



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General

29 June 2007

Original: English

Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

New York, 21 - 30 August 2007

Item 12 (d) of the provisional agenda*

Toponymic data files:

Automated data-processing systems

State catalogue of geographical names of the Russian Federation

Submitted by the Russian Federation**

* E/CONF.98/1.

** Prepared by the Federal Agency for Geodesy and Cartography (Roscartography), Russian Federation.

State Catalogue of Geographical Names of Russian Federation

Summary

The main objectives of the development of the State Catalogue are the following:

- provide a uniform and consistent use of geographical names;
- preserve geographical names as a part of historical and cultural heritage of the peoples in Russia;
- meet needs of the state authorities, local administrations, agencies, mass media and private persons in officially adopted geographical names.

The State Catalogue of Geographical Names is a constantly updated computer database of geographical names and accompanying information.

The standardized geographical names registered in the Catalogue are mandatory for use in legal documents, official correspondence, on maps, in publications and mass media.

The paper describes a structure of the Catalogue, its development stages and maintenance. By July 1, 2007, the names of 180,000 objects of 66 subjects of Russia were processed and registered in the database. The population of the database with the names in volume of 1:100,00 scale map shall be completed by 2010. Some examples of how the Catalogue serves practical purposes are given. Perspectives of providing information services to users are mentioned. It is emphasized that together with a population of the database with geographical names and related information, the task of providing an access to the Catalogue to a wide range of users is also being pursued.

The State Catalogue of Geographical Names is developed in the Russian Federation with a view to:

- provide a uniform and consistent use of geographical names;
- preserve geographical names as a part of historical and cultural heritage of the peoples in Russia;
- meet needs of the state authorities, local administrations, agencies, mass media and private persons in officially adopted geographical names.

A development of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names was proclaimed by the Federal Law “On the names of geographical objects” adopted in 1997, and detailed in subsequent resolutions of the Government of Russia.

The Catalogue is developed, maintained and updated by the Federal Agency of Geodesy and Cartography that is a department of the State Ministry of Transportation. This work is carried in cooperation with other federal agencies, local administrations, public and other organizations.

The State Catalogue of Geographical Names is a constantly updated computer database of geographical names and accompanying information.

The State Catalogue shall comprise the names of geographical objects of the Russian Federation, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation and names of geographical objects discovered or mapped by the Russian explorers in the open sea and Antarctica which fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal Law “On the names of geographical objects”. Names of the urban objects are not input in the Catalogue since they are not regulated by the State Law. Names that were assigned with infringements of the appropriate laws of the Russian Federation are not included in the Catalogue either.

The State Catalogue of Geographical Names is developed in the official language of the Russian Federation (the Russian language.)

The standardized geographical names registered in the Catalogue are mandatory for use in legal documents, official correspondence, on maps, in publications and mass media.

The State Catalogue is a part of the Federal Cartographic and Geodetic Fund. Its development is funded by the Federal Budget.

The national needs in geographical names can be met by registering in the Catalogue the names taken from the state topographic map at scale 1:100 000. Smaller objects are not input in the Catalogue since they are treated by local authorities and depart-

ments. The State Catalogue in the volume of the 1:100 000 map will comprise about 800 000 geographical names and accompanying information.

The State Catalogue uses the computer retrieval system to register, store, update geographical names, process and output them by queries of the users authorized in the Catalogue.

The State Catalogue's database includes up to 30 fields that are split into basic and complementary. The basic fields are those needed to register and unambiguously identify geographical objects and their names when searching for appropriate information in the database:

- geographical name in a standardized Russian spelling together with a source it is taken from and date;
- generic term together with a source it is taken from and date;
- current status of an object (exists or not);
- for populated places – their rank (administrative center, etc.);
- geographical and administrative references of the objects together with their sources and dates (subject of the Russian Federation, administrative unit where an object locates); For the objects on the continental shelf, exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation and objects discovered or mapped by the Russian explorers in the open sea and Antarctica, a name of a geographic region where a given object locates is provided;
- geo coordinates (latitude and longitude) to a minute: of the mouth – for rivers, streams, brooks; of administrative center – for administrative units;
- sheet of the topographic map at 1:100,000 scale on which an object is charted;
- reference to other (major) objects which are already registered in the Catalogue.

Registration numbers are assigned to the names of the objects on the territory of the Russian Federation which are input in the State Catalogue. The names of the objects on the continental shelf, exclusive economic zone of the Russian Federation and geographical objects discovered or mapped by the Russian explorers in the open sea and Antarctica are assigned identification numbers.

The following fields are complementary in the database since they bear information that details and specifies the basic knowledge of an object and its name:

- geographical name(s) other than standardized (alternative names) along with the sources they are taken from and date;
- alternative generic terms related to a given object with the sources and dates;
- comments (history of naming, etymology, etc.).

The development of the State Catalogue comprises collection of data, their standardization, verification, registration, input in the database and storage.

Since the development of the geographical names database for the territory of Russia is a very labor-consuming and long-term process it was split into several stages.

The first stage includes input of the names from the files containing information about major geo objects and accompanying information accumulated in the Central Geodesy, Air Survey and Cartography Research Institute (CNIIGAiK) over several dozens of years. At the second stage the database shall be populated with the geographical names taken from the map at scale 1: 100 000.

