THE ROYAL BELGIAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION: SCORING GOALS ON AND OFF THE PITCH[1]

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[1] This case was written by Charlotte Ferrara and Willem Standaert at HEC Liège, Belgium. Patrick Barbosa provided support in the development of the case. The case is intended to be used as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a management situation. The case was compiled from field research. Copyright © 2021 HEC Liège, Belgium. No part of this publication may be copied, stored, transmitted, reproduced or distributed in any form or medium whatsoever without the permission of the copyright owner.

In September 2020, the Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA) would launch their renewed 4-year "Football and Social Responsibility" strategy. In addition to managing the national football teams, the RBFA organized competitions for half a million football players of all ages across the country. On a rainy afternoon in August 2020, An De Kock and Hedeli Sassi, who coordinated the sustainability projects of the RBFA, met on Microsoft Teams, in keeping with the physical distancing measures related to the Corona pandemic. They met to prepare a presentation about the renewed strategy for the Belgian Red Devils and Red Flames, the male and female national teams.

Since 1986, the RBFA had spearheaded sustainability initiatives, following the mantra of Nelson Mandela: "Sport has the power to change the world." Since 2016, the RBFA organized their projects around 4 main themes and since 2019, it also aligned their projects with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[2]. While a survey revealed both internal and external stakeholders appreciated the prior efforts of the RBFA, which were mostly in terms of *Inclusion* and *Ethics*, it also indicated that more was expected in terms of the other two pillars: *Health & Well-being* and the *Environment*. Global events and movements in 2020 (e.g., Corona pandemic, climate and racial activism) had brought these topics high on the agenda.

The RBFA was on a high on the football pitch, as the Red Devils had been ranked first on the list of national football teams since September 2018. Now was the time to ramp up their sustainability efforts such that it would also be recognized as leading with "off the pitch" activities. They developed a strategy framework that combines four sustainability pillars, three levels of impact, and the UN SDGs. However, important questions remained: Would this structured approach help them to implement sustainability projects in an effective way? Was aligning with the SDGs going to help them to engage partners? Could the "Golden Generation" of football players become true sustainability champions? How could they help drive the world towards a sustainable future for everyone?

Who is the RBFA?

The Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA) was the governing body of Belgian football, recognized by the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) and the *Union of European Football Associations* (UEFA). It was founded in 1895 under the name "Union Belge des Sociétés de Sports Athlétiques" (UBSSA) and was a founding member of the FIFA (out of 7 countries in 1904) and of the UEFA (out of 31 countries in 1954). In 1920, recognized as a Royal Society, it became known as the "Union Royale Belge des Sociétés de Football Association" (URBSFA) in French or the "Koninklijke Belgische Voetbalbond" (KBVB) in Dutch. In 2019, just before their 125th anniversary, an English name was also adopted, in order to appeal to an international audience ("Royal Belgian Football Association") and the association also introduced a new visual identity and logo. The Association governed the Belgian football clubs and organized a range of national and provincial competitions. In 2020, the RBFA had almost 500,000 members in 3,824 football clubs (about 23,500 teams)[i].

The RBFA managed the official and friendly international matches of the Belgian national teams (known as the Belgian "Red Devils" and "Red Flames") in all the categories under the aegis of the FIFA and the UEFA. The most notable performances of the Belgian Red Devils

[2] The UN had established a sustainability framework with 17 goals for 2030 (see https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/).

were a 1st place at the Olympic Games in 1920, a 4th place at the FIFA World Cup in 1986, a 4th place at the Olympic Games in 2008 (under-23), and a 3rd place at the FIFA World Cup in 2018. The team was ranked number 1 of the FIFA world ranking since September 2018. The Red Devils played their home games in the King Baudouin Stadium, inaugurated in 1930. This stadium was also one of the host stadiums for the UEFA European Championship in 2000 ("Euro 2000"). In addition to regular outdoor 11-11 football, the RBFA also assembled national teams for indoor football, and beach football across different age groups, as well as eFootball (eSports). It was also involved in overseeing the rules and regulations and managed game refereeing.

