



Making Geographical Names Data Accessible





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Previous issues of the Bulletin (formerly Newsletter) can be found at
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/#bulletin>



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Vers notre session de 2023

Chers Collègues,

Notre prochaine session se tiendra du 1^{er} au 5 mai 2023 à New York (États-Unis). Cette perspective oriente d'ores et déjà toute l'activité du Bureau du GENUNG... et aussi, nous l'espérons, au moins un peu, la vôtre !

Depuis quatre ans, avec les groupes de travail, les équipes spéciales et les divisions linguistiques ou géographiques, nous avons gardé comme ligne directrice notre Plan stratégique et Programme de travail pour 2021-2029. Celui-ci confirme notre engagement à contribuer, dans le domaine des noms de lieux, aux objectifs de développement durable des Nations unies pour 2030.

Année après année, nous suivons l'accent mis par les Nations unies sur tel ou tel aspect de ces objectifs, soit pour un thème du Bulletin, soit pour le thème de la session. Ces thèmes ne sont destinés, ni à ne rester qu'un habillage onusien de notre activité habituelle, ni à prétendre que les orientations mentionnées seraient les seules importantes. Ils sont simplement autant d'occasions de reconsidérer notre activité sous des angles différents pour la faire progresser. Et c'est aussi l'un des grands bénéfices de nos rencontres internationales, en divisions linguistiques ou géographiques ou en session plénière !

Pour notre session de 2023, le thème nous invite à « Renforcer les relations, les liens et les connexions dans la normalisation des noms géographiques et pour le développement durable et la reprise après la pandémie » Au sein du Conseil économique et social (ECOSOC), une analyse stratégique de ses organes subsidiaires a souligné cette année la pertinence de nos relations avec le Comité d'experts sur la gestion de l'information géospatiale à l'échelle mondiale. Et celui-ci plaide aussi pour renforcer des relations similaires au niveau national.

En somme, tout nous incite à participer à la prochaine session du GENUNG. Pour contribuer à la « reprise après la pandémie », elle se tiendra physiquement, mais on pourra aussi y assister par la télévision en ligne. Quel que soit le mode de participation, soyons sûrs de trouver des sources d'inspiration, pour assurer toujours mieux notre mission de normalisation des noms géographiques, dans les papiers que nous et nos homologues aurons préparés selon le calendrier établi.

Que ces travaux de réflexion et de rédaction ne vous empêchent pas, ainsi que vos collègues, de passer en famille de joyeuses et saines fêtes de fin d'année !

Pierre Jaillard (France)
Président du GENUNG
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Towards our 2023 session

Dear Colleagues,

Our next session will be held from 1 to 5 May 2023 in New York (USA). This prospect is already guiding all the activity of the UNGEGN Bureau... and hopefully also, at least a little, yours!

For the past four years, together with the working groups, special teams and linguistic or geographical divisions, we have kept our Strategic Plan and Programme of Work for 2021-2029 as a guideline. This one confirms our commitment to contribute to the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in the field of geographical names.

Year by year, we follow the UN's focus on a particular aspect of these goals, either for a theme of the Bulletin or for the theme of the session. These themes are not intended to be a mere blue washing for our regular work, nor are they intended to pretend that the orientations mentioned are the only ones that matter. They are simply opportunities to reconsider our activity from different perspectives in order to improve it. And this is also one of the great benefits of our international meetings, in linguistic or geographical divisions or in plenary sessions!

For our 2023 session, the theme invites us to "Strengthen relationships, links and connections in geographical names standardization and for sustainable development and pandemic recovery". Within the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), a strategic review of its subsidiary bodies this year highlighted the relevance of our relationship with the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management. And this Committee also calls to strengthen similar relationships at the national level.

All in all, we have every reason to participate in the next UNGEGN session. In order to contribute to the "pandemic recovery", it will be held in person, but can also be attended via web-TV. Whatever the mode of participation, let's be sure to find sources of inspiration, in order to better carry out our mission of standardization of geographical names, in the papers that we and our colleagues will have prepared according to the established schedule.

May this work of reflection and drafting not prevent you and your colleagues from spending with your families a happy and healthy New Year!

Pierre Jaillard (France)

Chair, UNGEGN

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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear UNGEGN Experts,

Extending greetings to all our readers of this the 64th issue of the UNGEGN Bulletin. This issue will feature the theme ***Making Geographical Names Data Accessible***, provide an update on preparations for the 2023/third UNGEGN session, in addition to the usual featured sections such as, from the divisions and from working groups.

Featured Theme

Twelve issues ago, Bulletin 52, May 2017, featured a similar theme to the current issue, which was ***Making Geographic Names Accessible and Available***. The theme remains relevant today as it was five years ago, where the principle of availability is enshrined in the Group of Expert’s [Rules of Procedure, Objective \(j\)](#), “*To make standardization principles and standardized geographical names available as practical information for as wide a user community as possible, through all appropriate media.*” In addition, reference is made to resolution VII/9 and decision 2/2021/5 (d) which support open and free use of geographical names data. Resolution VII/9 (4) recommends that access to data included on toponymic Web sites be provided free of charge in the interests of international standardization and decision 2/2021/5 (d) called for the open and free use of geographical names data from various sources under an appropriate regulation framework.

The theme is also strongly aligned to UNGEGN’s Vision, Values and work programme as detailed in the UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029. **UNEGN’s vision states:** *Every country to have a fully functioning and globally-aligned structure and policy framework, based on common principles for national standardization of authorized geographical names that identify location and respect the associated culture and heritage, and to have these names easily accessible for national and international use - facilitating consistent worldwide use of geographical names to foster communication and cooperation.* In addition, **Values III states:** Our products and outcomes will be

solution-oriented, relevant, user-friendly, innovative, and fully and equitably accessible; and **action item 1-iii-8** requires the Group of Experts to; Monitor the availability of free and easily accessible authorized digital geographical names data as it is seen as a key driver in encouraging the use of nationally standardized geographical names.

Reference is also made to the FAIR guiding principles for scientific data management and stewardship, published in Scientific data in 2016. Where FAIR represents Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable, which serves to guide data producers and users in their data stewardship and management. The FAIR principles have largely been adopted across the spectrum of users from government, private sector and academia. Has your organization adopted FAIR principles?

In support of the theme, six member states: Armenia, Cyprus, Lithuania, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shared how they are providing access to their geographic names databases, gazetteers and geographic information web services.

Preparations for the 2023/third UNGEGN session

The UNGEGN secretariat is pleased to let you know that the 2023/third session of UNGEGN will be convened from **1 to 5 May 2023** at the UN Headquarters in New York, United States, and will be in-person only. Please note that the note verbale (in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#)) announcing the holding of the 2023/third session was issued to all Permanent Missions to the UN in New York on 27th October 2022, and announcement letters to Members States and Observers were circulated on 4th November 2023 via the geoinfo_unsd-desa@un.org email. All announcement letters are available on the UNGEGN website at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/3rd_session_2023/#other.





Important Dates to Note

In preparation for the session, we are kindly asking you to note the following dates, for the submission of documents (country reports, divisional reports, and technical papers).

- **Summary Reports** are due on **20 January 2023**
- **Full Reports** are due on **13 March 2023**
- The e-deleGATE will be opened on **27 February 2023** to begin accepting registration

Supporting documents (the Provisional Agenda [GEGN.2/2023/1](#) for the 2023 session, Documentation for the session [GEGN.2/2023/INF/1](#)), [Summary template](#) and [Documentation-example of final paragraphs](#) to assist you with the preparation of your summary and reports are available on the 2023/3rd session at webpage under the Documents tab at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/3rd_session_2023/#documents

Theme for the Session

The session theme is “*Strengthening relationships, links and connections in geographical names standardization and for sustainable development and pandemic recovery*”. The theme is aligned to that of the 2023 ECOSOC High Level Political Forum which will take into account the different and particular impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across SDGs 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17, they are 6 clean water and sanitation, 7 affordable and clean energy, 9 industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11 sustainable cities and communities, and 17 partnerships for the Goals. The 2023 UNGEGN session will specifically be addressing SDG Goal 17 as it relates to its Strategic Plan and Programme of Work, [Strategy 2: Relationships, links and connections](#). A special focus on the theme of the session is welcomed, however, the submission of documents focusing on general issues and challenges of geographical names standardization is also encouraged.

Side Events

As has been the custom over the past years, side events will be accommodated prior to the session (virtually) and during the session (in person). Working Groups, Divisions, and experts are encouraged to convene side events which make take the form of meetings, technical workshops and seminars to address UNGEGN work items as per its 2023 provisional agenda and its Strategic Plan Programme of Work. Please monitor your

UNEGGN email and website for side event registration and other details which will be posted as they become available.

Special Presentations

We will also continue the practice of have special presentations featuring current topical technical issues, which will be delivered over the days of the session. Your suggestions for such presentations are welcomed.

General information on session logistics, meeting rooms, hotel accommodation, visas and other matters will be provided in the **NEW YORK RESOURCE GUIDE**. Please visit the UNGEGN website in late January for the Resource Guide and updates regarding preparations for the 2023/third session. UNGEGN representatives are encouraged to monitor the 2023 session webpages for updates on preparatory activities, also to begin preparing your technical papers and organizing your travel and hotel. The Secretariat is committed to keeping members informed on modality, organization and preparation of the session over the next months in a transparent manner.

Also included in this issue are contributions from the Divisions, Working Groups, Country, Special Projects and News Item, in Memoriam and upcoming events. Under UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work (SP&PoW) 2021-2029, there is an article which features work being done towards the implementation of strategy two relationships, links and connections.

We wish to keep you informed on the work of the Group of Experts and to make this possible, please complete the following contact information form. [The UNGEGN contact information for national geographical names authorities](#) The information collected from this form will be used to update the Group of Experts contact database.

We thank all our contributors to this issue, and to Andreas Hadjiraftis of Cyprus for designing the front page. Your comments on this issue and contribution to the next Bulletin, number 65, to be circulated in May 2023 under the theme “*Strengthening relationships, links and connections in geographical names standardization and for sustainable development and pandemic recovery*” are welcomed. Please circulate the bulletin among your colleagues and we hope you enjoy reading.

To receive issues of the Bulletin please register at <https://forms.gle/AKD1MGqrfx3RVXCE8>. Remember to tweet your geographical names activities @UNSD_GEGN. Looking forward to welcoming you to the 2023/third session in May in New York.

Cecille Blake

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SPECIAL FEATURE: Making Geographical Names Data Accessible

Means of accessing information on geographical names of the territory of Republic of Armenia

Taking into consideration the importance of geographical names as an integral part of the state security system, the National Assembly adopted the Law on Geographical Names of the Republic of Armenia (RA) on November 23, 1999. This law provides the legal basis for the naming and renaming of geographical objects of the RA, as well as the regulation, legalization, registration, use and preservation of geographical names that are part of the historical and cultural heritage are legally defined.

According to Article 14 of the Law on Geographical Names of RA, the geographical names of the Republic of Armenia are under state protection. The Cadastral Committee of the Republic of Armenia is the authorised state administration body in the field of geographical names. Legal entities and individuals are liable for breaking of the Law of RA "On Geographical Names" as prescribed by law (see: Article 15).

According to paragraphs e) and f) of Article 11 of the abovementioned law (Powers of the authorised state administration body) the authorised state administration body shall cooperate with relevant international organisations, as well as provide information on geographical names to individuals and legal entities of RA and foreign countries in the manner prescribed by the Government of the Republic of Armenia.

RA is a full member of the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) on the basis of the relevant standards and legislation. In the scope of cooperation, information and experiences are exchanged between member countries.

There are often problems regarding the accessibility geographical names data. There is audio, video and many other printed materials circulating in RA that have been produced in different countries which contain inaccurate and wrong data that undermine the topological field of RA. In the control of the abovementioned materials, many legal and other problems were evident. Therefore, some legislative amendments are currently being made to the RA Law on Geographical Names. To solve such problems, the Government of RA has established a professional commission on geographical names, comprising linguists, philologists, ethnographers and historians, who work closely with the experts on geographical names, of the Geomatics Centre of the Cadastre Committee. In order to improve the quality

of geographical names, specialists from the Cadastre Committee are constantly cooperating with toponymists, geographers, historians and other interested specialists outside the scientific committee.

