

SFS AWARDS 2026
FOOTBALL TECH CATEGORIES
TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION



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Premise

The Social Football Summit (hereinafter referred to as "SFS") is the leading international event for the Football Industry, designed as a global platform for discussion, training, knowledge sharing, and networking. As part of the SFS, the SFS Awards celebrate excellence in the Football Industry, rewarding clubs, organizations, companies, and professionals who stand out for quality, innovation, sustainability, creativity, and positive impact.

This format makes it possible to highlight emerging talent, original ideas, technological solutions, and sustainable projects, turning the SFS Awards into a benchmark not only for established excellence, but also for new high-potential entities. A prestigious event that reinforces SFS as an international hub for innovation and excellence in the Football Industry.

Article 1

Organizers of the Social Football Summit and Awards

Go Project S.r.l. (Viale Liegi 32, 00198 Rome | VAT no. 07539411004) is an innovative SME and digital company founded in 2003. Our mission is to meet the communication needs of our clients by integrating deep software development know-how with strong creative and strategic skills.

We support companies and institutions in positioning products and services on the market, boasting proven experience in both the public and private sectors, with a strong specialization in the world of football. We are the ideal partner to guide clients' strategic choices through innovative solutions covering all areas of communication: from social media management and content creation to the development of complex web portals. Go Project is a certified company holding ISO 9001:2015 (sector E33, sector E35), ISO 20121, ISO 27001, and UNI/PdR 125:2022 certifications.

Social Media Soccer S.r.l. (Viale Liegi 32, 00198 Rome | VAT no. 14472001008) is an innovative start-up and a football-first communication agency that reports daily on the football industry through its proprietary online magazine. We uncover the potential of sports clubs and support them in digital transformation processes to foster their growth and innovation, integrating strategic consulting and cutting-edge technological solutions. Our goal is to define the relationship between sports performance and brand authority, providing targeted tools to enhance business value. We aim to be the driver of digital evolution in the sports industry, optimizing the user experience of our partners and enabling it through technology.

Hereinafter referred to as "The Organization".

Article 2

Purpose, Objectives, and Structure of the Initiative

As part of their mission to promote innovation in the sports world, the SFS Awards 2026 are opening direct applications for 3 exclusive categories dedicated to Football Tech, aimed at those who are rewriting the boundaries of the football industry.

Participation aims to identify solutions capable of generating a systemic impact, transforming technological challenges into a concrete competitive advantage for clubs, athletes, and stakeholders. The purpose of the awards is not merely formal recognition, but the strategic validation of innovative merit to certify excellence, endorsed by top industry experts, thereby consolidating market positioning on a global scale. Through this stage, innovation receives its professional consecration, turning intellectual value into a decisive reputational asset to attract international partners and investors.

Article 3

Football Tech Award Categories

The three exclusive Football Tech categories open for applications are:

- **Best Football Tech AI Solution:** an award dedicated to projects that leverage Artificial Intelligence to generate value. Whether through predictive data analysis, process automation, advanced scouting tools, or other applications, we look for excellence in applying AI to serve clubs, stakeholders, and institutions.
- **Best Football Tech Entertainment Solution:** we reward solutions that revolutionize how fans experience football. From Fan Engagement platforms to innovative broadcasting, augmented reality, and new content consumption models.
- **Best Football Tech Performance & Health Solution:** this category is dedicated to innovations that optimize athletic performance, prevent injuries, and improve player health through hardware, wearables, and biomedical monitoring software.

Article 4

Participation Requirements

Participation is reserved for legal entities actively operating in the Football Industry or seeking to contribute to the technological and strategic evolution of the sector. Entities belonging to the following categories are eligible to apply:

- **Innovative Startups:** companies incorporated for no more than 60 months, characterized by a strong technological driver, and having their registered or operational office within the European Union.
- **SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises):** established companies presenting consolidated technological solutions validated by the market.
- **Established Companies (Corporates):** large corporations that have developed specialized projects, business units, or divisions specifically dedicated to innovation in football.

For the purposes of participation and during the selection process, the legal entity is represented by its Legal Representative. Participation by a designated representative is permitted, provided they hold

a formal written power of attorney (accompanied by a copy of the grantor's ID) certifying their signing and representation powers for the entire duration of the procedure.

Article 5

Submission Methods and Deadlines

Applications must be submitted exclusively online by filling out the designated registration form available at the following link: <https://awards.socialfootballsummit.com/>, no later than the strict deadline of **October 4, 2026**.

