



**IRISH SPORTS COUNCIL**

**QUADRENNIAL HIGH PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

**FINAL REPORT**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAI	Athletics Association of Ireland
BOA	British Olympic Association
BOCOG	Beijing Organising Committee for the Olympic Games
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CI	Coaching Ireland
DAST	Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism
FAI	Football Association of Ireland
FEI	International Equestrian Federation
HSI	Horse Sport Ireland
IABA	Irish Amateur Boxing Association
IARU	Irish Amateur Rowing Union
ICU	Irish Canoe Union
IFDS	International Disability Sailing Federation
IIS	Irish Institute of Sport
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IPC	International Paralympic Committee
ISC	Irish Sports Council
NCTC	National Coaching and Training Centre
NGB	National Governing Body
NOC	National Olympic Committee
NZOC	New Zealand Olympic Committee
OCI	Olympic Council of Ireland
PCI	Paralympic Council of Ireland
PNZ	Paralympics New Zealand
SCNI	Sports Council Northern Ireland
SCP	Sports Capital Programme
SINI	Sports Institute Northern Ireland

## 1. Executive summary

1.1 In October 2008, the ISC established a Steering Group to direct its quadrennial high performance review. This group was chaired by Judge Rory MacCabe, S.C., and comprised Mr Pat O'Neill and Mr Gary Owens. It was assisted by an independent consultant, Dr Neil Tunnicliffe of Wharton Consulting.

1.2 The terms of reference for the review were as follows:

- To benchmark the progress of Ireland's athletes and teams by means of their attempts to qualify for, and their performances in, the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- To review the effectiveness and outcomes of the investment in individual Olympic and Paralympic sports and athletes in the years 2005-08, and the trajectory of progress within each sport
- To review athlete service provision, management and development with respect to both Olympic and Paralympic performance, and to anticipate the future needs of funded athletes in the years 2009-13
- To review the progress demonstrated by organisations in which the ISC has invested in the years 2005-08, including and especially the Irish Institute of Sport, the National Coaching and Training Centre, and the Paralympic Council of Ireland, and to anticipate the future trajectory of development within each of these organisations
- To reference the above against the recommendations of the Athens Review, and the ISC's internal Mid-Cycle Review which took place in 2007, with a view to assessing adherence to and fulfilment of these

1.3 In the conduct of the review the consultancy:

- Interviewed representatives of the 14 Olympic and nine Paralympic sports which were funded by the ISC and / or who competed in the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and of the agencies which supported them – ISC, IIS, NCTC and PCI – and other parties
- Sought feedback from the 55 athletes who competed in the 2008 Olympic Games, and the 79 members of the Irish team who attended the Paralympic Games
- Conducted an amount of desk research, including previous review documents, performance plans, and data relating to performance at the Olympic and Paralympic Games

1.4 The report contains *inter alia* the statistics surrounding the sports and organisations under review, and a factual recital of observations made by interviewees whose identity is disclosed within an appendix. It also offers some interpretation of the implications of these facts for the future benefit of Irish sport.

### *Olympic sports*

1.5 Statistics show that, since 1960:

- The average number of medals won by Ireland in Olympic Games is less than one
- Four sports have produced medal-winners
- One athlete in the 1996 Games is responsible for four medals, or 36 per cent of the total number of medals won since 1960

1.6 Following the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, the ISC set itself a target of producing between six and nine finalists in the Beijing Olympic Games, out of which two to three medals might be produced.

1.7 Systematic investment in the performance programmes of Ireland’s Olympic (and Paralympic) sports commenced in 2002. It is therefore a relatively recent phenomenon, across just 1.5 cycles. Between 2005 and 2008, the total investment in the ISC high performance programme was €31,974,036, which breaks down as follows:

NGB performance programmes	€19,646,211
International Carding Scheme	€8,948,442
OCI core grant	€1,835,919
PCI core grant	€1,543,464

1.8 The return on that investment is manifest in Ireland’s third-highest medal return from an Olympic campaign. This was exceeded only in 1956 and 1996. The target set following the Athens Review was achieved – thus:

- Nine finalists, or top eight finishes
- Three medals – one silver, two bronze – in boxing

1.9 The Athens Review set no specific goals in terms of the numbers of athletes and sports which should qualify for Beijing. There was, however, an increase in both sports and athletes which qualified for Athens, as follows:

	No. of athletes qualified	No. of sports qualified
Athens, 2004	49	9
Beijing, 2008	54 <sup>1</sup>	12
<i>%age increase</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>33%</i>

<sup>1</sup> 55 athletes actually competed in Beijing, through use of a rowing reserve

1.10 In sports where such measurements are possible, five personal bests were achieved at the Games, and three athlete achieved season’s bests.

1.11 These performances placed Ireland in joint 62<sup>nd</sup> place in the medal table. Ireland’s position in the medal table at previous Games is as follows:

Games	Medals				Medal table position
	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	
1980	-	1	1	2	31
1984	-	1	-	1	33=
1988	-	-	-	-	-
1992	1	1	-	2	32
1996	3	-	1	4	28
2000	-	1	-	1	64=
2004	-	-	-	-	-
2008	-	1	2	3	62=

1.12 In summary, the performance of the Olympic sports against the performance estimates submitted to the ISC at the beginning of 2008 was as follows:

- Two sports exceeded their estimates, and five sports achieved their estimates
- Six sports failed to achieve their estimates, and one sport (triathlon) received no programme funding and was not therefore required to provide an estimate
- Six sports improved on Athens in all respects
- Seven sports demonstrated no real progress from Athens, and one sport (tennis) demonstrated no specific Olympic ambitions

1.13 In total, 93 individual athletes and one team were funded by the ISC at senior (i.e., contracted, World Class or international) level through the ICS in 2007 and 2008. This means that 59 per cent of the senior athletes funded by the ISC in the build-up to the Games secured qualification.

1.14 Of the 55 athletes who competed in Beijing:

- 39 were at their first Olympic Games. Six had been to both the Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 Games, and 10 had been to the Athens 2004 Games
- The average age was 26.95, and the age range was from 18 to 39. There were five athletes aged 20 and below, and 10 athletes aged over 30 – of whom five were in “sedentary” sports equestrianism and shooting, where longevity is expected
- 75 per cent of the athletes who returned the Olympic questionnaire stated that they were full-time athletes
- 40 per cent of the Olympic team (22 athletes) were based either full-time or part-time outside of Ireland
- 18 per cent of respondents to the athlete questionnaire described their overall preparation programme as excellent, 43 per cent described it as good, and 39 per cent described it as OK
- 25 per cent of respondents described their individual training environment as excellent, 39 per cent described it as good, 29 per cent described it as OK, and 7 per cent described it as poor
- 11 per cent of respondents described their competition schedule as excellent, 59 per cent described it as good, 26 per cent described it as OK, and 4 per cent described it as very poor
- Regarding their overall state of readiness when they departed for the Games, the athletes responded as follows:

	<b>Very well prepared</b>	<b>Adequately prepared</b>	<b>Not well prepared</b>
Technically	61%	39%	0%
Tactically	44%	37%	19%
Physically	68%	32%	0%
Mentally	61%	36%	4%
Lifestyle	50%	46%	4%

\* That the sum of these will not always equal 100 is a result of rounding

- 14 per cent of respondents stated that they had fulfilled their personal, primary performance goal at the Games, and the remaining 86 per cent stated that they did not
- Every athlete who responded stated that they believed their personal, primary performance goal for the Games to have been realistic
- When asked to rate their own performances at the Games, no athletes stated that they had exceeded their expectations, and 32 per cent stated that they had performed in accordance with their potential / expectations
- When asked to identify the element which had had the strongest *positive* impact on their and their team-mates’ performances in Beijing, the athletes picked out their physical condition (62 per cent)

- When asked to identify the element which had had the strongest *negative* impact on their and their team-mates' performances in Beijing, the athletes picked out injury / illness (37 per cent)

#### *Paralympic sports*

1.15 Statistics demonstrate that, since the profile of the Paralympic Games changed following the Seoul 1988 Games:

- The increasing number of competing nations has made qualification in itself more difficult
- Ireland's competitiveness was greater before the removal of learning disabilities and the combination of classes after the Sydney Games
- The average number of medals won by Ireland over the past five cycles is seven. The average number of gold medals won over this same period is 1.8
- Athletics, boccia and swimming are consistent and reliable medal sports for Ireland, while there is also an historical track record of producing medals in equestrianism, football and table tennis

1.16 The investment made by the ISC in Irish Paralympic performance and in PCI the past four years appears as follows:

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>2005 funding</b>	<b>2006 funding</b>	<b>2007 funding</b>	<b>2008 funding</b>	<b>Total</b>
Performance	76,000	272,524	551,300	514,947	1,414,771
PCI core funding	183,108	215,474	638,973	505,909	1,543,464
<i>Total</i>	<i>259,108</i>	<i>487,998</i>	<i>1,190,273</i>	<i>1,020,856</i>	<i>2,958,235</i>

1.17 Following the Athens Review, the ISC set itself a target of producing between 12 and 15 finalists in the Beijing Paralympic Games, from which four to five medals might be produced. The actual performance exceeded the target, as follows:

- 22 qualifiers for finals, or equivalent
- Five medals – three gold, one silver, one bronze – in three sports (athletics, boccia, swimming)

1.18 The Athens Review set no specific process goals in terms of the numbers of athletes and sports which should qualify for Beijing. However, both of these showed an increase on the numbers which qualified for Athens – thus:

	<b>No. of athletes qualified</b>	<b>No. of sports qualified</b>
Sydney 2000	39	7
Athens, 2004	40	8
Beijing, 2008	45	9
<i>%age increase from Athens</i>	<i>12.5%</i>	<i>12.5%</i>

1.19 Five world records were broken by Irish athletes at the Games, and 24 personal bests were achieved.

1.20 These performances placed Ireland in 36<sup>th</sup> place in the medal table. Ireland's position in the medal table at previous Games is as follows:

Games	Medals				Medal table position
	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	
1988	13	11	18	42	19
1992	-	3	4	7	43
1996	1	3	6	10	45
2000	5	3	1	9	31
2004	-	3	1	4	60
2008	3	1	1	5	36

1.21 In summary, the performance of the Paralympic sports, by comparison with their achievement in Athens four years previously, was as follows:

- All nine sports exceeded their performance levels from 2004
- Two sports (cycling, swimming) improved significantly from Athens
- Two sports (athletics, boccia) maintained and marginally enhanced their success in Athens
- Three sports (equestrianism, football, sailing) maintained and marginally enhanced an unsuccessful position from Athens
- Two sports qualified for Beijing having not done so for Athens

1.22 Forty individual athletes and one team were funded by the ISC at senior (i.e., contracted, World Class or international) level through the ICS in 2007 and 2008. Seven of these individual athletes did not qualify for Beijing: therefore 86 per cent of the senior athletes funded by the ISC in the build-up to the Games secured qualification.

1.23 Of the 45 athletes who competed in Beijing:

- 22 were first-time Paralympians
- The remainder had previous experience ranging from one to six Games
- The average age was 31.11, and the age range was from 13 to 57
- There were ten athletes aged 20 and below, four who were aged between 41 and 50, and three aged over 50 – all in sports where longevity is expected
- 41.8 per cent of respondents believed they had performed very well at the Paralympic Games, and a further 34.3 per cent believed they had performed well
- 57.8 per cent of respondents believed they had met their pre-Games expectations of performances
- Collectively, the athletes rated themselves as either very good or good in each of the following areas:
  - 91.9 per cent in the quality of their self-management
  - 94.5 per cent in their personal preparation for performance
  - 91.8 per cent in their interaction with other team members
  - 83.7 per cent in their communications with staff
- Collectively, the athletes rated their team-mates as either very good or good in each of the following areas:
  - 75.7 per cent in the quality of their self-management
  - 78.3 per cent in their personal preparation for performance
  - 86.4 per cent in their interaction with other team members
  - 78.4 per cent in their communications with staff
- 63.1 per cent of respondents described the Irish Paralympic team as very unified, and a further 21.5 per cent rated it as somewhat unified



### Comparator nations

1.24 This review has focused on Denmark and New Zealand as comparators for Ireland, on the basis of their geographical and cultural similarities to Ireland. Both nations have invested in high performance for longer than Ireland: Denmark, for one, has had a programme in place since 1985. The Athens Review noted that these nations also invested over three times more heavily than Ireland in the years leading up to 2004.

1.25 The performances of Denmark and New Zealand in Beijing were as follows:

	Olympic				Paralympic			
	Team size	No. of sports qualified	Medals	No. of medal sports	Team size	No. of sports qualified	Medals	No. of medal sports
Denmark	54	8	7 (2g, 2s, 3b)	6	39	10	9 (3g, 2s, 4b)	5
New Zealand	148*	11	9 (3g, 1s, 5b)	5	30	7	12 (5g, 3s, 4b)	4

\* NB that this figure includes 91 athletes in five teams across basketball, hockey & soccer

1.26 An analysis of these performances suggests the following regarding these two nations:

- Success is not appropriately measured in the number of sports or athletes which qualify for the Games. Rather, it is the quality of input and output from those sports and athletes who are supported which is significant
- Success is appropriately measured in the number of sports which win medals. This is a sign of a number of high-quality programmes
- Focus sports should be those which offer natural advantages and multimedal opportunities. The sports where Denmark (rowing, sailing) and New Zealand (rowing) consistently win medals are sports which suit their geography and are spread over numerous classes, i.e., where investment has a potentially high reward
- Investment in team sports is high risk. The level of investment required is high, given the numbers of athletes involved – but the potential return is low, i.e., just one medal per team
- Gold medal success is the most valuable currency. Almost 35 per cent of the medals won by Denmark and New Zealand in the past two Games have been gold
- In Paralympic terms, single athletes can contribute enormously to team outcomes if their performances are delivered across multiple events. New Zealand's competitive advantage in Beijing came from having a small team featuring two athletes who won seven medals between them

1.27 New Zealand's equivalent of ISC, SPARC, has invested into Olympic and Paralympic sports over the four years from 2004-05 to 2007-08 a total of NZ\$65 million, or €28.6 million. Over the same period SPARC has also invested €809,600 in the New Zealand Olympic Committee, and €2,193,700 in Paralympics New Zealand.

### Key findings

1.28 The Beijing Games, both Olympic and Paralympic, demonstrated an improvement on Ireland's performances in 2004. In some sports, the improvement was significant. This

progress is attributable to the effects of the substantial levels of investment by Government via the ISC. Over the period under review, total Government investment in the ISC has increased from €34.4 million in 2005 to €57.1 million in 2008 – an increase of 66 per cent.

- 1.29 Some sports which received significant amounts of programme funding from the ISC provided a tangible return on that investment, as did some smaller sports whose individual athletes were able to fashion effective “bubble” support for their training and competition programmes. Other sports which were in receipt of substantial sums offered more uneven returns.
- 1.30 The strongest output of the Beijing cycle in Olympic terms has been the demonstration of “what good looks like” within the boxing programme. That this programme has delivered not only success within the Olympic sphere, but has subsequently followed up with more medals at World Junior and European Championships, suggests that its strengths are systemic and structural, consistent and repeatable.
- 1.31 Those sports and athletes which were stable in their build-up to the Games, and which were able to treat and manage the event as a sport-specific championship, fared well in Beijing. By contrast, those sports and athletes who did not fulfil their potential at the Games had some or all of the following common denominators:
- External or internal disruption within their preparation programme
  - Where there was simmering discontent between athletes and coaches / managers, this was exacerbated by the pressure of the Games
  - Late qualification, which prevented the formulation and delivery of a periodised programme building to a deliberate peak for the Games
  - A lengthy qualification programme, which resulted in burnout
  - An absence of agreed goals for the Games – or qualification for the Games being the goal in itself
  - An absence of effective, multidisciplinary and integrated support services, including and especially sports psychology
- 1.32 By contrast with the Athens Games, where numbers of athletes appeared physically unprepared for the challenges of the Olympic environment, the Beijing Games seem to have been marked more by a psychological deficit.
- 1.33 Injury and illness did have some impact on performances in Beijing, as did the design of competition venues, and the heat and humidity undoubtedly affected those involved in endurance events.
- 1.34 With regard to sports’ usage of the funding invested in them, in summary:
- Some sports have responded well to funding, and set about building systems and structures within Ireland where these have been considered feasible
  - Some sports have concluded that domestic systems and structures are not achievable, and have set about building these outside Ireland
  - Some sports have their eye on long-term, sustainable success, and others on short-term gain
  - Some sports have pursued success not through systems and structures, but through the employment and deployment of individuals – whose presence within their programmes may be transient

- 1.35 The €31,974,036 invested by ISC in Olympic and Paralympic performance over the past four years can be broadly (though not exactly) compared with the €28.6 million which New Zealand has invested over the same period, and suggests that the amount of finance within the system should no longer be considered a bar to Ireland achieving success at Olympic and Paralympic level.
- 1.36 The goals which the ISC is seeking to achieve through this funding have been clarified by means of a high performance paper published in June 2007. As regards the investment delivered in fulfilment of these goals, the following points have been made previously and remain valid:
- ISC is at present unable to fund sports and athletes for more than one year at a time. This inhibits both good planning, and sports' ability to recruit the best available personnel
  - The planning template through which the ISC procures annual plans from sports encourages NGBs to take a fiscal approach to performance planning, rather than a qualitative / developmental / pathway-driven approach
  - While the Sports Capital Programme has provided national training centres for sports such as boxing, hockey, rowing and swimming, other sports prioritised by ISC for high performance funding (such as athletics for indoor training, canoeing and cycling) have not similarly benefited from SCP investment in high performance facilities
  - There is a lack of co-ordination between ISC's investment in high performance, and that made by SCNI in Northern Ireland
- 1.37 Almost without exception, the sports interviewed for this review reported a good relationship with the ISC. The athletes who responded to the Olympic questionnaire were more circumspect: 43 per cent described the support they received from the ISC as good, 29 per cent described it as OK, and 21 per cent as poor.
- 1.38 The International Carding Scheme, or ICS, attracted a mixed reaction from those Olympic athletes who returned the questionnaire. Some 25 per cent rated the support received from the scheme as either poor or very poor; 36 per cent rated it either good or very good. Specific issues raised by interviewees regarding the ICS include the following:
- Athletes' desire that payments should be made to them in the form of a monthly salary, rather than quarterly in arrears
  - The principle of "boat-capping" – wherein payments to a crew or a team are capped at a certain level – which continues to be invidious
  - There has been a lack of co-ordination between:
    - The financial administration of the ICS, through the ISC, and the non-financial elements of the programme, which are co-ordinated through the NCTC. Moving the non-financial elements of the ICS under the auspices of the IIS will resolve this
    - The ICS in Ireland, and the athlete support schemes in operation in Northern Ireland. This means that Northern Irish athletes can potentially benefit from their geographical location, by means of double-funding
- 1.39 In protection of this investment, and to manage the risks associated with it, ISC has invested heavily in the improvement of its anti-doping programmes. Its professed intention was to test each of the selected Olympic athletes three times in the six months prior to the Games: this was, however, made difficult by late selection in a number of sports.

