

Strategic Plan 2022-2024 & Action Plan 2022



NATIONAL
BETTING
AUTHORITY





Contents

02	Message from the President
03	Responsibilities, Role, Objectives
04	Organisational Structure
05	Current Situation
07	Strategic Plan
18	2022 Action Plan

Message from the President



It is with great pleasure that we present the National Betting Authority's Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2024. The Strategic Plan has been developed in light of the severe impact of Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on the need to safeguard the sustainability of the betting sector.

An immediate priority of the Authority is to apply the governmental policies, measures and support schemes with regard to the pandemic. In the long-term, the Authority will keep introducing initiatives in line with its Action Plan and its Strategic Priorities.

The Authority's vision is to establish Cyprus as a fair and safe environment of development and innovation in the gambling sector, while focusing on the protection of players.

The Strategic Plan of the Authority is the core of its actions and activities, and it sets its strategic goals and priorities for the period 2022-2024. The strategic goals for 2022-2024 are: the enhancement of the Authority's regulatory and supervisory roles, the protection of the players and the public, the development and modernisation of the sector, and the improvement of its internal operation.

A fundamental pillar of the Authority is to maintain its leading and decisive role for a sustainable development in the betting sector, while protecting society, eliminating illegal activity within the sector and preventing money laundering.

The National Betting Authority's team and I will keep doing our best towards a successful implementation of our strategic goals and objectives.

Responsibilities, Role, Objectives

The National Betting Authority (hereinafter the “Authority”) was established in 2012 as a legal public entity governed by the Betting Law of 2019 37(I)/2019. It is an independent supervisory Authority with financial independence and autonomy.

The Authority’s main responsibilities are the regulation, supervision, and monitoring of the betting activity in the Republic of Cyprus. Among its main responsibilities are the issuing of Class A (land-based betting) and Class B (online betting) licenses to bookmakers and authorized agents, carrying out on-site inspections, supervising licensees, as well as drafting and issuing Directives that facilitate law implementation.

The inspections conducted by the Authority aim to ensure that the betting activity is legal, transparent and fair, complying with the regulations, that the profits are paid to the players, the taxes are paid to the government and the contributions to the Authority, and that the betting activity complies with the legal and regulatory framework. Furthermore, the Authority is responsible for adopting measures for combating money laundering and terrorist financing, as well as for issuing relevant Directives that facilitate the implementation of the law and measures.

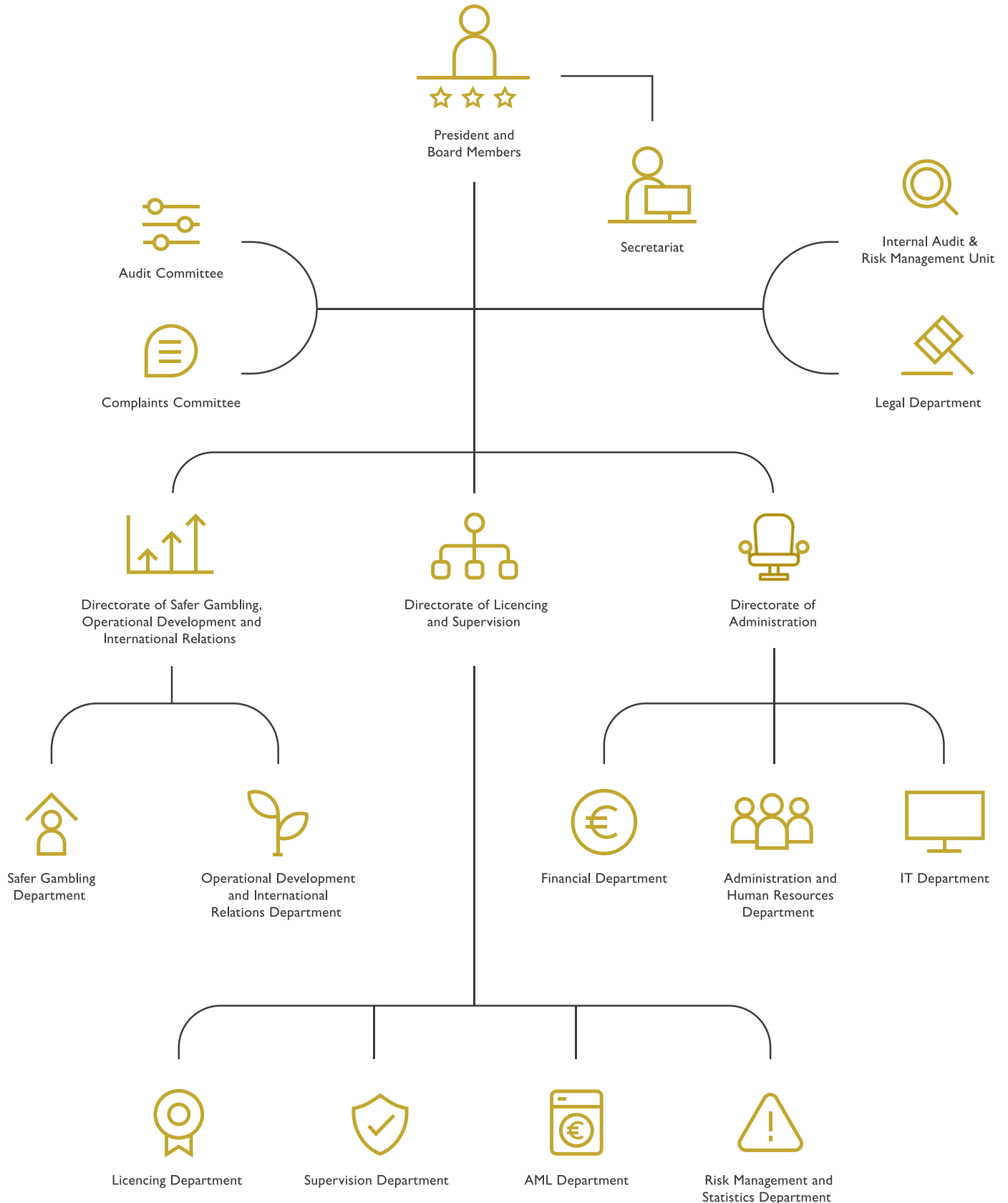
Additionally, the Authority is responsible for the cooperation and discussion with various bodies, governmental departments and international institutions on topics related to gambling, hence its participation at the Gaming Regulators European Forum (GREF).

