



## TO THE MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS OF FIFA

Circular no. 1959

Zurich, 5 February 2026

### FIFA Talent Development Scheme – 2026 application windows

Dear Sir or Madam,

FIFA is pleased to announce that applications for the FIFA Talent Development Scheme (TDS) are now open for 2026. Each Member Association is invited to apply to take part in the programme.

#### TDS operational lifecycle for the 2023-2026 period

To provide every Member Association with additional resources and a structure in the field of talent development, the TDS offers a suite of services based on the following four key pillars:

- *Expertise*: bespoke guidance delivered by leading specialists to help each Member Association devise and implement a tailored, long-term talent development plan
- *FIFA Talent Coach*: a FIFA Talent Coach working collaboratively with the Member Association to establish a FIFA Talent Academy
- *Learning and exchange*: on-site and online workshops, facilitated by FIFA specialists, to educate and inspire Member Associations to address common challenges and share best practice
- *TDS projects*: dedicated resources to support the implementation of the above activities and promote long-term collaboration

#### Eligibility and application process

To apply to participate in the TDS operational lifecycle 2023-2026, each Member Association must submit an annual request through the dedicated TDS application process on the FIFA Forward Platform.

The process will include:

- confirming that the Member Association has an appropriate technical department in place, which comprises at least three full-time staff members and will be in charge of the TDS plan;
- submitting a revised strategic long-term development plan with key targets and **concrete actions linked to the Member Association's strategic objectives**;
- agreeing to fully comply with the TDS regulations; and
- completing the application form via the FIFA Forward Platform, including the declaration of commitment.

There are three windows in 2026 in which to submit applications for the current TDS operational lifecycle, which will close on 31 March, 31 May and 31 August 2026, respectively.

### Funding

A base fund of USD 50,000 will be granted, in principle, to every Member Association that participates in the TDS operational lifecycle and that complies with the criteria and requirements outlined in the enclosed TDS regulations.

Member Associations may also apply for additional funding opportunities through TDS projects and the FIFA Talent Coach Programme. A dedicated team of TDS leads will support every participating Member Association throughout the creation, refinement and implementation of their strategic long-term development plan, including the process of applying for funding through the TDS.

### FIFA Forward Platform

If your nominated TDS contact person – who is authorised to submit TDS applications on the FIFA Forward Platform – **has changed, please email the new TDS contact person's details** (including their name, role and email address) to Luis Miguel Del Risco, TDS Junior Operations Manager, at [tds@fifa.org](mailto:tds@fifa.org).

We will then send the newly nominated TDS contact person an email with the link to the FIFA Forward Platform, and related instructions on how to complete and submit the TDS application.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Luis Miguel Del Risco, TDS Junior Operations Manager, at the above address.

Yours faithfully,

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE  
DE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Mattias", is positioned below the organization's name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mattias Grafström  
Secretary General

Encl.: FIFA Talent Development Scheme Regulations

cc: - FIFA Council  
- Confederations  
- Technical Development Committee

**FIFA®**

**REGULATIONS**

FIFA Talent Development  
Scheme



OPERATIONAL LIFECYCLE 2023-2026

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# FIFA TALENT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME REGULATIONS

OPERATIONAL LIFECYCLE 2023-2026



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# DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these Regulations, the terms set out in the FIFA Statutes, as well as the following definitions (initial capitals), shall apply:

**ESA:** global ecosystem analysis carried out by FIFA in coordination with the member associations.

**FIFA Forward 3.0:** FIFA Forward Development Programme 2023-2026.

**FIFA talent coaches:** team of FIFA-trained international coaches, responsible for supporting member associations with the development of their most talented players.

**FIFA Training Centre:** online digital platform providing educational resources for coaches and technical leaders to support global football development.

**FIFA high-performance specialists:** team of international experts in the field of global football development, responsible for supporting member associations in their endeavours on the TDS.

**Global Football Development Panel:** a panel within the FIFA administration that evaluates and approves allocations of funding under the TDS.

**LTDP:** long-term development plan.

**Regulations:** these Talent Development Scheme Regulations.

**TDS:** Talent Development Scheme.

**TDS operational lifecycle:** programme development phase, approved by the FIFA Council on 16 December 2022, for the 2023-2026 period.

**NB:** Terms referring to natural persons are applicable to both genders. Any term in the singular applies to the plural and vice-versa.



