

Report of the Independent Review Group (IRG)



into certain issues linked to the 2020 Sports Capital Grant
awarded to Eventing Ireland by Sporting Ireland

Issue Date: 25.07.2023

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1.0 DOCUMENT CONTROL DETAILS

DOCUMENT STATUS

‘Report of the Independent Review Group (IRG)’ was requested by the Board of Eventing Ireland.

Strictly Private & Confidential.

VERSION HISTORY

This Version	Version:	Date:	Author(s):	Comment(s)
	V1 Draft_Final	13.07.2023	Tony Ennis; Declan O’ Shea; Robert Ramsden (IRG Panel).	
✓	Final IRG Report	25.07.2023	Tony Ennis; Declan O’ Shea; Robert Ramsden (IRG Panel).	

VERSION SIGN-OFF RECORD

Version Sign-off:	Date:	Signed-Off By:	Comment(s)
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Final IRG Report	24.07.2023	Tony Ennis; Declan O’ Shea; Robert Ramsden (IRG Panel).	

DOCUMENT CIRCULATION

Version Name:	Date:	To and By:	Comment(s)
V1 Draft_Final	13.07.2023	To: Board of Eventing Ireland via Fleur Creed, Director. By: IRG Panel.	Eventing Ireland -Board eyes <u>only</u> .
Final IRG Report	25.07.2023	To: Board of Eventing Ireland via Fleur Creed, Director. By: IRG Panel.	Delivered via email attachment.

Disclaimer: While reasonable care has been taken in carrying out this independent review, the authors shall take no responsibility and accept no liability whatsoever for any inaccuracy, errors or omissions or for the consequences arising from the use of the information in this report.

2.0 CORE ELEMENTS OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW

The full Terms of Reference (TOR) details received by the Independent Review Group (IRG) from Eventing Ireland are contained in '12.0 Appendix 2: IRG Terms of Reference' within this report.

The main review elements contained within the TOR were as follows:

1.1 To investigate, review, form opinion(s) with any conclusions, and provide a written report on the following as they relate to the Sports Capital Grant for Cross Country Fences awarded in 2020 to Eventing Ireland by Sports Ireland. Specifically:

(a) Was the procurement, supply contract award, and management of the contract conducted by Eventing Ireland undertaken to an acceptable standard?

(b) Were the goods provided/installed under the supply contract award to the original specification requirements of Eventing Ireland?

(c) Was the quality and suitability of the goods provided/installed under the supply contract award fit for purpose as intended by Eventing Ireland and the capital grant award?

3.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE IRG PANEL

The 3 person Independent Review Group panel consisted of:

1. Tony Ennis *BSc; CMC, FIMCA, MMII*, Business Consultant. Chairperson of the IRG and tasked with the review of core review element 1.1(a) and contributing, co-authoring, and assembling the final report.
2. Declan O' Shea *B.E., C.Eng., M.I.E.I.* Consulting Engineer. Tasked with the review of core review element 1.1(b) and contributing and co-authoring the final report.
3. Robert Ramsden – FEI level 3 Technical Delegate. Tasked with the review of core review element 1.1(c) and contributing and co-authoring the final report.

4.0 REVIEW OF TOR 1.1(a)

4.1 TOR 1.1(a)

1.1 To investigate, review, form opinion(s) with any conclusions, and provide a written report on the following as they relate to the Sports Capital Grant for Cross Country Fences awarded in 2020 to Eventing Ireland by Sports Ireland. Specifically:

(a) Was the procurement, supply contract award, and management of the contract conducted by Eventing Ireland undertaken to an acceptable standard?

4.2 Review Methodology

The methodology deployed to deliver this review of TOR 1.1 (a) is a four step process, with no. 4 being addressed in section '9.0 Opinions & Conclusions of the IRG' within this report.

1. Identification of the procurement process undertaken by Eventing Ireland.
2. Identification of the supply contact award process undertaken by Eventing Ireland.
3. Identification of any contact management process (post award) undertaken by Eventing Ireland.
4. Review and develop opinion(s) as to was the process(s) identified in i, ii, iii, to an acceptable standard.

I have used an exclusive desk review methodology for 1 - 3. This commenced with an electronic file transfer [to me] of all records, correspondence, and contract(s) - electronic or hard copy, held by Eventing Ireland relating to the 2020 Sports Capital Grant awarded to Eventing Ireland by Sporting Ireland. Eventing Ireland has shared a folder of information with the IRG panel. This folder contained c. 161 individual documents. I have reviewed this cache of documents, and have extracted and studied those most relevant to TOR 1.1(a). It has been open to me should I require clarification on any written information provided, or further written information on any matter I deem relevant to my review, I may request phone or email contact with Eventing Ireland personnel who will comply fully with my requirements in a timely manner. Any other written factual information provided by any other parties will be treated similarly.

This chronological table best represents in my opinion the actions undertaken prior, during, and post the procurement process under review:

Period	Detail
Nov 2020	The Board of Eventing Ireland discussed and agreed that the organisation would apply under the Sports Capital Grant 2020 programme (SPC) for the purchase of cross-country fences on behalf of its Event Organisers. The Board tasked 2 people to prepare a technical specification for the fences so this can be sent out to competent suppliers to obtain quotations.

