

# FIFA YOUTH SURVEY



**FIFA**<sup>®</sup>



## FOREWORD

Football development lies at the heart of FIFA's overarching mission. We strive to improve the game constantly and promote it globally in light of its unifying and educational capabilities – particularly when it comes to youth development programmes.

This survey was conducted in order to obtain a greater understanding of youth football development worldwide, as well as to determine pathways to close the transitional gap between grassroots (6-12 years old) and elite football, particularly through the organisation of youth competitions.

By comparing the results to the qualification for any of the last three FIFA U-17 World Cups (both men and women), we are able to isolate specific success factors to identify which initiatives, programmes and structures are required to achieve international success at youth level.

There is no development without competitions. The organisation of domestic youth football championships in different age groups, combined with the proper education, are therefore essential aspects of bringing youth football forward.

The member associations are invited to make best use of FIFA's Forward Programme in order to take youth football, one of the main pillars in the development pyramid, to the next level. FIFA's increased investment demonstrates its commitment to growing the game as part of its vision for the future.

The data presented in this report will be crucial to benchmarking and eventually developing tailor-made support programmes to aid all of our members.



Zvonimir Boban

FIFA Deputy Secretary General  
(Football)

## METHODOLOGY

This research report was produced by the CIES Football Observatory using data collected by FIFA via an online survey. In total, 178 member associations (MAs) participated in the survey. The full list is available on the next page. The answer rate was 84.4%. This is a very satisfactory percentage with regard to the geographic scope of the research.

The CIES Football Observatory academic team verified the consistency of all answers provided by each member association who completed the survey. In a few cases, data was projected according to more reliable answers provided for other questions. While the adjustments undertaken allowed us to further enhance the reliability of the findings presented, it is possible that minor issues still exist for some specific figures.

Answers provided by the respondents were generally analysed at three different levels:

**Total:** all respondents. The percentages refer to the overall number of associations who answered the question (there is no "missing answer" category).

**By confederation:** respondents were divided according to their confederation.

**By FIFA U-17 World Cup participation:** the most successful associations refer to those who qualified at least once for the last three editions of the FIFA U-17 World Cup. If the data only refers to male football, only qualifications for male editions are taken into account. The same holds true for data referring to female football only. Conversely, for indicators referring to both male and female football, qualifications were considered irrespective of gender.

The choice of considering success with respect to FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification is related to the fact that in the U-20 category, many players are already professional. Conversely, at FIFA U-17 level, all footballers are still in the youth development stage and the role played by associations to help them exploit their full potential is even greater than for older age categories.

To know to which confederation or FIFA U-17 World Cup categories the member associations belong, please refer to the table on the next page.

## PARTICIPATING MAS

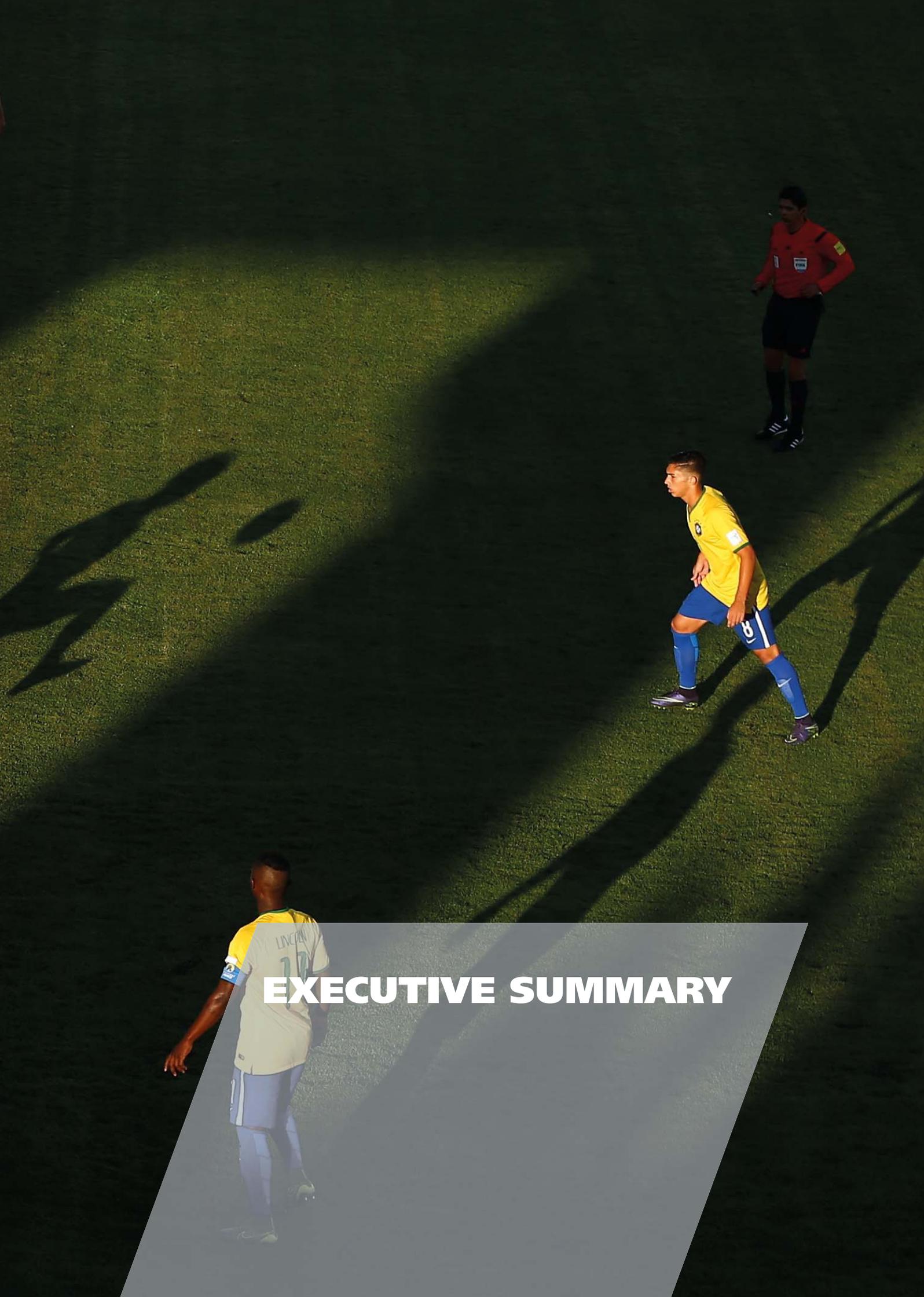
		M	W	
<b>AFC</b>	AFG	Afghanistan	-	-
	AUS	Australia	x	-
	BAN	Bangladesh	-	-
	BHR	Bahrain	-	-
	BHU	Bhutan	-	-
	BRU	Brunei Darussalam	-	-
	CAM	Cambodia	-	-
	CHN	China PR	-	x
	GUM	Guam	-	-
	HKG	Hong Kong	-	-
	IDN	Indonesia	-	-
	IND	India	-	-
	IRK	Iraq	x	-
	IRN	Iran	x	-
	JOR	Jordan	-	-
	JPN	Japan	x	x
	KGZ	Kyrgyzstan	-	-
	KSA	Saudi Arabia	-	-
	KUW	Kuwait	-	-
	LAO	Laos	-	-
	LIB	Lebanon	-	-
	MAC	Macau	-	-
	MAS	Malaysia	-	-
	MDV	Maldives	-	-
	MNG	Mongolia	-	-
	MYA	Myanmar	-	-
	NEP	Nepal	-	-
	PAK	Pakistan	-	-
	PLE	Palestine	-	-
	PRK	Korea DPR	x	x
	SIN	Singapore	-	-
	SYR	Syria	x	-
TJK	Tajikistan	-	-	
TKM	Turkmenistan	-	-	
TLS	Timor-Leste	-	-	
UAE	United Arab Emirates	-	-	
UZB	Uzbekistan	x	-	
YEM	Yemen	-	-	
<b>CAF</b>	ALG	Algeria	-	-
	ANG	Angola	-	-
	BDI	Burundi	-	-
	BFA	Burkina Faso	x	-
	BOT	Botswana	-	-
	CGO	Congo	x	-
	CHA	Chad	-	-
	CIV	Côte d'Ivoire	x	-
	CMR	Cameroun	-	x
	COD	Congo Democratic Rep.	-	-
	COM	Comoros	-	-
	CTA	Central African Rep.	-	-
	DJI	Djibouti	-	-
	EGY	Egypt	-	-
	EQG	Equatorial Guinea	-	-
	ERI	Eritrea	-	-
	ETH	Ethiopia	-	-
	GAB	Gabon	-	-
	GAM	Gambia	-	x
	GHA	Ghana	-	x
	LBY	Libya	-	-
	LES	Lesotho	-	-
LBR	Liberia	-	-	
MAD	Madagascar	-	-	
MAR	Morocco	x	-	

		M	W	
<b>CONCACAF</b>	MLI	Mali	x	-
	MOZ	Mozambique	-	-
	MRI	Mauritius	-	-
	MTN	Mauritania	-	-
	MWI	Malawi	-	-
	NAM	Namibia	-	-
	NIG	Niger	-	-
	RSA	South Africa	x	-
	RWA	Rwanda	x	-
	SEN	Senegal	-	-
	SEY	Seychelles	-	-
	SOM	Somalia	-	-
	SSD	South Sudan	-	-
	SUD	Sudan	-	-
	SWA	Swaziland	-	-
	TAN	Tanzania	-	-
	TOG	Togo	-	-
	TUN	Tunisia	x	-
	UGA	Uganda	-	-
	ZIM	Zimbabwe	-	-
	AIA	Anguilla	-	-
	ARU	Aruba	-	-
ATG	Antigua and Barbuda	-	-	
BAH	Bahamas	-	-	
BER	Bermuda	-	-	
BLZ	Belize	-	-	
BRB	Barbados	-	-	
CAN	Canada	x	x	
CAY	Cayman Islands	-	-	
CUB	Cuba	-	-	
CUW	Curaçao	-	-	
DMA	Dominica	-	-	
DOM	Dominican Rep.	-	-	
GRN	Grenada	-	-	
GUA	Guatemala	-	-	
GUY	Guyana	-	-	
HAI	Haiti	-	-	
HON	Honduras	x	-	
JAM	Jamaica	x	-	
LCA	St Lucia	-	-	
MEX	Mexico	x	x	
MSR	Montserrat	-	-	
NCA	Nicaragua	-	-	
PAN	Panama	x	-	
SKM	St Kitts and Nevis	-	-	
SLV	El Salvador	-	-	
SUR	Suriname	-	-	
TCA	Turks and Caicos Islands	-	-	
TRI	Trinidad and Tobago	-	-	
USA	USA	x	x	
VGB	British Virgin Islands	-	-	
VIN	St Vincent and the Grenadines	-	-	
VIR	US Virgin Islands	-	-	
<b>CONMEBOL</b>	ARG	Argentina	x	-
	BOL	Bolivia	-	-
	BRA	Brazil	x	x
	CHI	Chile	-	-
	COL	Colombia	-	x
	ECU	Ecuador	x	-
	PAR	Paraguay	x	x
	PER	Peru	-	-
	URU	Uruguay	x	x
	VEN	Venezuela	x	x

