

IETF 111 San Francisco go/no-go assessment

This is the assessment of whether IETF 111 San Francisco 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 111 San Francisco meeting should be replaced with an online meeting.**

Classification system

This assessment uses the following classification system for each criterion:

Assessment	Indicator	Count
Met	Green	5
Confident it will be met	Green	0
Not met	Red	5
Not confident it will be met	Red	4
Unable to assess / Not assessed	Grey	3

The decision to be made is whether we can be confident that the global situation will have improved sufficiently by July for the meeting to go ahead. Because of that approach, each criterion needs to meet a threshold of “met” or “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/admin-discuss/L5t8vXsvjEP_p2uujtgc1X30YE/

Assessment of individual criteria

General background

The US has been severely affected by COVID-19 with more than 31 million cases and 561 thousand deaths in a population of 328 million. California is currently under a 'stay at home' order² but is scheduled to lift all restrictions on 15 June 2021³ if certain conditions are met. California restrictions are based on the tier assignment of each county with San Francisco county, where the hotel is based, currently assessed as moderate risk⁴.

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 ⁵ can be met (space, access, network, etc)	Convention centers are only allowed to operate "indoors up to 150 participants with assigned seating and proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test" ⁶ and so an IETF meeting is not possible. While the scheduled lifting of restrictions will change this, there is too much uncertainty to be confident of that. ASSESSMENT: Not confident it will be met	
1.2	Any prohibitions on mass gatherings are only for events of more than 1250 people.	As noted above, conventions/conferences are restricted to 150 people indoors. While the scheduled lifting of restrictions will change	

² <https://covid19.ca.gov/stay-home-except-for-essential-needs/>

³ <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/#beyond-blueprint>

⁴ <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/#tier-assignments>

⁵ <https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/html/rfc8178#section-3.1>

⁶ <https://sfmayor.org/article/san-francisco-reopen-and-expand-additional-businesses-and-activities>

	(If this and only this criterion is not met then it may be possible to go ahead with fewer in-person participants than normal)	<p>this, there is too much uncertainty to be confident of that.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Not confident it will be met</p>	
1.3	There are enough restaurants within the vicinity of the meeting hotels operating at sufficient capacity to serve our expected number of participants.	<p>Restaurants are open but operating at a maximum of 50% indoor capacity⁷ with a maximum of 6 people from three households at one table and 100% outdoors with up to 8 people per table⁸. Local contacts say that this leads to long waiting times, making it difficult to fit this into the meeting lunch break.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Not confident it will be met</p>	
1.4	Local medical facilities capable of treating COVID-19 have sufficient capacity.	<p>San Francisco county has good medical facilities and availability⁹</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Met</p>	
1.5	Other similar international meetings (conferences) are confirmed as going ahead before or at the same time as our planned meeting.	<p>Very few conferences are scheduled in San Francisco around the time of the IETF meeting and none appear to be international in nature</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Not met</p>	

⁷ <https://sf.gov/resource/2020/reopening-guidance-restaurants-and-bars>

⁸ <https://sfmayor.org/article/san-francisco-reopen-and-expand-additional-businesses-and-activities>

⁹ <https://www.latimes.com/projects/california-coronavirus-cases-tracking-outbreak/hospitals/>

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 the venue.	San Francisco county, where the hotel is based is currently assessed as moderate risk ¹⁰ , which is unacceptably high. Vaccinations are underway but this process still has a long way to go ¹¹ . ASSESSMENT Not confident it will be met	
2.2	Independent assessment of the health and safety risk of travelling to the venue.	As the US is the venue country in question this assessment uses the backup source of the UK Foreign Office ¹² , which advises against all but essential travel to the US ¹³ . ASSESSMENT: Not 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 finally produced evidence to support their view that air travel is low risk ¹⁴ .	

¹⁰ <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/#tier-assignments>

¹¹ <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines/#California-vaccines-dashboard>

¹² This source is chosen as an alternative to the US State Dept because a) their advice is in English; b) they cover every country; c) their advice includes a simple advice scale. We intentionally do not use multiple sources to guard against advice shopping.

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/usa>

¹⁴ <https://www.iata.org/en/youandiata/travelers/health/low-risk-transmission/>

	ASSESSMENT: Met	
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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	US borders are not closed to visitors	Visitors from multiple countries cannot enter the US ¹⁵ . There are no published plans for lifting these restrictions. ASSESSMENT: Not met	
3.2	No form of quarantine or self-isolation on arrival in the US	All unvaccinated people who arrive in the US are subject to a set of self-isolation restrictions ¹⁶ , though it is not clear if these are enforced in any way. There are no published plans for lifting these restrictions. ASSESSMENT: Not met	

¹⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-other-countries.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel-precautions.html>

3.3	No new form of health-related travel restriction imposed by the US that is inherently discriminatory in nature.	All travellers to the US are required to have a clean test 1-3 days before travel ¹⁷ , which appears to be a global standard and not discriminatory though we will monitor the situation. ASSESSMENT: Met	
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Assessed on a per country basis

Given the restrictions on entry into the US 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	
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	

¹⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html>

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.

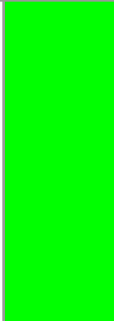
Assessed on a per country basis

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 (China, Germany, UK, Canada, Japan based on IETF 110 attendance¹⁸) for travel to the US in July, as well as by attempting to book travel insurance from a number of origin countries.

#	Test	Assessment	Percent	
4.1	Sufficient capacity of flight availability to the US for at least 80% of expected participants.	Flight capacity in March 2021 was significantly down on that of March 2019 ¹⁹ and with the current restrictions in place on entering the US, flight capacity is severely reduced. ASSESSMENT: Not met	<70%	
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%	

¹⁸ <https://datatracker.ietf.org/stats/meeting/110/country/>

¹⁹ <https://www.oag.com/coronavirus-airline-schedules-data>

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 though 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 appears to be reasonable ASSESSMENT: Met.	>80%	
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Summary

Of the 17 individual tests, all need to be assessed as “Met” or “Confident it will be met” for an in-person meeting to be held. 9 tests have been assessed as “Not met” or “Not confident it will be met” giving a clear outcome. 3 tests have not been assessed as that assessment is very detailed and cannot change the outcome.