



1. Project Data

Project ID

P132634

Project Name

Safety Net Systems for the Poorest

Country

Bangladesh

Practice Area(Lead)

Social Protection & Jobs

L/C/TF Number(s)

IDA-52810,IDA-61370,IDA-D5910

Closing Date (Original)

31-Dec-2017

Total Project Cost (USD)

778,926,412.39

Bank Approval Date

26-Jun-2013

Closing Date (Actual)

31-Dec-2024

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	845,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	765,638,457.28	0.00
Actual	778,926,412.39	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

As stated in the October 4, 2013 Financing Agreement (p. 4), the project's original development objective (PDO) was "...to improve the equity, efficiency, and transparency of major safety net programs to benefit the poorest households," consistent with the formulation in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, p. 15). Subsequently, under the project's fourth restructuring in March 2020, as part of Additional Financing 2 (AF2), the PDO was revised to read: "...to improve the equity, efficiency, transparency, and shock-responsiveness of major safety net programs to benefit the poorest and most vulnerable households." AF2 also clarified key definitions, specifying that *poor households* refer to host community households unable to afford a basic



consumption basket, while *vulnerable households* include host and Rohingya community households negatively affected by shocks and in need of temporary social assistance to cope with emergencies and achieve some level of recovery. In 2020, Bangladesh was hosting over 850,000 displaced Rohingya, concentrated in densely populated camps in Teknaf and Ukhia - among the poorest upazilas (sub-districts) in Cox's Bazar District - where the displaced population outnumbered host communities. The arrival of a larger and poorer refugee population placed significant strain on local labor markets, infrastructure, and social services, heightening economic vulnerability among host communities.

Although the project's PDO and Results Framework were revised during implementation - most notably through the fourth restructuring (with AF2) in March 2020 - the revisions reflected an overall expansion in project scope and ambition, extending safety net coverage to additional vulnerable groups. Therefore, a split evaluation of the project is not applied.

- b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?**
Yes

Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?
Yes

Date of Board Approval
31-Mar-2020

- c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**
No

- d. Components**
Original Components

Component 1: Support to MoDMR Safety Net Programs (estimated cost: US\$430 million equivalent; revised cost: US\$562.8 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$531.2 million equivalent). This component aimed to strengthen five major safety net programs implemented by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR) - Food for Work (FFW), Test Relief (TR), Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP), Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), and Gratuitous Relief (GR) - by enhancing performance through improved targeting and reduced leakage; increasing efficiency via stronger administration, management, and monitoring systems; and promoting transparency through reinforced governance and accountability measures. The FFW program provides food-wage employment during the agricultural off-season, primarily for constructing and maintaining rural infrastructure, with payment in rice or wheat. TR generates short-term employment during the rainy season for community maintenance, with payments in food or cash; unlike FFW, up to 100 percent of the project allocation can be monetized for wage and non-wage costs. EGPP offers 40 days of cash wage employment across two lean periods to maintain basic rural infrastructure, with payments made via bank accounts and up to a third of beneficiaries being female. VGF provides 10-20 kg of rice per month to poor households during periods of distress, while GR delivers 10-20 kg of rice per household for up to six months following disasters. Component 1 financing was linked to eight Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs) that supported results in three areas: (i) improving the targeting of program resources to the poorest areas and households to promote more pro-poor coverage; (ii)



strengthening management, program information systems and monitoring capacity to ensure efficient administration; and (iii) strengthening governance and accountability measures for increased transparency.

Results Area 1: Improving targeting of program resources to the poorest areas and households to promote more pro-poor coverage.

- **DLI 1 - Increased pro-poor geographical targeting of SSN programs (estimated cost: US\$35 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$35 million equivalent):** DLI 1 focused on two key improvements: (i) revising the EGPP's geographic allocation formula using updated poverty data to ensure a more accurate and equitable distribution of resources, and (ii) adjusting the allocation formulas for the FFW, TR, and VGF programs to progressively place greater emphasis on poverty rates, thereby channeling more resources to Upazilas with higher concentrations of poor households. Allocations under the GR program were determined by emergency and shock response needs and were therefore not linked to this DLI.
- **DLI 2 - Use of the Bangladesh Poverty Database (BPD) (later renamed National Household Database, NHD) for household targeting (estimated cost: US\$100 million equivalent; revised cost: US\$132 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$105 million equivalent):** Household-level targeting across all five programs (FFW, TR, EGPP, VGF, and GR) was to be transitioned to the Bangladesh Poverty Database (BPD) to ensure consistent and data-driven beneficiary selection. During the interim period, MoDMR's public works programs were to progressively align their beneficiary identification processes with those of the EGPP. In line with EGPP's approach, the eligibility criteria for FFW and TR were to be revised to prioritize households headed by manual laborers owning less than 0.5 acres of land - factors that, according to the HIES 2010, remained good predictors of poverty in rural Bangladesh.
- **DLI 3 - Maintain Gender Targeting in EGPP and VGF (estimated cost: US\$20 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$20 million equivalent):** Findings from the EGPP household survey indicated that the inclusion of a gender quota significantly increased participation among female-headed households. Since these households tend to be more vulnerable and economically disadvantaged compared to male-headed ones, maintaining gender targeting was considered essential. Accordingly, under the project, the gender quota was sustained at 33 percent of beneficiaries nationally under the EGPP, while the VGF program introduced a quota ensuring that up to 90 percent of beneficiaries under its festival bonus component - which provides food relief to vulnerable populations - were women.

Results Area 2: Strengthening Management, Systems, and Monitoring Capacity.

- **DLI 4 - Increased use of efficient administrative systems (estimated cost: US\$105 million equivalent; revised cost: US\$169 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$156.8 million equivalent):** While the EGPP had begun establishing an efficient record-keeping system through an automated MIS, other programs continued to rely on manual record management. Under the project, the EGPP MIS was to be linked to a Ministry-wide Management Information System (MIS) that consolidates the monitoring of five safety net programs implemented by MoDMR. This unified MIS was expected to enable the collection of standardized indicators at the sub-project level, and feed that information up to management for improved access to information and monitoring. The MoDMR was first to develop a comprehensive Operations Manual outlining clear implementation guideline, followed by the phased development and rollout of the MIS that was to have links with the BPD, and its incremental roll out across the country.



- **DLI 5 - Implementation and monitoring capacity improved and maintained (estimated cost: US\$40 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$40 million equivalent):** To address weak information flows that hindered field-level program management and monitoring capacity, the EGPP recruited an additional field supervisor for each of the poorest 334 Upazilas out of a total of 485 Upazilas. Spot-check assessments indicated that these additions led to gradual improvements in program management and accountability. Building on this success, the project aimed to retain these 334 supervisors and expand coverage by recruiting additional personnel for the remaining Upazilas. These positions were to be reclassified as Sub-Assistant Engineers (SNSP).

Results Area 3: Strengthening governance and accountability measures for increased transparency.

- **DLI 6 - Implementation of an efficient payment system for cash wages (estimated cost: US\$30 million equivalent; revised cost: US\$94 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$84 million equivalent):** A key innovation introduced under IDA support for the EGPP was the shift to direct bank payments for workers' wages. Instead of receiving cash from a Project Implementation Committee, beneficiaries were paid directly into their bank accounts. As shown by household surveys conducted by both the Bank and IFPRI, this change significantly reduced payment leakages. This successful system was to be adopted for all cash-based wage payments under the other public works programs.
- **DLI 7 - Increased awareness on program design, eligibility rules and entitlements among beneficiaries (estimated cost: US\$35 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$35 million equivalent):** Many safety net beneficiaries lacked awareness of the specific programs they benefited from, their entitlements, or eligibility criteria, leading to targeting errors and benefit leakages. DLI 7 was to address this issue by promoting systematic beneficiary awareness across the five MoDMR safety net programs, to ensure that participants better understood eligibility requirements and benefit levels under the various programs - thereby strengthening governance and accountability.
- **DLI 8 - Increased use of the Grievance Redress System (estimated cost: US\$65 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$65 million equivalent):** Spot checks had revealed that grievance redress mechanisms under the EGPP remained weak, creating opportunities for political interference and misuse of program benefits in high-poverty areas - a challenge not unique to EGPP. To address this, MoDMR was to develop operationally sound and practical mechanisms for grievance redress across its five major safety net programs to strengthen the accountability of program officers. The MIS was to include a grievance redress module, which would help keep a record of grievances and the time required for their resolution. Tracking of these grievances was also intended to provide additional insight into the challenges associated with implementation and generate lessons for improvement. DLI 8 focused on the phased implementation of this system.