In 2020, the RBFA employed 150 people in their Brussels headquarters and in their provincial offices[ii]. Of those 150 employees, 19 worked in the Marketing & Communications department, of which two focused on sustainability projects. In 2019, the RBFA founded a Knowledge Center with the aim of creating knowledge with and for the Belgian football community, through collaborations with knowledge institutes, such as colleges and universities. The RBFA had also opened the Belgian Football Centre in 2016, located in Tubize, a town 25 km outside the centre of Brussels. It was a training center for the national teams and referees, featuring 5 outdoor and 1 indoor playing fields and other training facilities. In 2021, the RBFA headquarters would also move to this Centre, which would be known as Proximus Basecamp.[3]

Sustainability at the RBFA

For the RBFA, football was more than just a game on the pitch. The RBFA also wanted to contribute socially by initiating sustainability projects. The RBFA's commitment to sustainability was highlighted by CEO Peter Bossaert: "*As the country's largest sports organization, we want to use our strengths to have a positive impact on sustainability issues. We also want to raise awareness among supporters about these topics through our strong communication channels[iii]."* Manu Leroy, Director of Marketing and Communication at the RBFA, added: *"Since two years we are the number one in the world on the pitch, we should also strive to be recognized as the leading association off the pitch."*

The Beginning

When participating in the FIFA World Cup in 1986 in Mexico, the members of the Belgian delegation took the initiative to help local orphans by launching a humanitarian aid action called "Acción Diablos rojos Casa Hogar".[iv] Thanks to this initiative, every year children were accommodated and educated in Belgium. The "Casa Hogar" project earned the UEFA Fair Play Award in 1992. This was considered the first sustainability initiative of the RBFA, but since a few years, the RBFA was no longer directly involved in this project.

In 2016, the RBFA established a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) department and a policy plan, with various objectives for the period 2016-2020. The RBFA's mission was to 'promote the values of respect, fair play, inclusion, health, sustainability and education in our society through football.' Michaël Schockaert, Marketing Manager at the RBFA who closely oversaw the CSR activities through weekly meetings, commented: *"We succeeded in our goal to have a transparent and structurally anchored CSR policy by 2020, which focuses on a number of relevant social issues and is aligned with the needs and questions of internal and*

[3] Proximus was one of the largest telecommunications operators in Belgium and a sponsor of the national teams since 25 years.

external stakeholders." Two full-time staff members, An De Kock and Hedeli Sassi were hired (respectively in 2016 and 2017) to specifically manage the CSR projects.

CSR Organization

The CSR strategy was aligned with the UEFA HatTrick programme.[4] Indeed, the UEFA called upon national associations and local clubs to take their responsibility in 'creating positive social impact through football' (UEFA, 2020)[v]. The "Football & Social Responsibility" strategy of the UEFA highlighted that social responsibility activities did not need to come at the expense of profit, but was rather about how revenues were generated[vi]. The UEFA worked with the 55 members (national associations) and external experts on strategic themes and implemented a four-year review cycle, which coincided with the organization of the European Championships[5]. As part of the HatTrick programme, the UEFA provided funds for CSR projects. Hedeli Sassi explained: *"We work very closely with the UEFA: we report our progress on a yearly basis and meet with them regularly to discuss and finetune next steps. In return, we received € 50,000 on a yearly basis in the 2016-2020 cycle to implement our sustainability projects. In addition, the UEFA provides a week-long program on sustainability subjects that we both participated in. They also provide a platform to exchange best practices with other football associations, both through online and offline events."* Until 2020, Gaston Schreurs, then a member of the RBFA Executive Committee, represented the RBFA's sustainability activities at the UEFA Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee.

At the start in 2016, the budget of the RBFA for sustainability activities was not much more than what they received from the UEFA. In 2020, the total budget had grown with public funding to about €400,000 (without salaries). Also, the €50,000 per year (for the 2016-2020 cycle) would increase to €100,000 per year in the new 2020-2024 cycle.

Moreover, the RBFA established structural partnerships in order to develop sustainable and effective CSR projects in the long term, including with Belgium's two regional football associations, referred to as the 'wings' of the RBFA ("Voetbal Vlaanderen" and "Association des Clubs Francophones de Football" (ACFF)) and with the Pro League.[6] At each of these associations, there was one person responsible for sustainability activities. At least once a month, a meeting was organized between the CSR representatives of the RBFA, Voetbal Vlaanderen, ACFF and the Pro League to discuss the progress of the diverse CSR projects and to identify potential new projects. An De Kock commented: *"We collaborate on several projects but each of us decides on specific actions for the respective association. The goal is to develop aligned policies and strive for synergies."* Over the years, the RBFA had also entered into multiple partnerships with social advisory organizations, public authorities and international umbrella associations such as Plan International Belgium and the Belgian Foundation against Cancer. Those partnerships helped them with relevant expertise and advice to implement sustainability projects.

