

**RESPONSIBALL**

## **RESPONSIBALL Ranking 2017**

**The Seventh Annual Social  
Responsibility Ranking of International  
Football Leagues**

**September 2017**

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## Charts and Illustrations

A. Schwery

|    |      |                 |  |   |   |
|----|------|-----------------|--|---|---|
| 1  | (2)  | Denmark         |  Superliga      |    |    |
| 2  | (3)  | England         |  Premier League |    |    |
| 3  | (5)  | Germany         |  Bundesliga     |    |    |
| 4  | (7)  | Scotland        | Premiership  |    |    |
| 5  | (11) | USA             | MLS  |    |    |
| 6  | (6)  | Spain           | La Liga  |    |    |
| 7  | (1)  | Netherlands     | Eredivisie   |    |    |
| 8  | (-)  | Japan           | J-League   |    |   |
| 9  | (-)  | Brazil          | Série A  |    |   |
| 10 | (13) | Austria         | Bundesliga   |   |   |
| 11 | (9)  | France          | Ligue 1  |  |  |
| 12 | (8)  | Switzerland     | Super League   |  |  |
| 13 | (10) | Italy           | Serie A  |  |  |
| 14 | (-)  | Poland          | Ekstraklasa  |  |   |
| 15 | (12) | Portugal        | Primeira Liga  |  |  |
| 16 | (4)  | Sweden          | Allsvenskan  |  |  |
| 17 | (17) | Rep. of Ireland | Premier Division   |  |  |
| 18 | (14) | Australia       | A-League   |  |  |
| 19 | (16) | Russia          | Premier League   |  |  |
| 20 | (18) | Ukraine         | Premier League   |  |  |
| 21 | (-)  | Croatia         | First Football League  |  |   |
| 22 | (-)  | Turkey          | Süper Lig  |  |   |
| 23 | (-)  | Czech Republic  | First League   |  |   |
| 24 | (15) | Greece          | Superleague  |  |  |
| 25 | (-)  | India           | Super League   |  |   |

# The Ranking

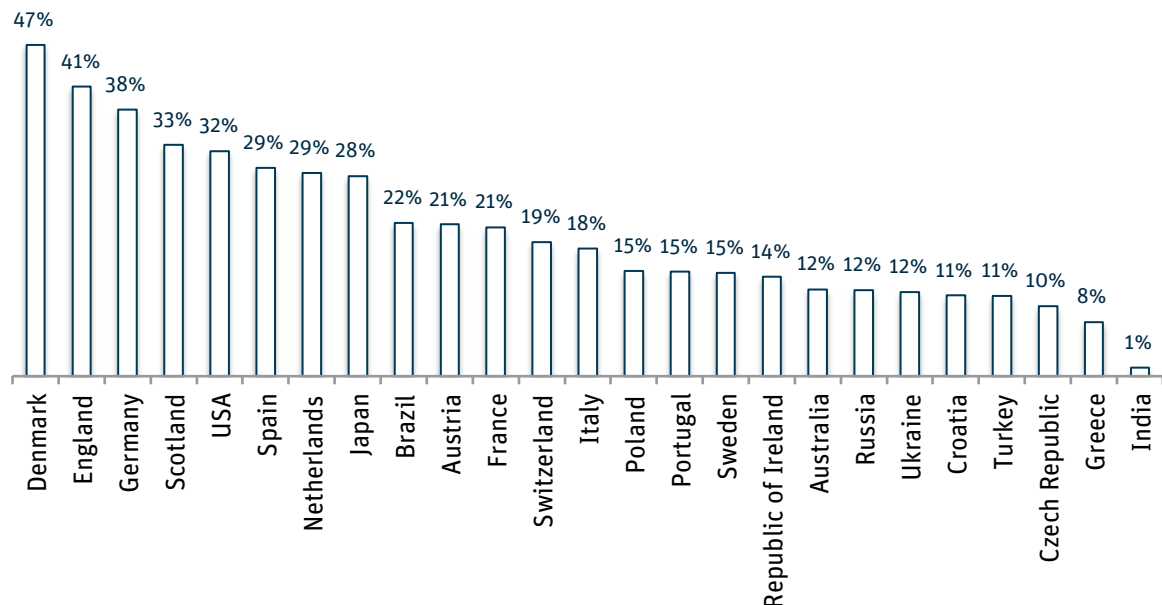
Welcome to the 7<sup>th</sup> annual RESPONSIBALL Ranking. This report details our research into the commitment of top-level football clubs to social responsibility through the 16-17 season.