To complete the application, participants must attach a Pitch Deck (maximum 10 slides) focusing on the business model and/or a presentation Video Pitch (maximum duration 60 seconds). In order to ensure the international reach of the award, all documentation may be submitted, at the candidate's discretion, in either Italian or English.

Submitting an application after the deadline or with incomplete documentation will result in automatic disqualification from the evaluation process.

Article 6

Application Fee and Administrative Expenses

Participation in the Football Tech selection is subject to the payment of an Application Fee, intended as a non-refundable contribution toward costs. This fee is aimed at guaranteeing the independence and excellence of the selection process, covering the following expenses:

- **Administrative Management and Coordination:** coverage of technical secretariat costs, document verification, and ongoing assistance to candidates during the submission phases.
- **Integrity and Technological Infrastructure:** maintenance of security protocols and management of the dedicated digital platform, ensuring secure uploading and encrypted preservation of materials and trade secrets.
- **Technical Auditing and Professional Evaluation:** compensation for the analytical review and time dedicated by each of the seven experts on the Evaluation Committee. Every project receives an in-depth individual examination, guaranteeing the high scientific profile of the selection and the integrity of the final assessment.
- **Coverage of Two Corporate Pass Tickets for Non-Winning Participants:** Corporate Pass tickets include access to all Delegate areas, access to the Corporate & Business Area, access to B2B activities, full access to the networking platform, live + on-demand content post-event, chat, meetings, and appointment bookings.

Payment must be made simultaneously with the submission of the application, following the instructions provided within the platform.

Article 7

Payment Methods for the Application Fee

To finalize the application, the participant is required to pay the Application Fee. To ensure maximum transaction security and traceability, payment processing is handled by the certified platform Nexi Business. The Nexi Business system allows for immediate online payment using major payment

networks. Once the application form is completed and the "Pay Now" button is clicked, the candidate will be automatically redirected to the secure payment page hosted on Nexi servers.

Important Note on Data Security and Privacy: Credit card details entered do not pass through nor are they stored in any way on the Organization's servers. The entire transaction takes place in encrypted mode directly on Nexi's protected systems, in compliance with international PCI-DSS security standards.

Article 8

Validity and Completion of the Application

An application for the SFS Awards 2026 is considered formally completed and admitted to the preliminary review phase only upon actual receipt of the Application Fee payment. Receipt of the fee is an essential condition for the project to be taken into consideration by the Evaluation Committee.

Should payment confirmation fail to arrive by the strict deadline of **October 4, 2026**, the application will be deemed inadmissible. In such cases, the project will not be evaluated, regardless of whether the materials were successfully uploaded to the digital platform.

Participants are strongly advised to complete the payment well in advance to avoid potential bank processing delays that could invalidate their registration. Only applications that are administratively complete with both documentation and payment will receive formal notification of acceptance.

Article 9

Non-Refundable Fee Policy (No-Refund Policy)

The Application Fee constitutes consideration for administrative preliminary checks, document verification, and technical analysis conducted by the Evaluation Committee. Due to the nature of the services provided immediately upon receipt of the application, the following non-refundable terms apply:

- **Evaluation Outcome:** no refund will be issued if the project is not selected as an Award winner.
- **Ineligibility:** the fee will not be refunded if the Evaluation Committee, in exercising its technical discretion, deems the project ineligible, irrelevant, or qualitatively below the required standards.
- **Withdrawal or Absence of the Applicant:** failure to complete the application, voluntary withdrawal of the project, or the applicant's inability to participate in subsequent phases of the event does not entitle them to a refund of any paid amounts.

Article 10

Evaluation Committee (Jury)

To ensure maximum technical rigor and impartiality throughout the selection process, applications will be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee, an independent panel composed of seven high-profile international figures in the Football Industry. To guarantee a multi-dimensional assessment, the jurors have been selected to represent seven strategic pillars of the sector:

- **Business Management & Strategy:** assessment of business model viability, long-term financial sustainability, and international scalability potential.

- **Data Analytics & Advanced CRM:** data integration (CDP, advanced CRM), traceability, monetization, and fanbase loyalty.
- **Emerging Technologies, Deep Tech & Sustainability:** application of AI deep tech, digital infrastructure, and the impact of technology on sustainability (ESG) in motorsport and mainstream sports.
- **Omnichannel Strategy, Media & Club Journalism:** cross-platform content strategies, sports brand positioning, proprietary channel management (OTT, Social, Web), and fan entertainment.
- **Digital Economy Law & Sports Compliance:** legal tech, data governance, smart contracts, digital market regulations, and regulatory compliance within the sports ecosystem.
- **Investment, Venture Capital & Sport Tech Acceleration:** investor appeal, open innovation potential, and synergies between athletes and the startup ecosystem.
- **Gamification, Fantasy Sports & Community Engagement:** game mechanics applied to sports, mass fan engagement platforms, reward dynamics, and retention strategies for Gen Z and Gen Alpha.

