



BUILDING A BUSINESS MODEL FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BULGARIAN MINI FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (BASED ON GLOBAL EXPERIENCE)

D. Ilieva*, M. Dimitrov

National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski," Sofia, Bulgaria

ABSTRACT

This report examines the possibilities for developing a successful business model for the management of the Bulgarian MiniFootball Association (BMFA) by analyzing successful global practices in administering similar sports organizations.

The purpose of the study is to identify key elements from international experience that can be adapted and applied in the Bulgarian context to enhance organizational effectiveness, financial sustainability, and the promotion of minifootball in the country.

Using **methods** to analyze the existing business model, case studies from international minifootball organizations, and analysis of specific conditions in Bulgaria, the study identifies the key elements of a successful business model. The approaches include organizational structure, revenue generation strategies, models for competitive activity development, marketing and communication strategies, as well as good governance and control practices.

The results indicate that integrating innovations in the management of BMFA and engaging with local communities is essential for the growth of minifootball. Building a management business model will focus on optimizing the organizational structure, developing innovative funding strategies, improving the quality of competitions, expanding the fan base, and increasing public interest in minifootball in Bulgaria.

In conclusion, the study would contribute to the strategic development of BMFA and its transformation into a leading and sustainable national sports organization.

Keywords: management, business, sports, minifootball

INTRODUCTION

Minifootball began to develop as a distinct sporting discipline in the second half of the 20th century, offering a fast and affordable version of the traditional game of football (1). According to Vladimir Guba's research, minifootball quickly established itself as a popular form of sport for urban environments due to the possibility of quick organisation and short matches (2). Minifootball emerged as an accessible and effective way to promote physical activity and social integration. This sport is characterised by smaller pitches and simplified rules, providing the opportunity for people of all ages and fitness levels to participate (3).

The World Minifootball Federation (WMF) is a key player in standardising and promoting the

sport. The introduction of uniform rules and the creation of international competitions organised under the auspices of the WMF have contributed to the global spread of minifootball (4).

In recent years, there has been a steady trend in Europe to conduct applied research related to the governance of sports organisations - their establishment, functioning, structure and interaction with the external environment (5). Particular attention has been paid to resource provision - human, financial, material and information resources - and to the quality of management processes (6). The analyses in these studies confirm the need for clearer regulation, strategic programming and accountability, and also highlight the role of models as a basis for diagnosis, forecasting and informed decision-making. In this context, modelling is being established as a scientific and practical tool to ensure balanced and effective governance in sport (7).

**Correspondence to: Desislava Ilieva, National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski," Sofia, Bulgaria, E-mail: desislava.ilieva@nsa.bg*

METHODS

This study examines the opportunities for the development of minifootball in Bulgaria by analysing the business model of the Bulgarian Minifootball Association (BAMF) in the context of the experience of the European Minifootball Federation (EMF) and the World Minifootball Federation (WMF).

The aim is to identify key strategies and practices that could be adapted and applied in the Bulgarian context in order to support the sustainable development of minifootball and promote active lifestyles among the population.

The analysis of the results is structured in two main areas. The first one covers a survey of the opinions of Bulgarian professionals involved in the management of the Bulgarian Minifootball Association. For this purpose, a specialised expert survey was developed, containing 20 indicators divided into two main areas: firstly, building a profile of the experts involved in the Association's system, and secondly, an expert assessment of key marketing aspects related to its management and development as an overall structure.

RESULTS

The study involved 36 experts—members of the executive board of the Bulgarian Minifootball Association, as well as representatives from all regional structures across the country operating under its jurisdiction. Within the first analytical

strand an attempt was made to build an objective image of the expert staff working for the promotion and development of the Bulgarian MiniFootball Association. Such an analytical approach allows to reveal the real state of staffing in the system, as well as to identify potential resources and opportunities for improvement of the management process.

From the research the following profile could be made of the experts managing organizations in different towns (Lovech, Plovdiv, Varna, Kardzhali, Sofia, Yambol, Veliko Tarnovo, Burgas) as well as the Bulgarian Minifootball Association. The respondents are mostly male - 94.4%, young people between 26 and 35 years - 55.6% and middle aged 36-45 years (33.3%), graduates of higher education (66.6%) and without extensive professional experience (2-5 years). This profile could be a good basis for the future staff development of the Bulgarian Minifootball Association.

