



## Guidance on Rohingya Volunteer Incentive Rates

V.12

This guidance is the recommended approach for humanitarian stakeholders working in Rohingya refugee camps and settlements. This guidance provides a uniform, harmonized approach to definitions of refugee volunteer engagement. Refugee volunteer incentive rates across implementing agencies will help to ensure fairness for refugees and retention of volunteers at different skill levels, by avoiding preference to any agency or Sector due to difference in rates for comparable work. It will help to clarify and manage two way communications with communities on incentives, and will also help to manage relationships between the refugee and host communities.

There are two main ways in which refugees are engaged in labour the current context: Cash for Work programming, and engaging refugee volunteer labour to achieve set operational objectives (including unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled volunteers).

Category	Criteria and Competencies	Current Rate
<b>Cash-for-Work</b>	Principles of Cash for Work Programming, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Beneficiary selection criteria (usually vulnerability)</li><li>- Days of work predetermined (16 days consecutively, or 32 days scattered over a quarter)</li><li>- Predetermined daily flat rate</li></ul> <b>See Cash Working Group CFW Guidance</b>	<b>350 BDT/day</b> (Revised April 2018, yet to be endorsed by the HCTT. This amount represents 75% of the Minimum Expenditure Basket)
<b>Unskilled Volunteer</b>	Unskilled labour engaged to meet operational needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Porters</li><li>• Physical/construction labourers</li><li>• Truck loading/unloading</li><li>• Gatekeepers</li><li>• General labour eg cleaners</li></ul>	<b>50 BDT per hour</b>
<b>Semi-skilled Volunteer</b>	Semi-skilled labour engaged to meet operational needs. Requires basic literacy and basic training prior to performing the role. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community mobilizers</li><li>• Outreach workers (including community health workers, hygiene promoters)</li><li>• Site management assistants</li><li>• Enumerators/data collectors (generalists)</li></ul>	Hourly rate (infrequent engagement) <b>BDT 50<sup>1</sup> – BDT 75 per hour</b>  Monthly rate (longer term engagement) <b>BDT 7,200<sup>2</sup> – BDT 12,600 per month</b> (assumption of 7 hours per day, 24 days a month)

<sup>1</sup> It is noted that the starting incentive for semi-skilled is equivalent to that for unskilled. Unskilled labour is often of a hard, physical and sometimes dangerous nature, which requires fair remuneration, and therefore, this is not deemed to be a flaw in the incentive structure. The upper parameter included in the semi-skilled incentive allow for agencies to pay according to their own determination of complexity and responsibilities.

<sup>2</sup> It is noted that the lower end of the band for monthly incentives is lower than the hourly incentive, if multiplied across the same time worked. This acknowledges the additional benefits of predictability of income in a longer-term engagement.





Office of the Refugee Relief and  
Repatriation Commissioner, Cox's Bazar



<b>Skilled Volunteer</b>	Skilled labour engaged to meet operational needs. Requires literacy and significant training.	<b>Determined within relevant Sector</b> <i>Will be annexed when determined</i>
--------------------------	--	--

These recommended rates for volunteers have been developed by a technical working group of operational agencies<sup>3</sup>, including UN agencies, INGOs and NNGOs, and have been reviewed and endorsed by the Sector Coordinators and Heads of Sub-Offices Cox's Bazar on 11 June 2018. The proposal took into account prevailing incentive rates across agencies and within Sectors; fairness to refugee volunteers; the indirect benefits of cash injection; the sustainability of operations; prevailing Bangladeshi labour market rates, and the needs, expectations and constraints of the host community and local authorities regarding refugee labour and employment opportunities. The application of these rates will be periodically reviewed as appropriate.<sup>4</sup>

The rates should apply to contractors taken on by agencies as well. The guidance should be incorporated by agencies into contracts at the time they are drawn up.

### Definitions: Cash-for-Work and Volunteers

#### Cash-for-Work

**Cash-for-Work is a very specific programmatic approach underpinned by specific principles, rather than any type of employment relationship.** It is important that it is not confused with volunteer incentives. While the term Cash-for-Work has generally been used loosely, the humanitarian community has agreed to move towards a more accurate definition of Cash-for-Work to prevent misunderstandings and confusion.

