

FIFA CLUB LICENSING

# HANDBOOK



**FIFA**<sup>®</sup>

## **Fédération Internationale de Football Association**

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## Acronyms and definitions

<b>CL</b>	Club licensing
<b>Handbook</b>	FIFA Club Licensing Handbook
<b>Licence applicant</b>	Legal entity that is fully and solely responsible for the football team participating in the national and international club competitions and that applies for a licence
<b>MA</b>	FIFA member association
<b>Minimum criteria</b>	Criteria to be fulfilled by a licence applicant in order to be granted a licence

## Background information

In October 2016, FIFA unveiled FIFA 2.0, establishing the path forward for FIFA as the steward of global football, and communicating the organisation's vision: *promote the game of football, protect its integrity, and bring the game to all.*

FIFA will achieve this vision by achieving three key objectives: growing the game; enhancing the experience; and building a stronger institution.

Central to fulfilling the objective of growing the game is the further professionalisation of club football around the world.

FIFA is leading these efforts with the recent creation of the Professional Football Department as part of a new approach to better engage with football stakeholders such as clubs, leagues and players.

The global implementation of club licensing requires a mentality of growing the game through the professionalisation of club football, which will help confederations and MAs to improve the standards within the football community and to safeguard the credibility and integrity of club competitions, thereby promoting sporting values, principles of fair play and transparency in club finances and club ownership.

This Club Licensing Handbook serves as an effective tool for the implementation of club licensing and is part of FIFA repositioning club licensing from a regulatory instrument to a flexible and principle-based vehicle for the professionalisation of club football.

# 1 Introduction to the FIFA Club Licensing Handbook

## 1.1 What is the Handbook?

The FIFA Club Licensing Handbook (hereinafter: “Handbook”) is a reference document designed to be an easy-to-read, practical guide to club licensing. The Handbook supplements the FIFA CL requirements and principles. It is intended as a step-by-step guide for MAs as they establish their own national club licensing system and national CL regulations.

The Handbook reflects the new approach to club licensing that has been adopted by FIFA in close collaboration with the confederations.

The Handbook has been drafted particularly for MAs with limited or no experience in the implementation of FIFA Club Licensing. Section Two provides a step-by-step guide to developing and implementing a national club licensing system. It sets out the one-time actions that an MA will typically need to take, as well as what will need to be done on a seasonal basis under the national CL regulations. Section 3 presents an array of examples from MAs around the world as they have established their own systems.

## 1.2 A summary of the recommended approach

MAs are recommended to approach the establishment and implementation of their national club licensing system with a positive and open attitude, and with the following as strongly recommended guidelines:

### “Do”

- Implement a national club licensing system as a fundamental football development tool and to achieve the strategic plan of the MA
- Engage in open communications and cooperation with all stakeholders at every stage of the development of the national club licensing system
- Ensure that the criteria properly reflect wider social, economic and political contexts
- Adopt criteria and timelines that create the best possible prospect of sustainable, long-term compliance with the highest possible standards and on a cost-effective basis
- Consider the option of application to leagues other than the top men’s division, for instance the men’s second division and the women’s league
- Consider the progressive implementation of higher standards over time

- Ensure open and clear communication with clubs throughout the planning and implementation phases, and create educational seminars with all relevant club personnel
- Ensure equal treatment of clubs and effective compliance with criteria
- Ensure that the members of the First Instance Body and Appeals Body are independent, neutral and competent

**“Do not”**

- Copy and paste from any confederation or MA CL regulations
- Ignore local circumstances or the feasibility of implementation
- Fail to provide support for clubs on club licensing implementation
- Fail to communicate regularly with clubs on club licensing implementation
- Fail to consider the possibility of a wider application of the club licensing system
- Refrain from updating the criteria each season
- Fail to comply with the core process of the club licensing system
- Appoint First Instance Body or Appeals Body members who are on another MA, league or club body, represent a club, or lack knowledge and competency in club football
- Seek to interfere in the decision-making of independent bodies



## 2 Implementing a national club licensing system

### 2.1 Step-by-step guide to planning, establishing and implementing a national club licensing system

MAs should see the establishment of a national club licensing system as a two-stage process, consisting of “one-time protocols” to establish the system and “seasonal protocols” that are necessary for an effective system to operate each competition season.

MAs with experience in the implementation of the club licensing system for confederation and/or national competitions may not need to adopt some “one-time protocols” as they will already be in place. However, these should be reviewed by each MA to ensure that all aspects of the updated FIFA CL requirements and principles are addressed.

