

Before buying land in Medellín

A practical workbook for turning land-use questions into evidence and decisions

Use this document to prepare questions, organise evidence and record what remains unknown. It does not certify ownership, permitted use, building rights, availability or the status of a public project. Obtain property-specific answers from the competent authority and appropriate professionals before making commitments.

Work with one clearly identified property and one dated version of your intended project. For every answer, save the full source, date, scope and unresolved question. Separate documentary evidence, an advertiser's statement and your own assumption.

Practical task

Write the property identifiers and one concrete project description. List any mismatch between the advert, map and documents before comparing offers.

Property reference

Intended use, scale and project version

Additional notes and file references

2. Ask a precise land-use question

Reading context from our existing source-based guide

Test a case and identify the missing answer

Imagine a hypothetical rural plot advertised as ideal for a home and guest stays. The seller supplies a map screenshot and an economic-activity response without project drawings. The review should not summarise everything as approved use: first confirm municipality, identification and the activity actually queried. Then separate personal housing from accommodation and describe scale, access, facilities and operation to obtain a relevant answer. Ask the planning reviewer to identify conditions and documents appropriate to the actual proposal. If the screenshot lacks date, layer or sufficient location detail, retain that limitation and request suitable mapping. An initial response can justify further investigation without necessarily justifying a construction advance. This example neither predicts a municipal decision nor determines an individual right. It identifies missing evidence and the spending dependent on it. Keep a changed project version with the enquiry rather than silently applying a conclusion to another use or scale. A decision should remain conditional where the answer addresses only part of the proposed activity.

Practical task

Draft a question naming the property, intended activity and scale. Ask which documents and conditions apply; keep the answer's exclusions with the answer.

Question for the authority or professional

Scope and limitations

Additional notes and file references

3. Connect the documents to the land

Reading context from our existing source-based guide

Connect the registered identity to the site

Create a sheet listing the property folio, cadastral reference, municipality, rural locality, address, stated area and deeds mentioned. Add a coordinate plan when one exists. Different rural property names do not always indicate an error, but the difference needs a documented explanation. Cadastre and registration have different purposes: a cadastral certificate does not replace evidence of ownership. Nor does a recently installed fence automatically establish the legal boundary. Ask the surveyor to identify the evidence supporting each boundary and the lawyer to compare that geometry with the recorded documents. Where earlier or derived folios appear, draw the relationship between the parent holding, subdivisions and advertised lot. This simple diagram helps prevent accidentally reviewing the neighbouring property's history. Do not fill unknown fields with estimates presented as facts; record the discrepancy, who will investigate it and what evidence is needed to resolve it.

Practical task

Create a document list with issuer, date and property identifier. Mark which apparent matches still require a professional explanation.

Property registry number and document reference

Document or map layer

What is still unknown?

Additional notes and file references

4. Read maps without inventing rights

Reading context from our existing source-based guide

Check the map, scale, date and supporting instrument

Consult municipal instruments and relevant studies for the property's exact location. Establish the represented phenomenon, scale, date, version and associated instrument; a flood map does not necessarily answer landslide questions. Decree 1077 distinguishes basic planning studies and detailed studies within its framework. A general layer may guide enquiries without resolving conditions on a specific platform. Ask the technical adviser to connect folio, survey and location to avoid assessing another holding or a displaced point. If a proposed POT revision appears, distinguish its status from current rules and decisions; publishing a technical document does not itself demonstrate adoption. In Medellín and neighbouring municipalities, verify the mapping and procedure relevant to the actual jurisdiction. Retain the consulted file or reference and precision uncertainties. A useful result explains what can be concluded and what needs additional review rather than simply saying that the lot appears green. Each colour has meaning only within its legend, purpose and documentary context.

Practical task

Save a map view with the location, layer name, date, scale and source visible. Record what the map cannot answer rather than treating an absence as permission.

Document or map layer

Source or document date

What is still unknown?

Additional notes and file references

5. Separate access and utility questions

Reading context from our existing source-based guide

Identify the organisation and delivery point

Create one row per service identifying the organisation consulted, coverage requiring confirmation, proposed delivery point and existing document. EPM maintains distinct project channels for water, electricity and gas; that institutional separation helps avoid treating one response as sufficient for everything. Where another provider applies, ask for its procedure without assuming EPM's process transfers. Ask the owner which contracts or communications exist and which property they concern. A bill may identify a current service, but the team must examine whether it addresses the new brief. Record who will submit the enquiry and what authorisation is needed to provide background. Our workflow avoids sending complete files to many recipients without a purpose. Establish who examines the case first, then supply relevant information through an appropriate channel. If different accounts name two organisations, keep coverage pending until a location specific response can establish the relevant provider.

