

Minutes

132nd Annual General Meeting of The International Football Association Board





Attendees



___ attended by conference call

FIFA

Gianni Infantino (President) David Chung (Vice President) Victor Montagliani (Vice President) Ramon Jesurun (Council Member) Fatma Samoura (Secretary General) Zvonimir Boban (Deputy General Secretary) Pierluigi Collina (Referee Committee Chairman) Marco van Basten (Chief Officer Technical Development) Massimo Busacca (Head of Refereeing) Johannes Holzmüller (Head of Football Technology Innovation)

Mattias Grafström (Chief of President's

The IFAB

Office)

Lukas Brud (Secretary) David Elleray (Technical Director)

Scottish FA

Alan McRae (President) Rod Petrie (Vice President) Ian Maxwell (Main Board Member) Andrew McKinlay (Chief Executive interim) John Fleming (Head of Referee Operations)

Irish FA

David Martin (President) Jack Grundie (First Deputy President) Crawford Wilson (Second Deputy President) Patrick Nelson (Chief Executive) William Campbell (Head of CEO office)

FA of Wales

David Griffiths (President) David Jones (Vice President) Kieran O'Connor (Vice President) Jonathan Ford (Chief Executive) Ray Ellingham (Referees Manager)

The FA

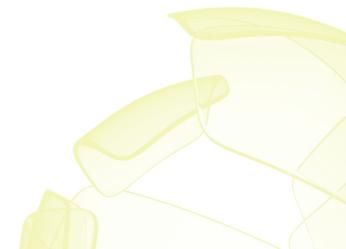
Greg Clarke (Chairman) Martin Glenn (Chief Executive) Neale Barry (Head of Refereeing) Louise Fyans (Head of Communication)

Other attendees

Boudien Broekhuis (The IFAB) Dirk Schlemmer (The IFAB) Tom Gorissen (FIFA) Naoise King (FIFA) Giovanni Marti (FIFA) Giancarlo Dapoto (FIFA) Fabrice Jouhaud (FIFA)

KU Leuven

Werner Helsen Thibaud Nijssen Jochim Spitz

















I./II./III. Welcome, chairman's remarks, and roll call

The President of FIFA, Gianni Infantino (GI) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to Home of FIFA in Zurich. He emphasised the importance of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The IFAB whose outcome always has a direct impact on billions of people around the world who are playing or watching football and caring about the game. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the IFAB members to encourage and increase participation by taking the right decisions for football.

GI thanked everyone for attending this important meeting and reflected on his first week in office with the 2016 IFAB AGM and the start of the VAR experiment. He stressed that the requests for video assistance for referees came from all over the world and that everyone should realise the importance of the decision to be taken about Video Assistant Referees (VAR).

The Secretary of The IFAB, Lukas Brud (LB), introduced everyone present and informed the meeting that, because of travel disruption, several delegation members would join via conference call.

IV. Approval of the Agenda

The members unanimously approved the agenda of the meeting.

V. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous AGM on 3 March 2017 were unanimously approved.

VI. Agenda containing the items to be discussed and enclosures

1. Laws of the Game 2017/18

The Technical Director of The IFAB, David Elleray (DE), stated that the overall feedback on the major Law revision has been very positive. The greater flexibility given to national FAs in the Modifications section, for example the number of substitutions and the introduction of temporary dismissals ('sin bins') at lower levels has been especially welcomed. DE stated that work on the translations will continue with input from national FAs and referee experts.

No comments from members.















2. Laws of the Game 2018/19

a) Law 3 - Additional substitute in extra time

LB reminded members that The IFAB 2016 AGM approved a two-year experiment for teams to have the option to use a 4th substitute (at the 2017 AGM this changed from '4th' to 'additional' substitute to allow testing in lower level competitions) when a match goes to extra time, whether or not the team has already used all their permitted substitutes. The main reasons for the option are to increase the chances of winning a match in 'normal' playing time and to reduce potential injuries due to fatigue.

LB stated that the IFAB Advisory Panels supported the experiment and, at their last meeting, agreed that the option of an additional substitute in extra time was beneficial and positive for the welfare and safety of players, and enhanced the attractiveness/quality of the game with more goals being scored and more excitement.