The analysis of **Figure 1** shows a clear trend - the experts who participated in the survey are permanently and actively involved mainly in the management of functional processes in local sports organizations in Bulgaria. A significant number of them combine this activity with additional functions in the Bulgarian Football Union (BFS), which indicates an extended scope of their expertise and influence in the field of football in general.

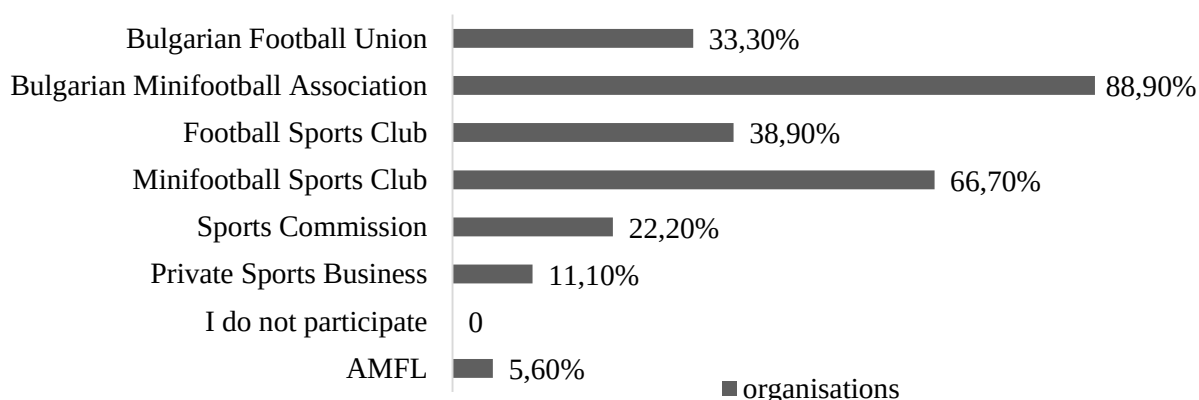


Figure 1. Engagement in the work of institutions.

*The sum of the percentages exceeds 100 because respondents were allowed more than one answer.

The analysis of the responses on the position held in the field of sport further highlights the qualifications and capacity of the experts involved in the survey. In addition to chairpersons and coaches, the survey also included managers, organisers, BAMF regional representatives, referee committee members,

and sports medicine and media professionals. The presence of people combining several roles (e.g., football club director, BAMF regional manager, coach and athlete) further highlights the commitment and multifunctionality of the experts involved in the analysis.

The analysis of the responses on involvement in the drafting of sport-related documents reveals that the highest proportion of experts (66.7%) are involved at the regional/municipal level, highlighting the importance of local regulation for the development of sport and the role of municipalities and regions in creating favourable conditions for sporting activities. In

addition, a significant number of respondents were involved in the drafting of documents at the institutional (27.8%) and national (22.2%) levels, indicating a contribution to both the regulation of sport in specific organisations and national policies. International involvement was the lowest (11.1%), which is expected (**Figure 2**).

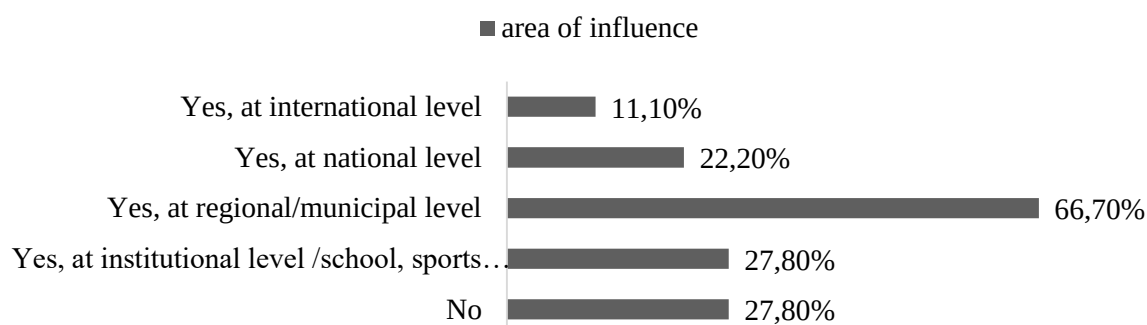


Figure 2. Involvement in the preparation of documents /laws, regulations, ordinances, decrees, etc./ related to the implementation of activities in the field of sports.

