Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus, Phase 2 (SAFE+2)
ANNUAL PROGRAMME[1] NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2025

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 Results[2]

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

FAO implemented land rehabilitation and resilience activities in close coordination with the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), Department of Environment (DoE), Department of Cooperative (DoC), Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), district and sub-district administrations, local government institutions, the Coastal Forest Division, the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), and Horticulture Research Center. In addition, the technical and implementing partners were World Food Program (WFP), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS), the Centre for Environmental and Geographic Information Services (CEGIS), and the NGO Forum.

IOM

IOM conducted liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) distribution in 17 Rohingya refugee camps through direct implementation. NF Enterprise supported the programme as the LPG supplier, delivering LPG to the distribution points. IOM also coordinated with the RRRC and its sub-divisions for overall programme support and facilitation.

UNHCR

UNHCR works with the ACTED, Action Aid Bangladesh and BEXIMCO (and BEXIMCO's partner Help the Needy) to enable LPG distributions. The agency also works with

[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

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.

WFP

WFP works alongside key partners in both host and Rohingya communities, including ActionAid Bangladesh, ACTED, BRAC, CARE, HELVETAS, PROTTYASHI, Stitching Cordaid, Shushilan, and RIC to implement a comprehensive package of resilience interventions focused on green skills development, reforestation, climate smart agriculture trainings, enhanced access to quality agricultural inputs, finance and insurance products through climate smart agriculture trainings, enhanced access to quality agricultural inputs, finance and insurance products, livelihood improvement, and market linkage promotion. Throughout 2025, skills development initiatives were implemented in close coordination with other sectors, particularly the Food Security Sector (FSS), the Livelihoods and Skills Development Sector (LSDS), and the Shelter and Camp Coordination Camp Management Sector (S-CCCM). Overall, programme harmonization was ensured through continuous coordination with other SAFE+2 partners and the Government of Bangladesh, supporting alignment, efficiency, and impact across all activities.

Programme/Project Cost (US$)

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

MPTF /JP Contribution[4] in 2025:

- *FAO: USD 1,012,296*
- *IOM: USD 2,750,688*
- *UNHCR: USD 2,423,277*
- *WFP: USD 1,101,364*

Agency Contribution

- *by Agency (if applicable)*

Government Contribution
(if applicable)
Other Contributions (donors) in 2025
Norway: NOK 20 million/ USD 1,776,205
Sweden: SKr. 47 million / USD 4,998,001

TOTAL: USD 6,867,845

Programme Duration

Overall Duration: *60 months*

Start Date[5] *(06.07.2022)*

Original End Date[6] *(31.03.2025)*

Current End date[7] *(30.06.2027)*

[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.

USD 445,340 programmable funds were received in December 2024 and transferred to partners in January 2025. USD 93,639 was transferred from the initial SAFE+ programme to SAFE+2.

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.

Assessment/Review - if applicable *please attach*
☐ Yes X No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*
Mid-Term Evaluation Report – *if applicable please attach*
X Yes ☐ No Date: *24.06.2025*

Report Submitted By

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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
RCP: Refugee Coordination Platform
IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature
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
SMSD: Site Management and Site Development (SMSD).
TVET: technical and Vocational education and Training
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, the Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Plus (SAFE+2) partners successfully sustained and built upon the achievements of the initial SAFE+ phase and its second phase, which has been ongoing since 2022. The Programme continues to prioritize three key areas: improving refugees' access to cleaner energy, promoting environmental conservation, and strengthening resilience.

In an increasingly challenging funding environment, the three strategic objectives of SAFE+2 and its activities remain critical to the Rohingya Response. While progress was made in all three pillars of the programme significantly partners successfully maintained the LPG distributions over the year.

Strategic Priority 1: Access to Cleaner Energy

LPG remains the backbone of the SAFE+2 Programme, providing a safe, reliable, and environmentally sustainable alternative to firewood for refugees in Cox's Bazar. In 2025, coverage remained exceptionally high, with 99% of the refugee population receiving LPG, matching 2024 levels. Access among vulnerable groups was similarly strong, including households with persons with disabilities (99%), elderly members (97%), and all female-headed households (100%). The harmonization of refill cycles between UNHCR and IOM, following pressure cooker distributions, further strengthened programme efficiency.

Environmental benefits remain substantial. Based on the 2022 Stanford University baseline, LPG use resulted in an estimated 457,085 tonnes of CO_2 emissions avoided annually and protected approximately 14,120 hectares of forest, compared with pre-LPG conditions. Despite increased firewood use in 2024–2025 due to funding shortages and a 10% rise in the camp population, 85% of refugees reported stable or improving vegetation inside the camps. Only a small proportion (6–7%) collected firewood from outside camp boundaries.

In 2025, UNHCR and IOM jointly distributed 1,789,254 LPG refills, 382,581 were supported by SAFE+2 donor funding. Additional resources ensured maintenance of cooking stoves, regulators, and hoses. Pressure cooker coverage also improved, with 108,123 units distributed in 2025 and full coverage expected by Q2 2026 following new fundraising efforts.

LPG supply was delivered through established partners—NF Enterprise for IOM and Beximco for UNHCR—with suppliers also providing repair services. Households continued to receive training on safe LPG handling through videos, IEC materials, and demonstrations. A joint UNHCR–IOM tender issued in December 2025 aims to further harmonize procurement.

