Module 3. Capturing data and creating influential metrics to explain the value created by women's football business

Section 1. Introduction

> *When you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meager and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely in your thoughts advanced to the stage of science (Lord Kelvin; inventor of the Kelvin temperature scale).*

As the above quote from Lord Kelvin above indicates, measurement has long been seen as central to the development of human knowledge. This quote is often abbreviated to 'what gets measured gets done', indicating that measurement is not only important to developing knowledge, but that it also serves as a driver of performance. As Henderson (2015) explains: "Regardless of the origin or the wording, the message is clear: measuring something gives you the information you need, in order to make sure you actually achieve what you set out to do." (para. 2).

In the domain of governance, the importance of data and metrics for policymaking has been recognised for centuries. For example, in 1086, the *Domesday Book*, a survey of land ownership and value in England and Wales, was completed by the order of William I (known as William the Conqueror). The purpose of the survey was one that still drives state-level policymakers today – to develop a comprehensive record as a basis for capturing the taxes (or dues) owed by individuals to the state. The name *Domesday Book* was not the original one conferred by William I (instead, the records were known as a *descripto* – i.e., a description or writing down). However, the renaming reflected the finality of the judgements captured in this record, which were used in the resolution of disputes about land and taxes. Writing nine centuries after the completion of the *Domesday Book*, Roffe (1990) explains that "Like the Last Judgement, it was felt that there was no appeal from its testimony, and, to the present day, the popular imagination has invested the *Domesday Book* with near-mystical power as a source of exhaustive and

unimpeachable authority" (p. 310). This example shows that data and metrics have long been of central importance to policymaking. It also demonstrates a second, less obvious, aspect of the data/governance nexus – formally recorded statistics gain a power of their own over time. Because they establish the 'facts' upon which policy decisions rest, and against which policy success or failure is evaluated; the numbers that we use to characterise the world are powerful.

From the late 1970s onwards, governance scholars have noted a growing emphasis on what has been called performance management or new public management in the development, delivery, and assessment of policy. While thousands of pages are devoted in the literature to disputes about the precise definition of these terms, Freiberg's (2005) description serves to illustrate some of the key elements of most relevance to us:

> Rather than being **defined**, it [new public management] is probably best described through its constituent elements, which are by now well known. It stresses **clarity of purpose** through corporate planning, which involves the articulation and promulgation of mission statements, strategic, and operational plans. These, in turn, require **accountability** through performance management by the use of key performance indicators (KPIs), bench-marking processes and data collection, analysis and, often, publication of comparative performance outcome. (p. 14).

This reading will focus on the importance of data and metrics in policymaking for women's football businesses. As the reading progresses, you will see that the new public management approach outlined above is now widespread at various levels of the women's football governance network – from state actors, through FIFA and UEFA, all the way down to national associations and individual clubs. Indeed, we can even see the increasing use of performance measurement, metrics, and KPIs at the level of individual players, in which tracking during matches and training, and reviewing key statistics regularly is now a normal part of elite sport (Garcia-Unanue *et al*., 2020). It is now very unusual to find a significant governance actor in women's football not adopting an approach that espouses a mission statement alongside strategic and operational plans that are linked to specific KPIs.

In the rest of this reading, I develop the following structure: section 2 lays out the key concepts and vocabulary that we will use in this reading, providing definitions of the terms data, metrics, and KPIs, as they apply to policymaking. Sections 3, 4, and 5 place data and metrics in the broader context of the key concepts used to analyse policy that we covered in the first reading. Sections 3 and 4 look at how data and metrics feature

across our policy typology of regulative, distributive, redistributive, and constitutive policy outputs germane to women's football business, providing a series of substantive examples. Sections 5 explores how data and metrics manifest across the policymaking process, outlining how, at some parts of the process, KPIs are best understood as a means through which women's football business can structure their engagement with policymakers to develop support for projects and initiatives. At other stages in the process, however, there are opportunities to shape KPIs, which can be particularly valuable for women's football business as, once established, KPIs tend to 'lock in' and drive subsequent developments.

I then move onto an applied analysis of specific existing KPIs in contemporary women's football policy – drilling down into some of the key KPIs outlined in FIFA and UEFA women's football strategy documents. These structural policies are explored in section 5, while section 6 turns its focus toward KPIs in the running of individual football organisations. Throughout section 6, I argue that understanding how KPIs are generated is vital to be able to communicate how an activity within women's football business is consonant with the policies of a governance actor; this can enable women's football businesses to better attract policy support for their activities and initiatives. In section 7, I consider examples of attempts to insert new KPIs into women's football policy. Here, I argue that appropriately crafted KPIs can both capture and further promote the value created by women's football businesses. Section 8 recaps the key insights and core takeaways from the reading and sets the scene for reading 4.

