



GOVERNS AND PROMOTES IRISH EQUESTRIANISM

HORSE SPORT IRELAND STRATEGY 2030





Boulerie Jump
Pôle européen du cheval

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STRATEGIC PLAN

Ministerial Foreword

The sport horse is a national symbol and a national asset. As a nation, Ireland excels from breeding and producing foals in communities across the country to athletes and horses achieving success at the highest level on the global stage.

The sport horse and equestrian sector is a vital part of the Irish economy, generating approximately €1 billion per annum and supporting over 14,000 jobs, the majority of which are based in rural communities.

Horse Sport Ireland sees their role to act as a key bridge between grassroots participation and high-performance and between rural and urban equine communities.

Sporting excellence, growing participation, strong governance, sectoral partnership, and customer service are acknowledged by Horse Sport Ireland to be central to their work, and these are outlined in their new Strategic Plan.

The Horse Sport Ireland Strategic Plan to 2030 is to provide them with a clear framework as they embrace new technologies, prepare for the LA Olympic Games in 2028, and Brisbane Olympic Games in 2032 as it develops the next generation of athletes and coaches, and works with its affiliates and Government to further grow and strengthen the sector.

HSI's strategic priorities aim to support the delivery of national objectives for sport, agricultural sustainability and rural development.

As Ministers with responsibility for departments immersed in the sport horse sector and equestrian sport, we wish Horse Sport Ireland every success in their contribution for the betterment of the Irish sport horse and the communities that are central to Ireland's success as a world leader in the sport horse industry.



Patrick O'Donovan TD
Minister for Culture,
Communications and Sport



Martin Heydon TD
Minister for Agriculture,
Food and the Marine



Charlie McConalogue TD
Minister of State with
Special Responsibility for
Sport and Postal Policy





Introduction

This Strategic Plan 2026-2030 sets out Horse Sport Ireland's vision and priorities for the years ahead. It has been developed through one of the most thorough consultation processes in the organisation's history. Over 550 individuals engaged with the public consultation, 22 affiliate organisations participated in a dedicated stakeholder workshop at Goffs, and our staff, Senior Management Team, and Board all contributed to shaping the direction of this plan. We are grateful to each and every one who gave their time and insight.

What emerged from that process is a clear and shared sense of ambition. The sector wants HSI to be a stronger, more confident national governing body - one that champions equestrian sport and breeding with authority, supports affiliates and participants with high-quality services, and earns the trust of government, funders, and the wider public through excellent governance and transparent accountability.

The five Strategic Priorities set out in this plan - Partnership and Sector Representation; Excellence in Breeding and High-Performance Sport; Participation, Access and Development; Customer Value and Sustainable Growth; and Organisational Capability and Strong Governance - reflect both the opportunities before us and the challenges we must address. They are grounded in evidence from the SWOT and PESTLE analysis, and are designed to be mutually reinforcing. Progress in one priority supports and enables progress across the others.

We are also clear that how we deliver matters as much as what we deliver. Welfare, environmental responsibility, social inclusion, and strong governance are not add-ons to this strategy - they are embedded in our values, our ways of working, and in each of our strategic priorities. HSI is committed to operating to the highest standards in all that we do.

The Board is pleased to present this plan and looks forward to working with the executive team, our affiliates, and the wider equestrian community to bring it to life. The potential of Ireland's sport horse sector is immense. This strategy is our commitment to realising it.



