities are underpinned by specific theory-of-change methodologies, which should be regularly reviewed and used to inform programme interventions.</p>		and Evaluation Unit; Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit; Programme Unit)		

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 EVALUATION FEATURES

### Rationale and Objectives

1. This evaluation was commissioned in line with the World Food Programme (WFP) policy on country strategic plans (CSPs), which specifies that all country strategic plans will undergo country portfolio evaluations towards the end of their implementation period, to assess progress and results against their intended outcomes and objectives, including towards gender equity and other cross-cutting corporate results.<sup>14</sup> The evaluation purpose is to 1) provide evidence and learning on WFP Bangladesh country strategic plan performance for country level strategic decisions, including assessing the level three emergency response (L3) to the Rohingya crisis; specifically to inform the development of the next country strategic plan and 2) provide accountability for results presented to WFP stakeholders. The terms of reference (ToRs) are provided in Annex 1.<sup>15</sup>

2. The stakeholders for this country strategic plan evaluation (CSPE) include the WFP Bangladesh country office, various ministries of the Government of Bangladesh (referred to as “the Government”), United Nations (UN) agencies, development partners, and international and national civil society organizations (see Annex 2).<sup>16</sup> The findings will be relevant to the WFP Executive Board, headquarters’ (HQ) technical divisions, and the regional bureau in Bangkok (RBB), given that the Bangladesh country office was one of the first generation of country strategic plans required to incorporate a level three emergency response during the implementation period.

### Methodology and limitations

3. Fieldwork was undertaken between October 2019 and March 2020. In agreement with WFP, the evaluation assesses activities covering the period prior to the country strategic plan from March 2016 to December 2019, with additional evidence drawn for comparative purposes. This includes: country office transition to a country strategic plan; country strategic plan implementation from March 2017 to March 2020; the influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar in August 2017 resulting in the scale-up of WFP operations in the Rohingya refugee camps to a level three emergency response in September 2017; and the subsequent scale down to a level two emergency response (L2) in January 2019.

4. The evaluation responds to the methodological requirements of the original terms of reference, as well as Bangladesh country office priorities. These priorities included adding a fifth evaluation question to enable an assessment of the WFP response to the level three crisis within the context of a country strategic plan.

5. The CSPE methodology included the following components:<sup>17</sup> inception period; extensive document review; key informant interviews and focus group discussions; strategy and context analysis; stakeholder analysis; a participatory community engagement survey; two thematic “deep dives” (into nutrition-sensitive social protection (NS-SP) and common and inter-agency services in Cox’s Bazar, respectively); gender equality and social inclusion analysis; and a capacity strengthening assessment tool.

6. Limitations experienced by the evaluation team included:<sup>18</sup> less than anticipated availability of stakeholders with institutional history of WFP Bangladesh pre- and post-country strategic plan introduction;

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<sup>14</sup> WFP, (2016). *Policy on Country Strategic Plans*, Rome, November 2016 <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000037168/download/>

<sup>15</sup> Unless stated otherwise, annexes referenced in this report can be found in the separate accompanying Volume II of this CSPE report.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to Annex 12 for list of people consulted.

<sup>17</sup> Refer to Annex 3 for more detail of the methodology.

<sup>18</sup> Table 1 in Annex 3 (Methodology) includes a list of limitations anticipated at inception phase.

the unforeseen absence of two evaluation team members during fieldwork; replacement of the team leader during final report writing phase; and issues with data availability caused by inconsistencies in country strategic plan indicator reporting, poor disaggregation and lack of harmonized data management systems. The constraints faced by the evaluation team did not affect the findings in any major way.

## 1.2 COUNTRY CONTEXT

### General overview

7. **Geography and demography:** Bangladesh is located in South Asia, bordering with India, Myanmar and the Bay of Bengal. With an estimated population of 163 million, it is the eighth most populous country in the world.<sup>19</sup> In 2018, the population density was estimated to be 1,204 people per square km,<sup>20</sup> with one third of the population living in urban areas, a number projected to increase to 70 percent by 2035. The majority of the population (98 percent) belongs to the Bengali ethnic group and are Muslim, followed by Hindus, Christians and Buddhists. While life expectancy at birth is rising (75 years in 2017), fertility is declining (two births per woman), leading to an overall decline in population growth. In 2017, the country's annual population growth was 1.05 percent.<sup>21</sup>

8. **Basic macro-economic indicators:** Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with 7.6 percent average gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate during the period 2016 to 2019.<sup>22</sup> While gross domestic product growth was high, inflation remained below the Government's 5.5 percent target, supported by bumper rice harvests since 2018. Growth factors include year-on-year increases in public-sector investments as a result of large infrastructure programmes; major remittance flows; a strong export sector led by the garment industry; numerous micro-credit options that have stimulated rural entrepreneurship, especially by women; official development assistance and foreign direct investment.<sup>23</sup>

9. Rapid economic growth enabled Bangladesh to achieve lower middle income country status in 2015<sup>24</sup> and, by 2018, Bangladesh graduated from the United Nations Least Developed Countries list for the first time.<sup>25</sup> This achievement was accompanied by an increase in real wages with a gross national income per capita of USD 3,677, increasing national household income and expenditure as well as access to clean water, sanitation, electricity and household assets.<sup>26</sup> By 2018, expected years of schooling sat at 11.4.<sup>27</sup> In 2017, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ranked Bangladesh 136 out of 189 countries with a human development index of 0.614.<sup>28</sup> In accordance with economic growth, official development assistance has decreased in the past two decades.<sup>29</sup> The Seventh Five-Year Plan (2016–2020) articulates the development goals defined by the Government, including achieving upper-middle income status.<sup>30</sup>

10. Consistent with the trajectory towards middle income status, poverty is declining in all poverty count measures, including national poverty lines, head count ratio and squared poverty gap.<sup>31</sup> Extreme poverty in Bangladesh fell from 82 percent in 1972, to below 9 percent in 2018 (as measured by the percentage of people living below the international extreme poverty line).<sup>32</sup> However, according to government data, one

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<sup>19</sup> United Nations, 2020. Population Data <https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery/>.

<sup>20</sup> World Bank, 2020. World Development Indicators.

<sup>21</sup> World Bank, 2020. World Development Indicators.

<sup>22</sup> Asia Development Bank 2019 Asia Development Outlook 2019 update [www.adb.org/countries/bangladesh/economy](http://www.adb.org/countries/bangladesh/economy).

<sup>23</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh CSP (2017-2020)* and World Bank, 2019. Development Update.

<sup>24</sup> UNCAT, 2017. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Geneva.

<sup>25</sup> World Bank, 2019. Development update.

<sup>26</sup> BBS, 2017. *Bangladesh Statistics 2017*. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

<sup>27</sup> UNDP, 2017. *United Nations Human Development Report*.

<sup>28</sup> UNDP, 2017. *United Nations Human Development Report*.

<sup>29</sup> Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, Dhaka Bangladesh.

<sup>30</sup> Government of Bangladesh, 2015. *Seventh Five-Year Plan, 2016-2020*.

<sup>31</sup> BBS, 2019. *Report on the Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2016*. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

<sup>32</sup> World Bank. *Bangladesh Development Update (PDF)*. The World Bank.



in four Bangladeshis still live in poverty<sup>33</sup> and poverty levels in urban regions decreased significantly slower; largely due to slower reductions in poverty in Dhaka and rising levels in Chittagong.

11. Bangladesh's Gini<sup>34</sup> coefficient of 0.32 reflects high inequality and although the Government has implemented a pro-poor development strategy, the country continues to experience worsening income distribution.<sup>35</sup> Income held by the poorest 40 percent of the population declined from 17.41 percent in 1991 to 13.01 percent in 2016 while income held by the richest 20 percent increased from 37.4 percent to 41.4 percent.<sup>36</sup> In addition to income inequality, Bangladesh experiences regional disparities with the northern part of Bangladesh being the least developed. Social exclusion of disadvantaged groups, gender inequality, and the continuing urban-rural divide account for differential rates of poverty reduction throughout the country.

12. **Disasters:** In 2017, severe flooding in April and August affected more than 8 million people, causing widespread crop damage and disruption to livelihoods. In 2019, Cyclone Bulbul forced over 2 million people to evacuate to cyclone centres in 14 districts.<sup>37</sup>

13. **National voluntary review on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The Government is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals and integrated all 17 goals into its Seventh Five-Year Plan (2016–2020). According to the 2017 voluntary national review, priority thematic areas for Bangladesh include poverty reduction, food security and hunger, health, women empowerment, infrastructure and maritime life, and global partnerships. In the two years since the introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals, respective ministries work towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal Action Plan, with an estimated cost of USD 1.1 trillion, making resource mobilization a critical challenge going forward. Other challenges include data availability and management, localization of the Sustainable Development Goals and incorporation of social, economic and environmental protection.<sup>38</sup> In the latest UNDP Sustainable Development Goal progress report, all the indicators for which data are available reveal improvements, apart from a few such as dimensions of gender parity.<sup>39</sup>

## National social safety net policy and the Sustainable Development Goals

14. Social safety net programmes in Bangladesh have largely emerged in response to various shocks and risks that vulnerable groups frequently face. Many of these programmes, originating from the birth of the nation, are founded with the objective of protecting vulnerable people from falling into income and human poverty. They include the provision of income security for the elderly, widows and persons with disabilities, generating temporary employment for working-age men and women, and supporting the healthy development of young mothers and children. (Further details can be found in Annex 4.)

15. The 2015 National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) sets out the basis for reform of social safety net programmes. The key policy intervention of the National Social Security Strategy is to reduce the number of social protection programmes. There are 130 programmes defined as social protection/social safety net and the aim is to reduce this to a core group of programmes framed within a life-course approach. This envisages programme interventions that prioritize the poorest and most vulnerable people, expand urban coverage and enhance the disaster response element. This consolidation is intended to enhance food

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<sup>33</sup> BBS, 2017 *Bangladesh Statistics 2017*. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

<sup>34</sup> The gini coefficient is a measure of the distribution of income across a population, often used as a gauge of economic inequality. The coefficient ranges from 0 (perfect equality) to 1 (perfect inequality).

<sup>35</sup> General Economics Division (GED). 2018. *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Bangladesh Planning Commission Ministry of Planning.

<sup>36</sup> BBS, 2017 *Bangladesh Statistics 2017*. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

<sup>37</sup> World Bank, 2018. *Groundswell, Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*. The World Bank Group, Washington, USA.

<sup>38</sup> Government of Bangladesh, 2017. *Voluntary National Review (VNR), 2017: Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world*.

<sup>39</sup> General Economics Division (GED). 2018. *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Bangladesh Planning Commission Ministry of Planning.

access and utilization to achieve SDG 2, but many social safety net programmes fail to target the people most in need.<sup>40</sup>

## Food and nutrition security

16. Bangladesh is making good progress on food security and availability. In the last ten years, as a result of favourable policies, the country achieved self-sufficiency in fish, meat, rice and vegetable production.<sup>41</sup> Rapid economic growth is attributed to improvements in food availability and food insecurity, resulting in a decline in extreme poverty. In the 2019 Global Hunger Index, Bangladesh ranks 88<sup>th</sup> out of 117 countries with a score of 25.8, compared to 30.3 in 2010.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, over the past decade Bangladesh has made steady progress on improving child nutrition: stunting rates fell from 43 percent in 2007 to 31 percent in 2017, and the number of underweight children declined from 41 percent in 2007 to 22 percent during the same period.<sup>43</sup> Equally, 2019 witnessed a sharp decline in chronic malnutrition among children under 5, from 42 percent in 2012–2013 to 28 percent in 2019.<sup>44</sup> However, as a consequence of urban migration flows and low living standards, many children suffer from multiple micronutrient deficiencies, with vitamin D and zinc deficiencies being the most common.<sup>45</sup>

17. While the general situation has improved, the country still has pockets of poverty and food insecurity, largely due to inequality in the distribution of resources. Inequality is contributing towards regional disparity in food security.<sup>46</sup> Data from the Bangladesh Household Income and Expenditure Survey indicates that stubborn pockets of poverty persist in districts where ethnic minorities make up the majority of the population. Social, economic, and ecological factors contribute to this disparity. In addition, increased urbanization is having a negative impact on food security, food safety, obesity, and nutritional outcomes for children living in slums. Similarly, it is argued that climate change will lead to a 30 percent reduction in crop production by the end of the century, with food crops becoming less nutritious due to CO<sup>2</sup> emissions.<sup>47</sup>

18. In addressing these challenges the Government is developing policies and has adopted critical interventions, including the introduction of fortified rice, the distribution of iron-folic acid supplements among pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls, vitamin A distribution for children, deworming, salt iodization, maternity leave for mothers to assist breast-feeding, and implementation of WASH programmes emphasizing quality water, sanitation and hygiene. Similarly, many United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the private sector contribute to SDG 2 within the 2017–2020 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). However, effective coordination across government ministries to achieve SDG 2 remains difficult, principally due to scarce resources.

## Agriculture

19. Although more than half of the population lives in rural areas (63 percent in 2018) and 40 percent of the total labour force is employed in agriculture, the share of agriculture to gross domestic product is only 13 percent (2018) and continues to decline.<sup>48</sup> Crops form the largest part of the agricultural sector (55 percent) followed by fisheries (22 percent), livestock (14 percent) and forests (9 percent). Rice is an

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<sup>40</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017–2020)*.

<sup>41</sup> CRI. 2019. *Bangladesh Towards Achieving Food Security: 2009–2019*. Centre for Research and Information. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

<sup>42</sup> Concern Worldwide/Welthungerhilfe, 2019. *Global Hunger Index 2019: Bangladesh*. <https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2019/Bangladesh.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> NIPORT and ICF. 2019. *Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2017–18: Key Indicators*. National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) and ICF. Dhaka, Bangladesh and Maryland, USA.

<sup>44</sup> UNICEF, BBS, 2019. *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019*.

<sup>45</sup> Government of Bangladesh, 2015. *National Strategy on Prevention and Control of micronutrient deficiencies, Bangladesh (2015–2024)*.

<sup>46</sup> Islam N, Noman ANK. 2015. *Regional Disparity for Northern Bangladesh*. Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 20, Issue 11, Ver. I (Nov. 2015) pp 59–63.

<sup>47</sup> WFP, 2016. *Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Bangladesh*.

<sup>48</sup> World Bank, 2020. *World Development Indicators*.

important crop, which constitutes half of the agricultural contribution to gross domestic product and is a major factor in achieving food security. Since the 1970s, the yield rate for some rice varieties almost tripled to 2–4 mt per hectare. The biggest challenge to the agricultural sector is associated with the effects of climate change, and floods and droughts.<sup>49</sup>

### Impact of climate change and vulnerability

20. Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with most of the country lying less than 10 m above sea level (and 10 percent less than a metre). Nearly half of the Bangladesh population experiences annual climate shocks and natural disasters with increasing frequency and severity, including cyclones, floods and earthquakes.<sup>50</sup> Research suggests that by 2050, climate change could force the internal migration of 13 million Bangladeshis,<sup>51</sup> adding greater pressure onto congested urban areas. Climate change will also negatively affect crop production due to increased temperatures, changing seasons and more extreme weather events.<sup>52</sup> The southern regions of the country are experiencing the consequences of increased salinity of coastal waters, resulting in lower and less nutritious crop production and adverse effects on human fertility.<sup>53</sup> Air quality in Bangladesh was the worst in the world in 2019, with Dhaka ranking as the second worst capital.<sup>54</sup>

21. Tackling these ongoing challenges relates directly to achieving SDG 13 on climate action, which includes targets around resilience and adaptive capacity, disaster risk reduction, climate-related policy and planning. The Government has several policy interventions in place to address climate change. These include the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100<sup>55</sup> and the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy of Bangladesh (2016–2020), both informed by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.<sup>56</sup> Despite infrastructure investments in recent years greatly reducing mortality from recurring disasters, a lack of operational maintenance of these facilities can render them ineffective in an emergency.

### Education

22. Since 2010, Bangladesh has made significant progress in educational attainment. According to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the literacy rate for the population aged 7 years and above increased from 46.2 percent to 51.8 percent during 2001–2011. The literacy rate during the same period increased from 50.3 percent to 54.1 percent for men and boys and 41.8 percent to 49.4 percent for women and girls. Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in school enrolment and primary school completion.

23. There are several factors that might prevent Bangladesh from achieving the goal of “Education for All” by 2021. Despite recent progress in enrolment, girls remain far less likely than boys to complete their secondary education (52 percent versus 65 percent),<sup>57</sup> and high dropout rates remain a concern as young boys increasingly leave school to work. Furthermore, the quality of education, due to factors such as a lack of competent teachers, contributes to Bangladesh’s poor achievement of SDG 4.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> LightCastle BD, 2019. *An Overview of Agriculture in Bangladesh*. <https://atabd.co/stories/an-overview-of-agriculture-in-bangladesh-4185> [accessed 11 May 2020].

<sup>50</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)*.

<sup>51</sup> World Bank, 2018. *Groundswell, Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*. The World Bank Group, Washington, USA.

<sup>52</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NL, 2018. *Climate Change Profile: Bangladesh*.

<sup>53</sup> Haider, R., 2019. *Climate Change-Induced Salinity Affecting Soil Across Coastal Bangladesh*. UNB United News of Bangladesh and IPS Inter Press Service.

<sup>54</sup> IQAir, 2019. *2019 World Air Quality Report*.

<sup>55</sup> General Economic Division (GED), 2019. *Bangladesh Delta Plan (BDP) 2100*. Bangladesh Planning Commission.

<sup>56</sup> General Economics Division (GED), 2018. *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Bangladesh Planning Commission Ministry of Planning.

<sup>57</sup> Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2015.

<sup>58</sup> General Economics Division (GED). 2018. *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Bangladesh Planning Commission Ministry of Planning.

## Gender

24. Despite the rapid increase in educational attainment and policy changes in favour of women in Bangladesh, prejudicial social and legal norms, which are entrenched in this patriarchal society, continue to hold back achievement towards gender equality (SDG 5). The low social status of women and girls in Bangladesh is reflected in its rankings; 47 out of 144 countries and gender gap index of 0.719 in the 2017 Gender Gap Report.<sup>59</sup> Women also experience social constraints and discriminatory practices that limit their independent movement in the public sphere. This leads to social and economic interaction restrictions, which affect women's decision making at the household level, and contribute to the practices of early marriage and childbearing. Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of child marriages and adolescent pregnancies in South East Asia.<sup>60</sup> Violence against women is widespread, with almost two out of three (72.6 percent) ever-married women in Bangladesh having experienced some form of partner violence in their lifetimes.<sup>61</sup> Bangladesh is a signatory to several international conventions that aim to increase gender equality. The 2011 National Women Development Policy stipulates the objective of establishing equal opportunity and rights to ensure national development.

## Rohingya refugee crisis

25. The Rohingya people are a stateless Muslim minority in Myanmar.<sup>62</sup> Having faced decades of systematic discrimination in Myanmar, the Rohingya have been both registered refugees and undocumented Myanmar nationals in the Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh. In 1991–1992, an estimated 250,000 Rohingyas entered Bangladesh, leading to the establishment of 21 refugee camps. In the following years until 2005, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) supporting the discussions between Bangladesh and Myanmar at the time, 236,000 were repatriated; of the once 21 camps only two remained in the Cox's Bazar region.<sup>63</sup> The approximately 32,000 registered refugees resided in two official camps while another estimated 200,000 to 300,000 undocumented Myanmar nationals lived in non-camp settings in surrounding areas.<sup>64</sup> On 25 August 2017, by far the largest movement of Rohingya influx into Bangladesh occurred. By the end of 2019 an estimated 745,000 Rohingya fled into Bangladesh. An independent United Nations-mandated International Fact-Finding Mission concluded that the cause of this "mass exodus was widespread and systematic attack[s] on [civilians]" including "murder, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture, rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence, persecution, and enslavement" with "elements of extermination and deportation" as well as "systematic oppression and discrimination [that] may also amount to the crime of apartheid".<sup>65</sup>

26. As of January 2020, between 850,000 and 915,000 Rohingya refugees<sup>66</sup> reside in Cox's Bazar, in Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts. The majority live in 34 "extremely congested camps".<sup>67</sup> The United Nations estimates that, from the outset of this current crisis, the Government has saved the lives of nearly 1 million

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<sup>59</sup> World Economic Forum, 2017. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*. Davos.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF, 2019. *Child marriage, adolescent pregnancy and school dropout in South Asia*.

<sup>61</sup> UN Women, 2019. *UN Women in Bangladesh*, <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/bangladesh> [accessed 28/03/2020].

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/rohingya-emergency.html>

<sup>63</sup> Kaladan Press Network, 2016. *300,000 Rohingya living in Cox's Bazar areas, Bangladesh*. <https://www.kaladanpress.org/index.php/news/397-news-2016/june-2016/4990-300,000-rohingya-living-in-cox%E2%80%99s-bazar-areas,-bangladesh.html>.

<sup>64</sup> ACAPS, 2017. *Bangladesh Refugee Influx – Briefing Note*, 18 January 2017.

<sup>65</sup> ISCG, 2019. *Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, January to December*. (accessed January 2020), ISCG.

<sup>66</sup> The final family counting joint exercise of UNHCR and the Government in September 2019 gave a figure of 914,998 refugees. However, the second phase of the registration exercise – including biometric identification – has reduced that figure to 854,000 although these figures had not yet been published as of February 2020.

[https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/sitrep\\_december\\_2019\\_english.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/sitrep_december_2019_english.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> ISCG, 2019. *Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis, January to December*. (accessed January 2020), ISCG.

Rohingya refugees by maintaining an open border policy and by coordinating the humanitarian response, continuing to show “exceptional hospitality”<sup>68</sup> to the Rohingya population.

### 1.3 THE WFP COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN IN BANGLADESH

27. With the introduction of the corporate WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2021)<sup>69</sup> and the Integrated Road Map (IRM) to Zero Hunger,<sup>70</sup> the Bangladesh country strategic plan became the next operation spanning the period 2017–2021. Figure 1 depicts the timeline of WFP operations over several years. (Annex 7 provides a graphic representation of the major phases in the evolution of the portfolio over time and major changes in the external context.)

**Figure 1: WFP operations in Bangladesh (2016–2020)**

Operation	Time Frame	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
CP 200243	Jan 2013 – March 2017	Total Requirements (2016-2017) USD 54,485,426				
		Total Contributions received USD 12,275,315 Funded: 23%				
PRRO 200673	July 2014 – March 2017	Total requirements (2016-2017) USD 7,929,939				
		Total contributions received: USD 4,259,386 Funded: 54%				
CSP BD01	March 2017 – December 2020			Needs Based Plan (2017-2020): USD 969,120,577 Needs Based Plan Funded: USD 641,426,577 Funded: 66%		
Direct Expenditures (USD)		190,467,392	46,933,286	183,726,999	124,929,197	N/A

Source: CSPE terms of reference with 2019-2020 data updated, extracted from WFP FACTory on 20/04/2020.

28. The country strategic plan framework represents an explicit commitment to strategically driven performance management in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the wider United Nations community. The country strategic plan is aligned with UNDAF (2017–2020)<sup>71</sup> and the Government’s Seventh Five-Year Plan 2016–2020.<sup>72</sup> UNDAF introduced a strategic shift by focusing on the United Nations normative and strategic role in supporting Sustainable Development Goal achievement in Bangladesh. UNDAF objectives that contribute to SDG 2 include: i) improving social policies and programmes; ii) enhancing resilience; and iii) increasing opportunities for women and disadvantaged groups to contribute to and benefit from economic progress.

29. The country strategic plan combines development and emergency preparedness and response to support the country in ending hunger and reducing malnutrition by 2030. Given government commitment to increased institutional and financial support for development, the country strategic plan reflects the country office shift in corporate focus away from direct project implementation. WFP asserts that its

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> WFP, 2013. *Strategic Plan (2014-2017)*.

<sup>70</sup> WFP, 2016. *Integrated Road Map: Positioning WFP For A Changing World*.

<sup>71</sup> United Nations, 2017. *UNDAF, 2017-2020*

[https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/bangladesh\\_undaf\\_2017-2020.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/bangladesh_undaf_2017-2020.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Government of Bangladesh, 2016. *Bangladesh Seventh Five-Year Plan, (2016-2020)*

greatest added value is through its role as an enabler and supporter of national hunger solutions, while simultaneously maximizing impact and value for money. The strategic shifts endorsed in the country strategic plan include:

- Technical assistance, the creation of evidence, and advocacy will support the formulation and operationalization of policies and help to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of national initiatives for achieving food security and improved nutrition for the most vulnerable groups.
- The enhancement of nutrition and resilience will now focus on enhancing advocacy and coordination for a multisectoral approach to nutrition and on testing and validating innovative approaches for resilience.
- The WFP operational role will be limited to emergency assistance in response to natural disasters, and delivery of multifaceted programmes integrated into United Nations initiatives in Cox's Bazar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts.<sup>73</sup>

30. The country strategic plan is structured around five strategic outcomes that are designed to contribute to SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 17 (partnerships) and, at the output level, to SDG 4 on quality education and SDG 5 on gender equality. The five strategic outcomes are:

- 1) Vulnerable groups in rural and urban settings are supported by work to improve nutrition indicators in line with national targets by 2020.
- 2) The food security and nutrition of the most vulnerable populations of Cox's Bazar, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and areas affected by disaster are enhanced.
- 3) Innovative approaches to enhancing the resilience of food-insecure households affected by climate-related stresses are validated by 2020.
- 4) The response system for large-scale natural disasters can respond with reduced costs and lead times.
- 5) Humanitarian and development partners in Bangladesh have access to a range of reliable common services from WFP during crises, including logistics, emergency telecommunications and engineering services.

31. Fourteen activities, each with an associated number of expected outputs, are aligned to the five strategic outcomes. The country strategic plan line-of-sight diagram, (Figure 2) sets out the Bangladesh country strategic plan structure.

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<sup>73</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)*.



Figure 2: Country strategic plan line-of-sight

BGD CSP Budget Revision 5 – Line of sight USD 969.12 Million				
SR 2: NO ONE SUFFERS FROM MALNUTRITION SDG TARGET 2.2	SR 1: ACCESS TO FOOD SDG TARGET 2.1	SR 4: FOOD SYSTEMS ARE SUSTAINABLE SDG TARGET 2.4	SR 5: COUNTRIES HAVE STRENGTHENED CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE SDG SDG TARGET 17.9	SR 8: SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE, EXPERTISE AND TECHNOLOGY, STRENGTHEN GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT TO COUNTRY EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THE SDGs (SDG TARGET 17.16)
<b>SO1: VULNERABLE GROUPS IN RURAL AND URBAN SETTINGS ARE SUPPORTED BY ENHANCED NATIONAL ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THEIR NUTRITION INDICATORS IN LINE WITH NATIONAL TARGETS BY 2020</b> USD 51.25 M	<b>SO 2: THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATION OF COX'S BAZAR, THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS AND DISASTER-STRIKEN AREAS HAVE ENHANCED FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION</b> USD 808.75 M	<b>SO 3: INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ENHANCE THE RESILIENCE OF FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS EXPOSED TO CLIMATE-RELATED SHOCKS AND STRESSES ARE VALIDATED BY 2020</b> USD 36.39 M	<b>SO 4: THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE SYSTEM FOR LARGE-SCALE NATURAL DISASTERS IN BANGLADESH CAN RESPOND WITH REDUCED COST AND LEAD TIME.</b> USD 15.23 M	<b>SO 5: HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS IN BANGLADESH HAVE ACCESS TO RELIABLE SERVICES IN THE AREAS OF SUPPLY CHAIN, EMERGENCY TELECOMM, SITE MAINTENANCE AND ENGINEERING PROJECT CRISES.</b> USD 57.5 M
Capacity Development	Implementation	Innovation	Capacity Development	Service Delivery
<b>BD01.02.013</b> CS1 <b>Budget: USD 15.49 M</b> ACT:1: Technical assistance and advocacy to enhance the food security and nutrition impact of selected safety nets. <b>9</b> (CS/F/CBT)	<b>BD01.01.021</b> URT1 <b>Budget: USD 769.47 M</b> ACT:5: Deliver an integrated assistance package in Cox's Bazar. <b>1</b> (F/CBT)	<b>BD01.04.031</b> CAR1 <b>Budget: USD 11.26 M</b> ACT:8: Evidence creation on innovative approaches to enhance resilience. <b>3</b> (CS/CBT)	<b>BD01.05.042</b> EPA1 <b>Budget: USD 13.49 M</b> ACT:10: Capacity strengthening for emergency response. <b>17</b> (CS)	<b>BD01.08.051</b> CPA1 <b>Budget: USD 12.13 M</b> ACT:12: Coordinate the LS/C and provide efficient common logistics services to support the humanitarian community's response. <b>17</b> (SD)
<b>BD01.02.013</b> CS2 <b>Budget: USD 6.7 M</b> ACT:2: Technical assistance and advocacy for improved nutrition. <b>9</b> (CS/F/CBT)	<b>BD01.01.021</b> URT2 <b>Budget: USD 16.75 M</b> ACT:6: Deliver an integrated assistance package in CHT. <b>1</b> (F/CBT)	<b>BD01.04.031</b> CAR2 <b>Budget: USD 25.13 M</b> ACT:9: Implement the Nobo Jatra programme. <b>6</b> (SD/CBT)	<b>BD01.05.042</b> EPA2 <b>Budget: USD 1.74 M</b> ACT:11: Lead the logistics cluster and co-lead the food-security cluster. <b>17</b> (CS/SD)	<b>BD01.08.051</b> CPA2 <b>Budget: USD 4.12 M</b> ACT:13: Coordinate the ETS/C and provide efficient common services to support the humanitarian community response. <b>17</b> (SD)
<b>BD01.02.013</b> CS3 <b>Budget: USD 5.89 M</b> ACT:3: Technical assistance and advocacy for scaling-up post-harvest rice fortification. <b>9</b> (CS)	<b>BD01.01.021</b> URT3 <b>Budget: USD 22.53 M</b> ACT:7: Deliver food assistance in emergencies. <b>1</b> (F/CBT)			<b>BD01.08.051</b> CPA3 <b>Budget: USD 41.25 M</b> ACT:14: Site Maintenance and Engineering Project (SMEP) <b>17</b> (SD)
<b>BD01.02.013</b> CS4 <b>Budget: USD 23.17 M</b> ACT:4: Policy advice and technical assistance to scale-up school feeding. <b>9</b> (CS/F/CBT)				
ROOT CAUSES	CRISIS RESPONSE	RESILIENCE BUILDING	RESILIENCE	CRISIS RESPONSE

● Corporate activity number     ● Modality (underlined if dominant): F (food), CBT (incl. comm. vouchers), CS (capacity strengthening), SD (service delivery)

Source: WFP Bangladesh CO

32. Several activities represent a continuation of work undertaken prior to the country strategic plan. (Annex 7). This includes strategic outcome 1 on enhancing government social safety nets (activity 1) and school nutrition (activity 4). Activity 3 builds on WFP efforts on rice fortification in Bangladesh. Activity 2 moves WFP into more collaborative and coordinated approaches to improving nutrition in support to enhancing the Government's own targets on stunting, being underweight and micronutrient deficiencies.

