

The Iraqi Football Association



IFA Club Licensing Regulations

2017 Edition

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CHAPTER ONE: CLUB LICENSING PROCESS

Article 1 Introduction

1. A “Club License”, shall be granted by IFA if the applicant club fulfills the requirements specified below in these regulations.
2. The “Club License” shall be a requirement for eligibility to participate in the AFC Club Competitions and IFA League as decided by IFA or AFC.

Article 2 Licensor

1. IFA is the Licensor and legally authorized to draft, finalize and issue the license to any applicant that seeks to get the license.
2. IFA governs the licensing system, appoints the corresponding licensing bodies and determines the necessary processes.
3. IFA guarantees the license applicant (club) full confidentiality with regards to information given by the license applicant during the licensing process.
4. Anyone involved in the licensing process or appointed by IFA will ensure confidentiality of the tasks undertaken.

Article 3 Club Licencing Bodies

1. IFA shall have two-decision making bodies to decide on the application and hearing appeals on the granting of a license to the applicants.
2. The two decision making bodies shall be independent of each other and the members shall not have any conflict of interest.
3. Members of the decision making bodies shall have relevant knowledge of professional football and one or more of the criteria mentioned in these regulations.
4. The quorum for the decision making bodies shall be three and all decisions made shall be in writing.
5. The decision making bodies are:
 - a. The Club Licensing Committee (CLC)
 - b. The Appeal Licensing Committee (ALC)

Article 4 The Club Licencing Committee (CLC)

1. The CLC decides on whether a license should be granted to an applicant club on the basis of the documents provided and in accordance with these Regulations.
2. The CLC shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of IFA.
3. The CLC shall consist of a chairman, a deputy chairman and five members.
4. At least one member of the CLC shall be chartered accountant and at least another shall be a lawyer.

Article 5 The Appeal Licencing Committee (ALC)

1. The ALC decides on appeals submitted in writing and makes a final and binding decision on whether a license should be granted or revoked based on the documents submitted by the deadline.
2. The ALC shall consist of a chairman, a deputy chairman and three members appointed by the Executive Committee of IFA.
3. Members of the ALC shall include a qualified lawyer and a qualified accountant/auditor.
4. Appeals may be lodged by:
 - a. The license applicant club, who received the refusal of the CLC.
 - b. The licensee club, whose license has been withdrawn by the CLC.
 - c. The Club Licensing manager of IFA.
5. Appeal against the decision of the CLC must be lodged within 14 days of the notification of the decision.
6. The ALC makes its decision based on the documents submitted before the CLC. No new documents or evidence shall be admitted.
7. Decisions pronounced by the ALC shall be irrevocable and binding on all the parties concerned. This provision is subject to appeals lodged with the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) within 10 days of notification of the ALC decision. The appeal before CAS shall automatically be subject to an expedited procedure and be completed before 31 October.

Article 6 The Club Licencing Manager (CLM)

1. The Club Licensing Manager (CLM) is responsible for all the administrative matters relating to the Club Licensing Regulations.
2. The CLM may be assisted by IFA Secretariat or any additional staff deem necessary.
3. The CLM and his/her staff are responsible for:
 - a. Preparing, implementing and further developing the Club Licensing Regulations.
 - b. Providing administrative support to the decision making bodies.
 - c. Assisting, advising and monitoring the licensed clubs during the season.

4. The CLM and his/her staff must comply with strict confidentiality rules regarding information received during licensing procedure.
5. The CLM and his/her staff will not be influenced or affected by the decision making bodies in any aspects.

Article 7 The Licence Applicant (Club)

1. A license applicant is a legal entity fully and solely responsible for the football team participating in IFA and AFC competitions which either:
 - a. is a registered member of IFA and/or participates in its affiliated league (:”Registered Member”); or
 - b. has a contractual relationship with a Registered Member (“Football Company”).
2. An individual or a natural person cannot apply for a license.
3. The membership and/or the contractual relationship must have lasted at the start of the Licensing process at least two consecutive years. Any alteration to club’s legal form or company structure (including, changing its headquarters, name, club colours, or transferring stake holdings between different clubs/entities) in order to facilitate its qualification on sporting merit and/or its receipt of a licence is deemed as an interruption of membership or contractual relationship (if any) within the meaning of this provision.