Section 2. Getting to grips with key terms: data, metrics, KPIs

In this section, I will outline three ideas: data, metrics, and KPIs. I explain how data, processed in the form of metrics, emerge as KPIs associated with policies. I discuss recommendations in the women's football governance literature about developing KPIs, by focusing on the paradigm that they should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound (SMART) to be strategically effective.

Let us begin with the term 'data'. This term is the plural of the Latin word *datum*, which can be defined as either a piece of information or an assumption/premise from which inferences may be drawn. This double meaning is interesting, as data are best understood not simply as freestanding 'facts' that occur independently in the world; instead, they represent information collected for a specific purpose. In this course, we use the term 'data' to capture the raw information or measurements that are generated by women's football and its network of governance actors. The main purposes of data in the policymaking world are the following:

1. to describe or characterise a key policy focus. In policies relating to women's football business, the two-key-policy foci to date have been levels of commercial performance of women's football organisations and levels of participation in women's football.

2. To allow for comparison. Systematically collected data can be analysed at a variety of levels of comparison – these include comparisons over time, comparisons across organisations, comparisons across states, and comparisons across regions.
3. To assess the impact of a given policy (or set of policies). Here, we can separate 'process' data – which captures the implementation of key steps in a given policy versus 'outcome' data, which captures the overall goal at which policy is directed.

It is on the basis of data that the metrics and KPIs that we will explore in this reading are measured. At its heart, the generation of data represents an attempt to capture the state of the world with reference to properties or outcomes. In some cases, there are processes that can prove relatively straightforward to capture via data – for instance, the attendance of fans at games, or the value of television and sponsorship deals are both properties that are captured as a part of the commercial process.

However, other aspects of social reality, for instance, the levels of participation in or perception of women's football require more indirect methods. Regarding perception, for instance, public opinion surveys are the major source of data – and the ways in which questions are framed (and samples are collected) can influence the validity of this information. A common issue in generating data is bias, which occurs when a way of measuring information systematically over or under-estimates the phenomenon being measured. Biases can arise for all sorts of reasons. In public opinion polling, for instance, social desirability bias has been observed as an issue where respondents feel that their 'true' response might incur negative social judgements. When the individuals or institutions reporting data have an interest in representing the world in a certain way, this can lead to the emergence of bias. Such 'self-reported' data is inherently less reliable than data generated by independent sources.

The analysis of data is a subtle matter, and any sort of complex data can normally be interpreted in a variety of ways – hence the old saying that there are 'lies, damn lies, and statistics.' As such, to use data as a means of evaluating policy efficacy, we need metrics, which can be defined as quantifiable measures businesses use to track, monitor, and assess the success or failure of various processes (Lutkevich, 2022). Metrics represent ways of systematically combining items of data to arrive at a score. They facilitate the three purposes of data collection (description, comparison, and policy evaluation) outlined above.

In order to understand the relationship between data and metrics, we can think about the example of metrics in the domain of customer service excellence outlined by the Football Association's (2002) guidance on Key Performance Indicators for Football Clubs. A club's customer care teams can capture how external telephone requests are handled as a form of data. These data might include the amount of time each customer waits for a human response, whether they receive a human response at all, or they indicate that they were satisfied with that response when asked. Key metrics that could be extracted from such data include the proportion of callers receiving a human response (and/or the proportion

receiving a human response within a set time), or the percentage of customers indicating that they were satisfied with their experience. Once these metrics are established, they can be populated with data to facilitate analysis.

KPIs are metrics that are targeted as a matter of policy. Typically, KPIs are published and discussed regularly, and they can be monitored at different levels of aggregation. Within organisations, KPIs often capture the performance of individuals or subunits, and form a part of their process of performance review. In the domain of policy, KPIs tend to focus on larger aggregates, capturing the performances of organisations as a whole, or of all organisations in a given administrative unit. Usually, KPIs will indicate a required performance level on the selected metric. To illustrate again using the example of customer satisfaction, an organisation collects **data** concerning levels of customers who are satisfied with their experience of telephoning the customer care team; this is converted into a **metric** – for example, the percentage of customers who are either satisfied or very satisfied with their experience, a KPI based on this metric might be that each month, the score on this metric should be in excess of 90 % customer satisfaction.

Figure 1. SMART approach to selecting KPIs as applied to an example from women's football

Source: Women's Football Strategy, 2019, https://bit.ly/3Bv3MJG.

