



Construction Project Oversight & Management in Panama

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1. WELCOME

Dear Future Client,

Thank you for your interest in Build Right Panama. Whether you're ready to build your dream home, invest in land, or need help navigating the complexity of construction in Panama, I'm here to guide you every step of the way.

With years of hands-on experience managing projects in Panama, I understand how things work here—from the cultural differences and legal systems to the real-world logistics of labor, materials, and local regulations. My goal is to remove the stress and uncertainty that often comes with building in a foreign country.

This packet will walk you through what I do, how I charge, and what you can expect. If you're serious about building in Panama, I'll

make sure it gets done the right way—with full transparency, solid planning, and professional execution.

2. WHAT I DO

Build Right Panama provides full-scope construction oversight and boots-on-the-ground project management. I handle everything from legal coordination, land prep, and permitting, to staffing, purchasing, and site execution—ensuring your build moves forward smoothly, securely, and on budget.

3. WHAT WE HANDLE SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

- **Property search support and legal purchase coordination**
- **Title verification, surveys, and zoning compliance**
- **Architectural and engineering plan prep or translation**
- **Full permitting process with local municipalities and agencies**
- **Environmental clearances, building licenses, and site registration**
- **Power, water, septic, and site utility setup**
- **Local labor sourcing and wage negotiation**
- **Compliance with Panama's labor and social security laws**
- **Bulk material purchasing and jobsite delivery coordination**
- **Daily on-site management, logistical planning, and problem solving**
- **Weekly progress reports, photos, and updates**
- **Final inspections, certifications, and walkthroughs**

4. PRICING STRUCTURE

Estimated Monthly Management Fee:

\$4,200–\$5,100 USD / month (depending on project intensity, subject to change based on project complexity)

5. CONSTRUCTION COSTS

All construction-related expenses—labor, materials, legal fees, permits, utilities, etc.—are separate from my management fee.

You'll receive:

- A custom quote at the start of your project with detailed cost estimates**
- Real-time receipts and updates**
- A pay-as-you-go setup to maintain control of your funds**
- The ability to scale up or down based on your timeline or budget**

6. UNDERSTANDING PANAMA'S PACE

Culturally, Panama operates at a more relaxed pace than many foreigners expect. Government offices move slowly, permit approvals can take time, and holidays often pause all work. I've learned how to navigate these realities by working every day—following up on paperwork, managing payrolls, and planning ahead so we stay ready to move when systems restart. You'll always have someone keeping momentum going, even when others stop.

7. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Q: Do you provide the materials?**

A: No. I help source them through local and regional suppliers at fair rates. Every purchase is tracked and verified.

- **Q: Can I scale the build up or down?**

A: Yes—your timeline and budget shape how many workers we hire and how fast we move.

- **Q: Do you handle the legal side?**

A: I coordinate with trusted Panamanian attorneys to manage contracts, due diligence, permits, and title transfers.

8. NEXT STEPS

If you're ready to move forward or want to explore whether your project is the right fit, let's schedule a call. After a brief consultation, I'll prepare a custom quote that outlines expected costs, steps, and timelines tailored to your goals.

9. PRICING PERSPECTIVE – WHY THIS MODEL WORKS

To help you understand where my pricing comes from, here's how it compares from both sides of the equation:

- **From the Client's Perspective:**

- I am more affordable than U.S.-based contractors managing international builds, who may charge \$8,000–\$12,000/month or a percentage of the total project cost.
- I am significantly safer than many local Panamanian companies, which are known to:
 - • Disappear with deposits
 - • Deliver poor-quality work
 - • Inflate material and labor costs without any transparency
- Instead, you're working with someone who offers:
 - • Fluent bilingual communication and cultural fluency in both American and Panamanian systems
 - • Full transparency with real-time receipts and project updates
 - • Personal accountability—no subcontracted oversight or fluff
 - • Daily commitment to pushing the project forward, even when others are off due to holidays or slowdowns
- From My Perspective:
 - \$4,200–\$5,100/month results in \$50K–\$60K/year for a full-time commitment
- I take on 100% of the liability, legal risk, planning, and execution
- I operate independently in a foreign country without institutional protection or support
- I manage everything from legal compliance to labor force coordination and daily problem-solving
- I am the direct point of contact, decision-maker, and project steward—unlike large firms with staff turnover or shifting priorities
- Meanwhile, skilled trades in the U.S. with much narrower responsibilities are earning \$70K–\$100K+ annually

Build Right Panama

Construction Oversight. Done Right.

1. Meet Your Project Manager: Who I Am and Why I Built This Company

My name is Nicolas Gambini, and I'm the founder of Build Right Panama — a company created to solve a very real problem: how can foreign clients confidently build a home in Panama without being taken for a ride?

After working in real estate and managing projects both in the U.S. and abroad, I saw the gaps firsthand: language barriers, missed deadlines, corner-cutting, and a total lack of accountability. Too many general contractors worked for themselves, not for the client.

I built a company that works differently.

