



AS ROMA

INDIAN FOOTBALL REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The first section of the report focus on the current landscape of Indian football. This section is aimed at providing an in-depth understanding of the game in the country, current state, evolution, expected progress and key issues. It focuses on the key stakeholders of Indian football – national governing body, government, state associations, partners and fans. It also includes an overview of the AIFF’s partnership with IMG Reliance and the breakdown of the ISL structure.

The next part of the Indian football landscape focuses on the major competitions and playing structure of the sport. In addition to the emergence of the Indian Super League, its objective and structure, the section also touches upon other leagues and premier cup competitions in the country.

This analysis is followed by the second part of the report – identifying areas of opportunities and entry for AS Roma in India. Here, the key emphasis lies on tying into the current football structure and working closely with all the stakeholders including the government.

After a brief discussion on the major avenues of opportunities, we attempt to highlight some of the working strategies over the course of an 18-month period. The programmes are conceptualized with an aim to fulfill AS Roma’s key objectives – Branding, Building Relationships, and Creation of Commercial Assets. Each programme is aimed at fulfilling at least one core objective with details of possible online and offline activations.

Lastly, the report briefly highlights a possible execution strategy for some of the programmes listed.

“

With the success of the FIFA U-17 World Cup and the growth of domestic leagues and investments, it's safe to say that India is now a football country

”

Gianni Infantino
President, FIFA

FIFA[®]

For the Game. For the World.





INTRODUCTION

The landscape of Indian football has changed significantly over the last five years. Sepp Blatter once said India is the “sleeping giant” of world football, and if the last few years are anything to go by, he was spot on. The football revolution in India started over a decade ago when top European leagues started being broadcast live on television. Hundreds of thousands of young Indians became fans overnight, and European clubs and players became household names. India’s football renaissance has not gone unnoticed, and all leading clubs and leagues from around the globe have identified it to be the next big market, along with China.

The advent of Indian Super League has been a game-changer investment.

With high viewership and interest in watching foreign leagues, the ISL provides a very real and accessible avenue for fans and investors. In a short span of time, the league has managed to attract high-profile club owners, as well as created excitement among brands to invest in Indian football. The early success of ISL indicates that the Indian football story is not just here to stay but explode into something tremendous over the next decade with various stakeholders wanting to be part of the journey.

La Liga and Real Madrid have set up permanent offices in New Delhi to meet their objectives of expanding into India and Atletico Madrid have made their presence known through their partnership with ISL franchise, Atletico de Kolkata.

A1. AIFF AND INDIAN FOOTBALL LANDSCAPE



GOVERNANCE

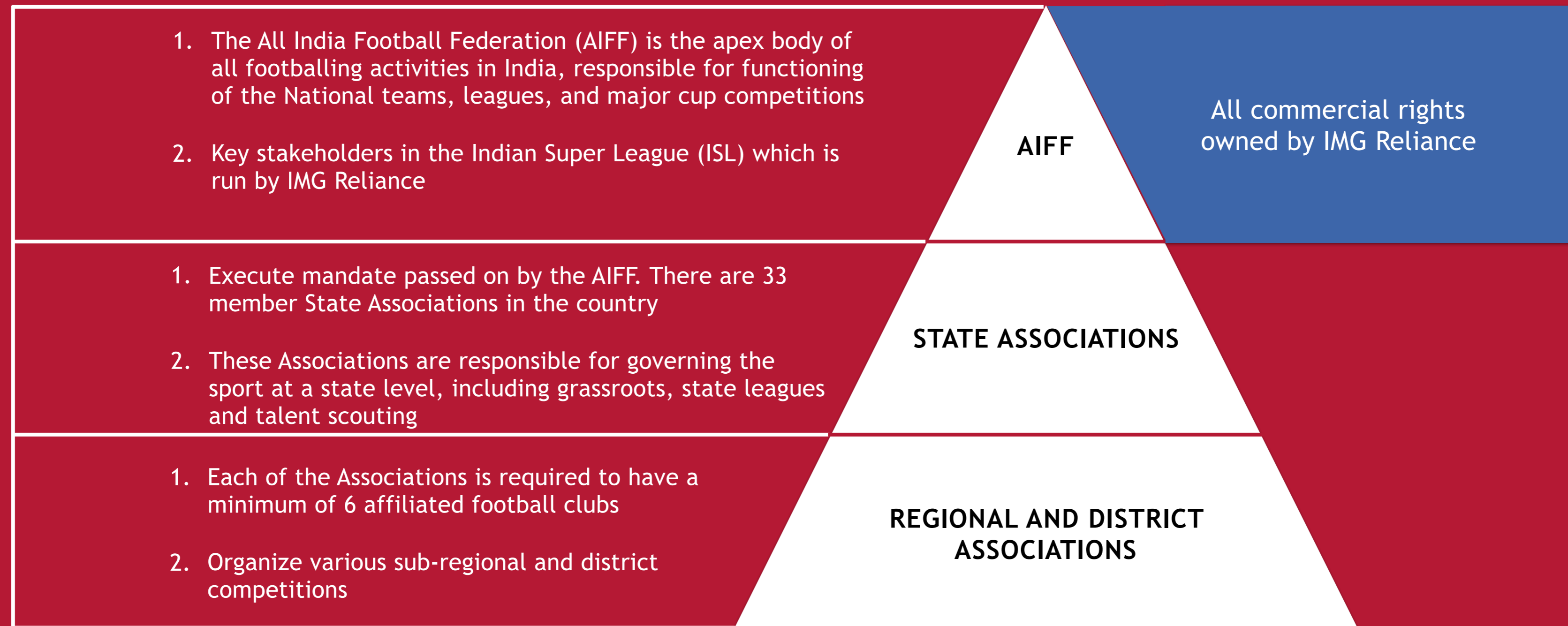
COMPETITIONS



**YOUTH SYSTEM AND
DEVELOPMENT**

**KEY CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

1.1 GOVERNANCE OF INDIAN FOOTBALL



THE PARTNERSHIP

AIFF & IMG RELIANCE

1. In 2010, the AIFF signed IMG Reliance as its commercial partner for 15 years, in a deal worth €100 million
2. The agreement grants IMG Reliance all commercial rights to football in India, including sponsorship, advertising and broadcasting, franchising and rights to form new leagues
3. The deal is aimed at improving and developing the ecosystem of football in India including grassroots and youth development



1.2 ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION

The AIFF is the apex body overseeing all football operations in India. It is responsible for India's national football teams, regulating and being a key stakeholder in India's premier club competitions – the I-League and the ISL, in addition to other competitions and teams.

