



INCREASING GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS



An analysis of the talent development
ecosystem in Iceland



FIFA



FOREWORD

Dear friends,

My vision for FIFA in the coming years is to make football truly global. A major part of this is to pave the way to a landscape in which 50 national teams and 50 clubs, men and women, around the globe can genuinely compete for the title of world champions. This is easy enough to propose, but achieving it takes commitment.

FIFA's Talent Development Programme is a practical expression of that commitment. It is also a truly ground-breaking initiative and the very first of its kind globally. Over the course of the last year, a team of the world's foremost technical experts has conducted a comprehensive assessment of your member association, as well a selection of nominated academies, to gather detailed data about the structures and resources used to develop your young talents.

That data has now been compiled to produce this in-depth, country-specific report to present an overview of your country's ecosystem in which your young footballers are developed. In this report, you will find details on global benchmarks, along with a series of recommendations.

This country-specific report is part of our commitment, not only to you and your association, but to all talented players and stakeholders across your country.

We have referred to the talent development "ecosystem" precisely because everything is connected in our sport. We are all connected. Giving every talent a chance requires everyone to play their part. Through carefully considered recommendations, this report shows how each of your stakeholders can contribute to a richer talent development ecosystem.

The first-ever 48-team FIFA World Cup and the first-ever 32-team FIFA Women's World Cup are now in sight, and we want to see the strongest-possible competition for the crown of world champions. With the guidance of these findings, we hope and believe you will have a better chance of making FIFA's global tournaments even more spectacular.

Yours in football,

Gianni Infantino

FIFA President

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This individual report on your member association's high-performance ecosystem is part of a global analysis carried out in 2020. It spotlights various important areas on and off the pitch, compares them to global benchmarks, and gives specific recommendations on how to improve potential issues. The report itself is divided up into six main chapters, which are presented and summarised below.



1. Management and resources

The Technical Division, which is part of International Football, employs a Technical Director, who oversees the national teams, talent ID and talent development. The KSI works towards strategic objectives in collaboration with clubs and other relevant stakeholders. The MA's LTPD strategy encompasses men's and women's football from grassroots to the senior national teams. The KSI, which is a small organisation, is well managed. This sound management is reflected in the performances of both the men's and women's national teams.



2. National teams

The KSI strategic plan aims to develop all national teams. Playing opportunities for all youth national teams mainly depend on results in European championships. Depending on performance, the number can vary from year to year, which does not guarantee players enough experience. The strategic plan highlights the importance of having a solid foundation in place. The KSI continues to enhance the club environment and to further develop the strong grassroots programme. The MA is confident that it will accomplish the targets for the national teams by following the strategic plan.



3. Domestic competitions

The KSI's Competition Department is responsible for all competitions across all regions in Iceland, from the top tiers (men's and women's) all the way down to U-12 youth competitions. Clubs are responsible for younger age groups. All players at all levels have enough appropriate playing opportunities, guided by qualified youth coaches. This is a major strength. Youth leagues are constantly under review to optimise player development and informal street football activities are also promoted. A nationwide mini-pitch project strategically close to schools was an important milestone for player development.



4. Talent development and identification

The clubs are key stakeholders within talent development, with a developmental environment created based on the MA's guidelines. The KSI Talent Programme is the MA's main and most efficient talent ID structure. It caters for the top U-13 and U-14 boys and girls across all regions and is the basis for naming the U-15 national teams. The transition from junior to senior football is an area to be addressed, particularly for men. The Talent Programme is one of the MA's strengths. The core elements of the complete talent pathway – identification, high-quality training and enough playing opportunities – are all taken care of.



5. Academies

The academy pathway is quite straightforward. Every academy provides enough training opportunities (four or five times a week) and has a well-balanced player-to-coach ratio. Having access to enough meaningful games is a major challenge. The technical leadership of the academies gives coaches freedom to approach player development as they see fit. A clearly defined football blueprint informing coaches where to focus in the different age groups does not exist and nor does a systematic process for evaluating player performance and progression.



6. Education

In line with the KSI's LTPD strategy, the core element of the education strategy is having qualified coaches to educate the younger age groups. The number of accredited coaches is relatively high in Iceland. As a leader in gender equality within the football industry, the KSI also ensures there are opportunities for female coaches. The consistency of courses, the emphasis on earmarking the best coaches for the younger age groups and the special attention devoted to coaching children are strengths of the education system.

General characteristics

FIFA World Ranking

♂ **46**

♀ **16**

10 out of 10 FIFA Forward criteria fulfilled

Population

million people

0.4

rank

171

GDP per capita

thousand USD

57.2

rank

8

Professional male players in Top 30 leagues

number of players

31

rank

51

Management and resources

2 year(s) Tenure of the current technical director

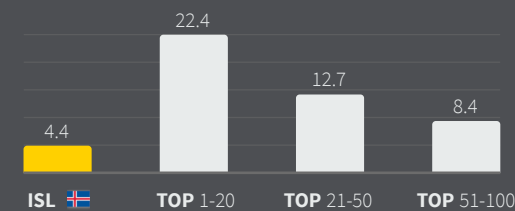
Existence of a written national playing philosophy

TOP 1-20 **75%** ISL

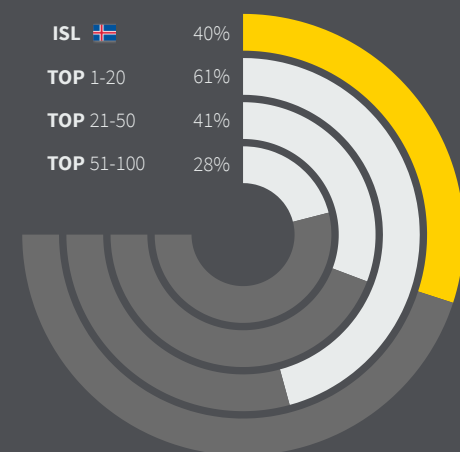
TOP 21-50 **55%**

TOP 51-100 **58%**

Human resourcing of the technical division (in full-time equivalents)

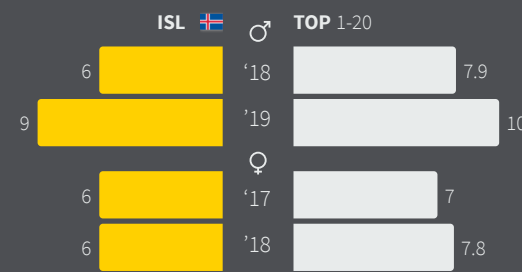


Percentage of senior and youth national team head and assistant coaches holding a pro licence

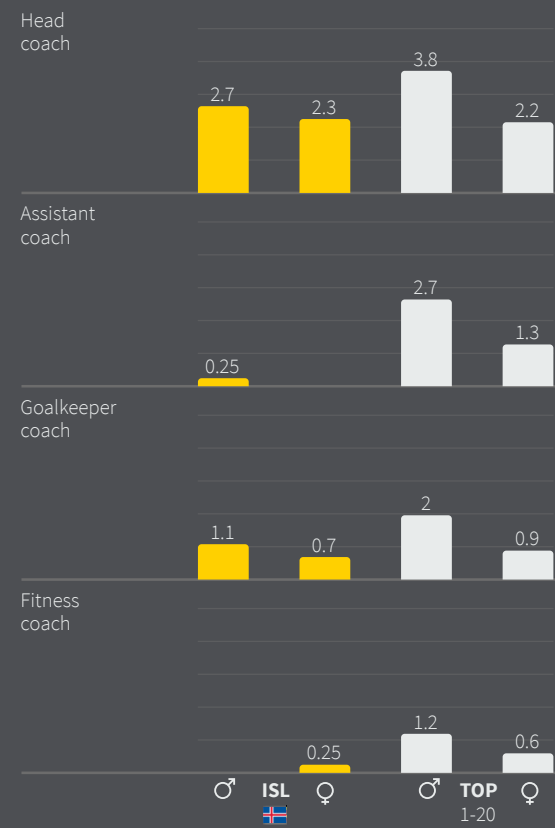


National teams

Number of official matches played by your U-16/ U-17 youth national teams compared to the Top 20

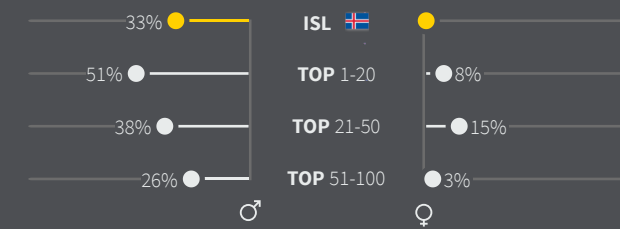


Number of different coaches dedicated to youth national teams (in full-time equivalents)

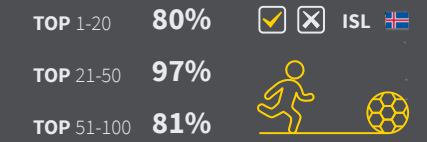


Domestic competitions

Percentage of professional teams in the first three tiers of the domestic competitions

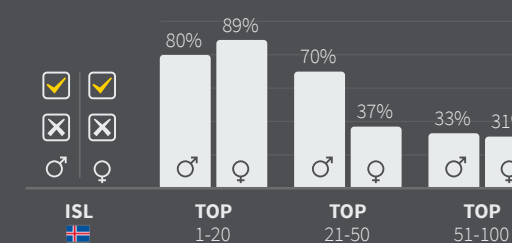


Grassroots competitions are part of the overall strategy for long-term player development.

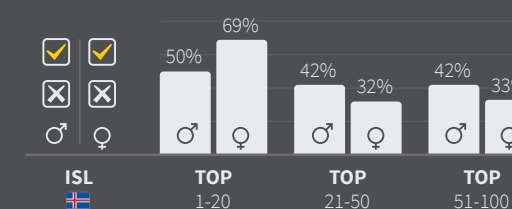


Talent development and identification

Existence of a talent identification system



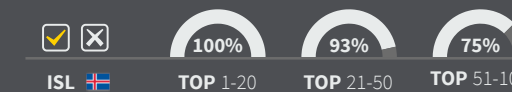
Existence of a specific strategy for the transition of players from junior to senior level



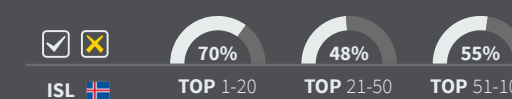
Education

No. of active licensed coaches **600**

Provision of specific education for coach educators

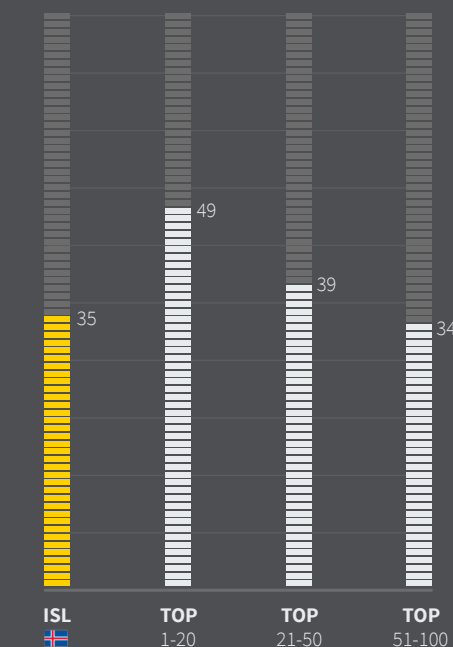


The national football philosophy is reflected in the coach education programme

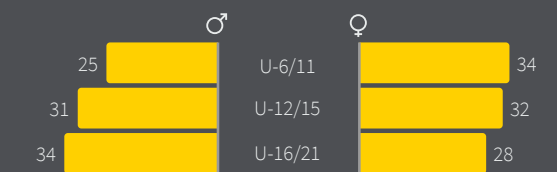


Academies

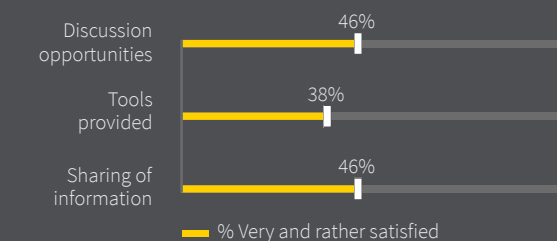
Number of international quality standards fulfilled by leading academies



Average number of games played by your leading academies per season



Satisfaction of the academies with the following MA-programs and services



INTRODUCTION

The development of talent enables each MA to reach its full potential.

At present, not all talents get a chance.

It is clear that much more can and needs to be done to make football truly global at the highest level. At the heart of this is a dedicated approach to talent development. Long-term commitment in this area leads to structural results. The forthcoming chapters show that talent development has a positive impact upon later success, both domestically and internationally. A concerted effort from all stakeholders (FIFA, confederations, associations, leagues and clubs) to influence the key factors of talent development could lead to a much-needed higher competitive balance – globally.

FIFA exists to govern the game, organise competitions and promote the development of football.

FIFA is principally responsible for organising international competitions that are fit for every purpose. Beyond its own tournaments, FIFA is duty-bound to support global football in partnership with the six confederations and its 211 member associations (MAs). As stated in [The Vision 2020-2023](#), one of FIFA's main objectives is to increase global competitiveness. Optimising their talent development schemes should ultimately reduce the gap between countries. FIFA's approach to achieving this objective is to:

- 1 **organise competitions that are fit for every purpose;**
- 2 **provide high-performance support programmes; and**
- 3 **enhance educational frameworks and share knowledge.**

“In many countries, the focus of the association is mainly on the senior national team, but this national team is always the product of football development across the country. Sustainable development is a long-term approach and requires dedication, confidence and patience.”

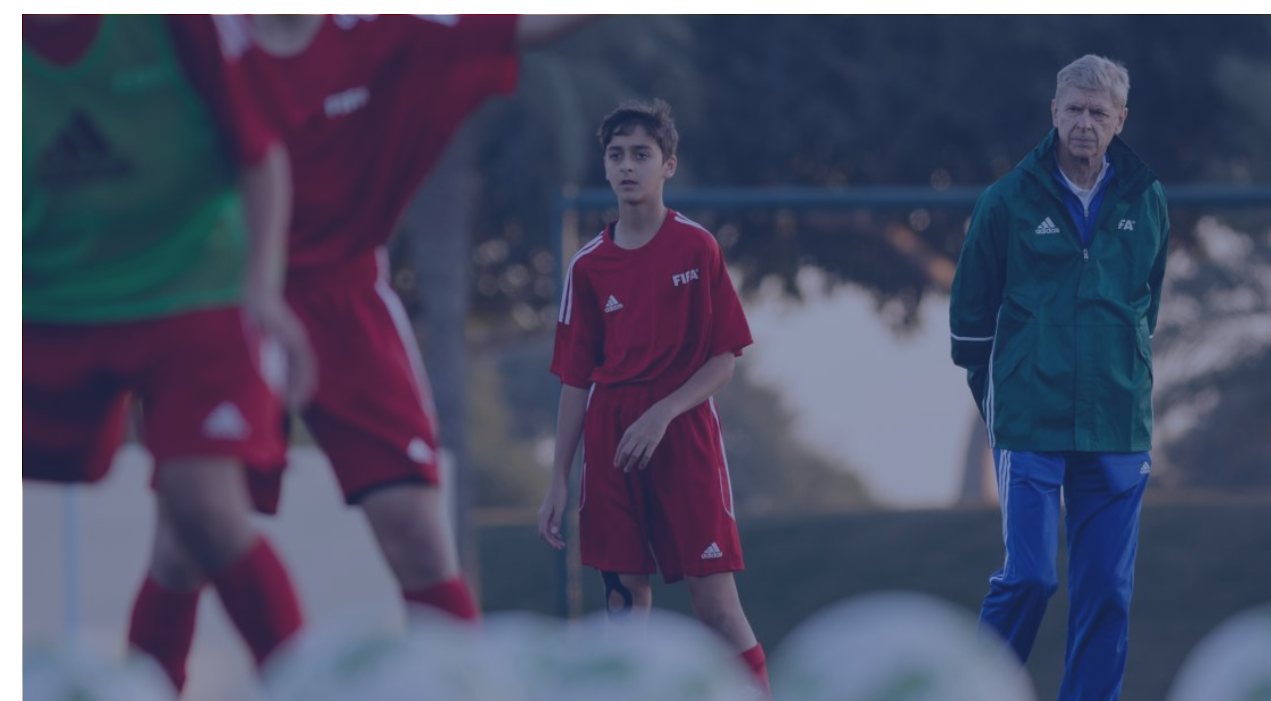
Arsène Wenger - FIFA Chief of Global Football Development

In support of this, the FIFA Talent Development Programme, led by Arsène Wenger, was launched in 2020 to ensure that every talented player gets a chance. To this end, FIFA set up a team of experts from all parts of the world to build relationships with MAs with a view to gaining a clear understanding of their men's and women's talent development ecosystem. The details of this global project are outlined below:

THE WHY - Awareness of the different talent development systems across the globe and the factors impacting the player pathway and international success.

THE WHAT - The link between a country's geopolitical status and its talent development ecosystem, and the impact on football performance.

THE HOW - The design of the ecosystem analysis and the method through which it was delivered to ensure all data collected was valid and reliable.



1. The why

We want to make football truly global.

Gianni Infantino - FIFA President

As time passes, and with the increase in the sport's exposure due to the plethora of viewing methods, the world of football is attracting more and more attention globally. An indication of this was the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™, which was attended by over three million fans and seen by a wing 3.6 billion viewers, making it the most-watched football event of all time.

With the millions of male and female footballers across the globe, plus the innumerable children dreaming of lifting the World Cup, it is clear that FIFA, the six confederations and the 211 MAs must all work together to drive the continuous development of both men's and women's football, and to ensure that games remain exciting.

Football development lies at the heart of FIFA's overarching mission. To truly impact the sport's development, there must be an understanding of the current global landscape. As such, there are four questions to examine around specific aspects of football growth:



Is there a competitive balance globally?



Are MAs reaching their full potential?



Are opportunities for players balanced across the globe?



Is women's football growing equally across the globe?



Competitive imbalance

When it comes to the standard of football, the disparity between different regions of the world has been steadily widening. FIFA intends to take concrete steps to bridge this gap, with the long-term ambition of enabling at least 50 national teams and 50 clubs around the globe to compete at the very highest level. It is clear from the data below that there is a marked imbalance, with European football dominant across international competitions.

Position	2018	2014	2010	2006
Champions	France	Germany	Spain	Italy
Runners-up	Croatia	Argentina	Netherlands	France
3rd place	Belgium	Netherlands	Germany	Germany
4th place	England	Brazil	Uruguay	Portugal

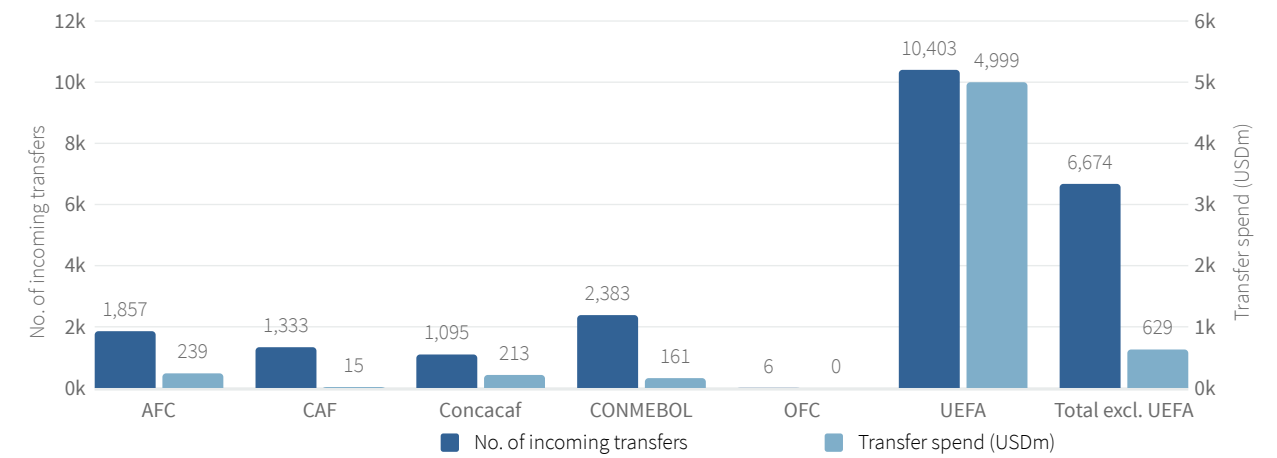
Illustration 1 | Semi-finalists in the last four editions of the FIFA World Cup™

0%

No country from outside of Europe and South America has qualified for the FIFA World Cup semi-finals since 2006

In 2020, UEFA clubs spent 456% more on transfer funds than their AFC, CONMEBOL, OFC, CAF and Concacaf counterparts combined.

Illustration 2



Transfer spend (USDm) and number of incoming players per confederation in 2020. Reference: FIFA Global Transfer Market Report 2020

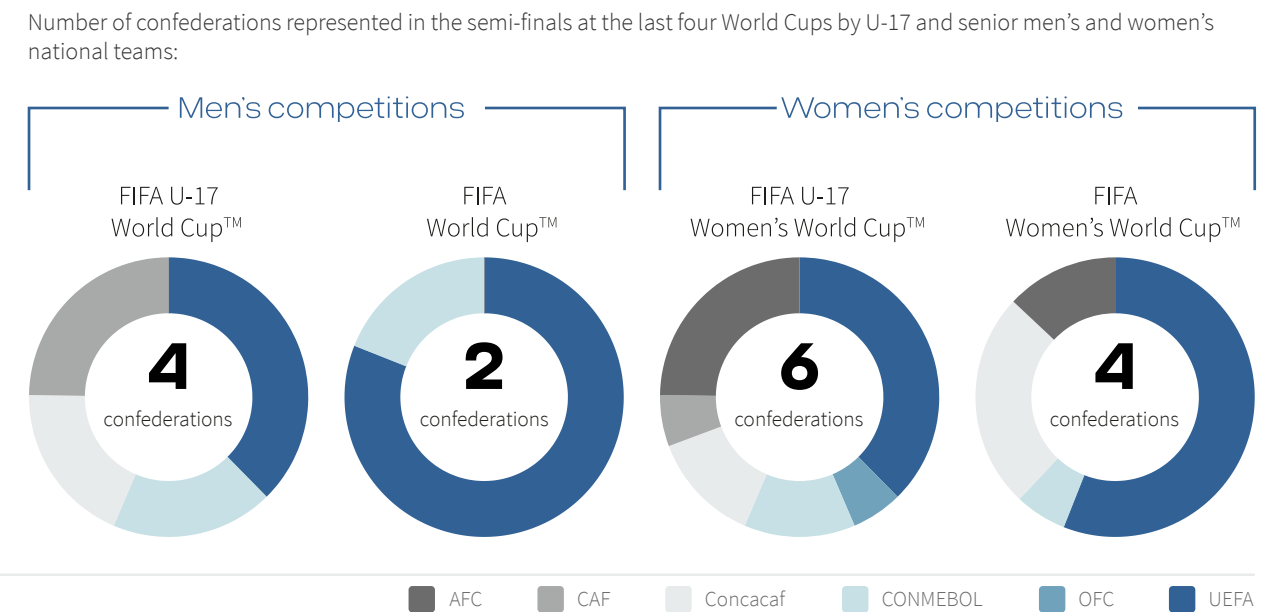
From 2010, there was a steady increase in the total number of international transfers, which peaked at 18,047 in 2019. However, following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting suspension of basic football activities across the world, that figure decreased by 5.4% – the first such decline in ten years. Although the number of transfers in 2020 was still higher than in 2018, this overall downward trend is a clear sign of the effects of the pandemic and an indication of the enormous financial strain being felt by MAs and their respective football structures across the globe.



Not all MAs reaching their full potential

For an MA to reach its full potential and maximise opportunities for future success, there must be an awareness of existing issues, and efforts must be made to support talented boys and girls in the country and develop a pathway to facilitate the step up to senior football. With so few nations able to manage this transition, what are the contributing factors? Are there barriers to entry hindering access to professional domestic competitions? Are senior-team resources limited? Is there strategic misalignment within the MA? Understanding such pitfalls will give countries the opportunity to realise their potential and grow the game in their region.

Illustration 3



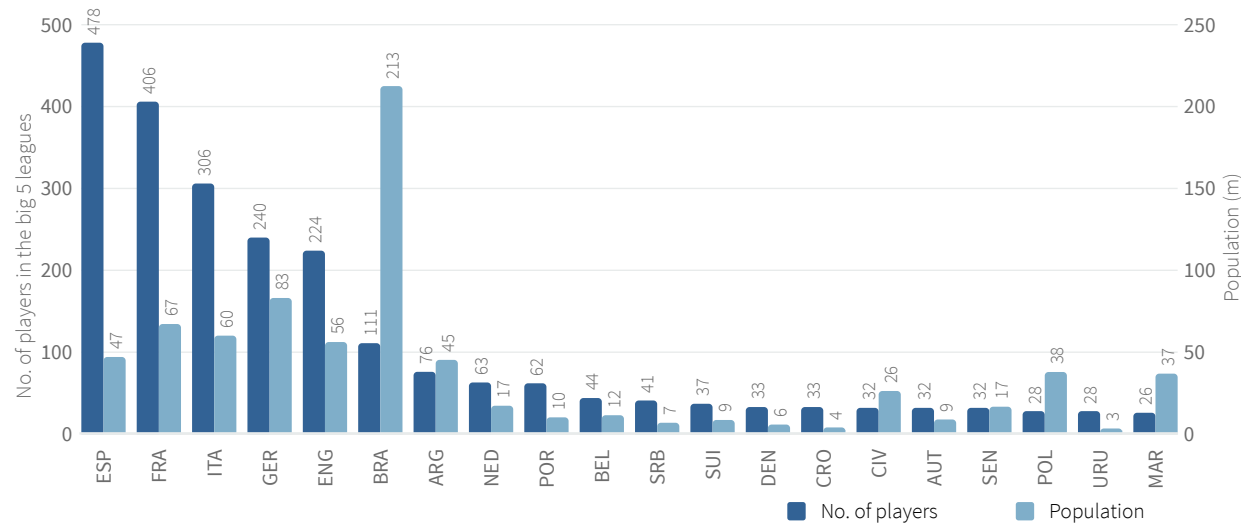


The imbalance of playing opportunities across the globe

The average age of a debutant in the Big 5 leagues (England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain) is 21.7 years [Source], with clubs in these competitions offering significantly fewer debuts than those in the next five championships in 2020 (2.8% v. 6.1%) [source]. This highlights the importance of having a pathway that supports regular exposure to competition from U-18 to U-23 level, and with such a small percentage of players coming through the academies, this is an area that requires attention. As shown in Illustration 4, Spanish footballers are the most popular across the Big 5 leagues, making up 16% of players across these leagues. The “Big 5” countries not only have the capacity to produce and keep domestic talent in their leagues but they can also attract best international talent from across the globe [source].

Spanish players dominate the Big 5 leagues, yet Spain has the smallest population of the top five countries.

Illustration 4

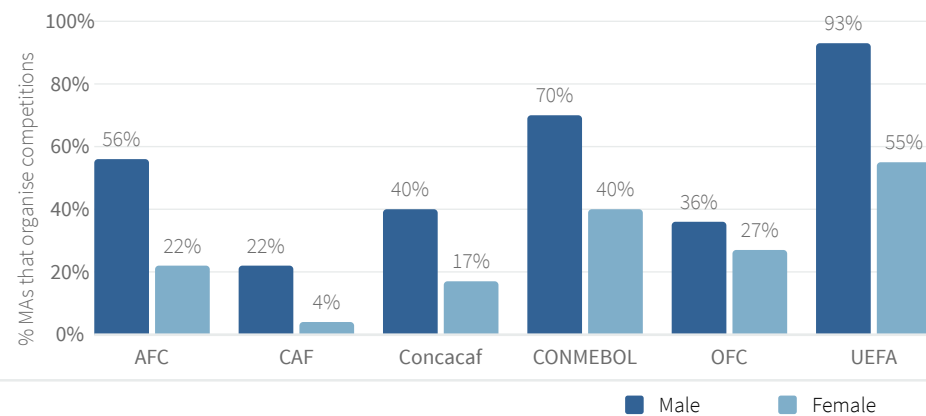


Sources: World Bank – DataBank. Office for National Statistics, National Records of Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency – population estimates. Nationalities of players in the Big 5 leagues in 2020/21 - www.FBref.com

When this dominance is put into perspective against the population of the players’ countries of origin, there is an apparent imbalance and disparity in the opportunities available for talented football players to reach the top leagues in the world. As illustrated below, the opportunities for young boys and girls to participate in organised competitions vary across the globe. There must be a drive to facilitate and work towards the objective of giving every talented player a chance. The absence of regular and consistent playing opportunities, both domestically and internationally, puts certain age groups and countries at a distinct disadvantage

There is a disparity in the opportunities available to talented football players.

Illustration 5



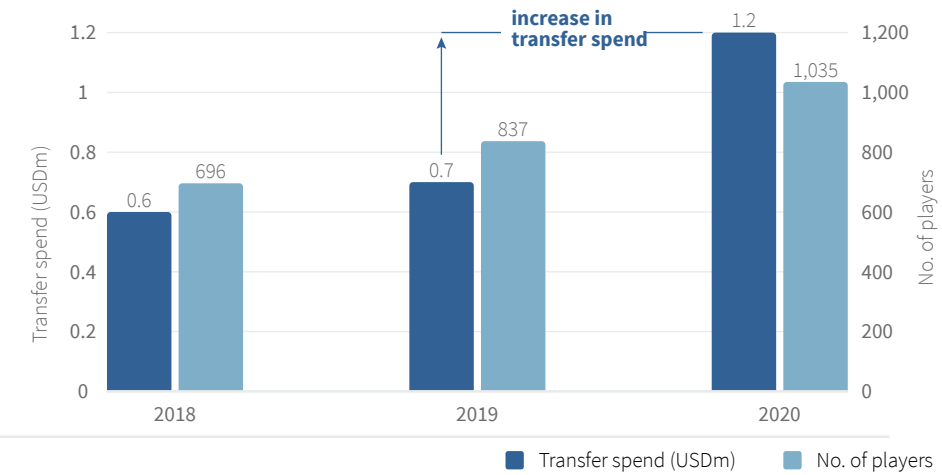
Percentage of member associations per confederation that organise boys’ or girls’ competitions in at least two age categories. Source: FIFA. Per the FIFA Forward Development Programme Regulations – Forward 2.0, article 6 paragraph 3b. (points v. and vi.)



The rapid growth of women’s football

Over recent years, there has been a meteoric rise in the visibility and popularity of women’s football, with over 13 million players now participating across the globe [source]. In the same vein, the FIFA Women’s World Cup 2019™ saw a 30% increase in the number of viewers, from 764 million to 993.5 million [source]. Despite this growth and FIFA doubling its investment between 2019 and 2022, there are clear gaps that need to be addressed at both domestic and national level across youth and senior football to ensure that every player gets a chance and that all MAs can achieve their full potential.

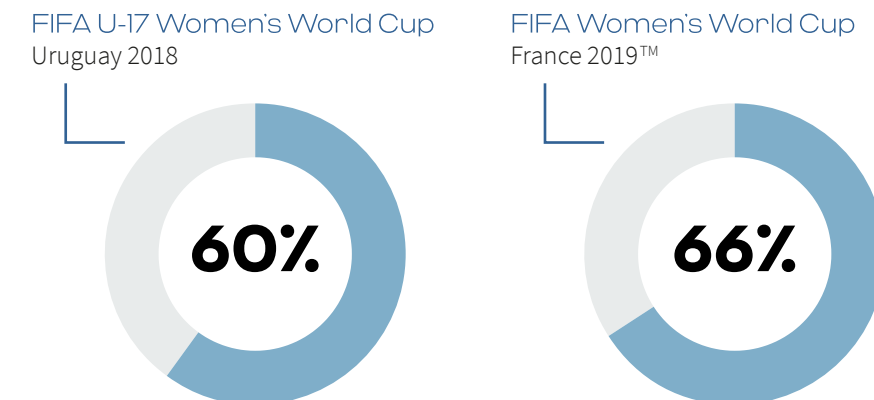
Illustration 6



The development of the women’s international transfer market: 2018 - 2020 Source: FIFA Global Transfer Market Report 2020

Despite the meteoric rise of women’s football globally, one out of three nations still does not have a women’s national team at either senior or junior level.

Illustration 7



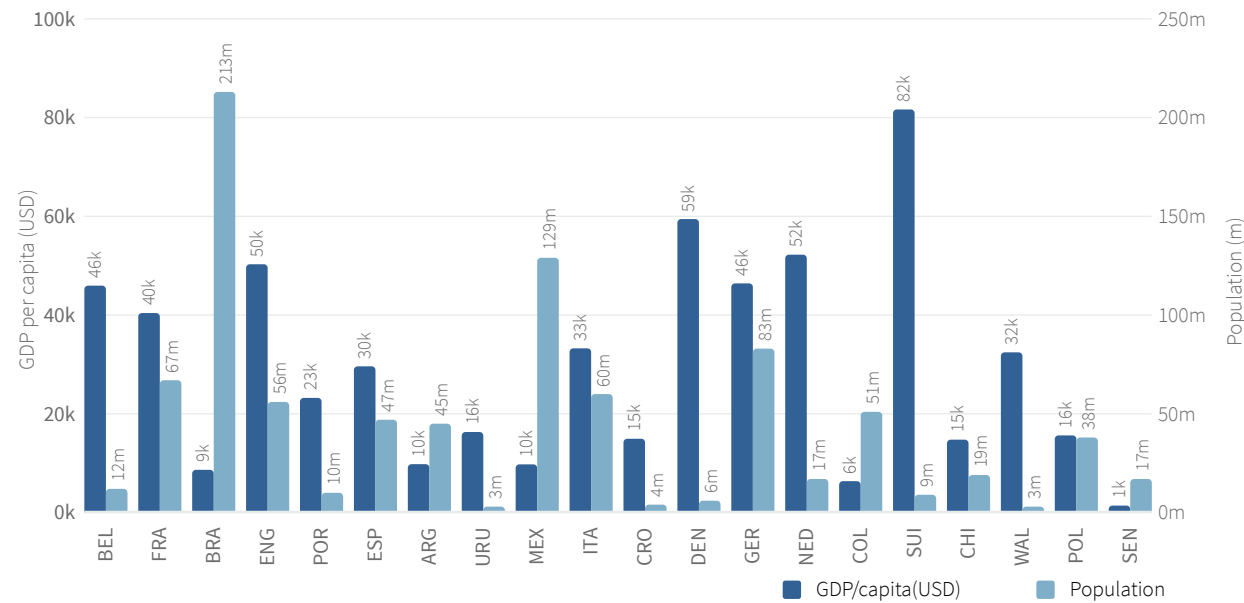
Comparison of the percentage of member associations that entered a team into the qualifying competitions for the FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup Uruguay 2018™ and the FIFA Women’s World Cup France 2019™. Source: FIFA Women’s Football Member Associations Survey Report 2019

2. The what

Money and population alone are not a predictor of international success – the development ecosystem is key.

International football success does not always depend on a country's characteristics in terms of GDP and population. Therefore, it is clear that we need to understand the talent development ecosystem that enables relatively small nations to compete at the pinnacle of international football. Such insight can also help to identify associations that are not reaching their full potential.

Illustration 8

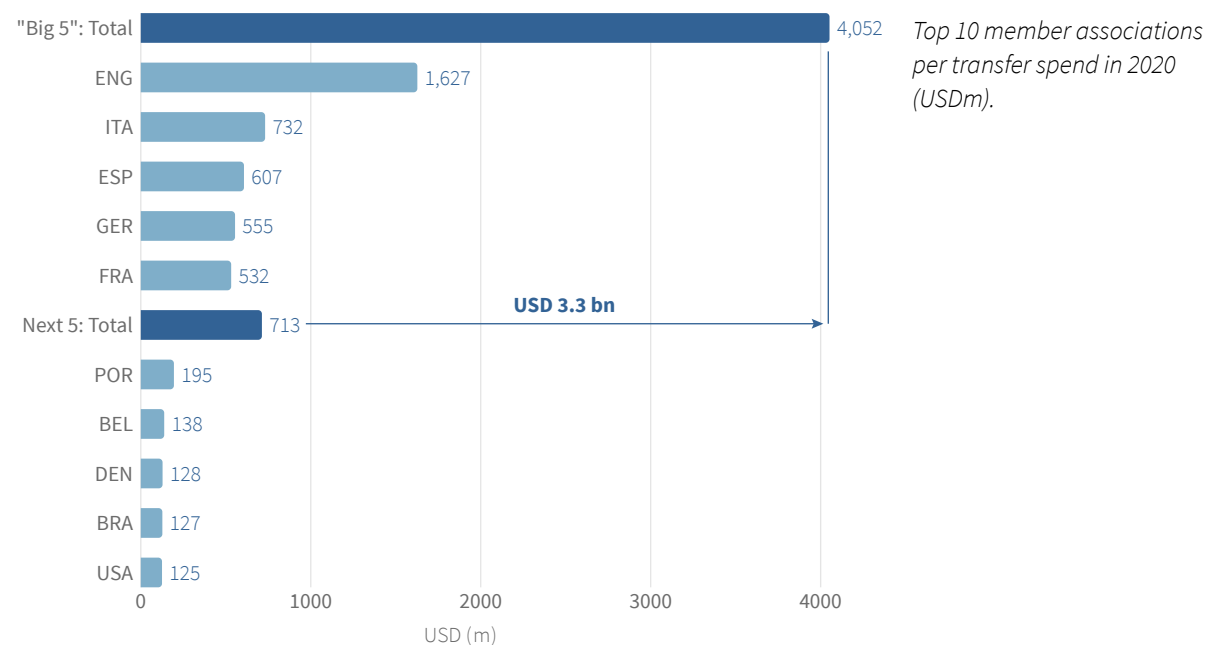


Population and GDP per capita of the top 20 countries in the FIFA/ Coca-Cola Men's World Ranking as of 10 December 2020.

Sources: World Bank – DataBank

In 2020, the "Big 5" leagues had a combined transfer spend of USD 4,052m, 469% more than the next five leagues.

Illustration 9



It must be noted that, as shown in Illustration 9, before COVID-19, the football industry's elite clubs and associations were enjoying what seemed to be stable growth. However, the impact of COVID-19 has been devastating for both clubs and associations across the globe, with KPMG [source] reporting an initial aggregate decrease in total operating revenues of approximately USD 1.44bn amongst clubs in the top ten European leagues. This is a new financial era for modern football, and it is one that must be met with caution to ensure the game's future is protected.

As shown in Illustration 8, Croatia and Uruguay have achieved significant international success with not only the smallest populations and lowest GDPs of all the MAs in the top 20 of the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking, but also the sparsest domestic league revenues. Further to this, Denmark has the third-lowest population but the highest GDP per capita in the top 20, whereas Senegal has the 13th-highest population inside the top 20 but the lowest GDP per capita.

Based on the assumption that money and population alone are not a predictor of success, smaller countries with fewer financial resources can achieve great results. It is clear that the structure of the country's football ecosystem and provision throughout the player pathway is having an impact on international achievement. It is this ecosystem that we are setting out to examine and understand in a bid to bridge the gap to ensure that each MA can reach its full potential and that every talented player gets a chance.

The analysis matrix

To understand the talent development ecosystem in each country, it was crucial to gain a clear picture of the opportunities available to talented male and female individuals and the processes and structures that are in place to support their pathways.

Interaction within the matrix

As shown in Illustration 10, the analysis matrix was designed to facilitate the examination of talent development across MAs. This matrix portrays how an age-appropriate support framework specific to football ("AREAS") must be coupled with appropriate management and resources ("OPERATIONS") at each stage of development in order to facilitate the progression of talented young footballers, both male and female. With such structures in place throughout the player pathway, MAs will have every opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

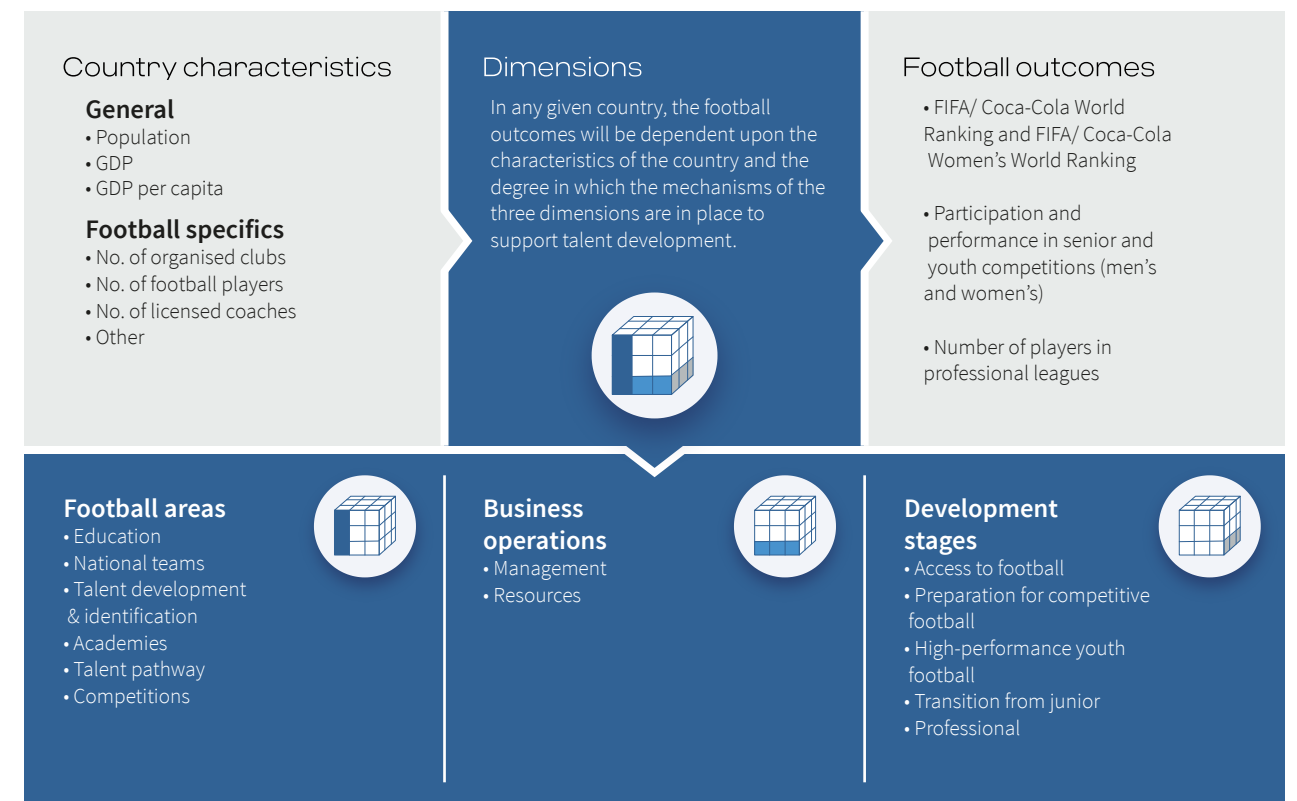
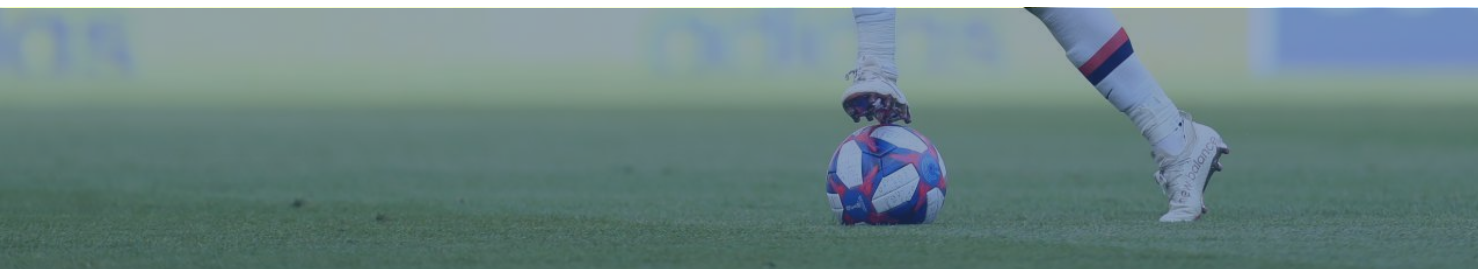


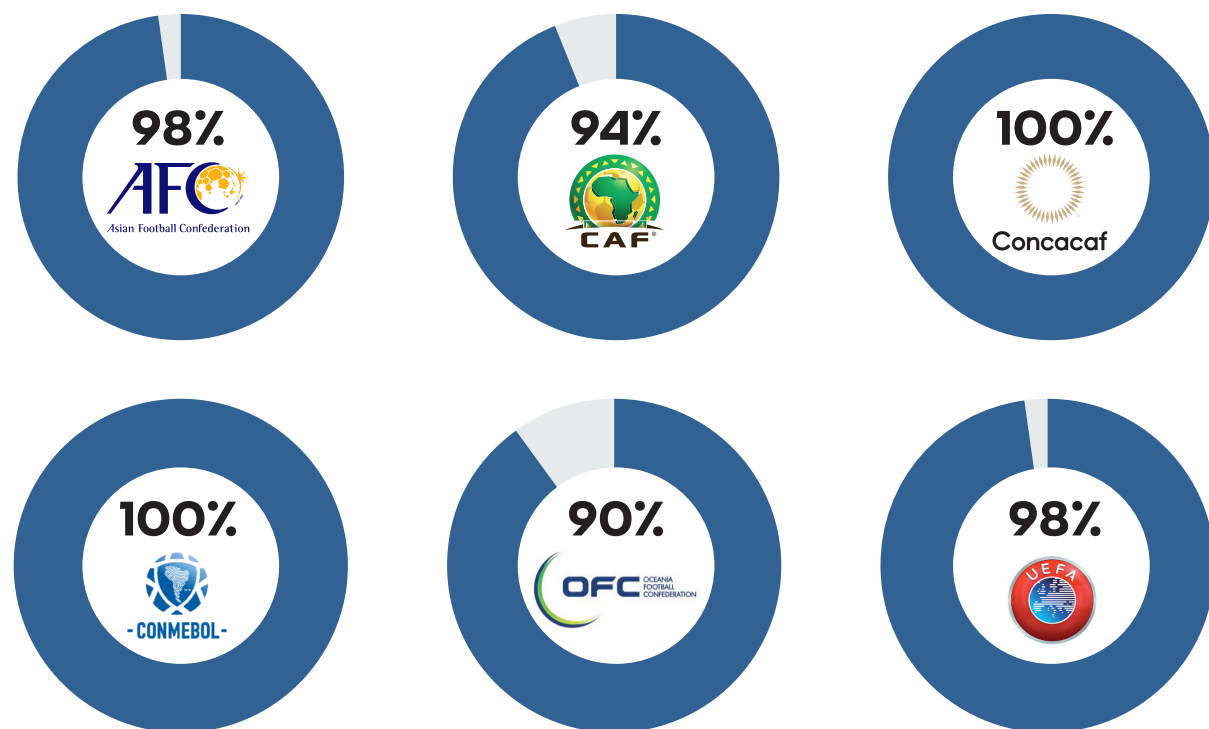
Illustration 10 | The three key dimensions of the analysis matrix that forms the basis of the talent development ecosystem analysis



3. The how

205 MAs accepted the invitation to participate in the process, which encompassed over 2,000 surveys, over 2,500 templates, over 85,000 questions and over 1,000 interviews.

Illustration 11



Percentage of member associations per confederation taking part in the talent development ecosystem analysis.

Methodology

All 211 MAs were invited to participate in this analysis, with 205 accepting the opportunity. However, this report is based on the 190 MAs that had completed the ecosystem analysis process by the deadline of 31 January 2021.

The people

In December 2019, FIFA brought together a vastly experienced and diverse group of strategic thinkers with a proven track record in football to form a high-performance team tasked with spearheading the delivery of the ecosystem analysis. Each of the 16 high-performance teams included a high-performance expert and a high-performance manager and was assigned a set of MAs to support on this fact-finding mission. In collaboration with Double Pass, using its scientific, proven methodology, analysts located across the globe set out to investigate the critical success factors of selected elite academies within each MA.

Throughout this process, FIFA's regional technical consultants were integral in becoming a conduit between the high-performance team and the MA and helping to build a fruitful relationship.

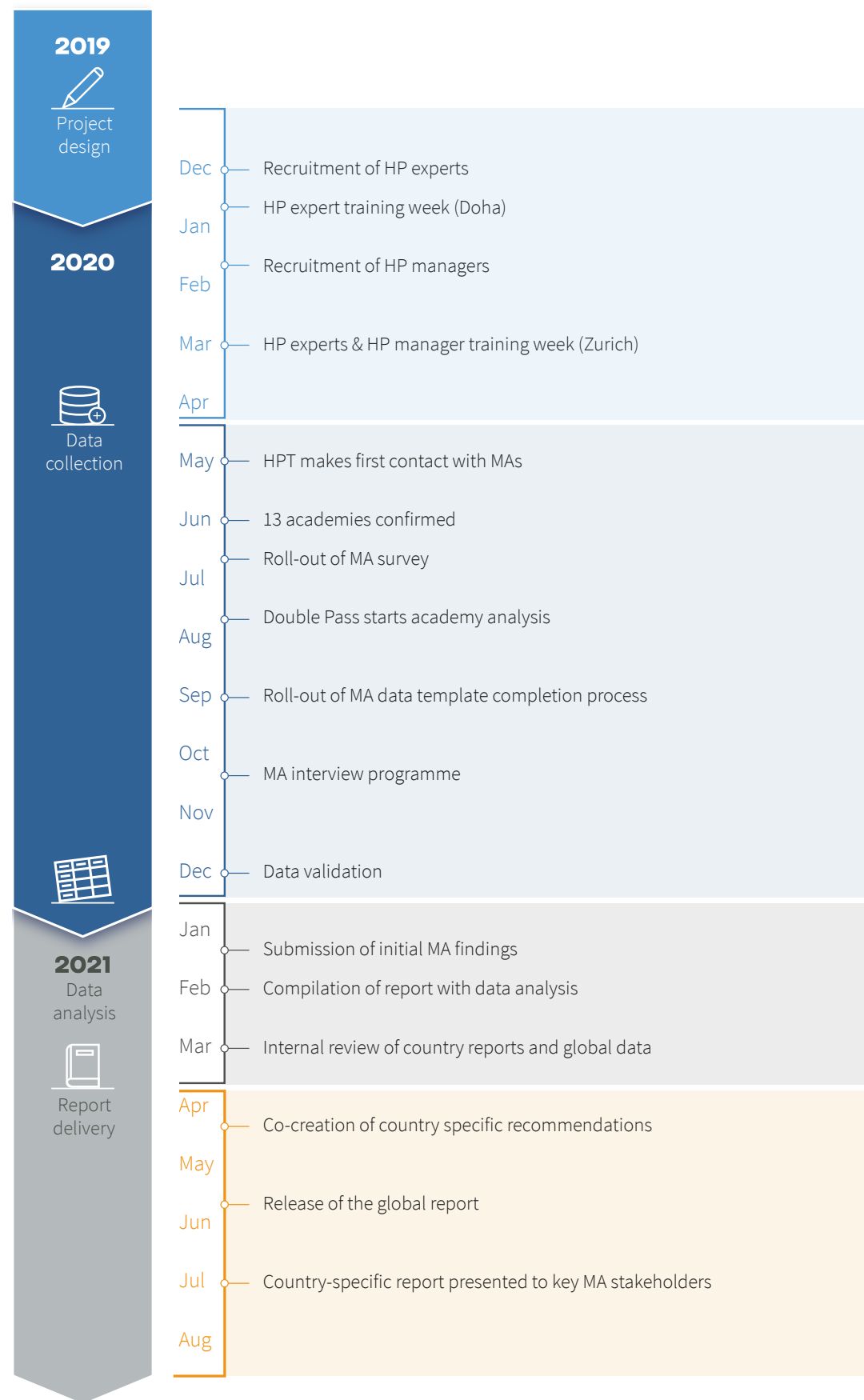


Illustration 12 | The plan - road map

The process

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial plan was for this process to be conducted in person with the high-performance teams embarking on a three- to four-day site visit to each participating MA to validate data, interview key stakeholders and observe the ecosystem in practice. Regrettably, the process had to be redesigned due to the impact of the pandemic and the resulting travel restrictions, while taking the welfare of all involved into account.





Analysis content	
 Survey modules	14
 Template modules	11-13
 Academy analysis	<p>Up to 13 academies selected, with analysis conducted by Double Pass</p> <p>Three in-depth evaluations (interview + CAMP survey), 2:1 split (boys' or girls' academies)</p> <p>Up to ten (five boys', five girls') academies analysed through the CAMP survey only</p>
 Interview programme	Eight to 12 interviews incorporating executive management, leaders of technical departments, coach education staff, talent identification staff, youth and senior national-team coaching and support staff and professional league representatives

Illustration 13 | *The ecosystem analysis process*

This remodelled online ecosystem analysis followed the same process across all MAs, with four forms of data collection for each association. As shown in Illustration 13, this consisted of MA-specific surveys, data templates, an interview programme led by a high-performance team and an analysis of selected domestic academies conducted by Double Pass.

The process of collecting information was conducted over a seven-month period during which positive working relationships were formed between high-performance teams and MAs. With regular contact through weekly video calls, groundbreaking results were achieved: greater insight into the football landscape within the country and the MAs' needs was obtained and, most importantly, trust was built up among those working within associations.



The data

This is the first time that FIFA has conducted analysis of this magnitude, with the scale of the collection and dissemination of data unrivalled on the global stage. FIFA sees this as the basis of future research and a continuous evaluation process. The analysis in this report is based on the participation of 190 MAs, and the findings and comparisons herein are drawn from a data set comprising 2,140 completed surveys, 2,734 completed templates and 1,143 interviews.

Despite the undoubted boon represented by the huge amount of data collected, it must be noted that throughout this analysis journey, there have been many challenges and restrictions due to the absence of critical data points from across the associations. Data forms the basis for analysing the state of play and helps to make developments become visible. It provides important insight and information and is therefore essential for making informed, objective decisions and assessments. As a result, we urge each and every MA to facilitate the discovery of similar insights internally by collecting data to produce association-specific key performance indicators for progress assessment and to enable the development of its own ecosystem for the future.

In this report, average values from comparison groups are given. The basis for determining the comparison groups was the FIFA/ Coca-Cola World Ranking (for both men and women) from December 2020, with levels I-III respectively bringing together the countries ranked 1-20, 21-50 and 51-100. When referring to aspects explicitly applicable to the women's game, the report uses the FIFA/ Coca-Cola Women's World Ranking for countries accordingly.

The comparisons presented in this report can be highly informative and have the potential to enhance practice. However, they must be treated with caution. Each and every MA is different, with its own football ecosystem, cultural background and social structures across the country. Consequently, what works in one MA will not necessarily work in another, due to the needs and demands of different regions across the globe, denoted by the cultural background and historical development of football in a given country. From an interview perspective, we also found that, on occasion, there was a range of interpretations of certain questions, which was reflected in the answers and does not always allow for reliable comparisons to be drawn. However, it was important for us to present these questions, the corresponding answers and data, as they can provide valuable suggestions for the development of adequate long-term plans.

The report

As shown below in Illustration 14, the analysis will enable the development of an MA-specific report outlining the current football landscape of the country along with a global report highlighting trends and critical success factors across the world. Both of these elements will support the creation of a tailor-made programme for each MA.

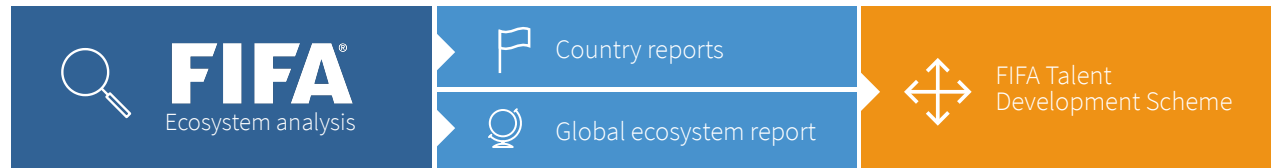


Illustration 14 | Expected project outcomes



Acknowledgements

Without the hard work, dedication, support and openness of the MAs and their staff, this analysis would not have been possible. Thank you to everyone involved who took time to support us in completing the surveys and templates, coordinating the interview schedules and being on hand to deal with any queries.

Building strong relationships across the Icelandic Football Association over the last year was key to enabling the completion of an intense interview programme and the collection and dissection of multiple data points. This process has led us to create this report to reflect the talent ecosystem in Iceland.

MA counterparts

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Participating academies

Breiðablik, FH Hafnarfjörður, Fylkir Reykjavík, Handknattleiksfélag Kópavogs (HK), Haukar, Valur Reykjavík

The FIFA high-performance team



High performance expert
Hesterine de Reus



High performance manager
Luis Miguel Del Risco Torres

1. MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES

Through thoughtful management, MAs can take significant steps towards achieving their performance objectives.

The management and resources of a member association (MA) influence a wide range of departments across the association, as well as all levels of the wider football community. The process of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of an MA's performance in all of its areas – from strategy to the national playing philosophy – can significantly contribute to the realisation of the broader objectives and goals that the MA has set for itself and its footballing community.

1.1 General management

The following section provides a picture of general management, the long-term strategy for player development, and the support for executing this strategy through sufficient budgeting and data management. It is imperative that the MA outline a clear direction – supported by sufficient financial and empirical backing – that it wants the organisation and its staff and players to work towards.

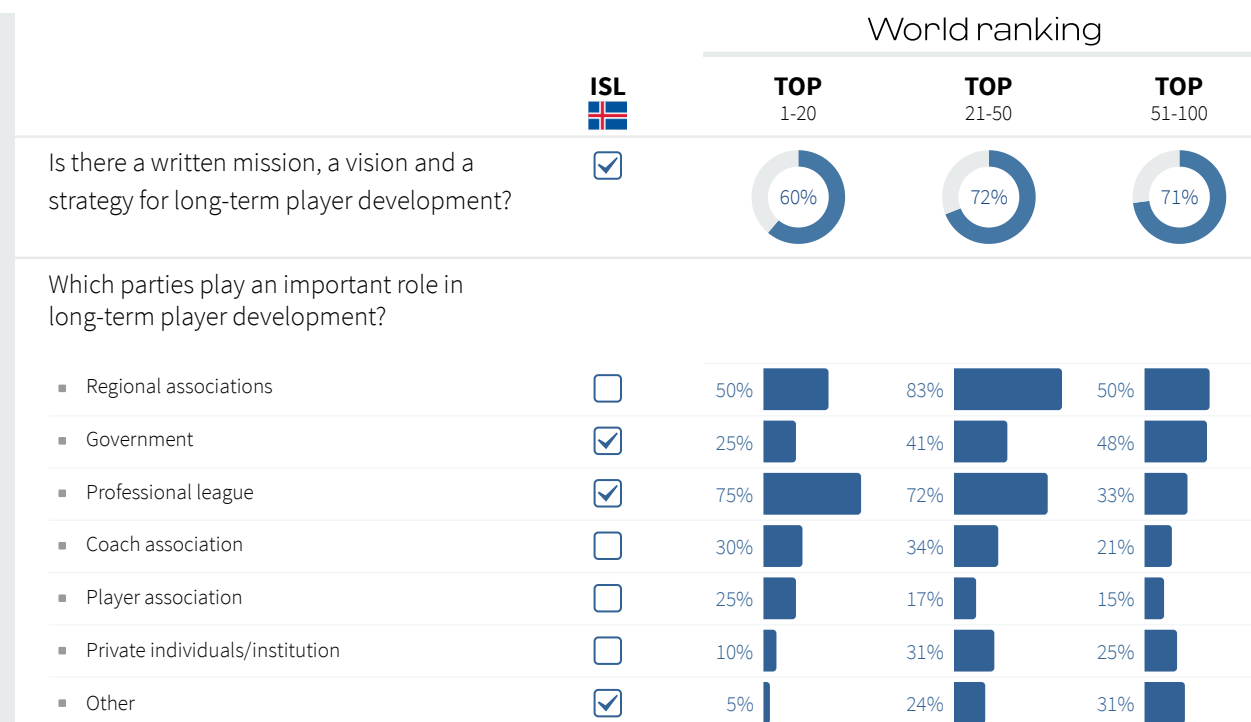
Long-term player development (LTPD) strategy

As is the case at any organisation, a strategy is needed to help the MA achieve its goals or objectives. More specifically, a clear LTPD strategy must be established to realise the targets that the MA sets for itself and the footballing environment as a whole.