# GENERAL RULES



## 1. CONCEPT AND OBJECTIVES

1. The FIFA Talent Development Scheme (TDS) was launched as part of FIFA's vision to promote football globally and to support the progress of all member associations towards the aim of increasing global competitiveness and bridging the gap between the different regions.
2. A fundamental step towards this objective of enhancing the competitiveness of national teams globally is to take a coordinated, holistic and scientific approach to developing talent pathways across the entire world in order to “give every talent a chance”, and the TDS aims to do this by:
  - creating a sustainable legacy for long-term talent development in order for each member association to reach its full potential; and
  - providing every member association with (financial and non-financial) resources and structures to deliver a state-of-the-art talent development programme tailored to the specific individual circumstances of each member association.
3. The operational lifecycle of the TDS for the 2023-2026 period incorporates a needs-based approach and sets out the support that may be provided to the member associations wishing to be part of the TDS, including the possibility to apply for dedicated funding.
4. In order to ensure equal investment in the long-term development of both male and female players, the dedicated funding allocation of USD 200 million for the TDS operational lifecycle 2023-2026 will in principle be equally split and assigned for investment in male and female talents. This principle will guide the development of the underlying strategy and applications from participating member associations and will be a key consideration in the examination of every application for funding by the Global Football Development Panel.

## 2. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

1. These Regulations define and govern the following:
  - a) The content of the TDS operational lifecycle for the 2023-2026 period
  - b) The requirements for member associations to participate in the TDS operational lifecycle
  - c) The principles and distribution of funding and the process of approval
  - d) The rights, duties and obligations of member associations



2. The TDS operational lifecycle shall be administered and managed in accordance with these Regulations.

### 3. **BENEFICIARIES**

The beneficiaries of the TDS operational lifecycle are member associations that:

- have participated in the global ecosystem analysis carried out by FIFA;
- have applied to participate in the TDS operational lifecycle and meet all criteria and requirements as per these Regulations; and
- have successfully completed the process of approval of funding as per articles 7 and 8 and have received approval from the Global Football Development Panel based on their specific needs.



# TDS OPERATIONAL LIFECYCLE



## 4. TDS OPERATIONAL LIFECYCLE

1. The TDS operational lifecycle is intended to provide every member association, during the 2023-2026 period, with fully bespoke consulting services in the fields of talent development and high performance.

2. Member associations may apply to participate in the TDS operational lifecycle on a yearly basis, based on the conditions defined in these Regulations.

3. The TDS operational lifecycle is based on the following four key pillars:

- Expertise: planning and guidance for every member association, delivered by leading specialists (regional technical consultants and/or FIFA high-performance specialists), alongside and in collaboration with the confederations, where relevant, to support specific and highly developed talent programmes.
- Training and education: delivered by dedicated FIFA talent coaches, other experts and through the FIFA Training Centre, to provide knowledge in specific and dedicated matters (e.g. on-the-ground talent coaching support, specialists in academy management, coach education development, elite youth coaching, or goalkeeping).

The educational activities and services shall be tailored to the needs of each member association and shall be communicated at the beginning of every year of the 2023-2026 period.

- Knowledge exchange platform: this platform shall bring together, on a regular basis, the leaders of member associations and confederations with similar challenges in order to foster collaboration, address common challenges and integrate potential solutions into their talent development programmes, both online and on-site and in collaboration with confederations.
- Funding: in order to support the above activities with the aim of assisting delivery towards a strategic LTDP, an annual contribution of USD 50,000 will be allocated to member associations that successfully apply to participate in the TDS operational lifecycle.

In addition to the annual contribution, further financial resources may be applied for under one or more of the FIFA talent programmes (FIFA Talent Coach Programme, FIFA Academies Programme), as well as funding for specific talent development projects that support the strategic LTDP of the member association.

It should be noted that any potential funding that is allocated under the TDS operational lifecycle is not an irredeemable entitlement and does not impact other funding for existing activities in MAs.



4. All TDS funding received by a member association must be invested in one or more of the following categories:

- Talent identification set-up (e.g. domestic scouting network, shadow programmes for late developers, framework to follow players abroad, etc.).
- Academies programme (e.g. member association's centre of excellence environment quality assurance system, academy directors' education, etc.).
- Youth national teams programme (e.g. international playing opportunities, coaching workforce, playing philosophy and coaching methodology, etc.).
- Elite coaches programme (e.g. elite youth coaching courses etc.).
- Games programme (e.g. elite domestic youth competitions etc.).