		M	W		
<b>OFC</b>	ASA	American Samoa	-	-	
	COK	Cook Islands	-	-	
	FJI	Fiji	-	-	
	NCL	New Caledonia	-	-	
	NZL	New Zealand	x	x	
	SAM	Samoa	-	-	
	SOL	Solomon Islands	-	-	
	TAH	Tahiti	-	-	
	TGA	Tonga	-	-	
	VAN	Vanuatu	-	-	
	<b>UEFA</b>	ALB	Albania	-	-
		ARM	Armenia	-	-
		AUT	Austria	x	-
		AZE	Azerbaijan	-	-
		BEL	Belgium	x	-
		BIH	Bosnia and Herzegovina	-	-
		BLR	Belarus	-	-
BUL		Bulgaria	-	-	
CRO		Croatia	x	-	
CYP		Cyprus	-	-	
CZE		Czech Republic	x	-	
DEN		Denmark	x	-	
ENG		England	x	x	
ESP		Spain	-	x	
EST		Estonia	-	-	
FRA		France	x	x	
FRO		Faroe Islands	-	-	
GEO		Georgia	-	-	
GER		Germany	x	x	
GIB		Gibraltar	-	-	
GRE	Greece	-	-		
HUN	Hungary	-	-		
IRL	Rep. of Ireland	-	-		
ISL	Iceland	-	-		
ISR	Israel	-	-		
ITA	Italy	x	x		
LAT	Latvia	-	-		
LIE	Liechtenstein	-	-		
LTU	Lithuania	-	-		
LUX	Luxemburg	-	-		
MDA	Moldova	-	-		
MKD	FYR Macedonia	-	-		
MLT	Malta	-	-		
MNE	Montenegro	-	-		
POR	Portugal	-	-		
ROM	Romania	-	-		
RUS	Russia	x	-		
SCO	Scotland	-	-		
SMR	San Marino	-	-		
SRB	Serbia	-	-		
SVN	Slovenia	-	-		
UKR	Ukraine	-	-		

x FIFA U-17 World Cup participation  
M: Men  
W: Women



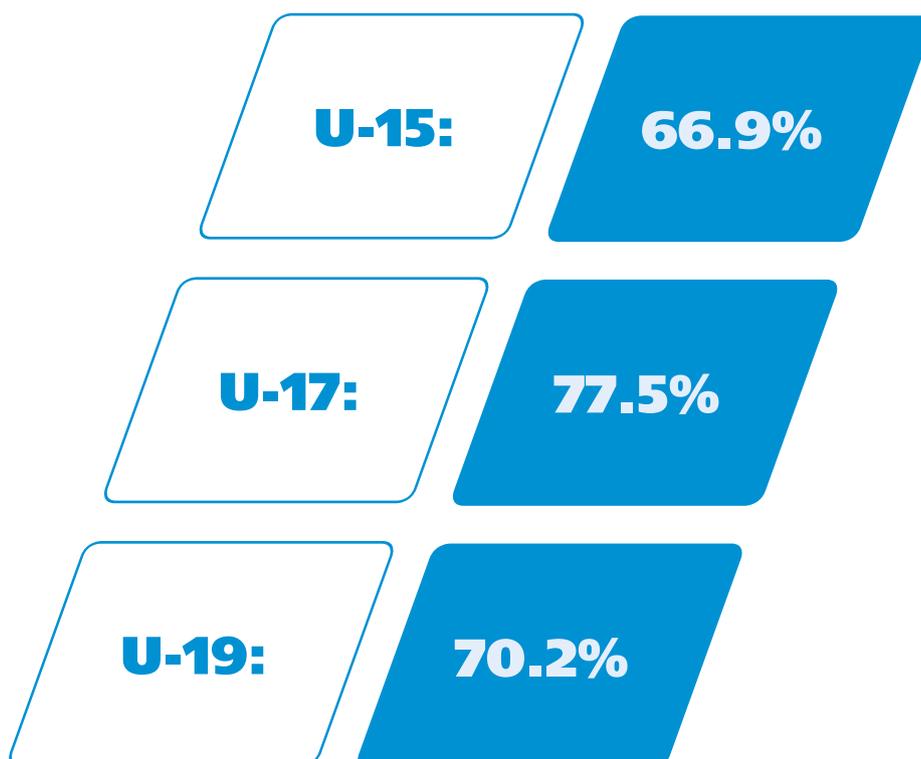


# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUES – MALE

National male youth football leagues exist in at least two thirds of associations that took part in the survey for each of the three age categories considered. The highest figure was recorded at U-17 level (77.5%), while the lowest was measured for U-15 (66.9%). While relatively high, this data shows that there is still room for improvement in terms of male youth league organisation. In many territories, it is also certainly possible to better the quality of competitions from both a duration and geographical spread perspective.

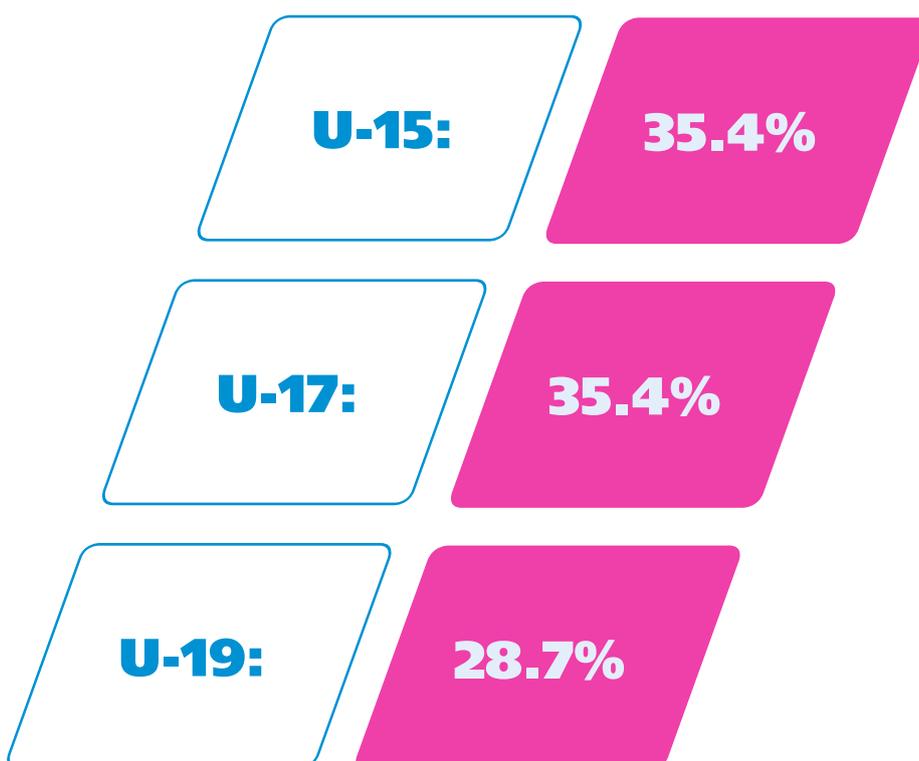
### Percentage of member associations with national youth leagues for male players



## NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUES – FEMALE

The percentage of associations where national female youth leagues are organised is much lower with respect to the data registered at male level. The gaps vary between 31.5% in the U-15s and 42.1% at U-17 level. National competitions for female players only exist in about one third of associations among respondents. This reveals the need for associations to consider the development of women's football at youth level as a priority. This is clearly not yet the case in the majority of territories at global scale.

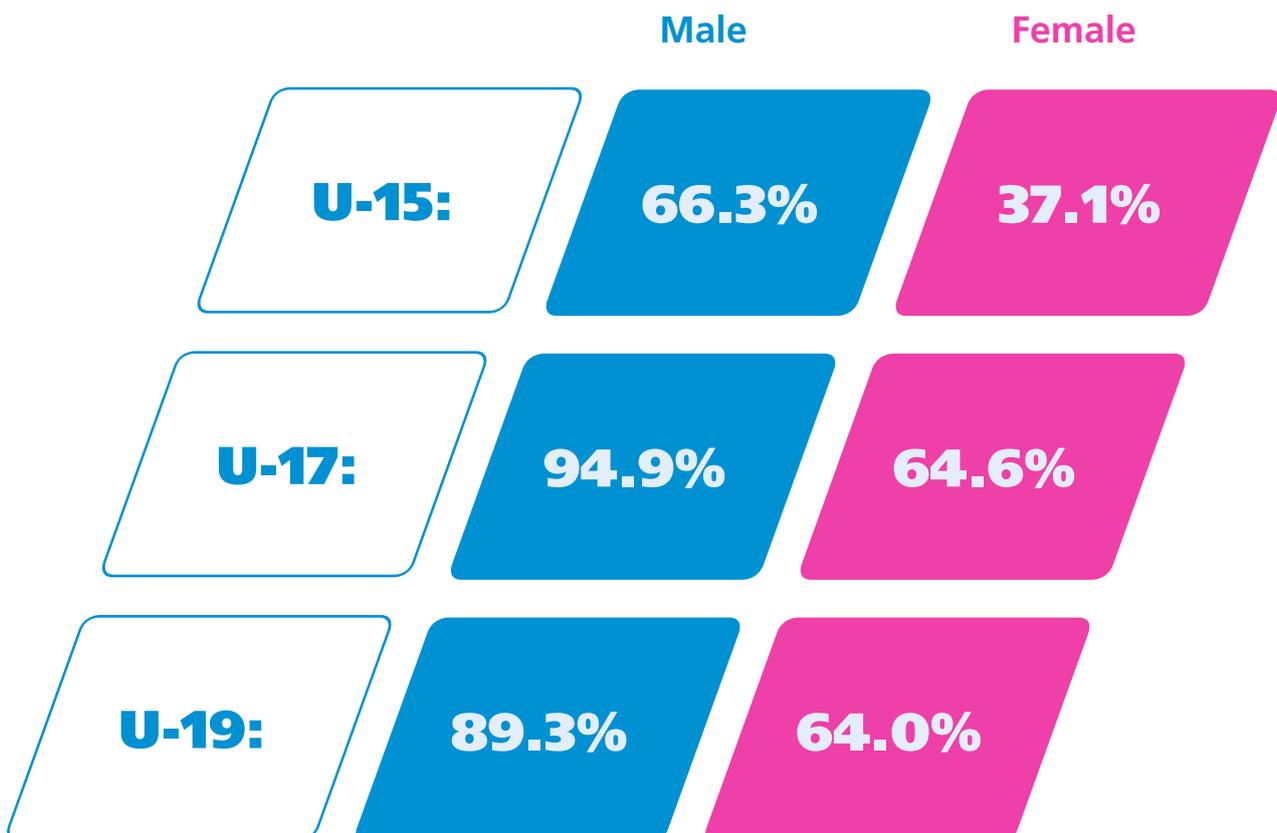
### Percentage of member associations with national youth leagues for female players



## NATIONAL YOUTH TEAMS

As for national youth competitions, there are big discrepancies in the existence of national youth teams between male and female. In the former case, the percentage of associations among respondents with national teams varies between 66.3% in the U-15s to 94.9% in the U-17s. These figures are much lower at female level: from 37.1% in the U-15s to 64.6% in the U-17s. This finding not only shows the correlation between the existence of national youth leagues and that of national youth teams, but also the uneven development between the male and the female game.