KEY FACTS

- The AIFF was established in 1937
- It received FIFA and AFC affiliation in 1948 and 1954 respectively
- The AIFF is headquartered in Dhwarka, New Delhi
- **Key personnel:**
 - Praful Patel (President)
 - Kushal Das (General Secretary)
 - Kishore Taid (Head of Operation & Strategy)
 - Sunando Dhar (CEO, I-League)

MANDATE & VISION

The AIFF aims to drive growth of football across India in an inclusive and holistic manner:

- (i) Football to be the sport of choice, reaching out to all communities across India.
- (ii) India to be an inspiring, proud and successful football nation at the highest level
- (iii) To develop, promote, protect and professionally manage football for the benefit of the nation through:
 - Enabling mass participation
 - Strengthening the national teams
 - Executing competitions
 - Actualizing thorough advancement programmes in association with all partners



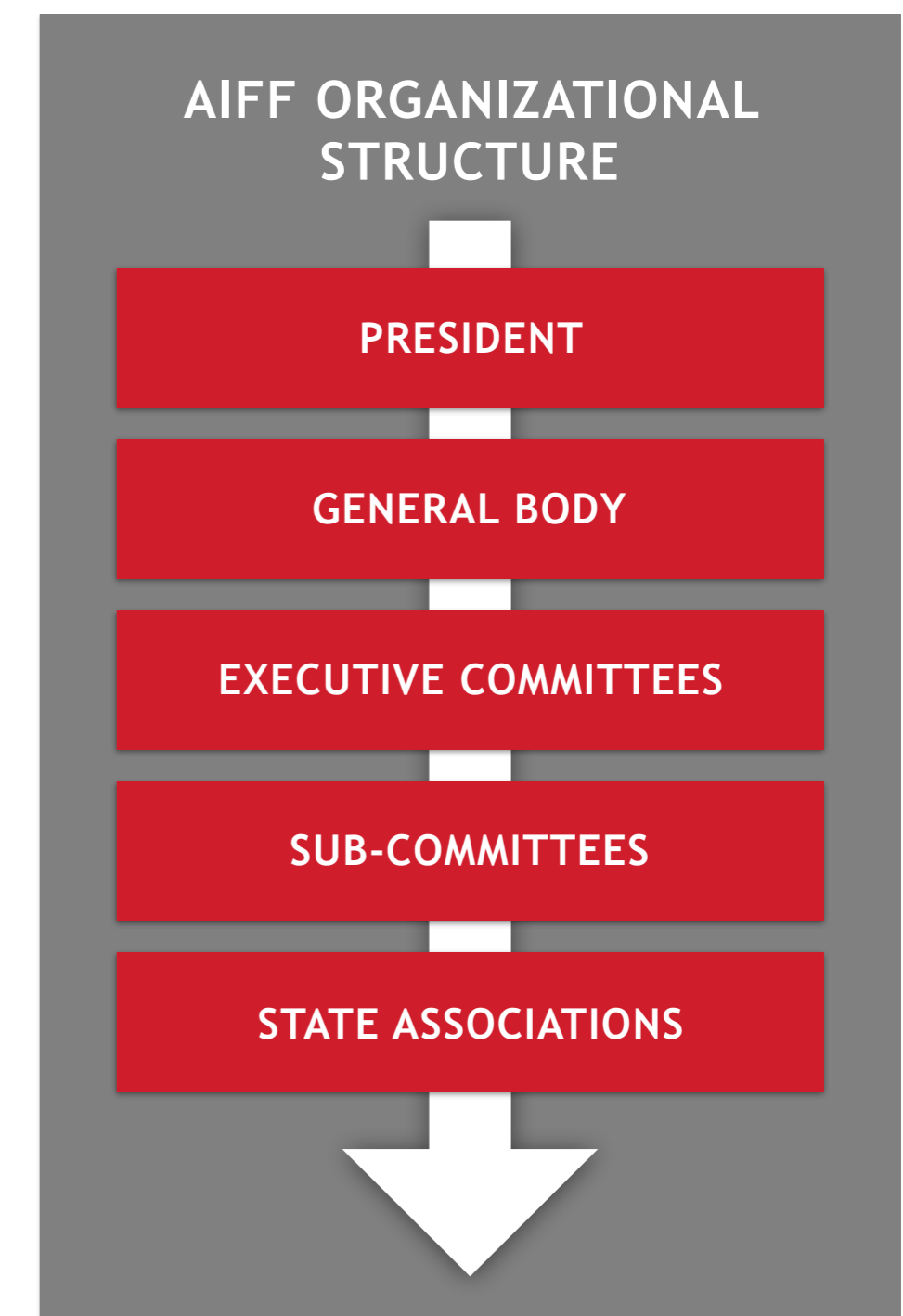
1.2 ALL INDIA FOOTBALL FEDERATION

STRATEGIC GOALS

- (i) Perform and excel in the following areas:
 - National teams
 - Professional leagues and clubs
 - National competitions

- (ii) To build key support structures for the following:
 - Grassroots
 - Youth Development
 - Coaching
 - Referee Development
 - Women's Football

- (iii) Transform internal aspects of the AIFF:
 - Management
 - State Associations
 - Professional clubs



AIFF KEY STAKEHOLDERS



1.3 AIFF & IMG RELIANCE

ABOUT

The AIFF and IMG Reliance have laid out a long-term commitment to work towards improving the standard of football in India, and play an important role in driving future changes.

Summary:

- In 2010, the AIFF signed an exclusive deal with IMG Reliance thereby appointing it its commercial partner. The historic deal is the first of its kind and runs for a period of 15 years, and is reported to be worth €100 million¹
- The tie-up with the AIFF grants IMG Reliance all commercial rights to football in India including sponsorship, broadcasting, merchandising, advertising, video/data, intellectual property (IP), franchising as well as rights to form new leagues.
- As part of the mandate, IMG Reliance will be responsible for redeveloping the branding and marketing landscape of Indian national teams, domestic competitions, as well as the participating teams.

Highlights of the partnership:

- As part of the deal, IMG Reliance would examine the possibilities of overhauling domestic football competitions in India. This would involve conceptualizing of a new structure (pre-ISL), format and schedules for the league and cup competitions.
- IMG Reliance would work towards promoting and developing the sport in India, including tying up with various State Associations and international bodies – leagues, teams and players alike.
- Academy development is a key aspect to the partnership and IMG Reliance, along with their partners and stakeholders of AIFF, will set up training and development facilities across the country.
- The deal with IMG Reliance caused the termination of AIFF's relationship with Zee Sports (the official broadcasting partner of AIFF). Zee Sports were paid €1 million² as part of a buyout. Every year for the first five years of the partnership, IMG Reliance would pay AIFF €0.8m or 20 per cent³ of the annual revenue from football in India, whichever was higher.



1.3 OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

OVERVIEW

Over the years, various entities have provided the AIFF funds for the development of football in the country. Some of the examples are listed below

Australian Sports Outreach Programme (ASOP)

- The ASOP was an Australian Government outreach initiative implemented by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) with a commitment of AUD 5 million over five years (2009-14)¹.
- ASOP programme was executed through vital partnerships made with chosen associations to improve grassroots development. The understanding included monetary, authoritative and specialized support from Football Federation of Australia (FFA).