For those involved in developing policy, there are typically many possible metrics to choose from in selecting KPIs. It is important to understand that, in an area as complex as women's football, policymakers have a larger number of potential metrics to choose from than can be useful as KPIs. This is because KPIs must be kept to a manageable number in order to be useful in driving policy. As such, the selection of KPIs is an important process. In guiding this process, one useful approach is the use of SMART criteria, an example of

which is provided in figure 1. This figure is taken from UEFA's (2019a) Women's Football Strategy framework. The SMART paradigm captures a series of attributes that KPIs should possess in order to perform their function of allowing policymakers to both assess and drive policy delivery. The particular example developed in figure 1 shows that the data generating process arises at the intersection of the 'specific' and 'measurable' criteria. This explains why both FIFA and UEFA's strategic plans focus on player registrations, rather than wider measures that could also capture informal participation. The 'achievable' criterion represents a judgement when set against current circumstances and likely future trajectories, while 'relevant' captures the fit of the KPI to the strategic objectives of the policymaker.

Having now established definitions for the terms data, metrics, and KPIs, we move on to show their prevalence across different categories of women's football policy.

Section 3. Data and metrics in contemporary women's football policy 1. Regulative policy

In this section, we will return to the approach of categorising policy developed in reading 1, with a view to mapping examples of data and metrics in policy areas germane to women's football business. As we saw in reading 1, Lowi (1972) distinguished four types of policy: regulative, distributive, redistributive, and constitutive. Regulative policy pertains to the setting of rules and norms for behaviour, with clear sanctions attached to failure to comply with these rules. Distributive and redistributive policy centre on the allocation of resources, with the key distinction between them being that distributive policies allocate resources in a way that is broadly accessible to a wide range of actors, without a clear cost implication for an identified group, whereas redistributive policies see resources being moved from one group to another. Constitutive policies focus on the way policies themselves are made, with a focus on governance structures and actors.

In the domain of regulative policies, the state has historically been a key factor in women's football governance. Discussing the ongoing evolution of equality policies in UK sport, Lusted (2013) notes:

> It was legal and political changes instigated by the New Labour administration from 1997 that provided the main impetus for the uptake of equality policies in sport. Important changes were made to equality laws, first by strengthening the Race Relations Act in 2000 and then in planning for a new holistic Equality Act, eventually enacted in 2010. For the first time, many sport organisations felt that such legislation may be applicable to them and so policy commitments to equality

were seen to be one form of 'proof' of meeting statutory legal obligations; they reacted to a hard whack from the legislative stick. (p. 88).

In her analysis of how these state-level policy developments translated into the development of regulative policy consequences for UK sports organisations, Shaw (2007) notes that the framework created a set of KPIs and audited through the *Equality Standard for Sport* via the Sports Councils Equality Group (SCEG) in the UK. In their (2014) guidance document, the SCEG sets out its system for assessing the performance of sporting organisations against this standard:

Foundation: The organisation is committed to equality and that commitment is communicated to all staff and volunteers.

Preliminary: The organisation is clear about what it needs to do to achieve equality, it understands the issues and barriers faced by under-represented groups in sport and has a robust equality action plan which all staff, volunteers and key stakeholders understand.

Intermediate: The organisation is increasing opportunities for participation and involvement by a diverse range of people including representation on its own leadership, staff, board and senior volunteers. All internal policies pay due regard to diversity.

Advanced: Leadership and staff, including coaches and officials as well as participants, are offered a fair and equal opportunity and are reflective of the community the organisation serves. Equality is central to the way an organisation carries out all of its work. All affiliated organisations and clubs are able to engage and develop participants, coaches, officials and administrators from under-represented groups. (p. 5).

Shaw (2007) noted that this particular policy generated a set of KPIs that predominantly focused on data capturing processes, rather than outcomes. These KPIs involved conducting audits of organisations' equality profile, delivering training, and developing and publishing policies and statements supporting equality. Reflecting on the efficacy of this approach, Lusted (2013) is critical, arguing that "many organisations have reached these preliminary levels, but only a handful have gone any further than the very basic rhetorical commitment" (p. 89). We can see a similar emphasis of process-based KPIs in regulative policy in FIFPRO's (2020) Women's Football Report – with its emphasis on establishing sustainable competition structures, developing global minimum labour standards for women's football professionals, and provision of equal access to playing opportuneness. Regulative policy is, by definition, best understood in terms of process – that is, it can be evaluated by the establishment of rules and norms. However, this can lead to considerable wriggle room when it comes to implementation of this type of policies – as the relevant KPIs often take the form of 'tick boxes' rather than comparable, sensitive metrics. While regulative policies may be attached to outcome KPIs (such as levels of participation in women's football), these outcomes are often quite far 'downstream' from regulative policy, and thus do not always provide for straightforward evaluation.

