

FOOTBALL BUSINESS AFRICA MAGAZINE



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FOCUS

WHY AFRICAN
FOOTBALL MUST GO
DIGITAL TO ENGAGE
FANS BETTER &
UNLOCK
REVENUES...

THE BRAND VALUE OF AFRICA'S FOOTBALL ELITE

WHO IS SCORING BIG ON
AND OFF THE FIELD?

MANAGEMENT

5 STEPS TO IMPROVE THE
OPERATIONS OF YOUR
FOOTBALL CLUB



TP MAZEMBE,
LUBUMBASHI,
DR CONGO

MOÏSE KATUMBI

FROM FISHMONGER TO FOOTBALL MOGUL

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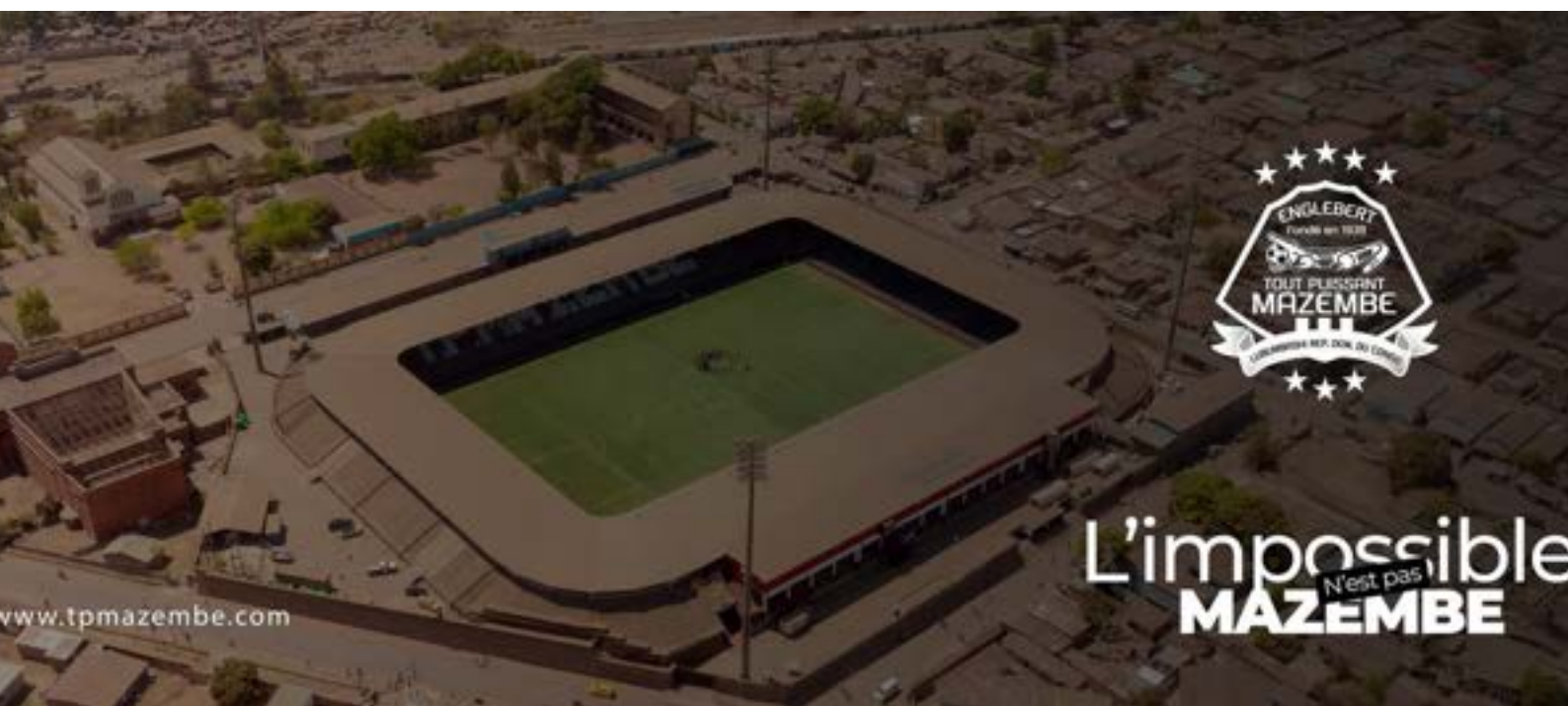
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FROM POTENTIAL TO REVENUES

Welcome to another edition of Football Business Africa Magazine. This issue dives into the heart of a single question: how to translate the vast potential of African football into tangible revenues?

Across the continent, passion and talent abound. Yet, financial prosperity for most remains elusive. This edition seeks to illuminate pathways to bridge that gap.

In this edition, our focus is on the *revolutionary power of digital transformation*. We delve into how African clubs and leagues can leverage technology to engage fans, expand their reach, and unlock new revenue streams. This is no longer a luxury but a necessity.

Building on this, we tackle the urgent need for *improved business operations*. It's clear that on-field brilliance must be matched by off-field acumen. We examine strategies for clubs to streamline operations, enhance marketing, and diversify revenue models. Simply put, good governance and sound business practices are the key to growth.

For the past few years Moise Katumbi has been at the forefront of improving his football club's business operations, making Tout-Puissant Mazembe, in the DR Congo, a force in Africa's club football. His profile is worth a look and is also our cover story.

The *FIFA Forward programme* emerges as a crucial catalyst in the football business landscape in Africa. We analyze how this initiative is providing vital resources and support to African football federations.

Finally, we shine a light on the brand images of Africa's elite men footballers. These athletes are not just players; they are global icons. Their personal brands represent a significant, often untapped, commercial potential.

The common thread woven throughout these articles is clear: Africa's football potential is undeniable. But potential alone is not enough. It must be harnessed, nurtured, and strategically managed to generate the revenues needed for sustainable growth.

This edition is a call to action and a roadmap.

We hope you enjoy!