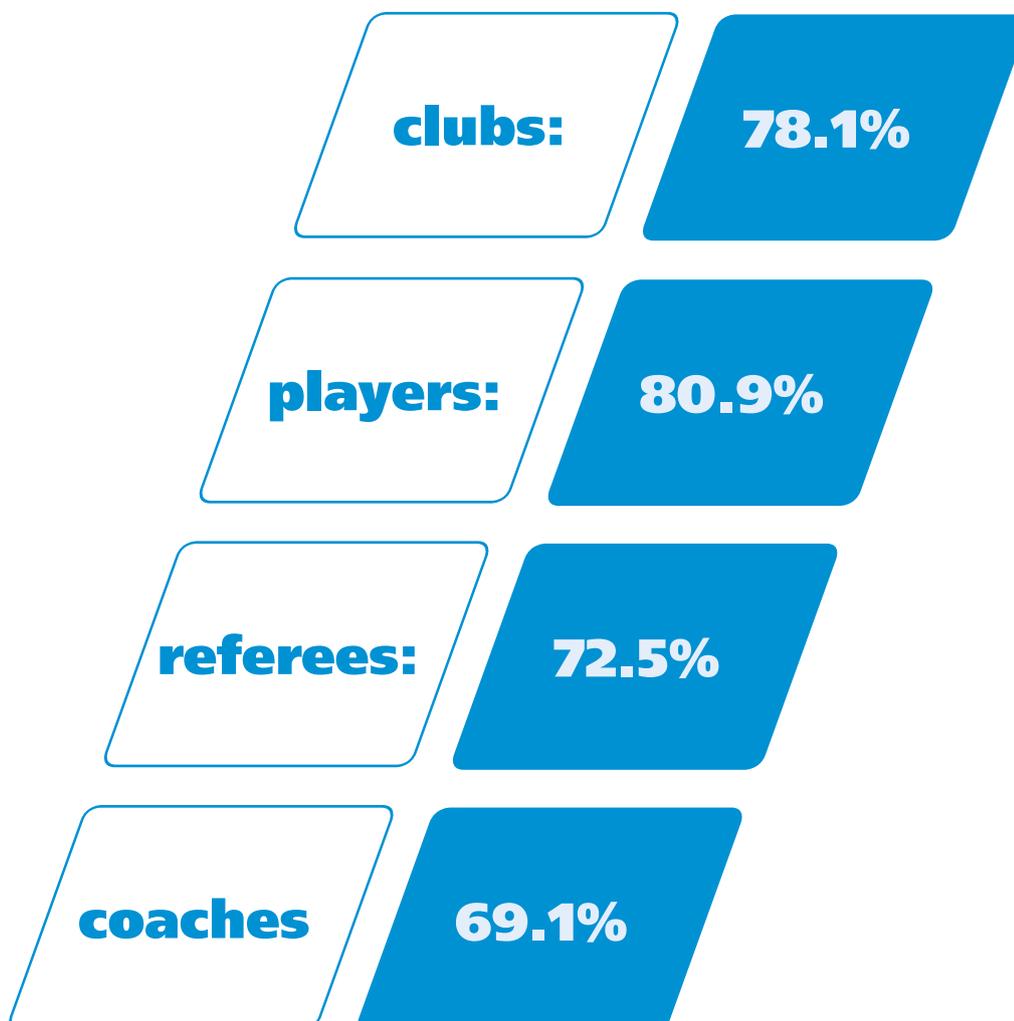
### Percentage of member associations with national youth teams for male/female players



## REGISTRATION SYSTEM AND LICENSING

The registration of the main actors of the game is of crucial importance for the sound development of the game from a member association standpoint. The survey shows that there is still room for improvement in this area. Registration systems are indeed not yet in place in a significant number of territories: two out of ten regarding players and coaches, up to three out of ten with regard to referees and coaches.

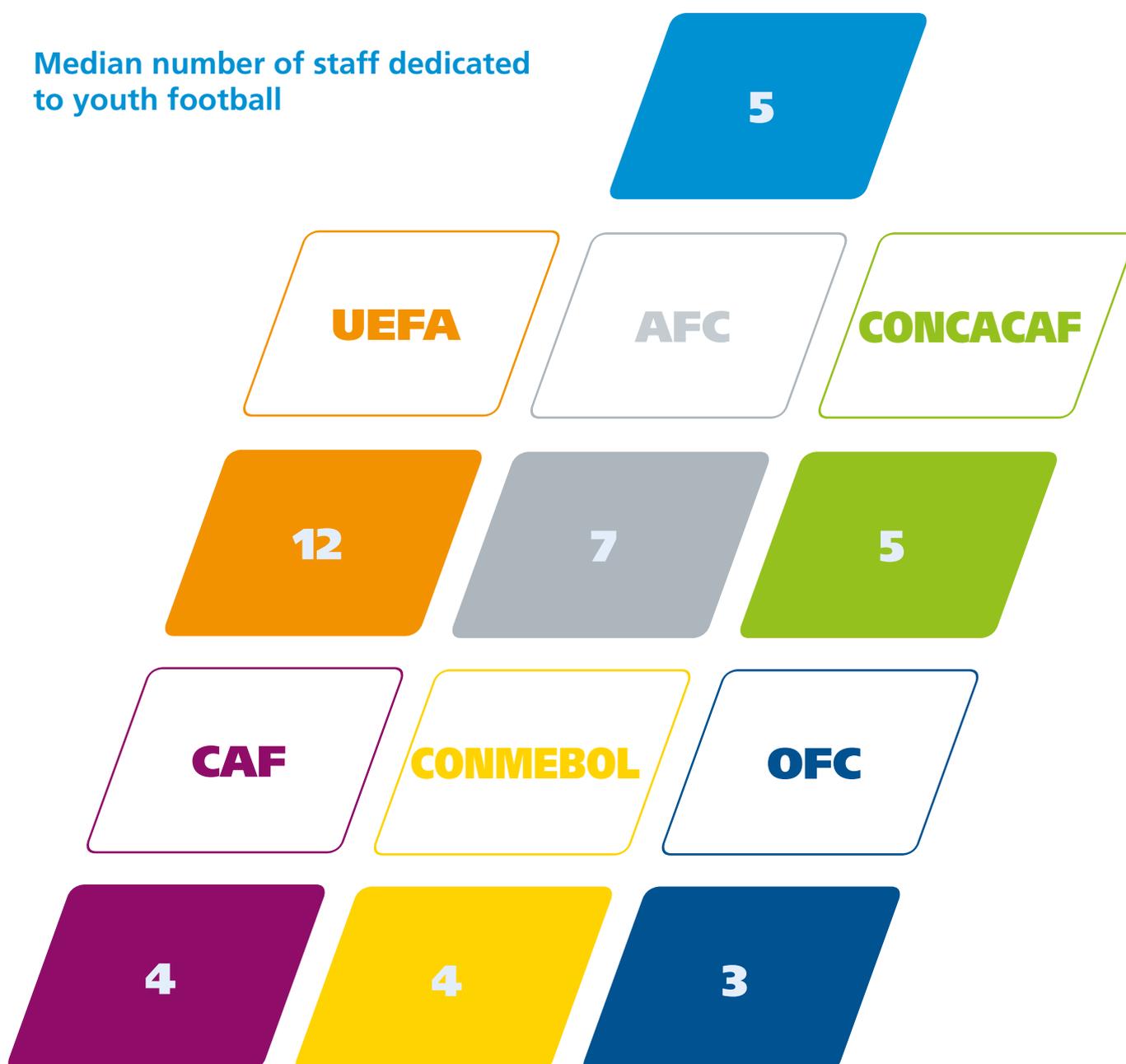
Percentage of member associations with a registration system at national youth league level for...



## YOUTH FOOTBALL STAFF AND ORGANISATION

The median number of staff dedicated to youth football per association in the world is five. This figure varies from three in the OFC up to 12 in UEFA territories. The differences between confederations mainly reflect the gaps in both football and economic development at global level. While this situation is of a structural nature, the stronger focus on youth football in the less well-off associations would be beneficial to reduce the gaps observed both on and off the pitch.

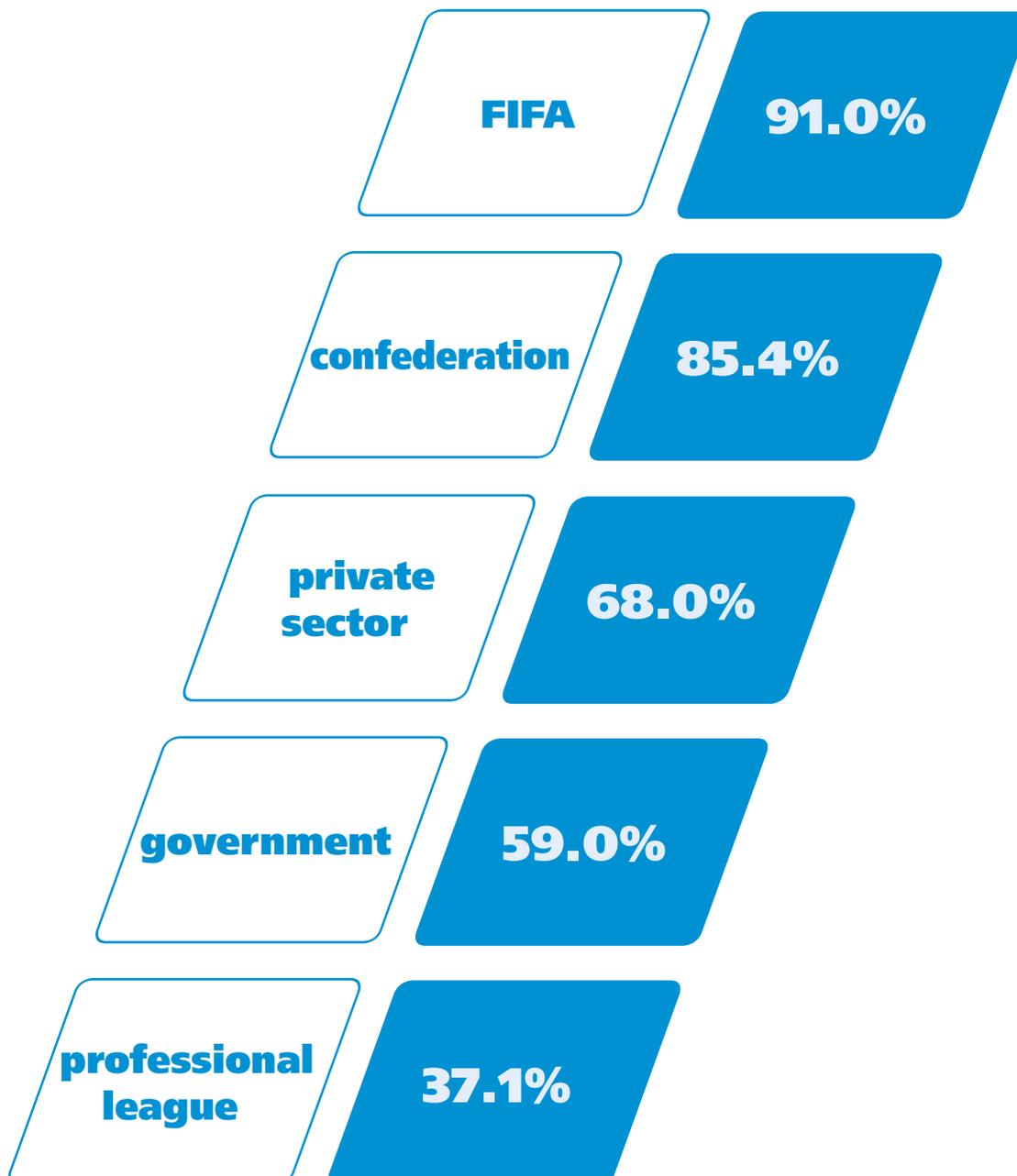
### Median number of staff dedicated to youth football



## STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

FIFA and the confederations are the most active stakeholders in the support of youth football at association level. This data highlights the key importance of the role played by international football governing bodies in the development of the youth game throughout the world. The majority of associations having participated in the survey stated to benefit also from private sector and government support. Conversely, professional league support for youth football only exists in 37.1% of associations.

