mtgvenue
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IETF Plenary Meeting Venue Selection Process
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Abstract

The IAOC has responsibility for arranging IETF plenary meeting Venue selection and operation. This document details the IETF's Meeting Venue Selection Process from the perspective of its goals, criteria and thought processes. It points to additional process documents on the IAOC Web Site that go into further detail and are subject to change with experience.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

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## 1. Introduction

[[ED: The issue tracker for this document can be found at https://github.com/elear/mtgvenue/issues/.]]

The IAOC has responsibility for arranging IETF plenary meeting venue selection and operation. The purpose of this document is to guide the IAOC in their selection of regions, cities, and facilities, and
hotels. The IAOC applies this guidance at different points in the process in an attempt to faithfully meet the requirements of the IETF community. We specify a set of general criteria for venue selection and several requirements for transparency and community consultation.

It remains the responsibility of the IASA to apply their best judgment. The IASA accepts input and feedback both during the consultation process and later (for instance when there are changes in the situation at a chosen location). Any appeals remain subject to the provisions of BCP101 [RFC4071]. As always, the community is encouraged to provide direct feedback to the NOMCOM, IESG, and IAB regarding the discharge of the IAOC's performance.

Three terms describe the places for which the IETF contracts services:

Venue:
This is an umbrella term for the city, meeting resources and guest room resources.

Facility:
The building that houses meeting rooms and associated resources. It may also house an IETF Hotel.

IETF Hotels:
One or more hotels, in close proximity to the Facility, where the IETF guest room allocations are negotiated and IETF SSIDs are in use.

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC2119].

## 2. Venue Selection Objectives

### 2.1. Core Values

Some IETF values pervade the selection process. These often are applicable to multiple requirements listed in this document. They are not limited to the following, but at minimum include:

Why do we meet?
We meet to pursue the IETF's mission [RFC3935], partly by advancing the development of Internet-Drafts and RFCs. We also seek to facilitate attendee participation in multiple topics and to enable cross-pollination of ideas and technologies.

Inclusiveness:

We would like to facilitate the onsite or remote participation of anyone who wants to be involved.

Every country has limits on who it will permit within its borders. However the IETF seeks to:

1. Minimize situations in which onerous entry regulations inhibit, discourage, or prevent participants from attending meetings, or failing that to distribute meeting locations such that onerous entry regulations are not always experienced by the same attendees; and
2. Avoid meeting in countries with laws that effectively exclude people on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or gender identity.

Where do we meet?
We meet in different locations globally, in order to spread the difficulty and cost of travel among active participants, balancing travel time and expense across the regions in which IETF participants are based.

## Internet Access:

As an organization, we write specifications for the Internet, and we use it heavily. Meeting attendees need unfiltered access to the general Internet and our corporate networks. "Unfiltered access" in this case means that all forms of communication are allowed. This includes, but is not limited to, access to corporate networks via encrypted VPNs from the meeting Facility and Hotels, including overflow hotels. We also need open network access available at high enough data rates, at the meeting Facility, to support our work, including the support of remote participation. Beyond this, we are the first users of our own technology. Any filtering may cause a problem with that technology development. In some cases, local laws may require some filtering. We seek to avoid such locales without reducing the pool of cities to an unacceptable level by stating a number of criteria below, one mandatory and others important, to allow for the case where local laws may require filtering in some circumstances. [MeetingNet]

## Focus:

We meet to have focused technical discussions. These are not limited to scheduled breakout sessions, although of course those are important. They also happen over meals or drinks -- including a specific type of non-session that we call a "Bar BOF" -- or in side meetings. Environments that are noisy or distracting prevent
that or reduce its effectiveness, and are therefore less desirable as a meeting Facility.

Economics:
Meeting attendees participate as individuals. While many are underwritten by employers or sponsors, many are self-funded. In order to reduce participation costs and travel effort, we therefore seek locations that provide convenient budget alternatives for food and lodging, and which minimize travel segments from major airports to the Venue. Within reason, budget should not be a barrier to accommodation.

