Cost recovery guide: How to use the Costing Spreadsheet

The Fast-track Timesheeting Solution is a system that allows agencies, local government, and other parties involved in Fast-track applications to recover costs. The solution includes a costing template (spreadsheet), an invoice submission process, and a system for processing and storing timesheet data. The Fast-track Timesheeting Solution is designed to streamline the process of submitting and processing timesheets and invoices for cost recovery.

This guide focuses on the Fast-track costing spreadsheet and will walk you through the steps involved in using this effectively.

1. Preparing the Costing Spreadsheet

When it comes time for you to invoice your associated Fast-track costs, you will need to send the costing spreadsheet alongside your invoice.

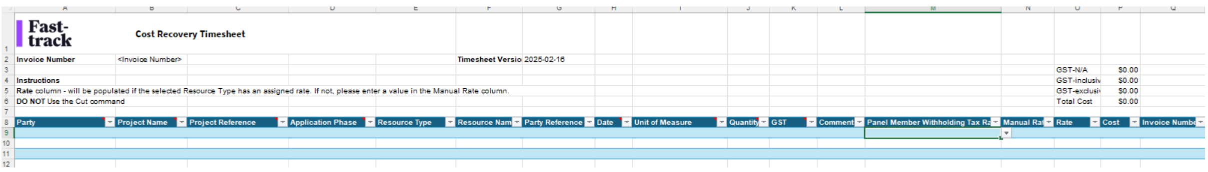
Note:

- Please send these costs through at least once a month, but you are welcome to send them at a greater frequency (e.g. weekly).
- You can combine multiple projects and costs into one spreadsheet, if they are fully captured in the associated invoice.

1.1 Getting the latest version of the Template

The latest version of the costing spreadsheet template is emailed to agencies every weekend. You can also request the latest version from the Fast-track team (contact@fasttrack.govt.nz). This will be date stamped and contain the version number of the spreadsheet.

1.2 Filling Out the Spreadsheet



Please note that compulsory columns have a red triangle in the right-hand corner, and there is data validation on most fields.

- **Party**: Select the relevant agency or party from the dropdown list. For Māori Organisations and Panel Members, there is one generic Party name for each. The actual name of the Māori Organisation or Panel Member needs to be entered in the Resource Name column.
- **Project Details (Name & Reference)**: Select the Project Name and Project Reference from the dropdown lists. These are updated weekly from the AMS (Application Management System). Please note that there could be more than one Reference for each project, so please ensure you are careful to select the correct reference.
- **Application Phase:** Select the Application Phase from the dropdown list. Please refer to the **Appendix** to know which phase to use when. *Generally*, all local authorities and agencies with the exception of Fast-track admin staff at the EPA and MfE should use the Comments step.
- **Resource Type**: Select the Resource Type (e.g. Advisor, Consultant) from the dropdown list. The rate will pre-populate automatically based on the selected resource type. If you require additional resource types to be added, please contact the Fast-track team. You can also enter the rate manually if required by entering the rate in the 'manual rate' field.
- **Resource Name:** Enter the name of the resource (person). See note above re generic Party names – actual names must be entered in the Resource Name field. If the line item relates to work completed by a third party, such as a consultancy you've engaged, please enter the registered company name in this cell.
- **Party Reference:** Enter the internal reference ID. This can be anything that identifies this cost line, for example, it can be an internal cost centre, purchase order number, or project refence you or your organisation has given to the project.
- **Date**: Enter the date in the format DD/MM/YYYY. Ensure the date is valid.
- **Unit of Measure:** Enter the unit of measure (e.g. hours). If the line item is for 'KMs' (mileage), the GST will automatically be marked as 'Not Applicable'.
- **Quantity:** Enter the quantity (e.g. hours worked). Hours should be in 15-minute increments.
- **GST:** Indicate whether GST is included. Note: The GST field should only be set to 'inclusive' for a reimbursement where the receipts do not specify the GST amount. Otherwise use 'exclusive' and GST will be calculated at the spreadsheet level.
- **Comments:** This is a **mandatory field** that must be completed. Please provide specific details about:
    - The work activities you completed during the time being reported, or

    - If submitting an expense, include a clear description of the expense item and its purpose.