Interest in the experiments was very high with competitions from across the world taking part. In approx. 80% of matches that went to extra time, the additional substitute was used, either for tactical reasons or player welfare. In the remaining 20%, where the additional substitute was not used, coaches said that they already had the best performing team on the field. Coaches rated the impact of an optional additional substitute on their tactics as significant, giving them a better chance to control the game. The medical staff appreciated the additional substitute option to assist player welfare. Overall, feedback from participants was very positive (80%) and the introduction of an additional substitute would be welcomed.

GI thanked everyone involved in the running of the experiment.

No comments from members.

VOTE

On the approval of additional substitutes in extra time, as a competition option and, as a consequence, on the required Law change (Law 3 – The Players: additional substitute in extra time).















b) Law 4 - The Players` Equipment

i. Electronic and communication equipment in the technical area

DE summarised that advances in technology risk having a Law which does not reflect the modern world and which cannot be enforced as it is now almost impossible to prevent coaches receiving information in the technical area. However, it is very important for fairness, and especially integrity, that players cannot communicate (or be contacted) electronically.

As the use of communication equipment by team officials for player welfare is important, the Law was amended in 2017 to permit electronic communication by team officials where it directly relates to player welfare or safety.

DE stated that, as agreed at the 2016 AGM, consultation had been undertaken with IFAB's Football and Technical Advisory Panels and other stakeholders, including some national FAs, to consider what information may be communicated to/from the technical area and what issues may arise. The consultation has shown that there is widespread agreement (albeit somewhat reluctant) that the realistic approach is to move the focus to resulting behaviour rather than prevention. It was agreed that permitted equipment should be limited to small mobile/handheld devices (e.g. microphone, headphones, ear-piece, mobile/smart phone, smart watch, tablet, laptop) and that inappropriate behaviour or use of non-permitted equipment should result in dismissal from the technical area.

A question was asked about the exact criteria to define a small device, since this could lead to many different interpretations. DE responded the wording in the Laws of the Game would stipulate that permitted devices would have to be small and handheld; the wording will state that misuse will be sanctioned.

DE also stated that the principles and practicalities behind the Law change should be considered by disciplinary bodies i.e. when a team official is dismissed or banned from the technical area, it is impractical to require that the official can not be in contact with the technical area.

VOTE

On the approval of the use of small/mobile electronic and communication equipment in the technical area for player welfare and coaching/tactical use and, as a consequence, on the required Law change (Law 4 – The Players' Equipment).















b) Law 4 - The Players' Equipment ii. Electronic performance and tracking systems (EPTS)

The FIFA Head of Football Technology Innovation, Johannes Holzmüller (JH), provided an update on the development of the FIFA Quality Programme. He said that the 2015 AGM approved the use of EPTS for an initial two-year period, subject to the agreement of the national association/competition organiser concerned, taking into account the principles that devices must not pose any danger to the players and/or match officials and that information and data transmitted from the devices/systems was not permitted to be received or used in the technical area during the match. At the 2017 AGM, the minimum safety standard (IMS) for wearable devices was approved and included in the Laws of the Game 2017/18.

FIFA has been working on a quality programme to categorise EPTS devices, to regulate their use and to ensure the validity and reliability of the collected data. This process is on-going with an expert group and an independent testing institute and will be released shortly. As from 1 June 2018 (Laws of the Game 2018/19), only licensed EPTS devices will be allowed in competitive football matches; data can be received from such devices in the technical area during the match.

JH continued that as a final step of the EPTS development process, a professional standard for reliability and accuracy of positional data is being implemented during 2018 to support competition organisers with their introduction and use of EPTS. In the coming years, FIFA and The IFAB will continue research into whether the increasing use of such devices may have a medical benefit (injury prevention) or will bring any unintended consequences.

No comments from members.

VOTE

On the approval of amended wording in Law 4, to reflect the EPTS development.















c) Law 12 - Fouls and Misconduct: DOGSO and SPA

DE explained that at the 2016 AGM, The IFAB approved a two year global experiment that a 'denial of an obvious goal-scoring opportunity' (DOGSO) offence in the penalty area which was an attempt to play the ball would be sanctioned by a caution (yellow card) and not a sending-off (red card); the new wording was included in the Laws of the Game 2016/17.

Following the same philosophy, The IFAB approved at the 2017 AGM that a 'stopping a promising attack' (SPA) offence in the penalty area, which was an attempt to play to ball, would no longer be a caution (yellow card).

