



SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chairman's foreword	4
Introduction	6
Our vision, mission and principles	8
Introduction to the strategy and methodology	10
Analysis of the context.....	11
Internal stakeholder consultation.....	11
External stakeholder consultation.....	12
Clubs consultation.....	13
Materiality analysis.....	13
ECA governance structure	18
General Assembly.....	20
Board.....	21
Executive Committee (ExCo).....	21
ECA Working Groups.....	22



ECA Sustainability Strategy	26
Our governance objectives	28
Risk management.....	30
Transparency and accountability.....	34
Training and capacity building.....	40
Communication.....	44
Our social objectives	48
Anti-racism.....	50
Child and youth protection.....	54
Equality and inclusion.....	58
Football for all abilities.....	64
Health and well-being.....	68
Refugee support.....	72
Solidarity and rights.....	78
Our environmental objectives	82
Circular economy.....	84
Climate and advocacy.....	88
Event sustainability.....	92
Infrastructure sustainability.....	96

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Football holds a unique place in society, bringing together people from all backgrounds, united by a shared purpose and passion.

ECA works hard to harness this collective unity for good – including tackling the social and environmental challenges affecting our communities. Climate change, racism and social exclusion are just a few of the many challenges that will significantly harm the future of our sport, if we do not have a clear and collective plan together.

The purpose of this ECA Sustainability Strategy is to drive forward that positive change. We will help our member clubs minimise the impact of sustainability issues through measurable action plans, informed

by a new pan-European ECA Sustainability Working Group. We will develop strong stakeholder networks to amplify our sustainability commitments, leveraging the whole football ecosystem. Most importantly, we have made sustainability one of ECA's eight strategic objectives, so it is at the heart of our operating culture and decision-making.

Our work in this area will never stop – that is our lasting commitment.

On behalf of ECA, I thank you for your support. For the future of football, our members and all the communities we support.

NASSER AL-KHELAÏFI

Chairman, European Club Association



INTRODUCTION



Sustainability took centre stage at our January 2024 European Club Association (ECA) Executive Committee meeting in Doha, featuring presentations by Niclas Carlén, ECA Board Member and Chair of our Sustainability Working Group, and a review of our efforts against UEFA's Licensing and Financial Sustainability Regulations and the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).

This goes some way to highlighting sustainability's growing strategic importance for our organisation and our commitment to setting an example for our member clubs and the broader European football community.

It is evident that sustainability in football is no longer optional or a philanthropic, ad-hoc endeavour; it must be integrated into the core strategy of football organisations that are facing a number of significant social and environmental issues.

ECA's approach is to lead by example in sustainability, inspiring and empowering clubs to take action. Our top management prioritised sustainability as one of ECA's eight key pillars for our upcoming strategic cycle. We appointed a Head of Sustainability to guide our strategy and established a Sustainability Working Group for consistent action and accountability.

We provided comprehensive sustainability training for our entire ECA workforce and extended this education to our member clubs through six highly attended webinars on the topic, marking some of our most successful webinar events to date.

Our strategic partnership with UEFA, European football's governing body, deepened as we backed various initiatives, such as the joint online webinars on UEFA Sustainability Licensing requirements. Additionally, to ensure clarity and consistency for football clubs across Europe, we harmonised our key sustainability policy areas with UEFA's Strength Through

Unity Sustainability Strategy. Establishing our sustainability strategy marks a pivotal moment for us. It not only underscores our dedication to joining the broader shift towards sustainable and responsible practices but also serves as a reference for our members throughout the continent.

Our primary focus lies in offering support and guidance to our members and other stakeholders, and this strategy underscores our readiness and willingness to collaborate in addressing the significant challenges we collectively encounter.

OUR VISION, MISSION AND PRINCIPLES

The European Club Association's (ECA) **vision** is to make football a driving force for sustainable change. This translates to using the power of football clubs to inspire governments, sponsors, fans and suppliers to be more sustainable.

Our **mission** is to put clubs at the Heart of Football and make ECA the **Heart of Sustainable Football**. This means we are driven every day by the passionate belief that the fundamental role clubs play in the development, sustainability and success of football must be better coordinated, recognised and operationalised. We act to strengthen each club for the benefit of all and to ensure that clubs are at the heart of decisions.

ECA strives to set a leading example as the European clubs' representative body by embodying and practising sustainability principles, becoming a benchmark organisation for clubs aspiring to sustainability excellence.

Our guiding principles include:



REPRESENTATION

Direct representation of clubs to safeguard and promote their interests on European club football matters.



PARTICIPATION

High level involvement in the decision-making process of football governing bodies.



COOPERATION

Commitment to play a constructive role in European football, together with all stakeholders.



SERVICE

To offer knowledge sharing, information, and services to member clubs on European club football matters.



INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

This strategy is the result of a thorough analysis designed to address the pressures guiding football clubs towards sustainability. It ensures these pressures are taken into account from analysis to proposal phases, enhancing overall management.

Our objective is to confront two primary challenges. Firstly, the strategy must devise actions to internally enhance ECA's own sustainability credentials. Secondly, it needs to guide members in addressing both mandatory (by regulations) and anticipated (by stakeholders) integration of sustainability within football clubs.

Through our defined strategy, we aim to directly influence member clubs' transition and indirectly shape European football towards a naturally sustainable governance model.



1

ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT

This aims to understand ECA's operating environment by analysing key regulatory frameworks such as EU Regulations and regulations from football governing bodies like FIFA and UEFA. It also involves assessing the increasing media focus on sustainability in sports, understanding the diverse profiles of new generations of football fans, benchmarking against other sports organisations' sustainability approaches and delving into the most commonly adopted sustainability standards.

2

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

This involved consulting all ECA's employees, with a total of **30** participants engaged. Across three focus groups, the objective was to (1) identify potential ECA stakeholders in sustainability, (2) explore UEFA's Sustainability Strategy as a model for ECA's and (3) initiate discussions about expectations for the future sustainability strategy.





EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Building on the collaborators identified earlier, a group of **17** core stakeholders was contacted for interviews, representing the following categories.

Category of stakeholder	Number of interviewees
International federations	2
European leagues	1
European clubs	1
European federations	3
National federations	3
Stadium association	1
NGOs	1
Scientific think-tank	1
Collaborative network	1
Media	1
Sponsors	1
Supporters	1

The interview was organised into three main sections, referring to ESG (environmental, social, governance) criteria. Based on their expertise and roles in relation to ECA, interviewees were questioned about the social, environmental and/or governance dimensions of this framework.

Specifically, the interview questions were designed to explore the following areas:

- Environment-related impacts and risks – and what ECA may or may not be doing to reduce or mitigate them.
- Social impacts and risks generated within its community.
- Roles, responsibilities and expectations to ensure good decisions are made for the stakeholders and for the environment.

The three areas were explored under a dual perspective:

- ECA's potential to directly impact on the topic as an organisation.
- ECA's potential to directly impact on the topic as a supporting actor for the clubs.

The interviews provided evidence that guided the structure and content of the entire strategy.



CLUBS CONSULTATION

This was executed through a questionnaire directed at all member clubs' sustainability managers. Its primary goal was to assess the current state of football clubs regarding sustainability governance, existing commitments, awareness levels and their needs for enhancing sustainability efforts.