The following components contribute to the accessibility of geographical names data:

- databases
- handbook-dictionaries
- official directories
- thematic atlases
- maps
- geographic information systems
- geoportal
- online platforms, social networks
- books, scientific topics, newspapers, etc

The Armenian database of geographical names includes more than 200,000 named geographical objects and was created and maintained by the Cadastral Committee. Many directories, databases, books, dictionaries, geographical directories and other materials have been published at the initiative of the Cadastre Committee of Armenia in order to make geographical names data accessible. Particularly:

- Handbook-Dictionary of Physical Geographic objects of the Republic of Armenia - 2007.
- The Dictionary of RA settlements - 2008
- List of exonyms of geographical names in Armenian language - 2008.
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Aragatsotn Marz, RA - 2007.
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Armavir Marz, RA -2007
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Ararat Marz, RA -2007
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Gegharkunik Marz, RA -2007
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Erevan -2008
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Kotayk Marz, RA-2007
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Lori Marz, RA-2007
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Shirak Marz, RA-2007

- Official directory of Geographical Names of Syunik Marz, RA -2007
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Vayots Dzor Marz, RA-2007
- Official directory of Geographical Names of Tavush Marz, RA –2007.
- Handbook of the Administrative Territorial Structure of RA - 2012.
- World States and Territories concise handbook-dictionary - 2012.
- A concise handbook-dictionary of Historical and Architectural Monuments of the Republic of Armenia – 2014
- Concise Handbook-Dictionary of Orographic Site Names of RA - 2015.
- Concise Dictionary of the World's Largest and Most Important Cities - 2016.
- Concise gazetteer of the Republic of Armenia–2016
- Concise handbook-dictionary of hydrographic site names of the Republic of Armenia - 2017.
- Handbook-dictionary of Major Physical Geographical sites of Europe - 2017.
- Handbook-Dictionary of large physical geographic sites in Asia - 2022.
- Handbook-Dictionary of large physical geographic sites in Africa - 2022
- Handbook-Dictionary of large physical geographic sites in North America - 2022
- Handbook-Dictionary of large physical geographic sites in South America - 2022

The publication of official directories of all regions of RA, in which some 40,000 unified names of geographical objects have been presented, has a great importance. The directories were important for the means of clarifying and identifying geographical names and were also available to local authorities for all settlements. To ensure the availability of geographical names data, the Armenian handbook of underwater geographical features of the world is currently being prepared, which is unique in Armenian geographical literature. It will include 6,910 named underwater features names. It is planned to be published on various online platforms.

Thematic atlases and maps of various types and meanings have been created to facilitate the dissemination of geographical names. The two-volume National Atlas of Armenia is considered to be the most valuable, which has been already published in English. The last volume is currently being published in Russian by the Geomatics Centre. Publishing in foreign languages will contribute to increasing international recognition of RA geographical names. To ensure the publicity and accessibility of the activities carried out, the published literature is sent to government bodies, as well as to universities, colleges, schools, district, town and village libraries and other interested organisations. Some of the literature has been provided to TV, radio stations and other media (now online).

Geographic information systems currently facilitate the specification and dissemination of geographic names. Through geographic information system (GIS), the standardisation of geographical names is faster and the quality and reliability of the results are higher. A geographical names database has been created in the geographic information system (GIS) that can be easily managed with appropriate tools. There are often inaccuracies of geographical names arising from the clarification and standardization of real estate addresses at the Cadastre Committee. These are easily identified and corrected through proper maintenance of the database.

Special importance is given to geographical names correction and digitization in the Paragraph 5.1 (unified cadastre structure, data accessibility and interoperability) of the Government Decision N 505-L “On Approval of the Strategic Plan for the Integrated Cadastre” dated 8 April 2021. The creation of a national spatial data infrastructure and the launch of a geoportal is planned by strategic plan of unified cadastre (*Figure 1*).

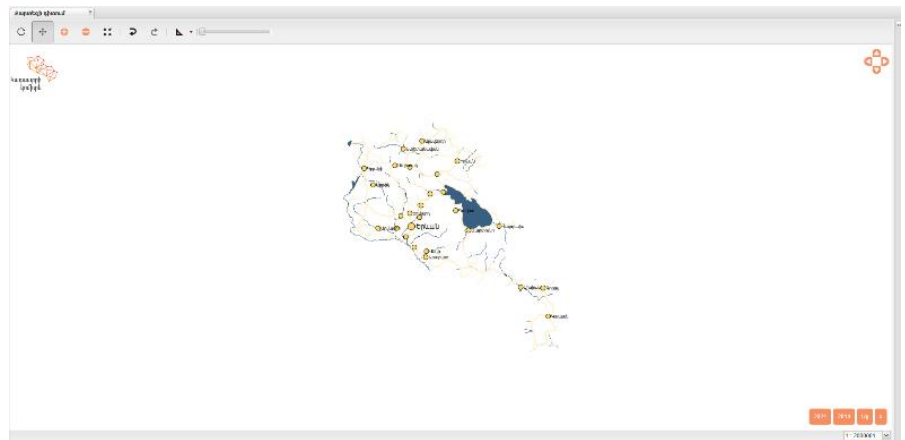


Figure 1

Integration of map layers, addresses and geographic names, registry of names, cadastral archive and text data of real estate will be carried out in the National Geoportal of Armenia. In this case, addresses, text data and archive will be linked to real estate cadastral maps, and geo names will be linked to topographic maps. Entering corrected geographical names into the National Geoportal of RA will make the addressing process faster (in future automatically), avoiding inaccuracies as much as possible. On the other hand, maintaining and updating the geographical names database in the National Geoportal of Armenia will enable geospatial analysis.

The Government of RA has initiated several draft laws and regulations to ensure the availability of geographical names data. To identify existing gaps and problems, monitoring is continuously carried out, which contributes to the automation of our activity and the quality improvement.

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Cyprus: Making Geographical Names Data Accessible

The Cyprus Permanent Committee for the Standardization of Geographical Names (CPCSGN) has issued various independent publications that help in understanding and handling the actions and activities which relate to geographical names, and also contribute to the solution of problems arising. The creation and operation of its website (www.geonoma.gov.cy) is continuously updated and provides useful information regarding services and activities.

In this website you will find information on the history, the legislation and the Committee's operating regulations, information with respect to its members, communications and activities, texts from its participation in conferences and events, reports on efforts to tackle illegal alteration of historical names of Cyprus, maps, material for the transliteration of geographical names into the Roman alphabet, etc.

The main national gazetteers prepared by the CPCSGN are:

- (i) The "Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus"
- (ii) Gazetteer of Sea Geographical Names

All geographical names, toponyms, and sea names included in these gazetteers were derived from official records and from the official large scale cadastral map series of the Department of Lands and Surveys. The Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus is currently available on CPCSGN's website in full searchable format.

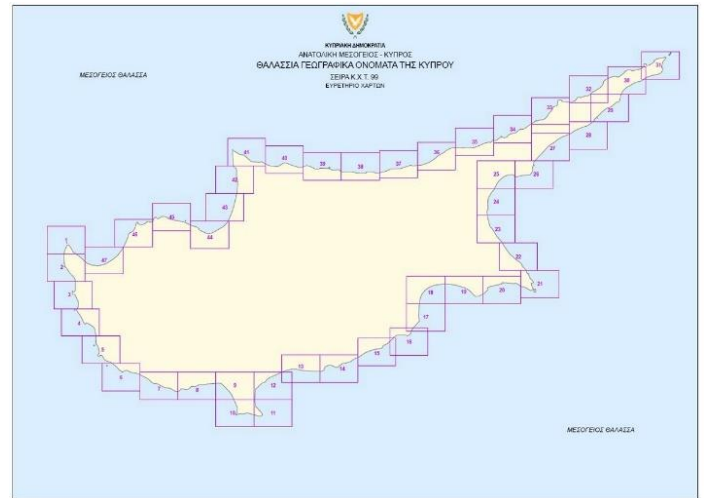


Figure 2: Sea geographical names map series

Additionally, all geographical names and toponyms are included in the Geoportal of Cyprus at: www.geoportal.gov.cy. The Geoportal consists of two main parts these being: (a) INSPIRE Spatial Data Infrastructure Geoportal, and (b) DLS-Portal (The portal of the Department of Lands and Surveys).

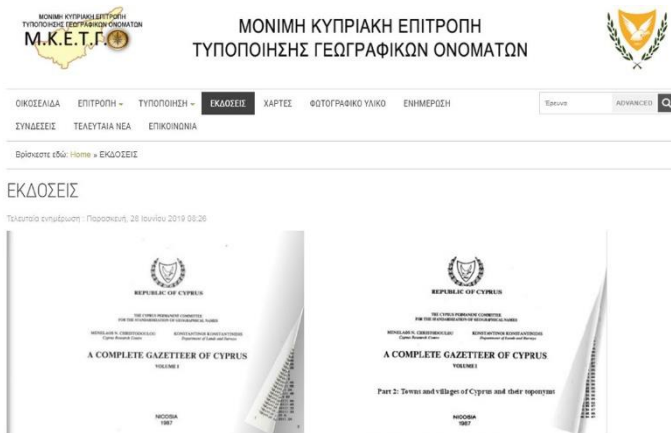


Figure 1: The Complete Gazetteer of Cyprus

<https://www.geonoma.gov.cy/myfiles/ekdoseis/cygazetteer/index.html>

The geographical sea names of Cyprus can be found at: <https://www.geonoma.gov.cy/myfiles/ekdoseis/thalassia-toponymia/index.html>.

This gazetteer is supplemented by a series of maps that are available for free download at:

<https://portal.dls.moi.gov.cy/el-gr/maps/Pages/default.aspx>

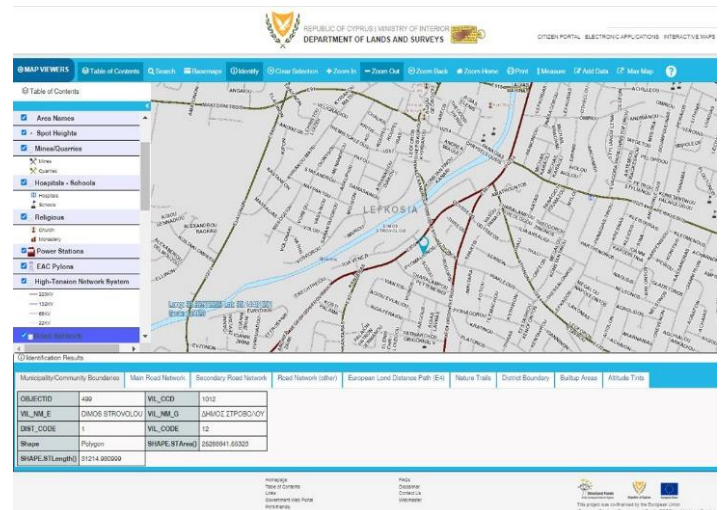


Figure 3: DLS-Portal Interactive Maps including geographical names

<https://eservices.dls.moi.gov.cy/#/national/geoportalmapview>

Geographical names and other geo-spatial information are fully accessible on-line and are available for searching, viewing, printing, downloading and direct accessing via GIS, through DLS-Portal, and also through the European Commission's INSPIRE Geoportal.