Least Astonishment and Openness:
Regular participants should not be surprised by meeting Venue selections, particularly when it comes to locales. To avoid surprise, the venue selection process, as with all other IETF processes, should be as open as practicable. It should be possible for the community to engage early to express its views on prospective selections, so that the community, IAOC, and IAD can exchange views as to appropriateness long before a venue contract is considered.

### 2.2. Venue Selection Non-Objectives

IETF meeting Venues are not selected or declined with the explicit purposes of:

Politics:
Endorsing or condemning particular countries, political paradigms, laws, regulations, or policies.

Maximal attendance:
While the IETF strives to be as inclusive as possible both online and in person, maximal meeting attendance in and of itself is not a goal. It would defeat a key goal of meeting if active contributors with differing points of view did not have the opportunity to resolve their disagreements, no matter how full the rooms.

Tourism:
Variety in site-seeing experiences.

## 3. Meeting Criteria

This section contains the criteria for IETF meetings. It is broken down into three subsections: mandatory criteria, important criteria, and other considerations, each as explained below.

### 3.1. Mandatory Criteria

If criteria in this subsection cannot be met, a particular location is unacceptable for selection, and the IAOC MUST NOT enter into a contract. Should the IAOC learn that a location no longer can meet a mandatory requirement after having entered into a contract, it will inform the community and address the matter on a case by case basis.
o The Facility MUST be assessed to be able to provide sufficient space in an appropriate layout to accommodate the expected number of people to attend that meeting.
o The Facility and IETF Hotels MUST provide wheelchair access to accommodate the number of people who are anticipated to require it.
o The venue MUST provide unfiltered access to the Internet, to the extent permitted by governing laws and regulations.

### 3.2. Important Criteria

The criteria in this subsection are not mandatory, but are still highly significant. It may be necessary to trade one or more of these criteria off against others. A Venue that meets more of these criteria is on the whole more preferable than another that meets less of these criteria. Requirements classed as Important can also be balanced across Venue selections for multiple meetings. When a particular requirement in this section cannot be met, the IAOC MUST notify the community at the time the venue is booked. Furthermore, the IAOC is requested to assist those who, as a result, may be inconvenienced in some way.

### 3.2.1. Venue City Criteria

o Travel to the Venue is acceptable based on cost, time, and burden for participants traveling from multiple regions. It is anticipated that the burden borne will be generally shared over the course of multiple years.
o The Venue is assessed as favorable for obtaining a host and sponsors. That is, the Meeting is in a location and at a price that it is possible and probable to find a host and sponsors.
o Travel barriers to entry, including visa requirements, are likely to be such that an overwhelming majority of participants can attend. The term "travel barriers" is to be read broadly by the IASA in the context of whether a successful meeting can be had.
o Economic, safety, and health risks associated with this Venue are acceptable.

### 3.2.2. Basic Venue Criteria

The following requirements relate to the Venue and Facilities.

The IETF operates internationally and adjusts to local requirements. Facilities selected for IETF Meetings conform with local health, safety and accessibility laws and regulations. A useful discussion of related considerations in evaluating this criterion is at: [http://www.sigaccess.org/welcome-to-sigaccess/resources/accessible-conference-guide/](http://www.sigaccess.org/welcome-to-sigaccess/resources/accessible-conference-guide/)

In addition:
o There are sufficient places (e.g., a mix of hallways, bars, meeting rooms, and restaurants) for people to hold ad hoc conversations and group discussions in the combination of spaces offered by the facilities, hotels and bars/restaurants in the surrounding area, within walking distance (5-10').
o The cost of guest rooms, meeting space, meeting food and beverage is affordable, within the norms of business travel.
o The Facility is accessible by people with disabilities. While we mandate wheelchair accessibility, other forms are important, and should be provided to the extent possible, based on anticipated needs of the community.

### 3.2.3. Technical Meeting Needs

The following criteria relate to technical meeting needs.
o The Facility's support technologies and services -- network, audio-video, etc. -- are sufficient for the anticipated activities at the meeting, or the Facility is willing to add such infrastructure or these support technologies and services might be provided by a third party, all at no -- or at an acceptable -cost to the IETF.
o The Facility directly provides, or permits and facilitates, the delivery of a high performance, robust, unfiltered and unmodified IETF Network.
o The IETF Hotel(s) directly provide, or else permit and facilitate, the delivery of a high performance, robust, unfiltered and
unmodified Internet service for the public areas and guest rooms; this service is typically included in the cost of the room.