Alongside operational improvements, partners advanced long-term sustainability efforts. FAO's 2025 analysis reaffirmed LPG as the most effective cooking fuel for Cox's Bazar. Progress was also made toward establishing a carbon financing mechanism, with potential to cover up to 30% of LPG costs from 2027 onward.

Strategic Priority 2: Environment and Ecosystems

SAFE+2's Strategic Priority 2 has been instrumental in reducing landslides and flash floods affecting Rohingya refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar. Through nature-based slope stabilization across 464 hectares of high-risk terrain, SAFE+2 partners converted fragile hillsides into protective green barriers that safeguard lives, shelters, and critical infrastructure. These interventions were implemented through Cash-for-Work, engaging vulnerable households while strengthening self-reliance and community capacity in disaster risk reduction.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the partners strengthened local seedling production and enhanced biodiversity restoration capacity by establishing permanent nurseries with the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), providing inputs and training to private nurseries, engaging youth in nursery management, and introducing a digital nursery portal.

To address growing water-related disaster risks, SAFE+2 partners developed community-led watershed management plans for the Bharuakhali and Palongkhali catchments—two of Cox's Bazar's most vulnerable watersheds. Advanced scientific assessments identified severe groundwater contamination and rapid ecological degradation. The resulting plans provide a clear, evidence-based roadmap to mitigate water scarcity, reduce flood and pollution risks, and restore degraded ecosystems, offering a high-value investment pathway to strengthen water security and climate resilience.

SAFE+2 partners also advanced human–elephant conflict mitigation by mapping hotspots, providing elephant-deterring crop seeds to 1,400 households, training frontline BFD responders, and improving coordinated response mechanisms. These actions have enhanced community knowledge and preparedness, laying the foundation for safer, more sustainable coexistence and reducing the likelihood of hazardous encounters.

Strategic Priority 3: Resilience

In 2025, the SAFE+2 partners' resilience and livelihoods programme made substantial progress in strengthening food security and enhancing climate-smart agricultural production for both host and Rohingya communities in Cox's Bazar. Through support to 5,000 Bangladeshi farmers organized into 250 groups, the programme enabled year-round homestead gardening and reinforced technical expertise using the Farmer Field School approach. These farmer groups also advanced in financial inclusion, as all 250 groups successfully opened bank accounts—marking a major step toward sustainable financial empowerment. Capacity-building support to 25 Aggregation Centres further reinforced institutional sustainability, with 11 centres achieving formal registration.

Structured market engagement played a central role in increasing incomes for smallholders in the host community. Farmers sold over 1,800 MT of fresh vegetables through the programme's support, strengthening supply chains to both local and camp markets. These structured processes ensured transparent pricing, reduced dependence on middlemen, and built trust between producers and buyers. Complementary investments in horticulture nurseries, solar-powered irrigation systems, and climate-smart demonstration plots also improved production efficiency while minimizing environmental impact. Together, these components laid the groundwork for scalable and sustainable resilience across the agricultural landscape.

Within the Rohingya camps, SAFE+2 and complementary WFP initiatives helped 600 households adopt homestead gardening practices, improving access to nutrient-rich foods. Integrated community gardens and aquaculture ponds supported diversified food production, while a tailored Homestead Gardening Guideline ensured harmonized and scalable implementation across partners. Overall, households benefited from better nutrition and enhanced skills in sustainable cultivation practices, contributing to improved well-being despite constrained camp environments.

Beyond this, WFP reached 46,550 Rohingya individuals—95% of whom were women—through climate-smart livelihood activities, including homestead gardening, aquaculture, mushroom cultivation, and composting. Upcycling initiatives provided additional income avenues while contributing to better environmental management within the camps. These activities collectively strengthened household resilience by providing food sources that did not rely solely on external distributions and by fostering new skills that can serve households in the long term.

In the host community, SAFE+2 and its cooperating partners supported 21,946 smallholder farmers organized into Self-Help Groups (SHGs). These farmers received practical training on entrepreneurship, climate-smart agricultural practices, market-oriented production, and essential business skills. Savings groups mobilized USD 0.11 million collectively, significantly improving households' capacity to invest in income-generating activities like poultry farming and handicraft production. Survey findings showed positive results, with 88% of farmers reporting increased market sales in 2025 and average annual sales rising to USD 638.23 per farmer. Market access strengthened considerably through the WFP-supported Aggregation Centre network, which became a central mechanism for linking farmers to structured markets. In 2025, more than 7,000 farmers per month visited the centres, making over 93,000 cumulative visits across the year—reflecting repeat and sustained engagement. Through these transactions, ACs aggregated over 14,000 MT of produce in 2025. Significant investments in climate-resilient infrastructure—including access roads, canals, ponds, and upgraded ACs—enhanced connectivity, reduced transport time, and improved productivity for smallholders seeking reliable and transparent market outlets.

Across supported aggregation centres, governance and market systems improved as union parishads and community groups received training on management, digital tools, and multi-stakeholder coordination. These efforts enhanced institutional capacity, reinforced producer–buyer linkages, and promoted transparent, inclusive market systems. Together, these achievements contributed to strengthening household resilience, expanding income opportunities, and supporting long-term sustainability of local food systems for both Rohingya and host communities.

