



Notes: FlexForum session 23

When	0900 – 1200, Thursday 4 May 2023
Where	Virtual
Who	Lyndon Bird (Manawa), Shay Brazier (ReVolve Energy), Luke Cartmell-Gollan (Simply), John Campbell (Our Energy), Jason Christini-Crawford (ecotricity), Margaret Cooney (Octopus), Ryan Kuggeleijn (Meridian), Mark Herring (Transpower/SO), Peter Kimber (Influx), Jeremy Levy (Mercury), MaryAnn Mitchell (IEGA), Tom Rose (evnex), James Tipping (Vector), Evie Trollove, (Orion), Jenny Van der Merwe (Kāinga Ora), Nicolas Vessiot (Transpower), Brendan Winitana (SEANZ)
	Guests: Glen Baxter (Ara Ake)
	Observers: Nicole Kirkham (MBIE), Andrew Zielinski (EA), John Rampton (ComCom)
	Secretariat: Craig Evans, Matt Smith

Session notes

0 Agenda overview

The group agreed the agenda.

1 Incorporation

The group discussed the unresolved provisions in the draft constitution and agreed to:

- finalise the wording of several provisions in the draft constitution, including approach to selecting Steering Group members
- share the draft constitution with the wider FlexForum community by Friday 12 May 2023
- ask people if they are keen to join the society
- schedule a meeting to occur in about 6 weeks to approve the draft constitution and resolve to apply to incorporate
- send the secretariat a nomination for chair and a member of the Steering Group.

Finalising the unresolved provisions in the draft constitution

The group discussed the unresolved provisions in the draft constitution.

- powers of the Steering Group

- selection of the Steering Group, including the chair.

The group agreed the ability of the Steering Group to exercise its powers (in cl 3.3) should be further qualified by requiring it to do everything necessary to achieve the objects and to achieve the FlexForum workplan.

The group agreed the chair of the Steering Group should:

- be independent and vote on Steering Group decisions
- be appointed by
 - members will nominate a person who meets the criteria and wants the role
 - members will vote for candidates from a shortlist prepared by the Steering Group. The shortlist includes all nominees who meet the criteria
 - voting will use the single transferrable vote process. The first candidate to get 50% of votes will be appointed.

The group agreed the other members of the Steering Group should be appointed by:

- members will nominate a person who meets the criteria and wants the role
- members will vote for candidates from a shortlist prepared by the Steering Group. The shortlist includes all nominees who meet the criteria
- the chair will prepare a list of candidates to fill vacancies on the Steering Group taking account of the number of votes received and to ensure to ensure the Steering Group membership reflects the diverse and whole-of-supply chain interests and participation in the FlexForum
- members will vote on the list of candidates
 - the list of candidates will be appointed with approval of 60% of members present
 - if the list is not approved, the chair will propose another list and members will vote again
 - the voting will continue until the list of candidates is approved.

The process for selecting and appointing the Steering Group was decided to ensure members were involved in the selection/appointment process and to ensure the ensure the Steering Group membership reflects the diverse and whole-of-supply chain interests and participation in the FlexForum. The latter requirement was discussed extensively to identify a workable way to ensure diversity.

- voting alone was not considered effective due to the potential for the make-up of the membership to be weighted to one or more parts of the supply chain
- identifying categories of member, eg, distributor, retailer etc, and allowing each category a vote to fill a spot founded on the complexity of defining categories, particularly for non-traditional firms.

The group concluded that a neutral party was needed to exercise judgement about the make-up of the Steering Group, noting the approach is used to appoint members to the Cycle NZ Board and Electricity Authority advisory groups. After considering the options, the group agreed the independent chair should be responsible for ensuring the Steering Group reflects whole-of-supply chain interests.

2 Securing ongoing funding

The group noted there is an ongoing conversation with MBIE and EECA about a potential government funding contribution, and that feedback from both is expected soon.

The group noted there may be a gap between finalising the constitution and receiving member subscriptions.

The group discussed the indicative operational model for the FlexForum and the role it would play. Comments were:

- the distinction between the costs of operating/coordinating versus costs of learning-by-doing. The group noted that establishing and maintaining a coordination framework is not free, and that investing in whole-of-system coordination is needed to optimise learning-by-doing
 - the group noted the FlexForum should not be funding specific demonstration / R&D projects.
- the roles of the FlexForum, the Knowledge Group, and FF workstreams and individual demonstration projects
 - the FlexForum exists to support alignment of learning – lots of people will be doing lots of stuff, and we will better leverage scarce resources by having someone responsible for joining the dots and collating the implications and insights of learning and sharing these. Dissemination of experience will be valuable, and a centralised approach is effective
 - the FlexForum may also have a role in developing non-project related outputs, eg, a common framework or application of experience
 - a key role of the FlexForum is to take learning and translate this into advice on rules and practices, ie, translating pain points into practical action to accelerate regulatory change. This aspect is of particular interest to MBIE.

3 Draft advice: opportunities to improve learning-by-doing

The group noted the process for finalising the advice on opportunities to improve learning-by-doing.

Members agreed to respond with final feedback quite soon. Initial feedback was:

- include a reference to the benefits of learning-by-doing to end consumers, to highlight how the learning is expected to explore a specific issue which resolution would deliver tangible benefits.

4 Draft advice: exploring flexibility knowledge of DER suppliers

The group heard an update on the research into the flexibility knowledge of DER suppliers, particularly noting the difficulty experience in getting people to participate in the research.

- SEANZ is arranging a further 12 interviews
- members considered the results / conclusions reached from the first round of research are a reasonable indication of the current state, particularly the conclusion that EV charging firms have greater understanding of flexibility than PV installers.

Finalising the advice depends on completing the further research and may not occur until after 28 May 2023.

5 Engagement update

The group noted the engagement update.

The group discussed the outcome of the session with the CE Forum – it went very well

- very supportive of the FlexForum
- reminder to ensure value for money

- the FlexForum complements the CE Forum efforts to develop an accord to deliver the recommendations of the BCG report.

6 Workplan update

The group noted progress with the workplan:

- delivered task #8 (communications and connectivity) 21 April
- customer journey mapping (task #C) has been completed by the Resiflex project and the results are currently being considered. Further engagement with stakeholders is planned
- task #7 (pricing/valuing flexibility) has taken a backseat to other tasks. The work will be reinvigorated once the draft constitution is settled.

7 Administration

The group noted the budget is on track.

The group agreed to schedule two further monthly FF sessions on the first Thursday of each month on a just in case basis.

Finish 1155.