



BFF CLUB LICENSING REGULATIONS

bhutanfootball.org



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SECTION A: CLUB LICENSING PROCESS

Article 1: Introduction

- A “Club License”, shall be granted by the Licensor if the applicant club fulfills the requirements specified below in these regulations.
- The “Club License” shall be a requirement to be eligible to participate in the BHUTAN PREMIER LEAGUE (BPL) Club Competitions & National League as decided by the Licensor (BFF).

Article 2: Objectives

The main objective of these Club Licensing Regulations is to provide **structure and guidance for the development of football clubs** and seek to:

- Establish reliability, credibility, and integrity of the National League and BFF Club Competitions along with the clubs participating in those competitions.
- Promotion and continuous improvement of standards of all the aspects of football.
- Ensure qualified coaches are engaged in training the players in each participating club with the overall aim to improve the standard and quality of the matches.
- Ensure development of youth teams.
- Ensure adequate and good quality match and training facilities for the clubs participating in those competitions.
- Improve the overall administration and management organization of the clubs and make them more efficient, productive, and transparent.
- Improve the economic and financial standings of clubs and generate revenues through effective marketing and commercial exploitation by the clubs.

Article 3: LICENSOR

A. WHO IS THE LICENSOR?

- The National Football Association is the Licensor.
- The National Football Association as the licensor is legally authorized to draft, finalise and issue the license to any applicant that seeks to get the license.
- The National Football Association governs the licensing system, appoints the corresponding licensing bodies, and determines the necessary processes.
- The National Football Association guarantees the license applicant (club) full confidentiality about the information given by the license applicant during the licensing process.
- Anyone involved in the licensing process or appointed by the Football Association will ensure confidentiality of the tasks undertaken.

Article 4: DECISION-MAKING BODIES

The Licensor shall have two decision-making bodies to decide on the application and hear appeals on the granting of a license to the applicants. The two decision-making bodies shall be independent of each other and the members shall have not any conflict of interest. Members of decision-making bodies shall have relevant knowledge of professional football and one or more criteria mentioned in these regulations. The quorum for the decision-making bodies shall be three and all decisions made shall be in writing. The decisions making bodies are:

- First Instance Body (FIB)**
- Appeals Body (AB)**

i. First Instance Body (FIB)

- a. The FIB decides on whether a license should be granted to an applicant club based on the documents provided and in accordance with these Club Licensing Regulations. Members of the FIB shall include a qualified lawyer and a qualified accountant/auditor.

ii. Appeals Body (AB)

- a. The AB decides on appeals submitted in writing and makes a final and binding decision on whether a license should be granted or revoked based on the documents submitted by the deadline. Members of the AB shall include a qualified lawyer and a qualified accountant/auditor.
- b. Appeals may be lodged by:
 - i. The license applicant club, who received the refusal of the FIB
 - ii. The licensee club, whose license has been withdrawn by the FIB
 - iii. The Licensing Manager of the National Football Association or its affiliated Football league
- c. The AB makes its decision based on the documents submitted before the FIB. No new documents or evidence shall be admitted.

Article 5: LICENSING ADMINISTRATION

- a. The Licensing Administration of the National Football Association is responsible for all the administrative matters relating to the Club Licensing Regulations.
- b. The Licensing Administration is responsible for:
 - i. Preparing, implementing, and further developing the Club Licensing Regulations
 - ii. Providing administrative support to the decision-making bodies

- iii. Assisting, advising, and monitoring the licensed clubs during the season
- c. All persons involved in the licensing process must comply with strict confidentiality rules regarding information received during licensing procedure.
- d. The Licensing Administration will not be influenced or affected by the decision-making bodies in any aspect.

D. NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE SEASON

The National Football League Season is defined as one cycle of the National Football League competition that usually commences in May and usually concludes in November.

Article 6: LICENCE APPLICANT AND LICENCE

A. DEFINITION OF LICENSE APPLICANT

1. A license applicant is defined as a legal entity fully and solely responsible for the football team participating in national and international club competitions which either:
 - a. is a registered member of BFF (hereinafter: registered club); or
 - b. has a contractual relationship with a registered member (hereinafter: football company).
2. An individual or a natural person cannot apply for a license.
3. The membership and/or the contractual relationship must have lasted at the start of the Licensing process for at least two consecutive years. Any alteration to the club's legal form or company structure (including, changing its headquarters, name, club colors, or transferring stake holdings between different clubs/entities) in order to facilitate its qualification on sporting merit and/or its receipt of a license is deemed as an interruption of membership or contractual relationship (if any) within the meaning of this provision.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LICENSE APPLICANT

The license applicant is responsible for ensuring that the Licensor is provided with all necessary information and/or documents relevant to proving that the licensing obligations are fulfilled, as these obligations relate to the criteria set out under the club licensing regulations.

