



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief

April 2022



WFP beneficiary from Chittagong Hill Tracts holding fortified rice © WFP/Asif Mahmud

Operational Context

WFP started its first operation in Bangladesh in 1974. While it has made significant economic growth in the past decade, the country still faces a number of challenges with nearly one third of the population facing food insecurity and 20 percent living below the national poverty line. Bangladesh is also particularly vulnerable to natural hazards with most of the population residing in areas that are prone to natural hazards such as floods and cyclones.

The country is still recovering from the economic shocks of the COVID-19 crisis. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected to fall to 5.1 percent in 2022 from 8.2 percent in 2019 and the average income of the poor has fell 23 percent below the pre-COVID level.

Since 2017, in response to the influx of over 745,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, WFP has been providing food assistance and nutrition services in the Cox's Bazar camps as well as life-skills training, disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities and common engineering services. WFP also supports Bangladeshis in the host communities through longer-term nutrition, school feeding, livelihoods and DRR interventions.

In 2022, WFP began implementing its new Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2022-2026. This CSP reinforces the commitment of WFP to provide food assistance in emergencies, and to strengthen the capacities of government counterparts and the resilience of vulnerable communities.

Since late 2020, the Government has been relocating a relatively small number of refugees from the camps in Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char island. UNHCR and the Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding in October 2021 which sets the policy framework for the UN's humanitarian response on the island.

Population: **167 million**

2015 Human Development Index: **135 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

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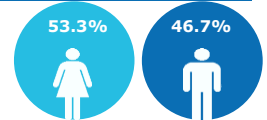
In Numbers

857 mt of food assistance distributed

US\$ 12 m cash-based transfers made

US\$ 186.62 m six months (May 2022 – October 2022) net funding requirements

1.37 m people assisted in April 2022



Operational Updates

- In **Bhasan Char**, WFP supported a second month of in-kind food assistance through its partner, Islamic Relief, reaching 21,900 people (almost 5,000 more than in March) and will continue supporting the population in May. WFP is looking to secure stable funding to support food operations from July onwards. Meanwhile, WFP will continue to support pregnant and lactating women and children under 5 on the island with specialized nutritious foods through its malnutrition prevention and treatment programmes with 6,272 individuals reached in April.
- In Cox's Bazar **general food assistance** was provided to 887,000 Rohingya using e-vouchers, which allow refugee households to select from a variety of cereals, spices and fresh food items at one of WFP's 21 e-voucher outlets.
- To address malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, WFP continued to provide preventive and curative services at 45 integrated **nutrition** sites in the refugee camps, along with curative services at 129 host community clinics. In April, more than 174,400 pregnant and nursing women, and children aged 6-59 months were reached within the refugee and host communities.
- Through the **school feeding** programme in Cox's Bazar, in April 125,000 host community and 233,400 refugee children received fortified biscuits from local schools and camp learning centres, respectively.
- There was no **disaster risk reduction** work or beneficiary engagement in Cox's Bazar in April, as the next phase of the programme will start in May 2022. However, several studies took place in the host community, including a need-gap analysis for the joint agricultural infrastructure intervention with the Department of Agriculture and FAO, and baseline and endline reports for WFP cyclone shelter improvement works.
- As part of the WFP **livelihoods** programme in Cox's Bazar, 24,800 vulnerable host community women are receiving training and start-up capital to set up their own businesses. A further 19,700 programme graduates continued to receive technical support for market and value chain development, including smallholder farmers linked to local markets and Fresh Food Corners via WFP and FAO aggregation centres.
- To enhance food security and nutrition among the most vulnerable refugees, 16,900 people were engaged in **self-reliance** activities, including agriculture, handicraft production and food packet recycling.

Country Strategic Plan (2022-2026)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
1.62 bn	155.35 m	142.63 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Populations affected by crisis in Bangladesh are able to meet basic food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after crises

Focus area: Crisis response

Act. 1: Provide food, nutrition and self-reliance assistance to crisis-affected populations.

Strategic Result 2: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 2: By 2026, the nutrition needs of women, children and vulnerable groups in Bangladesh are met through national institutions that have enhanced capacities to design and implement gender- and nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes

Focus area: Root causes

Act. 2: Support national institutions in strengthening their capacity to design and implement inclusive and nutrition- and gender-sensitive safety net programmes to meet the nutrition needs of women, children and vulnerable groups.

Strategic Result 4: Food Systems are Sustainable

Strategic Outcome 3: By 2026, vulnerable communities in Bangladesh are more resilient to shocks and natural disasters owing to enhanced national disaster management capacity and flexible, nutrition- and gender-sensitive social safety net programmes.

Focus area: Resilience building

Act. 3: Assist national institutions and communities in strengthening their capacity to implement inclusive, responsive and nutrition- and gender-sensitive safety net programmes and in disaster risk preparedness and response to protect the food security and nutrition of vulnerable populations.

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

Strategic Outcome 4: Vulnerable crisis-affected populations in Bangladesh benefit from enhanced coordination and improved common services during and after crises

Focus area: Crisis response

Act. 4: Provide coordination and common services to humanitarian and development partners and the Government

- Under the **urban food assistance project**, WFP supports 3,050 households in Dhaka with cash transfers to purchase food items, as well as Social and Behaviour Change Communication interventions incentivising healthy and diversified food purchases. WFP is also working with FAO to establish linkages with 500 smallholder farmers and 30 producers. In April, WFP and UNFPA provided 1260 adolescent girls and women from slum households with sanitary pads.

- With technical assistance from WFP, the Department of Women Affairs transferred the monthly payment of BDT 800 (USD 9) to over 205,000 **Mother and Child Benefit Programme** beneficiaries in 66 upazilas across Bangladesh for the month of April.

- As part of the **Seasonal Livelihood programme** in Kurigram, northern Bangladesh, WFP provided one-time investment grants to 250 additional households to enable them to start income-generating activities. Several of the 3,100 households engaged in the programme participated in WFP's new- climate-adaptive activities such as vermicomposting and hydroponic fodder cultivation. Together with Oxfam and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, WFP also began piloting **insurance for climate risks** for vulnerable groups in part of Kurigram.

Monitoring

- WFP received 229 calls through the WFP complaint and feedback hotline across Bangladesh with 211 calls emanating from Cox's Bazar. The call rate increased 76 percent in April with most calls related to food assistance and disaster risk reduction programmes in the camps.
- In Cox's Bazar, WFP M&E reached 95 percent of its monitoring target, visiting 88 food assistance, nutrition and self-reliance sites (75 in camps, 13 in host communities). The VAM team also published the March edition of its Market Monitor which assesses market functionality and the prices of key commodities used to support the Rohingya refugee response. A rapid food security and vulnerability assessment of Bhasan Char will be published soon.

Challenges

- Due to global supply chain shortages, WFP continued distributing half rations of SuperCereal Plus (WSB++) to children in its malnutrition prevention programme.

Success Story

Last year, [Happy Chakma](#), an Indigenous woman from Chittagong Hill Tracts, took part in a government-led, WFP supported, vulnerable group development (VGD) workshop. A resident of Rangamati district, she is not new to the challenges of monsoon rains, landslides and scarcity of resources. Through the programme, she learned about the benefits of fortified rice to complement the diet of those who do not have access to sufficient and diversified healthy food. She now cooks fortified rice for her family every day, ensuring her family meets more of their daily micronutrient requirements, no matter what the season.

Donors

Donors to WFP Bangladesh in 2022 include: Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Contributions were also received from multilateral funds, private donors, UN CERF, and UN pooled funds.