

R-HALTENSWERT



BeEQC

**UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTION.
ENABLING DEVELOPMENT.**





BeEQC was deployed under real-world conditions for the first time during the 2026 World Championships in Aachen.

The high level of participation and the large number of structured observations made one thing clear: there is a distinct need to capture perception in equestrian sport in a way that is no longer merely selective, incident-driven or played out in open social media debates.

Perception can be structured. It can be differentiated. And it can be made observable over time.

Aachen was deliberately conceived as a first field test - not as a scientific research project and not as a conclusive assessment of the World Championships.

The purpose of the deployment was to trial BeEQC under real event conditions and to demonstrate the insights that structured perception and stakeholder monitoring can deliver.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who contributed their observations.

The data collected in Aachen is being analysed internally and will feed into the further development of BeEQC. Within the specifically admitted expert group in particular, there is a broad basis of professionally contextualised observations from which recurring and clearly identifiable patterns of perception can be derived in several areas.

The results can be analysed and presented differentiated by topic area, discipline and observer group.

We deliberately decided against reducing this first deployment to individual percentages, rankings or pointed findings.

Not because insights are lacking. But because equestrian sport by now knows well enough where its areas of conflict lie.

The decisive question has long since become a different one: **What follows from this?**

Criticism alone changes nothing.

Anyone who wants development has to understand causes, bring professional perspectives together and derive concrete options for action from them.

That is precisely where BeEQC comes in.

Our ambition goes further: to turn observation into insight, and insight into development.

This is not about a single event. It is about the future of equestrian sport.



1. R-haltenswert - consistently in search of solutions

From the outset, R-haltenswert has worked not only to name criticism of equestrian sport, but to develop formats from it that make insight, reflection and change possible.

It began with the use of EQC at the warm-up arena during the World Cup Final in Basel. There, for the first time, what becomes visible in immediate sporting action was recorded systematically, along with how observations can be documented in a structured way.

This was followed by the Reflection Panel in Stuttgart, the Social Media Reflection Report and finally BeEQC.

Our most important goal always remains the same: not just to make problems visible, but to **find solutions that genuinely move equestrian sport forward**.

Our projects are not separate, stand-alone measures but development steps that build on one another. One central question runs through all of them:

How can equestrian sport better understand what becomes visible, how it is perceived - and what follows from that for its further development?

Equestrian sport is under public scrutiny. This has long ceased to be about individual images or debates; it concerns fundamental questions of animal welfare, transparency, credibility, responsibility and social acceptance.

R-haltenswert continuously develops instruments that make it possible to record perception systematically, compare different perspectives and trace developments over time.

Interest in this work is considerable. Hundreds of thousands of visits to our channels show that these topics resonate far beyond individual specialist debates.

R-haltenswert works independently.

This independence enables us to work with federations, organisers, professional institutions, athletes and other stakeholders as equals - without artificially dissolving differing interests and perspectives.

It is precisely where views diverge that insight arises not through adaptation, but through the possibility of clearly naming uncomfortable observations, dissenting assessments and open questions.

For us, cooperation therefore does not mean agreement.

It means bringing different perspectives together and enabling viable developments to emerge from them.

BeEQC is the logical continuation of this path: perceptions are recorded in a structured way, perspectives are made comparable and developments become visible over time.



The ambition of BeEQC is to give equestrian sport an instrument with which it can better understand its own impact, identify relevant developments earlier and shape change more purposefully.

2. Perception is part of the reality of equestrian sport

Anyone talking about the future of equestrian sport has to understand **how visible events affect people.**

Today, equestrian sport is no longer viewed solely within its own rules, traditions and professional standards. Livestreams, television and social media make sporting situations visible far beyond the event itself within a matter of seconds.

These images reach people with very different experiences, knowledge and expectations. And they have an effect.

Precisely where a living being is not merely part of the action but is used for sporting performance, particular standards apply to responsibility, comprehensibility and social acceptance.

This effect cannot be managed through communication alone. An image that causes irritation does not automatically become unproblematic simply because it is explained differently within the system.

What is needed, therefore, is a precise examination: **What is observed? How is what has been observed interpreted? What is perceived as positive, critical or unclear? And where do perspectives differ?**

Alongside the sport-internal question **“Does what we see comply with our rules and professional standards?”** a second question inevitably arises: **“What effect does what we see have on the people who come into contact with it?”**

Both questions are relevant. **But they do not answer the same thing.**

3. Perception is not social licence - but it can influence it

The social acceptance of equestrian sport is frequently discussed under the heading of the **social licence to operate.**

A clear distinction matters here:

Perception is not identical with social licence.

