



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Private Sector Engagement

WFP Bangladesh conducts development and humanitarian work with the engagement of a range of private companies within Bangladesh.

MOBILE MONEY TRANSFERS

Since 2017, WFP has supported the digital literacy and inclusion of the low-income Bangladeshi households through its long-term partnership with bKash. Through the national mobile financial service, beneficiaries receive WFP cash entitlements through mobile money transfers using accounts linked with their mobile SIM number. Currently bKash services are being used to facilitate CBT transfers to beneficiaries of WFP's urban food security programme in Dhaka, Resilience programme beneficiaries in Kurigram, June 2022 flood response beneficiaries in Sylhet as well as Bangladeshi participants of WFP's DRR and livelihoods programmes in Cox's Bazar. The transition from cash-in-hand to mobile money transfer has helped to mitigate security and protection risks, increase accountability, and prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the height of the pandemic by reducing crowding at distribution points.

INNOVATIVE FOOD ASSISTANCE

In Cox's Bazar, WFP works with 12 Bangladeshi retailers who manage e-voucher outlets in the refugee camps. They inject US\$7.3 million directly into the local economy every month under the current US\$8 ration (US\$11 million is injected each month under the full US\$12 ration).

Every month, WFP and retailers agree on standards for products being sold depending on the season and the availability of commodities, and product samples are reviewed for quality control. After products reach the shelves, WFP performs frequent quality checks in the warehouses and e-voucher outlets, and supervises retailers to ensure the most efficient and dignified shopping experience for beneficiaries.

On Bhasan Char, WFP has contracted a new Bangladeshi retailer as part of a value voucher pilot launched in December 2022. Now scaled up to 10,200 people (34 percent of the island population), the pilot has been extended to January 2024 to allow for a detailed assessment of the market functionality and the onboarding of larger retailers to gradually shift the remaining population to e-vouchers.

PRODUCING MICRO-NUTRIENT FORTIFIED BISCUITS

Since the National School Feeding Programme started in 2001, WFP has assisted the Government of Bangladesh to manage contracts with 10 fortified biscuit suppliers across the country.

In collaboration with Government, WFP provides a standard set of specifications to manufacturers as well as annual training. WFP Food Safety Technicians perform quality control checks at every level of production to identify any potential issues, such as micro-leakage, through contracted firms). To ensure safe and undamaged products reach needy children under the programme, every batch of biscuits – whether destined for WFP or Government-supported sub-districts – is also inspected by government scientists from the Ministry of Science and Technology (BCSIR Laboratories) before being certified and delivered to schools.

Under the new National School Feeding Programme (expected later in 2023), WFP will be ready to support Government with additional contracts as requested.



MARKETING AND SCALE-UP OF FORTIFIED RICE

From 2015, WFP has supported the Government to establish domestic production of fortified rice kernels and reduce micronutrient deficiencies. Seven private companies in Bangladesh now make the kernels, which are composed of rice powder mixed with vitamins and 180 millers across the country blend the kernels with ordinary rice. Fortified rice is distributed to more than 15 million ultra-poor Bangladeshis through two government social safety nets. To make the nutritious product more widely available, WFP also supports commercial scale-up in the country. WFP is facilitating cost analysis and market research to enhance understanding of consumer and producer preferences and behaviour, to promote local fortified rice sales and to advocate for the continued use of fortified rice within government social safety nets.

NUTRITION-CONSCIOUS BUSINESS SUPPORT

WFP co-chairs the Scaling Up Nutrition Business Network (SUN) in Bangladesh, which mobilizes business investment in responsible and sustainable ways to improve the consumption of safe, nutritious food.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE VIA PRIVATE INSURANCE

In 2020, Oxfam, Green Delta Insurance Company Ltd. and WFP designed a flood insurance scheme to compensate for agricultural wage losses in case of severe weather in Kurigram, northern Bangladesh. Following prolonged 2020 monsoon flooding, the scheme supported 2,000 farming and agricultural labourer households with BDT 2,700 (US\$ 27) to cover lost wages based on set flood index parameters. Weather index-based crop insurance was created in 2021 to test how crop-specific insurance could further mitigate losses caused by extreme weather. These two types of insurance have covered some 12,500 marginalized, smallholder farmers so far, and analyses of the pay-outs so far are providing Government with evidence on how it might incorporate innovations and shock-responsiveness into social safety nets countrywide.

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING AND MARKET LINKAGES

Since 2019, WFP has engaged Japanese company, Euglena Co. Ltd., through a broader, multi-year partnership supported by the Japanese government. Euglena provides farmers with training on mung bean cultivation methods in Patuakhali. After the harvest, the beans are delivered to the Euglena factory in Ishwardi for sorting, packing and shipment to WFP-contracted retailers at WFP e-voucher outlets in the Cox's Bazar camps and the export market.

Photos (WFP/Sayed Asif Mahmud)

Pg. 1: Fatema Khatun, 27, an Urban Food Programme participant redeems WFP cash assistance from a bKash agent in Dhaka's Duaripara slum

Pg. 2: WFP staff observe the packaging of micronutrient-fortified biscuits at one of the 10 facilities it contracts to produce the lifegiving product