PRIVILEGED AND CONFIDENTIAL

Request for Consultancy Support

ECA’s Sustainability Management System and Sustainability Report 2024/25

This document outlines the requirements of the European Club Association (ECA) in its request for consultancy support in developing ECA’s first Sustainability Management System (hereinafter “SMS”) and its first Sustainability Report (together the “**Project**”).

In April 2024, ECA published its first [Sustainability Strategy](https://www.ecaeurope.com/eca-services/eca-sustainability-strategy/) with specific targets and KPIs. As the core of the strategy implementation, ECA committed to (i) developing a Sustainability Management System, (“**Project Part One**”) and (ii) start publishing a Sustainability Report every year to update stakeholders on the strategy implementation status (“**Project Part Two**”).

This document is designed to serve as a guide for consultancy service providers, who are invited to submit a proposal (including framework, process, costs and timeframe) for the execution of the above two Parts of the Project.

In addition, please note that the scope described below is not necessarily exhaustive and is subject to amendment.

**About the client**

The European Club Association (ECA) is an association based in Switzerland which represents the interests of the leading football clubs in Europe. ECA currently represents over 700 football clubs from the 55 UEFA National Associations across Europe. For more information concerning ECA, we invite you to visit our website at: [www.ecaeurope.com](http://www.ecaeurope.com/).

This document is structured as follows:

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6. **Background and context of required Project**

In recent years, sustainability has become a significant part of the approach used by the public to evaluate organisations. This evolution is also reflected in the behaviour of different economic actors within the wider sports & entertainment industry, such as media, corporates, governments and fans. In particular, the presence of a long-term sustainability strategy and the ability of a company to “walk the talk” is increasingly demanded by stakeholders, possible business partners and the wider public, in order to be willing to invest and to create meaningful relations or strong affiliations to sporting organisations or brands.

In the last couple of years, the regulatory framework has deeply evolved, making de facto sustainability a ‘must have’ rather than a ‘nice to have’ also in the football industry.

The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (“CSRD” hereinafter) in particular, will apply to almost 150 ECA members starting from season 2025/26 and to many others (who can be classified as SMEs) from season 2026/27. Other relevant EU regulations are entering into force and may have an impact on our members and/or on their main partners and sponsors (CSDDD, Green Claims Directive, EU taxonomy etc.).

In addition, in 2022 UEFA introduced [sustainability licensing criteria](https://documents.uefa.com/r/UEFA-Club-Licensing-and-Financial-Sustainability-Regulations-2024-Online) asking every club that wants to obtain the licence to compete in a UEFA competition to name a sustainability manager and to develop a sustainability strategy that covers, as a minimum, 5 areas: anti-racism, child and youth protection, equality and inclusion, football for all abilities and environmental protection (these are 5 policies extracted from UEFA Sustainability Strategy ‘[Strength through Unity’](https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/0270-13f888ffa3e5-931c597968cb-1000/uefa_football_sustainability_strategy.pdf)). Failing to fulfil these requirements may lead to a fine but would not prevent the obtainment of the licence.

Starting from season 2025/26, these requirements will be upgraded from B to A criteria, meaning that, if not fulfilled, the licence will not be granted.

Finally, national leagues and federations have started imposing their own sustainability requirements (Bundesliga, La Ligue, Premier League etc.).

The main consequence of this trend is that sports organisations have purposeful mandates to embed sustainability principles into their corporate strategies and ECA wants to provide a good example. In essence, ECA does not want to ask its members to do something it is not doing itself.

Therefore, ECA has already hired a Head of Sustainability and developed a Sustainability Strategy that covers all UEFA’s policies, as required by UEFA licensing requirements, even if, of course, ECA does not need to obtain a UEFA licence.

ECA does not fall within the CSRD scope of application since it is based in Switzerland. As of now, it does not even fall within Swiss obligation to report on its sustainability performance. Nevertheless, ECA desires to be of help to its members that do have to fulfil the CSRD requirements and wishes to start publishing a Sustainability Report from season 2024/25. Ideally, the report should aim at satisfying CSRD requirements from the following season 2025/26 (like its members).