Component 2: Strengthening of MoDMR program administration and transparency (estimated cost: US\$30 million equivalent; revised cost: US\$33.3 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$29.8 million equivalent). The objective of this component was to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Department of Disaster Management to implement MoDMR's five major safety net programs (EGPP, FFW, TR, VGF, and GR) in an efficient and transparent manner. It was to function as a financing instrument to support the inputs required to achieve the DLI targets under Component 1. Activities financed under this component were to include: (i) preparation of two comprehensive Operations Manuals - one for the workfare programs (EGPP, TR, and FFW) and one for the humanitarian programs (VGF and GR) - detailing program rules and assigning roles and responsibilities; (ii) development of specifications for a consolidated program MIS, incorporating modules for beneficiary selection and verification, registration, payments/transfers, case



management, grievances, and appeals; (iii) enhancement of field-level program monitoring; (iv) strengthening of overall program management; and (v) preparation of evaluation reports. Program evaluations were to be conducted with two key purposes: (i) regular monitoring of the programs, including tracking progress on the DLIs, ensuring that the means of DLI verification were integrated into the M&E framework; and (ii) an independent operational review, consisting of process evaluations to verify compliance with the Operations Manuals and systematic spot checks across all five MoDMR safety net programs to inform timely policy decisions and adjustments to program design.

Component 3: Development of the Bangladesh Poverty Database - BBS (estimated cost: US\$40 million equivalent; revised cost: US\$75.5 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$72 million equivalent).

This component was to support the Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) of the Ministry of Planning in developing the Bangladesh Poverty Database (BPD) - a comprehensive national registry aimed at improving poverty targeting for MoDMR's five safety net programs and other government agencies. The BPD, based on a Poverty Score Card (PSC) using uniform, objective, and transparent criteria to identify poor households, was expected to cover approximately 34 million households nationwide through a census approach. It was to generate Upazila-level lists of poor and non-poor households, enabling timely identification of both poor and vulnerable populations during shocks. The SID and the Bank team had agreed on a proposed Proxy Means Test Formula (PMTF) based on the nationally representative Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2010.

Revisions to components

The project's components were revised several times through restructurings and additional financings to reflect evolving implementation needs and the introduction of new activities.

- Under the first restructuring in 2016, Component 3 was renamed from "Development of the Bangladesh Poverty Database" to "Development of the National Household Database (NHD)" to better reflect its scope. The same restructuring also streamlined certain IRIs to align with actual implementation progress.
- The 2017 Additional Financing (AF1) retained the original project components while scaling up key systems critical to achieving the PDO. Under the original project, the Bank co-financed five major safety net programs - Food for Work (FFW), Test Relief (TR), Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP), Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), and Gratuitous Relief (GR). Under AF1, only EGPP continued to receive Bank co-financing, with beneficiary wage expenditures for FY2018 and FY2019 eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursements for EGPP were linked to the achievement of DLIs focused on improving targeting, information systems, monitoring capacity, and governance. Around 78 percent of AF1 resources were directed to Component 1 (Support to MoDMR Safety Net Programs), with the remainder covering cost overruns under Component 2 (Strengthening of MoDMR program administration and transparency) and Component 3 (Development of the National Household Database). The allocation for Component 1 increased from USD 400.76 million equivalent to USD 592.76 million equivalent (an increase of USD 192 million equivalent). The allocation for Component 2 increased from USD 27.96 million equivalent to USD 31.96 million equivalent (an increase of USD 4 million equivalent) to support continued MIS development, capacity strengthening, and project management within MoDMR/DDM. The allocation for Component 3 increased from USD 37.28 million equivalent to USD 86.28 million equivalent (an increase of USD 49 million equivalent) to complete development of the NHD, strengthen capacity within the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, and finance related management costs. Overall, total project costs under AF1 increased from USD 466 million equivalent to USD 711 million equivalent.



- Under the 2020 restructuring and AF2, US\$5 million was reallocated from Component 1 to Component 2 to strengthen the Department of Disaster Management's (DDM) implementation capacity and support the design of a shock-responsive EGPP+. AF2 also introduced two new components - Components 4 and 5:
 - **Component 4: Strengthening Community Resilience with EGPP+ (estimated cost: US\$65 million equivalent; revised cost: US\$75.7 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$73.9 million equivalent)** provided income support to host community beneficiaries in Cox's Bazar through public works and community service subprojects. The 2022 restructuring reallocated unutilized funds from Components 1-3 to scale up Component 4 in additional high-poverty districts affected by flooding and price shock.
 - **Component 5: Strengthening Community Resilience for the Displaced Rohingya Population (estimated cost: US\$30 million equivalent; revised cost: US\$44.8 million equivalent; actual cost: US\$41.3 million equivalent)** supported the Displaced Rohingya Population through similar community-based income-generating and resilience-building activities. The 2024 restructuring reallocated SDR 11 million within AF2 to extend support to over 150,000 displaced Rohingya beneficiaries, ensuring continuity of assistance until the follow-on ISO Project (P500727) became effective.

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Cost and Financing. The total project cost was estimated at US\$2,672 million equivalent at the time of appraisal, including a substantial contribution by the government. The ICR does not report end-of-project total cost or the government's actual contribution. The original IDA credit was 331.4 SDRs. Under AF1, an additional IDA credit in the amount of 174.1 SDRs was approved. Under AF2, an IDA grant in the amount of 72.9 million SDRs was approved, for a total of 578.4 SDRs in approved IDA financing. Of this amount, 14.33 million of AF1 was cancelled, and 1.43 million was undisbursed but not yet returned to the Bank, as of November 2025. This culminates in a disbursement rate of 99.75 percent.

Key Dates. The project was approved on June 26, 2013, and became effective on November, 17, 2013. A midterm review took place in October 2015. The project's original closing date of December 31, 2017 was extended five times (by a total of 84 months), to implement additional activities under two additional financings and address implementation delays. The project closed on December 31, 2024.

Restructuring and Additional Financing. The project was restructured six times and benefited from two Additional Financings.

The **first restructuring** (June 2016) addressed early implementation challenges that slowed progress and aligned the Results and DLI Frameworks with actual progress and revised plans agreed at the 2015 midterm review.

The **second restructuring and first AF1** (December 2017) provided a credit of SDR 174.10 million (US\$245 million equivalent) to scale up key systems supporting the PDO, cover cost overruns, and extend the project's closing date by eighteen months to June 30, 2019. AF1 focused on three selected DLIs - household targeting (DLI 1, previously DLI 2), administrative systems (DLI 2, previously DLI 4), and payment systems (DLI 3, previously DLI 6) - which respectively addressed the PDO's equity, efficiency, and transparency objectives. These DLIs were linked through the MoDMR/DDM safety net program MIS (DLI 2), connecting the National Household Database for beneficiary targeting (DLI 1) and systems for digital



payments (DLI 3). The Results and DLI Frameworks were revised to emphasize digitization of program targeting, administration, and benefit delivery, including increased NHD usage for EGPP and VGF, expanded use of program MIS, and enhanced digital payments.

The **third restructuring** (May 2019) extended the closing date by two years to June 30, 2021, to complete pending activities and, using existing implementation arrangements under DDM and BBS, to support a new safety net program for host communities affected by the Rohingya refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar District. At that time, Bangladesh was managing a large influx of people displaced from Myanmar. Host communities already faced high vulnerability due to limited services, weak infrastructure, and constrained local labor markets, and the arrival of refugees further increased their exposure to economic hardship and pressure on local services.

The **fourth restructuring** and second Additional Financing (AF2) (March 2020) introduced a grant of SDR 72.90 million (US\$100 million equivalent) to support both host and Rohingya refugee communities through cash-for-work programs, added two new components (4 and 5), and modified the PDO to include "shock-responsiveness." It also updated the Results Framework, components, costs, and disbursement arrangements, and extended the closing date to December 31, 2022.

The **fifth restructuring** (November 2022) extended the project by 18 months to June 30, 2024, and reallocated unutilized funds to enable completion of delayed activities under Components 4 and 5, whose start was affected by COVID-19-related delays and UNHCR review requirements. It also supported scaling up the shock-responsive EGPP+ in high-poverty districts affected by flooding and rising food and fuel prices.

