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## RESEARCH NOTE

#PARG 2026-70RN

# FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association)

An examination of governance

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### Introduction

FIFA stands for Fédération Internationale de Football Association (French for International Federation of Association Football). The 2026 FIFA World Cup is a landmark event on the world stage, bringing together three host nations, Canada, Mexico, and the United States, for the first tri-nation tournament in the competition's history. As the 2026 edition is coming to North America, it is worth looking at several perspectives. Governance of FIFA is an important dimension.

FIFA's governance system sits at the center of global football, shaping how the sport is regulated, commercialized, and developed across more than 200 member associations. At its core, FIFA governance is meant to balance the interests of national federations, players, clubs, and fans while ensuring transparency, accountability, and fair play in decision-making. Understanding how FIFA governs is essential to understanding both the opportunities and the challenges facing the world's most influential sporting body.

The purpose of this study is to examine key aspects of FIFA's governance in its role as the main organizer of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. By reviewing documentation, the study aims to build a clearer understanding of how the organization operates and manages its resources.



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## Methodology

### *Source of information*

This research note is based on publicly available information gathered through open-source documentation. Governance and financial data were obtained from the FIFA website and its associated publications. Financial information in the research notes covers a five-year period (2021–2025). Data for the year 2021 was sourced from the financial statements published in 2022, as FIFA reports its prior-year results within the following year’s statements.

### *Elements of governance*

This study examines governance through key elements that shape how institutions function: leadership structures, which define authority; decision-making processes, which guide how policies are formed; transparency mechanisms, which make actions visible to stakeholders; stakeholder participation, which reflects inclusivity; and oversight systems, which ensure compliance and accountability. Together, these elements provide a framework for assessing governance quality within the research context.

FIFA’s governance framework is built around a global structure designed to regulate, develop, and safeguard the sport across more than 200 member associations. At its core, FIFA operates through a combination of legislative, executive, and judicial bodies that define the rules of the game, oversee strategic decision-making, and ensure ethical conduct throughout the football ecosystem. Yet its structure, spanning the FIFA Congress, the Council, the President, and a network of committees, has long been scrutinized for issues ranging from political maneuvering to financial oversight.

Examining FIFA’s governance requires acknowledging the long-standing controversies that have shaped both public perception and academic interest in the organization. Allegations of corruption, opaque decision-making, and weak accountability structures have repeatedly raised questions about how power operates within FIFA and how its institutional design may enable or limit misconduct. These persistent concerns also mean that official documents cannot be treated as neutral or comprehensive sources. Nevertheless, this report adopts a primarily descriptive approach and does not apply a critical lens to these issues.

This research note is one component of a wider series analyzing FIFA as an organization, alongside related notes addressing governance (PARG-2026-70RN), finances (PARG-2026-71RN), and the 2026 Men’s FIFA World Cup (PARG-2026-72RN).

## FIFA as an organization

FIFA is the international governing body for football, responsible for overseeing the sport's global development, organizing major competitions, and setting the rules that shape how the game is played worldwide. Founded in 1904 and headquartered in Zurich (Switzerland), it brings together 211 member associations, making it one of the largest and most influential sports organizations in the world. Through its regulatory role, investment programs, and flagship events such as the FIFA World Cup, FIFA works to promote football's growth, integrity, and accessibility across all regions.

### *Vision*

"FIFA's vision is to promote the game of football, protect its integrity and bring the game to all." (FIFA, 2025d)

"The 'FIFA Vision' (specifically the 2020-2023 'Making Football Truly Global' initiative and subsequent 2023-2027 'Football Unites the World' strategy) is a strategic roadmap aimed at modernizing football, fostering global competitiveness, and leveraging technology to make the sport more inclusive. Key goals include expanding the global reach of tournaments, accelerating the growth of women's football, and investing in talent development." (FIFA, 2020a)

### *Mission*

"Since 2016, our mission at FIFA has been based around one simple message - to bring football back to FIFA, and FIFA back to football – and it has been a mission that has seen many different iterations." (FIFA, 2023b)

### *Strategic objectives 2023-2027*

FIFA Strategic objectives for 2023-2027 are the following (FIFA, 2023a):

1. Revise the FIFA Statutes and improve our regulations
2. Implement transfer system reform and address other governance-related matters
3. Deliver fan engagement including through eFootball and invest in digital technology and Artificial Intelligence for the next generations
4. Organise more youth tournaments at various age levels
5. Focus on Player, Coach and Referee development and FIFA Academies
6. Focus on social responsibilities, in particular human rights and climate-related aspects
7. Provide FIFA Member Associations with new international match opportunities for their national teams and clubs
8. Deliver the greatest FIFA Women's World Cup™ ever in 2023 to help drive further development in women's football
9. Ensure the FIFA World Cup™ will be the Greatest show on the planet in 2026

10. Organise a brand-new FIFA Club World Cup in 2025 with 32 teams and extend FIFA's club competition offering
11. Achieve a minimum of 11 billion USD revenues as part of a more global administration: An incredible new record... with more to come!"

The previous FIFA strategic objectives for 2020–2023 were articulated in *The Vision 2020–2023: Making Football Truly Global* (FIFA, 2020a, 2020b). This document served as FIFA's roadmap for advancing its ambition to globalize the sport in a rapidly evolving environment. It was structured around eleven core goals.

1. Modernise the football regulatory framework
2. Grow revenues sustainably for further reinvestment in football
3. Increase the efficiency and efficacy of the organisation
4. Ensure the success of our iconic competitions
5. Globalise our competitions
6. Increase global competitiveness
7. Maximise our impact on global football development
8. Accelerate the growth of women's football
9. Harness technology in football
10. Protect positive values in football
11. Impact society through the power of football

### **FIFA as an organizer of global events**

FIFA serves as the global organizer of a diverse portfolio of football competitions, with the FIFA World Cup standing as its most iconic event. Beyond this flagship tournament, FIFA oversees a wide range of international competitions, including the FIFA Women's World Cup, the FIFA Club World Cup, and youth tournaments such as the U-20 and U-17 World Cups, as well as the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup and the FIFA Futsal World Cup.