69% of member associations in the top 100 have a written strategy for LTPD.

The majority of MAs have a strategy for LTPD, with the breakdown by ranking group ranging from 60% (top 20) to 71% (MAs ranked 51-100). The successful delivery of such a strategy requires engagement from a range of agencies and stakeholders. The most popular key stakeholders amongst the top 100 are regional associations, the government and – particularly in the top 50 – the professional league.

Illustration 1.1



Finding

National strategy for player development and the associated key stakeholders

- The MA's LTPD strategy encompasses men's and women's football from grassroots to the senior national teams.
- The talent ID and development programme at U-13 and U-14 levels is an important element within talent development.
- The KSI Club Licensing System establishes criteria for the club environment. Clubs are an important stakeholder within LTPD and create a tailor-made environment for all players based on the MA's guidelines. The local governments also support the clubs.



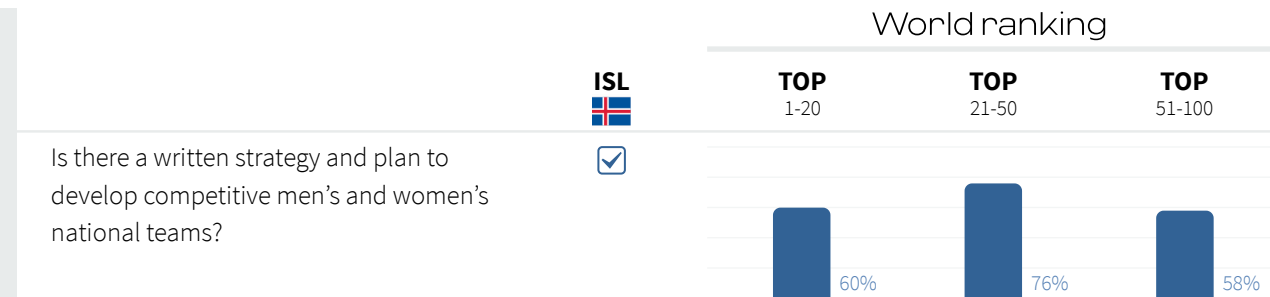
The existence of a written national-team strategy

Having a written strategy formally acknowledges the targets – and the means to achieve these targets – that have been set by the MA. Furthermore, a written strategy minimises room for miscommunication between those who are pursuing it, allowing faster progress towards the goals set by the MA. The strategy then has to be brought to life and implemented to fulfil its purpose.

Approximately 35% of the MAs across the top 100 do not have a written plan to develop competitive national teams.

The top 100 MAs are similar in their focus on the development of their national teams, with a range between 58% (top 51-100) and 76% (MAs ranked 21-50) of associations having a strategy in place.

Illustration 1.2



Finding

The written strategy for national teams

- The KSI has a strategic plan (2020-2025) to develop all of its national teams. The strategy aims for the men's and women's national teams to participate in major tournaments in the long term.
- Although the KSI's executive management is aware of the challenge this target represents, there is a confidence that it will be accomplished by following the strategic plan.
- The strategic plan highlights the importance of having solid foundations in place at grassroots level, which is already a strength within the KSI. The MA continues to enhance the club environment, which is the starting point for player development, through its licensing system. Facilities and accredited coaches are key elements within the system.
- Mixed football is promoted across the clubs to foster the development of talented girls.
- The youth league system is constantly under review with a view to optimising player development, particularly amongst talented players.

Data management

Technical leaders can benefit from data insights gained from processing and analysing relevant data in many ways. However, a prerequisite for the processing and analysis of data is for data to be first collected and then presented informatively. Effective data management is necessary to guarantee that these basic requirements are met.

All of the top 20 MAs have a database for players, coaches and match officials.

The vast majority of the top 100 MAs have a data management system to track registered players. However, the top 20 use such a system to a greater extent for the tracking of match officials, as well as for the management of coach education and talent development.

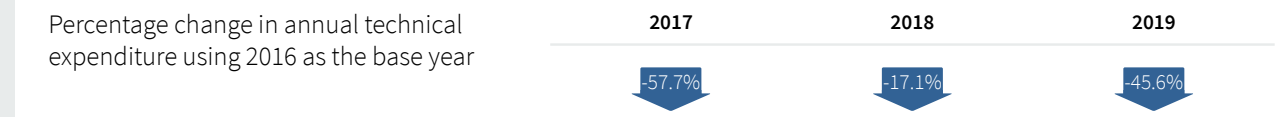
Illustration 1.3

Do you have a data management system in place for:	ISL	World ranking		
		TOP 1-20	TOP 21-50	TOP 51-100
Registration of players	✓	100%	100%	98%
Competition management	✓	95%	90%	88%
Registration of coaches	✓	100%	79%	85%
Registration of referees	✓	100%	79%	81%
Coach education management	✓	84%	79%	65%
Talent development management	✓	63%	45%	31%
Management of the national team(s)	✓	89%	66%	71%

Budget allocation

The strategy, mission and direction that the technical leadership sets need to be grounded in financial realities. An analysis of budget allocation can provide an insight into why technical goals are or are not being reached.

1.4



Finding

The use and management of data to inform practice

- The KSI use data management systems to collect information across a wide range of areas, from the registration of players and coaches to competition, talent development and the management of their national teams.
- For the next strategic cycle, the KSI plans include the use of technology and creating a database as a benchmark tool as one of the Technical Division's strategic objectives.
- Having these dedicated systems in place to collect relevant performance-related data clearly provides further support to the quality of work being undertaken. One of the benefits they provide is the possibility to make strategic decisions, once the collected data is processed, to enhance their player development structure.

1.2 Organisational structure

The following section illustrates how the technical division is situated in the organisational structure of the MA. The organisational structure of an MA is comprised of many components. The multidisciplinary make-up of technical divisions provides the opportunity for associations to accommodate them in unique ways that can help the functioning of both the division and the association.

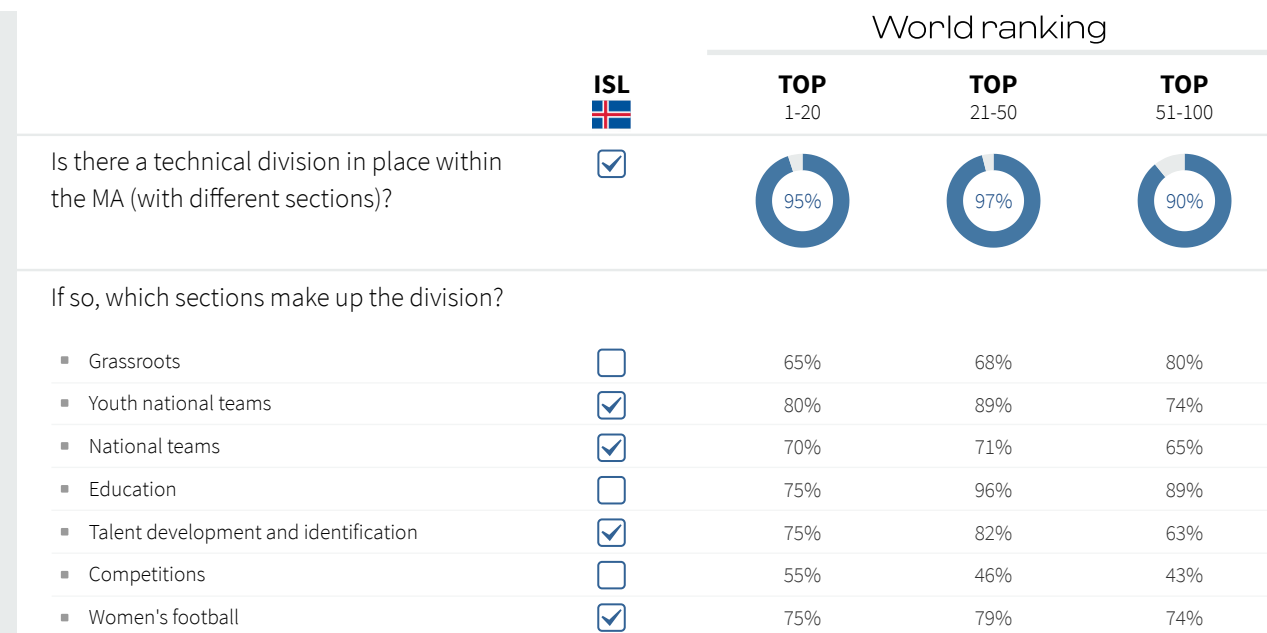
Technical division

Effectively incorporating a technical division into the organisational structure of an MA and giving it a high enough platform at executive level enable MAs and their corresponding footballing communities to capitalise to the maximum on the benefits and expertise provided by technical divisions.

Education, youth national teams, talent development and women's football are all key sections of the technical division across the top 50 MAs.

93% of MAs in the top 100 have a technical division. Associations ranked 51-100 are more likely to have the grassroots game as part of the technical division, with education, talent development & identification, and women's football more prominent in the structure of the technical division across the MAs ranked 21-50.

Illustration 1.5



Finding

The technical division's operational structure and its representation at board level

- The Technical Division is part of International Football and manages the national teams, football development and talent ID.
- Women's football is fully integrated within the Technical Division. Given that the KSI embraces equality, "football" always refers to the men's and women's games.
- The MA has a unique organisational structure. Education and grassroots are operated by a division that is not managed by the Technical Department. There is close cooperation across all departments and the heads of department meet monthly.
- Technical development proposals are formulated between the respective divisions and reviewed by the Technical Committee. The Technical Division or GS presents them to the board.



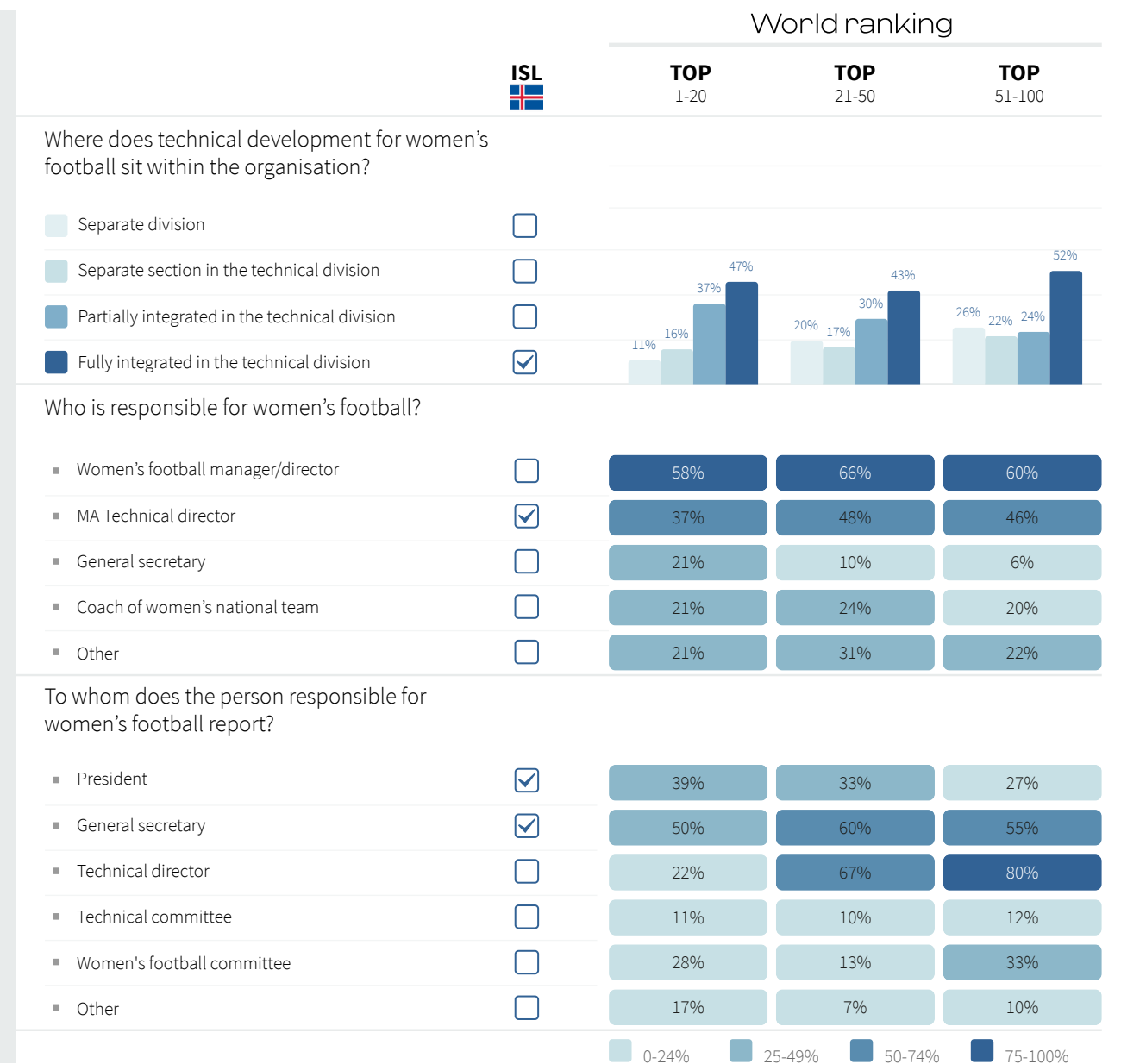
Women's football

This section focuses on the current status of technical development within parties in the MA that are specifically relevant to women's football. It is important for an emphasis on technical development – and its corresponding benefits – to be seen in these parties as well, in order to match the ever-increasing popularity of the women's game.

MAs adopt various models of integrating women's football into their organisation according to their circumstances.

Across the top 100, the majority of member associations tend to fully integrate women's football in the technical division. Furthermore, associations in the top 100 will often have a head of women's football or a director who reports to either the technical director or the general secretary. In some MAs, multiple people are responsible for women's football.

Illustration 1.6



1.3 Technical leadership

Given its wide remit, the technical leadership has a strong influence within an MA. When aspects such as a national playing philosophy, strategic planning and the role of the technical director are implemented effectively, the technical leadership can play an important part in raising the standard and health of a football environment.

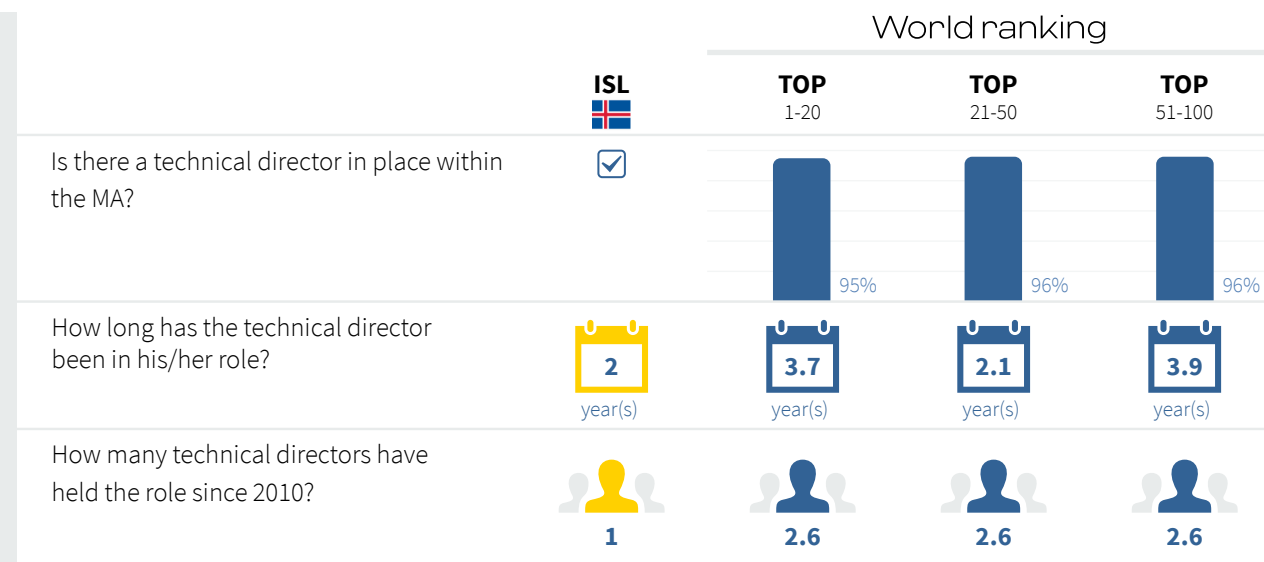
Technical director

The following section looks at the various processes in place at your MA regarding the role of the technical director. Although leadership quality comes from the individual, there are also certain structural requirements in order to give the technical director the opportunity to lead effectively.

MA's ranked 21-50 offer the least stability in the role of the technical director, with an average length in post of 2.1 years.

Although 96% of MAs in the top 100 have a technical director, the limited time in which technical directors are in post (2.1 to 3.9 years across the top 100) is a key issue in guaranteeing the design and implementation of long-term strategies. Across all associations, within a ten-year period, generally there will be between two and three changes of technical director.

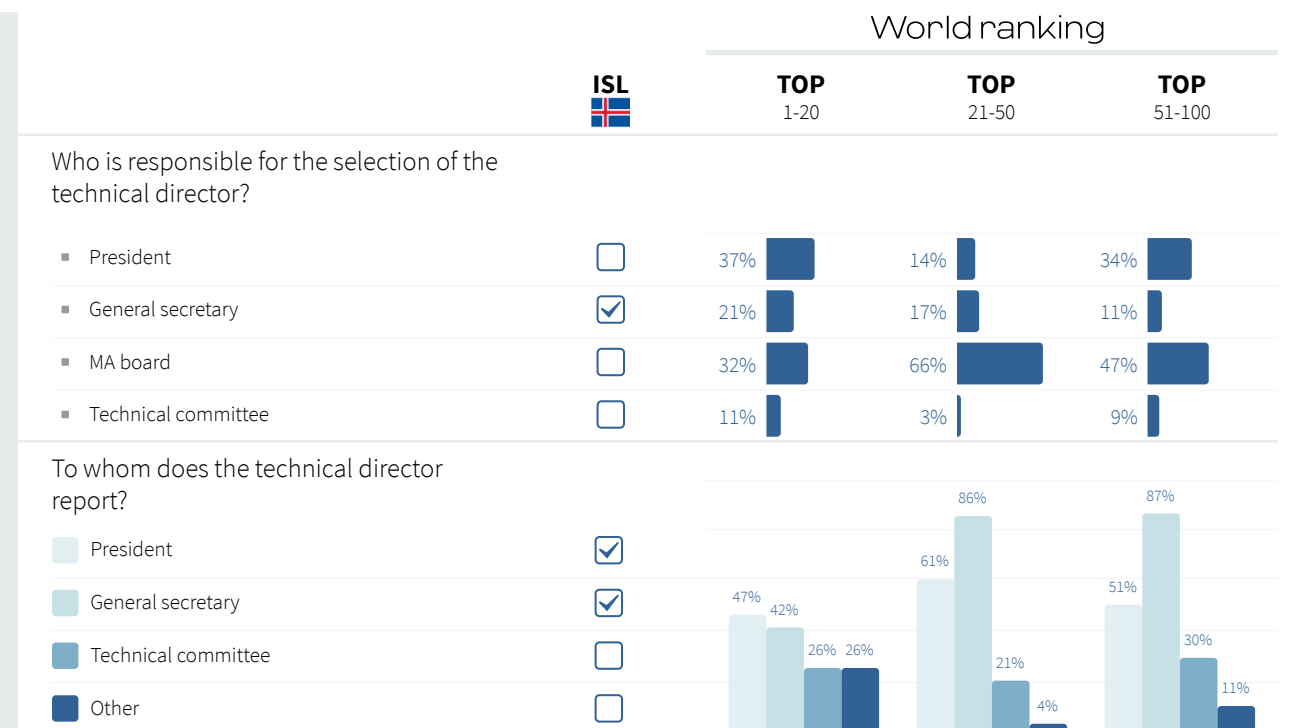
Illustration 1.7



The MA board plays a significant role in the selection of the technical director across the top 100 MAs.

A greater percentage of the top 20 MAs have their president take the lead in the appointment and management of the technical director. Conversely, in associations ranked 21 to 100, it more frequently falls to the MA board to select the technical director and to the general secretary to manage him or her.

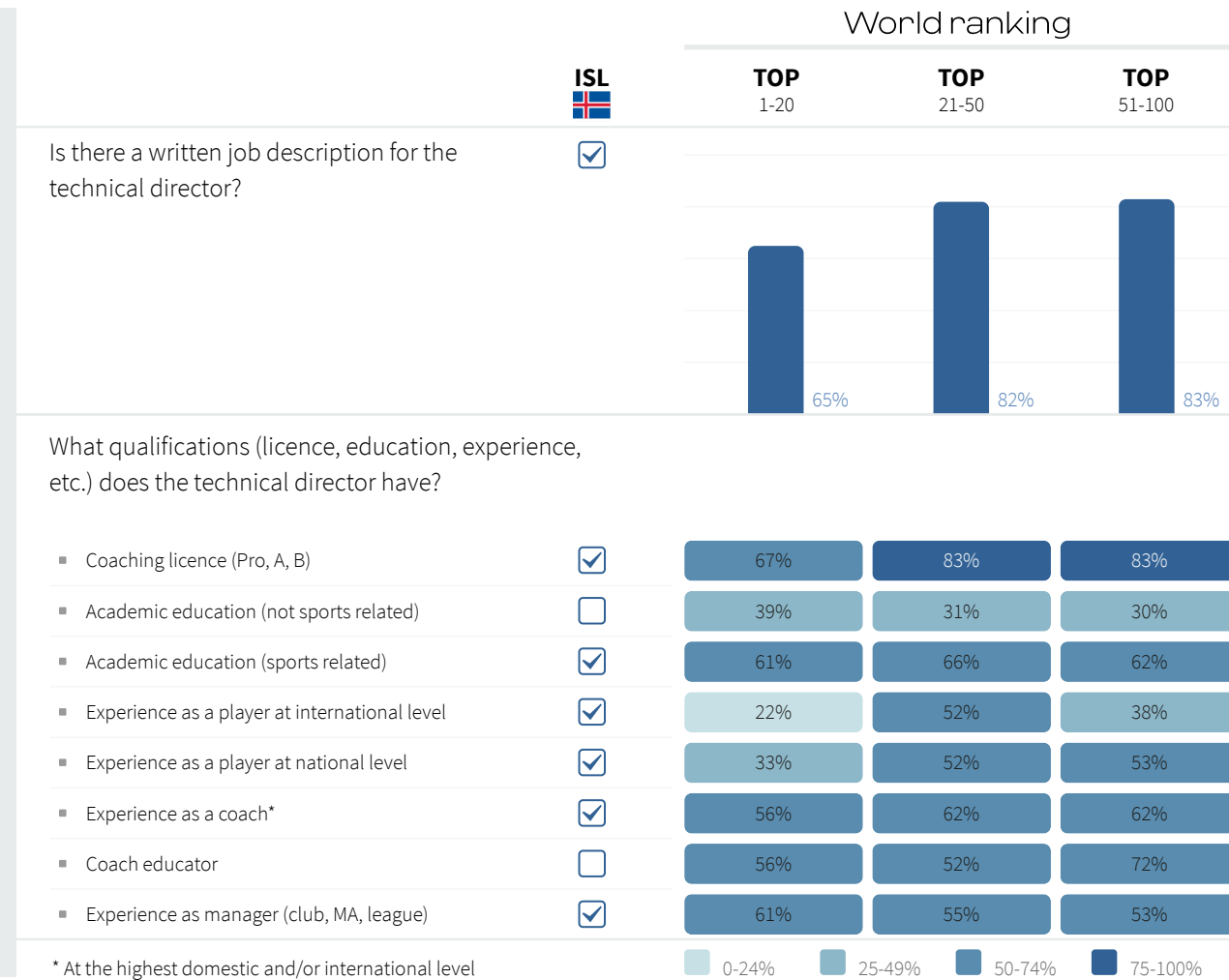
Illustration 1.8



55% of technical directors in the top 100 MAs have experience as a club, association or league manager.

83% of technical directors in the MAs ranked 21-100 have a coaching licence as opposed to 67% of those in the top 20, with more technical directors at associations ranked 51-100 being qualified coach educators (72%). Furthermore, across the top 100, 63% of technical directors have a sports-related academic qualification. From a human resources perspective, most MAs have a written job profile for the technical director.

Illustration 1.9



Finding

The technical director and the assigned roles and responsibilities

- The Technical Division is managed by an experienced Technical Director, who has held the role since 2019. For a number of years, the MA had no technical director.
- The Technical Director, a UEFA Pro Licence holder and a former national-team player, became a coach immediately after ending his playing career and spent five years in Belgium before becoming the KSI's Technical Director.
- The role of Technical Director also involves coaching a national team. He started coaching the men's U-21 side and currently works with the senior men's team.
- The Technical Director is responsible for elite performance, talent development and football development for both genders. His work is guided by a strategic plan and executed in collaboration with clubs, national-team coaches and the KSI Competitions Manager.
- International data collection and benchmarking is currently an important element of the KSI's performance strategy and a key area for the Technical Director to oversee.



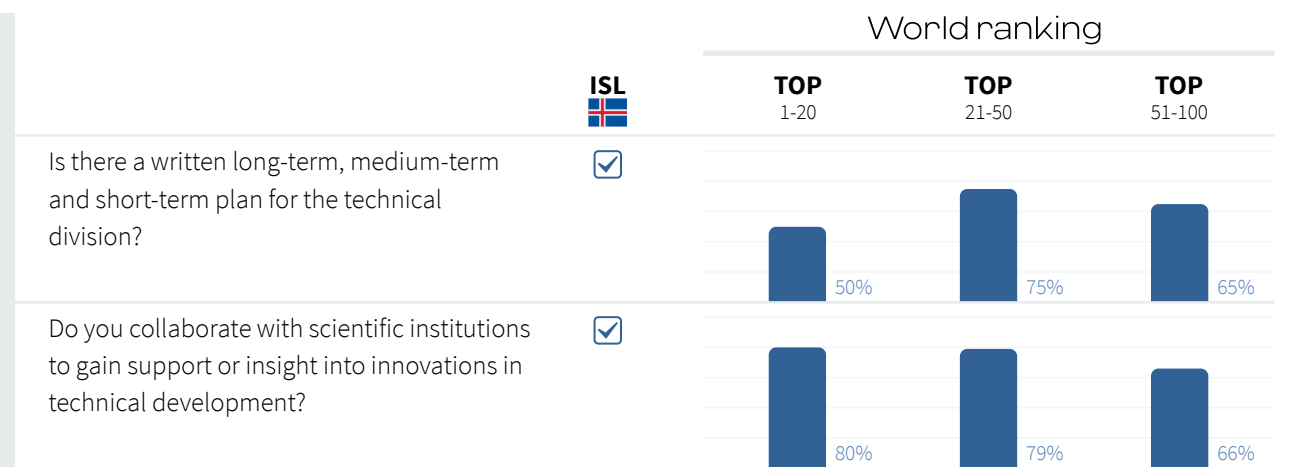
Strategic planning

Similar to the overarching strategy necessary for setting the general direction of MAs, strategic planning specific to the technical division is needed to outline the unit's direction for the short-, medium- and long-term future. Additionally, strategic planning also entails working with and gaining insight from scientific institutions outside football.

A significant number of MAs have yet to create a written strategy for the management of the technical division.

Approximately 35% of the top 100 member associations do not currently have a written long-term plan for the technical division. A large proportion of the top 100 associations (73%) collaborate with scientific institutions, with more MAs in the top 50 choosing to do so.

Illustration 1.10



Finding

Strategy of the technical division and its collaboration with scientific institutions

- The Technical Division's strategy features within the KSI Performance Strategy 2020-2025. The use of technology and data collection, locally and internationally, is their objective to bring Iceland in line with other European nations in terms of the use of these performance tools.
- In 2020 the MA started to measure player performance and created a database. Veo video cameras being installed in three stadiums and Instat Scout are examples of the technology used. A player database and benchmarking aims to guide performance development.
- Apart from the MA's efforts, data collection across the clubs is part of the 2020-2025 performance strategy.
- The MA has a good relationship with Reykjavik University. Research into the physical ability of players from the age of 16 (carried out in 2019) and performance data benchmarking for elite female players (2014) are examples of studies that have been carried out.

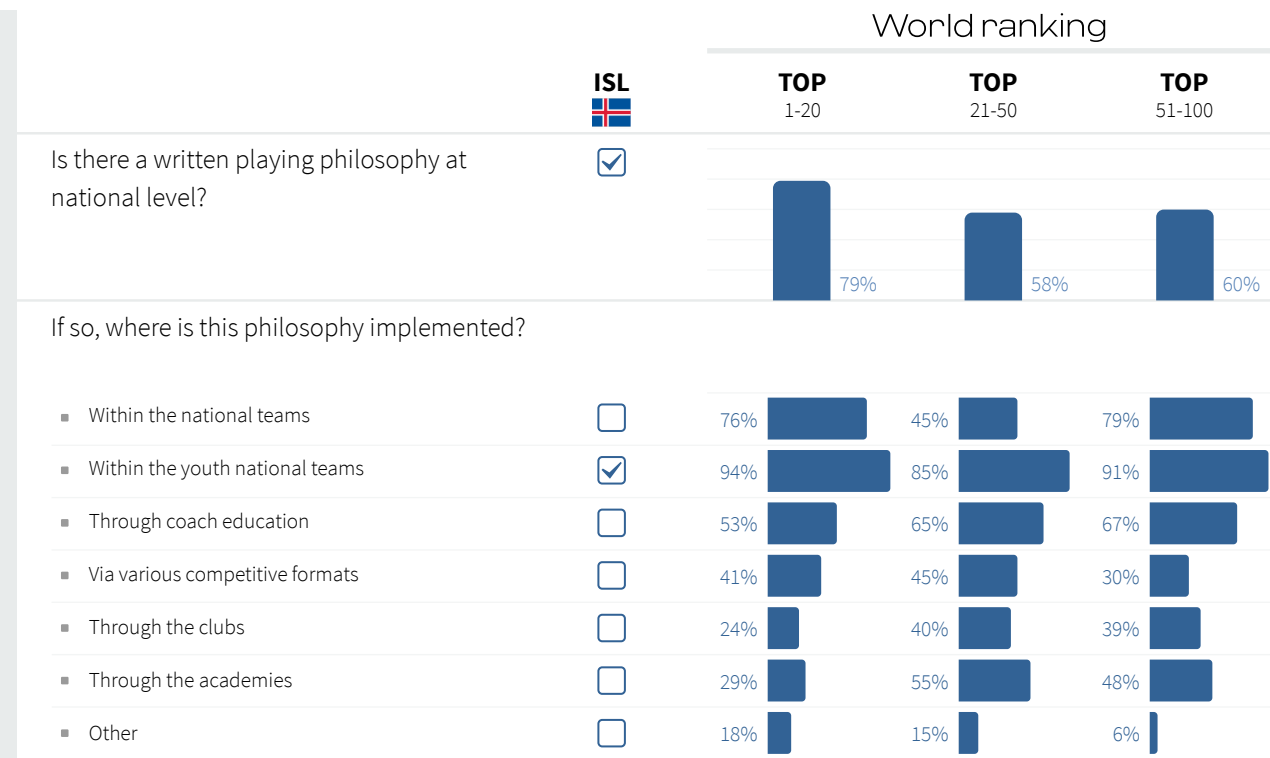
National playing philosophy

A national playing philosophy has numerous benefits for a footballing community: it synchronises the domestic footballing environment despite varying levels of ability, increases the utility of youth products for clubs and national teams, and contributes to a sense of national football identity.

Leading MAs are more likely to have a written national playing philosophy in place.

There is a clear distinction between the top 20 MAs, where 79% have a written playing philosophy in place, and the lower ranked MAs (21-100), as only 59% of them have such a philosophy. Most MAs that do have this philosophy in place implement it across the youth national teams (90%), coach education (64%) and senior national teams (68%).

Illustration 1.11



Finding

Implementation of the national playing philosophy

- Based on the development of the game and the ambition to constantly improve elite performance, the KSI is rewriting its national playing philosophy. All national-team coaches are involved in devising the new philosophy.
- Playing principles, aligned to the players' development stages, are taught through the KSI Talent Programme. Players are educated to adapt to different playing systems in the youngest national teams (U-15 and U-16 levels).
- Individual development is central to the activities, with a results-oriented approach adopted as the players advance through the age groups. Good results lead to more international matches at official tournaments.
- There is a clear consensus across the national teams about the values Iceland stands for, with the "red line" concept: strong mentality, hard work and real team spirit central to this.
- The MA promotes equal support for the men's and women's national teams, based on international standards.



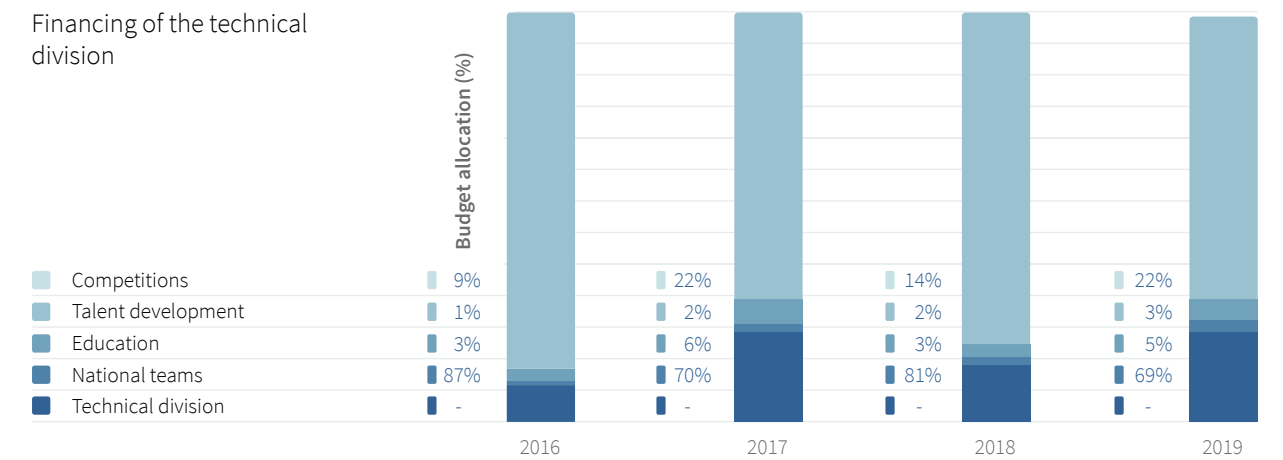
1.4 Resources

The section below illustrates the resources available to your MA's technical division. Sufficiently resourced technical divisions can carry out their specific role and disseminate their findings to other areas within the MA. Without sufficient resources, their ability to do this to a desirable standard will wane.

Financial resources

Chief among the resources required for the technical division are financial resources. Here, we look at the budget allocation for your technical division and how it has changed in comparison to other departments over recent years.

Illustration 1.12



Finding

The budget planning process for technical development

- The KSI's overall budget is formally planned for a four-year cycle and in line with the available funds. Funding from UEFA and FIFA are essential to the KSI's operations.
- Budget planning is annually led by the General Secretary (GS) and Finance, where activity plans are discussed with the department managers to draw a draft budget. This is then presented by the GS and Finance to the Board for its approval and adjustment of activities, before being presented to the annual congress. New and "nice-to-have" projects are also annually reviewed.
- As such, technical development budget is initially discussed alongside the TD.
- Given that running the senior national team usually accounts for the bulk of the overall budget and the fact the KSI has a small workforce, the challenge for the relevant stakeholders is to ensure there are sufficient funds and skilled human resources to accomplish the strategic objectives.

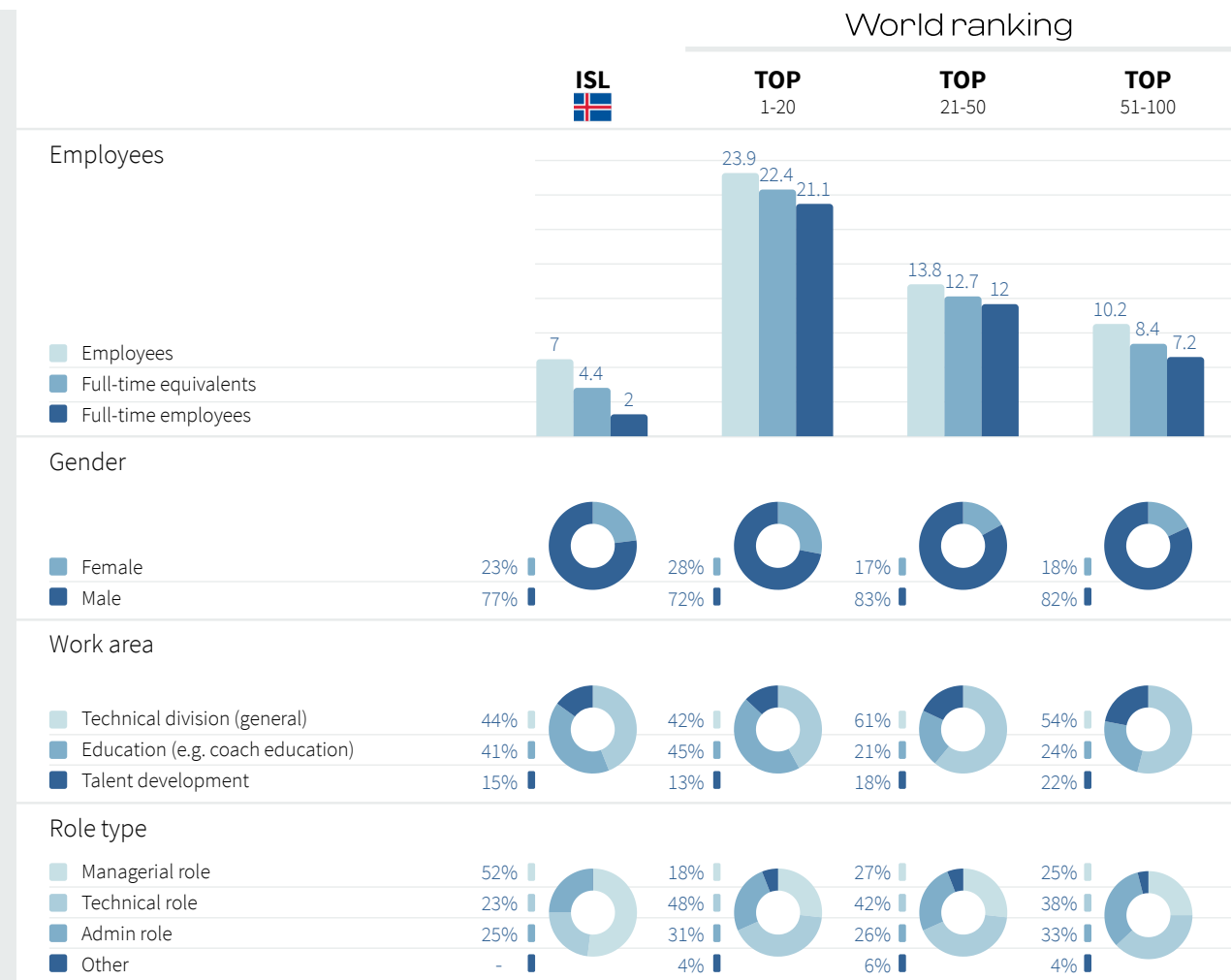
Human resources

Sourcing the best-suited individuals for roles within the technical division will have a direct influence on the division's work and consequently the performance of the MA altogether. Thorough and effective staffing practices help guarantee that those hired will be useful additions to the division.

The top 20 MAs have the highest numbers of staff working within the technical division.

Overall, MAs ranked in the top 20 employ more staff in their technical division than lower-ranked MAs. Regarding women's representation, an average of 28% of the staff in the top MAs are female, a number that drops to 18% in the MAs ranked between 21 and 100.

Illustration 1.13



Human resource management

This aspect of human resources looks after the well-being of employees, provides them with opportunities for development, and ensures that the technical division has a sustainable work environment where staff can meet the targets set by the MA.

89% of the top 20 MAs support technical staff with continuous professional development (CPD).

MAs in the top 20 appear to have a greater support network for human resource management than their lower-ranked counterparts. A larger proportion of the highest-ranked group have job descriptions in place and support their staff with CPD. However, only 64% of associations ranked between 51 and 100 support the development of technical staff through organised CPD.

Illustration 1.14

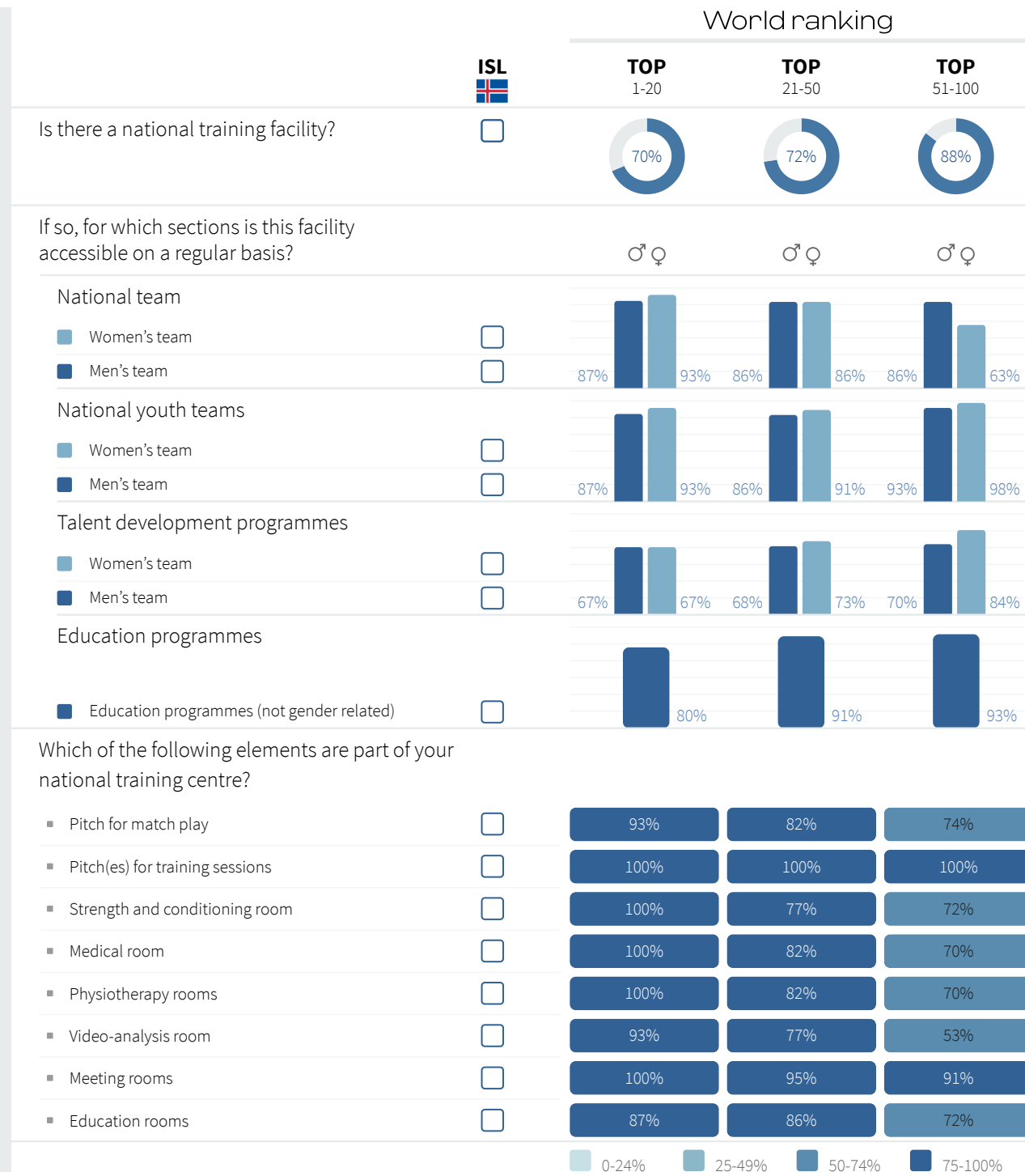


Infrastructure

As well as serving as the pinnacle of football infrastructure in a given country, a modern national training facility provides a state-of-the-art platform for honing players' skills and fitness, and consequently influences performance on the pitch. An MA with a facility that caters for the multidisciplinary nature of modern football will reap the vast rewards of this approach.

80% of the top 100 member associations have a national training facility.

A greater percentage of MAs ranked from 51 to 100 have a national training facility (88% compared to 71% of the top 50). Although national training centres are more commonplace in lower-ranked member associations, these facilities tend not to be fully equipped – specifically in the areas of medicine, video analysis and strength & conditioning. National training centres are used for a multitude of purposes to support both the men's and women's game.



Finding

National training facilities

- There is no national training facility. The MA rents the national stadium for the senior national teams. The national youth teams use rented club facilities or stadiums for training camps and games.
- The national stadium fails to meet quality standards and the availability of other leading venues depends on third parties.
- There is a major need for the MA to have its own technical facility, particularly for both of the national teams. This would enhance player development.

MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES

SUMMARISING NOTES

- The MA's LTPD strategy encompasses men's and women's football from grassroots to the senior national teams. The MA's talent program is central to talent development. Before the KSI becomes involved in player development, the clubs are an important stakeholder.
- The Technical Division, which is part of International Football, employs a Technical Director, who oversees the national teams, football development and talent ID. Women's football is fully integrated. The division's latest objective relates to performance development through the use of technology and data collection.
- The KSI's overall budget is planned on a four-year cycle, led by the GS and the Finance Department in collaboration with the department managers. The draft budget is presented to the Board and then to the annual congress.
- The KSI is a small organisation in which employees carry out a range of tasks in addition to those they are employed to. The lack of a training centre must be addressed to enhance player development.
- The grassroots game is a strength within the KSI. The environment at club level, where player development begins, is not challenging enough for talented players and it must be improved.

Recommendations

1. We get the impression that the KSI is well managed. This sound management is reflected in the performances of both the men's and women's national teams, based on the KSI's performance policy and its performance strategy. The next step to enhance the national teams and boost the KSI Talent Programme is to invest in a national training centre. This project will be dependent on the MA's ability to establish synergies with stakeholders who can offer financial support.
2. The environment at club level, where player development begins, is not challenging enough for the most talented players. We advise to prioritise club development, aiming to build a developmental environment for talented players, especially on the girls side.
3. An area that needs attention for all national teams is performance analysis. The role of performance analyst as part of the National Team staff is getting more and more emphasis. In line with the development of the role, also specialised education in this regard is an area of attention.

2. NATIONAL TEAMS

Exposure to the highest level of football in the world.

National teams offer their players an unrivalled development experience. The elite-competition and tournament situations of international football provide an incredible learning process. National teams are important for the health of their domestic football environment as well. A team's success on the global stage can inspire younger generations, generate interest in the game, and drive amateur engagement in their community.

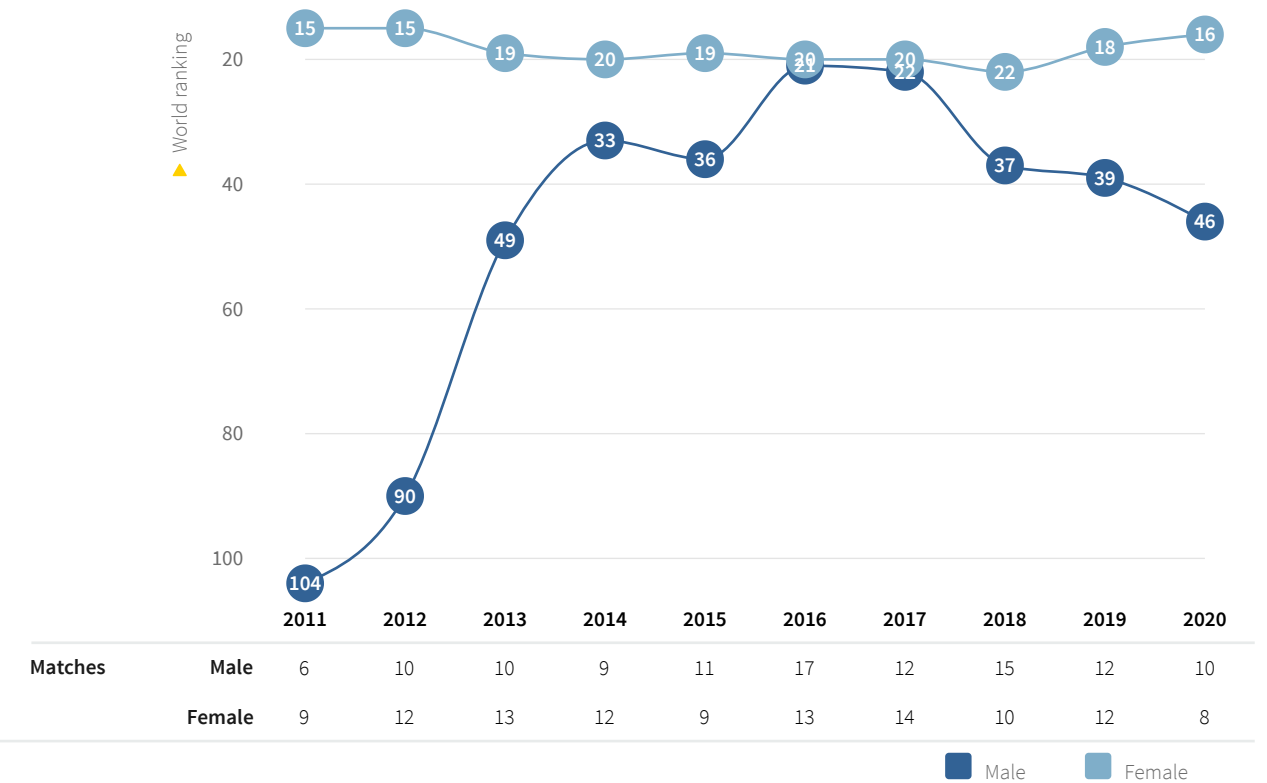
2.1 Strategic management

This section reviews the MA's management structure and the alignment across the national teams from youth to senior. Having such alignment across the national teams is essential to maximise the individual development practices and to support the transition pathway for the best players in the country. This comes in the form of a national playing philosophy, a multi-disciplinary coaching and development methodology, national player profiling and KPIs, a performance support network and the communication and collaboration of staff across all squads

Performance and playing opportunities at senior level

The participation and performance of a national team in qualification campaigns and international tournaments are two fundamental ways to assess a national team's success. National teams first need to participate in qualifiers, and if they are successful, they can then participate in continental or global tournaments. Below is the ranking evolution of your senior national teams over a ten-year period along with the number of matches played (official and friendly).

Illustration 2.1



Men's senior team age profile

The illustration below shows the age distribution of your men's senior national team and the playing minutes accumulated by these players over a two year period from 2019 to 2020 (data courtesy of CIES).

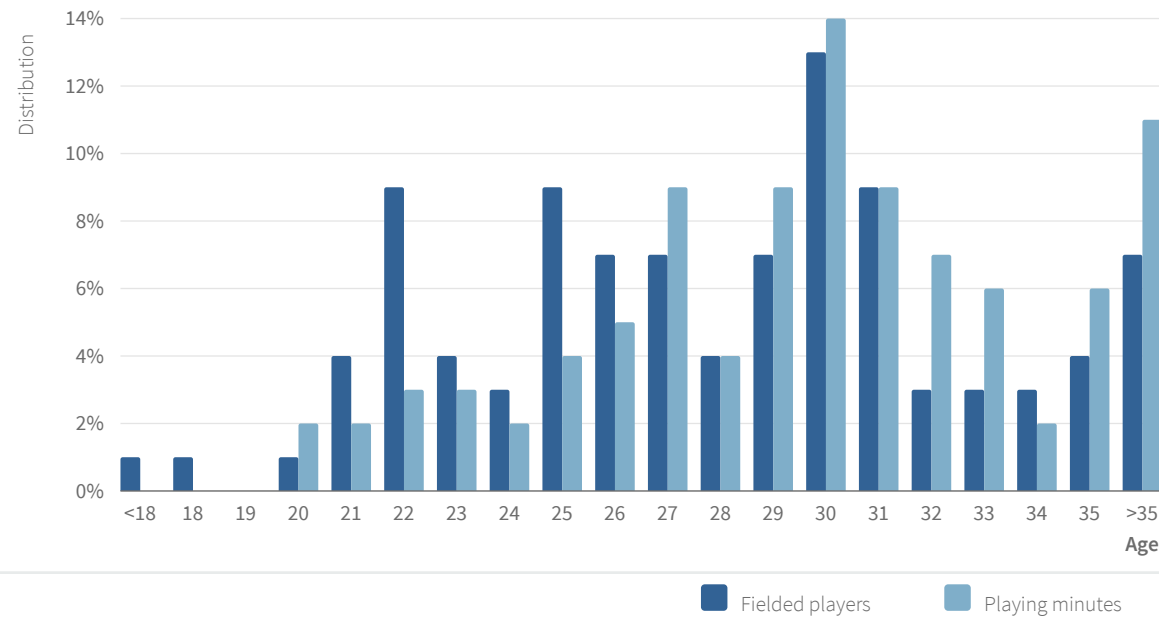


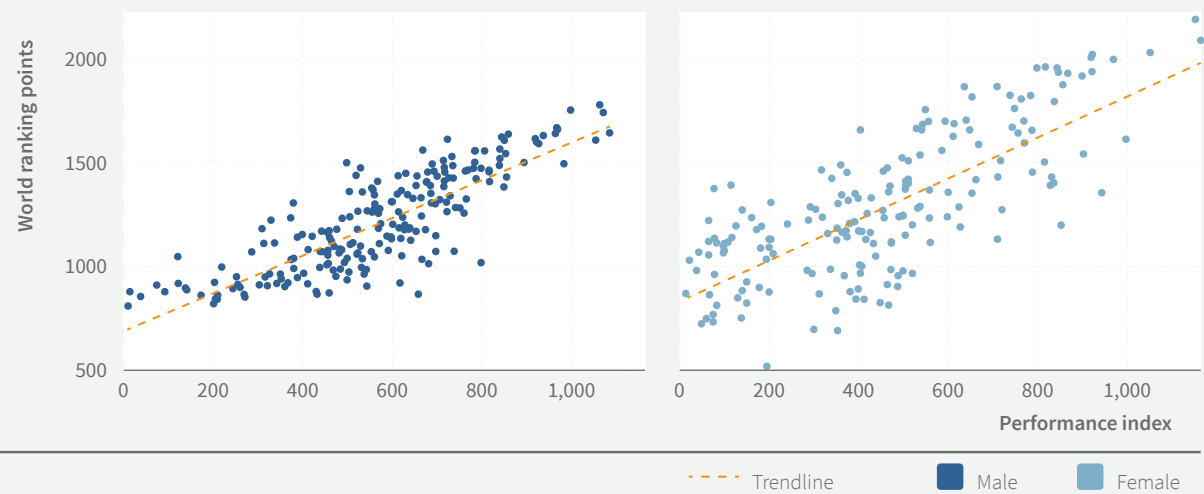
Illustration 2.2

Infobox

Introducing the performance index

The performance index is an average score created from the results of all matches played over a set time period, with each match result weighted based upon the level of competition. In this instance, the time period is eight years broken down into two-year cycles. The match weighting takes into account the following levels of classification; friendly, continental qualification, World Cup qualification, continental final, and World Cup final, with each level receiving a progressively higher weighting. i.e. the more games played and won at a higher level results in a higher performance index score.

As shown in the graphs below, an MA's performance index score given its results over a two-year cycle correlate to the world ranking. Given that these two metrics correlate, youth and senior team performances can now be aligned and compared over a set period of time.



Performance and playing opportunities at youth level

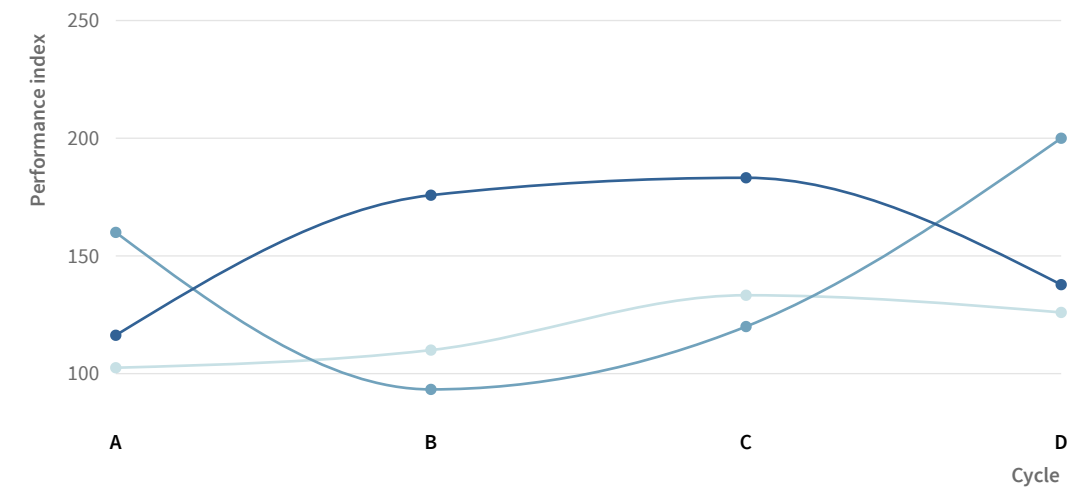
International matches provide unrivalled learning opportunities. High levels of participation and success at youth level are closely linked to future achievements.

Success at youth level leads to a greater potential for senior team success.

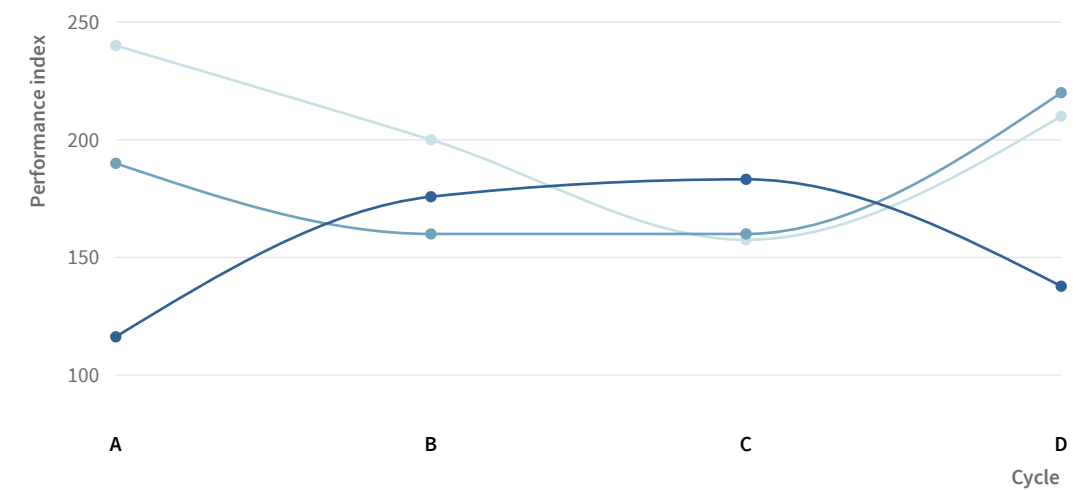
The illustrations below show your youth national team performance index for the U-16/U-17 and U-19/U-20 age groups in comparison to your senior national team performance index for both men and women over a period of four two-year cycles. The cycles are aligned to the World Cup cycles at both youth and senior levels (men's, senior: 2011-2018; men's, youth: 2012-2019; women's, senior: 2012-2019; and women's, youth: 2011-2018).

