



# BANGLADESH Fact Sheet

## FEED THE FUTURE AT A GLANCE

Feed the Future, the U.S. government's global hunger and food security initiative, is a \$3.5 billion commitment to support country-driven approaches to address the root causes of poverty, hunger, and undernutrition. A whole-of-government initiative led by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Feed the Future leverages the strengths of multilateral institutions, civil society, and the private sector. Globally we aim to assist 18 million vulnerable women, children, and family members – mostly smallholder farmers – escape hunger and poverty. Together, we will increase agricultural productivity, decrease poverty, drive economic growth, and reduce undernutrition to improve millions of lives.

## COUNTRY CONTEXT

Since 2000, Bangladesh's GDP has grown at an average rate of six percent. Rice production has tripled over the last 30 years, while the poverty rate has declined by 10 percent over the past decade. Despite these gains, Bangladesh is the most densely populated large country in the world, with 150 million people living in a land area roughly the size of Iowa. As a result, poverty, lack of access to agricultural land, and poor eating habits contribute to one of the highest undernutrition rates in the world. Forty percent of the population and 50 percent of the female population is undernourished. Forty percent of the population currently lives below the poverty line and the country has one of the highest rates of child stunting in the world.

### Bangladesh Quick Facts

- Bangladesh has a population of 150 million
- GDP growth rate averaged 6% in the past decade
- 48% of Bangladeshis are employed in the agriculture sector, with rice as the single-most important product
- 40% of the population lives below the poverty line
- 40% of the population is undernourished
- 43% of children under 5 suffer from moderate to severe stunting

Forty-eight percent of Bangladeshis are employed in the agriculture sector and a large majority of the rural population is involved in fisheries. The country is one of the world's largest producers of rice, tea, jute, potatoes, mangoes, and onions. However, population growth, urbanization, and soil and natural resource depletion have resulted in the degradation of land, water bodies, wetlands, and forests and pose a significant threat to the agriculture sector. Arable land loss, rising sea levels, frequent flooding, and extreme weather patterns, due in part to climate change, compound the threats to food security in Bangladesh. Food insecurity is further complicated by gender-related factors—women are heavily engaged in agriculture but do not have access to extension services or other inputs like seeds and fertilizer. They are also usually the last to eat at mealtimes.

Nonetheless, Bangladesh is making progress. The under-five mortality rate has declined by more than 50 percent since 1993

and 88 percent of children under the age of five receive vitamin A supplementation twice a year through successful campaigns led by the government.

## OPPORTUNITIES

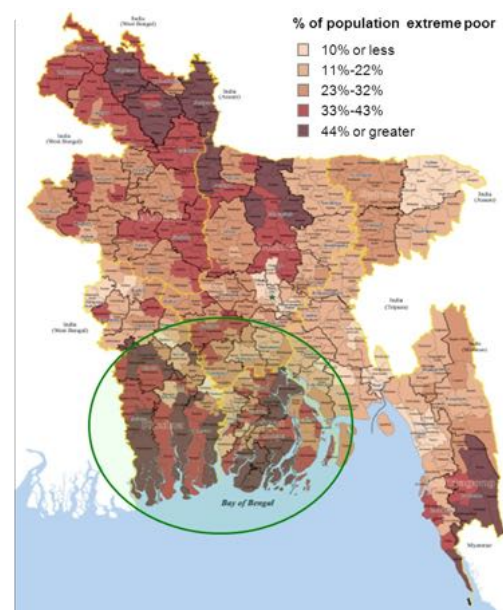
Bangladesh has tremendous potential for agriculture-led growth with fertile soil, abundant water, strong research and extension institutions, and expanding infrastructure. Over the past several decades, the Government of Bangladesh has adjusted its policies in the agriculture sector to increase private sector participation and reduce tariffs and price controls. The Government of Bangladesh has demonstrated strong leadership in the area of food security and hosted a high-level Food Security Investment Forum in May 2010. At the meeting, representatives of the government, civil society, the private sector, academia, and donors discussed the Country Investment Plan, which was finalized in March 2011. The government also began implementing a \$52 million Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, managed by the World Bank, to enhance agricultural productivity through technology generation and adoption as well as improved water management.

## KEY OBJECTIVES

Our collective efforts aim to improve the livelihood and nutritional status of households in Bangladesh through:

- Increased on-farm productivity
- Increased investment in market systems and value chains
- Enhanced food security policy and planning capacity
- Enhanced agriculture innovation capacity
- Improved nutritional status of rural poor

## TARGET REGIONS



## FEED THE FUTURE: IMPACT IN BANGLADESH

Over the next five years:

- An estimated 900,000 vulnerable Bangladeshi women, children, and family members – mostly smallholder farmers – will receive targeted assistance to escape hunger and poverty.
- More than 300,000 children will be reached with services to improve their nutrition and prevent stunting and child mortality.
- Significant numbers of additional rural populations will achieve improved income and nutritional status from strategic policy engagement and institutional investments.

