FIFA

ACTIVITY REPORT
2018
FIFA Activity Report 2018

2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™
More than half the world’s population watched as Russia put on a festival of football that brought a new perspective to the beautiful game and the host country itself.

Forward 2.0
Having redefined the landscape in football development with more than 900 concrete projects, the Forward Programme is evolving to help the member associations do even more through investment in footballing and human capital.

Women’s Football Strategy
Taking the lead in the women’s game, FIFA set out a realistic plan with measurable deliverables in its Women’s Football Strategy.

FIFA World Cup 2026™
For the first time, it was the FIFA member associations that decided on the hosting of the FIFA World Cup™ in an all-inclusive final vote at the 68th FIFA Congress.

More than a game
In collaboration with national and international authorities, FIFA has an important role to play in unlocking football’s enormous power for good around the world.

FIFA Financial Report 2018

Huge financial success in the 2015-2018 cycle
FIFA’s revenue reached a new high of USD 6,421 million, of which USD 5,357 million or 83% was delivered by the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™, the most profitable edition to date.

FIFA’s revenue goes back into football
More than 81% of full-cycle investments (USD 4,360 million) were invested across the entire football community: through substantially increased development funding for FIFA members, as well as financial contributions to all participants at Russia 2018.

Strong and sustainable financial position
FIFA’s total assets amounted to USD 4,389 million (50% higher than at the end of the previous cycle), with 82% in the form of cash, cash equivalents and financial assets.

Prepared for the future
FIFA’s reserves also reached a new record level of USD 2,745 million, providing global football with a solid financial foundation from which to flourish.

FIFA Governance Report 2018

A landmark FIFA World Cup™ for the Compliance Division
FIFA’s comprehensive World Cup compliance programme helped to build transparency, foster ethical behaviour, identify risks, define policies, create procedures and implement prompt corrective measures.

More development and education funding
FIFA Forward now has a budget of USD 1,746 million for the new four-year cycle, 2019-2022.

Better funding oversight
Independent central reviews of 204 member associations in 2018 – an increase of 179% on 2017.

New compliance training and guidance
Five new directives and a greatly increased programme of compliance training were among FIFA’s key internal initiatives during 2018.

A successful bidding process for the FIFA World Cup
Transparent, objective, inclusive and sustainable – the two-year bidding process for FIFA’s flagship tournament concluded successfully in the summer.
France’s supremely talented young team swept all before them to win the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ in Russia.
We delivered.

FIFA’s performance is best measured by actions, not just words. This is something I’ve been repeating since my election in 2016, and 2018 provided the greatest measure yet. During those 12 months, FIFA showed the world that it is a positive, responsible and pioneering sports organisation.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ was hailed by a great many people from all across society as the best World Cup ever. From the level of organisation and the spirit of the volunteers to the successful implementation of new technology and the unique atmosphere of togetherness created by fans of all nationalities, not to mention the action on the pitch, Russia 2018 was a resounding triumph.

And FIFA did so much more in 2018: we led the continued professionalisation of our sport around the world, we deepened our commitment to development, we made strides towards bringing much-needed structure to the club game, and one year ahead of women’s football’s showpiece event, we unveiled our Women’s Football Strategy. It is fair to say that FIFA is engaging with the world as never before, and it is much to the benefit of football.

FIFA’s investment in football in years to come is safeguarded by our organisation’s strong financial situation at the close of the four-year World Cup cycle. Thanks to a combination of conscientious cost reduction, expert financial direction and a successful commercial programme, FIFA managed to increase its financial assets significantly in 2018, assets that will be invested straight back into the game that is the reason we are here in the first place.

The main channel through which FIFA invests in the game is Forward 2.0. FIFA’s signature development programme has evolved, not just through the increased funding of up to USD 6 million over four years, but also in terms of the bolstered compliance structure that requires all recipients to show the funds they receive are responsibly managed through best-practice controls and reporting methods.

The end of a cycle is an ideal moment to reflect on achievements. Looking back, I see how robust our financial, governance and compliance structures have become, how much more comprehensive our development work is, and how much better we are at listening to the game’s stakeholders – all of which ultimately impacts football in a much more sustainable way.

During this cycle, we rebuilt our organisation from the ground up and, at the end of it, enjoyed the best FIFA World Cup the world has ever seen. I can assure you, it will only get better from here.

Yours in football,

Gianni Infantino
FIFA President
This was a year of big achievements for all of us at FIFA. The administration showed its drive and creativity to make development projects happen around the world, keep our competitions and events world-class, fight injustice and promote equality across society, and – alongside the Russia 2018 Local Organising Committee – stage a FIFA World Cup™ that brought more than a million fans to Russia and set new audience records with more than half the world watching. The fans engaged with us on an unprecedented scale to tell us just how they want to see their sport develop. The players gave their all to make the World Cup an unforgettable experience. And the member associations showed their commitment and desire to boost the game around the world, submitting 606 Forward Programme project applications, a new high.

After putting on the best FIFA World Cup ever, rather than resting on our laurels, we are more motivated than ever to keep evolving as an organisation. That’s not to say we need to shake everything up: as much as we want to make key changes, we should also acknowledge the things that we have done well.

Indeed, we have just conducted the most transparent, objective and inclusive FIFA World Cup bidding process ever, which was finally decided in an open vote by the member associations themselves. We have subjected the financial management of our members (not to mention our own) to unparalleled scrutiny – in 2018 alone, we conducted central reviews of the development finances of 204 members – within a robust compliance system throughout the football world. Within the administration, we have trained more staff than ever on the foundations of conduct and integrity, a core component of our compliance programme.

Our member associations came together in Zurich in October to discuss compliance topics and to exchange best practices, thereby enhancing their compliance programmes across the football world. And we have put our finances in solid order, bringing in a net result of USD 1,201 million at the end of the FIFA World Cup cycle, funds that will be used to continue our work to further develop all levels of the sport.

But we also know that we can do better. That is why we have set out our long-term strategy for the women’s game: gender equality is absolutely essential to football and is a key part of the FIFA 2.0 vision. It is why we have made innovation part of our fabric through a new division dedicated to the digital transformation of FIFA. It is why we have established a new internal audit function, providing independent assurances on the effectiveness of FIFA’s governance, risk management and internal control processes. And it is why we have raised the bar in regard to funding and financial accountability through Forward 2.0, our signature development programme, with development offices around the world upping our game in terms of communication and coordination.

The new World Cup cycle offers a host of new opportunities for the football community. Our organisation is fit and ready to meet this challenge and set new standards throughout the world.

Yours faithfully,

Fatma Samoura
FIFA Secretary General
Peru defeated Australia 2-0 in their final Group C game in Sochi, André Carrillo scoring Los Incas’ first FIFA World Cup goal since Spain ’82. Despite the result, both teams went home after the group stage.
Decades from now, when we look back at what 2018 meant for the game, there is little doubt about what will spring to mind. The year will inevitably go down in football history for Russia’s hosting of a smashingy successful FIFA World Cup™: a month-long, fairy tale of dazzling atmosphere, impeccable infrastructure and football of the highest level.

On the pitch, the use of video assistant referees made the game fairer than ever and had football fans asking themselves: “How did we live without this before?” And, with a young and exciting team, France had the same fans wondering: “How are we going to stop these guys?”

In Russia with love

Over the 64 games, 98% of the seats were occupied. More than 1 million fans travelled from abroad to enjoy their time in Russia. They celebrated in peace and safety with locals and rivals alike. They wore their FAN IDs like badges of honour. They came back enthralled by the country – and the feeling among the Russian hosts was mutual.

In 2018, over 3.5 billion people – or more than half the world’s population – watched it live as football took Russia by storm and the country responded with what was, simply put, the best World Cup ever.
A women’s game with a plan

For far too long, the most popular game all but overlooked half of the world’s population. The result was an enormous gulf between men’s and women’s football, one which FIFA is firmly committed to reducing.

This commitment produced a few of its most significant results in 2018, such as the increased participation of women in decision-making positions of football administration; the three-fold increase of the financial contribution to teams taking part in the FIFA Women’s World Cup™; and the presentation of the FIFA Women’s Football Strategy. The milestone document provides a blueprint of how to advance in five key areas: development, commercialisation, promotion, governance, and education and empowerment.

It may not have redressed the balance, but it is a key step in the right direction: having a realistic plan with measurable deliverables.
Over the course of two and a half years, FIFA Forward has become synonymous with substantial, effective and responsible football development for the 211 member associations. In 2018, the FIFA Council approved a series of measures to invigorate the programme even further during the 2019-2022 cycle: Forward 2.0.

The path forward

Each member association is now entitled to receive up to USD 6 million to develop the game – an increase of USD 1 million in comparison with the previous cycle – and, in this process, will be subject to even stricter auditing and reporting measures. It is FIFA Forward making good of its primordial promise: more investment, more impact and more oversight.
Football cannot save the world, and it is only right that the game’s administration should steer clear of such pretension. However, the power of the most popular sport on earth can and should be used for good: something best done in cooperation between the game’s institutions and national and international authorities.

FIFA has been making strides in its commitment to play a role in civil society by engaging with governments and geopolitical actors around the globe: from signing a landmark memorandum of understanding with the Council of Europe to presenting football’s unifying power to the world’s most powerful leaders at the G20 Summit on 1 December 2018.
Selecting the hosts of the FIFA World Cup™ is too important a decision to be left open to doubt – and certainly too crucial to be taken by anyone but football’s supreme legislative body, the FIFA Congress.

Following an objective and transparent bidding process during which not a single decision – and not a piece of information surrounding any decision – was guarded away from public scrutiny, in June FIFA’s member associations took the final vote and designated Canada, Mexico and the United States as the hosts of the FIFA World Cup 2026™.
New Zealand ensured their historic performance at the FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup Uruguay 2018 was capped off with a podium finish after a 2-1 victory over Canada in the match for third place.
Making a world of difference

In just two and a half years, FIFA’s ground-breaking Forward Programme has established a new landscape in football development with significantly increased financial support.

Offering 360-degree, tailor-made support, the Forward Programme has helped the member associations set more focused, tangible targets in key areas such as infrastructure, capacity-building and youth and women’s competitions and by agreeing sustainable and inclusive strategic development goals based on strict transparency and accountability requirements.

With a total of USD 1.079 billion in funding provided in the first programme cycle, USD 832 million has already been approved and committed to the specific development needs of members and confederations, including investment of more than USD 270 million in tailor-made development projects.

This more rigorous and professional approach to global football development is proving a win-win for both FIFA and its members.

PROJECTS WORLDWIDE 2016-2018

264 infrastructure
163 competitions
144 capacity-building
106 national team support
122 equipment
142 other projects

Total investment USD 270,269,341
941 projects in 179 member associations

220 projects in 52 member associations
Total investment
USD 87,199,847

172 projects in 35 member associations
Total investment
USD 52,777,309

133 projects in 38 member associations
Total investment
USD 46,257,098

168 projects in 11 member associations
Total investment
USD 13,750,043
Forward in focus

Member associations have applied for Forward funding for a wide range of eligible project types, from capacity-building activities to the construction of stadiums or technical centres, and from grassroots tournaments to professional leagues or national championships. Here are just some of the many Forward projects having a positive impact on the football of tomorrow, today.

**Palestine**

**ARTIFICIAL TURF IN FAISAL AL-HUSSEINI INTERNATIONAL STADIUM**
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 1,063,025**

Renovation work on Palestine’s home stadium was completed in 2018 – with a state-of-the-art drainage system installed to solve flooding issues, an international-standard artificial turf pitch and new spectator seating. FIFA Forward provided the necessary financial backing to realise a long-needed upgrade, enabling Palestine to host high-quality international football matches.

