



WFP Bangladesh Country Brief February 2021

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



Operational Context

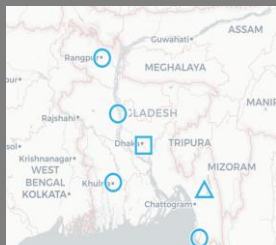
COVID-19 cases continued to increase in Bangladesh. By 28 February there were 534,770 positive cases in the country, including 5,593 positive cases in host communities in Cox's Bazar and 406 positive cases among Rohingya refugees.

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

The Government of Bangladesh has ended the national lockdown which was in place from 26 March to 30 June, resulting in the closure of businesses and markets and causing a loss of employment for many, especially those working in the informal sector. Wearing facemasks while outside remains compulsory to contain the spread of COVID-19. Schools, which have been closed since March 2020 are due to reopen on 31 March 2021.

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.

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**

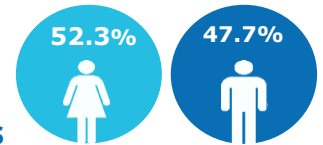
In Numbers

1,168.87 mt of food distributed

US\$10.66 million cash-based transfers made

US\$83.67 million six months (March - August 2021) net funding requirements, of which **US\$74.39 million** is for the Cox's Bazar L2 Emergency Response.

1.01 million people assisted in February 2021



Situational Updates

Bangladesh started its COVID-19 vaccination campaign in January for 130 million people. Health workers, law enforcement agencies, military forces, government officials, journalists and public representatives will be vaccinated first. WFP national staff who qualify for priority treatment have also started to be vaccinated as part of the national campaign, while details of the vaccination roll-out for WFP international staff are still being determined.

A fourth group of 2,818 Rohingya refugees were relocated to Bhashan Char island on 13, 14 and 15 February bringing the total number of refugees on the island to almost 10,000.

Operational Updates

WFP provided **General Food Assistance (GFA)** to 857,937 Rohingya refugees. Almost 99 percent (844,287 people) received e-vouchers at 21 outlets and the remaining caseload (13,650 people) received in-kind assistance at one distribution point. **Building Blocks**, WFP's blockchain-based digital ledger launched one year ago in March 2020, is now serving 95 percent of the total refugee population and has processed 1.3 million transactions to date.

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.

Through the cash-back urban support programme, WFP provided support to a total of 31,109 individuals (7,407 households) with cash transfers in February. Of these, 6,554 households (27,527 individuals) received cash-back incentives, totalling BDT 4.4 million (US\$52,179). Each family received up to BDT 750 (US\$8.83) based on their purchase of healthy foods in February. Of all food purchased, more than 97 percent was healthy food.

Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP): WFP facilitated the self-registration of 22,588 new beneficiaries in February, and the transfer of a monthly allowance of BDT 800 (US\$9) to 104,298 beneficiaries enrolled under MCBP.

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Country Strategic Plan (2017-2020)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Mar -Aug'21 Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
1,367.71 million	874.98 million*	83.67 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).

Investment Component Vulnerable Group Development (IC-VGD) Programme: With technical assistance from WFP, the Government has selected 100,000 vulnerable women through online household verification under the IC-VGD programme.

School Feeding: In February, WFP supported the distribution of nutritious snacks for **over 3 million pre-primary and primary school children**. Of this number, 73,353 students were reached in Cox's Bazar host community with 138 mt of high energy biscuits and 182,307 households were reached in refugee camps with 228 mt of high energy biscuits. A total of 37.5 mt of high-energy biscuits was distributed as take-home rations to 10,204 children of Govt. primary and NGO schools in Bandarban district.

Rice Fortification: WFP continues to advocate for and provide technical assistance to the Government to scale up distribution of fortified rice through its social safety net programmes. WFP is supporting the Government in scaling up rice fortification in the food friendly programme (FFP) and the vulnerable group development (VGD) programme in 120 new upazilas in 2021 to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

Nutrition: As part of COVID-19 programmatic adaptations, WFP continues to implement the **targeted supplementary feeding programme** across 45 integrated nutrition sites in the refugee camps and 123 host community clinics. In February, WFP provided malnutrition prevention and treatment services to 44,912 pregnant and nursing mothers and 174,723 children under 5 in the camps and host communities.

Livelihoods in host communities of Cox's Bazar: Through the ten functional aggregation and collection centres, women from host communities in Ukhiya and Teknaf sold products worth US\$100,801 in February.

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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