It is neither social approval nor trust, legitimacy or credibility in itself.



Social acceptance arises from the interplay of many factors: personal values and experiences, public discussion, media portrayal, trust in institutions and the question of whether decisions appear comprehensible, responsible and credible.

How visible events are perceived is one part of this overall picture.

Perception therefore does not determine social acceptance on its own. But it does influence how trust develops, how decisions are interpreted and what attitude people form towards equestrian sport.

Anyone who wants to understand and secure social licence in the long term must therefore also understand what people perceive, how they interpret it - and at which points trust is built or lost.

4. Scientific evidence and social impact

That social impact is increasingly understood as an independent dimension of equine welfare and the corresponding standards is also reflected in the current work of the CHIO Aachen Scientist Circle.

Alongside the scientific assessment of equine welfare, this interdisciplinary body explicitly addresses the **acceptance and impact of such standards in equestrian sport within society**. Transparency, communication and social responsibility are thus part of the picture as well.

This makes one thing clear: two different questions have to be answered for the future of equestrian sport.

What can be established professionally and scientifically about equine welfare, workload and sporting practice?

And:

How are visible actions, standards and changes perceived and interpreted by people?

Neither level replaces the other. **They complement each other.**

BeEQC deliberately addresses the second level: it structures perception and makes visible where social impact, professional assessment and existing standards align - and where differences arise.

It is precisely this connection that is becoming increasingly decisive for the further development of equestrian sport.



5. Subjective perception is not professional truth

Equestrian sport has established systems for assessing sporting performance, rule compliance and aspects of how horses are handled.

Judges assess sporting performance. Stewards monitor rule compliance. Veterinarians assess medical aspects. Rules and guidelines define requirements for training, equipment and competition.

BeEQC deliberately operates on a different level: **What impression do visible events create among the people who observe them?**

This perception is not an objective welfare assessment. It replaces neither veterinary examination nor professional analysis, and it does not determine whether behaviour complies with the rules or breaches them.

But that does not make subjective perception meaningless.

On the contrary: every person interprets what they see on the basis of their own experiences, values, knowledge and expectations.

The sum of these individual perceptions is what forms the public image of a sport.

For exactly that reason, critical perception must neither be dismissed as mere “subjective feeling” nor automatically understood as proof of a professional or welfare-related problem.

The decisive task lies in between: **Record perception. Identify differences. Understand patterns. Assess them professionally. Derive the right questions.**

Because social impact does not only arise where all observers reach the same professional judgement.

It arises from what people see, how they understand it and what attitude they develop from it.

6. Making different perspectives visible

Between sport-internal assessment and social impact lies an area that is becoming increasingly relevant for the future of equestrian sport.

A sporting situation can comply with the rules and still cause irritation among observers. Conversely, a publicly criticised situation may be assessed in a more differentiated way from a professional point of view.

BeEQC therefore does not decide **who is right**.



The instrument makes visible: **Where do differing perceptions arise? Where are assessments similar? Where is there uncertainty? And at which points is a closer professional examination worthwhile?**

The value of BeEQC lies in being able to record different perspectives in a structured way and - where this makes sense for the question at hand - compare them with one another.

Which groups are distinguished depends on the respective application.

At the World Championships in Aachen, a deliberate distinction was made between the community, professionals and specifically admitted experts.

This separation is not, however, a rigid model.

For other questions it may make sense to include only individual groups, to address other stakeholders specifically, or to conduct a simple survey in which differentiating between groups is not necessary at all.

The methodology follows the question - not the other way around.

a) Community

The community represents the perspective of those who feel connected to equestrian sport without necessarily holding a defined professional qualification for the question at hand.

What matters here is not whether this perception is "right" or "wrong", but **how sporting events are understood and interpreted.**

Which situations appear positive or comprehensible? Where does irritation arise? Which criteria are understood differently? And which images shape the impression of the sport?

b) Professionals

Professionals assign themselves to this group and state their respective qualification, training, professional activity or practical experience.

This keeps visible **the professional background from which an assessment is made.**

The group is deliberately not homogeneous. Different training paths, fields of activity and experiences can lead to different assessments.

These very differences can show **how strongly professional background shapes the perception of the same or comparable events.**



c) Experts

The expert group differs fundamentally from the group of professionals.

