



**STRATEGY**  
FOR MALTESE FOOTBALL  
**2020-24**

**WE CAN  
PERFORM  
BETTER**







**WE CAN  
PERFORM  
BETTER**



# How **SUCCESS** will be measured

## VISION

Football as a source of pride, joy and inspiration for the whole nation



## OUR MISSION

is to continue growing and improving the game of football and the people in it at all levels; fostering a positive social change to embrace a sporting culture; championing national pride and unity as we strive to achieve high standards and inspire people.

## VALUES

Dynamic, Socially Responsible, Trustworthy

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# FOREWORD

The Malta Football Association is the largest sports association in the country with over 15,000 affiliated members between players, coaches, match officials, administrators, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders who are all part of the domestic football family.

The vision of the Malta FA is to further strengthen its investment to build a stronger foundation, aiming at long-term development and the sustainability of Maltese football across all levels, from community, grassroots, amateurs, women and youths all the way to the elite, clubs and national team selections.

We can only attain these objectives if, together, we adopt a holistic approach and plan strategically for the future. For the first time in its 120 years of existence, the Malta FA is presenting a strategic document centred around our core mission... football and its development.

Although the Malta FA is launching this strategy during a very challenging period, we are all motivated to implement its delivery.

Over the next four years, we will undertake the proposed reforms and projects, ensuring that football is central to our efforts.

This strategy will change the way we – officials, administrators, athletes, volunteers and fans – perceive and experience the game of football in this country. It is based on four major pillars – further technical and infrastructural development, the growth and sustainability of football clubs, broadening the exposure and commercial value, and better governance by strengthening the compliance and integrity aspects with the aim of delivering better competitions.

Beyond the ongoing efforts to deal with the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we will keep striving to increase football participation, improve expertise





# WE CAN PERFORM BETTER

and pursue technical excellence, professional opportunities, social inclusion, commercial sustainability and digital transformation of our processes.

This can only be achieved if everyone – members, stakeholders and legislators – work collectively in the best interest of the game of football. The Malta FA is intent on playing a leading role in inspiring the community by showing that We Can Perform Better and gain results that will take us to new levels in football. Diligent work is key to reaching the strategic aims supported by increased fan engagement.

The power of football should spur our efforts to make the game more accessible

across Malta and Gozo, thus creating a new image of football in this country. Planning our future with emphasis on stability is at the heart of this, using football as a tool for education and modernising the system to make it more inclusive.

These targets are challenging but realistic and achievable. As President of the Malta FA, I will be devoting all my energy and resources to translate this potential and unrealised ability into future success.

**Bjorn Vassallo**

MALTA FA PRESIDENT

# MALTA FA

## MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

### VISION

Football as a source of pride, joy and inspiration for the whole nation.

### MISSION

The Malta Football Association is committed to growing and improving the game of football and the people in it at all levels; fostering a positive social change to embrace a sporting culture; championing national pride and unity as we strive to inspire people and achieve high standards.

### CORE VALUES

**Dynamic** – We are proactive and passionate in delivering the highest standards of performance.

**Socially Responsible** – we are inclusive and open to all, regardless of gender, ability, age, religion, sexual orientation, politics or race.

**Trustworthy** – we are open, honest and shall strive to instil trust in our institution and competitions in a manner that reflects the highest standards of integrity.



# INTRODUCTION



The Malta Football Association is adopting its first strategy for Maltese football on the basis of the endorsement by the Executive Committee of the document 'Vision 2027' as presented by President Bjorn Vassallo in 2019. This process is being undertaken within UEFA's Football Federations of the Future (FFOTF) strategic framework, under the mentorship provided by the UEFA GROW programme. Following the review of 'Vision 2027', the strategic goals, key priorities and implementation scheduling for the Malta FA were defined. In addition, the resource requirements associated with each objective and operational practicality were considered.

## UEFA GROW

UEFA GROW is a comprehensive business development tool designed to help all 55 UEFA Member Associations to maximise their potential on and off the pitch, in order to systematically and strategically grow European football. UEFA GROW provides each association with a tailor-made approach providing fact-based research, market intelligence, UEFA expertise and industry experts to assess

and address their own specific needs and challenges.

## FOOTBALL FEDERATIONS OF THE FUTURE

Launched in October 2019, Football Federations of the Future is a UEFA GROW blueprint which sets out a specific framework through which each national association can assess its own 'state of play' in overall strategic planning and each of the core and supporting UEFA GROW pillars.

It enables each national association to establish a clear vision and strategic direction for the future of football in its respective country. It is built around a principle of self-assessment, with facilitation by UEFA. Each national association is able to determine its current status across each of the individual development pillars and use this as the basis to plot a path that identifies where they wish to be by 2024, across each area of the organisation.



# TIME FOR OUR FIRST STRATEGY

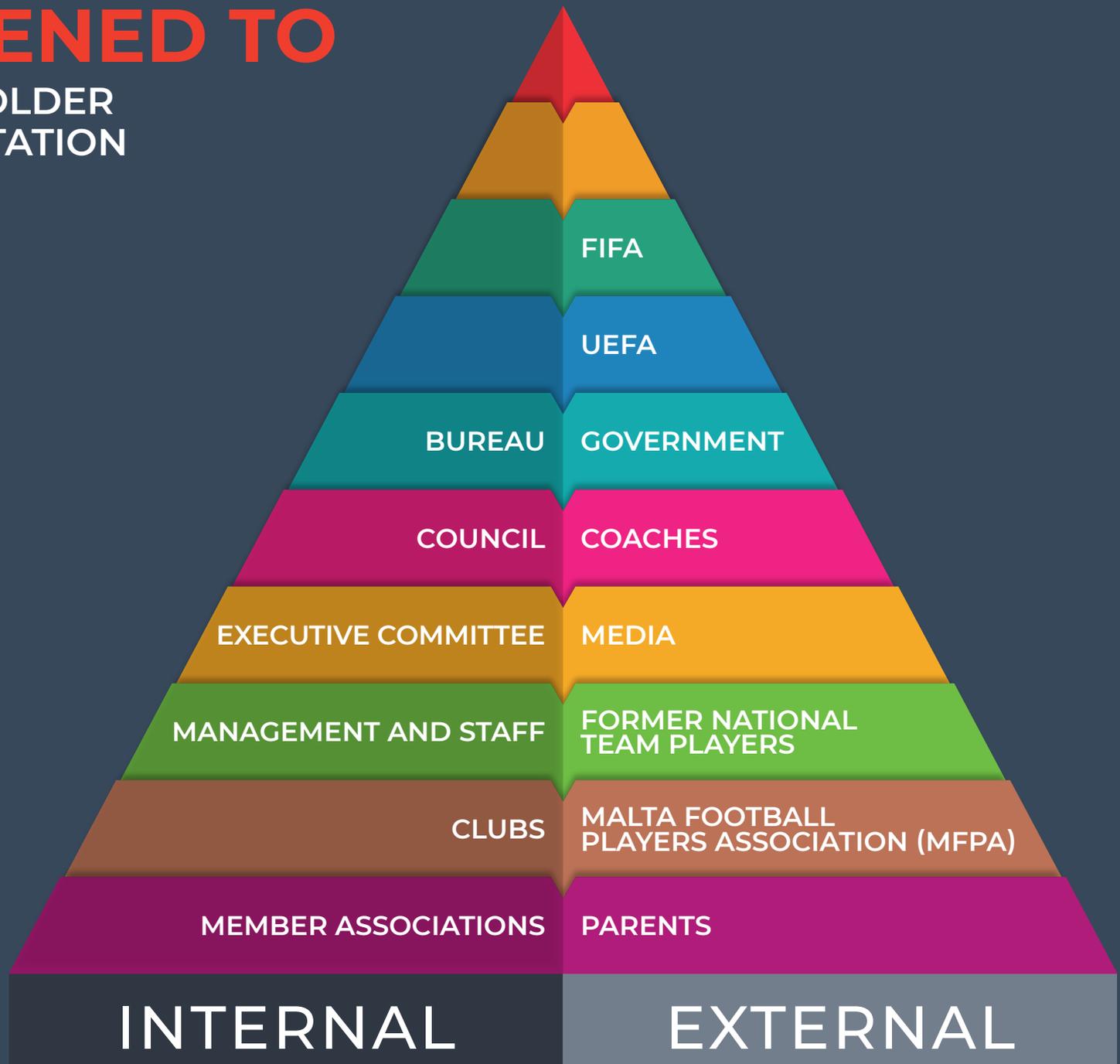
## WHY WE NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY WE THINK