5. The examples listed in each of the above categories are non-exhaustive and each category may comprise other activities and/or initiatives. TDS funding is a support to help finance the implementation of the LTDP. Investments in talent development and high performance shall not be only limited to TDS funding.

## **5. CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE**

1. To apply to participate in the TDS operational lifecycle, every member association shall submit an annual request form by following the dedicated TDS application process provided by the FIFA general secretariat.

2. In the request form, the member association shall:

- confirm that it has an appropriate technical department in place, which shall be in charge of the TDS plan and include at least three full-time technical staff members;
- submit a revised strategic LTDP with key targets and actions linked to its strategic objectives and, where applicable, how this is linked to and aligned with existing talent development schemes already operational within the member association or the respective confederation.  
A dedicated team of FIFA high-performance specialists and account managers will support every member association throughout the creation, iteration and implementation of the LTDP, as required;
- complete a declaration of commitment to the TDS and the implementation of this strategic LTDP; and
- agree to fully comply with these Regulations.



3. The request form shall be signed by the President, the General Secretary and the Technical Director of the member association.
4. There will be two windows each year in which to submit the request form. In 2023, these windows will close on 31 May and 30 September. In the following years of the 2023-2026 period, these windows will close on 31 March and 31 August.
5. The member association shall provide all corresponding information and documentation to support compliance with the criteria and requirements under art. 5 par. 2 above.
6. The member association shall ensure that only reliable, accurate, truthful and complete information and documentation is provided.
7. The FIFA general secretariat shall verify compliance with all applicable requirements, and it has the right to request additional information and supporting documentation from the member association concerned.
8. Where an incomplete application is submitted, the FIFA general secretariat shall notify the member association and request rectification.
9. Failure to comply with any requirement of the annual request shall prevent a member association from participating in the TDS operational lifecycle until compliance is confirmed by the FIFA general secretariat.



# PRINCIPLES OF FUNDING AND PROCESS OF APPROVAL



## 6. PRINCIPLES OF FUNDING

1. Each member association that is accepted to participate in the TDS operational lifecycle will be granted an annual contribution of USD 50,000 to cover associated operational costs.
2. The Global Football Development Panel decides whether or not to accept a member association's participation in the TDS operational lifecycle in accordance with articles 7 and 8 of these Regulations.
3. In addition to the annual contribution of USD 50,000, member associations participating in the TDS operational lifecycle may submit an application for funding under one of the annual bespoke FIFA talent programmes below and/or to support specific projects related to the strategic LTDP of the member association.
  - FIFA Talent Coach Programme  
Member associations may apply to engage one FIFA-trained talent coach on a 12-month basis during the TDS operational lifecycle. If the application is successful, the specific terms of engagement of this FIFA-trained coach shall then be determined by the FIFA general secretariat, in coordination with the member association and the coach concerned.
  - FIFA Academies Programme  
Member associations may apply for annual funding to manage and run their academies programme (e.g. certification, quality management programme, etc.).
  - Specific talent development projects  
Member associations may submit an application for funding for one or several specified project(s) that support the implementation of their strategic LTDP.
4. Any request shall be made within the applicable deadlines and through the dedicated TDS application process provided by the FIFA general secretariat.
5. Any decision on the allocation of any funding related to applications submitted in relation to art. 6 par. 3 above shall be taken by the Global Football Development Panel, as per article 7, and based on the individual needs of each member association. Among other things, consideration will be given to the global ecosystem analysis carried out by FIFA in coordination with the member associations.

## 7. GLOBAL FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT PANEL

1. The Global Football Development Panel is responsible for taking final decisions in respect of:
  - applications to participate in the TDS operational lifecycle;
  - applications for FIFA talent programmes (FIFA Talent Coach Programme, FIFA Academies Programme); and
  - applications for funding for specific talent development projects.
2. The composition and functions of the Global Football Development Panel shall be approved by the FIFA Development Committee and regular updates shall be provided to the FIFA Development Committee by the Global Football Development Panel. This includes a monthly report on any approved project to be provided to the FIFA Development Committee, which has the right to challenge any approved projects.
3. The Global Football Development Panel is also responsible for providing the FIFA Governance, Audit and Compliance Committee with an annual report detailing all allocated funding.

