

**Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus, Phase 2 (SAFE+2)
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2023**

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <p>Programme Title: <i>Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus, phase 2 (SAFE+2)</i></p> <p>Programme Number: <i>MPTF00293 & XI-IATI-UNPF</i></p> <p>MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ <i>00132257</i></p>	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p><i>Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar region. Strategic result areas include: cleaner energy provision, regional environment and ecosystems, and enhanced resilience for refugee and host communities.</i></p> <p><i>Strategic Priority Area 1: Access to Cleaner Energy</i></p> <p><i>Strategic Priority Area 2: Environment and Ecosystem</i></p> <p><i>Strategic Priority Area 3: Resilience</i></p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <p>FAO, IOM, UNHCR, WFP</p>	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <p>FAO worked with the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Department of Environment (DoE), Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Office (RRRC), district and sub-district administration, local government organizations, the Coastal Forest Division, the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and the Mukti Foundation.</p> <p>IOM provided liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) distributions through direct implementation and worked with NF Enterprise as supplier/service provider. The agency directly implemented a livelihoods study. The organization works with RRRC and its sub-divisions for overall programme support.</p> <p>UNHCR works with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) and BEXIMCO (and BEXIMCO's partner Help the Needy) to enable LPG distributions. The agency also works with RRRC and its sub-divisions. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) supported UNHCR with research on refugees' LPG consumption levels and in the identification of energy savings with pressure cookers.</p> <p>WFP's skills development activities are conducted through Action Aid Bangladesh, BRAC, Stitching Cordaid, HelpAge, and a private company providing technical support for market linkage and promotion. In 2023, skills development activities continued in coordination with ISCG sectors such as the Food Security Sector (FSS) and the</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector. Overall coordination is maintained with other SAFE+2 partners and the Government of Bangladesh.

Programme/Project Cost (US\$)

Total approved budget as per project document:
USD 282,039,934

MPTF /JP Contribution⁴:

- *FAO: USD 2,349,624*
- *IOM: USD 5,603,413*
- *UNHCR: USD 5,653,256*
- *WFP: USD 2,133,148*

The first tranche from the Sewdish contribution, USD 5,842,559, was received in December 2022 but disbursed to partners in 2023. Therefore, total MPTF /JP contribution in 2023 were: USD 15,739,441

Agency Contribution

- *by Agency (if applicable)*

Government Contribution
(if applicable)

Other Contributions (donors)

Canada: CAD 7.5 million/ USD 5,466,572

Sweden: SEK 18.5 million/ USD 1,712,289

Norway: NOK 30 million/ USD 2,850,735

TOTAL: USD 10,029,597

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.

Assessment/Review - if applicable *please attach*

Yes No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

Mid-Term Evaluation Report – *if applicable please attach*

Yes No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

Programme Duration

Overall Duration: *33 months*

Start Date⁵ (*06.07.2022*)

Original End Date⁶ (*31.03.2025*)

Current End date⁷(*31.03.2025*)

Report Submitted By

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⁴ The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

NARRATIVE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, SAFE+2 partners have maintained and continued to build on the successes of the initial phase of SAFE+2 and the continuation of the programme in 2022 across all three priority areas: refugees' access to cleaner energy, environmental conservation, and resilience. Notably, advancements in fundraising and coordination were achieved although further efforts particularly in fundraising are required.

Strategic Priority 1: Access to Cleaner Energy

Under this priority, efforts have been directed towards ensuring access to cleaner energy sources for Rohingya refugees. The distribution of LPG by IOM and UNHCR has been sustained throughout 2023, benefiting almost 195,000 Rohingya households, encompassing approximately 940,000 refugees across 33 refugee camps. Remarkably, WFP's Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVA 6⁸) affirmed that 99% of refugees receive LPG as their primary cooking fuel. Over the course of 2023 a total of 472,044 LPG cylinders have been distributed to refugees in Cox's Bazar with funding from SAFE+2, 26% of the total number of LPG cylinders distributed in 2023.

Strategic Priority 2: Environment and Ecosystems

According to the RIMA 2⁹ study, the average resilience index of households benefiting from the project interventions was 39 in the host community and 36 in the Rohingya community. Initial analysis of the data collected for RIMA-3, covering the reporting period, shows that 61 percent of the farmers supported by the project are now able to market their produce locally, generating an average annual revenue of USD 452, compared to unsupported farmers with an average annual revenue of USD 295. In 2023, SAFE+2 achieved plantation coverage of 73 ha degraded landscapes. This includes plantation on roadsides, slopes and streambanks.

