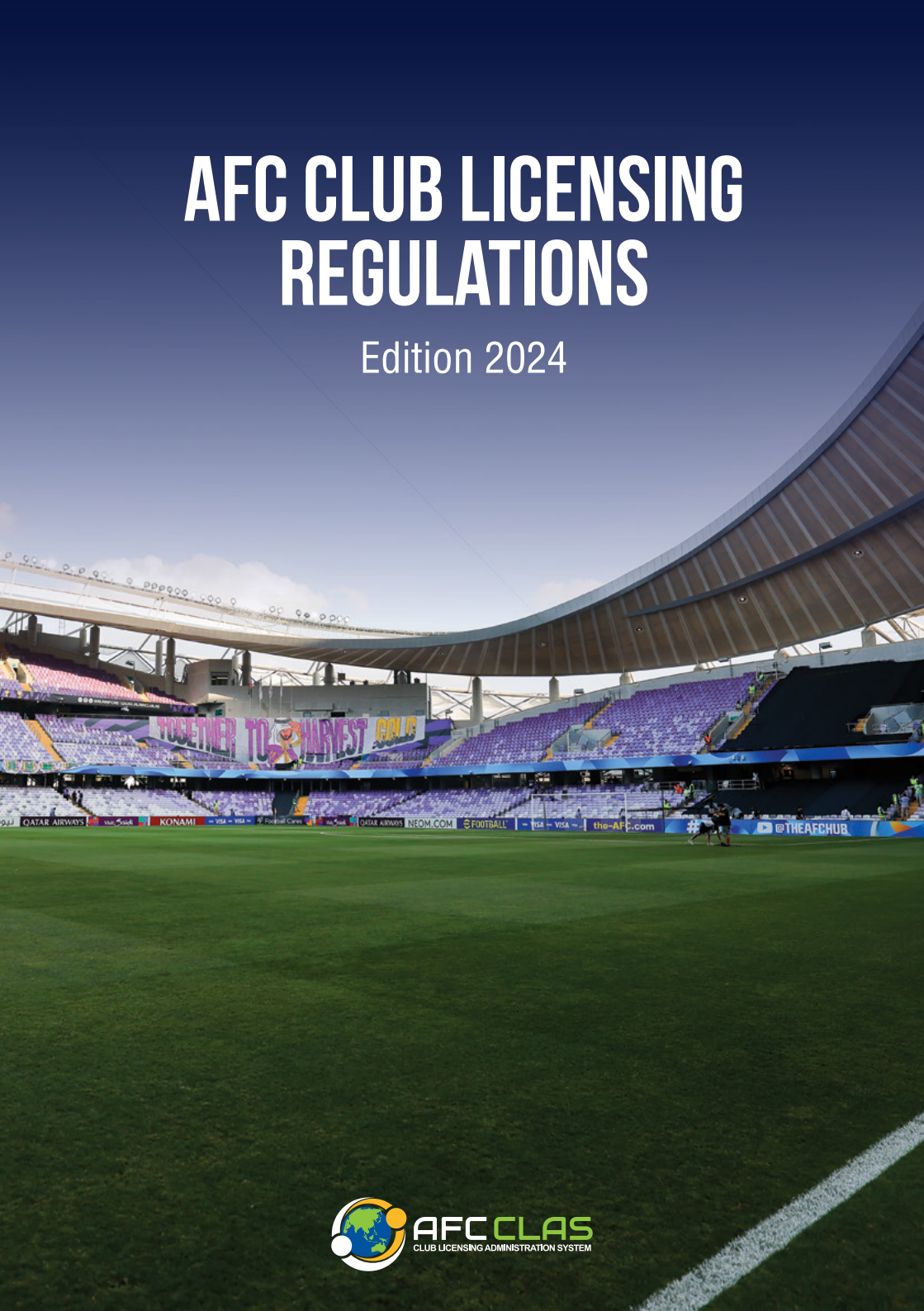
AFC CLUB LICENSING REGULATIONS

Edition 2024



AFC CLAS
CLUB LICENSING ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM


NISSA
27

AFC CLUB LICENSING REGULATIONS

EDITION 2024

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DEFINITIONS

Accounting Policies	The specific principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices adopted by an entity in preparing and presenting its financial statements.
ACGL	The AFC Challenge League.
ACL Elite	The AFC Champions League Elite.
ACL Two	The AFC Champions League Two.
AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook	The handbook issued by the AFC which provides operational and technical guidance in relation to the financial criteria in these Regulations. It is a compilation of explanations and templates to support the Licence Applicant in complying with the financial criteria.
AFC Club Licensing Quality Standard	The document issued by the AFC which defines the minimum requirements that a Licensor must comply with in order to operate the club licensing system.
AFC Stadium Regulations	These regulations set out the minimum requirements for a Stadium to be eligible to host matches in AFC competitions.
Annual Financial Statements	A complete set of financial statements prepared as at the Statutory Closing Date, normally including a balance sheet, profit and loss account, a statement of cash flows and those notes, and other statements and explanatory material that are an integral part of the financial statements.
Associate	An entity, including an unincorporated entity such as a partnership, over which the investor has Significant Influence and that is neither a Subsidiary nor an interest in a Joint Venture.

Audit	The objective of an audit of financial statements is to enable the auditor to express an opinion whether the financial statements are prepared, in all Material respects, in accordance with an identified financial reporting framework. The phrases used to express the auditor's opinion are "give a true and fair view" or "present fairly, in all material respects", which are equivalent terms. A similar objective applies to the audit of financial or other information prepared in accordance with appropriate criteria. In an audit engagement, the auditor provides a high, but not absolute, level of assurance that the information subject to audit is free of Material misstatement. This is expressed positively in the audit report as reasonable assurance. The term "Audited" shall be interpreted accordingly.
Budget	The schedules containing an entity's Future Financial Information, based on management's assumptions about events that may occur in the future and possible actions by an entity.
CLAS or Club Licensing Administration System	The IT system developed by the AFC for the purpose of gathering information from Licence Applicants/Licensees and for sharing information with Licensors concerning their affiliated clubs within the scope of the implementation, assessment and enforcement of these Regulations.
Club Licensing Criteria	The requirements applicable to the grant of Licences to Licence Applicants, as set out in these Regulations, which are divided into five categories (sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial).
Consolidated Financial Statement(s)	Financial statements of a Group presented as those of a single economic entity.
Control	The power to conduct the activities of an entity and to direct its financial, operating and/or sporting policies in any manner which may affect the outcomes of such activities, whether by means of share ownership, voting power, constitutional documents (e.g. statutes), agreement and/or otherwise. The terms "Controlled" and "Controlling" shall be interpreted accordingly.

Event or Condition of Major Economic Importance	An event or condition is of major economic importance if it is considered Material to the financial statements of the Reporting Entity and would require a different (adverse) presentation of the results of the operations, financial position and net assets of the Reporting Entity if it had occurred during the preceding Financial Year or Interim Period.
Financial Year	The financial reporting period ending on the Statutory Closing Date, whether this is a year or not, and which is not an Interim Period.
Future Financial Information	Information about the prospective financial effects of future events and possible actions on the entity concerned.
Going Concern	The "going concern" concept, or assumption, is an accountancy term that describes an entity which can continue operating without the significant threat of liquidation, and which can therefore continue in operation for the foreseeable future. A Reporting Entity is normally viewed as a Going Concern. It is assumed that the Reporting Entity has neither the intention nor the necessity of liquidation, ceasing trading nor seeking protection from creditors pursuant to laws or regulations.
Group	A Parent and all its subsidiaries.
Historic Financial Information	Information about the financial effects of past events on the entity concerned. Historic Financial Information is in respect of the financial performance and position prior to the licensing decision.
Interim Financial Statements	A financial report containing either a complete set of financial statements or a set of condensed financial statements for an Interim Period.
Interim Period	A financial reporting period shorter than a Financial Year. It does not necessarily have to be a six-month period.
Joint Venture	A contractual arrangement whereby two or more parties jointly undertake an economic activity.
Licence	Certificate granted by the Licensor confirming fulfilment of all minimum Club Licensing Criteria by the Licence Applicant as part of the admission procedure for entering the relevant AFC club competition(s).

Licence Applicant	Legal entity fully and solely responsible for the football team participating in national and international club competitions which applies for a Licence.
Licence Season	AFC season for which a Licence applies. It starts the day following the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions by the Licensor to the AFC and lasts until the relevant deadline the following year.
Licensee	Licence Applicant that has been granted a Licence by its Licensor.
Licensing Administration	The staff within the Licensor that deals with club licensing matters.
Licensor	The body that operates the club licensing system and grants the Licences in accordance with these Regulations.
List of Licensing Decisions	The list submitted by the Licensor to the AFC containing, among other things, information about the Licence Applicants that have undergone the licensing process and been granted or refused a Licence by the Licensor in the format established and communicated by the AFC General Secretariat.
Material or Materiality	Omissions or misstatements of items or information are Material if they could, individually or collectively, influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial information submitted by the Licence Applicant/Licensee. Materiality depends on the size and nature of the omission or misstatement judged in the surrounding circumstances or context. The size or nature of the item or information, or a combination of both, could be the determining factor.
Parent	An entity that has one or more subsidiaries.
Registered Member	Any legal entity according to national law and/or AFC Member Association statutes, which is member of the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.
Reporting Entity/ Entities	A Registered Member and/or football company or Group of entities or some other combination of entities which is included in the reporting perimeter and which must provide the Licensor with information for club licensing purposes.

Review	The objective of an engagement to review financial information is to enable an auditor to express a conclusion whether, on the basis of the review, anything has come to the auditor's attention that causes the auditor to believe that the financial information is not prepared, in all Material respects, in accordance with an identified financial reporting framework. A review, in contrast to an Audit, is not designed to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial information is free from Material misstatement. A Review consists of making inquiries, primarily of persons responsible for financial and accounting matters, and applying analytical and other review procedures. A Review may bring significant matters affecting the financial information to the auditor's attention but it does not provide the evidence that would be required for an audit.
Significant Change	An event that is considered Material to the documentation previously submitted to the Licensor and that would require a different presentation if it had occurred prior to the submission of the licensing documentation.
Significant Influence	The power to participate in the financial, operating and/or sporting policies of an entity whether by means of share ownership, voting power, constitutional documents (e.g. statutes), agreement and/or otherwise, but without having Control over that entity either on its own or as part of a Joint Venture. Examples include a party: a. holding, directly or indirectly, between 20% and 50% of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in an entity; b. having the ability to influence the appointment or removal of members charged with the governance of an entity (e.g. any administrative, management or supervisory bodies of an entity); c. being a minority shareholder or a member of the entity and alone, pursuant to an agreement entered into with other shareholders or members of the entity or by any other means, being able to exercise any Significant Influence; and/or d. providing in one reporting period - either alone or in aggregate with parties under the same ultimate controlling party or government (excluding the AFC, its own AFC Member Association and any affiliated league) - 30% or more of the entity's total revenue for that reporting period.

