



## TO THE MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS OF FIFA

Circular no. 1616

Zurich, 26 January 2018

SG/nro

### **Guidance on the Bid Rules of Conduct for the process to select the host(s) of the 2026 FIFA World Cup™**

Dear Sir or Madam,

We refer to the ongoing process in relation to the selection of the host or hosts of the final competition of the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ (the "**Competition**").

At the 67<sup>th</sup> FIFA Congress in Manama, all member associations agreed that it was of paramount importance for FIFA and the world of football to conduct the bidding procedure in relation to the Competition in an ethical, transparent, objective and unbiased way. As stated by the FIFA President on many occasions, FIFA and its representatives are aware of their responsibilities in this regard and are therefore fully committed to securing the highest standards of ethical behaviour in relation to the ongoing bidding procedure. However, to achieve this important objective, FIFA fully depends on the close collaboration of all football stakeholders involved in the bidding procedure, namely all persons who are directly or indirectly involved in the administration of the bidding procedure, the evaluation of the bids and/or the selection decisions, including all member associations. Therefore, FIFA trusts in your full cooperation in ensuring the integrity and fairness of the bidding procedure.

The procedure for the selection of the host or hosts of the Competition has been materially revised as part of FIFA's reform process. Most prominently, with the adoption of the new art. 69 par. 2 of the FIFA Statutes, the statutory competence in relation to the decision-making process has been split between the FIFA Council (responsible for the shortlisting of bids) and the FIFA Congress (responsible for the final selection decision).

Furthermore, due to the change to the underlying hosting concept in alignment with the new FIFA 2.0 vision, FIFA has also decided to revamp the entire bidding procedure in close coordination with the relevant internal and external stakeholders and committees. The key focus of these procedural modifications is to significantly strengthen all procedural requirements and deliverables relating to the bidding, aiming at (a) ensuring state-of-the-art protection of the integrity of the bidding procedure, (b) fostering transparency of the bidding procedure inside and outside of FIFA, and (c) ensuring that the Competition is hosted in a country or countries offering the best possible hosting conditions.

As part of this, FIFA has established a fair and transparent bidding procedure to award the right to host the Competition. FIFA has a responsibility towards the world of football to conduct the

bidding procedure in an ethical, transparent, objective and unbiased way, in particular to secure the highest standards of ethical behaviour by all parties involved in the bidding procedure. Accordingly, as part of the “Bidding Registration” document which FIFA has provided to all bidding member associations, FIFA has defined in detail the “Bid Rules of Conduct” governing any activities of the representatives and employees of the bidding member associations, any of their bid consultants and any further nominees. The “Bid Rules of Conduct” specify the general rules contained in the FIFA Code of Ethics and the FIFA Code of Conduct. With the aim of fulfilling the standards of the “Bid Rules of Conduct” in a strict and enforceable manner, the bidding member associations have all committed to several regulations governing their activities and behaviour during the bidding procedure and will continuously provide personal declarations of compliance by all involved personnel, bid consultants and further nominees.

However, it is understood that FIFA and the bidding member associations can only meet their responsibilities in connection with the bidding procedure if, inversely, all football stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in the administration of the bidding procedure, the evaluation of the bids and/or the selection decisions are likewise fully committed to impeccable and ethical behaviour in relation to their respective involvement.

For such purpose, on 27 October 2017 the FIFA Council ratified the “FIFA Regulations for the selection of the venue for the final competition of the 2026 FIFA World Cup™” (“**Bidding Regulations**”). In article 5, the Bidding Regulations specify the FIFA Code of Ethics by defining the “Bid Rules of Conduct” also applicable to all officials, such as the members of the FIFA Council, the delegates of the FIFA Congress, the members of the FIFA general secretariat as well as the representatives of all member associations of FIFA involved in the bidding procedure.

For the sake of providing further clarity and guidance on the Bid Rules of Conduct and to emphasise and summarise the duties and obligations, in its first part, this circular highlights again the core Bid Rules of Conduct for all football officials involved in the bidding procedure. In its second part, this circular provides you with some information pertaining to the function of the FIFA Ethics Committee in relation to the bidding procedure.

For the avoidance of doubt, the content of this circular shall not supersede, replace, modify or amend any existing regulations, codes and/or any other document. Please also note that the content of this circular is of an informative nature only and hence without prejudice to any decision that any of the competent decision-making bodies of FIFA might be called upon to pass in this matter in the future.

## **1. Reflection of Bid Rules of Conduct**

The following Bid Rules of Conduct apply to all football officials in the sense of the FIFA Statutes, including any members of the FIFA Council, any other person responsible for technical, medical and administrative matters at FIFA, a confederation or a member association, or any other persons obliged to comply with the FIFA Statutes in connection with the bidding procedure for the Competition:

- 1.1 All officials shall conduct all of their own activities in relation to the bidding procedure in accordance with basic ethical principles such as integrity, responsibility, trustworthiness and fairness.