FIFA

- FIFA has been a noteworthy contributor for the AIFF and in 2010, it awarded \$2 million for the development of infrastructure primarily at the Ravindra Sarovar Stadium, Bangalore Football Stadium and Cooperage, Mumbai.
- In addition to this, FIFA supports the AIFF in building technical centers, academies and elevating the sport at a regional level.



1.3 FIFA U-17 WORLD CUP



FIFA U-17 WORLD CUP

December 6th, 2010 was a historic date for Indian football, as the FIFA Executive Committee awarded India the privilege of hosting the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup.

Tournament Facts

- Dates: October 6th-28th, 2017
- Tournament Director: Javier Ceppi
- Kheleo – a clouded leopard was chosen to be the tournament's Official mascot

Key benefits expected from the World Cup

- Infrastructure development
- Youth and Grassroots Football Development
- Global recognition
- Elevate the status of the sport in India
- Government involvement and funding
- Legacy building
- Youth participation (viewership)
- Establish relationships with global footballing nations, businesses and non-profits

1.4 STATE ASSOCIATIONS



Overview:

There are 33 State Association affiliated to the AIFF. Besides the States, the Services and Railways Sports Control Board and the Women's Committee are also the affiliated units of the AIFF.

State Associations have their own constitution and structure, sometimes independent to that of the AIFF. Depending on the size of the state, the State Associations have District Associations affiliated to them. The clubs in turn are usually affiliated to the District Associations, unless it's a smaller state, in which case the club comes directly under the State Association.

The State Associations are fundamental to promoting the game at the grassroots level and instrumental in AIFF's vision. The AIFF tends to initiate projects with the State Associations who are committed to implementing the same.

Functions:

- (i) Each state conducts its own competitions – district level and inter-district level
- (ii) Associations are to support the AIFF grassroots programme in full and remain committed to implementation and success long-term
 - Administer the grassroots programme within the state, organize regional grassroots courses with the Development Officers and appoint leaders in each area of the state.
 - Ensure all activities and programmes are implemented under the bigger AIFF umbrella, as per FIFA philosophy

STATE ASSOCIATIONS IN INDIA

- All Manipur Football Association
- Andaman & Nicobar Football Association
- Andra Pradesh Football Association
- Arunachal Pradesh Football Association
- Assam Football Association
- Bihar Football Association
- Chandigarh Football Association
- Chhattisgarh Football Association
- Daman & Diu Football Association
- Delhi Soccer Association
- Football Association of Odisha
- Goa Football Association
- Gujrath Football Association
- Haryana Football Association
- Himachal Pradesh Football Association
- Jammu & Kashmir Football Association
- Jharkhand Football Association
- Karnataka Football Association
- Kerala Football Association
- Madhya Pradesh Football Association
- Meghalaya Football Association
- Mizoram Football Association
- Nagaland Football Association
- Pondicherry Football Association
- Punjab Football Association
- Railway Sports Promotion Board
- Rajasthan Football Association
- Services Sports Control Board
- Sikkim Football Association
- Tamil Nadu Football Association
- The Indian Football Association (West Bengal)
- Tripura Football Association
- Uttar Pradesh Football Association
- Uttarakhand Football Association
- Western Indian Football Association (Maharashtra)

1.5 DISTRICT AND SUB-REGIONAL COMPETITIONS

Overview:

District and sub-regional associations play an integral part in the functioning of grassroots level and youth development. Each State Association defines the scope of authority and the rights and duties of its District Associations.

- Each member state is required to have District Associations across 70 per cent¹ of the districts in that state.
- Each of these associations shall have a minimum of 6 affiliated clubs.
- State Associations in smaller states (i.e. less than six districts), shall have at least 24 clubs affiliated to them.
- Every State Association ensures that its affiliated District Associations or clubs take all decisions on matters regarding membership independently without interference of any external body.

Scope and Mandate:

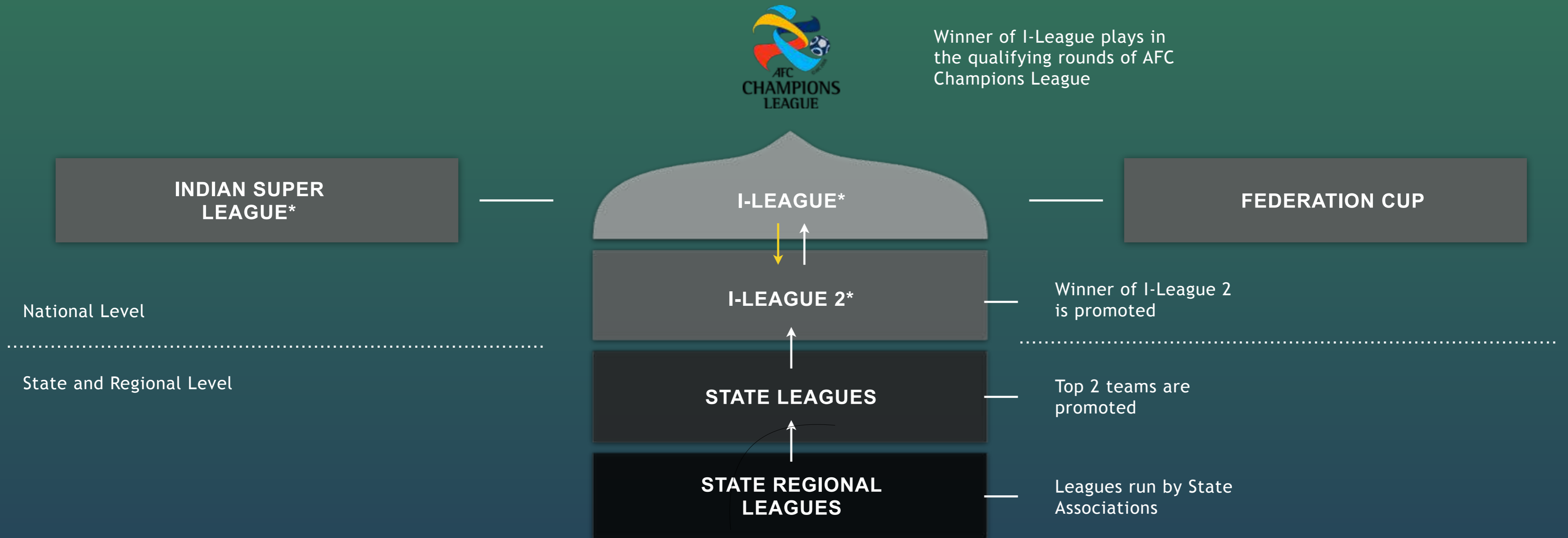
- To provide a platform for football and promote the game of football at the grassroots level, while engaging the support system of these children – parents, teachers, and sporting directors.
- To provide windows of opportunities for gifted youngsters through talent scouting.
- To execute mandates on grassroots development provided by the State Associations.
- To ensure smooth functioning of district leagues.
- To oversee progress of member clubs.