In addition, to ensure proper implementation of its Sustainability Strategy, ECA wants to obtain ISO 20121 certification by the end of 2025.

**For these reasons, ECA seeks the assistance of a consultancy service provider to support the internal team in developing the SMS and the Sustainability Report.**

1. **Scope and Deliverables**

Scope of the project:

1. **Project Part One**

**Support ECA in developing its Sustainability Management System following ISO 20121:2024 standard.** Below issome key information to prepare the proposal:

* 1. **ECA is a small organisation of around 45 employees.** However, it is fast growing: in 2022 it had only 14 employees and it keeps opening new positions,
  2. Internal growth is necessary also to cope with the growing number of members: from 250 in May 2023 to over 700 in July 2024,
  3. Given the small size of the organisation, there is a general lack of internal policies and procedures, and many activities are done quite informally. The core organisational document is the ECA Statutes. In addition to this, we have an employee Guide and Procurement Policy. We expect this to change as we grow, however, the SMS should be quite fluid and flexible to adapt to a small organisation,
  4. ECA is under an overall governance review: this is an optimal moment to start integrating sustainability in the new governance model and the development of the SMS should go in parallel with the internal changes,
  5. In terms of **core business** (specifically in reference to what is relevant for an SMS) ECA is in essence an event organiser: we hold two main events per year, our General Assembly in autumn and a conference style event in spring. In both cases, we invite around 500 club representatives from all around Europe in a different location every year. The events last 2-3 days. In addition, we organise several other smaller events during the year: Board meetings, Academy Visits, Working Groups meetings, clubs, visits, roadshows etc. (all approximately for 30-50 people). We have an internal events team that manages most of the event organisation and an internal marketing team that covers branding and dressing of the events,
  6. The other core activities are performing our representative role, via our representative bodies. There is a strong push on equality, diversity and inclusion in the Sustainability Strategy, however, the policies and procedures connected to this area of work will be developed by another expert that works in conjunction with our dedicated ED&I panel,
  7. There is no need to budget for the internal audit, since we already have an expert that can perform that role.

**The deliverables of the work** would include but not be necessarily limited to:

1. Initial Gap Analysis,
2. The ECA SMS Manual, including the development of all the necessary missing policies and procedures,
3. Interviews with key staff members, training sessions and anything necessary to ensure a proper functioning of the SMS,
4. Support during the audit phase to obtain ISO 20121 certification by the end of 2025.
5. **Project Part Two**

**Support ECA in developing its first Sustainability Report (season 2024/25).** Below issome key information to prepare the proposal:

* 1. The ECA financial year goes from 1 July to 30 June. The period to report on is from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025,
  2. ECA already performed an extensive stakeholder engagement and materiality analysis for the development of its Strategy. Both the process and the outcome of the analysis are published in the document: therefore, the Report is mainly aimed at updating stakeholders on the implementation state of the Strategy,
  3. The opportunity to extend the materiality analysis to a double materiality analysis can be discussed but it is not seen as a must have at this stage,
  4. ECA will report on its own data exclusively: there is no intention to collect data from member clubs directly. For some targets, it will be important to consider certain clubs’ performance, but this will be managed by internal research or access to internal data (like attendance lists to our events),
  5. Since this is the first report, it will be key to develop a data collection system to use for future reports. The SMS should take this need into account.

**The deliverables of the work** would include but not be necessarily limited to:

1. Sustainability Report 2024/25 draft document,
2. All the internal data collection forms, processes and procedures to make the report complete,
3. Expand the materiality analysis to a double materiality analysis (as an option),
4. Copying and editing (as separate option if you offer this service)

**Expected timeline**

1. Firstly, we would like to work on Project Part One from August 2024 to February 2025.
2. Once the SMS is ready and the colleagues are trained on the new procedures and on how to collect and share relevant information and data, we would like to start working on Project Part Two from February 2024 to October 2025.
3. An External audit for ISO 20121 certification is aimed for Spring/Summer 2025.

However, if you believe there is a better way of developing the two elements of the Project, feel free to propose a different timeframe.

Please, consider that the internal team consists of only 2 persons and there will be moments when they will be busy with events or other activities.

