

# Fast-track Cost Recovery System (CRS): How to get started

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**For more detailed guidance on cost recovery**, visit this page on the Fast-track website:

[Cost recovery for agencies](#)

## What is the Cost Recovery System?

The Fast-track Cost Recovery System (CRS) is an Oracle-based secure online portal that enables CRS 'suppliers' – agencies (administering agencies and local authorities) and other parties involved in Fast-track applications – to recover actual and reasonable costs incurred in carrying out their [functions, duties, and powers](#)<sup>1</sup> under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024.

The system includes time and expense entry and approval using online weekly 'timesheets', invoice generation and verification, and invoice submission. There is also an option to bulk upload already-approved time and expense information from your own system and submit it with your invoice. The option you choose is configured as part of the setup process.

The CRS connects directly to the EPA's financial management information system and is designed to streamline the cost recovery process for all involved.

This document introduces the CRS and provides key cost recovery 'need-to-knows' for all new users. Comprehensive guidance for each CRS role (see below for what these are) is available on the Fast-track website: [Cost recovery for agencies](#).

## Your CRS System Administrator

Every supplier organisation using the Fast-track CRS has one or more people who have been set up as a 'CRS System Administrator'. This role enables each supplier to manage their own users, resource types, and charge-out rates for each resource type.

The CRS System Administrator can then set up other users with one or more of the following roles:

- **User:** a person who enters time and expense data into the CRS.
- **Invoice Administrator:** a person who prepares and submits invoices in the CRS, including uploading time and expense data from your agency's own system if required.

If your agency has nominated to use the time and expense entry process with an approval workflow, the Fast-track team will set up the Approvers for your agency.

- **Approver:** a person who approves time and expense data submitted in the CRS.

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 103 - Cost Recovery Interpretation:  
<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2024/0056/latest/LMS1005459.html>

Your CRS System Administrator is the person to contact if you need to add a new team member for cost recovery purposes, or if someone no longer needs access (e.g. they leave the organisation or move to another team that is not involved in Fast-track).

## Accessing the CRS

When you are first set up in the CRS by your System Administrator, you will receive an email with your username and asking you to activate your CRS account.

**Before you do this**, please read the Terms and Conditions of Use published on the Fast-track website: [Fast-track Cost Recovery System Terms and Conditions of Use \(PDF, 111KB\)](#)

By activating your account, and by accessing or using the CRS, you are agreeing to be bound by these Terms and Conditions.

Once you have activated your account, we recommend that you **bookmark the CRS Dashboard in your web browser**. We do not provide this link in publicly accessible information, so please contact the Fast-track team at [contact@fasttrack.govt.nz](mailto:contact@fasttrack.govt.nz) if you need this link, or need to reset your password or multifactor authentication (for example, if you get a new phone).

The first time you sign in to the CRS, you will also need to set up your **password** and **secure verification** using an authenticator app.

Your password must meet the following criteria:

- Must have at least 12 characters
- Cannot exceed 40 characters
- Cannot contain the first name of the user
- Cannot contain the last name of the user
- Cannot contain the username
- Must have at least 1 lowercase character
- Must have at least 1 uppercase character
- Must have at least 1 numeric character
- Cannot repeat last 4 passwords

**You will need the Microsoft Authenticator app** on your smartphone for the secure verification process. You can download this from the Apple app store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android).

Detailed sign in instructions are available in each CRS user guide.

## A guide to time and expense information

As you work through each weekly timesheet to enter your time and expenses, **please pay particular attention to these very important fields**. Both are crucial in ensuring applicants accept the costs being charged against their application fees.

### Comments

It is mandatory to include a **meaningful comment** with each line of time or expense entered. By meaningful, we mean:

- **specific details about the work activities you completed** during the time being reported, or
- if submitting an expense, **a clear description of the expense item and its purpose**

This free-text information helps ensure accurate record-keeping and helps your agency and the Fast-track team to answer queries from applicants if required.

It is a key responsibility of time/expense users and approvers to ensure this information is provided.

Timesheets cannot be submitted without a comment for each line of time or expense. **Timesheets with insufficiently detailed comments will be rejected by your approver or returned for correction by the Fast-track team**, delaying the processing of your agency's invoice.

### Application Phase

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 Ministerial reviews of application fees and levies.

**We will advise you of the application phase to use** whenever we ask you to work on an application. If you are not sure which application phase to use, please check with your agency's application lead or with the Fast-track application lead for the project.

Your Application Phase options change depending on whether you are entering time/expenses against a referral application or a substantive application. Please ensure you select the right option for the work you are recording.

#### Referral application phases

- **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 application phases**

- **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.

### **Actual and reasonable costs**

Please ensure costs are actual and reasonable. This includes providing enough detail in timesheets so we can make that determination. Without sufficient information, cost objections will create extra work for both parties.

Please **confirm that invoiced work relates to tasks required under the Act**. Only work necessary for performing functions, duties, and exercising powers under the Fast-track Approvals Act should be charged to the EPA.

All persons exercising functions and powers under the Act must take all practicable steps to **use timely, efficient, consistent, and cost-effective processes that are proportionate to the functions, duties, or powers being performed or exercised** under the Act.

Please note you can still use your own cost recovery mechanisms to charge applicants for consultation outside the process, but **only cost-recoverable work undertaken as part of the Fast-track process should be invoiced to the EPA.**