Assignment is not based on self-assessment. Experts are specifically selected and admitted by R-haltenswert in line with the respective question.

What counts are verifiable professional qualifications and experience - for example in veterinary medicine, training, sporting practice, biomechanics, ethology, rules or judging.

We handle the composition of our expert groups transparently. Many of the experts involved are publicly known and are presented on our website with their respective professional background.

Which expertise is relevant for a specific survey depends on the question. The aim is explicitly not to produce a unified "expert opinion".

The value lies in placing different, professionally grounded perspectives side by side in a structured way and making visible where they agree, where they diverge or where additional questions arise.

d) The added value of different perspectives

The added value of a differentiated approach does not lie in calculating a supposedly objective overall score or a hierarchy of perspectives from the various groups.

It lies in **specifically comparing those perspectives that are relevant to a concrete question.**

In Aachen these were the community, professionals and experts. In other applications they might be organisers, athletes, spectators, sponsors, officials or other defined stakeholder groups. And sometimes such a comparison is not necessary at all.

BeEQC is therefore not a rigid three-group model but a modular instrument whose structure is guided by the respective question.

7. Not every difference means a conflict

When different groups arrive at different assessments, this does not automatically mean that one perspective is "right" and another "wrong".

Differences can have many causes: experience, professional knowledge, the observation situation, the camera angle, the terms used, evaluation standards or genuinely differing assessments of what was seen.



What matters, therefore, is not merely to establish these differences but to understand **where they arise and what they mean.**

BeEQC distinguishes between four levels:

Observation - What was seen?

Interpretation - How is what was seen understood?

Evaluation - Is it classified as positive, critical or neutral?

Impact - What significance can this classification have for attitudes, trust or public perception?

These levels must not be mixed with one another.

Only this separation makes visible **where a difference actually arises**: already in the observation, in the interpretation of what was seen, in its evaluation, or only in the effect that follows from it.

BeEQC thus shows not only **that** perceptions diverge. It makes visible **why they diverge, at which level the difference arises and what significance can result from it.**

8. Practical example: what an observation can lead to

How these levels interact can be illustrated by a concrete example from Aachen.

In dressage, the head-neck position was one of the features perceived particularly clearly. **66 per cent of the observations submitted on this point classified the perceived head-neck position as critical.**

The reference value is decisive here: **66 per cent of the observations does not mean 66 per cent of the horses.**

BeEQC records perceptions. The figure therefore describes only how the observations submitted within this criterion were classified.

It is precisely from this that the follow-up question arises.

At the level of **observation**, it can initially be noted that a horse was perceived in a markedly tight head-neck position.

The **interpretation** may already differ: one person sees a specific training situation, another a strong rider influence, a third initially just a conspicuous visible image or an indication of a possible training problem.

This is followed by **evaluation**: is what was seen classified as positive, neutral, critical or unclear?



And finally the question of **impact**: what does such an image mean for the way dressage, training and the handling of horses are perceived?

The professional significance of a specific head-neck position must then be assessed independently - biomechanically, veterinarily and in terms of training.

BeEQC makes visible that certain situations repeatedly attract attention, how they are interpreted by different groups and at which point a professional question arises from this.

That is exactly where a single observation becomes a matter of genuine interest for insight.

And that is exactly where the next step begins: professional assessment, examining possible causes and - where necessary - enabling development.

9. Aachen 2026 - what the field test showed

During the 2026 World Championships in Aachen, BeEQC was deployed under real event conditions for the first time.

Aachen was explicitly **not a scientific research project and not a conclusive assessment of the World Championships**, but the first field test of a digital observation and participation instrument.

The central question was therefore not: **"Was Aachen good or bad?"** but rather: **"Can different perspectives of perception be recorded in a structured way in live operation - and what added value can such an instrument create for the further development of equestrian sport?"**

The answer to that is clear: **Yes.**

The deployment showed that perceptions can be recorded, analysed and presented in a differentiated way even under real event conditions.

From the expert group in particular, already experienced through other formats, there is a broad basis of professionally contextualised observations. On this basis, recurring patterns of perception can be identified and analysed.

The strength of the field test therefore lies not only in the volume of data collected, but in the fact that clearly identifiable patterns of perception, concrete questions and clear development steps can be derived from it.

At the same time, Aachen showed how BeEQC can be used even more purposefully in future applications.

This includes, for example, stable situation or combination assignments when several groups are to compare the same events specifically, pseudonymous user IDs for a better



understanding of usage patterns, an even clearer separation of different phases of competition, as well as further refinement of individual criteria and of user guidance.

