

# Update on FIFA's human rights due diligence for the FIFA World Cup 2026™

On 16 June 2022, FIFA announced the cities and stadiums that will host the FIFA World Cup 2026™ – to be held across three countries: Canada, Mexico, and the United States. This occasion is a welcome opportunity to provide an update on FIFA's ongoing human rights due diligence for the tournament.

FIFA is committed to ensuring that the tournament has a positive and lasting impact. This is why human rights have been a key consideration from the outset. FIFA's new human rights requirements for tournaments, which were developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and with the technical support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, were implemented for the first time for a major event during the bidding process for the World Cup in 2026.

## ***Human rights due diligence during the bidding process for the FIFA World Cup 2026***

In accordance with the new human rights requirements for FIFA tournaments, during the host country bidding process for the FIFA World Cup 2026, which took place from 2017 to 2018, bidding member associations were required to:

- explicitly commit to upholding the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) in all aspects of their activities relating to the hosting and staging of the competition, including legacy and post-event related activities;
- submit a human rights strategy for the competition, including a comprehensive report identifying and assessing any risk of adverse human rights impacts in connection with the hosting and staging of the competition, including legacy and post-event related activities;
- commission an independent study assessing how the national context, including the national legislation and legal practice, may impede or enable the member association's ability to host and stage the competition, including legacy and post-event related activities, the findings of which should be reflected in the human rights strategy;
- engage with human rights stakeholders, including independent external experts, potentially affected groups and other relevant stakeholders, in accordance with the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard, and provide a summary report outlining the member association's stakeholder engagement process implemented as part of the development of the aforementioned human rights strategy;
- provide government declarations and guarantees from the host countries as well as the proposed host cities, stating their full support for FIFA and the member association in their efforts to host and stage the competition in accordance with the UNGPs;
- submit signed stadium, training site, airport and hotel agreements from relevant authorities, whereby they undertake to conduct all competition-related activities in accordance with the UNGPs.

The United Bid by the United States, Canada and Mexico was rated a "medium" risk. In line with FIFA's human rights reporting commitments, the requirements, as well as the respective assessments, strategies and evaluations, were published on FIFA.com.

## **Human rights due diligence during the host city selection process for the FIFA World Cup 2026**

Once the United States, Canada and Mexico were selected to host the FIFA World Cup 2026, FIFA started the selection process for the host cities and stadiums. All 22 candidate cities submitted host city human rights declarations as part of the above-mentioned United Bid, in which they committed to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights in all activities associated with the hosting of the competition, and to supporting FIFA in its efforts to organise the World Cup in accordance with the UNGPs and FIFA's own human rights commitment.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, FIFA required candidate cities to conduct a human rights stakeholder engagement process and produce a report outlining the process, its results, and the city's human rights plans in relation to the competition. This process took place between September 2019 and December 2021 and FIFA mandated the cities to publish their reports on their respective websites.

FIFA commissioned the business and human rights consultancy firm Ergon Associates to conduct an independent evaluation of all candidate city reports. The evaluations were also informed by one-to-one calls with each city and the local stakeholders invited by the city. Ergon's independent evaluation included a detailed assessment that allowed FIFA to make comparisons and consider human rights due diligence as part of the selection process. FIFA has published the qualitative findings from Ergon's host city evaluations on FIFA.com.

In preparation for future tournament bidding, FIFA will be reviewing the selection process conducted and welcomes any feedback to facilitate continuous learning and improvement.

### **Looking ahead**

The selection of host cities and stadiums marks the start of a new phase of human rights due diligence for the tournament. In that respect, FIFA is developing a host city human rights framework, inspired by the lessons learnt from the host city and stadium selection process, which will establish a common standard of achievement for all FIFA World Cup 2026 host cities. FIFA will provide support and capacity-building to continuously advance the host city human rights framework.

In parallel, FIFA will develop a sustainability strategy for the tournament, which will include a focus on ensuring that FIFA and its local subsidiaries embed respect for human rights across their activities. This work will be closely aligned with and complementary to the host city framework to ensure a joint approach among all entities involved in the delivery of the tournament.

All of this will be informed by extensive stakeholder engagement. Now that the tournament venues are known, FIFA will enhance its stakeholder engagement and support host cities in their local engagement with stakeholders. The tournament will be one of the greatest and most diverse celebrations of all time, and FIFA understands that stakeholder engagement is key to ensuring that it has a positive and lasting impact.

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<sup>1</sup> Due to Vancouver's late entry as a candidate city, Vancouver was asked to sign a predefined human rights commitment and share the terms of reference and a list of organisations and respective representatives of a human rights stakeholder committee that will lead the stakeholder engagement process. High-level qualitative findings from the independent evaluation of Vancouver's submission can be found in the summary report published on FIFA.com.