

IETF 109 Bangkok go/no-go assessment

This is the assessment of whether IETF 109 Bangkok can go ahead as an in-person meeting or whether it will need to be replaced with some form of online meeting. It has been made by the IETF Executive Director assisted by the IETF Secretariat and local contacts. This assessment follows the published framework¹ that was developed by the IESG, IETF LLC and IRTF Chair.

Recommendation

As set out below, all the required conditions for an in-person meeting have not been met and so the recommendation is that **the in-person IETF 109 Bangkok meeting should be replaced with an online meeting.**

Classification system

This assessment uses the following classification system for each criterion:

Assessment	Indicator
Met	Green
Confident that it will be met	Green
Not met	Red
Not confident that it will be met	Red
Unable to assess / Not assessed	Grey

The decision to be made is whether we can be confident that the global situation will have improved sufficiently by November for the meeting to go ahead. Because of that approach, each criterion needs to meet a threshold of “met” or “we are confident it will be met” for it to be indicated as green. If the threshold is not met then it stays as red. There is no intermediate amber to express an uncertain but possible likelihood.

¹ https://mailarchive.ietf.org/arch/msg/ietf-announce/7GHV8JuZuNgYjv-Dt9wrk_CN5BE/

Assessment of individual criteria

General background

Thailand has only been moderately affected by COVID-19 with less than 3,500 cases in total in a population of 70 million. For some time now only a handful of new cases have been reported each day and all are related to returning nationals. However Thailand remains under an Declaration of an Emergency Situation in order to manage COVID-19.²

CRITERION: The venue continues to meet mandatory criteria.

#	Test	Assessment	
1.1	All of the mandatory venue selection criteria from section 3.1 of RFC 8178 ³ can be met (space, access, network, etc)	The hotel informs us that there are multiple social distancing restrictions in place including a maximum of 1 person per 4m ² , 1m personal space and room maximums, which mean that an IETF meeting is not possible. ASSESSMENT: Not met	
1.2	Any prohibitions on mass gatherings are only for events of more than 1250 people. (If this and only this criterion is not met then it may be possible to go ahead with fewer in-person participants than normal)	The hotel informs us that while there are no restrictions on the total size of a mass gathering in the hotel, the maximum in any one space is restricted to 200. ASSESSMENT: Not met	

² <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/contents/files/news3-20200805-165733-102031.pdf>

³ <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc8178#section-3.1>

1.3	There are enough restaurants within the vicinity of the meeting hotels operating at sufficient capacity to serve our expected number of participants.	Restaurants are operating though patrons are required to wear masks, socially distance and to check in/out using a government mandated app and posted QR codes. ASSESSMENT: Met	
1.4	Local medical facilities capable of treating COVID-19 have sufficient capacity.	Thailand has an excellent healthcare system ⁴ and with the current low levels of COVID-19 infections it has sufficient capacity. ASSESSMENT: Met	
1.5	Other similar international meetings (conferences) are confirmed as going ahead before or at the same time as our planned meeting.	Many international conferences in Bangkok have been cancelled. A few international conferences are listed as going ahead but research into a sample shows that those are all online but still listed as physical. ASSESSMENT: Not met	

⁴ <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1746289/thailands-healthcare-ranked-sixth-best-in-the-world>

CRITERION: Economic, safety, and health risks associated with this Venue are acceptable.

#	Test	Assessment	
2.1	Local assessment of the health and safety risk of travelling to Thailand/Bangkok.	The infection rate is low and there are comprehensive public health requirements of masks, social distancing, location tracking and hand washing. In recent months there have been rallies protesting against the government ⁵ , but these have been peaceful. ASSESSMENT Met	
2.2	Independent assessment of the health and safety risk of travelling to Thailand/Bangkok.	The US CDC travel alert for Thailand is at Warning Level 1 "Practice Usual Precautions". ⁶ ASSESSMENT: Met	
2.3	Assessment of the health and safety risk of air travel in and of itself.	The WHO continues to defer to IATA on the matter of the safety of air travel and IATA have strengthened their view that air travel is low risk ⁷ but without any reference to scientific evidence. ASSESSMENT: Unable to assess	

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020_Thai_protests

⁶ https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/thailand?s_cid=ncezid-dgmg-travel-single-001

⁷ <https://www.iata.org/en/youandiata/travelers/health/>

CRITERION: 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 [...] in the context of whether a successful meeting can be had.