Article 8 Responsibilities of the Licence Applicant (Club)

The license applicant is responsible for ensuring that the IFA is provided with all necessary information and/or documents relevant to proving that the licensing obligations are fulfilled, as these obligations relate to the criteria set out under these regulations.

Article 9 License

1. A license is a right given by IFA to the football club to participate in IFA League and the relevant AFC Club Competitions for the upcoming season.
2. Clubs which qualify for the AFC Club Competitions on sporting merit must obtain a licence issued by IFA.
3. Only clubs which fulfil the criteria set out in these Regulations at the deadlines may be granted a license to enter the AFC Club Competition and IFA League.
4. Clubs which fail to get a license will not be allowed to participate in the IFA league unless an exception is granted by AFC.
5. A license shall be mandatory to participate in AFC Club Competitions.
6. A license expires without prior notice:
 - a. at the end of the League season for which it was issued, or

- b. on dissolution of the League.
- 7. License may be withdrawn during a season if:
 - a. for any reason a licensee becomes insolvent and enters into liquidation during the season, as determined by the Iraqi Law: or
 - b. any of the conditions for the issuing of a license are no longer satisfied; or
 - c. the licensee violates any of its obligations under these Regulations.
- 8. A license cannot be transferred.

Article 10 Extraordinary Application

1. If a club qualifies for an AFC Club Competition on sporting merit but has not undergone any licensing process at all or has undergone a licensing process which is lesser/not equivalent to the one applicable for top division clubs, because it belongs to a division other than the top division, IFA may on behalf of the club request an extraordinary application of the Club Licensing System in accordance with Annex 1.
2. Based on such an extraordinary application, AFC may grant special permission to the club to enter the corresponding AFC Club Competition subject to the relevant AFC Club Competition Regulations. Such an extraordinary application applies only to the specific club and for the season in question.

Article 11 Core Process and Timeline

IFA defines the timeline and the processes that it undertakes to decide if a license applicant can be granted a license or not.

Article 12 The Principle of Licencing

1. IFA defines the core process for the verification of the criteria described in these regulations. The core process shall include the timeline assigned to fulfil each criterion.
2. The core process starts at a time defined by IFA and ends on submission of the list of licensing decisions to the AFC CL Administration by the deadline fixed by AFC.
3. The IFA defines the timeline within which the applicant clubs must submit documents to prove the compliance of various criteria.
4. The core process consists of the following minimum key steps:
 - a. distribution of the licensing documentation to the license applicants;
 - b. return of the licensing documentation to IFA;
 - c. assessment of the documentation by the CLM and his/her staff;

- d. assessment and decision by the CLC and ALC;
- e. submission of list of licensing decision to the AFC CL Administration.

Article 13 The Process of Licencing

The core process of licensing implementations is as follows:

