BLGARIAN CRICKET FEDERATION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028

INTRODUCTION

Bulgaria does not have a long history in the sport of cricket, nor does it have traditions in its development. Moreover, until the year 2000, this sport was not part of the country's sports system. Between 2000 and 2001, the first cricket clubs were established, and in 2002, the Bulgarian Cricket Federation was founded. Since 2003, Bulgaria has hosted an annual national championship, as well as outdoor and indoor tournaments, and the development of youth cricket began, primarily promoted in schools among children aged 10-15. Since 2010, a National Women's Championship, both outdoor and indoor, has also been held.
In 2008, Bulgaria was accepted as an associate member of the ICC (International Cricket Council), and in 2024, the Bulgarian Cricket Federation became a full member of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee.

Globally, the development of cricket as a sport has undergone significant positive changes. The IOC's (International Olympic Committee) requirement for equality and the development of sports as one of the main criteria for inclusion in the Olympic Games program has contributed many positive aspects to the growth of the game:

- A new connection with two billion people, representing 25% of the global population living in cricket-crazy countries.
- A global fan base of over one billion, with 92% of them residing in countries with developed market economies.
- A young audience, with an average age of 34, including 630 million fans aged 16-37, and 40% women.
- A passionate audience, as demonstrated by recent T20 World Cups.
- A cumulative specialized television audience of 1.28 billion.
- 6.6 billion video views on the ICC's digital channels.

This development led to the inclusion of cricket in the T20 format in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games. This also shaped a key part of our strategic plan for the development of cricket in Bulgaria for 2025-2028, which is to promote and develop cricket with a focus on its Olympic future.

About this Strategic Plan?

The potential for the growth of the game in the country is significant and well understood. However, the Bulgarian Cricket Federation remains at a very early stage, both in terms of its structure and the number and refinement of programs and initiatives it currently offers to the cricket community. It is clear that over the next few years, much work needs to be done to lay the foundations. By its very nature, this Strategic Plan does not include an analysis of competitors or...

market or complex strategic theory. Rather, this plan represents a structured activity that emphasizes the achievement of five key goals. We continue to identify and prioritize the core operational activities within the control of the Bulgarian Cricket Federation that must be carried out over the next four years to achieve significant progress toward these goals.

We are aware that many of the key plans and initiatives need further refinement and will evolve rapidly as we act, learn, and adapt. However, we proudly present this plan because it includes and proposes a set of concrete actions that the Bulgarian Cricket Federation, in partnership with cricket clubs and local stakeholders, aims to achieve over the next four years. These actions aim for structural and financial improvements, as well as expanding opportunities from grassroots cricket to high-level participation. The idea is for participants to experience positive emotions and feel the beauty and joy of playing this great game.

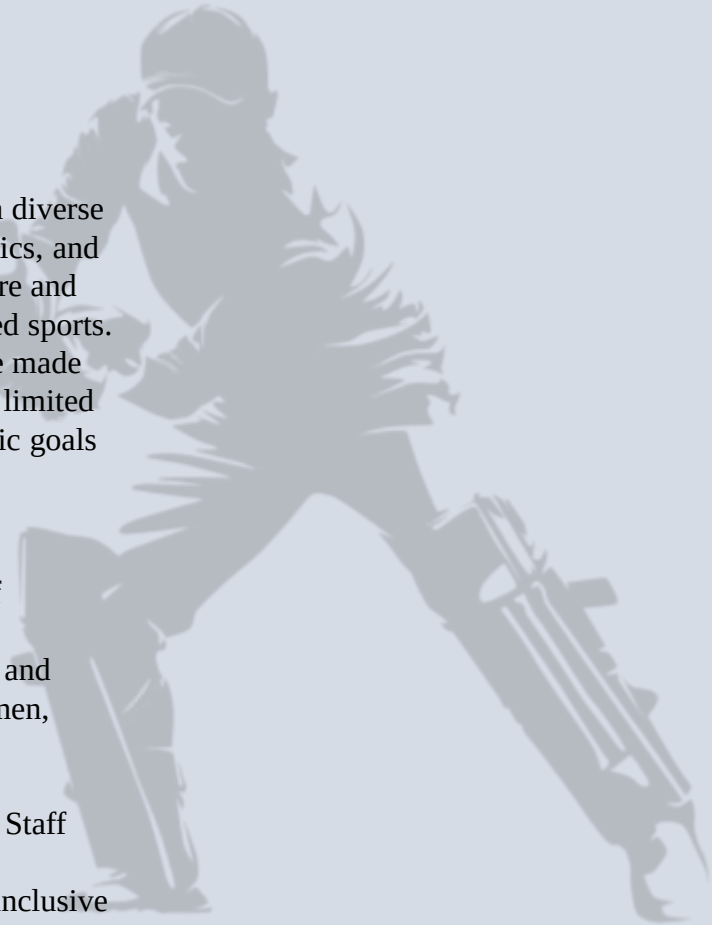
The actions outlined in this strategic plan were identified and developed through consultations with local experts—both within and outside cricket—discussions and meetings with school principals, heads of sports departments at universities, municipal mayors, and cricket club chairpersons. Invaluable assistance was also provided by the young and ambitious development team from ICC Europe. We thank everyone who helped us in this process.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Bulgaria is not a large, expansive country with a diverse population and unique demographic characteristics, and cricket faces serious competition for market share and attention from a wide array of already established sports. With the idea of moving forward faster, we have made five strategic choices on what we will focus our limited time, resources, and energy. In short, our strategic goals are:

