



Islamic Republic of Iran
Football Federation (FFIRI)
Club Licensing Regulations
Azadegan (First Division) National League

SEASON 2025-2026

To Participate in Competitions 2026-2027



PREFACE

The present regulations are the latest version of FFIRI Azadegan (First Division) Club Licensing Regulations for Season 2025-2026.

This Regulation is based on the recent update of the AFC Club Licensing Regulations, edition 2024. These updated regulations have been revised after a consultation process involving key stakeholders. The AFC regulations aim to encourage more sustainable investment in football clubs, encouraging more growth and development of the requirements, taking into consideration the experience gained over the last years.

The club licensing criteria of the regulations have been developed to encourage inclusivity, promote integrity and increase awareness. I would like to thank you all for participating in the club licensing system. I hope that you will continue to use licensing as a framework for excellence at your club. We will continue to assist all clubs who aspire to achieve the highest quality standards in all areas of their club. I wish you all the best of luck for the coming Season.

Mehdi Taj
FFIRI President



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Definitions

Accounting Policies	The specific principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices adopted by an entity in preparing and presenting its financial statements.
ACGL	The AFC Challenge League
ACL Elite	The AFC Champions League Elite
ACL Two	The AFC Champions League 2
AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook	The handbook issued by the AFC, which provides operational and technical guidance in relation to the financial criteria in these Regulations. It is a compilation of explanations and templates to support the Licence Applicant in complying with the financial criteria.
AFC Club Licensing Quality Standard	The document issued by the AFC which defines the minimum requirements that a Licensor must comply with in order to operate the club licensing System.
AFC Stadium Regulations	These regulations set out the minimum requirements for a Stadium to be eligible to host matches in AFC competitions.
Annual Financial Statements	A complete set of financial statements prepared as at the Statutory Closing Date, normally including a balance sheet, profit and loss account, a statement of cash flows and those notes, other statements and explanatory material that are an integral part of the financial statements.
Associate	An entity, including an unincorporated entity such as a partnership, over which the investor has Significant Influence and that is neither a Subsidiary nor an interest in a Joint Venture.
Audit	The objective of an audit of financial statements is to enable the auditor to express an opinion whether the financial statements are prepared, in all Material respects, in accordance with an identified financial reporting framework. The phrases used to express the auditor's opinion are "give a true and fair view" or "present fairly, in all material respects", which are equivalent terms. A similar objective applies to the audit of financial or other information prepared in accordance with appropriate criteria. In an audit engagement, the auditor provides a high but not absolute, level of assurance that the information subject to audit is free of Material misstatement. This is expressed positively in the audit report as reasonable assurance. The term "Audited" shall be interpreted accordingly.
Budget	The schedules containing an entity's Future Financial Information, based on management's assumptions about events that may occur in the future and possible actions by an entity.
CLAS or Club Licensing Administration System	The IT system developed by the AFC for the purpose of gathering information from Licence Applicants/Licensees and for sharing information with Licensors concerning their affiliated clubs, within the scope of the implementation, assessment and enforcement of these Regulations.
Club Licensing Criteria	The requirements applicable to the grant of Licences to Licence Applicants, as set out in these Regulations, which are divided into five categories (sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial).
Consolidated Financial Statement(s)	Financial statements of a Group presented as those of a single economic entity.



Control	The power to conduct the activities of an entity and to direct its financial, operating and/or sporting policies in any manner which may affect the outcomes of such activities, whether by means of share ownership, voting power, constitutional documents (e.g. statutes), agreement and/ or otherwise. The terms “Controlled” and “Controlling” shall be interpreted accordingly.
Event or Condition of Major Economic Importance	An event or condition is of major economic importance if it is considered Material to the financial statements of the Reporting Entity and would require a different (adverse) presentation of the results of the operations, financial position and net assets of the Reporting Entity if it had occurred during the preceding Financial Year or Interim Period.
Financial Year	The financial reporting period ending on the Statutory Closing Date, whether this is a year or not, and which is not an Interim Period.
Future Financial Information	Information about the prospective financial effects of future events and possible actions on the entity concerned.
Going Concern	The ‘going concern’ concept, or assumption, is an accountancy term that describes an entity which can continue operating without the significant threat of liquidation, and which can therefore continue in operation for the foreseeable future. A Reporting Entity is normally viewed as a Going Concern. It is assumed that the Reporting Entity has neither the intention nor the necessity of liquidation, ceasing trading nor seeking protection from creditors pursuant to laws or regulations.
Group	A Parent and all its subsidiaries.
Historic Financial Information	Information about the financial effects of past events on the entity concerned. Historic Financial Information is in respect of the financial performance and position prior to the licensing decision.
Interim Financial Statements	A financial report containing either a complete set of financial statements or a set of condensed financial statements for an Interim Period.
Interim Period	A financial reporting period shorter than a Financial Year. It does not necessarily have to be a six-month period.
FFIRI	Islamic Republic Of Iran Football Federation
Joint Venture	A contractual arrangement whereby two or more parties undertake an economic activity that is subject to joint control.
Licence	Certificate granted by the Licensor confirming fulfilment of all minimum Club Licensing Criteria by the Licence Applicant as part of the admission procedure for entering Azadegan National League competitions.
Licence Applicant	Legal entity fully and solely responsible for the football team participating in national and international club competitions, which applies for a Licence.
Licence Season	The Azadegan National League season for which a Licence Applicant has applied for/been granted a Licence. It starts the day following the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions by the Licensor to the AFC and lasts until the same deadline the following year.
Licensee	Licence Applicant that has been granted a Licence by its Licensor.



Licensing Administration	The staff within the Licensor that deals with club licensing matters.
Licensor	The Body that operates the club licensing system and grants the Licences in accordance with these Regulations.
List of Licensing Decisions	The list submitted by the Licensor to the AFC containing, among other things, information about the Licence Applicants that have undergone the licensing process and been granted or refused a Licence by the national decision-making bodies in the format established and communicated by the AFC General Secretariat.
Material or Materiality	Omissions or misstatements of items or information are Material if they could, individually or collectively; influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial information submitted by the Licence Applicant/ Licensee. Materiality depends on the size and nature of the omission or misstatement judged in the surrounding circumstances or context. The size or nature of the item or information, or a combination of both, could be the determining factor.
MCR	Minimum Coach Requirements
N1	Azadegan (Division 1) National League
Parent	An entity that has one or more subsidiaries.
RECC	Recognition of Experience and Current Competence
Registered Member	Any legal entity according to national law and/or FFIRI statutes, which is member of the FFIRI and/or its affiliated league.
Reporting Entity/ Entities	A Registered Member and/or football company or Group of entities or some other combination of entities which is included in the reporting perimeter and which must provide the Licensor with information for club licensing purposes.
Review	The objective of an engagement to review financial information is to enable an auditor to express a conclusion whether, on the basis of the review, anything has come to the auditor's attention that causes the auditor to believe that the financial information is not prepared, in all Material respects, in accordance with an identified financial reporting framework. A review, in contrast to an Audit, is not designed to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial information is free from Material misstatement. A Review consists of making inquiries, primarily of persons responsible for financial and accounting matters, and applying analytical and other review procedures. A Review may bring significant matters affecting the financial information to the auditor's attention but it does not provide the evidence that would be required for an audit.
Significant Change	An event that is considered Material to the documentation previously submitted to the Licensor and that would require a different presentation if it had occurred prior to the submission of the licensing documentation.
Significant Influence	The power to participate in the financial, operating and/or sporting policies of an entity whether by means of share ownership, voting power, constitutional documents (e.g. statutes), agreement and/or otherwise, but without having Control over that entity either on its own or as part of a Joint Venture. Examples include a party: holding, directly or indirectly, between 20% and 50% of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in an entity;



	b. having the ability to influence the appointment or removal of members charged with the governance of an entity (e.g. any administrative, management or supervisory bodies of an entity); c. being a minority shareholder or a member of the entity and alone, pursuant to an agreement entered into with other shareholders or members of the entity or by any other means, being able to exercise any Significant Influence; and/or d. providing in one reporting period - either alone or in aggregate with parties under the same ultimate controlling party or government (excluding the AFC, its own AFC Member Association and any affiliated league) - 30% or more of the entity's total revenue for that reporting period.
Stadium	Any stadium at which a match is played. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes: (i) the entire premises (to the extent that a valid accreditation card or ticket is required in order to gain access) of a stadium facility inside the outer stadium perimeter fence and (on matchdays and any day on which any official training takes place within the stadium) the aerial space above such stadium premises; (ii) parking facilities; (iii) VIP and hospitality areas (including any hospitality village); (iv) concession areas; (v) commercial display areas; (vi) buildings; (vii) the field of play; (viii) the media tribune; (ix) any broadcast compound; (x) the stadium media centre; (xi) the press conference room; (xii) the mixed zone; (xiii) any stands; and (xiv) any areas beneath the stands.
Statutory Closing Date	The annual accounting reference date of the Reporting Entity.
Subsequent Events	Events or conditions occurring after the licensing decision.
Subsidiary	An entity, including an unincorporated entity such as a partnership that is Controlled by another entity (known as the Parent).
Supplementary Information	Financial information to be submitted to the Licensor in addition to the financial statements if the minimum requirements for disclosure and accounting are not met. The supplementary information must be prepared on a basis of accounting, and Accounting Policies, consistent with the financial statements. Financial information must be extracted from sources consistent with those used for the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements. Where appropriate, disclosures in the supplementary information must agree with, or be reconciled to, the relevant disclosures in the financial statements.
Training Facilities	The venue(s) at which a club's registered players undertake football training and/or youth development activities on a regular basis.



For the purposes of these Regulations, and provided the context so permits:

- a) the singular shall include the plural and vice-versa;
- b) the masculine gender shall include the feminine and vice-versa;
- c) references to natural persons shall include any legal person or corporation; and
- d) all defined terms, unless otherwise stated herein, shall bear the same meaning as ascribed to them in the AFC Statutes and the AFC Competition Operations Manual.



Article 1: Introduction and Scope of Application

1- These Regulations have been adopted pursuant to AFC Club Licensing Regulations (Edition 2024) and have been approved by the FFIRI Executive Committee in accordance with the FFIRI Statutes.

2- These Regulations apply whenever expressly referred to in specific regulations and other rules governing club competitions to be played under the auspices of FFIRI.

3- These regulations govern the rights, duties and responsibilities of all parties involved in the national club licensing system and define in particular:

- a) The minimum requirements to be fulfilled by the FFIRI in order to act as a licensor for its clubs, as well as the minimum procedures to be followed by the licensor in the assessment of the Club Licensing Criteria;
- b) The Licence Applicant and the Licence required to enter the Azadegan League club competitions;
- c) The minimum sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial criteria to be fulfilled by a club in order to be granted a Licence by the FFIRI as part of the admission procedures to enter Azadegan League (First Division) club competitions.

Article 2 :Objectives

These regulations aim to:

- a) Safeguard the credibility and integrity of all club competitions in Iran;
- b) Allow the development of benchmarking for clubs in financial, sporting, legal, personnel and administrative, infrastructure related criteria in Iran.
- c) Continuously improve the standard of all aspects of football in Iran and to give priority to the training and care of young players in every club;
- d) Ensure that clubs have an adequate level of management;
- e) Improve the financial capability of the clubs, increasing their transparency and credibility and place the necessary importance on the protection of creditors and to ensure that clubs settle their liabilities with employees, social/tax authorities and other club punctually;
- f) Improve clubs' sporting infrastructure to provide the various stakeholders with well-equipped and safe stadiums and facilities;
- g) To ensure that clubs are properly constituted under national laws and in accordance with the statutes of the FFIRI;

Article 3: Club Licensing Criteria

1- Subject to Article 3.2, the criteria defined in Articles 16 to 20 must be fulfilled by clubs in order for them to be granted a Licence to enter the Azadegan (First Division) League club competition(s).

