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IETF Plenary Meeting Venue Selection Process
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Abstract

The IASA has responsibility for arranging IETF plenary meeting Venue selection and operation. This memo specifies IETF community requirements for meeting venues, including hotels and meeting room space. It directs the IASA to make available additional process documents around that describe the current meeting selection process.

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

The Internet Administrative Support Activity (IASA) has responsibility for arranging IETF plenary meeting venue selection and operation. The purpose of this document is to guide the IASA in their selection of regions, cities, facilities, and hotels. The IASA 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 Nominations Committee (NOMCOM), Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG), and IAB regarding the discharge of the IASA's performance.

Four 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.

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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 block allocations are negotiated and where network services managed by the IASA (e.g., the "IETF" SSID) are in use.

Overflow Hotels:

One or more hotels, usually in close proximity to the Facility, where the IETF has negotiated a group rate for the purposes of the meeting. Of particular note is that Overflow Hotels usually are not connected to the IETF network and do not use network services managed by the IASA.

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [BCP 14 \[RFC2119\]](#) [RFC8174] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

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 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. Widespread participation contributes to the diversity of perspectives represented in the working sessions

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, citizenship, or gender identity.

Where 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. Our regional location policy is articulated in [[I-D.ietf-mtgvenue-meeting-policy](#)].

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 their 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" [[RFC6771](#)] - 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

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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 and the IASA 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 IASA MUST NOT enter into a contract. Should the IASA 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 provide sufficient space in an appropriate layout to accommodate the expected number of participants, leadership, and support staff 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 It MUST be possible to provision Internet Access to the Facility and IETF Hotels that allows those attending in person to utilize the Internet for all their IETF, business, and day to day needs; as well as sufficient bandwidth and access for remote attendees. This includes, but is not limited to, native and unmodified IPv4 and IPv6 connectivity, global reachability, and no additional limitation that would materially impact their Internet use. To ensure availability, it MUST be possible to provision redundant paths to the Internet.
- o The facility MUST prohibit smoking in meeting rooms, interior common spaces and corridors, indoor lobby bars which are open to common spaces and corridors, and indoor restaurants. IETF primary and secondary hotels MUST have blocks of rooms designated as "Non Smoking" guest rooms.

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 preferable than another that meets fewer 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 IASA MUST notify the community at the time of the venue announcement. Furthermore, it may be appropriate for the IASA to assist those who, as a result, have been 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 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 who wish to do so 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.
- o The selection of the venue comports with [\[I-D.ietf-mtgvenue-meeting-policy\]](#).

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 SHALL have provided written assurance that they are in compliance with local health, safety and accessibility laws and regulations, and will remain in compliance throughout our stay.

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 minutes).
- 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 or reasonable accommodations can be made to allow access by people with disabilities.

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 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 to and from the Facility and at a variety of guest room rates.
- o The Facility 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 or the Facility 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 centrally located, permitting easy access to participants.

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 Facility 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 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.

- o The Facility 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.

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.

- o 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.
- o 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.
- o It is desirable to enter into a multi-event contract with the Facility and IETF Hotels or associated hotel chains in case such a contract will either reduce administrative costs, reduce direct attendee costs, or both.
- o Particularly when we are considering a city for the first time, it is desirable to have someone participate in the site visit who is familiar with both the locale and the IETF. 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. Documentation Requirements

The IETF Community works best when it is well informed. This memo does not specify processes nor who has responsibility for fulfilling our requirements for meetings. Nevertheless, both of these aspects are important. Therefore, the IASA SHALL publicly document and keep current both a list of roles and responsibilities relating to IETF meetings, as well as the selection processes they use in order to fulfill the requirements of the community.

5. IANA Considerations

This memo asks the IANA for no new parameters.

[The RFC-Editor may remove this section prior to publicaiton.]

6. Security Considerations

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

7. Privacy Considerations

Different places have different constraints on individual privacy. The requirements in this memo are intended to provide for some limited protections that attendees can apply. As meetings are announced, IASA SHALL inform the IETF of any limitations to privacy they have become aware of in their investigations. For example, participants would be informed of any regulatory authentication or logging requirements. This note reveals no personally identifying information apart from its authorship.

8. Contributors

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9. 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.

10. References

10.1. Normative References

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- [RFC4071] Austein, R., Ed. and B. Wijnen, Ed., "Structure of the IETF Administrative Support Activity (IASA)", [BCP 101](#), [RFC 4071](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC4071, April 2005, <<http://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc4071>>.
- [RFC8174] Leiba, B., "Ambiguity of Uppercase vs Lowercase in [RFC 2119](#) Key Words", [BCP 14](#), [RFC 8174](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC8174, May 2017, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8174>>.

10.2. Informative 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>.
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- [RFC6771] Eggert, L. and G. Camarillo, "Considerations for Having a Successful "Bar BOF" Side Meeting", [RFC 6771](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC6771, October 2012, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc6771>>.

Appendix A. Change Log

[RFC Editor: Please remove this section prior to publication.]

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 fromm 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 Post-Seroul Revisions and Text Carried Forward.

2016-12-24 Address comments made on list by Stephen Farrell <stephen.farrell@cs.tcd.ie>. Minor text change in [Section 5](#). Replaced links in sections [5.3](#) and [5.5](#).

- 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 criteria 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.
- 2017-09-12 These are last call edits. Big change is around Internet requirements. Also, address Andrew Sullivan comments, as well as SM comments. Brian Carpenter big scrub on IAOC to IASA.
- 2017-10-20 Final edits from WGLC based on Laura Nugent's review. Most are editorial for clarity. Also, remove large table and link to the live copy.
- 2018-01-10 Changes based on AD review.
- 2018-02-02 Changes based on genart review and IETF last call.
- 2018-05-07 Several versions of changes. Based on reorg of meetings committee, [Section 4](#) and 5 moved out. Also, final LC comments addressed. In particular: no smoking added. Reference to [RFC8174](#) added. Reference to meeting policy doc added.

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