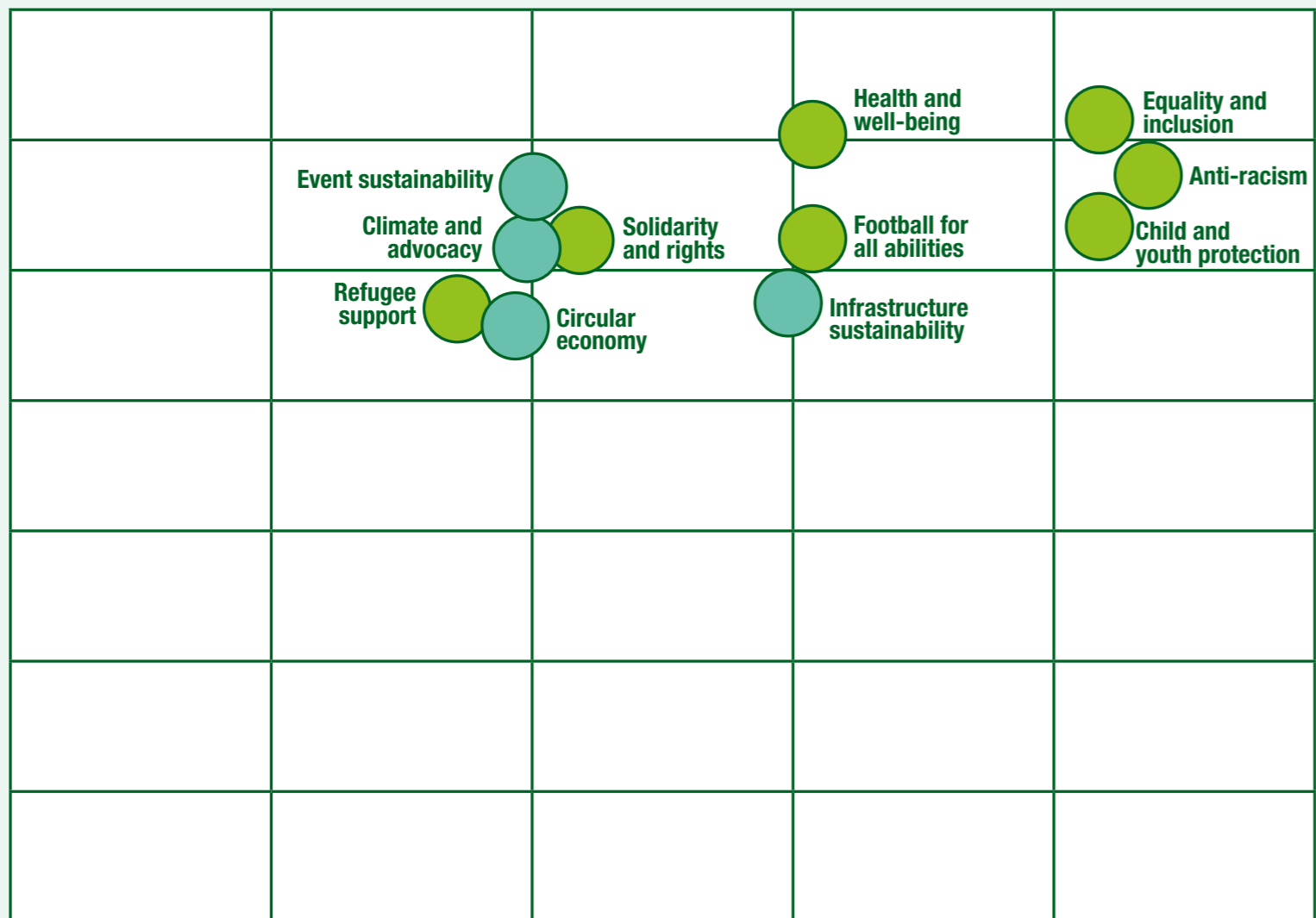
MATERIALITY ANALYSIS

The materiality analysis and solution findings phase form the propositional part of the adopted strategy model, aiding in the identification of key topics to address.

Specifically, we constructed a materiality matrix by aligning the importance of topics for ECA's operations (Y-axis) with their significance to external stakeholders (X-axis). Stakeholders' perceptions were derived by combining interview results with findings from the survey conducted with ECA's Members.



MATERIALITY MATRIX



Stakeholder

ECA SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

ECA



Each category was accompanied by a set of defined objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs were further categorised into those ECA can independently ensure and those reliant on collaboration with other stakeholders. Additionally, this strategy involved identifying two dimensions of ECA:

- ECA as an organisation, where ECA administration exerts full control.

- ECA as the representative of European clubs, where ECA administration does not have control over members' governance and strategic decisions, however it can exert influence and support them in their sustainability journey.

Once the dimensions were established, the key actors and time frames for implementing the strategy were identified. Actors include ECA's administration and ECA members,

while time frames are divided into short-term (by the end of 2025, one and a half years from strategy launch), medium-term (by mid-2027) and long-term (by the end of 2030).

In alignment with these goals, ECA has also joined the Football for the Goals Initiative, offering a platform for the global football community to support and promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In response to stakeholders' suggestions, we aligned our objectives with UEFA's sustainability strategy, Strength Through Unity using its social and environmental policy categories to streamline our approach and adding four policies under the governance dimension.

INFRASTRUCTURE SUSTAINABILITY
Fostering collaboration to promote sustainable infrastructure among our members and other clubs.

EVENT SUSTAINABILITY
Minimising the environmental impact of events from design to implementation.

CLIMATE AND ADVOCACY
Promoting environmental preservation across football activities and leveraging the influence of sport to advocate for urgent action.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY
Adopting circular economy principles to minimise waste and optimise product consumption and life cycles.



ANTI-RACISM
Initiating actions to combat racial discrimination in European football, promoting inclusivity through education, policy reforms and collaborative efforts across all levels.

CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION
Dedication to safeguarding children, prioritising protection against abuse, neglect, bullying and discrimination.

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION
Accelerating actions to promote equality and inclusion, combating discrimination based on gender, age, race, ability, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.

FOOTBALL FOR ALL ABILITIES
Encouraging inclusive football infrastructure and venues, ensuring accessibility for players and fans of all abilities and backgrounds.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
Taking actions to safeguard health, promote well-being and foster inclusivity in football, acknowledging its vital role in societal integration.

REFUGEE SUPPORT
Promoting refugee integration through football, enhancing physical and mental well-being and fostering community connections and social inclusion.

SOLIDARITY AND RIGHTS
Promoting dignity, respect and equal rights in football, fostering solidarity and ensuring universal access to the sport.



RISK MANAGEMENT
Actions to steer clubs towards sustainable risk management encompassing environmental, social and governance factors in football, aiming for long-term success, financial stability, enhanced reputation and increased community engagement.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY
Tools and training to cultivate accountable and transparent football clubs. Transparency ensures accountability and fosters stakeholder trust.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING
Action plans and training programmes to promote the integration of sustainability principles into daily routines.

COMMUNICATION
Assistance for members in developing effective sustainability-related communication strategies.



GOVERNANCE **STRUCTURE**

ECA, an association of European football clubs, is established under Articles 60 et seq. of the Swiss Civil Code and is based in Nyon, Switzerland. Our governance is outlined in the published Statutes on the ECA website, which identifies our three key organs as: the General Assembly, the Board and the Executive Committee (ExCo).



01 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Composed of all ECA members, the General Assembly has the authority to amend the Statutes, approve the budget, conduct elections and generally operate as the supreme body of ECA.

Definition: Supreme board.

Role: Amending the Statutes, approving the ECA Administration budget and conducting elections.

Meeting schedule: Twice per year.

02 THE BOARD

ECA's supervisory body consists of **37** members, comprising **26** representatives from Ordinary Members, four representatives per Subdivision, three Independent Board Members and four Diversity Champions (one per Subdivision). Additionally, ECA has appointed two Observers for the 2023-27 cycle. Meeting at least twice annually, the Board holds authority over ECA's activities, economic and administrative management, strategic planning, budget preparation and the implementation of decisions made by the General Assembly.

Definition: Supervisory board.

Role: Authority to oversee ECA's operations, including economic and administrative management, such as developing strategic plans, implementing General Assembly decisions and preparing budgets.

Meeting schedule: At least twice per year.

03 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Our executive body comprises the ECA Chair, elected by the Board, five Board Members, elected as Vice-Chairs, and six Board Members appointed by the Board. Tasked with monitoring and managing the implementation of the Board-approved strategic plan, the ExCo addresses critical issues that may influence the strategy's outcomes.

