Steering Group meeting

When	**Thursday 13 August 2026, 0900-1030**
Where	Virtual
Who	Toby Stevenson, Fiona Wiseman, Sam Elder, Malcolm Cleland, Matt Smith, Nicole Kirkham Secretariat: Craig Evans, Lyndal Blatch Observers: Siobhan Bradley, Connie Dunbar
Apologies	Matt Bostwick, Terry Paddy, Tim Calder, Sean McCready (Commission)

Session notes

1: Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the session.

The SG:

- noted apologies
- noted their individual obligations relating to the Commerce Act 1986 prohibiting anti-competitive conduct
- noted interests
- confirmed the agenda.

Strategic items

2: Maximising FF impact for the year ahead

The SG discussed the ways for FlexForum to maximise its impact on the year ahead, noting:

- FF Members via the 2026 flex progress assessment agreed where things stand and flex priorities for 2027.
- FF Members endorsed a workplan at the 2026 AGM involving 4 core activities to deliver FlexForum objectives and priorities.

The discussion opened with the chair reflecting on the launch event for Localflex; speakers from Our Energy, participating distributors, retailers and regulators each gave positive, forward looking and action focused comments on the role and opportunities of flex.

- the chair noted initial efforts in May to gain more support for customer-related flex action; consistent with the FF advice to ERGANZ and the progress report findings regarding prioritising activity centred on the customer proposition.

Points made in the discussion were:

- A suggestion to ensure FF has a compelling elevator pitch describing its role and focus. The SG noted an engagement plan developed in May 2024 included an elevator pitch, but the energy sector is facing a range of transition challenges and noise. Decision-makers are directing resources to the noisiest problems.
- What can FF tell these decision makers? Should FF attempt to put $/year/household benefits of particular changes in front of them. Or should FF rely on existing value reference points, eg FF flex potential estimates, BCG estimates, TIMES-NZ estimates. We could leverage these to highlight where to allocate scarce time/effort.
- The flex context has changed significantly in the past 2 years. Flex is getting more focus from individual distributors, and the ENA Future networks forum has flex-related initiatives underway. Similarly, several retailers have flex-related efforts underway, including to maximise the benefits of dynamic water heating flex. And regulators are also undertaking flex-related activities.
- Given this context, 'What value is FF providing to its members?', 'What is the added value of FF compared to supporting other organisations/activities?', 'What is the FF value proposition for different parts of the supply chain (and membership)?', and 'Has the value proposition changed?'.
- The context shift is relevant, but this translates into a struggle for people to discover what is going on. There is no authoritative voice that says 'we agree on these things, let's get on with implementation', and 'we need more exploration and learning in these areas of disagreement', and 'these are the gaps'. … there is no total landscape view.
- The SG considered the extent that interests are aligned, eg, affordability is a sector priority, and flex is in part a solution.

The SG agreed to prepare a FF elevator pitch which reflects the value proposition for Members and the wider sector.

Standing items

3: Engagement

The SG noted the engagement update:

- stakeholder conversations had and upcoming
- statistics on who is listening to FlexForum through its website, newsletter and linkedin channels.

4: Workplan

The SG noted the workplan update.

- Flexibility Plan progress assessment – 2026 progress report was published 5 August 2026. A graphic summary is being developed to highlight the FF view of sector priorities for the year ahead.
- The pricing and orchestration deep dive was on hold to focus on the progress report. The next workshop - on wholesale signals - is being planned.
- Knowledge sharing – FF will be assisting EECA with knowledge sharing for the Scaled flexibility pilot programme via practitioner focused project updates and thematic assessments

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- these thematic assessments will explore common issues/experience emerging from the pilots. Likely topics are comms/connectivity, pricing and incentives, installation, customer recruitment/participation.

- Flex Day 2026 – the SG endorsed the proposed agenda and noted an indicative venue.

5: Finance

The SG noted the financial update.

- The SG noted the financial position on 31 July 2026.
- The SG noted the status of membership renewals.

Procedural items

6: Memberships

The SG noted that 1 new member (Tes Acha) had joined since our last meeting.

7: Actions

The SG noted the status of actions from previous sessions.

8: Next Steering Group meeting

The SG confirmed the SG meeting is Thursday 10 September 2026.

9: AoB/Close

No other business.

Meeting finished at 10.00am

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