This assessment of football clubs' commitment to social responsibility has been evaluated through the clubs' transparent communication of initiatives across three main pillars: Governance, Community, and Environment.

Building off of the 2016 Ranking, we have added seven leagues to this year's research, with a total of 25 leagues spanning five continents. While the majority of these leagues are in Europe, both South America and Asia entered the Ranking this year with the inclusion of the Brazilian Série A (a re-entry from 2015), the Japanese J-League, and the Indian Super League.

The ultimate purpose of the Ranking is to raise awareness and demonstrate the level of social responsibility in elite level professional football.

## Average Social Responsibility Scores by League



## **A change in the leaderboard**

The 2017 Ranking saw a reshuffling of the RESPONSIBALL leaderboard. The Danish Superliga reclaimed their 2014 position at the top of the list as, once again, they drew upon a history of high adherence to governance standards, along with a strong commitment to community-based initiatives.

The Netherlands, an overwhelming leader in 2015 and 2016, was surpassed this year by ever-rising league scores in England, Scotland, Germany, and the United States, whose Major League Soccer went up almost ten percentage points from last year (from 22% to 32%). Another notable decline from last year's Ranking is Sweden.

## **Newcomers**

This year saw the addition of seven more leagues than last year's Ranking, some having been in previous additions, others making their first appearance. Japan started off its campaign well, while Brazil jumped back in at a good position – both earning the respective eighth and ninth positions on the overall Ranking. The Japanese J-League proved especially strong in the Environmental category, coming in the third position (21%) behind Germany (28%) and the United States (22%). With new aggressive environmental policies and the upcoming Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, the future of Japan's football may very well be green.

## **Moving on up**

The United States and Scotland had a successful year in the rankings. Both not only moved up in their overall position (USA from 11 to five; Scotland from seven to four), but also in their overall percentages (USA up 10%; Scotland up 4%). Both also ranked in the top ten in Community and Governance, and Major League Soccer ranked second in the Environmental category.

With both leagues increasing their commitments to social responsibility, it is unsurprising that they have increased their positions from last year. Major League Soccer, which adds new clubs every few years, has seen an increase in popularity to match its growth. New football-specific stadiums are being built throughout the United States, offering planners fresh opportunities to get it right.

## **Good practices**

One of the main goals of RESPONSIBALL is to seek out, share and showcase good practices in social responsibility at football clubs, and this year's Ranking has provided us with ample opportunity to do just that.

As the researchers work through club websites, they note down the links to pages that show information relating to specific indicators (more on this in the Methodology).

From elite footballers partaking in AC Milan’s ‘Sport for Values’ community project and Chelsea’s partnership with PLAN International as a means to reach out to children, especially those in vulnerable situations; to a strong commitment to the needs of and accessibility for disabled supporters at Wolfsberger AC; to FC Thun’s youth and refugee integration and inclusion program; and to the environmental cleanup programs on the Mediterranean at Greece’s Olympiacos; the Ranking is full of good practices that may act as examples for other clubs to emulate and develop.

Once again, the report features a Good Practices section, which showcases one initiative from each league. This section not only aims to highlight clubs’ unique social responsibility approaches and initiatives, but also emphasize the value of communicating those practices. Don’t miss these and more good practices on the [RESPONSIBALL website](#).

### A slight dip, but Community remains on top

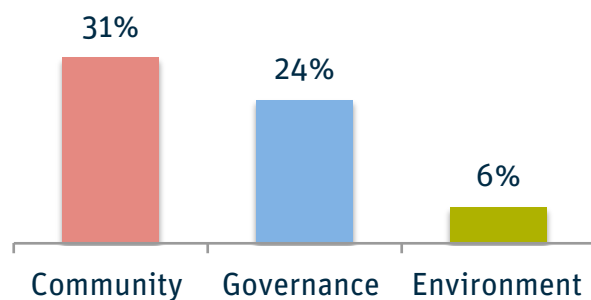
The average score across all clubs included in the 2017 Ranking is 21%, down from 26% last year. Though there were declines in individual league scores, the addition of seven more leagues than last year’s Ranking meant greater saturation of the averages.