  This free text field helps ensure accurate record-keeping and helps the Fast-track team to answer queries from applicants if required.
  Submissions with an empty or insufficient Comments field will be returned for correction, delaying the processing of your spreadsheet and invoice.
- **Panel Member Withholding Tax:** This field only needs to be filled out for the Panel Convener or Panel Members; all others can disregard it.
- **Manual Rate:** If you do not have a rate pre-populated, please manually fill in this field, or use this to override a rate showing for the Resource Type, if required.
- **Rate:** Ensure the Rate is correctly populated. Rates are tied to Party (agency, panel convenor, etc.) As agencies/bodies provide new/different costs, they can be loaded into the Costing Spreadsheet template. See notes for Resource Type column above.
- **Cost:** This will be calculated automatically based on values entered in the 'Quantity, Manual Rate, Rate' fields.
- **Invoice Number:** Once your invoice has been populated, please enter your invoice number in cell B2 at the top of the spreadsheet. Once a value has been added here, your invoice number will appear in column Q.

Credit Notes

If there is an incorrect invoice (= entire spreadsheet) or invoice line (= one line in the spreadsheet), you will need to issue a credit note (credit memo) to correct it. The steps below describe the correction/credit note process for this cost recovery solution.

For each line that needs to be corrected, you will need to first negate the original line and add a line to submit the correct costs.

1. Open the original spreadsheet that needs to be corrected.
2. In a blank spreadsheet, paste the line that needs to be corrected
3. Change the quantity in this line to the negative of the original. E.g. if you had a quantity of 10, change it to -10. Let's say the rate was $100, so the cost column will now show -$1000
4. In the next row below, paste the line you had copied in step 1 again.
5. Change the column(s) that need to be corrected: If it was just the quantity that was incorrect, change it the correct quantity. In the example from step 3, if the correct quantity was 6, enter 6 in place of 10. The cost column for this example would show $600
6. At this time, the net effect of this new spreadsheet would show a positive or negative total in the cost column depending on whether the correction was upward (additional quantity) or downward (reduced quantity) respectively.

7. In the example we are working with here, the net effect is -$400, and hence it is a credit note.
8. In your ERP, generate a credit note for this amount and attach the PDF along with the spreadsheet showing the same negative amount and submit as usual.

Special case: If the correction was to any column other than quantity – e.g. you had the incorrect project in the original spreadsheet – the net effect of the correction is zero dollars. In such a scenario, there is no additional amount owing to you (which is an invoice) or you owe Fast-track (which is a credit note). Because you have to attach a PDF when submitting every spreadsheet, please attach any PDF (a blank Word document exported to PDF or even the spreadsheet exported to PDF) to ensure the system processes your spreadsheet.

In the billing to applicants and in the invoice payments to you, the above changes (credit notes or change invoices) will be reflected.

1.3 Validating the Spreadsheet

Please ensure all mandatory fields are filled out before you generate your invoice. Mandatory fields have red triangles in the title name.

Task Name	Agency Reference	Date	Unit of Measur	Quantity	Rate	Manual Rate	Cost	GST
Comments		10/02/2025	Hours (time units)	2.00	$150.00	$150.00	$300.00	

Then check for any validation errors indicated by the spreadsheet:

- Yellow: required field.
- Orange: warning, e.g. negative quantity – valid if doing a correction
- Red: error, e.g. incorrect hour increments, resource type and unit of measure not consistent, panel member services cannot exceed 8 hours/day.

2. Submitting the Spreadsheet and Invoice

2.1 Preparing the Invoice

Once you have completed your costing spreadsheet, you will need to generate an invoice in PDF format that matches the spreadsheet data, and the spreadsheet file name.

To help verify that your invoice amount aligns with the costing spreadsheet, a 'totals' calculation has been included in the top-right corner of the costing spreadsheet:

GST-N/A	$0.00
GST-inclusiv	$0.00
GST-exclusi	$0.00
Total Cost	$0.00

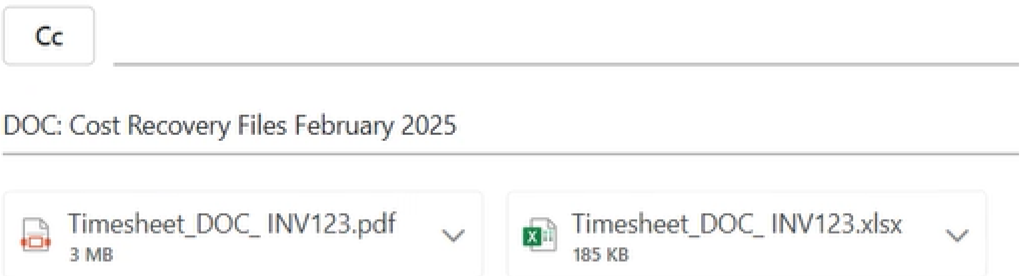
This invoice is essentially your Accounts Receivable invoice that you are sending to Fast-track – but instead of emailing to the finance team at Fast-track, please send it to the cost recovery email (costrecovery@fasttrack.govt.nz), along with the costing spreadsheet, which is considered supporting material to your AR invoice.