SOME IMPORTANT REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS IN INDIA

- Bangalore District Football Association
- Imphal District Football Association
- Kozhikode District Football Association
- Mumbai District Football Association
- Pune District Football Association

Source: AIFF

A2. DOMESTIC STRUCTURE OF INDIAN FOOTBALL



COMPETITIONS IN INDIAN FOOTBALL

* ISL, I-League and I-League 2: National League affiliated to the AIFF

** Federation Cup: National Cup competition, where winner qualifies to the AFC Cup

2.1 COMPETITIONS IN INDIAN FOOTBALL



PROFESSIONAL COMPETITIONS

- Includes I-League, I-League 2, Indian Super League. Promotion and relegation only between I-League and I-League 2 division
- ISL and I-League function at the same level, however they are not interconnected
- Two different time windows allotted by the AIFF for both the leagues:
 - ISL (November- March)
 - I-League (January - May)
- Federation Cup is the national cup competition. The winner qualifies for group stages of the AFC Cup



STATE COMPETITIONS

- Each state has its own league, which is divided into two or three intra-state tiers
- Every year top two teams from each state are promoted to the qualifying rounds of I-League 2
- District leagues act as feeder leagues to state football leagues. Regular promotion and relegation take places every year
- Semi-professional competitions include some of India's oldest and iconic competitions (eg: Durand Cup)



YOUTH COMPETITIONS

- The official youth leagues in India are I-League U16 and U18 Youth League
- U16 Youth League was started in the wake of the FIFA U17 World Cup announcement



OTHER / AMATEUR COMPETITIONS

- Premier Futsal, a 5-a side tournament was conceptualized by Premier Futsal Management Pvt. Ltd and the inaugural league kicked off in 2016 with 6 teams



2.2 THE INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE



Overview:

Key stakeholders in the ISL:

- The AIFF
- IMG Reliance
- Star India

The ISL was conceptualized and born in 2013, after several failed attempts to set up a franchise system modeled around Major League Soccer (MLS). The AIFF approved the project and it was kicked off in 2014 with 8 franchises located at eight football centric cities across the country, namely: Atlético de Kolkata, Chennaiyin, Delhi Dynamos, FC Goa, Kerala Blasters, Mumbai City FC, North-East United and Pune City FC. The inaugural winners of the league were Atlético de Kolkata.

The league is set for expansion from the 2017-18 season, with two more teams joining the pack – Bengaluru FC and Jamshedpur FC.

The league is committed to investing in stadium refurbishment in the eight identified venues and also to a strong grassroots development programme that will create a platform to groom football talent in the country

Mission:

To provide an entertaining and high-quality football league that engages hundreds of millions of fans, drives improvement in playing standards and delivers value for all partners

Vision:

For India to become a global football power and qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup



2.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE



Objectives:

- (i) To present an international-quality domestic football competition
- (ii) To engage hundreds of millions of passionate and proud Indian football fans
- (iii) To encourage and facilitate the masses to start playing the sport
- (iv) To produce a large pool of talented Indian players and 'heroes' to play for the Indian national team
- (v) To set new standards in sports administration, governance and marketing in India
- (vi) To deliver value to all our stakeholders and partners and create demand for further investment



Strategic Partnership: ISL and the Premier League

The ISL entered into a strategic partnership with the English Premier League in 2014 to improve the standard of football in India. Some of the objectives from the partnerships are listed below:

- (i) The Premier League to share knowledge and exchange best practice programmes
- (ii) The Premier League to provide expertise, strategic support and assistance to the ISL and its franchises
- (iii) The Premier League will assist in establishing club governance, shaping the ISL brand, fan engagement, defining anti-corruption and anti-doping policies, as well as jointly promote football (ISL and the Premier League) in India



2.2 DELIVERABLES AND REVENUE STREAMS



League deliverables

- (i) Running the league smoothly
- (ii) Tournament operations
- (iii) Broker partnerships and broadcast rights deals
- (iv) Facilitate players transfer management system
- (v) Central governance including anti-doping, anti-corruption, disciplinary regulations etc.

Club deliverables

- (i) Team logistics
- (ii) Recruitment and management of players, coaches and other support staff
- (iii) Stadium operations and venue management
- (iv) Marketing and promotion of the club
- (v) Implementation of grassroots and youth development programmes

Club Revenue Streams

- (i) Teams have the right to sell various spots on the shirt for sponsorship – sleeve, kit and official sponsors
- (ii) Ticket sales and memberships
- (iii) Teams receive a central revenue from the ISL from TV ads and league-wide sponsorship deals
- (iv) Prize money for winnings and participation
- (v) The league provides €130,000 to implement grassroots programmes





ATLÉTICO DE KOLKATA



ABOUT

- **Atletico de Kolkata** is one of the ten ISL franchises and is based in the Indian city of Kolkata. It plays its home games in the iconic Salt Lake Stadium, which has a seating capacity of 85,000. They are the defending ISL Champions, having won their most recent and second title in 2016
- **The club is owned by:** Atletico Madrid, Saurav Ganguly, Harshavardhan Neotia, Sanjiv Goenka, Utsav Parekh
- **Past notable stars:** Teddy Sheringam (current coach), Luis Garcia, Helder Postiga, Robbie Keane

Key insights:

- Located in the hub of Indian football (largest fan base)
- Strong relationship with co-owners Atletico Madrid, including technical expertise and access to players
- Complicated ownership structure
- Rumors of merger with iconic Indian clubs Mohan Bagan/East Bengal





BENGALURU FC



ABOUT

- **Bengaluru FC** is one of the expansion clubs, set to participate in the ISL from the 2017-18 season, and are based in the Indian city of Bengaluru. It plays its home games in the Sree Kanterava Stadium which has a seating capacity of 24,000
- **The club is owned by:** JSW Group (Jindal Group)
- **Past notable stars:** Ashley Westwood (ex-coach), Sean Johnson

Insights:

- Bengaluru FC is reputed for being one of the most vocal fan bases in Asia and the fans are known as West Block Blues
- 2017-18 season marks BFC's inaugural participation in the ISL
- 2-time winners of I-League and Federation Cup and 2015-16 AFC Cup runners-up





CHENNAIYIN FC



ABOUT

- **Chennaiyin** is an ISL club based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The club plays its home games at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (capacity of 40,000). They were the **2015 Indian Super League champions**
- **The club is owned by:** Abhishek Bachchan, Mahindra Singh Dhoni and Vita Dani
- **Past notable stars:** Alessandro Nesta, Elano, Marco Materazzi

Insights:

- 7 Italian players have played on the Chennaiyin roster
- Very loyal, strong fan base and franchise foundation
- Two celebrity owners who are closely involved with the club resulting in massive fan engagement





DELHI DYNAMOS

ABOUT

- **Delhi Dynamos** is an ISL club based in New Delhi. The club plays its home games at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (capacity of 60,000).
- **The club is owned by:** GMS Inc and DEN Networks
- **Past notable stars:** Florent Malouda, Alessandro del Piero, Roberto Carlos, John Arna Riise