1. **ECA Main Project Contacts**

Dr. Gaia Pretner, Head of Sustainability,

Ms. Carolina Komel.

1. **Accompanying documents**

The below documents will be provided to bidders (upon their submission of an acknowledgment by email in accordance with the RFP Procedure below) on a privileged and confidential basis and, insofar they are not in the public domain, may not be distributed to, or shared with, third parties without the prior written consent of ECA.

**General**

1. [ECA Statutes](https://www.ecaeurope.com/media/5574/eca-statutes-2023.pdf)
2. [ECA Sustainability Strategy](https://www.ecaeurope.com/eca-services/eca-sustainability-strategy/)
3. [UEFA Football Sustainability Strategy 2030](https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/0270-13f888ffa3e5-931c597968cb-1000/uefa_football_sustainability_strategy.pdf)

**Appendix 1 – RFP Procedure**

**A) CONTACT DETAILS**

Send you proposal to:

ECA, Route de St Cergue 9 CH-1260 Nyon, Switzerland

For the attention of: Gaia Pretner, Head of Sustainability

Subject: ECA SMS and Sustainability Report RFP

Or by email to: [carolina.komel@ecaeurope.com](mailto:carolina.komel@ecaeurope.com)

**B) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Companies wishing to participate in the RFP process are required to acknowledge the terms and conditions of the RFP Process and confirm their interest by e-mail to the above address as soon as possible but, in any case in advance of the Acknowledgement Deadline (as defined in section (G) below). Upon such acknowledgement, the terms and conditions of this RFP Procedure shall be binding on the bidding company including, but not limited to, the following:

* Each bidder undertakes, warrants and represents to ECA that it shall not associate itself with ECA or any ECA member club without the prior written consent of ECA or the relevant club;
* Nothing in this RFP shall constitute an offer or agreement by ECA to agree any contractual obligations with any bidder;
* Once submitted, a proposal shall be binding on the bidder and shall constitute an unconditional offer which shall be valid for 30 days after the Final Deadline;
* Each bidder is solely responsible for all costs and expenses incurred by it in connection with its proposal;
* All rights, title and interest (including, but not limited to copyright) in any materials provided by a bidder to ECA shall be assigned to ECA so that ECA may be freely entitled to use all ideas and concepts contained within such materials irrespective of whether the proposal is successful or not;
* Each bidder undertakes not to make any form of public announcement (including via any media or third party) relating directly or indirectly to this RFP without ECA’s prior written consent;
* Each bidder warrants and represents that:
  + All material contained in its proposal is original and will not infringe on any third party rights, including intellectual property rights;
  + It has not engaged in any activity which does or could bring into disrepute or otherwise negatively impact on the reputation of ECA or any of its member clubs.

Following such confirmation, ECA will, where possible, provide any clarification reasonably requested by bidders in relation to the contents of this RFP. In this regard, it is currently envisaged that such bidders will (if so required by that party) have the opportunity to have an initial conference call with ECA in relation to the RFP process. The purpose of such conference call will solely be for ECA to provide the bidder with any initial clarification required by such bidder in respect of the requirements and objectives in this RFP process.

Any requests from bidders for clarification or further information must be addressed in writing to the e-mail address provided above.

ECA reserves the right to make its response to any queries from any bidder available to all recipients of this RFP.

**C) PRESENTATION AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

Bidders may submit proposals for:

Type A Proposal: Project Part One on its own;

Type B Proposal: Project Part Two on its own;

Type C Proposal: Both Project Part One and Part Two together.

ECA has no preference between the above options and all proposals will be assessed on their own terms. However, bidders must clearly differentiate their pricing/fee structures (and any other variables) between proposal types A, B and C.