**Bhutan**

**ARTIFICIAL TURF PITCHES**
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 1,300,000**

Bhutan was in great need of pitches to train its thousands of grassroots and youth players. FIFA Forward support was used to bring the dream to life. Four artificial pitches were constructed in different parts of the country and, with a maintenance programme set up by the association, will be kept in top condition.

**Thailand**

**RENOVATION OF FA THAILAND HQ**
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 746,460**

Proper administration facilities are essential, especially to those associations aspiring to keep up with a fast-growing domestic football scene and to be able to serve the needs of long-term football development. With Forward funding, the 65 staff of the Football Association of Thailand now work in a modern, fully equipped office.
Botswana
GRASSROOTS, YOUTH AND WOMEN’S FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 996,000**

Through an ambitious project, the Botswanan FA not only created new leagues (at U-13, U-15 and U-17 level) for both boys and girls in the country’s four regions and established girls’ teams nationwide, but also created six inter-regional tournaments and trained 400 youth and women’s football coaches and programme administrators.

Burundi
ARTIFICIAL TURF PITCHES
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 2,038,200**

With a significant investment in infrastructure – specifically, four top-level artificial pitches – the Burundian FA hosted a very successful CECAFA men’s U-17 championship in 2018 for eight national teams of East and Central Africa and has substantially increased the performance of its players.

Madagascar
DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF WOMEN’S FOOTBALL
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 341,600**

The Madagascan FA has made women’s football its priority by increasing engagement with girls through grassroots-level coaching. It has also created an eight-club elite women’s national championship, which, due to the size of the territory, features the best teams qualifying from each region.
USA
YOUTH FOOTBALL “SHOWCASE” (YOUTH DEVELOPMENT)
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 515,425**

As part of its ongoing efforts to make soccer the pre-eminent sport in the United States by developing world-class players, coaches and referees, the programme aims to improve everyday environments focused on individual player development. In 2018, with Forward investment, US Soccer ran the Development Academy “Summer Showcase” and launched online refereeing courses, raising the level of the US national youth teams.

**Barbados**
UPGRADING OF WILDEY TECHNICAL CENTRE
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 1,559,550**

High-quality floodlighting has made it possible to hold evening matches and to televise them. The association has also installed 5,000 new spectator seats, adding modern changing rooms and other facilities for matchday operations together with parking to accommodate the needs of the players, whether for the women’s and men’s national teams or clubs.

**Costa Rica**
FUTSAL FROM SCRATCH
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 1,062,420**

Officially inaugurated in 2018, the sleek and stylish arena comprises an indoor futsal space with wooden flooring that meets the highest international standards, stands with a capacity of 450 seats, modern public restroom facilities and changing rooms, as well as facilities for disabled spectators.
Peru

PLAN DE MENORES

FIFA Forward investment: **USD 2,250,000**

FIFA Forward supported the creation of 28 youth development centres across Peru, benefiting more than 5,000 players with advanced training by highly qualified professionals, and helped establish the Torneo Centenario, national competitions for all age categories and running for three consecutive years, contributing to the dynamic revamping of national football.

Paraguay

ALBIROGA TECHNICAL CENTRE

FIFA Forward investment: **USD 2,249,460**

With support from Forward, the Albiroga Technical Centre has become a world-class footballing facility. The project included modern changing rooms, floodlighting, perimeter fences, expansion and remodelling of the senior team living quarters, and new catering facilities, as well as renovation of the administration and technical management building – all in an ecologically sustainable way.

Colombia

LIGA FEMENINA

FIFA Forward investment: **USD 753,000**

For two seasons running, the Liga Femenina – one of the strongest in the Americas – has run an 18-club competition with 400-plus young women (around 16% of whom are professional) participating and an impressive following. The professionalism of the organisation and high standard of football are justifying expectations that the competition will soon become self-sufficient.
New Zealand
WOMEN’S AND YOUTH FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 588,197**

Participation in competitive matches is a key element in developing national teams. With Forward support, New Zealand’s Football Ferns and All Whites youth teams have been able to complete a very intensive programme, involving an extensive travel schedule, and are on the right track, having achieved some significant results.

Fiji
WOMEN’S FOOTBALL
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 348,717**

The Forward Programme has had a significant impact on women’s football development in Fiji, with the national team reaching the 2018 OFC Women’s Nations Cup final. Approximately 700 girls, including school pupils, have been involved in the programme, which has created a greater sense of inclusion and community.

New Caledonia
U-14, U-16 AND U-19 COMPETITIONS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 699,724**

By organising local “elite” youth and women’s competitions at various levels, the New Caledonian FA aims to develop the game by making regular practice and high-quality competition a standard part of the national game. The competitions also allow the association to identify the best local talents for its national teams.
Gibraltar

UPGRADE OF THE NATIONAL STADIUM
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 350,000**

The GFA, supported by Forward, has embarked on its quest to become more professional and to improve its players technically by investing heavily in infrastructure. Through a playing surface development project, the GFA decided to install a high-quality artificial turf pitch inside the only playing facility available in Gibraltar: the 5,000-seat Victoria Stadium.

Belarus

COLD-WEATHER FOOTBALL DOMES
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 1,590,000**

The beautiful but harsh winter of the Belarussian valleys is not ideal for training and playing football during long periods of the year. The installation of two (of a planned four) air domes in Minsk and Brest have enabled Belarussian football teams to focus on technique, rather than staying warm, in winter training.

Romania

YOUTH NATIONAL TEAM DEVELOPMENT
FIFA Forward investment: **USD 670,000**

The Romanian FA started the long-term development of its U-19 and junior national teams in 2017. An assistant coach for each team, as well as a video analyst, psychologist, physio, medical team and other support staff were brought in to help young national players progress with a view to achieving major tournament success.
FIFA FORWARD PROGRAMME

Development around the world

To support its members in getting the most out of the Forward Programme, FIFA has a dedicated team, with a Member Associations Division in Zurich and ten Regional FIFA Development Offices around the world, staffed by experienced full-time development officers.

In particular, the regional offices play a central role locally in assisting members in the implementation and coordination of their Forward football development projects, and ensure a permanent local FIFA presence to further support member associations throughout each region around the globe.
REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

As part of the Forward Programme, FIFA organises regular workshops focused on strategic development planning, financial governance, administration, and specific development areas such as building and maintaining sustainable and accessible infrastructure. There are many more capacity-building workshops to come in 2019 and 150 plus missions undertaken each year by the Member Associations Division to support individual member associations and address their specific capacity-building needs.

Here are some of the workshops FIFA held with its members in 2018:

**Connect Programme**
Through dedicated regional workshops, members’ registration specialists learn about the specific features and functions of the FIFA Connect ID and Platform and are trained in the registration of players and other football stakeholders online. Both FIFA IT solutions are offered to member associations as a free e-service.

**Forward 2.0**
Following the Council’s approval of the new Forward 2.0 regulations in October, FIFA held 13 workshops to ensure its 211 member associations were familiar with the upgraded benefits and measures, as well as the statutory obligations and funding controls to ensure transparency and the proper use of FIFA Forward development funds ahead of the new cycle.

**Financial governance**
Regular financial governance workshops were organised to assist the member associations in their financial management, and to review and upgrade their accounting systems where needed. They also ensured that members were aligned with the increased transparency and accountability obligations under the Forward Programme.

**Football infrastructure**
A series of innovative workshops brought football administrators from across the globe together with experts in engineering, architecture, accessibility, environmental sustainability, and project management to consider construction solutions and help drive the strategic development of ever more sustainable sports facilities. The first workshop, which was very well received, took place in Istanbul in October, bringing together representatives of ten associations from Europe and six from Asia. A further edition was held a month later in Costa Rica, with more workshops planned across 2019.

**Strategic planning/management of football development**
In a series of workshops, senior MA staff analysed their associations’ strengths and needs, identified domestic and international opportunities through football, and evaluated trends in the football industry. With individual breakout sessions a key feature, these workshops help members to identify their own development priorities and formalise their strategic plans as a critical component of the development process.
As the second cycle begins, Forward is set to move up another gear with members also benefiting from the wide range of capacity-building initiatives being provided by FIFA. This joint approach is further supported by a FIFA-driven, MA knowledge-sharing programme.

Raising the game
At its meeting in October, the FIFA Council approved the revised FIFA Forward 2.0 Development Programme Regulations, which will regulate football development funding for the 211 member associations over the course of the 2019-2022 cycle.

The enhanced programme will offer greater resources to FIFA’s members, as well as the confederations and zonal/regional associations, while strengthening the regulatory framework – in essence, setting firm foundations for sustainable football development everywhere.

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**Forward 2.0: taking football further**

Since its inception in May 2016, the Forward Programme has provided a fourfold increase in FIFA’s investment in global football development and proved a catalyst for the further professionalisation of FIFA’s 211 member associations as a lasting legacy.

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**FORWARD 2.0 IN A NUTSHELL**

- **Up to USD 6 million** in development funding for each member association over 2019-2022 – **an increase of USD 1 million**.
  
  Up to USD 1 million per year for operational/running costs, of which USD 500,000 is subject to the fulfilment of specific conditions.

- **Up to USD 12 million** per year for each confederation to support football activities and projects – **an increase of USD 2 million**.

- **Up to USD 1 million** per year for each zonal/regional association to organise men’s, women’s and youth football tournaments.

- **In addition, up to USD 1 million** is available over the cycle for member associations most in need of financial support for the travel, accommodation and equipment costs of their national teams.

- **Accountability**: a broader and more systematic auditing and reporting mechanism, including the central audit review, undertaken by an independent auditor for all member associations receiving Forward funds in the previous year. This 100% central review programme provides ever greater financial efficiency and transparency.

- **Ethical practices**: beneficiaries have greater social responsibility and an obligation to ensure that the principles of anti-discrimination and inclusion, accessibility and human rights are protected and promoted, and that measures are taken to protect and safeguard children and minors.
MORE COMPETITIONS WITH FORWARD 2.0

Article 6 of the updated Forward Regulations provides specific operational funding incentives to support an increase in the number and quality of competitions, including youth and women’s competitions, that are more efficient and competitive:

Regular nationwide men’s and women’s competitions.
At least ten teams playing a combined 90 matches over at least six months of the year.

Men’s “A” and women’s “A” national team.
Playing at least four matches per year.

Organising national or regional boys’ and girls’ competitions.
At least two age categories (e.g. U-15 and U-17).

Boys’ and girls’ national teams in at least two age categories (e.g. U-15 and U-17).
Playing at least four matches per year in each category.

Up-to-date IT player registration and competition management capabilities.

Programme for promotion and development of refereeing.
Full-time qualified head of refereeing.
Ten workshops for male and female referees per year.

Members can also get up to **USD 2 million** over the four-year cycle for running specific projects in the following areas:

**Football infrastructure**
(e.g. pitches including lighting systems, technical centres, training grounds, stadiums, association headquarters)

**Strategic areas**
(e.g. strategy and planning, governance and legal affairs)

**Organisational areas**
(e.g. leadership training, management of leagues and clubs, marketing and revenue generation, event and competition management, financial management, management of facilities, stadiums and security, social responsibility, IT)

**Sporting areas**
(e.g. training of technical directors, training of coaches, referees, youth football, women’s football, domestic competitions, training centres, beach soccer and futsal)

“By 2022, FIFA will have invested almost USD 3 billion in global football development through the Forward Programme. When you see how the game is growing in more and new territories, you know that this is an investment well placed.”

GIANNI INFANTINO
FIFA President
The Women’s Football Strategy, unveiled in October 2018, sets out FIFA’s game plan for working together with the confederations and member associations, clubs and players, the media, fans and other stakeholders to give women’s football a clear pathway to success.

It focuses chiefly on broadening female participation in football, which will entail optimising the quality and commercial strength of existing competitions as well as creating new ones. Leadership training platforms will be developed, meanwhile, to bring more women into the upper ranks of the football industry.