In addition, the RBFA established an annual review process of the sustainability activities and presented progress in a public report as of 2017. Moreover, they strived to structurally anchor

[4] In football, a Hat-trick was a term used to denote one player scored 3 goals in one match. The UEFA's programme was named this way to refer to its three dimensions: financial support, education, and knowledge-sharing. In the 2016-2020 cycle, €610.5 million financial support was provided.
[5] Although the 2020 UEFA EURO was postponed to 2021 due to the Corona crisis, the cycle renewal was maintained.
[6] Founded in 1974, the Pro League was a Belgian non-profit association that organized the first division competition in Belgium among 18 professional football clubs.

CSR projects in their daily operations, De Kock explained: *"We relate sustainability to every project we develop, which often extends beyond the CSR department, to include Marketing, Facilities, Events, HR, Legal,... Moreover, we really want ideas for sustainability projects to come from anywhere in the organization, not just from us. We are there to empower and support employees. The goal is to do this together."*

There were no specific communication channels for the RBFA CSR activities, Sassi commented: *"We have weekly content meetings with communications, in which we suggest topics to communicate about and they make recommendations on what channel to use. Since our strategy links clearly with the overall RBFA strategy and the RBFA channels have a broad reach, it makes sense to use the main channels."*

4 Pillars

From 2016 until 2020, the CSR policy developed by the RBFA focused on four main pillars. For each one of them, they carried out several projects.

1. Inclusion;
2. Ethics;
3. Health & Well-being;
4. Environment.

In the annual CSR report, the RBFA presented the projects that were realized throughout the year, arranged by pillar (see Appendix 1 for a summary table). Each report provided an overview of the objectives, actions, and partners of the different projects. In the 2019 annual CSR report, the RBFA also indicated the UN SDGs each project contributed to.

Inclusion

For the RBFA, inclusive football meant "everyone, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, color, religion, health and background" should be able to "practice the sport in an open and safe environment[vii]." Different projects within this pillar had the objective to facilitate access to people who found it more difficult to practice football, such as "Nobody Offside" to include disabled people or "Everyone on the Field" for refugees and asylum seekers. De Kock commented: *"We started on this pillar early on in collaboration with the local associations. We helped to plant the seeds, but now they are taking ownership and come with initiatives of their own."* It was undeniable that the RBFA had focused heavily on inclusivity for the majority of their projects, Sassi commented on how it was the RBFA's responsibility to *"ban all forms of discrimination in football by working on four fronts: regulating, raising awareness, training and sanctioning*".

In 2020, the RBFA conducted a study with over 1,000 referees, together with a Belgian University, about discrimination. 45% of referees indicated that discrimination, based on racism, sexism, or homophobia had increased and one out of six referees had been the victim of homophobia. De Kock commented: *"These findings signal that we have an important role to play to educate our members, starting with the grassroots, but at the same time train our stewards about how to respond to verbal abuse. We want to completely ban hurtful chorus from our football fields."* The RBFA planned to take further steps, through the yearly "Football

for All" campaign and by hosting an international conference on LGBTQ+-acceptance in the world of football.

Ethics

The RBFA chose to work with organizations that focused on the promotion and protection of children's and human rights. Organizations such as Bednet and Take Off were helped by the association by putting them in the forefront and helping to raise awareness about the access to education for sick children. Eden Hazard, Captain of the Red Devils, commented: "*We look forward to working with the whole group to help all the children who are unable to go to school because of their illness. It is great that these organizations make sure that they can stay in touch with their classmates and teachers*[viii]*!"*

The theme of this second pillar had first been named 'Children and Human Rights'. After the first 4-years cycle, the CSR team decided to change it to 'Ethics'. De Kock commented: *"We had the feeling the label 'Children and Human Rights' had a lot of overlap with our other pillars. Our focus is now on safeguarding in football. Also, this label is aligned with the overall RBFA strategy, which includes a newly developed ethical code*[7]*."*

This pillar also was at the foundation for other projects focusing on the prevention of transgressive behavior in sports, such as racism, homophobia, but also physical, psychological and sexual violence. This pillar had the second highest number of related projects and the RBFA saw itself as an organization 'responsible for how thousands of children and adults in Belgium practice sports'. People (adults and children) had to be able to exercise and live in an environment that respected their rights, and this was promoted by the RBFA in Belgium and also in developing countries, such as in Benin (Africa). De Kock explained: *"Since 2016, the Red Flames are partners of Plan International Belgium to support women's football in Benin. This project was initiated to educate women and children about their rights via football. The Red Flames are ambassadors of the project so we use our games to promote the project. Together with some of the Red Flames, I went to Benin and it is really a heartwarming and impactful project."*

