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National standardization

**Good place-name practice – a tutorial for place-name
standardization**

Submitted by Sweden**

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In 2001 the Swedish Place-Names Council compiled and published a place-name standardization tutorial, *God ortnamnsed Ortnamnsrådets handledning i namnvård*. The tutorial was aimed for people involved in place-name planning at governmental authorities, at local authorities, at the Lantmäteriet (the Swedish Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authority), and at the Church of Sweden. The main purpose was to give guidance on how to combine the need for place names that easily identify and locate places with the important function that names have as guardians of the cultural heritage and as transmitters of information about a bygone era.

Fifteen years have passed since the first edition of the guide and several significant changes have been made concerning official name standardization in Sweden since 2001. The legislation that forms the basis for today's place name standardization was revised in 2013 and supplemented by, among other things, an important addition on Meänkieli place names. The users and readers of the tutorial have asked for a new, revised edition, and last spring a new, revised version of the tutorial was published. The core is still the same: According to the Historic Environment Act (Sw. *Kulturmiljölagen*) we need to observe good place-name practice in central and local government activities in order to preserve and retain our place names. This means that we should not to change established place names without solid incentives to do so, and to have the spelling of place names conform to established linguistic or onomastic rules. Names that are approved by *Lantmäteriet* must be used in their approved form also in other contexts.

The new edition consists of 10 chapters.

The Introduction and background chapter presents the Historic Environment Act as well as the Place Names Council, who is the initiator of the guide. The Place Names Council is an advisory body that seeks to apply good place name practice. The present members represent Lantmäteriet (The Chair), The Institute for language and folklore, The Swedish national heritage board, The Sami parliament of Sweden, The Swedish association of local authorities and regions, The Swedish transport administration, and the universities. Those responsible for the changes and additions in the new, revised edition are the former place name consultant Leif Nilsson (The Institute of Language and Folklore), Professor Staffan Nyström (Uppsala University), and Annette Torenshjöö (head of the Department of Onomastic in Uppsala at the Institute of Language and Folklore). Muriel Bjureberg (Lantmäteriet) was in charge of editorial work and graphic design.

The second chapter discusses the roles and functions that place names have, through a discussion of names in relation to place, of names functioning as a tool to make interaction more efficient and to help us localize specific places, of place names as transmitting affect, catching ideologies and creating social togetherness, and of place names as historical sources. The third chapter discusses the notion *God ortnamnsed* (Good place-name practice). In this chapter, the concept of *hävvd* (Eng. 'tradition') as well as the notion of established names and accepted rules for language correctness are explained through illustrative case studies. The purpose is to show in more detail how the concept of good place name practice should be interpreted and applied.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss governmental name planning and municipality name planning, respectively, and what kind of questions fall under whose jurisdiction. These chapters contain new sections on *parishes* and *districts*. The new sections are motivated by changes in the

administrative division in Sweden in 2016, where new registry units were introduced for the population registration.

In chapter 6 minority issues are discussed. Sweden has five national minority languages. Three of these are called territorial minority languages, and these languages are reflected also in place names. In recent years extensive work has been done to improve the rendering of e.g. the Sámi place names.

The seventh chapter discusses the use of place names for commercial purposes. The tutorial advises against this use, on the basis of UNCSGN resolution X/4.

The eighth chapter deals with the use of geographical names to be used to divide Sweden into different administrative areas. In the subchapters the authors discuss the notions counties and regions, municipalities, statistical localities, parishes, and districts.

The ninth chapter is about international cooperation in place name standardization and name research, and the tenth chapter gives practical and pragmatic linguistic advice on how to handle geographical names in writing, in accordance with prevailing rules of grammar.

We use place names every day to identify and locate places effortlessly, and society would not work if we did not have place names for this important task. At the same time the place names we use give us information about the history and society at present. The tutorial presented above is compiled with the mission to help those who work with the management of the place names to maintain good place name practice.