



RELEASE

Frankfurt, May 30, 2022

Clubs in the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 adopt sustainability criteria for licensing regulations for the first time

The Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 have become the first major professional football leagues to include a binding sustainability guideline in their licensing regulations. The Members Assembly of the DFL passed a resolution to this effect on Monday.

With this decision, the clubs are continuing on the path they embarked on together in December 2021, when they included a clear commitment to sustainability in all its dimensions (ecological, economic and social) in the preamble to the statutes of DFL e.V., and also resolved that sustainability criteria were to become part of the licensing process.

A multistage implementation model is now envisaged. To this end, at today’s Members Assembly, the Minimum Criteria were approved, applying to three areas: “club management and organisation”, “environment and resources” and “stakeholder groups”. In future, the clubs will be obliged to provide evidence of a sustainability strategy and an environmental strategy, for instance. Other obligations include annual measurements of water consumption, wastewater production and energy consumption, as well as a mobility and traffic analysis. In addition, all clubs must prove that they have a code of conduct for all employees, clearly distance themselves from all kinds of discrimination, and commit to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Divided into two categories, the Minimum Criteria will come into force in stages. Proof of compliance with the Minimum Criteria I is already compulsory in the licensing process for the 2023-24 season. For the Minimum Criteria II, which are still to be defined in more detail, this is optional for the time being. Binding compliance with both Minimum Criteria I and II will be examined for the first time in the licensing process for the 2024-25 season.

The Sustainability Guidelines have been drawn up over the past few months. They incorporate the opinions of the Sustainability Working Group appointed by the DFL Executive Committee, the individual feedback from the clubs and the clubs’ Responsibility Working Group, and the opinions of external specialist advisers and experts. During the development of the guidelines, it has been and will be ensured that clubs that are already carrying out extensive activities individually can continue to act with a focus on their respective strategic priorities.

The existing commitment of the clubs, particularly on an individual level, will therefore have a uniform framework for guidance and action in future. Such measures, that have a huge influence on structural, HR and financial planning, will still have to be feasible for all clubs in both leagues. Consequently, the economic and structural variety within the DFL – from the UEFA Champions League participants to clubs coming up from 3. Liga – must be taken into account.

Constant and gradual enhancement of the guidelines is envisaged so that all clubs have the opportunity to keep on developing and expanding their structures in this field. With this in mind, some criteria are initially also geared towards obtaining further findings and data. In addition, to supplement the Minimum Criteria, expanded criteria are to be introduced in the next few years, with the potential for financial and non-financial incentives being set to encourage compliance. The DFL will continue to work closely with the clubs to expand the overall framework, while also ensuring feasibility.

Along with enhancing the guidelines, the DFL is already working on various core topics in the field of sustainability. For instance, the establishment of a data platform for the clubs is being planned as part of the development of the licensing structures. This helps the clubs to continuously gather and evaluate data on sustainability and enables the use of data for internal management tasks or in dialogue with external stakeholder groups. Furthermore, the DFL is working with external experts to devise additional support services for clubs in terms of compliance with the guidelines. These services include handbooks and templates for uniform analyses that assist with the implementation of defined criteria. The DFL will also focus on new sustainability training opportunities for the clubs’ employees.

In addition, the DFL will hold the first “DFL Sustainability Summit” on 26 July 2022. The event, taking place in Berlin, is intended to create a platform for the DFL and the clubs in the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 to exchange ideas among themselves as well as with experts from politics, business, society, science and the media.

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09 | 2022

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