Illustration 2.3

♂ Male



♀ Female



Legend: U-16/U-17 (light blue), U-19/U-20 (medium blue), Senior (dark blue)

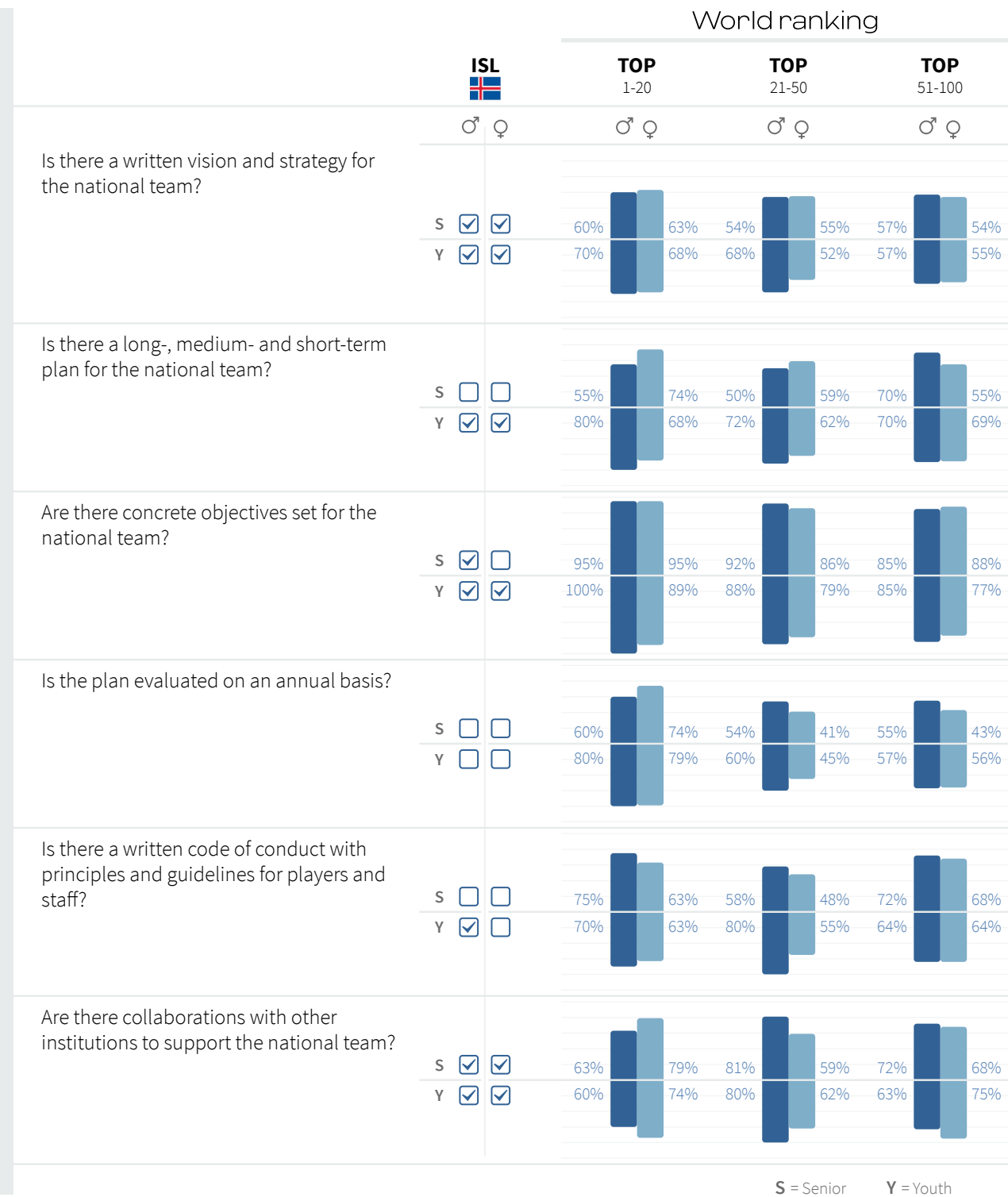
Strategic planning

Having a clearly defined vision and strategy enables all areas of the national team structure to become aligned through guided working practices in order to maximise player transition and sustained national team success. Illustration 2.4 shows the different ways in which strategy and planning are evident amongst your national teams.

Only 57% of the top 100 MAs have senior men's national team strategy in place.

Approximately 95% of the top 20 MAs have structured objectives for all national teams, both youth and senior. Furthermore, 61% of MAs in the top 100 have a long-term plan for their senior men's national team, with the top 20 more likely to evaluate progress annually.

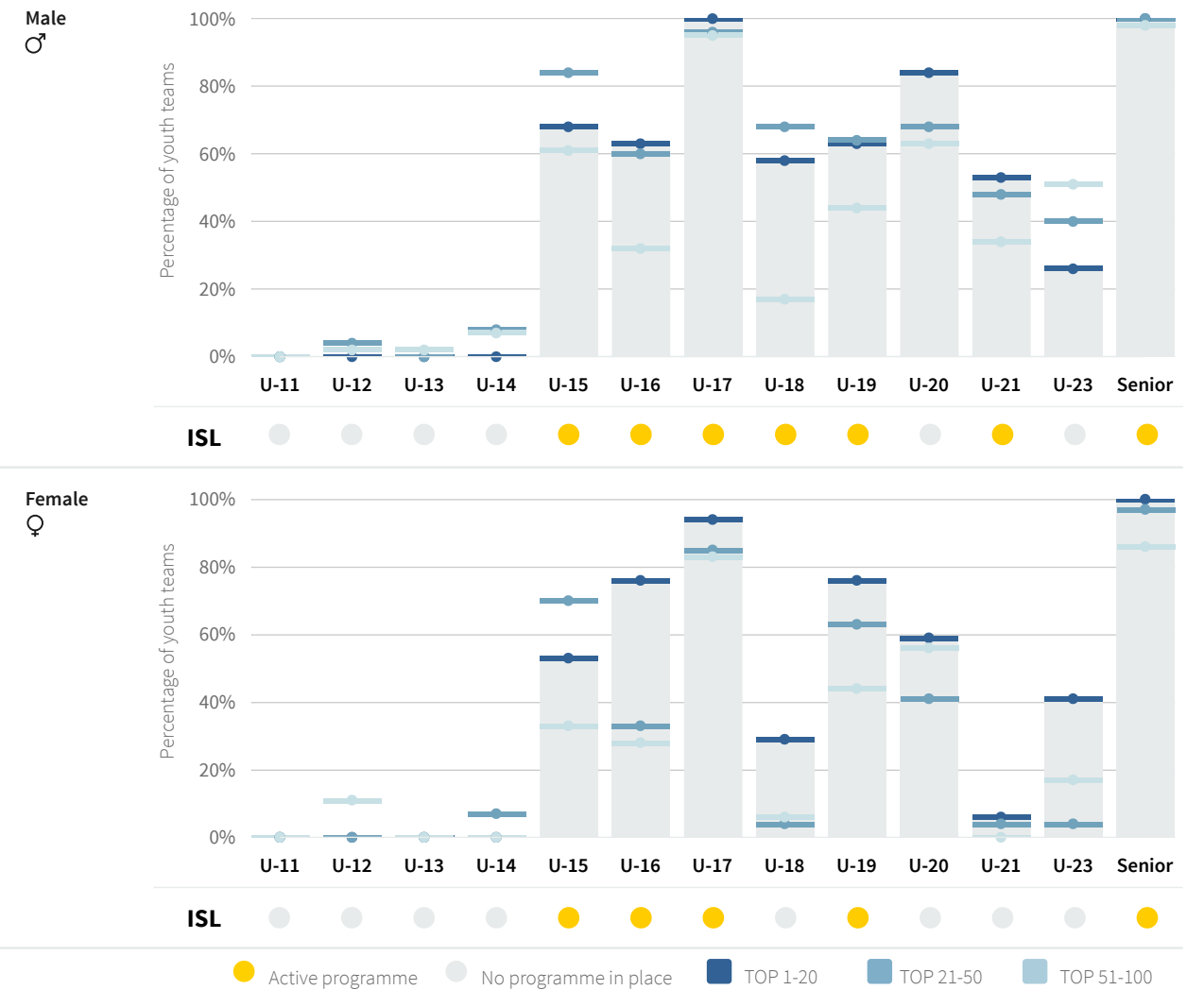
Illustration 2.4



National teams programme

To maximise all of the development opportunities provided by youth national teams while avoiding any gaps in the development process, a consistent pathway throughout the appropriate age groups is required. The illustration below indicates the percentage of member associations that have an active national team at the indicated age level from U-11 to senior.

Illustration 2.5



Finding

Strategy and performance of the national teams' programme

- The KSI strategic plan aims to develop all national teams. The target is for the men's and women's teams to participate in major tournaments in the long term.
- The medium-term plan is to have a gentle generational shift in the men's senior team.
- For boys, Iceland has active teams for all age groups from U-15 to U-19, as well as U-21. The active girls' teams are U-15, U-16, U-17 and U-19.
- The women's national team (WNT) has occupied a consistent position in the world ranking over the last ten years. The men's national team (MNT) made huge progress between 2010 and 2014 and qualified for the FIFA World Cup for the first time in 2018.
- The women's youth national teams (WYNT) have not qualified for the U-17/U-19 European Championship since 2016. The men's U-17 and U-21 teams qualified for the EURO in 2019 and 2021, respectively.

2.2 Resources

This section investigates the MA's investment in creating a high-performance environment. A high-performance culture is essential for maximising player development in youth teams as well as for gaining competitive advantages for the senior national team playing at the elite level. Whether it be specialist coaches, a national training centre, access to tactical analysis modalities, or the delivery of performance support services, all play a role in creating a high-performance environment.

Financial resources

National teams – especially senior national teams – account for a significant amount of an association's budget. However, a successful senior national team can in return provide a valuable source of income for the entire domestic football pyramid. Thus, providing financial support for national teams not only influences those specific teams, but also contributes to the overall health of the domestic football community.

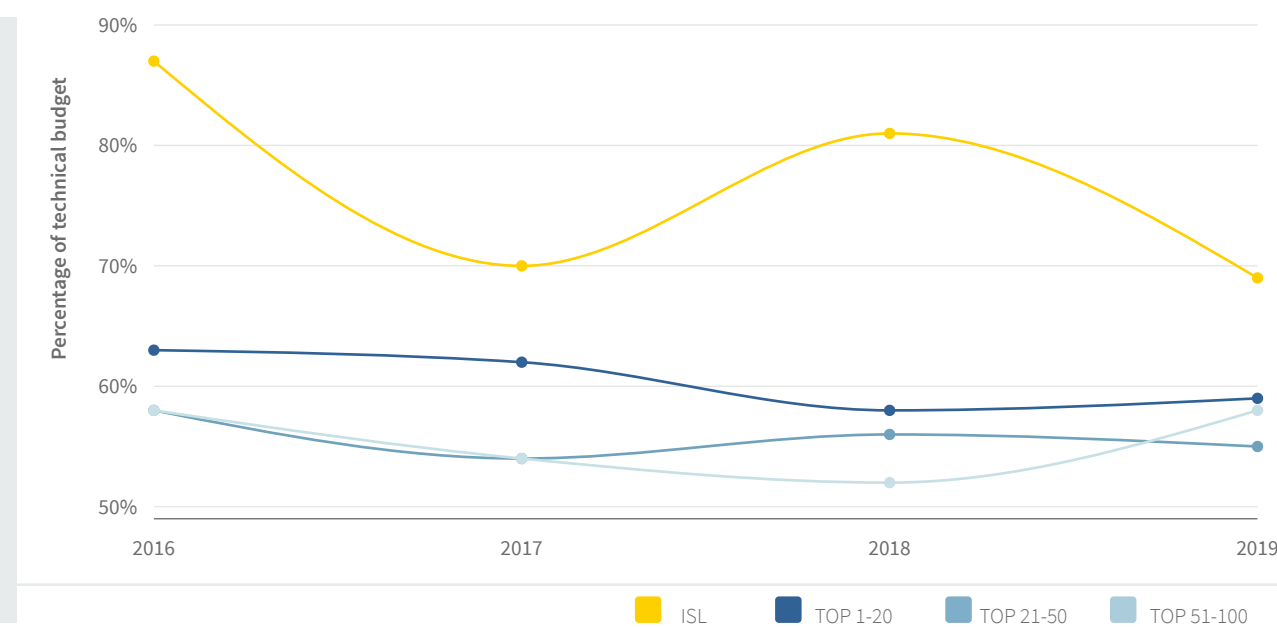
Technical expenditure on national teams

The following illustration displays the percentage of the total technical expenditure on all national teams as part of the overall budget and its development over the last four years. In addition, the distribution of budget amongst your association's various national teams between 2016 and 2019 is presented.

The top 20 MAs spend a greater percentage of the technical budget on national teams.

Between 2016 and 2019, top 20 MAs invested between 59% and 63% of their technical budget on the national teams. MAs ranked 21-100 spent a similar percentage of their national teams, an investment ranging from 52% to 58% of the technical budget across the same four-year period.

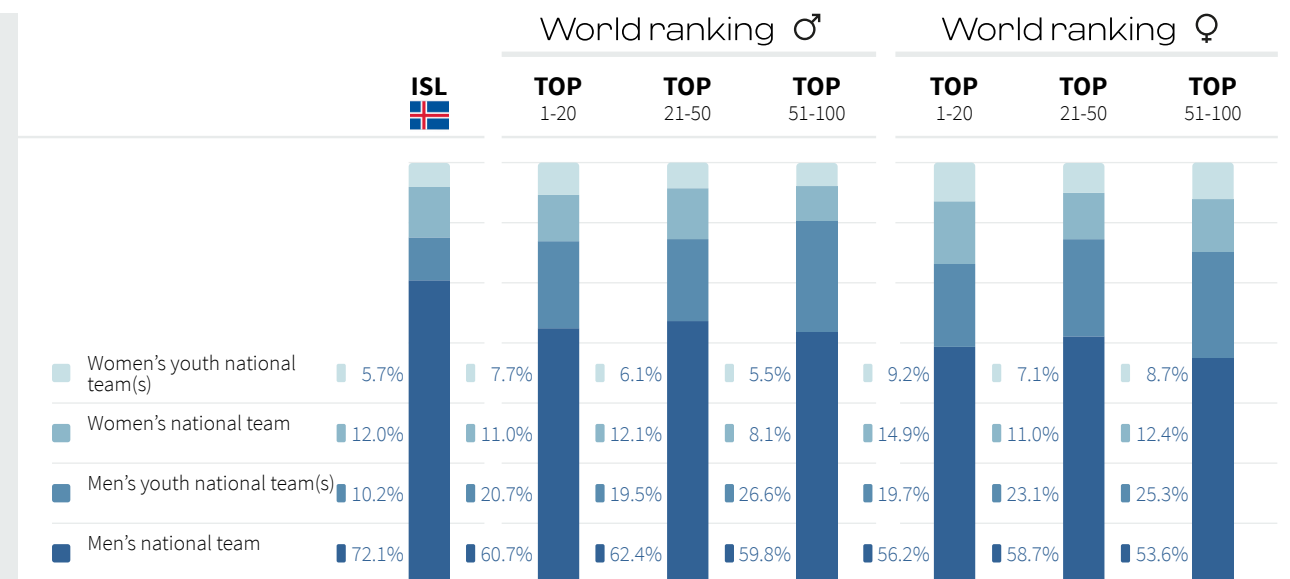
Illustration 2.6



MAs in the top 100 spend over 80% of their national team budget on men's youth and senior national teams.

As shown below, approximately 60% of all money spent by the top 100 MAs on their national teams is allocated to the senior men's squad, with men's youth national teams representing the second largest spend with investments ranging from 19.5% (in MAs ranked 21-50) to 26.6% (in MAs ranked 51-100) of the overall spend. However, when based upon the women's world ranking, the MAs in the top 20 spend a greater amount on their senior and women's youth national teams with a combined investment of 24.1% of the overall budget.

Illustration 2.7



Finding

Budget planning process of the national teams

- The men's national-team budget is operated initially by the team managers. Based on the needs of the team's international competitions, they coordinate the activity plan with the Technical Director (TD), who then approaches the Finance Director (FD) and the General Secretary (GS). The GS presents the draft budget to the Board for its approval.
- The women's national team manager provides the activity plan to the TD, who discusses it with the GS and FD. The GS translates the activity plan into a budget and creates a draft budget together with the FD to be discussed at Board level.
- The budget process for both the boys' and girls' national teams works similar to that for the senior teams.

Human resources

Elite national teams require a variety of support staff working behind the scenes in order to function at a high standard. Employing the necessary specialists – and in correct numbers – is a crucial process for guaranteeing tangible results in international competitions. As international football is the highest level of the game, the backroom staff should match the calibre of the players with whom they work.

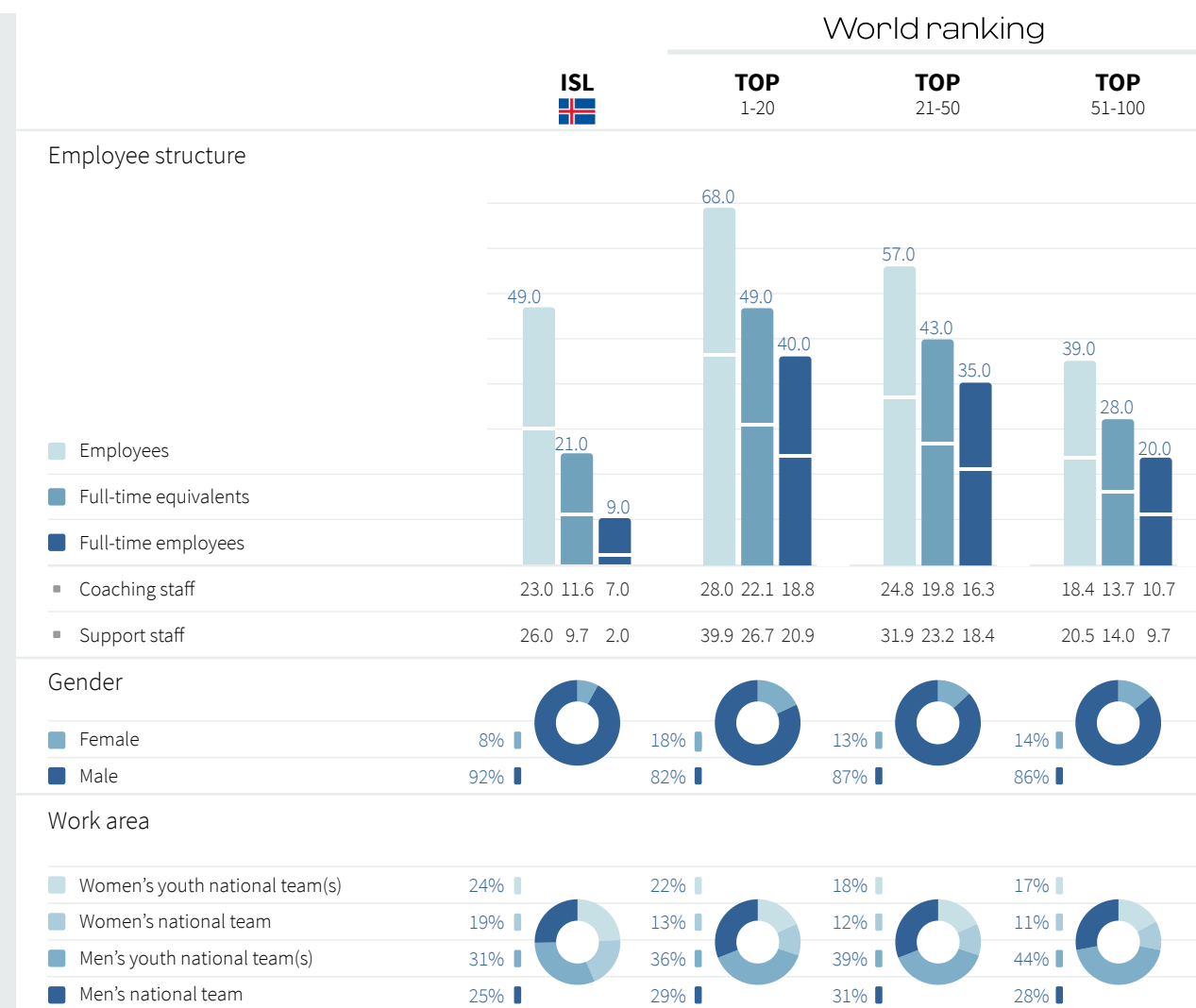
National team staff overview

A balanced allocation of staff can optimise the processes and performances of an association's national teams. Included below are the total numbers of employees for the men's national team, the women's national team, the men's youth national teams, and the women's youth national teams. We have also analysed how many of these employees are full-time as well as the full-time equivalent of all employees working for the national teams. One FTE is equivalent to one person working full-time. Note: the data reflects the staffing situation in January 2020. Staff changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic are not taken into account.

The top 20 MAs employ more staff to support their national teams than those ranked lower in the top 100.

86% of the staff attached to the senior and youth national teams of the top 100 MAs are male. Furthermore, approximately 70% of the national team workforce across the top 100 associations are dedicated to the men's national teams at youth and senior levels.

Illustration 2.8



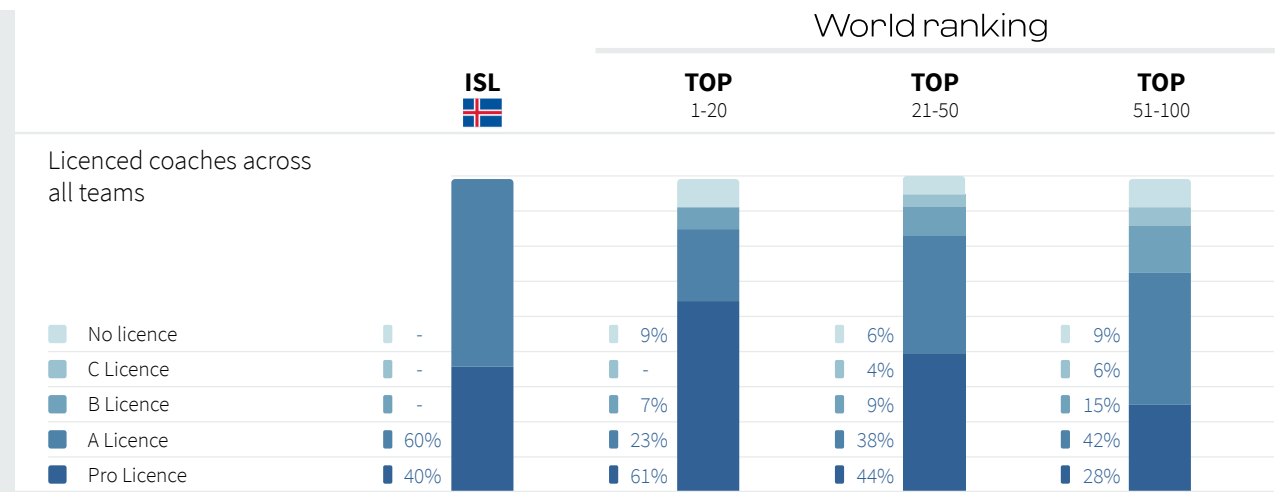
Coaching staff qualifications

The level of qualifications obtained by the coaching staff is an important aspect of any national team's human resources. Below is a chart which displays the various types of coaching licences obtained by the head and assistant coaches of your national teams.

Top 20 MAs have the highest percentage of Pro Licence coaches at national team level.

61% of the coaches working for the top 20 MAs have a Pro Licence, a figure that falls to 44% and 28% in the 21-50 and 51-100 ranking groups respectively. However, the top 50 MAs have over 80% of national coaches qualified at either Pro or A Licence level compared to 70% in MAs ranked 51-100.

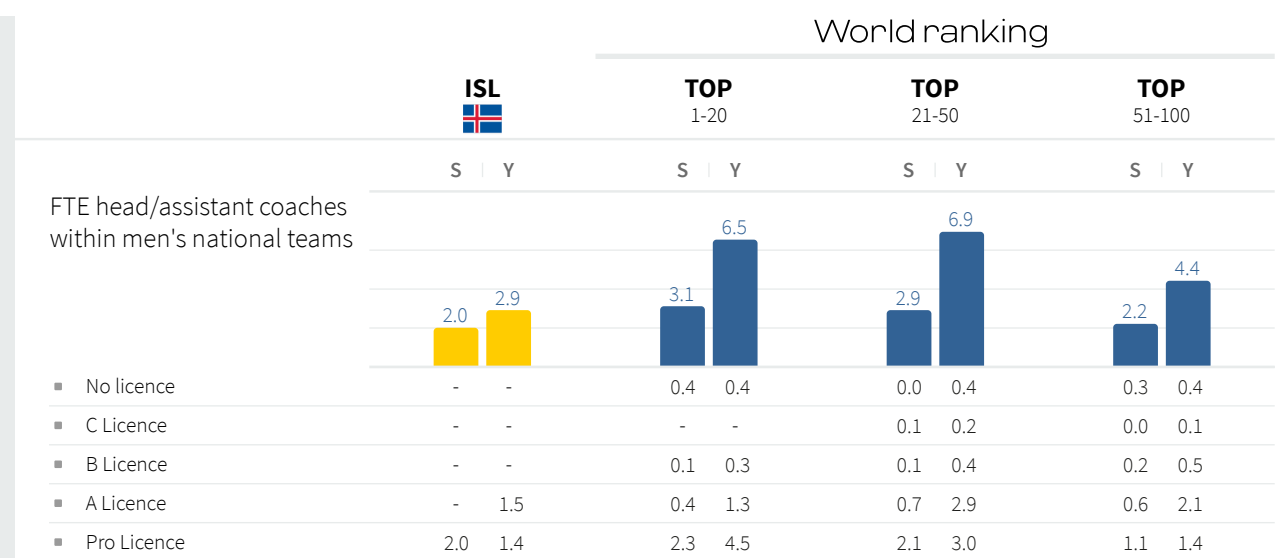
Illustration 2.9



Top 20 MAs have approximately 2.7 times more FTE Pro Licence coaches working across all men's squads than MAs ranked 51-100.

At senior level, the top 50 MAs have a similar FTE number of Pro Licence coaches, with top 20 MAs having 2.35 and MAs ranked 21-50 having 2.08. At youth level, the gap widens between youth and senior across the top 100, with the top 20 MAs having 4.45 FTE Pro Licence coaches compared to 2.97 and 1.44 for MAs ranked 21-50 and 51-100 respectively. This shows that across men's national teams, leading MAs have more highly qualified coaches to support their players.

Illustration 2.10

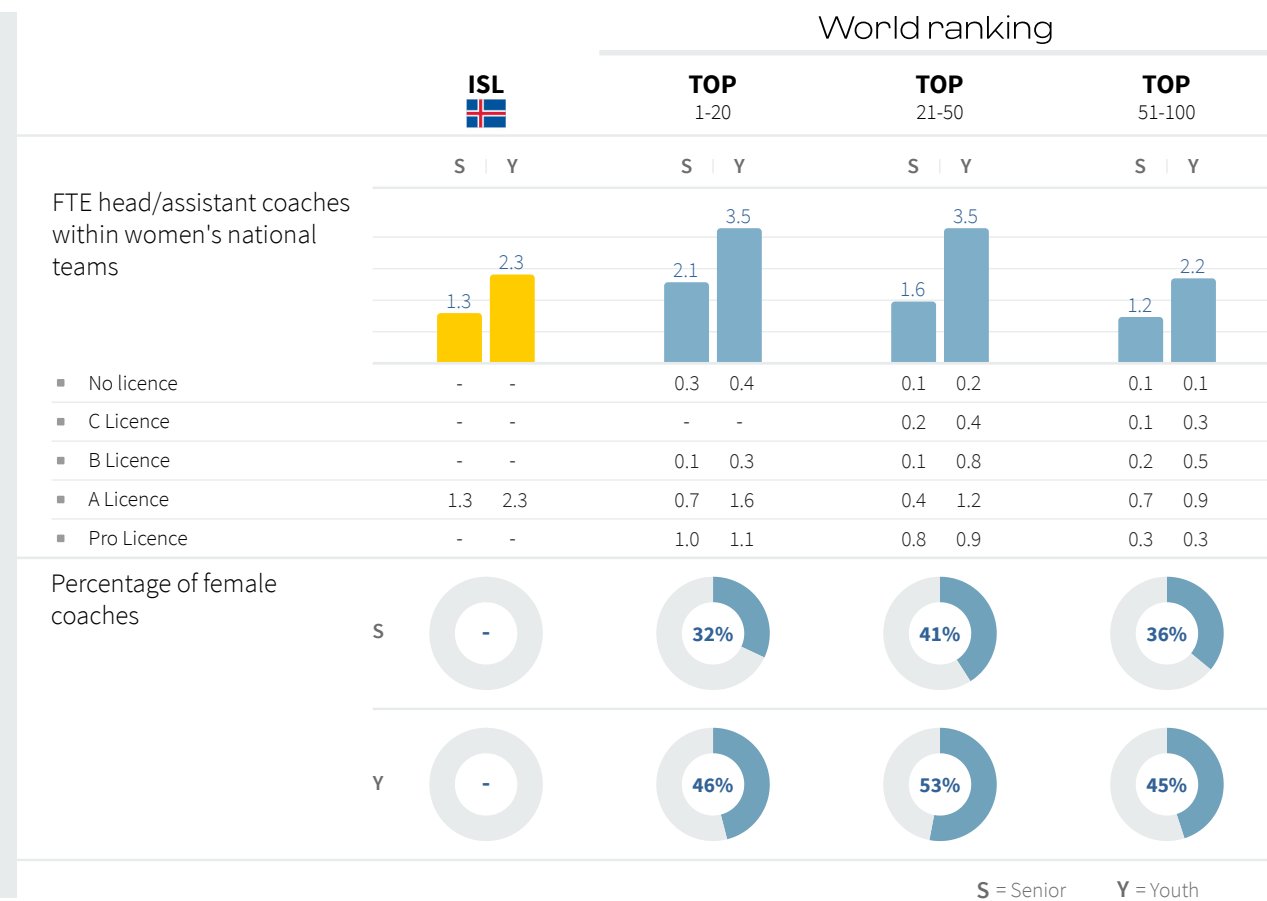




The greatest percentage of female senior women's team coaches is in the top 21-50 MAs, with 41%.

The top 20 MAs have the most number of Pro Licence coaches (1.0) at senior level, with the MAs ranked 51-100 having the least (0.3). Together with top 20 countries, MAs ranked 21-50 share the highest number of coaches (3.5) working with youth national teams.

Illustration 2.11



Infrastructure

The pitches that national teams train and play on are at the pinnacle of a country's footballing infrastructure. Having a high standard of facilities that are readily accessible for the national teams is key to the development and competitive progression of the association across all squads, both youth and senior. Based upon the perceived ratings provided by your association, the illustration below presents the quality of both the training and home pitches used by your national teams.

Illustration 2.12



Finding

Quality of pitches available to the national teams

- The national stadium is used for men's national team home matches and training. The facilities and pitch are not up to the required standards, and the capacity is a limitation to host more fans and raise revenues.
- The WNT uses the same stadium for their home matches and training. It is big enough for women's games. It was recently upgraded with cameras for match analysis.
- The men's and women's youth national teams rent club facilities for training programmes. This infrastructure, with artificial pitches, is of average quality for the men and of good quality for the women. The availability of grass pitches may be a challenge due to weather conditions. For home games, good stadiums, sometimes with grass pitches, are used. Most games are played abroad.
- There is a need for a national training centre, especially for the youth teams' preparation and the KSI Talent Programme.





2.3 Processes of the senior national teams

This chapter analyses the mechanisms in place to support the work of the men's and women's senior national teams in their quest for international success. It is widely known that the relative success of these teams can have a substantial impact upon the growth of the game in the country, both through the financial facet of investments and endorsements into the sport and from a surge in participation across both male and female domains.

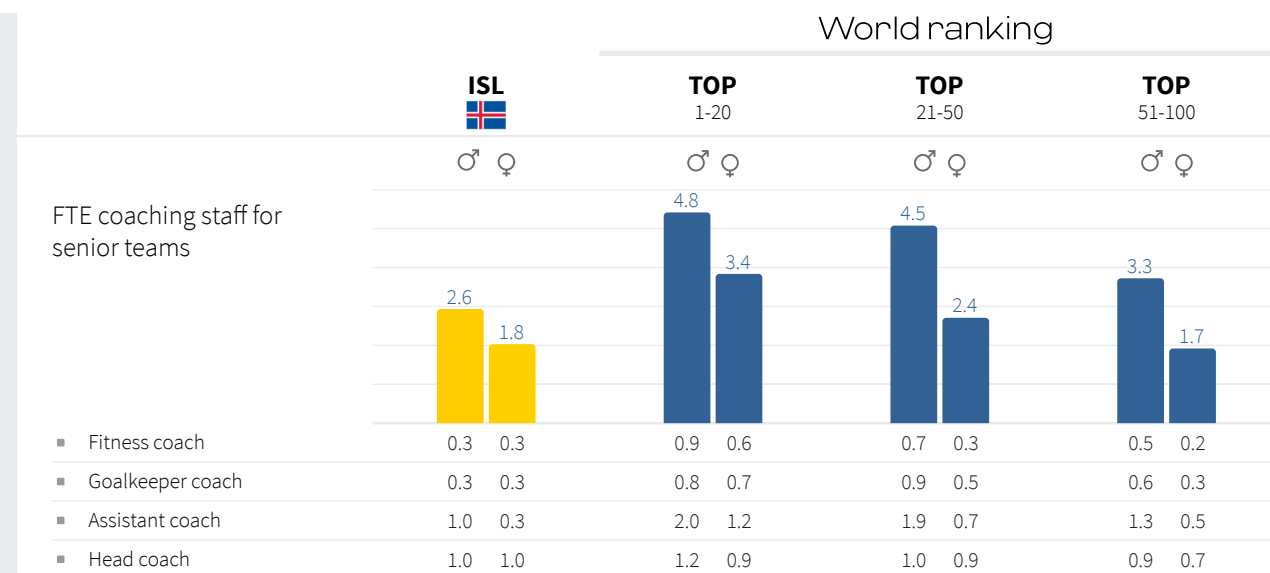
Coaching staff

Having the right number of necessary coaching staff is important for the overall functioning of a national team. The number of people employed by your national teams in these roles is displayed below in absolute numbers (full-time equivalents).

MA's in the top 20 have the largest coaching staff cohort at senior level.

The top 20 women's senior national teams are more resourced in the areas of fitness, goalkeeping and assistant coaches compared to their lower-ranked counterparts. The top 20 men's senior national teams follow a similar trend, except for goalkeeping, as MA's ranked 21-50 have the most resources in this area.

Illustration 2.13



Team schedule

Like any football team, national teams need to guarantee their players playing time and training sessions to ensure that they develop. As national team players are primarily occupied by their club duties throughout the year, it is important that national teams allot enough time in their calendar so that players and coaching staff can gel as their own group.

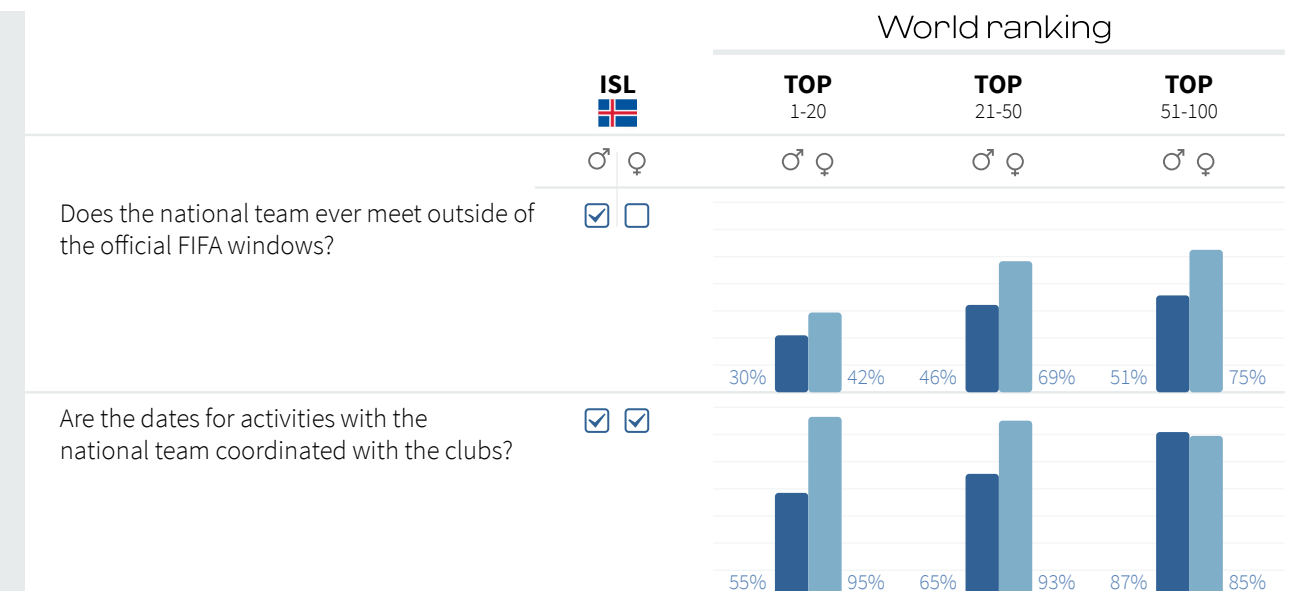
Calendar and club coordination

The windows for national teams to meet in a calendar year are limited. Therefore, it is crucial for national teams to plan and prepare appropriately throughout the year to maximise the time available with the players. Additionally, communication between national teams and domestic clubs is necessary to ensure the smooth transition of players to and from national teams. Whether your national teams meet outside official FIFA windows – and whether these teams coordinate national team activities with domestic clubs – can be seen in the following illustration.

MA's ranked outside of the top 50 are more likely to meet outside of official FIFA windows.

51% of men's teams and 75% of women's teams ranked 51-100 meet outside of official FIFA windows. Furthermore, these teams are more likely to coordinate the senior men's dates with the associated clubs. Across the top 100 MA's, dates for women's activities are more likely to be coordinated with clubs than dates for men's activities.

Illustration 2.14



Finding

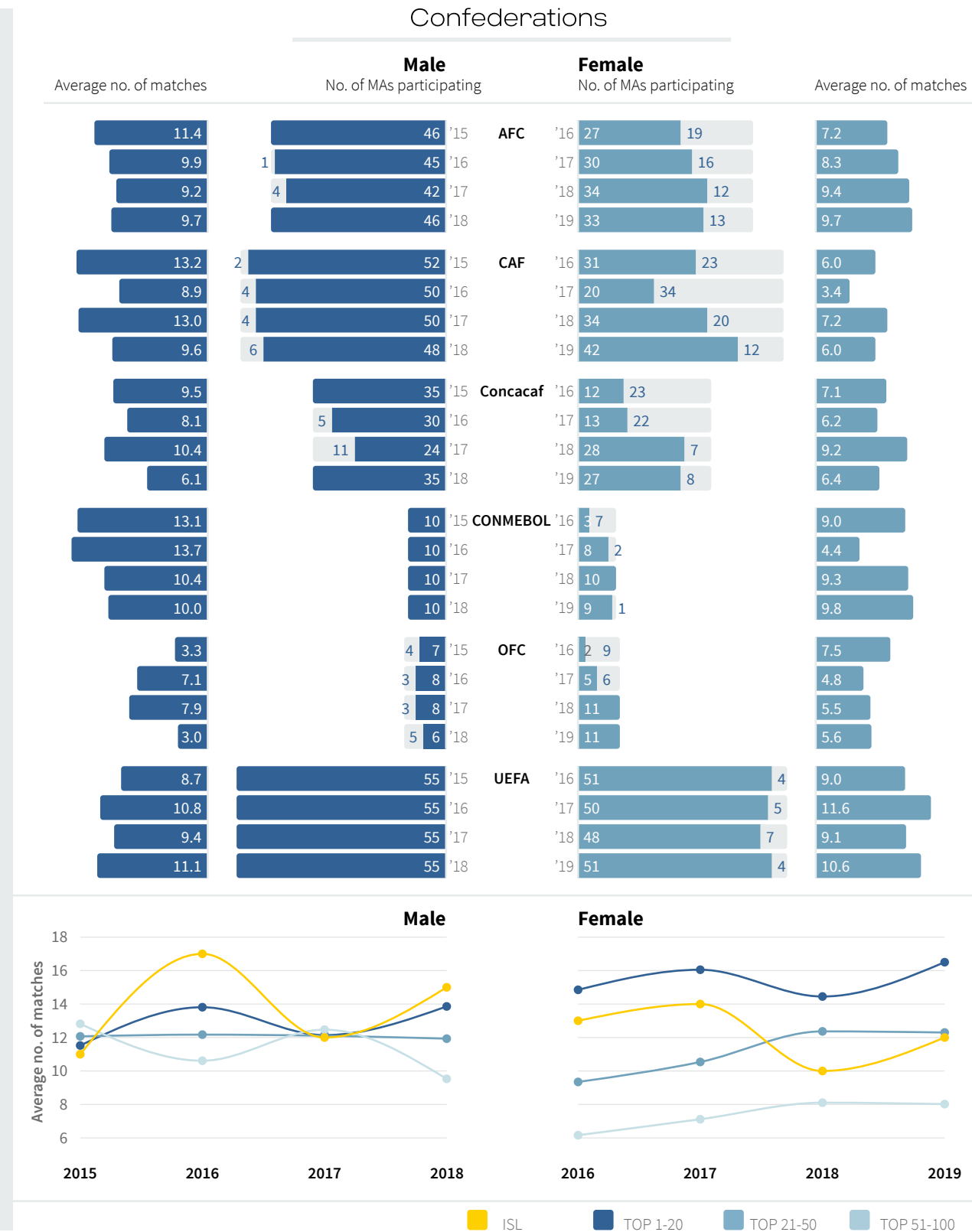
Cooperation with domestic clubs regarding the release of senior players

- The men's national team manager is responsible for sending a formal release letter to the clubs, following FIFA regulations. Four weeks prior to national team activity, the KSI sends pre-release papers for 30 players. One week before, the final squad is announced.
- FIFA regulations also act as the only agreement for the coordination of activities for the women's national team. The formal letters to release players and the communication between KSI coaches and club coaches on player matters are the only cooperation.
- As the coordination of activities between the KSI and clubs is according to FIFA international windows, issues surrounding the release of players may arise if there is an initiative to call up players outside of an official window.

Competitive playing opportunities

Playing competitive international games is crucial to the development of players and for the future success of the senior national team. The following illustration shows the total number of official and friendly matches played by your men's and women's senior national teams. The timeframes are based on their respective World Cup cycles (men's: 2015-2018; women's: 2016-2019). Illustration 2.15 also shows the number of senior national teams per confederation that have played at least one match and the average number of games that each team played per year in their respective World Cup cycles.

Illustration 2.15



Finding

Appropriate number of matches and training days for the senior national teams

- The FIFA international windows are used by the MNT to play the usual double-header matches. They play a high number of matches every year, consistent with the world's top countries.
- Given the tight schedule of the FIFA windows, MNT coaching staff try to maximise their training programme. The staff would like to have more days available within the FIFA windows to provide a more structured training programme.
- The WNT does not use all available FIFA dates, especially for friendlies. The fact that Iceland is an island makes it expensive for Icelandic teams to travel abroad or for other teams to travel to Iceland. Budget restrictions hinder playing a high number of matches every year.
- WNT training camps are also limited to FIFA windows. Overseas players are only released for official dates, and the KSI does not organise training camps for players playing in Iceland.

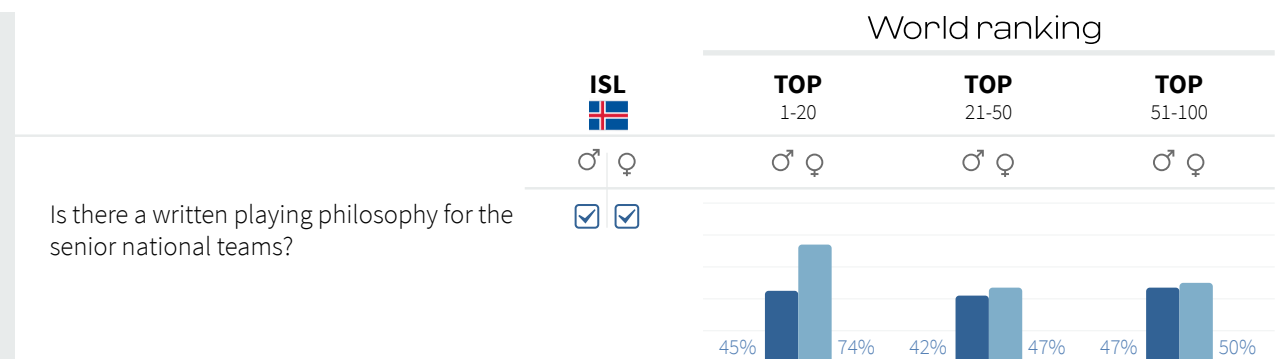
Playing philosophy

A playing philosophy can help to sustain certain performance standards in a national team over a prolonged period and provide a template for incoming coaches and players to follow. Subsequently, an overarching philosophy is invaluable to the long-term stability of any national team, giving it a solid foundation to achieve its performance goals.

A national playing philosophy is more prevalent across senior women's teams.

54% of women's senior national teams in the top 100 have a playing philosophy, compared to 45% for men's national teams. The top 20 women's MAs have the highest percentage at 74%, compared to 45% for the men's in the same ranking group.

Illustration 2.16





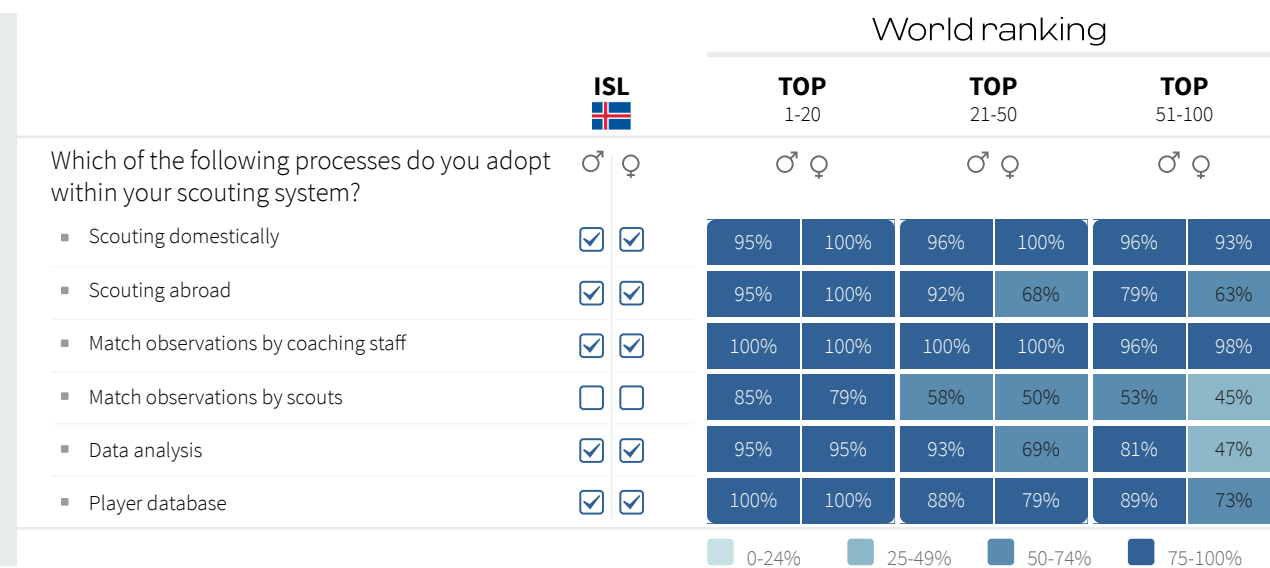
Scouting and team selection

The national team is meant to be made up of the best players available to that country. The scouting process is meant to reflect this. Scouting and selection should be based on proven practices so that a promising squad can be formed. The following table identifies the scouting and selection practices that your association and the top 100 associations undertake.

Top 20 MAs adopt a more comprehensive scouting system at senior level.

Member associations in the top 20 collectively utilise a greater array of processes as part of their scouting system. Furthermore, use of data analysis and the production of a player database is commonplace in the top 20.

Illustration 2.17



Finding

The scouting and selection process for the senior national teams

- The MNT has a list of around 40 players, most of whom play abroad. Past national team performances and current club performances are two of the selection criteria. Coaches maintain close communications with the players.
- The WNT coaches have a good overview of all potential players in the domestic league. They attend all matches and have regular communication on these players' performances. Budget is available for these coaches to visit players playing abroad. The final selection is purely by the head coach.
- Scouting of both MNT and WNT players is taken care of by technical staff, who constantly monitor players prior to them being selected for the team. Watching games live, personally and via Wyscout, besides talking to club coaches, are the main scouting sources. The youth national team system is also considered, due to the good cooperation, to promote young players.

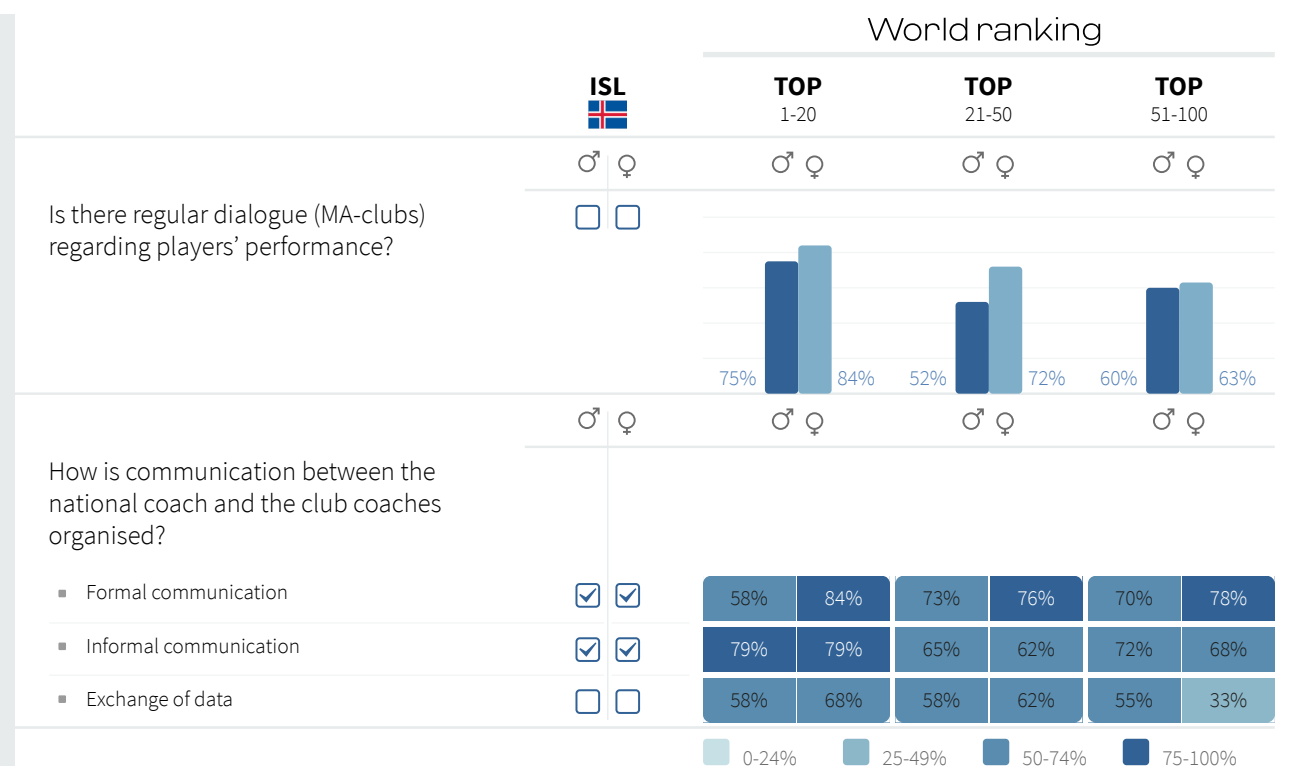
Communication with club coaches

The way the football season is structured means that national team players (or players under consideration for national team selection) will play most minutes for their club teams, resulting in club coaches having more opportunity to assess them. Considering the informed opinions of club coaches can have great value for national teams when evaluating a player's form, development and potential. The ways in which the national teams of your association carry out communication with club coaches can be seen below.

A greater percentage of the top 20 MAs communicate regularly with clubs on player performance than their lower-ranked counterparts.

84% of women's teams and 75% of men's teams of MAs ranked in the top 20 have regular contact with clubs on player performance. Women's teams ranked 51-100 and top 21-50 men's teams are least likely to form such relationships. Furthermore, a greater percentage of top 20 MAs exchange data with clubs.

Illustration 2.18



Finding

Communication with domestic club coaches

- The communication between MNT coaches and club coaches varies from club to club. The MNT staff value a good relationship and try to establish communication channels. There are closer relationships with domestic club coaches than with overseas coaches. The MNT staff do not interfere with the way players train at their clubs.
- When communication channels are open, information is shared informally on player performances, physical data and health.
- The WNT coach's communication with club coaches is rather informal. With overseas coaches, it is mainly over the phone. The WNT coach visits club games where possible.
- Regular communication around the WNT players' performance is not common. Performance reports are not shared with clubs, and only the fitness coach shares fitness data with overseas clubs, informally and upon request.

2.4 Processes of the Youth National teams

This section delves into the working practices of the youth national teams in discovering and nurturing the best talent in the country, with the aim of creating a senior national team for the future. The developmental initiatives that are performed within the youth national team set-up are vital in creating an elite learning environment, not only for players, but also for national team staff. These initiatives maximise the development opportunities that the players are exposed to and help to strengthen the national talent pool, sufficient playing opportunities being the most important measure.

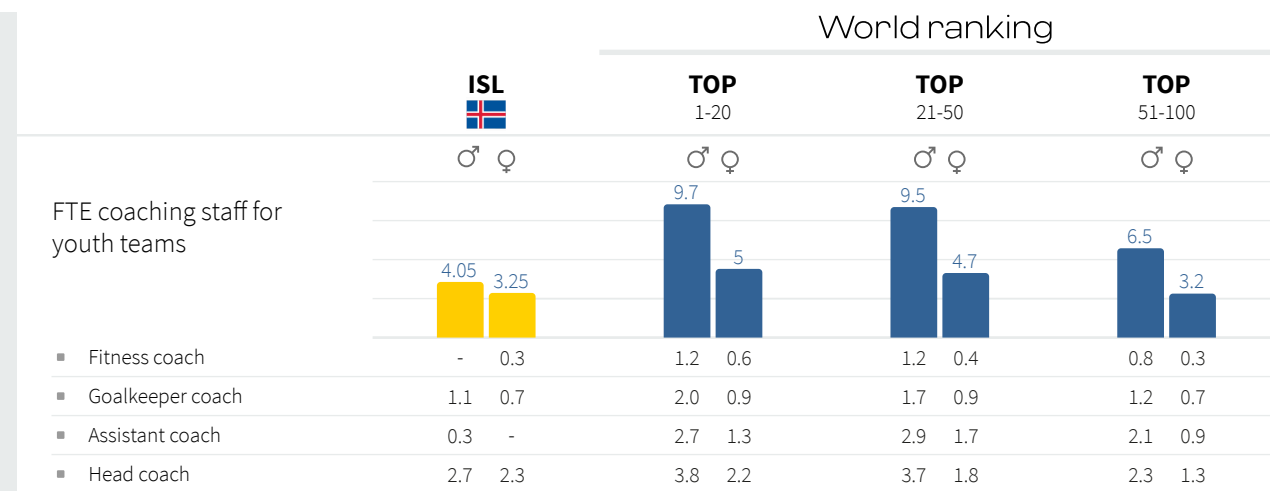
Coaching staff

Having a coaching set-up that consists of the right number of staff is just as important for youth national teams as it is for their senior equivalents. The number of people that your men's and women's youth national teams employ in these coaching roles is shown below in absolute numbers.

Men's youth national teams have a more comprehensive coaching team than women's youth national teams.

Across the top 100 MAs, men's youth national teams have a greater number of coaching staff than women's youth national teams. Moreover, the top 50 MAs have greater staffing resources across both genders than their lower-ranked competitors.

Illustration 2.19



Team schedule

Youth national teams may find gathering outside of official international schedules necessary. Training camps, friendly matches, domestic tournaments and participation in various competition set-ups are an essential part of player and team development. Such events guarantee the best possible preparation for official tournaments.

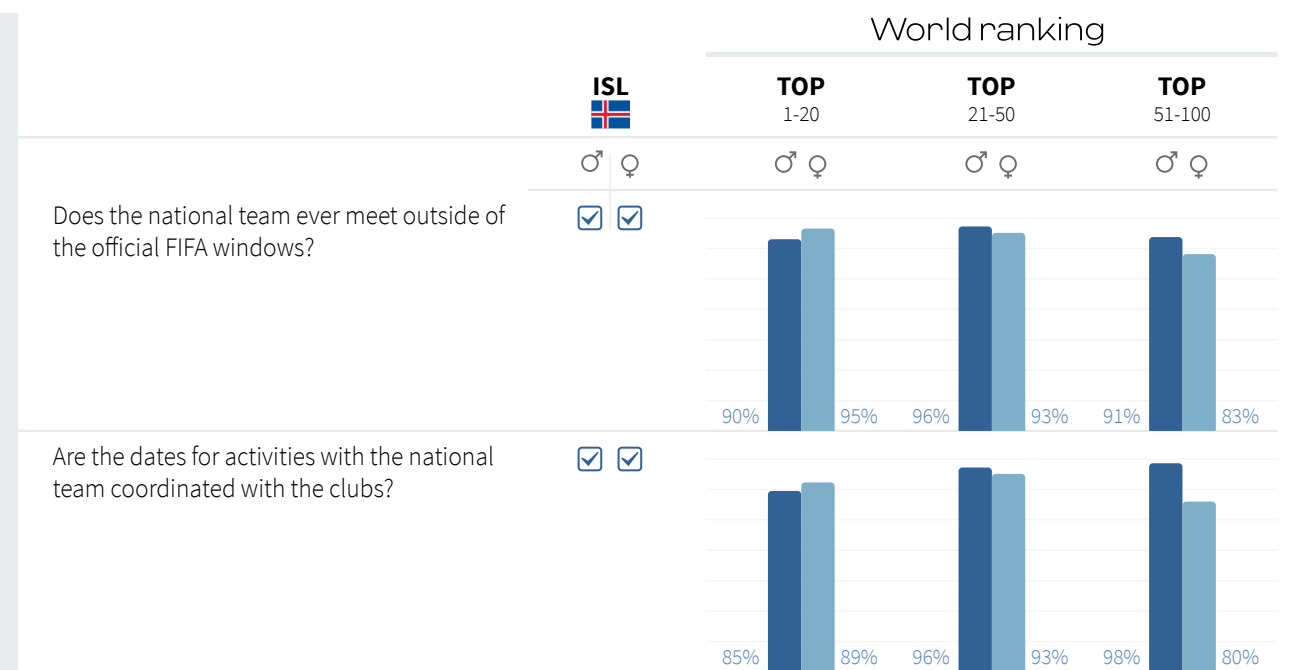
Calendar and club coordination

Whether your youth national teams meet outside of official FIFA windows – and whether these teams coordinate national team activities with domestic clubs – is shown below.

