



Standard Operating Procedure for Emergency Rapid Food Assistance Multi-Hazard Emergency Response for Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar Food Security Sector | Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Note: In this document, the term "actors" is used for Food Security Sector partners and non-partners engaged in the distribution of emergency rapid food assistance.

1. Background and Context

The Food Security Sector (FSS) co-led by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), was established in 2017 to coordinate the food security interventions for the Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar. Food Security Sector's (FSS) highly critical objectives is to ensure and sustain the timely provision of life-saving nutrition-sensitive food assistance for Rohingya refugees. The sector provides three main interventions towards food assistance including, the General Food Assistance (GFA) that serves as blanket food assistance for all refugees through e-voucher food rations, a supplement that targets the most vulnerable Rohingya populations with access to Fresh Food Corner shops, and Rapid Food Assistance provided during emergencies.

Cox's Bazar district is highly vulnerable to natural hazards and food insecurity due to its geography, human pressure, and unsustainable use of natural resources. The district experiences seasonal climate variations and faces threats from monsoons, cyclones, and increased risk of fire incidents during the dry season. This poses a significant danger, especially in densely populated areas like the Rohingya refugee camps, where fires can rapidly spread and intensify.

Since the 2017 influx, the Rohingya refugee camps encountered several disasters requiring immediate humanitarian response including rapid food assistance. The goal of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Emergency Rapid Food Assistance is to harmonize the assistance among the actors engaged. Developed from previous experiences, it aims to strengthen coordination, increase timely response efficiency, and clarify stakeholders' responsibilities. Its purpose is to provide the standards and course of action for engaged actors in rapid food assistance during an emergency.

The following details the 2. Modalities of the food intervention, 3. Standard minimum food basket, 4. Operational guidelines 5. Targeting approach, 6. Planning, 7. Response and 8. Post-response activities per stakeholder 9. Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

2. Modalities

At the onset of an emergency in the Rohingya camps, the FSS responds with rapid food assistance to the affected populations through 3 modalities:

- Fortified Biscuits (FB): First step of the emergency food assistance response to the affected people is the distribution of FB conducted by the WFP.
- Hot meals: In consideration that the affected population do not have access to cooking facilities, hot meal distributions is implemented promptly.
- Complementary dry food: To complement hot meals and ensure the standard nutritional and caloric intake, dry food compliment packages are provided.



3. Minimum Standards

To ensure a dignified, efficient, and equitable distribution of rapid food for the affected people, responding actors must comply to the minimum standards of quality and quantity of food in a timely manner depicted in table 1.

Table 1. Minimum standards

Assistance modality	Details	Timeline	Duration/Frequency
Fortified Biscuits (FB)	Per HH 100 (50g) packets or equivalent	At the onset of the emergency	One-time distribution
Hot Meals	Per individual Boiled rice (400 g) Mixed vegetables (200g) Thick dal/lentils (200g) TOTAL (800g)	Lunch: 11h00 -13h00 Dinner: 16h00 -18h00	Distributed daily**
Complementary Dry Foods	Per HH Bread 2 packets (40 slices) Puffed rice (1kg) Molasses / Sugar (0.5kg) Biscuit packets (5) (400 g) Peanuts Local (1kg) Pulse (1 kg) Chickpeas (1 kg) Flattened rice (1kg) Fruits local (1kg)	Breakfast: 0800-10h00*	1-2 times/week**

Notes:

*Refugees have noted preference for early morning distributions to feed them till the hot meal lunch distribution and facilitate the hauling of the items.

**Distributed within 24 hours from the onset of the emergency and continues until the e-voucher provisions resume.

Important compliances to follow:

- Hot meals cannot not include eggs or meat to avoid risks of food contamination and poisoning.
- Actors are required to use packaging that reduces plastic waste. Use paper boxes, aluminum tins, reusable hard plastics are permitted while avoiding single-use packaging.
- Non-compostable materials such as Styrofoam and low-grade plastic bags are prohibited. Reference to the FSS and WASH Sectors Joint Guidance Note - Waste Avoidance and Management in Emergency Food Distributions¹.
- Rapid food distribution does not include water, unless specifically requested by the Government of Bangladesh or the WASH Sector. This recommendation is in place to avoid and reduce plastic usage in the camps. WASH Sector actors ensure access to water at specific access points.
- Above points are an effort to address the RRRC circular of May 2022 urging the humanitarian community to stop the use of polythene materials in the Rohingya refugee camps².

¹ [FSS and WASH Sector Joint Guidance Note](#) – Waste Avoidance and Management in Emergency Food Distributions.