Dr Pamela Byrne
Chair of the Board
Horse Sport Ireland



Denis Duggan
Chief Executive Officer
Horse Sport Ireland





What the Sport Horse Sector Delivers for Ireland

- €1 billion annually to the Irish economy, supporting rural development and national growth. ¹
- Annual exports of sport horses in the four-year period 2021-2024 averaged over €82 million compared to an annual average of less than €13 million in the previous decade (2012-2020), positioning Ireland as a global leader in equine trade. Exports peaked at over €100 million in 2022. ²
- Employment for 14,000 people and engagement of more than 47,000 active participants across the country. ³
- Preservation of rural heritage and culture, sustaining traditional equestrian practices and community identity. As well as tourism and hospitality benefits, with international buyers and competitors generating revenue for hotels, restaurants, and local businesses.
- Global reputation for excellence, with the Irish Sport Horse Studbook ranked World Number 1 in Eventing for over 20 years
- and consistently in the top 10 for Showjumping.
- High-performance success on the world stage, including Olympic, World, and European podium finishes by athletes and horses.
- Support for rural communities, included dedicated localised schemes for breeders, owners and producers to engage local services such as veterinary, farriery, feed suppliers, and transport, creating a multiplier effect in rural economies.
- Youth development and education pathways, fostering skills and careers in equine science, sports, and business.
- Contribution to Ireland's international brand, reinforcing the country's image as a centre of equine excellence.
- Wellbeing benefits through equine-assisted activities, supporting mental health, physical rehabilitation, and emotional well-being.



¹ The Business of Breeding (2022)

² Own compilation based on Eurostat COMEXT database

³ Untapped Potential – Unlocking the Economic Potential of the Irish Sport Horse Industry report (2018)



Impact of Horse Sport on Ireland

Wellbeing Benefits
Supports mental health, physical rehabilitation, and emotional well-being.

Economic Contribution
Generates €1 billion annually, supporting rural development and national growth.

Impact of Horse Sport on Ireland
Positions Ireland as a global leader in equine trade with over €200 million in exports.

International Brand
Reinforces Ireland's image as a centre of equine excellence.

Employment and Participation
Provides jobs for 14,000 people and engages over 47,000 active participants.

Youth Development
Fosters skills and careers in equine science, sports, and business.

Tourism and Hospitality
Generates revenue for hotels, restaurants, and local businesses.

Rural Community Support Economic Contribution
Creates a multiplier effect in rural economies through various services.

Global Reputation
Maintains a top ranking in Eventing and Showjumping.

High-Performance Success
Achieves podium finishes in Olympic, World, and European competitions.







Overview of Horse Sport Ireland's Role and Activities

What We Do

- **National Governing Body:** Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) is the official body recognised by the Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI), Sport Ireland, the Olympic Federation of Ireland (OFI), Paralympics Ireland, and Sport Northern Ireland. HSI oversees all equestrian disciplines, including showjumping, eventing, dressage, para-equestrian and driving as well as many other aspects of the sport.
- **High-Performance Programme:** HSI manages high-performance programmes, supports elite athlete development, selects and funds international teams, and administers the National Equine Anti-Doping programme. HSI also works with Sport Ireland to deliver pathways for athletes aspiring to compete at Olympic and World Championship levels.
- **Passports and Registration:** HSI maintains Irish studbooks on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) through the innovative digital platform HorseSource, managing and issuing passports for Irish Sport Horses (ISH), Irish Sport Ponies, Irish Draughts (ID), Irish Cobs and Irish Part-bred Cobs, ensuring compliance with national and EU regulations.
- **Breeding and Production Support:** HSI delivers National Breeding Services initiatives to the sector on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. These includes dedicated grants, genotyping and genetic analysis, equine research, and a young-horse production pathway. These programmes support and add value to breeders enabling them to uphold Ireland's reputation as a global leader in sport horse breeding.
- **Coaching, Education, and Safeguarding:** HSI leads the national coaching programme, offering certification pathways for coaches and ongoing professional development. It also functions as a hub for safeguarding within affiliated organisations, promoting best practice across the sector.
- **Grassroots Development and Recreation:** Equestrian sport and recreation encapsulate our affiliate family allowing for greater participation across all levels and abilities in equestrian sports, especially in the grassroots and recreation divisions.
- **Sectoral Representation and Political Engagement:** HSI represents the interests of equestrian sport and breeding at national, European and international forums. It engages with government, public bodies and partner organisations to influence policy, secure funding, and contribute to discussions that affect the future of the sector.





Our Values

How we work when we are at our best



HORSE SPORT IRELAND

SPORT



COURAGE

We rise to every challenge with determination and unwavering focus, turning setbacks into opportunities for growth.

