

**FIFA  
GUIDE  
TO CLUB  
LICENSING  
IN WOMEN'S  
FOOTBALL**

**FIFA**<sup>®</sup>



## FOREWORD

At FIFA, accelerating the growth of women's football is one of the top priorities in our blueprint to make football truly global. To do so, we have established four pillars aimed at reforming competitions, increasing the commercial value, modernising development programmes, and enhancing professionalisation.

Ahead of the first-ever 32-team FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand in 2023, through our dedicated Women's Football Division and thanks to record levels of investment, FIFA has recently launched various projects aimed at strengthening the current competitions, increasing participation, raising awareness and impact, implementing new and specific development programmes, and propelling the professionalisation of the women's game forward, both on and off the pitch. This has led to steady progress and, thanks to the efforts at all levels – whether by confederations, member associations, leagues, clubs, players, or the many other stakeholders of the game – the future of women's football is certainly bright and strong, and we will all have a part to play as we continue along this path towards ever-greater heights.

It is in this spirit that we have created this comprehensive, yet practical guide to contribute towards the further development and professionalisation of the women's game at club level. Incorporating the club licensing system as a development tool has been an important step in the process of raising the standards of clubs and leagues all around the world and boosting the development of the women's game. Clubs are the foundation of our game and, by creating specific tools and programmes to support the unique women's football environment, we aim to enhance the player pathways for women and girls all over the world. This guide offers a framework to establish solid, customised foundations in the club landscape for long-term growth and stability.

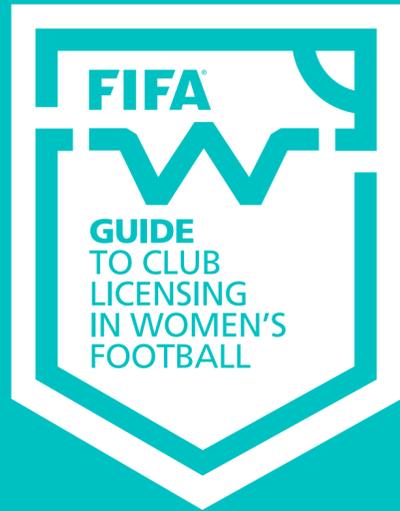
I hope and trust that this guide will inspire and guide your efforts to consolidate women's football in your country, while at the same time strengthening the role of girls and women in our game and amplifying the benefits of football for society.



**Yours in football,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'GIANNI INFANTINO'.

**Gianni Infantino**  
FIFA President



# Welcome.

This is where your journey to creating a club licensing system begins.

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Club licensing is a tool that member associations (MAs) around the globe can use to continuously strengthen their clubs' landscape.



## CHAPTER 2

### Key steps

**PART 1.**  
Set up  
the system



**PART 2.**  
Implement  
the system



## CHAPTER 3

### Conclusions and annexes

After you have gone through all the steps, your club licensing system will be all set. In this chapter, you will find additional tools to assist you.

 **CHAPTER 1**

# INTRODUCTION

- Introduction
- What is club licensing?
- Why club licensing?
- An ideal working framework for club licensing in women's football

## INTRODUCTION

The key objectives of the FIFA Women's Football Strategy are to **grow participation, enhance the commercial value** and **build the foundations**.

Club licensing is a tool that member associations (MAs) around the globe can use to continuously work with their clubs to strengthen these key objectives.

Club licensing has been used as a **development and control tool** for over two decades all around the world. In the last five years, with the continued development of women's club football, competition organisers have started to integrate club licensing into their structures for both professional and amateur competitions.

In order to support our MAs, we have created this guide to ensure that all football stakeholders have a document to which they can refer when looking to improve an existing system or create one from scratch.

Today, FIFA is delighted to publish this comprehensive Guide to Club Licensing in Women's Football, which

outlines the key steps that should be taken in order to set up and implement a system for the strategic growth of women's club football.

Our primary audience for this guide is our MAs, who will benefit from many recommendations to help them throughout the process of setting up and/or implementing a proper club licensing system for women's football. Naturally, this guide also allows all football stakeholders, including confederations, leagues, clubs, players, coaches, fans, partners and media outlets, to learn about club licensing in women's football in depth and the steps that are expected from competition organisers to put this important tool in place.



This document will guide readers through the **key steps (divided into two parts) that an MA and/or a competition organiser should consider when setting up and/or implementing a club licensing system in women's football**. These steps are preceded by a suggested "ideal working framework for club licensing", which includes all professionals who should be involved in the system and, finally, the guide provides a set of conclusions to summarise the main learnings.

## WHAT IS CLUB LICENSING?

Club licensing is a development and control tool that MAs can use to raise standards in the key strategic areas of football clubs.

Traditionally, this includes (but is not limited to) the following areas: **sporting, infrastructure, administration, legal** and **financial**.

The system uses a set of criteria that clubs must meet to receive a licence and be permitted to participate in a specific club competition, assuming the club qualifies based on sporting merit.

MAs act as licensors, determining the domestic competitions for which clubs will require a licence in order to participate and establishing the minimum criteria that clubs must meet.

Ultimately, club licensing provides a framework with the flexibility to be adapted to the domestic reality of each MA in order to improve club football.



# WHY CLUB LICENSING?

When properly implemented, club licensing can:

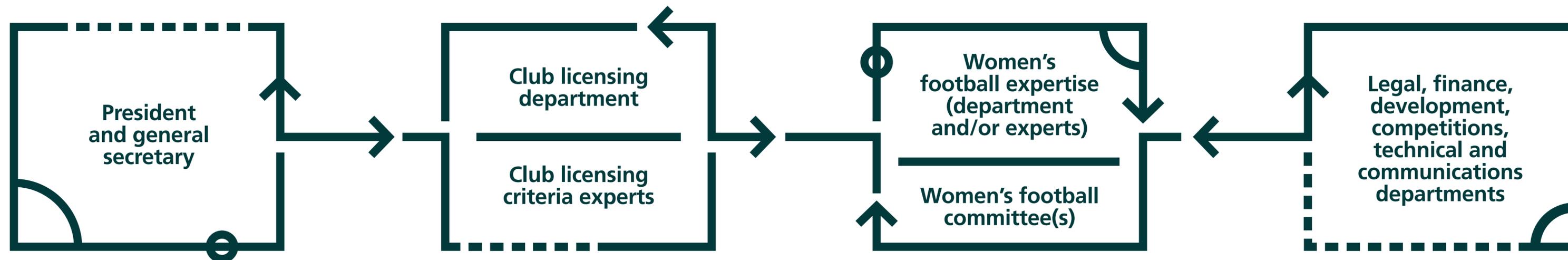


- Bring MAs closer to their clubs
- Increase coaching qualifications
- Raise the levels of professionalism in club management
- Promote financial transparency in clubs
- Promote and improve good governance at each club
- Increase clubs' financial stability
- Increase the number of youth development teams and players
- Encourage investment in the game
- Increase trust in and the integrity of clubs
- Increase the understanding of club ownership groups
- Improve the stadiums, office spaces and training facilities of clubs
- Assist in risk and crisis management
- Enhance the integrity of competitions
- Provide a practical tool to improve conditions for players

# AN IDEAL WORKING FRAMEWORK FOR CLUB LICENSING IN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

When setting up and implementing a club licensing system in women's football, there is no "one size fits all" strategy for how the system will be created and operated. However, it is important that the following departments and individuals work together to ensure that all aspects of women's football and the club licensing system are considered.

A successful system starts with the support of the MA's leadership, but the collaboration between all departments of an MA is equally as important to ensuring that the system is built to take account of the reality of women's football clubs, as well as all rules and regulations of the MA and the country.

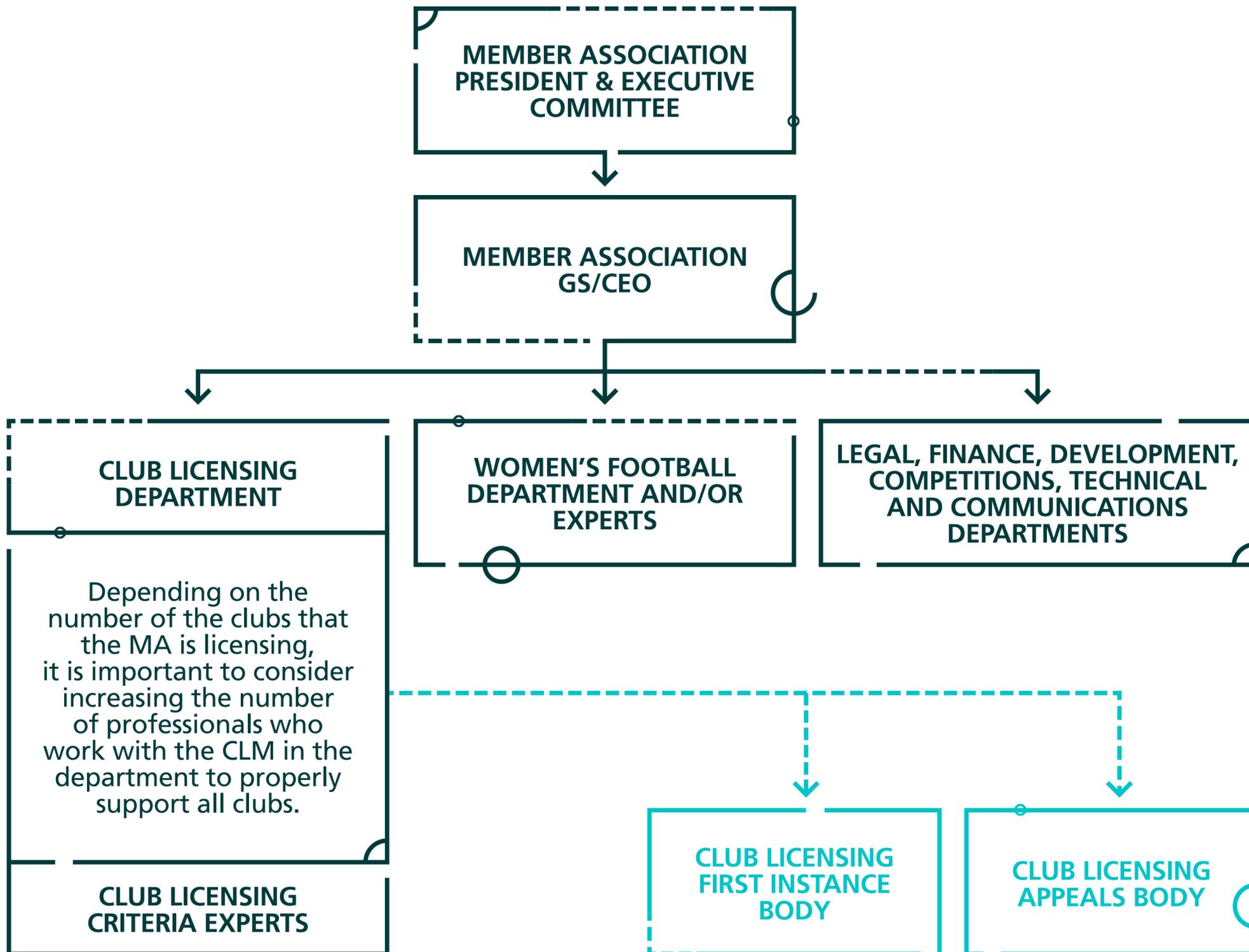


# AN IDEAL WORKING FRAMEWORK FOR CLUB LICENSING IN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

The following illustration shows an ideal administrative structure of how the system can be operated inside an MA\*, with the club licensing department coordinating all the licensor's efforts under the club licensing system to ensure that the clubs have all the information they require to comply with and benefit from the system.

A representative of top management should be given responsibility for club licensing matters.

**FOOTBALL CLUBS**



\*An MA can delegate the operation of a club licensing system to an affiliated league.

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*For UEFA, club licensing is a key strategic tool to promote and continuously improve the standard of all aspects of football in Europe. The introduction of the system for the UEFA Women's Champions League aimed to further professionalise clubs' structures and to contribute to their long-term sustainability, becoming an integral part of the strategic plan for the development of the competition."*

**Aleš Zavrl**

Head of Club Licensing, Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)



 **CHAPTER 2**

# THE KEY STEPS

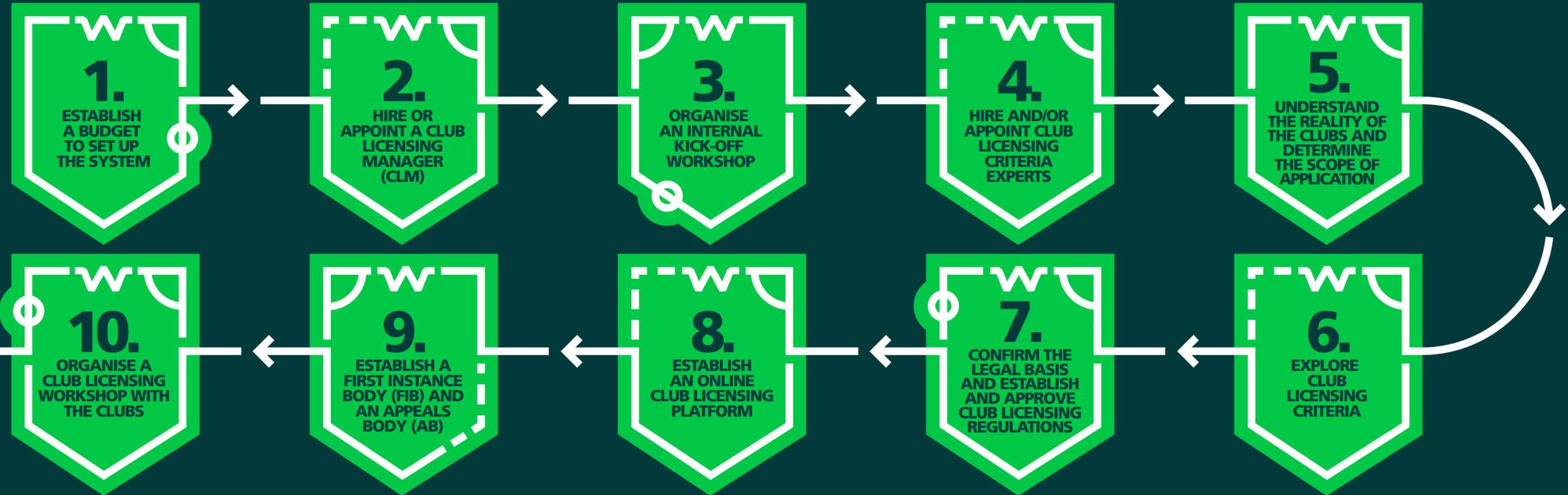
In the following section, MAs will find information on the key steps for setting up and/or implementing a club licensing system in women's football.

The key steps are split into two parts to specifically guide an MA in setting up and/or implementing a club licensing system.

# THE KEY STEPS

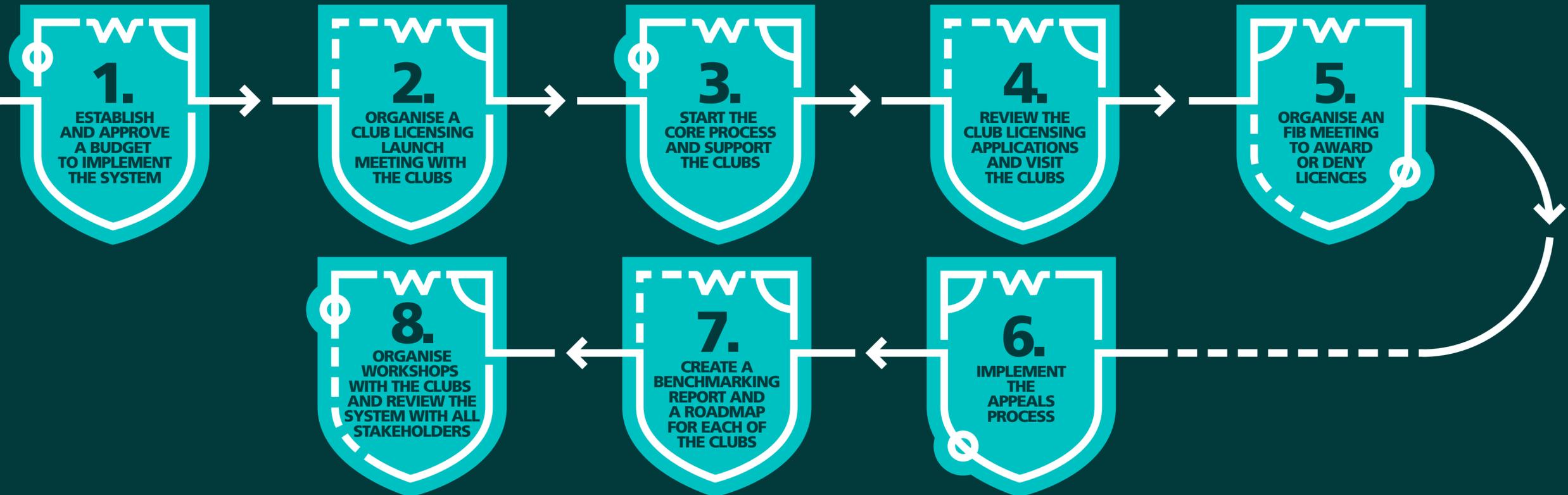
## PART 1

### SET UP THE SYSTEM



## PART 2

### IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM



THE KEY STEPS

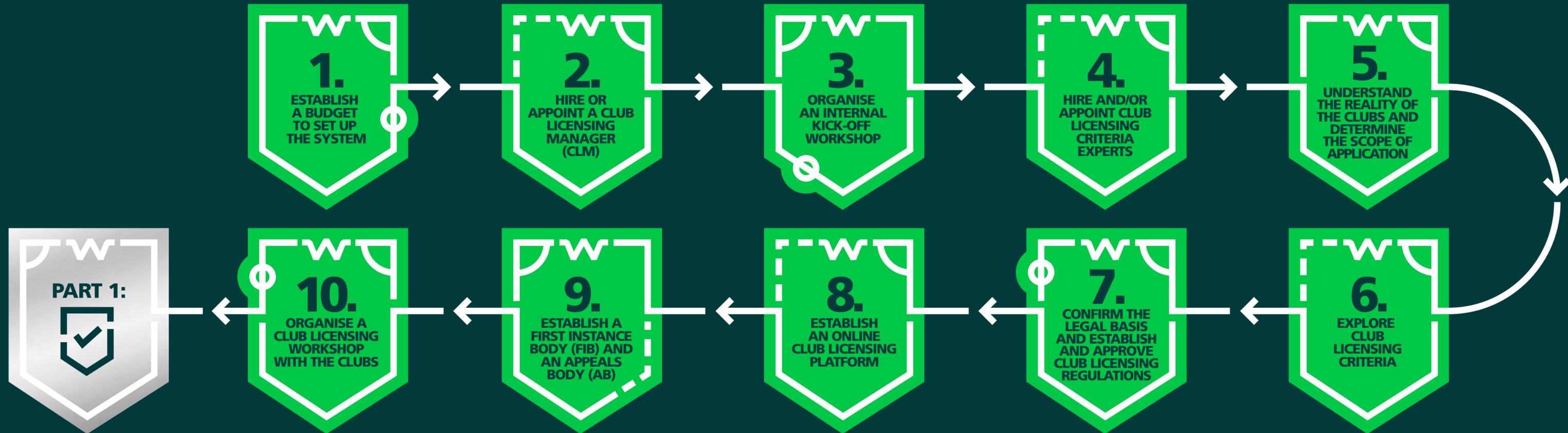
**PART 1**

**SET UP THE SYSTEM**

In part 1 of this guide, MAs will find information on the ten key steps for setting up a club licensing system.

