Tips and Pitfalls

Room Selection/Setup

- Avoid pillars in the meeting rooms that obstruct view across the meeting room– even if the hotel insists that they aren't a problem, this has been an issue at past WEFMAX meetings
- Avoid wood/tile floors for the acoustical issues
- Check to make sure there aren't loud activities going on in the next room, like a band or DJ playing, and have statements as such included in the hotel contract
- Avoid rooms with low ceilings, this effects the size of the screen and general visibility
- Visit the hotel/location to see meeting rooms first hand…brochures may use pictures from when the facility was newer, thus important to verify the current conditions of the facility, staff and service
- WEF recommends half rounds because this encourages dialogue, allows for good visibility by all attendees and gives you some flexibility in numbers (easy to add one or two more chairs at each half round). Other setups don't work as well. A classroom style setup leads to more of a lecture or presentation feel and doesn't encourage the open exchange and networking that makes WEFMAX so valuable. Full rounds limit attendees' visibility and your flexibility in numbers.

Meals/Breaks

- Schedule lunch in a separate room – this allows for delegates to get up, stretch their legs and move around a bit. This is not normally an extra cost.
- Sometimes hotels will offer the breakfast as part of the room rate. This will help you save money on your budget.
- In a large room you should try to set up coffee breaks inside the room, otherwise people really feel like they are disengaging and leaving the meeting when they step outside. With a small room you may need to set up breaks just outside the room and this is ok.
- Consider skipping desert at lunch and have a sweet snack break later in the afternoon.
- Include water station and soda (don't forget the diet drinks) in the morning, not just juice, coffee and tea.

AV Equipment

- Important to find out if the hotel owns their AV equipment or if they use an outside contractor. There can be a significant cost increase if an outside contractor is required.
- Internet in the meeting room– Hotels can charge a lot to include internet service in the meeting room. We have found if you paid for a daily usage fee for internet service in your room…then most times you can use your password to connect most anywhere in the hotel. Ask the question when you meet with your hotel representative if you can use your room password in the meeting room. Another option is to have a wireless broadband internet card which is very reasonable in price.

Room Reservations/Meeting Numbers

- When negotiating number of hotel rooms keep in mind that local attendees will likely not stay at the hotel. Also make sure to account for the WEF staff/leadership that will be staying in the room block (general 3 people).
- You might wish to invite local attendees (teachers, local student chapter president, MA committee chairs, local politician) that might only stop in for a short while but you will still need the meeting space to accommodate them during the exchange.

Non-Hotel Locations

A WEFMAX meeting doesn't necessarily need to be held at a hotel but in order for it to be a success make sure that an alternative site includes the following:

- Ability to host a meeting
- AV equipment and support
- Food for breakfast, lunch and mid-morning and mid-afternoon coffee/snack breaks
- Transportation to/from the location with local hotel
- Restrooms
- Comfortable chairs

It is extremely important to contact WEF staff ASAP with all details when considering a non-hotel location.

Sustainability reminders

Whenever possible keep sustainable and green solutions in mind.

- Try to avoid bottled water. If this is necessary consider locally bottled water, definitely stay away from types like Fiji water.
- Minimize the use of disposable items or use "potato" plates and utensils
- Use recycled paper products
- Use and encourage attendees to use double sided copies for any meeting handouts