RESPECT

We honour every voice and perspective, creating a culture of kindness, empathy and understanding.

How we work when we are at our best

EXCELLENCE

We embrace change with professionalism and grace, delivering outstanding results no matter how the world evolves.

INTEGRITY

We lead with honesty and accountability, earning trust through actions that reflect our highest principles.

UNITY

We believe in the power of collaboration, sharing ideas and supporting one another to achieve greatness.

The HSI values define how we work – expressing the commitments that guide how we deliver on our purpose and vision. They represent who we are at our best and what we stand for every day.



VISION & PURPOSE: The future we are working towards and why it matters

OUR VISION

Horse Sport Ireland leads a modern, innovative and welfare-centred equestrian sector, integrating grassroots participation, breeding and high-performance sport, with recognised international impact.

OUR PURPOSE

To strengthen and innovate Ireland's equestrian sector, by advancing excellence, expertise and education, supporting horses, people and communities to thrive.

WHY OUR PURPOSE MATTERS

HERITAGE & IDENTITY

Ireland's equestrian tradition is woven into our national fabric. We honour this legacy by ensuring it evolves with integrity and remains relevant for future generations.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Horses bring people together across rural and urban communities, creating connections, opportunities and enriching lives in ways that matter deeply to individuals and families.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Our €1bn+ sector sustains rural livelihoods, creates skilled employment, and drives regional prosperity. Strengthening the sector means strengthening Irish communities.

WELFARE EXCELLENCE

The partnership between horse and human is built on trust and care. Upholding international welfare standards reflects our values and ensures public confidence in everything we do.

GLOBAL STANDING

Irish equestrian excellence inspires pride at home and commands respect worldwide. We have a responsibility to maintain and enhance this hard-earned reputation.





Strategic Priorities

Our five Strategic Priorities set out the main areas of focus for Horse Sport Ireland over the life of this strategy.

They reflect HSI's strategic intent in response to the challenges and opportunities facing the organisation and the equestrian sector and set out where HSI intends to concentrate effort and investment, supported by clear goals and actions.



Partnership, Influence and Sector Representation	Excellence in Breeding and High-Performance Sport	Participation, Access and Development	Customer Value and Sustainable Growth	Organisational Capability and Strong Governance
To build stronger, transparent, and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders while supporting the wider equine community.	To develop high-performance athletes and horses capable of achieving international success and podium results through the support of a breeding to performance ecosystem.	To build strong foundations for equestrian sport and breeding by improving participation, access, standards and long-term involvement across Ireland.	To drive sustainable growth by deeply understanding HSI's customers and delivering high quality services that translate into strong commercial performance.	To be a resilient, well-governed organisation with the culture, capability and systems to operate with integrity and confidence.



Priority 1:

Partnership, Influence and Sector Representation

To build stronger, transparent, and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders while supporting the wider equine community.

Focus

To strengthen Horse Sport Ireland's relationships across the sector and building a more united, collaborative sport horse community. By using our industry expertise to inform policy makers of the sector's economic and rural value, we will champion its interests while respecting the cultural heritage and diversity within the sport.

Goals and success measures

GOAL

How we'll know we've succeeded

Enhance engagement and trust amongst affiliates, breeders, athletes and the wider sport horse community.

- Affiliates, breeders and athletes participate more consistently in consultations and forums.
- Stakeholders report increased confidence and satisfaction in engagement through surveys and general feedback.

Expand on collaborative partnerships with stakeholders.

- Structured engagement forums (e.g. Annual Affiliates Meeting) are well attended and consistently inform sector planning and decision-making.
- Representative bodies (e.g. Athletes' Commission) contribute meaningfully to policy and planning discussions.
- Joint initiatives with affiliates increase and are delivered regularly.

Proactively engage with decision-makers in all relevant institutions on behalf of the sector.

- Policy submissions and engagements lead to tangible outcomes.
- HSI is sought out by government to input on sectoral matters and is recognised as the voice for affiliates.
- There is a better recognition of the challenges and opportunities within the industry and sport amongst decision-makers.

Promote services, accessibility and equine heritage.