Section 4. Data and metrics in contemporary women's football policy 1: regulative policy

Policies pertaining to resources are less prone to this issue because resources are more easily quantified. As such, both distributive and redistributive policies can be evaluated through more granular KPIs. However, it is interesting to note that it can be difficult to discern how changes in resources being devoted to women's football relate to those devoted to men's football in the policy strategies of governance actors in football. To the extent that resource KPIs are laid out at all (and they are notably underplayed in many women's football strategy documents), the point of comparison is usually the prior level of women's football resource. For instance, figure 2 below displays an infographic from UEFA's (2019b) women's football strategy document.

As we can see from this figure, data and metrics can be very useful in tracking levels of resource invested via policy in women's football. However, this is very much framed as a form of distributive policy – KPIs based on a redistributive policy framing (a framing which inherently results in greater conflict, as we noted in reading 1) would tell a story of resources in the women's game still lagging far behind men's football.

Figure 2. An example of resource data and metrics in women's football from UEFA

Source: UEFA, 2019b, p. 12.

Finally, in this section, we consider KPIs that centre on constitutive policy. In some senses, this domain is where we can find the most specific and relevant KPIs pertaining to women's football business. For the most part, these KPIs centre on the representation of women if football governance structures, and they tend to specify that a minimum proportion of key office holders should be female. For instance, FIFA's (2018) Women's Football Strategy sets out the following KPIs: "Every Member Association will have one spot on its Executive Committee dedicated to the interests of women and by 2026 have at least one woman seated, while by 2022, at least one-third of FIFA committee members will be women" (https://bit.ly/3Bv3MJG).

While the use of such quotas can be controversial, there is growing consensus that they have had a significant and largely positive impact on both democratic and corporate governance as they have become more widespread in the last 30 years. For instance, Hughes *et al*. (2017) assert that "after adoption, quotas have influenced women's numbers, the performance and outcomes of decision-making bodies, and broader public attitudes." (p. 331).

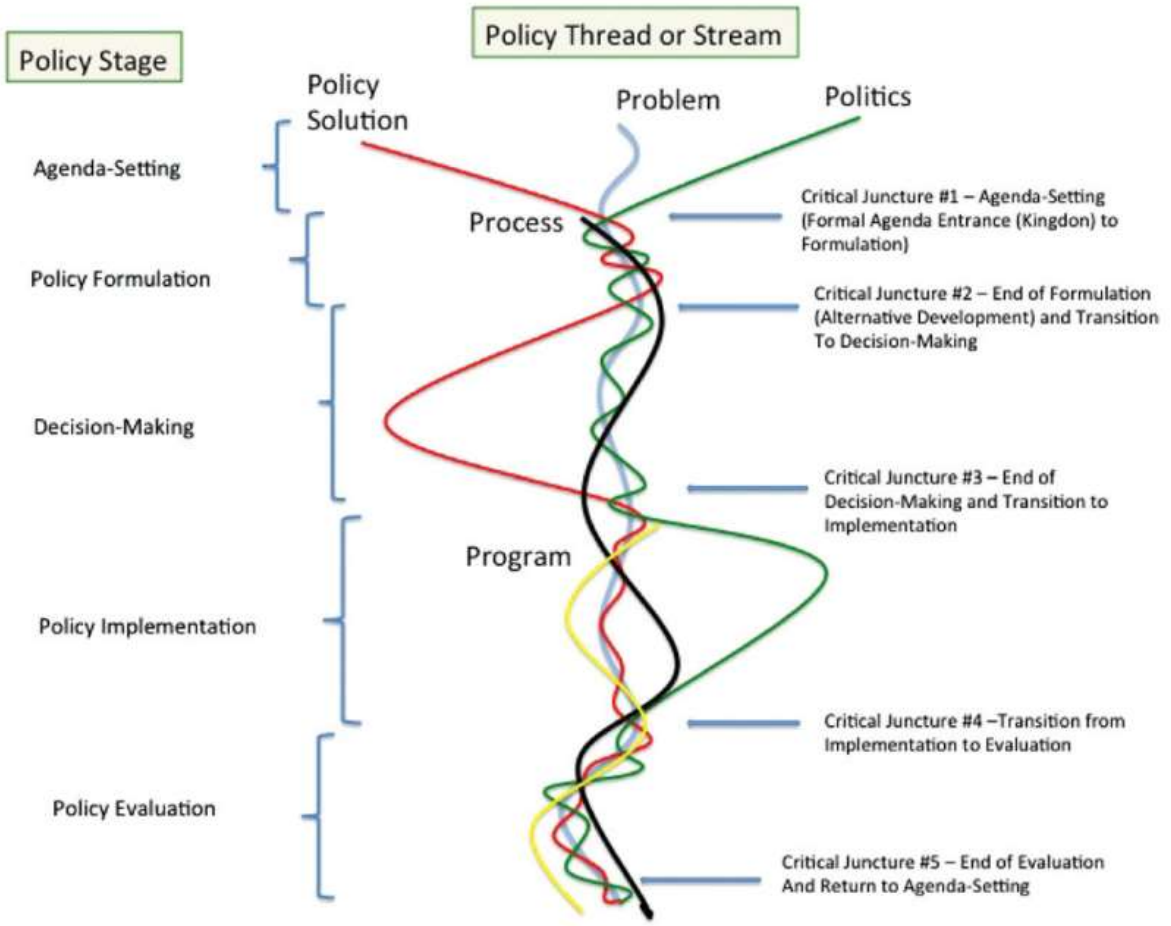
Having established how KPIs appear across different aspects of policy, affecting women's football business, let us now examine how they feature in the policymaking process – as this insight will allow us to understand when and how to leverage KPIs to best effect.