Stadium	Any stadium at which a match is played. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes: (i) the entire premises (to the extent that a valid accreditation card or ticket is required in order to gain access) of a stadium facility inside the outer stadium perimeter fence and (on matchdays and any day on which any official training takes place within the stadium) the aerial space above such stadium premises; (ii) parking facilities; (iii) VIP and hospitality areas (including any hospitality village); (iv) concession areas; (v) commercial display areas; (vi) buildings; (vii) the field of play; (viii) the media tribune; (ix) any broadcast compound; (x) the stadium media centre; (xi) the press conference room; (xii) the mixed zone; (xiii) any stands; and (xiv) any areas beneath the stands.
Statutory Closing Date	The annual accounting reference date of the Reporting Entity.
Subsequent Events	Events or conditions occurring after the licensing decision.
Subsidiary	An entity, including an unincorporated entity such as a partnership that is Controlled by another entity (known as the Parent).
Supplementary Information	Financial information to be submitted to the Licensor in addition to the financial statements if the minimum requirements for disclosure and accounting are not met. The supplementary information must be prepared on the basis of accounting, and Accounting Policies, consistent with the financial statements. Financial information must be extracted from sources consistent with those used for the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements. Where appropriate, disclosures in the supplementary information must agree with, or be reconciled to, the relevant disclosures in the financial statements.
Training Facilities	The venue(s) at which a club's registered players undertake football training and/or youth development activities on a regular basis.

For the purposes of these Regulations, and provided the context so permits:

a) the singular shall include the plural and vice-versa;

b) the masculine gender shall include the feminine and vice-versa;

c) references to natural persons shall include any legal person or corporation; and

d) all defined terms, unless otherwise stated herein, shall bear the same meaning as ascribed to them in the AFC Statutes and the AFC Competition Operations Manual.

ARTICLE 1 | INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF APPLICATION

1. These Regulations have been adopted by the AFC Executive Committee in accordance with the AFC Statutes.

2. These Regulations apply whenever expressly referred to in specific regulations and other rules governing club competitions to be played under the auspices of the AFC.

3. These Regulations govern the rights, duties and responsibilities of all parties involved in the AFC club licensing system and define in particular:

    a) the minimum requirements to be fulfilled by an AFC Member Association in order to act as a Licensor for its clubs, as well as the minimum procedures to be followed by the Licensor in the assessment of the Club Licensing Criteria;

    b) the Licence Applicant and the Licence required to enter the relevant AFC club competition(s); and

    c) the minimum sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial criteria to be fulfilled by a club in order to be granted a Licence by a Licensor as part of the admission procedure to enter the relevant AFC club competition(s).

ARTICLE 2 | OBJECTIVES

These Regulations aim to:

a) safeguard the credibility and integrity of all club football competitions in Asia;

b) allow the development of benchmarking of clubs in sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial related criteria throughout Asia;

c) continuously improve the standard of all aspects of football in Asia and give priority to the training and care of young players in every club;

d) ensure that clubs have an adequate level of management;

e) improve the financial capability of the clubs, increase their transparency and credibility, place necessary importance on the protection of creditors and ensure that clubs settle their liabilities with employees, social/tax authorities and other clubs punctually; and

f) improve clubs' sporting infrastructure to provide the various stakeholders with well-equipped and safe Stadiums and facilities.

ARTICLE 3 | CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

1. Subject to Article 3.2, the criteria defined in Articles 16 to 20 must be fulfilled by clubs in order for them to be granted a Licence to enter the relevant AFC club competition(s).

2. The criteria described in Articles 16 to 20 are graded into "A", "B" and "C" categories.

   a) **A – Club Licensing Criteria Gradation**
   These are mandatory criteria to be fulfilled by the Licence Applicant. If the Licence Applicant does not fulfill any of the A - Club Licensing Criteria, then it shall not be granted a Licence to enter the relevant AFC club competition(s).

   b) **B – Club Licensing Criteria Gradation**
   If the Licence Applicant does not fulfill any B – Club Licensing Criteria, then it shall be sanctioned as specified by the Licensor for non-fulfillment of these criteria, however, the Licence Applicant may still receive a Licence to enter the relevant AFC club competition(s).

   c) **C – Club Licensing Criteria Gradation**
   These Club Licensing Criteria are best practice recommendations.

3. It is recommended that the criteria set out in Annex 5 are fulfilled by clubs participating in national women's club competitions with the aim of encouraging the AFC Member Associations to implement a women's club licensing system as part of their national club licensing regulations.

4. It is recommended that the criteria set out in Annex 6 are fulfilled by clubs participating in national futsal competitions with the aim of encouraging the AFC Member Associations to implement a futsal club licensing system as part of their national club licensing regulations.

5. The Licensor is free to increase the minimum requirements or to upgrade the criteria gradation established by the AFC for the purposes of entering AFC club competitions. The Licensor may also introduce additional Club Licensing Criteria not included in the AFC Club Licensing Regulations. For this purpose, any increase to the minimum requirements, upgrade of the criteria gradation or introduction of additional minimum Club Licensing Criteria shall not be inconsistent with these Regulations.

6. Where introduced by the Licensor in its national licensing regulations, any increased minimum requirements, upgraded criteria gradation or additional criteria will be applicable to enter the relevant AFC club competition(s).

ARTICLE 4 | EXCEPTIONS POLICY

The AFC General Secretariat may grant an exception to any provisions in these Regulations within the limit as set out in Annex 3.

ARTICLE 5 | LICENSOR

1. The Licensor is an AFC Member Association and governs the club licensing system within its country/territory. The Licensor is obliged to use the Club Licensing Administration System (CLAS) to govern the club licensing system.

2. Each AFC Member Association must comply with Article 10.1(n) of the AFC Statutes.

3. Under certain conditions as set out in Annex 2, an AFC Member Association may delegate the club licensing system to its affiliated league(s). The AFC Member Association shall remain liable and responsible for the proper implementation of the club licensing system regardless of any delegation.

4. The Licensor governs the licensing system, appoints the licensing bodies and determines the necessary processes.

5. The Licensor shall ensure that all applicable provisions defined in these Regulations are integrated into its national club licensing regulations which must be submitted in English to the AFC General Secretariat via the CLAS for accreditation according to the procedures defined in Annex 1.

6. In particular, the Licensor must:

    a) establish an appropriate Licensing Administration as defined in Article 6;

    b) establish at least two decision-making bodies as defined in Article 7;

    c) set up a catalogue of sanctions as defined in Article 8;

    d) define the core process as defined in Article 9;

    e) assess the documentation submitted by the Licence Applicants, consider whether this is appropriate and define the assessment procedures as defined in Article 10;

    f) ensure equal treatment of all clubs applying for a Licence and guarantee the clubs full confidentiality with regard to all information provided during the licensing process as defined in Article 11;

    g) strictly follow the core process;

    h) determine whether each criterion has been met and what further information, if any, is needed for a Licence to be granted;

    i) comply with the AFC Club Licensing Quality Standard; and

    j) comply with all the requirements set out in Annex 7.

ARTICLE 6 | THE LICENSING ADMINISTRATION

1. The Licensor must appoint a licensing manager who is responsible for managing the Licensing Administration.

2. The Licensor must notify the AFC in writing of the appointment of the Club Licensing Manager, and of any changes to such appointment.

3. The tasks of the Licensing Administration include:

   a) preparing, implementing and further developing the club licensing system;

   b) accessing and administering the CLAS;

   c) providing training and support for Licence Applicants in using the CLAS;

   d) providing administrative support to the decision-making bodies;

   e) assisting, advising and monitoring the Licensees during the License Season;

   f) informing the AFC of any event occurring after the licensing decision that constitutes a Significant Change to the information previously submitted to the Licensor; and

   g) serving as the contact point for and sharing expertise with the licensing departments of other AFC Member Associations and with the AFC.

4. Within the Licensing Administration, at least one staff member or an external financial adviser must have a financial background and a diploma in accountancy/auditing recognised by the appropriate national body (e.g. national trade association) or must have several years' experience in the above matters.

ARTICLE 7 | THE DECISION-MAKING BODIES

1. The decision-making bodies are the First Instance Body and the Appeals Body. These bodies must be independent of each other and the Licensor.

2. The First Instance Body decides on whether a Licence should be granted to an applicant on the basis of the documents provided by the submission deadline set by the Licensor and on whether a Licence should be withdrawn upon the application of the licensing manager.

3. The Appeals Body decides on appeals and makes a final decision on whether a Licence should be granted or withdrawn.

4. Appeals may only be lodged by:

   a) a Licence Applicant who received a refusal from the First Instance Body;

   b) a Licensee whose Licence has been withdrawn by the First Instance Body; or

   c) the Licensor, the competent body of which must be defined (e.g. licensing manager).

5. The Appeals Body shall make its decision based only on the case file and evidence provided by the Licence Applicant and Licensor before the First Instance Body. A request for appeal shall be made by the set deadline.

6. If an AFC Member Association has an independent arbitration tribunal specified in its statutes, then that tribunal shall be the final appellate authority. If the AFC Member Association does not have an independent arbitration tribunal then the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) shall be the final appellate authority. In this respect, particular attention must be paid to the relevant deadlines for entering the relevant AFC club competition(s).

7. Members of the decision-making bodies shall be elected or appointed in accordance with the relevant AFC Member Association's statutes and must:

   a) act impartially in the discharge of their duties;

   b) abstain if there is any doubt as to their independence from the Licence Applicant or if there is a conflict of interest. In this regard, the independence of a member may not be guaranteed if he/she or any member of his/her family (spouse, child, parent or sibling) is a member, shareholder, business partner, sponsor or consultant of the Licence Applicant;

   c) not act simultaneously as licensing manager;

   d) not belong simultaneously to a judicial statutory body of the Licensor;

   e) not belong simultaneously to the executive body of the AFC Member Association or its affiliated league;

f) not belong simultaneously to the management personnel of an affiliated club; and

g) include at least one qualified lawyer and one qualified financial expert holding a qualification recognised by the appropriate national professional body.

8. The quorum of the decision-making bodies must be at least three (3) members. In case of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote.

9. The decision-making bodies must operate according to the principles of natural justice and must as a minimum regulate the following standards:

a) deadlines (e.g. submission deadline, etc.);

b) safeguards of the principle of equal treatment;

c) representation (e.g. legal representation, etc.);

d) the right to be heard (e.g. convocation, hearing);

e) official language (if applicable);

f) time limit for requests (e.g. calculation, notification, compliance, interruption, extension);

g) time limit for appeal;

h) effects of appeal (e.g. no delaying effect);

i) type of evidence requested;

j) burden of proof (e.g. Licence Applicant has burden of proof);

k) decision (e.g. in writing with reasoning, etc.);

l) grounds for complaints;

m) content and form of pleading;

n) deliberation/hearings; and

o) cost of procedure/administrative fee/deposit.

ARTICLE 8 | CATALOGUE OF SANCTIONS

1. To guarantee an appropriate assessment process, the AFC Member Association must:

   a) set up a catalogue of sanctions for the club licensing system to apply in respect of any non-compliance with the criteria referred to in Articles 16 to 20, Annex 5 or Annex 6 (as applicable), which may include a caution, a fine, the obligation to submit evidence or to fulfil certain conditions by a deadline; and

   b) refer to the national disciplinary regulations in respect of violations of the licensing regulations where appropriate (e.g. submission of false documents, non-respect of deadlines, sanctions against individuals, etc.).

ARTICLE 9 | THE CORE PROCESS

1. The Licensor must define the core process for the verification of the applicable criteria for issuing Licences.

2. The core process starts at a time defined by the Licensor and ends on submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to the AFC General Secretariat by the deadline fixed by the AFC.

3. The core process consists of the following minimum key steps:

   a) distribution of the licensing documentation to the Licence Applicants;

   b) return of the licensing documentation to the Licensor;

   c) assessment of the documentation by the Licensing Administration;

   d) assessment and decision by the decision-making bodies; and

   e) submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to the AFC General Secretariat.

4. The deadlines for the above key process steps must be clearly defined and communicated to the clubs concerned in a timely manner by the Licensor.