Practical task

Ask separate questions about physical access, legal access, water, electricity and wastewater. Record the evidence and responsible party for each.

Document or map layer

Question for the authority or professional

Additional notes and file references

6. Make uncertainty visible in the budget

Reading context from our existing source-based guide

Connect conditions with money and commitments

Organise a table connecting each territorial condition with evidence, owner, investigation cost and the decision dependent on it. An unresolved restriction can change siting, design, budget or the suitability of a candidate; a generic financial contingency does not resolve it. Ask which documents need renewed review before signing and which project changes would require another enquiry. Where the seller undertakes obligations about licences, services or suitability for a use, have the agreement describe their scope with advice rather than confusing listing claims with an already agreed guarantee. Retain complete responses, annexes and professional exclusions. Municipal mapping and environmental determinants have different scopes: a favourable review of one layer does not certify all others. When a decisive answer is absent, adjustment, waiting or rejection can be preferable to forcing a conclusion. The file should explain what is known about the property, for which project and under which conditions. Keep visible what does not yet support permission or expenditure so the next commitment can be assessed on current evidence.

Practical task

List the purchase price separately from checks, taxes, professional work, site works and construction. Flag each cost that depends on an unanswered question.

Cost item and assumption

Decision dependent on this answer

Additional notes and file references

7. Test future infrastructure claims

Reading context from our existing source-based guide

Match the project scale to the property question

A metropolitan investment may improve a region without resolving a particular parcel's immediate access. Likewise, enlarging a main utility network does not prove that an individual connection has approved capacity or conditions. Separate general benefits from specific dependencies. For the property, identify the actual road section, access arrangement, service or intervention on which the proposal relies. Then check whether it appears explicitly in the available documents. A broad scale plan can guide research while remaining too general to locate an exact impact. Record map scale, date and version, and request technical clarification when uncertainty remains. Our recommendation is to describe public projects as context while treating the site's own conditions as matters requiring their own evidence. That approach supports more honest advertisements and helps buyers understand which advantages exist today and which are still possibilities dependent on later decisions.

Practical task

Choose one future benefit mentioned in the offer. Find evidence for its current stage and describe how a delay would affect your intended use.

Exact claim and who made it

What part of my project depends on it?

Additional notes and file references

8. Prepare a decision and a handover

Give the next reviewer the property identifiers, project version, full source documents, dated map captures, unanswered questions and decisions that depend on them.

Practical task

Name the next action, its owner and the evidence required before spending or signing. Keep unresolved conditions explicit in the handover.

- ☐ I compared the property identifiers across the advert and documents.
- ☐ I wrote the intended use and scale rather than relying on a generic label.
- ☐ I recorded the scope and exclusions of the land-use response.
- ☐ I separated asking price from additional costs and unknowns.
- ☐ I checked the documented stage of any claimed future benefit.

Result of the check and open conditions

Person responsible for the next check

Next review date

Additional notes and file references

The linked sources support further investigation. Their inclusion does not establish a favourable result for a particular property. Official source titles and institutional names remain in their original language.

<https://www.medellin.gov.co/es/transparencia/plan-de-ordenamiento-territorial-de-medellin/>

<https://www1.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=49731>

<https://www.igac.gov.co/sites/default/files/listadomaestro/IN-GCT-PC05-07%20V1%20Certificado%20Catastral%20para%20Entidades.pdf>

https://cancilleria.gov.co/normograma/compilacion/docs/lev_1523_2012.htm

https://cancilleria.gov.co/normograma/compilacion/docs/lev_0388_1997.htm

<https://www.epm.com.co/clientesyusuarios/aguas/constructor-y-urbanizador/>

<https://www.epm.com.co/clientesusuarios/energia/constructor-y-urbanizador/>

<https://www.medellin.gov.co/es/departamento-administrativo-de-planeacion/instrumentos-informacion-geografica-del-distrito-de-medellin/geome>

Send or take a concise question with the property reference, intended project, map capture and document list. Ask for a response tied to that specific question.