

# ISOCARP Strategic Plan 2021-2023

**ISOCARP  
REGULATION  
2021/05**

## ISOCARP Constitution

ISOCARP Constitution (Art. 7.5) regulates that:

*“The Board shall adopt a strategic plan and a financial plan and update both plans annually. The strategic plan prioritizes the activities to be performed by the association. The financial plan explains targets for managing the assets of the association and fund raising.”*

ISOCARP’s last updated Strategic Plan 2015-2018 dates back to 2017.

While the pandemic crisis disrupted the initiative of the previous Board to establish a new strategic plan, the current Board finally resumed activities to that end.

Based on the strategic objectives presented in the Board its Annual Report 2019-2020, warmly welcomed by the annual general assembly of members (AGM) on 10 November 2020, the Board launched end of 2020 a [Strategic Position Paper](#) (SPP) as platform for strategic re-orientation during and beyond the pandemic crisis. The SPP was shared with all members and helped the Board with presenting a list of 10 strategic priority objectives at the Special General Meeting (SGM) on 2 February 2021. While the 10 strategic priorities were widely welcomed by the SGM, a motion was carried to encourage ordinary members to engage with the Board on the implementation and eventual expansion of its priorities.

While this requires a member-wide participatory process to monitor, evaluate and eventually advise a review of ISOCARP’s strategic planning on short, medium and longer term, it does not absolve the Board of its constitutional duty to adopt and present its own (rolling) Strategic Plan, well aligned with its Financial Plan for the next fiscal year (and eventually beyond).

Therefore, this Board Policy regulates its own **Strategic Plan 2021-2023** as its guiding compass and a basis for further member engagement and mobilization. It thereby replaces the former 2015-2018 Strategic Plan.

## ISOCARP Legacy

Founded in 1965, the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) is a global association of professional urban and regional planners. Our network brings together individual and institutional members from more than 90 countries, who work in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The Society’s main event is the annual ISOCARP World Planning Congress, which focuses on a globally significant planning theme each year. The Congress is open to both members and non-members. Since 1965, the Congress has always promoted the creation and sharing of knowledge in the planning profession, combining a unique, triple perspective on theory, policy and practice. At the Congress we launch our annual World Planning Practice Review as well our Planning Excellence Awards. With over five decades of accumulated knowledge and expertise manifested in both our members and within the Society, we initiated ‘ISOCARP Institute’ as a research spin-off for generating and disseminating knowledge for better cities. ISOCARP has successfully organized annual World Planning Congresses with thousands of papers, articles and contributions, accruing a wealth of knowledge for cities and territories. The Society and Institute share ‘Planetary’, a digital knowledge-platform by and for its members and visitors: [www.isocarp.org](http://www.isocarp.org).

## ISOCARP Vision

### Vision

Make cities and regions inclusive, safe, healthy, resilient and sustainable through integrative participatory placemaking and urban & territorial planning.



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Our Vision Statement describes the bigger picture. The Vision is what we aspire for the future.

Article 2 of our Constitution provides clear aims: a) *to be the international society for those professionally involved in city and regional planning*, and b) *to support at a global level the practice, teaching, promotion and improvement of city and regional planning, and housing*.

Yet, after the 2019 World Planning Congress in Jakarta and its Declaration, there is a growing member and Board commitment to increase our standing vis-à-vis the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development. In our ISOCARP Brochure 2020, we explained how we can contribute to the Global (Territorial) Agenda and the Decade of Action to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agreed upon by all United Nation members and thus a vast majority of humanity:

## How we contribute to the Global Agenda?

- ISOCARP promotes good health and well-being in policies, plans and designs (SDG 13)
- ISOCARP contributes to quality education and gender equality through training programmes and young planners' workshops in both Global South and Global North (SDGs 4 and 5)
- ISOCARP promotes clean water, renewable energy, sustainable innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, responsible consumption, climate action and protection of life on land and below water in city and regional planning, through its planning services, projects, publications, and World Planning Congresses (SDGs 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15)
- ISOCARP invests in partnerships for the goals, e.g. by joining UN-Habitat's Planners for Climate Action and co-implementing European projects, e.g. +CityxChange, ThinkNature (SDG 17)
- ISOCARP's main focus, however, is the implementation of SDG 11 on creating 'Sustainable Cities and Communities', through the application of the United Nations New Urban Agenda (NUA) and UN-Habitat's International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP), by providing a unique platform to turn inspiring planning practices into science and put theories into practice.

Hence, complementary to the vision in our Constitution, this Strategic Plan presents a Vision and Mission Statement that is more responsive to this Global Territorial Agenda and seeks to position our Society as a 'movement of change' to reach the higher goals for humanity and the planet we call our home.