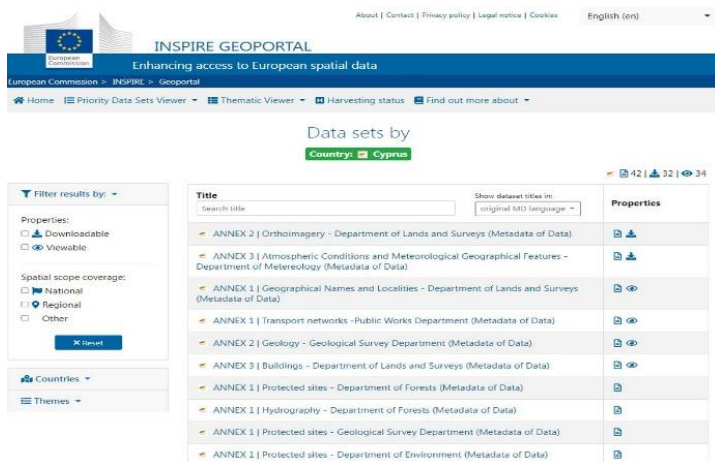


Figure 4: EC INSPIRE Geoportal
<https://inspire-geoportal.ec.europa.eu/results.html?country=cy&view=details&theme=none>

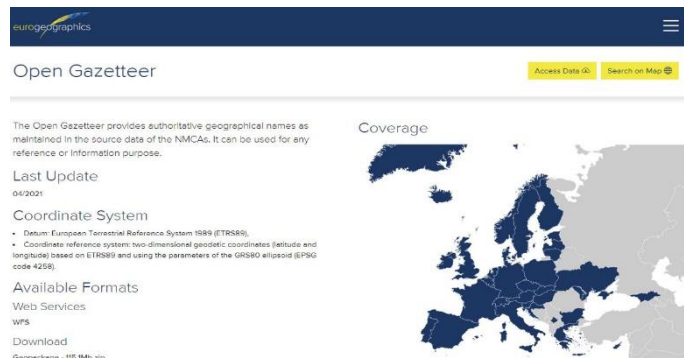


Figure 5: Open Gazetteer in EuroGeographics' Open Maps for Europe, <https://www.mapsforeurope.org/>

A significant amount of data is available on the National Open Data Portal of Cyprus. Toponyms and other geographical names are also very easily accessible and available through this portal.



Figure 6: Toponyms – Open Data of Cyprus, <https://www.data.gov.cy>

Based on the above, it is evident that Cyprus has a fully functioning and globally-aligned structure and policy framework, based on common principles for national standardization of authorized geographical names which identify location and respect the associated culture and heritage. Geographical names are easily accessible for national and international use, which foster communication and cooperation. In addition, the systems that have been implemented are solution-oriented, relevant, user-friendly, innovative, and fully and equitably accessible. Furthermore, it is evident that Cyprus monitors the availability of free and easily accessible authorized digital geographical names data, as it is seen as a key driver in encouraging the use of nationally standardized geographical names.

Andreas Hadjiraftis

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Geographical Names as Open Data in Lithuania

In Lithuania, the primary official state spatial data set for geographical names collection is GV_DRLT. Management of state spatial data sets, as the GV_DRLT is, is the task of state cartography.

According to the Law on Geodesy and Cartography of the Republic of Lithuania, state spatial data sets, including GV_DRLT, are open data.

Opening up geographical names data for us means the transparency and openness to the public, making possibility to reuse data and enable users to answer their questions basing their decisions on toponymal data.

The awareness of the importance of geographical names represents the following fact: in 2019 The Council for the Safeguarding of Ethnic Culture together with the partners achieved that the tradition of using and safeguarding geographical names would be included in the National Compendium of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Legal Basis for Data Opening

As mentioned above, the primary official spatial data set for collecting and managing geographical names in Lithuania is the state geographical names spatial data GV_DRLT.

GV_DRLT is a place where it is possible to collect, manage and store:

- official names and locations of administrative units, residential areas, transport network, hydrographic objects, protected areas, land cover, landforms, buildings and others;
- the names and locations of small geographic objects that are not suitable for the registering in state registers and cadasters;
- the names and location of historical objects;
- previous names of existing objects. Such names are valuable for identifying an event or location.



Public access to GV_DRLT data and related services.

GV_DRLT is regulated by the Geodesy and Cartography Law of the Republic of Lithuania, and its management is included in the country's mapping program.

In the list of spatial data themes of the Lithuanian Spatial Information Infrastructure since 2017, GV_DRLT is used for the implementation of the Geographical Names spatial data theme. This list is the basis for the

implementation of Europe's INSPIRE directive and provide data to the INSPIRE data portal.

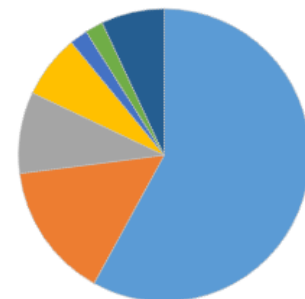
For the last decade, Open Data initiatives have been taking place in the region on a regular basis. By the 17th of July in 2021 the European Union member states were obliged to transpose the requirements of Europe's Open Data Directive into their national legal system. At the same time the amendment to the Law on Geodesy and Cartography of the Republic of Lithuania, which has been in effect until now, announced that from the 1st of July in 2021 state spatial data sets, including GV_DRLT, were opened and provided to the users under the licenses of Creative Commons.

Open Data as Incoming Data in the Official Dataset

The content of GV_DRLT dataset contains two types of information: firstly, newly created information through analysis of information sources, and secondly, integrated from other sources and reorganized for the purposes of GV_DRLT. Newly created data makes up 2% of all GV_DRLT data content.

When integrating data from other resources into GV_DRLT, the initial data is geoprocessed for the purposes of GV_DRLT: for example, the segments of streets, rivers are merged into one street, river. The attribute information of the initial data set is rearranged according to the GV_DRLT structure.

The GV_DRLT data set has been in development since 2014. New data is added to GV_DRLT every year using the available data, most appropriate and the best that the country has at that time. The use of primary data sources is under the focus first of all. Georeferenced base cadaster data is the main initial data source of GV_DRLT from the beginning. Now the GV_DRLT dataset contains nearly 160,000 objects.

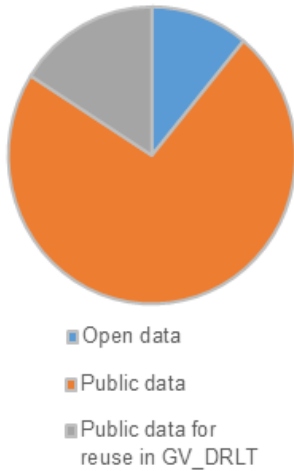


- Georeference base cadaster
- Geoinformational database of Lithuanian place names
- Public transport travel data information system
- EuroBoundaryMap of the Republic of Lithuania
- Cultural heritage register
- Historical Address register data
- Other sources

Parts of incoming data sources in GV_DRLT, percentage



Some of incoming data sources used in GV_DRLT are open data (names of public transport stops, historical Address register data) or historical data which is no longer subject to copyright.



Types of incoming data sources in GV_DRLT

Address register data is open for the public reuse purposes under CC BY 4.0 licence starting from the October in 2020. Today, data of the georeferenced base cadaster, EuroBoundaryMap, as well as ethnographic regions are already open data also. It should be noted that not all initial open datasets used in GV_DRLT are regularly updated, and still remains some risks of future restrictions on data openness.

A separate layer of GV_DRLT consists of names reported by users. This data is provided as data view service after data is approved.

Providing Data in Open File Formats

There are different ways of sharing GV_DRLT data content. The easiest way to share data among the users is using an object link. The object link uses the unique identifier of the GV_DRLT object. Such a link can be inserted into Wikipedia pages or other sources and illustrate an article. A link to Labanoras Forest is as an example <https://www.geoportal.lt/vietovardziai/map?id=9F9BD0D4-0C90-486D-94CC-360DDE0C4E92>

Users can download the GV_DRLT data set as open file formats (SHAPE file), get data as open interface OGC WMS view services or search GV_DRLT data using the open programming interface API. GV_DRLT search service is integrated with the most popular mapping APIs, including OpenLayers and Leaflet.

Conclusion

According to the Law on Geodesy and Cartography of the Republic of Lithuania, state spatial data sets, including GV_DRLT, are open data under the Creative Commons licenses.

GV_DRLT data exploration, analysis and visualisation is the subject of internship for students of cartography and GIS and the way to learn new skills and get the knowledge. Context is the same: to be open and transparency in the activity of geographical names management in the country, to make users aware of the content of GV_DRLT.

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References:

1. Tradition of using and safeguarding geographical names in the National Compendium of Intangible Cultural Heritage <https://savadas.lnkc.lt/vietovardziai.html>
2. Spatial data set of geographical names for the territory of Lithuania GV_DRLT (download link) https://www.geoportal.lt/geoportal/en/web/en/search#queryText=gv_drlt
3. GV_DRLT API search service <https://www.geoportal.lt/vietovardziai/Home/PageIntegrate>
4. Geographical names (INSPIRE dataset) in NSDI portal (download link) [https://www.geoportal.lt/geoportal/en/web/en/search#queryText=%20Annex%20I.%20Geographical%20names%20\(INSPIRE%20dataset\)](https://www.geoportal.lt/geoportal/en/web/en/search#queryText=%20Annex%20I.%20Geographical%20names%20(INSPIRE%20dataset))



Making geographical names data accessible in New Zealand

Theme context: UNEG's Vision, UNEG's Values III, Strategic Action Item 1-iii-8

'Every country to have a fully functioning and globally-aligned structure and policy framework, based on common principles for national standardization of authorized geographical names that identify location and respect the associated culture and heritage, and to have these names easily accessible for national and international use - facilitating consistent worldwide use of geographical names to foster communication and cooperation.'

'Our products and outcomes will be solution-oriented, relevant, user-friendly, innovative, and fully and equitably accessible.'

'Monitor the availability of free and easily accessible authorized digital geographical names data as it is seen as a key driver in encouraging the use of nationally standardized geographical names.'

Introduction

Making New Zealand's online Gazetteer easy to access and search, freely downloadable for reuse, and interoperable in a range of formats, complements the intangible cultural benefits that geographic names serve. The Gazetteer allows users to have authoritative information that provides certainty and a reliable single point of truth.

Geographic names are a core theme in any geospatial dataset and are a fundamental part of New Zealand's spatial data infrastructure¹. They provide context and a framework to support the administration, management, governance and analysis of the environment and its resources.

By providing high quality, accessible, timely, consistent and reliable data, New Zealand's national naming authority² contributes to managing places for scientific research, exploration and environmental management, emergency management and government administration.

Gazetteer Background

The New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008 has a legal requirement for the Board to maintain and publish a publicly available Gazetteer. From 2008 the Board began moving away from paper-based records to a new Gazetteer digital system.

The previous 80 years of the Board's official decisions were initially captured into spreadsheets and published online as PDFs. As geographic names became their own dataset, this created the need for a full Gazetteer system to manage and accessibly communicate official naming decisions.

¹ http://gsdiassociation.org/images/publications/cookbooks/SDI_Cookbook_New_Zealand_v1-1_17Nov2011.pdf

² New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa

Strategic context

In respect to geographic names' accessibility, the New Zealand Geographic Board's (NZGB) relevant strategic objectives/goals 2020-2025³ refer:

1. We ensure our information about places is accurate and complete.
2. We make information about place naming processes accessible and easy to understand.
3. We let people know how to make proposals and submissions to the NZGB.
4. We further develop the NZGB's online presence.
5. We promote and share information about place names and their stories to improve people's knowledge.
6. We publish documents in Māori and English to reach a broader audience.
7. We provide place name information for commemorations and cultural events that contribute to our national identity.
8. We ensure the record of official place names is readily available.
9. People can easily find the stories behind place names.

Web Accessibility

Four principles are set out in the *New Zealand Web Content Accessibility Guidelines*⁴:

1. Perceivable — information and the user interface must be presented in ways that users can perceive.
2. Operable — functionality must be available to all users, for example from a keyboard.
3. Understandable — make content readable and understandable.
4. Robust — content must be robust enough to be interpreted by a wide variety of users and assistive technologies.

Key Benefits:

1. More people can access online information and services.
2. Accessible websites are easier to use.
3. Accessible websites not only help people with disabilities but also older people and people from different cultures.
4. Government organisations can reach a significantly larger portion of New Zealanders.
5. People can better participate in society.
6. Accessible sites are easier for search engines to crawl.
7. Cost savings can be made by building an accessible website from the beginning rather than fixing issues after development.