Together, these events span senior, youth, and club levels, illustrating FIFA's central role in shaping football development worldwide. By managing logistics, host-country coordination, competition standards, and global broadcasting, FIFA exerts significant influence on the sport's global ecosystem. Its tournaments not only showcase elite talent and unite fans across continents but also support long-term growth by promoting visibility, encouraging grassroots participation, and strengthening infrastructure in host nations. Table 1 summarizes key information about these major FIFA-organized events.

Table 1 - Key information about major FIFA-organized events

<i>Event / Tournament</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Last / Upcoming event</i>
FIFA World Cup	Senior Men's National Teams	Every 4 years	2026 (USA, Canada, Mexico) 2030 (Morocco, Portugal, Spain) 2034 (Saudi Arabia)
FIFA Women's World Cup	Senior Women's National Teams	Every 4 years	2027 (Brazil)
FIFA Club World Cup (Men)	Champion clubs from each confederation	Annual	2025 (USA) 2029 (To be determined)
FIFA Club World Cup (Women)	Champion clubs from each confederation	Annual	2026 (UK - London)
FIFA U-20 World Cup (Men)	U-20 men's national teams	Every 2 years	2027 (Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan)
FIFA U-20 World Cup (Women)	U-20 women's national teams	Every 2 years	2026 (Poland)
FIFA U-17 World Cup (Men)	U-17 men's national teams	Annual	2025-2029 (Qatar)
FIFA U-17 World Cup (Women)	U-17 women's national teams	Annual	2025-2029 (Morocco)
FIFA Futsal World Cup (Men)	Men's futsal national teams	Every 4 years	2024 (Uzbekistan) 2028 (To be determined)
FIFA Futsal World Cup (Women)	Women's futsal national teams	Every 4 years	2025 (Philippines) 2029 (To be determined)
FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup	Men's beach soccer national teams	Every 2 years	2025 (Seychelles) 2027 (To be determined)
2028 Los Angeles Olympic	Senior Men's National Teams	Every 4 years	2028 (USA)
	Senior Women's National Teams		

Source: FIFA (2014, 2026k\_); Wikipedia (2026f-q)

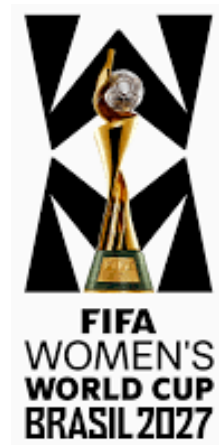
### *FIFA World Cups (Men)*

Since 1930, the FIFA World Cup has been the premier global tournament for men's senior national teams, held every four years and recognized as the most widely viewed sporting event in the world. The upcoming edition, the 2026 FIFA World Cup, will take place from 11 June to 19 July 2026 and will be co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, marking the first World Cup with 48 participating teams. Recent tournaments have drawn significant attention not only for the competition on the field but also for the controversial selections of Russia in 2018 and Qatar in 2022, which sparked debates around geopolitics, human rights, and FIFA's bidding process. Looking ahead, the 2030 FIFA World Cup will be jointly hosted by Morocco, Portugal, and Spain, symbolizing a historic cross-continental collaboration and setting the stage for another major milestone in the tournament's evolution (FIFA, 2024; Wikipedia, 2026f). The 2034 FIFA World Cup will be hosted by Saudi Arabia (FIFA, 2024).



### *FIFA Women's World Cup*

Since 1995, the FIFA Women's World Cup is the premier global competition for women's senior national teams, held every four years and is recognized as the highest stage in international women's football. The next edition, the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup, will take place in Brazil from 24 June to 25 July 2027, marking the first time the tournament is hosted in South America. As the women's counterpart to the men's World Cup, the event brings together the world's top national teams, showcasing elite talent, expanding the global reach of the women's game, and contributing to the rapid growth of women's football worldwide. (Wikipedia, 2026g)



### *FIFA Club World Cup (Men)*

Since 2000, the FIFA Club World Cup is an annual competition that brings together the champion men's club teams from each of FIFA's continental confederations to compete for the title of the world's best club. It continues to expand in scale and visibility, with new formats enhancing global participation. (Wikipedia, 2026h)



### *FIFA Women's Champions Cup*

On the women's side, FIFA is launching the FIFA Women's Champions Cup culminating in its inaugural edition in London in 2026. Together, these tournaments elevate both men's and women's club football, offering elite teams a global stage and reinforcing FIFA's commitment to growing the sport across all levels. (Wikipedia, 2026i)



### *FIFA U-20 + U-17 World Cup (Men + Women)*

Since 1977 for men and 2002 for women, the FIFA U-20 World Cup has stood as one of the most important youth tournaments in international football, held every two years and serving as a crucial platform for developing future global stars. The next women's edition will take place in 2026, hosted by Poland from 5 to 27 September 2026, bringing together the world's top U-20 women's national teams. The men's edition will follow in 2027, jointly hosted by Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, continuing the tournament's long tradition of showcasing emerging talent on the world stage. (Wikipedia, 2026j, k)



Since 1985 for men and 2008 for women, the FIFA U-17 World Cup has been held every two years and now every year and serves as a key global stage for youth national teams at the youngest competitive level. The 2026 men's U-17 World Cup will take place in Qatar from 19 November to 13 December 2026, as part of the country's broader hosting cycle running from 2025 to 2029. On the women's side, the 2026 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup will be hosted by Morocco, also within its hosting cycle from 2025 to 2029, further strengthening the development pathway for young female footballers worldwide. (Wikipedia, 2026l, m)



### *FIFA Futsal World Cup*

Since 1989 for men and 2025 for women, the FIFA Futsal World Cup has been held every four years, establishing itself as the premier global competition for national futsal teams. The 2024 men's edition was hosted by Uzbekistan, bringing together the world's top futsal nations in a fast-paced indoor format. On the women's side, the inaugural 2025 FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup took place in the Philippines, marking an important milestone in the expansion and formal recognition of women's futsal on the world stage. (Wikipedia, 2026n, o)



### *FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup*

Since 2005, the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup has been held every two years, featuring national men's beach soccer teams competing at the highest international level. FIFA does not currently organize a women's Beach Soccer World Cup, and no equivalent global tournament exists under its governance. (Wikipedia, 2026p)



### *Los Angeles 2028 Olympic*

The Los Angeles 2028 Olympic football tournaments will feature 12 teams in the men's competition and 16 teams in the women's event, with matches scheduled from 10 to 19 July 2028. Games will be played across seven U.S. cities, namely New York, Columbus, Nashville, St. Louis, San José, San Diego, and Los Angeles (LA28, 2026).