Following a consultation period with our internal and external stakeholders, we were able to determine our vision, mission, values, roles and objectives for the next four years in a coherent strategic document.

Although Maltese football has made significant strides, it is imperative that the Malta FA adopts a strategic approach based on clear objectives and measurable outcomes. We will be looking to further improve our communication with external stakeholders, also to address any reputational damage in order to restore full trust in our organisation. Therefore, a culture change is required to modernise our practices and increase the trust of the Maltese sporting community.

# WHO WE HAVE LISTENED TO

## STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION



# GOAL 1

INVEST IN THE  
TECHNICAL SET-UP TO  
DEVELOP A UNIFIED  
GAME PHILOSOPHY FOR  
OUR NATIONAL TEAMS





## UNIFIED FOOTBALL PHILOSOPHY

The strengthening of our national teams at all levels remains the foremost priority for the Association. For this to happen, we need to invest in development. Our national teams will embrace and reflect a unified footballing philosophy that gives us an identity based on the characteristics of our players.

We must work in unison towards a common objective – build from the bottom, be patient and sustain this work with all the resources at our disposal so that the legacy of this strategy will be to see our national teams become consistently competitive.

All national team selections, from the youth sides to the A teams, should follow a unified and consolidated game philosophy. This will be the responsibility of the Head Coach who leads our national senior team and heads the team of coaches at all levels of the selections.

Coaching education will be adapted to become a crucial complimentary tool in the achievement of such a unified game philosophy.

## CREATING THE RIGHT CONDITIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ELITE YOUTH PLAYER PATHWAY

This project is aimed at maximising the potential of our elite footballers who form part of our national team selections in the U15, U16 and U17 age groups. We believe



that the following objectives will have a tangible impact on the football development of every single player who is part of our system:

- Establishing a **unified style of play that suits our qualities and capabilities**, shared between all national team age groups rooted in not only football strengths but also cultural traits of the nation;
- Providing an **individualised support system** for the elite footballers who form part of our set-up through the support of various experts in the field of nutrition, sports science and sports psychology;
- Creating an **online portal** to consolidate the data gathered from our extensive scouting network, cataloguing of technical, tactical and medical data of our players and to act as an interface for the knowledge-sharing between our staff and players;
- Increasing **international participation** through more friendlies in order to provide a means for our players to test their abilities at a higher level than that which is available locally;
- Expanding our **scouting network** to ensure that Maltese players featuring in foreign leagues are being adequately followed by our coaching staff;
- Providing greater **medical support** for injured, recovering or developing athletes through our centralised medical clinic.

## REGIONAL HUBS FROM SEPTEMBER 2021

# 3

With the introduction of three regional hubs, promising players at ages 11-14 will be given the opportunity to train regularly in a professional environment. All hubs will be run by the *Inhobb il-Futbol* Foundation coaches who shall follow the curriculum set by the Technical Centre. A number of annual training camps for each age category will be organised at Ta' Qali. Players will receive a minimum of 230 hours of coaching on a yearly basis. In parallel, the girls' academy will continue to develop young talent.



## INCREASE NUMBER OF MALTESE PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS PLAYING ABROAD BY 2024

With the right methodology and appropriate investment, following a short- to long-term development programme, this can be achieved. 2024 is a realistic target to develop the foundations of a young 16-year-old player (see also our Youth Players Abroad Scheme in the next section) to reach a stage where they can sign a professional contract with a foreign club:

- Creating a short- to long-term development programme by delivering the right technical, tactical, physical and mental skills from a very young age.
- Creating a well-structured football hub focusing on youth development and exporting players abroad. This would even include the introduction of other complimentary sport disciplines at a young age.
- Urging all the member football clubs of the Association to follow this development programme which would be communicated to them and the progress would be eventually monitored.
- Establishing a platform which includes the parents and professionals in the field. They would meet every so often to offer them education on the development of young athletes touching upon nutritional, psychological and other essential aspects.
- Establishing the right networks and contacts to promote the right talent to foreign clubs and facilitate players' moves abroad.



## UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE TARGET

The UEFA Nations League is a national-team competition that has replaced friendlies with competitive matches, allowing nations to play against equally-ranked teams.

After our national team placed second in Group D1 of the 2020-21 UEFA Nations League, the Malta FA has now set itself the ambitious target of winning the group in the next edition and earn promotion to League C.



## YOUTH PLAYERS ABROAD SCHEME

Over the last decade, Malta has witnessed an increase in youth football players seeking a professional career abroad. However, many of the players who pursued such an opportunity struggled to settle at foreign clubs. Hence, the Malta Football Association will retain its youth player grant scheme with the aim of facilitating this transition and increasing the chances of success when it comes to living and playing football abroad. The revamp is intended to ensure maximisation of benefits from the funds available for the development of promising youth footballers.

The key objectives of the Youth Players Abroad Scheme are:

- To encourage youth players in pursuing a professional football career abroad;
- To provide support for youth players during migratory transitions; and
- To support promising players in further developing their football standards.



