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**Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus, Phase 2 (SAFE+2)
ANNUAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Programme Title & Project Number

Programme Title: *Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus, phase 2 (SAFE+2)*

Programme Number: *MPTF00293 & XI-IATI-UNPF*

MPTF Office Project Reference Number:³ *00132257*

Participating Organization(s)

FAO, IOM, UNHCR, WFP

**Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) /
Strategic Results²**

Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar region. Strategic result areas include: cleaner energy provision, regional environment and ecosystems, and enhanced resilience for refugee and host communities.

Strategic Priority Area 1: Access to Cleaner Energy

Strategic Priority Area 2: Environment and Ecosystem

Strategic Priority Area 3: Resilience

Implementing Partners

FAO conducted ecosystem rehabilitation in coordination with the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Department of Environment (DoE), 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), International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS) and the Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS).

IOM provided liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) distributions through direct implementation and worked with NF Enterprise as a supplier/service provider. IOM directly implemented a livelihoods study as well. While implementing a program, IOM works alongside the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) and its related divisions to offer thorough support for the LPG program.

UNHCR procures LPG through direct implementation with Beximco (and Beximco's partner Help the Needy) as the supplier and works with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) to manage the LPG distributions. 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. All activities are closely coordinated with the RRRC's Office and Camp-in-Charges.

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](#)

WFP, in host and Rohingya communities, works with ActionAid Bangladesh, ACTED, BRAC CARE, Christian Aid, Stitching Cordaid, Shushilan, RIC to implement green skills development, reforestation, capacity strengthening of local community for livelihood and market linkage promotion. In 2024, skills development activities continued in coordination with ISCG sectors such as the Food Security Sector (FSS) and the 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 in 2024:

- *FAO: USD 1,156,284*
- *IOM: USD 2,689,786*
- *UNHCR: USD 2,596,402*
- *WFP: USD 936,671*

Agency Contribution

- *by Agency (if applicable)*

Government Contribution
(if applicable)

Other Contributions (donors) in 2024

Canada: CAD 7.5 million/ USD 5,545,799

Norway: NOK 25 million/ USD 2,315,805

TOTAL: USD 7,379,143

USD 445,340 programmable funds were received in December 2024 and transferred to partners in January 2025. Those funds are not included in the above.

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: *10.04.2024*

Programme Duration

Overall Duration: *60 months*

Start Date⁵ (*06.07.2022*)

Original End Date⁶ (*31.03.2025*)

Current End date⁷(*30.06.2027*)

Report Submitted By

- Name: Christopher Bender
- Title: Sn Interagency Coordination Officer
- Participating Organization (Lead): UNHCR
- Email address: benderc@unhcr.org

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.

List of acronyms and abbreviations

AC: Aggregation Centres
ACMC: Aggregation Center Management Committee
ACTED: Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
BDRCS: Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
BEXIMCO: Bangladesh Export Import Company Limited
BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
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
EEN: Energy and Environment Network
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
FFS: Farmer Field School
FSS: Food Security Sector
GBV: gender-based violence
GUK: Gram Unnayan Karma
HH: households
HEC: Human Wildlife Conflict
HRC: Horticulture Research Center
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
MGK: Micro-gardening kits
MoDMR: Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
MPTF Office: Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
NFIs: Non-Food Items
PDM: Post Distribution Monitoring
REVA: Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment
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
SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
SEK: Swedish Krona
SMSD: Site Management and Site Development (SMSD).
TVET: technical and Vocational education and Training
USD: United States Dollar
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSDG: United Nations Sustainable Development Group
WFP: World Food Programme

NARRATIVE REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus (SAFE+2) partners have successfully maintained and expanded upon the achievements of the initial phase of SAFE+ and its second phase, which has been ongoing since 2022. The Programme has continued to focus on three priority areas: refugees' access to cleaner energy, environmental conservation, and resilience.