The **sixth restructuring** (May 2024) extended the closing date to December 31, 2024, reallocated funds within the second Additional Financing, and partially canceled SDR 14.33 million from IDA Credit 6137-BD (AF1) corresponding to funds no longer needed under Components 1, 3, and 4.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The PDO was highly relevant to country conditions at the time of design, which persist today, despite some improvements. At appraisal, Bangladesh's social safety net system faced targeting challenges, reflected in substantial inclusion and exclusion errors, high administrative costs, and significant leakages, particularly in food-based programs. The project aimed to address these issues through measures to strengthen targeting, efficiency, and transparency of major safety net programs. The PDO's relevance was further reinforced through the addition of a shock-responsiveness objective, intended to support the government's response to the Rohingya displacement crisis and help establish a shock-responsive window within the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest, which was aimed at improving the government's ability to rapidly scale up assistance to households affected by shocks. The PDO remains relevant to current country conditions, as the pace of poverty reduction and job creation has slowed, particularly in rural areas and among women, while spatial disparities and urban poverty have increased, highlighting the ongoing need for a more equitable, efficient, and adaptive social protection system.



The PDO was and remains closely aligned with the government’s development priorities. The Government of Bangladesh has recognized the need to strengthen targeting and delivery of safety net programs, expand efficient, cash-based transfers, and improve coordination of social protection programs through data-driven approaches such as the National Household Database (NHD). The project aimed to support these priorities through measures to improve targeting, enhance delivery efficiency, promote transparency across major safety net programs, and support the establishment of the NHD, consistent with the 2015 national Social Protection Strategy. It also sought to strengthen the analytical, empirical, and institutional base to inform the implementation of this strategy. The PDO remains highly relevant today, as the government continues to prioritize socio-economic inclusion, reducing spatial and gender disparities, and addressing climate and disaster vulnerabilities, in line with the Long-Term Perspective Plan (2021-41) and the 8th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), which emphasize inclusiveness, poverty reduction, and a resilient social protection system.

The PDO was and remains strongly aligned with the Bank’s strategic priorities for Bangladesh. It supported the Country Assistance Strategy (FY11-14) objective of improving social services delivery (Strategic Objective 3) and Outcome 3.3 (Strengthened social protection system to reduce vulnerability). The project’s focus on gender-based targeting also supported Strategic Objective 4 (Enhance accountability and promote inclusion) and Outcome 4.4 of enhancing women’s participation and economic empowerment. The PDO remained relevant under the Country Partnership Framework for FY23-27, aligning with Higher-Level Outcome B (Improved socioeconomic inclusion) and Objective 5 (Enhanced economic opportunities for women and vulnerable groups).

The project formed part of the World Bank’s broader country engagement in Bangladesh and built on its established support for the social protection sector. This engagement included the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP), which the Bank supported in 2010 with US\$150 million in results-based financing. The Bank’s financial and technical assistance focused on helping the MoDMR improve EGPP’s targeting at the geographical, household, and gender levels; enhance transparency in payment mechanisms; and strengthen accountability through a robust monitoring and evaluation framework. The EGPP’s success demonstrated the benefits of incremental governance and systems reforms in social protection and fostered a strong partnership between the Bank and the MoDMR. Building on these lessons and institutional foundations, the project aimed to continue support for the EGPP and extend similar reforms to other safety net programs implemented by the MoDMR, with the goal of further advancing the equity, efficiency, and transparency of major safety net programs to better serve the needs of the poor.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1 Objective



To improve the equity of major safety net programs to benefit the poorest and most vulnerable households in Bangladesh.

Rationale

Improving the equity of major safety net programs included activities such as revising the geographical allocation and targeting formulas to make resource distribution more pro-poor; establishing a universal social registry through a National Household Database (NHD); maintaining gender-sensitive targeting mechanisms across key safety net programs; and utilizing the NHD for household-level targeting of beneficiaries. These activities were designed to produce outputs such as enhanced pro-poor geographic, household, and gender targeting (linked to DLIs 1-3). In turn, these outputs were expected to contribute to the outcome of a more equitable social protection system, as reflected in increased coverage of beneficiaries within the bottom expenditure quintile. Ultimately, these achievements aimed to support higher-level objectives of reducing poverty among social protection beneficiaries and strengthening the resilience of the poorest and most vulnerable households against shocks. The realization of these results depended on several key assumptions, including a stable political environment, sufficient fiscal space for resource allocation, and sustained political commitment to continue implementing the reforms.

Outputs and intermediate results

- **The original DLI 1**, aimed at increasing pro-poor geographical targeting of SSN programs, **was achieved**, with targets consistently met from FY 2013-14 to FY 2016-17, as documented in the 2017 Restructuring Paper/AF1. This achievement was supported by the issuance of guidelines specifying revised program allocation formulas and by implementing actual allocations in line with these guidelines, ensuring that resources were effectively directed to areas with the highest concentration of poor and vulnerable populations.
- **The original DLI 2** (Increased use of the National Household Database [NHD] for household targeting) was renamed **Performance-based Condition (PBC) 1/DLI 1** (Increased use of program household eligibility criteria and the NHD) under the 2017 Restructuring/AF1 and **was partially achieved**. Most targets under PBC 1/DLI 1 were met. Consistent eligibility criteria were developed and applied across the EGPP, FFW, TR, and VGF programs, requiring that beneficiaries own less than 0.5 acres of land and belong to households headed by casual laborers. However, as reported by the Bank team in a written interview dated November 5, 2025, one of the PBC 1/DLI 1 targets - drawing EGPP and VGF (festival component) beneficiaries from the bottom 30 percent of the NHD in at least 15 upazilas - was not achieved, and the corresponding allocation of US\$27 million was reallocated to other categories/components. Data collection for the NHD was completed ahead of schedule in all upazilas, but many household records were incomplete due to missing National Identification (NID) numbers. NHD operators were trained, and five data-sharing agreements were signed. However, the DDM Safety Net MIS was finalized only around project closure. As a result, no households were registered in the NHD, and NHD-based targeting was not implemented, making the collected data largely irrelevant for household targeting.
- **The original DLI 3** (Maintain gender targeting in EGPP and VGF) **was partially achieved**. Strong gender targeting was maintained under the EGPP, with 39 percent female participation by project closing - exceeding the target of 33 percent - and consistently upheld throughout the project period and in preceding years. For the VGF (festival component), guidelines were issued requiring 70 percent of beneficiaries to be women. The FY15 target of 60 percent female beneficiaries was met, but the higher targets set for FY16 and FY17 (70-80 percent female VGF beneficiaries) were not



- achieved. As noted in the 2017 Restructuring and AF1 Paper, the government later considered revisions to the overall VGF design, resulting in partial achievement of this DLI.
- The number of direct project beneficiaries reached 11,953,527 in 2017, **almost achieving the target of 12,000,000** (99.6 percent achieved). The indicator was not tracked beyond FY2017, as it included beneficiaries from TR, VGF, and FFW programs that were not co-financed by the project after FY2017. Following the March 2020 AF2/Restructuring 4, two new coverage indicators were introduced: “Beneficiaries of EGPP” and “Beneficiaries of EGPP+” (the project co-financed EGPP before AF2 and started co-financing EGPP+ post AF2).
 - The number of EGPP beneficiaries reached 477,766 by January 2023, **partially achieving the target of 600,000** (around 80 percent achieved). The indicator was introduced in FY2020 through AF2, with an initial target of 990,000. In FY2022, the government doubled the EGPP wage rate to keep pace with market wages, reducing coverage while focusing on the highest poverty upazilas.
 - The share of female beneficiaries under the EGPP reached 39 percent, **exceeding the target of 33 percent**. The project surpassed the end target for this sub-indicator in June 2021 and maintained the female participation rate at 39 percent until closing, demonstrating the effectiveness of the project’s gender mainstreaming interventions, particularly those implemented under DLI 3 (Gender Targeting).
 - The number of EGPP+ beneficiaries reached 124,735 by June 2024, **surpassing the target of 100,000**. Originally, the AF2 target was 40,000 (Cox’s Bazar only), which was increased to 100,000 through the 5th restructuring as EGPP+ expanded to five additional districts
 - 41 percent of EGPP+ transfers were made to women, **exceeding the target of 40 percent**, reflecting the impact of gender mainstreaming efforts, including the introduction of DLI 3 (Gender Targeting), community service sub-projects designed to be less labor-intensive and more female-friendly, and the establishment of child nursing facilities at sub-project sites to support women’s participation.
 - The number of beneficiaries of Rohingya community services/works reached 338,302 by December 2024, **surpassing the target of 85,000**, although progress was initially slow due to COVID-19 delays.
 - The female participation in Rohingya community services/works reached 51 percent, **partially achieving the target of 60 percent** (85 percent achieved). While female participation peaked at 65 percent in December 2023, it was not sustained until project closing, reflecting persistent social barriers to women’s economic inclusion in the DRP camps.