## SIGNING OF MoU WITH OTHER NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The Malta FA is actively looking to co-operate with other European football associations and international partners (such as members of other Football Confederations). One such MoU has already been signed with the FIGC (Italian Football Federation).

The set objectives for the next three years include:

- Coaching Education
- Football Social Responsibility
- Refereeing

# GOAL 2

INVEST IN CAPITAL  
PROJECTS TO  
IMPROVE FOOTBALL  
INFRASTRUCTURE

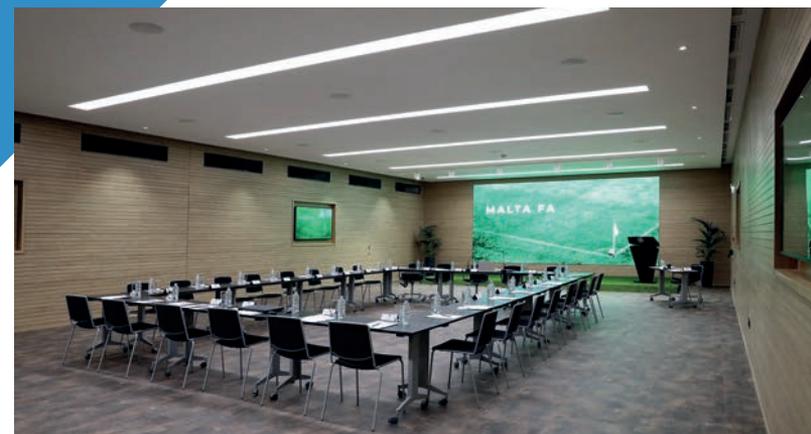




## BUILD A NEW NATIONAL FOOTBALL CENTRE BY DECEMBER 2022

The Association will build a new state-of-the-art National Football Centre at the Ta' Qali Training Grounds that will serve as a home for all youth national teams and will feature the latest in sports science research labs, medical facilities, physiotherapy clinic, gymnasium, dressing rooms, catering facilities, multi-functional meeting rooms and technical offices.

- To provide a cutting-edge practice facility for the national teams at a single location;
- To support the development of the national teams, selection and talent identification;
- To offer an inspirational environment for the national teams to excel in line with this Malta FA strategy;
- To incorporate a UEFA Category 1 stadium that can host international matches for women and youth teams; UEFA U/19 Championship Bid;
- To host coach education and inclusivity programmes;
- To enhance sports tourism through elite-level training camps.



## RENOVATION OF TRAINING PITCHES AT TA' QALI

To renovate the training pitches to the highest quality for professional football. Having been built in the 1980s, the training pitches require significant investment to improve their performance throughout the year.

In practice, this means that pitches should:

- be well-drained, smooth and level;
- be safe for players;
- allow for optimal play;
- have a good visual appearance.

## EXTENSION OF CENTENARY STADIUM

The project is designed for a better and more flexible use of the stadium. The new east stand will complement the existing grandstand. The design features two functional elements: the body of the spectator stand, and the underlying functional space. The spectator stand would add approximately 700 seats to the existing capacity and will house premium public and corporate facilities. The ground floor level will feature dressing rooms, multi-function meeting rooms and offices.

- To fully comply with UEFA Category 2 Stadium requirements;
- To support the development of the *Inħobb il-Futbol* Foundation;
- Offer new facilities for professional football teams;
- To enhance operations for domestic competitions.

## RESURFACING OF CLUBS' FOOTBALL PITCHES AND COMMERCIALISATION OF SPORTS FACILITIES

Member clubs having artificial football pitches that were installed between 2007 and 2013, will have their facilities renovated. The current surface will be replaced with a new one. The Association will partner with the Government to secure funding for this initiative which is deemed crucial for the sustainability of club facilities, and the staging of club training and domestic competitions.

A critical aspect in helping sports organisations become financially sustainable and professional is the identification of new revenue streams. The development of complementary commercial projects can help sports organisations to boost their income and improve facilities.

## REDEVELOP THE SANNAT GROUND AS A SECONDARY STADIUM IN GOZO

The embellishment of the stadium at Sannat will be a major capital project for Gozo intended to give the GFA the needed support to sustain its football leagues. The investment includes upgrades to the synthetic turf pitch and the flood-lighting. The ongoing works on the stands, financed by public funds, will complement the renovation of this facility.

# GO AL 3

LAUNCH FIRST  
PROJECTS OF  
*IN#OBB IL-FUTBOL*  
FOUNDATION





We can have an uplifting impact on the Maltese society! Football yields social, economic and political benefits for the whole country, and has the power to strengthen partnerships targeting justice and social needs. The Association's influence and nation-wide reach makes it imperative for the Malta FA to have a powerful voice in the areas of social responsibility and philanthropy.

## ESTABLISHING IN#OBB IL-FUTBOL FOUNDATION

The Foundation will be the development arm which will implement a new performance strategy for youth development. The Foundation will focus on three different aspects which should lead to greater participation, the pathway from grassroots to elite level, and player welfare.

The Foundation will rely on the support of the Association, the Government and businesses to fund its projects involving grassroots, youths and women's football, through the various technical, educational, health and inclusivity programmes.

# Participation & Football For All

involving schools, volunteers, Football Social Responsibility, disability and social inclusion programmes.

# Together We Grow

for youth and elite player pathway programmes, events and competitions (nurseries, fun and recreational football, girls and women).

# Football is the Game

for nursery licensing, player welfare and child protection.





## INCREASE PARTICIPATION GROWTH BY 15% BY 2024

Through the Foundation's strategy, we need to work towards increasing participation at all levels. In recent years, football in Malta has seen a decrease in numbers especially at grassroots and youth level. It is crucial that the Association puts together a strategic plan to maximise growth and ensure a steady increase in the number of active participants and registered players.

Based on the Football Federations of the Future (FFOTF) framework, participation is one of the instrumental pillars when it comes to football development. This encompasses community club development, futsal, women and girls, grassroots and coach education among others.

## GRASSROOTS COMMITMENT

The game at this level can be a vehicle for individual and collective development, and UEFA has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to grassroots football over the years. The main goal of this investment is to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to be involved in the game, regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, race, religion or sexual identity. As a result, and together with the 55 national associations, UEFA has created the **Grassroots Charter**, a quality mark for grassroots football, and encourages stakeholders to introduce strategies and programmes to develop the grassroots game and ensure the reach and future of football. The charter sets standards and supports the provision of tailored assistance to the national associations, each of which receives annual earmarked funding to continually develop and improve its grassroots activities. The Malta FA has just been upgraded to silver status so we will continue to strive to reach the coveted gold by 2024.



## Football in Schools

Schools, with their significant reach and influence, have been identified as key stakeholders. For many children, the school environment may provide the first taste of physical activity, sport and, crucially, football. Ensuring that as many children as possible can practise football in school and that this first experience of the sport is positive and enjoyable, leading to lifelong involvement, are therefore the main goals of the Football in Schools programme.

