



Bangladesh, 2024 © WFP/ Saikat Mojumder



Resilience-building

Adapting to a changing climate

In Bangladesh, climate change is a daily reality. As one of the world's most climate-vulnerable and flood-exposed countries, it faces worsening floods, cyclones, sea-level rise, and extreme heat. Tropical cyclones cost around USD 1 billion annually, and severe flooding could cut GDP by up to 9 percent (World Bank). Poor communities in districts like Kurigram, Barguna, Gaibandha, and Cox's Bazar face growing risks to their food security and livelihoods.

WFP partners with the Government to help communities anticipate, respond to, and recover from climate-related disasters. Through integrated resilience-building efforts including anticipatory action, emergency response, climate risk insurance, and social protection, WFP supports families not just to survive, but to recover and bounce back stronger.

Acting before disasters strike

WFP leads anticipatory action (AA) in Bangladesh using forecasts and early warning systems to provide cash

support to vulnerable families before disasters occur. In partnership with the government and as co-lead of the AA Technical Working Group, WFP ensures a coordinated response across all actors.

First introduced in 2015, anticipatory action reached a major milestone in 2024 with the largest-ever operation, supporting 628,000 people ahead of a cyclone and floods in the Jamuna Basin. This marked the first time AA was used in response to a cyclone in Bangladesh. Families received cash to protect their food, livestock, and assets, reducing losses and speeding up recovery.

WFP is also coordinating the early warning for all (EW4AALL) initiative in Bangladesh, with a roadmap developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR). Its implementation is critical to strengthening early warning systems, enhancing community preparedness, and enabling timely anticipatory action for climate-related disasters.

Emergency response and recovery

When extreme weather events occur, WFP delivers timely food and cash assistance to families in the hardest-hit areas. But response is only the beginning. Through its Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) programme, WFP supports recovery by enabling vulnerable communities to build or rehabilitate critical infrastructure such as raised homesteads, embankments, roads, and irrigation canals, while receiving food or cash assistance. These efforts provide vital income during lean seasons, strengthen resilience to future shocks, and help restore community assets lost to climate disasters. In 2024 alone, WFP reached hundreds of thousands of people across Feni, Cumilla, Noakhali, and other flood- and cyclone-affected districts.

Embedding resilience in safety nets

Since 2023, WFP has been supporting the Government to integrate anticipatory and shock-responsive features into national safety nets, including the Employment Generation Programme for the Poorest (EGPP) and the Mother and Child Benefit Programme (MCBP). This includes strengthening early warning systems, developing tools to rapidly identify and reach at-risk populations, enabling secure digital payments, and designing programmes that consider climate risks and seasonal shocks. WFP has also worked to embed shock-responsive elements into the Vulnerable Women Benefit Programme (VWBP), Old Age Allowance, and Disability Allowance, helping ensure timely and effective assistance to those most in need.

Integrated risk management: a systems-based approach

Since 2018, WFP's Integrated Risk Management (IRM) approach in Bangladesh has combined anticipatory action, climate risk insurance, seasonal livelihood programming, and disaster risk reduction. By linking early action with insurance, diversified livelihoods, and community preparedness, IRM strengthens national systems and empowers vulnerable households to manage climate risks, breaking the cycle of crisis and recovery and promoting long-term resilience and food security.

Partnering for scalable solutions

WFP works with the Cabinet Division, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Ministry of Women Children

Affairs, and technical agencies like the Meteorological Department and Flood Forecasting Centre to strengthen national policies and protocols for anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection. WFP partners with the Economic Relations Division to develop pre-arranged, trigger-based financing mechanisms, advancing national-level risk financing in Bangladesh.

At the community level, WFP partners with local government and NGOs to deliver cash and asset creation programmes, supports Disaster Management Committees in conducting risk assessments and planning, and pilots index-based climate insurance. In hard-to-reach areas such as char lands and cyclone-prone coasts, WFP engages youth volunteers and builds local preparedness.

In Cox's Bazar, where climate risks and population pressures intersect, WFP supports both host communities and Rohingya refugees through reforestation, slope stabilization, gardening, and skills training in sustainable livelihoods. Activities also include Food for Assets initiatives such as the construction of roads and pathways, as well as agricultural infrastructure development to connect farmlands with markets. WFP also connects smallholder farmers to retailers supplying Fresh Food Corners in the refugee camps, strengthening local food systems and improving nutrition access. On Bhasan Char, WFP promotes climate-resilient food production, including rice fortification, to strengthen refugee self-reliance in this remote and high-risk setting.

Evidence and impact

Research shows that every dollar invested in anticipatory action can save up to US\$7 in avoided losses. Post-distribution monitoring confirms that early cash enables better preparedness and faster recovery, while community feedback points to greater dignity, less debt, and fewer harmful coping strategies. WFP also supports national resilience analytics through risk mapping, vulnerability assessments, and cost-benefit analyses to guide future programme design and scale-up.

Looking ahead

As climate risks grow, so must our collective response. WFP stands ready to support the Government to develop climate policy and access climate financing opportunities such as the Global Shield, the Green Climate Fund, InsuResilience, and other regional risk financing initiatives. With continued collaboration, Bangladesh can lead the region in climate-smart social protection and disaster response. WFP remains committed to a future where no shock drives families into poverty and communities are equipped to withstand future challenges.

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