According to the preliminary results from the RIMA 3 survey food security among supported households also increased from 66 percent in 2022 to 68 percent in 2023. Satisfaction levels among beneficiaries provided with inputs and tools under the project show that 99 percent of Rohingyas and 81 percent of host Bangladeshis are highly satisfied with the quantity and quality of inputs they received. Additionally, 78 percent of Rohingyas and 89 percent of host Bangladeshis are satisfied with their crop production using the inputs provided by FAO.

Strategic Priority 3: Resilience

In 2023, under the resilience component, WFP provided vocational skills development to 5,227 beneficiaries, comprising 3,390 women and 1,833 men. The activities covered community aquaculture and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). TVET encompassed various skills such as reusable sanitary napkin production, handicrafts, tailoring, mechanics, bamboo and wood repair, gas stove repair, solar panel maintenance, and plumbing. Additionally, life skills training was provided in accordance with the Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector (LSDS) guidance, including basic literacy and numeracy lessons, cooking demonstrations, sign language sessions, and training on solid waste management and upcycling.

Under Strategic Priority 3, FAO conducted homestead gardening training in Rohingya camps and host communities, utilizing updated guidelines from the Food security sector (FSS) and RRRC. FAO also trained local extension providers on digital and farm mechanics services and distributed vegetable seeds and inputs

⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/refugee-influx-emergency-vulnerability-assessment-reva-6-report-june-2023>

⁹ https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/rima_r2_report_oct_2023.pdf

to 600 female beneficiaries in Rohingya camps and 2,200 in host communities. Additionally, they provided training on gardening, climate-smart agriculture, financial management, and market linkage.

In terms of coordination, monthly SAFE+2 coordination meetings, led by the SAFE+2 Coordinator, were held in Cox's Bazar, facilitating information exchange and collaborative approaches on technical and operational matters among partner agencies. Further, SAFE+2 partners convened its annual meeting with the Bangladeshi Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) and the three SAFE+2 donors to ensure oversight and transparency. To promote the programme in Bangladesh SAFE+2 partners organized two meetings to present the programme and its achievements to the wider donor community in Bangladesh.

Donor support remains integral to the success of the SAFE+2 programme. Grateful acknowledgment is extended to Canada (GAC), Sweden and Norway for their generous contribution, which enabled the implementation of all SAFE+2 activities during the reporting period. In 2023, the programme welcomed Norway as a new contributor, further enhancing its financial capacity.

Given the program's substantial operational costs, partners have devised a targeted fundraising strategy focusing on both traditional and non-traditional donors. Emphasis has also been placed on cost-saving measures and prioritization. Notably, particular attention has been directed towards averting potential disruptions, such as an LPG pipeline break, which could jeopardize the substantial investments made in the Cox's Bazar area. As funding constraints persist, prioritization of activities based on criticality will be imperative for the SAFE+2 programme in the forthcoming year. Fundraising and cost-saving thus constitute primary areas of focus for SAFE+2 programming in 2024.

I. Purpose

The inception of the SAFE+ programme was driven by the imperative to address the operational requirement for a pragmatic, secure, and sustainable cooking fuel alternative to firewood, achieved through the provision of LPG. Beyond this primary objective, the programme also sought to address the pressing issues of deforestation in and around the Cox's Bazar refugee camps, and to facilitate the restoration of impacted ecosystems. Furthermore, it aimed to diminish the risks and vulnerabilities faced by women in the form of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and to foster enhanced social cohesion between refugee and host communities through initiatives focused on livelihoods and skills development.

In the evolution of the initiative, the SAFE+2 programme, as the second phase, retained these foundational program objectives while focusing its focus towards three principal Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority 1: Access to Cleaner Energy

This priority is dedicated to ensuring the provision of cleaner and more efficient cooking energy. It involves the sustained distribution of LPG and energy-efficient cooking equipment to curtail deforestation and contribute to climate change mitigation.