Finally, the Authority is responsible for the implementation of preventive measures on the protection of young people and vulnerable groups from addiction to gambling.

The Strategic Plan 2022-2024 sets the framework of priorities and activities which are considered essential for the Authority’s aims and objectives for the next three years. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan aims to have a constructive and contributory role to the achievement of the Government’s strategic goals in the gambling sector, and to support the sector’s sustainable development.

The current Strategic Plan is dynamic, as it has been drafted in a way that provides flexibility to the Authority, allowing it to respond effectively to the constantly changing and evolving gambling sector.

Organisational Structure



Current Situation

Governed by the strategic objectives of the Strategic Plan 2021-2023 and the 2021 Action Plan, the National Betting Authority has concluded various initiatives and actions that have contributed to the achievement of its vision based on its five strategic goals.

Given the recent developments related to the Covid-19 pandemic which have impacted all sectors including betting, the Authority was faced with an unprecedented situation, and it therefore had to revise its strategic goals and operation.

Following the Ministry of Health's decrees on the protection of public health and on tackling the pandemic effects, the operation of all betting premises was suspended for a significant period of time in 2020, as well as for in the first three months of 2021, with a tremendous impact on Class A licensed Bookmakers (land-based betting). Nevertheless, a slow and steady recovery was achieved by the betting sector in the first quarter of 2021. The resuming of sports events, national championships, as well as EURO2020 and the Olympics, had a vital role to this recovery.

Consequently, some of the Authority's activities had to be revised and adjusted to the new situation. More specifically, the Authority accelerated the process of its digital transformation, and is now in the final stage of applying its internal computerised system, having already upgraded its IT system infrastructure. Moreover, since the beginning of the pandemic, the Authority has reacted promptly, developing the remote working system for its personnel, and implementing its action plan on digital policy.

In order to enhance the regulatory framework, the Authority issued an AML Directive in the first quarter of 2021, aiming at eliminating the manipulation of certain conditions that facilitate criminal activity. The rightful implementation of the provisions of the national law and the European Directives is the cornerstone for the development of reliability and trust in the sector, as well as in the Republic.

CURRENT SITUATION

Aiming to improve its operation, the Authority has applied ISO31000, ISO27001 and ISO37001 standards. These provide mechanisms that will detect, document, and assess risks which may hinder the efficient operation of the Authority. These standards will assist the achievement of goals and objectives, will improve the information safety procedures and tools and will reduce bribery risks.