On 27 November 2024, the partners, together with donors and the government of Bangladesh, agreed to extend the Programme until June 2027. This decision was formalized with an addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in February 2025. The extension is driven by the ongoing needs in the refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, particularly in the areas of cleaner cooking fuel, environmental and ecosystem conservation, and the resilience of both refugees and host communities.

Strategic Priority 1: Access to Cleaner Energy

LPG is crucial to the SAFE+2 Programme's success, replacing firewood as cooking fuel, in turn protecting camp plantations and surrounding forests, and thereby mitigating landslide risks during monsoon seasons. It also improves health by reducing indoor pollution, decreases gender-based violence (GBV), eases host community-refugee tensions, and enhances nutrition. Despite 99% LPG coverage, 23% of refugees still use firewood to complement their needs. In 2024, UNHCR and IOM distributed over 1.77 million LPG refills, supported by various funding sources. Out of this number IOM provided 978,806 refills while UNHCR provided 798,525 refills. This was funded by SAFE+2 in addition to bilateral contributions from donors to IOM and UNHCR. The distribution of LPG led to the protection of 14,539.7 hectares of forests and the reduction of 376,822 tonnes of carbon dioxide compared to the utilization of firewood. Ongoing efforts include optimizing LPG use, for instance through improvement of fuel efficiency and reduction of cooking time, exploring climate financing, and assessing alternative fuels. One notable optimizing effort in 2024 was UNHCR's adjustment of refill cycles in line with household size, based on the second study on the impact of pressure cookers on LPG consumption, which led to efficiency gains. In 2024, IOM has started to distribute pressure cookers aiming to cover all refugees in the camps under its management in 2025. Accordingly, the organization plans to harmonize its refills cycle in 2025 with UNHCR.

In 2024, the IOM introduced innovative tools, such as a "fire safety ring" to enhance cooking safety, along with recommendations for shelter design modifications to reduce fire risks. Community mobilization efforts were implemented to keep beneficiaries informed about distribution timelines based on household size, enabling effective organization and prompt access to resources. Through these initiatives, the SAFE+2 Programme not only addressed immediate needs but also promoted sustainable practices and improved living conditions for both Rohingya refugees and host communities.

Strategic Priority 2: Environment and Ecosystems

Under SAFE+2, in collaboration with IOM, WFP, and BFD, FAO revegetated and restored 578 hectares of degraded land, sequestering 25,802 tons of carbon dioxide resulting in improved ecosystem health and a greener environment. The planted forest also mitigates landslide risk and human-elephant conflict. To reduce disaster risk and improve watershed services, FAO supported the development of an integrated watershed management plan in four sub-districts of Cox's Bazar, incorporating technical knowledge and community perceptions. FAO has successfully identified and mapped human-elephant conflict (HEC) zones in Cox's Bazar, categorizing them by frequency to determine high-risk areas. To mitigate HEC, FAO provided 1,400 households with deterrent crop seeds and supported 100 forest-dependent households with training and logistics to reduce conflicts.

Strategic Priority 3: Resilience

FAO is supporting 5,000 Bangladeshi farmers and 600 Rohingya beneficiaries under this project by providing high-yielding hybrid (HYV) and open-pollinated (OP) varieties of vegetable seeds, capacity-building training, and market linkage initiatives. With the production from the distributed summer and winter vegetable seeds in 2023, each supported host community farmer generated an average profit of USD 43, while Rohingya beneficiaries generated an average profit of USD 14. The satisfaction level with production and the quality of the distributed seeds was high at 94%. Due to the market linkage initiatives taken under this project, 76% of farmers are connected to the market, and 1.7 MT of vegetables worth USD 673 were sold by the farmers. These development initiatives enhanced the resilience of the supported communities, evidenced by an increase in the resilience index from the baseline of 31 to 42.

