



When the Concrete Is the Finish: Forming the BENCH Headquarters in Bonifacio Global City

Taguig City, Philippines

Setting a New Standard for Exposed Architectural Concrete in the Philippines

Foster + Partners designed the tower so that large portions of the structure read as exposed architectural concrete, where the as-cast surface is the final finish. The concrete is the architecture, with no second chance to fix it. No plaster. No cladding. Every form joint, tie pattern, and pour line becomes a permanent design element. Bare-finish concrete at this scale is still new to the Philippine market, which makes the project a reference point for the region's construction community and a working demonstration of what disciplined formwork practice makes possible. The building itself rises 23 stories above six basement levels that reach 20 meters (66 feet) below grade, in the heart of Taguig City's Bonifacio Global City business district.

Foster + Partners' latest Philippines project combines a tall office tower with deep basement levels, creating one of BGC's most architecturally significant new developments.

Every detail of the formwork translates directly into the final appearance, making tie patterns and joint lines integral elements of the architectural design.



Choosing a Formwork System When the Concrete Is the Finish

You choose for two things at once: pressure capacity and surface precision. Monolith Construction & Development Corporation, the project's concrete contractor, has worked with EFCO Philippines for years, but familiarity alone did not drive the decision. The building required an engineered, panelized system that could resist the full pressure of fresh concrete on one-sided retaining walls while holding the alignment and surface precision an exposed finish demands. Most concrete formwork systems answer one of those requirements well. This project needed both from the same equipment, on the same pour. Monolith selected the EFCO E-BEAM® & SUPER STUD® wall-forming system for the perimeter and core walls, with the E-Z DECK® shoring system and Z-BEAM® table forms carrying the basement decks. EFCO's record on demanding projects worldwide gave the contractor and the design team confidence that the equipment would hold, and that confidence was about to be tested deep below grade.

How Do You Form a One-Sided Retaining Wall Without Ties?

You make the formwork itself the structure. Conventional wall formwork balances concrete pressure between two opposing faces connected by ties. At BENCH Headquarters, that approach was off the table: the basement perimeter walls are one-sided, tie-less retaining walls, an application still uncommon in the Philippines. In this one-sided concrete forming arrangement, the SUPER STUD® panels serve as the primary structure and resist the full fluid-concrete load with no back form to push against. 32 mm (1-1/4 inch) coil anchors tie each gang to the floor slab and transfer those loads safely into the completed structure. Crews pre-assembled the gang forms in an on-site fabrication area, building sets 3.6 meters (12 feet) wide and up to 5.45 meters (17.9 feet) tall, then crane-set each one into final position. Work platforms attached to the E-BEAM® walers gave placement crews a safe, tied-off position at the top of the wall and eliminated the need for separate scaffolding. One crane pick delivered forming, access, and pouring in a single system.



The forming layout was carefully aligned with each plywood joint location, producing the clean, symmetrical lines that define the finished walls and reward the contractor's investment in premium form materials.

When Single-Sided Wall Height Jumps to 5.45 Meters (17.9 Feet)

When single-sided wall heights jump, the pressure climbs sharply, and the engineered formwork has to be redesigned to carry it without touching the finish. The toughest test came in the basement, where retaining wall height rose to 5.45 meters (17.9 feet) from roughly 3.0 meters (9.8 feet) on the lower levels. EFCO's engineers reworked the configuration, adjusting SUPER STUD® spacing, E-BEAM® arrangement, and coil anchor layout to safely carry the higher loads. Just as important, the redesign protected the surface: it added no form marks and introduced no misalignment risk. Because the exposed face drives the architecture, EFCO built the formwork design around the precise locations of the phenolic plywood form joints, producing the clean, symmetrical joint lines visible across the finished walls. Monolith limited each phenolic plywood sheet to four uses to keep the surface consistent from the first pour to the last, and the retaining wall forms held alignment tight enough to make that investment pay off.





Pre-assembled wall sections allowed crews to install lengthy spans of formwork in a single day, demonstrating how thoughtful staging accelerates concrete operations on complex sites.

24-Hour Formwork Cycling Lowers In-Place Concrete Cost (LIPCC)

Turning engineering into cycle time, and cycle time into labor hours saved.

Every gang arrived pre-assembled; crews set the entire 100 linear meters (328 linear feet) of wall formwork for a full pour in a single day, placed concrete the next day, stripped after just 24 hours of cure, and cycled the gangs to the next location. That steady two-day rhythm is concrete cycle time reduction in its most practical form: it cut labor hours per pour and kept the crane productive instead of idle. Overhead, the E-Z DECK® elevated slab shoring and Z-BEAM® table forms covered full 3,300-square-meter (35,500-square-foot) basement floor plates at 3.5-meter (11.5-foot) floor-to-floor heights. After each deck pour, crews rolled the flying form tables to the ramp opening and flew them to the next level for immediate reuse. The biggest savings, though, came from what the project never had to do. With imperfections controlled at the form face, the bare finish required virtually no patching, rubbing, or repair, the least predictable line items on any architectural concrete job and the ones that quietly consume a budget after the pour is done.



Why Monolith Construction Chose EFCO Formwork for BENCH Headquarters

BENCH Headquarters left no room for compromise between structural performance and architectural quality, and EFCO delivered both. Engineering support adapted the system as wall heights and pressures increased rather than asking the contractor to work around a fixed catalog. Field service stayed close to the project team through design changes, installation, and every critical pour. The result is a project where speed, safety, and first-time finish quality reinforce each other, which is exactly what Lowest In-Place Concrete Cost (LIPCC) means in practice: the total cost of concrete in place, not the price of the panel. And the story is not finished. As the tower rises, EFCO's POWER TOWER PT-50 self-climbing formwork system will form the building's two core walls, lifting itself off the completed structure instead of tying up the tower crane. Watch for a project update in a future issue of FORM MARKS.

EFCO EQUIPMENT

E-BEAM & SUPERSTUD®, Z-BEAM®,
E-Z DECK®

EFCO FORMWORK SPECIALISTS - PHILIPPINES

Michael Victor Ong..... District Manager
Abunasif A. Gubat..... Territory Manager
Jeanna Fernandez..... District Engineer
Jey-M Salon..... Field Supervisor

MONOLITH CONSTRUCTION & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Harley Tagatac..... Area Manager
Osmund Fernandez..... Project Manager
Dexter Pepito..... Project In-Charge