At Build Right Panama, I act as your on-site construction manager, not a general contractor. That means I represent you, the property owner, keeping your build on schedule, on budget, and done to the standard you expect. You approve every cost. You stay in control. I just make sure it gets done right.

2. What Makes Build Right Panama Different

Most expats in Panama go through the same painful learning curve: they hire a builder who disappears, overspends, or cuts corners. By the time they realize what's happening, it's too late.

That's not how we do things here.

At Build Right Panama:

- **You stay in charge of your money — I never mark up labor or materials.**
- **I treat your project like it's my own property.**
- **I'm on-site every day to supervise, inspect, and coordinate your build.**
- **I manage everything from hiring to permitting to logistics — so you don't have to.**

In other words, I don't just "build homes." I build peace of mind.

3. Permits, Rules, and the Panama Puzzle: Navigating the System

Panama has its own way of doing things. Permitting and approvals here aren't impossible — but they are slow, decentralized, and require boots on the ground.

I work directly with the necessary agencies, including:

- **MIAMBIENTE – environmental approval**
- **IDAAN – water and sewage planning**
- **MOP – road access**
- **Municipal Engineers & Planning Departments**
- **INADEH – labor training and compliance**

I don't just wait and hope. I proactively guide your project through each phase of approval, keeping your paperwork clean and your timeline moving.

4. Building a Local Crew: How I Hire, Manage, and Keep the Site Moving

You won't see me dragging the same crew from project to project across the country. Why?

Because good workers are local — and local means faster, cheaper, and more sustainable for your build.

For each project, I:

- **Hire tradesmen who live near the build site**
- **Select workers based on skill, attitude, and work ethic**
- **Assemble the right number of workers for speed and efficiency (minimum crew: 4)**
- **Personally supervise day-to-day labor and task delegation**
- **Handle payroll, daily transport, social security contributions, and safety**

These men work for the project, not for a contractor with five jobs at once. That means no split focus, no “mañana,” and no corner-cutting.

5. Step-by-Step: From Dirt to Keys

Here's what you can expect, from groundbreaking to handoff:

1. **Land Clearing + Site Prep – boundaries marked, crew mobilized, container placed**
2. **Utility Setup – coordinate water tank or hookup, generator, temporary services**

3. **Surveying + Layout** – final lot prep, elevations marked, plans confirmed
4. **Footings + Foundation** – dig, pour, and cure reinforced slab, footings and seismic beams.
5. **Wall Construction** – block laying, window/door framing, bond beams
6. **Roofing + Framing** – steel trusses, C-channel systems, waterproofing
7. **Plumbing + Electrical Rough-In** – before walls are sealed
8. **Windows, Doors, and Finishes** – install, plaster, prep for paint
9. **Tile, Fixtures, Paint** – clean install, not rushed
10. **Utility Finalization** – test connections, install breakers, verify flow
11. **Final Walkthrough** – your house, key in hand, ready to live or rent

Rough Timeframe:

Every build presents its unique set of challenges, and a timeframe will be provided once all project information is available.

6. The \$7,000 Tool + Equipment Fee: Why It's Needed

To build efficiently, every job site needs tools, power, storage, and control. That's what this fee covers.

You're not paying for fluff. You're paying for a mobile build kit that keeps your site moving like a machine — without delays, rental fees, or begging for parts.

Included:

- **Concrete mixer, generator, welding gear, saws, drills, rebar tools, water tank, shade, safety gear. This list is provided under the itemized tool and equipment list.**
- **Tools are bought once, stored on-site in a secure container, and used by your crew alone.**
- **I don't haul a crew across Panama — they wouldn't want to leave home, and they don't make enough to pay for hotels.**
- **Each build gets its own dedicated setup, run by me and local labor, built from scratch.**

You get a clean, efficient, fully equipped jobsite — not a circus.

7. Why Plan Conversion is Required (and Why It's Not a Big Deal)

Even if you already have plans in hand, they must be reviewed and converted by a Panamanian architect to meet local code.

Here's why:

- **Foreign plans often ignore Panama-specific factors: drainage, seismic zones, labor methods**
- **The municipality and fire department won't approve a build without legal, stamped local plans**
- **I work with trusted architects who quickly convert foreign plans while keeping your layout intact**

It's a necessary step — but I make it painless.

8. What You Get When You Work With Me

- **A single point of contact who actually shows up**
- **Full transparency: labor and materials are paid by you, with no markup**
- **Photos, updates, and check-ins throughout the build**
- **Fast problem-solving — I don't email questions, I walk 20 ft and fix the issue**
- **Your home. Built right. In Panama. With pride.**

9. Ready to Build? Here's What to Expect Next

If you're serious, I'll walk you through the following:

- 1. We finalize your lot, your vision, and your timeframe**
- 2. You approve a basic budget and plan conversion**
- 3. You pay the startup fee — I mobilize**
- 4. We break ground**

How Long Will It Take? (The Truth About Building in Panama)

If you're imagining a smooth, fast-paced 4-6 month build like in the States — forget it.