Open and accessible data

The New Zealand Government promotes open data and the use of open-source technologies. Services, products, and applications

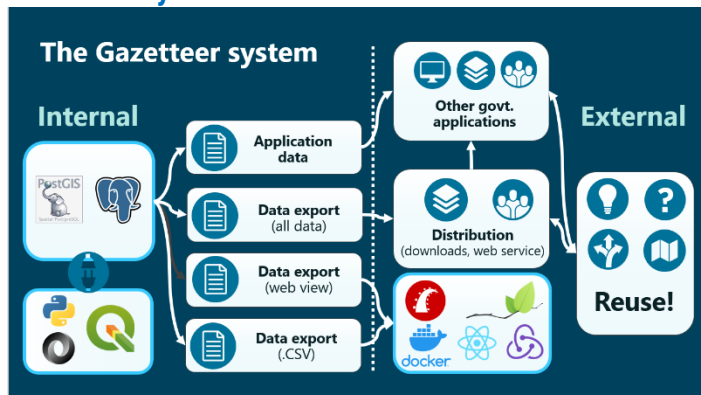
³ https://www.linz.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-09/nzgb_strategic-plan-2020-2025_20201014.pdf

⁴ <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>

are typically freely available to use, and where possible, to reuse and build upon. Government agencies aim to:

1. Ensure the spatial information under their custodianship is both accessible and readily available.
2. Ensure appropriate storage, maintenance, security and archival procedures for their spatial information.
3. Safeguard the Government's interest in the use of its information through licensing arrangements or letters of understanding to protect privacy and confidentiality.
4. Act as the authoritative source for the information in their care.
5. Encourage the proper use of spatial information and to discourage duplication through ignorance.
6. Nominate a point of contact for enquiries about the datasets under their care.

Gazetteer System



This diagram shows New Zealand's system starting on the left with the internal management of data using a relational and spatial database integrated with a GIS platform. External users interact with the New Zealand Gazetteer⁵ on the right using online tools, including a bespoke viewing platform. They can search geographic names to find what information is held. It offers fundamental information such as when did the Board make a name official, what does the name mean, a reference point and a description of the feature.

The latest version of the online Gazetteer was built on the open-source Leaflet mapping platform in the JavaScript React and Redux libraries, which are free and open-source. The backend of the application, which is built on Ruby on Rails, communicates with the Gazetteer database to pick up an export table using Docker to securely move the data. It sits on Amazon™ web services, using Docker for load balancing.

Other applications within Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) use the Gazetteer, mainly to provide a search function using authoritative official geographic names. The Gazetteer data is also published to a distribution platform, enabling other government agencies and third parties to download or use this authoritative data as a web service.

⁵ <https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/>

The Board's decisions are conveyed in publications and products such as official topographic maps and hydrographic charts. However, geographic names are becoming data in their own right. Demonstrating the commitment to equal access, LINZ the organisation that hosts the Board, reuses official geographic names from the same distribution platform as the public.

Gazetteer System Upgrades

Because New Zealand's Gazetteer system is modular, the software and technologies that support each part can be upgraded or replaced, potentially with a limited or at least reduced impact on the other parts. Open-source technology helps and much of the system is built using open-source languages, technologies and platforms.

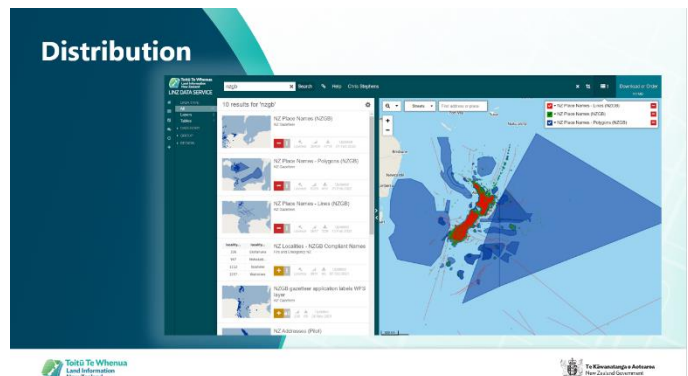
Using and accessing the Gazetteer

Users can search geographic names, filtering by status, feature type, and within various administrative areas. There is search logic for partial matches and to account for diacritic marks. The results are presented in an interactive side panel that highlights which geographic names are official.

Users can also pan or scroll around the map to find all geographic names in an area. The results are presented on either a topographic basemap or a simplified landcover basemap with bathymetry to the edge of New Zealand's continental shelf.

Each geographic name in the Gazetteer is shown as a point, and if available, line and polygon extents can be turned on. Enhancements made in 2019 included adding patterning to feature geometry to improve accessibility, and user options to change the colours and line weights for those who are colour challenged.

Gazetteer Distribution



The Gazetteer's data is published through the LINZ Data Service⁶, pictured in the image above which is based on Amazon™ web services. Users can download all geographic names as a point layer, with separate layers for vector lines and polygons. Through the service's management functions, layers are set up to be read from the Gazetteer database daily and refreshed if changes are found.

The data can be downloaded in a wide range of the most common file formats. Vector and raster information can also be reprojected

⁶ <https://data.linz.govt.nz/>



before being served up to the user as a download. Publishing the data through the LINZ Data Service ensures compliance with relevant Australasian and international metadata and geospatial standards.

The layers can be connected to as live web feature services through an API by using a free login account. Changeset services that only identify and update the differences on each publication are also available.

Data improvements

Each year the Board actively sets out to make the Gazetteer data better. Recent improvements include:

- Standardisation of older dual name format from brackets to a forward slash.
- Macrons added to official Māori place names.
- Entries from Reed's *Place Names of New Zealand* added to the History/Origin/Meaning field.
- Further research for adding to the History/Origin/Meaning field.

Who reuses the data?

- Landonline, New Zealand's survey and land title system, pulls a small extract of geographic names to provide a search function.
- Antarctica New Zealand has a multimedia catalogue grouped by geographic names extracted from the Gazetteer.
- More than 21000 Wikipedia™ pages link back to the Gazetteer as the authority for a place name.
- Google™ is using Gazetteer data more systematically, particularly since a major update in early 2021. Board decisions adding macrons to Māori names, or for official dual names, can now be seen on some Google™maps.
- Third party cartographers and digital mapmakers who recombine data from LINZ, the Gazetteer, Statistics New Zealand, and many other sources.
- Linguistic research: Te Pūnaha Matatini and Dragonfly Data Science created text recognition software to recognise the Māori language by training it against the Gazetteer. Maps have been published to show where current geographic names contain at least some Māori language.

Summary

*Spatial Data Infrastructure Cookbook*⁷ (abridged): 'As the world changes, geospatial information has to be constantly updated to reflect those changes. Constant maintenance is a challenging aspect of geospatial information. With web service delivery, the user has an expectation that the service is being maintained for currency by the provider. The ideal situation is that there is a direct connection between the provider's production system and the web service. So as an edit is made to a geospatial feature in the production system, that edit is immediately available in the web service. This ensures that business decisions employing the web services are made on the very latest view of the world.'

Wendy Shaw

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References :

New Zealand Spatial Data Infrastructure Cookbook:

http://gsdiassociation.org/images/publications/cookbooks/SDI_Cookbook_New_Zealand_v1-1_17Nov2011.pdf

The Australian and New Zealand Foundation Spatial Data Framework:

<https://www.anzlic.gov.au/resources/foundation-spatial-data-framework>

New Zealand Web Accessibility Standard and Guidelines:

<https://www.digital.govt.nz/standards-and-guidance/design-and-ux/accessibility/>

New Zealand Geospatial Research Conference 2022

'finding our way to an open world' Conference Report:

<https://geocollaboratory.massey.ac.nz/2022/09/08/new-zealand-geospatial-research-conference-2022-report-from-the-chair/>

ISO/TC 211: Guidelines of Best Practice for the Acquisition, Storage, Maintenance and Dissemination of Fundamental Geo-Spatial Datasets:

<https://committee.iso.org/home/tc211>

The Board's Te Rautaki | Strategy 2020-2025:

<https://www.linz.govt.nz/file/21892/download?token=grD4XLkV>

New Zealand article in Bulletin # 52 on accessible and available geographic names, May 2017:

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEGN%20bulletin%2052.pdf>

7

http://gsdiassociation.org/images/publications/cookbooks/SDI_Cookbook_New_Zealand_v1-1_17Nov2011.pdf



State Catalogue of Geographical Names in the Russian Federation

The legal basis of activities in the field of naming geographical objects of the Russian Federation is provided by the Federal Law "On Names of Geographical Objects" No. 152-FZ of 18.12.1997 (hereinafter – the Law No. 152-FZ).

The Law No. 152-FZ applies to activities on establishment, normalization, use, registration, accounting and preservation of the names of geographical objects specified in its Article 1, geographical objects of the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation, as well as geographical objects discovered or identified by Russian researchers in the high seas and Antarctica, unless otherwise provided by international treaties of the Russian Federation.

The State Catalogue of Geographical Names (hereinafter – the State Catalogue) is created and maintained in order to ensure uniform and sustainable use of names of geographical objects in the Russian Federation, as well as registration, accounting and preservation of names of geographical objects as an integral part of the historical and cultural heritage of the peoples of the Russian Federation.

The State Catalogue is based on an information search system that forms a database about objects and their names and facilitates its storage, processing and issuance of information registered in it at the request of interested parties free of charge. The

recommended request form is available on the website of the organization responsible for the State Catalogue maintenance (hereinafter – the State Catalogue Operator). Currently, about 800,000 names of geographical objects are registered in the State Catalogue.

The names of geographical objects as an integral part of the historical and cultural heritage of the peoples of the Russian Federation are protected by the state. Unauthorized renaming and the use of distorted names of geographical objects is not allowed.

The State Catalogue consists of the register of names of geographical objects which is a systematized set of information on the names of geographical objects and contains two sections:

- names of geographical objects of the land part of the Russian Federation;
- names of geographical objects of the continental shelf of the Russian Federation, the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation, as well as geographical objects discovered or identified by Russian researchers in the high seas and Antarctica.

Each geographical object in the database of the State Catalogue is characterized by indicators, most of which are the information necessary for registration and unambiguous identification of a geographical object (name of the geographical object, type of

Figure 1

Register of geographical names in the State Catalogue
of Geographical Names as of 24.02.2022

201.21

Astrakhan region

Number of records – 3763

Registration number	Name of geographical object	Type of object	Administrative-territorial position	Geographical coordinates		Nomenclature of the sheet of the topographic map of scale 1 : 100 000
				Latitude	Longitude	
				Position to <u>other</u> geographical object		
1	2	3	4	5		6
0333374	№ 4	settlement by railway junction	Limanskiy district	46°03'	47°07'	L-38-071
0332918	№ 6	settlement by railway junction	Limanskiy district	45°50'	47°01'	L-38-083
0332538	Abaitobe	hill		46°18.9'	48°08'	L 39-061
				right bank of the Kutum River		
0334577	Abdylkin	shallow channel		46°05.8'	48°46.9'	L-39-062
				left bank of branch of the Malobelinskiy Bank River		
0331757	Abdurakhmankol	estuary		48°23.6'	46°33.9'	M-38-130
				northwest of Lake Baskunchak; south-east of the Bozhakkol estuary		
0333847	Abramanovskie	sands		46°49.1'	48°17.2'	L-39-037
				on the Caspian lowland; north of the sands of Kyzyltau		
0331959	Abramenko	shallow channel		48°26.8'	45°54.6'	M-38-128
				in the lower reaches of the Volga branch and the Podstepka River		
					River, between the Akhtuba	

object, administrative status of the settlement, administrative-territorial position of the geographical object, geographical coordinates, nomenclature of the sheet of a topographic map of scale 1:100 000 on which geographical object is displayed, position of the object relative to another larger geographical object, etc.).

The other part of the information indicators includes additional reference data on the geographical object and its name (variants of the name, variants of the type of object, data on the origin of the name, etc.).

Registers of names of geographical objects formed according to the State Catalogue (**Figure 1**) are published on the official website of the State Catalogue Operator: <https://cgkipd.ru/science/names/index.php> to promptly bring information to interested users.

In addition, in order to increase the availability of information about the current names of geographical objects, open data set in CSV format "Information from the State Catalogue of Geographical Names" is prepared and published on the official website of Rosreestr (<https://rosreestr.gov.ru/opendata/>).

Also, Rosreestr and the State Catalogue Operator have organized work on maintaining an electronic bulletin "Changes in Geographical Names on the Territory of the Russian Federation", which is updated annually. Each new issue of the electronic bulletin contains information on a cumulative basis.