The feedback for both changes has been overwhelmingly positive and The IFAB has not received a single complaint; not even from the public.

No comments from members.

VOTE

On the confirmation of the revised wording for 'denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity (DOGSO)' and 'stopping a promising attack (SPA)'.















d) Summary and confirmation of clarifications announced since the 131st AGM

DE informed members of the Law clarifications and guidelines which had been approved since the 2017 AGM and were communicated in IFAB Circular 11, dated 25 September 2017.

The main clarifications related to:

- substitutions in youth football (Modifications to the Laws of the Game)
- slogans, statements, images and advertising (Law 4 The Players' Equipment)
- updated definition of first point of contact of 'play or touch' for offside because of the use of super slow-motion by VARs (Law 11 Offside)
- an offence against a team-mate or a team substitute/team official off the field of play (Law 12 Fouls and Misconduct)
- a definition of 'kick' (mainly for translation purpose) i.e. ball is kicked with the ankle or below, with any body part above the ball is played (Glossary).

No comments from members.

VOTE

To confirm Law clarifications already announced in Circular 11.















e) Additional amendments and clarifications

DE informed members of the additional clarifications for 2018-19, which had been approved by the Technical Subcommittee of The IFAB and discussed by the Technical- and Football Advisory Panels (TAP and FAP) of The IFAB.

DE highlighted four important clarifications:

- limiting the number of substitutes that can be named in a friendly international match to 12 (for control and seating) to be in line with competitive international matches
- clearly stating in the Laws that referees (and other match officials) may not wear cameras during matches for various reasons, including disputes over ownership of the footage
- the length of the 'drinks break' to be limited to one minute to avoid (mis)using the time for a commercial or tactical breaks (this does not apply to medical 'cooling' breaks)
- biting has been added as a direct free-kick and sending-off offence, because some disciplinary/legal departments have not accepted biting as a form of violent conduct.

No comments from members.

VOTE

On the approval of the additional amendments and clarifications mentioned and listed in item summary 2.e.















3. Video Assistant Referees (VARs)

a) Experiment summary

After showing a video on the VAR experiment over two years, LB reminded members that in March 2016 the AGM approved a two-year global experiment with VARs. Since then, the number of participants and interested parties has grown steadily from the 6 FAs/competitions initially interested in implementing VARs in June 2016 to more than 40 at the start of 2018.

In the first experiment phase the protocol was trialled and refined and this was followed by a second phase of a large number of 'live' tests in different competitions, once the required referee training/education and stadium tests had been fulfilled.

The work of national FAs and competitions has been fundamental for what has been a successful and meaningful experiment, even though the workload has been much greater than originally anticipated, especially as each country has needed tailor-made solutions to be developed and coordinated on an almost weekly basis. The main challenges for participants were effective VAR/referee education, project management and planning, technology and communication, existing technical infrastructure and financial resources.

On-going support for current and new VAR participants will continue to be essential to ensure that the use of VARs is effective, consistent and professional, so The IFAB and FIFA are developing a support and approval structure to be put in place almost immediately, although FIFA's involvement will necessarily be restricted until after the FIFA World Cup in Russia 2018.

DE focused on the key learnings from the trials. He said that many 'successful' reviews are for situations which are not 'bad' mistakes but situations where the referee/assistant could not see the incident clearly or the decision/judgment was extremely difficult. Overall reaction to VARs has been that players generally accept the final decision when replays have been used, but prefer on-field reviews if a major decision (e.g. penalty kick) is changed. Some want more decisions included; some want fewer included e.g. only factual. The processes/protocols are not yet fully understood, but once people are familiar with how the system operates the general reaction is positive. DE emphasised that the use of VAR has already demonstrated the potential to improve player behaviour and tackling match manipulation.

Some video footage was shown to illustrate the benefits of VAR and what has been learned. DE explained that, with more practice, the understanding of what can and cannot be reviewed increases, as does the identification of 'clear and obvious errors' and the speed of the review process. The trials also emphasised that referees must be very well trained about when to use the on-field review (OFR) as well as to ensure that 'everything' is checked/reviewed i.e. that the review of a complex incident does not miss something crucial.