## ISOCARP Mission

The mission is what we do, for whom and how. It is important to clearly state what we believe in and to aim for that on a daily basis.

The Society is registered in The Netherlands as a non-profit membership association. Its Constitution empowers the members to govern the Society .

### Mission

Support communities and their planners making cities and territories more sustainable through integrative participatory placemaking and urban & regional planning by:

- Advocating inclusive placemaking and urban/territorial as precondition for sustainable development or cities and regions;
- Promoting placemaking and planning profession, planning education and planning research, accessible for all;
- Enhancing public awareness and understanding of major planning issues at the global level;
- Representing and providing networks and communication channels for its members and partners;
- Improving the planning practice through creating a global network of planning and placemaking practitioners;
- Developing urban and regional planning activities, services and resources;
- Creating and sharing knowledge through congresses, workshops, projects and publications.

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At General Meetings (done online, allowing inclusive participation) the members make the rules, decide on directions, approve the budget, and elect the Board at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

A Secretariat is established in its seat in The Hague/The Netherlands, to support the Board and the AGM in the implementation of the Boards (multi-)annual Strategic Plan.

## Guiding Principles and Strategic Objectives

Since our foundation in 1965, great traditions have been established, and we plan to build on them: the sense of fellowship as members; an international outlook; our commitment to planning in the public interest; our willingness to participate; and above all our willingness to contribute to the activities of our Society, at Congresses, in projects and programs, as members of committees and the Board, and in the kinds of innovations listed below.

The Strategic Plan is structured around five guiding principles, translated into a series of operational objectives and targets for 2021-2023.

### First Principle: By the Members, for the Members

1. **Membership Relation Management (CRM) and membership growth** in all parts of the world, both individual and institutional members, including exploring regionalization options to increase diversity and Global South/North balance.
2. **Open and members-only platforms** to encourage engagement and participation by planners and non-members (ISOCARP World Café, Community of Practices & Research, Cyber Agora, and Planners' Lab).
3. Improved '**Planetary**': developing a new website

while restoring the members's area with forum function on the existing website; and more interactive communications tools including a more frequent newsletter (PULSE + Spotlight) and improved social media.

4. Continue to enhance opportunities for members to support the Society in prospecting and implementing **member-to-member planning activities and member-to-clients planning services**.
5. **Strengthen strategic partnerships** to advance our vision and to mobilize sponsoring and donations for the implementation of our mission.

## Second Principle: Knowledge for Better Cities and Regions

6. Innovate and extend the reach of the **ISOCARP World Planning Congress** and its Annual **Review of World Planning Practices**.
7. Innovate our other publications and archive (**digital paper/knowledge platform**).
8. Consolidate and expand the interest for and outreach of **ISOCARP Planning Awards**.
9. Promoting and using **ISOCARP Institute** as a world-class knowledge-bank and think tank for city and regional planning excellence, through planning research, practice and training.
10. Publish the **Society's position** on critical issues and speak directly to local, national and global decision takers, making optimal use of our **Scientific Committee**.

## Third Principle: Member Governance

11. Improved governance and management of the **ISOCARP Ecosystem** (Society and Institute).
12. **Gender- and diversity-responsive governance and electoral reform**.
13. **Professional Secretariat** and appropriate digital infrastructure.
14. Developing a virtual and physical **podium function** for our Secretariat through local and regional territorial collaboration.
15. Consolidated **financial administration**.
16. Explore and test new **revenue generating mechanisms** (donations, freemium services, ...).

## Fourth Principle: Transform and Innovate

17. **Weather the pandemic earthquake and aftershocks**; transform in ways that accelerate strategic change. Come out stronger with a mix of in-person and virtual events and tools to advance member to member collaborative knowledge generation and exchange.

18. **Selective strategic partnerships** for increased advocacy on global recognition of planning and planners; to enable long-life learning opportunities; to co-implement the common global sustainability agenda; and to advocate and contribute to a new 'Territorial Agenda'.
19. Advocate planning rights of communities by mobilizing interest and donations for **Planning Aid** for poor and deprived communities.

## Fifth Principle: Think with us!

20. The pandemic crisis is a good chance to fundamentally rethink the what and how of city and regional planning, as well the promotion and recognition of planning and planners in both Global South and North. This can only be done through **open dialogue** of all members, facilitated by the Board and its Scientific Committee, resulting in old and new fields of collaborative planning research and practice, as suggested below.