33. The three activities under strategic outcome 2 are designated specifically to the Cox's Bazar and Chittagong Hill Tracts districts, and related to food assistance in emergencies.

34. Strategic outcome 3 continues the WFP focus on enhancing resilience to disasters and the effects of climate change. Activity 8 focuses on creating evidence on innovative approaches to enhance resilience, while activity 9 supports implementation of the *Nobo Jatra* (new beginning) programme.

35. Strategic outcome 4, similar to strategic outcome 1, focuses on capacity strengthening of government partners in line with the WFP strategic shift. Activities 10 and 11 aim to enhance the preparedness of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief to respond to natural disasters.

36. A fifth strategic outcome was added to the country strategic plan in October 2017<sup>74</sup> focusing on service delivery to facilitate the scaling up of the WFP response to the refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar. Activities 12 and 13 focused on coordination of the logistics and emergency telecommunications sectors/clusters in order to support the humanitarian community's response to crises. A further budget revision in May 2018 added activity 14 (site maintenance and engineering project (SMEP)) to strategic outcome 5 and increased

<sup>74</sup> Sections 3.2 and 3.3 of the CSP document and Annex 8 of this evaluation report provide detailed information on outcomes, outputs and activities.

allocations to in-kind food assistance). A final, budget revision in 2019 aims to support ongoing operations in Cox's Bazar until 2020.<sup>75</sup>

## Overview of WFP Bangladesh's analytical work

37. In designing the country strategic plan, WFP drew recommendations and lessons from the strategic review of food security and nutrition in Bangladesh; evaluations and assessments of previous WFP interventions; and consultations with government and other development partners. Consistent with The WFP Integrated Road Map, the country office commissioned a National Zero Hunger Strategic Review to inform the country strategic plan design.<sup>76</sup> The 2016 review provides a comprehensive analysis of the country's progress, concerns and challenges, and strategies for improving nutrition and food security.

38. The WFP operational activities in Bangladesh have been shaped by a suite of analytical products and processes. The WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) unit supports and produces emergency assessments, baseline studies, market assessments and monitoring reports.<sup>77</sup> WFP has been able to draw from regular food security monitoring bulletins, poverty maps, two Refugee influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessments (REVA), a "Fill the Nutrient Gap" analysis,<sup>78</sup> emergency assessments of flood and cyclone situations, joint assessment mission reports and guidelines with UNHCR in Cox's Bazar.<sup>79</sup> Other analytical work conducted by the country office includes assessments and evaluations of WFP Bangladesh programming;<sup>80</sup> assessments of food security;<sup>81</sup> brochures and factsheets; and country/thematic briefs.

39. The WFP Gender Policy (2015–2020) seeks to ensure that country strategic plans contribute to a transformation of gender relations and social structures and equality. The WFP Gender Action Plan 2016 provides guidance and markers to enable country strategic plans to convert the policy's goal into "concrete and measurable actions and accountabilities".<sup>82</sup>

## Country strategic plan performance overview

40. The country strategic plan originally aimed to reach a total of 1,542,800 beneficiaries.<sup>83</sup> Following the Rohingya influx the overall target number of beneficiaries increased to 3,853,158 in 2019 with additional budget allocations. In each year of the country strategic plan WFP has fallen short of its overall planned beneficiary targets.<sup>84</sup> Roughly 90 percent of the target was achieved in 2017 and 2019, and 70.3 percent in 2018. In terms of its gender targets, the country office falls somewhat short of its 56 percent target, with 52–53 percent of women and girls reached each year. (Figure ).

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<sup>75</sup> WFP, February 2019. *Crisis response revision of Bangladesh country strategic plan (March 2017–December 2020) and corresponding budget increase* [Budget revision 5]. Revisions 2 and 4 were minor technical revisions in 2017 and 2018.

<sup>76</sup> WFP, 2016. *Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Bangladesh: A independent review commissioned by the WFP*.

<sup>77</sup> WFP, 2020. *Bangladesh VAM Assessments*, [https://vam.wfp.org/CountryPage\\_assessments.aspx?iso3=BGD](https://vam.wfp.org/CountryPage_assessments.aspx?iso3=BGD) [accessed 01/05/2020].

<sup>78</sup> WFP, May 2019. *Fill the Nutrient Gap Assessment (Cox's Bazar)*.

<sup>79</sup> Refer to evaluation question 4.1 for assessment of WFP use of data on hunger challenges, the food and security and nutrition issues to develop and deliver the CSP.

<sup>80</sup> For example: WFP, 2015. *Impact of climate-related shocks and stresses on nutrition and food security in selected areas of rural Bangladesh*; WFP, 2016. *Impact evaluation of the WFP Enhancing Resilience to Natural Disasters and the Effects of Climate Change programme - with a specific focus on the resilience dimension*; WFP, 2017. *Mid-Term Evaluation of McGovern-Dole-supported School Feeding Programme in Bangladesh (2014-2016)*; WFP, 2017. *Final Evaluation of McGovern-Dole-supported School Feeding Programme in Bangladesh (2015-2017)*.

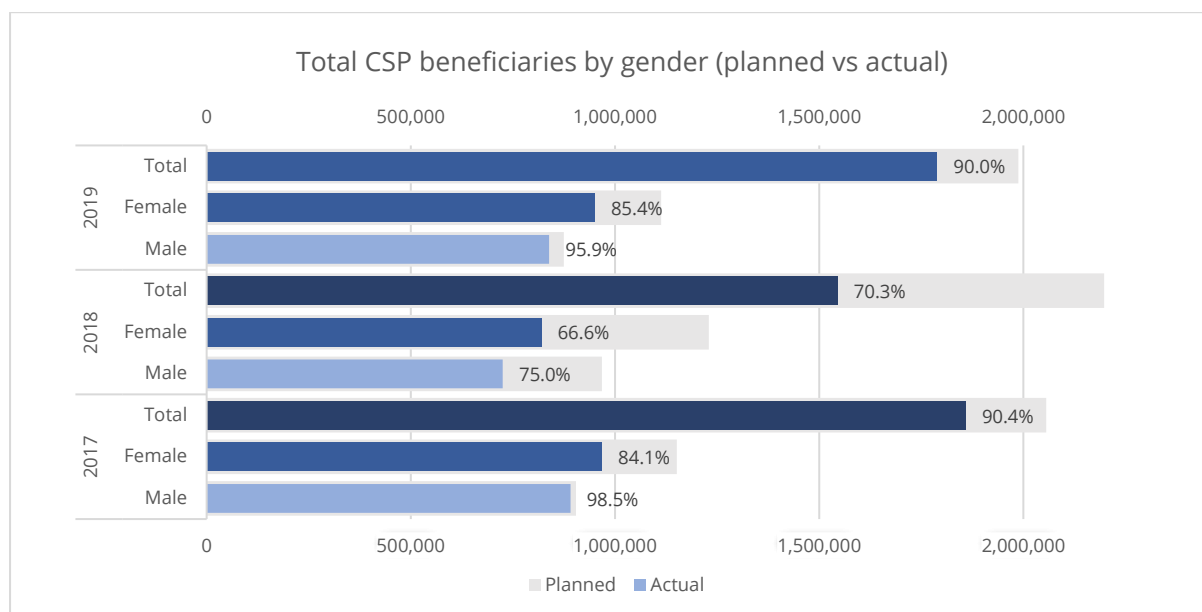
<sup>81</sup> For example: WFP, 2015. *Food Insecurity and Undernutrition in the Urban Slums of Bangladesh*; WFP, May 2019. *Fill the Nutrient Gap Assessment (Cox's Bazar)*.

<sup>82</sup> Annex 6 and findings throughout this report consider the quality of this gender analysis in more detail and the extent to which the CSP responds to the core tenets of the overarching gender framework.

<sup>83</sup> Excluding double counting of beneficiaries.

<sup>84</sup> A comprehensive breakdown of beneficiary counts is provided in Annex 13.

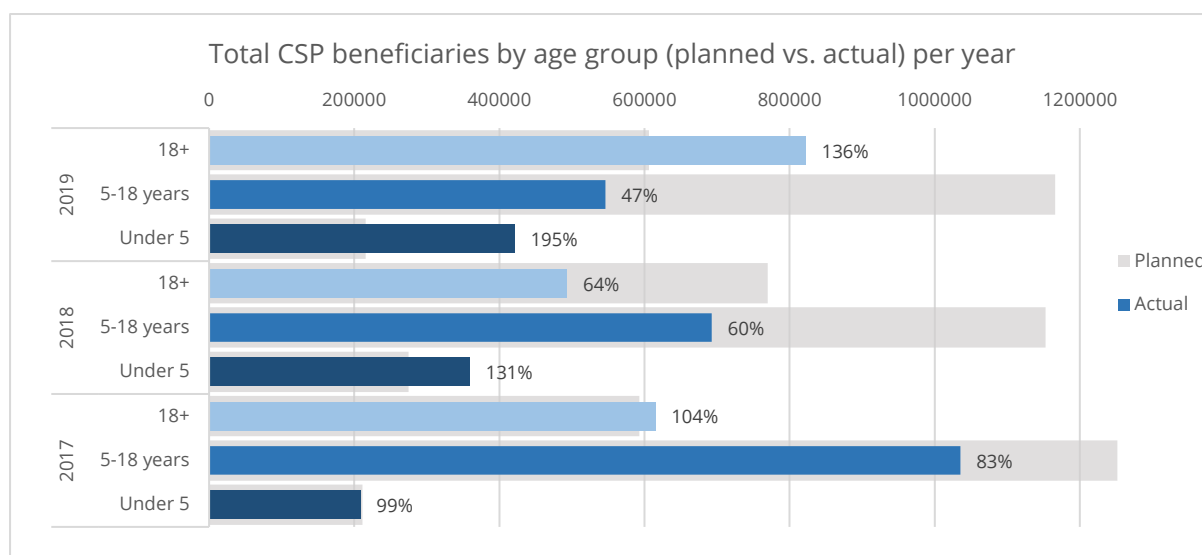
**Figure 3: Total country strategic plan beneficiaries by gender (planned versus actual) per year**



Source: Annual Country Report 2017; Annual Country Report 2018; Annual Country Report 2019.

41. Coverage across age groups was found to be uneven. WFP mostly targets beneficiaries in the 5–18-years age range. As Figure 4 demonstrates, WFP consistently failed to achieve the target number of beneficiaries for that age group. However, WFP exceeded targets for those aged 18 years and above in 2017 and 2019, and for under 5s in 2018 and 2019.

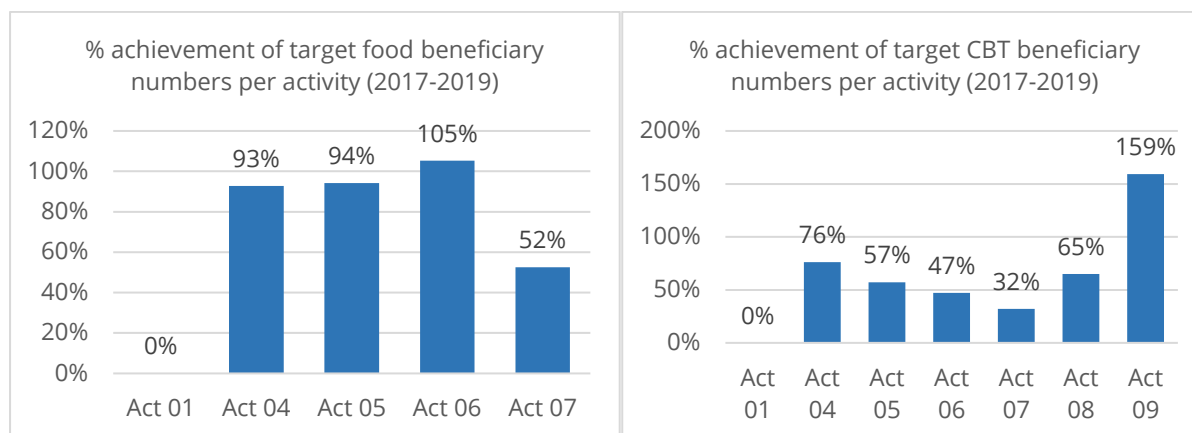
**Figure 4: Total country strategic plan beneficiaries by age group (planned versus actual) per year**



Source: Annual Country Report 2017; Annual Country Report 2018; Annual Country Report 2019.

42. As Figure 5a highlights, food distribution in Chittagong Hill Tracts shows that WFP exceeded its targeted aid recipient coverage for the period 2017–2019. Other activities during this period fell short of beneficiary targets. In relation to cash-based transfers (Figure 5b) WFP was only able to achieve its target in activity 9 (*Nobo Jatra*) while other activities varied from 0–76 percent.

**Figure 5: a) WFP country strategic plan percentage achievement of target food (left); b) Cash-based transfer (right) beneficiary numbers per activity (2017-2019)**



Source: Total figures based on 2017-2019. Annual Country Report 2017; Annual Country Report 2019, 2018 data extracted on 28/04/2020 from WFP COMET<sup>85</sup>

### Financing the country strategic plan

43. The initial country strategic plan budget in 2017 was USD 202 million, increasing to USD 344 million to respond to the Rohingya crisis (strategic outcome 5).<sup>86</sup> In May 2018, the budget was further increased to USD 531 million. This covered activities including in-kind food assistance, transition to e-vouchers, and an additional activity related to the humanitarian crisis. In 2019 the budget increased further to USD 969 million, primarily to extend operations in Cox's Bazar.<sup>87</sup>

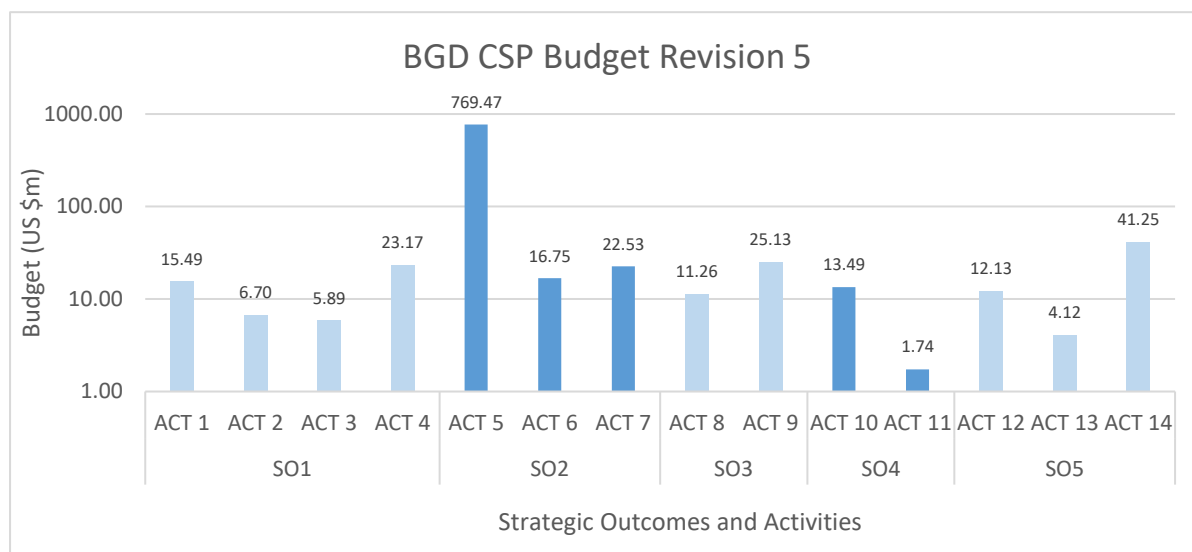
44. The budgetary resource allocations by activity under the country strategic plan are summarized in Figure 6.

<sup>85</sup> Results affected by discrepancies between the 2017 ACR and CM-R002b (extracted from COMET on 28/04/2020), which are present for: a) activity 5 planned food and planned CBT beneficiaries, and b) activity 7 planned CBT beneficiaries. Activity 4 actual food beneficiaries total for 2019 taken to be 14,165 to avoid double counting.

<sup>86</sup> WFP, 2017. *CSP revised with BR1*.

<sup>87</sup> WFP, February 2019. *Crisis response revision of Bangladesh country strategic plan (March 2017-December 2020) and corresponding budget increase* [Budget revision 5].

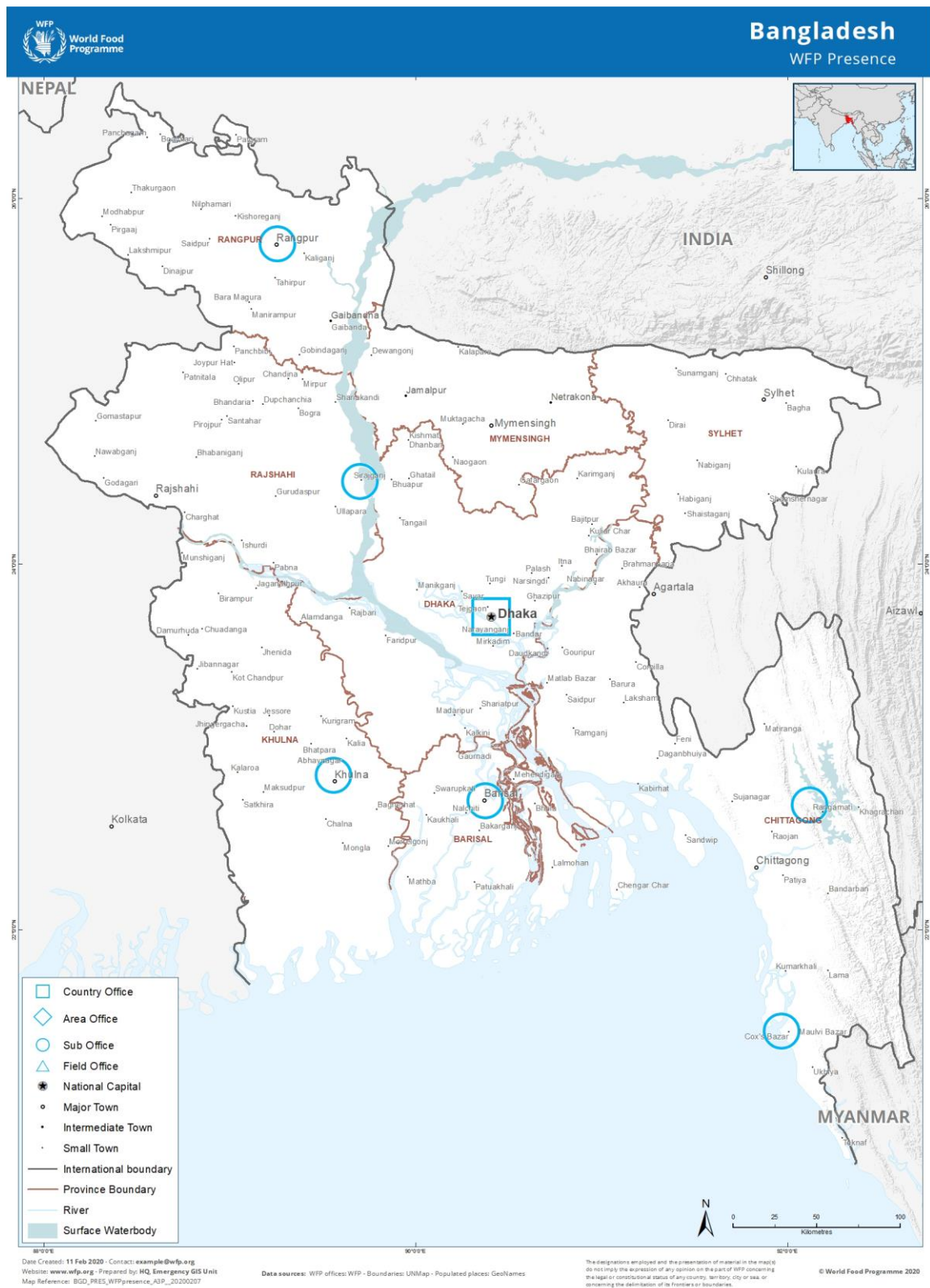
**Figure 6: Resource allocation as per Bangladesh country strategic plan budget revision 5**



Source: Crisis response revision of Bangladesh country strategic plan (March 2017–December 2020) and corresponding budget increase (Budget revision 5).<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> N.B: for presentational reasons, this graph uses a logarithmic scale, meaning the activity 5 figure looks much closer to those of other activities than is the case. Note the incrementations of the vertical axis

Figure 7: Map of WFP Bangladesh presence



Source: Annual Country Report 2019.



## 2. Evaluation Findings

### E.Q. 1 To what extent is the WFP strategic position, role and specific contribution based on country priorities and people’s needs and rights as well as on WFP strengths?

#### E.Q.1.1. To what extent has the design of the country strategic plan remained relevant, appropriate and coherent to national policies, plans, strategies and goals, including achievement of the national Sustainable Development Goals?

45. **Finding 1.1: The design of country strategic plan was (and remained) relevant, appropriate and coherent to national policies, plans, strategies and goals, including achievement of the national Sustainable Development Goals.** The WFP Strategic Plan (2017–2020) forms the corporate basis of the country strategic plans. The Bangladesh country strategic plan is designed to address the WFP priority targets related to SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 17 (partnerships).<sup>89</sup> Table 1 sets out the linkages of country strategic plan strategic outcomes to specific Sustainable Development Goal targets.

**Table 1: Country strategic plan strategic outcome alignment with Sustainable Development Goal targets**

Strategic outcome	SDG target
<b>Strategic outcome 1:</b> Vulnerable groups in rural and urban settings are supported by enhanced national actions to improve their nutrition indicators in line with national targets by 2020	<b>SDG Target 2.2:</b> By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons
<b>Strategic outcome 2:</b> The most vulnerable populations of Cox’s Bazar, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and disaster-affected areas have enhanced food security and nutrition	<b>SDG Target 2.1:</b> By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round
<b>Strategic outcome 3:</b> Innovative approaches to enhance the resilience of food-insecure households exposed to climate-related shocks and stresses are validated by 2020	<b>SDG Target 2.4:</b> By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality
<b>Strategic outcome 4:</b> The humanitarian response system for large-scale natural disasters in Bangladesh can respond with reduced cost and lead time	<b>SDG Target 17.9:</b> Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation
<b>Strategic outcome 5:</b> Humanitarian and development partners in Bangladesh have access to reliable common services from WFP during crises in the areas of logistics, emergency telecommunications and engineering support.	<b>SDG Target 17.16:</b> Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multistakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

<sup>89</sup> WFP, 2017. *WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2020)*.



Source: Evaluation Team

46. The WFP strategic approach aligns with the Government's Seventh Five-Year Plan (2016–2020), which underpins commitments to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Government priorities related to SDG 2 include the National Social Security Strategy, with its plan to consolidate national safety nets, promoting a life-cycle approach and introducing a child benefit programme and a nutrition policy that aims to reduce the prevalence of stunting.<sup>90</sup> In order to inform the country strategic plan design, WFP was involved in strategic stakeholder discussions with the Government and other key partners on the reform of the National Plan of Action for Nutrition, and the National Strategy for Prevention and Control of Micronutrient Deficiencies in Bangladesh.<sup>91</sup> This process enabled the WFP country office to have a better understanding of government priorities and ways of working. This engagement also contributed to the capacity strengthening approach that followed.

47. To reflect Bangladesh's transition towards a middle income country the country strategic plan aims to continue the WFP shift in focus from direct implementation towards capacity strengthening of government systems and processes. This focus aligns with national goals to enhance national nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes, strengthens support to post-harvest rice fortification and school feeding, and contributes to improving communications on better-quality diets.<sup>92</sup>

48. The country strategic plan incorporates lessons from the previous country programme (CP200243)<sup>93</sup> and the 2016 strategic review highlighting linkages between social protection and nutrition-sensitive interventions. The National Social Security Strategy, established in 2015, provided WFP with a tangible set of prepared policy and programme areas to link into in order to achieve coherence to its NS-SP aims and objectives in the country strategic plan. The WFP NS-SP proposed and stated interventions in support of the Government's nutrition-sensitive policy framework were established and designed prior to the country strategic plan timescale. Prior to the country strategic plan period, WFP had gained significant experience supporting government reforms of social safety nets, particularly through its involvement implementing core components of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Strengthening Government Social Protection Programmes for the Poor (SGSP) programme. However, there is little evidence to suggest that WFP took advantage of opportunities to use its technical support for existing social protection programmes to specifically target nutrition-sensitivity.

49. Moreover, due to the timing of the current country strategic plan, there was limited scope and opportunity for WFP to engage with government partners to change and influence the overall policy approach of the social safety net-supported interventions, with the aim of making them more nutrition-sensitive.

50. The focus of the WFP approach places emphasis on capacity strengthening, requiring the country office to adapt from its previous implementing role (through the SGSP programme) towards a new set of skills to influence existing government programmes and implementation processes. Given the long-standing experience of WFP in the country on food security issues, this provided an opportunity to engage in stakeholder discussions at the Cabinet Division level. However, this influencing role was a relatively new area of operation for WFP and it has not been without its problems; WFP engagement with the Cabinet Division on strategic policy and programme issues has been perceived by government officials as lacking the required standard of technical capability. Despite these challenges, WFP has provided technical assistance and had a major influence in shaping the school meals policy with the Ministry of Education in 2019.

51. Another key area related to coherence in the context of the NS-SP agenda was the WFP engagement with the Government on establishing and introducing the supply and demand of fortified rice into existing

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<sup>90</sup> WFP, 2017. *Annual Country Report 2017*.

<sup>91</sup> See Annex 10, which describes the relevant government nutrition-related policies and the extent to which the CSP aligns with them.

<sup>92</sup> WFP, 2017. *Annual Country Report 2017*.

<sup>93</sup> In particular, component 4 of the country programme (CP200243 2012-2016) which stated: "enhance nationally owned safety-net programmes addressing hunger and household food security".

national social security strategy programmes. WFP stakeholders deemed this to be a successful strategic move contributing to relevant nutrition targets.

52. The 2016 strategic review, and the subsequent update in 2019, highlights “how the food security and nutrition landscape in the country had changed over three years and describ[ing] the policies and programmatic efforts while explaining their impacts on the changed food security and nutrition scenario”.<sup>94</sup> The update seeks to inform national planning processes including the Eighth Five-Year National Development Plan (2020–2025), sectoral plans, United Nations Common Country Analysis, and the second WFP Country Strategic Plan (2021–2025). The draft updated strategic review, while being commissioned later in the country strategic plan timescale, redefined alignment and actions as contributing to government strategies to maintain national relevance.

53. Long-term resilience of disaster-stricken populations was a key consideration in the development of the Bangladesh country strategic plan. Two out of the original four strategic outcomes focus on “resilience building”. This is critical, both in terms of disaster risk management and response more broadly, and specifically in the context of reaction to the Rohingya situation. The country strategic plan was developed within a specific disaster context – flooding and cyclones, with responses managed under the Government – exemplified by the design of strategic outcome 4, focusing on enabling WFP to respond to, and support, government responses to “large-scale natural disasters”.<sup>95</sup> In strategic outcome 3, *Nobo Jatra* aims to develop local capacity in disaster preparedness and response in the southwestern part of Bangladesh.<sup>96</sup> The forecast-based financing piloting (within activity 8) is one innovative approach through which WFP aims to generate evidence for resilience building. Each of these examples align with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief’s National Plan for Disaster Management (2016–2020), with its focus on “Building Resilience for Sustainable Human Development”.<sup>97</sup>

54. As a result of the humanitarian emergency in August 2017, the WFP response was both relevant and appropriate. This involved incorporating a fifth strategic outcome within the country strategic plan framework and classifying the Rohingya crisis response as a level three emergency. In December 2018, WFP deactivated its level three response and scaled down operations to a level two response. Throughout this process WFP has maintained political neutrality as much as possible whilst providing assistance to both the host communities and Rohingya refugees. However, the addition of strategic outcome 5 was not accompanied with adequate consideration of sector-wide policies and best practices for level three refugee responses, particularly regarding issues of protection and humanitarian principles.<sup>98</sup>

#### **E.Q.1.2. To what extent is the country strategic plan coherent and aligned with the wider United Nations and other humanitarian stakeholders based on the comparative advantage of WFP in the country?**

55. **Finding 1.2a: The country strategic plan did not set sufficient strategic direction for WFP on how it should align with the United Nations and other humanitarian actors.** In principle, the design of the country strategic plan was fully aligned with the countrywide UNDAF, 2017–2020, through its focus on improving social policies and programmes, enhancing resilience, and increasing opportunities for women and disadvantaged groups to contribute to, and benefit from, economic progress. However, respondents from both within and outside WFP claimed that initially WFP was not a “visible” or an active participant in the UNDAF. Therefore, the country strategic plan’s strategic outcomes and broader objectives were not expressed in the UNDAF. This may reflect the status of the UNDAF, which was not fully operationalized at that time. It also highlights an historical legacy of WFP in Bangladesh not actively engaging with United Nations agencies and other humanitarian actors outside of an emergency response context.

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<sup>94</sup> WFP, 2019. *Draft update to the Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Bangladesh*.

<sup>95</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017–2020)*, p.13.

<sup>96</sup> WFP, 2017. *Annual Country Report 2017*.

<sup>97</sup> Government of Bangladesh, 2017. *National Plan for Disaster Management (2016–2020)*.

<sup>98</sup> See evaluation question 5 for detailed analysis of the Rohingya response operation in Cox’s Bazar.

56. The country strategic plan does not reference or acknowledge the changes to international humanitarian architecture that emerged from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. This is noticeable in the context of the “Grand Bargain” and the “New Way of Working”. A consensus emerged among key informants that, given its comparative advantage as an influential humanitarian leader working throughout the country, WFP has not demonstrated adequate alignment with other humanitarian actors, framed within the broader institutional and humanitarian policy context. The country strategic plan also does not refer to the centrality of protection, which is more than a mainstreaming issue.<sup>99</sup> This is a missed opportunity for embedding protection, inclusion and the “leaving no one behind” agenda to ensure that the country strategic plan is aligned with wider humanitarian standards. However, throughout the country strategic plan implementation and in response to the humanitarian crisis, WFP did demonstrate a closer working relationship and coherence with other United Nations and humanitarian actors in Cox’s Bazar.

