



The Border Consortium
MIDYEAR OVERVIEW
January to June
2024

www.theborderconsortium.org

The Border Consortium

2024 Midyear Annual Report January to June 2024



Context

Between the coup on the 1st of February 2021 and the end of June 2024, the State Administration Council (SAC) has killed over 5,350 civilians, detained and imprisoned over 26,500 human rights defenders¹. There are now over 3 million internally displaced persons (IDP) nationwide, with over 1.1 million IDPs in southeastern Myanmar.

The Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF), following widespread territorial losses on the ground, have continued to launch prolonged indiscriminate air strikes and heavy artillery fire throughout the country, with a devastating impact on the civil population. Hospitals, schools and places of worship have been destroyed by the MAF, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. Human security continues to deteriorate around the country, but particularly in disputed territories due to heavy fighting, and the continued threat of airstrikes.

Refugee flows into Thailand from Myanmar have continued throughout the first half of 2024. This displacement has been exacerbated by the SAC's announcement in February that they would introduce mandatory conscription into the armed forces. Displacement into Thailand has primarily been into refugee camps, remote communities in rural Thailand and increasingly urban areas.

Thailand launched a humanitarian initiative early in the year, aiming to provide aid to conflict affected communities in Myanmar, in part to reduce further displacement into Thailand. This effort was widely criticised by civil society and the NUG for its engagement with the SAC. There was one shipment of aid that took place in March. The potential for future versions of the Humanitarian Initiative which would instead engage civil society based cross-border aid modalities instead of the SAC seemed likely. However, momentum slowed following a cabinet reshuffle in April which led to the resignation of Foreign Minister Parnpree Bahiddha-nukara, who had spearheaded the initiative.

¹ <https://aappb.org/?p=28593>

Strategic Direction 1 Prioritise the Humanitarian Imperative:

Address the humanitarian needs of displaced and conflict-affected communities, with a focus on especially vulnerable people. Provide equitable access for displaced communities to food, shelter and non-food items.

TBC conducted major humanitarian activities throughout the year. In **Thailand** food assistance was provided to 98,790 refugees in the nine camps through our Food Card System. Each quarter, TBC conducted quarterly nutritional assessments of the food card value to ensure that the most vulnerable refugees in camp were able to secure a fully nutritional food basket each month. In-camp Shelter Working Groups and teams successfully distributed shelter materials and maintained stockpiles of key building materials during this reporting period. This ensures that supplies are prepositioned for distribution as required.

The Annual Population Verification process is scheduled to take place later in 2024. Monthly updates in population figures show a total of 102,931 refugees in all nine camps, a 15% increase since the start of 2024.

Outside of camp, TBC continued to implement the emergency response plan to assist newly arriving refugees. This involved distributing essential supplies such as food, shelter materials, and hygiene items to those in Temporary Safety Areas (TSAs). Through collaboration with local partners, TBC extended similar support to refugees residing outside TSAs, including those concealed within border communities.

In **southeastern Myanmar**, TBC supported a network of local partners to distribute life-saving aid to over 250,000 civilians affected by atrocities. Unconditional cash transfers equivalent to at least USD 30 were distributed to over 130,000 people. Access to at least three months of food aid was ensured for another 50,000 internally displaced persons. This was complemented by basic medical treatment for 130,000 civilians afflicted with common diseases in remote areas. The multi-sectoral approach also included distribution on a smaller scale of temporary shelters for newly displaced communities and non-food items such as dignity kits for girls and women.

Strategic Direction 2 Reinforce Resilience and Recovery:

Mitigate the longer-term impact of displacement on food security and nutrition. Enhance nutrition, environmental hygiene, climate-smart agriculture, small businesses and access to employment for displaced and conflict-affected communities.

In **Thailand** the Healthy Babies Bright Futures programme continued to provide BabyBRIGHT fortified complementary food to young children, complemented by MIYFC education and activities. Each month, caregivers of approximately 2,000 children aged 6-24 months enrolled in educational sessions focussing on best nutritional practices.