- Youth and Long-Term Development
- Women and Girls
- Priority Development of T20 as the Center of Planning for the 2028 Olympics
- Development of Existing Teams and Players, and Creation of New National Teams (Men, Women, Boys, Girls)
- New Development Projects
- Administration, Infrastructure, Scientific and Staff Support, and Funding

These priorities aim to create a sustainable and inclusive environment for cricket in Bulgaria, ensuring its growth and success in the years to come.



YOUTH AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

The strategy of the Bulgarian Cricket Federation (BFK) for the long-term development of cricket for children and youth in Bulgaria is closely tied to the "10x10x10" Project and the "Cricket in Higher Education Institutions" Project.

1.1. Project "10x10x10"
The name of the project defines its main goals, namely:
Launching cricket in at least 10 schools across 10 municipalities, with the idea of evolving into a long-term project over 10 years.

- ➢ The goal is to conduct at least 10 sessions per academic term with the formed groups.
- ➢ Short-term goals:

Annual organization of a national event dedicated to June 1st (Children's Day), featuring an outdoor tournament with standard teams of 11 participants.

- ➢ Medium-term goals:

Formation of expanded national teams for boys and girls under 17 years old, and seeking opportunities for these teams to participate in relevant international competitions organized by the ICC.

- ➢ Long-term goal:

After 10 years, at least 10 players from these participants should be integrated into the national men's and women's teams.

1.2. Project "Cricket in Higher Education Institutions“

Within the framework of the "Cricket in Higher Education Institutions" Project, the following goals have been set:

- ➢ Short-term goals (18 months):

Establish 7 men's teams and 6 women's teams.

- ➢ Medium-term goals (by the end of 2027):

- Create a Men's Student League with at least 8 teams.
- Create a Women's Student League with at least 8 teams.
- Form a National Student Men's Team.
- Form a National Student Women's Team.

1.3. Initiatives with ICC and EUSA:

Advocate for the inclusion of student cricket in the European University
Championships and European University Games.
Organize a European University Cricket Cup by the end of the period.
These initiatives aim to create a sustainable pathway for youth development in cricket, from schools to universities, and ultimately to national and international representation. The focus is on building a strong foundation for the sport in Bulgaria while fostering talent and passion among young players.

2. WOMEN'S CRICKET: STRATEGY FOR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Development of a National Program to Support Growth and Development

- Achieve a 50% increase in the number of participants at the national level.
- Identify a significant pool of talent through accredited female coaches and officials by offering various training courses at the National Sports Academy.
- Increase the number of women on the federation's board, committees, and clubs in line with international sports policies.

2.2. Meeting ICC Participation Criteria (EPPC)

By the 2028 qualifications for the Women's T20 World Cup, we aim to have:

- At least 8 women's teams training and playing cricket with 11 players, each playing a minimum of 5 matches with 20 overs.
- 10 teams in total across U15 to U19 age groups, training and playing cricket with 11 players, each playing a minimum of 5 matches with 20 overs.
- Prioritize women's cricket as part of the "10x10x10" Project and the "Cricket in Higher Education Institutions" Project.
- Recruit participants from school cricket programs into competitive clubs.
- Expand and support the youth program in schools through an ICC pilot program.
- Form a national under-17 women's team by selecting the best talent from the "10x10x10" Project and the Higher Education Project.

2.3. Investment in Women's Cricket

Allocate up to 20% of the federation's budget to support women's cricket.
Seek opportunities to secure sponsorships specifically for women's cricket in Bulgaria.
This strategy aims to create a sustainable and inclusive environment for women's cricket, ensuring its growth and success at both national and international levels. By focusing on talent development, participation, and investment, the Bulgarian Cricket Federation is committed to building a strong foundation for the future of women's cricket in the country.

2.4. Women's Cricket: Girls and Young Women

- Priority Focus on Women's Cricket as part of the "10x10x10" Project and the "Cricket in Higher Education Institutions" Project.
- Recruitment of participants from school cricket programs into competitive clubs.
- Expansion and support of the youth program in schools through an ICC pilot program.
- Formation of a national under-17 women's team by selecting the best talent from the "10x10x10" Project and the Higher Education Project.
- Investment in women's cricket through up to 20% of the federation's budget and seeking opportunities to secure sponsorships specifically for women's cricket in Bulgaria.

