THE WASLI GOVERNING DOCUMENT

INTRODUCTION
This document is the Governing Document of the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI), adopted at the first WASLI Conference on 2 November 2005 in Worcester, South Africa.

The document uses British English because this is the most widely used and understood form of English.

This Governing Document includes the aim and objectives of WASLI and the general principles of the Association. The Executive Board will be responsible for developing and maintaining ‘Internal Rules’. The Internal Rules will give the detail of how the aim, objectives and general principles of the Association will be achieved.

References in this document to ‘Sign Language Interpreter’ - refers to both Deaf interpreters and Hearing interpreters

References in this document to ‘National Association’ – refers to any interpreter association which has similar goals to WASLI and represents the views and interests of interpreters in:
(1) a single country, e.g. RID in the US. This does not preclude some countries which have more than one interpreter association e.g. Italy
(2) a number of countries, e.g. ASLI for England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or
(3) countries where there is more than one official language and there are interpreter associations representing each, e.g. ARILS (French speaking Switzerland), BGD (German speaking Switzerland), ILLISSI (Italian speaking Switzerland)

1. Organisation
1.1. NAME - The name of the association is the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI).
1.2. LOCATION - WASLI is an international association with its headquarters at a place determined by the Executive Board.
1.3. LANGUAGE – English is the official language for WASLI documents. English and International Sign are the official languages of WASLI meetings. The translation of documentation into local languages is encouraged

2. Aim
The aim of WASLI is to advance the profession of sign language interpreting worldwide.
3. Objectives
In pursuit of the aim we will:

3.1. Encourage the establishment of national associations of sign language interpreters in countries that do not have them
3.2. Be a support network for existing national associations of sign language interpreters
3.3. Share information and be a reference point for interpreting issues, using the World Wide Web and other internationally accessible ways
3.4. Support the work of sign language interpreters working at international events, e.g. conferences, sporting events
3.5. Work in partnership with Deaf and Deafblind associations on sign language interpreting issues
3.6. Encourage research
3.7. Develop and promote standards for high quality training, education and assessment of sign language interpreters
3.8. Host conferences and seminars
3.9. Liaise with spoken language interpreter organisations and other organisations having common interests

4. POWERS AND LIMITATIONS
4.1. The supreme decision-making body of WASLI is the National Members. Only National Members may vote. Provisional, Sponsoring and Honorary Members are non-voting members
4.2. The Executive Board will manage WASLI between General Meetings
4.3. No WASLI officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind WASLI by any contract or commitment or pledge or to make WASLI liable financially for any purpose or in any amount unless authorised by the Executive Board
4.4. The signature of the President or the Vice President plus 1 additional member of the Executive Board is required on contracts and other agreements approved by the Executive Board
4.5. All members, both voting and non-voting members, have the right to contribute at WASLI meetings
4.6. The Executive Board will, on behalf of the membership, consider all applications for membership

5. Membership
WASLI has the following categories of members: National Members, Provisional Members, Sponsoring Members, and Honorary Members

5.1. NATIONAL MEMBERS are national associations of sign language interpreters with goals similar to WASLI.
5.2. PROVISIONAL MEMBERS are groups of interpreters from countries where there is no national association of sign language interpreters.
   5.2.1. The Provisional Member must provide a working plan toward the development of a national association. This plan must be received
and accepted by the WASLI Executive Board before being allowed
to join as a Provisional Member

5.3. **SPONSORING MEMBERS** are individuals, businesses, agencies,
institutions, or others who support WASLI through payment of the
appropriate membership fee or by making a donation.

5.4. **HONORARY MEMBERS** are individuals given special recognition
because of their significant international contribution to the
profession.
5.4.1. Honorary membership is for life.
5.4.2. The Executive Board select recipients for Honorary
 Membership from nominations by NATIONAL members

6. **TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**
Membership of WASLI may be terminated for one of the following reasons:
6.1. For non-payment of fees
6.2. By resignation, or
6.3. For serious misconduct

7. **FEES**
7.1. The Membership Fee Structure of WASLI shall be set by the
 Executive Board and approved by National Members
7.2. Members must pay their annual membership fee by the first day of
 January each year
7.3. The Executive Board may also ask for the payment of a reasonable
 late fee and/or reinstatement fee to join again.
7.4. Notification of membership fee changes must be announced to
 WASLI members at least 1 year before the change.

8. **VOTING**
8.1. The nominated delegate of the National Member will exercise the
 National Member’s one vote in the business of WASLI.
8.2. National Members must have their membership fee paid in full to
 be able to vote.
8.3. All proposals brought to WASLI General Meetings will be decided by
 a 51% majority of those National Members in attendance and
 including proxy votes.
8.4. All proposals brought to the WASLI Executive Meeting will be
 decided by a 51% majority of Executive Board Members in attendance
8.5. Proposals to make amendments to the Governing Document or to
dissolve WASLI will be decided by a 2/3 majority vote of those
 members in attendance and including proxy votes.
8.6. Mail voting will be allowed, including by email. The majorities
 needed are the same as for General Meetings
8.7. Proxy voting will be allowed.

9. **GENERAL MEETINGS**
9.1. General Meetings must be held at least once every 4 years.
9.2. General meetings must be announced at least 6 months in advance. The announcement of the meeting must include an agenda or purpose for the meeting.
9.3. The quorum for General Meetings is 25% of the number of National Members
9.4. General Meetings may be attended by all members: National, Provisional, Sponsoring and Honorary, but only National Members may vote.

9.5. **FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL MEETING** are to:
   9.5.1. Review and approve reports on activities of WASLI during the previous period
   9.5.2. Review and approve financial documents
   9.5.3. Approve membership fees
   9.5.4. Elect members of the Executive Board
   9.5.5. Consider and decide upon proposals submitted by a National Member or the Executive Board (or committee)

10. **THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**
10.1. The Executive Board consists of four Officers (the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer) and a number of Regional Representatives.