Outcomes

- The share of EGPP beneficiaries from the bottom expenditure quintile increased from 49 percent in June 2013 to 75.1 percent in June 2024, **surpassing the target of 60 percent**. This reflects a significant improvement in poverty-based household targeting under the EGPP (including EGPP+). The results are based on sample-based spot-check surveys conducted by the M&E firm engaged under the project.
- The share of beneficiaries in the bottom expenditure quintile under FFW (previously WFM) increased from a baseline of 34.99 percent in 2014 to 45.47 percent in June 2017, **surpassing the target of 41 percent**. Tracking of this indicator ceased after June 2017, as the project no longer co-financed the FFW program beyond that date.
- The share of beneficiaries in the bottom expenditure quintile under TR increased from 34 percent in 2013 to 40.96 percent in June 2017, **substantially achieving the target of 44 percent** (93 percent achieved). Tracking of this indicator ceased after June 2017, as the project no longer co-financed TR beyond that date.



- The share of beneficiaries in the bottom expenditure quintile under VGF increased from 37 percent in 2013 to 39.1 percent in June 2017, **partially achieving the target of 46 percent** (85 percent achieved). Tracking of this indicator ceased after June 2017, as the project no longer co-financed VGF beyond that date.
- The share of beneficiaries in the bottom expenditure quintile under GR increased from 31 percent in 2013 to 55.36 percent in June 2017, **exceeding the target of 46 percent**. Tracking of this indicator ceased after June 2017, as the project no longer co-financed GR beyond that date.

Incomplete household records combined with the late delivery of the common DDM Safety Net MIS, limited the usefulness of the collected data and prevented NHD-based targeting during the project period. Nevertheless, MoDMR's progressive annual adjustments to safety net program policies resulted in notable gains in equity: all five major programs improved their targeting, with three programs surpassing their targets for the share of beneficiaries from the bottom expenditure quintile and the remaining two achieving substantial progress relative to their targets.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

To improve the efficiency of major safety net programs to benefit the poorest and most vulnerable households in Bangladesh.

Rationale

Improving the efficiency of major safety net programs involved several key activities, including establishment of a consolidated Management Information System (MIS) to monitor five safety net programs implemented by MoDMR; retention and recruitment of field supervisors to strengthen program management and monitoring at the field level; and implementation of an efficient digital payment system for cash wages. These activities were intended to generate outputs such as increased access to and use of the unified MIS across upazilas (sub-districts) (DLI 4), enhanced implementation and monitoring capacity of social safety net programs (DLI 5), and the operationalization of digital payment systems for cash wages (DLI 6). In turn, these outputs were expected to contribute to the outcome of more efficient social protection programs, reflected in a greater share of program benefits reaching beneficiaries in the bottom expenditure quintile. The achievement of these results relied on critical assumptions, including adequate budgetary support, sustained political commitment to reforms, and a stable political environment.

Outputs and intermediate results

- **The original DLI 4** (Increased use of efficient administrative systems), renamed **PBC 2/DLI 2** under the 2017 restructuring/AF1, **was achieved**. The DDM Safety Net MIS for MoDMR - a common MIS for MoDMR safety net programs - was delivered although with a delay. As this system could not be used during implementation, an EGPP+ MIS for Cox's Bazar beneficiaries was developed to support Component 4 and maintain the original objective of strengthening program management through electronic systems. Ahead of the rollout of the common MIS, the DDM digitized over 1.5 million



beneficiary records in the EGPP MIS, **meeting the PBC 2/DLI 2 target**. Implementation and monitoring capacity were further strengthened through the Operations Manual for DDM programs, which provides clear guidelines for program implementation; training for DDM staff; and the appointment and training of Sub-Assistant Engineers responsible for field monitoring and supervision. Although the DDM safety net MIS was not fully operationalized during the project, it is expected to be sustained beyond project closure, supporting long-term improvements in administrative efficiency and program management.

- **DLI 5** (Improved and maintained implementation and monitoring capacity) **was achieved**, contributing to enhanced field-level oversight and implementation capacity. Sub-Assistant Engineers were appointed in all Upazilas to strengthen implementation and monitoring, with 90 percent of positions filled. All appointed staff were trained and assessed on program delivery. Under the 2017 Restructuring and AF1, DLI 5 was not retained, and its efficiency-related objectives were incorporated into the newly introduced **PBC 2** (Increased use of efficient administrative systems), which **was achieved**.
- **The original DLI 6** (Implementation of efficient payment system for cash wages), renamed **PBC 3/DLI 3** under the 2017 restructuring/AF1, **was achieved**. In FY2019, the DDM was making digital payments of EGPP benefits in 19 upazilas, **exceeding the PBC 3/DLI 3 target of 15 upazilas** for that year. Before that, guidelines were developed to implement an efficient cash payment system through the banking network and/or other formal financial channels, following the EGPP model. The EGPP+ window of the EGPP fully implemented mobile financial service (MFS) payments. As reported by the Bank team in a written interview dated November 5, 2025, all beneficiaries of cash-based social safety net (SSN) programs are now receiving payments directly to their MFS accounts, following a 2021 policy decision by the Government of Bangladesh.
- The number of person-days of employment generated and financed by cash wage payments under EGPP increased from a baseline of 59,000,000 in 2013 to 73,758,920 in 2018, **almost achieving the target of 75,000,000** (over 98 percent achieved). The indicator was not tracked beyond FY2018, as project co-financing for EGPP was discontinued, with support continuing for EGPP+.
- The number of workdays provided under EGPP+ reached 14,365,394 by June 2024, **partially achieving the target of 20,400,000 workdays** (70 percent achieved). While the project surpassed its beneficiary coverage target under EGPP+, delays in government budget allocations led to postponed sub-project implementation, preventing participants from completing all their allocated workdays.
- The number of workdays provided under Rohingya community services and works reached 13,486,974 by December 2024, **far exceeding the target of 5,040,000**.

Outcomes

- The share of program benefits received by households in the bottom expenditure quintile under EGPP increased from 42 percent in June 2013 to 72.3 percent in June 2024, **exceeding the target of 51 percent**. This demonstrates enhanced targeting accuracy and benefit allocation efficiency within the EGPP (including EGPP+), as verified through sample-based surveys. The project itself directly financed beneficiary wages only under EGPP and its shock-responsive window, EGPP+, which was intended to be rolled out exclusively for the host community in Cox's Bazar under AF2. The project's impact on the other programs was indirect, through improved efficiency in program administration, management, and monitoring.
- The share of program benefits received by beneficiaries in the bottom expenditure quintile under FFW/WFM increased from 32.83 percent in 2014 to 47.96 percent in June 2017, **surpassing the**



target of 38 percent. This indicator was tracked only through FY2017, when project co-financing for the FFW/WFM program ended.

- The share of program benefits received by beneficiaries in the bottom expenditure quintile under TR increased from 18 percent in 2013 to 39.25 percent in June 2017, **substantially achieving the target of 42 percent** (94 percent achieved). This indicator was tracked only through FY2017, when project co-financing for the TR program ended.
- The share of program benefits received by beneficiaries in the bottom expenditure quintile under VGF increased from 23 percent in 2013 to 42.95 percent in June 2017, **substantially achieving the target of 46 percent** (93 percent achieved). This indicator was tracked only through FY2017, when project co-financing for the VGF program ended.
- The share of program benefits received by beneficiaries in the bottom expenditure quintile under GR increased from 20 percent in 2013 to 58.88 percent in June 2017, **surpassing the target of 39 percent.** This indicator was tracked only through FY2017, when project co-financing for the GR program ended.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 3

Objective

To improve the transparency of major safety net programs to benefit the poorest and most vulnerable households in Bangladesh.