The editor

FOCUS

DIGITAL OR BUST: WHY AFRICAN FOOTBALL MUST GO DIGITAL.

IN A DIGITAL WORLD, THE VERY FABRIC OF HOW FANS CONSUME, ENGAGE WITH, AND EVEN PARTICIPATE IN FOOTBALL IS UNDERGOING A SEISMIC SHIFT.

FOR AFRICAN FOOTBALL CLUBS AND FEDERATIONS AIMING FOR GROWTH, SUSTAINABILITY, THE QUESTION IS NO LONGER IF THEY SHOULD EMBRACE DIGITAL

THE QUESTION IS: HOW URGENTLY AND HOW EFFECTIVELY THEY CAN LEVEL UP THEIR GAME IN THE DIGITAL ARENA.

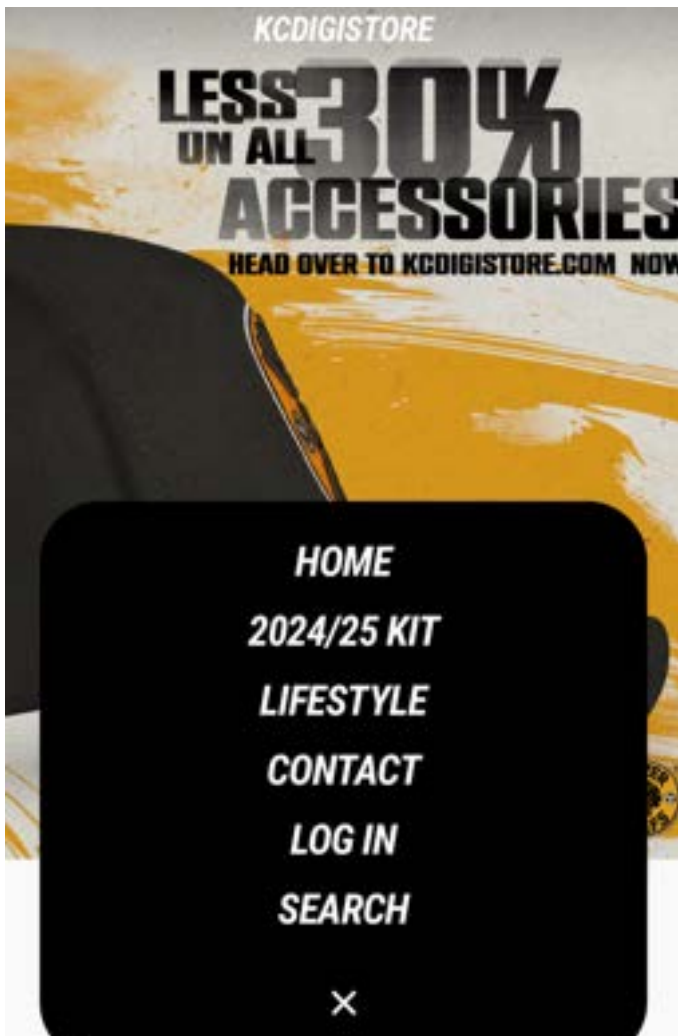
DIGITAL IS THE WAY TO KEEP FANS, ATTRACT SPONSORS AND MAKE MONEY!

DIGITAL OR BUST



Africa's football future isn't in stadiums alone —it's in smartphones, streams, and social media.

Here is how embracing technology can unlock revenue, engage fans, and elevate Africa's game to global heights.



Screenshots of websites for Al Ahly (Egypt);

JS Wangata (DR Congo)

Kaizer Chiefs (South Africa) App.



Africa's love for football is unmatched. From the bustling streets of Lagos to the dusty pitches of Kinshasa, the continent lives and breathes the game. Yet, while African players like Sadio Mané and Mohammed Salah dominate global leagues, the administrative engines powering the sport at home remain stuck in analog. In an era where a single TikTok video can reach millions overnight, federations risk irrelevance by clinging to outdated models.

The solution? An urgent digital overhaul—one that Nigeria's NPFL, South Africa's PSL, and even clubs like TP Mazembe are already leveraging to surge ahead.

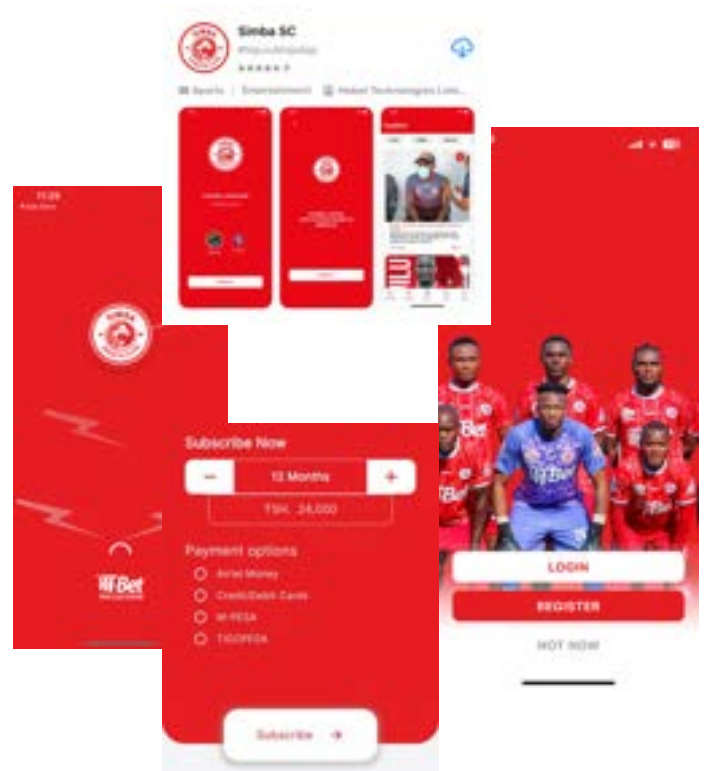
WHY NOW? THE DIGITAL IMPERATIVE

1. Africa is a “connected” continent

Africa is the world's fastest-growing mobile market, with 477 million smartphone users projected by the end of 2025. TikTok, YouTube and Facebook are already the primary content hubs for young Africans. Ignoring this shift is surrendering fans and revenue. The digital world opens up new revenue streams. Digital sponsorships, e-commerce platforms selling official merchandise, premium content subscriptions, and even data monetization can contribute significantly to clubs and federations' financial sustainability.