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Period	Detail																																				
Dec 2020	<p>The Sports Capital Grant 2020 programme opens.</p> <p>Thereafter the Sports Capital Grant 2020 programme was placed on hold due to an upsurge in the Covid 19 crisis.</p>																																				
Aug 2021	The Sports Capital Grant 2020 programme was re-opened once again in August 2021.																																				
Oct 2021	<p>Market Engagement. Details of the grant first official communication to all Event Organisers, outlining the intended mechanics to acquire fences utilising the Sports Capital Grant 2020 programme.</p> <p>A meeting was held with Event Organisers to consult them on specification requirements for fences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of fence(s) • Type of wood to be used • Type of frame (steel or wood) • Height of fence • Arena or XC Fence • Number of fences <p>Organisers were given until 4th November 2021 to provide feedback on the design discussions. Reminder email sent from Head Office on 1st November 2021. No feedback or request for further information was forthcoming. Details of indicative venue/fences/quantities to be covered by the SCG:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Venue</th> <th>No. of Fences</th> <th>Cost paid by venue 35%</th> <th>Total Cost</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ballindenisk</td> <td>18</td> <td>€10,798</td> <td>€30,850</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Clyda</td> <td>34</td> <td>€16,441</td> <td>€46,973</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Creora</td> <td>14</td> <td>€6,645</td> <td>€18,984</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Frankfort</td> <td>8</td> <td>€3,952</td> <td>€11,290</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hillcrest</td> <td>16</td> <td>€9,224</td> <td>€26,354</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scarteen</td> <td>4</td> <td>€2,049</td> <td>€5,855</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EI</td> <td>64</td> <td>€34,500</td> <td>€98,571</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>€83,607</td> <td>€238,878</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Venue	No. of Fences	Cost paid by venue 35%	Total Cost	Ballindenisk	18	€10,798	€30,850	Clyda	34	€16,441	€46,973	Creora	14	€6,645	€18,984	Frankfort	8	€3,952	€11,290	Hillcrest	16	€9,224	€26,354	Scarteen	4	€2,049	€5,855	EI	64	€34,500	€98,571			€83,607	€238,878
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Period	Detail
Nov 2021	<p>Request for Quotation (RFQ) including specification requirements were sent by Eventing Ireland to five chosen suppliers, two did not respond, and three quotes were received from Ballindenisk, Kilguikey House, and Willis Brothers. See '13.0 Appendix 3: Technical Specification For Fences Etc' which was used within the RFQ to suppliers.</p> <p>Details sent for checking to solicitor Patrick Kennedy, PJ O'Meara, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.</p> <p>Zoom Meeting with Event Organisers to finalise the details.</p> <p>Two people were tasked with preparing the grant application for submission.</p> <p>The Board discussed reasoning why all three suppliers who submitted quotations were suitable, and discussed which was the Board's preferred supplier within the 3 suppliers. Variance of opinions are present within the Board, resulting in 2 Board members resigning.</p> <p>The Eventing Ireland grant application was submitted/uploaded utilising the OSCAR online system on 25th November 2021.</p>
April 2022	<p>The Sports Capital Programme rejected two of the three supplier quotations submitted through OSCAR online system in November 2021. One (Willis Brothers) was denied because it did not include transportation costs from the UK to Ireland. The second was denied (Ballindenisk) because the supplier was not vat registered. The SCG needed three comparative quotes.</p> <p>Eventing Ireland invited two other suppliers to provide a quote. Quotes requested from Hillcrest, Annaharvey, and Kilguilkey House (one of the 3 original RFQ suppliers) once again.</p> <p>Quotations were resubmitted, including two new suppliers. The two new quotation suppliers (Hillcrest, Annaharvey) were more expensive than the remaining original quotation supplier (Kilguilkey House).</p>
May 2022	<p>Eventing Ireland received formal grant approval ref: CRM: 0091054 from the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme Unit of the Dept. of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media on 18th May 2022. The grant approval was in the amount of €128,962.00. The authorised supplier was identified as Kilguilkey House.</p> <p>'Mechanics to buy' the cross-country fences and order forms were circulated to Event Organisers. The grant was to cover 65% of the cost and the organisers to provide 35%. A 50% deposit was required on order with the balance due on delivery.</p> <p>The Fence(s) must be retained for use by Eventing Ireland for five years from when it arrives on site. Maintenance details outlined. The fences are owned and insured by</p>

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Period	Detail
	Eventing Ireland for a period of five years. Due diligence has also ensured that the manufacturer is an FEI-qualified course builder and fully insured. An engineer has been engaged to ensure fences are built to specification and safety standards. This information is available to all who have submitted an order.
Jan 2023	Grant payment confirmation received (the drawdown process was supervised by DMM Accountants).
Dec 2022 to Present	A number of issues have arisen, resulting in disagreement between the Board and some Eventing Ireland members, this includes issues raised at the AGM in February 2023. Some of these issues also connect with Board issues in November 2021. Quality / non-specification compliance issues have also arisen regarding some fences supplied under the contract.

4.3 Identification of the procurement process undertaken by Eventing Ireland

Utilising the document information provided Eventing Ireland and cross referenced to chronological table, this is, in my opinion the procurement process undertaken by Eventing Ireland.

1. A technical specification was developed by 2 people tasked with that work by the Board.
2. Eventing Ireland manager liaised with personnel within the funding body / Sports Capital Programme to identify grant application requirements. A minimum of 3 supplier quotations was identified.
3. Market engagement was undertaken with Event Organisers to establish fence volumes etc that might be applicable under funding through the Sports Capital Programme.
4. Potential suppliers we identified by Eventing Ireland (manager and Board).
5. A RFQ email was issued by Eventing Ireland manager to potential suppliers.
6. 3 supplier quotations were received by Eventing Ireland.
7. The Board discussed and identified a preferred supplier from the 3 quotations received.
8. A Sports Capital grant application was developed and submitted using the Oscar online system.
9. Personnel within the funding body / Sports Capital Programme advised Eventing Ireland of issues with 2 supplier quotations. 2 different quotations from new suppliers were obtained, and resubmitted along with the remaining original supplier quotation.
10. Eventing Ireland received formal grant approval ref: CRM: 0091054 from the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme Unit of the Dept. of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media on 18th May 2022. The authorised supplier was identified as Kilguilkey House.

4.4 Supply Contract Award

The supply contract was awarded to the authorised supplier - Kilguilkey House. The unsuccessful quotation suppliers were notified.