- 1.40 Sports science / medicine support service provision is delivered to individual athletes through practitioners co-ordinated by the NCTC. The weaknesses of this system are that:
- It depends in many cases upon the athlete knowing what he / she requires from a support service programme
  - It depends upon geography, i.e., the availability of suitably qualified and expert practitioners across a range of disciplines within the area where the athlete resides
- 1.41 The NCTC acknowledges that it has not done enough to modernise this system over the course of the last cycle. However, it has good reason for this: it has effectively been marking time, waiting for the IIS to come fully on stream.
- 1.42 The IIS in turn has experienced uncertainty over its legal identity and corporate format. The original proposal to establish the Institute as a wholly owned subsidiary of ISC by means of legislation is on hold. Accordingly, ISC will continue to oversee the development of the IIS directly for the foreseeable future. ISC, through its High Performance Unit, will continue to have responsibility for setting policy and strategy in accordance with its statutory remit. This will include having overall responsibility for the administration and funding of programmes relating to high performance sport. The role of IIS will be to deliver services to sports and athletes to support and enhance the high performance programmes of ISC. These services will concentrate on sports science, sports medicine, athlete lifestyle, performance systems and elite coach development.
- 1.43 The Steering Group has not, within this review, sought to procure the opinion of athletes or sporting bodies on the discharge of its functions by OCI in the lead-up to or in the course of the Beijing Games. We understand that OCI is conducting its own review on Beijing.
- 1.44 Notwithstanding that, opinions relating to OCI's delivery of services prior to and in Beijing have been offered by interviewees. Collectively, the input of interviewees gives the impression that the performance environment created by OCI in Beijing was improved from that which prevailed in Athens in 2004. However, several areas were identified by interviewees where they felt that service delivery at and leading up to the Games may have adversely impacted upon the performances of the athletes. The areas cited by these interviewees comprise:
- Transport to the Games
  - The allocation of accreditation
  - The provision of team kit
  - Team management and support services
  - Media management
- 1.45 PCI deserves praise for the excellence of its approach to Paralympic preparation. The results of the questionnaire independently delivered to participants in the Paralympic Games as part of the PCI debrief demonstrate high level of satisfaction with all aspects of their experience.
- 1.46 There were certain aspects of PCI's campaign that gave rise to concern. These include:
- The difficulty of maintaining a centrally driven programme as the numbers of athletes within it increase
  - The twin need:

- To recognise which volunteers have reached their natural limit within their sport, and to find a way of effecting a separation
- To find additional volunteers who are willing and able to take these places, and who will be themselves capable of moving the sport on to the next level
- The standard of coaching currently available to Paralympic athletes
- The danger that the PCI's sports science and medicine support group will spread themselves so thinly that they end up doing none of their roles very well
- The disruption to focus caused by family members and friends of some athletes in Beijing

### *Recommendations*

1.47 Subject to the levels of funding available to it, ISC should underpin its previously stated goals for 2012 by seeking the establishment of systems and structures within a small number of sports (i.e., not just boxing) which deliberately generate consistent and repeatable medal success. Specifically, it should seek the following:

- Within the Olympic Games:
  - A repeat of the medal success of the Beijing Games
  - An increase in the number of finalists, or equivalent
  - An increase in the percentage of sports represented at the Games which improve their performances from Beijing to London
- Within the Paralympic Games:
  - A repeat of the medal success of the Beijing Games, including the number of gold medals won
  - An increase in the number of sports which win medals
  - An increase in the number of individual athletes who win medals
  - An increase in the percentage of sports represented at the Games which improve their performances from Beijing to London

1.48 The Government should continue if possible under the prevailing economic circumstances to invest in sport to at least the levels which have been established over the past four years.

1.49 Attempts must be made:

- To provide multi-annual budgets, to create conditions under which ISC and the sports which it funds can plan confidently over a number of years, secure in the knowledge that their funding levels will remain constant
- To ensure that high performance planning and the funding of capital projects through the Sports Capital Programme are more closely aligned
- To source up to €1 million each year to support the equipment requirements of elite sport – especially in sports where the capital costs are habitually high
- To align ISC investment in high performance sport with that made by SCNI, to ensure that best value is secured from expenditure, and that double-funding is avoided

1.50 ISC should once again review the list of focus sports in which it invests for high performance, with a view to pruning it back to those which are able to deliver systems and structures which develop and control athletes within Ireland.

1.51 For other sports, ISC should adopt an entrepreneurial approach: it should look to place its investment in:

- Performance projects: not systemic, and with limited structures, these will be geared towards the generation of specific performance gains in return for mid-level investment
  - “Institutes of one”: whereby individual athletes with a known performance profile receive funding to create personal support networks around themselves, through the engagement of coaches and service providers
- 1.52 Having allocated this investment, ISC should ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to anticipate and manage the risks associated with it. These will include:
- The continued improvement of anti-doping protocols and procedures
  - Extending its influence over the governance and management of the sports in which it invests, in order that it might steer outcomes more effectively
  - Ensuring that the team environments in which outcome performances are delivered, both Olympic and Paralympic, are conducive to producing a maximal return on the investment made in sports / athletes; also that the investment made in the agencies which create those environments itself demonstrates a positive return
- 1.53 The ISC’s focus sports should be required to demonstrate an improved level of planning. Such planning should give due consideration to the benefits and disadvantages of the 2012 Olympic Games being to all intents and purposes a home Games; and be used as a forerunner to the development of structured and formal programmes of talent identification.
- 1.54 ISC should actively consider steps through which it might influence more positively the governance and management structures of the sports which it funds. These might include, *inter alia*:
- Requiring a non-executive representative on the Board of Directors of any organisation to which it commits funding
  - The propagation of models of good governance for performance programmes
  - Guiding, co-ordinating and managing the recruitment of key personnel to performance programmes – again, perhaps through IIS
  - Influencing the nomination of Team Managers for the all major games and championships,
  - Ensuring that each funded programme has a set of policy documents which allow for its effective governance, management and administration – potentially through withholding a percentage of funding from any NGB which does not have such policies in place
- 1.55 The future development of IIS should demonstrate a number of key features – including that it should anticipate the need to manage the consequences of ISC’s investment programme as outlined above.
- 1.56 In relation to the ICS, the following matters should be reviewed:
- Athletes funded through the ICS should have a notional, multiannual development plan which takes them to the next Games or milestone event
  - Payments should be made at least quarterly in advance, in order to signify trust, build faith, and reduce the financial pressure on the athletes – if not in the form of a monthly salary
  - The principle of “boat-capping” should be removed, to ensure that all elite athletes are equally rewarded for their commitment

- Consideration should be given to augmenting the payments made to athletes within sports where the equipment requirement is high and costly
- Liaison should be conducted with SCNI / SINI and their funding and athlete support programmes, in order that athletes are optimally supported but not able to play one funding agency off against another

1.57 While this report makes no specific recommendations concerning the services delivered by OCI leading up to and during the Olympic Games, it does, however, require ISC to ensure that any investment made in OCI is risk-free as far as is possible; that this investment is aligned with the investment in sports and the requirement on those sports to produce a performance outcome; and that the OCI is held to account to demonstrate a performance return.

1.58 Recommendations regarding PCI are as follows:

- PCI's Chief Executive should also serve as Chef de Mission for the London 2012 Paralympic Games
- PCI should consider making additional management / administrative appointments to support the Chief Executive as he carries this dual role
- PCI should particularly consider the breadth of its funding programme, in respect of how many sports it chooses to support – in particular, to concentrate on promoting genuine medal potential
- PCI's planning should particularly address, *inter alia*:
  - Talent identification, and talent transfer
  - Team Manager recruitment and development (see below)
  - Coach development (see below)
  - The integration of sports science and medicine
  - Managing preparation for a "home Games" in 2012 (see below)
- In sports where there is an Olympic counterpart, PCI and ISC should work together to engage the mainstream NGB in supporting the Paralympic programme through all appropriate means, a partnership to which each party contributes equally in pursuit of an agreed goal, and within agreed parameters
- In order that the sports are closely aligned with PCI and its core programme, care should be taken in identifying, training and appointing Team Managers – extending the role to a fully remunerated, part-time one in the larger sports, if needs be
- PCI should also respond to the calls of its athletes for more and improved coaching.
- PCI should investigate the opportunities afforded by the inclusion of adaptive rowing as a comparatively new and undeveloped sport within the Paralympic Games
- As regards its sports science and medicine support group, PCI should:
  - Review the remit given to that group to ensure that it is focused and effective
  - Consider the addition of nutritional support as a core discipline in support of strength & conditioning
  - Ensure that the group meets or at least communicates formally and regularly, so that its effort is co-ordinated
  - Ensure that this group is situated in close proximity to the IIS, so that its workings can be co-ordinated with the emerging practices of the Institute
- PCI should ensure that its athletes benefit from the athlete lifestyle management programmes which the IIS is currently rolling out.
- In anticipation of the London 2012 Games, the PCI should:
  - Learn from the classification issues which arose in Beijing, and attempt to ensure that any borderline athletes are clearly classified before departing for the Games

- Take appropriate steps to anticipate the re-inclusion of athletes with a learning disability
- Also in anticipation of the London 2012 Games, PCI should review its stated intention to create a training base away from Ireland and the UK, in order to avoid the potential distractions of family and friends. Instead, PCI should consider:
  - Identifying a training base in England
  - Pursuing a programme designed to educate family and friends regarding the in-competition requirements of elite athletes and how these should be supported and not disrupted
  - Establishing an athletes' lodge in London, with the support of the London Irish community, within which athletes may mingle with their friends and family within a controlled environment during the Games



## **2. Brief and methodology**

2.1 In October 2008, the ISC established a Steering Group to direct its quadrennial high performance review. This group was chaired by Judge Rory MacCabe, S.C., and comprised Mr Pat O'Neill and Mr Gary Owens.

2.2 The terms of reference for the review were as follows:

- To benchmark the progress of Ireland's athletes and teams by means of their attempts to qualify for, and their performances in, the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- To review the effectiveness and outcomes of the investment in individual Olympic and Paralympic sports and athletes in the years 2005-08, and the trajectory of progress within each sport
- To review athlete service provision, management and development with respect to both Olympic and Paralympic performance, and to anticipate the future needs of funded athletes in the years 2009-13
- To review the progress demonstrated by organisations in which the ISC has invested in the years 2005-08, including and especially the Irish Institute of Sport, the National Coaching and Training Centre, and the Paralympic Council of Ireland, and to anticipate the future trajectory of development within each of these organisations
- To reference the above against the recommendations of the Athens Review, and the ISC's internal Mid-Cycle Review which took place in 2007, with a view to assessing adherence to and fulfilment of these

2.3 To assist in the conduct of this quadrennial high performance review and the preparation of this report, the ISC retained Wharton Consulting, an independent consultancy.

2.4 The following interests material to the conduct of this review have been declared by the consultant and the members of the Steering Group:

- The consultant was the author of the Athens Review, the proposals to Government through which the Irish Institute of Sport was established, and the ISC's internal Mid-Cycle Review
- Pat O'Neill was chairperson of the ISC from 1999 to 2005
- Gary Owens is a former chairperson of AAI, and is currently chairperson of the AAI Competitions Review Committee

2.5 In the conduct of the review the consultancy:

- Examined results achieved by Irish athletes in the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and those of comparator nations
- Conducted desk research into sports' performance plans, ISC and IIS plans and other relevant data
- Interviewed representatives of the 14 Olympic sports which were funded by the ISC and / or who competed in the 2008 Olympic Games – Team Managers, Coaches, and governing body Presidents, Chairs and/or Chief Executives

- Interviewed representatives of the PCI, and attended the PCI team and sport-by-sport debrief on Saturday 1 November, 2008, which was attended by athletes, team managers and support service providers
- Generated and delivered an athlete questionnaire to all 55 athletes who competed in the 2008 Olympic Games. In this regard, responses were received from 28 athletes
- Accessed the results of a questionnaire delivered to all 79 members of the Irish team who attended the Paralympic Games, both athletes and support staff. The questionnaire was facilitated by the IIS, and 72 responses were received
- Conducted follow-up interviews with selected Olympic athletes, in order to validate the results of the questionnaire
- Accessed the outputs of the annual debriefs conducted by sports with the assistance of the IIS
- Interviewed members of the ISC's High Performance Unit
- Interviewed representatives of both the IIS and NCTC
- Interviewed additional parties, e.g., Government and representatives of the media who attended the 2008 Games

2.6 A full list of consultees can be found at Appendix 1.

2.7 The International Olympic Committee governs and owns the rights to the Olympic Games. Through its Olympic Charter it charges the NOCs with *inter alia* constituting, organising and leading their respective delegations at the Olympic Games, including selecting the athletes, providing for their equipment, transport and accommodation, and prescribing and determining their clothing, uniforms and equipment. ISC invited the NOC for Ireland, the OCI, to participate in this review and this invitation was declined.

2.8 The Steering Group wishes to acknowledge the time and effort that was invested by the participants in this review, either by giving an interview or by completing a questionnaire.

2.9 The Steering Group further wishes to acknowledge the support and expertise of Austin Mallon and Kathryn Gallagher of the ISC, who facilitated the interviews and provided supporting information.

2.10 A body of data regarding sports and their preparation programmes now resides with the consultant, not all of which is reflected in this report. This data will be retained for future use, to enhance and maximise programme development within the sports funded by the ISC and elsewhere within Irish sport.

### 3. Olympic sports

#### (a) Performance

3.1 Ireland's performance in Olympic Games since 1960 is as follows:

Olympic Games	Medals won	Sports winning medals
Rome, 1960	0	-
Tokyo, 1964	1 (bronze)	Boxing
Mexico City, 1968	0	-
Munich, 1972	0	-
Montreal, 1976	0	-
Moscow, 1980	2 (1 silver, 1 bronze)	Boxing, sailing
Los Angeles, 1984	1 (silver)	Athletics
Seoul, 1988	0	-
Barcelona, 1992	2 (1 gold, 1 silver)	Boxing
Atlanta, 1996	4 (3 gold, 1 bronze)	Swimming
Sydney, 2000	1 (silver)	Athletics
Athens, 2004	0	-
<i>Totals</i>	11	4

3.2 These statistics show:

- The average number of medals won in Olympic Games is less than one
- Four sports have produced medal-winners
- One athlete in the 1996 Games is responsible for four medals, or 36 per cent of the total number of medals won since 1960

3.3 Systematic investment in Ireland's Olympic (and Paralympic) sports commenced in 2002. It is therefore a relatively recent phenomenon, across just 1.5 cycles.

3.4 Following the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, the ISC set itself a target of producing between six and nine finalists in the Beijing Olympic Games, out of which two to three medals might be produced. The primary rationale for this target was that Government investment in high performance was still at a level in arrears of that applied in comparator nations (for which see Section 5 below).

3.5 Investment in high performance focus sports by the ISC over the period between 2005 and 2008 (not including ICS support for individual athletes) appears as follows:

Sport	2005 funding	2006 funding	2007 funding	2008 funding	Total
Athletics	336,375	476,680	818,467	707,786	2,339,308
Badminton	80,000	137,250	130,000	140,000	487,250
Boxing	404,600	543,946	700,282	551,250	2,200,068
Canoeing	254,000	310,017	444,000	275,000	1,283,017
Cycling	180,000	200,000	431,295	405,000	1,216,295
Equestrian	450,000	480,000	480,000	736,635	2,146,635
Fencing	14,000	15,000	15,000	12,000	56,000
Hockey	300,000	330,000	905,000	550,000	2,085,000
Rowing	420,425	490,000	887,700	640,000	2,438,125

Sport	2005 funding	2006 funding	2007 funding	2008 funding	Total
Sailing	404,025	387,990	560,000	443,000	1,795,015
Shooting	49,727	50,000	145,000	95,000	339,727
Swimming	190,000	255,000	426,000	279,000	1,150,000
Tennis	150,000	170,000	185,000	190,000	695,000
PCI	76,000	272,524	551,300	514,947	1,414,771
Totals <sup>1</sup>	3,309,152	4,118,397	6,679,044	5,539,618	19,646,211

<sup>1</sup> Not including performance investment in golf between 2005 and 2008 (total €1,658,000) or in OCI

3.6 The return on that investment is manifest in Ireland's third-highest medal return from an Olympic campaign. This was exceeded only in 1956 and 1996 (see 3.1-2 above). The target set following the Athens Review has been achieved:

- Nine finalists, or top eight finishes
- Three medals – one silver, two bronze – in boxing

3.7 The Athens Review set no specific goals in terms of the numbers of athletes and sports which should qualify for Beijing. There was, however, an increase in both sports and athletes which qualified for Athens, as follows:

	No. of athletes qualified	No. of sports qualified
Athens, 2004	49	9
Beijing, 2008	54 <sup>1</sup>	12
<i>%age increase</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>33%</i>

<sup>1</sup> 55 athletes actually competed in Beijing, through use of a rowing reserve

3.8 In sports where such measurements are possible, five personal bests were achieved at the Games, and three athletes achieved season's bests.

3.9 These performances placed Ireland in joint 62<sup>nd</sup> place in the medal table. Ireland's position in the medal table at previous Games is as follows:

Games	Medals				Medal table position
	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	
1980	-	1	1	2	31
1984	-	1	-	1	33=
1988	-	-	-	-	-
1992	1	1	-	2	32
1996	3	-	1	4	28
2000	-	1	-	1	64=
2004	-	-	-	-	-
2008	-	1	2	3	62=

(b) Sports

i. Athletics

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 16 13 A standard, 3 B standard	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 19
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 27.5	No. of development athletes, 2008: 17
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 7	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 40
Total ISC investment, 2005-08 <sup>1</sup> : €3,851,020	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 14 qualifiers, 4 finalists
Performance against target: Not achieved: 13 A standard qualifiers      Achieved: 2 finalists, and 2 top 8	

<sup>1</sup> High performance funding and ICS funding for individual athletes combined

3.10 In all, 13 athletes achieved qualification for Beijing through their 2007 performances reaching the “A” standard set by the IAAF. In late July 2008, a further three athletes were added to the team having attained only the lower “B” standard. The “A” standard athletes were able to plan their preparation for the Games throughout the winter and summer seasons. The “B” standard athletes had three weeks’ notice of their inclusion in the Beijing Olympic team.

3.11 The performances of the Irish athletics team in Beijing were as follows, by comparison with their world ranking prior to the Games and their personal and 2008 season’s bests:

<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>World ranking</b>	<b>PB</b>	<b>SB</b>	<b>OG</b>	<b>Result</b>
Thomas Chamney*	800m	94	1:46.46 (2007)	1:46.66	1:47.66	Heat 1: 5 <sup>th</sup>
Jamie Costin	50 km walk	n/a	3:53:30 (2007)	n/a	4:15:16	44 <sup>th</sup>
Alistair Cragg	1500m	95	3:36.18 (2007)	3:39.12	3:44.90	Heat 2: 8 <sup>th</sup>
	5000m	59	13:07.10 (2007)	13:16.12	13:38.57 -	Heat 1: 6 <sup>th</sup> Final: DNF
Martin Fagan	Marathon	249	2:14:06 (2008)	2:14:08	-	DNF
David Gillick	400m	22	45.12 (2008)	45.12	45.83	Heat 7: 4 <sup>th</sup>
Colin Griffin	50 km walk	54	3:51:32 (2007)	3:58:26	-	Disqualified
Rob Heffernan	20 km walk	12	1:19:22 (2008)	1:19:22	1:20:36	8 <sup>th</sup>
Paul Hession	200m	29	20.30 (2007)	20.37	20:59 20.32 (SB) 20.38	Heat 1.6: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Heat 2.4: 1 <sup>st</sup> S-f 1: 5 <sup>th</sup>
Fionnuala Britton	3000m sc	66	9:41.36 (2007)	9:45.54	9:43.57 (SB)	Heat 1: 10 <sup>th</sup>
Michelle Carey*	400mh	43	56.19 (2008)	56.19	57.99	Heat 2: 7 <sup>th</sup>
Joanne Cuddihy	400m	88	50.73 (2007)	51.98	53.32	Heat 4: 6 <sup>th</sup>
Pauline Curley*	Marathon	239	2:39:05 (2008)	2:39:05	2:47:16	63 <sup>rd</sup>

<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>World ranking</b>	<b>PB</b>	<b>SB</b>	<b>OG</b>	<b>Result</b>
Olive Loughnane	20km walk	16	1:29:17 (2008)	1:29:17	1:27:45 (PB)	7 <sup>th</sup>
Roisin McGettigan	3000m sc	17	9:28.29 (2007)	9:30.56	9:28:92 (SB) 9:55:89	Heat 2: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Final: 14 <sup>th</sup>
Derval O'Rourke	100mh	38	12.72 (2006)	12.90	13.22	Heat 2: 6 <sup>th</sup>
Eileen O'Keeffe	Hammer	19	73.21m (2007)	72.75m	67.66m	Group B: 10 <sup>th</sup>

\* "B" standard qualifier

3.12 The above is summarised thus:

- Two finalists, and two top 8 finishes
- One personal best
- Three additional season's bests
- Five top 16 performances
- Eleven athletes, including all three "B" standard athletes, did not perform to their potential.