3. Africa must embrace the trend...

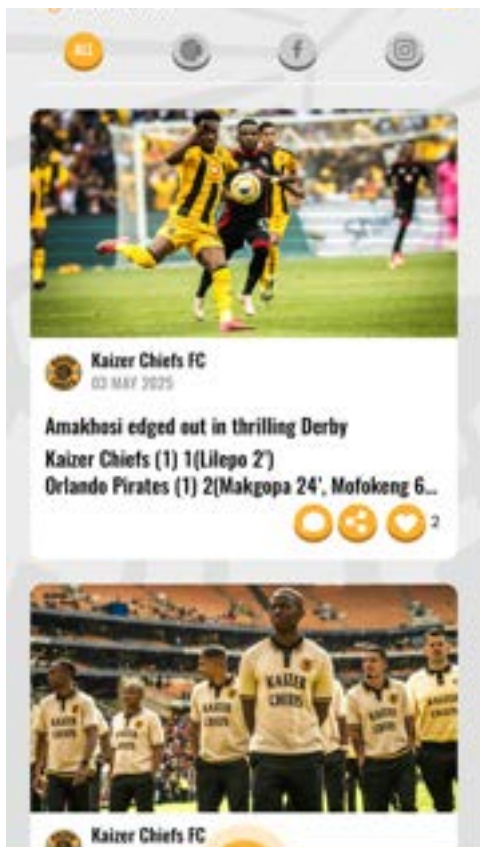
Europe's top leagues generate billions via digital strategies: the English Premier League earns £1.6 billion annually from international broadcast rights, while the NFL's app drives fan engagement through real-time data. Africa's federations can't afford to lag. A strong digital presence projects a modern and forward-thinking image for a football federation. Engaging content, interactive platforms, and innovative digital initiatives enhance the federation's brand, attracting sponsors, partners, and the next generation of players and fans.



Screenshots of Simba SC (Tanzania) fans App.

2. Africa is the “youngest” continent

60% of Africa's population is under 25. This tech-savvy generation demands instant access—live streams, stats, and interactive content—not static league tables in newspapers. A robust digital strategy allows federations to connect with fans where they are, fostering deeper loyalty and expanding their reach beyond traditional stadium attendance. Imagine a federation like FECOFA in DR Congo using a dedicated mobile app to provide personalized content, live match updates, and interactive fan zones, engaging millions of passionate supporters both at home and abroad.



Kaizer Chiefs (South Africa) App (left)

Young SC (Tanzania), fan APP. Interface in Swahili... (right)



PROOFS OF CONCEPT

1. Nigeria’s NPFL: Streaming for Profit

In 2022, the NPFL signed a deal with streaming platform *Propedia*, offering live matches for \$2/month. Result? A 300% revenue jump and 1.2 million subscribers in Year 1. Fans in diaspora paid premiums for access, proving demand exists.

2. South Africa’s PSL: The App Advantage

The PSL’s mobile app, featuring live scores, ticket sales, and fantasy leagues, boasts 1.5 million active users. Sponsors like MTN and Nedbank pay premium rates for in-app ads, funding youth academies.

3. TP Mazembe: NFTs and Merchandising

DR Congo’s TP Mazembe launched an e-commerce site selling branded NFTs of historic wins. The club now earns \$1.2 million annually from digital merch—10% of its total revenue.

4. Morocco’s Data-Driven Edge

After adopting Opta’s analytics tools, Morocco’s federation identified undervalued talents and optimized training. The result? A historic World Cup semifinal run in 2022.

60% of Africa's population is under 25. This tech-savvy generation demands instant access—live streams, stats, and interactive content—not static league tables in newspapers.

THE "HOW" OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Implementing a successful digital transformation strategy requires a structured and comprehensive approach:

- **Develop a Clear Digital Strategy:** This involves defining clear objectives, identifying target audiences, outlining key initiatives, and establishing measurable key performance indicators (KPIs). The strategy must align with the federation's overall goals and vision.
- **Invest in Technology and Infrastructure:** This includes developing or upgrading websites and mobile applications, implementing robust databases and data analytics tools, and ensuring adequate technological infrastructure to support digital initiatives.
- **Focus on Compelling Content Creation:** High-quality, engaging content is the lifeblood of any successful digital strategy. Federations need to invest in creating diverse content formats, including text, images, videos, and interactive experiences, tailored to different platforms and audiences.

- **Engage Fans Across Multiple Platforms:** A multi-platform approach is crucial to reach fans on their preferred channels. Federations should develop tailored strategies for their website, mobile app, and various social media platforms.
- **Embrace Data Analytics:** Implement systems to collect, analyze, and interpret data to gain valuable insights into fan behavior, operational performance, and player development. This data should inform decision-making and continuous improvement.
- **Seek Strategic Partnerships:** Collaboration is key. Federations should seek partnerships with technology providers, media companies, sponsors, and even telecommunication operators to leverage their expertise and resources.
- **Foster a Culture of Innovation:** Digital transformation is an ongoing process.¹⁰ Federations need to cultivate a culture of innovation, encouraging experimentation with new technologies and approaches.

CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

1. Funding Hurdles

- Seek FIFA Forward Programme grants...

2. Resistance to Change

- Train staff via CAF's digital workshops. Rwanda's FA now employs a 12-person digital team.

3. Infrastructure Gaps

- Solution: Optimize for low bandwidth. Kenya's FKF offers SMS score alerts for rural fans without smartphones.

CONVERSATIONS WORTH LISTENING TO...