4.5 Contract Management (Post Award)

'Mechanics to buy' the cross-country fences and order forms were circulated to Event Organisers. Orders were placed by Event Organisers and fences have been supplied.

Quality / non-specification compliance issues have arisen in some instances regarding fences supplied under the contract. Eventing Ireland has been reacting to these issues with the relevant Event Organisers.

As Eventing Ireland must retain ownership of the fences funded under the Sports Capital Programme scheme for a minimum period of 5 years I anticipated a more comprehensive detailed asset register would exist within Eventing Ireland. An asset register of the fences does indeed exist within the organisation but it did not include elements like a UIC (Unique Identification Code) for each supplied fence, or a 'photographic library' of those fences, both elements would be beneficial for control and verification purposes.

My overall opinions and conclusions as they relate to TOR 1.1(a) are contained in section '9.0 Opinions & Conclusions of the IRG' within this report.

TOR 1.1(a) review conducted by Tony Ennis BSc; CMC, FIMCA, MMII.

5.0 REVIEW OF TOR 1.1(b)

5.1 TOR 1.1(b)

1.1 To investigate, review, form opinion(s) with any conclusions, and provide a written report on the following as they relate to the Sports Capital Grant for Cross Country Fences awarded in 2020 to Eventing Ireland by Sports Ireland. Specifically:

(b) Were the goods provided / installed under the supply contract award to the original specification requirements of Eventing Ireland?

The specifications for the cross-country fences must be compliant with current FEI Guidelines, in addition:

- a. All standard fences must be 3.6m or 12ft wide
- b. All rails must be either Douglas Fir or Larch – planed and sanded
- c. All other timber be C16 KDPAREN14081 Machine Graded
- d. All fixings must be SPAX screws or equivalent
- e. All frames must be made out of 6” x 3” timber
- f. All timbers that are being faced with flat timber has to be a minimum of 44mm
- g. Fences to be faced with 120mm Machined ½ round are as follows: Flower Boxes, Triple Brushes, Double Brushes, Corners and Brush Corners
- h. All other Fences are 44mm
- i. All Fences must be finished to the highest standard: planed, sanded and treated with clear Decking Oil and will be ready for painting

5.2 Review Based on Original Specification

All standard fences must be 3.6m or 12ft wide

I physically measured a number of standard fences at Crecora Equestrian Centre and found the fences to be 3.6m wide. The photographic evidence provided by Eventing Ireland suggests that all the standard fences are 3.6m wide. This is a simple practicality as the timber can be bought in 3.6m lengths.

All rails must be either Douglas Fir or Larch – planed and sanded

I contacted Danny Duloherly and he confirmed that all the timber provided for the construction of the fences was machined by Glennon Bros. in Fermoy. The timber was Douglas Fir or Larch. Certification of all the timber is available from Glennon Bros. or from Danny Duloherly.

All other timber be C16 KDPAREN14081 Machine Graded

I physically examined the fences at Crecora and the fences could be seen with the C16 marking.



Photo 1 : This photo clearly shows the timber sheeting boards all marked with C16



Photo 1a Zoom in on Photo 1 showing markings of C16

All fixings must be SPAX screws or equivalent

I physically examined the fences at Crecora and the fixings used were SPAX screws

All frames must be made out of 6" x 3" timber

I examined the fences at Crecora and all the frames were made of timber of at least 6" by 3" timber.
See Photo 2 below



Photo 2 : Upright timbers of at least 6” by 3” timber

All timbers that are being faced with flat timber has to be a minimum of 44mm

I enclose herewith a sample photo of a fence with flat timber of a minimum thickness of 44mm. Again, see photo 2 above.

Fences to be faced with 120mm Machined ½ round are as follows: Flower Boxes, Triple Brushes, Double Brushes, Corners and Brush Corners



Photo 3 : Clearly shows an example of 120mm ½ round timbers within the fence construction.

All other Fences are 44mm

There are numerous photos that clearly illustrate that the facing timbers are 44mm thick. This is a standard timber sizing within the construction sector.



Photo 4 :

All Fences must be finished to the highest standard : planed, sanded and treated with clear Decking Oil and will be ready for painting

The four photos above along with the photos provided by Eventing Ireland clearly illustrate that the fences were finished to a very high standard.

My overall opinion / conclusion as it relates to TOR 1.1(b) is contained in section '9.0 Opinions & Conclusions of the IRG' within this report. My recommendation regarding fences is contained in section '10.0 Recommendations to the Board from IRG'.

TOR 1.1(b) review conducted by Declan O' Shea B.E., C.Eng., M.I.E.I.

6.0 REVIEW OF TOR 1.1(c)

6.1 TOR 1.1(c)

1.1 To investigate, review, form opinion(s) with any conclusions, and provide a written report on the following as they relate to the Sports Capital Grant for Cross Country Fences awarded in 2020 to Eventing Ireland by Sports Ireland. Specifically:

(c) Was the quality and suitability of the goods provided/installed under the supply contract award fit for purpose as intended by Eventing Ireland and the capital grant award?