#	Test	Assessment	
3.1	Thailand borders are not closed to visitors	<p>Thailand restricts access⁸ to all but a small set of travellers⁹, which does not include conference attendees. This restriction lasts until the end of August having been extended once and it appears to be extended again¹⁰ as the underlying conditions have not changed..</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Not confident that it will be met</p>	

⁸ <https://www.caat.or.th/en/archives/51895>

⁹

<https://thaiembdc.org/covid-19inthailand/?fbclid=IwAR0iFv1kFR2Qmlc45AWOo1sTIAb7NwDIdNQ5aOjO5nBuYC7CpMtGbdELLZU>

¹⁰ <https://www.nationthailand.com/news/30393500>

3.2	No form of quarantine or self-isolation on arrival in Thailand	All new foreign nationals arriving into the country are required to produce multiple documents in advance and stay in state quarantine facilities for a 14-day period ¹¹ . ASSESSMENT: Not met	
3.3	No new form of health-related travel restriction imposed by Thailand that is inherently discriminatory in nature.	Thailand has taken a transparent and science based approach to the pandemic and there is no evidence that this will change ¹² . ASSESSMENT: Met	

Assessed on a per country basis

Given the restrictions on entry into Thailand as described in 3.1 / 3.2 / 3.3 the criteria in this section have not been assessed.

#	Test	Assessment	Percent	
3.5	Any form of quarantine on return affects less than 20% of expected participants	ASSESSMENT: Not assessed	N/A	

¹¹ https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/eng/file/guidelines/g_quarantine_190620new.pdf

¹² <https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/eng/announcement.php>

3.6	Any form of self-isolation requirement on return of more than 24 hours unless consistent with general self-isolation requirements, affects less than 20% of expected participants	ASSESSMENT: Not assessed	N/A	
3.7	Government travel bans in either direction, affects less than 20% of expected participants	ASSESSMENT: Not assessed	N/A	

CRITERION: 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 generally be shared over the course of multiple years.

Assessed on a per country basis

Given the restrictions on entry described in 3.1/3.2/3.3, assessment of the criteria in this section has been carried out in a lightweight manner by utilising flight comparison websites and searching for flights from the capital cities of the top 5 countries by percentage for travel to Thailand in November, as well as by attempting to book travel insurance from a number of origin countries.

#	Test	Assessment	Percent	
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4.1	Sufficient capacity of flight availability to Thailand for at least 80% of expected participants.	Sufficient capacity of flights advertised from the capital cities of the top 5 countries by percentage. ASSESSMENT: Met	>80%	
4.2	Fares within reasonable range for at least 80% of expected participants.	Flights advertised from the capital cities of the top 5 countries by percentage, appear to be at a reasonable price. ASSESSMENT: Met	>80%	
4.3	Travel insurance is available and for a reasonable price for at least 80% of expected participants	Insurance seems to be available at a reasonable price and without COVID-19 from a handful of the top 5 countries by percentage. A thorough check was not undertaken but in general the availability and cost of insurance appears to be set by the travel advisories for the destination and Thailand is regarded as low risk for infection. ASSESSMENT: Confident that it will be met.	>80%	

Summary

Of the 17 individual criteria 13 have been assessed and all need to be assessed as “Met” or “Confident that it will be met” for an in-person meeting to be held. 5 criteria have been assessed as “Not met” or “Not confident that it will be met” giving a clear outcome. 4 criteria have not been assessed as that assessment is very detailed and cannot change the outcome.