## FIFA Entities

Table 2 presents FIFA's subsidiaries as of 31 December 2025, offering an overview of the organizational entities through which FIFA manages its commercial, administrative, and developmental activities. These subsidiaries play distinct roles in areas such as service company (event management, media rights, marketing operations and development programs), museum, ticket sales, allowing FIFA to structure its responsibilities while maintaining oversight across diverse functions. By outlining these entities in a consolidated format, the table helps illustrate how FIFA's corporate architecture supports its broader governance framework and operational priorities heading into the 2026 cycle.

Table 2 - FIFA's subsidiaries as of 31 December 2025

<i>Name of organization</i>	<i>Location of incorporation</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Ownership Interest 2025</i>	<i>Ownership Interest 2024</i>
FIFA Museum AG	Zurich, Switzerland	Museum	100%	100%
FIFA Ticketing AG	Zurich, Switzerland	Ticket sales	100%	100%
FIFA Development Zurich AG	Zurich, Switzerland	Service company	100%	100%
FIFA Foundation	Zurich, Switzerland	Foundation	100%	100%
2018 FIFA World Cup Ticketing Limited Liability Company	Moscow, Russia	Ticket sales	100%	100%
FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 LLC	Doha, Qatar	Service company	51%	51%
FIFA Ticketing LLC	Doha, Qatar	Ticket sales	100%	100%
FWWC2023 Pty Ltd	Sydney, Australia	Service company	100%	100%
FWC2026 US, Inc.	Wilmington, USA	Service company	100%	100%
FWC26 Canada Football Ltd.	Victoria, Canada	Service company	100%	100%
FWC2026 Mexico, S. de R.L. de C.V.	Mexico City, Mexico	Service company	100%	100%
FIFA Clearing House SAS	Paris, France	Service company	100%	100%
FIFA (SG) Ltd.	Singapore, Singapore	Service company	100%	100%
FWWC 27 LTDA.	Río de Janeiro, Brasil	Service company	100%	0%
FIFA Foundation USA, Inc.	Delaware, USA	Foundation	100%	0%
Bureau Africain de la FIFA	Rabat, Morocco	Service company	100%	0%
FIFA (Americas), Inc.	Miami, USA	Service company	100%	100%
FIFA World Cup Brazil Assessoria Ltda. (in liquidation)	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Service company	100%	100%

Source: FIFA (2025e)

Two entities warrant more detailed explanation.

## FIFA Museum

“FIFA created the FIFA Museum to celebrate the rich heritage of football and to show how the game continues to connect and inspire the world. The FIFA Museum tells the story of how world football’s governing body has developed association football globally and made it the undisputed number-one sport in the world, uniting nations and bringing continents together. Pride of place in the FIFA Museum is the FIFA World Cup™ Gallery. A must-see for all fans, the gallery is dedicated to the history of football’s ultimate prize and hosts an incredible collection in a stunning architectural setting where the jewels of the exhibition – the FIFA World Cup Trophies – are on display. With a multitude of attractions, audiovisual experiences and thought-provoking exhibitions, the FIFA Museum shows the impact football has had on society, and how it is a source of inspiration for fans across the globe.” (FIFA Museum, 2026b).



The FIFA Museum is a vibrant celebration of global football culture, designed to showcase how sport has shaped communities, identities, and history around the world. Inside, iconic artifacts like World Cup trophies, legendary players’ jerseys, and interactive exhibits that let visitors relive unforgettable moments from past tournaments. The FIFA Museum is based in Zurich with antennas in Miami, New York, Vancouver and Hong Kong. Exhibitions include *Rainbow of Shirts*, *The Timeline*, *The Foundations*, *The FIFA World Cup Gallery*, the *Cinema*, *Unidad – The World’s Game*, the *Legacy of Champions* (FIFA Museum, 2026a).

## FIFA Foundation

“The FIFA Foundation was established in 2018 as part of FIFA’s commitment to making a positive social impact and addressing the most pressing global challenges.” “The FIFA Foundation is an independent organisation that shares FIFA’s goals of using football to unite the world and bring about positive change in society. It does this through a number of programmes bound by a common thread: making lives around the world better thanks to the beautiful game. Its work tackles a range of issues, including the social challenges facing young people, and provides support in a number of areas, such as education, empowering women and girls to play football and realise their full potential, and revamping sports infrastructure.” (FIFA Foundation, 2026)



## FIFA Confederations and Member Associations (MA)

A total of 222 national associations is grouped within six continental confederations (see Figure A). However, FIFA officially recognizes 211 affiliated member associations that govern football across the world's regions. The number of FIFA members exceeds the number of sovereign states because FIFA admits associations from non-sovereign entities as full members. These include the four Home Nations of the United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) as well as the two Special Administrative Regions of China, Hong Kong and Macau.

The 211 FIFA-affiliated associations are organized under six continental confederations: the Confederation of African Football (CAF), Asian Football Confederation (AFC), Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL), and the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) (see Table 3). FIFA (2026a)

**Figure A – FIFA Confederations Map**



Source: Wikipedia (2026a) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FIFA>

Table 3 - FIFA Confederations

<i>Regions</i>	<i>Confederations</i>	
<b>Africa</b> (56 associations)		Confederation of African Football / Confédération Africaine de Football
<b>Asia</b> (47 associations)		Asian Football Confederation
<b>Europe</b> (55 associations)		Union of European Football Associations /Union des associations européennes de football
<b>North, Central American and Caribbean</b> (41 associations)	 Concacaf	Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football
<b>South America</b> (10 associations)	 -CONMEBOL-	South American Football Confederation
<b>Oceania</b> (13 associations)		Oceania Football Confederation

Source: FIFA (2026a)

“The FIFA Member Associations (MAs) are at the centre of football’s global ecosystem, representing 211 countries and territories across six continents. These MAs are responsible for the development and governance of football within their territory, including organising competitions, nurturing grassroots programmes, and promoting the sport at all levels. They work to ensure that football thrives as a unifying force within their communities, fostering participation and providing opportunities for players, coaches, and referees to grow. FIFA Member Associations also play a crucial role in upholding the integrity of the game by enforcing FIFA’s regulations and promoting fair play, inclusion, and respect on and off the pitch.