6.2 Review re: Fit for Purpose

The initial specifications drawn up by Eventing Ireland for the tenderers was outlined in the following:

Cross Country Fence Specification supplied to tenderers by Eventing Ireland:

The specifications for the cross country fences must be compliant with current FEI Guidelines, in addition:

- All standard fences must be 3.6m or 12ft Wide
- All rails must be either Douglas Fir or Larch – which must be planed and sanded
- All other Timber be C16 KDPAREN14081 Machine Graded
- All fixings must be SPAX screws or equivalent
- All Frames must be made out of 6"x3" or 4"x3" timber
- All Fences that are being faced with flat timber has to be a minimum of 44mm
- Fences to be faced with 120mm Machined ½ Round are as follows:
- Flower Boxes, Triple Brushes, Double Brushes, Corners and Brush Corners
- All other Fences are 44mm
- All Fences must be finished to the highest standard: planed, sanded and treated with clear Decking Oil and will be ready for painting

ORDER FORM	EI120	EI115	EI110	EI105	EI100	EI90	EI80
Sheep Feeders							
Shooting Butts							
Hay Carts							
Cottages							
Roll Tops							
Flower Boxes							
Box Chests							
Triple Brush**							
Double Brush**							
Triple MIMs Rails							

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Single MIMs Rails							
Parallel Oxers Inc MIMs							
Corners							
Brush Corners							
Boat/Rolltop*							
Gypsy Wagon*							

For the purposes of this section of the report, namely **Fit for Purpose**, only the **current FEI Guidelines** and **EI level standards** included by implication in the order form headers have relevance.

The following sets of specifications are relevant:

Eventing Ireland Rulebook: 23.24 Permitted Dimensions of Obstacles

The dimension of obstacles must be within the limits shown for the relevant level of competition.

The fixed and solid part of an obstacle may not exceed the specified height or spread at any of the points at which an athlete might reasonably attempt to negotiate the obstacle.

The following table gives the maximum permitted dimensions of obstacles for each class, but this does not mean that obstacles must always be of uniform height or spread throughout their length, or that these dimensions may never be exceeded anywhere between the red and white flags marking the extent of an obstacle.

It is sufficient if ALL parts of an obstacle, where the average horse and athlete could reasonably and conveniently be expected to jump, does not exceed the maximum permitted dimensions.

The spread of an obstacle will be measured from the outside of the relevant rails or other material making up the obstacle.

For the diagram of the measuring of spread fences, see Appendix G .

OBSTACLES	E110			
	E1120	E1115	E1110P	E1105
MAX HEIGHT	1.20m	1.15m	1.10m	1.05m
MAX SPREAD AT HIGHEST POINT	1.80m	1.60m	1.40m	1.20m
MAX SPREAD AT BASE	2.70m	2.40m	2.10m	1.80m
MAX SPREAD WITHOUT HEIGHT	3.60m	3.20m	2.80m	2.40m
MAX SPREAD OVER WATER	4.00m	3.65m	3.05m	3.05m
DROP FENCES: MAX DROP	2.00m	1.80m	1.60m	1.40m
MAX DEPTH JUMPING IN & OUT OF WATER	0.35m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m

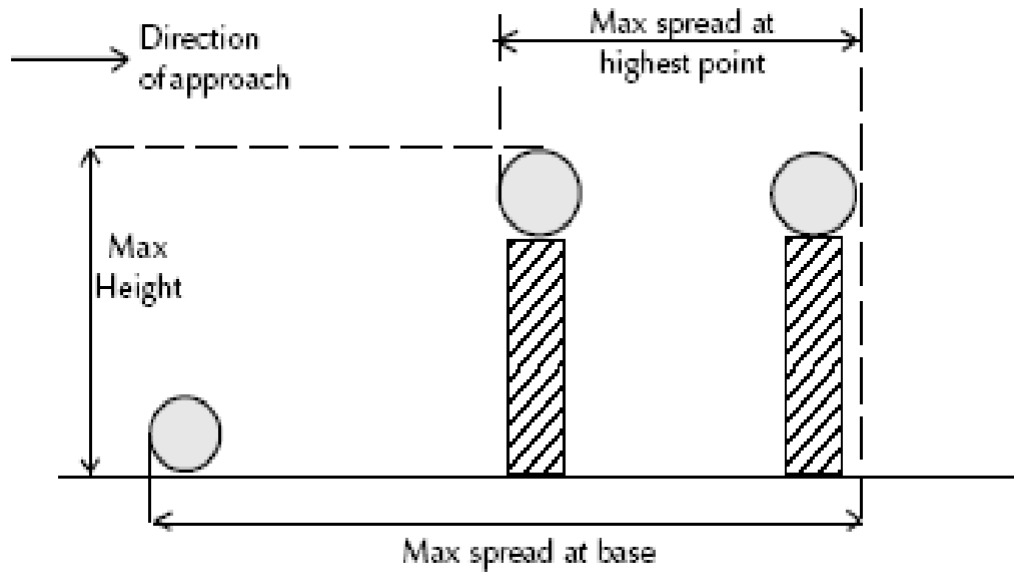
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BRUSH	1.40m	1.35m	1.30m	1.25m
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OBSTACLES	ALL EI100 CLASSES	ALL EI90 CLASSES	ALL EI80 CLASSES
MAX HEIGHT	1.00m	0.90m	0.80m
MAX SPREAD AT HIGHEST POINT	1.10m	1.00m	0.90m
MAX SPREAD AT BASE	1.80m	1.50m	1.25m
MAX SPREAD WITHOUT HEIGHT	1.80m	1.20m	1.20m
MAX SPREAD OVER WATER	3.05m	2.00m	2.00m
DROP FENCES: MAX DROP	1.40m	1.30m	1.20m
MAX DEPTH JUMPING IN & OUT OF WATER	0.20m	-	-
BRUSH	1.20m	1.10m	1.00m

The above are absolute specifications to which the supplied fences **must** meet.

Eventing Ireland Rulebook: APPENDIX G: Measuring Cross Country Obstacles



FEI Eventing Cross Country Guide for Officials

Published on 8 May 2019 Last update: 06.01.2021

It must be noted that the FEI Eventing Cross Country Guide for Officials are a moving guideline of 'best practises' that is often updated yearly. In this case the following guidelines are specific to the Term of Reference and were published on 8 May 2019 and last updated the 6th of January 2021.

Of further note it's important to understand that the final presentation of the fence on the cross country course with additional dressing has significant effect on the implementation and application of the below guidelines, and therefore there will be some discrepancies between the fences built as they stand versus when they have been placed on the cross country course and dressed accordingly.