### 2.2 “One-time protocols” (i.e. actions to plan and establish the national CL regulations)

#### 2.2.1 Recognition of the club licensing system by the MA’s executive committee and adoption of club licensing into the MA’s statutes

Club licensing is a significant step, and as such it will need to be adopted into the MA’s statutes by the MA’s congress. It is recommended that this amendment to the statutes of the MA be an enabling provision, with the MA’s executive committee to address the topic in detail.

The enabling provision in the MA statutes is crucial to ensure that there is a sound legal basis for the club licensing system so that it is legally binding on all clubs. The relevant provisions need to be drafted by a legal professional. A generic example of possible wording is as follows:

“The Executive Committee of XX [MA’s name] will draft regulations for a club licensing system governing the participation of clubs in the competitions of XX [confederation’s name] and XX [MA’s name], in compliance with the minimum requirements of the club licensing system as set up by XX [confederation’s name] and in conformity with the FIFA CL requirements and principles. In particular, the Club Licensing Regulations of XX [MA’s name] will include the minimum criteria that clubs must meet in order to be eligible to take part in the competitions of XX [confederation’s name] and XX [MA’s name], as well as the procedure for granting licences to clubs.”

### 2.2.2 Developing an underpinning strategy for the national system

An effective national club licensing system is an important tool to help an MA achieve its strategic plans and priorities. The MA's executive committee should therefore agree on an underpinning strategy and objectives for its national club licensing system at the earliest possible stage.

As the club licensing system covers many aspects of football, it is strongly recommended that it be developed for the executive committee through cross-departmental brainstorming sessions. For instance, this could involve a review and discussion led by the general secretary with the heads of various departments, including but not limited to leagues/competitions, technical, marketing, media/communications, finance, legal, etc.

While respecting the clear division of labour and the principle of delegation, the president should also be consulted on the general direction of the strategy at this early planning stage.

An important question to address is "which clubs should be included?" An MA will need to look at the system for the confederation's top-tier competition, and consider the relationship between any criteria applicable to their clubs through the confederation system and the criteria to be adopted in the national CL regulations. MAs should look to avoid creating unnecessary duplication of effort within clubs; using confederation processes and information should be considered.

It is strongly recommended that MAs do not see club licensing as applicable to only the top-tier league or to only professional clubs. The national CL regulations could apply in some form to other leagues, such as the men's second division, youth leagues, the women's league, futsal competitions, and beach soccer competitions. This would help to further advance the MA's strategy and promote high standards within such competitions. It could also be part of a coordinated approach to promote higher standards in semi-professional and/or amateur leagues in various aspects, both on and off the pitch.

### 2.2.3 Setting up decision-making bodies

As stated in the FIFA CL requirements and principles, the establishment of two decision-making bodies, the First Instance Body and the Appeals Body, is mandatory. These decision-making bodies must be independent institutions in their own right, and also independent from each other. The separation of powers between the two bodies is vital.

## **First Instance Body**

The primary role of the First Instance Body is to approve or reject applications from clubs based on the documentation submitted by the relevant deadlines.

The members of the First Instance Body must not be associated with or connected to any football club in the MA in order to ensure that the body is independent, transparent and accountable. Therefore, no member of the First Instance Body may belong simultaneously to any another statutory judicial body of the licensor, and all members must act impartially in the discharge of their duties.

The FIFA Club Licensing Programme has been designed to establish standards for certain key areas of club football development and governance, so-called mandatory criteria, which in general can be divided into five club licensing areas (see table in section 3.2 below).

Ideally, all members of the First Instance Body should have relevant knowledge of professional football, including one or more areas of criteria, in order to be able to efficiently evaluate all licence applications. The appointment of external specialists (for instance a lawyer, an accountant/auditor, an architect) should be considered in order to ensure that the committee is well-balanced.

All First Instance Body members need to be elected or appointed by the MA's executive committee. If there is already a body that can act as the First Instance Body, it may do so as long as the above requirements are met.

## **Appeals Body**

The primary role of the Appeals Body is to pass a decision on any appeal lodged by a club following a First Instance Body decision. The Appeals Body must be comprised of members who are neither associated with nor connected to any football club in the MA or any other football organisation, such as a league where there could be any real or perceived conflict of interest, in order to ensure that the body is transparent, independent and accountable.

As with the First Instance Body, the composition of the Appeals Body needs to include qualified external specialists with knowledge of club football and the CL criteria to ensure that the committee is well balanced.