57. The country strategic plan highlights its intention to work on emergency assistance (strategic outcome 2), and with the humanitarian response system (strategic outcome 4), without clarifying where WFP would position itself in relation to its comparative advantage with regards to the interventions of other humanitarian actors.<sup>100</sup> Whilst it is evident there were consultations during the country strategic plan design process, it appears that WFP often works in isolation in the development of its humanitarian programmes and strategies. Donors appreciate the quick and efficient response to the Rohingya influx, but perceive WFP to be more of an implementing partner, rather than a strategic partner that aligns with the wider institutional principles.<sup>101</sup>

58. Building on its leadership role of co-chairing both the national logistics cluster and the food security cluster in the humanitarian sector, WFP was able to successfully bring in the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief as co-chair of the logistics cluster in July 2019 (achieved through collaboration between WFP and the ministry under activity 10). This had a number of positive impacts, such as strengthened coordination and more efficient importation, storage, and disbursement of emergency supplies at the start of the Rohingya response in 2017. The WFP response through the joint needs-assessment working group and the joint response plan aimed to underpin coherence with the wider humanitarian community. Although attribution to the country strategic plan is unclear, the WFP operations in Cox’s Bazar were largely implemented in parallel to the country strategic plan.

59. WFP, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) ensures access to reliable common services for logistics, emergency telecommunications and food security to help address complex humanitarian responses. However, while the humanitarian cluster system was not formally activated, these sectors were supported and underpinned by the principles of the cluster approach through the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG). In addition to its formal commitments, WFP supported other inter-agency services that were of significant benefit to the humanitarian community working in Cox’s Bazar during the Rohingya refugee crisis.<sup>102</sup>

60. Following a change of country office leadership in 2018, WFP progressively moved the country strategic plan towards greater alignment with United Nations agencies and other humanitarian actors. Each country strategic plan strategic outcome now has a focal point. The United Nations and WFP are actively involved in the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Common Assistance Framework. The effective co-chairing of the Joint United Nations operations management team reinforced the WFP comparative advantage as an operationally effective organization. However, WFP is not functioning at a strategic level to define its focus or align itself with joint United Nations advocacy with the Government. Equally, some stakeholders also question the added value of WFP at an organizational level in highlighting critical issues concerning innovation related to food security shocks and stresses in the context of climate resilience.

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<sup>99</sup> IASC, 2013. *The Centrality of Protection Statement in Humanitarian Action*.

<sup>100</sup> See WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017–2020)*; explanation of strategic outcome 2 (p.11) and outcome 4 (p13).

<sup>101</sup> This is elaborated upon under evaluation questions 4.3 and 4.4.

<sup>102</sup> For a more in-depth analysis of WFP work on common and inter-agency services in Cox’s Bazar, see Annex 5.

61. **Finding 1.2b: WFP has a clear comparative advantage in being an “honest broker” and being able to operate at scale.** WFP has two comparative advantages: being able to operate quickly and at scale; and acting with operational independence, acknowledged by both WFP staff and its partners as being an “honest broker” with its response. This is certainly the case in comparison to the complex lead agency arrangements between International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR. The interpretation regarding human rights’ issues and status determination (the right to be recognized as refugees rather than forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals) embroiled other United Nations actors in political engagement that WFP managed to avoid.<sup>103</sup> Equally, WFP decided against advocacy in relation to the Government’s ongoing debate on the provision of cash to refugees in Cox’s Bazar. Although this approach was criticized by a number of donors and other partners, it meant that WFP was able to position itself as a United Nations agency that was engaged, but not directly implicated in the politics of the situation.

62. In the context of being able to operate at scale, this was demonstrated by the speed and sheer scale of WFP operations in Cox’s Bazar. Every Rohingya refugee has benefited, consistently, from WFP assistance, across all camps. No other agency can claim this: site management is divided between UNHCR and IOM, and other agencies focus on particular population groups rather than responding to specific needs across all refugees – men, women, boys, and girls. The reliability and efficiency of WFP operational abilities are valued by key informants from WFP donor organizations.

63. Playing to WFP strengths, the vast majority of country strategic plan financing has been allocated to activity 5 and the Cox’s Bazar assistance package (as evidenced in Figure and paragraph 45). However, for other parts of the national programme, a number of external respondents report that WFP has duplicated the efforts of other development actors or made efforts to advance in areas that fall outside of the organization’s proven strength of enacting rapid, large-scale emergency responses. For example, some were concerned that the social behaviour change communication for nutrition space, and the micro-insurance component of the forecast-based financing, are outside the WFP core competencies. Some government officials also remarked that WFP lacks the required level of technical capability to engage with the higher levels of government on these topics.

#### **E.Q.1.3. To what extent did the country strategic plan address appropriately: a) the needs and rights of the most vulnerable people in the country and, b) the risks of exclusion and inclusion to ensure that no one is left behind?**

64. **Finding 1.3a: The country strategic plan design was appropriate to the immediate needs of the most food-insecure people, but inadequately considered rights or risks of exclusion/inclusion based on gender, disability, or other disadvantaged groups.**

65. The country strategic plan design made appropriate use of data from the Zero Hunger Strategic Review and thematic reports in developing the strategic outcomes and activities. The needs of different population groups, including refugees, and isolated poverty-prone populations (Cox’s Bazar, Chittagong Hill Tracts), women and girls were clearly articulated in the country strategic plan.

66. At the country office level, progress is being made on disaggregating data by sex and age, but there is scope to improve on addressing disability as an inclusion issue in the country strategic plan.

67. The gender analysis underpinning the country strategic plan identifies significant gender inequality factors. These include women and girls reducing their food consumption, early pregnancy, and weaknesses in targeting of social protection schemes. All of these have implications for Bangladesh’s food and nutrition security, and despite progress in certain aspects of empowerment – such as improvements in women’s education and economic status – these have not translated into significant changes to the country’s food and nutritional security.

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<sup>103</sup> More generally, an evaluation of WFP Policies on Humanitarian Principles and Access in Humanitarian Contexts finds that WFP operational independence is put at potential risk by exposure to the political interests of the small pool of donors on which it depends for funding. See WFP, 2018. *Evaluation of WFP Policies on Humanitarian Principles and Access in Humanitarian Contexts*.

68. The country strategic plan strategic outcomes refer to “vulnerable groups” rather than to specifically defined groups. This is consistent with WFP categorization, and to some extent ensures the country office is not constrained to working solely with defined groups. However, the strategic review and the country strategic plan are unequivocal in stating that girls and women face a range of systemic threats and constraints. Therefore, designing a strategic outcome directly targeting gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) appears to be low risk, and doing so would present a clear strategic statement about the WFP work in this area.

69. The strategic review also recommended adopting a rights-based programming approach, but rights do not feature as an explicit focus in the WFP operational approach. Some WFP country office staff stated that this was designed to preserve its focus to maintain political neutrality as a humanitarian organization. This, to some extent, is understandable as the approach WFP pursues is one of coordinating with others to empower vulnerable, food insecure people. However, the absence of attention to detail on rights, gender and inclusion explicitly threatens the adequacy of country strategic plan interventions to address the barriers to claiming benefits and entitlements faced by vulnerable people, through the targeting and coverage of specific programmes. Similar concerns are highlighted in government nutrition policies<sup>104</sup> and national social security strategy diagnostic studies.<sup>105</sup> According to a United Nations agency key informant this approach suggests that the WFP narrative does not adequately align with the overall United Nations position with its emphasis on rights, as expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals. The country strategic plan would have benefited from incorporating rights-based gender and inclusion strategies and approaches into its design.

70. WFP Bangladesh’s Disability Inclusion Plan<sup>106</sup> acknowledges the importance of embedding inclusion of people with disabilities into the country office’s operations and lists possible opportunities to achieve this. These range from strengthening data disaggregation at the activity level to improving dialogue with government partners around more inclusive programme design. Conversely, across the WFP country office portfolio, there is no evidence of appropriate screening measures being adopted to ensure inclusion of people with disabilities. Equally, no monitoring data has been disaggregated by people living with disabilities. The food security outcome monitoring for refugees in Cox’s Bazar is an isolated exception. This prevents the country office from collectively measuring progress in reaching these vulnerable populations. The 2019 annual country report (ACR) was the first initiative since the onset of the country strategic plan where WFP attempted to report the number of people with disabilities it reaches. However, without having collected and disaggregated the data throughout the country strategic plan, this reduces estimates to those largely based on national census data.

71. As an overarching framework “the leave no one behind agenda” is being addressed through geographic and demographic targeting, but collated data are not consistently and systematically used across the five strategic outcomes to strengthen and improve gender equality and social inclusion actions and outcomes. In addition, gender and inclusion analyses are not used consistently to inform interventions. Furthermore, there is no clear consensus amongst WFP country office staff about how to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion through intervention modalities and capacity strengthening activities with relevant strategic partners.

**72. Finding 1.3b: A range of strategies to address inclusion/exclusion were adopted in the country strategic plan. These appear to have been effective in reaching the poorest people and targeting women, but less focused on other disadvantaged groups.**

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<sup>104</sup> Government of Bangladesh, 2015. *National Social Security Strategy*. and Government of Bangladesh, 2015. *Seventh Five-Year Plan, 2016–2020*.

<sup>105</sup> Commissioned through the SGSP, the diagnostic studies included: SPFMSP, 2017. *A Diagnostic Study on Maternity Allowance (MA) and Lactating Mothers Allowance (LMA) Programmes of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs*. Strengthening Public Financial Management for Social Protection (SPFMSP) Project under Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh; and SPFMSP, 2017. *Diagnostic Study on Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme of Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs*. Strengthening Public Financial Management for Social Protection (SPFMSP) Project under Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

<sup>106</sup> WFP, 2019. *WFP Disability Inclusion Action Plan (2019–2020)*.



73. There are mixed findings concerning the ability of WFP to address exclusion and inclusion appropriately in the country strategic plan. The vulnerability analysis and mapping unit conducts targeting exercises for the school feeding programme (activity 4) and resilience innovation (activity 8). The forecast-based financing project targets unions based on data related to socioeconomic vulnerabilities and those areas with historical flood trends,<sup>107</sup> which is triangulated through consultations with local stakeholder groups. This approach aims to ensure the programme impacts upon those populations most at risk/in need during floods.

74. Since 2014–2015, WFP has been working in collaboration with UNHCR as part of the joint needs-assessment working group to create a 72-hour response tool. This enables weather forecasting and satellite imagery to anticipate climatic events, such as cyclones, and quickly identify affected geographic locations. This tool was effectively deployed to produce a joint needs assessment of the impacts of the monsoon floods<sup>108</sup> and cyclone *Mora*<sup>109</sup> in 2017. These assessments also identify affected sectors and consider impacts on gender issues such as gender-based violence (GBV).

75. The WFP response at reaching the poorest refugees in Cox's Bazar has been effective. The country strategic plan commitment to “promote the targeting of assistance in Cox's Bazar on the basis of vulnerability rather than refugee status, reflecting the harmonization of support among various population groups” has contributed to that effective response.<sup>110</sup> The vulnerability assessment in 2017 determined that the entire refugee population desperately needed food and nutrition support. On this basis, WFP decided it was more effective to target all refugees with its general food assistance rather than undertake further vulnerability analyses.<sup>111</sup>

76. WFP has taken practical measures to reduce the access issues that particular groups experience in the camps. However, more timely analysis would have allowed earlier action to resolve some critical gender-specific socio-cultural challenges. A weakness in the WFP analysis is that the perspectives of aid recipients are not systematically documented. WFP did ultimately arrive at key solutions including: women-only collection lines with women distributors; breast-feeding corners at the distribution points; porter systems to transport food to the elderly, women with children, pregnant women, and people with disabilities; wheelchair access ramps in retail shops; and providing SCOPE cards to both men and women. These actions were recognized as a positive measure, although in one example it took WFP over a year to implement these necessary changes.

77. Partners report that WFP staff have the skills to recognize gender and inclusion issues, and are active in the multipurpose women's centres and in humanitarian gender planning processes. However, WFP ability to translate this knowledge into appropriate interventions for people with particular vulnerabilities was slow. Examples include SCOPE cards initially being issued only to women. While this is a laudable gender objective in the right context, due to prevailing conservative values, it had the potential to create intra-household conflict. SCOPE cards are now routinely issued to both men and women. The challenge of understanding the gender implications from the interventions points to a wider problem of the United Nations response in Cox's Bazar.

78. General food assistance targeting in Cox's Bazar was assisted by the WFP vulnerability analysis and mapping unit conducting three REVA studies.<sup>112</sup> These tracked vulnerability and sought to collate the needs of men, women and children among both refugee and host communities. WFP and UNHCR worked on developing targeting criteria for interventions in Cox's Bazar, utilizing their respective data sets and complementing it with the REVA, to produce a vulnerability profile. This was not the case for all

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<sup>107</sup> WFP, 2018. *Forecast-based Financing targeting methodology\_04062018\_V2 (002)*.

<sup>108</sup> Needs-Assessment Working Group, 2017. *Bangladesh Monsoon Floods*.

<sup>109</sup> Needs-Assessment Working Group, 2017. *Bangladesh Cyclone Mora*.

<sup>110</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017–2020)*, p. 9.

<sup>111</sup> WFP, 2017. *Annual Country Report 2017*.

<sup>112</sup> By December 2019, two reports had been finalized.

interventions in the sub-office. For example, the SMEP and livelihoods programmes did not utilize targeting criteria, participants were instead recommended by the *Majhi*;<sup>113</sup> this selection bias resulted in favouritism.

79. The EFSN (activity 6) targets ultra-poor women in the Alikadam and Naikhongchari subdistricts of Bandarban district, providing monthly allowances, behaviour change communication, income-generation, and support for women's groups.<sup>114</sup> Local government officials point out that the programme's coverage is insufficient but targeting is effective in reaching the most disadvantaged. The Hellen Keller International's evaluation of the programme confirms these findings, stating that, "high levels of poverty and low levels of dietary adequacy among the population of this area in baseline [indicates] appropriate targeting of the intervention".<sup>115</sup> During the EFSN scale-up in 2019, WFP produced targeting guidelines<sup>116</sup> for its cooperating partner. This included vulnerable group development (VGD) beneficiary list analysis, door-to-door surveys and focus group discussions to ensure women meet the targeting criteria. The criteria also include age, household size, assets and impact from refugee influx. The particular criterion that "participants need to be physically and mentally capable to be included in the programme", risks excluding people with disabilities.

80. WFP supports the school feeding programme (activity 6) for 40,000 students in six subdistricts of the Bandarban district and the school meals programme, benefiting 19,500 students in the Lama subdistrict of Bandarban.<sup>117</sup> These programmes are highly appropriate for the needs of the district population, with local government requesting a further scale-up of the school meals programme, citing the importance of providing one nutritious meal a day to children in an area with excessive poverty and high food insecurity. According to WFP sub-office staff, the school feeding programme is successful because it targets geographically isolated areas and children from all ethnic minorities.<sup>118</sup> The Ministry of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs and the Hill District Council have requested WFP to bring school meals to other subdistricts.

**81. Finding 1.3c: In delivering the country strategic plan, the vulnerability analysis and mapping unit supports the targeting and inclusion of the most vulnerable people in the country, though it faces challenges and results are mixed.** During the country strategic plan implementation the vulnerability analysis and mapping unit supported a range of assessments, including poverty maps, urban assessments, policy research, market assessments, nutrition analyses, and food security monitoring reports. These assessments were used to inform the targeting strategies.

82. The vulnerability analysis and mapping unit faces three challenges in effectively informing country strategic plan targeting practices. Firstly, it depends on the Government's Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics poverty maps (provided in collaboration with the World Bank). WFP staff and government officials acknowledge there are delays with the poverty maps, as they are based on household income expenditure survey data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. As a result, the 2016 poverty mapping was only finalized in mid-late 2019. This affects the reliability and efficacy of any targeting measures, given the ever-changing context in Bangladesh. Due to this, the country strategic plan has a strategic output ensuring that

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<sup>113</sup> The "Majhi system" in its current form was established in August 2017 as an emergency response arrangement consequently to the sudden refugee influx. The main rationale for the system is to estimate the population, identify the immediate survival needs, and provide a link between the Rohingya refugees and the various emergency assistance provided. As the Rohingya population was not consulted in the establishment of the system, the system lacks representation and accountability to them, and does not reflect the age, gender and diversity composition of the Rohingya population, as most of the *Majhi* are middle-aged men. Some of them were appointed by the Bangladesh army and are not traditional leaders, nor respected members of the communities. Experiences show that the system is further unreliable for distributions of humanitarian aid, as it does not reflect needs and respect humanitarian standards, such as representation, impartiality, transparency, and accountability. Therefore, it cannot be seen as representative of the Rohingya population's views and interests, nor is it justified after the immediate refugee influx. Protection Sector Working Group Cox's Bazaar, 2018. Protection Considerations on the "Majhi System".

<sup>114</sup> WFP, n.d. *Enhancing Food Security in Cox's Bazar*.

<sup>115</sup> Hellen Keller International/Bangladesh, (unpublished draft). *Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) Programme in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh*.

<sup>116</sup> WFP, 2019. *Targeting Guidelines: WFP Livelihoods Scale Up 2019*.

<sup>117</sup> WFP, n.d. *Programme description-Activity 6*.

<sup>118</sup> The evaluation team was unable to obtain documentation of the programme's targeting methodology/criteria to triangulate this point.



reliable data on the food security and nutrition outcomes of national social protection programmes are available from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (under activity 1).

83. The second challenge related to effective targeting is the lack of a single overarching system or data set that WFP can tap into to ensure its efforts are reaching the most vulnerable. For example, the vulnerability analysis and mapping unit conduct targeting exercises for country strategic plan projects, but it has no means of determining whether the targeted populations are recipients of national social safety nets. Chittagong Hill Tracts officials claim that there are beneficiaries of the WFP EFSN programme who receive benefits from the Government's vulnerable group development programme, old age allowances and widow allowances. As the government programmes are based on a quota system, this potentially excludes some vulnerable people. With EFSN scale-up, WFP is working with its cooperating partners to facilitate focus group discussions with EFSN leaders and local oversight committees to obtain lists of eligible women who are not part of other safety net or livelihoods programmes.<sup>119</sup> This fragmented approach to utilizing national statistical systems restricts the ability of WFP to effectively and efficiently engage the most vulnerable. There is scope for the country strategic plan to ensure these issues are the focus of future government capacity strengthening work.

84. The third, crucial, challenge is the apparent lack of appreciation for data and use of evidence in targeting WFP activities among operational staff. The process of engaging the vulnerability analysis and mapping unit is not optimized, with mapping exercises being commissioned after intervention areas are already selected, rather than using vulnerability analysis and mapping assessments to identify geographical areas with the most need. Equally critical is the concern that, while vulnerability analysis and mapping assessments are produced and disseminated, they are not fully integrated in strategic programmatic decision processes across the programme. One exception to this is the REVA studies, which have helped inform strategic decisions in Cox's Bazar. The trend across the country office appears to highlight that, although data are useful for short-term programmatic decisions, these analytical tools are not used for a broader reflection on the knowledge WFP is generating through its experience in country.

#### **E.Q.1.4. How effective were approaches to coverage, scale-up and targeting of interventions under the country strategic plan?**

**85. Finding 1.4a: The WFP approach to increasing the coverage and scale of interventions with the Government was broadly successful.**

86. WFP made a significant contribution to digitized systems for self-registration under the mother and child benefit programme (MCBP). WFP contributed to development of the management information system alongside a new government-to-person payment system. The selection process used to be managed by local officials and was prone to maladministration. These new systems allow mothers to self-enrol in the programme at any time and receive their payments monthly (both processes previously made payments annually or semi-annually). WFP has also been supporting the Department of Women's Affairs to raise awareness, amongst vulnerable women, of self-registration in the MCBP. This, according to government officials and WFP staff, has enabled women beneficiaries to meet their needs more effectively and provide essential nutritional benefits to their children in the early weeks following birth.

87. Self-registration in principle should empower the poorest women to apply for these allowances. In practice, however, barriers to equitable access, including insufficient information for women to understand the selection processes, has resulted in some women paying middlemen to register them on the system.<sup>120</sup> Equally, self-registration systems are not guaranteed to be accessible to those who live outside of the union centres where the digital centres are mostly located. According to one cooperating partner in Khulna, potential beneficiaries require a lot of persuasion to have confidence to enrol at the digital centres.

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<sup>119</sup> WFP, 2019. *Targeting Guidelines: WFP Livelihoods Scale-Up 2019*.

<sup>120</sup> SPFMSP, 2017. *A Diagnostic Study on Maternity Allowance (MA) and Lactating Mothers Allowance (LMA) Programmes of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs*. Strengthening Public Financial Management for Social Protection (SPFMSP) Project under Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh.

88. WFP works with cooperating partners to support the MCBP. NGO-managed women development workers, (locally recruited women), facilitate behaviour change communication activities, and are responsible for key tasks, including: verifying pregnancies among possible beneficiaries, and using information from house visits and neighbours, police, and family planning registers to determine eligibility. The biggest challenges in reducing inclusion and exclusion errors are: a) women not having national identity cards; and b) women enrolling who already have more than the maximum number of children to qualify. Although WFP trains and manages the cooperating non-governmental organizations, the process is still susceptible to individual or political interference.

89. WFP has been a key player in supporting the scale-up and increased coverage of the national VGD programme. WFP was successful in its advocacy with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs for an additional 40,000 women from Cox's Bazar to be included in the VGD programme.<sup>121</sup> However, the VGD programme guidelines for beneficiary selection are not adequately followed.<sup>122</sup> Evidence also suggests significant inclusion errors due to inefficient geographical targeting.<sup>123</sup> The WFP pilot investment component to the VGD programme was approved by the Government in 2019. Approximately 100,000 women were selected from the existing one million VGD programme beneficiaries, using poverty and vulnerability analysis. The women who were selected as IC-VGD beneficiaries were the most vulnerable women.

90. The coverage of the national school feeding programme, where children are given fortified biscuits at school, increased significantly under the country strategic plan. In 2016, the programme extended to 72 subdistricts, and by the end of 2019 the programme covered all state primary schools in 104 subdistricts. (Figure 8). The 2020–2025 Development Project Proposal from the Government intended to scale up the programme to cover all government-run primary schools in all 509 subdistricts starting in July 2020. In terms of geographical targeting, subdistricts for the programme were originally selected based on poverty maps, nutritional and educational outcome data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and other sources.

91. WFP supported the Government to roll out the school meals programme after providing advocacy and technical support from the beginning of the country strategic plan. By 2019, the Government was providing school meals to schools in 16 subdistricts (Figure 8). In 2020, government officials from the Directorate of Primary Education expect the programme to reach 100 of the poorest subdistricts. WFP provides support with procurement, service contractin, and quality control. The school meals programme aims to achieve blanket coverage of all government primary schools in the selected subdistricts. However, without any guidance or selection criteria from the programme, decisions on which schools are enrolled in the programme are left to subdistrict education officers.

92. The country strategic plan's rice fortification initiative (activity 3) scale-up was successful. Initiatives included strengthening both the demand and supply of the fortified rice value chain. This was achieved through various interventions, such as the provision of assistance to the Ministry of Food to establish a national rice fortification coordination committee consisting of 13 ministries and several development partners. Principally, WFP was successful in advocating for the distribution of fortified rice under the Government's food friendly vulnerable group development social safety net programmes. During the country strategic plan, engagement by the country office with the private sector was enhanced<sup>124</sup> to convince millers to produce fortified rice kernels commercially.<sup>125</sup> Evidence demonstrated the acceptability

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<sup>121</sup> More detail on this, including the targeting criteria, can be found in Finding 1.3b.

<sup>122</sup> SPFMSP, 2017. Diagnostic Study on Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) Programme of Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. Strengthening Public Financial Management for Social Protection (SPFMSP) Project under Finance Division, Ministry of Finance, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> A market survey found that people were willing to buy fortified rice if it was available in the market. Up to 96 percent of consumers expressed approval of the idea and 88 percent of retailers and wholesalers expressed interest in trading fortified rice. Half (51 percent) of consumers surveyed were willing to pay an additional Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) 1-2 (USD 0.01-0.02) maximum per kg of fortified rice compared to non-fortified rice.

<sup>125</sup> In 2018 there was capacity of 1,200 mt per year for the production of fortified rice kernels.

and effectiveness of investing in consumer awareness-raising and providing technical support to private sector stakeholders.<sup>126</sup> Interviews with the Government reveal that this strengthened national capacity. By 2019 three companies could produce fortified rice kernels with over 50 blending units operational across the country able to distribute fortified rice to social safety net programmes.<sup>127</sup> Food technology advice to meet international quality standards and technical guidance for the rice blending units was also provided in collaboration with Nutrition International and relevant government agencies.

93. An important part of the successful approach of WFP was to assist in the management of the fortified rice supply chain.<sup>128</sup> The WFP country office procurement unit assisted the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to assess and qualify rice millers and create a roster of approved suppliers.<sup>129</sup> WFP also identified three laboratories to help improve fortified rice kernel testing capacity<sup>130</sup> in partnership with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition<sup>131</sup> and conducted training on warehouse management and commodity control for the Government, cooperating partners and traders. Support was provided to a national trainer group to help improve training quality for non-governmental organization and government staff, and in 2019, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs expanded the rice fortification programme to 96 subdistricts. Despite delays in setting up additional blending units,<sup>132</sup> the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and the Ministry of Food together have been able to reach over 2 million beneficiaries with fortified rice in 2019 (compared to 30,000 in 2013) and the Government committed to investing in the construction of a new rice fortification facility.

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<sup>126</sup> WFP facilitated two South-South cooperation study tours to China focused on rice fortification for the Government of Bangladesh, kernel producers, millers and garment manufacturers. These tours helped stimulate private sector investment.

<sup>127</sup> WFP, 2019. *How WFP supported the Government of Bangladesh to Introduce and Scale up Rice Fortification – A Case Study on Reducing Micronutrient Malnutrition.*

<sup>128</sup> Key informants confirmed that the WFP Logistics Execution Support System (LESS) helped to improve stock tracking and minimize losses.

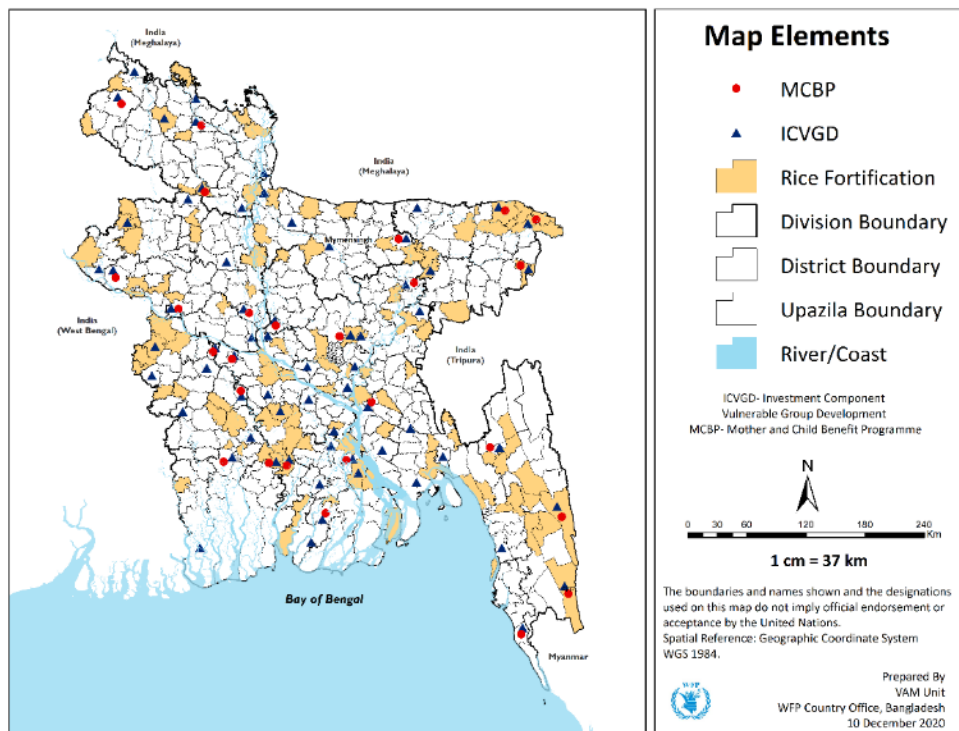
<sup>129</sup> WFP used the IN-TEND online e-procurement system to manage tenders.

<sup>130</sup> Previously there was only one central laboratory certified to conduct tests, which slowed down kernel production. Four government scientists were trained on the testing of micronutrients in fortified rice kernels at the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition in Maryland, United States. (WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Annual Country Report 2017.*)

<sup>131</sup> UNICEF also collaborated to create (in 2017) a platform for a National Fortification Alliance under the Ministry of Industries.

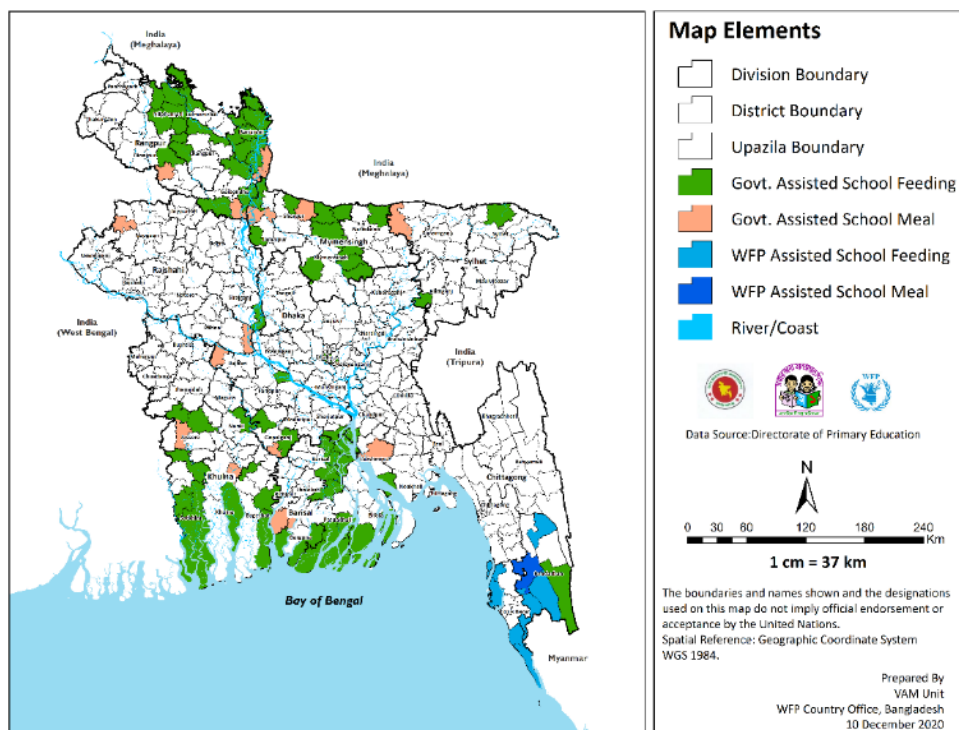
<sup>132</sup> The aim was to have 64 blending units operational by the end of 2019 in each of the 64 districts in Bangladesh.