ARTICLE 10 | ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The Licensor defines the assessment procedures, except those defined under these Regulations for which specific assessment processes must be followed as set out therein.

ARTICLE 11 | EQUAL TREATMENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

1. The Licensor shall ensure equal treatment of all Licence Applicants during the core process.

2. The Licensor shall guarantee the Licence Applicants full confidentiality with regard to all information submitted during the licensing process. Anyone involved in the licensing process or appointed by the Licensor shall sign a confidentiality agreement before assuming their tasks.

ARTICLE 12 | LICENCE APPLICANT AND TWO-YEAR RULE

1. A Licence Applicant shall only be a football club, i.e. a legal entity fully responsible for a football team participating in national and international competitions which either:

   a) is a Registered Member of an AFC Member Association and/or participates in its affiliated league(s); or

   b) is a football company which has a contractual relationship with a Registered Member.

2. At the start of the Licence Season, the membership and/or the contractual relationship must have lasted for at least two (2) consecutive years. Furthermore, the Licence Applicant must have participated in official national competitions for at least two (2) consecutive seasons.

3. Any change to the legal form, legal Group structure (including a merger with another entity or transfer of football activities to another entity) or identity (including headquarters, name or colours) of a Licence Applicant during this period to the detriment of the integrity of a competition or to facilitate the Licence Applicant's qualification for a competition on sporting merit or its receipt of a Licence is deemed as an interruption of membership or contractual relationship (if any) within the meaning of this provision.

ARTICLE 13 | RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LICENCE APPLICANT

1. The Licence Applicant must provide the Licensor with:

   a) all necessary information and/or relevant documents to fully demonstrate that the licensing obligations are fulfilled; and

   b) any other document relevant for decision-making by the Licensor.

2. This includes information on the Reporting Entity/Entities in respect of which sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial information is required to be provided.

3. Any event occurring after the submission of the licensing documentation to the Licensor representing a Significant Change to the information previously submitted must be promptly notified to the Licensor, especially a change of legal form, legal Group structure or identity.

ARTICLE 14 | LICENCE

1. Clubs which qualify for an AFC club competition on sporting merit must obtain a Licence issued by their Licensor according to the AFC accredited club licensing regulations for that competition, except where Article 15 applies.

2. A Licence expires without prior notice at the end of the season for which it was issued.

3. A Licence cannot be transferred.

4. A Licence may be withdrawn by the AFC or the Licensor's decision-making bodies if:

   a) any of the conditions for the issuing of a Licence are not satisfied; or

   b) the Licensee violates any of its obligations under these Regulations and/or the AFC accredited club licensing regulations.

5. The AFC Entry Control Body shall make all final decisions in this regard. Such decisions shall be made in accordance with the Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body.

6. As soon as a Licence withdrawal is envisaged, the AFC Member Association must inform the AFC General Secretariat accordingly.

ARTICLE 15 | EXTRAORDINARY APPLICATION

1. If a club qualifies for an AFC club competition(s) on sporting merit but has not undergone any licensing process at all or has undergone a licensing process which is lesser/not equivalent to the Licence required for the competition it became eligible for, the Licensor of the club concerned may on behalf of such a club request an extraordinary application of the club licensing system in accordance with Annex 4A and/or Annex 4B (as applicable).

2. Based on such an extraordinary application, the AFC may grant special permission to the club to enter the corresponding AFC club competition(s) subject to the relevant AFC club competition regulations. Such an extraordinary application applies only to the specific club and for the season in question.

3. The AFC Entry Control Body shall make all final AFC decisions in this regard. Such decisions shall be made in accordance with the Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body.

ARTICLE 16 | SPORTING CRITERIA

S.01	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Youth Development Programmes (YDP)	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must have a written youth development programme approved by the Licensor. The Licensor must evaluate the quality of the youth development programme before approving it and verify the implementation by conducting periodic visits to training sessions and games.

2. The programme must cover at least the following areas:

   a) Objectives, youth playing philosophy and youth development philosophy;

   b) Organisation of youth sector (organisational chart, bodies involved, relation to Licence Applicant, youth teams, etc.);

   c) Personnel (technical, medical, administrative, etc.) and minimum qualifications required;

   d) Infrastructure available for youth sector (training and match facilities, etc);

   e) Financial resources (available Budget, contribution by Licence Applicant, players or local community, etc.);

   f) Football education programme for different age groups (psychological, technical, tactical and physical);

   g) Education programmes (Laws of the Game, anti-doping, integrity, anti-racism);

   h) Medical support for youth players (including medical checks);

   i) Individual performance evaluation of players in the programme;

   j) Review and feedback process to evaluate the results and the achievements of the set objectives; and

   k) Validity of the programme (at least three years but maximum seven).

3. The Licence Applicant must further ensure that:

   a) every youth player involved in its youth development programme has the possibility to follow mandatory school education in accordance with national law; and

   b) no youth player involved in its youth development programme is prevented from continuing their non-football education.

S.02	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Youth Teams	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must at least have the following youth teams within its legal entity, another legal entity included in the reporting perimeter or a club affiliated to its legal entity:

   a) At least three (3) youth teams of different age groups within the age range of 10 to 21; and

   b) At least one (1) Under 10 (U10) team.

2. Each youth team, except the U10s, must take part in official competitions or programmes played at the national, regional or local level and recognised by the AFC Member Association.

S.03	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Medical Care of Players	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant shall provide all players registered in the club with full access to medical support services. These shall include, but not be limited to the following:

   a) yearly medical examination including cardiovascular screening for all its players in its first squad;

   b) yearly medical examination for all players above the age of 12; and

   c) comprehensive medical insurance coverage for all its players in its first squad.

S.04	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Educational Programmes	A	A	B

1. The Licence Applicant must ensure that players and all technical coaching staff of at least the first squad have attended a session or an event related to:

   a) sports integrity matters;

   b) IFAB Laws of the Game;

   c) doping control; and

   d) other topics as required by the AFC.

2. These sessions or events must be provided either by the Licence Applicant, AFC Member Association or a third party in collaboration with the Licence Applicant / AFC Member Association during the year prior to the season to be licensed.

S.05	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Registration Of Players	A	A	A

1. All the Licence Applicant's players, including youth players aged 10 and above, must be registered in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

S.06	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Racial Equality Practice	B	B	B

1. The Licence Applicant must establish a policy to tackle racism in football. All players and staff of the Licence Applicant shall acknowledge the policy by signing the policy document.

S.07	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Grassroots Programmes	B	B	C

1. Children, youths, amateurs, veterans, those with learning or physical disabilities and the socially disadvantaged shall be included in the grassroots programmes.

2. The main objectives of the Licence Applicant's grassroots football programme shall be to encourage mass participation, stimulating greater interest in the game, providing more opportunities for social inclusion, supporting healthy lifestyles and the development of young people, both from the sporting and educational aspects.

S.08	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Child Protection and Welfare	C	C	C

1. The Licence Applicant must establish and apply measures, in line with any relevant AFC policies and guidelines, to protect and safeguard children from potential abuses and to promote their wellbeing within football when participating in activities organised by the Licence Applicant. The Licence Applicant should work with locally based child protection experts and have a child safeguarding officer within its administration to develop and implement such measures, including having a child safeguarding policy.

S.09	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Women's Football	C	C	C

1. The Licence Applicant must support women's football by implementing measures and activities aimed at developing, professionalising and popularising women's football, such as:

   a) having a women's team within its legal entity or another legal entity included in the reporting perimeter which takes part in official competitions played at the local, national and/or regional level, as recognised by the relevant AFC Member Association;

   b) providing support to an affiliated women's football club; and/or

   c) organising other women's football initiatives.

S.10	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programmes	C	C	C

1. The Licence Applicant must establish strategies and implementation programmes to promote the club, the game and address current issues in football and society.

2. Support should be provided for initiatives and campaigns to implement strategies and programmes as promulgated by either the Licence Applicant, the AFC Member Association, the AFC and FIFA.

3. Such programmes connect and create links with the community which will facilitate the following:

   a) establishment and enlargement of their fan base;

   b) creation of a pool of volunteers;

   c) organisation of grassroots football activities, initiatives and events for and within the community;

   d) creation of strong links with the community; and

   e) creation of a market base for branding, merchandising, sponsors and commercial partners.

S.11	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Club Youth Academy	C	C	C

1. The Licence Applicant must establish a Club Youth Academy with the required infrastructure and facilities as prescribed in the AFC Elite Youth Scheme.

ARTICLE 17 | INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA

I.01	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Approved Stadiums for AFC Club Competitions	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must have a Stadium available to play the relevant AFC club competition(s). The Licence Applicant either:

   a) owns the Stadium; or

   b) can provide a written contract with the owner of the Stadium it will use. This contract must guarantee the use of the Stadium for AFC matches for the coming season, for which the Licence Applicant qualifies in sporting terms.

2. The Stadium must meet the requirements expressly referred to by the:

   a) AFC Stadium Regulations; and

   b) respective AFC club competition regulations/AFC Competition Operations Manual.

3. The Stadium must be approved by the Licensor and located in the same city where the Licence Applicant is based. If the Stadium is not located in the Licence Applicant's base city, a justifiable reason should be provided.

I.02	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Stadium – Safety Certification	A	A	A

1. The Stadium must be certified for safety. The certification is defined according to national/local law and must include provisions related to safety. If such law does not exist, the Licensor shall establish the content of the Stadium certificate and the procedure in close cooperation with the appropriate body/bodies (e.g. local safety and security authorities, the local hospital, fire brigade, police, etc.).

2. The certificate shall comply with the requirements in the AFC Safety and Security Regulations and must provide at least the following information:

   a) safety status of the Stadium structure and building fitness;

   b) compliance statement regarding the safety/security regulations of the competent civil authority;

   c) approval of the entire Stadium capacity (individual seats, terraces and total number);

   d) approved evacuation plan which ensures that the whole Stadium can be emptied in a case of emergency according to the applicable national law;

   e) a colour-coded floor plan diagram showing the possible evacuation routes should be prominently displayed in the Stadium; and

   f) an approved match security plan covering the organisational measures intended to ensure safety and security strategy covering all aspects of the organisation of a football match such as ticket distribution system, screening of spectators, segregation strategy, crowd dispersal strategy, medical service, measures taken in case of fire, loss of power supply, or other emergencies.

3. The certificate issued by the appropriate body shall be valid for a maximum of two (2) years and shall be valid throughout the licensing season.

I.03	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Stadium – Approved Evacuation Plan	A	A	A

1. The appropriate body (e.g. safety and security authority, competent civil authority or other qualified and approved firms) approves the evacuation plan which ensures that the whole Stadium can be emptied in case of an emergency according to the applicable national law.
2. If such law does not exist, the Licensor establishes the content of the evacuation plan, including an evacuation time and the approval body, in close cooperation with the appropriate civil body (e.g. local safety and security authorities, the local hospital, fire brigade, police, etc.).
3. A colour-coded floor plan diagram showing the possible evacuation routes should be prominently displayed in the Stadium.
4. Risk analysis specific to the Stadium.
5. The Safety and Security Officer, stewards and club and Stadium employees shall be briefed on the evacuation plan.

I.04	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Training Facilities – Availability	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must have Training Facilities available throughout the year. The Licence Applicant either:
   a) owns the Training Facilities; or
   b) shall provide a written contract with the owner of the Training Facilities.
2. It must be guaranteed that the Training Facilities can be used by all teams of the Licence Applicant during the Licence Season, taking into account its youth development programme.