Women’s football has never been in better health. And now, with its Women’s Football Strategy, FIFA has embarked on a drive to realise the full potential of the sport.

The Women’s Football Strategy offers a starting point for more associations to emulate the success of US Soccer: the women’s national team went unbeaten in 2018, with Alex Morgan leading the scoring.
Drawing inspiration from experience
FIFA’s Women’s Football Conferences provided a hotbed of ideas for the future direction of the women’s game. Organised jointly with four of the confederations in 2018, leading figures from women’s football came together to discuss strategies, hear testimonies on development projects and participate in workshop sessions on areas such as grassroots participation, elite development and governance.

A new-look calendar
Based on extensive consultation with the confederations, leagues, clubs and players, the 2020-2023 women’s international match calendar sees a reduction in the number of international windows to six and a period each year between July and August blocked for women’s national team competitions (including confederation final tournaments and the FIFA Women’s World Cup).

FIFA’S FIVE GOALS FOR THE WOMEN’S GAME

Develop and grow
FIFA aims to double the number of female players to 60 million by 2026. It will do so by encouraging all its member associations to establish their own comprehensive women’s football strategies by 2022 and advocating for football to feature in national school curricula through the new Football for Schools Programme.

Showcase
FIFA’s greatest showcase for the female game is the FIFA Women’s World Cup™. Building on the unprecedented success of the 2015 edition in Canada, FIFA will use the global exposure of France 2019 as a driving force to develop the women’s game through new and improved international and club competitions around the world and at all levels.

Communicate and commercialise
Women’s football is undoubtedly a force for good in society. The new Women’s Football Legends Programme offers modern role models for a youthful audience, and they will engage with that audience through FIFA’s modern digital and communications platforms. Meanwhile, the commercial side of the women’s game will be structured in a dedicated programme by 2026.

Govern and lead
FIFA has formal goals for strong female governance in football: every member association must have at least one woman on its executive committee by 2026 while, by 2022, at least one third of FIFA committee members must be female. As part of professionalising the domestic game, FIFA took a significant step in 2018 by incorporating female transfers into the International Transfer Matching System (ITMS) and it will bring further regulation by introducing a club licensing system.

Educate and empower
FIFA is in an ideal position to educate and empower women and girls and will use it to address specific social issues that affect them. Through its competitions and by working more closely with NGOs and government stakeholders, as well as the member associations, FIFA will be able to help bring lasting improvements to the lives of women around the world, whether through leadership schemes or health education programmes.

“Our Women’s Football Strategy will make football more accessible to girls and women and encourage female empowerment, a subject of great importance, now more than ever before.”

FATMA SAMOURA
FIFA Secretary General
A new name was etched onto the FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup honours board as Japan prevailed in impressive fashion in northern France. It was a richly deserved success for the Young Nadeshiko, who beat two former winners – the USA and Germany – along the way, and finished with the tightest defence (three goals conceded) and most potent attack (15 goals scored).

While Japan made history by becoming the first country to win titles in all three FIFA Women’s World Cup age categories, the tournament’s outstanding player was Spain’s Patricia “Patri” Guijarro, who claimed the adidas Golden Ball. She additionally earned the adidas Golden Boot, her three assists edging out England’s Georgia Stanway, who also hit six goals. Such was Patri’s impact, which included heading home the winner against France in the semi-finals, that some Japan players even asked for her autograph after the final in Vannes.

There were breakthrough performances from Spain and England, but it was Japan that swept everyone away at the FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup France 2018.
MATCH FOR THIRD PLACE  
24 August  
**FRANCE** 1  
**ENGLAND** 1  
(PSO 2-4)  
**FINAL**  
24 August  
**SPAIN** 1  
**JAPAN** 3

THE GOLDEN GIRLS  
adidas Golden Boot  
Patricia Guijarro,  
Spain – 6 goals, 3 assists  
adidas Golden Ball  
Patricia Guijarro, Spain  
adidas Golden Glove  
Sandy MacIver, England

Japan plan pays off  
Besides the main trophy, Futoshi Ikeda’s victorious players also captured the FIFA Fair Play Award, along with adidas Silver and Bronze balls for Saori Takarada and Moeka Minami respectively. They likewise won plenty of admirers thanks to their attractive style of play, which featured no shortage of overlapping runs, cross-field passing, short interplay, wonderful dribbling and fantastic goals.

Captains today, leaders of tomorrow  
A two-day workshop in June brought the captains of the qualified teams for the FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup and six referees representing the confederations together in Moscow to focus on their leadership skills.

"Each and every one of you brings something unique to the sport," FIFA Legend and guest speaker Karina LeBlanc told the attendees. “You lead a team, you lead a nation. You are the biggest names in your country, and if your country hasn’t started paying attention yet, trust me they will. Women’s football is going places.”

Step forward, Haiti  
France 2018 brought Haiti’s first-ever appearance at a FIFA competition. Although they lost each of their three games in a tough group featuring China PR, Germany and Nigeria, Haiti were no pushovers and gave an excellent account of themselves, with captain Nérolia Mondésir shining throughout.

Qualification for the competition was already a huge achievement and the culmination of a lot of hard work, supported by the FIFA Forward Programme. “This qualification would not have been possible without FIFA Forward,” said Haitian FA President Yves Jean-Bart. “We were able to get equipment, hire qualified managers and provide elite training for our talented young girls and boys. We’ve become a power in the Caribbean and, in some respects, it seems we’ve closed the gap that existed between us and the North American teams.”

“I’m delighted that we were able to show what Japanese football is all about in France.”

MOEKA MINAMI  
Japan U-20  
women’s captain
A first for Spain as fresh faces shine

Spain won their maiden U-17 world title while Mexico, New Zealand and Canada also broke new ground in Uruguay.

Spain etched a new name onto the FIFA Women’s U-17 World Cup honours board – and with it secured their first world title in women’s football, prevailing 2-1 over Mexico in the final. Unbeaten all the way, Spain suffered their biggest scare when requiring a penalty shoot-out to get past defending champions Korea DPR in a quarter-final in which adidas Golden Glove winner Catalina Coll saved two spot kicks.

The adidas Golden Boot went to Mukarama Abdulai of quarter-finalists Ghana, whose seven goals all came in the group stage, while 2014 champions Japan earned the FIFA Fair Play Award. Their quarter-final elimination against New Zealand on penalties was one of the biggest stories in a tournament full of surprises – and a huge step for the outsiders from Oceania who ended up finishing third.

**SEMI-FINALS**
28 November

- NEW ZEALAND 0
- SPAIN 2
- MEXICO 1
- CANADA 0

**MATCH FOR THIRD PLACE**
1 December

- NEW ZEALAND 2
- CANADA 1

**FINAL**
1 December

- SPAIN 2
- MEXICO 1

**THE GOLDEN GIRLS**

- **adidas Golden Boot**
  Mukarama Abdulai, Ghana
  7 goals, 2 assists

- **adidas Golden Ball**
  Clàudia Pina, Spain

- **adidas Golden Glove**
  Catalina Coll, Spain
Spanish “veterans” lead way
For Spain’s three co-captains, Catalina Coll, Eva Navarro and Clàudia Pina, victory in Montevideo was particularly sweet after losing the U-20 final three and a half months earlier. Each played a key role in Uruguay: adidas Golden Ball winner Pina scored in the quarters, semis and the final, and now has nine goals in total across two U-17 Women’s World Cups. Navarro, meanwhile, achieved the most assists (three) in Uruguay, and Coll conceded just three goals in six matches (0.5 per game).

“This is a special moment, absolutely one-of-a-kind. We know what it means for girls all over the world and for Spain’s women’s football, this is massive.”

TOÑA IS
Spain U-17 women’s coach

Mentorship programme pays dividends
The inaugural FIFA Coach Mentorship Programme offers 21 female coaches the opportunity to acquire knowledge and experience – and for a trio of participants, the benefits were almost immediate. Just a month into the programme, Mexico head coach Mónica Vergara, Canada head coach Rhian Wilkinson (pictured together below) and New Zealand assistant coach Gemma Lewis oversaw the unprecedented progress of their teams to the last four in Uruguay. Jill Ellis, Hope Powell and Asako Takakura were the respective mentors for Vergara, Wilkinson and Lewis. “It’s incredible all that the mentors share, how they opened their world and experiences, and it’s something that has helped me a lot before coming here to Uruguay,” said Vergara.

Learning opportunities
FIFA organised coaching workshops around both of its junior Women’s World Cups in 2018. In the case of the U-17s, the FIFA Regional Course for Women’s Football in Montevideo welcomed 28 delegates from nine CONMEBOL member nations, including national team head coaches as well as assistant coaches, physical trainers and academy coaches. “The course consists of both theory sessions, which include analysis of matches at the World Cup, and practical sessions, where we transfer what we’ve been studying in theory,” FIFA coach Andrea Rodebaugh explained.

Peru opens new pathway
Elsewhere in South America, the development of women’s football received a significant boost in Peru with the unveiling of the FIFA Girls Academy, a pilot project aimed at promoting elite youth development in the women’s game. Similar projects have been launched in Portugal, Namibia, New Caledonia, Vietnam and Mexico. The Peruvian project will involve an estimated 160 players split into U-14 and U-16 categories across four development centres. They will train twice a week for nine months of the year with the ultimate goal of developing a team equipped to qualify for the FIFA Women’s World Cup™.
La Seine Musicale was the venue for the FIFA Women's World Cup France 2019™ draw, which was conducted by FIFA Legends Alex Scott and Louis Saha and served up an opening match between France and Korea Republic on 7 June at the Parc des Princes – the first challenge awaiting the hosts who also face Norway and Nigeria in Group A.

Other intriguing match-ups caught the eye straightaway, such as the Nice opener between old rivals England and Scotland in Group D that also contains 2015 runners-up Japan. Group B offers the prospect of two-time champions Germany taking on a Spain side that qualified unbeaten. Reigning champions the USA, meanwhile, will kick off against Thailand in Group F, where they also meet Chile and Sweden.

Among the draw assistants were past champions Cindy Cone (USA), Aya Miyama (Japan) and Steffi Jones (Germany), as well as helping hands from the men’s game: Didier Deschamps, Kaká and Michael Essien.
The mascot
etti™, the official tournament mascot for France 2019, warmed up for her starring role by appearing alongside the luminaries at the draw. The daughter of Footix – mascot for the 1998 FIFA World Cup France™ – is now ready to follow in her father’s footsteps.

“Dare to Shine”
The slogan for France 2019 is “Dare to Shine” and, on the eve of the draw, stars of past FIFA Women’s World Cups gave their own interpretations of what this means. Top scorer in 2015, Germany’s Célia Šašić said: “If you fall, it’s not a failing but just the next step to be better next time. So just dare to do it.”
Senegal’s fans set a fine example at Russia 2018, mingling with other supporters, bringing vibrant colour and noise to each of their games and even cleaning up after themselves.
ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE
Best. World Cup. Ever.

When football history books come to be written, 2018 will be known as the year when football finally trusted technology, Russia wowed the world with its impeccable hospitality and the FIFA World Cup™ more than lived up to its title as football’s ultimate showcase.
A modern classic

From the explosive opening match to the thrilling final, the action on the pitch at Russia 2018 enthralled football lovers the world over and was hailed by many as the best World Cup ever.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup™ had it all: from the familiar sight of Cristiano Ronaldo hitting a hat-trick for Portugal and Lionel Messi and Neymar carrying the hopes of their nations, to the shock of a German group-stage exit; from football nearly coming home to England, to the emergence of a Russia team that rose beyond all expectations to do the host country proud; from the flourishing of Belgium’s golden generation and the Croatia team playing to the rhythm of midfield maestro Luka Modrič, to everything clicking at the right moment for France as they swept away all before them to claim a second FIFA World Cup™ title.