These further developments open up additional possibilities: targeted group comparisons, recurring surveys, more differentiated longitudinal observation and the analysis of developments over time.

Aachen therefore achieved both: it made relevant patterns visible and created the basis for the next stage of BeEQC's development.

10. From snapshot to monitoring

The particular value of BeEQC lies not in examining a single event, but in the possibility of recording perception in a structured, repeated and occasion-related way.

A single survey shows how particular situations or topics are interpreted at a particular point in time by the participants reached.

It does not permit sweeping statements about what "the public" or "equestrian sport" as a whole thinks.

Its strength lies elsewhere: it makes visible which patterns of perception arise within clearly described groups, where perspectives differ - and how these patterns change over time.

Depending on the question, BeEQC can be used in very different ways.

a) Event-related observation

At championships, shows or individual competition formats, it is possible to examine which situations stand out particularly, which criteria are perceived as positive, critical or inconsistent, and where the perspectives of different groups differ or coincide.

This makes visible at which points perception attracts attention - and where professional review or development needs may arise from it.

b) Thematic surveys and polls

BeEQC is not tied to a show or to the observation of specific situations.

The instrument can equally be used for targeted, also simpler surveys - for example on attitudes, expectations, experiences or current developments within different stakeholder groups.

This makes it possible to cover both complex observation formats and clearly focused surveys.



Possible topics range from equipment rules, nosebands, bits and draw reins, through young horse classes, competition formats and control systems, to stewarding, judging procedures, communication or other questions concerning equine welfare and social acceptance.

Here, too, the methodology follows the question: it is specifically defined which groups are included, which criteria are recorded and which perspectives are compared with one another.

c) Feedback on regulations

New rules do not take effect simply because they are adopted and formally implemented.

Equally relevant is **how they are understood, perceived and experienced in visible practice.**

BeEQC can map this level in a structured way: **Is a rule understood? Is it accepted? Is its effect perceived in visible practice? And do these assessments differ between stakeholder groups?**

BeEQC thus complements the formal evaluation of a rule with a second, strategically important level: **What effect does a change actually have on the people who experience and observe it?**

d) Recording public controversies in a structured way

The strength of a structured perception instrument becomes particularly evident when publicly debated incidents develop strong momentum.

Open social media debates generate large volumes of reactions within a short time - but rarely clarity about **what was actually perceived, which aspects cause irritation and where different perspectives part ways.**

BeEQC is designed to record such situations in a structured way.

The following can be examined: **What exactly is perceived? Which aspects are seen as problematic, in need of explanation or unclear? Where do groups agree? Where do they differ? And which questions then need to be examined professionally?**

The decisive difference from an open debate lies in the structure.

Responses are not placed side by side at random but recorded along defined questions and criteria, analysed by relevant groups and thereby made comparable.

In this way BeEQC can help bring an emotionally or heavily mediatised discussion back to the decisive questions.

Not: **Who is for or against?** But: **What is being seen? How is it understood? Where does the actual conflict lie - and what follows from it?**



e) Making developments visible over time

The strategic value of monitoring comes from repetition.

The question is then no longer only: “**How is this topic perceived today?**” but: “**How does this perception change over time?**”

Which topics remain stable? Where does new irritation arise? Which lose significance? Which become entrenched? And are changes within the sport perceived at all by different stakeholder groups?

For federations, organisers, partners and other institutions in particular, this perspective is decisive.

Because a change within a system is not automatically a change that is perceived outside that system.

Continuous perception monitoring can therefore show whether measures actually land, whether trust is being built or lost, and whether perception is moving in the intended direction.

Depending on the question, BeEQC can work with targeted recruitment, defined panels or recurring participant groups where long-term and more stable comparisons are required.

In this way individual surveys become an instrument that does not merely react to developments but makes them visible early, accompanies them and makes them verifiable.

11. From observing to acting

Perception data alone solves no problem.

Its value arises where it enables a structured professional debate and, from that, concrete development.

BeEQC therefore follows a multi-stage approach:

a) Record perception

What was observed? How is what was observed interpreted?

b) Identify patterns

Where do recurring features appear? Where do groups differ? Where do their assessments coincide?



c) Assess professionally

Which perceptions can be substantiated professionally? Where is there a need for further review or clarification?

d) Draw on expertise and existing knowledge

Which findings from veterinary medicine, biomechanics, ethology, training science, welfare assessment, training practice and the rulebook are relevant to the question at hand?

e) Examine possible causes

Which sporting, structural, organisational or communicative factors could play a role?