Health & Well-being

The RBFA also promoted an active and healthy lifestyle. Internally, Human Resources together with the CSR team had started working on a health and wellbeing policy for employees. Externally, the RBFA offered people active and healthy options by means of 2 important long-term projects: establishing a smoke-free stadium policy, and raising money for the Belgian Foundation against Cancer[8] through diverse activities. Sassi commented: *"All the Red Devil home games are played in a smoke free stadium. We are one of the first associations to implement this. We engage smoke free ambassadors during the games, if they see someone in the stadium smoking, they kindly ask them to stop."*

[7] The ethical code encompassed that all employees should follow the core values of the RBFA, including integrity, transparency, respect, and fair play. The principles included to treat everyone rightfully and fairly, to be neutral and avoid conflict, to embrace diversity, to protect privacy, and not tolerate bribery or match-fixing.
[8] For more information, see https://www.kanker.be/over-ons/onze-organisatie/geschiedenis.

Environment[9]

The ambition of the RBFA was to reduce their *"climate impact by focusing on actions relating to sustainable energy and water consumption, sustainable transport, sustainable purchasing policies and CO_2 reduction*[ix]*."* Environmental sustainability was already embedded at the Belgian Football Centre. For example, various types of waste (plastic – cardboard – residual waste) were sorted for recycling. All green waste was also sorted and composted to fertilize the grounds. Apart from this, eco-friendly sprays were used to maintain the football pitches and rainwater was reused. Also, six bee hives were present on the site[x]. In 2021, the RBFA was planning on moving their headquarters to the Centre, CEO Bossaert commented: *"The Proximus Basecamp will be a very sustainable site, featuring solar panels, a wind mill, and other sources of green electricity. In addition, we will have charging capacity for electric and hybrid cars. Everything is really thought through in line with environmental sustainability".*

In December 2018, 'Project Tackle' was provided with European Union's LIFE[10] funding. It aimed at measuring the environmental impact during the organization of national matches at the King Baudouin Stadium in order to limit the environmental burden as much as possible. The measurement was done during a home game in October 2019 and 3,110 kg of waste was recorded. Based on the initial measurement, an action plan was developed, together with the stadium owner (the City of Brussels) and partners of the RBFA (Coca Cola, AB Inbev, Bevers & Bevers).[11] Initiatives that were identified included the use of reusable cups, as well as focusing on green mobility by offering mobility alternatives to supporters. Sassi concluded: *"Awareness, waste, and mobility are the 3 priority topics we want to focus on for the environmental pillar."*

An important impulse for making the home games more environmentally sustainable was expected from constructing a new stadium. Even though a stadium manager had been hired to advance the plans, some factors had delayed the progress, such as the difficulty in establishing a federal government and budgetary constraints following the Corona crisis. It turned out, the RBFA would have to focus on renovating the existing stadium and infrastructure.

The 2020-2024 RBFA Sustainability Strategy

In September 2020, the RBFA would announce and start implementing a renewed 4-year strategy and focus for sustainability. Sassi commented on the rationale behind the new strategy: "*The previous UEFA HatTrick cycle came to an end, so what had to renew. We really took the opportunity to pause and think about what we did in the past and what we want to become in the future.*" The basis of their new sustainability strategy was aligned with four key dimensions of the overall RBFA strategy: Football first (long-term plan for the vision of Belgian football); A new positive culture with a clear set of values (Sportive, Integer, Inclusive, Team Player, Service-oriented); Adapted to the new reality (with amongst others a strong link to digitalization); and Commercial growth (in order to be able to reinvest in the future of football and create shared value).

[9] In the two first CSR reports (2017 & 2018), the 'Environment' pillar was named 'Sustainability'.
[10] LIFE was an abbreviation of the French "L'Instrument Financier pour l'Environnement)" and was the funding instrument to support environmental sustainability, established in 1992.
[11] Bevers & Bevers is one of the leading companies in the field of public catering in the Benelux region (https://www.beversbevers.be/over-ons).