All members of the Appeals Body are elected or appointed by the MA's executive committee. If an equivalent body is already in place (such as the MA's appeals body for other matters under the MA's statutes), it may also act as the Appeals Body for club licensing as long as the above requirements are met.

#### **2.2.4 Appointing a club licensing manager**

One of the MA's initial tasks when addressing club licensing is to appoint a dedicated club licensing manager (CL manager). Within the club licensing system, the CL manager will be responsible for all administrative matters related to the national club licensing system. Ideally, the CL manager should be a full-time employee of the MA who can dedicate his time and resources to the job and offer on-site assistance to the MA and clubs, although it should be understood that this may be restricted by the MA's financial capabilities.

It is crucial for the CL manager to be involved in the process from the very start.

The CL manager will be the primary point of contact between the MA and all clubs that are applying for licences. The CL manager will be responsible for all official communications with the clubs as well as for collecting and organising the documents submitted by clubs as part of their applications for the required licences.

The CL manager will also be the primary point of contact with FIFA and the confederation on club licensing matters.

In order to ensure that all documents meet the standard requirements of the national CL regulations, the CL manager needs to liaise throughout the season with all clubs participating in the official competitions that fall under the scope of applicability of CL.

#### **2.2.5 Drafting the national club licensing regulations**

In drafting the national CL regulations, the two key elements to consider are the "system" and the "criteria". The system consists of the core processes and the two specific bodies that need to be established. The criteria are the detailed content and standards. The national CL regulations need to ensure that the minimum criteria set by the confederation regulations are met at national level. The MA is strongly encouraged to add its own criteria or to consider raising the minimum requirements under confederation regulations at national level in order to achieve the strategic priorities within its national context.

At the same time, whilst drafting the national CL regulations (if the league is a separate entity), careful consideration must be paid to deciding whether the MA will be the licensor or whether this responsibility will be delegated to an affiliated league.

### **2.2.6 Setting deadlines for implementing each step**

Setting credible deadlines and announcing them to all clubs and stakeholders is an equally important part of the system. The MA has to provide clubs with sufficient time to enable them to meet the criteria in the national CL regulations.

Involving the clubs in the establishment of the system and criteria will help greatly in achieving successful implementation. It is important to understand the difference between criteria that are one-off or initial season criteria and those criteria that are seasonal, as well as those criteria where standards can be developed to higher levels over time.

FIFA, given its role as a service provider, can assist by providing specific templates to highlight the required club licensing timelines to ensure that all necessary deadlines and milestones can be met.

## **2.3 “Seasonal protocols” (i.e. processes that are required annually, applicable for every season)**

### **2.3.1 Announcing the implementation of a national club licensing system to clubs for the season**

Clubs must be informed in writing about the implementation of a national club licensing system. This correspondence shall clarify the objectives and deadlines for all clubs applying for licences. Application forms and other toolkits must also be prepared to help clubs provide the required documentation.

The MA is responsible for establishing deadlines for the processes/and or events that are set out below. It is highly recommended that the MA publish the CL regulations, deadlines and additional information on its website.

### **2.3.2 Organising workshops for clubs to explain the details of the system and relevant timelines**

To supplement the announcement via written correspondence, it is highly recommended that workshops be organised so that the MA can inform the clubs about the details of the system and specific timelines. Additionally, such workshops help to strengthen the communications between the MA and the licence applicants, which is fundamental to the success of the club licensing system as a whole. As stated above, workshops should ideally be a continuation of the clubs' involvement in the creation of the system and the criteria.

### **2.3.3 On-going communication with and assistance to clubs**

Whether it is in pre-season or during the season itself, MAs and clubs must constantly engage in on-going communication for the benefit of both parties.

Communication is imperative to avoid any unnecessary conflicts that may arise between an MA and clubs. The CL manager has an essential role to play here in maintaining such communications.

### **2.3.4 Submission of an application for a national club licence**

Written applications for a national club licence must be submitted by the established deadline and accompanied by all necessary documents.

### **2.3.5 Decision by the First Instance Body**

The First Instance Body must decide whether to grant a licence to an applicant on the basis of the documents provided and in accordance with the provisions of the national CL regulations applicable at the time of the submission deadline.

The First Instance Body must make information available to all members in good time so that they can discuss and evaluate each club's licence application at the meeting. A vote will be taken to decide whether each club's application is approved or rejected, with a simple majority required in order to reach a decision. Additionally, the First Instance Body may seek clarification and communicate with the CL manager to request further documentation and information in relation to any submission.