Strategic Priority 2: Environment and Ecosystems

This priority centers on knowledge management pertaining to watershed and natural resource management. It emphasizes ecosystem rehabilitation, environmental conservation, and climate action, along with efforts to fortify relations between refugee and host communities. Additionally, it addresses the mitigation of conflicts over natural resources, incorporating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approaches to prevent landslides, floods, and droughts through Nature-Based Solutions.

Strategic Priority 3: Resilience

This priority is geared towards enhancing resilience for both refugees and host communities. It encompasses initiatives related to skills development, livelihood practices, and endeavors to empower refugees to be as self-sustainable as possible. Furthermore, it seeks to prevent further environmental harm resulting from negative coping strategies and unsustainable agricultural practices.

Outcomes:

The principal anticipated outcome of the SAFE+2 programme under Strategic Priority One, 'Access to Cleaner Energy,' is to ensure that targeted households possess secure and adequate access to cleaner cooking energy for meeting their fundamental needs. This objective is realized through the attainment of three distinct outputs:

- Output 1: Continuous Safe Access to Cleaner Cooking Fuel (LPG) for Refugee Households
- Output 2: Provision of Energy-Efficient, Reliable, and Modern Cooking Equipment to Targeted Households
- Output 3: Assessment of Energy Needs and Alternatives

Similarly, under Strategic Priority Two, 'Environment and Ecosystems,' the envisaged outcome is the rehabilitation of the environment and ecosystems to fortify community resilience against conflicts over natural resources, disasters, and climate shocks. This objective is pursued through the following three outputs:

- Output 2.1: Management of Environment and Socio-Ecological Knowledge
- Output 2.2: Watershed Management and Ecosystem Rehabilitation
- Output 2.3: Strengthening Community Capacity to Manage Conflicts over Natural Resources

Concluding with Strategic Priority Three, the overarching goal is to augment the resilience of vulnerable host communities and Rohingya refugees. Outcomes are distinctly delineated for each group:

Outcome 3A: Sustaining Resilience of Vulnerable Host Communities (Especially Women)

This is pursued through the following outputs:

- Output 3A.1: Conducting Market and Value Chain Analysis to Identify Sectors for Green Economic Growth
- Output 3A.2: Production of Environmentally Sustainable Products and Services by Vulnerable Host Community Households
- Output 3A.3: Establishment of On- and Off-Farm Producer Groups Linked to Markets

Outcome 3B: Sustaining Resilience of Rohingya Refugees (Especially Vulnerable Groups)

This is achieved through the following outputs:

- Output 3B.1: Assessment and Identification of Approaches for Quality, Sustainable, and Complementary Programming in the Camps
- Output 3B.2: Development of Green Skills among Rohingya Refugees through Training and Inputs

II. Results

i) Narrative reporting on results:

Strategic Priority 1: Access to Cleaner Energy

In 2023, the implementation of SAFE+2 initiatives remained imperative for Rohingya refugee households in the Cox's Bazar area. SAFE+2 partners seamlessly sustained the provision of Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) to Rohingya refugees in 33 camps, facilitated by SAFE+2 and additional bilateral funding. The wide coverage underscores the scale of the program and the commitment of the partners to ensure that all households in the camps have access to this essential resource. Partners are using various distribution points throughout the camps to provide LPG refills in a hassle-free way. These distribution points are equipped with separate lines

for males and females, sitting arrangements, complaint and feedback desks, breastfeeding corners, training rooms, storage rooms, and separate male and female toilets. Refugee households follow a predetermined refill time schedule adjusted to the household size.

As per the World Food Programme's Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVA) 6, 99% of the refugee population received LPG, establishing it as a preferred and cleaner source of cooking energy throughout the reporting period. The findings from the same study reflected a high level of satisfaction among Rohingya refugees with the cooking fuel assistance provided. Notably, 78% expressed a high level of satisfaction regarding cooking fuel in 2022, which is an increase compared to REVA 5 from 2021 and the highest satisfaction across all assistance¹⁰.