The Food Security Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was carried out quarterly, offering essential insights into the food security status among the refugee population. Following this quarterly monitoring, an annual assessment and analysis was carried out, which found that 90% of refugee households reported having an acceptably diverse diet. The PDMs found that the balance provided on the Food Cards were primarily used to purchase rice and cooking oil, which are essential items with relatively high cost. To supplement their diet, households relied on fresh vegetables obtained from community and home gardens. Later this year TBC will distribute new agricultural equipment to all nine camps, ranging from watering cans, pipes, water tanks, gardening tools and a distribution of vegetable seeds to increase the productivity of community and home gardens.

In all nine camps, the Livelihoods Committees distributed agricultural supplies and vegetable seed to all nine camps. The Savings and Loans Committees provided access to loans for small businesses within the camps. Various capacity-building activities improved refugees' skills for generating income, including bamboo furniture construction and cement block making. The Community Driven Natural Resource Management (CDNRM) program continued in its efforts to protect the local environment and raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation.

In **southeastern Myanmar**, civil society partners supported the recovery of over 76,000 civilians of whom 56% were girls or women. Sustainable natural resource management included securing land tenure and strengthening community forests and watershed management for more than 4,000 villagers in ethnic administered areas. Agricultural extension initiatives with over 9,000 subsistence farmers included the repair of motorbike roads and bridges, the investments of mechanical ploughs into farming collectives, the extension of irrigation canals and micro-dams as well as capacity development in organic gardening and small animal breeding. Ethnic health organisations were supported to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene for more than 34,000 civilians in conflict-affected communities.

Strategic Direction 3. Promote Protection and Safer Futures:

Reduce the exposure of displaced and conflict-affected communities to harm and mobilise safe and dignified pathways. Defend human rights including access to human security in Myanmar, temporary shelter and work in Thailand and resettlement to third countries.

Discussions in **Thailand** about potential pathways for refugees to move outside the camps have continued with the Royal Thai Government (RTG) as part of TBC's ongoing advocacy efforts to secure durable solutions. Despite these efforts, there have been no significant advancements in official Thai policy concerning refugee employment. However, some refugees have managed to leave the camps on a temporary basis to engage in locally sanctioned, unofficial work opportunities.

Thailand's refugee policy toward new arrivals from Myanmar remains challenging and has not been revised under the new Thai government. According to this policy, newly arrived refugees are not permitted to enter existing camps. Instead, many are directed to officially designated Temporary Safety Areas (TSAs), which are usually largely inaccessible to the UNHCR and international NGOs. Basic humanitarian aid, such as food and non-food items, is typically distributed through local community groups and leaders. However, these TSAs do not provide long term refuge. Inhabitants are pressured to return to Myanmar once the Royal Thai Army (RTA) assesses the situation to have improved, often after just 48 hours of reduced conflict.

In **southeastern Myanmar**, the reinforcement of social protection mechanisms directly benefitted more than 5,000 especially vulnerable individuals. Social safety nets included mobilising seed and rice banks, resourcing nursery schools, enabling civilian protection monitoring, promoting early warning systems through community media and supporting victims of sexual and gender-based violence. These grassroots interventions were complemented by advocacy with UN mandate holders, Thai authorities, foreign diplomats and international civil society to mitigate threats to human security in Myanmar and along Thailand's border.

Strategic Direction 4. Strengthen Local Governance:

Diversify representation and enhance accountability in the ownership and oversight of programs and services. Responsibly and transparently manage change in collaboration with refugee and civil society partners, local authorities, donors and other stakeholders.

In **Thailand**, program staff, camp committees, and security personnel have undergone continued trainings on our Code of Conduct, our Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH), and Child Protection Policies. Additional trainings were provided on social inclusion and gender sensitivity, aiming to empower local camp governance and enhance their ability to provide safe, well-governed environments. Other capacity-building sessions have covered office skills, management, communication skills, fraud prevention, Excel training, and good governance practices. Efforts to promote localisation remain a key priority.