It is important to note that more regional experts need to be involved in the process of drafting national regulations and bylaws in order to better reflect the needs and specificities of local sport communities and to ensure more effective implementation of national sport policy.

Responses on involvement in the organisation of sport events/tournaments revealed that the highest proportion of experts (83.3%) were actively involved at the regional/municipal

level, highlighting the importance of local sport events in developing sport and getting more people into physical activity (**Figure 3**). Municipalities and regions has an important role in supporting them and in creating favourable conditions for them to take place. In addition, a significant number of respondents were involved in the organization of events at the national (61.1%) and institutional (50%) levels, indicating experience in preparing and conducting sport forums of different scales.

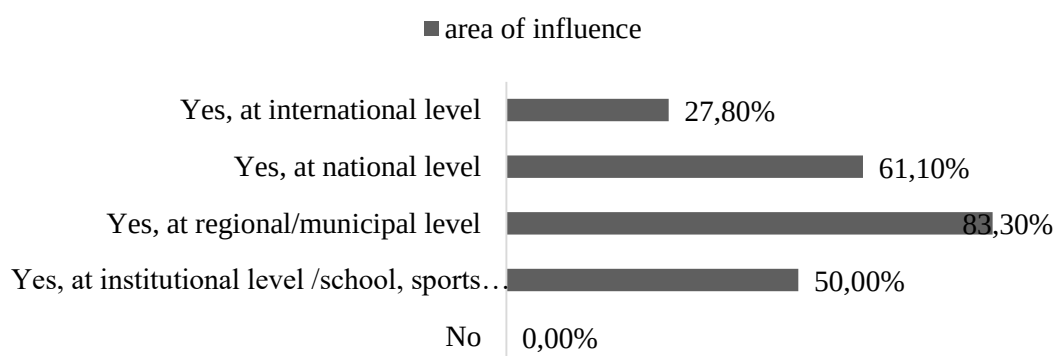


Figure 3. Involvement in the preliminary or operational work of a sport event/tournament.

The experience of experts in the organisation of national events is a valuable resource that should be used to improve the quality and effectiveness of national sports forums.

According to the experts who participated in the survey, the Bulgarian Minifootball Association (BAMF) has a leading role in the development of minifootball in Bulgaria (66.7%), followed by sports clubs (50%), private companies and

organisations (44.4%) and the Bulgarian Football Union (38.9%). Governmental bodies and municipalities are perceived as less influential, while other NGOs have an insignificant share. The findings suggest that the advancement of minifootball in Bulgaria is predominantly driven by the Bulgarian Minifootball Association (BAMF) and private sector initiatives, with governmental support not being regarded as a decisive or strategic contributor (**Figure 4**).

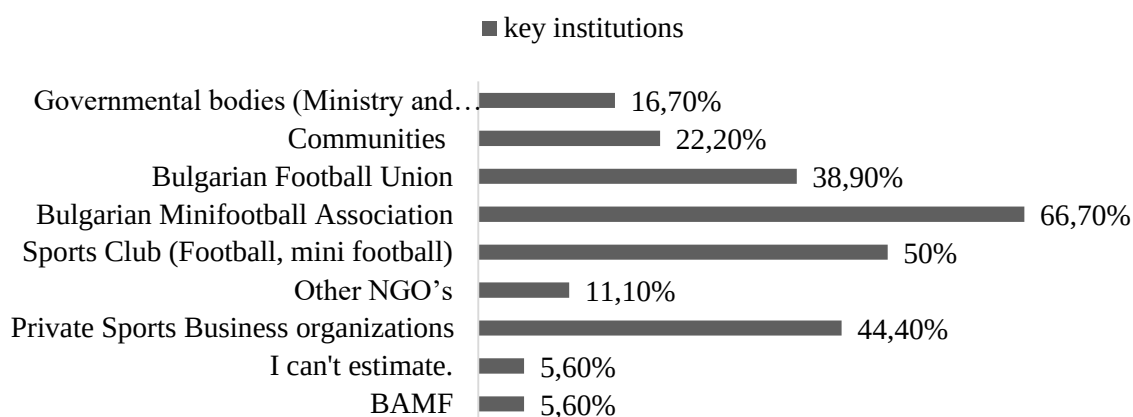


Figure 4. Importance for the development of minifootball in Bulgaria.