The Malta FA has compiled a plan in relation to a new football in schools project that will come into effect over the next four-year cycle.

The project aims to:

- Increase the number of **children involved in regular football or physical activity** – which is pertinent for Malta as we have the highest percentage of obese children in Europe (1 in 4).
- Increase the number of **primary schools offering regular football or physical activity** – to date public primary schools only have one PE lesson per week (45 minutes) in their curriculum.
- Increase the **number, variety and frequency of opportunities** for young people to engage with football. Since all primary school children in Malta will be targeted during the first academic year (30,000 students registered in 100 schools), there is an increased likelihood that they will choose to play football in their local nurseries.
- Facilitate the **pathway from school to community/clubs** to foster continued involvement in football/sports.
- To **widen the scouting effort** by the Malta FA as we can monitor 30,000



students over a period of four years. Designated coaches will be able to identify potential talents from a young age and monitor their development as they progress through the programme. From the age of 11, we can refer them to our regional hubs where they can get acquainted with our national teams' technical staff and attend training sessions in a professional setting.

- To promote **football as a social and educational tool** – Maltese schools have become ethnically diverse which sometimes can lead to tension within the school premises. Organising these inclusive football sessions can go some way towards helping these migrant children to integrate better in Maltese communities.
- Increase the **size and ability of the school football coaching workforce** (teachers, Malta FA coaches, club coaches).

## Futsal & Beach Soccer

The Malta FA will draw up a four-year strategic plan for the development of futsal and beach soccer that will encompass:

- Action Plans for various sectors including but not limited to development, technical (coordinating coaching and refereeing training courses), competitions, grassroots and infrastructure in order to align with the Malta FA vision and strategy;

- Oversee and assist Futsal and Beach Soccer associations;
- Initiate new competitions at youth level – Launched U16 Futsal League in October 2020 and U19 by October 2021;
- Establish U19 futsal national team by 2022;
- Attract international tournaments and competitions such as the Beach Soccer Worldwide (BSWW) Euro beach Soccer Superfinal;
- Establish youth and senior beach soccer national teams.

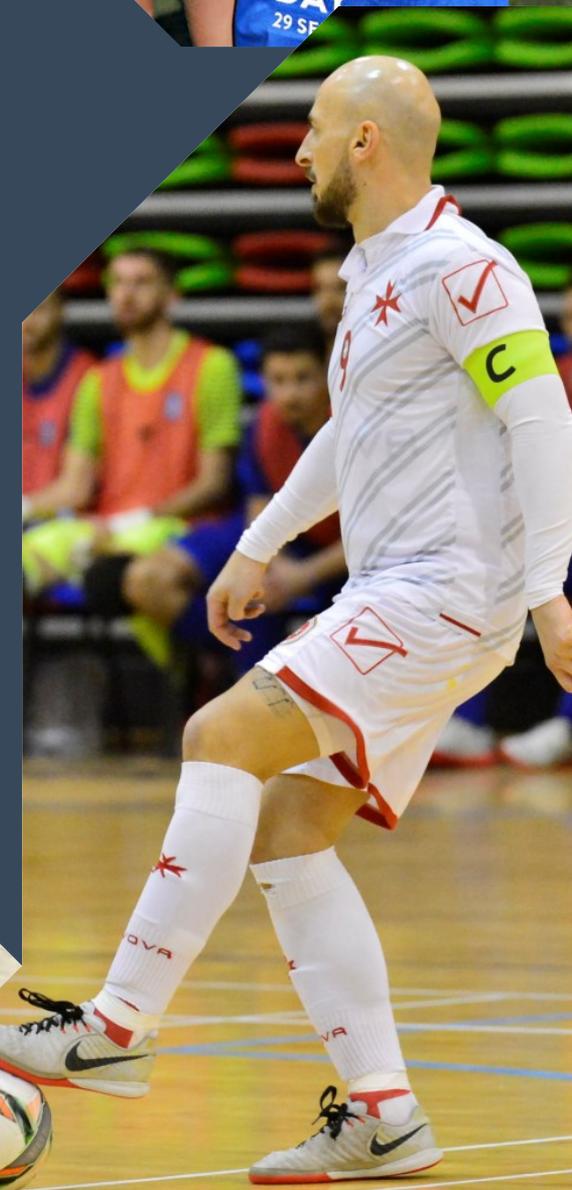
## Football Social Responsibility – FSR

Football is the perfect platform to reach out to different communities within our society. The Malta FA's Football Social Responsibility (FSR) department is co-ordinating various initiatives and projects with several national and international

stakeholders to promote core values such as equality, human rights, social inclusion, diversity and solidarity, through the game of football.

### COLLABORATION WITH UEFA FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN

As the Malta Football Association continues to develop and improve the football infrastructure across the island, we will be installing an artificial turf pitch together with a floodlighting system and perimeter fence at St. Joseph Home Institutes & Children's Home in St. Venera. This project, which is planned to be completed by the end of 2021, is part of a wider programme of investment towards football infrastructure development and is also intended to promote inclusion in football. In fact, this project will be partly funded through the UEFA Foundation for Children Programme.



# UEFA PLAYMAKERS

Inspired by 

## (2021-2025)



The Malta FA has been selected to join the first year of a new girls-only grassroots project.

Successfully piloted to widespread positivity, Playmakers has been specifically designed in collaboration with Disney and the English FA to inspire 5-8-year-old girls who have never played football and give them the chance to experience the game for the first time.

### FORMAT

- UEFA will fund the creation of a maximum of 30 'centres' at the Malta FA, which will continue to receive support for a total of four years.
- A 'centre' can be a school, a sports/football club, or a community hub that is strategically selected to appeal to maximise participation and ensure that there is a pathway to clubs for those girls that wish to continue playing.
- Each 'centre' will be required to deliver a total of 20 sessions per year. UEFA will provide funding to help

create and support these 'centres', contributing to the costs incurred from hiring coaches, renting facilities and marketing the event.

- NAs will be responsible for all 'centres' in their boundaries to ensure adequate staffing, safeguarding, licensing and quality.

## DEFINE A NEW STRATEGY FOR GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Following the launch of a widespread consultation within the football family, we will develop an enhanced plan for girls' and women's football.

Annual operational and technical plans will set out key performance indicators and form the basis of our targets which will be challenging and ambitious with the overarching aim being to take girls' football in Malta to the next level.

### THE PROJECT AIMS TO:

- ✓ Introduce girls to playing football by providing an environment designed for them that focuses on fun, friends and football.
- ✓ Teach a new and customised methodology that uses imagination (Disney stories and characters) as a tool for learning and coaching football skills.
- ✓ Improve girls' physical literacy skills and provide a life-long affiliation with football.



