

# WOMEN'S FOOTBALL STRATEGY

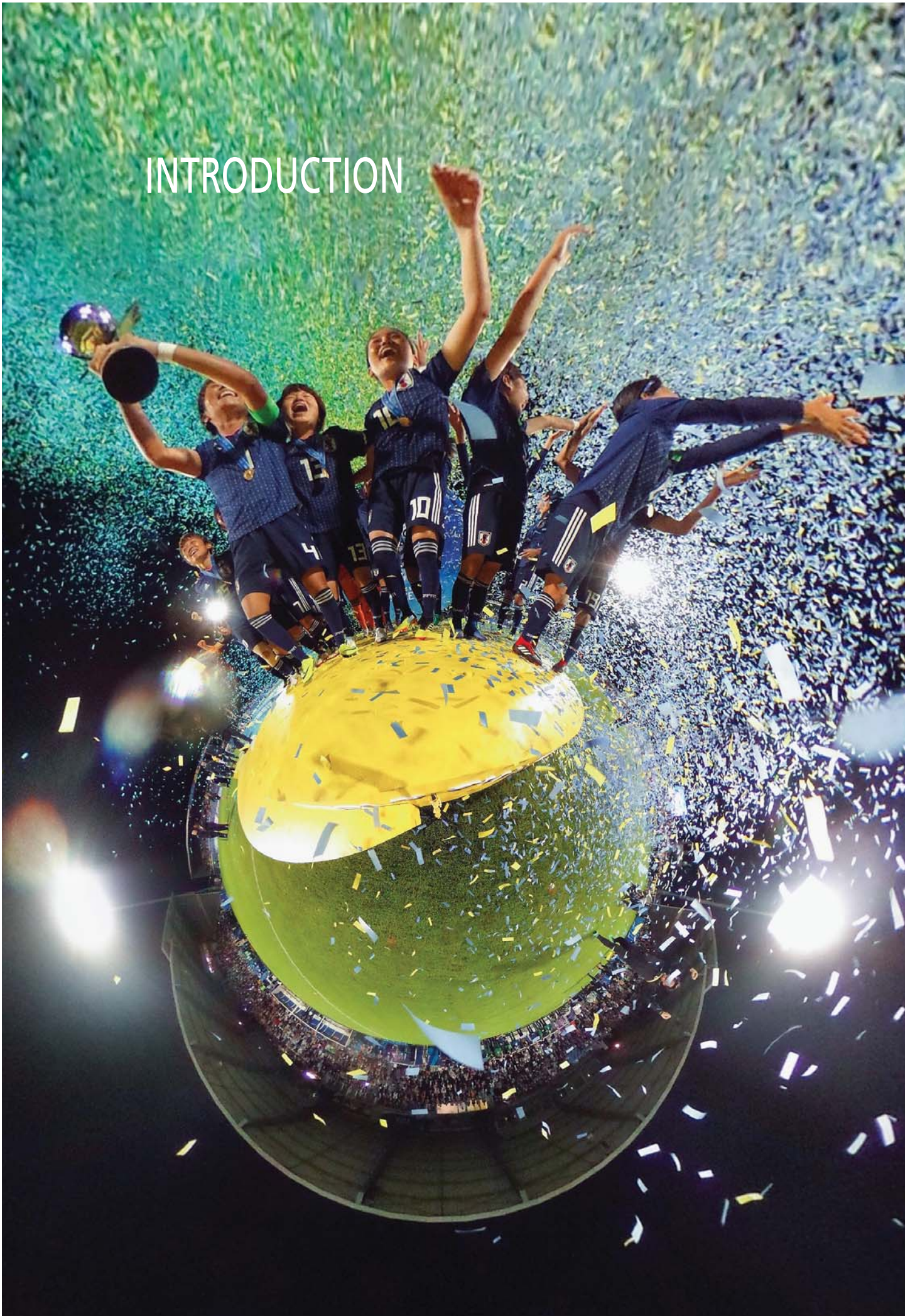


**FIFA**<sup>®</sup>

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# INTRODUCTION





All over the world, girls and women play football with great passion. In stadiums and on village pitches, with world-class equipment or hand-me-downs, with a professional player's consummate skill or a beginner's enthusiasm – football is the global game for women and girls, cutting across all boundaries in terms of society, race, religion, ethnicity and socio-economic circumstances.