In 2023, IOM and UNHCR distributed in total 1,797,092 LPG cylinder refills of which 472,044 were funded through the SAFE+2 programme. Additionally, both partners made sure that each registered refugee has access to a fuel-efficient stove and a LPG refill cylinder replacing equipment in case of loss. Although not through SAFE+2 funding, UNHCR distributed 85,028 pressure cookers which together with the 6,000 distributed in 2022 covered the entire population within the 16 camps managed by UNHCR with the aim to increase efficient use of LPG. Considering the total number of LPG refills that partners provided over the reporting period 13,390 ha of forest are estimated to be protected. After the 2022 report the Stanford university research team has revised the calculation¹¹ for carbon dioxide savings by using scenarios for low, medium and high household firewood consumption. The revised figures estimate 470,000 tonnes (low), 658,000 tonnes (medium) and 750,000 tonnes (high) CO₂ savings for cooking with LPG instead of firewood.

Throughout 2023, partners continued to investigate cost-saving measures, commissioning two comprehensive LPG consumption studies by UNHCR. The first report is attached as Annex 2 as the second has not been finalized. These studies underscore the significant potential of pressure cookers in reducing LPG consumption. In line with the findings of the initial LPG consumption study conducted in March 2023, UNHCR implemented an extension of its refill cycle, resulting in cost savings of around 11.3%. According to a UNHCR PDM report from June 2023, 99% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the pressure cooker, rating it as either useful or very useful.

The J-MSNA 2023¹² indicates that 42% of refugees report not having enough LPG, which is consistent with the findings of the second LPG pressure cooker study conducted by UNHCR in cooperation with IUCN and East West University, Dhaka. The J-MSNA further concludes that out of the 42% who reported insufficient LPG, 43% sporadically bought firewood, and 42% sporadically collected firewood in 2023. These two percentages represent 18% each of the entire camp population. This outcome confirms field observations that refugee households occasionally resort to supplementing their cooking energy with firewood, typically to compensate for deviations in their LPG consumption. The results from 2023 show a decrease compared to the J-MSNA from 2021, which reported 52% sporadically buying firewood¹³ or 37% compared to the entire population. It is important to note that the second study on pressure cookers indicated that some refugees finish their LPG on average up to 2.3 days (household size 1-3) before refill. The revised proposal for cycle adjustment based on the second study aims to better align the allocation with the household size. To assess the environmental impact of firewood collection, the total number of refugees in need of firewood should be considered, as it determines the scale of the overall firewood requirement. Although the results show a slight increase compared to the baseline, external factors such as the reduction of food assistance in 2023 should be taken into account simultaneously.

¹⁰ <https://www.wfp.org/publications/refugee-influx-emergency-vulnerability-assessment-reva>

¹¹ It should be noted that the Stanford research team used population data from before the opening of the Bashan Char camp.

¹² https://rohingyaresponse.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/BGD_CXB_J-MSNA-2023_Factsheets_Camps_Feb-2024.pdf

¹³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/joint-multi-sector-needs-assessment-j-msna-bangladesh-host-communities-december-2021>

In support of Strategic Priority 1, the FAO issued a call for proposals to conduct a study on alternative fuels to LPG. The selection process for service providers is currently underway.

In alignment with Strategic Priority 1, WFP provided technical assistance for the distribution of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to beneficiaries by IOM. The distribution of LPG cylinders was recorded and managed using the SCOPE platform.

Strategic Priority 2: Environment and Ecosystems

During the reporting period under strategic priority 2, the FAO implemented reforestation activities in the Rohingya camps, covering approximately 73 hectares of degraded landscapes. The initiative targeted unstable slopes and riparian zones to minimize landslide risks. Additionally, 3.8 km of roadside and 19.3 km of streambank areas inside the camps were rehabilitated through tree planting, aiming to stabilize and protect slopes from erosion, as well as provide shade and environmental benefits to the residents. These activities were carried out in coordination with relevant sectors of the ISCG, the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC), and other implementing organizations such as BRAC, IUCN, CARE, and ACTED. This coordination aimed to prevent duplication and overlaps, and to adhere to best practices.

FAO provided technical advice and procured reforestation materials for SAFE+2 partners for their respective reforestation activities. Additionally, FAO offered field support to the partners during the planting period and guided plantation workers when necessary. Forty individuals (32 males and 8 females) from IOM and WFP partners were trained on effective plantation techniques and post-plantation care.