All proposal documents must:

* Detail a proposed approach, with project team structure and phasing / timing, to achieve the objectives identified in this RFP (identifying suggested additions or particular emphasis to areas of scope where appropriate)
* Provide a detailed financial quotation for the services to be provided
* Provide specific details and experience (and cost breakdown) of staff to be involved in this project, including proposed time allocations per team member
* Provide complete CVs of the proposed team (short bios would not be evaluated)
* Include details of relevant prior projects carried out, and any current experience, which can be used as reference qualifications, including proposed individuals at client organisations who could be called upon as referees
* Identify any potential conflict of interest the consultant may have in carrying out this work, and a proposed approach for handling
* Be submitted in an industry standard electronic format (such as PDF) by e-mail to the e-mail address specified above
* Be in the English language. Any documentation not in the English language must be accompanied by an English language translation and, in the event of any inconsistency between language versions, the English language version will prevail.
* Be received by the Initial Deadline or the Final Deadline (as defined in section (G) below), depending on the relevant stage of the RFP process.

**D) EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS**

Following the receipt of proposals and their subsequent evaluation, bidders may be required to provide clarification and/or further information in respect of their proposals (i.e. ECA may facilitate additional rounds including all or some of the bidders, at ECA’s discretion). Bidders shall co-operate fully with ECA in this respect (including in respect of attending meetings and participating in conference calls where and when requested, provided that ECA shall always act reasonably and provide appropriate time for responses and appropriate preparation time ahead of any meetings/calls).

ECA is committed to carrying out an objective, fair and transparent RFP process and will consider, evaluate, and assess each validly submitted proposal on its merits, in accordance with the following criteria (which are not exhaustive and not listed in any particular order):

* the bidder’s proposed strategy for meeting ECA’s objectives and requirements;
* the bidder’s proposed financial arrangements (including any proposed cost efficiencies);
* the bidder’s proposed service team(s);
* the bidder’s demonstrated ability to deliver all of ECA’s needs and requirements; and
* the bidder’s demonstrated existing expertise in providing equivalent services.

**E) ECA’S PROPOSAL RESPONSE**

ECA reserves the right to respond to proposals at its sole discretion, including by:

* accepting or rejecting any proposals;
* requesting further information, clarification or revised or amended proposals;
* entering into negotiations with one or more of the bidders on such basis as may be determined by ECA at its sole discretion;
* postponing the continuation of the RFP process;
* modify any element of the RFP process, provided that equal opportunity and notice is provided to all relevant bidders; and/or
* terminating the RFP process and conducting an entirely new or revised selection or tender process at ECA's sole discretion.

ECA shall not be required to select any proposal submitted by any bidder in relation to this RFP and ECA reserves the right to procure the delivery of any services related to this RFP at any time from any party at ECA’s sole discretion and without recourse to any bidder(s) participating in this RFP process. ECA is not under any obligation to accept the proposal with the most favourable financial terms.

**F) SELECTION OF BIDDER(S)**

The final selection of any successful bidder(s) and the relevant proposal(s) shall be subject to the execution of a long-form agreement between ECA and the relevant bidder(s), such agreement(s) to be prepared by ECA. ECA may, as part of its evaluation process, provide any bidder(s) with a copy of the agreement and request all of the bidder(s) written comments thereon within a fixed timeframe.

No agreement between ECA and any bidder shall be binding on ECA until such agreement has, at ECA’s absolute discretion, been accepted and fully executed by ECA.

ECA reserves its right at any time to withdraw from negotiations and/or not to execute any agreement submitted by a bidder (whether or not such agreement is signed by the bidder).

Bidders who are unsuccessful will be informed by ECA without any obligation on ECA to give any reason for making any selection or rejection.

**G) RFP - TIMETABLE**

The timetable for this RFP process is set out below. The timetable is indicative only and is subject to change by ECA at any time at ECA’s sole discretion, subject to ECA always providing reasonable notice to all bidders in respect of any changes

* **Acknowledgement Deadline:** Deadline for service provider to express interest to submit proposal and submit any initial questions. Confirmation will be required at this stage that no conflicts of interest are foreseen for the service provider in carrying out this work by Friday 19th July 2024, 12:00 CET
* Bidder RFP process clarification opportunities from 12st July 2024 to 19th July 2024
* **Final Deadline:** Interested service providers to submit outline proposals by Friday 2nd August 2024, 18:00 CET
* Target decision, 15th August 2024
* Contracting / Project Kick Off, 19th August 2024