*The sum of the percentages exceeds 100 because respondents were allowed more than one answer.

The key role of BAMF can be explained by its function as a competition organiser, personnel trainer and promoter of minifootball in the country. Also, the important role of sports clubs and private companies and organisations reflects the growing trend of commercialisation of the sport and the search for alternative sources of funding. On the other hand, the lesser involvement of governmental bodies and municipalities may be related to the lack of

sufficient financial resources, insufficient attention to minifootball or inefficient management of sports infrastructure.

According to the experts who participated in the study, the management and development of minifootball in Bulgaria should be focused mainly on achieving social and health objectives.

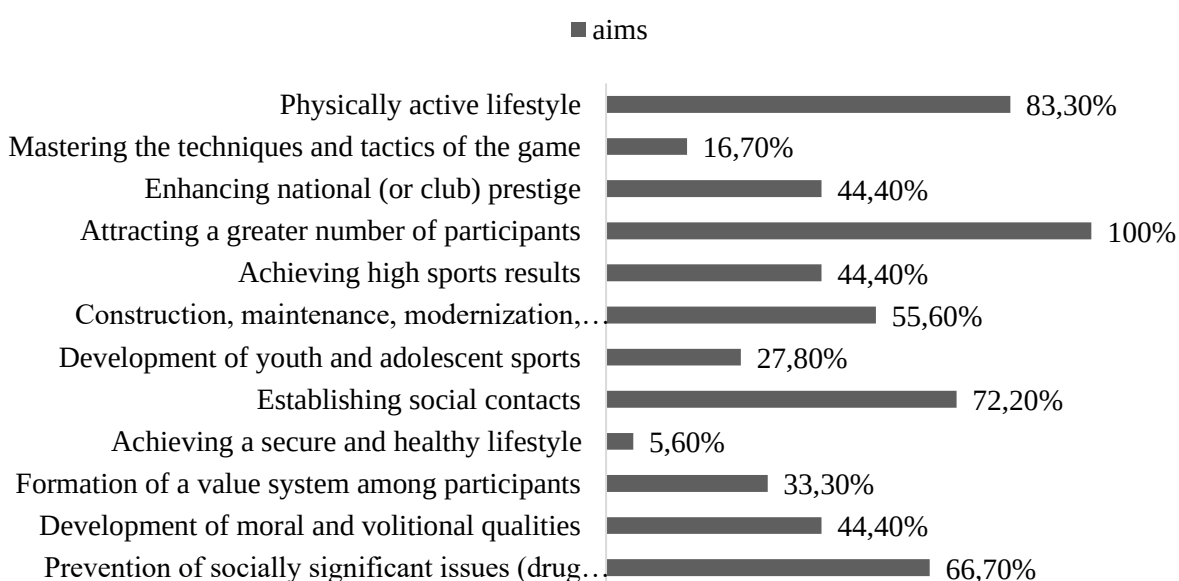


Figure 5. Key objectives in the management and development of minifootball.

Figure 5 shows that the management and development of minifootball in Bulgaria should be based on the principles of social responsibility and be aimed at achieving a wide range of goals related to health, socialisation and values formation. It is necessary to encourage participation of people of all ages and social groups, to provide good conditions

for training and competitions and to use the potential of minifootball for prevention against significant social problems.

The analysis of the responses to the question on the main problems in the development of minifootball at club level reveals a clear picture of the challenges faced by clubs and local organisations.

