

# New Zealand Battery Project Technical Reference Group Terms of Reference

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## New Zealand Battery Project Technical Reference Group

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

MBIE will establish an advisory Technical Reference Group (TRG) to inform the [NZ Battery Project](#). The TRG will not have any decision-making role. It will review and provide input into proposals and analysis brought to the Group by MBIE, in periodic meetings as required.

#### Purpose

The purpose of the NZ Battery Project Technical Reference Group is to provide technical expertise and sector knowledge relating to the quantitative analysis MBIE is undertaking, including modelling, and to advise on other relevant social, cultural or environmental issues that may be brought to the Group and lie within its expertise.

The Group is advisory – its main role is to provide specialist input and insight to the project team as they work through options and develop recommendations. Project governance and assurance will be carried out by different groups at a later stage to the TRG's input.

The Group will nominally consist of between eight and 12 participants outside of MBIE. However, this number may be extended as requirements change. In addition, specialists from MBIE, the Ministry for the Environment, Department of Conservation and the Electricity Authority will join the group for particular meetings or to address particular issues where their experience is considered valuable.

TRG members are expected to review and test the assumptions that underlie MBIE's quantitative analysis. It is worth noting that consensus is not an objective of the TRG.

Members are required to act in good faith, confidentially, independently and with integrity.

#### Timeframe

MBIE will establish the group in May 2021, and it is expected to run until at least 2022.

Membership of the group may vary over its life as the needs of the project dictate.

#### Meetings

Meetings will be at least 6 weekly in the first instance, or more frequent as required. The intention is that work outside meetings will be kept to a minimum – with summary material being presented for review during meetings although discussion will be better informed by some pre-reading. Most meetings will run for half a day although the total time commitment for members will be in the order of one day per month – based on half day meetings every 6 weeks or so with limited pre-reading and follow-up work.

MBIE's NZ Battery Project team will convene the meetings and will prepare the agenda. The meetings will provide the main forum and will focus on testing and review. MBIE will prepare brief summaries capturing the key points made during each meeting.

MBIE may occasionally invite specialists from relevant government departments and agencies to contribute to the work.

MBIE may appoint an independent facilitator to:

- facilitate discussions between group members in a manner that will stimulate robust debate on issues and encourage effective contribution from members
- guide relevant and effective discussions while also ensuring genuine disagreements and conflicts are aired and, if possible, resolved and
- liaise with MBIE on behalf of the group between meetings.

#### Requirements

Technical Reference Group members are expected to:

- Review key documents in advance of meetings
- Attend all panel meetings virtually or in person
- Contribute knowledge and expertise as required
- Provide technical advice on the inputs and assumptions that will be used
- Contribute to the development of scenarios that will be used
- Contribute to the review and analysis of the results of the quantitative and other analysis

## Working with the project team

The TRG will work with the MBIE NZ Battery Project team, providing advice and testing of assumptions in relation to the quantitative and other analysis.

Members of the NZ Battery Project team may attend meetings and will keep MBIE informed of the Group's progress through meeting summaries and updates at monthly meetings.

## Required skill sets

TRG members will be chosen based on their skills in one or more of the following areas:

1. An understanding and appreciation of quantitative analysis of:
  - a) the electricity sector, particularly the market and system of supply
  - b) energy technologies and/or
  - c) emerging trends in the energy sector
2. Policy and economic expertise, including the:
  - a) social, or
  - b) environmental, or
  - c) mātauranga Māori
  - d) understanding of how energy systems interact with wider environments and communities.
3. Experience in energy modelling, particularly in the New Zealand context.

## Confidentiality and independence

The intent in creating a Technical Reference Group is that members use their collective knowledge and experience when considering the matters before them.

This means that members must keep in mind that:

- They have been appointed for their knowledge and experience as well as their ability to participate constructively in group meetings.
- They have been appointed to act in their personal capacity (not as representatives of organisations) and must provide independent advice as a group, even though they need not be independent persons individually.
- This means that members are expected to act in the best interests of all stakeholders of the NZ Battery Project irrespective of whether this aligns with the interests of any organisation they may be associated with.

- The group is expected to reconcile divergent views and interests, both in the group and among wider stakeholders in a manner that achieves wider stakeholder "buy in". This requires a serious commitment by all members to understand alternative views and find workable solutions to what is a highly technical problem. However final consensus is not required.

Members are required to act independently and with integrity. All group proceedings are confidential to MBIE. All information will remain subject to the Official Information Act 1982. Any public statements will be made by MBIE.

Members have no media relations role and may not speak on behalf of MBIE or the Government in regard to matters on which the group has advised, or is advising. MBIE is solely responsible for all media relations and public statements.

## Conflicts of interest

Given the expertise for which members have been appointed to the group, conflicts of interest may arise from time to time and may preclude some members from attending some sessions.

If a member becomes aware of a situation where they have or may be perceived to have a conflict of interest with a matter the group is considering they should disclose this to the MBIE Secretariat.

If the matter meets the conflict of interest disclosure rules in sections 62 to 72 of the Crown Entities Act 2004, the Secretariat will facilitate the member making a formal disclosure and management plan for managing the conflict.