



Good governance principles for UEFA member associations

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1. Clear strategy

It is a good governance principle that, nowadays, national associations should not only run day-to-day business but also have in place a clear business strategy. A published strategic plan should ideally be implemented for both the short and medium term, e.g. for one to five years, and should be the result of an inclusive internal and external process. It is recommended to evaluate the strategic objectives on an annual basis, to ensure that the strategy corresponds to the national association's statutes and, for the sake of transparency, to publicly communicate it, ideally through the national association website. Without a strategic plan with measurable objectives, the President and Executive Body/Board cannot be properly held accountable by the members. The development of a clear strategy should also be seen as an opportunity for both elite and amateurs to consult and identify common goals.

2. Statutes

National associations are encouraged to revise and modernise their statutes. Desirable minimum requirements are outlined in UEFA Circular letter no. 11/2009 and certain mandatory provisions to be implemented at national level may be found in the relevant provisions of the FIFA and UEFA Statutes. It would be recommended to establish fixed terms for both the President and Board/Executive Committee members (e.g. term and/or age limits). In addition, a system of "checks and balances" should be in place to avoid excessive concentration of power in one person while, at the same time, adequate arrangements should ensure continuity in the work of relevant bodies (for example, partial renewals to have at least one third of members in office at each renewal).

Executive Committees/Boards of the national associations should have balanced gender representation (diversity) and it is, therefore, recommended to have a fair representation of women in these bodies and, ideally, in the corresponding bodies of leagues and clubs as well.

The statutes should provide for a clear separation of powers (e.g. legislative/executive, executive/administrative, and independent judicial bodies), a definition of rights and obligations of the members, a clear indication of responsibilities and decision-making bodies, as well as minimum provisions related to ethics. The statutes should also guarantee a democratic process with free elections, stakeholder consultation, regular general assemblies and definition of roles and powers of the President, Board/executive committee and administrative body.

Finally, it is recommended that the revision process for statutes takes place in specific working groups (where necessary including FIFA and UEFA).

3. Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholders (i.e. clubs, leagues, players, coaches, referees, supporters) but also other interest groups, such as political bodies, media and relevant NGOs, are important partners for the overall development of football at national level. Therefore, it is recommended to recognise and consult them on a regular basis. National associations are free to decide on the precise degree of stakeholder involvement, be it at board/executive committee, standing committee or working group level and stakeholders are expected to work closely with the national associations in order to support mutually agreed objectives. In countries where professional football exists, social dialogue should be formalised and national associations are expected to ensure that the minimum requirements for standard player contracts are implemented at national level, as unanimously agreed by the XXXVI Ordinary UEFA Congress, in Istanbul, on 22 March 2012. It could also be assessed, whether the relationship between professional and grassroots football could be based on a contractual agreement, in the framework of which the reciprocal activities are being negotiated.

4. Promotion of ethical values, integrity and good governance

Ethical values and good governance should be incorporated as statutory objectives. There should be an overall strengthening of ethical principles, in particular, the principles of integrity, honesty, fiduciary responsibility, loyalty, and sportsmanship. Rules should be put in place to avoid, or mitigate (e.g. through disclosure), conflicts of interests, and to tackle the threat of corruption, whether it be as a result of offering or accepting gifts, bribes, or any other abuse of office. There should be robust internal control procedures to combat such phenomena and, in particular, to ensure that all bidding and voting is always transparent and compliant. These principles must apply to everybody, e.g. members, stakeholders, staff and volunteers.

National associations are invited to specifically address ethics matters either in their disciplinary rules or via a specific Code of Ethics. Furthermore, the bodies applying such rules must be protected from any form of undue pressure or political interference, meaning that the independence of these bodies, as well as their secretariats, must be guaranteed.

Finally, national associations are invited to invest in relevant communication, training and education programmes (e.g. compliance/ethics/integrity training, women's leadership programme).

5. Professionalism of committee structures

The standing committees of national associations play an important role as they contribute to the development of the national game. Consequently, national associations should ensure that their statutes and regulations contain clear definitions regarding the work, responsibilities, and composition of the committees, including appointment rules and members' qualifications.