These are strategic steps that can be reviewed every two to five years to ensure the system is up to date with the latest trends or developments in club licensing and the football industry.

THE KEY STEPS





# ESTABLISH A BUDGET TO SET UP THE SYSTEM

Setting up a new system requires an MA to commit to allocating specific financial resources to establish the right framework for club licensing in women's football.

1

ESTABLISH A BUDGET TO SET UP THE SYSTEM

Creating a budget to set up a club licensing system is a key step for an MA.

We recommend that MAs take at least the following items into consideration:



**Salaries of the CLM and their team**

The CLM is a key player in the system and it is therefore important to budget for their salary as well as the salaries of other members of the department.



**Visits to clubs**

MAs will need to budget for travel and accommodation for its CLM and/or experts to visit all clubs to understand the reality of the clubs and determine the scope of application.



**Compensating experts**

MAs will need to budget for the compensation to be paid to external experts who help to evaluate potential criteria to be incorporated into the regulations.



**Overall design and printing**

The regulations and all additional tools developed by an MA must look professional to clearly communicate to all clubs and football stakeholders what the system is and how it is implemented.



**Office utilities**

Computers, mobile phones, etc.



**Workshop with the clubs**

Budget for meeting rooms and materials to be provided to the clubs.



**Establishing and operating an online platform**

1

ESTABLISH A BUDGET TO SET UP THE SYSTEM

Below is a template for a basic budget to set up the system:

ITEM	AMOUNT	FREQUENCY PER YEAR	TOTAL
CLM and additional team salaries	\$000,000	1	\$000,000
Visits to clubs	\$000,000	# of clubs	\$000,000
Criteria experts	\$000,000	# of individual experts / # of company experts	\$000,000
Establishing an online club licensing platform	\$000,000	1	\$000,000
Decision-making meetings	\$000,000	2	\$000,000
Workshop with clubs	\$000,000	2	\$000,000
Design and printing, office utilities	\$000,000	1	\$000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$000,000</b>

FIFA would like to remind all MAs that, when they are establishing their budget, they can apply to the Women’s Football Club Licensing [Development Programme](#), under which, provided that their application is accepted, funding of USD 25,000 is available for a two-year project period.

1

# TASK LIST

ESTABLISH A BUDGET TO SET UP THE SYSTEM

	Create a draft budget
	Have budget approved by senior management





2.

## HIRE OR APPOINT A CLUB LICENSING MANAGER (CLM)

The CLM oversees the administration of the system. They will be key to successful implementation but will also play a pivotal role in ensuring that the system is designed to meet the reality of the clubs.

2

The CLM is responsible for all administrative matters related to the club licensing system.

The CLM needs the internal support of all other departments in the MA.

HIRE OR APPOINT A CLUB LICENSING MANAGER (CLM)

## The main responsibilities of a CLM include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Establishing all elements of the club licensing system – regulations, supporting documents, processes, timelines, guides and manuals
- Serving as the primary point of contact between the MA and clubs (and between FIFA and the confederation), with regular communication
- Serving as a point of contact for the club licensing decision-making bodies
- Collecting, organising and reviewing documents submitted by clubs
- Preparing applications for review by decision-making bodies
- Formally communicating licensing decisions
- Monitoring clubs throughout the season to ensure continued compliance with criteria
- Organising workshops, courses and meetings to facilitate knowledge-sharing, and visiting the clubs
- Analysing data and developing reports
- Managing the department's budget
- Administering the online club licensing platform

## Key attributes of a CLM:

- Advanced project management skills
- Advanced organisational and analytical skills
- Time management skills
- Excellent communicator
- Proficient in technology
- Strong attention to detail
- Strong presentation skills
- Strong stakeholder management skills
- Team player
- Event management skills
- High standards of integrity
- Familiarity with club football
- Resilience/stress resistance
- Problem-solving skills



The CLM will receive confidential and sensitive information from clubs. The CLM must therefore sign a confidentiality agreement, which will be kept on file at the MA. The MA should inform FIFA and their confederation as soon as a CLM is hired or appointed.

2

HIRE OR APPOINT A CLUB LICENSING MANAGER (CLM)

## What if an MA already has a full-time CLM working on club licensing for men's club competitions?

If an MA already has a full-time CLM and/or club licensing department with various managers working on men's club competitions, these individuals can take on responsibilities for women's club competitions.

Depending on the total number of clubs that the MA is licensing, it is important to consider expanding the size of the club licensing department.

It is imperative to ensure that the CLM works very closely with the women's football department/experts so that women's football-specific knowledge is taken into account.





*As club licensing manager for the German FA, my daily work consists of ensuring all clubs have the information they need to be successfully licensed, as well as communicating with all stakeholders involved in club licensing to ensure everyone is aware of the latest requirements and deadlines. We also work with our clubs to share best practices in the key areas of the system. The work of a CLM is not limited to the time of the audit, but rather spans the entire season and reflects the diversity of the club licensing process.”*

**Christina Wolff**

Senior Manager Club Licensing, German FA (DFB)



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# TASK LIST

HIRE OR APPOINT A CLUB LICENSING MANAGER (CLM)





3.

## ORGANISE AN INTERNAL KICK-OFF MEETING

At the internal kick-off meeting, all internal MA stakeholders will be informed about the system, its objectives and the timeline to set it up and implement it.

3

ORGANISE AN INTERNAL KICK-OFF MEETING

An **internal kick-off meeting** at the MA is an excellent time for the leadership of the organisation and its administration to get the project started.

## Who should be present at the meeting?

- President and general secretary of the MA
- CLM
- Women's football department representative(s)/expert(s)
- Technical/development director of the MA
- Head of the MA's legal department
- Head of the MA's competitions department
- Head of the MA's finance department
- Executive director(s) of league(s)  
(including the heads of finance, legal and operations)

Representatives from FIFA and the relevant confederation may also be invited to participate in this meeting to clarify any questions the MA may have.



## What will be achieved at this meeting?

The CLM will present all the steps that the MA will take to set up and implement club licensing in women's football.

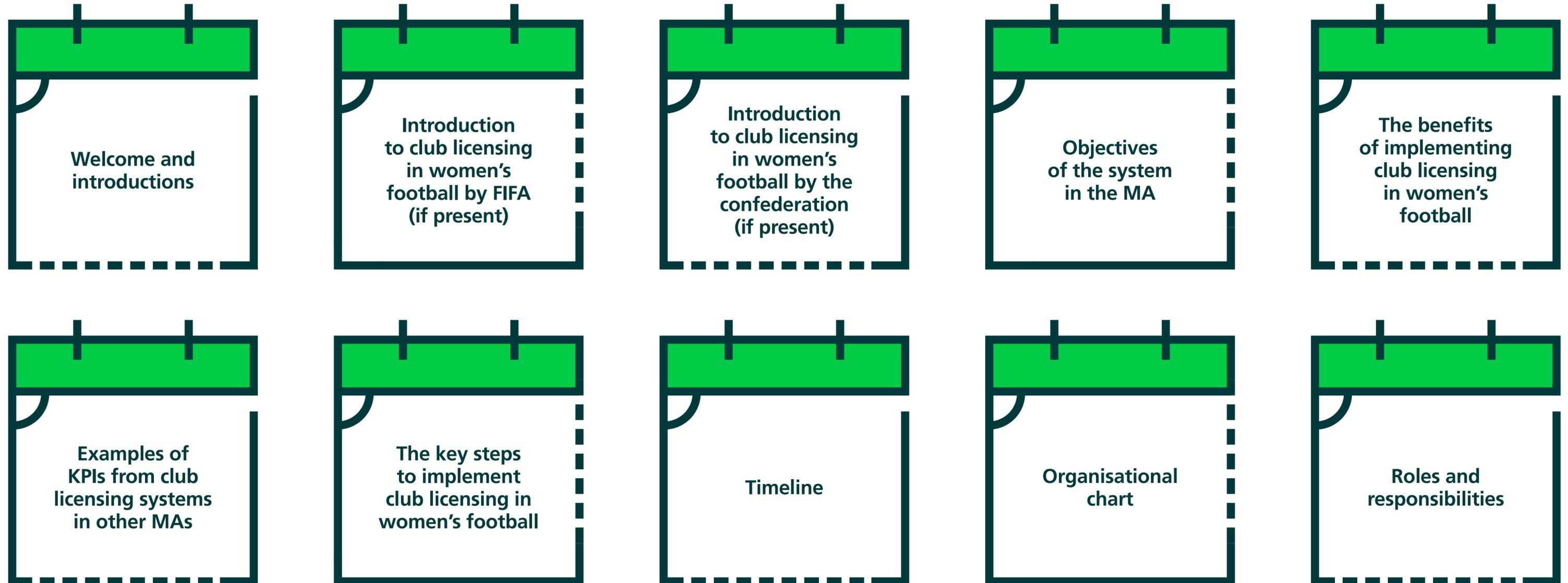
After this meeting, all individuals present will have a general understanding of what club licensing is, how it works, the steps being taken and the timeline that will be used to set up and implement the system in the women's game.

3

# INTERNAL CLUB LICENSING KICK-OFF MEETING AGENDA

Here is an example of an agenda that can be followed for an effective and efficient kick-off meeting:

ORGANISE AN INTERNAL KICK-OFF MEETING



3

# TASK LIST

ORGANISE AN INTERNAL KICK-OFF MEETING

-  Create presentation for the meeting
-  Set the date/time/location and communicate to all participants
-  Meeting has taken place





4.

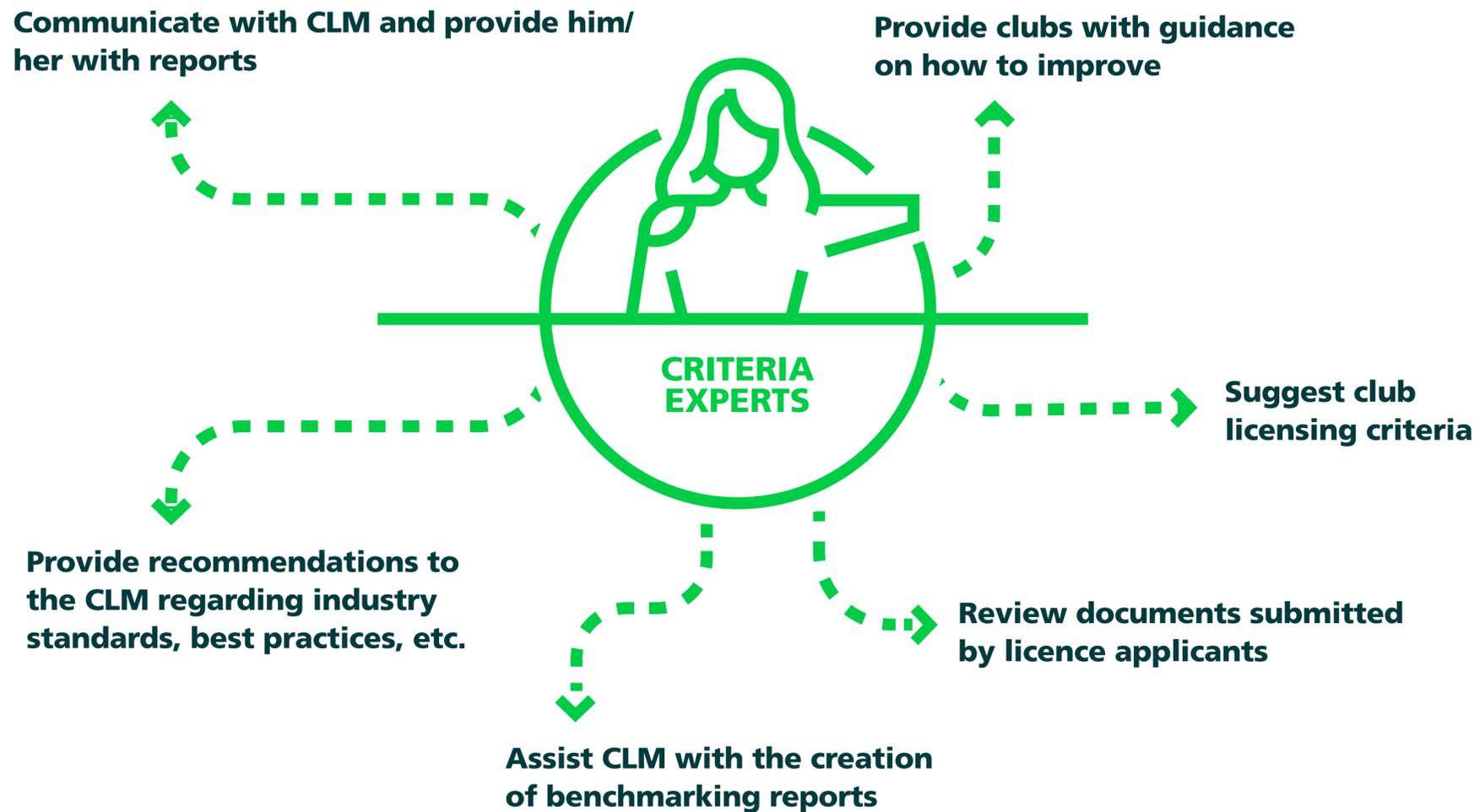
# HIRE AND/OR APPOINT CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA EXPERTS

Having individuals who are experts in each of the areas of club licensing will be paramount in setting the criteria, analysing documentation provided by clubs and providing clubs with the right knowledge and support.

4

HIRE AND/OR APPOINT CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA EXPERTS

The main responsibilities of **criteria experts** are shown in the following illustration:



**!** Each club licensing expert will receive confidential and sensitive information from the clubs. Each expert must therefore sign a confidentiality agreement, which will be kept on file at the MA.

As outlined in step 2 above, the MA's CLM will play a central role in the success of the system but will also need support from individuals or companies who are experts in their fields.

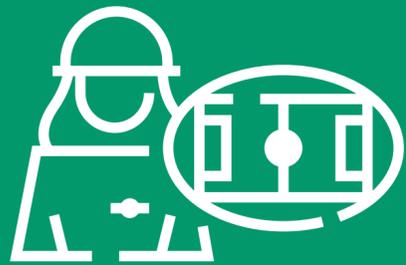
Experts in each of the areas of club licensing criteria can provide the licensor with valuable insights into how to set up the correct criteria for the club licensing system, and they can check, during the implementation of the system, that clubs presented the proper documentation when they applied for a licence.

The CLM will liaise with the criteria experts to assess the documentation provided by clubs and to provide them with guidance on the areas in which they could improve.