Insights:

- Modification of ownership in 2016 with the entry of GMS Inc.
- One of the lowest attendance in the league leading to low engagement.
- Arguably the highest star quotient over 3 years (Marquee players)





FC GOA



ABOUT

- **FC GOA** is an ISL club based in Goa and plays its home games at the Fatorda Stadium. Its stadium has a capacity of 19,500
- **The club is owned by:** Virat Kohli, Venugopal Dhoot, Jaydev Mody and Deltin Group
- **Past notable stars:** Zico (Ex-coach), Robert Pires

Insights:

- The club is under new majority ownership. Deletion Group purchased 65% of stake in 2015
- Owners include the Dempo and Salgaocar families – two of the biggest names in Indian football
- Goa is one of the hotbeds of Indian football mainly owing to its Portuguese and Russian colonial heritage (pre-independence)





KERALA BLASTERS



ABOUT

- **Kerala Blasters** is an ISL club based in Kochi, Kerala. The club plays its home games at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (capacity of 65,000). The team name comes from one of their owners, former Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, who was known as the "Master Blaster" during his playing days
- **The club is owned by:** Sachin Tendulkar, Chiranjeevi, Nagarjuna, Allu Aravind and Muthoot Group
- **Past notable stars:** David James, Carlos Marchena, Aaron Hughes

Insights:

- Highest average attendance in the league after 3 seasons
- Loyal fan following and attendance leads to multiple sponsorship and commercial partnerships
- Ownership: In Sachin Tendulkar, the Blasters have one of the most recognizable faces in India





JAMESHEDPUR FC



ABOUT

- **Jamshedpur FC** is an ISL expansion club based in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. The club plays its home games at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (capacity of 40,000).
- **The club is owned by:** Tata Steel (Tata Group)
- **Past notable stars:** None

Insights:

- Current coach, Steve Coppell, has led the Kerala Blasters to the league final





MUMBAI CITY FC



ABOUT

- **Mumbai City FC** is an ISL club based in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The club plays its home games at Mumbai Football Arena (capacity of 18,000). They were the **2015 Indian Super League champions**
- **The club is owned by:** Ranbir Kapoor and Bimal Parekh
- **Past notable stars:** Diego Forlan, Freddie Ljungberg, Nicolas Anelka

Insights:

- Moved to a new stadium in the heart of Mumbai City in 2016 to engage fans and reduce logistical constraints
- Winner of 2014 and 2015 ISL Grassroots Award
- Ranbir Kapoor is actively involved with the club and often invites his Bollywood friends to the matches to engage with fans





NORTHEAST UNITED



ABOUT

- **Northeast United** is an ISL club based in Guwahati, Assam. The club plays its home games at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium (capacity of 35,000)
- **The club is owned by:** John Abraham
- **Past notable stars:** Simao Sabrosa, Joan Capdevilla

Insights:

- The franchise represents 7 states in the North East region of India
- Another hotbed of football, the club arguably has the best pool of local talent available
- One of the highest home attendance in the league and known for its electric atmosphere





PUNE CITY FC



ABOUT

- **Pune City FC** is an ISL club based in Pune, Maharashtra. The club plays its home games at the Balewadi Stadium (capacity of 12,000).
- **The club is owned by:** Hrithik Roshan, ACF Fiorentina, Wadhawan Group
- **Past notable stars:** David Trezeguet, Adrian Mutu, Didier Zakora

Insights:

- Technical partnership with ACF Fiorentina from 2014
- Operate one of the most active grassroots programmes and recently started Pune FC Academies to foster talent
- Leading club in terms of fan engagement and organizes travel for fans to travel for away games





SUCCESS OF THE ISL



26% ↑

Increase in viewership from
Season 2 to Season 3



1.86 Million

In-stadium attendance (2016)



429 Million

TV viewership for Season 3



27,000

Average attendance
(only below Premier League,
Bundesliga and La Liga)



101 Million

Rural viewership

Higher online
viewership than

FIFA WC

in India



THE LIST OF
ALL ITALIAN
PLAYERS
 TO FEATURE IN THE ISL

PLAYER NAME	CLUB REPRESENTED	YEAR
Maurizio Peluso	Chennaiyin	2016-
Alessandro Del Piero	Delhi Dynamos	2014
Alessandro Potenza	Chennaiyin	2015
Alessandro Nesta	Chennaiyin	2014
Bruno Cirillo	Pune City	2014
Daniele Magliocchetti*	Pune City	2014
Davide Colomba	Pune City	2014
Davide Succi	Chennaiyin	2016-
Emanuele Belardi	Pune City	2014
Francesco Franzese	Chennaiyin	2015-
Manuele Blasi**	Chennaiyin	2014
Marco Materazzi	Chennaiyin	2014

** Former AS Roma Player

* Former AS Roma Youth Player

2.3 I-LEAGUE



Overview:

In 1996, the first domestic league was started in India known as the National Football League. After nearly a decade, the league was deemed a failure and restructured to form what we know today as the I-League.

The I-League is India's primary professional league for men's association football clubs. Prior to the emergence of the ISL, the I-League was considered as the highest level of club football in India. It is governed under the aegis of the AIFF.

Historically, the most successful clubs represent some of the iconic brands in Indian sports – Mohan Bagan, East Bengal and Dempo. These clubs are synonymous with the history of Indian football and enjoy a vast local fan base in their respective cities of Kolkata and Panjim.



Status:

The AIFF grants direct entry to the I-League on an open tender basis to those clubs who meet the minimum requirements such as:

- Stadium building
- Company registration
- Setting up of academies
- Ownership: High net worth (~ \$70 million)



2.4 I-LEAGUE 2



Overview:

The I-League 2 is the second division of Indian football introduced in 2008 as part of the expansion and restructuring of the league system. There is promotion and relegation every year between the I-League and I-League 2. From 2008-11, the title sponsor of the league was ONGC, which helped establish the league during its formative years.

From 2015-16 season, the matches are played on a home-and-away basis, with preliminary rounds played in a conference system with teams divided into Eastern and Western conferences. The top 3 teams from each conference qualify for the final round of the league. The league is slowly expanding its reach and recently introduced division 2 qualifiers for those teams nominated each year by their respective State and District Associations.