Updated in 2021, the electronic bulletin contains information on changes in the names of 1,682 geographical objects on the basis of federal legal acts adopted in the period 1991 – 2021 on the assignment of names to 1,188 geographical objects, including 1,113 geographical objects on the territory of the Russian Federation and 75 geographical objects of the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation, geographical objects discovered or allocated by Russian researchers in the high seas and Antarctica, as well as information on the renaming of 494 geographical objects on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Figure 2 shows the information contained in the electronic bulletin "Changes in Geographical Names on the Territory of the Russian Federation" (hereinafter – the Bulletin) on the official naming and renaming of geographical names on the territory of the Russian Federation in the period from 1998 to 2021.

In order to improve the activities on the Bulletin maintenance and to ensure the openness of information about the names of geographical objects, Rosreestr has developed a pilot project of an electronic cartographic resource based on the Bulletin data with the ability to view geospatial data on changes in geographical names displayed on a basemap (**Figure 3**): <https://rosreestr.gov.ru/activity/geodeziya-i-kartografiya/naimenovaniya-geograficheskikh-obektov/informatsionnye-byulleteni-izmeneniy-naimenovaniy-geograficheskikh-obektov/>.

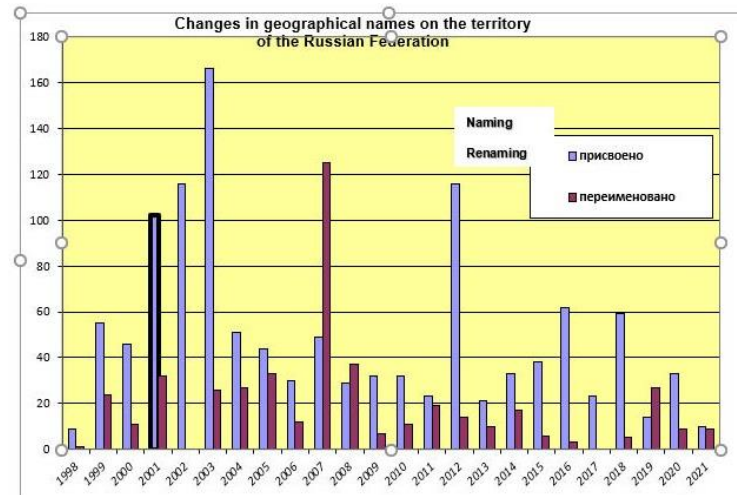


Figure 2

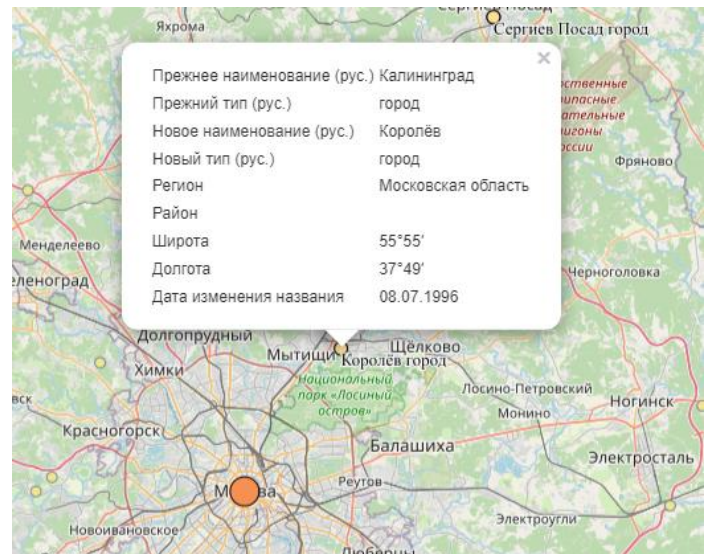


Figure 3

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Making Geographical Names Data Accessible in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

In 2019, General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information (GASGI) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia started a national initiative to collect all geospatial data available including geographical names data from all possible geospatial providers and publish it on the National Geospatial Platform (NGP) developed by GASGI.

The main goal of this work was to maximize the benefits from all efforts done by different entities to:

- Increase cooperation and encourage participation among all government agencies to access and use the available geospatial data and reduce the duplication of geospatial data which may occur such as maps, images and metadata provided by the participating parties.
- Reduce the cost related to geospatial data production for existing and future projects.
- Provide a unified national geospatial infrastructure for multiple uses.
- Supply all geospatial data in one geoportal.
- Apply the sharing principle “produce once & use many times”.

During the execution of this initiative, GASGI received data from 20 different government entities and did all necessary processes for six months as shown in **Figure 1**, including:

- Data inventory & evaluation
- Developing a unified Data Model
- Migrating data to the unified Model
- Apply data policy
- Disseminating data through NGP.

Starting from 300 million records and 20,000 data layers GASGI ended up with 35 million records and 1,000 data layers accepted to be published (**Figure 2**).

By completing this project and including all data in one unified database in NGP, GASGI started providing this data through web services and currently it has around 200 web services developed, 45 tools and applications, around 35 different government entities connected to NGP, and more than 2,000 users. NGP is now open for public and all users can register and access data directly.

After completing this initiative in February 2020, GASGI continues updating NGP data, services and building on top of what was started in 2019.

Today, in Saudi Arabia, searching for national geographical names service is available through the NGP and it is an easy to use. Users can search geographical names directly from the interactive map in NGP. At the same time there is a rich database for the geographical names where one can enquire by using different tools to find one's customized results. GASGI is working on a new version of the NGP that is expected to add more

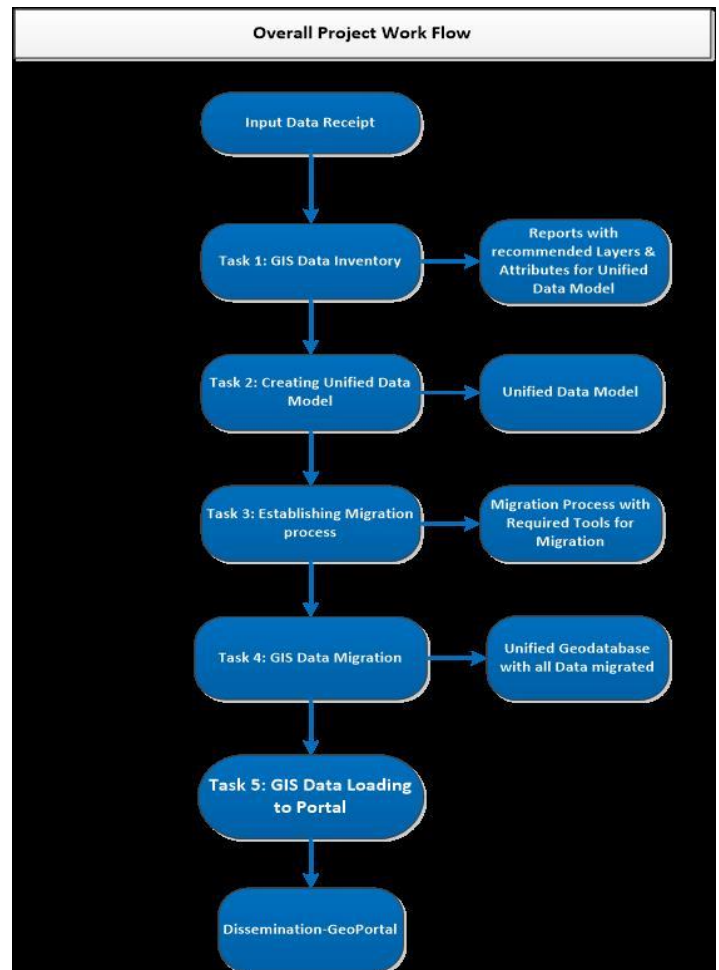


Figure 1 Data collection and dissemination project workflow

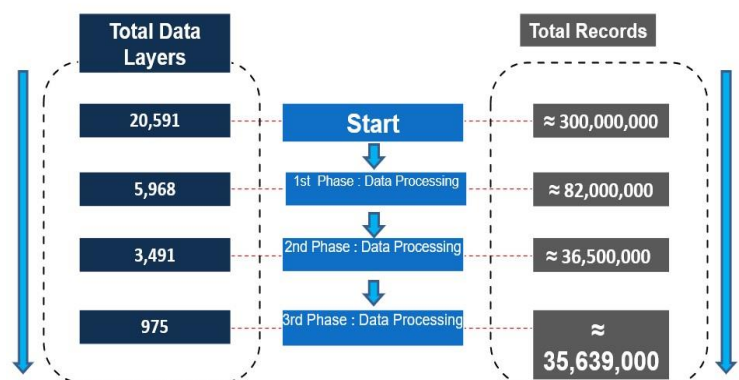


Figure 2 Data collection and dissemination project workflow

features, inquiries, filters, different presentation styles and more to the current national geographic names service.

This development for geographical names in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia benefitted a lot from other experiences and our developers are willing to share with others its successful experiences as well.

Before of the end of this article, we would like to provide as an example of the use of geographical names by NGP:

When someone wishes to inquire about a name for example, they will find all the geographical names related to the name, whether they are mountains, valleys, places, among other features.

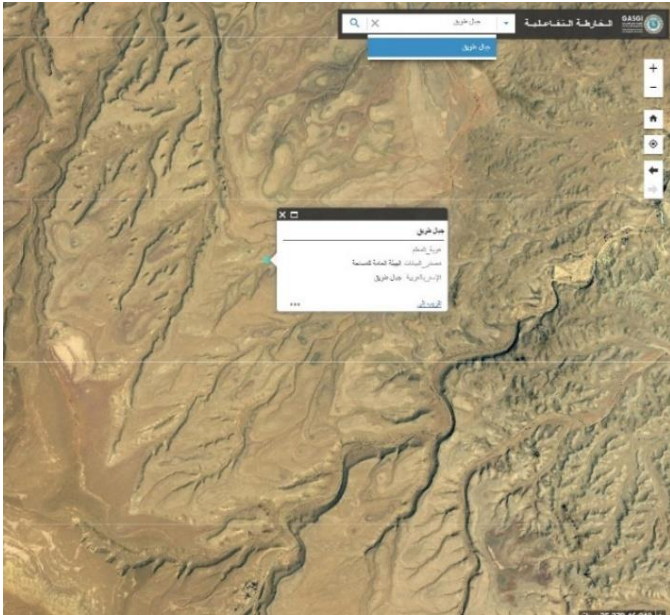


Figure 3

Moreover, NGP will give you the source, location, attributes and Arabic name available of that certain name. (See **Figure3**).

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UNGEKN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work (SP&PoW) 2021-2029

Monitor the availability of free and easily-accessible authorized digital geographical names data – call for cooperation

The Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management has taken responsibility for all subtasks/actions in Strategy 1 ‘Technical Expertise’ of UNGEKN’s [Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029](#) and has started to work on most of the actions, amongst others, on action 1-iii-8. Action Item 1-iii-8 is to “Monitor the availability of free and easily-accessible authorized digital geographical names data as it is seen as a key driver in encouraging the use of nationally-standardized geographical names.”

The main goal of the task is to provide UNGEKN and all member states with an overview of all free and easily-accessible authorized digital geographical name data. Therefore, it was decided to update the UNGEKN Subsite that contains links to geographical names databases for as many countries as possible: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/naa/geo-names/>

As Working Group members, we, Victoria Fölsing (Germany) and Marija Brnot (Slovenia), have taken the responsibility to coordinate this action. We started with collecting and compiling the existing data sources by web browsing in autumn 2021. Since it was not easy to get reliable information about which countries already provide free and easily-accessible authorized digital geographical names data, we sent an e-mail to the Division Chairs with a short questionnaire in April 2022 requesting to disseminate it among experts within their Divisions.

Thank you very much for all the feedback so far. Registered users can see all answers summarised in the WG wiki: <https://wiki.gdi-de.org/display/wgtdfg/Subtask+1-iii-8>

If you are not a registered user of the WG wiki, the following screenshots (see *figure 1*) may provide you with an impression of the content compiled:

Unfortunately, we are still missing replies from many member states. Therefore, we kindly ask again all experts and administrators of geographical names databases for their support and help in providing us with information. Our request is focused on the provision of the website for the geographical names databases or gazetteer services which could then be published on the UNGEKN Subsite <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/naa/geo-names/>.

