



Candidate Information for the appointment of industry directors to the Board of Horse Sport Ireland

Introduction

Horse Sport Ireland is the national governing body for equestrian sport in Ireland. HSI are committed to promoting excellence in all aspects of equestrian sport, from breeding, production, coaching to competition and welfare. Horse Sport Ireland's board of directors plays a critical role in guiding our strategy and ensuring our success. The current Board of Directors has recently undertaken a review of the processes currently in place in respect of the appointments to the Board of Directors. The board have considered whether such processes serve the organisation in the best possible manner. Recognising that the sport horse industry is a wide and diverse community, Horse Sport Ireland have changed the appointment method to the board of directors to ensure that we have access to the best talent available, to create a more diverse and inclusive board, and to ensure gender balance at board level.

Background

Currently, the Chairperson of Horse Sport Ireland and three non-executive directors are appointed by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in consultation with the Minister for Sport. As Horse Sport Ireland is a 32-country body, one director is nominated by the Northern Ireland Sport Forum and appointed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and Department of Sport.

Thereafter, the remaining four industry directors are selected by an independent selection panel based on two nominees (at least one of whom must be female) received from each of the Horse Sport Ireland Advisory Forum structure, being the following:

- Sport & Recreation Advisory Forum
- Breeding and Production Advisory Forum
- High Performance Advisory Forum
- Coaching and Education Advisory Forum

Guide for prospective industry applicants

Board Meeting Location: Beech House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare and virtually by way of MS Teams Platform.

Number of Vacancies: 4 Industry Directors

Remuneration: Board Fees: Directors - €8,100. Travel and subsistence allowances will be paid in respect of journeys undertaken to attend meetings of the Board or to transact its business, in accordance with the Horse Sport Ireland mileage and subsistence policy.

Time Requirements for Directors: Approx. 9 full day Board meetings per annum and possibly some committee commitment.

1. Background

Horse Sport Ireland was incorporated on 20 December 2006 under the Companies Acts as a Company Limited by Guarantee without share capital. On January 1, 2008, the organisation became the Governing Body for equestrian sport in Ireland (32 counties) as recognised by the International Governing Body (FEI), Sport Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland and the Olympic Federation of Ireland (OFI). Extensive reforms were undertaken during 2017 & 2018 as part of the implement of a wide range of reforms suggested by international consultancy firm Indecon in their 2017 Report on HSI's governance, structures and programmes of support. Following an eTender competition in 2022, Horse Sport Ireland, was awarded the service delivery contract for Breeding Services within the Irish sport horse industry and Studbook Services for the Irish Sport Horse, Irish Draught, Irish Sport Pony and Irish Cob.

Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) as the governing body is responsible for devising and implementing strategies for the development and promotion of an internationally competitive sport horse industry, covering breeding and production, high performance equestrian sport, coaching and education and sport and recreation activities.

Horse Sport Ireland provides supports and services for the wider equine industry in Ireland including:

- Interface with the Government and government agencies on behalf of the sector
- Acts as the National Governing Body for Equestrian Sport as recognised by FEI, Sport Ireland, Sport NI, OFI
- Acts as an umbrella body for the sector with recognised Affiliates (breeding and sport)
- Licences & regulates athletes & horses for international competition (FEI and Olympics)
- Manages High Performance Equestrian Programmes for Olympic & Paralympic Programmes (youth and senior)
- Coordinates the National Equine Anti-Doping Programme
- Acts as a centralised Safeguarding hub for recognised affiliates, and is a Relevant Organisation pursuant to the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012
- Maintains the Irish Sport Horse and Irish Draught Horse Studbooks, Irish Sport Pony, and Irish Cob under approval from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

- Provide support tools to breeders to facilitate them reach their objectives for producing horses capable of competing at the highest levels in equestrian sport or providing horses for the leisure and recreation industry in Ireland and abroad.

2. Functions of the Board

The Board of Horse Sport Ireland are ultimately responsible for the operation, oversight, management and strategic direction of the organisation as a whole.

3. Functions of a Director

A Horse Sport Ireland Director is responsible for steering the company forward and is collectively responsible for its long-term sustainability. The Industry Director should bring independent judgement to bear on issues of sector across breeding and sport and organisational strategy, performance, resources, key appointments and standards of conduct. Industry Directors are appointed to the Board because of their specific skills, knowledge and experience.

The role of Director require high standards of corporate governance. Individuals who are appointed must to act, first in foremost in the best interests of Horse Sport Ireland. Horse Sport Ireland is a publicly funded organisation and must serve the interests of the taxpayer, pursue value for money in their endeavours (including managing risk appropriately), and act transparently. As such, members of the Board, and the relevant management team, are accountable for the proper management of the organisation.

Horse Sport Ireland is benchmarked against the DPER Circular 13/2014 (<https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/10b42-circular-132014-management-of-and-accountability-for-grants-from-exchequer-funds/>), which sets out the four principles of clarity, fairness, value for money, & governance which applies to bodies such as HSI in receipt of grant funding from Government. HSI is responsible for the orderly management and accountability for Grants From Exchequer Funds. Horse Sport Ireland is compliant with the Sport Ireland Governance Code.

In order to be an effective contributor on the Board it is recommended that prospective Industry Directors have the following attributes:

- bring independent and objective scrutiny to the oversight of the organisation;
- be prepared to be challenging when necessary while being supportive to the delivery of organisational strategy and objectives;
- be equipped to offer considered advice on the basis of sound judgement and experience;
- be prepared to make a time commitment to their work commensurate with their role.
- hold a full understanding and awareness as to the meaning of fiduciary duty in the context of the companies act 2014

5. Person Specification for Industry Director

Four Industry Directors are required for the Board of Horse Sport Ireland, the position to take effect in April 2024.

Experience

Nominees from each of the Advisory Forum, must demonstrate in their application the following:

Essential

1. Knowledge of the equestrian industry.
2. Professional experience at an appropriately senior level in one or more of the following areas:
 - Business
 - Finance, Economics
 - Accountancy and Auditing
 - Public Administration
 - Corporate Governance
 - Project Management & Investment
 - Media, Public Relations
 - Law
 - Veterinary
 - Animal Welfare/Social License
 - Digital Transformation
3. Prior Board level experience will be a distinct advantage with an excellent understanding of Governance.

Desirable

The selection panel will follow government policy regarding gender balance on Board, i.e. 40% minimum female participation.

1. Demonstrable expertise in one or more of the following key areas:
 - Strategic Planning
 - Risk management
 - Organisational change management
2. Ability to understand and interrogate financial reports.
3. Ability to operate as part of a team.

6. Terms of Appointment

Appointments to Industry Director of Horse Sport Ireland is for a 3 year term, with eligibility for a further term.

7. Assessment Process

The Independent Selection Panel (the “Panel”) will be convened by the Board of Horse Sport Ireland to consider and review the expressions of interest received.

The Panel will:

- Review and discuss the nominations received against the specific appointment criteria for the role;
- Assess potential appointees further, once they meet the specified appointment criteria, by undertaking any or all of the following steps:
 - Consideration of the nomination/written applications; and/or
 - Referee checks;
 - Any other selection method deemed appropriate.
- Conduct interviews of each candidate nominated by the Advisory Forum structure
- Make recommendations as to suitable candidates to the Board of Horse Sport Ireland for appointment.

The Independent Selection Panel is made up of the following members;

- Tom Moran (Chairperson)
- Dr Una May
- Fiona Tierney
- Gemma Daly
- Brian Mangan