Cox’s Bazar is one of the poorest and most vulnerable districts in Bangladesh, with development indicators that are far below the national average. Host to nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees, the district faces immense pressure on public services and the environment.

**Objectives**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is working with partners in the Food Security Sector to:

- Enhance livelihoods and resilience of vulnerable host communities and support social protection interventions.
- Strengthen sustainable natural resource management.
- Strengthen the self-reliance of Rohingya refugees to improve household nutrition and develop transferable skills.

**Activities**

**Support livelihoods to enhance food security and nutrition**

- Farmers’ group production support
- Market linkages
- Improved production systems and technologies
- Conservation agriculture
- Livestock inputs and training
- Environmentally sound homestead vegetable production and training

**Environmental rehabilitation and disaster risk reduction**

- Landslide and flash flood mitigation measures
- Ecosystem-based farming systems
- Nursery establishment
- Reforestation
- Water management and conservation
- Cash-for-work
- Capacity building for resource management
- Ecotourism development

Addressing the food security and livelihood needs of both refugees and host communities will require strengthening food systems, localizing production, enhancing market linkages and strengthening sustainable natural resource management.
Impact on food security

The already dire conditions of Cox’s Bazar, where hundreds of thousands of refugees live in extremely congested camps, have been aggravated by the economic impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Supply chain disruptions and essential health-related movement restrictions have exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, leading to the increased cost of inputs that farming, fishing and livestock-raising households – both refugees and hosts – need to keep their livelihoods intact. More than 1.2 million people (of the district’s population of 2.65 million) are food insecure.

In addition to shaking the economy, the effects of the pandemic have increased social tension among refugees and host communities, as both vie for severely limited employment opportunities and access to resources.

Households dependent on agriculture need support to increase their production and incomes in a way that is tailored to their specific livelihood – i.e. crop and vegetable production, fisheries, and livestock production. Farming households require high-quality inputs, enhanced irrigation facilities and improved agro-machinery to reduce production costs. Livestock owners need to build their knowledge on sustainable livestock management and care. Fishing households must be trained on improved aquaculture (or sea safety practices, as applicable) and be provided with a sufficient supply of fish fry and feed. Linkages must be fostered between community groups and the rapidly growing markets to identify gaps and weaknesses in the existing crop, fisheries and livestock supply chains.

The district’s increased population, due to the influx of refugees, has created a massive demand for fuel wood, in turn putting severe pressure on local natural resources, services and existing infrastructure. Thousands of hectares of land have been degraded, posing an enormous threat to entire ecosystems. Support is needed to restore degraded lands, mitigate the risk of disasters like flooding and landslides, improve watershed management to conserve ecosystems and ensure sustainable production.