

Managing a national names programme

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu

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Within the module “Managing a national names programme” it will be demonstrated by the example of Germany how a national names programme has been established and evolved. The legal issues to be considered, the human and financial resources needed for maintaining and publishing the database will be explained.

Official surveying and mapping in the Federal Republic of Germany belong to the responsibilities of the 16 states (Länder). Each of the Länder is responsible for its own topographic service, land and property register, environmental and statistical data collection, and in general for data policies. Data collection is largely decentralised and carried out mostly on the regional and local level, which means that the processing and maintenance of data is mostly tailored to local and regional requirements. The different Länder have issued laws (‘Surveying and Cadastral Acts’) that regulate the work, the responsibilities etc. of the surveying and mapping authorities.

The relevant administrations of the Länder are coordinated through the Working Committee of the Surveying Authorities of the States of the Federal Republic of Germany (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Vermessungsverwaltungen der Länder der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - AdV).

Whereas the mapping agencies of the states (Länder) are responsible for the supply of medium scale reference data, the local cadastre offices have to perform the tasks of the real estate cadastre and to provide large scale reference data. Based on authorisation by law or agreements between the administrations, third parties, too, are involved in the settlement of these tasks. The states are being supported by the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (Bundesamt für Kartographie und Geodäsie - BKG) as well as by other administrative bodies at state or commune level fulfilling the relevant staff requirements. With regard to the provision of topographic reference data the smaller scales (smaller than scale 1:200.000) are compiled by the BKG.

In order to fulfil the requirement of an unambiguous data maintenance at BKG, all geographical names information of several (topographic) vector data products – amongst others, the Digital Landscape Model 1:250 000 / 1:1 000 000 (DLM 250/1000), Administrative Units 1:250 000 (VG250) and Geographical Names 1:250 000 / 1:1 000 000 (GN250/1000) – are amalgamated. According to a new data model developed for geographical names information, the respective data was converted to a single database called Geographical Names of Germany (GN-DE). Through unique identifiers the names’ entries of the GN-DE are linked unambiguously to all databases and products mentioned above. By that GN-DE provides the unique geographical names source for all BKG products and naturally for the (Gazetteer-) web service. The administration and maintenance tasks of the GN-DE are conducted in Frankfurt am Main, whereas the (Gazetteer-) web service is facilitated through the National Geodata Centre at BKG in Leipzig.