3.13 Comparing these performances with those of Irish athletes at the 2007 World Championships in Osaka, Japan, where 15 athletes competed:

<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>PB</b>	<b>SB</b>	<b>WC</b>	<b>Result</b>
David Campbell	800m	1:46.05 (2007)	1:46.05	1:46.77	Round 1: 7 <sup>th</sup>
Jamie Costin	50 km walk	3:53:30 (2007)	3:53:30	-	DNF
Alistair Cragg	5000m	13:07.10 (2007)	13:07.10	13:59.45	Round 1: 13 <sup>th</sup>
David Gillick	400m	45.12 (2008)	45.23	45.35 45.37	Round 1: 3 <sup>rd</sup> S-f: 6 <sup>th</sup>
Colin Griffin	50 km walk	3:51:32 (2007)	3:51:32	-	Disqualified
Rob Heffernan	20 km walk	1:19:22 (2008)	1:20:15	1:23:42	6 <sup>th</sup>
Paul Hession	200m	20.30 (2007)	20.30	20.46 20.50 20.50	Round 1: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Round 2: 1 <sup>st</sup> S-f: 6 <sup>th</sup>
Fionnuala Britton	3000m sc	9:41.36 (2007)	9:41.36	9:42.38 9:48.09	S-f: 7 <sup>th</sup> Final: 12 <sup>th</sup>
Michelle Carey	400mh	56.31 (2006)	56.53	57.10	Round 1: 8 <sup>th</sup>
Mary Cullen	5000m	15:19.04 (2007)	15:19.04	15:40.53	Round 1: 11 <sup>th</sup>
Joanne Cuddihy	400m	50.73 (2007)	50.73	51.55 50.73 (PB)	Round 1: 3 <sup>rd</sup> S-f: 8 <sup>th</sup>
Olive Loughnane	20km walk	1:29:17 (2008)	1:32:25	1:36:00	17 <sup>th</sup>
Roisin McGettigan	3000m sc	9:28.29 (2007)	9:28.29	9:39.41 9:39.80	S-f: 4 <sup>th</sup> Final: 10 <sup>th</sup>
Derval O'Rourke	100mh	12.72 (2006)	12.88	12.91 12.98	Round 1: 4 <sup>th</sup> S-f: 8 <sup>th</sup>
Eileen O'Keeffe	Hammer	73.21m (2007)	73.21	71.07m 70.93m	Qual: 5 <sup>th</sup> Final: 6 <sup>th</sup>

3.14 These performances demonstrate:

- Three finalists, and one additional top 8 finish
- One personal best
- No other season's bests, and six athletes falling some way short of their potential
- Eight top 16 performances

- 3.15 The comparisons between these two sets of championship performances suggest that, while more Irish athletes won through rounds in Osaka than in Beijing, the high-level outcomes were better in Beijing than in Osaka. The similarity between the two performances further suggests that this level of return is the current standard for the sport – notwithstanding the potential for individuals to continue to improve.
- 3.16 These performances in turn compare favourably with the sport's performance in Athens in 2004, when 14 athletes qualified, two reached a final, one recorded a season's best, and none recorded a personal best.
- 3.17 Injury and illness had an impact on Irish athletics' performances in Beijing – as it had in Athens, when three athletes withdrew from their event through injury. In 2008, four athletes were impacted by injury or illness: of these, two incurred their illness / injury in the course of the Games.
- 3.18 As the governing body funded to deliver the Olympic performance programme, AAI had comparatively little influence on the individual preparations of the athletes. These preparations were managed largely by the athletes themselves, under the guidance of their personal coaches and sports science / medicine practitioners. AAI did organise and deliver training and preparation camps in the build-up to Beijing, and these were considered to be successful in creating an environment in which the athletes could prepare together as a group. AAI's role was therefore that of co-ordinator and facilitator for the Olympic athletes, and not driver.

## ii. Badminton

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 2	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 3
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 20	No. of development athletes, 2008: 0
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 0	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 1
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €660,492	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 2 qualifiers
Performance against target: Achieved: 2 qualifiers	

- 3.19 Irish badminton qualified a male player for the Games for the first time ever, qualified a female player for only the second time, and won an Olympic match for the first time ever. The results of the two players who qualified were as follows:

<i>Player</i>	<i>WR</i>	<i>Opponent</i>	<i>WR</i>	<i>Round</i>	<i>Result</i>
Scott Evans	47	M Zweibler (GER)	24	1	L: 18-21, 21-18, 19-21
Chloe Magee	77	K Tolmoff (EST)	46	1	W: 18-21, 21-18, 21-19
Chloe Magee	77	J Jun (KOR)	11	2	L: 12-21, 14-21

- 3.20 Both players had sought qualification and prepared for the Games outside Ireland – Scott Evans in Denmark and Chloe Magee in Sweden. The investment made in badminton supported their personal coaches in these countries, and their competition programmes. Evans's qualification was largely secured by October 2007, allowing him a lengthy period in

which to prepare for the Games; Magee qualified in June 2008, reducing her preparation time accordingly.

- 3.21 Both players performed with credit, having particular regard to their ages. Scott Evans is 21 and Chloe Magee is 19.

iii. Boxing

- 3.22 This was the best performance by an Irish Olympic boxing team since 1956, when four boxing medals were won; the second best ever, and the first time in 16 years that Ireland had won a boxing medal.

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 5	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 13
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 22.2	No. of development athletes, 2008: 6
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 5	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 24
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €3,245,909	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 3 qualifiers, 1 medal zone
Performance against target: Exceeded: 5 qualifiers, 3 medals	

- 3.23 Following the 2007 World Championships in Chicago, when only one qualifying spot was secured, a recalibration of the programme was worked over the subsequent months. This led to successful navigation through the subsequent Olympic Qualifying Tournaments in spring 2008. Five qualifiers were five times the number who qualified for either Athens in 2004 or Sydney in 2000.

- 3.24 Final preparations before the Games (participation in the European Union Championships, training camp in Vladivostock to spar against the cream of Russian boxers) proved vital in supplying the boxers with confidence and a competitive edge.

- 3.25 Detailed preparation for the Olympic experience resulted in the following performances:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Boxer</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Round</b>	<b>Score</b>
Light flyweight	Paddy Barnes	J L Meza (ECU)	Preliminary	W: 14-8
	Paddy Barnes	L Maszczyk (POL)	Qtr-final	W: 11-5
	Paddy Barnes	S Zou (CHN)	Semi-final	L: 0-15
Bantamweight	John Joe Nevin	A Ourradi (ALG)	Preliminary	W: 9-4
	John Joe Nevin	B Enkhbat (MGL)	Preliminary	L: 2-9
Light welterweight	John Joe Joyce	G Kate (HUN)	Preliminary	W: 9-5
	John Joe Joyce	F Diaz (DOM)	Preliminary	L: 11-11
Middleweight	Darren Sutherland	N Kassel (ALG)	Preliminary	W: RSCH
	Darren Sutherland	A Blanco Parra (VEN)	Qtr-final	W: 11-1
	Darren Sutherland	J Degale (GBR)	Semi-final	L: 3-10
Light heavyweight	Kenny Egan	J Jackson (ISV)	Preliminary	W: 18-2
	Kenny Egan	B Mazaffer (TUR)	Preliminary	W: 10-2
	Kenny Egan	W Silva (BRA)	Qtr-final	W: 8-0
	Kenny Egan	T Jeffries (GBR)	Semi-final	W: 10-3
	Kenny Egan	X Zhang (CHN)	Final	L: 7-11

- 3.26 Three medals were won – a silver and two bronze – and each Irish boxer lost to the eventual Olympic champion.



3.27 IABA nominated a volunteer, Mr Jim Walsh, to the OCI for appointment as Team Manager in place of its professional Performance Director, Gary Keegan. Mr Walsh was accredited while Keegan and the boxing programme's psychologist and physiotherapist were not.

iv. Canoeing

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 1	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 5
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 28	No. of development athletes, 2008: 6
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 1	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 1
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €1,733,442	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 2 qualifiers, 1 finalist
Performance against target: Not achieved: 1 qualifier Achieved: 1 finalist	

3.28 The target set for the ICU was to qualify one male and one female athlete, as had been achieved in Athens. Eoin Rheinisch, in the men's slalom K1 kayak, was the only qualifier. A K2 boat finished 11<sup>th</sup> in the 2007 World Championships, narrowly failing to qualify. Rheinisch had previously competed in Athens where he had failed to reach the semi-finals, finishing 21<sup>st</sup> overall.

3.29 The ICU programme was adapted to give individual support to Rheinisch especially over the course of 2008. The result of this was that Rheinisch reached the final in Beijing, where he finished in fourth place, 3.46 seconds off a bronze medal.

v. Cycling

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 4	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 12
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 29	No. of development athletes, 2008: 6
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 2	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 3
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €1,760,252	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 2 road, 1 track team, 1 MTB
Performance against target: Not achieved: 2 road, 1 track cyclist, 1 MTB	

3.30 Irish cycling qualified the same number of athletes as it had in Athens, when two road and two mountain bike riders attended the Games. Of these, one road rider finished the course, in 13<sup>th</sup> place; while the mountain bike riders were 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> respectively.

3.31 The success of 2008 was in qualifying a track cyclist for the first time since 1996 – although this fell below the target of qualifying a full team of four riders indoors. This qualification resulted from systematic investment in a track programme, modelled on the successful Great Britain track programme.

3.32 The track rider, David O'Loughlin, finished joint 10<sup>th</sup> against a personal target of top six, which was based on his performance at the previous World Championships: his time of 4:26.102 was some four to five seconds below his expectations.

3.33 Neither the road riders nor the mountain bike rider prepared to any extent under the auspices of the Cycling Ireland programme. While the road riders enjoyed some time at a pre-Games training camp, their preparation was affected by their professional teams' schedule. In a highly challenging road race in Beijing, Nicholas Roche was 64<sup>th</sup> and Philip Deignan 81<sup>st</sup>.

3.34 The mountain bike qualifier, Robin Seymour, pursued qualification through international tour events, and made his own preparation in Canada, in conditions very different to those he encountered in Beijing. He failed to finish the course in Beijing.

vi. Equestrian

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 6	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 0
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 31.33	No. of development athletes, 2008: 0
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 3	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 0
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €2,146,635 <sup>1</sup>	Target for Beijing as at 2008: none given
Performance against target: Three-day eventing team 8 <sup>th</sup> overall (best individual 21 <sup>st</sup> ) Showjumping: rider disqualified due to positive drugs test	

<sup>1</sup> Equestrian investment as part of Horse Sport Ireland allocation from 2007

3.35 HSI sent two separate teams to Hong Kong: one in three-day eventing, and one showjumper.

3.36 In 2004, a three-day eventing team, a dressage rider and a team of four showjumpers attended the Athens Games. Their results were as follows:

- The three-day eventing team finished 8<sup>th</sup> overall, with the best individual performance 21<sup>st</sup> and the least 62<sup>nd</sup>
- The showjumping team finished 7<sup>th</sup> overall, with other riders finishing 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>
- The dressage rider finished 50<sup>th</sup>

3.37 HSI was established in mid-cycle, in succession to the Equestrian Federation of Ireland, becoming operational in January 2008. Its High Performance Coach for three-day eventing, Ginny Elliott, was appointed in March 2008, and in May five individual riders qualified the team for Beijing through their FEI rankings. A sixth-place finish was targeted. Late changes to the cross-country course, which disadvantaged the selected horses, and a longstanding weakness in dressage, saw the team again finish eighth. As individuals, all the riders finished within the top 45 – an improvement on Athens.

3.38 The Irish showjumping team failed to qualify for Beijing through either the European or World Championships. An individual berth was qualified through Jessica Kuerten's third place in the world rankings, but Kuerten did not accept this. Denis Lynch and his horse Lantinus were subsequently nominated.

3.39 Lynch and Lantinus progressed through qualification in Hong Kong to reach the final but, with Lantinus having tested positive for a prohibited substance, Lynch was removed from the start list and suspended from the competition. This incident has been subject to formal proceedings through FEI, and to an enquiry by a panel of experts convened by HSI.

v. Fencing

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 1	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 1
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 23	No. of development athletes, 2008: 1
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 0	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 0
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €109,750	Target for Beijing as at 2008: Unlikely to qualify
Performance against target: Exceeded: 1 qualifier	

3.40 Siobhan Byrne was Ireland's first fencing representative at the Games in 16 years. Narrowly failing to qualify for the Athens 2004 Games, she accepted a scholarship to Ohio State University in 2004, where she pursued qualification for Beijing under the tutelage of that institute's fencing programme and with the support of the ISC's high performance funding and ICS.

3.41 Byrne qualified for Beijing through the European zonal qualifier. She was seeded 36 of 39. In the first round she was drawn against an athlete ranked some 120 places above her in the world and she lost 8-15.

vi. Hockey

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 0	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: senior men's and women's teams
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: n/a	No. of development athletes, 2008: U18 men's and women's teams
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: n/a	No. of junior athletes, 2008: U16 boys' and girls' teams
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €2,255,000	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 1 team qualifier
Performance against target: Not achieved: no team qualifier	

3.42 Hockey was funded by the ISC in accordance with a six-year plan to qualify a team or teams for the London 2012 Olympic Games. No Irish team has qualified for the Olympic Games, although an Irish team did compete in 1908.

3.43 In 2008, Olympic qualification was determined primarily by performances in continental championships – with three places being on offer to the medallists in the 2007 European Championships. In these championships, Ireland's men finished in seventh place of eight, drawing with silver medallists Spain and England and losing to the Netherlands and France. They were relegated to the Trophy / European second division for 2009. The women's team retained their first division status by finishing sixth, losing to England, the Netherlands and Azerbaijan, while beating both Italy and Ukraine.

3.44 Both teams participated in the Olympic Qualifying Tournament, where three groups of six contested three Olympic berths. The men's team finished fourth in their OQT in New Zealand in February, winning three matches but losing to eventual qualifiers New Zealand. The women's team finished third in their event in Canada in April / May, losing to the qualifiers, Korea, and to Italy.

3.45 The men's team is now ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in the world as at September 2008 and 7<sup>th</sup> in Europe, while the women are ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the world and 6<sup>th</sup> in Europe.

vii. Rowing

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 8 <sup>1</sup>	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 19
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 28.44	No. of development athletes, 2008: 0
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 2	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 13
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €3,595,824	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 3 boats, 1 finalist

Performance against target:  
Not achieved: 2 boats, no finalist

<sup>1</sup> Plus two reserves, one of whom competed in Beijing

- 3.46 Two lightweight crews qualified for the Athens 2004 Games, a men's four and double sculls. The four finished in sixth place in their final while the double sculls failed to progress beyond the semi-final.
- 3.47 Medals in both the 2005 and 2006 World Championships for the lightweight men's four, and a first ever World Cup victory, created a legitimate expectation for Beijing. A breakdown in relations with the head coach emerged in 2006 and was not resolved until the end of 2007. Thereafter the appointment of a replacement coach was instrumental in securing the crew's qualification for Beijing.
- 3.48 Attempts to qualify two other crews for Beijing were unsuccessful. A heavyweight men's four did qualify under the tutelage of the head coach, but others (lightweight and heavyweight men's pairs, various women's combinations) failed to qualify. It may be the case that the timing of an attempt to qualify additional men's pairs distracted the core business of consolidating the two fours which had qualified. The heavyweight four was finalised only after their arrival in Beijing, where it raced as a combination for the first time.
- 3.49 Neither the lightweight nor the heavyweight four reached their respective A final: both crews qualified for the semi-finals, the lightweights by way of the repechage, but failed to progress. In the B finals, both crews finished 10<sup>th</sup> overall.
- 3.50 The performance of the heavyweight four was on a par with expectations. For the lightweight four, the circumstances leading up to the change of coach were disruptive and may well have damaged their chances of challenging for a medal.

#### viii. Sailing

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 6	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 11
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 25.83	No. of development athletes, 2008: 15
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 0	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 18
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €2,597,239	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 4 boats to qualify
Performance against target: Achieved: 4 qualifying boats	

- 3.51 Alongside athletics, boxing and swimming, sailing is one of the four sports to have produced medals for Ireland within the past 48 years. Six boats qualified for the Athens 2004 Games, of which just one finished inside the top 15.
- 3.52 Four boats qualified for the Beijing Games, and their world rankings and race-by-race performances were as follows:

Class	WR	Race										Overall place
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Finn	18	22	13	15	15	17	16	21	15	C	C	21 <sup>st</sup>
470	19	22	1	17	15	1	25	21	15	13	24	16 <sup>th</sup>
Star	48	6	12	7	10	12	13	13	8	11	12	13 <sup>th</sup>

Class	WR	Race										Overall place
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Laser	38	23	17	15	7	13	24	25	18	10	C	20 <sup>th</sup>

3.53 Ireland's performances on the water in Beijing were similar to those in Athens. In 2008, however, races were won in the Olympic regatta by Phil Lawton and Ger Owens in the 470. The most consistent performances came from the Star crew whose preparation was affected by a prolonged legal dispute over selection.

#### ix. Shooting

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 1	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 3
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 38	No. of development athletes, 2008: 0
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 1	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 0
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €520,560	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 1 finalist
Performance against target: Not achieved	

3.54 Ireland was again represented in Beijing by Derek Burnett, now in his third Games, who had finished in equal seventh place in Athens. Attempts to secure a wild card berth for a second shooter, Philip Murphy, who won a World Championship silver medal in 2007, failed.

3.55 The shooting performance was influenced adversely by the venue in Beijing: a combination of unaccustomed landscape, backdrop and targets militated against Burnett's style and, from a world ranking of 11<sup>th</sup>, he finished in 29<sup>th</sup> place, failing to reach the final.

#### x. Swimming

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 3 2 A standard, 1 B standard	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 5
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 21.67	No. of development athletes, 2008: 7
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 2	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 20
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €1,524,316	Target for Beijing as at 2008: 2 qualifiers
Performance against target: Achieved: 2 A standard qualifiers	

3.56 Up until July 2008, SI had secured just one "A" standard qualifier for Beijing, Andrew Bree in the breast-stroke. Bree trained within the swim programme of the University of Tennessee, and his qualification was secured in the US Nationals in July 2007.

3.57 In July 2008, and prior to the addition of the three "B" standard athletes to the athletics team, two "B" standard swimmers, Melanie Nocher and Aisling Cooney, were selected for Beijing. Nocher subsequently achieved the "A" standard prior to leaving for China.

3.58 Despite the lack of preparation time for the two "B" standard swimmers, all three Irish athletes matched or came close to matching their personal best times in Beijing. The performances they registered were as follows:

<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>World ranking</b>	<b>PB</b>	<b>SB</b>	<b>OG</b>	<b>Result</b>
Andrew Bree	100m breast	61	1:01.83 (2008)	1:01.83	1:01.76 (PB)	Heat 5: 2 <sup>nd</sup>
	200m breast	40	2:13.14 (2007)	2:13.20	2:10.91 (PB) 2:10.16 (PB)	Heat 4: 1 <sup>st</sup> S-f 1: 5 <sup>th</sup>
Melanie Nocher	200m back	65	2:12.71 (2008)	2:12.71	2:12.29 (PB)	Heat 2: 1 <sup>st</sup>
	200m free	-	-	-	2:04.29	Heat 2: 7 <sup>th</sup>
Aisling Cooney	100m back	78	1:02.24 (2008)	1:02.24	1:02.50	Heat 4: 7 <sup>th</sup>

3.59 These performances were ranked as follows:

<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Andrew Bree	100m breast	30 <sup>th</sup>
	200m breast	11 <sup>th</sup>
Melanie Nocher	200m back	20 <sup>th</sup>
	200m free	43 <sup>rd</sup>
Aisling Cooney	100m back	31 <sup>st</sup>

xi. Tennis

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 0	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 1
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: n/a	No. of development athletes, 2008: 2
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: n/a	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 3
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €765,816	Target for Beijing as at 2008: No qualifiers
Performance against target: Achieved: no qualifiers	

3.60 The ISC's investment in Tennis Ireland has been by way of a contribution towards an Academy programme based at Dublin City University, which is intended to prepare junior players aged 12 and above for the challenges of life on the international tours. It was never directly intended to produce Olympic qualifiers. As the programme began only three years ago, there was no legitimate expectation that qualification would be achieved for the Beijing Games.

xii. Triathlon

No. of Beijing qualifiers: 1	No. of senior funded athletes, 2007-08: 2
Average age of Beijing qualifiers: 22	No. of development athletes, 2008: 2
No. of qualifiers based in Ireland: 0	No. of junior athletes, 2008: 1
Total ISC investment, 2005-08: €82,675	Target for Beijing as at 2008: no target
Performance against target: Not applicable	

3.61 Initially, ISC support for triathlon came in the form of ICS funding and services for Gavin Noble. Although his qualification campaign progressed well through 2007, results were less good in 2008 and he failed to qualify.

3.62 Emma Davis is a graduate of the Great Britain programme, who was required to complete a qualification period before she could join the Irish team and receive ICS support in 2008. By

means of an arduous qualification campaign, Davis secured a Beijing berth in June by claiming a world ranking of 51 – just inside the required ranking of 55.