4

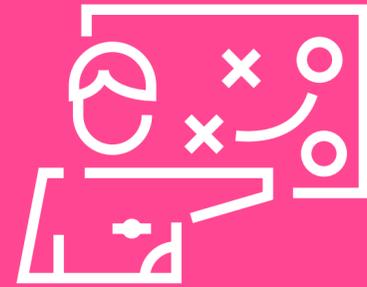
HIRE AND/OR APPOINT CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA EXPERTS

The club licensing **criteria experts** must, as a minimum, include professionals in the following areas:



### 1. Infrastructure

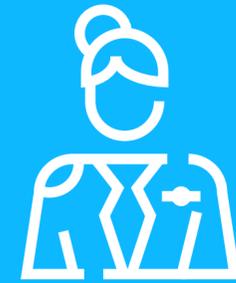
Experts in this area may include architects, engineers, stadium experts and competition general coordinators.



### 2. Sporting

Experts in this area may include former technical directors, coaches and heads of academies.

Inside MAs, the current technical department can also serve in this function.



### 3. Administration

Experts in this area may include business administration professionals.

Specific criteria experts, for example experts in safeguarding, marketing, media, etc. may also be involved.



### 4. Finance

Experts in this area may include auditing and/or finance companies.

Inside MAs, the current finance department can also serve in this function.



### 5. Legal

Experts in this area may include lawyers specialised in labour/sports law and company registration.

Inside MAs, the current legal department can also serve in this function.

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*In addition to the JFA's finance, administration, sporting, legal and infrastructure experts, we have hired an expert in safeguarding, with the objective of this expert being not only to verify that each club is properly implementing a safeguarding programme, but to also assist the clubs in understanding the importance of safeguarding and how they can maximise their efforts in this important area."*

**Soleen Al-Zou'bi**

Head of Women's Football, Jordan FA (JFA)



4

# TASK LIST

HIRE AND/OR APPOINT CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA EXPERTS

	Identify experts
	Officially hire and/or appoint experts





# UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF THE CLUBS AND DETERMINE THE SCOPE OF APPLICATION

It is paramount for the MA to understand the current reality of the clubs from a 360-degree perspective. During this step, it is also important to determine the scope of application (i.e. for which competitions a licence will be required).

In order to be fully informed of the reality of the clubs and to establish realistic criteria, MAs should at least examine the following areas for each club participating in women's competitions.

As part of this exercise, MAs can draw on the knowledge of criteria experts to better understand the reality of the clubs, specifically when creating the framework for the study and analysing clubs' responses.



## FIFA encourages MAs to follow the phases outlined below to fully understand the reality of the clubs.



### PHASE 1

Create an online survey and establish clear internal and external strategies to communicate the purpose and objectives of the survey to the relevant stakeholders.

The questions that an MA asks in the survey should reflect the type of criteria that it is hoping to implement in the system. It is important that the MA involve the club licensing experts and other MA departments during this phase.



### PHASE 2

Send the survey, by official letter from the MA general secretary's office, to the clubs that the MA wishes to study. Give clubs at least two weeks to complete the survey. MAs can encourage the clubs to ask multiple people to complete the survey based on their area of expertise.

An MA may also request key documents such as the club's strategic plan, marketing plan, budget, audited financial statements, etc.



### PHASE 3

Visit the clubs to meet the people working at the club, as well as the players and coaches.

Make sure that pictures of the facilities and club employees are taken during the visit to be able to use them in the report that will be created in phase 4.

Send a checklist of the areas to be visited at the club ahead of time. Ensure that the club's decision-makers are involved in the visits. The clubs can also present their strategic plan during the visit.



### PHASE 4

Analyse the responses from the clubs together with the criteria experts.

Create an internal report which informs the MA of each club's current position in the areas of infrastructure, sporting, administration, finance and legal, as a minimum. Ideally, some feedback should be provided to each club on their current circumstances.

For the women's teams that are part of a wider club structure that includes men's football, try to outline exactly which areas apply to the women's team(s).

## Once an MA understands the current reality of the clubs, it can start determining the scope of application for the women's club licensing system.

The scope of application for club licensing refers to the competitions for which clubs will require a licence to be eligible to participate.

At domestic level, this could mean only applying the club licensing system to clubs participating in the top-tier women's competition, or the system could be applied to several competitions.

The system may be designed to include other competitions, such as the women's futsal or beach soccer leagues. Naturally, the criteria for each competition will vary based on the reality of the participating clubs.

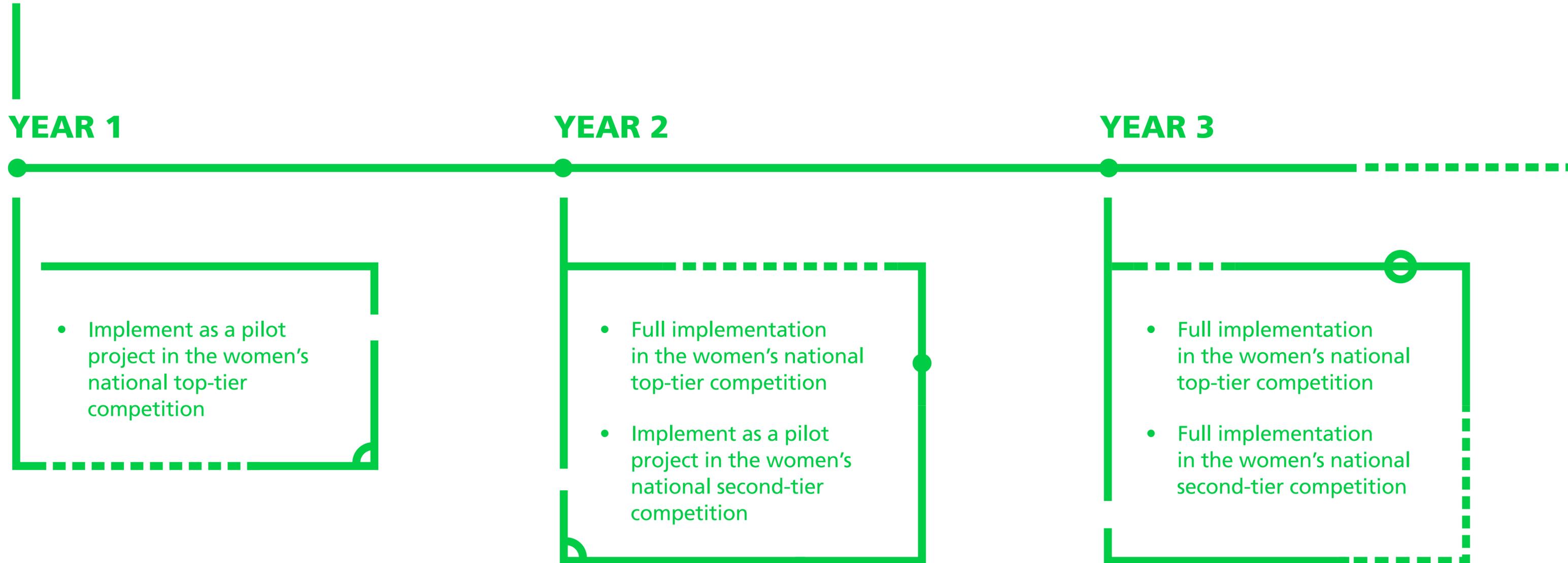
The decision on the competitions in which the system should be implemented should be aligned with the MA's overall strategic plan for women's football.

WHEN ESTABLISHING THE SCOPE OF APPLICATION, MAs SHOULD CONSIDER THE COMPETITIONS IN WHICH THEIR CLUB LICENSING SYSTEM WILL APPLY.	 YES	 NO
<b>Women's confederation club competition</b>		
<b>Women's national top-tier competition</b>		
<b>Women's national second-tier competition</b>		
<b>Women's national third-tier competition</b>		
<b>Women's national fourth-tier competition</b>		
<b>Women's national futsal competition</b>		
<b>Women's national beach soccer competition</b>		

A phase-in approach can also be implemented by an MA, so that, for example, the system only applies to the women's national top-tier competition in years 1 and 2, but in year 3, clubs competing in the second-tier competition will be required to have a licence in order to participate.

Naturally, the levels and quantity of club licensing criteria that clubs need to meet may differ from one competition to another. It is important to mention that in their long-term strategy, some MAs try to use their confederation's women's competition criteria as the level of criteria they try to reach or even exceed in their top-tier women's league.

**For example:**





*Understanding the reality of Thai clubs was a paramount step towards creating the appropriate club licensing system for our top competition. We created a survey together with FIFA and visited our clubs, which enabled us to have a complete idea and understanding of the status of our clubs.*

*We then used all this relevant information to create realistic yet ambitious criteria that our clubs will need to meet in order to be licensed and guarantee quality education and coaching for girls and women in the framework of the programme: **Thailand, a leader country to grow as a football player.***

**Sirima Phanichewa**

Vice-President, Football Association of Thailand (FAT)



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# TASK LIST



Create an online survey for the clubs



Send survey to the clubs



Visit the clubs



Create an internal report on the reality of the clubs



Determine the scope of application of the system



UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF THE CLUBS AND DETERMINE THE SCOPE OF APPLICATION



6.

## EXPLORE CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

Once an MA has a clear understanding of the reality of its clubs, it is time to explore the potential club licensing criteria to be used in its system.

## EXPLORE CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

Once an MA has a clear understanding of the reality of its clubs, it is time to explore the potential club licensing criteria to be used in its system.

MAAs should engage in internal and external discussions on the specific criteria to be used for the areas of sporting, infrastructure, financial, legal and administration that will be part of the women's club licensing system. To start the process, it is advisable to undertake a review and an analysis of the existing criteria in other women's and men's club licensing systems around the world.

MAAs can first explore the club licensing criteria currently in place for the confederations, paying particular attention to the criteria for their own region. Criteria from other MAAs within the region and around the world can then be reviewed and analysed. It is important to keep in mind the principles that are important to the MA, and then criteria can be developed to achieve these principles based on the specific circumstances of the clubs in a competition.

There is not necessarily a limit on the type and number of criteria that can be created by an MA. The criteria can be as simple as requiring clubs to have a logo or a website, but they may also try to tackle new challenges that club licensing has traditionally not addressed. For example, Germany has announced that it will include sustainability in its club licensing criteria in its next club licensing regulations.

Another area that is important to explore is safeguarding. Club licensing criteria can create specific parameters that clubs must comply with in the area of safeguarding for the first team and the youth teams, from having a specific safeguarding policy to having a safeguarding officer who is responsible for overseeing the club's safeguarding, protection and/or welfare programmes.



Ultimately, the criteria should be realistic and feasible for the clubs, yet also require them to develop and improve to raise the standards for women's clubs. The criteria should also assist the MA in achieving its strategic goals for women's football. Once finalised, the criteria will be included as part of the MA's club licensing regulations.

When drafting new regulations, an MA may choose to formalise a consultation process with various working groups dedicated to exploring club licensing criteria. These working groups should include experts from various club licensing areas, and the MA should establish clear and measurable objectives for each working group.

On the next pages, FIFA has outlined examples of the women's club licensing criteria currently in place at confederation level.

6

EXPLORE CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

When exploring club licensing criteria, a great starting point can be to look at the criteria established by the confederations. Currently, the AFC, CAF, CONMEBOL and UEFA have implemented club licensing regulations for the AFC Women's Champions League, CAF Women's Champions League, CONMEBOL Women's *Libertadores* and UEFA Women's Champions League, respectively.

The full regulations can be found by clicking on the following links: [AFC](#), [CONMEBOL](#), [UEFA](#).

The following table provides a summary of the criteria currently being used by each confederation. *(table created in January 2022)*



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EXPLORE CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

	Infrastructure	Sporting	Administration	Finance	Legal
AFC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stadium availability</li> <li>Training ground(s) for the first team and youth teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum of one youth girls' team (in U-15, U-16 or U-17 category)</li> <li>Medical care of players</li> <li>Registration of players</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Club secretariat</li> <li>Administrative manager responsible for the management of women's football at the club</li> <li>Medical doctor</li> <li>Physiotherapist</li> <li>Head coach of women's first team has the coaching certification required by the competition</li> <li>At least one qualified youth head coach</li> <li>Rights, responsibilities and duties</li> <li>Duty of replacement during season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual audited financial statements</li> <li>Annual budget</li> <li>No overdue payables towards football clubs, employees and social/tax authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signed legal declaration regarding participation in the AFC Women's Champions League</li> <li>Written contracts with professional players</li> <li>Legal documents</li> </ul>
CAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stadium availability</li> <li>Training ground(s) for the first team and youth teams</li> <li>Office space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical examination for all first-team players</li> <li>Player welfare and child protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Club secretariat</li> <li>General manager (in case of standalone women's football club) or individual(s) responsible for women's football</li> <li>Medical doctor</li> <li>Physiotherapist</li> <li>Head coach for the first team</li> <li>Assistant coach for the first team</li> <li>Minimum of two women in the team delegation</li> <li>Person responsible for CAF's online club licensing platform</li> <li>Complete CAF questionnaire</li> <li>Website or at least one social media account</li> <li>Rights and duties of staff members</li> <li>Duty of replacement and to notify changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget</li> <li>Bank account</li> <li>Annual financial statements</li> <li>No overdue payables towards football clubs, employees and social/tax authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signed legal declaration</li> <li>Minimum legal documents</li> <li>Club ownership and control declarations</li> <li>Written contracts with professional players and online registration</li> <li>Formal agreement if the women's team is a separate legal entity from the men's football club</li> </ul>
CONMEBOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training ground(s) for the first team and youth teams</li> <li>Stadium</li> <li>Office space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum of two women in the team delegation</li> <li>Head coach with at least a B level coaching licence</li> <li>Goalkeeper coach</li> <li>Minimum of one youth girls' team</li> <li>Medical insurance for first-team players</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Person responsible for the management of women's football at the club</li> <li>Complete the FIFA/CONMEBOL questionnaire</li> <li>Marketing and communications plans</li> <li>Official website and at least one social media account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget for participation in CONMEBOL <i>Libertadores</i></li> <li>Bank account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signed legal declaration</li> <li>Registered legal entity</li> <li>Club ownership and control declarations</li> <li>Formal agreement if the women's team is a separate legal entity from the men's football club</li> </ul>
UEFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability of a stadium classified at least as UEFA Category 1</li> <li>Training ground(s) for the first team and youth teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medical examination for all first-team players and youth players</li> <li>Medical insurance for first-team players</li> <li>All first-team players and youth players must be registered</li> <li>Written contracts with professional players</li> <li>Attend Laws of the Game session</li> <li>Racial equality &amp; anti-discrimination</li> <li>Establish and apply child protection &amp; welfare measures</li> <li>Goalkeeper coach</li> <li>Minimum of one youth girls' team within the range of 12 to 17</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Club secretariat</li> <li>Administrative manager</li> <li>Medical doctor</li> <li>Physiotherapist</li> <li>Head coach for the first team with at least a UEFA A level coaching licence</li> <li>Head coach for the youth team with a coaching licence defined by the UEFA member association</li> <li>Rights and duties</li> <li>Duty of replacement during season</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual financial statements</li> <li>No overdue payables towards football clubs, employees and social/tax authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signed legal declaration</li> <li>Minimum legal information</li> </ul>

UEFA is working on a new set of Club Licensing Regulations for the UEFA Women's Champions League.



*The OFC recognises the impact club licensing can have on both administrative capability off the field and success on the field. The development of club licensing with the formation of new leagues, or the evolution of current league structures, are devised concurrently and we intend to have elements adopted by all our MAs for national and continental competitions.*

*We'll continue developing local capability, providing support, and ensuring that any amendments to club licensing are appropriate for the sustainability of the game. Clubs are the lifeblood of our sport and the successful implementation of club licensing will have a significant impact."*

**Steven Dillon**

Clubs and Leagues Manager, Oceania Football Confederation (OFC)



6

# TASK LIST

EXPLORE CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

-  At least one meeting has taken place to explore club licensing criteria
-  Finalise criteria to be used for each competition





# CONFIRM THE LEGAL BASIS AND ESTABLISH AND APPROVE CLUB LICENSING REGULATIONS

This step is successfully achieved by transitioning the criteria to a set of regulations that can be implemented in a pilot phase before a formal “full” implementation, as well as by finalising other documents that are crucial to the club licensing process.

## THE LEGAL BASIS FOR CLUB LICENSING

**For the implementation of the club licensing system, each MA must have a legal basis within its statutes that describes the objective of the system and the relevant authority, and a reference to further, more detailed national club licensing regulations.**

**As an alternative, the club licensing system may also be based on a contract between the clubs and the MA.**

**An MA can also choose to have both, namely a contract with the clubs and to include club licensing in its statutes.**

FIFA outlines this obligation in article 15(g) of the FIFA Statutes.

Once an MA has confirmed the legal basis for the club licensing system, and once the MA and the person responsible for women's football in the MA or the women's football department fully understand the current reality of the clubs, it is time to establish the right set of criteria for the clubs to meet and to integrate them into regulations.