I.05	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Training Facilities for Player Development – Minimum Infrastructure	B	B	C

1. As a minimum, the infrastructure of the Training Facilities for Player Development must include:

   a) outdoor Training Facilities;

   b) indoor Training Facilities;

   c) dressing rooms; and

   d) medical room(s) or direct access to first aid at the training site.

I.06	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Stadium – Ground Rules	B	B	C

1. Ground rules must be visibly affixed at each stadium and made available online to spectators. These rules must provide information on at least the following:

   a) admission rights;

   b) abandonment or postponement of events;

   c) description of prohibitions and penalties, such as entering the field of play, throwing objects, use of foul or abusive language, racist behaviour, etc.;

   d) restrictions with regard to smoking, alcohol, fireworks, banners, etc.;

   e) seating rules; and

   f) causes for ejection from the ground.

ARTICLE 18 | PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

P.01	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Club Secretariat	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must have an office space sufficiently spacious to run its administration with the required infrastructure.
2. The Licence Applicant must have appointed an adequate number of skilled secretarial staff according to its needs to run its daily business.
3. It must ensure that its office is open to communicate with the Licensor and the public and that it is equipped, as a minimum, with phone, email facilities and a website.

P.02	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
General Manager	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a General Manager responsible for running its daily business (operational matters).
2. The appointment must have been done by the appropriate body (e.g. Executive Board) of the Licence Applicant.

P.03	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Finance Officer	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Finance Officer responsible for its financial matters.
2. The Finance Officer must hold as a minimum one of the following qualifications:
   a) a degree in accountancy, finance or related field; or
   b) a recognition of competence issued by an organisation recognised by the Licensor.

P.04	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Safety and Security Officer	A	A	B

1. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Safety and Security Officer responsible for safety and security matters.
2. The Safety and Security Officer must hold as a minimum one of the following qualifications:
   a) a certificate as policeman or security person according to national law;
   b) a safety and security diploma based on a specific course issued by the AFC Member Association or by a state recognised organisation; or
   c) a recognition of competence approved by the AFC Member Association, which is based on the participation in specific safety and security courses of the AFC Member Association and at least one (1) year experience in such matters.
3. The Safety and Security Officer must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league

P.05	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Media Officer	A	A	B

1. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Media Officer responsible for media matters.
2. The Media Officer must hold as a minimum one of the following qualifications:
   a) diploma in journalism;
   b) concluded a media officer education course provided by the AFC Member Association or an organisation recognised by the AFC Member Association; or
   c) a recognition of competence approved by the AFC Member Association, which requires at least one (1) year experience in such matters.
3. The Media Officer must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

P.06	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Team Doctor	A	A	B

1. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one (1) doctor who is responsible for medical support during matches and training as well as for doping prevention.
2. The qualification of the Team Doctor must be recognised by the appropriate national health authorities.
3. The Team Doctor must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

P.07	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Physiotherapist	A	A	B

1. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one (1) Physiotherapist responsible for medical treatment and massages for the first squad during training sessions and matches.
2. The qualification of the Physiotherapist must be recognised by the appropriate national health authorities.
3. The Physiotherapist must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

P.08	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Head Coach of First Team	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must appoint a Head Coach with a valid coaching diploma/licence responsible for all football matters of the first team.
2. The Head Coach must:
   a) hold the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Competition Operations Manual; or
   b) hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by the AFC in compliance with the RECC regulations for cases where the Head Coach of the first team does not have the required certification as defined under (a) above; or
   c) already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above.
3. The Head Coach must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

P.09	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Assistant Coach of First Team	A	A	C

1. The Licence Applicant must appoint an Assistant Coach with a valid coaching diploma/licence assisting the Head Coach in all football technical matters of the first team.
2. The Assistant Coach must:
   a) hold at least the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Competition Operations Manual; or
   b) hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by the AFC in compliance with the RECC regulations for cases where the Assistant Coach of the first team does not have the required certification as defined under (a) above; or
   c) already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above.
3. The Assistant Coach must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

P.10	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Head of Youth Development	A	A	C

1. The Licence Applicant must appoint a Head of Youth Development (HYD) with a valid coaching diploma/licence responsible for managing and implementing all aspects of youth development matters including the Youth Development Programme (YDP).

2. The Head of the Youth Development must:

   a) hold at least the AFC 'A' diploma/licence or its equivalence recognised and approved by the AFC; or

   b) already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above;

   c) have specific youth coaching experience and/or supplementary certification/ qualification related to coaching and managing young players; and

   d) have strong management and administration skills to ensure the efficient implementation of the programme, activities, roles and duties in collaboration with other relevant personnel.

3. The Head of Youth Development must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

P.11	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Youth Coaches	A	A	B

1. For each mandatory youth team, the Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one qualified coach who is responsible for all football matters related to that team.

2. At least two (2) Youth Coaches must:

   a) hold at least the AFC 'B' coaching diploma/licence or its equivalence recognised and approved by the AFC;

   b) have specific youth coaching experience and/or supplementary certification/ qualification related to coaching and managing young players; and

   c) have strong competencies to ensure the efficient implementation of the technical programme to develop elite youth players in collaboration with other relevant personnel.

3. The other Youth Coaches must hold the minimum qualification as defined by the AFC Member Association which shall not be below the AFC Member Association's 'C' coaching diploma/licence or its equivalence recognised and approved by the AFC.

4. The Youth Coaches must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

P.12	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Safety and Security Organisation - Stewarding	A	A	C

1. The Licence Applicant must have engaged qualified stewards to ensure safety and security at home matches. For this purpose, it must:

   a) employ the stewards; or

   b) conclude a written contract with the Stadium owner providing the stewards; or an external security company providing stewards.

P.13	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Rights, Responsibilities and Duties	A	A	A

1. The rights, responsibilities and duties of the Licence Applicant's personnel mentioned in these Regulations must be defined in writing.

P.14	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Duty of Replacement During the Licensing Season	A	A	A

1. If a function defined in these Regulations becomes vacant during the season, the Licensee must ensure that, within a period of a maximum of sixty (60) days, the function is taken over by someone who holds the required qualification.
2. In the event that a function becomes vacant due to illness or accident, the Licensor may grant an extension to the sixty (60) day period only if reasonably satisfied that the person concerned is still medically unfit to resume duties.
3. The occurrence of vacancy and replacement must be notified to the Licensor within seven (7) working days of the respective event.

P.15	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Legal Advisor	B	B	C

1. The Licence Applicant must appoint a qualified legal advisor who is responsible for handling all legal matters in the Licence Applicant's activities.
2. The legal advisor shall have the necessary legal qualifications.

P.16	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Club Technical Director	B	B	C

1. The Licence Applicant must employ a Club Technical Director.
2. He should have at least an AFC 'A' Coaching diploma/licence and supplementary qualities like extensive playing and work experience at the professional club level or have been a long-serving dedicated member of the club as a player, coach, manager or advisor.
3. He must have strong management skills, be a visionary and lead the technical development of the club.
4. He shall be responsible for but not limited to the following:
    a) establish and/or implement club philosophy;
    b) establish Youth and Player Development Structures and Programmes;
    c) ensure technical standards are maintained and enhanced;
    d) monitor and evaluate all technical and developmental programmes;
    e) talent scouting;
    f) management of Club's Youth Academies;
    g) recruitment and management of coaches and talent scouts; and
    h) management of match analysis processes.
5. The Club Technical Director must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

P.17	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Goalkeeper Coach of First Team	B	B	C

1. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Goalkeeper Coach with a valid coaching diploma/licence for the first team.
2. The Goalkeeper Coach must:
   a) hold at least the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Competition Operations Manual; or
   b) hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by the AFC in compliance with the RECC regulations for cases where the Goalkeeper Coach does not have the required certification as defined under (a) above; or
   c) already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above.
3. The Goalkeeper Coach must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

P.18	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Fitness Coach of First Team	B	B	C

1. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Fitness Coach with a valid coaching diploma/licence for the first team.
2. The Fitness Coach must:
   a) hold at least the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Competitions Operations Manual; or
   b) hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by the AFC in compliance with the RECC regulations for cases where the Fitness Coach does not have the required certification as defined under (a) above; or
   c) already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above.
3. The Fitness Coach must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

ARTICLE 19 | LEGAL CRITERIA

L.01	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Declaration in Respect of the Participation in AFC Club Competition(s)	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must submit a legally valid declaration confirming that:

   a) it recognises as legally-binding the statutes, rules and regulations and decisions of FIFA, the AFC, its AFC Member Association and, if it exists as a separate legal entity, of its national league as well as the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne as provided in the relevant articles of the AFC Statutes;

   b) it recognises the exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (domiciled in Lausanne, Switzerland) for any dispute of international dimension and in particular involving FIFA and/or the AFC;

   c) it recognises the prohibition on recourse to ordinary courts under FIFA and AFC Statutes;

   d) at the national level, it will play in competitions that are recognised and endorsed by its AFC Member Association (e.g. national championship, national cup, etc.);

   e) at the international level, it will participate in competitions recognised and endorsed by the AFC and/or FIFA. To avoid any doubt, this provision does not relate to friendly matches;

   f) it will abide by and observe the provisions and conditions of the national club licensing regulations;

   g) its reporting perimeter is defined in accordance with Article 20.1 of these Regulations and it will be accountable for any consequences of an entity included in the reporting perimeter not abiding by and observing this declaration;

   h) all submitted documents are complete and correct;

   i) it authorises the competent Licensor and the AFC to examine documents and seek information and, in the event of any appeal procedure, to seek information from any relevant public authority or private body according to national law; and

   j) it acknowledges that the AFC reserves the right to execute compliance audits at the national level in accordance with Article 21.3.

2. This declaration must be executed by an authorised signatory no more than three (3) months prior to the corresponding deadline for its submission to the Licensor.

L.02	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Legal Documents	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must submit the following documents:

   a) a copy of its current company articles, constitution, statutes or a similar governing document;

   b) an extract from a public register (e.g. trade register) which demonstrates that the Licence Applicant is a legal entity which contains the following minimum information:

      i. registered name;

      ii. popular name;

      iii. address of headquarters;

      iv. legal form;

      v. list of authorised signatories and;

      vi. type of signature (e.g. individual, collective).

   c) the agreement between the Licence Applicant and the relevant member which has the right to participate in affiliated competitions of the AFC Member Association (if applicable).

L.03	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Ownership and Control of Clubs	A	A	A

1. To safeguard the integrity of national matches and competitions, Licence Applicants must be committed to ensuring that they conform to the highest ethical and sporting standards regarding matters of ownership and Control.

   In this regard, the Licence Applicant must comply with the following criteria:

   a) the Licence Applicant shall not, either directly or indirectly:

      i. hold or deal in the securities or shares of any other participating club(s) in the same national competition;

      ii. be a member of any other participating club(s) in the same national competition;

iii. be involved in any capacity whatsoever in the management, administration and/or sporting performance of any other participating club(s) in the same national competition; and/or

iv. have any power whatsoever in the management, administration and/or sporting performance of any other participating club(s) in the same national competition,

if there is a material risk that this would actually or potentially jeopardise the integrity of the national competition.

b) No one connected to the Licence Applicant shall simultaneously be involved, either directly or indirectly , in any capacity whatsoever in the management, administration and/or sporting performance of the Licence Applicant and any other participating club(s) in the same national competition, if there is a material risk that this would actually or potentially jeopardise the integrity of the national competition.

c) No individual or legal entity connected to the Licence Applicant shall have Control or influence over any other participating club(s) in the same national competition, if there is a material risk that this would actually or potentially jeopardise the integrity of the national competition. In assessing whether or not Control or influence exists in this context, the following factors shall be taken into account:

i. holding a majority of the shareholders' voting rights in the relevant clubs;

ii. having the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management, or supervisory body of the relevant clubs;

iii. being a shareholder and alone controlling a majority of the shareholders' voting rights pursuant to an agreement entered into with other shareholders of the relevant clubs; and/or

iv. being able to exercise by any means a decisive influence in the decision-making of the relevant clubs.