2.5. Staff and Personnel

- Recruitment, training, and support of female volunteers and staff in cricket.
- Appointment of a national women's cricket coach.
- Providing opportunities for female officials and administrators to take on leadership roles.

2.6. Increasing Participation

- Introduction of modified formats to make cricket more accessible and increase the base of female players.
- Facilitating participation through open days and sessions led by women, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for new players.

3.DEVELOPMENT OF TWENTY20 CRICKET, OLYMPIC CRICKET

Twenty20 Cricket is the format that is best suited to grow the sport in new markets and that its structure, design and appeal are suitable for finding a place in the Bulgarian sporting landscape. While recognizing the importance of One Day International (ODI), we will continue to participate in this format at the international level and will strive to position Twenty20 Cricket at the center of our plans.
Cricket will return to the program of the Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028 in the Twenty20 format for both men and women.

3.1. Inclusion of the sport of cricket in the Olympic Preparation Program of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Bulgarian Olympic Committee;
3.2. Start in the development of Olympic cricket
Formation of a T20 Olympic Men's Team;
Formation of a T20 Olympic Women's Team;
3.3. Development of a detailed Olympic training plan for two Olympic cycles

4. Development of existing teams and players and creation of new National Teams (women, juniors, girls);

PRIORITIES:

4.1. Increasing the support and control of the BCF over the educational and training work and improving the synchronization of efforts between the federation and cricket clubs.

- Organizing various events to attract players.
- Maintaining and developing the necessary facilities and infrastructure for the sport;
- Mini World Cups, Tableball, indoor cricket, beach cricket, doubles, Family cricket and open days;
- Cooperation with similar sports (e.g. softball/baseball);

4.2. BFC to work to improve the quality of internal competitions.
BFC to make efforts and provide assistance to cricket clubs (CC) that have the potential to participate in the State Championships with a view to their completion and conduct of sports and competitive life;

4.3. In the short term, national teams for boys and girls under 17 years of age should be formed;

4.4. BFC to conclude annual standard contracts with CC regarding the participation of their players in the different age national teams;
BFC and CC to annually report on the implementation of the concluded contracts and, according to their implementation, to receive a bonus from the funds allocated to support the activities of CC;

5. Administration, Infrastructure and Scientific and Human Resources

5.1 Administration

- We will develop and implement diversity, equality, inclusion and stimulation of cultural changes around a number of issues concerning the development of cricket in our country;
- We will provide support for the clubs to include women in committees and representation in governing bodies

5.2. Infrastructure

- Renovation of the cricket field on the territory of the NSA

- new artificial turf surface
- new professional pitch

- Construction of additional/auxiliary training facilities indoors and outdoors;

5.3 Scientific and Human Resources

- Increasing qualifications

-Periodic improvement of the professional qualifications of coaches while strictly complying with the requirements for the licensing of coaches;
-Annual holding of courses and seminars for coaches, umpires and scorers with the participation of foreign lecturers from the ICC, if possible;
-All senior coaches of national teams, international and candidate international referees and scorers must speak English. BFC to provide assistance in improving the language skills of its personnel;
-Periodically, to hold seminars in zones and regions to refresh knowledge, to which physical education teachers should also be invited to participate.

5.4. Staff stimulation

- Periodically, coaches should be proposed for awards according to the "Regulations for Awarding a Badge of Honor" for successes achieved at the national and international level and in connection with round anniversaries;
- The Board of Directors should stimulate the most prominent coaches and referees by sending them to major forums abroad with full or partial financial expenses. They must submit to BFC a report (on a special form) and, respectively, statistics and methodological materials from the event

FINANCING

6.1. Revenue:

- Increase in revenue from contracted partners and ranking results;
- Launch of financial projects in various areas of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Bulgarian Olympic Committee;
- Attracting more revenue from sponsors;
- Securing a General Sponsor;