WFP's resilience programme is creating a lasting positive impact on both Rohingya refugees and host communities by equipping them with vital green skills, strengthening local economies, and fostering sustainable livelihoods. Through initiatives like SAFE+2 and other grants, WFP is enhancing skills in farming, financial literacy, leadership, and climate-smart practices. In refugee camps and host communities, 71% of planned producers are actively supplying goods and surpassing sales targets by an impressive 169%. Aggregation Centers are meeting 8% of the fresh food demand in refugee camps, strengthening economic ties. Over 30,000 refugees have received training in home gardening and aquaculture, empowering them to grow food for their families. Additionally, innovative waste upcycling programmes have repurposed approximately 2.9 million foil packages into nearly 48,000 handmade products, reducing waste and generating income. Ongoing efforts are focused on improving agricultural productivity, expanding market connections, and scaling up green innovations. By fostering self-reliance and environmental sustainability, SAFE+2 partners are not only building resilience but also laying the foundation for long-term food security and nutrition in Cox's Bazar.

Coordination

The four SAFE+2 participating UN organizations—FAO, IOM, UNHCR, and WFP—continue to meet monthly for operational discussions at the Cox's Bazar level. At the strategic level in Dhaka, partners met with donors and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) in January and November 2024 for their respective annual meetings for 2024 and 2025. During the November meeting, all participants agreed to extend the Programme until June 2027. Additionally, three meetings with donors were held to provide progress updates and raise awareness on the Programme.

Funding

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 SAFE+2 activities in 2024.

During the reporting period of 2024, the SAFE+2 Programme did not see any new donors join. However, Norway increased its initial commitment. Despite this contribution, the Programme remains significantly underfunded. The four participating UN organizations have successfully relied on bilateral contributions to implement prioritized activities, notably LPG. Overall, the SAFE+2 Programme is working towards increasing its funding.

I. Purpose

The SAFE+ Programme was initiated to meet the critical need for a practical, secure, and sustainable alternative to firewood for cooking, achieved through the provision of LPG. In addition to this primary goal, the Programme aimed to tackle significant issues such as deforestation in and around the Cox's Bazar refugee camps and to support the restoration of affected ecosystems. Moreover, the Programme sought to reduce the risks and vulnerabilities faced by women, particularly in terms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and to promote greater social cohesion between refugee and host communities through initiatives focused on livelihoods and skills development.

SAFE+2 Programme: Strategic Priorities and Objectives

As the second phase of the initiative, the SAFE+2 Programme has built upon its foundational objectives while concentrating on three principal Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority 1: Access to Cleaner Energy

This priority focuses on providing cleaner and more efficient cooking energy. It includes the ongoing distribution of LPG and energy-efficient cooking equipment to reduce deforestation and contribute to climate change mitigation.

Strategic Priority 2: Environment and Ecosystems

This priority emphasizes knowledge management related to watershed and natural resource management. It aims at ecosystem rehabilitation, environmental conservation, and climate action, while also strengthening relations between refugee and host communities. Additionally, it addresses conflict mitigation over natural resources and incorporates Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies to prevent landslides, floods, and droughts through Nature-Based Solutions.

Strategic Priority 3: Resilience

This priority is dedicated to enhancing the resilience of both refugees and host communities. It includes initiatives for skills development, livelihood practices, and efforts to empower refugees towards self-sustainability. Furthermore, it seeks to prevent further environmental degradation caused by 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

LPG remains fundamental to the success of the SAFE+2 Programme as it replaces firewood as refugees' primary cooking fuel, thereby protecting the plantations inside the camps as well as the forests surrounding them. With trees and plants playing a key role in slope stabilization, this is particularly important given the increased intensity of the monsoon season, which has resulted in numerous landslides that endanger the lives of refugees in the camps. Additionally, LPG improves health conditions in the camps by reducing indoor pollution, decreases GBV, mitigates tensions between host communities and refugees, and enhances overall nutrition by providing a reliable source of cooking fuel.

According to the 2024 Intersector Needs Assessment (ISNA) 99% of the population have received LPG while the preliminary results from the 2024 annual evaluation indicate 99.6%. The annual evaluation results also show that 99% of households with at least one person with disabilities received LPG, while 97% of households with at least one elderly person and 100% of female-headed households received LPG. It should be noted that during 2024 UNHCR and IOM had different refill cycle schedules as UNHCR had completed the distribution of pressure cookers across the population of the camps under its management.