2- The criteria described in Articles 16 to 20 are graded into "A", "B" and "C" categories.

a) A – Club Licensing Criteria Gradation



These are mandatory criteria to be fulfilled by the Licence Applicant. If the Licence Applicant does not fulfill any of the A - Club Licensing Criteria, then it shall not be granted with a Licence to enter the Azadegan (First Division) League club competitions.

b) B – Club Licensing Criteria Gradation

If the Licence Applicant does not fulfill any B – Club Licensing Criteria, then it shall be sanctioned as specified by the Licensor for non-fulfillment of these criteria; however, the Licence Applicant may still receive a Licence to enter the Azadegan (First Division) League club competitions.

c) C – Club Licensing Criteria Gradation

These Club Licensing Criteria are best practice recommendations.

- 3- The Licensor is free to increase the minimum requirements or to upgrade the criteria gradation established by the FFIRI for the purposes of entering the Azadegan (First Division) club competitions. The Licensor may also introduce additional Club Licensing Criteria not included in the AFC Club Licensing Regulations. For this purpose, any increase to the minimum requirements, upgrade of the criteria gradation or introduction of additional minimum Club Licensing Criteria shall not be inconsistent with these Regulations.
- 4- Where introduced by the Licensor in its national licensing regulations, any increased minimum requirements, upgraded or additional criteria will be applicable to enter into the Azadegan League (First Division) club competitions.

Article 4: Exceptions Policy

The AFC General Secretariat may grant an exception to any provisions in these Regulations within the limit as set out in Annex 3.

Article 5: Licensor

- 1- The Licensor is FFIRI and governs the club licensing system within its country/territory. The Licensor is obliged to use the CLAS to govern the club licensing system.
- 2- FFIRI Complies with Article 10.1(n) of the AFC Statutes.
- 3- Under certain conditions as set out in Annex 2, FFIRI may delegate the club licensing system to its affiliated league(s). FFIRI shall remain liable and responsible for the proper implementation of the club licensing system regardless of whether there is a delegation.
- 4- The Licensor governs the licensing system, appoints the licensing bodies and determines the necessary processes.
- 5- The Licensor shall ensure that all applicable provisions defined in AFC Regulations are integrated into its National Club Licensing Regulations, which must be submitted in English to the AFC General Secretariat on CLAS for accreditation according to procedures defined in Annex 1.
- 6- In particular, the Licensor must:
 - a) Establish an appropriate Licensing Administration as defined in Article 6;
 - b) establish at least two decision-making bodies as defined in Article 7;
 - c) set up a catalogue of sanctions as defined in Article 8;
 - d) define the core process as defined in Article 9;



- e) assess the documentation submitted by the Licence Applicants, consider whether this is appropriate and define the assessment procedures in accordance with Article 10;
- f) ensure equal treatment of all clubs applying for a Licence and guarantee the clubs full confidentiality with regard to all information provided during the licensing process as defined in Article 11;
- g) strictly follow the core process;
- h) determine whether each criterion has been met and what further information, if any, is needed for a Licence to be granted.
- i) Comply with the AFC Club Licensing Quality Standard; and
- j) Comply with all the requirements set out in Annex 7.

Article 6: The Licensing Administration

- 1- The licensor must appoint a Licensing Manager, who is responsible for managing the Licensing Administration.
- 2- The Licensor must notify the AFC in writing of the appointment of the Club Licensing Manager, and of any changes to such appointment.
- 3- The tasks of the Licensing Administration include:
 - a) Preparing, implementing and further developing the Club Licensing System;
 - b) Accessing and administering the CLAS.
 - c) Providing training and support for the Licence Applicants in using CLAS
 - d) Providing administrative support to the decision-making Bodies;
 - e) Assisting, advising and monitoring the licensees during the Licence Season;
 - f) Informing the AFC of any event occurring after the licensing decision that constitutes a significant change to the information previously submitted to the Licensor.
 - g) Serving as the contact point for and sharing expertise with the licensing departments of other AFC member associations and with AFC;
- 4- Within the Licensing Administration, at least one staff member or an external financial adviser must have a financial background and a diploma in accountancy/auditing recognised by the appropriate national body (IRI Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance/IRI Audit Organization) or must have several years' experience in the above matters.

Article 7: The Decision-Making Bodies

- 1- The decision-making bodies are the First Instance Body and the Appeals Body. These bodies must be independent of each other and the Licensor.
- 2- The First Instance Body (FIB) decides on whether a Licence should be granted to an applicant on the basis of the documents provided by the submission deadline set by the Licensor and on whether a Licence should be withdrawn upon the application of the licensing manager.
- 3- The Appeals Body decides on appeals and makes a final decision on whether a Licence should be granted or withdrawn.
- 4- Appeals may only be lodged by:



- a) a Licence Applicant who received a refusal from the First Instance Body;
 - b) a Licensee whose Licence has been withdrawn by the First Instance Body; or
 - c) at the request of the Licensor and/or Club Licensing Manager.
- 5- The Appeals Body shall make its decision based only on the case file and evidence provided by the Licence Applicant and Licensor before the First Instance Body. A request for appeal shall be made by the set deadline.
- 6- Since the FFIRI does not have an independent arbitration tribunal then the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) shall be the final appellate authority. In this respect, particular attention must be paid to the relevant deadlines for entering the Azadegan (First Division) National club competitions.
- 7- Members of the decision-making bodies shall be elected or appointed in accordance with FFIRI's statutes and must:
- a) Act impartially in the discharge of their duties;
 - b) abstain if there is any doubt as to their independence from the Licence Applicant or if there is a conflict of interest. In this regard the independence of a member may not be guaranteed if he/she or any member of his/her family (spouse, child, parent or sibling) is a member, shareholder, business partner, sponsor or consultant of the Licence Applicant;
 - c) not act simultaneously as licensing manager;
 - d) not belong simultaneously to a judicial statutory body of the Licensor;
 - e) not belong simultaneously to the executive body of the FFIRI or its affiliated league;
 - f) not belong simultaneously to the management personnel of an affiliated club;
 - g) have among its members at least one qualified lawyer and one qualified financial expert holding a qualification recognised by the appropriate national professional body.
- 8- The quorum of the decision-making bodies must be Three (3) members. In case of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote.
- 9- The decision-making bodies must operate according to the principles of natural justice and must as a minimum regulate the following standards:
- a) deadlines (e.g., submission deadline, etc.);
 - b) safeguards of the principle of equal treatment;
 - c) representation (e.g., legal representation, etc.);
 - d) the right to be heard (e.g., convocation, hearing);
 - e) official language (if applicable);
 - f) time limit for requests (e.g., calculation, notification, compliance, interruption, extension);
 - g) time limit for appeal;
 - h) effects of appeal (e.g., no delaying effect);
 - i) type of evidence requested;
 - j) burden of proof (e.g., Licence Applicant has burden of proof);
 - k) decision (e.g. in writing with reasoning, etc.);
 - l) grounds for complaints;
 - m) content and form of pleading;
 - n) deliberation/hearings;
 - o) cost of procedure/administrative fee/deposit.



Article 8: Catalogue of Sanctions

1- To guarantee an appropriate assessment process, FFIRI must:

- a) set up a catalogue of sanctions for the club licensing system to apply in respect of any non-compliance with the criteria referred to in Articles 16 to 20, which may include a caution, a fine, the obligation to submit evidence or to fulfil certain conditions by a deadline in accordance with Annex 8;
- b) refer to the national disciplinary regulations in respect of violations of the licensing regulations where appropriate (e.g. submission of false documents, non-respect of deadlines, sanctions against individuals).

Article 9: The Core Process

- 1- The Licensor must define the core process for the verification of the applicable criteria for issuing Licences.
- 2- The core process starts at a time defined by the Licensor and ends on submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to the AFC General Secretariat by the deadline fixed by the AFC.
- 3- The core process consists of the following minimum key steps:
 - a) distribution of the licensing documentation to the Licence Applicants;
 - b) return of the licensing documentation to the Licensor;
 - c) assessment of the documentation by the Licensing Administration;
 - d) assessment and decision by the decision-making bodies;
 - e) submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to the FFIRI General Secretariat then to the AFC General Secretariat.
- 4- The deadlines for the above key process steps must be clearly defined and communicated to the clubs concerned in a timely manner by the Licensor.

Article 10: Assessment Procedures

- 1- The Licensor defines the assessment procedures, except those defined under these Regulations for which specific assessment processes must be followed as set out therein.

Article 11: Equal Treatment and Confidentiality

- 1- The Licensor shall ensure equal treatment of all Licence Applicants during the core process.
- 2- The Licensor shall guarantee the Licence Applicants full confidentiality with regard to all information submitted during the licensing process. Anyone involved in the licensing process or appointed by the Licensor shall sign a confidentiality agreement before assuming his or her tasks.

Article 12: Licence Applicant and Two-Year Rule

- 1- A Licence Applicant shall only be a football club, i.e. a legal entity fully responsible for a football team participating in national competitions which either:
 - a) is a Registered Member of FFIRI and/or participates in its affiliated league(s); or
 - b) is a football company which has a contractual relationship with a Registered Member.



- 2- At the start of the Licence Season, the membership and/or the contractual relationship must have lasted for at least two (2) consecutive years. Furthermore, the Licence Applicant must have participated in official national competitions for at least two (2) consecutive seasons.
- 3- Any change to the legal form, legal Group structure (including a merger with another entity or transfer of football activities to another entity) or identity (including headquarters, name or colours) of a Licence Applicant during this period to the detriment of the integrity of a competition or to facilitate the Licence Applicant's qualification for a competition on sporting merit or its receipt of a Licence is deemed as an interruption of membership or contractual relationship (if any) within the meaning of this provision.

Article 13: Responsibilities of the Licence Applicant

- 1- The Licence Applicant must provide the Licensor with:
 - a) all necessary information and/or relevant documents to fully demonstrate that the licensing obligations are fulfilled; and
 - b) any other document relevant for decision-making by the Licensor.
- 2- This includes information on the Reporting Entity/Entities in respect of which sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial information is required to be provided.
- 3- Any event occurring after the submission of the licensing documentation to the Licensor representing a Significant Change to the information previously submitted must be promptly notified to the Licensor, especially a change of legal form, legal Group structure or identity.

Article 14: Licence

- 1- Clubs which qualify for Azadegan (First Division) club competition on sporting merit must obtain a Licence issued by their Licensor according to the FFIRI accredited club licensing Regulations for that competition.
- 2- A Licence expires without prior notice at the end of the season for which it was issued.
- 3- A Licence cannot be transferred.
- 4- A Licence may be withdrawn by the AFC or the licensor decision-making bodies if:
 - a) Any of the conditions for the issuing of a Licence are not satisfied; or
 - b) The licensee violates any of its obligations under these Regulations and/or the AFC accredited Club Licensing Regulations.
- 5- As soon as a Licence withdrawal is envisaged, the FFIRI must inform the AFC Licensing General Secretariat accordingly.



Article 15: Extraordinary Application

- 1- If a club qualifies for an AFC club competition on sporting merit but has not undergone any licensing process at all or has undergone a licensing process which is lesser/not equivalent to the Licence required for the competition it became eligible for, the Licensor of the club concerned may on behalf of such a club request an extraordinary application of the club licensing system in accordance with Annex 4.
- 2- Based on such an extraordinary application, AFC may grant special permission to the club to enter the corresponding AFC club competition subject to the relevant AFC Club Competition Regulations. Such an extraordinary application applies only to the specific club and for the season in question.
- 3- The AFC Entry Control Body shall make all final AFC decisions in this regard. Such decisions shall be made in accordance with the Procedural Rules Governing the AFC Entry Control Body.



Article 16: Sporting Criteria

S.01	N1
Youth Development Programmes (YDP)	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have a written youth development programme approved by the Licensor. The Licensor must evaluate the quality of the youth development programme before approving it and verify the implementation by periodic visits to the training and games. 2- The programme must cover at least the following areas: a) Objectives, youth playing philosophy and youth development philosophy; b) Organisation of youth sector (organisational chart, bodies involved, relation to Licence Applicant, youth teams, etc.); c) Personnel (technical, medical, administrative, etc.) and minimum qualifications required; d) Infrastructure available for youth sector (training and match facilities, etc); e) Financial resources (available Budget, contribution by Licence Applicant, players or local community, etc.); f) Football education programme for the different age Groups (psychological, technical, tactical and physical); g) Education programmes (Laws of the Game, anti-doping, integrity, anti-racism and sport psychology); h) Medical support for youth players (including medical checks); i) Individual performance evaluation of players in the programme; j) Review and feedback process to evaluate the results and the achievements of the set objectives; k) Validity of the programme (at least three years but maximum seven); and l) Football Schools under the name of Licence Applicant which provide football education for children 3- The Licence Applicant must further ensure that: a) every youth player involved in its youth development programme has the possibility to follow mandatory school education in accordance with national law; and b) no youth player involved in its youth development programme is prevented from continuing their non-football education.	