3.63 Davis finished in 37<sup>th</sup> place, as against her baseline goal of a top 30 finish.

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3.64 In summary, then, the performance of the Olympic sports against the performance estimates submitted to the ISC at the beginning of 2008 was as follows:

Sport	Estimate as at January 2008	Estimate fulfilment	Comparison with Athens 2004
Athletics	14 qualifiers, 4 finalists	Not achieved: 13 A standard qualifiers Achieved: 4 finalists / top 8	Improved: more qualifiers, more finalists, more PBs / SBs
Badminton	2 qualifiers	Achieved: 2 qualifiers	Improved: more qualifiers
Boxing	3 qualifiers, 1 medal zone	Exceeded: 5 qualifiers, 3 medals	Improved: more qualifiers, more medals
Canoeing	2 qualifiers, 1 finalist	Not achieved: 1 qualifier Achieved: 1 finalist	Fewer qualifiers, but better performance
Cycling	2 road, 1 track team, 1 MTB	Not achieved: 2 road, 1 track cyclist, 1 MTB	Same no. of qualifiers, inferior performances
Equestrian	Estimate provided in 2005 for two teams to qualify – eventing and showjumping	Not achieved: eventing team qualified, but not showjumping	Fewer qualifiers. Eventing: same team performance and better individual performances. Inferior showjumping performances
Fencing	Unlikely to qualify	Exceeded: 1 qualifier	Improved: more qualifiers
Hockey	1 team qualifier	Not achieved: no team qualifier	No difference
Rowing	3 boats, 1 finalist	Not achieved: 2 boats, no finalist	Same no. of qualifiers, inferior performances
Sailing	4 qualifiers	Achieved: 4 qualifiers	Fewer qualifiers, similar performance levels
Shooting	1 finalist	Not achieved: no finalist	Same no. of qualifiers, inferior performance
Swimming	2 qualifiers	Achieved: 2 A standard qualifiers	Improved: more qualifiers, better performances
Tennis	No qualifier	Achieved: no qualifier	Not applicable
Triathlon	No programme funding, and therefore no estimate required	Not applicable	Improved: more qualifiers
<p><i>Summary:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 sports exceeded targets, and 5 sports achieved targets</li> <li>• 6 sports failed to achieve targets, and one sport set no target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 sports improved on Athens in all respects</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 7 sports demonstrated no real progress from Athens, while one demonstrated no specific Olympic ambitions</li> </ul>			

*(c) Olympic athletes*

3.65 In total, 93 individual athletes and one team were funded by the ISC at senior (i.e., contracted, World Class or international) level through the ICS in 2007 and 2008. This means that 59 per cent of the senior athletes funded by the ISC in the build-up to the Games secured qualification.

3.66 Of the 55 athletes who competed in Beijing, 39 were at their first Olympic Games. Six had been to both the Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 Games, and 10 had been to the Athens 2004 Games. It is widely acknowledged that Olympic performance comes easier the second time around.

3.67 In terms of age profile:

- The average age was 26.95
- The age range was from 18 to 39
- There were five athletes aged 20 and below – two each in boxing and swimming, and one in badminton
- There were 17 aged between 21 and 25
- There were 23 athletes aged between 26 and 30
- There were 10 athletes aged over 30 – of whom five were in the “sedentary” sports of equestrianism and shooting, where longevity is expected, and the remainder in athletics, cycling and rowing

This profile demonstrates that, in age terms, at least half of the Beijing Olympic team should be available for selection for the London 2012 Games.

3.68 Seventy five per cent of the athletes who returned the Olympic questionnaire stated that they were full-time athletes. Others stated that they were in full-time employment (two athletes), self-employed (two athletes), in part-time education (two athletes), and otherwise not full-time (one athlete).

3.69 Forty per cent of the Olympic team (22 athletes) were based either full-time or part-time outside of Ireland. Of these, the largest group was in athletics, where ten athletes or 62.5 per cent of the team trained overseas. Other significant concentrations were in equestrianism (three of six riders), the badminton team and the cycling road team. Individuals who secured Olympic qualification from wholly outside of the Irish system were fencer Siobhan Byrne, swimmer Andrew Bree, and triathlete Emma Davis.

3.70 Regarding their preparation, aspirations and performances at the Games, the athletes who returned the Olympic questionnaire stated as follows:

- Regarding their overall programme, 18 per cent described it as excellent, 43 per cent described it as good, and 39 per cent described it as OK
- Regarding their individual training environment, 25 per cent described it as excellent, 39 per cent described it as good, 29 per cent described it as OK, and 7 per cent described it as poor
- Regarding their competition schedule, 11 per cent described it as excellent, 59 per cent described it as good, 26 per cent described it as OK, and 4 per cent described it as very poor



- Regarding their overall state of readiness when they departed for the Games, the athletes responded as follows:

	<b>Very well prepared</b>	<b>Adequately prepared</b>	<b>Not well prepared</b>
Technically	61%	39%	0%
Tactically	44%	37%	19%
Physically	68%	32%	0%
Mentally	61%	36%	4%
Lifestyle	50%	46%	4%

\* That the sum of these will not always equal 100 is a result of rounding

- As to whether they fulfilled their personal, primary performance goal for the Games, 14 per cent stated that they did, and the remaining 86 per cent stated that they did not
- Every athlete who responded stated that they believed their personal, primary performance goal for the Games to have been realistic
- When asked to rate their own performances at the Games:
  - No athletes stated that they had exceeded their expectations
  - 32 per cent stated that they had performed in accordance with their potential / expectations
  - 36 per cent stated that they had fallen slightly short of their potential / expectations
  - 32 per cent stated that they had fallen a long way short of their potential / expectations
- When asked to identify the elements which had had the strongest *positive* impact on their and their team-mates' performances in Beijing, the athletes picked out the following from a potential list:
  - Their physical condition (62 per cent)
  - The inspiration of a major Games (50 per cent)
  - Coaching strategy / input (44 per cent)
- When asked to identify the elements which had had the strongest *negative* impact on their and their team-mates' performances in Beijing, the athletes picked out the following from a potential list:
  - Injury / illness (37 per cent)
  - Deficiencies in leadership / management (22 per cent)
  - Their technical / tactical approach (22 per cent)
  - The quality of opponents (18 per cent)

#### 4. Paralympic sports

##### (a) Paralympic performance

4.1 Consideration of the performance of Irish athletes in the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games must be taken in context. The Paralympic Games has developed very rapidly since Seoul in 1988, with the addition of new sports at the expense of others (such as snooker and lawn bowls); and significant changes in the disability classes embraced by the Games, such as the removal of learning disabilities after Sydney in 2000.

4.2 Since the Paralympic Games in Seoul in 1988:

- The number of nations participating in the Games has increased by 123 per cent, while the number of participating athletes has increased by 26 per cent
- As the number of nations participating in the Paralympic Games has increased, so has the number of medalling nations – by 53 per cent over the past five cycles since 1988
- At the same time, the number of available medals (and the number of available gold medals) fell by 29 per cent between 1988 and 2004, and by a further 7 per cent between the Athens and Beijing Games

4.3 The competitive environment has therefore become much more demanding. Further detail can be provided by looking at Ireland's performances within Paralympic Games since 1988:

Paralympic Games	No. of nations	No. of athletes	No. of sports	No. of available gold medals	Medals won by Ireland	Irish sports winning medals
Seoul, 1988	61	3053	16	733	Total 42: 13 g, 11 s, 18 b	Athletics, boccia, football, lawn bowls, snooker, swimming, table tennis
Barcelona, 1992	82	3021	16	490	Total 7: 3 s, 4 b	Athletics, boccia, football, swimming, table tennis
Atlanta, 1996	103	3195	17	518	Total 10: 1 g, 3 s, 6 b	Athletics, boccia, equestrian, swimming
Sydney, 2000	122	3843	18	550	Total 9: 5 g, 3 s, 1 b	Athletics, boccia, swimming
Athens, 2004	136	3806	18	519	Total 4: 3 s, 1 b	Athletics, swimming
Beijing, 2008	146	3951	19	472	Total 5: 3 g, 1 s, 1 b	Athletics, boccia, swimming

4.4 These statistics demonstrate that, since the profile of the Paralympic Games changed following the Seoul 1988 Games:

- The increasing number of competing nations has made qualification in itself more difficult
- Ireland's competitiveness was greater before the removal of learning disabilities and the combination of classes after the Sydney Games
- The average number of medals won by Ireland over the past five cycles is seven. The average number of gold medals won over this same period is 1.8

- Athletics, boccia and swimming are consistent and reliable medal sports for Ireland, while there is also an historical track record of producing medals in equestrianism, football and table tennis

4.5 Systematic investment in Ireland’s Paralympic sports commenced in 2002. This was at least five years after competitors first accessed serious investment to support their athletes and teams, and gives an “investment history” of just six years, or 1.5 Paralympic cycles. The investment made by the ISC in Irish Paralympic performance and in PCI the past four years appears as follows:

Purpose	2005 funding	2006 funding	2007 funding	2008 funding	Total
Performance	76,000	272,524	551,300	514,947	1,414,771
PCI core funding	183,108	215,474	638,973	505,909	1,543,464
<i>Total</i>	<i>259,108</i>	<i>487,998</i>	<i>1,190,273</i>	<i>1,020,856</i>	<i>2,958,235</i>

This performance investment represents 7.2 per cent of the investment made by the ISC in its high performance focus sports over this period.

4.6 Following the Athens Review, the ISC set itself a target of producing between 12 and 15 finalists in the Beijing Paralympic Games, from which four to five medals might be produced. The actual performance exceeded the target, as follows:

- 22 qualifiers for finals, or equivalent
- Five medals – three gold, one silver, one bronze – in three sports (athletics, boccia, swimming)

4.7 The Athens Review set no specific process goals in terms of the numbers of athletes and sports which should qualify for Beijing. However, both of these showed an increase on the numbers which qualified for Athens – thus:

	No. of athletes qualified	No. of sports qualified
Sydney 2000	39	7
Athens, 2004	40	8
Beijing, 2008	45	9
<i>%age increase from Athens</i>	<i>12.5%</i>	<i>12.5%</i>

4.8 Five world records were broken by Irish athletes at the Games, and 24 personal bests were achieved.

4.9 These performances placed Ireland in 36<sup>th</sup> place in the medal table. Ireland’s position in the medal table at previous Games is as follows:

Games	Medals				Medal table position
	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	
1988	13	11	18	42	19
1992	-	3	4	7	43
1996	1	3	6	10	45
2000	5	3	1	9	31
2004	-	3	1	4	60
2008	3	1	1	5	36

(b) Paralympic sports

i. Archery

4.10 Sean Heary was a late qualifier for the men's compound archery event at the Games. Having ranked 20<sup>th</sup> of 20 archers in the ranking round, in the elimination round he beat Arenz of Germany (ranked 13<sup>th</sup>) by 108-104 to progress to the last 16. Here he beat the fourth-ranked Go of Korea by 113-112. He was then beaten in the quarter-final by the fifth-ranked Horner of Switzerland, 99-113. His progress through the tournament justified his selection.

ii. Athletics

4.11 The Irish athletics team for Beijing featured ten athletes, six male, four female. Their performances were as follows, by comparison with their best performances in qualifying prior to the Paralympic Games:

<i>Athlete</i>	<i>Class / Event</i>	<i>World ranking</i>	<i>Qualifying best</i>	<i>PG event</i>	<i>PG performance</i>	<i>Result</i>
Eoin Cleare	F32 shot	12	6.57m (2007)	F32 shot	6.11m	7 <sup>th</sup>
Garrett Culliton	F52 discus	3	17.47m (2007)	F33/34/52 discus	17.79m (PB)	5 <sup>th</sup>
Roy Guerin	T53 100m	23	15.91 (2008)	T53 100m	16.59	Heat 1: 6 <sup>th</sup>
John McCarthy	F51 discus	10	9.23m (2007)	F32/51 discus	9.48m	9 <sup>th</sup>
	F51 club	7	21.76 (2008)	F32/51 club	19.53m	11 <sup>th</sup>
Michael McKillop	T37 800m	1	2:03.68 (2007)	T37 800m	1:59.39 (WR)	1 <sup>st</sup>
Jason Smyth	T13 100m	1	10.85 (2007)	T13 100m	10.81 (WR) 10.62 (WR)	Heat 2: 1 <sup>st</sup> Final: 1 <sup>st</sup>
	T13 200m	1	21.89 (2007)	T13 200m	21.81 (WR) 21.43 (WR)	Heat 1: 1 <sup>st</sup> Final: 1 <sup>st</sup>
Orla Barry	F57 discus	2	27.98m (2008)	F57/58 discus	27.08	5 <sup>th</sup>
Lisa Callaghan	F37 javelin	5	24.39 (2007)	F35-38 javelin	22.87m	9 <sup>th</sup>
Patrice Dockery	T53 100m	9	18.15 (2008)	T53 100m	18.90	Heat 2: 4 <sup>th</sup>
	T53 200m	11	33.21 (2007)	T53 200m	35.38	Heat 2: 6 <sup>th</sup>
	T53 400m	12	1:03.78 (2008)	T53 400m	1:08.95	Heat 2: 5 <sup>th</sup>
Catherine Wayland	F51 discus	1	5.89m (2008)	F32-34/51-53 discus	6.16m (SB)	6 <sup>th</sup>

4.12 These performances resulted in:

- Three gold medals
- Two finals, and six other top 8 finishes
- Five world records
- Seven personal bests

- One additional season's best

4.13 The following is a comparison between the Beijing performances and those of Irish athletes at the 2006 World Championships in Assen, Netherlands, where 14 athletes competed:

<i><b>Athlete</b></i>	<i><b>Class / Event</b></i>	<i><b>PG performance</b></i>	<i><b>WC event</b></i>	<i><b>WC performance</b></i>	<i><b>Result</b></i>
Eoin Cleare	F32 shot	6.11m	F32 shot	6.25m (PB)	6 <sup>th</sup>
Garrett Culliton	F52 discus	17.79m (PB)	F33/34/52 discus	16.18m	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Trevor Dunne	F37 discus	n/a	F37 discus	37.38m	9 <sup>th</sup>
Roy Guerin	T53 100m	16.59	T53 100m	16.33 (PB)	8 <sup>th</sup>
	T53 200m	n/a	T53 200m	29.36	15 <sup>th</sup>
Garrett Jameson	F32 club	n/a	F32/51 club	24.39m	5 <sup>th</sup>
James McCarthy	F57 shot	n/a	F57 shot	8.99m	9 <sup>th</sup>
John McCarthy	F51 discus	9.48m	F32/51 discus	8.48m	7 <sup>th</sup>
	F51 club	19.53m	F32/51 club	21.78 (PB)	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Michael McKillop	T37 800m	1:59.39 (WR)	T37 800m	2:02.13 (WR)	1 <sup>st</sup>
	T37 1500m	n/a	T37 1500m	4:24.16 (PB)	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Derek Malone	T38 400m	n/a	T38 400m	55.21 (PB)	9 <sup>th</sup>
Jason Smyth	T13 100m	10.62 (WR)	T13 100m	10.86 (WR)	1 <sup>st</sup>
	T13 200m	21.43 (WR)	T13 200m	21.83 (WR)	1 <sup>st</sup>
Orla Barry	F57 discus	27.08 (PB)	F57/58 discus	25.24m (PB)	4 <sup>th</sup>
Lisa Callaghan	F37 javelin	22.87m	F35-38 javelin	22.75m	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Patrice Dockery	T53 100m	18.90	T53 100m	19.16	9 <sup>th</sup>
	T53 200m	35.38	T53 200m	34.72	13 <sup>th</sup>
	T53 800m	n/a	T53 800m	2:18.81	16 <sup>th</sup>
	T53 1500m	n/a	T53 1500m	4:26.61	13 <sup>th</sup>
Rosemary Tallon	F53 discus	n/a	F32-34/51-53 discus	11.03m	6 <sup>th</sup>
	F53 javelin	n/a	F32-34 51-53 javelin	7.86m	6 <sup>th</sup>

4.14 These performances resulted in:

- Seven medals – three gold, two silver, two bronze
- 14 top 8 finishes
- Three world records
- Nine other personal bests

4.15 In comparing the two sets of performances, allowances must be made for the significant differences in performance environment between the Paralympic Games and the sport-specific championship, and credit must be given to the exceptional performances of Smyth and McKillop within the Games. Notwithstanding this, Irish athletes performed better in outcome terms in Assen than they did in Beijing, and the principal point of contrast between the two events lies in the performances of Ireland's field athletes: these produced medal-winning form in Assen (where the events were single-class) which they did not in Beijing (where the events were for combined classes).

4.16 These performances compare with the sport's performance in Athens in 2004, when 11 athletes qualified, three won medals, eight personal bests were recorded and two other season's bests.

iii. Boccia

4.17 Ireland qualified four boccia players for the Beijing Games, two BC1s and two BC2s. This compared with the Athens standard when six players qualified – a BC1/BC2 team of four, and two BC3 players. In Athens, two BC2 players reached the quarter-final of the individual competition, but no other player or combination progressed beyond the group stage.

4.18 The Beijing results for the Irish team were as follows:

<b>Player</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Round</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Result</b>
Gabriel Shelly	BC1	Group stage	B Richardson (CAN)	W 4-2
		Group stage	M Ibarbure (ARG)	W 3-2
		Group stage	T Kitani (JPN)	W 5-2
		Group stage	J S Park (KOR)	L 3-5
		Quarter-final	J Vaquerizo (ESP)	W 8-2
		Semi-final	A Marques (POR)	L 1-4
		Bronze medal	Y Wang (CHN)	W 6-2
Padraic Moran	BC1	Group stage	D Smith (GBR)	W 9-0
		Group stage	A Marques (POR)	L 2-4
		Group stage	L Sanders (NZL)	W 7-3
		Group stage	R Aandelan (NOR)	W 4-2
		Quarter-final	Y Wang (CHN)	L 5-6
Tom Leahy	BC2	Group stage	R Kainuma (JPN)	L 2-4
		Group stage	D Bentley (GBR)	L 1-5
		Group stage	F Ferreira (POR)	W 5-2
Roberta Connolly	BC2	Group stage	F Cao (CHN)	L 0-5
		Group stage	R Leglice (ARG)	W 4-3
		Group stage	P Cortez (ARG)	L 1-4
Ireland	BC1/2	Group stage	Finland	W 7-3
		Group stage	Spain	L 1-12
		Quarter-final	China	L 2-12

4.19 The return of one bronze medal and two other quarter-final appearances was a considerable improvement on the Athens showing. Shelly performed to his world ranking of 4; Moran demonstrated a huge progression in his first Games from a 2007 world ranking of 25, reaching the quarter-final and losing on a tie-break; Leahy (16) and Connolly (31) performed within their expectations; and a quarter-final place for the sixth-ranked BC1/2 team was again in accordance with known form.

iv. Cycling

4.20 By comparison with the Athens Games, when one visually impaired cyclist qualified, Ireland fielded four athletes in the Beijing Games. Their performances were as follows:

<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Result</b>
Michael Delaney / David Peelo	B & VI (1-3)	Individual pursuit	4:49.911	13 <sup>th</sup> of 14
		1km time trial	1:08.593 (NR)	10 <sup>th</sup> of 16
		Sprint	11.460 (NR)	5 <sup>th</sup> of 8
		Road time trial	36:26.54	18 <sup>th</sup> of 20
		Road race	2:29:32	16 <sup>th</sup> of 21
Cathal Miller	LC1	Individual pursuit	4:53.969 (NR)	5 <sup>th</sup> of 15
		1km time trial	1:11.824 (PB)	7 <sup>th</sup> of 14
		Road time trial	36:33.95	9 <sup>th</sup> of 16
		Road race	DNF	-
Enda Smyth	CP4	Individual pursuit	3:55.919 (NR)	7 <sup>th</sup> of 9
		1km time trial	1:16.074	7 <sup>th</sup> of 8
		Road time trial	41:24.28	9 <sup>th</sup> of 9
		Road race	DNF	-
Catherine Walsh / Joanna Hickey	B & VI (1-3)	Individual pursuit	3:50.515 (NR)	5 <sup>th</sup> of 9
		1km time trial	1:16.208 (NR)	7 <sup>th</sup> of 8
		Road time trial	40:09.67	7 <sup>th</sup> of 10
		Road race	2:03:14	9 <sup>th</sup> of 10

4.21 Ireland's cyclists can be proud of returning six national records and one other personal best.

#### v. Equestrian

4.22 As in Athens in 2004, Ireland qualified one dressage rider for the Beijing Games. Eilish Byrne finished 11<sup>th</sup> in the championship test and 8<sup>th</sup> in the freestyle test, in contrast to Athens, where the comparable results were 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. From a 2007 world ranking of 27<sup>th</sup>, this performance was progressive.

4.23 It had been Ireland's objective to qualify an equestrian team for the Games, and this did not happen. The team pursued only one of four opportunities to qualify, leaving themselves no margin for error.

#### vi. Football

4.24 As in Athens, Ireland qualified a seven-a-side football team for the Games having finished 8<sup>th</sup> at the 2007 World Championships in Brazil. The 2004 team carried a world ranking of fifth, but finished seventh in the Paralympic Games, losing all their group matches before beating the USA in the play-off match.