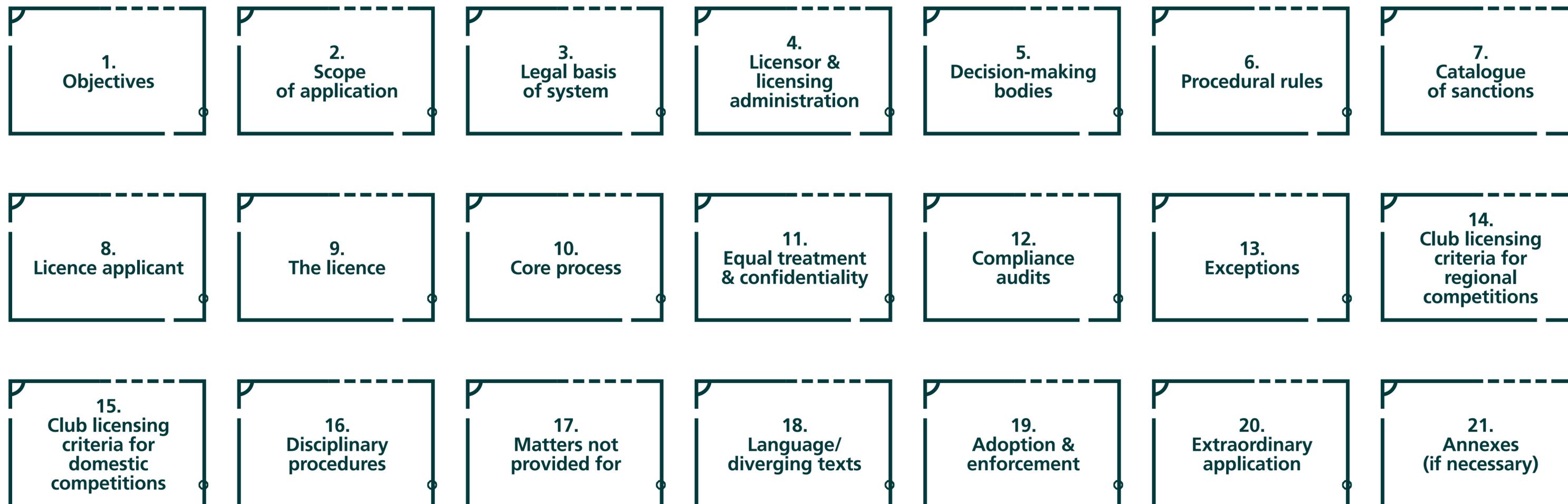
The CLM should draft the regulations in collaboration with the MA's legal department, with input from other MA departments and the confederation.

In some cases, a confederation may have a template for regulations that can be adapted by the MA.

Best practice when launching a completely new system is to first implement the club licensing system in a pilot phase, in which an MA can go through the implementation as an exercise without awarding or denying licences to the clubs. This allows the clubs to familiarise themselves with the procedure and to receive feedback from the MA on what they did correctly or incorrectly when applying for a licence. The pilot phase would also allow the MA, as the licensor, to perfect its implementation process. Once the pilot phase has been completed, it is also best practice to provide clubs with a feedback questionnaire for them to provide their comments.

The **club licensing regulations** are a comprehensive document that outlines all of the elements of the system.

While each MA can create their own regulations, the following sections are considered “standard” and should be incorporated:



## An MA should go through the following phases to establish a set of national club licensing regulations.



### PHASE 1

Determine the criteria that clubs will need to meet in the following areas: infrastructure, sporting, administrative, financial and legal. Other areas, such as social responsibility, safeguarding and business, can be explored.



### PHASE 2

Draft the national club licensing regulations using the criteria established in phase 1 and ensure that the regulations are in line with the FIFA Club Licensing Regulations and the applicable confederation club licensing regulations.



### PHASE 3

Present the draft club licensing regulations to the clubs and other national stakeholders for feedback.



### PHASE 4

Present the draft club licensing regulations to the confederation and FIFA for feedback.



### PHASE 5

Finalise the national club licensing regulations based on the feedback received.

Once finalised, the appropriate body within the MA (i.e. executive committee) will need to approve the regulations.

//

*At the AFC, we launched our inaugural women's club licensing criteria in January 2021. These new criteria will apply via a soft implementation for the upcoming cycles, and will become fully mandatory for the AFC Women's Champions League. We are also encouraging our member associations to implement a club licensing system for their national women's competitions."*

**Wen Min See**

Club Licensing Administrator, Asian Football Confederation (AFC)



7

CONFIRM THE LEGAL BASIS AND ESTABLISH AND APPROVE CLUB LICENSING REGULATIONS

### TASK LIST

- Confirm legal basis for club licensing system
- Draft regulations, including specific criteria
- Discuss regulations internally
- Have regulations approved by the MA's legal team
- Have regulations reviewed by FIFA/confederation
- Have regulations approved by MA's relevant body (e.g. ExCo, etc.)





8.

## ESTABLISH AN ONLINE CLUB LICENSING PLATFORM

Using an online club licensing platform will make the system efficient and easy to use for the clubs and all stakeholders involved in the system. The platform can become the centralised location for the application process.

8

ESTABLISH AN ONLINE CLUB LICENSING PLATFORM

Establishing an **online club licensing platform** is a key step in the success of the system. This tool allows clubs to upload the required documentation and information to comply with the MA's club licensing regulations.

Documents can of course be submitted by email or in person, but conducting the process via an online platform will be much more efficient for all stakeholders as all documentation regarding a club's application will be centralised in one location.

An MA may develop its own internal online platform or it can hire an external company to provide this service.

When developing the platform, it is imperative to involve the clubs at an early stage to have their user experience in mind.

**The online club licensing platform must, as a minimum, have the following functionalities:**

- Enable the CLM to create required fields and deadlines for clubs
- Enter information via various form fields
- Upload documents
- Indicate the date and time of document submission
- Receive notifications that a document has been accepted or rejected
- Enable the CLM to view, approve or reject a submission
- Enable a club licensing expert to view documents
- Enable FIB members to view a club's application
- Enable AB members to view a club's appeal
- Store the data entered by the clubs on a yearly basis
- Issue reports

**It is best practice for the online club licensing platform to provide MAs with automatic benchmarking tools based on the information that clubs have uploaded as part of their applications.**

The CLM should train clubs on how to use the platform and be available to answer any questions, by email or telephone, regarding the platform. Creating a user guide for the clubs on how to use the online platform is an example of best practice.

**As a minimum, an online club licensing platform needs to have the following user types (each with unique permission types):**

- CLM
- FIB member
- AB member
- Football club
- Finance expert
- Infrastructure expert
- Sporting expert
- Administration expert
- Legal expert

Whenever possible, it is preferable to find an online platform that generates synergies between the MA's competition platform, the player registration platform and the online club licensing platform.

Finally, it is imperative that emphasis is placed on data protection due to the partially sensitive data that is submitted by the clubs via the online platform.



**What if an MA already has an online club licensing platform for men's clubs?**

If an MA already has an online platform that is being used by men's clubs for their club licensing applications, it may integrate the women's club licensing process, with its specific requirements, into this existing platform.



8

Below we have included an example of an online club licensing platform in Chile:

**NAVIGACIÓN**

- Escritorio
- Panel de Control**
- LICENCIA DE CLUBES
- UNIDAD DE CONTROL ...
- Administración
- Reportes
- Circulares y Normas
- Instructivos y Formatos

**LICENCIA DE CLUBES**

Volver | Siguiete Club

Seleccione Club: Football Club | Seleccione Categoría: Desportivo | Seleccione Requisito: - | Seleccione Estado: Entregado

**Documentos Asociados**

CÓDIGO	NOMBRE	FREC.	PERIODO	PLAZO	DOCUMENTO	TIPO	ESTADO	ACCIÓN
D.1	Programa de Desarrollo Fútbol Joven	Anual	2021	31/08/2021	[Icons]	PDF	Entregado	Aprobado [Icons]
D.2	Equipos Juveniles	Anual	2021	31/08/2021	[Icons]	PDF	Entregado	Aprobado [Icons]
D.3	Certificado Programa médico de los jugadores	Anual	2021	31/08/2021	[Icons]	PDF	Entregado	Aprobado [Icons]
D.4	Equipo Femenino	Anual	2021	31/08/2021	[Icons]	PDF	Entregado	Aprobado [Icons]
D.5	Entrenador del Primer Equipo	Anual	2021	31/08/2021	[Icons]	PDF	Entregado	Aprobado [Icons]

ESTABLISH AN ONLINE CLUB LICENSING PLATFORM

8

Below we have included an example of the online club licensing platform operated by CAF:

ESTABLISH AN ONLINE CLUB LICENSING PLATFORM

CONFÉDÉRATION AFRICAINE DE FOOTBALL

DFMO VERSION

Recherche...

Sportifs | Infrastructure | Administratifs et Lies au personnel | Juridique | Financières

Actif: **ACTIF**

Débloqué: **DÉBLOQUÉ**

Experts: Pas disponible

> 1.1 - Informations générales

> ART 25 - Programme approuvé de formation des jeunes joueurs

▼ ART 26 - Équipes de jeunes joueurs

Le candidat à la licence doit, au minimum, disposer des équipes de jeunes joueurs suivantes, présentes au sein de son entité juridique ou affiliée

Actif: **ACTIF**

Débloqué: **DÉBLOQUÉ**

Identifiant	Nom	Type	Obligatoire	Actif	Débloqué
26.1	Au moins une équipe de jeunes joueurs dans la classe d'âge des 15 à 21 ans	Case à cocher	Non	<b>ACTIF</b>	<b>DÉBLOQUÉ</b>
26.1.1	La liste des joueurs au moins une équipe de jeunes joueurs dans la classe d'âge des 15 à 21 ans	Fichier	Non	<b>ACTIF</b>	<b>DÉBLOQUÉ</b>
26.2	Au moins une équipe de jeunes joueurs dans la classe d'âge des 10 à 14 ans	Case à cocher	Non	<b>ACTIF</b>	<b>DÉBLOQUÉ</b>
26.2.1	La liste des joueurs au moins une équipe de jeunes joueurs dans la classe d'âge des 10 à 14 ans	Fichier	Non	<b>ACTIF</b>	<b>DÉBLOQUÉ</b>

> ART 27 - Suivi médical des joueurs

> ART 28 - Équipes féminines

> ART 29 - Protection et bien être des joueurs et des jeunes joueurs





*At CAF, we have revamped the system by introducing a contemporary club licensing regulatory framework which now includes regulations for men's and women's clubs. Additionally, we are establishing a CAF club licensing online platform to be operational on a continental and domestic level. This platform will allow the entire club licensing core process to be more automated, centralised, and efficient. We are very keen to accelerate the process of implementation of club licensing in women's football in Africa."*

**Muhammad Sidat**

Club Licensing Senior Manager, Confederation of African Football (CAF)



8

# TASK LIST



Explore internal and external options



Select platform



Secure platform

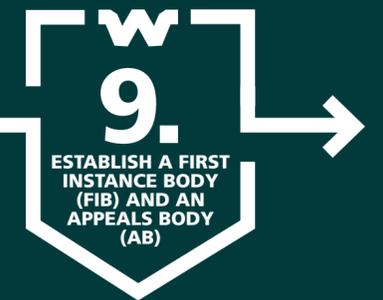


Train clubs on how to use the platform

COMPLETE



GO TO NEXT STEP



ESTABLISH AN ONLINE CLUB LICENSING PLATFORM



## ESTABLISH A FIRST INSTANCE BODY (FIB) AND AN APPEALS BODY (AB)

Both the FIB and AB need to be composed of the right individuals. The process of appointing or electing them must follow the protocols put in place by the MA and confederation.

9

ESTABLISH A FIRST INSTANCE BODY (FIB) AND AN APPEALS BODY (AB)

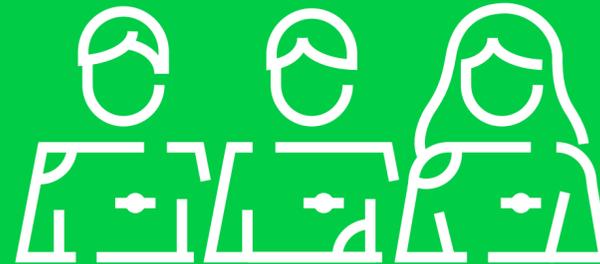
## The licence decision-making process is based on a two-stage approach: first instance and appeal.

Two independent decision-making bodies must be established:



**FIRST INSTANCE BODY**

The first instance body (FIB) has the primary function of determining whether to award or deny licences, based on the established criteria and documentation provided by the applicants.



**APPEALS BODY**

The appeals body (AB) has the primary function of reviewing and deciding on appeals against FIB decisions to award or deny licences.

The FIB and the AB must each have a minimum of three members, and specific requirements regarding the number of members and quorums must be determined by each confederation and/or MA. Members should not be associated with, or connected to, any club affiliated to the MA, as these bodies must be independent and impartial when making licence decisions. No individual can be a member of both the FIB and the AB.

Members of the FIB and the AB should have relevant knowledge of one or more club licensing criteria areas. It is strongly recommended that each body has at least one member who is a qualified lawyer, one who is a qualified accountant/auditor or someone with a financial background, and one architect or someone who is an expert in infrastructure. Confederations establish specific criteria relating to qualifications and requirements for FIB and AB members that the MA needs to keep in mind when appointing/electing the members of its decision-making bodies.

Each member of the FIB and AB must sign a confidentiality agreement, which will be kept on file at the MA, as all members of these bodies will have access to confidential and sensitive club information.

9

ESTABLISH A FIRST INSTANCE BODY (FIB) AND AN APPEALS BODY (AB)

## What if an MA already has an FIB and an AB for men's club licensing?

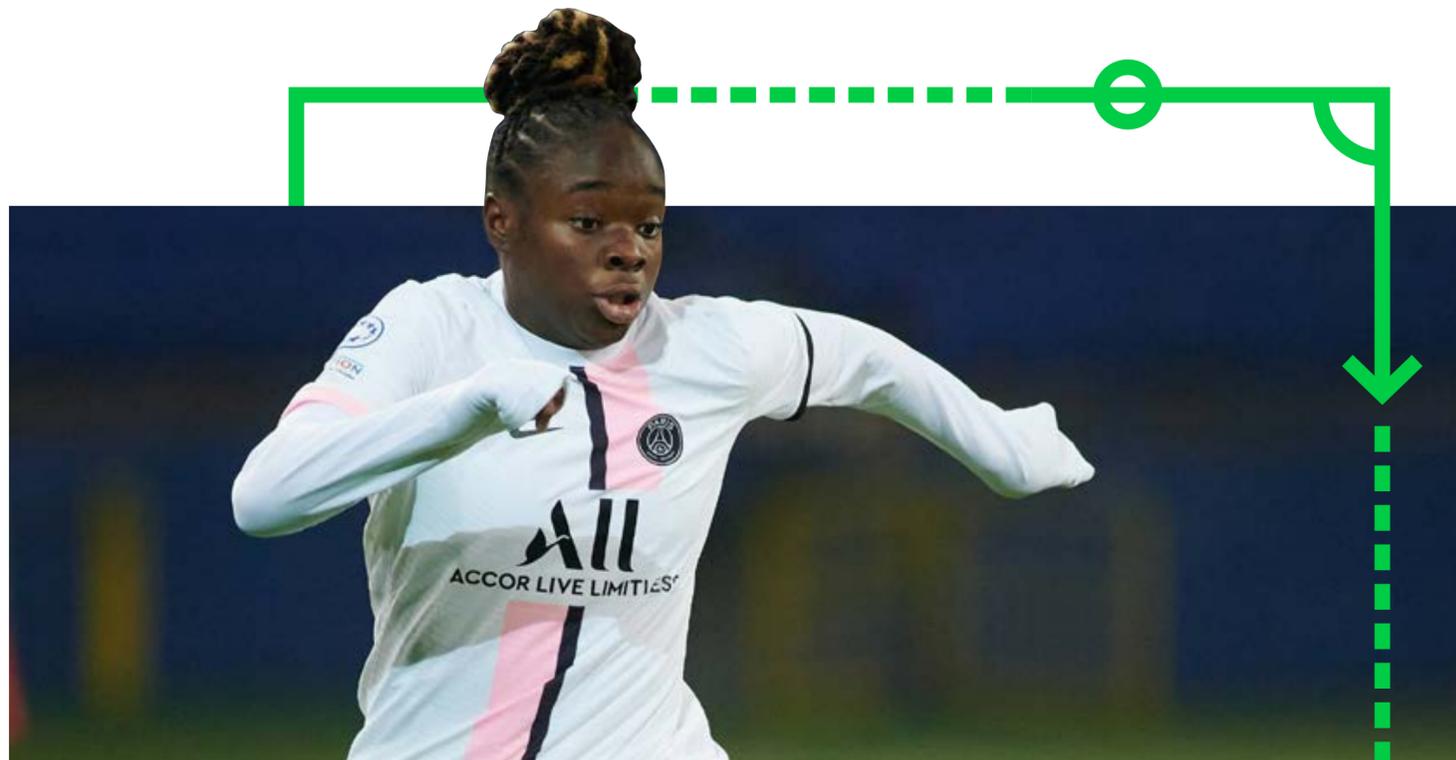
### OPTION 1

These established bodies can also serve as the FIB and AB for women's club licensing, provided that all members fulfil the requirements stipulated in the women's club licensing regulations.

If, for some reason, a member does not meet the requirements (e.g. the member is involved in a women's club, but not a men's club), then that member will need to be replaced for the women's club licensing process.

### OPTION 2

The MA can establish a new FIB and AB specifically for the women's club licensing process.



# TASK LIST



Identify individuals



Have individuals confirmed by MA's relevant body/person (e.g. ExCo, GS, etc.)

COMPLETE



GO TO NEXT STEP





## → ORGANISE A CLUB LICENSING WORKSHOP WITH THE CLUBS

When an MA reaches step 10, it is ready to introduce the clubs to the new system. The timeline and the people involved in the system need to be presented at this event.