Rationale

The theory of change for PDO 3 envisaged that transparency in major safety net programs would be enhanced through activities such as implementing extensive public information campaigns to communicate key program rules (including eligibility criteria, entitlements, and grievance redress mechanisms), making this information available on the MoDMR/DDM websites, and electronically recording grievances in a unified MIS. These activities were intended to produce outputs such as increased beneficiary awareness of program design, eligibility rules, and entitlements (DLI 7), and greater utilization of the grievance redress system (DLI 8). In turn, these outputs were expected to contribute to the outcome of enhanced transparency and accountability of major safety net programs, as reflected in the number of beneficiaries aware of program rules, the number of grievances recorded electronically in the unified MIS, and the level of beneficiary satisfaction with service delivery. The achievement of these results relied on key assumptions, including sustained political commitment to transparency, adequate fiscal space, and a stable political climate.

Outputs and intermediate results

- **The original DLI 7** (Increased awareness on program design, eligibility rules and entitlements among beneficiaries) **was achieved.** Extensive public information campaigns outlining the programs' objectives, eligibility criteria, entitlements, and grievance redress processes, and making this information available on the MoDMR/DDM websites, resulted in an increased share of beneficiaries (over 60 percent) across various SSN programs, who were aware of program rules - defined as eligibility criteria, entitlements, and grievance redress mechanisms.



- **The original DLI 8** (Increased use of the Grievance Redress System, GRS) **was achieved**. As noted by the Bank team in a written interview dated November 5, 2025, the project effectively strengthened the GRS within the EGPP by issuing formal guidelines outlining grievance redress processes, training all Grievance Redress Officers on their roles and procedures, and integrating grievance reporting into the EGPP MIS across all operational Upazilas. All milestones were successfully completed, with required evidence submitted and corresponding DLI disbursements made. However, despite these improvements, focus group discussions revealed limited beneficiary engagement with the grievance system, mainly due to low expectations of resolution and fear of being removed from the beneficiary list.

Outcomes

- The share of beneficiaries aware of program rules under EGPP increased from 0 percent in June 2013 to 72 percent in June 2024, **surpassing the target of 70 percent**.
- The share of beneficiaries aware of program rules under FFW/WFM increased from 0 percent in June 2013 to 76 percent in June 2017, **surpassing the target of 70 percent**. Reporting on this indicator was limited to FY2017, reflecting the end of project co-financing for the FFW/WFM program.
- The share of beneficiaries aware of program rules under TR increased from 0 percent in June 2013 to 73.6 percent in June 2017, **exceeding the target of 70 percent**. Reporting on this indicator was limited to FY2017, reflecting the end of project co-financing for the TR program.
- The share of beneficiaries aware of program rules under VGF increased from 0 percent in June 2013 to 73.5 percent in June 2017, **exceeding the target of 70 percent**. Reporting on this indicator was limited to FY2017, reflecting the end of project co-financing for the VGF program.
- The share of beneficiaries aware of program rules under GR increased from 0 percent in June 2013 to 63.8 percent in June 2017, **substantially achieving the target of 70 percent** (91 percent achieved). Reporting on this indicator was limited to FY2017, reflecting the end of project co-financing for the GR program.
- Beneficiary satisfaction with service delivery under EGPP+ reached 76.2 percent in June 2024, **surpassing the target of 70 percent** - indicating enhanced transparency and community engagement in program delivery.
- Beneficiary satisfaction with service delivery under the Rohingya community services and works component reached 98 percent by December 2024, **surpassing the target of 70 percent**. Satisfaction levels among project beneficiaries from the Rohingya community remained consistently high - between 87 and 93.4 percent from June 2023 through December 2024.

Rating

High

OBJECTIVE 4

Objective

To improve the shock-responsiveness of major safety net programs to benefit the poorest and most vulnerable households in Bangladesh.

Rationale



Improving the shock-responsiveness of major safety net programs involved integrating shock-responsive features into the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP) and providing temporary income support to poor and vulnerable households affected by shocks through engagement in community service and public works. These activities were expected to generate outputs such as increased access to income-generating opportunities for shock-affected households and a greater number of workdays under community service and public works. In turn, these outputs were intended to contribute to enhanced shock-responsiveness of social protection programs. The achievement of these results depended on key assumptions, including political stability, sustained fiscal space for contingency financing, and continued government commitment to building a more shock-responsive social protection system.

Outputs and intermediate results

- Under the March 2020 Additional Financing, the project supported the establishment of the Employment Generation Program for the Poorest Plus (EGPP+), a dedicated shock-responsive window designed to assist poor and vulnerable households affected by economic shocks, natural disasters, and forced displacement. While the EGPP provided 80 workdays of cash support during two lean seasons per year, EGPP+ was designed to provide year-round financial support, targeting 220 workdays annually for a large number of beneficiaries affected by major shocks or disasters. The *EGPP+ Guidelines*, approved by the government in January 2021, provided the necessary policy and institutional framework for the program. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and delays in internal government approvals postponed its launch until FY22. EGPP+ was implemented for only 108 days in FY21-22, 156 days in FY22-23, and 198 days in FY23-24. EGPP+ was originally designed as a general shock-responsive window, but under AF2 it was implemented only in Cox's Bazar. Following the 2022 floods, the program was extended to five additional districts outside Cox's Bazar as a one-time shock-response intervention, conducted between February and June 2023.
- By project completion, EGPP+ had delivered cash transfers through public and community works subprojects to 124,735 beneficiaries, **surpassing the target of 100,000**. Of these:
 - 41 percent were women, **exceeding the target of 40 percent**.
 - 36,988 beneficiaries were in Cox's Bazar.
 - 87,747 beneficiaries were in flood-affected districts.
- 75 percent of host community EGPP+ beneficiaries met all selection criteria, and 97.2 percent came from the lowest two income quintiles.
- Under Component 4, a total of 14,365,394 workdays were provided to host community beneficiaries under the EGPP+, **partially achieving the target of 20,400,000** (70 percent achieved). The shortfall was primarily due to delays in sub-project implementation caused by late government budget allocations, which prevented host community beneficiaries from completing all their available workdays within a given year.
- Under Component 5, a total of 13,486,974 workdays were provided to members of the Displaced Rohingya Population (DRP) in the Cox's Bazar camps, **exceeding the target of 5,040,000** workdays. Activities included slope stabilization, tree planting, and drainage maintenance, among others. Additionally, mothers and caregivers received nutrition education to promote better health and nutrition outcomes, while vegetable gardening initiatives contributed to household food security. Despite significant socioeconomic and political challenges, the World Food Programme successfully ensured uninterrupted implementation of Component 5 activities throughout the project period.

Outcomes



PDO 4 (improved shock-responsiveness of major safety net programs) was measured through the development of a shock-responsive program window (EGPP+), which was successfully established and operational. However, this represents an output-level achievement, reflecting the existence of the mechanism rather than demonstrating that it provided timely support to poor and vulnerable households during actual shocks - which would better indicate true improvements in the shock-responsiveness of major safety net programs, in this case, the EGPP.

The EGPP+ exceeded its overall beneficiary coverage target and surpassed its target for female beneficiary inclusion, reflecting strong gender-focused outreach. However, PDO 4 was substantially rather than fully achieved, as delays in program launch and sub-project implementation limited the number of workdays completed, preventing beneficiaries from fully realizing their entitlements and reducing the timeliness and adequacy of the provided emergency support.

Beyond the PDO 4 indicator, third-party assessments demonstrated that EGPP+ contributed to significant improvements in household welfare, resilience, and financial security among poor and vulnerable host community beneficiaries:

- **Poverty alleviation:** 20.1 percent of EGPP+ beneficiaries rose above the upper poverty line, while 1.3 percent of the control group fell below it due to inflation.
- **Increased household income and expenditure:** Average monthly income and expenditure grew by 31.76 percent and 31.37 percent, respectively; real per capita income, adjusted for inflation, increased by 28 percent.
- **Enhanced food security:** 98 percent of beneficiary households now eat three meals a day; daily per capita food consumption increased by 51.4 grams and calorie intake by 147 kcal, exceeding the control group by 50.7 grams and 117 kcal.
- **Employment generation and financial security:** All beneficiaries were engaged in income-generating activities, primarily road repair work; savings increased from 0 percent to 8.5 percent, while loan dependency fell by 10.5 percent, indicating improved financial stability.