JH explained the VAR technology and the main challenges faced during the experimental phase. Following the practical experiences and feedback, improvements have been made to separate the referee communication system from the VAR system. Furthermore, after extensive testing,















the best technology providers for the calibrated virtual offside line have been identified and recommendations can be made confidently. Finally, the different solutions for proper backup solutions were presented to all participating competitions. Over the last months, an automatic VAR information system was developed to keep spectators involved and aware of what is happening, to improve transparency and accuracy.

LB summarised that all components, training, technology, as well as communication have to work but as these components are not at the same level in all football environments, each competition using VARs will face different challenges, requiring tailor-made solutions. Crucial VAR elements are project management (structure, planning, scope, risk management), the education of 'on-field match officials', 'video match officials' and 'other VAR officials', proper internal and external communication (including managing expectations), selection of the right technology provider, connection to broadcasters, financial planning and budgeting, and legal preparations.

LB concluded that assisting spectators to understand what is happening when the game is delayed for a 'check' or a 'review' is crucial.

The FIFA Referee Committee Chairman, Pierluigi Collina (PC), reported on VAR use in several FIFA competitions. He noted that overall feedback from the referees and VARs has been positive. Results showed that with more practice and experience, the involvement of the VAR has improved.

The FIFA Director of Refereeing, Massimo Busacca (MB), said that if VAR are approved and implemented during the FIFA World Cup in Russia, FIFA would use VARs who have significant experience from live competitions.















b) Research results by KU Leuven

Professor Werner Helsen (WH) provided the academic analysis of the results of the two-year VAR experiment. He explained that the data were collected through The IFAB's specifically designed VAR platform. Project managers from each competition/FA uploaded clips of VAR incidents and related information/data and each country was carefully monitored throughout the experiment (start-up meeting, protocol explanation, follow-up, close contact with project managers). Although over 2000 matches had used VARs, but only the 972 top level competitive matches were analysed as they reflected the most realistic VAR use.

Across all review categories (penalty/no penalty, goal/no goal, direct red card and mistaken identity), the results clearly show that when the VAR is used, the accuracy of the final decision (98.8%) is significantly higher than the accuracy of the initial decision (93.0%). A logistic regression analysis concluded that there is a clear benefit and increase in accuracy following the VAR's involvement. In total, 307 initial decisions were 'clear and obvious errors' (i.e., approx. 1 'clear and obvious error' per 3 matches) and the VAR reduced this number to 52 remaining 'clear and obvious errors' in total (i.e., reducing the incidence to approx. 1 'clear and obvious error' per 19 matches). These remaining errors were mainly 'human errors' (44 decision-making errors, 4 perceptual errors and 1 error due to bad communication). Only 3 errors were related to technology (lack of virtual offside line).

An online questionnaire had been completed by referees (incl. ARs, VARs and AVARs), players and coaches to obtain their opinions about the VAR experiment. This questionnaire consisted of a number of relatively easy and straightforward statements with a Likert scale rating (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). Referees appear to be far more positive about the VAR experiment compared to players/coaches. Coaches and, especially, players are more sceptical. This can be because of a lack of knowledge of the VAR concept (maximum benefit - minimum interference) and restrictions, or because of difficulties during the early matches with VAR.

Professor Helsen also reported on the impact of VAR use on the length of the game. An on-field review necessarily takes longer than a VAR only review but the median time lost for reviews was 55 seconds. To put this in context, the involvement of the VAR only results in a relatively minor time loss compared to other incidents that result in much more time loss e.g. free kicks, throw-ins, and goal kicks. Moreover, the referee makes allowance for VAR time 'lost' at the end of the half in which the time was 'lost'.

GI thanked Professor Helsen and the whole KU Leuven team for their thorough analysis of the VAR experiment results which would enable The IFAB AGM to make a decision based on objective facts and figures and not on subjective feelings and emotions.















c) Discussion and decision

GI opened the topic for discussion.

FIFA Vice President and chairman of the Stakeholders Committee, Victor Montagliani, reported positive feedback to the VAR experiment, the progress made, and the impact on the game.

The FA asked about the opinion of fans who seemed concerned about the impact of VARs on the dynamic flow of the game. JH responded that thorough surveys had been conducted by Nielsen Sports during the experiment amongst approx. 15`000 fans in 25 top football markets and over time the results were stable and positive with approx. 80% in favour of the use of VAR. Social media monitoring during the FIFA tournaments that used VARs showed that comments were mainly neutral, although in matches when VAR decisions were taken there were some negative comments related to not knowing what was happening.