1. IFA invites clubs who wishes to participate in IFA League and will provide the circular, application manual and other licensing documents and checklist to the clubs before 1 May of every year.
2. License Applicants should start the process of fulfilling and implementing the criteria in their respective clubs immediately after the IFA has explained the terms, criteria and the requirements they need to fulfill and has provided the circular, application manual and other licensing documents and checklist.
3. CLM and his/her staff will closely monitor and follow up on the License Applicants in fulfilling the criteria. If needed the CLM or his/her staff will visit the License Applicants and provide them with any information or assistance that the License Applicant needs.
4. License Applicants need to submit the required supporting documents to IFA to prove compliance with the licensing criteria. The last date for submission of the supporting documents for participating in the upcoming season of the IFA shall be on or before 15 June of every year.
5. CLM or his/her staff shall assess the documents submitted by the license applicant clubs to verify their compliance with the criteria once the License Applicants submit the application along with supporting documents. The assessment may include site visits. This process must be completed before 15 July of every year.
6. The CLM or his/her staff shall present the license application along with the supporting documents to the CLC before 1 August of every year
7. The CLC will decide on whether a license should be granted to the applicant club on the basis of the documents provided and in accordance with these Club Licensing Regulations on or before 15 August of every year
8. On refusal of the license, the applicant club can lodge an appeal to General Secretary of the IFA against the refusal. The appeal should be made in writing within 14 days of the receipt of refusal. It shall be compiled by CLM or his/her staff and forwarded to the ALC on or before 15 September of every year
9. The ALC will examine the application, supporting documents and submitted evidence to take a decision on the refusing of license and the decision shall be informed to the license applicant as soon as it is taken.
10. IFA will communicate to AFC regarding the final decision on granting of license before 31 October of every year.
11. IFA shall ensure equal treatment to all license applicant clubs during the core process.

Date	Action	Action By
1 May	CLM distributes the circulars & Licensing Packs to License Applicant Club	CLM
15 June	Submission Date - Clubs to submit completed License Applications to CLM	Clubs
15 July	Assessment on the License Applications (inspection, site visit, etc) and to present report to the CLC	CLM
1 August	Decision making for granting of license by the CLC	CLC
15 August	Appeal Date – Club may file request for appeal against the determination of the CLC (refusal license cases)	Clubs
15 September	Decision making for granting of license by the ALC	ALC
31 October	CLM to inform the Clubs and AFC of the Club(s) which is/are issued with license, license issued with sanctions and license not issued	CLM

CHAPTER TWO: CLUB LICENSING CRITERIA

A: Sporting Criteria

Article 14 Head Coach of the First Team

1. The license applicant club must have appointed a Head Coach for its first team, who is responsible for all the sporting matters of the first team.
2. He must hold at least a valid AFC 'A' Certificate or any valid coaching qualification that is equivalent to AFC 'A' recognized by IFA and AFC.
3. He must be appointed by the executive body or the club secretariat of the license applicant club through a written agreement endorsed by Executive Committee of the club.
4. **Submission to IFA:** The club must submit to IFA the name and CV of the Head Coach. The club must also submit a copy of his/her coaching qualification/coaching certificate along with an appointment letter or an employment contract stating the appointment of the person as the head coach of the first team of the club.
5. IFA shall verify the documents to confirm the appointment.

Article 15 Youth Teams and Participation in Youth Competition(s)

1. The license applicant club must have at least two (2) youth teams within the age range of U15 and U18.
2. The youth teams in the above mentioned age range should have regular training and must be coached by at least an AFC "C" licensed certified coach.
3. The youth teams shall participate in all the relevant youth competition(s) organised by IFA and such other bodies at the national, regional or local level.
4. The youth team should also participate in any youth development activities organised IFA.
5. **Submission IFA:** The club needs to provide the details of all the youth team players including name, address, date of birth etc. and proof of participation in the youth competitions. The club must also submit a copy of the youth coach's coaching qualification/coaching certificate along with an appointment letter or an employment contract stating the appointment of the person as the coach of the youth teams of the club.

Article 16 Team Doctor or Physiotherapist for the First Team

1. The license applicant club must have appointed a Team Doctor or a Physiotherapist who is responsible for medical support during matches and training as well as for doping prevention.
2. The qualifications of the Team Doctor or Physiotherapist must be recognized by the Health Ministry of Iraq.
3. The Team Doctor or Physiotherapist must be duly registered with IFA.
4. **Submission to IFA:** The club must submit the name of a Team Doctor or a Physiotherapist to IFA along with his/her CV and an appointment letter or employment contract stating his/her appointment as a Team Doctor or a Physiotherapist of the club.

Article 17 Written Contract with Players

1. All the players of the license applicant club's top team must have a written contract with the license applicant in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations for the Status and Transfer of Players and shall incorporate all key provisions required by the Iraqi Law, IFA, FIFA and AFC.
2. **Submission to IFA:** The club needs to provide the contract of each player of the top team.