From June 2022 to December 2024, the Government of Bangladesh and the World Food Programme jointly implemented Component 5 of the project to strengthen the resilience of the Displaced Rohingya Population (DRP) in the Cox's Bazar camps. The main implementation challenge was a 14-month delay in contract signing, resulting from extended negotiations on the scope of work and lengthy government approval processes. Despite this, the project achieved significant improvements in food security and nutrition outcomes among DRP households. By the end of 2024, the Food Consumption Score among beneficiary households had increased from 30 percent to 65 percent, consumption of protein-rich foods tripled to 63 percent, and Vitamin A-rich food consumption rose from 15 percent in 2023 to 26 percent. These results demonstrate the project's contribution to strengthening the resilience of vulnerable households in the Cox's Bazar camps.

Rating
Substantial



OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Overall efficacy under the PDO-level targets was substantial, based on substantial achievement of the first objective (*improved equity of major safety net programs*), substantial achievement of the second objective (*improved efficiency of major safety net programs*), high achievement of the third objective (*improved transparency of major safety net programs*), and substantial achievement of the fourth objective (*improved shock-responsiveness of major safety net programs*).

Also, in a written interview dated November 5, 2025, the Bank team shared its views of the project's attribution/contribution and counterfactual as follows.

Attribution. The project directly supported improvements in equity, efficiency, transparency, and shock-responsiveness of safety net programs - particularly the EGPP (for which the Bank co-financed transfers) - through reforms in targeting, monitoring, and delivery systems, including the use of MIS, digital payments, and spot checks. These interventions plausibly and materially contributed to the observed outcomes. The scope of equity gains could have been even greater had the National Household Database become functional on time, a limitation acknowledged in the ICR.

Counterfactual. In the absence of the project, there would likely have been little impetus for the government to transition toward a more transparent and efficient program administration system based on digital service delivery and strengthened monitoring tools, including spot checks and enhanced implementation capacity through partnerships with NGOs and the WFP. The second Additional Financing (AF2) was particularly instrumental in supporting the government's response to the forced displacement crisis, leveraging established systems to channel assistance to displaced and host populations - an area in which the Bank played a significant role across sectors. Without AF2, the government's response would likely have been less adequate.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

Economic Analysis. At appraisal, the project's economic efficiency was assessed through simulations of improved targeting across the five major social safety net programs (EGPP, FFW, TR, VGF, and GR), using baseline household consumption data from the 2010 Household Income and Expenditure Survey and the 2012 Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey. The development of the Bangladesh Poverty Database (later renamed the National Household Database, NHD) was expected to enable full implementation of improved targeting, including new geographic allocation formulas (giving greater weight to the number of poor) and household-level proxy means testing. The analysis estimated that full use of the NHD to implement these targeting rules could reduce the rural poverty headcount from 34.6 percent to 34.1 percent, potentially lifting an additional half a million individuals out of poverty. Simulations also suggested that, holding poverty reduction constant, the programs could achieve the same impact with 45 percent fewer resources, generating annual savings of US\$105 million to US\$253 million, depending on the proportion of the budget reaching eligible beneficiaries. These savings exceed the estimated cost of updating the NHD every five years (US\$40 million),



demonstrating that improved targeting could both finance NHD updates and create room to expand benefits or coverage. Further efficiency gains were anticipated from strengthened MIS, enhanced grievance redress mechanisms, and increased program transparency, which could further reduce leakage of allocated benefits.

The ICR assessed the project's efficiency along three dimensions: (a) improving household consumption and poverty outcomes through the programs it supported; (b) fiscal savings from more efficient targeting; and (c) cost savings and/or return on investment (ROI). The end-of-project economic analysis found strong welfare effects: EGPP participation increased household consumption by 7.7-10.6 percent, while EGPP+ increased per capita income/expenditure by 31.5 percent and average daily calorie intake by 7.2 percent, with about 20 percent of beneficiaries moving above the upper poverty line. Beneficiary households also reported improvements in food security, ability to afford education, and engagement in income-generating activities. Although fiscal savings from more efficient targeting were not fully realized because the National Household Database (NHD) was not operational, it benefited cash transfer programs implemented by the Department of Social Services (DSS), which adopted its PMT indicators. After applying the PMT formula, 77 percent of beneficiary households in three DSS programs were selected from the bottom 40 percent of households ranked by poverty and vulnerability, compared with less than 50 percent on average, highlighting the potential impact of a fully operational NHD. Component 4 (EGPP+) was highly cost-effective, with a net present value of US\$561 per beneficiary over five years and a benefit-cost ratio of 4.38 (which is higher than similar livelihood support programs in Niger and Afghanistan), while Component 5 initiatives (targeted to DRP in the Cox Bazar camps), including community aquaculture and homestead gardens, showed ROIs of 8-48 percent. Digital payments generated annual savings of approximately US\$6.88 million per year, reducing transaction costs for both the government and beneficiaries. Overall, the project demonstrated strong efficiency in improving welfare, generating cost savings, and supporting innovative delivery mechanisms.

Implementation efficiency is rated modest. The project faced significant operational challenges that extended its duration to nearly 12 years, requiring two additional financings and six restructurings, collectively adding 84 months. Frequent leadership changes (11 project directors at DDM, eight at BBS, and six at MoDMR), delays in budget allocations - particularly for procurement - and weak contract management slowed progress on key deliverables. Difficulties in operationalizing the National Household Database (NHD) stemmed from incomplete and outdated data, delays in MIS development, and limited cross-ministerial coordination. While BBS completed household data collection between 2017 and 2018, validation exercises identified numerous incomplete records, including missing National Identification (NID) numbers. BBS's withdrawal from the project in 2022 left the MIS incomplete, preventing the use of the collected data for its intended targeting purpose. The NHD MIS development was delayed partly due to poor coordination between DDM, BBS, and the contracted firm. According to BBS, these delays were primarily due to the non-performance of the MIS development firm and weak inter-ministerial coordination rather than deficiencies in BBS's technical capacity. BBS also clarified that it did not abandon the NHD; rather, the component was revised multiple times to allow completion, but the contractor failed to deliver a functional MIS despite several extensions (ICR, p. 32). External shocks - including the COVID-19 pandemic, severe flooding, the Rohingya refugee crisis, and exchange rate fluctuations - further constrained implementation by causing funding shortfalls, delaying program launches such as the shock-responsive EGPP+, and limiting service delivery.

While the economic analysis indicates that the project was a sound investment, efficiency was considerably weakened by implementation challenges, resulting in a Modest efficiency rating.

Efficiency Rating



Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

The relevance of the project’s objectives is rated High, as they were responsive to the country context and well aligned with both the government’s and the Bank’s sector priorities. Project efficacy is rated Substantial, as the aggregated objectives were substantially achieved despite delays in MIS implementation and the inability to utilize the National Household Database (NHD) data for targeting due to incomplete household records and the late establishment of the common MIS. Efficiency is rated Modest, as implementation delays, capacity constraints, and the late delivery of the common MIS limited the timely realization and utilization of project outputs, thereby reducing overall cost-effectiveness. These findings are indicative of a Moderately Satisfactory overall outcome rating.

a. **Outcome Rating**
Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

As noted by the Bank team in a written interview dated November 5, 2025, the risk to sustaining the development outcome is considered low to moderate. The government remains committed to strengthening and institutionalizing an adaptive and inclusive social protection system, as reflected in its national policy priorities and reform strategies. This commitment is being reinforced through substantial follow-on IDA support. The follow-on SSPIRIT (P508519) project aims to expand coverage and enhance the delivery of the national social protection system for the poor, including continued assistance for the establishment and operationalization of the Dynamic Social Registry (DSR) to improve targeting, efficiency, and transparency. Complementing this, the SGIR (P508179) project includes a policy action to establish the DSR framework. In parallel, the follow-on ISO (P500727) project continues supporting the EGPP+ and the DRP community services/works program, with institutional strengthening for the Department of Disaster Management also continuing under this operation. These follow-on operations provide financial and institutional continuity, reinforcing the sustainability of the reforms initiated under this project. However, Bangladesh continues to face external risks stemming from macroeconomic pressures - such as the projected slowdown in GDP