2. The Licence Applicant shall submit a legally valid and binding declaration outlining the ownership structure and Control mechanism of the club, and confirming its compliance with the criteria set out above. If the Licence Applicant considers that it may contravene any of the criteria, this should be explained in the declaration (with evidence). The declaration must be executed by an authorised signatory no more than three (3) months prior to the corresponding deadline for its submission to the Licensor.

L.04	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Legal Group Structure and Ultimate Controlling Party	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must provide the Licensor with information on the legal Group structure at the Statutory Closing Date prior to the deadline for the submission of the application to the Licensor. It must be presented in a chart and duly approved by management. The Licensor must be informed of any changes to the legal Group structure during the period between the Statutory Closing Date and the submission of the chart to the Licensor.

2. This document must clearly identify and include information on:

   a) the Licence Applicant or, if different, the Registered Member of the AFC Member Association;

   b) any Subsidiary of the Licence Applicant or, if different, the Registered Member of the AFC Member Association;

   c) any Joint Venture entity, including other parties with an interest in the Joint Venture, in which the Licence Applicant (or, if different, the Registered Member of the AFC Member Association) has an interest;

   d) any Associate entity of the Licence Applicant or, if different, the Registered Member of the AFC Member Association;

   e) any direct or indirect Controlling entity of the Licence Applicant, up to and including the ultimate Controlling party;

   f) any party that has 10% or greater direct or indirect ownership of the Licence Applicant, or 10% or greater voting rights;

   g) any party with a Significant Influence over the Licence Applicant;

   h) any other football club in respect of which any of the parties identified in (a) to (g) or any of their key management personnel have any ownership interest, voting rights and/or any involvement or influence whatsoever in its management, administration and/or sporting performance; and

   i) the reporting perimeter as defined in Article 20.1 must also be clearly identified in the document.

3. If deemed relevant, the Licensor may request the Licence Applicant/Licensee to provide additional information other than that listed above (e.g. information about any subsidiaries and/or Associates of the ultimate Controlling entity and/or direct Controlling entity).

4. The following information must be provided in relation to all entities included in the legal Group structure:

   a) Name of legal entity;

   b) Type of legal entity;

   c) Main activity of legal entity; and

   d) Percentage of ownership interest (and, if different, percentage of voting power held).

5. For any Subsidiary of the Licence Applicant/Licensee and, if different, the Registered Member of the AFC Member Association, the following information must also be provided:

   a) Share capital;

   b) Total assets;

   c) Total revenues; and

   d) Total equity.

6. Without prejudice to the foregoing, the Licensor shall ensure that it assesses the information provided by the Licence Applicant under Criterion L.04 to determine the accuracy of the Licence Applicant's declaration under Criterion L.03.

   Accordingly, the Licence Applicant shall ensure that it clearly identifies and includes information regarding its compliance with the various components of the declaration under Criterion L.03 when providing the Licensor with information on its legal Group structure under Criteria L.04.

L.05	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Written Contract with Players	A	A	A

1. The professional players of the Licence Applicant must have a written contract with the Licence Applicant in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players (or for amateur players, a valid memorandum of understanding with the Licence Applicant) and shall incorporate all key provisions required by the relevant national law and of FIFA, the AFC, and the AFC Member Association.

L.06	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Disciplinary Procedure and Code of Conduct for Players and Officials	B	B	B

1. The Licence Applicant shall establish a legally binding code of conduct for players and officials in compliance with the relevant national law, and the Statutes of FIFA, the AFC and the AFC Member Association.

2. The code of conduct should be supplemented by a legally binding disciplinary regulation under which the infringement of the code of conduct, club rules, club regulations, and club decisions shall be prosecuted and sanctions may be applied.

ARTICLE 20 | FINANCIAL CRITERIA

1. Reporting Entity/Entities and reporting perimeter

   a) The Licence Applicant determines and provides to the Licensor the reporting perimeter, i.e. the entity or combination of entities in respect of which financial information (e.g. single entity, consolidated or combined financial statements) has to be provided.

   b) The reporting perimeter must include:

      i. the Licence Applicant and, if different, the Registered Member of the AFC Member Association;

      ii. any Subsidiary of the Licence Applicant and, if different, the Registered Member of the AFC Member Association;

      iii. any other entity included in the legal Group structure which generates revenues and/or performs services and/or incurs costs in respect of the football activities defined in paragraph c) iii. to x. below; and

      iv. any entity, irrespective of whether it is included in the legal Group structure, which generates revenues and/or performs services and/or incurs costs in respect of football activities as defined in paragraph c) i. and ii. below.

   c) Football activities include:

      i. employing/engaging personnel (as defined in Criteria F.04) including payment of all forms of consideration to employees arising from contractual or legal obligations;
      ii. acquiring/selling players' registrations (including loans);

      iii. ticketing;

      iv. sponsorship and advertising;

      v. broadcasting;

      vi. merchandising and hospitality;

      vii. club operations (e.g. administration, matchday activities, travel, scouting, etc.);

      viii. financing (including financing secured or pledged against the assets of the Licence Applicant);

      ix. use and management of Stadium and Training Facilities; and

      x. youth sector.

d) An entity may be excluded from the reporting perimeter only if:

i. its activities are entirely unrelated to the football activities defined in paragraph c) above and/or the locations, assets or brand of the football club; or

ii. it is immaterial compared with all the entities that form the reporting perimeter and it does not perform any of the football activities defined in paragraph c) i. and ii. above; or

iii. the football activities it performs are already entirely reflected in the financial statements of one of the entities included in the reporting perimeter.

e) The Licence Applicant must submit a declaration by an authorised signatory which confirms:

i. that all revenues and costs related to each of the football activities indicated in paragraph c) have been included in the reporting perimeter and provide a detailed explanation should this not be the case; and

ii. whether any entity included in the legal Group structure has been excluded from the reporting perimeter, justifying any such exclusion with reference to paragraph d).

2. For further information on the mandatory reporting period and the minimum requirements on the format of reporting and accounting, as well as a detailed explanation of each of the criteria below, please refer to the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook.

F.01	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Annual Financial Statements – Audited	A	A	A

1. Regardless of the legal structure of the Licence Applicant, Annual Financial Statements based on the local legislation for incorporated companies shall be prepared and Audited by an independent auditor.

2. The Audited Annual Financial Statement shall be in respect of the Statutory Closing Date immediately prior to the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to the AFC and must consist of:

   a) a balance sheet;

   b) a profit and loss account;

   c) a cash flow statement;

   d) notes, comprising a summary of significant Accounting Policies and other explanatory notes; and

   e) a financial Review by management.

3. The Audited Annual Financial Statements shall meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook.

4. If the Audited Annual Financial Statements do not meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook, then Supplementary Information must be prepared by the Licence Applicant and assessed by the auditor.

F.02	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Financial Statements for the Interim Period – Reviewed	A	A	C

1. If the Statutory Closing Date of the Licence Applicant is more than six (6) months before the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to the AFC, then the Licence Applicant shall prepare and submit additional financial statements covering the Interim Period.

2. If the Financial Statements for the Interim Period are prepared and submitted, they should cover the Interim Period up to a date within six (6) months preceding the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to the AFC and must be Reviewed or Audited by an independent auditor.

3. The Interim Financial Statements shall meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook.

F.03	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
No Overdue Payables Towards Football Clubs Arising from Transfer Activities	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must prove that it has no overdue payables towards football clubs arising from transfer activities as at 31 December preceding the season to be licensed, unless by the following 31 March they have been fully settled, deferred by mutual agreement with the creditor or are subject to a not-obviously unfounded dispute submitted to a competent authority.

F.04	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
No Overdue Payables Towards Employees and Social/Tax Authorities	A	A	A

1. The Licence Applicant must prove that, in respect of contractual and legal obligations with its current/former employees and social/tax authorities, it has no overdue payables as at 31 December preceding the season to be licensed, unless by the following 31 March they have been fully settled, deferred by mutual agreement with the creditor or are subject to a not-obviously unfounded dispute submitted to a competent authority.

2. The term "employees" shall include but not be limited to:

   a) all professional players according to the applicable FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players; and

   b) the administrative, technical, medical and security staff specified in the AFC Club Licensing Regulations

F.05	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Written Representations Prior to the Licensing Decision	A	A	A

1. Within seven (7) days prior to the date on which the licensing decision is to be made by the First Instance Body, the Licence Applicant must make written representations to the Licensor.

2. The written representations shall confirm:

   a) That all documents submitted to the Licensor are complete and correct;

   b) Whether or not any Significant Change in relation to all the licensing criteria has occurred;

   c) Whether or not any Events or Conditions of Major Economic importance have occurred that may have an adverse impact on the Licence Applicant's financial position since the balance sheet date of the preceding Audited Annual Financial Statements or Reviewed Interim Financial Statements (if applicable). If Any Events or Conditions of Major Economic Importance have occurred, the management representation's letter must include a description of the nature of the event or condition and an estimate of its financial effect, or a statement that such an estimate cannot be made; and

   d) Whether or not the Licence Applicant (or the Registered Member of the AFC Member Association which has a contractual relationship with the Licence Applicant within the meaning of Article 12) or any Parent company of the Licence Applicant included in the reporting perimeter is seeking or has received protection from its creditors pursuant to laws or regulations within the twelve (12) months preceding the Licence Season.

   3. Approval by management must be evidenced by way of a signature on behalf of the executive body of the Licence Applicant.

F.06	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Future Financial Information	A	A	B

1. The Licence Applicant must prepare and submit Future Financial Information in order to demonstrate to the Licensor its ability to continue as a Going Concern until the end of the Licence Season if it has breached any of the indicators defined in paragraph 2 below.

2. If a Licence Applicant exhibits any of the conditions described by indicator 1 or 2, it is considered in breach of the indicator:

   a) Indicator 1: Going Concern
   The auditor's report in respect of the Annual or Interim Financial Statements submitted in accordance with F.01 and F.02 includes an emphasis of matter or a qualified opinion/conclusion in respect of Going Concern

   b) Indicator 2: Negative equity
   The Annual Financial Statements (including, where required, the Supplementary Information) submitted in accordance with F.01 disclose a net liabilities position that has deteriorated relative to the comparative figure contained in the previous year's Annual Financial Statements, or the Interim Financial Statements submitted in accordance with F.02 (including, where required, the Supplementary Information) disclose a net liabilities position that has deteriorated relative to the comparative figure at the preceding Statutory Closing Date.

3. Future Financial Information must cover the period commencing immediately after the Statutory Closing Date of the Annual Financial Statements or, if applicable, the balance sheet date of the Interim Financial Statements, and it must cover at least the entire Licence Season.

4. Future Financial Information consists of:

   a) a budgeted profit and loss account, with comparative figures for the immediately preceding Financial Year and Interim Period (if applicable);

   b) a budgeted cash flow, with comparative figures for the immediately preceding Financial Year and Interim Period (if applicable); and

   c) explanatory notes, including a brief description of each of the significant assumptions (with reference to the relevant aspects of Historic Financial Information) that have been used to prepare the budgeted profit and loss account and cash flow statement, as well as of the key risks that may affect the future financial results.