Article 18 Medical Support Services for Players

1. The license applicant club must provide all the players registered in the club with full access to medical support services.
2. The players must undergo a yearly medical examination.
3. The license applicant club must provide medical treatment to all its players in case of any injuries.
4. **Submission to IFA:** The club needs to provide certificate for each top team player to IFA stating that the player has undergone a medical check and is fit to play.

Article 19 Approved Youth Development Program

1. The license applicant must have a written youth development programme approved by IFA.
2. **Submission to IFA:** The club must provide the approved youth development program which includes as a minimum the organisation chart, annual training plans and personnel involved.

B: Infrastructure Criteria

Article 20 Stadium

1. The club must either own or have a guaranteed access to a Playing Field that is considered as its home venue for IFA League matches and AFC competitions.
2. The playing field must be of minimum size as indicated in the FIFA Laws of the Game.
3. The stadia must meet the requirements expressly referred to by the:
 - a) AFC Stadia Regulations; and respective
 - b) AFC Club Competition Regulations/Manual.
4. **Submission to IFA:** The club must submit to IFA the name and address of the Home Playing Field along with the ownership document or agreement with the owner of the Home Playing Field stating guaranteed access to the club as its Home Playing Field for IFA League matches. If the Club owns the Home Playing Field, it must submit the documents proving its ownership. IFA shall verify the documents and visit the field to confirm the venues.

Article 21 Training Facilities

1. The club must either own or have a guaranteed access to Training Field/ Training Facilities that is available throughout the year where the players of the club can train on a regular basis.
2. The Training Field must have full size football pitch of good quality and Goal posts.
3. **Submission to IFA:** The club must submit to IFA the name and address of the Training Field along with the ownership document or agreement with the owner of the Training Field stating guaranteed access to the club as its Training Field for the entire year. If the Club owns the Training Field, it must submit to IFA the documents proving its ownership. IFA shall verify the documents and visit the field to confirm the venue of the training field.

Article 22 Office Space (headquarters)

1. The club must either own or have a guaranteed access to an office space to conduct its administration.
2. The club administration must be based in this office space.
3. The administrative office must be equipped with all the necessary communication facilities such as telephone, fax, computer, internet, email, etc.
4. **Submission to IFA:** The club must submit to IFA the name and address of the club headquarters along with the ownership document or agreement with the owner of the

office space stating guaranteed access to the club as its headquarters to conduct all its administrative tasks. If the Club owns the office space, it must submit to IFA the documents proving its ownership.

5. IFA shall verify the documents and visit the office space to confirm the facility.

C: Administrative Criteria

Article 23 General Secretary

1. The club must have appointed a General Secretary who is the head of the administration of the club.
2. He/she is responsible for managing and supervising the administrative matters of the club.
3. The General Secretary should have adequate academic qualifications and must have experience of administration of a football club.
4. He/she should have the necessary knowledge and communication skills required in club management.
5. He/she shall:
 - i. Be responsible for executing the decisions of the Executive Body of the club.
 - ii. Be responsible for the administration of the club secretariat and appointment and supervision of the administrative staff.
 - iii. Assist and participate in the Congress and Executive Committee meetings of the club as an ex-officio.
 - iv. Be responsible for all the official correspondence and communications with IFA, government, other clubs and any other stakeholders involved.
 - v. Attend all the club management and club development seminars organised by the IFA any other governing bodies for the development of the club.
6. The appointment of the General Secretary should be done by Executive Board of the club.
7. **Submission to IFA:** The club must submit the name and CV of the General Secretary to IFA along with an appointment letter or an employment contract stating his/her appointment as a full time head of club administration.
8. IFA shall verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

Article 24 Treasurer

1. The club must have appointed a treasurer who is responsible for its financial and accounting matters.
2. He/she is responsible for managing and supervising all the financial matters of the club.