If the information cannot be found on the website, please answer the following questions:

1. Does your country provides authorized digital data on geographical names?
2. Is it free and/or easily accessible?
3. Where can we find it (link)?
4. In which language is the data accessible?
5. If 1. or 2. is answered „no“: Can you explain why?

Subtask 1-iii-8

Erstellt von Victoria Fölsing, zuletzt geändert von Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu am Sep 22, 2022

Information/results of several surveys on free/accessible/open geographical names data should be compiled.

Secretariat might provide information from the Sec's side. UK has done some work on this and can share results.

Surveys on free/accessible/open geographical names data will be compiled.

<p>Monitor the availability of free and easily-accessible authorized digital geographical names data as it is seen as a key driver in encouraging the use of nationally-standardized geographical names</p>	<p>No references to other WGs WG GNDM</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compilation of the existing data sources 2. Check whether the data is free and easily-accessible 3. Review every year 4. Encourage more member states to provide authorized geographical names data <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Draft a dissemination and communication plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Articles in the Bulletin ii. Presentation at national, regional and international conferences/workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report (at each session) • Update of the Website (as part of UNGEKN Website): Overview with all free and easily-accessible authorized digital geographical names data)
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Figure 1: Subtask Overview



Country	Does your Country provide authorized digital data on geographical names?	Is it free and/or easily-accessible?	Link	In which language is the data accessible?
Argentina	Yes	Yes	https://www.ign.gob.ar/NuestrasActividades/Geografia/Nomenclador/Buscador	Spanish
Australia	Yes	Yes	https://placenames.fsdf.org.au/	English
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes	https://geonames.cadastre.bg/index.php	Bulgarian and English
Croatia	Yes	Yes	Dataset of geographical names Access through NSDI geoportal: Dataset of geographical names View and search of geographical names database Access through geographical names application View and search of geographical names database	Croatian

Figure 2: table with feedbacks

The feedback (links, answers, comments) is most welcome from all Member States! Please send a note to: victoria.foelsing@bkg.bund.de and marija.brnot@gov.si.

If you are interested to get access to the Wiki content, please get in touch with us. We will provide you with the access details.

We are looking forward to receiving your responses and will report on our progress during the next UNGEKN Session in May 2023.

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On behalf of the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management

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FROM THE DIVISIONS

Asia South-East Division

10th Divisional Meeting of the UNGEGN Asia South-East Division

The UNGEGN Asia South-East Division (ASE Division) held the 10th Divisional Meeting on 19 April 2022, which was virtually hosted by Indonesia. The meeting was attended by delegations from Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, and Viet Nam, with a total of 49 participants. (Figure 1).

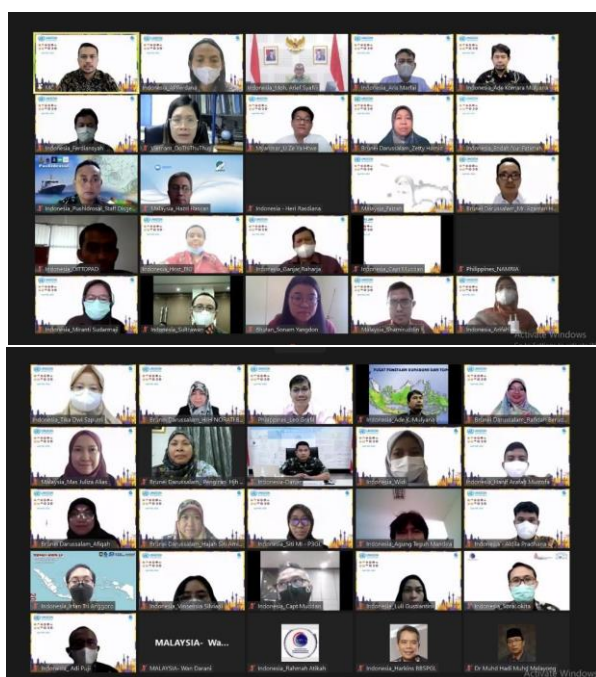


Figure 1. The delegates from member countries participated in the meeting

The 10th Divisional Meeting marked the end of Indonesia's chairmanship in the ASE Division for four years since Indonesia was elected in the 6th Divisional Meeting in Philippines, in 2018. There were three main agenda items discussed in the meeting, namely the chairman's report from the 2018-2022 Chairman, country reports, and the election of the new Chairman. The meeting started with the opening remarks from the Chairman of UNGEGN ASE Division, Mr. Mohamad Arief Syafii, and was followed by the welcoming speech from the Head of the Geospatial Information Agency, Mr. Muh Aris Marfai.

For the first agenda item, the Chairman reported all the activities conducted throughout Indonesia's chairmanship. The UNGEGN ASE Division held a Divisional Meeting every year during the

chairmanship. The ASE Division also held a webinar themed "Recognizing Generic Terms in Geographical Names from Local Languages" and has built the Collaborative Platform that allows member countries to voluntarily add and update data with various data types. In the meantime, the International Training on Toponymy that was previously planned to be held in 2020 was postponed until 2023. Mohamad Arief Syafii also conveyed his wish for the new chairman to encourage activities of geographical names standardization within the division.

On the second agenda item, delegates from member countries reported their accomplishments and plans for the future. The delegations were also invited to add comments which made the discussion more lively.

The Kingdom of Bhutan delegation conveyed that Bhutan had its first technical working group to standardize the geographical names, consisting of five agencies. Bhutan committed to fixing the discrepancy in their data and made a guideline for the standardization of geographical names before launching the gazetteer later this year.

Brunei Darussalam recently standardized a flyover and named three roads. Brunei Darussalam also aimed to publish guidelines for Geographical Names and Road Naming, Brunei Darussalam National Geographical Names Committee's official website and logo, and resume their naming activities.

The Indonesian delegation represented by the Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) reported several activities. Indonesia launched the Gazetteer of the Republic of Indonesia for the first time after the enactment of Government Regulation 2/2021 concerning the Standardization of Geographical Names. The report also mentioned the naming of the Indonesian new capital city, Nusantara, following the plan to move its capital city from Java to East Kalimantan. Indonesia also carried out activities on issues related to the outermost islands, the development of the "Halo Bahasa" application by the Ministry of Education and Culture, undersea toponym survey, the publication of the Lists of Unique Code for Government Administration Areas, as well as the development of collaboration with the private sector and the mapping community to support improving the quality and quantity of geographical names in Indonesia.

Malaysia, represented by the Malaysia National Geographical Names Committee (JKNG), is committed to coordinating the activities of geographical names in Malaysia. JKNG considers that accurate and standardized geographical naming is essential as a basis for communication tools to help cooperation between



region, national, and international organizations. In addition, JKNG also aims to have a comprehensive and efficient database for geographical names that can contribute to the country's development.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar, represented by the Myanmar Survey Department (MSD), updated geographical names in the 1:50,000 scale topographic maps. The geographical names are confirmed with local people and authorities. MSD planned to update 150 map sheets for 2022-2023 and aimed to introduce the online mapping system and establish a geographic database in 2030.

Republic of the Philippines delegates reported that they had just published the latest version of The Philippine Standard Geographic Code (PSGC) in March 2022. They were also working on updating the Philippine Gazetteer Project and Topographic Base Maps.

The Department of Surveying, Mapping, and Geo-information of Viet Nam (DOSMVN) carried out the activities of geographical names in Viet Nam. In the future, DOSMVN plan to keep updating the administrative geographical names and database of geographical names, and also setting up a website to provide data on geographical names.

The meeting concluded with the election of the new Chairman for 2022-2026 (**Figure 2**). The election started in March 2022 with the nomination process through the UNGEGN ASE Division Collaborative Platform. The member countries were encouraged to nominate one country, either themselves or another member country. The new chairman was elected through a mutual agreement among all nominees in the 10th Divisional Meeting. The result was the election of Mrs. Nor Zetty Akhtar Haji Abdul Hamid from the Survey Department Ministry of Development - Brunei Darussalam as the new Chairman of the UNGEGN ASE Division.

Resolution

There are 3 resolutions approved by the members at the end of the meeting, which are:

- Appreciation towards chairmanship of Indonesia and activities carried out by the ASE Division Member Countries in 2022;
- International Training on Toponymy is the only item in the 2019-2022 work plan that was not implemented due to the COVID-19 outbreak. However, Indonesia is still committed to convening the International Training on Toponymy in 2023 in Bali as discussed with the UNGEGN Secretariat; and

- Brunei Darussalam was elected as the new Chair of the UNGEGN ASE Division. The new Chair will compose the new divisional work plan for 2022-2026, which will be presented at the next divisional meeting.



Chairman of UNGEGN ASE Division 2018 -2022 Moh. Arief Syafi'i (top) and Chairman of UNGEGN ASE Division 2022 - 2026 Nor Zetty Akhtar Haji Abdul Hamid (bottom)

The 10th Divisional Meeting was closed by the speech delivered from the newly elected UNGEGN ASE Division's Chairman, Mrs. Nor Zetty Akhtar Haji Abdul Hamid of Brunei Darussalam.

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FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

UNEGN Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management

Linked Open Data Developments – What’s in for UNGEGN and its Experts?

The Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management and the Working Group on Publicity and Funding jointly organised this webinar ‘*Linked Open Data Developments – What’s in for UNGEGN and its Experts?*’ on Friday 30 September 2022. It was the second in UNGEGN’s webinar series focusing on topics relevant to implementation of UNGEGN’s Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029 and provided an overview on the challenges and advantages of linked open data (LOD) and some implementation examples. UNGEGN views LOD as another stage in the evolution of data management methodologies which the UNGEGN community needs to consider, to facilitate widespread use of standardized geographical names.

The image shows a registration card for the UNGEGN Webinar Series. It features the UNGEGN logo at the top left, a globe icon, and the title 'LINKED OPEN DATA DEVELOPMENTS - WHAT'S IN FOR UNGEGN AND ITS EXPERTS?'. The date and time are listed as '30 SEPTEMBER 2022, 7:00 AM - 8:30 AM EDT'. A 'REGISTER' button is prominently displayed with a URL. Below, a list of speakers is provided, each with a checkmark icon. At the bottom, there are social media handles for UNSTATS, GEOINFO, and UNSD.

The webinar was attended by a global audience of over 100 persons, primarily from national names authorities, national mapping agencies and universities. Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany), Convenor of the UNGEGN Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management moderated the webinar, with opening remarks given by UNGEGN Chair Pierre Jaillard (France) and Director of UNSD Stefan Schweinfest, and closing remarks given by UNGEGN Co Vice-Chair Susan Birtles (Australia).

The first presentation, delivered by Henrik Askjer (University of Bergen, Norway), introduced LOD from an historical

perspective, provided an overview of fundamental requirements, and both challenges and advantages. This was followed by examples of national LOD implementations from Alexandra Rowland (Kadaster, the Netherlands’ Land Registry and Mapping Agency), and from Falk Würriehausen (Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy, Germany) which demonstrated benefits, methodology, architecture, and software of LOD implementation, in addition to the challenges experienced and solutions adopted. The final presentation was delivered by Peder Gammeltoft (University of Bergen, Norway and Chair of the UNGEGN Working Group on Publicity and Funding), providing summary of the challenges, opportunities and benefits of LOD. This was followed by a panel discussion session.

The organisers again would like to thank all the presenters and attendees for their contributions.

The UNGEGN community is encouraged to seek country local connections within country or region. LOD specific technical expertise is not a common skillset within geographical names authorities, yet geographical names data is so often fundamental to building useful linked data ecosystems. Equally, the nuanced nature of geographical names and the various ways names data is structured may be challenging to LOD practitioners wishing to use it. Geographical names authorities, geospatial data management authorities, LOD practitioners, and research institutions must work together on this, so please seek out your national and regional colleagues and continue the discussion.

If your country or division has examples or learnings to share, please get in touch with the Working Group and consider submitting a paper at the next UNGEGN session in May 2023.