92% of the top 100 MAs have their men's youth teams meet outside of official FIFA windows.

Comparably, across the top 100, 88% of MAs have their women's youth teams meet outside of official FIFA windows. Furthermore, 86% of women's youth national teams and 95% of men's youth national teams coordinate activities with their domestic clubs.

Illustration 2.20



Finding

Agreements and cooperation with domestic clubs regarding the release of youth players

- All youth national teams (YNT) follow the FIFA dates and the schedule of activities is shared with the clubs in advance. Training camps are usually held in the winter, when there are no domestic competitions.
- The formal FIFA player release agreements are used and there have never been any issues within the FIFA windows. Activities outside of the FIFA windows can pose challenges in terms of the release of older players who compete abroad (mostly for the men's U-19 and U-21 national teams) and particularly when there is a lot of travelling involved.
- Besides sharing the dates for the YNT activities, the cooperation between the KSI and the domestic clubs is limited to informal relationships between YNT coaches and club coaches.
- The cooperation with foreign clubs is more professional and varies depending on the status of the clubs, whilst the communication with the domestic clubs is more straightforward.

Competitive playing opportunities

Playing both friendly and competitive international matches is essential for giving youth players more experience. Illustration 2.21a and 2.21b present the number of official matches and active teams during the last youth World Cup cycle (men's: 2018-2019; women's: 2017-2018) per confederation for the U-16/U-17 and U-19/U-20 age groups respectively. Furthermore, Illustration 2.22 presents the official number of matches (FIFA or confederation competitions) played by your U-16/U-17 and U-19/U-20 men's and women's youth national teams in comparison to their counterparts over the same youth World Cup cycle.

Illustration 2.21a

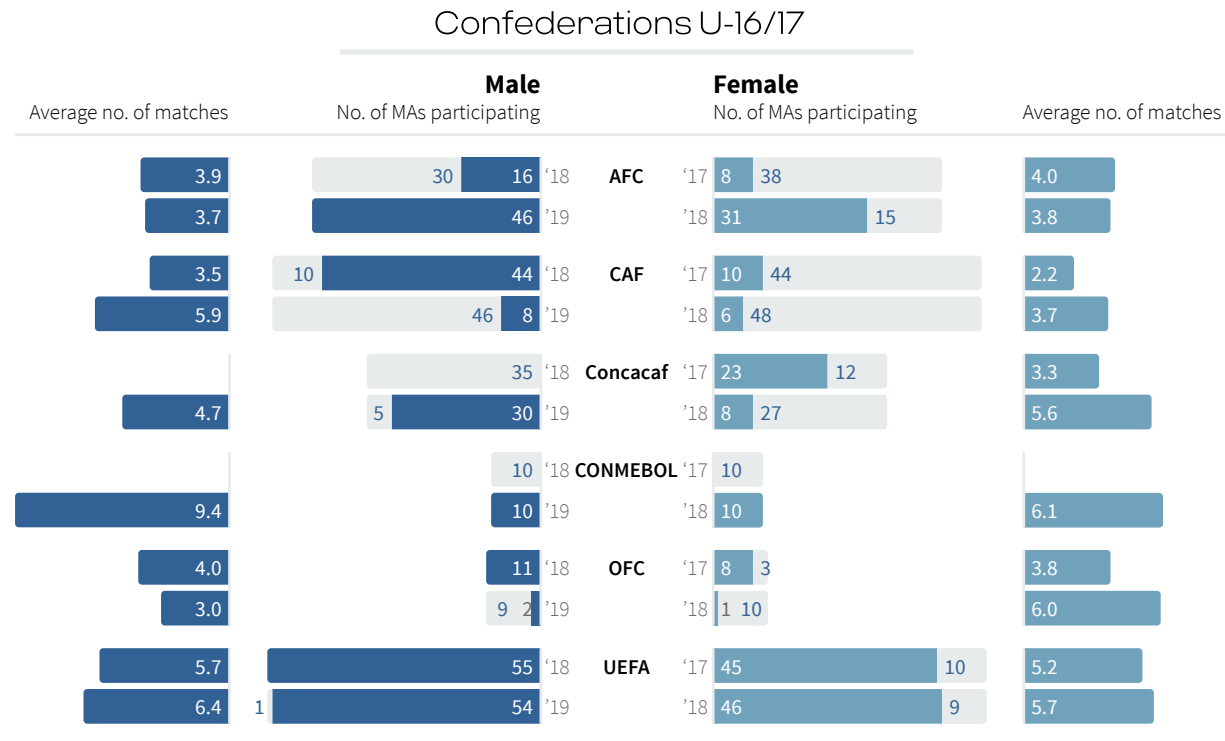


Illustration 2.21b

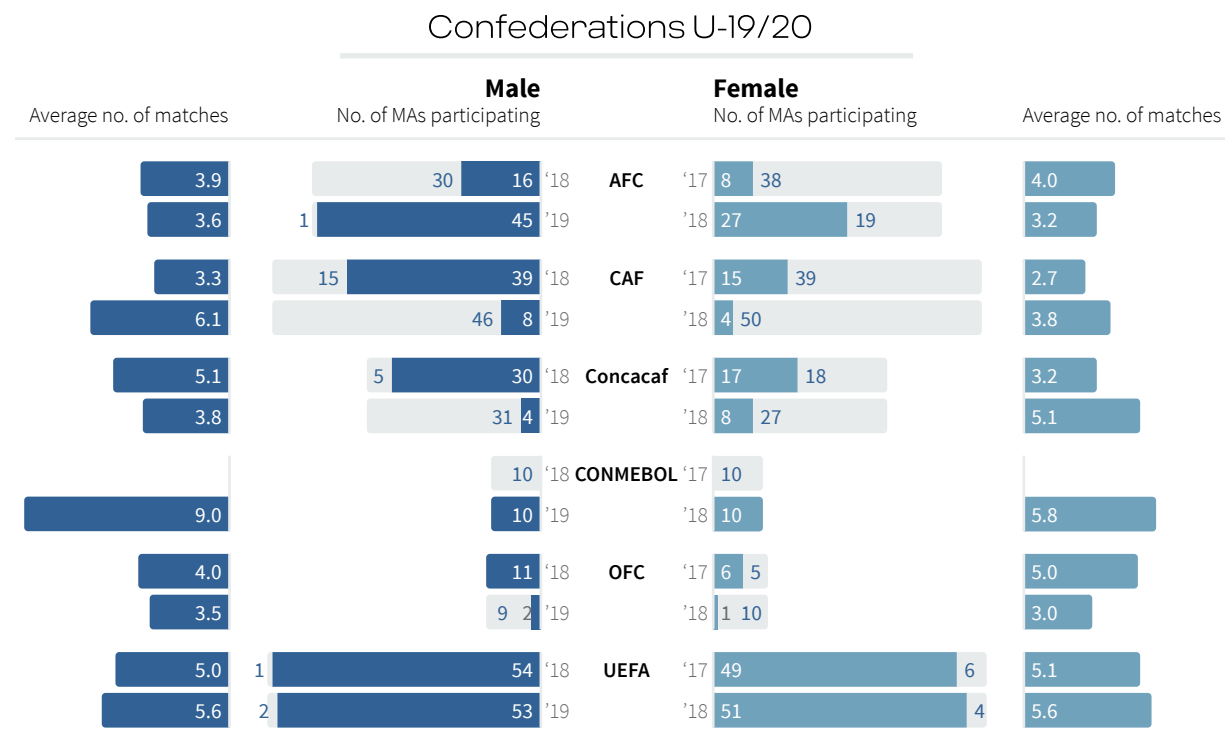
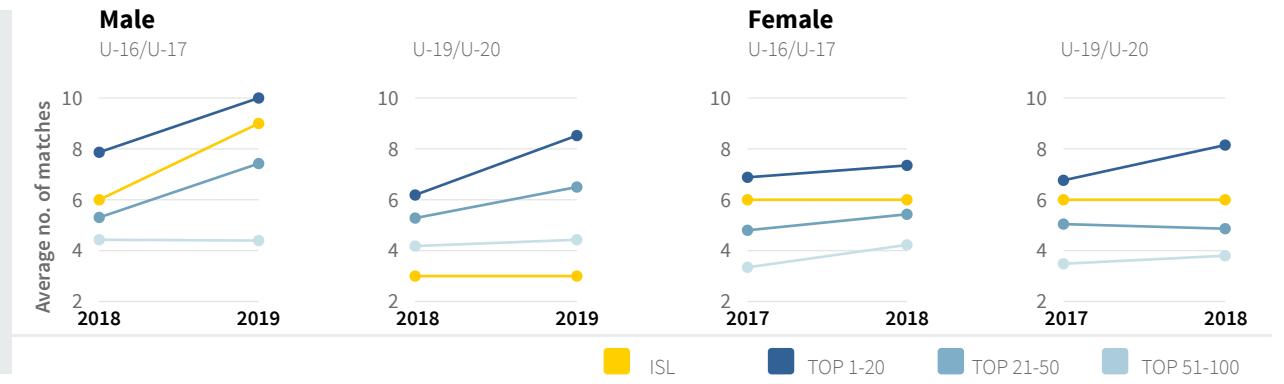


Illustration 2.22



Finding

Appropriate number of matches and training days for the youth national teams

- The number of competitive matches played by all YNTs depends on team results. When teams progress through qualification rounds and reach finals, the number of matches is adequate for player development.
- The associated costs mean that not all the YNTs play an appropriate number of friendlies. As a result, the MA does not use all available FIFA dates to play friendlies.
- The training time for the men's youth national teams (MYNT) varies per age group. Younger teams hold training camps outside of the FIFA windows (during the winter), whereas the sessions for the U-19 and U-21 teams are limited to FIFA dates as this is the only time when overseas players are released.
- On the women's side, the winter training camps, held when the leagues have finished, are highly valued and considered to offer sufficient training opportunities.

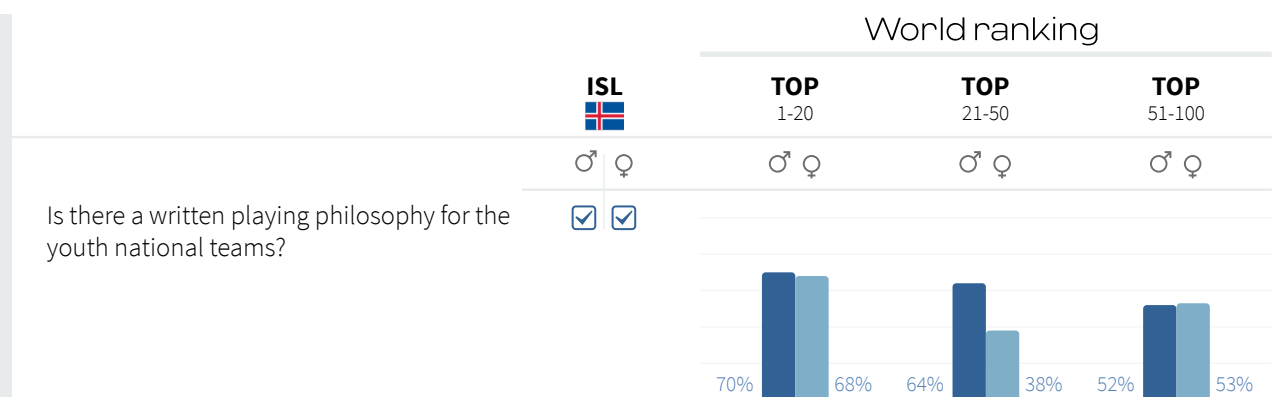
Playing philosophy

Having youth national teams adhere to an overarching playing philosophy can assist in developing players in a way that will make them valuable assets to the senior national team in the years to come. The table below shows whether your national teams have a written playing philosophy.

Top 20 MAs are more likely to have a national playing philosophy at youth level.

More than 68% of MAs ranked in the top 20 have a national playing philosophy. Associations ranked 51-100 have the lowest percentage supporting a written playing philosophy for their men's youth national teams, whereas for women's youth national teams, the MAs ranked 21-50 have the lowest percentage at only 38%.

Illustration 2.23



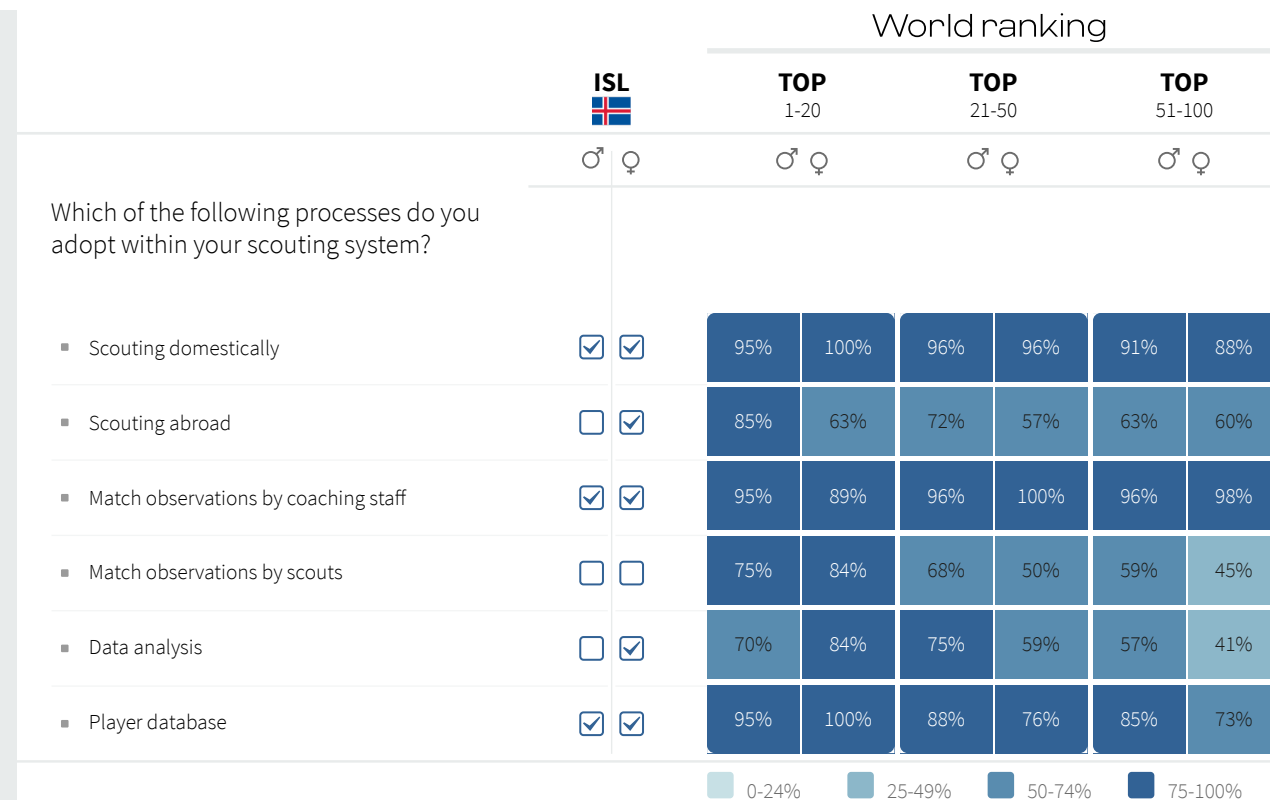
Scouting and team selection

An effective scouting and team selection system is a rewarding practice in youth football. Identifying players with a natural aptitude for the game early on, and on an ongoing basis, allows youth national teams to optimise these young players' potential. The graph below shows the processes related to effective scouting that your youth national teams undertake.

Top 20 MAs adopt a more comprehensive scouting system at youth level.

85% of men's teams and 63% of women's teams in the top 20 scout abroad for talent, more than any other ranking bracket. Scouting domestically and match observations by the coaching staff are still the most popular methods across the top 100, with top 20 MAs more likely to use a player database at youth level.

Illustration 2.24



Finding

The scouting and selection process for the youth national teams

- Scouting for the YNTs begins with player observation via the KSI Talent Programme (U-14 and U-15), followed by match observation of the youth leagues and discussions with the clubs' heads of youth coaches for the older YNTs. Players are monitored over a longer period of time in domestic competitions and at national-team training camps before the coaches draw up a final squad list.
- On the women's side, the close cooperation with the KSI Talent Programme's Head of Talent ID is key to scouting young players. The women's youth national team (WYNT) scouting system also involves data collected from fitness testing.
- A player profile is available as a guideline when scouting YNT players. Iceland's small population means that it is possible to access all players, but the type of talent that coaches want is not always available. The best players are chosen and the playing style is adjusted to the available talent.

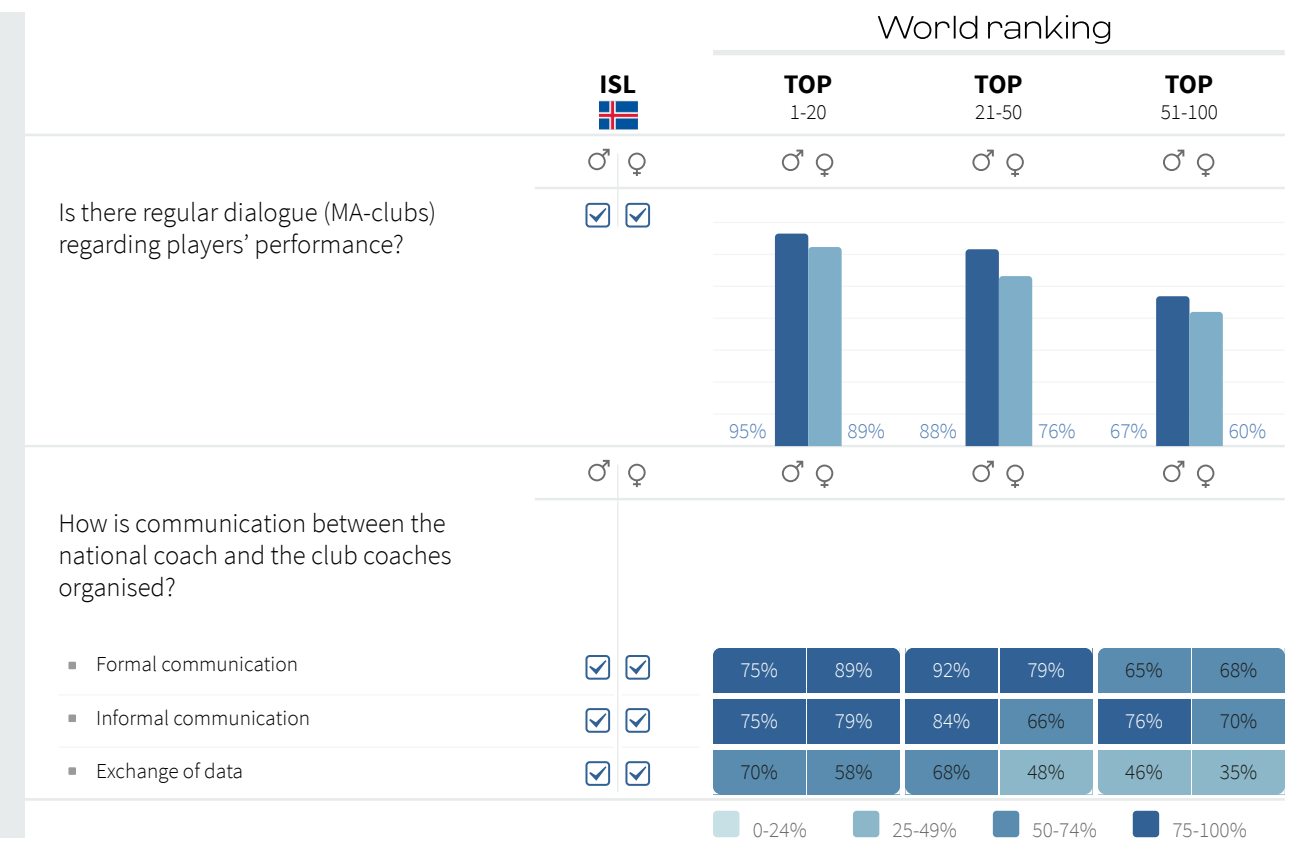
Communication with club coaches

As stated previously, transparent communication with the club coaches of national team players is both a necessary and beneficial exercise. The ways in which the staff working with your association's youth national teams facilitate communication with club coaches are displayed below.

A greater percentage of the top 20 member associations communicate regularly with clubs on player performance than lower-ranked MAs.

95% of men's youth teams and 89% of women's youth teams ranked in the top 20 have regular contact with clubs on player performance. Associations ranked 51-100 are least likely to form such relationships with domestic clubs. Furthermore, a greater percentage of top 20 MAs exchange data with clubs.

Illustration 2.25



Finding

Communication with domestic club coaches

- Communication between the MYNT coaches, clubs' heads of youth coaches and club coaches is good but informal. Player performance feedback on matches is informally shared with club coaches, with an opportunity for clubs to also obtain player performance information at training sessions (upon request).
- The WYNT coaches create an informal environment for knowledge sharing with the club coaches. There is a strong level of cooperation as, besides conversations held during visits to watch matches, club coaches are invited to join the WYNT training sessions. Player performance reports are shared with club coaches.
- As for a more formal set-up, the MA's Technical Director organises meetings every three to four months with YNT coaches and the clubs' heads of youth coaches.
- A new staff structure was introduced in 2017, with WYNT and MYNT head coaches appointed as full-time employees. This has improved the cooperation with clubs and the organisation of youth football.

2.5 Performance support services

This section investigates the access to high-performance expertise and the support frameworks available to the senior men's and women's national teams. This service is vital in terms of making informed decisions to maximise the performance output of both the team and the individual whilst minimising the risk of injury and championing an elite learning environment.

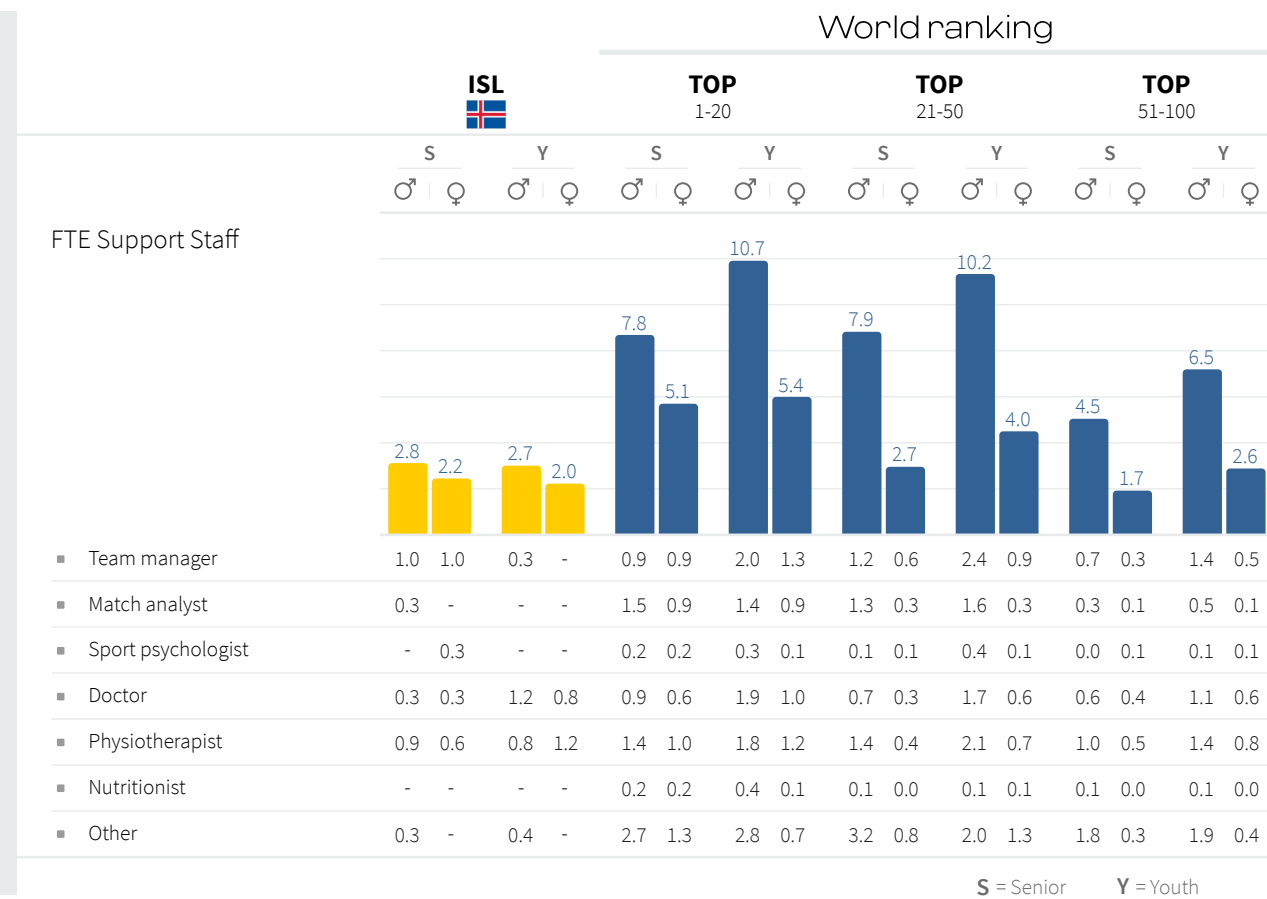
Breakdown of support staff

A healthy distribution of the necessary support staff is needed to sustain the high-level performance standards of national teams. Below is a table that indicates this distribution across your national teams.

Top 20 MAs have a more comprehensive performance support team than their lower-ranked competitors.

MAs ranked in the top 20 have a greater number of performance staff supporting all national squads, except from the top 21-50 senior men's teams. However, women's teams are still considerably under-resourced when compared to the men's teams across all age groups and rankings.

Illustration 2.26



Performance analysis

The following section displays how your national teams implement match analysis. The ability to look at previous matches and to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of a team's performance is a critical process for both team and individual player development. Below is a table that shows the availability of match analysis for the men's and women's national teams at both youth and senior levels.

Performance analysis is used to a greater extent across the top 20 MAs.

Video analysis is used across a multitude of platforms to aid the development of players and coaches to a greater extent in the top 20 MAs. Nations ranked 51-100 use this process the least in supporting player and coach development.

Illustration 2.27



Finding

Performance analysis and its implementation across the national teams

- Cameras were recently installed at the national stadium to record all MNT matches and training sessions. The footage is processed by a match analyst and used for tactical team sessions, individual player development and match analysis.
- The WNT matches and training sessions held at the stadium are recorded and the coach has Wyscout at his disposal. Footage is used to develop the playing style. Wyscout is used to analyse the opposition's playing style.
- WYNT and MYNT matches are recorded and analysed by the coaches. A match analysis system is available and considered to be an important development tool. Footage is used for individual player development and match preparation. Training sessions are usually not recorded, while opposition videos are analysed only where available.
- On account of financial constraints, the MA does not employ a match analyst to work with the WNT, the WYNTs and the MYNTs.



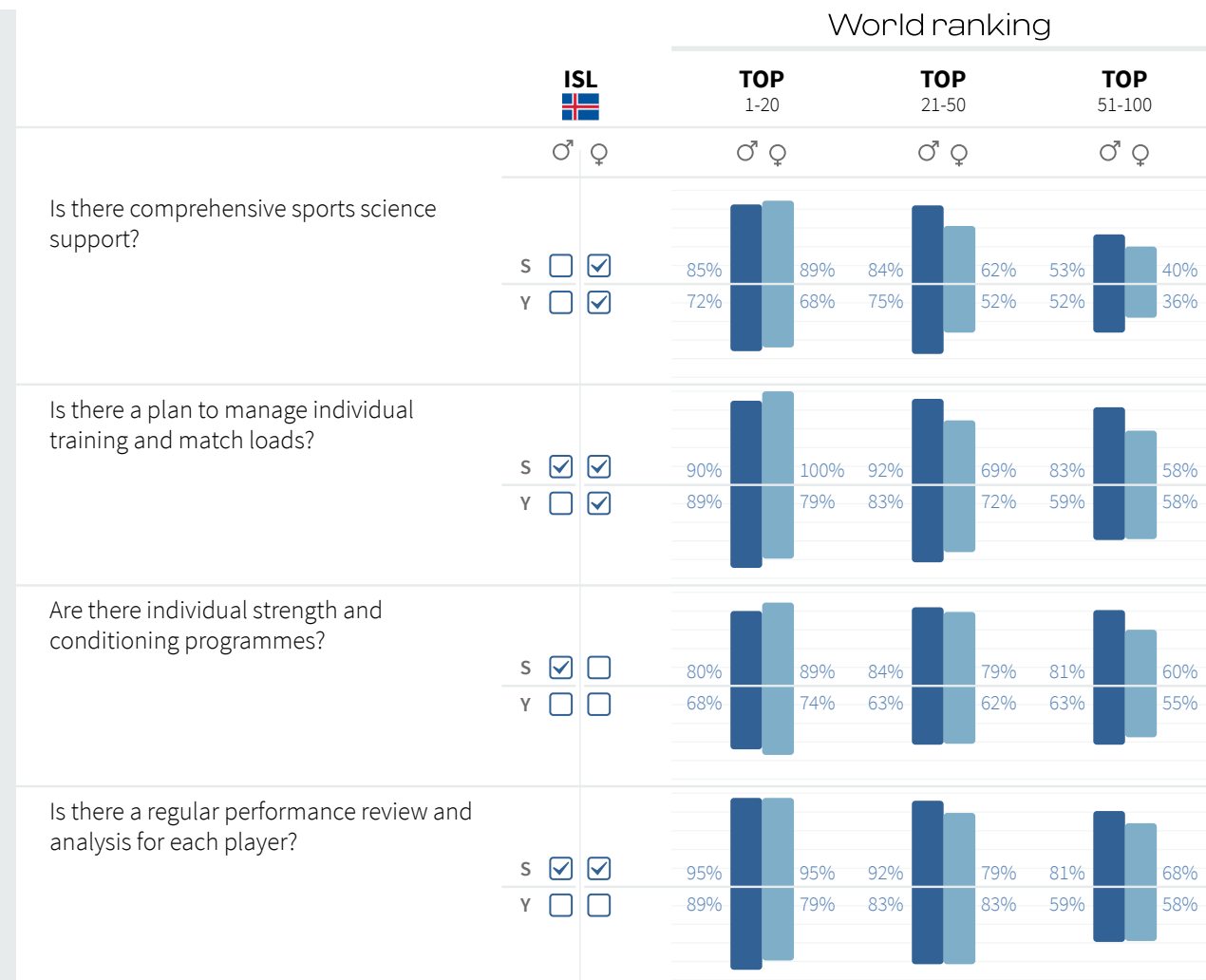
Sports science

Incorporating sports science into national teams is part of the wider multidisciplinary approach that modern football requires. In this way, national teams can discover innovative ways to boost a player's physical and mental performance. The extent to which sports science practices are implemented in your senior and youth national teams can be seen in the following illustration.

Senior national teams of MAs in the top 20 use sports science support to a greater degree than those of lower-ranked MAs.

89% of women's senior national teams in the top 20 have sports science support compared to 48% of MAs ranked 21-100. The same pattern holds true for senior men's national teams, with 85% of senior men's national teams in the top 20 compared to 65% in MAs ranked 21-100. Sports science is less well established at youth level, particularly in the women's game.

Illustration 2.28



Finding

Sports science and its implementation across the national teams

- All MNT players are monitored by GPS technology. The fitness coach analyses GPS data and shares information with the coaches.
- The MYNTs do not have a fitness coach. GPS technology is used by the head coaches of the older age groups during camps to monitor fitness levels. A GPS report on the U-21 players is shared with the clubs. Younger groups are monitored on the basis of their performance.
- A fitness coach works with all of the women's teams, whilst Reykjavík University offers comprehensive sports science support. At least once a year, fitness data is collected from tests involving women's players to build an individual data profile. GPS and rating of perceived exertion tools are used.
- Monitoring the workload of WNT and WYNT players at the clubs is based on the good level of cooperation between coaches. Clubs lead strength and conditioning programmes, which are supported by the fitness coach attached to the WNT and WYNT.

Medical provision

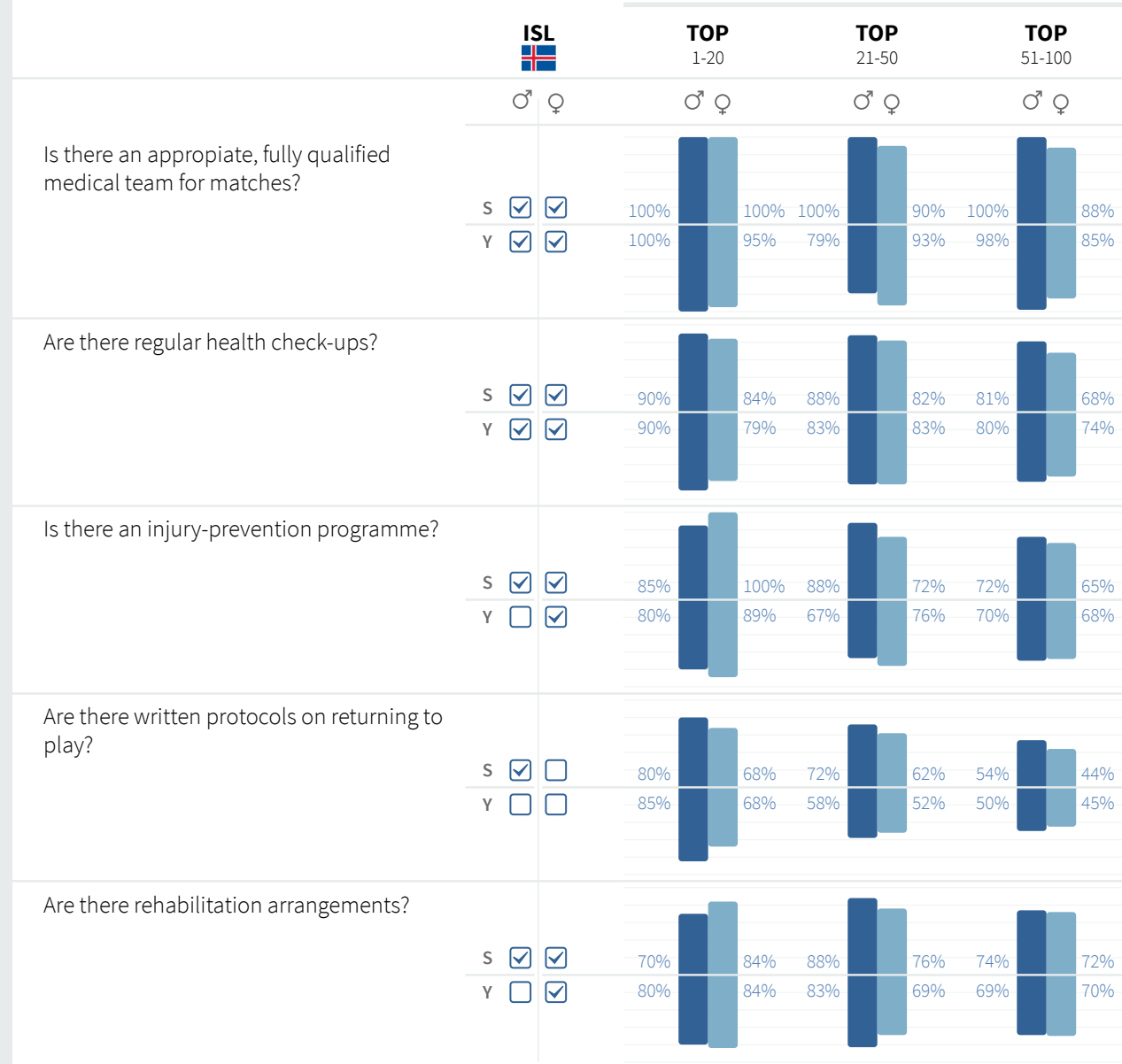
The nature of the international schedule, where tournaments and qualifiers consist of many games in quick succession along with long-distance travel, is particularly demanding on the human body. A fully qualified medical team is needed to deal with injuries as well as to prevent injuries through sound medical advice. Whether your senior and youth national teams have access to an appropriate medical team and its practices is displayed below.

Medical provision is more comprehensive in MAs ranked in the top 20.

All senior men's national teams in the top 100 have access to a qualified medical practitioner. Outside of the top 20, medical provisions and processes appear to be less comprehensive across all teams at both youth and senior levels.



World ranking



Finding

The medical team and its provision across the national teams

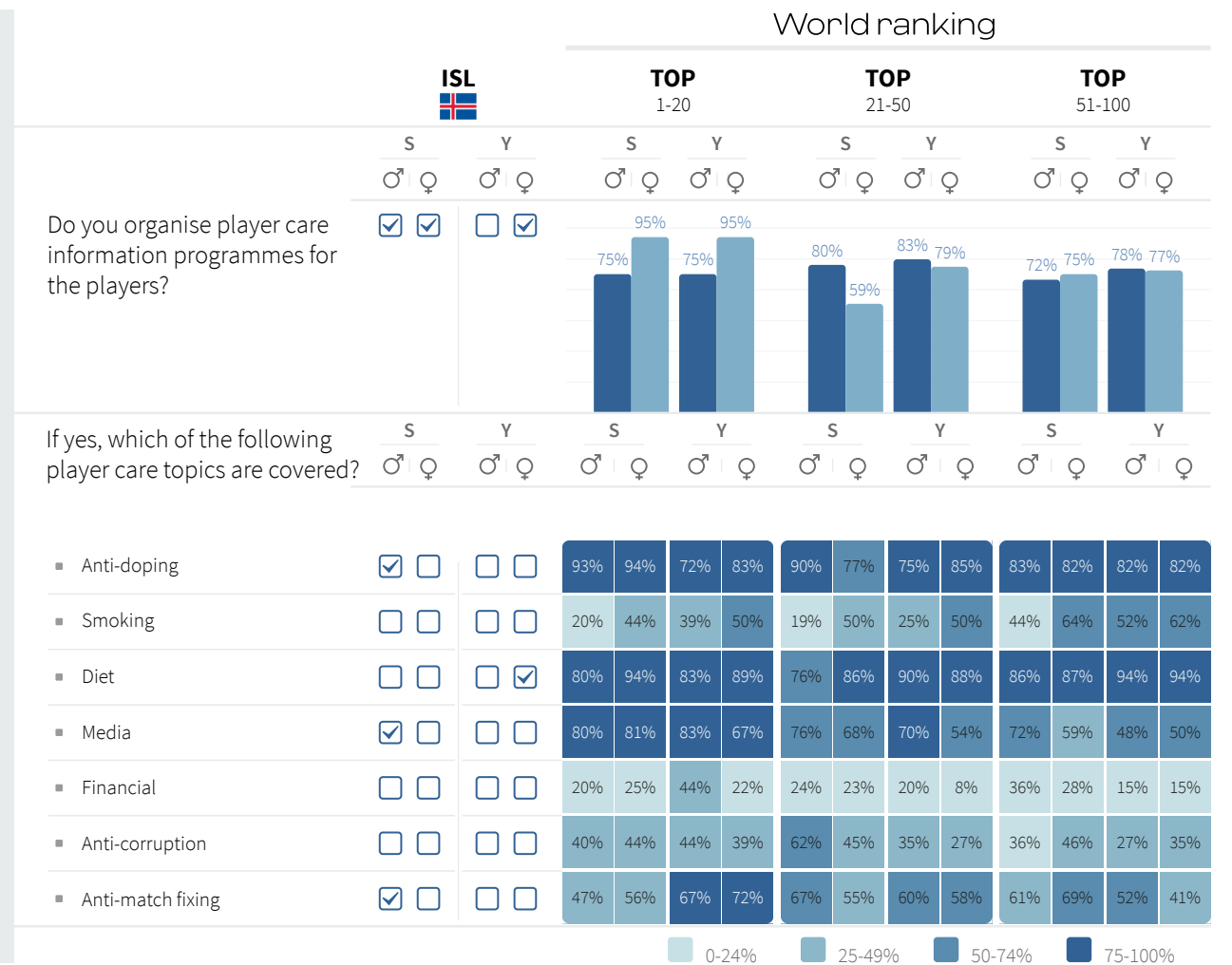
- The MNT medical team is well qualified and offers a high standard of care. The MA's part-time medical staff, consisting of a doctor and several physiotherapists, only join the team during international windows and competitions. The medical staff is highly committed and keeps in touch with players outside of MNT activities, despite not being full-time employees.
- The WNT has two physiotherapists and a doctor available for all matches. The medical provision is of a high standard. Players are given an injury-prevention programme to follow at their clubs.
- All YNT coaches are satisfied with the high-quality service provided by the medical staff. A physiotherapist is available to all teams for both training sessions and matches, whilst doctors are drafted in primarily for matches.
- It was reported that although the clubs are responsible for the rehabilitation of the WYNT players, KSI physiotherapists are always available to offer support.

Player-care programme

A good player-care programme is intrinsically valuable to player well-being as well as to a team's performance. Playing for the national team is a great honour but it comes with a unique set of challenges. Additional player-care support helps players overcome these challenges and gives them the clarity of mind needed to perform at the top level. The two tables below illustrate the aspects of player-care programmes that are provided to your senior and youth national teams.

77% of MAs across the top 100 provide player-care programmes for their national team players.

Women's teams in the top 20 MAs are more likely to have a player-care programme (95%). Moreover, doping, nutrition and media training are the most popular topics for MAs in the top 100.



Holistic education

This section analyses your MA's commitment to the holistic education of youth national team players. There are many reasons for continuing a player's education alongside their playing career. Additionally, the benefits of education are not merely restricted to youth team players, as further education can help to forge new career paths for players in the latter stages of their playing career. By emphasising holistic education, national teams ensure that their players develop as citizens as well as players.

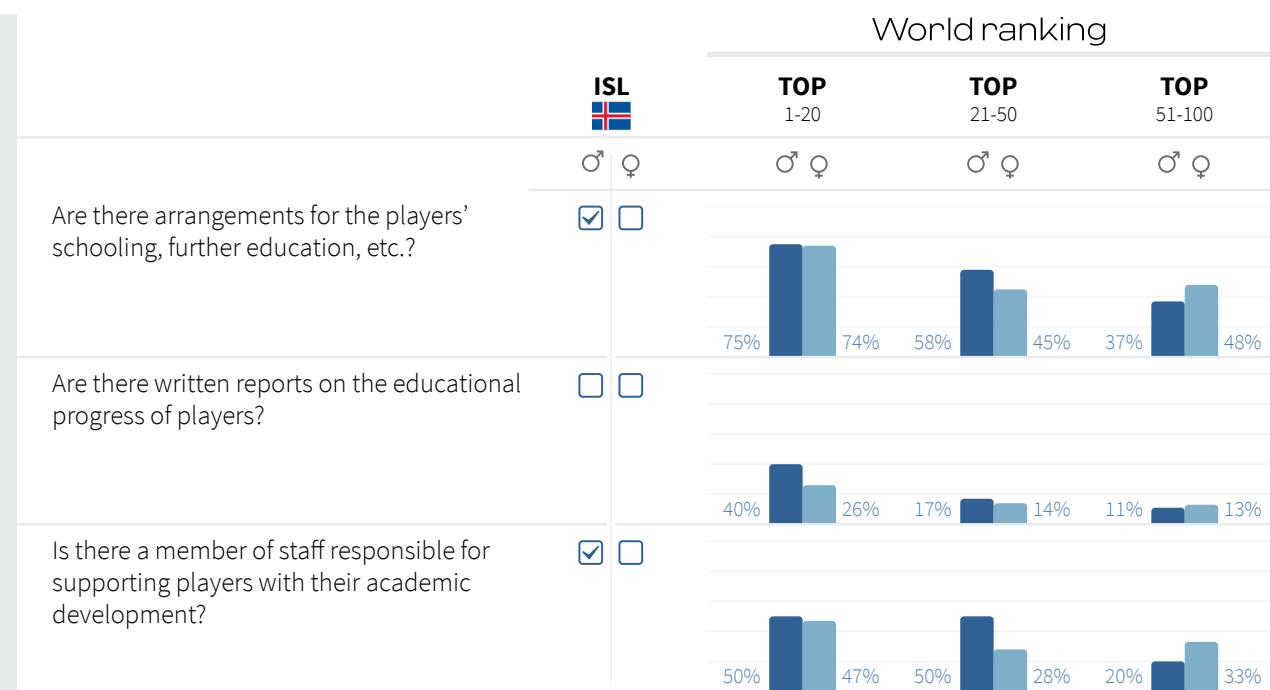
Processes

Processes need to be put in place to ensure that players are fulfilling their academic and basic well-being requirements. Youth players in national teams can miss out on parental guidance when away from their family. National teams need to ensure that the necessary support is provided and that travelling away from home is an enriching – and not detrimental – experience for young players. Whether these types of processes are in place within your national teams can be seen in the following table.

65% of the top 100 men's MAs do not have dedicated staff responsible for supporting players with their academic development.

75% of the top 20 men's MAs support education around training camps and games compared to between 45% of MAs ranked 21-100. The trend is similar for the women's national teams, with only 47% of MAs ranked 21-100 supporting education during training camps. Written education reports are more prevalent across the top 20, but this is still low at only 40%.

Illustration 2.31



Formal education

National teams should provide academic guarantees to their young players and their respective institutions in return for the large amounts of time that players dedicate to fulfilling their national team duties. National teams need to be in constant communication with each youth player's school to guarantee that the player maintains the necessary academic standards expected of them. The areas in which your national teams communicate with the schools of their players, as well as the number of school days missed by players due to playing duties, is shown in the illustration below.

Children can miss up to five weeks of school per year whilst attending national team activities.

Whilst on international duty, most children miss between 11 and 25 days of school per year. In some cases, girls (15%) are more likely than boys (10%) to miss more than 50 days (ten weeks) of school per year whilst representing their country. Furthermore, top 20 men's MAs (58%) are more likely to support a player's education with substitute lessons than lower-ranked MAs.



Illustration 2.32

	ISL		World ranking					
	♂	♀	TOP 1-20		TOP 21-50		TOP 51-100	
	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀
On which topics is there cooperation between the school authorities and the MA?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
▪ No cooperation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	32%	16%	22%	31%	41%	35%
▪ Possibility to pass exams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	32%	53%	57%	34%	39%	38%
▪ Flexibility regarding the demands of school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	47%	58%	78%	55%	57%	45%
▪ Guidance of teacher	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	32%	21%	39%	10%	24%	23%
▪ Substitute lessons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	58%	53%	43%	31%	20%	28%
▪ Individual education plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	32%	47%	35%	21%	28%	23%
Missed school days because of national team activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
▪ None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	0%	0%	8%	3%	9%	3%
▪ Between 1 and 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6%	6%	13%	14%	13%	28%
▪ Between 11 and 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	39%	28%	29%	41%	38%	43%
▪ Between 25 and 50	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	39%	50%	42%	21%	31%	18%
▪ More than 50	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17%	17%	8%	21%	9%	10%

Finding

Holistic education and the support provision to youth players

- The Icelandic education system is flexible and supportive of top youth talent. Both MYNT and WYNT players miss between 25 and 50 days of schooling. The opportunity to sit exams while representing Iceland is an example of the cooperation with the schools.
- There are academic arrangements in place for the MYNT players. One member of the MA staff also acts as a teacher during trips and guides school work, whilst recovery lessons are also offered. There are no such arrangements in place across the WYNTs.

NATIONAL TEAMS

SUMMARISING NOTES

SENIOR

- The head coaches of both senior teams and the MNT assistant coach are full-time employees. The rest of the coaching staff are part-time employees. The MNT and WNT use the national stadium for matches and training. The facilities and pitch fail to meet the required standards. The stadium's limited capacity prevents more fans from attending games, particularly those involving the MNT.
- The MNT plays a high number of matches, using all FIFA windows to contest two games. On account of budget restrictions, the WNT does not make use of all FIFA windows and in particular does not play friendlies.
- The MNT coaches value strong relationships with the clubs and seek to establish communication channels. The informal communication between WNT coaches and club coaches does not include information on player performance.
- Scouting of both MNT and WNT players is performed by technical staff, who permanently monitor players prior to selection. Watching games, in person and via Wyscout, and talking to club coaches represent the main scouting methods.
- Unlike the WNT, the MNT is supported by a match analyst. Both the MNT and the WNT benefit from an adequate sports science provision and a high standard of part-time support from medical staff.

Recommendations

1. Given the number of registered players, the national teams perform well in international competitions. The lack of a national training facility was cited as a challenge to the development of the playing style. We recommend that the KSI devise a long-term plan to open its own national training centre.
2. To support the international competitiveness of the WNT, we advise that the MA increase the number of matches by organising more friendlies in the available windows.

YOUTH

- The MA runs U-15, U-16, U-17 and U-19 WYNTs and MYNTs at U-15 to U-19 and a U-21 side. The YNTs have six full-time coaches, with other coaching staff employed on an activity basis. Most of the staff work across the various teams.
- Given that the KSI rents club facilities, which feature artificial pitches, for its YNTs, there is a major need for a national training centre with grass pitches.
- Playing opportunities for all YNTs mainly depend on results in European competitions.
- The KSI tries to foster a good level of cooperation between YNT coaches and their club counterparts. The release of players outside of the FIFA dates is only an issue for players who are based overseas. YNT coaches share close and informal communication with club coaches. Performance feedback is shared with the clubs.
- The scouting process for the younger national teams starts with player observation via the KSI Talent Programme, followed by observation of the local leagues and conversations with the clubs' heads of youth coaches for the older YNTs.
- The YNTs have no access to a match analyst, whilst the MYNTs do not have access to a fitness coach or sports science support. Basic education arrangements are offered mainly for the MYNT players.

Recommendations

1. The number of matches played by the YNTs can vary each year and coaches have to win games to secure more playing opportunities. We recommend that the MA seek opportunities to participate in annual friendly tournaments to promote player development across all age groups and to gain more international experience.
2. Footage of matches and training is used to promote player development and considered to be an important development tool. To increase the impact of match and training footage we advise that the KSI add a performance analyst to its YNT staff.
3. Given the current provision of venues for the YNT training camps, which are rented from clubs, we recommend that the MA consider devising a long-term plan to open its own national training centre, which would offer natural-grass pitches, which is seen as a major requirement to strengthen player development.
4. Given the way in which the global game is developing, we advise that the KSI add a fitness coach to the MYNT staff.

3. DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS

Domestic competition is vital to the growth of the game and the development of national talent.

The structure of domestic competition underpins the development of young players and their opportunity to reach their full potential. Having a competitive games programme throughout each stage of the player pathway is essential to support a progressive and challenging development environment to maximise the learning experience for all players. Such a games programme will not only grow the game, but will also optimise development.

3.1 Management and resources

This subsection illustrates the structure and organisation of the member association's (MA) strategy in the development of domestic competitions. Development of – and adherence to – a long-term strategy is critical to the growth of the game in the country and its impact on the future success of national teams. In particular, talent development is directly affected by the competition structures and regulations.

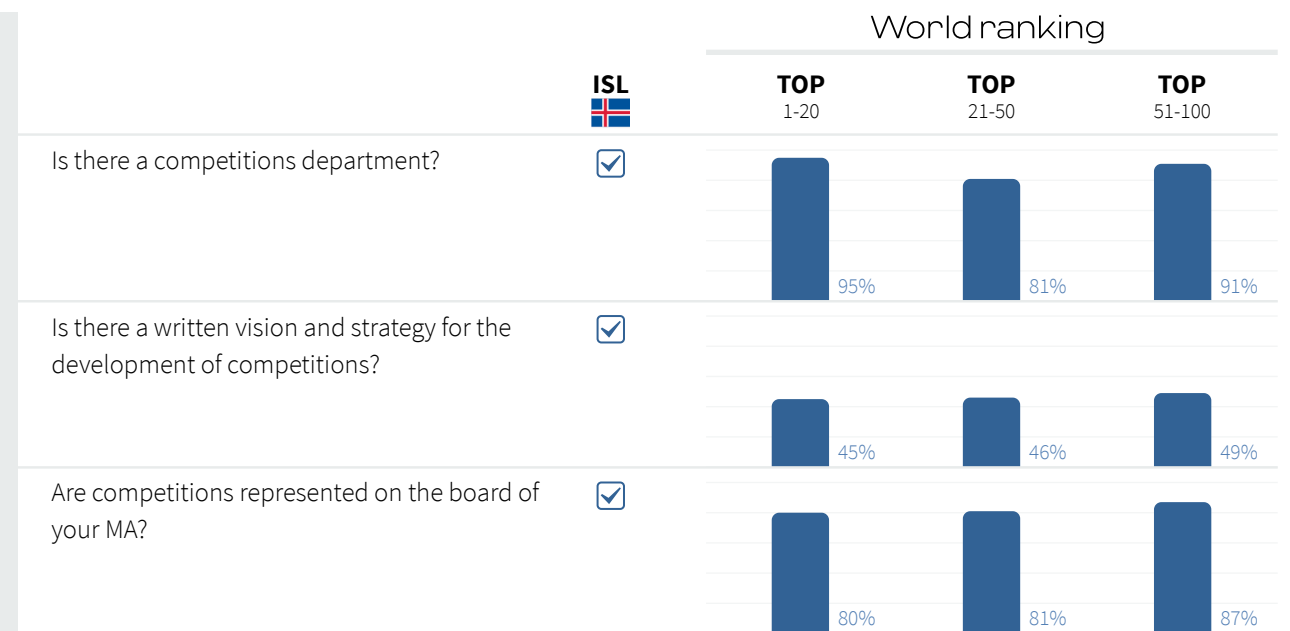
Strategy and organisation

Embedding a competitions department with a strategy into the structure of your association can aid the development of your football community. Whether this has happened at your association can be seen below.

Most MAs have a competitions department, but very few have a written vision and strategy.

89% of MAs in the top 100 of the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking have a dedicated competitions department, with most (84%) being represented at board level. However, very few have a written vision and strategy for the development of competitions, with 47% of the top 100 associations having such a strategy in place.

Illustration 3.1



Finding

Cooperation between the competitions department and technical development

- The Competitions Department is part of the Domestic Football Division, which is responsible for all competitions (youth and senior) across all regions in Iceland and has an independent way of working.
- The Head of Competitions oversees the competitions together with the chairperson of the Competitions Committee. The Domestic Football Division meets with other football-related committees at least six times a year.
- The Competitions Department and Technical Division formally meet every month and their members maintain informal communication on a daily basis. The monthly meetings have a clear agenda with issues to work on.
- The general vision is for every person to be able to play football at all levels under the KSI umbrella, which has proven to be a strength for the development of players.
- The new women's club licensing system is seen as a key tool to keep promoting the professionalisation of the domestic women's game.

Cooperation with the league

Domestic competition structures are influenced by the set-up of the football pyramid and by the relationship between the top-tier competition organiser and the MA. The human resource structure of this body (if cooperation with such an institution is in place) can give more detailed insight into the main focus areas.

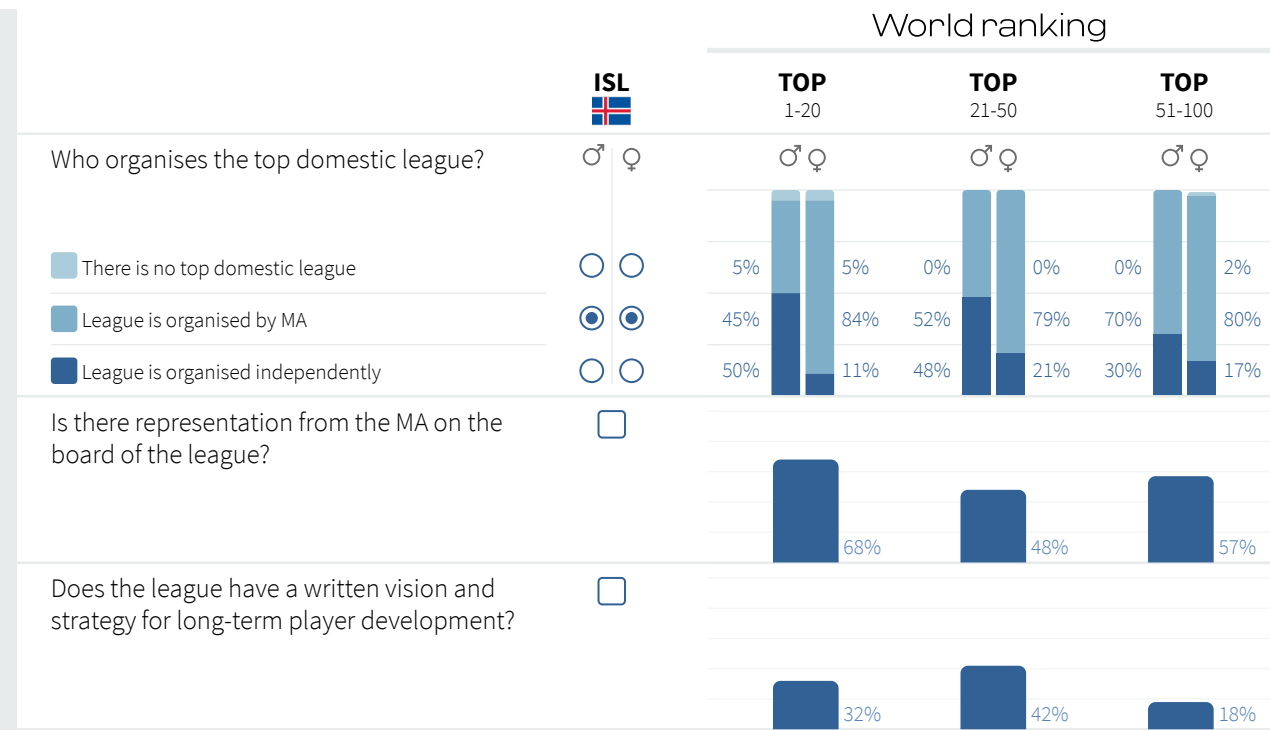
Top-tier competition organiser

Having a unified player development strategy for both your association and the independent top-tier league(s) ensures that player development is sustained throughout all competitions in the pyramid. The following illustration displays the cooperation and player development strategy between your league(s) and association

The majority of top-tier men's and women's domestic leagues are organised by the MA

50% of the men's top-tier domestic leagues in associations ranked 1-20 are organised independently. Of all the independently organised leagues across the top 100, only 57% have a representative from the MA on the board. More ominously, only 28% of these leagues have a written strategy for long-term player development.