This is Panama.

And here's what that really means:

- **There are 30+ national holidays, many of which shut down government offices completely.**
 - **Workers may not show up after a long weekend.**
- Vendors don't deliver when they say they will.**

- Architects take weeks, sometimes months, to make basic revisions.
- Municipal approval? You're lucky if they look at your file this month.
- The pace is slow, and there's nothing you or I can do to change that — but I can manage it.

So how long does it take?

- A 2-bedroom home with my full oversight: 6 to 9 months if all goes well.
- Bigger or more complex builds: 9–12 months — sometimes longer, depending on the site and permit delays.

I don't promise speed.

I promise results.

My job is to show up every day, chase approvals, push vendors, and make sure your project doesn't fall behind while no one's watching. Without that? You'll wait twice as long and still end up paying more.

Labor Safety & Liability: How Workers Are Protected on Your Site

All laborers hired under Build Right Panama are enrolled in Caja de Seguro Social (CSS) — Panama's national social security and worker protection program. This provides full medical coverage, injury benefits, and disability compensation in the event of an accident on-site.

In addition:

- Every worker is legally documented and paid through a formal payroll (planilla).

- **Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided and enforced on-site.**
- **Safety briefings and tool handling procedures are conducted regularly.**
- **Build Right Panama maintains physical site logs and worker records to comply with labor standards.**

CONSTRUCTION OVERSIGHT & PROJECT MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

This Agreement is entered into on _____ (Date) by and between:

CLIENT:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone / Email: _____

MANAGER:

Build Right Panama (the “Manager”)

Representative: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

1. SCOPE OF WORK

The Manager agrees to oversee and manage construction operations for the Client’s property located at:

Project Address: _____

Services include:

- Daily on-site supervision and labor oversight
- Crew hiring, payroll, and labor compliance
- Permit tracking and regulatory coordination
- Timeline management and reporting

- **Equipment mobilization and material coordination**

2. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR STATUS

Build Right Panama operates as an independent company and is not an employee or legal agent of the Client. The Manager assumes full legal responsibility for labor, equipment, and operations unless otherwise agreed.

3. EQUIPMENT & MOBILIZATION FEE

The Client agrees to pay a non-refundable startup equipment and mobilization fee of \$7,000 USD, due prior to commencement. This covers:

- **Tools, equipment, generator, saws, mixer, safety gear**
- **On-site container, water access, and fuel startup**
- **Labor recruitment and transport**

Note: All tools and equipment remain the property of Build Right Panama unless transferred in writing after project completion. In the event of early termination, Client is not entitled to claim or retain project equipment.

4. MANAGEMENT FEE

The Client agrees to pay the Manager a monthly project oversight fee of:

\$_____ USD/month, payable in advance by the ____ day of each month.

5. PAYMENT TERMS & STOP-WORK POLICY

If payment is not received within seven (7) days of the due date:

- **All work and labor may be paused immediately without penalty to the Manager**
- **The Client remains responsible for labor wages and incurred expenses up to that point**

6. CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Client agrees to:

- **Provide timely access to the property and construction site**
- **Respond to material and design decisions promptly**
- **Fund labor and material purchases as approved**

7. EARLY TERMINATION & DEFAULT

This Agreement may be terminated:

- **By either party with thirty (30) days' written notice**
- **By the Manager with seven (7) days' notice if payments are delinquent or job site is unsafe**

In the event of client default:

- **Client remains responsible for all active payroll and unrecoverable costs**

- The Manager reserves the right to seek recovery through legal means, including material cost reimbursement and wage settlements

8. WORKER LIABILITY & SAFETY

All site labor is enrolled in Panama's Caja de Seguro Social (CSS) and covered under national labor insurance. Safety protocols, PPE, and sign-in logs will be maintained by the Manager. The Client assumes no legal liability for worker injury once project funding is active and current.

9. LIABILITY WAIVER

The Manager shall not be held liable for:

- Delays caused by government agencies, third-party vendors, or client-driven changes
- Acts of God, force majeure, or material shortages
- Any subcontracted work not directly performed by Build Right Panama personnel

10. GOVERNING LAW

This Agreement is governed by the laws of the Republic of Panama.

SIGNATURES

CLIENT:

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

BUILDRIGHT PANAMA:

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

EXAMPLE

Why People Get Burned Building in Panama - and How We're Different

If you've spent any time researching construction in Panama, you've probably seen the horror stories:

- Contractors disappearing mid-project
- Paying for materials that never show up
- Builds running months behind with no accountability
- Language barriers and legal blind spots that leave owners powerless

I've lived it. I've built homes in Panama and I've seen first-hand how easy it is for foreign clients to get taken advantage of - especially when they try to manage a build from abroad or trust the wrong people.

That's exactly why I started Build Right Panama.

I don't work for contractors. I don't profit off materials. I work directly for you - the client - as your on-site representative. I speak the language, know the system, and I'm there every day to make sure your investment is protected and your home is built right.