Other club competitions:

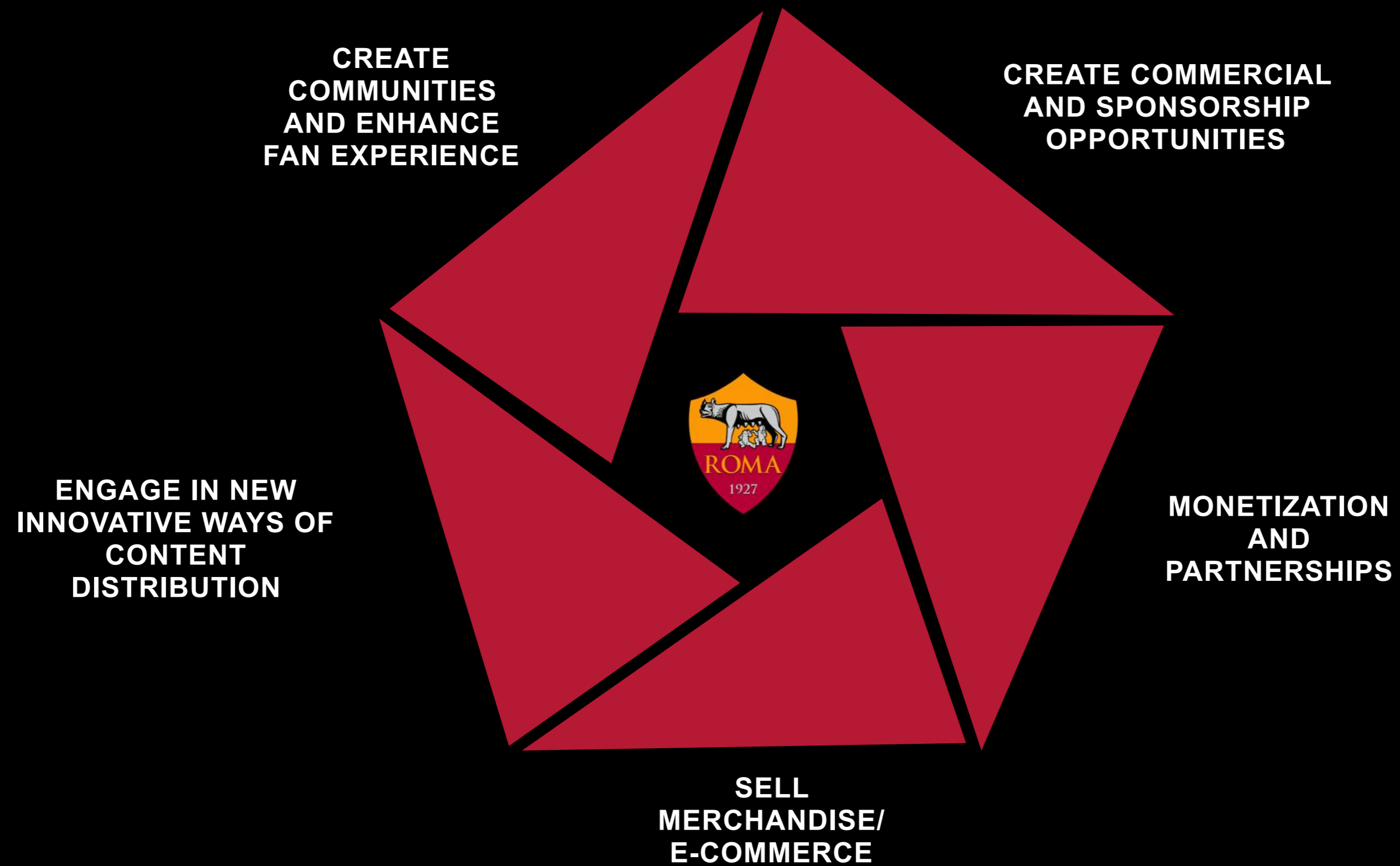
- Federation Cup - An open system where teams from the lower leagues compete with the clubs in I-League on a knockout basis
- Durand Cup - Army and civil services tournament
- Santosh Trophy - Inter state football tournament
- Calcutta Football League - Intra City league

Youth club competitions:

- Coca-Cola Cup
- Subroto Cup



B1. AS ROMA: OBJECTIVES AND ENTRY INTO INDIA



OVERVIEW

To leverage all assets available in the entertainment landscape to establish and grow AS Roma presence in India with the goal of not just acquiring fans but to showcase the beautiful game from the heart of Italy

1.1 OBJECTIVES BREAKDOWN



- 1 Stay closer to the fans
- 2 Build a voice – enhance visibility and presence in India
- 3 Establish and strengthen relationships with Indian brands and properties
- 4 Increase AS Roma brand recognition and activation
- 5 Reach marketing and commercial deals locally in strategic markets
- 6 Increase recognition of all Italian clubs
- 7 Build and engage a strong network of AS Roma fans across India
- 8 Share knowledge and exchange experiences



1.2 AS ROMA: KEY FOCUS POINTS

It is proposed that AS Roma adopts a three pronged approach to achieve its objectives in India

1

BRAND AWARENESS

- Visibility and reach
- Experiential connect and engagement

2

PARTENSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Establish relationships with strategic partners
- Growing audiences through social media

3

CREATING COMMERCIAL ASSETS

- Partnering with existing footballing projects and brands
- Creating new commercial engagements and assets

C1. PROPOSED PROJECTS



It is proposed that AS Roma follows a strategic approach aimed towards achieving its desired goals. The following section attempts to introduce key projects and initiatives, which are possible for AS Roma to undertake over the course of 18 months. Each project has been briefly explained, followed by a few suggested routes to execute them. It has also been indicated which objectives each project seeks to accomplish and the estimated timeline for the same

1.1 BRANDING AND AWARENESS



THE OVERVIEW

Introduce Italian Serie A and AS Roma to a wider audience by creating initiatives that enhance visibility and reach, as well as creating a direct connect with existing and potential fans of the league and the sport as a whole in India

Increase the presence and visibility of brand AS Roma by creating avenues for mass reach and instant recall value

VISIBILITY AND REACH

Create a dedicated digital presence with India-centric content

Appointing AS Roma brand ambassador/lead in India

Developing strategic media partnerships and thought leadership

Engaging with customers and fans of football in India through interactive activities that enable them to experience football through Italian Serie A and AS Roma

EXPERIENTIAL CONNECT AND ENGAGEMENT

Conducting local activations and events such as match screenings, 5-a-side tournaments

Organizing marquee calendar events such as player visits and mini-tours

Aligning with technical and entertainment based football properties and influencers



1.2 BUILDING COMMUNITIES: MATCH SCREENINGS

PROGRAMME DETAILS

Prominent AS Roma matches (derbies) and highly contested matches in competitions such as the Champions League will be showcased to the Indian fans and wider audience through large format, experiential events. The screenings will be executed in two parts: Local matches (games vs Lazio, Milan, Inter and Napoli) and European matches (UCL, UEL etc.)