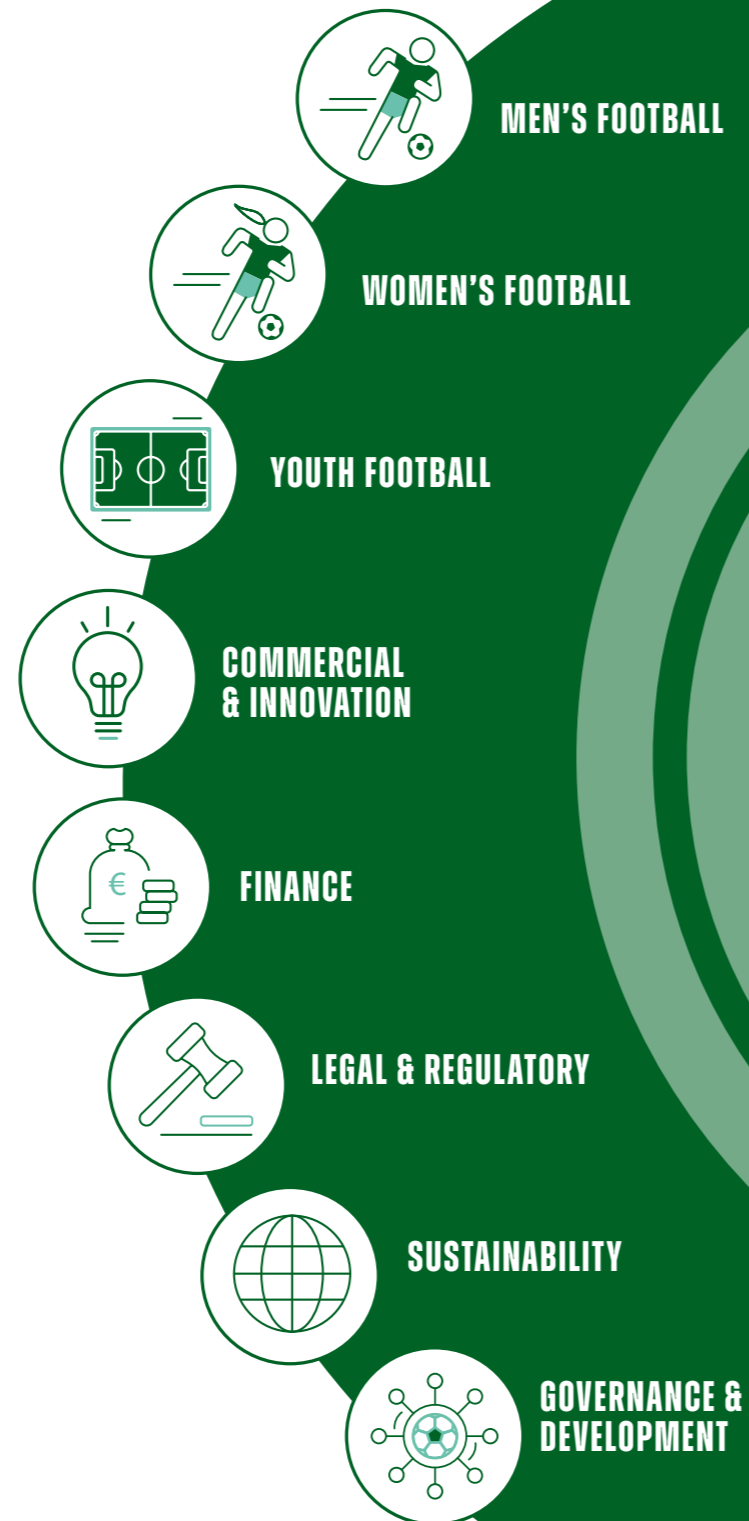
Definition: Executive body.

Role: Oversees the execution of the approved strategic plan and addresses critical issues that could affect its outcomes.

14 WORKING GROUPS

Representing more than 600 European clubs as the 'Heart of European Football,' ECA prioritises continuous communication with its members to effectively advocate for their interests and enhance tailored services. Our eight Working Groups, each led by an ExCo Board Member, serve as instrumental platforms for identifying key topics for collaboration.

Comprising approximately **25** club representatives with expertise in their respective workstreams, each Working Group prioritises broad representation, considering both geographical and Subdivision perspectives. Furthermore, these groups have the flexibility to establish smaller bodies, such as temporary task forces or permanent panels, to address specific topics in a dedicated manner.



ECA SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

Led by ExCo and Board Member Niclas Carlén, CEO of Malmö FF, the Sustainability Working Group (SWG) consists of 27 club representatives from 16 European countries. The SWG's primary role is to pinpoint crucial sustainability topics for European clubs, providing updates and proposing recommendations to the Board.

Addressing current football-related sustainability issues, the SWG has so far initiated:

- A Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive Task Force;
- Sustainable Venue Management Panel;
- An Equality, Diversity; and Inclusion Panel (in cooperation with the Governance & Development Working Group).

Future task forces or panels can be established based on emerging needs or opportunities. The SWG played a pivotal role in developing and approving the ECA Sustainability Strategy and will actively support its implementation in the coming years.



A SHARP FOCUS ON WOMEN'S FOOTBALL AND GENDER EQUALITY IN FOOTBALL

ECA has a dedicated workstream for women's football, demonstrating its enduring commitment to the game. In 2021, we launched our inaugural women's football strategy, 'Be a Changemaker.' The initial three-year implementation phase has concluded, and efforts to evolve the six key strategic goals outlined below commenced in 2024.

These goals include:

1. Enhance club player pathways to provide a prosperous and sustainable future for the game.
2. Accelerate professionalisation, empowering clubs to reach, maintain and exceed minimum standards.
3. Advance the economic development of women's football and identify new commercial opportunities.
4. Boost the opportunities for clubs to realise European ambitions through the development of the competition landscape.
5. Facilitate the successful creation of new women's football clubs across Europe.
6. Produce first-of-its-kind research studies that become a reference point for the women's game globally.

Promoting gender equality in football extends beyond professionalising women's football to ensuring equal opportunities in all football-related roles. A systemic lack of women is observed in club administrations and top management positions, including within ECA.

This broader concept aligns with the equality and inclusion dimension of the ECA Sustainability Strategy. While synergies exist between women's football and sustainability, it's essential to note that women's football primarily develops the women's game, while sustainability leads gender equality efforts.

THE AIM IS TO CREATE A FAR-REACHING, ROBUST AND INFLUENTIAL WOMEN'S CLUB FOOTBALL ECOSYSTEM WITH A CLEAR PATH TOWARDS INCREASED PROFESSIONALISM.



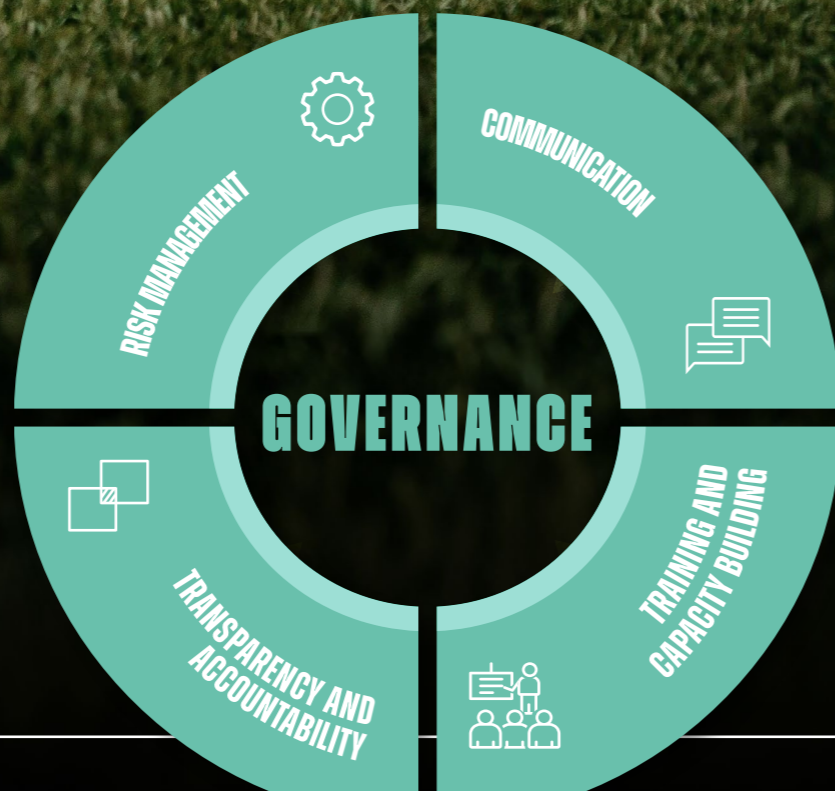


SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

OUR GOVERNANCE OBJECTIVES

For successful sustainability integration, organisations, including both ECA and its members, should follow a five-step approach.

We will attempt to lead by example with our published strategy, committing to enhance our sustainability performance, inspire our members and provide support services. The governance aspect covers four dimensions – risk management, transparency and accountability, training and capacity building, as well as communication – all with defined objectives and KPIs.



FIVE STEP APPROACH

STEP 1: Establish a sustainability-focused structure or function.

STEP 2: Define a vision aligning sustainability practices with good governance, initiated by top management.

STEP 3: Assess club impacts, risks and opportunities, which is crucial for setting priorities, targets and KPIs.

STEP 4: Publicise a sustainability strategy through an annual report, promoting transparency and accountability.

STEP 5: Adopt cross-functional initiatives for training, capacity building and communication on sustainability principles.

01 RISK MANAGEMENT

Sustainability risk management involves identifying, assessing, prioritising and mitigating environmental, social and governance risks that can affect a football club's long-term success, financial stability, reputation and community engagement.

The key elements of sustainability risk management typically include:



IDENTIFICATION

Recognising and understanding sustainability risks, including climate change impacts, resource scarcity, human rights violations, health and safety concerns for players and fans, reputation damage and regulatory non-compliance.