Illustration 3.2



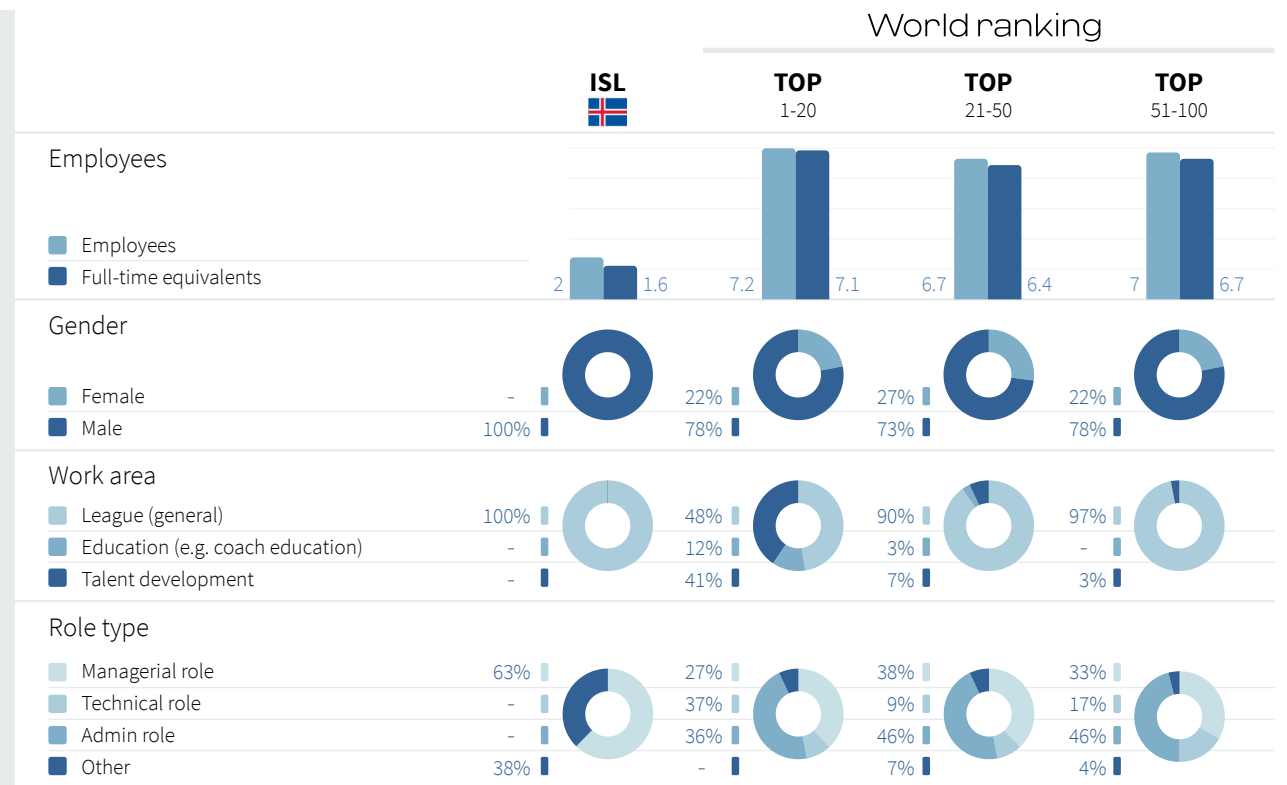
Professional league staffing

What is the staff structure of the top league with which your MA cooperates (if applicable)? What is the gender make-up of this staff structure? What is the percentage of full-time staff (full-time equivalents)? How many staff members are dedicated to the areas of talent development and education compared to the administrative section?

There is a greater focus on talent development in the top 20 MAs.

Professional leagues within the top 20 MAs dedicate 41% of their relevant staff members to talent development, compared to 7% and 3% of leagues in MAs ranked 21-50 and 51-100 respectively. Across the top 100, there is a consistently low percentage of female staff (22% to 27%) employed within professional league structures. Additionally, from a structure perspective, there is an upward shift in the proportion of the roles deemed technical, increasing from 9% in MAs ranked 21-50 to 37% in the top 20.

Illustration 3.3



Finding

The role of the member association and the league in terms of player development

- The KSI runs the men's and women's top flights. There is good cooperation and knowledge-sharing between the KSI and both leagues' clubs, both formally and informally; the clubs' top management is mainly involved via the club association.
- Although the leagues do not have specific talent development staff, the KSI club licensing system sets requirements for player development. This includes a home-grown player rule and coach education. The top-tier clubs must all have age-group teams participating in youth leagues.
- All clubs have a Head of Youth Coaching, who has regular meetings with the KSI, mainly through KSI coaches. The KSI provides support to this figure on player development.
- The transition from junior to senior football is a topic that the KSI believes it can improve on, especially on the men's side, by tackling the gap between U-19 and the first team.

3.2 Senior competitions

This section illustrates the senior competition structure in your country. It is widely known that the level of domestic competition and its structure can define the opportunities for players, coaches and support staff. Whether it be facilities, development infrastructure and support networks, income generation, or playing opportunities, all aspects of the game expand with the level of competition in the country.

Competition structure

The table below shows, according to the information provided by the MA, how many teams and leagues are part of your competition structure in the first three tiers of your football pyramid.

Top-tier men's leagues across the leading 20 MAs have, on average, 17.6 teams.

The number of teams per top-tier league in men's football steadily increases from 14.6 in MAs ranked 51-100 to 17.6 in the top 20. In women's football, the number of teams per top-tier league increases, to a lesser extent, from 10.3 teams in the 51-100 benchmark group to 11.3 in the top 20.

Illustration 3.4

Tier	Number of	World ranking							
		ISL		TOP 1-20		TOP 21-50		TOP 51-100	
		♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀	♂	♀
1	Leagues	1	1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.1
	Teams	12	10	17.6	11.3	16.5	10.1	14.6	10.3
2	Leagues	1	1	1.1	1.5	1.4	2.0	1.3	2.7
	Teams	12	10	21.3	23.9	24.0	19.1	20.8	26.1
3	Leagues	1	1	1.8	4.6	2.8	1.6	3.4	0.6
	Teams	12	9	45.6	52.5	46.4	16.4	60.7	6.4

League status

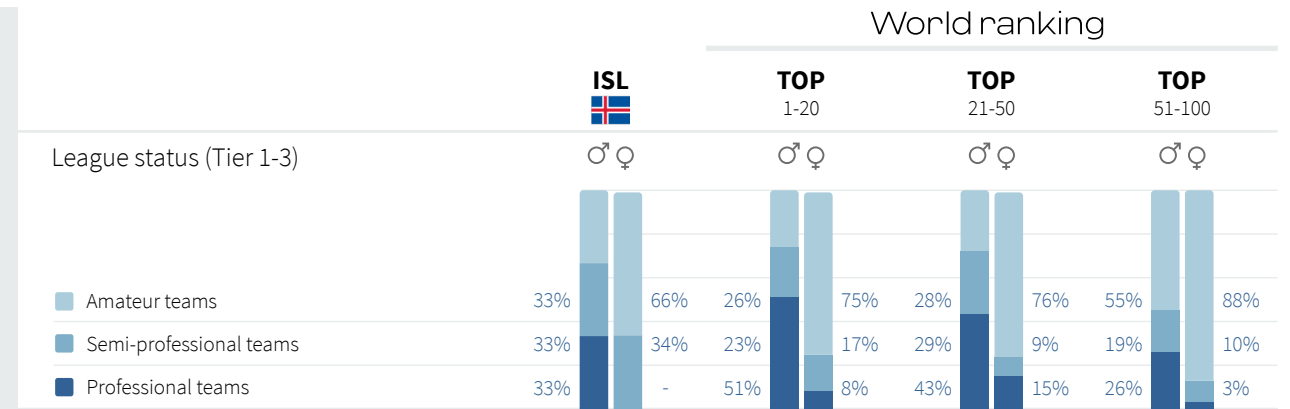
The number of professional, semi-professional and amateur teams participating in an association's top three tiers provides insight into the health of the overall football environment. Having enough professional playing opportunities contributes to good health. A breakdown of the top three tiers can be found below.

Across the top 50 MAs, clubs in men's top three tiers are mostly fully professional, whereas the women's game has an overall lack of professional clubs.

As expected, the MAs in the upper reaches (top 20) of the world have a higher combined percentage of professional and semi-professional teams. This is drastically different for women's football, as the vast majority of women's clubs across the globe are amateur, with the largest percentage of professional clubs (only 15%) located in MAs ranked 21-50.



Illustration 3.5



Top-tier competitions

Top-tier competitions can serve as a flagship for the development of domestic football. Most of the time, these leagues will attract the highest number of spectators and will help to develop your top home-grown players. Therefore, it is helpful to have a closer look at the characteristics of your top-tier competitions and their constitution.

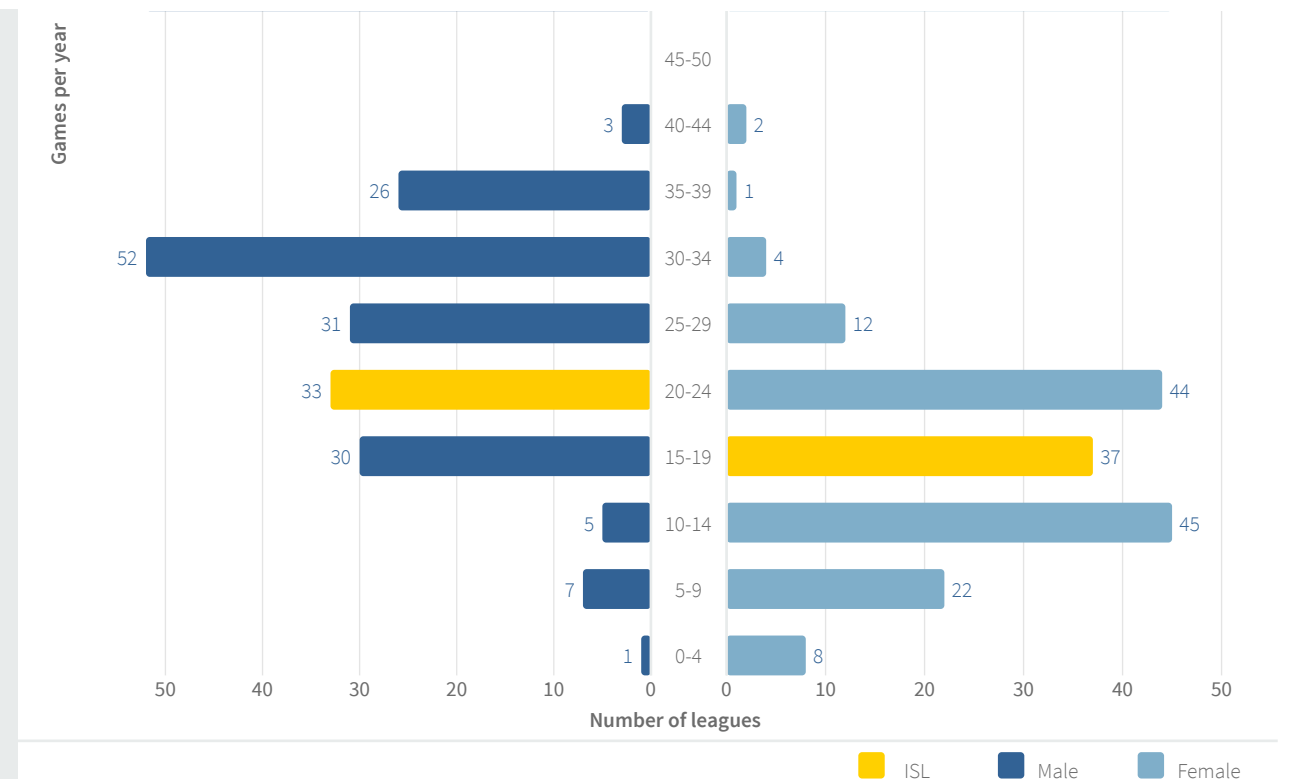
Number of matches played per year

Playing competitive matches is a fundamental aspect of player development. With too little playing time, players cannot acquire the experience needed to compete at the highest level. The table below shows the guaranteed minimum number of games per year that your leagues provide.

The most common range for the number of games in top-tier women's leagues is 10-24 per season, whereas it is 30-34 in top-tier men's leagues.

Globally, men's league structures deliver more playing opportunities, with 52 of the top domestic leagues offering 30-34 games per season. This is in stark contrast to the women's game, in which 45 of the top leagues offer 10-14 games per season, with a further 44 leagues offering 20-24 games a year.

Illustration 3.6



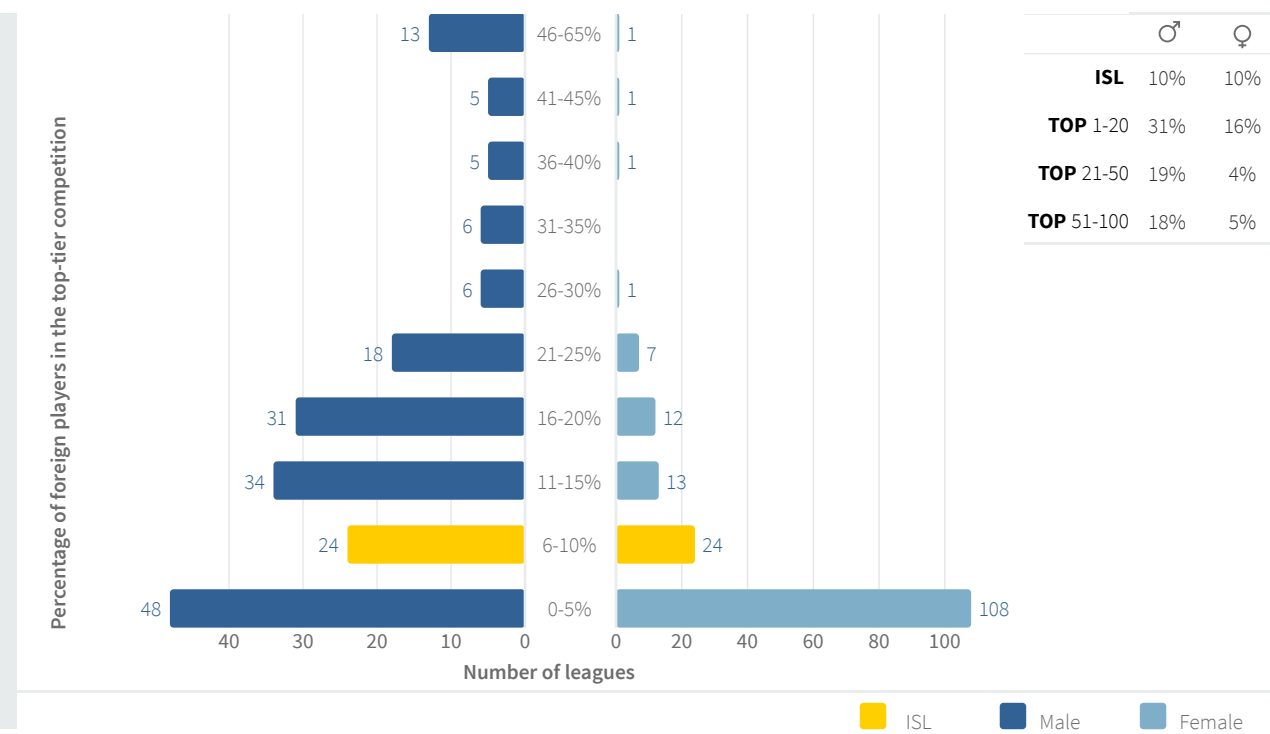
Foreign players in top-level competitions

Striking the right balance between home-grown (a player who, regardless of their nationality, has been trained by their club or by another club in the same national association), domestic (a player who is eligible to represent the national association in which their club resides) and foreign players (players who are not eligible to represent the national association in which their club resides) is a significant topic for top-level competitions. Having too many foreign players can restrict opportunities for domestic talent. The percentage of foreign players playing in your top leagues is displayed below.

There is a greater percentage of foreign players in the top-tier men's and women's leagues in the top 20 MAs.

The top 20 MAs in the men's game have the highest percentage of foreign players per team (31% compared to 18% outside the top 20). The same pattern can be seen in the top-tier women's leagues, but on a lesser scale (16% in the top 20 compared to 5% outside), allowing top-tier women's teams to have a greater proportion of domestic talent.

Illustration 3.7



Finding

Set-up of the senior competition structure

- The KSI is in charge of all senior competitions (men's and women's). The men's top tier is the only fully professional league; the men's second division and women's top flight hold semi-pro status and the remaining leagues are amateur.
- Therefore, with only around 600 players categorised as "professional", the game is not a full-time option for most registered players. This suggests a need to continue efforts to increase the profile of domestic football.
- Both the men's and women's top leagues have a low number of teams (12 and ten respectively), but this is in keeping with the size of the player pool. The number of games per season (22 and 18) is also low; this is linked to the format (due to drastic weather conditions, the leagues only last five months spanning the late spring and summer).
- As a result of the domestic football situation, it is common for the best local players to migrate to higher-profile foreign leagues to strengthen their development.



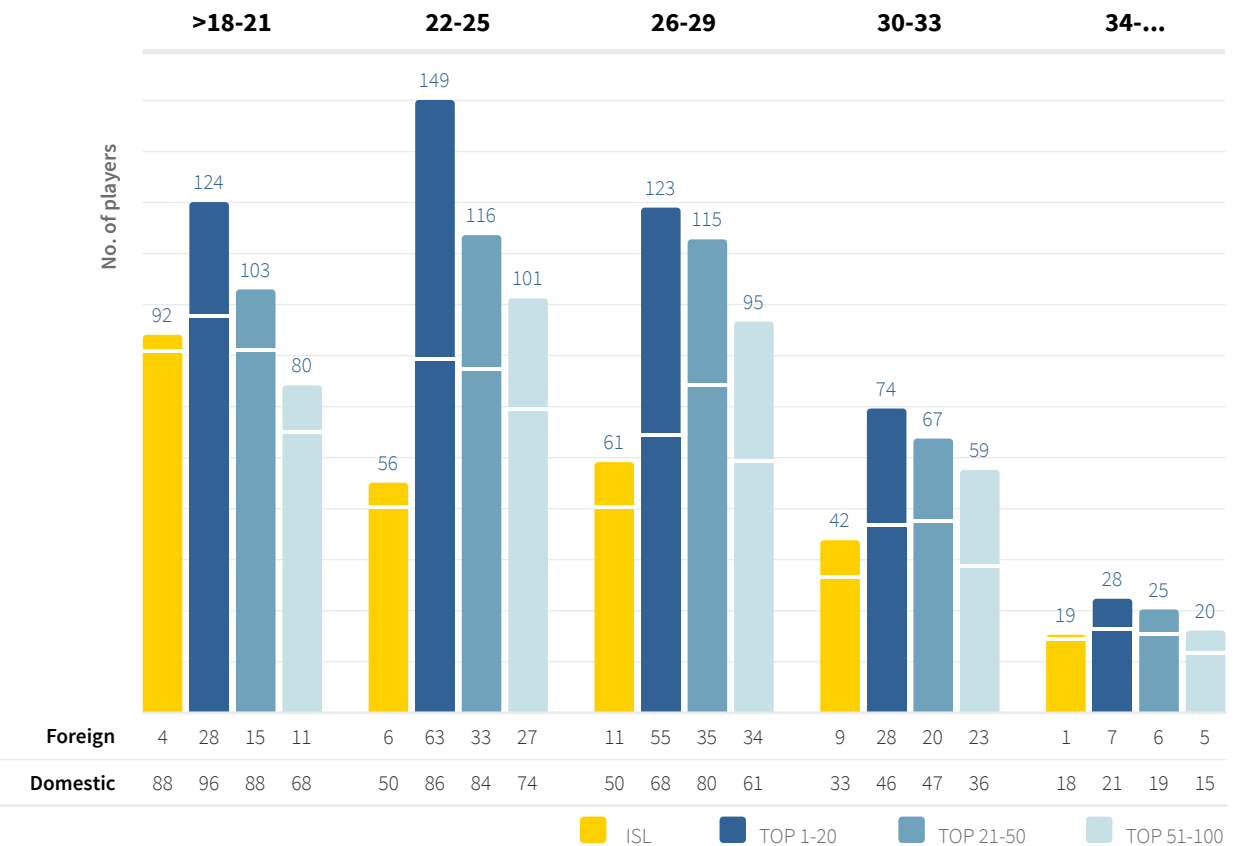
Age profile of the top-tier men's league

The average player age can be a good indicator of a league's strength. An essential part of maintaining effective player development and sustaining high-level competition over time is to ensure that the league achieves a good balance between talented young players and experienced elite players. The illustration below presents the number of players, both domestic and foreign, in each age bracket across the top 88 men's domestic leagues worldwide (data courtesy of CIES).

Leagues in the top 20 MAs have the highest proportion of players aged 18-25.

Across all benchmark groups, between the ages of 18 and 21, domestic leagues have a greater proportion of domestic players than players from overseas. Furthermore, the top 20 domestic leagues have the highest proportion of players between the ages of 18 and 25 along with the highest number of foreign players across the top 100 between the ages of 22 and 25. The age profile shifts more towards older age groups across the MAs as they get further away from the top 20.

Illustration 3.8



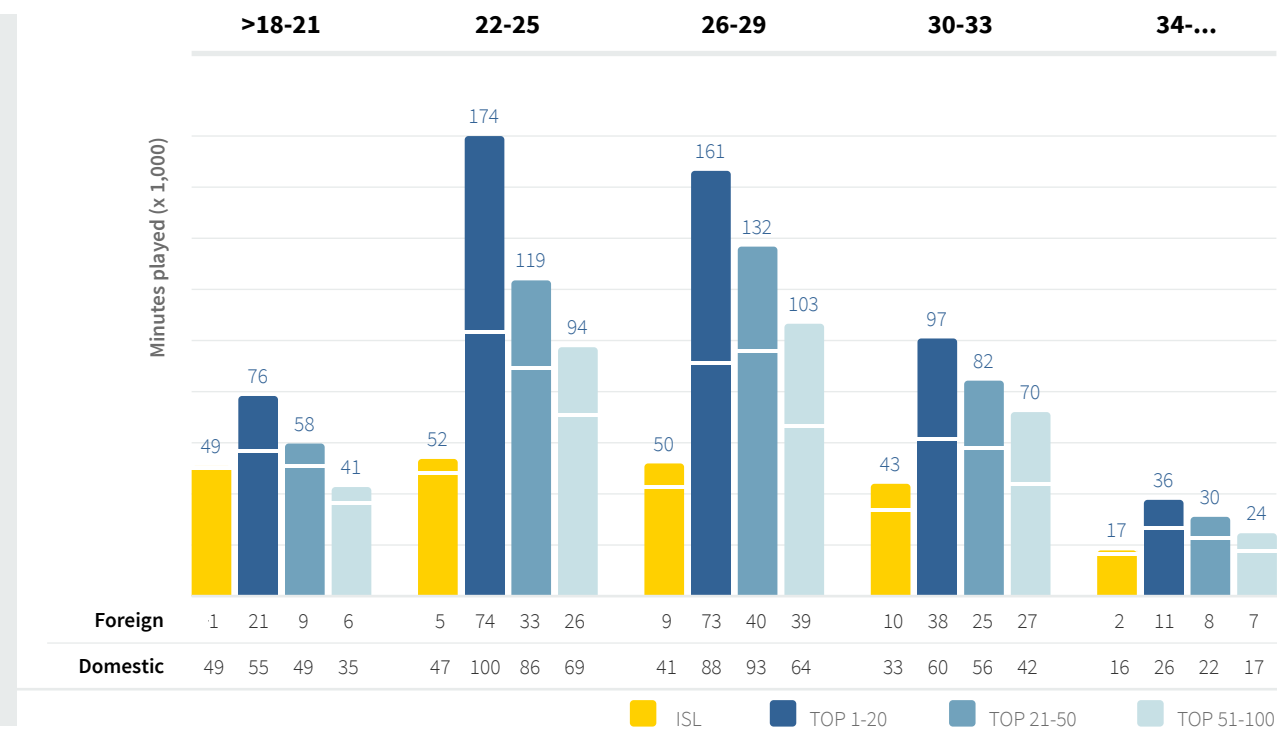
Average playing time for foreign and domestic players

For the development of talent, no matter at what age, playing time is crucial. Having access to the top-tier domestic competition for young players along with a long-term strategy is critical for the effective transition of players into the senior game. The next step is to sustain this playing time through the decisive years of development, allowing players to establish themselves and inevitably enhancing the performance of the national team. The illustration below presents the playing time of domestic and foreign players in each age bracket across the top 88 men's domestic leagues worldwide (data courtesy of CIES).

Top 50 MAs offer the most match minutes to players aged 18 to 21.

The top 50 MAs offer approximately 14% of all playing time to players aged 18 to 21, compared to 12% in MAs ranked 51-100. However, in this age group, leagues within MAs ranked 21-50 offer a greater percentage of playing time to domestic players (85%), compared to 74% in the top 20 MAs. Lastly, MAs ranked 51-100 offer the largest proportion of game time to players aged 30+.

Illustration 3.9



Infrastructure

The infrastructure of a football community can influence its competitions. Infrastructure of a good standard can provide solid foundations to develop promising players, whereas below-par facilities can hinder this process.

Finding

Standard of the infrastructure available to stage the matches in the top league(s)

- Stadium and training infrastructure is part of the KSI licensing system, which covers medical standards, pitch condition, stadium capacity, etc.
- Few grounds have a capacity over 2,000. The national stadium holds 10,000, but the facilities are suboptimal. The weather is a challenge: artificial turf is often more suitable than natural grass, especially in winter.
- The facilities largely meet the required standards, but infrastructure may limit the game's profile and player development.



3.3 Youth football competitions

An effective talent pathway is reliant upon a progressive and competitive games programme. Such a competitions structure should first and foremost have the capacity to maximise participation across the country to grow the game and its talent pool. Youth football, in particular, must be progressive across the phases of development, deliver multiple high-performance learning experiences, and be age-appropriate – based upon an awareness of growth and maturation – and aligned with the development methodology of the association.

Participation

The bigger the football family, the better. Youth players are the beating heart and soul of football culture all around the globe. But it is not simply the number of players that counts. To get a clear impression of the status quo in terms of participation, aspects such as the player pool (size) in comparison to the size of the population can be helpful.

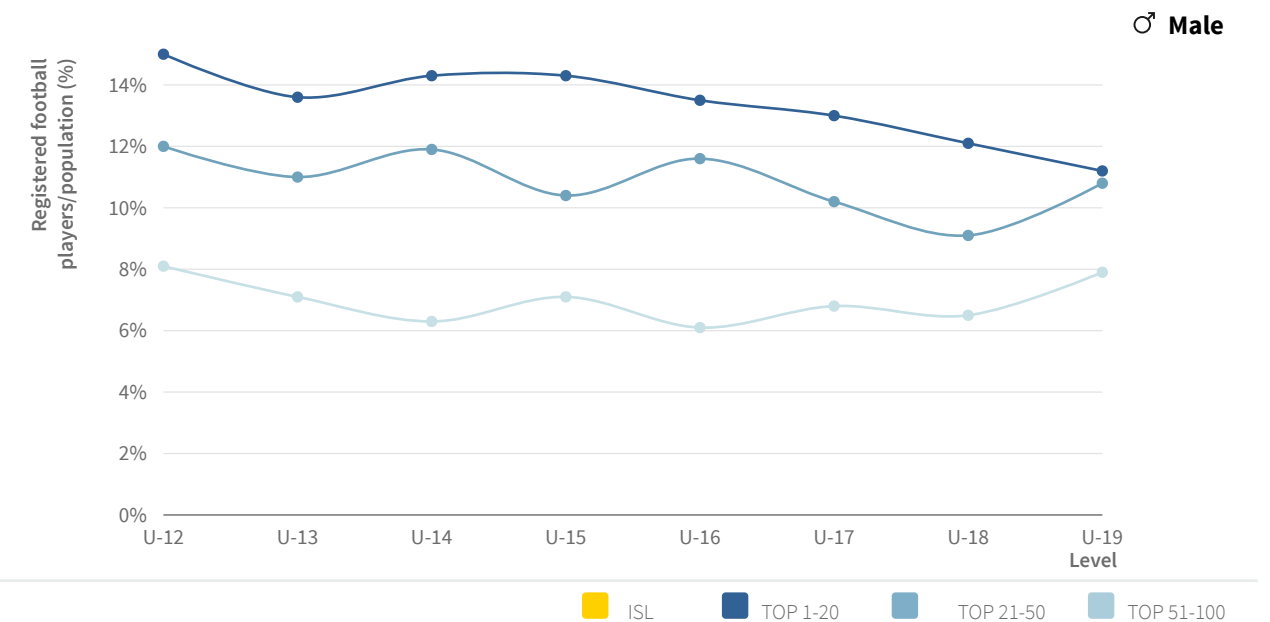
Player pool

The player pool is the percentage of all registered male and female players in different age levels in comparison to the population of your country, irrespective of their competition level. Talent development can be enhanced by a large player pool and the high level of participation it generates. Since larger player pools create fiercer competition, the elite-level teams will ultimately see higher-calibre players enter their development pathways. The data displayed in the illustrations below is self-reported by MAs.

The higher-ranked MAs have the highest percentage of registered male players across all age groups.

In men's football, the highest percentage of registered players (in comparison to the population) can be found in the top 20 MAs for all age groups between U-12 and U-18. However, it must be noted that from U-15 upwards, this percentage decreases in the top 20 MAs to the point that it reaches the same percentage as MAs ranked 21-50. Furthermore, at U-19, there is an upward shift in the percentage of registered players per population in the MAs ranked 21-100.

Illustration 3.10a



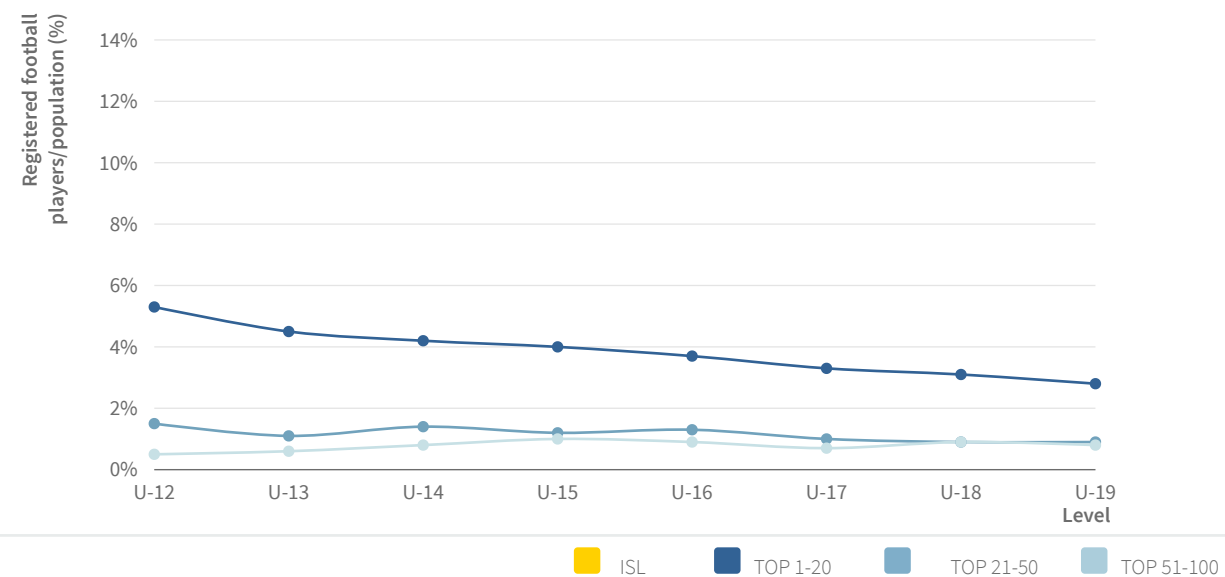


The higher-ranked MAs have the highest percentage of registered female players.

In women's football, the highest percentage of registered players (in comparison to the population) can be found in the top 20 MAs for all age groups between U-12 and U-19. However, this percentage declines from the outset to less than 3% at U-19 level – in stark contrast to the numbers in the men's game. MAs ranked 51-100 have an increase in the number of registered players at U-15 level; however, this overall percentage is incredibly low, standing at approximately 1% of the population.

♀ Female

Illustration 3.10b



Elite youth competitions

Competitions at elite youth level play an important role in player development as they concentrate on the MA's biggest talents. Adequate and diverse competitive formats at this level can have a major impact on player development.

Competition structure

Separated by age bracket, the following illustration displays the number of male, female and mixed teams in your elite youth competitions. It also indicates whether these competitions are organised at national, regional or local level.

Illustration 3.11

		Elite youth level												
		U-11	U-12	U-13	U-14	U-15	U-16	U-17	U-18	U-19	U-20	U-21	U-22	U-23
Teams	Male	-	174	-	86	-	95	-	-	69	-	-	-	-
	Female	-	88	-	30	-	51	-	-	28	-	-	-	-
	Mixed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coverage	National	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Regional	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Local	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Coverage	National	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Regional	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	Local	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● Male ● Female ● Absent

Finding

Quality and quantity of playing opportunities for registered youth players

- In the younger age groups (6-11), the clubs are responsible for organising regular festivals and matches. The KSI provides guidelines, which most clubs follow.
- The KSI manages all the youth leagues, played nationwide, for both boys and girls, in the U-12, U-14, U-16 and U-19 categories. There is also a cup for both genders at U-16 and U-19 levels.
- The data shows a trend regarding the number of teams per age group: the older the age group, the fewer teams in the competitions.
- The cold temperatures also affect the format of youth competitions, restricting boys and girls to a range of 12-20 matches per season on average.
- A major strength is that players at all levels are educated by qualified youth coaches from a young age (six). Clubs are responsible for football in their area and mostly cater for all age groups for both boys and girls.



Youth football infrastructure

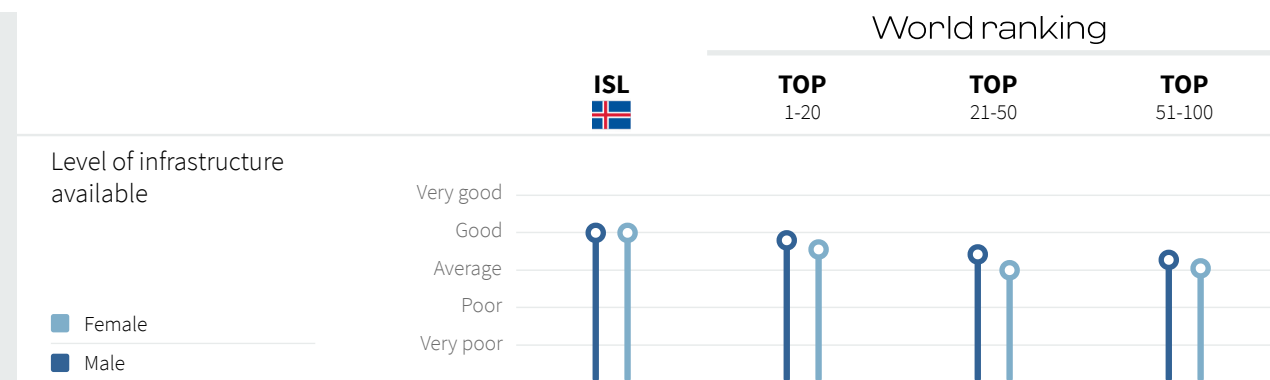
To help young players reach their potential, your football ecosystem needs to offer adequate facilities to host competition and training.

The illustration below illustrates the level of infrastructure available for both boys' and girls' competitions in your country compared to the world top 100. Note that this is a subjective evaluation by the MA.

In comparison to girls, boys have better access to competition infrastructure across all of the top 100 MAs.

It is evident, across all member associations from 1 to 100, that boys' football receives better infrastructural support than girls' football.

Illustration 3.12



Finding

Standard of the infrastructure available to stage youth competitions

- The standard of venues varies, but is generally considered high. The municipalities provide the infrastructure and take care of its maintenance.
- All age groups at a club, from grassroots to senior, use the same facilities and pitches. This collective approach is seen as a strong point for player development.
- A project involving the construction of 100 mini-pitches with floodlights strategically close to schools nationwide was mentioned as an important milestone.

3.4 Grassroots competitions

Grassroots football is the foundation of the pyramid and the development pathway. Between U-5 and U-12 levels, there must be a focus on participation and growing the game across the country in a bid to develop and expand the pool of young male and female footballers. Grassroots football plays a key role in shaping football culture. Better access to grassroots football creates more opportunities for young players to get involved.

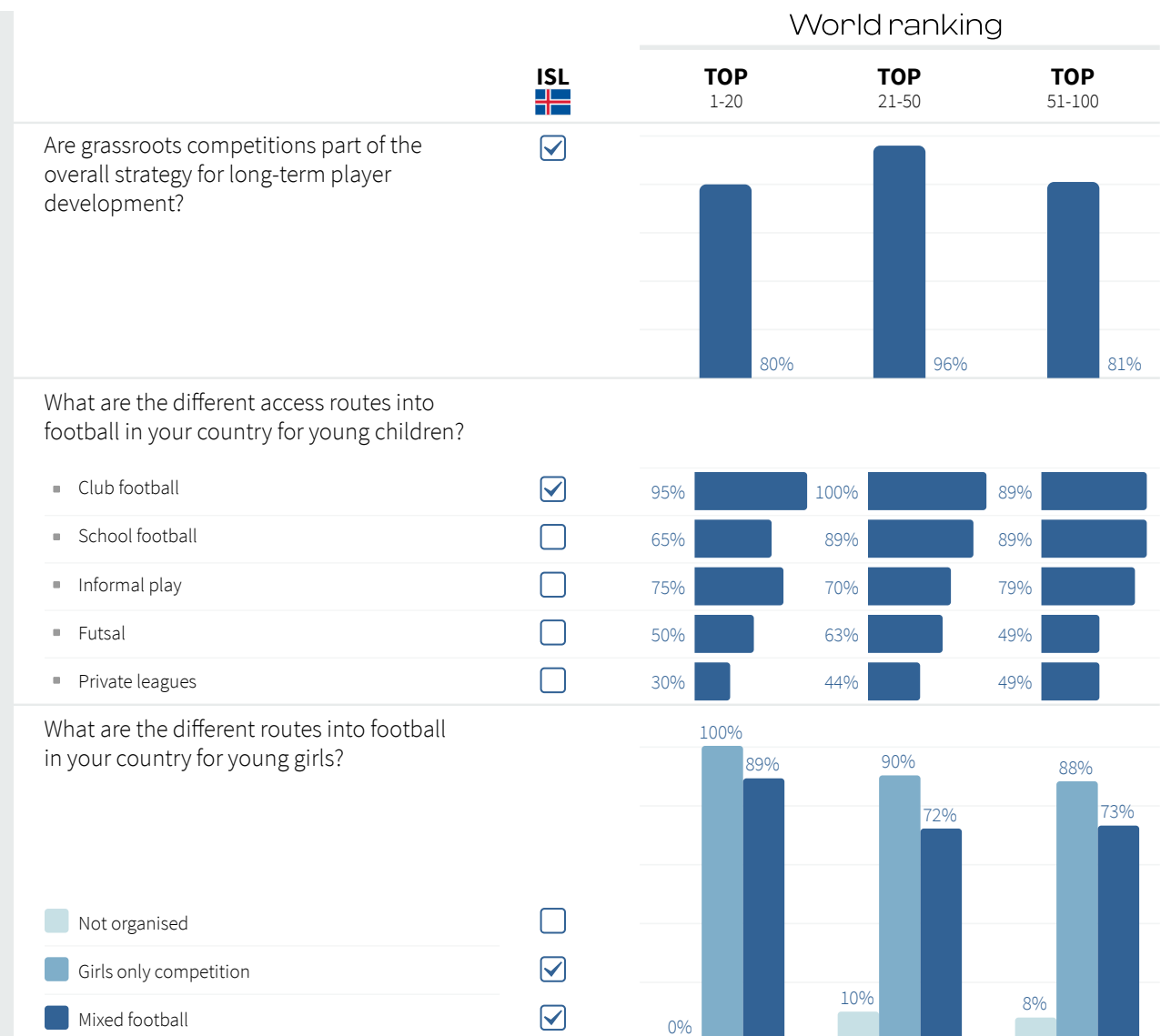
Organisation and strategy

Organising different routes into football helps to generate interest in the game. Furthermore, having a strategy for the grassroots sustains interest over the long term. The level of organisation and the presence of a strategy in your association's management of grassroots football can be seen in the illustration below.

85% of the top 100 MAs have grassroots as part of the LTPD strategy.

85% of MAs in the top 100 have grassroots as part of their overall strategy for long-term development, although the figure is as high as 96% among the top 21-50 MAs. Club football is seen as the dominant access route to football for young children, with school football and informal play being close behind. From a girls' perspective, female-only competitions are the most prevalent access route, with mixed football a close second. However, some MAs in the 21-100 ranking band currently have no organised girls' football in their country.

Illustration 3.13



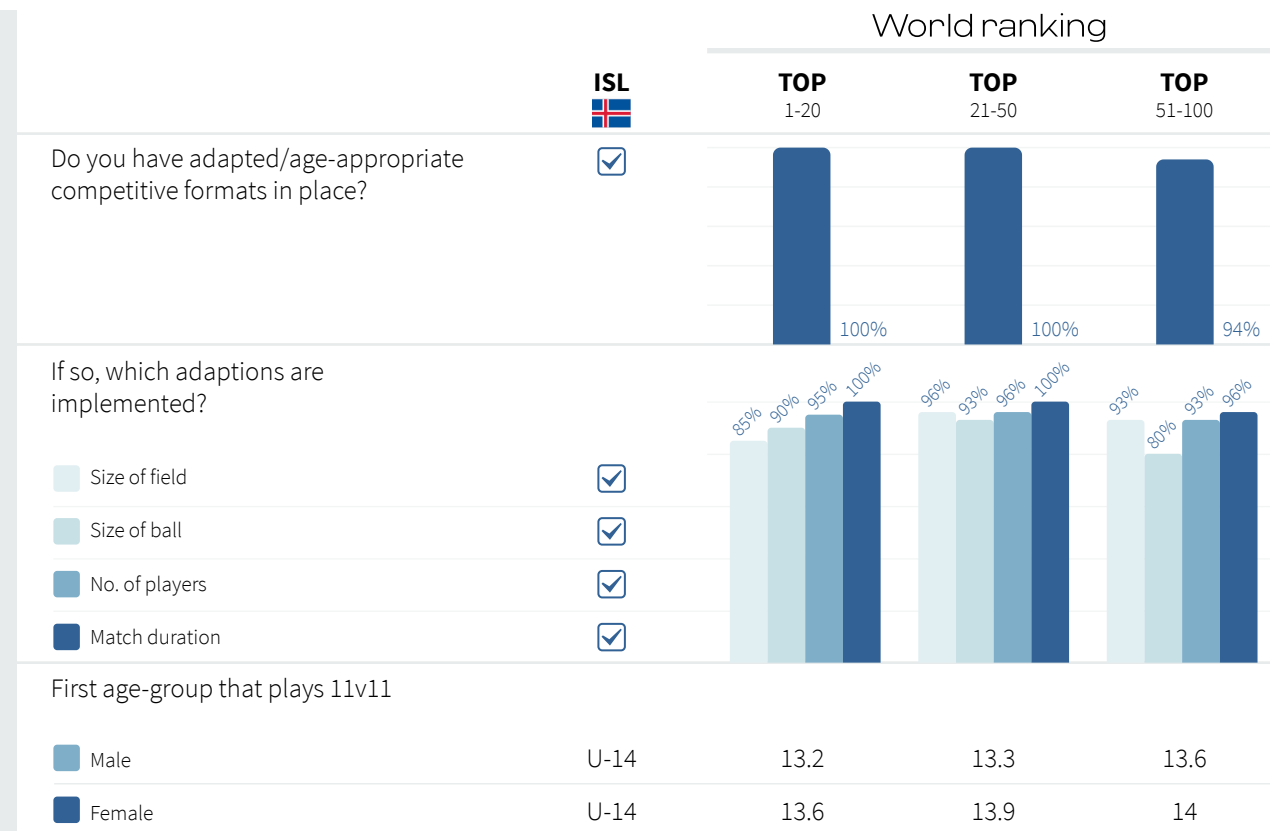
Age-appropriate competitive formats

Tailoring the football experience for different ages by adapting factors such as pitch size and player numbers can increase the retention of young footballers playing the game. Whether your association adapts the game according to the age of young players can be seen below.

All MAs ranked 1-50 have age-appropriate game formats, with 11v11 starting at the average age of 13.

The vast majority of MAs in the top 100 have age-appropriate game formats, with more MAs focusing on adapting the match duration and the number of players than the size of the ball and the size of the pitch. As you move further away from the top 20, 11v11 game formats are introduced later for both boys and girls.

Illustration 3.14



Finding

Use of age-appropriate competitive formats to aid player development

- Competition formats at grassroots level are decided by the clubs, subject to the KSI's approval. For the KSI, grassroots football automatically means catering for both boys and girls, which is clearly part of the MA's overall vision for player development.
- Age-appropriate formats are used up to the age of 14. The formats go from 5v5 for U-10 players up to 8v8 for U-11s to U-13s; 11v11 kicks in at U-14 level.
- Although the main route into football for young children is via clubs, informal street football activities are highly valued. This is boosted by the multiple playgrounds available through the successful mini-pitch project.
- Coach education plays a vital role at grassroots level. The B Licence is required to coach U-6 to U-12 players. Besides the structure and content of training sessions, coaches create an enjoyable environment. Children have fun, learn more and are enthusiastic about practising outside the regular organised training (through street football).

DOMESTIC COMPETITIONS

SUMMARISING NOTES

- The KSI's Domestic Football Division is responsible for all competitions across all regions in Iceland, from the top tiers (men's and women's) all the way down to youth competitions (for boys and girls).
- The focus on player development mainly materialises via the collaboration between KSI coaches and clubs' Head of Youth Coaching. Moreover, the men's club licensing system includes criteria for youth football – another tool for the KSI to create a good development environment.
- The overall infrastructure appears to meet the requirements to support player development from grassroots to elite youth level. Nevertheless, it may be necessary to improve the facilities to increase the profile and progression of the senior competitions.
- The KSI organises all the elite boys' and girls' national competitions (U-12, U-14, U-16 and U-19). These do not take place over the winter due to the weather, thus hindering the chance for a greater number of games over the season.
- Competition formats at grassroots level are decided by the clubs, subject to approval from the KSI. Children at U-10 level play 5v5, 8v8 is used between the U-11 and U-13 age groups, and U-14s and older play 11v11, with enough playing opportunities at all levels.

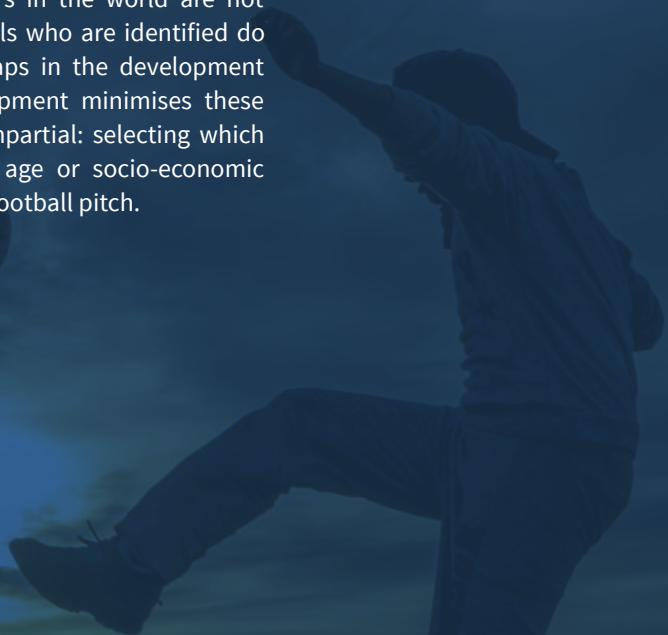
Recommendations

1. Youth leagues are constantly under review to optimise player development. We recommend to review the gap between youth and senior football. Competition development for players aged between 16 and 23 is an area that needs attention.
2. The KSI club licensing system sets quality standards for the club environment on the boys side. We recommend to introduce a licensing system for the women's club youth sides as well. Development of the club environment for elite girls players will support their development.

4. TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTIFICATION

Every talent deserves a chance.

It is an unfortunate fact that many talented players in the world are not spotted – and also that many of the gifted individuals who are identified do not ultimately fulfil their potential, often due to gaps in the development process. Thorough talent identification and development minimises these inefficiencies. Talent development should also be impartial: selecting which youngsters to develop ought to be based not on age or socio-economic factors, but on the value that the player brings to the football pitch.



4.1 Talent development strategy

The following section illustrates how talent development is managed in your football community. Managing talent development properly guarantees that players with a natural aptitude for the game are identified and nurtured, which is vital for the growth of the football environment to be sustained.

Strategy and planning

Setting a clear direction for talent development helps ensure transparency between the parties involved in the process. Having a unified vision and strategy creates tangible goals for staff to work towards when developing talented individuals.

A significant number of MAs have committed to the implementation of a talent development strategy with identified targets.

Of the top 20 women’s MAs, 83% have a specific section in their technical division that focuses on talent development, in contrast to only 60% of the men’s top 20. Across nearly all areas of management and planning, the degree to which this is implemented rises as one moves up the three ranking groups in the women’s game. There remains, however, a significant number of MAs which have neither a strategy nor targets for talent development.

Illustration 4.1



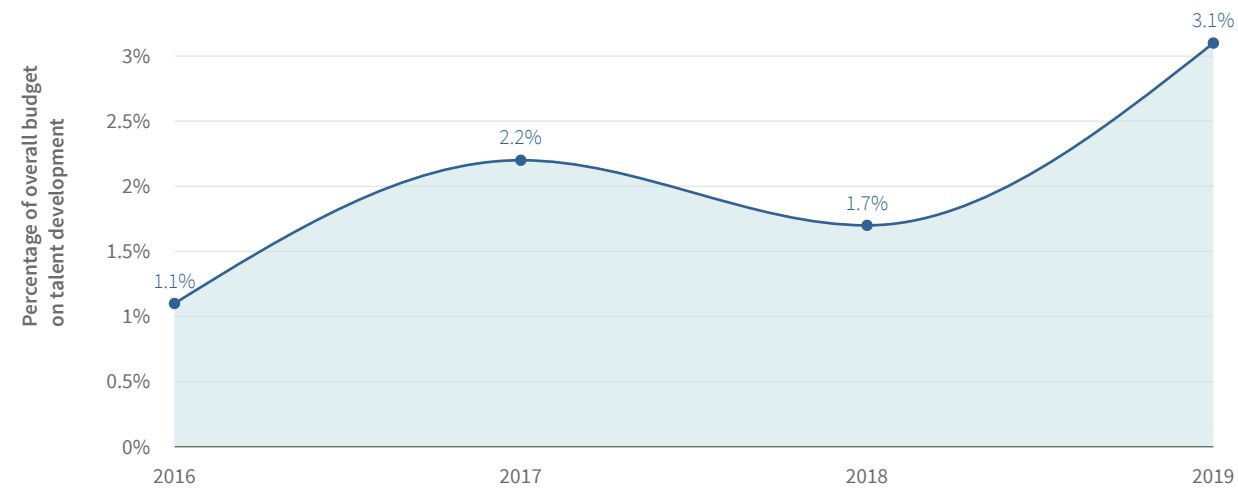
Finding

- ### Player development as a part of the technical division
- The KSI’s organisational chart features three key departments: International Football, Domestic Football and Commercial/Marketing. Football Development and Talent Scouting are sections within the International Football Department.
 - Six full-time coaches also cover player development activities. The U-15 boys’ and girls’ national-team coach is also the Head of Talent Development & Identification.
 - The Iceland Talent Programme, which is an initiative aimed at both boys and girls at U-13 and U-14 levels, is an asset within the MA’s structure. The main goal of the scheme is to observe a large pool of players at regional level, before inviting the top performers to train with the U-15 national team.
 - The Coach Education Department plays a vital role in the KSI’s LTPD plans and ensures that players are exposed to quality coaches from a young age.

Financial resources

With the right amount of financial resources, talent development can be organised in a way that guarantees a steady supply of suitable players for elite and national-level teams. Below is the percentage of your association's budget allocated to talent development.

Illustration 4.2



Institutions

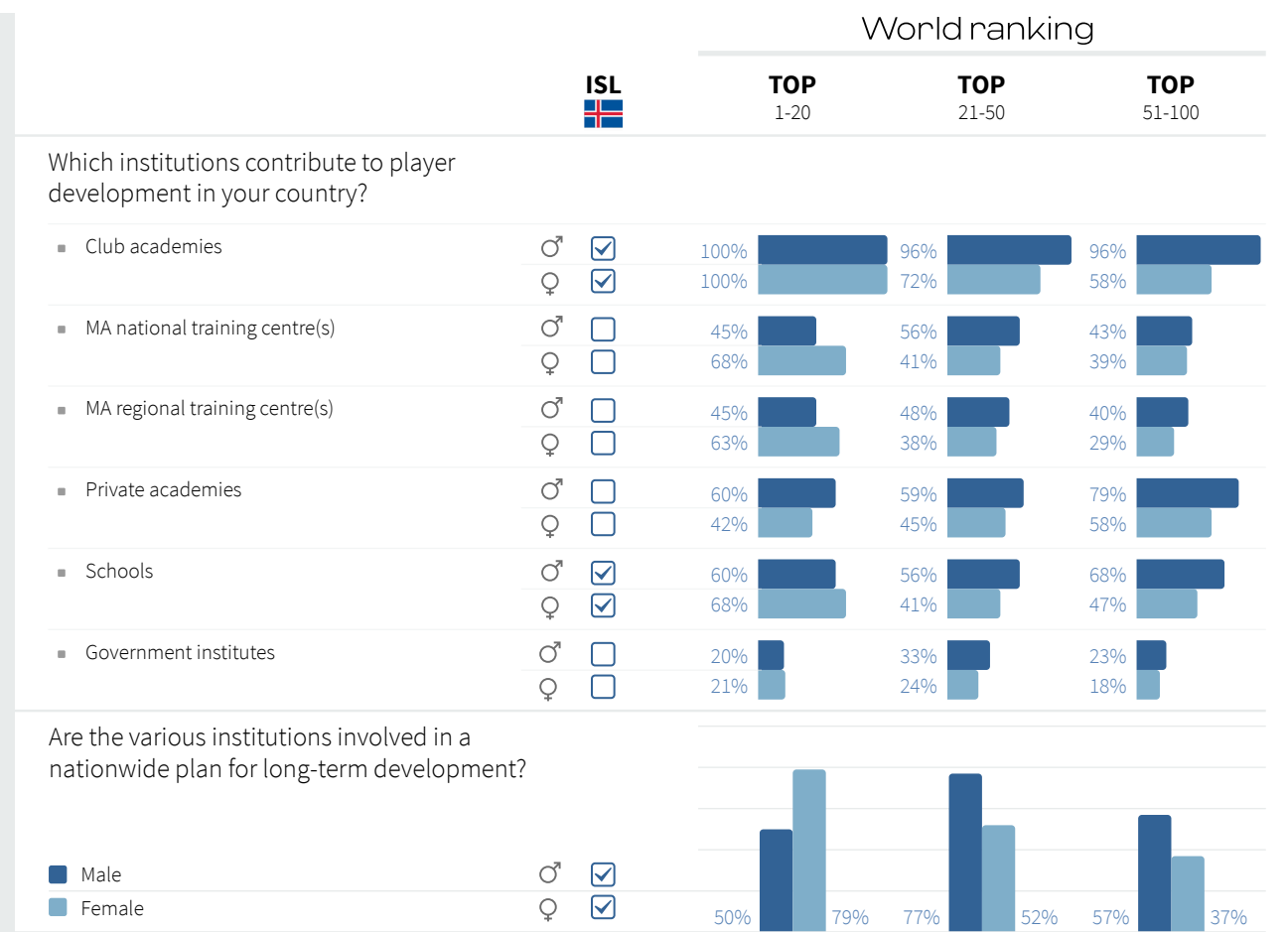
Football institutions play a key role in developing prospects. Working with a broad range of such organisations – from schools to elite-club academies – and having them adhere to an overarching development plan helps to create an environment where talent is properly nurtured. The following table illustrates which institutions partake in the player development process both in your country and in the top 100 MAs.

Club academies are the dominant key stakeholders in player development across the top 100 MAs.

The majority of MAs in the top 100 see club academies as the key stakeholders in the development of male and female players. A significant number of MAs also recognise the importance of leading national and regional training centres/academies in supporting player development. In women's football, 79% of the top 20 MAs include various institutions and academies as part of their national plan for long-term player development, compared to just 50% of the top 20 men's MAs.



Illustration 4.3



Finding

Involvement of academies in a nationwide plan for long-term player development

- The club academies are the only type of true academies in the country.
- Talent development begins at club level for both boys and girls. Clubs are to be found throughout the country and boast fully-fledged youth systems. Joining a club's youth set-up is straightforward and access is easy. Teams of nearly all age groups are run, from U-6 level through to the senior ranks.
- Clubs are important stakeholders in terms of talent development. The KSI respects that clubs work on their own LTPD strategies, with a developmental environment created based on its guidelines. In the younger age groups (below U-13 level), clubs are fully responsible for player development.
- Players at all levels have sufficient playing opportunities and are educated by qualified youth coaches from a young age, thanks to the efforts of the MA's Coach Education Department
- The club academies are not as heavily involved in the development of girls.

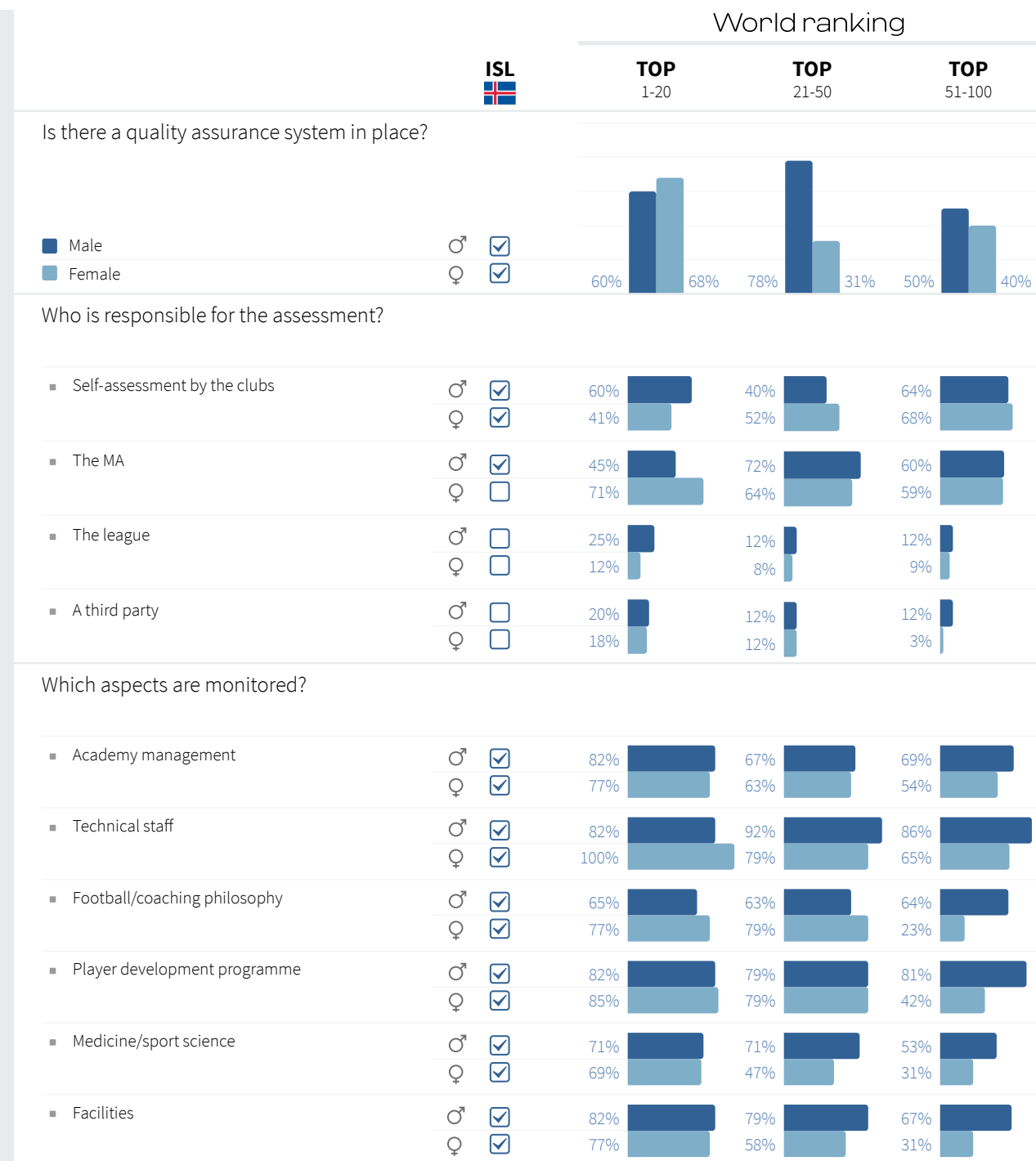
Quality assurance

The aim of quality assurance is to adhere to a defined standard for talented young players throughout their development. By focusing on maintaining the quality of the various stages involved in a player's development, quality assurance can help guarantee that when youth players are called up by the senior team, they have attained the necessary level.