5. Future Financial Information must be prepared on a quarterly basis.

6. Future Financial Information must be prepared on a consistent basis with the Audited Annual Financial Statements and follow the same Accounting Policies as those applied for the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements, except for accounting policy changes made after the date of the most recent Annual Financial Statements that are to be reflected in the next Annual Financial Statements, in which case details must be disclosed.

7. Future Financial Information must meet the minimum disclosure requirements as set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook. Additional line items or notes must be included if they provide clarification or if their omission would make the Future Financial Information misleading.

8. Future Financial Information with the assumptions upon which they are based must be approved by management and this must be evidenced by way of a brief statement and signature on behalf of the executive body of the Reporting Entity.

SUBSEQUENT INFORMATION

Criteria F.07 and F.08 apply to Licensees after the Licensing Decision. Criterion F.07 (duty to notify Subsequent Events) applies to all Licensees. Criterion F.08 (duty to update Future Financial Information) only applies to those Licensees who exhibited a breach of one or more of the indicators.

F.07	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Duty to Notify Subsequent Events	A	A	C

1. Following the licensing decision by the decision-making body, the Licensee must promptly notify the Licensor in writing about any Subsequent Events that may cast significant doubt upon the Licensee's ability to continue as a Going Concern until at least the end of the season for which the Licence has been granted.

2. Compliance with this criterion shall be assessed by the Licensor in respect of the following licensing cycle.

F.08	ACL Elite	ACL Two	ACGL
Duty to Update Future Financial Information	A	A	C

1. If the Licensee is in breach of one or more of the indicators below, then the Licensee must prepare and submit an updated version of the Future Financial Information (prepared according to F.06). In addition, the prepared information shall include a comparison of Budget to actual figures including explanations of variances. The updated version of the Future Financial Information must be prepared, as a minimum, on a six (6) month basis.

   Indicator 1: Going Concern
   The auditor's report in respect of the Annual or Interim Financial Statements submitted in accordance with F.01 and F.02 includes an emphasis of matter or a qualified opinion/ conclusion in respect of Going Concern.

   Indicator 2: Negative equity
   The Annual Financial Statements (including, where required, the Supplementary Information) submitted in accordance with F.01 disclose a net liabilities position that has deteriorated relative to the comparative figure contained in the previous year's Annual Financial Statements, or the Interim Financial Statements submitted in accordance with F.02 (including, where required, the Supplementary Information) disclose a net liabilities position that has deteriorated relative to the comparative figure at the preceding Statutory Closing Date.

2. The updated Future Financial Information shall meet the minimum disclosure requirements set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook.

3. Compliance with this criterion shall be assessed by the Licensor in respect of the following licensing cycle.

ARTICLE 21 | FINAL PROVISIONS

1. AUTHORITATIVE TEXT AND LANGUAGE OF CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence between the AFC and the Licensor and/or the Licensee must be in English and the AFC may ask the Licensor and/or Licensee for a certified translation of documents at their expense.

In the event of a discrepancy between these Regulations and the club licensing regulations of an AFC Member Association, these Regulations shall be authoritative.

These Regulations shall be implemented according to the AFC Statutes, AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Code and other AFC regulations. In case of any discrepancy between these Regulations and any applicable AFC regulations, these Regulations shall be authoritative.

The headings used for the various Parts, Sections, and Articles of these Regulations are for convenience only and shall not be deemed part of the substance of these Regulations or to affect in any way the language of the provisions to which they refer.

These Regulations shall be issued in English. If these Regulations are translated into another language, the English version issued by the AFC shall prevail.

2. ANNEXES

All annexes to the present Regulations form an integral part thereof.

3. COMPLIANCE AUDITS

a) The AFC and/or its nominated bodies/agencies reserve the right to, at any time, conduct compliance audits of the Licensor and Licence Applicant/ Licensee.

b) Compliance audits aim to ensure that the Licensor, as well as the Licence Applicant/ Licensee, have fulfilled their obligations as defined in these Regulations and that the Licence was correctly awarded at the time of the final decision of the Licensor. Non-cooperation of the Licensor or the Licensee to execute a compliance audit shall be referred to the AFC judicial bodies for their appropriate action.

c) In the event of a discrepancy between these Regulations and the club licensing regulations of an AFC Member Association, these Regulations shall be authoritative.

4. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Should the AFC discover that any licensing decision has been made in violation of the AFC Club Licensing Regulations, the AFC may refer the Licensor to the AFC judicial bodies for their further action in accordance with the relevant regulations.

5. IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS

The AFC General Secretariat shall take the decisions and adopt, in the form of directives, the detailed provisions necessary for implementing these Regulations. The AFC reserves the right to make amendments to any part of these Regulations for any reason whatsoever. Such amendments shall be duly communicated in due course.

6. MATTERS NOT PROVIDED FOR

Matters not provided for in these Regulations shall be decided by the AFC Executive Committee. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.

7. ENFORCEMENT

a) These Regulations were ratified by the AFC Executive Committee on 25 June 2024 and came into force immediately.

b) These Regulations shall be applicable for the granting of Licences to participate in the ACL Elite, ACL Two and ACGL for the sporting season 2025/26 onwards.

c) For the avoidance of doubt, the AFC Club Licensing Regulations Edition 2023 shall remain in force for the purposes of, and be applicable for, the granting of Licences to participate in the ACL Elite, ACL Two and ACGL in the sporting season 2024/25.

d) These Regulations were amended by the AFC Executive Committee on 29 April 2026 and such amendments came into force immediately. The relevant amendments are highlighted in these Regulations.

For the AFC Executive Committee

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
President

Datuk Seri Windsor John
General Secretary

ANNEX 1 | INTEGRATION OF THE AFC CLUB LICENSING REGULATIONS INTO NATIONAL CLUB LICENSING REGULATIONS

A. PRINCIPLE

In its national club licensing regulations, each AFC Member Association must define the parties involved, their rights and duties, the criteria and the necessary processes in accordance with these Regulations for entering the relevant AFC club competition(s).

B. THE PROCESS

1. The AFC Member Association must finalise the wording of the national club licensing regulations in English and submit it via the CLAS (unless exempted by the AFC) to the AFC General Secretariat for review.

2. The AFC Member Association is responsible for ensuring, and must demonstrate to the AFC General Secretariat, that all applicable provisions of these Regulations have been integrated into its national club licensing regulations. Exceptions may be granted by the AFC General Secretariat according to Article 4 of these Regulations.

3. The AFC Member Association is free to increase or introduce additional minimum criteria in its national club licensing regulations for the purpose of entering the relevant AFC club competition(s).

4. Where introduced by the Licensor in its national club licensing regulations, any increased or additional minimum criteria shall apply to entry in the relevant AFC club competition(s).

5. The AFC Member Association must confirm to the AFC General Secretariat that all provisions contained in the national club licensing regulations are in compliance with the applicable national law.

6. The AFC General Secretariat reviews the final version of the national club licensing regulations and accredits it by approving it on the CLAS which confirms that:

   a) the applicable provisions of these Regulations for the purpose of entering the relevant AFC club competition(s) are integrated into the national club licensing regulations; and

   b) the Licence issued by the competent national bodies according to the national club licensing regulations is based on the minimum criteria set out in Articles 16 to 20, Annex 5 or Annex 6 (as applicable) of these Regulations.

7. The national club licensing regulations must be approved by the competent national bodies and communicated to the Licence Applicants before the start of the licensing process and they cannot be amended during the latter process, unless duly approved by the AFC.

ANNEX 2 | DELEGATION OF LICENSING AND MONITORING RESPONSIBILITIES TO AN AFFILIATED LEAGUE

1. The AFC General Secretariat may approve any requests from AFC Member Associations to delegate or to withdraw licensing and monitoring responsibilities to/from its affiliated league(s) as specified in Article 5.2.

2. Such well-founded requests can be made to the AFC General Secretariat at any time. All the requests presented to the AFC in writing before the start of the core process will be considered for effect in the following sporting season.

3. The timing of such a request must be carefully considered. The AFC will not accept any request to delegate or withdraw licensing responsibilities during the core process in order to ensure continuity.

4. The AFC General Secretariat may approve a delegation request if it is satisfied that the league:

    a) is affiliated to the AFC Member Association and has accepted its statutes, regulations and the decisions of its responsible and competent bodies in writing;

    b) is responsible for running the top national championship;

    c) has submitted a written decision by the legislative body of its affiliated league to comply with the following obligations towards the AFC:

        i. to implement the Club Licensing Criteria according to the provisions of these Regulations and any future amendments thereto into national club licensing regulations;

        ii. to cooperate with the AFC and its nominated bodies/agencies for the purpose of club monitoring;

        iii. to grant the AFC and its nominated bodies/agencies full necessary access to verify the operation of the club licensing system and the decisions of the decision-making bodies at any time;

        iv. to allow the AFC and its nominated bodies/agencies to conduct compliance audits at any time of clubs that qualify for an AFC club competition(s);

        v. to accept any AFC decision made with regard to exceptions and/or compliance audits; and

        vi. to issue the appropriate sanctions to the relevant parties according to the AFC's recommendations or decisions.

ANNEX 3 | EXCEPTIONS POLICY

A. PRINCIPLE

1. The AFC General Secretariat may, in accordance with Article 4, grant exceptions on the following matters:

   a) non-applicability of a minimum requirement concerning the decision-making bodies or process defined in Article 7 due to national law or any other reason;

   b) non-applicability of a minimum requirement concerning the core process defined in Article 9 due to national law or any other reason;

   c) non-applicability of a minimum assessment procedure defined in Article 10 due to national law or any other reason;

   d) non-applicability of a certain criterion defined in Articles 16 to 20, Annex 5 or Annex 6 (as applicable), due to national law or any other reason;

   e) extension of the introduction period for the implementation of a criterion or a category of criterion defined in Articles 16 to 20, Annex 5 or Annex 6 (as applicable); and/or

   f) non-applicability of the two-year rule defined in Article 12.2 in case of change of legal form or company structure of the Licence Applicant on a case-by-case basis.

2. Exceptions related to items a) to e) are granted to an AFC Member Association and may apply to all clubs which are registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and which submit a licensing application to enter the relevant AFC club competition(s). Exceptions related to item f) are granted to the individual club that applies for a Licence.

3. In principle an exception is granted for a period of one Licence Season. Under specific circumstances, this period may be extended and the AFC Member Association may be placed on an improvement plan.

4. A renewal of the exception is possible upon a new request.

B. THE PROCESS

1. The AFC General Secretariat acts as the first instance decision-making body on exception requests.

2. An exception request must be in writing, clear and well-founded.

3. Exceptions related to items defined under A (1) a) to e) must be submitted by the AFC Member Association to the AFC General Secretariat thirty (30) days prior to the start of the core process.

4. Exceptions related to the item defined under A (1) f) can be submitted at any time. A Licensor notified of the reorganisation or restructuring of an affiliated club (e.g. change of legal form, merger of clubs, split of club, liquidation or bankruptcy) is responsible for notifying the AFC General Secretariat accordingly as soon as it becomes aware of it.

5. The AFC General Secretariat shall exercise necessary discretion to grant any exception within the limits of these Regulations.

6. The status and situation of football within the territory of the AFC Member Association will be taken into account when granting an exception. This encompasses, for example:

   a) size of the territory, population, geography, economic background, force majeure;

   b) size of the AFC Member Association (number of clubs, number of registered players and teams, size and quality of the administration of the association, etc.);

   c) the level of football (professional, semi-professional or amateur clubs);

   d) status of football as a sport within the territory and its market potential (average attendance, TV market, sponsorship, revenue potential, etc.);

   e) the AFC and FIFA ranking;

   f) stadium ownership situation (club, city/community, etc.) within the association;

   g) support (financial and other) from the national, regional and local authorities, including the national sports ministry;

   h) protection of creditors;

   i) legal Group structure and reporting perimeter; and/or

   j) club identity.