The FA of Wales (FAW) stated that communicating to the spectators is an area for improvement. LB acknowledged that the communication infrastructure has to be improved and he mentioned that it would be the responsibility of the competition to have the right communication framework to involve/inform all their stakeholders about the VAR process.

In the context of some negative perception of media and fans about VARs and their impact on the flow of the game, DE commented that it should not be forgotten that the use of VAR so far has been experimental. He reminded everyone that the aim was never 'no interference' as consulting a replay inevitably takes some time; the aim is 'minimum interference', which has been achieved and it is in this context (and the increased accuracy of decision-making) that the time 'lost' impact should be considered.

The FAW mentioned that, based on a recent match in England, the speed of the decision-making with VAR has to improve. GI and PC emphasised that conclusions should be drawn from all data available and not just one country. The FA agreed that England has had some negative experiences but they are at an early stage of its use. The FA affirmed that the VAR decision should be based on the global results and not on a few matches in one country. The Scottish FA (SFA) and Irish FA (IFA) agreed.

VOTE

On the approval of VARs in football as a competition option (with immediate effect) and VAR principles, procedures and practicalities ${\bf v}$















d) Next steps

i. VAR-related changes to the Laws of the Game

DE stated that the VAR protocol, as far as possible, conforms to the principles and philosophy of the Laws of the Game and the use of VARs will only be permitted where the match or competition organiser has fulfilled all the VAR protocol and implementation requirements (as set out in the VAR Handbook) and has received written permission from The IFAB and FIFA.

The VAR protocol principles, practicalities, and procedures will continue to be the basis for VAR implementation in all competitions and the whole protocol will be incorporated into the Laws of the Game as a separate section.

In addition, the use of VARs requires some references in the Laws, but these have been kept to a minimum. DE emphasised that, even with the introduction of VARs into the Laws, the referee remains the sole decision-maker and this should be communicated strongly to prevent any misunderstanding i.e. the VAR does not make any decisions; the VAR simply assists the referee in the same way that the assistant referee, fourth officials etc assist the referee who is the only (and final) decision-maker.

No comments from members.

VOTE

On the approval of protocol and VAR-related changes to the Laws of the Game listed in item summary 3.d.i.















d) Next steps

ii. Post-experiment VAR Protocol & Implementation Handbook

LB stated that the basis for the VAR experiment was the VAR protocol and the implementation handbook which contains the regulations and advice for VAR application and implementation and which has, effectively, become a 'VAR extension' of the Laws of the Game.

This document has been continually updated and refined, based on practical experience and participants' feedback, but the original fundamental assumptions and principles have not been changed as there have been no requests for them to change.

Participants, and in fact all football stakeholders and football itself, seem happy with the main VAR principles as approved by IFAB in 2016.

The new VAR handbook will contain all necessary information for a successful implementation of VARs in a competition, including the VAR protocol, selection and qualification of match officials, technology infrastructure and quality programme, project management and implementation, and communication. It will also contain details of the mandatory approval process.

No comments from members.















d) Next steps

iii. Implementation Assistance and Approval Programme

LB explained the proposal for a VAR Implementation Assistance & Assessment Programme (IAAP).

Given that the use of VARs is a considerable and complex undertaking, it is important that an approval process is maintained for 'new' participants but also, in a less demanding way, a 'reapproval process for existing participants. This process will be crucial to ensuring consistent and correct worldwide use of VARs, as well as helping 'new' competitions understand the challenges they will face and the support that is available from The IFAB and FIFA.

The process will initially include using the existing digital platform for all VAR-related information and which participants can use to receive specific advice and feedback. A new elearning training environment will be developed and implemented to provide a more efficient way of training and educating all people involved in the VAR operation. The first discussions are currently being held with potential providers to find the optimal solution.

LB stated that as well as every person involved in the VAR operation being assessed and approved, technology providers will be categorised and licensed by FIFA – the systems will have to be licensed and the stadiums will have to be tested and certified. The whole preparation, implementation and approval process for VAR use will take considerable time and cannot be achieved overnight. Moreover, after approving VAR use, The IFAB will continue, as in the experimental phase, with close monitoring and reassessment.

