



# BUILDING A SAFER NEPAL

Promoting safe construction practices to minimize the creation of new risk

## BACKGROUND

Earthquakes are a great threat to Nepal as most of the country lies in a high-risk seismic zone. Despite this reality, most buildings and infrastructure continue to be built without reference to earthquake-resistant technology, putting millions of lives at risk. Due to a lack of enforcement in best construction practice, Nepal is plagued with haphazard construction that threatens lives and the gains made in development.

## UNDP'S ROLE

In order to reduce vulnerability, the UNDP five-year Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Programme aims to enhance the implementation of a National

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▲ *Providing training aimed specifically at female masons encourages women to be agents of change in Disaster Risk Reduction. (Photo: UNDP)*

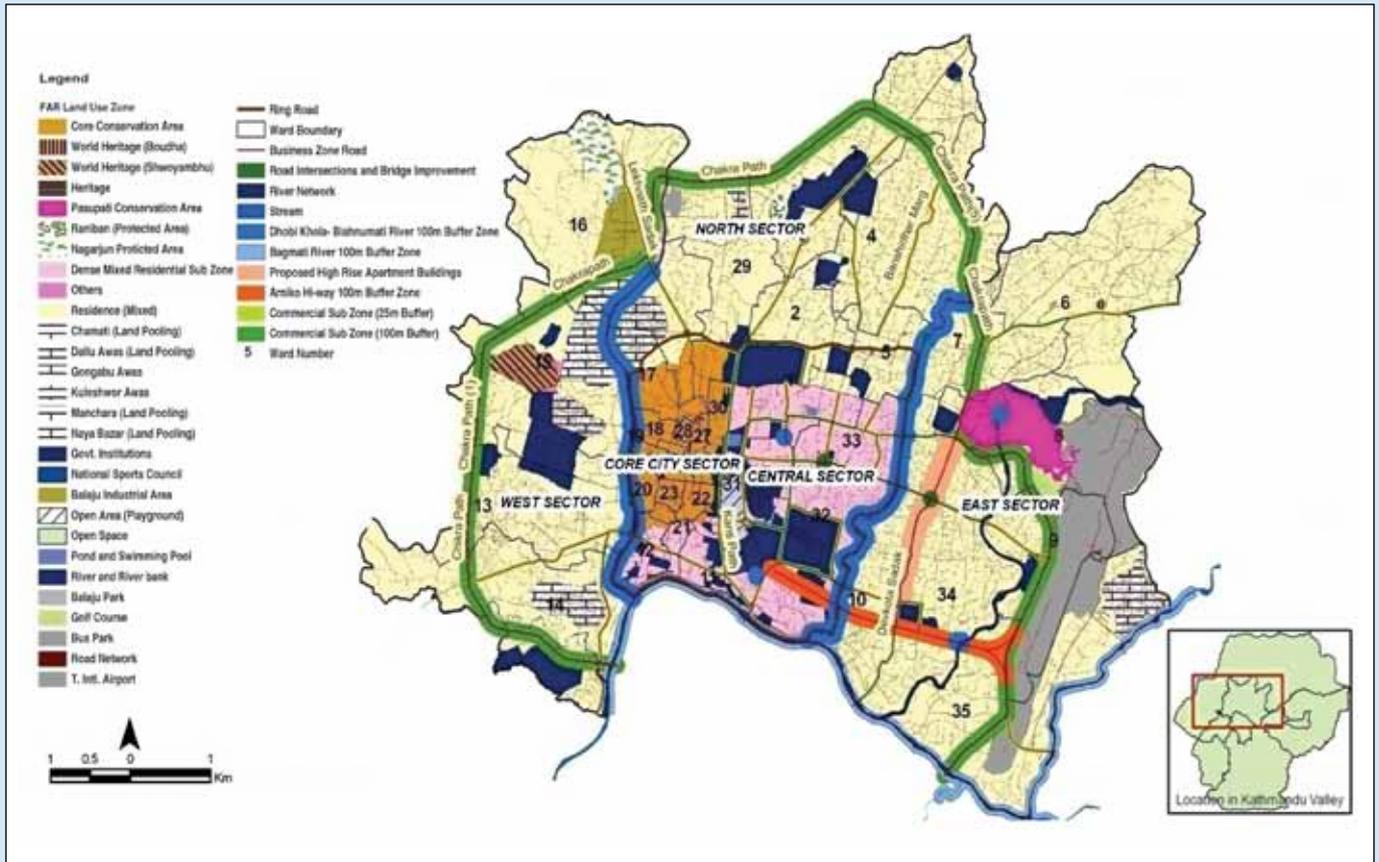
By 2015, UNDP seeks to create an automated building permit approval system to enhance building code compliance across major cities in Kathmandu Valley and other urban areas.



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

**Comprehensive  
Disaster Risk Management  
Programme (CDRMP)  
UNDP Nepal**

## Kathmandu Metropolitan City Proposed Land Use Map



Where land use planning is a location-based mitigation tool, building codes are the structural tool; they complement each other and both are essential for DRR in Nepal.

Building Code (NBC) and to promote Risk Sensitive Land Use Planning (RSLUP) in Nepal, particularly in rapidly urbanizing urban centers like Kathmandu.

### WHAT IS THE NATIONAL BUILDING CODE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Building codes are engineering tools used to ensure structural safety of buildings and convenience of occupants. The National Building Code (NBC) is a set of standard practices adopted by engineering community for designing and constructing buildings and backed by the legislation of the country. Building codes are a critical part of mitigation planning for Disaster Risk Management (DRM). A home that is not resilient to natural disasters puts people and livelihoods at risk. Communities cannot reduce vulnerability if the structures they live

in are at risk to natural disasters.

### WHAT IS RISK-SENSITIVE LAND USE PLANNING AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Risk Sensitive Land Use Planning (RSLUP) is a disaster mitigation tool that takes issues of disaster risk into account in the conventional planning process. When infrastructure is planned in unsafe areas, it becomes vulnerable to natural disasters. For example, a house built close to a riverbank would be vulnerable in areas that are at risk of flooding, a road built next to a steep embankment would be at risk in areas prone to landslides, and a school built close to a dry forest would be at a higher risk in case of a fire. RSLUP advocates appropriate planning to ensure reduced vulnerability to the hazards associated with the natural disaster are taken into account. RSLUP is an integral

component of DRR as it ensures locations for proposed development are safe, reducing vulnerabilities to natural disasters.

### ACTIONS TAKEN/FUTURE OUTLOOK

Working with municipalities, the programme aims to develop standardize building inspection systems and increase community awareness through outreach activities and video toolkits that outline earthquake-safe building practices and retrofitting guidelines. Partnering with the government, UNDP has a goal to create a pool of at least 3,000 trained and certified masons, enabling municipalities to require skilled labor in all construction sites. By 2015, UNDP seeks to create an automated building permit approval system to enhance building code compliance across major cities in Kathmandu Valley and other urban areas.

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