Documentation and a recording of the webinar is available: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/>

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Task Team for Africa

Task Team for Africa Participates in 8th Session of the Regional Committee for UN-GGIM: Africa

24-28 October 2022, , at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The UNGEGN Task Team for Africa participation in the UN-GGIM: Africa Eighth meeting was very important. Over 100 participants, including delegates from 38 African countries, as well as observers from international organizations including the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission (AUC), the UN-GGIM Secretariat, academia, industry organizations and the private sector participated in meeting.

Delegates from the following African Member States participated in the meeting: *Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana (online), Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, DR Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.*

Representatives from the following organizations also attended: *African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE); the African Regional Institute for Geospatial Information Science and Technology (AFRIGIST); Afroleadership (Cameroon); AgriSpace; AIC Mindful (South Africa); Central Statistical Agency (Ethiopia); Centre d'Étude de Recherche et de Production en Information pour l'Environnement et le Développement Durable (CERPINEDD, Burkina Faso); Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN); Columbia University (United States); Digital Earth Africa (South Africa); Esri (United States); Esri Eastern Africa (Kenya); Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI – Ethiopia); Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO – United Kingdom); Gandhi Memorial Hospital (Ethiopia); Geospatial Initiatives; Geospatial World; Geo-Referenced Infrastructure and Demographic Data for Development (GRID.3 – United States); GTOPIC Sarl (Morocco); HEAD Aerospace (China); Natural Resources (Canada); Obafemi Awolowo University (Nigeria); PASCO Corporation (Japan); PLACE (United States); SatNav Africa (Senegal); Technical University of Kenya (Kenya); University of Khartoum (Sudan); World Geospatial Industry Council (Netherlands)*

United Nation agencies attending the meeting included: *United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN); United Nations Statistics Divisions (UNSD); United Nations Geospatial Information Section (UNGIS); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); Resident Coordinator Office (RCO – Nigeria).*

UN-GGIM Africa currently has five Working Groups. They are as follows: **Working Group WG1: African Geodetic, WG2: Fundamental Datasets, WG3: Institutional and, WG4: Capacity and capability development , and WG5: Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Information.**

During the work of this meeting UNGEGN's Coordinator for the Task Team for Africa, Brahim Atoui presented on the history of the Group of Experts, its aims and its objectives, and also emphasized the importance of standardization of geographical names as an important part of a country's cultural heritage and its importance in the development of a country.

This presentation gave rise to an interesting debate, during which several delegates promised to put in place in their respective countries the structures necessary for the management of geographical names.

In addition, it was noted that several African countries such as Mauritania, Senegal, and Burundi have very active commissions on geographical names; other countries such as Djibouti, Comoros, and Congo among others are committed to starting the process as soon as they return to their respective countries to set up toponymy management structures. For this, they asked UNGEGN to provide them with the necessary documentation.

The meeting decided to create a fifth Working Group on the standardization of geographical names within the GGIM/Africa in place of the existing Sub-Group. It should be noted that this sub-group created at the Sixth Meeting of GGIM/Africa has never been active. The creation of this Group will henceforth help to effectively promote the standardization of geographical names in Africa.

In addition, it is worth mentioning the commitment of the UNECA for the promotion of geographical names in Africa and in particular the help received from Mr. André Nonguierma throughout the meeting. May he be thanked for this.

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FROM THE COUNTRIES

Geographical Names and Indigenous Knowledge for a Better Disaster Mitigation in the Lembang Fault Area

The Lembang Fault Area

With its approximate length of 29 km in the west-east direction to the north of the Municipality of City of Bandung, Indonesia, the Lembang Fault Area is considered to be a geological hazard-prone area. With an annual movement of 6 mm (Meilano et al, 2018), the fault had caused 13 earthquakes with magnitude between 0.4 and 3.3 Mw (moment magnitude scale) between 2010 and 2017 (Handayani et al, 2021).

The fault activity may also produce an earthquake with a magnitude between 6.5 and 7.0 Mw with a repetition time between 170 and 670 years (Daryono et al., 2018). Furthermore, the area is prone to volcanic hazard due to the existence of the active Tangkubanparahu volcano (Marjiyono et al., 2008; Silitonga, 1973; Tjia, 1968; van Bemmelen, 1949; Daryono et al., 2018).

Geographical Names

Geographical names in the area reveal the characteristics of the area. *Gawir*, a Sundanese word that is already absorbed into Indonesian, means a cliff that is normally formed due to a deformation process. In Earth Science, the translation of *gawir* in English is fault scarp. Moreover, between km 8 and km 16 of the fault, there are seven places using generic term for a hill, five places using a term for a water-related feature in their names, and three places that use the generic word for cleft.

The places with hill in their generic, show the evidence of the fault in the form of a ridge comprising of the seven hills. The places with cleft as the generic also describe the fault. Of the five places with water-related feature in the name, two of them are have the term pond as the generic element in the name, while the rest of the places have fishing ground, port and *pancuran*, or natural fountain, in their name. These names reveal that these places have a history as water reservoirs, while Panyairan, which denotes a fishing ground, was used for an inland fishing. Furthermore, Darmaga, which means port, tells us that the area used to act as the port for water-related activities.

Indigenous Knowledge

A legend on the how the Tangkubanparahu volcano was formed also provides valuable information on the characteristics of the Lembang Fault area: Once upon a time, there was a charming young man whose name is Sangkuriang, fell in love with a woman who was in fact is his own mother. Having recognized the man as her son, the woman whose name is Dayang Sumbi asked Sangkuriang to build a huge boat before the next sunrise, which

was thought to be an impossible mission. However, Sangkuriang possessed divine powers that allowed him to do the impossible.

When Sangkuriang cut down a big tree, the ground was shaking, which in interpreted as the process of the formation of the fault. In short, because Dayang Sumbi woke up a rooster to crow early that marked the failure of Sangkuriang to fulfil his task, Sangkuriang was chasing Dayang Sumbi to a higher ground. This part of the story provides a guidance to evacuate to a higher ground particularly during a volcanic eruption, which will be explained by the next part of the story.

Additionally, before vanishing on a hill called Gunung Putri or Mount of a Princess, Dayang Sumbi threw her scarf and the scarf was extended 10 km from Gunung Putri until Batu Karembong or Scarf Stone to the south of Gunung Putri. It is interpreted that, in the case of Tangkubanparahu eruption, the lava will flow through a draw to reach the northern part of the Municipality of City of Bandung.

Furthermore, indigenous knowledge of Sundanese provides guidance on managing such features. The guidance is provided in a simple proverb stating that every mountain should have forest on it, every cliff should have bamboo growing on it, and every cleft should be allocated as water reservoirs.

Discussion

While the Lembang Fault area is known for its beautiful scenery, the development in the area has mostly not been considering geographical names and indigenous knowledge of the area. In Pasirsereh, which means the hill of the lemongrass, there are many abandoned structures, which were abandoned after the largest earthquake in the area in 2011.

Moreover, as the land use of places with pond and cleft in their generic part of their name have mostly been converted for residential and tourism purposes, lately these areas and their surroundings have been constantly flooded, particularly during a rainy season. Along with the land use conversion, the growing extent of agriculture, settlements and touristic attractions have reduced the capacity of the area to absorb the water.

Conclusion

Geographical names, which mostly co-exist with the associated indigenous knowledge, may reveal the characteristics of and guidance to how to manage the area in question. Also, from the above-mentioned examples, geographical names and indigenous knowledge may also be valuable for guiding disaster mitigation and disaster risk management in general. Nonetheless, efforts on understanding the real meaning of geographical names and



indigenous knowledge is still expected to be augmented as, according to Abdulharis et al. (2022), they are quite difficult to interpret as they are given in the form of symbols.

Reintroduction of the mentioned knowledge to the people acts as one of important basis on development of community disaster resilience, as well as to promote the achievement of sustainable development goals (Abdulharis et al., 2022). Considering its wide scope, such a task may only be achieved by means of Penta Helix development model, in which academy, government, industry, civil society and social entrepreneurs collaborate on collecting and analysing geographical names and their associated indigenous knowledge toward promotion of a sound disaster risk management and development policy for the Lembang Fault area.

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SPECIAL PROJECTS AND NEWS ITEMS

IGU Centennial Congress in Paris, 18-22 July 2022: Session “Place names as (positive or negative) brands”

In the framework of this congress celebrating the 100th anniversary of the International Geographical Union’s (IGU) foundation in Paris, the Joint ICA/IGU Commission on Toponymy organized a session on place names as (positive or negative) brands with 15 papers presented.

The topic of this session came to our mind, when the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that place names can assume the quality of brands almost overnight: Wuhan in China as the origin of the virus and the first city massively affected by it, Bergamo in Italy, from where we saw pictures of overburdened hospitals and the army transporting the coffins of the passed away, or the ski resort Ischgl in Austria, from where the virus was spread over wider parts of Europe by returning tourists, became drastic recent examples for place names having assumed the quality of negative brands. Older examples of this kind are Chernobyl and Fukushima as the places of nuclear disasters.

But place names can of course, and do this even more frequently, also assume the quality of positive brands. The positive image of places is, e.g., transferred to others by providing them with the decorative epithet of the famous original. Amsterdam and Stockholm are called the “Venice of the North”, Dresden the “Florence on River Elbe”, Salzburg the “Rome north of the Alps” or Bucharest [București] the “Little Paris” or the “Paris of the East”.

This potential quality of place names as positive or negative brands is due to their symbolic power and their capacity to activate imaginations and emotions. Reading, hearing or memorizing the name Paris activates the entire concept we have of the place designated by the name and as received from the media, from literature and also by tourism advertising, if we have not been already there and constructed our own concept of the place. For this very reason place names with the quality of positive brands are also frequently applied to small and unimpressive places, just to polish their image and to elevate them over others. They are also used for commercial products of all kinds to enhance their attractiveness, to provide them with a character or a regional affiliation. Negative brands are applied to other places rather as nicknames like Siberia to places known to be specifically cold. Paris as a prototype for this topic seemed to be the appropriate location to discuss this wide thematic field from the perspectives of cultural geography and critical toponomastics.



UNEGGN Vice-Chair Sungjae Choo presenting his paper (Photo: Chanho Kim)

In this session chaired by Peter Jordan (Austria) and Cosimo Palagiano (Italy), the co-chairs of the Commission, basic introductions into the concept field and the generation of place names as brands were presented by UNGEGN Vice-Chair Sungjae Choo (Republic of Korea), whose idea it was to organize a session on this topic, and Peter Jordan, who provided also examples from Europe. Malak Alaslí (Hungary) referred to the impact of place names as brands. Chanho Kim (Republic of Korea) presented an experimental study on the negative brand value of place names by the example of Wuhan, China. Jonathan Cherry (Ireland) spoke on colonial naming and renaming in Ireland. Eugenio Climent-López and Samuel Esteban-Rodríguez (Spain) regarded the use of place names as brands of protected designations of origin by the example of the wine-growing areas of the Ebro Valley, Spain. Josip Faričić and Lena Mirosević (Croatia) highlighted the name Dalmatia as a brand. Nuria Font-Casaseca (Spain) examined the renaming of neighborhoods through digital platforms in Barcelona. UNGEGN expert Matjaž Geršič and Drago Perko (Slovenia) spoke on the standardization of geographical names through research projects providing two examples from Slovenia. Kinga-Xénia Havadi-Nagy (Romania) contributed in a very entertaining way on the occurrence of place names as brands in Hungarian, Romanian and German proverbs and sayings. Ekaterina Mikhailova (Switzerland) gave insights in Critical Toponomastics based on an online course. Daniel Orongo Nyangweso (Hungary) explored the impact of place names having assumed the value of brands by the Covid-19 pandemic on the places designated by them. Cosimo Palagiano focused on place names as negative brands. Suraj Prasad and Anjan Sen (India) highlighted the dichotomy of economic and cultural space



by examining the impact of an Indian painting on art. Antonio Violante (Italy) addressed the global pandemic as the ultimate rebranding tool by the example of Montenegro.

The session was well-attended not only by the ‘toponymic community’ but attracted also many geographers with a research focus in other fields thus very likely promoting the interest in our field. This may comply to a goal of specific sessions organized in the framework of larger events of global scientific umbrella

organizations, which to some extent have the character of shopping malls, where people also stroll from stand to stand and get stuck with what particularly attracts them.

