

FREE FIELD GUIDE / KENYA

Investigate the land before you price the opportunity.

A practical due-diligence system for testing title, boundaries, planning, site capacity, environment, services, market evidence, and acquisition terms before a development site becomes an expensive assumption.

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FORMAT
Field guide + Excel pack

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAYBOOK

Land / Capital / Design / Delivery / Operations

THE SHORT ANSWER

Due diligence converts uncertainty into acquisition terms.

The purpose is not to prove that a site is perfect. It is to identify what is true, what remains uncertain, what each constraint costs, and which risks should change the price, structure, programme, design, or decision.

VERIFY	TRANSLATE	CONDITION
Facts that must be evidenced before commitment.	Consequences for design, cost, time, and value.	Protections written into the offer and completion.

THE ACQUISITION SEQUENCE

01	Screen	Reject obvious title, access, planning, environmental, or pricing failures before spending heavily.
02	Verify	Commission legal, survey, planning, physical, utility, and market evidence for the surviving case.
03	Price	Translate constraints into area, programme, infrastructure cost, risk allowance, and land value.
04	Condition	Turn unresolved matters into conditions precedent, retentions, warranties, or a lower offer.
05	Decide	Proceed, renegotiate, pause, redesign, or walk away with the evidence register attached.

The complete acquisition test.

Run the workstreams together. A technically buildable site can still fail legally, commercially, or financially.

01 Title and legal interest

Does the seller control the interest being offered, and what travels with it?

- Official search and registered proprietor
- Title, lease, charges, cautions, restrictions, and easements
- Seller identity, authority, and ownership trail
- Land rent, rates, disputes, and completion conditions

Minimum evidence: Search certificate / title copy / seller documents / advocate report

02 Survey and boundaries

Is the land on paper the same land that exists on the ground?

- Registry index map, deed plan, or survey plan
- Beacons, dimensions, acreage, and encroachments
- Road reserves, riparian edges, wayleaves, and easements
- Need for resurvey, amalgamation, or subdivision

Minimum evidence: Survey plan / beacon certificate / surveyor site report

03 Planning and development controls

What can lawfully be built, at what intensity, and through which approval path?

- Existing and proposed land use
- Density, plot ratio, coverage, height, parking, and setbacks
- Change or extension of user requirements
- County plans, special planning areas, and safeguarding controls

Minimum evidence: Planning search / zoning note / county advice / planner report

04 Physical site capacity

Can the concept survive the real geometry and condition of the site?

- Access, frontage, levels, slope, soil, and drainage
- Existing structures, neighbours, trees, and site constraints
- Preliminary buildable envelope and parking logic
- Abnormal works, demolition, retaining, or remediation

Minimum evidence: Site record / topographical survey / concept test / geotechnical advice

05 Environment and statutory risk

Which environmental or safeguarding conditions could alter the programme or design?

- Likely NEMA screening and EIA pathway
- Riparian, wetland, conservation, heritage, or aviation constraints
- Noise, waste, traffic, water, and neighbouring impacts
- Public participation and specialist approvals where applicable

Minimum evidence: Environmental screening note / specialist advice / regulator correspondence

06 Infrastructure and services

Are services available, adequate, connectable, and affordable?

- Power capacity and connection route
- Water source, sewer strategy, and stormwater discharge
- Road access, traffic interface, and construction logistics
- Telecommunications, waste, fire access, and utility wayleaves

Minimum evidence: Utility confirmations / infrastructure plan / preliminary connection budgets

07 Market and acquisition case

Does this site create an investable advantage after its constraints are priced?

- Comparable land and end-product evidence
- Demand, competition, absorption, and likely product
- Land price, taxes, transaction costs, and holding period
- Residual value, downside case, conditions precedent, and walk-away price

Minimum evidence: Market note / valuation / residual land test / acquisition recommendation

Conditions that should slow the deal down.

- | | |
|----|---|
| 01 | The site is priced on development potential that has not been verified with the planning authority. |
| 02 | The title area, occupied boundary, and survey evidence do not reconcile. |
| 03 | Access exists in practice but not as a clear legal right. |
| 04 | Utility availability is assumed from proximity rather than confirmed capacity and connection cost. |
| 05 | A premium scheme is required to support the land price, but the site constraints dilute that premium. |
| 06 | The offer becomes unconditional before the highest-impact investigations are complete. |

A red flag is useful only when it changes an action: commission evidence, revise design, add time, include cost, condition completion, reduce the price, or stop.

The reports are inputs. The decision is the output.

A useful acquisition recommendation makes the evidence visible and states what remains unresolved. It should connect each material finding to the development concept, cost plan, programme, offer terms, and supported land value.

01	Verified facts	What is supported by current, attributable evidence?
02	Open matters	What remains unknown, who owns it, and by when must it be resolved?
03	Development consequence	How does each issue affect area, design, cost, time, demand, funding, or value?
04	Acquisition protection	Which condition precedent, retention, warranty, indemnity, price adjustment, or exit right is required?
05	Recommendation	Proceed, proceed conditionally, renegotiate, pause, redesign, or walk away.

The downloadable Excel pack includes:

Diligence Register	28 structured checks across seven workstreams.
Evidence Log	Documents, advisers, dates, links, validity, and reliance notes.
Red Flag Tracker	Probability, impact, severity, owner, mitigation, and decision consequence.
Responsibility	Lead, reviewer, minimum output, target date, status, and dependency.
Decision Summary	Completion, severe flags, evidence count, price gap, and acquisition recommendation.

KENYA REFERENCE POINTS

Begin with primary sources.

Requirements vary by county, project type, site condition, and regulatory updates. Confirm the current position with the relevant authority and appointed professionals.

Official land search	State Department for Lands	https://lands.go.ke/issuance-search-certificate
Digital land services	Ardhisasa	https://ardhisasa.lands.go.ke/
Development permission	Kenya Law - Physical and Land Use Planning Act	https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/2019/13
Development applications	Kenya Law - General Development Permission and Control Regulations	https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/act/ln/2021/253/eng@2022-12-31
Environmental assessment	National Environment Management Authority	https://nema.go.ke/services/environment-impact-assessment-eia/
Construction registration	National Construction Authority	https://www.nca.go.ke/project-registration
Electricity connections	Kenya Power	https://www.kplc.co.ke/faq/new-connections

Source list checked for this edition on 1 July 2026. Official requirements, portals, fees, classifications, and approval processes can change.

USE THE PACK

Move from a checklist to an evidence-backed decision.

Download the companion Excel workbook from The Development Playbook. Use the online Site Acquisition Go / No-Go Calculator to turn the diligence findings into an explicit acquisition screen.

GUIDE	developmentplaybook.africa/resources/guides/kenya-site-acquisition-due-diligence
CALCULATOR	developmentplaybook.africa/tools/site-acquisition-go-no-go

IMPORTANT

This guide is general educational material only. It is not legal, surveying, planning, environmental, valuation, tax, or investment advice. Appoint appropriately qualified professionals for the specific property and transaction.