The Following sections of the FEI Eventing Cross Country Guide for Officials are applicable in terms of the construction of fences with regards to the Cross Country Fence Specification supplied to tenderers by Eventing Ireland:

Front Shoulder of Spread Fences (refer to Eventing rules, art 547.2.6)

Since 1st January 2020, it has been included in the Eventing rules state that all CDs should reshape spread fences with upright fronts so that the top of the front of the fence will be rounded or sloped. It is recommended that the slope should be 45° (with a margin of +/- 5°) to a point 20cm. below the top of the leading edges.

If a fence has a sloping back, the back edge should follow the same principles as the front edge.

Gates are exempted. However, if gates are used on a course it is strongly recommended at all levels that they have an approved frangible mechanism incorporated in to their design and a groundline. It is not recommended at any level to encourage athletes to jump gates on an angle.

Anchoring or Securing of Portable Fences

The importance of this cannot be overemphasised and it is not acceptable to assume that, because a fence is heavy, it will not move if hit at speed by a Horse. Course designers, builders and TD's should make every effort to ensure that each and every portable fence is 'anchored' in a way that will prevent movement as fences that do move significantly increase the chance of a fall.

There are various recognised ways of securing portables, with the most traditional being the use of posts and, more recently, the Spirafix Ground Anchor system which is both popular and efficient (see below for more information). There are other methods and, as long as the principle is adhered to, they can also be accepted.

Profiles of Fences/Lower Rails

The profiles of every fence must be such that it helps the horses 'read the shape of the fence' and understand the question. Officials need to understand how the profile of a fence affects how a horse will jump it.

Where there is a fence with a top rail and a lower rail on the front face (e.g. an oxer or an upright post & rails) the lower rail needs to be not less than half way up the fence, and that in these situations there should be some sort of ground line also.

Alternatively, if a top rail and a ground line are used there needs to be some dressing (e.g. a shrub/tree/bush) to ensure that there is a good profile to the front of the fence and not just a gap between the top rail and the ground line.

Leading Edges (art. 547.2.6)

It is essential that every effort is made to avoid unforgiving leading edge on any fence.

Research has shown that the more a Horse's mass can be deflected and the less it is stopped at impact the more forgiving the fence and the less the chance of a rotation. In the same vein a smooth surface is more forgiving than rough bark.

Any front leading edge must not be in front of the base of a fence. Where an angled section has been added to the front of an existing fence use the ground line and any necessary filling/dressing to prevent a horse hitting the front of the angled part from underneath.

As a recommendation, front leading edge of spread fences, corners, etc should be sloped at 45° (with a margin of +/- 5°) to a point 20cm below the highest point of the leading edge.

Solid top spread fences - there should be nothing protruding from the front of a fence such as a half round which a horse may catch a leg on as it comes upwards in its jumping trajectory Ascending fences - the front of any spread fence, such as a house or flower box, must be no less than 25cms from the height of the fence unless it is rounded.

Table Type Fences

At all levels the top of tables or table type fences should always be built either with a sloping front face, sloping upwards away from the Horse on the take-off side of the fence at approximately 45° or a round or half rounds so that the depth of the front face is not less than 25-30cm.

At all levels, the possibility of a false ground line should be avoided. Thus for instance in the case of a picnic table there should not be a bench on the landing side of the obstacle if it causes a false optic.

It is very important that CDs and TDs help the Horse to judge the spread of an obstacle the top of a table should be slightly ascending anyway and painting the front and back edges and top of the fence can give it added definition. Another recommendation to help identify the spread is to put decoration on top of the fence at the front and the back, not just the back as this can make it more difficult for the Horse to read the leading edge.

The back of tables/all spread fences should be clearly visible and looking higher than the front part.

Brush Fences

Where there is both a solid or fixed part and a soft "brush" part (for Horses to brush through it without causing injury to the Horse) to an obstacle, the fence will jump better if there is 25cm to 30cm. of brush above the solid part which should be 5-10cms below the maximum permitted at every level.

The back of the brush box should be 5cm. lower than the front

For instance, at 4* and 5* where 1.40 - 1.45 m is permitted for the maximum height of the brush, the fixed part should actually be set at approximately 1.10 – 1.15 m at the front and 1.05 – 1.10m at the back

Brush fences should be 'brushable' and not present a 'solid' element to the fence. Horses should be able to brush through them without undue stiffness in the brush.

The material used should be such that the risk of injury to Horses is as small as possible.

Thick stems and sharp ends after trimming/cutting must be avoided. Ideally the top of the brush should be used in the fence rather than the thick, bottom part of the brush, ie cut the bottom off before the brush is put in to the fence and then trim the top

Brush 'shoulders' – care should be taken that Athletes do not try to jump the shoulder itself or the high brush and so it may be necessary to flag the parts of the brush that the Course Designer wants to be jumped.

It is recommended that the overall thickness/depth of the brush need not be more than 10cms. Brush means that a horse must readily be able to brush through the top of the brush. Its thickness will depend on the materials used in different parts of the world. Great care must be taken when constructing brush fences so that there is no way that a horse is able to get one of its feet in to the frame holding the brush. If necessary the gap in the frame can easily be reduced.

CDs must be mindful of the number of brush fences on their courses. It is important that horses learn to jump 'solid' fences correctly at the lower levels and so not to overuse brush at these levels. It is also important not to change the XC test by overusing brush fences which require horses to expend more effort overall.

As a guide, the number of brush fences should be between 15% and 20% of the course.

Double and Triple Brushes

It is essential that double and triple brushes are "filled in" between the rows of brush, so that a Horse can put a foot down with safety.

In the case of double brushes, it is essential to "fill in" between the two rows of hedge and to have a $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ round in front of the second brush on top of the 'fill'.