4.25 The 2008 squad of 12 included seven of the 2004 vintage, and produced the following results:

<b>Round</b>	<b>Opponent</b>	<b>Score</b>
Pool B	Iran	L 2-4
Pool B	Ukraine	L 0-7
Pool B	Great Britain	D 1-1
Classification	China	W 4-1
5 <sup>th</sup> / 6 <sup>th</sup> place	Netherlands	L 2-4

4.26 In finishing sixth, Ireland improved on both Athens or in the 2007 World Championships. The campaign was badly disrupted by the reclassification of Derek Malone, a 2004 medallist on the track, who was deemed to be insufficiently disabled to play football in 2008. At the time of writing, this issue remains unresolved. It prevented Malone from playing a full part in the Games, and denied Ireland an important team member.

vii. Sailing

4.27 As in 2004, Ireland qualified boats for Beijing in two Paralympic classes, the Sonar and the SKUD18. By comparison with their predecessors' placings of ninth (Sonar) and 15<sup>th</sup> (2.4mR), the Beijing crews performed as follows:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Race</b>											<b>Overall place</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	
Sonar	7	10	12	12	10	5	3	4	10	11	11	9 <sup>th</sup> of 14
SKUD18	9	10	9	10	10	9	10	9	10	9	-	10 <sup>th</sup> of 11

4.28 Irish sailors demonstrated no real improvement on their Athens performance levels. The 2007 IFDS World Championships in the USA saw two Sonar crews entered, finishing 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> in a field of 27, while the one Irish SKUD18 crew finished 15<sup>th</sup> of 18. Due to subsequent illness, none of these crews featured the combinations which subsequently sailed in Beijing. In the IFDS 2-person World Championship in 2008, what was to be the Paralympic SKUD18 boat secured qualification by finishing fifth in a field of eight.

viii. Swimming

4.29 The Irish swim team in Beijing numbered six athletes, by comparison with the three who competed four years earlier in Athens. Of those three, one achieved bronze medal success and, while the other two failed to reach a final, one did achieve a personal best.

4.30 Of the three Athens swimmers, one remained within the sport in 2008 – the three-time Paralympic medallist, David Malone. The remainder of the Beijing team was young (three athletes aged 18 and under, and the remainder 20 and 22), and its performances were as follows:

<b>Athlete</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>PG</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>World ranking at Sept 2008</b>
Stephen Campbell	S11 100m fly	1:16.28	Heat 1: 5 <sup>th</sup>	12
	S11 100m free	1:08.08	Heat 3: 6 <sup>th</sup>	20
	S11 400m free	5:28.43 (NR)	Heat 2: 6 <sup>th</sup>	13
Hannah Clarke	S9 100m fly	1:18.50	Heat 1: 6 <sup>th</sup>	19
	SB5 100m breast	2:06.33 (PB)	Heat 1: 5 <sup>th</sup>	10
Jonathan Cummings	S6 100m back	1:29.92 1:29.26 (NR)	Heat 2: 5 <sup>th</sup> Final: 8 <sup>th</sup>	15
	S6 400m free	5:50.54 (PB)	Heat 1: 5 <sup>th</sup>	13
Ellen Keane	SB8 100m breast	1:27.61 (PB) 1:29.72	Heat 2: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Final: 6 <sup>th</sup>	6
	SM9 200m IM	2:47.35 (NR)	Heat 2: 6 <sup>th</sup>	11



<i><b>Athlete</b></i>	<i><b>Event</b></i>	<i><b>PG</b></i>	<i><b>Result</b></i>	<i><b>World ranking at Sept 2008</b></i>
Darragh McDonald	S6 400m free	5:13.68 (NR) 5:09.75 (NR)	Heat 1: 1 <sup>st</sup> Final: 2 <sup>nd</sup>	2
David Malone	S8 100m back	1:16.80	Heat 2: 5 <sup>th</sup>	13

4.31 These performances resulted in:

- One medal – a silver for the teenager Darragh McDonald
- Three finalists in total
- Five national records
- Three other personal bests

ix. Table tennis

4.32 Two table tennis players represented Ireland in Beijing, compared with none in Athens. In the TT2 class, Eimear Breathnach held a world ranking of 10<sup>th</sup> in July prior to the Games, while her team-mate Kathleen Reynolds was world-ranked 18<sup>th</sup> in the TT3 class.

4.33 The performances of the two players in Beijing were as follows:

<i><b>Player</b></i>	<i><b>Class</b></i>	<i><b>Round</b></i>	<i><b>Opponent</b></i>	<i><b>Opponent WR</b></i>	<i><b>Result</b></i>
Eimear Breathnach	F1-2 singles	Group stage	N Pushpasheva (RUS)	4	L 1-3
		Group stage	P Pezzutto (ITA)	6	L 1-3
Kathleen Reynolds	F3 singles	Group stage	Q Li (CHN)	3	L 1-3
		Group stage	H J Choi (KOR)	7	L 1-3
		Group stage	Y Silva (CUB)	9	L 2-3
Ireland	F1-3 team	Quarter-final	France	-	L 1-3

4.34 While neither player won a match, each defeat was to a player with a higher world ranking.

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4.35 In summary, the performance of the Paralympic sports, by comparison with their achievement in Athens four years previously, was as follows:

<b>Sport</b>	<b>Performance in Athens 2004</b>	<b>Performance in Beijing 2008</b>	<b>Comparison with Athens 2004</b>
Archery	Did not qualify	One qualifier: reached quarter-final	Improved: more qualifiers, better performance
Athletics	11 qualifiers, 3 medals, 1 world record, 8 PBs, 2 other SBs	10 qualifiers, 3 medals (all gold), 5 world records, 7 PBs, 1 other PB	Improved (marginally): fewer qualifiers, same no. of medals, more world records, fewer PBs / SBs
Boccia	6 qualifiers, 2 quarter-finals	4 qualifiers, 1 medal, 1 other quarter-final	Improved: fewer qualifiers, more medals, same no. of quarter-finals
Cycling	1 qualifier, 2 PBs	4 qualifiers, 6 national records, 1 other PB	Improved: more qualifiers, better performances

Sport	Performance in Athens 2004	Performance in Beijing 2008	Comparison with Athens 2004
Equestrian	1 qualifier, finished 17 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup>	1 qualifier, finished 11 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup>	Improved (marginally): same no. of qualifiers, better performance
Football	1 team qualifier, finished 7 <sup>th</sup>	1 team qualifier, finished 6 <sup>th</sup>	Improved (marginally)
Sailing	2 boats qualified, finished 9 <sup>th</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup>	2 boats qualified, finished 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup>	Improved (marginally): same no. of qualifiers, better performances
Swimming	3 qualifiers, 1 medal, 1 PB	6 qualifiers, 1 medal, 5 national records, 3 other PBs	Improved: more qualifiers, better performances
Table Tennis	Did not qualify	2 qualifiers, no quarter-finals	Improved: more qualifiers
<p><i>Summary:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All 9 sports exceeded their performance levels from 2004</li> <li>• 2 sports (cycling, swimming) improved significantly from Athens</li> <li>• 2 sports (athletics, boccia) maintained and marginally enhanced their success in Athens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 sports (equestrianism, football, sailing) maintained and marginally enhanced an unsuccessful position from Athens</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2 sports qualified for Beijing having not done so for Athens</li> </ul>			

*(c) Paralympic athletes*

4.36 Forty individual athletes and one team were funded by the ISC at senior (i.e., contracted, World Class or international) level through the ICS in 2007 and 2008. Seven of these individual athletes did not qualify for Beijing: therefore 86 per cent of the senior athletes funded by the ISC in the build-up to the Games secured qualification.

4.37 Of the 45 athletes who competed in Beijing, 22 were first-time Paralympians. Of the remainder:

- One athlete had been to eight Games, stretching back to 1976
- One athlete had been to six Games
- One athlete had been to five Games
- One athlete had been to four Games
- Four athletes had been to three Games, one of whom had been involved as long ago as 1972
- Five athletes had been to two Games
- Ten athletes had been to a single previous Games, of whom seven had been in Athens

This was, then, a group with a good mix of youth and experience, one which exemplifies the longevity of Paralympic performance in a number of sports.

4.38 In terms of age profile:

- The average age was 31.11
- The age range was from 13 to 57
- There were ten athletes aged 20 and below – two in athletics (including one of the two medal-winners), four in swimming (including the medal-winner) and four in football
- There were five aged between 21 and 25
- There were five athletes aged between 26 and 30

- There were eight athletes aged between 30 and 35, and a further nine aged between 36 and 40
- Four of the team were aged between 41 and 50, and three aged over 50. These were all in sports where longevity is expected, archery, boccia, equestrianism, sailing and table tennis

This profile demonstrates that, in age terms, at least half of the Beijing Paralympic team should be available for selection for the London 2012 Games.

4.39 In terms of their performances at the Paralympic Games, through the medium of the athlete questionnaire, the athletes expressed the following opinions:

- 41.8 per cent of respondents believed they had performed very well at the Paralympic Games, and a further 34.3 per cent believed they had performed well
- 57.8 per cent of respondents believed they had met their pre-Games expectations of performances:
  - 15.6 per cent believed they had exceeded those expectations, while 26.7 per cent believed they had fallen short
- Collectively, the athletes rated themselves as either very good or good in each of the following areas:
  - 91.9 per cent in the quality of their self-management
  - 94.5 per cent in their personal preparation for performance
  - 91.8 per cent in their interaction with other team members
  - 83.7 per cent in their communications with staff
- Collectively, the athletes rated their team-mates as either very good or good in each of the following areas:
  - 75.7 per cent in the quality of their self-management
  - 78.3 per cent in their personal preparation for performance
  - 86.4 per cent in their interaction with other team members
  - 78.4 per cent in their communications with staff
- 63.1 per cent of respondents described the Irish Paralympic team as very unified, and a further 21.5 per cent rated it as somewhat unified

## 5. Comparator nations

5.1 The Athens Review rated Ireland's performances against a range of comparable nations, from New Zealand and Denmark to Costa Rica and Puerto Rico, using the relative size of population, gross national income and GNI per capita as the basis of the comparison.

5.2 This review focuses on Denmark and New Zealand as comparators for Ireland, on the basis of their geographical and cultural similarities to Ireland. Both nations have invested in high performance for longer than Ireland: Denmark, for one, has had a programme in place since 1985. The Athens Review noted that these nations also invested over three times more heavily than Ireland in the years leading up to 2004.

5.3 The performances of Denmark and New Zealand in Beijing were as follows:

	Olympic				Paralympic			
	Team size	No. of sports qualified	Medals	No. of medal sports	Team size	No. of sports qualified	Medals	No. of medal sports
Denmark	54	8	7 (2g, 2s, 3b)	6	39	10	9 (3g, 2s, 4b)	5
New Zealand	148*	11	9 (3g, 1s, 5b)	5	30	7	12 (5g, 3s, 4b)	4

\* NB that this figure includes 91 athletes in five teams across basketball, hockey & soccer

5.4 The comparison with the Athens 2004 Games is as follows:

	Olympic				Paralympic			
	Team size	No. of sports qualified	Medals	No. of medal sports	Team size	No. of sports qualified	Medals	No. of medal sports
Denmark 2004	90	16	8 (2g, 6b)	6	33	9	15 (5g, 3s, 7b)	6
Denmark 2008	54	8	7 (2g, 2s, 3b)	6	39	10	9 (3g, 2s, 4b)	5
New Zealand 2004	169	18	5 (3g, 2s)	4	37	9	10 (6g, 1s, 3b)	6
New Zealand 2008	148	11	9 (3g, 1s, 5b)	5	30	7	12 (5g, 3s, 4b)	4

5.5 The positions achieved in the medal table by Denmark and New Zealand in Beijing were as follows, compared with previous Games:

Denmark:

<b>Games</b>	<b>Olympic</b>					<b>Paralympic</b>				
	<b>G</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Posn</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Posn</b>
1988	2	1	1	4	23	23	19	22	64	11
1992	1	1	4	6	30	12	22	12	46	11
1996	4	1	1	6	19=	7	17	17	41	24
2000	2	3	1	6	30	8	8	14	30	19
2004	2	-	6	8	37	5	3	7	15	29
2008	2	2	3	7	30	3	2	4	9	35

New Zealand:

<b>Games</b>	<b>Olympic</b>					<b>Paralympic</b>				
	<b>G</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Posn</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Posn</b>
1988	3	2	8	13	18	2	4	11	17	30
1992	1	4	5	10	28	5	1	-	6	23
1996	3	2	1	6	26	9	6	4	19	19
2000	1	-	3	4	45	6	8	4	18	25
2004	3	2	-	5	24	6	1	3	10	26
2008	3	1	5	9	26	5	3	4	12	24=

5.6 The 2008 statistics show that:

- In Olympic terms:
  - Both Denmark and New Zealand qualified participants in fewer sports than did Ireland
  - Both Denmark and New Zealand qualified participants in far fewer sports than they had done four years earlier in 2004
  - When the team sports are removed from New Zealand's roster, the number of individual athletes qualified by the three nations was broadly the same (54 Ireland, 54 Denmark, 57 New Zealand)
  - Both Denmark (7) and New Zealand (9) achieved greater medal success than did Ireland (3):
    - None of the team sports contested by New Zealand produced a medal for them
  - Both Denmark (6) and New Zealand (5) achieved medal success from a greater number of sports than did Ireland (1):
    - Both nations show consistent and repeatable success across sports. Denmark have won medals in rowing and sailing at each of the past three Olympic Games, while New Zealand have won medals in rowing in each of the past three Games
  - Both Denmark and New Zealand achieved multiple gold medal success, which differentiated their performances and their positions in the medal table from those of Ireland (one silver, two bronze):
    - New Zealand's gold medal success was in three sports, athletics, rowing and sailing, while Denmark's was in two sports, rowing and sailing
  - It is possible to win more medals than previously and fall down the medal table – and to win fewer medals than previously and rise up the medal table – depending upon the number of gold medals won

- In Paralympic terms:
  - While Denmark qualified participants in more sports than did Ireland, New Zealand qualified participants in fewer sports
  - Both Denmark and New Zealand qualified fewer athletes than did Ireland, while all three nations were represented in team sports:
    - Ireland in seven-a-side football (squad of 12)
    - Denmark in goalball (two squads of six)
    - New Zealand in wheelchair rugby (squad of eight)
  - Both Denmark (9) and New Zealand (12) achieved greater medal success than did Ireland (5):
    - It should be noted that Denmark's medals were contributed by one team (women's goalball) and five athletes, three of whom were multimedallists
    - New Zealand's 12 medals came from just seven athletes, two of whom were multimedallists, winning seven medals between them
    - Compare this with Ireland medals, which came from four athletes, one of whom was a multimedallist
  - Both Denmark (5) and New Zealand (4) achieved medal success from a greater number of sports than did Ireland (3):
    - Denmark have won medals in athletics, goalball and swimming at each of the past three Paralympic Games. New Zealand have won medals in athletics, cycling and swimming at each of the past three Games
  - New Zealand achieved the greatest gold medal success, with five, while both Denmark and Ireland won three golds each:
    - New Zealand's five golds came from just three athletes, one of whom won three golds in the pool
    - Denmark's golds came from three different athletes, while Ireland's came from just two

#### 5.7 This analysis has the following implications in Olympic terms:

- Success is not appropriately measured in the number of sports or athletes which qualify for the Games. Rather, it is the quality of input and output from those sports and athletes who are supported which is significant. Note that, while both Denmark and New Zealand reduced the size of their teams considerably between Athens and Beijing, their output did not fall: in New Zealand's case, it was increased
- Success is appropriately measured in the number of sports which win medals. This is a sign of a number of high-quality programmes. Both Denmark and New Zealand can identify one or more programmes through which consistent and repeatable medal success is attained
- Focus sports should be those which offer natural advantages and multimedal opportunities. The sports where Denmark (rowing, sailing) and New Zealand (rowing) consistently win medals are sports which suit their geography and are spread over numerous classes, i.e., where investment has a potentially high reward
- Investment in team sports is high risk. The level of investment required is high, given the numbers of athletes involved – but the potential return is low, i.e., just one medal per team
- Gold medal success is the most valuable currency. Almost 35 per cent of the medals won by Denmark and New Zealand in the past two Games have been gold. This is the difference

between a comparatively lowly position in the Olympic medal table, and one which is more advanced

5.8 In Paralympic terms:

- Again, success is not appropriately measured in the number of sports or athletes which qualify for the Games. Rather, it is the quality of input and output from those sports and athletes who are supported which is significant
- Again, success is appropriately measured in the number of sports which win medals, from programmes which produce consistent and repeatable outcomes
- Focus sports should be those which offer multimedal opportunities. The seven sports where New Zealand entered athletes in Beijing offered a total of 383 potential gold medals, or 81 per cent of the total available in all events at the Games. The sports where New Zealand has won medals in each of the last three Games – athletics, cycling and swimming – between them accounted for 343 of the available gold medals in Beijing, or 73 per cent
- Single athletes can contribute enormously to team outcomes if their performances are delivered across multiple events. New Zealand’s competitive advantage in Beijing came from having a small team featuring two athletes who won seven medals between them
- Again, gold medal success is the most valuable currency. Half of New Zealand’s medals in the past two Games, and a third of Denmark’s, have been gold. This is the difference between a comparatively lowly position in the Olympic medal table, and one which is more advanced

5.9 New Zealand’s high performance strategy from 2006-12, and the points of contrast between that nation’s activities and the state of Ireland’s development, was subject to an analysis on 2007, the results of which are set out in Appendix 4.

5.10 It is worth emphasising the scale of the investment which New Zealand’s equivalent of ISC, SPARC, has made into Olympic and Paralympic sports over the four years from 2004-05 to 2007-08 – a total of NZ\$65 million, or €28.6 million. This is part of a total funding package for high performance sport which also includes non-Olympic team sports such as Rugby Union, Rugby League and netball, and equals NZ\$130,453,000 or €57.4 million.

5.11 Over the period between 2004-05 and 2007-08, SPARC invested the following funds in the New Zealand Olympic Committee and Paralympics New Zealand:

	<b>2004-05</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>Total NZ\$</b>	<b>Total €</b>
NZOC	300,000	500,000	250,000	790,000	1,840,000	809,600
PNZ	704,100	1,593,720	1,324,524	1,363,338	4,985,682	2,193,700

## 6. Key findings

### (a) Performance levels

6.1 The Beijing Games, both Olympic and Paralympic, demonstrated an improvement on Ireland's performances in 2004. In some sports, the improvement was significant.

6.2 All of the outcome targets set by the Athens Review were fulfilled.

6.3 This progress is attributable to the effects of investment by the ISC. Some sports which received significant amounts of programme funding from the ISC – athletics, boxing, swimming, the PCI – provided a tangible return on that investment, as did some smaller sports whose individual athletes were able to fashion effective “bubble” support for their training and competition programmes.