C. LICENSE

A license is a right given by the Licensor to the football club to participate in the National Football League and the relevant AFC Club Competitions for the upcoming season. Clubs that qualify for the AFC Club Competitions on sporting merit must obtain a license issued by their licensor, except where Article 4.D below applies the principles governing the License are:

- a. Only clubs that fulfill the criteria set out in these Club Licensing Regulations at the deadlines may be granted a license to enter the AFC Club Competition and/or National Football League. Clubs that fail to get a license will be allowed to participate in the National Football League season upon payment of a fine of Nu. 500,000). A license shall be mandatory to participate in BPL & AFC Club Competitions.
- b. A license expires without prior notice:
 - i. at the end of the League season for which it was issued, or
 - ii. on the dissolution of the League.
- c. The license may be withdrawn during a season if:
 - i. for any reason, a licensee becomes insolvent and enters into liquidation during the season, as determined by the National Law: or
 - ii. any of the conditions for the issuing of a license are no longer satisfied; or
 - iii. the licensee violates any of its obligations under these Club Licensing Regulations.
- d. A license cannot be transferred.

Article 7 CORE PROCESS & TIMELINE

The Licensor defines the timeline and the processes that the Licensor undertakes to decide if a license applicant can be granted a license or not.

A. PRINCIPLE

- The Licensor defines the core process for the verification of the criteria described in these regulations. The core process shall include the timeline assigned to fulfill each criterion.
- The core process starts at a time defined by the licensor and ends on submission of the list of licensing decisions to the BFF CL Administration by the deadline fixed by BFF.
- The Licensor defines the timeline within which the applicant clubs must submit documents to prove the compliance of various criteria.
- The core process consists of the following minimum key steps:
 - distribution of the licensing documentation to the license applicants;
 - return of the licensing documentation to the licensor;
 - assessment of the documentation by the Licensing Administration;

- assessment and decision by the decision-making bodies;
- Submission of list of licensing decisions to the BFF CL Administration.

B. PROCESS

The core process of licensing implementations is as follows:

- i. The Licensor invites clubs who wish to participate in the National Football League and will provide the circular, application manual, and other licensing documents and checklist to the clubs by **1st Sep 2022**
- ii. License Applicants should start the process of fulfilling and implementing the criteria in their respective clubs immediately after the Licensor has explained the terms, criteria, and requirements they need to fulfill and has provided the circular, application manual, and other licensing documents and checklist.
- iii. The Licensing Administration will closely monitor and follow up on the License Applicants in fulfilling the criteria. If needed the Licensing Administration will visit the License Applicants and provide them with any information or assistance that the License Applicant needs.
- iv. License Applicants need to submit the required supporting documents to the Licensor to prove compliance with the licensing criteria. The last date for submission of the supporting documents for participating in the upcoming season of the National Football League will be **28th February 2023**
- v. The Licensing Administration will assess the documents submitted by the license applicant clubs to verify their compliance with the criteria once the License Applicants submit the application along with supporting documents by **10th -20th March 2023**. The assessment may include site visits.
- vi. The Licensing Administration will present the license application along with the supporting documents to the FIB.
- vii. The First Instance Body (FIB) will decide on whether a license should be granted to the applicant club based on the documents provided and in accordance with these Club Licensing Regulations by **05th April 2023**
- viii. On refusal of the license, the applicant club can lodge an appeal to the General Secretary of the Licensor against the refusal. The appeal should be made in writing within 5 days of the receipt of refusal. It shall be compiled by Licensing Administration and forwarded to the AB.
- ix. The AB will examine the application, and supporting documents, and submit evidence to make a decision on issuing or refusing a license **by 20th April 2023 and the decision shall be informed to the license applicant within 3 days of the decision.**
- x. The Licensor will communicate to BFF and all the applicant clubs regarding the final decision on granting of a license by **31st April 2023**.
- xi. The Licensor shall ensure equal treatment to all license applicant clubs during the core process.