Regular communication between TBC and camp partners ensures smooth data flow and operational efficiency. The Camp Information Teams distributed a wide range of information to camp residents, including updates on camp activities and political and humanitarian developments in Myanmar. This information was shared through film screenings, home visits, and loudspeakers.

Plans for immediate returns to Myanmar are on hold due to the recent coup, but preparations for future opportunities outside the camps continue.

TBC received two complaints through our Beneficiary Complaints and Response Mechanism (BCRM) regarding communication modalities and shelter material allocations. Both complaints were resolved within 30 days.

In **southeastern Myanmar**, 64 young leaders enrolled in the third iteration of a six-month course in Governance and Public Administration. This was complemented by support for in-service training to strengthen the accountability of township officers in ethnic administered areas. Over 1,500 community leaders and township administrators were supported to consult with their constituents about emerging needs and concerns. Local partners were also supported to strengthen mechanisms for safeguarding children; preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; promoting gender equality; detecting fraud and corruption and soliciting beneficiary feedback and complaints.

Future overview

The Myanmar Armed Forces (MAF) are likely to remain the primary perpetrators of violence against civilians throughout the rest of 2024, necessitating a continued humanitarian response, both for emergency relief and protracted displacement. Although the National Unity Government (NUG) and various ethnic revolutionary organizations are expanding their influence, their ability to protect communities from airstrikes is still limited. In the immediate future, the risk of escalating threats to human security in Myanmar appears high.

It is crucial to expand options for refugees' long-term futures, ensuring that they can live safely and with dignity. The Border Consortium (TBC) will persist in advocating for legal local work opportunities for refugees, among other solutions.

TBC remains dedicated to implementing its 2023-2025 strategy throughout the latter half of 2024. The strategy's flexibility is vital to effectively address the diverse humanitarian needs of displaced communities across various scenarios.

TBC FINANCIAL REVIEW January- June 2024

TBC 2024 financial overview and update as of 30 June is presented in the following table:

Financial Summary 2024			
Item in THB (Millions)	Original Budget	Updated Projections	Variance
Income	963	1,040	77
Expenses	-920	-1,000	80
Net Movement in Funds	43	40	-3
Opening Fund Balance	553	553	
Closing Fund Balance	596	593	-3
Restricted Funds	495	486	-9
Designated Funds	61	63	2
General fund	40	44	4
Total fund Balance	596	593	-3
Balance Sheet:			
Net Fixed Assets	1	1	0
Receivable from Donors	495	500	-5
(Payable) to Suppliers	-60	-60	0
Bank Balance	160	152	8
Net Assets	596	593	-3
Liquidity	100	92	

Income

TBC already accrued THB 420M in income with projections that it could pass THB 1B by year-end if the new potential donors are guaranteed. This increase from initial expectations can be attributed namely to additional funds for the ongoing emergency response in Myanmar.

Government contributions are the backbone of our financial support, making up 98% of total portfolio. The US-PRM remains the largest donor, contributing 69% of the funds. Their support plays a vital role in providing cash assistance for food and the cooking fuel needs in all nine border camps, along with bolstering emergency response efforts on both sides of the border. We are in Year 2 of a three-year agreement, signed in August 2022, will enter year 3 of the agreement in August 2024.