6.4 Some sports which were in receipt of substantial sums offered uneven returns:

- The investment in rowing initially realised quite considerable success in World Championships and World Cups, but was ultimately disappointing in Beijing
- Sailing delivered little of note over the course of the cycle
- The efficacy of programmes commenced in badminton, track cycling and hockey will not be seen for a further four years

6.5 The strongest output of the Beijing cycle in Olympic terms has been the demonstration of “what good looks like” within the boxing programme. That this programme has delivered not only success within the Olympic sphere, but has subsequently followed up with more medals at World Junior and European Championships, suggests that its strengths are systemic and structural, consistent and repeatable. This is not to say that boxing's model could or should be applied in all sports; rather that it contains a number of key elements, some of which might profitably be replicated by others, including *inter alia*:

- Strong leadership, setting the vision for the programme
- Clear targets, and a plan for the delivery of them
- Flexibility and dynamism of approach, responsive to circumstances
- Structured programme delivered within a centralised environment
- An athlete-centred approach, geared towards meeting individual needs
- A coach-led approach, empowering the coaches to direct the athletes
- Multidisciplinary support services, contracted to the programme and fully integrated within the coaching regime
- In particular, effective sports psychology which anticipated and addressed the pressure points for the athletes
- Robust training and competition regime, which hardened the athletes to adversity
- A properly periodised training plan, which sought deliberately to peak at the Olympic Games

6.6 Those sports and athletes which were stable in their build-up to the Games, and which were able to treat and manage the event as a sport-specific championship, fared well in Beijing. The successes of canoeist Eoin Rheinisch and swimmer Andrew Bree, in particular, appear to have been built around:

- Early qualification, resulting in a prolonged and well-defined preparation period



- A coach-led, carefully periodised preparation programme, which focused on Beijing and deliberately engineered a peak at the Games, at the expense of any other competitive outputs
  - Preparation within a training group which provided internal competition and motivation
  - The integration of multidisciplinary support services within the coaching regime, including (in Eoin Rheinisch's case at least) sports psychology
  - Clear focus on the job in hand at Games time, to the elimination of all external distraction
- 6.7 By contrast, those sports and athletes who did not fulfil their potential at the Games had some or all of the following common denominators:
- External disruption within their preparation programme, e.g., through injury or illness
  - Internal disruption within the preparation programme, e.g., through a change of coach, technique, approach or combination
  - Where there was simmering discontent between athletes and coaches / managers, this was exacerbated by the pressure of the Games
  - Late qualification, which prevented the formulation and delivery of a periodised programme building to a deliberate peak for the Games
  - A lengthy qualification programme, which resulted in burnout:
    - A clear example can be found in triathlon
  - An absence of agreed goals for the Games – or qualification for the Games being the goal in itself
  - An absence of effective, multidisciplinary and integrated support services, including and especially sports psychology
- 6.8 There seems to have been no corollary between an athlete's training base – whether in Ireland or overseas – and their performance level. Some athletes based outside of Ireland failed to fulfil their potential, while some based in Ireland excelled – and vice versa.
- 6.9 By contrast with the Athens Games, where numbers of athletes appeared physically unprepared for the challenges of the Olympic environment, the Beijing Games seem to have been marked more by a psychological deficit. There are several athletes whose participation and performances appear to have suffered from one of the following:
- Failure to set a performance goal beyond that of qualification for the Games
  - Failure to come to terms with competing at an event of the magnitude of the Games,
  - Fear of the consequences of performing below optimal level on such a big stage
- An attempt was made to overcome these by use of the OCI psychologist within the Olympic village during the Games. The lateness of this intervention is likely to have minimised its impact.
- 6.10 Notwithstanding the point made in 6.9 above, injury and illness did have some impact on performances in Beijing, especially (but not exclusively) within the athletics team. Some athletes incurred injury / illness during the Games itself; others reported injury on arrival in Beijing, prior to their event.
- 6.11 The design of competition venues, revealed late to competitors, had a material and detrimental effect on Irish performances in three-day eventing and shooting; while the heat and humidity undoubtedly affected those involved in endurance events, especially the cycling road racers and triathlete.

*(b) The Olympic sports*

- 6.12 As set out in Section 3, the ISC has funded 11 Olympic programmes over the past four years. This does not include the “bubble” support which has been provided to a single fencer, or the investment which has gone into tennis. With the exception of those whose funding has been significant (and by this we mean in excess of €500,000 per annum), the complaint emanating from sports has been that they have received too little to do anything effectively. That is to say, they have spread the investment as widely and thinly as possible in order to institute programmes at senior, development and junior levels, but have ended up not being able to deliver any of these programmes optimally.
- 6.13 Sports believed that they were some 30-50 per cent short of optimal performance funding. It is necessary to decide whether the amount of funding within the Irish system remains a problem, whether the real problem lies in the way that funding is used, or if it is a combination of both.
- 6.14 The way that the funding is expended by sports certainly admits differentiation. There have been one or two sports – and rowing would be an example – whose choice has been to utilise the investment received most heavily at senior level. The rationale for this is that medals at senior level will lead to continued, perhaps even increased, investment. While this is a valid and defensible decision, the long-term consequences of this approach are apparent. Without junior and development programmes functioning well beneath senior level, any success may be short-lived and unrepeatable.
- 6.15 Sports, such as swimming and hockey, have taken the strategic decision to invest at the junior level, aiming at long-term success in 2012 and beyond. These sports have sought to establish systems and structures which are in many ways analogous to those which have generated positive results in boxing, in the hope that the shortage of immediate outputs will not militate against them when the ISC make their annual funding decisions, and in the belief that this template is the proper way to progress their sports. The problem for these sports is that they run the risk of being victims of their own success: swimming in particular found that, as their junior programmes produced swimmers good enough to progress to senior level, there was insufficient funding at that senior level to provide those graduates with appropriate support.
- 6.16 Other sports are dogged by infrastructural issues in their attempts to build systems and structures for the development of athletes within Ireland. Respondents to the athlete questionnaire highlighted this when 35 per cent stated that their NGB’s provision of training facilities was poor, and further 35 per cent rated it as merely OK. This return reflects the facts that:
- Athletics lacks an indoor facility / high performance centre of any calibre – one reason why a majority of its elite performers choose to pursue their development overseas
  - Track cycling lacks a velodrome, and must seek to pursue its programme from facilities in other countries
  - Canoeing lacks whitewater courses within Ireland, which means that its elite slalom athletes must conduct their preparation in Europe and beyond
  - Equestrianism must live with the fact that its riders are dependent upon owners who may purchase and keep their horses overseas, and for whom the commercial considerations of the international circuit are paramount

- 6.17 The above issues have led some sports – badminton, cycling, athletics to a degree – to formulate a pragmatic, “offshore” programme, which provides structured support to athletes based and training overseas. This is not without risk, in that:
- It depends upon the co-operation of foreign coaches, service providers, clubs and facility operators for its continued viability
  - Unless adroitly managed, it offers the potential to add little or nothing to Ireland’s domestic system within these sports
- 6.18 There have continued to be some notable pressure points within governing bodies of sport, related to their governance and management of performance programmes. Respondents to the athlete questionnaire made frequent reference to the adverse influence of “amateurs” within what they see as and believe should be a professional environment. A very public row emerged within boxing over the appointment of a non-professional Team Manager for Beijing in place of the full-time Performance Director (see 3.27 above). There continues to be a culture within some NGBs which views high performance as the precinct of informed volunteers, and who are not yet convinced that professional advice and management is where the future lies.
- 6.19 Within the Olympic athlete questionnaire, 21 per cent of respondents described their NGB as either poor or very poor, and a further 29 per cent described it as OK.
- 6.20 The questionnaire further highlighted concerns regarding the personnel employed / deployed by some sports to lead, manage, coach and administer their performance programmes:
- Deficiencies in leadership and management were rated as the second strongest negative impact on performances within the Olympic team (see 3.70 above)
  - 44 per cent of respondents rated their NGB’s Performance Director as either ineffective or very ineffective
  - 36 per cent rated their governing body coaches as either ineffective or very ineffective
  - 31 per cent rated their Team Manager at the Olympic Games as either poor or very poor in all respects
- 6.21 Analysis of the returns demonstrates that these concerns were situated principally within two sports, athletics and rowing. While the issues within the rowing programme are well-rehearsed (see 3.47-50 above), the picture painted within athletics is of an athlete diaspora dissatisfied by the NGB’s attempts to co-ordinate and support it between major championships (see 3.18 above).
- 6.22 In summary, then:
- Some sports have responded well to funding, and set about building systems and structures within Ireland where these have been considered feasible
  - Some sports have concluded that domestic systems and structures are not achievable, and have set about building these outside Ireland
  - Some sports have their eye on long-term, sustainable success, and others on short-term gain

- Some sports have pursued success not through systems and structures, but through the employment and deployment of individuals – whose presence within their programmes may be transient

(c) *The ISC*

6.23 ISC continues to allocate the high performance funding which is given to it by Government. This consists of annual funding for the NGB performance programmes, the International Carding Scheme, the OCI and PCI. Over the course of the cycle to date this has amounted to:

Year	ISC expenditure item	Sub-total	Total	%age increase
2005	NGB performance programmes	3,309,152	5,795,851	-
	International Carding Scheme payments	1,862,235		
	OCI core funding	441,356		
	PCI core funding	183,108		
2006	NGB performance programmes	4,118,397	6,801,918	17.36
	International Carding Scheme payments	2,117,863		
	OCI core funding	350,184		
	PCI core funding	215,474		
2007	NGB performance programmes	6,679,044	10,120,808	48.79
	International Carding Scheme payments	2,277,278		
	OCI core funding	525,513		
	PCI core funding	638,973		
2008	NGB performance programmes	5,539,618	9,255,459	-9.34
	International Carding Scheme payments	2,691,066		
	OCI core funding	518,866		
	PCI core funding	505,909		
Total			31,974,036	59.69

6.24 This level of funding approximates the €28.6 million which New Zealand has invested in its Olympic and Paralympic high performance programme over the past four years (see 5.10 above), notwithstanding our inability to perform a precise, like-for-like comparison between the two nations. The comparison between ISC's funding of OCI and PCI, and SPARC's funding of their New Zealand equivalent, should also be noted:

- OCI received €1.836 million, while PCI received €2.96 million
- NZOC received €809,600, while PNZ received €2.2 million

6.25 In total, the Government's investment in sport via ISC has increased substantially from €34.4 million in 2005 to €57.1 million in 2008 – an increase of around 66 per cent. This, and the figures quoted above, would suggest that neither Government nor the ISC has been lax in supporting sports' ambitions to compete on the highest stage. Specifically, it implies that the amount of finance currently available should not be considered a bar to Ireland achieving success at Olympic and Paralympic level.

6.26 Use of funding remains an issue. ISC may, in attempting to optimise fund allocation (see 6.12-13 above and, by way of comparison, the points made in 5.6-8), have overstretched its

ambitions in pursuit of its stated strategic goals. However, it is not ultimately responsible for disbursing the money on programmes which individual sports devise and deliver.

6.27 As regards the ISC's stated strategic goals, a criticism was made mid-cycle that these were not sufficiently clear, especially to the stakeholders involved in the investment programme. A high performance paper has since been approved by the ISC for the period 2008-13, and this should subsist unless or until the ISC decides to review and / or amend it.

6.28 As regards the investment delivered in fulfilment of these goals, the following points have been made previously and remain valid:

- ISC is at present unable to fund sports and athletes for more than one year at a time. This inhibits both good planning, and sports' ability to recruit the best available personnel by offering job security in a cut-throat market for competent and reputable experts
- The planning template through which the ISC procures annual plans from sports encourages NGBs to take a fiscal approach to performance planning, rather than a qualitative / developmental / pathway-driven approach. Sports' plans largely comprise a schedule of fixed costs and activities to take place over the course of the year; they do not, by and large, represent a statement of what it takes to get Irish athletes from their current level to that which is required to win medals. This has the benefit for the ISC of creating a relatively easy audit of sports' delivery of that schedule of activities during the course of the previous year; however, what is less easy to audit, but more important in the long run, is the progress that sports have made by conducting these activities
- There is no doubt as to the impact of the Government's Sports Capital Programme on Irish high performance sports, through its sponsorship of national centres for boxing, hockey, rowing and swimming. However, there remain profound needs in athletics (for indoor training), cycling and canoeing, to name but three (see 6.16 above) – each of which is prioritised by ISC for revenue investment, but none of which appears prioritised within the SCP at the current time
- The lack of co-ordination between ISC's investment in high performance, and that made by SCNI in Northern Ireland. Currently, around 110 athletes are supported through SINI, only one of whom is participating in a Great Britain programme. Increased dialogues and a "smart" approach may ensure that best value is worked through the alignment and dovetailing of investment programmes

6.29 The support provided by the ISC to sports and athletes has generally been well received. Almost without exception, the sports interviewed for this review reported a good relationship with the ISC – although this was not without its reservations, largely over the levels of funding received. The athletes who responded to the Olympic questionnaire were more circumspect: 43 per cent described the support they received from the ISC as good, 29 per cent described it as OK, and 21 per cent as poor.

6.30 Given that the ISC's High Performance Unit has made conscious efforts over recent times to establish a closer relationship with the athletes whom it funds, the above response is disappointing. Potential reasons for this response may be:

- The association of the ISC with the International Carding Scheme, and the athletes' gripes with that – for which, see below

- The dangers inherent in the ISC attempting to get close to the athletes, which present the risk of confusing the lines of communication between the athlete and his / her programme management
  - The comparatively low response rate to the athlete questionnaire, which may have skewed this result
- 6.31 The International Carding Scheme, or ICS, attracted a mixed reaction from those Olympic athletes who returned the questionnaire. Some 25 per cent rated the support received from the scheme as either poor or very poor; 36 per cent rated it either good or very good, with the remaining 39 per cent considering it OK. This reflects the more general feedback provided by the athletes, which stressed the hardship that some encounter, especially in respect of:
- Meeting the costs of training and competing, especially in those sports with a high equipment or maintenance cost (e.g., canoeing, sailing, wheelchair sports); and
  - Preparing for life after sport, and generating a level of security which will support them in the long term.
- 6.32 Some issues which have been reactivated or raised for the first time by interviewees comprise:
- Athletes' desire that payments should be made to them in the form of a monthly salary, rather than quarterly in arrears. While improvements have been made, including making payments direct to the athletes rather than through the medium of their NGBs, the present system still appears not to alleviate athletes' financial difficulties as well as it might
  - The principle of "boat-capping" – wherein payments to a crew or a team are capped at a certain level – continues to be invidious. In effect, this means that four world-class athletes in a boat will receive less per annum than four world-class individual athletes – simply because they comprise a combination
  - There is a lack of co-ordination between:
    - The financial administration of the ICS, through the ISC, and the non-financial elements of the programme, which are co-ordinated through the NCTC. Moving the non-financial elements of the ICS under the auspices of the IIS will resolve this
    - The ICS in Ireland, and the athlete support schemes in operation in Northern Ireland. This means that Northern Irish athletes can potentially benefit from their geographical location, by means of double-funding
- 6.33 In protection of this investment, and to manage the risks associated with it, ISC has invested heavily in the improvement of its anti-doping programmes. Its professed intention was to test each of the selected Olympic athletes three times in the six months prior to the Games: this was, however, made difficult by late selection in a number of sports. Other issues which the ISC's anti-doping have sought to address include:
- The education of Ireland's athletes in the requirements of anti-doping – especially where those athletes are part of the diaspora, training overseas
  - The obligation of athletes to observe anti-doping procedures and regulations. Contractually, this is linked to the receipt of ICS funding and services, which not all Olympic athletes individually receive
  - The transfer of custody of anti-doping from the ISC to the OCI for the period of the Games, and the need to ensure that information and approach is maintained constant all the while

(d) *The IIS and NCTC*

6.34 Sports science / medicine support service provision is delivered to individual athletes through practitioners co-ordinated by the NCTC. Athlete satisfaction with the NCTC, as expressed through the medium of the athlete questionnaire, is varied: 44 per cent rated it as good or very good, but 33 per cent rated it poor or very poor.

6.35 When asked to rate the individual science / medicine services they had received over the past four years, the Olympic athletes responded as follows:

Service	Very effective	Effective	Neutral	Ineffective	Very ineffective	Not applicable
	%*					
Strength & conditioning	21	39	14	21	-	4
Video analysis	11	25	21	21	-	21
Psychology	11	33	15	19	7	15
Nutrition	21	29	29	7	4	11
Medical	14	39	21	11	7	7
Physiotherapy	19	59	4	7	4	7
Sports massage	11	41	19	4	4	22

\* That the sum of these will not always equal 100 is a result of rounding

6.36 These results reflect in part the continuation of the practice of self-management, through which athletes supported by the ICS have access to support services which they must source for themselves from a list of available practitioners provided by the NCTC, for which the ICS / NCTC will pay the cost. The weaknesses of this system are that:

- It depends in many cases upon the athlete knowing what he / she requires from a support service programme
- It depends upon geography, i.e., the availability of suitably qualified and expert practitioners across a range of disciplines within the area where the athlete resides

6.37 The NCTC acknowledges that it has not done enough to modernise this system over the course of the last cycle. However, it has good reason for this: it has effectively been marking time, waiting for the IIS to come fully on stream. For some time now, the NCTC has been merely working a holding pattern in anticipation of the date when it hands over control of the support service network to the IIS, in 2009.

6.38 The IIS in turn has experienced uncertainty over its legal identity and corporate format. The original proposal to establish the Institute as a wholly owned subsidiary of ISC by means of legislation is on hold. Accordingly, ISC will continue to oversee the development of the IIS directly for the foreseeable future. ISC, through its High Performance Unit, will continue to have responsibility for setting policy and strategy in accordance with its statutory remit. This will include having overall responsibility for the administration and funding of programmes relating to high performance sport. The role of IIS will be to deliver services to sports and athletes to support and enhance the high performance programmes of ISC. These services will concentrate on sports science, sports medicine, athlete lifestyle, performance systems and elite coach development.

6.39 IIS has made certain advances over the past two years:

- It has identified and appointed key individuals to drive the development of its four strands – namely technical development, sports science, sports medicine, and athlete lifestyle support:
  - The sports science post currently lies vacant, following the recent departure of the consultant appointed to fill it.
- It has worked with and supported a number of individual athletes and programmes in the build-up to Beijing – most notably contributing to boxing’s Olympic qualification campaign in the early part of 2008
- It has worked with a number of sports to review their performances in Beijing, and to draw out the learning for transfer into their programmes for the 2009-12 cycle
- It has formulated an accreditation scheme through which sports science / medicine practitioners in all disciplines will be quality-assured for working with athletes on the ICS
- It has researched the needs of athletes in respect of their lifestyle and welfare, and formulated a programme which seeks to support them in addressing non-sporting issues with employers and third-level institutions (see 6.31 above)
- It has laid the groundwork for the implementation of an online medical records system which will ultimately allow for communication between practitioners and a continuity of care for all ICS athletes.

6.40 The planning of IIS now needs to embrace answers to the following principal threats which exist to its future as the agency charged with supporting the development of a truly world-class high performance system within Ireland:

- There are some who believe that the IIS will not become operational or effective unless or until the built environment which will house it is ready to be occupied. There is a need to separate this perception of IIS from the physical / capital development of National Sports Campus at Abbotstown. Since this last is unlikely to be before 2012, the IIS needs to establish its usefulness distinctly and obviously well in advance of that time
- The need to establish a network which covers Ireland geographically as well as sport by sport. Much good progress has been achieved by SINI in the north, and its systems and practices need assimilation within the IIS so that athletes in all 32 counties have access to an equal level of support
- The uncertainty of the past two years has seen sports take the initiative to gap-fill, i.e., rather than waiting for the IIS to come along and satisfy their needs, a number of sports have developed their own internal science / medicine functions through the employment and deployment of embedded practitioners. This means that the original vision for the IIS as the principal provider of such services could not now be fulfilled without first dismantling these sport-specific structures which have emerged in the meantime. IIS therefore needs to penetrate and add value to these sports, while filling gaps which exist elsewhere in the system, as part of a compelling and cohesive vision for performance support in the future
- As a means of headlining the role of IIS, as envisaged from the outset, there is a strong case for the recruitment of high-performance personnel by individual sports to be co-ordinated and led by IIS. Such a vital and universal role would underpin publicly the status of IIS, while setting a common standard for all sports where high performance personnel are required



*(e) The OCI*

- 6.41 The Steering Group has not, within this review, sought to procure the opinion of athletes or sporting bodies on the discharge of its functions by OCI in the lead-up to or in the course of the Beijing Games. We understand that OCI is conducting its own review on Beijing. The focus of this ongoing review has been on the strategic development of high performance across all relevant sports and all relevant sporting competitions.
- 6.42 Notwithstanding that, opinions relating to OCI's delivery of services prior to and in Beijing have been offered by interviewees. This is because OCI creates and controls the immediate environment within which those sports deliver their outcome performances at the Games, and has been granted €1.836 million by ISC over the past four years to do so.
- See 5.11 above for the parallel investment made by SPARC in the New Zealand Olympic Committee over the same period, which is the equivalent of €809,600. In the UK, the British Olympic Association receives no public funding from UK Sport
- 6.43 On balance, the input of interviewees gives the impression that the performance environment created by OCI in Beijing was improved from that which prevailed in Athens in 2004. There were several sports who stated that they had no, or no significant complaints over the service provided to them by OCI.
- 6.44 Several areas were identified by other interviewees, however, where they felt that service delivery at and leading up to the Games may have adversely impacted upon the performances of the athletes. At the highest level of competition, the difference between an optimal and a sub-optimal performance can come down to one or two percentage points, each of which must be calculated in the preparation. It is the accumulation of these percentage points that interviewees referred to in their comments on OCI's actions and omissions.
- 6.45 The areas cited by these interviewees comprise:
- Transport to the Games. The arrangements made by OCI for athletes to travel to Beijing are described as being inflexible, introvert and lacking in consideration of the needs of athletes to prepare optimally for performance. As a result, several sports / athletes chose to make their own travel arrangements, at their own expense
  - The allocation of accreditation. OCI exercised absolute control over the initial allocation of those accreditations which it received from BOCOG for the Irish team, and the subsequent transfer of those accreditations from one sport to another during the Games; it also controlled the use of those day passes which were allocated by BOCOG to allow otherwise unaccredited personnel to access the Olympic village. Interviewees suggested that OCI failed to use those accreditations / passes to give adequate support to sports with genuine medal potential. Further suggestions that accreditations were allocated to fulfil OCI's own political purposes, rather than in the best interests of the team, are unexplained and difficult to rationalise

**Case study: British Olympic Association**

In accordance with IOC Rule 39, each NOC receives accreditations from the local organising committee in accordance with the number of athletes in membership of its team, and the gender split of these. The final number of accreditations issued to each NOC is not confirmed until the Delegation Registration Meeting, which is in July prior to the Games starting in August.