10

ORGANISE A CLUB LICENSING WORKSHOP WITH THE CLUBS

**Organising a club licensing workshop** will allow the MA and the club licensing administration to inform all stakeholders about the new or updated system.

This workshop, which can be conducted virtually or in person, should include participants from all clubs that will be applying for a licence.

During the workshops, the MA may choose to have bilateral meetings and provide tailor-made support in order to introduce clubs to the new system.

### Topics to be discussed include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Objectives and overview of the new or updated club licensing system
- Scope of the new or updated system (and phases of implementation, if applicable)
- Introduction to the new or updated club licensing regulations
- Overall timeline of the new or updated system
- Introduction to the decision-making bodies
- Possible sanctions for non-fulfilment of criteria
- Online platform/application submission overview
- Other tools, guides and resources available to the clubs



Clubs should also be given the opportunity to ask questions on all of the topics outlined, and the relevant documents should be provided (regulations, link to online platform, etc.).

**Ultimately, clubs should leave the workshop with a clear understanding of the new or updated system.**





*The club licensing regulations applicable to the CONMEBOL Libertadores Femenina were the result of an extensive consultation process with clubs that participated in the competition. This process was key in order to have criteria adjusted to the clubs' context. In addition, in 2021, at CONMEBOL, we organised our first workshop for all women's football clubs in South America. This event allowed us to share best practices with clubs and provide them with new information on our women's club licensing system."*

**Fabimar Franchi**

Sustainability and Women's Football Development Manager,  
South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL)



# TASK LIST



Set date/time/location/agenda and communicate to all participants in the MA and at the clubs



Workshop has taken place

COMPLETE





Your system  
has been set up.

**IT IS NOW TIME  
TO IMPLEMENT IT.**

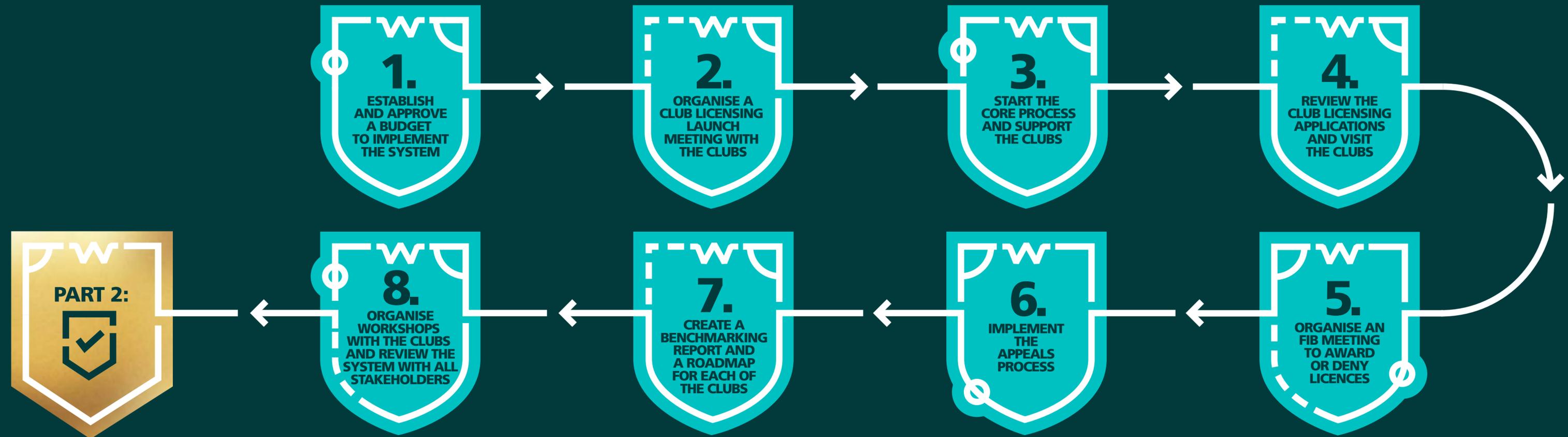
**START PART 2** 

# PART 2 IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM

In part 2 of this guide, MAs can find details on the eight key steps that FIFA recommends when implementing a club licensing system in women's football competitions.

These are key steps that should be followed on a per-season basis to ensure that the system is properly implemented by an MA.

THE KEY STEPS





# ESTABLISH AND APPROVE A BUDGET TO IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM

The club licensing system must be managed as a project, and all well-structured projects have a proper yearly budget approved by senior management.

1

ESTABLISH AND APPROVE A BUDGET TO IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM

While a budget to set up a club licensing system was established in part 1 of this guide, it is also important to create a budget for the implementation of the system. The MA needs to ensure that it has the funds to finance the operation of the system each year.

For instance, in some cases, licensors require clubs to pay a club licensing application fee to offset some of the costs of the system.

It is vital that a budget is established and then revised every year. We recommend that at least the following items are taken into consideration.



## Must have

- **Salaries of club licensing manager and their team:** the CLM is a key player in the system and therefore it is important to budget for their salary as well as for other members of the department.
- **Decision-making meetings:** the FIB and the AB meetings will take place at least once a year. Depending on the system, they may take place more than once per year.
- **Workshops with clubs:** budget for meeting rooms and materials to be provided to the clubs.
- **Visits to clubs:** the MA will need to budget for the travel and accommodation of the CLM and/or experts to visit the clubs.
- **Office utilities:** computers, mobile phones, etc.

## Highly recommended

- **Compensating experts:** the MA will need to budget for the compensation of external experts who help to evaluate documentation presented by clubs and provide clubs with their expertise. Proper club licensing systems contract reputable auditing companies to ensure that the financial documentation provided by clubs is accurate. This item has not been included as a "Must have" since some MAs are able to use committees, volunteers and/or employees within the MA that are already compensated.
- **Operating an online platform:** licensors have an internal online platform or hire external service providers.
- **Overall designing and printing:** the regulations and all additional tools developed by the MA must be concise and look professional and presentable to clearly communicate to the clubs and football stakeholders what the system is and how it is implemented.
- **Benchmarking report:** the MA might want to hire an external company to create a benchmarking report, or this can be done internally, but it is important to budget for at least hiring a design company to bring the report to life.

//

*At Concacaf, budgeting sits at the core of our strategic process. This enables us to paint a clear picture of what is needed to get a programme up and running. During our club licensing workshops, we use this opportunity to present budget templates and discuss the importance of establishing and approving a budget. This allows us to demonstrate how the budgeting process can directly impact the success of a club licensing programme."*

**Jonathan Martinez**

Head of Professional Football Development, Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (Concacaf)



1

ESTABLISH AND APPROVE A BUDGET TO IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM

The following table provides a template for a basic budget.

ITEM	AMOUNT	FREQUENCY PER YEAR	TOTAL
CLM and additional team salaries	\$000,000	1	\$000,000
Visits to clubs	\$000,000	# of clubs	\$000,000
Criteria experts	\$000,000	# of individual experts/ # of company experts	\$000,000
Finance criteria expert	\$000,000	1 external company	\$000,000
Online platform	\$000,000	1 licence for external platform/ 1 maintenance cost for internal platform	\$000,000
Benchmarking report	\$000,000	1	\$000,000
Decision-making meetings	\$000,000	2	\$000,000
Workshops with clubs	\$000,000	2	\$000,000
Design and printing, office utilities	\$000,000	1	\$000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$000,000</b>

1

# TASK LIST



Create a draft budget



Have budget approved by senior management

COMPLETE



GO TO NEXT STEP



ESTABLISH AND APPROVE A BUDGET TO IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM



2.

## ORGANISE A CLUB LICENSING LAUNCH MEETING WITH THE CLUBS

A launch meeting will allow the clubs to learn about the season's club licensing process before the start of the core process.

**Organising an annual club licensing launch meeting** right before the start of the core process will allow the MA and the club licensing administration to inform the clubs about how the system will be implemented in a particular season.

This launch meeting, which can be conducted virtually or in person, should include participants from all clubs that will be applying for a licence.

### Topics to be discussed include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Objectives and overview of the club licensing system
- Criteria that clubs will need to meet to be eligible to participate in domestic and/or regional competitions in a particular season
- Core process for that year's implementation
- Timelines and deadlines of that year's core process
- Composition of the FIB and the AB
- Possible sanctions and/or rewards for non-fulfilment or fulfilment of specific criteria
- How to use the online club licensing platform (i.e. how to upload documents to the platform)
- Other tools, guides and resources available to the clubs
- Answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs)



Clubs should also be given the opportunity to ask questions regarding all of the topics outlined above, and the relevant documents should be provided (regulations, link to online platform, etc.).

**Ultimately, clubs should leave the meeting with a clear understanding of the process they have to follow for them to be awarded a licence for that particular season.**

2

# TASK LIST



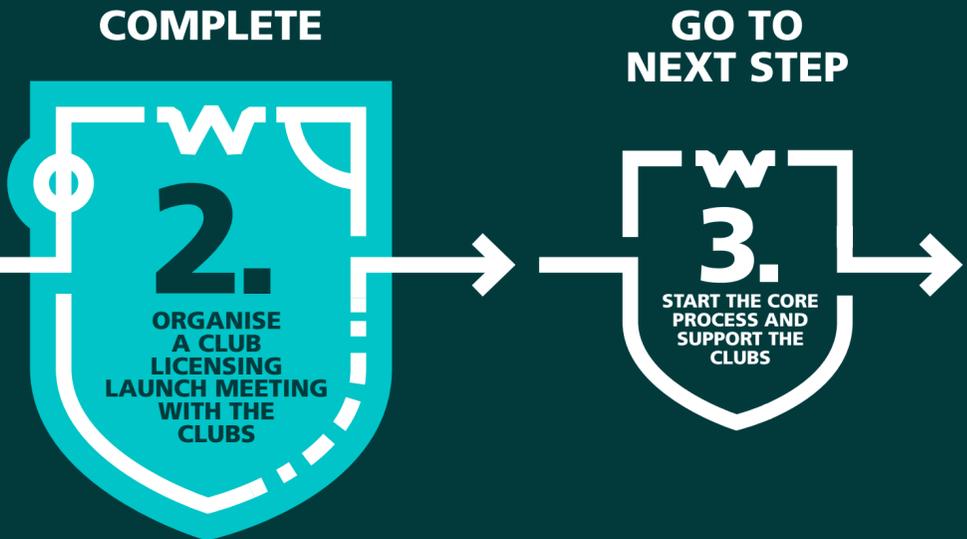
Create presentation for the meeting



Set date/time/location and communicate to all clubs



Meeting has taken place



ORGANISE A CLUB LICENSING LAUNCH MEETING WITH THE CLUBS



3.

# START THE CORE PROCESS AND SUPPORT THE CLUBS

The first step of the core process is to send invitation letters to the clubs to apply for a licence.

3

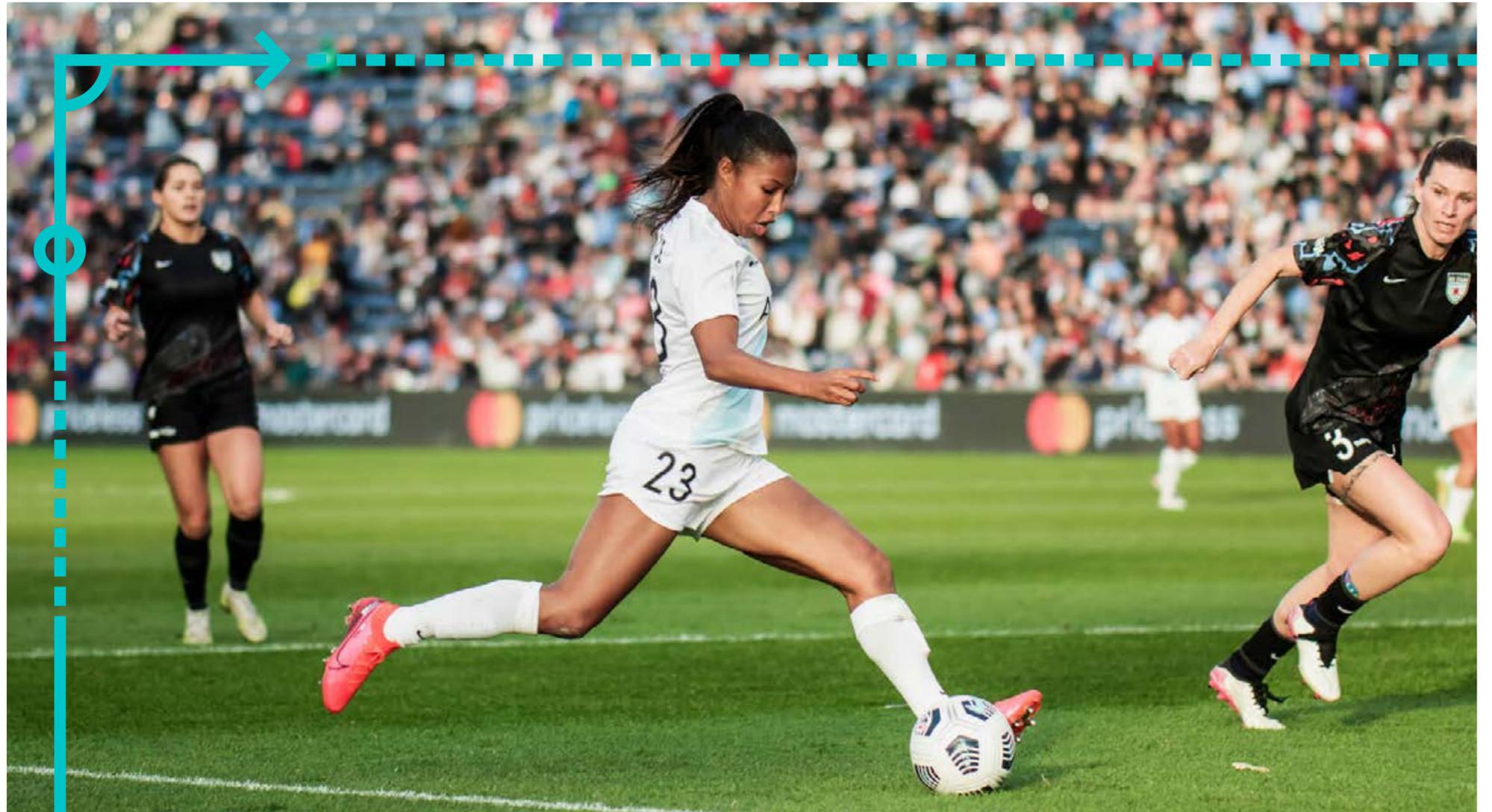
START THE CORE PROCESS AND SUPPORT THE CLUBS

In the first step of the **core process**, the CLM shall send an official invitation letter to all clubs that need to apply for a licence.

This letter will outline the competition(s) for which clubs require a licence in order to participate, invite the clubs to submit their licence application, and include the relevant deadlines.

A sample invitation letter is included here for reference. Once the invitation letters have been distributed, the CLM should also provide support to the clubs throughout the process by answering questions and providing feedback when requested.

A checklist with the main tasks and deadlines can be shared with the clubs.



Invitation letter sample:

**Name of Club:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Recipient:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Recipient Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Recipient Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Invitation to apply for the [insert MA name] 2022 domestic club licence**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ [Name of Recipient],

The [insert MA name] would like to formally invite \_\_\_\_\_ (club name) to apply for a [insert MA name] domestic club licence, which will be valid for one season of competition and will expire on \_\_\_\_\_ (licence expiration date). All clubs participating in the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of league competition) for the \_\_\_\_\_ (year) season will require a licence.

Enclosed with this letter you will find all materials necessary to submit your application for the [insert MA name] domestic club licence.

**THESE MATERIALS INCLUDE:**

- Club Licensing Regulations
- Club Licensing Confidentiality Agreement
- Club Licensing Confidentiality Agreement - Member Association Employee
- Link to Club Licensing Online Platform
- Legal Declaration

The deadline to submit all documentation to apply for a [insert MA name] domestic club licence is \_\_\_\_\_ (deadline date). Please submit all application materials to the Club Licensing Manager, \_\_\_\_\_ (club licensing manager name).

Your club's application will be processed and submitted to the first instance decision-making body, and the decision will be taken by \_\_\_\_\_ (deadline date). If your application is approved and you have qualified on sporting merit, your club will be notified and will be eligible to participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of league competition) for the \_\_\_\_\_ (year) season.

Should your application be rejected, your club will have the right to appeal to the appeals body by \_\_\_\_\_ (deadline date), as outlined in the [insert MA name] Club Licensing Regulations. The decision taken by the appeals body is final, and if your club's application is rejected, your club will not be eligible to participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of league competition) for the \_\_\_\_\_ (year) season.

We look forward to receiving your application for a [insert MA name] domestic club licence. Should you have any questions regarding the club licensing process, please do not hesitate to contact our Club Licensing Manager, \_\_\_\_\_ (club licensing manager name), at \_\_\_\_\_ (phone number) or \_\_\_\_\_ (email address).