Quality assurance systems for academies are not commonplace across the top 100 MAs.

Among the top 20 MAs, 60% of boys' academies and 68% of girls' academies undergo a form of quality assessment. Outside of the top 20 (21 to 100), this number drops to approximately 37% of associations, particularly in women's football. Furthermore, a high proportion of academies with such a system in place have the assessment conducted by the MA.

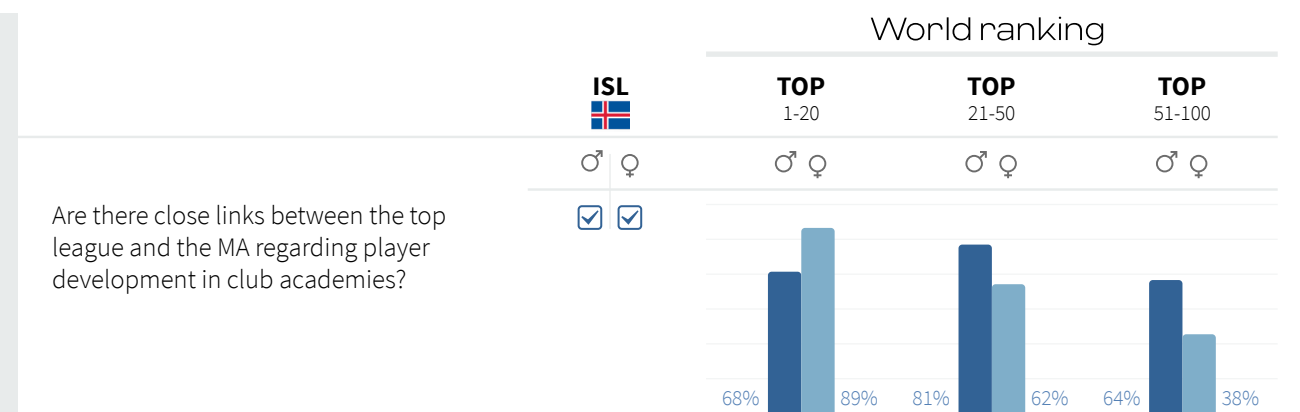
Illustration 4.4



Top 50 MAs have closer links with the top league in supporting player development at club level.

68% of the top 20 men's MAs have close links with the top league to support the development of club academies, rising to 81% in the 21-50 ranking group. In women's football, this type of relationship is not as commonplace in MAs outside of the top 50, with only 38% of these associations appearing to have brokered such a partnership with the top league.

Illustration 4.5



Finding

Collaboration between the MA and the top league

- The MA's coaches have a good relationship with the top-tier clubs on player development, with particularly strong links between the KSI's Head of Talent Development and the clubs' heads of youth coaches and youth coaches.
- The KSI organises regular formal and informal meetings with clubs throughout the year to discuss LTPD regulations. The Head of Youth Coaches is a key club representative. Given that Iceland is a small country, these meetings are easily accessible.
- The club licensing system is an important tool to ensure quality at club and youth/academy levels and to establish player development criteria. A homegrown player rule, coach education and fielding teams in all youth leagues are examples of club licensing initiatives.
- There is currently no licensing system in place for women's clubs for the younger age groups and quality assurance is carried out by the clubs/academies themselves.

4.2 Talent identification and promotion

This section highlights the talent identification (TID) practices in your MA's football community. A prerequisite for talent development is identifying and recruiting – through the introduction of processes and programmes – players who have what it takes to play at elite level.

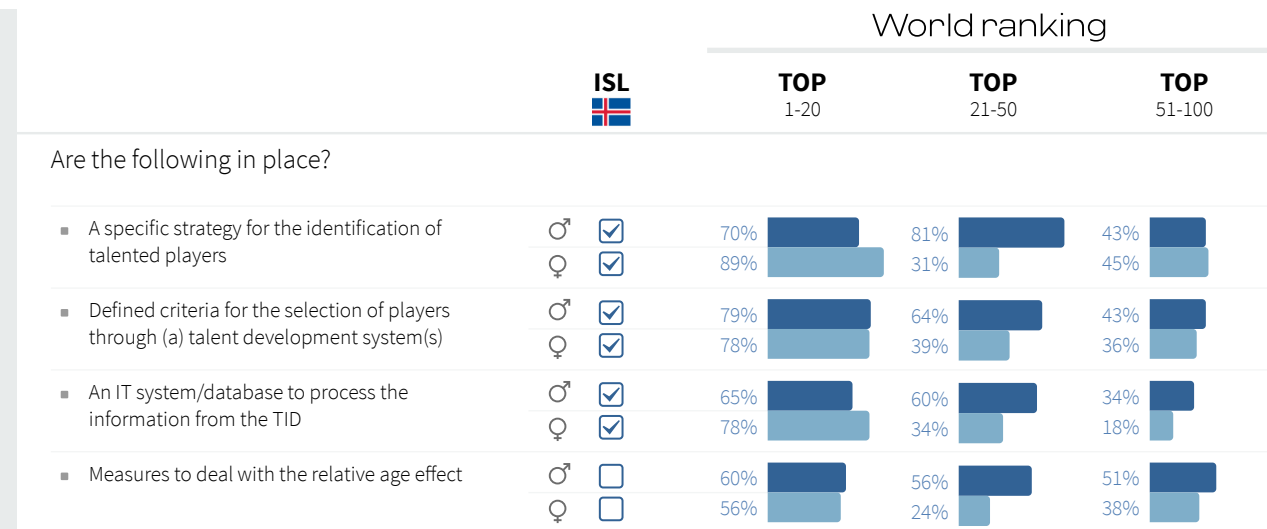
Talent identification strategy

Determining what constitutes a player with the necessary talent to perform at elite level is a step that all MAs should include in their identification practices. Outlining an identification strategy for scouts and other relevant parties to follow helps shape the characteristics of the talent pool of an MA's football community in a way that ties in with its wider footballing goals.

A high number of MAs in the top 100 do not have a TID strategy in place.

Although men's football appears to take account of the relative age effect more than women's football, only 51% of the MAs ranked from 51 to 100 implement such programmes. In the women's game, a higher percentage of the top 20 MAs have a specific strategy for talent identification of players in place, with 89% of MAs having such a strategy compared to 70% for the men's. Furthermore, across both the men's and women's top 100, lower-ranked countries are less likely to have an IT system or player selection criteria in place.

Illustration 4.6



Finding

Specific strategy for the identification of talented players

- Launched in 2014, the KSI Talent Programme represents the MA's talent ID strategy, which aims to ensure that as many players (boys and girls) as possible aged 13-14 are observed.
- The MA's coaches are responsible for scouting and are qualified. The heads of youth coaches at the clubs scout club players and nominate players for the program.
- When selecting players, the MA looks at technical skills, tactical discipline, mentality and athletic ability.
- Given that Iceland is a small country, it is even more important that talented players are not missed and that there is a strong talent ID system. The MA believes that it is in its interests to maintain good relations with all clubs to be able to monitor player progress.
- A lot of trust has to be placed in the clubs and the heads of youth coaches have to understand what is required to play at national-team level. This can represent a challenge within the talent ID system, particularly for girls.

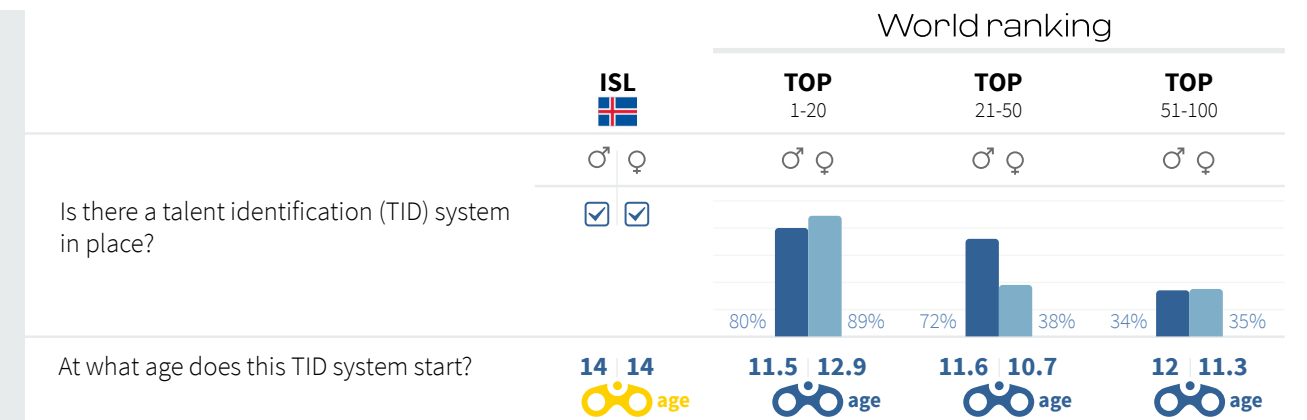
Talent identification system

The illustrations below highlight your MA's system for identifying players with potential. The types of process in place influence the amount of talent that is identified. The more effective the process, the greater the number of players with strong natural ability that are identified.

A high percentage of MAs in the top 20 have a TID system in place.

More than 80% of the top 20 MAs adopt a systematic approach to TID. This number decreases significantly in the lower-ranked MAs, especially on the women's pathway where only approximately 36% of MAs ranked 21-100 have a TID system in place for female players. Across the top 100 MAs, TID appears to start between the ages of ten and 12.

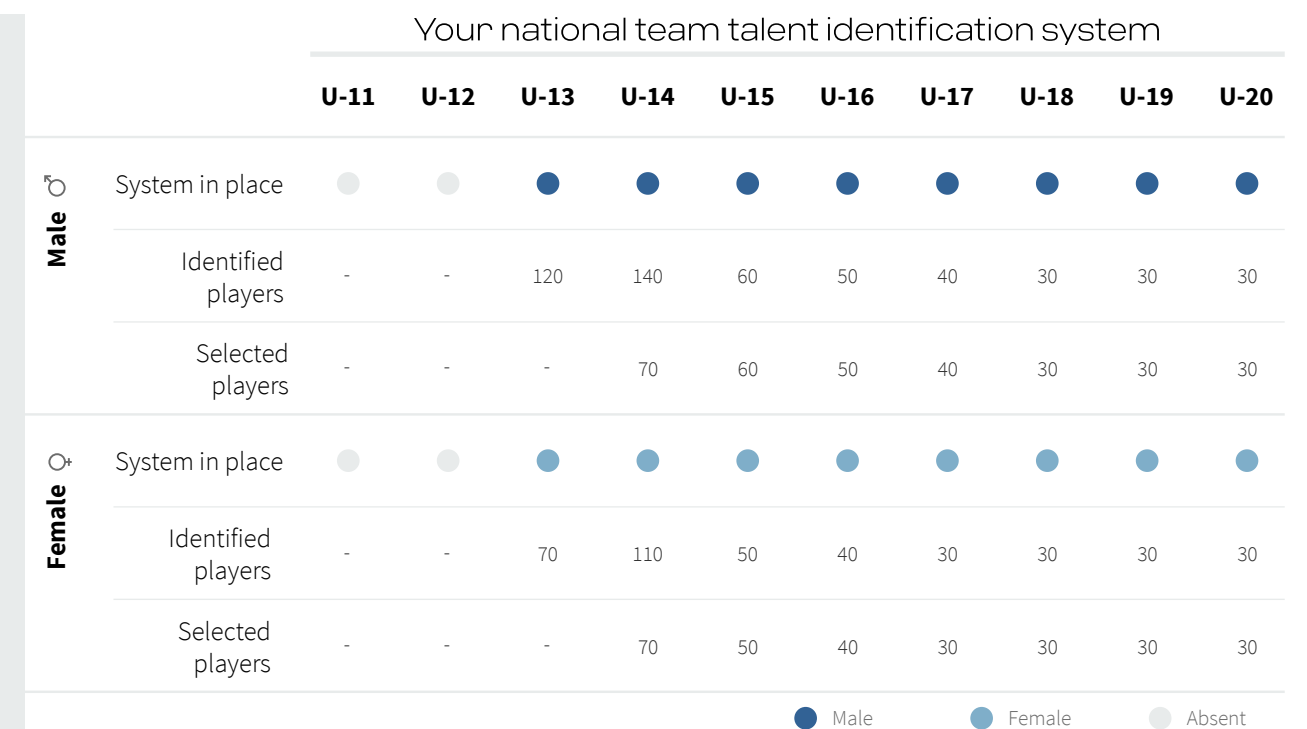
Illustration 4.7



System set-up

The illustration below shows which of your male and female youth age brackets have a talent identification system, the number of players that enter these systems on an annual basis, and the number of players who are ultimately selected for further activities after being identified.

Illustration 4.8



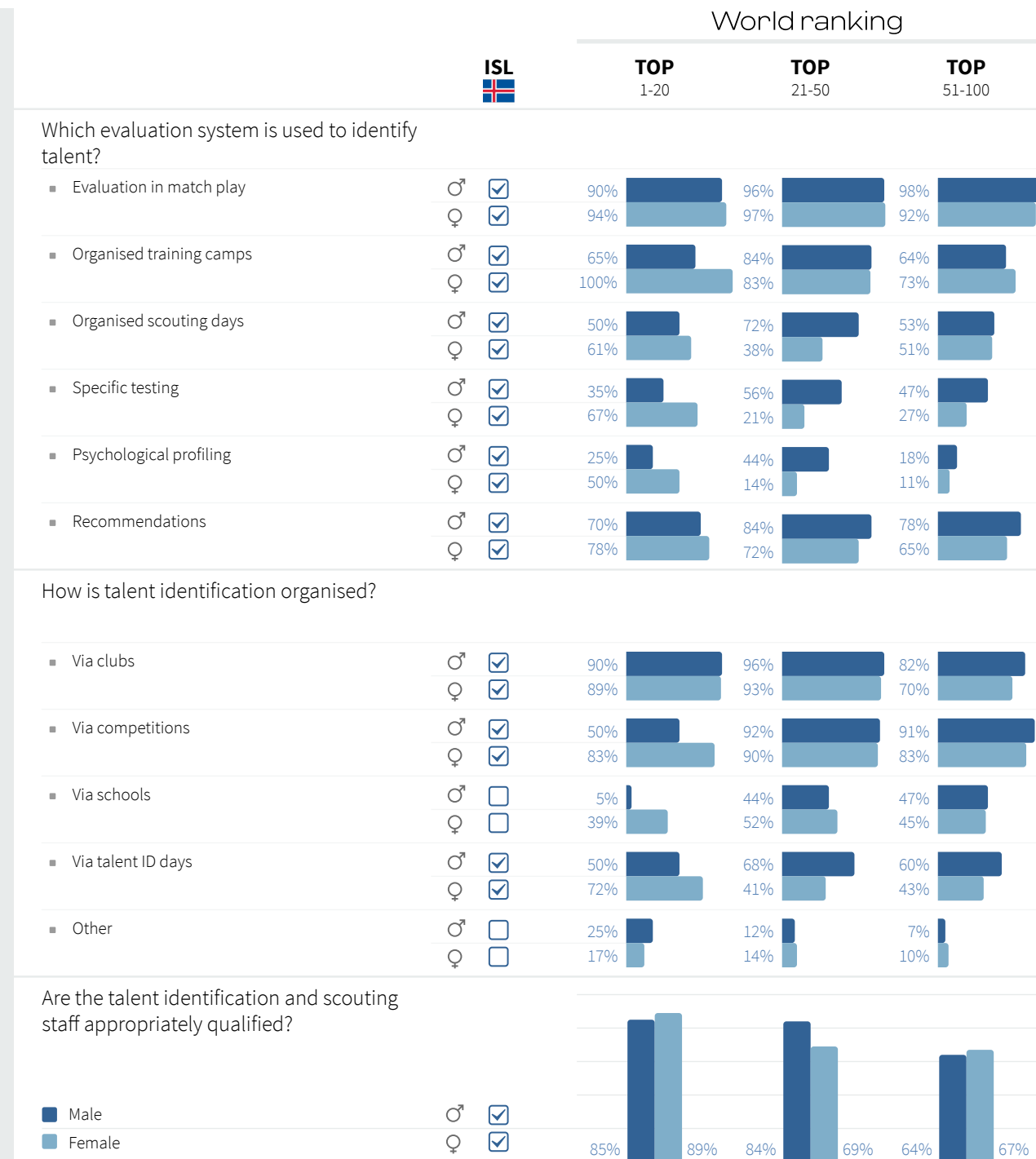
Organisation of talent identification

An effectively organised talent identification system creates a large pool of promising players from which elite teams can choose. The way talent identification is organised in your country, and the methods used for evaluating the talent, can be seen in the illustration below.

In the majority of the top 100 MAs, TID is organised through clubs.

Match play is the most popular form of evaluation across the top 100 MAs, with specific testing and psychological evaluations being the least-used methods. Player identification across the top 100 in both the men's and women's game is organised primarily through clubs, competitions and TID days. Furthermore, the top 20 MAs have a higher percentage of appropriately qualified scouts and TID staff than the lower-ranked MAs.

Illustration 4.9



Finding

The organisation and structure of the national Talent ID system

- Regional sessions are divided into two rounds and across seven regions. The first round is in the winter and primarily involves U-14 players (and talented U-13 players) nominated by club coaches. The second round is run before the summer and involves the players who impressed in the first round. Around 40-50 sessions take place.
- The talent tournament is the next step. The top players from the regional trials are selected (some 60-70 per gender) and put into four teams to play games over a weekend in September. This activity represents the basis to name the U-15 national teams.
- The U-15 national teams are part of the talent ID programme, which involves four training camps and an annual tournament.
- Three elite training sessions are held in each region as extra training sessions for Elite players who are available for the U-15 and U-16 squads.

Post-identification activities

Once talented individuals have been identified, they are then enlisted in further activities or programmes that develop their talent. The various activities and programmes undertaken by your country's promising players are displayed below.

The top 100 MAs mostly select players for the national teams following identification.

91% of the top 100 men's MAs and 92% of the women's top 100 MAs select players for the national team following identification. Further to this, those women's national teams in the top 20 use regional teams, regional training camps and national training camps more than men's teams, following identification.

Illustration 4.10

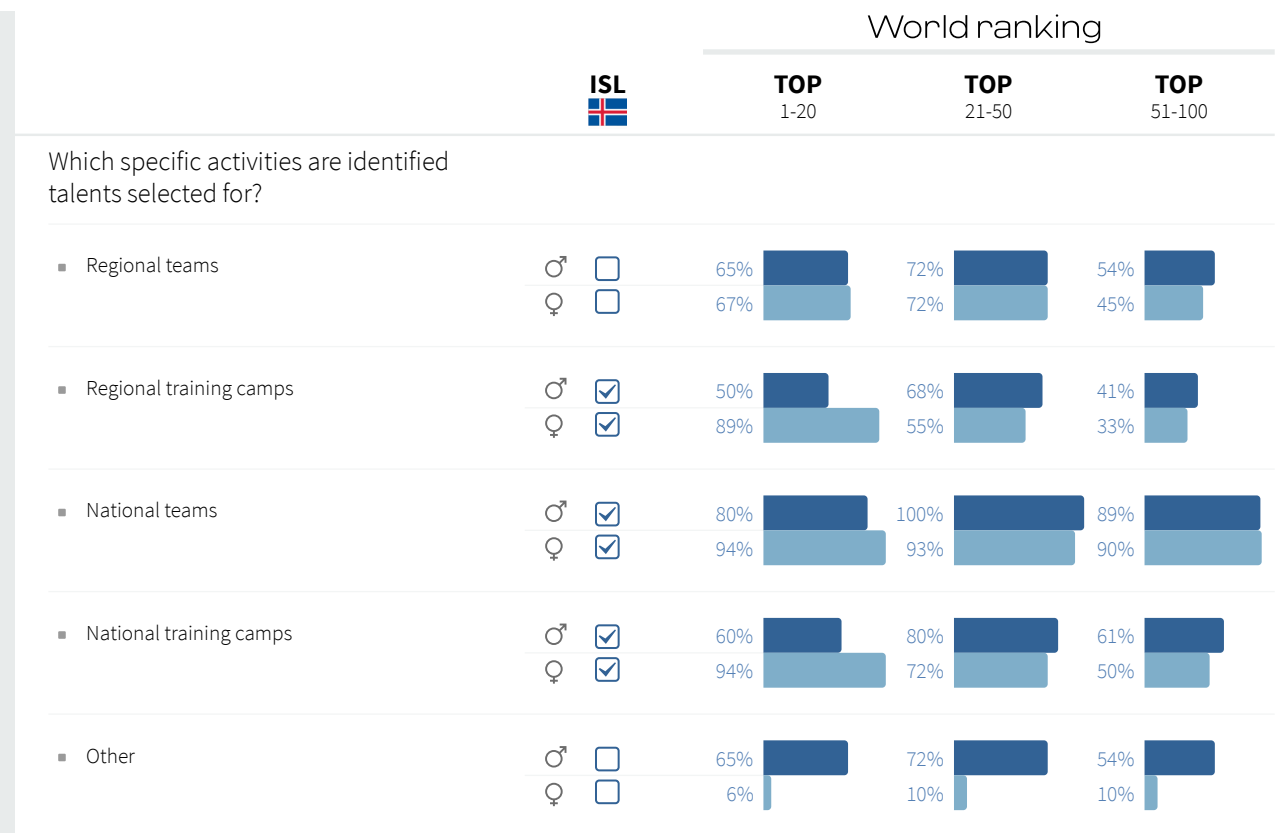


Illustration 4.11 and 4.12 display the various categories selected for your country's promising youth players after talent identification, broken down into the U-11 to U-20 age groups.

Illustration 4.11

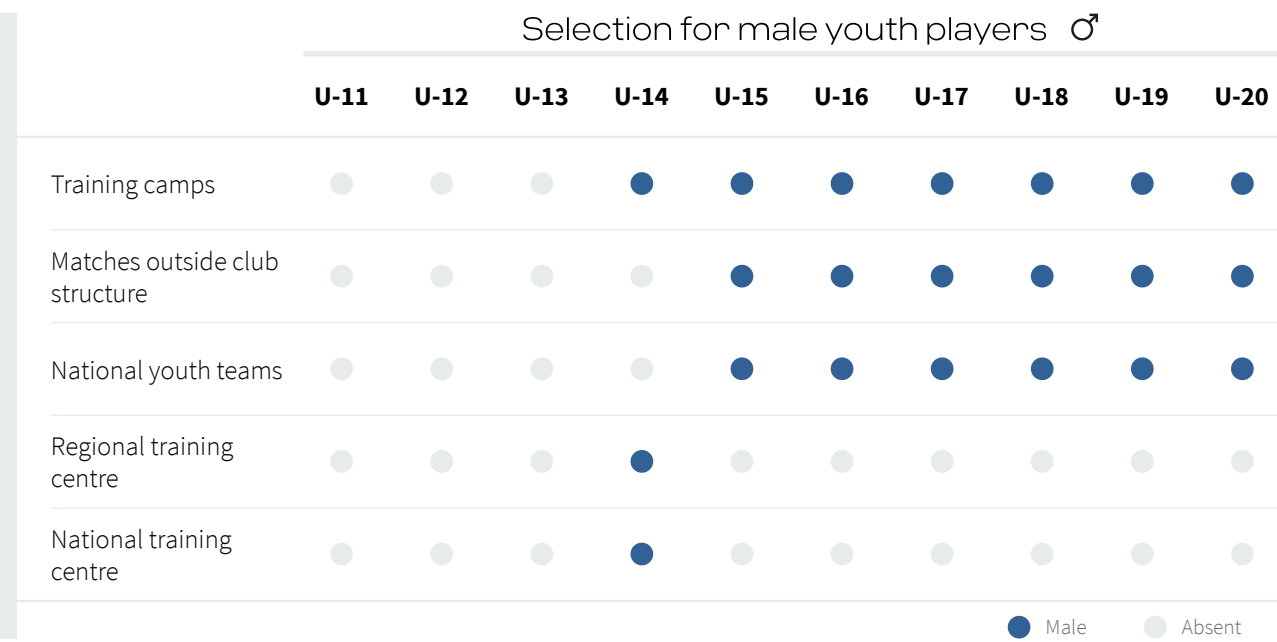
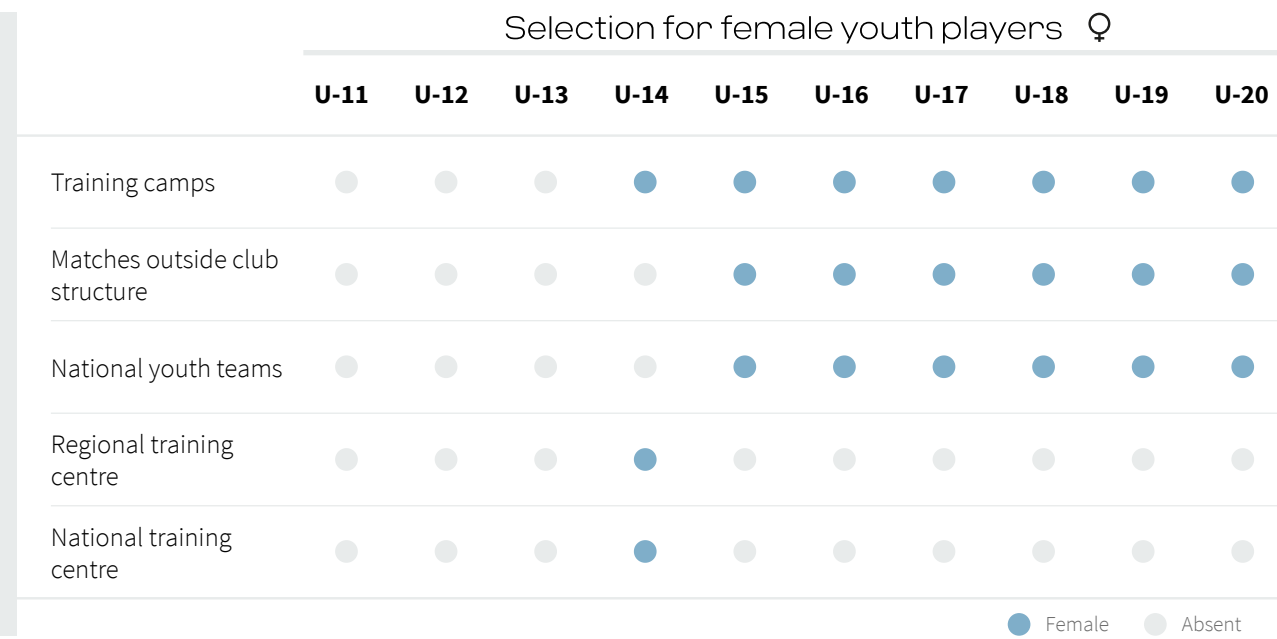


Illustration 4.12



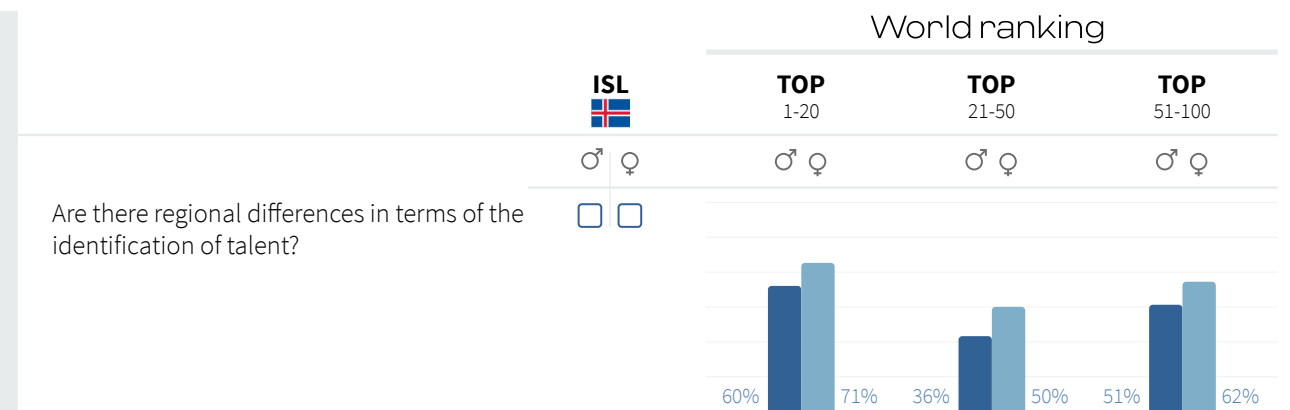
Regional differences

There may be regional differences in talent identification across a given country. Identifying and acknowledging these differences can be useful steps towards mitigating any negative consequences they may have on maximising a country's pool of talented players. Whether there are regional differences across your football community can be seen below.

A considerable number of MAs acknowledge that they face regional differences in talent identification.

60% of MAs in the men's top 20 and 71% of MAs in the women's top 20 acknowledge that they have regional differences in the identification of talented players. Across the top 100, regional differences are more prevalent in women's football.

Illustration 4.13



Finding

Regional differences in terms of talent identification

- The KSI's Talent Programme covers Iceland's seven regions. The MA's coaches visit all of the regions biannually before the summer and without showing any geographic discrimination. They visit the most isolated areas in each region at least once, given that it is a struggle for players from these areas to travel to the regional sessions held during the winter.
- Some colder regions may have fewer competitions, which could affect the exposure that these players have to regular playing opportunities. This is seen as an obstacle to player progression when compared to players from more populous regions.
- The majority (some two-thirds) of registered young players live in the capital city. The south-west part of the country supplies the most national-team players.



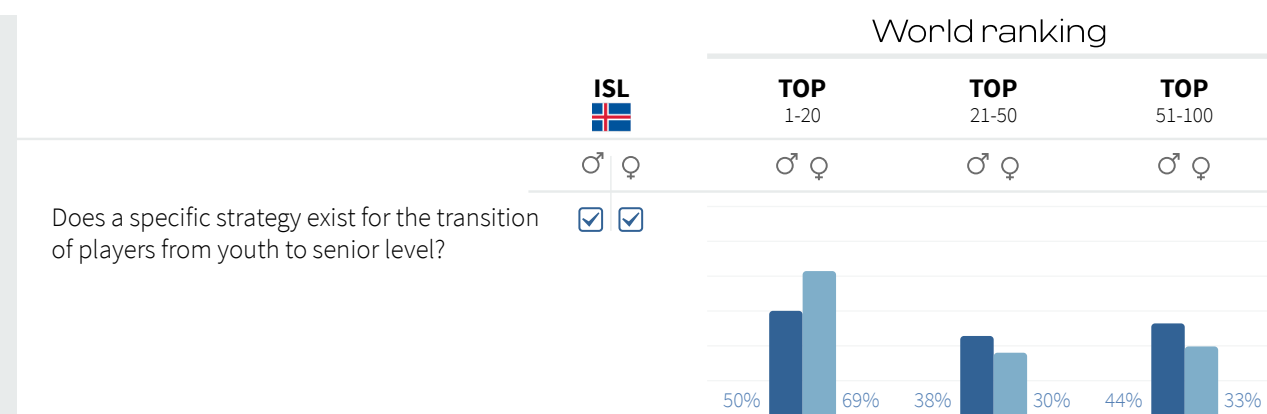
4.3 Transition from youth to senior

Moving youth players up to senior level has an incredibly positive effect on their development and can determine the heights they will reach in their prime. Specific strategies can be created to guarantee a transition whereby young prospects receive the senior exposure needed early on to become high-quality senior players.

A significant number of the top 100 MAs do not have a strategy in place for transitioning players to senior football.

Across the top 100, only 43% of MAs in men's football have a strategy in place for the transition of players from youth to senior level. For women, it is a similar picture outside the top 20, although in the top 20 itself, 69% have such a support strategy in place.

Illustration 4.14



Finding

Measures in place to facilitate the transition between junior and senior level

- The KSI identified the transition from junior to senior football as an area for improvement, especially in the men's game. The gap between U-19 players who compete in the U-19 league and the senior team can be difficult to bridge.
- To address this issue, some clubs have an affiliated club, where players aged above 19 who are not yet ready to join the first team are sent on loan to get some playing time.
- On the girls' side, the transition from junior to senior football was not considered to be an issue.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTIFICATION

SUMMARISING NOTES

- Football Development and Talent Scouting are sections within the KSI's International Football Department. The Head of Talent Development runs the Talent Programme for both boys and girls, with the support of five MA coaches. As a small country, it is important that Iceland has a strong talent ID system.
- The clubs are key stakeholders within talent development. The KSI respects that clubs work on their own LTPD strategies, with a developmental environment created based on the MA's guidelines. In girls' football, the club academies are not as heavily involved. A licensing system ensures quality at club and youth/academy levels. There is currently no licensing system at women's clubs for the younger age groups.
- The Talent Programme is the MA's main and most efficient talent ID initiative. It caters for the top U-13 and U-14 boys and girls across all regions and is the basis for naming the U-15 national teams.
- The transition from junior to men's football is an area to be addressed. The gap between U-19 level and the senior team is huge. This transition is not an issue in the female game.
- Great trust is placed in the clubs and the heads of youth coaches have to understand what is required to play at national-team level.

Recommendations

1. Clubs have an important role to play in talent development up until the age of 13. The next step in the process, the KSI Talent Programme, represents a good initiative to continue the development of talented players. We noticed that the number of players in the system is very similar across the 14-20 age groups. We recommend that the talent programme be developed further and into a pyramid system, starting from the age of 12.
2. To increase the benefits of the developmental club environment on the boys' side, we recommend that mixed football become a prominent feature. Girls, especially talented girls, could be offered a more challenging environment by playing with boys at club level.
3. We understand that the winter training camps at U-15 and U-16 levels involve a rather training-based programme. To increment playing opportunities, we recommend that a match-based programme is implemented instead.

5. ACADEMIES

The quality of the academy system is decisive for the future success of the member association, the professional league and the national teams.

The vast network of academy structures is linked to clubs, schools and private companies, in addition to regional and national associations, and can be considered as the feeder system for the national teams. As a consequence, the (future) success of any member association (MA) is largely determined by the capacity and performance of this academy system. Talented players are recruited and developed by these academies and follow their pathway to the top along these structures. Moreover, academies are also responsible for the players' personal and social development, with the aim of moulding these youngsters into well-rounded people.

5.1 Participation and academy types

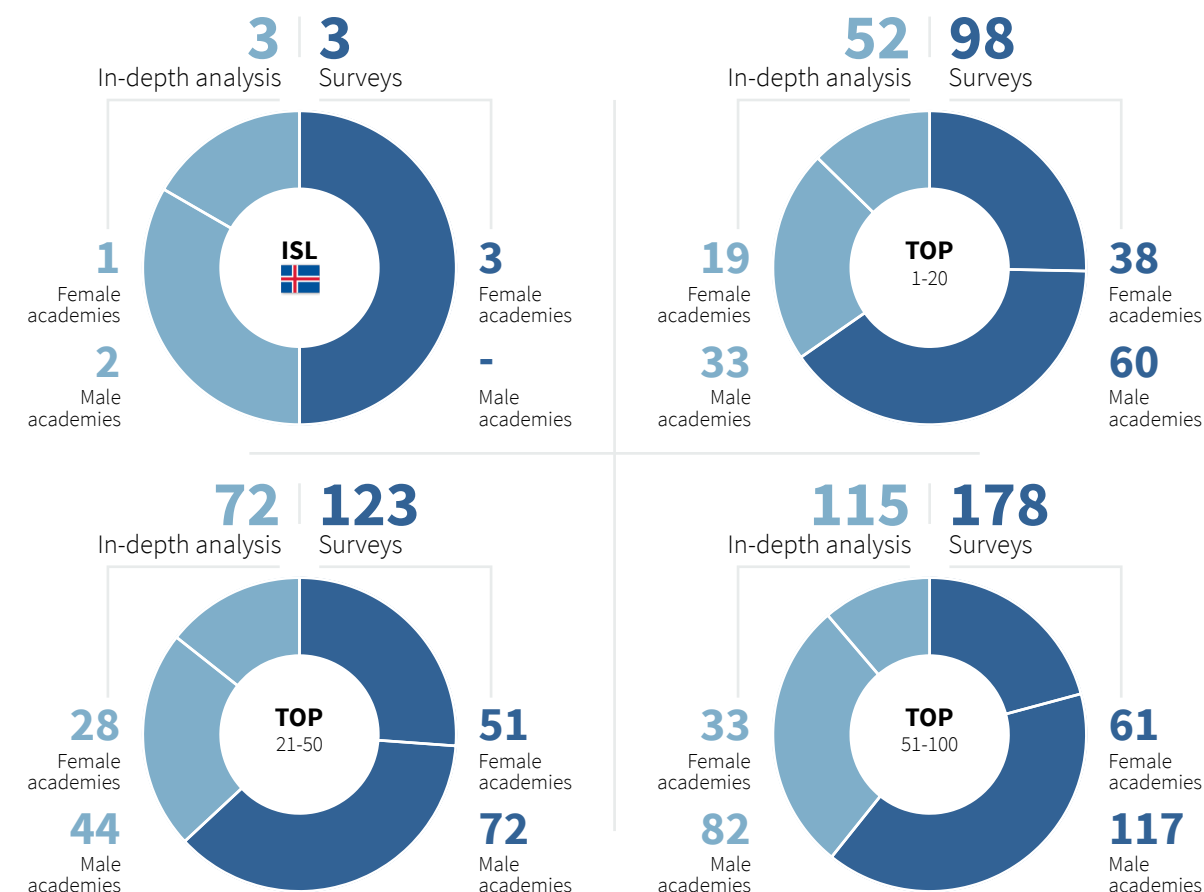
The Academy Analysis focused on all environments and institutions that develop the most talented players in the country. In most cases, these are youth academies at (professional) clubs, but they also include national or regional training centres operated by the MA, elite schools run by the government, private academies and a mixture of various other approaches.

More than 1,000 academies from 130 FIFA member associations participated in the Academy Analysis.

The graphs below show the participation rates for the in-depth analysis and the survey, with a focus on the proportion of boys' and girls' academies and different types of organisations. All selected academies, whether they were invited for the in-depth analysis or only for the survey, were given access to the online Club and Academy Monitoring Platform (CAMP). Of the 1,027 academies that started to complete the questionnaire, 864 (84.1%) fully completed the ID Card with general information about their teams, programme, staff and facilities. This means that an average of 6.6 academies per MA shared sufficient quantitative data about all these aspects.

In the in-depth analysis of the leading academies (an average of 2.8 per MA), in addition to the data collected via CAMP, documents were analysed by a team of experts and interviews were conducted with various key figures from the academy. This allowed us to provide a more objective analysis of these academies and to provide them with a report with concrete findings and action points.

Illustration 5.1



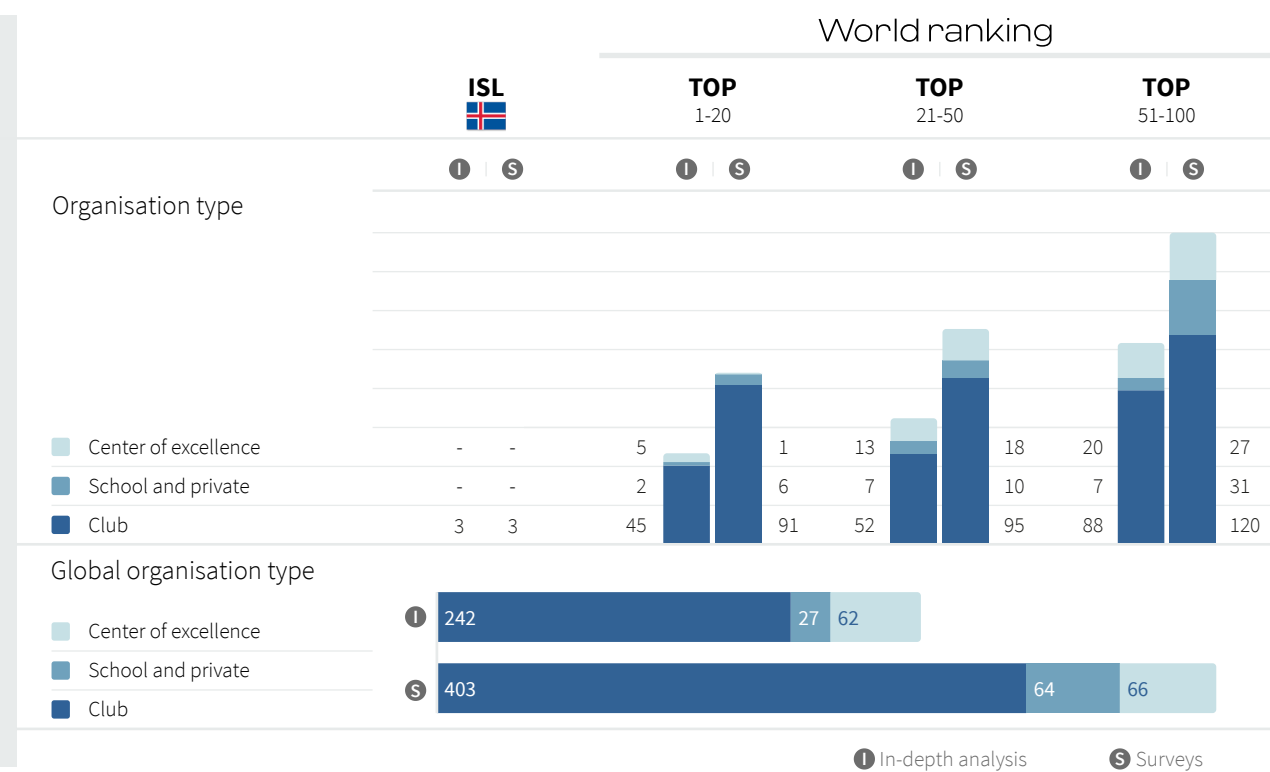
Participation rate from the top 100 countries





The graphs below present the composition of the samples according to the types of organisation. Three quarters of the academies in the total sample were related to a traditional club structure. In the top 20 MAs, this contingent was even higher, accounting for 90% of the sample. 15% of all academies can be considered a “centre of excellence” linked to a national or regional association. The smallest group (10%) was academies related to schools or private institutions.

Illustration 5.2



Finding

Cooperation with the selected academies for the in-depth analysis

- All three academies were very cooperative and had no problems with filling out the analysis platform in a timely and accurate way. An adequate number of surveys were filled in by two academies.
- Although academies uploaded some documents, overall, they operated rather informally.
- Training footage was received from two of the academies analysed.

5.2 Typical academy structures and pathways

The pathways for academy players to senior football mostly differ for boys and girls according to the type of academy. In this section, information is presented about the age groups and teams, as well as the training and playing opportunities for these academy players in the main phases of the development pathways.

Age groups and teams

The tables below provide an overview of the average number of teams and players per age group, as well as the player/coach ratio within the various teams for boys and girls.

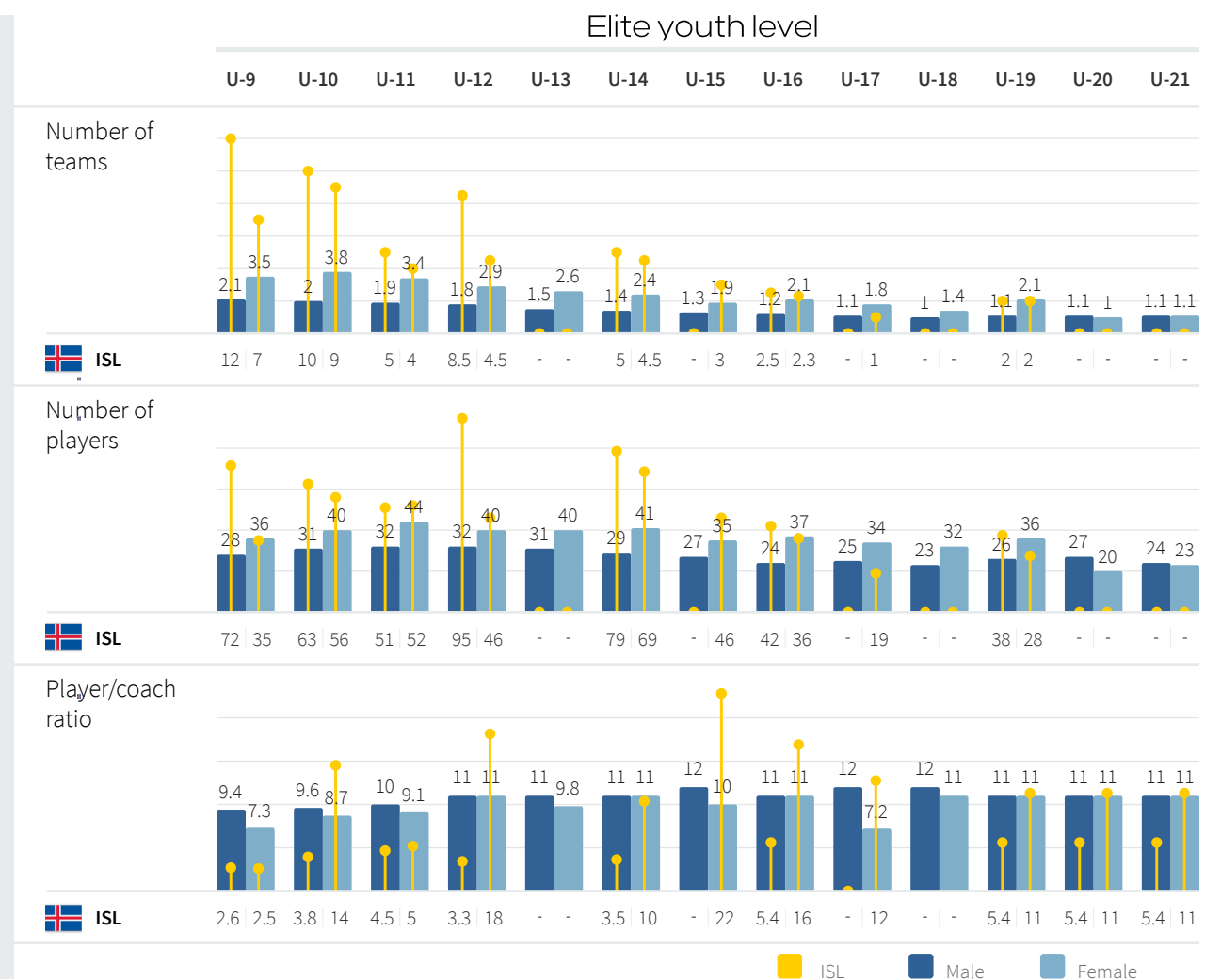
Overall, there are about 50% more age groups at boys' academies compared to girls' academies.

In general, boys' academies have an average of 7.7 age groups, compared to 5.4 at girls' academies. In the youngest phase (U-6 up to U-11), there tends to be a high number of teams in each age group. In the second phase (U-12 to U-15), these numbers start to decrease, and in the oldest phase (U-16+), age groups are regularly structured per two or three years.

Overall, we see that girls' academies in the top 20 MAs have a greater number of players than those in the lower-ranked MAs for almost all age-group phases. On the other hand, for boys' academies, MAs in the lower reaches (51-100) have a higher number of players compared to the other ranking groups.

In general, the average number of players per coach is 12.5 for boys' academies and 11.9 for girls' academies. For boys' academies, within all ranking groups, the U-12 to U-15 phase has the highest player/coach ratio. In girls' academies, the player/coach ratio tends to increase with ranking group and age-group phases.

Illustration 5.3





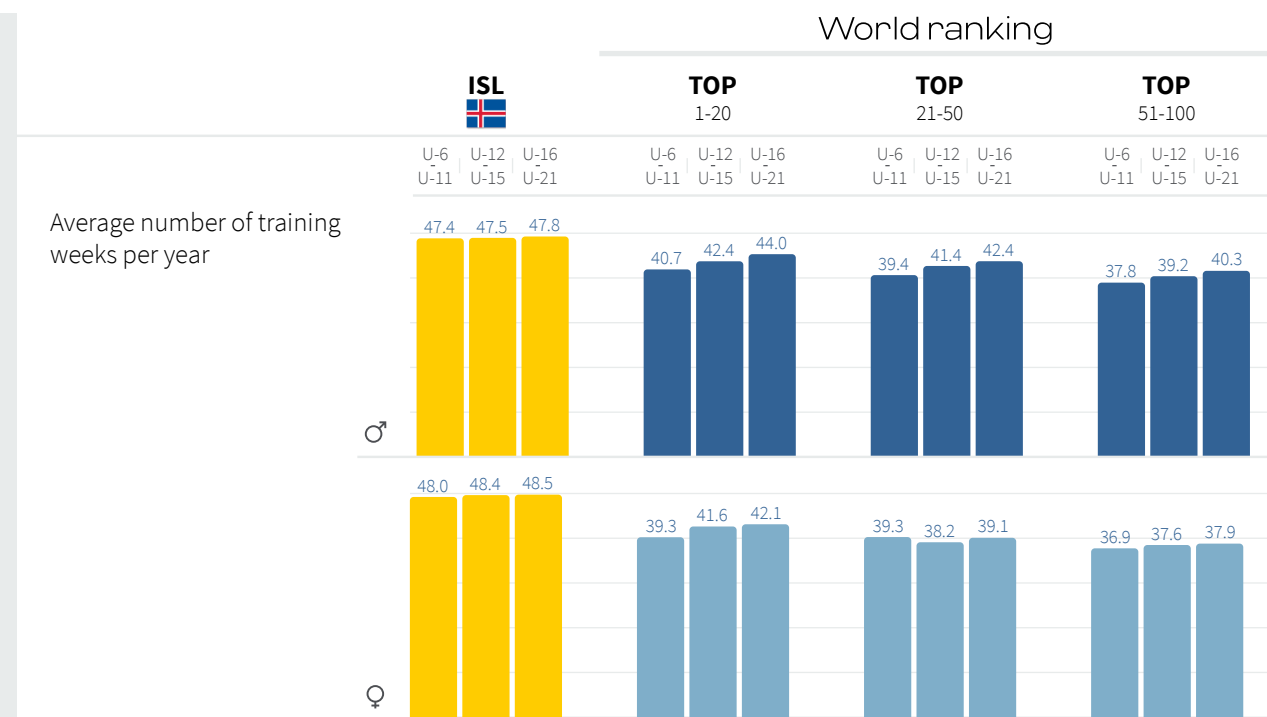
Training opportunities

Maximising the number of training opportunities and the contact time between a coach and a player leads to a greater chance of development. The data below gives an overview of the training opportunities at academies across the top 100 MAs for both boys and girls.

Academies in the top 20 MAs have the highest number of training weeks per season.

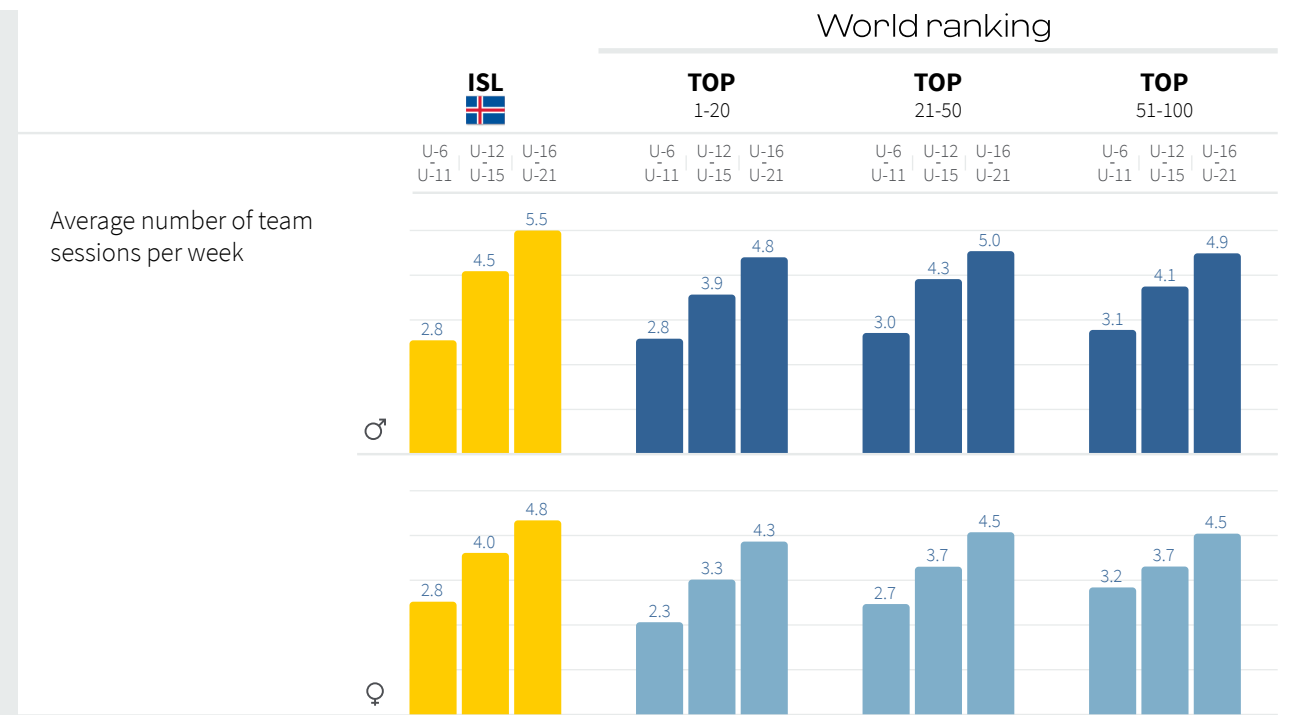
The graphs below show the average number of training weeks per year and the average number of training sessions per week. In general, boys have more training weeks than girls (on average 39.0 weeks for boys compared to 37.9 weeks for girls). For both genders, the academies in the top 20 MAs have significantly more training weeks than the lower-ranked countries.

Illustration 5.4



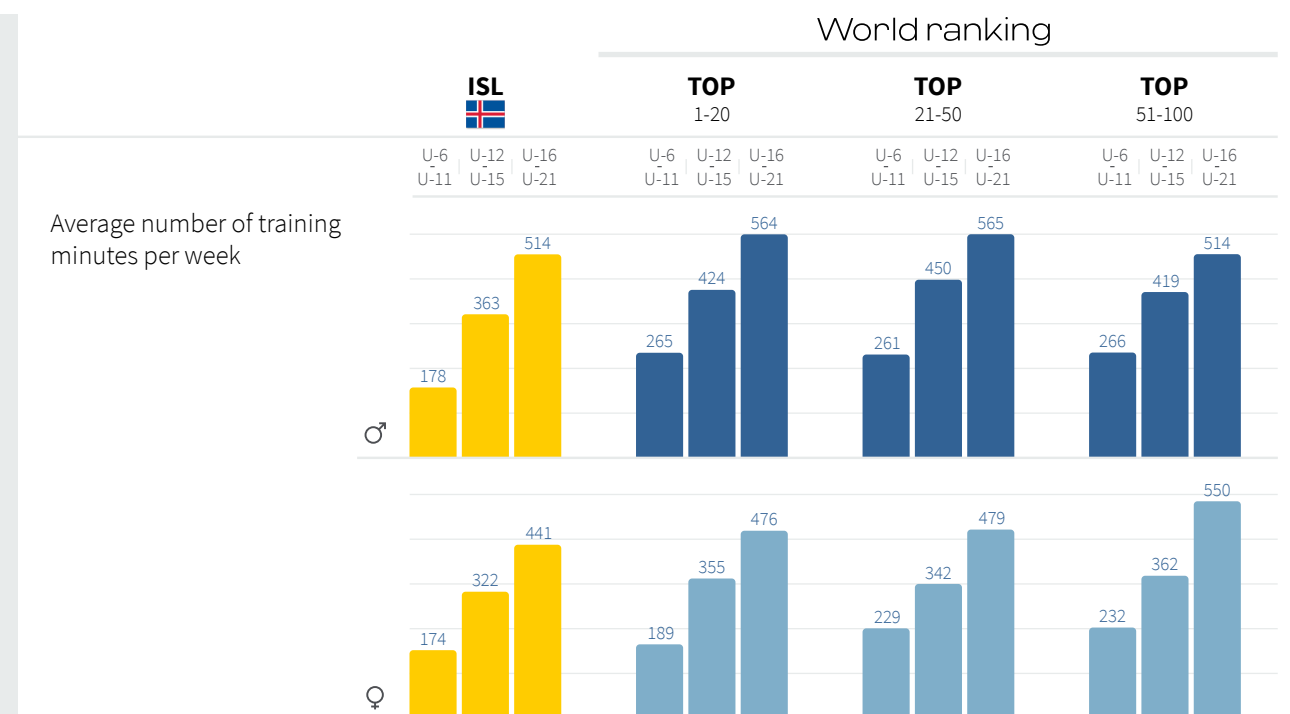
With an average of 5.3 training sessions per week, boys have an average of 206.7 training opportunities per season (team and individual sessions together). At girls' academies, the average sum of team and individual training sessions per week is 4.7, giving them an average of 178.1 training opportunities per season.