Date	Action	Action By
10/10/2022	Club Licensing Administration (CLA) distributes the circulars & Licensing Packs to License Applicant (LA) / Club	CLA
28/02/2023	<u>Submission Date</u> - LA / Club to submit completed License Applications to CLA (deadlines may vary for each criterion and each document type)	LA / Club
20/03/2023	Assessment on the License Applications (inspection, site visit, etc) and to present a report to the Decision Making Bodies – First Instance Body (FIB)	CLA
05/04/2023	Decision making for granting of a license by the First Instance Body	FIB
10/04/2023	<u>Appeal Date</u> – LA / Club may file a request for appeal against the determination of the FIB (refusal license cases)	LA / Clubs
20/04/2023	Decision-making for granting of a license by the Appeals Body (AB)	AB
31/04/2023	CL Administration (CLA) to inform the Clubs and AFC of the Club(s) which are issued with a license, license issued with sanctions, and license not issued	CLA

SECTION B: CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

2. CRITERIA

Article 8: SPORTING CRITERIA

The purpose of having sporting criteria is to encourage the clubs to produce and continuously develop good quality players for the first team.

Also, the players need to be provided with effective and quality coaching to develop themselves and achieve positive results for the club.

If a club wants to improve its elite team/first team, it needs to focus on its youth teams. It takes a lot of effort and time to develop young talent and make them technically good.

The objectives of the sporting criteria are:

- i. Provide efficient coaching and support to the players on the field
- ii. Continuous production and development of skilled players for the club
- iii. Investment of clubs into youth development
- iv. Encourage education (football and non-football) among the youth players
- v. Encourage youth players to adopt a fair play policy on and off the pitch

S.01 YOUTH TEAMS AND PARTICIPATION IN YOUTH COMPETITION(S)

The license applicant club must have at least one (1) youth team within the age range of notified by BFF.

The youth team in the above-mentioned age range should have regular training and must be coached by at least an AFC/BFF “C” licensed certified coach.

The youth teams shall participate in all the relevant youth competition(s) organized by the Licensor and such other bodies at the national, regional, or local level. The youth team should also participate in any youth development activities organized by the Licensor.

Submission to the Licensor

The club needs to provide the details of all the youth team players including name, address, date of birth, etc, and proof of participation in the youth competitions. The club must also submit a copy of the youth coach’s coaching qualification/coaching certificate along with an appointment letter or an employment contract stating the appointment of the person as the coach of the youth teams of the club.

S.02 MEDICAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR PLAYERS

The license applicant club must provide all the players registered in the club with full access to medical support services. The players must undergo a yearly medical examination. The license applicant club must provide medical treatment to all its players in case of any injuries.

Submission to the Licensor

The club needs to provide a certificate for each first team and reserve team player to the Licensor stating that the player has undergone a medical check and is fit to play.

S.03 APPROVED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The license applicant must have a written youth development program approved by the licensor.

Submission to the Licensor

The club needs to provide the approved youth development program which includes as a minimum the organization chart, annual training plans, and personnel involved.

Article: 9 INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA

Infrastructure should be seen as a long-term investment whereby a club can attract more fans to the stadium, create a better atmosphere and generate revenue. Therefore, clubs should ensure that they have access to a stadium that is attractive, safe, secured, hygienic, and easy to access for the fans.

The objectives of the infrastructure criteria are:

- i) Clubs have access to a stadium that is approved by Licensor that provides necessary and adequate facilities for the players, officials, and spectators.
- ii) Clubs have suitable training facilities for their players to help them improve their technical skills

I.01 STADIUM/HOME PLAYING FIELD

The club must either own or have guaranteed access to a Playing Field that is considered its home venue for National Football League matches and AFC competitions.

The playing field must be of a minimum size as indicated in the FIFA Laws of the Game. Ideally, the stadia must meet the requirements expressly referred to

by the:

- a) AFC Stadia Regulations; and respective
- b) AFC Club Competition Regulations/Manual.

Submission to the Licensor

The club must submit to the Licensor the name and address of the Home Playing Field along with the ownership document or agreement with the owner of the Home Playing Field stating guaranteed access to the club as its Home Playing Field for the National Football League matches. If the Club owns the Home Playing Field, it must submit the documents proving its ownership.

The Licensor shall verify the documents and visit the field to confirm the venues.

I.02 TRAINING FACILITIES

The club must either own or have guaranteed access to Training Field/ Training Facilities that are available throughout the year where the players of the club can train regularly.

