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High level guidance for the meeting policy of the IETF
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Abstract

This document describes a proposed meeting policy for the IETF and the various stakeholders for realizing such a policy.

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IETF Meeting Policy

January 2017

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[1.](#) Introduction

The work of the IETF is primarily conducted on the working group mailing lists, while face-to-face WG meetings mainly provide a high bandwidth mechanism for working out unresolved issues. The IETF currently strives to have a 1-1-1-* meeting policy [[IETFMEET](#)] where the goal is to distribute the meetings equally between North America, Europe, and Asia that are the locations most of the IETF participants have come from in the recent past. This meeting rotation is mainly aimed at distributing the travel pain for the existing IETF participants who physically attend meetings and for distributing the timezone pain for those who participate remotely. This policy has neither been defined precisely nor documented in an IETF consensus document. The goal of this document is to provide an initial definition of the policy, and eventually to get a consensus-backed version published as a BCP.

[2.](#) The 1-1-1-* meeting policy

Given that the majority of the current participants come from North America, Europe, and Asia [[CONT-DIST](#)], the IETF policy is that our meetings should primarily be in those regions. i.e., the meeting policy (let's call this the "1-1-1" policy) is that meetings should rotate between North America, Europe, and Asia. It is important to note that such rotation and any effects to distributing travel pain should be considered from a long-term perspective. While the typical cycle in an IETF year may be a meeting in North America in March, a meeting in Europe in July, and a meeting in Asia on November, the 1-1-1 policy does not mandate such a cycle, as long as the distribution to these regions over multiple years is roughly equal.

There are many reasons why meetings might be distributed differently in a given year, and that is fine as long as the distribution in subsequent years balances out the disruptions.

BACKGROUND NOTE: The IETF recognizes that we have not always been successful in following this policy over the past few years. In fact, at the time of writing, going back 6 years the meeting locations resemble more the previous 3-2-1 policy (9 Americas, 6 Europe and 3 Asia). This is attributable to two reasons:

- o we plan meetings 3 years ahead (meaning meetings for 3 of the 6 years had already been planned when the new policy was set)
- o there were some logistical issues (venue availability, cost etc.).

While this meeting rotation caters to the current set of IETF participants, we need to recognize that due to the dynamic and evolving nature of participation, there may be significant changes to the regions that provide a major share of participants in the future. The 1-1-1-* meeting policy is a slightly modified version of the aforementioned 1-1-1 meeting policy that allows for additional flexibility in the form of a wildcard meeting denoted as a "*". This wildcard meeting can be used to experiment with exceptional meetings without extensively impacting the regular meetings. e.g. these wildcard meetings can include meetings in other geographical regions, virtual meetings and additional meetings past the three regular meetings in a calendar year.

The wildcard meeting proposals will be initiated based on community consent. After such a proposal is initiated the IESG will make a decision in consultation with the IAOC [[RFC4071](#)] to ensure that the proposal can be realistically implemented. The final decision will be communicated back to the community to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to comment.

NOTE: There have not been many such wildcard meetings in the past (with IETF95 in Buenos Aires and IETF47 in Adelaide being the exceptional instances). How often we intend to do such meetings in the future should also be an open topic for discussion within the community.

3. Implementation of the policy

Once this meeting policy has been agreed upon, the policy will be provided to the IAOC as high level guidance. Similarly, any wildcard meeting decisions will also be communicated to the IAOC to be implemented. The actual selection of the venue would be performed by the IAOC following the process described in [\[I-D.baker-mtgvenue-iaoc-venue-selection-process\]](#).

The IAOC will also be responsible

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- o to assist the community in the development of detailed meeting criteria that are feasible and implementable, and
- o to provide sufficient transparency in a timely manner concerning planned meetings so that community feedback can be collected and acted upon.

4. Re-evaluation and changes to this policy

Given the dynamic nature of participant distribution in the IETF, it is expected that this policy needs to be periodically evaluated and revised to ensure that the stated goals continue to be met. The criteria that are to be met to initiate a revision need to be agreed upon by the community prior to the publication of this document. (e.g. try to mirror draft author distribution over the preceding five years).

5. Open items

There has been some discussion on whether attracting new participants is one of the stated goals of this policy. This should be one of the things to be discussed and agreed upon with the community as the draft progresses.

This draft uses the terms North America, Europe and Asia without a precise definition of the geographical regions. This might lead to some ambiguities. Is this ambiguity something that is desirable or not? Or should we redefine the regions based on other criteria such as the distribution of RIRs (e.g. ARIN/RIPE/APNIC), the UN

statistical department's classification of macro geographical regions?

Do we need to predefine success criteria for the wildcard meetings?

6. Acknowledgments

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7. References

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7.1. Normative References

[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>>.

7.2. Informative References

[CONT-DIST] arkko.com, "Distribution of authors by continent", 2016, <<http://www.arkko.com/tools/allstats/contdistr.html>>.

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