Figure 8a: Rice Fortification ICVGD , MCBP working area for 2020



Source: WFP Bangladesh CO

Figure 8b: Bangladesh School Feeding Programme



Source: Directorate of Primary Education, Government of Bangladesh

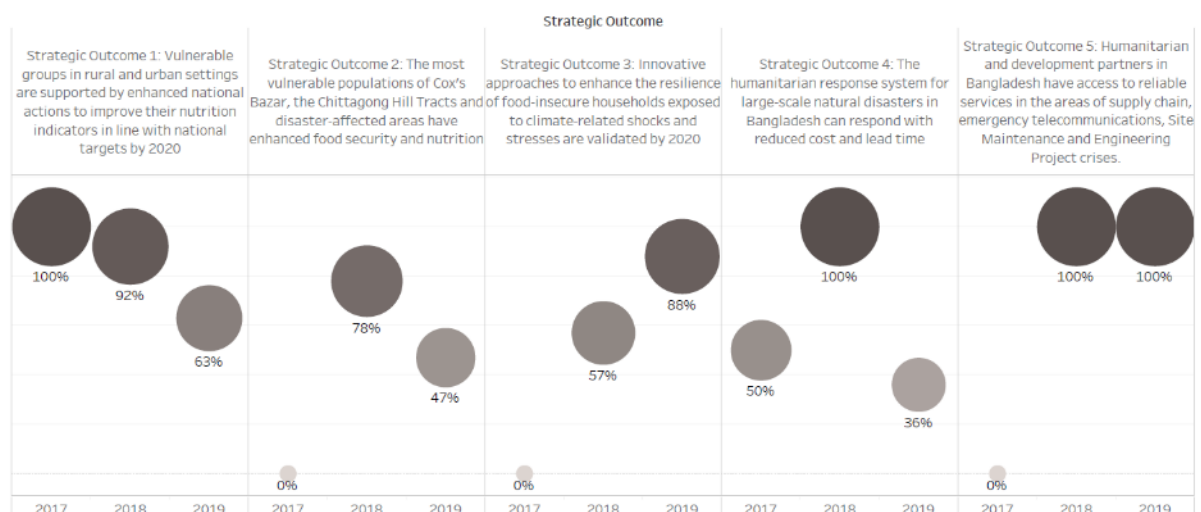
## E.Q. 2 What is the extent and quality of the specific WFP contribution to country strategic plan strategic outcomes in Bangladesh?

### E.Q.2.1. To what extent did WFP deliver expected outputs and contribute to the expected country strategic plan strategic outcomes?

94. **Finding 2.1a: Country office progress towards achieving outputs has varied by strategic outcome and by year. Achievement of country strategic plan outcomes is low for most activities.** The Integrated Road Map and its corporate results framework (CRF) informs the country office logframe. This in turn guides the implementation, monitoring, and reporting on progress towards strategic outcomes. Strategic outcomes aim to measure the short-and medium-term effects of WFP programmes and their contribution to WFP strategic results and achieving national Sustainable Development Goal targets. The WFP programme results chain<sup>133</sup> defines the strategic results at the country level based on a set of WFP strategic outcomes, generated by the organization's outputs. The corporate results framework provides guidance for country offices in assigning standardized strategic outcome, output, and activity categories. These permit resources to be monitored at the activity, outcome, and result levels by country. Drawing from the corporate results framework, the country office assigns relevant output and outcome indicators against which each activity should report and collect data.

95. The achievement rates for corporate-level output indicators are summarized in Table . Results are varied.<sup>134</sup> In 2017, progress was particularly slow, largely as a result of country strategic plan systems being established whilst the country office organized and scaled up its refugee response. As the data suggests, performance against strategic outcomes 1 and 5 was particularly successful. However, it is not useful to draw comparisons between strategic outcomes due to the complexity of the respective indicators, which vary considerably.

**Table 2: Country strategic plan output indicator target achievement rates**



<sup>133</sup> See revised CRF (2017–2021) Part II June 2019).

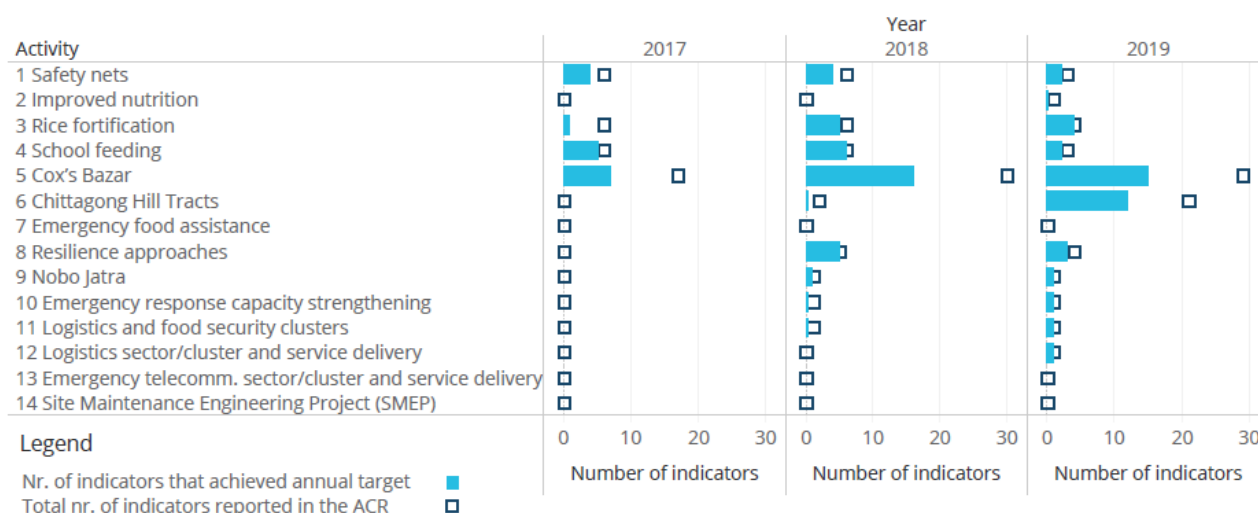
<sup>134</sup> See Annex 8.1 for a comprehensive breakdown of output indicator progress.

Output indicator target achievement rate			
Strategic outcome	2017	2018	2019
<b>Strategic outcome 1:</b> Vulnerable groups in rural and urban settings are supported by enhanced national actions to improve their nutrition indicators in line with national targets by 2020	100%	92%	63%
<b>Strategic outcome 2:</b> The most vulnerable populations of Cox's Bazar, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and disaster-affected areas have enhanced food security and nutrition	0%	78%	47%
<b>Strategic outcome 3:</b> Innovative approaches to enhance the resilience of food-insecure households exposed to climate-related shocks and stresses are validated by 2020	0%	57%	88%
<b>Strategic outcome 4:</b> The humanitarian response system for large-scale natural disasters in Bangladesh can respond with reduced cost and lead time	50%	100%	36%
<b>Strategic outcome 5:</b> Humanitarian and development partners in Bangladesh have access to reliable services in the areas of supply chain, emergency telecommunications, site maintenance and engineering project crises.	-	100%	100%

Source: Annual country report 2017; WFP, 2018. Annual country report 2018; WFP, 2019. Annual country report 2019.

96. Table highlights the achievements of corporate-level outcome indicator targets and average achievement rates for the 14 country strategic plan activities. This reveals that progress towards achieving country strategic plan outcomes varies widely between activities, with the average achievement rates ranging from 20 percent (activity 2) to 100 percent (activities 9, 11 and 12).<sup>135</sup> Activities 7, 13, and 14 stand out because they had no reported outcome indicator data to assess. For all activities combined, the proportion of outcome indicators for which targets were met rose from 49 percent in 2017 to 64 percent in 2018, then fell to 61 percent in 2019 (indicators vary each year due to revisions of the logframe).<sup>136</sup>

**Table 3: Country strategic plan outcome indicator achievements**



<sup>135</sup> The number of indicators being reported per activity must be considered because many report against only one while others (e.g. activities 5 and 6) report against a much larger number).

<sup>136</sup> See Annex 8.2 for a comprehensive breakdown of outcome indicator progress.



Outcome indicator achievements								
Activity		2017		2018		2019		Average achievement rate <sup>137</sup> (2017-2019)
		Outcome indicators reported against	Outcome indicators that achieved annual targets	Outcome indicators reported against	Outcome indicators that achieved annual targets	Outcome indicators reported against	Outcome indicators that achieved annual targets	
1	Safety nets	6	4	6	4	3	2	39%
2	Improved nutrition	0	-	0	-	1	0	20%
3	Rice fortification	6	1	6	5	4	4	51%
4	School feeding	6	5	6	6	3	2	40%
5	Cox's Bazar <sup>138</sup>	17	7	30	16	29	15	81%
6	Chittagong Hill Tracts	0	-	2	0	21	12	91%
7	Emergency food assistance	0	-	0	-	0	-	-
8	Resilience approaches	0	-	5	5	4	3	81%
9	Nobo Jatra	0	-	1	1	1	1	100%
10	Emergency response capacity strengthening	0	-	1	0	1	1	97%
11	Logistics and food security clusters	0	-	1	0	1	1	100%
12	Logistics sector/cluster and service delivery	0	-	0	-	1	1	100%
13	Emergency telecommunications sector/cluster and service delivery	0	-	0	-	0	-	-
14	Site maintenance engineering project (SMEP)	0	-	0	-	0	-	-
<b>Total</b> (target achievement rate) <sup>139</sup>		<b>35</b>	<b>17</b> (49%)	<b>58</b>	<b>37</b> (64%)	<b>69</b>	<b>42</b> (61%)	-

Source: Annual country report 2017; WFP, 2018. Annual country report 2018; WFP, 2019. Annual country report 2019.

97. Inconsistent and low outcome achievement rates were affected by the differing numbers of indicators reported per activity, combined with changes to the country strategic plan logframe, and variable

<sup>137</sup> Average achievement rate is calculated by taking an average of the overall CSP achievement rates for each indicator against which the activity has reported (the penultimate column of the table in Annex 8.2). NB: there is a wide variance in the number of indicators used by activities, which affects this analysis. For example, activity 11 scores 100% but only reported against one indicator and only in 2019, whereas activity 4 scores 36% but reported outcome indicator data for multiple indicators across three years. See Annex 8.2 for the detail behind these necessarily summarized figures.

<sup>138</sup> For activity 5, most indicator data were disaggregated by target group. The number of indicators in this line of the table represent the number of indicators reported against by target group. For example, in 2018 the moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) treatment default rate was collected and reported for host community, new influx and refugee camp, so this is counted as three indicators here.

<sup>139</sup> Annual target achievement rate reflects the proportion of indicators reported against those which achieved their targets, expressed as a percentage.



reporting processes. Only two outcome indicators were consistently reported in annual country reports from 2017 to 2019 (attendance rate and retention rate under activity 5). This is because corporate indicators were changed (i.e. moved from the Zero Hunger Capacity Scorecard to new capacity strengthening indicators under strategic outcomes in 2019). In other cases, the target groups/location of indicator data was specified in reports for some years but not others, making it difficult to track progress over time. In this regard, low target achievement rates (Table 3) do not necessarily reflect poor performance of the country office but do highlight clear indicator data challenges.

98. **Finding 2.1b: Beyond corporate indicators, WFP has made progress and experienced successes in delivering its expected country strategic plan strategic outcomes, though some activities have progressed more than others.**<sup>140</sup> The majority of country strategic plan outputs, the basis for which the country office aims to achieve its outcomes, are under implementation and output monitoring data shows that most have been achieved.<sup>141</sup>

99. Strategic outcome 1 is pursued through four activities focusing on strengthening government capacity: social safety nets (activity 1), nutrition (activity 2), rice fortification (activity 3), and school feeding (activity 4). There are success stories from activities 1, 3, and 4. Most notably, regarding support to numerous enhancements to the national vulnerable group development, child benefit, and vulnerable women benefit programmes; contributions to the scale-up of national school feeding/meals programmes, including supporting the national school feeding policy in 2019 and strengthening the Ministry of Food and Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs capacity to coordinate rice fortification and distribution. These successes relate to the effective management of government relationships, high quality technical assistance and adequate collaborative funding among the Government, private sector and WFP. There was little progress in securing reliable data on the food security and nutrition outcomes of national social protection programmes from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (output 1.3 under activity 1). Interviews with WFP staff suggest that contributing factors to poor progress could include lack of dedicated funds for the country office's vulnerability analysis and mapping unit. Some government officials comment that this reflects on the weak relationship between the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and WFP, especially at senior management-level.

100. Nutrition was the country strategic plan's least funded activity (activity 2) and this relates to much slower progress and results.<sup>142</sup> The evaluation recognizes and acknowledges that WFP endeavours to link nutrition to many of its activity areas and is pursuing an appropriate direction to support improved SGD 2 outcomes. Related to this context, WFP is providing support to embed nutrition aims and objectives within government-managed safety net programmes. While WFP is shifting from direct delivery of assistance to the development arena, understanding that environment and having the skills required to have influence in that space presents new challenges. Government officials interviewed see other United Nations agencies (specifically, UNICEF) and organizations (for example, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition and Nutritional International) as being the key players and providers of nutrition-focused knowledge and technical assistance. Government and senior staff in development agencies relate how WFP presence in multisectoral meetings does not bring much additional value. WFP country office staff believe there could be a perception in the Government that WFP staff are more junior compared to those from other United Nations agencies. This highlights the need for WFP to position itself appropriately to influence the cross-cutting nutrition-sensitive operational areas of government programmes. For WFP, nutrition should be set as a priority internally if changing the views of the Government and increasing its bargaining power in these fora are its aims.

101. Strategic outcome 2 has been largely successful. Large assistance packages in Cox's Bazar, Chittagong Hill Tracts and disaster-affected areas are being successfully delivered. Each of the four associated outputs are under implementation and all but one have been achieved. In Chittagong Hill Tracts, (activity 6) WFP has provided an assistance package, including the EFSN programme and a school feeding programme. Data

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<sup>140</sup> Progress and results have been necessarily summarized here. More detail available in Findings 1.3 (coverage and targeting), 4.2 (capacity strengthening), 4.3-4.4 (partnerships), 5.1-5.2 (Rohingya refugee response), as well as in Annex 8 (output, outcome, and cross-cutting indicator reporting).

<sup>141</sup> Annex 8.1 contains a detailed evaluation of implementation and progress of CSP outputs, by activity.

<sup>142</sup> See evaluation question 3.1 and Annex 11 for more detail on CSP funding.

collected in 2019 show that WFP is achieving 5 out of 12 food consumption score targets. However, the percentage of targeted households in Chittagong Hill Tracts with acceptable food consumption scores in 2019 was 66.41 (target percentage is  $\geq 70$ ). With regard to delivery of food assistance in emergencies (activity 7), WFP provided micronutrient fortified biscuits and/or cash transfers to households affected by cyclones and monsoon floods across Bangladesh in 2017 and 2019. Due to lack of outcome-level reporting it is difficult to tell whether these interventions contributed to increased food security and nutrition.

102. In Cox's Bazar, WFP assists more than 837,000 refugees. This is achieved through a combination of: in-kind and e-voucher transfers (through general food assistance as of January 2020); distribution of micronutrient fortified biscuits to children in both refugee and host communities (school feeding programme); livelihood and food security support to refugees (self-reliance programme); treatment and prevention of malnutrition to pregnant and lactating women and children under 5; and providing nutrition to vulnerable women in host communities through the EFSN programme. The refugee influx of 2017 had significant resource implications to meet the requirements of activity 5, but due to the high level of humanitarian funding, these projects were well resourced. The Rohingya response in Cox's Bazar is widely viewed as a well-organized and effective operation. According to outcome indicator reporting (see Annex 8.2), WFP had achieved 90 percent or more progress on most indicators under activities 5 and 6 by the end of 2019. These indicators cover nutrition, food security, and education, suggesting that WFP is well on its way to achieving the overall outcome of enhancing food security and nutrition of vulnerable populations.

103. The **delivery of food assistance in emergencies** (activity 7) has been more difficult to measure due to the absence of consistent reporting against output or outcome indicators. Quarterly monitoring reports do show that in 2019, cash (Bangladeshi takar (BDT) 4,500 per household per month to 15,000 households) and micro-nutrient fortified biscuits (3.75 kg per household to 258,585 people) were distributed in response to floods in Gaibandha, Kurigram, and Jamalpur districts.<sup>143</sup> However it is difficult to tell whether these interventions contributed to increased food security and nutrition.

104. Strategic outcome 3 was pursued through a series of interventions, which include piloting of the forecast-based financing mechanism in 2018; formulation of the Building Resilience to Achieve Zero Hunger project; and implementation of the disaster risk reduction pillar of the *Nobo Jatra* project. The forecast-based financing and *Nobo Jatra* projects have demonstrated success in testing new approaches. While these approaches are new to WFP, they are not necessarily "innovative" in the Bangladesh context. Although still in its early stages, the forecast-based financing model is gaining traction at the policy level and WFP staff and local government officials believe that the pilot has been successful in building resilience to climatic shocks. Equally, through the *Nobo Jatra* programme, subdistrict-level disaster management committees have been revived and are reported to be largely functional and responding to extreme weather events with increased efficiency.

105. Strategic outcome 4 has also seen successes. Emergency preparedness and response support provided through WFP has been cost-effective despite the challenges present.<sup>144</sup> In 2017, WFP was instrumental in establishing the Bangladesh National Logistics Cluster which, under the co-leadership of Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief seeks to improve the long-term coordination of supply chain functions for the whole country. The Bangladesh National Logistics Cluster developed a nationwide inventory of logistics resources and capacity mapping of humanitarian agencies that proved to be supportive during an emergency. In Cox's Bazar, WFP supported the coordination of inter-agency emergency preparedness and response activities across multiple sectors. An emergency operational dashboard was developed to support the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief's emergency preparedness, supply chain and response activities.

106. WFP also conducted a number of emergency simulation exercises that are anticipated to have built the emergency response capacity of government ministries and departments, particularly the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. A further intended output of strategic outcome 4 was the establishment of a humanitarian staging area (HSA) near Dhaka airport. Once established, this will facilitate the receipt, handling, and dispatch of cargo in emergencies. Acquiring land for the humanitarian staging area in Dhaka

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<sup>143</sup> CSP activity 7 - Plan Reporting Tool (Emergency).

<sup>144</sup> See evaluation question 3.4 for more on this.

proved challenging. However, WFP successfully negotiated with the Government to acquire three acres of land in the Purbachal area for it.

107. Strategic outcome 5 was a late addition to the country strategic plan. Under this strategic outcome, WFP was able to ensure access to reliable common services for logistics, emergency telecommunications and food security to help address the scale and complexity of the humanitarian response. Although the humanitarian cluster system was not formally activated, the sectors were underpinned by the principles of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) cluster approach. WFP supported other related inter-agency services that were of significant benefit to the humanitarian community working in Cox's Bazar during the Rohingya refugee crisis, such as via the site maintenance, and engineering project. All output indicator targets were met for strategic outcome 5 activities.

**108. Finding 2.1c: Linkages between logframe data and the results chain are unclear, resulting in missed opportunities to fully capture the country office's contributions to country strategic plan strategic outcomes.** There is an impressive amount of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data collected and managed at varying levels. As per corporate guidance, the country strategic plan monitoring and evaluation system in the country office collects data across four domains: (i) programme outcome and output indicators; (ii) cross-cutting indicators for programme implementation; (iii) process monitoring; and (iv) programme review and evaluation. These systems enable the country office to present a vast amount of data to WFP headquarters and donors, mostly via annual country reports.

109. There are considerable inconsistencies in the data being reported. Only two of the many outcome indicators have had data reported each year since 2017, and in addition the required gender disaggregation data is in some cases missing.<sup>145</sup> One obstacle to effectively tracking results is the revision of the global corporate results framework in 2018–2019. This required an update to the Bangladesh country office logframe, with the addition of new indicators and the removal of others. This interrupted the stream of data for some indicators, making it impossible for the country office to track the full progress from 2017 to present.

110. Certain activity teams (activity 5) collect data and information over and above that specified by corporate results framework and country logframe indicators. The Cox's Bazar sub-office collected data on beneficiary purchasing behaviour pre- and post-rice capping in late 2019. Unfortunately, information from initiatives such as this is not fed into country office-level monitoring and evaluation. This can result in cases where WFP Bangladesh is under-reporting its achievements due to a lack of oversight of these data sources.

111. For some parts of the country strategic plan, linkages between output- and outcome-level data and the WFP programme results chain are difficult to draw, due to the way in which the country strategic plan strategic outcomes were designed. Given strategic outcome 1's capacity strengthening focus, indicator data is restricted to measuring the extent and quality of the programme's contribution to national capacity (i.e. through the Zero Hunger Capacity Scorecard<sup>146</sup> or the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER school feeding national capacity indicators). Results for most of these indicators are generally low, with achievement rates of less than 50 percent (Annex 8). They do not provide an adequate measurement of progress towards achieving the overarching strategic outcome of "vulnerable groups in rural and urban settings are supported by enhanced national actions to improve their nutrition indicators in line with national targets by 2020". There are several issues with this outcome. Firstly, clarity is necessary on who are vulnerable groups, how they are supported by national actions, and whether improvements to nutrition indicators are underway; secondly, future outcome statements should ensure they are measurable within the scope of WFP programmatic monitoring and evaluation systems. Similarly, the focus of strategic outcome 3 is on resilience-building activities, but there is little coherence among the output data, outcome data and the strategic outcome. It is unclear how the indicator data collected under activities 8 and 9

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<sup>145</sup> See Annex 8.

<sup>146</sup> In 2019, this indicator was replaced with what the M&E unit deems to be more practical, simpler and measurable indicators of capacity building.

evidence the “validation” of innovative approaches related to strategic outcome 3.<sup>147</sup> “User satisfaction rate” is the only outcome indicator used to measure progress towards activities related to achieving strategic outcomes 4 and 5. This indicator is highly inadequate in allowing WFP to measure its progress towards reducing the cost and lead time of the humanitarian response system (strategic outcome 4) and improving access of partners to reliable services (strategic outcome 5).

#### **E.Q.2.2. To what extent did WFP contribute to the achievement of cross-cutting aims (humanitarian principles, protection, accountability to affected populations, gender equality and other equity considerations)?<sup>148</sup>**

112. **Finding 2.2a: Within WFP, there is a high level of awareness of, and commitment to, the cross-cutting priorities. However, it is not clear that the mechanisms in place to operationalize them are adequate.** The WFP corporate results framework defines four key cross-cutting priorities which country offices must consider. These are: accountability to affected populations; protection; gender; and environment. In this context, the country strategic plan pursues four cross-cutting results: 1) affected populations are able to hold WFP and partners accountable for meeting their hunger needs in a way that reflects their views and preferences; 2) affected populations are able to benefit from WFP programmes while ensuring and promoting their safety, dignity and integrity; 3) there is improved gender equality and women’s empowerment among WFP-assisted populations; and 4) targeted communities benefit from WFP programmes without harming the environment.

113. At the country office-level, there is a high level of awareness and appreciation of the importance of these cross-cutting issues. Persons responsible for gender in the country office and Cox’s Bazar offices have been nominated, as have respectful workplace advisors, and regular training is provided to staff and partners. However, the WFP response on protection and gender rests largely on these individual staff members. The 2014 evaluation of the Gender Policy (2009–2014) highlights that “shifts are driven from the bottom up and are not guided by a common central vision, framework or learning from the policy”.<sup>149</sup> As noted in interviews there is an underlying attitudinal challenge relating to the perception that gender issues require an active champion at higher levels of the office rather than this being the responsibility of all staff. A further challenge in this regard is the absence of women in senior WFP positions in Bangladesh.

114. The Rohingya crisis has presented challenges for WFP in maintaining respect for humanitarian principles while working hand-in-hand with the host Government dealing with a refugee population.<sup>150</sup> Protection, gender and inclusion feature strongly in principle in the coordinated United Nations Rohingya refugee response, but the impact on the ground has been frustrated by a number of factors.<sup>151</sup> WFP is commended by a number of respondents for its contribution to advocating on issues of protection and inclusion. However, similar to perceptions of responsibility for driving gender, this is mainly attributed to senior management rather than seen as a systematic adherence to WFP and sector-wide standards.

115. There are formal positions in place at the country office and Cox’s Bazar office for gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE). In comparison, the human resources for driving the protection against sexual exploitation and abuse agenda (PSEA) seem to rely on less formal mechanisms through volunteers (refer to Annex 6). A number of other measures have been taken: both country office and Cox’s Bazar office have grievance mechanisms in place for PSEA and there is a staff counsellor at the regional bureau. There is also a whistleblower’s protection mechanism in place. Management in Cox’s Bazar has emphasized respect, dignity, and equality in all staff meetings. Programme heads regularly arrange code of conduct sessions for their staff and partners. While the disability inclusion adviser was a welcome short-term addition to the WFP staff in Cox’s Bazar, there is less clarity on how disability inclusion will be mainstreamed in the future, and, more importantly who will lead this agenda.

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<sup>147</sup> Strategic outcome 3 = Innovative approaches to enhance the resilience of food-insecure households exposed to climate-related shocks and stresses are validated by 2020.

<sup>148</sup> A more comprehensive analysis of gender equality and social inclusion can be found in Annex 6.

<sup>149</sup> WFP, 2014. *Summary Evaluation Report of the Gender Policy (2008–2014)*. Executive Board First Regular Session, Rome 10–11, Feb 2014. WFP/EB.1/ 2-14/5-A.

<sup>150</sup> See evaluation question 4.4 – Finding 4.4d for further elaboration on this point.

<sup>151</sup> See evaluation question 5.1 for further elaboration on this point.

116. PSEA is seen by WFP Bangladesh as central to the humanitarian principles and personnel, training and complaints procedures have all been introduced. Interviews with key stakeholders confirm the importance of ensuring good management of security and protection issues for humanitarian responses, and data has revealed that camp residents' exposure to a number of risks was a valid concern requiring a concerted focus. Compared to GEWE, PSEA focuses on immediate risks and far less on root causes, and PSEA results are easier to present via quantitative information. Still, few complaints related to PSEA issues are received. Data collected (focus group discussions with refugees in Cox's Bazar) indicate that reasons for this include a lack of confidence in the complaint mechanisms, lack of knowledge about how or where to complain, or simply a result of power hierarchies between the "beneficiaries" and staff rendering complaints difficult. In particular, women and young people find it difficult, if not impossible, to make complaints themselves and have to go through the elders or the *Majhi*.

117. In the context of the Rohingya response, WFP aligns with the overall PSEA approach. However, some respondents reported this was more organization-centric than survivor-focused. Most WFP staff within Cox's Bazar have received basic PSEA training, although this has not been rolled out to WFP implementing partners. In terms of PSEA response mechanisms, there is limited evidence that WFP in Cox's Bazar has a coherent approach.

118. Embedding GEWE and PSEA also requires an enabling environment and organizational culture conducive to these commitments. Understaffing of the gender and inclusion unit, the lack of a dedicated budget, weak lines of accountability, and limited corporate guidance on how to operationalize GEWE, PSEA and inclusion at the country level are a few of the operational challenges. In such a dynamic operating environment, the country office did not have the skills, time or incentives to address and integrate the full range of WFP gender protection and inclusion objectives into working practices. Translating WFP GEWE, PSEA and inclusion policy commitments into clear, practical actions tailored to the country strategic plan strategic outcome context requires dedicated resources and valid outcome-level indicators to hold all staff to account.

119. The notions of accountability and inclusion in the context of a refugee response can be understood as the right to information, the right to participation, and the right to feedback. Through community engagement (conducted as part of the evaluation<sup>152</sup>) it was found that, in relation to the right to information, all refugees and host community members were aware of WFP, its role, and their own entitlements. In terms of right to participation – this has been much less successful with the majority of focus groups reporting very limited participation in design, implementation and monitoring of WFP programming, particularly among older women, younger women and girls, and older men. Similarly, in terms of the right to feedback, refugees have limited access to any direct feedback mechanisms unless through the *Majhi*. Even when more direct access mechanisms are available, women and girls still unanimously report going through the *Majhi* system for everything, meaning WFP has to be even more aware of how the information it receives from different community members is filtered.

120. The corporate results framework sets out mandatory cross-cutting indicators that country offices are required to monitor (see Annex 8.3). Under the Bangladesh country strategic plan, only 3 of its 14 activities report against cross-cutting indicators. The extent to which these can be evaluated in a reliable fashion is low because of inconsistencies in reporting. Furthermore, disaggregation is undertaken at different levels each year. In the Bangladesh context the nature of the programme has a bearing on reporting. Reporting against indicators on accountability to affected populations, - on protection and gender issues - are only mandatory for interventions involving household transfers. Therefore WFP only reports against cross-cutting indicators in 5 of its 14 activities (4, 5, 7, 8, and 9), but for 2 of these activities (4 and 9) only one indicator is used.<sup>153</sup> A further complication is that the country office monitoring system does not have gender indicators that are related to the activities carried out by the programme. This presents a challenge in making the linkages between direct programme activities and cross-cutting indicators, and results in incomplete reporting against progress. There are no corporate results framework-mandated environment

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<sup>152</sup> Refer to Annex 3.2 for the methodology of the community engagement, including gender and age categories for focus group discussions – older women 25+, older men 25+, women youth (15–25), and men youth (15–25).

<sup>153</sup> The indicator is "proportion of project activities for which beneficiary feedback is documented, analysed and integrated into program improvements (%)"



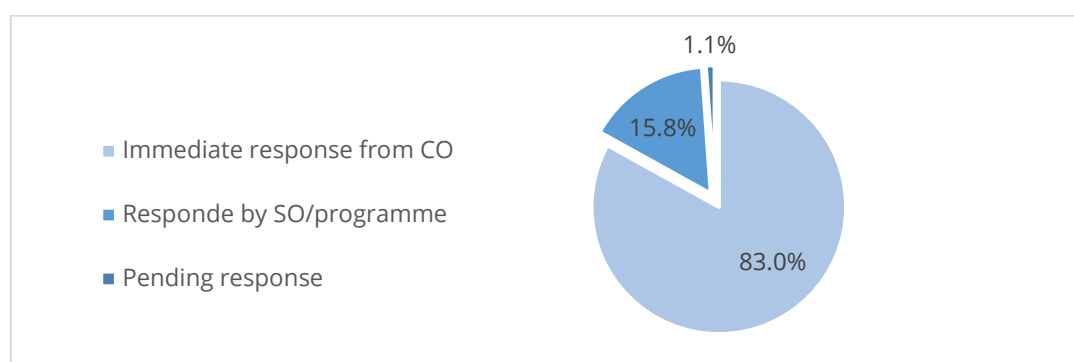
data collection requirements in the country strategic plan. This is only required for food assistance for assets interventions, which are jointly managed with other United Nations agencies. However, the annual country reports in 2017 and 2018 attempt to provide qualitative analysis of environment factors.