ASSESSMENT

Evaluating the severity, likelihood and significance of identified sustainability risks by analysing their potential impacts on the organisation's operations, finances, reputation, stakeholders and broader societal and environmental well-being.



PRIORITISATION

Ranking sustainability risks based on significance, urgency and the organisation's capacity to manage them effectively. It involves considering short-term and long-term implications while aligning risk management priorities with the organisation's strategic objectives and values.



MITIGATION

Developing and implementing strategies, policies, procedures and controls to reduce, transfer or avoid sustainability risks and their negative consequences. This may include adopting sustainable business practices, enhancing stakeholder engagement and integrating sustainability criteria into decision-making processes.




MONITORING AND REVIEWING

Continuous assessment of sustainability risks to identify changes, emerging trends and new threats, adjusting risk management strategies accordingly. Regular reviews of processes and performance ensure their effectiveness and relevance in addressing evolving sustainability challenges.

ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Risk management
Short-term (2025)	Initiate sustainability risk assessment covering human rights and environmental protection.
KPIs	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Conclude the assessment and execute mitigation measures for identified risks.
KPIs	Identified risks successfully mitigated/total risks identified.
Long-term (2030)	Continuously review and implement mitigation actions based on the risk assessment.
KPIs	Identified risks successfully mitigated/total risks identified.
SDGs	



Policy	Risk management
Short-term (2025)	Webinar on how to map sustainability risks.
KPIs	Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Support ECA members in complying with EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD).
KPIs	Number of ECA Members that comply with the Directive/number of ECA members that fall within the Directive scope.
Long-term (2030)	Development of an advisory service on sustainability due diligence.
KPIs	Number of ECA members benefitting from advisory services.
SDGs	

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Establishing accountable and transparent institutions is a global imperative. Transparency is a catalyst for holding organisations accountable, and both principles are interdependent. Therefore, addressing transparency and accountability concurrently is essential.

Transparency involves collecting and safely sharing organisational data upon request. It also entails proactively making specific internal information consistently public, visible and accessible to stakeholders. The recent EU CSRD (Directive (EU) 2022/2464) imposes sustainability reporting obligations on large EU-based companies or groups meeting at least two of three specified criteria:

1. Net turnover of more than **€40 million**
2. Balance sheet total assets greater than **€20 million**
3. At least **250** employees

ECA identifies approximately **150** members within the scope of the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and pledges support for their compliance. Accountability, a facet of liability, involves transparent reporting of all activities within an organisation's responsibility to build responsible governance. This practice enhances stakeholder confidence and trust in the club's sustainability performance.

Transparency and accountability serve as anti-corruption tools and

positively impact public perceptions of clubs. Institutionalising these practices requires the creation of strategic documents, such as an internal sustainability policy. Many organisations ensure high levels of transparency and accountability by implementing a sustainability

management system adhering to ISO standards.

These systems guarantee the integration and implementation of organisational commitments through continuous monitoring and improvement.



They necessitate the development of policies and procedures, ensuring the seamless integration of sustainability considerations into daily operations and proper data collection for performance measurement and reporting.

A crucial aspect of an effective sustainability management system is sustainable procurement, which evaluates the impact of purchasing choices on the environment, community and social conditions of production and delivery. Sustainability criteria for selecting goods must encompass both social and environmental considerations.








From a social sustainability perspective, purchases require documentation of the production value chain, ensuring no human rights violations. On the environmental front, procurement requests should address product durability, utility and life cycle impacts – creation, delivery and end of life. Even organisations without a dedicated purchasing office can promote this practice among individual employees to guide them through proper procedures.







TRANSPARENT REPORTING
ENHANCES STAKEHOLDER
CONFIDENCE AND TRUST
IN A CLUB'S SUSTAINABILITY
PERFORMANCE.

ACTIONS FOR ECA

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Transparency and accountability			
Short-term (2025)	Create a sustainable procurement policy encompassing common categories of goods and services purchased by ECA (e.g., hotels, venues, food, gifts, dressing & signage materials).	Develop ECA Sustainability Policy.	Sustainability report (year based).	Development of sustainability management system, based on ISO 20121.
KPIs	Done/not done.	Done/not done.	Done/not done.	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Implement procedures to evaluate the sustainability compliance of significant purchases (> 50,000 CHF).	Share the Sustainability Policy with all members and relevant stakeholders.	Sustainability report (year based).	Continuous improvement of sustainability management system.
KPIs	At least 50% of materials and services compliant with sustainability principles.	Done/not done.	Done/not done.	Done/not done.
Long-term (2030)	Improve suppliers selection process and further enforce the compliance procedures.	100% of suppliers compliant.	Sustainability report (year based).	Continuous improvement of sustainability management system.
KPIs	80% of materials and services compliant with sustainability principles.	Number of compliant suppliers.	Done/not done.	Done/not done.
SDGs	 	  		

Policy	Transparency and accountability		
Short-term (2025)	Webinar on sustainable procurement in football.	CSRD task force established.	Create guidelines and a training course on selecting KPIs from European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) protocols.
KPIs	Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.	Number of meetings.	Done/not done. Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Events for sharing best practices developed among clubs and suppliers.	Support ECA members in complying with the CSRD.	Events for sharing best practices about KPIs among clubs.
KPIs	Number of participants. Number of events.	Number of ECA Members that comply with the Directive/ number of ECA members that fall within the Directive scope.	Number of participants. Number of events.
Long-term (2030)	Increase in the overall number of clubs adopting sustainable procurement practices.	Development of an advisory service on sustainability due diligence.	Review and improve Guidelines on KPIs selection from EFRAG.
KPIs	Done/not done.	Number of ECA members benefitting from advisory services.	Done/not done.
SDGs	 		

13 TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING



Sustainable knowledge and expertise in football, and sport in general, requires further development. To achieve sustainable governance, it's crucial to invest time, effort and resources in training and capacity building.

This need arises not only from football's delayed adoption of sustainable practices but also in response to the expanding knowledge in this area and the heightened importance of sustainability among the growing generation of fans.



It is essential not only to comply with UEFA's licensing requirements and EU CSRD, but also to engage ECA's staff and club members in developing sustainability knowledge.

Good governance relies on this collaboration, necessitating not just formal training but also meaningful relationships with all stakeholders for knowledge sharing and best practices. This is particularly crucial as governance spans across all functions and topics, requiring horizontal integration of sustainability and other relevant aspects throughout the organisation.



TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE, IT'S CRUCIAL TO INVEST TIME, EFFORT AND RESOURCES IN TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING.

ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Training and capacity building
Short-term (2025)	Train all employees on sustainability and pertinent topics in football sustainability.
KPIs	Number of training sessions organised. Number of ECA employees trained.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Incorporate periodic sustainability training sessions into the onboarding process for new employees.
KPIs	Number of training sessions organised. Number of ECA employees trained.
Long-term (2030)	Training for all employees on new sustainability trends and topics in football.
KPIs	Number of training sessions organised. Number of ECA employees trained.
SDGs	 



ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Training and capacity building
Short-term (2025)	Create a training programme for clubs' sustainability managers.
KPIs	Programme established.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Increase the number of ECA members that have certified trained sustainability managers.
KPIs	Number of members with trained sustainability manager/ total of members.
Long-term (2030)	100% ECA members with a qualified sustainability office and/or officer.
KPIs	Number of members with trained sustainability manager/ total of members.
SDGs	 

14 COMMUNICATION




We support and guide our members in sustainability through communication campaigns addressing key issues. As an organisation, we must communicate our commitments, actions and achievements to our members and the wider football community.



Regular updates on the ECA Sustainability Strategy will be published in an annual sustainability report, which will be widely shared on our website and actively promoted on social media.

As the representative body for clubs, we encourage members to showcase their sustainability efforts, acting as an amplifier for their messages. Effective communication also includes showcasing members' best practices and announcing the winner of the annual ECA Sustainability Award.

ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Communication
Short-term (2025)	Establish a sustainability-focused page on the ECA website.
KPIs	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Regularly update the ECA sustainability page with relevant content and activity updates.
KPIs	Number of articles and documents uploaded.
Long-term (2030)	Regularly update the ECA sustainability page with relevant content and activity updates.
KPIs	Number of articles and documents uploaded.
SDGs	



Policy	Communication	
Short-term (2025)	Launch a communication campaign on one sustainability topic	Launch the ECA Sustainability Award for ECA Members.
KPIs	Number of views, impressions, like.	Number of Members participating.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Launch at least one communication campaign per year on a sustainability topic.	Launch the Sustainability Award every year.
KPIs	Number of campaigns launched. Number of views, impressions, like.	Number of members participating.
Long-term (2030)	Launch at least one communication campaign per year on a sustainability topic.	Launch the Sustainability Award every year.
KPIs	Number of campaigns launched. Number of views, impressions, like.	Number of members participating.
SDGs		

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS



OUR SOCIAL OBJECTIVES



Football, a global phenomenon, intertwines with human rights and societal progress. Nelson Mandela once said that sports have the power to change the world – and what better change maker than football, the most popular sport in the world?