FIFA maintains a close and collaborative relationship with its MAs, supporting them with investment, technical expertise, and strategic guidance. Through development initiatives such as the FIFA Forward Programme, FIFA provides funding to enhance infrastructure, improve training, and expand access to football for all. This partnership ensures that MAs can achieve sustainable growth and make a lasting impact within their regions. By working together, FIFA and its Member Associations strengthen the global football family, building a more inclusive, diverse, and innovative future for the sport.” (FIFA, 2026a)

## FIFA Governance and Organizational Structure

In addition to its six confederations and member associations, FIFA’s governance and oversight system includes several key bodies: the Congress, the Council, the Bureau of the Council, the President, the Secretary General, a range of standing and independent committees, and multiple administrative divisions. Figure B presents how FIFA governance and oversight is structured. At the top is the FIFA Congress, followed by the FIFA Council, which provides strategic direction. The General Secretariat oversees FIFA’s daily operations, supported by committees.

**Figure B – FIFA Governance and Oversight Structure**

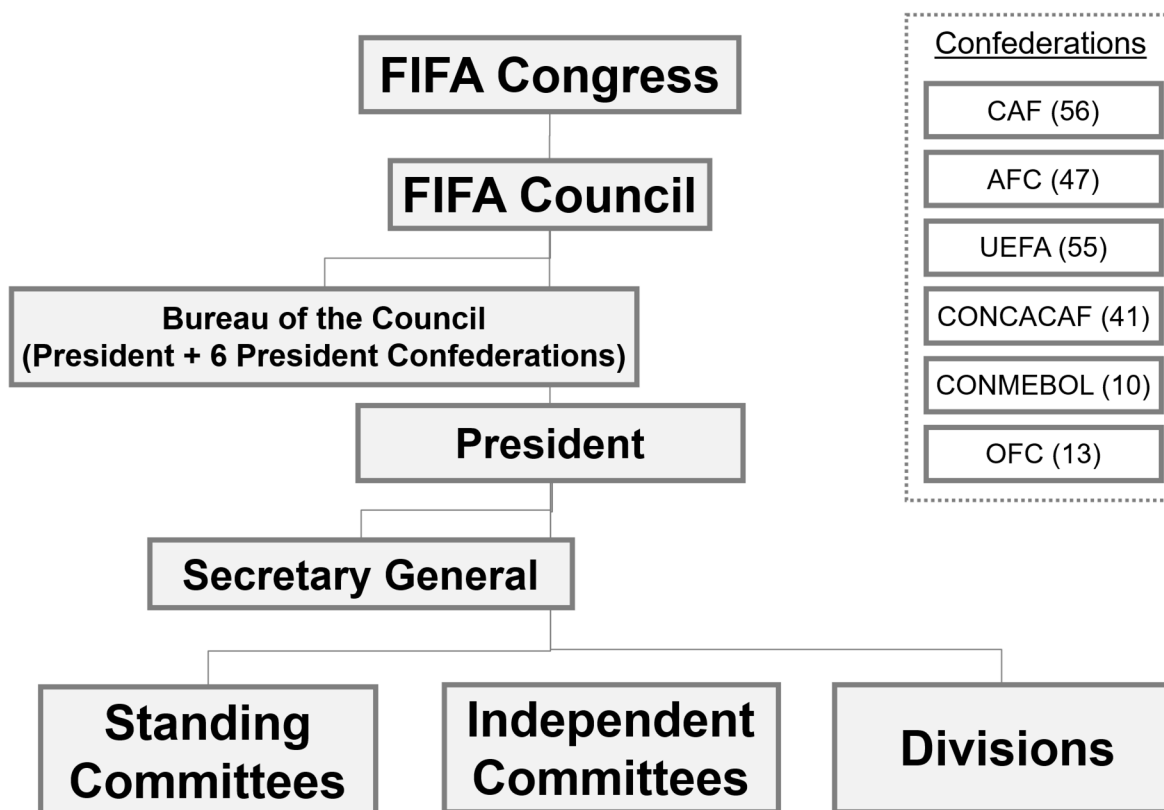
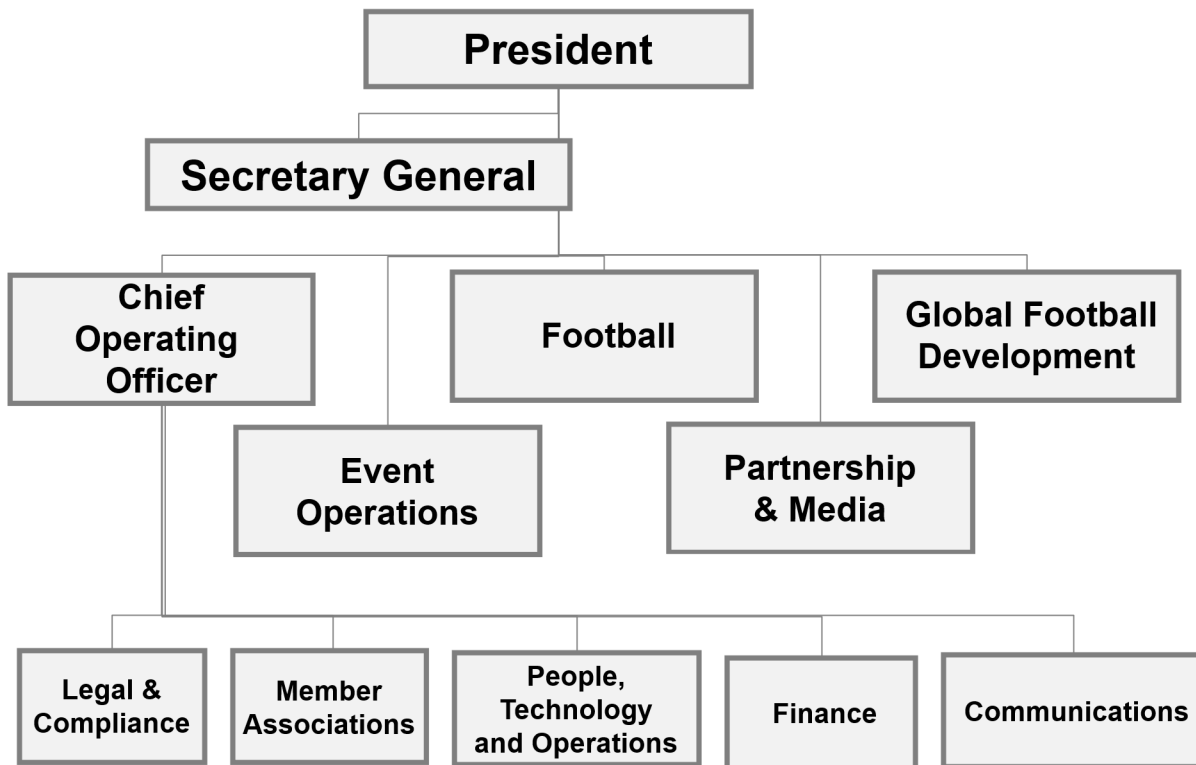