### **2.3.6 Communicating the licence approval or rejection**

All licence decisions taken by the First Instance Body must be communicated formally and in writing within the designated timeframe. If an application is rejected, the reasons must be clearly set out by the First Instance Body in its meeting minutes and communicated to the club.

### **2.3.7 Launching an appeal**

If a club's application is rejected by the First Instance Body, the club has the right to submit an appeal to the Appeals Body by the specified deadline. The club must submit its appeal in writing, stating the reason(s) for its appeal to the MA.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the CL manager must process it as soon as possible. The CL manager will inform the club whether its request for an Appeals Body decision has been granted and the date by which the Appeals Body will reach a decision. The appeal must be heard if the club has set out valid reasons in accordance with the national CL regulations. An appeal may be made on the basis that the First Instance Body failed to apply the criteria correctly or did not understand the facts as given. An appeal may not be made on the basis of new or additional information, for instance that the club has met the criteria since the First Instance Body process.

### **2.3.8 Final decision by Appeals Body**

The Appeals Body shall take its decision based solely on the documents and evidence submitted to the First Instance Body, which includes the documents submitted by the club and the First Instance Body's initial reasons for rejecting the application. At this stage, any new documents and/or evidence submitted to the Appeals Body shall not be taken into account in the deliberations over the appeal. The Appeals Body shall review the documents and evidence submitted by the licence applicant to the licensor prior to the initial deadline and the First Instance Body's reasoning for rejecting the application. In addition, the Appeals Body might request additional information from the licence applicant or the First Instance Body by a certain deadline to be taken into account in the deliberations over the appeal.

A vote shall be taken to determine whether the club's application for a licence shall be approved or rejected. A simple majority is required to reach a decision. The Appeals Body's decision is final. The decision must be recorded in the minutes and communicated to the club.

## 3 Annexe

### 3.1 Examples of strategies and criteria: FIFA Club Licensing Criteria Library

The FIFA Club Licensing Criteria Library is a collection of criterion examples derived from various national CL regulations adopted by MAs. MAs may consult this library for help with developing their own national CL regulations, selecting the necessary criteria to achieve their strategy.

### 3.2 Examples of club licensing implementation strategies

Set out below are a sample of approaches adopted by various MAs.

#### 3.2.1 Criteria to achieve an MA's development strategy through a progressive implementation timeline

MA [X] used its club licensing system to achieve a set of strategically prioritised goals over a period of years by implementing a progressive (i.e. step-by-step) approach to criteria and standards.

#### Youth development

MA [X]'s strategic plan prioritised youth development and in particular youth-team players moving into first-team squads. Consequently, in the first year of the club licensing system, priority was placed on developing and professionalising youth teams. Coherent criteria were also established for the years 2018 and 2019.

- 2017: Clubs required to have youth teams (i.e. U-17 and U-15 teams)
- 2018: Clubs required to have a written youth development programme approved by the MA
- 2019: A minimum numbers of players from youth teams to be in the first team



## Infrastructure

Progressive implementation was not solely limited to youth team development. This approach was also applied to “infrastructure”. In this regard, the availability of a stadium and a training facility was mandatory for the first year (i.e. 2017), while minimum standards for the stadium and training facility were mandatory for the second year (i.e. 2018).

2017: Availability of a stadium and a training facility

2018: Minimum standards for the stadium and training facility

## Financial

MA [X] also drafted financial criteria based on a thorough consideration of their clubs’ financial position and an assessment of what was needed and achievable in order to create sustainability. Fundamental elements, such as “submission of financial statements” and “no overdue payables” were strictly mandatory from the first year (i.e. 2017), while other detailed and technical financial criteria, such as provisions on “acceptable deviation”, “acceptable aggregated deviation”, and “compliance with the operating balance requirement”, were recommended on the basis that these would later become mandatory.

For 2019, accumulation of losses (operating deficit) or surplus (operating surplus) for the 2014-2018 period will also be assessed as part of the “monitoring period” criterion.

- 2017: Financial statements  
No past due debts  
Annual income tax return and social security bond guaranteeing payment to players
- 2018: Financial statements  
Legal structure of applicant club  
Financial management control  
Result of football activities  
Acceptable deviation  
Accumulated result of football activities  
Acceptable aggregated deviation  
Operating balance information  
Compliance with operating balance requirement  
Constraints to compliance with operating balance
- 2019: Monitoring period

An overview of this progressive approach is outlined in the table below, which illustrates how specific criteria can be developed over time. Details of each criterion can be reviewed in the Club Licensing Criteria Library.