During a match, people from all walks of life unite for 90 minutes,

representing varied backgrounds and beliefs. Imagine extending this unity beyond the field.

In addressing social issues, we've carefully selected key topics, considering intersections and aligning with UEFA's Sustainability Strategy and licensing requirements. The social aspect comprises seven dimensions:





ANTI-RACISM



As the sole representative body for European football clubs, we acknowledge our duty to combat racial discrimination across all levels of the sport, from grassroots to elite professionalism. Despite football's unifying power, various forms of discrimination, especially against ethnic minorities, persist within the game.

Historical societal biases have subtly influenced attitudes in football, potentially shaping how players, fans and officials perceive individuals from various racial backgrounds. Economic disparities intersect with these issues, posing challenges for individuals from marginalised backgrounds and inadvertently perpetuating stereotypes.

Fan culture significantly fuels the issue, as seen in chants, slurs and gestures, with the anonymity of large crowds amplifying discriminatory expressions.

Despite heightened awareness, racism persists as a prominent form of discrimination in football.

Tackling it demands a multifaceted, intersectional approach encompassing education, policy reform, diversity promotion and robust enforcement of anti-discrimination measures across all levels of the game. Collaborative efforts among governing bodies, clubs, players and fans are vital for fostering a more inclusive and tolerant football environment.

ADDRESSING RACISM DEMANDS A MULTIFACETED APPROACH, THROUGH EDUCATION, POLICY REFORM AND ROBUST MEASURES.



ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Anti-racism
Short-term (2025)	Revise ECA job descriptions template to include an anti-discrimination clause.
KPIs	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Establish a task force to review all documents for discriminatory language or content.
KPIs	All documents reviewed.
Long-term (2030)	Implement a procedure to ensure new ECA documents are free from discriminatory language or content.
KPIs	Done/not done.
SDGs	

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Anti-racism		
Short-term (2025)	Disseminate best practices for establishing a system to report and address discrimination incidents within clubs.	Create a service for member clubs to remove hate content from their social media accounts.	Webinar with UEFA on anti-racism licensing requirements.
KPIs	Number of best practices shared.	Done/not done.	Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Create a preventive and educational program addressing online abuse and hate speech.	Expand the service and involve more member clubs.	All ECA members complying with UEFA licensing requirements.
KPIs	Number of training initiatives. Number of participants.	Number of members using the tool. Number of hate posts removed.	Number of ECA members complying.
Long-term (2030)	Partner with global organisations and football governing bodies to exchange best practices.	Keep expanding the service and involve more member clubs.	Establish an advisory service for integrating anti-racism topics into club development.
KPIs	Number of joint projects, initiatives and programmes carried out.	Number of members using the tool. Number of hate posts removed.	Number of clubs benefitting from advisory services.
SDGs			



CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION

ECA envisions European football clubs as safe havens for children to enjoy their childhood and forge relationships. As the sole representative body, we bear the responsibility to ensure this vision becomes a reality. Despite the physical and mental benefits children gain from football, the potential for abuse or harm exists, demanding paramount attention to safeguarding issues that require careful consideration.

A key concern is the risk of child abuse, encompassing physical, emotional or sexual harm, requiring preventive measures and robust protocols for identification and intervention. Neglect and exploitation



present another critical issue, from insufficient supervision to pushing young players beyond their limits. Additionally, bullying, harassment and discrimination in football settings threaten mental health and enjoyment of the sport.

Crucial elements of child and youth protection include formulating and implementing safeguarding policies. Inadequate or poorly executed policies can create gaps in protection, emphasising the need for clear and comprehensive guidelines governing the behaviour of coaches, staff and volunteers. Essential background checks help mitigate risks associated with individuals who may have a history of abusive behaviour or criminal offences.

An excessive focus on winning may hinder the holistic development of young players. Striking a balance between competitive goals and age-appropriate development is crucial. Essential to this is coach training in child protection and safeguarding, equipping coaches to recognise signs of abuse and provide age-appropriate training.

Social media usage poses significant risks, exposing young players to cyberbullying, inappropriate online interactions and privacy concerns. Establishing guidelines and monitoring online interactions are critical. Parental involvement and education are crucial components of child protection efforts, as informed and engaged parents significantly contribute to creating a safe environment for their children in football.

COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE YOUTH FOOTBALL WORKSTREAM



ECA prioritises youth football as a workstream, aiming to assist clubs in nurturing and retaining talent while contributing to European football development.

The ECA Youth Football Strategy seeks to position ECA as a 'globally recognised centre of excellence' through expert advisory, education, research and fostering connections among members and beyond.

These pillars form the foundation of our four strategic goals:

1. Develop the youth competition landscape in Europe.
2. Support clubs in protecting their club-trained players.
3. Become a centre of excellence for youth football.
4. Use the power of football to promote healthy values and help tackle important social issues while focusing on promoting dual career, mental well-being, sustainability, child protection, the fight against racism and support for migrants.

ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Child and youth protection
Short-term (2025)	Identify experts within the Youth Football department who possess combined knowledge in child and youth protection and coaching to collaborate on training initiatives.
KPIs	Number of staff attending training. Number of training sessions delivered.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Establish a joint task force between the Sustainability and Youth Football Working Groups to develop educational programmes.
KPIs	Done/not done.
Long-term (2030)	Develop a common Sustainability and Youth Football educational programme.
KPIs	Done/not done.
SDGs	 

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Child and youth protection
Short-term (2025)	Webinar with UEFA on child and youth protection licensing requirements
KPIs	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	All ECA members with a programme in place.
KPIs	Number of ECA members with a programme in place.
Long-term (2030)	Research on the positive impact of a safe academy environment.
KPIs	Research report published.
SDGs	  



EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Football must ensure fair treatment and inclusion for all, regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or ability. Discrimination patterns in football reflect broader societal mistreatment of certain groups, perpetuating itself through the sport.

Persistent issues include racial discrimination, including against refugees and migrants, both on and off the field. Additional challenges involve the lack of diversity in leadership, age discrimination affecting youth and older players, and inaccessible facilities, posing barriers to inclusion, especially for people with disabilities.

Gender inequality persists in football, with differences in pay, sponsorship, media coverage and facilities between men's and women's football. The ECA Women's Football Department addresses this aspect, while the sustainability department focuses on gender inequality in clubs' administration, including discrimination and harassment prevention.

Homophobia and transphobia are concerns in football for both players and fans, requiring efforts to challenge stereotypes and foster acceptance of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.



ECA FEMALE REPRESENTATION TODAY

18%

on ECA Board

25%

in ECA Working Groups

4

Diversity Champions on ECA Board

As a widely embraced social activity, football holds the responsibility and opportunity to protect players, spectators, supporters and all associated individuals from discrimination.

With millions of viewers, the conduct displayed in a stadium sets an example that is likely observed and emulated. ECA, responding to the significance of gender equality, established targets and KPIs based on a survey involving 94 members. The results revealed a need for improvement, with women representing 30% of club

administration staff and only 18% at the C-level. The survey indicated a lack of clear career progression from medium to senior and executive management levels.

ECA has taken proactive steps to boost female representation on its Board and representative bodies, introducing five dedicated seats for women in each ECA Subdivision, alongside a seat for network clubs. The newly elected ECA Board comprises six women, including two elected and four designated as 'Diversity Champions,' out of 37 members.

With one seat still available for an Independent Board Member, the total female representation on the Board will be **18%**, totalling seven women out of the **39** members.




Our goal is to markedly enhance female representation in the next cycle by urging ECA clubs to appoint women to ECA representative bodies with a set target of 40% for this cycle and 50% for the following one.

Women serving on ECA bodies gain valuable exposure to an international context, expanding their football network across Europe and becoming pivotal figures within their clubs. Furthermore, ECA will introduce training and mentorship programs to bolster women's career development in football, facilitating increased access to top management positions.

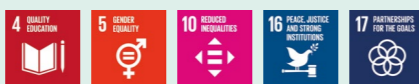
To address all forms of discrimination, ECA will establish an internal incident reporting system and further promote awareness among its members through webinars, training, and events, fostering a more inclusive football environment.



ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Equality and inclusion			
Short-term (2025)	An annual equality monitoring survey is distributed to all employees to gain insights into our workforce and enhance our support for them.	ED&I Panel established.	Empower ECA female staff through training and mentorship events.	Create a system for reporting discrimination incidents and ensure responsive action within ECA.
KPIs	% of staff answering the survey	Done/not done.	Number of women involved. Number of events created.	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Based on survey data, identify diversity priorities and develop an Equality Improvement Plan.	Empower ECA female representatives in working groups (training, coaching, mentorship programme).	Empower ECA female staff through training and mentorship events.	Begin tracking annual reported incidents to ensure thorough investigation and resolution of each case.
KPIs	Done/not done. Measure improvement via Equality Monitoring annual survey.	Number of women involved. Number of events created. At least 25% female representation on the Board. 40% female representation in working groups.	Number of women involved. Number of events created. Number of women in senior management positions > 30%.	Number of incidents reported = number of incidents investigated. Delta (incidents 2027-incidents 2025)/ incidents 2025.
Long-term (2030)	Regularly review, update and implement the Equality Improvement Plan	Empower ECA female representatives in working groups (training, coaching, mentorship programme) as potential candidates for the Board.	Empower ECA female staff through training and mentorship events	Reduction of reported discrimination incidents
KPIs	Done/not done. Measure improvement via Equality Monitoring annual survey.	Number of women involved. Number of events created. At least 35% female representation on the Board. 50% female representation in working groups.	Number of women involved. Number of events created. Number of women in senior management positions > 40%.	Number of incidents reported = number of incidents investigated. Delta (incidents 2030-incidents 2027)/ incidents 2027.
SDGs	  			

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Equality and inclusion			
Short-term (2025)	Webinar with UEFA on equality and inclusion licensing requirements.	Webinars and events on equality and inclusion topics.	Develop an ED&I policy for ECA Campus Educational Programme.	Conduct research to identify the primary barriers to female representation in C-level and administrative roles within clubs.
KPIs	Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.	Number of participants/ Number of events.	Done/not done.	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	All ECA members complying with UEFA equality and inclusion licensing requirements.	Establish partnerships (UEFA, UN, EU Commission, NGOs etc.) to promote equality and inclusion in football.	Implement a policy with balanced targets and objectives for educational programs, including scholarships, reserved seats and customised initiatives.	Develop an educational and mentorship programme for women in football.
KPIs	Number of ECA members that comply/ Number of ECA members.	Number of partnerships.	Number of women in ECA's educational programme/ Total number of participants. Number of people of colour in ECA's educational programme/ Total number of participants.	Number of participants involved. % of women attending. Number of events created.
Long-term (2030)	Board members workshop on unconscious bias.	Develop an advisory service to integrate ED&I topics into club development.	Implement a policy with balanced targets and objectives for educational programs, including scholarships, reserved seats and customised initiatives.	Repeat the research and measure improvements.
KPIs	Done/not done.	Number of clubs benefitting from advisory services.	Number of women in ECA's educational programme/ Total number of participants. Number of people of colour in ECA's educational programme/ Total number of participants.	Delta % women in C-level and administration positions 2030/2023.
SDGs				





FOOTBALL FOR ALL ABILITIES

Football's infrastructure and venues should be accessible to all, and ECA must play a role in ensuring inclusivity for players and fans of all abilities. In 2022, 27% of the EU population over 16 had a disability, totalling 101 million people, or one in four adults in the EU, according to Eurostat estimates.

In the football world, there are three main accessibility aspects that need to be considered:



1. ACCESSIBILITY TO MATCHES FOR FANS WITH DISABILITY

Considerations encompass physical, sensory and information accessibility. Stadiums should include wheelchair-accessible seating, ramps, elevators and amenities for those with physical impairments.

Accessible restrooms and matchday information, provided in formats like braille or audio descriptions, cater to fans with visual or hearing impairments. Clubs often implement tailored ticketing policies, offering discounts, priority seating and companion tickets to enhance the matchday experience for fans with disabilities.

2. PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Facilitating football opportunities for individuals with disabilities is vital for promoting inclusivity. The aim is to establish structured, inclusive youth development programmes to nurture aspiring players with disabilities toward professionalism.

Football organisations can foster support by creating adaptive leagues, adjusting coaching methods and adapting facilities. Initiatives that encourage the inclusion of disabled players, coupled with specialised coaching, enhance the development and diversity of football talent.



3. JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN FOOTBALL ORGANISATIONS

A football organisation's commitment to inclusivity extends from the pitch to administrative and operational areas. Creating a supportive workplace and inclusive hiring practices are crucial for providing opportunities to people with disabilities, accommodating diverse needs and fostering an inclusive culture. In various football sectors, active recruitment of individuals with disabilities for roles such as administration, coaching, marketing, media and others is encouraged.

Tailored training programmes and internships will make the football industry a place where all talents are recognised, regardless of physical or sensory abilities. Addressing these accessibility dimensions builds a truly inclusive football culture representative of diverse backgrounds and abilities.



ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Football for all abilities
Short-term (2025)	Create a mechanism to ensure accessibility in all ECA activities, including documents, activities and working spaces.
KPIs	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Solve detected accessibility issues.
KPIs	Number of detected issues = number of solved issues.
Long-term (2030)	Continuously monitor for new accessibility issues.
KPIs	Number of detected issues = number of solved issues
SDGs	 



ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Football for all abilities	
Short-term (2025)	Webinar with UEFA on football for all abilities licensing requirements.	Share best practices and training materials to improve stadium accessibility and enhance the match experience for all members.
KPIs	Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.	Number of best practices shared.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	All ECA members complying with UEFA football for all abilities licensing requirements.	At least 50% of ECA members have accessible stadiums and/or disability programmes in place.
KPIs	Number of ECA members that comply/ Number of ECA members.	Number of ECA members that satisfy the requirement/ number of ECA members.
Long-term (2030)	Develop an advisory service on accessibility issues for ECA members.	All ECA members have an accessible stadium and/or a disability programme in place.
KPIs	Number of clubs benefitting from advisory services	Number of ECA members that satisfy the requirement/ number of ECA members.
SDGs	   	



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

ECA plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the health and well-being of football participants of all ages. Football, beyond being physical activity, serves as a potent force for social integration, fostering individual development, community building and inclusive connections. As a universal form of communication, football transcends cultural, linguistic and socio-economic barriers.

Football significantly enhances both physical and mental well-being, improving cardiovascular fitness, strength and endurance. Participation serves as a natural stress reliever, positively impacting mental resilience and reducing the risk of mental health issues. Exercise-induced endorphin release contributes to a positive mood, alleviating anxiety and depression.

Football plays a crucial role in shaping individual personal growth, fostering valuable life skills such as discipline, perseverance and goal



setting. Athletes learn to navigate triumphs and setbacks, developing resilience and emotional intelligence. Team sports like football cultivate teamwork, communication, break down societal divides and promote social integration.

Furthermore, football facilitates community building, serving as a focal point for collective identity, pride and shared experiences. From local teams to large-scale events, football creates opportunities for people to unite, celebrate achievements and strengthen social bonds.





The health and well-being dimension is pivotal for ECA. In addition to external efforts promoting inclusive clubs, ECA prioritises the well-being of its employees. This involves measures like insurance coverage, financial incentives, pension funds and group recreational activities to foster a positive work environment. Our ongoing goal is to monitor evolving employee needs, keeping staff welfare at the forefront as the company grows.



ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Health and well-being
Short-term (2025)	ECA Staff needs' assessment.
KPIs	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	HR plan to improve ECA staff health and well-being.
KPIs	Retention rate. Employee satisfaction questionnaire.
Long-term (2030)	HR plan to improve ECA staff health and well-being.
KPIs	Retention rate. Employee satisfaction questionnaire.
SDGs	 

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Health and well-being
Short-term (2025)	Webinar on the importance of sport for physical and mental health and well-being.
KPIs	Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Expand the participation of clubs in including older people, establishing elderly walking teams and refugee teams.
KPIs	Number of ECA members.
Long-term (2030)	Expand the participation of clubs in including older people, establishing elderly walking teams and refugee teams.
KPIs	Number of ECA members.
SDGs	   



REFUGEE SUPPORT



ECA strives to promote the physical and mental well-being of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people, integrating them into their host communities and clubs through the transformative power of football.

As of May 2023, over 110 million individuals faced forced displacement globally due to persecution, conflict, or human rights violations, often encountering obstacles and uncertainties in foreign lands.

While football can't solve all migration challenges, it remains a potent force for integration, social inclusion, and equal opportunities. Football acts as a catalyst, supporting diverse social outcomes such as education, employment, health and social cohesion.