The number of committees and frequency of meetings should correspond to the real needs of each national association. In addition to the independent judicial bodies (which are mandatory), national associations are encouraged to have at least the following committees in place: competitions, women's football, grassroots and finance. Due consideration should be given to the reality of each country and the structure of each national association.

National associations are also encouraged to have a fair gender representation and balance of interests in their standing committees and to appoint external technical staff or experts, if needed.

Finally, it is of outmost importance that a clear mechanism/procedure is in place so as to allow a proper communication flow between the committees and the relevant board/executive committee.

6. Administration

The administration of each national association is the body that delivers the day-to-day business. To guarantee a high quality of work, it is recommended to protect the administration from undue political influence on operational matters and daily decisions. Moreover, it is recommended to have an open, clear and transparent hiring process, to ensure that the most competent candidates are recruited to work in the administration and, in so doing, to protect the overall interests of the national association.

As the image of the administration reflects the image of the national association, there should be clear guidelines/regulations in place for the use of social media, confidentiality matters, accepting/offering gifts etc.

7. Accountability

To enhance accountability it is recommended to establish a clear process regarding signatory rights in national associations. In particular, for certain documents of major importance, it is recommended to implement a "double signature system" in order to ensure that important contracts cannot be signed off by a single person.

As national associations may be exposed to financial losses in view of the various commercial businesses they run, it is highly recommended to have in place an adequate insurance. This is in line with the general need for a proper risk management programme to be in place.

For sales or purchases above a certain limit, national associations should envisage having tender processes to provide greater accountability and better protect their own financial interests. In defining the applicable thresholds, the specificity of each country would be taken into account.

Finally, internally, there should be a clear definition of budgets and responsibilities/competence for each division and unit.

8. Transparency in financial matters and corporate documents

Transparency is one of the most important principles of good governance, especially when it comes to financial matters. A national association which is transparent will have a better image and will protect itself more effectively from any accusation of mismanagement or undue influence. This is appealing, both to the general public and to business partners, such as sponsors but also political bodies (both as potential funders and regulators). For this reason, it is strongly recommended to have transparent structures and strict financial controls, both at internal (i.e. the internal control system, including internal audit) and external (i.e. independent company) level.

In addition to the audited annual report and accounts, other related as well as relevant corporate documents should be made publicly available where possible, ideally on the national association website, provided such documents do not conflict with the overarching interest of the national associations or data protection law. It is recommended to include specific sections where the following documents are made available for download: statutes, regulations, strategy, background info on President/GS/Board members, committees composition, clear explanations of General Assembly and other bodies' key decisions (and ideally also meeting agendas), media releases, circular letters, annual activity report and financial information (as provided to members), sustainability report, procedure and forms for registration of intermediaries.

Finally, organisational structures and contact details of national associations' members (e.g. regional associations, clubs etc.) should be available on the website and updated when necessary.

9. Compliance

National associations are always expected to have a system and resources that check that they comply with their own statutes and regulations, as well as all general civil and criminal laws to which they are subject.

All national associations should have a compliance policy and culture. Policies such as respect, transparency, health and safety, equality/diversity, protection of minors, match-fixing, doping, human rights, fair play and solidarity, and the fight against racism, discrimination, and data protection are of major importance and should be reflected in the national association's strategy and operations. From time to time, UEFA invites its national associations to adopt certain campaigns or policies with specific resolutions approved by the UEFA Congress (e.g. resolutions "*European football united against racism*" and "*European football united for the integrity of the game*" unanimously adopted respectively by the XXXVII Ordinary UEFA Congress on 24 May 2013 in London and the XXXVIII Ordinary UEFA Congress held on 27 March 2014 in Astana).

10. Volunteer programmes

As the overall goal of all national associations should be to stimulate participation in football, it is recommended to have in place volunteer programmes that will increase the number of people active in all different aspects of the game, especially young people. Not only will this lead to a better image of national associations but it will also establish a stronger foundation for the future development of football. Especially the significance of honorary engagements at the grassroots level of football should be emphasized and acknowledged by the national associations.