121. **Finding 2.2b: Accountability to affected populations mechanisms are in place, but function more as an alert mechanism than a means to incorporate beneficiaries views.** The WFP strategy on accountability focuses on information provision, consultation, and complaints and feedback mechanisms.<sup>154</sup> A dedicated hotline is in place with a call centre based within the monitoring and evaluation unit of the country office. The free-to-call hotline number allows affected populations to raise grievances with WFP. According to the call centre annual report for 2019, 3,635 calls were received that year, 45 percent of which related to the *Nobo Jatra* programme and 37 percent of which concerned a cash transfer delay. The vast majority of grievances (2,973) were responded to immediately at the country office level; a smaller proportion (567) required a sub-office or programme-level response; and a number (40) were awaiting response (see Figure 9). Although accountability to affected population mechanisms are in place and operational in some capacity within the gender equality and social inclusion and PSEA framework approach, the functionality of these systems is confined to awareness-raising and alerting people on messages rather than systematically incorporating people's views on their rights and entitlements.

122. Various programmes were designed through different processes and in some cases beneficiary views were taken on board. A participatory study was conducted by the Cox's Bazar sub-office (December 2019), which shows an impressive undertaking to gather women's views across 20 groups. The output of the qualitative study appears to have been quantified to test change rather than analysis for enriching programming information. However, the report does offer actions for programme adjustments. Overall, progress made on accountability mechanisms does not yet align with the aim of the WFP Accountability to Affected Populations Strategy (2016-2021) of ensuring that: "by 2021, all people that are served by WFP are able to hold the organization to account for hunger results and for addressing their needs in a manner that reflects their views and preferences".<sup>155</sup>

123. The extent to which affected populations, especially women, feel empowered to use these feedback mechanisms is unclear. In Cox's Bazar reports from the community suggest that the complaints boxes make people feel as though only literate people are allowed to provide feedback.<sup>156</sup> Affected populations' access to telecommunications devices should also be taken into consideration.

**Figure 9: 2019 Call centre grievance response by WFP Bangladesh country office**



Source: Call Centrer Annual Report – 2019, WFP Bangladesh CO.

<sup>154</sup> NB: "A functioning complaints and feedback mechanism is defined as a mechanism available for beneficiaries that can refer protection and other specialized issues to relevant partners, give feedback to affected populations, and provide information for WFP to use to adapt implementation. The mechanism should have an associated system to process information received through the existing channels while adequately protecting sensitive data." (Revised CRF (2017–2021) Part II June 2019).

<sup>155</sup> WFP, 2017. *WFP's Strategy for Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) (2016–2021)*.

<sup>156</sup> For more on accountability in Cox's Bazar, see Finding 5.1b.

### **E.Q.2.3. To what extent have the achievements of the country strategic plan ensured connectedness and are likely to be sustained?**

124. **Finding 2.3a: WFP has sought connectedness and sustainability through implementation of its country strategic plan emergency response outputs and activities. However, it is not clear that the country strategic plan enhanced the ability of WFP to achieve this.** Connectedness refers to the linkages made between emergency response and longer-term resilience issues. This is key to the ongoing WFP strategic shift towards enabling the sustainable development of its partner countries. In Bangladesh, rice fortification is one example of how WFP has connected its emergency response to longer term efforts that address root causes and build national capacity to address emergency situations. WFP has been at the forefront of efforts to scale up rice fortification as an effective strategy to address micronutrient deficiencies in Bangladesh.<sup>157</sup> Critically, WFP also provided technical support to companies that produced the vitamin premix, used to make fortified kernels, and to facilities where fortified rice kernels were blended with non-fortified rice.

125. WFP has worked with garment factories offering a good entry point to address undernutrition of women.<sup>158</sup> Providing fortified rice to their workers is a critical part of garment factories' corporate social responsibility programmes and is a key sustainable objective.<sup>159</sup> Strategic connections have also been strengthened through support to government social safety nets. Two WFP-assisted food distribution programmes, the "enhancing resilience to the effects of natural disasters and climate change" programme, with 70 percent of the beneficiaries being women, and the school meals initiative programme have both adhered to connectedness principles. Though too soon to tell, the forecast-based financing and the new "building resilience to achieve zero hunger" project<sup>160</sup> could provide opportunities for further linkages between emergency and longer-term development going forward.

126. Other examples in this area can be found in the WFP response to the Rohingya refugee crisis. WFP and other United Nations agencies are learning from other refugee situations and choosing to enhance support to host communities. The growing narrative among key informants is that host communities do not receive sufficient investment, therefore, in response, as well as to maintain a peaceful and sustainable operation, humanitarian actors increasingly pay attention to the livelihoods of host communities. Since 2019, the WFP food assistance for assets programme has been reforesting the camps, which enhances resilience while providing refugees and host communities with work and skills.<sup>161</sup> In 2019, the programme targeted the most vulnerable refugees and host communities and engaged 71,561 refugees and 7,906 host community members to build and maintain assets. A further 3,973 refugee participants engaged in reforestation activities.<sup>162</sup> In the same year, a new farmers' market initiative has also been piloted to expand access to fresh food and reduce negative coping strategies. Incorporating local and pre-existing market traders. This project has a livelihoods aspect, which could potentially lead to longer-term connectedness.

127. In Cox's Bazar, WFP implements the "safe access to fuel and energy" (SAFE) project, alongside FAO and IOM. This seeks to "curtail environmental degradation and rehabilitate the resource base and economic livelihoods of the host population, while securing a safe and healthy environment".<sup>163</sup> Equally, the new district plan led by UNDP includes the improvement of service provision within camps and supporting the rehabilitation of roads and the greening of the camps, thereby increasing the sustainability of the camp and the way refugees and host communities co-exist. These are all part of a wider effort to ensure humanitarian

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<sup>157</sup> In the early stages of the programme, WFP collaborated with representatives from the Asia regional offices of the Food Fortification Initiative (FFI), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), the Micro-nutrient Initiative (MI), PATH, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to form a committee to organize the first regional rice fortification workshop. "Scaling Up Rice Fortification in Asia." [https://sightandlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SAL\\_WFP\\_Suppl.pdf](https://sightandlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/SAL_WFP_Suppl.pdf).

<sup>158</sup> Approximately 90 percent of garment workers are women.

<sup>159</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Annual Country Report 2017*. and WFP, 2018. *Bangladesh Annual Country Report 2018*.

<sup>160</sup> Under activity 8 of the CSP, WFP is piloting forecast-based financing, seasonal livelihoods, and micro-insurance models for resilience. The project is funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and is in collaboration with the Department of Disaster Management.

<sup>161</sup> WFP, 2019. *Annual Country Report 2019*.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> WFP, 2017. *Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) Bangladesh*.



support can continue to be provided and that the natural landscape can continue to sustain the local population. However, these are all recent efforts and it is unclear how these programmes are connected to the wider institutional environment or based on lessons from other resilience programmes.

128. Despite efforts from the Cox's Bazar office, there is widespread criticism among donors and partners that WFP did not engage with efforts to lobby the Government to provide cash for refugee populations. Cash is pivotal for connectedness and provides recipients with the freedom to build their own assets. The absence of WFP from this national debate led many to believe that WFP could have done more to improve the long-term situation in Bangladesh.

129. Efforts to ensure connectedness are being made with some success. However, it is not clear that the country strategic plan itself enabled WFP to enhance its efforts towards connectedness any more than would have taken place under a country programme or an emergency operation. Respondents suggest that much of the work is driven by Cox's Bazar staff and by inter-agency efforts. For connectedness to be sustainable, there must be institutional take-up of interventions by the Government and other partners. Key informant interviews with high-level government partners indicate that the level of relationship-building required to ensure this sustainable connectedness has yet to evolve. Feedback from these informants suggest that there are gaps in compliance with reporting and protocols, and that WFP is not engaging with key government officials outside of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to share their knowledge and expertise. This is a missed opportunity to drive sustainable connectedness through policy and regulatory reforms.

### **E.Q. 3 To what extent were WFP systems, structures and resources marshalled efficiently in support of country strategic plan outputs and strategic outcomes?**

#### **E.Q.3.1. To what extent has WFP been able to mobilize adequate, predictable and flexible resources to finance the country strategic plan?**

**130. Finding 3.1a: WFP struggled to maintain a resource mobilization strategy with adequate and flexible resources to finance the entire country strategic plan, reducing its ability to enact the strategic shift envisioned by the country strategic plan.**

131. The ability of WFP to mobilize adequate resources to finance the country strategic plan has decreased over time. While allocated contributions in absolute numbers have risen each year, the amount of the needs-based plan funding has decreased. In 2017, allocated contributions covered 142 percent of the needs-based plan. This was a result of heightened donor allocations for the Rohingya crisis response, as well as a transfer of USD 35 million from the WFP country programme (CP 200243) and the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO 200673). In 2018, following two budget revisions, 94 percent of the country strategic plan had been resourced. In 2019, a fifth revision increased the budget from USD 531 million to USD 969 million and the country office successfully resourced 60 percent of this with allocated contributions. (See Figure a).

132. The total country office expenditures were lower than expected each year. The reasons for this varied between activities. Capacity strengthening and enhancing resilience activities (under strategic outcomes 1, 3 and 4) were slow to start, leading to underutilizations in 2017 and 2018. This contributed to the overall country strategic plan resource utilization sitting at 54 percent in 2017<sup>164</sup> and 73 percent in 2018.<sup>165</sup> The Rohingya response (activity 5) and in-kind loans and contributions from the Government led to lower utilization than expected. In 2019, delays to activities 1, 5, 10, 12 and 14 caused underutilization and dedicated funding for strategic outcome 3 led to their being more resources than required to implement activities 8 and 9. In contrast to this overall trend of underutilization, activities 4 and 9 spent more than

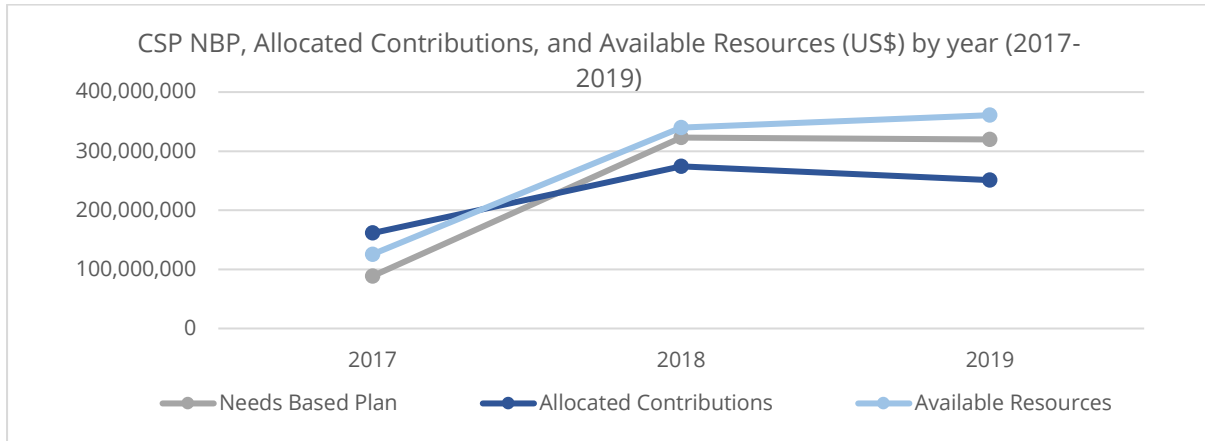
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<sup>164</sup> According to WFP, 2017. *Annual Country Report 2017*, p.13. However, evaluation team's own analysis of resource utilization (Expenditures expressed as a percentage value of available resources) puts the 2017 overall total utilization rate at 37% (see Annex 11).

<sup>165</sup> According to WFP, 2018. *Annual Country Report 2018*, p.8. However, evaluation team's own analysis of resource utilization (Expenditures expressed as a percentage value of available resources) puts the 2018 overall total utilization rate at 54% (see Annex 11).

planned in 2019. Cumulatively, 60 percent of the needs-based plan was funded and 75 percent of those resources were utilized (see Figure b).<sup>166</sup> (Annex 11 provides data for the needs-based plan, available resources, and expenditures disaggregated by year and by activity).

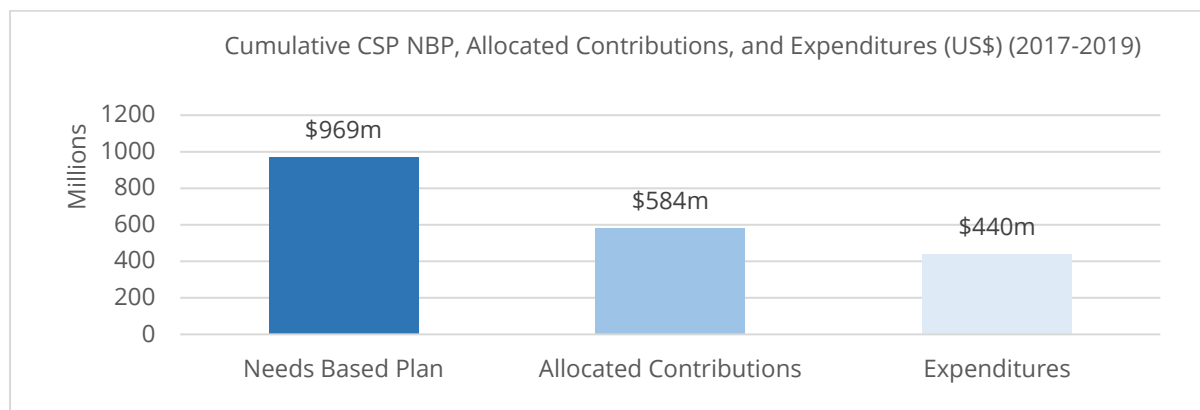
**Figure 1a: The country strategic plan's needs-based plan, allocated contributions, and available resources by year**



Source: Needs-based plan and available resources data from WFP IRM Analytics, extracted on 21/05/2020. Allocated contributions data from WFP FACTory extracted on 20/04/2020).

<sup>166</sup> ACR1-A-Standard\_Country\_Report v29 (extracted from IRM Analytics on 07/05/2020 and providing a cumulative financial overview from beginning of CSP to 30/01/2020).

**Figure 10b: The cumulative country strategic plan’s needs-based plans, allocated contributions, and expenditures (cumulative)**



Source: WFP IRM Analytics, extracted on 07/05/2020.<sup>167</sup>

133. Taking an average across 2017–2019, funding levels (in relation to needs-based plans) vary across activities, ranging from 24 percent for activity 2 (nutrition) to 131 percent for activity 3 (rice fortification). Activities 4, 5, 9, and 13 also surpassed funding targets on average. This varied between years and activities 3 and 4 were the only ones being consistently fully funded by donor contributions (excluding in-kind loans from the Government). At the strategic outcome level, average funding levels ranged from 29 percent for strategic outcome 4, to 87 percent for strategic outcome 1.<sup>168</sup> (See Figure ).

134. Across the country strategic plan period predictable funding was allocated to school feeding (4), the Rohingya crisis response (5), emergency preparedness (7), resilience approaches (8), *Nobo Jatra* (9), and SMEP (14). The Government provided in-kind loans and contributions throughout the country strategic plan. This included contributions of wheat for the provision of fortified biscuits for school feeding under activity 4. The Government also loaned rice to WFP to support the Rohingya response – 15,000 mt (equivalent to USD 15 million) in 2017 and 43,000 mt (equivalent to USD 43 million) in 2018 – 30,900 mt of which was paid back in 2019.

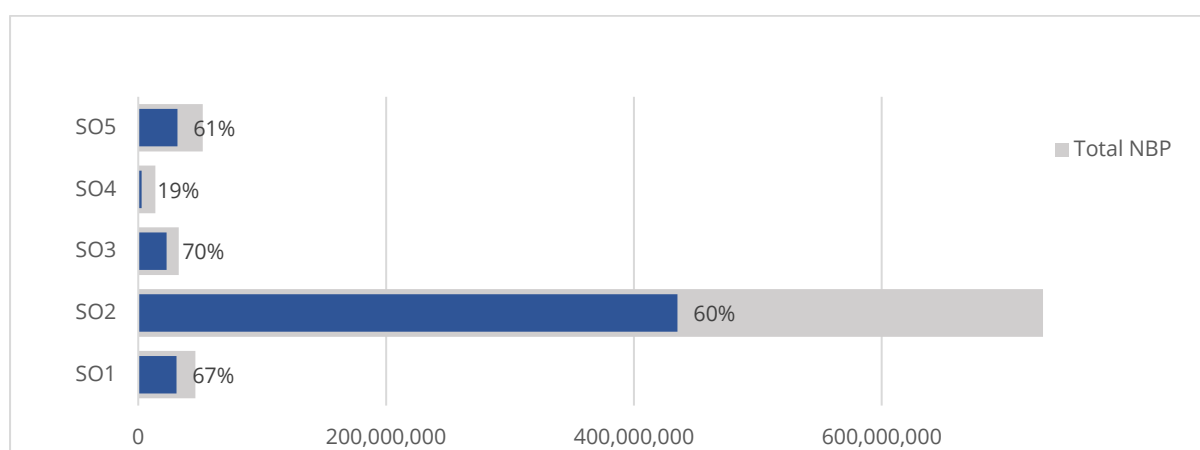
135. The country strategic plan intended to mobilize flexible and unrestricted funding to resource entire strategic outcomes or large cross-cutting programmes. In reality, it proved difficult to leverage that approach. Most donor contributions (90 percent) were tied to activities. This resulted in the country strategic plan being more activity-driven than resource-driven. Earmarking of contributions meant certain activities (for example, activity 13 in 2019) remained underfunded whilst resource utilization on other activities was lower than expected.<sup>169</sup> To counter this, WFP supported pilot projects (forecast-based financing and *Nobo Jatra*.) to utilize funding flows.

<sup>167</sup> Both 13a and 13b consider data from 01/03/2017 to 30/01/2020

<sup>168</sup> Averages across CSP period years have been used in this paragraph to give an overall picture of the CSP, but this approach has its limitation, especially given the constantly changing context in Bangladesh with the Rohingya refugee situation.

<sup>169</sup> WFP, 2019. *Annual Country Report 2019*.

**Figure 2: Total (2017–2019) Allocated contributions to needs-based plans by strategic outcome**



Source: WFP IRM Analytics extracted on 07/05/2020). Considers data from 01/03/2017 to 30/01/2020.

136. The resource mobilization strategy aimed to attract more flexible funding from private donors. These contributions almost doubled between 2017 and 2018 but then fell sharply in 2019. As a share of the annual needs-based plan, flexible funding decreased each year, from 12.6 percent in 2017 to 2.1 percent in 2019. Equally, allocated contributions from private donors fluctuated throughout the country strategic plan period. The share of the needs-based plan fell from 15.6 percent (coinciding with the refugee influx) to 2.8 percent in 2018, and increased to 3.9 percent in 2019. (Table 4).

**Table 4: Flexible funding and private donor contributions to the country strategic plan per year**

Flexible funding			Private donors		
Year	Allocated contributions (USD)	Share of needs-based plan (%)	Year	Allocated contributions (USD)	Share of needs-based plan (%)
2017	11,215,555	12.6%	2017	13,813,492	15.6%
2018	21,057,728	6.5%	2018	8,948,879	2.8%
2019	6,562,327	2.1%	2019	12,436,587	3.9%

Source: Country Portfolio Budget 2017-2019 extracted from WFP FACTory on 20/04/2020. Considers data from 01/03/2017).

137. The country office struggled to adequately resource country strategic plan activities with a more long-term vision. Activities 1 (safety nets), 2 (nutrition), 7 (emergency preparedness), 8 (resilience approaches), and 10 (capacity for emergency response), each averaged below 50 percent of funding levels. This reflects concerns raised by WFP regional bureau and country office staff that funds are not effectively facilitating the WFP strategic shift towards capacity strengthening and away from direct implementation. WFP donors showed a general lack of awareness of the intended strategic shift, with informants questioning certain programmatic choices (such as forecast-based financing, emergency preparedness infrastructure construction and disaster risk reduction). Some donors are concerned that WFP is overreaching its mandate, and comparative advantage, as a historically humanitarian relief-focused agency.

138. WFP has not managed to shift its approach to donor relations, nor its fundraising systems and guidance, all of which reflect humanitarian – rather than development – funding requirements. WFP staff are not accustomed to the long-term relationship-building required to finance development and the in-house capacities and resources for fund management are not in place.

139. WFP country office staff raised challenges with inter-office coordination and donor communications. Synergies across activities are not captured and consolidated by the monitoring and evaluation and vulnerability analysis and mapping teams to inform donor- and media-facing communications. Although there are dedicated staff for external affairs and communications, some country office staff believe that responsibility for programme fundraising could have been delegated across the country office and sub-

offices. During 2018 and 2019 there were two overarching budgets under two resource management teams – country office and Cox’s Bazar office.

140. The Cox’s Bazar office, with a larger budget share, exhibits more strategic direction, with a staffing structure that has clear coordination between communications, partnerships, reporting, knowledge and information management teams. However, in the absence of a dedicated countrywide communication strategy with built-in monitoring and evaluation, neither office could demonstrate that communicating results led to mobilization of financial resources. Partnerships between the Cox’s Bazar sub-office and donors are positive, though these relative successes are the result of the legacy of humanitarian funding. Going forward there are many synergies and lessons from Cox’s Bazar that the country office could draw upon in terms of resource mobilization.

141. Overall, the country office’s ability to address the complexity of moving from direct implementation to capacity strengthening during this country strategic plan remains a challenge. However, the country office was trying to pursue the resource mobilization strategy whilst maneuvering a large-scale organizational shift in strategy as well as responding to a level two/level three emergency.

### **E.Q.3.2. How well have WFP oversight mechanisms, leadership and accountability supported implementation and achievement of the country strategic plan?**

142. **Finding 3.2a: The WFP strategic oversight mechanisms provide a useful framework, but the application is inadequate to support implementation of the country strategic plan and not sufficiently adapted for the emergency refugee response.** Bangladesh was one of the first wave of countries to begin implementation of the Integrated Road Map in 2017. The country strategic plan systems and mechanisms for reporting and reviewing performance across the country office and sub-offices, while useful in monitoring general progress, do not actively support the achievement or development of the country strategic plan. The structures established during the country strategic plan design are utilized with varying degrees of success between activities and function. They are viewed more as a formality than as a means of analysis to increase efficiency across the country portfolio. The Cox’s Bazar sub-office is an exception, largely due to an increased budget allocation in response to the Rohingya crisis and it has adapted and developed such mechanisms within its sub-office operations. However, there is a clear disconnect between country office and sub-offices. The country office does not have appropriate systems in place to maintain oversight of such adaptations. Other sub-offices report via the country office on accountability mechanisms that have been put in place, but this does not translate into constructive engagement between different activity managers, which could lead to improved coordination and better country strategic plan result outcomes. Oversight is maintained at an activity and strategic outcome level, and there is little cross-strategic outcome sharing of information.

143. The budget and programme revisions implemented throughout the country strategic plan demonstrate the flexibility of WFP in responding to emergencies. However, these revisions were not accompanied by new or additional oversight mechanisms. These structural issues and challenges contributed to the ultimate separation of operational function between the Cox’s Bazar sub-office and the country office. This resulted in reduced linkages and hindered the connectedness and learning between the two offices. Both offices appear to have limited capacity to effectively utilize existing reporting mechanisms allowing for better oversight of achievement on different strategic outcomes and activities. Some sub-offices point out that resource utilization is not coordinated across the country strategic plan. There are cases where activity managers do not have access to a relevant budget, which can result in some activities not being implemented regardless of its importance in the local context.

144. The Enterprise Risk Management Policy (2018)<sup>170</sup> defines the WFP risk management approach to deal with uncertainty, reduce the likelihood of negative outcomes, and ensure that WFP achieves its objectives.<sup>171</sup> In 2019, corporate risk assessment processes were aligned to the new Enterprise Risk

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<sup>170</sup> A new Enterprise Risk Management Division was created in the Resource Management Department in 2017.

<sup>171</sup> The WFP Risk Appetite Statement identifies a number of risks and mitigation measures in the following areas: security, wellness and safety risks to personnel, well-being of beneficiaries, operations, demonstrating results, staff capacity, partnerships, WFP reputation and risk tolerance decision making. (Enterprise Risk Management Policy WFP/EB.A/2015/5-B).

Management Policy and risk categorization at the country office, regional bureau and headquarters level. The country offices have aligned the country strategic plan to the new framework and strengthened risk management decision-making procedures. Annual performance planning and risk review processes were conducted according to the new risk management guidelines.<sup>172</sup> The Cox's Bazar office has produced a risk register from November 2019 that identifies the most serious risks based on their likelihood and impact. However, there is no evidence to suggest that risk registers are produced across the country office portfolio.<sup>173</sup>

145. **Finding 3.2b: WFP leadership has generally improved with the introduction of the country strategic plan.** The leadership at the country office level has improved over the course of the country strategic plan implementation, with WFP staff observing there is now more direct engagement between senior leadership and junior staff. Respondents highlight that the senior managers of certain offices work well together, while others state that cooperation across activities is lacking. Several respondents from different WFP offices state that in the initial phases of the implementation of the country strategic plan, leadership from WFP headquarters and the regional bureau could have enhanced the implementation and operational efficiency with clearer guidelines and direction. Staff report that there was insufficient guidance on how to operationalize the country strategic plan, that is, how to shift from direct project implementation to supporting capacity strengthening interventions with the Government. This seemed to have improved over time, particularly in the context of supply chains and emergency responses that benefited from closer working relationships among the different levels.

146. At an institutional level, sub-offices report feeling “left out”, as the country strategic plan limits the sub-offices’ control over targeting, coverage and scale-up compared to the previous country programme experience. This is reinforced by the country office developing budgets, which are then allocated to the sub-offices.

147. **Finding 3.2c: At the headquarters level there are robust policies and guidance in place related to accountability, but there is limited evidence of systematic reporting on gender mainstreaming across the country strategic plan.** At a strategic level WFP has adequate gender policies with specific guidance in place, but there seems to be a disconnect between translating policy and putting this into operational practice at the country office level. The regional bureau gender focal person and the headquarters gender team provide technical assistance for the implementation of the gender policy at the country office level. The Bangladesh office also participated in the WFP headquarters gender transformation programme to receive guidance on gender mainstreaming. As a result, the WFP corporate results framework and country strategic plan established cross-cutting indicators including the integration of gender through their regular reporting. Although there is a plethora of gender-specific output indicators in the gender guidance, only a limited few are being monitored through the WFP systems. Within the country strategic plan financial management arrangements for gender budgeting have yet to be implemented. WFP stakeholders in the regional bureau report not seeing evidence that Bangladesh is tracking gender across budget lines.

### **E.Q.3.3. How well did WFP address internal capacity gaps and align its organizational structures and systems to deliver the country strategic plan?**

148. **Finding 3.3a: Managing the capacity of staff to implement the country strategic plan, while adapting human resources needs for the Rohingya crisis, presented some operational challenges.** Since 2017 the country offices have appointed several new staff. Measures have been or are being introduced to build staff capacity. These include: monthly day-long induction programmes for new staff on country strategic plan policies, programmes and functions; a compulsory online Integrated Road Map course for all new staff; four-month training on “leadership development” for 18 mid/senior-level leaders; an eight-week online supervisory skills-development programme for 19 first-level managers; and a learning needs-assessment survey conducted in 2019 to identify skills gaps, which form the basis of formulating a learning and development plan.

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<sup>172</sup> WFP to refer to the risk register.

<sup>173</sup> WFP Bangladesh, 2019. *WFP Cox's Bazar Risk Register*.

149. The efforts to provide induction briefings and training for new staff has not produced evidence to suggest this process was linked or adapted to the specific activities planned under the country strategic plan (that is, a shift to government capacity strengthening). The internal operational structures of the country office to support the country strategic plan implementation are based on activity-focused aspects rather than a more strategic outcome focus. This is an area that WFP Bangladesh could improve in order to gain ownership amongst staff of the country strategic plan, as sub-offices are reporting with a limited understanding of the country strategic plan in general. Capacity strengthening is undertaken through on-the-job learning, there is no formal training. In addition, some sections of the country strategic plan have limited staffing capacity, which affects implementation, and most team members do not possess relevant skills for the specific tasks. These challenges are typified by the case where the person initially hired to support the staff capacity-building initiative was re-deployed into a communications role in response to the Rohingya crisis. In terms of the gender dimension, despite women occupying 60 percent of positions, leading units (for example finance, admin, information and communications technology, procurement, vulnerability analysis and mapping, communication, partnerships, field office, sub-offices and some activities), they are not represented in senior positions across the country office.

150. The Cox's Bazar office had to quickly increase its human resource capacities, in response to the Rohingya crisis, to address the situation on the ground. This resulted in an intense recruitment drive of national and international staff. In addition, a number of WFP specialist staff were seconded temporarily from other WFP offices. By January 2020, the Cox's Bazar office comprised 350 staff, the bulk of whom are national consultants, and 19 national fixed-term and nine international fixed-term appointments. There are 42 international consultants working on 11-month United Nations contract terms. Work permit requirements for international staff in Bangladesh contribute to delays deploying key specialists. As a result, human resources is trying to build the capacity of national staff and create more fixed-term national posts. However, due to its standard short-term appointment regulations, WFP is losing national staff to other agencies that can offer improved job security prospects.

151. The protection, gender, disability and inclusion unit, set up during the country strategic plan implementation is a positive development in compliance with headquarters guidance protocols, but an increase in resources and capabilities is required.<sup>174</sup> Efforts to mainstream protection and gender issues are more nuanced and established within the WFP operational approach; the country office efforts to address disability and inclusion require additional work. The draft disability and inclusion plan was pending at the time of the evaluation field work. However, the country office is processing the recruitment of a disability advisor and the Cox's Bazar programme has appointed a short-term consultant on disability issues. This has had a positive effect. A number of training courses were organized to provide orientation on disability and inclusion. Discussions are ongoing with headquarters and the regional bureau to introduce a child protection policy in order to address the vulnerabilities of child beneficiaries.