- Industry increasingly recognises the benefits of the services delivered by HSI.
- Stakeholders report satisfaction with services following modernisation initiatives.
- HSI supports cultural heritage within the sector.



Priority 2:

Excellence in Breeding and High-Performance Sport

To develop high-performance athletes and horses capable of achieving international success and podium results through the support of a breeding-to-performance ecosystem.

Focus

This priority seeks to align genetic selection, young horse development, and high-performance pathways to maximise the long term success of Irish athletes and Irish bred horses on the world stage. It leverages data and genetic science to design innovative approaches that strengthen international competitiveness whilst preserving and protecting native and rare breeds.

Goals and success measures

GOAL

How we'll know we've succeeded

Increase international competitiveness in sport horse breeding and performance

- Ireland sustains strong results and visibility across major international championships.
- Irish-bred horses demonstrate consistent representation and competitiveness at high-performance international level

Optimise genetics, genomic insight and performance data to strengthen breeding excellence

- Genomic, health and performance data are more integrated and systematically used to inform breeding and high-performance decisions.
- Genetic selection is supported by a clearer evidence base, including validated health traits and preservation of genetic diversity in native and rare breeds.

Strengthen and clarify high-performance pathways for horses and athletes

- High-performance pathways are clearly defined, with transparent stages and shared expectations for progression.
- Structured supports and clearer alignment across breeders, producers, riders and high-performance programmes to improve progression to elite competition.

Strengthen visibility, engagement and fan connection around high-performance sport and breeding

- High-performance achievements and Irish-bred success are more visible and consistently communicated to sector stakeholders and wider audiences.
- Storytelling and engagement initiatives strengthen connection to Irish breeding and sport, enhancing pride, recognition and sector profile.





Priority 3:

Participation, Access and Development

To build strong foundations for equestrian sport and breeding by improving participation, access, standards and long-term involvement across Ireland.

Focus

This priority strengthens the foundations of equestrian sport and breeding in Ireland by supporting participation, improving access, and enabling sustained involvement across disciplines and regions. Horse Sport Ireland will set and support high standards across the sector, including welfare and safeguarding, education and development, and workforce capability.

Goals and success measures

GOAL

How we'll know we've succeeded

Improve access to equestrian sport and recreation at grassroots level across Ireland

- Grassroots participation is more stable across regions and disciplines.
- Fewer barriers to entry are reported by participants and affiliates.
- HSI Participation Grant is supporting targeted participation programmes with a data driven track record of increasing participation.

Strengthen consistency in safeguarding, education and welfare standards

- Providing consistency in safeguarding, education and welfare practice across HSI affiliates.
- Clearer shared standards, application and practice.

Support the education and capability of coaches, officials and volunteers

- Coaching, officiating and volunteer base has reduced reliance on a small number of individuals across regions and disciplines.
- Sustaining level 1,2 and 3 coaches.

Strengthen high-quality breeding standards and education in breeding

- Breeding standards are clearly defined and consistently applied across HSI-supported breeding activity.
- Provide supports to improve breeding for leisure horses.
- Evidence of new or returning breeders choosing to operate within HSI-supported frameworks and standards.
- HSI introduces and supports an equine research programme based on academic excellence.



Priority 4:

Customer Value and Sustainable Growth

To drive sustainable growth by deeply understanding Horse Sport Ireland's customers and delivering high quality services that translate into strong commercial performance.

Focus

This priority focuses on creating meaningful, differentiated value for Horse Sport Ireland's customers while ensuring that the organisation remains financially resilient over the long term. This priority aligns customer outcomes with sustainable revenue streams, enabling long term customer loyalty and the financial capacity to invest in future innovation.

Goals and success measures

GOAL

How we'll know we've succeeded

Design services around HSI's customer needs

- Customers experience reliable, high-quality services at every touchpoint.
- Services are aligned with industry-specific demands.

Expand on services offered and increase commercial activity

- Service offerings are enhanced and expanded.
- An expanded portfolio of services in data and genetics is introduced.

Support long term financial sustainability

- Market opportunities are identified, increasing income generation.
- Financial sustainability is strengthened through strong commercial performance.



Priority 5:

Organisational Capability and Strong Governance

To be a resilient, well-governed organisation with the culture, capability and systems to operate with integrity and confidence.

Focus

This priority focuses on strengthening the organisational foundations that enable consistent, high-quality performance across all areas of activity. Horse Sport Ireland will focus on governance, workforce capability, and organisational culture as enablers of effective decision-making, public trust, and long-term resilience. Fundamentally, this priority seeks to ensure the organisation is effectively led, adequately resourced, and fully equipped to adapt and perform over time.

Goals and success measures

GOAL

How we'll know we've succeeded

A resilient, well-governed organisation

- Governance and risk management are consistently applied and clearly understood across the organisation, with high levels of regulatory confidence and assurance.
- Decision-making is supported by clear roles and accountabilities, with issues escalated appropriately and resolved in a timely way

A capable, engaged and future-ready workforce

- Workforce capability is more consistent across functions, with improved retention of critical skills and clearer development pathways.
- Staff engagement measures reflect a positive, inclusive culture where people feel supported, accountable and empowered to contribute to continuous improvement.

Efficient, consistent and user-focused ways of working

- Services are delivered more consistently and efficiently, with fewer errors, reduced duplication and clearer end-to-end processes.
- Stakeholders experience simpler interactions and greater confidence in organisational systems, while data is routinely used to inform decisions and improve outcomes.





Horse Sport Ireland's Strategic Plan was developed through an inclusive and evidence-based process to ensure it reflects the priorities of the sport horse sector and aligns with best practice in governance and stakeholder engagement. The process combined broad public consultation, targeted stakeholder workshops, and internal collaboration.

Strategy Development Process

17,000
HSI Customers
 Customers contacted for consultation

3,300
Postal Recipients
 Flyers included in postal correspondence

766
FEI Athletes
 Text message sent to registered athletes

550
Individuals Engaged
 Individuals engaged in the process

27
HSI Affiliates Participated
 in strategic plan workshops

Strategic Plan Consultation process:
 HSI Strategic Plan Consultation Engagement

HORSE SPORT IRELAND



See Appendix 1 for full details of Strategy Development Process

SWOT and PESTLE Analysis

The SWOT analysis brings together key strategic insights from stakeholder consultation, research undertaken, and internal strategy workshops with the strategy project team and Senior Management Team.

It summarises the strategic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing HSI and was used to inform the development of the strategic priorities.



S STRENGTHS

- Experienced and Skilled workforce
- Worldwide sporting and breeding success
- Strong High-performance coaching programme
- Horse Source - Online passporting platform
- Strong safeguarding practices and comprehensive Garda vetting
- Well structured breeding schemes
- Unique national and international role across sport and breeding



W WEAKNESSES

- Funding structure
- Lack of structure around grassroot participation
- Minimal data around membership numbers and demographics
- Visibility and storytelling of HSI's impact
- Cost as a barrier to participation



O OPPORTUNITIES

- Further expansion of Horse Source
- Opportunities to include AI in services
- Develop new income streams
- Lead sustainability for the sector
- Proactive equine welfare strategies
- Use data to drive decisions around genetics, sport and breeding



T THREATS

- Increasing operational costs
- Public visibility of equine sports decreasing
- Competition with other PIO's
- Reliance on third parties to supply data
- Negative media influence





PESTLE Analysis Summary

Horse Sport Ireland operates in a sector entering a period of heightened regulatory scrutiny, rising welfare expectations, and tighter public funding politics. The €1 billion equestrian sector maintains a strong rural employment footprint but faces multiple strategic pressures across political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental dimensions.

Key Opportunity:

Position HSI as the sector leader on welfare standards, data integration, digital transformation, and demonstrable rural economic impact.

Critical Risk:

Governance fragmentation, poor stakeholder narratives, and inadequate systems integration could undermine political confidence and funding security.