“

THIS MEDIA-FOCUSED PANEL FROM WORLD FOOTBALL SUMMIT RABAT 2025 EXPLORES THE EVOLVING ROLES OF DIGITAL AND TRADITIONAL MEDIA IN AFRICAN SPORTS, EXAMINING CHALLENGES AND COMPLEMENTARY FUNCTIONS IN THE MODERN LANDSCAPE.

A conversation worth watching [here](#)

For more insights visit www.worldfootballsummit.com

COVER STORY

MOÏSE KATUMBI, FROM FISHMONGER TO FOOTBALL MOGUL

The Congolese businessman and political figure has taken TP Mazembe, a once-struggling team, and turned it into a continental powerhouse. But Katumbi's story is far more colorful than your average billionaire benefactor. It's a tale of fish, football, and maybe even a future presidency.

Katumbi's journey began far from the glitz and glamour of European football.

Born in a small village near Lake Mweru, he started his entrepreneurial career at the tender age of 13, supplying fish to the local mining company.

Talk about a "big fish" in a small pond! From there, he built a diverse business empire spanning mining, transportation, and food processing.

This wasn't just about inheriting wealth; Katumbi earned his stripes through hard work and a keen eye for opportunity.

Katumbi's true passion, however, lay in football. As a youngster, he'd chase after stray balls for TP Mazembe, dreaming of one day leading the team to glory.

That dream became a reality in the early 2000s when he took over the club. At the time, TP Mazembe was a shadow of its former self, having suffered humiliating defeats and struggling to attract fans.

Katumbi, however, had a vision.

He poured millions into the club, upgrading facilities, attracting top talent (and paying them handsomely!) and even building a state-of-the-art stadium Stade TP Mazembe, with its artificial turf, VIP boxes, and electronic advertising panels, was unlike anything Africa had ever seen.



“ He poured millions into the club, upgrading facilities, attracting top talent (and paying them handsomely!) and even building a state-of-the-art stadium Stade TP Mazembe, with its artificial turf, VIP boxes, and electronic advertising panels, was unlike anything Africa had ever seen. ”



More Than Just a Sugar Daddy

But Katumbi's involvement went beyond just splashing the cash. He was a hands-on owner, deeply involved in the club's management and fostering a winning mentality.

He even threatened to resign when fans questioned his decisions! This passionate, sometimes direct approach has drawn criticism, with some accusing him of running the club "like his house."

Despite the controversies, Katumbi's impact is undeniable.

TP Mazembe has won the CAF Champions League five times and become a symbol of pride for the Congolese people.

He's also invested heavily in youth development through the Katumbi Football Academy, nurturing the next generation of Congolese stars.

Running a successful football club, even with a billionaire owner, requires a smart business strategy. TP Mazembe generates revenue through various streams, including matchday income, prize money from competitions, player transfers, sponsorships, and merchandise sales. They've even secured deals with big names like Simba Breweries and Tenke Fungurume Mining.

However, the club's finances are heavily reliant on Katumbi's personal wealth, which has raised concerns about long-term sustainability. The recent financial difficulties faced by LINAFOOT, the Congolese top-flight league, further highlight the challenges.



Katumbi's political career has also been fraught with controversy. He's faced accusations of hiring mercenaries, plotting a coup, and even had his plane denied landing in the DRC.

He's brought unprecedented success to TP Mazembe, but his legacy is still being written.

Politics and Football: A Balancing Act

Katumbi's story takes another twist when you consider his political ambitions. He served as the Governor of Katanga Province and has been described as "the second most powerful man in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This has led to accusations of using TP Mazembe's success for political gain and questions about the source of his wealth. His political career has also been fraught with controversy. He's faced accusations of hiring mercenaries, plotting a coup, and even had his plane denied landing in the DRC.

Talk about a political goal! Despite these challenges, Katumbi remains a popular figure and is seen by many as a potential future president.

Moise Katumbi is a complex and fascinating figure. He's a self-made millionaire, a passionate football enthusiast, and a political figure.

He's brought unprecedented success to TP Mazembe, but his legacy is still being written.

Whether he'll achieve his ultimate goal of becoming the DRC's president remains to be seen. But one thing's for sure: Katumbi's story is a reminder that in the world of football, sometimes the most exciting action happens off the pitch.

CONVERSATIONS WORTH LISTENING TO...



“

THIS CRITICAL PANEL FROM WORLD FOOTBALL SUMMIT RABAT 2025 EXAMINES THE CURRENT STATE OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL ACROSS AFRICA, HIGHLIGHTING ACHIEVEMENTS WHILE ADVOCATING FOR INCREASED INVESTMENT AND STRUCTURAL SUPPORT.

A conversation worth watching [here](#)

For more insights visit www.worldfootballsummit.com

INSIGHTS

BRAND.**RANKING THE
BRAND POWER
OF AFRICA'S
FOOTBALL ELITE.**

FROM PERFORMANCE TO ENDORSEMENTS, AND SOCIAL MEDIA REACH, WHAT MAKES AFRICAN FOOTBALLERS PAST AND PRESENT MARKETABLE? WHO IS SCORING BIG ON AND OFF THE FIELD?

FROM EGYPT'S MO SALAH, CAMEROON'S SAMUEL ETO'O, SENEGAL'S SADIO MANÉ... FROM IVORY COAST'S DIDIER DROGBA AND NIGERIA'S VICTOR OSIMHEN WE RANK THEM ALL.

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WWW.FOOTBALLBRANDSAFRICA.COM



IE The King

MO. SALAH, LIVERPOOL & EGYPT



Field performance

Exceptional and consistent. Mo scores goals and provides assists at a dizzying speed. The Egyptian is the Star among Liverpool many stars.

Salah has already won numerous individual awards (African Player of the Year twice, the PFA Golden Boots three Player of the Season twice) and team trophies (Premier League in 2020, Champions League in 2021).

Social media impact

He's one of the most popular footballers in the world, with over 100 million followers on social media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter...)