If you're looking for someone who's already made the mistakes and learned the hard way - so you don't have to - you're in the right place.

Not a General Contractor - Your Personal Project Manager

At Build Right Panama, I don't act as a traditional general contractor. Instead, I work directly for you - the property owner - as your on-site construction manager.

That means:

- You stay in control of your budget
- You approve all material and labor costs
- I manage the entire process on your behalf

From converting your plans for Panama's building codes, to clearing the land, sourcing materials, coordinating workers, and overseeing each phase - I'm on the ground making sure your vision is executed the right way.

There are no hidden markups. No third-party agendas. Just professional oversight, honest communication, and hands-on accountability.

This is how you build in Panama without getting taken advantage of.

Build Right Panama – Full Build Material & Vendor Cost Estimate (Example)

This estimate outlines typical material and outsourced vendor costs associated with a standard 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom home in Panama. All figures are approximate and reflect pricing pulled from national suppliers, local hardware stores, and major distributors. I take advantage of bulk discounts and source from multiple vendors to reduce costs where possible. Client approvals are required before any purchase is made.

****Final, accurate pricing for your specific project will be determined only after architectural plan conversion and scope review are completed.****

PRE-CONSTRUCTION & PROFESSIONAL FEES

Item / Service	Estimated Cost (USD)
Architectural Plan Conversion	\$800 – \$1,200
Topographic Survey	\$250 – \$500
Municipal Permits (incl. MIAMBIENTE, Fire Dept, MOP)	\$600 – \$1,000
Soil Test (if needed)	\$250 – \$400
Site Clearing & Prep	\$300 – \$500
Backhoe Excavation (for footings)	\$300 – \$450
Water Tank Setup or IDAAN Connection	\$200 – \$600
Lawyer Fees (contracts, permits, filings)	\$2,000 – \$4,000

STRUCTURE MATERIALS

Item / Service	Estimated Cost (USD)
Cement (94lb bags)	250–350 bags @ \$8 each
Rebar (various sizes)	800–1,200 kg @ \$1.10/kg
Concrete Blocks (6")	2,500–3,000 units @ \$0.50–\$0.60 each
Sand & Gravel Base Fill	\$250 – \$400
Ready-Mix Concrete (slab pour)	\$600 – \$900

ROOFING

Item / Service	Estimated Cost (USD)
Zinc Roofing Sheets	\$800 – \$1,200
Steel Trusses or C-Channel	\$1,200 – \$2,000
Self-tapping Screws with Rubber Washers (Zinc Fasteners)	\$150 – \$250
Gutters & Downspouts	\$150 – \$300

FORMWORK & FRAMING

Item / Service	Estimated Cost (USD)
2x4 & 2x6 Treated Lumber	\$300 – \$500
Plyform Sheets	\$150 – \$250
Nails, Oil, Misc. Hardware	\$100 – \$200

PLUMBING SYSTEM

Item / Service	Estimated Cost (USD)
PVC Pipes, Joints & Fittings	\$400 – \$700
Main Drain Lines	\$200 – \$300
Bathroom Fixtures	\$600 – \$900
Kitchen Plumbing Fixtures	\$250 – \$400

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

Item / Service	Estimated Cost (USD)
Electrical Breaker Panel + Breakers	\$150 – \$300
Wiring (AWG 12–14 rolls)	\$250 – \$400
Conduit, Boxes, Switches & Outlets	\$300 – \$500
Exterior Light Fixtures	\$150 – \$250

INTERIOR & FINISHES

Item / Service	Estimated Cost (USD)
Ceramic Tile (walls & floors)	\$700 – \$1,200
Mortar / Grout / Adhesives	\$150 – \$250
Windows & Doors	\$1,200 – \$2,000
Interior Paint + Supplies	\$400 – \$700
Cement for Repello / Plastering	\$150 – \$300
Exterior Paint (walls, trim)	\$300 – \$500
Air Conditioning Unit(s)	\$500 – \$1,200 (each, installed)
HVAC Ducting and Installation (if central)	\$800 – \$1,500
L Channel / Perimeter Trim for Drop Ceilings	\$150 – \$300
Sheetrock (Drywall Panels)	\$500 – \$800
Plaster Materials (lime, cement blends)	\$200 – \$400
Ceiling Suspension Hardware (tie wire, angles)	\$100 – \$200
Wall Insulation (if used)	\$300 – \$600
Ceiling Insulation (fiberglass or foil)	\$400 – \$800
Kitchen Cabinets (modular or built-in)	\$1,000 – \$2,000
Bathroom Vanities / Cabinets	\$300 – \$700
Kitchen Appliances (stove, fridge, range hood)	\$1,500 – \$2,500

CONSUMABLES & SITE SUPPLIES

Item / Service	Estimated Cost (USD)
Gasoline & Fuel (for generator/mixer)	\$150 – \$250
Acetylene / Oxygen Tank Refills	\$100 – \$200
Cutting Discs, Drill Bits	\$100 – \$150
Glues, Sealants, Silicone	\$100 – \$200
Screws, Nuts, Bolts (general use)	\$150 – \$300
PPE (gloves, masks, boots)	\$100 – \$200

Labor & Jobsite Oversight – Build Right Panama

This section outlines how BuildRight Panama manages local labor, handles jobsite standards, and coordinates payroll transparently and in an organized manner. All work is performed under direct oversight and documented for client review.