## 8. PROCESS OF APPROVAL OF FUNDING

1. The FIFA general secretariat shall examine every request of a member association in order to assess its compliance with the criteria and requirements of these Regulations, and endorse or reject the allocation of any financial support. If endorsed, the application will be submitted for approval to the Global Football Development Panel, which shall take a final decision on the allocation of financial support.
2. The applicable conditions and procedure for submission of an application for approval to the Global Football Development Panel shall be defined by the FIFA general secretariat.
3. The FIFA general secretariat and the Global Football Development Panel shall ensure compliance with the principles and objectives of the TDS operational lifecycle.
4. When examining an application, the FIFA general secretariat and the Global Football Development Panel have full discretion to approve or reject an application.

In particular, an application shall only be approved if all criteria and requirements of these Regulations have been fulfilled by the respective member association, and consideration will also be given to the global ecosystem analysis carried out by FIFA in coordination with the member associations.



5. The FIFA general secretariat and the Global Football Development Panel shall maintain strict confidentiality on every application process.
6. The Global Football Development Panel shall take a decision on the approval or rejection of a request from a member association to receive funding within a period of 60 days from receipt of the complete application endorsed by the FIFA general secretariat.
7. Any request for funding under the TDS operational lifecycle can be approved until 31 December 2026.
8. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no legal guarantee, nor any entitlement, for a member association to obtain funding in the context of the TDS operational lifecycle.

## **9. NOTIFICATION AND PAYMENT**

1. Every member association will be notified of the outcome of their application(s).
2. No advance payment will be made to any member association.
3. Any decision by the FIFA general secretariat or the Global Football Development Panel to reject a request for funding shall be communicated with a short reasoning so that the member association can take the necessary steps to resubmit its application within a reasonable time frame.
4. Upon approval of funding by the Global Football Development Panel, the concrete contribution shall be provided upon receipt of a final written declaration from the respective member association, in which the member association shall confirm and guarantee that the respective investments are part of their LTDP and the overall strategic plan of the member association during the period of the TDS operational lifecycle, and in which the envisaged use of the funding shall be confirmed.
5. Payment of any funding shall be made by the FIFA general secretariat to the dedicated FIFA Forward bank account of the beneficiary member association, with specific reference to the TDS project for which the funding will be assigned.

**OBLIGATIONS  
OF MEMBER  
ASSOCIATIONS**

**IV.**

## 10. OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS | FINANCIAL REPORTING | STATUTORY AUDIT REPORT | FIFA CENTRAL AUDIT REVIEW | MISUSE OF FUNDING AND THE FIGHT AGAINST FRAUD

1. Each member association applying for or receiving funding under the TDS operational lifecycle shall at all times comply with, and agree to be bound by, these Regulations.
2. To the extent relevant, these Regulations shall include, and each member association applying for or receiving funding acknowledges and agrees to be bound by, the provisions of art. 8, arts 11 to 15 and any other provision of the FIFA Forward Development Programme Regulations for Forward 3.0 (Forward Regulations) providing for obligations or duties of member associations, in each case as if they were included specifically in these Regulations.
3. Art. 8 and arts 11 to 15 of the Forward Regulations shall apply *mutatis mutandis* and form an integral part of these Regulations, including without limitation with regard to obligations of member associations (see art. 10 par. 2 above), rights and remedies of FIFA, processes, governance and powers, and the duties and responsibilities of FIFA bodies; except that where reference is made to the Development Committee in any such provision in the Forward Regulations, the Global Football Development Panel shall be in charge and have the respective powers, duties and responsibilities under these Regulations, unless otherwise provided herein.



**FINAL  
PROVISIONS**

**V.**

## 11. MATTERS NOT PROVIDED FOR

1. Any matters not provided for in these Regulations shall be determined by the FIFA general secretariat.
2. Cases of force majeure affecting these Regulations shall be decided by the FIFA Council, the decisions of which are final.
3. Final decisions related to the TDS operational lifecycle can be appealed before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), as provided for in the FIFA Statutes.

## 12. AUTHORITATIVE VERSION

These Regulations were drawn up in English and translated into Spanish and French. In the event of any discrepancy in the wording of the different languages, the English text shall be authoritative.

## 13. OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The FIFA general secretariat is entrusted with the operational management of the TDS operational lifecycle and is therefore entitled to make all decisions and adopt the detailed provisions and measures necessary for implementing these Regulations and monitoring their implementation.

## 14. ENFORCEMENT AND PERIOD OF VALIDITY

These Regulations were approved by the FIFA Council at its meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, on 14 March 2023. They came into force with immediate effect and apply to the financial period ending on 31 December 2026.

For the FIFA Council:

President:

Gianni Infantino

Secretary General:

Mattias Grafström



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