Russia 2018 was a classic for fans old and new, and a shining example of what elite football can and should be.
THE CHAMPIONS

France turned up with a very clear philosophy, and were well prepared, building on experience at previous major tournaments. They played in a very balanced, compact manner and had an excellent side, with Paul Pogba and Antoine Griezmann launching attacks with real purpose and FIFA Young Player Award winner Kylian Mbappé wreaking havoc with his speed.

FIFA AWARDS

adidas Golden Ball
Luka Modrić (Croatia)

With his amazing technique and tactical awareness, Modrić dictated the pace of games, defended, attacked and even scored goals. His contribution was crucial in taking the team all the way to the final.

adidas Silver Ball
Eden Hazard (Belgium)

FIFA Young Player Award
Kylian Mbappé (France)

FIFA Fair Play Trophy
Spain
2018 FIFA WORLD CUP RUSSIA™

Numbers game

Creative force
30 passes threaded through into opposition penalty areas by England’s Kieran Trippier

Danger man
27 Neymar had the most shots on goal

Relentless
352 Croatia launched the most attacks at the tournament

Goals galore
169 goals scored at the 2018 FIFA World Cup™ – the third-highest scoring edition in history. Only Brazil 2014 and France 1998 produced more goals (171 at each)

2.64 The average number of goals scored per game in Russia

Back of the net
16 Belgium were the most prolific side, scoring 16 times

A flying start
57 seconds: Mathias Jørgensen scored the fastest goal of the tournament (Denmark v. Croatia, round of 16)
Late drama

33 goals
the period in which most goals were scored was the last ten minutes of the match

19 goals scored during added time

Corner boys

42 Brazil took the most corner kicks

Recovery mission

61 Number of times N’Golo Kanté recovered the ball for France

Olé!

485 Sergio Ramos completed the most passes

In the book

21 Croatia’s Ante Rebić committed more fouls than any other player

Top stopper

27 Thibaut Courtois made the most saves

Pass and move

3,336 England completed more passes than any other team

Anti-doping

Most extensive anti-doping testing programme ever performed for a FIFA World Cup™

1,500 players in the pre-competition testing pool

2,761 samples (urine, blood and/or blood passport samples) collected

626 samples collected during random in-competition tests

FIFA Football Conference

For the first time, coaches and technical experts of all member associations were invited to gather at a single post-FIFA World Cup football conference to analyse and discuss key lessons learned and experiences. Attending coaches and technical experts also took part in separate panel discussions and confederation meetings, sharing their own retrospective thoughts on Russia 2018.
A new era for football

FIFA can look back with great satisfaction at how the referees performed at the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia and how the historic introduction of video assistant referees (VARs) contributed to the resounding success of refereeing at the tournament. The new review system met with overwhelming acceptance by players, coaches, fans and the media.

For the first time at a FIFA World Cup™, referees on the pitch were supported by VARs in deciding on potentially match-changing incidents, with the effect that the percentage of correct decisions rose to 99.32%.

### Decisions, decisions

- **64** matches
- **455** incidents checked (7.1 checks per match)
- **20** VAR reviews
- **17** decisions reconsidered
- **3** decisions confirmed

### VAR EXPLAINED

“Minimum interference, maximum benefit.”

VARs are used only to correct obvious errors and deal with serious missed incidents in a few predetermined match-changing situations:

- Goals
- Penalties
- Direct red cards
- Mistaken identity for disciplinary sanctions
The system

In Russia, the video assistant referee team supported the referee from a central video operation room (VOR), located in the International Broadcast Centre in Moscow. All relevant camera feeds from the 12 stadiums were provided to the VOR through a fibre-optic network, and the referee on the pitch in each stadium was able to talk to the VAR team via a sophisticated radio system.

The activation of VARs follows a clear process

Incident occurs → VARs review and inform referee

Referee accepts VAR information

Referee decides to review information

Decision or action is taken

The referee can also initiate a review without any initial VAR input

In general, VAR-only reviews are more suitable for factual decisions e.g. offside, ball out of play, etc.

On-field reviews are generally more suitable for subjective decisions e.g. severity of a foul, interference of a player in an offside position, etc.

Signals

Check
If the referee needs to delay the restart of the game because the VAR is undertaking a check, the referee will hold a finger to one ear and extend the other hand/arm.

Review
The referee indicates that an incident will be reviewed by making the sign of a TV screen with both hands. At the end of the review process, the referee will make the TV signal again before the final decision is indicated.
Russia: the host with the most

Over the course of a month, more than one million fans travelled to 11 cities around Russia, filling 98% of available seats in the 12 stadiums. The careful preparation, unwavering commitment and very hard work of the Local Organising Committee and the 11 Host Cities set the stage for a magical month of football and celebration.

“It is a true marvel of mankind, how 11 cities so far away from one another and so rich and distinct came together to celebrate the same passion for football in their own way.”

GIANNI INFANTINO
FIFA President
Inclusivity and equality was one of nine key issues covered by the 2018 FIFA World Cup Sustainability Strategy. FIFA and the LOC ensured that people with disabilities or limited mobility could enjoy a barrier-free environment alongside their fellow supporters. In total, FIFA sold 23,462 special access tickets (and provided 17,685 free tickets for companions), representing 97% of such tickets.

**Green World Cup**

All 12 stadiums were awarded green certification in recognition of their compliance with environmental standards.
Supporters from all continents and cultures found themselves welcomed with open arms by both smiling locals and ever-helpful tournament volunteers – and if the visiting world fell in love with Russia and the Russian people, the feeling was undoubtedly mutual. From Kaliningrad in the west to Ekaterinburg in the east, and everywhere in between, there was enchantment at the friendly invasion of fun-loving fans.

Volunteers
Selected from a record number of candidates – 176,870 in total – 17,040 volunteers helped out at the FIFA World Cup™ all across Russia. They included a grandmother and her grandson, couples and indeed entire families. Their cheerful assistance made visitors feel welcome from airport arrivals to the stadium and everywhere in between, helping create a carnival atmosphere throughout the country.

“Volunteers are the heart and soul of this World Cup. You are the ones who have enabled this tournament to become a reality.”

FATMA SAMOURA
FIFA Secretary General
FAN ID: safety, security, comfort
The Russian authorities issued more than 1.8 million FAN IDs, offering fans simple, visa-free entry to the country and free travel in and between the 11 Host Cities. The world felt safe and welcome in Russia: the sight of people from all countries wearing their teams’ colours in stadiums, on the streets and on public transport created a sense of comfort and community. The FAN ID became a powerful symbol of that and even became a badge of pride among fans who wore them over their jerseys everywhere they went.

As a further welcoming gesture, the Russian government extended visa-free travel with the FAN ID until the end of 2018, an opportunity that was gladly taken up by more than 30,000 foreign visitors once the World Cup was over.

Free public transport
FAN ID holders were entitled to free travel on trains between the Host Cities and on local public transport for the duration of the World Cup.

734
free trains used by
320,000 passengers
from 181 countries

A badge of pride

1,827,678
FAN IDs issued
841,146 to foreign fans
986,532 to Russian fans

Oldest FAN ID holder 98 years
Youngest FAN ID holder < 1 month

Anti-discrimination
FIFA has a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, and stepped up its anti-discrimination mechanisms for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia. For each of the 64 matches, FIFA deployed three anti-discrimination match observers, experts knowledgeable in the specificities of fan culture and forms of discriminatory behaviour in the stadium. They were in contact with FIFA security officers throughout each game and provided observations for the anti-discrimination match report.

10 disciplinary cases opened based on anti-discrimination match reports led to sanctions by the FIFA Disciplinary Committee (warnings and fines)
2018 FIFA WORLD CUP RUSSIA™

An experience like no other

The spirit of the FIFA World Cup™ reaches far beyond the stadiums. In Russia, there were plenty of opportunities for fans to participate and soak up the atmosphere at free public events in each of the Host Cities, while football-crazy social media influencers shared their own experiences with the world.

FIFA Fan Fest™
The FIFA Fan Fest took Russia by storm, welcoming 7.7 million visitors.

On each of the 25 matchdays, tens of thousands of Russian and international football fans flocked to the locations in each Host City, watching all of the games live on a giant screen and enjoying an exciting music and cultural entertainment programme that featured 646 bands playing 323 hours of live music, all free of charge.

The highest day’s attendance was 25 June, when Uruguay played hosts Russia, with 499,000 fans attending the 11 venues. Moscow achieved the best overall attendance with a staggering 1,887,200 visitors.

The Rival Hug campaign motivated fans globally to create and share their very personal moment with a rival fan from another team and upload it with the hashtag #RivalHug on social media for the chance to win tickets to the 2018 FIFA World Cup final.

At Moscow’s FIFA Fan Fest, fans could even take their rival hug at a special photo booth, from which more than 11,000 hugs were sent out to the world. With more than 200 million impressions, #RivalHug became the greatest fan engagement campaign in the history of the FIFA World Cup.

Brazil 2014: 5.2 million fans
Russia 2018: 7.7 million fans
In 2018, FIFA sought to create an organic, grassroots and global movement that would democratise football and inspire people to participate, follow and attend.

The Fan Movement brings together superfans, amateur players, coaches, gamers and freestylers who share their views and love of the game on social media, creating hundreds of hours of unique content with the hashtag #WeLiveFootball.

Over the course of the World Cup, members of the Fan Movement documented their experiences of the tournament and shared their passion with millions of followers on social media.

449 influencers from 44 countries

34% women

66% men

3,000+ pieces of content created

24.4 million video views

42 hours of footage

Combined audience 21 million+

7.9 million

3.5 million

8.1 million

2 million
While today’s biggest football stars shone on the pitch, the legendary players who helped write the history of the FIFA World Cup™ were watching closely and constantly engaged in sharing their stories and interacting with the fans.

Whether answering questions from students at Moscow State University, previewing matches on Instagram videos or firing up the crowd during the pre-match ceremonies, the FIFA Legends quickly became an integral part of the football frenzy that took Russia by storm.
The History Makers

The FIFA World Football Museum teamed up with FIFA Partner Hyundai to take a special pop-up exhibition of World Cup memorabilia to Moscow. For six weeks, the free exhibition proved a runaway hit, bringing more than 94,000 visitors through the doors.

Some of the more notable figures to visit “The History Makers” included football legends David Trézéguet and Peter Schmeichel along with former World Cup referee Abraham Klein, while the exhibition became a sought-after filming location for international media and received overwhelmingly positive coverage by more than 130 media outlets, including the BBC, FOX Sports and Globo.

Back in Zurich, the FIFA World Football Museum also offered free entry during the World Cup to all football fans wearing a national team shirt and became a popular public viewing venue as fans were invited to make the museum their “living room”. All in all, the FIFA World Football Museum received more than 140,000 visitors over the course of the year – by far the most successful since it opened in 2016.
FIFA’s official digital platforms were the first port of call for fans during Russia 2018. Across social media, 128 million fans followed FIFA’s official accounts, receiving official World Cup content, which overall received more than seven billion clicks.

New digital innovations and initiatives introduced by FIFA, including a new bespoke app, broader and more interactive coverage on social media, dedicated reporters for the 32 competing teams and an innovative new visual stories approach, played a key role in giving fans more opportunities to connect, follow and engage with all the latest action and breaking news from across the tournament.

In June and July, FIFA.com became the world’s number-one sports website in 128 countries, with its live blogs attracting 87 million fans: three times more fans than in 2014. Official content was shared 25 million times, while the number of registered users shot up from 16 million to 24 million during the tournament. On Facebook, FIFA’s official content was clicked 2.3 billion times by some 383 million fans.
Like and subscribe
For the first time, FIFA had a dedicated social media production team integrated into the wider host broadcast operation based at the International Broadcast Centre (IBC). The team created more than 1,800 media assets – such as short-form videos and infographics – tailored for Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat that aimed to boost engagement and spark online interaction.