The Authority has also participated at GREF online working groups (Gaming Regulators European Forum) on topics related to information and data exchange, online gambling and safer gambling. This year's meetings focused on exchanging information on tackling the pandemic effects.

Finally, the Authority has adopted a framework on how to deal with the negative betting effects on public health and social cohesion. The importance of maintaining safer betting and gambling sheds light to a new approach on the responsibility of the state and bookmakers towards this direction. This approach underlines that apart from the players' personal responsibility, all stakeholders – the state, public institutions, bookmakers – share a common obligation towards this goal.

Strategic Plan

Mission

The Authority's Mission is the effective regulation and supervision of betting activity in the Republic of Cyprus, the protection of public interest, the development of the country's economy, the fight against illegal betting and gambling and the contribution in social health, safety and social cohesion.

Vision

The National Betting Authority's vision is to establish Cyprus as a fair and safe environment of development and innovation in the gaming sector, while focusing on the protection of players, and social welfare.

Values

The National Betting Authority is governed by Values that dictate its operation and actions, goals and objectives. The Authority's philosophy is reflected on the following values:

STRATEGIC
PLAN
→ VALUES

◆ **Commitment**

Personal and collective commitment of the Chairwoman, Board Members, and the personnel of the Authority to accomplishing the objectives and goals set in the Authority's mission and role.

◆ **Compliance**

A non-negotiable value is the compliance with every legal (national and European) and moral obligation associated with the operation and the capacity of the Authority.

◆ **Respect and Integrity**

Transparency, equality, sincerity, and honesty apply on all levels of decision-making, administrative and regulatory operation of the Authority, based on the Values of respect and integrity.

◆ **Reliability**

Reliable services based on accurate, prompt information, ensure efficient operation.

◆ **Professionalism and Responsibility**

Through continuous professional training and development, the Authority's team demonstrates high levels of professionalism and responsibility serving the State, citizens and stakeholders. The Authority aims at the increase of its workforce for higher efficiency.

◆ **Cooperation and Initiative**

The promotion of cooperation and team-spirit within the Authority, along with the initiative for development and improvement, contributes to the achievement of the goals set by the Authority.

◆ **Social Responsibility and "Safe Gambling"**

The Authority maintains continuous direct contact with the public, ensuring open communication channels with young people and vulnerable social groups. Its aim is to have an active and substantial contribution towards the protection of society from the negative consequences of problematic gambling. Thus, it promotes the necessity of "Safer Gambling", paying particular attention to the positive social impact of such a concept.

Strategic Goals 2022 – 2024

The Authority's Strategic Goals reflect its vision and mission and contribute to a sustainable development in the betting and gambling sector.

The Strategic Goals for the period 2022-2024 are the following:

- ◆ Enhancement of the Authority's regulatory and supervisory roles
 - ◆ Protection of the players and the public
 - ◆ Development and modernisation of the sector
 - ◆ Improvement of the Authority's internal operation
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Strategic Framework

Since its establishment in 2012, the National Betting Authority has been developing constantly, adapting to the rapid evolution of the gambling sector, determined to accomplish its mission and vision. The Authority aims to evolve even further, becoming a modern, flexible and human-centered organisation that applies a risk-based approach in all its operations, serving the public interest and responding to the needs and expectations of its stakeholders.

In order to achieve the strategic goals, the Authority has set the following strategic framework as a guideline to its internal operations, procedures and human resources, as well as to its relationship with external factors and the general development of the gambling sector.

Human Resources and Capacity:

The core of every organisation is its human capital; this is why the Authority's strategy has been designed in a way that offers its employees opportunities for professional development and advancement, skills and knowledge enhancement and productivity improvement, through innovative employment schemes and lifelong learning. As a consequence, the employees can comprehend and develop their knowledge on the Authority's regulatory and supervisory roles. Great emphasis is placed on the open-mindedness, high level thinking and academic background of the employees, their team spirit and cooperation skills, which aid towards the accomplishment of the Authority's strategic goals.