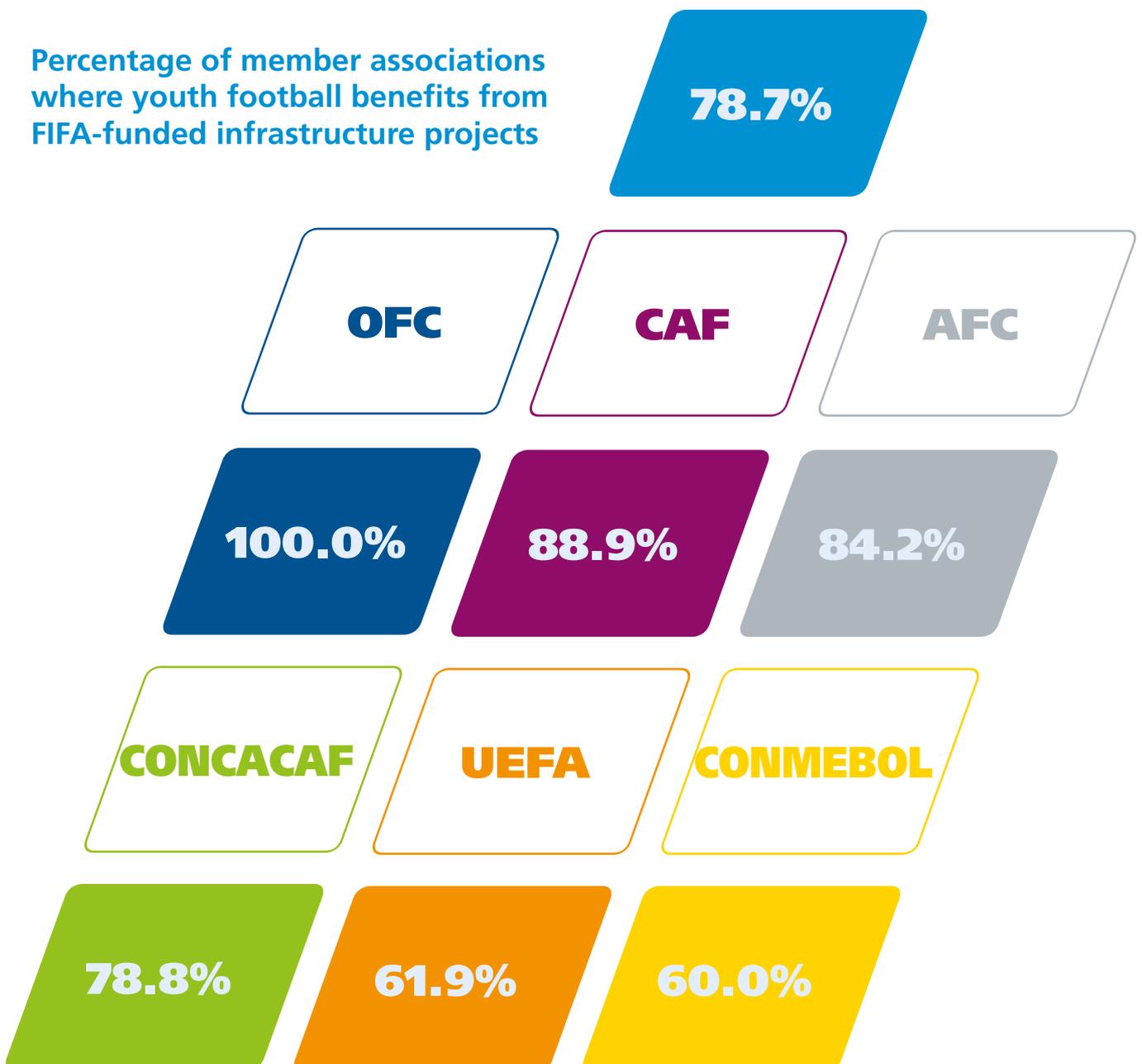
### Percentage of member associations with youth football support by...



## FIFA-FUNDED INFRASTRUCTURE

FIFA-funded infrastructure exists in the vast majority of member associations throughout the world. In each confederation, these projects also benefit youth football in at least six associations out of ten. This proportion varies between 60% in CONMEBOL and up to 100% in the OFC. With regard to FIFA-funded pitches, the most common use at youth level is training, followed closely by courses and competitions.

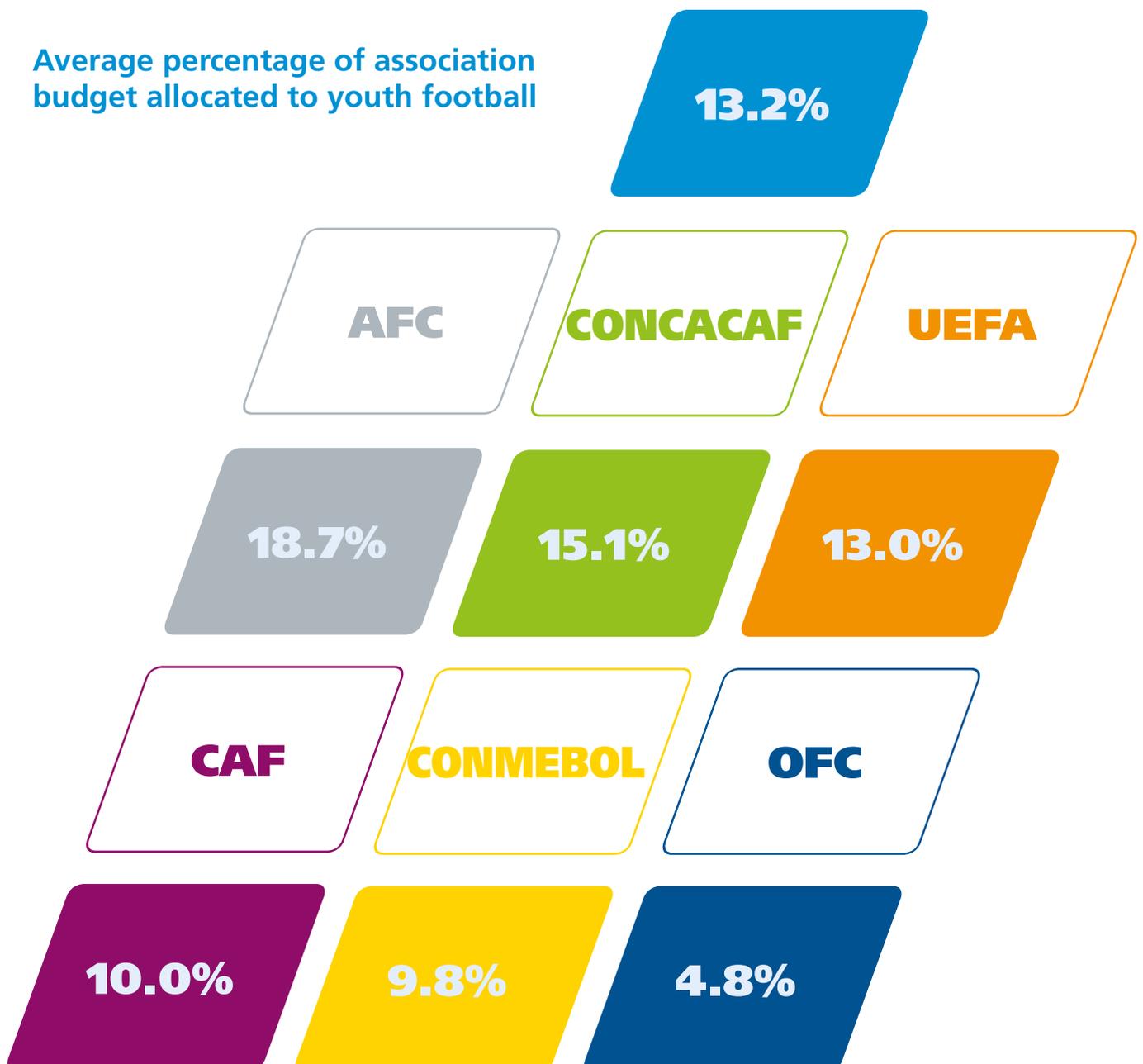
Percentage of member associations where youth football benefits from FIFA-funded infrastructure projects



## INVESTMENT IN YOUTH FOOTBALL

Associations that participated in the survey reported allocating 13.2% of their total budget to youth football. With regard to the strategic importance of youth football for the sound development of the game, a growth in this percentage would certainly be beneficial. The percentages vary from less than 5% in the OFC to almost 20% in the AFC. In absolute terms, associations that qualified for at least one of the last three male or female FIFA U-17 World Cup editions invest 5.5% more for youth football development than those who did not.

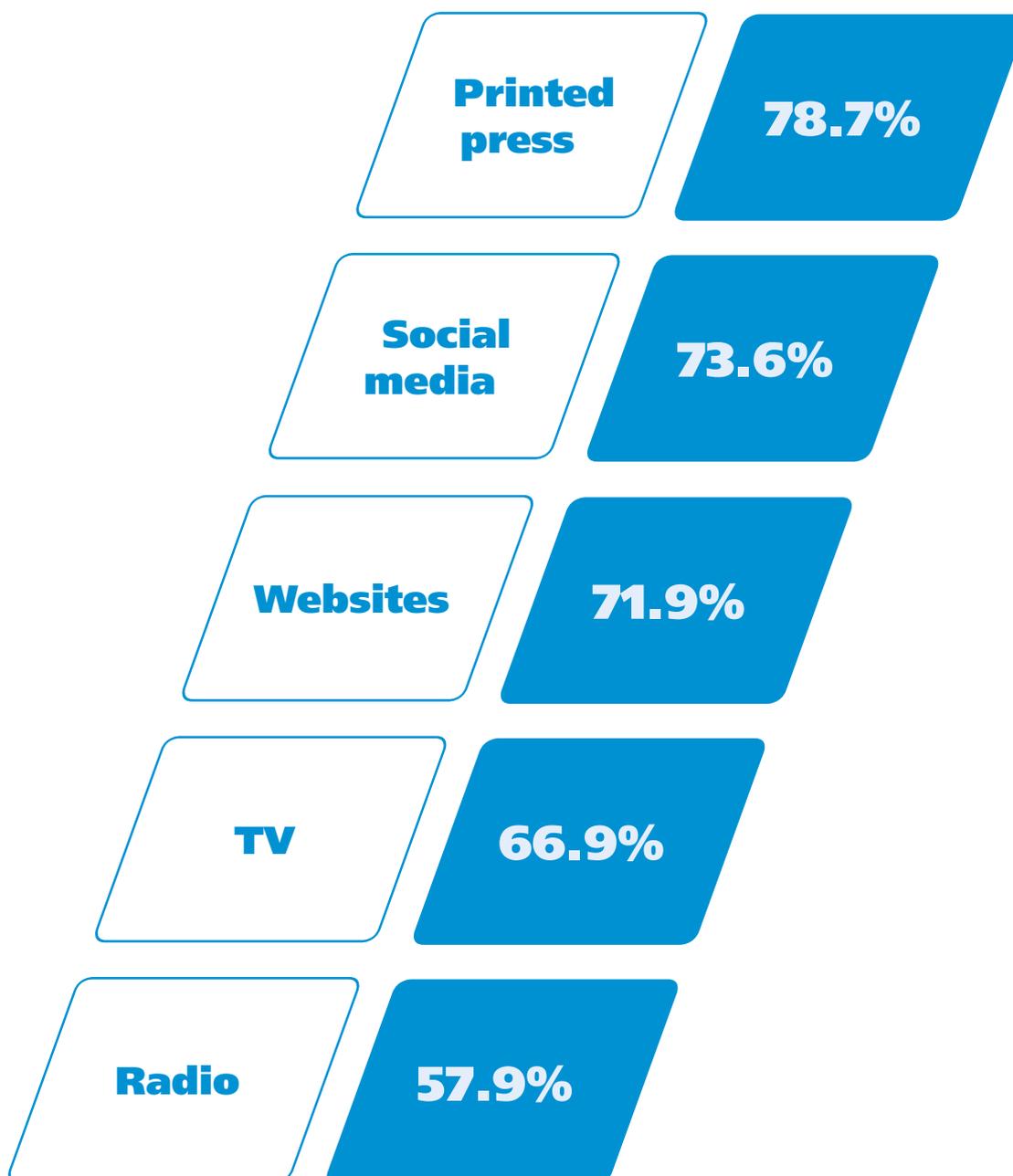
Average percentage of association budget allocated to youth football



## MEDIA PROMOTION

The printed press is the medium covering youth football in the highest percentage of associations surveyed. Social media and websites also cover youth football in a quite high percentage of associations that took part in the study: 73.6% and 71.9% respectively. While lower figures were measured for radio and TV, the percentages are also over 50.0%: 57.9% and 66.9% respectively. These figures confirm the high potential of youth football from a media perspective.