S.02	N1
Youth Teams	A
1- The Licence Applicant must at least have the two youth team within its legal entity, another legal entity included in the reporting perimeter or a club affiliated to its legal entity within the range of 10 to 21; 2- Each youth team, except the under 10s, must take part in official competitions or programmes played at national, regional or local level and recognised by FFIRI.	



S.03	N1
Medical Care of Players and Technical Staff	A
1- The Licence Applicant shall provide all players registered in the club with full access to medical support services. These shall include, but not limited to the following: a) yearly medical examination including cardiovascular screening for all its players in its first squad; b) yearly medical examination for all players above the age of 12; and c) comprehensive medical insurance coverage for all its players in its first squad and Technical Staff d) yearly medical examination including cardiovascular screening for all technical staff of the club (including technical staff of academy)	

S.04	N1
Educational Programmes	B
1- The Licence Applicant must ensure that players and all technical coaching staff of at least the first squad have attended two session or an event related to: a) sports integrity matters; b) IFAB Laws of the Game; c) doping control and medical emergencies; d) emotional intelligence control; e) other topics as required by the AFC. 2- These sessions or events must be provided either by the Licence Applicant, FFIRI or a third party in collaboration with the Licence Applicant / FFIRI, during the year prior to the season to be licensed. 3- Participation of players and technical staff in two courses, sports integrity matters (a) and doping control and medical emergencies (c) are mandatory. 4- Instructors of training courses and workshops must be approved by FFIRI.	



S.05	N1
Registration of Players	A
1- All the Licence Applicant's players, including youth players aged 10 and above, must be registered in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.	

S.06	N1
Racial Equality Practice	C
1- The Licence Applicant must establish a policy to tackle racism in football. All players and staff of the Licence Applicant shall acknowledge the policy by signing the policy document.	

S.07	N1
Grassroots Programmes	C
1- Children, youths, amateurs, veterans, those with learning or physical disabilities and the socially disadvantaged shall be included in the grassroots programmes. 2- The main objectives of the Licence Applicant's grassroots football programme shall be to encourage mass participation, stimulating greater interest in the game, providing more opportunities for social inclusion, supporting healthy lifestyles and the development of young people, both the sporting and educational aspects.	

S.08	N1
Child Protection and Welfare	C
1- The Licence Applicant must establish and apply measures, in line with any relevant AFC policies and guidelines, to protect and safeguard children from potential abuses and to promote their wellbeing within football when participating in activities organised by the Licence Applicant. The Licence Applicant should work with locally based child protection expertise and have a child safeguarding officer within its administration to develop and implement such measures, including having a child safeguarding policy.	



S.09	N1
Women's Football	C
1- License applicant must have a senior women's football team. And this team should participate in one of the leagues including the premier division, first division or second division of Iran women's football competitions organized by the Iran Football League Organization.	

S.10	N1
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programmes	C
1- The Licence Applicant to establish strategies and implementation programmes to promote the club, the game and to address current issues in football and society. 2- Support should be provided for initiatives and campaigns to implement strategies and programmes as promulgated by either the Licence Applicant, FFIRI, AFC and FIFA. 3- Such programmes connect and create links with the community which will facilitate the following: a) establishment and enlargement of their fan base; b) creation of a pool of volunteers c) organisation of grassroots football activities, initiatives and events for and within the community; d) creation of strong links with the community; and e) creation of a market base for branding, merchandising, sponsors and commercial partners.	

S.11	N1
Club Youth Academy	C
1- The Licence Applicant must establish a Club Youth Academy with the required infrastructure and facilities as prescribed in the AFC Elite Youth Scheme.	

S.12	N1
Scientific Cooperation	C
1- The Licence Applicant should have scientific and research cooperation in the form of a contract or memorandum of understanding with an educational and research center licensed by the Ministry of Science of Iran in order to improve the scientific and qualitative level of the club.	



Article 17: Infrastructure Criteria

I.01	N1
Approved Stadiums for National Club Competitions	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have a stadium available to play Azadegan (First Division) League Competitions. The Licence Applicant either: a) owns the stadium; or a b) can provide a written contract with the owner of the Stadium it will use. This contract must guarantee the use of the Stadium for the Azadegan (First Division) League and other relevant matches for the coming season, for which the Licence Applicant qualifies in sporting terms. 2- The Stadium must meet the requirements expressly referred to by the: a) Iran Football League Organisation Stadium Regulations; and b) respective Iran Football League Organisation club competition regulations/ Iran League Organisation Competition Operations Manual. 3- The Stadium must be approved by the Licensor and located in the same city where the Licence Applicant is based. If the Stadium is not located in the Licence Applicant's base city, a justifiable reason should be provided.	

I.02	N1
Stadium –Safety Certification	A
1- The Stadium must be certified for safety. The certification is defined according to national/local law and must include provisions related to safety. If such law does not exist, the Licensor shall establish the content of the Stadium certificate and the procedure in close cooperation with the appropriate body/bodies (e.g. local security authorities, the local hospital, fire brigade, police, etc.) 2- The certificate shall comply with the requirements in the Iran Football League Organisation Safety and Security Regulations and must provide at least the following information: a) safety status of the Stadium structure and building fitness; b) compliance statement regarding the safety/security Regulations of the competent civil authority; c) approval of the entire Stadium capacity (individual seats, terraces and total number). d) approved evacuation plan which ensures that the whole Stadium can be emptied in a case of emergency according to the applicable national law; e) a colour coded floor plan diagram showing the possible evacuation routes should be prominently displayed in the Stadium; and f) an approved match security plan covering the organisational measures intended to ensure safety and security strategy covering all aspects of the organisation of a football match, such as ticket distribution system, screening of spectators, segregation strategy, crowd dispersal strategy, medical service, measures taken in case of fire, loss of power supply, or other emergency. 3- The certificate issued by the appropriate body shall be valid for a maximum of two (2) years and shall be valid throughout the licensing season.	



I.03	N1
Stadium – Approved Evacuation Plan	A
1- The appropriate body (e.g. safety and security authority, competent civil authority or other qualified and approved firms, etc.) approves the evacuation plan, which ensures that the whole Stadium can be emptied in case of an emergency according to the applicable national law. 2- If such law does not exist, the Licensor establishes the content of the evacuation plan, including an evacuation time and the approval body, in close cooperation with the appropriate civil body (e.g. local security authorities, the local hospital, fire brigade, police, etc.) 3- A colour coded floor plan diagram showing the possible evacuation routes should be prominently displayed in the Stadium. 4- Risk analysis specific to the Stadium. 5- The Safety and Security Officer, stewards and club & Stadium employees shall be briefed on the evacuation plan.	

I.04	N1
Training Facilities – Availability	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have Training Facilities available throughout the year. The Licence Applicant either: a) owns the Training Facilities; or b) Shall provide a written contract with the owner of the Training Facilities. 2- It must be guaranteed that the Training Facilities can be used by all teams of the Licence Applicant during the Licence Season, taking into account its youth development programme.	

I.05	N1
Training Facilities for Player Development – Minimum Infrastructure	C
1- As a minimum, the infrastructure of the Training Facilities for Player Development must include: a) outdoor Training Facilities; b) indoor Training Facilities; c) dressing rooms; and d) medical room(s) or direct access to first aid at the training site.	



I.06	N1
Stadium –Ground Rules	C
1- Ground rules must be visibly affixed at each stadium and made available online to spectators. These rules must provide information on at least the following: a) admission rights; b) abandonment or postponement of events; c) description of prohibitions and penalties, such as entering the field of play, throwing objects, use of foul or abusive language, racist behavior, etc. d) restrictions with regard to smoking, alcohol, fireworks, banners, etc. e) seating rules; and f) causes for ejection from the ground;	

I.07	N1
Automated External Defibrillator (AED)	B
1- The License Applicant shall ensure that at least one (1) AED is available at the Training Facilities for the First Squad.	



Article 18: Personnel and Administrative Criteria

P.01	N1
Club Secretariat	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have an office space sufficiently spacious to run its administration with the required infrastructure. 2- The Licence Applicant must have appointed adequate number of skilled secretarial staff according to its needs to run its daily business. 3- It must ensure that its office is open to communicate with the Licensor and the public and that it is equipped, as a minimum, with phone, fax, email facilities and a website.	

P.02	N1
General Manager	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed a General Manager being responsible for running its daily business (operational matters). 2- The appointment must have been done by the appropriate body (e.g. Executive Board) of the Licence Applicant. 3- The General Manager should participate in training workshops organized by FFIRI and/or Iran League Football Organization.	

P.03	N1
Finance Officer	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Finance Officer who is responsible for its financial matters. 2- The Finance Officer must hold as a minimum of one of the following qualifications: a) a degree in accountancy, finance or related field; or b) a recognition of competence issued by an organisation recognised by the Licensor. 3- The Finance Officer should participate in training workshops organized by FFIRI and/or Iran League Football Organization.	



P.04	N1
Safety and Security Officer	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Safety and Security Officer being responsible for safety and security matters. 2- The Security Officer must hold as a minimum one of the following qualifications: a) a certificate as policeman or security person according to national law, or; b) a safety and security diploma based on a specific course issued by FFIRI or by a state recognized organization, or; c) a 'recognition of competence' approved by FFIRI, which is based on the participation in specific safety and security course of FFIRI and at least one (1) year experience in such matters. 3- The Safety and Security Officer must be duly registered with the FFIRI and/or its affiliated league.	

P.05	N1
Media Officer	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Media Officer being responsible for media matters. 2- The Media Officer must hold as a minimum one of the following qualifications: a) diploma in journalism; b) concluded a media officer education course provided by the FFIRI or an organisation recognised by the FFIRI; or c) a recognition of competence approved by FFIRI, which requires at least one (1) year experience in such matters. 3- The Media Officer should participate in training workshops organized by FFIRI and/or Iran League Football Organization. 4- The Media Officer must be duly registered with the FFIRI and/or its affiliated league.	



P.06	N1
Team Doctor	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one doctor who is responsible for medical support during matches and training as well as for doping prevention. 2- The qualification of the Team Doctor must be recognized by the appropriate national health authorities. 3- The Team Doctor should participate in training workshops organized by FFIRI and/or Iran League Football Organization. 4- The Team Doctor must be duly registered with FFIRI and/or the affiliated league	

P.07	N1
Physiotherapist	A
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one (1) Physiotherapist being responsible for medical treatment and massages for the first squad during sessions and matches. 2- The qualification of the Physiotherapist must be recognized by the appropriate national health authorities. 3- The Physiotherapist should participate in training workshops organized by FFIRI and/or Iran League Football Organization. 4- The Physiotherapist must be duly registered with FFIRI or the affiliated league.	



P.08	N1
Head Coach of First Team	A
1- The Licence Applicant must appoint a Head Coach with a valid coaching diploma/ licence responsible for all football matters of the first team. 2- The Head Coach must: a) hold the Minimum Coach Requirement (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Competition Operations Manual; or b) hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by AFC in compliance with the RECC Regulations for cases where the Head Coach of the first team does not have the required certification as defined under (a) above or; c) already have started the required education course, recognized by AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above. 3- The Head Coach must be duly registered with the FFIRI and/or its affiliated league. 4- The General Manager should participate in training workshops organized by FFIRI and/or Iran League Football Organization. 5- The Education Committee of FFIRI has a separate instruction regarding the Minimum Coach Requirement (MCR) related to the qualified coaches of IRAN Leagues, according to which a National Licence will be applied.	