152. In Cox's Bazar there is a gender team with separate protection advisers. This has contributed to increasing the profile for gender equality support to humanitarian activities and enhancing the capacity of the various working groups, including those on gender, violence against women and children, and protection. The Cox's Bazar gender team report directly to the Head of Operations who is supportive of the team's efforts. This approach seems to be empowering junior team members to be confident in their role. WFP is aware of its capacity gaps regarding gender analysis and programming for social inclusion and has initiated a series of regular training events for its staff and partners on gender analysis and PSEA.

153. **Finding 3.3b: Through the country strategic plan, WFP pays more attention to knowledge and information management but the processes to capture data require further development.** Currently the country strategic plan monitoring and evaluation systems are not yet fully aligned across and between different programmes and activities. This presents a challenge for monitoring progress against all 14 activities systematically. The country strategic plan has not contributed to a more integrated way of monitoring activities between the monitoring and evaluation and vulnerability analysis and mapping team. Process monitoring appears to be dependent on individual teams and their respective capacities, and in many cases reliant on the knowledge and information management team in the Cox's Bazar office and cooperating partners. This highlights a capacity gap regarding the integration between the gender unit and

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<sup>174</sup> At the time of the evaluation, one of the two-person protection, gender, disability and inclusion unit was on sick leave.



the monitoring section with the former not having access to the Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Tool (COMET) to monitor activities through their gender and other cross-cutting indicator data.

#### **E.Q.3.4. To what extent were alternative, more cost-effective measures considered to deliver against the strategic outcomes?**

154. **Finding 3.4a: Measures were taken to consider, pilot and implement more cost-effective means of delivering activities under strategic outcome 1.** The intended shift away from implementation and towards enabling and supporting national hunger solutions provides WFP with opportunities to maximize the “value-for-money” of its interventions. At the activity-level, this is clearly reflected under the IC-VGD/VGD programme (activity 1). A value-for-money analysis was conducted<sup>175</sup> against good practice guidance using the “three Es” model – “economy, efficiency, and effectiveness”. This mapped out measures to be taken to increase cost-effectiveness. This included: following corporate procurement procedures to consider lowest price and maintaining quality standards; efficient selection and monitoring of partners; choice of approaches to build capacity of government staff (for example, training-of-trainers approach for minimizing cost); and, building on previous interventions, advocacy with the Government, introducing fortified rice into the vulnerable group development’s distribution package.<sup>176</sup>

155. WFP also adopted a number of cost-effective measures in other activities aimed at strengthening government safety net programmes. Under the school feeding activity (activity 4), WFP provides technical assistance through the deployment of a staff member to the Directorate of Primary Education to develop more efficient management information systems for school feeding/meals. The WFP value-for-money analysis found deploying staff in this way minimizes costs of staff using office space.<sup>177</sup> In discussions between WFP and the Ministry of Education, concerning the school meals model, WFP were advocating for more cost efficient resource provision for kitchen requirements, specifically, their design, permanency and potential for cluster-kitchens to maximize cost-effectiveness. Locally recruited cooks are trained alongside the Ministry of Agriculture, using a training-of-trainers approach, resulting in further efficiency gains.

156. Cost-effectiveness was a key driver of the school meals policy advocacy work, given that the pre-existing model of providing fortified biscuits was much cheaper than supplying meals. Due to the relative cost of providing nutritious meals, WFP, in partnership with the Ministry of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs, ran a pilot in two schools in the Lama sub-district (Bandarban District) in 2018, in which local communities participated in the planning, implementation, and quality control monitoring. This brought the cost of providing school meals down from BDT 22 to BDT 19 per meal. According to WFP staff, this contributed to the eventual success of this advocacy approach. WFP continues to provide hot meals to 90 government schools in Lama where local communities help establish kitchens and contribute utensils and fuel.

157. In compliance with global best practice, cost-effectiveness is a priority for cash-based payment systems. In this regard WFP provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs to transition payments for the “improved maternity and lactating mother allowance (IMLMA)” programme to the “government-to-person” system.<sup>178</sup> As a result, payments are now made directly from the exchequer to beneficiaries’ accounts. Replacing the pre-existing system is a significant cost effectiveness approach. Losses of 7–8 percent of funds in transfer administrative costs can accrue going through the Government’s Treasury, while payments are held with intermediaries for up to nine months before being released to beneficiaries. WFP is supporting the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs to link the government-to-person system to a management information system. Both will maximize efficiency of the programme for the Government. To increase the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of their own cash payments, WFP is in an ongoing process of negotiating with the Government to allow WFP to process government-to-person payments. This would require an agreement with the Ministry of Finance but so far, for reasons unknown to WFP staff, the process of negotiating this has been unsuccessful.

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<sup>175</sup> WFP (n.d.). *Value for Money Good Practice. Updated version.*

<sup>176</sup> WFP (n.d.). *Value for Money Good Practice. Updated version.*

<sup>177</sup> WFP (n.d.). *Value for Money Good Practice. Updated version.*

<sup>178</sup> Advocacy for the government-to-person system is part of the larger “strengthening public financial management for social protection (SPFMSP)” project and is not limited to WFP work on IMLMA. (Alam, Md. A, 2018. Consolidation of Social Allowance Programme. *National Conference on Social Security Programme Review.* Presentation.)

158. The rice fortification activity team has also explored cost-effectiveness in their work with the Government in scaling up rice fortification. The WFP role in introducing fortified rice into the Government's vulnerable group development programme was acknowledged by the strategic review, which recommended "increasing the use of national food-based safety nets to provide fortified rice for vulnerable populations as a cost-effective means of addressing micronutrient deficiencies and related morbidities".<sup>179</sup> Piloting the inclusion of fortified rice in two subdistricts was successful, with the Government scaling up inclusion of fortified rice into vulnerable group development distributions in 96 subdistricts from 2019. WFP is continuing its advocacy with the Government to develop national rice kernel blending units rather than to import them.<sup>180</sup> WFP is working with its technical and strategic partner, DSM,<sup>181</sup> to develop cost-effective solutions for the sourcing of micro-nutrients needed to produce fortified rice kernels. In 2019, a cost analysis of rice fortification in Bangladesh was commissioned by WFP to inform ongoing strategy.<sup>182</sup> The report provides a number of detailed recommendations on how best WFP could support the Government in rice fortification.

159. Examples of robust cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analyses being conducted under other strategic outcomes were not evident. Given the focus of strategic outcome 1 (capacity strengthening) there is a clear need to ensure cost-effectiveness is a driver for enhancing national actions. Currently there are no mechanisms in place for reporting cost-effectiveness or value-for-money of interventions. Reporting and documenting these issues in the country strategic plan is dependent on individual teams and managers. According to WFP staff in the regional bureau, the lack of such systems results in information being scattered across programmes and activities, with no clear guidance on how to report on cost-effectiveness.

160. **Finding 3.4b: The WFP supply chain and logistics services has been efficient and cost-effective given the challenges.** In 2017, WFP was instrumental in establishing the Bangladesh National Logistics Cluster<sup>183</sup> in Dhaka to improve the long-term coordination of supply chain functions for the whole country. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, the main coordinating ministry of the Government during an emergency, is now Co-Chair of the National Logistics Cluster.

161. The supply chain and emergency response preparedness unit based in Dhaka supported various functions such as warehousing, procurement, customs clearance, and onward transport, etc. The local and international sourcing of food and non-food items has been an important service within both the national programme and the Rohingya response operation. The tonnage of food commodities acquired peaked in 2018 at almost 160,000 mt, reducing to 110,000 mt in 2019 as the e-voucher programme in Cox's Bazar expanded.<sup>184</sup> During the country strategic plan, 96 percent of food commodities distributed by WFP related to the Rohingya response. The country office and the WFP team in Cox's Bazar shared procurement plans in order to ensure a cost-efficient approach to sourcing requirements.<sup>185</sup> Although in general, particularly during the level three emergency period, this was not always feasible. The value of non-food goods and services procured by WFP Dhaka between 2017 and 2019 amounted to USD 17.6 million – with a peak of USD 8.3 million in 2018. (See Table below).

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<sup>179</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017–2020)*, p.8.

<sup>180</sup> WFP Innovation Accelerator, Project Overview (11/09/2017).

<sup>181</sup> DSM is a global science-based company active in health, nutrition and materials, and one of the world's largest producers of micronutrients. As part of their corporate social responsibility, they have been a partner of WFP since 2007 to help develop cost-effective and sustainable nutritious food solutions.

<sup>182</sup> WFP, 2019. *Cost Analysis of Rice Fortification in Bangladesh*.

<sup>183</sup> A technical working group formed of ten member agencies established the National Logistics Cluster on August 29, 2017 (Bangladesh National Logistics Cluster meeting minutes 4 January 2018). As an inter-agency networking function, it appears to have been useful but has not been run as a common service.

<sup>184</sup> Based on import parity form analysis to determine local or regional purchase 66,000 mt was locally procured in 2018 and 91,000 mt internationally procured. In 2019, 75,000 mt was locally procured and 35,000 mt internationally procured because rice was cheaper in the country at that time.

<sup>185</sup> During the CSP, WFP Dhaka supply chain unit managed the receipt of about 80 shipments of food and 35 non-food shipments, a significant amount of work, 90 percent of which was for the L3. Cox's Bazar relies on WFP Dhaka to manage customs clearance and forwarding procedures and the issuance of tax exemption certificates etc.

**Table 5: Food commodity distribution and value of goods and services procured by year and by activity**

Year	Food commodities distributed (mt)	Goods & services procured (USD value)
2017	35,826	USD 4,452,881
2018	148,269	USD 8,359,354
2019	111,103	USD 4,851,830
Activity	Food commodities distributed (mt)	
Activity 5 (Cox's Bazar)	291,498 (99%)	-
All others	3,701 (1%)	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>295,198</b>	<b>USD 17,664,065</b>

Source: Food commodities distributed from: WFP, 2017. Annual Country Report 2017; WFP, 2018. Annual Country Report 2018; WFP, 2019. Annual Country Report 2019. Goods & services procured from: WFP Bangladesh supply chain and emergency response preparedness unit.

162. Managing food supply chain relationships with the Government has been important to the provision of cost-effective assistance to refugees. WFP was able to respond timely to significant demand for emergency food assistance at the start of the Rohingya crisis due to pre-assigned agreements<sup>186</sup> in place with the Government's Director General of Food at the Ministry of Food to borrow up to 50,000 mt of rice. This food loan mechanism not only enabled a rapid means to deliver food assistance but was also a cost-effective approach as initial stocks of food could be obtained locally at favourable rates. This mechanism also enabled WFP to ensure a consistent food pipeline by overcoming shipment delays or lack of availability of funds during key periods of the operation. However, the agreement did not allow for food safety and quality control mechanisms to be put in place upon receipt of the cargo, which could have resulted in additional costs in the last mile, and in exposure to food safety and quality-related risks. The country office was able to borrow rice stock on a segment by segment basis, usually 10,000 mt at a time. The total amount borrowed from the Government was 60,000 mt with approximately 30,000 mt repaid by the end of 2019.

163. WFP has been moving to outsource the provision of food assistance to the Rohingya crisis to local market retailers. The e-voucher programme in Cox's Bazar established contracts with local retailers to run shops for WFP in all the refugee camps. Each shop typically serves 3,000 to 17,000 households, with two or three shops in each location, or about 30 locations in all. Retailers are encouraged to source food products according to certain criteria and within a certain price range.<sup>187</sup> Under this contract arrangement WFP receives a discount on the food products. This discount is passed on to the beneficiaries. Evidence suggests this approach has been far more cost-effective than the provision of in-kind food assistance; the latter requires the management and operation of long and expensive supply chains, as identified in studies on the effectiveness and efficiency of cash-based approaches.<sup>188</sup>

164. Analysis of WFP beneficiary and expenditure data provides a rough estimate of the cost-per-beneficiary of food and cash-based transfers/commodity vouchers. These figures (shown in Table ) show that for activities 5, 6, and 7, provision of food in Bangladesh has cost less per beneficiary than cash and/or commodity vouchers each year (2017–2019). Under activity 4, cash-based transfers have been less costly on average than food provision, except in 2017 when it was the opposite.<sup>189</sup> It should be noted, however, that

<sup>186</sup> Memorandum of Understanding with Provision on Release of Rice from the Government Stocks to Assist Affected People in the Event of Disaster 1 March 2018 (deemed to have been effective from April 2017 for a period of four years).

<sup>187</sup> Once a catchment service is completed at the end of each month, the retailer provides an invoice that is reconciled with the SCOPE system and if it matches the retailer is then paid.

<sup>188</sup> The evaluation team were unable to obtain supplementary data to evidence these statements in interviews. This is, however, supported by a study of WFP support to Mozambique in 2016, which estimates a 24% cost reduction when providing refugee populations with food, over in-kind aid. Bailey, S., 2016. *Why not cash? The case for cash transfers for refugees in Mozambique*. ODI Working Paper 504.

<sup>189</sup> The evaluation team were unable to obtain supplementary data to ascertain specific reasons behind differences in these figures, which would require a more detailed and comparative cost-benefit analysis.

the full extent of support costs related to provision of food, cash-based transfers and commodity vouchers are not covered by these calculations.<sup>190</sup>

**Table 6: Food versus cash-based transfers and commodity voucher comparison of country office expenditure, number of beneficiaries, and cost-per-beneficiary by activity**

Year	Expenditure (USD)		Number of beneficiaries		Cost-per-beneficiary (USD)	
	Food	CBT and commodity voucher	Food	CBT and commodity voucher	Food	CBT and commodity voucher
<b>Activity 4 - Policy advice and technical assistance for scaling up school feeding</b>						
2017	1,683,555.21	196,944.43	272,995	16,444	6.17	11.98
2018	1,649,540.26	203,680.44	102,791	15,047	16.05	13.54
2019	736,212.23	178,641.87	14,165	14,165	51.97	12.61
Average					24.73	12.71
<b>Activity 5 - Deliver an integrated assistance package in Cox's Bazar</b>						
2017	14,906,606	4,421,550	1,170,424	66,400	12.74	66.59
2018	96,070,757	30,051,858	1,513,777	423,452	63.46	70.97
2019	73,742,268	61,686,105	1,502,917	932,881	49.07	66.12
Average					41.76	67.89
<b>Activity 6 - Deliver an integrated assistance package in the Chittagong Hill Tracts</b>						
2017	480,145.09	0.00	64,886	0	7.40	-
2018	1,310,203.04	523,806.95	61,338	6,240	21.36	83.94
2019	1,793,223.34	733,728.60	90,566	29,467	19.80	24.90
Average					16.19	36.28
<b>Activity 7 - Deliver food assistance in emergencies</b>						
2017	423,526.93	1,529,677.78	334,000	48,035	1.27	31.85
2018	460,569.41	18,434.28	0	0	-	-
2019	397,915.69	850,949.97	266,680	75,000	1.49	11.35
Average					1.38	14.40
<b>Activity 8 - Creation of evidence related to innovative approaches to enhancing resilience</b>						
2017	0.00	0.00	0	0	-	-
2018	0.00	161,224.76	0	16,900	-	9.54
2019	0.00	314,954.25	0	22,070	-	14.27
Average					-	7.94
<b>Activity 9 - Nobo Jatra</b>						
2017	0.00	1,294,462.61	0	82,060	-	15.77
2018	0.00	7,676,656.43	0	169,070	-	45.41
2019	0.00	4,708,915.44	0	142,365	-	33.08
Average					-	31.42

Source: WFP, 2017. Annual Country Report 2017; WFP, 2019. Annual Country Report 2019; WFP COMET and WFP IRM Analytics, extracted on 28/04/2020.

## E.Q. 4 what are the factors that explain WFP performance and the extent to which it has made the strategic shift expected by the country strategic plan?

### E.Q.4.1. To what extent did WFP analyze or use existing evidence on hunger challenges, the food and security and nutrition issues to develop and deliver the country strategic plan?

165. **Finding 4.1a: The country strategic plan design was informed by data on relevant issues but during implementation there was limited focus on applying lessons from evidence across strategic outcomes, with the Rohingya response being a key exception.** The country strategic plan was developed and informed by “the strategic review, evaluations of WFP’s past assistance and consultations

<sup>190</sup> Expenditure for “food” includes the food value, transport, storage, port, supply chain management costs, cooperating partner costs and “other food-related costs”. Expenditure for CBT and commodity voucher includes the cash value, delivery costs, management costs, and cooperating partner costs. The costs of infrastructure to enable CBT provision is not included here and human resourcing costs are not included for either modality.

with the Government and development partners”.<sup>191</sup> The 2016 strategic review of food security and nutrition in Bangladesh provided a useful operational framework.<sup>192</sup> That independent review provided vital directions and guidelines for the development of the country strategic plan, particularly in identifying challenges to ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition. The country strategic plan states that the strategic review, as well as previous WFP successes, informed choices made by the country office in terms of which programmes and interventions to pursue under the country strategic plan.

166. Examples of evidence-based interventions to inform the country strategic plan design include: (1) research highlighting the benefits of school meals with regards to fortified biscuits - findings suggested that biscuits alone were insufficient for children to reach a minimum daily calorific intake of 558 kilocalories, whereas school meals have better outcomes in terms of improving micronutrient status of children and body mass index (BMI) for age compared to fortified biscuits;<sup>193</sup> (2) the IC-VGD model - partially informed by results and lessons from the “food security for the ultra poor (FSUP)” project;<sup>194</sup> (3) the design of the Cox’s Bazar assistance package - informed by the 2016 joint assessment mission recommendations that WFP provide advocacy around the opportunities and status of refugees, transition to targeted assistance in order to balance the delivery of interventions between refugee and host communities, and introduce livelihood interventions to enhance self-reliance; and (4) the interventions in climate change risk reduction - based on a comprehensive study commissioned by WFP.<sup>195</sup> More broadly, the organizational shift in approach from direct service delivery to institutional capacity building itself was deemed appropriate based on country context and recommendations made by independent evaluations of previous WFP interventions.<sup>196</sup>

167. The country strategic plan activities and outcomes did not systematically utilize supplementary data, or other emerging contextual issues, to influence strategic decisions to reposition the country office’s direction.<sup>197</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that a formal revision of individual country strategic plan strategic outcomes or activities was ever attempted during country strategic plan implementation (excluding the addition of strategic outcome 5 following the Rohingya refugee influx). However, there are some examples of commissioning evidence to inform support in its emergency response work. The country office conducted a rapid food security, nutrition, and damage assessment to determine the need for tailored support in Naria subdistrict and Shariatpur district in 2018.<sup>198</sup> In 2019, WFP conducted a “fill the nutrient gap” analysis, designed to “strengthen nutrition situation analysis, build consensus and foster decision making for improved nutrient intake”.<sup>199</sup> Changes in country strategic plan delivery as a result of this are yet to be seen.

168. The country strategic plan recognized that data relating to the Rohingya population could be used to inform future programming. In this regard, WFP was more strategic in utilizing data in comparison to the rest of the country operation. Following the first influx of displaced Rohingya, WFP has been compiling data through the REVA process. The first REVA was conducted in 2017 with a second follow up undertaken in 2019.<sup>200</sup> The REVA 2 sample size of 2,593 people included new arrivals, previously unregistered and registered refugees, , and host communities. The REVA modules include demography, overall vulnerability, expenditures and economic vulnerability coping strategies, minimum expenditure basket, food

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<sup>191</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)* page 9.

<sup>192</sup> WFP, 2016. *Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Bangladesh: A independent review commissioned by the WFP.*

<sup>193</sup> WFP, 2017. *Annual Country Report 2017.*

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> WFP, 2015. *Impact of Climate related Shocks and Stresses on Nutrition and Food Security in selected areas of Rural Bangladesh.*

<sup>196</sup> WFP, 2017. *Bangladesh Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020).*

<sup>197</sup> An update to the strategic review was in progress at time of writing and could be seen as an attempt to do this. However, with access to an early draft only, the evaluation team are unable to comment further.

<sup>198</sup> WFP, 2019. *Annual Country Report 2018.*

<sup>199</sup> WFP, May 2019. *Fill the Nutrient Gap Assessment (Cox’s Bazar).*

<sup>200</sup> WFP, 2019. *Refugee influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVA), Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh* (accessed January 2020). WFP, 2019.



consumption and other essential needs, multidimensional poverty, existing assistance and preferences, nutrition, protection, and gender.<sup>201</sup>

169. The REVA studies track vulnerability issues for different groups and how women and children were being affected by the provisions of food and other assistance. REVA is seen as a practical tool that provides valuable information to WFP and other partners on key issues, such as the preference by refugees to receive a mix of food and voucher/cash solutions to ensure all their needs can be met. Partly due to this (while also being aligned to WFP global policy direction), direct in-kind food assistance has gradually transformed into more preferred hybrid solutions, including vouchers. REVA provided initial evidence on this that later supported the creation of the farmers' market initiative.

170. REVA data also identified a number of negative coping strategies among transfer recipients. Many were selling rice to cope with cash needs. In addition, people reported the rice/lentils/oil provision was monotonous and wanted diversity in their diets. These two findings led to rice capping<sup>202</sup> (up to BDT 400 for rice) and the introduction of e-vouchers allowing recipients to use vouchers to buy other essential items and vegetables from local farmers' markets. Vulnerability analysis and mapping data is also being used in Cox's Bazar to support WFP livelihoods teams reach and address the needs of the most vulnerable Bangladeshis in the communities surrounding the camps. In 2017, the vulnerability analysis and mapping unit organized a market assessment to inform the office's move towards retail-based assistance for refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar.<sup>203</sup>

171. The REVA reporting was intended to have a gender and protection module, but only documents protection issues. The REVA reports highlight how women and girls of different age groups were being affected by sexual harassment (19 percent compared to 2 percent for men); physical violence and abuse (26 percent compared to 3 percent for men); abduction (37 percent for those under 18 years of age) and general feelings of being unsafe (10 percent compared to 3 percent for men). Both REVA reports provide analysis of coping, food consumption, nutrition and access to other essential needs, but do not elaborate on gender differences within households, and between women-headed and other households. The REVA also lacks a gender analysis in certain key areas, such as market access, which is a critical factor facing refugees.

**172. Finding 4.1b: Knowledge and information coordination processes are not sufficiently established; this has impacted on the effective utilization of data in delivering the country strategic plan.**

173. The monitoring and evaluation and vulnerability analysis and mapping units play a key role in an evidence-led approach for the country office and country strategic plan portfolio. Correspondingly, the partnerships, communications, and reports teams are responsible for managing external relations and ensuring that evidence generated reaches WFP partners and donors. However, these teams work independently of each other and their efforts are largely uncoordinated. The monitoring and evaluation and vulnerability analysis and mapping units are managed by the Deputy Country Director for Programmes, while the partnerships, communications, and reports teams fall under the External Relations and Communications Department.<sup>204</sup> The Cox's Bazar office follows similar team structures to the country office but with the addition of a knowledge and information management unit. In Cox's Bazar it is noted that responsibilities are clear, and these teams operate in a collaborative way, and depend on the support of others in joint planning to increase visibility of the data they collect.

174. The monitoring and evaluation unit provides reporting systems, tools, and support to activity teams to facilitate the collection of process-monitoring data, output data, and outcome data. Process-monitoring data are intended to inform corrective actions in programming. There is no evidence to suggest that any such actions are adopted. The output and outcome data collection systems provided by the monitoring and evaluation unit to activity managers enable the country office to report against corporate indicators.

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> It is worth noting that while the point being made here is that WFP used data analysis to inform operational changes, the decision to enforce rice capping has been a controversial one, especially from a rights perspective.

<sup>203</sup> Bangladesh food security sector and WFP, 2017. *Market Assessment in Cox's Bazar: Implications for market-based interventions targeted to Rohingya refugees and host communities.*

<sup>204</sup> WFP, 2019. *BGD Organigram 2019 – For Discussion.*



Managing these processes and systems from Dhaka is a difficult task for the monitoring and evaluation unit and, following the revisions of the corporate results framework in 2019, that task has become harder.

175. There is little evidence that data on corporate indicators, collated by the monitoring and evaluation unit, are used to inform decision making or adapt programming in a systematic manner. Furthermore, these data collection processes include scant qualitative data. Review of activity design documents finds limited strategic use of monitoring and evaluation data in informing the revision, addition, or removal of activities from the country strategic plan to improve delivery of its strategic outcomes. However, there are examples of outcome surveys and studies being used as proof-of-concept for some interventions, for example, the vulnerable group development programme, school meals, rice fortification, and forecast-based financing.

176. Assessments produced by the vulnerability analysis and mapping unit incorporate a broad range of data and analyses, including poverty mapping, all of which inform targeting for all WFP programmes. However, the process of engaging the unit for such assessments is not optimized, with many activity managers commissioning mapping exercises as an after-thought to justify the pre-defined interventions in pre-selected geographical areas, which may not always be those areas most in need. Vulnerability analysis and mapping assessments are being completed and distributed, though not fully integrated in strategic programming decisions and despite the unit's best efforts, the knowledge is not optimally managed. This suggests a lack of appreciation for data and for use of evidence in targeting WFP activities. An opportunity that was perhaps missed in this regard was the utilization of the "Three-Pronged Approach (3PA)"<sup>205</sup> to inform the design and implementation of some activities; there was no evidence to suggest this approach was adopted. The impact of these challenges is that the country office misses opportunities to optimize routine lesson-learning and integrate evidence into programme implementation.

#### **E.Q.4.2. To what extent did WFP operationalize the intended shift towards capacity strengthening of government partners?**

**177. Finding 4.2a: The design and direction of the country strategic plan continues to move WFP Bangladesh away from operational delivery and towards capacity strengthening, but as a new approach it is not yet fully embedded into the WFP work planning culture.**

178. Since 2011, WFP Bangladesh has been in a process of shifting its portfolio away from direct operational delivery and towards institutional capacity strengthening.<sup>206</sup> With the introduction of the country strategic plan, WFP committed to continue this process through expansion of its advisory and knowledge-sharing roles in support of government agencies working to achieve the SDG 2 targets.

179. In order to operationalize this strategic shift, and in line with the WFP corporate approach to country capacity strengthening (CCS),<sup>207</sup> two of the country strategic plan's strategic outcomes and their related activities were dedicated to providing capacity strengthening (strategic outcomes 1 and 4). Theories of change (ToCs) for strategic outcome 1 and its activities were produced, mapping how enhanced national capacities would lead to improved nutrition outcomes.<sup>208</sup> However, these theories of change do not clearly and adequately reflect how specific WFP inputs will contribute to these enhanced capacities, nor do they make clear the assumptions that underpin them. This prevents the theories of change from being a useful basis for reflection on country strategic plan delivery. Similarly, the theories of change do not articulate the outcomes that typify a state of self-sufficient capacity, which the corporate approach toolkit states they should.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> WFP, 2017. The Three-Pronged Approach. [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000023753/download/?\\_ga=2.141754612.752173976.1594307371-1145629076.1593683808](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000023753/download/?_ga=2.141754612.752173976.1594307371-1145629076.1593683808).

<sup>206</sup> The United Nations defines capacity strengthening as "the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time" (as quoted in WFP, 2017. *WFP Corporate Approach to Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) CCS Toolkit Component 001*).

<sup>207</sup> WFP, 2017. *WFP Corporate Approach to Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) CCS Toolkit Component 001*.

<sup>208</sup> WFP, 2017. *Theory of change for outcome 1*.

<sup>209</sup> WFP, 2017. *WFP Corporate Approach to Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) CCS Toolkit Component 001*.

180. Capacity needs-mapping exercises were conducted by the social safety nets (activity 1), rice fortification (activity 3), school feeding (activity 4), and emergency response (activity 10) teams.<sup>210</sup> These highlighted existing capacity assets, gaps and stakeholder priorities and desired actions against five pathways from the WFP Corporate Country Capacity Strengthening Framework Strategy. It is unclear to what extent other mapping exercises have been updated and/or utilized since. However, since 2019, the school feeding activity team has been measuring and reporting against the SABER school feeding index. This aims to provide a framework to diagnose and identify opportunities for capacity strengthening. This began in November 2019, with a workshop bringing together officials from different ministries, government technical agencies including the Directorate of Primary Education, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, including the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network.<sup>211</sup> In the context of strategic outcome 4, there is no evidence of a theory of change, capacity-needs mapping or exit strategy.

181. Despite the efforts to bring capacity strengthening into the country strategic plan design, there are clear reservations from WFP management at country office, regional bureau and headquarters about the ability of WFP to enact the organizational shift. This is compounded by a lack of clarity and guidance from regional bureau or headquarters to enable the country office to be more strategic in its approach to government capacity strengthening. The roll-out of the approach in Bangladesh is inconsistent and the internal narrative and strategy around capacity strengthening is yet to be institutionalized or embedded into the organizational culture. A collective understanding of those partners and their needs is missing. Another factor is the fact that the country office does not have the right staff with the right skills to make the difference required by government partners. Across the country office, WFP staff shared the opinion that internal capacity needs to be built (either through internal training or the recruitment of more specialized staff) before the office can successfully embark on capacity strengthening as a “new way of working”.

182. In contrast, there is evidence that some country office staff have found the country strategic plan to be a helpful guidance tool in navigating how to work with the Government. Equally, one senior ministry official claims to have noticed a shift in the WFP approach, in that WFP is now trying harder to understand the Government, and this has resulted in better relationships between the two parties.

**183. Finding 4.2b: WFP has carried out activities dedicated to capacity strengthening, with some successes at the national and subnational level. However, adherence to a viable definition of capacity strengthening is missing.**

184. The intended operationalized shift envisaged towards capacity strengthening of government partners was largely disjointed across the country strategic plan activities with weak coherence in relation to outcomes and strategic objectives. It was noted that capacity strengthening indicators did not translate into improved strategic partnership outcomes. The major drawback to this shift is the lack of a capacity assessment covering the strengths and weaknesses of the institutions WFP wishes to support. Layered on top of this is the commitment that WFP is embarking on its transition from being a trusted and dependable emergency response implementing agency, to now investing more energy in enabling and supporting the implementation of national Sustainable Development Goal targets. This has required a concerted effort and marked change in organizational culture across the WFP country office to support capacity strengthening. However, a collective understanding by WFP staff of the capacity needs of its intended partners was found to be missing. This raises the concern that the country office is currently ill-equipped to effectively support institutional strengthening of government ministries in a way that produces long-term positive outcomes for the population of Bangladesh.