The strategy renewal process started in the beginning of 2019, when the RBFA aligned their CSR policy with the UN SDGs 'to make a contribution with a significant impact, create a common language and goal, and be a role model within the sports sector[xi].' Indeed, the UN did not only invite governments and individuals to make a difference and join forces to achieve their SDGs, but also companies and organizations such as the RBFA. Therefore, in 2018, the UN had developed a toolkit for sports organizations helping them to contribute[12]. Sassi commented: *"For external people, our projects may seem very diverse and scattered, leading to low overall visibility. We changed our approach to have a bigger impact and we strongly believe that adopting the UN SDGs as a framework for our renewed strategy can help us to get there."*

This project was called 'Project 2030', referring to the year by which the SDGs should be met, and the project title was: 'Sport as a development tool: innovative methodology for encouraging policy actions with a view to organizational and system changes.' The project benefited from funds made available by the Flemish Foreign Affairs public authorities, which enabled the RBFA to engage consultancy agency Route 2030[13] for three years (2019-2021). De Kock explained: *"The starting point for linking our strategy to the SDGs was a meeting with Route 2030. They showed us we already did many things that could be aligned with the SDGs. Moreover, we noticed that more and more sponsors and governments were adopting the framework. It therefore felt as a very natural next step for us to do the alignment exercise as well. However, it was not a straightforward process, because the SDGs are very broad and we needed to translate that to 'football language' for our organization."*

The first phase of this project involved the settlement of an internal working group with colleagues from diverse departments, as they would be the ambassadors of the organization's new approach to sustainability. Sassi commented: *"We organized several internal workshops and our colleagues were eager to participate and engage."* In addition, an important initial step was to gather input through a big stakeholder consultation.

Stakeholder Consultation

It was of utmost importance that this new strategy policy was compatible with the expectations and requirements of internal and external stakeholders. It also had to provide a positive and measurable contribution to social challenges and include different well-defined substantive projects that would have a long-term impact. From May to September 2019, the RBFA conducted their first major stakeholder consultation in cooperation with Route 2030. A survey was developed and directed to a representative set of internal and external stakeholders (See Appendix 2 for the stakeholders involved in the survey) by asking them which SDGs they found to be a priority for the RBFA. They were also interested in finding out how their stakeholders were actually perceiving the RBFA's contribution to these goals.

The results of this survey led to a materiality matrix showing which SDGs and related topics the internal and external stakeholders of the RBFA evaluated as most important (see Exhibit 1).

[12] For more information, see https://www.sdgfund.org/un-presents-new-toolkit-action-how-sports-can-contribute-achieve-sdgs.
[13] A change management consultancy agency, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Flemish Government.

Additionally, the survey helped to indicate to what extent the stakeholders believed the RBFA had a positive impact on specific topics (see Appendix 3). Stakeholders were satisfied with the RBFA efforts related to the pillars of Inclusion and Health & Well-being. However, some areas where the RBFA needed to make extra efforts were identified, related to the Environmental Sustainability pillar. Sassi took this stakeholder feedback very seriously and expressed the ambition to: "*make our activities as climate-neutral and even climate-positive as possible, while continuing to invest heavily in inclusive football as this is part of our organization's DNA*[xii]*."* Based on the results, priorities were set for the RFBA's new strategy (see Exhibit 2).

From CSR to FSR

Based on these results, many internal (brainstorming) meetings ensued. On the one hand, the focus of the new strategy would be set on the priorities identified by the stakeholders. On the other hand, the new strategy would also focus on the areas where the RBFA needed to show more effort (see Appendix 3). A second stakeholder consultation would then be conducted in 2021 in order to assess the strategy's success. De Kock commented: *"A new consultation round may reveal how the perceptions of stakeholders have changed following the Corona crisis. It already seems that two important points from the materiality matrix (Climate & Poverty) will be even more important after the crisis. Inside the RBFA, some positive changes can also be noted already, as people will be able to continue working from home more than before. This does not only have a positive impact on the well-being of employees, but it also reduces our carbon footprint significantly."*

As football was and always had been their main focus, the RBFA decided to no longer refer to a *Corporate and Social Responsibility*, but rather to a *Football & Social Responsibility* (FSR) strategy. The association wanted to use football to create a sustainable and positive impact on society, by sharing and promoting their new values on and off the pitch. De Kock commented: *"The new strategy is inspired by and aligned with the UEFA. They have provided us with lots of material and knowledge, as well as giving us much positive feedback about our new strategic plan."*

In addition, across the four overarching social responsibility pillars (Inclusion, Ethics, Health & Well-being, and the Environment), the RBFA decided to introduce more structure by explicating three different levels of actions. First, it wanted to foster change within the association itself by motivating employees to change behavior aligned with the new policy. Second, it wanted to encourage a 'sustainable and social responsible organization of football events'. Third, it wanted to ensure a positive impact on Belgian society at large. De Kock commented: *"Our stakeholder consultation also revealed that we can have the largest impact with projects focusing on Belgium. If we can expand the projects beyond Belgium, that's great, but we should start from our key strengths locally."* In summary, the new strategy would combine the four main themes (pillars) with actions at three levels (inside the RBFA, in the competitions, and outside the RBFA) and at the same time indicated the UN SDGs they would contribute to (see Exhibit 3).