The Training Field must have:

- i. A full-size football pitch of good quality
- ii. Goalposts

Necessary training equipment such as balls, cones, bibs, etc should be provided to the players.

Submission to the Licensor

The club must submit to the Licensor the name and address of the Training Field along with the ownership document or agreement with the owner of the Training Field stating guaranteed access to the club as its

Training Field for the entire year. If the Club owns the Training Field, it must submit to the Licensor the documents proving its ownership

The Licensor shall verify the documents and visit the field to confirm the venue of the training field.

Article 10. PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

Having professional, well-educated, and experienced people in the administration of the club is the key to running any professional club efficiently and effectively. The license applicant club is responsible for identifying and recruiting people who meet the set requirements and comply with the defined profile either full-time or part-time.

The objectives of the personnel and administrative criteria are:

- i) Clubs have well-educated, qualified, and skilled specialists with specific know-how and experience
- ii) Clubs are in a position to exploit the commercial and marketing opportunities prevailing in the commercial environment of the country
- iii) It helps the league to become more professional and commercially beneficial over a period of time

P.01 CLUB SECRETARIAT

The club must either own or have guaranteed access to an office space to conduct its administration. The club administration must be based in this office space.

The administrative office must be equipped with all the necessary communication facilities such as telephone, fax, computer, internet, email, etc.

Submission to the Licensor

The club must submit to the Licensor the name and address of the club secretariat along with the ownership document or agreement with the owner of the office space stating guaranteed access to the club as its secretariat to conduct all its administrative tasks. The club must submit all the relevant contact details of the club secretariat.

If the Club owns the office space, it must submit to the Licensor the documents proving its ownership

The Licensor shall verify the documents and visit the office space to confirm the facility.

P.02 HEAD COACH OF THE FIRST TEAM

The license applicant club must have appointed a Head Coach for its first team, who is responsible for all the sporting matters of the first team.

The Head Coach must:

- i. Hold at least a valid AFC/BFF 'B' Certificate or any valid coaching qualification that is equivalent to AFC 'A' recognized by the Licensor and BFF
- ii. Be appointed by the executive body or the club secretariat of the license applicant club through a written agreement endorsed by the head of club administration

Submission to the Licensor

The club must submit to the Licensor the name and CV of the Head Coach. The club must also submit a copy of his/her coaching qualification/coaching certificate along with an appointment letter or an employment contract stating the appointment of the person as the head coach of the first team of the club.

The Licensor shall verify the documents to confirm the appointment.

P.03 GENERAL MANAGER/GENERAL SECRETARY

The club must have an appointed full-time CEO or General Manager or General Secretary who is the head of the administration of the club. He is responsible for managing and supervising the administrative matters of the club.

The CEO/General Manager/General Secretary should have adequate academic qualifications and must have experience in the administration of a football club. He/she should have the necessary knowledge and communication skills required in club management.

He/she shall:

- i) Be responsible for executing the decisions of the Executive Body of the club.
- ii) Be responsible for the administration of the club secretariat and appointment and supervision of the administrative staff.
- iii) Assist and participate in the Congress and Executive Committee meetings of the club as ex-officio.
- iv) Be responsible for all the official correspondence and

communications with the Licensor, Government, Other Clubs, and any other stakeholders involved.

- v) Attend all the club management and club development seminars organized by the Licensor (BFF) or any other governing bodies for the development of the club.

The appointment of the full-time CEO/General Manager/General Secretary should be done by the Executive Body of the club through a written contract.

Submission to the Licensor

The club must submit the name and CV of the full-time CEO/General Manager/General Secretary to Licensor along with an appointment letter or an employment contract stating his/her appointment as a full-time head of club administration.

The Licensor shall verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

P.04 TEAM DOCTOR OR PHYSIOTHERAPIST FOR THE FIRST TEAM

The license applicant club must have appointed a Team Doctor or a Physiotherapist who is responsible for medical support during matches and training as well as for doping prevention.

The qualifications of the Team Doctor or Physiotherapist must be recognized by the appropriate national health authorities.

The Team Doctor or Physiotherapist must be duly registered with the BFF/or the affiliated league.

P.05 FULL TIME/PART-TIME FINANCE OFFICER

The club must have an appointed full-time or part-time 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.

The Finance Officer should have adequate financial, accounting, and bookkeeping academic qualifications and experience in these aspects of the football industry/football club.