growth in FY26 that may constrain fiscal space - and high exposure to climate-related shocks. Nonetheless, the adaptive systems, strengthened institutional capacities, and established policy frameworks developed under this project, along with those expected from subsequent operations, provide a solid foundation for resilience, indicating that the overall risk to sustaining the project's development outcome remains manageable, though, as noted in the ICR (p. 15), it will require ongoing support and close attention.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project's Quality at Entry is rated Moderately Satisfactory. The project was strategically relevant, as evidenced in its strong alignment with Bangladesh's development priorities in the social protection sector and with the Bank's country strategic frameworks - both the one in place at appraisal and the one effective at closing. The design drew on lessons from the then-ongoing Bank-financed EGPP operation, as well as international experience from safety net reforms in Pakistan, the Philippines, and Romania. The project's focus on establishing a national targeting database, improving payment systems, and linking disbursements to performance was consistent with global good practice. However, the design was ambitious relative to institutional capacity. As noted in the ICR (p. 14), the project underestimated the complexities involved in developing and implementing sophisticated information technology systems and did not designate an overall coordinating agency among multiple implementing entities - the Department of Disaster Management (DDM), the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), and later, the World Food Programme. These design limitations contributed to major implementation challenges, including the failure to establish the National Household Database and significant delays in delivering the DDM safety net MIS. This suggests that the technical design exceeded the practical readiness of the responsible agencies. While risks were appropriately rated as "Substantial" at appraisal and mitigation measures such as Disbursement-Linked Indicators and technical assistance were well conceived, their effectiveness was only partial in addressing deep-rooted coordination and capacity issues. On the institutional front, the failure to designate an overall lead agency to coordinate the multiple implementing agencies operating under this project undermined the smooth implementation of the project, particularly the delivery of inter-dependent components (ICR, p. 11). Fiduciary, environmental, and social arrangements were generally sound. The Environmental and Social Management Frameworks were comprehensive and updated as the project's scope expanded. Procurement capacity faced persistent challenges throughout implementation, as anticipated during preparation but insufficiently mitigated. The M&E design was robust, combining administrative data, spot checks, third-party beneficiary satisfaction surveys, and a planned impact evaluation..

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

During implementation, the Bank team provided hands-on, proactive, and adaptive supervision, maintaining continuous engagement, and responding flexibly to major external shocks - including the



Rohingya refugee influx, COVID-19, and severe flooding - through restructurings and additional financings. A total of 21 implementation support missions were conducted, averaging two per year, with associated documentation, such as Aide-Memoires and ISRs, prepared in a timely manner. Beyond formal missions, the Bank maintained active and continuous engagement, providing technical expertise and mobilizing international specialists to address bottlenecks in establishing the National Household Database. The team also promoted sustainability by coordinating closely with teams managing follow-on Bank-financed operations. Despite persistent coordination and capacity challenges, including the high turnover of counterpart staff and of others holding leadership positions in relevant government agencies - largely beyond the Bank's control - the quality of supervision was strong and contributed to sustaining progress toward achievement of the PDOs.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The project's revised Theory of Change (ToC), presented in the ICR (p. 42), was well-articulated, evidence-based, and captured most of the key elements of the project's results chain. It presented a coherent and plausible linkage between project activities, outputs, and the PDO, showing how improvements in targeting, MIS consolidation, digital payments, transparency initiatives, and shock-responsive mechanisms were expected to strengthen major social safety net programs benefiting the poorest and most vulnerable households. However, while the narrative referred to all four PDO outcomes, the ToC illustration did not explicitly reflect the PDO of improved efficiency, which slightly weakened the alignment between the visual results chain and the project's stated objectives. The ToC also appropriately linked measurable outputs to DLIs and incorporated the project's pro-poor, gender, and adaptive design features, underpinned by assumptions of political stability, fiscal space, and sustained political commitment. Nonetheless, the causal chain could have been strengthened by including intermediate outcomes - such as reduced exclusion and inclusion errors, improved timeliness and accuracy of benefit delivery, reduced payment leakages, faster identification of shock-affected households, and more rapid mobilization of resources during crises. Including these intermediate outcomes would have made the results chain more verifiable and measurable, enabling clearer assessment of whether and how project activities led to the intended outcomes.

The project's M&E design was comprehensive, integrating internal systems with independent assessments to ensure accountability and learning. Institutional arrangements for M&E assigned primary responsibility to the Department of Disaster Management, supported by strengthened MIS and dedicated field-level supervision through Sub-Assistant Engineers at upazila level. The Department of Disaster Management was responsible for routine program monitoring, DLI verification, beneficiary spot checks, and satisfaction surveys. M&E activities were designed to facilitate effective use of funds, prevent malpractice, and maintain good governance, including through regular monitoring, strengthened institutional arrangements to improve information flows from sub-project to central level, enhanced field supervision supported by Sub-Assistant



Engineers, provision of transport facilities and staff training, and investments in MIS and internet connectivity to enable real-time decision making. Central-level oversight was to be reinforced through enhanced staffing and training. Independent third-party validations, a program impact evaluation, annual audits of beneficiary payments, household and operational surveys, qualitative assessments, and Bank-led spot checks at the upazila level were to complement internal monitoring systems. The Results Framework featured indicators that were feasible to collect and monitor across outputs, intermediate outcomes, and final outcomes. Outcome indicators, along with the planned independent assessments, provided a strong basis for measuring progress toward PDO achievement.

b. M&E Implementation

M&E implementation was complex. Multiple changes occurred throughout the project's life, including two Additional Financings (AFs) and several restructurings in response to the evolving context, which necessitated frequent adjustments to the Results Framework and DLI matrix. Additionally, AF2 introduced two new implementation partners responsible for routine monitoring of Components 4 and 5: the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and the World Food Programme, respectively. Nevertheless, the project maintained regular monitoring. Initially, this was based on administrative paper records verified through spot checks, supported by the original EGPP MIS and the temporary EGPP+ MIS, since the consolidated MIS, to which monitoring was expected to transition, was established only toward the end of the project. Supported by technical advice from the Bank team, DDM's proactive development of the temporary EGPP+ MIS enabled effective assessment of Component 4 and the PDO. Although an impact evaluation was not conducted, a third-party consulting firm was engaged to conduct spot checks and provide ongoing monitoring oversight. Additionally, WFP prepared a completion report detailing its activities under Component 5.

c. M&E Utilization

M&E data was used to track project progress, guide implementation, and inform stocktaking during each restructuring and Additional Financing. Because disbursements were partly results-based, M&E data was also critical for verifying results and triggering payments. Monitoring activities further revealed that most subprojects were initially public works involving strenuous physical labor, which limited women's participation and benefits. Based on this finding, the project increased its emphasis on 'community service' subprojects that were more suitable for women. Finally, lessons drawn from M&E findings informed the design and preparation of follow-on projects.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project, classified as Category B, triggered the Bank's Operational Policies on Environmental Assessment (OP 4.01) and Indigenous Peoples (OP 4.10). During two additional financings, the



implementing agency updated its Environmental Management Framework (EMF) to incorporate EGPP+ and expand public works, ensuring that no subprojects requiring land acquisition were funded. Environmental screening was mandatory for all subprojects, including those involving tribal communities. Independent third-party assessments and audits were conducted, alongside World Bank-contracted evaluations of safety net programs. A Social Management Framework (SMF) and a Tribal People's Development Framework were developed, incorporating a Gender Assessment Framework and measures to ensure inclusion, transparency, and accountability. Female participation was systematically tracked, and spot checks were conducted to identify gender gaps. While no new social safeguards were triggered during the AF phases, a new Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared for AF2 due to increased community-level schemes under EGPP+. Environmental and social issues for the displaced Rohingya population were managed by applying the ESMF of the Emergency Multi-Sector Rohingya Crisis Response Project (EMRCR, P167762) to Component 4 of this project. Meanwhile, the original SMF remained applicable to programs under Component 1 until full disbursement.