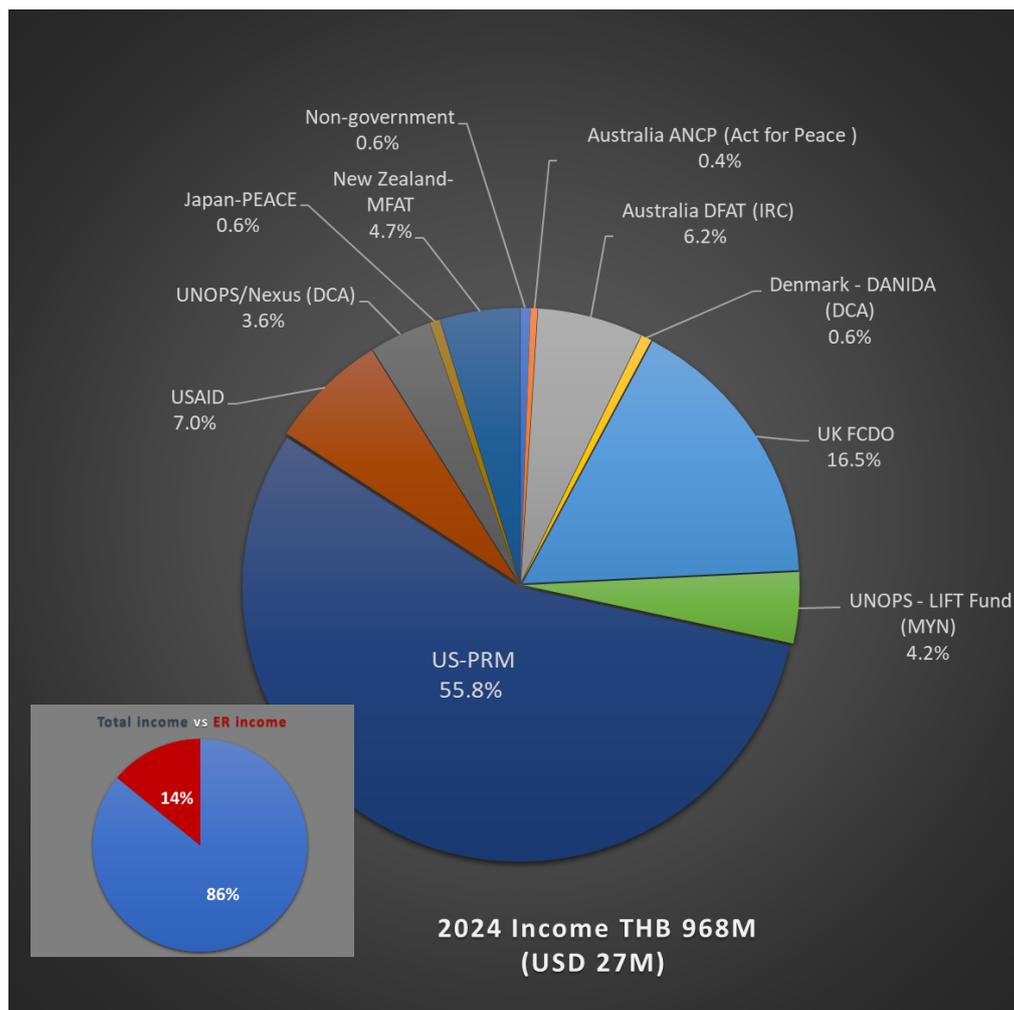
A cost-extension was signed with UK-FCDO, extending the current agreement to March 2025, constituting 15% of the overall income portfolio. This funding supports a broad spectrum of TBC programmes in both the refugee camps and Myanmar. Additionally, a portion of the budget is allocated to various activities related to the emergency response on both sides of the border.

TBC's third largest donor this year is Australia-DFAT funding via IRC, and makes up 7% of the portfolio, and 2024 marks year 2 of the three-year agreement. DFAT's support aids operations in the nine refugee camps along the border, with a portion of the funds going toward the emergency efforts within Myanmar.

Other Government funding to support the camp operations comes from Australia-ANCP via Act for Peace, Denmark-DANIDA via DCA, and MOFA-Japan via PEACE. The two critical donors who support programmes in Myanmar are UNOPS-LIFT, and Community Partners International (CPI) which is financed by USAID's LEARN programme. Other funding endeavours are being sought out with WFP.

TBC greatly values the support from non-governmental organisations, which make up 1% of the total portfolio. These funds help run Thailand’s camp programmes and only include KIA. Long time supporter, Caritas-Australia, have informed TBC that they will not continue support after June. Caritas generally covers 33% of the annual nutrition budget in the camps, so TBC will need to see further funding for this financial gap.