He/she shall:

- i) Be responsible to manage and oversee all aspects of the club's financial functions and financial risks.
- ii) Be responsible for monitoring, managing, and reporting all financial and accounting aspects of the club including budgeting, accounting, banking, payroll, overhead costs, salaries, expenses, and revenues.

- iii) Be responsible for preparing financial statements including profit and loss accounts and balance sheets.
- iv) Be responsible for preparing the annual budget.
- v) Be responsible for monitoring and control of cash flow and bank accounts.
- vi) Attend all the seminars and workshops organized by the Licensor or any other governing body for the development of the club in financial, accounting, and governance aspects.

The appointment of a full-time/part-time Finance Officer should be done by the head of the club administration, i.e., the CEO/General Manager/General Secretary through a written contract.

Submission to the Licensor

The club must submit the name of the full-time/part-time Finance Officer to the Licensor along with his/her CV and an appointment letter or employment contract stating his/her appointment as the head of all the financial matters relating to the club.

The Licensor shall verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

P.06 SECURITY OFFICER OR SECURITY ADVISOR

The license applicant club must have an appointed part-time or full-time security officer or a security advisor who is responsible for safety and security matters.

The appointment of a full-time/part-time Security Officer or Security Advisor should be done by the head of the club administration, i.e., the CEO/General Manager/Club Secretary through a written contract.

Submission to Licensor

The club must submit the name of the security officer or security advisor to the Licensor along with his CV and all his contact details. The club must submit an appointment letter or an employment contract stating the appointment of the office as the security officer or security advisor.

The Licensor will verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

P.07 FULL-TIME/PART-TIME MEDIA OFFICER

The club must have an appointed part-time or full-time Media Officer is responsible for all media matters.

The Media Officer should have adequate academic qualifications and experience in media aspects of the football industry/football club.

He/she shall:

- i) Be responsible to manage and oversee all aspects of the club's media management.
- ii) Be responsible for communicating and interacting with mass media and external media/newspapers to provide all relevant information on club matters.
- iii) Be responsible for communicating with the Licensor (BFF) for all media-related matters of the club
- iv) Be responsible for handling media operations including a press conference, flash interviews, media briefing, etc during match days and non-match days
- v) Be responsible for all the Public Relations (PR) and Promotional aspects of the club (in coordination with the Marketing Manager)

The appointment of a full-time/part-time Media Officer should be done by the head of the club administration, i.e., the CEO/General Manager/General Secretary through a written contract.

Submission to the Licensor

The club must submit the name of the full-time/part-time Media Officer to the Licensor along with his/her CV and an appointment letter or employment contract stating his/her appointment as the head of all the media commercial matters relating to the club.

The Licensor shall verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

Article 11: LEGAL CRITERIA

It is necessary that the club has an appropriate legal personality as per the legal principles in the country. The benefit of having legal criteria is encouraging the clubs to be stable over the long run.

The objectives of the legal criteria are:

- i. Establishing a stable and sustainable entity
- ii. Compliance with the rules and regulations of the national association
- iii. Increased protection for the club, players, and officials through compliance with contractual obligations
- iv. Increased efficiency in player transfer procedures
- v. Transparency in financial management
- vi. Ability to secure contracts with sponsors and commercial partners
- vii. Streamlining of approvals from government bodies for construction/ownership of club infrastructure

L.01 LEGAL ENTITY

The license applicant must be registered with an appropriate authority as a legal entity as per the law prevailing in the country. The license applicant must be in possession of legally valid documents confirming the following:

- i. It is a legal entity registered with a recognized legal authority
- ii. It holds a certificate/document stating its legal entity status

Submission to the Licensor

The club needs to provide the necessary documents and certificates that prove that the club is a legal entity that is registered with the appropriate authority in the country.

L.02 WRITTEN CONTRACT WITH PLAYERS

All the registered players of the license applicant club must have a written contract with the license applicant in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA/BFF Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players and shall incorporate all key provisions required by National Law, Licensor (BFF), FIFA and AFC.

Submission to Licensor

The club needs to provide the contract of each player.

