



October 2024

UNESCO Land Subsidence International Initiative (LaSII)

Guidelines for the organization and maintenance of membership

Structure of the LaSII

The LaSII is an integrated, world-wide group of specialists in the different aspects related to Land Subsidence. The group is formed by a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Technical Secretary, members, observers and affiliates.

The LaSII strives to integrate representatives from each country in the world affected by subsidence. Each country may be represented by a maximum of two members. If members are unavailable, a country can be represented by one or two observers. A third category, affiliate, is for any land-subsidence specialist or enthusiast practitioner showing an outstanding commitment to LaSII's activities as evaluated by the members, even if there are already two members/observers of her/his represented country.

Activities of the LaSII

- Meet annually and discuss the status and strategy of the LaSII, as well as other topics
- Organize an International Land Subsidence Symposium approximately every 5 years
- Raise awareness of land subsidence
- Disseminate information (presentations, policy brief, webinars, flyers, etc.)
- Train (courses, summer courses, webinars, presentations, conferences, etc.)
- Encourage development of collaboration projects
- Update and improve the LaSII website
- Contribute to the annual reporting to UNESCO

Membership

If the LaSII evaluates and approves the integration of a new member, she/he generally will be admitted as an observer for the first year and can subsequently be promoted to a member if LaSII vote results determine the observer has sufficiently engaged in the activities mentioned in these guidelines.

A potential new observer is proposed by one of the members, with the CV and statement-of-interest distributed through the Technical Secretary. To become an observer, the candidate must demonstrate 1) specific “knowledge” on land subsidence occurrences in the country she/he will represent and 2) that land subsidence is a key field of her/his actual research or work; or 3) In the case (1) and (2) cannot be “accomplished”, the candidate must have strong connections/collaborations with local academic/administrative/technical institutions, especially if he/she will represent a developing country (mainly for Africa, Asia, and Latin America) that are regions of particular interest for UNESCO. An observer participates in the meeting but only members can vote on the LaSII decisions.

If an observer position is not available (the country is already represented by 2 members/observers) or the above requirements are not fulfilled, a land-subsidence scientist/expert can be integrated as an “affiliate” to LaSII activities when she/he demonstrates a sufficient interest in land subsidence as evaluated by the LaSII. Affiliates are expected to follow and participate in LaSII activities. Attendance to the annual LaSII meeting is not mandatory but can be requested. The permanence of affiliate will be evaluated every five years based on their contribution to land subsidence activities.

The Chairman will send a letter to communicate the new member/observer/affiliate is admitted and to notify his commitments to the LaSII.

Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Technical Secretary

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected by the LaSII members every five years, generally during the meeting of the International Symposium. The Vice-Chairman can be promoted to Chairman by LaSII member vote. After his/her promotion, the Chairman may propose a member for the Vice-Chairman position. Chairman and Vice-Chairman must be members of the LaSII for at least the previous 5 years.

If the Chairman, during her/his term abandons her/his position, the Vice-Chairman is promoted to Chairman, and a Vice-Chairman is elected for the remainder of the 5-year term. In case of absence during any meeting, the Chairman delegates her/his duties and responsibilities to the Vice-Chairman.

The Technical Secretary is selected by the Chairman in agreement with the Vice-Chairman.

Maintenance of membership

Maintenance of membership depends on LaSII activity level. An active member of the LaSII is expected to:

- Demonstrate work on academic or applied research related to the processes associated with land subsidence
- Participate physically or virtually in the annual meetings of the LaSII. If absent for two consecutive meetings, the permanence of the member/observer will be evaluated by the LaSII
- Develop activities that encourage or promote the LaSII and their achievements
- Contribute to the LaSII strategies in the short, medium and long term

The status of the members that are no longer active in LaSII activities will change to "emeritus member".

Voting

During meetings, voting is accomplished by "raising hand" (or verbal expression for virtual attendees); between meetings, voting is accomplished by email visible to all the members. The Technical Secretary will organize the voting and determine voting results. Only LaSII members may vote.

Member voting about a new member or removal of a member will be proposed by the Chairman and evaluated by the LaSII members during the annual meeting. 50% of the present or virtual member votes are required to approve a new member; 67% of the present or virtual member votes are required to remove a member. Voting is done in the absence of the potential candidate.

Member voting about a new observer or affiliate can be proposed by any member. This can be done at any time by an email to the Technical Secretary who will be distribute the proposal to all the LaSII members. The new-observer/affiliate proposal must include a CV and statement-of-interest. After evaluation of the proposal, the LaSII members will vote on the new observer or affiliate during the next LaSII annual meeting. 50% of the present or virtual member votes are required to approve a new observer or affiliate. Voting is done in the absence of the potential candidate.

For all other decisions (e.g. the location of the next annual meeting or symposium), approval requires 50% of the present/virtual member votes. Decisions by 'normal voting' generally will be carried out during the LaSII annual meeting.