The allocation of these accreditations is then entirely at the discretion of each NOC. The BOA's stance is that it needs to balance the needs of each individual sport against the claims of others, and the interests of the team as a whole. On this basis it gives an indicative allocation of accreditations to sports in the January prior to the Games taking place, prior to confirmation then in July – utilising the following as a basis for its calculations:

- BOA team leadership and administrative support staff, to a maximum 10 per cent of the available accreditations
- The medal potential of individual sports
- The number of athletes qualified by individual sports
- The gender split of athletes within sports
- The technical requirements of each sports (e.g., those with multiple disciplines)

Each NOC is given two categories of accreditation for officials: AO, which is non-transferable; and AO Additional, which may be transferred between officials once and once only. The BOA uses these last accreditations to support those sports which compete in the second week of the Games, at the expense of those sports who competed in the first week. In Athens, 90 per cent of the BOA's AO Additional accreditations were transferred; in Beijing, it was 76 per cent.

The BOA has a track record of refusing to accredit officials nominated by sports whom they do not believe to be of the requisite calibre to provide the desired level of performance support for the athletes. This has happened in both Sydney and Athens, where a single sport had its nomination for Team Manager rejected. The BOA's ability to do this emanates directly from the Olympic Charter, which sets each NOC the task to "constitute, organise and lead their respective delegations at the Olympic Games".

- The provision of team kit. Interviewees described the provision as uneven and, in some cases, ill-fitting. There were also issues surrounding kit which was sport-specific, e.g., in swimming, where the sport was left to source its own competition suits
- Team management and support services. Some specific complaints were registered by athletes regarding the supportiveness of the team management, and the accessibility and efficacy of support staff. Within the Olympic athlete questionnaire, points were made regarding the difficulty of working with and trusting team management with whom athletes had had no prior contact
- Media management. OCI officers made more than one public statement during the Games which was critical of the performances of the team which it managed. This had a foreseeable psychological effect on the athletes who heard it. There were also instances during the Games when OCI took steps to distance itself from incidents or crises which emerged in specific sports (e.g., equestrianism, swimming) rather than supporting athletes within its team

*(f) The PCI*

6.46 PCI deserves praise for the excellence of its approach to Paralympic preparation. The results of the questionnaire independently delivered to participants in the Paralympic Games as part of the PCI debrief exercise show that:

- 72.5 per cent of respondents described their experience as a member of the Irish Paralympic team as very good, while a further 21.7 per cent described it as good
- PCI's headquarters and support staff at the Games were rated very good for their teamwork (70.1 per cent), communication between each other (61.2 per cent), communication with the athletes (62.7 per cent), and clarity of their roles and responsibilities (70.1 per cent)
- Each of the individual staff members was rated as very good – the Chef de Mission, the PCI executive staff who attended the Games, and each member of the support staff who attended the Games and the pre-Games holding camp
- The team impact programme operated by PCI to develop and maintain team spirit, and to motivate the athletes, was rated as very good in each of its constituent respects. The result was that 63.1 per cent of participants felt that the team was very unified in Beijing
- PCI's Beijing Strategy Group's advice and guidance to the participants was rated as very good by 60 per cent of participants for its appropriateness, relevance and completeness
- This was the first Games for which PCI had taken out its own kit deal separate from that secured by OCI. The response to this new initiative was positive: the in-competition kit, which was provided by means of a sponsorship deal with O'Neill's, was rated good or very good by 69.8 per cent of participants, while the standard team kit was rated good or very good by 68.1 per cent of participants:
  - There was, however, some comment raised about the wearability of the kit by athletes with certain disabilities
- PCI's three training camps in the build-up to the Games in 2008 were each rated as very good, while 85.9 per cent of respondents described the pre-Games holding camp as effective in facilitating their pre-Games preparation
- Over 80 per cent of respondents felt that the PCI programme of training camps over the three years prior to the Games contributed positively to both the unity and the performance of the Irish Paralympic team
- Each of the individual components of the PCI preparation programme was rated as very good – although the endorsement given to strength & conditioning, nutrition and general lifestyle management support fell below 40 per cent in each instance

6.47 There were certain aspects of PCI's campaign that gave rise to concern. The first of these relates to the immediate consequences of growth, and has three dimensions:

1. The key to the success of the Irish Paralympic programme has been that it is, to all intents and purposes, centralised – that is, it is overseen and co-ordinated by PCI itself: PCI receives and distributes funding, the Team Managers are appointed by and work with / report to PCI, and PCI is in charge of preparing the athletes for the Games as well as delivering the Games management and support functions. As the programme grows, however, and the athletes within it grow ever more numerous and demanding, the ability of PCI to maintain such close control will become diluted. At this stage (which is more or less now), PCI must delegate more, and enter into partnerships with other organisations to share the workload. The arrival of different stakeholders, sometimes with different agendas, within the programme creates the new challenge for PCI of ensuring that all are working to a common standard

2. PCI has worked with the same volunteers in some sports for as long as it has maintained a performance programme. However, after six years, there were signs in Beijing that the programme was beginning to outgrow some of those volunteers. More than one sport experienced friction within their management and coaching teams, which was demonstrated in the responses to the post-Beijing participant questionnaire. This is clear evidence of the fact that this unrest communicated itself to the athletes, and undoubtedly impacted upon some performances. The challenge here for PCI is twofold:
  - a. To recognise which volunteers have reached their natural limit within their sport, and to find a way of effecting a separation
  - b. To find additional volunteers who are willing and able to take these places, and who will be themselves capable of moving the sport on to the next level
  
3. The availability of coaching of an appropriate standard for Paralympic athletes was also a recurrent theme within the debrief questionnaire returns. As these athletes grow ever more experienced (see 4.37-38 above), so their expectations of their coaches increase. However, the number of coaches nationally who are experienced and expert in disability sport is limited; indeed, the supply lines to produce such coaches are less than obvious. If PCI is to oversee the continuation of growth (both horizontal and vertical) within its performance programmes, this is an area in which it will need to find solutions quite rapidly
  
- 6.48 Similar issues to those which have emerged in coaching were raised by the Athens Review in respect of sports science and medicine – namely, that there was a need on the one hand to develop and / or engage practitioners who were able to provide a disability- and sport-specific service to Paralympic athletes; and on the other hand to increase awareness among those athletes of the benefits that such services could provide. An innovation over the course of the cycle to Beijing has been the convening of a sports science and medicine support group, comprising practitioners in sports medicine, physiotherapy, massage therapy, strength & conditioning, physiology and psychology.
  
- 6.49 The principal purpose of this group has been to provide hands-on support services to Paralympic athletes in PCI training and holding camps, and at the Games itself. However, as it has gone about its business, it has begun to address the possibility of involving itself in other areas – including:
  - Serving as a repository of disability-specific sports science and medicine expertise within Ireland
  - Guiding and advising athletes as they access support services through the ICS in between PCI camps
  - In some cases, continuing to support those athletes in a hands-on manner in between PCI camps
  - Guiding and supporting the practitioners accredited through the ICS to provide services to Paralympic athletes
  
- 6.50 While these are all wholly viable roles, they demand much of a group of practitioners whose engagement is very part-time. PCI's instinct is, understandably, to sweat this asset as much as possible, and so there is no inclination to rein the group back in. Yet the risk is that, by attempting so ambitious a remit, these practitioners will spread themselves so thinly that they end up doing none of these roles very well.
  
- 6.51 The final concern emanates from London, where the Paralympic Games will take place in 2012. The Beijing team encountered several disruptions from family members and friends of

the athletes, all of whom were keen to access events and support their associates. While this was on one level to be encouraged, on another it created a tier of problems – not least of which were enhanced pressure to perform, and the logistical worry of securing tickets, etc.

- 6.52 If family and friends could travel the 5,000 miles from Dublin to Beijing to support Irish athletes, how much greater will the traffic be across the 287 miles from Dublin to London? There is a clear need for PCI to anticipate this through strategies which help its athletes cope in 2012 with what will to all intents and purposes be a home Games.

## 7. Recommendations

### (a) Goal setting

7.1 ISC's outcome goals for the period 2008-12 have already been set within the high performance paper which it approved and published in June 2007. For Olympic and Paralympic sports, these are:

- To project Irish athletes and teams into the world's top ten within their respective sports and disciplines
- On this basis, to secure between six and nine finalists in the 2012 Olympic Games and, from these, to win two to three medals
- To secure between 12 and 15 finalists in the 2012 Paralympic Games and, from these, to win four to five medals

7.2 Subject to the levels of funding available to it, ISC should underpin these goals by seeking the establishment of systems and structures within a small number of sports (i.e., not just boxing) which deliberately generate consistent and repeatable medal success. Specifically, it should seek the following:

- Within the Olympic Games:
  - A repeat of the medal success of the Beijing Games
  - An increase in the number of finalists, or equivalent
  - An increase in the percentage of sports represented at the Games which improve their performances from Beijing to London
- Within the Paralympic Games:
  - A repeat of the medal success of the Beijing Games, including the number of gold medals won
  - An increase in the number of sports which win medals
  - An increase in the number of individual athletes who win medals
  - An increase in the percentage of sports represented at the Games which improve their performance from Beijing to London

7.3 On the basis of 5.6-8 above, the numbers of athletes and sports which qualify for Olympic and Paralympic Games should be de-emphasised. Instead, it should be the quality of programmes which is considered paramount – few and strong, rather than many and weak.

### (b) Investment

7.4 The Government should if possible continue to invest in sport to at least the levels which have been established over the past four years. Now that investment levels approximate those which are committed by comparator nations, such as New Zealand, Ireland has the opportunity to consolidate and build on the progress demonstrated to date. Notwithstanding the global financial conditions which prevail at the time of writing this report, continued and high-level investment is a *sine qua non* for the advancement of Ireland athletes on the international stage.

7.5 Attempts must be renewed to provide multi-annual funding for high performance, to create conditions under which ISC and the sports which it funds can plan confidently over a number of years, secure in the knowledge that their funding levels will remain constant.

- 7.6 Attempts must also be made to ensure that the sports prioritised by ISC for high performance funding and the capital projects prioritised through the Sports Capital Programme are closely aligned. DAST has commissioned a national sports facilities strategy. When this is executed, the needs of the sports prioritised for performance investment by ISC must be represented prominently within it.
- 7.7 ISC should also seek to source up to €1 million each year to support the equipment requirements of elite sport – especially in sports such as cycling, rowing, sailing and wheelchair sports where the capital costs are habitually high.
- 7.8 ISC should further pursue discussions with SCNI to align their respective investment in high performance sport; to ensure that best value is secured from expenditure, and that double-funding is avoided. Given the resources available within Northern Ireland to support performance sport – and that additional and important high performance facilities stand to be developed in Ulster in the foreseeable future – ISC can only gain from such collaboration.
- Such a move might be facilitated by representation on each other’s Board – or, at least, representation on each other’s High Performance Committee or equivalent
- 7.9 ISC should once again review the list of focus sports in which it invests for high performance, with a view to pruning it back to those which are able to deliver systems and structures which develop and control athletes within Ireland. For other sports, ISC should adopt an entrepreneurial approach: it should look to place its investment either in discrete, performance-related projects which offer the prospect of hard returns, or in world-class, individual athletes around whom it can build “institutes of one”.
- 7.10 The ISC’s high performance funding should therefore be divided as follows:
- Focus sports: those in which Ireland has a track record of international success, where the nation has traditional, cultural or geographical strengths, and there is currently a critical mass of talented athletes at senior, development and junior levels. In each of these sports there should be an expectation that a domestic high performance system / structure will be built, one which involves the development or maintenance of a high performance centre(s) within Ireland where talented athletes can be nurtured from junior to senior levels by resident coaches and sports science / medicine support staff – and where Paralympic athletes may also be supported, where appropriate (see below). The list of these sports will be determined by ISC, but our findings suggest that they might number no more than six or seven
  - Performance projects: not systemic, and with limited structures, these will be geared towards the generation of specific performance gains in return for mid-level investment. Potential examples would be:
    - The badminton academy which is based in Denmark under coach Jim Laugeson
    - The track cycling project which was commenced in 2006
    - The junior tennis academy at Dublin City University
  - “Institutes of one”: whereby individual athletes with a known performance profile, within sports where neither of the above initiatives is deliverable, receive funding to create

personal support networks around themselves, through the engagement of coaches and service providers

7.11 The entrepreneurial approach described above should be extended to work economies of scale wherever possible within this investment programme – such as:

- The use of systems and structures within athletics, cycling and swimming to support a triathlon programme
- The encouragement of the FAI to pursue an Olympic qualification programme from the funding which they receive
- The use of Olympic systems and structures to support Paralympic athletes and programmes (see below)

7.12 Having allocated this investment, ISC should ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to anticipate and manage the risks associated with it. These will include:

- The continued improvement of anti-doping protocols and procedures, especially those required to address the issues identified in 6.32 above
- Extending its influence over the governance and management of the sports in which it invests, in order that it might steer outcomes more effectively (see 7.16 ff. below)
- Ensuring that the team environments in which outcome performances are delivered, both Olympic and Paralympic, are conducive to producing a maximal return on the investment made in sports / athletes; also that the investment made in the agencies which create those environments itself demonstrates a positive return

*(c) Sports and their planning*

7.13 The ISC's focus sports should be required to demonstrate an improved level of planning. Such planning should outline the following:

- The conceptual pathway through which talented athletes are developed from first identification, through junior, youth and intermediate programmes to fulfilment at senior levels
- A four-year programme through which:
  - Athletes currently within the programme will be nurtured, developed and supported within multidisciplinary preparation programmes towards performance at the London 2012 Olympic Games
  - Systems and structures will be developed or maintained to ensure that success is consistent and repeatable
- Process and outcome goals through which the progress of the programme might be measured in the meantime
- The linkages between performance activity and those other parts of the NGB's remit which impact upon it, such as recruitment and development, coach education, competition structure, and facilities development.

7.14 Within these plans, ISC should ensure that each sport has given due consideration to the benefits and disadvantages of the 2012 Olympic Games being to all intents and purposes a home Games. In particular, sports should be required to set out the specific steps that they intend to take to maximise the advantages, and manage the disadvantages (e.g., the proximity of family, friends and well-wishers, etc.).



7.15 The pathway planning process should also be used as a forerunner to the development of structured and formal programmes of talent identification, to underpin the junior and development programmes which have been established since the Athens Games. Such talent identification programmes should be:

- Sport-specific, where technical and tactical ability is paramount and unique
- Cross-sport, where shared physiological attributes are being sought (e.g., cycling and rowing).

7.16 ISC should actively consider steps through which it might influence more positively the governance and management structures of the sports which it funds. These might include, *inter alia*:

- Requiring a non-executive representative on the Board of Directors of any organisation to which it commits funding
- The propagation of models of good governance for performance programmes – specifically, the creation of competence-based Performance Management Groups to serve as sub-committees of NGBs’ Boards of Directors, with a brief to oversee and report on performance activity on behalf of those Boards
- Establishing – perhaps through IIS – “ job and man” specifications for key personnel to lead and manage performance programmes
- Co-ordinating and managing the recruitment of key personnel to performance programmes – again, perhaps through IIS

7.17 Most specifically, ISC should explore means through which it can influence the nomination of Team Managers for the all major games and championships, with a view to ensuring that these are best placed to maintain continuity within performance programmes.

7.18 ISC should further ensure that each funded programme has a set of policy documents which allow for its effective governance, management and administration. These should include, *inter alia*:

- Financial policy and procedures, through which the funds allocated in support of the programme will be managed
- Personnel development policy / procedures, providing especially for the appraisal of staff members’ performance
- Athlete agreements between the NGB and the athletes on the programme, which set out the respective obligations of either party
- Disciplinary and disputes policy, which determines the process through which grievances are addressed
- Selection policy, which sets out the process and criteria for each major event, and provides for circumstances in which athletes will be deselected

ISC should consider withholding a percentage of funding from any NGB which does not have such policies in place, until such time as they are instituted.

*(d) Support service provision*

7.19 As previously stated, the writing of this report is broadly coterminous with the planning process for the future of IIS. Dialogue has been maintained between the two parallel

processes to ensure that the one does not countermand the other. The future development of IIS should demonstrate *inter alia* the following features:

- A clear brand and identity, which is synonymous with excellence
- A vision and remit which enhances that which has gone before
- A strategy which at one and the same time:
  - Drives and is responsive to the needs and plans of sports
  - Identifies the gaps within the current system and fills these
  - Adds clear value to existing sport-specific structures, especially through shared good practice and professional development
- A management structure which has proper regard for the roles which must be fulfilled to drive the delivery of strategic outcomes, and which allows for its functioning and performance to be satisfactorily monitored and evaluated by ISC
- A service delivery network which is quality-assured, and gives equal priority to all science / medicine disciplines. Herein there is an especial need to develop:
  - System-wide strength & conditioning programmes, supported by sport-specific nutritional advice
  - Preventative sports medicine initiatives which promote the importance of massage therapy
  - Performance analysis as an important coaching tool
  - Awareness of the utilisation of sports psychology in its different forms, namely to:
    - Support athletes and programme personnel on an ongoing basis
    - Skills-build within athlete groups, to develop coping strategies in anticipation of specific situations
    - Problem-solve within athlete groups, where difficult situations have emerged
- A system for the identification and development of elite and potential elite coaches within Ireland
- Co-ordination and synergy with SINI in Northern Ireland, with whom it has much in common and from whom it has much to gain within an all-island network
- Creativity and innovation, to find ways in which Ireland may keep pace with and, where possible innovate in, developments in key sports

7.20 Within this structure, IIS should also anticipate the need to manage the consequences of ISC's investment programme as outlined above. In particular, it should consider the best means of managing the performance projects and "institutes of one" which may be created, and decide whether this function should be performed by IIS rather than within NGBs.

7.21 In relation to the ICS, the following matters should be reviewed:

- Athletes funded through the ICS should have a notional, multiannual development plan which takes them to the next Games or milestone event
- Payments should be made at least quarterly in advance, in order to signify trust, build faith, and reduce the financial pressure on the athletes – if not in the form of a monthly salary

- The principle of “boat-capping” should be removed, to ensure that all elite athletes are equally rewarded for their commitment
- Consideration should be given to augmenting the payments made to athletes within sports where the equipment requirement is high and costly
- Liaison should be conducted with SCNI / SINI and their funding and athlete support programmes, in order that athletes are optimally supported but not able to play one funding agency off against another

(e) *The OCI*

- 7.22 This report has recounted opinions offered by athletes and sports bodies on the services provided to them leading up to and at the Beijing Games. This report makes no specific recommendations concerning these services, as the OCI is understood to be carrying out its own review of its functions and services surrounding the Games.
- 7.23 This report does, however, require ISC to ensure that any investment made in OCI is risk-free as far as is possible; that it is aligned with the investment in sports and the requirement on those sports to produce a performance outcome; and that the OCI is held to account to demonstrate a performance return (see 7.12 above). Any consideration taken in this regard should be mindful of the issues raised by interviewees and recorded in Section 6 as potential threats to the delivery of an optimal performance.