Labor Hiring & Oversight

- All workers are hired under day labor or short-term contract arrangements managed by BuildRight Panama.
- The client approves the total laborer headcount and budget before hiring.
- On-site labor is directly supervised by a designated Build Right lead or site coordinator.

Payroll Handling

- Worker payments are tracked and recorded weekly.
- Clients receive payroll summaries with names, days worked, and total pay.
- Social security enrollment or taxes are the client's responsibility unless otherwise agreed upon in writing.

Work Hours & Conduct

- Standard hours are 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Monday to Friday, unless otherwise adjusted by the client.
- Alcohol and drug use are strictly prohibited on-site.
- All workers must wear appropriate PPE and follow safety instructions provided by BuildRight Panama.

Tools & Materials

- BuildRight coordinates all necessary tools and site logistics.
- Responsibility for purchasing tools and materials rests with the client.
- Workers are required to maintain site cleanliness and use tools respectfully.

Site Security & Theft

- A night guard or weekend watchman may be recommended for sites located in remote or high-risk areas.
- Clients are responsible for securing tools and materials unless authorization is given to BuildRight Panama to manage security on their behalf.

Legal Labor Framework

All labor provided through BuildRight Panama follows the basic principles of Panama's labor code. Workers are compensated fairly and ethically in accordance with local minimum wage laws and typical construction industry practices.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, workers are hired as temporary labor and are not considered formal employees of BuildRight Panama. If the client requires formal employment contracts, CSS registration, or benefit contributions, these must be handled by the client or explicitly outlined in a separate agreement.

Build Right Panama – Employee Payroll Sheet (Example)

This sheet is used to calculate and document worker wages, CSS deductions, and net pay for laborers hired under Build Right Panama.

Each worker signs upon receiving payment. CSS is withheld at 9.75% from gross wages, and employer contributions (~13%) are recorded separately.

Name	Cedula	Trade	Days Worked	Daily Rate	Gross Pay	CSS Deduction (9.75%)	Net Pay	Signature
Juan Castillo	8-123-456	Block Mason	5	\$40	\$200	\$19.50	\$180.50	[signed]
Luis González	4-456-789	Welder	6	\$45	\$270	\$26.33	\$243.67	[signed]

Construction Permits & Timeline – Panama Project Overview

This document outlines the core permits required for residential construction in Panama. This includes who is responsible for obtaining permits, where they are filed, typical costs, and when they must be completed within the groundbreaking timeline.

Required Permits Overview

- Municipal Construction Permit

Agency: Municipality (City Hall)

Who Pulls It: Pulled by the architect or the engineer

Timeline: Must be approved before groundbreaking

Estimated Cost: \$300–\$800 (varies by m² and location)

- Environmental Approval (MIAMBIENTE)

Agency: Ministerio de Ambiente (MIAMBIENTE)

Who Pulls It: Filed by architect or project manager

Timeline: Apply 2–3 weeks before other permits; must be approved before build begins

Estimated Cost: \$150–\$500 depending on area

- Water & Sewage Permit (IDAAN)

Agency: IDAAN (water authority)

Who Pulls It: Filed by architect or project manager

Timeline: Submit before plumbing install or utility connection

Estimated Cost: \$100–\$300

- Fire Department Approval

Agency: Bomberos (Fire Department)

Who Pulls It: Plans submitted by the architect/engineer

Timeline: Must be approved before a municipal permit is finalized

Estimated Cost: \$100–\$200

- Road Access Approval (if needed)

Agency: Ministerio de Obras Públicas (MOP)

Who Pulls It: Filed by the project manager

Timeline: Before road cuts, culvert installation, or driveway construction

Estimated Cost: \$150–\$500

- Final Municipal Inspection & Approval for Use

Agency: Municipality (Engineering Dept.)

Who Pulls It: Requested by the project manager or the homeowner

Timeline: Requested after construction is complete

Estimated Cost: Often included in original permit or minor extra fee (~\$100)

Permit Responsibility Chart – Build Right Panama

This chart outlines the construction-related permits that can be submitted by the client or project manager and which ones must be submitted by licensed Panamanian professionals. This helps clarify the legal boundaries and streamlines coordination between parties.

Permit Submission Breakdown

- Environmental Approval (MIAMBIENTE)

Who Can Submit:  Client or Project Manager

Notes: Basic declaration or Formulario Básico

- Road Access (MOP)

Who Can Submit:  Client or Project Manager

Notes: If cutting into road or installing culverts/driveway

- Municipal Construction Permit

Who Can Submit:  Architect/Engineer Only

Notes: Must include stamped plans

- IDAAN Water/Sewer Approval

Who Can Submit:  Architect/Engineer Only

Notes: Plans must be stamped and submitted

- Bomberos (Fire Safety Approval)

Who Can Submit:  Architect/Engineer Only

Notes: Plans must be stamped for fire code compliance

Architectural Redesign Costs – Panama Construction Projects

If the client does not already have finalized architectural plans or if foreign plans cannot be converted to Panamanian code, a licensed Panamanian architect will need to create new, buildable plans. Below is a breakdown of the typical costs involved in full plan design and documentation.

