



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief June 2021



## 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 has been in place from 26 March was extended until 14 July with a strict stay-at-home order beginning 1 July. 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. Schools have remained closed for in-person learning since March 2020.

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

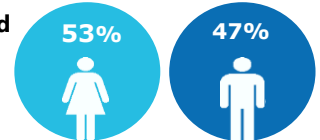
**1,558 mt** of food assistance distributed

**US\$ 11.25 million** cash-based transfers made

**US\$ 5.01 million** six months (July - December 2021) net funding requirements, of which

**US\$ 0.60 million** is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response.

**1.13 million people** assisted in June 2021



## Situation Updates

**COVID-19 cases increased rapidly in June** with 1,842 positive cases in the Rohingya camps and 10,507 cases in the host community, as of 5 July.

Bangladesh started its COVID-19 vaccination campaign in January. Health workers, law enforcement agencies, military forces, government officials, journalists and public representatives are being vaccinated first. Since early April 2021, the Government has put in place a second nationwide lockdown to reduce the rise in COVID-19 cases. Public movement has been restricted, while businesses have been allowed to stay open on the condition that they maintain appropriate safety protocols.

## Operational Updates

WFP provided **General Food Assistance (GFA)** to 882,152 refugees, all of whom have been receiving food assistance **through e-vouchers** from end-April. In May, the transfer value changed from 11 US\$ to 12 US\$ per person per month and allows beneficiaries to access the same quantity of food as before amidst inflation in food prices. Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases, five camps have been locked down since 20 May. WFP lifesaving assistance is continuing in line with Government restrictions. One new e-voucher site opened in June, bringing the total number of outlets to 22.

**Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP):** WFP facilitated new 12,964 beneficiary's self-registration in June and transfer of monthly allowance of BDT 800 to 165,204 beneficiaries enrolled under MCBP, following Government to Person (G2P) payment system.

**Rice Fortification:** WFP is continuing supporting the Ministry of Food to distribute fortified rice in 19 Upazilas in Chittagong Hill Tracts under the Vulnerable Group Development programme reaching more than 158,000 beneficiaries.

**Self-reliance in the Rohingya refugee camps:** Thirty-one women and men were engaged in self-reliance activities in June, including three people with disabilities. They cleaned and collected 16,000 packets and bottles products which will be recycled into handicraft products. Over half a million WFP food packets have been recycled since September 2020.

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Photo: WFP/Mehedi Rahman

## Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jul-Dec'21 Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>1,367.71 million</b>	<b>1,000.03 million</b>	<b>5.01 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 and dietary 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 shops. Since August 2020, WFP 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 June, WFP provided support to a total of 30,948 individuals (7,299 households) with cash transfers, and 6,539 households (27,464 individuals) received cashback incentives, with a total amounting to BDT 4,774,878 (USD 56,252).

### Investment-Component Vulnerable Group

**Development (ICVGD):** ICVGD beneficiary selection started in January and was completed in March. The ICVGD baseline survey (quantitative and qualitative) was conducted nationally and collected data of 2,600 beneficiaries in March-May. Upazila level inception and orientation began in June in 64 districts. 176 participants from WFP and the Department of Women Affairs attended 4 sessions of orientation on how to conduct an upazila level inception event for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of ICVGD.

**School feeding:** In June, WFP supported the distribution of nutritious snacks by the Government for **over 3 million pre-primary and primary school children**. Of this number, 108,419 students were reached in Cox's Bazar host community by WFP with 250 mt of high energy biscuits and 183,959 households were reached in refugee camps with 230 mt of high energy biscuits. A total of 37 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 129 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".

**Livelihoods in host communities of Cox's Bazar:** WFP supported 43,622 host community women through the Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) programme. Almost US\$ 126,800 worth of produce was sold through WFP's 23 operational aggregation centres in June.

## 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.

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