Section 5. Engaging with data, metrics and KPIs across the policymaking process

In this section, we demonstrate that understanding the mechanisms through which they emerge and become part of the policy process is a vital skill for engaging with women's football policy. Because of their centrality to driving and assessing existing policy, being able to make a 'case' in terms of existing KPIs can be hugely beneficial for women's football businesses engaging with policymakers. Furthermore, we will argue that, when existing policies are being evaluated, and, as new policies are being developed, there are opportunities to shape future policy dynamics by driving for the inclusion of new KPIs that best capture the value of women's football. Women's football businesses being able to engage with data and metrics in these moments is vital because, once embedded in policymaking, KPIs exert a significant effect on how policy is delivered and assessed in the medium term.

In order to develop this line of thought, we reproduce the five-stream framework of the policy process that was introduced in the first reading of this course in figure 3. Let us consider how data, metrics, and KPIs map on to this structure. At the agenda setting phase, data and metrics can be used to demonstrate that an issue needs policy attention. For instance, we have previously discussed the England Football squad's attempt to leverage their success in the 2022 Women's Euro to drive the UK's policy agenda. In their open letter, note their use of data and metrics around women's participation in football – they state that only 63 % of girls can play football in PE lessons. In Fair Game's (2022) report, data and metrics were also put to good use to frame both shortcomings and opportunities in existing policy – for instance, they note that female representation on English Club Boards is between 4.2 % and 11.3 % (depending on the league). They compare data on the fanbases of men's American Football (where women make up 47 % of the fanbase) to men's football in the UK (where women make up only 26 % of the fanbase) to demonstrate the commercial opportunities available to organisations that develop a more welcoming atmosphere for female fans. So, at the agenda-setting phase, data and metrics can be used for description or comparison to shape policy narratives.

Figure 3. The five-stream framework of the policy process



Source: Howlett *et al*., 2017, p. 73.

What is important to note here is the idea of 'path dependency' that can occur in any policy process. As Barnes *et al*. (2004) explain: "once a particular behaviour is embedded in organizations (for whatever reason), a strong *status quo* inertia may discourage other behaviour" (p. 371). The logic of path dependency, as it applies to our focus, is that, to the extent that a policy problem is framed using certain metrics at the agenda setting stage, these same metrics are often adopted as KPIs later in the process. So, for instance, data collected about female representation on boards or in football association can frame constitutive policy KPIs later in the policy process. Data about the gender distribution of a fanbase can also serve a similar role – i.e., a KPI might be established to drive towards a 40 % female fanbase for a football organisation by a specific deadline. This makes logical sense because it was how the issue was initially framed, but also practical sense in that groups proposing a policy solution have a ready-made data collection process and metric for adoption in the policy formulation and decision-making phases.

I raise this point here because it speaks to the key insight that I wish to share in this section – namely, that how you use data, metrics, and KPIs to engage with policy depends

significantly on what stage the policy process is in. As I will discuss in the next section, both FIFA and UEFA are approximately mid-way through their current strategic plans for women's football. As such, they have passed the decision-making phase of the policy process and are in the policy implementation phase, which will transition towards policy evaluation towards the end of the cycle. In these circumstances, the policy programme and associated KPIs have already been established and, as I have discussed, are resistant to change in the short term. In such a context, the key for engaging in policy with either FIFA or UEFA for women's football business is to align activities or initiatives with **already established KPIs**. From policymaker's perspective, this is the language in which policy engagement needs to be framed in order to draw their attention (and resources).

Understanding both this perspective and the data and metrics that underlie a given KPI will leave women's football businesses best positioned to be successful, in developing proposals, for policy engagement that meet the needs of policymakers. For example, a women's football business venture in 2022 seeking to gain support and/or resources for UEFA (or from a Member Association of UEFA) that centred on improving participation in the women's game, would do well to frame their proposal against UEFA's (2019b) participation KPI of 2.5 million registered football players by 2024. With this KPI established, other forms of participation (for instance, joining a casual game of street or park football) in football do not count in the same way as becoming a registered player from policymakers' perspective.