PESTLE Framework: Key Issues and Implications

CATEGORY	KEY ISSUES	STRATEGIC IMPLICATION
Political	High dependence on state funding; governance behaviour = direct political risk; cross-border volatility	Strengthen political capital through compliance excellence and unified governance
Economic	€1 billion sector with strong rural footprint; rising costs; heavy reliance on exchequer funding; under-monetised	Diversify revenue and tie funding to measurable economic outcomes
Social	Rising welfare scrutiny; perception issues (elitism, affordability); fragmented stakeholders; strong participation potential	Reframe social story: welfare-first, inclusive, community-centred, visibly safe
Technological	Horse Source = core infrastructure; data fragmentation; growing opportunities in analytics; consumer-grade expectations	Build single digital spine: one horse, one customer, one dataset
Legal/Regulatory	Dense EU/Irish compliance landscape; stricter grants/procurement rules; enforcement visibility; board conduct consequences	Tighten controls and treat regulatory assurance as strategic pillar
Environmental	Climate pressures affecting breeders; expanding ESG expectations; limited sector reporting	Integrate ESG (welfare + land stewardship) into programmes and sponsorship



Welfare, Environment, Social and Governance (WESG)

Welfare, environmental responsibility, social trust and strong governance are fundamental to Horse Sport Ireland's role as the national governing body for equestrian sport. They underpin public confidence, legitimacy and long-term sustainability, and set clear boundaries for how the organisation operates and leads the sector.

Welfare

Horse welfare and participant safeguarding are non-negotiable.

HSI operates to the following standards:

- Horse welfare is paramount and is never subordinate to competitive or commercial pressures.
- International welfare standards, including the FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse, apply across national and international activity.
- Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is an essential condition of participation in equestrian sport.
- Clear expectations of behaviour and responsibility apply to coaches, officials, participants and providers.

Environmental Responsibility

HSI recognises the close relationship between equestrian sport and the natural environment.

Expectations include:

- Environmental considerations are relevant across all HSI activities.
- Understanding environmental impact is informed by research, data and collaboration across the sector.
- Environmental responsibility is considered in the context of rural communities, land use and transport.

Social Responsibility

HSI has a social responsibility to the equestrian community it serves.

This includes:

- Creating the conditions for safe, respectful and positive participation across all levels of the sport.
- Acting with transparency and accountability in engagement with participants, affiliates and stakeholders.
- Recognising that public trust, community confidence and legitimacy are shaped by how the sport is governed and led.

Governance and Integrity

Strong governance underpins credibility, accountability and integrity.

HSI operates within:

- National and international governance frameworks applicable to equestrian sport.
- The Sport Ireland Governance Code and relevant regulatory requirements.
- Clear standards of conduct and ethical behaviour for directors, officials, staff and members.
- Anti-doping and disciplinary processes aligned with FEI and international standards.



How Our Strategic Priorities Deliver on WESG

WESG commitments are not standalone obligations - they are actively delivered through HSI's five Strategic Priorities. The table below shows how each priority contributes to the organisation's welfare, environmental, social, and governance responsibilities.

	Welfare	Environmental Responsibility	Social Responsibility	Governance and Integrity
P1: Partnership, Influence & Sector Representation	Advocates for welfare standards as a sector-wide expectation; promotes responsible horse ownership culture through affiliate engagement.	Engages policymakers on land use, rural sustainability and the environmental contribution of the equestrian sector.	Strengthens inclusion, equitable access and community cohesion through deeper affiliate and stakeholder relationships.	Transparent consultation and co-design processes demonstrate accountable, stakeholder-centred governance.
P2: Excellence in Breeding & High-Performance Sport	Welfare embedded in breeding standards; genetic diversity preservation and health traits integral to selection frameworks.	Promotes responsible land and resource stewardship in breeding operations; supports research into sustainable practices.	Supports rural livelihoods and preserves cultural heritage through native and rare breed protection.	Anti-doping aligned with FEI standards; data-led performance decisions reinforce integrity and accountability.
P3: Participation, Access & Development	Safeguarding frameworks and welfare education delivered consistently at grassroots; coach and official training standards strengthened.	Grassroots participation supports connection to land and outdoor activity; greener event practices encouraged at affiliated level.	Reduces barriers to entry; promotes inclusion across age, ability, geography and background; broadens equestrian community diversity.	Consistent standards across affiliates demonstrate robust governance at every level of the sport.
P4: Customer Value & Sustainable Growth	Service design centres on customer needs; welfare-conscious products and data services reinforce responsible stewardship.	Revenue diversification reduces state dependency; ESG credentials increasingly important for commercial partnerships and sponsorship.	Measurable economic outcomes and data transparency demonstrate social value of investment in the sector.	Financial sustainability and standardised processes underpin regulatory compliance and long-term organisational confidence.
P5: Organisational Capability & Strong Governance	Embeds welfare and safeguarding culture across the organisation; workforce development includes welfare literacy for all roles.	Operational efficiency improvements reduce organisational carbon footprint; ESG reporting integrated into performance frameworks.	Inclusive culture and positive staff engagement support a socially responsible workplace; equitable recruitment practices promoted.	Sport Ireland Governance Code compliance; clear roles, accountabilities and risk frameworks define the governance backbone of the strategy.