Finally, the new strategy would be even further embedded throughout the organization. For the projects under each pillar, responsible managers would be identified. This would be a combination of the coordinators (De Kock or Sassi) with employees in the different departments involved. For each project, detailed operational goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be listed and validated by the respective department director.

Moreover, there were further opportunities for collaborating in this area with current sponsors and partners, such as the National Lottery, Coca-Cola, or Proximus. Sassi commented: *"Presenting our new strategy can be a conversation starter. Once we start interacting with the CSR managers of our sponsors and partners, we can identify opportunities for collaboration."*

An Ambitious Sustainability Future for the RBFA

With their new FSR policy taking shape, the RBFA was preparing for a future where (sport) organizations were increasingly expected to actively participate in society to help build a brighter and more sustainable future for everyone. In Summer 2020, right before their 125th anniversary on September 1st, many factors were coming together for the RBFA: their prior CSR strategy was coming to an end, the UEFA and other national associations were developing ambitious sustainability goals, the RBFA had obtained important insights from their stakeholder consultation, and they wanted to focus on the pressing societal needs that had recently come to the foreground. Moreover, the Red Devils were one of the teams tipped to win the postponed European Championship in 2021. De Kock and Sassi agreed the time was right for the RBFA to live up to the challenge expressed by Director Leroy: becoming a leading national football association, also off the pitch.

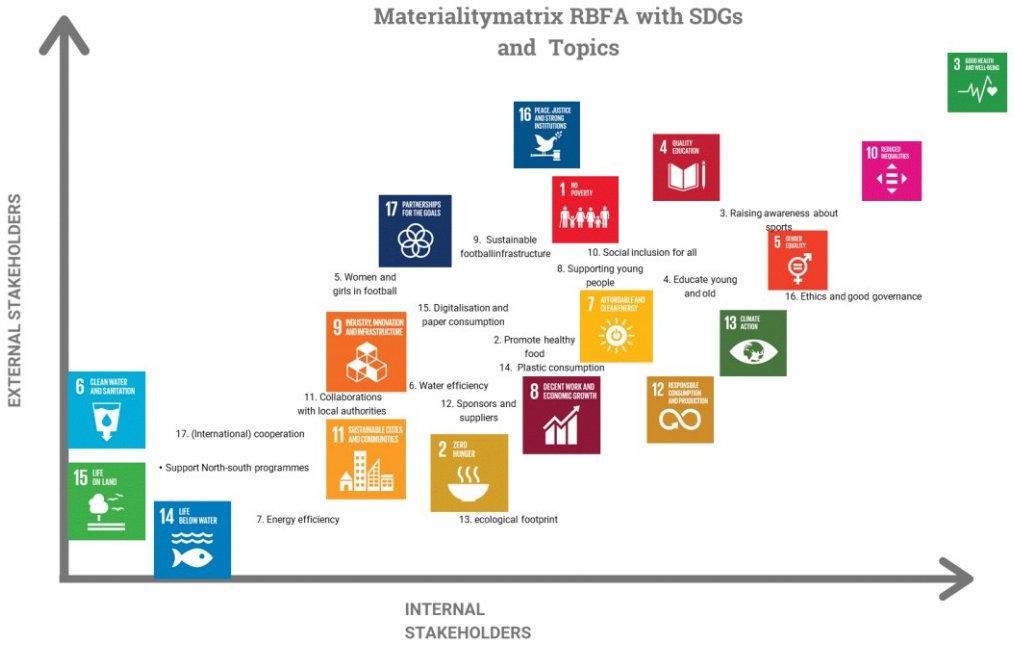
De Kock commented: *"A first big effort to meet this challenge was to refine our strategy, streamline our sustainability projects and our communication around them".* Sassi added: *"This is not a one-off exercise, we need to continuously monitor our progress and update our approach where needed, all the while ensuring our colleagues take ownership of this domain in their day-to-day jobs."*

The new strategy framework had been established. It combined the four main sustainability pillars with three levels of action (internal, football competitions, and broader society) and was aligned with the UN SDGs. However, key decisions remained about what areas of sustainability to prioritize, how to turn goals into action, and how to engage the public at large.