3. He/she should have adequate financial, accounting and book keeping academic qualifications and experience in these aspects of football industry/football club.
4. He/she shall:
 - i. Be responsible to manage and oversee all aspects of club's financial functions and financial risks.
 - ii. Be responsible for monitoring, management and reporting of all financial and accounting aspects of the club including: budgeting, accounting, banking, payroll, overhead costs, salaries, expenses and revenues.
 - iii. Be responsible for preparing financial statements including profit and loss account and balance sheet.
 - iv. Be responsible for preparing the annual budget.
 - v. Be responsible for monitoring and control of cash flow and bank accounts.
 - vi. Attend all the seminars and workshops organised by IFA or any other governing body for the development of the club in financial, accounting and governance aspects.
5. The appointment of the treasurer should be done by the Executive Board of the club through a written contract.
6. **Submission to IFA:** The club must submit the name of the treasurer to IFA along with his/her CV and an appointment letter or employment contract stating his/her appointment as the head of all the financial matters relating to the club.
7. IFA shall verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

Article 25 Security Officer

1. The license applicant club must have an appointed part time or full time security officer who is responsible for safety and security matters.
2. The appointment of full time/part time Security Officer should be done by the Executive Board of the club through a written contract.
3. **Submission to IFA:** The club must submit the name of the security officer to IFA along with his CV and all his contact details. The club must submit an appointment letter or an employment contract stating the appointment of the official as the security officer.
4. IFA shall verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

Article 26 Media Officer

1. The club must have appointed a Media Officer being responsible for all media matters.
2. The Media Officer should have adequate academic qualifications and experience in media aspects of football industry/football club.
3. He/she shall:
 - i. Be responsible to manage and oversee all aspects of club's media management.
 - ii. Be responsible for communicating and interacting with mass media and external media/newspaper to provide all relevant information on club matters.

- iii. Be responsible for communicating with AFC and IFA for all media related matters of the club
 - iv. Be responsible for handling media operations including press conference, flash interviews, media briefing, etc. during match days and non-match days
 - v. Be responsible for all the Public Relations (PR) and Promotional aspects of the club (in coordination with Marketing Manager).
4. The appointment of Media Officer should be done by the Executive Board of the club through a written contract.
 5. **Submission to IFA:** The club must submit the name of the Media Officer to IFA along with his/her CV and an appointment letter or employment contract stating his/her appointment as the head of all the media commercial matters relating to the club.
 6. IFA shall verify the documents and confirm the appointment.

D: Legal Criteria

Article 27 Legal Entity

1. The license applicant must be registered with an appropriate authority as a legal entity as per the law of Iraq.
2. The license applicant must be in possession of legally valid documents confirming the following:
 - i. It is a legal entity registered in accordance with the law of Iraq.
 - ii. It holds a certificate/document stating its legal entity status.
3. **Submission to IFA:** The club needs to provide the necessary documents and certificates that prove that the club is a legal entity that is registered with the appropriate Iraqi authority.

Article 28 Ownership and Control of Clubs

1. The Licence Applicant must submit a legally-valid declaration outlining the ownership structure and control mechanism of the Club.
2. Such declaration should ensure conformity with the conditions set out below.
3. No natural or legal person involved in the management, administration and/or sporting performance of the club, either directly or indirectly:
 - a) holds or deals in the securities or shares that allows such person to exercise decisive influence in the activities of any other club participating in the same competition;
 - b) holds a majority of the shareholders' voting rights of any other club participating in the same competition;

- c) has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of any other club participating in the same competition;
 - d) is a shareholder and alone controls a majority of the shareholders' voting rights of any other club participating in the same competition pursuant to an agreement entered into with other shareholders of the club in question;
 - e) is a member of any other club participating in the same competition;
 - f) is involved in any capacity whatsoever in the management, administration and/or sporting performance of any other club participating in the same competition;
 - g) has any power whatsoever over the management, administration and/or sporting performance of any other club participating in the same club competition.
4. These declarations must be executed by an authorised signatory no more than three (3) months prior to the corresponding deadline for its submission to IFA.