Triple Brushes – the maximum base spread should never be more than $\frac{3}{4}$ (75%) of the maximum permitted base spread. The key to the success of these fences is to ensure that they are in proportion with not too much base spread: 1* and 2* 1.40m, 3* 1.60, 4* and 5 * 1.80m

Part of the challenge of these fences is the width of the jump at the front; the wider it is the easier it tends to be and so for all levels the front width needs to be considered alongside the width at the back and the base spread

Corners

Open Corners are recommended at all levels where Horses have time to understand the question.

Closed in 'solid top' corners are recommended where there is limited re-action time, i.e. after a step or ditch or shortly after crest of hill.

Corners should not have a back rail shorter than 2.5m. and should be longer at the lower levels (1*, 2* & 3*). See table below. Use flagging and decoration to create a clear single visual passage across the fence. If a frangible rail is used great care should be taken to avoid the risk of a Horse jumping onto the retaining post.

Suggested degrees for corners:

- 1*: 40°-45 °
- 2*: 45°-55 °
- 3*: 55°-65 °
- 4*: 70°-80°
- 5*: up to 90°

On open corners, if the course designer uses a short rail at the back, the suggested minimum length is:

- 1*: not an acceptable fence for the level
- 2*: 3.00m.
- 3*: 2.80m.
- 4*& 5*: 2.50m

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Review process

Fences were reviewed in person as well as by photo and dimension survey.

I physically reviewed fences at Ballindenisk during the September 2022 event and found the design and construction and fitment of frangible MIM devices to meet all eventing Ireland specifications and FEI construction guidelines.

As I was not able to physically see every fence constructed I initiated a fence review process where each recipient of fences was asked to complete a form and measure all the relevant dimensions of the fences that they had received.

Fence measurements supplied by recipients:

#	FENCE DESCRIPTION	LEVEL	HEIGHT	TOP SPREAD	BASE SPREAD	JUMPABLE WIDTH	FRANGIBLE	RECIPIENT
1	Cottages		90	100	100	360		Hillcrest
2	Roll Tops		110	125	130	360		Hillcrest
3	Roll Tops		90	95	100	360		Hillcrest
4	Box Chests		115	150	220	360		Hillcrest
5	Box Chests		110	130	185	360		Hillcrest
6	Box Chests		100	103	160	360		Hillcrest
7	Gypsy Wagon		115	107	107	360		Hillcrest
8	Gypsy Wagon		110	97	97	360		Hillcrest
9	Gypsy Wagon		90	85	85	360		Hillcrest
10	Brush Corners		90	130	250	250		Hillcrest
11	Double Brush		73	105	110	200		Hillcrest
12	Double Brush		75	107	112	200		Hillcrest
13	Triple Brush		87	167	167	135		Hillcrest
14	Triple Brush		85	150	150	140		Hillcrest
15	Double Brush	90	80	100	100	100		Scarteen
16	Frangible Oxer	90	90	90	140	140	Yes	Scarteen
17	Triple Brush	110	80	123	123	123		Scarteen
18	Corner	90	80					Scarteen
19	1A	90						Frankfort

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20	1B	100					Frankfort
21	1C	110					Frankfort
22	2A	90				Yes	Frankfort
23	2B	100				Yes	Frankfort
24	2C	110				Yes	Frankfort
25	3A	90					Frankfort
26	3B	90					Frankfort
27	Sheep Feeders	110cm	110	140	200	360	Crecora
28	Sheep Feeders	100cm	100	110	180	360	Crecora
29	Sheep Feeders	90cm	90	100	150	360	Crecora
30	Box Chests	115cm	115	155	230	360	Crecora
31	Box Chests	110cm	108	135	205	360	Crecora
32	Box Chests	100cm	98	105	175	360	Crecora
33	Box Chests	90cm	88	95	150	360	Crecora
34	Shooting Butts	110cm	108	140	200	360	Crecora
35	Shooting Butts	100cm	99	110	180	360	Crecora
36	Shooting Butts	90cm	88	100	150	360	Crecora
37	Double Brush	115cm	100	155	155	130	Crecora
38	Double Brush	110cm	100	150	150	160	Crecora
39	Double Brush	100cm	85	125	125	180	Crecora
40	Double Brush	90cm	75	105	105	200	Crecora

It must be noted that in cases where Top Spread' exceeds maximums that the measurers are not qualified TD's and that certain types of fences like Triple Brushes may be measured incorrectly. Given the fence type, this discrepancy is understood to occur in measurement.

Additional, each recipient was asked to provide photos from front, side, back and oblique angles.

Examples of photos received:

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In total I was able to review 43 of the 96 fences constructed. This was a significant sample and as this review was conducted after the construction of the fences and outside of the influence of the constructor, I see no reason that there would be any significant deviation in the construction methodologies in the remaining 53 fences.

My overall opinion and conclusion as they relate to TOR 1.1(c) are contained in section '9.0 Opinions & Conclusions of the IRG' within this report.

TOR 1.1(c) review conducted by Robert Ramsden – FEI level 3 Technical Delegate.

7.0 ENGAGEMENT WITH MR. KIERAN CONNORS (MRG)

Mr. Kieran Connors is a member of Eventing Ireland. As Chairperson of the IRG, I (Tony Ennis) received an email request from Kieran on 05.06.2023 on behalf of a grouping, the Members Representative Group (MRG). Kieran requested a meeting, via Teams or Zoom, with the IRG Panel as soon as possible to present in person, members questions and concerns relevant to the subject work of the IRG, and thereafter to provide written information. I responded to Kieran with a request that the written information be provided through me first, identifying which sub heading under TOR under 1.1 the information relates to, which I would review, and then come to a determination on the next appropriate step.