The first stage began in 2002 and is being completed now. In 2006, the second stage of the database development started. It will include input of the names taken from the sheets of the topographic map at scale 1: 100,000. This work shall be completed by 2010. By July 1, 2007, the names of 180,000 objects of 67 subjects of Russia were processed and registered in the database.

The following data sources were used to populate the State Catalogue: normative legal documents of the Russian Federation and its subjects, All-Russian Classifier of administrative units, reference-books of administrative division of the subjects of the Russian Federation, General Census of Population, gazetteers, cartographic and other publications.

Unified registration forms (appendix 1 and 2) are used to gather and register geographical names. The procedure of geographical data registration, input, verification and storage is determined in the specification to the Catalogue's retrieval system.

The Catalogue is a constantly updateable information resource. The task of its keeping up-to-date is a part of the Catalogue's general maintenance. The Catalogue's development also includes input of newly named objects, renamed objects, changes of generic terms, verification of objects' current status, changes in the administrative division, and any other information on the objects and their names found after their registration in the database. The new input data are accompanied with the sources they are taken from and dates. The procedure of making changes in the Catalogue and its updating is determined by the specification to the retrieval system as well.

After processing of the data available in the Catalogue, the following information and documents can be output to the user:

- standardized geographical name of an object, its generic term, administrative status (for populated places), administrative unit where an object locates, geo coor-

dinates, number of 1:100,000 map sheet, versions of the name and a generic term of an object;

- lists of geographical names of the objects located in the Russian Federation or any of its subjects;
- alphabetical lists of geographical names sorted by the generic terms of the objects located in the Russian Federation or any of its subjects;
- alphabetical lists of the objects in the Russian Federation or any of its subjects which do not exist any longer;
- lists of the objects bearing the same name;
- alphabetical lists of newly named objects in the Russian Federation or any of its subjects;
- lists of renamed geographical objects in the Russian Federation or any of its subjects arranged in the alphabetical order of their new or former names.

The information available in the Catalogue of Geographical Names is already used to solve some practical tasks:

- examine proposals on naming and renaming of geographical objects;
- check spelling of geographical names in the lists of administrative units and gazetteers prepared for publication in the subjects of the Russian Federation;
- check spelling of geographical names in the official documentation;
- respond to queries coming from organizations and general public;
- monitor official changes in geographical names (since 2006 an electronic bulletin is published on 6 months basis to be distributed to federal legislative and executive bodies and cartographic organizations).

Information on the development of the State Catalogue of Geographical Names is available on the site of the Federal Agency of Geodesy and Cartography: <http://www.roskart.gov.ru>. It is planned to develop a standalone site and put lists of geographical names of the RF subjects there.

Before providing geographical names to the users and uploading them on the site, lists of the names will be sent to the subjects of the Russian Federation to be agreed. In April 2006, lists of the names of Nizhegorodskaya and Lipetskaya regions were recorded on a CD and sent to the administrative authorities of these regions.

A technology is now being developed that will allow providing databases of geographical names for required regions at user's request. The databases will be accompanied with the appropriate software so that the user could search needed information. It is also planned to provide an access to the Catalogue via the Internet.

So, simultaneously with populating the Catalogue's database of geographical names, a work is carried out to provide an access to it to a wide range of users.

Appendix 1

State Catalogue of Geographical Names of Russia (Section: geographical objects on the territory of Russian Federation)			
REGISTRATION FORM FOR GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES			
1. Basic information:			
(01) Standardized name			
(02) Source of standardized name			
(03) Date of name approval			
(04) Generic term		(05) Current availability of geo object	
(06) Source of generic term			
(07) Date of generic term approval		(08) Admin. status (for popul. places)	
Administrative and geographical reference			
(09) Name of subject of Russian Federation			
(10) Name of administrative district			
Geographical coordinates:			
	(11) Latitude	(12) Longitude	
(13) Geo reference (in relation to other geo features)			
2. Complementary information:			
(14) Name variant	(15) Source of name variant	(16) Date of name variant occurrence	(17) Date - when name was officially changed
(18) Generic term variant	(19) Source of generic term variant		(20) Date - when generic term occurred
(21) Notes			

Filled by _____
(Signature)Date _____
(dd/mm/yy)Verified by _____
(Signature)Date _____
(dd/mm/yy)

Appendix 2

State Catalogue of Geographical Names of Russia (Section: geographical objects in continental shelf and exclusive economic zone of Russian Federation, objects discovered or mapped by Russian explorers in open sea and Antarctica)			
REGISTRATION FORM FOR GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES			
1. Basic information:			
(01) Standardized name			
(02) Source of standardized name			
(03) Date of name approval			
(04) Generic term		(05) Current availability of geo object	
(06) Source of generic term			
(07) Date of generic term approval			
(09) Name of geo region	Geo reference of object:		
Geographical coordinates: of object	(10) Latitude	(11) Longitude	
(12) Geo reference in relation to other geo features			
2. Complementary information::			
(14) Name variant	(15) Source of name variant	(16) Date of name variant occurrence	(17) Date - when name was officially changed
(18) Generic term variant	(19) Source of generic term variant		(20) Date - when generic term occurred
(21) Notes			

Filled by _____
(Signature)Date _____
(dd/mm/yy)Verified by _____
(Signature)Date _____
(dd/mm/yy)