185. The intended WFP shift to capacity strengthening of government partners is largely noticed under strategic outcomes 1 and 4. Capacity strengthening interventions targeted: Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs and the Department of Women’s Affairs on enhancing social safety nets; Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics with their Household Income and Expenditure Survey; Bangladesh National Nutrition Council on planning and coordination of nutrition-sensitive programmes; Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs and Ministry of Food on the production and distribution of fortified rice; Ministry of Education with scaling up their school feeding programming; and Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and

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<sup>210</sup> The evaluation team was able to obtain a copy of the assessment documentation for activity 4, but not for other teams. For the other activities, ACR reports say they were conducted.

<sup>211</sup> WFP, 2019. *CSP Activity 4 - Plan Reporting Tool (SF-CS) - Q4*.

government officials from other ministries at subnational levels for enhancing emergency supply chains. A number of successes under these capacity strengthening activities have been reported during the implementation period. Table 7 below highlights the key areas.

**Table 7: Summary of capacity strengthening activities**

Activity area	Capacity strengthening
<b>School meals</b>	In 2019, the Ministry of Education finalized a national school meals policy following support from WFP in the drafting and creation of evidence on school meal programming from a successful pilot in the Lama district. Officials from the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs concur that the WFP technical support was instrumental in the policy's formation. However, WFP work with the Ministry of Education on school feeding long pre-dates the country strategic plan and so this success cannot be attributed to the country strategic plan design/delivery changing the way WFP works on capacity strengthening. Interviews with WFP staff and government officials suggest that having the right person in the right seat of political power was a very strong contributing factor to the acceptance of the policy.
<b>Mother and child benefit programme</b>	WFP provided technical support and guidance to the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and the Department of Women's Affairs in the revision of the national MCBP, which facilitated the inclusion of a management information system and a government-to-person payment system. Interviews with both government officials and WFP staff acknowledge the WFP role in these developments, which allow the Government to monitor the programme better and provide more timely payments to beneficiaries. <sup>212</sup>
<b>Vulnerable group development programme</b>	The national vulnerable group development programme was enhanced by the addition of a livelihood-based "investment component", the inclusion of an additional 40,000 women from Cox's Bazar as new beneficiaries, and the incorporation of fortified rice into the transfer modality. According to WFP country office staff interviews, each of these can be somewhat attributed to WFP support.
<b>Rice fortification</b>	The country office procurement unit assisted the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs to create an initial roster of approved suppliers. <sup>213</sup> WFP also identified three laboratories to improve fortified rice kernel testing capacity in partnership with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. In addition, WFP facilitated training with government and cooperating partners. In 2019, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs expanded the rice fortification programme to 96 subdistricts and by 2019, together with the Ministry of Food, were able to reach over 2 million beneficiaries across the country with fortified rice; despite delays in setting up additional blending units. <sup>214</sup> According to WFP staff, the Government has committed to invest up to USD 8 million in a new rice fortification facility in Dhaka.
<b>Nobo Jatra</b>	As it is responsible for the disaster risk reduction component of the programme, WFP works to strengthen the Union Disaster Management Committees, the Upazila Disaster Management Committees, and the Ward Disaster Management Committees in its implementation subdistricts. According to interviews with sub-office staff, cooperating partners, and some disaster management committee members themselves, <sup>215</sup> WFP support through <i>Nobo Jatra</i> has strongly improved the functionality of committees, enabling their localities to better respond to natural disasters. Similarly, there is anecdotal evidence from a field visit to Rangpur that work under the forecast-based financing project has strengthened the Government's union-level capacity around flood preparedness.

Source: Evaluation Team

<sup>212</sup> Thanks to the government-to-person system, payments can be made monthly, rather than semi-annually. According to interviews with government officials, this reduces the risk of mothers being unable to provide adequate nutritional support to their newborns due to late payments.

<sup>213</sup> WFP used the IN-TEND online e-procurement system to manage tenders.

<sup>214</sup> The aim was to have 64 blending units operational by the end of 2019, one in each of the 64 districts in Bangladesh.

<sup>215</sup> Only one UDMC was engaged during a field visit made in Khulna, so this is anecdotal.

186. Other capacity-related interventions under the country strategic plan include advocacy work, large-scale coordination, setting up management information systems, and knowledge transfers. However, there is little evidence to suggest that these inputs align with the United Nations definition of capacity strengthening as “the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time”.<sup>216</sup> The creation of a new management information system or training government staff will not lead to increased capacity over time without systems being put in place to ensure that the capacity remains when government staff rotate or WFP steps away. Equally, WFP facilitating the enhancement of government programmes on the ground cannot be deemed capacity strengthening without a long-term vision for the eventual exit of WFP.

#### **E.Q.4.3. To what extent did the country strategic plan enhance WFP ability to leverage and sustain strategic partnerships that positively influenced performance and results?**

**187. Finding 4.3 Throughout the country strategic plan, WFP engaged many partners in its work, positively influencing the country offices’ performance. However, the extent to which partnerships can be deemed “strategic” is unclear.**

188. The WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017) defines partnerships as: “collaborative relationships between actors that achieve better outcomes for the people we serve by: combining and leveraging complementary resources of all kinds; working together in a transparent, equitable and mutually beneficial way; sharing risks, responsibilities and accountability. To achieve objectives (both the collective partnership’s objectives and individual partner goals) that could not be achieved as efficiently, effectively or innovatively alone, and where the value created is greater than the transaction costs involved.”<sup>217</sup> The Integrated Road Map and the country strategic plan guidance encourage that a “whole of society approach” be taken in the country strategic plan, meaning that civil society is included wherever possible to build its capacity, in particular to promote food security.<sup>218</sup>

189. The WFP office in Cox’s Bazar was able to leverage synergies with other United Nations agencies, including FAO, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and IOM to respond to the humanitarian crisis, while also addressing the host community’s needs, as is set out in the country strategic plan. Since 2018, WFP expanded the usability of its multi-wallet platform, SCOPE, thereby facilitating the distribution of hygiene products provided by UNICEF and the distribution of cooking stoves and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders under the “SAFE Plus” programme (together with IOM and FAO). In order to further improve the use of SCOPE while improving data sharing and streamlining the humanitarian assistance, WFP, UNHCR and the Government signed an agreement to align SCOPE data with the beneficiary dataset of the other two partners.<sup>219</sup> Although these partnerships are particularly effective in the implementation of the humanitarian response in Cox’s Bazar, there are concerns by other United Nations agencies that this collaboration mainly focuses on the implementation of specific programmes and sectors but that WFP does not engage in collaboration in a routine and systematic way.

190. WFP has many bilateral partnerships, mostly with non-governmental organizations that are engaged to assist with implementation and monitoring of interventions. These partnerships are vital in the delivery of many activities in Cox’s Bazar and across the country strategic plan. Highlighted is WFP implementing the “whole of society approach” in its school feeding programme. Local non-governmental organizations claim their partnership with WFP is mutually beneficial – non-governmental organizations receive support to develop their capacity and image, WFP benefits from their local knowledge and connections.

191. The rice fortification initiative was achieved through partnerships. Starting out in 2013, WFP continued to engage with the private sector to produce fortified rice kernels while also partnering with the Shornokishoree Network Foundation (SKNF) and with Social Responsibility Asia (SRA) to increase demand

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<sup>216</sup> As quoted in WFP, 2017. *WFP Corporate Approach to Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) CCS Toolkit Component 001*. *Emphasis added by the evaluation team.*

<sup>217</sup> WFP, 2014. *WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014-2017)*, p.8.

<sup>218</sup> WFP, 2018. *Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans – Evaluation Report*.

<sup>219</sup> WFP, 2020. *Annual Country Report 2019*.

for fortified rice.<sup>220</sup> Food technology advice, to meet international quality standards and technical guidance for the rice blending units, was also provided in collaboration with Nutrition International and relevant government agencies.

192. In Cox's Bazar, WFP was able to leverage its existing operational partnerships with non-governmental organizations while establishing new partnerships to respond to the emergency. However, this partnership approach appears more to be on an ad-hoc basis rather than a strategic goal. The existing partnership with the Red Cross (IFRC/ICRC) was crucial in order to reach refugees as they crossed the border. At the same time, given the rapid development of the crisis and the need for food and nutrition support, WFP partnered with new non-governmental organizations,<sup>221</sup> to provide general distributions to the entire refugee population.<sup>222</sup> Although much attention was paid to the refugees, some interventions were aimed at host communities. Children in the host communities suffering from severe acute malnutrition were enrolled in services managed by Action Against Hunger and UNICEF partners, thereby complementing the WFP nutrition interventions. As part of the EFSN intervention, the WFP partners (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), IOM, Solidarités International and Handicap International) trained staff of cooperating partners who went on to train frontline staff to facilitate behaviour change communication sessions for beneficiaries.<sup>223</sup>

193. Throughout the implementation of the country strategic plan, WFP worked with various government ministries and agencies. Traditional WFP partners are the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Food and the Planning Commission. WFP has a long-standing relationship with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs based on its support to the vulnerable group development programmes, and provision of technical assistance to launch the MCBP<sup>224</sup> and supporting work on management information.<sup>225</sup> The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs staff values its partnership with the WFP team, but other government stakeholders raise concerns that WFP should be working with more strategic ministries to expand its reach and coverage. Another key partner is the Ministry of Education, which took over the school feeding programme from WFP in 2019 and with WFP support was able to bring the national school feeding policy to approval.<sup>226</sup>

194. In the Cox's Bazar office, WFP collaborates with external partners for particular areas of research. WFP and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) have conducted joint studies and this partnership provides mutual benefits whereby WFP can access IFPRI research for its own programming and IFPRI can test assumptions in real time, or establish and continue longitudinal data sets through WFP funding. However, this partnership seems to have become less strategic in recent years.

195. These examples demonstrate that WFP collaborates with a wide range of partners nationally, particularly in Cox's Bazar, but not many of these initiatives can be classified as strategic. The WFP collaborations with smaller non-governmental organizations are not based on shared risks, responsibilities, or accountabilities, and there is no suggestion that these partnerships were clearly understood as being "strategic", nor that the partners clearly understood the country strategic plan or its objectives. Therefore, there is no evidence that the country strategic plan modality enhanced WFP ability to leverage and sustain or hinder these partnerships.

196. The WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy states that WFP "requires its partners to work in ways that protect vulnerable people and promote gender equality and women's empowerment".<sup>227</sup> No evidence

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<sup>220</sup>WFP, 2019. *How WFP supported the Government of Bangladesh to Introduce and Scale up Rice Fortification – A Case Study on Reducing Micronutrient Malnutrition*.

<sup>221</sup> These NGOs include Mukti, Society for Health Extension and Development (SHED), Resource Integration Centre (RIC) and Young Power in Social Action (YPSA).

<sup>222</sup> WFP, 2017. *Annual Country Report 2017*.

<sup>223</sup> WFP, 2017. *Annual Country Report 2017*.

<sup>224</sup> The mother and child benefit programme is the consolidation of two existing programmes: the "maternal allowance" (rural areas) and the "lactating mothers allowance" (urban areas).

<sup>225</sup> WFP, 2019. *Annual Country Report 2019*.

<sup>226</sup> WFP, 2019. *Annual Country Report 2019*.

<sup>227</sup> WFP, 2014. *WFP Corporate Partnership Strategy (2014–2017)*, p.13.



was found to suggest that considerations of gender or other cross-cutting issues are routinely or systematically incorporated into partnership selection or management processes.

**E.Q.4.4. To what extent was WFP able to shift focus towards strategic linkages and partnerships between humanitarian operations and longer-term development and, where appropriate, peace work considering changing contexts and political directions, national capacities, and priorities?**

197. **Finding 4.4a: The introduction of the country strategic plan has brought into sharp focus the need for WFP to pursue its dual mandate of humanitarian and development work.** Prior to the country strategic plan WFP applied different country-level programming approaches that focused on emergency humanitarian responses at the expense of support in order to to underpin its dual humanitarian and development mandate. With the introduction of the country strategic plan, WFP recognizes the humanitarian-development (and peace) nexus.<sup>228</sup> through prioritization of SDG 2 and SDG 17<sup>229</sup> and linking the country strategic plan to the national zero hunger strategic reviews. Although immediate emergency response remains a priority for WFP, the strategic outcomes embed responses to protracted crises and the structure of the strategic outcomes (“crisis response”, “resilience building”, “response to root causes”) shows that WFP is committed to the triple nexus.<sup>230</sup> Of the five strategic outcomes of WFP Bangladesh’s country strategic plan, two aim at “crisis response”, two at “resilience building” and one at “root causes”.

198. The country strategic plan was aligned with the national priorities in the development space. The country strategic plan responds to social protection reform and allowed WFP to focus on food security and nutrition while gaining experience in supporting government reforms of social safety nets and related initiatives.

199. **Finding 4.4b: WFP was not able to effectively use its leverage through the central role it occupies within the United Nations system to pursue strategic opportunities.** Due to its central position within the United Nations system, and in the crisis response in Cox’s Bazar, WFP Bangladesh is seen as having the convening power to link its work with other development actors. There was an opportunity to ensure linkages between the WFP role in Cox’s Bazar and its work with other agencies to contribute to and facilitate changes at the policy level in development areas such as disaster risk reduction and resilience in the entire country. However, WFP is not seen to be a proactive member of the various task forces it is engaged with, such as Common Country Assessments, Joint Consultative Working Group and the Bangladesh Development Forum. WFP missed the opportunity to share strategies and approaches with development partners that go beyond UNDAF.

200. **Finding 4.4c: WFP was able to integrate humanitarian-development interventions in Cox’s Bazar through collaboration with others. However, it was not able to bring these collaborations to a programmatic level or to a national scale-up.** The WFP office in Cox’s Bazar was able to develop strong partnerships with other United Nations agencies to respond to the humanitarian crisis, while also responding to the host community’s needs. Examples include the food assistance for assets programme and the farmers’ market pilot that is being implemented through Relief International in cooperation with FAO, as well as WFP collaboration with United Nations Population Fund to set up women-led community centres for refugees and host communities where women can acquire new skills to increase their independence.<sup>231</sup>

201. In supporting these initiatives during a protracted emergency crisis, WFP was acutely aware of the needs of the host community, and knew that they could not be disconnected from those of the the refugees as this would potentially lead to conflicts. However, WFP was not able to translate these experiences into more collaborative work in other development interventions beyond Cox’s Bazar. Although WFP and UNICEF have collaborations in some cluster activities in Cox’s Bazar, there is only one programme

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<sup>228</sup> The Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot CSPs (WFP, 2018. *Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans – Evaluation Report*) finds that the policy on CSPs acknowledges the triple nexus, but it only refers to its peacebuilding role in transition settings, while there is no specific guidance on how the CSPs can incorporate the triple nexus.

<sup>229</sup> At the output level, the CSP in Bangladesh also addresses SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 5 (gender equality).

<sup>230</sup> WFP, 2018. *Strategic Evaluation of the Pilot Country Strategic Plans – Evaluation Report*.

<sup>231</sup> WFP, 2019. *Bangladesh Annual Country Report 2019*.



with UNHCR that is institutionalized through a memorandum of understanding. Such programmes are not being scaled up at national level. Also, in Cox's Bazar WFP and UNICEF jointly were able to carry out supplement nutrition to malnourished children and pregnant and lactating mothers. However, despite the recognized terms of understanding, they could not scale this up to promote the supplements nationally due to restrictions in the Community Management of Acute Malnutrition guidelines and a complex Bangladesh policy environment. Similarly, under the tripartite coordination of WFP, IOM and FAO (SAFE Plus), households in Cox's Bazar received LPG and stoves through SCOPE to address their cooking needs while reducing the deforestation of the area; but this could not be taken forward at a national level either. In the context of Bangladesh, much of the WFP funding goes into the emergency response and less so into the development space, thereby making it more difficult for WFP to operate in this arena.

**202. Finding 4.4d: WFP has to strike a delicate balance with its mandate of upholding respect for humanitarian principles whilst also working under the auspices of government-managed interventions.** Under a country strategic plan framework that is designed to work closely with host governments, maintaining this balance is further complicated because the country strategic plan does not provide clear guidance on how to engage with the host government where there may be a conflict of interest. It is increasingly evident within WFP that the framework of the country strategic plan reduces the independence of WFP, with its changing role of providing support to strengthen government systems. The Rohingya crisis represents a clear example of where this may produce tensions between maintaining humanitarian principles (of neutrality, humanity, impartiality, and operational independence) and working hand-in-hand with the host government. In the Rohingya response, protection aligned with humanitarian principles and the long-term goal of providing livelihoods to the refugees has become increasingly difficult with expanding restrictions placed on refugees and the lack of accountability and adherence to humanitarian principles by camp leaders (Camp-in-Charges).<sup>232</sup> Within this context, some respondents report that WFP has “stepped up” and taken an active role in advocacy for humanitarian principles whereas other respondents report a more critical perspective, including: (a) lack of advocacy for cash, which would foster a higher level of dignity and agency for Rohingya refugees in line with humanitarian principles and basic protection principles; (b) the issue of Bhasan Char – the island to which the Government is considering relocating refugees – and the lack of WFP visibility on this move; and (c) the perceived lack of WFP advocacy against the increasing removal of rights such as restriction of mobile data service and the ongoing fencing of the camps.

203. Whilst it is true that much of this criticism is levelled against the overall humanitarian response, WFP is necessarily implicated. This is because WFP is viewed as an honest broker and is the largest United Nations agency with a comprehensive presence for refugees in Cox's Bazar but is at the same time absent from the refugee status determination politics.<sup>233</sup>

## **E.Q. 5 To what extent were the operational modalities (structure, systems and processes) the right ones to allow WFP to respond effectively to the level 3 emergency in the context of a country strategic plan?**

### **E.Q.5.1. Did the country strategic plan implementation modalities allow WFP to rapidly scale up and down the level three emergency with WFP food assistance and protection programming and in alignment with humanitarian principles?**

**204. Finding 5.1a: Despite challenges, including the incorporation of an unforeseen level three emergency into the country strategic plan, WFP executed a highly commendable response to the Rohingya population and surrounding host communities' needs.**

205. WFP was providing assistance in the Cox's Bazaar area to existing Rohingya – both registered and unregistered refugees – and host communities prior to the influx in August 2017. The scale and coverage of the WFP response provided to Rohingya refugees since the start of the crisis in August 2017 has been widely commended by the international community. As at the end of 2019, 880,000 refugees were receiving, monthly, full general food assistance through either in-kind assistance, with complimentary

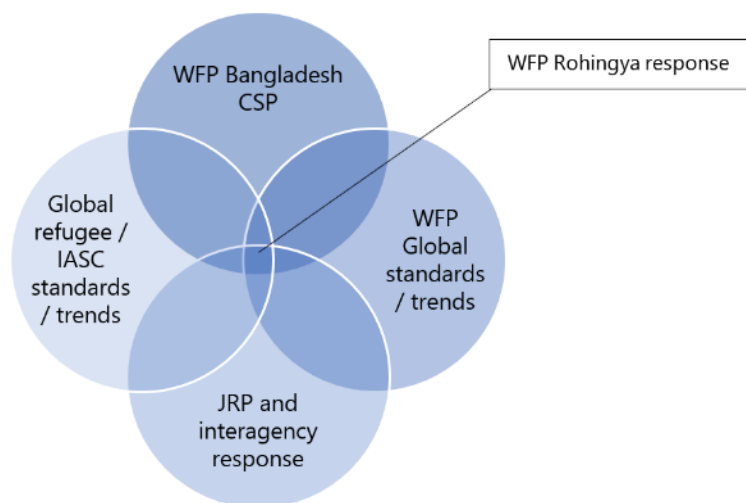
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<sup>232</sup> Multiple key informants.

<sup>233</sup> This point is explored further in evaluation question 5.1.

vouchers provided by partners, or food assistance through e-vouchers via SCOPE.<sup>234</sup> The WFP Rohingya response sits at the centre of multiple frameworks. These being the WFP country strategic plan, WFP global humanitarian response standards, overall global humanitarian response standards, and the specific joint response plan framing the inter-agency response for the Rohingya refugee crisis (see Figure ). The WFP response has necessarily been influenced by all these frameworks, not just by the country strategic plan.

**Figure 3: WFP Rohingya response's position among the country strategic plan and other frameworks of humanitarian response**



Source: Evaluation Team

206. WFP recognized that the country strategic plan as originally envisaged did not, structurally, optimize an immediate response to an unforeseen level three crisis. With the onset of the recent influx of Rohingya refugees it soon became apparent that attempts to integrate a response of that scale within an existing strategic outcome (strategic outcome 2) at an activity level (activity 5) incorporating all activities in Cox's Bazar under a senior manager structure was not going to work. In addition, the Rohingya refugee crisis presented the Government with a specific humanitarian situation that required shared responsibility to coordinate an international response. It is debatable that, had a level three crisis occurred in comparative terms, such as a devastating cyclone or flood affecting a million or more Bangladeshi people, the country strategic plan would have been fit for purpose, given that the Government would have mobilized existing national disaster response frameworks in order to respond.

207. Views were expressed within WFP to suggest that once the level three response had been activated, WFP should have undertaken a full revision exercise of the country strategic plan, largely because the level three crisis changed the focus and shifted the balance away from the original strategic direction. WFP should be praised for the way in which it addressed the problem. Instead of arriving at a solution in-between trying to manage the response under the country strategic plan strategic outcome 2 activity 5, which would have necessitated a full revision of the country strategic plan, the preferred option was to add an additional specific strategic outcome. This was generally considered pragmatic and effective and allowed the level three response to scale up appropriately and rapidly within a workable structure. That structure was already in place and appropriately aligned in terms of seniority of WFP Cox's Bazar leadership with other United Nations agencies. Regardless of these structures being established and in place, the subsequent revision of the country strategic plan required Executive Board approval in Rome, which was granted within nine days due to waivers of some procedures.<sup>235</sup> However, many respondents across United

<sup>234</sup> The transfer value of e-vouchers stands at approximately USD 9 per person a month (monetary value of USD 54 million) while the monthly household food assistance entails 30kg of rice, 9kg of pulses, and 3 litres of fortified vegetable oil. See WFP, 2019. *Annual Country Report 2019*.

<sup>235</sup> WFP, 2019. *Evaluation of WFP's Capacity to Respond to Emergencies*.

Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the Government applaud the scale-up and speed of the WFP response.

208. The WFP SCOPE registration process was completed much quicker than the official UNHCR registration of refugees. SCOPE was recognized as being successful in terms of both the speed of enrolment and assisting the transition (ongoing) for people from in-kind general food distribution, with partner complimentary vouchers, to a multi-wallet e-voucher system. By the end of 2019, approximately 540,000 out of 880,000 people were receiving food via the e-voucher rather than through in-kind distribution. Internally WFP is of the opinion that this process could have occurred faster, but the majority of external stakeholders recognized this was a significant achievement, given the challenges and the sheer scale of the operation.

209. Market assessments conducted by WFP found that food supply is generally very good with a continuous pipeline particularly for rice, although prices for other goods fluctuate.<sup>236</sup> The introduction of the farmers' market, established in collaboration with FAO, is commendable because this seeks to maximize benefit to host communities and therefore reduce tensions while also enabling the Rohingya community access to fresh foods.

210. The e-vouchers are a useful transition mechanism between in-kind distribution and cash transfers. The use of cash transfers within the Rohingya response has generated an important debate. The Government does not allow cash or livelihoods for Rohingya refugees, although some level of support is provided through "resilience" programmes rather than livelihoods programmes. Some respondents express disappointment that, given the WFP strategic position, it did not robustly advocate for the use of cash within the Rohingya response. Others readily acknowledge the sensitivities around this debate with the Government and recognize that WFP had taken a practical stance. It has been suggested that WFP should have conducted a quick analysis of the use of cash as an appropriate intervention during the early stages of the crisis. This may have preempted the debate on what the emerging government stance was likely to be and offered a pragmatic solution, although working within government limitations was a sensible approach.<sup>237</sup> Despite the Government's prohibition on cash transfers, there is still a vibrant cash economy in the camp. A joint study<sup>238</sup> conducted for WFP found 40 percent of Rohingya refugees were generating cash income from self or wage employment. Respondents reported that WFP did not play as strong a role as it could have played around cash as a modality of assistance, and some questioned the commitment of WFP to advocating for cash when faced with government restrictions.

211. The Rohingya response also flagged other challenges for WFP. One relates to the issue of rice capping, the other concerns cash-generating activities through livelihoods interventions. Monitoring surveys showed that Rohingya refugees were using up to 82 percent of their entitlement within e-vouchers to buy rice, which they resold on the market for cash. Rice capping started in July 2019 in two outlets.<sup>239</sup> Subsequently rice capping has been rolled out across all retail outlets and despite some initial protests it is now standard practice. Currently, out of an allowance of BDT 770 (approximately USD 10) rice is capped at BDT 350, with BDT 420 for other commodities. The rice capping debate involves two schools of thought. Donors raise concerns that food allocations are being sold on the open market. However, refugees require cash – which has the added impact of generating the local economy and provides recipients with dignity and agency. Vouchers are considered a halfway point between in-kind distribution and actual cash.

212. WFP supports the host community through a livelihood programme. This is seen as a pragmatic approach to government restrictions in camps by implementing government-approved resilience-building programmes. Views have been expressed that these programmes should be integrated with broader policy and institutional frameworks involving agency programming.

213. The livelihoods/resilience-building programmes are intersectoral because they focus on nutrition. The programmes aim to improve food security and nutrition of women from host communities by supporting them to develop skills that enable entrepreneurial activities while giving a monthly subsistence allowance of BDT 1,050 (approximately USD 12). After completion of the training, women receive a cash grant to start

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<sup>236</sup> WFP, Nov 2017. Rohingya Market Assessment Report | WFP, Nov 2017. VAM-FSS Rohingya Market Assessment Report.

<sup>237</sup> Other United Nations agency key informant.

<sup>238</sup> Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies/International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

<sup>239</sup> Leda and Jadimura.

their income-generating business.<sup>240</sup> By December 2019, these programmes reached almost 20,000 women from host communities.<sup>241</sup>

214. Stakeholders report that the WFP nutrition activities, both blanket and targeted supplementary feeding, have had an impact and are well-coordinated with other sectoral leads. While United Nations Population Fund provides nutritional activities in the women-led community centres, UNICEF is leading on the nutrition and the school feeding activities in temporary learning spaces for unregistered refugee children. During its country strategic plan interventions in Cox's Bazar, WFP reported a reduction in the global acute malnutrition<sup>242</sup> rates among new arrivals from 19 percent at the beginning of the crisis to 11 percent in 2018.<sup>243</sup> This significant drop demonstrates a clear impact as a result of WFP and nutrition partners' interventions. Nonetheless, other actors working with WFP in nutrition are concerned about the effectiveness of the WFP programmes to improve the nutrition status widely. School feeding and school meals are not targeting the appropriate demographic groups,<sup>244</sup> while the IMLMA programme, although appropriately targeting beneficiaries, has no mechanism for beneficiaries to use the cash transfer for nutritious food. Therefore, the nutrition status in Bangladesh could benefit from WFP programmes having a clearer focus on nutrition while ensuring improvements in nutrition for the upcoming generations.

215. A key development during the period 2019–2020 is the alignment of nutrition interventions (across WFP and UNICEF programming) with one partner now implementing all nutritional activities within each camp. While partners report some challenges in the transition period, all agree in the longer term that it is a good move to have integrated facilities.

216. **Finding 5.1b: The country strategic plan did not contribute significantly to protection and accountability-orientated approaches in the way WFP responded to the Rohingya refugee crisis.** The country strategic plan did not hamper what WFP was able to achieve, but neither did it promote a significantly more protection and gendered way of how the organization operated, compared to operations under the previous emergency operations. WFP is not a protection agency, but has increasingly recognized the need for protection, inclusion, and accountability based on:

- WFP global standards regarding mainstreaming gender and protection<sup>245</sup>
- Core inter-agency standards, including the centrality of protection and assorted protection and gender policies<sup>246,247,248</sup>
- The PSEA risk, particularly regarding high-value and high-volume items such as food
- Linkages with the Agenda for Humanity, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the “leaving no-one behind” promise
- The fact that protection, accountability, and inclusion is foundational within the country strategic plan.

217. In response to the Rohingya crisis, WFP has established a gender hub (rather than a singular gender adviser), gender focal points and a full-time dedicated PSEA coordinator. Protection, accountability and

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<sup>240</sup> WFP, 2019. *Livelihoods programme for women in Cox's Bazaar*.

<sup>241</sup> WFP, 2019. *Annual Country Report 2019*.

<sup>242</sup> Global acute malnutrition is a measure of acute malnutrition in children between 6 and 59 months, with above 15 percent being considered an emergency situation requiring blanket supplementary feeding. Rates below 10 percent, although not requiring specific interventions, are still high enough for continued blanket feeding.

<sup>243</sup> UNHCR, WFP, 2019. *UNHCR-WFP Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) Report 2019*. Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

<sup>244</sup> To target the next generation requires targeting pregnant and lactating mothers, as well as children under five and adolescent girls.

<sup>245</sup> WFP, 2015. *WFP Gender Policy 2015–2020* and WFP, 2012. *WFP Humanitarian Protection Policy*.

<sup>246</sup> IASC, 2013. *The Centrality of Protection Statement in Humanitarian Action*.

<sup>247</sup> IASC, 2016. *Protection in Humanitarian Action*.

<sup>248</sup> It is noted that as a refugee response, IASC standards do not always apply – however, it is more of a mixed response as Rohingya refugees are not formally recognized as refugees by the Government of Bangladesh and UNCHR and IOM share joint management responsibilities: furthermore, IASC standards for protection are considered best practice across all humanitarian interventions.

gender and inclusion feature in successive joint response plans.<sup>249</sup> Other agencies commend the WFP approach to gender, accountability, and inclusion. Firstly, this approach was centred around the efforts of WFP senior management in Cox's Bazar and not a broader institutionalized process. Secondly, this process is more internalized at the office level rather than specifically impacting at the community level. WFP has regular gender awareness days with quizzes and activities to get all staff involved. WFP is the only agency to recruit a (short-term assignment) disability adviser, and subsequently hold a disability workshop. While all these initiatives have been lauded by different stakeholders, the impact on, and influence in, the camps are less visible. However, the potential impact of having these processes has been stifled by the extremely conservative nature of the Rohingya population and by a lack of genuine cultural knowledge of the Rohingya population, overlaid by the *Majhi* system put in place by the Government that further limits interaction with all segments of the community.