*Officials are expected to be fully committed to such ethical attitude, behaving in a dignified manner and acting with complete credibility and integrity.*

- 1.2 All officials shall reject any attempt to be influenced in relation to their respective function and obligations in relation to the bidding procedure.

*The perception of what represents an attempt of undue influencing by a third party may differ from case to case and from recipient to recipient. FIFA trusts in your good judgement. In case of any doubt, please do not hesitate to request guidance from the appointee of the investigatory chamber of the FIFA Ethics Committee in respect of the bidding procedure for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ by using the contact details set forth below.*

- 1.3 All officials shall reject any gifts and/or other benefits offered by any bidding member associations, any of their bid consultants and/or nominees, unless they:

- a) only have symbolic or trivial value;
- b) exclude any influence for the execution or omission of an act that is related to their official activities or falls within their discretion;
- c) are not contrary to their duties;
- d) do not create any undue pecuniary or other advantage; and
- e) do not create a conflict of interest.

*It is well understood that offering and accepting gifts and/or other benefits, such as hospitality, is not uncommon and plays an important role in facilitating business relationships and practice. The acceptance of gifts or other benefits, however, can lead to accusations of unethical, or even unlawful conduct which may seriously harm the integrity of the bidding procedure. Therefore, as an underlying principle, in case of any doubt as to whether a gift or other benefit offered to you meets the criteria set out above, do not offer or accept such gift or other benefit. For further guidance, please do not hesitate to request guidance from the appointee of the investigatory chamber of the FIFA Ethics Committee in respect of the bidding procedure for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ by using the contact details set forth below.*

- 1.4 All officials shall refrain from publicly making any written or oral statements of any kind, whether adverse or otherwise, about the bidders in relation to their bids.

*One of the key aspects of the integrity of the bidding procedure is fairness towards all bidding member associations. All members of the FIFA Council and delegates of the FIFA Congress should take their personal shortlisting or selection decision on the basis of their own assessment of the merits of the bids without being influenced by supportive or adverse comments of other officials. Therefore, all officials are requested to refrain from expressing publicly their personal opinion about the merits of one or more bids during the bidding procedure.*

- 1.5 All officials shall refrain from collaborating or colluding with any bidding member associations, other member associations or confederations, or any other third party with a view to unfairly influencing the outcome of the bidding procedure, in particular by entering into any kind of agreement with any bidders, other member association or

confederation in regards to the behaviour during the bidding procedure and other bidding processes organised by FIFA or any third party in a manner which may otherwise influence the bidding procedure;

*All members of the FIFA Council and delegates of the FIFA Congress should take their own, unfettered personal decision on the basis of their own assessment of the merits of the bids. The integrity of the bidding procedure would be seriously jeopardised and FIFA may, to the detriment of the entire football community, fail to ensure that the Competition is hosted in a country or countries offering the best possible hosting conditions if members of the two competent bodies seek to influence the result of the bidding procedure by entering into collaborations or collusions with other officials seeking to link their vote with other affairs or bidding processes unrelated to the merits of the submitted bids.*

- 1.6 All officials shall refrain from accepting any kind of support or development programme or further initiative containing any kind of financial or commercially beneficial contributions to single or multiple members of the football community which may unduly affect the integrity of the bidding procedure.

*All bidding member associations committed to refrain from creating, or announcing or promising, any kind of support or development programme or further initiative containing any kind of financial or commercially beneficial contributions to single or multiple members of the football community, such as other member associations, the confederations, football leagues or football clubs outside of the candidate host country or host countries in a manner which may be considered being connected to their bid. Though football development activities, in principle, are very supportive and also necessary for our sport, accepting development measures from a bidding member association, its bid consultants or even sponsors may seriously impact the integrity of the bidding procedure and could lead to accusations of unethical or even unlawful conduct. Therefore, in case of any doubt as to whether a given or new development programme offered to you may be considered inappropriate or unethical, please do not hesitate to request guidance from the appointee of the investigatory chamber of the FIFA Ethics Committee in respect of the bidding procedure for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ by using the contact details set forth below.*

- 1.7 All officials shall refrain from organising and/or staging, or agreeing to commercial terms in relation to commercial rights to, friendly matches with the representative teams of any bidding member associations or friendly matches with football clubs in a manner which may be considered as unduly influencing the bidding procedure.