At the top level of the sport, the FIFA Women's World Cup™ is the pinnacle of women's football. The 2015 edition in Canada drew unprecedented interest with more than 750 million fans tuning in from around the world to watch on TV and 1.35 million spectators buying tickets to watch it in the stadiums. Women's leagues all over the world are continually strengthening with more female players able to earn money playing the game they love.

At grassroots level, we have seen more investment in projects dedicated to women's football. The FIFA Forward Programme has enabled our member associations to allocate

record levels of investment to women's football projects, with new leagues and competitions being made possible thanks to the increased funding.

Nevertheless, the passion for the women's game and its steady growth also demonstrates the vast untapped opportunities presented to the football community as a whole – to grow the game, to get more girls involved in it earlier, to keep more women in the game longer, and to further leverage the empowerment of women and the societal benefits of football.

FIFA's Women's Football Strategy charts the course for how FIFA will work with confederations and member associations, clubs and players, the media, fans and other stakeholders to confront and surmount the challenges.

Working together, we will help fulfil the goals of FIFA 2.0, the organisation's overall strategic road map: grow the game of football, protect its integrity and bring the game to all.

# CURRENT STATE OF PLAY



The state of play in women's football today is that the game is both in rude health and in need of fundamental change.

A major milestone was the introduction of the FIFA Women's World Cup™ in 1991 and subsequently the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup in 2002 and the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in 2008. The level of play has dramatically improved, media attention has increased exponentially, and the game has grown in popularity. One only needs to look back at the enormous success of the FIFA Women's World Cup Canada 2015™ for an indication of just how popular and powerful the sport is around the world, as the event created nearly half a billion dollars of economic activity in the host country. The USA v. Japan final was the most watched football match in US history. Seven matches during the tournament had more than 50,000 spectators in attendance and a total of nine billion impressions were registered on Twitter.

However, the competitive and commercial success stands in stark contrast to the

underlying challenges that face the game and its leaders when it comes to grassroots and development – which represent the future of the game away from the spotlight. Years of institutional neglect and a lack of investment have prevented girls and women from playing the game and from assuming roles in technical, administrative and governance functions.

The long-standing lack of women in positions of responsibility in the football community means there have been limited voices to advocate for change. In 2016, the FIFA Congress made the first steps to rectify this problem by approving some landmark decisions for women's football and the representation of women in football. Although these changes were momentous, the challenges ahead are still great, and we must continue to build on the momentum created. FIFA's Women's Football Strategy will empower the organisation to take further concrete steps to address the historic shortfalls in resources and representation, while advocating for a global stand against gender discrimination through playing football.

# KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE WOMEN'S GAME

Within the context of realising the objectives of FIFA 2.0, the organisation has defined the following women's football-specific goals:

**GROW PARTICIPATION**

**ENHANCE THE COMMERCIAL VALUE**

**BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS**



## GROW PARTICIPATION

FIFA must not only promote football in those areas where it is not currently played by women, it also needs to further develop the game in those areas where women already take to the pitch every single day.

Increasing the level of female participation in football is central to the organisation's ability to reach the goals and objectives outlined in FIFA 2.0: The Vision for the Future. FIFA will

implement new programmes and initiatives to broaden participation, many of which will seek to improve upon existing pathways for women to participate and add unique dimensions to the game. It will work diligently to ensure that more women have increased access to football in regions all over the world while supporting its member associations in achieving their own women's football objectives.

