

# FlexForum session 19: 01-12-22 notes

---

<b>When</b>	0900 – 1200, Thursday 1 December 2022
<b>Where</b>	Virtual
<b>Who</b>	Briony Bennet (Ara Ake), Shay Brazier (ReVolve Energy), Tim Calder (Meridian), John Campbell (Our Energy), Luke Cartmell-Gollan (Simply Energy), David Charlton (Octopus Energy), Jason Christini-Crawford (Ecotricity), Glenn Coates (Aurora), Andrew Kerr (Powerco), Jeremy Levy (Mercury), Jenny Van der Merwe (Kāinga Ora), Mary Ann Mitchell (IEGA), Tom Rose (evnex), Terry Paddy (Cortexo), Eric Pyle (solarZero), Buddhika Rajapakse (Mercury), Scott Scrimgeour (Wellington Electricity), James Tipping (Vector), Evie Trolove, (Orion), Nicolas Vessiot (Transpower), Fiona Wiseman (Manawa Energy).  Observers: Nicole Kirkham (MBIE), Geoff Parr (EA), Andrew Matheou (EA), Clare Penno, EECA, Sean McCready (ComCom), Isabelle LeQuellec (Orion)  Secretariat: Craig Evans, Matt Smith

---

## Session notes

### Agenda overview

The group welcomed first time FlexForum participants.

The group agreed the agenda with one change:

- discuss item 8 (Administration) immediately before item 5 (FF insights: network access and connection arrangements)

### Item 1: Request to participate

The group agreed to the Independent Electricity Generators Association (IEGA) becoming a member of the FlexForum.

## Item 2: Workshop outcomes and confirm next steps

The group reflected on the future FlexForum workshop, agreeing attendees were broadly aligned and coalescing around a common purpose regarding distributed energy resources, flexibility, and the importance of coordinated, collaborative action. The next phase will be a messy period as everyone works to get clarity about what to do and how to do it, but this should not stop progress.

The group agreed to consider a draft charter for the future FlexForum on 2 February 2023.

Several members agreed to provide input during December 2022 and January 2023.

## Item 3: How and when does the FlexForum get visibility of projects

The group discussed the Orion and Wellington Electricity ResiFlex project as a reference point for identifying an initial process and expectations for the FlexForum to obtain visibility of projects and activities.

The group agreed to develop a framework and process for people to share information with the FlexForum and for the FlexForum to share information generally, eg, via a knowledge hub.

- Key points for sharing information are at the outset of a project/activity, during delivery, and at the end.
- Having information in the same place is valuable to support coordination (eg, how many people are looking at the same topic), to understand status of things and the scope for influencing approach (eg, scoping or final stages), to support collaboration, and to share information
- The amount and type of information shared will need to be worked through. A starting point is to provide sufficient information about the scope, purpose and results for someone to understand if they want to know more.
- As the store of information in the knowledge hub increases, there will be opportunities for meta-analysis on themes, broader conclusions and gaps in activities.
- Examples to guide development of the knowledge hub and framework include:
  - the Vehicle to Grid project hub: <https://www.v2g-hub.com/insights/partners/#graphs>

The group shared some perspectives on the Resiflex project:

- The project builds on the work by Orion, Aurora and Wellington Electricity during FlexForum phase 1 on the commercial mechanisms available to distributors to recruit flexibility. One desired outcome is to better understand the regulatory barriers/enablers and incentives for distributors to use flexibility.

- There were several perspectives on sharing the benefits of learning-by-doing, with concerns raised about what benefits consumers overall realise from learning-by-doing. Orion and Wellington Electricity have benefited from insights obtained by Aurora through its investment in learning-by-doing. Consumers in Christchurch and Wellington, and probably across the country, will benefit as a result. Investment in preparing for the future is required.
- The Resiflex project is exploring the customer journey/consumer perspectives because distributors want information they may not otherwise get if working through a supplier. Distributors want a value proposition that works, and this requires a whole of supply chain approach to learning-by-doing and research. Taking an arms-length approach could result in issues important to distributors not being explored and vice versa.
- Considering a framework for valuing and pricing flexibility from a distribution perspective. Getting expert help in early 2023. Top of mind is how to make sure the distributors commercial model doesn't prevent value stacking.

#### Item 4: Learning-by-doing ecosystem – project scope and approach

The group agreed the project scope and approach noting the intention is to join the dots to identify opportunities to improve existing arrangements for supporting learning-by-doing. A whole of system review will complement and reinforce work underway on specific aspects of the learning-by-doing ecosystem, eg, distributors developing advice on the innovation allowance aspects of the Input Methodologies.

The group noted a high-level gap assessment of action/progress against the steps in the Flexibility Plan is an outcome of the interactions map, dependencies and gaps task and Barriers to progress task, with the group scheduled to consider these in February 2023.

The group agreed the secretariat could procure external support with oversight of the budget oversight group.

#### Item 8: Administration

##### **Legal entity for contracting**

The group agreed the proposed approach for the FlexForum to contract with MBIE.

- FlexForum members will sign a letter authorising Our Energy and CTQ Advisors to contract with MBIE on behalf of the FlexForum (an unincorporated association)
- All FlexForum members can sign, but at a minimum signatories should include the 10 members which have made a financial contribution
- The letter will clarify liability is limited to the amount contributed.

The group noted this is a short term solution, and a more lasting arrangement is required to enable the FlexForum to contract with other parties as necessary.

## Budget update

The group noted the budget update.

## Item 5: network access and connection arrangements

The group agreed to share the FlexForum insights on network access and connection arrangements:

- finalise the content and the approach by 9 December 2022
- share the plan with the group
- share the FlexForum insights.

Specific things discussed by the group:

- there is no coordinated work on dynamic operating envelopes (DOEs) underway by distributors, though individual firms are working on the issue and it is being discussed by the Smart Tech Working Group
- work on DOEs should be coordinated and collaborative, ie, not a distributor only activity
- network operators have varying positions on how to manage network operation and nature/type of control over customer access/load. The key thing is to ensure the customer has agreed to whatever arrangement is in place
- the focus should be on how to make the best use of network infrastructure and the opportunity to better allocate capacity. A range of issues to be resolved, including to ensure appropriate clarity about how network access is managed
- consider the audience and how people may react to the FlexForum insights. It might be worth to first check in with the STWG
- consider a non-traditional engagement approach, ie, don't just release a paper. It is worth breaking down key concepts into videos, infographics etc.

Several members had specific comments which they agreed to provide after the session.

## Item 6: Engagement update

The group discussed recent and potential engagement on the Flexibility Plan.

- Arrange a session with the Consumer Advocacy Council
- Arrange engagement with iwi in early 2023.

## Item 7: Workplan update

The group discussed the workplan and the opportunity for specific members to contribute to delivering tasks.

End 1153