Kind regards,

\_\_\_\_\_

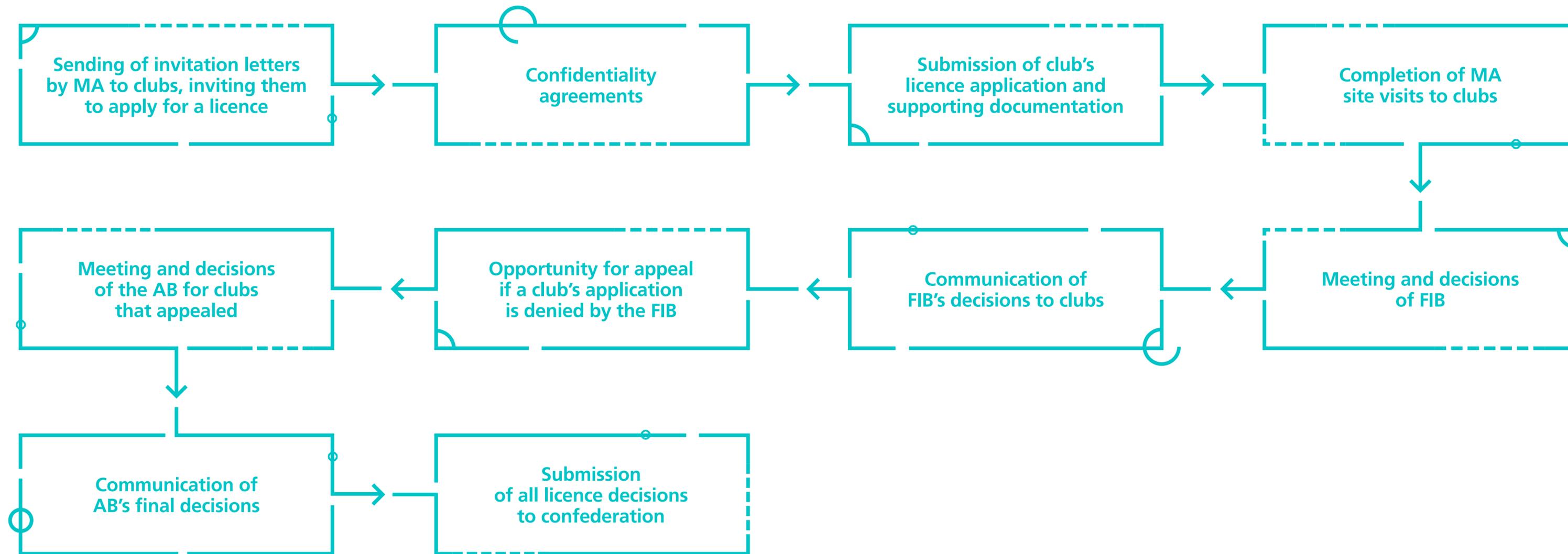
(Name of MA President or GS)

FIFA®

3

START THE CORE PROCESS AND SUPPORT THE CLUBS

The following illustration provides an example of the **core process** that MAs usually follow.



The process and deadlines should be established so that sufficient time is provided for clubs to prepare and submit their applications and for the decision-making bodies to properly review and make final decisions on applications prior to the start of the competition.

3

START THE CORE PROCESS AND SUPPORT THE CLUBS

**As a minimum, and to properly support the clubs during the core process, the CLM is expected to:**

**Follow up individually with each club to ask if they understand the process, deadlines and requirements of the system, and if they have any suggestions**

**Answer any questions regarding the online club licensing platform**

**Set up communication tools to provide clubs with easy access to information that guides them on how to comply with all the requirements**

**Touch base regularly to ensure that the clubs are aware of the deadlines they need to meet for the system**

**Organise workshops or group meetings to provide clubs with progress reports**

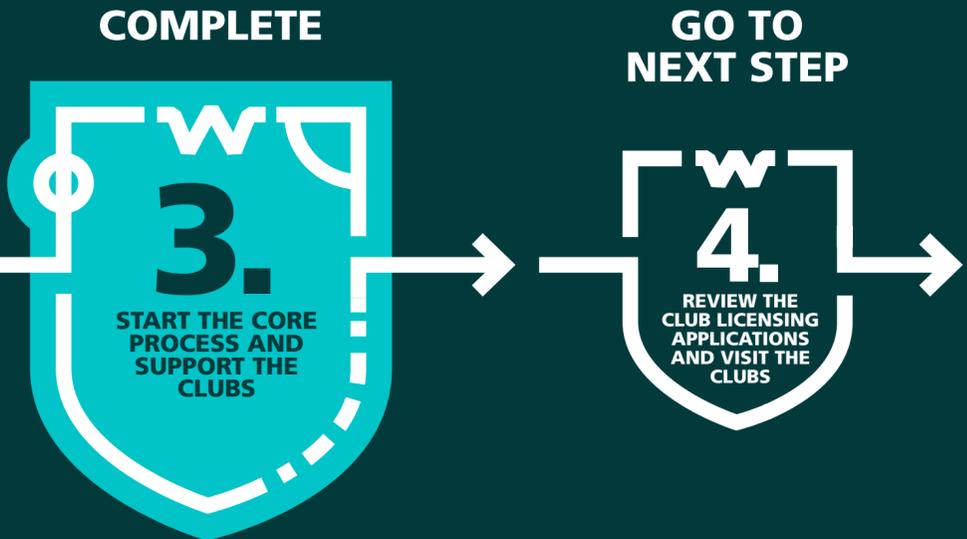


3

# TASK LIST

START THE CORE PROCESS AND SUPPORT THE CLUBS

-  Finalise core process
-  Send invitation letters to the clubs
-  Follow up with each club to ensure they have all the information they need





4.

# REVIEW THE CLUB LICENSING APPLICATIONS AND VISIT THE CLUBS

As clubs submit their applications prior to the deadline, the CLM and the criteria experts must review the documentation provided. It is important to visit the clubs during the application phase to ensure that the documents provided are accurate and the applications reflect what the club actually has in place.

The CLM has the important tasks of compiling and **organising all documentation** submitted by the clubs, as well as **verifying information** through site visits and consultation with the criteria experts.

As the clubs complete their applications, the CLM should inform the clubs whether any information submitted is incomplete or missing. The CLM should also confirm receipt of the submitted application for each club.

It is crucial to verify the information that the clubs submit in their licence applications. A representative from the MA should conduct a site visit to each club's headquarters, stadium and training facilities to assess the information provided in the application. An inspection form should be completed to provide a source of reference to compare with the documentation submitted by the club.

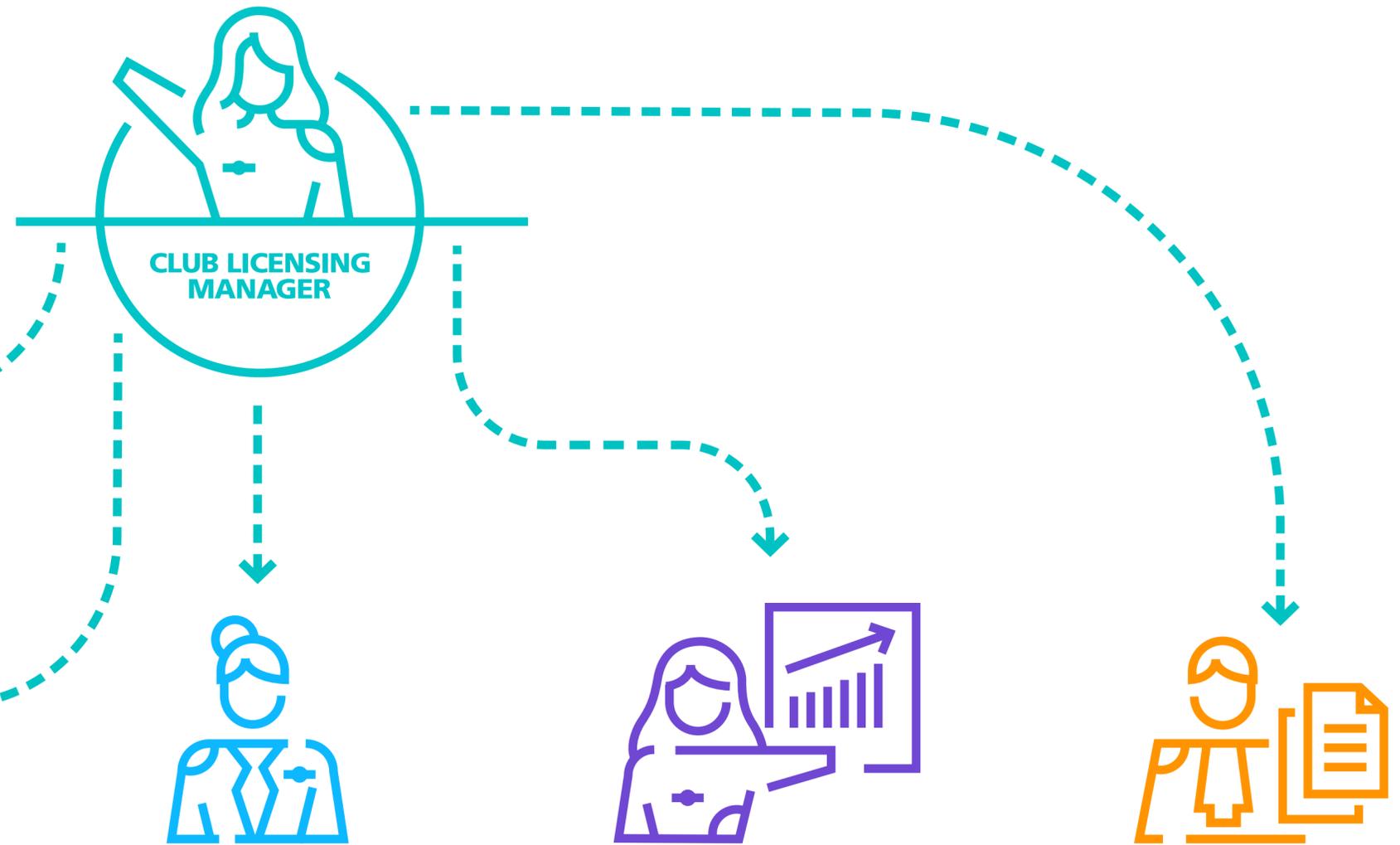
Once the CLM has reviewed all applications and conducted visits to the clubs, the CLM should prepare all application documentation in an orderly manner. They should prepare a report for the FIB that provides an overview of each club's application, including the results from the site visit and highlighting if any information is missing or incorrect. This will ensure that the FIB is fully aware of the status of each club's application and facilitate a more efficient and effective decision-making process.



4

REVIEW THE CLUB LICENSING APPLICATIONS AND VISIT THE CLUBS

## The CLM should use the support of the MA's club licensing criteria experts during this key step.



### 1. Infrastructure

To review the infrastructure submissions, the CLM must receive support from the infrastructure experts appointed earlier in the year. The infrastructure experts can be in-house through an infrastructure committee inside the MA, external consultants or representatives of an architecture firm.

### 2. Sporting

To review the sporting submissions, the CLM must receive support from the sporting experts appointed earlier in the year. The sporting experts can be in-house through the MA's technical division, external consultants or representatives of a company specialised in sporting matters.

### 3. Administration

To review the administration submissions, the CLM must receive support from the business experts appointed earlier in the year. The business and administration criteria experts can be in-house within the MA, external consultants or representatives of a business consulting firm.

### 4. Finance

To review the financial submissions, the CLM must receive support from the financial experts appointed earlier in the year. The finance experts can be in-house through the MA's finance department, external consultants or representatives of an auditing firm.

### 5. Legal

To review the legal submissions, the CLM must receive support from the legal experts appointed earlier in the year. The legal experts can be in-house through the legal department of the MA, external consultants or representatives of a law firm.

//

*As part of the club licensing core process, continuously communicating and supporting our clubs is crucial. The club licensing administration in our organisation consistently reviews documentation, answers questions and provides recommendations regarding the club's submissions to ensure the applications are complete and accurate."*

**Aisha Nalule**

Director of Competitions, Federation of Uganda Football Associations (FUFA)



4

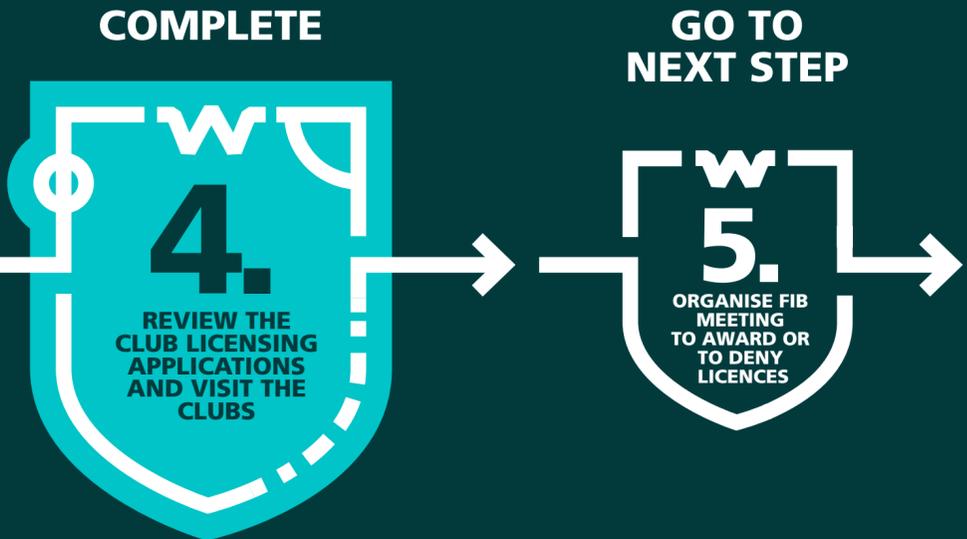
# TASK LIST



Review documents submitted by clubs



Inform clubs if the documents they submitted are correct





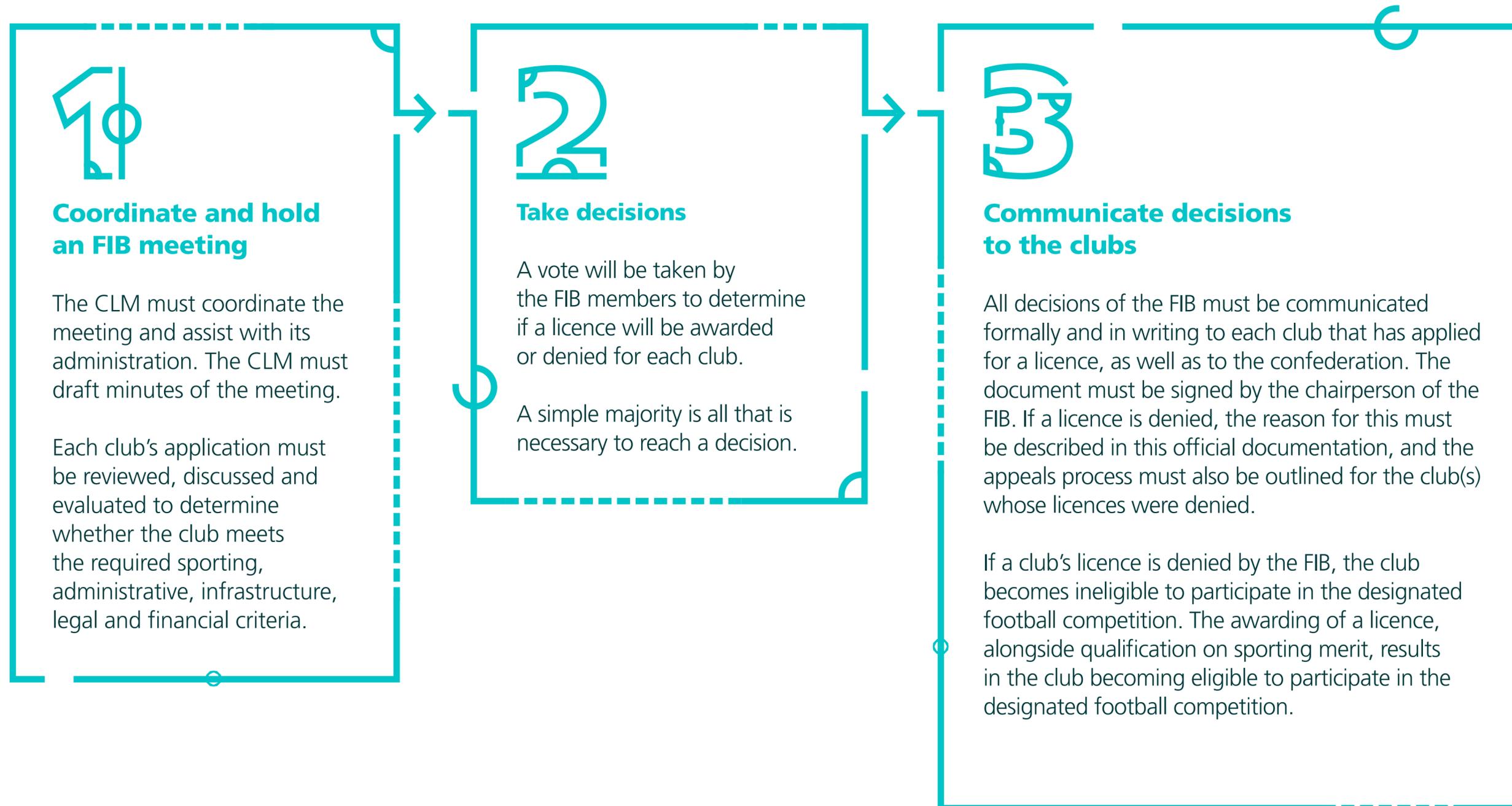
# ORGANISE AN FIB MEETING TO AWARD OR DENY LICENCES

Once the applications have been reviewed and visits to the clubs have taken place, the FIB must meet to decide whether to award or deny licences.