Illustration 5.5



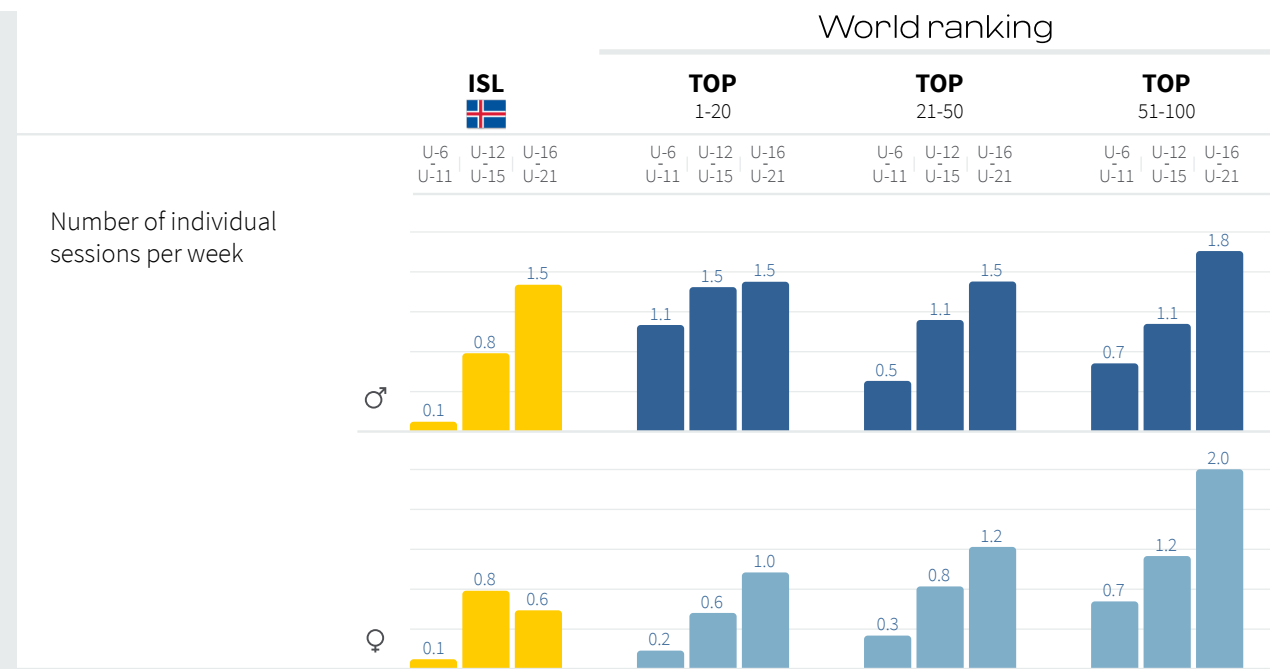
Overall, we see that academies in the top 50 MAs complete significantly more training minutes per week (team and individual training together). While boys have an average of 424.1 training minutes per week, the average for girls is slightly lower (395.6 training minutes per week).

Illustration 5.6



In general, individual training sessions are not frequently organised. This is an area for improvement for both boys' and girls' academies, including in the top 20 MAs.

Illustration 5.7



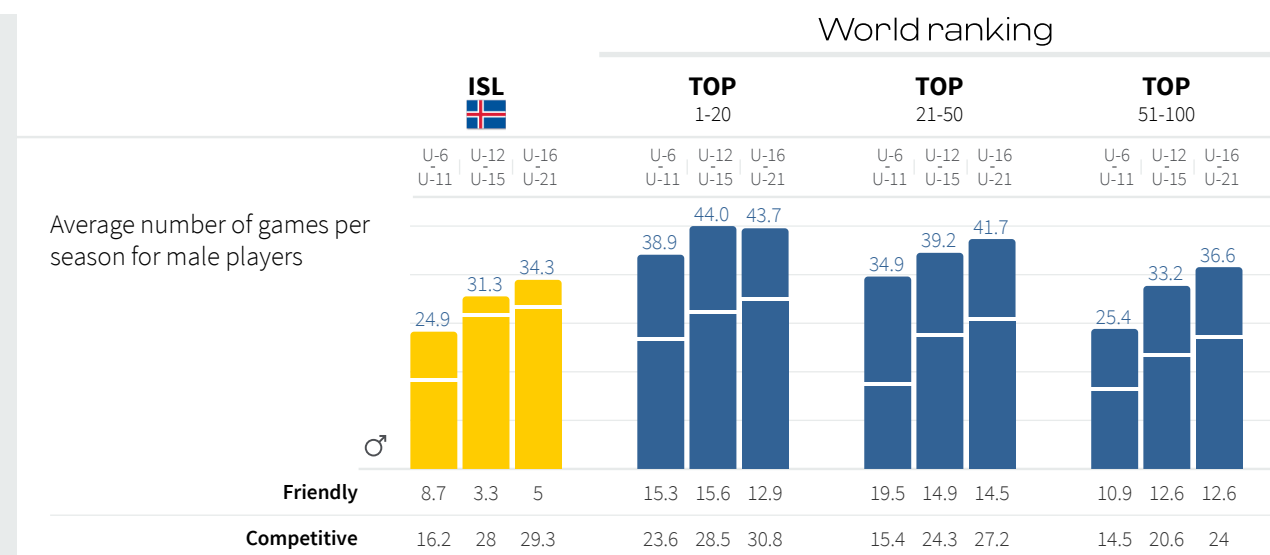
Playing opportunities

Game time and playing opportunities are crucial for the development of players, no matter at what age. The data below gives an insight into the playing opportunities at academies across the top 100 MAs for both boys and girls.

Boys at academies in the top 20 MAs play more “meaningful games” per season, particularly in regular competitions.

The graph below shows the average number of games per season, regular competition matches and friendlies combined for boys in the three main phases of the pathway. The number of competition games appears to differ significantly for the boys' academies in the higher-ranked MAs.

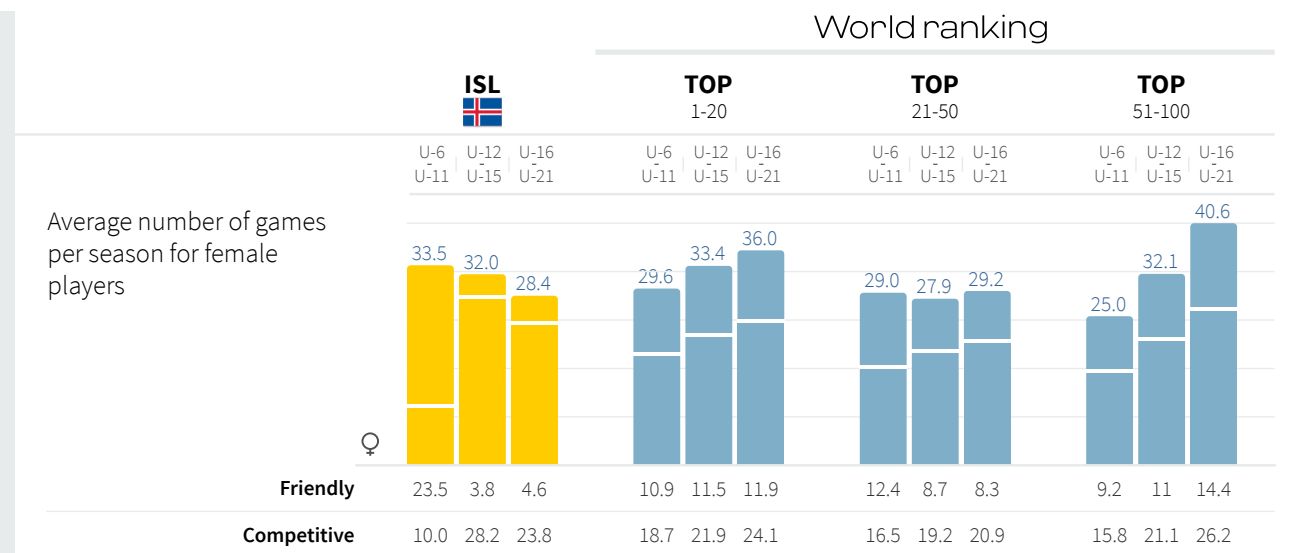
Illustration 5.8



In general, there are fewer playing opportunities for girls, mainly due to a significantly lower number of matches at girls' academies.

Below is a similar graph for girls' academies. Among these, the differences in the number of matches appear to be less prominent between the top-ranked MAs and the rest. On the other hand, it is clear that there are fewer (competition) matches for girls compared to boys, especially in the higher-ranked MAs.

Illustration 5.9



Finding

Typical academy structures and pathways

- The pathway is quite straightforward in every academy. Players are primarily selected from school football, then go through the various ages and stages of the youth system with the aim of playing in their club's first team.
- Youth teams work closely with their first team and integrate young players effectively. A common objective for these academies is to develop players who have the potential to be transferred to continental Europe.
- Every academy analysed provides enough training opportunities (four or five times a week) and has a well-balanced player-to-coach ratio. Managing playing opportunities and having access to enough meaningful games is, on the other hand, a major challenge.

5.3 Overall evaluation of the academies

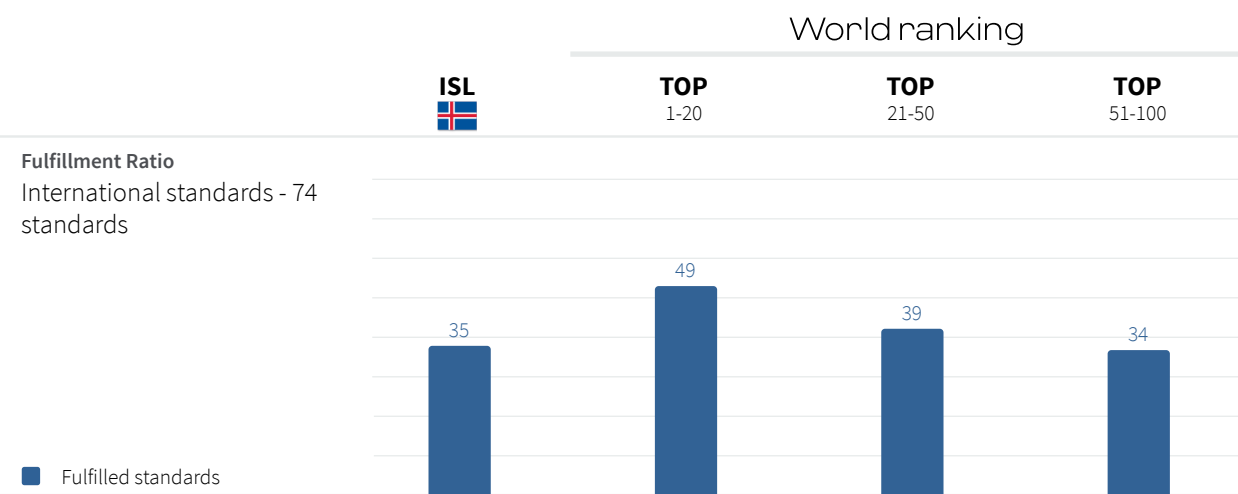
The capacity and performance of any talent development system are dependent on the availability of appropriate resources like staff, infrastructure and technology. Besides this, structures, strategies and procedures have to be properly designed and aligned to execute the managerial, football-specific and supporting processes in an efficient way. Permanent monitoring of the implementation and the output is key to effective talent development.

In the in-depth analysis of the leading academies per MA, 230 criteria were checked to evaluate these critical success factors. In the Double Pass model, these are related to 12 key areas or dimensions clustered over four main components: management, football, support and resources. Research at the University of Brussels resulted in a selection of 74 international standards that have a significant impact on the productivity of an academy. Although these factors have not been validated for other academy structures (such as centres of excellence and schools), we used them as a guideline to analyse the actual status of the academies in the different countries.

Leading academies in higher-ranked MAs have a higher fulfilment ratio for the international standards.

With an average of 66% of fulfilled international standards, the leading academies in the top 20 MAs have significantly higher scores than those in the MAs ranked between 21 and 50 (53%) and those in the MAs between 51 and 100 (46%). In general, with an average fulfilment ratio of 51%, boys' academies scores higher than girls' (43%). For the few mixed academies in our sample, the fulfilment ratio of 50% is similar to that of the boys' academies. It is important to note that this objective analysis is only based on the selected leading academies per MA.

Illustration 5.10



The radar diagram below shows the average fulfilment ratio of the leading academies in the MAs ranked in the top 20, in those ranked between 21 and 50, and in those ranked between 51 and 100 on the different dimensions. With the exception of facilities and organisation, it is noticeable that the hierarchy of the world ranking is respected in all dimensions in terms of higher fulfilment ratios for academies in the higher-ranked MAs.

Illustration 5.11

Average fulfilment ratio by dimension



5.4 Management

Long-term success in talent development and academy management requires a clear strategy and structure to create the right setting and culture. An analysis of these three management-related dimensions (strategy, organisation and human resources) provides a clear picture of the potential for further business growth.

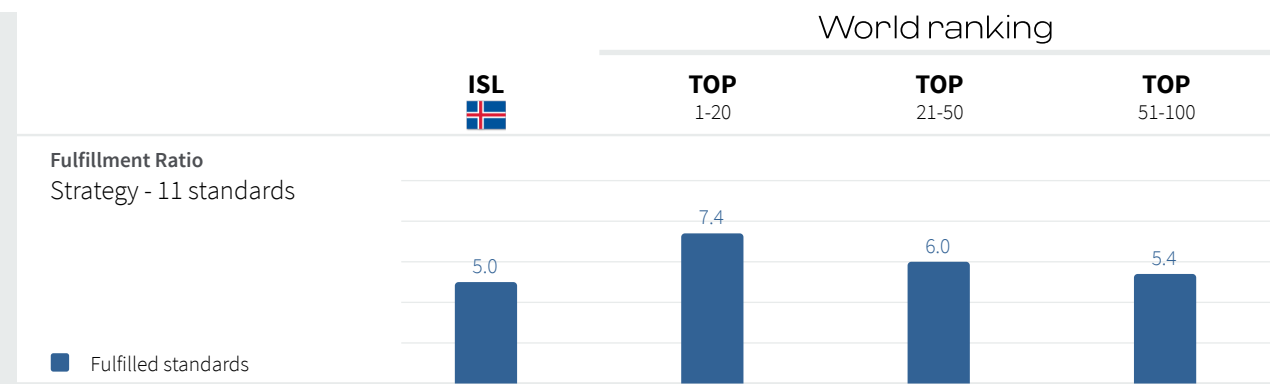
Strategy

This dimension analyses the different elements of a strategic roadmap for the academy. For instance, we evaluated whether there is a sustainable vision for the football business model and if a strategic role for the academy is present. In addition, this dimension examined whether the mission and vision are translated into strategic objectives and operational goals. Lastly, we also checked whether performance targets are monitored as a measure to evaluate the effectiveness of the action plan.

The best-performing academies work more purposefully, with sharply defined targets (KPIs) that are continuously monitored.

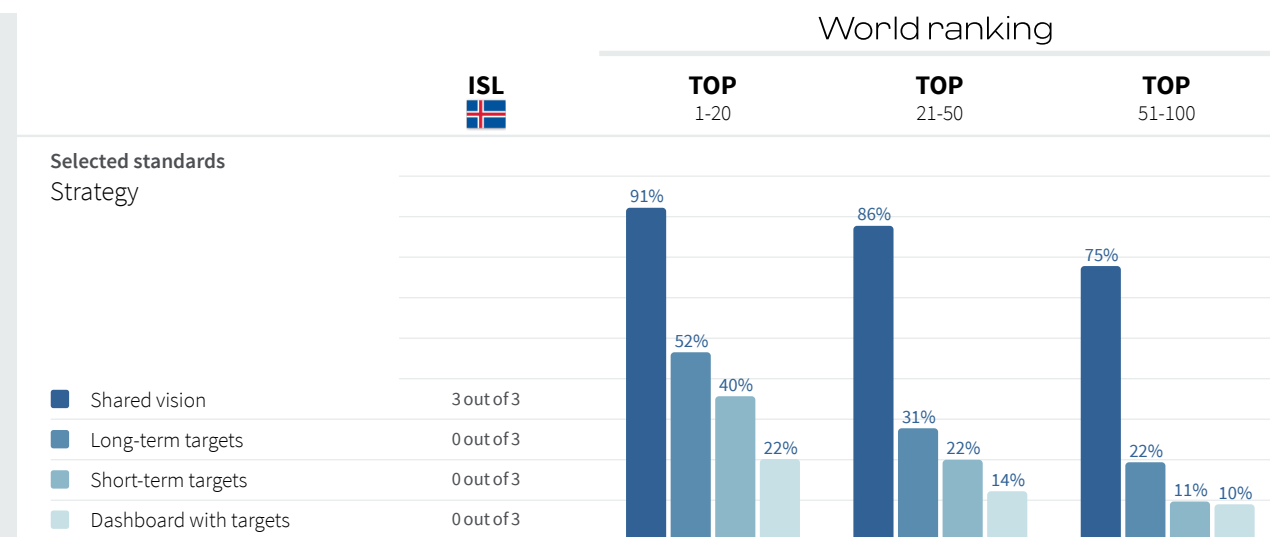
The leading academies in MAs in the upper reaches of the FIFA world ranking fulfil more standards for strategy, whereas the global average is about half of the 11 selected standards.

Illustration 5.12



Most of the organisations have a shared vision regarding talent development. A few have defined strategic objectives for the academy and have translated these into operational goals. Only 10% of the academies monitor their performance targets on a permanent basis.

Illustration 5.13



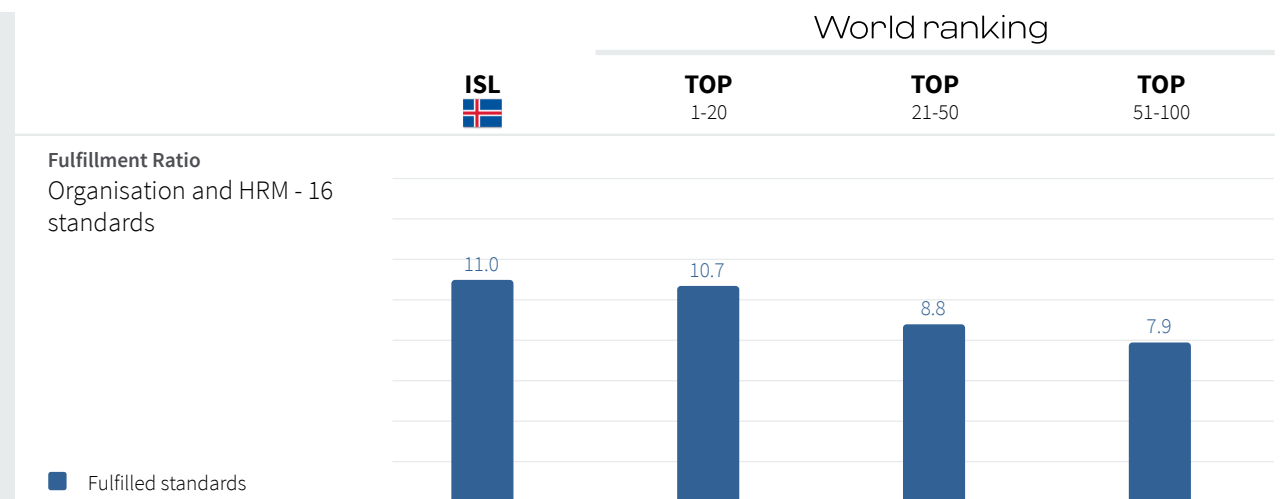
Organisation and HRM

In these dimensions, the focus is on the position of the academy in the organisational set-up and its potential as a learning environment. This analysis examines whether there is a clear decision-making model or committee structure that covers the strategic planning process of the organisation and the different key areas. Additionally, it identifies whether the performance of the academy staff is monitored and evaluated by observing their contribution to the overarching objectives, and lastly whether continuous improvement is guaranteed at all levels.

The academy management of the most productive academies is better positioned in the decision-making model.

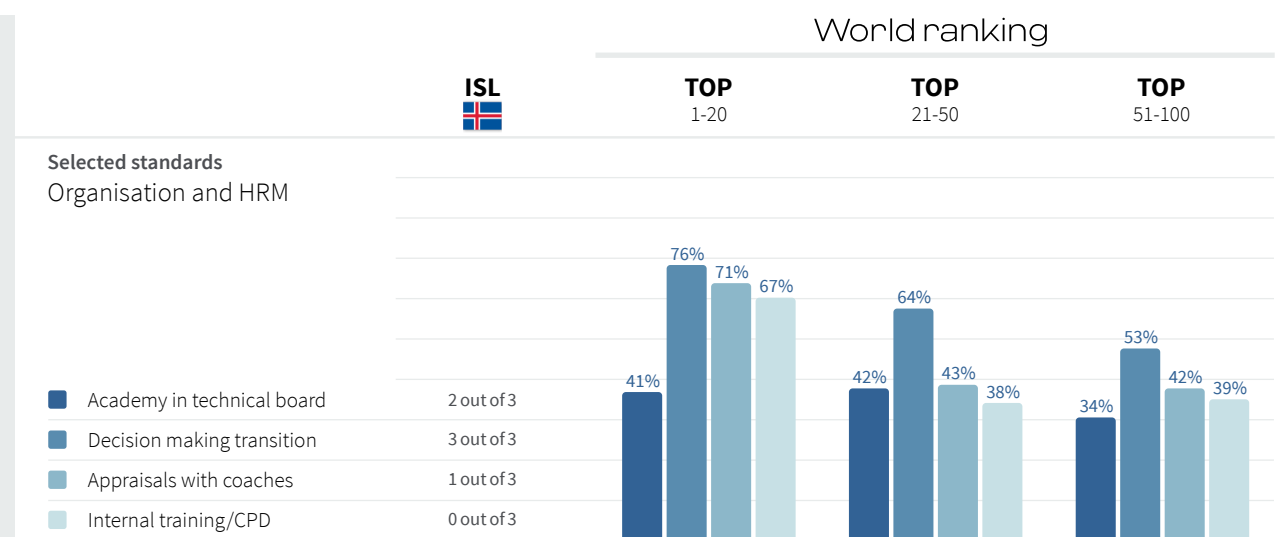
Where there appears to be little difference between the top 50 MAs in terms of organisation, it is clear that the leading academies in the top 20 MAs have a higher fulfilment ratio for human resources or people management.

Illustration 5.14



Although a decision-making process has been outlined for the transition of players at more than half of the academies, we noted that the academy management is formally involved in the technical board of the organisation in only a minority of cases. HR activities such as performance appraisals and professional development of staff seem to be implemented better in the top 20 MAs, in particular for boys' academies, in comparison to academies in lower-ranked MAs.

Illustration 5.15



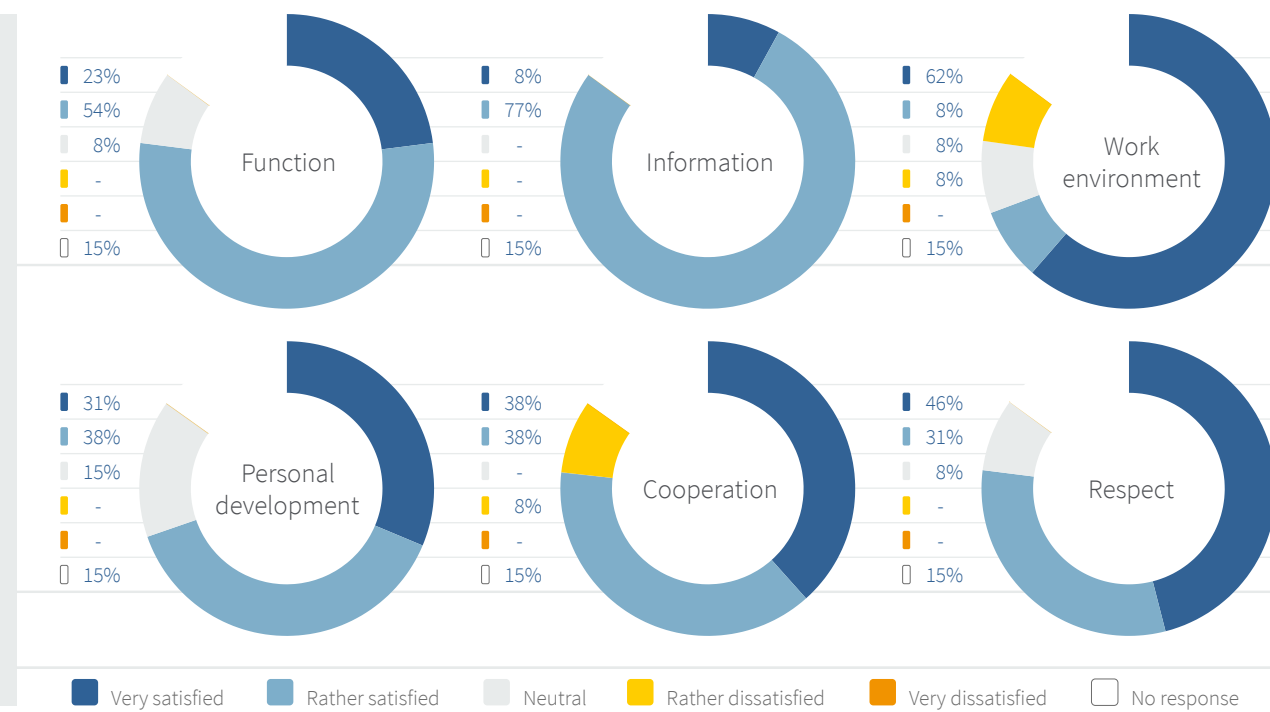
Coach satisfaction survey

A well-functioning HR policy should result in more satisfied and better-performing staff members. For this, we conducted a coach satisfaction survey focusing on the key factors: the function, the extent to which one is informed, the colleagues, the work environment, the possibilities for personal development and the respect one receives.

Coach satisfaction can be considered a key performance indicator for a successful HR policy and a well-managed academy.

The graph below shows to what extent the coaches at the participating academies in your country are satisfied with these aspects

Illustration 5.16



5.5 Football

The football programme is at the heart of any academy. Team development examines how the football philosophy is translated into a curriculum to develop the desired player profiles for the professional game. This must guide the coaching staff on how to put the football philosophy into practice. The individual development of players focuses on maximising the football potential of each individual player and providing them with a clear pathway to professional football.

Team development and coaching

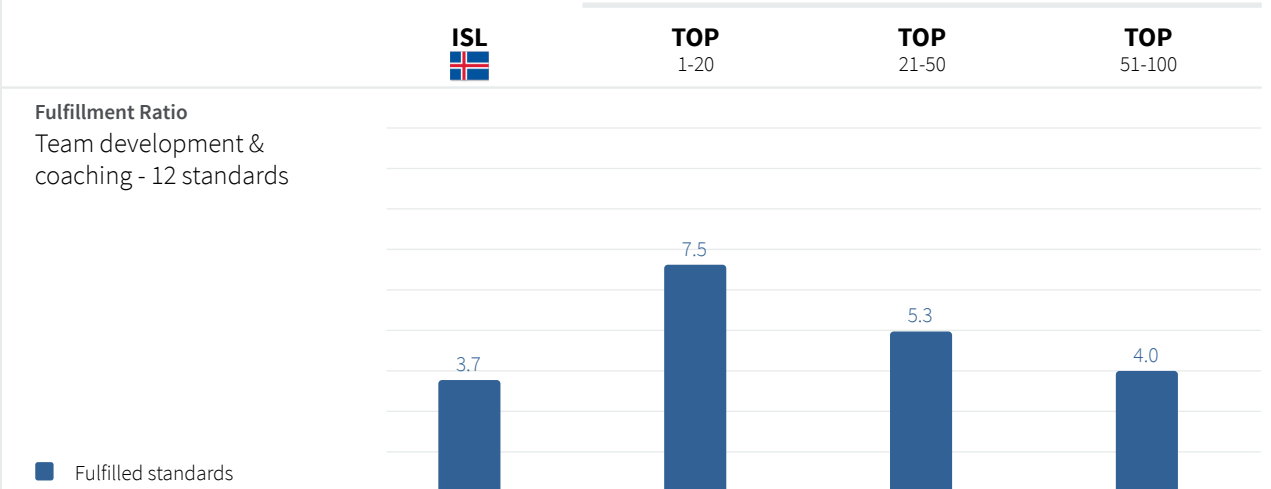
This dimension analyses whether there is a well-defined football philosophy, including a style of play that represents the identity of the organisation on the pitch. In addition, it examines whether there is a football curriculum to inform coaches about what to focus on in different age groups, and lastly, whether there is a preferred methodology and coaching DNA that translate football theory into practice.

The higher-ranked MAs have better-defined football and coaching philosophies at their leading academies.

The academies in higher-ranked countries in the world ranking fulfil more standards for team development and coaching, especially on the boys' side. Nevertheless, the overall average is less than half of the 12 selected standards, which means that the football philosophy still has to be created or better documented to give more guidance to the coaches.

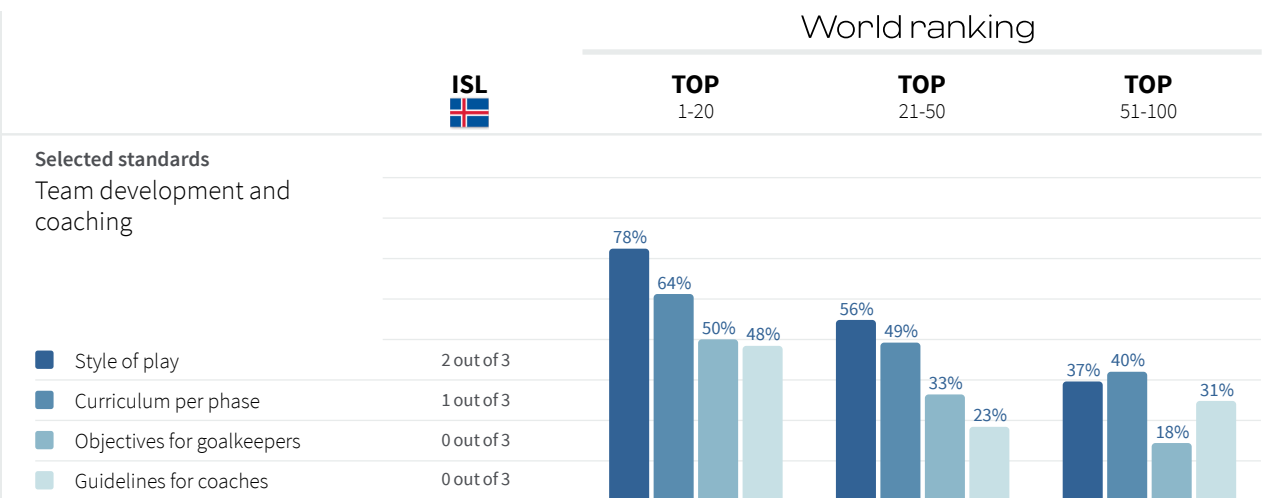
World ranking

Illustration 5.17



When we focus on some of these standards, we see that most of the leading academies have a defined style of play. These numbers systematically decrease when we look at how this is translated into a curriculum with objectives for the different phases (including goalkeepers) and concrete guidelines for coaches in terms of a session, exercise and coaching DNA.

Illustration 5.18



Vision for talent development and individual development

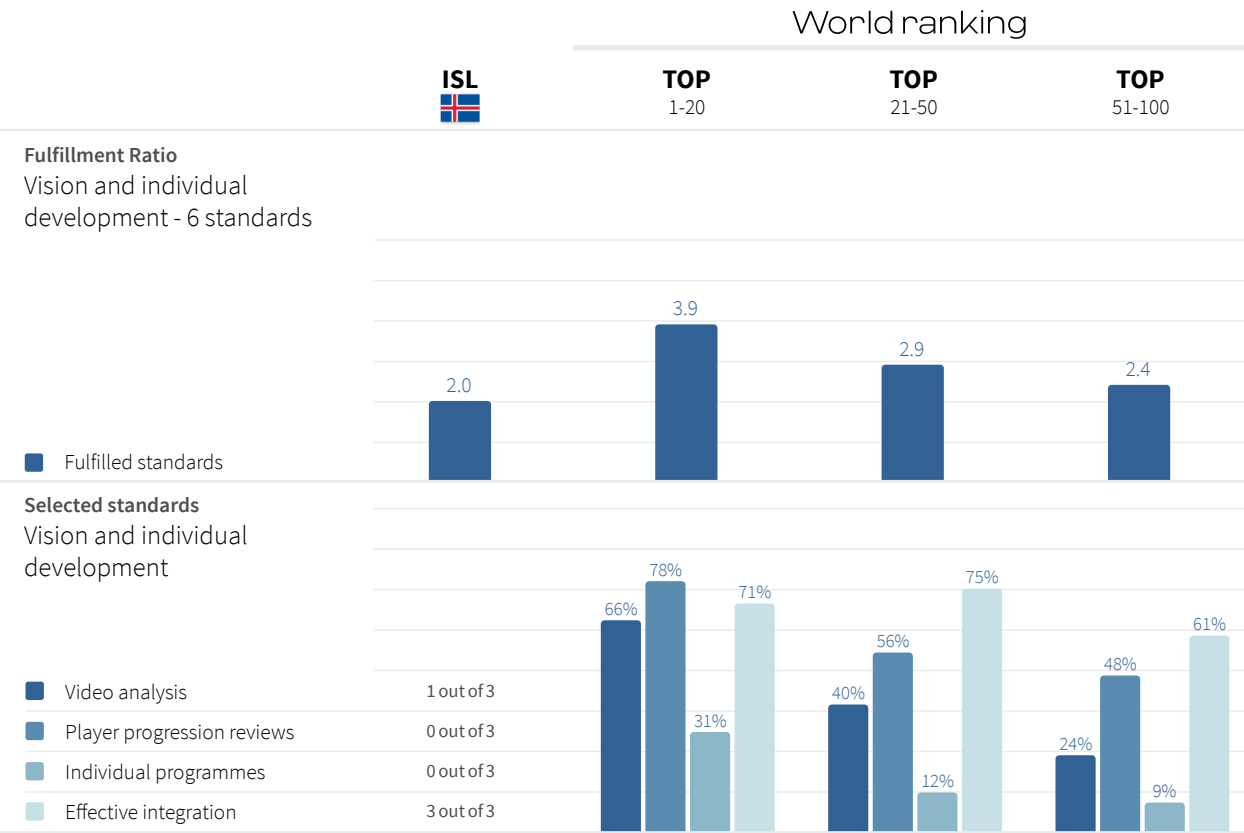
In this section, the individual development of a player is examined, focusing on the efforts made by the academy to maximise each player's football potential. Firstly, we looked at how player profiles are translated into individual key qualities. Next, we analysed how players are individually screened and evaluated, and how individual programmes and action plans are implemented in daily practice. Lastly, we examined how young players are integrated into the professional environment, with a focus on the completion of their individual development.

The best-performing academies focus more on the individual development of their top talents.

The following illustration explains some of the differences in the individual approach towards talent development at the leading academies in different MAs. It is clear that only a few academies work with individual programmes for their players, mostly in the top 20 MAs.



Illustration 5.19



Finding

Football programme of the academies

- There is no clear distinction between elite and grassroots football. Players can join the academies analysed regardless of their capabilities or previous training.
- No formalised football philosophy was evidenced at any of the academies analysed. Detail regarding style of play, principles, formations, and player profiles are not defined by the technical leadership of the academies. Coaches are free to approach team and individual development according to their philosophies and prior education.
- No systematic process has been evidenced for evaluating player performance and progression. Individualised training sessions are not conducted on a regular basis.

5.6 Support

In any high-performance environment, it is important to provide young talent with professional support, both on and off the pitch. Because of the increasing physical and mental load, a health & performance programme should be in place to ensure that players are healthy and ready to perform. Besides this, academies are also responsible for the social welfare and personal development of these youngsters. Another department that supports the coaching staff is Talent ID and Recruitment.

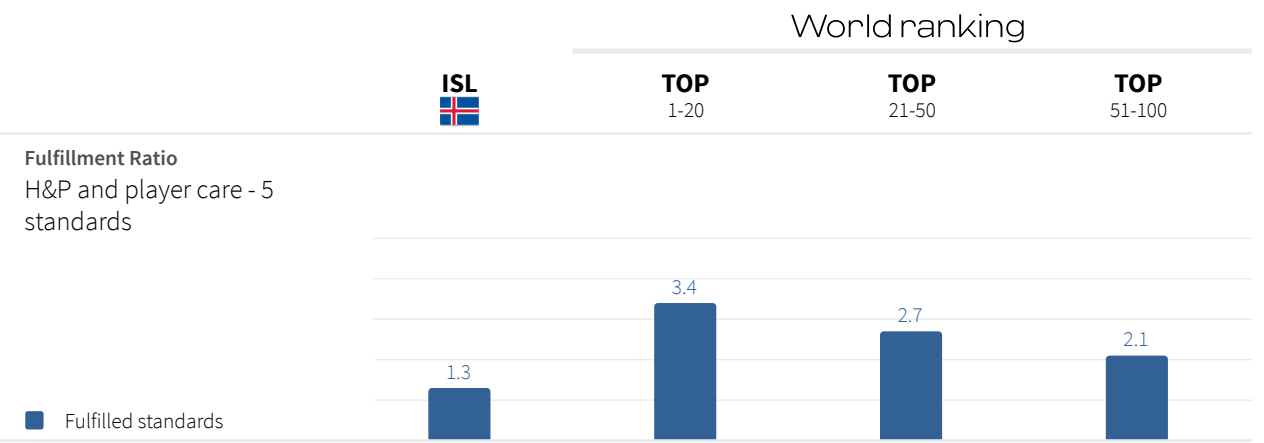
Health & performance and player care

These dimensions focus on the holistic perspective of player development. They examine how the physical fitness and mental performance of academy players are developed and monitored. We also checked whether a protocol for injury prevention, treatment and the return to play is in place. Besides this, we evaluated how the academy gives support to its players in combining elite football with their studies and how top talents are prepared for life as a professional football player.

In any high-performance environment, it is important to provide young talent with professional support, both on and off the pitch.

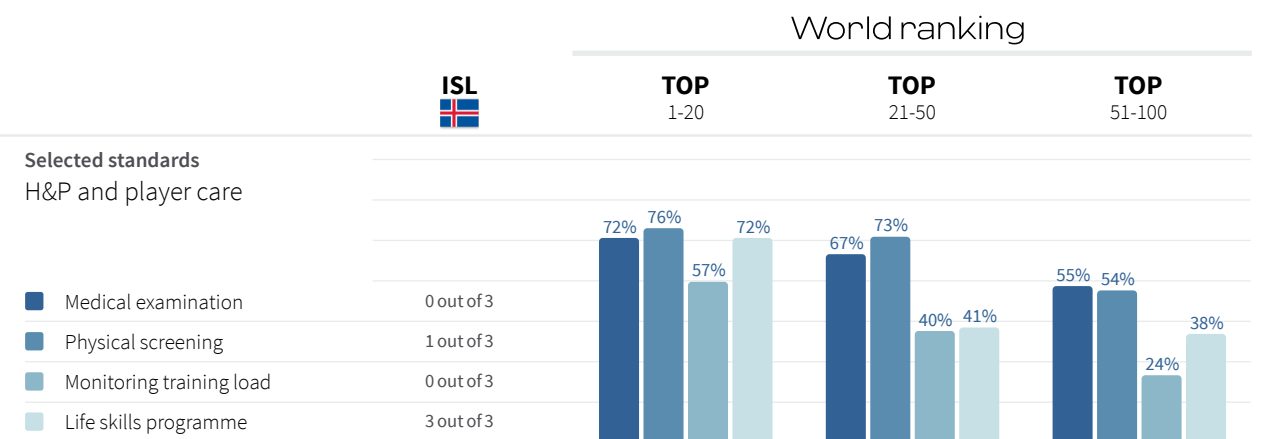
In this analysis, only a few basic criteria were evaluated regarding health & performance and player care. Nevertheless, we found that, on average, only half of these criteria are met by the leading academies in the top 50 MAs.

Illustration 5.20



The graph below shows the fulfilment ratio of four international standards regarding these supporting procedures. Academies in the top 50 MAs score higher on these standards, especially for boys' academies.

Illustration 5.21



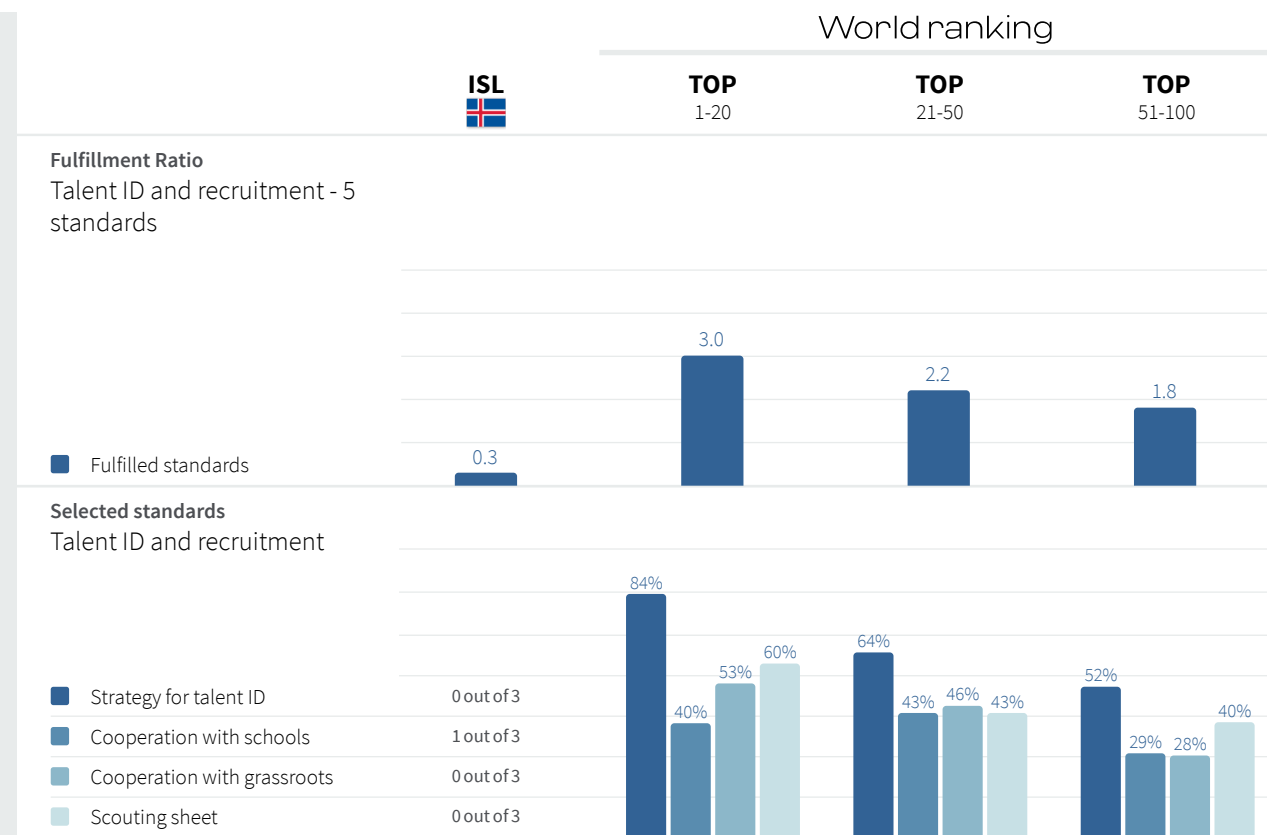
Talent ID & recruitment

This dimension analyses the academy's strategy for identifying and recruiting the best available talent for its football programme. It examines whether there is a shared vision on talent, a defined process for talent identification and whether the academy has a network of scouts.

Talent ID & recruitment is a key area with room for improvement in most MAs, for both boys and girls.

The graph below shows the number of cases in which the scouting strategy is translated into partnerships and concrete guidelines for scouting staff. For these items, a significant difference can be seen between the top 50 MAs and the rest.

Illustration 5.22



Finding

Support related dimensions

- Access to health and performance specialists, technology and facilities is limited. Most academies have one person specialised in this field who typically works across all ages and stages, including the first team.
- None of the academies analysed has a scouting department or a comprehensive scouting plan. However, academies have good links to amateur clubs and schools and recruit players through open trials.



5.7 Resources

One fundamental aspect that largely determines the capacity of any professional academy is the availability of sufficient resources in terms of people and infrastructure. The people aspect deals with the availability of qualified and specialised staff. Infrastructure focuses on the facilities for both players and staff. Both dimensions are directly dependent on the budget spent on the academy.

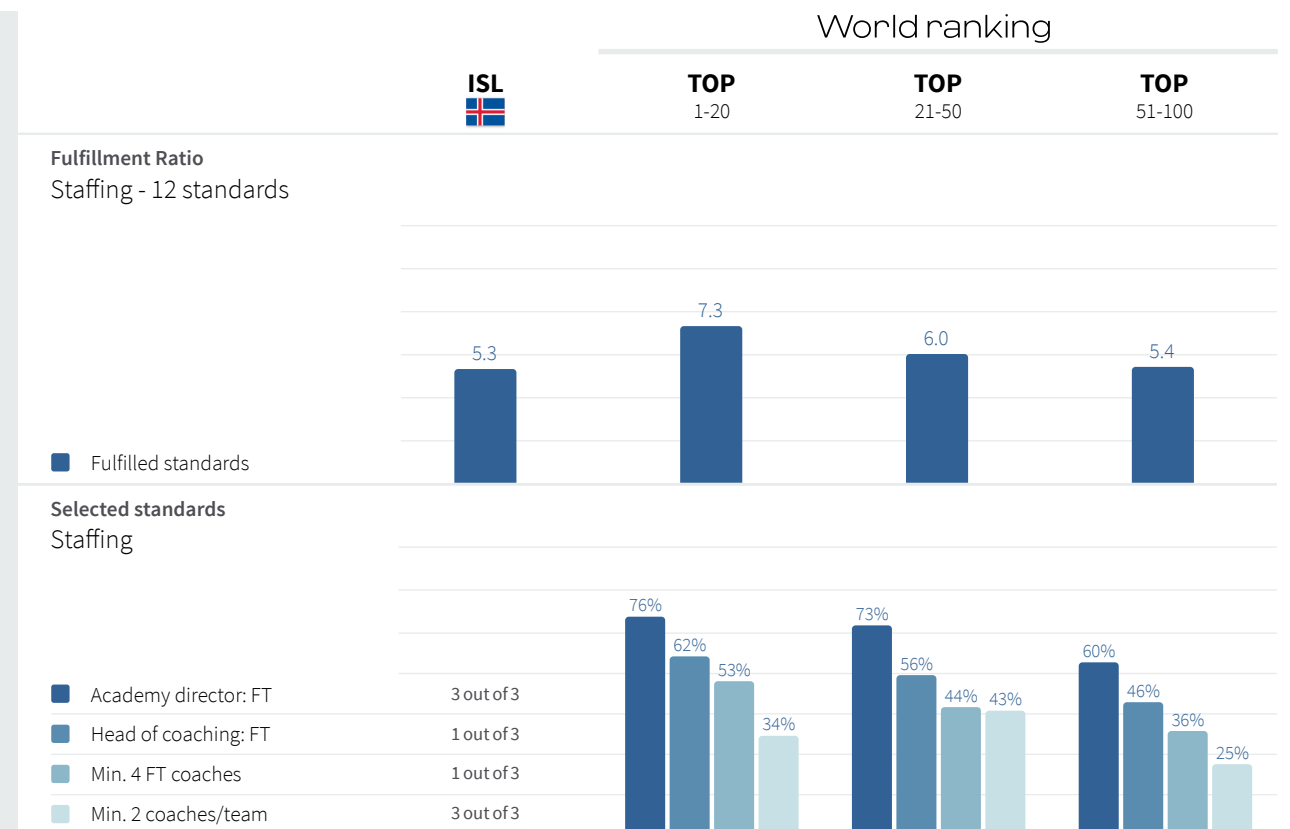
Staffing

This section is about the level of specialisation of the academy staff. It explores whether leadership roles are fulfilled in an exclusive manner, and examines the size and composition of the coaching staff. Additionally, it addresses aspects such as whether coaches are sufficiently qualified and experienced to fulfil their roles and whether there are specialists available to support specific aspects of player development.

The level of specialisation of the coaching and support staff is significantly higher at boys' academies, especially in the top 50 MAs.

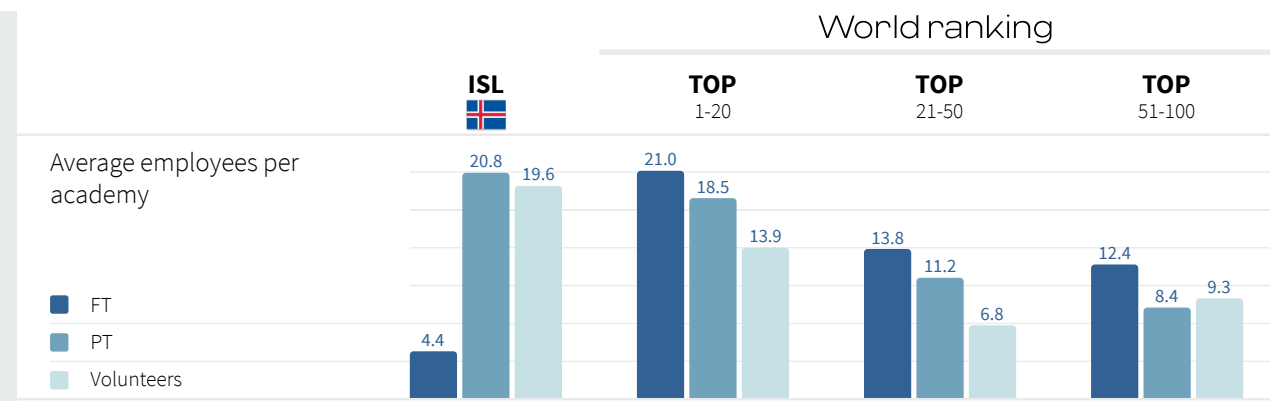
While the majority of leading academies have a full-time academy director, we also noticed that half of them do not have a head of coaching who works full-time for the academy. The same applies to the coaching staff, as we found that only the leading academies in the top 20 MAs have at least four full-time coaches for their academy teams.

Illustration 5.23



When we focus on employment status, we can conclude that academies in the top 20 MAs have, on average, more full-time, more part-time and more volunteer staff members.

Illustration 5.24



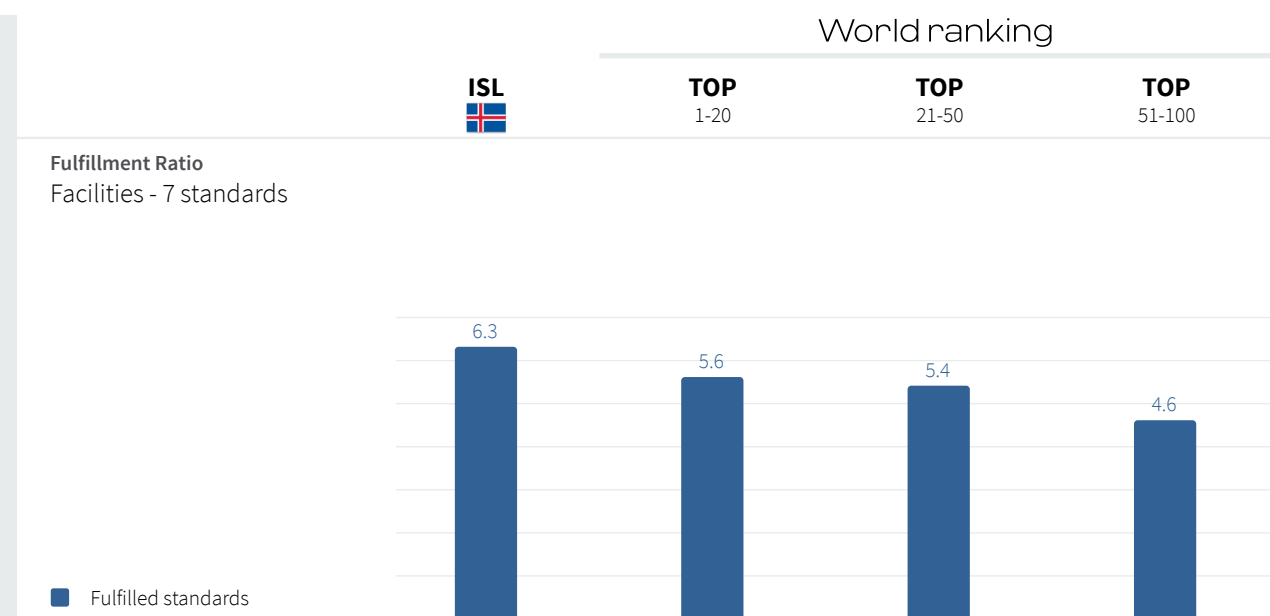
Infrastructure

This dimension is about the physical setting of the academy in terms of facilities for players and staff. We examined whether there is a centralised location for all academy activities, and whether academy teams have sufficient access to high-quality pitches and other training facilities. Lastly, we considered whether academy staff have access to a modern and functional work environment.

It seems that the minimum requirements regarding facilities are available for most academies, especially in the top 50 MAs. However, the main difference may lie in the quality of these facilities.

In general, we observed relatively high scores for the availability of specific infrastructure. After all, the focus was more on the availability, rather than the quality of the facilities, which could not be evaluated on-site because of COVID-19.

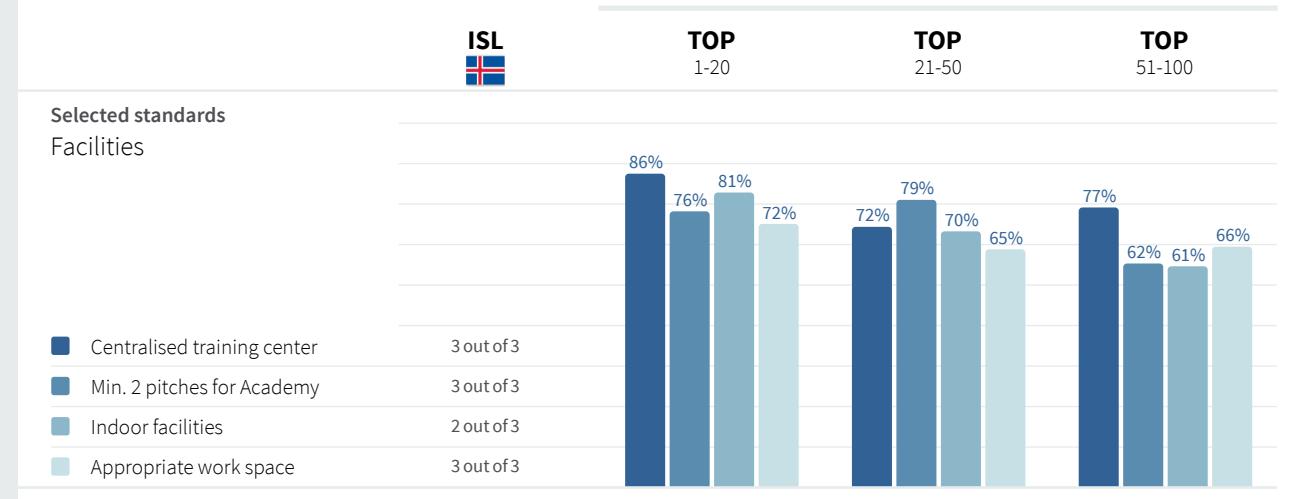
Illustration 5.25



Most of the leading academies in each MA have access to a centralised training centre with a minimum of two pitches for the academy. In most cases, they also have access to indoor facilities for strength and conditioning.

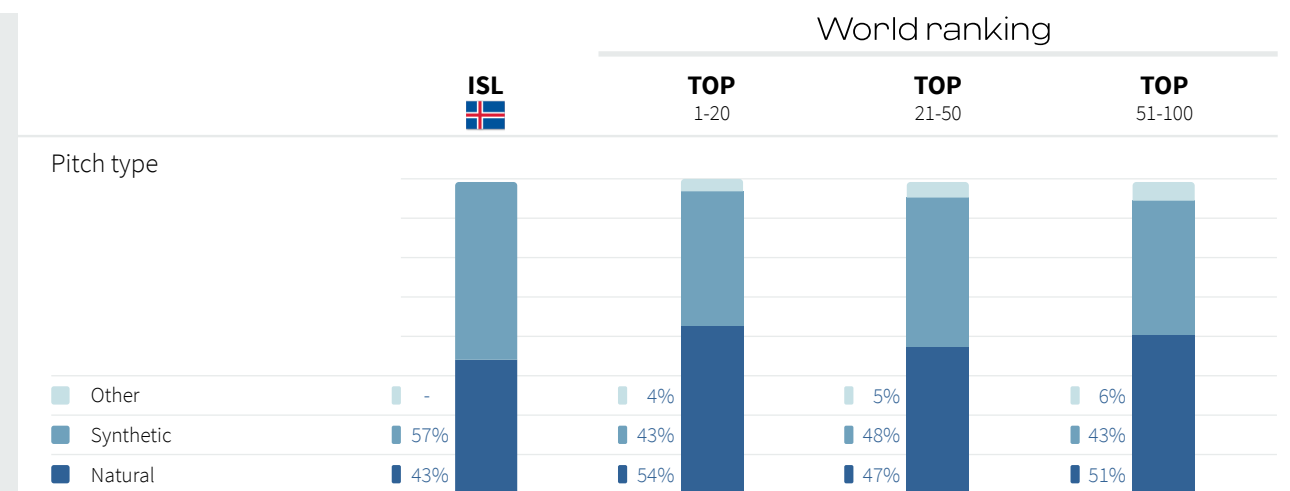
World ranking

Illustration 5.26



About half of the pitches for the academy teams are made of natural grass, which is almost in balance with synthetic surfaces. In all, two thirds of the academies have a synthetic grass pitch available.

Illustration 5.27



Finding

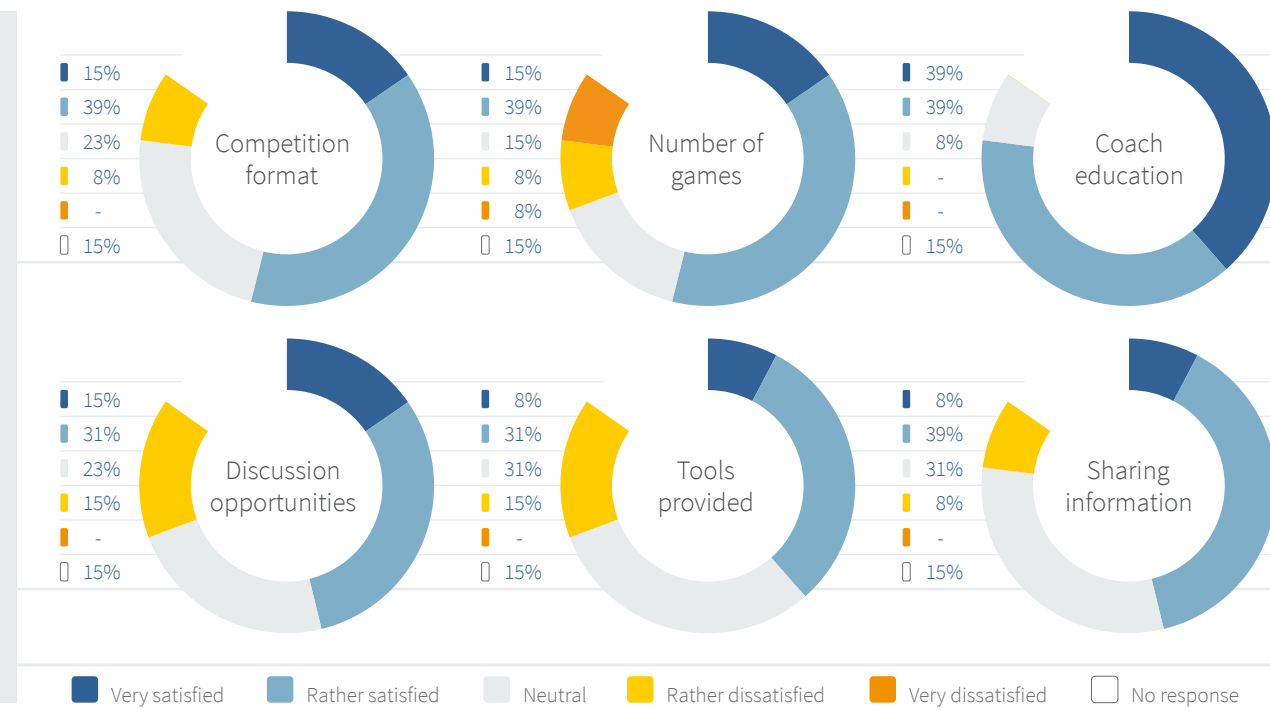
Staffing and facilities of the academies

- The overall quality of facilities is high, although academies must accommodate many players at the same time. Indoor facilities are also available to deal with restrictions imposed by the weather.
- All academies analysed have an extensive coaching staff and some full-time managerial posts available, often fulfilling multiple roles within the club. The number of support and specialised staff is, on the other hand, very limited.