**Cash-for-Work beneficiaries are selected based on specific criteria (usually vulnerability).** Beneficiaries of Cash-for-Work programmes should be selected using predetermined criteria to ensure the programme is impactful as possible, and that protection principles and other programmatic considerations are abided by.

**Cash-for-Work beneficiaries are guaranteed a predetermined number of work days – in Bangladesh either 16 days consecutively, or 32 days scattered over a quarter.** This depends on the size of the cash grant available and the specific needs identified.

**Cash-for-Work beneficiaries are paid a flat daily rate** of 350 BDT per day, which is calculated as 75% of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB). The rate tries to meet the objective of addressing needs by introducing cash into an economy, while minimizing distortions in the local labor market (through offering a CfW rate that is lower than the prevailing labor market wage rate for unskilled daily labour, currently estimated at BDT 500 per day).

Cash-for-Work initiatives should be coordinated through the Cash Working Group. The Working Group has developed a detailed guidance on CfW as a programmatic approach.

Refugees who are not given exactly 16 or 32 days work at BDT 350 per day, are then considered volunteers, and not Cash-for-Work beneficiaries.

#### Unskilled, Semi-Skilled and Skilled Volunteers

**Volunteers are engaged in order to achieve specific operational objectives, often as daily labour and sometimes on a longer-term basis.** Their engagement is determined by operational need, rather than any programmatic criteria, as in Cash-for-Work programming.

<sup>3</sup> Agencies participating in the technical group included: UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, WFP, UNFPA, UNWomen, WHO, FAO, DRC, MSF, BDRCS, BRAC, IFRC, ADRA, ACF.

<sup>4</sup> Food Security Sector, WFP/VAM are collecting information on labour rates bi-weekly.





Office of the Refugee Relief and  
Repatriation Commissioner, Cox's Bazar



As the unskilled and semi-skilled categories are engaged across the Sectors with comparable functions and competency requirements, a harmonized approach is proposed for these categories across the operation.

A flat rate of BDT 50 per hour applies for unskilled volunteers. For semi-skilled volunteers, understood to require basic literacy and basic training prior to performing the required roles, a range of incentives with a lower and upper limit is proposed. This will enable agencies to vary incentive rates within their teams, to acknowledge and retain those who take on higher levels of responsibility, or those who have received more training or experience over time. Skilled volunteer roles, requiring higher levels of literacy and training, are to be defined by the Sectors and should receive higher incentive rate than semi-skilled volunteers.

It is noted that in engaging refugee volunteers, some agencies emphasise contribution to community cohesion and common goods, with provision of only minimal stipends aimed at expense recovery (lunch or transport coverage).

### Principles of refugee volunteer engagement

All agencies engaging volunteers must:

- Ensure safe and dignified conditions, including provision of appropriate protective equipment and clothing where required.
- Establish transparent recruitment processes and conditions of engagement, including predictable, timely payment of incentives owed.
- Promote equitable access to volunteer opportunities, taking into consideration age, gender and diversity.
- Consult concerned populations in developing volunteer engagement strategies.
- Establish procedures for volunteer feedback and ensure volunteers are aware of these.
- Wherever possible, build upon volunteers' existing skills and support transferable skills that can promote longer-term economic security.
- Adhere to the Child Protection Sub-Sector guidance on engagement of children and Protection Sector guidance on engagement of porters (annexed)
- For additional criteria/guidelines refer to the Livelihoods Working Group advocacy paper developed with Protection and GiHA.

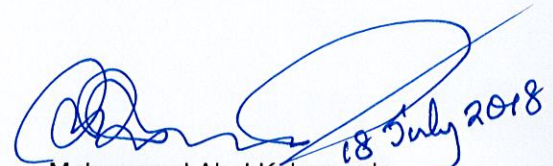
### Inclusion of host community

It is further advised that inclusion of host community in refugee programming, and employment of affected host communities in humanitarian operations, where possible and feasible, is encouraged in order to promote social cohesion and shared benefits. In general, engagement of affected host communities should take into account prevailing Bangladeshi labour market rates.



18/7/18

Sumbul Rizvi  
Senior Coordinator  
Rohingya Refugee Response  
Cox's Bazar



18 July 2018

Mohammad Abul Kalam, ndc  
(Additional Secretary)  
Refugee Relief and Repatriation  
Commissioner  
Cox's Bazar