

17<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Dear Ms. Everett, Mr M. Dowling and Mr D. Duggan,

I refer to the industry consultation document on the appointment of directors to the Board of Horse Sport Ireland.

The views of the Irish Horse Board Co-operative Society, which is by far the largest membership representative body of breeders and producers in Ireland, on the proposals, are outlined in some detail in the attached document.

The Irish Horse Board and the Equestrian Federation of Ireland, in conjunction with the two government Departments of Agriculture and Sport were responsible for the establishment of Horse Sport Ireland in order to provide better coherence between sport and breeding. The agreement to establish the 'Umbrella' organisation followed many years of discussion, having their origins in the Connellan Agreement in 2001 and ultimately agreed per the Dowling Report in December 2006.

As you are aware, the national sports side of the industry did not join Horse Sport Ireland per se and hand over their day-to-day functions but opted instead to become affiliate members of the new organisation. In contrast, the Irish Horse Board representing the breeding and production side of the industry handed over its functions, staff and resources to Horse Sport Ireland on the basis of a binding agreement entered into between the two bodies at that time. This agreement facilitated an arrangement whereby policy for the industry was formulated by the Irish Horse Board and other breeders' representatives and channelled through the Breeding Sub Board for implementation. Subsequently, following the Indecon Report, the Breeding Sub Board became the Breeding and Production Advisory Council, but the de facto position remained the same, in that this group formulated breeding policy for implementation by the main Board and Executive of Horse Sport Ireland.

With the Breeding and Production Advisory Council having been stood down and the unilateral decision taken by the Horse Sport Ireland Executive to break the Agreement with the Irish Horse Board, the current position is that Horse Sport Ireland no longer has legitimacy to formulate policy on behalf of breeders and producers. The current proposals in relation to the make-up of the main board of HSI, if implemented, would endorse this current totally unacceptable situation of having policy taken out of the control of the industry membership bodies.

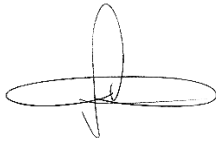
Accordingly, the Irish Horse Board is strongly opposed to the proposals contained in the industry consultation document and request Horse Sport Ireland to enter into meaningful discussions with the Irish Horse Board and other industry representatives, as appropriate, in order to ensure that the

Board of Horse Sport Ireland is structured in a manner that facilitates meaningful input from the industry representative membership bodies.

I also wish to inform you that in view of the current proposals contained in the Consultation Document and the recent actions by Horse Sport Ireland to stand down the advisory councils and disregard the agreement with the Irish Horse Board, that we will be seeking an urgent meeting with the Minister for Agriculture Food and Marine to request that he initiates a fundamental review of Horse Sport Ireland to ensure that a body that best serves the interests of the industry channelled through its membership bodies, is in place to safeguard the future of our sector.

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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop on the left and a horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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Tiernan Gill

Chairman, Irish Horse Board Co-operative Society Limited



**Irish Horse Board  
Co-operative Society Limited**

*Submission on the  
Consultation Paper  
for the Appointment of  
Industry Directors  
to the Board of Horse Sport Ireland*

**17th August 2023**

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# Consultation Paper - Appointment of Industry Directors to the Board of Horse Sport Ireland