The final ISR (archive date December 26, 2024) rated overall safeguards performance as Moderately Satisfactory. However, as clarified by the Bank team in a written interview dated November 5, 2025, actual safeguards performance, as confirmed by E&S Specialists based on their engagement with clients during implementation, was considered Satisfactory. The Bank team reported that grievances brought to its attention, including those related to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse / Sexual Harassment, were proactively addressed and resolved satisfactorily. Grievances under both the EGPP+ (December 2020 - Dec 2024) and the Displaced Rohingya Population (DRP) community services/works program (June 2022 - December 2024) were systematically tracked and resolved. For EGPP+, the Department of Disaster Management recorded 90 grievances across five upazilas in Cox's Bazar, covering issues such as delayed wages, replacement workers instead of the intended beneficiaries, and administrative issues, all of which were resolved. Under the DRP program, WFP tracked 1,308 cases through on-site monitoring and hotline channels, addressing queries on payments, service quality, inclusiveness, targeting criteria, and occasional extortion, with all cases resolved within 3-5 days.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management. The project's financial management (FM) at closing was assessed as Moderately Satisfactory. At appraisal, the project's FM risk was rated Substantial due to the high volume of wage payments under EGPP results-based co-financing and extensive BBS transactions during NHD data collection. While utilizing existing arrangements was expected to ensure that funds were used for their intended purposes, weak systems could affect transparency and accountability. The project incorporated controls to address these risks. With the addition of Components 4 (EGPP+) and 5 (DRP community services/works) under AF2, new reporting requirements applied. EGPP+ wage and stipend expenditures were reported via the government's integrated budget and accounting system (iBAS++). FM weaknesses included payroll delays due to manual recording, iBAS++ not segregating wage costs, and coordination of EGPP+ payments by an MIS specialist rather than an FM specialist. Most issues were resolved by project closing, and an FM policy waiver was granted with no adverse impact on project implementation from an FM perspective. Credits IDA 5281-BD and IDA 6137-BD (both IPF operations with DLIs) required external audits within nine months of the end of the reporting period, while Grant IDA D591 (IPF without DLIs) required six months. A waiver aligned D591's audit submission timeline with that of the credits to ensure consistency across financing instruments. As reported by the Bank team in a written interview dated November 5, 2025, all external audit reports have been submitted, except for the report for FY2024–25,



which is due by March 31, 2026. The audit report for FY2023–24 was submitted on December 30, 2024. No qualifications were noted in any of the external audit reports. The Bank requested a refund of the remaining Designated Account balance of BDT 237,147,553.89 (SDR 1,431,290.39 / US\$1,923,024.52); as of November 2025, the refund has not yet been completed.

Procurement. Procurement under the project was carried out in line with the World Bank’s Procurement Guidelines for services and the Government of Bangladesh’s Public Procurement Act 2006 and Public Procurement Rules 2008 for goods. At appraisal, procurement risk was rated Substantial due to the volume and complexity of procurement, the limited capacity of implementing agencies, and lessons from previous projects. During implementation, the project faced several challenges, including delays in short-listing and preparing Requests for Proposals, completing technical evaluations, and maintaining accurate documentation, including timely updates in the Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) system. Under AF2, additional risk mitigation measures were introduced, such as (a) appointing experienced procurement consultants and independent technical experts on evaluation committees; (b) conducting regular capacity-building workshops for staff on integrity, conflict-of-interest, fraud and corruption red flags, and risk management; (c) briefing potential bidders on conflict-of-interest disclosure requirements and consequences of fraudulent and corrupt practices; and (d) enhancing Bank oversight through regular reviews of contract implementation. These measures strengthened adherence to procurement procedures. Overall procurement performance improved during implementation. As clarified by the Bank team in a written interview dated November 5, 2025, procurement performance at closing was rated Moderately Satisfactory based on the final assessment, although the final ISR incorrectly noted a Satisfactory rating.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

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d. Other

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11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	



12. Lessons

The ICR presented the following lessons, slightly reworded by IEG.

Strong institutional leadership, technical capacity and a strong and well-defined coordination function are essential for managing multi-agency system-building initiatives. The project demonstrated that when multiple agencies are responsible for interconnected components of a transformative system - such as the National Household Database (NHD) and the DDM safety net MIS - coordination and leadership are critical. The separation of responsibilities between BBS (for the NHD) and DDM (for the MIS) created operational challenges that delayed integration and limited the NHD's initial use. The experience showed that successful implementation of large, cross-cutting data systems requires both strong technical capacity within implementing agencies and a single coordinating body with the authority and mandate to guide and align efforts across ministries. This lesson has already informed the design of subsequent operations, such as the SSPIRIT project, which assigned coordination responsibility to the Finance Division and established a Steering Committee for the Dynamic Social Registry (DSR) - headed by the Secretary of the Cabinet Division - to oversee overall DSR implementation.

Flexible design and adaptive implementation can enhance gender outcomes in social protection programs. Experience under the project-supported EGPP safety net program showed that sustained attention to gender during implementation - through close monitoring, feedback, and adjustment - can yield significant improvements in women's participation, even in conservative contexts. Gender outcomes improved markedly when subprojects were adapted to women's capacities and preferences (for example, homestead gardening, cleaning, and tree planting), which informed the development of the EGPP+ window. Additional measures such as providing communal childcare, creating women-friendly worksites, and conducting effective social behavior change communication campaigns also contributed to greater inclusion. The project experience highlights that gender inclusion is best achieved not through static design features, but through continuous adaptation informed by field-level learning.

Stronger government oversight and independent M&E arrangements can enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency of partner-implemented programs. Under the project, interventions for the Displaced Rohingya Population (DRP) were implemented by WFP on behalf of the government. However, the implementation arrangements involved little oversight from the government (minimal data sharing and no independent/third-party M&E arrangements). The lack of regular data sharing reduced the government's capacity to anticipate needs and plan interventions across different stages of displacement. In addition, the absence of independent or third-party M&E limited opportunities to assess performance objectively and generate lessons for future programming. This experience highlighted that even when international partners lead implementation, strong government engagement - supported by timely data sharing and independent M&E - is important for accountability, operational efficiency, and evidence-based planning.

13. Assessment Recommended?



No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

Quality of evidence. The ICR's evidence base was grounded primarily in systematically collected administrative and monitoring data from the implementing agencies, complemented by spot checks and beneficiary feedback. Although the envisaged impact evaluation was ultimately not implemented, the use of periodic audits, spot checks, and independent verification helped ensure data credibility and accountability. The ICR effectively drew on these data sources to track progress against the Results Framework and the DLI matrix, presenting key results systematically in Annex 1 and integrating them into the efficacy analysis. The inclusion of data from beneficiary surveys enriched the ICR's evidence base. However, the absence of the planned impact evaluation limited the project's ability to rigorously assess causal attribution and longer-term outcomes. Overall, the ICR demonstrated sound use of available monitoring data and triangulated multiple sources to substantiate its findings, although the absence of the planned impact evaluation limited the overall strength of the evidence base.

Quality of Analysis. The ICR provided a generally solid analysis, integrating project data, indicator achievements, and findings from beneficiary studies to assess outcomes. It was candid about implementation delays and provided an overall adequate, critical assessment of the project's achievements and shortcomings, as well as detailed explanations of the project's changes introduced under the six restructurings and two additional financings. The analysis engaged with the Theory of Change, examining whether project activities and outputs contributed to intended outcomes. However, it did not directly assess attribution/contribution of the project or consider a counterfactual scenario of no project. A November 5, 2025 meeting with the Bank team provided useful input to strengthen these analyses.

Quality of Lessons. The lessons in the ICR are derived from project-specific evidence and analysis and appropriately reflect the experiences and findings discussed in earlier sections of the report. They are also relevant for other countries seeking to strengthen their social protection systems.

Results Orientation. Overall, the ICR had a solid results orientation. The efficacy discussion was organized around the project's four development objectives and systematically presented evidence of how project activities contributed to outcomes and impacts.

Internal Consistency/Adherence to Guidelines. The ICR was generally coherent and largely adhered to Bank guidelines, though several gaps reduce full internal consistency and transparency. The Results Framework (ICR, pp. 18-19) lists indicators for four SSN programs (FFW/WFM, TR, VGF, and GR) as "*not tracked beyond FY 2019*," although these indicators were actually monitored only through FY 2017, when their co-financing under the original project ended. This creates confusion as to whether the FY 2019 reference reflects a reporting error or implies that the project continued tracking the indicators until FY 2019 but reported progress only through FY 2017. In a written interview dated November 5, 2025, the Bank team confirmed that the government's monitoring and reporting on the indicators for these four SSN programs indeed stopped in FY 2017, corresponding to the end of their co-financing under the original project. In addition, the Theory of Change (Annex 7, p. 42) omits efficiency as a distinct PDO, despite its central relevance to the project. The ICR would also benefit from a dedicated summary of the Disbursement-Linked Indicators' achievement status, including allocated and revised amounts and actual disbursements, to strengthen transparency and completeness.



a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial