

*Morocco keeps scoring major points in its bid to host the 2025 AFCON finals after the country passed strict FIFA prerequisite criteria for the organisation of an expanded new-look FIFA World Cup.*

On Wednesday, the North African country became the only country to successfully get the greenlight in the strict FIFA prerequisite criteria specifications on sports, hotel, health and infrastructures that make a country eligible to organise the FIFA World Cup under its new format of an increase from 32 to 48 teams.

This is not the first time Morocco gets the thumbs up after a Task Force composed of dozens of experts travelled throughout Morocco for several months in 2018 before awarding an above-average score that made the Kingdom's bid eligible for the 2026 World Cup.

The news comes just days after George Weah led loud calls from African legends for Morocco to host the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations finals.

The 1995 Ballon d'Or winner, who remains the only African ever to be crowned the best player in the world, is a big admirer of Morocco's massive investment in football.

"Liberia fully endorses and supports Morocco's bid to host Afcon 2025. I have made this commitment to King Mohamed VI. It is cast in stone," Weah said in a statement released by the Presidency.

The 56-year-old, whose 18-year glittering career took him to top European clubs, including Monaco, AC Milan and Chelsea, said Morocco was a shining example on and off the field.

The North African country has one of the best football infrastructures in Africa.

Stadiums selected to bolster its bid have been approved by FIFA [as part of the bid for the 2026 World Cup] and CAF as part of the qualifications for the FIFA World Cup and the AFCON.

The Kingdom also has the Mohammed VI Football Complex, one of the best national football centres in the world.

On the field of play, in the 2019/20 season, four of the eight semi-finalists of the Champions League and Confederations Cup have been from Morocco's Botola Pro

league. Last year, Moroccan clubs won all the CAF competitions.

Wydad Athletic Club and RS Berkane are the reigning CAF Champions League and Confederation Cup champions, while AS Far won the women's Champions League.

Morocco became the first African country to reach the semi-finals of the FIFA World Cup in Qatar. Their women's national team finished as runners-up to Banyana Banyana at the Africa Cup of Nations last year.

Off the field, Morocco, like Weah, recently won praise from legendary former Bafana Bafana coach Pitso Mosimane for their football development.

"I don't know how long it is going to take us, South Africa, to get to where Morocco is in terms of infrastructure and facilities to develop coaches and programmes to develop players," said Mosimane.

Former Indomitable Lions international Antoine Bell concurs with Mosimane and Weah that Morocco should host not only AFCON but the World Cup in 2030.

He went further and called for South Africa to support Morocco's bid to bring the World Cup to Africa again.

"South Africa showed the way, and I am confident Morocco will follow suit. The country has international standards, from stadiums to top infrastructure. Morocco can compete with the best in the world," he said.

"When South Africa talks on the continent, the rest of the continent listens; hence South Africa needs to support Morocco. South Africa has the experience, and Morocco will use this experience to win the 2026 bid," added Bell.

Surprisingly, despite this success on and off the field, Morocco has yet to host an African Cup of Nations since 1988.