² RRRC Circular – [‘Stop using polythene shopping bag and other polythene materials in Rohingya camps’](#)



4. Operational Guideline

- During emergency responses, the FSS coordinates the actors while WFP and its cooperating actors lead the rapid food assistance response.
- At the onset of the emergency, actors are required to engage with the FSS to plan their rapid food distribution intervention.
- FSS, through the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), engages with the Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRRC) to ensure compliance of this SOP by the Camp In-Charge (CiCs).
- The CiCs have operational oversight of the emergency interventions.
- At the camp level, actors are required to validate their distribution plan with the FSS Focal prior to its endorsement by the CiC.
- FSS coordinates with the FSS Focal and the WFP GFA team throughout the duration of the response.

5. Targeting approach

- To ensure equal distribution of assistance, FSS actors are required to plan based on their capacity to provide rapid food assistance for an entire unit such as a complete camp, camp-block or sub-block, for at least 1 full day with 2 hot meals, lunch and dinner, for every affected individual in that respective unit.
- Actors are required to refer to the monthly UNHCR population data³ to determine the number of individuals within the selected unit according to their intervention capacity and plan.

6. Planning

Actors

- Actors are required to communicate and engage with FSS throughout each phase of the emergency.
- Actors are required to present a rapid food distribution plan to FSS with the number of people following and the number of days they will provide a full cycle of 2 hot meals.
- If an actor does not have the capacity to cover an entire unit as required, FSS will coordinate with other actors to operate together and ensure the proper coverage.
- Actors are required to comply to the minimum standards of quality and quantity food assistance and the timing of the distributions as per Table 1 in this SOP.
- Actors are required to have their distribution plan validated by FSS and endorsed by the CiC.

FSS

- At the onset of an emergency, FSS requests the RRRC (through the ISCG) to open the line of communication between the CiC and FSS.
- FSS receives the distribution plans from actors, assesses its feasibility and validates based on the terms of this SOP.
- FSS compiles and prepares a unified distribution plan shared with the FSS Focal and the CiC.

³ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/bgd>



- FSS is available to actors to provide support in preparing a distribution plan and any other request as needed.

FSS Focal

- FSS Focal is authorized to validate an actor's distribution plan at camp level and shares it with FSS. (Validation of a distribution plan means that it complies to this SOP's minimum standards Table 1 and the targeting approach)
- FSS Focal, in consultation with CiC, identifies a site for each actor to set-up their distribution point.

CiC

- As per the RRRC directives in letter no-5808, the CiC is required to consult with FSS, through the FSS Focal, to seek validation prior to endorsing an actor's distribution plan.
- CiC is required to refer all interested actors to FSS for screening and validation.
- CiC, as the overall responsible body, formally endorses all distribution plans.

7. Response

Actors

- Actors are required to arrive 1 hours earlier to set-up their distribution point, ensuring adequate shade coverage for staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries.
- Actors are required to distribute the lunch hot meal at 11h00 to be completed by 13h00 giving sufficient time to prepare the dinner distribution.
- Actors are required to distribute the hot meal dinner at 16h00 to be completed by 18h00.
- Actors are required to inform FSS or FSS Focal of any changes to their operational plan as soon as possible to cover the gaps.
- Throughout the distribution operation, staff and volunteers are required to dispose of the waste at the designated location leaving no footprint.
- Actors are required to submit a daily report to FSS with the distribution figures and a situation report.

FSS

- FSS compiles the daily report provided by the engaged actors and shares it with the stakeholders.
- FSS prepares the next day distribution plan and shares it with the engaged actors, FSS Focal and CiC.
- FSS is required to follow-up on issues and concerns raised by the stakeholders during the distribution.

FSS Focal

- FSS Focal ensures that distribution points are properly and adequately set-up and staffed by the actor.
- FSS Focal monitors the distribution and provides technical support to the actor as needed.
- FSS Focal are required to communicate daily issues and concerns to the FSS and CiC.



8. Post-response

Actors

- Actors submit a final report with a narrative, figures and issues encountered to FSS as soon as possible after completing their emergency response.

FSS

- FSS compiles the final distribution reports and shares it with the stakeholders including actors, FSS Focal, CiC, ISCG and WFP.
- FSS organizes a lesson learned workshop with the stakeholders to improve future emergency responses.

FSS Focal

- FSS Focal is required to report to FSS any issues and concerns that were raised during the emergency operation.
- FSS Focal informs FSS, CiC, SM of the timeline when e-vouchers are to resume as the normal course of food assistance.

9. Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (alphabetic order)

Actors

Actors interested in taking part in emergency rapid food assistance are required to coordinate with the FSS for assistance and validation. Actors are required to comply with this SOP. All actors are responsible for disposing their waste from the distribution site and leave no footprint.

Camp-in-Charge (CiCs)

The CiC is responsible for the overall operational oversight. The CiC is required to consult with FSS through the FSS Focal prior to approving a distribution plan to avoid duplication, gaps in services, ensure compliance with minimum standards and rationalize the use of available resources.

FSS

The FSS is responsible to coordinate the actors and the response, ensuring compliance to this SOP. FSS works closely with the WFP GFA team, collaborates with the CiCs / Site Management (through FSS Focal), other Sectors particularly S-CCCM and WASH, the ISCG, and the RRRC (through ISCG).

FSS Focal

The FSS Focal is part of the WFP's GFA field staff. The FSS Focal is responsible for the supervision and the implementation of distributions at the camp level. FSS Focal is required to work in close collaboration with FSS to ensure a coordinated, efficient and timely rapid food distribution by the actors. The FSS Focal is responsible to report concerns and issues to the FSS and the CiC during the response process. The FSS Focal, in collaboration with WASH Sector and SM Focal, is responsible for monitoring and ensuring that actors leave no footprint.



Inter-Sector Coordination

During an emergency response, FSS communicates with relevant Sectors directly to raise any issues or concerns. In the case of Non-Food Items distributions, FSS and S-CCCM Sectors coordinate closely. To address solid waste management and access to water, FSS coordinates with the WASH Sector.

Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG)

During an emergency response, ISCG coordinates the Sectors including FSS, to ensure emergency needs are being met and coordinated. ISCG chairs emergency meetings with Sector Coordinators and the members of the Refugee Operations and Coordination Team (ROCT). The Sectors provide regular Situation Reports to the ISCG. The ISCG is the representative of the Sectors and is the responsible body for direct engagement with the RRRC and ARRRC on their behalf.

Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC)

The Office of the RRRC, under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), is the governing body responsible for the provision of humanitarian assistance for Rohingya refugees with the support of the humanitarian community. As such, the RRRC coordinates closely with the ISCG and the Sectors including FSS during emergency responses. All actors must follow the RRRC protocols for emergency response.

Shelter-Camp Coordination and Camp Management (S-CCCM)

FSS Focal coordinates with the SM S-CCCM designated Emergency Focal Points⁴ that work in close collaboration with the CiC. The SM Focal, on behalf CiC, is responsible to conduct a community-based needs assessment of the affected people. The CiC, as the overall responsible body, endorses the findings that are shared organization-wide for planning purposes. SM Focal, on behalf of the CiC, monitor the emergency operations. SM jointly with WASH Sector ensures the proper disposal of waste.

WFP

The WFP GFA team leads the emergency rapid food assistance. As a first response WFP and its cooperating partners distribute Fortified Biscuits (FB) to the affected families and activates the hot meal operation. WFP GFA and FSS work in close collaboration to ensure the full PIN coverage, leaving no-one behind and to avoid duplications.

WASH Sector

WASH Sector, in collaboration with SM / FSS Focal, is responsible to identify locations for the disposal of waste originating from the distributions safely away from food preparation, storage, shelters, and other services (like clinics and community centers)⁵ to avoid cross-contamination. Green bins (for organic) and red bins (for no-organic) are placed accordingly. WASH Sector collects the waste on daily basis to be disposed at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF). WASH Sector and FSS Focal ensure compliance to the *Joint Guidance Note - Waste Avoidance and Management in Emergency Food Distributions*⁶. WASH Sector is responsible for the water supply at food distribution sites.

⁴ Multi-Hazard Response Plan for Rohingya Refugees in Cox's Bazar District.

⁵ FSS and Wash sector joint guidance note – Waste avoidance and Management in Emergency Food Distribution.

⁶ FSS and Wash sector joint guidance note – Waste avoidance and Management in Emergency Food Distribution.



10. Archive

Actors that are not partners of the FSS network but wish to implement rapid food distributions during emergency events are required to communicate and coordinate with FSS that maintains an archive of these actors with their contact information.

https://wfp.sharepoint.com/:x:/s/fsc_cxb/EYorCAsv3yVMteKPApev0uYByPJRn6I_cZDuXvT_57ftBQ?e=xBD6ix

11. FSS partners' contingency stock

The FSS maintains and updates partners' emergency contingency stocks on a quarterly basis. FSS partners, upon request, can have access for the list of items available for emergency operations. Herewith the link to the partners' Contingency Stock Tracker.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-OWcQYgkCy7TNsQ6bO_q0nnuhBkxJmmH/edit?usp=sharing&oid=112334541722664179766&rtfopof=true&sd=true

12. FSS contact details

FSS is readily and promptly available to all actors for any support needed. Don't hesitate to contact us directly.

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