However, according to the ISNA 23% of all interviewed households indicated that they still used firewood as a complementary cooking fuel while the preliminary results from the 2024 annual evaluation state that 29% buy firewood and 12% collect firewood. This result underscores the differences in cooking habits and practices among refugees. 12% have also stated (2024 ISNA) that they sold or rented their LPG to other families in the camp. WFP's Refugee Influx Emergency Vulnerability Assessment (REVA) of 2024 mentions that 76% of refugees were satisfied with the cooking fuel assistance, the highest level of satisfaction among all assistance in the refugee camps. Compared to the baseline established by the Stanford study in 2022, the LPG intervention saves an annual 376,822 tonnes of CO₂ as compared to cooking with firewood. As explained in the 2023 report the lower amount is explained by a lower population number in Cox's Bazar as the baseline was calculated with population figures prior to the opening of Bhasan Char. Based on the preliminary results of the 2024 SAFE+2 evaluation an area of 14,539.7 ha of forest is estimated to be protected by the intervention, as the increase in the availability of LPG and in turn the increase in LPG usage have effectively reduced firewood needs.

During the reporting period of 2024, UNHCR and IOM collectively distributed 1,777,331 LPG refills out of which 989,011 were funded by contributions to the SAFE+2 Programme. Both partners have also supported LPG distribution thanks to separate funding sources that allowed for the maintenance of cooking stoves and LPG related equipment (regulators and hoses). These funds also allowed for the expansion of pressure cooker distribution with a total of 11,198 households having received a pressure cooker in 2024, either as a new item or as replacement in case their original pressure cooker was lost in a fire incident.

In October 2023, UNHCR conducted a second study on the impact of pressure cookers on LPG consumption, with results published in March 2024. The study confirmed the findings of the initial study but recommended another revision of UNHCR's refill cycle schedule. This revision introduced dedicated refill schedules for each household size and adjusted the schedule based on the observed consumption levels of representative households. The study also confirmed that increased training and awareness activities have positively impacted the utilization of pressure cookers among refugees over time. The research indicated that there is still room to further increase the use of pressure cookers through intensive training, community awareness raising to foster behavioural change in order to improve the efficient use of LPG.

In 2024, IOM and UNHCR agreed for IOM to transition from using WFP's SCOPE e-voucher system to UNHCR's global distribution tool (GDT), which will enable more efficient distributions by enabling biometrical verification of beneficiaries to prevent duplication of aid.

For LPG distributions IOM partners with NF Enterprise while UNHCR partners with Beximco through designated distribution centers. Suppliers also provide cooking stove repairs. Households are trained through videos, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials, and practical demonstrations on how to safely maintain their LPG cylinders and stoves.

Partners have continued discussions around alternative funding sources for LPG and the diversification of cooking fuels. IOM and UNHCR plan to conduct feasibility studies on climate financing in 2025, aiming to access carbon markets as a complementary funding source. Additionally, FAO has carried out an assessment on alternative cooking fuels, with results expected to be available in April 2025. SAFE+2 partners coordinate closely with the Energy and Environment Network and the Shelter Camp Coordination and Camp Management sector within the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG).

Strategic Priority 2: Environment and Ecosystems

FAO implemented reforestation activities in the Rohingya camps, covering 578 hectares of degraded landscapes. The initiative targeted unstable slopes and riparian zones to minimize landslide risks. 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), WFP, IOM, and other implementing organizations such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Gram Unnayan Karma (GUK), Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), and the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED). This coordination aimed to prevent duplication and overlaps and to adhere to best practices.

FAO provided technical advice and procured planting materials for SAFE+2 partners for their respective reforestation activities. Additionally, FAO offered field support to the partners during the planting period, including guidance to the workers when necessary.