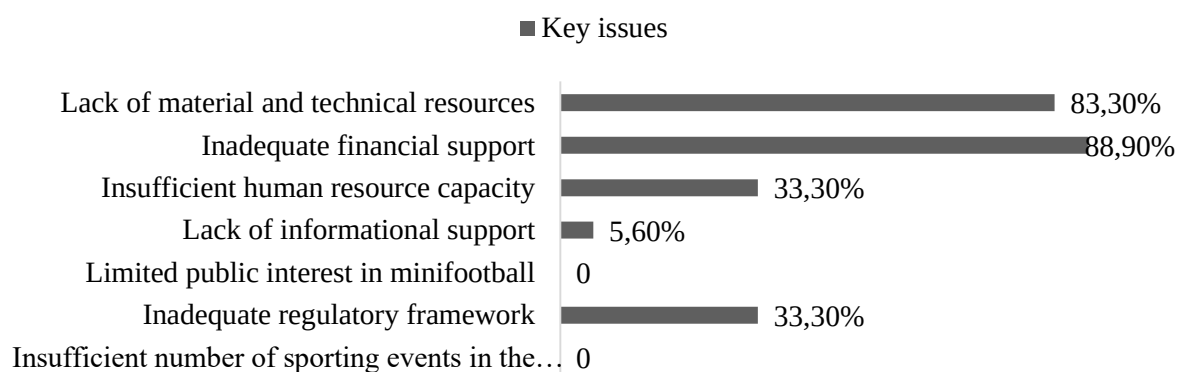


Figure 6. Key issues affecting the development of minifootball at the grassroots and club level.

The figure shows that the development of minifootball at club level is mainly hindered by financial (88.9%) and material and technical problems (83.3%). The second place is occupied by the problems related to the personnel provision and regulations - 33.3%. In order to overcome these challenges, it is necessary to take measures to ensure sustainable financing of clubs, improve the material facilities and qualification of staff and improve the regulatory framework (**Figure 6**).

The analysis of the responses to the question on the main sources of funding for club-level activities in minifootball reveals that clubs

mainly rely on sponsorship/donation (83.3%) and membership fees (55.6%). This shows that clubs are dependent on external sources of funding and the support of their members.

Other sources of funding such as international, national and regional programmes for the development of minifootball, marketing (sale of sporting events, services, fan merchandise, etc.), TV rights and transfer of athletes were rated as unimportant (11.1% each). This indicates that clubs are not using the full potential of these alternative funding sources (**Figure 7**).

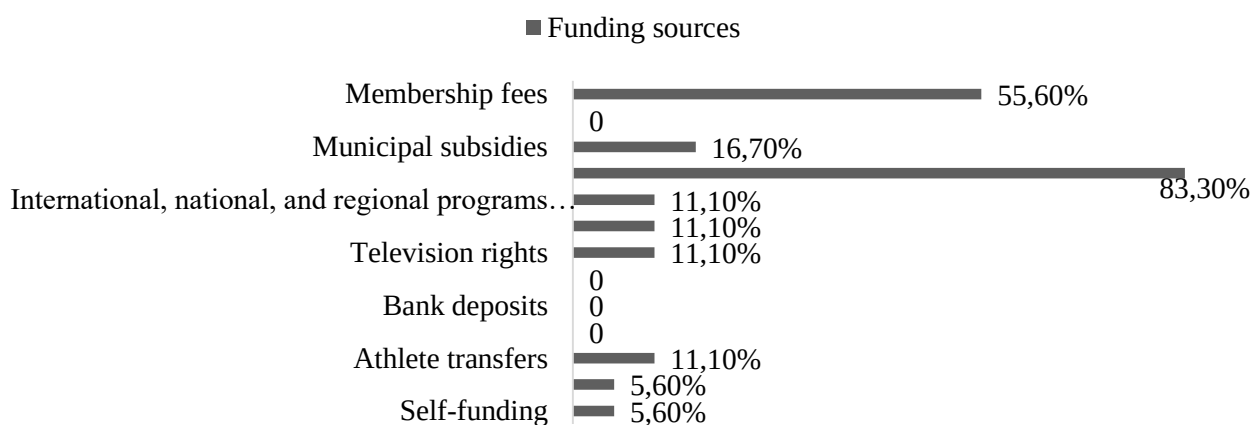


Figure 7. Main sources of funding at the club level.