He often shares his sponsors content, increasing their visibility and reach. Among them are major brands such as Adidas, Pepsi, and Vodafone. These partnerships highlight his global appeal and marketability.

Marketability

Mo Salah is generally perceived as a role model with a strong work ethic and a positive attitude. This makes him attractive to brands looking to associate with a respected athlete.

His market value is high. His transfer fees and salary are among the highest in football, reflecting his on-field abilities and commercial appeal. For a marketer, Mo is Gold.

IE The Rising star

BRYAN MBEMBE, BRENTFORD & CAMEROON



Field performance

Mbeumo has been a consistent performer for Brentford in the Premier League, a side he has helped gain promotion to the Premier League in 2021. He's capable of playing in multiple attacking positions and contributes with both goals and assists. He was nominated for the EFL Player of the Year and Young Player of the Year awards in 2020 and 2021.

Social media impact

Mbeumo maintains a social media presence. He's reasonably active on sharing updates about his career and engaging with fans. He has been praised for using his platform to connect with fans.

As he continues to perform well and attract more attention, his social media impact is likely to increase.

Marketability

Mbeumo is considered a rising star in the Premier League, and his performances are attracting interest from other clubs. He's known for his hard work and dedication on the pitch.

His young age, exciting playing style, and growing profile make him an attractive prospect for brands. Mbeumo's market value is increasing, reflecting his on-field contributions and potential for future growth.

IE The helper

ANDRÉ OUSANA, MANCHESTER U. & CAMEROON



Field performance

André Ousana is a modern goalkeeper - one of the best in the world - with a successful career. He won 3 Eredivisie titles with Ajax, and one FA cup with Manchester United as well as other trophies in Italy with Inter Milan.

After a difficult Premier League season last year, he has been one of Man U's best this season, despite much publicised mistakes.

Social media impact

Ousana maintains an active presence on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, engaging with fans and sharing updates on his career and foundation.

He's reasonably active on social media, sharing updates about his career and engaging with fans and he occasionally posts content related to his sponsors.

Marketability

Ousana's public perception is currently mixed due to some of his performances. He has shown resilience in overcoming early struggles at United. He won the 2024 FIFA PRO Player Impact Award for his work helping children get medical help in Africa.

His market value remains relatively high, reflecting his potential and experience.

IE The other special one

DELE DROGBA, LIVERPOOL & COTE D'IVOIRE



Field performance

Dele Drogba is a legendary Ivorian footballer with a remarkable career. He won four Premier League titles and one Champions League with Chelsea. He was twice the African Footballer of the Year (2006, 2009) and won the Premier League Golden Boot twice. He was nominated for the Ballon d'Or eight times.

Social media impact

Drogba maintains a substantial and active social media presence. He has around 30 million followers across Instagram and Facebook.

He connects with fans, shares updates about his activities, and advocates for various causes. His voice is respected and he uses his platform to speak on football, social issues, and his philanthropic work.

Marketability

Now retired, his on-field performance is no longer a direct factor in his marketability as a player. His legacy, however, is a major asset. His brand remains valuable for endorsements, particularly those related to sports lifestyle, and social impact initiatives. Brands seeking to associate with a respected and philanthropic figure find him attractive.

IE The Boss

S. ETO'O, CAMEROON (RETIRED)



Field performance

Eto'o has an illustrious career and was perhaps the greatest of his African footballers of his generation. He was named African Player of the Year four times, won the UEFA Champions League three times with Barcelona and Inter Milan, 3 La Liga titles with Barcelona and one Serie A title with Inter, 1 Africa Cup of Nations and an Olympic gold medal with Cameroon.

Social media impact

Eto'o maintains an active social media presence with over 30 million followers. He has been praised for his impactful media presence and for using his platform to speak out against racism in football.

Marketability

Eto'o's brand value has fluctuated throughout his career, reaching its peak during his time at Anzhi Makhachkala.

Eto'o became the world's highest-paid player. He has supported various humanitarian causes, including donating hospital beds and emergency aid. He became President of the Football Federation in Cameroon 3 years ago.

IE The Great Keeper

NERENSI, SENEGAL



Field performance

Nrensi is a Senegalese goalkeeper who has achieved success at both club and international levels. He won the UEFA Champions League with Chelsea and the Africa Cup of Nations with Senegal. He was also the best African goalkeeper to win both the UEFA and FIFA goalkeeper of the year awards in 2021. After a drop of form, he was transferred from Chelsea to Al Ahli in the Saudi Pro League.

Social media impact

Nrensi maintains a stable social media presence with over 5 million followers on Facebook and Instagram. He has been vocal about racial inequalities in the media. However, his presence is not at the level of the most globally recognized football stars.

Marketability

Already respected within the footballing world for his abilities, particularly his shot-stopping, his marketability is primarily tied to his on-field performance. When he was playing at his best, he was a highly marketable goalkeeper. However, a difficult period negatively impacted his brand. He remains a very respected figure thanks to his past successes.

IE The Prince

RYAD MAHREZ, AL AHLI & ALGERIA



Field performance

Mahrez is an Algerian winger who has achieved success in both England and France. He won the Premier League title with Leicester City and four Premier League titles with Manchester City. He also won the Africa Cup of Nations with Algeria in 2019.

Mahrez is known for his exceptional dribbling and ball-control skills.

Social media impact

Mahrez has a substantial and engaged following on social media platforms totaling at 26 million across Facebook, Instagram and X. His posts often generate significant engagement, showing his influence and reach. Mahrez frequently features his sponsors in his social media content, leveraging his platform for commercial partnerships.

Marketability

Mahrez is an established and recognizable global brand, with a history of successful endorsements. He's generally perceived as a skilled and exciting player, which enhances his marketability. His established reputation coupled with his strong social media presence, ensures his cost marketability. If the Saudi Pro League opened new opportunities.