L.03 OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF CLUBS

The Licence Applicant must submit a legally valid declaration outlining the ownership structure and control mechanism of the Club. Such declaration should ensure conformity with the conditions set out below

No natural or legal person involved in the management, administration, and/or sporting performance of the club, either directly or indirectly:

- a) holds or deals in the securities or shares that allows such person to exercise decisive influence in the activities of any other club participating in the same competition;
- b) holds a majority of the shareholders' voting rights of any other club participating in the same competition;
- c) has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management, or supervisory body of any other club participating in the same competition;
- d) are a shareholder and alone controls a majority of the shareholders' voting rights of any other club participating in the same competition pursuant to an agreement entered into with other shareholders of the club in question;
- e) is a member of any other club participating in the same competition;
- f) is involved in any capacity whatsoever in the management, administration, and/or sporting performance of any other club participating in the same competition;
- g) has any power whatsoever over the management, administration, and/or sporting performance of any other club participating in the same club competition.

These declarations must be executed by an authorized signatory no more than three (3) months prior to the corresponding deadline for its submission to the licensor.

Article 12: FINANCIAL CRITERIA

For any organization to sustain and grow, it is of utmost importance that it has a healthy and sound financial position. It not only includes higher revenues but also includes proper maintenance of financial statements and accounts. The financial criteria will help deliver both short and long-term improvements for clubs, and football in general.

The financial criteria should help to:

- i) Improve their understanding of the financial position and prospects of their member clubs;
- ii) Enhance their ability to be proactive in assisting clubs with financial issues

For the clubs, the financial criteria should help to:

- Improve standards and quality of financial management and planning activities;
- Enable better management decision-making;
- Enhance clubs' financial and business credibility with stakeholders;
- Improve financial stability; and
- Enhance revenue-generating ability and cost management.

The objectives of the financial criteria are:

- i. Improve the economic and financial capability of the clubs;
- ii. Increase clubs' transparency and credibility;
- iii. Place the necessary importance on the protection of creditors;
- iv. Safeguard the continuity of competitions.

F.01 ANNUAL BUDGET

The club must submit its annual budget before the start of the season. It should state the following:

- a) projected income for the coming financial year
- b) projected expenditure for the coming financial year
- c) all the sources of revenues and income projected for the financial year along with the amount
- d) all the sources of expenditures projected for the financial year along with the amount

Submission to the Licensor

The club needs to provide the budget with the above details which will be verified by the Licensor.

F.02 AUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The club must submit its audited annual financial statements for the previous financial year.

The financial statements should include the following –

- ✓ **Balance Sheet**
 - i. Current Assets
 - ii. Fixed Assets
 - iii. Current Liabilities
 - iv. Non-Current Liabilities
 - v. Net assets/liabilities
- ✓ **Profit and Loss Account**
 - i. Revenue
 - ii. Expenses
 - iii. Other

Submission to the Licensor

The club needs to provide the audited annual financial statements with the above details which will be verified by the Licensor.

Summary of the Criteria

Following is a summary highlighting the club licensing criteria for the clubs to participate in the National Football League:

SPORTING CRITERIA

- License Applicant Club to appoint a Head Coach for its first team, who holds at least an AFC/BFF 'B' Coaching Certificate.
- One Youth Team and participation in youth competitions, AFC C Licensed Coach
- Team Doctor or Physiotherapist
- License Applicant Club to have a written contract with all its professional players
- License Applicant Club to provide all its registered players with a medical check and necessary medical support
- Approved Youth Development Programme

INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA

- License Applicant Club to either own or have guaranteed access to a Home Playing Field to play its National Football League matches.
- License Applicant Club to either own or have guaranteed access to Training Field/ Training Facilities throughout the year.
- License Applicant Club to either own or have guaranteed access to an office space to conduct its administrative task.

PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

- License Applicant Club to appoint a full-time CEO/General Manager/General Secretary as the head of club administration.
- License Applicant Club to appoint a full-time or a part-time Finance Officer responsible for its financial and accounting matters.
- License Applicant Club to appoint a full-time or a part-time Security Officer.
- License Applicant club to appoint part-time or full-time Media Officer responsible for all media matters.

LEGAL CRITERIA

- License Applicant Club to be a legal entity registered with the appropriate authority.
- Declaration regarding Ownership and Control of Clubs

FINANCIAL CRITERIA

- License Applicant Club to submit its annual budget
- License Applicant Club to submit its annual audited financial statements from the previous financial year

Article 13: Club Licensing Criteria for the National Women's League

A license applicant must fulfill the following Club Licensing Criteria to be granted a license to enter the National Women's League. All the criteria are graded "A" which means the license applicant must fulfill all the 13 criteria listed below.

Sporting Criteria

1. Youth Teams

- a) The license applicant must have at least one U14 or U15 women's youth team.
- b) Each Women's youth team must take part in official competitions or programs played at the national, regional, or local level and recognized by the Bhutan Football Federation.