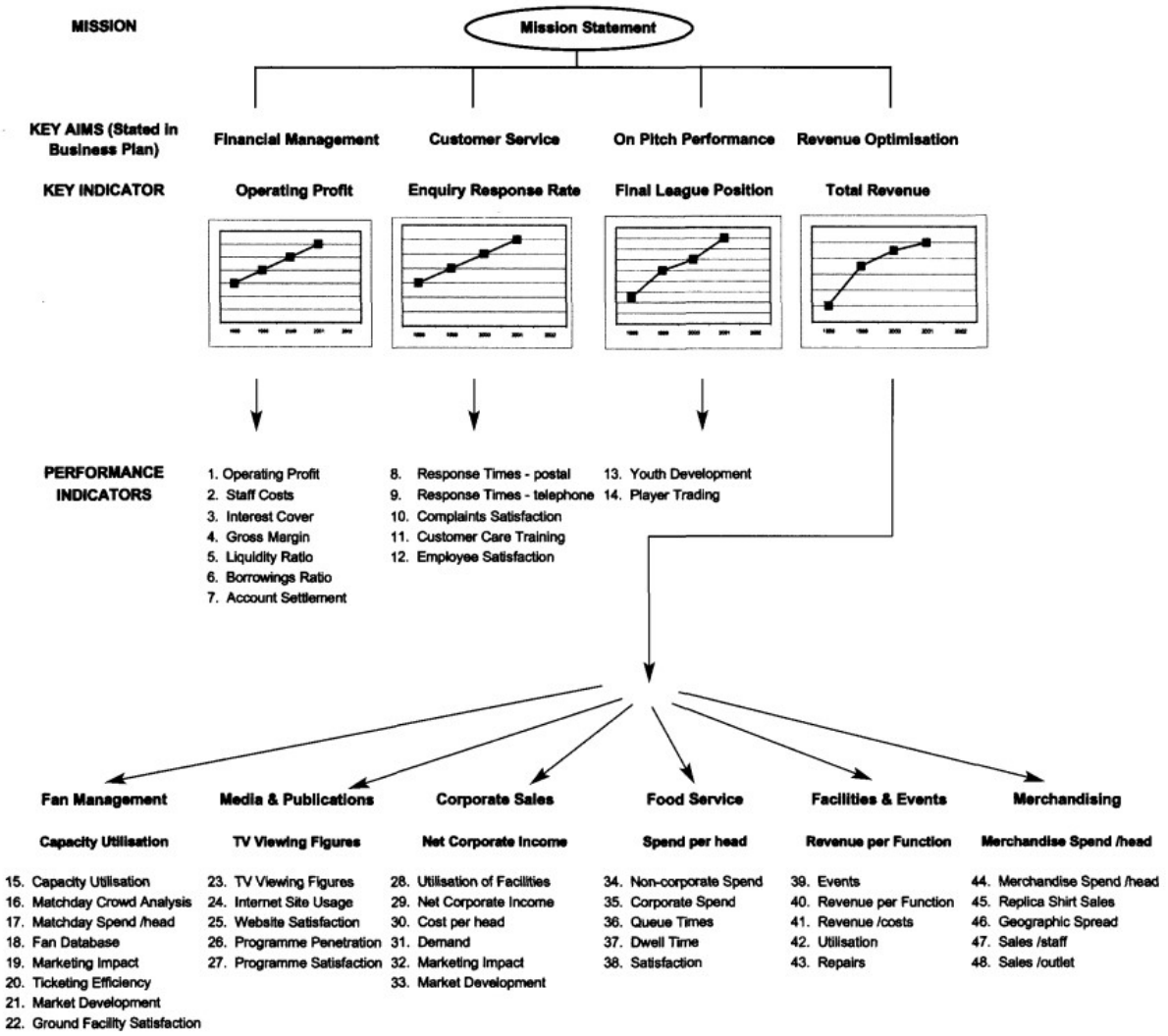
Section 6. KPIs for women's football business within and beyond sports organisations

In this section, we move from frameworks for understanding how policy in women's football business aligns with KPIs both across types of policy, and within the policy process, to exploring some more specific examples of established KPIs that are important in policies germane to women's football business. In order to do so, I begin by considering the role of KPIs within sports organisations – focusing on those that are to do with the health of the organisation generally (with a particular focus on commercial KPIs). I then move to discuss important KPIs embedded in policies and policy strategies of key governance actors in the women's football policy network. Throughout, these examples are used to develop an appreciation of the role of data, metrics, and KPIs in application.

