What is Congress?

Congress is the Institute’s global advisory body that represents the membership. It is constituted such that it is not dominated by a single interest group; its role is to engage the membership to guide and influence the Global Board of Trustees (GBT) through the Chair of Congress.
What is the role of Congress?

Congress is the Institute’s representative and advisory body, elected from and by the global membership. Congress members represent CIPS global membership and their contributions help to enhance the reputation, elevate the value of CIPS and engage the CIPS Global Community. They are a key communications link between members and the Institute’s leadership.

Congress Members are part of CIPS volunteer community of over 600 CIPS Member Volunteers globally.

CIPS Volunteers provide valuable insights from the procurement and supply community, their contribution is vital and significant, not only to CIPS and the profession in the here and now, but to the professionals of the future who are inspired by our volunteers and all they give back to our profession. Congress Members play a large part in the development of a rich and diverse procurement community, which is built on a passion for procurement and supply.

1. Advice and guidance
   Congress role is advisory, it has no legal or governance responsibilities but provides guidance to the Global Board of Trustees (GBT), ensuring that the issues that matter to members are on the agenda and that leadership decisions are influenced by the opinions of the global membership.

2) Does Congress have a governance role?
   Congress is set up as per our Royal Charter and byelaws to support GBT. It does not have executive decision-making powers.

3) Communications
   Congress Members act as a two-way communication channels between the membership and the Institute’s leadership. The role is to engage with members to understand their needs and how they are being affected by developments in the profession and make recommendations to the GBT. These recommendations are fed into GBT through the regular reporting to the Chair of Congress. Congress Members are ambassadors and positive advocates supporting the communication and champion CIPS strategies, plans and achievements back to the membership.

4) The election process to the Board
   Congress is the constitutional mechanism for electing a number of Congress Members on to GBT. Once elected as a Trustee to the GBT, the member concerned ceases to be on CIPS Congress. The member chosen as Congress Chair is active in both Congress and GBT; moving from being a Congress Member representing one region to representing (on GBT) the entire global membership.
How is Congress constituted?
Congress is divided into global geographical regions to ensure representation of members is appropriate.

Who can be a Congress Member?
All current MCIPS and FCIPS members are eligible to stand for Congress. Students and Affiliate Members are not eligible to be a member of Congress.

Congress members must be resident in the region they represent.

What is the process to become a Congress Member?
- Calls for nominations for vacant seats are emailed to all current fully qualified CIPS members in the relevant region at the start of the election process by an independent election provider appointed by CIPS.
- Interested members must complete an online nomination application which includes a Nomination Statement which will be used for the election.
- CIPS verify the eligibility of nominees against the mandatory criteria from the Congress role description. Where there are more than three nominations for a seat, the nominees that meet the mandatory criteria are taken to a shortlisting panel which is made up of the Chair of Congress plus two elected Global Board of Trustees.
- A maximum of three nominees for each vacant seat are confirmed ahead of the online election.
- The Congress election is opened for voting through an online ballot.
- The link to the voting ballot is emailed to all current fully qualified CIPS members in the relevant region where there is a vacant seat. Members vote for their preferred candidates in order of preference.
- CIPS encourage engagement in the Congress election through email communications to members, through CIPS social media channels and CIPS member and volunteer networks.
- When voting closes, the candidates are ranked 1st, 2nd 3rd for each seat and ratified by CIPS and the Chair of Congress.
- CIPS contact the 1st place candidates to request their acceptance, and formalise the signing of the CIPS Volunteer Agreement.
- Once all seats are confirmed results are announced to members.
- CIPS organises a virtual on-boarding session to those successful ahead of starting their term as Congress Members

We encourage all eligible members to vote in the Congress Elections and we understand that candidates may want to campaign for votes through their local networks. Candidates can start campaigning as soon as their candidacy has been formally confirmed. CIPS provides guidance on campaigning to help make the process transparent. Congress election candidates must always act in accordance with the CIPS Code of Conduct.

Who can vote in Congress elections?
All current MCIPS and FCIPS members resident in the region where there is a vacant seat for election can vote in elections to elect their Congress Member.
What does the commitment involve?

The Congress term is three years, from the elected date.

Congress Members must be current fully qualified members of CIPS (hold MCIPS or FCIPS), have completed the CIPS Ethics Test, hold Chartered Status or upgrade within 3 months of their appointment. They must hold residence in the region they represent.

All CIPS volunteers, including Congress Members, must read the CIPS Volunteer Handbook which includes volunteer policies and sign the CIPS Volunteer Agreement. The Congress role outline provides information about the expectations of Congress Members.

There is no minimum or expected time commitment from volunteers and it is recognised that the role will coexist with personal and professional commitments, which can vary over time. Depending on your level of engagement and contribution you could expect to commit anywhere between 5 and 25 hours in any given month.

Congress Members are expected to engage with professionals and members throughout the year – whether virtually or in person. Congress Members provide quarterly reports to the Chair of Congress which includes updates of their engagement with members in their region and feedback on themes and views of members. The consolidated reports allow the Chair of Congress to feedback to the Global Board of Trustees in their quarterly meetings.

There will typically be up to three global Congress meetings each year. These will be held virtually, and/or face to face. Congress Members are expected to prepare for meetings by reading any relevant documentation and to carry out any actions agreed to, such as contributing to a working group. They should liaise with members and external professional groups in their region to bring in different perspectives as required. Where physical meetings are organised, Congress Members will be asked to travel and be able to obtain the necessary visas as required in line with the Volunteer Expenses Policy.
What will I get out of joining CIPS Congress?
The simple answer is as much as you put in. While being a Congress Member is a voluntary, unremunerated role, there is a payback in professional and personal benefits. You will have the personal satisfaction of helping to drive our agenda and shape the future development of our Institute. The experience of networking and collaborating with other Procurement and Supply Professionals from every global region and from all business sectors provides a unique opportunity to develop your own knowledge and skills.

If you are interested in non-executive roles and becoming a Trustee, eligible members of Congress may be able to stand for election to the CIPS GBT, which in turn opens the door to senior officer appointments.

10 good reasons to be a congress representative

1. Be the voice of our membership
2. Form a two-way communication channel between Congress and CIPS members
3. Help to influence the CIPS agenda
4. Shape the future of your Profession
5. Network with others committed to the future of your Profession
6. Develop your own professional knowledge and skills
7. Hear first-hand about developments
8. Help raise the profile of your Profession and Institute
9. Raise your personal profile with your peers ...and perhaps most important:
10. Gain the satisfaction of a job well done both for yourself and for your Profession