Kieran provided me on 09.06.2023 with a 9 page Word Document, titled 'Members Questions to the Independent Review Panel re: XC Fence Grant'. The document comprised of a cover letter (1page) and 8 pages containing a series of c. 81 questions across 10 headings all identified under an overarching reference '1' i.e. '*Was the procurement, supply contract award, and management of the contract conducted by Eventing Ireland undertaken to an acceptable standard?*'. This equates in my opinion to TOR ref 1.1(a) which is my area of review. Having reviewed all the questions, it was my clear opinion neither this quantity of questions or the depth and scope of the review required to address them all is possible under the current TOR.

I conveyed my opinion back to Kieran with an explanation as to why I came to that conclusion, and that it was my belief the issues identified in the Word document, must be raised with others and respectfully in the first instance I would recommend with Fleur Creed, as she is the designated lead between the EI Board and the IRG. This was done.

All interaction with Kieran was conducted via a series of emails between us. The last email interaction was conducted on 13.06.2023. I would like to record my sincere thanks to Kieran for those interactions, and I found all to be professionally and respectfully conducted throughout.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT WITH MS. FLEUR CREED (Director EI)

The IRG panel agreed that a single point of contact and communication with Eventing Ireland was the optimal practice where we had a request for further information and where we had questions requiring answers. This was utilised successfully on a number of occasions via the IRG chairperson and Fleur as the single point of contact with Eventing Ireland.

The IRG panel would like to record our sincere thanks to Fleur for those interactions and we found all of our requests to be professionally and diligently addressed throughout the review.

9.0 OPINIONS & CONCLUSIONS OF THE IRG

9.1 Was the procurement process undertaken to an acceptable standard?

An acceptable (and effective) procurement process should be conducted in accordance with General Principles of EU law including the principles of (1) value for money, (2) equal treatment, (3) non-discrimination, (4) mutual recognition, (5) proportionality and (6) transparency.

In my opinion the procurement process undertaken by Eventing Ireland which is the subject of this review was sub-optimal. There is no evidence of meaningful procurement expertise existing in Eventing Ireland (Board or management) within the time period under review, nor of Eventing Ireland seeking external expert guidance and advice on the procurement process during the same period. This should be addressed in any future procurement process where significant monetary values and public funds are involved.

In my opinion Eventing Ireland did comply with the direct grant submission requirements of the Funding Body. Etender publication was not a requirement, a minimum of 3 quotations was.

In my opinion it was open to Eventing Ireland to utilise the etender process voluntarily and this should be considered in any future procurement process where significant monetary values and public funds are involved e.g. where funding above €50k applies. Using the etender process would have aided transparency and confidence in the RFQ process.

In my opinion adequate good governance processes and protocols within the procurement process deployed by Eventing Ireland was not detailed/robust enough given the significant monetary values and public funds involved in the grant application. This should be addressed in any future procurement process where significant monetary values and public funds are involved.

In my opinion the development and inclusion of a clear Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT) scoring criteria within the RFQ sent to potential suppliers would have significantly aided transparency and equality of treatment as part of the selection of a preferred supplier. There is no evidence a MEAT scoring criteria was developed or shared. In addition the specification's surround' would have benefited from a requirement to identify if sub-suppliers were to be involved in the supply chain. These should be addressed in any future procurement process where significant monetary values and public funds are involved.

My overall conclusion is that Eventing Ireland approached this procurement process in a reactive manner rather than proactive manner. Eventing Ireland did comply with the direct grant submission requirements of the funding body. However given the significant monetary values and public funds involved in the grant application/approval under review the procurement process executed was somewhat below the acceptable standard which could be reasonably anticipated from a national membership based organisation like Eventing Ireland. This should be addressed by the Board ahead of any future procurement process where significant monetary values and public funds are involved.

Tony Ennis, IRG panel member.

9.2 Was the Supply Contract Award undertaken to an acceptable standard?

In my opinion, Yes. It was in line with the formal grant approval ref: CRM: 0091054 from the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme Unit of the Dept. of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

My overall conclusion is that the supply contract award was in line with requirements and to an acceptable standard.

Tony Ennis, IRG panel member.

9.3 Was the Contract Management (Post Award) undertaken to an acceptable standard?

In my opinion, Yes in engagement with Event Organisers regarding the 'Mechanics to buy' the cross-country fences, order forms, and payment details. However some issues that have emerged involving quality and non-specification compliance with a number of Event Organisers fences should not occurred. This is a management of supplier and contract issue for Eventing Ireland which it has and is dealing with. It is worth noting that effective contract management (post award) is also about planning to ensure any such issues do not arise in the first place.

My overall conclusion is that the contract management (post award) was to an acceptable standard regarding engagement with the Event Organisers but some pro-active management planning to ensure avoidance of quality and non-specification compliance issues arising would enhance the contract management process.

Tony Ennis, IRG panel member.

9.4 Were the goods provided / installed under the supply contract award to the original specification requirements of Eventing Ireland?

It is my professional opinion that the fences I physically saw at Crecora and the fences I viewed on the supplied photos from Eventing Ireland were built in accordance with the original technical specification.

Declan O' Shea, IRG panel member.

9.4 Was the quality and suitability of the goods provided/installed under the supply contract award fit for purpose as intended by Eventing Ireland and the capital grant award?

In reviewing the fences either in person or by dimension and photographs, I found that in all cases, the Eventing Ireland published specifications were met in the construction of the fences.

In nearly all cases, the FEI guidelines were taken into account in the design and construction of the fences. In cases where the optimal guidelines (ie. square leading edge profile) were not followed 100%, the type of fence lends itself to additional filler which would need to be added on placement on courses by the course designer.

In my opinion the requirements of the tender were met and that the fences supplied are fit for purpose, and additionally are of a very good standard internationally.

Conclusion – Fit For Purpose

Robert Ramsden, IRG panel Member.

