



*WASLI is committed to the development of the profession of sign language interpreting worldwide*

## **Considerations for Establishing a National Association of Sign Language Interpreters**

The World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI) was established with the goal of every nation having its own National Association of Sign Language Interpreters (NASLI). WASLI is working with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) to make sure that the Deaf Community and the Interpreting Community work hand in hand to provide high quality Sign Language Interpreting services. We believe that such work will allow Deaf men, women, and children to take their rightful place in society.

Historically, the National Association of the Deaf, children of deaf adults (CODAs), educators, and religious workers have been the founders of NASLIs. This noble tradition has been repeated in many countries. WASLI strongly supports Sign Language Interpreters working in partnership with the National Deaf Association while maintaining their own autonomy (see [www.wasli.org](http://www.wasli.org) Joint Agreements).

WASLI developed this document to help guide countries to establish their own National Association of Sign Language Interpreters (NASLI).

The following is a summary of steps almost all countries have taken to establish their NASLI

1) People interested in establishing a NASLI meet.

People agree on the reasons to establish a NASLI (Aim and Objectives).

They propose the structure of the NASLI (see #3).

2) The people elect an Organisational Board.

The Organisational Board generally has a leader (facilitator), a recorder (secretary), a treasurer and an Deaf Representative.

The facilitator arranges for future meetings, develops the agenda, and chairs the meetings of the Organisational Board. The Secretary keeps a record of the meetings and the decisions made. The Treasurer begins collecting membership fees. The Deaf Representative consults and keeps the Deaf Association up to date with NASLI development

3) The Organisational Board develops a Governing Document.

The Organisational Board develops the structure of the NASLI.

Various names for this document are constitution, bylaws, statutes, articles of incorporation. The term “governing document” has been used as a general term for the “government” of the NASLI.

The Organisational Board investigates any legal issues involved with establishing an association in the country.

**Note:** Some countries require associations to formally register with the government for official recognition. This will vary from country to country.

“Governing Document Considerations” can be downloaded from [www.wasli.org](http://www.wasli.org).

- 4) The Organisational Board presents the Governing Document to members of the NASLI for approval.

This Governing Document will change over time. Perfection the first time is not a goal.

People attending this meeting become the first members of the NASLI. These members vote to accept the Governing Document and to establish the NASLI.

It is recommended that the name of the NASLI include the name of the country (e.g., Botswana Sign Language Interpreters Association).

- 5) Elections of Officers

The minimum officers generally are President (Chair), Vice President (Assistant Chair), Secretary, Treasurer, and National Association of the Deaf Representative. One seat from each governmental region of the country may also be considered.

- 6) The work begins.

NASLI Officers are encouraged to make contact with the Officers and members of other countries’ NASLI to assist in future planning and work.

Most NASLIs have the following items as their first efforts:

- Membership recruitment
- Code of Ethics/Code of Professional Conduct/Code of Professional Responsibility
- Newsletter
- Certification testing, licensing, registration (a list of recognised interpreters)
- Education (both continuing education of current interpreters and training new interpreters)
- Establishing a National Office

\*\*\*\*\*

For links to Member Nations, see [www.wasli.org](http://www.wasli.org). From those links, requests for assistance and information can be made.

\*\*\*\*\*