Figure 7 shows that steps need to be taken to ensure more sustainable funding for clubs and to diversify funding sources, including through encouraging sponsorship, using marketing and advertising, seeking European and national programmes and improving ownership management.

The analysis of the structure of the financial costs of the minifootball clubs reveals that for

most clubs the costs for salaries and insurance represent a small share of the total budget, less than 25%.

Significant costs are allocated to sports facility rentals, which are mainly in the 25-50% range. On the other hand, costs for athlete treatment, sports equipment, sports equipment and supplies, administrative activities, training camps, membership fees, advertising and

consumables (electricity, water, heating, etc.) are usually less than 25% of total costs. This points to a limited budget and possibly insufficient funding for important aspects of the clubs' activities. The exception is fees and commissions, where for a large proportion of clubs expenditure is above 75%.

Overall, the analysis highlights the need to provide better funding for minifootball clubs and optimise their cost structure.

In the area of communication strategies of sports clubs, the analysis reveals a strong

orientation towards social networks (**Figure 8**). Facebook is the leader (94.4%), making it the main communication channel for most clubs. Instagram is also popular (55.6%), with visual content having an important role. TikTok is gaining popularity (50%), indicating that clubs are targeting a younger audience and using short videos. Twitter is not a popular channel for disseminating information (0%). Google (11.1%) and E-mail (16.7%) are little used. A small proportion of clubs rely on their own website (5.6%).

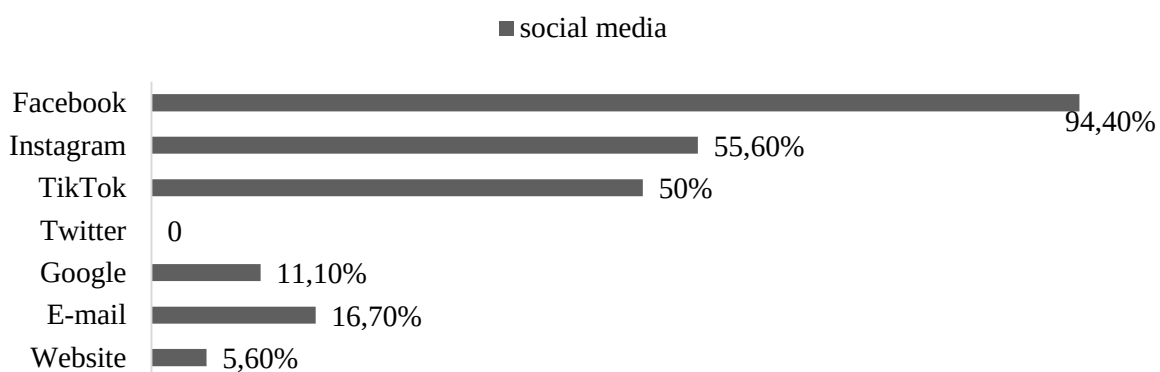


Figure 8. Information dissemination channels used by the sports club.

These results show that minifootball clubs in Bulgaria are focused on social networks as the main channels for communication and for reaching their audience. Facebook is the dominant platform, but Instagram and TikTok are also important for reaching younger audiences. Traditional channels such as Google, E-mail and website are not actively used. The lack of use of Twitter can be explained by the fact that this platform is more popular in other countries than in Bulgaria.

In general, the communication strategies of the Bulgarian minifootball clubs are focused on social networks and the use of visual content such as photos and videos. This reflects trends in modern communication and the need to reach audiences through the channels they most actively use.

Expert insight highlights several key areas where change is not just desirable, but imperative. Three areas stand out with equal weight, identified by the majority of respondents (83.3%): regulating uniform standards, improving infrastructure and ensuring stable funding. These three aspects were perceived as essential for building a sustainable and competitive system for the development of minifootball.

The analysis of the results shows that the leadership of the organisations are actively working for the development of minifootball in Bulgaria, but there are opportunities for improvement by applying successful international practices. EMF and WMF offer valuable experience in organising competitions, attracting sponsors and communicating with fans.

The European Mini-Football Federation (EMF) was founded in 2012 and aims to promote, manage and develop minifootball in Europe based on the following key aspects as a tool for positive social development (5).