P.09	N1
Assistant Coach of First Team	A
1- The Licence Applicant must appoint an Assistant Coach with a valid coaching diploma / licence assisting the Head Coach in all football technical matters of the first team. 2- The Assistant Coach must: a) hold at least the Minimum Coaching Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Competition Operations Manual; or b) hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by AFC in compliance with the RECC regulations for cases where the Assistant Coach of the first team does not have the required certification as defined under (a) above; or c) already have started the required education course, recognized by AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above. 3- The Assistant Coach must be duly registered with the FFIRI and/or its affiliated league 4- The Education Committee of FFIRI has a separate instruction regarding the Minimum Coach Requirement (MCR) related to the qualified coaches of IRAN Leagues, according to which a National Licence will be applied.	



P.10	N1
Head of Youth Development	B
1- The Licence Applicant must appoint a Head of Youth Development (HYD) with a valid coaching diploma/licence responsible for managing and implementing all aspects of youth development matters including the Youth Development Program (YDP). 2- The Head of the Youth Development must: a) hold at least the AFC 'A' Diploma/ Licence or its equivalence recognized and approved by AFC, or; b) already have started the required education course, recognized by AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above; c) have specific youth coaching experience and/or supplementary certification/qualification related to coaching and managing young players, and; d) have strong management and administration skills to ensure the efficient implementation of the program, activities, roles and duties in collaboration with other relevant personnel. 3- The Head of Youth Development must be duly registered with the FFIRI and/or its affiliated league.	

P.11	N1
Youth Coaches	A
1- For each mandatory youth team, the Licence Applicant must have appointed at least one qualified coach who is responsible for all football matters related to that team. 2- At least two (2) Youth Coaches must: a) hold at least AFC 'B' coaching diploma/licence or its equivalence recognized and approved by AFC; b) have specific youth coaching experience and/or supplementary certification/qualification related to coaching and managing young players, and c) have strong competencies to ensure the efficient implementation of the technical programme to develop elite youth players in collaboration with other relevant personnel. 3- The other Youth Coaches must hold the minimum qualification as defined by FFIRI, which shall not be below to AFC "C" coaching diploma/licence or its equivalence recognised and approved by AFC. 4- The Youth Coaches must be duly registered with the FFIRI and/or its affiliated league. 5- The Education Committee of FFIRI has a separate instruction regarding the Minimum Coach Education Requirement (MCR) related to the qualified coaches of IRAN Leagues, according to which a National Licence will be applied.	



P.12	N1
Safety and Security Organisation - Stewarding	B

1- The Licence Applicant must have engaged qualified stewards to ensure safety and security at home matches. For this purpose, it must:

- a) employ the stewards; or
- b) conclude a written contract with the Stadium owner providing the stewards; or an external security company providing stewards.

P.13	N1
Rights, Responsibilities and Duties	A

1- The rights, responsibilities and duties of the Licence Applicant's staff personnel mentioned in these Regulations must be defined in writing.

P.14	N1
Duty of Replacement During the Licensing Season	A

1- If a function defined in these Regulations becomes vacant during the season, the Licensee must ensure that, within a period of a maximum of sixty (60) days, the function is taken over by someone who holds the required qualification.

2- In the event that a function becomes vacant due to illness or accident, the Licensor may grant an extension to the sixty (60) day period only if reasonably satisfied that the person concerned is still medically unfit to resume duties.

3- The occurrence of vacancy and replacement must be notified to the Licensor within seven (7) working days of the respective event.



P.15	N1
Legal Advisor	C
1- The Licence Applicant must appoint a qualified legal advisor who is responsible to handle all legal matters in the Licence Applicant's activities. 2- The legal advisor shall have the necessary legal qualifications. 3-The Legal Advisor should participate in training workshops organized by FFIRI and/or Iran League Football Organization.	

P.16	N1
Club Technical Director	C
1- The Licence Applicant must employ a Club Technical Director. 2- He should have at least an AFC 'A' Coaching diploma / licence) and supplementary qualities like an extensive playing and work experience at the professional club level, or have been a long serving dedicated member of the club as a player, coach, manager or advisor. 3- He must have strong management skills, visionary and lead the technical development of the club. 4- He shall be responsible for but not limited to the following: a) establish and/or implement club philosophy; b) establish Youth and Player Development Structures and Programmes; c) ensure technical standards are maintained and enhanced; d) monitor and evaluate all technical and developmental programmes; e) talent scouting; f) management of Club's Youth Academies; g) recruitment and management of coaches and talent scouts; and h) management of match analysis processes. 5- The Club Technical Director must be duly registered with FFIRI and/or the affiliated league.	



P.17	N1
Goalkeeper Coach of First Team	B
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Goalkeeper Coach with a valid coaching diploma / licence for the first team. 2- The Goalkeeper Coach must: a) hold at least the Minimum Coach Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Competition Operations Manual; or b) hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by AFC in compliance with the RECC regulations for cases where the Goalkeeper Coach does not have the required certification as defined under (a) above; or c) already have started the required education course, recognized by AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above 3- The Goalkeeper Coach of First Team must be duly registered with FFIRI and/or the affiliated league. 4- The Education Committee of FFIRI has a separate instruction regarding the Minimum Coach Requirement (MCR) related to the qualified coaches of IRAN Leagues, according to which a National Licence will be applied.	

P.18	N1
Fitness Coach of First Team	B
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed a qualified Fitness Coach with a valid coaching diploma / licence for the first team. 2- The Fitness Coach must: a) hold at least the Minimum Coach Requirements (MCR) as stipulated by the AFC Competitions Operations Manual; or b) hold a Recognition of Experience and Current Competence (RECC) issued by AFC in compliance with the RECC regulations for cases where the Fitness Coach does not have the required certification as defined under (a) above; or c) already have started the required education course, recognized by AFC, to achieve the required diploma as defined under (a) above. 3- The Fitness Coach must be duly registered with the FFIRI and/or its affiliated league. 4- The Education Committee of FFIRI has a separate instruction regarding the Minimum Coach Requirement (MCR) related to the qualified coaches of IRAN Leagues, according to which a National Licence will be applied.	



P.19	N1
Club License Officer	A
1- The license applicant must have a club licensing officer. The club licensing officer is responsible for liaising with the club licensing team. Licensing officer must be fluent in English language and possess minimum requisite qualifications in working with computer. 2- The Club License officer must work full-time with the club. 3- The Club License officer must not have any other occupations within License Applicant legal entity but Club License Officer duties and responsibilities. 4- The Club License Officer must be only affiliated as a Club License Officer with one club participating in relevant competitions organized by Iran Football League Organisation. 5- The Club License Officer should participate in training workshops organized by IRIFF and/or Iran League Football Organization.	

P.20	N1
Psychologist	C
1- Each club should appoint a specialist holding a psychology diploma as the psychologist of the first team. 2- psychologist must be a member of the Iranian Psychological Association	

P.21	N1
Marketing Officer	C
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed a Marketing Manager who is responsible for the Licence Applicant's Marketing Strategic Programme (Criteria F.09) as well as all other marketing and commercial matters. 2- Key Areas of his/her responsibility will be for: a) Regulation, Implementation and Follow-up of the Club's Marketing Strategic Programme and related activities with the aim of increasing commercial revenue and fan base. b) Corporate Social Responsibility, Fan & Community Development, Sponsorship, and Communications. 3- The Marketing Manager must be a full-time employee of the Licence Applicant and work exclusively as a Marketing Manager; 4- The Marketing Manager must possess either of the following qualification:	



- a) A Bachelor's and/or Master's Degree in Sport Marketing, Marketing Management, Business Management, International Marketing, Research Marketing or Related disciplines which must be approved by the Licensor; or
 - b) Worked two years (within the last five years) in the area of Sports Marketing.
- 5- The Marketing Manager must provide quarterly updates to the Club Licensing Department on implementation of the Licence Applicant's Marketing Strategy. This must include a review of progress towards the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that have been set for the ongoing Licensing Cycle.

P.22	N1
Club's Website and Social Media	C

1- The Licence Applicant must develop a website (in English and Persian) to promote the football and social activities of the Club to its fan base and to prospective fans.

2- At a minimum, the Club website must contain the following and must be updated as indicated below:

- a) Club news and features (updated at least once before each first team match and once after each first team match);
- b) Fixtures (updated at least two weeks before the start of the season) and results (updated within 2 hours after the match);
- c) Player and coach profiles of the First team (updated at least two weeks before the season starts and any changes to be reflected within 24 hours of public announcement);
- d) Player and coach profiles of youth teams and the fixtures of youth team competitions.
- e) Club information (map, stadium location, contact details) (updated at least two weeks before start of season and within 24 hours of change);
- f) Club history (updated at least two weeks before the start of the season);
- g) Ticketing information (or online portals) (updated at least one week before each match of the first team);
- h) Community initiatives and activities (updated at least once a week);
- i) Sponsor logos and links;
- j) Links to FFIRI/ Iran football League Organisation website.
- k) Other information on the website could include (but not limited to):
 - i. Merchandising;
 - ii. Club Membership (how to become a member of the club)

3- The Licence Applicant must engage in at least two (2) Social Media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Telegram, Bale, Eitaa, etc.) as below;

- a) Social media official pages must be in English and Persian.
- b) Club must create engagement with fans through the social media pages including providing information, Interacting with fans, competitions, photos, videos etc.



- 4- The English and Persian content on the Licence Applicant's website and social media shall be up to date and not be translated via an automated computer software such as Google translate.
- 5- The Licence Applicant must appoint a Website and Social Media Editor which is responsible for writing and editing of Club's Website and Social Media content.
- 6- For NPL:
License applicant's Website and Social Media official pages may be only in Persian.

P.23	N1
Competitions Officer	C
1- The Licence Applicant must have appointed a Competition Officer who is responsible all matters related to all International and/or Domestic Competitions hosted by the Licence Applicant. 2- The Competitions Officer must: Fully cooperate with the bodies organizing international and/or domestic competitions: a) Be present at Licence Applicant's each International Competitions organized by the AFC and conduct the required cooperations with Competition Organizing Bodies (e.g. MC, LGC, LOC, LSO, LMO, etc); and b) Be present at Domestic Competitions organized by Iran Football League Organization and conduct the required cooperations with Iran Football League Organization's Representative, Provincial Football Association's Representative, Media Supervisor of Competition and etc.; and c) Participate in Match Coordinating Meeting; and 3- The Competition Officer must be duly registered with the AFC Member Association and/or its affiliated league.	

P.24	N1
Child Safeguarding Officer	C
1- the Licence Applicant must have appointed a Child Safeguarding Officer which is responsible for: a) Writing and Regulating a Child Safeguarding Policy for the club. b) Maintaining a record of all club staff in direct contact with Children, including part time, project, volunteers and 3rd party companies. c) Ensuring all staff members with direct contact with children are aware and comply with the Child Safeguarding policy of the licence applicant d) Being the main point of contact for all child related reports and concerns. e) Maintaining a record of all child related concerns raised to attention or reported to the club. f) Reporting any and all any concerns directly to the license applicant's related authorities. 2- The Child Safeguarding Officer must possess the following qualifications:	



- a) Participation Certificate in training workshops/Courses organized by AFC; or Participation Certificate in training workshops organized by FFIRI and/or Iran League Football Organization; and
- b) Bachelor's degree in Psychology, Education Sciences (Pedagogy), or Related disciplines which must be approved by the Licensor; and
- c) Clean Criminal Records Certificate; and
- d) Non- usage of smoking materials

P.25	N1
Human Resource (HR) Handbook	C
1- The Licence Applicant must submit a legally valid human resource handbook which shall comply with national law and FIFA, AFC, FFIRI and Iran League Football Organization's statutes, rules and regulations. The HR handbook shall contain at least the following: a) Introduction (Vision/Mission, Objectives, Core values) b) Employment Policy and Hiring process c) Work schedule & Overtime d) Organization hierarchy e) Remuneration / Salary f) Allowances and benefits g) Travel policy h) Leave and holidays i) Dress Code j) Training and Development k) Job evaluation l) Safety and Health m) Club's information confidentiality Maintenance n) Disciplinary Action (for general employees and players/officials) o) Dispute resolution p) Termination of employment 2- The HR handbook must have been signed and approved by Licence Applicant's all BOD members and General Manager.	