On YouTube, FIFA attracted more than four million new subscribers to its official channel, through which World Cup-related videos were viewed over 1.25 billion times.

Strengthening our digital footprint in China PR
As part of its activities to expand its digital presence in China PR during the World Cup, FIFA opened an official FIFA WeChat account and a microsite in Mandarin, FIFAofficial.cn – an extension of FIFA.com. They followed the successful launch of FIFA’s accounts on the Weibo platform, @FIFA and @FIFAWorldCup, which had the highest average engagement of any sports organisation on the microblogging site in 2018, attracting more than nine million followers by the end of the year.

MOST INTERACTIVE WORLD CUP EVER

7 billion clicks on official FIFA content
128 million followers across social media

FIFA.com
87 million visits to FIFA’s live blogs

2.3 billion clicks
383 million fans engaged

1.25 billion views
4 million+ new subscribers

During the World Cup, FIFA.com became the go-to sports website: 87 million fans read the dedicated team and matchday live blogs.
The 2018 FIFA World Cup was broadcast in every territory around the world and consumed by a record number of viewers on TV and digital platforms, both at home and on the move, while local public screenings of matches also brought a huge number of fans together.

The final between France and Croatia on 15 July attracted a combined global audience of 1.12 billion, comprising 884.37 million viewers tuning in to linear TV coverage and a further 231.82 million out-of-home and digital-only viewers.

The unrivalled quality of both the football on the pitch and the broadcast that captured it gave fans the best-ever World Cup viewing experience.
**Award-winning production**

FIFA’s ambitious production plan brought together a team of more than 3,000 professionals working from the IBC in Moscow and around Russia, on one of the most technologically advanced sports broadcast projects ever. The core production plan was augmented with market-leading innovations to serve the complex needs of more than 350 Media Rights Licensees from around the world.

All 64 matches were produced in ultra-high definition (UHD) with high dynamic range (HDR) for the first time ever, with a standard 37-camera plan ensuring that high-quality pictures were available from every angle in each stadium.

In an expanded range of digital products for Russia 2018, FIFA offered major innovations in virtual reality and dedicated apps and web platforms, which allowed fans around the world to connect to the event beyond the broadcast match experience.

In recognition of its exceptional broadcast, FIFA TV claimed the “Outstanding Live Achievement” and “Outstanding Technical Achievement, Imaging” prizes at the SVG Sport Production Awards in September.

**FIFA Legacy Programme**

Russian university students got unique hands-on experience in helping behind the scenes to bring television coverage of the 2018 FIFA World Cup to billions of fans around the world. Deployed at the 12 stadiums and the IBC, 312 successful applicants received paid internships in roles matching their particular fields and skillsets.

The Legacy Programme aims to ensure that the skills and know-how that go into broadcasting the world’s biggest single-sport event are passed on to the next generation of local professionals in the host country.

1.12 BILLION unique viewers for the final between France and Croatia
Fans are at the heart of FIFA’s new digital strategy, with a new Digital Media House offering a tailored experience within a global football community.

Demonstrating its commitment to harnessing opportunities and addressing the challenges that will reshape the sports industry in years to come, in September 2018 FIFA launched its new Digital Transformation & Innovation Division.

“2018 will go down as FIFA’s year of digital revolution as we develop a worldwide digital future to engage and interact with fans.”

GIANNI INFANTINO
FIFA President
FIFA intends to lead the way in digital transformation and innovation in the world of sport and execute a new digital strategy based on four strategic pillars:

**Digital**
The new division launched its Digital Media House to revamp FIFA's digital content by adding a new entertainment-focused and “emotional” approach to all football fans. As the world of football increasingly intersects with media, entertainment and digital communication, it is FIFA's duty to integrate the latest consumer trends and provide the entire ecosystem with a far better experience across all platforms.

**Community**
More than ever, fans and consumers have constant access to never-ending entertainment alternatives and personalised experiences. The Digital Transformation & Innovation Division has outlined a direct-to-consumer relationship strategy in order to deliver a tailored experience for each one. FIFA will interact with the global football fan base, aggregating football as “One Single Community”, also connecting real and virtual.

**Data**
The new division will adopt a sophisticated data strategy to provide FIFA with a 360-degree fan view and shift towards a data-based decision-making culture. Instilling a strong fan-centric culture, FIFA has already started to implement the Fan Relationship Management System to better understand fans' needs and ambitions.

**Technology**
Redefining and strengthening our cooperation with leading technology companies and the start-up ecosystem is key for the future of football as we know it. The new division will ensure FIFA's access to R&D resources. This will allow the organisation to pursue new strategic business opportunities, bring new off-pitch innovation and put the latest technologies at the service of member associations and the broader football family.

**Leading women’s empowerment**
The Digital Transformation & Innovation Division is working hand in hand with the Women’s Football Division. Gender equality and the women’s empowerment movement play a central role at FIFA and increased content creation and distribution capabilities will highlight women in football. The first example took place at the Draw for the FIFA Women’s World Cup™ in December, when FIFA’s inspiring artwork became an online sensation among players, fans, officials and FIFA Legends alike. In 2019, FIFA’s Digital Transformation & Innovation Division will continue to tell, share and elevate the unwritten stories of the game to ensure that France 2019 becomes a landmark not only for the women’s game but also for the women’s empowerment movement.
After a decade and a half in which the world’s leading FIFA players battled for global glory in the tournament known as the FIFA Interactive World Cup, 2018 saw the inaugural FIFA eWorld Cup form the cornerstone in FIFA’s expanding eFootball portfolio.

The FIFA eWorld Cup Grand Final 18 was attended by a record audience of 3,000 in London’s O2 Arena and streamed with commentary in four languages by millions online. For the first time, WADA-compliant anti-doping measures were introduced with random testing of the 32 players participating in the Grand Final.

With vastly increased – and increasingly professional – participation in the 2018 edition, a massive global audience and a growing list of sponsors, the FIFA eWorld Cup is one of the hottest competitions in the world right now.

- **US$ 250,000** in prize money (up on US$ 200,000 in 2017)
- **29 million+** digital views during the FIFA eWorld Cup Grand Final 18 (400% increase on 2017)
- **Over 20 million** players on the Road to the FIFA eWorld Cup via the EA Sports FIFA 18 Global Series online qualification (v. 7 million in 2017)
- Broadcast with commentary in German, English, Spanish and Chinese
- **Over 190 million** impressions on FIFA’s social media channels across the whole season
- Shown by 19 broadcasters covering more than 60 territories around the world
Mosaad “Msdossary” Dossary of Saudi Arabia is crowned champion at the FIFA eWorld Cup Grand Final 18.

King of eSports

The FIFA eWorld Cup Grand Final 18 defeated other major eSports tournaments, including the 2018 NHL Gaming World Championship and the MLB Home Run Derby VR Championship, to claim the “New Esports Competition – Single Tournament/Event” prize at the Tempest Awards at the Esports Business Summit.

Instant hit

For the first time, the FIFA eWorld Cup Grand Final was covered in China on FIFA’s channels with a dedicated Chinese commentary and a live feed on Weibo. The live stream garnered more than 20 million viewers in China over the three-day tournament.
The spice of life

The variety of FIFA’s tournaments became all the richer in 2018 with women’s teams enhancing the blend at the Blue Stars/FIFA Youth Cup and the Olympic door opening to futsal. Yet Real Madrid’s FIFA Club World Cup triumph showed that while some things change, others remain the same.

OTHER FIFA TOURNAMENTS IN 2018

Blue Stars/FIFA Youth Cup 2018

“Where Stars Are Born” is the tagline of the Blue Stars/FIFA Youth Cup and the 2018 tournament in Zurich on 9-10 May provided a fresh twist by shining a light on female as well as male talent. This 80th edition featured an inaugural six-team women’s event and BSC Young Boys emerged victorious with a final success against Valencia, player of the tournament Ilona Guede Redondo scoring the goal. In the ten-team men’s competition, Young Boys had to settle for a runners-up spot after a 2-0 final loss to a Dinamo Zagreb side propelled by player of the tournament Antonio Marin.

Youth Olympic Futsal Tournaments Buenos Aires 2018

The Youth Olympic Games took place from 7 to 18 October and provided two firsts for futsal – never before had it featured on an Olympic programme and never before had there been a FIFA women’s futsal tournament. A welcome development opportunity for players, it also provided a taste of glory for Brazil in the men’s competition as they overcame Russia 4-1 in the final, while Egypt overturned a three-goal deficit to stun Argentina 5-4 and take bronze. A free-scoring Portugal side, featuring the 23-goal Fifó, were the inaugural champions of the women’s competition, beating Japan 4-1 in the final while Spain beat Bolivia 11-0 to claim third place.
**FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2018**

Real Madrid won their third FIFA Club World Cup in a row but, for the first time, there was an Asian finalist on show as Al Ain finished runners-up at the December event in Abu Dhabi. While a hat-trick from adidas Golden Ball winner Gareth Bale eased Madrid past Kashima Antlers in one semi-final, local favourites Al Ain delivered a sizeable upset in the other semi by ousting River Plate 5-4 on penalties after a 2-2 draw. Yet there would be no surprise in the final as the Spanish side prevailed 4-1 with Luka Modrić, Marcos Llorente and Sergio Ramos all finding the net.
The third edition of the awards extravaganza welcomed 1,400 FIFA guests and 350 football fans to celebrate the achievements of the year’s standout players, coaches and fans.

Luka Modrić was named The Best FIFA Men’s Player, marking the first time since 2007 that someone other than Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo had won the top individual award in men’s football. Meanwhile, Marta received The Best FIFA Women’s Player award, the sixth time she has been recognised as the best in the world.

France’s FIFA World Cup™-winning manager Didier Deschamps took home The Best FIFA Men’s Coach gong, with the women’s prize going to Reynald Pedros, who masterminded Lyon’s third UEFA Women’s Champions League triumph in a row. Another big winner on the night was the coverage of the event, particularly via social media. On Twitter, FIFA uploaded 270 posts about the event, which were viewed 30 million times (an average of 111,000 views per tweet) and received 2.2 million interactions from fans. Similarly impressive numbers could be found on Facebook, with FIFA reaching 10 million users, receiving 3.9 million interactions and attracting 66,000 new followers.

What’s more, a total of 96 members of the written press, 66 television and radio representatives, 18 non-rights holders and 12 social media influencers were in attendance, with the ceremony being broadcast on television in 160 territories worldwide.
Awards

The Best FIFA Men’s Player
Luka Modrić (CRO)

The Best FIFA Women’s Player
Marta (BRA)

The Best FIFA Men’s Coach
Didier Deschamps (FRA)

The Best FIFA Women’s Coach
Reynald Pedros (FRA)

The Best FIFA Goalkeeper
Thibaut Courtois (BEL)

FIFA Puskás Award
Mohamed Salah (EGY)

FIFA Fair Play Award
Lennart Thy (GER)

FIFA Fan Award
Peru fans

FIFA FIFPro World11
David de Gea (ESP)
Dani Alves (BRA)
Raphaël Varane (FRA)
Sergio Ramos (ESP)
Marcelo (BRA)
Luka Modrić (CRO)
N’Golo Kanté (FRA)
Eden Hazard (BEL)
Kylian Mbappé (FRA)
Lionel Messi (ARG)
Cristiano Ronaldo (POR)
A landmark day for world football

The awarding of the FIFA World Cup 2026™ to Canada, Mexico and the USA at the 68th FIFA Congress was a culmination of a two-year transparent bidding process.