9.5 A Contextual Conclusion

A look back review such as this has the distinct benefit of detached examination of information together with the benefit of hindsight on actions and activities that have already taken place. In addition to our findings and conclusions recorded here, we also want to state the IRG panel's clear combined opinion that Eventing Ireland were absolutely right to pursue the significant funding opportunity presented by applying for funding on behalf of Event Organisers through the 2020 the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme. The secured funding has and will continue to benefit Eventing activities and membership across Ireland.

Eventing Ireland, in keeping with the majority if not all the sporting and leisure event membership organisations in Ireland, relies to a large extent on volunteerism by members to undertake actions and activities at all levels of such organisations. The reliance on all such volunteers is critical to building and maintaining of activities. Volunteers give of their time and skills primarily out of a passion for their sport or leisure activity and bring whatever skills they possess to deliver outcomes in furtherance of members participation and experiences.

Tony Ennis, IRG panel member.

Declan O' Shea, IRG panel member.

Robert Ramsden, IRG panel Member.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD FROM THE IRG

1. Individual suggestions to the Board of Eventing Ireland for improvements in processes contained in 9.1 and 9.3 of this report should be pursued with immediate effect.
2. For the cross-country fences to remain in a usable condition it is imperative that the fences are treated with the appropriate decking oil on an annual basis.

The painted fences must be re-painted on an annual basis.

It is critical that the fences are handled and transported in a careful manner.

Ideally, the fences would be stored internally when not in use. If internal storage is not an option, the fences should be stored off the ground and protected with a rain proof covering.

The fences should also be stored on level ground.

11.0 APPENDIX 1: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS USED IN THE REPORT

IRG	Independent Review Group
TOR	Terms of Reference
EI	Eventing Ireland
Board	The Board of Directors of Eventing Ireland
FEI	Fédération Équestre Internationale (International Federation for Equestrian Sports)
RFQ	Request for Quotation
MEAT	Most Economically Advantageous Tender
MRG	Members Representative Group (ref: Mr. Kieran Connors)

12.0 APPENDIX 2: IRG TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference (TOR) for an Independent Review Group (IRG) into the 2020 Sports Capital Grant awarded to Eventing Ireland by Sporting Ireland.

1. Terms of Reference for the Independent Review Group (IRG)

1.1 To investigate, review, form opinion(s) with any conclusions, and provide a written report on the following as they relate to the Sports Capital Grant for Cross Country Fences awarded in 2020 to Eventing Ireland by Sports Ireland. Specifically:

(a) Was the procurement, supply contract award, and management of the contract conducted by Eventing Ireland undertaken to an acceptable standard?

(b) Were the goods provided/installed under the supply contract award to the original specification requirements of Eventing Ireland?

(c) Was the quality and suitability of the goods provided/installed under the supply contract award fit for purpose as intended by Eventing Ireland and the capital grant award?

2. Composition of the IRG

2.1 The IRG will consist of:

- A consultant experienced in grant funding – s/he will undertake 1.1 (a)
- A qualified, suitably experienced engineer – s/he will undertake 1.1 (b)
- An FEI 4* Technical Delegate – s/he will undertake 1.1. (c)

3. Procedural, operational, and reporting requirements for the IRG

3.1 No member of the IRG can have any conflict of interest with its work to ensure and maintain absolute independence.

3.2 All members of the IRG will hold confidential all its work, save for to fulfil the reporting phases noted in 3.7 below. Post final report delivery full and total confidentiality will be maintained.

3.3 The IRG will appoint from its number a Chairperson.

3.4 The IRG will collectively agree a timetable to ensure the review process is completed within eight weeks from the start date.

3.5 Agree a start date with the task force group established by Board of Eventing Ireland.

3.6 Undertake all the work detailed in 1.1 above.

3.7 The Chairperson of the IRG will integrate the individual reports of 1.1 (a); 1.1(b) 1.1 (c) and write an overall report, presented firstly in draft form (pdf format) for discussion to the task force group, and thereafter provide the Final Report (pdf format) to the Board of Eventing Ireland.

13.0 APPENDIX 3: TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION FOR FENCES ETC

Cross Country Fence Specifications

Attached is a list of fences for which we would like you to quote. The quantities will vary so at this stage we are looking for a unit cost.

The specifications for the cross country fences must be compliant with current FEI Guidelines, in addition:

- All standard fences must be 3.6m or 12ft Wide
- All rails must be either Douglas Fir or Larch – which must be planed and sanded
- All other Timber be C16 KDPAREN14081 Machine Graded
- All fixings must be SPAX screws or equivalent
- All Frames must be made out of 6"x3" or 4"x3" timber
- All Fences that are being faced with flat timber has to be a minimum of 44mm
- Fences to be faced with 120mm Machined ½ Round are as follows: o Flower Boxes, Triple Brushes, Double Brushes, Corners and Brush Corners
- All other Fences are 44mm
- All Fences must be finished to the highest standard: planed, sanded and treated with clear Decking Oil and will be ready for painting

MIMS Devices

The cost of the MIMs devices is to be INCLUDED in the final price for the fences. The MIMs devices are to be supplied by Cetag at the prices on the attached sheet.

VAT

Eventing Ireland is not registered for VAT and we require that in cases where any supplier is VAT registered, they must provide quotes which are VAT inclusive. To avoid any confusion in relation to VAT we require any supplier to confirm their VAT status together with any quotation.

If you are registered for VAT you must provide satisfactory documentary evidence to confirm your registration and any invoices or quotes must clearly identify any VAT charge.

Please note that if you are not registered for VAT then any quotes provided cannot be amended to include VAT at any stage.

Proof of Qualifications

Please can you provide proof that you are qualified to design and build Cross Country fences to the highest levels we are expecting.

Proof of Insurance

Please can you provide proof of your insurance confirming you are covered to design and build cross country fences.

Deadline for Manufacturer of Fences

All fences must be built and ready for inspection and collection by a date to be confirmed in the summer. All fences must be ready for inspection and collection at least three weeks before the start of the event which has requested them.