The strategy aims at increasing the personnel's efficiency and their leadership skills that will assist towards the realisation of the Authority's vision, mission, and strategic priorities, based on its values. Regardless of their hierarchy level, the Authority's employees are expected to deliver high quality professional services, assisting towards the Authority's efficient operation.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Information Technology Systems and Infrastructure:

This strategy has been designed so as to adapt to innovation, rapid technological development and simplification of processes. In this context, a Digital Policy was formed, which is based on the seven following pillars:

- ◆ Digitalisation of internal operations
- ◆ Digitalisation of activities and services offered to supervised parties and the public
- ◆ Employees' digital skills development
- ◆ Cybersecurity
- ◆ Upgrade of current technologies and infrastructure
- ◆ Development and modernisation of the sector
- ◆ Capitalisation on the synergies and exchange of best practices

The digital strategy aims at providing suitable, safe and adjustable applications and systems that will support the Authority's current and long-term operation.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Regulation and Supervision

The strategy on regulation and supervision aims at promoting self-compliance of the authorised licensees with their license terms through explicit guidelines, encouragement and positive reinforcement reward schemes, regular trainings, constructive dialogue and law enforcement where necessary. This approach will bring a significant cut to the costs on regulation, supervision and implementation of measures and fines, but most importantly, it will foster a new self-compliance culture in the long run.

Synergies

The strategy of establishing and enhancing cooperation, exchanging ideas and adopting best practices is vital to the implementation of the Authority's strategic goals. The strengthening of synergies on a national, European and international levels facilitate the modernisation and sustainability of the betting sector, safeguarding of the public interest and public health.

Sustainable Development

The strategy on sustainable development is reflected on the operational model of the Authority, which is based on the trifold People-Society-National Economy. The strategic goals of the Authority are fully aligned with the sustainable development goals and targets through a series of investments, reforms and actions.

Strategic Goals 2022-2024

1

Enhancement of the Authority's Regulatory and Supervisory Role

The National Betting Authority has set the following objectives in order to enhance its regulatory and supervisory role:

① Simplification and modernisation of licensing procedure

- ◆ Reduction of assessment period and operational costs
- ◆ Efficiency improvement in application processing
- ◆ Increase of transparency in licensing procedures
- ◆ Proper and smooth functioning of the sector

② Framework development on data submission, analysis and management and risk assessment

- ◆ Improvement of regulatory framework efficiency
- ◆ Efficient risk prediction and classification
- ◆ Market risk reduction
- ◆ Reduction of fraud and illegal activities

③ Implementation of preventive supervision, on-site and remote inspections

- ◆ Reduction of administrative and compliance costs
 - ◆ Enhancement of targeted supervision
 - ◆ Ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework
 - ◆ Efficient enforcement of penalties
 - ◆ Elimination of major offences
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STRATEGIC GOALS 2022-2024

ENHANCEMENT OF THE AUTHORITY'S REGULATORY AND SUPERVISORY ROLE

4 Improvement of countering money laundering and terrorism financing

- ◆ Implementation of directives
- ◆ Efficient attention on potential risks
- ◆ Reporting on suspicious transactions

5 Education and training of stakeholders and licensees

- ◆ Comprehension of the regulatory framework
- ◆ Encouragement of self-compliance
- ◆ Establishment of corporate governance
- ◆ Enhancement of professional code of conduct

2

Protection of the Players and the Public

The National Betting Authority has set the following objectives in order to protect the players and public; these objectives are outlined more thoroughly in the Safer Gambling Action Plan:

1 Create the conditions for stakeholders to protect society from potential harms related to gambling

- ◆ Implementation of suitable protective measures and policies
 - ◆ Efficient application of protective methods
 - ◆ Provision of training and incentives to stakeholders
 - ◆ Enhancement of synergies among stakeholders
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STRATEGIC GOALS 2022-2024

PROTECTION OF THE PLAYERS AND THE PUBLIC

- 2 Increase awareness on safer gambling strategies, resources and supports**
 - ◆ Awareness raising among players and society
 - ◆ Development of targeted messages and campaigns addressed to different risk groups
 - ◆ Provision of tools and resources for the detection of problem gambling

 - 3 Provide support to individuals who are affected by gambling related harm to safeguard public health**
 - ◆ Facilitation of access to treatment
 - ◆ Enhancement of counselling and treatment
 - ◆ Development of intervention practices for vulnerable and high-risk groups
 - ◆ Reduction on public healthcare costs

 - 4 Develop effective programs, policies and initiatives that ensure safer gambling**
 - ◆ Acknowledgement of the interaction of various factors on gambling related harm
 - ◆ Deep comprehension of safer gambling framework
 - ◆ Development of targeted strategies for specific target groups
 - ◆ Development of evaluation capacity on safer gambling
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STRATEGIC GOALS 2022-2024

3

Development and Modernisation of the Sector

The National Betting Authority has set the following objectives for the development and modernisation of the sector:

1 Improvement of legal and regulatory framework

- ◆ Market development based on international standards
- ◆ Promotion of healthy competition
- ◆ Improvement of business operation conditions
- ◆ Ensuring players' protection
- ◆ Elimination of illegal gambling

2 Enhancement of research and innovation

- ◆ Improvement of market knowledge
- ◆ Improvement of regulatory framework
- ◆ Market development
- ◆ Incentives for start-ups and innovative businesses

3 Development of national and international cooperation

- ◆ Expertise enhancement
- ◆ Improvement of information exchange
- ◆ Increase of active participation at national and international bodies
- ◆ Development of bilateral cooperation agreements with local institutions and relevant authorities in other EU countries

4 Promotion of the Republic's regulatory framework

- ◆ Promotion of Cyprus' competitive advantages as an investment destination
 - ◆ Increase of investment incentives
 - ◆ Promotion of Cyprus potential to become an international gambling hub
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STRATEGIC GOALS 2022-2024

4

Improvement of the Authority's Internal Operation

The National Betting Authority has set the following objectives to improve its internal operation:

1 Implementation of efficient governance

- ◆ Transparency increase in all procedures
- ◆ Reliable and independent decision making
- ◆ Reduction of operational risk and ensuring the organisation's viability
- ◆ Enhancement of stakeholders' confidence towards the Authority

2 Human Resources Development and Retention

- ◆ Skill development and skill mismatch reduction
- ◆ Productivity and efficiency boosting
- ◆ Provision of high-quality services to stakeholders
- ◆ Development of personnel's expertise

3 Optimisation of operation and procedures

- ◆ Simplification of procedures and automation
 - ◆ Reduction of bureaucracy and operational costs
 - ◆ Efficient time management and task prioritising
 - ◆ Increase of operational development and transparency
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Action Plan 2022



**ACTION PLAN
2022**

In this section the detailed actions for each strategic goal are outlined:

1**Enhancement of the Authority's Regulatory and Supervisory Roles****ACTIONS**

- ◆ Development of standards and practice guidelines for gambling operators
 - ◆ Intensification of measures on the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing in the gambling sector
 - ◆ Improvement of the bookmakers' supervision with enhanced methods
 - ◆ Improvement of data analysis tools and procedures, and effective data assessment for informed decisions
 - ◆ Implementation of new illegal website blocking tools
 - ◆ Stakeholders' training on the regulatory framework through the gambling academy and e-learning platform
 - ◆ Research and survey on illegal gambling
 - ◆ Application of international practices against match-fixing
 - ◆ Cooperation with relevant institutions for combating illegal gambling
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ACTION PLAN 2022

2

Protection of the Players and the Public

ACTIONS

- ◆ Safer Gambling Awareness Week – October 2022
 - ◆ Safer Gambling awareness raising campaigns
 - ◆ Cooperation with stakeholders on developing youth empowering programs, projects for vulnerable groups and treatment infrastructure
 - ◆ Operation of the National Self-exclusion Platform
 - ◆ Operation of the Safer Gambling Centre
 - ◆ Application of Safer Gambling standards
 - ◆ Conduct of a prevalence study on the players' profile and gambling behaviors
 - ◆ Actions and projects based on the Action Plan 2022-2025
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ACTION PLAN 2022

3

Development and Modernisation of the Sector

ACTIONS

- ◆ Reassessment of licensing procedures and fees
 - ◆ Development of practical guides on the efficient implementation of the law
 - ◆ Revision of the legal and regulatory frameworks
 - ◆ Drafting comprehensive bills and regulations on gambling
 - ◆ Research and implementation of projects that foster innovation and promote start-ups in the gambling sector
 - ◆ Drafting standards through participation at CEN committees
 - ◆ Cooperation with other national supervisory and regulatory betting authorities and exchange of information and expertise
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ACTION PLAN 2022

4

Improvement of the Authority's Internal Operation

ACTIONS

- ◆ Application of the standards ISO:31000 Risk Management, ISO:37001 – Anti-Bribery Management Systems and ISO:27001 – Information Management Systems
 - ◆ Improvement of Internal Audit and of internal procedures efficiency assessment
 - ◆ Training and development of personnel based on individual learning targets
 - ◆ Revision of the Authority's organisational structure, enhancing the potential for personnel's professional development
 - ◆ Improvement of the tools and procedures of effective data assessment for informed decisions
 - ◆ Recruiting on vacant permanent posts and obtaining support from expert consultants
 - ◆ Further development of IT systems and further application of the Digital Policy Action Plan
 - ◆ Further implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 2030
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