- Financial sustainability by attracting funding from various sources, including the European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme. In 2018, the EMF organised events such as the Mini4EU festival, which promotes sport among young people.
- Coordination and dissemination of good practice, through a partnership organisational structure with national and regional associations as full members.
- A value system including participation, fun, well-being and sportsmanship, with the motto "YOU PLAY". This motto reflects the EMF's commitment to providing opportunities for

everyone to play minifootball, regardless of age, gender or fitness level.

The World Minifootball Federation (WMF) is the global governing body, founded in 2008, with 144 national associations. The WMF organises the most important international competitions, including the World Championships, the Continental Cup and the Women's World Cup. We could distinguish the following key directions as a factor for the development of minifootball worldwide (4).

- The WMF is a structure with global influence in organising tournaments and events that attract participants from different countries, promoting cultural exchange and understanding between nations.

- The WMF focuses on the development of minifootball at all levels, from amateur to professional. The federation supports national associations and helps them to develop training programmes for coaches and referees.

This study presents a graphical model that brings together all the data from the studies and tries to resolve existing or possible negative situations in the development of minifootball in Bulgaria (8-9). The governance model of European and World Minifootball Association appears as a tool in the strategic planning process for the development of the Bulgarian Minifootball Association and the promotion of this sport at the national level (**Figure 9**).

