



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Bangladesh Country Brief August 2021



A beneficiary prepares a meal for her family with food provided by the EFSN programme © WFP/Asif Mahmud

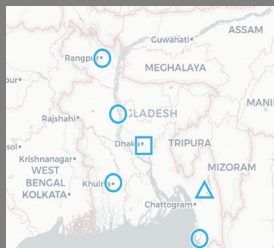
Operational Context

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.

The national lockdown which was in place from 26 March was eased on 19 August. Pandemic restrictions have resulted in the closure of businesses and markets and causing a loss of employment for many, especially those working in the informal sector. The government extended the closure of primary and secondary schools until 11 September, but announced the resumption of in-person learning at universities from October 15.

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**

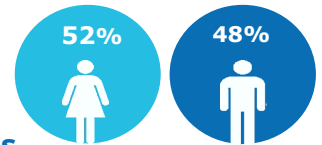
In Numbers

1,248 mt of food distributed

US\$ 11.45 million cash-based transfers made

US\$ 33.36 million six months (September '21-February '22) net funding requirements, of which **US\$ 29.87 million** is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response.

1 million people assisted in August 2021



Situational Updates

- **As of 30 August**, there have been 1.5 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Bangladesh with 26,563 deaths. The number of weekly cases reported sharply decreased in August; from 99,693 cases the last week of July to 20,919 in the last week of August.
- **In Cox's Bazar**, the first phase of the government's vaccination campaign for refugees over 55 was conducted and 86 percent were vaccinated from 10-23 August. The national lockdown was eased, although restrictions continued especially in the refugee camps.

Operational Updates

- **General Food Assistance (GFA):** WFP provided General Food Assistance to 866,770 refugees, all of whom have been receiving food assistance **through e-vouchers** from end-April. WFP lifesaving assistance continued in line with ongoing Government restrictions.
- **Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP):** WFP facilitated the self-registration of 5,951 beneficiaries in August and the transfer of a monthly allowance of USD 9 to 171,155 beneficiaries already enrolled under the Mother and Child Benefit Programme following Government to Person (G2P) payment system.
- **Rice Fortification:** WFP continues to support the distribution of fortified rice in government food-based social safety net programmes and commercial markets, reaching more than 7 million beneficiaries. In August 2021, WFP supported the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs and the Department of Women Affairs to increase access to fortified rice for 31,610 beneficiary households (141,000 people) in 19 Upazilas in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. WFP is also providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Food to develop guidelines and the long-term scale-up plan to mainstream rice fortification across safety net programmes by 2030.

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Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Sep'2021-Feb'2022 Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
1,367 million	1,012 million	33 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 incentivise nutrition and diversity 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 cash back top-up of up to 25 percent from the designated shops.

Since August 2020, WFP has provided 181,385 individuals with cash transfers and food. This includes the distribution of in-kind food to 149,885 individuals in quarantine and isolation. In August, WFP provided support to a total of 13,576 individuals (3,202 households) with cash transfers. A total of 2,763 households (11,715 individuals) received cashback incentives, with a total amounting to USD 113,089. Each family received up to USD 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:** In August, WFP supported the distribution of nutritious snacks by the Government for **over 3 million pre-primary and primary school children**. In Cox's Bazar, 48,513 students were reached in the host community with 182 mt of fortified biscuits and 184,196 households were reached in refugee camps with 230 mt of fortified biscuits. 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 the **basic and targeted supplementary feeding programmes** (BSFP and TSFP) across 45 integrated nutrition sites in the refugee camps, and the TSFP at 129 host community clinics, reaching 209,000 pregnant and nursing women, and children under 5.
- **Self-reliance in the Rohingya refugee camps:** in August, 1,700 women and 2,300 men were engaged in self-reliance activities, including 361 people with disabilities. Some participants received agricultural inputs, while others were engaged in mask production, Communications with Communities (CWC) or recycling activities. At the recycling centres, 15,160 packets and bottles were collected and cleaned, and 120 new handicraft products created.
- **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. USD 159,900 worth of produce was sold through WFP's 23 food aggregation centres in August.

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.