The FA cautioned everyone to be ready for competitions wanting to implement VAR immediately/too quickly and thus a rigorous and formal accreditation and approval process to control quality will be of high importance. PC strongly agreed and said that without strictly monitoring and assessing the referee and VAR performances, the reputation of the VAR system could be damaged.

LB was asked about the likely number of requests to use VARs and he announced that The IFAB, together with FIFA, will host a VAR workshop at the end of March to establish the global interest and the related project resources requirements. For many competitions this workshop will be their first step in understanding the complexities of the VAR implementation and approval process.

VOTE

On the approval of the next steps.















4. *Play Fair!* Initiative

a) Summary, initial feedback, and early testing

DE briefly recapped that at The IFAB Board of Directors had requested a framework for future Law changes and the 2017 AGM, The IFAB, in close partnership with FIFA, had agreed to the *play fair!* initiative which complements and enhances FIFA's 'fair play' programme so that ideas to develop the game through its Laws reflect "what football wants". Topics are in three main areas: improving player behaviour and increasing respect, increasing playing time, and increasing fairness and attractiveness.

DE said that stakeholder feedback (IFAB Advisory Panels, some confederations and national FAs, members of the World League Forum etc.) showed support for the *play fair!* initiative and feedback has been complementary of The IFAB listening to the football community and consulting stakeholders. Some topics which were initially approved for immediate testing have received a lot of support and were welcomed (e.g. red and yellow cards for team officials) or have confirmed the validity of the original idea/assumption.

b) Next steps

On the basis of discussions by the Advisory Panels and feedback from other important stakeholders, the ABM agreed to divide the topics into four groups:

- no testing required / possible immediate implementation (enhanced role of the captain, stricter refereeing for mobbing, time-wasting, 6 seconds by the goalkeeper)
- ready for extensive testing (red and yellow cards for team officials, goal kick /defensive free kick defending team may play the ball within their penalty area, ABBA order for kicks from the penalty mark, substituted player to leave at nearest boundary line)
- further discussion needed (offside change definition of offside position; only consider the 'trunk' part of the body, handball definition, offence by goalkeeper, RC for scoring a goal with the hands, stopping a goal with the hands, penalty kick same procedure as a kick from the penalty mark, pre-match handshake between coaches and referee)
- not under current consideration (half-time and full-time whistle only when play has stopped, stadium clock – stop-start in coordination with referee's watch, effective time, red card for substitute – lose one substitution, self-pass at a free kick, ball can be moving at goal kick, goal kick to be taken from the side it left the field of play).

Members were asked to approve the topic groups, especially those for more extensive testing.

No comments from members.

VOTE

On the approval of categories and further testing in 2018/19.















VII. Financial and business matters

5. Financial matters

a) Audit Report 2016

LB announced that the 2016 audit report was completed on 4 December 2017 and must therefore be approved retrospectively.

The negative result (of CHF 95'k) was due to additional costs resulting from the VAR experiment, but will be covered by the 2017 budget. Otherwise, the overall operational expenses of The IFAB would have been within the available budget of CHF 1.2m.

VOTE

On the approval of Audit report 2016.

All members unanimously approved.

b) Expenditure 2017 and audit timeline

LB stated that the Audit for 2017 will be performed in Q2/2018 and the report will be shared by post and it will require written approval before it can be published. He added that the operational expenditure of The IFAB in 2017 remained within budget.

c) Budget 2018

LB stated that the operational budget for 2018 is CHF 1.2m, as in 2015-2017. Depending on the extent of the VAR project and The IFAB's involvement, the budget may not be sufficient but expenditure related to the VAR project is to be considered separately, as in the previous years.

VOTE

On the approval of the Budget for 2018.















VIII. Any other business

No comments from members.

IX. Next meetings

GI stated that the next AGM will be hosted by the SFA and handed over to their President.

SFA President, Alan McRae, announced that the 133rd AGM will take place on Friday 1 and Saturday 2 March 2019 in Scotland, the exact venue will be confirmed shortly.

GI thanked The IFAB for their excellent preparation work for the meeting and thanked everyone for attending this historic 132^{nd} Annual General Meeting of The IFAB and closed the meeting.

Lukas Brud

Secretary of The IFAB, March 2018