## Capture the passion of volunteers

The Malta FA will offer various incentives to volunteers working at all levels of the game to revive their passion through a life-long love for football. A database of volunteers is being established to facilitate direct contact with all volunteers and also ensure that they work in a positive and secure environment that is free of abuse and harm. To this end, the Association will be launching a VRP (Volunteer Recruitment Programme). The Malta FA needs to care about all volunteers and must be confident that the appropriate safeguards are in place, especially to keep young people involved. UEFA reiterates that having a volunteer legacy will not only lead to a better image of national associations but will also establish a stronger foundation for the future development of football.

The Malta FA will also be launching the Ambassadors Programme, involving former national team stalwarts, to encourage children to play football and lead a healthy lifestyle.

## Disability Football

The Association already has a plan for persons with disability to participate in football activities. However, the development of a new plan will ascertain an increase in participation. There remains a significant discrepancy in provision at local level for those with a disability in comparison to non-disabled people. Eventually, the plan will be worked out with the collaboration of Special Olympics and will be another opportunity to remove all barriers.



Over the past years, the Malta FA has embarked on a number of educational projects, including multiple editions of the Certificate in Football Administration, the Football Symposium and other similar projects. It is the intention of the Association to better organise itself on this front.

Setting up a sports academic institute, which is accredited and authorised by the country's education authorities, is the objective. This shall direct our educational policy towards improving the overall administrative qualities of the Association and its stakeholders.

Courses will include administrative and managerial, marketing, financial, match-analysis and other similar education programmes.

## BIDDING FOR EU FUNDING

Since 2018, the Malta FA has successfully managed to tap into European Union (EU) funding opportunities and received €1.1 million to date. The Malta FA shall continue to work on various projects to further consolidate the 'Football For Life' programme for the benefit of all its members, stakeholders and the wider society. The Malta FA shall commit to implement at least one EU-funded project every year for the next four years.

## PLAYER WELFARE

The Malta FA recognises its duty of care for all involved in the game – players, officials, supporters, match officials, administrators, and volunteers. We have a responsibility to lead by example and ensure that all children and young people participating in our programmes do so in a positive and secure environment. Through this policy the Association needs to safeguard the most vulnerable in all aspects of our work. Some programmes will be run in collaboration with other European Member Associations.

## REVIEW NURSERY LICENSING

To adapt to the fast-changing environment there will be a review of the Nursery licences to ensure that the business models and development strategies align with today's local footballing landscape. The Nurseries will commit to minimum standards in the key areas with club licensing moving from a development and regulatory instrument into a tool supporting the professionalisation of football at all levels.

# GO AL 4

BID TO HOST AN  
IMPORTANT  
INTERNATIONAL  
EVENT



We believe that football has a unique power to engage and inspire a wide spectrum of individuals for the good. In 2014, Malta hosted the UEFA Under-17 European Championships which was a successful tournament in terms of organisation, also considering that it was the first time Malta hosted a high-profile UEFA tournament (the Malta FA subsequently won the prestigious UEFA KISS Award for its Reach Out campaign). Six years on, the Malta FA is embarking on its first ever strategic plan with one of the main pillars being direct investment in the game to ensure that every Maltese who wants to play football has access to the game, regardless of age, gender, cultural backgrounds, or whether they have different abilities.

The Malta FA promises to deliver the best sustainable events it can whilst also leaving a strong legacy. The successful delivery of such prestige events are built on solid pillars to use football to drive much-needed social and sporting infrastructure projects in line with this ambitious strategic plan.



## UEFA U19 TOURNAMENT BID

Our motivation to bid for the UEFA Under-19 European Championship is based on creating a legacy in infrastructure, grassroots players, youth players in the elite pathway and a number of trained and diverse volunteers. With the aim of increasing participation growth by 15% over the next four years by making the game more accessible and support youth development, the Malta FA recognises that youth and grassroots football are key building blocks of tomorrow's elite men's and women's game and fundamental to the success of European football.

Malta's motivation is founded on a common vision, shared by the Malta FA, the public authorities including the Maltese Government, and all other partners, reflecting unprecedented stakeholder engagement. The approach is fully aligned with the Maltese Government's vision to aim higher, be integrated in our approach, and improve access and equity in all aspects of sport.





# GO AL 5

CREATE A  
COMMERCIALY  
SUSTAINABLE  
ORGANISATION



## COMMERCIAL STRATEGY

The Malta FA will formalise a Commercial Strategy for the next four years that aligns with our overall strategy:

- Formulating a three-tiered sponsorship structure/rights packaging (partner-supporter-supplier);
- Undertaking Malta FA Rebrand – Increase in figures by a minimum 40% across participation, attendance, and overall interest;
- Developing a valuation of rights' package;
- Airing of all Premier League Fixtures - Increase the percentage of televised Premier League matches;
- Present plans for a commercial multi-purpose stadium at the heart of a sports complex;
- Selling of stadium naming rights.



From a sponsorship point of view, it is about the evolution of sponsorships and that today's motivation lies in fan engagement and relationships, not only brand visibility. Aligning well with this is the overall match experience. Digital fan engagement is crucial, yet has equally weighted importance on the ground. We must bear in mind that the in-home experience for many nowadays is based on hi-end technology such as 4k large TV screens so in essence stadiums must be at the top of their game if they are going to attract the crowds.



Technology plays a big part in this and in our case, it should start by us addressing those known annoyances that have been inherent to our stadia for many years. This also has a multiplier effect on our return to our sponsors who, within the current state of things, negotiate on contracts based on the limitations of our stadia. Consequently, by changing this and increasing footfall due to added value and a good match experience, brands will be more visible and the Association will be better equipped to put forward statistics that command better pricing.



However, while looking ahead, the level of uncertainty surrounding economic forecasts is unprecedented due to a range of factors such as the Covid-19 pandemic. This is creating a scenario where sponsors are reluctant to invest especially since the temporary cessation of all football events in March 2020 through a Legal Notice issued by the Health Ministry. Despite domestic competitions re-starting in September, fans are still not allowed to enter stadiums. It is evident from the current socio-economic context that Malta faces a challenging environment. Despite this seemingly bleak future, it is not without its commercial opportunities as we are investing heavily in digital platforms that can stream live matches. This is a complete re-direction of how our traditional fans have engaged with our game but perhaps an opportunity to tap into a younger demographic that were hitherto missing.

## REVENUE GENERATION FROM MILLENNIUM STAND FACILITIES

The Malta FA will continue to explore creative ways on how to maximise revenue from different operations within its Millennium Stand. To date,

established businesses in medical care, fitness and food and beverage have paid monthly rent to utilise the facility. Thinking ahead, we want to diversify our service provision and tap into new revenue streams. We have identified untapped surface areas that can be rented out to other operators. The Malta FA has also identified a strategic space to accommodate the Maltese Football Museum, which will form an integral part of our National Stadium Tour.