P.26	N1
Football Club Strategy Plan	C
1- The Licence Applicant must submit a Strategic Plan. A Strategic Plan defines what direction the football club wants to go as a business and how it will get there. It is a document that provides focus for all staff and other key stakeholders of the football club which must include, as a minimum: a) Vision Statement b) Mission Statement c) Core values d) Situation analysis: including SWOT Analysis and PESTEL created via engagement of key football club stakeholders e) Long-term goals: these must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound (i.e., SMART) f) Annual objectives: illustrating how the club will achieve its long-term goals and is the plan for HR within the club to drive successful implementation of the Strategic Plan g) Illustrate alignment with other key strategic documents, including those required under Youth Development Programmes (S.01) and Club's Marketing Strategic Programme (F.09). 2- The Strategic Plan must be a minimum of four years and updated annually in order to: a) Measure the implementation of the the Licence Applicant previous season's Performance b) Illustrate how the previous season's implementation has contributed towards the overall goals of the Football Club Strategic Plan c) Highlight any revisions to the overall Football Club Strategic Plan based on learnings or new direction of the Football Club 3- The Strategic Plan must have been signed and approved by Licence Applicant's all BOD members and General Manager.	

P.27	N1
Athletic Trainer	C
1- Each club must appoint a specialist holding sports pathology and corrective movements diploma as the first team athletic trainer. 2- The qualification of Athletic Trainer must be recognized by the medical center of the league organization.	



Article 19: Legal Criteria

L.01	N1
Declaration in Respect of the Participation in National Club Competitions	A
1- The Licence Applicant must submit a legally valid declaration confirming that: a) it recognises as legally-binding the statutes, rules and regulations and decisions of FIFA, the AFC, FFIRI and, if it exists as a separate legal entity, of its national league as well as the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne as provided in the relevant articles of the AFC Statutes; b) it recognises the exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (domiciled in Lausanne, Switzerland) for any dispute of international dimension and in particular involving FIFA and/or the AFC; c) it recognises the prohibition on recourse to ordinary courts under the FIFA and AFC Statutes; d) at national level, it will play in competitions that are recognised and endorsed by FFIRI (e.g. national championship, national cup); e) at international level, it will participate in competitions recognised and endorsed by the AFC and/or FIFA. To avoid any doubt, this provision does not relate to friendly matches; f) it will abide by and observe the provisions and conditions of the national club licensing regulations; g) its reporting perimeter is defined in accordance with Article 20.1 of these Regulations and it will be accountable for any consequences of an entity included in the reporting perimeter not abiding by and observing this declaration. h) all submitted documents are complete and correct; i) it authorises the competent Licensor and the AFC to examine documents and seek information and, in the event of any appeal procedure, to seek information from any relevant public authority or private body according to national law; and j) it acknowledges that AFC reserves the right to execute compliance audits at national level in accordance with Article 21.3. 2- This declaration must be executed by an authorised signatory no more than three (3) months prior to the corresponding deadline for its submission to the Licensor.	



L.02	N1
LEGAL DOCUMENTS	A
1- The Licence Applicant must submit the following documents: a) a copy of its current company articles, constitution, statutes or similar- type governing document; b) an extract from a public register (e.g. trade register) which demonstrates that the Licence Applicant is a legal entity which contains the following minimum information; 1. registered name 2. popular name 3. address of headquarters 4. legal form 5. list of authorized signatories and 6. type of signature (e.g. individual, collective) c) (If applicable) the agreement between the Licence Applicant and FFIRI which has the right to participate in affiliated competitions of FFIRI.	

L.03	N1
Ownership and Control of Clubs	A
1- To safeguard the integrity of national matches and competitions, Licence Applicants must be committed to ensuring that they conform to the highest ethical and sporting standards regarding matters of ownership and Control. In this regard, the Licence Applicant must comply with the following criteria: a) the Licence Applicant shall not, either directly or indirectly: i. hold or deal in the securities or shares of any other participating club(s) in the same national competition; ii. be a member of any other participating club(s) in the same national competition; iii. be involved in any capacity whatsoever in the management, administration and/or sporting performance of any other participating club(s) in the same national competition; and/or iv. have any power whatsoever in the management, administration and/ or sporting performance of any other participating club(s) in the same national competition, if there is a material risk that this would actually or potentially jeopardise the integrity of the national competition; b) No one connected to the Licence Applicant shall simultaneously be involved, either directly or indirectly, in any capacity whatsoever in the management, administration and/or sporting performance of the Licence Applicant and any other participating club(s) in the same national competition, if there is a material risk that this would actually or potentially jeopardise the integrity of the national competition.	



- c) No individual or legal entity connected to the Licence Applicant shall have Control or influence over any other participating club(s) in the same national competition, if there is a material risk that this would actually or potentially jeopardise the integrity of the national competition. In assessing whether or not Control or influence exists in this context, the following factors shall be taken into account:
- i. holding a majority of the shareholders' voting rights in the relevant clubs;
 - ii. having the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management, or supervisory body of the relevant clubs;
 - iii. being a shareholder and alone controlling a majority of the shareholders' voting rights pursuant to an agreement entered into with other shareholders of the relevant clubs; and/or
 - iv. Being able to exercise by any means a decisive influence in the decisionmaking of the relevant clubs.

2) The Licence Applicant shall submit a legally valid and binding declaration outlining the ownership structure and Control mechanism of the club, and confirming its compliance with the criteria set out above. If the Licence Applicant considers that it may contravene any of the criteria, this should be explained in the declaration (with evidence). The declaration must be executed by an authorised signatory no more than Three (3) months prior to the corresponding deadline for its submission to the Licensor.



L.04	N1
Legal Group Structure and Ultimate Controlling Party	C

1- The Licence Applicant must provide the Licensor with information on the legal Group structure at the Statutory Closing Date prior to the deadline for the submission of the application to the Licensor. It must be presented in a chart and duly approved by management. The Licensor must be informed of any changes there may have been to the legal Group structure during the period between the Statutory Closing Date and the submission of the chart to the Licensor.

2- This document must clearly identify and include information on:

- a) the Licence Applicant and, if different, the Registered Member of FFIRI;
- b) any Subsidiary of the Licence Applicant and, if different, the Registered Member of FFIRI;
- c) any Joint Venture entity, including other parties with an interest in the Joint Venture, in which the Licence Applicant (or, if different, the Registered Member of the AFC Member Association) has an interest;
- d) any Associate entity of the Licence Applicant and, if different, the Registered Member of FFIRI;
- e) any direct or indirect Controlling entity of the Licence Applicant, up to and including the ultimate Controlling party;
- f) any party that has 10% or greater direct or indirect ownership of the Licence Applicant, or 10% or greater voting rights;
- g) any party with a Significant Influence over the Licence Applicant;
- h) any other football club, in respect of which any of the parties identified in (a) to (f) or any of their key management personnel have any ownership interest, voting rights, and/or any involvement or influence whatsoever in its management, administration and/or sporting performance; and
- i) The reporting perimeter as defined in Article 20.1 must also be clearly identified in the document.

3- If deemed relevant the Licensor may request the Licence Applicant/Licensee to provide additional information other than that listed above (e.g. information about any subsidiaries and/or Associates of the ultimate Controlling entity and/or direct Controlling entity).

4- The following information must be provided in relation to all entities included in the legal Group structure:

- a) Name of legal entity.
- b) Type of legal entity.
- c) Main activity of legal entity; and
- d) Percentage of ownership interest (and, if different, percentage of voting power held).

5- For any Subsidiary of the Licence Applicant/Licensee and, if different, the Registered Member of FFIRI, the following information must also be provided:

- a) Share capital;
- b) Total assets;
- c) Total revenues; and
- d) Total equity.

6- Without prejudice to the foregoing, the Licensor shall ensure that it assesses the information provided by the Licence Applicant under Criterion L.04 to determine the accuracy of the Licence Applicant's declaration under Criterion L.03.



Accordingly, the Licence Applicant shall ensure that it clearly identifies and includes information regarding its compliance with the various components of the declaration under Criterion L.03 when providing the Licensor with information on its legal Group structure under Criteria L.04.

L.05	N1
Written Contract with Professional Players	A

1- The professional players of the Licence Applicant must have a written contract with the Licence Applicant in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players (or for amateur players, a valid memorandum of understanding with the Licence Applicant) and shall incorporate all key provisions required by the relevant national law and of FIFA, the AFC, and FFIRI.

L.06	N1
Disciplinary Procedure and Code of Conduct for Players and Officials	B

1- The Licence Applicant shall establish a legally binding code of conduct for players and officials in compliance with the relevant national law, and the Statutes of FIFA, the AFC and FFIRI.
 2-The code of conduct should be supplemented by a legally binding disciplinary regulation under which the infringement of the code of conduct, club rules, club regulations, and club decisions shall be prosecuted and sanctions may be applied.



Article 20: Financial Criteria

1- Reporting Entity/Entities and reporting perimeter

- a) The Licence Applicant determines and provides to the Licensor the reporting perimeter, i.e. the entity or combination of entities in respect of which financial information (e.g. single entity, consolidated or combined financial statements) has to be provided.
- b) The reporting perimeter must include:
 - i. the Licence Applicant and, if different, the registered member of FFIRI;
 - ii. any Subsidiary of the Licence Applicant and, if different, the Registered Member of FFIRI;
 - iii. any other entity included in the legal Group structure which generates revenues and/or performs services and/or incurs costs in respect of the football activities defined in paragraph (c) (3. to 10) below;
 - iv. any entity, Rialspective of whether it is included in the legal Group structure, which generates revenues and/or performs services and/or incurs costs in respect of football activities as defined in paragraph (c) (1) and (2) below.
- c) Football activities include:
 - i. employing/engaging personnel (as defined in Criteria F.04) including payment of all forms of consideration to employees arising from contractual or legal obligations;
 - ii. acquiring/selling players' registrations (including loans);
 - iii. ticketing;
 - iv. sponsorship and advertising;
 - v. broadcasting;
 - vi. merchandising and hospitality;
 - vii. club operations (e.g. administration, matchday activities, travel, scouting, etc.);
 - viii. financing (including financing secured or pledged against the assets of the Licence Applicant);
 - ix. use and management of Stadium and Training Facilities; and
 - x. youth sector.
- d) An entity may be excluded from the reporting perimeter only if:
 - i. its activities are entirely unrelated to the football activities defined in paragraph (c) above and/or the locations, assets or brand of the football club; or
 - ii. it is immaterial compared with all the entities that form the reporting perimeter and it does not perform any of the football activities defined in paragraph (c) (1 and 2) above; or
 - iii. the football activities it performs are already entirely reflected in the financial statements of one of the entities included in the reporting perimeter.
- e) The Licence Applicant must submit a declaration by an authorised signatory, which confirms:
 - i. that all revenues and costs related to each of the football activities indicated in paragraph (c) have been included in the reporting perimeter and provide a detailed explanation should this not be the case; and
 - ii. whether any entity included in the legal Group structure has been excluded from the reporting perimeter, justifying any such exclusion with reference to paragraph d).



2- For further information on the mandatory reporting period and the minimum requirements on the format of reporting and accounting, as well as a detailed explanation of each of the criteria below, please refer to the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook.

F.01	N1
Annual Financial Statements - Audited	A
1- Regardless of the legal structure of the Licence Applicant, Annual Financial Statements based on the local legislation for incorporated companies shall be prepared and Audited by an independent auditor. 2- The Audited Annual Financial Statement shall be in respect of the Statutory Closing Date immediately prior to the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to AFC and must consist of: a) a balance sheet; b) a profit and loss account; c) a cash flow statement; d) notes, comprising a summary of significant Accounting Policies and other explanatory notes; and; e) a financial Review by management. 3- The Audited Annual Financial Statements shall meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook. 4- If the Audited Annual Financial Statements do not meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook, then Supplementary Information must be prepared by the Licence Applicant and assessed by the auditor.	