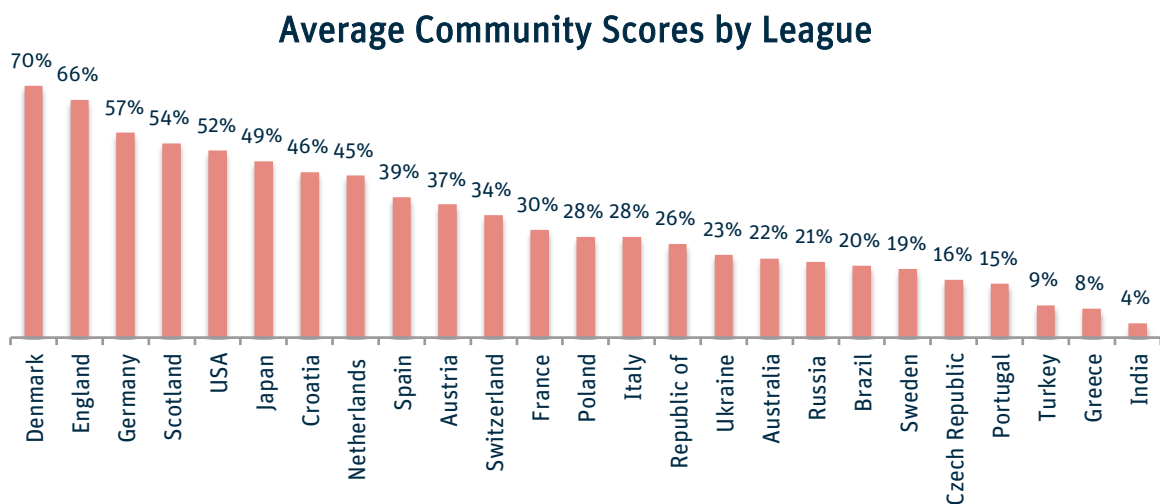
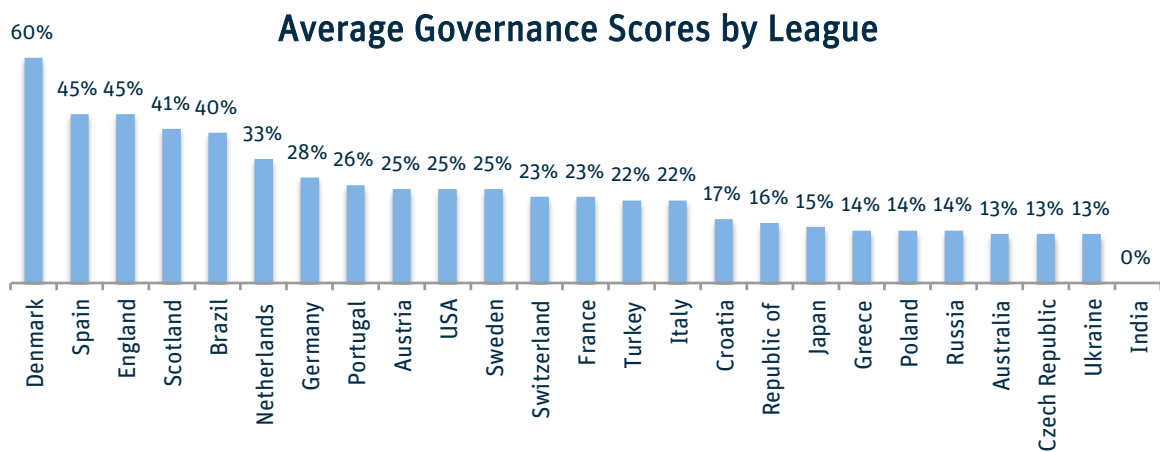
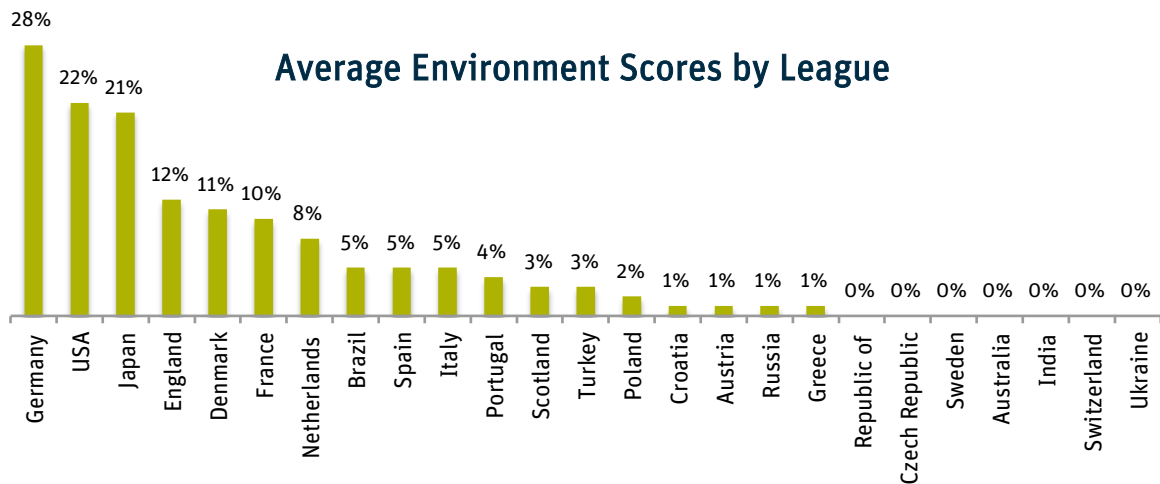
There was only a slight decrease in the **Environment** average score (down to 6% from 8%). Ranking newcomer Japan added to the environmental good practices we have seen over the years, with club Omiya Ardija’s commitment to [energy efficiency and waste reduction](#).