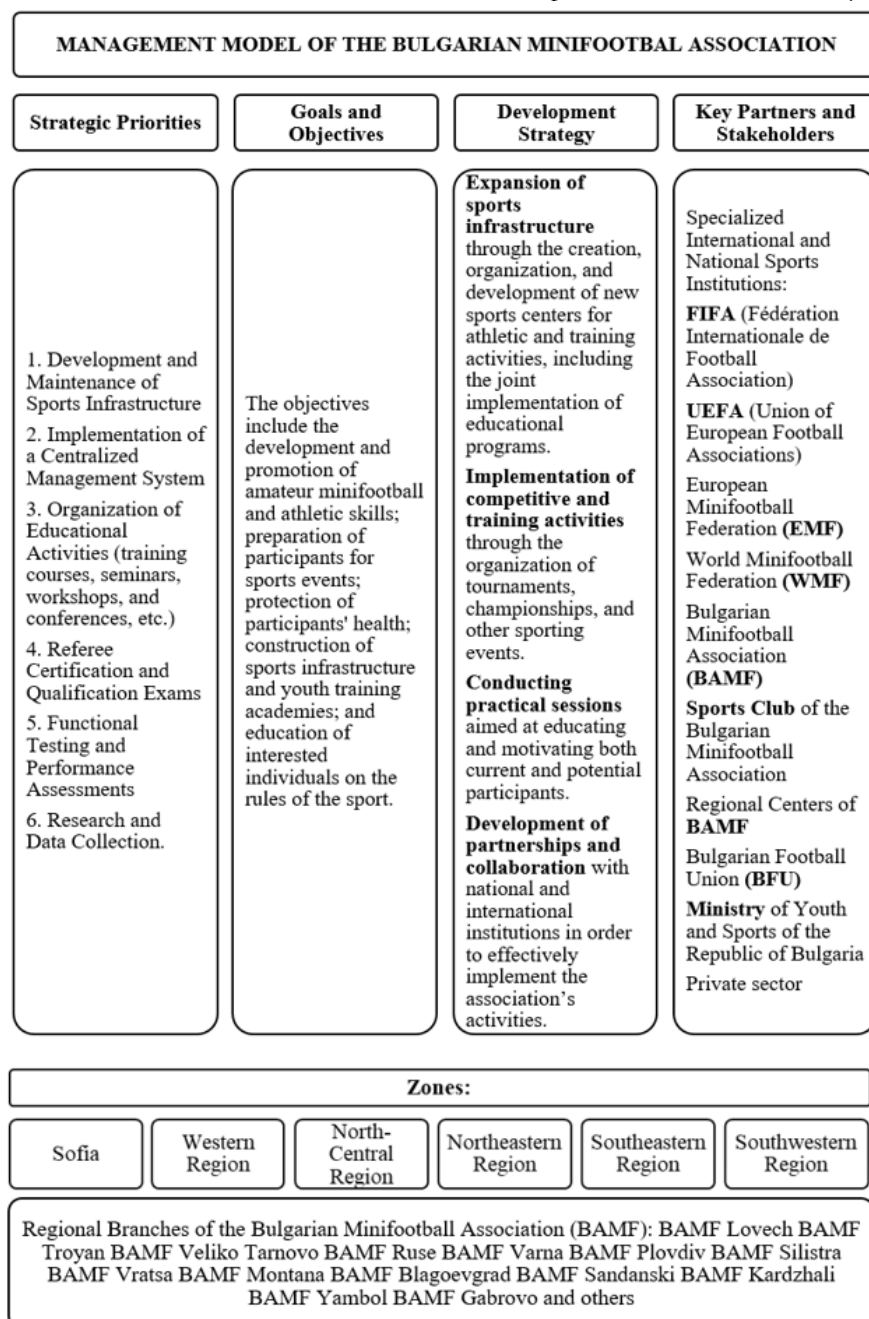


Figure 9. Management Model of the Bulgarian Minifootball Association.

DISCUSSION

Through the application of the international experience in Bulgaria, the following recommendations for the development of BAMF have been identified based on the analysis:

- Optimise the organisational structure: the BAMF could benefit from the experience of the EMF and WMF by establishing clear rules and procedures for the management of clubs and leagues. Clear roles and responsibilities need to be defined for the different levels of management and effective communication between them needs to be ensured.
- Diversification of funding sources: the WMF needs to implement fundraising strategies, including sponsorships, membership fees and the generation of revenue from media rights. Both the EMF and WMF have been successful in attracting sponsors from different sectors, allowing for funding of events and sports development programmes.
- Improving the quality of competitions: the WMF must ensure professional refereeing and compliance with the rules to ensure fair and competitive play. There is a need to invest in the training of referees and to introduce quality control systems.
- Expanding the fan base: BAMF can use social media and other communication channels to attract fans. It is important to create attractive content and organise events to engage the audience.
- Cooperation with local municipalities: BAMF should work closely with local municipalities to organise tournaments and events in partnership. This will help promote minifootball to the general public and provide access to sports facilities.
- Youth Programmes: BAMF should develop youth programmes to encourage children and youth participation in minifootball. This will ensure sustainable development of the sport and help form healthy habits among the younger generation.

CONCLUSION

The present study may contribute to the strategic development of the Bulgarian Minifootball Association (BAMF), supporting its transformation into a leading and sustainable sports organization at the national level. This would enable the establishment of a successful management business model for BAMF, grounded in both the analysis of international best practices and the insights provided by Bulgarian experts. By implementing the existing measures, the sustainable development of minifootball in Bulgaria could be achieved and it could become a sport that promotes health, socialization and physical activity among the population.

REFERENCES

1. Arislanov, Ilkhom Tashtemirovich. "MANAGEMENT OF THE TRAINING OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED ATHLETES IN MINI-FOOTBALL." *American Journal of Innovation in Science Research and Development* 2.2 (2025): 10-14.
2. Guba, Vladimir. Theory and methodology of mini-soccer (futsal). Liter, 2017.
3. Axmuratovich, Allaev Sherkul, and Mukimjonov Mirziyo. "MINI-FOOTBALL AS A MEANS OF COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS." *The Conference Hub*. 2025.
4. <https://www.wmfworldcup.com/>, accessed 25 March 2025.
5. <https://www.minifootball.eu/>, accessed 06 April 2025.
6. Dimitrov, I. PEST analysis of the management of Taekwondo WT in Bulgaria. *Yearbook of the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski"*. Volume 2. Sofia, NSA PRESS, ISSN 2682-9908, 2022.
7. Dimitrov, I. & Draganov, G. Marketing factors in the development and management of Taekwondo WT in Bulgaria. *Yearbook of the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski"*. Volume 1. Sofia, NSA PRESS, ISSN 2682-9908, 2020. <https://minifootball.bg/>, accessed 10 April 2025.
8. <https://bamf.bg/>, accessed 10 April 2025.