Estimated Cost for Architectural Plan Design

- Basic Architectural Plans (1-floor home, approx. 100–150m²): \$1,200 – \$2,500
- Full Buildable Plan Set (structure, plumbing, electrical, stamped): \$2,500 – \$4,500
- Custom Larger or Multi-Story Designs: \$4,500 – \$7,000+

Typically Includes:

- Floor plans, roof, and elevation drawings
- Structural layout and calculations
- Electrical and plumbing schematics
- Professional stamps
- Coordination for municipal approval

Factors That May Affect Final Cost:

- Total square meters and number of floors
- Site visits and terrain complexity
- Whether a custom layout is needed vs. modifying an existing model
- Location (design fees are typically lower outside Panama City)

Build Right Panama's \$7000 Equipment List.

***This is a flat rate package price for equipment, actual prices of individual items subject to change depending on availability.**

Core Equipment

- Concrete Mixer – 1 unit – \$1,500
- Generator – 1 unit – \$800
- Stick Welder – 1 unit – \$450
- Wheelbarrows – 2 units – \$60
- Buckets – 5 units – \$25

Hand & Power Tools

- Pliers – 5 units – \$30
- Hammers – 5 units – \$45
- Shovels & Pick – 5 units – \$250
- Ropes – 3 units – \$20
- Hoses – 3 units – \$45
- Extension Cords – 4 units – \$60
- Chop Saw (10") – 1 unit – \$150
- Skill Saw (7 1/4") – 1 unit – \$120
- Sawmill (Portable) – 1 unit – \$1,200
- Brooms – 2 units – \$20
- Trowels – 4 units – \$40
- Collapsible Tables – 2 units – \$50
- Levels – 2 units – \$30
- Plumb Bobs – 2 units – \$12

Specialty Tools

- Cordless Drills (High Quality) – 2 units – \$240
- Corded Drill (Heavy Duty for Concrete) – 1 unit – \$150
- Acetylene Cutting Torch with Tanks – 1 unit – \$600
- Tile Cutting Water Table – 1 unit – \$300

Site Safety & Setup

- First Aid Kit – 1 unit – \$25



Construction Cost Breakdown with Summaries & Dates

This document details monthly costs, grouped purchase dates, and includes a narrative summary of construction progress each month. It reflects a full, realistic build process for a 2,500 sq ft single-story block home in Panama.

January

- Jan 03, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline (generator, pump): \$200
- Jan 03, 2025 – Drinking Water for Crew: \$50
- Jan 03, 2025 – Consumables (tape, blades, gloves): \$150
- Jan 03, 2025 – Misc. Site Supplies: \$100
- Jan 03, 2025 – BRP Oversight Fee: \$4,500
- Jan 11, 2025 – Equipment Startup (tools, mixer, PPE, setup gear): \$7,000
- Jan 11, 2025 – Architect Plan Conversion: \$2,000
- Jan 11, 2025 – Storage Container Rental (monthly): \$300
- Jan 11, 2025 – Water Tank, Pump, Hoses: \$200

- Jan 11, 2025 – Electrical Access Setup (breaker, cords): \$200
- Jan 21, 2025 – Water Access Approval (IDAAN): \$250
- Jan 21, 2025 – Temporary Electric Permit: \$250
- Jan 21, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline (generator, pump): \$200
- Jan 21, 2025 – Drinking Water for Crew: \$50
- Jan 21, 2025 – Consumables (tape, blades, gloves): \$150
- Jan 21, 2025 – Misc. Site Supplies: \$100
- Jan 21, 2025 – 10% Contingency (weather, delays, holidays): \$1,520

Total for January (with buffer): \$17,220

Summary for January: We're setting up the project this month: converting architectural plans, securing the site with storage and water access, setting up temporary electricity, and purchasing tools and equipment needed for the jobsite.