Figure C presents the FIFA organizational chart, illustrating how the operations of world football are structured. Alongside the President, the General Secretariat is responsible for managing FIFA’s day-to-day activities. Together, these components show how FIFA organizes its operational functions and supports decision-making across global football.

**Figure C – FIFA Organizational Chart**



Source: <https://inside.fifa.com/organisation>

### **FIFA Congress**

The FIFA Congress is the organization's highest decision-making body. It may be convened as either an ordinary or an extraordinary congress, with ordinary sessions held annually. Each of FIFA's 211 member associations holds one vote, ensuring equal representation in the decision-making process. The Congress has been hosted in Canada on two occasions: the 40<sup>th</sup> FIFA Congress in 1976 in Montreal and the 76<sup>th</sup> FIFA Congress on April 30, 2026, in Vancouver (FIFA, 2026f; Wikipedia, 2026d).

“According to media reports, the president of the Iran Football Federation was denied entry to Canada due to his past ties to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which Canada designates as a terrorist organization. As a result, only 210 member associations were represented at the Congress in Vancouver, even though FIFA's legislative body comprises 211 members.” (AFP, 2026 April 29; Culbert, 2026; Woo, 2026)

## FIFA Council and Committees

FIFA's committees form the backbone of its governance system, providing specialized oversight and expertise across the organization's most critical functions. Each committee carries defined responsibilities, such as monitoring financial integrity, enforcing ethical standards, or shaping the rules and structure of global tournaments, helping distribute authority beyond the FIFA Council and President. Together, they create a framework intended to balance accountability, technical expertise, and representation within world football's governing structure.

FIFA committees could be divided into three main groups, namely Council, Standing Committees and Independent Committees (FIFA, 2026c). Table 4 lists the various committees.

### *FIFA Council*

The FIFA Council provides strategic direction and oversight. Together, the FIFA Council, the Bureau of the Council, and the FIFA-Confederations Coordination Group form a governance ecosystem that balances global leadership with regional representation, ensuring that world football remains unified while respecting the sport's diverse contexts (FIFA, 2026g).

The FIFA Council serves as FIFA's main decision-making body in the intervals between FIFA Congress meetings. It is responsible for long-term strategy, regulatory oversight, tournament structures, and global development programs, with authority ranging from approving competition formats to defining FIFA's overall vision for the game. The Council plays a central role in shaping global football governance and ensuring that the sport develops in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner. It brings together representatives from all six continental confederations, giving each region a meaningful voice in major policy decisions.

The Council is composed of 37 members: the FIFA President (elected by the FIFA Congress), eight vice presidents, and 28 additional members elected by the member associations, each serving a four-year term. To promote gender representation, each confederation must elect at least one female member. Both the President and the Council members may serve no more than three terms, whether consecutive or not, reinforcing FIFA's commitment to leadership renewal and accountability.

Supporting the Council is the Bureau of the Council, a smaller, more agile group composed of the FIFA President and the presidents of each confederation. The Bureau is empowered to make urgent decisions between full Council meetings, particularly on matters requiring swift action such as scheduling adjustments, emergency regulatory updates, or issues affecting upcoming competitions. While the Council sets broad policy, the Bureau ensures continuity and responsiveness in day-to-day governance.

Table 4 - FIFA Committees

Type	Committees	
Council	FIFA Council	Vittorio Montagliani (Canada) - Concacaf President
	Bureau of the Council	Vittorio Montagliani (Canada) - Concacaf President
	FIFA-Confederations Coordination Group	
Standing Committees	Finance Committee	
	Development Committee	
	Men's National Team Competitions Committee	
	Women's National Team Competitions Committee	
	Men's Club Competitions Committee	
	Women's Club Competitions Committee	Diana Matheson (Canada)
	Olympic Football Committee	Charmaine Crooks (Canada)
	Youth Boys' Competitions Committee	
	Youth Girls' Competitions Committee	
	Futsal Committee	
	Beach Soccer Committee	
	Men's Football Stakeholders Committee	
	Women's Football Stakeholders Committee	
	Member Associations Committee	
	Referees Committee	
	Medical Committee	
	Technical Development Committee	
	Women's Football Development Committee	
	Grassroots and Amateur Football Committee	
	Institutional Relations Committee	
	Legal Committee	
	Stadium and Security Committee	
	Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Committee	Paul-Claude Berube (Canada)
	Football Social Responsibility Committee	
	Football Technology, Innovation and Digital Transformation Committee	Peter Augruso (Canada)
	Commercial and Marketing Advisory Committee	
	Media and Communications Committee	
	Football Esport Committee	
	Future of Football Committee	
	Laws of the Game Committee	
Independent Committees	Governance, Audit and Compliance Committee	
	Disciplinary Committee	
	Appeal Committee	
	Ethics Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigatory chamber</li> <li>- Adjudicatory chamber</li> </ul> Bruno De Vita (Canada)

Source: FIFA (2026b,c)

The FIFA-Confederations Coordination Group serves as a bridge between FIFA and the six continental confederations, ensuring that global decisions align with regional realities. This group focuses on harmonizing calendars, competitions, development initiatives, and administrative processes across continents. By coordinating priorities and sharing information, it helps maintain consistency in how football is organized worldwide.