Objectives

- (i) To create a strong engagement platform with existing and potential football fans, and generate a wider buzz and interest around the club and the Italian league
- (ii) Inspire and support future community-driven initiatives by empowering local brand ambassadors and community leaders across India
- (iii) Establish relationships with various commercial and strategic partners

KEY HIGHLIGHTS	KEY OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fan park like atmosphere including large screens for viewing and interactive and engaging activities for the fans• Free entry to ensure greater attendance• Each screening attended by Roma ambassador to create PR and drive digital engagements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish properties/events that fans and media look forward to• Provide a platform to leverage the football content that is the Italian Serie A• Build affinity towards AS Roma, other Italian Serie A teams and the league as a whole

EXECUTION

- Aim to conduct the first large screening (Derby games) in 2 cities: Delhi and Mumbai and at least one other game in 2 new cities: Bangalore and Kolkata

1.2 BUILDING COMMUNITIES: MATCH SCREENINGS



PROGRAMME DETAILS

Partner with Italian restaurants and pubs in cities such as Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata to establish AS Roma hubs that are officially recognized by the club. With the goal of screening weekly games and presenting a platform for fans to meet and enjoy the game together will foster the growth and enhance brand awareness in football centric cities.

Objectives (short-term)

- (i) To tie up with authentic Italian restaurants as a weekly screening partner
- (ii) Offer logistic and knowledge support – AS Roma merchandise and utilities to get started
- (iii) Engage with local communities - AS Roma blood drives, charity service

Objectives (long-term)

- (i) Offer 'free' membership to fans
- (ii) Create and sell India-specific merchandise
- (iii) Discounted travel package to AS Roma Fan Club members to visit Rome and watch 1 game

KEY HIGHLIGHTS	KEY OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekly turnout to build awareness across football hubs within cities in India• Provide a platform to connect with AS Roma fans and other football fans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interest in Italian football as a whole• Brand visibility and merchandise sales• Increase in social following and memberships

EXECUTION

- Identify mid-budget Italian restaurants so as to cater to a wider audience in football-centric cities such as Bangalore, Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata
- Offer free merchandise and other goodies as a kick-starter pack

1.3 COMMERCIAL: FOOTBALL TOURNAMENTS



PROGRAMME DETAILS

AS Roma will host 5-a-side football tournament for fans across multiple cities (once a year, preferably over the summer) in association with Premier Futsal League. This is expected to open doors to sponsorship with Indian brands as the tournament will feature two best teams from 8 cities to fight it out for national championship.

Objectives

- (i) To promote football by targeting two categories – youth and ‘open age’ football fans
- (ii) Tie up with local regional partners and agencies to promote the tournament and cover logistic costs
- (iii) To connect fans and AS Roma players (current/former)
- (iv) Create a buzz around AS Roma’s India initiatives and educate fans about local screenings and fan memberships within their cities and how they can be involved in working with the club in ‘niche’ ways (i.e. content sharing, community drives and initiatives etc)

Bonus activation

- (i) Winner of the national tournament vs AS Roma 5-a-side youth/former/current players/coaches & trainers

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Enhance commercial partnerships
- Connect with fans and increase visibility across major footballing cities in India
- Drive engagement and be etched in memories of fans through player interactions

KEY OUTCOMES

- AS Roma commercial asset in India
- Increased brand awareness and visibility through local news coverage and media
- Platform for Indian brands to enter Italian markets and engage with football fans

EXECUTION

- Shortlist 8 cities and venues in each of those, to host the ‘invitation only’ tournament under two age categories – open age and U-15
- Regional clubs to nominate one team for the preliminary round of 32 in each city
- Winners and runners-up to fight for national championship in Mumbai/Bangalore (depending on sponsorship)

1.4 AS ROMA DIGITAL PLATFORM



PROGRAMME DETAILS

AS Roma digital project entails creating various India-specific social media content across various channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat etc.). These platforms will push content created from the India market (through programmes, activations and digital) along with packaging Italian football in way that is best suited to the Indian market

Objectives

- (i) To grow the Indian audience on AS Roma's social media and create engagement between the audience and the club. This will also help create excitement around on-site activations and larger AS Roma related events in India
- (ii) Roma India Star of the week/month: Recognize and feature youth players every week/month through partnerships with local academies and clubs in India
- (iii) Leverage existing and AS Roma created commercial assets, ISL, I-League, regional clubs, fan clubs and other partnerships to create fan-specific content to drive brand awareness and merchandise sales.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The platform will cover AS Roma match-day, training, behind the scenes and India-specific content
- All India on-site/ground activations and events will be covered including creation of indigenous fan content
- Enhance local partnerships and presence

KEY OUTCOMES

- Social platforms to help bring the fans closer to the club and get critical data in terms of fan behavior, spending habits and preferences etc.
- Strengthened presence among local football hubs and fan clubs

EXECUTION

- India specific content i.e. voices, names and faces that fans can relate to – Bollywood, television, celebrities, local viral content and brands
- Content delivery in both English and Hindi to cater to a wider audience

1.5 AS ROMA COMMUNICATION AND PR



PROGRAMME DETAILS

A comprehensive PR and Communication plan is critical to highlight all the different projects and initiatives that AS Roma plans to deliver in India along with key messaging that needs to be delivered from Italy. It is important to have an ongoing relationship with the media to ensure regular communication is sent out to the Indian mainstream media.

Objectives (Three fold)

- (i) Building Awareness: Regular information flow to the media on AS Roma in order to stay in the news
- (ii) Building Preference: Creating deeper and innovative engagements with new media business
- (iii) Building Participation: Creating local events and activations involving media (access)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The relationship with media will be maintained by delivering stories, providing access to key personnel, media trips etc.
- The coverage to be across news wires, English and Hindi dailies, electronic and online media

KEY OUTCOMES

- A year-round coverage of AS Roma across India's leading media and digital outlets
- Key events and derbies to receive most coverage and engagement from media so as to create buzz

EXECUTION

- Establish relationships with digital platforms such as Sportskeeda (India's most popular sports publication), ESPN India, Star Sports and Sportstar, as well as traditional media houses such as NDTV, CNN IBN and Republic TV
- Collaborate with influencers and football teams in exchange for knowledge, merchandise and non-cash based incentives to promote the club

1.6 PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS



THE OVERVIEW

- Build relationships with the AIFF and other footballing brands, sports-technology startups, media houses and non-profit organizations working in the development of football
- Share knowledge on areas such as fan engagement, audience development, new media adoption etc.

Increase presence through a series of well-developed and calendar of events helping other clubs and leagues across India to emulate AS Roma's digital strategy

KNOWLEDGE SHARE

Quarterly workshops around best practices from the world of football and sports

Collaborate with the AIFF and its properties to grow fan base through digital media in India

Increase the recognition level for all Italian clubs and Serie A

Collaborate with different Indian sports teams and celebrities

1.7 PARTNERSHIPS: FIORENTINA + CRICKET



PROGRAMME DETAILS

ACF Fiorentina: Conducting knowledge sharing sessions and workshops with ACF Fiorentina-owned Pune City FC and other ISL teams on audience development and social engagement on semi-annual basis. These relationships and knowledge sharing sessions will help other clubs understand and learn from the best in the business, in turn AS Roma and team can benefit from understanding the Indian football market

Cricket: Piggyback on cricket and showcasing support for India's most popular sport (through the Indian Premier League) to further drive brand recognition and potentially attract sports fans to the AS Roma brand. This approach can be adopted to several other popular sports as well such as Kabaddi, Hockey, Tennis and Badminton.