Coordination

The four SAFE+2 participating UN organizations—FAO, IOM, UNHCR, and WFP—continue to hold monthly operational meetings 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 November 2024 for the annual planning meetings for 2025. Throughout the year, partners regularly updated donors on programme developments, particularly regarding LPG funding. Four dedicated meetings were organized to brief donors on LPG cost-reduction strategies, carbon financing plans, and implementation progress.

SAFE+2 partner monitoring visit, UNHCR/SAFE+2

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 2025.

No new donors joined the SAFE+2 Programme in 2025. However, Sweden significantly increased its contributions by providing two top-ups during the year. Despite these additional funds, the Programme remains substantially underfunded. The four participating UN organizations have relied on bilateral contributions to implement prioritized activities, particularly LPG distribution. Moving forward, the SAFE+2 Programme continues to work toward broadening its funding base.

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 a cornerstone of the SAFE+2 Programme, serving as the primary alternative to firewood for cooking. This shift not only protects plantations within the camps but also safeguards the surrounding forests. Vegetation plays a critical role in stabilizing slopes, which is especially vital given the increasing intensity of monsoon seasons that have triggered numerous landslides, putting refugee lives at risk.

Beyond environmental benefits, LPG significantly improves health by reducing indoor air pollution, lowers the risk of gender-based violence, eases tensions between host communities and refugees, and enhances nutrition by ensuring a consistent and reliable source of cooking fuel.
According to the 2025 Intersector Needs Assessment (ISNA), 99% of the population have received LPG, maintaining the same coverage level as in 2024.

Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) indicates strong overall satisfaction with the LPG equipment. UNHCR PDM reports that the quality of LPG stoves, hosepipes, and regulators remained consistently high throughout 2025, with 94% of respondents rating them as "Good" or "Very Good." However, PDM findings also highlight a key challenge: 26% of supported households reported running out of LPG before receiving their next cylinder. Similarly, households expressed very high appreciation for pressure cookers, with 99% describing them as "useful" or "very useful."

Woman in the Ukhiya camp cooking with LPG, UNHCR/SAFE+2

Compared to the baseline established by Stanford University in 2022, the LPG intervention results in an annual reduction of approximately 457,085 tonnes of CO_2 emissions relative to cooking with firewood. This figure reflects the baseline study conducted by Stanford in 2022 and accounts for the population increase in the Cox's Bazar camps as of December 2025. Furthermore, the intervention is estimated to protect 14,120 hectares of forest, as compared to the situation before LPG was distributed.

In 2025, a follow up survey to the 2024 annual evaluation showed that 27.45% bought firewood and 10.3% collected firewood as a secondary cooking fuel. This represents a slight decrease from 2024 which reported 29% buying firewood and 12.7% collecting firewood. According to the ISNA from 2025, 64% of the camp population use firewood. However, it should be noted that 27% use it for heating. Overall, the ISNA indicates that 33% of all refugees using firewood for cooking while another 13% use firewood for boiling water. Notably, only 7% reported collecting firewood from outside the camps. While the amount of LPG distributed in UNHCR managed camps remained unchanged compared to the previous year, IOM aligned the refill cycle to UNHCR's after the distribution of pressure cookers.

At the same time, refugees continue to borrow LPG from neighbours or transfer gas to other cylinders—an extremely dangerous practice that can lead to fire outbreaks. While reported firewood use continues to be prevalent, 85% of refugees observed no decline—or even an increase—in vegetation within the camps over the past year (ISNA 2025).

During the 2025 reporting period, UNHCR and IOM collectively distributed 1,789,254 LPG refills, of which 382,581 were funded through contributions to the SAFE+2 Programme. This represents a slight increase compared to 2024, as partners were able to reach more households due to new arrivals and adjust the refill cycle following increased distributions of pressure cookers.

Refugees reported in a third-party survey conducted in early 2026 that 21% experienced a decrease in LPG consumption in 2025 compared to 2024, while 44% reported an increase, and 35% indicated no change in their LPG consumption.

In 2025, both agencies also continued to support LPG distribution using additional funding sources, which enabled the maintenance of cooking stoves and LPG-related equipment, including regulators and hoses.

By the end of 2025, almost all refugee households had received a pressure cooker; however, funding shortages left a remaining gap of 28,788 pressure cookers. Fortunately, fundraising efforts by partners successfully secured additional resources in early 2026 to address this shortfall. As a result, all refugee households are expected to receive a pressure cooker by the end of Q2 2026. In total, partners have distributed 108,123 pressure cookers in 2025 although the activity was not funded through SAFE+2 sources.

For LPG distributions, IOM partners with NF Enterprise, while UNHCR works with Beximco through designated distribution centres. Suppliers also provide stove repair services. In addition, households receive training on the safe maintenance of LPG cylinders and stoves through videos, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials, and practical demonstrations. In December 2025, IOM and UNHCR launched a joint tender for LPG with the objective to further harmonize and streamline LPG supply lines.

Partners have continued discussions on alternative funding sources for LPG and the diversification of cooking fuels. FAO has finalized its report, "Assessment and Piloting of Reliable, Affordable and Clean Alternatives to LPG" (Annex 3), reaffirming LPG as the most effective cooking fuel option in Cox's Bazar. The report demonstrates that LPG achieves a Social Benefit-Cost Ratio significantly higher than alternative fuels,

outperforming other biomass options in terms of efficiency, reliability, user satisfaction, and environmental impact.