On the eve of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™, FIFA’s supreme legislative body convened in Moscow for a landmark day for world football. For the first time in FIFA history, the decision on designating the hosts of a FIFA World Cup was made with full disclosure and by representatives of the whole football family, not just a select privileged few.

FIFA’s member associations voted by a significant majority to award the right to host the FIFA World Cup 2026™ to the United Bid jointly submitted by the Canadian, Mexican and US football associations. Of the 200 valid votes cast, 134 (67%) went to the United Bid, while the Moroccan FA’s bid received 65 (33%).

It was the culmination of a transparent and objective bidding process that was established during the reforms of 2016 and which was delivered step by step over the subsequent two years leading up to the 68th FIFA Congress.
The United Bid
The FIFA World Cup 2026™ will not be the first to be jointly hosted by neighbouring countries, but it will be the first to be played across three host countries.

Timeline of the bidding process

October 2017
FIFA sends bidding and hosting agreements and documents to the bidders that have registered their candidature.

November 2017
Deadline for submission of completed bidding agreement to FIFA.

March 2018
Submission of bids to FIFA. Approval of the “Voting Procedure for the Designation of the Host Country of the 2026 FIFA World Cup” outlining the details of how the 68th FIFA Congress will vote on the matter.

June 2018
Shortlisting of bids by the Council. Final decision on the host(s) of the FIFA World Cup 2026™ taken in an open vote by FIFA's member associations.

The 68th FIFA Congress votes in favour of the United Bid, awarding the hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2026™ to Canada, Mexico and the USA.

Living Football
At the Congress in Moscow, President Infantino unveiled FIFA's new corporate identity: “Living Football”. It underpins our vision for football, for the here and now, for the future, and for the people who make it so special – be they players, coaches, fans, partners or administrators. Because football does not belong to FIFA, nor does it belong to its staff or any other body representing the interests of players, clubs or countries. It belongs to the people; to all of us who live football, every day.

Living Football is what we do and it is why we are here.
Modern times

Progress was the watchword of the FIFA Council in 2018. Breaking with the tradition of holding its meetings at the Home of FIFA in Zurich, the Council met on three different continents, reflecting FIFA’s expanded horizons. Several key decisions were taken in favour of modernising the sport, bringing greater equality between the men’s and women’s games, and protecting the players.

Bogotá, Colombia 16 March
In Bogotá, the Council voted to introduce video assistant referees (VAR) for every game at the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™, as well as to allow an additional substitute for each team in matches going to extra time and the use of data-tracking devices in the technical area for coaches, changes approved by The IFAB at its 132nd annual meeting.

It also agreed on the exact wording of significant amendments to the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, streamlining dispute resolutions between players and clubs, particularly for decisions in cases of overdue payables, and introducing a new provision to prevent the abusive conduct of parties, such as players being forced to train alone.

Moscow, Russia 10 June
As it geared up for the opening match of the 2018 FIFA World Cup™, Moscow hosted the Council’s second meeting of the year. In another key step in the landmark bidding process for the FIFA World Cup 2026™, and following the publication of the Bid Evaluation Report, FIFA’s strategic body validated the two bids to be voted on by the 68th FIFA Congress.

Meanwhile, following over two years of reviews and studies of different alternatives and a comprehensive consultation process with all confederations, the Council approved an overhauled formula to calculate the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking. The new system was inaugurated with the first official ranking following Russia 2018.
Meeting in the East African capital, the Council gave its seal of approval to major financial boosts to the FIFA Women’s World Cup™ and the Forward development programme.

The approved overall financial contribution of USD 50 million to the 24 teams playing at France 2019 covered a 100% increase in the amount of prize money (USD 30 million), as well as a fund of USD 11.52 million to help the 24 teams prepare for the competition, and a new Club Benefits Programme to reward clubs releasing players for the competition (totalling USD 8.48 million).

At the conclusion of a commercially successful four-year cycle, FIFA was able to commit USD 100 million to implement the new Football for Schools Programme, through which it will distribute 11 million footballs to schools in the territories of the 211 member associations and create an online platform to inform teachers on how to incorporate football into education.

Following an extensive period of consultation with stakeholders, the Council also approved the revamped women’s international match calendar for 2020-2023.
Football for global partnerships

FIFA’s dialogue with governments and international institutions is vital to make the most of its power to have a positive impact on societies across the globe.

FIFA’s power to effect positive change globally was writ large in a year in which the organisation engaged in direct dialogue with some of the biggest institutions beyond the world of football, including the United Nations, the White House and the G20 Summit.

The tone for the year was set early on as FIFA President Gianni Infantino attended the World Economic Forum in Davos, where he discussed the social and economic significance of football in meetings with heads of state from three different continents, including the President of Rwanda and 2018 Chairperson of the African Union, Paul Kagame, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Argentinian President Mauricio Macri.

The following month, António Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, praised the efforts of the world governing body to reform itself and reflected on football’s potential to spread positive values and human rights during the FIFA President’s visit to the UN headquarters in New York.

At the UN headquarters, FIFA presented football as a valuable tool for development and pledged its support to UN efforts in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals around the world.
**A step forward in IR Iran**

One striking example of this potential followed Mr Infantino’s visit to IR Iran in March, where he met President Hassan Rouhani in Tehran and received a promise that women in the country would soon have access to football stadiums.

On returning to Tehran in November for the second leg of the AFC Champions League final between Persepolis and Kashima Antlers, the FIFA President “was delighted to personally witness that, for the first time in 40 years, Iranian female football fans were allowed to attend an official match again”.

1,000+ women watched Persepolis play Kashima Antlers in the second leg of the AFC Champions League final at the Azadi Stadium.
Keynote speech to the G20
The year ended with a landmark address by Mr. Infantino to the leaders of the world’s major economies at the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires on 1 December – the first time that a FIFA President had addressed the group. In his speech, he reiterated that football was a force for good with the power to bring people together.

“There are at least five areas,” he said, “where football can convey a message of hope and be used as a powerful tool: economic growth, which includes infrastructural development; education; health; gender equality; and integration, particularly for immigrants and refugees.”

From Paris to Washington
Connecting with political leaders is an important part of the FIFA President’s role and 2018 brought other notable encounters. In February, Mr. Infantino was a guest of French President Emmanuel Macron at a lunch held in honour of the visiting George Weah, the President of Liberia and former FIFA World Player of the Year. During this get-together, discussions took place on a platform to finance sport-based projects in Africa, sponsored by the French Development Agency and the African Development Bank.

One of FIFA’s highest-profile meetings of 2018 came in August following an invitation for Mr. Infantino to meet the President of the United States, Donald Trump, and discuss the US’s joint-hosting of the FIFA World Cup 2026™.

Later in the year, at the Palais de l’Europe in Strasbourg, FIFA and the Council of Europe signed a memorandum of understanding focused on four main areas of cooperation: human rights, integrity and good governance in sport; safety and security at football matches; mutual dialogue and cooperation in view of major sporting events; and institutional cooperation.
Following a series of consultation workshops organised by the Task Force Transfer System, which sought input from across the football community, including a group of agents, FIFA’s Football Stakeholders Committee completed the groundwork on a major transfer-system reform package.

The subject of progress was also prominent at FIFA’s third Professional Football Conference in South America, which took place in Buenos Aires in July. The two-day conference, organised by FIFA in collaboration with CONMEBOL, brought together representatives of South America’s ten member associations as well as guest speakers from the AFC, La Liga, Liga MX, UEFA and Club Universidad de Chile. They reflected on improvements made and lessons learned since the implementation of the CONMEBOL club licensing system in 2016.
Putting the pillars in place for Qatar 2022

Hosting a sustainable FIFA World Cup™ means human, social, environmental, economic and governance factors are all on the agenda in planning for 2022.

FIFA is pursuing a five-pillar approach towards its FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ Sustainability Strategy and Policy. Aligned with the Qatar National Vision 2030, they represent a commitment to ensuring the 2022 tournament leaves a positive impact on people, society, the economy and the environment.

A thorough stakeholder engagement process was key to the development of the strategy in 2018, during which world football’s governing body also conducted materiality and human rights impact assessments, which identified 20 material issues and 22 strategic objectives to be targeted in the lead-up to 2022.

The “human pillar” was prominent in the endeavours of the past year, with FIFA determined to enforce the Workers’ Welfare Standards established by the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy. A third Workers’ Welfare Progress Report was published in March by the Supreme Committee, while a month earlier, Impactt – a UK-based independent third-party monitoring company – delivered its first compliance report. These will form part of a four-tier audit system designed by the Supreme Committee to enforce compliance with the Workers’ Welfare Standards by contractors and
subcontractors working on tournament construction sites. FIFA officials also held meetings in Doha with representatives from the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is participating in a technical cooperation programme with Qatar to ensure compliance with relevant international labour standards.

Human rights in focus
FIFA’s Human Rights Advisory Board published its second report in November 2018, covering the 12 months from October 2017. The board – eight independent experts from the United Nations, trade unions, civil society and FIFA sponsors – noted FIFA’s “consistent progress” on a “range of issues” and detailed its recommendations on addressing human rights issues across the footballing world.

It also addressed preparations for Qatar 2022, specifically the need to further strengthen management of the risks to construction workers from the physical environment. Board members had visited Doha in October 2018 to assess the human rights context, progress made and challenges still to be faced.
Honoring our craft

FIFA continued to evolve in 2018, not merely in size by more than a hundred additional employees, but also in scope with the creation of a new division. The Digital Transformation & Innovation Division gives the organisation a greater focus on leveraging its digital platforms and is able to dedicate resources to producing more content that is relevant for fans and other stakeholders.
Football with a smile

Up and running in March 2018, the FIFA Foundation helped deliver positive social change through football in its first year of operations, with several initiatives under way across the globe.

The FIFA Foundation helps to tackle social issues affecting young people today, empower women and girls to play football and realise their potential, and repair damaged or destroyed sports infrastructure worldwide.

In order to hit its social responsibility targets, the Foundation has set up a number of different programmes all over the world. The FIFA Foundation Community Programme aims to improve the lives of disadvantaged young people, inviting non-profit organisations to apply for funding to address social issues including education, health, peacebuilding, population displacement, leadership and gender equality.

Elsewhere, the FIFA Foundation Recovery Programme provides much-needed financial relief to communities devastated by natural disasters or unforeseen events, while the Football for Girls in the Middle East project breaks down cultural barriers to get more women and girls playing football in traditionally patriarchal societies.

Finally, the FIFA Legends perform their duties as ambassadors for the Foundation, visiting a number of countries to interact with fans, contributing to solving local problems and responding to local needs.

The Foundation’s board – led by FIFA President Gianni Infantino and supported by FIFA, FIFA Partners and FIFA Legends – ensures that the organisation’s social responsibility goals are met.

FIFA provided the Foundation with an initial sum of USD 4,400,000, while it can also draw on donations, inheritances, legacies and gifts of any kind, as well as a number of resources within FIFA.

The Foundation runs on a not-for-profit basis, generating revenue for its charitable aims through events, charity matches involving the FIFA Legends, and digital fundraising activities.

“I want to give back to society what football has given me. It made me the man I am today.”

CARLES PUYOL
FIFA Legend
BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE AT THE FIFA WORLD CUP™

The FIFA Foundation Festival (23 June – 3 July) saw young representatives from 48 NGOs based in 38 different countries come together at the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ to share ideas on how the beautiful game can be a catalyst for positive social change.

With several FIFA Legends including Karina LeBlanc, Roberto Carlos and Christian Karembeu in attendance, no football festival would have been complete without a tournament and awards ceremony, which took place at Moscow’s iconic Red Square on 30 June.

A HELPING HAND IN GUATEMALA

The FIFA Foundation Recovery Programme came to Guatemala’s aid in June 2018 following the aftermath of a volcanic eruption that left over a hundred Guatemalans dead and thousands missing.