### 3.2.4. Hotel Needs

The following criteria relate to IETF Hotels.
o The IETF Hotel(s) are within close proximity to each other and the Facility.
o The guest rooms at the IETF Hotel(s) are sufficient in number to house $1 / 3$ or more of projected meeting attendees.
o Overflow Hotels can be placed under contract, within convenient travel time of the Facility and at a variety of guest room rates.
o The Venue environs include budget hotels within convenient travel time, cost, and effort.
o The IETF Hotel(s) are accessible by people with disabilities. While we mandate wheelchair accessibility, other forms are important, and should be provided to the extent possible, based on anticipated needs of the community.
o At least one IETF Hotel has a space for use as a lounge, conducive to planned and ad hoc meetings and chatting, as well as working online. There are tables with seating, convenient for small meetings with laptops. These can be at an open bar or casual restaurant. Preferably the lounge area is on the path between the meeting rooms and the hotel entrance, and is available all day and night.

### 3.2.5. Food and Beverage

It is said that an army travels on its stomach. So too does the IETF. The following criteria relate to food and beverage.
o The Venue environs, which includes both onsite, as well as areas within a reasonable walking distance or conveniently accessible by a short taxi ride or by local public transportation, have convenient and inexpensive choices for meals that can accommodate a wide range of dietary requirements.
o The Venue environs include grocery shopping that will accommodate a wide range of dietary requirements, within a reasonable walking distance, or conveniently accessible by a short taxi, bus, or subway ride, from the Facility and IETF Hotels.
o A range of attendee's health-related and religion-related dietary requirements can be satisfied with robust and flexible onsite service or through access to an adequate grocery.

### 3.3. Other Consideraitons

The following considerations are desirable, but not as important as the preceding requirements, and thus should not be traded off for them.

We have something of a preference for an IETF meeting to be under "One Roof". That is, qualified meeting space and guest rooms are available in the same facility.

It is desirable for overflow hotels provide reasonable, reliable, unfiltered Internet service for the public areas and guest rooms; this service is included in the cost of the room.

It is desirable to enter into a multi-event contract with the Facility and IETF Hotels to optimize meeting and attendee benefits, i.e., reduce administrative costs and reduce direct attendee costs, will be considered a positive factor. Such a contract can be considered after at least one IETF meeting has been held at the Facility.

Particularly when we are considering a city for the first time, it is desirable to have someone who is familiar with both the locale and the IETF participate in the site selection process. Such a person can provide guidance regarding safety, location of local services, and understanding best ways to get to and from the Venue, and local customs, as well as identify how our requirements are met.

## 4. Venue Selection Roles

The formal structure of IETF administrative support functions is documented in BCP 101 [RFC4071], [RFC4371], [RFC7691]. The reader is expected to be familiar with the entities and roles defined by that document, in particular for the IASA, ISOC, IAOC and IAD. This section covers the meeting selection related roles of these and other parties that participate in the process. Note that roles beyond meeting selection, e.g., actually running and reporting on meetings, are outside the scope of this document.

### 4.1. IETF Participants

While perhaps obvious, it is important to note that IETF meetings serve all those who contribute to the work of the IETF. This includes those who attend meetings in person, from newcomer to
frequent attendee, to those who participate remotely, as well as those who do not attend but contribute to new RFCs. Potential new contributors are also considered in the process.

Participants have a responsibility to express their views about venues early and often, by responding to surveys or other solicitations from the IAD or IAOC, and by initiating fresh input as the Participant becomes aware of changes in venues that have been reviewed. This permits those responsible for venue selection to be made aware of concerns relating to particular locations well in advance of having entered into contract discussions.

### 4.2. IESG and IETF Chair

The Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG) comprises the IETF Area Directors and the IETF Chair. Along with the IAB, the IESG is responsible for the management of the IETF, and is the standards approval board for the IETF, as described in BCP9 [RFC2026]. This means that the IESG sets high level policies related to, among other things, meeting venues. The IETF Chair, among other things, relays these IESG-determined policies to the IAOC. The IETF Chair is also a member of the IAOC.