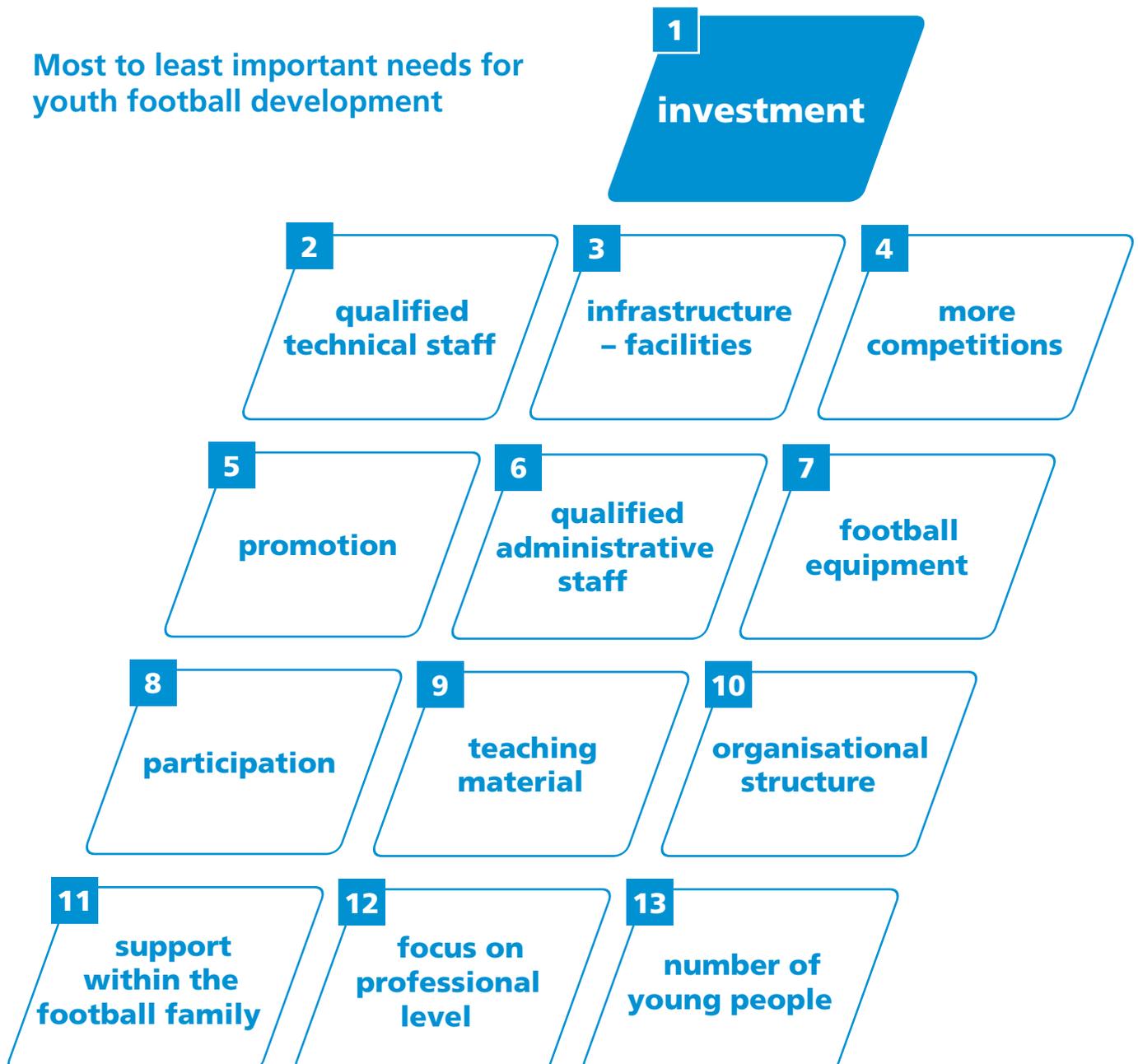
### Percentage of member associations with youth football coverage by...



## PERCEPTION, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

Investment, qualified technical staff and facilities/ infrastructure are considered by associations having taken part in the study as the most important needs with respect to their priorities and goals from a youth football development perspective. Conversely, the number of young people interested in football is the least quoted item in the list. This confirms the very high potential of youth football as a key driver for further football growth at global scale.

### Most to least important needs for youth football development







GAZPROM



HYUNDAI

1

**NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUES**

## NATIONAL U-15 MALE LEAGUES

About two thirds of member associations that took part in the survey (66.9%) affirmed that a national youth league is organised for at least an age category of male players under 13, 14 or 15 years of age. This percentage is almost twice as high in CONCACAF (87.9% of respondents) than in CAF (46.7%). Percentages in CONMEBOL and UEFA are above the global average, while those measured in the AFC and the OFC are below.

Percentage of member associations with national leagues for male players under 15 years of age

66.9%

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONCACAF	87.9%	
CONMEBOL	80.0%	
UEFA	71.4%	
AFC	65.8%	
OFC	60.0%	
CAF	46.7%	

## NATIONAL U-15 FEMALE LEAGUES

Only about one third of member associations among respondents (35.4%) reported the existence of a national youth league for female players under 13, 14 or 15 years of age. This is almost twice less than the figure recorded at male level for the same age categories. CONCACAF is the only confederation where the majority of associations who participated in the survey reported that a national U-15 female league is organised (60.6%). This proportion is below 30% in both CAF and the AFC.

Percentage of member associations with national leagues for female players under 15 years of age

35.4%

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONCACAF	60.6%	
CONMEBOL	40.0%	
OFC	40.0%	
UEFA	35.7%	
AFC	26.3%	
CAF	22.2%	

## NATIONAL U-17 MALE LEAGUES

U-16 and/or U-17 national leagues for male players exist in more than three associations out of four (77.5%). The lowest percentage was measured among CAF nations who participated in the survey. However, even there, the proportion is close to 70%. At the opposite end of the table, the highest percentages were observed at UEFA (90.5%) and the AFC (90.0%). The figures for CONMEBOL, the OFC and CONCACAF are just below the average recorded at worldwide level.

Percentage of member associations  
with national leagues for male players  
under 17 years of age

**77.5%**

### What are the differences between confederations?

UEFA	90.5%	
AFC	90.0%	
CONCACAF	73.7%	
OFC	73.3%	
CONMEBOL	70.0%	
CAF	69.7%	

## NATIONAL U-17 FEMALE LEAGUES

The percentage of member associations where national leagues for U-17 and/or U-16 female players are organised is much lower than that observed for male footballers of the same age categories: 35.4% versus 77.5%. This confirms the under-development of female youth football and the need for member associations to put a special emphasis on it. In no confederation is the percentage of associations among respondents with national U-17 female leagues over 50%: from 26.3% in the AFC to 48.5% in CONMEBOL.

Percentage of member associations with national leagues for female players under 17 years of age

35.4%

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	48.5%	
CONCACAF	40.5%	
UEFA	40.0%	
OFC	30.0%	
CAF	28.9%	
AFC	26.3%	

## NATIONAL U-19 MALE LEAGUES

National U-19 and/or U-18 male leagues exist in fewer associations than do U-17 and/or U-16 competitions. However, in this case too, the percentage is over 70%. National U-19 male leagues are the norm in UEFA and CONMEBOL, where professional championships are well established. Conversely, only about six out of ten CONCACAF and OFC associations that took part in the survey organise national U-19 male leagues. While U-19 players can and do already play at senior level, this probably undermines the possibility for many local talents to fully develop their potential.

Percentage of member associations  
with national leagues for male players  
under 19 years of age

**70.2%**

### What are the differences between confederations?

UEFA	90.5%	
CONMEBOL	90.0%	
AFC	70.0%	
CAF	69.7%	
OFC	57.9%	
CONCACAF	57.8%	

## NATIONAL U-19 FEMALE LEAGUES

National U-19 and/or U-18 female leagues exist in just about one quarter of associations who participated in the study (28.7%). This proportion is less than one fifth in the OFC and UEFA. On one hand, these very low figures reflect the need to further develop youth female football throughout the world. On the other hand, it shows the tendency for female footballers to join senior teams earlier than their male counterparts. In any case, the organisation of more U-19 female leagues would be beneficial for women's football.

Percentage of member associations with national leagues for female players under 19 years of age

28.7%

### What are the differences between confederations?

CAF	51.5%	
CONCACAF	40.0%	
CONMEBOL	31.0%	
AFC	20.0%	
UEFA	18.4%	
OFC	10.0%	

## DURATION OF MALE YOUTH LEAGUES

The average duration of national youth male leagues is 6.2 months. Great discrepancies exist between confederations. In the OFC, national youth male competitions last on average only 4.5 months. At the opposite end of the spectrum, they have a much longer duration in CONMEBOL (8.0 months) and UEFA (7.6 months). The most successful national associations also benefit from longer youth male championships than the least successful ones. This is also part of their competitive advantage.

Average duration in months of national youth male leagues

6.2

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

U-17 World Cup qualification	7.0	
No U-17 World Cup qualification	5.9	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	8.0	
UEFA	7.6	
CAF	6.1	
AFC	5.6	
CONCACAF	5.1	
OFC	4.5	

## DURATION OF FEMALE YOUTH LEAGUES

The average duration of female youth competitions is 15% lower than at male level: 5.3 versus 6.2 months. A negative gap was recorded in each confederation. The difference is particularly significant in the AFC: 3.9 months compared to 5.6 (-30%). Similarly to male youth football, female youth leagues in the associations that qualified to at least one of the last editions of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup last longer than in those that did not. The reduction of this gap will most probably allow more member associations to field competitive teams.

Average duration in months of national youth female leagues

5.3

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

U-17 World Cup qualification	7.2	
No U-17 World Cup qualification	5.0	

### What are the differences between confederations?

UEFA	7.0	
CONMEBOL	6.1	
CAF	5.5	
CONCACAF	4.5	
AFC	3.9	
OFC	3.3	

## NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE ORGANISATION

Member associations play a crucial role in the organisation of youth football competitions. The survey shows that in 86% of cases, the national association holds the main responsibility for the organisation and management of youth leagues. The lowest percentage was recorded in CAF, where external bodies outside of the member association play a greater role than elsewhere. However, in all confederations, the percentage is over 75%, up to 100% in the OFC.