7. The decision will be communicated to the AFC Member Association. The decision shall be in writing and state the reasoning. The AFC Member Association shall then communicate it to all Licence Applicants concerned.

8. Appeals can be lodged against decisions made by the AFC General Secretariat in writing before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in accordance with the relevant provisions laid down in the AFC Statutes.

ANNEX 4A | EXTRAORDINARY APPLICATION OF THE CLUB LICENSING SYSTEM

1. The minimum licensing criteria applicable shall be the same as in Articles 16 to 20, Annex 5 or Annex 6 (as applicable) of these Regulations.

2. AFC Member Associations must notify the AFC of any potential extraordinary applications in writing latest by 31 January preceding the season to be licensed.

3. AFC Member Associations must provide the criteria for the extraordinary application to the club(s) concerned. They must prepare the club(s) concerned for the extraordinary application procedure.

4. The club(s) concerned must provide the necessary documentary proof to the AFC Member Association. The AFC Member Association will assess the club(s) against the minimum criteria in Articles 16 to 20, Annex 5 or Annex 6 (as applicable) of these Regulations.

5. The AFC Member Association shall forward the following (in English) to the AFC by 30 April preceding the season to be licensed:

   a) a written petition to the AFC Entry Control Body duly signed and dated by the club requesting it to grant a Licence to participate in the corresponding AFC club competition(s). Such request must provide:

      i. the name and address of the club;

      ii. the identity of any club(s) directly affected by its petition;

      iii. its full written argument with reference to the relevant regulations;

      iv. all documentary evidence provided to the AFC Member Association;

   b) a recommendation by the AFC Member Association (including the dates and names of the persons that assessed the club); and

   c) any other documents requested by the AFC.

6. If during this extraordinary application procedure any such club is eliminated on sporting merit, the AFC Member Association concerned shall notify the AFC General Secretariat immediately and the procedure will be immediately terminated without further decision. Any such terminated procedure cannot be resumed or restarted at a later stage.

ANNEX 4B | EXTRAORDINARY APPLICATION OF THE CLUB LICENSING SYSTEM DUE TO THE AMENDMENT OF SLOT ALLOCATIONS FOR THE AFC CLUB COMPETITIONS 2026/27

1. For the avoidance of doubt, only clubs that qualify for the AFC club competitions 2026/27 on sporting merit due to the introduction of additional slots as part of the amended slot allocation ratified by the AFC Executive Committee on 29 April 2026 can benefit from the extraordinary application process set out in this Annex 4B.

2. The minimum licensing criteria applicable shall be the same as in Articles 16 to 20 of these Regulations.

3. AFC Member Associations must notify the AFC of any potential extraordinary applications in writing latest by 8 May 2026.

4. AFC Member Associations must provide the criteria for the extraordinary application to the club(s) concerned. They must prepare the club(s) concerned for the extraordinary application procedure.

5. The club(s) concerned must provide the necessary documentary proof to the AFC Member Association. The AFC Member Association will assess the club(s) against the minimum criteria in Articles 16 to 20 of these Regulations.

6. The AFC Member Association shall forward the following (in English) to the AFC by 1 June 2026:

    a) a written petition to the AFC Entry Control Body duly signed and dated by the club requesting it to grant a Licence to participate in the corresponding AFC club competition(s). Such request must provide:

        i. the name and address of the club;

        ii. its full written argument with reference to the relevant regulations;

        iii. all documentary evidence provided to the AFC Member Association;

    b) a recommendation by the AFC Member Association (including the dates and names of the persons that assessed the club); and

    c) any other documents requested by the AFC.

7. If during this extraordinary application procedure any such club is eliminated on sporting merit, the AFC Member Association concerned shall notify the AFC General Secretariat immediately and the procedure will be immediately terminated without further decision. Any such terminated procedure cannot be resumed or restarted at a later stage.

ANNEX 5 | WOMEN'S CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

It is recommended that the following criteria are fulfilled by clubs participating in national women's club competitions with the aim of encouraging the AFC Member Associations to implement a women's club licensing system as part of their national club licensing regulations.

Sporting Criteria

1. Youth Teams

a. The Licence Applicant must have at least one (1) Under 15 (U15) or U16 or U17 women's youth team.

b. Each women's youth team must take part in official competitions or programmes played at the national, regional or local level and recognised by the AFC Member Association.

2. Medical Care of Players

a. The Licence Applicant shall provide all players registered in the club with full access to medical support services. These shall include, but not be limited to the following:

i. yearly medical examination including cardiovascular screening for all its players in its first squad; and

ii. yearly medical examination for all players above the age of 12.

3. Registration of Players

a. All the Licence Applicant's players, including youth players above the age of 12, must be registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

Infrastructure Criteria

4. Approved Stadium

a. The Licence Applicant must have a Stadium available to play matches. The Licence Applicant either:

i. owns the Stadium; or

ii. can provide a written contract with the owner of the Stadium it will use. This contract must guarantee the use of the Stadium for AFC matches for the coming season, for which the Licence Applicant qualifies in sporting terms.

b. The Stadium must meet any requirements set by the AFC Member Association.

c. The Stadium must be approved by the Licensor and located in the same city where the Licence Applicant is based. If the Stadium is not located in the Licence Applicant's base city, a justifiable reason should be provided.

5. Training Facilities – Availability

a. The Licence Applicant must have Training Facilities available throughout the year. The Licence Applicant either:

i. owns the Training Facilities; or

ii. shall provide a written contract with the owner of the Training Facilities.

b. It must be guaranteed that the Training Facilities can be used by all teams of the Licence Applicant during the Licence Season.

Personnel and Administrative Criteria

6. Club Secretariat

a. The Licence Applicant must have an office space sufficiently spacious to run its administration with the required infrastructure.

b. The Licence Applicant must have appointed an adequate number of skilled secretarial staff according to its needs to run its daily business.

c. It must ensure that its office is open to communicate with the Licensor and the public and that it is equipped, as a minimum, with phone, email facilities and a website.

7. Administrative Manager

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a manager who is responsible for running its operative matters linked to women's football.

8. Team Doctor

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one (1) doctor who is responsible for medical support of the women's first team during matches and training as well as for doping prevention.

b. The qualification of the Team Doctor must be recognised by the appropriate national health authorities.

c. The Team Doctor must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

9. Physiotherapist

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one (1) Physiotherapist responsible for medical treatment and massages for the women's first team during training sessions and matches.

b. The qualification of the Physiotherapist must be recognised by the appropriate national health authorities.

c. The Physiotherapist must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

Supplementary requirement: A minimum of one (1) personnel amongst the Team Doctor and Physiotherapist must be female.

10. Head Coach of Women's First Team

a. The Licence Applicant must appoint a Head Coach with a valid coaching diploma/licence responsible for all football matters of the women's first team.

b. The Head Coach must:

i. hold the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Competition Operations Manual; or

ii. hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by the AFC in compliance with the RECC regulations for cases where the Head Coach of the first team does not have the required certification as defined under (i) above; or already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (i) above.

c. The Head Coach must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

11. Youth Coach

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one (1) qualified coach who is responsible for all football matters related to the youth team(s) as defined under item 1 (a) above.

b. The Youth Coach must hold the minimum qualification as defined by the AFC Member Association which should not be below an AFC 'B' coaching certificate or its equivalence recognised and approved by the AFC.

c. The Youth Coach must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

12. Rights, Responsibilities and Duties

a. The rights, responsibilities and duties of the Licence Applicant's personnel mentioned in items 7 to 11 must be defined in writing.

13. Duty of Replacement During the Licensing Season

a. If a function defined in items 7 to 11 becomes vacant during the season, the Licensee must ensure that, within a period of a maximum of sixty (60) days, the function is taken over by someone who holds the required qualification.

b. In the event that a function becomes vacant due to illness or accident, the Licensor may grant an extension to the sixty (60) day period only if reasonably satisfied that the person concerned is still medically unfit to resume duties.

c. The occurrence of vacancy and replacement must be notified to the Licensor within seven (7) working days of the respective event.

Legal Criteria

14. Declaration in Respect of the Participation in National Competition

a. The Licence Applicant must submit a legally valid declaration confirming that:

i. it recognises as legally-binding the statutes, rules and regulations and decisions of FIFA, the AFC, its AFC Member Association and, if it exists as a separate legal entity, of its national league as well as the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne as provided in the relevant articles of the AFC Statutes;

ii. it recognises the exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (domiciled in Lausanne, Switzerland) for any dispute of international dimension and in particular involving FIFA and/or the AFC;

iii. it recognises the prohibition on recourse to ordinary courts under FIFA and AFC Statutes;

iv. at the national level, it will play in competitions that are recognised and endorsed by its AFC Member Association (e.g. national championship, national cup, etc.);

v. at the international level, it will participate in competitions recognised and endorsed by the AFC and/or FIFA. To avoid any doubt, this provision does not relate to friendly matches;

vi. it will abide by and observe the provisions and conditions of the national club licensing regulations;

vii. its reporting perimeter is defined in accordance with Article 20.1 of these Regulations and it will be accountable for any consequences of an entity included in the reporting perimeter not abiding by and observing this declaration;

viii. all submitted documents are complete and correct;

ix. it authorises the competent Licensor and the AFC to examine documents and seek information and, in the event of any appeal procedure, to seek information from any relevant public authority or private body according to national law; and

x. it acknowledges that the AFC reserves the right to execute compliance audits at the national level in accordance with Article 21.3.

b. This declaration must be executed by an authorised signatory no more than three (3) months prior to the corresponding deadline for its submission to the Licensor.

15. Written Contract with Players

a. The professional players of the Licence Applicants must have a written contract with the Licence Applicant in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players (or for amateur players, a valid memorandum of understanding with the Licence Applicant) and shall incorporate all key provisions required by the relevant national law and of FIFA, the AFC, and the AFC Member Association.

16. Legal Documents

The Licence Applicant must submit the following documents:

a. a copy of its current company articles, constitution, statutes or similar-type governing document;

b. an extract from a public register (e.g. trade register) which demonstrates that the Licence Applicant is a legal entity which contains the following minimum information:

i. registered name;

ii. popular name;

iii. address of headquarters;

iv. legal form;

v. list of authorised signatories; and

vi. type of signature (e.g. individual, collective).

c. the agreement between the Licence Applicant and the relevant member which has the right to participate in affiliated competitions of the AFC Member Association (if applicable).

Financial Criteria

17. Annual Financial Statements – Audited

a. Regardless of the legal structure of the Licence Applicant, Annual Financial Statements based on the local legislation for incorporated companies shall be prepared and Audited by an independent auditor.

b. The Annual Financial Statement shall be in respect of the Statutory Closing Date immediately prior to the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to the AFC and must consist of:

i. a balance sheet;

ii. a profit and loss account;

iii. a cash flow statement;

iv. notes, comprising a summary of significant Accounting Policies and other explanatory notes; and

v. a financial Review by management.

c. The Annual Financial Statements shall meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook.

d. If the Audited Annual Financial Statements do not meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook, then Supplementary Information must be prepared by the Licence Applicant and assessed by the auditor.

18. Annual Budget

a. The Licence Applicant must submit its annual Budget before the start of the season.

b. It should state the following:

i. projected income for the coming Financial Year

ii. projected expenditure for the coming Financial Year

iii. all the sources of revenues and income projected for the coming Financial Year along with the amount

iv. all the sources of expenditures projected for the Financial Year along with the amount

19. No Overdue Payables Towards Football Clubs, Employees and Social/Tax Authorities

a. The Licence Applicant must prove that it has no overdue payables towards football clubs, employees and social/tax authorities, as set out in Criteria F.03 and F.04 under Article 20 of these Regulations.