IE The reliable one

T. PARTEY, ARSENAL & GHANA



Field performance

Partey is a crucial player for Arsenal, providing strength, stability, and ball-winning ability in midfield. He's known for his tackling, interceptions, and ability to break up opposition attacks.

He has played at a high level for both Atletico Madrid and won Ligue 1 (2020) and the Europa League (2021) before joining Arsenal.

Social media impact

Partey has a respectable following on social media where he's increasingly active and engages with fans. He's not known for being a particularly prominent or outspoken figure on social media and his social media presence seems to be primarily focused on his football career and less on building a personal brand.

Marketability

Partey is seen as a respected and reliable player, which makes him attractive to some brands. His brand value is linked to his consistent performance as a midfielder in the Premier League.

His focus, however, seems to be primarily on his team and his performance on the field. Partey was involved in a sponsorship deal with the luxury transfer during his time at Atletico Madrid.

IE The Philanthropist

G. MANE, AL NASR & SENEGAL



Field performance

An established star, now playing in Saudi Arabia, Mane has had a hugely successful career, reaching legendary status at Liverpool. He won the Premier League title with Liverpool in 2021, the African Cup of Nations in 2022, and Bundesliga with Bayern Munich in 21. He was named African Footballer of the Year twice (2019, 2021) and won the Premier League Golden Boot.

Social media impact

Mane maintains a social media presence with over 15 million followers, although he prefers to keep his personal life private.

He's a popular figure, particularly in Africa and frequently features his sponsors in his social media content, leveraging his commercial partnerships with brands such as New Balance.

Marketability

Mane is known for his humility and generosity, which resonates with fans. His dedication to improving his hometown sets him apart. He is most viewed as a role model and inspiration in Senegal and across Africa.

Mane is considered a "baritone brand" due to his fair treatment and contributions to his community.

IE The Fighter

Y. OSIMHEN, GALATASARAY & NIGERIA



Field performance

Osimhen is a highly effective, consistent and young striker who has been linked with the biggest teams in the world. His pace, strength, and finishing ability make him a constant threat to opposing defenses. He was the top scorer in Serie A in 2022-23 and won the league title before joining the Turkish league. He was named African Footballer of the Year in 2023.

Social media impact

Osimhen has a strong social media presence, with over 5 million followers on Instagram. He actively engages with fans and shares updates on his career. He celebrated reaching 5 million followers on Instagram after his impressive debut with Galatasaray. Osimhen occasionally features his sponsors in his social media content.

Marketability

His rising profile and exciting playing style make him an attractive prospect for brands looking to associate with young and dynamic athletes. Osimhen is generally seen as a dedicated and hardworking player, which contributes to his marketability. Osimhen's difficult upbringing shaped his playing style and character.

COMING SOON...

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AFRICAN CLUBS

5 STEPS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY



African football clubs stand at a crossroads of immense potential and major challenges. The continent's clubs are engines of talent, community pride, and cultural identity. Yet, while clubs from Egypt, Morocco and South Africa dominate continental competitions, most grapple with financial instability, crumbling infrastructure, and governance crises. In this article, FBA Magazine explores the structural landscape of African football, assesses regional disparities, and outlines 5 actionable strategies for clubs to achieve sustainability.

Features of African Football Clubs

Ownership and Governance Structures

- State and Community Models: In North and West Africa, clubs like Egypt's Al Ahly and Algeria's JS Kabylie are deeply tied to government or community entities, ensuring stability but risking political interference.
- Corporate Ownership: Southern Africa leads in commercialization, with South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns (owned by mining magnate Patrice Motsepe) blending corporate governance with global scouting networks.
- Informal Patronage: Many Sub-Saharan clubs, such as Kenya's Gor Mahia, rely on wealthy patrons or politicians, leading to volatility when funding dries up.

Regional Disparities and Trends

- **North Africa**: Professionalized leagues benefit from state investment. Represents 70% of CAF C1 winners since 2000.
- **West Africa**: Raw talent abounds, but political interference and infrastructure neglect hinder growth.
- **Southern Africa**: Corporate models thrive in South Africa, yet neighboring nations like Zimbabwe face resource gaps.
- **East/Central Africa**: Tanzania's Simba SC and Yanga SC as well as DR Congo's TP Mazembe showcases private-sector success.

Financial Realities

- Revenue Streams: Overreliance on wealthy patrons or on player sales to Europe (e.g., ASEC d'Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire) and inconsistent sponsorships plague most leagues. Exceptions include Morocco's Botola Pro and South Africa's PSL, which generate \$30M annually from centralized TV deals.
- Debt and Mismanagement: A 2021 Transparency International report estimated \$500M lost annually to corruption, while 70% of West African clubs lack audited accounts.

Infrastructure Gaps

- North Africa's state-funded stadiums (e.g., Morocco's Mohammed VI Academy) contrast sharply with Sub-Saharan Africa's dilapidated venues. Only 15% of stadiums in the latter meet CAF standards.

Youth Development

- Academies like ASEC Mimosas (Côte d'Ivoire) and Generation Foot (Senegal) are talent factories but struggle to retain stars. FIFPRO reports 45% of African academy players sign contracts without legal advice.

Emerging trends in African Football...

Several key trends are reshaping the African football club landscape.

A - The **increasing professionalization of domestic leagues** is evident across the continent, driven by national associations and CAF's club licensing requirements. This push aims to improve the quality of play and commercial appeal.

B- **Growing foreign investment and multi-club ownership** are also on the rise. While more prevalent in Europe, multi-club ownership is gaining traction globally and could impact African football, potentially bringing financial stability and expertise but also raising concerns about competitive integrity and player exploitation.

C- **Infrastructure improvements and stadium development** are gaining momentum, often spurred by hosting major continental tournaments. Initiatives like the African Football League also aim to enhance infrastructure.

D - Finally, the **role of technology and digitalization** is expanding, with clubs leveraging social media, mobile apps, and potentially AI and VR to enhance fan engagement and explore new revenue streams.



The migration of talented players to more lucrative leagues in Europe and within Africa, the "brain drain," weakens domestic leagues and clubs.