Exhibit 1 – Materiality matrix

Horizontal axis: the topics and SDGs that are a priority for internal stakeholders.

Vertical axis: the topics and SDGs that are a priority for external stakeholders.



Source: RBFA Sustainability report 2019.

Exhibit 2 – Priorities for the RBFA in line with the SDGs

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG)	RBFA topic
3	Raising awareness about sports, non-smoking football, alcohol consumption, stress and the pressure to achieve.
4	Educating the young and old about human rights, gender equality, fair play and diversity.
5	Ensuring full participation and equal representation of women and girls in football.
8	Supporting young people in getting a basic education and avoiding early drop-out through e.g. Bednet & Take Off, homework support, cooperation with top sports schools, etc.
10	Enabling and promoting social inclusion for all through initiatives such as Iedereen op het veld (Everybody on the Pitch), Niemand Buitenspel (Nobody's Offside), Younited Belgium, etc.
13	Internal and external awareness-raising about the ecological footprint and incentives (Play Green, bicycle compensation scheme, etc.)
14	Raising awareness about plastic consumption among clubs, fans and employees.
16	Integrating ethics and good governance into the DNA of the RBFA and aspiring after full transparency and public oversight.

Source: RBFA Sustainability report 2019.

Exhibit 3 – Framework for the new strategy



Source: Company materials

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Sustainability projects carried out by the RBFA from 2017 until 2019

N°	Pillar	2017	2018	2019
1	**Inclusion**	**Project 1: UEFA HatTrick Nobody Offside**. Include people with disabilities. **Project 2: Heroes of Football**. Include LGBT+ people. **Project 3: Everybody on the Pitch** Include refugees and asylum seekers. **Project 4: Belgian Homeless Cup** Include homeless people. **Project 5: Social One-Stop-Shop.** Hand out free tickets to organizations working with disadvantaged groups (e.g., Make a Wish).	**Project 1: UEFA HatTrick Nobody Offside**. Include people with disabilities. **Project 2: Everybody on the Pitch**. Include refugees and asylum seekers. **Project 3**: **Tackling Discrimination in Football**. Security Officers. **Project 4: Belgian Homeless Cup**. Include homeless people. **Project 5: Working Group Diversity in Football**. Tackle discrimination and stimulate diversity. **Project 6: Conference on Football & Diversity**. Each association presented one project. **Project76: Social One-Stop-Shop.** Hand out free tickets to organizations working with disadvantaged groups.	**Project 1: Nobody Offside**. Include people with disabilities. **Project 2: Everybody on the Pitch**. Include refugees and asylum seekers **Project 3**: **Tackling Discrimination in Football**. Referees, Security Officers. **Project 4: Belgian Homeless Cup**. Include homeless people. **Project 5: Erasmus + Project Out!** Fight against homophobia and support LGBTQ+ stakeholders in football. **Project 6: Social One-Stop-Shop.** Hand out free tickets to organizations working with disadvantaged groups.
2	**Ethics**	**Project 1: Partnership with "Pleegzorg/Familles d'Accueil"** Protect children's rights. **Project 2: Partnership with "Plan International Belgique"** Protect women's right to do sports and have a say. **Project 3: Tackling Transgressive Behavior** Racism, homophobia.	**Project 1: Partnership Bednet and Take Off**. Help sick children get back to school. **Project 2: Partnership "Plan International Belgium"**. Improve girls' and women's rights. Project in Benin with the woman football team Red Flames. **Project 3: Tackling Transgressive Behavior**. Racism, homophobia, physical violence, psychological violence, and sexual violence.	**Project 1: Partnership Bednet and Take Off**. Help sick children get back to school. **Project 2: Partnership "Plan International Belgium"**. Improve girls' and women's rights. Project in Benin with the woman football team Red Flames. **Project 3: Tackling Transgressive Behavior**. Sexual abuse, bullying, etc.
3	**Health & Well-being**	**Project 1: Relais pour la Vie** The staff and supporters of the RBFA took part. **Project 2: Foundation Against Cancer**. Contribute to scientific research against cancer and promote a healthy lifestyle.	**Project 1: Smoke-free Stadium**. During matches played by national teams. **Project 2: Foundation Against Cancer**. Contribute to scientific research against cancer and promote a healthy lifestyle.	**Project 1: Smoke-free Stadium**. During matches played by national teams. **Project 2: Foundation Against Cancer**. Contribute to scientific research against cancer and promote a healthy lifestyle.
4	**Environment**			**Project 1: Project Tackle**. Measure the environmental impact of football events. **Project 2: Project 2030**. Adjust the CSR policy of the RBFA to the SDGs. **Project 3: Recycling & Mobility During Matches of National Teams**. Measure the environmental impact of football events.