For the purpose of this provision, the term "employees" includes, but shall not be limited to, all professional players according to the applicable FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players as well as the administrative, technical and medical staff under items 7 to 11 above.

ANNEX 6 | FUTSAL CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

It is recommended that the following criteria are fulfilled by clubs participating in national futsal competitions with the aim of encouraging the AFC Member Associations to implement a futsal club licensing system as part of their national club licensing regulations.

Sporting Criteria

1. Youth Teams

a. The Licence Applicant must have at least one (1) Under 18 (U18) or Under 19 (U19) youth team.

b. Each futsal youth team must take part in official competitions or programmes played at the local, national or regional level which are recognised by the relevant AFC Member Association.

2. Medical Care of Players

a. The Licence Applicant shall provide all players registered within the club with full access to medical support services. These shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

i. yearly medical examination including cardiovascular screening for all its players in its first team squad; and

ii. yearly medical examination for all players above the age of 12.

3. Registration of Players

a. All the Licence Applicant's players, including futsal youth players above the age of 12, must be registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

Infrastructure Criteria

4. Approved Stadium

a. The Licence Applicant must have an indoor Stadium available to play its home matches. The Licence Applicant must either:

i. own the indoor Stadium; or

ii. provide a written contract with the owner of the indoor Stadium which guarantees the use of the indoor Stadium during the coming Licence Season.

b. The Stadium must meet any requirements set by the AFC Member Association.

c. The Stadium must be approved by the Licensor and located in the same city as the Licence Applicant is based. If the Stadium is not located in the Licence Applicant's base city, a justifiable reason should be provided.

5. Training Facilities – Availability

a. The Licence Applicant must have Training Facilities available throughout the year for all its teams. The Licence Applicant must either:

i. own the Training Facilities; or

ii. provide a written contract with the owner of the Training Facilities which guarantees the use of the Training Facilities for all its teams during the coming Licence Season.

Personnel and Administrative Criteria

6. Club Secretariat

a. The Licence Applicant must have an office space sufficiently spacious to run its administration with the required infrastructure.

b. The Licence Applicant must have appointed an adequate number of skilled secretarial staff according to its needs to run its daily business.

c. It must ensure that its office is open to communicate with the Licensor and the public and that it is equipped, as a minimum, with phone, email facilities and a website.

7. Administrative Manager

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a manager who is responsible for running its operational matters related to futsal.

8. Finance Officer

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Finance Officer who is responsible for its financial and accounting matters. He/she is responsible for managing and supervising all the financial matters of the club.

b. The Finance Officer must hold as a minimum one (1) of the following qualifications:

i. a degree in accountancy, finance or a related field; or

ii. a recognition of competence issued by an organisation recognised by the Licensor.

9. Safety and Security Officer

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a Safety and Security Officer who is responsible for safety and security-related matters with the qualifications as mentioned in Criteria P.04 under Article 18 of these Regulations.

b. The Safety and Security Officer must be duly registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

10. Media Officer

a. The Licence Applicant must have an appointed Media Officer who is responsible for all media-related matters.

b. The Media Officer should have adequate academic qualifications and experience in the media-related aspects of the futsal industry/futsal club.

c. The Media Officer must be duly registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

11. Team Doctor

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one (1) doctor who is responsible for medical support of the futsal first team during matches and training, as well as for doping prevention.

b. The qualification(s) of the Team Doctor must be recognised by the appropriate national health authorities.

c. The Team Doctor must be duly registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

12. Head Coach of the Futsal Team

a. The Licence Applicant must appoint a Head Coach with a valid coaching certificate/licence who is responsible for all futsal matters of the team.

b. The Head Coach must:

i. hold the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Member Association; or

ii. hold an AFC Member Association recognised equivalent of the MCR; or

iii. already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC Member Association, to achieve the MCR.

c. The Head Coach must be duly registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

13. Assistant Coach of the Futsal Team

a. The Licence Applicant must appoint an Assistant Coach with a valid coaching certificate/licence who is responsible for assisting the Head Coach in all futsal technical matters of the team.

b. The Assistant Coach must:

i. hold at least the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Member Association; or

ii. hold an AFC Member Association recognised equivalent of the MCR; or

iii. already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC Member Association, to achieve the MCR.

c. The Assistant Coach must be duly registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league

14. Goalkeeper Coach of the Futsal Team

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Goalkeeper Coach with a valid coaching certificate/licence for the team.

b. The Goalkeeper Coach must:

i. hold at least the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Member Association; or

ii. hold an AFC Member Association recognised equivalent of the MCR; or

iii. already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC Member Association, to achieve the MCR.

c. The Goalkeeper Coach must be duly registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

15. Fitness Coach of the Futsal Team

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Fitness Coach with a valid coaching certificate/licence for the team.

b. The Fitness Coach must:

i. hold at least the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Member Association; or

ii. hold an AFC Member Association recognised equivalent of the MCR; or

iii. already have started the required education course, recognised by the AFC Member Association, to achieve the MCR.

c. The Fitness Coach must be duly registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

16. Youth Coach of the Futsal Team

a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one (1) qualified coach who is responsible for all futsal matters related to the youth team(s) as defined under item 1 (a) above.

b. The Youth Coach must hold at least the minimum qualification as defined by the relevant AFC Member Association.

c. The Youth Coach must be duly registered with the relevant AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.

17. Rights, Responsibilities and Duties

a. The rights, responsibilities and duties of the Licence Applicant's personnel mentioned in items 7 to 16 must be defined in writing.

18. Duty of Replacement During the Licensing Season

a. If a function defined in items 7 to 16 becomes vacant during the season, the Licensee must ensure that, within a period of a maximum of sixty (60) days, the function is taken over by someone who holds the required qualification(s).

b. In the event that a function becomes vacant due to illness or accident, the Licensor may grant an extension to this sixty (60) day period only if reasonably satisfied that the person concerned is still medically unfit to resume duties.

c. The occurrence of vacancy and replacement must be notified to the Licensor within seven (7) working days of the respective event.

Legal Criteria

19. Declaration in Respect of the Participation in National Competition

a. The Licence Applicant must submit a legally valid declaration confirming that:

i. it recognises as legally-binding the statutes, rules and regulations and decisions of FIFA, the AFC, its AFC Member Association and, if it exists as a separate legal entity, of its national league, as well as the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne as provided in the relevant articles of the AFC Statutes;

ii. it recognises the exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (domiciled in Lausanne, Switzerland) for any dispute of international dimension and in particular involving FIFA and/or the AFC;

iii. it recognises the prohibition on recourse to ordinary courts under FIFA and AFC Statutes;

iv. at the national level, it will play in competitions that are recognised and endorsed by its AFC Member Association (e.g. national championship, national cup, etc.);

v. at the international level, it will participate in competitions recognised and endorsed by the AFC and/or FIFA. To avoid any doubt, this provision does not relate to friendly matches;

vi. it will abide by and observe the provisions and conditions of the national club licensing regulations;

vii. its reporting perimeter is defined in accordance with Article 20.1 of these Regulations and it will be accountable for any consequences of an entity included in the reporting perimeter not abiding by and observing this declaration;

viii. all submitted documents are complete and correct;

ix. it authorises the competent Licensor and the AFC to examine documents and seek information and, in the event of any appeal procedure, to seek information from any relevant public authority or private body according to national law; and

x. it acknowledges that the AFC reserves the right to execute compliance audits at the national level in accordance with Article 21.3.

b. This declaration must be executed by an authorised signatory no more than three (3) months prior to the corresponding deadline for its submission to the Licensor.

20. Written Contract with Players

a. The professional players of the Licence Applicants must have a written contract with the Licence Applicant in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players (or for amateur players, a valid memorandum of understanding with the Licence Applicant) and shall incorporate all key provisions required by the relevant national law and by FIFA, the AFC and its AFC Member Association.

21. Legal Documents

The Licence Applicant must submit the following documents:

a. a copy of its current company articles, constitution, statutes or similar governing document;

b. an extract from a public register (e.g. trade register) which demonstrates that the Licence Applicant is a legal entity which contains the following minimum information:

   i. registered name;

   ii. popular name;

   iii. address of headquarters;

   iv. legal form;

   v. list of authorised signatories; and

   vi. type of signature (e.g. individual, collective).

c. the agreement between the Licence Applicant and the relevant member which has the right to participate in affiliated competitions of the relevant AFC Member Association (if applicable).

Financial Criteria

22. Annual Financial Statements – Audited

a. Regardless of the legal structure of the Licence Applicant, Annual Financial Statements based on the local legislation for incorporated companies shall be prepared and Audited by an independent auditor.

b. The Annual Financial Statement shall be in respect of the Statutory Closing Date immediately prior to the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to the AFC and must consist of:

   i. a balance sheet;

   ii. a profit and loss account;

   iii. a cash flow statement;

   iv. notes, comprising a summary of significant Accounting Policies and other explanatory notes; and

   v. a financial Review by management.

c. The Annual Financial Statements shall meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook.

d. If the Audited Annual Financial Statements do not meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook, then Supplementary Information must be prepared by the Licence Applicant and assessed by the auditor.

23. Annual Budget

a. The Licence Applicant must submit its annual Budget before the start of the season.

b. It should state the following:

i. projected income for the coming Financial Year;

ii. projected expenditure for the coming Financial Year;

iii. all the sources of revenues and income projected for the coming Financial Year along with the amount(s); and

iv. all the sources of expenditure projected for the Financial Year along with the amount(s).

24. No Overdue Payables Towards Futsal Clubs, Employees and Social/Tax Authorities

a. The Licence Applicant must prove that it has no overdue payables towards futsal clubs, employees and social/tax authorities, as set out in Criteria F.03 and F.04 under Article 20 of these Regulations.

For the purposes of this provision, the term "employees" shall include but not be limited to all professional players according to the applicable FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, as well as the administrative, technical and medical staff under items 7 to 16 of the Personnel and Administrative criteria above.

ANNEX 7 | IMPLEMENTATION OF LICENSING AND MONITORING REQUIREMENTS TO GOVERN PARTICIPATION IN ITS NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

1. Each AFC Member Association is required to implement a club licensing system and monitoring requirements to govern participation in at least its national top division league. For this purpose, each AFC Member Association is free to increase, decrease, or introduce additional minimum criteria in its national club licensing regulations for the purpose of entering the national competition(s).

2. For the purposes of implementing club licensing for participation in the national competition(s), the general principles of club licensing defined under Articles 2 to 14 of these Regulations must be respected.

3. In each AFC Member Association, the licence applicants from at least the national top division league must comply with Article 12 of these Regulations. The AFC General Secretariat may grant an exception to the rule defined in Article 12.2 in case of a change of legal form or company structure of the licence applicant. The process for an exception request is defined under Annex 3.B of these Regulations.

4. It is recommended that each AFC Member Association includes, as a minimum, all Club Licensing Criteria (as per Articles 16 to 20 of these Regulations) graded ACGL B and higher as defined in these Regulations for its national top division league. These criteria can be adjusted by taking into consideration the status and situation of football in the relevant AFC Member Association.

5. For the purposes of the national club licensing system in relation to Club Licensing Criteria F.03 and F.04 (overdue payables), the AFC Member Association may adapt the dates as per the national competitions calendar while preserving the general principles as established in these Regulations.


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