F.02	N1
Financial Statements for the Interim Period– Reviewed	B
1- If the Statutory Closing Date of the Licence Applicant is more than six (6) months before the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to AFC, then the Licence Applicant shall prepare and submit additional financial statements covering the Interim Period. 2- If the Financial Statements for the Interim Period are prepared and submitted, they should cover the Interim Period up to a date within six (6) months preceding the deadline for submission of the List of Licensing Decisions to AFC and must be Reviewed or Audited by an independent auditor. 3- The Interim Financial Statements shall meet the minimum disclosure requirements and accounting principles set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook.	



F.03	N1
No Overdue Payables Towards Football Clubs Arising from Transfer Activities	A

1- The Licence Applicant must prove that it has no overdue payables towards football clubs arising from transfer activities as at 31 December preceding the season to be licensed, unless by the following 31 March they have been fully settled, deferred by mutual agreement with the creditor or are subject to a not obviously unfounded dispute submitted to a competent authority.

F.04	N1
No Overdue Payables Towards Employees and Social / Tax Authorities	A

1- The Licence Applicant must prove that, in respect of contractual and legal obligations with its current/former employees and social/tax authorities it has no overdue payables as at 31 December 2024 preceding the season to be licensed, unless by the following 31 March 2024 they have been fully settled, deferred by mutual agreement with the creditor or are subject to a not obviously unfounded dispute submitted to a competent authority.

2- The term 'employees' shall include but not limited to:

- a) all professional players according to the applicable FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players; and
- b) the administrative, technical, medical and security staff specified in the AFC Club Licensing Regulations.



F.05	N1
Written Representations Prior to the Licensing Decision	A
1- Within seven (7) days prior to date on which the licensing decision is to be made by the First Instance Body, the Licence Applicant must make written representations to the Licensor. 2- The written representations shall confirm: a) That all documents submitted to the Licensor are complete and correct; b) Whether or not any Significant Change in relation to all the licensing criteria has occurred; c) Whether or not any Events or Conditions of Major Economic importance have occurred that may have an adverse impact on the Licence Applicant's financial position since the balance sheet date of the preceding Audited Annual Financial Statements or Reviewed Interim Financial Statements (if applicable). If Any Events or Conditions of Major Economic Importance have occurred, the management representations letter must include a description of the nature of the event or condition and an estimate of its financial effect, or a statement that such an estimate cannot be made; and d) Whether or not the Licence Applicant (or the Registered Member of FFIRI which has a contractual relationship with the Licence Applicant within the meaning of Article 12) or any Parent company of the Licence Applicant included in the reporting perimeter is seeking or has received protection from its creditors pursuant to laws or regulations within the 12 months preceding the Licence Season. 3- Approval by management must be evidenced by way of a signature on behalf of the executive body of the Licence Applicant.	



F.06	N1
Future Financial Information	A
1- The Licence Applicant must prepare and submit Future Financial Information in order to demonstrate to the Licensor its ability to continue as a Going Concern until the end of the Licence Season if it has breached any of the indicators defined in paragraph 2 below. 2- If a Licence Applicant exhibits any of the conditions described by indicator 1 or 2, it is considered in breach of the indicator: a) <u>Indicator 1: Going Concern</u> The auditor's report in respect of the Annual or Interim Financial Statements submitted in accordance with F.01 and F.02 includes an emphasis of matter or a qualified opinion/conclusion in respect of Going Concern. b) <u>Indicator 2: Negative equity</u> The Annual Financial Statements (including, where required, the Supplementary Information) submitted in accordance with F.01 disclose a net liabilities position that has deteriorated relative to the comparative figure contained in the previous year's Annual Financial statements, or the Interim Financial Statements submitted in accordance with F.02 (including, where required, the Supplementary Information) disclose a net liabilities position that has deteriorated relative to the comparative figure at the preceding Statutory Closing Date. 3- Future Financial Information must cover the period commencing immediately after the later of the Statutory Closing Date of the Annual Financial Statements or, if applicable, the balance sheet date of the Interim Financial Statements, and it must cover at least the entire Licence Season. 4- Future Financial Information consists of: a) a budgeted profit and loss account, with comparative figures for the immediately preceding Financial Year and Interim Period (if applicable); b) a budgeted cash flow, with comparative figures for the immediately preceding Financial Year and Interim Period (if applicable); and c) explanatory notes, including a brief description of each of the significant assumptions (with reference to the relevant aspects of Historic Financial Information) that have been used to prepare the budgeted profit and loss account and cash flow statement, as well as of the key risks that may affect the future financial results. 5- Future Financial Information must be prepared on a quarterly basis. 6- Future Financial Information must be prepared on a consistent basis with the Audited Annual Financial Statements and follow the same Accounting Policies as those applied for the preparation of the Annual Financial Statements, except for accounting policy changes made after the date of the most recent Annual Financial Statements that are to be reflected in the next Annual Financial Statements, in which case details must be disclosed. 7- Future Financial Information must meet the minimum disclosure requirements as set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook. Additional line items or notes must be included if they provide clarification or if their omission would make the Future Financial Information misleading. 8- Future Financial Information with the assumptions upon which they are based must be approved by management and this must be evidenced by way of a brief statement and signature on behalf of the executive body of the Reporting Entity.	



Subsequent Information:

Criteria F.07 and F.08 apply to Licensees after the Licensing Decision. Criterion F.07 (duty to notify Subsequent Events) applies to all Licensees. Criterion F.08 (duty to update Future Financial Information) only applies to those Licensees who exhibited a breach of one or more of the indicators.

F.07	N1
Duty to Notify Subsequent Events	C
1- Following the licensing decision by the decision-making body, the Licensee must promptly notify the Licensor in writing about any Subsequent Events that may cast significant doubt upon the Licensee's ability to continue as a Going Concern until at least the end of the season for which the Licence has been granted. 2- Compliance with this criterion shall be assessed by the Licensor in respect of the following licensing cycle.	

F.08	N1
Duty to Update Future Financial Information	C
1-If the Licensee is in breach of one or more of the below indicators, then the Licensee must prepare and submit an updated version of the Future Financial Information (prepared according to F.06). In addition, the prepared information shall include a comparison of Budget to actual figures including explanations of variances. The updated version of the Future Financial Information must be prepared, as a minimum, on a six (6) month basis. <u>Indicator 1: Going concern</u> The auditor's report in respect of the Annual or Interim Financial Statements submitted in accordance with F.01 and F.02 includes an emphasis of matter or a qualified opinion/conclusion in respect of Going Concern. <u>Indicator 2: Negative equity</u> The Annual Financial Statements (including, where required, the Supplementary Information) submitted in accordance with F.01 disclose a net liabilities position that has deteriorated relative to the comparative figure contained in the previous year's Annual Financial Statements, or the Interim Financial Statements submitted in accordance with F.02 (including, where required, the Supplementary Information) disclose a net liabilities position that has deteriorated relative to the comparative figure at the preceding Statutory Closing Date. 2- The updated Future Financial Information shall meet the minimum disclosure requirements set out in the AFC Club Licensing Financial Handbook. 3- Compliance with this criterion shall be assessed by the licensor in respect of the following licensing cycle	



F.09	N1
Club's Marketing Strategic Programme	C
1- The Licence Applicant must submit a Marketing Strategic Programme. The Programme must include at least the following: - Vision, mission and target of the Licence Applicant in relation to all marketing activities of the club; - General research analysis (i.e. SWOT analysis, PESTEL analysis, etc.); - Specific fan research analysis (i.e. analysis of fan attendance over last 5 seasons, study why fans attend / do not attend matches of Licence Applicant, etc.); - Commercial asset list illustrating all assets of the Licence Applicant that can be exploited as commercial opportunities; - Strategy and plans to increase the number and value of commercial partnerships and how to manage those partnerships, including details of partnership categories/gradings; - Communications strategy, including plans around digital marketing - Strategy and plans to increase income from merchandising, including details on what merchandise the club sells. Sale of merchandise can be at the Licence Applicant's headquarters, within the stadium perimeter on match days or at public locations, or additionally in dedicated club shops in malls or certain products made available for sale with third party retailers or flagship stores belonging to their kit suppliers. - Strategy and plans to develop / increase fan base, including short term and long term plans on marketing and promotion. This excludes plans that are done in partnership with Licence Applicant's commercial partners. This section must include details of community outreach programme; - Strategy and plans to increase fan attendance, including short and long term plans detailing any promotional activities. This excludes plans that are done in partnership with Licence Applicant's commercial partners. The activities conducted must be more than just conducting raffle draws and/or free prizes at matches; Strategy and plans to increase fan base or fan attendance in cooperation with Licence Applicant's commercial partners (include short and long term plans).	
Each of sections e) to i) must include the following: "WHAT" the Licence Applicant wishes to achieve; "HOW" the Licence Applicant intends to achieve the items indicated in above; "WHO" is responsible for each of the activities identified in above; "HOW MUCH" financial resources are allocated to the activities identified in above; "WHEN" will these activities be conducted, including a timeline to complete and/or achieve the activities identified in above; - Specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the term of the plan to "MEASURE" the success of each activities / objectives identified in above; - evaluation of previous plans and activities, including if they were successful or not and reasons for the success and/or failure (applicable in the next licensing cycle).	



- 2- The Marketing Strategic Programme must have been signed and approved by Licence Applicant's all BOD members and General Manager.
- 3- The Marketing Strategic Programme shall be valid for a minimum period of three (3) years.
- 4- The Licence Applicant does not need to resubmit a previously approved Marketing Strategic Programme to the Licensor except for the following cases:
 - a) Withdrawal of the approval by the Licensor due to the Licence Applicant's non-implementation of its Programme provisions;
 - b) Expiry of the validity of the Programme;
 - c) Change or Modification in the minimum required content of the Programme;
- 5- The Licence Applicant must submit an Annual Report and Evaluation concerning the Marketing Strategic Programme for each licensing cycle to Licensor which at least includes the following:
 - i. Evaluation of previous plans and activities progress;
 - ii. Whether an activity which was planned was carried out or not;
 - iii. If activity was not carried out, to indicate the reasons;
 - iv. Where an activity was carried out, did it meet the KPI and/or anticipated success;

Where an activity was carried out, to submit documents, including but not limited to media clippings, photographs, videos, etc. to prove that activities and plans were conducted in accordance with the programme.



Article 21: Final Provisions

1- Authoritative text and language of correspondence

All correspondence between the AFC and the Licensor and/or the Licensee must be in English and the AFC may ask the Licensor and/or Licensee for a certified translation of documents at their expense.

In the event of a discrepancy between these Regulations and AFC club licensing Regulations, AFC club licensing regulations shall be authoritative.

These Regulations shall be implemented according to the Statutes, Disciplinary and Ethics Code and other FFIRI Regulations. In case of any discrepancy between these Regulations and any applicable FFIRI Regulations, these Regulations will be authoritative.

The headings used for the various Parts, Sections, and Articles of these Regulations are for convenience only and shall not be deemed part of the substance of these Regulations or to affect in any way the language of the provisions to which they refer.

These Regulations shall be issued in English and Persian. In the event of a discrepancy in translation between AFC Club Licensing Regulations and these Regulations, the AFC Club Licensing Regulations shall be authoritative.

2- Annexes

All annexes to the present Regulations form an integral part thereof.

3. Compliance Audits

a) The AFC and/or its nominated bodies/agencies reserve the right to, at any time, conduct compliance audits of the Licensor and Licence Applicant/ Licensee.

b) Compliance audits aim to ensure that the Licensor, as well as the Licence Applicant/ Licensee, have fulfilled their obligations as defined in these Regulations and that the Licence was correctly awarded at the time of the final decision of the Licensor. Non-cooperation of the Licensor or the Licensee to execute a compliance audit shall be referred to the AFC judicial bodies for its appropriate action.

4- Disciplinary Procedures

Should the AFC discover that any licensing decision has been made in violation of the AFC Club Licensing Regulations; the AFC may refer the Licensor to the AFC judicial bodies for their further action in accordance with the relevant regulations.

5- Implementing Provisions

The FFIRI shall take the decisions and adopt, in the form of directives, the detailed provisions necessary for implementing these Regulations. The FFIRI reserves the right to make amendments to any part of these Regulations for any reason whatsoever. Such amendments shall be duly communicated in due course.