6.2. Revenue from projects

- Participation in projects under the Erasmus + Sport Program

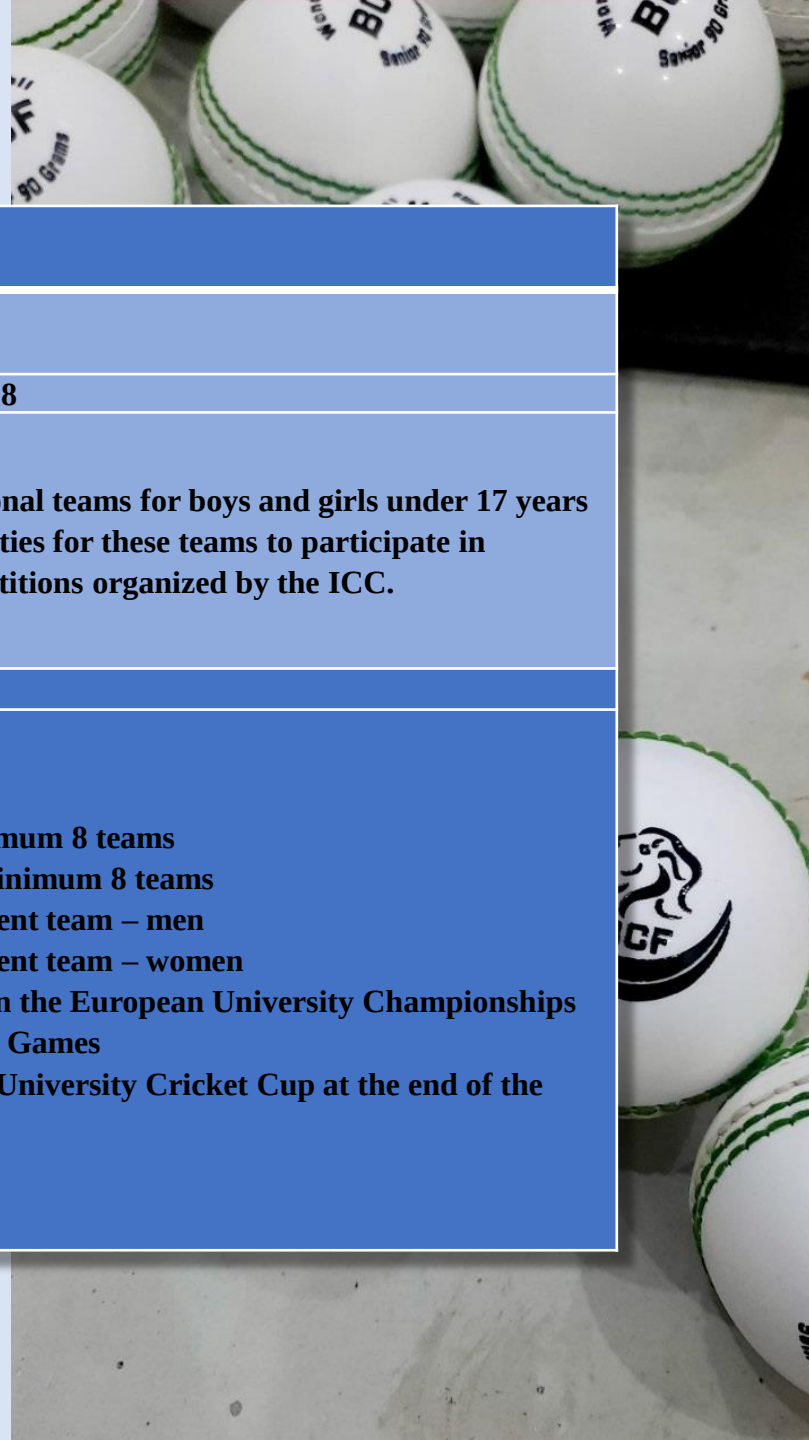
-Preparation of projects under other programs;
-Defense of a project for OP and receipt of financial funds for development from the MMC;

6.3 Annual increase in own revenue through TV broadcasts, live streaming and joint activities with ECN;

6.4. Improving financial discipline and increasing control over the spending of funds;

6.5. With the help of local authorities, the Board of Directors to assist cricket clubs in the country for permanent financial support;

Main activities	1. Increasing engagement	2. Stimulation of participation	3. Improving the performance of national teams	4. Ensuring financial stability	5. Building trust in the community
1.Children's and youth cricket	✓	✓		✓	✓
2. Development of Women and Girls	✓	✓		✓	✓
3.Development of T20 Cricket		✓	✓	✓	✓
4.National Development Men	✓	✓		✓	✓
5. Administration, Infrastructure and Scientific and Human Resources	✓		✓	✓	✓
6. Financing	✓	✓	✓	✓	