2. Medical Care of Players

- a) The license Applicant shall provide all players registered in the club with access to medical support. This shall include, but is not limited to the following:
 - Yearly cardiovascular screening (ECG) for all the players in the first squad;
 - Yearly blood report for all the players in the first squad;
 - Yearly blood report for all players above the age of 12(youth team).

3. Registration of Players

- a) All the License Applicant's first squad players must be registered with the Bhutan Football Federation and/or its affiliated league by the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulation on the status and transfer of players.
- b) All the License Applicant's youth players must be registered with Bhutan Football Federation and/or its affiliated league.

4. Sustainability

These criteria are currently being developed based on the United Nations Sustainable Developments Goals. As an initial(pilot) phase, the license applicant will regulate 3 sustainable development goals. The dimensions will increase in the future.

- a) The Licence Applicant should have a strategic approach to sustainable development. They should establish strategies and implementation programs in the following three dimensions:

i) Climate Action

ii) Responsible consumption & production (Waste Management)

iii) Sustainable cities & communities (Education and communication or engagement)

- b) The club will be obligated to provide evidence of sustainability strategies and activities initiated for the above three dimensions.

Infrastructure Criteria

5. Home Playing Field

- a) The Licence Applicant must have a home playing field available to play National League matches. The playing field must be of a minimum size as indicated in the FIFA Laws of the Game. It should have changing facilities for officials and players.
- b) The License Applicant either:
 - i) Owns the ground; or
 - ii) Can provide a written contract with the owner of the home playing field. This contract must guarantee the use of the ground for the National League.

Personnel & Administrative Criteria

6. Club Secretariat

- a. The License Applicant must have an office space sufficiently spacious to run its administration with the required infrastructure. If the women's club is part of the wider football club (men's club), they can share the club office.
- b. It must ensure that its office is open to communicate with the Licensor and the Public and that is equipped, as a minimum, with a computer, phone, email facilities, and a website (social media page).

7. Head Coach of Women's First Team

- a. A The License Applicant must appoint a Head Coach with a valid coaching diploma/license responsible for all football matters of the women's first team.
- b. The Head Coach must:
 - Must be female and hold at least a valid AFC/BFF "B" Certificate or any valid coaching qualification that is recognized by the Licensor.
 - The Head Coach must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and undertaken by the appropriate body of the Licence Applicant.
 - Be appointed by the executive body or the club secretariat of the license Applicant club through a written agreement endorsed by the head of club administration.

8. Full-Time or Part-Time Physiotherapist

- a. The License Applicant must hire a full-time or part-time Physiotherapist for the training and matches:
- b. The qualification of the Physiotherapist must be recognized by the appropriate national health authorities
- c. The Physiotherapist must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and or/ affiliated league.

Supplementary Requirements: The physiotherapist must be female however if the club couldn't get a female physiotherapist, the license applicant can hire a male physiotherapist, and it is mandatory to attend the safeguarding course provided by the Member Association.

9. Administrative Manager

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

Legal Criteria

10. Legal Entity

- a) The license applicant must be registered with an appropriate authority as a legal entity as per the law prevailing in the country. The license applicant must have legally valid documents confirming the following:
 - i. It is a legal entity registered with a recognized legal authority
 - ii. It holds a certificate/document stating its legal entity status

11. Written Contract

- a) All the registered players (First Team) of the license applicant club must have a written contract with the license applicant by the relevant provisions of the FIFA/BFF Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players and shall incorporate all key provisions required by National Law, Licensor (BFF), FIFA and AFC.

Financial Criteria

12. Annual Financial Statement

- a) The club must submit its audited annual financial statements for the previous financial year.
- b) The financial statements should include the following:
 - ✓ Balance Sheet
 - ✓ Profit and Loss Account
 - ✓ Cash flow statement

13. Annual Budget

- a) The club must submit its annual budget before the start of the season. It should state the following:
 - i. projected income for the coming financial year
 - ii. projected expenditure for the coming financial year all the sources of revenues and income projected for the financial year along with the amount
 - iii. all the sources of expenditures projected for the financial year along with the amount

Document Checklist:

Sporting Criteria

1. Youth Teams:

- ✓ Youth Teams list of players
- ✓ Proof of participation in competitions

2. Medical Care of Players

- ✓ Cardiovascular report of the first team
- ✓ Blood report first team and youth team
- ✓ List of players registered in the first team
- ✓ List of players registered in the youth team