**Governance** has also decreased from last year, dropping from 33% to 24%. Despite the decline, examples of good governance continued to show up during the research. Irish club Cork City FC’s [supporter-owned society](#) puts the game back into the hands of the people of Cork. Ireland has several “co-op” clubs, or clubs owned by a supporters’ trusts, which has given many failing clubs a chance at revival. Republic of Ireland was one of the leagues to see a rise in its overall social responsibility score, up from last year’s 12% to 14%.

Once again, though, the clubs proved their commitment to **Community** initiatives, with highs of 70% adherence from Denmark and 66% in the English Premier League. Community efforts have historically been the easiest to implement in a club’s social responsibility strategy, thus forming the cornerstone of their entire social responsibility policy. For a seventh year, Community is the pillar with the highest score, though it has declined from 2016’s 38% to 31%.

### Average Scores by Pillar





# Good Practices

## **Australian A-League** — Adelaide United

Adelaide United has created a community program dedicated to bringing football to Adelaide and the surrounding community. The program works in youth programs and schools, promoting healthy food and active lifestyle choices. Adelaide United also has programs in place to encourage multi-cultural understanding with the refugee and indigenous communities.

<http://www.adelaideunited.com.au/community/community-programs/yzwy7tzo08r513qawjt30gbu9>

## **Austrian Bundesliga** — Wolfsberger AC

Wolfsberger AC provides the contact information for a Disability Access Officer on the club website. In order to ensure easy access, the Disability Access Officer is responsible for all things pertaining to people with disabilities attending Wolfsberger matches. This includes reserving tickets, receiving supporters at the appropriate entrance, accompanying supporters to their seats, and being available to answer questions or provide support during home matches.

<http://rzpelletswac.at/verein/barrierefrei>

## **Brazilian Série A** — SC Corinthians Paulista

Corinthians, known as “the People’s Team,” created a social responsibility department, which has been responsible for the implementation of a variety of projects focused on reaching out to and engaging those within the Sao Paulo community who are considered most vulnerable or at risk. With projects focused on youth, Corinthians uses football, as well as boxing, art, music, and other activities to reach the chosen demographic.