This analysis begins with a discussion of some common KPIs within football organisations that are to do with commercial performance. An excellent resource for understanding both the specific KPIs common across a range of football organisations and how they align with key business aims is provided by FA (2002), with the key visualisation from that report reproduced in figure 4. As you can see, revenue optimisation represents the most significant source of metrics, which is unsurprising given the 'bottom line' of commercial viability that clubs must pay attention to, as well as the fact that the bulk of club operations can be located within this category. For those of you taking this course, who are already working within a football organisation, it is of vital importance that you familiarise yourself with the specific KPIs that are employed in managing that

operation. Not only will this make you a more effective operator in general within that organisation, but it will allow you to develop activities and proposals that are aligned with the organisation's KPIs. In particular, be clear to link your projects to specific KPIs – the more granular your analysis, the more likely your proposal will be to gain traction within the organisation.

Figure 4. KPIs in football clubs and their alignment with business aims



Source: The Football Association, 2002, p. 5.

Many football organisations will have already adopted KPIs that speak more directly to growing the women's professional game. Often, the broad frameworks within which these KPIs are embedded are guided by national associations. We can explore another example from the English Football Association, which released its strategy document for the women's professional game (2021-2024) in 2021. The headline targets in this document are reproduced in figure 5. Again, we can see evidence of a connection to the more generic KPIs for football organisations laid out in figure 4.

Figure 5. Headline targets/KPIs from the Football Association's (2021) women's professional game strategy (2021-2024)

HEADLINE TARGETS:

Target	Starting point	Success measure
Average attendance for the BFA WSL	3,092	6,000
Average attendance for the FA WC	410	1,000
Sell out Wembley Stadium for the Vitality Women's FA Cup Final	2018/19: 43,264 2019/20: No attendance due to Covid-19 pandemic 2020/21: Final to be played December 2021	A sell-out Wembley for the Vitality Women's FA Cup Final
The most-followed women's football league in the world on social media	#2	#1
One English club winner of UEFA Champions League and England win the FIFA Women's World Cup	English Club UEFA Champions League positioning – runners-up FIFA Women's World Cup 2019 – 4th	English Club UEFA Champions League winners FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 winners
Lead partnerships sold for BFA WSL, FA WC and VWFAC	BFA WSL and Women's FA Cup title partnerships sold	100% sold
% players transitioning from Academies into BFA WSL/ FA WC senior teams	TBC*	TBC*
% increase in player progression measures	TBC*	TBC*
% increase in the number of players from the most deprived wards in the country	TBC*	TBC*

To be set post Player Pathway pilot years (2021/22)

Source: Women's Football Strategy, 2019, https://bit.ly/3Bv3MJG.

Finally, it is worthwhile to understand the global women's football strategy currently being pursued by FIFA (2019) in some detail in terms of KPIs. This strategy encompasses participation, the commercial value of the women's game, and building the necessary governance and regulatory foundations to drive the women's game forward. The 'game plan' developed in this document provides an array of KPIs across these domains, with examples including doubling the number of member associations with organised women's and girls' youth leagues; developing and implementing a football in schools programme, and significantly increasing the number of qualified female coaches working in the game. In terms of exploring specific strategies beyond those reviewed in this

reading, UEFA (2019a) provides an extensive list of recent strategies, reproduced in figure 6 below. All of these strategies include KPIs that can be leveraged to create significant opportunities in women's football business – in each case, developing activities and proposals that 'speak the language' of these KPIs is likely to prove advantageous.

Figure 6. List of example strategies

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL	ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION
1. **FIFA Women's Football Strategy**	FIFA	Realising the objectives of FIFA 2.0
2. **UEFA Time for Action**	UEFA	Women's Football Strategy, 2019–24
3. **Gender Equality Plan 2019**	Football Federation Australia	Closing the gap and transforming men's and women's football into footbALL
4. **Women's Football Strategic Plan**	CONCACAF	Strategic plan overview and key actions, 2019
5. **The Gameplan for Growth**	The Football Association	England's strategy for women's and girls' football, 2017–20
6. **The World At Our Feet**	Royal Belgian Football Association	Belgium's strategy for women's football, 2019–24
7. **Time To Fly Higher**	Football Association of Moldova	Moldova's strategy for women's and girls' football, 2018–22
8. **Football in the Heart of Latvia**	Latvian Football Federation	Strategy development guide

OVERARCHING FOOTBALL STRATEGIES	ORGANISATION	DESCRIPTION
9. **Together We Are Football**	Romanian Football Federation	Romania's strategic plan, 2017–20
10. **Scotland United a 2020 Vision**	Scottish Football Association	Scotland's strategic plan, 2015–20
11. **Promoting, Fostering and Developing Football For All**	Irish Football Association	Northern Ireland's strategic plan 2017–22
12. **We Are Football – Whole of Football Plan**	Football Federation Australia	Australia's strategic plan, 2017–22
13. **National Facilities Strategy Update**	New Zealand Football	New Zealand's strategy update, June 2016

Source: UEFA, 2019a, https://bit.ly/3Bv3MJG.