Please note that the costrecovery@fasttrack.govt.nz email address must **only** be used to send in your costing spreadsheets and matching PDF invoices – nothing else. You'll find the email addresses for other cost recovery and finance related enquiries on the Cost recovery for agencies page on the Fast-track website.

In our FMIS (Financial Management Information System) we consider each line of your spreadsheet as invoice line to the invoice. It is up to you whether the actual PDF invoice is also at the line level, but the total payable on your costing spreadsheet must match the total payable on the accompanying PDF invoice.

Please note:

- Be mindful of the GST exclusive/inclusive column when determining invoice totals. See **GST** note on page 2 above.
- Ensure the invoice number is included in cell B2 of the spreadsheet.
- There is no naming convention for the costing spreadsheet, but the spreadsheet and invoice MUST have a matching file name i.e. "**Trial_UAT_test_Fri24**" followed by the relevant file type for the spreadsheet **.xlsx** and invoice **.pdf**



2.2 Sending the Email

When you have a final version of your costing spreadsheet, and a matching invoice PDF, you will need to attach both to an email and send the email to costrecovery@fasttrack.govt.nz.

You will receive an autoreply confirming your submission has been processed successfully.

3. Processing the Submission

3.1 Automated Processing

The system monitors the inbox and triggers the processing flow upon receiving the email. The files are sent on to our FMIS.

- The files will be stored in a secure SharePoint folder and validated.
- Invoices will be paid as per the table below.

Invoice Date (month)	Payment Date
July	September
August	September
September	December
October	December
November	December
December	March
January	March
February	March
March	June
April	June
May	June
June	September

The exact date of this payment run each quarter is tbc.

3.2 Error Handling

If there are any errors (e.g. missing mandatory fields or mismatched invoice and spreadsheet), you will receive an email notification with details of the error.

If this occurs, please correct the errors and resubmit the files.

4. Viewing Processed Data

4.1 Accessing the Data

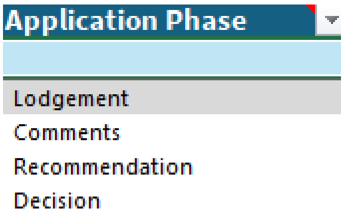
- Processed data will be stored in a database and can be accessed via Power BI dashboards. When this feature is available, we will share links and guidance on how to access and use this information.

Support and Assistance

- For any issues or questions, contact the Fast-track Contact Centre team on contact@fasttrack.govt.nz

Appendix

Application Phases



Assigning costs to the correct **Application Phase** helps ensure that we understand and can explain the true costs of each stage of the Fast-track process. This data will also be used to inform future reviews of application fees and levies.

Your Application Phase drop-down options change depending on whether you are completing your costing spreadsheet for a referral application or a substantive application.

Please ensure you select the right option for the work you are recording.

Referral applications

- **Lodgement** – from receipt of application through to sending of Stage 1 briefing or non-compliance letter. MfE use only.
- **Comments** – from Minister's decision on Stage 1 briefing through to final comments received. Used by MfE, relevant agencies commenting on application and/or invited to comment on application (s17), providing further information (s19, s20) or consulted on Treaty Settlements report (s18).
- **Recommendation** – Stage 2 briefing and recommendation to the Minister on referral decision; finalisation of Treaty Settlement Report. Used by MfE and relevant agencies supporting feedback from the Minister of Māori Development and the Minister for Māori Crown Relations on draft s18 report.
- **Decision** – MfE's post-decision close out work. MfE use only.

Substantive applications

- **Lodgement** – from lodgement through to setting up a Panel, including completeness and competing applications checks. Used by the EPA and relevant agencies commenting on application (s46, s47).
- **Comments** – Panel instructs the EPA to invite comments. Used by the EPA and relevant agencies providing advice/reports (s51) and/or invited to comment on application (s53).

- **Consideration** – Panel deliberations. Used by the EPA, the Panel, and relevant agencies asked to provide further info or issues report (s67, s68).
- **Hearing** – Panel decides to conduct a hearing. Used by the EPA, the Panel, and relevant agencies invited to appear (s57).
- **Decision/Minor corrections** – Panel drafts and finalises decision and conditions. Used by the EPA, the Panel, and relevant agencies supporting feedback from Ministers invited to comment on draft conditions (s70) or feedback from the Minister of Māori Development and the Minister for Māori Crown Relations on draft decision and conditions (s72).
- **Appeal** – EPA and Panel use only