



WFP Bangladesh Country Brief April 2021

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

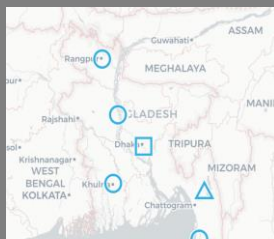
COVID-19 cases have increased dramatically in Bangladesh over the last two months. By end-April, there were 759,132 positive cases in the country, including 7,785 positive cases in host communities in Cox's Bazar and 579 positive cases among Rohingya refugees.

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

The Government of Bangladesh has ended the national lockdown which was in place from 26 March to 30 June, resulting in the closure of businesses and markets and causing a loss of employment for many, especially those working in the informal sector. Wearing facemasks while outside remains compulsory to contain the spread of COVID-19. Schools, which have been closed since March 2020 are due to reopen on 31 March 2021.

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

In response to the influx of over 745,000 Rohingya refugees in August 2017, the CSP was amended to facilitate WFP's tailored response to the crisis in Cox's Bazar. Since the start of the crisis, WFP has provided food assistance and nutrition services as well as life-skills training, disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities and common engineering services to the camp population every month. WFP also supports host community populations through longer-term interventions, including nutrition assistance, school feeding, livelihoods programmes and DRR activities.



Population: **167 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **135 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **31% of children between 6-59 months**

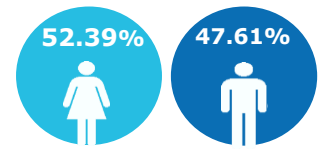
In Numbers

1,939 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$11.62 million cash-based transfers made

US\$71.89 million six months (May - October 2021) net funding requirements, of which **US\$66.52 million** is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response.

1.14 million people assisted in April 2021



Situational Updates

COVID-19 cases increased steeply in April in both the host community and Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar towards the end of the month; 7,785 confirmed cases have so far been reported in the host community as of 2 May and 579 in the camps, representing a respective increase of 2,192 and 173 infections from the beginning of April.

Bangladesh started its COVID-19 vaccination campaign in January for 130 million people. Health workers, law enforcement agencies, military forces, government officials, journalists and public representatives are being vaccinated first. On 5 April 2021, the Government initiated a second nation-wide lockdown to reduce the rise in COVID-19 cases across the country. Public movement has been restricted, while businesses have been allowed to stay open on the condition that they maintain appropriate safety protocols. The lockdown has since been extended until 16 May.

Operational Updates

All Rohingya refugees now receive **food assistance through e-vouchers** with 21 outlets operational by end-April. WFP also introduced live chicken and fish into two (of the 15) Fresh Food Corners in April.

Through the urban food security programme, WFP has so far provided 181,385 individuals with cash-based transfers and food. This programme, which has been operational in two slums in Dhaka since August 2020, has included the distribution of in-kind food to 149,885 individuals in quarantine and isolation.

Mother and Child Benefit Programme: WFP facilitated the self-registration of 22,588 new beneficiaries in April, and the transfer of a monthly allowance of BDT 800 (US\$ 9) to 104,298 beneficiaries enrolled under MCBP.

Rice Fortification: WFP continues to advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Government and private sector to scale up the distribution of fortified rice in food-based social safety net programmes and the commercial market. In April, the Government, with technical support from WFP, distributed fortified rice in 130 Upazilas under the Vulnerable Group Development programme and 140 Upazilas under the Food Friendly Programme.

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Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	May -Oct'21 Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
1,367.71 million	892.89 million	71.89 million

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable groups in rural and urban settings are supported by enhanced national actions to improve their nutrition indicators in line with the national targets by 2020.

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Act. 1 Technical assistance and advocacy to enhance the food security and nutrition impact of selected safety nets.
- Act. 2 Technical assistance and advocacy for improved nutrition.
- Act. 3 Technical assistance and advocacy for scaling up post-harvest rice fortification.
- Act. 4 Policy advice and technical assistance to scale-up school feeding.

Strategic Result 1: Access to Food

Strategic Outcome 2: The most vulnerable population of Cox's Bazar, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and disaster-stricken areas have enhanced food security and nutrition.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Act. 5 Deliver an integrated assistance package in Cox's Bazar.
- Act. 6 Deliver an integrated assistance package in Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- Act. 7 Deliver food assistance in emergencies.

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: Innovative approaches to enhance the resilience of food insecure households exposed to climate-related shocks and stresses are validated by 2020.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- Act. 8 Evidence creation on innovative approaches to enhance resilience.
- Act. 9 Implement the Nobo Jatra programme.

Strategic Result 5: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDG

Strategic Outcome 4: The humanitarian response system for large-scale natural disasters in Bangladesh can respond with reduced cost and lead time.

Focus area: Resilience

Activities:

- Act. 10 Capacity strengthening for emergency response.
- Act. 11 Lead the logistics cluster and co-lead the food-security cluster.

Strategic Result 8: Sharing of knowledge, expertise, technology, strengthen global partnership to support country efforts to achieve the SDG

Strategic Outcome 5: Humanitarian and development partners in Bangladesh have access to reliable services in the areas of supply chain, emergency telecommunication, site maintenance and engineering project crises.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Act. 12 Coordinate the LS/C and provide efficient common logistics services to support the humanitarian community's response.
- Act. 13 Coordinate the ETS/C and provide efficient common services to support the humanitarian community response.
- Act. 14 Site Maintenance and Engineering Project (SMEP).

Social Safety Nets: The urban food security programme, operational in two slums in Dhaka, builds in a cash-back element to incentivize nutrition and dietary diversity among beneficiaries, and is designed to support government safety nets to become more nutrition sensitive. The project works through 30 designated shops where beneficiaries use their monthly stipend to buy nutritious food items and avail cash-back top-ups of up to 25 percent from the designated shops.

Through the cash-back urban support programme, WFP provided support to a total of 31,076 individuals (7,399 households) with cash transfers in April. Of these, 89 percent received cashback incentives, with a total amounting to BDT 4.8 million (US\$ 57,421). Each family received up to BDT 750 (US\$ 9) based on their purchase of healthy foods in March 2021. Of all food purchased, more than 97 percent was healthy food.

Investment-Component Vulnerable Group

Development (ICVGD): 100,000 vulnerable women have been selected online through household verification under the ICVGD programme with technical assistance of WFP.

School feeding: In April, WFP supported the distribution of nutritious snacks for **over 3 million pre-primary and primary school children**. Of this number, 109,340 students were reached in Cox's Bazar host community with 311 mt of high energy biscuits and 181,200 households were reached in refugee camps with 227 mt of high energy biscuits. A total of 38 mt of high-energy biscuits was distributed as take-home rations to 10,204 children of government primary and NGO schools in Bandarban district.

Nutrition: WFP continues to implement the **targeted supplementary feeding programme** across 45 integrated nutrition sites in the refugee camps and 124 host community clinics.

WFP participated in the first preparatory national dialogue for the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, which is to be held later this year. WFP is the global lead for Action Track 5, "Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress".

Self-reliance in the Rohingya refugee camps: Over 380 women and men were engaged in self-reliance activities in April. This includes 86 people working in the recycling centre which has removed over half a million WFP food packets from camps and recycled them into almost 2,500 products.

Livelihoods in host communities of Cox's Bazar: WFP continued to support 28,671 host community women through the Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) programme. Almost US\$ 129,360 produce was sold through WFP's 23 operational aggregation centres in April.

The Logistics Sector launched the [Logistics Information Exchange- Physical Access Constraint](#) platform that enables access to comprehensive country-specific infrastructure and logician capacity information while allowing users to report real-time access constraints.

Donors

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

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