While transfers can provide revenue, the constant outflow of top talent diminishes the competitiveness of local football.



CHALLENGES

Despite these positive trends, African football clubs face significant challenges. **Financial instability and a lack of sustainable funding** remain paramount. Reliance on inconsistent government subsidies or individual owners hinders long-term planning and investment.

Inadequate training facilities also severely impede progress. Poor stadium conditions and limited access to quality training grounds affect player development and fan experience.

The **migration of talented players** to more lucrative leagues in Europe and within Africa, the "brain drain," weakens domestic leagues and clubs. While transfers can provide revenue, the constant outflow of top talent diminishes the competitiveness of local football.

Persistent **governance issues** continue to plague the sport, deterring investors and hindering development.

5 steps to improve your club's business operation

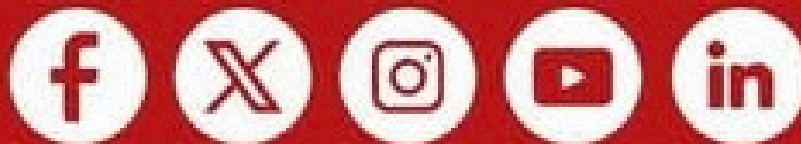


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Date: 9 & 10 September 2025.

Place: Kigali, Rwanda

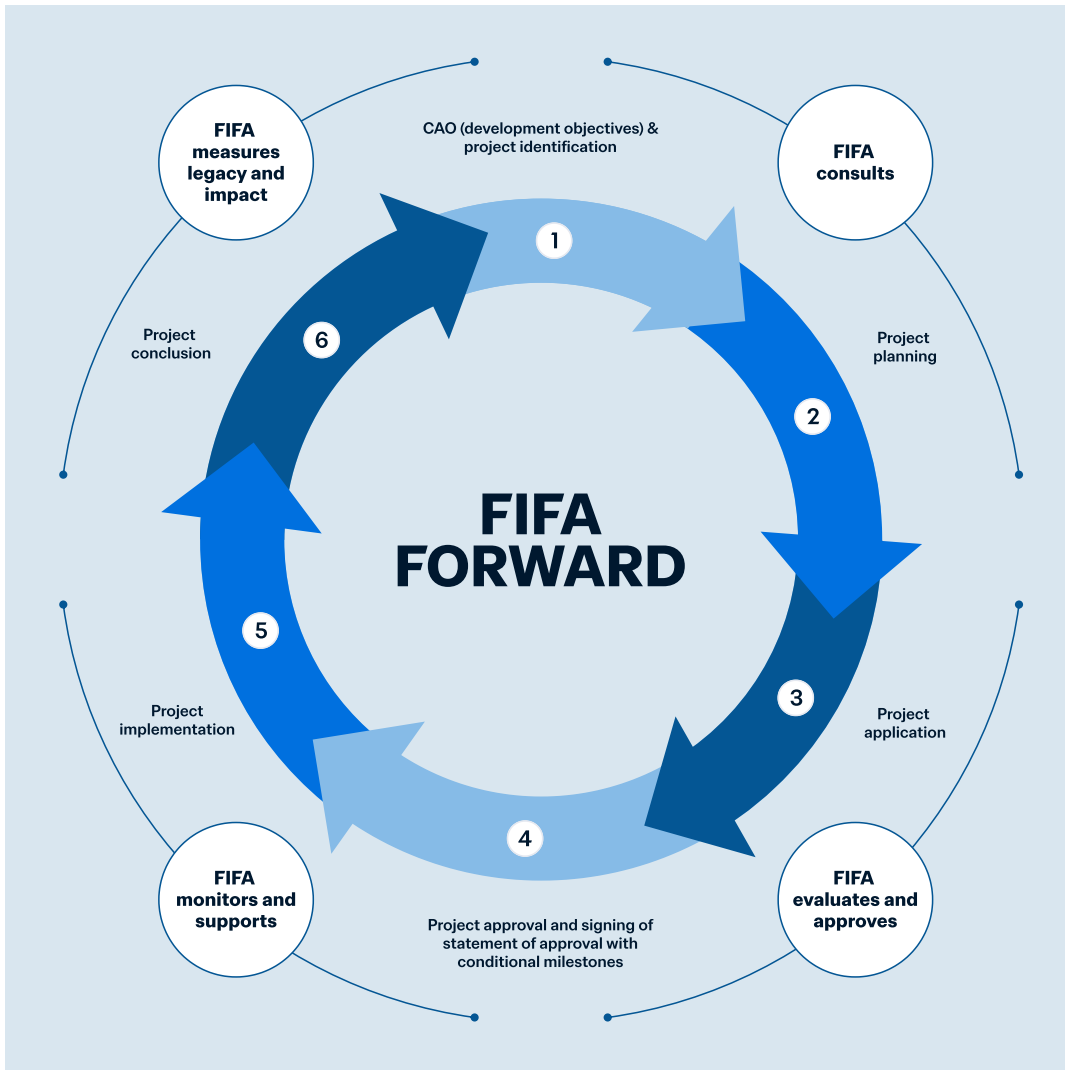
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FIFA FORWARD

POWERING THE BUSINESS OF FOOTBALL IN AFRICA



Since its inception in 2016, the FIFA Forward Programme stands as a remarkable investment in the global game. With over USD 1.25 billion invested in African football to date, the initiative represents a clear commitment from FIFA to foster growth in the continent's footballing landscape. FBA Magazine delves into the programme's impact on the business of football on the continent, examining trends, actors, and its challenges.



Mauritania's Sheikh Boudi stadium renovated with a Fifa Forward Grant.

A primary focus has been on infrastructure development, a cornerstone for sustainable progress. Across the continent, 169 new football pitches have been laid, providing better playing surfaces crucial for nurturing talent.