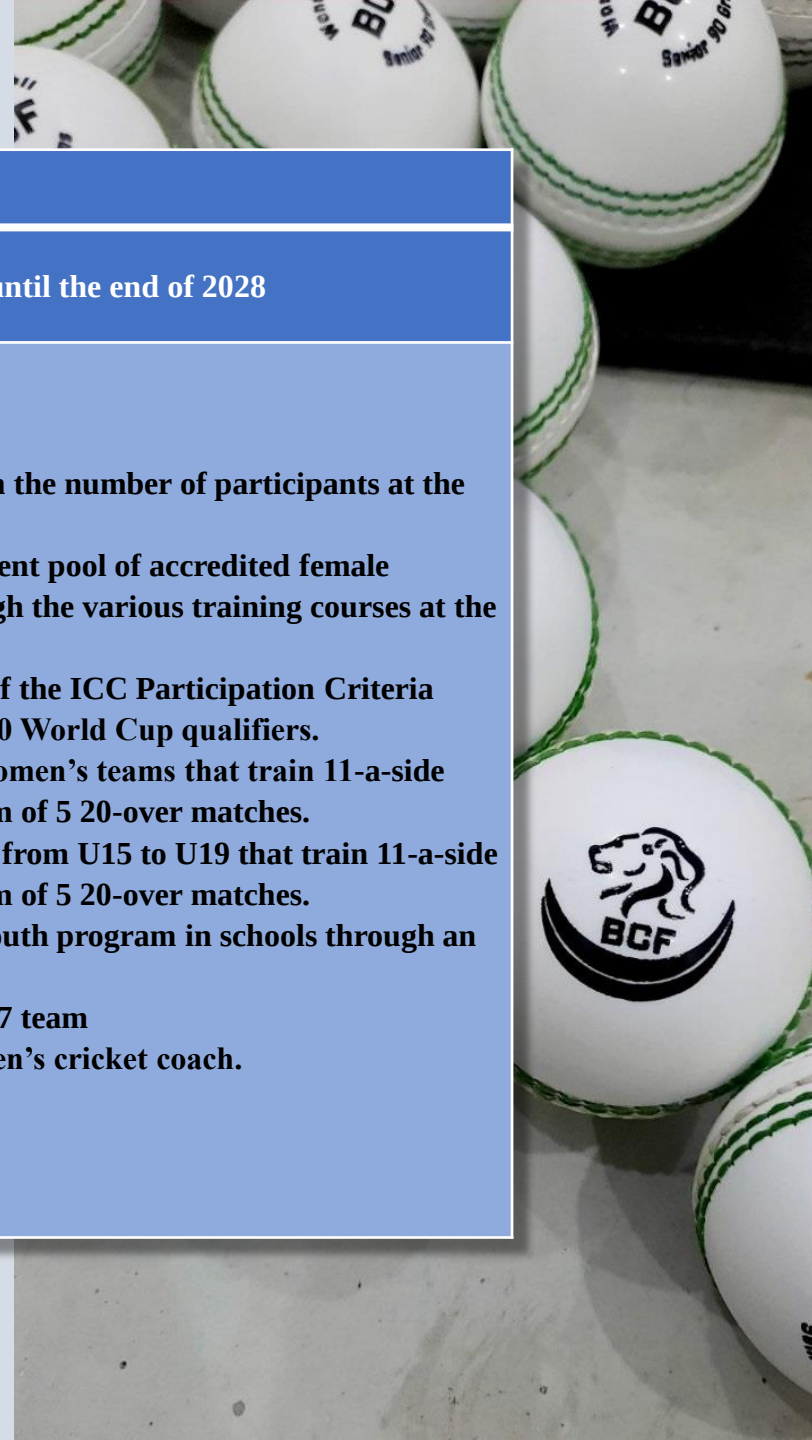
CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH'S CRICKET

PROJECT "10 x 10 x 10"

Short-term priorities for the next 12 months	Future actions until the end of 2028
➢ Conducting a minimum of 10 activities per year with the formed groups. ➢ Annually conducting a national review dedicated to June 1 /Children's Day/ with an outdoor tournament with normal teams of 11 participants.	➢ Formation of expanded national teams for boys and girls under 17 years of age and seeking opportunities for these teams to participate in relevant international competitions organized by the ICC.

PROJECT "CRICKET IN HIGH SCHOOLS"