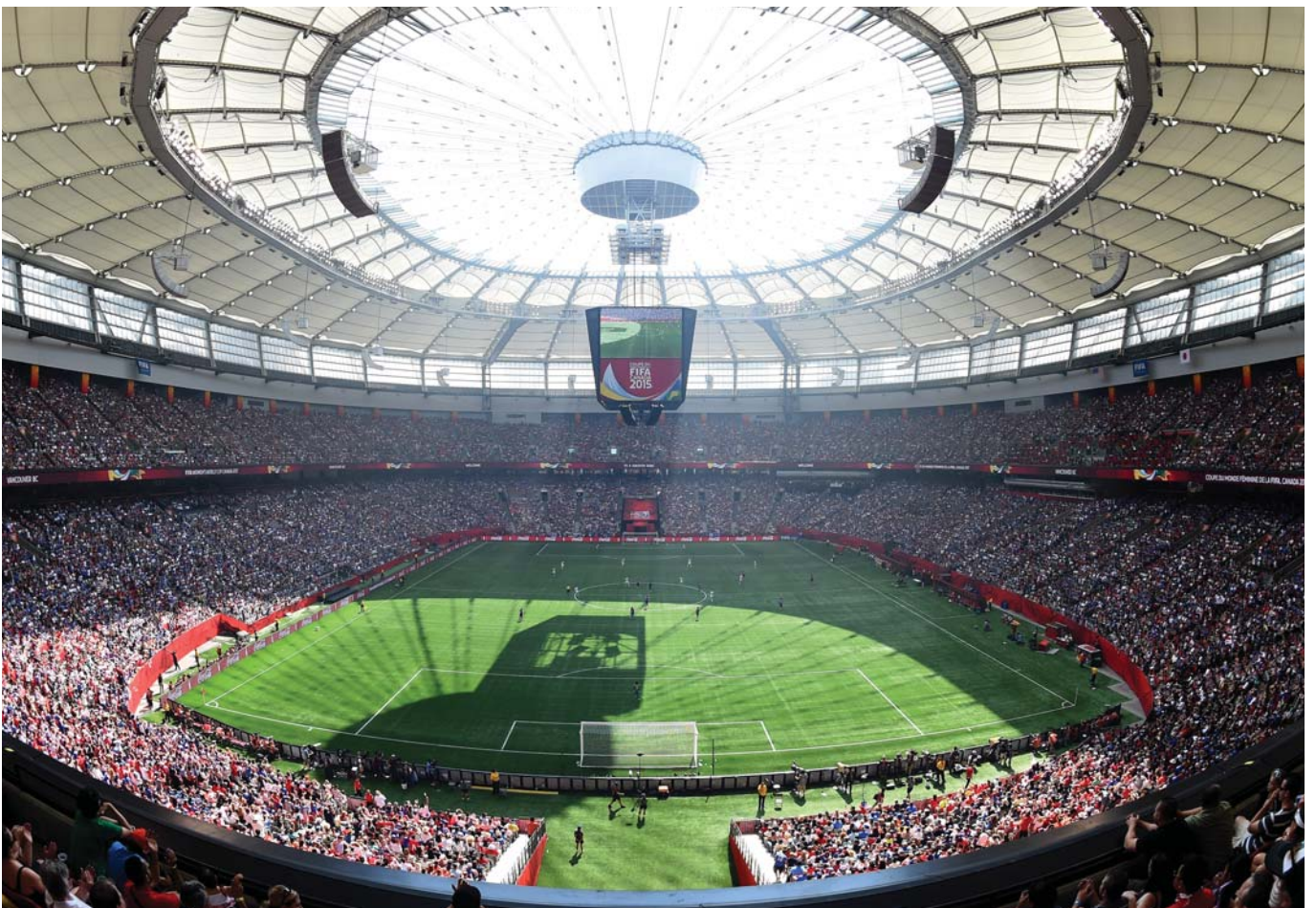




## ENHANCE THE COMMERCIAL VALUE

FIFA's ability to develop the game depends upon its effectiveness to commercialise its competitions and events. FIFA has a tremendous opportunity to expand its development efforts by creating new revenue streams from its women's competitions and events, and by providing all stakeholders with the necessary

strategic guidance to do the same. The organisation will optimise existing competitions in order to maximise their quality and commercial benefits and will dedicate the same focus to creating new competitions that will provide additional opportunities for women to play on the world stage.



## BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS

As FIFA works to grow female participation in football and enhance the associated commercial benefits, it will build upon the current foundations to effectively govern and regulate a more sophisticated women's football ecosystem. The organisation will further develop leadership training platforms designed to attract women to the upper ranks of the football industry, improve upon current regulatory frameworks and modernise its management of the game by

developing and refining the tools by which it regulates matters both on and off the pitch. As FIFA works to strengthen all of its relationships within the global football community, it will pay special attention to the interests of women's football, in the knowledge that increasing female participation in football will play a major role in realising the organisation's larger goals of growing the game, protecting its integrity and bringing it to all.