In collaboration with the South Forest and Coastal Forest Divisions of Cox's Bazar district, FAO distributed 100 metric tons of organic (cow dung and vermicompost) and inorganic fertilizer (TSP, MoP, and Urea), as well as 200,000 dry bamboos to eight nurseries to facilitate seed germination and seedling production. FAO also provided essential tools and safety equipment to the BFD to support their day-to-day operations and post-plantation care activities. These tools included watering cans, spades, crowbars, pruning scissors, wheel carts, helmets, gumboots, vests, trousers, gloves, and raincoats. WFP and FAO jointly planned to reforest and rehabilitate 155 hectares of degraded forestland in the South Forest and Coastal Forest Division of Cox's Bazar. Request was placed in May 2023 to the Chief Conservator of Forest of the Forest Department. Due to government administrative delays, government approval for this activity could not be achieved in 2023.

Strategic Priority 3: Resilience

Under Strategic Priority 3, FAO facilitated homestead gardening training and activities in the Rohingya camps and host communities, using new or updated guidelines adapted to field demand and context. The homestead gardening guideline for Rohingya camps was developed in collaboration with the Food Security Sector (FSS) and the RRRC office and is now the standard guideline for all homestead gardening activities in the camps. FAO also provided training to local extension service providers from ten aggregation centers in the host community areas, focusing on providing digital and farm mechanics services to farmers. Additionally, FAO distributed summer and winter vegetable seeds and other inputs such as fertilizers and dry bamboo to 600 female beneficiaries in the Rohingya camps and to 2,200 beneficiaries in host communities (1300 males and 900 females). Host communities received training on homestead gardening, climate-smart agriculture, financial management, and market linkage.

WFP's resilience programme in camps, under the SAFE+2, supported 5,227 refugees (1,833 men and 3,394 women) by facilitating various skills development activities to enhance their capabilities. This includes training on community aquaculture, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), inclusive TVET and solid waste managements/upcycling.

Community aquaculture: The World Food Programme (WFP) initiated a Community Aquaculture project in four refugee camps, benefiting 500 refugees (412 female, 84 male). Participants underwent training in various aspects of aquaculture, including pond preparation, water quality testing, fish feeding, seedling plantation for pond-dyke production, and harvesting. In June 2023, 77,940 fingerlings (77,450 tilapia and 490 common carp) were released into the fishponds, leading to a subsequent harvest of 13,133 kilograms of fish from 16 ponds between November and December. The harvested fish, averaging 27 kilograms per person, were distributed among the participants. Additionally, the pond's dykes were utilized for vegetable production, with a yield of 5,395 kilograms of various vegetables, including members of the gourd family, eggplant, and green chili, which were also distributed among the participants.

TVET and inclusive TVET: WFP implemented TVET in nine refugee camps, benefiting 2,000 refugees, with additional Inclusive TVET programs in ten camps catering exclusively to 1,500 refugees with disabilities. Training encompassed a wide array of skills including reusable sanitary napkin production, handicrafts, tailoring, mechanics, bamboo and wood repair, gas stove repair, solar panel maintenance, and plumbing. Under the guidance of the Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector (LSDS), curriculums for both TVET and Inclusive TVET incorporated basic literacy, functional literacy in English, Burmese, and numeracy, alongside vocational and livelihood skills. Participants engaged in basic literacy and numeracy lessons, life skill training covering various topics, TVET training sessions tailored to specific skills, cooking demonstrations, sign language sessions for hearing and speak impaired participants and their family members and neighbours, and Solid Waste Management/Upcycling activities. Notably, waste materials collected were transformed into useful products and sold to establish market linkages, contributing to sustainable livelihoods within the refugee camps.

Challenges, lesson learned & best practices

Identifying fundraising as a pivotal challenge in ensuring the seamless operation of the SAFE+2 programme, it is imperative to address the existing discrepancy. Out of the initially budgeted SAFE+2 programme amounting to USD 284 million, a mere 13 percent of the anticipated funding had been secured by the conclusion of 2023. This shortfall necessitated a comprehensive SAFE+2 fundraising strategy, accompanied by heightened and targeted fundraising endeavors specifically tailored to engage both traditional and non-traditional donors. In response to the funding challenge, SAFE+2 partners have consistently engaged with the broader donor community in Bangladesh by organizing 2 presentation of the programme to the wider donor community in Bangladesh in 2023. Additionally, partners have produced visibility items strategically positioned at prominent international conferences, including COP28 and GRF, to enhance awareness and garner support.