Percentage of territories where the member association is in charge of the organisation and management of national youth leagues

**86.0%**

### What are the differences between confederations?

OFC	100.0%	
CONCACAF	90.9%	
CONMEBOL	90.0%	
AFC	89.5%	
UEFA	85.7%	
CAF	75.6%	

## NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE PARTICIPATION

Amateur clubs are the main participants of youth competitions worldwide. In almost three quarters of national associations among respondents, amateur clubs take part in youth leagues. The other main participants are youth academy teams (40.4%), youth professional clubs (38.8%, up to 57.1% in the most competitive associations) and school teams (28.1%).

Percentage of member associations where amateur clubs participate in national youth leagues

**74.4%**

### What are the percentages for other participants?

Youth academy teams	40.4%	
Youth professional clubs	38.8%	
School teams	28.1%	

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	Amateur youth clubs	69.6%	
	Youth academy teams	44.6%	
	Youth professional clubs	57.1%	
	School teams	16.1%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	Amateur youth clubs	77.0%	
	Youth academy teams	38.5%	
	Youth professional clubs	30.3%	
	School teams	33.6%	

## REGIONAL YOUTH LEAGUES

In about seven national associations out of ten, regional youth leagues do exist. This proportion is much greater in the associations that qualified for at least one of the last three male or female FIFA U-17 World Cup editions than for those that did not: 94.6% compared to 60.7%. While also reflecting the popularity and development level of football in each country, this gap shows that having a football pyramid with a solid basis is very helpful to compete at the highest level. The importance of regional leagues should not be underestimated, especially in large territories in order to provide access to football for everyone across the country.

Percentage of member associations  
with regional youth leagues

**71.3%**

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

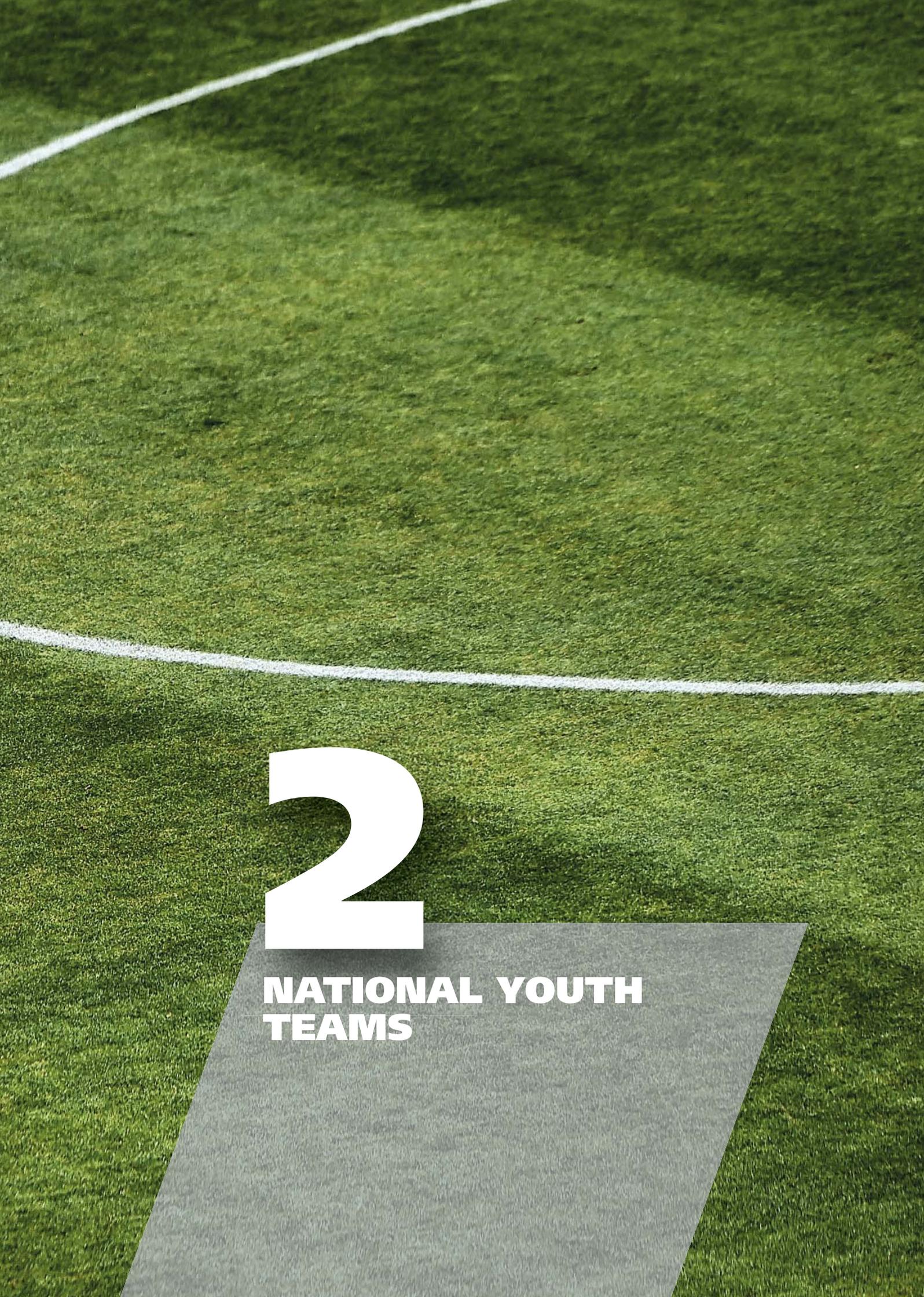
FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	94.6%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	60.7%	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	100.0%	
UEFA	81.0%	
CAF	80.0%	
AFC	60.5%	
OFC	60.0%	
CONCACAF	54.5%	







**2**

**NATIONAL YOUTH  
TEAMS**

## NATIONAL U-15 MALE TEAMS

Two thirds of associations that participated in the survey reported running a national U-15 male team. This proportion varies from 0% in the OFC to 100% in CONMEBOL. The existence of international competitions in a given age group clearly encourages the setting up of national teams. There is also a correlation between the existence of national youth leagues and that of national youth teams. Only four CAF associations out of ten have national U-15 male teams. The percentage of member associations with a national team in this age category is higher among the most competitive nations than for the least competitive ones: 76.3% versus 63.6%.

Percentage of member associations with national teams for male players under 15 years of age

66.3%

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	76.3%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	63.6%	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	100.0%	
CONCACAF	87.9%	
AFC	81.6%	
UEFA	71.4%	
CAF	40.0%	
OFC	0.0%	

## NATIONAL U-15 FEMALE TEAMS

National U-15 female teams exist in 37.1% of associations having responded to the questionnaire. This percentage is over 50% only in the AFC and CONCACAF. A first step could be to have a national U-15 female team in at least one association out of two at global level. This percentage is currently only 36.1% in the least competitive associations, and no more than 45.0% in the most competitive ones.

Percentage of member associations with national teams for female players under 15 years of age

**37.1%**

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	45.0%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	36.1%	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONCACAF	66.7%	
AFC	55.3%	
UEFA	38.1%	
CONMEBOL	20.0%	
CAF	11.1%	
OFC	0.0%	

## NATIONAL U-17 MALE TEAMS

The existence of national U-17 male teams is well established throughout the world. Only nine out of the 178 associations that participated in the study reported not having such a selection in place. While the very existence of national U-17 male teams is not an issue, the conditions offered to young talents to fully develop their potential can probably still be significantly improved in many countries. A qualitative approach to raise performance standards would in this sense most probably be of key importance.

Percentage of member associations with national teams for male players under 17 years of age

94.9%

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	100.0%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	93.6%	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	100.0%	
OFC	100.0%	
UEFA	100.0%	
AFC	97.4%	
CONCACAF	90.9%	
CAF	88.9%	

## NATIONAL U-17 FEMALE TEAMS

The percentage of member associations with national U-17 female teams is much higher than at U15 level: 64.6% versus 37.1%. However, this percentage is significantly lower than that observed for national U-17 male teams: 64.6% compared to 94.9%. This confirms that further efforts are needed from national associations to best promote women's football at youth level. While 90% of the most successful nations have a national U-17 female team in place, this percentage is only 61.4% for the least successful ones.

Percentage of member associations with national teams for female players under 17 years of age

**64.6%**

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	90.0%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	61.4%	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	100.0%	
UEFA	85.7%	
OFC	80.0%	
CONCACAF	66.7%	
AFC	47.4%	
CAF	46.7%	

## NATIONAL U-19 MALE TEAMS

Almost nine associations that took part in the survey out of ten have a national U-19 male team in place (89.3%). This proportion is over three quarters in all confederations: from 75.8% in CONCACAF to 100% in both CONMEBOL and the OFC. As for U-17 male selections, the existence of national U-19 teams is no more an issue at worldwide level. However, resting on its laurels would be a big mistake for any association. In such a competitive and global environment as football, this would lead to substandard performance over the long term.

Percentage of member associations with national teams for male players under 19 years of age

89.3%

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	100.0%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	86.4%	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	100.0%	
OFC	100.0%	
UEFA	97.6%	
AFC	89.5%	
CAF	86.7%	
CONCACAF	75.8%	

## NATIONAL U-19 FEMALE TEAMS

The percentage of associations with national U-19 female teams (64.0%) is very close to that observed for U-17 selections (64.6%). A significant gap exists between nations that qualified for at least one of the three last FIFA U-17 Women's World Cups and those who did not: 95.0% versus 60.1%. Great discrepancies were also recorded between confederations. Up until now, only about one African and Asian association out of two reported running a national U-19 female team. This rate should definitively be improved in the future.

Percentage of member associations with national teams for female players under 19 years of age

**64.0%**

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	95.0%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	60.1%	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	90.0%	
UEFA	85.7%	
OFC	70.0%	
CONCACAF	66.7%	
CAF	51.1%	
AFC	44.7%	

## NATIONAL MALE YOUTH TEAM MATCHES

The median number of matches played per year by national youth teams of associations having taken part in the study is nine. This figure varies from six in both CAF and CONCACAF to 19 for CONMEBOL respondents. The gap is also great between associations that qualified for at least one of the last three FIFA U-17 men's World Cups and those that did not: 13 compared to seven. This finding suggests that the ability of national associations to organise fixtures for their youth teams is a key success factor.

Annual median number of matches played by national youth teams for male players

9

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	13	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	7	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	19	
AFC	12	
OFC	10	
UEFA	10	
CAF	6	
CONCACAF	6	

## NATIONAL FEMALE YOUTH TEAM MATCHES

The annual median number of matches played by national female youth selections is seven. The comparison with male teams shows again the lower importance given by national associations to women's football. The values per confederation range between six and 11 fixtures per year. As at male level, national youth teams of the most competitive nations play almost twice as many games per year as the least competitive ones: ten compared to six.

Annual median number of matches played by national youth teams for female players

7

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	10	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	6	

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	11	
AFC	9	
UEFA	8	
OFC	7	
CAF	6	
CONCACAF	6	





# 3

## REGISTRATION SYSTEM AND LICENSING

## REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Almost eight associations out of ten have a registration system for clubs participating in national youth leagues. This proportion is about seven out of ten for the least successful associations and nine out of ten for the most successful ones. Registration is still not unanimous also for players, referees and coaches. From an administration and management perspectives, the ability of member associations to register all the main actors involved in the game should be seen as a priority.

