

# UTILITY Q&A ON THE FLEXIBLE GRID CONNECTION IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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## 1. What is Flexible Grid Connection?

Flexible Grid Connection (FlexGC) is the process of modifying the performance or timing of loads or distributed energy resources connecting to the grid to expedite connection timelines and avoid creating grid constraints. The guide describes two broad categories of FlexGC — static and dynamic. Static FlexGC is based on a predefined set of limits that the customer agrees to at the point of grid connection, while dynamic FlexGC more actively conveys these limits on a day-ahead or real-time basis, based on monitored grid conditions. Dynamic FlexGC can fine-tune limits but requires a method to communicate those limits to customers. This could be done through DERMS or other methods (such as in Australia, where limits are “published” to customers).

## 2. How can this guide help utilities?

The guide serves as a **step-by-step playbook** to identify where and how FlexGC can relieve connection backlogs and defer or avoid capital upgrades. Utilities can use it to:

- ▶ **Understand readiness** to implement FlexGC using self-assessment templates (staff and software capabilities, data systems, DERMS maturity).
- ▶ **Prioritize and scale** methods starting with static import/export limits, then progress

to staggered, scheduled, or dynamically managed approaches.

- ▶ **Standardize customer offers**, making flexible connections a formal service rather than an ad hoc exception.

## 3. How do Flexible Grid Connections differ from business-as-usual technically?

Traditional grid connections assume **100% firm service at all times**, based on nameplate capacity or assumed coincident demand. FlexGC differs by:

- ▶ Making the most of the existing grid rather than building grid capacity to meet nameplate capacity requirements. This means **limiting capacity, either by threshold, schedules, or dynamic limits**.
- ▶ **Providing scheduled or dynamic capacity** based on real-time or forecasted system constraints.
- ▶ **Using enhanced telemetry, data sharing, and control systems** where needed for dynamic options.

## 4. How can utilities implement FlexGC?

The guide describes 10 steps for implementing FlexGC. It's important to note that the specific type of FlexGC method (static vs. dynamic) will depend on the use cases being served and other considerations.

*This fact sheet was developed from the report, “CHARGED Flexible Grid Connection: Implementation Guide,” which was developed as part of a CHARGED working group.*

## 5. What benefits can utilities expect?

- ▶ **Faster customer connections:** More customers can be connected faster by reducing queue congestion.
- ▶ **Deferred infrastructure investment:** Makes better use of the available capacity of feeders, substations, and transformers in constrained areas.
- ▶ **Improved asset utilization:** Shifts customer load to periods where capacity is more available.
- ▶ **Improved planning insights:** Granular time-series data on equipment operation and energy use supports more accurate forecasts.

## 6. Can FlexGC be considered outside of docketed proceedings?

Yes, existing utility connection processes may be able to support FlexGC without additional regulatory structures. Consider options such as working groups to explore how existing utility processes can integrate FlexGC approaches.

## 7. What are the risks utilities must manage?

- ▶ **Reliability risk:** Temporary or dynamic limits must be enforceable to prevent overloads.
- ▶ **Process complexity:** FlexGC requires updated study templates, more complex study methods, new tracking fields, and cross-team coordination.
- ▶ **Customer trust:** Changes to import/export limits must be transparent and avoid unplanned restrictions that negatively impact customer business operations.

## 8. When and where should utilities deploy FlexGC?

- ▶ When demand growth outpaces construction lead times.
- ▶ On feeders with moderate constraints and expected growth of customers with flexible loads (e.g., fleets, campuses).

- ▶ In areas where necessary underlying load and asset data already exist or can be added economically.

## 9. How can utilities minimize implementation costs?

- ▶ Start simple: Use static or scheduled limits first.
- ▶ Target deployment: Focus on locations with overlapping constraints and willing customers.
- ▶ Scale adaptively: Layer in advanced telemetry and DERMS only when value is proven.

## 10. What internal processes should utilities adopt?

- ▶ **Modify study workflows and connection processes** to include partial energization and temporary operating limits.
- ▶ **Establish “exit criteria”** to define when restrictions can be lifted.
- ▶ **Develop templates and customer education materials** to standardize communication and improve uptake.

## 11. What unanswered questions remain?

- ▶ How can utilities maintain consistency of application across customer classes and service areas?
- ▶ What standards should govern measurement, enforcement, and telemetry certification?
- ▶ How can utilities manage multi-customer feeders and mixed flexibility resource portfolios?



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