## Summary

- Horse Sport Ireland was established by the representative membership bodies for equine breeding/production (Irish Horse Board) and sport (Equestrian Federation of Ireland) in conjunction with the Government Departments of Agriculture, Food & Marine and Sport in December 2016, with the objective of bringing more coherence between equestrian sport and breeding;
- The model agreed for the new organisation was to have a central/overarching (Umbrella) body which embraced the membership bodies representing the breeding/production and sport sides of the industry and this concept was reflected in the governance structure put in place, through having policy made by the membership organisations from the industry and implemented by the Board/Executive of the new organisation, Horse Sport Ireland (HSI);
- While there was overall agreement reached to establish Horse Sport Ireland, the model put in place for the fledgeling organisation was rather unusual, in that the individual constituent sporting bodies of the Equestrian Federation of Ireland became affiliates of HSI, but retained their own identity and continued to carry out most of their original functions, whereas on the breeding side, the Irish Horse Board handed over most of its functions to the new body on the basis of an agreement put in place between the two organisations;
- From the outset of the discussions to form the new Umbrella body, having their origins in the Connellan Agreement, through to the Dowling Report when the new organisation was established, and more latterly the Indecon Report, the core principle of policy for the industry being made the representative member-based organisations and implemented by the Board/Executive of the Umbrella body that is HSI, was maintained;
- The recent unilateral decision by Horse Sport Ireland to effectively disregard the governance structures that were put in place by the industry to establish the organisation, by 'standing down' the Advisory Councils, ignoring the agreement entered with the Irish Horse Board and now attempting to populate the Board of the organisation with individuals who would carry no remit from the industry, clearly demonstrates that Horse Sport Ireland has lost sight of its *raison d'être* and accordingly, its suitability to serve the Industry must now be questioned;
- The Irish Horse Board is now calling on the government to carry out an independent review of the structures of Horse Sport Ireland with a view to putting an organisation in place that is democratic and fit for purpose. In addition, in the interim, the Irish Horse Board requests Horse Sport Ireland to have urgent discussions with representatives of the industry to agree measures to populate the current board with industry representatives so that it can operate effectively on behalf of the sector.

## 2. Introduction

Horse Sport Ireland was established in December 2006 following agreement of the Irish Horse Board, the membership body representing the breeding and production side of the industry and the Equestrian Federation of Ireland, representing the sport side, to form a new Umbrella organisation for the whole of the industry. The original concept underpinning its establishment was to bring more coherence between equestrian sport and breeding.

Following its establishment, Horse Sport Ireland subsequently became the Governing Body for all equestrian sport in 2008. This role was previously the responsibility of the Equestrian Federation of Ireland, which then ceased to exist. When Horse Sport Ireland was established, the international sporting disciplines, showjumping, eventing, dressage and para equestrian continued to run their sports at national level, as they did before the formation of HSI, and became affiliates of HSI.

In January 2008, Horse Sport Ireland was granted responsibility for the functions formerly carried out by the Irish Horse Board and in July 2008, responsibility for operating the Irish Horse Register was handed over to Horse Sport Ireland by the Irish Horse Board, following an EGM. Essentially at that point, Horse Sport Ireland had taken over all Irish Horse Board former operational functions: the Irish Horse Register, promotion and marketing of Irish horses, education and training of breeders and producers, and functions relating to equestrian tourism, in collaboration with Tourism Ireland. While this is in total contrast to what happened on the sport side, where the main function of Horse Sport Ireland is international participation, in order to get the consent of the Irish Horse Board for the transfer of functions and enable the establishment of Horse Sport Ireland, an agreement between the Irish Horse Board and the new body was put in place (Appendix III).

### **3. Background to Horse Sport Ireland**

Initial agreement on the formation of a new Umbrella body for equestrianism was reached following three years of industry negotiations under the chairmanship of Mr Liam Connellan (Connellan Report, Appendix I) in 2001. However, arrangements to put the new body in place were not proceeded with at that point.

In 2005, the concept of an Umbrella body was revisited by the then Chairman of the Irish Horse Board, Michael Osborne, and an industry group was established under the chairmanship of Mr Michael Dowling. This resulted in the Dowling Report (Appendix II) which was agreed by industry and the new Umbrella body, Horse Sport Ireland, was established in December 2006. At all times throughout these discussions, the model envisaged and agreed was to have an overarching (Umbrella) body which embraced the membership bodies representing the breeding/production and sport sides of the industry. It was never intended to establish a separate or independent body, operating almost in competition with, rather than serving the needs of existing member bodies.