The principle here is: **a difference in perception alone does not allow a cause to be derived.**

f) Derive options for action

What consequences follow from the professional assessment? Are adjustments to training, communication, rule-setting, monitoring or event organisation appropriate?

Or does the analysis show that better information, further data or a more precise question are needed first?

g) Observe developments again

Where changes have been made, it is then possible to examine whether and how they are perceived by the respective groups - and whether patterns of perception actually change.

In this way perception becomes a starting point for development: not as a substitute for professional assessment, but as an additional basis for better decisions.

12. What BeEQC delivers - and where its role ends

Equestrian sport has to be able to consider two levels at the same time.

It has to decide, on professional grounds, what responsible equestrian sport is. And it has to understand **how visible actions are perceived by different people.**

These levels are not identical.

Critical perception does not automatically mean that a rule has been breached or that a horse's wellbeing has been impaired.



Conversely, rule compliance does not automatically mean that every visible image is comprehensible to people outside the relevant professional logic.

If every critical perception is automatically understood as a problem of the sport, such an instrument loses its capacity to differentiate.

If critical perception is dismissed as ignorance on principle, the sport may lose important indications of **how its practice actually comes across**.

That is precisely why a level is needed between premature judgement and reflexive defence.

BeEQC does not measure **how much criticism** there is.

It makes visible where perceptions diverge, where they coincide and which questions arise from this for the sport.

BeEQC is not an additional judging authority. It replaces neither sporting assessment nor veterinary diagnostics, and it does not publicly evaluate individual riders or horses.

This is not about pillorying people or constantly searching for misconduct.

It is about structuring perception in such a way that insight can arise from it.

Equally, not every BeEQC survey automatically claims to be representative of "the public", "the community" or "equestrian sport" as a whole.

What is decisive is transparent contextualisation: **Who was asked? What were they asked? In which context was the observation made? Which groups were included? And what statement can actually be derived from it?**

It is precisely this clarity that makes perception data usefully applicable.

The value of BeEQC is therefore not measured by producing as many critical findings as possible.

It is measured by whether it succeeds in understanding perceptions more precisely, making differences visible, framing professional questions more clearly and deriving viable developments from them.

BeEQC is not meant to decide **who is right**.

It is meant to make visible what needs to be understood before meaningful decisions can be made.



13. An independent instrument for federations, organisers, institutions and partners

BeEQC is designed as a **modular infrastructure for different questions and stakeholders in equestrian sport.**

The instrument can be used for federations, organisers, championship formats, sponsors and partners just as much as for internal quality and reflection processes, feedback on regulations, stakeholder dialogue, cooperation with professional institutions and questions concerning equine welfare and social acceptance.

A clear allocation of roles is decisive here.

Cooperation requires transparency, independence and openness of outcome.

Questions, target groups and the logic of analysis must be defined in a comprehensible way. Results may neither be predetermined nor may critical or unexpected findings be suppressed.

This is precisely where the value of an independent instrument lies.

A federation or organiser can thus ask not only: **“Does the sporting action comply with our rules and professional standards?”** but additionally: **“How are our actions perceived - and what insights does that yield for further development?”**

For sponsors and partners, a further dimension is added.

Anyone who associates their name with equestrian sport invests not only in visibility and sporting success, but also in values, credibility and reputation.

BeEQC can make visible **which images and developments are associated with an event, a format or the sport as a whole - and how this perception fits the values a partner wants to stand for.**

BeEQC thus complements sport-internal assessment with a strategic perspective on **perception, external impact and change.**

It makes visible where internal assessment and external perception converge, where they diverge - and where concrete development needs or new development potential arise from this.

14. Development can grow out of perception

R-haltenswert brings BeEQC into dialogue with federations, organisers, sponsors, professional institutions, science and athletes as an independent instrument.

Perception is not professional truth. But it is part of the reality of equestrian sport.

What matters, therefore, is not to translate perception prematurely into judgement, but to bring it together with professional expertise, existing rules, scientific findings and experience from training and sport. That is precisely where the ambition of BeEQC lies:



to ask the right questions earlier, to make different perspectives visible and to let insight grow out of observation.

Because the future of equestrian sport will not be decided solely by what is considered right within the system.

It will also be decided by whether responsible action becomes visible, comprehensible and credible.