Approximately THB 128M has been actualised income to support the emergency response effort. Key contributors to date include Australia-DFAT (17M), New Zealand- MFAT (THB 44M), FCDO (31M), (and UNOPS-NEXUS via DCA (THB 34M).



Expenditure

Expenditure in the first half of 2024 totalled THB 538M, or 59% out of the THB 920M projection. The expenditures align with TBC budgets expectation so far and the urgency of deploying funds for the ongoing emergency. Any unspent balances will carry over to 2025, where eligible.

We especially note that TBC funding for the Thailand influx emergency, will dry up in August 2024. TBC urges donor to consider helping to support this important endeavour.

Figure 3: Expenditures by Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objectives	2024 Actual	2024 Budget	Variance
1. Prioritise the Humanitarian Imperative:	279,000,000	586,000,000	48%
Emergency Myanmar	110,000,000	63,000,000	175%
Emergency Thailand	34,000,000	30,000,000	110%
2. Reinforce Resilience and Recovery	18,000,000	31,000,000	59%
3. Promote Protection and Safer Futures	24,000,000	57,000,000	42%
4. Strengthen Local Governance	74,000,000	153,000,000	46%
Emergency Thailand	539,000,000	920,000,000	59%
Grand Total USD	16,000,000	27,000,000	-

Highlights:

- The FC Rations is TBC’s largest expense, accounting for 36% of this year’s budget. At the beginning of the year, we budgeted for a population of 92,000 refugees in the camps. However, recent survey conducted in June reveals that the population has surged to over 100,000 people. Current camp population estimates reach as much as 116,000 people. The USA-PRM grant typically is enough to cover the full FC and cooking fuel needs of the camps, however, year three’s budget is only able to finance 90% of the expected need.
- Shelter budget exceeded the available amount by 13%. This is attributed to the additional funding provided by Peace Japan to construct new shelters.
- TBC will continue to respond to the emergency response as funds are raised. These funds are typically utilised at a much faster rate compared to the funds used for normal operations and management in the camps.
- Thailand Emergency Response funds will essentially dry up in August, signalling a strong concern and need for more funding, as the influx into Thailand continues.
- Myanmar programme makes up approximately 28% of TBC’s overall budget compared to 30% last year. The funding supports various activities aimed at bringing as much stability to the communities navigating their lives amidst the ongoing crisis.

All the additional funding to support the emergency fall within the Humanitarian Need Objective. They cover primarily food assistance, natural disasters within the camps, and emergencies caused by the Myanmar crisis.

OTHER FINANCE RELATED NEWS

TBC’s audited 2023 Financial Statements and TAR have been issued with an “unqualified” opinion by KPMG and is available on the website or upon request. TBC intends to continue using KPMG services for 2024.

In 2024, TBC will perform an external assessment of its current finance system and software to determine whether there are more appropriate solutions available for its future.

Financial Outlook 2025

TBC will consider the following variables as it plans the operational budget for 2025:

1. Population potential of 116,000 refugees by the start of the year.
2. Food card values and cooking fuel prices will include a 4% inflation factor and remain the largest expenditure item. It is anticipated that charcoal prices could increase another 10% in 2025, due to increasing production costs. TBC is also considering alternative cooking fuel methods.

3. TBC will assume similar funding levels from all current donors to minimally assure adequate coverage of costs to support the nine refugee camps along the border.
4. TBC will seek additional funding for the financial gap of 10% for FC and cooking fuel.
5. FX rate fluctuations will remain a significant factor impacting TBC's budget and cash flow management.
6. In response to the growing workload and rising demands from donors, TBC has taken steps to recruit a new high-level director position.
7. TBC is to invest in an assessment of its financial systems and accounting software.
8. TBC will remain nimble enough to support emergencies as funding becomes available.

TBC would like to thank its Donors and Members for their generous contributions and support



Livelihoods and Food Security Fund



managed by UNOPS



- This publication has been funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- The views expressed in this publication are the author's alone and are not necessarily the views of the Australian Government.
- Funding provided by the United States Government.
- The views expressed by the author(s) do not necessarily reflect those of IRC or PRM.