In collaboration with the Cox's Bazar South Forest Division, Coastal Forest Division, Teknaf Upazila administration of Cox's Bazar district, SAFE+2 partners distributed 450 metric tons of organic (cow dung and vermicompost) and inorganic fertilizer (TSP, MoP, and Urea), as well as 122,315 pieces of dry bamboo and 842,969 seedlings for reforestation. FAO also provided essential tools and safety equipment to the BFD, WFP, and IOM to support their day-to-day operations and post-planting care activities. These tools included watering cans, spades, crowbars, pruning scissors, wheel carts, helmets, gumboots, vests, trousers, gloves, and raincoats. The SAFE+2 Programme jointly reforested and rehabilitated 330 hectares of degraded forestland in the South Forest and Coastal Forest Division of Cox's Bazar and 248 hectares of degraded forestland in the Rohingya camps reaching in total 578 hectares. FAO also identified 50 nurseries to strengthen their capacity in terms of technical, financial, and operational aspects.

Under the SAFE+2 initiative, FAO has been working to develop watershed management plans for critical watersheds in both host and camp areas. In 2024, FAO initiated community-based watershed management

planning in watersheds spanning Sadar, Ramu, Ukhiya, and Teknaf upazilas of Cox's Bazar. To ensure an inclusive and effective planning process, the Programme prioritized community consensus, local knowledge, and government stakeholders' participation. As a first step, a district-level workshop was conducted in early 2024 to analyze the institutional framework for watershed management. The workshop brought together key government stakeholders, including the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), Department of Environment (DoE), and Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), among others.

Following the workshop, FAO conducted field-level watershed assessments, including the evaluation of biophysical characteristics and land use patterns of four key watersheds—Bharuakhali Canal, Palongkhali Canal, Rezu Canal, and Nhila Canal. Additionally, FAO assessed the quality of water resources in these watersheds, laying the groundwork for watershed management planning. Throughout this process, FAO engaged with local communities to identify and prioritize watershed management interventions. Currently, FAO is working to produce two watershed management plans for two watersheds by February 2025.

In addition, FAO has successfully identified and mapped human-elephant conflict (HEC) zones in Cox's Bazar and provided 1,400 households with deterrent crop seeds and supported 100 forest-dependent households with training and logistics to reduce conflicts.

Strategic Priority 3: Resilience

The SAFE+2 Programme has made significant progress in supporting both refugees and host communities through various green skills development, capacity strengthening, and market linkage promotion activities, enhancing their capabilities combining SAFE+2 and other bilateral grants.

Host communities

FAO, with endorsement from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), identified 5,000 Bangladeshi farmers based on predefined selection criteria. A total of 250 farmer groups, each comprising 20 members, were formed. During the reporting period, project participants received training on high-nutrient horticulture crop production and homestead vegetable gardening using climate-smart technologies. Additionally, climate-resilient seed varieties and micro-gardening kits (MGKs) were identified and provided to the host communities for both winter and summer seasons. As a result, agricultural production increased, and market access improved from 61% in 2023 to 76% in 2024, according to the FAO RIMA-4 study.

FAO developed a draft guideline for the Integrated Family Farming System through the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach. The guideline is undergoing a formal validation process with relevant government departments and stakeholders. Following finalization, 25 FFS groups will be trained on its implementation. A value chain assessment on vegetables was conducted in 2024 in collaboration with the DAE, Horticulture Research Center (HRC), and private sector stakeholders. The assessment identified critical challenges and opportunities to strengthen market linkages for smallholder farmers.

FAO facilitated the opening of formal bank accounts for all 250 farmer groups to ensure financial inclusion. This initiative will be completed within the project duration, enabling farmers to access financial services and improve their economic resilience. In 2023, 5% of farmers were connected to local markets through Aggregation Centers (ACs), which increased to 6% in 2024. Five new ACs were constructed and established in 2024, serving as holistic support hubs for smallholder farmers by providing agricultural technical support, market linkages, post-harvest loss reduction strategies, access to financial and extension services, and improved marketing infrastructure. ACs specifically aim to enhance market access for smallholder farmers, particularly women, ensuring fair pricing and improved income opportunities.