Source: Created by the case authors, based on company materials

Appendix 2 - Stakeholder overview (SDGs survey)

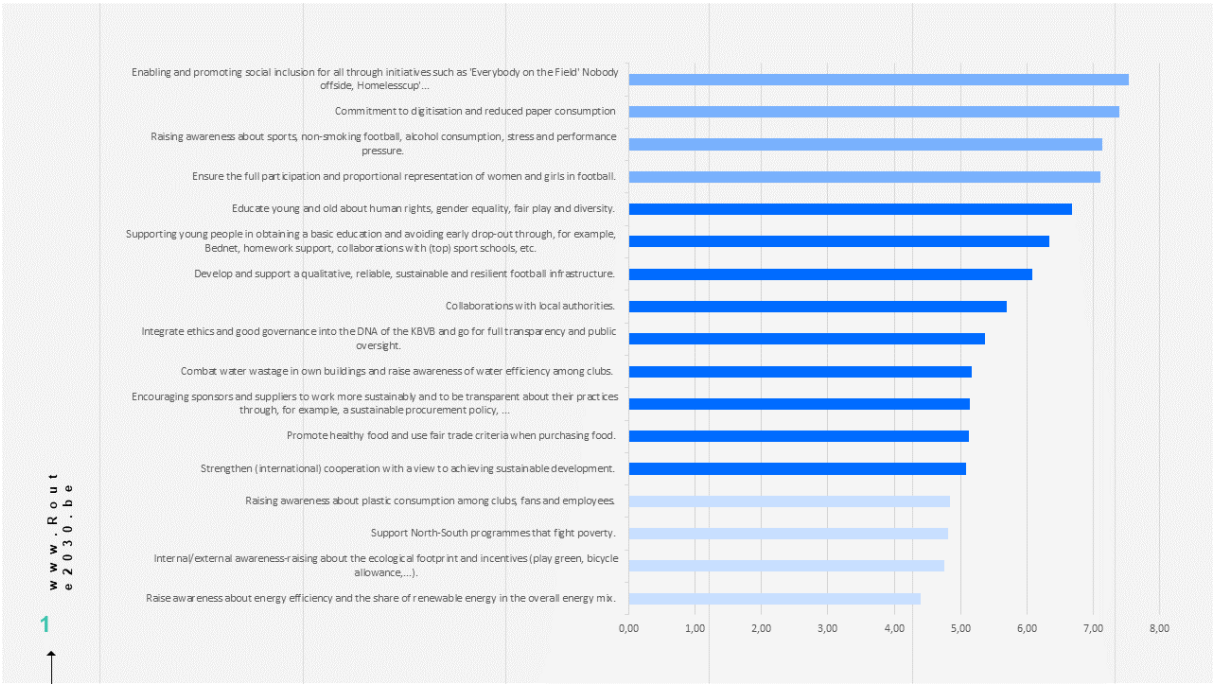
Internal stakeholders	• RBFA employee • Members of the board/high council • Employee of Voetbal Vlaanderen, ACFF or Pro league
External stakeholders	• Employee of the UEFA, FIFA or any other federation • Member or player • Sponsor • Club • Fan or fanclub • Referee • Steward/volunteer • Government • Media • Social partner • Other

Source: RBFA, 2019 Annual Corporate Social Responsibility report.

Appendix 3: RBFA impact through actions

0: negative impact

8: positive impact



Source: RBFA, 2019 Annual Corporate Social Responsibility report.

[i] RBFA. (2020). Welcome brochure for new staff.
[ii] RBFA. (2020). https://www.rbfa.be
[iii] RBFA, 2019 Annual Corporate Social Responsibility report.
[iv] https://www.casahogar.be/nl/wie-zijn-we
[v] UEFA. (2020). Football and Social Responsibility. https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/social-responsibility/overview/
[vi] UEFA. (2020). Football and Social Responsibility. https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/social-responsibility/overview/
[vii] RBFA, 2017 Annual Corporate Social Responsibility report.
[viii] RBFA, 2019 Annual Corporate Social Responsibility report.
[ix] RBFA, 2019 Annual Corporate Social Responsibility report.
[x] RBFA, 2018 Annual Corporate Social Responsibility report.
[xi] RBFA, 2018 Annual Corporate Social Responsibility report.
[xii] RBFA, 2019 Annual Corporate Social Responsibility report.