Category	Criterion	2017	2018	2019
Sporting	Participation in junior and minor matches			×
	Medical care for players	×		
	Written contract with professional players	×		
	Youth development programme		×	
	Registration of players		×	
	Laws of the Game and referees		×	
	Racial equality policy		×	
	Team structure of professional players			×
Infrastructure	Availability of a stadium	×		
	Training facilities	×		
	Minimum quality standards of the stadium		×	×
	Minimum quality standards for training facilities		×	×
Administration and personnel	Doctor	×		
	Club general management	×		
	Finance manager	×		
	First-team coach	×		
	First-team assistant coach	×		
	Manager for youth development programme	×		
	Junior and minor team coaches	×		
	Offices and furniture		×	
	Physiotherapist		×	
	Nutritionist		×	
	Media and PR manager		×	
	Graduates in physical education		×	
	Security officer		×	
	Security arrangements for home matches		×	
	Fan liaison officer		×	
	Communication of changes in management and administration staff		×	
Training programmes and social responsibility		×		

Category	Criterion	2017	2018	2019
Legal	Submission to licensing system	×		
	Copy of by-laws, registry entry and registration of board of directors	×		
	Ownership statement and club control		×	
	Registration of internal regulatory policy		×	
Financial	Financial statements	×		
	No past due debts	×		
	Annual income tax return and social security	×		
	Bond guaranteeing payments to players	×		
	Legal structure of applicant club		×	
	Financial management control		×	
	Result of football activities		×	
	Acceptable deviation		×	
	Accumulated result of football activities		×	
	Acceptable aggregated deviation		×	
	Operating balance information		×	
	Compliance with operating balance requirement		×	
	Constraints to compliance with operating balance		×	
	Monitoring period			×

### 3.2.2 Example of an MA adopting a system based on “B criteria” with a points system

MA [Y] established its national CL regulations with a points system designed to reflect the diverse background of clubs in the country and to provide the MA with a realistic enforcement tool. This system included a set of “A criteria”, which were compulsory, and a set of “B criteria”, which licence applicants had to aim to meet. If certain “B criteria” were not completely fulfilled, the licence applicant was still entitled to receive a valid licence, but was subject to either sanctions or ordered to meet the criteria by a specified date.

Under the points system, meeting the “B criteria” enabled licence applicants to attain a minimum aggregate percentage score, as shown in the table below:

a) Green range		70% to 100%
b) Yellow range		56% to 69%
c) Purple range		46% to 55%
d) Red range		0% to 45%

### **Green range**

Licence issued without conditions.

### **Yellow range**

Provisional licence issued, with specific items to be fulfilled before the beginning of the second half of the season. In the event of failure at this stage, the applicant club can only apply for a licence to play in the next lower division for the subsequent season.

### **Purple range**

Club required to address specific criteria within timelines set by the licensor prior to the First Instance Body considering the application. If not achieved, the licence application will be rejected.

### **Red range**

Licence not granted, and the club may only apply for the next lower division for the subsequent season.

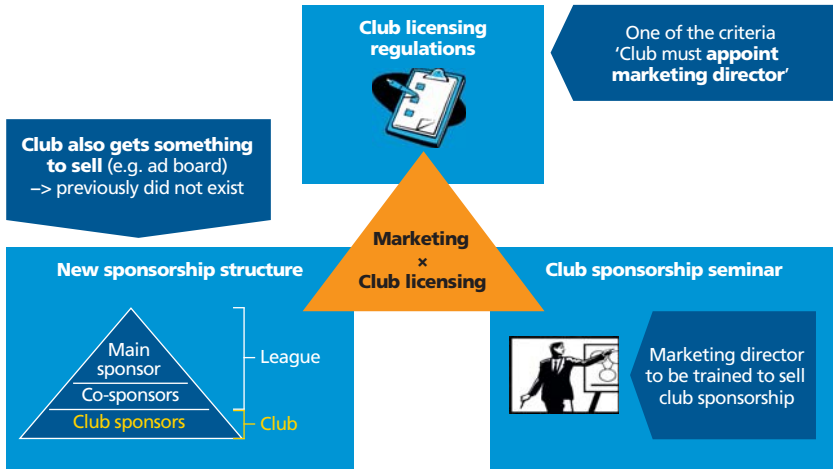
The table below outlines the points awarded for each criterion under this MA's points system.

For an extensive explanation of each criterion, please refer to the Club Licensing Criteria Library.