### **4. The Board/Governance of Horse Sport Ireland**

In examining how governance of Horse Sport Ireland should be structured in the future, it is imperative to look at what was proposed and ultimately agreed by the industry, when the new organisation was originally established:

Connellan Agreement: The Agreement reached by the Equestrian Federation of Ireland/Irish Horse Board task force in September 2001, following almost three years of discussions, was that the new organisation would be governed by a general council of 59 representatives who would delegate powers of implementation to an Executive Board of 15 to 16 people (Appendix I).

The General Council members (59) were to come from the EFI disciplines, other sporting bodies and the breeding side. In regard to breeding, 12 members were to come from the Irish Horse Board, two from the Northern Ireland Horse Board and two from the Connemara Pony Breeders Society, making a total of 16 breeders' representatives, out of an overall total of 59 (Appendix I).

In regard to the makeup of the Executive Board, seven members were to come from the EFI disciplines, four from the Irish Horse Board and three or four from the other sporting disciplines (RDS, the Universities, AIRC, AIRE, Irish Pony Club, Irish Pony Society) as per Appendix I.

The governance structure of the organisation proposed under the Connellan Agreement envisioned that policy would be made by the industry General Council who would delegate powers of implementation to the Executive Board of 15/16 members.

Dowling Report: The Dowling Report (the basis on which Horse Sport Ireland was ultimately established), while it differed from the Connellan Agreement of having a General Council and main Board, had at its core, the same principles as Connellan in regard to the governance structure, that is of policy being made by the industry representative operating as industry sub-boards (Breeding & Sport) of the main Board and brought to the main Board for implementation. In this regard, in relation to breeding, the Irish Horse Board and other breeders' representatives became the Breeding sub-Board of Horse Sport Ireland and had responsibility for formulating policy for the breeding and production side of the industry. This policy was implemented by the main Board of HSI, which included five Irish Horse Board directors.

Indecon Report: In 2017 the Indecon Report was commissioned by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and following implementation of some of the proposals in this report, the sub boards were replaced by advisory councils. In this regard, the Breeding sub-Board was replaced by the Breeding and Production Advisory Council which formulated policy for breeding and production, and while this was an 'Advisory' group, the de-facto position remained the same as proposed by Connellan, in that policy proposals coming from this body, representative of breeders and producers, were implemented in full by the main Board. Accordingly, after the changes following Indecon the core principles of the industry making policy was maintained and all policy/programme design decisions were implemented in full, with none being overturned by the main Board/Executive.

## 5. Current Proposals/Horse Sport Ireland Consultation Paper

The current view of the industry at grass roots level is that there has been a gradual erosion of industry input into the decision-making processes since Horse Sport Ireland was established and this is clearly manifest in ongoing adverse media publicity attaching to the sector, including the resignation of the main Board of Horse Sport Ireland last year and most recently, in the Oireachtas Committee meeting in June 2023.

This erosion of input and connectivity with the grass roots in the industry has been facilitated to some degree through the evolution of the governance structures. In the case of breeding, the governance structure has evolved from the Breeding Sub-Board to the Breeding and Production Advisory Council, to the current situation of having no industry input since the unilateral decision of the Executive of Horse Sport Ireland to dispense with the original agreement entered with the Irish Horse Board and effectively 'stand down' the Breeding and Production Advisory Council. This has resulted in the current autocratic nature of decision making in the organisation, with the most visible manifestation of this being the recent substantial increase in registration fees for breeders, without consultation with the industry.

Horse Sport Ireland Consultation Paper: The proposals in the current HSI Consultation Paper (Appendix IV) for the appointment of industry directors to the Board of Horse Sport Ireland, if they were to be implemented, would fundamentally change the core principle on which Horse Sport Ireland was founded, i.e. that the industry representatives on the Board of the new 'Umbrella' organisation (HSI) would be elected by the respective members-based affiliate organisations (IHB for breeding/production) and accordingly would reflect the views of the industry members.