From the renovation of iconic stadiums like **Liberia's** Antoinette Tubman Stadium and **Mauritania's** Sheikh Boudi stadium to the installation of artificial turf at technical centers in **Botswana**, **Lesotho**, and **Seychelles**, the programme is upgrading the very foundations of the game.

Côte d'Ivoire, the recent AFCON champions, are set to benefit from a USD 4.3 million investment in their National Technical Centre in Bingerville, a facility that will serve all national teams.

Beyond infrastructure, the FIFA Forward Programme has been instrumental in nurturing the next generation of African talent through its support for youth football development. Senegal's launch of national youth leagues across various age groups for both boys and girls exemplifies this commitment, providing a structured pathway for young players to develop.

In the COSAFA region, countries like **Comoros** and **Madagascar** have strategically prioritized youth initiatives, laying the groundwork for future success.

The advancement of women's football has also been a significant beneficiary. **Morocco's** journey to hosting the Women's Africa Cup of Nations and qualifying for the FIFA Women's World Cup highlights the impact of strategic investment.

Sierra Leone's establishment of a new Women's Premier League offers a vital platform for female players.

Across Africa, over 10,000 girls and women have participated in 36 competitions launched with Forward funding, demonstrating a growing commitment to inclusivity.

Recognizing that strong administration is vital, the programme has supported numerous capacity building initiatives. Over 15,000 individuals across CAF's member associations have benefited from 46 capacity development projects, enhancing the skills of administrators, coaches, and referees.

In Comoros, specific training courses for these key personnel have been conducted, contributing to a more professional footballing environment. The impact extends to national teams and competitions.

Seychelles will host the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup 2025™ after renovating facilities with Forward funding, while Mauritius previously hosted the COSAFA U-17 Women's Championship.

National teams like Comoros, Botswana, and Angola have seen improved FIFA rankings, attributing their progress to FIFA initiatives, particularly the Forward Programme.

Cabo Verde's ability to host FIFA World Cup qualifiers after two decades, thanks to the renovation of their national stadium, showcases the programme's role in elevating playing standards.

Navigating the Challenges: Areas for Growth and Focus

Despite the considerable successes, the FIFA Forward Programme also faces challenges in its implementation and impact across Africa.

One notable issue is the underutilization of funds by some member associations. Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, utilized only 50% of its allocation between 2016 and 2022. This may be due to difficulties in meeting the programme's requirements for project execution.

While infrastructure and national team support receive significant attention, **club-level development and sustainability** appear to be areas receiving comparatively less direct support.

African clubs often grapple with financial instability, and while the Forward Programme benefits them indirectly, more targeted initiatives could be beneficial.

Addressing corruption and mismanagement, significant hindrances to African football development, is another area where more direct intervention might be needed. While the programme emphasizes oversight, specific anti-corruption initiatives are not as prominently featured.

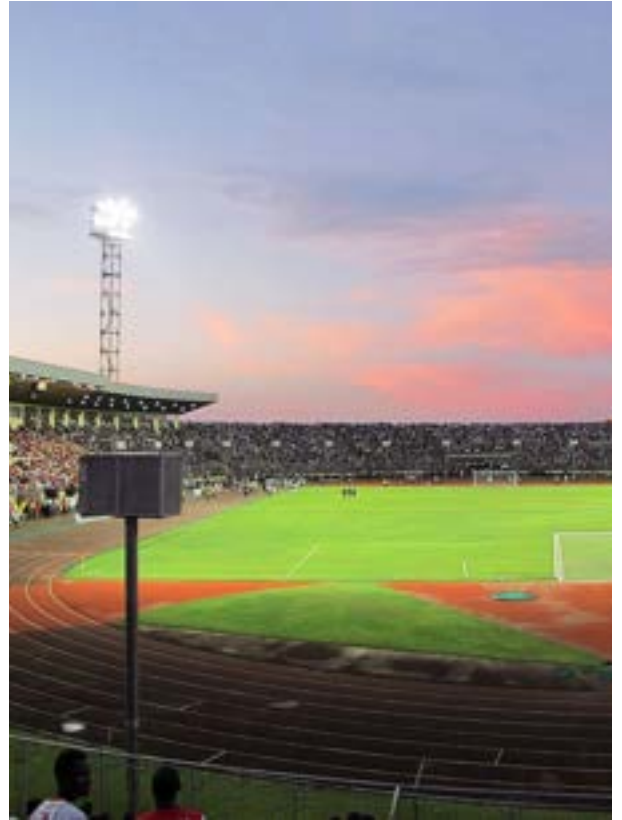
Furthermore, while women's football has seen growth, **disparities in funding and opportunities** persist at the national federation level. Ensuring equitable allocation of resources and consistent competitive platforms remains a challenge.

Across Africa, over 10,000 girls and women have participated in 36 competitions launched with Forward funding, demonstrating a growing commitment to inclusivity.

Looking Ahead: A Brighter Future for African Football?

Evaluations of the FIFA Forward Programme highlight its overall positive impact, with over USD 2.24 billion invested directly in member associations globally between 2016 and 2022. This has led to tangible outcomes like new pitches and competitions. In Africa, the USD 1.25 billion investment has contributed to both sporting and societal development.

The launch of FIFA Forward 3.0 (2023-2026) with an almost 30% increase in investment signals a continued commitment to African football. With each member association now eligible for up to USD 8 million over the four-year cycle, the potential for further progress is significant. A key focus of this new cycle is to contribute to FIFA's global goal of increasing female participation.



Liberia's Antoinette Tubman Stadium renovated with a Fifa Forward Grant.

The FIFA Forward Programme is undeniably a powerful catalyst for football development in Africa. Its substantial investments are yielding tangible results in crucial areas.

However, to fully unlock the continent's footballing potential, continued efforts are needed to ensure effective fund utilization, strengthen club structures, proactively address governance challenges, and guarantee equitable support for all levels of the game, particularly women's football.

As FIFA Forward 3.0 unfolds, the African football community will be watching closely to see how this ambitious programme continues to shape the future of the beautiful game on the continent.



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