WFP's market linkage promotion efforts focused on building the capacity of Aggregation Centers (ACs), training 96% (858 out of 894) members of Aggregation Center Management Committees (ACMC) across 62 centers. The training included key areas such as aggregation center operations, fresh food transactions,

marketing strategies, occupational health and safety, disaster awareness, environmental and social safeguards, crop calendars, nutrition, gender and protection considerations, leadership development, post-harvest management, and food safety & quality. In addition, 44 APMC members participated in exposure visits to model centers, gaining hands-on experience to improve their operations.

As a result, 71.48% of the planned producers (19,977) engaged with the 62 ACs, supplying produce and achieving 169% of their annual sales target. These centers played a pivotal role in strengthening market access and promoting social cohesion, supplying 963 metric tons of fresh fruits to Fresh Food Corners in refugee camps, meeting 7% of total demand and fostering stronger economic ties between refugees and host communities.

WFP also improved the operational capacity of the Aggregation Centers by establishing offices, ensuring legal compliance through trade licenses, and registering 11 centers with the Government of Bangladesh. Through Community-Based Participatory Planning (CBPP), WFP coordinated infrastructure improvements benefiting 6,070 beneficiaries, including rehabilitating 25 Aggregation Centers, upgrading 23.65 km of market linkage roads, and re-excavating 20.9 km of drainage and irrigation canals to ensure efficient water management.

Additionally, the Programme included the establishment of 304 climate-smart agriculture plots, including 18 demonstration plots and 26 nursery plots, promoting seedling production and agroforestry. These efforts are contributing to long-term climate resilience, enhanced agricultural yields, and improved market access for both refugees and host communities.

The results have been impressive: beneficiaries successfully produced and sold 622 metric tons of vegetables, 1,193 metric tons of poultry, 481 metric tons of livestock, 178 metric tons of eggs, 7 metric tons of dried fish, 6 metric tons of live fish, and 16 metric tons of fruits through aggregation centers and local markets, thereby contributing to enhanced food security and livelihoods. Additionally, 2,876 kg of vermicompost was produced to support sustainable agriculture, along with 40,057 off-farm products such as Nakshikanta, baskets, nets, caps, and bamboo crafts, promoting economic diversification and income generation.

Rohingya camps

In the Rohingya camps, 600 beneficiaries received training on homestead gardening and were provided with necessary inputs, including climate-resilient seed varieties by FAO. Homestead gardening played a significant role in improving food security. On average, 79 kg of vegetables were consumed per homestead-practicing household in 2023, according to the FAO RIMA-3 study. Homestead-practicing households demonstrated higher food security levels at 48% compared to non-practicing households at 33%. Homestead gardening also provided an additional income source, with each household generating a profit of USD 14 on average with the distributed seeds in 2023.

Additionally, WFP implemented green skills development initiatives to enhance self-reliance and food security. A total of 30,115 participants received training and inputs for home gardening, allowing them to cultivate vegetables for household consumption. Additionally, 1,000 participants were trained in community aquaculture, leading to the production of 8 metric tons of fish, which contributed to dietary diversity and nutrition.

To further support sustainable food systems, 2,180 individuals participated in cooking demonstrations to learn how to prepare nutritious meals with locally available ingredients. WFP also established eight mushroom cultivation units and excavated 21 ponds, expanding livelihood opportunities and improving food availability. Vegetable production activities led to the cultivation of 4,285 metric tons of vegetables, strengthening household food security and reducing dependency on external food sources.

WFP's Upcycling-Solid Waste Management initiative trained 1,205 refugees in waste collection, sorting, cleaning, and crafting handmade products from upcycled materials. Over 2.9 million super cereal foil packages were upcycled into 47,874 items, such as bags, baskets, and floor mats. These products were sold in Cox's Bazar markets and host community shops, providing income opportunities while promoting environmental sustainability and self-reliance. This initiative also supported skills training programs, further contributing to green skills development.