Percentage of member associations with a registration system for clubs in the national youth leagues

**78.1%**

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	87.5%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	73.8%	

### What percentage for players, coaches and referees?

Youth league players	80.9%	
Youth league referees	72.5%	
Youth league coaches	69.1%	

## COACHING LICENCES

A minimum coaching licence is required to train teams participating in national youth competitions by almost four out of five associations (78.7%). However, the level of the licence requested varies between the nations who qualified for at least one of the least three editions of the male or female FIFA U-17 World Cups and the remaining associations. While 42.8% of the former require at least a "B" licence, only 27.5% of the latter do so. The use of youth football competitions to promote talented coaches should be incentivised.

Percentage of member associations where a minimum coaching licence is required to train national youth competition teams

**78.7%**

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	"A"-licence	22.4%	<div style="width: 22.4%;"></div>
	"B"-licence	20.4%	<div style="width: 20.4%;"></div>
	"C"-licence	57.1%	<div style="width: 57.1%;"></div>
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	"A"-licence	7.7%	<div style="width: 7.7%;"></div>
	"B"-licence	19.8%	<div style="width: 19.8%;"></div>
	"C"-licence	72.5%	<div style="width: 72.5%;"></div>

### What are the differences between confederations?

UEFA	90.5%	<div style="width: 90.5%;"></div>
OFC	90.0%	<div style="width: 90.0%;"></div>
CAF	82.2%	<div style="width: 82.2%;"></div>
AFC	81.6%	<div style="width: 81.6%;"></div>
CONCACAF	60.6%	<div style="width: 60.6%;"></div>
CONMEBOL	50.0%	<div style="width: 50.0%;"></div>





# 4

## **YOUTH FOOTBALL STAFF AND ORGANISATION**

## STAFF DEDICATED TO YOUTH FOOTBALL

The median number of staff per association dedicated to youth football is five. The most successful associations employ twice as much staff than the least successful ones: eight compared to four. When looking at the discrepancies between MAs, the size of the MA in general as well as its overall staff number has to be considered. The median number of staff focusing on youth football in the OFC associations who took part in the survey is only three. This figure is four times higher in UEFA. Having more competent staff for youth football could be very helpful for many associations.

Median number of staff dedicated to youth football per member association

5

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	8	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	4	

### What are the differences between confederations?

UEFA	12	
AFC	7	
CONCACAF	5	
CAF	4	
CONMEBOL	4	
OFC	3	

## YOUTH FOOTBALL COMMITTEE

Less than two thirds of associations have a youth football committee: 62.9%. This shows that the importance of youth football is still not always considered as it should. Not even one in two associations has a national youth team department (42.1%), a youth football department (42.7%), nor employs a youth football development manager (44.4%). All these figures indicate that more emphasis should be put on youth football development throughout the world.

Percentage of member associations  
with a youth football committee

62.9%

### What are the percentages for the following bodies and positions?

National youth team department	42.1%	
Youth football department	42.7%	
Youth football development manager	44.4%	

### What are the differences between confederations?

UEFA	73.8%	
CAF	71.1%	
CONMEBOL	70.0%	
CONCACAF	63.6%	
OFC	50.0%	
AFC	42.1%	





**5**

**STAKEHOLDER  
SUPPORT**

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Only about six out of ten associations who responded to the questionnaire reported benefitting from local government support at youth football level. This proportion is higher for nations who qualified for at least one of the last three male or female FIFA U-17 World Cups than for those who did not. The most common types of government help are facilities (58.4%) and financial support (47.2%). A MoU between the government and national associations only exists in 10% of countries.

Percentage of member associations with government support for youth football

59.0%

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	64.3%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	56.6%	

### What are the most/least common types of support?

Facilities	58.4%	
Financial support	47.2%	
Coaching education	9.0%	
Sports equipment	7.9%	
Technical expertise	7.3%	
Teaching material	3.4%	

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORT PER CONFEDERATION

Seven out of ten AFC associations among respondents claimed to receive government support for youth football. This is the highest figure recorded. In the other confederations, the percentages vary between 64.4% at CAF level and only 10% in CONMEBOL. These differences mainly reflect those observed in the involvement of associations in school football (see page 60). Many development opportunities still exist in this area.

**Highest percentage of member associations in a confederation with government support for youth football**

**AFC**

### What are the differences between confederations?

AFC	71.1%	
CAF	64.4%	
OFC	60.0%	
UEFA	57.1%	
CONCACAF	54.5%	
CONMEBOL	10.0%	

## SPONSOR SUPPORT

Over two thirds of member associations among respondents have sponsor support for youth football (68.0%). This reveals the high potential of youth football from a sponsorship perspective. All over the world, brands are keen to engage with the next generation of consumers. Youth World Cup qualification further helps member associations to attract the interest of sponsors. The most common types of contribution from sponsors are financial support (54.5%) and sports equipment (33.1%).

Percentage of member associations with sponsor support for youth football

68.0%

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	75.0%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	64.8%	

### What are the most/least common types of support?

Financial support	54.5%	
Sports equipment	33.1%	
Facilities	8.4%	
Teaching material	5.1%	
Coaching education	4.5%	
Technical expertise	2.2%	

## SPONSOR SUPPORT PER CONFEDERATION

Sponsor support for youth football is particularly developed in CONMEBOL. Youth competitions in this confederation are very popular as they often reveal top-level talents destined for being transferred to the most competitive clubs and leagues worldwide. This certainly helps attracting an interest from sponsors. The lowest percentage was measured in CAF, where youth competitions are much less structured than in other confederations. However, great potential in attracting sponsors at youth level also exists in Africa.

**Highest percentage of member associations in a confederation with sponsor support for youth football**

**CONMEBOL**

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	90.0%	
UEFA	81.0%	
CONCACAF	75.8%	
AFC	71.1%	
OFC	50.0%	
CAF	46.7%	

## PROFESSIONAL LEAGUE SUPPORT

Professional leagues do not exist in all FIFA member associations. This explains why only about one third of respondents reported benefitting from professional league support to develop the game at youth level (37.1%). This also explains the gap in professional league support between the most and least competitive nations: 58.9% compared to 27.0%. The most common type of support from professional leagues is facilities. However, the percentage of associations who benefit from this kind of contribution remains limited: 22.5%.

Percentage of member associations with professional league support for youth football

**37.1%**

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	58.9%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	27.0%	

### What are the most/least common types of support?

Facilities	22.5%	
Financial support	18.5%	
Technical expertise	16.3%	
Sports equipment	10.7%	
Coaching education	10.1%	
Teaching material	5.6%	

## PROFESSIONAL LEAGUE SUPPORT PER CONFEDERATION

CONMEBOL tops the table with regard to professional league support for youth football (60%). The percentage in UEFA is also quite high (45.2%). At the opposite end of the spectrum is the OFC (20%). The gaps observed between confederations mainly reflect the differences existing in the development of professional football.

**Highest percentage of member associations in a confederation with professional league support for youth football**

**CONMEBOL**

### What are the differences between confederations?

CONMEBOL	60.0%	
UEFA	45.2%	
AFC	36.8%	
CAF	33.3%	
CONCACAF	30.3%	
OFC	20.0%	

## FIFA SUPPORT

FIFA support for youth football is widespread. It concerns nine associations out of ten who participated in the survey. No significant difference was measured between associations that qualified at least once for the last three FIFA U-17 men's or women's World Cups and those who did not. Financial support is the most common FIFA's contribution (79.8%), closely followed by coaching education (73.0%) and teaching material (65.7%). Over half of associations also benefit from sports equipment (61.2%) and technical expertise (59.0%).

Percentage of member associations with FIFA support for youth football

91.0%

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	89.3%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	91.8%	

### What are the most/least common types of support?

Financial support	79.8%	
Coaching education	73.0%	
Teaching material	65.7%	
Sports equipment	61.2%	
Technical expertise	59.0%	
Facilities	34.8%	

## FIFA SUPPORT PER CONFEDERATION

In each confederation, at least four out of five of associations among respondents claimed to receive FIFA support for youth football: from 80% in CONMEBOL to 100% in the OFC. This finding confirms the crucial importance of FIFA in the development of the youth game at worldwide level.

**Highest percentage of member associations in a confederation with FIFA support for youth football**

**OFC**

### What are the differences between confederations?

OFC	100.0%	
CONCACAF	97.0%	
AFC	94.7%	
CAF	91.1%	
UEFA	83.3%	
CONMEBOL	80.0%	

## CONFEDERATION SUPPORT

Generally speaking, confederation support is similar to that provide by FIFA both quantitatively and qualitatively. This finding shows the importance of coordinating the respective contributions in the best possible way. From this perspective, constant dialogue is an obligation for success. Coaching education is clearly the most common type of support received by associations from their confederation: 73.6%. Technical expertise, financial support and teaching material are also quite common.

Percentage of member associations with confederation support for youth football

85.4%

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	85.7%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	85.2%	

### What are the most/least common types of support?

Coaching education	73.6%	
Technical expertise	54.5%	
Financial support	54.5%	
Teaching material	50.0%	
Sports equipment	42.7%	
Facilities	21.3%	

## CONFEDERATION SUPPORT PER CONFEDERATION

As with regard to FIFA, confederation help for youth football is widespread. The percentage of associations receiving such a support is over 85% in four confederations out of six. The lowest percentages were recorded in CAF and CONMEBOL. However, they remain quite high: 71.1% and 70.0% respectively.

**Highest percentage of member associations with confederation support for youth football**

**OFC**

### What are the differences between confederations?

OFC	100.0%	
UEFA	95.2%	
CONCACAF	90.9%	
AFC	86.8%	
CAF	71.1%	
CONMEBOL	70.0%	

## INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL FOOTBALL

There are big discrepancies in the involvement of member associations in school football. The overall percentage shows the existence of well-established links between associations and schools (71.3%). However, while 100% of OFC associations who responded to this specific question of the survey reported to be involved in school football, this percentage is only 10% in CONMEBOL. The latter situation is more an exception than the rule as the proportions observed in all other confederations are two thirds or over.

Percentage of member associations involved in school football

**71.3%**

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	64.3%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	74.6%	

### What are the differences between confederations?

OFC	100.0%	
AFC	78.9%	
UEFA	73.8%	
CONCACAF	72.7%	
CAF	68.9%	
CONMEBOL	10.0%	







6

**FIFA-FUNDED  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

## FIFA-FUNDED INFRASTRUCTURE FOR YOUTH

In almost eight associations out of ten, youth football benefit from FIFA-funded infrastructure projects. This reveals the importance of the latter for the development of youth football throughout the world. The percentages per confederation vary from 60% in CONMEBOL to 100% in the OFC. The comparison between confederations shows that FIFA-funded infrastructure projects are of particular importance in the least developed areas.

Percentage of member associations where youth football benefits from FIFA-funded infrastructure projects

**78.7%**

### What are the differences between confederations?

OFC	100.0%	
CAF	88.9%	
AFC	84.2%	
CONCACAF	78.8%	
UEFA	61.9%	
CONMEBOL	60.0%	

## USE OF FIFA-FUNDED INFRASTRUCTURE

The main use of FIFA-funded pitches at youth football level is training: 87.5% of the associations that benefit from FIFA-funded infrastructure projects. FIFA-funded pitches are also frequently used within the framework of the organisation of courses (86.7%) and competitions (78.1%). The comparison between the most and least competitive associations shows that the latter use FIFA-funded pitches at youth football level even more intensively than the former.