The prevention of an LPG pipeline break stands as a matter of particular significance within the context of the SAFE+2 programme. Recognizing that any disruption in LPG provision possesses the inherent risk of jeopardizing years of investment in the programme, particularly in the realms of reforestation and additional accrued positive achievements, underscores the criticality of this concern. A noteworthy consideration is the potential impact of an LPG pipeline break on the sustained protection space for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. This is due to the likelihood that such an occurrence could lead to increased deforestation and depletion of natural resources, consequently fostering negative perceptions toward the Rohingya population among host communities and the Government of Bangladesh. Mitigating this risk is imperative for preserving the program's accomplishments and maintaining harmonious relations within the broader community.

The identification and implementation of an exit strategy for LPG distributions present a notable challenge within the framework of the longer-term SAFE+2 programming and will be one of the strategic focus areas in 2024. The current Rohingya situation does not afford the possibility of a comprehensive return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar in conditions of safety and dignity, nor does it enable full engagement in livelihood activities within Bangladesh. This limitation in income-earning opportunities restricts the means for refugees

to procure LPG independently. Consequently, their reliance on the donor community for access to cleaner cooking energy persists.

The crowded camps and the use of inflammable materials for construction pose a risk of fire incidents. To address these risks, the Government of Bangladesh, UN agencies, and NGOs have implemented crucial measures to enhance fire safety for refugees. These measures involve educating refugees on safe cooking fuel practices, deploying safety volunteers and community mobilizers throughout the camps, and establishing a coordinated response system for swift action during fire emergencies. To ensure refugees are familiar with LPG usage, comprehensive training is provided covering efficient cooking techniques, health and nutrition, fire safety, and environmental conservation. The training, developed by the Energy and Environment Network (EEN), is delivered through animated videos in the local language (Rohingya for camps), followed by practical demonstrations for each beneficiary. Refresher training is also provided during refills to ensure continued safety awareness.

The Government of Bangladesh endorsed two frameworks in August 2022: the Skills Development Framework and the Volunteering Guidelines, leading to the establishment of the Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector (LSDS) under ISCG in 2023. These frameworks stressed the importance of transferable vocational skills in both refugee camps and host communities. However, there's a need for advocacy to the government regarding market linkage opportunities, both within the camps and to the broader Bangladeshi community. Continuous dialogue with relevant authorities is essential to foster this advocacy, as there are varying levels of understanding regarding skills development activities among different administrative levels, emphasizing the importance of increased engagement in advocacy and communication efforts.

Vocational training for refugees faces challenges despite standardized curriculums and training materials by LSDS. Formal competency-based training is hindered by low literacy levels among refugees aged 18 and above, falling short of the requirements for the National Skills Certificate Level 1. Moreover, restrictions on the number of work-days allowed for refugees, coupled with varying training hour requirements, such as 120 hours for vocational training and 360 hours for agricultural crop production, further limit refugees' consistent attendance at training sessions.

Expenditure rates

IOM and UNHCR have shifted some of the received contributions for the provision of LPG from 2023 to 2024. The flexibility of the SAFE+2 funding has allowed both agencies to incorporate timebound bilateral funding contributions for LPG and therefore use SAFE+2 funding more efficiently. It should be noted that the flexibility to use funding contributions over the entire programme period is highly appreciated by partners and the funding is scheduled to be fully utilized until the end of the programme.

FAO obtained an expenditure rate of 22.32 percent during the reporting period, noting that FAO missed the planting season due to a delay in securing the required government approval for planting activities in the host community areas. Further delays were caused by procurement difficulties as a tender did not receive enough qualified bidders. The tender has now been revised and opened to international bidders to ensure procurement in 2024. FAO plans to utilize of received funding by the end of the programme period.

WFP reached an expenditure level of 21.1 percent during the reporting period. This reflects WFP's use of timebound funding outside of SAFE+2 in 2023 and delays in implementation related to the above mentioned delay in securing government approval for planting activities in the host communities. SAFE+2 funding will be implemented in the remaining program time.

Gender

All site development and management activities within the SAFE+2 program adhere to a gender and diversity-sensitive approach, prioritizing assistance and support for the most vulnerable households. During the distribution of LPG, SAFE+2 partners ensure that community engagement is mindful of age, gender, and diversity considerations. Specific measures, such as dedicated queues and services for women, are implemented at distribution points to address these considerations.