In addition, partners have explored opportunities to access global carbon markets as a complementary funding source through carbon financing—selling the benefits of reduced carbon emissions from LPG use. During 2025, several briefings with donors and government counterparts paved the way for establishing a carbon project in 2026, which can then be listed on global carbon markets. Estimates suggest that carbon financing could potentially cover up to 30% of LPG costs. (see further details under section iii)

Strategic Priority 2: Environment and Ecosystems

FAO provided critical technical leadership to reduce landslide and flash-flood risks for Rohingya refugees and host communities by rehabilitating 464 hectares of high-risk slopes through enrichment planting and nature-based slope stabilization. These interventions strengthened root systems and vegetative cover, transforming fragile hillsides into protective green barriers that reduce erosion, stabilize soil, and safeguard lives, shelters, and essential infrastructure.

In close coordination with the Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD), the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), the Rohingya Coordination Platform (RCP), and SAFE+2 partners, FAO supplied 562,000 high-quality tree seedlings, 465,884 bamboo poles, and 162 metric tons of fertilizers, while providing continuous technical guidance throughout the land rehabilitation process. To support ongoing care and maintenance, FAO engaged 2,420 vulnerable households through emergency Cash-for-Work, strengthening practical skills in slope stabilization and fostering community ownership. As a result of these combined efforts, 264 hectares within the camps and 200 hectares in surrounding host-community forest areas were rehabilitated, contributing to long-term, climate-resilient protection.

To secure a sustainable seedling supply and advance biodiversity restoration, FAO established five permanent BFD nurseries and supported 51 private nurseries by providing infrastructure and essential inputs, including agro-sheds, vermicompost, irrigation pipes, polybags, water tanks, motors, and solar panels, along with technical, financial, and operational capacity-building support. All nurseries were registered with the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and linked to four nursery associations registered under the Department of Cooperatives (DoC). FAO also established eight model nurseries as peer-learning centres and developed a digital nursery portal, with discussions underway to integrate it into the DAE website. In addition, FAO trained 100 youth in nursery management, eco-enterprise development, and green entrepreneurship, which contributed to a 29.55 percent increase in nursery production capacity and a 54.9 percent improvement in technical knowledge among training participants. To preserve threatened species, FAO identified and tagged 500 mother trees representing 20 species and supported targeted seedling production along with community awareness efforts.

Under SAFE+2, FAO developed community-led watershed management plans for the Bharuakhali watershed in Cox's Bazar Sadar and the Palongkhali watershed in Ukhia. Comprehensive scientific assessments—ranging from water-quality testing and hazard mapping to satellite-based resource analysis and community consultations—revealed significant vulnerabilities, including iron contamination affecting more than half of groundwater sources and salinity impacting 45 percent of sources in the Bharuakhali catchment. In Palongkhali, early signs of ecological decline and contamination risks were linked to camp-related waste inflows.

Plantation activities by refugee volunteers, UNHCR/SAFE+2

The resulting plans outline an integrated strategy built around water-resource management, agricultural transformation, ecological restoration, and livelihood strengthening, combining cost-effective engineering measures such as canal re-excavation and embankment stabilization with nature-based solutions including mangrove rehabilitation, native forest regeneration, and wildlife-corridor protection. These plans provide an evidence-based investment pathway to mitigate water scarcity, reduce disaster risk, and enhance soil and ecosystem health.

FAO also advanced human–elephant conflict mitigation by mapping conflict hotspots and supporting 1,400 households with elephant-deterring crop seeds to reduce losses and protect livelihoods. A further 100 forest-dependent households received training and logistical support to safely manage conflict risks. FAO trained 30 frontline BFD staff and provided wildlife-response equipment such as snake tongs, animal cages, personal protective equipment, and first-aid kits to ensure the safety of both people and wildlife. Standard operating procedures and coordinated engagement between communities, wildlife response teams, Camp Management Committees, and BFD strengthened communication and incident response. Awareness campaigns, field demonstrations, and mock drills improved preparedness, reduced crop losses, and supported safer, more sustainable coexistence between people and wildlife while protecting household incomes and local biodiversity.

To ensure quality implementation, care and maintenance of new plantations, a total of 5,491 unique beneficiaries among which 88% Rohingyas were engaged in Cash-for-Work (CfW) activities throughout 2025, generating 144,280 person-days of work by WFP. The incentives provided through the CfW initiative significantly strengthened household income while directly supporting environmental rehabilitation efforts in the region. Vulnerable community members actively participated in reforestation and ecosystem-restoration activities that enhanced the resilience of their own communities. At the same time, they earned much-needed income to meet essential household needs, ensuring that the programme delivered both livelihood support and environmental protection benefits simultaneously.

Strategic Priority 3: Resilience

Host communities

WFP's support to 21,946 smallholder farmers, organized into 945 Self Help Groups (SHGs) across Cox's Bazar, to strengthen household food security, improve livelihoods, and enhance community resilience. Through training in entrepreneurship, business planning, climate-smart agriculture, and improved production practices, farmers reported strengthened technical capacity, enabling them to adopt more efficient, climate-resilient farming methods and develop viable business plans.

Financial resilience improved as SHGs collectively generated USD 0.11 million in savings and income, providing members with increased access to capital for household needs and livelihood investments. Livestock disease prevention also improved, through WFP's support, community vaccinators trained by veterinary experts from the Department of Livestock vaccinated and treated over 28,000 animals, reducing disease risks, mortality and supporting livestock-based incomes. Knowledge sharing expanded through demonstration plots and WFP has over 1,000 lead farmers that apply climate smart agriculture practices in their fields and demonstrate these to other farmers. In the reporting period, 900 farmers visited the lead farmer plots to learn and replicate climate-smart practices demonstrated on model plots.

