



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Bangladesh Country Brief May 2021



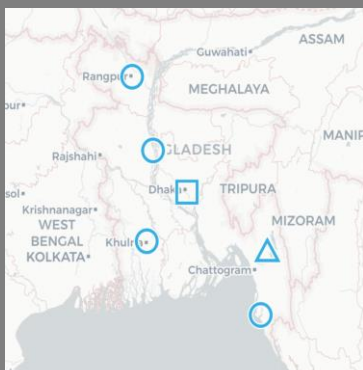
## Operational Context

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 significant, 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 has been extended until 16 June. 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, which have been closed since March 2020 have not reopened as originally planned due to the lockdown.

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

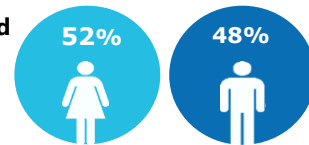
**1,697 mt** of food assistance distributed

**US\$ 10.36 million** cash-based transfers made

**US\$ 80.98 million** six months (June - November 2021) net funding requirements, of which

**US\$ 75.19 million** is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response.

**1.02 million people** assisted in May 2021



## Situation Updates

**COVID-19 cases continued to increase in May** with 1,316 positive cases in the Rohingya camps – more than twice the number of infections reported in April. An additional 9,325 cases were reported in the host community as of 6 June.

Bangladesh started its COVID-19 vaccination campaign in January. Health workers, law enforcement agencies, military forces, government officials, journalists and public representatives will be vaccinated first. Since early April 2021, the Government has put in place a second nation-wide 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 862,875 refugees, all of whom have been receiving food assistance **through e-vouchers** in 21 outlets from end-April. In May, the transfer value changed from 11 US\$ to 12 US\$ per person per month. This increase reflects the inflated food costs in the market and increased vulnerability reported in the Rohingya Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVA-4). The value increase will allow beneficiaries to access the same quantity of food as before. Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases, five camps were locked down from 20 May. WFP general food assistance (GFA), retail and nutrition interventions are continuing however, all other staff have suspended their presence in the locked down camps until restrictions are lifted. Operations in other camps continue, complying with Government restrictions.

**Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP):** WFP facilitated the self-registration of 10,108 new beneficiaries in May, and the transfer of a monthly allowance of BDT 800 to the 152,240 beneficiaries currently enrolled under MCBP.

**Rice Fortification:** From May onward, WFP is 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.

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".

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## Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Jun–Nov'21 Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
<b>1,367.71 million</b>	<b>931.36 million</b>	<b>80.98 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 designated 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 May, WFP provided support to a total of 29,694 individuals (7,070 households) with cash transfers. 6,599 households (27,716 individuals) received cashback incentives, with a total amounting to BDT 4,782,436 (USD 56,778). Each family received up to BDT 750 (USD 8.83) based on their purchase of healthy foods in April 2021. More than 97 percent of the total expenditure by beneficiaries was on healthy food.

**Investment-Component Vulnerable Group Development (ICVGD):** ICVGD beneficiary selection started in January and was completed in early March. The ICVGD baseline survey was conducted nationally and collected data of 2,600 beneficiaries in March-May. Upazila level inception and orientation will start in June in 64 districts.

**School feeding:** In May, WFP supported the distribution of nutritious snacks for **over 3 million pre-primary and primary school children**. Of this number, 89,668 students were reached in Cox's Bazar host community with 268 mt of high energy biscuits and 183,843 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.

**Self-reliance in the Rohingya refugee camps:** Eighty-seven women and men were engaged in self-reliance activities in May. They recycled 30,000 products for the recycling centre and recycled them into almost 2,500 products. The recycling centre has removed over half a million WFP food packets from the camps since September 2020.

**Livelihoods in host communities of Cox's Bazar:** WFP supported 42,755 host community women through the Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition (EFSN) programme. Almost US\$ 83,000 worth of produce was sold through WFP's 23 operational aggregation centres in May.

## 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.

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