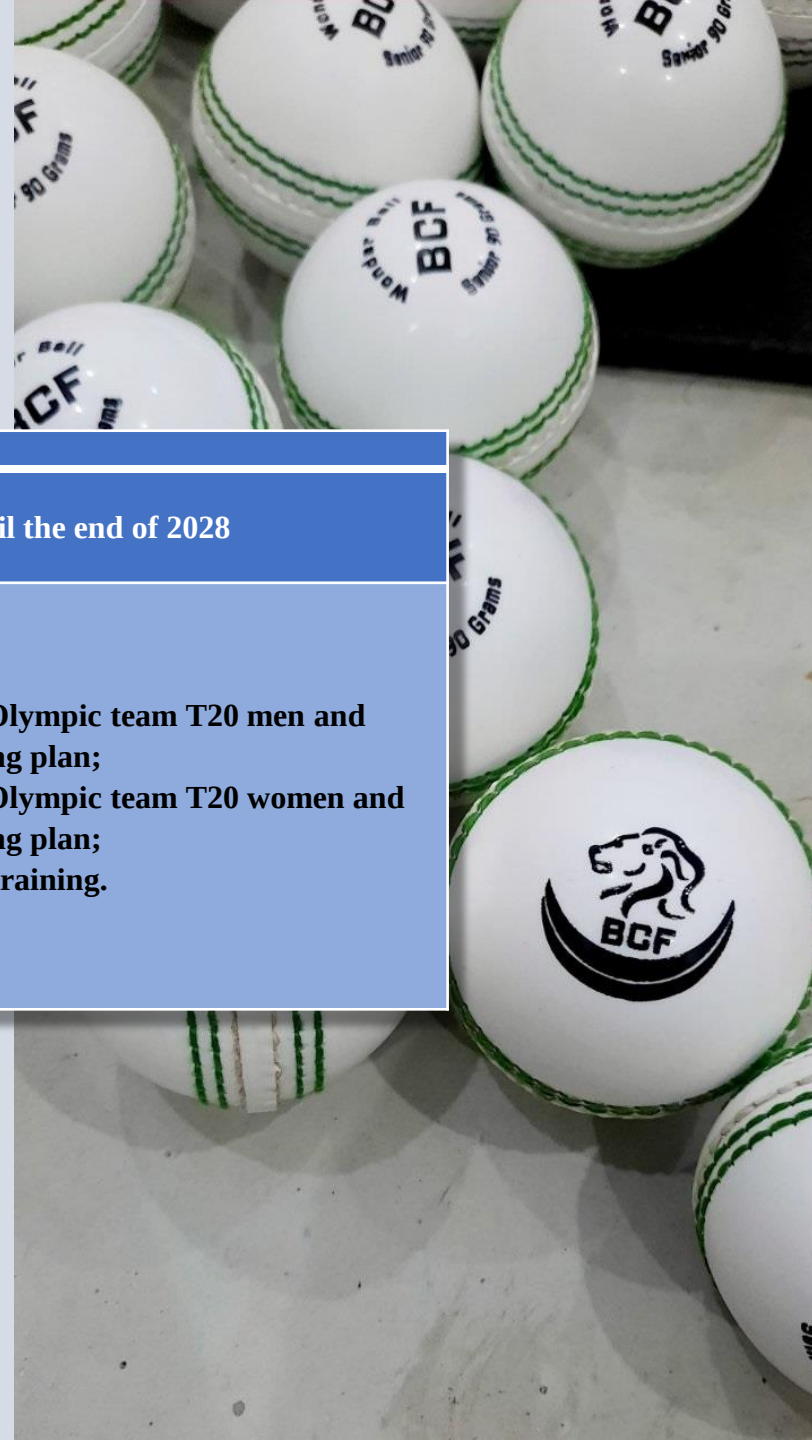
➢ Formation of 8 male and 6 female student teams. Organizing, together with the Academic University Sports Association, the annual participation of male and female student teams in the National ➢ UniversiadeTransitioning into two stages of the National University Games- spring and autumn	➢ Student League - men - minimum 8 teams ➢ Student League - women - minimum 8 teams ➢ Formation of a national student team – men ➢ Formation of a national student team – women ➢ Inclusion of student cricket in the European University Championships and the European University Games ➢ Organization of a European University Cricket Cup at the end of the period