*The organisation and staging of football friendly matches between member associations' representative teams form an important part of the statutory tasks of each member association. Therefore, without any doubt, the Bid Rules of Conduct shall by no means be understood as limiting or even prohibiting on any level the holding of friendly matches against, or further encounters with, the representative teams of the bidding member associations, football clubs from the bidding countries or youth teams. It is not the purpose of the Bid Rules of Conduct to prevent the bidding member associations and its football teams from holding international friendly matches. However, during the bidding procedure, special care must be taken in relation to the commercial terms under which such friendly matches and further sporting encounters are held. It is not acceptable that*

*the underlying arrangements are, or may be considered as, unduly influencing the selection of the host country or host countries for the Competition in violation of the Bid Rules of Conduct. It is understood that the line between what constitutes an appropriate friendly match arrangement and an unethical influence of the bidding procedure can be unclear. Therefore, in case of any doubt, please do not hesitate to request guidance from the appointee of the investigatory chamber of the FIFA Ethics Committee in respect of the bidding procedure for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ by using the contact details set forth below.*

- 1.8 All officials shall immediately disclose to FIFA any activities by the bidding member associations, any of their bid consultants and/or further nominees in relation to the bidding procedure that may adversely affect the fairness of the bidding procedure and/or may cause any undue influence on the outcome of the bidding procedure.

*As stated at the beginning of this circular, FIFA has a responsibility towards the world of football to conduct the bidding procedure in an ethical, transparent, objective and unbiased way, in particular to secure the highest standards of ethical behaviour by all parties involved in the bidding procedure. Therefore, FIFA trusts in your full cooperation in ensuring the integrity and fairness of the process to select the host – or hosts – of the Competition and to protect the entire football community against any doubts or accusations which would severely damage our sport. Pursuant to Clause 4.4 of the Bidding Registration, the required disclosure also includes any activities by third parties not officially named as bid consultants/further nominees but intending to support a bid.*

## **2. FIFA Ethics Committee and its representative**

All officials are bound by the FIFA Code of Ethics. Any violation of the Bid Rules of Conduct and the ethical standards described in this circular may lead to sanctions by the FIFA Ethics Committee under the FIFA Code of Ethics.

Regarding the functions of the FIFA Ethics Committee in relation to the bidding procedure for the Competition, the FIFA Ethics Committee is, among other things, competent to investigate whether any activities in connection with the bidding process are of an unethical nature in violation of the FIFA Code of Ethics, the Bidding Regulations or other specific rules of conduct to be established by the FIFA general secretariat. It is also competent to impose sanctions as set forth in the FIFA Code of Ethics for any breaches of the FIFA Code of Ethics or of such other specific rules of conduct.

Please take note that in accordance with art 6.2 of the Bidding Regulations, the investigatory chamber of the FIFA Ethics Committee has appointed one of its members, **Mr Michael Llamas**, as its representative in respect of the bidding process for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™.

Mr Llamas was selected by means of a draw involving the members of the investigatory chamber who are not nationals of a member association affiliated with CAF or CONCACAF (as the bidding member associations are affiliated with these two confederations).

Mr Llamas' main function will be to act on behalf of the FIFA Ethics Committee as its first point of contact and main liaison with the member associations, other stakeholders and FIFA

throughout the bidding process in order to monitor whether any related activities are of an unethical nature or are in violation of any specific rules of conduct.

If you wish to seek further guidance on the content of this circular, please do not hesitate to contact the FIFA Bidding Team by email ([2026bid@fifa.org](mailto:2026bid@fifa.org)) or **Mr Michael Llamas** at the following contact details:

Mr Michael Llamas  
Member of the investigatory chamber of the FIFA Ethics Committee  
c/o Secretariat to the FIFA Ethics Committee  
FIFA-Strasse 20  
P.O. Box  
8044 Zurich  
Switzerland

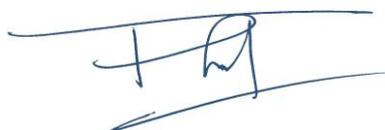
[secretariat-investigatory-chamber@fifa.org](mailto:secretariat-investigatory-chamber@fifa.org)

In turn, please note that, in the event of any requests from Mr Llamas and the FIFA Ethics Committee, all football officials, including but not limited to members of the FIFA Council and delegates of the FIFA Congress, will be asked to cooperate with and support any audit or inquiry conducted by the FIFA Ethics Committee in such a manner as required under articles 41 and 42 of the FIFA Code of Ethics. This would, in particular, include the timely provision of any information or documents required to be disclosed. We have no doubt that the Bid Rules of Conduct and the enhanced standards of integrity provisions will not only help to protect FIFA against any wrongdoing but will also support the hosting of the FIFA World Cup™ as the world's leading sports event.

If you wish to receive further information or clarification regarding the Bid Rules of Conduct, please do not hesitate to contact us directly. We thank you for taking note of these important matters and for your continued support and cooperation throughout this bidding procedure.

Yours faithfully,

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE  
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



Fatma Samoura  
Secretary General

cc: - FIFA Council  
- Confederations