Category	Criterion	Points
Finance (20%)	Realisable budget	25
	Naming of club-certified public auditors	30
	Books (accounts) of previous season	30
	Use of club bank account	20
	Financial accounting policies	25
	Ratio of club income to club expenditure	40
	Bank balance at time of application	30
	Indebtedness	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>
Sporting (28%)	Medical	80
	Youth programmes	80
	Team	120
	<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>
Infrastructure (20%)	Stadium	140
	Training ground	60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>
Administration and Personnel (17%)	Personnel	120
	Fans development plan	30
	Training for staff	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>
Legal (20%)	Separation of powers	100
	Professional club organigram	50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	

### 3.2.3 Promoting marketing and commercial development

MA [Z] used the club licensing system to systematically develop and strengthen its marketing strategy in a bid to increase the commercial value of its top-tier league.



To achieve this, MA [Z] encouraged clubs to employ dedicated marketing personnel through the club licensing system.

Clubs were initially recommended to appoint a marketing/commercial director (a part-time director was acceptable) to oversee its commercial and marketing interests. This later became a mandatory criterion, with the MA providing its assistance in publicising the employment opportunities through advertisements in local newspapers. The MA was able to help scope the specific job description.

In coordination with the above, the sponsorship rights licensing structure was altered to enable clubs to manage part of the commercial rights, which had previously been strictly managed and sold by the MA. As a result of this structural change, clubs were equipped with the capacity to drive sales and were able to attract sponsors on their own.

Beyond the assistance provided by the MA, the confederation assisted by organising a seminar for all club marketing/commercial directors.

### 3.2.4 Promoting club identity and fan engagement

MA [P] used the club licensing system to establish, evolve and expand club identity.



For MA [P], the league consisted of department teams, which were teams of public organisations or state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and in most cases, their team names and mascots represented the names of the public organisations and SOEs (i.e. an electricity company, the air force, etc.). The league could not generate any commercial revenue through fan engagement, and it could not create sponsorships.

The MA adopted a strategy to rebrand the league and the clubs, to increase commercial value, and in the long run to attract a larger fan base. As a part of the league’s re-branding task, all clubs were obliged to “give their club an identity”, and this was included as one of MA [P]’s unique criteria. The concept and rationale were defined as follows:

#### Club identity

All clubs participating in MA [P]’s elite league had to give themselves a clear identity. Fans and interested supporters were then able to associate themselves with a club in their vicinity, city or province. In the long term, it was hoped that emotional affiliations and shared experiences would create loyal supporters. A primary way to distinguish a club’s identity would be to re-brand and make changes to its name, logo and club colours. The clubs had to create an overall strategy to create a new identity, built on the club’s history and the identity

of the city or regional community. The club colours had to be designed to be emotionally engaging, and their application to club merchandise and branding had to be shown as part of the overall plan.

The clubs also had to show active engagement with fans through a variety of social media platforms. The clubs also had to show how they would update, present and keep the fans informed on the activities of the club on matchdays and non-matchdays. The clubs also had to have a continuously updated communications plan as well as an event plan for managing relations with their fans.

### 3.2.5 Personnel capacity-building and development programmes

MA [Q] realised the need to increase the capacity of its personnel through the organisation of a seminar co-hosted by FIFA and the MA. Conducting effective seminars targeted at the right personnel was deemed to be an important factor in ensuring that participants were able to fully engage with each other and exchange experiences.

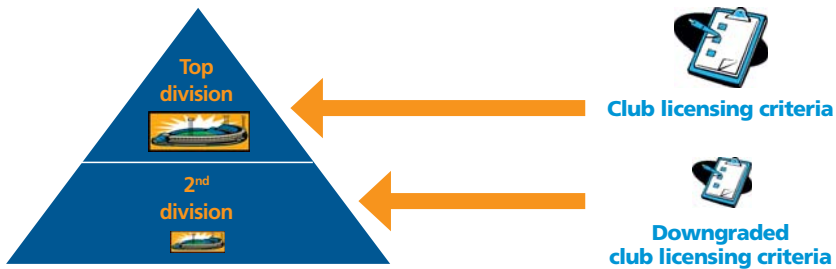
The criteria for participation in the organised workshops were defined as follows:

<b>Clubs in top division (mandatory)</b>	The club must ensure that a first-team and a youth-team coach attend a FIFA 11+ injury prevention workshop.
<b>Clubs in top division (recommended)</b>	All club coaches (including contracted community coaches) must attend a FIFA 11+ injury prevention workshop.
<b>Clubs in 2<sup>nd</sup> division</b>	The head coach must attend a FIFA 11+ injury prevention workshop.