Challenges, lesson learned & best practices

The two studies on the impact of pressure cookers on LPG consumption confirmed their potential to further extend LPG refill cycles, thereby reducing costs. This has led to a more granular targeting modality, identifying a unique refill schedule for each household size. Both partners have either distributed or are in the process of distributing pressure cookers and plan to align their refill cycles across the 33 camps in 2025.

According to the UNHCR Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) report from 2024, 97% of recipients found the training on pressure cooker use highly beneficial, with 100% indicating that the training helped them learn about their safe and effective usage. Furthermore, 96% of refugees noted that the quantity of pressure cookers received was sufficient to meet their needs. Daily usage of pressure cookers was high, with 89% of refugees reporting daily usage. The cooker's efficiency allowed 71% of users to report cost savings, marking an increase from last year's 69%. This indicates pressure cookers' significant role in helping refugees manage their resources effectively.

LPG funding remains challenging, exacerbated by recent reductions in humanitarian funding globally. Although partners have ensured a continuous supply of LPG through SAFE+2 and bilateral contributions, the SAFE+2 Programme allocates 70% of its funding to LPG, thus prioritizing the first strategic priority. To address the high funding needs for LPG, SAFE+2 partners are exploring complementary energy sources for cooking. A relevant study on alternative cooking fuels is expected to be completed in early 2025, which will guide partners' energy diversification efforts. Additionally, studies are planned by UNHCR and IOM in 2025 to explore possible climate financing modalities to supplement the required funding for LPG.

The establishment of the Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector (LSDS) in 2023 under the ISCG serves as a significant best practice, streamlining skills development efforts within refugee camps and setting the foundation for more organized interventions. However, challenges remain, particularly in the need for stronger advocacy to enhance market linkages both inside the camps and across Bangladesh. The ongoing dialogue with government authorities is essential but challenging, as it requires continuous effort to align the LSDS agenda with national development priorities and create sustainable livelihood opportunities. One key lesson learned is the importance of strategic advocacy to improve market linkages and the role of government engagement in driving this agenda forward. Furthermore, the creation of volunteering guidelines has proven effective in engaging community members and ensuring active participation, helping build a sense of ownership in the skills development process.

Funding

The flexibility of SAFE+2 funding over the entire duration of the Programme is a major advantage for the four participating UN agencies as it allows them to prioritize other sources of funding that is timebound and available on short notice. However, in response to a reduction in funding for the Rohingya Response in general, partners have increasingly utilized SAFE+2 funding as reflected in the expenditure rates.

Due to high staff turnover in several partner offices, and the political unrest in August 2024, there have been delays in the implementation of activities. While the supply of LPG experienced only minor delays, certain activities under specific objectives 2 and 3 were temporarily halted due to the security situation.

The Programme expects one more funding installment from Norway in early 2025. Norway has also provided an additional of NOK 5,000,000 in December 2024 on top of its original commitment.

In 2024, France expressed its interest in joining the SAFE+2 Programme and began supporting UNHCR with funding dedicated to SAFE+2 activities.

Programme Extension Agreement

At the end of November 2024, the four participating UN agencies, in agreement with the Government of Bangladesh and donors, decided to extend the Programme until June 2027. This extension reflects the continuous need for the proposed activities and the effort required to preserve the achievements made so far. A note on the SAFE+2 extension has been signed by the four participating UN organizations, and the MoU was amended in February 2025. Partners are also seeking written confirmation from the MoDMR, the representing government entity. However, the low funding rate highlights the urgent need for additional funding to consistently continue activities under SAFE+2.

Gender

Indicator 1: 96% of women and girls (individuals) report reduced hours spent on unpaid care work due to SAFE+2 activities. This shows a large increase compared to the 2023 report where 62% reported reduced hours spent on unpaid work.

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 50% of the households' women make decisions on the use of resources while in 36% of the households' men make the decisions. In 14% of the households' men and women make decisions on the use of resources. This constitutes an increase of almost 10% in households where women make decisions on resources, albeit a 14% decrease in households where joint decisions are made has also been reported.