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UN-GGIM’s efforts to strengthen global geospatial information management arrangements

In June 2022, pursuant to the UN Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/27, following a global consultation and review process involving Member States and finalized by the Bureau, the Bureau of the Committee of Experts transmitted to the Council, via letter to the Vice-President of ECOSOC, its report on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management ([E/2022/68](#)) entitled "**Enhancing global geospatial information management**". This report was prepared pursuant to ECOSOC resolution 2016/27 which requested that the Committee report back to the Council, no later than during its 2022 session, on the implementation of the resolution as well as on its efforts to work with the Statistical Commission and with the entire United Nations system, and to integrate geospatial and statistical information systems and, in this context, to examine the strengthening of the institutional arrangements of the Committee. The report was also part of the Committee of Experts efforts to strengthen its institutional arrangements, gain sustainability with regular budgetary resources and to be accorded meeting entitlements to convene annual sessions. The report was supported by a draft resolution [E/2022/L.26](#) proposed by Fiji.



acknowledges the achievements and progress made by the Committee of Experts in the area of global geospatial information management and its contribution to the strengthening of geospatial information management capacities and utilization in developing countries. The resolution reiterates the importance of strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee, particularly for the achievement of its operations focused on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, to strengthen and ensure its continued effectiveness and benefit to all Member States. Further, the resolution updated and modified the Terms of Reference for the Committee of Experts.

UNEGN/UN-GGIM Secretariat

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On 22 July 2022, ECOSOC welcomed and noted the report from the Committee of Experts ([E/2022/68](#)) and adopted resolution [E/RES/2022/24](#) entitled "**Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements**". The resolution



UNGEGN Continues to participate in the annual session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)

The twelfth session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management was held in person (after 2 years in virtual format) from 1 to 5 August 2022 in conference room 2 at UN headquarters in New York. Gathered were over 350 chief executive officers and technical experts from governments, industry, academia and NGO’s from 78 countries who addressed in a participatory and inclusive manner key issues in the management and advancement of geospatial information.

management, all guided by the [United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework](#), the guiding framework for UN-GGIM and resource for all countries to help strengthen their national geospatial capacity.

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, representative from Germany and member of the UNGEGN expanded bureau represented the Group of Experts, see **figure 2**. He introduced UNGEGN’s report [E/C.20/2022/18/Add.1](#) under agenda item 16 Collaboration with the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names. [The introductory Statement is available here](#). An important element of the report was the project proposal on the development of a compendium of institutional arrangements and operational good practices aimed at strengthening relations between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts. The proposal was well received and included in the report of the session was decision 12/114 (d), which noted the efforts to build a stronger relationship between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts, supported the collaborative project proposal to increase cooperation, create synergies, and share knowledge and good practices for the standardization of geographical names. The decisions also included urging Member States and their national mapping and geospatial agencies to develop and adopt toponymic guidelines in collaboration with their national geographical name’s authorities and encouraging the participation of representatives of national mapping and geospatial agencies to the 2023/third UNGEGN session.

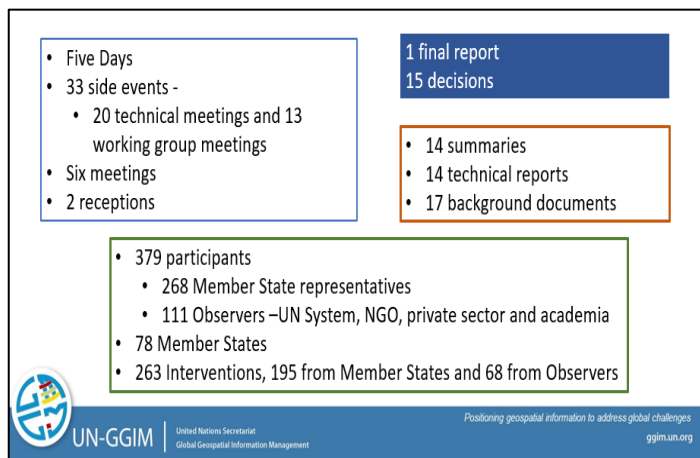


Figure 1 UN-GGIM 12th session in figures

See **figure 1** which gives an overview of the session in numbers.

Opening remarks were delivered by Her Excellency Agnes Ali-Harm from Fiji where she recognized the important role and work of the UN Committee of Experts. She said “when the world was grappling with the global pandemic with regard to health response efforts, you can imagine what this looks like for small administrations with limited capacities and resources. For Fiji, given our ongoing work with the UN-GGIM, we managed to use geospatial information to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic in decision making to support the deployment of resources to where it was most needed.”

A major topic discussed was the quality and long-term sustainability of the global geodetic reference frame (GGRF), the establishment of a Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence at the United Nations Campus in Bonn, Germany, which will address current challenges in sustaining the GGRF. Also addressed were the integration of statistical, geospatial and other data, using geospatial information for sustainable development, including land administration and management, disasters and marine



Figure 2 Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, Germany introduces UNGEGN's report



There were sixteen interventions regarding UNGEEN’s report, the commenting countries are shown in *figure 3*. Interventions made across all UN-GGIM agenda items are shown in *figure 4*.

The Committee concluded the work of its twelfth session with the adoption of its report that included fifteen substantive decisions on policies, strategies and programmes to be pursued. On the margins of the twelfth session, thirty-three side events and meetings were held which promoted the sharing and exchange of knowledge, experiences and practices and strengthened the coordination and coherence of the global geospatial information community. Further information on the Committee of Experts and its work can be found on its website <http://ggim.un.org>

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Figure 3 Interventions on Agenda Item 16, at 12th Session on UN-GGIM

Interventions

	Agenda Name	Member States	Observers	Total Interventions
item 8	Global geodetic reference frame.	23	9	32
item 7	Integrated Geospatial Information Framework.	24	5	29
item 10	Integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information	19	8	27
item 3	Strengthening global geospatial information management arrangements. Geospatial information for sustainable development	13	6	19
item 11	Application of geospatial information related to land administration and management	12	5	17
item 12	Geospatial information and services for disasters.	13	4	17
item 12	Geospatial information and services for disasters.	11	6	17
item 5	Contribution of regional committees to the global geospatial information agenda	11	5	16
item 13	Marine geospatial information.	12	4	16
item 14	Policy and legal frameworks, including issues related to authoritative data	12	4	16
item 16	Collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. Implementation and adoption of standards for the global geospatial information community.	13	3	16
item 15		14	1	15
item 4	Determining the future geospatial information ecosystem.	10	4	14
item 6	Contribution of thematic networks to the global geospatial information agenda.	8	4	12
		195	68	263

Figure 4 Total number of interventions all agenda items – 12th Session on UN-GGIM



IN MEMORIAM

Șerban Dragomirescu (1932-2022)

On May 8, 2022, Șerban Dragomirescu, long-term Romanian UNGE GN expert, geographer, toponymist, secretary of the Commission of the Romanian Academy for the standardization of geographical names and member of the Romanian place-name commission that prepared the Romanian place-name law of 2001, passed away. The UNGE GN community, the community of toponymists at large and the community of geographers mourns the loss of an outstanding member.

Born into a family of distinguished Bucharest intellectuals, Șerban Dragomirescu graduated 1955 as a geographer at the University of Bucharest [București] and started working at the Institute of Meteorology. Most of his professional activity, however, took place at the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, where he worked until 1990 and where he was particularly engaged in the geographical journals "Revue Roumaine de Géographie" and "Studies and Research in Geography" [Studii și Cercetări de Geografie] as well as, being fluent in French, German, English and Russian, in relations of the Institute with geographers from other countries, earning the reputation of an "ambassador of Romanian geography". After 1990 he was appointed scientific secretary of the Section of Geonomic Sciences of the Romanian Academy, a position he held until 2000, and continued to be scientifically active.

Remarkable in Șerban Dragomirescu's work was its thematic diversity comprising geomorphology, history of geography, geography of tourism, toponymy, cartography, and political geography. His historical-geographical expertise justified his participation in the editorial team of the two editions of the Historical-geographical Atlas of Romania [Atlasul istorico-geografic al României], and he contributed essentially to the Geographical Dictionary of Romania [Dicționarul geografic al României] as well as to the Historical Atlas of Romanian Cities [Atlas istoric al orașelor din România].

In the field of toponymy, Șerban Dragomirescu's focus was on standardization in general and the rendering of Romanian exonyms. From 1970 to 1979 he functioned as the coordinator of the Romanian place-name board and was member of the Commission for Tourist Maps of the National Geographical Atlas. From 1972 onward he represented Romania in UNGE GN



Șerban Dragomirescu in Casa Mureșenilor Brașov/Brassó/Kronstadt (Photo: Simina Dragomirescu)

as member or head of the Romanian delegation, as a member of UNGE GN's Romano-Hellenic and French-speaking divisions as well as in United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN). He attended in these functions the UNGE GN sessions No. 4 1972 in Geneva [Genève], No. 5 1973 in New York, No. 16-17 1992 and 1994 in New York, No. 18 1996 in Geneva, and No. 19-20 1998 and 2000 in New York as well as the 2nd UNCSGN 1972 in London, the 6th UNCSGN 1992 in New York, the 8th UNCSGN 2002 in Berlin, and the 9th UNCSGN 2007 in New York. He was also a very active member of the UNGE GN Working Group on Exonyms from its foundation in 2002.

At the national level one of Șerban Dragomirescu's major merits is certainly his essential contribution to the Romanian place-name law of 2001 (Monitorul Oficial al României, annus XIV, Nr. 936/2002)

which can be regarded as minority-friendly and very much in line with UN resolutions on place names in minority languages. He worked for it as a member of a scientific commission composed of two experts from the Romanian Academy and one each from the University of Iași and the Military Topographic Directorate. It was installed on request of the government to define place names in minority languages and arrived at the remarkable result that place names used by minorities speaking languages written in non-Roman alphabets (in Romania:

Russian-Lipovanians and Ukrainians) had not to be converted to Roman script to be shown on town signs and elsewhere in public space. In 2006-2007, Șerban Dragomirescu was also member of the coordinating group of the Dictionary of Geographical Names of Romania, the Romanian gazetteer compiled in the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy based on UN recommendations.

Șerban Dragomirescu's merits will remain, and he will rest in our memories with all his inspiring thoughts and kindness.

Simina Dragomirescu (Romania), widow

Email: simina88@hotmail.com

Peter Jordan

Honorary Chair, Austrian Board on Geographical Names

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Naftali Kadmon (1925-2022)

Naftali Kadmon from Israel was an active participant of UNGEGN for thirty years, from 1977 to 2007, as Chief Cartographer of the Survey of Israel or as Professor of Geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His interests and expertise as a cartographer and toponymist were wide ranging: from training and academic courses in toponymy to toponymic data files, automation of names placement on maps, biscriptual and bilingual gazetteers, romanization of Hebrew, exonyms and endonyms, pronunciation guides and the representation of geographical names in world atlases. Over the years, he presented nearly 50 papers to UNGEGN and the Conferences on behalf of Israel or the East Mediterranean Division (other than Arabic).



Prof. Kadmon contributed to the success of UN Conferences by rapporteuring for Technical Programmes (1987), acting as Vice-Chair and then Chair for International programmes (1992, 1998), and as Chair for National Standardization (2002). His contributions to UNGEGN projects will stand out in UNGEGN's history. From 1991 to 2007, Naftali Kadmon was the Convenor of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology and most diligently oversaw the compilation and editing of the Glossary of terms for the standardization of geographical names published in

the six UN languages in 2002, with an addendum in 2007. He was a lecturer at the first UNGEGN training course in South Africa in 1992 and contributed chapters on language and on exonyms, as well as providing editorial assistance, to the Manual for the national standardization of geographical names (2006), used widely for training purposes. In addition, he personally used his knowledge of the standardization of geographical names and of UNGEGN to write a much needed handbook; *Toponymy. The lore, laws and language of geographical names* was published by Vantage Press in 2000 and became an interesting and valuable reference for any toponymist.

Naftali Kadmon will be remembered for his dedication and expertise in many aspects of toponymy, which made him a valued contributor to UNGEGN's activities and progress over many years.

Helen Kerfoot

Chair, UNGEGN, 2002-2012

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UPCOMING EVENTS

1 – 5 May 2023

Third Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

UNHQ, New York