Cultural Statement

At Horse Sport Ireland, our culture is the living expression of our vision, purpose, and values. It shapes how we work, how we collaborate, and how we deliver for our sector, our communities, our partners, and above all—for the horses entrusted to us.

Who We Are

We are the national governing body for equestrian sport and breeding in Ireland, stewarding a sector with deep heritage, global impact, and profound responsibility. Every day, our people contribute to a €1bn+ industry that sustains rural communities, supports athletes and coaches, advances breeding quality, protects welfare standards, and strengthens Ireland's reputation on the world stage.

Our culture reflects the pride we take in this role and the ambition with which we pursue it.

What Guides Us

Our vision is to lead a modern, innovative, and welfare-centred equestrian sector that integrates grassroots participation, breeding, and elite sport with internationally recognised impact. Our purpose is to strengthen and innovate Ireland's equestrian sector - advancing excellence, expertise and education so that horses, people and communities thrive. These commitments guide not only what we do, but how we show up every day.

How We Work Together

We bring our purpose and vision to life through a culture grounded in our five core values:

RESPECT

We honour every voice and perspective. In our interactions with colleagues, athletes, affiliates, breeders, volunteers and partners, we lead with kindness, empathy and understanding. Everyone deserves to feel heard, valued and supported.

INTEGRITY

We do the right thing, always. Our decisions and actions reflect honesty, transparency and accountability. Trust is central to our role in the sector, and we work every day to earn it.

UNITY

We achieve more when we work together. Collaboration and partnership across teams, disciplines, organisations and communities are central to our success. We share ideas, support one another, and celebrate collective achievement.

EXCELLENCE

We pursue high standards in everything we do. As the sector evolves, we embrace innovation, change and continuous improvement with professionalism and pride. Excellence is a commitment, not a destination.

COURAGE

We rise to challenges with determination and focus. Whether developing new programmes, navigating complex issues or representing the sector nationally and internationally, we act with confidence, resilience and ambition.

How Our Culture Shows Up in Practice

Across all our work: high-performance programmes, breeding initiatives, coaching and education, safeguarding, grassroots development, sectoral representation and passporting services; our culture drives us to:



- Put horse welfare at the heart of every decision.
- Listen openly and act respectfully, even when we disagree.
- Deliver with professionalism and follow through on commitments.
- Share knowledge and build expertise across our organisation and affiliates.
- Innovate for the future while honouring Ireland's equestrian heritage.
- Champion the communities, volunteers and partners who power our sector.
- Represent Ireland with pride on the national and international stage.

Our Cultural Commitment

We hold ourselves accountable to this culture - individually and collectively. It shapes how we lead, how we collaborate and how we serve the sector. It ensures that every interaction reflects who we are at our best. And it connects us to something bigger: a thriving Irish equestrian sector where horses, people and communities can flourish.