Football, often hailed as a 'universal language,' transcends social, cultural, and national boundaries. In its optimal form, the sport unites people regardless of origin, background, beliefs, or economic status, fostering connections between new arrivals and host communities.

This establishes football as a distinctive, universal platform for cultural exchange, individual and community development, offering an alternative pathway to education and employment during transitions into a host society.

With its notable benefits on mental and physical well-being, football also enhances life skills like confidence, motivation, self-esteem, communication and teamwork.



ECA RELIEF PROGRAMME AND ECA ACADEMY SUPPORT

During the ECA General Assembly in March 2022, it was agreed to establish a €1 million fund through the ECA Relief Programme. Member clubs could apply for donations ranging from €25,000 to €50,000 per club to support humanitarian initiatives aiding Ukrainian families and children affected by ongoing tragic circumstances.

ECA was steadfast in financing initiatives that offered tangible humanitarian aid and emergency relief, prioritising the integration

and development of war-affected refugees. Teaming up with the UEFA Foundation for Children, ECA initiated this project ahead of forming a dedicated ECA Foundation in future. The ECA Ukrainian Relief Committee, in collaboration with the UEFA Foundation, selected projects aligned with common objectives and directed the funds.

In total, 32 projects from 24 clubs were supported under this programme. Below is a summary of the supported projects:




- Emergency Humanitarian Assistance:**
 The fund provided vital supplies including food, water, clothing and medical aid to affected communities, alleviating immediate hardships.
- Education and Skill Development:**
 The fund backed programs offering quality education and training for refugee children, empowering them with essential knowledge and skills for a better tomorrow amidst crisis.

- Shelter and Infrastructure:**
 The fund supported the construction and renovation of shelters, ensuring safe living spaces for displaced families.
- Psychosocial Support:**
 The fund provided therapy services to address the emotional and psychological impact of displacement, promoting emotional well-being among affected individuals.

During the conflict's onset, a programme facilitated Ukrainian youth players, along with their families (mothers and siblings), seeking refuge in ECA Member Club academies. The aim was to ease their transition to these academies, providing a safe, healthy and structured environment for them to pursue their passion for sports.

Notably, GNK Dinamo Zagreb, Sporting Clube de Portugal, and Athletic Club were prominent participants, while others, albeit fewer, also extended such support, albeit outside the ECA framework, mostly for specific cases.

ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Refugee support
Short-term (2025)	ECA Foundation constitution
KPIs	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Fund solidarity projects and provide aid to refugees and humanitarian emergencies through ECA Foundation initiatives.
KPIs	Number of projects funded. Amount of money distributed.
Long-term (2030)	Fund solidarity projects and provide aid to refugees and humanitarian emergencies through ECA Foundation initiatives.
KPIs	Number of projects funded. Amount of money distributed.
SDGs	





SOLIDARITY AND RIGHTS

ECA champions dignity, respect, and equal rights for everyone in football, fostering a spirit of freedom and solidarity. The overarching goal within this dimension is to safeguard human dignity and ensure that all ECA and football club activities are free from harm.

Human rights issues, including anti-discrimination, inclusion and safeguarding children's rights, are integral, creating an inseparable connection to all other social dimensions.

Solidarity means ensuring equal opportunities for all, promoting access to the sport regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or any

other characteristic. Upholding individuals' rights to engage in football establishes a level playing field, making solidarity a foundational pillar for a fair, inclusive and ethical sport.

From elite to grassroots levels, solidarity is indispensable for the successful and sustainable functioning of the entire football framework.



ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Solidarity and rights	
Short-term (2025)	ECA Foundation constitution	Risk assessment on human rights.
KPIs	Done/not done.	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Fund solidarity projects and provide aid to refugees and humanitarian emergencies through ECA Foundation initiatives.	Implement mitigation action on identified risks.
KPIs	Number of projects funded. Amount of money distributed.	Identified risks successfully mitigated/ total risks identified.
Long-term (2030)	Fund solidarity projects and provide aid to refugees and humanitarian emergencies through ECA Foundation initiatives.	Strategic guidelines with KPIs.
KPIs	Number of projects funded. Amount of money distributed.	Done/not done.



OUR ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Football relies on a healthy environment, and the consequences of climate change demand urgent action. The environmental strategy comprises four dimension that align with global norms and legislation like the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and the European Green Deal, and that have defined objectives and KPIs:



CIRCULAR ECONOMY



ECA focuses on measuring and optimising the consumption and life cycle of products, including food, packaging and branded items in our operations and events. The circular economy principles, condensed into 4R by UEFA (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover), simplifies the 9R framework (Refuse, Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Refurbish, Repurpose, Remanufacture, Recycle, Recover).

The circular economy is vital for waste reduction, encompassing merchandising, clothing, dressing, signage and food waste. This approach not only lessens waste but also contributes to a decrease in carbon emissions.

Football's seasonal nature results in significant apparel production, responsible for 0.4% of total global carbon

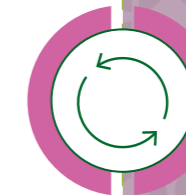
emissions – a substantial figure considering that the fashion industry's overall contribution is 8-10%.

ECA addresses waste generation primarily from events, with minimal office waste. Actions to prevent and reduce waste are detailed under 'sustainable events', with specific objectives for members to raise awareness and collaborate closely with UEFA.



REDUCE

Integrating Refuse, Rethink and Reduce, this principle aims to decrease resource use, emissions and waste throughout a product's life cycle. The goal is to establish a circular economy by prioritising waste elimination over treatment.



REUSE

Encompassing Reuse and Repurpose, this principle aims to extend the lifespan of products used for football events. The objective is to maximise resource capacity by reusing products and systems for multiple cycles, reducing the need for new materials and promoting a "second-hand" approach. While Repair, Refurbish and Remanufacture principles exist, they may be less easily applicable to football products.



RECYCLE

When the above alternatives aren't applicable, prioritise any recycling process that reprocesses waste materials to obtain products or substances for their original or alternative purposes.






RECOVER

The recovery of energy through the incineration of material deposited in landfill. This should be the last resort.

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS



Policy	Circular economy	
Short-term (2025)	Webinar with UEFA on circular economy licensing requirements.	Develop concise summaries of UEFA circular economy guidelines for food & beverages, energy and water, apparel and football equipment, and event materials.
KPIs	Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	All ECA members complying with UEFA circular economy licensing requirements.	Research on circular economy regulation and standard development.
KPIs	Number of ECA members that comply/ Number of ECA members.	Number of reports and scientific articles published.
Long-term (2030)	Develop an advisory service on circular economy issues for ECA members.	Research on life cycle assessments (LCAs) of different products (cups, merchandise, signage etc.).
KPIs	Number of clubs benefiting from advisory services.	Number of reports and scientific articles published.
SDGs	  	



CLIMATE AND ADVOCACY



ECA works to prevent environmental degradation from football-related activities while leveraging the sport's reach for advocacy on urgent action.

Climate change is already altering global weather conditions, evidenced by heightened extremes like heatwaves, heavy rainfall, droughts and tropical cyclones. Mainly caused by greenhouse gas emissions, the global surface temperature has risen by 1.1 ° C (1850-1900 to 2011-2020), with a significant increase from 2010 to 2019 due to unsustainable energy practices, land use changes, lifestyle choices and consumption patterns.


Beyond environmental impacts, climate change also poses a global threat to human physical and mental health, potentially leading to humanitarian crises in areas of high vulnerability.

In the past decade, climate variability has jeopardised major international sports events, including football. As the world's most popular sport with a substantial carbon footprint, ECA has a responsibility to address football's environmental impact. This involves aligning with the UNFCCC Sports for Climate Action Framework, launched at COP24 in December 2018, and supporting UEFA's Sustainability Strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030.

A significant contributor to football's carbon emissions is travel, particularly to and from tournaments or individual matches.


The majority (60%) of clubs' travel-related emissions stem from transportation, primarily flying, often domestically, for fixtures. ECA makes a minor contribution to football's travel emissions through administrative travel, involving staff visits to clubs and meetings that gather multiple clubs.

ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Climate and advocacy	
Short-term (2025)	Measure carbon footprint to pinpoint key contributors and develop a CO ₂ e emission reduction strategy.	Carbon offsetting for unavoidable emissions.
KPIs	Done/not done.	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Develop a CO ₂ e emission prevention and minimisation strategy.	Identify climate mitigation projects for investment and carbon offsetting for unavoidable emissions.
KPIs	Achieve a minimum 10% reduction in CO ₂ e emissions per member compared to the fiscal year 2023-24.	Done/not done.
Long-term (2030)	Revise and enhance the CO ₂ emission prevention and minimisation strategy.	Identify climate mitigation projects for investment and carbon offsetting for unavoidable emissions.
KPIs	Achieve a minimum 30% reduction in CO ₂ e emissions per member compared to the fiscal year 2023-24.	Done/not done.
SDGs		



ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Climate and advocacy	
Short-term (2025)	Webinar with UEFA on climate and advocacy licensing requirements.	Assist members in adopting the UEFA Carbon Footprint Calculator.
KPIs	Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.	Number of ECA members that adopt the UEFA Carbon Footprint Calculator.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	All ECA members report their CO ₂ e emissions.	Establish partnerships (UEFA, UN, EU Commission, NGOs etc.) on climate change and advocacy.
KPIs	ECA members with CO ₂ e emission measurement/ all ECA members.	Number of partnerships.
Long-term (2030)	All ECA members incorporate CO ₂ emission measurements in their sustainability reports.	Develop an advisory service on climate change issues for ECA members.
KPIs	ECA members with CO ₂ e emission measurement/ all ECA members.	Number of clubs benefitting from advisory services.
SDGs		



ECA SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

EVENT SUSTAINABILITY

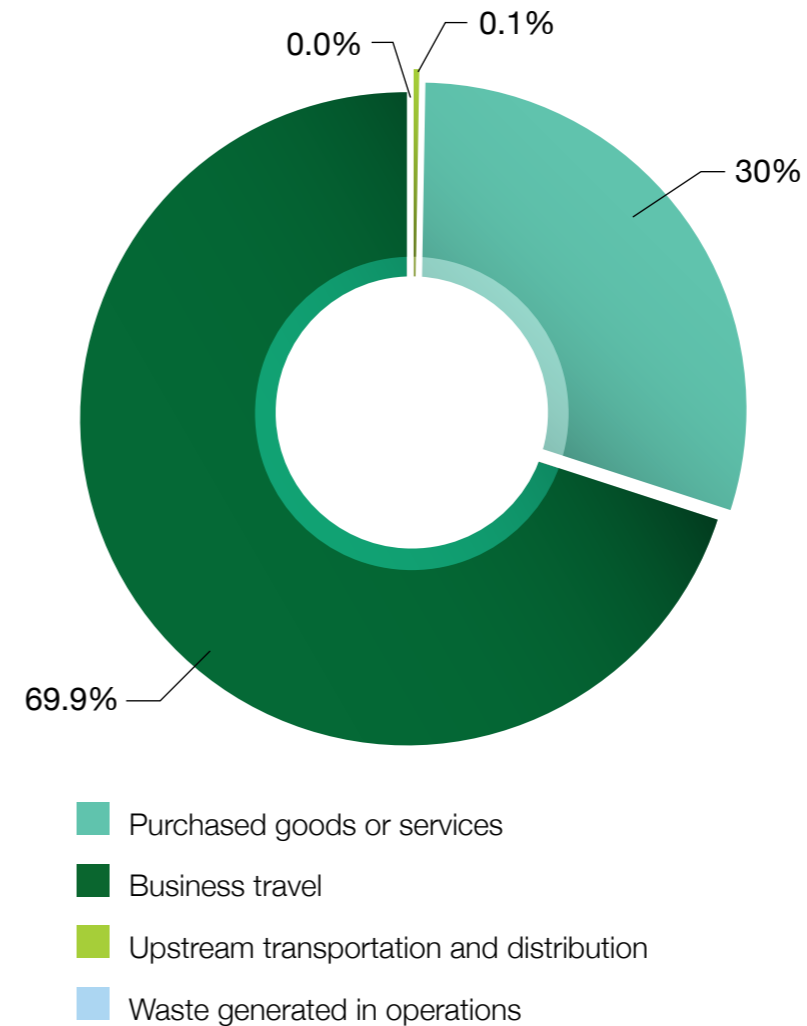


Football events have a substantial environmental impact, mainly from resource consumption and significant waste generation. ECA is committed to shaping, planning and executing events to prevent or minimise adverse environmental effects on host cities and surrounding communities, particularly focusing on carbon emissions from fan transportation.

Around 40% of a European competition football team's environmental emissions come from fan travel, a figure that increases significantly with air transportation.

On average, a European football match produces 0.8kg of waste per spectator, totalling 20 tonnes for a stadium with 25,000 spectators.

Total GA Emissions (Scope 3)
(% of Total Emissions)







The largest environmental impact of ECA events, particularly the annual ECA General Assembly (GA), totalled 291.7 tonnes of carbon in 2023. These emissions, categorised into Category 1 (purchased goods and services), 4 (upstream transportation and distribution), 5 (waste generated) and 6 (business travel), were dominated by the latter, contributing nearly 70% (203.8 tonnes) to the total.







Category 1 (purchased goods and services) was the second-highest contributor, constituting 30% (87.6 tonnes) of GA emissions. Categories 4 and 5 had negligible contributions, likely due to incomplete waste data from the venues.

To offset unavoidable carbon emissions, ECA chose two Gold Certified projects: a wind farm in Türkiye's Gallipoli district, supplying clean energy to around 5,000 households, and a plastic recycling facility in Romania, reducing the need for new plastic bottles. ECA has set specific objectives for future general assemblies and club events (matches) to minimise their environmental impact.

ACTIONS FOR ECA

Policy	Event sustainability	
Short-term (2025)	Identify and measure critical elements (e.g., dressing and signage, food, merchandise) for waste generation during ECA events.	Implement internal guidelines to reduce the environmental impact of transportation to attend ECA events.
KPIs	Done/not done.	Done/not done.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Waste prevention and minimisation strategy for events.	Implementation of mobility strategy.
KPIs	Done/not done.	Done/not done.
Long-term (2030)	Review and improvement of the waste prevention and minimisation strategy for events.	Review and improve mobility strategy.
KPIs	Done/not done.	Achieve a minimum 30% reduction in CO ₂ e emissions per member compared to the fiscal year 2023-24.
SDGs	  	

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Event sustainability	
Short-term (2025)	Sustainable Venue Panel established.	Establish partnerships (UEFA, ESSMA, EU Commission etc.) on event sustainability.
KPIs	Done/not done.	Number of partnerships.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Develop pilot projects with ECA members.	Share best practices among ECA members.
KPIs	Number of pilot projects developed.	Number of best practices shared.
Long-term (2030)	Develop an advisory service on event sustainability issues for ECA members.	
KPIs	Number of clubs benefitting from advisory services.	
SDGs	     	



INFRASTRUCTURE SUSTAINABILITY

ECA acknowledges that sustainable football infrastructure, primarily in stadium construction or renovation, offers long-term financial and environmental advantages, enhancing community spaces.

While renovating often outweighs new construction costs, the exploration of renovation opportunities should be a consistent practice to avoid demolishing existing infrastructure.

When developing infrastructure projects, there must be multiple considerations:



Adopting eco-friendly practices in the design, construction and ongoing operations;



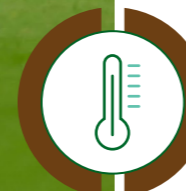
Optimisation of water and energy usage;



Reducing carbon emissions, light pollution and fostering biodiversity;



Understanding and safeguarding biodiversity in the local area;



Guaranteeing a comfortable ambient temperature with natural solutions; and



Enhancing accessibility and safety.

The site selection for a sports facility significantly influences its sustainability. The surrounding environment must align with planned sustainability levels, such as opting for a site accessible by public transport to minimise the need for parking.

Infrastructure sustainability relies on a holistic approach, demanding collaboration among stakeholders and meticulous planning for the stadium's longevity and environmental impact.

Based on this, the policy sustainability of infrastructure is not material for ECA as we do not construct or own infrastructure. Our sustainability focuses on hotel and venue selection for events and office facilities.

However, the sustainability of infrastructure is crucial for clubs, and ECA has set specific goals to foster collaboration between UEFA and clubs. This involves considering initiatives like the UEFA Sustainable Infrastructure Guidelines and sharing best practices in the field.

ACTIONS FOR MEMBERS

Policy	Infrastructure sustainability
Short-term (2025)	Webinar on the UEFA Sustainable Infrastructure Guidelines.
KPIs	Number of ECA members and other clubs attending.
Medium-term (2027) – end of cycle	Share best practices among ECA members.
KPIs	Number of best practices shared.
Long-term (2030)	Develop an advisory service on infrastructure sustainability issues for ECA members.
KPIs	Number of clubs benefitting from advisory services
SDGs	  

European Club Association

Route de St-Cergue 9

1260 Nyon

Switzerland

www.ecaeurope.com

info@ecaeurope.com