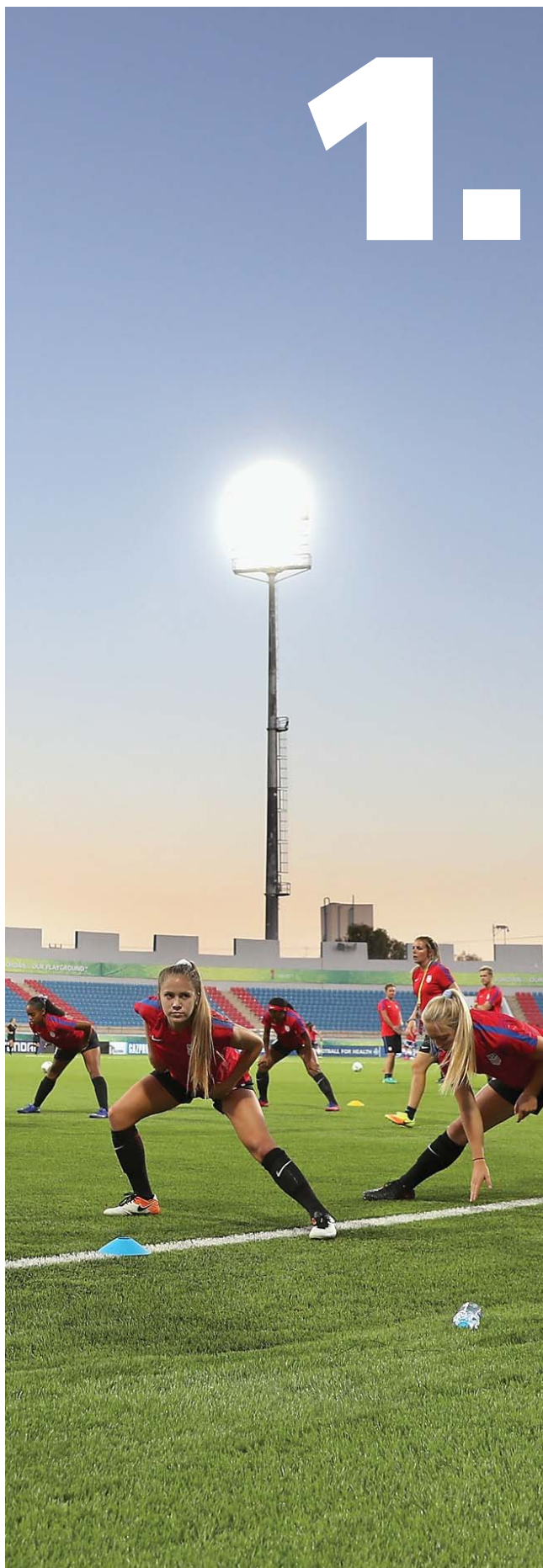


# GAME PLAN AND TACTICS

FIFA will achieve its objectives by executing a five-pronged strategy to:

- 1. DEVELOP AND GROW**
- 2. SHOWCASE**
- 3. COMMUNICATE AND COMMERCIALISE**
- 4. GOVERN AND LEAD**
- 5. EDUCATE AND EMPOWER**





## DEVELOP AND GROW

### GAME PLAN

FIFA will focus on developing the women's game, both on and off the pitch, at all levels. Together with the confederations, FIFA will support member associations in developing football locally, to retain and grow female participation in football, and do all that is necessary to ensure that girls and women have clear pathways to play and govern the game.

Specifically, FIFA will:

- Double the number of female players to 60 million by 2026;
- Raise the standards of women's football clubs and leagues across all member associations;
- Double the number of member associations that have organised youth leagues by 2026 in order to address the dropout rate and sustain girls' participation in football;
- Ensure that by 2022, 100% of FIFA member associations have developed comprehensive women's football strategies;
- Develop and implement a Football in Schools Programme;
- Foster greater cooperation, education and advocacy for women's football between FIFA, the confederations and the member associations.

