

MTGVENUE
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Prioritized Objectives for Making Decisions in Selecting a Meeting Venue
[draft-sullivan-mtgvenue-decisions-00](#)

Abstract

Selecting a site for an IETF meeting necessarily involves balancing various factors about the site and the goals of the IETF meeting. Those who are faced with choosing a site need guidance on how to prioritize objectives in making such decisions, since no algorithm is possible. This memo provides a set of such objectives in order of importance.

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[1.](#) Introduction

As [[I-D.baker-mtgvenue-iaoc-venue-selection-process](#)] makes clear, there are myriad factors to balance in choosing an IETF meeting venue. While that document outlines some important principles at work in considering the factors, it offers only guidance about how to decide among competing considerations.

This memo offers a list of objectives, in descending order of importance, in an attempt to guide decision-makers. These are objectives, not rules, and are intended to guide decisions in a way that encourages the productivity and comity of the IETF community.

It is expected that the list will be initially controversial. It is offered as a proposal in order to determine whether the community has collective preferences. Expression of such collective preferences can help those who are making venue selections be confident that they understand what the community is likely to want. If it becomes clear that the community cannot really come to a conclusion about how to order these sorts of objectives, that too is information for those undertaking venue selection.

[2.](#) Objectives

2.1. Inclusiveness

The purpose of an IETF meeting is above all to support the standards-development work that is undertaken by IETF participants. Therefore, when selecting venues, maximal inclusiveness is paramount, and must trump other considerations. Maximizing inclusiveness carries a number of implications:

Legal exclusions: Formal legal exclusions or differential treatment by authorities in a candidate destination, on the basis of age, gender or gender identity, sexuality, marital status, political views, racial background, nationality, countries previously visited, or any other category of irrelevant discrimination, in general ought to disqualify a site from candidacy. Informal but widely-experienced (or widely-announced) persistent discrimination of the same sort, particularly at the point of immigration, should also be treated as an extremely negative consideration, but is not the same as formal legal sanction against an identifiable group.

Accessibility: IETF contributors have different physical abilities. An acceptable venue must accommodate the ranges of physical ability found across the community. This means that attendance at every session and accommodation in meeting hotels must be a practical possibility for those using a variety of assistive devices.

Distribution of travel difficulty and cost: The composition of IETF contributors changes over time, and the difficulty and cost of travel ought to be shared throughout the community. This includes difficulties relating to long journeys, different customs in modes of travel, and cultural adjustment to local norms of visitor behaviour.

Predictions are hard, especially about the future: Legal, political, and economic realities sometimes change after an agreement is signed, and nobody expects infallible predictions. The goal is still maximal inclusiveness, even if that goal can be only imperfectly realised.

2.2. Co-location of attendees

The IETF does not meet to make decisions: those are made on mailing lists. The reason for the in-person meetings is twofold. First, it is to address issues that can be better solved in person because of the way in-person communication can often dissolve misunderstanding more quickly than written communication can. Second, it is to encourage the development of social bonds and informal understanding so that later written communication can be easier.

Accordingly, sites to be selected must provide the necessary support for informal interaction and random group work. In practice, this means that:

- o Venues need to be in urban areas in order to accommodate a wide range of opportunities for these kinds of interaction.
- o Meeting hotels need to be in close proximity to each other and the venue.

2.3. Network access

Unfettered high-bandwidth access to the entire Internet, from all the hotels associated with the meeting, is a necessary criterion for a successful meeting. It should be treated as an extremely negative consideration were mobile networks outside the hotels to be subject to significant filtering or interference.

2.4. Safety and security

In keeping with the objective of inclusiveness noted in [Section 2.1](#), an acceptable venue will be in general safe for individuals. Health risks and issues of safety from violence or personal crime are to be regarded as worse than issues of crimes against property.

2.5. Affordability

Many IETF participants fund their own way to meetings, and many others have limited employer support for travel. With the understanding that the facilities necessary to achieve the goals of meeting in person at all cannot be sacrificed, the cost to meeting attendees for accommodation should be minimized.

3. Non-Objectives

3.1. One roof

While it can be convenient to hold a meeting in a venue under "one roof" (e.g. a conference centre with an attached hotel, or a large hotel with many meeting rooms), it is a secondary goal and may be sacrificed whenever it is in tension with goals in [Section 2](#).

3.2. Maximal attendance

Because the IETF garners a significant portion of its revenue from IETF meeting fees, there is considerable incentive for decision-makers to prefer a venue that will attract more attendees. It is important to resist this temptation: a larger meeting in which key

contributors could not make it is not a better meeting; neither is one with a lot of "tourists".

3.3. Geographic outreach

The IETF moves its meetings around to ensure that those who can participate in person at the meetings share the difficulty and cost of travel. The point of such moving is emphatically not to find new or interesting places to visit, or to undertake outreach to new communities who would not otherwise participate in the IETF.

4. Informative References

[I-D.baker-mtgvenue-iaoc-venue-selection-process]
Baker, F., "IAOC Plenary Meeting Venue Selection Process",
[draft-baker-mtgvenue-iaoc-venue-selection-process-03](#) (work
in progress), July 2016.

Appendix A. Discussion Venue

This Internet-Draft is offered for discussion in the IETF MTGVENUE working group, and on its mailing list <mtgvenue@ietf.org>

Appendix B. Change History

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- * Initial version

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