### *Standing committees*

The Standing Committees support the FIFA Council by providing expert advice in specific areas of the game. Some committees focus on competitions, such as those for men's and women's national teams, clubs, youth tournaments, futsal, beach soccer, and the Olympic football tournament. Others concentrate on development and participation, including committees for technical development, women's football development, grassroots and amateur football, and overall football development worldwide.

Several committees address governance, safety, and integrity, such as the Finance, Legal, Stadium and Security, Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination, and Medical Committees. There are also groups dedicated to stakeholder engagement, media and communications, commercial strategy, technology and innovation, esports, and the long-term future of football. Together, these committees ensure that FIFA's decisions are informed, specialized, and responsive to the needs of the global game.

### *Independent committees*

The Independent Committees within FIFA play a crucial role in safeguarding integrity, accountability, and fair play across global football. These bodies operate autonomously from FIFA's political and administrative structures to ensure that disciplinary, ethical, and governance matters are handled impartially. The Governance, Audit and Compliance Committee oversee transparency, financial integrity, and adherence to governance standards. The Disciplinary Committee is responsible for enforcing FIFA's regulations by imposing sanctions for rule violations, while the Appeal Committee reviews and adjudicates appeals against disciplinary decisions, ensuring due process. The Ethics Committee is divided into two independent chambers: the Investigatory Chamber, which conducts inquiries into potential ethical breaches, and the Adjudicatory Chamber, which evaluates the findings and issues decisions or sanctions. Together, these independent bodies help maintain trust in FIFA's regulatory framework by ensuring that misconduct, corruption, and ethical violations are addressed with neutrality and rigor.

## *FIFA Canadian representatives*

A few Canadians represent Canada on various FIFA committees. It is possible to mention: Vittorio Montagliani as CONCACAF President on Council and Bureau of the Council; Diana Matheson on Women's Club Competitions Committee; Charmaine Crooks on Olympic Football Committee; Paul-Claude Berube on Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Committee; Peter Augruso on Football Technology, Innovation and Digital Transformation Committee; and Bruno De Vita in the Investigatory chamber of the Ethics Committee.

## **FIFA Divisions**

FIFA is organized into a series of specialized divisions, each responsible for a key area of the global game. These include divisions focused on communications, finances, legal and compliance, innovation, refereeing, and global football development, as well as units dedicated to women's football, professional football, social responsibility, and member associations. Additional divisions manage partnerships and media, people and operations, and the delivery of FIFA tournaments, including the FIFA World Cup. Together, these divisions support FIFA's strategic objectives, ensure effective governance, and drive the worldwide growth and professionalization of football.

Table 5 presents the various FIFA divisions, including a brief description.

## **FIFA Headquarters, Continental Offices, and Regional Development Offices**

Table 6 summarizes the headquarters, continental offices, and regional development offices.

### *Headquarters and Continental Offices*

FIFA is headquartered in Zurich (Switzerland). Several of the major football confederations maintain continental offices in key global cities to support their administrative, development, and governance activities. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) operates from Rabat, Morocco, while the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) maintains a significant office presence in Paris, France. In Asia, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) is supported by its regional office in Jakarta, Indonesia, and across the Atlantic, CONCACAF oversees football in North, Central America, and the Caribbean from its continental office in Miami, United States.

Table 5 - FIFA's Divisions

<i>Divisions</i>	<i>Description</i>
Communications	"The role and objectives of the Communication Division is to raise FIFA's profile and support implementation of the 11 Strategic Objectives for the Global Game: 2023-2027."
Finances	"FIFA Issues a financial statement in line with International Financial Reporting Standards that must be certified by an auditing firm. The financial statement must be approved by the FIFA Finance Committee, the FIFA Council and the FIFA Congress."
Global Football Development	"The Global Football Division provides bespoke assistance to stakeholders to professionalise the game with strategic development projects and ultimately, to be one of the main "players" within FIFA in implementing the organization's vision."
Innovation	"The Innovation team is responsible for solving existing problems in the football world by testing and implementing new technologies and innovations."
Legal & Compliance	"The FIFA Legal & Compliance Division provides advice to the various FIFA divisions and to all internal bodies and committees, which, primarily, are governed by the FIFA Statutes and regulations."
Member Associations	"The aim of the Member Associations Division is to support the 211 member associations and six confederations in the development, governance and administration of football."
Partnership & Media	"The Partnerships & Media Division is responsible for generating interest and income through regional and global initiatives, spearheading a collective strategy that underpins the long-term development of football worldwide."
People, Technology & Operations	"The aim of the People, Technology & Operations division is to enable and empower the FIFA team by creating efficient structures, providing core services and nurturing a positive working culture that helps us all to achieve our goals."
Professional Football	"The aim of the Professional Football division is to centralise all professional football-related areas, facilitating a knowledge-based, efficient and coordinated approach to drive the growth and development of professional football around the world."
Refereeing	"FIFA Refereeing's principal goal is deliver the very best referee performances at our tournaments, keeping the players safe and applying the Laws of the Game."
Social Responsibility and Education	"The Social Responsibility and Education Division works with governments, global and regional development agencies, human rights groups, international and local non-profit organisations and former players to promote a fairer, more equal society through football."
Women's Football	"The Women's Football Division oversees FIFA's investment in dedicated funding, human resources, and innovative, tailor-made development programmes."
FIFA World Cup	"The aim of the Tournaments Division is to ensure the success of our world-class competitions and events – wherever they take place."