## MALTESE FOOTBALL MUSEUM

The new Maltese Football Museum is located on Level 2 of the Millennium Stand in Ta' Qali. It preserves, conserves and displays important collections of football memorabilia dating back to the 1920's. The museum recreates the social history and culture of the much-loved sport, with shirts, medals, trophies and exhibits that further highlight why football became the game of our lives and why Malta has become the footballing nation it is today. The museum also houses an auditorium where visitors can watch a documentary featuring unique footage of iconic moments in the history of Maltese football.

# Sports Tourism

## MFA SportsPlus Ltd

MFA SportsPlus Ltd is the commercial arm responsible for attracting and coordinating football sports camps locally. It is tasked with procuring hotel accommodation, transport and all other logistical arrangements for travelling teams and their entourage. Profits are split equally with 50% going to the Malta FA and 50% to an Austrian-based company.



### SEASON 2019 – 2020 IN FIGURES:

GENERATED  
TURNOVER

€4.2m

98

NATIONAL TEAM  
MATCHES / YEAR

20

PROFESSIONAL  
TEAMS THAT  
VISITED MALTA

30

SEMI-PRO TEAMS  
ANNUALLY

GENERATED

57,630

BED NIGHTS

The Malta FA will strive to remain an attractive destination for football camps and exploit new opportunities that may arise over the next four-year period.





## E-SPORTS – LAUNCH OF EPREMIER LEAGUE

In a world pervaded by digital technologies, we need to recognise that our football fans are changing. Younger generations are smart-phone oriented and always connected. Their interest goes beyond the 90 minutes of the match – behind-the-scenes content and e-sport competitions are growing in popularity. According to a recent Forbes study in 2019, e-sports audiences have almost doubled compared to 2015, reaching more than 443 million fans worldwide and numbers were predicted to reach 645 million by 2020.

Against this backdrop, the Malta FA in 2019 signed a partnership agreement with Electronic Arts (EA) to create the Malta



ePremier League in collaboration with GMR Entertainment.

The agreement between the Malta FA and Electronic Arts is a milestone for local esports as it has given local *EA SPORTS FIFA* players the opportunity to further their careers while representing one of the clubs in the Premier League, the country's flagship football competition. The Malta ePremier League is an officially licensed qualifying event as part of the *EA SPORTS FIFA* Global Series.

# GOAL 6

IMPROVE THE GOOD GOVERNANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION





## BETTER IMPLEMENTATION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The promotion of good governance is a strategic priority for all sports organisations.

**UEFA's 10 principles of Good Governance include:**

- 1. Clear strategy**
- 2. Statutes**
- 3. Stakeholder involvement**
- 4. Promotion of ethical values and integrity**
- 5. Professionalism of committee structures**
- 6. Administration**
- 7. Accountability**
- 8. Transparency in financial matters and corporate documents**
- 9. Compliance**
- 10. Volunteer programmes**

## DEVELOP A CLEAR ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY

This strategy itself is the result of a thorough process of consultation. It will be publicised widely with our internal and external stakeholders.

While the strategy will run until 2024, a review progress will be presented to the Malta FA Executive Committee and UEFA GROW team annually. This will track achievements against goals set, analyse where improvements need to be made and provide a yearly benchmark of the delivery of the four-year plan.

## GREATER COOPERATION WITH PUBLIC ENTITIES

The Malta FA is pursuing greater cooperation with public entities, including the Malta Gaming Authority, the Police, MCAST and the Ministry for Education, through Memorandum of Understanding agreements. The MoUs cover exchange of expertise, knowledge sharing and community outreach.

## REVISE AND MODERNISE THE ASSOCIATION'S STATUTE AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

A Statute Reform Committee was created in January 2020, responsible for revising and modernising the Association's statute and decision-making processes. This will include assessing the current composition of the Council and Executive Committee and proposing alternative ways through which the decision-making processes can be rendered more effective. The voting powers will also be reviewed, and relevant changes will be presented by May 2021, following consultation with all stakeholders involved. The Malta FA new statute will come into force at the start of season 2021/22. This process is being conducted in close cooperation with UEFA and FIFA.



## STATUTE REFORM OBJECTIVES

- Term and/or age limit for President and Executive Committee/Board members;
- Checks and balances to be in place at all levels;
- Balanced gender representation on the Executive Committee/Board
- Clear separation of powers (e.g. legislative/executive, executive/administrative and independent judicial bodies);
- Statutory definition of members' rights and obligations in line with FIFA/UEFA standards;
- Clear indication of responsibilities and competence of decision-making bodies;
- Provisions related to ethics.

## PROMOTION OF ETHICAL VALUES AND INTEGRITY

An Ethics and Compliance Committee will be responsible for:

- Developing an overarching compliance programme, including key components such as anti-bribery and anti-corruption policies, employee training, compliance risk-assessments, advising and supporting Malta FA staff;
- Assist in the publication of a Code of Ethics for Malta FA office-holders, staff and external stakeholders;
- Investigate any attempt to damage the integrity and reputation of football.

Malta FA's Ethics and Compliance Committee Tangible Objectives:

- Ethical values and good governance incorporated as statutory objectives;
- Strengthening of ethical principles (i.e. integrity, honesty, fiduciary responsibility, loyalty, and sportsmanship);
- Rules and internal control procedures to avoid conflict of interests and to tackle the threat of corruption;
- Transparency in bidding and voting procedures;
- Ethics matters to be addressed in the disciplinary rules or via a Code of Ethics to be presented to the Bureau by March 2021);
- Protection of disciplinary and/or ethics committee from undue pressure or political interference;
- Investment in training and education programmes (e.g. compliance, ethics, integrity training, women's leadership programme).

## A STRATEGY TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE FAIR PLAY BY 2021

Upholding the principles of integrity in any sports is nowadays a main priority for all sports associations. Having spearheaded a change in the national legislative framework on match-fixing, the Association will maintain its efforts in the area of integrity.

The Malta FA will have a document that will be adopted over the next four-year period (2021-2024). This policy will outline a set of basic principles enforced by the Malta FA, resting upon two main pillars which are: the promotion of integrity, and the protection of football matches and competitions.

## ENHANCE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

For the Association, it is vital to safeguard the principles of accountability and transparency, and to persist with the trust of our partners and stakeholders. The exigency for greater accountability and transparency in the world of football and the loss of trust in governing institutions demand for more scrutiny. An Association managed properly presents an opportunity in terms of accountability and the new administration is committed to transformation and reforms through vision, performance and transparency.

### A better procurement policy by June 2021

The purpose and scope of the Procurement Policy and Procedures is to structure the Malta FA's purchasing processes and sourcing strategies to ensure that the services and goods we acquire are the result of transparent, objective, time and cost-effective decision making and risk management.