(f) *The PCI*

- 7.24 As stated in Section 6, PCI stands at a crossroads. It has a variety of challenges to meet which emanate from its growth and success. The key to this will be consistency and stability within its own management team. For this reason, the first recommendation is that PCI’s Chief Executive should also serve as Chef de Mission for the London 2012 Paralympic Games.
- 7.25 In order to facilitate this step, PCI should consider making additional management / administrative appointments to support the Chief Executive as he carries this dual role. It would seem appropriate to appoint an assistant to the Performance Director, in order to create capacity within the PCI performance programme, especially in the run-up to the Games.
- 7.26 PCI should particularly consider the breadth of its funding programme, in respect of how many sports it chooses to support. Section 5 above suggested that it is not numbers which breed success, but the quality of the programme: PCI should therefore concentrate on promoting genuine medal potential.
- 7.27 The recommendations made above regarding multidimensional, quadrennial planning apply equally to PCI as they do to individual sports. PCI’s planning should particularly address, *inter alia*:
- Talent identification, and talent transfer
  - Team Manager recruitment and development (see below)
  - Coach development (see below)
  - The integration of sports science and medicine
  - Managing preparation for a “home Games” in 2012 (see below)

- 7.28 In sports where there is an Olympic counterpart, PCI and ISC should work together to engage the mainstream NGB in supporting the Paralympic programme through all appropriate means (see above, on ISC working economies of scale). However, PCI should be wary of losing control of its programme by delegating absolute authority to an NGB which may not have the commitment necessary to drive matters: the ideal is a partnership to which each party contributes equally in pursuit of an agreed goal, and within agreed parameters. The sports where this approach may be tested are:
- Athletics
  - Cycling
  - Equestrianism
  - Sailing
  - Swimming
  - (See 7.32 below, for the possibility of adding rowing here)
- 7.29 In order that the sports are closely aligned with PCI and its core programme, care should be taken in identifying, training and appointing Team Managers. Emphasis must be placed on the appropriate “job and man” specification and the recruitment of individuals who are fitted to it. The search must be for the most able, not the most available; and consideration should be given to extending the role to a fully remunerated, part-time one in the larger sports, if needs be.
- 7.30 The PCI should also respond to the calls of its athletes for more and improved coaching. Dialogue must be established with:
- IIS, to ensure that the coaches of Paralympic teams and athletes are supported appropriately through programmes of continuous professional development and, where necessary, additional funding
  - The NGBs of Olympic sports wherein there is a Paralympic counterpart, to identify talented coaches who might view working with Paralympic athletes as a potential career development
- 7.31 Through these, and other appropriate initiatives, PCI should look to strengthen:
- The support mechanisms surrounding those athletes who have the potential to be multimedallists, in sports such as athletics, cycling, boccia and swimming
  - Athletics, and the field athletes who performed below their potential in Beijing
  - Those sports wherein little progress has been made between Athens and Beijing, namely equestrianism, football and sailing
- 7.32 PCI should investigate the opportunities afforded by the inclusion of adaptive rowing as a comparatively new and undeveloped sport within the Paralympic Games, and explore the creation of a bespoke programme targeted at medals in 2012 in partnership with the IARU and IIS.
- 7.33 As regards its sports science and medicine support group, PCI should:
- Review the remit given to that group to ensure that it is focused and effective. The role of the group needs to be marshalled and tailored to cater for individual needs

- Consider the addition of nutritional support as a core discipline in support of strength & conditioning, given the complexities of refuelling athletes who are wheelchair-users for performance
  - Ensure that the group meets or at least communicates formally and regularly, so that its effort is co-ordinated
  - Ensure that this group is situated in close proximity to the IIS, so that its workings can be co-ordinated with the emerging practices of the Institute, so that it can benefit from the systems and structures which are created
- 7.34 In particular, and bearing in mind the feedback emanating from the Paralympic participant questionnaire, PCI should ensure that its athletes benefit from the athlete lifestyle management programmes which the IIS is currently rolling out.
- 7.35 In anticipation of the London 2012 Games, the PCI should:
- Learn from the classification issues which arose in Beijing, and attempt to ensure that any borderline athletes are clearly classified before departing for the Games
  - Anticipate the re-inclusion of athletes with a learning disability, earmark resources to support these where appropriate, and ensure that issues of classification are addressed early and comprehensively
- 7.36 In anticipation of the London 2012 Games, PCI should review its stated intention to create a training base away from Ireland and the UK, in order to avoid the distractions of family and friends. This seems merely to postpone the day when these distractions must be faced, rather than to obviate them entirely. Instead, it is recommended that PCI should consider:
- Identifying a training base in England, where athletes can:
    - Become accustomed to the proximity of family and friends, and vice versa
    - Become acquainted with the 2012 competition venues in the build-up to the event
    - Become acquainted with the challenges of travelling to and from the competition venues in advance of the event
  - Pursuing a programme designed to educate family and friends regarding the in-competition requirements of elite athletes and how these should be supported and not disrupted
  - Establishing an athletes' lodge in London, with the support of the London Irish community, within which athletes may mingle with their friends and family within a controlled environment during the Games, prior to returning to the sanctity of the village

## **APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES**

Athletics:	Liam Hennessy (President) Mary Coghlan (CEO) Patsy McGonagle (Team Manager)
Badminton:	Colm McCashin (CEO) Donal O'Halloran (Team Manager) Jim Laugeson (Coach)
Boxing:	Dominic O'Rourke (President) Gary Keegan (High Performance Director) Billy Walsh (Head Coach) Jim Walsh (Team Manager) Gerry Hussey (Psychologist)
Canoeing:	Mick Scanlon (CEO) Deaglan O'Drisceoil (Team Manager)
Cycling:	Miceal Concannon (President) Frank Campbell (Team Manager)
Equestrian:	Damian McDonald (CEO) Ginny Elliott (High Performance Coach – eventing) Robert Splaine (Team Manager – showjumping)
Fencing:	Nuala McGarrity (Team Manager)
Hockey:	Dave Passmore (High Performance Director) Gene Muller (Head Coach – women)
PCI:	Tony Guest (President) Jimmy Gradwell (Vice-President) Jimmy Byrne (Chef de Mission) Liam Harbison (Performance Director) Nancy Chillingworth (Assistant Performance Director) Dr Joe Conway (Medical Officer) Fintan O'Donnell (Physiotherapist) Alan Ringland (Psychologist) Derek Malone (Strength & Conditioning Coach) Bruce Wardrop (Physiologist) Brendan Kirrane (Massage Therapist)
Rowing:	Mike Heskin (Team Manager) John Holland (Coach – lightweight men's four)
Sailing:	Harry Harmon (CEO) James O'Callaghan (Performance Director)
Shooting:	Kevin Kilty (Team Manager)

Swimming: Sarah Keane (CEO)  
Keith Bewley (Head Coach)

Tennis: Des Allen (CEO)  
Gary Cahill (Technical Director)

Triathlon: Jag Gunawardana (President)  
Amanda Mannix (Performance Administrator)

Athletes: Kenny Egan (boxing)  
David Gillick (athletics)  
Paul Griffin (rowing)  
Rob Heffernan (athletics)  
Roisin McGettigan (athletics)  
Sean O'Neill (rowing)  
Ger Owens (sailing)  
Eoin Rheinisch (canoeing)

ISC: John Treacy  
Finbarr Kirwan  
Shane Keane  
Austin Mallon  
Kathryn Gallagher  
Una May  
Paul McDermott

IIS: Gary Keegan  
Dr Rod McLoughlin  
Phil Moore

DAST: Donagh Morgan (Assistant Secretary)

NCTC: Michael McGeehin (Director)  
Deirdre Lyons (International Carding Scheme Co-ordinator)

SCNI/SINI: Shaun Ogle (Director – Performance, SCNI)  
Peter McCabe (Athlete Services Manager, SINI)  
Jo Hopkins (High Performance Manager, SINI)

Other: Niamh Fitzpatrick (OCI Team Psychologist)  
Bernie Cotton (Olympic Performance Manager, BOA)  
Cliona Foley (Irish Independent)  
Denis Walsh (Sunday Times)

**APPENDIX 2: Olympic athlete questionnaire**



## Irish Sports Council Quadrennial High Performance Review

### Olympic Athlete Questionnaire

The following questionnaire has been developed to canvass your opinions on the preparation programme which you experienced in advance of, and on your participation in, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Your response will contribute to the formulation of recommendations for the way that the Irish Sports Council and Irish Institute of Sport structure and conduct their high performance programmes over the course of the next Olympic cycle: it's therefore extremely important that you complete this fully and return it to us.

Please answer the questions yourself, without consultation with team mates – it is **your** opinions which count. Please be assured that all your responses will be kept strictly confidential: they will be processed by an independent consultant, and not shared with either the ISC or your governing body. If you have any queries about the survey, please contact Neil Tunncliffe at Wharton Consulting on (00 44) 7712 178275, or by e-mail at [neil.tunncliffe@btconnect.com](mailto:neil.tunncliffe@btconnect.com).

#### 1. About you:

1a. Which sport / event / discipline do you compete in? .....

1b. Are you based in: Ireland  Please state which province / county: .....

Overseas  Please state which country: .....

1c. How many previous Games have you attended?

Athens 2004  Sydney 2000  Atlanta 1996  Barcelona 1992

1d. Immediately prior to the Beijing Games were you (please tick all that apply):

A full-time athlete  In full-time employment  In full-time education

A part-time athlete  In part-time employment  In part-time education

Other  (Please explain) .....

**2. About your performance programme**

2a. In general terms, how would you rate the following elements of your performance programme over the past four years:

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable
Your overall programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your individual training environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your competition schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governing body training camps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support from the Carding Scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support from the ISC, generally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support from NCTC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support from IIS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2b. How would you rate each of the following services in your performance programme over the past four years?

	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Ineffective	Very Ineffective	Not Applicable
Coaching – governing body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaching – personal / club	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strength & conditioning training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Ineffective	Very Ineffective	Not Applicable
Video analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physiotherapy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports massage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

2c. How would you rate the effectiveness of the personnel employed by your national governing body, in terms of improving your performance? Please answer where applicable.

	Very Effective	Effective	Neutral	Ineffective	Very Ineffective	Not Applicable
Performance Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Coach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other coaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other staff (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

.....

2d. How would you rate your national governing body's performance in the following specific areas:

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Very poor
General administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of training facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competition logistics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competition management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management of selection for the Games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2e. How would you rate your national governing body's performance overall?

Excellent  Good  OK  Poor  Very poor

**3. About your preparation for the Games:**

3a. What were your own, personal goals for the Beijing Games? Please tick all that apply:

Gold medal – individual  Gold medal – team  Any medal – individual  Any medal – team

Quarter-final  Semi-final  Final  Placing  Top .....

Win through rounds  Qualification  Other  (Please state) .....

3b. Did you achieve your own, personal primary goal for the Games? Yes

No

3c. With hindsight, do you believe your own, personal primary goal was realistic? Yes

No

3d. In general terms, how would you rate the following elements of your preparation for the Games:

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable
Your overall preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your competition schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Governing body training camps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-Games training camp	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acclimatisation strategy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3e. When you departed for the Games, how would you describe your state of readiness:

	Very well prepared	Adequately prepared	Not well prepared
Technically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tactically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Very well prepared	Adequately prepared	Not well prepared
Mentally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4. About the Games

4a. How would you rate each of the following aspects of the Games experience:

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Very poor
Village accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food / nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competition facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social / recreational provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport to and from venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ireland team kit and equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4b. How would you rate your own performance as an athlete at the Games:

I overperformed against my expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	I performed to my potential / expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>
I fell slightly short of my potential	<input type="checkbox"/>	I fell a long way short of my potential / expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>

4c. Would you say that any of the following elements had a positive impact on you and your team-mates' performances in Beijing? Please rate each one:

	Strong impact	Some impact	No real impact	Not an issue
The facilities in which you trained / competed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The facilities in which you stayed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The inspiration of a major Games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical / tactical approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive team spirit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of your equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive leadership / management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaching strategy / input	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your physical condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	.....			

4d. Would you say that any of the following elements had a negative impact on you and your team-mates' performances in Beijing? Please rate each one:

	Strong impact	Some impact	No real impact	Not an issue
The facilities in which you trained / competed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The facilities in which you stayed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strong impact	Some impact	No real impact	Not an issue
The climate / heat / smog	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The pressure of a major Games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The quality of opponents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technical / tactical approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of team spirit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deficiencies in equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deficiencies in leadership / management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coaching strategy / input	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injury / illness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state):	.....			

4e. How would you rate your squad's Team Manager at the Games in each of the following respects:

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable
Professionalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge / experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable
Speed of action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4f. How would you rate your squad's accredited coaching staff at the Games in each of the following respects:

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable
Professionalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge / experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speed of action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4g. How would you rate the support staff you used at the Games in each of the following respects:

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable
Professionalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	OK	Poor	Very poor	Not applicable
Knowledge / experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speed of action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 5. Summary

5a. Please list three things that you think worked well in your performance programme leading up to and in Beijing:

1.	
2.	
3.	

5b. Please list three things that you think did not work well in your performance programme leading up to and in Beijing:

1.
2.
3.

5c. Please list three improvements that you would like to see, to put right what didn't work in your performance programme leading up to and in Beijing:

1.
2.
3.

5d. If you can, please list three new / additional things that you would like to see done to generate improvements in Ireland's performances over the four years up to and including the London Olympic Games in 2012:

1.
2.
3.

5e. Please add any further comments that you think might be useful to this review:

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Thank you very much for your time and assistance in completing this questionnaire. We'd be very grateful if you could return it – preferably **NO LATER THAN FRIDAY 31 OCTOBER 2008** – either by printing it off and posting it, or by e-mail, to the following addresses:

By post to: Wharton Consulting  
Harrogate Business Centre  
Hammerain House  
Hookstone Avenue  
Harrogate  
North Yorkshire HG2 8ER  
United Kingdom

By email to: [neil.tunicliffe@btconnect.com](mailto:neil.tunicliffe@btconnect.com)

## APPENDIX 3: New Zealand comparator review

### *i. Strategy and policy*

- 1 In the aftermath of Athens 2004, New Zealand’s equivalent of the Sports Council, SPARC, published a new High Performance Strategy for the years 2006 to 2012. The strategy responded to the realisation that standing still was not an option:

“New Zealand’s reality is that we have a smaller talent pool and lower levels of funding than most other sporting systems. Accordingly our high performance system needs to be wiser, savvier, more innovative and more strategic in our approach.”

- 2 The overall goal of the strategy is simple, unequivocal and ambitious: to create winning teams and athletes in events which matter to New Zealand. This overall goal is broken down into a series of process goals which state that, by 2012, New Zealand’s high performance system will:

- Be nationally driven with all contributory organisations committed toward a shared vision
- Provide long-term, needs-based investment to “results capable” sports, athletes and strategic partners
- Have world-class athletes coached by world-class coaches training in world-class facilities
- Ensure world-class athletes are regularly exposed to world-class competition
- Have world-class people at all levels of the system (e.g., regional operations, national sports organisations, SPARC)
- Deliver performance-enhancing support services where and when required (domestic and international)
- Capture and share knowledge and expertise for the good of high performance sport in New Zealand
- Maximise the opportunities available to high performance sport through alignment to SPARC’s sector development initiatives; and
- Be supported by high-quality national sport organisations that employ world-class people and operate world-class governance and management systems.

- 3 The eight strands unveiled within the strategy were geared towards making best use of existing resources – in anticipation of the likely situation that levels of investment would not increase significantly over the period. These eight strands can be summarised as:

Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embodied in SPARC, which sets the vision and standards, and seeks to establish partnerships only with like-minded organisations and individuals</li> </ul>
Targeted investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 70 per cent of total high performance investment focused on those sports which are deemed to be “results capable”</li> <li>• Up to 5 per cent of total high performance investment focused on world-class individuals, i.e., world’s top 16 in Olympic sports, world’s top eight in non-Olympic sports</li> <li>• Remaining 25 per cent of investment allocated on a project basis to those who can achieve success in “important” events</li> </ul>

Athlete development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along a five-stage athlete development pathway, with focus on the latter two stages – “perform” and “excel”</li> <li>• Talent identification and development programmes to underpin the talent pools available in key sports</li> </ul>
Coach development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to deliver previous strategy, with an emphasis on the coach as the facilitator of an athlete-centred system</li> <li>• Focus on appointing world-class or potential world-class coaches, and supporting them in every appropriate aspect of their development</li> </ul>
Capability development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multidimensional personal development programmes for those involved in high performance as directors, coaches, managers, service providers, etc.</li> </ul>
Knowledge transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration between sports to share experience and expertise, and exploration of business and industry to identify complementary experience</li> <li>• Collation of knowledge, statistics and data in a central repository, for interpretation to best effect</li> </ul>
Refined delivery system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refinement of the current delivery system through the Academy, consolidated within two regions</li> <li>• Separation of “generic services” – reactive medicine, and strength &amp; conditioning, provided locally – from specialist services (provided in five specialist centres)</li> <li>• Creation of a “centre of excellence” concept for athletes and teams to train together in multisport venues</li> </ul>
World-class facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a national development blueprint to address the perceived deficiencies within the country’s stock of facilities</li> </ul>

4 The success of these strategies will be measured in accordance with the following key performance indicators:

- i. The results of New Zealand athletes and teams in events that matter to New Zealand. By 2012 the system will have contributed to:
  - a. New Zealand being world champions in cricket, netball and rugby; and
  - b. New Zealand securing 10 or more medals at the 2012 Olympic Games
- ii. The depth of athlete and coaching talent available within New Zealand
- iii. The quality of the high performance programmes (people and systems) of the sports supported by the system
- iv. The ability of sports to develop and implement world class high performance plans
- v. The performance impact of the services provided by the regional operations
- vi. Progressive targets for 2008 (Beijing Olympics) and 2010 (Delhi Commonwealth Games) and World Championship events are agreed from time to time with national sports organisations

5 An important feature of the strategy’s infrastructure is a statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved, i.e., SPARC, the New Zealand Academy, the regional organisations, the governing bodies of sport, and the New Zealand Olympic Committee. This very clear statement of “who does what” is an obvious prerequisite for the fulfilment of the strategy regarding leadership, which is outlined above.

6 As stated above, SPARC has three investment priorities – thus:

- Its focus sports – athletics, men’s cricket, cycling, netball, rowing, men’s Rugby Union, sailing, swimming and triathlon
  - Its world-class athletes – those outside the focus sports who are in the world’s top 16 in Olympic sports, or the top eight in non-Olympic global sports (i.e., played in at least three continents, and within a minimum number of countries)
  - “Contestable investment” – allocated on a project basis against applications raised by sports outside the focus sports, who are pursuing success in events that matter to New Zealanders
- 7 The criteria for the selection of cricket, netball and Rugby Union as focus sports simply concern the importance of those sports to New Zealanders, and their potential to win World Cups and World Championships. However, these sports must present demonstrable need for investment prior to receiving it. For other, mainly Olympic sports, the criteria are as follows:
- i. Importance to New Zealand
  - ii. Results at the most recent pinnacle event
  - iii. Results progress toward world’s best performance, and anticipated medal-winning performances at the next pinnacle event
  - iv. Depth of talent, and the number of medals available at their pinnacle event
  - v. Ability to impact on the performance of their world-class athletes and teams.
- 8 The “contestable investment” is governed by a set of rules which dictate the following, *inter alia*:
- It is available to those sports outside the focus sports who have the potential to achieve success in their pinnacle event, or to produce a creditable performance in the Olympic Games – “creditable” being defined as finishing in the top half of the field
  - It is awarded on a project basis, and projects must be time-limited with a start date and an end date which coincides with the pinnacle event
  - Only national governing bodies may apply, and no sport can submit more than one application per annum
  - While applications are considered annually, projects may be spread across as many as four years. Such applications should, however, be broken down into their constituent annual parts
  - Applications are made through the medium of a set application form, and adjudicated against a clear set of criteria. These include:
    - The ability of the project to contribute to SPARC’s high performance mission by winning in an event that matters to New Zealand or a creditable result in the Olympic Games
    - The quality and clarity of the proposal
    - The applicant’s track record and ability to successfully deliver high performance outcomes
    - The extent to which the project will provide lasting benefits to the applicant’s high performance programme (i.e., not just short-term benefits)
    - The availability of athletes, coaches and support personnel to meet the requirements of the project; and
    - Value for money (i.e., the ability to produce the best results for the least investment, or whether there are any spin-off benefits for other sports or the wider community)
- 9 As for its levels of investment, in 2007 SPARC invested NZ\$11 million (or €5.97 million) in its target sports. It invested a further NZ\$5.63 million (or €3.06 million) across 17 other sports on



a project basis – supplemented by an additional NZ\$3 million (or €1.63 million) in athlete grants and support services. The overall investment in high performance sport for 2007 was NZ\$32 million (or €17.38 million) – an increase of 88 per cent on the 2002 figure of NZ\$17 million (or €9.23 million).

*ii. Conclusions*

- 10 This updated snapshot of New Zealand builds on the picture presented within the Athens Review of the nation on which Ireland might profitably model itself (similar population, not dissimilar economic profile, but markedly superior sporting outputs). The snapshot shows in particular how New Zealand has moved with the times over the past three years.
- 11 The comparison between New Zealand and Ireland remains loaded, given the prolonged period of time that New Zealand has been investing in its high performance system. It none the less provides a useful indicator of the speed at which the rest of the world is travelling while Ireland develops its system; also of the sort of refinements that are being made elsewhere with a view to working smarter and gaining a competitive advantage. It further provides a platform for thinking about what progressions are necessary now within the Irish system as the nation prepares for Beijing and beyond.