Source: FIFA (2026h)

## Regional Development Offices

“The Regional Development Offices provide substantive guidance and support to the member associations and act as a key conduit in facilitating the implementation of the FIFA Forward development programme at regional and local levels, with the support of the FIFA Member Associations Division in FIFA’s Paris office. This increased local presence allows FIFA to better understand the key objectives and circumstances on the ground that shape the MAs’ work to develop football for all – boys, girls, men and women – from the grassroots to elite level.” (FIFA, 2026e)

“The offices’ main activities include the following:

- Administering the FIFA Forward Programme (including by facilitating its implementation and providing oversight)
- Serving as the first point of contact for member associations
- Coordinating and providing support for FIFA-related activities in the region
- Driving knowledge-sharing and education services for member associations
- Providing strategic and operational guidance to member associations
- Gathering important information for FIFA” (FIFA, 2026e)

“The regional offices embody FIFA’s presence around the world. Through them, FIFA can better understand the problems that member associations face in their regions and meet their needs to help grow and promote football around the world.” (FIFA, 2026e)

Table 6 - FIFA’s headquarters, continental offices, and regional development offices

<i>Region</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Associations supported</i>
Europe	Switzerland	Zurich	FIFA Headquarters	
	France	Paris	continental office (UEFA)	
North America	United States	Miami	continental office (CONCACAF)	
Central America	Barbados	Christ Church	regional development office	22
	Panama	Panama City	regional development office	13
South America	Paraguay	Asunción	regional development office	10
Africa	Morocco	Rabat	continental office (CAF)	
	Senegal	Dakar	regional development office	24
	Congo	Brazzaville	regional development office	8
	Rwanda	Kigali	regional development office	16
	South Africa	Johannesburg	regional development office	14
Asia	Indonesia	Jakarta	continental office (AFC)	
	United Arab Emirates	Dubai	regional development office	19
	India	New Delhi	regional development office	6
	Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	regional development office	21
Oceania	New Zealand	Auckland	regional development office	11
<b>total</b>				<b>156</b>

Source: FIFA (2026d,e)

## **FIFA President**

The FIFA President serves as the highest executive authority within world football's governing body, responsible for providing strategic leadership, representing the organization globally, and overseeing the implementation of FIFA's statutes and long-term vision. Elected by the FIFA Congress, the President works closely with the FIFA Council, confederations, and member associations to guide policy, promote the development of the game, and safeguard the integrity of international football. The role also includes diplomatic engagement with governments, sports institutions, and global partners, reflecting FIFA's influence not only in sport but also in international cooperation and cultural exchange. As with all leadership positions in global sport, the President's actions and decisions are subject to scrutiny, making transparency and accountability central expectations of the office.

Elected in February 2016 and reelected in 2019 and 2023, Gianni Infantino (Switzerland/Italy) is the current FIFA President. Born in March 1970 (aged 56 years-old), he is a career sports administrator. Before his election, he was the General Secretary of the UEFA, the European confederation, and previously Deputy General Secretary, Director of Governance and Legal Affairs Division and Director of Legal Affairs and Club Licensing. He studied law at the University of Fribourg. Infantino worked as the secretary general of the International Centre for Sport Studies (CIES) at the University of Neuchâtel. He speaks French, German and Italian as mother tongues and speaks Arabic, English, Portuguese and Spanish. Gianni Infantino has also been an International Olympic Committee member since 2020. (Conn, 2016; Wikipedia, 2026c)

Infantino is the 9<sup>th</sup> president of FIFA. They tend to last for a long period of time (except for three that were acting for a short period of time). Three of them died in office (Daniel Burley Woolfall (England: June 1906 – October 1918); Rodolphe Seeldrayers (Belgium: June 1954 – October 1955); Arthur Drewry (England: June 1956 – March 1961)) (FIFA, 2026i; Wikipedia, 2026a). Before Infantino, Sepp Blatter (Switzerland: June 1998 – October 2015) was suspended and banned (Gibson, 2015). Stanley Rous (England: September 1961 – May 1974) and Joao Havelange (Brazil: May 1974 – June 1998) were President before Blatter (FIFA, 2026j; Wikipedia, 2026a).

## **FIFA Secretary General**

The FIFA Secretary General acts as the Chief Operating Officer of world football's governing body, managing the day-to-day business operations, administration, and financial implementation. Working alongside the FIFA President, they oversee the general secretariat, lead staff, and execute the strategic and commercial directives mandated by the FIFA Council.

After being named Secretary General as interim in October 2023, Mattias Grafström was formally appointed as Secretary General of FIFA by the FIFA Council in May 2024.

Born in September 1980 (aged 46 years-old), he is a football administrator. Passionate about sports and football, he shifted at a young age from playing on the field to focusing on football administration when he received an opportunity in 1997 to work in the Media department of UEFA. Grafström continued to work for UEFA at its headquarters and during its major events on a regular basis until 2004. Grafström returned to UEFA in 2008 where he held several roles within the organization, starting at UEFA Media Technologies and ending in 2016 as the Senior Manager of the Executive Office. Grafström worked for the Swedish Football Association and the Norwegian Football Association.

Following the election of Gianni Infantino as FIFA President in February 2016, he joined FIFA as Chief of Staff. In 2019, he took on the role of Deputy Secretary General (Football), responsible for overseeing all football matters. He speaks Swedish, Dutch, French, English, German and Spanish. His university education includes two master's degrees: one in information and communication systems at the University of Geneva, and one in sports management and technology at the AISTS in Lausanne (FIFA, 2026j; Wikipedia, 2026e).

## **Controversies**

FIFA has been at the center of numerous governance controversies, many of which have raised serious questions about transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct within the organization. Over the years, investigations by journalists, law-enforcement agencies, and independent ethics bodies have revealed patterns of misconduct involving senior officials and regional football leaders. "Gambling, match-fixing, bribery, money laundering, tax evasion, and corruption generally have been rampant in football for many decades." (Bean, 2019, p.197)

Per FIFA (2026l) own words, "[t]ransparency is a key component of FIFA's commitment towards good governance. FIFA publishes its annual financial report every year with full transparency, and in line with the International Financial Report Standards (IFRS). The report must be audited by its statutory auditor and approved by the FIFA Finance Committee, the FIFA Council and, finally, by the FIFA Congress."

A persistent and deeply damaging pattern in FIFA's governance has been the prevalence of bribery and corruption. The most consequential example emerged during the 2015 investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice, which revealed extensive bribery networks tied to marketing rights, media deals, and votes for World Cup hosting. The repercussions were extensive, with dozens of officials facing indictments or lifetime bans, and the crisis culminating in the removal of long-time FIFA president Joseph Sepp Blatter. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the investigation uncovered over \$150 million in bribes and kickbacks paid over more than two decades to officials from CONMEBOL and CONCACAF by sports marketing executives seeking lucrative commercial contracts (Panja, 2026). Bean (2017) raises the absence of accountability with the FIFA.