The HSI Consultation Paper states that:

*'This process will involve inviting **individuals** from a broad range of backgrounds and with a diverse set of skills to submit their expression of interest in joining the board of Horse Sport Ireland.'*

This provides for the appointment of '**individuals**' who won't necessarily represent the views of the industry bodies and have no remit from any affiliate member-based bodies. The proposals, if implemented, would be at total odds with the original concept of providing coherence in the industry through the direct involvement of stakeholders, where policy is made by people who represent the interests of those involved in the sector. Individuals cannot assume, or be granted, this remit. In this regard, the process proposed by Horse Sport Ireland is fundamentally flawed, in that it is not necessarily inclusive of the views of membership bodies, is accordingly potentially undemocratic and flies in the face of the core concept underpinning the establishment of what was set up as an 'Umbrella' organisation for the whole of the industry. In addition, a model based on such high-handed decision-making processes, using the input of individuals, regardless of their expertise, could never be as effective as a model that facilitates input considered by the entire industry, and in any event, such a model would never be acceptable to the sector.

Regarding the funding of Horse Sport Ireland, it must be pointed out that almost €5 million comes from the Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine, which has responsibility for breeding and production for the equine sector and over €1 million comes from studbook services. This equates to approximately 60% of total HSI income and accordingly, all policy decisions relating to breeding/production expenditure must be made by the representatives of breeders and producers. Not surprisingly, this is recognised in the Horse Sport Ireland Constitution (Appendix V) which provides for direct input by the Irish Horse Board and Northern Ireland Horse Board on any matters they consider important for their part of the horse industry. Clearly, the current HSI proposals are not in accord with its own Constitution.

It is now clear to the industry that the latest proposals are an attempt by Horse Sport Ireland to further morph into something that was never intended by the industry that created the organisation in the first instance and was never agreed by the industry at any point since then.

Accordingly, the Irish Horse Board, as the democratically elected body representing the Irish breeders and producers engaged in the Irish sport horse industry are strongly opposed to any attempt by Horse Sport Ireland to alter the structures of the organisation in a way that would further dilute the input of breeders and producers into policy making for their industry. Consequently, the Irish Horse Board will vigorously resist any such moves by Horse Sport Ireland.

## 6. Recommendations.

- i. The Irish Horse Board is now calling on the government (Departments of Agriculture, Food & Marine and Sport) to carry out an independent review of the structures of Horse Sport Ireland with a view to putting an organisation in place that is democratic and fit for purpose. This review must involve full consultation with all industry stakeholders and have as its core the overriding principle that the industry retains control of policy, in order to optimise the future development of the sport horse sector and thereby safeguard the livelihoods of all its stakeholders.
- ii. As an interim arrangement, the Irish Horse Board requests Horse Sport Ireland to enter immediate discussions with representatives of the industry (including the Irish Horse Board) to agree temporary measures to populate the current board with industry representatives so that it can operate effectively on behalf of the sector.



## Appendix I - Connellan Agreement.

### **Agreement reached by EFI IHB Task Force - September 2001**

At a series of task force meetings over recent months which included representatives of the EFI and the Irish Horse Board the following key issues have been agreed unanimously:

1. That a new national governing body for the horse sport sector should be established. The working title adopted for this new organization was Horse Sport Ireland.
2. That the Irish Horse Board would be part of the new organization.
3. That's the FEI disciplines and the Irish Horse Board would combine resources, structures, staff and finance into a single new operational, registration, and membership system managed by a Chief Executive Officer and staffed by up to 20 staff.
4. That the new organization would be governed by a general council of 59 representatives who will delegate powers of implementation to an executive board of 15 to 16 people.
5. That representation on the Board of the new organization will be as shown in the attached proposals agreed without dissension a task force meeting of September the 24th 2001.

Liam Connellan

Chairman

30th September 2001.