The names of the jury members will be announced as soon as possible on official SFS channels.

Article 11

Selection Criteria and Evaluation Methodology

The Evaluation Committee is an independent panel composed of seven members. Each project will undergo an in-depth individual examination based on the following weighted macro-criteria set forth in these regulations. Panel members will use this 5-point grid as a guide for their detailed analysis of each project:

I. Originality, Market Disruption, and Unique Positioning

Definition: Verification of the level of innovation of the solution compared to the current state-of-the-art technology and methodology in the SportTech sector. The project must not be a mere replica of existing solutions but must demonstrate the ability to disrupt traditional market dynamics.

- **Key Evaluation Elements:**
 - Presence of defensible barriers to entry (IP, proprietary algorithms, patents, or exclusive know-how).
 - Genuine competitive advantage over direct and indirect competitors.
 - Ability to identify or anticipate major fanbase consumption trends (e.g., new habits of Gen Z and Gen Alpha).

II. Technological Architecture, Data Strategy, and Advanced Integration

Definition: Analysis of the solidity, security, and effectiveness of the technological infrastructure. Declared cutting-edge technologies (AI Deep Tech, Web3, Blockchain, IoT, complex digital infrastructures) must be structural and core to the project's architecture, rather than superficial marketing layers.

- **Key Evaluation Elements:**
 - **Data Strategy Quality:** capacity to integrate advanced data architectures (CDP, advanced CRMs) for traceability, monetization, and data protection.

- **Interoperability:** ease of integration with existing digital systems within the sports ecosystem.
- **Compliance and Governance:** legal robustness regarding regulatory compliance (GDPR, digital market regulations, smart contracts).

III. Flexibility, Vertical Scalability, and Democratization of Access

Definition: Assessment of the technical and commercial flexibility of the project to be implemented at any level of the sports pyramid (and specifically within football), ensuring maximum operational adaptability.

- **Key Evaluation Elements:**
 - **Modularity:** ability to serve both global top clubs (complex enterprise needs) and small amateur entities (need for automation and accessible costs).
 - **Cross-Sport Adaptability:** potential for application beyond football, such as in motorsport or mass participation sports.

IV. Business Model Sustainability and International Scalability

Definition: Examination of long-term economic and financial viability, as well as how easily the business model can be exported to foreign markets (Global Go-To-Market strategy).

- **Key Evaluation Elements:**
 - **Financial Sustainability:** clear, recurring, and scalable revenue streams that do not rely exclusively on single investment rounds.
 - **Investability:** attractiveness to the Venture Capital ecosystem and potential integration into Open Innovation frameworks.
 - **Cross-Border Scalability:** absence of regulatory, cultural, or logistical barriers that could hinder international expansion.

V. Tangible Impact, KPIs, and Sustainability (ESG)

Definition: Verification of objective, quantifiable, and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) capable of demonstrating a concrete return on investment (ROI) for all stakeholders involved.

- **Key Evaluation Elements:**
 - **Value Metrics:** clear KPIs tied to operational/financial efficiency for clubs, performance enhancement for athletes, or retention/conversion metrics for fan entertainment (Gamification, omnichannel strategies, OTT).
 - **ESG Impact:** presence of measurable metrics related to environmental, social, and governance sustainability within the sports system.

Scoring Method

After evaluating the project against the 5 criteria described above, each Committee member will assign a single overall score ranging from 1 to 10, representing the overall value of the proposal.

The scores awarded by the 7 members will be summed up and divided by 7. The resulting average will determine the project's final score. The project achieving the highest score in its respective category will be declared the winner.

Score	Evaluation Level	Overall Project Description
1, 2, 3	Unsatisfactory	The project fails across most criteria. Technology is obsolete or non-existent, with poor utility and no growth prospects.
4, 5	Below Average	Shows some points of interest but suffers from major structural shortcomings: poor scalability or lack of clear impact on stakeholders.
6	Satisfactory	The project meets the minimum requirements. The technology is standard, scalability is decent, and the impact is quantifiable, albeit limited.
7	Good	Solid proposal. Excellent technological integration, internationally scalable business model, and clear, measurable KPIs.
8, 9	Very Good	High-level project. Demonstrates strong innovation drive, cutting-edge technology usage, and excellent cross-sector scalability, delivering a significant and lasting impact on the industry.
10	Outstanding	Highly innovative and potentially disruptive project. Fully satisfies all 5 evaluation criteria at the highest level, setting a new industry benchmark.