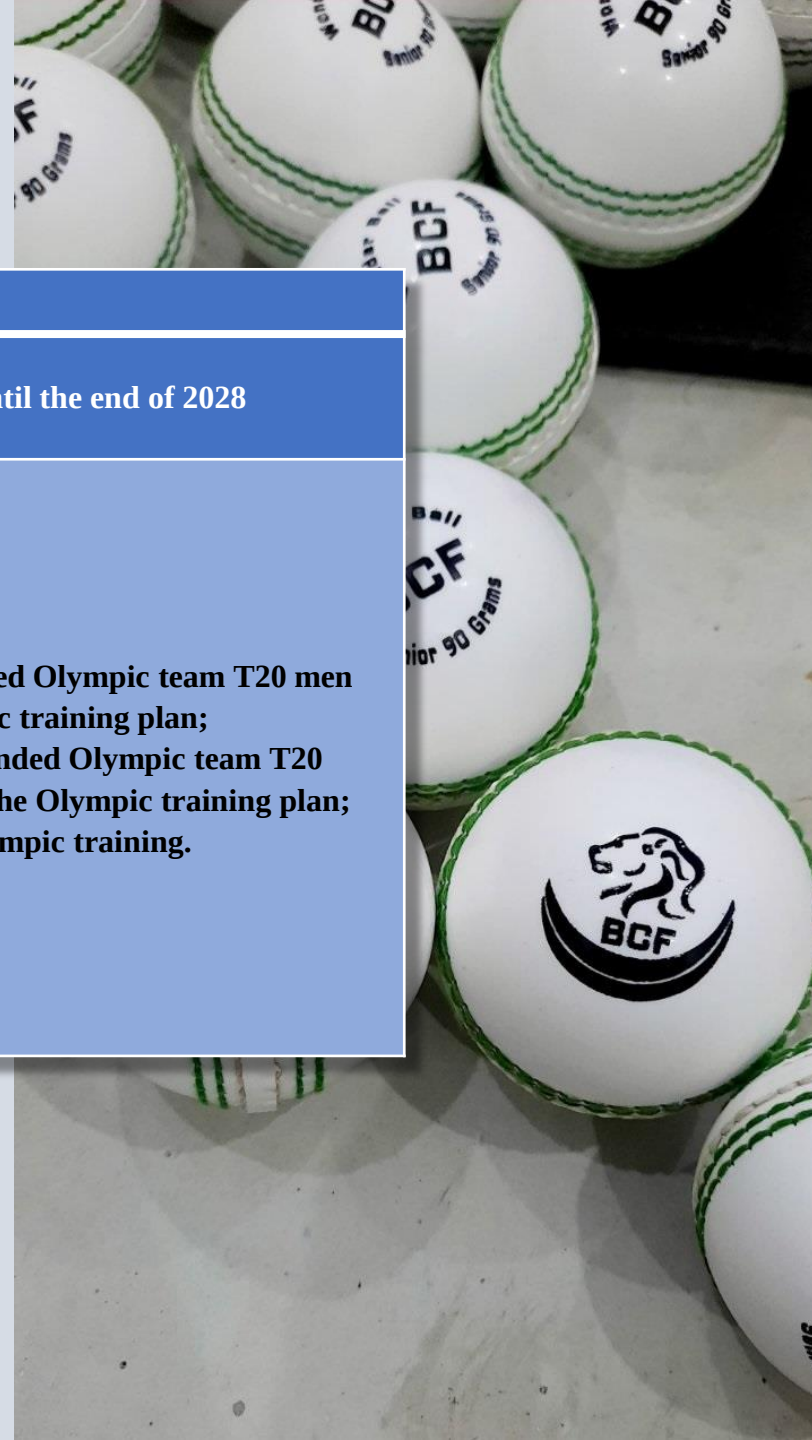


DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Short-term priorities for the next 12 months	Future actions until the end of 2028
➢ Increase the number of women on federation boards, committees and clubs in line with international sports policy. ➢ Prioritising of Women's Cricket as part of the 10x10x10 project and part of the Cricket in Higher Education Project. ➢ To recruit participants in school cricket activities for competitive clubs. ➢ To work with the best from the 10x10x10 and Higher Education Project ➢ To Invest in women's cricket through limited funding of up to 20% ➢ To recruit, train and support women's cricket volunteers and staff. ➢ To provide opportunities for women officials and administrators. ➢ To provide modified formats to increase the base of women cricketers. ➢ To facilitate participation through open days and sessions led by women.	➢ To achieve 50% increase in the number of participants at the national level. ➢ To uncover a significant talent pool of accredited female coaches and officials through the various training courses at the National Sports Academy. ➢ To meet the requirements of the ICC Participation Criteria (EPPC) in the Women's T20 World Cup qualifiers. ➢ To form a minimum of 8 women's teams that train 11-a-side cricket and play a minimum of 5 20-over matches. ➢ To form a total of 10 teams from U15 to U19 that train 11-a-side cricket and play a minimum of 5 20-over matches. ➢ To grow and support the youth program in schools through an ICC pilot program ➢ To form a national under-17 team ➢ To appoint a national women's cricket coach.

TWENTY20 CRICKET, OLYMPIC CRICKET	
Short-term priorities for the next 12 months	**Future actions until the end of 2028**
➢ Inclusion of cricket in the Olympic training system of our country; ➢ Development of a detailed Olympic training plan for two Olympic cycles. ➢ Formation of teams for sports training and control for the national stables.	➢ Formation of an expanded Olympic team T20 men and work on the Olympic training plan; ➢ Formation of an expanded Olympic team T20 women and work on the Olympic training plan; ➢ Annual control of Olympic training.

