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Office treatment of names

**Local Autonomy and Standardization of Geographical Names:
Institutional and Technological Advances**

Submitted by the Republic of Korea**

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Local Autonomy and Standardization of Geographical Names: Institutional and Technological Advances¹

SUMMARY

National standardization of geographical names can be successfully implemented with supports from local governmental agencies. The cooperative governance of national and local authorities facilitates the standardization from local authorities' participation and knowledge communication of geographical names. The National Geographic Information Institute (NGII), the government agency of the Republic of Korea, has maintained the management system of geographical names to collect, preserve, and manage geographical names. While the system used to be open to NGII's authorized national officials, the institute recently underwent a renovation and gave the authority to the persons in charge of geographical names in the local government since local managers have dealt with diverse naming issues and demands from the local society. Authorized personnel of geographical names are able to register the suggested changes, track the changes, share information, and review decision processes. In addition to the introduction of technology the NGII hosted seminars for local personnel in charge of geographical names in order to introduce the new system, develop a protocol, and to establish common understanding for the importance of geographical names and their standardization.

The new management system of geographical names

The new management system of geographical names has been renovated to accommodate new technological development and facilitate cooperation between national agencies and local governments. Several technological advances were introduced and achieved (figure 1). First, the new system provides a function to search diverse attributes of place names. Users are able to search geographical names by their spelling, classifications, and location. Second, it is optimized to track the changes of geographical names. All events on the changes of geographical names are recorded and the reasons for their changes are included and reviewed in the system as well. Third, the system provides accurate geographical coordinates with the help of the integrated GIS system. The user-friendly GIS system enables users to find and correct geographical coordinates of place names. Fourth, the system is designed to integrate various etymologies and stories related to place names. Considering the growing interest in cultural and historical aspects of place names, the system would promote the use of place names for users who are interested in place names' stories.

Promoting cooperation: National and local agencies

With the introduction to the new system, NGII hosted seminars with local authorities to discuss issues on geographical names, and to increase awareness and develop protocol between national, regional, and local

¹ This working paper pertains to the UNCSGN resolutions I/4 (National standardization), and VII/5 (National standardization based on local usage) and VI/9(Recognition of national standardization).

agencies. The seminars were organized to include various relevant topics, such as the emphasis on key rules of naming (e.g., local people’s preferences for names), concern over the commercialization of place names (e.g., public nature of geographical names), national standardization and international cooperation (e.g., national and international rules for names inspired by historical figures) as well as the introduction of manuals for the new management system of geographical names. NGII will maintain and strengthen the cooperation between NGII, the national map agency, and local authorities.

Figure 1. Geographical Names Management System in the Republic of Korea