### 4.3. The Internet Society

With respect to IETF meetings, the Internet Society (ISOC):
o Executes all Venue contracts on behalf of the IETF at the request of the IAOC
o Solicits meeting sponsorships
o Collects all meeting-related revenues, including registration fees, sponsorships, hotel commissions, and other miscellaneous revenues

ISOC also provides accounting services, such as invoicing and monthly financial statements.

### 4.4. IETF Administrative Oversight Committee

The IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC) has the responsibility to oversee and select IETF meeting venues. It instructs the IAD to work with the Internet Society to write the relevant contracts. It approves the IETF meetings calendar. In cooperation with the IAD, the IAOC takes necessary actions to ensure that the IASA is aware of participant concerns about particular venues as early in the process as is feasible.

### 4.5. IETF Administrative Support Activity

The IETF Administrative Support Activity (IASA) performs the meeting selection process under the oversight of the IAOC. This includes identifying, qualifying and reporting on potential meeting sites, as well as supporting meeting Venue contract negotiation. The IETF Secretariat is part of the IASA under the management of the IAD. The IAD takes appropriate actions to solicit community input regarding both retrospective and prospective feedback from participants.

### 4.6. IETF Administrative Director

The IETF Administrative Director (IAD) coordinates and supports the activities of the IETF Secretariat, the IAOC Meetings Committee and the IAOC to ensure the timely execution of the meeting process. This includes participating in the IAOC Meeting Subcommittee and ensuring its efforts are documented, leading Venue contract negotiation, and coordinating contract execution with ISOC. The meetings budget is managed by the IAD.

### 4.7. IAOC Meeting Committee

The fundamental purpose of the Meetings Committee is to participate in the Venue selection process, and to formulate recommendations to the IAOC regarding meeting sites. It also tracks the meetings sponsorship program, recommends extraordinary meeting-related expenses, and recommends the IETF meetings calendar to the IAOC. The charter of the committee is at: <https://iaoc.ietf.org/ committees.html\#meetings>.

Membership in the Meetings Committee is at the discretion of the IAOC; it includes an IAOC appointed chair, the IETF Administrative Director (IAD), IAOC members, representatives from the Secretariat, and interested members of the community.

## 5. Venue Selection Steps

The following sequence is used by the IAOC to select venues. Unless otherwise stated below, the IAOC may evolve these steps over time without updating this document.

### 5.1. Identification

Four years out, a process identifies cities that might be candidates for meetings. For example:
a. The IAOC selects regions, cities, and dates for meetings.
b. A list of target cities per region is provided to the Secretariat, with host preferences, if known.
c. Potential venues in preferred cities are identified and receive preliminary investigation, including reviews of Official Advisory Sources, consultation with specialty travel services, frequent travelers and local contacts to identify possible barriers to holding a successful meeting in the target cities.
d. Investigated cities and findings are provided by the Secretariat to the Meetings Committee for further review. Meetings Committee makes a recommendation to the IAOC of investigated/target cities to consider further as well as issues identified and the results of research conducted.

### 5.2. Consultation

The IAOC MUST consult the community about potential new venues prior to them being booked. The timing and means by which it does so may vary over time, but MUST include references to any notable travel risks. The consultation may overlap with the previous step (identification).

For example:
a. The IAOC asks the community whether there are any barriers to holding a successful meeting in any of the target cities in the set.
b. Community responses are reviewed and concerns investigated by the Meetings Committee. The results together with recommendations for whether each city should be considered as potential meeting location is provided to the IAOC.
c. The IAOC identifies which cities are to be considered as a potential meeting location.
d. On a public web page, the IAOC lists all candidate cities, when community input was solicited, and if a city is to be considered as a potential meeting location.
e. The Meetings Committee pursues potential meeting locations based on the posted list of cities that have been identified as a potential meeting locations.