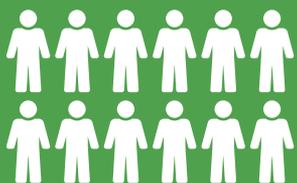
The policy is a commitment to continuous and performance-driven improvement and benchmarking. The procurement policy will apply to all Malta FA staff, managers, directors, and officers as well as any intermediaries seeking to acquire, acquiring and/or managing ongoing contractual relationships for the provision of services and/or goods to or on behalf of the Association.

It is not a box-ticking exercise, but rather implies careful consideration at all stages of the procurement process. Adhering to this policy will be mandatory. The policy will be shared with potential suppliers, stakeholders and other external partners and incorporated into any resulting contractual relationship.

## LAUNCH CONFLICT OF INTEREST DIRECTIVES

To further protect the Malta FA and the internal members' reputation and integrity, we will be addressing potential conflict of interest issues more robustly. The new directives will be aimed at preventing ethical misconduct, eliminate favouritism and minimise the risk of patronage. The new Compliance Office will oversee these directives.

# GOVERNANCE TIMELINE REFORMS



**2021**

ETHICS

**ETD:**  
MARCH 2021



**2021**

STATUTE

**ETD:**  
JULY 2021



**2021**

LICENSING

**ETD:**  
DECEMBER 2021



**2023**

RESTRUCTURING

**ETD:**  
DECEMBER 2023

## CLUB LICENSING REFORM

The review of the licensing criteria is a significant step to ensure fairer competitions, financial discipline, long-term stability, and sustainability. It is very important for clubs, professional or amateur (community-based) to commit to minimum standards in key areas such as:

- Youth Development
- Infrastructure
- Administrative Structures
- Financial Parameters
- Legal Criteria

## CORPORATE RESTRUCTURING

Clubs shall be reclassified and re-organised according to their abilities and the categories they participate in.

Whilst clubs competing in the highest echelons of Maltese football will be encouraged to adopt a professional structure, embracing both the commercial and football activities, clubs in the lower divisions will not be burdened with administrative assignments in an effort to ensure that their community objectives are met.

Through a creative way, foundations, companies and voluntary organisations shall come together to

ascertain that club members are represented, intellectual property is safeguarded, while avenues for well-meaning investors are created.

## DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Over the next four years, the Malta FA will be undertaking research to gain a better understanding of FIFA and UEFA's approaches in compiling their data protection policies. This will entail the following stages:

**Stage 1:** Information Audit

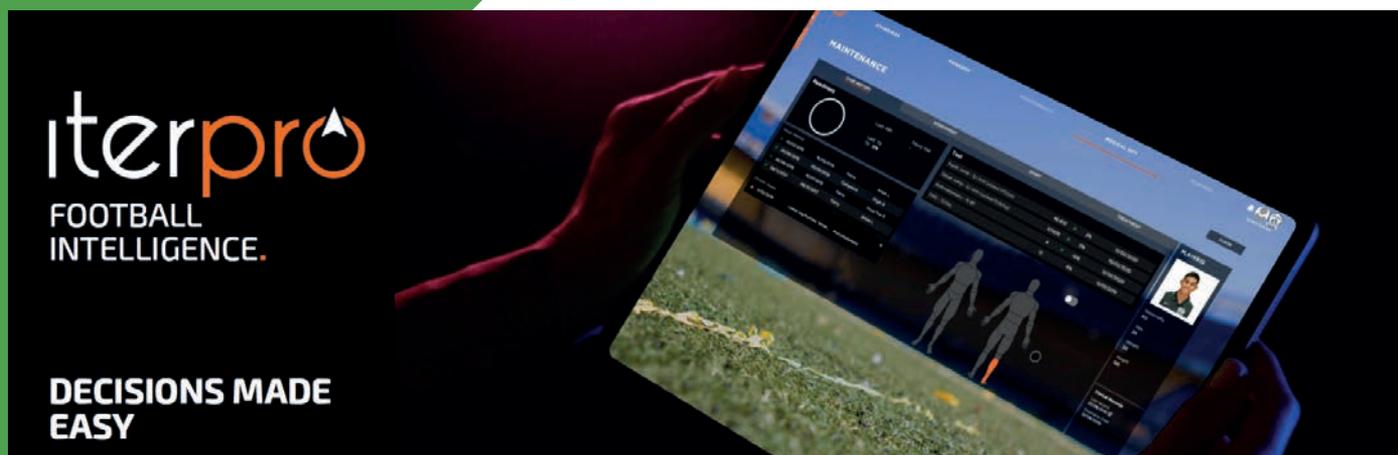
**Stage 2:** Risk Assessment and Data Protection Impact Assessment

**Stage 3:** Gap Analysis

**Stage 4:** Action Plan

# GO AL 7

ENHANCE SERVICE  
TO THE FOOTBALL  
COMMUNITY  
THROUGH  
DIGITALISATION AND  
INNOVATION



## INVESTMENT IN I.T. INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOOLS

Since 2017, the Malta Football Association started working towards identifying a comprehensive system which would be able to process all forms of data pertaining to the game of football, involving processes such as the registration of players, the management of competitions and the processes involved in the game itself. After a period of market research and consultation, COMET – Competition Management Expert System was selected. The Malta FA has continued to invest in new modules of COMET and also match analysis software such as Iterpro.



## INTEGRATE FIFA CONNECT FOR PLAYER ID

FIFA Connect for Player ID will ensure the electronic player passport as a main requisite. The system works in sync with COMET and FIFA will provide the needed seamless integration. This integration will help the clearing house to process training compensation and solidarity payments, and the clubs to streamline better their administrative and organisational processes in terms of transfers and contracts.

## INTRODUCE A GUEST MANAGEMENT ONLINE SYSTEM

Through a guest management online system, the Malta FA will enhance its protocol services and hospitality programme to its VIP guests, commercial partners, stakeholders and executive members for its competitions and events. This system will provide the administration with enhanced controls in the preparation of events.



## NEW WEBSITE (BY SEPTEMBER 2021)

The Malta FA is constantly striving to advance and enhance digital services and products ensuring we are platform agnostic – delivering a high level of digital engagement and user experience across all devices.

The existing website has now been in place for many years and needs modernisation. Platform performance and user journey necessitated particular attention to ensure the website becomes an established source of engaging content for football fans in Malta. This new project will be providing us with a blueprint for the next stage in our digital

growth in order to launch a new official Malta FA web platform. This initiative is being fully funded by the FIFA Forward Development programme.

## ENHANCE STAFF TRAINING

The Human Resources Department is relatively new to the organisation as the HR function was non-existent. In view of this, the staff is highly receptive to the department's purpose and viewed as an important function in order to help professionalise our day-to-day business.