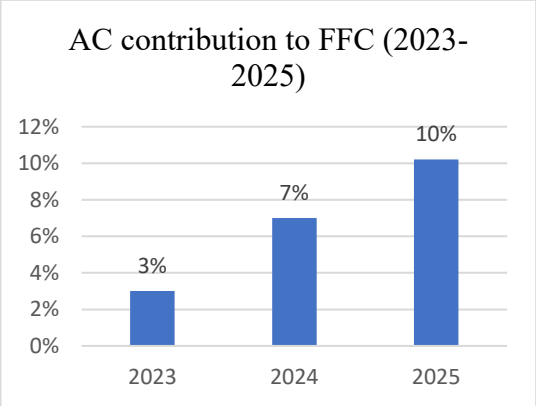
Host community woman receiving home gardening support, UNHCR/ SAFE+2

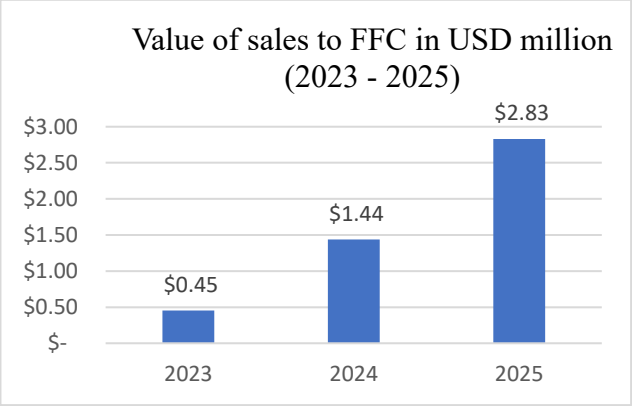
Access to quality agricultural inputs was also strengthened through support to 13 nursery plots, 1,121 Lead Farmers, and 21,946 farmers (male: 851/female: 21,095) who received improved vegetable seeds to boost production and diversify food availability. The inputs were sourced from approved certified seed suppliers in Bangladesh, this support also aimed to increase farmers' appreciation for improved seed varieties.

Under the Market linkage intervention

Fresh Food Transactions: In 2025, a total of 63 Aggregation Centres (ACs) were supported by WFP and humanitarian partners, facilitating market linkage to both WFP's Fresh Food Corners (FFC) in the camps and local markets. This activity was supported through SAFE+2 and complementary funding.

Some 6,697 producers aggregated 2,255 MT of produce valued at BDT 342.8 million (USD 2.83 million) for FFCs. AC-supplied volume has been increasing over the years, contributing to 10 percent of all FFC transactions (up from 7 percent/ 963 MT in 2024 and 3 percent/317 MT in 2023).





Combined, the ACs supported over 93,000 producers with total aggregation quantity of more than 14,000 MT of produce. This directly translated into increased incomes among the participating farmers. The recent Return on Investment assessment conducted by WFP showed that the incomes of farmers participating in aggregation activities has increased and resultingly increased their expenditure on food, health care and children's schooling.

Overall, the results underscore the increasing role of ACs in connecting smallholder farmers to reliable and transparent markets, while strengthening market linkages and supporting greater participation of local producers.

Paddy Transaction: In 2025, ACs in Ramu and Ukhiya upazilas initiated paddy transactions with WFP-contracted retailers for the first time. A total of 139.83 metric tons of paddy was supplied through this initiative, generating BDT 4.64 million in revenue. This effort reflects growing AC capacity to manage staple crop transactions and the potential for diversifying product portfolios and strengthening local agricultural economies.

Off-Farm Product Transactions: A total of 9,470 beneficiaries actively engaged in market transactions of non-agricultural products, including handicrafts and artisanal works, totalling 97,975 units and generating BDT 16.24 million in economic value.

Market Linkage Workshops (On-Farm): Four workshops were conducted to strengthen coordination in FFC operations, and review progress, transaction, and reporting procedures. The sessions further focused on building the capacity of AC management committee (ACMC) members, retailers, and field staff to ensure transparency, accountability, and timely payments, while providing a platform for joint problem-solving to improve operational efficiency.

Market Linkage Workshops (Off-Farm): Four Market Linkage Workshops were held to strengthen sustainable connections between off-farm producers and buyers. The workshops provided a platform for direct dialogue, trust-building, and coordination among producers, buyers, government agencies, development partners, and the private sector particularly supporting women and youth. Key objectives included enhancing producers' understanding of market demand, quality standards, pricing, and design trends, while reducing information gaps and promoting market-driven livelihoods.

Meetings with the Agricultural Standing Committees of each Union Parishad: During the reporting period, the project supported all 13 targeted Union Parishads in Teknaf (5), Ukhiya (5), and Ramu (3), holding 35 of 39 planned meetings with 620 participants, including UP leaders, government staff, NGO staff, AC representatives, and farmer leaders. The meetings strengthened coordination among UPs, ACs, and ACMCs,

and aligned project activities with government priorities. Technical discussions included crop planning, market analysis, climate-resilient practices, and strategies to enhance women's and youth participation.