**Proposals agreed at Task Force Meeting of September 24<sup>th</sup>**

1. That the General Council will be composed of 59 members.
2. That the Board of Directors will be composed of 15/16 members.
3. That representation on the Council and Board will be as follows:

**FEI disciplines**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Council Members</b>	<b>Board Members</b>
SJAI	12	4
Eventing Ireland	6	2
Dressage Ireland	3	1
ILDRA	1	
CDA	1	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>

**Other Sporting Bodies**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Council Members</b>	<b>Board Members</b>
RDS	3	see Note below
Universities	1	
Army Equitation School	3	see Note below
Parequestrian		
RDA	1	
AIRC	3	1 shared between the 2 orgs
AIRE	3	
Irish Pony Club	3	1 shared between the 2 orgs
Irish Pony Society	2	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3/4</b>

**Breeding**

Irish Horse Board	12	4
N I Horse Board	2	
Connemara Pony Soc	2	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>Independent Chair</b>	1	1
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<b>Overall total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>15/16</b>
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**Note:** the remaining issue unresolved at the meeting was the representation on the Board for the RDS/ Universities, and AES/ Parequestrian/RDA. The proposal put before the meeting was that each of these two groups would have one place each making a total of 16 seats on the Board. An alternative proposal was put forward by some participants that 1 seat should be allocated to represent the two groups giving a total Board membership of 15. The Task Force was divided on this issue.

# The representative of Dressage Ireland on the Task Force abstained from voting on the structure of the Council and Board at the meeting on Sept 24<sup>th</sup>, and the Irish Pony Club representative was absent.

## **Horse Sport Ireland**

1. Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) will be a company limited by guarantee. It shall have a Board of Directors, representatives of the industry, and two advisory boards. Its executive will be responsible to the main Board. HSI shall be an all island body.

### **Aims and Responsibilities of HSI**

2. The responsibilities of HSI are to:
  - Develop and implement strategies for the development and promotion of an internationally competitive Irish sport horse industry (breeding, sport and leisure sides) - including quality improvement, education and training, market development, welfare and high performance - and based as far as possible on Irish bred horses.
  - Ensure coherence between breeding policies and the needs of the sport and leisure sides of the industry.
  - Act as Governing Body for the sport in Ireland and represent the industry and sport internationally.
  - Maintain the Irish Horse Register.
  - Co-ordinate the activities of the different organisations within the industry and provide services for and on behalf of those organisations.
  - Obtain adequate and secure financial resources for the industry.

### **Board of Directors**

3. HSI will be controlled by a Board of Directors comprising:
  - (a) *Eight, with one directorship rotating between ILDRA, the CDA and PEI*
  - (b) *Four representing other sport/leisure organisations*
  - (c) *Five representing the breeding side of the industry*
  - (d) *One independent Chairman*

The individual organisations in the sport and leisure sector will nominate their 12 directors at (a) and (b). The Irish Horse Board will nominate the 5 at (c). The Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, in consultation with the Minister for Agriculture and Food, will nominate the Chairman.

The Board will be charged with ensuring that the responsibilities of HSI are effectively discharged and that proper corporate governance is in place. It shall appoint the Chief Executive, ensure that an effective administration is established and oversee its proper operation.

### **Sub Boards**

4. The Connellan Report suggested a large Council, fully representative of the industry, which would advise on policy and strategy. We are suggesting that this function should be performed by a sub Board responsible for advice on policy and strategy in the sport and leisure areas. In any company the Board of Directors has to be, and be seen to be, the overall controlling entity in terms of policy, strategy and implementation. It is suggested that the numbers on this sub Board be kept at a manageable level which would mean at least halving the numbers suggested in Connellan. It does not seem necessary to have large multiple representation from individual organisations on this type of advisory body. We are suggesting, therefore, that each organisation have one member on the advisory sub Board, with one member from Northern Ireland and an independent Chairman (15 members).
  
5. The Irish Horse Board should continue as a co-operative with members elected / nominated as at present. It would perform the function of an advisory sub Board within HSI on issues relating to the stud book and breeding policy and would agree the programmes to implement that policy within the budgetary parameters stipulated by the HSI Board. Implementation would, however, be the job of the executive, responsible through the CEO, to the Board of HSI. Responsibility for ensuring coherence between breeding policy and the sports / leisure needs of the industry would rest with the Board of HSI. The Breeding Sub Board would co-opt a member each from the Connemara Pony Society, the Irish Pony Society and the Northern Ireland Horse Board. This Sub Board would be responsible for nominating the breeder representatives to the Board of HSI.