6- Matters Not Provided For

Matters not provided for in these Regulations shall be decided by the FFIRI Executive Board. Such decisions are final and binding and not appealable.

7. Enforcement

- a) These Regulations were ratified by the FFIRI Executive Board and came into force immediately.
- b) These Regulations shall be applicable for the granting of Licences to participate in Azadegan (First Division) League commencing from the sporting season 2025/2026 onwards.

Mehdi Taj
FFIRI President



Annex 1- Integration of the AFC Club Licensing Regulations into National Club Licensing Regulations

A. PRINCIPLE

In its National Club Licensing Regulations, FFIRI must define the parties involved, its rights and duties, the criteria and the necessary processes in accordance with the AFC Club Licensing Regulations for entering the AFC and/ or National Club Competitions.

B. THE PROCESS

1- FFIRI must finalise the wording of the national club licensing regulations in English and submit it in CLAS (unless exempted by the AFC), to the AFC General Secretariat for review.

2- The FFIRI is responsible for ensuring, and must demonstrate to the AFC General Secretariat, that all applicable provisions of AFC club licensing regulations have been integrated in its national club licensing regulations. Exceptions may be granted by the AFC General Secretariat according to Article 4 of the AFC Club Licensing Regulations.

3- FFIRI is free to increase or introduce additional minimum criteria in its national club licensing Regulations for the purpose of entering the AFC club competitions.

4- Where introduced by the licensor in its national club licensing Regulations, any increased or additional minimum criteria shall apply to entry in the AFC club competitions.

5- FFIRI must confirm to the AFC General Secretariat that all provisions contained in the national club licensing regulations are in compliance with the applicable national law.

6- The AFC General Secretariat reviews the final version of the national club licensing regulations and accredits it by approving it on CLAS, which confirms that:

- a) the applicable provisions of the AFC Club Licensing Regulations for the purpose of entering the AFC Club Competitions are integrated in the national club licensing Regulations;
- b) the licence issued by the competent national bodies according to the National Club Licensing regulations is based on the minimum criteria set out in Articles 16 to 20 of these Regulations.

7- The National Club Licensing Regulations must be approved by the FFIRI Executive Board and communicated to the Licence Applicants before the start of the licensing process and they cannot be amended during the latter process, unless duly approved by AFC.



Annex 2- Delegation of Licensing and Monitoring Responsibilities to an Affiliated League

1- The AFC General Secretariat approves any requests from FFIRI to delegate or to withdraw licensing and monitoring responsibilities to/from its affiliated league(s) as specified in Article 5.2.

2- Such well-founded requests can be made to the AFC General Secretariat at any time. All the requests presented to AFC in writing before the start of the core process will be considered for effect in the following sporting season.

3- The timing of such a request must be carefully considered. AFC will not accept any request to delegate or to withdraw licensing responsibilities during the core process in order to ensure continuity.

4- The AFC General Secretariat may approve a delegation request if it is satisfied that the league:

- a) is affiliated to the FFIRI and has accepted its statutes, regulations and the decisions of its responsible and competent bodies in writing;
- b) is responsible for running the top domestic championship;
- c) has submitted a written decision by the legislative body of the affiliated league to comply with the following obligations towards the AFC:
 - i. to implement the Club Licensing Criteria according to the provisions of AFC/National Club Licensing Regulations and any future amendments thereto into national club licensing Regulations;
 - ii. to cooperate with the AFC and its nominated bodies/agencies for the purpose of club monitoring;
 - iii. to grant the AFC and its nominated bodies/agencies full necessary access to verify the operation of the club licensing system and the decisions of the decision-making bodies at any time;
 - iv. to allow the AFC and its nominated bodies/agencies to conduct compliance audits at any time of clubs that qualify for an AFC club competition;
 - v. to accept any AFC decision made with regard to exceptions and/or compliance audits;
 - vi. to issue the appropriate sanctions to the relevant parties according to the AFC's recommendations or decisions.



Annex 3- Exceptions Policy

A. PRINCIPLE

1- The AFC General Secretariat may, in accordance with Article 4, grant exceptions on the following matters:

- a) non-applicability of a minimum requirement concerning the decision-making bodies or process defined in Article 7 due to national law or any other reason;
- b) non-applicability of a minimum requirement concerning the core process defined in Article 9 due to national law or any other reason;
- c) non-applicability of a minimum assessment procedure defined in Article 10 due to national law or any other reason;
- d) non-applicability of a certain criterion defined in Articles 16 to 20, due to national law or any other reason;
- e) extension of the introduction period for the implementation of a criterion or a category of criterion defined in Articles 16 to 20.
- f) non-applicability of the two-year rule defined in Article 12.2 in case of change of legal form or company structure of the Licence Applicant on a case by case basis;

2- Exceptions related to items a) to e) are granted to an FFIRI and may apply to all clubs which are registered with the FFIRI and which submit a licensing application to enter the Azadegan (First Division) Club Competitions. Exceptions related to item f) are granted to the individual club that applies for a licence.

3- In principle an exception is granted for a period of one Licence Season. Under specific circumstances, this period may be extended and the FFIRI may be placed on an improvement plan.

4- A renewal of the exception is possible upon a new request.

B. The Process

1- The AFC General Secretariat acts as the first instance decision-making body on exception requests.

2- An exception request must be in writing, clear and well-founded.

3- Exceptions related to items defined under A (1) a) to e) must be submitted by the FFIRI to the AFC General Secretariat thirty (30) days prior to the start of the core process.

4- Exceptions related to the item defined under (A) (1) f) can be submitted at any time. A Licensor notified of the reorganisation or restructuring of an affiliated club (e.g. change of legal form, merger of clubs, split of club, liquidation or bankruptcy) is responsible for notifying the AFC General Secretariat accordingly as soon as it becomes aware of it.

5- The AFC General Secretariat shall exercise necessary discretion to grant any exception within the limits of these regulations.

6- The status and situation of football within the territory of FFIRI will be taken into account when granting an exception. This encompasses, for example:

- a) size of the territory, population, geography, economic background, force majeure;
- b) size of the FFIRI (number of clubs, number of registered players and teams, size and quality of the administration of the association, etc.);



- c) the level of football (professional, semi-professional or amateur clubs);
- d) status of football as a sport within the territory and its market potential (average attendance, TV market, sponsorship, revenue potential, etc.)
- e) AFC and FIFA ranking.
- f) stadium ownership situation (club, city/community, etc.) within the association;
- g) support (financial and other) from the national, regional and local authorities, including the national sports ministry.
- h) protection of creditors;
- i) legal Group structure and reporting perimeter
- j) club
identity

7- The decision will be communicated to the FFIRI. The decision shall be in writing and state the reasoning. The FFIRI shall then communicate it to all Licence Applicants concerned.

8- Appeals can be lodged against decisions made by the AFC General Secretariat in writing before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in accordance with the relevant provisions laid down in the AFC Statutes.



Annex 4 - Extraordinary Application of the Club Licensing System

1. The minimum licensing criteria applicable shall be the same as in Articles 16 to 20 of these Regulations.
2. FFIRI must notify the AFC of any potential extraordinary applications in writing latest by 31 January of the year preceding the season to be licensed.
3. FFIRI must provide the criteria for the extraordinary application to the club(s) concerned. They must prepare the club(s) concerned for the extraordinary application procedure.
4. The club(s) concerned must provide the necessary documentary proof to the FFIRI. FFIRI will assess the club(s) against the minimum criteria in Articles 16 to 20 of these Regulations.
5. The FFIRI shall forward the following (in English) to the AFC by the 30 April of the year preceding the season to be licensed:
 - a) a written petition to the AFC Entry Control Body duly signed and dated by the club requesting it to grant a Licence to participate in the corresponding AFC club competition. Such request must provide:
 - i. the name and address of the club;
 - ii. the identity of any club(s) directly affected by its petition;
 - iii. its full written argument with reference to the relevant regulations;
 - iv. all documentary evidence provided to FFIRI;
 - b) a recommendation by the FFIRI (including the dates and names of the persons that assessed the club);
 - c) any other documents requested by the AFC.
6. If during this extraordinary application procedure any such club is eliminated on sporting merit, the FFIRI shall notify the AFC General Secretariat immediately, and the procedure will be immediately terminated, without further decision. Any such terminated procedure cannot be resumed or restarted at a later stage.



Annex 7: Implementation of Licensing and Monitoring Requirements to Govern Participation in its National Competitions

1. FFIRI is required to implement a club licensing system and monitoring requirements to govern participation in at least its national top division league. For this purpose, each FFIRI is free to increase, decrease, or introduce additional minimum criteria in its national club licensing regulations for the purpose of entering the national competition(s).
2. For the purposes of implementing club licensing for participation in the national competition(s), the general principles of club licensing defined under Articles 2 to 14 of these Regulations must be respected.
3. In each AFC Member Association, the licence applicants from at least the national top division league must comply with Article 12 of these Regulations. The AFC General Secretariat may grant an exception to the rule defined in Article 12.2 in case of a change of legal form or company structure of the licence applicant. The process for an exception request is defined under Annex 3.B of these Regulations.
4. It is recommended that each AFC Member Association includes, as a minimum, all Club Licensing Criteria (as per Articles 16 to 20 of these Regulations) graded ACGL B and higher as defined in these Regulations for its national top division league. These criteria can be adjusted by taking into consideration the status and situation of football in the relevant AFC Member Association.
5. For the purposes of the national club licensing system in relation to the Club Licensing Criteria F.03 and F.04 (overdue payables), the FFIRI may adapt the dates as per the national competitions calendar, while preserving the general principles as established in these Regulations.



Annex 8 - Catalogue of Sanctions

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Article 6 - Notification and Execution of the Decision-Making Bodies and the Judicial Bodies of FFIRI Votes

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Article 11 - Disciplinary Penalties Table



Introduction and Scope of Application

This instruction is based on the AFC/National Club Licensing regulation and has been developed in order to establish unity of procedures in the evaluation of the clubs' documents in AFC/National Club Licensing System, prevention of inattention to the establishment of provided requirements, respecting of clubs' rights and investigation of their violations. Investigation of clubs' violations according to this instruction, the disciplinary regulations of the FFIRI and the AFC/National Club Licensing Regulations shall be effective from the date of notification of this instruction.

Article 1 – The Principle of Legality of Offences

- a) All clubs in National Pro, Division 1, Division 2 league are required to participate in AFC/National Club Licensing System. Following Club Licensing Department invitation, License Applicants who sign the Application Form and Commitment Letter will be permitted to participate in Club Licensing System. In case of clubs' failure to participate in the Club Licensing System, they will be subject to legal act in accordance with provisions of this instruction.
- b) Those behaviors, acts, and activities of clubs constructing failure to implement and meet the requirements of the AFC/National Club Licensing System, inattention to deadlines, failure to answer to correspondences, etc., shall be subject to this instruction and other related rules and regulations.

Article 2 – The Principle of Proportionality

- a) Adhering to the proportionality between the violation and the punishment is mandatory
- b) The Judicial Bodies of FFIRI shall decide on the disciplinary Measures to be applied to the club, based on the reports and suggestions received from the Decision-Making Bodies and Club Licensing Department Manager, this guideline, the disciplinary regulations of the FFIRI and the Club Licensing Regulations.
- c) In case of no provision related to violation of this instruction and other regulations, the Judicial Bodies of FFIRI will consult with the decision-making bodies and decide about the penalty, considering the followings:
 - 1) Type of offense
 - 2) The severity and importance of the offense
 - 3) Previous records of the related club in the National/AFC Club Licensing in the previous years
 - 4) Number of repetitions of the offense in previous years
 - 5) Number of offenses in the subject season.

Article 3 – The Principle of Equal Treatment and Fair Audit

- a) The right is preserved for clubs to be audited fairly.
- b) All clubs at all level of competitions organized by the FFIRI or the Football League Organization, shall be equal before this the Club Licensing Regulation, this guideline, the disciplinary rules and regulations, and other rules and regulations. Any discrimination based on the club's standing in the upcoming competition tables, the current ethnic, local or geographical status, the significance or the number of fans of the club, or any other correspondance reason that could be an exception, is unacceptable and prohibited.