During this reporting period, 1,186 AC members were trained on Post-Harvest Management, and 1,152 AC members were trained on Food Safety and Quality. To enhance digital market access, 139 aggregators were trained on the Farm2GO app, equipped with devices to enable real-time, transparent transactions. Farm2GO is a digital platform that enables the WFP contracted retailers currently supporting the FFC's within the E-voucher to access information of produce availability in the aggregation centres or local markets without physically visiting them. Leadership and financial management were also reinforced through training for 64 Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurers, striving to improve decision-making, governance, and accountability. All 32 WFP-established ACs were fully registered with the Department of Cooperatives to ensure legal recognition and long-term sustainability. Formal registration of the ACs with the government entities is a significant achievement because it gives them the legal recognition required to operate as a formal organization. As a result of this legalization, the ACs have been able to obtain trading licenses, register as seed distribution dealers, and even financial service providers (in a few). This is not only key for self-sustenance and income generation, it is an enabler in positioning ACs as development partners.

Under the agricultural infrastructure activities, a total of 15.72 km of access roads were constructed, improving year-round mobility from farms to ACs. A total of 71 km of drainage/mini-irrigation canals were re-excavated to drain out excessive rainwater from 7,066 ha of agricultural land in rainy season and supporting irrigation for 1,767 ha Boro rice and vegetable crops in dry season. A total of 24,549 sqm ponds were re-excavated, supporting irrigation for 246 ha of Boro rice and vegetable crops in dry season. A total of 12 ACs were constructed/maintained to ensure community-based market linkage promotion by providing spaces where producers could engage with buyers, receive market information, and enhance their income-earning prospects.

During the reporting period, 5,000 Bangladeshi farmers across 250 groups received climate-resilient seed varieties and micro-gardening kits for both winter and summer seasons, enabling continuous homestead vegetable production that strengthened dietary diversity and improved household resilience to seasonal and climate-related shocks. FAO advanced this effort through an Integrated Family Farming System delivered via the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach, training 125 FFS groups in practical, climate-smart techniques that enhanced technical capacity in integrated crop production and efficient resource use.

To reinforce financial inclusion and group sustainability, FAO supported the opening of formal bank accounts for all 250 groups, institutionalizing savings practices and improving access to financial services. The institutional capacity of 25 FAO-established Aggregation Centres (ACs) was further strengthened through targeted training for Aggregation Center Management Committee members in business planning, marketing, and supply-chain management. As a result, 11 ACs obtained formal registration with the Department of Cooperatives, solidifying their legal standing and long-term viability.

Infrastructure investments included the installation of five solar irrigation systems with a combined lifting capacity of approximately 500,000 litres per day, enabling irrigation across 4–5 acres per site and supporting year-round commercial vegetable production while reducing dependence on conventional energy sources.

To promote climate-resilient production and encourage technology uptake, 50 year-round demonstration plots were established using climate-smart agricultural practices. These plots increased the regular supply of high-value vegetables to both Rohingya camps and local markets and served as practical learning hubs for scalable adoption of resilient livelihood practices.

Rohingya camps

In the Rohingya camps, community engagement in SAFE+2's resilience programmes was particularly strong among women, who represented 95 percent of the 46,550 individuals trained in green skills. Training areas included homestead gardening, aquaculture, mushroom production, composting, and upcycling, enabling households to adopt low-cost solutions for small-scale food production and environmental management.

A total of 44,247 households established vertical and climate-smart gardens, producing 3,694 metric tons of vegetables valued at over USD 2.10 million. An additional 404 households practiced pond-bank cultivation, producing 2.63 metric tons of vegetables worth USD 1,500. All participating households received quality agricultural inputs to sustain production beyond training.

Community-based production hubs continued to serve as central points for both learning and collective food production. By the end of 2025, 21 community fishponds were fully operational, producing 4 MT of fish for 1,000 households. Another 13 mushroom houses yielded 412 kg of mushrooms for 154 households, while 17 Green Skills Development Hubs further strengthened community capacity, providing hands-on training spaces where participants could learn, practice, and collaborate. Complementing these efforts, 365 cooking demonstrations were held, reaching 7,260 women, helping households maximize the nutritional benefits of vegetables and fish through improved food preparation.

A total of 1,205 participants collected, cleaned and transformed nearly 3 million aluminium packets and 176,257 rice-sack packets into 218,789 upcycled items, generating income and reducing environmental waste. Composting initiatives using kitchen and market organic waste further helped reduce the volume of organic waste and improve soil fertility across demonstration plots.

Innovation remained a key focus of SAFE+2. Several pilot models were introduced to test scalable solutions for food production in a land-constrained environment. These included hydroponics, aquaponics, integrated aquaculture-vegetable systems, women-led production of reusable upcycled bags, and small-scale poultry and pigeon rearing models. Early results indicate strong potential for replication.

SAFE+2 supported 600 beneficiaries in the Rohingya camps through structured homestead-gardening training and the provision of essential inputs, including climate-resilient summer and winter crop seeds. This assistance enabled households to produce fresh vegetables, directly strengthening food availability, dietary diversity, and overall household resilience.

To ensure quality, cost-efficiency, and scalable replication across partners, FAO developed a comprehensive Homestead Gardening Guideline tailored to the Rohingya camp context. The guideline was disseminated through the Food Security Sector (FSS), helping institutionalize harmonized technical standards and ensuring sustained impact across camp settings.