5

ORGANISE AN FIB MEETING TO AWARD OR DENY LICENCES

An FIB meeting must be organised to assess the documentation submitted by each club in order to award or deny the club a licence.



**Coordinate and hold an FIB meeting**

The CLM must coordinate the meeting and assist with its administration. The CLM must draft minutes of the meeting.

Each club's application must be reviewed, discussed and evaluated to determine whether the club meets the required sporting, administrative, infrastructure, legal and financial criteria.



**Take decisions**

A vote will be taken by the FIB members to determine if a licence will be awarded or denied for each club.

A simple majority is all that is necessary to reach a decision.



**Communicate decisions to the clubs**

All decisions of the FIB must be communicated formally and in writing to each club that has applied for a licence, as well as to the confederation. The document must be signed by the chairperson of the FIB. If a licence is denied, the reason for this must be described in this official documentation, and the appeals process must also be outlined for the club(s) whose licences were denied.

If a club's licence is denied by the FIB, the club becomes ineligible to participate in the designated football competition. The awarding of a licence, alongside qualification on sporting merit, results in the club becoming eligible to participate in the designated football competition.

**Note:**

The non-fulfilment of certain criteria may not necessarily lead to a licence application being rejected on the basis of the club licensing regulations. Instead, it may lead to a designated procedure or sanction as outlined in the regulations.

The FIB must be aware of these sanctions and procedures as it makes its decisions, and the CLM will need to monitor the club(s) to ensure that the procedure is completed, or the sanction is enforced.

5

# TASK LIST



Inform FIB members of date/time/location of the meeting



Prepare report based on documentation submitted



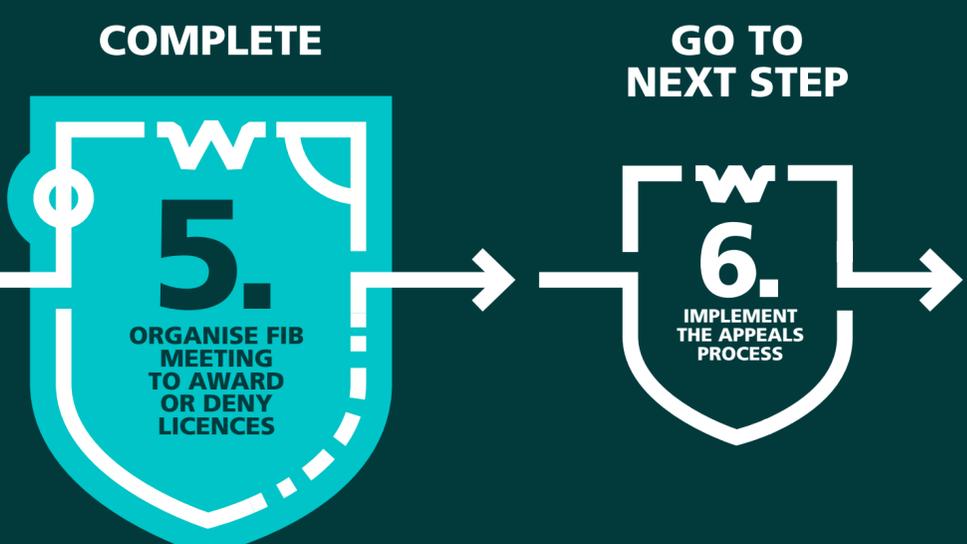
FIB meeting has taken place



Draft minutes for the meeting



Communicate decisions to the clubs



ORGANISE AN FIB MEETING TO AWARD OR DENY LICENCES



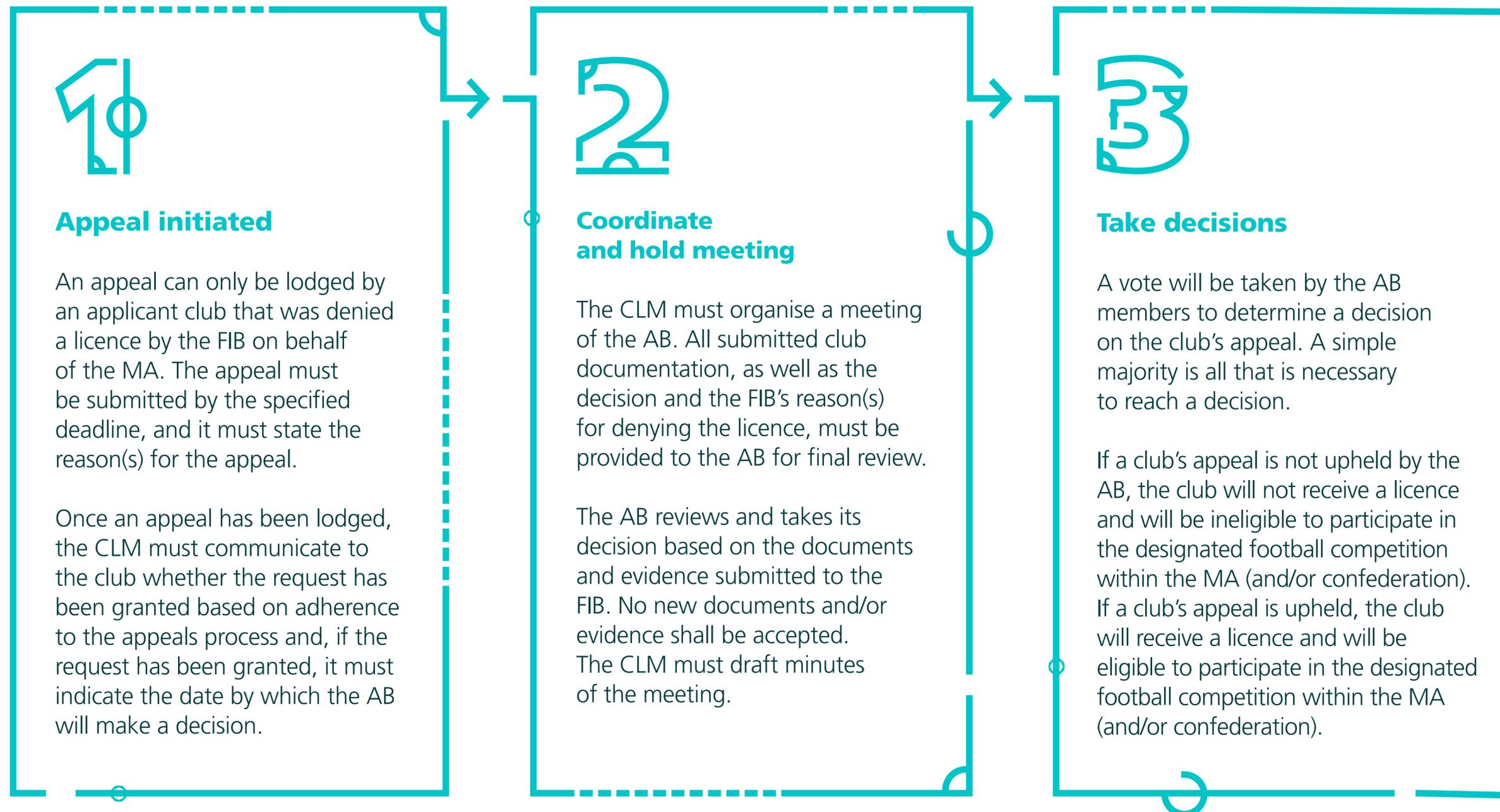
## IMPLEMENT THE APPEALS PROCESS

If applications are rejected by the FIB, the clubs concerned must be provided with an opportunity to appeal against the decision. If a club submits an appeal, the MA must organise a meeting with the members of the AB for a decision to be taken.

6

IMPLEMENT THE APPEALS PROCESS

Clubs must be provided with the opportunity to appeal against the decision of the FIB, and the **appeals process** must be implemented as outlined in the regulations for a decision to be taken by the AB.



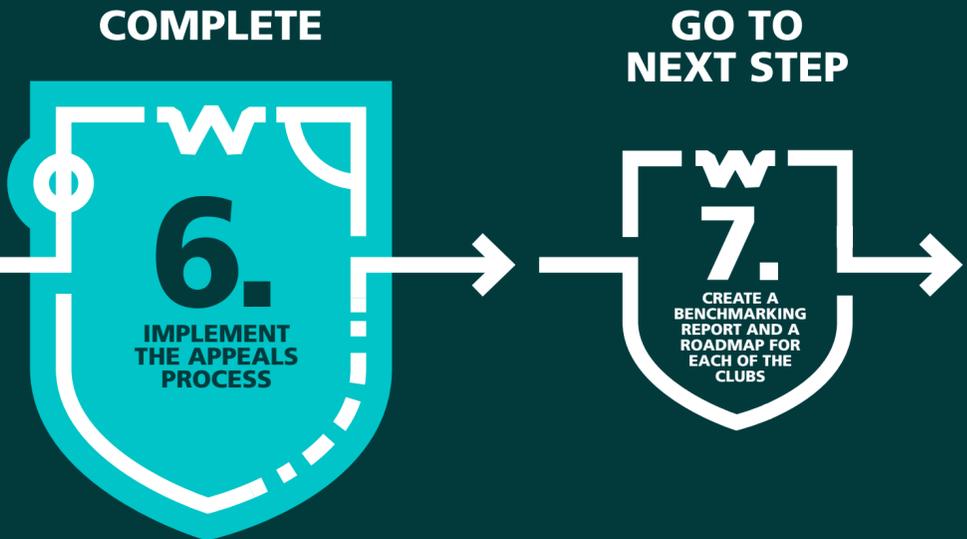
After the AB has met, the MA will need to formally communicate the decisions to the clubs in writing. Once all clubs have been informed, the MA can communicate the decisions to all relevant stakeholders, including the confederation and media outlets. In this step, it is imperative that the MA's communications department is involved in the creation of this communication process to the general public.

6

# TASK LIST

IMPLEMENT THE APPEALS PROCESS

-  Provide clubs denied a licence by the FIB with instructions on how to appeal against the decision
-  AB meeting has taken place
-  Draft minutes for the meeting
-  Communicate decisions to the clubs and the confederation



**FRANCE**  
Division 1 Féminine

**GERMANY**  
FLYERALARM Frauen-Bundesliga

# CREATE A BENCHMARKING REPORT AND A ROADMAP FOR EACH OF THE CLUBS

The club licensing system allows the MA to compile a significant amount of quality data on its clubs. Non-sensitive data can be collated by an MA for publication in a benchmarking report on women's club football.

GENERAL INFORMATION



FINANCIAL



PLAYERS



GOVERNANCE



FAN ENGAGEMENT



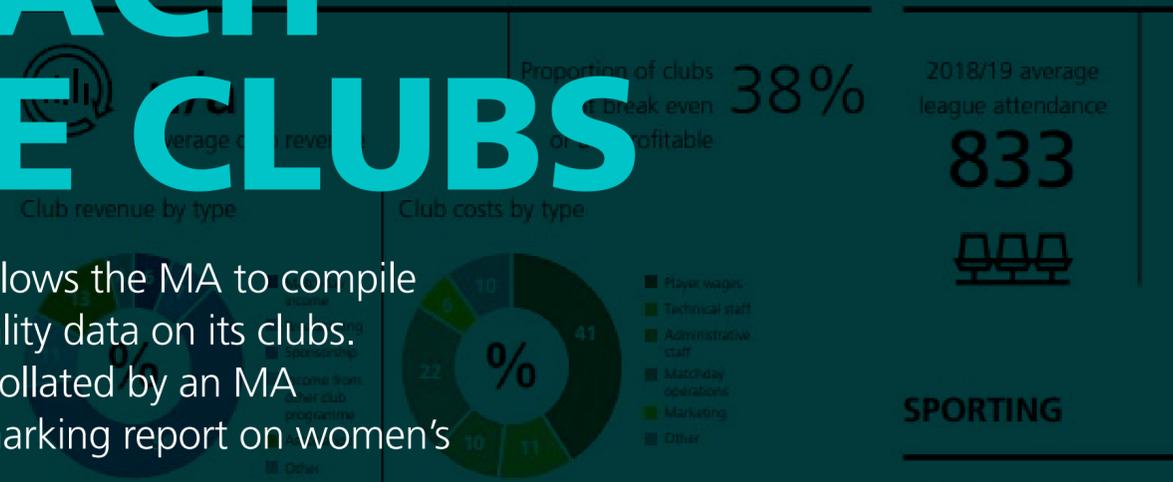
SPORTING



GENERAL INFORMATION



FINANCIAL



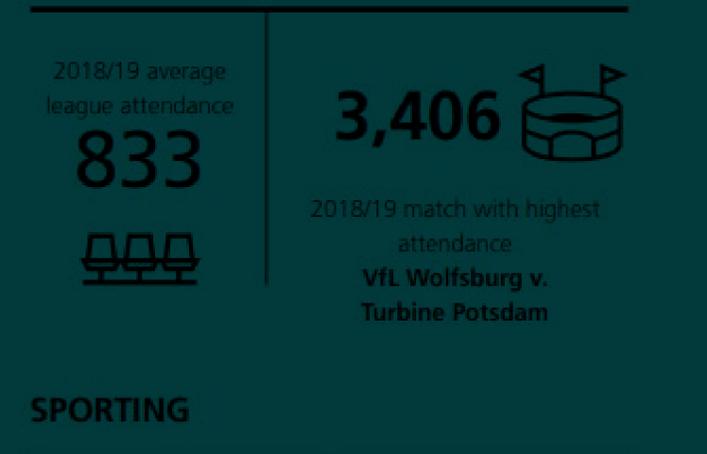
PLAYERS



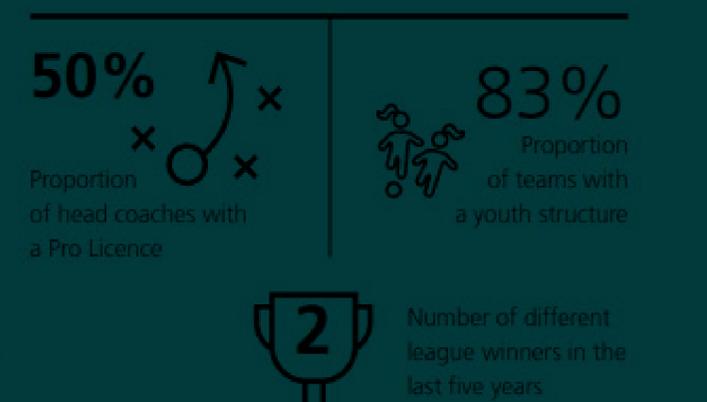
GOVERNANCE



FAN ENGAGEMENT



SPORTING



## BENCHMARKING REPORT

FIFA has already published its first benchmarking report on the current status of women's club football globally. The report can be found at the following [link](#). This FIFA report will be published on a regular basis and will provide stakeholders around the world with insights into the reality of women's club football across some of the top leagues in the world.

If an MA would like to create something similar to the FIFA report, but at national level, it will provide football stakeholders with useful, detailed insights into the reality of women's club football in its country or territory. This will also allow an MA to measure the evolution of women's club football over the years.

An MA would truly be implementing best practice by creating this type of report and would provide further visibility to its football clubs at both national and regional level.

After completing a benchmarking report, it would be beneficial to organise a workshop with the clubs to present the findings to them before publishing the report to a wider audience. It is important to note that a benchmarking report may also influence the criteria that an MA includes in future editions of its national club licensing regulations.

**A national women's club football benchmarking report could present data in the following areas:**



**What if an MA already publishes a men's club football benchmarking report?**

MAs are encouraged to include women's club football within their next benchmarking report, or the MA can publish two reports per year: one on women's club football and another on men's club football.

7

# TASK LIST



Identify areas to cover in the report



Analyse data for the report



Write and design report



Publish the report and meet with clubs to provide them with their roadmap

COMPLETE



GO TO NEXT STEP





8.

# ORGANISE WORKSHOPS WITH THE CLUBS AND REVIEW THE SYSTEM WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS

After the conclusion of the core process, it would be beneficial to organise development workshops for the clubs in the areas in which they need assistance, and to review the system with all stakeholders.

## Providing clubs with additional support and tools to encourage growth and investment is an important step in any club licensing system.

Based on the reality of the clubs and the information submitted in the licence applications, workshops can be organised to assist clubs in the following areas: sporting, administration, infrastructure, legal and finance.

Experts can be brought in to present on priority topics, and clubs should have the opportunity to share best practices and challenges with each other.

At these workshops, the CLM can also present updates and establish the future direction of the club licensing system for the MA.

This is also an opportunity for the women's football department to present the clubs with an update on the MA women's football strategy, the MA's vision for women's football at club level and the important role that the clubs play in achieving this vision. Having the women's football department present at these workshops will also ensure that they have a good understanding of the club landscape, and it can create and bolster good relationships with those involved in women's football within the clubs.