### 5.3. Qualification

Visit:
a. Secretariat assesses "vetted" target cities to determine availability and conformance to criteria.
b. Meetings Committee approves potential cities for site qualification visit.
c. Site qualification visits are arranged by Secretariat and preliminary negotiations are undertaken with selected potential sites.
d. Site qualification visit is conducted using the checklist along the lines of what is included in Appendix A; the site visit team prepares a site report and discusses it with the Meetings Committee.

### 5.4. Negotiation

2.75 - 3 years out, initiate contract negotiations:
a. The Meetings Committee reviews the Venue options based on Venue selection criteria and recommends a Venue to the IAOC. Only options that meet all Mandatory labeled criteria might be recommended.
b. IAOC selects a Venue for contracting as well as a back-up contracting Venue, if available.
c. Secretariat negotiates with selected Venue. IAD reviews contract and requests IAOC and ISOC approval of contract and authority for Secretariat to execute contract on ISOC's behalf.
d. Contracts are executed.
e. The venue is announced. At this time, the announcement MUST include any notable travel risks or references thereto.

### 5.5. Late Changes

If at any time after a contract is signed the IAOC learns
circumstances have changed such that it is not certain that Important or Mandatory criteria can be met by a Venue, the IAOC MUST reconsider the selection. A description of how reconsideration currently takes place is found in Appendix B. The IAOC will gauge the cost of making a change against the ability of the IETF to conclude a successful
meeting, and make a final determination based on their best judgment. When there is enough time to do so, the IAOC is expected to consult the community about changes.

## 6. IANA Considerations

This memo asks the IANA for no new parameters.
[The RFC-Editor may remove this section prior to publicaiton.]

## 7. Security Considerations

This note proposes no protocols, and therefore no new protocol insecurities.

## 8. Privacy Considerations

This note reveals no personally identifying information apart from its authorship.
[The RFC-Editor may remove this section prior to publicaiton.]
9. Contributors

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## 10. Acknowledgements

Additional contributions came from Jari Arkko, Scott Bradner, Alissa Cooper, Dave Crocker, Jordi Palet Martinez, Andrew Sullivan, and other participants in the mtgvenue working group. Those listed in this section or as contributors may or may not agree with the content of this memo.

## 11. References

### 11.1. Normative References

[MeetingNet]
O'Donoghue, K., Martin, J., Elliott, C., and J. Jaeggli, "IETF Meeting Network Requirements", wEB https://iaoc.ietf.org/ietf-network-requirements.html.
[RFC2026] Bradner, S., "The Internet Standards Process -- Revision 3", BCP 9, RFC 2026, DOI 10.17487/RFC2026, October 1996, [http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2026](http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc2026).
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[RFC7691] Bradner, S., Ed., "Updating the Term Dates of IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC) Members", BCP 101, RFC 7691, DOI 10.17487/RFC7691, November 2015, [http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7691](http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7691).

### 11.2. Informative References

[I-D.barnes-healthy-food]
Barnes, M., "Healthy Food and Special Dietary Requirements for IETF meetings", draft-barnes-healthy-food-07 (work in progress), July 2013.
[RFC3935] Alvestrand, H., "A Mission Statement for the IETF", BCP 95, RFC 3935, October 2004.

## Appendix A. Site Qualification Visit Checklist

This section is based on the PreQualification RFP, dated January 23, 2016, which is available at [https://iaoc.ietf.org/meetings-committee/venue-selection.html](https://iaoc.ietf.org/meetings-committee/venue-selection.html). The contents of the link may be changed as needed.

Prequalification Specification


Meeting Space Requirements:





* Breakouts $6+7+8$ (or some combination thereof) to be used as the Plenary as Plenary and Breakouts do not run simultaneously
** Additional space required, not included in total meeting space

Note: Prices quoted are those that will apply on the dates of the event and include all tax, services and fees

Accomodation:


o Guest-room Internet, breakfast, $10 \%$ commission, all tax, service and fees are incorporated into the lodging rate.
o Guest-room rates quoted are those that will apply on the dates of the event.
o Attendees will book individually.