 STRATEGIC POSITION PAPER 2021-2023: OLD & NEW FIELDS

	ISSUES	ISOCARP ACTIONS
<b>PLACE-BASED PLANNING</b>		
1. Planning & Placemaking for towns, cities and city-regions	Policies, Plans and Designs	Excellence Awards
2. Planning for eco-regions	Place-based governance	Urban Planning Advisory Teams
3. Planning for countries and beyond	Place-based legislation	Regional Planning Advisory Team
	Place-based financing	National Planning Advisory Team
		Transnational Community of Practices & Research
		Public Space/Placemaking Programme
<b>PEOPLE-BASED PLANNING</b>		
1. Children & Youth	Child/Elderly-responsive planning	Students Awards
2. Women	Gender-responsive planning	Young Professional Planners Programme
3. Elderly & Disabled	Disabled-responsive planning	Female Planners Actions
4. Poor & Deprived	Poor-responsive planning	Senior Planners Actions
	Minority/Indigenous based	Barefoot Placemaking & Planning Training
	Human Rights based participatory planning	
<b>ISSUE-BASED PLANNING</b>		
1. Health-based	Urban Health	Thematic Community of Practices & Research
2. Mobility-based	Urban Mobility	PECA
3. Climate-based	Climate Action	
4. Nature-based	NBS	
5. Housing-based	Housing	
6. Energy-based	Energy	
7. Innovation-based	Innovation	

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The twenty strategic objectives spread over five guiding principles can be further condensed into ten clustered strategic priority actions, as presented at the member assembly meeting on 2 February 2021.

## 10 STRATEGIC PRIORITY ACTIONS 2021-2023

1. MEMBERS RELATION MANAGEMENT (Individual/Institutional + Old/New)
2. WRAPPING UP 56<sup>TH</sup> WPC (Declaration, Report)
3. PREPARATION 57<sup>TH</sup> & 58<sup>TH</sup> WPC'S
4. REVIEW 17 & DIGITAL PAPER PLATFORM
5. BUILDING NEW WEBSITE + MAINTAINING CYBER COMMUNITY (Cyber Agora/Lab, Community of Practices & Regionalization) + SOCIAL MEDIA
6. WORKPLAN MoU UN-HABITAT (NUA/SDG11, WUF11, WUC, Urban October,...) and MoU URBAN ECONOMY FORUM (incl World Urban Pavilion)
7. ACTIVATING OTHER MOST STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS (Inside/outside GPN + contributing to COP26)
8. INNOVATION OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES & SERVICES (Awards, UPAT/YPP/GPA/Trainings/EU-projects,...)
9. IMPROVED GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT Society + Institute + Secretariat
10. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT & STRATEGY (monitoring, donations, freemium services, ...).

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For ISOCARP members, these ten strategic objectives can also be translated in five good reasons to remain or become a member of the International Society of City and Regional Planners.

### WHAT'S IN IT FOR ISOCARP MEMBERS?

1. ISOCARP remains a member-led association of professional planners \_ sense of belonging
2. ISOCARP opens up to non-planners to locally co-implement a global sustainable planning agenda \_ sense of duty
3. ISOCARP board and secretariat enables member-2-member & member-2-client planning activities & services \_ sense of collaboration
4. ISOCARP members empower planners across gender, generational, education and economic inequalities \_ sense of solidarity
5. ISOCARP links planners from/with cities, universities, CSO's and consultancies \_ sense of partnership

STAY MEMBER > ENGAGE > RECRUIT MEMBERS

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## Roadmap for Implementation

The Board is responsible to the members for the management of the Society, overseeing projects, programs, events and the administration of the Society. The Board develops new policies and programmes and prepares for the General Meetings where the members make the ultimate decisions.

The Board has eleven members, or twelve when – every third year – there is a President Elect. As this is currently the case, the Board is preparing a smooth transition from Martin Dubbeling's presidency to Pietro Elisei's presidency. This will be formalized on 10 November 2021, during the 57<sup>th</sup> World Planning Congress. The next election for 7 of the 12 Board positions is due for late

2022.

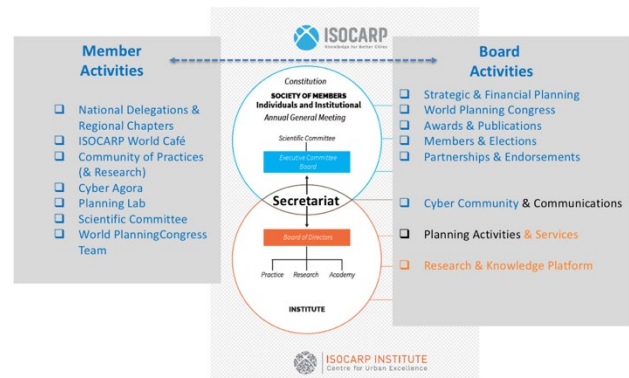
The operations of the Board and the election is regulated by ISOCARP Policy 2021/01.