Article 4- The Principle of Proceeding and Legality of Penalties

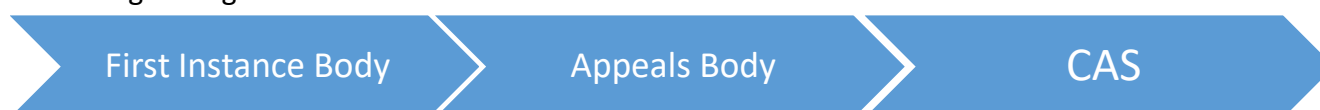


- a) Determination of penalties shall be in accordance with this guideline, the Club Licensing Regulation and the disciplinary rules and regulations of the FFIRI.
- b) Penalties shall be enforced based on the proposal of the Decision-Making Bodies to the Judicial Bodies of the FFIRI and by the issuance of a vote by the Judicial Bodies of the FFIRI.
- c) The Decision-Making Bodies in requirement auditing process and evaluation of related documents and proceeding of clubs' penalties, must observe the provisions of Club Licensing Regulation.
- d) In compliance with article 7 of Club Licensing Regulation, license granted or withdrawn is only within the authority of decision-making bodies. Judicial bodies of FFIRI shall not interfere in this matter.
- e) The Decision-Making Bodies can propose their suggestion for the application of disciplinary penalties to the Judicial Bodies of FFIRI, for decision-making. The License Applicant can Appeal
- f) to decisions issued by the Judicial Bodies. This right is preserved for the licence applicants who have been granted the related licence with sanction that would appeal against the applied sanction. Appeals to Disciplinary Committee decisions shall be reviewed and judged by the Appeal Committee of the FFIRI.
- g) Any decisions adopted by the Judicial Bodies should be in writing, with description of grounds and appeal process, and duly notified to License Applicant by the General Secretary of FFIRI.
- h) The Club Licensing Manager, has the authority to appeal against all and any decisions issued by the First Instance Body, independently from the club.
- i) The clubs are not authorized to submit new documents to the Appeal Body of Club Licensing Department or Appeal Committee of FFIRI and new documents shall not be accepted.

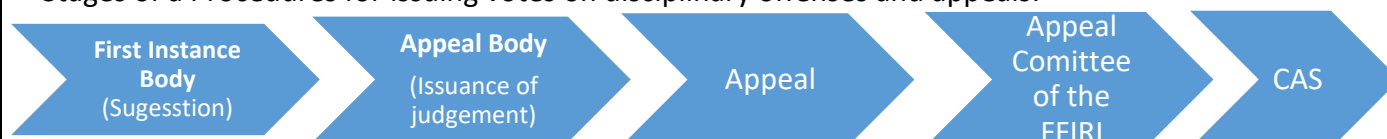
Stages of granting or withdrawn of the AFC Licence:



States of granting or withdrawn of the National Licence:



Stages of a Procedures for issuing votes on disciplinary offenses and appeals:



Article 5 – Types of Disciplinary Penalties

- a) **Notice:** reminder of a disciplinary rule which entails a legal warning to the violator indicating penalties in case of rules infringement in the future which must be duly notified to the offending club. Including but not limited to non-participation in official meetings, failure to respond to correspondences and Club Licensing Department correspondences, non-compliance with the provided deadlines, failure to submit the documents within documents completion deadlines,



failure or defect in responses and documents submission, non-fulfilment of criteria and requirements shall be subject to Notice. Such Notices will be announced to the applicant clubs through official correspondence from the authorized officials of Football League Organization, FFIRI and Club Licensing Manager.

- b) **Cash Penalties:** The cash penalties applied to the offender clubs include the followings:
 - 1) Failure to pay attention to the Notices sent by the Club Licensing Department.
 - 2) Failure to participate in sessions that the License Applicant has been officially invited to by the related Departments.
 - 3) Submission of documents within fulfillment date on Club Licensing Administration System (CLAS)
 - 4) Failure to participate in the National Club Licensing System.
 - 5) Failure to meet any grade A criteria in the National Club Licensing System.
 - 6) Failure to meet any grade B criteria in the AFC and National Club Licensing System.
- c) According to the type and severity of the violation the following Penalties can be applied along with cash fines. In this case, the ban shall remain until full payment of the cash fine.
 - 1) Ban from holding matches in a particular stadium: Banning the club from holding its related matches in a particular stadium
 - 2) Holding matches in a neutral stadium: One or several matches of a club or the entire matches of one season of a club shall be held in a stadium within a neutral province.
 - 3) Ban from transfers: Banning a club from registration of a new player (Domestic and /or international) in the defined deadline.
 - 4) Return of Awards/Financial Aids: All received awards and benefits.
 - 5) Deduction of the spectators' numbers of the related team.
 - 6) Deduction of Points: Deduction of points gained or will be gained by the club in the future.

Article 6 - Notification and Execution of the Decision-Making Bodies and the Judicial Bodies of FFIRI Votes

- a) The provisions of the minutes of the votes issued by the the Decision-Making Bodies and the Judicial Bodies of FFIRI, shall be notified to clubs in accordance with the pre-issued timetable.
- b) All and any the Decision-Making Bodies votes shall be notified to clubs only with the signature of the General Secretary of the FFIRI.
- c) All votes issued for repetition and continuance of a violation or proving inattention in the establishment of related requirements or lack of intention for the establishment of them, are final.
- d) The secretariat of the Club Licensing Department shall be responsible for following up on the execution of the votes issued by any Judicial Bodies.
- e) The votes and decisions shall be executed immediately after notification.
- f) If the decision is overturned in the appeal phase and a new decision is issued, the interpretation of the decision in the overturned part is the responsibility of the Appeal Committee of the FFIRI.
- g) The copy of the Judicial Bodies' votes will be sent to the Secretary General of the FFIRI for notification to the relevant committees and cooperation in the implementation of the votes. In this regard, all affiliated committees and departments in Football League Organization and the FFIRI are required to act on the announced bans and disciplinary cases.
- h) Regard to all defined deadlines in this instruction notification, implementation, sent dates and etc. are considered as deadlines and since the criteria for evaluating the clubs' actions is the AFC website calender therefore, in all cases, the number of days shall be computed regardless of holidays or working days, and all days shall be counted. In other words, no national administrative



or official holiday is an exception not counted in the deadlines and shall be counted as part of the deadline.

Article 7- Refrainment from the execution of decisions and punishments and failure to cooperate with the Judicial Bodies

All clubs subject to the Club Licensing Regulation and this guideline are bound and required to execute and follow orders and votes issued by the official authorities and the Judicial Bodies of the FFIRI in accordance with disciplinary rules and regulations.

The club's unjustified refrainment to the announcement of the vote, which may be in the form of automation system and/or face-to-face and/or any other way, constitutes the notification of the vote, and the deadline for appeal and re-evaluation is calculated from the date of notification of the vote. if the club refrains from acknowledging this:

- a) A cash penalty of an amount of at least 500,000,000 Rials shall be applied and an at most 30 days deadline shall be given to the club for the implementation of the financial or non-financial vote and decision. Despite of any circumstances, the mentioned deadline shall never be extended,
- b) Refrainment or negligence in execution of the votes and decisions in the defined deadlines, shall be subject to a points deduction or relegation to lower divisions.

Article 8- The Principle of Confidentiality

- a) All and any parties involved in the administrative, decision making, the Judicial Bodies, and others within the Club Licensing System, shall fully observe and comply with the principle of confidentiality and shall not disclose confidential information, documents and papers, they have had access to due to their position unless rules and regulations or competent judicial bodies order them to disclose such information.
- b) Any disclosure of the process of proceeding and evaluation of documents until decision-making announcement by the decision-making bodies, Club Licensing Department and the Judicial Bodies of the FFIRI is prohibited and shall be construed as disclosure of confidential information.
- c) The chairman and all members of the Decision- Making Bodies, the members of the Club Licensing Department of FFIRI, while fully observing the principle of confidentiality and neutrality, should refrain from making any comments about the case or its content and doing any interview with the media before decision-making announcement. Following decision-making announcement and in case of any need for responses or interpretation of the vote or decision, preferably should be done through the official website of the FFIRI, in cooperation with FFIRI.
- d) In case of violating these rules and regulations and non-compliance with the principle of confidentiality, the Judicial Bodies shall act against the violator in accordance with the rules and regulations.
- e) All persons subject to these regulations are obliged to inform the officials and competent authorities of the FFIRI or the Football League Organization without any delay if they are informed of any violation of the rules by the members.
- f) Publication of final decisions and votes is necessary and they should be published and notified to the club in writing and through the automated administrative system of the FFIRI and/or the Football League Organization. Publication of the judgment or decision before official notification to the club, by any person, is generally prohibited and construed and considered as a disclosure of confidential information.

Article 9 – Matters Not Provided for



Concern to matters not provided for in this instruction, the Judicial Bodies shall refer to the Disciplinary Rules and Regulation of the FFIRI, the Club Licensing Regulation, the Decision-Making Bodies and in case of need, shall make inquiries to AFC before decision making

Article 10 – Distribution of Cash Penalties related to Club Licensing:

The FFIRI and the Football League Organization are obliged to distribute the fines received through this regulation for the development of basic football and education in underprivileged areas. The Club Licensing Department supervises the proper implementation of this clause.

Article 11 - Disciplinary Penalties Table

1) Cash Penalties: issues subject to cash penalties include the followings:

- a) After receiving written notice No.1 from the Club Licensing Department about a particular subject in a season, the club shall have to pay a cash penalty of 300,000,000 Rials.
- b) After receiving written notice No.2 from the Club Licensing Department about a particular subject in a season, the club shall have to pay a cash penalty of 500,000,000 Rials.
- c) After receiving written notice No.3 or more from the Club Licensing Department about a particular subject in a season, a cash penalty of 400,000,000 Rials for each notice shall be added to the 500,000,000 Rials cash penalty.
- d) In case of non-participation of club's representative in the meetings where the License Applicant has been officially has been invited by the Club Licensing Department, the club shall have to pay a cash penalty of 500,000,000 Rials.
- e) In case of submission of the documents after the Fulfillment Date on the Club Licensing Administration System (CLAS), the club is obliged to pay a Penalty of 500,000,000 Rials for each A category criterion.
- f) The penalty for not obtaining a license for clubs that are required to participate in the National Club Licensing System includes:
 - I. Failure to obtain a National License for the first year in the National Pro League, in addition to the penalties listed in table one, leads to a deduction of three (3) points and a ban on employing foreign players.
 - II. Failure to obtain a National License for the second year in the National Pro League, in addition to the penalties listed in table one, leads to a deduction of six (6) points and a ban on employing foreign players.
 - III. Failure to obtain a National License for the third year in the National Pro League, in addition to the penalties listed in table one, leads to relegation to division one (1) and a ban on employing foreign players.
 - IV. Failure to obtain a National License for the first year in Division 1/Division 2, in addition to the penalties listed in table one, leads to a deduction of three (3).
 - V. Failure to obtain a National License for the second year in Division 1/Division 2, in addition to the penalties listed in table one, leads to a deduction of six (6) points.
 - VI. Failure to obtain a National License for the third year in Division 1/Division 2, in addition to the penalties listed in table one, leads to relegation to lower divisions.



Note: Given that usually the results of obtaining a license are announced at the end of the season every year; Related penalties such as points deduction will be applied for the next season. The relegation of the club to a lower division in based on sports merit shall not hinder the implementation of the penalties of this regulation.

Table 1: Cash Penalties of National Club Licensing System Table

Regulation	First Year	Second Year	Third Year
National Pro League Football	A cash penalty of 1,400,000,000 Rials shall be applied for failure to fulfill each grade A and B criteria	A cash penalty of 2,000,000,000 Rials shall be applied for failure to fulfill each grade A and B criteria	A cash penalty of 2,600,000,000 Rials shall be applied for failure to fulfill each grade A and B criteria
Division One (1)	A cash penalty of 700,000,000 Rials shall be applied for failure to fulfill each grade A and B criteria	A cash penalty of 1,000,000,000 Rials shall be applied for failure to fulfill each grade A and B criteria	A cash penalty of 1,700,000,000 Rials shall be applied for failure to fulfill each grade A and B criteria