Food and Beverage:


Technology:

| \| Item | \| Question | Response |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \| Outside | \| Can we bring in our own |  |
| \| connection | \| external circuit? |  |
| \| Infrastructure | \| Can we use your cabling |  |
| । | \| infrastructure to build a |  |
| \| | \| dedicated network, including |  |
| \| | \| installation of network |  |
| \| | \| equipment in data closets and |  |
| \| | \| phone rooms? |  |
| \| Access | \| Is it possible to have 24 -hour |  |
| - | \| access to data closets and |  |
| I | \| phone rooms to support the |  |
| \| | \| network? |  |
| \| Wireless | \| Is it possible to deploy a |  |
| I | \| wireless network? |  |
| \| Venue network | \| Would you be willing to |  |
| I | \| disable your wireless network |  |
| \| | \| in the meeting and public | , |
| \| | \| spaces? |  |
| \| Infrastructure | \| Do all proposed meeting rooms |  |
| \| | \| have at least one available |  |
| I | \| Category 5 twisted pair |  |
| \| | \| connection? |  |

## Appendix B. Contingency Planning Flow Chart

This section is based on the Contingency Planning Flow Chart which is available at [https://iaoc.ietf.org/meetings-committee/venueselection.html](https://iaoc.ietf.org/meetings-committee/venueselection.html). The contents of the link may changed as needed.

## (Start)



## Appendix C. Change Log

2016-01-12: Initial version

2016-01-21: Update to reflect https://iaoc.ietf.org/documents/ VenueSelectionCriteriaJan2016.pdf and
https://iaoc.ietf.org/documents/VenueSelectionProcess11Jan16.pdf, accessed from https://iaoc.ietf.org/private/privatemeetings.html.

2016-02-23: Reorganize and capture IAOC Meetings Committee discussions.

2016-03-03: Final from Design Team.

2016-03-17: First update incorporating mtgvenue@ietf.org comments

2016-05-20 Updated in accordance with editing by Laura Nugent, Dave Crocker, Lou Berger, Fred Baker, and others.
posting as working group draft August 2, 2016

Reorganized per Alissa Cooper outline Work in progress. In addition, contributors were re-organized to be authors.

2016-10-28 Editor changeover. Further alignment with guidance by Alissa Cooper, Andrew Sullivan and the mtgvenue working group. Many various changes.

2016-11-16 Extensive editorial, format and polishing pass. A few substance changes, including food section.

2016-11-30 Additions based on working group meeting and off-list discussions; more editorial and format hacking.

2016-12-24 Various clarifying bits to provide some glue between the high-level 'objectives' and the detailed criteria and roles, per suggestions fronm Lear. Editorial changes, per 12/27 response to Cooper. Refined uses of 'facility' and 'venue', per 12/4 response to Carpenter; also added Carpenter 'lounge' text. Moved community consultation to a separate criterion; removed 'acceptable to the IETF Community from the 2 entries that had it. Removed PostSeroul Revisions and Text Carried Forward.

2016-12-24 Address comments made on list by Stephen Farrell [stephen.farrell@cs.tcd.ie](mailto:stephen.farrell@cs.tcd.ie). Minor text change in Section 5. Replaced links in sections 5.3 and 5.5 with Appendix $A$ and Appendix B

2017-03-12 Add openness comment as requested by Stephen Farrell. Add statement about 4071 as proposed by Brian and modified by Jari. Elaborated on what "unfiltered" means, based on discussion between Eliot and Stephen. Preface to Section 5 as discussed between Lou and Stephen. Slight editorial tweak to that by Eliot. IETF operates internationally, as proposed by Brian.

2017-04-18 Add new introductory text. Sharpen mandatory definition. Split first criteria into two, and reword them to be more actionable. Remove net cash positive requirement. Change many critera from Mandatory to Important. Remove consensus text. Modify chapeau. Add some normative MUSTs in Section 5, and
restructure Section 5.5. A bunch of other stuff as well. Use diff.

2017-05-14 Happy Mother's Day. This version removes the tabular format of requirements, moves mandatory requirements up front, adds a desiderata section, adds a mandatory filtering requirement, consolidates introductory text, moves procedural requirements into Section 5, removes the definition of Headquarters Hotel, removes the MUST in late changes, and adds a desire for a local participant in site selection.

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