<https://www.corinthians.com.br/clube/responsabilidade>

## **Croatian First Football League** — HNK Rijeka

HNK Rijeka provides a link to its annual strategic report. In the comprehensive report, the club shares their plan and results of sustainable initiatives, including maintaining the training grounds and fields, information on accessibility for those with disabilities, and creating youth programs in the community.

<http://www.nk-rijeka.hr/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/HNK-RIJEKA-REZULTATI-POSLOVANJA-I-STRATESKI-PLAN.pdf>



### **Czech Republic First League** — FC Zbrojovka Brno

FC Zbrojovka Brno participates in the ‘Innovations in the field of Regeneration and Nutrition in Sport’ project, which has been funded by the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic.

<http://fczbrno.cz/zobraz.asp?t=partneri-spolupracujeme>

### **Danish Superliga** — AaB Fodbold

AaB’s Supporter Club has created a carpooling system to away games for all interested fans. The club encourages supporters to sign up for a bus to all away games. The goal of this initiative is to decrease emissions from cars while providing a safe and efficient way to get supporters to matches.

<https://aabsport.dk/nyhedsarkiv/stoet-aab-i-odense-loerdag>

### **Dutch Eredivisie** — AFC Ajax

Ajax produces annual financial reports, which are uploaded to its website along with other pertinent reports. In the financial reports, the club documents where the money goes, including television contracts, merchandising costs, and yearly earnings from different sectors.

<http://www.ajax.nl/de-club/organisatie/de-vennootschap/cijfers-en-verslagen.htm>

### **English Premier League** — Chelsea FC

Chelsea partnered with charity PLAN International in 2015, and since then, they have kept a commitment to supporting and transforming children’s lives through football. The commitment is both to the local community, as well as to children in vulnerable situations in different areas around the globe. Chelsea footballers from both the men’s and women’s first teams have committed to the effort, by visibly supporting the efforts of the partnership.

<http://www.chelseafc.com/news/latest-news/2016/06/going-to-plan.html>

### **French Ligue 1** — Olympique Lyonnais

Olympique Lyonnais’s Foundation is the platform which OL male and female players, staff, supporters, and partners may carry out their commitment to the values of respect and solidarity in a material way. Some of the Foundation’s key projects focus on integration, education, and non-professional support through sport.

<http://www.olweb.fr/en/team/ol-foundation-ol-and-ethics-179.html>

### **German Bundesliga** – Borussia Mönchengladbach

Borussia Mönchengladbach has worked very closely on developing their water management strategy and implementation. They use well water from the ground, rather than available drinking water, for their fields and training ground. By using water from the ground, they have not only mitigated the use of valuable drinking water but also cut the costs of bringing in water from other sources.

<https://www.borussia.de/de/verein-stadion/verein/nachhaltigkeit/ressourcen-schonen.html>

### **Greek Super League** – Olympiacos

Olympiacos has made a commitment to protecting and preserving the environment around them. They host regular beach cleanups with leading figures from a range of sports, making games out of the cleaning to encourage young people and children to participate.

<http://www.olympiacos.org/article/57261/o-thrylos-dinei-paradeigma-katharizei-ti-mesogeio>

### **Indian Super League** – FC Goa

Launching their grassroots and youth development program in February 2015, FC Goa has already reached out to over 20,000 children, coaching and mentoring over 1,500 from 16 schools. The club hopes to build a larger pool of teams and players so that children will have greater opportunity to develop and grow through football.

<http://www.fcgoa.in/grassroots>

### **Italian Serie A** – A.C. Milan

A.C. Milan and the Fondazione Milan, which was established in 2003, have created a project titled ‘Sport for Values.’ This project is aimed at working with youth to promote sport both as a physically rewarding activity, as well as one rife with social benefits. The club encourages players to visit schools, local associations, and amateur sports clubs to share their values and experiences with young people.