### 3.2.6 Promotion of higher standards in 2<sup>nd</sup> division/lower divisions

Certain MAs have chosen to apply club licensing to their second-tier league. This enables clubs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> division to be able to prepare for criteria for the top division in the event of them securing promotion, but this also strengthens the organisation of the lower league.





MA [R] used the club licensing system for all of its five divisions, including its elite women's league. The club licensing criteria were strictly implemented, with the CL manager providing necessary assistance to all divisions prior to the implementation.

Additional examples of criteria for the top division and 2<sup>nd</sup> division can be found in the Club Licensing Criteria Library.

### 3.2.7 Club licensing to promote women's football

MA [M] also applied club licensing to promote and further enhance women's football. The MA developed five levels of criteria to progressively implement club licensing and to enable clubs to decide which level they wanted to be at by a given year. As a result, clubs were then encouraged to adopt their own strategy.



The categories of criteria were: organisation, economy, marketing and communications, sporting, and youth development. The criteria for each category were defined as follows:

## Organisation

Level	Criteria
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation shall have at least 3 full-time employees.</li> <li>• The club shall have job descriptions defining tasks and responsibilities.</li> </ul>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation shall have at least 3-4 full-time employees.</li> <li>• The club shall have job descriptions defining tasks and responsibilities.</li> </ul>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation shall have at least 6 full-time employees.</li> <li>• The club shall have job descriptions defining tasks and responsibilities.</li> <li>• The club shall have a qualified election committee that is able to present a competent and stable board in order to avoid frequent changes of board members.</li> </ul>
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation shall have a minimum of 7 full-time employees.</li> <li>• The club shall have job descriptions defining tasks and responsibilities.</li> <li>• The club shall have a qualified election committee able to present a competent and stable board in order to avoid frequent changes of board members.</li> </ul>
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organisation shall have at least 7-8 full-time employees.</li> <li>• The club shall have job descriptions defining tasks and responsibilities.</li> <li>• The club shall have a qualified election committee able to present a competent and stable board in order to avoid frequent changes of board members.</li> </ul>

## Economy

Level	Criteria
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a positive equity as at 31 December.</li> <li>• The club shall have a turnover of not less than USD 350,000.</li> <li>• Central funding received shall not exceed 20% of the club's turnover.</li> <li>• Ticket sales shall correspond to at least 6% of the total revenue.</li> <li>• Match attendance shall be at least 300 persons.</li> </ul>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a positive equity as at 31 December.</li> <li>• The club shall have a turnover of not less than USD 575,000.</li> <li>• Central funding received shall not exceed 20% of the club's turnover.</li> <li>• Ticket sales shall correspond to at least 6% of the total revenue.</li> <li>• Match attendance shall be at least 500 persons.</li> </ul>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a positive equity as at 31 December.</li> <li>• The club shall have a turnover of not less than USD 925,000.</li> <li>• Central funding received shall not exceed 20% of the club's turnover.</li> <li>• Ticket sales shall correspond to at least 10% of the total revenue.</li> <li>• Match attendance shall be at least 1,000 persons.</li> </ul>

Level	Criteria
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a stable equity of at least USD 25,000 as at 31 December for two consecutive years.</li> <li>• The club shall have a turnover of not less than USD 1,400,000.</li> <li>• Central funding received shall not exceed 15% of the club's turnover.</li> <li>• Ticket sales shall correspond to at least 10% of the total revenue.</li> <li>• Match attendance shall be at least 1,200 persons.</li> </ul>
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a stable equity of at least USD 60,000 as at 31 December for three consecutive years.</li> <li>• The club shall have a turnover of not less than USD 2,250,000.</li> <li>• Central funding received shall not exceed 10% of the club's turnover.</li> <li>• Ticket sales shall correspond to at least 10% of the total revenue.</li> <li>• Match attendance shall be at least 1,500 persons.</li> </ul>

## Marketing and communication

Level	Criteria
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a designated board member or a general manager with clear responsibility for marketing and communications.</li> <li>• The club shall meet the conditions listed in central agreements and contracts.</li> <li>• The club shall have a continuously updated website and shall be active on at least two (2) social media channels.</li> <li>• The club shall have a communication plan.</li> </ul>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a part-time marketing manager or a general manager with clear responsibility for marketing and communications.</li> <li>• The club shall meet the conditions listed in central agreements and contracts.</li> <li>• The club shall have a continuously updated website and shall be active on at least two (2) social media channels.</li> <li>• The club shall have a communication plan.</li> <li>• The club shall have a plan for long-term sponsorship work.</li> </ul>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall meet the conditions listed in central agreements and contracts.</li> <li>• The club shall have a continuously updated website and shall be active on at least three (3) social media channels.</li> <li>• The club shall have a communication plan as well as an event plan.</li> </ul>
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a plan for long-term sponsorship work.</li> <li>• The club shall meet the conditions listed in central agreements and contracts.</li> <li>• The club shall have a continuously updated website and shall be active on at least three (3) social media channels.</li> <li>• The club shall have a communication plan as well as an event plan.</li> <li>• The club shall have a plan for long-term sponsorship work.</li> </ul>