## TACTICS

### **A. Modernise existing development programmes**

Review the existing portfolio of women's football-focused development programmes to determine those of greatest impact, and construct new tailored programmes to realise measurable goals related to mass participation, the development of elite youth pathways and national leagues, as well as technical, coaching and refereeing development programmes.

### **B. Organise global women's football academies**

Explore the creation of elite women's football academies at member associations with the necessary infrastructure to provide girls with structured and regular training opportunities in preparation for regional, confederation and FIFA competitions. Provide financial and operational support in the areas of player infrastructure, development, technical staff education, and implementation of high-performance programmes.

### **C. Develop a Football in Schools Programme**

Leverage existing school structures in all member associations to incorporate football into the school curriculum where possible, and increase access for young girls to train and participate in organised football activities.

### **D. Foster a global network**

Strengthen the global network of women's football by harnessing new platforms to better communicate with and deepen interaction among football stakeholders and fans around the world.

### **E. Improve technical development**

Increase the number of qualified female coaches working in the game by creating easier pathways for them to gain qualifications and increasing the opportunities to obtain employment in coaching. A dedicated career pathway for female coaches will include mentoring programmes to ensure that talented female coaches have the same education and opportunities as their male counterparts.

More focus will also be placed on improving female refereeing in terms of pathways, quality and quantity.



## SHOWCASE

### GAME PLAN

As part of FIFA's broader efforts to improve the appeal of women's football to players, fans and commercial partners, FIFA will optimise its competitions to ensure that the best players and teams are showcased and that there is an effective means to develop the future stars of the women's game.

Accordingly, FIFA will:

- Raise the profile of the FIFA Women's World Cup™ and use it as a driving force for the development of women's football;
- Work with confederations to optimise the regional qualifying pathway for FIFA women's competitions (senior and youth);
- Further develop FIFA youth tournaments to build elite female participation at an earlier age;
- Develop and launch new international competitions for women's national teams and clubs;
- Examine, monitor and analyse the global landscape of the professional club leagues with a view to evolving the regulatory framework surrounding the women's game, protecting its integrity and the players.

## TACTICS

### A. Competition review

As part of FIFA's broader competition review, analyse all existing women's competitions with the intention of revitalising and optimising all sporting and commercial elements.

### B. Develop new FIFA women's football competitions

Introduce new competitions designed to retain female participation in football and provide greater opportunities for women to play the game they love. Examples include:

- FIFA Women's World League
- Youth development tournaments
- International club competition
- FIFA women's futsal competition

### C. Strengthen the women's international match calendar

Work with relevant football stakeholders to strengthen the women's international match calendar and related regulations as a fundamental tool for the professionalisation of women's football and build the regulatory foundation for the women's game.

### D. Optimise regional qualifiers

Work with the relevant football stakeholders to improve the regional qualification pathway at all age levels to elevate the quality of FIFA women's competitions and events and ensure that opportunities to play are increased in developing regions.





## COMMUNICATE AND COMMERCIALISE

### GAME PLAN

FIFA will broaden the exposure of women's football and grow its commercial value.

Specific goals include:

- Devise a clear women's football communications strategy covering both competitions and development;
- Develop an effective marketing programme for global women's football that harnesses its full commercial potential and social impact;
- Develop and implement a Women's Football Commercial Programme by 2026;
- Work to build awareness of top female athletes and role models through greater coverage and exposure on FIFA's own digital and communication platforms;
- Identify ambassadors to raise the profile of women's football and advocate for access, equal opportunities, health benefits and positive societal change through the game.



## TACTICS

### **A. Develop a women's commercial programme to include:**

- Enhancing women's football engagement with existing commercial partners
- Developing a strategy to sell broadcast, digital and media rights, including an unprecedented breadth of coverage for FIFA women's football competitions and programmes
- Implementing a distinct brand strategy for the women's game that inspires players and fans and gives the game a new identity to complement men's football and enrich the game's overall image
- Revamping the ticketing strategy and designing a model that integrates the "family" aspect of the women's game

### **B. Explore digital content distribution alternatives and new technology**

Work to harness technology and innovation to attract new fans, deepen FIFA's connection with current football supporters, and unlock additional sources of revenue to fund the game's development.

### **C. Create a dedicated Women's Football Legends Programme**

Establish a women's ambassadorial programme to generate additional exposure for legendary female footballers, ensuring they acquire the strong communication skills required for advocacy roles.