3. Registration of players

- ✓ Registration documents with MA/ league

4. Sustainability Goals

- ✓ Policy or a strategic approach for 1) Climate Action,
2) Responsible consumption, and production (Waste Management),
3) Sustainable cities & communities (Education and communication or engagement).
- ✓ Annual Sustainability Report

Infrastructure Criteria

5. Home playing field

- ✓ Name and address of the home ground
- ✓ Ownership documents or contract with the owner
- ✓ Images of the home ground

Personnel & Administrative Criteria

6. Head Coach

- ✓ Appointment letter or contract
- ✓ Qualification documents
- ✓ Citizenship Identity card
- ✓ Passport size photo

7. Club Secretariat

- ✓ Documents of ownership or tenancy
- ✓ Images of premises with allocated infrastructure
- ✓ Club Logo

8. Administrative Manager

- ✓ Appointment letter or contract letter
- ✓ Citizenship Identity Card
- ✓ Passport Sizer Photo

9. Physiotherapist

- ✓ Appointment letter or contract
- ✓ Qualification documents
- ✓ Citizenship Identity Card
- ✓ Safeguarding certificate
- ✓ Passport Size Photo

Legal Criteria**10. Legal Entity**

- ✓ Certificate of registration
- ✓ Club Logo

11. Written contract

- ✓ List of the first team
- ✓ Written Contract
- ✓ Citizenship Identity Card

Financial Criteria**12. Annual Financial Statement**

- ✓ Audited financial statement

13. Annual Budget

Club Licensing Criteria for the AFC Women's Champions League

A Licence Applicant must fulfill the following Club Licensing Criteria in order to be granted a Licence to enter the AFC Women's Champions League:

Sporting Criteria

1. Youth Teams

- a. The Licence Applicant must have at least one 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 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 limited to the following:
 - i. yearly medical examination including cardio vascular screening for all its players in its first squad;
 - 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 for AFC Women's Champions League

- a. The Licence Applicant must have a Stadium available to play AFC Women's Champions League 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 the AFC matches for the coming season, for which the Licence Applicant qualifies in sporting terms.

- a. The Stadium must meet the requirements expressly referred to by the:
 - iii. AFC Stadium Regulations;
 - iv. respective AFC club competition regulations;
 - v. AFC Competition Operations Manual; and
 - vi. any other applicable AFC rules and regulations.
- b. 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 basecity, 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, fax, 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. Medical Doctor

- a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one 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 Medical Doctor must be recognised by the appropriate national health authorities.
- c. The Medical Doctor must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or the affiliated league.

9. Physiotherapist

- a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one (1) Physiotherapist being responsible for medical treatment and massages for the women's first team during trainings 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 the affiliated league.
- Supplementary requirement: A minimum of one (1) personnel amongst the Medical 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 Coach Education Requirement (MCER) as stipulated by the AFC Competition Operations Manual; or
 - ii. hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by 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, recognized by 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 undertaken by the appropriate body of the Licence Applicant.

1. Youth Coach

- a. The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one 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 AFC.

2. Rights, Responsibilities and Duties

- a. The rights, responsibilities and duties of the Licence Applicant's personnel mentioned in items 6 to 11 must be defined in writing.

3. Duty of Replacement During the Licensing Season

- a. If a function defined in items 6 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

4. Declaration in Respect of the Participation in AFC Women's Champions League

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

- i. at international level, it will only participate in competitions recognised and endorsed by the AFC and/or FIFA. To avoid any doubt, this provision does not relate to friendly matches;
 - ii. it will abide by and observe the provisions and conditions of the national club licensing regulations;
 - iii. 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;
 - iv. all submitted documents are complete and correct;
 - v. 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
 - vi. it acknowledges that AFC reserves the right to execute compliance audits at national level in accordance with Article 21.3.
- d. 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.

11. Written Contract with Professional 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 and shall incorporate all key provisions required by the relevant national law and of FIFA, the AFC, and the AFC Member Association.

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

Financial Criteria

13. 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 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.

14. 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

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

The Licence Applicant must prove that it has no overdue payables towards football clubs, employees and social / tax authorities, as set out in Article 20 F.03 and F.04 of these Regulations. For the purpose of this provision, the term “employees” includes 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

Please refer to the AFC Club Licensing Regulations for further details. (https://www.the-afc.com/en/more/content/afc_club_licensing_regulations_2021_3.html)





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