### CORE INVESTMENTS

The U.S. is focusing its efforts in targeted regions and value chains to maximize impact. Concentrating resources, fostering political engagement, linking agriculture to nutrition, and supporting gender equality are critical investments to successfully improve food security throughout Bangladesh.

### Targeted Investments

Feed the Future will have the highest impact with focused interventions in areas that offer opportunities to reduce poverty and undernutrition. We will target intensification of rice production by promoting higher-yield, saline/drought resistant, and more nutritious rice by supporting research institutions, government policy makers, NGOs, farmers, and the private sector. We will also support diversification into higher-value, nutritious products such as fruits, vegetables, fish, and livestock. This will increase farmers' incomes while also making more nutritious food available both in markets and at the household level. Women will be specifically targeted through promotion of homestead food production and nutrition education to encourage consumption of the diversified foods they produce.

### Private Sector Engagement

We will support private sector growth by identifying market constraints and working with the government and private sector to eliminate constraints. We will build the capacity of farmers, small and medium enterprises, and civil society by promoting market linkages and improving access to market information.

### Policy Reform

Feed the Future will identify and advocate for policy reforms, stimulate policy dialogue, and strengthen the analytical and monitoring capabilities of national institutions. We will generate policy research to fill knowledge gaps in critical areas and communicate research outcomes to relevant stakeholders. We will also improve the capacity of the government, civil society, farmers, and the private sector to engage in policy dialogue with an emphasis on Bangladesh's most vulnerable populations.

### Research and Innovation

Feed the Future will strengthen agricultural research capacity with a focus on: (1) crops that are resilient to climate change-related challenges such as salinity, drought, and floods; (2) improved cost effectiveness; (3) improved farming practices, including fertilizer use and better irrigation; and (4) high-value crops. Socio-economic research will also be prioritized, especially in the promotion of agribusiness marketing, value-added transformation, and analysis of the overall enabling environment. Natural resource management issues such as soil fertility and erosion and the impacts of pesticide use will be an important part of building research capacity in

Bangladesh. Programs will focus on strengthening extension services to farmers through government, NGOs, and the private sector to facilitate the dissemination of research results. In particular, efforts will focus on gender roles in farming and household gardening activities and increasing the number and skills of female extension agents.

### Nutrition

Through extension activities and community outreach, Feed the Future will disseminate consistent information on nutrition and social and behavioral change. In collaboration with the U.S. Government's Global Health Initiative, Feed the Future will improve nutrition service delivery for pregnant women and young children. Research on innovative nutrition technologies and bio-fortified varieties of rice will be targeted toward improving the quality of food and preventing and treating undernutrition.

### Climate Change

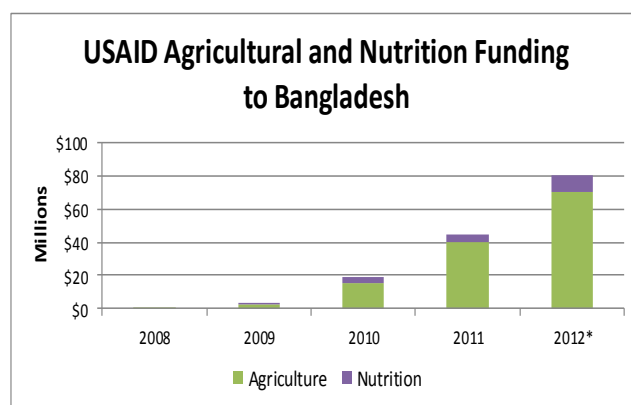
Crop research and development will focus on improving resiliency against climate change impacts associated with salinity, drought, and floods. Our efforts will focus on use of energy and fertilizer, as well as on improved irrigation technologies to mitigate greenhouse gas production. Communities will be trained in conservation and sustainable agriculture practices. Feed the Future will also promote improved natural resource management, watershed protection, and sustainable management of water bodies since Bangladesh is heavily dependent on fishery systems.

### GENDER INTEGRATION

Nutrition education will focus on women and children, though not to the exclusion of men. Extension activities will reach out to women, and ensure that women are well-represented in Bangladeshi agricultural support services. Our efforts encourage teaching the "whole family at once" approach to assure access to women and the next generation of farmers and better information retention.

### WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

Feed the Future elevates coordination across the U.S. Government so that our investments, resources, and programs are harmonized for greater collective impact. This interagency engagement, led by USAID, includes collaboration with U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Treasury Department, Millennium Challenge Corporation, U.S. African Development Foundation, U.S. Trade Representative, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. For example, State will encourage regulatory reform and market liberalization to improve the business climate for farmers and the private sector.



\*2012 is included in the President's budget request to Congress and is not yet approved