5.8 Relationship with the member association

Finally, the coach satisfaction survey also included a section about their perception of the MA's programmes and services. As shown in the graph below, the satisfaction of the academy staff was assessed in terms of the competition format and the number of meaningful games for their team, the quality of coach education organised by the MA, the opportunities to discuss football with MA experts, the tools they receive from the MA, and the information that is shared by the MA.

Illustration 5.28



ACADEMIES

SUMMARISING NOTES

- **CLUB AND ACADEMY MANAGEMENT (STRATEGIC ROADMAP)** – Although the raison d'être and the ambitions of academies are clear, these are rarely supported by formalised planning and structured monitoring of academy performance. Academy leaders would benefit from composing a strategic roadmap with concrete Key Performance Indicators and actionable plans related to the critical success factors of running an elite academy.
- **FOOTBALL MODEL (TEAM DEVELOPMENT)** – While clubs focus on bringing players through their talent development system and into their first team, a clearly defined football blueprint that would inform coaches where to focus in the different age groups does not exist. The technical leaders of the clubs would benefit from composing a digital playbook and age-specific curricula to inform the player development pathway.
- **HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE** – Academy departments specialised in providing sports science and medical supervision are generally underdeveloped. The expansion and professionalisation of these departments, along with a comprehensive health and performance plan, would enable these academies to define and action more specific Individual Development Plans and, ultimately, enhance their ability to optimise player potential.

Recommendations

1. Invest in the professionalisation of academies, especially when it comes to health and performance structures, facilities and technology. Incentives provided by the MA should be linked to a quality assurance system that sets specific criteria to be met by academies, ensuring they are following good practice in their daily operations.
2. Educate academy directors on various aspects of running an elite academy. In this way, formalised planning and evaluation of academy performance should receive more attention. Ultimately, the return on investment for these environments could also be monitored more effectively.
3. Promote the role of head of coaching and educate individuals fulfilling this role about how to compose and implement a consistent football philosophy and age-specific curricula through a comprehensive coaching competency framework.
4. Define an elite development strategy at MA level to promote a 'best v. best' approach and to expose the country's top talent to a more varied and challenging games programme.

6. EDUCATION

The quality of the coaching determines the quality of the talent.

A focus on education and the creation of a lifelong learning culture within a member association (MA) are both critical to the development of the game. Such a comprehensive strategy will determine the development of coaches, support practitioners and players and, in turn, will ultimately lead to future international success. The talent development workforce across the country must be regularly upskilled to have an impact upon creating an elite learning environment in which young players can develop and thrive. This impact can be felt across all levels, genders and age groups. To this effect, it is important that the education across all technical domains is up to date, challenging and appropriate for the demands of the modern game.

6.1 Management and strategy

The implementation of a nationwide coach education strategy and the associated framework is paramount for the development of the workforce aligned with the MA's long-term objectives. A well-structured and executed education strategy will ultimately impact upon the growth of the game by enhancing participation, with increased levels of player development leading to better home-grown players and ultimately to a more attractive domestic league. To achieve such success, appropriate finances and resources must be assigned to meet the educational demands to enhance both the men's and women's game.

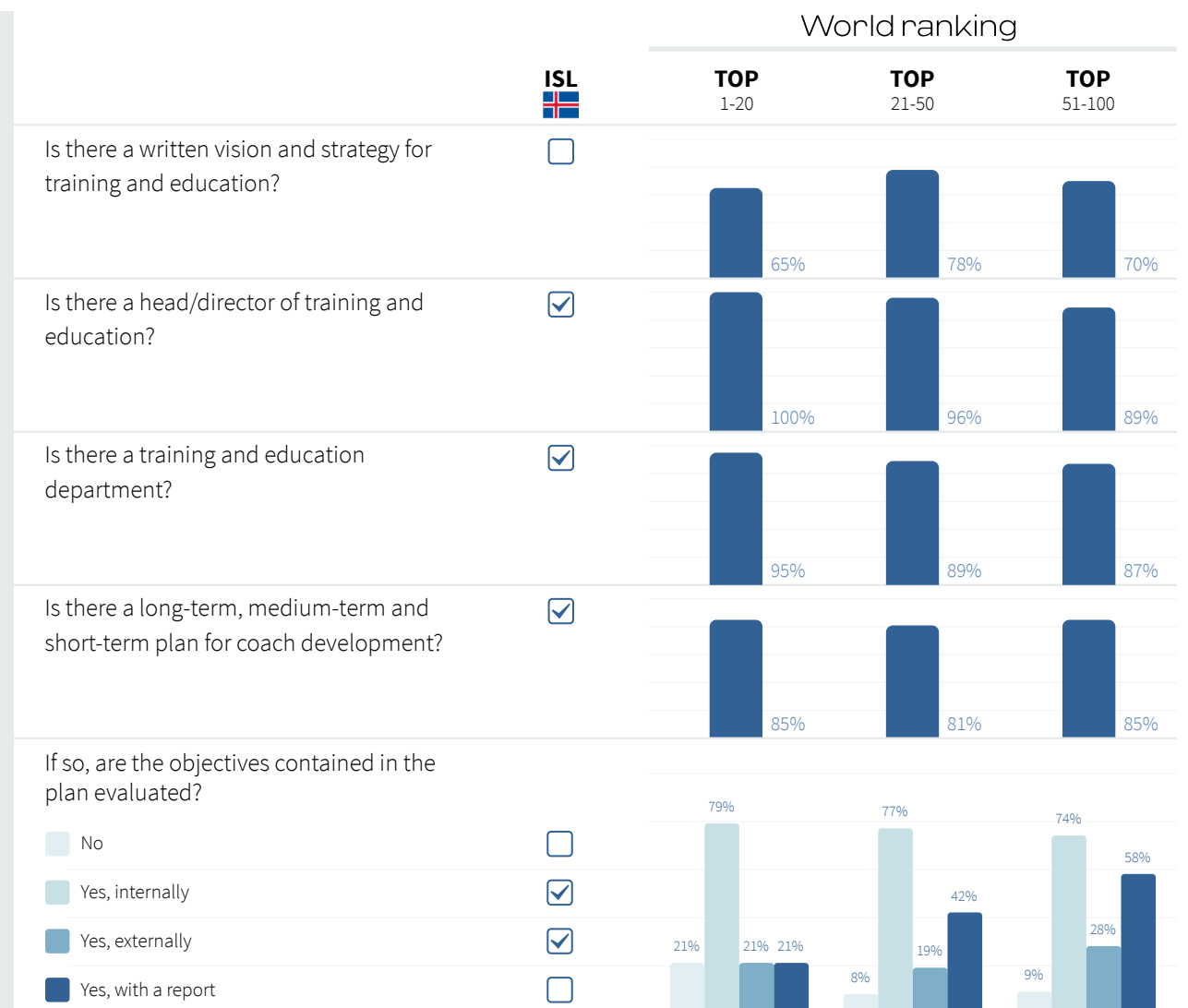
Structure

Where is education given emphasis within the structure of the association? A structure that acknowledges the importance of education by creating leaders and departments that prioritise the implementation of education in football will reap rewards, both domestically and internationally.

All of the top 20 associations have a head/ director of training and education, but only 65% have a national strategy for education and training.

78% of MAs ranked 21-50 have a national strategy for education, this being the highest score across the ranking groups. Furthermore, 95% of the top 20 MAs have a department dedicated to education, compared to 88% of MAs ranked 21-100.

Illustration 6.1



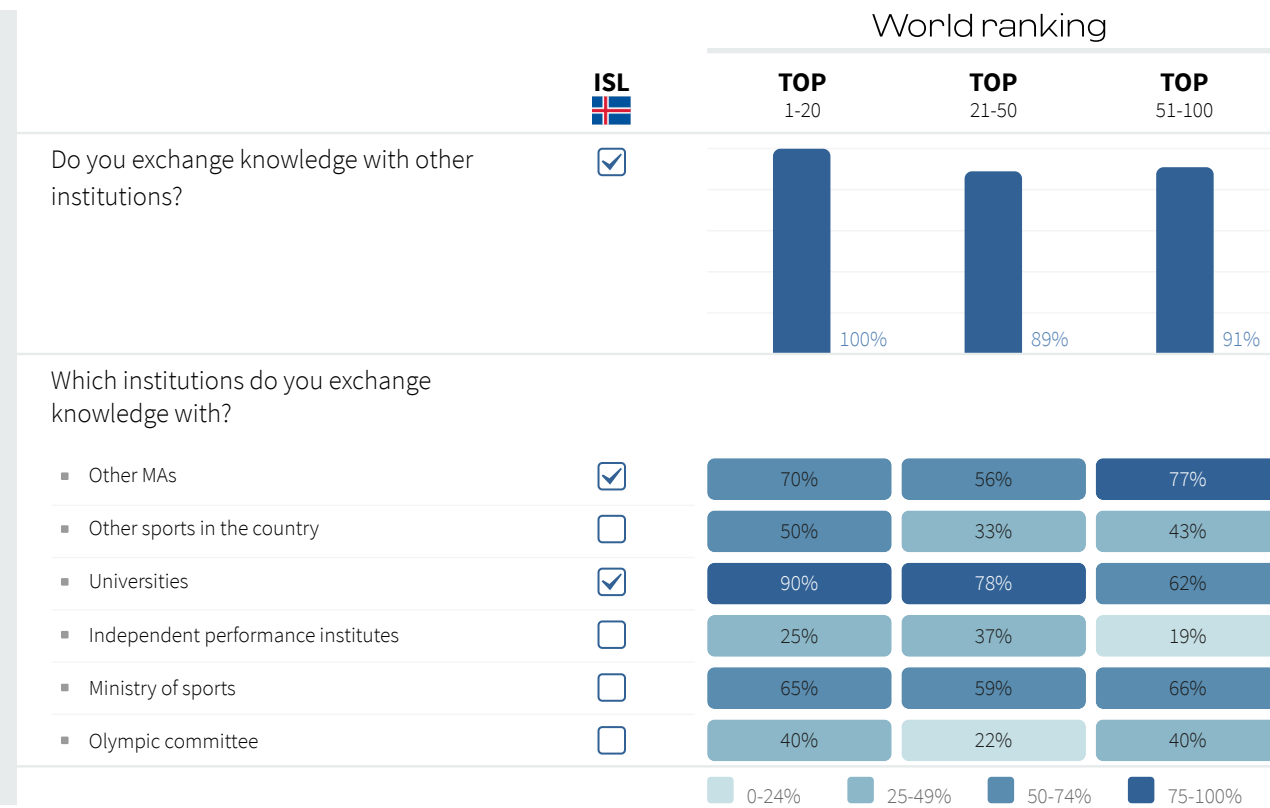
Collaboration

A significant amount of knowledge learnt through coach education is research-based. With so many methods and specialists available to conduct such high-quality research, no single institution can possess all of the resources required for a state-of-the-art football education framework. As a result, for an MA to create the best education practices, it has to collaborate with multiple institutions and adopt a growth mindset throughout the association.

Top-ranked MAs exchange knowledge with external institutions.

All MAs ranked in the top 20 exchange knowledge with external institutions, compared to 90% of MAs in the 21-100 ranking band. Across the top 100, those MAs that do exchange knowledge tend to do so with other MAs, universities and the ministry of sports.

Illustration 6.2



Finding

The national education strategy

- The education strategy is aligned with the long-term player development strategy. A core element of the education strategy is having good, qualified coaches (B Licence holders) to educate the youngest age groups. There is social demand for such quality in Iceland, but the matter is also regulated in the club licensing system.
- Emphasis on an enjoyable environment is also part of the strategy. When children have fun, they learn more and are more enthusiastic about practising outside regular, organised training. Encouraging street football is a cornerstone of the KSI's international success.
- There is an independent Education Department. The Head of Education collaborates with the Domestic Football and International Football divisions, with formal meetings held monthly.
- Annual educational events are organised around the men's and women's cup finals in collaboration with the coaches' union.

6.2 Coach education

The development of the coaching workforce is one of the cornerstones in the production of elite players within any MA. The MA's coach education strategy should be clearly defined and aligned with the coaching convention of the confederation, and it should be reflective of the MA's long-term player development strategy. Developing a coaching workforce that is attuned to the modern game and understands the demands and challenges of the elite environment will have a direct impact upon the development of young players across the country.

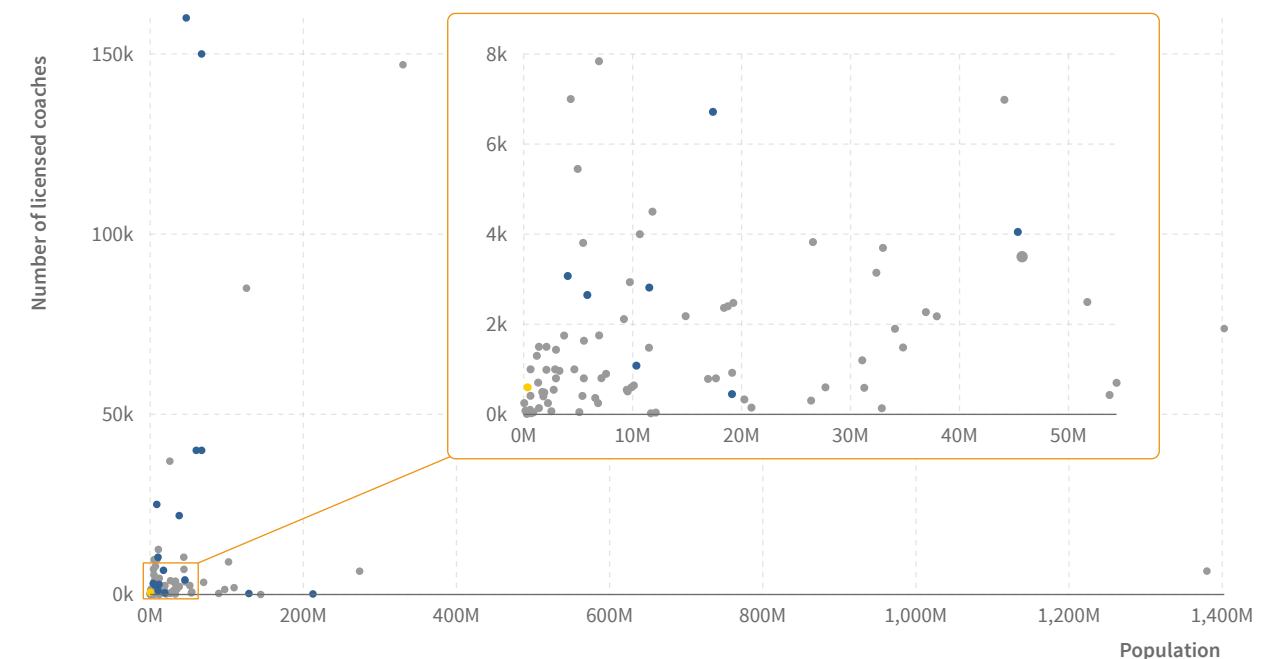
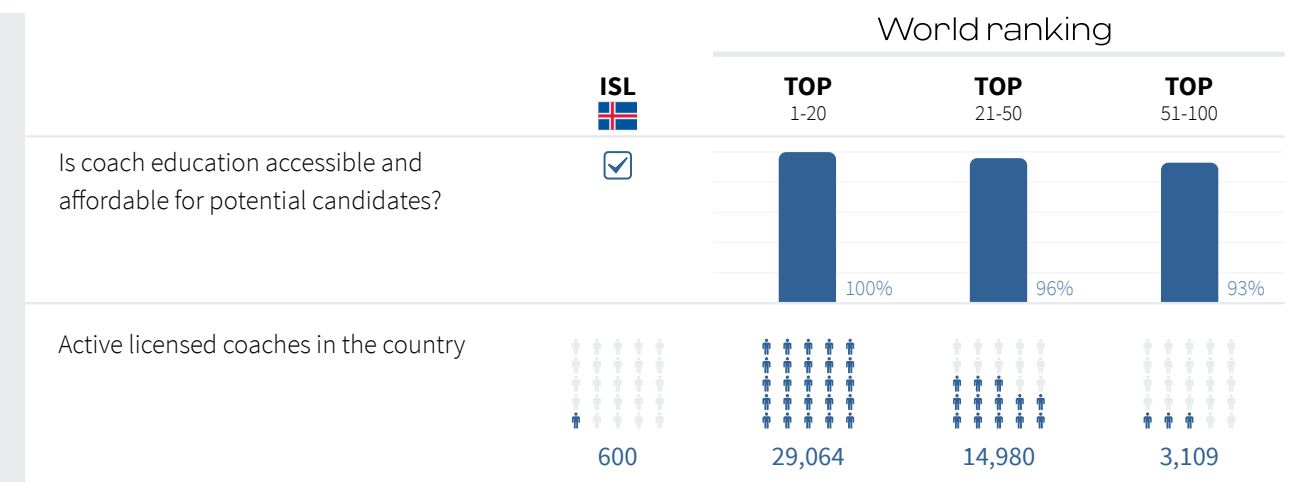
Coaching licence pathway and curriculum

An appealing and easily accessible route into the world of coaching as well as a progressive pathway through the coaching licence framework are two significant contributors to a country's emphasis on football education. In addition, a curriculum that trickles down from elite teams to the grassroots elicits effective coach and player development throughout. Adherence to an overarching national football philosophy can be a useful way of synchronising a domestic football community despite various levels of ability.

Top 20 MAs have the highest number of licensed coaches.

All member associations in the top 20 deem their education accessible and affordable, compared to 94% of MAs ranked 21-100. Furthermore, top 20 MAs have a greater number of licensed coaches in their country, with an average of 29,064 coaches compared to 14,980 and 3,109 in MAs ranked 21-50 and 51-100 respectively.

Illustration 6.3



Finding

Accessibility to coach education

- Education for candidates is affordable. Courses are organised centrally in Reykjavik, where two thirds of the population live; participants from elsewhere can normally stay with a relative, meaning that they only have to pay the travel and course costs.
- The KSI has around 600 registered coaches, including 13 with the UEFA Pro Licence and 196 with the UEFA A Licence (2016 figures).
- The KSI has set about implementing a massive professionalisation programme for coaches at clubs, in turn ensuring an increase in participation numbers. Courses are held according to the needs of the country. Iceland has a high number of accredited coaches (relative to its small population) compared to neighbouring countries.
- The centralised courses, their consistency – they are delivered by the same instructors – and having the best coaches working at youth level are strong elements for long-term player development.

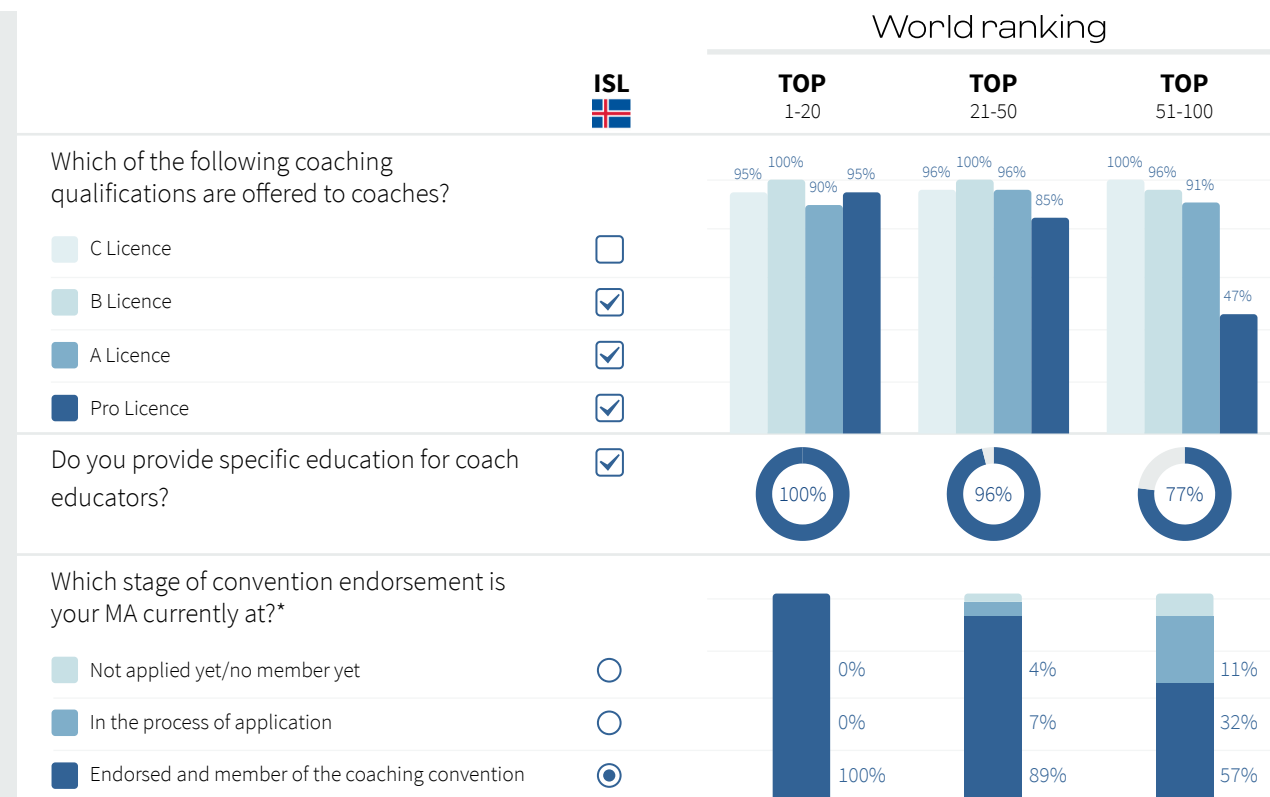
Football coaching course programme

Offering a diverse and wide range of coaching courses for all levels can help an MA achieve the strategic aim of educating potential future coaches. These programmes prepare coaches to step into the world of coaching, from youth to senior football. They then have the option of progressing to the C Licence, B Licence, A Licence and Pro Licence. A large pool of qualified coaches at all levels, from grassroots to senior football, is crucial for player development.

Only 47% of MAs ranked 51-100 offer Pro Licence courses.

Top 20 associations offer the most comprehensive education programme, particularly at A and Pro Licence levels. Furthermore, top 20 MAs provide specific training for coach educators, something that only 77% of MAs in the top 51-100 offer.

Illustration 6.4



*Not applicable to Concacaf MAs



Only 56% of MAs across the top 100 reflect their football philosophy in the education curriculum.

MAs in the top 20 are more likely to have their national football philosophy embedded in their education curriculum, with 70% doing so, compared to only 52% of associations ranked 21-100.

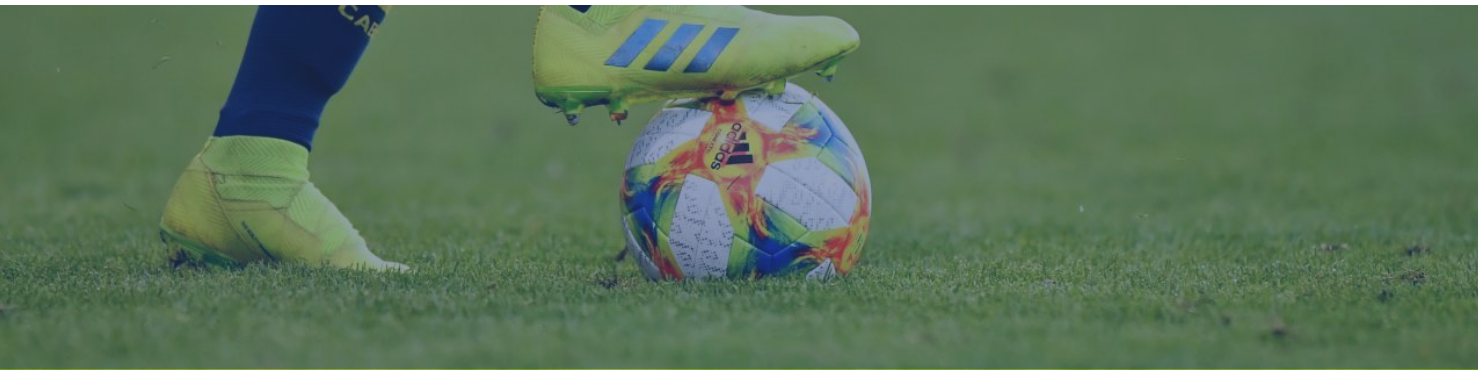
Illustration 6.5



Finding

The link between coach education and the national football philosophy

- As a member of the UEFA Coaching Convention, the KSI is entitled to run courses for the Pro, A and B licences.
- The KSI's education strategy and the structure, content and delivery of training sessions are closely aligned with the MA's criteria for player development.
- There is not a strong connection between the national playing philosophy and the coach education programme. The education curriculum is based on the UEFA convention. The KSI embraces diversity at club level; clubs are free to implement their own methods.
- The B and A courses focus on coaching youth players, creating an enjoyable learning environment and general football knowledge. There is more of a link with the national playing style in the Pro Licence programme.
- The quality of coaching for younger age groups, the consistency of the education programme, the fun environment and the encouragement to play in informal settings are strong points of the strategy.



Coach identification and development

Knowing the best coaches in the country is crucial for the development of the game. A principled approach to the identification and development of male and female coaches is required to discover such promising talent. Taking a further step in placing them at the pinnacle of the sport where their talent can then be realised can accelerate their development and their impact upon the game in the future.

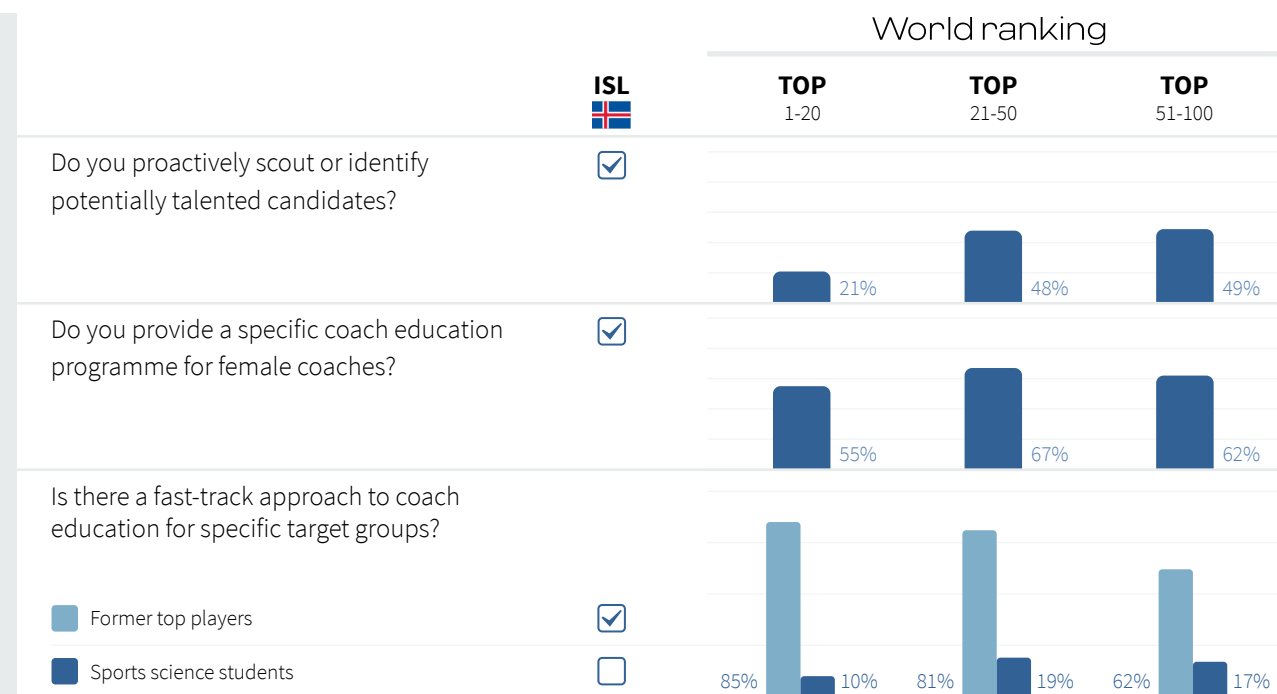
Coach identification

Many individuals begin their coaching careers as a hobby and not as a profession, so highly talented coaches can be found at the lower end of the football pyramid as well as at the top. A comprehensive identification process is therefore essential to ensure that talent at all levels of the pyramid is identified and brought into an elite environment where their capabilities can flourish.

Only 62% of the top 100 MAs provide a specialist coach education programme for female coaches.

Top 20 MAs are less likely to facilitate a process for identifying talented coaches or to provide a programme for female coaches. However, top 20 MAs provide more support for ex-players on fast-track programmes.

Illustration 6.6



Coach development

Once talent has been identified, it is important to nurture it by providing opportunities. Internships, workshops, career planning, mentorships and coaching magazines are just some of the many methods that can be used to help promising coaches on their journey to fulfil their potential. Furthermore, having a re-licensing process and mandatory continuous professional development (CPD) regulations allows the MA to conduct quality assurance on the level of coaching across the country.

89% of the top 50 MAs make CPD mandatory for maintaining a coaching licence.

90% of the top 20 MAs make it mandatory for licence holders to undertake CPD to maintain their licence. Furthermore, the MAs ranked between 21 and 50 are more likely to use additional associations or organisations in the role of coach education (93% compared to 65% of MAs in the top 20). 79% of associations in the top 100 provide educational support in the form of conferences and workshops, but only a low percentage offer a mentorship programme, with the greatest support (40%) coming from associations ranked between 51 and 100.

Illustration 6.7



Finding

Coach identification and development

- The KSI does not have a scouting system to identify coaches. There is confidence that talented, up-and-coming coaches will be spotted given how small the community is.
- As a leader in gender equality within the football industry, the KSI ensures opportunities for female coaches. Its approach to football as one sport, regardless of gender, is a major strength and its coach education efforts are fully aligned with that. Its new women's club licensing system is an important tool to promote minimum standards for coaches in the women's league.
- As part of the UEFA convention, KSI coaches' licences must be renewed every third year. The KSI holds regular further education events for different levels and coaching licences to foster continuous professional development.
- Given Icelandic football's full professionalisation is still a way off, although all coaches are remunerated, earning a living from coaching full-time is a challenge.

6.3 Other roles

Education for support roles and the wider multidisciplinary team is critical, both for the progression of the coaching workforce and for player development within an association. Elite player development is multifaceted, and all skillsets across multidisciplinary teams must be well resourced with knowledge of the modern game. There must be plans in place to structure and develop the whole technical workforce in order to fully embrace talent development and advance the game across the country. Such plans must be clearly aligned with the MA's player development strategy. This ensures that the needs identified for player development are met and resourced appropriately.

Programmes

Training programmes and courses are effective ways to enhance the benefits that clubs gain from these support roles. As with any education framework, these courses must be grounded in empirical research. New research, findings and methods of significance to these multidisciplinary positions are constantly being discovered. Consequently, it is important to continue to expose these specialists to relevant programmes through which they can enhance their understanding of their field.

Top 20 member associations offer greater provisions for the development of technical leadership roles.

75% of associations in the top 20 offer specific courses for technical leadership, and these associations make such courses available to club technical directors, academy managers/directors and academy technical managers on a relatively uniform basis (55%-60%). These numbers fall drastically for the lower-ranked MAs, however.

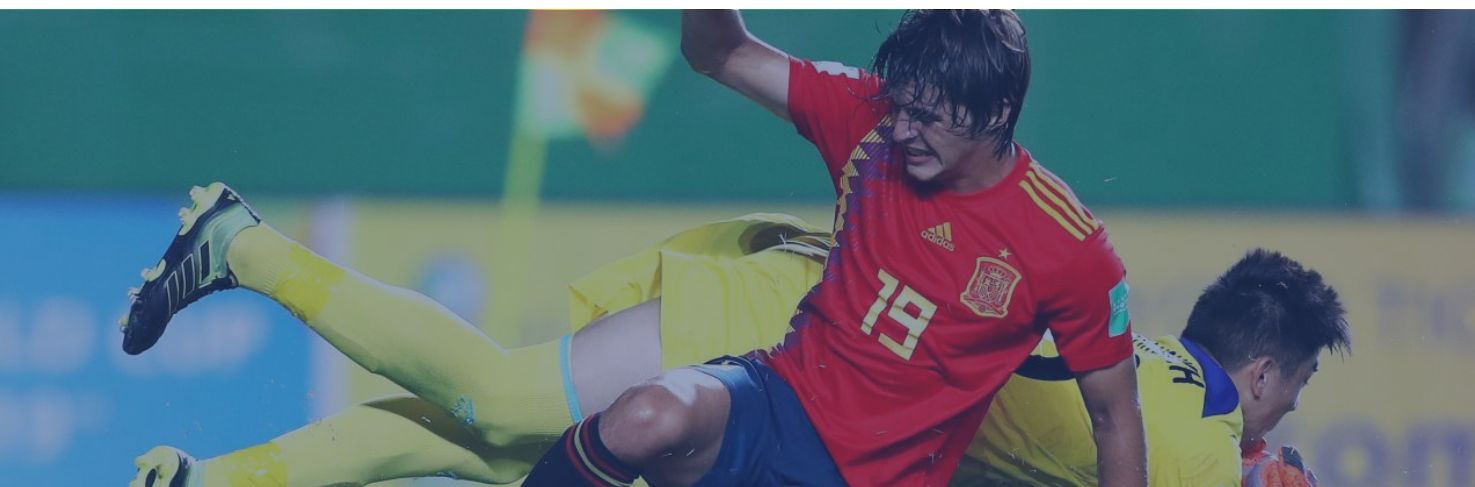
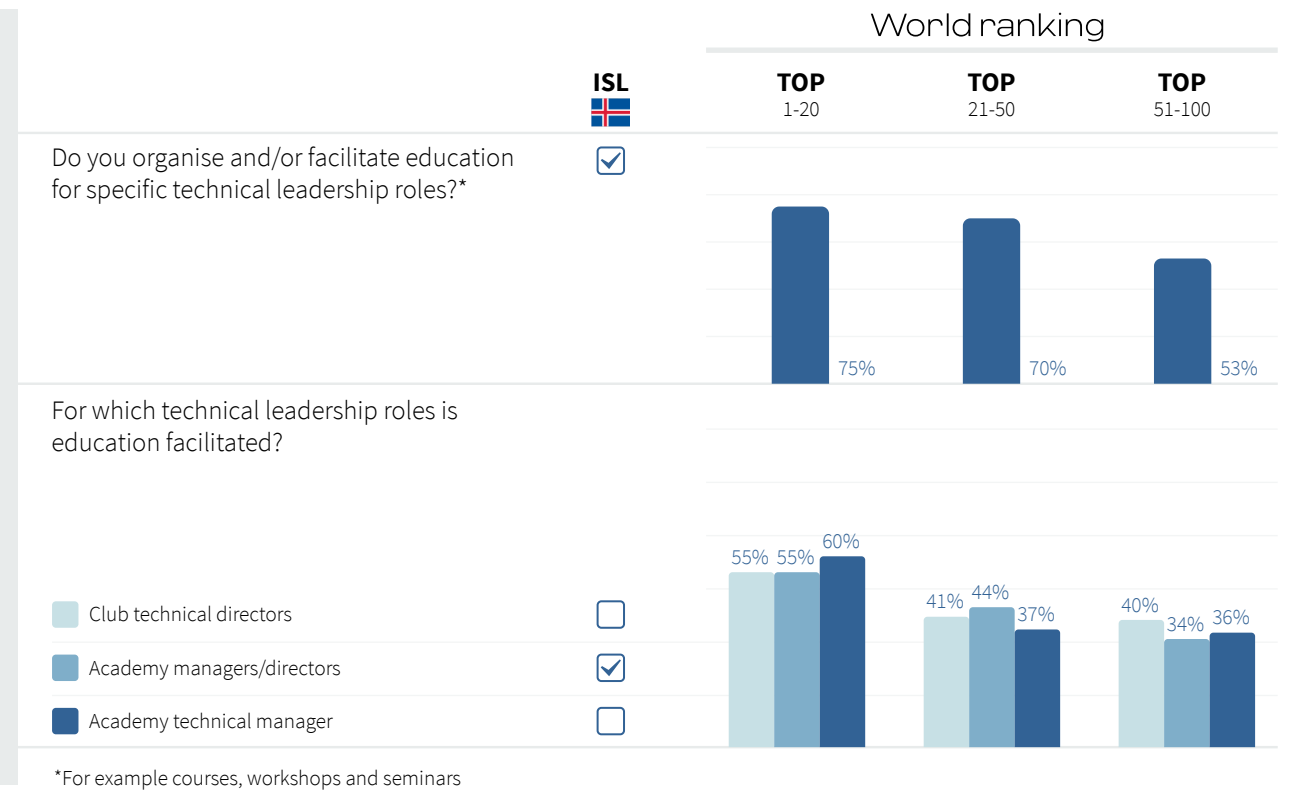


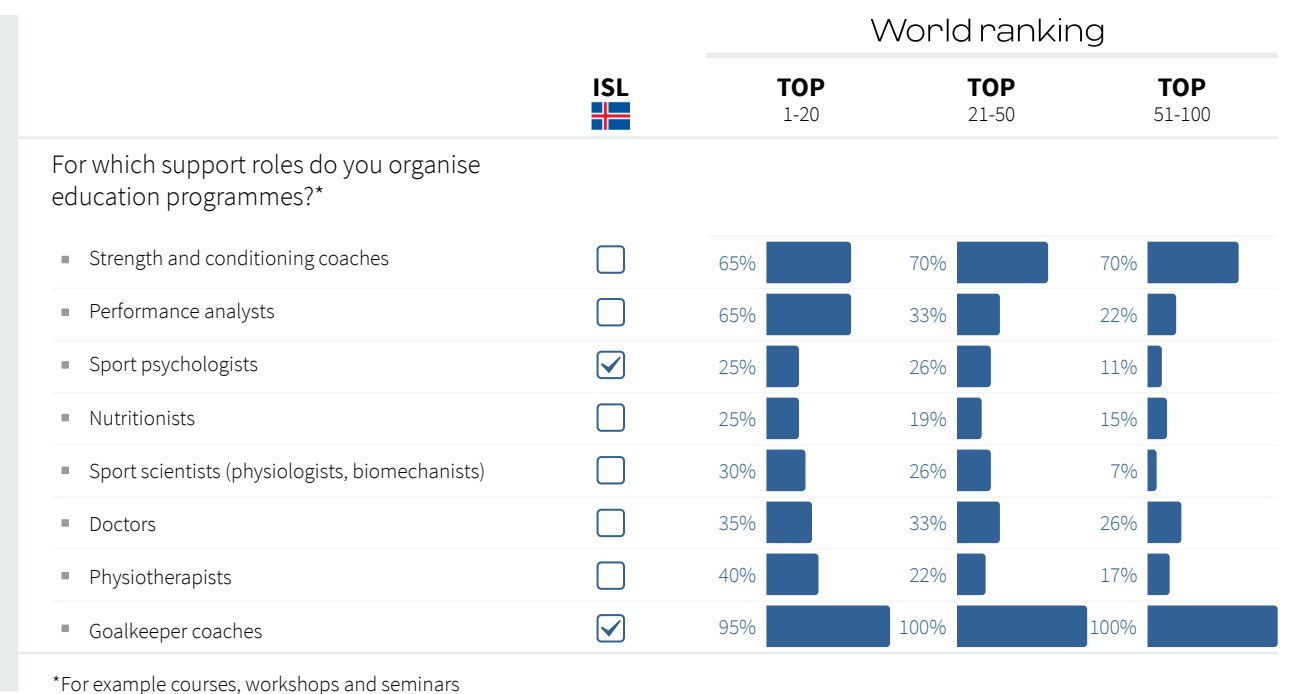
Illustration 6.8



The top 20 MAs offer a more comprehensive education programme for supporting roles.

99% of associations in the top 100 support the education of goalkeeper coaches and also focus on strength and conditioning (69%). The top 20 MAs have a greater provision for performance analysts than any other ranking group (65% of MAs in the top 20 compared to 26% of MAs between 21 and 100). However, the lowest provision of education across the top 100 MAs is for sports psychology, nutrition and sports science (18%, 18% and 17% respectively).

Illustration 6.9



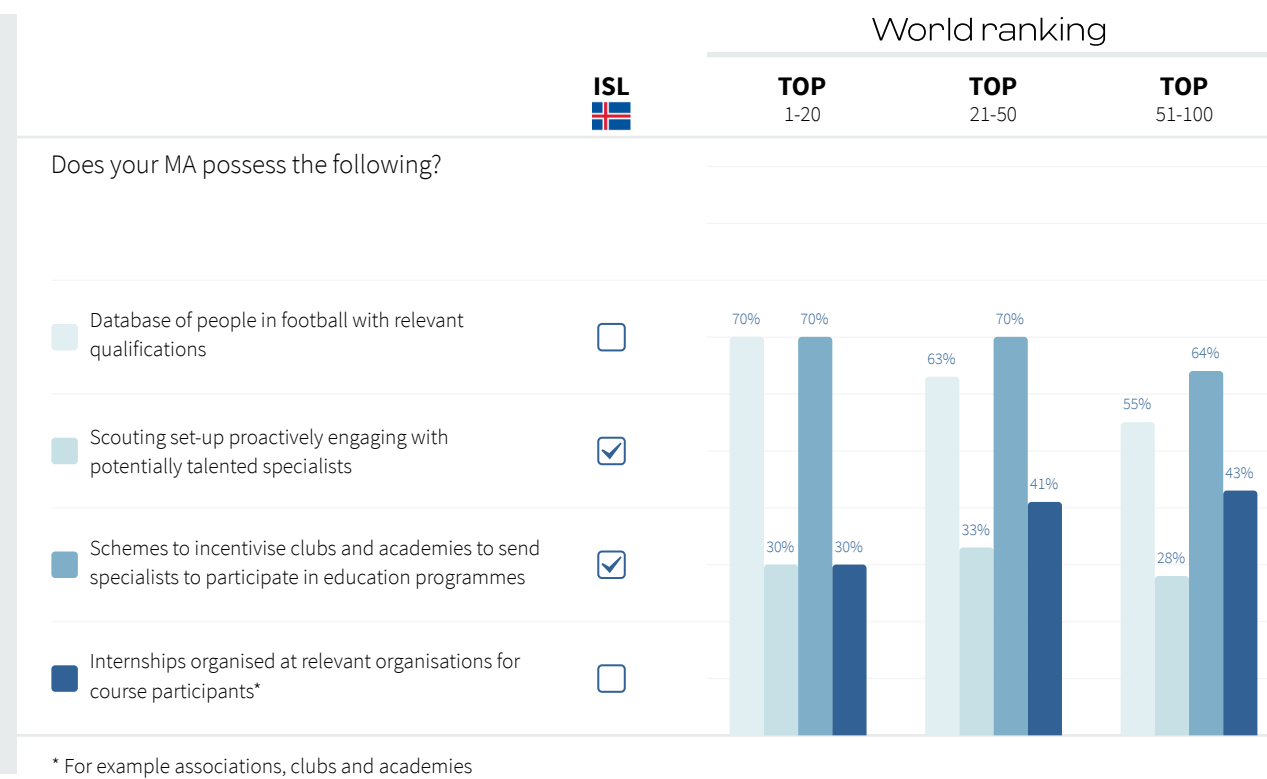
Supporting professional development

Bringing together all of the knowledge and expertise that these roles offer is essential for the success of elite-level teams, both internationally and domestically. Modern-day football finds itself in a place where there are often only the finest of margins between top competitors. As a result, every bit of expertise is required to achieve success at the highest level. The benefits of these niche roles, however, cannot be felt fully if they are not supported.

The top 20 MAs are more likely to have a database of specialist practitioners but are less likely to organise specialist internships.

70% of the top 20 MAs have a database of people working in football and holding specialist qualifications, higher than any other ranking group (63%-55%). A relatively high number (67%) of associations across the top 100 offer incentives for specialists to participate in education programmes; however, very few offer specialist internships or scout potentially talented specialists (28%-33%).

Illustration 6.10



Finding

Training and education of specialist roles

- The education of specialists is part of the coach education strategy. Courses on goalkeeping, fitness, and football-related psychology are provided by the Education Department. Additionally, some specialised topics (match analysis, use of GPS data, scouting and mental coaching) are covered in modules of the Pro Licence course. The provision of specialist roles, however, does not seem to fully cater for the overall player development needs in Iceland.
- Because the KSI is aware that there is certainly more work to be done in this area, both the Head of Education and the Technical Director are working on the content for a physical training module, given it is strongly needed for the ongoing development of the local workforce.
- Specialists, both local and from abroad, are invited to teach the aforementioned topics in the Pro Licence programme.
- The UEFA Elite Youth A course is at the disposal of clubs' Head of Youth Coaching.

EDUCATION SUMMARISING NOTES

- In line with the KSI's long-term player development strategy, the core element in the education strategy is having qualified coaches to educate the younger age groups. These coaches are encouraged to create an enjoyable environment.
- The Coach Education Department operates independently but in constant collaboration with the other departments.
- The national playing philosophy is not strongly connected to coach education; the KSI embraces diversity at club level, so clubs are free to implement their own methods.
- Education is affordable and courses are organised in centralised venues, making them relatively accessible.
- The education of specialists is part of the coach education strategy. Goalkeeping, fitness and football-related psychology courses are provided by the Education Department. Some specialised topics (match analysis, use of GPS data, scouting and mental coaching) are covered in modules of the Pro Licence course. These subjects are taught by external experts.
- The small size of the country, the consistency of courses, the emphasis on earmarking the best coaches for the younger age groups and the special attention devoted to coaching children are strengths of the education system.

Recommendations

1. The strategy for coach education centres on having the best coaches at youth level. Given the fact that clubs have an important role in player development, the objective of having qualified coaches for all age groups at every club is an excellent strategic goal. We advise continuous professional development and professionalisation for coaches at youth level.

Boys talent pathway

A talent pathway is the player development structure created by an MA, forming the route from grassroots to senior level and reflecting the development opportunities within a country. It encompasses five distinct areas: football accessibility, preparation for competitive football, high-performance youth football, and the transition from junior to senior and professional level. Playing opportunities, talent identification and talent promotion are all vital aspects at every level of the talent pathway.

YOUTH COMPETITIONS

Highest level of competition 📈
Is there a national champion 🏆
Level most games are played 📍

SUMMER CLUBS TOURNAMENTS

🏆 champion
📍 regional

KSI U-12 LEAGUE

🏆 champion
📍 national

KSI U-14 LEAGUE

🏆 champion
📍 national

KSI U-16 LEAGUE

🏆 champion
📍 national

KSI U-19 LEAGUE

🏆 champion
📍 national

TALENT POOL

Number registered players 🟩

TALENT ID PROGRAMME

Number of selected players #

NATIONAL TEAM PROGRAMME

Existence of active youth team 🏃

U-6 to U-11 U-12 U-13 U-14 U-15 U-16 U-17 U-18 U-19 U-20 U-21 U-22 U-23

70 60 50 40 30 30 30

🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃 🏃

Talent pool
U-20 and older
0 →

DEVELOPMENT STAGES

U-6 to U-11 Accessibility to football

The clubs run participation activities for players aged six to eight and weekly matches for those aged nine to 11. All matches are organised in adapted formats and enable player development. A core element of the coach education strategy is to place “the best” coaches in the youngest age groups, which is a success factor within youth football. Informal street football is highly valued and boosted by the availability of playgrounds.

U-12 to U-15 Preparation for competitive football

Clubs create their own LTPD strategy, based on KSI guidelines, to cater for player development. The club environment has quality standards enforced by the KSI Club Licensing System. The KSI runs all youth leagues from U-12. The KSI Talent Programme begins nationwide from U-13/U-14 levels, which is when players are introduced to 11v11 football. The programme represents the next step in talent development and is based on a year-round training programme.

U-16 to U-18 High performance youth football

The KSI Talent Programme focuses on the development of 30-40 players each year via training camps integrated within the club calendar. Talent development is based on clear and consistent principles of play per age group. The men’s youth national teams (MYNTs) (U-15, U-16 and U-17) play relatively few international matches. Players are educated to adapt to different playing systems in the U-15 and U-16 MYNTs.

U-18 to U-23 Transition from junior to senior

The KSI’s league structure covers two years per age group (U-12-U-14-U-16), whilst the huge step from U-16 to U-19 covers three years. There is also a gap between the U-19 league and the top tier. Some clubs run an affiliated team and send players who are not ready for the first team out on loan. The KSI created a U-21 side as a feeder into the senior team and to bridge the gap between the U-19 and senior sides.

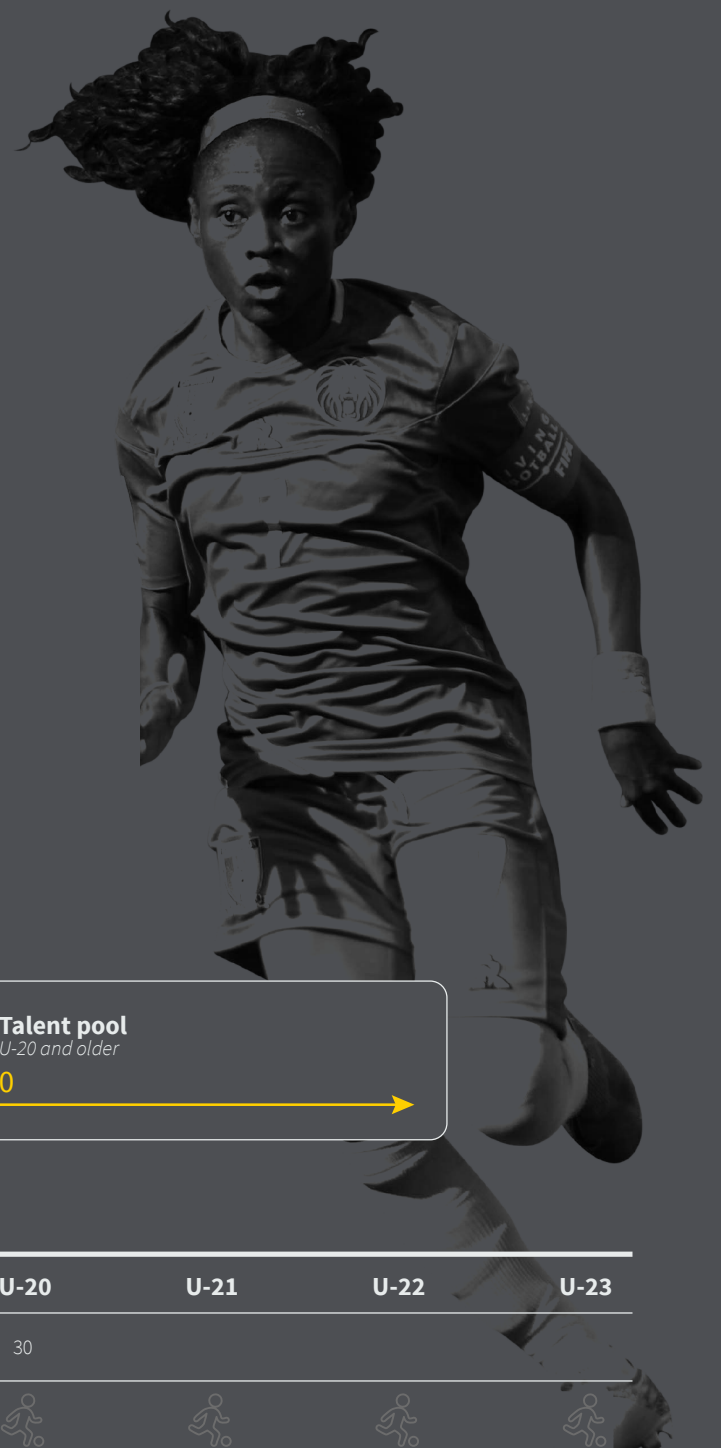
U-18 plus Professional level

The top flight is a professional 12-team league played over 22 matches across five months. The second tier is a semi-professional league. Given the status of the domestic game, most players join higher-profile foreign leagues to enhance their development. The KSI constantly develops its national playing style. The Red Line playing principles offers all national teams clear guidelines.



Girls talent pathway

The opportunity to progress through a clear talent pathway is equally vital for the development of female players as it is for males. A thorough and objective identification system should be in place to ensure enough talented female players are selected. Identified players must then receive both sufficient playing and progressive development opportunities to help them fulfil their true potential. A pathway with these characteristics helps ensure all players get a chance.



YOUTH COMPETITIONS

Highest level of competition 📈
Is there a national champion 🏆
Level most games are played 📍

SUMMER CLUBS TOURNAMENTS

🏆 champion
📍 regional

KSI U-12 LEAGUE

🏆 champion
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🏆 champion
📍 national

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🏆 champion
📍 national

TALENT POOL

Number registered players 🟩

TALENT ID PROGRAMME

Number of selected players #

NATIONAL TEAM PROGRAMME

Existence of active youth team 🏃

U-6 to U-11 U-12 U-13 U-14 U-15 U-16 U-17 U-18 U-19 U-20 U-21 U-22 U-23

70

50

40

30

30

30

30



Talent pool
U-20 and older
0 →

DEVELOPMENT STAGES

U-6 to U-11 Accessibility to football

As is the case with the boys, the clubs provide girls with enough playing opportunities from the age of six and run teams in all age groups. Every girl who wants to play can do so at a suitable level. All teams use the same facilities. This collective use of infrastructure is a strength within player development, as is the quality of the coaches.

U-12 to U-15 Preparation for competitive football

The KSI runs nationwide leagues for women at U-12 and U-14. Mixed football is permitted up until U-16. Players at all levels have enough playing opportunities and are educated by qualified coaches from the age of six. The KSI Talent Programme for girls is similar to the boys' programme but is even more significant to their development, given that club academies are not as heavily involved in girls' development.

U-16 to U-18 High performance youth football

The KSI youth league structure and the KSI Talent Programme are central to player development. The opportunities and pathway for girls are similar to the boys, but club licensing is not in place for the women's youth sides. The MA provides the U-16-U-17 women's youth national teams (WYNTs) with monthly winter training camps. The WYNT's playing style can be adjusted to suit the players, but talent development follows consistent principles of play.

U-18 to U-23 Transition from junior to senior

Talent development for girls receives the same treatment as the boys' system, but the transition from junior to senior football is a little different. When compared to the boys, the most talented girls may join the clubs' first team earlier (between U16-U17). The transition phase is smooth for the girls. There is an active U-19 WYNT programme as a feeder for the women's senior national team. However, the gap is huge.

U-18 plus Professional level

The women's top tier is a ten-team semi-professional league. To strengthen the league, foreign players are recruited. The winner participates in the Women's Champions league. The second tier is an amateur league played nationally. The MA seeks to constantly improve the performance of its national teams. Training camps are limited to FIFA windows and not all windows are used to play matches.

GLOSSARY



AFC	Asian Football Confederation
CAF	Confederation of African Football
CONMEBOL	South American Football Confederation
Concacaf	Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football
OFC	Oceania Football Confederation
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association

Academy

Typically the part of a football club that trains young players who might one day become part of the first team.

An academy may also be based at the national association. In this context, it may be referred to as a centre of excellence. Its role is still to develop young players for the senior team, but the focus is on the national team rather than on a particular club.

There are also examples of private academies and schools, which can also be a focus for the development of young footballers. These environments all have one thing in common: they select and train the players based upon their potential to make it at the professional level of the game.

Academy Performance Plan (APP)

A long-term strategy developed by an academy that provides coaches and support staff with clearly defined performance targets closely aligned to a club/association's football philosophy

Club Academy Monitoring Platform (CAMP)

System that was used by Double Pass to monitor academies throughout the Global Ecosystem Analysis

Continuous professional development (CPD)

A planned, continuous and lifelong process whereby coaches further develop their personal and professional qualities, and improve their knowledge, skills and practice. CPD is often a prerequisite to maintain a coaching licence and is offered by many MAs as part of their licensing programme

Data management system

The platform(s) used to record all performance-related data for the effective functioning of football systems

Domestic player

A player who is eligible to represent the national association in which their club resides

Fast-track approach

The practice of accelerating the learning pathway for certain target groups. In the context of coach education, it is typically used to enable former professional players to speed up the process of achieving their coaching qualifications.

Foreign player

A player who is not eligible to represent the national association in which their club resides

Full-time equivalent (FTE)

Refers to an employee's scheduled hours divided by the employer's hours for a full-time working week

Home-grown player

A player who, regardless of their nationality, has been trained by their club or by another club in the same national association

Licensed coach	An individual who holds an up-to-date and valid coaching qualification endorsed by the national association. The licence should be commensurate with the level at which the coach is coaching in order for it to be valid.
Long-term player development (LTPD)	The concept of designing appropriate coaching programmes for players subject to the stage of their development. Typically, LTPD is divided into phases, from foundation phase through to youth development (which may be sub-divided into pre- and post-pubescent stages) and finally professional development. The LTPD model will usually seek to capture all aspects of a player's development, including technical, tactical, physical, psychological and social aspects.
Member association (MA)	FIFA member association
Player care	Term used for a range of services that focus on the mental and physical well-being of players. These services will relate to the wider health and well-being of the player rather than the football-specific aspects of a player's development.
Playing philosophy	Usually a document that shows how the MA has embedded an approach to playing the game. It will impact upon the tactical approach adopted by the national teams and it is likely to impact upon other aspects of football policy within the MA, such as the approach to coach education, coaching and player recruitment, and development.
Relative age effect (RAE) (also known as the birth date effect)	The process by which children born in the earliest part of the year are more likely to be selected for representative teams or academy squads. The RAE is most pronounced in sports that select early developers (i.e. pre-pubescent). It has been identified as a significant bias in many football systems around the world.
Return-to-play protocols	standardised process that national teams and clubs will usually have for bringing a player back to fitness after injury
Sports science support	The range of services available designed to support the performance of players. Typically, this will include physiology, strength and conditioning (athletic training), psychology, physiotherapy and nutrition.
Talent identification	A key discipline within the wider scouting process, referring to processes and programmes that are set up to identify players who have the potential to be professional/national team players. Talent identification aims to detect, select, recruit and develop players who have the skills and competencies to succeed at the predetermined level. Referred to as "TID" in combination with talent development.

Technical division	The departments that are responsible for the delivery of all technical football aspects of the work of the association (typically this will be coaching, player development, recruitment, scouting, performance analysis, etc.)
Technical leaders	Those staff, other than coaches, who have specific technical duties to carry out in support of the MA, for example the director of coaching, the head of coach education or the technical director him/herself
Top league	The senior competition for men and for women in a country. This will usually be the professional league. If there is a senior professional league that has multiple divisions, the top league refers to the highest division.
Top-tier competition	The highest national championship in a country, regardless of professional/amateur status
Youth league	An age-restricted competition usually subject to maximum age criteria, but it may also have minimum age criteria as well

Abbreviations used in the infographics:

Y:	Youth
S:	Senior
M:	Male
F:	Female





**“Invest in the future of the game.
Give every talent a chance.”**

Arsène Wenger

Imprint

Published by

Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FIFA-Strasse 20, P.O. Box, 8044 Zurich, Switzerland
T: +41 (0)43 222 7777 FIFA.com Produced in Switzerland

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FIFA.com

Content & Production

FIFA Technical Subdivision - High Performance Programmes
Philippka-Sportverlag

Analysis Data

Double Pass
CIES
FIFA internal sources

Graphic design

Jaaf Design
VMLY&R Branding

Photos

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