



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief October 2021



WFP beneficiaries in Cox's Bazar attend training on market linkages. © WFP/Asif Mahmud

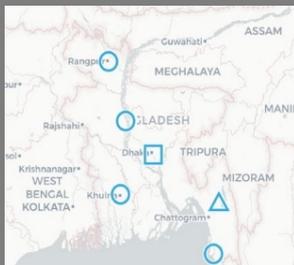
## Operational Context

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

Heightened tensions have characterized the refugee camps since 29 September, when prominent Rohingya repatriation activist, Mohib Ullah, was shot outside his Kutupalong office. Another violent attack occurred on 22 October, killing at least seven people and wounding many others, including children. The UNHCR has called for immediate measures to improve security in the camps, as well as the arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators.

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. A new CSP for 2022-2026 has recently been released and will go into effect in January 2022.

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

**1,578 mt** of food assistance distributed

**US\$ 16.9 m** cash-based transfers made

**US\$ 35.95 m** six months (November 2021- April 2022) net funding requirements, of which **US\$ 33.57 m** is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response.

**1.37 million people assisted** in October 2021



## Situational Updates

- **On 9 October**, the Government of Bangladesh and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the humanitarian response on Bhasan Char. With this common protection and policy framework in place, UN agencies can begin operational planning to provide services for the Rohingya population living on the island.
- **On 16 October**, religious extremists attacked Hindu temples across Bangladesh, resulting in the deaths of two men.
- **As of 31 October**, there have been 1.5 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Bangladesh with 27,887 deaths. The number of weekly cases reported continued to decrease; from 6,613 cases in the last week of September to 1,847 in the last week of October.

## Operational Updates

- **General Food Assistance (GFA):** WFP provided GFA to 892,000 refugees, all of whom have been receiving food assistance **through e-vouchers** from end April.
- **Mother and Child Benefit Programme:** WFP facilitated the self-registration of 5,815 new beneficiaries in October and transferred a monthly allowance of USD 9 to the 173,580 beneficiaries currently enrolled under Mother and Child Benefit Programme following Government to Person payment system.
- **Special Support to the Host Communities:** WFP completed the final round of one-time cash assistance to almost 92,000 Bangladeshi households in Cox's Bazar. The programme carried out together with Government, addressed the needs of vulnerable households most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Rice Fortification:** In September 2021, WFP supported the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and the Department of Women Affairs to increase access to fortified rice for 60,000 beneficiary households (300,000 people) in 19 Upazilas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

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## Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in US\$)	Allocated Contributions (in US\$)	Nov 2021-Apr 2022 Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
<b>1.37 billion*</b>	<b>1.06 billion*</b>	<b>35.95 million</b>

### 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 incentivise nutrition among beneficiaries, and is designed to support government safety nets become more nutrition sensitive. The project works through 30 designated shops where beneficiaries can use their monthly stipend to buy nutritious food items and avail a cash back top-up of up to 25 percent from designated shops.

Since August 2020, WFP has provided 181,385 individuals with cash transfers and food assistance. This includes the distribution of in-kind food to 149,885 individuals in quarantine and isolation. In October, WFP provided support to a total of 3,202 households with cash transfers. A total of 2,763 households received cash back incentives, with a total amounting to US\$ 113,089. Each family received up to US\$ 9 based on their purchase of healthy foods in July 2021. More than 97 percent of the total expenditure by beneficiaries was on healthy food.

- **School feeding:** WFP supported the distribution of nutritious snacks by the Government for **over 3 million pre-primary and primary school children**. In Cox's Bazar, 59,200 host community students were reached with 68 mt of fortified biscuits. In the camps, 87,900 refugee students received biscuits through the learning centres for the first time since the pandemic began. In addition, a total of 37 mt of fortified biscuits were distributed as take-home rations to 10,204 children of Government primary and NGO schools in Bandarban district.
- **Nutrition in Cox's Bazar:** WFP continues to implement **prevention of acute malnutrition and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition programmes** across 45 integrated nutrition sites in the refugee camps, and the TSFP at 129 host community clinics, reaching 204,000 pregnant and nursing women, and children under 5. Over 19,600 children under 5 received e-voucher assistance through the nutrition top-up pilot.
- **Self-reliance in the Rohingya refugee camps:** In October, 2,250 women and 735 men were engaged in self-reliance activities, including 662 people with disabilities. Participants engaged in Communications with Communities (CWC), centre-based training, recycling and agricultural activities and mask making which yielded 56,400 masks.
- **Livelihoods in host communities of Cox's Bazar:** WFP supported 43,600 host community women through the Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) programme, plus an additional 500 men and women in the climate adaptive agriculture pilot. US\$ 157,600 worth of produce was sold through WFPs 23 food aggregation centres in October.

## 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.