The Board appointed a subcommittee called the Executive Committee, consisting of the President, the Secretary General and three other Board Members.

The Executive Committee is responsible to the Board for day-to-day management of the Society, including matters that the Board has explicitly delegated to the Executive Committee. The Board has assigned to the Executive Committee the responsibility for organizing the World Planning Congresses. Powers, functions and procedures assigned to the Executive Committee by the Board are regulated in ISOCARP Policy 2021/02.

ISOCARP Policy 2021/03 details the ISOCARP Governance as interplay between Member Activities and Board Activities, as illustrated below, with the ISOCARP Secretariat as linking pin. This diagram is followed by a brief description of Member Activities and Board Activities. The ISOCARP Secretariat will feature more prominently in a more Operational Plan.

### ISOCARP GOVERNANCE MODEL



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### Member Activities

Member Activities are primarily initiated and conducted by ordinary members, with tacit support by Board members and with the eventual logistical support of the Secretariat.

- **National Delegations and Regional Chapters:** while the Board is no longer elected by the National Delegations (NDs), members are still encouraged to self-organize and convene at national level. For federal countries with regionalize competences for spatial planning, this remains a convenient mean to maintain a national dialogue. However, the Board

is also committed to cater for the expressed need for more regional groupings of ISOCARP members, acknowledging the broad spectrum from transnational (two or more countries) to continental (Africa, Asia, America's, ...). While the Board is lending a helping hand, it will be up to ordinary members to launch initiatives to enable the 'regionalization' of ISOCARP as a global association and movement.

- **ISOCARP World Café:** launched during the first ever virtual 56<sup>th</sup> World Planning Congress, its success opens perspectives for a recurrent similar event to substantially reflect on specific aspects of ISOCARP's legacy, with a member-led forward-looking discussion to match legacy with innovation.
- **Community of Practices & Research (CoPR):** the first CoPR on Urban Health, established by two ordinary members shortly after World Urban Forum 2020, paved the way for other CoPR's, both thematic (Urban Innovation and potentially Urban Mobility) and geographic (MENA Urbanity and potentially 'Eurodelta'). While these CoPR's are member-led, coaching and limited logistical support from respectively Board and Secretariat are essential to create value for all members.
- **Cyber Agora:** the real agora was a central public space in ancient Greek city-states. Cyber Agora is its virtual replica that was initiated as response to the Covid-19 lockdowns, turning a crisis into a new opportunity to overcome physical distancing by social connectivity using the zoom-technology. Since the first Cyber Agora on 'Covid-19 Urbanism', three more events have been successfully organized, curated and animated by ordinary members, coached by the Board and with logistical support from the Secretariat. The Board is committed to maintain and facilitate this virtual public meeting place.
- **Planners' Lab:** while the Cyber Agora events are public events to mobilize registered and potential members, Planners' Lab is dedicated to members only, curated by the deputy chair of ISOCARP's Scientific Committee. The purpose is to process knowledge generated by Cyber Agora events into ISOCARP publications, statements, social media content and potential project proposals.
- **Scientific Committee:** whilst chaired by a senior member of the Board, the SciCom is entirely composed by ordinary members, including the deputy-chair. The SciCom advises the Board and the World Planning Congress teams, and other

working bodies in the Society on major technical planning issues, with professional and academic integrity and competence. The SciCom was recomposed in 2020 and will be evaluated and renewed at the AGM 2023.

- **World Planning Congress Team:** whilst the Board successfully professionalized its flagship project by appointing a contractual Congress Director (based in the Secretariat), the Board remains committed to keep a member-based and led voluntary Congress Team as the pumping hearth of the Congress, from preparation to wrap-up. Uniquely, the Congress Team of the 56<sup>th</sup> virtual World Planning Congress will also manage the content of the 57<sup>th</sup> World Planning Congress, jointly with the Local Organizing Committee.

## Board Activities

After the abolition of the office of Vice-Presidencies with specific portfolio's (in 2018), it took some time to internally reorganize the Board and assign duties and responsibilities to the twelve Board members, based on a new Board governance structure. Apart from the most formal Executive Committee and the World Planning Congress Committee, the Board is now organized in seven standing Board Teams.