February

- Feb 03, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$250
- Feb 03, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60
- Feb 03, 2025 – Consumables: \$200
- Feb 03, 2025 – Misc. Site Supplies: \$150
- Feb 03, 2025 – BRP Oversight Fee: \$4,500
- Feb 03, 2025 – Backhoe Excavation (1 day): \$1,000
- Feb 11, 2025 – Cement (80 bags @ \$9/bag): \$720
- Feb 11, 2025 – Gravel (5 m³ @ \$35/m³): \$175
- Feb 11, 2025 – Sand (5 m³ @ \$25/m³): \$125
- Feb 11, 2025 – Rebar (150 pcs @ \$6/pc): \$900
- Feb 11, 2025 – Tie Wire (5 rolls): \$75
- Feb 11, 2025 – Formwood + Nails: \$300
- Feb 21, 2025 – Cement Truck / Slab Pour (2 loads): \$2,000
- Feb 21, 2025 – Crew Payroll: \$3,000
- Feb 21, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$250
- Feb 21, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60
- Feb 21, 2025 – Consumables: \$200
- Feb 21, 2025 – Misc. Site Supplies: \$150
- Feb 21, 2025 – 10% Contingency (weather, delays, holidays): \$1,346

Total for February (with buffer): \$15,461

Summary for February: Foundation work begins. We excavate, form footings, purchase rebar and concrete, and pour the slab. This is a heavy labor and materials month, focused entirely on establishing the base structure.

March

- Mar 03, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$250
- Mar 03, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60
- Mar 03, 2025 – Consumables: \$200
- Mar 03, 2025 – Tool Replacements: \$100
- Mar 03, 2025 – BRP Oversight Fee: \$4,500
- Mar 11, 2025 – Concrete Blocks (2,000 @ \$0.50): \$1,000
- Mar 11, 2025 – Mortar Mix & Cement (40 bags): \$360
- Mar 11, 2025 – Scaffolding Rental: \$250
- Mar 11, 2025 – Wheelbarrows, Buckets, Trowels: \$150
- Mar 11, 2025 – Roof Trusses & Sheet Metal: \$2,500
- Mar 21, 2025 – Screws, Washers, Sealants: \$250
- Mar 21, 2025 – Crew Payroll: \$3,000
- Mar 21, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$250
- Mar 21, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60
- Mar 21, 2025 – Consumables: \$200
- Mar 21, 2025 – Tool Replacements: \$100
- Mar 21, 2025 – 10% Contingency (weather, delays, holidays): \$1,262

Total for March (with buffer): \$14,492

Summary for March: Wall construction ramps up. We lay block, apply mortar, install structural support, and begin roofing prep. Materials like trusses, screws, and scaffolding are critical now.

April

- Apr 03, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$200
- Apr 03, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60
- Apr 03, 2025 – Consumables: \$150
- Apr 03, 2025 – Site Cleaning Supplies: \$75
- Apr 03, 2025 – BRP Oversight Fee: \$4,500
- Apr 11, 2025 – PVC Pipe – Various Sizes: \$500
- Apr 11, 2025 – PVC Fittings & Glue: \$300
- Apr 11, 2025 – Wire Rolls (4 rolls): \$400
- Apr 11, 2025 – Electrical Conduit: \$300
- Apr 11, 2025 – Breaker Panel + Switches + Outlets: \$600
- Apr 21, 2025 – Interior Wall Repello (sand, lime, cement): \$1,200
- Apr 21, 2025 – Crew Payroll: \$3,000
- Apr 21, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$200

- Apr 21, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60
- Apr 21, 2025 – Consumables: \$150
- Apr 21, 2025 – Site Cleaning Supplies: \$75
- Apr 21, 2025 – 10% Contingency (weather, delays, holidays): \$1,128

Total for April (with buffer): \$12,898

Summary for April: Plumbing and electrical rough-ins start. We're also working on internal wall repello and prepping surface finishes. Conduit, breaker boxes, and PVC are in focus.

May

- May 03, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$200
- May 03, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60
- May 03, 2025 – Consumables: \$150
- May 03, 2025 – Tool Maintenance: \$100
- May 03, 2025 – BRP Oversight Fee: \$4,500
- May 03, 2025 – Tile (60 m² @ \$6/m²): \$360
- May 11, 2025 – Grout, Adhesive: \$200
- May 11, 2025 – Interior Doors (4 @ \$100): \$400
- May 11, 2025 – Exterior Doors (2 @ \$250): \$500
- May 11, 2025 – Toilets (2 @ \$150): \$300
- May 11, 2025 – Sinks, Faucets, Valves: \$900
- May 11, 2025 – Paint (10 gallons): \$250
- May 21, 2025 – Crew Payroll: \$3,000
- May 21, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$200
- May 21, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60
- May 21, 2025 – Consumables: \$150
- May 21, 2025 – Tool Maintenance: \$100
- May 21, 2025 – 10% Contingency (weather, delays, holidays): \$1,092

Total for May (with buffer): \$12,522

Summary for May: This month transitions into interior work. We install tile, paint walls, and place basic fixtures like doors, sinks, toilets, and faucets. Precision and finish quality begin to take priority.