E: Financial Criteria

Article 29 Annual Budget

1. The club must submit its annual budget before the start of the season.
2. It should state the following:
 - a) projected income for the coming financial year.
 - b) projected expenditure for the coming financial year.
 - c) all the sources of revenues and income projected for the financial year along with the amount .
 - d) all the sources of expenditures projected for the financial year along with the amount.
3. **Submission to IFA:** The club needs to provide the budget with the above details which will be verified by IFA.

Article 30 Audited Annual Financial Statements

1. The club must submit its audited annual financial statements for the previous financial year.
2. The financial statements should include the following :
 - **Balance Sheet:** a) Current Assets; b) Fixed Assets; c) Current Liabilities; d) Non-Current Liabilities; and e) Net assets/liabilities.
 - **Profit and Loss Account:** a) Revenue; b) Expenses; and c) Other.

3. **Submission to IFA:** The club needs to provide the audited annual financial statements with the above details which will be verified by IFA.

Article 31 No Payables Overdue Towards Employees and Tax/Social Authorities

1. The licence applicant must prove that, it has no payable overdue towards its current or former employees and tax/social authorities in respect of its contractual or legal obligations.
2. The term “employees” shall include but not limited to:
 - a) all professional players according to the applicable FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players; and
 - b) the administrative, technical, medical and security staff specified in these Regulations.
3. **Submission to IFA:** The club needs to provide a legally valid declaration that there are no payable overdue towards its current or former employees and tax/social authorities. This declaration must be executed by General Secretary no more than thirty (30) days prior to the corresponding deadline for its submission to IFA.

F: Summary of the Criteria

Article 32 Summary of the Criteria

Following is a summary of the licensing criteria for the clubs to get a license:

SPORTING CRITERIA

License Applicant Club to have-

1. Head Coach for its first team, with an AFC 'A' Coaching Certificate
2. 2 Youth Teams, participation in youth competitions, AFC C Licensed Coach.
3. Team Doctor or Physiotherapist.
4. Written contract with all its players in top team.
5. All its registered players provided with medical check-up and treatment.
6. Approved Youth Development Programme.

INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA

License Applicant Club to either own or have a guaranteed access to-

1. a Home Playing Field to play its IFA League matches.
2. to Training Field/ Training Facilities throughout the year.
3. an office space to conduct its administrative task.

PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

License Applicant Club to appoint a

1. General Secretary as the head of club administration.
2. Treasurer.
3. Security Officer.
4. Media Officer.

LEGAL CRITERIA

1. Legal entity registered in accordance with the Iraqi law.
2. Declaration regarding Ownership and Control of Club.

FINANCIAL CRITERIA

1. Annual budget.
2. Annual audited financial statements from the previous financial year.
3. No payables overdue towards employees and tax authorities.

CHAPTER THREE: FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 33 Exceptions Policy

The AFC administration may grant an exception to any provisions in these Regulations as set out in Annex 2.

Article 34 Enforcement

These regulations were adopted by the IFA Executive Committee on XXXX and came into force the next day onwards.