- **Executive Committee:** a subcommittee of the Board, consisting of the President, the Secretary General and three other Board Members, responsible for day-to-day management of the Society, regulated by ISOCARP Policy 2021/02.
- **World Planning Congress Committee:** to monitor the overall management of the World Planning Congresses and the eventual ISOCARP engagement in other global events such as the World Urban Forum. The ExCom members as well as the ISOCARP Congress Director are ex-officio member of this committee.
- **Strategic & Financial Planning Team:** to monitor the rolling Strategic Planning (long and short term), the Financial Planning (account management and budgeting), the sponsoring strategy and the optimisation of governance and executive management of both the Society and the Institute.
- **Members & Elections Team:** to monitor the overall management of member assemblies, membership relations and the elections for vacant Board positions. The Team will pay special attention to a) better services provision for institutional members, b) reformulating the

role of remaining National ISOCARP-member Delegations and c) the prospect for so called 'Regional ISOCARP-member Chapters'.

- **Awards & Publications Team:** to conduct the annual ISOCARP Award Schemes and oversee the quality production of the annual Review of World Planning Practice (related to the central theme of the annual World Planning Congress) and other ISOCARP flagship publications (related to other planning activities and services). The Team will also monitor the establishment and maintenance of a digital repository of papers and articles published by ISOCARP. The Team is also responsible for a more frequent ISOCARP Newsletter (Pulse) – eventually combined with a 'members blog' facility.
- **Communications & Cyber Community Team:** in charge of the maintenance and improvement of 'Planetary', the bundle of ISOCARP websites and social media outlets, as of the overall management of the ISOCARP Cyber Community operations – largely member-driven – see also 'Member Activities'.
- **Partnerships & Endorsements Team:** to develop and monitor a partnerships and endorsement strategy, as well to prepare, review and monitor the implementation of MoU's and other partnership agreements. Priority will go to partnerships that contribute best to the strategic objectives of the Association
- **Planning Activities & Services Team:** to monitor the overall management of members-to-members planning activities and the member-to-clients services, including the legacy and adapted forms of UPATs and YPPs. The Team is also responsible for prospection and acquisition, through product- and service innovation (e.g. through virtualization and online-services). Financial management of member-to-client activities and services will be administered by the Institute. New projects must be submitted to the Board for its approval, including a financial and administrative/executive planning. Project management will be supported by a project monitoring mechanism.
- **Planning Research & Knowledge Platform Team:** to oversee and contribute to the Planning Research & Knowledge Platform activities conducted by the ISOCARP Institute.

All these Committees and Teams can engage with ISOCARP members outside the Board, as well with ISOCARP Secretariat staff members and designated service providers, coordinated by the Secretary General.

All Committees and Teams commit to establish a yearly workplan, meet on a regular basis, contribute to the

update of a monthly ISOCARP Action Monitor and prepare reports and proposals for the Board.

## Codes of Practice, Conduct & Ethics

Board Members are expected to actively encourage planners and institutions to join the Society, and to encourage planners, institutions, partners, sponsors and donors to provide gifts, scholarships, subsidies and bequests to support the Society.

While Board Members can interact with the Board of Directors and Secretariat of ISOCARP Institute, they can only represent the Society. Board Members must declare incomes received by and for services delivered to the ISOCARP Institute.

Remuneration of special services to implement the Strategic Plan delivered by ordinary and Board members will be regulated by a new Remuneration Policy.

All governance matters related to ISOCARP Secretariat and the ISOCARP Institute will be regulated in separate and complementary ISOCARP policies.

The Board will establish a new Code of Conduct & Ethics for Board and Staff members, including communication protocols (internal and external).

## Operational Plan

The Strategic Plan 2021-2023 includes the basics of a Roadmap for Implementation that will be complemented by a more Operational Plan, including a multi-annual budget proposal – the latter subjected to the approval of the annual member-assembly.

The Operation Plan will include a number of additional Policy Regulations and/or Workplans on

- Improved Governance of ISOCARP Ecosystem
- Financial Management
- Scientific Committee (based on its current Roadmap)
- Executive Management and The Secretariat;
- Member Relation Management (including 'Regionalization')
- Elections (reviewing the current regulation)
- World Planning Congress management (based on the current Terms of Reference)
- Awards Scheme Management
- World Planning Practice Review (and other publications)

- Communications & Marketing (based on current Communication Plan)
- Cyber Community/Member Activities (with focus on COPR's, Cyber Agora and Planner's Lab – based on current Roadmap)
- Partnerships and Representations (based on current Strategy)
- Project Acquisition and Monitoring (based on current Project Monitor)
- Knowledge Database (including Congress paper repository)
- Remuneration of services delivered by members.

The Board welcomes suggestion for improvement and implementation of its Strategic Plan on [isocarp@isocarp.org](mailto:isocarp@isocarp.org).

END