

ISOCARP Elections 2025

Elections will be held at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the International Society of City and Regional Planners to elect

Six Board Members

Key election dates

18 October 2025: Announcement of call for nominations

14 November 2025: Nominations close

18 November 2025: Special General Meeting

3 December 2025: AGM at the Riyadh Congress, closing of online voting and announcement of results

The International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) is the international society for those professionally involved in city and regional planning. The Society is registered in The Netherlands as a membership association. Its constitution empowers the members to govern the Society.

At Annual General Meetings, the members approve the annual accounts and the budget, and elect Board Members if there are vacancies. Under the Constitution, all members are entitled to vote in the election of Board Members, and to vote online.

The call for nominations to fill six board vacancies will close on 14 November 2025, followed by a vetting process by the (Board-independent) Nomination Committee, chaired by Ana Peric. The Nominations Committee will vet nominated candidates against the nomination criteria set forward by the Board and present its nominations report at the SGM on 18 November.

After the closing of nominations on 14 November there will be opportunities for candidates to present themselves and engage in constructive debates with other candidates and members. These interactions will be facilitated by the Board and the Secretariat and moderated by an independent member from outside the Board.

The voting platform and process will be managed by the Elections Committee, chaired by Jeremy Dawkins. The Elections Committee will oversee honest, fair and transparent elections using BigPulse as the digital voting platform and present its election report at and after the AGM on 3 December 2025.

The role of the Board

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 programs and prepares for the General Meetings where the members make the ultimate decisions.

The Society's Constitution provides for a Board of ten or more members. The Society's members have decided on a Board with eleven members, or twelve when – every third year – there is a President-Elect. Normally, the members of the Board are the President, the Secretary General, the Treasurer and eight other Board Members.

The Board appoints a subcommittee called the Executive Committee, consisting of the President, the Secretary, the Treasurer and two other Board Members. The Executive Committee is responsible to the Board for the 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 ISOCARP Congress Committee (ICC, comprising the Executive Committee plus one other Board member) the responsibility for organising the World Planning Congresses.

Directors of the Board are elected by the members for three years (AGM/Congress to AGM/Congress). Members may be elected for a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms (with exception of the President). Those elected must continue to be active members of the Society during their term of office. Board members are expected to participate actively in meetings, decision-making processes, and organizational initiatives. In cases of prolonged inactivity or non-engagement, the Board shall conduct a formal assessment of the member's participation. If the assessment confirms insufficient engagement, the Board may initiate procedures to replace the inactive member to ensure effective governance and representation. The Board is finalising principles on this topic, for sound governance and management in line with the new Dutch law (WBTR).

The role of Board Member

Each member of the International Society of City and Regional Planners elected to the Board has an opportunity to contribute to the Society, to work energetically in the members' interests, to champion new ways of doing things, to improve the Society's operations and programs, and to help build the Society's effectiveness, relevance, reach, and profile.

In doing so, each Board Member faces challenges, gains experience, learns much about city and regional planning around the world, is introduced to new people and organisations, and of course makes new friends. Each Board Member must ensure that the Society manages its finances and assets and remains solvent – Board Members are collectively and individually accountable if it does not. Each Board Member is expected to actively participate in decision making, to take on one or more specific projects or programs, to be responsible for tasks assigned by the Board, and to support other Board Members in their activities. Each Board Member is expected to attend two Board meetings in person each year (one of which is held at the World Planning Congress), and to actively participate in monthly online Board meetings.

Additional opportunities to contribute to the Society might be to be part of or even chair the Scientific Committee and to join the Executive Committee. Other opportunities involve challenging and rewarding roles in the World Planning Congress Committee, third-party planning services including YPPs, UPAT's, Masterclasses etc; publications, awards, relationships with international organisations, managing membership applications and leading campaigns to increase the society's global visibility and the interest in joining the society, supporting and shaping the website isocarp.org, contributing to the Society's social media channels, and new initiatives that Board Members may take to the Board.

The role of the Secretary General

Our current Secretary General, Frank D'hondt, completes his second three-year term at the 2025 AGM.

The Secretary General is seen as a senior member of the Board, assisting the President and deputising for the President when the President is not available. The Secretary has executive powers on matters explicitly delegated to the Secretary by the Board. The Secretary is an ex officio member of the Executive Committee. The Secretary is often the first point of contact for agencies and other entities with which the Society maintains relationships and takes the lead on contracts and employment matters. The Secretary is generally responsible for the administration of the society, preparing papers for meetings and the minutes, preparing reports and proposals relating to administrative matters, and overseeing the office, resources, and the website. To ensure smooth operations, and learning from previous experiences, the Secretary is preferably able to reach the Secretariat in The Hague, The Netherlands within 24-48 hours if needed.

To preserve the strategic decision-making and oversight role of Board members, operational tasks are partially implemented through the ISOCARP Secretariat. The Board is committed – pending available financial resources – to further differentiate between strategic and operational responsibilities and duties.

At the Special General Meeting on 18 November 2025, the Board will seek the members' support for the appointment of the Secretary General by the Board from amongst its members, rather than by direct election to the office. This offers flexibility and adaptability, in line with international best practice. The Board sees this change as an important step towards the goal of transferring operational responsibilities from a voluntary Secretary General to a professional Secretariat.

If the members support this initiative, the elections at the next AGM – at the 61st World Planning Congress on 1-4 December 2025 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – will fill six Board vacancies to bring the Board to eleven members, one of whom will be appointed Secretary.

Nominating for election to the Board

Members are encouraged to read the information relating to the elections and the nomination process and to consider nominating for election. Candidates may wish to express their interest in a variety of roles on the Board, including the role of Secretary General. Nominations are submitted on the online form and are supported by a candidate statement sent to elections@isocarp.org. Nominations close on 14 November 2025.

The International Society of City and Regional Planners has achieved much since it was founded in 1965, based on voluntary contributions by the members serving on and outside the Board, participating in Community of Practices, Cyber Agora's, supporting YPPs, joining the Congress team, writing and editing publications, and in many other ways. In the case of Board members, the voluntary commitment is significant, and only a proportion of travel expenses can be expected to be reimbursed. Most Board Members, however, find that the intangible rewards, including the satisfaction of strengthening our international association of planners, are even greater than expected.

Queries about this year's elections can be addressed to elections@isocarp.org.