The programme worked with the communities hit hardest by the catastrophe, providing initial football equipment and promising further funding in the future to repair footballing infrastructure.

FIFA Legend Michel Salgado played his part as a Foundation ambassador, leading a clinic and playing football with the local children.

BREAKING DOWN CULTURAL BARRIERS

A two-day workshop in Zurich in November brought together Middle Eastern and Nordic member association representatives to discuss ideas and share knowledge on the topic of “Football for Girls in the Middle East”.

The event launched an eight-year collaborative project between the two regions, with the Nordic countries, regarded as pioneers in the development of women’s football, constituting an ideal model from which their Middle Eastern counterparts can learn.

“Finally, we’re getting to be part of the ‘official football world’, whereas we never were before,” said Kuwaiti Women’s Football Committee member Ayeshah Al-Khaldi.
FIFA has a responsibility to stakeholders throughout the world of football that extends far beyond the glamour of elite competitions, top-level discussions in its standing committees or the confines of its headquarters in Zurich.

Whether providing support through the Forward Programme, holding regional workshops on a range of areas for professional development, or giving practical advice on the everyday activities of football administration, FIFA is involved with all six of the confederations, the zonal/regional associations and, of course, its 211 member associations on a daily basis.

In turn, FIFA is well supported by its members and other stakeholders, who take every opportunity to share their own experiences and build a common pool of knowledge and expertise, making the football family stronger as a whole. FIFA’s senior management regularly travels to see first-hand the work that is being carried out on the ground to develop the game around the world.
In 2018, the Bermudan FA received a visit from the FIFA President for the first time in 30 years. With support from the Forward Programme, Bermuda’s girls prepared for a milestone appearance at the 2018 Concacaf U-17 Women’s Championship, the first confederation-level competition that any Bermudan national team has ever reached.

The Vietnamese FA has enjoyed several recent achievements in men’s youth competitions, notably finishing as runners-up at the 2018 AFC U-23 Championship, and is seeking to build on these through Forward development projects to build state-of-the-art training facilities and train referees to raise the overall level. In 2018, Vietnam was also selected for an 18-month pilot project to develop women’s football.

A remembrance service was held at Old Trafford to mark the 60th anniversary of the Munich air disaster. A FIFA delegation stood in silent solidarity with former and current players and officials and more than 4,500 supporters.

The Turks and Caicos Islands FA (TCIFA) received a visit from the FIFA President for the very first time in 2018. The visit followed increased engagement between FIFA and the TCIFA since the beginning of the Forward Programme, under which the association has benefited from football and beach soccer coaching courses. The TCIFA also appointed Yunelsis Rodriguez-Baez as its first Director of Women’s Football in 2018.
In 2018, the Cape Verdean FA formalised plans to expand its men’s national championship to a traditional league format as part of the Forward Programme. Plans were also made for a national technical centre on the island of Sal, renovation of the Estádio Adérito Sena to international standard, as well as other youth development projects. Also in partnership with FIFA, the association is upgrading its IT infrastructure and implementing the FIFA Connect Platform.

The São Toméan FA celebrated the opening of its new headquarters, constructed with the help of Forward funding of around USD 400,000. At an event also attended by FIFA Secretary General Fatma Samoura and CAF President Ahmad Ahmad, President Infantino said: “This country’s passion for football shows that, whether large or small, all members of FIFA are equal.” The association is also developing artificial turf pitches as part of an infrastructure overhaul.

During a one-day visit, President Infantino visited a grassroots training session at the Asmara stadium, as well as the Eritrean FA’s new office building. In 2018, the association used Forward funding to reinforce infrastructure at its technical centre. The FIFA President noted Eritrea’s great footballing potential and underlined FIFA’s readiness to endorse further mutual partnership.

The European confederation announced record prize money for UEFA EURO 2020 and record grants for the development of the game among its members at the 42nd UEFA Ordinary Congress in Slovakia.
Following high-level discussions between FIFA, the AFC and IR Iranian authorities, the IR Iranian FA took the momentous decision to allow Iranian women to attend football matches. “This was an important first step in the right direction and I am convinced that through continued dialogue, further progress will be achieved soon,” said President Infantino. At the Youth Olympics, meanwhile, Gelareh Nazemi became the first Iranian woman to officiate the final of a FIFA tournament.

Apart from the country’s FIFA World Cup™ debut in Russia, Panama made further progress by holding elite and youth coaching courses, as well as a successful second edition of the women’s football championship, all of which was funded through the Forward Programme. As part of a pilot project to grow participation in women’s football, the Panamanian FA is confident that there is potential for the women’s game to grow even further.

During a visit to Panama, the FIFA President met with Central American Football Union (UNCAF) President Rafael Tinoco and Concacaf President Vittorio Montagliani to reiterate FIFA’s support to the development of the game throughout Central America. Following their meeting, President Infantino said: “Central America is a footballing region, where football is life. The work that Panama and UNCAF are doing is very important for the development of the game.”

Representatives from 163 member clubs attended the European Club Association’s (ECA) 20th General Assembly, the organisation’s ten-year anniversary event, in Rome, Italy. Among several items, member clubs were updated on the work being carried out by a specially set-up task force of the FIFA Stakeholders Committee on the future of the transfer system.
Following a successful first term as president, during which the South American confederation undertook significant reforms, in Asunción Alejandro Domínguez was unanimously re-elected for a second term. At the earlier congress in Buenos Aires, Mr Domínguez had declared: “Today, I can say with great satisfaction that we have fulfilled all of our promises. The new CONMEBOL has clear and transparent accounts, its house is in order, and South American football is back on the path to development.”

Real Madrid won a third consecutive – and a record-breaking 13th – Champions League in an eventful final that will be remembered for Gareth Bale’s amazing overhead goal.

The Spanish FA held its fourth congress for amateur football, an initiative supported by Forward that seeks to build an analytical picture of Spanish football from the grassroots up by listening to local football authorities from around the country. The FIFA President underlined the importance of the Spanish FA’s endeavour, saying at the association’s general assembly: “If Spanish football is doing well, that means European and world football are doing well.”

Winners of the UEFA Europa League, Atlético Madrid stormed to a 4-2 victory over their city rivals and UEFA Champions League winners Real Madrid in an entertaining Super Cup match at the Lilleküla Stadium in Tallinn.
Italian football found a new leader in October with Gabriele Gravina elected Italian FA President at an extraordinary general assembly. On accepting the position, he laid out his vision for Italian football: “The football that I want focuses on youth, but also on women’s football. I want a sustainable sport, open to families, with modern and functioning infrastructure and a competitive national team.”

At its annual congress, the AFC overwhelmingly approved the recognition of five Asian regional associations and welcomed them as partners that will contribute to delivering the confederation’s vision and mission to support its members with greater efficiency in the years ahead. The confederation also inaugurated its newly expanded headquarters.

Football Association of Malaysia President Datuk Hamidin Mohd Amin launched the F30 road map, a plan that sets out Malaysia’s ambition to become one of the top-five football nations in Asia by 2030. An initial step towards that goal was a revamped national women’s football championship in 2018.
Saad Bguir was the unlikely two-goal star as Espérance Sportive de Tunis defeated Egyptian side Al Ahly 3-0 to win a third CAF Champions League title. The 24-year-old midfielder, a reserve for most of the campaign, helped the Tunisians overcome a 3-1 first-leg deficit, taking them to the FIFA Club World Cup in the UAE.

While Japan’s Kashima Antlers won the AFC Champions League for the first time in their history, the second leg itself, with Persepolis playing at home, made history as women were allowed to attend a football match in IR Iran for the first time in 40 years.

“The new and modern headquarters of Concacaf express what Concacaf is about… it represents a new chapter for football in this wonderful region,” declared the FIFA President before participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The build-up may not have centred on the football, but the second leg of the final produced one of the most exciting games of the South American season. Both teams attacked with intensity and aggression and the drama played out until the very end, River Plate clinching the trophy in extra time.
Listening and learning

The philosophy at the heart of the summits is that sharing knowledge and experience makes everyone wiser.

Since launching in November 2016, the FIFA Executive Football Summits have become a vital exchange platform to discuss strategic football matters and share best practices between member associations’ executives in an open and constructive atmosphere. Between 20 and 30 associations are represented at each meeting, an initiative like no other in the history of football.

The summits also offer FIFA an invaluable opportunity to hear from the people who have their fingers on the pulse of football around the world, helping the organisation to keep giving support that is relevant to all of its stakeholders. Over the course of three series, the summits have helped the discussion and development of several key topics.
“We’re not universally capable in all things but anything we can do well, we’re quite willing to help other people to find their way, transfer expertise, sit down and help them solve their problems and learn from them too.”

GREG CLARKE
Chairman of The Football Association

“Coming out of this, the bigger associations will see some of the issues that the smaller associations experience. Having bilateral meetings with them as well will enable them to form greater alliances with these smaller territories.”

ANTHONY JOHNSON
President of the St Kitts and Nevis Football Association

**2nd CYCLE – 2017/18**

2. Istanbul, Turkey (23 November)
3. Nouméa, New Caledonia (12 December)
4. Hong Kong (14 December)
5. Amsterdam, Netherlands (16 January 2018)
6. Montego Bay, Jamaica (18 January)
7. Muscat, Oman (7 February)
8. Phnom Penh, Cambodia (9 February)
9. Nouakchott, Mauritania (18 February)
10. Lagos, Nigeria (20 February)
11. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (22 February)
12. Lima, Peru (13 March)

**3rd CYCLE – 2018/19**

1. Doha, Qatar (11 December 2018)
2. Doha, Qatar (12 December)
3. Doha, Qatar (13 December)
4. Marrakech, Morocco (15 January 2019)
5. Marrakech, Morocco (16 January)
6. Marrakech, Morocco (17 January)
7. Istanbul, Turkey (13 February)
8. Istanbul, Turkey (14 February)
9. Istanbul, Turkey (15 February)
10. Rome, Italy (25 February)
11. Rome, Italy (26 February)
12. Rome, Italy (27 February)
CYRILLE REGIS

Cyrille Regis was a pioneering figure for black footballers as a centre forward who came to prominence in the late 1970s with his scoring feats for West Bromwich Albion and went on to win five caps for England and the 1987 FA Cup with Coventry City.

Born in French Guiana, he was five when his family moved to England, settling in north-west London. After leaving school, he initially became an electrician, playing part-time football, but in 1977, he joined West Brom and, within a year, had earned the Professional Footballers’ Association’s Young Player of the Year award. Fast and powerful, Regis had a habit of hitting spectacular goals for a West Brom side which, under Ron Atkinson, finished third in the English top flight in 1979. In 1982, the year he won the BBC’s Goal of the Season competition, Regis became only the third black player to play for England.

The bullet he received in the post before his international debut was an extreme example of the bigotry he had to overcome. “Never was he ever intimidated. He always said it motivated him to play better,” said Brendan Batson, one of three black players in that pioneering West Brom side together with Regis and Laurie Cunningham.

Regis played into his late 30s, including two years at Aston Villa under Atkinson. He later became a football agent and in 2008 received an MBE for his charity work. He died suddenly of a heart attack in January 2018 aged 59.

“I just remember being very proud – proud that it was my uncle out on the pitch scoring those wonderful goals, proud that he was taking on the racists.”

JASON ROBERTS
nephew and
Concacaf Director of Development

MARÍA ELENA VALVERDE

María Elena Valverde, who died in April 2018 aged 89, was a founder member of the first women’s football team in Costa Rica and holder of the FIFA Order of Merit. Valverde was 20 when Deportivo Femenino Costa Rica, a trailblazing team that travelled across Central America to play matches, came into being.