Appendix 1: Strategy Development Process

Public Consultation

The consultation formally launched on 2nd September 2025 and remained open for six weeks, closing on 10th October 2025. To maximise participation, HSI used multiple channels:

- RDS Dublin Horse Show: Visitors were invited to complete surveys via tablets or QR codes, with a comment box for written feedback.
- Media and Digital Outreach: Coverage in The Irish Field and across HSI social media platforms.
- Direct Engagement:
- Emails to 17,000c HSI customers.
- A letter from the CEO to HSI affiliate Presidents/Chairs/Secretaries requesting formal submissions.
- Traditional Channels: Flyers in all HSI postal correspondence (approx. 3,300 recipients) during consultation period and an option for written submissions by post.
- Targeted Messaging: Text message sent to 766 FEI-registered Irish athletes.

By the close of consultation, over 550 individuals had engaged, providing valuable insights to shape the plan.

Stakeholder Workshop

HSI hosted an Affiliate Workshops in October 2025 and February 2026 facilitated by independent strategic consultant Tom Crisp.

- 87 participants registered, representing 27 affiliate organisations and sectoral forums.
- The workshops focused on identifying priorities, challenges, and opportunities for the sport horse sector.

Internal Collaboration

HSI commissioned strategic consultant Tom Crisp to guide the internal strategy process.

1. 15 staff volunteers formed project teams, with five team leaders appointed to oversee key themes.
2. Each team had a Senior Management sponsor to ensure alignment with organisational objectives.
3. Regular sessions were held with project teams and the Senior Management Team.
4. Dedicated Board Workshop: A full-day session was conducted with the Board to review emerging priorities and validate strategic direction.



Stakeholder Workshop Attendees

Connemara Pony Breeders Society (CPBS)	Teagasc	Eventing Ireland
Association of Irish Riding Clubs (AIRC)	Irish Shows Association (ISA)	Irish Pony Society
Irish Draught Horse Breeders Association (IDHBA)	Irish Cob Association	RDA Ireland
Irish Quarter Horse Association (IQHA)	Royal Dublin Society (RDS)	Mounted Games Ireland
Association of Irish Riding Establishments (AIRE)	Irish Harness Racing Association	Trec Trails Ireland
Irish Equine Veterinary Association	Irish Pony Club	TREC Ireland
College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)	Para Equestrian Ireland	Traditional Irish Horse Association (TIHA)
University College Dublin (UCD)	Army Equitation School	Northern Ireland Horse Board (NIHB)
Showing Ireland	Mounted Games Association of Ireland	Traditional Irish Horse Association (TIHA)

One on One meetings

Eventing Ireland	Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI)	Paralympics Ireland
Federation of Irish Sport	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Kildare County Council
Sport Ireland	European Equestrian Federation	Olympic Federation of Ireland (OFI)

Requests for submissions and offers of meetings were sent to all HSI affiliates and numerous industry stakeholders.



Appendix 2: Strategic Policy Guidance and Legislative Context

Horse Sport Ireland's Strategy 2030 operates within the national, European and international policy and legislative framework which underpins its governance, regulatory responsibilities, and the sustainable development of the organisation.

National Policy

- National Sports Policy 2018–2027
- Sport Ireland Strategy and Governance Frameworks

Equine and Agricultural Policy

- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) equine policies
- Animal Welfare Guidelines for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys
- National Animal Health and Welfare Strategy
- Equine Identification and Traceability Systems
- European Union Animal Breeding regulations

Irish Legislative Framework

- Sport Ireland Act 2015
- Companies Act 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013

International Sporting Governance

- FEI Statutes, Rules and Regulations
- FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse
- FEI Anti-Doping and Controlled Medication Regulations
- World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code
- Olympic Charter (where applicable)

Governance, Safeguarding and Ethics

- Sport Ireland Governance Code
- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport
- Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport
- Integrity and Anti-Doping Frameworks

This appendix sets out relevant policy and legislative frameworks relevant to Horse Sport Ireland's Strategy 2030. It is not an exhaustive list. HSI operates within a broader regulatory environment and is required to comply with a wide range of additional legislation, policies and obligations in its capacity as an employer, company, recipient of state funding, passport issuing authority (PIO) etc.





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