To improve team cohesiveness and effectiveness, we shall continue to introduce professional development programmes for staff, to empower our employees and help them feel supported in their work and reach their full potential. These initiatives include the joint FIFA & UEFA Women in Leadership Programme, UEFA's Certificate in Football Management (CFM), UEFA's Diploma in Football Leadership and Management (DFLM) and The Executive Master in Global Sport Governance (MESGO) supported by UEFA, FIFA, EHF, IIHF and EPAS.

## HOSTING OF UEFA CERTIFICATE IN FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT IN 2021

The Malta FA has been selected to host its first UEFA CFM in 2021. Applications opened in January and 25 candidates (internal staff and external stakeholders) will be selected to follow the programme. UEFA will also nominate 10 international candidates (from other National Associations) to join the course. It is important to note at this stage that there are several staff members who have already completed the programme but hosting the edition would be a timely opportunity to train the new members of the staff.

The UEFA CFM is the must-have foundation programme for anyone working in a football organisation who wants to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the game is managed. The blended learning approach of the UEFA CFM, containing a mix of e-learning and face-to-face seminars, has been carefully designed in collaboration with a prestigious academic institution and leading experts to ensure a high-quality programme.

The UEFA CFM is spread over nine months, comprising six online modules as well as three face-to-face seminars. Each module and face-to-face seminar addresses key areas of football management which are necessary for people working within the football industry.



# GO AL 8

RAISE STANDARDS  
OF DOMESTIC  
COMPETITIONS







The National Amateur Super Cup will be contested by the winners of the National Amateur League and the winners of the cup.

## REVAMP THE YOUTH COMPETITIONS

From season 2020-2021, the Youth League comprises four sections instead of five with 12 teams in Sections A to C and 11 in Section D. The emphasis is on developing young talent within club structures.

## RESTRUCTURING OF WOMEN'S LEAGUES

The Malta FA is engaged in regular discussions with women's football stakeholders to see how it can strengthen the resources and technical support to all women's teams and nurseries participating in the local leagues at senior, development and academy levels.

## ESTABLISH A LEAGUE ENTITY TO MANAGE THE PREMIER LEAGUE

With the assistance of the EL (European Leagues), we will be working to establish a separate league entity to manage the Premier League (administrative and sporting aspects). In the first year of affiliation, the League shall have a Development Member status which will be subsequently upgraded to Associate Member status. In the first three years, through a

dedicated budget, the Association will support this new entity to develop a business strategy, employ a full-time CEO and secretarial staff and lease an office to be used as its quarters.

All Premier League clubs will be eligible for funding to cover the expenses of commissioning a business plan and a strategy development document for a three-year period with the aim of maximising the value of the clubs in the top division.

All club presidents will form part of the board of directors but the Association will not have any shareholding in the new company. The same body would be eligible to manage the Challenge League in due course.

## MoU WITH MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

On 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2019, an MoU was signed with 13 Member Associations (with a full membership status) on grants and incentives packages, valid for a four-year period. These MoUs, which include all rights and obligations, are intended to ensure long-term stability at this level of football.



## MATCH OPERATIONS – CLASSIFICATION OF STADIUMS

Following an internal consultation, the Malta FA has embarked on a project to classify every stadium in Malta and Gozo where competitive football is played. The Association is seeking to define the minimum requirements for all venues willing to host any kind of competitive fixture and start categorising them based on a set of criteria.

For transparency reasons, each category will be assigned a 'weighting system' based on the following metric:

- **Field of Play**
- **Facilities**
- **Lighting**
- **Health and Safety**

Going forward, all prospective stadium licences will be classified into three main groups. The Malta FA will commence on-site verifications of all football grounds and classify each one of them as Category A, B or C.

## STADIUM SECURITY ASSESSMENT AND LAW AMENDMENTS

The Malta FA is undertaking a risk-categorising process at all stadiums and venues which host fixtures from our competitions – and this is the first step towards conducting a full risk assessment of each facility.

Risk is 'dynamic' and 'flexible' – and with emerging threats and vulnerabilities, it is likely that the way risk is assessed, calculated and measured will need to be adjusted accordingly from time to time. By 2024, the Association will henceforth be in a better position to come up with a tailored strategy pertaining to risk assessment/measurement (the size and importance of risks).



## REFEREEING

Main pillars of work include:

- 1) Good Governance: (compliance with UEFA Refereeing Convention), strategy, policy making, code of ethics, due diligence/audit set-up, categorisation of match officials
- 2) Talent ID & Mentorship: Talent identification and development, coaching/mentoring, recognition
- 3) Performance: Education and development (inc. women's football), match analysis and coaching, performance evaluation (inc. referee observers), fitness, appointments
- 4) Recruitment & Retention: Outreach recruitment campaign, revamp academy and induction and follow-up.

## STRATEGIC PLAN BY END 2021

The strategic plan for refereeing will set out a clearly-defined pathway from the moment a referee signs up to the academy all the way to reaching the highest level as a potential FIFA match official. The ultimate goal is to ensure that every referee has the right level of fitness, knowledge, education and respect. Referees must contribute to a flourishing domestic game and improve football for our stakeholders through clear objectives.

## INVESTING IN GROWTH AND RETENTION OF REFEREES

- Provide commitment with Grassroots Referees up to Elite Referees;
- Give opportunities to those who wish to fulfil their refereeing career;
- Strengthen the recruitment and retention of referees' participation on long-term basis;
- Improve the physical, technical, interpersonal skills and self-confidence of all referees and Referee Observers;
- Launch online tool – all material explicitly developed for referees will be channelled through a new tool. Training, educational and administrative content will be uploaded regularly to keep referees engaged and updated.

## ENSURE A MINIMUM OF 150 REFEREES BY 2024

The recruitment and retention of match officials is a priority for the Association in order to increase the number of referees in all categories. In recent years, the total number of referees has decreased and through recruitment initiatives and efficient mentoring and welfare, the Association will be striving to expand the pool of football, futsal and beach soccer referees across the country. Referee retention must exceed the 70% mark by 2022.

# Launch a Medical Policy

The role of medicine has become crucial in the modern-day game. It is essential that the Malta FA's Medical Department keeps up with the latest developments in football medicine, injuries and sports science.

1. Identify roles and objectives for Medical Department.
2. Define medical and rehab protocols for national team players.
3. Coordinate the Football Doctor Education Programme funded by UEFA HatTrick V.
4. Liaise with educational institutions to invest in research.
5. Establish a Medical Insurance Agreement with players and employers.
6. Publish a manual with standard medical operating procedures.
7. Enhance awareness on illegal substances through educational and information campaigns.
8. Increase doping tests across all Malta FA competitions.
9. Be an active player in the implementation of the integrity Unit for Sport as per Chapter 593 of the Laws of Malta.







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