To better monitor gender inclusion in the SAFE+2 programme specific indicators have been introduced and analysed during the SAFE+2 midterm evaluation. The SAFE+2 midterm evaluation could not be finalized before the submission of this report but preliminary result indicate the following achievements.

Indicator 1: 62.1% of women and girls (individuals) report reduced hours spent on unpaid care work due to SAFE+2 activities.

Indicator 2: % of Rohingya households enrolled in SAFE+2 programme activities where women, men, or both women and men make decisions on the use of transferred resources. In 40.3% of the households women make decisions on use resources while in 31.2% of the households men make the decisions. In 28.5% of the households men and women make decisions on the use of resources.

Indicator 3: The women's autonomy index¹⁴ for (a) skills development activities in the refugee community is 3.22 (out of 7), and b) for livelihood activities in the host community 2.45 (out of 5)

¹⁴ The questionnaire and description of the Women Autonomy Index has been shared with SAFE+2 donors in Bangladesh

iii) A Specific Story (Optional)

In 2017, Setera Begum, with her husband and children, fled Myanmar and escaped to the safety of Camp 15 in Cox's Bazar.



After settling in camp, her family struggled with multiple challenges, one major difficulty was cooking food. Setera was reliant on a basic mud stove, firewood, and sometimes trash, a combination that necessitated multiple exhausting cooking sessions each day. The smoke produced filled their shelter, creating a breathing hazard for the family and left a layer of soot in the house and on the pots and pans that required considerable time and effort to clean.

Collecting firewood presented its own difficulties. Government deforestation restrictions for environmental protection and community tensions made acquiring firewood from the forest very difficult. The alternative, purchasing firewood from the market, was expensive and the family couldn't afford to make the purchase.

The turning point came when the IOM provided the family with LPG and a cooking stove. This intervention dramatically simplified and accelerated the cooking process, reducing the previously encountered issues, improving the family's living conditions, and decreasing her daily stress of managing the household.

Setera expressed profound gratitude for the support which has improved the family's quality of life.

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations (if applicable)

- UNHCR, in cooperation with IUCN and East West University, Dhaka, Bangladesh conducted two LPG studies to monitor the impact of pressure cookers on LPG consumption.
- IOM, no assessment conducted during the reporting period.
- FAO finalized the second Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA-2, November 2022) during the reporting period. Further, data for RIMA 3 were collected. FAO carried out a PDM on seed distribution.
- WFP, carries out the annual Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVA)

IV. Programmatic Revisions (if applicable)

NTR

V. Resources (Optional)

In 2023, Norway has joined the SAFE+2 programme. Apart from the generous contributions from the SAFE+2 donors Canada, Sweden and Norway activities of the programme have also been supported bilaterally through contributions directly to the 4 UN agencies. These contributions have been instrumental to maintain a seamless supply of LPG to refugees in Cox's Bazar and increased the scope of activities under priority 2 and 3.

VI. Annexes

Annex 1: Indicator Based Performance Assessment

Annex 2: IUCN Pressure Cooker Use and LPG Refill Cycle Adjustment, March 2023

List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACTED: Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
BDRCS: Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
BEXIMCO: Bangladesh Export Import Company Limited
CAD: Canadian Dollar
CARE: Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CiC's: Camps-in-Charge's
CNRS: Centre for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS),
CODEC: Community Development Center
CORDAID: Catholic Organisation for Relief and Development Aid (CORDAID)
DAE: Department of Agricultural Extension
DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction
EETWG: Energy and Environment Technical Working Group
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
FSS: Food Security Sector
GBV: gender-based violence
HH: households
IATI: International Aid Transparency Initiative
ICDDR: International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh
(I)NGO: (International) Non-Governmental Organization
IOM: International Organization for Migration
ISCG: Inter Sector Coordination Group
IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JTS: Join Together Society
LoA: Letter of Agreement
LPG: Liquefied petroleum gas
MPTF Office: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
NFIs: Non-Food Items
PDM: Post Distribution Monitoring
PM 2.5: particulate matter 2.5
RIMA: Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis
RRRC Office: Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner
SAFE+2: Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus, Phase 2
SEK: Swedish Krona
SMSD: Site Management and Site Development (SMSD).
TVET: technical and Vocational education and Training
USD: United States Dollar
UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSDG: United Nations Sustainable Development Group
WFP: World Food Programme