<http://www.fondazionemilan.org/en/projects/sport-for-values---meeting-professional-athletes>

### **Japanese J-League** – Omiya Ardija

Omiya Ardija, which retains a close tie with nature through its squirrel emblem, has made a strong commitment to the environment. The club pledges to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and has been awarded the Certificate of Green Electricity (PV-Green) for its work in promoting the use of renewable energy sources. The club also has ‘zero garbage’ days, waste reduction policies, and regulatory learning environmental workshops as part of its overall environmental strategy.

<https://www.ardija.co.jp/club/eco.html>

### **Polish Ekstraklasa** — Lech Poznan

Lech Poznan has made a commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles for children. The club hosts an annual event at which participants may receive free diet, medical, or exercise consultations. The club encourages different activities to keep children moving, with first team players traveling to communities to host training sessions. The club specifically promotes winter activities, noting the tendency to remain indoors and inactive during that time.

<http://www.lechpoznan.pl/co-robimy,71.html>

### **Portuguese Primeira Liga** — F.C. Porto

In 2006, F.C. Porto's Estádio do Dragão achieved the Quality and Environment certification in accordance ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. From decreasing waste, reducing energy consumption, and controlling emissions to raising awareness for overall environmental concerns, F.C. Porto continues to make an effort to develop new and improve upon existing practices that make the stadium more environmentally friendly.

[http://www.fcporto.pt/pt/clube/grupo-fc-porto/Pages/sustentabilidade-intro.aspx#ancora\\_topo](http://www.fcporto.pt/pt/clube/grupo-fc-porto/Pages/sustentabilidade-intro.aspx#ancora_topo)

### **Republic of Ireland Premier Division** — Cork City FC

Cork City is owned and operated by the Friends of the Rebel Army Society, a trust to which supporters may purchase a share. The members of the trust annually elect a Board of Management, which is responsible for the daily operation of the club. All trustees over the age of 16 have voting rights on all aspects of the organization's business.

[http://www.corkcityfc.ie/home/club-info\\_\\_trashed/foras/what-is-foras/](http://www.corkcityfc.ie/home/club-info__trashed/foras/what-is-foras/)

### **Russian Premier League** — FC Krasnodar

The club provides clear information for supporters with disabilities to access the stadium and watch the matches, including means to attend the stadium by public transportation. The details include number of parking spaces, contact phone number, and discounted ticket information.

<https://fckrasnodar.ru/en/fan/disabled/>

### **Scottish Premiership** — Rangers FC

Scotland's Rangers FC's recruitment page specifically raises the issues of "Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults". The clause acknowledges the club's responsibility to safeguard those children and adults who are using the club's facilities or in some way under the care of the club. The club retains the right to obtain a Protect of Vulnerable Groups check on anyone going through the recruitment process.

<https://rangers.co.uk/club/recruitment-2/>

### **Spanish La Liga** — Reial Club Deportiu Espanyol de Barcelona

Spanish club RCD Espanyol publishes a seasonal sustainability report, in which it shares the community activities of the year, the environmental methods in place to reduce the club's footprint, and the governance and club information. The publication also includes information on the club's female team.

[https://www.rcdespanyol.com/pdf/RCDE\\_Memoria\\_Sostenibilidad\\_2015-2016\\_cast.pdf](https://www.rcdespanyol.com/pdf/RCDE_Memoria_Sostenibilidad_2015-2016_cast.pdf)

### **Swedish Allsvenskan** — IF Djurgården

IF Djurgården is one of several clubs to employ a Supporter Liaison Officer (SLO), though Djurgården has taken it a step further by adding four game-day SLOs to improve the overall football experience for fans. The SLOs' role as the first point of contact for supporters allows them to better build relationships and work with fans, coordinate with security personnel, and work with SLOs from other clubs to ensure safe and positive experiences for supporters.

<http://dif.se/slo/>

### **Swiss Super League** — FC Thun

FC Thun has created programs focused on integration and inclusion. Since 2013, the club has invited children with mental disabilities to the Stockhorn Arena for special training sessions. One of the key projects the club has worked on since February 2016 provides special training sessions for refugees, unaccompanied children, and young people who have lost their parents as a way to integrate into the FC Thun community and find respite in football.

