

FLEXFORUM |

Steering Group meeting: 12 October 2023

When	Thursday 12 October 2023, 0930-1130
Where	Virtual
Who	Steve Batstone, Shay Brazier, John Campbell, Terry Paddy, Matt Smith, Evie Trolove, Fiona Wiseman Secretariat: Craig Evans Observers: Brian Fitzgerald (EECA), Nicole Kirkham (MBIE), Sean McCready (ComCom)
Apologies	EA

Session notes

1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Steering Group (SG):

- confirmed there was a quorum
- noted apologies
- noted their individual obligations relating to the Commerce Act 1986 prohibiting anti-competitive conduct
- confirmed the agenda.

The group noted a FlexForum google workspace was being implemented and other collaboration tools will be identified/obtained as necessary.

2: FlexForum Membership

The Steering Group discussed three matters relating to FlexForum Membership

- update on Membership and payment of 2023/24 subscriptions by initial Members
- requests to join the FlexForum
- requests to reduce/waive the 2023/24 subscription.

Membership update

- invoices for the 2023/24 subscription were sent to initial Members on 21 September. Two payments had been received by 12/10 and more expected at 20th October pay-run.

Requests to join the FlexForum

Three requests to join the FlexForum were received since the previous SG meeting.

The group agreed:

- to develop guidelines setting out an approach and principles to consistently decide membership requests, ie, a membership policy
- follow up with the 3 parties requesting membership to discuss the proposed response and reasons
- follow up with parties which had previously indicated explicit interest in membership.

The group discussed a consistent approach to respond to requests to join the FlexForum.

- the tension between being inclusive and requiring subscriptions to fund FlexForum, particularly given uncertainty about the size/timing of government funding (whether directly or via a government agency). The importance of subscriptions as a revenue stream means we cannot diminish the value proposition of membership.
- principles are needed to provide a consistent approach to deciding membership requests, and to guide people about the category of membership (eg, individual or not). Considerations include:
 - whether someone is actively participating in FF activities v observing
 - nature of their interest in FF activities and distributed flexibility, ie, a consumer/prosumer v employee/owner of a commercially interested entity. Clarity is needed about whether someone is an individual, ie, a consumer/prosumer or commercially interested or representing consumers
 - willingness to contribute financially and practically
 - how the FF would benefit from their viewpoint, eg, by them providing a consumer perspective etc.

The group noted membership is not a prerequisite for participating in FF activities or access to information.

Requests to reduce/waive the 2023/24 subscription

One formal request to reduce/waive the 2023/24 subscription was received from the Electricity Engineers Association (EEA).

The group agreed to waive the EEA's 2023/24 subscription because:

- it was necessary to enable the EEA to participate in the FlexForum, and its contribution to the FlexForum would be sufficiently unique in respect of achieving the objectives and purpose of the FlexForum
- the EEA committed to a material in-kind contribution to support delivering the objectives and purpose of the FlexForum, specifically:
 - providing Dr Stuart Johnston, EEA Lead Advisor (Engineer & Technical), as convener of the Flexible resource integration and visibility workstream
 - offering use of the EEA's existing knowledge hub software to provide an online knowledge hub for FlexForum and its work.

The group requested confirmation the convener role would be undertaken on a neutral basis.

The group requested the decision and EEA commitment be documented and be accessible to Members.

The group noted an update on discussions with two other initial Members regarding a waiver/reduction to the 2023/24 subscription.

The group requested follow ups with parties who had expressed interest in joining the FlexForum.

3: Steering Group membership

The group agreed to a process to appoint 1 or 2 people to the SG.

- SG members to suggest candidates to the chair taking account of the criteria set out in the constitution, particularly to ensure representation/diversity across the ecosystem and that the candidate will be willing/able to be hands on
- circulate a list of suggestions prior to the next SG meeting.
- decide to appoint 1 or 2 people at the next SG meeting.

The group discussed:

- Mark Herring resigned from the Steering Group on 5 October after resigning from Transpower, leaving the SG with 6 members plus the independent chair.
- the SG must have between 7 and 8 members plus the independent chair
- any vacancy in the number of members of the Steering Group may be filled by the Steering Group. Any person so appointed will hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.

4: Funding conversations

The SG discussed progress with funding conversations with Ara Ake and EECA.

- the Ara Ake Board needs to approve the proposed funding. The matter is to be considered at its 20 October Board meeting
- the funding proposal is based on matching industry contributions
- the proposal is for 12 months, but sets expectations for ongoing deliverables
- subject to approval, a funding agreement will be finalised including milestones etc.

EECA is interested in establishing a collaborative relationship with the FF to support its work programme. A draft proposal was shared with EECA for feedback.

6: Engagement update

The Steering Group noted engagement activity completed and planned.

- in-principle agreement to a memorandum of cooperation between the FF and ENA Future Networks Forum
- sessions discussing issues raised in MBIE EMM paper were productive and an efficient way to share views/perspectives.

The group agreed to prepare a short submission to the MBIE EMM paper setting out key FF messages, including:

- the FF role and unique capability is to indicate areas of consensus and divergence, and topics which need testing/discussion.

6: Workplan update

The Steering Group noted progress with developing the 2023/24 workplan.

- 3 initial workstream sessions had been scheduled and arrangements being made for the fourth.

7: Finance update

The Steering Group noted a finance update.

- A FlexForum bank account has been opened
- A FlexForum Xero account is operating
- A draft budget was shared with the SG.
- Contracts are needed with dedicated resources given the roles/functions, noting that extra resources, eg, engagement/communications, should be contracted once there is clarity on funding.

8: Procedural matters

The Steering Group discussed procedural matters.

Interests

- interests – all but one SG member had submitted their interests form, and that final response was expected soon.
- A Register of Members was being developed. The group agreed it should identify subscription category, any specific in-kind contributions, subscription waivers/reductions
- A FF meeting would be scheduled for late November to discuss agree a workplan based on the initial workstream discussions
- Reschedule the November FF meeting to 22 November and have that session in-person in Wellington
 - Members were to share thoughts on the agenda for that session with the chair

Finish 1153.