Level	Criteria
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="266 180 980 236">• The club shall meet the conditions listed in central agreements and contracts.</li><li data-bbox="266 236 980 292">• The club shall have a continuously updated website and shall be active on at least four (4) social media channels.</li><li data-bbox="266 292 980 320">• The club shall have a communication plan as well as an event plan.</li><li data-bbox="266 320 980 347">• The club shall have a plan for long-term sponsorship work.</li></ul>

## Sporting

Level	Criteria
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall employ a head coach who has at least started his/her "A" licence coach education.</li> <li>• The club shall have players in good physical condition in order to be able to play at a high tempo.</li> <li>• The club shall continuously aim to improve the players' attitude to a long-term commitment to their football career by creating a good development environment in the club.</li> </ul>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall employ a head coach who has started or completed his/her "A" licence coach education.</li> <li>• The club shall have players in good physical condition in order to be able to play at a high tempo.</li> <li>• The club shall continuously aim to improve the players' attitude to a long-term commitment to their football career by creating a good development environment in the club.</li> </ul>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall employ a head coach who has completed his/her "A" licence coach education.</li> <li>• The club shall have players in good physical condition in order to be able to play at a high tempo.</li> <li>• The club shall continuously aim to improve the players' attitude to a long-term commitment to football and also support them in planning for their post-football career.</li> </ul>
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall employ a head coach who has started or completed his/her PRO licence coach education.</li> <li>• The club shall have players in good physical condition in order to be able to play at a high tempo.</li> <li>• The club shall continuously aim to improve the players' attitude to a long-term commitment to football and also support them in planning for their post-football career.</li> </ul>
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall employ a head coach who has started or completed his/her PRO licence coach education.</li> <li>• The club shall have world-class players in their starting line-up.</li> <li>• The club shall continuously aim to improve the players' attitude to a long-term commitment to football and also support them in planning for their post-football career.</li> </ul>

## Youth development

Level	Criteria
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a talent development plan and a competitive U-19 team.</li> <li>• The club shall employ at least one part-time talent/U-19 coach who has at least started his/her "A" licence coach education (and by extension started or completed Elite Youth).</li> <li>• The club shall offer a stimulating match environment for young players.</li> </ul>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a good talent development plan and a competitive U-19 team.</li> <li>• The club shall employ at least one part-time talent/U-19 coach who has at least started his/her "A" licence coach education (and by extension started or completed Elite Youth).</li> <li>• The club shall offer a stimulating match environment for young players.</li> </ul>
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a good talent development plan and a competitive U-19 team.</li> <li>• The club shall employ at least one part-time talent/U-19 coach who has at least started his/her "A" licence coach education (and by extension started or completed Elite Youth).</li> <li>• The club shall offer a stimulating match environment for young players.</li> </ul>
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a high-quality talent development plan and a competitive U-19 team.</li> <li>• The club shall employ at least one full-time talent/U-19 coach who has at least started his/her "A" licence coach education (and by extension started or completed Elite Youth).</li> <li>• The club shall offer a stimulating match environment for young players.</li> </ul>
Level 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The club shall have a high-quality player development plan and a competitive U-19 team (among the top 3).</li> <li>• The club shall employ at least one full-time talent/U-19 coach who has at least started his/her "A" licence coach education (and by extension started or completed Elite Youth).</li> <li>• The club shall offer a stimulating match environment for young players.</li> </ul>

### 3.2.8 Monetary incentives to support youth development programmes

As part of its youth development programme, MA [N] launched a monetary incentive scheme, which allowed clubs to receive financial support to improve and professionalise the status of their youth teams. The MA contributed up to USD xx,xxx to each club in the project, based on the condition that the lump sum was used to improve the infrastructure and related facilities used by the youth teams.

Interested clubs were obliged to submit a project plan, which had to include details of how the club would establish the necessary infrastructure and information on the contracts of technical and support staff (i.e. coaches, physiotherapists, doctors, nutritionists, physical trainers, and management/administrative staff) for the youth teams.