<u>Challenges, lesson learned & best practices</u>

Challenges:
In 2025, SAFE+2 partners faced a wide range of operational, environmental, and market-related challenges across both host and refugee settings. Efforts to identify alternative cooking fuels among refugees—such as biomass briquettes, improved stoves, and electric-cooking pilots—did not yield a viable replacement for LPG, which the FAO report confirmed remains the most appropriate option in humanitarian contexts. At the same time, environmental pressures continued due to past deforestation and limited availability of land, compounded by climate shocks, high population density, and supply-chain disruptions. Livelihood barriers persisted, including weak buyer linkages, lack of structured price-monitoring systems, and limited access to

finance. Aggregation Center (AC) committee members—especially women—also struggled with limited marketing capacity and mobility constraints, reducing their ability to negotiate with retailers, while producers remained vulnerable to informal market taxes. For Rohingya households, movement restrictions curtailed income-generation despite improved production skills, prompting WFP to pilot a small-scale traders' market to safely connect Rohingya producers with General Food Assistance beneficiaries.

Lessons Learned:
Key lessons underscored the importance of institutional strengthening, inclusive capacity development, and coordinated action across multiple stakeholders. Harmonizing technical standards—such as the planned unification of LPG cylinder valve specifications between UNHCR and IOM—is expected to enhance efficiencies and contingency planning and reduce costs. Legal registration of ACs significantly enhanced governance and long-term sustainability by enabling formal business operations. Capacity-building efforts across all levels—project staff, AC leaders, ACMC members, and farmers—improved digital literacy, post-harvest management, food safety, and financial literacy, supported by refresher training, mentoring, and continuous learning approaches. Community ownership emerged as a cornerstone of sustainability in environmental restoration efforts, while initiatives like UNHCR's LPG voucher pilot showed that incentive-based approaches have the potential to influence positive behavioural change. Importantly, aligning green skills training with market demand and ensuring gender- and disability-inclusive methods strengthened participation among women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

Best Practices:
Effective practices in 2025 demonstrated the value of integrating technology, market-orientation, and community-centred approaches. Combining market-driven green skills, financial literacy, conditional cash support, and post-training mentoring helped participants successfully adopt new livelihood practices. Digital tools such as the F2GO marketing app improved transparency, strengthened recordkeeping, and expanded market access for small-scale producers and aggregators. Legal registration of ACs created a robust foundation for sustainable governance and formal market engagement, while strong collaboration with public and private actors enhanced supply chain efficiency and built community confidence. The integration of climate-smart and renewable technologies—such as solar irrigation and climate-smart agriculture—proved highly effective for sustaining production, diversifying energy sources, and reducing environmental pressure in climate-vulnerable environments. Collectively, these practices offer a scalable model for strengthening livelihoods, environmental resilience, and market systems in fragile settings.

Funding
The SAFE+2 Programme has received contributions in 2025 from Sweden (US$ 4,998,001), Norway (US$ 1,776,205) and a transfer from the previous SAFE+ Programme (US$ 93,639). In addition to these generous contributions, bilateral contributions outside the SAFE+2 Programme were received. Partners continue to actively promote the Programme with donors to increase contributions. In 2025 funding through SAFE+2 continued to be allocated 70% to IOM and UNHCR for activities under SO 1 and 15% for FAO and 15% for WFP for activities under SO2 and SO3.

Gender
SAFE+2 activities generated strong gains in reducing women's unpaid care burdens and strengthening their decision-making power across Rohingya and host communities.

Women and girls report reduced hours spent on unpaid care work
Monitoring data show that 95 percent of participating women and girls (approximately 96 percent in 2024) reported fewer hours spent on unpaid care work, demonstrating the impact of time-saving technologies, improved energy access, and targeted sensitization that enabled them to redirect time toward productive and

learning opportunities. The drop could be related to the group of families that arrived in 2025 and started receiving LPG later during the year.

Decision making on the use of transferred resources
Household decision-making patterns also improved. Among Rohingya households, 51 percent reported that women independently decide how to use transferred resources, compared with 18 percent where men decide alone and 31 percent where decisions are joint. These shifts reflect growing control over resources and gradual progress toward more equitable intra-household dynamics.

Women's autonomy index:
Women's autonomy scores reinforce this trend. In the Rohingya community, the autonomy index for participation in skills-development activities remained steady at 0.53 since 2024, indicating sustained engagement and agency. In host communities, the autonomy index for livelihood activities rose from 0.56 in 2024 to 0.58 in 2025, reflecting measurable progress in women's ability to influence economic decisions.

Collectively, these outcomes highlight SAFE+2's contribution to reducing gendered time poverty, strengthening agency, and fostering more equitable decision-making across refugee and host households.

Women and girls remain central to resilient agrifood systems, and SAFE+2 placed gender equality at the core of its design by expanding opportunities for their participation in household production, decision-making, and community engagement. FAO's 2025 impact assessment found high levels of engagement in homestead production, with 81 percent of Rohingya women and 71 percent of Bangladeshi women reporting active involvement. These results reflect the effectiveness of targeted training, tailored inputs, and context-appropriate extension services in supporting women's contributions to household consumption and local markets.