The awarding of the 2018 World Cup to Russia and the 2022 World Cup to Qatar intensified scrutiny, as critics argued that the bidding processes lacked transparency and may have been influenced by improper incentives (Becker, 2013; Youd, 2014). The 2026 North American World Cup was awarded under FIFA's newly articulated strategic vision (Bar-On and Reiche, 2026; Beissel and Ternes, 2024). The "decision to grant the 2034 World Cup to Saudi Arabia despite the country's human rights abuses and the - opacity of executive decision making, as examples of concerning trends" (MacInnes, 2025). While FIFA has consistently denied wrongdoing in these selections, the controversies contributed to a broader perception of systemic governance failures.

In response to these crises, FIFA introduced a series of reform measures, including new ethics committees, term limits for senior officials, enhanced financial disclosure requirements, and structural changes intended to separate political and commercial functions. However, debates continue about whether these reforms will go far enough (Bayle and Rayner, 2016; DiCenso, 2017; FairSquare, 2025). Some observers, such as journalists, researchers, academics, watchdog organizations, insiders, and governance specialists, argue that progress has been uneven ten years after the major 2015 scandal (FairSquare, 2025). For example, FairSquare (2024b) has proposed a report for an external reform of FIFA.

Issues such as persistent concerns about internal accountability, the independence of oversight bodies, the influence of regional power blocks, "the key structural flaws", "the deeply problematic power dynamic between the organisation's executive branch and its member associations", "there is little verifiable evidence to show that the primary impact of this redistribution has been the development of the game, and considerable evidence to suggest its main purpose has been to ensure the loyalty and allegiance of member associations" are raised to explain governance problems" and "precludes effective internal reform" (FairSquare, 2025; MacInnes, 2025).

The overall pattern is clear: FIFA's governance controversies have had a lasting impact on its reputation and continue to shape discussions about the future of global football administration. "FIFA is arguably more poorly governed today than it was 10 years ago." (FairSquare, 2025)

## Brief Evaluation Score

Given the descriptive focus of this research note, more extensive commentary on governance challenges and reform prospects is not pursued here. Nonetheless, such analysis falls outside the scope of this note. However, it may be relevant to mention the work of the group FIFA Watch (2026a), an unofficial organization of fans.

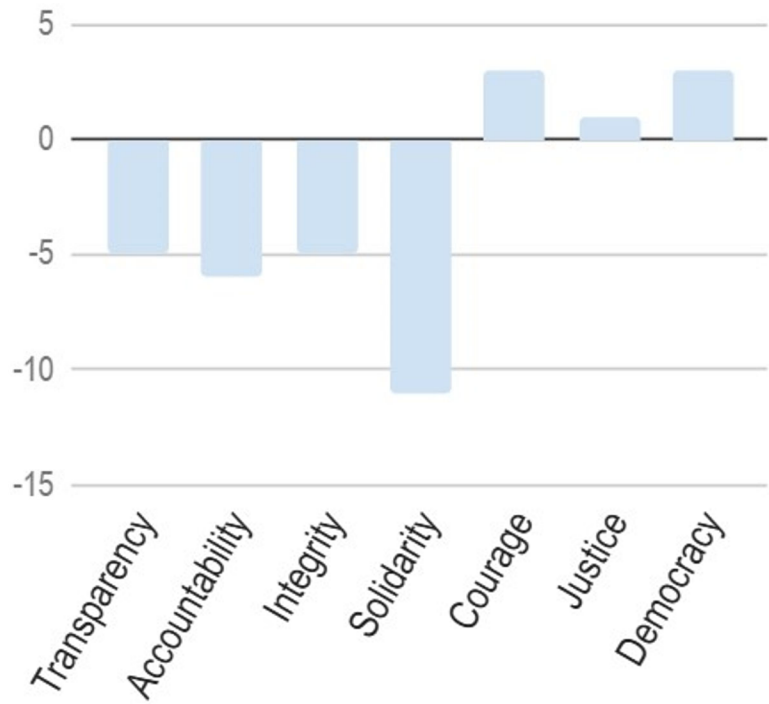
The mission of FIFA Watch (2026c) “is to oversee and communicate quantified facts about FIFA in order to influence and increase transparency and accountability, to reduce opportunities for corruption, to ensure that human rights are respected”.

FIFA Watch (2026c) uses values defined by Transparency International (2026). The seven values are:

- **TRANSPARENCY:** is operating in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions.
- **INTEGRITY:** is regarded as the honesty and truthfulness or accuracy of one’s actions. integrity can stand in opposition to hypocrisy.
- **SOLIDARITY:** is a unity of purpose or togetherness.
- **COURAGE:** is the choice and willingness to confront agony, pain, danger, uncertainty or intimidation.
- **JUSTICE:** as found in the study and application of the law.
- **DEMOCRACY:** the rule of the majority.”

Figure D presents the last FIFA Watch Score Report, which is negative for the first four values and positive for the last three values. The methodology used is unclear.

**Figure D – FIFA Watch Score Report**



Source: <https://fifa.watch/fifa-score-reports/>

## Conclusion

The examination of FIFA's governance reveals an organization that sits at the center of global football's extraordinary reach, influence, and financial power, yet continues to grapple with structural weaknesses that have accumulated over decades. The institution has made visible efforts to modernize, introducing compliance reforms, expanding transparency requirements, and creating new ethics bodies, but these measures have often struggled to keep pace with the scale of FIFA's commercial growth and the complexity of its political ecosystem.

The tension between FIFA's role as a global regulator and its identity as a commercial rights-holder remains the defining challenge: it must simultaneously safeguard the integrity of the sport while managing billions in revenue, negotiating with governments, and balancing the interests of 211 member associations with vastly different resources and priorities. That dual mandate creates inherent vulnerabilities, and history shows how easily governance gaps can be exploited when oversight is fragmented or overly internalized.

Ultimately, the trajectory of FIFA's governance will depend on whether the organization can move beyond episodic reform and embrace deeper structural change. Independent oversight, clearer separation between commercial and regulatory functions, and more equitable representation for smaller football nations are all recurring themes in governance analyses for good reason. They should address the root causes rather than the symptoms. FIFA's global legitimacy rests not only on its ability to stage tournaments but on its capacity to demonstrate fairness, accountability, and stewardship of the world's most popular sport. Strengthening governance is not simply an administrative exercise; it is essential to restoring trust among fans, players, and national associations who expect the organization to embody the values it promotes.

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