### **D. Create marketing and communications programmes and platforms**

Develop and enhance women's football marketing and communications programmes and platforms that will be aimed at:

- Attracting girls to the game and keeping them involved for longer
- Publicising the grassroots programmes, leagues and competitions that are essential to the sustainable development of the women's game
- Leveraging the power of the game to do social good
- Showcasing the commercial power of the women's game, focusing not only on the World Cup but also on role models and powerful examples of social impact



# 4.

## GOVERN AND LEAD

### GAME PLAN

FIFA will broaden female representation in football decision-making at the highest levels and further refine the regulatory frameworks that will foster the professionalisation of the women's game.

Tangible goals include:

- 100% of FIFA member associations to have at least one woman present on their executive committee by 2026.
- By 2022, at least one third of FIFA committee members will be women.
- Every member association will dedicate at least one seat on its executive committee to representing the interests of women in football and women's football.
- Advance the professionalisation of the women's game while ensuring that players are protected and have clear recognition for their profession at FIFA, member association and confederation levels.

## TACTICS

### A. Strengthen and expand the Female Leadership Development Programme (FLDP)

Deepen the impact of the FLDP by creating three targeted programmes to:

- Increase representation of women in football leadership and decision-making bodies through a targeted, executive programme which will include both men and women.
- Upskill, empower and create stronger networks for women who work in football through regionalised leadership development programmes.
- Create the leaders of tomorrow through a new programme targeting the captains of youth national teams focused on building leadership skills and creating future role models.

### B. Women's football professionalisation

Enhance the organisation of women's football by applying more regulatory strength and solidifying its relationship with key professional football stakeholders. This will include:

- Strengthening the transfer matching system to incorporate player transfers in the women's game.

- Incorporating the club licensing system as a development tool to raise the standards of clubs and leagues and accelerate the development of the game at all levels.
- Develop and issue a regular report on the landscape of women's professional football in order to closely monitor and foster growth in collaboration with all women's football stakeholders.
- Create a sharing platform for exchange of expertise and knowledge on the professionalisation of women's football.

### C. Institutionalise regional expertise in women's development

- Assign Women's Football Development Officers to the FIFA Regional Development Offices to enhance the support to member associations.
- Work together with the confederations to create regional women's football experts charged with driving the development of women's football in the regions and helping FIFA to implement its Women's Football Strategy.



## EDUCATE AND EMPOWER

### GAME PLAN

FIFA will harness the power of the game and its competitions to highlight football's positive social impact on women and girls all around the world.

Tangibly, FIFA will:

- Strengthen football's ability to positively impact the lives of women and girls around the world;
- Leverage the power of FIFA competitions and events to address specific social issues faced by women and girls (e.g. health, empowerment, equality);
- Educate and inspire female players and those involved in the delivery of the women's game on medical matters, the importance of healthy lifestyles and tactics to ensure long-lasting playing careers;
- Participate in and/or support programmes and promotional campaigns aiming to empower girls through football;
- Support member associations and sports entities lobbying for governments to include women and girls football in the school curriculum.

## TACTICS

### A. Build effective relationships with third parties to highlight football's impact on women

Broaden FIFA's existing outreach to important NGOs and government stakeholders that are concerned with women's leadership, well-being and empowerment, seeking to leverage FIFA's involvement in those issues from a football perspective.

### B. Strengthen legacy programmes at showcase competitions

- FIFA will leverage its showcase competitions and events to bring a focus to the biggest social issues that impact young girls and women, not only in the host region but on a global level as well.
- Work with host countries and regional NGOs to develop sustainable social impact projects that highlight football's power as a vehicle to improve the lives of those who play the game.

### C. Harness capabilities to measure the effectiveness of women's football programmes and the growth of the game

As part of FIFA's work to drive women's football development, FIFA will create a monitoring and evaluation system to measure the impact of its various development

activities and provide important data to guide the future direction of its efforts.

### D. Create women's football-specific medical and health programmes

- FIFA will gather and analyse medical data on women's football players with a focus on injury prevention, playing conditions and female biology.
- Following this, FIFA will develop specific educational and awareness programmes for players and football professionals involved in the women's game.