### What are the most common types of use?

Courses	86.7%	
Competitions	78.1%	

### What are the differences between the most and least competitive associations?

FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	Training	80.0%	
	Courses	80.0%	
	Competition	67.5%	
No FIFA U-17 World Cup qualification	Training	90.9%	
	Courses	89.8%	
	Competition	83.0%	





7

**INVESTMENT IN  
YOUTH FOOTBALL**

## REVENUE SOURCES

In all associations who took part in the survey, member associations provide the main revenues for youth football. This shows the key role that both national and international football governing bodies have to play for the sustainable development of the game. Any failure of these key stakeholders has negative consequences over the long term. Only about one third of national associations have a dedicated youth football sponsor. With more proactive policies in this area, this percentage could be improved in the near future.

**Percentage of member associations with dedicated youth football sponsors from the private sector**

**33.1%**

### What are the main sources of support per confederation?

	Top source	2 <sup>nd</sup> main source	3 <sup>rd</sup> main source	4 <sup>th</sup> main source
AFC	National association	Private sector	Club	Government
CAF	National association	Club	Private sector	Government
CONCACAF	National association	Private sector	Government	Club
CONMEBOL	National association	Private sector	Government	Club
OFC	National association	Government	Club	Private sector
UEFA	National association	Government	Private sector	Club

## YOUTH FOOTBALL BUDGET

On average, member associations allocate 13.2% of their total budget to youth football. With regard to the strategic importance of youth football for the sound development of the game, a growth in this percentage would certainly be beneficial. The percentages vary from less than 5% in the OFC to almost 20% in the AFC. In absolute terms, the most successful associations invest 5.5 times more in youth football development than the least successful. This proportion is 7.5 in terms of annual budget for youth football, up to ten times in investment in youth competitions.

Average percentage of member association budget allocated to youth football

13.2%

### What are the differences between confederations?

AFC	18.7%	
CONCACAF	15.1%	
UEFA	13.0%	
CAF	10.0%	
CONMEBOL	9.8%	
OFC	4.8%	

### What are the gaps between the most and least competitive associations?

Investment in youth football competitions	x 10	
Annual budget for youth football	x 7.5	
Investment in youth football development	x 5.5	





8

**MEDIA PROMOTION**

## MEDIA COVERAGE

The printed press is the medium covering youth football in the highest percentage of associations who took part in the study. Social media and websites also cover youth football in quite a high percentage of associations surveyed: 73.6% and 71.9% respectively. While lower figures were measured for radio and TV, the percentages remain over 50%: 57% and 66.9% respectively. These findings confirm the high potential of youth football from a media perspective. Much remains to be done by member associations to fully exploit this potential.

Percentage of member associations where the printed press promote youth football

**78.7%**

### What are the percentages for other media platforms?

Social media	73.6%	
Websites	71.9%	
TV	66.9%	
Radio	57.9%	

## MEDIA DEPARTMENT ACTIVITY

Websites are the main communication channel used by member associations to promote youth football. Almost three quarters of associations having responded to the questionnaire reported using websites for this purpose (74.7%). This percentage is also high for social media: 73.6%. Websites and social media have therefore overtaken radio, TV and the printed press as the main communication channels used by associations. Proper communication strategies should be further developed in this domain.

Percentage of member associations where the media department uses websites to promote youth football

**74.7%**

### What are the percentages for other media platforms?

Social media	73.6%	
Printed press	65.2%	
TV	54.5%	
Radio	47.8%	





# 9

## **PERCEPTION, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS**

## PERCEPTION OF MALE YOUTH FOOTBALL

Only about one fifth of association representatives who participated in the study (20.8%) reported that male youth football is considered as an attractive area of investment in their country. Much remains to be done to change this perception. Conversely, almost four respondents out of five think that male youth football is considered as a platform for future pro players. This reflects the dominant performance-oriented vision of youth football. While already quite widespread, the perception of football as a vehicle for education, health and social inclusion should be further enhanced.

Percentage of member associations where male youth football is considered as an attractive area of investment

20.8%

### What are the main perceptions of male youth football?

Platform for future pro players	77.5%	
Social initiative to get teenagers off the street/in schools	69.1%	
Platform for international competition	62.4%	
Health initiative	57.9%	
Form of education	56.7%	

## PERCEPTION OF FEMALE YOUTH FOOTBALL

The percentage of association representatives who think that female youth football is considered as an attractive area of investment in their country is even lower than for male youth football: 12.4% compared to 20.8%. Contrary to male youth football, the dominant vision of the female youth game is centred on health, international cooperation, education and social inclusion. However, in this case too, the percentages are not very high. This shows that more emphasis should be put on the promotion of female youth football at all levels.

Percentage of member associations where female youth football is considered as an attractive area of investment

12.4%

### What are the main perceptions of female youth football?

Health initiative	62.9%	
Platform for international competition	60.1%	
Form of education	59.0%	
Social initiative to get teenagers off the street/in schools	56.7%	
Platform for future pro players	36.0%	

## YOUTH FOOTBALL CHALLENGES

The associations that participated in the survey reported infrastructure/facilities as the biggest challenge with which they are confronted to developing youth football in their country. Almost three associations out of four also see qualified technical staff and investment as a big challenge to develop the youth game. These findings are very interesting from a development policies perspective as they show what member associations consider to be a priority.

**Percentage of member associations that consider infrastructure to be a big challenge for the development of youth football**

**75.3%**

### What are the percentages for the various challenges

Qualified technical staff	73.6%	
Investment	72.5%	
More competitions	59.0%	
Football equipment	52.2%	
Qualified administrative staff	51.1%	
Organisational structure	49.4%	
Promotion	47.8%	
Teaching material	39.3%	
Participation	36.0%	
Focus on professional level	36.0%	
Young players dropping out	34.3%	
Support within the football family	33.7%	
Number of young people	27.5%	

## YOUTH FOOTBALL NEEDS

The results presented on this page are fully consistent with those highlighted on the previous one. Investment, qualified technical staff and facilities/ infrastructure are considered by associations having taken part in the study as the most important needs with respect to their youth football priorities and goals. At the opposite end of the table are the number of young people, focus on professional level and support within the football family.

Position of investment in terms of youth football needs according to member association priorities and goals

1<sup>st</sup>

### What is the overall ranking?

1	Investment
2	Qualified technical staff
3	Infrastructure/facilities
4	More competitions
5	Promotions
6	Qualified administrative staff
7	Football equipment
8	Participation
9	Teaching material
10	Organisational structure
11	Support within the football family
12	Focus on professional level
13	Number of young people



FIFA SAY NO TO RACISM

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RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For the first time, this survey allowed FIFA to gather relevant information on youth football development at worldwide level. This report provides valuable insights for all youth football development stakeholders. It shows the importance for member associations to include grassroots (six to 12 years) and youth football (13 to 20 years) in both their global strategy and the freshly conceived FIFA Forward Development Programme.

Here are some recommendations based on the outcome of this survey:

### Structure and financing

From a member association standpoint, the development of paths and the establishment of links from grassroots to youth football should be considered as a key step to building future success both on and off the pitch. This implies the necessity to look at best practices, and adapting them to the local context. In order to provide football players, coaches and referees with a suitable path during their career development, a strategy to ensure the transition from grassroots programmes (focusing on participation) to youth football competitions (focusing on performance) is crucial.

In order to implement such strategies, the role of full- or part-time youth football staff (or even a department) under the supervision of the technical director in a member association is essential (p. 46). Setting up a youth football committee can also be highly beneficial if it has the relevant decision-making powers and is represented in the executive committee by its chairperson.

Concerning finance, growth in the percentage of investment in youth football would undoubtedly be beneficial. It appears that member associations that took part in the survey allocate an average of about 13% of their total budget to youth football (p. 69). At the same time, they consider investment as the most crucial need to fulfil their goals from a youth football development point of view (p. 79). This reveals a discrepancy between the importance of youth football for the future of the game and the investment of member associations into it. Youth football should be considered as a priority in the member associations, also from a financial perspective (p. 69).

Infrastructure and facilities are also key for youth football development. Efficient use of football pitches, technical centres and training grounds is essential at local, regional and national level. Ownership and proper maintenance are also vital, as well as setting clear and strict regulations and guidelines for the running and staffing of technical centres and academies.

### **Competitions and national youth teams**

There is no development without competitions. The organisation of a greater number of youth competitions is therefore a key step for the development of youth football players, coaches and referees. Furthermore, the goal should be to extend the duration of existing competitions and to make them as accessible as possible for every team. The more playing opportunities there are, the more progress can be made by all involved. The survey shows that the most successful associations in youth football organise longer youth competitions than the least successful ones (pp. 24-25).

The number of leagues, age categories and format (national, regional/number of teams and matches per league) have also to be taken into consideration depending on specific situations and possibilities. The organisation of occasional, week-long tournaments does not have the necessary impact for a real development of youth football. Whenever possible, the organisation of youth football has to stay in the hands of the member/regional association and not of private organisations.

The survey shows as well that there are many more national teams in the different age groups than domestic leagues of these categories (pp. 6-8, 18-23 and 32-37). Such discrepancies must disappear in the future so that each national team has a domestic league as the source for the selection of the players.

This survey indicates the need for member associations to strengthen their efforts in developing female youth competitions and national female teams. All of the figures show that the negative gaps in the existence of national youth leagues and national teams for female players is even more significant than in male football (pp. 6-8, 18-23 and 32-37). Only active policies from member associations in this area can change the situation in the future. Efforts should be made to organise more competitions for female players, both at regional and national level.

The level of development of national youth teams is a key indicator of youth football development in the country. A consistent talent scouting system (including the education of qualified scouts) based on uniform scouting criteria elaborated by the MA is necessary for the increased quality of national youth teams. Youth competitions in the different age groups should be the main sources for scouting players.

Lastly, the licensing of youth coaches and clubs is very important. Having a minimum coaching licence and organising a minimum number of coaching courses per year conducted by qualified instructors would be helpful in order to maintain a good competition standard (p. 43). A club licensing programme in which the clubs are subject to certain requirements for youth football development would help to improve and promote youth football in the country as well (p. 42). Additionally, the involvement of clubs at community level (including schools) should be considered.

### **Partnerships and cooperation**

Irrespective of gender, stronger relationships should also be developed with schools. Moreover, according to the survey, only about one member association out of ten has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with governments. Such agreements have high potential in terms of general football development, and on grassroots and youth football level in particular. An MoU is the basis for a very good partnership (whether at regional or national level), indicating the kind of support to be provided such as education, facilities, finance, equipment, etc.

External support from the private sector is also desirable, whether it is financial, for infrastructure or value in kind. The survey confirms that FIFA and the respective confederation are major contributors to youth football development for the member associations (pp. 56-59).

With respect to the social importance of youth and grassroots football, member associations could strengthen their efforts to make coaches aware of the potential that football has from an educational standpoint. While competitiveness is important, it is worth noting that the importance of youth football is much broader. The majority of respondents consider that youth football should be consistently used to get teenagers off the streets/in schools, for health initiatives, and to serve as an education platform (pp. 76-77).

The survey also shows that youth football should be understood in a more comprehensive way than is often still currently the case. While many efforts are undertaken to bring more actors to the game, much remains to be done in this area.

### **Marketing and communications**

There should be a marketing and communications strategy in place for youth football that reflects the number of youth football corporate events and communications in the news (TV, radio, printed press) (p. 73). The presence of youth football in social media has to be considered too, including different kinds of activities, advertisements, youth competitions and awards, statistics or even developing a youth football platform. The MA's website may include a youth football section, in order to promote and communicate its youth football activities.

In today's global and digitalised world, the importance of football to young people is immense. More than ever, football is the perfect vehicle through which to transmit positive values to young people. Member associations must be fully open to including youth football development in their marketing and communications strategies, not only from a competitive perspective but also from an educational standpoint.

FIFA would like to express its sincere thanks to all member associations that responded to our questions and contributed to this survey.