<http://www.fcthun.ch/de/Engagement>

### **Turkish Süper Lig** — Gençlerbirli i

Gençlerbirli i's football school is part of the club's overall scheme. The school's goal is to strengthen the psychological development of youth while encouraging them to play and enjoy football. The club and school believe that children should not be nervous about making mistakes, but willing to take risks and develop confidence through the sport.

<http://www.genclerbirligi.org.tr/spor-okullari/futbol/>

### **Ukrainian Premier League** — FC Olympik Donetsk

Olympik has provided rules and regulations that all fans visiting the stadium must adhere to. This includes the prohibition of any and all propaganda, songs, chants, etc. that are racist, political, or discriminatory in any way. The club also has a strict alcohol policy prohibiting the use of materials which may prove harmful to those in the stands or on the field.

[http://olimpik.com.ua/olimpik\\_sc/rules](http://olimpik.com.ua/olimpik_sc/rules)

### **USA Major League Soccer – Houston Dynamo**

The Houston Dynamo's BBVA Compass Stadium achieved the LEED® Silver classification upon construction in 2012. The stadium promotes green initiatives through the implementation of waste management programs, energy efficient equipment, and water-saving practices. Prizes are given to fans who are "caught recycling" and events, such as Earth Day, are promoted for greater fan involvement. BBVA Compass Stadium is also a recognized member of the Green Sports Alliance.

<http://www.bbvacompassstadium.com/stadium-information/environmental-sustainability>

# Methodology

## Data Sources

We have included 25 top-tier national leagues in our ranking. The Ranking is based on the analysis of information that football clubs communicate on their websites. This reflects a philosophy that good practices in social responsibility should be transparently communicated and shared by football clubs.

## Analysis

The analysis covered three main social responsibility pillars which are highlighted throughout the research: Governance, Community, and Environment. It involved the evaluation of over 50 pre-defined social responsibility indicators, which were created by adapting guidelines from widely recognised social responsibility standards, including GRI G4 and ISO 20121.

## Review of indicators

Three internal stages and two external stages (direct feedback from partners and a public survey) made up a review to re-define the indicators in 2014. The objective of the review was to ensure that the indicators we use are current – up to date with international standards – and relevant to football. It was also crucial that they met three important principles: 1) Applicable to all football clubs; 2) Reasonably expected to be found on the website of the football club; and 3) Relevant to making a positive and sustainable impact on communities.

## Results

Leagues were ranked across four main areas: the three social responsibility pillars, and one overall social responsibility ranking. The latter comes from taking the average score of the three pillars combined. Rankings are attained by calculating the average score for each club across the three pillars (weighted equally), and then combining these scores to find the average score for all clubs in each league.

## Limitations

The limitations to our methodology are as follows:

- 1) The indicators we use are not standards. We do not set required standards for social responsibility at football clubs.
- 2) These indicators have been used because they are non-specific. They were chosen because they should apply to all clubs. Clubs must implement their social responsibility strategy according to the needs of their stakeholders.
- 3) We check the information that is available on websites, as we believe that transparent communication is an essential facet of social responsibility. A more thorough check would involve a physical audit of the club but, due to the extent of such a task, this is not possible.

# About RESPONSIBALL

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RESPONSIBALL is the first point of reference for responsible football clubs. It supports the progress of social responsibility at all football clubs.

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An initiative funded by the work of Schwery Consulting, RESPONSIBALL provides an online platform for a community of practitioners within the football sector to act in unison; thus promoting and maintaining high standards of meaningful social responsibility.

RESPONSIBALL has two key goals at the heart of its mission:

- To showcase good practices in governance, community development, and environmental stewardship; and
- To support a community of practitioners who want to **connect** with others, **share** good practices, **compare** and progress.

## Connect

RESPONSIBALL supports a community of people who want to connect with others that share similar passions, interests, and jobs - all of whom understand, or want to learn more, about the how football clubs can work in harmony with their communities and the environment.

## Share

RESPONSIBALL is built to house a community that can exchange knowledge and insights. It holds a Good Practice database that allows members to easily upload and share good practices that may be useful or interesting for others.

## Compare

RESPONSIBALL allows practitioners to compare club practices with others' according to our three main pillars and a corresponding sub-set of topics, ultimately encouraging them to progress along their own path toward a more socially responsible future.

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