218. PSEA remains a concern with some respondents suggesting the overall PSEA approach, including by WFP, is more organization-centric than survivor focused. There are suggestions that PSEA is promoted more from the stance of protecting reputations than genuinely protecting vulnerable community members. For instance, although most WFP staff have received basic PSEA training, this has not been rolled out to all of the WFP implementing partners. Focus group discussions further show that those who received training, although they appreciated the training itself, could not recall the content. In terms of PSEA response mechanisms there is limited evidence that WFP in Cox's Bazar has a coherent approach to this. The shift in the delivery modality to refugees, from in-kind provision to e-voucher, has in effect transferred the responsibility for PSEA to retailers rather than WFP and direct partners and it is unclear how WFP intends to manage this. Interviews with a non-governmental organization partner mention the required signing of PSEA policies but there is no evidence to demonstrate that retailers and farmers have received in-depth PSEA training to ensure alignment with WFP global standards.

219. It is recognized by different stakeholders that REVA is a very useful tool, but it is unclear how gender, age, and other issues of diversity have been highlighted within REVA, and how it informs WFP programming on these issues. It has been raised by the gender team in Cox's Bazar that there is no programme specifically addressing the prevalence of gender-based violence in the camps, although this has been identified as an issue by REVA. WFP does not fully utilize sex- and age-disaggregated data across all its areas of responsibilities (the food security sector), despite this being standard practice for gender and age considerations.<sup>250</sup> The appointment of a disability inclusion adviser in Cox's Bazar was a useful addition to the team in the short term, but there is less coherence about how disability inclusion issues will be taken forward in the future.

#### **E.Q.5.2. Did the country strategic plan's implementation modalities allow WFP to rapidly establish and sustain IASC-mandated coordination responsibilities for food security, logistics, and emergency telecommunications for the level three/level two response?**

220. **Finding 5.2a: WFP sustained a leadership role in the food security, logistics and emergency telecommunications clusters, and established support to other country-level clusters.**<sup>251</sup> This engagement, as previewed by activities 11–14, aimed to address gaps in the country-level responses and to build, maintain, and improve capabilities to efficiently and effectively deliver emergency assistance. Due to the scale and complexity of the humanitarian response to the Rohingya crisis, a systematic coordination mechanism and shared services in logistics, emergency telecommunications, food security and an innovative engineering function (SMEP), were all required in order to support an effective humanitarian community response. It was observed that the humanitarian cluster system was not formally activated, but the various humanitarian "sectors" were underpinned by the principles of the IASC cluster approach.

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<sup>249</sup> United Nations, 2019. Joint Response Plan for Rohingya Humanitarian Crisis January–December.

<sup>250</sup> See, for example: OCHA, Feinstein International Centre, Tufts, Care International, 2011. Sex and Age Matter.

<sup>251</sup> A more detailed assessment of common and inter-agency services in Cox's Bazar is provided in the thematic deep dive in Annex 5.

## Food security

221. **Finding 5.2b: WFP as a co-lead with FAO, has actively supported the national food security cluster (NFSC)<sup>252</sup> together with other United Nations agency partners and various government departments.** During the country strategic plan period, the NFSC responded to several emergency situations and effectively liaised with the national cash working group to harmonize activities.<sup>253</sup> However, there were challenges in raising awareness and interest within the Government about the NFSC activities. It was reported that the Government is often slow to share information concerning early warning, and local government officials could benefit from enhanced capacity to produce useful maps and national dashboards regarding caseloads, targets and beneficiary coverage. There was a further need to understand how to support preparedness and disaster responses in urban areas.

222. **Finding 5.2c: WFP co-leadership in the food security cluster in Cox's Bazar has enabled different initiatives to be implemented in a coordinated manner.** Under the coordination of the food security sector, several needs assessments, the REVA and a market assessment were conducted, as well as market prices assessed.<sup>254</sup> These data formed the basis of subsequent interventions that increased the local market capacity of the refugees, increased the reach of the e-voucher system SCOPE and increased cash-based assistance.

223. **Finding 5.2d: There was a disconnect between the food security cluster in Cox's Bazar and other actors.** Although the NFSC supported the setup of the food security cluster in Cox's Bazar in the early phases of the emergency and there was an expansion of the scope of interventions to cover host communities in the broader Chittagong region, the engagement between the food security sector and NFSC remained limited. For the first time in 2019, joint planning was established between the NFSC and the food security sector. However, currently there is no exit strategy for the common services being provided through WFP and FAO, and no government counterpart has been identified to assume leadership for the NFSC.

## Logistics sector

224. **Finding 5.2e: Support provided by WFP to the logistics sector (LS) in Cox's Bazar has generally been positive,<sup>255</sup> enabling effective assistance to the humanitarian community, which in turn provided positive feedback for the services delivered.<sup>256</sup>** The logistics sector in Cox's Bazar was seen by donors as providing a good overview of logistics for the Rohingya crisis response. However, key informants indicated that there appears to have been little donor coordination concerning logistics challenges and limited scrutiny to ensure that the best use of partner logistics capacity has been made. The logistics sector was well funded compared to most other sectors, with DFID and USAID the main donors. Cost effectiveness for the logistics sector was not given a high priority.

225. Civil engineering was seen as a critically important function by respondents, and a valuable complement to logistics sector responsibilities to improve road access to refugee camps. The WFP preparedness efforts under the SMEP ensured that the 2018 monsoon season passed without causing major damage.<sup>257</sup> At the request of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, WFP provided support for relocating refugees from high-risk landslide and flood-prone areas and extending the Kutupalong-Balukhali expansion site.<sup>258</sup> Later the same year, the Bangladesh army withdrew its

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<sup>252</sup> The NFSC consisted of about 40 organizational partners (27 were reported as being active).

<sup>253</sup> During the level three response, links between country office and operations in Cox's Bazar were limited (there was a high turnover of coordinators in the food security sector).

<sup>254</sup> WFP, 2017. *Annual Country Report 2017*.

<sup>255</sup> Protection in logistics has not been a major consideration, nor has PSEA. The LS advised the evaluation team that it has been difficult to monitor subcontractors' activities but that there were few clauses about PSEA in contracts.

<sup>256</sup> LS user satisfaction rate was 90 percent as reported both in ACR 2017 and 2018.

<sup>257</sup> Key informants and, WFP, 2018. *ACR 2018*.

<sup>258</sup> WFP engineers, heavy machinery and casual labour were mobilized to enlarge the campsite by over 56.7 hectares. At one stage WFP had almost 100 bulldozers operating.



engineering support,<sup>259</sup> leaving WFP and IOM with the equipment and manpower needed to support camp maintenance. Before this, the Bangladesh military had played a key role in the first phase of the response by supporting site management and access road construction, building shelters and latrines, and transporting relief supplies from Chittagong port to Cox's Bazar.

226. **Finding 5.2f: While logistics coordination with the Government improved, there is a need for better integration of the work by the logistics sector and the Government.** With the humanitarian crisis transitioning into a protracted crisis, the need for better integration between the work done by the logistics sector and by the Government increases. One of the issues that requires attention is cross-border logistics. Currently, there is a list of approved items that can cross national borders, however, this list needs extending.

### Emergency telecommunications sector

227. **Finding 5.2g: As lead of the emergency telecommunications sector (ETS), WFP enabled inter-agency emergency telecommunications services at the start of the level three response.** This approach differed in part from the typical, more technically orientated emergency telecommunications sector deployment. Key components included "communications with communities"<sup>260</sup> and access to information through coordination, advocacy, and a needs-based provision of information and communications technology. Interviews indicate that the service for communities approach was not widely recognized within WFP and other coordination mechanisms, thereby leading to challenges in the rollout of the "ETC Connect" app that was developed to facilitate communication between the Rohingya refugees and the humanitarian organizations in Cox's Bazar. However, due to funding shortages, the initiative ended mid-2019. More successfully, there were increases in both the telecommunications capacity for the cyclone preparedness programme<sup>261</sup> and the broadcast coverage of a community radio station that supported social cohesion public awareness campaigns.

228. Importantly, the emergency telecommunications sector, under WFP leadership, was able to improve the telecommunications equipment in Cox's Bazar. Together with mobile network operators, internet service providers and humanitarian actors, technical solutions were found to assist needs. For instance, after mobile network operators were asked by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission to prevent refugees from using Bangladeshi networks, the emergency telecommunications sector provided the security radio infrastructure across all camps to ensure communications remained stable.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> The army switched efforts to constructing a camp boundary fence. The fence may cause additional risk if there is a cyclone or floods and the wire mesh could cause injuries. Concerns were raised with the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner /Government of Bangladesh.

<sup>260</sup> ETC had previously (2016 in Iraq) developed the term "services for communities" (S4C) to explore the use of information and communications technology to support people receiving relief and development assistance.

<sup>261</sup> Inter-Sector Coordination Group SitRep September 2018.

<sup>262</sup> See Annex 5 for more detail.

# 3. Conclusions and recommendations

## 3.1 CONCLUSIONS

229. The evaluation has found that the overall performance of the country strategic plan is broadly aligned with many of its stated outcomes and objectives and is largely consistent with supporting national policies and humanitarian interventions in Bangladesh. Due to the nature of the operation in Bangladesh, WFP was adept in responding to critical issues during the country strategic plan implementation. Expanding the country strategic plan activities and adding a fifth strategic outcome, while managing the level three response through several budget revisions over the country strategic plan period, presented many challenges. Despite these changes to the original country strategic plan, the WFP country office performance was effective in responding to the expansion of needs in the country.<sup>263</sup>

### Quality of the country strategic plan's strategic outcomes

230. Due to the separation of activities in the country strategic plan related to what these were intended to achieve as a measure of progress against an envisaged strategic outcome, WFP was unable to capture the full extent of how the results of its interventions contributed to progress on the various Sustainable Development Goals. This disconnect meant it was challenging to identify where the country strategic plan could have adapted to a changing external context; specifically, in order to adapt activities to ensure the country strategic plan maintained alignment with and coherence towards supporting government efforts at meeting SDG 2 and SDG 17 targets. Through the country strategic plan, WFP needed to ensure it had adequate resources to support government counterpart ministries to be able to develop a clear pathway for tracking and monitoring progress against targets, specifically in the context of the WFP niche area of nutrition-related food security. To underpin this support, it was essential for WFP to establish a lead role in facilitating and defining partnerships with clear roles of responsibility and lines of accountability with government counterparts and other key stakeholders.

231. The country strategic plan was established with the intention of generating unrestricted funds to finance strategic outcomes across the WFP portfolio of support to the Government's larger cross-cutting programmes. During the initial phase of the country strategic plan implementation in Bangladesh underfunding was an issue that overshadowed the strategic direction of the country strategic plan. This affected the country office's ability, particularly in the context of the multiple WFP development programme activities, to channel support to achieve its strategic aims of focusing on capacity strengthening objectives. In addition, the focus of resource allocation at a lower activity level in the country strategic plan restricted flexibility to redirect funding to higher strategic level interventions where and when it was required.

232. Another key challenge for the country office during the country strategic plan implementation was the absence of a clear vision for how activities under strategic outcome 1 – the primary focus on supporting government social safety net programmes – would contribute to the intended outcome. The country strategic plan places emphasis on the approach being one that provides technical assistance, engages with policy processes, and advocates for change to optimize efficiencies and effectiveness of national initiatives aimed at enhancing the food security and nutrition of the most vulnerable people. In the context of technical assistance, there has been a focus on actual capacity building and not on how the results of capacity building interventions would enhance national systems and actions to improve government nutrition indicators. WFP did not fully embrace opportunities to best position its support to change the system of national NS-SP interventions.

### Emergency response operational modalities – a key component of country strategic plans

233. Given Bangladesh's exposure to disaster risk scenarios, the country strategic plan was primarily designed to strengthen the linkages between humanitarian and development interventions. These systems,

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<sup>263</sup> Refer to Annex 9 Findings to Recommendations Matrix.

structures and processes often require extensive lead-in times to secure and maintain appropriate resource flows, while also necessitating a different way of engaging and securing investments with donor-supported inputs.

234. The changes to the country strategic plan/level three modalities contributed to a disruption in the strategic direction of the country strategic plan, which had an impact on the its ongoing development initiatives. Although the design of the country strategic plan recognized the probability of sudden onset emergency assistance, there was a disconnect between an effective strategy and operational systems for scaling up and integrating into government and United Nations agency collaborative actions. While the country strategic plan did not adversely impact on the speed and scale-up of the WFP response to the Rohingya crisis, the systems and structures in place at the time were not optimal. Nevertheless, strong leadership in Cox's Bazar and the country office meant that WFP was able to navigate through the weaknesses in the system without compromising its reputation.

235. In the context of worst-case climate-change scenarios, food insecurity among an increasing number of vulnerable people is likely to be a recurring problem in Bangladesh. WFP is well placed to continue in its role as a trusted agency with capable fast response mechanisms in place while also supporting, enhancing and strengthening government national development programmes to mitigate against the long-term impact of disasters on vulnerable groups.

### **Mainstreaming gender and social inclusion**

236. The country strategic plan rightly identifies the key cross-cutting linkages, gaps, and challenges to guide the process for developing support for government targets and strategic commitments. The challenge facing the WFP country office is that the approach to support cross-cutting activities appears to be reduced to a theoretical construct rather than a concerted effort to mainstream commitments and obligations across the full range of interventions.

237. Unless cross-cutting issues are sufficiently institutionalized, through appropriate job descriptions, with valid outcome indicators (not just percentage of staff receiving training), and until WFP staff are held to account, then there will be a continuous reliance on individuals' interest and the commitment of staff rather than a country office-wide response with which all staff are expected to align.

238. The country strategic plan defined a clear operational focus on engaging with and reaching the most vulnerable women, men and children, but this was not consistent across all of its activities and strategic outcome areas. The country strategic plan did not adequately consider sector-wide linkages and best practices in the context of international humanitarian policy architecture and protection. However, during country strategic plan implementation WFP established a close working relationship and coherence with other humanitarian actors. This was due largely to the country office proactively repositioning WFP based on its comparative advantage in logistics and supply chain management. Responding to the Rohingya crisis, WFP was effective in reaching the poorest refugees and demonstrated a clear comparative advantage able to support emergency interventions and operate at scale in critical areas. There was a trade-off between going to scale and including the coverage of the poorest through its approach. It was noted that WFP may not have always paid adequate attention or given sufficient consideration to rights and gender implications, in order to fully assess the risks of exclusion within its interventions.

239. The WFP country office will need to prioritize the significant amount of work that is required to address the gender equality and social inclusion challenges that are evident. Critical aspects of embedding gender equality and social inclusion into programme planning processes have been neglected over the years due to a range of differing circumstances.

240. While the country office may have overlooked these issues, the absence of sufficiently experienced senior staff to promote this approach means that a gender lens requires more internal advocacy. However, by institutionalizing gender equality and social inclusion as a key responsibility for all staff, the country office could learn from the speed and consistency with which new protection measures were rolled out. Gender equality and social inclusion and PSEA are linked but are not analogous; the latter appears to have benefited from internal and external pressure to implement; this learning approach could be transferred to bolster efforts for gender equality and social inclusion.

241. At a global level, WFP is committed to ensuring that its strategies for achieving a world of zero hunger need to be gender transformative. It also realizes its intention to deliver on the obligation under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – to leave no one behind. The challenge for WFP at the country office level has been to translate these commitments into realizable and practical actions, particularly in the context of the United Nations reform commitments.

### **Institutional capacity strengthening – embedding new ways of working**

242. Despite its best efforts to bring capacity strengthening into the country strategic plan design, there are clear challenges concerning the ability of WFP to embark on this organizational shift. In this regard the regional bureau in Bangkok and headquarters could have provided greater clarity and guidance to enable the country office to operate at a strategic level in support of government capacity strengthening strategic needs. The evidence also suggests that the roll-out approach in the country office has been inconsistent. This is largely as a result of ineffective communication to staff about the underlying strategic shift on the purpose of capacity strengthening, which is yet to be effectively institutionalized or embedded into the country office's organizational culture.

243. The absence of a strategic vision on capacity strengthening at different levels of government action, both through policy dialogue with relevant ministries, and through engagement with local government delivery mechanisms hindered WFP effectiveness as a key government partner. The WFP default in supporting government institutional strengthening has been on training and exposure visits as standard technical assistance packages, with little attention paid to broader policy discussions on enhancing and embedding nutrition into existing social safety net programmes.

244. Greater investment is required to ensure that country office staff have a collective understanding of who are the key WFP partners and what capacity support needs they have. This highlights a key capacity concern that country office staff require additional relevant skills deemed essential to complement and effectively and strategically support institutional systems strengthening of government counterpart ministries .

### **WFP performance in its strategic shift – enhancing partnerships**

245. The implementation of the country strategic plan in Bangladesh has required changes to the WFP operating model. This includes reassessing the organization's strategic position in terms of its long-standing relations with government counterpart ministries. There were aspects and areas of the Government's national strategic environment where the country strategic plan was not able to maximize opportunities to influence and shape the agenda. In this context, WFP did not fully utilize or explore the scope of setting, establishing, and embedding nutrition targets (SDG 2) adequately within its programme implementation areas.

246. The WFP move towards supporting government interventions and partner needs, and away from direct implementation, required different monitoring and reporting frameworks. In this regard, it was difficult to track issues of cost-effectiveness, largely due to information being scattered across programme activities with no coherent reporting lines. However, the country strategic plan was better at assessing cost-effectiveness of supply chain logistics and services in response to the Rohingya crisis through national coordination mechanisms.

247. The country strategic plan was intended to result in more effective partnerships spanning both the humanitarian and development contexts through advocacy and awareness raising, capacity strengthening and field implementation. The country office did not start off with a shared institutional understanding of what strategic partnerships entailed, both in terms of whom to partner with and in terms of what roles, responsibilities and contributions partners brought to a partnership arrangement. The specific modalities for establishing the partnership approach for country strategic plan implementation were not adequately set out. In order to identify country strategic plan partners, a number of strategies could have been deployed. Once the country office has established its priority focus thematic areas, it is important that the country strategic plan identifies its key stakeholders. This is useful both in terms of prioritizing the primary stakeholders, the aid recipients, and for identifying funding sources, the donors.

248. While some progress was made, partnerships were largely in relation to field implementation and advocacy and awareness raising. In a process that was, in the initial stages of the country strategic plan

implementation, more about learning-by-doing, it would have been appropriate for WFP to have developed guidance for its own internal ways of working on how to engage with government counterparts and development partners in the context of its catalytical role of influencing and facilitating change.

249. WFP could have made a more concerted effort to select its partners relevant to its thematic areas and based on an assessment of the specific country context in relation to the WFP comparative advantage. This might have included, for example, engaging programmatically with existing partners to draw on, and capitalize from, the technical expertise of the likes of UNICEF, Save the Children, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, and Nutrition International in designing and implementing nutrition-specific/sensitive interventions that link both humanitarian and development interventions.

250. The process for getting the country strategic plan right, as a new and effective strategic partnership framework tool, may take a few years to gradually settle in and for it to gain acceptance both within WFP and among its external stakeholder partners. It is important therefore that WFP country office learn lessons through this process and reflect on those observations when considering design iterations in subsequent country strategic plans. The WFP country office approach will need to be guided and steered by the changing political economy the country is likely to experience in the coming years as Bangladesh aims to consolidate its middle income status.

### 3.2 KEY LESSONS

251. The country strategic plan demonstrates the value of beginning with a shared institutional understanding of what strategic partnerships entail and how these issues relate to the envisaged organizational theory of change. It would have worked to the advantage of the country office, if senior management had involved government officials more in setting and defining collectively the country strategic plan strategic outcomes. To better manage performance and track results, future country strategic plans would benefit from an overarching theory of change that is regularly revised, to determine the causal pathways and assumptions that underpin its proposed interventions.

252. Positive gender actions have been developed by staff, but these seemed to have been derived more from their contextual understanding and building on networks rather than any specific strategy or assessment at a countrywide level. The evidence found that aspects of the WFP formal approach to gender can be easily “ticked off” by disaggregating data, achieving parity in men and women participant numbers, and by having interventions targeted only at women. A more nuanced understanding on how women (and other groups) access and engage with the WFP interventions, and how this relates to intra-household and social roles, is harder to accomplish and document. The WFP country office will need to create an enabling environment among all staff to ensure there is a radical shift in the way gender equality and social inclusion issues are institutionalized and mainstreamed in the next country strategic plan.

253. The country strategic plan was not set up to provide the most effective mechanism through which to react to the level three crisis. The level three response was run as a separate operation largely delinked from countrywide operations. While not surprising, given the scale of the response, this was at odds with the country strategic plan’s function to bring together development and emergency responses. Updating the country strategic plan with an additional strategic outcome for the level three emergency response came with transaction costs on staff time. Current thinking in the WFP country office around introducing a strategic outcome to country strategic plans in order to enable a response to an emergency without compromising the strategy and programmatic coherence is a pragmatic solution, especially in high disaster-prone countries such as Bangladesh. This would entail forward planning and analysing the typology of multiple disaster scenarios with estimate modeling of affected geographical areas and potential impact on different population groups. The design should also set out the structures to harmonize responses working with other United Nations agencies not only to work to relative WFP advantage areas, but also to reinforce and underpin United Nations reform commitments.

254. Establishing the the corporate results reporting framework led to an additional burden of workload in the Cox’s Bazar office on top of the need to respond to the Rohingya crisis. A situation that was not helped by the challenge of initially compiling data on the Rohingya crisis manually until receiving technical support to develop new systems. These challenges only compound the difficulty of extrapolating information across differing indicators in order to facilitate evidence-based decisions.

255. The WFP country office is a long-standing partner in supporting and strengthening NS-SP linkages in government safety net programme areas. As a forward projection the WFP country office's NS-SP objectives and interventions need to be more strongly aligned to the Government's National Social Security Strategy and Country Investment Plan 2, and other strategic NS-SP policy pillars. The WFP country office has not invested sufficient resources to investigate, and align with, what other social protection development partners are doing in NS-SP related areas. This is important to determine how WFP can complement and collaborate in partnership on these issues for maximum leverage. Reflecting on its experience, and taking on board shifting priorities, there may be a case for the WFP country office to reconsider some of its traditional social protection areas and re-prioritize and reposition itself if it intends to stay engaged with the NS-SP agenda at a strategic level.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

256. Building on the key findings, lessons learned and conclusions, the evaluation recognizes the many positive changes brought about by the country strategic plan process, while also observing opportunities to shape the strategic and operational direction for the next phase of country strategic plan planning. The six recommendations, three of which are strategic, and three operational, focus on issues that require immediate attention, whilst acknowledging the urgent challenges presented to WFP due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. The recommendations will need to be considered in a systematic way to ensure strategies and processes are put in place to address key issues for the next phase of the country strategic plan development process.



No.	Recommendation	Type	Who	Priority	When
1	<p><b>Enhance strategic partnerships</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>1.6 enhance and strengthen planning processes for developing the next CSP and actively engage with key stakeholders in shaping the strategic direction of the CSP;</p> <p>1.7 ensure that staff across the country office actively participate in the development of the next CSP by identifying and understanding the roles and operational parameters of key partners;</p> <p>1.8 develop a clear operational strategy that sets out how the next CSP will sustain government efforts to achieve SDG targets, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. United Nations reform efforts through the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework to set clear targets for 2030; and</li> <li>d. strengthening and supporting government governance and institutional reform systems engagement</li> </ul> <p>1.9 identify financial resources and development partners willing to invest in multi-year development interventions and resilience building efforts with communities affected by humanitarian crisis; and</p> <p>1.10 assess experiences and lessons learned from other country offices on CSP design processes to achieve the most effective strategic outcomes.</p>	Strategic	Country office, supported by the regional bureau and headquarters (Programme – Humanitarian and Development Division; Strategic Partnerships Division)	High	Mid 2021
2	<p><b>Improve the effectiveness of emergency preparedness, readiness and response mechanisms</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>2.5 ensure that an additional strategic outcome area is retained within the CSP for anticipating and mobilizing supplementary resources for immediate response to emergencies, including large-scale (Level 3) sudden-onset emergencies;</p> <p>2.6 actively engage with the Government to promote implementation of appropriate shock-responsive climate adaptation systems within national social protection programming and use WFP leverage to facilitate cooperation among stakeholders to sustain linkages between humanitarian-development programme interventions and emergency response mechanisms;</p> <p>2.7 invest further financial and human resources in supporting and complementing the work of the Government, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organization networks on embedding global standards on protection, accountability to affected populations and</p>	Strategic	Country office, with specialist support from the regional bureau and headquarters (Emergencies Operations Division; Programme – Humanitarian and Development	High	2021

No.	Recommendation	Type	Who	Priority	When
	<p>gender in emergency response mechanisms; and</p> <p>2.8 develop ready-to-apply plans anticipating responses to disaster events, both in the current context and for future scenarios.</p>		Division)		
3	<p><b>Strengthen support for nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>3.5 re-evaluate its added value and contribution to the Bangladesh social protection and nutrition arena, assessing strategic opportunities with relevant government ministries to complement the development of the national social protection policy framework mapping for the next phase of the national social security strategy;</p> <p>3.6 improve strategic relationships with key government actors to consolidate its role in promoting nutrition-sensitive interventions through national social safety net programmes;</p> <p>3.7 enhance, develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation strategy to facilitate evidence-based decisions for sharing with government policymakers and development partners; and</p> <p>3.8 develop and strengthen partnership ties with key social protection development partners to enhance linkages between nutrition-sensitive and adaptive shock responsiveness aspects of existing social protection programmes.</p>	Strategic	Country office, supported by headquarters (Social Protection Unit) and the regional bureau	Medium	2021–2022
4	<p><b>Enhance capacity strengthening strategy and interventions</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>4.4 ensure that the country capacity strengthening strategy is aligned with the revised corporate capacity strengthening strategy, underpins all CSP strategic outcome areas and effectively links up with other operational focus areas;</p> <p>4.5 ensure that the country office receives technical support for effectively linking programme operations and compliance with WFP global policy directives; this support should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. a training and development programme for selected staff tasked with implementing capacity strengthening objectives that takes into consideration WFP's niche areas and technical comparative advantage; and</li> <li>d. skills audits to determine the specific competency requirements for key staff for effectively and strategically engaging with government partners;</li> </ul> <p>4.6 reassess and evaluate the principles of the country capacity strengthening strategy to ensure clarity of purpose regarding how to effectively engage with the Government to support its</p>	Operational	<p>Country office</p> <p>Headquarters (Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service)</p> <p>Country office</p>	High	2021

No.	Recommendation	Type	Who	Priority	When
	capacity strengthening strategic goals in line with SDG commitments.				
5	<p><b>Strengthen gender equality and social inclusion interventions</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>5.6 fully integrate gender into thematic programming and CSP design to form the basis of a strategy for engaging with partners and stakeholders to ensure that WFP’s position on gender is effectively communicated;</p> <p>5.7 strengthen the design, implementation and qualitative monitoring of gender equality and social inclusion, including by commissioning studies, to shift the focus from quantitative aspects of gender, equity and social inclusion mainstreaming to a set of transformative actions embedded in activities and tracked across strategic outcomes;</p> <p>5.8 ensure that gender advisers and support units fully embed the principles and policy obligations that underpin WFP’s global position on gender transformation commitments in the CSP design process;</p> <p>5.9 build sufficient technical capacity in the gender, VAM and monitoring and evaluation units to support programme teams in operationalizing and mainstreaming gender considerations throughout the CSP period; and</p> <p>5.10 revisit recruitment and training strategies for redressing gender imbalances and ensure that adequate training is part of induction and continuous job performance and appraisal processes.</p>	Operational	Country office, supported by headquarters (Gender Office) and the regional bureau	High	2021
6	<p><b>Strengthen performance management strategy, processes and systems</b></p> <p>WFP should:</p> <p>6.5 develop a performance and knowledge management strategy to promote evidence-informed intervention design and implementation across CSP strategic outcome areas. The strategy should aim to build on best practice principles of the WFP monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning approaches; the research, assessment and monitoring model; and the three-pronged approach;</p> <p>6.6 encourage closer integration of the monitoring and evaluation, VAM and programme units to better capture lessons across CSP strategic outcomes and enhance field-level staff functions to go beyond distribution and process monitoring to provide contextual information (design) and connection to beneficiary experience (monitoring and evaluation);</p> <p>6.7 enhance qualitative research to inform nutrition-sensitive evidence generation and develop</p>	Operational	Country office (Monitoring and Evaluation Unit; Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit; Programme Unit)	High	2021

No.	Recommendation	Type	Who	Priority	When
	<p>monitoring and evaluation cross-cutting mechanisms – including strategies for engaging with and promoting the voices of poor and vulnerable groups in decision making – to inform policy and programmatic planning and to influence processes in dialogue with government partners; and</p> <p>6.8 ensure that all CSP activities are underpinned by specific theory-of-change methodologies, which should be regularly reviewed and used to inform programme interventions.</p>				



# Acronyms

<b>ACR</b>	Annual Country Report
<b>BDT</b>	Bangladeshi Taka
<b>BBS</b>	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
<b>CBT</b>	Cash-Based Transfers
<b>CCS</b>	Country Capacity Strengthening
<b>COMET</b>	Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Tool
<b>CP</b>	Country Programme
<b>CSP</b>	Country Strategic Plan
<b>CSPE</b>	Country Strategic Plan Evaluation
<b>CRF</b>	Corporate Results Framework
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
<b>EFSN</b>	Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (Programme)
<b>EQ</b>	Evaluation Question
<b>ETC</b>	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>HR</b>	Human Resource
<b>HSA</b>	Humanitarian Staging Area
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>IC-VGD</b>	Investment Component - Vulnerable Group Development
<b>IFPRI</b>	International Food Policy Research Institute
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IRM</b>	Integrated Road Map
<b>ISCG</b>	Inter-Sector Coordination Group
<b>L2</b>	Level Two Emergency Response
<b>L3</b>	Level Three Emergency Response
<b>IMLMA</b>	Improved Maternal and Lactating Mothers Allowance (Programme)
<b>LPG</b>	Liquefied Petroleum Gas (cooking gas)
<b>LS</b>	Logistics Sector
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MCBP</b>	Mother and Child Benefit Programme
<b>MAM</b>	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
<b>NFSC</b>	National Food Security Cluster
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NS-SP</b>	Nutrition-Sensitive Social Protection
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>PRRO</b>	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
<b>PSEA</b>	Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>RAM</b>	Research Assessment and Monitoring
<b>REVA</b>	Refugee influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment
<b>RBB</b>	Regional Bureau in Bangkok
<b>SAFE</b>	Safe Access to Fuel And Energy Project
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SGSP</b>	Strengthening Government Social Protection (Programmes for the Poor)
<b>SMEP</b>	Site Maintenance (or Management) Engineering Project
<b>SPFMSP</b>	Strengthening Public Financial Management for Social Protection



<b>SRA</b>	Social Responsibility Area
<b>SUN</b>	Scaling Up Nutrition
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>VAM</b>	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
<b>VGD</b>	Vulnerable Group Development
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

## **PHOTO CREDIT**

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