### **Executive**

6. The Board would appoint the CEO, who would be responsible for the appointment of the other staff and the establishment of an effective administrative structure
  
7. It is envisaged that there would be three broad divisions within HSI:
  - Finance and services (including education, training)

- Sport (including international)
- Breeding (including the stud book)

Each division would be headed up by a Director responsible to the CEO. The Finance Director would act also as the Company Secretary.

A suggested organigramme for the proposed new body is attached. This is very much a draft outline as the drawing up of a detailed structure for the body is, of course, a matter for its Board and Chief Executive.

8. Many of the services needed within HSI (Education, IT, HR, Payroll, Membership) are needed also in the individual organisations. Once HSI is established it would offer to provide these services for the individual organisations on an agency basis, thereby maximising synergies and effecting cost savings.

### **Financial**

9. Current funding for HSI will come from the resources of its constituent organisations, the Irish Sports Council and the Department of Agriculture and Food (breeding policy and related issues). At present the public element of the expenditure on the activities which would be the responsibility of HSI is about €2.25m out of a total of € 5.8m. The level and breakdown of future expenditure will, of course, be determined by the nature of the approved strategic plan for the organisation. There is, however, a need to be clear about the initial expenditure requirement of the new body. It is suggested that this needs to be set at € 7.5m for 2007. Of this amount, about €1.5m would be for operational and administrative costs which is in line with the current position. Thus the additional expenditure, which would require an increase from € 2.25m to € 4m in the allocation from public sources, will be all for the various programmes operated by, or with funding from, HSI. The funding requirements for future years will need to be settled within the framework of the multiannual strategic plan, the drawing up of which will be the first major task of the new Body.

The additional funding from public sources should be for improved or new programmes and services. Thus, organisations will be required to maintain their normal financial contribution to the activities which in the future will be the responsibility of HSI but which are currently undertaken by the Horse Board, the EFI or individual organisations.

10. The new body will, of course, have capital expenditure requirements. The extent of these will also depend on the strategic plan but is likely to include:

- a headquarters building
- a centre of excellence, and
- a common IT system

The cost of a capital programme can be reduced if decisions are taken to lease rather than build a new headquarters and to use existing facilities, such as Punchestown, for the centre of excellence. The plans and costs involved need to be negotiated with the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism.

### **Northern Ireland**

11. All are agreed that HSI should be an all island body. Most of the organisations affiliated to the EFI cover the whole island. The Horse Board does not but it has effective working links with the Northern Ireland Horse Board. In this new context those links will be strengthened and formalised with a view ultimately to having a single Horse Board (with perhaps two sections).

There is a clear need to ensure that there is proper representation from Northern Ireland within the new structure. As outlined above, there would be at least one Northern Ireland representative on each of the two Sub Boards. In addition it is suggested that one of the representatives of the FEI disciplines and, after formal links are created between the two Horse Boards, one of the nominees of the Breeding Sub Board, be from Northern Ireland.

### **Next Steps**

12. The revised proposals will now go to the Horse Board and, through the EFI structure, to the individual sport and leisure organisations for approval. Assuming this is forthcoming, the organisations should then make their nominations to the Board and the Minister should appoint the Chairman. The Board should then operate on an interim basis in order to appoint the Chief Executive and set up the organisational structure, with a view to having HSI formally established by the end of this year.