She was one of a group of seven women who, with the support of brothers Manuel Emilio and Fernando Bonilla – directors of Gimnástica Española, one of the leading football clubs of the era – established the team in March 1950. Valverde had an aunt with connections to Gimnástica and told her of her love of girlhood kickabouts with her five brothers.

Now she could play the game for real: within a month, 32 women had signed up for the first training sessions and a year later, on Sunday, 26 March 1950, men’s top-flight matches were postponed to allow the women to play an exhibition match in the National Stadium.

Valverde kept albums of photographs and newspaper cuttings of their subsequent adventures: exhibition matches in Panama, Curaçao and Honduras and, in May 1951, an international against Guatemala. It was a groundbreaking contribution recognised on the eve of the 2014 FIFA World Cup™ in Brazil, where Valverde was presented with her Order of Merit.
VICHAI SRIVADDHANAPRABHA

The outpouring of emotion in Leicester that followed the death of Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha in October 2018 underlined the gratitude an entire city felt towards a man who had made a seemingly impossible dream come true. Kun Vichai, as chairman and owner of Leicester City, had overseen the club’s climb from the second tier of English football to the first league title in their history, as 5,000-1 outsiders.

Two years later, the 61-year-old died in tragic circumstances, along with four other people, when his helicopter crashed shortly after take-off from Leicester’s King Power Stadium after a fixture against West Ham United. The sea of flowers, shirts and scarves that formed outside the stadium in the aftermath told of a deep sense of loss – as did the sight of grieving Leicester players in Bangkok at the funeral ceremonies of the man they knew as “Boss”.

Kun Vichai, whose duty-free business had made him a billionaire, was known for acts of generosity that included not just free beer for fans on his birthday but donations totalling GBP 4 million to the city’s hospitals. It was that wealth that provided the platform for one of the greatest football fairy tales of all.

“He wasn’t just a chairman, he literally was part of your extended family. It didn’t matter who you were, he always made time for you.”

JAMIE VARDY
Leicester striker

DELIO “MARAVILLA” GAMBOA

Delio Gamboa was Colombia’s greatest footballer of the 1960s, and the inspirational force behind Millonarios’s run of four consecutive league titles from 1961 to 1964. A quick, creative forward, he began life in the port city of Buenaventura, working on the docks before his brilliance for his regional team, Valle del Cauca, opened a path to the professional game.

Not long after he and attacking partner Marino Klinger had scored in Valle del Cauca’s 2-2 friendly draw with Argentina’s River Plate, Gamboa left for Atlético Nacional in Medellín. After two years in Mexico with Guadalajaran club CD Oro, he returned home to embark on his trophy-laden spell at Millonarios, shining alongside Klinger once more.

Capped 23 times by Colombia, Gamboa suffered frustration at the 1962 FIFA World Cup™, where an ankle injury in Colombia’s opening match curtailed his involvement. At club level, success kept coming, though, and he was a Colombian champion once more in 1966 after joining Sante Fe. Following stints at Once Caldas and Tolima, Gamboa returned to Millonarios and helped them reach the Copa Libertadores semi-finals, before assuming a coaching role with the club’s youngsters.

“Maravilla” (Wonder) was his nickname, and one of his favourite expressions, heard when trouble flared on the pitch, captured something of his spirit: “I came to play, not to fight.”
MUHAMMAD ISA

Muhammad Isa’s contribution to football in Trinidad and Tobago took many forms. At the time of his death aged 69 in July 2018, he was Technical Director of the T&T Football Association, yet he had occupied a variety of significant roles. As his daughter, Althea Reeder, told the Trinidadian media: “His entire life was about football.”

Isa, who had been born Anthony Christopher, coached T&T at all levels, including a spell overseeing the senior national team in 1991. His coaching CV also included St Benedict’s College, his alma mater, and the San Fernando Technical Institute team which, with the on-field inspiration of Russell Latapy, won the national championship and National Intercol double in 1985.

At club level, he guided Police FC to the 1991 Concacaf Champions’ Cup final, which they lost 4-2 on aggregate to Mexican club Puebla. As a member of the T&T Police Service, Isa played and coached for many years before working for the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs. At the time of his death, he was combining his work with the TTFA – where he worked hard to promote the game in rural areas as leader of the TTFA grassroots programme – with a technical director’s role at Club Sando from the T&T Pro League.

MAJID ARIFF

“The most skilful player our country has ever produced.” The words of former Singapore striker Fandi Ahmad provide a fitting epitaph for Majid Ariff, who was not just a football icon on the island in the 1960s but also the coach who nurtured Ahmad’s own cherished talents.

As a player, Ariff was a hero of Singapore’s 3-1 victory over Selangor in the 1965 Malaysia Cup final, a match played shortly before independence in which he dribbled past three Selangor players to score the equalising goal. The following year, he helped the new nation finish fourth in the football tournament at the Asian Games and became the only Singaporean member of the Asian All-Stars team that played matches against English sides Fulham, Sheffield Wednesday and Leicester City.

Ariff was passionate about coaching and made a notable impact on the career of Ahmad, the first Singaporean footballer to play in Europe with Dutch club Groningen, who had begun working with Ariff at 15. The two men were the only Singaporeans among the 116 players nominated for Asia’s Footballer of the Century award in 1998. Ariff, who had been suffering from pneumonia, died aged 80 in February 2018.
DAVIDE ASTORI

Serie A came to a stop on Sunday, 4 March 2018 as Italian football sought to absorb the shock of the death of Davide Astori. The Fiorentina defender, who left a wife and two-year-old daughter, had been found dead in his hotel room prior to his club’s match against Udinese, following a sudden heart failure during the night. The great esteem in which the 31-year-old Italian international was held was spelled out by Gianluigi Buffon, his former Azzurri team-mate, who praised his human qualities of “altruism, elegance, politeness and respect”.

Born in the Bergamo province, Astori was schooled in AC Milan’s junior ranks before loans with Pizzighettone and Cremonese led to a permanent transfer to Cagliari. He spent six seasons in Sardinia, where team-mates visited the ice-cream parlour he opened with fellow centre-back Lorenzo Ariaudo. It was with Cagliari that he won the first seven of 14 Italy caps; indeed, he became the first Cagliari player to score for Italy since Gigi Riva with his goal against Uruguay at the FIFA Confederations Cup 2013.

After calling time on her playing career, in which she made nine senior appearances for Finland, still at the relatively young age of 30, she dedicated herself to refereeing. Her new calling would take her to greater heights, officiating at the 1997 and 2001 UEFA Women’s Championship and the FIFA Women’s World Cups™ in 1999 and 2003. A natural figure of authority who earned a reputation for her firm-but-fair application of the Laws of the Game, Elovirta was picked to take charge of the inaugural UEFA Women’s Cup final in 2002.

Elovirta’s dedication and love for the game were such that her life in football entered a third act: as a refereeing coach for FIFA and UEFA, as a development manager with the Finnish FA, where she was heavily involved in establishing a national competition data system, and in 2012, as one of the first women to be appointed to FIFA’s Referees Committee.

Kariina “KATI” Elovirta

Well trodden is the career path from player to coach, less so the path from player to referee. In Kati Elovirta, who forged successful careers in both roles, Finnish football lost a true pioneer of the women’s game in 2018.

Elovirta enjoyed something of a purple patch late on in her playing career when she won the national women’s championship three times with clubs in the Finnish capital: first with Kaunis Nainen Futis in 1985, before tasting success again with PP-Futis in 1989 and Helsinki United in 1990.

After spending 2014-15 at Roma, he arrived in Florence in 2015, initially on a year’s loan. It would be there, in the Basilica di Santa Croce, that the city, and indeed all of Italian football, would say a deeply sad goodbye to the Viola captain.

“"You were the best expression of an old-fashioned world, one that people have left behind, with values like altruism, elegance, politeness and respect towards others.”

GIANLUIGI BUFFON

Italy team-mate
Over the course of the year, the football family lost many much-loved members who made a difference in the sport and in our lives.

Régis Manon
Ali Kadhim
Naby Laye Camara
Antonio Valentín Angelillo
Hans Aabech
Antonio Munguia
Juan Carlos García
Calan Vanterpool
Tommy Lawrence
Pierre Grillet
Takis Loukanidis
Hamid El Hazzaz
Cyrille Regis
Víctor Gamedze
Tsuchasa Hosaka
Philippe Gondet
Jimmy Armfield
Reinier Kreijermaat
Göran “Pica” Nicklasson
Azeglio Vicini
Jacques Lionel Désir
Károly Palotai
Majid Anifi
Ladislav Kačání
Liam Miller
Joseph Bonnel
Hans Rinner
Chinedu Udoji
Pavel Panov
Georgi Markov
Lucien Bouchardreau
Chow Chee Keong
Tsvetan Veselinov
Enrique Castro González – “Quini”
Davide Astori
Costakis Koutsokoumnis
Ion Voinescu
Rubén Galván
Samir Zaher

Nicolae Tilihoi
Emiliano Mondonico
Elie Onana
Ray Wilkins
André Lerond
Maria Elena Valverde
Roy Bentley
Golam Hafiz
Vladimir Weiss
Henri Michel
Lorenzo “Rotto” Isidore
Bjørn Hansen
Yoshinobu Ishii
Jack Chamangwana
Omar Daoud
Hugo Guerra
Abdoulaye Doumbouya
Mani Shah
Illoyd Samuel
Ray Wilson
José Louis López Serrano
Mohammed Houmane Jarir
Doğan Babacan
Roger Piantoni
Alejandro Peñaranda
Kostas Polychroniou
Walter Eich
Fadil Vokrri
Sow Ibrahim
Mohamed Sbai
Sogue Abdoulaye
Francis Smerecki
Jutta Nardenbach
Walter Bahr
Sergio Gonella
Katriina Elovirta
Alberto Fouilloux
Abdel Rahim Mohamed
Goran Bunjevčević
Lawrence Rondon
Juraj Halenár
Muhammad Isa
Abdoulaye Sylla – “Tomazi”
Aboubacar Bruno Bangoura
Henri Dirix
Hacène Laimas
Alan Gilzean
Roman Korynt
Chow Kwai Lam
Julia Borisenko
Delroy Scott
György Szepesi
Liber Vespa
Alfredo del Águila
Orlando Ramírez
Ahmed Abdalla Moalim Mohamed
Rafael Amador
Daan Schrijvers
Terry Quinn
Hamidou Camara
Rougui Syla Déco
12 fans of Barcelona SC, Ecuador, victims of a bus crash
Zvonko Bego
Morlaye Camara
Gavri Levy
Jimmy McIlroy
Kofi Annan
Delio “Maravilla” Gamboa
Ted Bennett
Aleksei Paramonov
François Konter
Reidar Goa
Mike Lee
Victims of a stampede in Antananarivo, Madagascar
Victims of a stampede in Luanda, Angola
Mazhye Burchall
Norbert Konter
Maha Daher
Labinot Harbuzi
Patrick Baumann
Peter Velappan
Mbaye Ndoye
Ilie Balaci
Victims of the Leicester City helicopter crash
José Varacka
Leah Namukonda
Ajuma Ameh-Otache
Victims of a bus crash in Rondon, Peru
Flemming Nielsen
Metin Türel
Óscar Sein Mungula Zelaya
Uladzimir Zhuravel
Andrzej Fischer
Bujor Hâlmarineanu
Jules Hmeun
Viktor Kanevskyi
David Pintado
Océane Rogon
Viktor Matviyenko
Zhang Ouying
Alexei Lomakin
Joseph Luís Núñez
Michael McComie
Luigi Radice
Iraj Danaeifard
Walter Williams
Carlos Cecconato
Bill Slater
Dr Jean Marie Fritz Henri
Stanko Poklepović
Jozef Adamec
Juan Bautista Aquero
Yehoshua Glazer