Indicator 3: The women's autonomy index⁸ for (a) skills development activities in the refugee community is 0.53, and b) for livelihood activities in the host community 0.56

The values of the gender indicators are from the preliminary outcomes of the annual evaluation. The report is expected in April 2025.

Women and girls are critical agents in the fight against rural poverty and hunger. Supporting them in reaching their full potential enables agricultural and rural development processes to be more effective. Increasing the productive and entrepreneurial capacity of rural women is an essential step to reduce food insecurity for millions of people. Reducing social and gender inequalities throughout food systems, from production to consumption, enhances the efficiency of reducing food loss and waste in food systems.

Partners recognize the potential of rural women and men in achieving food security and improved nutrition and are committed to overcoming gender inequality, in alignment with the global pledge to “leave no one behind,” at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the SAFE+2 intervention within the Host Community, 60% of women have the autonomy to make decisions about agricultural production (preliminary RIMA 4 data). Additionally, 29% have control over how their farming income is utilized, and 25% are involved in various social organizations. Moreover, around 20% can manage their workload independently, and 6% reported having the freedom to spend their leisure time as they wish. In the Rohingya community, 72% of women can make decisions regarding homestead gardening, 35% have control over the income generated from farming activities, and 4% can allocate their leisure time according to their preferences.

⁸ The questionnaire and description of the Women Autonomy Index has been shared with SAFE+2 donors in Bangladesh, the closer the average value of the Index is to 1, the higher is women's autonomy (and the other way round).

iii) A Specific Story

Jomila, a 45-year-old Rohingya woman living in Camp 15, Cox's Bazar, has faced numerous hardships since fleeing Myanmar in 2017. As the sole caregiver for her eight children—two of whom have disabilities—her daily struggles have been immense. Before receiving LPG support in 2018, she relied on firewood for cooking, which exposed her to significant risks, including conflicts with the host community, threats from forest officials, and even gender-based violence (GBV). The smoky environment in her cramped shelter caused constant discomfort, and during the monsoon season, finding dry firewood became nearly impossible.

With the introduction of LPG, Jomila's life has improved significantly—cooking became safer and faster. However, she still faced challenges, as staple foods like lentils and meat required long cooking times, consuming more fuel and adding to her burden. In November 2024, Jomila received a pressure cooker as part of an energy-saving initiative, along with hands-on training. This simple intervention transformed her daily life. Cooking became quicker and more efficient, allowing her to prepare meals with less fuel, reducing household heat, and giving her more time to care for her children. The secure lid kept food warm and protected it from domestic animals, easing her worries.



“Previously, I endured long waits for my food to cook, and at times, my LPG would deplete too quickly. Now, with a pressure cooker, I can cook swiftly and conserve gas. This improvement has made my life much easier,” Jomila explained. The pressure cooker has significantly lessened her chores while also providing her a sense of relief, comfort, and dignity within the refugee camp.”

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations

- UNHCR, Impact Assessment of Pressure Cooker Distribution in Rohingya Refugee Camps – Post Pilot Phase, March 2024
- FAO, Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA Round-3) study published in 2024,

IV. Programmatic Revisions

The duration of the Programme has been extended until 30 June 2027 without any changes to the foundational documents, i.e. proposal and financial requirements.

V. Resources

Apart from the generous contributions from SAFE+2 donors—Canada, Sweden, and Norway—the Programme’s activities have also been supported bilaterally through contributions directly to the four UN agencies. These contributions have been instrumental in maintaining a seamless supply of LPG to refugees in Cox’s Bazar and in increasing the scope of activities under priorities 2 and 3. However, SAFE+2 is significantly underfunded and requires additional funding to ensure previous achievements are maintained and planned activities can continue and expand.

VI. Annexes

Annex 1: Indicator Based Performance Assessment

Annex 2: 2023 Midterm Evaluation

Annex 3: Impact Assessment of Pressure Cooker Distribution in Rohingya Refugee Camps – Post Pilot Phase

Annex 4: Human-Wildlife Conflict Baseline Survey Report