**Relationship between Horse Sport Ireland and the Irish Horse Board Co-operative Society (Breeding Advisory Sub Board)**

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**Background**

This document clarifies the on-going relationship between Horse Sport Ireland and the Irish Horse Board co-operative society. It follows on from the timetable for the implementation of the Dowling report set out in a document agreed by the Board of Directors of the Irish Horse Board co-operative on September 17<sup>th</sup> and by the Board of Horse Sport Ireland on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

- (1) The Irish Horse board Co-operative plus co-optees has become the Breeding Advisory Sub-Board of Horse Sport Ireland, in line with paragraph five (5) of the agreed Dowling Report. This board will advise the main board of Horse Sport Ireland on all matters relating to breeding policy. This sub board will meet regularly but at least six times per year.
- (2) The Breeding Advisory Sub Board will provide regular reports to the Board of Horse Sport Ireland. In general if a situation arises where the main board disagrees with a decision of the sub board they will refer the matter back to the Breeding Advisory Sub Board. The Main board will not substitute their decision for a decision of the Breeding Advisory Sub Board.
- (3) The Irish Horse Board sponsorship programmes for 2007 will be rolled over for 2008. In future years such sponsorships will be reviewed by the Breeding Advisory Sub-Board who will decide on the allocation of such sponsorships within the budget stipulated by the main board.
- (4) The share capital in the Irish Horse Board Co-operative Society plus the retained surplus as at December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007 will remain the property of the Irish Horse Board Co-operative and any subscriptions for new shares (i.e. €10) will be retained by the Irish Horse Board Co-operative.
- (5) Horse Sport Ireland will provide fee discounts to paid up members of the Irish Horse Board co-operative and will produce and provide copies of the Stallion and Foal books as well as other related publications free to each paid up member in the year in question.
- (6) The Irish Horse Board co-operative will become an affiliate of Horse Sport Ireland. The annual affiliation fee from the Irish Horse Board Co-operative Society to Horse Sport Ireland will be an amount equal to the income from the annual membership fees (currently €25 per member) derived by the Irish Horse Board Co-operative Society in the year in question.
- (7) The Irish Horse Board co-operative will continue to operate the Sport Horse Breeders Skillnet. Horse Sport Ireland will provide accommodation at their National Office in Naas for the staff person employed as Skillnets Co-ordinator. The services of Horse Sport Ireland's Breeding Manager, Training and Education Manager and Finance Manager will be made available to the Horse Board co-operative to oversee

the running of this programme, acting under the direction of the steering committee established by the co-operative.

- (8) Horse Sport Ireland will also provide staff and resources to the Horse Board Co-operative society limited to provide the following functions:
- Service the Board of Directors of the co-operative and ensure that the society is compliant with all regulatory requirements.
  - Maintain the membership database
  - Organise the Horse board co-operative elections to its own board of Directors and therefore the breeding advisory sub board.
  - Produce accounts for the society.

### **Transition Arrangements for 2008**

- The Breeding Advisory Sub Board will commence a review of sport horse breeding policy for inclusion in the Horse Sport Ireland Strategic Plan. This review will take into account the findings of the Irish Horse Board report and submissions made in relation to Horse Sport Ireland's strategic plan.
- For 2008 Horse Board breeding sponsorships agreed by the Breeding Advisory Sub Board will be rolled over. If additional resources become available or alterations are proposed this will have to be approved by the breeding advisory sub board.
- The current Chairman of the Irish Horse Board will remain as Chairman of the Breeding Advisory Sub Board and the Governing Board of the Irish Horse Board Co-operative society. Subsequently the Chair of the Breeding Advisory Sub-Board will be nominated by the Chair of the Board of Horse Sport Ireland and will be selected from amongst the five sub board nominees to the main board.

**ENDS**

***Prepared by the Chairman and Presented to the Board of Directors of the Irish Horse Board Co-operative February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008.***



## Appendix IV– Consultation Document Appointment of Industry Directors to the Board of Horse Sport Ireland



### Consultation Paper 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. We are committed to promoting excellence in all aspects of equestrian sport, from breeding, production, coaching to competition and welfare. Our organisation's board of directors plays a crucial 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, we are considering changing the appointment method to the board of directors to ensure that we have access to the best talent available and to create a more diverse and inclusive board.