ANNEX 1 - EXTRAORDINARY APPLICATION OF THE CLUB LICENSING SYSTEM

1. The minimum criteria applicable for the extraordinary application of the Club Licensing System as specified in Article 10 shall be the same as in Chapter 2 of these regulations. The IFA shall notify the AFC as soon as a possibility for invoking Article 10 arises.
2. IFA must notify the AFC CL Administration of such extraordinary application requests in writing stating the name of the club concerned latest by 31 August of the year preceding the season to be licensed.
3. The IFA shall be responsible for providing the criteria to the club concerned for the assessment for the extraordinary procedure at national level. IFA must also take immediate action with the club concerned to prepare for the extraordinary procedure.
4. The club concerned must provide the necessary documentary proof to IFA that will assess the club against the fixed minimum standards and forward the following documentation in English to the AFC CL Administration by the 30 September of the year preceding the season to be licensed:
 - a) a written request to apply for special permission to enter the corresponding AFC Club Competition;
 - b) a recommendation by IFA based on its assessment (including the dates and names of the persons having assessed the club);
 - c) all documentary evidence provided by the club and IFA as requested by the AFC CL Administration;
 - d) any other documents requested by the AFC CL Administration during the extraordinary procedure.
5. The AFC CL Administration bases its decision on the documentation received and grants special permission to enter the AFC Club Competitions if all the set criteria are fulfilled and if the club ultimately qualifies on sporting merit. The decision will be communicated to IFA, which has to forward it to the club concerned.
6. If such a club is eliminated on sporting merit during this extraordinary procedure, the IFA has to notify the AFC CL Administration immediately, and this procedure is immediately terminated, without further decision. Such a terminated procedure cannot be restarted at a later stage.
7. Appeals can be lodged against decisions made by the AFC CL Administration in writing before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in accordance with the relevant provisions laid down in the AFC Statutes.

ANNEX 2 - EXCEPTIONS POLICY

A. PRINCIPLE

1. The AFC CL Administration may, in accordance with Article 33, grant exceptions on the following matters:
 - a) non-applicability of a minimum requirement concerning the decision-making bodies or process due to national law or any other reason;
 - b) non-applicability of a minimum requirement concerning the core process due to national law or any other reason;
 - c) non-applicability of a minimum assessment procedure due to national law or any other reason;
 - d) non-applicability of the two-year rule defined in Article 7(3) in case of change of legal form or company structure of the License Applicant on a case by case basis;
 - e) non-applicability of a certain criterion defined in Chapter 2, due to national law or any other reason;
 - f) non applicability of a license requirement for any club to participate in the National Football League of any National Association.
2. Exceptions related to items a), b), c) and e) are granted to IFA and may apply to all clubs which are registered with IFA and which submit a licensing application to enter the AFC Club Competitions. Exceptions related to item d) and f) are granted to individual clubs that applies for a license.
3. In principle an exception is granted for a period of one season. Under specific circumstances this period may be extended and the IFA may be placed on an improvement plan.
4. A renewal of the exception is possible upon a new request.

B. THE PROCESS

1. The AFC CL Administration acts as the first instance decision making body on exception requests.
2. An exception request must be in writing, clear and well founded.
3. Exceptions related to items defined under A (1) (a, b, c, e and f) must be submitted by the IFA to the AFC CL Administration ten (10) days prior to the start of the core process.
4. Exceptions related to the item defined under A (1) (d) can be submitted at any time. The IFA upon notification of the reorganization or restructuring of an affiliated club (e.g. change of legal form, merger of clubs, split of club, liquidation or bankruptcy) is responsible for notifying the AFC CL Administration accordingly as soon as it becomes aware of it.
5. The AFC CL Administration uses the necessary discretion to grant any exception within

- the limits of these regulations.
6. The status and situation of football within the territory of IFA will be taken into account when granting an exception. This encompasses, for example:
 - a) size of the territory, population, geography, economic background;
 - b) size of the IFA (number of clubs, number of registered players and teams, size and quality of the administration of the association, etc.);
 - c) the level of football (professional, semi-professional or amateur clubs);
 - d) status of football as a sport within IFA territory and its market potential (average attendance, TV market, sponsorship, revenue potential, etc.);
 - e) AFC and FIFA ranking;
 - f) stadium ownership situation (club, city/community, etc.) within the IFA;
 - g) support (financial and other) from the national, regional and local authorities, including the youth and sports ministry of Iraq.
 7. The decision will be communicated to IFA. The decision shall be in writing and state the reasoning. The IFA shall then communicate it to all License Applicants concerned.
 8. Appeals can be lodged against decisions made by the AFC CL Administration in writing before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in accordance with the relevant provisions laid down in the AFC Statutes.