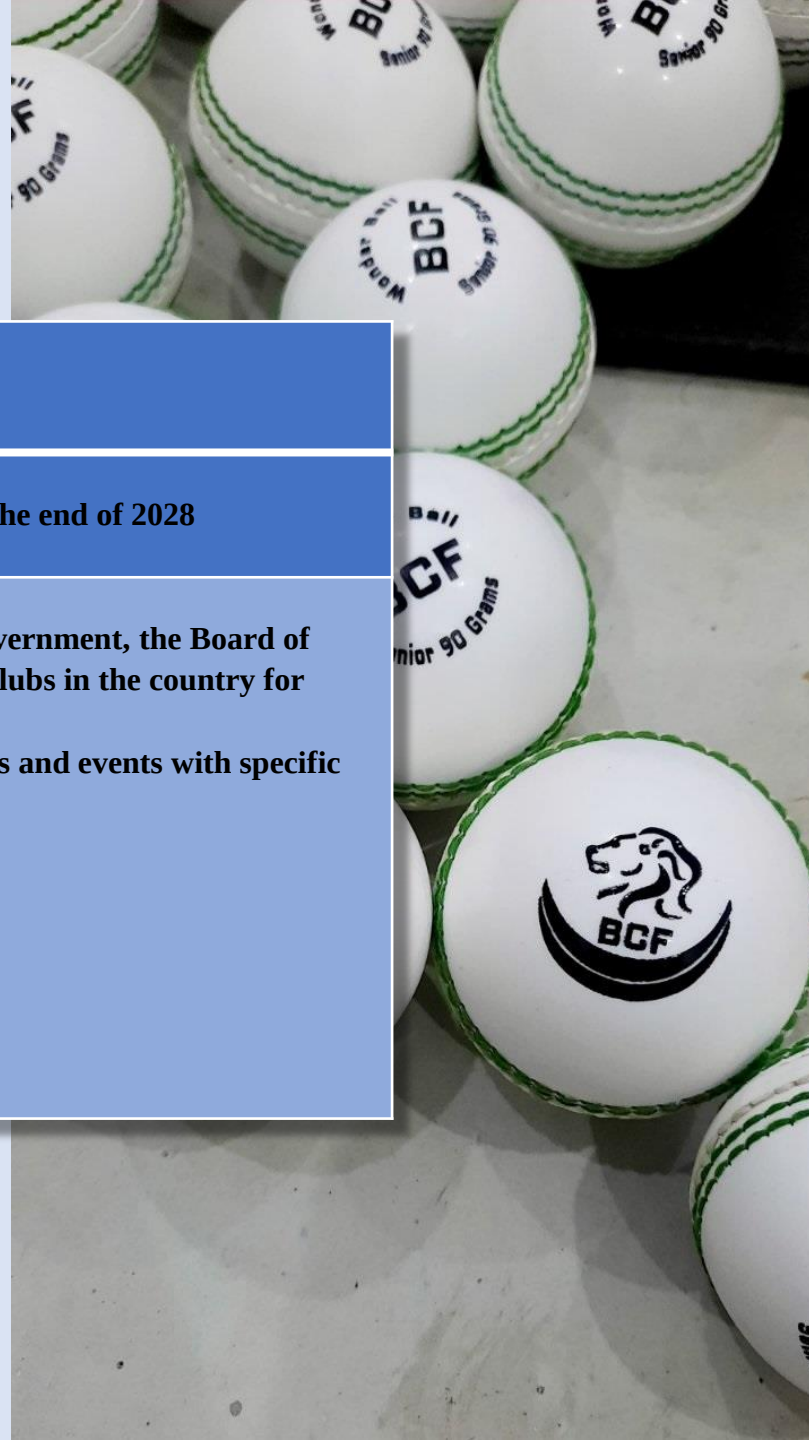




CRICKET MEN	
Short-term priorities for the next 12 months	**Future actions until the end of 2028**
➢ Organizing various events to attract new players; ➢ Maintaining and developing the necessary facilities and infrastructure for the sport; ➢ Mini regional cups, Tableball, indoor cricket, beach cricket, doubles, family cricket and open days; ➢ Cooperation with similar sports (e.g. softball/baseball); ➢ BCF and CC to annually report on the implementation of the concluded contracts and, according to their implementation, to receive a bonus from the funds allocated to support the activities of the CC;	➢ Formation of an expanded Olympic team T20 men and work on the Olympic training plan; ➢ Formation of an expanded Olympic team T20 women and work on the Olympic training plan; ➢ Annual control of Olympic training.

ADMINISTRATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SCIENTIFIC AND HUMAN RESOURCES	
Short-term priorities for the next 12 months	**Future actions until the end of 2028**
➢ Renovation of the cricket field on the territory of the National Sports Academy with a new artificial turf surface and a new professional pitch; ➢ Periodically improve the professional qualifications of the coaches; ➢ BCF to provide assistance in improving the language training of its staff; ➢ Conducting seminars in zones and regions to refresh knowledge, to which sports teachers should also be invited to participate; ➢ Periodically propose coaches for awards.	➢ Construction of additional/auxiliary training facilities indoors and outdoors;. ➢ Construction of another court of normal and standard dimensions in the eastern part of the country /the Black Sea coast; ➢ Annual holding of courses and seminars for coaches, referees and scorers ➢ The Board of Directors should stimulate the most prominent coaches and referees by sending them to major forums abroad.

FINANCING	
Short-term priorities for the next 12 months	**Future actions until the end of 2028**
➢ Inclusion of BF Cricket in the Olympic Preparation Program of the MMC; ➢ Attracting more revenue from sponsors; ➢ Participation in projects under the Erasmus + Sport Program; ➢ Preparation of projects under other programs; ➢ Defense of a project to receive financial funds for development from the MMC; ➢ Annual increase in own revenues;Improving financial discipline and increasing control over the spending of funds;	➢ Securing a General Sponsor; ➢ With the help of the local government, the Board of Directors will assist cricket clubs in the country for ongoing financial support; ➢ Launching annual campaigns and events with specific fundraising goals.



Implementation

After approval by the BF Cricket Board, the implementation of this plan will be overseen by the National Development Manager, with actions under each strategic pillar.

The supervision of the results of this plan will be with:

• The Cricket Promotion Committee, which will report to the Board on actions related to participation;

• The CTC, which will report to the Board on actions related to implementation;

• The BF Cricket Board of Directors will analyze and make necessary adjustments to the implementation of the development plan at least twice a year;

The BF Cricket General Assembly will receive an annual report on the progress and implementation of the development plan.

This development plan was adopted by the Board of Directors of BCF on 09/12/2024, Protocol 07/09.12.2024, Decision No. 1.