10.2. The Executive Board is elected for a 4-year period by the National Members at a General Meeting.

10.3. **Executive Board Meetings**
   10.3.1. The quorum for Executive Board meetings is 51%
   10.3.2. Face-to-face meetings must be announced at least 3 months in advance.
   10.3.3. There must be at least one face-to-face meeting of the Executive Board every year.
   10.3.4. An Executive Board meeting shall be held immediately before or after and at the same place as any General Meeting. Other annual meetings of the Executive Board may happen wherever and however possible.
   10.3.5. Online meetings may be held if a majority of the membership is able to connect. The Executive Board, and its committees, are encouraged to make full use of technology in the sharing of information and as part of the decision-making process.

10.4. **Executive Board duties** –
   The Executive Board is responsible to:
   10.4.1. Maintain membership of WASLI
   10.4.2. Develop and follow an action plan
   10.4.3. Provide an annual activity report by 1 April each year
   10.4.4. Provide a financial report by 1 April each year
10.4.4.1. The period of reporting and accounting is the 1 January to 31 December
10.4.5. Approve an annual budget
10.4.6. Appoint committees
10.4.7. Employ and supervise staff and agents
10.4.8. Prepare documents to be discussed at the General Meeting
10.4.9. Supervise fund raising, accounting and other WASLI business
10.4.10. Any decision of the Executive Board may be reversed by a majority vote of National Members.
10.4.11. To determine WASLI regions, subject to the approval of the National Members.

10.5. **DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

10.5.1. The **President** shall:
10.5.1.1. Chair General Meetings and meetings of the Executive Board
10.5.1.2. Represent WASLI as appropriate
10.5.1.3. Have the power to co-sign cheques
10.5.1.4. Provide an annual President’s report to the membership

10.5.2. The **Vice President** shall:
10.5.2.1. Assume all duties of the President if the President is absent or unable to complete their duties
10.5.2.2. Liaise with the General Meeting planning committee
10.5.2.3. Carry out other duties as requested by the Board
10.5.2.4. Provide an annual Vice President’s report to the membership

10.5.3. The **Secretary** shall:
10.5.3.1. Keep complete and accurate records of the proceedings of the Executive Board and the General Membership Meeting
10.5.3.2. Supervise the keeping of all WASLI records
10.5.3.3. Have the power to co-sign cheques
10.5.3.4. Provide an annual Secretary’s report to the membership

10.5.4. The **Treasurer** shall:
10.5.4.1. Supervise the receipt and safekeeping of all WASLI funds and financial records
10.5.4.2. Have the power to co-sign cheques
10.5.4.3. Liaise with the external auditor
10.5.4.4. Lead on the preparation of an annual budget
10.5.4.5. Monitor the annual budget
10.5.4.6. Lead on the preparation of a financial report by 1 April each year

10.6. **Duties of the Regional Representatives** shall:
10.6.1. Chair regional conferences
10.6.2. Facilitate the development of regional activities
10.6.3. Provide quarterly reports of their region’s activities and concerns to the Executive Board and to the members of the region they represent
10.6.4. Serve as a resource to the members within their region
10.6.5. Communicate regularly with the members in their region

10.7. Eligibility for Executive Board
10.7.1. All candidates for Executive Board positions shall have been members of their national association for at least 3 consecutive years immediately prior to candidacy. Furthermore, all candidates for Regional Representative shall have been a resident of their region for at least 2 consecutive years immediately prior to candidacy

10.8. Terms of office
10.8.1. Officers and Regional Representatives shall serve until the next WASLI Conference
10.8.2. Officers may stand for election to a different office at the next conference
10.8.3. Officers will be eligible for re-election to the same office after a break of 4 years

10.9. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS
10.9.1. Executive Board candidates must be nominated by a National Member and will be elected by the National Members
10.9.2. Regional Representative candidates must be nominated by a National Member from that region and will be elected by the National Members of that region

10.10. VACANCIES & REMOVALS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
10.10.1. Vacancies on the Executive Board which cannot be filled by election will be filled at the Board’s discretion
10.10.2. A decision to remove an Officer must be approved by 2/3 of the National Members
10.10.3. A decision to remove a Regional Representative must be approved by 2/3 of the eligible and voting members from that Representative’s Region

10.11. COMMITTEES AND STAFF
10.11.1. The Executive Board may appoint committees. These may include permanent or special committees, or individual members with particular expertise to carry out specific functions of WASLI
10.11.2. Committees and individuals serve as directed by the Executive Board. A member of the Executive Board will liaise with each committee.
10.11.3. The Executive Board is responsible for employing staff

11. INSPECTION RIGHTS AND CORPORATE SEAL
11.1. A copy of the WASLI Governing Document shall be available on the Internet and sent to anyone requesting it
11.2. The WASLI name and the WASLI logo shall be used by WASLI and its members for official and/or approved purposes only
11.3. WASLI’s corporate seal shall only be used by approval of the Executive Board

12. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY
12.1. WASLI does not discriminate because of age, colour, creed, disability, ethnicity, hearing or vision status, national origin, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation.

13. AMENDMENTS AND DISSOLUTION
13.1. A proposal for amendment of the Governing Document must be submitted to the Executive Board at least 1 year before a General Meeting. Amendments to this Governing Document require a 2/3 majority vote at the General Meeting or through a special mail ballot vote
13.2. The Executive Board or a 51% majority of National Members may propose that WASLI dissolve. Approval for dissolution requires a 2/3 majority vote
13.3. If WASLI dissolves all the funds and assets of WASLI shall be used to benefit sign language interpreters in accordance with the aims of WASLI.