

# Fast Track Construction

**The fast track construction is the project delivery method that allows reducing the time of project completion. It is not a new approach of the project execution. It is typical for commercial projects where an investor wants to generate the income from the completed property as soon as possible. It is not unknown for residential projects too, for instance, demolition or pilling works can commence while the design of the upper construction is still in progress. However, fast track project delivery method can impose some constraints.**

The conventional construction project commences when the design is completed, and all planning approvals are obtained. It takes more time to start works on site or finish such projects, but at the same time, the costs variations are minimised. In some cases, customers prioritise the completion date over the expenses. It is com-

mon for projects with a fixed deadline or when the completed project will generate the income, investment projects or emergency works.

## **How Fast Track Construction works?**

The construction work or both construction work and design are overlapping (one begins before the other is completed) while in the traditional approach could not be started until plans are ready or previous works finished. In fast track approach the design work is done in installments, for example foundation, superstructure, and exterior walls. As soon as first drawings and works specification is ready, works can be undertaken while further planning and designing is proceeding. Also known as "phased construction," this project delivery method typically consists of a series of bid packages. Usually the construction works begins prior to the completion of drawings.

## **Where to be careful when opting for Fast Track project approach?**

### **ERRORS and OMISSIONS:**

Often the design changes are made on site and such could require some of the construction works to be deconstructed. The errors in design or construction of one part influence the next one and generally any trial to reverse the wrongdoing will incur substantial costs either to contractor, client or both.

### **QUALITY:**

Plans and drawings might be not compatible with the on-site situation, measurements, field conditions, infrastructure, etc. Construction projects are complex, and one part can influence the other. It is essential to be prepared for quick amendments in plans if necessary to avoid additional costs. Proper coordination of architects and contractors is a must. The consistency across the project is harder to achieve when building stages are out of sequence, but today's BIM collaborative working methods are minimising such issues.

### **PLANNING:**

There is an increased risk of starting the project before all approvals are obtained for the whole design. Errors might not be caught quickly enough as the review time is limited. Sometimes particular works will have to be suspended in favour to other jobs due to lack of approvals etc. On the other hand the fast track approach leads to early construction expertise

### **VARIATIONS:**

Clients often do not understand the dynamics and complexity of the construction projects. Variations, time extensions or works suspensions due to the lack of plans, errors in the specification might disappoint the client and cause misunderstandings. It is important to inform customers



that during the project the additional approvals or changes in plans might be required due to discoveries on site etc. Fast tracking increases the likelihood of design revisions and change orders – with their resulting delays and costs. For architects and contractors, fast track approach often means increased risk, more liability, lower profits and a greater possibility of dispute.

#### **AMMENDMENTS IN DOCUMENTS:**

In fast track projects often client may decide and give the green light for contractors to change the method of construction, material or technology, works phase etc. or to instruct changes in drawings and specification without prior notice to contract administrator or contractor. It is to stay on track with the project delivery schedule but can lead to increased costs. Project contract should protect for unauthorised amendments in project documents.

#### **COLLABORATION:**

Advanced planning and collaboration are essential to complete the fast-track project successfully. It is important as architects and contractors must simultaneously coordinate works and design. Effective collaboration will influence the construction schedules and sequences.

#### **LABOUR COSTS:**

Rising costs of materials and labour are driving the project costs. Fast track construction

might cut some costs when properly planned and executed. Buying materials well in advance allow savings.

#### **How to avoid problems arising from fast track project delivery method?**

It is rather impossible. Construction projects are so complex that almost always some problems occur. It is all about the successful planning, risk assessment, management, communication and collaboration to resolve all issues without major increases in costs or delays. Prevention and client's education is essential. It is the client who has to understand and acknowledge the risks and potential liabilities when opting for fast track strategy. The customer has to be aware that changes to specification in the case of fast-track projects are unavoidable and might lead to increased costs and delays. What's more, the client has to understand that some finished works might have to be altered or reconstructed what also will increase cost and prolong the time of realisation.

It is recommended to get as many provisions related to the fast track method in the project's contract. Such document should describe the potential risks. The points below can be included in contract documents to provide some level of protection for the fast track project delivery:

- Acknowledgement about the fast-track project delivery method where design

and construction work overlap and cannot be scheduled in 100% accuracy as in the conventional process.

- A statement that changes in plans, materials delivery times, project phases, completion might change and increase costs.
- Agreement by the client to waive all claims against the contractor for design changes and modification of work already constructed.
- Acknowledgement that contractor will not be held liable for costs arising out of the project changes.
- Agreement by the client to pay for all required amendments in the construction documents.
- Agree and include in the contract total the contingency amount, which will cover for the design and construction changes. Such clause will acknowledge that some changes are unavoidable due to omissions or inconsistencies in plans, drawings or spec, so the final cost of the project may exceed the estimated one. Reasonable contingency amount will be used if required to cover for such increases. Usually the contingency amount varies between 10-20% of the contract value.