#### Background

Currently, the Chairperson of Horse Sport Ireland and four independent 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 industry director is nominated by Sport Northern Ireland in consultation with Department of Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland) and appointed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and Department of Sport.

Thereafter, the remaining four industry directors are elected from within the defined nominees from the Horse Sport Ireland Advisory Councils structure, being the following:

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

The number of nominees are finite within these Councils who are nominated from the current affiliate family connected with Horse Sport Ireland. However, the equestrian community has a broad reach, and in that context, the current process could be considered as exclusionary and may discourage potential candidates from participating through the affiliate structure, but who may have skills and

competencies within specific disciplines to offer. With an ever growing community, there is a demand for a wider and more diverse approach to ensuring the Board of Directors is reflective of both the breeding and sport elements of the industry. Further to this consideration, is the level of stewardship required for an organisation such as Horse Sport Ireland, where the application and high level of governance are increasingly demanding.

## Proposed Changes

To address these issues, the current Board of Directors propose changing the appointment method for the four industry appointees to the board of directors to an “open call process” which is linked to the affiliate structure, industry stakeholder groups and the broader equestrian community. This process will involve inviting individuals from a broad range of backgrounds and with a diverse set of skills to submit their expression of interest in joining the board of Horse Sport Ireland.

The Expression of Interest Guide [Appendix 1] sets out the skills and experience we are looking for in Directors to help guide potential candidates. The Guide contains information on the responsibilities and expectations of Directors, including time commitments and ethical standards.

Candidates will be asked to select their area of industry competency from the list below combined with professional skills they may offer. The following will be the defined areas:

- Sport & Recreation (capturing the leisure and recreation sport)
- Breeding and Production (capturing the production of the Irish Bred horse)
- High Performance (Olympic and Paralympic Disciplines or non-equestrian discipline experience but able to demonstrate experience in high performance teams and culture)
- Coaching and Education (both equestrian and non-equestrian relevancy in respect of skills that are rooted in the education field)

The candidate will be further required to submit a letter of support/endorsement or membership details for the preceding year from a current affiliate body or industry stakeholder group or society, for example a Breeders Group, that is active within the equestrian community.

Candidates will be required to submit to Chairperson of the Selection Panel, the following documents, cover letter, résumé, and references, which will be reviewed by an independent three person selection panel, who are currently being recruited.

Candidates will be required to consider any conflicts of interest or loyalty that they may have that would affect their ability to act as a director and fulfil their fiduciary duties. Further, candidates who have previously served as director of Horse Sport Ireland will be ineligible to ensure that board directors are refreshed and to avoid lengthy tenures.

The selection panel will be composed of external experts in the area of governance, and a Sport Ireland nominee. The panel will evaluate the candidates' qualifications, experience, and alignment with our organisation's values and goals.

## Benefits of Proposed Changes

The proposed changes to the appointment process for the Board of Directors offer several benefits. By opening up the process, we can increase the pool of potential candidates, ensuring that we have access to the best talent available, again reflective of an industry that is innovating and changing considerably. The recruitment will have cognisance of the gender quota requirements as set out in the National

Sports Policy as part of ongoing exchequer investment. The four industry appointees will be balanced in respect of gender.

This will help us to create a more diverse and inclusive board, which will bring a broader range of perspectives and skills to the table. A more diverse board can also help our organisation to better serve its stakeholders by ensuring that all voices are heard and considered.

## Conclusion

Horse Sport Ireland is committed to ensuring that we have a Board of Directors that is effective, diverse, and inclusive. We believe that the proposed changes to the appointment process will help us achieve this goal. We invite all interested parties to provide feedback on these proposed changes and any other suggestions they may have to improve the process. Your input is valuable to us, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Please submit your feedback by 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023 to Avalon Everet, Head of Sport, Legal and Governance, [aeveret@horsesportireland.ie](mailto:aeveret@horsesportireland.ie) or by post Avalon Everet, Head of Sport, Legal & Governance, Horse Sport Ireland, 1st Floor, Beech House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 TK7N