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High level guidance for the meeting policy of the IETF
draft-ietf-mtgvenue-meeting-policy-07

Abstract

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

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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. These 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 effort for the existing IETF participants who physically attend meetings and for distributing the timezone difficulty for those who participate remotely. This policy has neither been defined precisely nor documented in an IETF consensus document until now. This document is meant to serve as a consensus-backed statement of this policy 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. Please note that the boundaries between those regions has been purposefully left undefined. It is important to note that such rotation and any effects to distributing travel pain should be considered from a long-term perspective. While a potential 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 imply 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. Meeting locations in subsequent years should seek to re-balance the distribution if possible.

While this meeting rotation caters to the current set of IETF participants, it is important 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 an exploratory meeting denoted as a "*". This exploratory meeting can be used to experiment with exceptional meetings without extensively impacting the regular meetings. e.g. these exploratory meetings can include meetings in other geographical regions, virtual meetings and additional meetings past the three regular meetings in a calendar year.

The timing and frequency of future exploratory meetings will be based on IETF consensus as determined by the IETF chair. Once a meeting proposal is initiated, the IESG will make a decision in consultation with the Internet Administrative Support Activity (IASA) 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 a large number of meetings that would qualify as exploratory meetings under the current 1-1-1-* policy (with IETF95 in Buenos Aires and IETF47 in Adelaide being the exceptional instances). IETF27 (Amsterdam) and IETF54(Yokohama) were earlier examples of exploratory meetings that pioneered Europe and Asia as regular IETF destinations.

3. Implementation of the policy

IASA should understand the policy written in this document to be the aspiration of the IETF community. Similarly, any exploratory meeting decisions will also be communicated to the IASA to be implemented. The actual selection of the venue would be performed by the IASA following the process described in [I-D.ietf-mtgvenue-iaoc-venue-selection-process].

As mentioned in [I-D.ietf-mtgvenue-iaoc-venue-selection-process], the IASA will also be responsible

- 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.

Given that the geographical location of the venue has a significant influence on the venue selection process, it needs to be considered at the same level as the other Important Criteria specified in Section 3.2 of [I-D.ietf-mtgvenue-iaoc-venue-selection-process] (including potentially trading off the geographical region to meet other criteria, and notifying the community if the geographical region requirement cannot be met)

4. Procedure for initiating proposals for exploratory meetings

Someone who is interested in pursuing an exploratory venue proposes it on the IETF discussion list or on a future discussion list expressly setup and announced for this purpose. The community gets to comment on the venue and to offer their opinions. If the IETF chair determines that there is community consensus to pursue the venue further, the venue will be put up for discussion on the venue-selection mailing list. This would allow the interested party(ies) to refine their proposal with those tasked with evaluating it and providing further insightful feedback regarding the logistics of the venue. Once the venue selection process takes place, the final decision will be communicated back to the community to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to comment.

5. 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 need to be agreed upon by the community prior to initiating a revision of this document (e.g. try to mirror draft author distribution over the preceding five years).

6. Acknowledgments

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7. References

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