Objectives

- (i) Enhance brand awareness and showcase support for Indian sports
- (ii) Build a presence by leveraging all sporting channels

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- AS Roma brand to be visible during the ISL, IPL, IBL, ITPL and Hockey seasons
- Penetration into mainstream Indian sports
- Establishing relationships with key people across various sports properties

KEY OUTCOMES

- Associating with different sports leagues and clubs will lead to brand ambassadors and goodwill

1.8 AS ROMA AMBASSADOR PROGRAM



PROGRAMME DETAILS

In India, Bollywood and cricket are two most important properties of interest to people. Many ISL clubs are co-owned by A-list cricketers and Bollywood actors. The idea is to get a passionate football follower as the brand ambassador of AS Roma free of cost

Objectives

- (i) To provide audience a recognizable face in India – someone who can represent the league and best connect with the fans
- (ii) The ambassador will also leverage his/her/their fan-base digitally to push out key messaging that AS Roma wants to communicate with its fans and football enthusiasts in India

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The celebrity to be signed as the official ambassador of AS Roma in India
- No endorsement fee to be charged by the celebrity in order to have a positive relationship with the club
- AS Roma to leverage its prestige, non-cash based perks and other incentives to secure the deal

KEY OUTCOMES

- Secure one of the most popular youth icon/brand to endorse AS Roma
- Digital fans of the celebrity to be activated and added to the fan base of AS Roma to increase reach in India

1.9 AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME EXAMPLE: AIB



OVERVIEW

No one knows how to deliver viral content better than the Indian media company— All India Bakchod (AIB). The brand has built a loyal fan following among the Indian youth. The range of content varies from Bollywood to original shows to podcasts to promoting international properties.

AIB is primarily a 4-member standup comedy team who act as the face of the brand delivering content in the form of audio, video and text across verticals such as satire, comedy and awareness.

The NBA recently tied up with AIB to enhance brand awareness and visibility of its work in India.

They have previously also worked to promote Indian Premier League (Cricket) and Pro Kabaddi League (Kabaddi) to regional audiences.

Objectives

- Authenticity, staying true to the AS Roma brand
- Brand awareness
- Recognition (viral content)
- Engaging fans



**ALL INDIA
BAKCHOD**

1.9 WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT AIB



MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

- AIB have previously worked with brands such as the NBA, Amazon India, Amazon Prime, Prime Video, Netflix India among other Indian brands

Source: IIDE Case Study

DEMOGRAPHICS AND PSYCHOGRAPHICS

- 82.13% of their audience is between the ages of 18-34 years
- 80.59% of their audience is male with 14.94% also interested in sports

Source: api.deep.social

CONTENT

- Unique, intelligent, funny and making a point
- Content ranges from videos, to interviews, to podcasts, to satirical takes, to blogs
- **They are HUGE soccer fans!**

SOCIAL MEDIA

- AIB have a combined following of over 15 million across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube
- 3-4 videos uploads per month with an avg of 11M video views
- 41,800¹ average engagements (likes/comments) on Instagram

Source: api.deep.social



1.10 COLLABORATION WITH AIB



ACTIVATIONS

- FIFA 18 playoffs between ex-players or current players and AIB members
- AIB to host AS Roma derby match screening
- Sport jerseys and other AS Roma merchandise
- Arrange and record stadium visit (Stadio Olimpico)
- Opportunity to start India's first official sports Podcast show with guest players, coaches, trainers
- Behind-the-scenes with Roma players. Exclusive never seen before content featuring personal lives, stories about India, tasting Indian food, trying out Indian traditional clothing etc



1.11 MEDIA EXPOSURE TRIPS



PROGRAMME DETAILS

AS Roma to organize official trips for key Indian media professionals and the ambassador to travel to Rome to get a first-hand experience of the club, its culture, the league and other aspects related to it. Key influencers and media professionals will be carefully identified and invited for the trip with the idea of building strong relationships and enable a constant flow of value based content in India

Objectives

- (i) To provide audience recognizable faces in India – people who can represent the league and best connect with the fans
- (ii) The ambassadors will also leverage his/her/their fan-base digitally to push out key messaging that AS Roma wants to communicate with its fans and football enthusiasts in the Indian market

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The group shall consist of leading sports and business journalists from TV, digital and print media
- The short trip would consist of two AS Roma matches, seminars, and sessions with AS Roma digital and PR departments
- AS Roma to provide access to current and former players for interviews and shoot content

KEY OUTCOMES

- Establish strong relationships with media and key influencers in the Indian media industry
- Enable a better understanding of the team and league by Indian media (to be passed on to the fans to value based coverage)
- Enable the creation and promotion of specialized content to generate interest among a wider community in India

1.12 AS ROMA TECHNOLOGY HACKATHON



PROGRAMME DETAILS

Bangalore is considered to be the Silicon Valley of Asia and known for its strong engineering foundation. The city boasts of several big tech-companies with employees who are avid football fans. AS Roma hackathon will allow developers to come up with unique solutions to achieve objectives in the Indian market – fan engagement, content delivery, AS Roma related games etc.

Objectives

- (i) To collaborate with best technology startups and developers to achieve goals in India
- (ii) Open doors to tech-partnerships and sponsorships in India and Italy
- (iii) Tap into a unique community of football fans within the tech-industry
- (iv) Create a buzz around sports-tech in the country

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- 2-day hackathon with a technology partner such as Microsoft, Google, Amazon
- Enhance fan experience – providing winning team an opportunity to watch an AS Roma match in Rome

KEY OUTCOMES

- Establish strong relationships Indian Tech industry
- Create a platform for collaboration with Indian startups working in the sports-tech space
- Enhanced visibility from a B2B and partnerships perspective

C1.2 AS ROMA PROGRAMMES SUMMARY



PROJECT	PURPOSE	AS ROMA'S OBJECTIVES
1. MATCH SCREENINGS	Branding Commercial	Building communities and brand recognition
2. FAN CLUBS & MEMBERSHIPS	Branding Community	Visibility, brand affinity and exposure
3. DIGITAL PLATFORM	Brand building Content Distribution	Closer to the fans Brand voice
4. PR & COMMUNICATION	Brand building Content Distribution	Visibility and presence
5. FIORENTINA + CRICKET	Commercial Partnerships	Brand recognition
6. AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME	Brand building Partnerships Assets	Marketing closer to fans brand recognition
7. REVENUE STRATEGIES	Brand building Partnerships	Marketing and commercial deal
8. MEDIA EXPOSURE TRIPS	Brand building Partnerships	Increase club recognition
9. TECHNOLOGY HACKATHON	Innovation Partnerships Assets	Knowledge share and marketing
10. WORKSHOPS	Knowledge sharing Partnerships	Brand development
11. 5-A-SIDE TOURNAMENTS	Community Content	Brand development Exposure

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