Strengthened social networks were another key outcome. 44 percent of Rohingya women and 32 percent of Bangladeshi women reported involvement in groups or community networks. Increased participation improved access to information, peer learning, and collective bargaining, enabling women to adopt new practices more confidently and access market opportunities more effectively.

iii) A Specific Story

Leveraging Carbon Finance to Sustain Clean Cooking and Environmental Recovery in Cox's Bazar

Amid declining humanitarian funding and rising needs in the world's largest refugee settlement, UNHCR and SAFE+2 partners have advanced an innovative carbon-finance project designed to sustain life-saving clean cooking services for Rohingya refugees while delivering long-term environmental and livelihood benefits to host communities in Cox's Bazar. The initiative includes a total of 5 carbon-credit–generating activities: LPG clean cooking in Cox's Bazar camps and, in the host communities, clean cooking, afforestation-reforestation-agroforestry, alternate wetting and drying (AWD) rice cultivation, and waste-to-compost projects. Together, these interventions would form one of the first large-scale humanitarian-development carbon portfolios of its kind.

The project aims to address two urgent challenges. First, LPG provision—critical for reducing deforestation, preventing gender-based violence linked to firewood collection, and improving health—requires substantial and continuous funding. Second, host communities surrounding the camps face long-standing environmental degradation and limited livelihood opportunities. Carbon finance offers a sustainable solution by generating revenue from verified emission reductions, easing pressure on donor budgets, and reinvesting benefits directly into local ecosystems and economies.

Consultative meetings with partners, donors and government started in mid-2025, with the implementation of pilot projects expected by early 2027, pending Government of Bangladesh approval and completion of feasibility assessments to confirm designs of the host community projects. The projects will be co-developed with national institutions to reflect country priorities and commitments and meet legal requirements as per UNHCR Refugee Environmental Protection Fund principles.

Once operational, the project will deliver extensive co-benefits by restoring degraded slopes through reforestation and agroforestry, improving water efficiency and reducing methane emissions through AWD practices, reducing health hazard through provision of cleaner cooking solutions and cutting landfill waste via composting—while also creating paid employment opportunities, at least 40% of which will benefit women. As a whole, the initiative is designed to serve as a replicable model for integrating carbon finance into humanitarian settings—sustaining essential clean-cooking services, enhancing environmental recovery, and strengthening social cohesion in displacement contexts.

Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: Anuara Begum's Success with Shapla Nursery

Anuara Begum has operated Shapla Nursery in Ukhiya for more than 15 years. When she was first identified and enrolled as a beneficiary under the nursery development component, Shapla Nursery was a modest operation—rich in potential but constrained by limited tools, low species diversity, and traditional production methods that kept output low and income unpredictable. Like many rural women entrepreneurs, Anuara Begum had the ambition to expand her business but lacked the resources and technical support needed to modernize

Figure 1. Anuara Begum's Success with Shapla Nursery

Through structured training in nursery management, financial planning, and quality control—combined with exposure visits and regular field mentoring—Anuara gained the confidence and practical skills she needed to manage her nursery as a viable business. The project also equipped her with solar-powered irrigation systems, agro-shades, pest management equipment, and improved storage materials. These investments enabled her to adopt low-cost, climate-resilient production practices that reduced losses and significantly improved efficiency.

Before receiving project support, Shapla Nursery produced approximately 70,200 seedlings and sold around 62,630 units annually, generating an income of about BDT 1.29 million. Following the introduction of improved skills and technologies, production increased to 119,230 seedlings per year, annual sales rose to 105,000 units, and her income grew to BDT 1.73 million. More importantly, Anuara now manages a thriving nursery that contributes to local livelihoods, climate resilience, and greener agricultural landscapes.

With strengthened management systems and improved infrastructure, Anuara secured official registration from the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in July 2025 and achieved recognition as a Model Nursery. She introduced systematic record-keeping, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices, organic fertilization, and renewable energy use—laying a strong foundation for long-term environmental and financial sustainability.

Today, Shapla Model Nursery stands as a compelling example of women-led entrepreneurship and sustainable agribusiness in Ukhiya. Anuara's transformation from a small-scale operator into a recognized model entrepreneur demonstrates how targeted capacity building and institutional support can enhance livelihoods, strengthen local markets, and inspire other women within the community.

III. Other Assessments or Evaluations

- UNHCR, SAFE+2 Annual Evaluation, 2024, published June 2025
- FAO, Assessment and Piloting of Reliable, Affordable and Clean Alternatives to LPG, August 2025
- UNHCR, Thrid party impact survey, 2025

IV. Programmatic Revisions

The steering committee of the SAFE+2 Programme has agreed to extend the duration of the Programme until 30 June 2027. An MoU for the extension was signed among partners on 8 April 2025.

V. Resources

In addition to the generous support from SAFE+2 donors—Canada, Sweden, and Norway—the Programme has also benefited from bilateral contributions made directly to the four UN agencies. These contributions have been critical in ensuring a consistent supply of LPG for refugees in Cox's Bazar and in expanding activities under priorities 2 and 3. Further, SAFE+2 received in 2025 a transfer of unspent funds from the previous SAFE+ programme. Despite these efforts, SAFE+2 remains significantly underfunded and urgently requires additional resources to sustain past achievements and enable the continuation and scale-up of planned activities.

VI. Annexes

Annex 1: Indicator Based Performance Assessment
Annex 2: 2024 Annual Evaluation
Annex 3: Assessment and Piloting of Reliable, Affordable and Clean Alternatives to LPG