Article 12

Nature and Finality of the Evaluation

The judgment expressed by the Evaluation Committee is the result of a technical and discretionary analysis conducted by industry experts. This evaluation is not limited to a mere review of submitted documentation but addresses the intrinsic merit and strategic value of each individual proposal.

The final ranking and the decisions of the Committee are to be considered definitive, final, and non-appealable in any venue.

Applying and participating in this call for entries constitutes unconditional and full acceptance of this article, as well as recognition of the full competence and decision-making autonomy of the Committee.

Article 13

Exclusion Criteria and Denial of Registration

The Organization reserves the right to exclude proposals that do not meet the minimum participation requirements. In particular, applications will be declared inadmissible and automatically excluded if they:

- Are incomplete regarding the required technical documentation or lack final confirmation of the Application Fee payment.
- Lack sector relevance, meaning they fail to demonstrate a direct and functional link with technological innovation applied to the football industry.
- Are received after the strict deadline set by these regulations, regardless of the cause of delay.

Furthermore, the Organization retains the right to reject a competitor's registration, subject to reasoned notice. Any rejection decision will be duly justified and formally communicated, ensuring

that every exclusion is based on criteria of objective incompatibility with the prestige and purposes of the SFS Awards 2026.

Article 14

Protection of Intellectual Property and Know-How

Intellectual property rights, industrial property rights, and copyrights relating to the submitted projects and solutions remain the exclusive property of the applicants.

The Organization undertakes to process the materials received solely for purposes related to technical evaluation and winner selection. It is understood that, for the sole purposes of promotion and institutional communication of the SFS Awards 2026, the Organization is authorized to use only the project name, corporate trademarks, and logos on digital, social, and print channels. Any further disclosure of confidential technical details or trade secrets must be authorized in writing in advance by the rights holders.

Article 15

Privacy, GDPR Compliance, and Data Sovereignty

The processing of personal and corporate data will take place in strict compliance with EU Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) and current national legislation.

The Organization adopts advanced security protocols to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of transmitted information. To ensure maximum transparency and cybersecurity, all uploaded files and data are guaranteed to reside on servers located in Italy, preventing risks associated with non-EU data transfers and ensuring robust protection against unauthorized access or intellectual property breaches.

Article 16

Awards and Award Ceremony Procedures

Recognition at the SFS Awards represents the highest accolade for excellence and innovation in the sector. The winner of each category will receive an exclusive physical trophy featuring a refined design, serving as a tangible symbol of the achievement.

The announcement of the winners for the three categories will take place by October 2026. Selected participants will receive official notification via telephone. Should the first-place winner formally decline the award or be unreachable within the established timeframe, the recognition will be awarded to the second-place runner-up in that category.

The award presentation will take place during the prestigious SFS Awards Gala Dinner, scheduled for November 10, 2026, in Turin—an elite networking event where industry leaders will celebrate the year's achievements.

The participation fee does not include travel and accommodation expenses for the gala evening, which remains the responsibility of the participants, unless otherwise communicated by the organizing secretariat.

Article 17

Benefits for Non-Winning Participants (Corporate Passes)

As part of its mission to foster networking and knowledge sharing within the Football Industry, the Organization guarantees concrete value to all applicant entities. Each participating legal entity whose application does not win one of the three categories will be granted 2 (two) complimentary "**Corporate Passes**" for access to and participation in the SFS.

The passes are strictly nominal, valid for two individuals from the same organization, and will grant access to Summit sessions and areas, representing an exclusive opportunity for positioning and business matching with top industry players.

The operational procedures for redeeming and issuing the two passes will be officially communicated via email by the organizing secretariat alongside or immediately following the announcement of the winners in October 2026. It is understood that the allocation of these passes is subject to full administrative and technical compliance of the application, including the regular payment of the Application Fee.

Article 18

Event Cancellation and Force Majeure

By way of derogation from the above, if the SFS Awards 2026 are completely canceled due to the direct and exclusive fault of the Organization, participants will be entitled to a refund of the Application Fee paid.

It is understood that if the event undergoes changes in date, venue, or format (e.g., transition from physical to digital format) due to force majeure, decisions by competent authorities, or unforeseen events beyond the Organization's control, no refund obligation will arise, and the evaluation and certification activities already underway shall remain valid.