Section 7. Advocating for new KPIs in women's football business policy

In this penultimate section, we will look at opportunities to develop and advocate for new KPIs in women's football business policy. Why should this be a focus for women's football business? In the first place, policy in the domain of women's football business sits at the intersection of a complex array of social, commercial, and mental/physical health priorities. At the current state of development, KPIs in women's football policy can fall short of addressing many of the less obvious and/or visible barriers to the development of the women's game. For instance, the Women in Football professional network has gathered extensive data on the experiences of female professionals in the football industry; based on a survey of over 4,000 members they report 66 % of women having experienced or witnessed sexism in the workplace (while only 12 % reported such sexism), and 82 % having experienced significant obstacles to their career in football because of gender. Currently, there are few KPIs in women's football policy designed to drive these numbers down. Similarly, Fair Game's (2022) report focused on metrics about the media visibility of female football players and journalists, as well as outlining data about the proportion of female fans who experienced sexist abuse in stadia. Finally, there is emerging research in the sphere of player wellbeing, with growing evidence that "females experience higher rates of mental ill-health compared to elite male athletes and likely encounter gender-specific stressors which can negatively impact mental health (e.g. sexualisation)" (Perry *et al.*, 2022, p. 2).

Just as emerging metrics and (potentially) KPIs can be useful in combatting the barriers to growth in women's football, and identifying potential problems to be addressed in its management, they can also be developed to explore the considerable societal, mental and physical health, and commercial impacts of the women's game. While raw participation numbers are a useful starting point (particularly for regional or global-level strategies), KPIs that focus on more bespoke objectives can and should be developed in the near-future to allow all policy actors in the women's football business governance network to understand the value of the sport. In some cases, this may require sustained research, employing the services of reputable research agencies with transparent, replicable methodologies.

It is my belief that the next generation of KPIs in women's football will revolve around these more difficult-to-measure, but highly valuable outcomes. In particular, medium to long-term studies of the professional and social trajectories of players and fans of women's football should be developed to capture the capacity of the game to build physical and mental health, provide a means of community integration and the development of team working and even academic skills. Ultimately, to fully 'sell' the value of women's football to policymakers within and beyond the world of football, it will be necessary to create innovative data and metrics that can emerge as KPIs in policy.

In order to understand how best to be part of such a change, it is useful to focus on governance actors which are nearing the end of the policy cycle or at the beginning of a new cycle. Where this is the case, it can be very useful to partner with professional researchers and organisations – academia is a particularly rich source of such partners (indeed, many academic researchers are actively seeking to develop partnerships that facilitate their work having a social and economic impact). Doing this groundwork, while representing an upfront cost, can be of significant medium-term benefit, once established. KPIs tend to have a sustained effect on the development of policy.

Section 8. Conclusions and takeaways

This reading has developed a rather technical perspective on policy in women's football business, looking at the data, metrics, and KPIs that both inform and drive policy. The key message of the reading is that understanding existing KPIs, as well as the wider process through which KPIs are developed from data and integrated into policymaking, is a worthwhile endeavour for any professional working in women's football business. In the first place, I showed that KPIs can be found in the policies of key governance actors in the world of women's football business, and that they extend across all four types of policy: regulatory, distributive, redistributive, and constitutive. Furthermore, I demonstrated how, once a policy programme is in operation – individuals and organisations can harness the power of KPIs to develop activities and projects that are best-placed to attract support from governance actors. It is a matter of framing things in a language that these actors are incentivised to understand.

At a more ambitious level, I also advocated for the development of a new generation of KPIs surrounding women's football business – these can 'layer on' to existing goals, but can serve both to address the more subtle issues affecting the women's game and to fully demonstrate the value created by projects and activities undertaken by women's football business. This type of work is most likely to succeed when it is targeted at policymakers, either coming towards the end of a policy process or beginning a new one. It will require partnering with individuals and agencies with significant expertise in social research methods, and the investment of both time and financial resources.

Of course, doing this is not a straightforward task, and it should be seen in the light of a wider, strategic approach to managing policy in women's football business. In the next, final, reading for this course, I will outline the key components of such a strategy and provide a set of tools and insights that you can take forward in your professional life to be able to develop an individualised, strategic response to policy in women's football business.

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