June

- Jun 03, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$200
- Jun 03, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60

- Jun 03, 2025 – Consumables: \$150
- Jun 03, 2025 – Final Finish Supplies: \$100
- Jun 03, 2025 – BRP Oversight Fee: \$4,500
- Jun 11, 2025 – Lighting Fixtures (8): \$800
- Jun 11, 2025 – Switches, Plates: \$150
- Jun 11, 2025 – Kitchen Cabinets & Counter: \$2,000
- Jun 11, 2025 – Finish Screed Materials: \$500
- Jun 11, 2025 – Cleanup Materials: \$200
- Jun 21, 2025 – Crew Payroll: \$3,000
- Jun 21, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$200
- Jun 21, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$60
- Jun 21, 2025 – Consumables: \$150
- Jun 21, 2025 – Final Finish Supplies: \$100
- Jun 21, 2025 – 10% Contingency (weather, delays, holidays): \$1,166

Total for June (with buffer): \$13,336

Summary for June: Final finish work begins. Lighting, kitchen counters, and cabinet installs happen now. This is also a touch-up phase for floors, walls, and surfaces as we move toward livability.

July

- Jul 03, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$150
- Jul 03, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$50
- Jul 03, 2025 – Consumables: \$100
- Jul 03, 2025 – Punch List Supplies: \$100
- Jul 11, 2025 – BRP Oversight Fee: \$4,500
- Jul 11, 2025 – Final Paint, Trim: \$400
- Jul 11, 2025 – Punch List Repairs: \$600
- Jul 11, 2025 – Final Clean / Trash Removal: \$500
- Jul 21, 2025 – Crew Payroll: \$3,000
- Jul 21, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$150
- Jul 21, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$50
- Jul 21, 2025 – Consumables: \$100
- Jul 21, 2025 – Punch List Supplies: \$100
- Jul 21, 2025 – 10% Contingency (weather, delays, holidays): \$940

Total for July (with buffer): \$10,740

Summary for July: The punch list phase: detail corrections, trim paint, fixture checks, and jobsite cleanup. Labor stays consistent, but material needs shrink. We begin closing out systems.

August

- Aug 03, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$150
- Aug 03, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$50
- Aug 03, 2025 – Final Cleanup Supplies: \$150
- Aug 03, 2025 – Site Closure Materials: \$100
- Aug 11, 2025 – BRP Oversight Fee: \$4,500
- Aug 11, 2025 – Final Inspections / Utility Hookups: \$1,000
- Aug 11, 2025 – Site Wrap-up / Equipment Pull: \$500
- Aug 11, 2025 – Final Utility Hookups (Water & Electric): \$500
- Aug 21, 2025 – Municipal Final Inspection: \$500
- Aug 21, 2025 – Fuel & Gasoline: \$150
- Aug 21, 2025 – Drinking Water: \$50
- Aug 21, 2025 – Final Cleanup Supplies: \$150
- Aug 21, 2025 – Site Closure Materials: \$100
- Aug 21, 2025 – 10% Contingency (weather, delays, holidays): \$745

Total for August (with buffer): \$8,645

Summary for August: Final inspections, utility hookups, and formal close-out. Any remaining issues are resolved, and the site is cleaned and secured. This is the last month of full oversight and wrap-up.

Total Project Estimate (With Contingency)

TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COST: \$105,314

About the Owner



Nicolas Gambini

With decades of experience in Panama and the U.S., I offer a rare combination of general contractor-level field knowledge, logistical expertise, and client-first oversight. I've managed the construction of homes in Boquete, El Valle de Antón, and Panama City - from the ground up to final finish work - while assisting with remodeling and project planning for international clients.

In the U.S., I stay involved with home improvement projects because I have a genuine passion for building and hands-on work. I also have licensed experience in real estate, giving me a solid understanding of how construction ties into property value and long-term investment goals.

I hold a CDL-A license and have experience operating heavy machinery. As a professional in logistics and planning, I hold a CSCP certification from Texas A&M and a diploma in Construction Project Management from Columbia Tech.

In addition to formally being a U.S. Commercial Pilot, I also hold an AAC-issued Panamanian Private Pilot License - a unique advantage when it comes to reaching and managing builds in remote or logistically complex regions of Panama.

I travel to Panama regularly and stay informed on the latest labor availability, material costs, and construction trends. My role is simple: to work exclusively for property owners and investors as their on-site representative and site manager, ensuring their projects stay on schedule, on budget, and are built right the first time.

Build Right Panama – Declaración de Posición Legal

BuildRight Panama no opera como contratista general licenciado, arquitecto ni ingeniero. No firmamos planos, no tramitamos permisos de construcción a nuestro nombre, ni asumimos responsabilidad técnica sobre diseños. En cambio, actuamos como una empresa privada e independiente de gestión de proyectos, trabajando directamente para clientes internacionales que desean construir en Panamá.

Nuestro rol es coordinar la mano de obra local, los materiales y la logística, asegurando que la construcción se realice en cumplimiento total con los planos aprobados y sellados por profesionales panameños licenciados. Servimos de puente entre el cliente extranjero y el proceso de construcción en Panamá, reduciendo brechas de confianza, comunicación y cultura — ayudando así a atraer inversión, generar empleo y contribuir al desarrollo económico del país.

Todos los permisos, inspecciones y aprobaciones legales son gestionados por profesionales locales calificados. Nuestra función es garantizar que el proyecto avance de manera fluida, ética y transparente, sin reemplazar ni interferir con ningún rol legalmente requerido en Panamá.