Examples of workshops for clubs based on club licensing criteria include (but are not limited to) the following:

CRITERIA	WORKSHOP
Club budget	A workshop for clubs with a financial expert who can guide clubs in creating a proper club budget
Media officer	A workshop for clubs' media officers to improve the way in which each club conducts its media operations
Marketing plan	A workshop for clubs with a marketing expert to assist clubs with creating or improving their marketing plans
Youth development plan	A workshop for clubs with a youth development expert to assist with creating or improving a youth development plan
Stadium management and security	A workshop for clubs with stadium management and security experts to assist clubs in creating or improving in the areas of pitch maintenance, floodlights, stands and stadium security plans

**It is important that the CLM properly documents the workshops to keep a good record of the presentations, as well as the discussions that took place between the clubs, invited experts and the MA.**

During the workshops, an MA can also collect information from its clubs on how they believe the club licensing system can be improved.

The CLM can collect feedback from the clubs, FIB and AB members, criteria experts and any other stakeholders involved to confirm which elements of the system functioned well and to identify areas for improvement.

A survey can be created to assess specific items, and calls can be held to discuss relevant topics in further detail.

Clubs can be encouraged to add or adjust criteria for the next season, as well as to decide if the scope of application for the system should be widened to include additional competitions.

This is also a good time to think about the medium and long term of the system, as well as how it is assisting the MA to achieve its overall women's football strategy.

It is important to remember that the implementation of certain club licensing criteria can be very demanding for clubs. Therefore, it is essential to provide clubs with a good amount of time to adjust to any future requirements. For example, if floodlights will be required at the stadiums in the future, such changes require significant time and resources, and clubs should be given an appropriate amount of time to tackle these requirements.



//

*At the end of each season, we provide each club with the opportunity to give us feedback on the club licensing system and we prepare a presentation to inform them of their performance during the process, which areas they need to improve, and which areas were presented successfully. We also engage with our experts and decision-making bodies to see if there are any key improvements we can make to the system for the next season.”*

**Carmina Aztarbe**

Women's Club Licensing Manager, Argentinian Football Association (AFA)



# TASK LIST



Set date/time/location and agenda and communicate to all clubs



Confirm attendance of experts for presentations



Workshops have taken place

COMPLETE





**Your system  
has now been  
implemented.**

 **CHAPTER 3**

# CONCLUSIONS AND ANNEXES

- Conclusions
- Big picture timeline
- Detailed set-up timeline
- Detailed set-up checklist
- Detailed implementation timeline
- Detailed implementation checklist

## CONCLUSIONS

FIFA hopes that this guide will assist MAs around the world to properly implement club licensing in women's football. FIFA would like to reiterate the following:

### — 01 —

It is paramount that, when a new club licensing system is being set up, the licensor has an excellent understanding of the reality of all clubs that will be part of the system.

### — 02 —

Creating criteria without having first understood the specific reality of football clubs can be detrimental to the success of club licensing.

### — 03 —

MAs should truly work hand in hand with their experts in women's football, club licensing, competitions, development, legal, finance and communications to ensure that the system takes all viewpoints into consideration.

### — 04 —

MAs should support their clubs as they embark upon the club licensing journey and make sure that they are available to assist the clubs and provide them with the tools they need to succeed.

### — 05 —

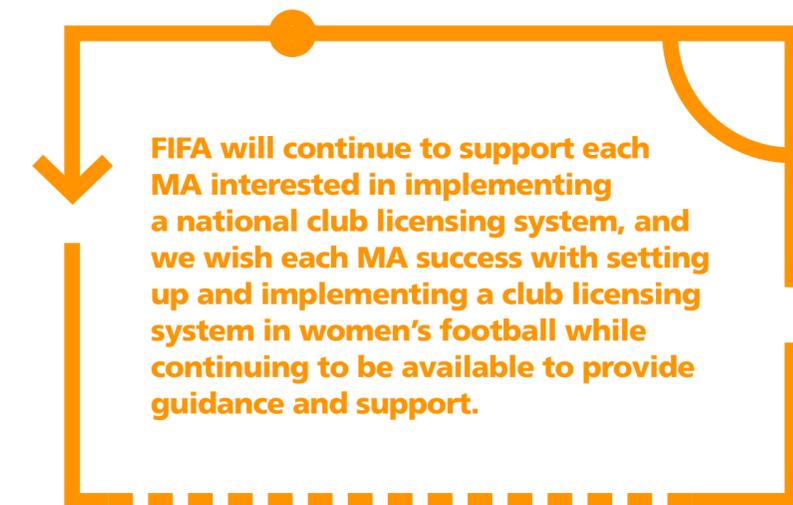
Developing an efficient and modern system that is tailor-made for the reality of clubs will provide the best opportunity for women's club football to grow and improve.

### — 06 —

The right people should be appointed to each role, with relevant qualifications and characteristics: excellent time management skills, commitment to achieving the system's goals and objectives, and dedication to consistently communicating with the relevant stakeholders.

### — 07 —

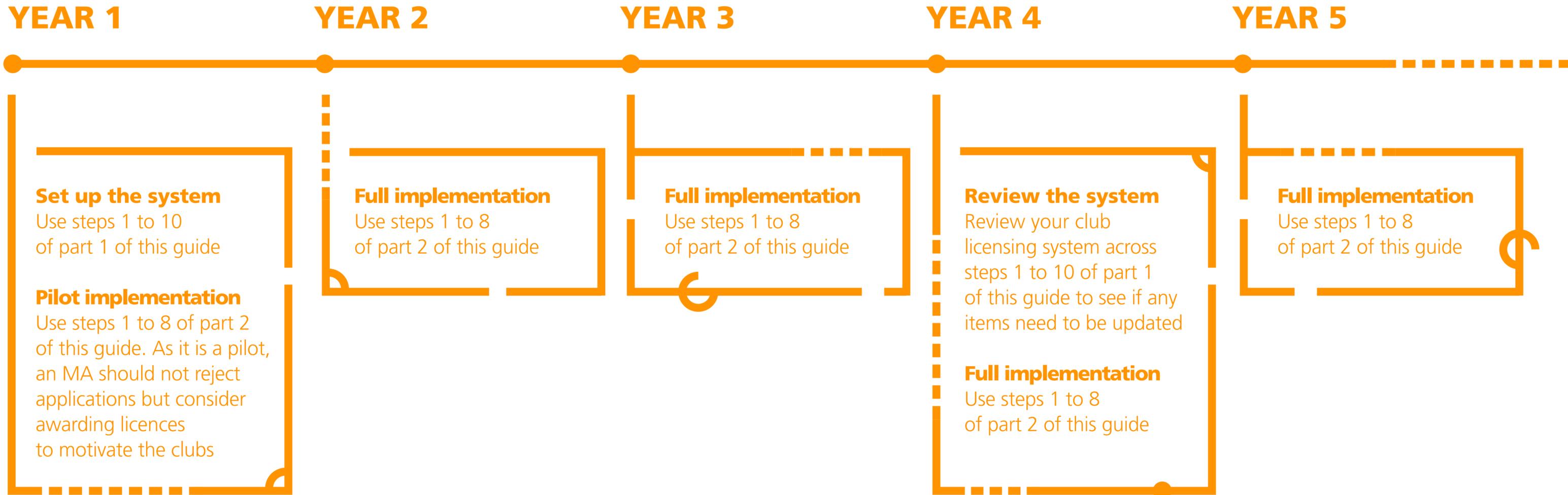
It is important to produce benchmarking reports and conduct club workshops to facilitate knowledge-sharing, to review the system and to make adjustments and improvements for future cycles.



# BIG PICTURE TIMELINE

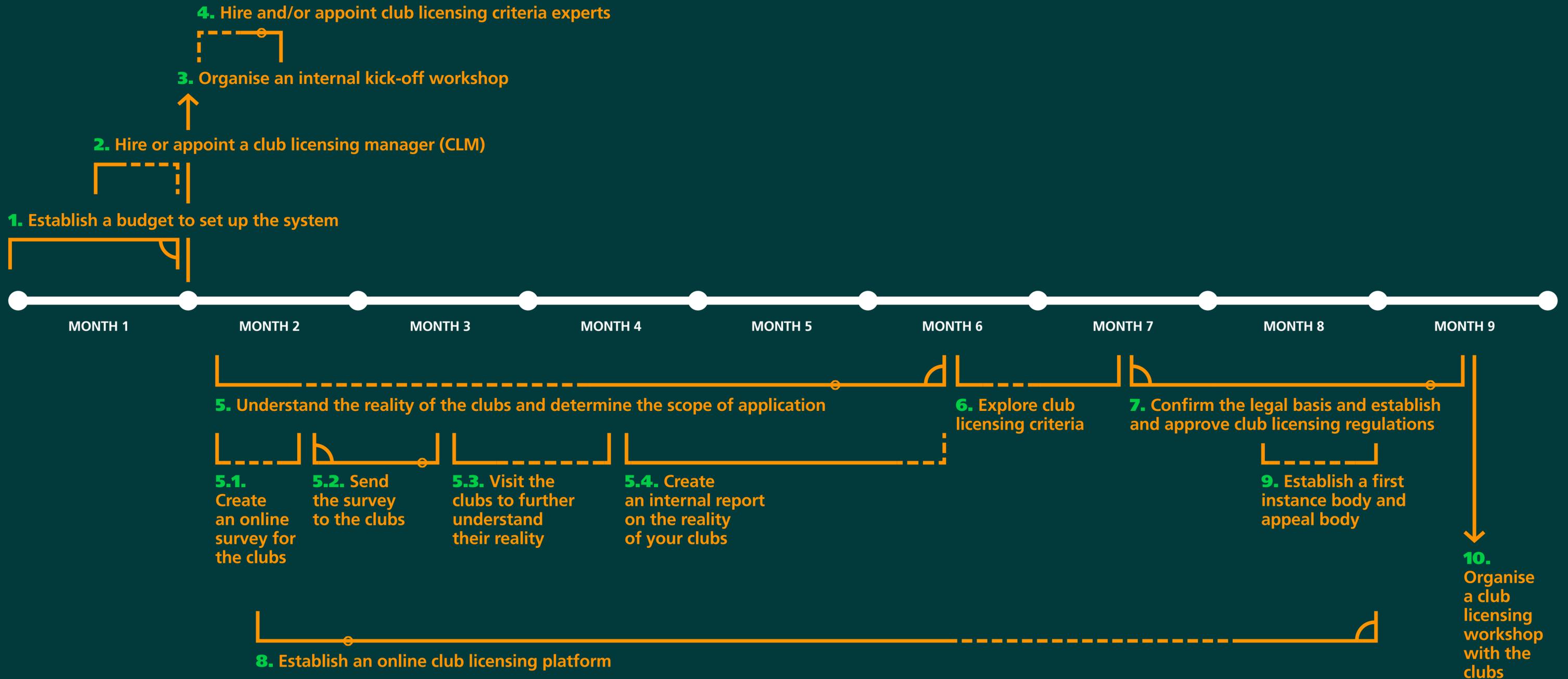
The following big picture timeline can be considered by any MA that is establishing its long-term vision and plan to implement club licensing in women's football at national level for the first time.

CONCLUSIONS AND ANNEXES



# DETAILED SET-UP TIMELINE

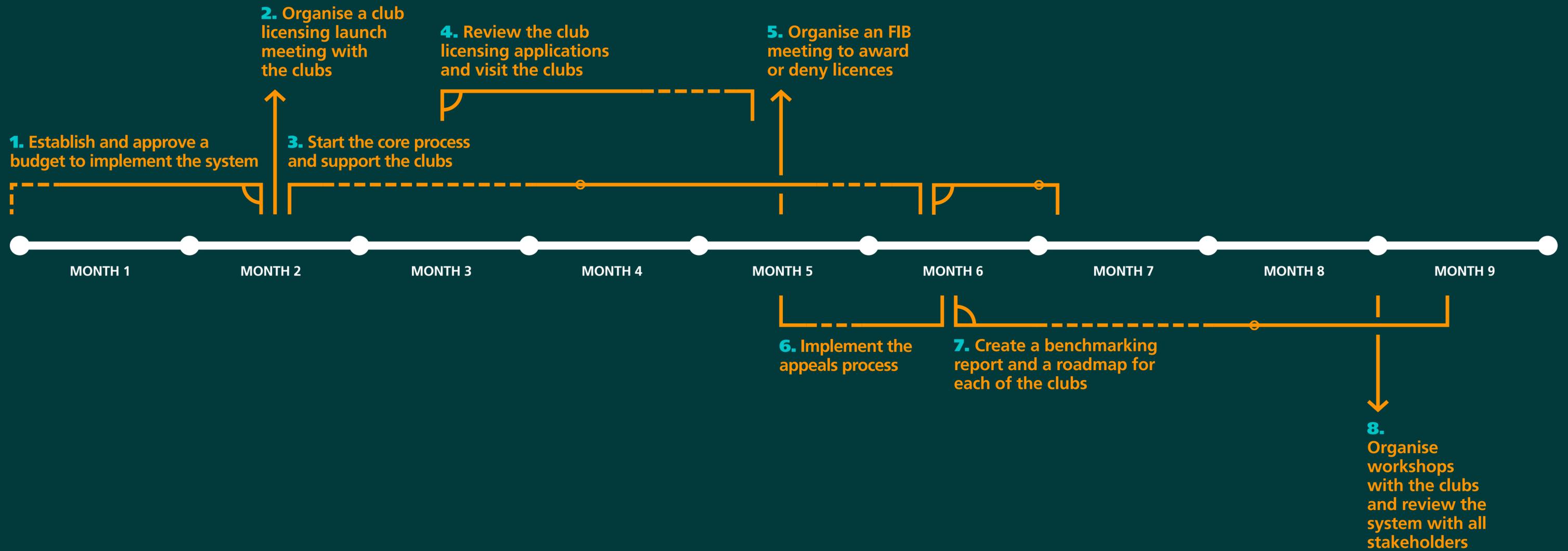
This graphic can be used by an MA to establish a timeline to set up its club licensing system. The time frame is only a suggestion and can be tailored to the reality of each MA.



SET UP THE SYSTEM		KEY DELIVERABLES	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED
1	<b>Establish a budget to set up the system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create a draft budget</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have budget approved by senior management</li> </ul>		
2	<b>Hire or appoint a club licensing manager (CLM)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure, as a minimum, that one individual in the MA's administration is responsible for club licensing in women's football</li> </ul>		
3	<b>Organise an internal kick-off meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create presentation for the meeting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set the date/time/location and communicate to all participants</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meeting has taken place</li> </ul>		
4	<b>Hire and/or appoint club licensing criteria experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify experts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Officially hire and/or appoint experts</li> </ul>		
5	<b>Understand the reality of the clubs and determine the scope of application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create an online survey for the clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Send survey to the clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visit the clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create an internal report on the reality of the clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine the scope of application of the system</li> </ul>		
6	<b>Explore club licensing criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At least one meeting has taken place to explore club licensing criteria</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalise criteria to be used for each competition</li> </ul>		
7	<b>Confirm the legal basis and establish and approve club licensing regulations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm legal basis for club licensing system</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Draft regulations, including specific criteria</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss regulations internally</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have regulations approved by the MA's legal team</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have regulations reviewed by FIFA/confederation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have regulations approved by MA's relevant body (e.g. ExCo, etc.)</li> </ul>		
8	<b>Establish an online club licensing platform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore internal and external options</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select platform</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Secure platform</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Train clubs on how to use the platform</li> </ul>		
9	<b>Establish an FIB and an AB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify individuals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have individuals confirmed by MA's relevant body/person (e.g. ExCo, GS, etc.)</li> </ul>		
10	<b>Organise a club licensing workshop with the clubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set date/time/location/agenda and communicate to all participants in the MA and at the clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workshop has taken place</li> </ul>		

# DETAILED IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

This graphic can be used by an MA to establish a timeline to implement its club licensing system. The time frame is only a suggestion and can be tailored to the reality of each MA.



SET UP THE SYSTEM		KEY DELIVERABLES	DEADLINE	DATE COMPLETED
1	<b>Establish and approve a budget to implement the system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create a draft budget</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have budget approved by senior management</li> </ul>		
2	<b>Organise a club licensing launch meeting with the clubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create presentation for the meeting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set date/time/location and communicate to all clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meeting has taken place</li> </ul>		
3	<b>Start the core process and support the clubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalise core process</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Send invitation letters to the clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with each club to ensure they have all the information they need</li> </ul>		
4	<b>Review the club licensing applications and visit the clubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review documents submitted by clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inform clubs if the documents they submitted are correct</li> </ul>		
5	<b>Organise an FIB meeting to award or deny licences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inform FIB members of date/time/location of the meeting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare report based on documentation submitted</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> FIB meeting has taken place</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Draft minutes for the meeting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communicate decisions to the clubs</li> </ul>		
6	<b>Implement the appeals process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide clubs denied a licence by the FIB with instructions on how to appeal against the decision</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> AB meeting has taken place</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Draft minutes for the meeting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communicate decisions to the clubs and the confederation</li> </ul>		
7	<b>Create a benchmarking report and a roadmap for each of the clubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify areas to cover in the report</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Analyse data for the report</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write and design report</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Publish the report and meet with clubs to provide them with their roadmap</li> </ul>		
8	<b>Organise workshops with the clubs and review the system with all stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set date/time/location and agenda and communicate to all clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm attendance of experts for presentations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workshops have taken place</li> </ul>		



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