

Chapter 2.2

Governance of a National Federation

Benefits of this chapter

Good governance is essential to having an efficient, effective and ethical aquatics federation. While it may not solve all the problems or challenges your federation might face, it can help to prevent and solve some of the most important ones.

Developing structural governance within your federation goes well beyond of just staying keeping within the legal boundaries of your nation. The purpose of incorporating good sporting governance is important in terms of running your federation smoothly and effectively. By assigning proper roles and responsibilities your aquatics federation can think and plan for its current activities but also establish a solid basis for its future aquatics success.

This chapter will provide you with the means for setting your own good practices. Please note that the suggestions provided are not meant to serve as replacements for existing laws within your own countries; they should rather serve as guidelines to set a minimum standard for aquatics governance within your federation.

Introduction

Governance of a National Federation

What is good governance and how can you implement it in your federation? To start, there are many types of governance your federation needs to keep in mind, organisational governance, sporting governance, are only two of them. From whichever point of view it is still just a framework that your federation will use to work properly and efficiently.

Good governance within your federation should aim at promoting long term value at all levels. When setting up your framework and structure, it is important that your federation aims to be transparent, ethical and responsible in all manners.

Objectives of aquatics governance

The governance of your aquatics federation should above all serve as a tool to remain stable, withstand hardship and possible problems, and be used to bring together members and combine them in their best possible interest.

In order to ensure your federation remains focused the following points should be considered:

- Clear and concise roles: There should be clear roles within your organisational structure. No overlap in powers of any individuals or departments will help to ensure that responsibilities are appropriately allocated.
- Clear processes: Clear, documented policies and processes which reflect best practices will help to provide clarity and consistency in day-to-day operations.
- Clear controls: Maintaining regular controls in all your federation's processes can help to keep everyone focused and ensure that targets and goals are being met.

A National aquatics federation constitution

Bringing consistency, credibility and order in the aquatics environment of your country can be done by implementing a constitution in your National aquatics Federation.

In order to do this, your federation should aim to achieve the following:

- Develop a governance structure capable of delivering services necessary to achieve all the objectives set out in the constitution.
- Encourage, develop, organise and promote aquatics throughout the country, bringing order, credibility and consistency through the adoption of necessary uniform rules and regulations.
- Maintain political and religious neutrality and not to tolerate any form of discrimination.
- Set up and maintain the lines of communications between its members.
- Establish a financial policy and generate adequate financial

resources in order to develop aquatics within a balanced financial budget.

- Generate the necessary resources to realise programs for national teams, which represent the country at various international competitions.
- Provide sports competitions, camps, seminars, conferences, courses, clinics, examinations, development programs, events, campaign, and other promotional activities for its members.
- Promote and develop the standard of coaching, officials and aquatics administration.

Membership involvement

Keeping your members involved in the governance process of your federation fosters effective governance. Governance is about leadership, therefore it is important to understand your members and keep them in mind when constructing your policies.

When creating guidelines for your federation's members, keeping in mind current FINA membership procedures can be helpful:

- The national body governing Swimming, Open Water Swimming, Diving, Water Polo and Synchronised Swimming, in any country or Sport Country shall be eligible for membership in FINA. Once approved for membership, your federation will then fall within a specific "Sport Country", meaning a geographical territory or region which, though not recognised as a country, has certain aspects of self-government (to the extent of sport) which is recognised by FINA.
- When developing a constitution and rules within your federation remember that your rules must not be in conflict with those of FINA. If there is a conflict, you must remember that FINA rules will prevail over those developed by your federation.
- As a member of FINA your national rules must acknowledge that FINA is the only recognised body in the world which governs Swimming, Open Water Swimming, Diving, Water Polo, Synchronised Swimming, and Masters internationally.

General congress

The governance of your National Federation must include specifications about the make up of the General Assembly/Congress within your National Federation. This must also include the allocation of the votes, which in case of a dispute this is going to be the only valid document.

The General Assembly/Congress should be the highest authority within your National Federation, mainly due to the fact that all objectives within your governance should be voted up and withheld through the power of your general congress.

A General Assembly/Congress can be used for the following:

- To adopt, modify and change the governance of your federation.
- To elect Executive Board/Management Committee members, the President and the Treasurer.
- To examine, review and approve all reports (in particular reports of the Executive Board/Management Committee).
- To approve the accounts and the balance sheet, and to vote on the budget of your federation.
- To adopt internal regulations.
- To designate the auditor.
- To take a vote of no confidence in the Executive Board/Management Committee.
- To grant titles of Patron, Honorary and Life Members.
- To exclude officials or members.
- To dissolve the National Federation.

The General Assembly/Congress should meet once a year (after the end of the financial year – preferably the financial year should be the calendar year) and they should have the right to legislate aquatics in the country. This power is fundamentally vested to the members of the National Federation and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation. As mentioned, for the purpose of transparency, your National Federation should publish (officially announce) the findings of each General Assembly/Congress as well as any votes/decisions which have been made.

Roles within your federation

Within each federation there are a number of roles which need to be filled, however the two most important responsibilities lay with the President and the Treasurer of your federation.

The President

The President should be responsible for:

- Taking care about general affairs of the National Federation,
- Supervising the proper functioning of the National Federation,
- Ensuring that all decisions are properly carried out,
- Representing the National Federation in public,
- In case of a tied vote at the meetings he/she shall have a casting vote.
- He/She is elected at the General Assembly/Congress

The Treasurer

The Treasurer of the National Federation should have the following responsibilities:

- Control the financial administration within your federation.
- Supervise the current account of income and expenditure.
- Examine the periodic financial reports
- Draw up the four year budget together with the assistance of a staff member.
- Ensure the proper implementation of the budget.
- Present the complete statements of accounts to the General Assembly/Congress.

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Useful hints

Each member within your National Federation should have clearly defined responsibilities and reporting lines.

There is a need to have a clear differentiation between your members and potential influential bodies to avoid any conflict of interest.

Your National Federation must operate in a democratic way with a legislative, an executive and a juridical authority to best represent and promote aquatics in your country.