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A new map of German landscapes
at 1 : 1 million scale

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A new map of German landscapes at 1 : 1 million scale

One of the activities of the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (Ständiger Ausschuß für Geographische Namen, StAGN) was focussed on the edition of a list of landscape names and their correct localisation on a map at 1 : 1 million scale, shown by an exact boundary line. This allows to define the correct area of a named landscape.

Precursors of this map were already existing: In the former GDR the map "Regionale Geographische Namen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik" ¹⁾ had been published in 1982 at a scale of ca. 1 : 800 000, which was followed in 1985 by the publication of the map "Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1 : 1 000 000 - Landschaften; Namen und Abgrenzungen (2. Ausgabe 1982)" ²⁾. In both of those two maps all landscapes ended exactly at the political border, often cutting landscapes into two unequal parts, not considering that landscapes of natural or historical origin are independent of to-day's borderlines. Thus, both maps did not fit exactly at the former inner-German borderline. There was a lot to do to adapt the boundary lines in the area along the former inner-German borderline, independent of the differing scales of both maps.

There were also different methods used to select among the landscapes in both former parts of Germany. Recognizing some mistakes in Eastern Germany's map it was necessary to examine all landscape boundaries. Some changes in boundaries were made, but most landscapes were left as they were, with the exception of those ones that touched each other. They were shown in the western version as two parallel lines, but in the eastern version just as one line. In the new landscape map of 1994, all landscape boundaries are shown in the western type with two parallel boundary lines.

¹⁾ Regional Geographic Names of the German Democratic Republic

²⁾ Federal Republic of Germany 1 : 1 000 000 - Landscapes: Names and their Boundaries (2nd edition 1982)

The kind of the boundary line gives information about the character of the landscape type, for instance a more natural landscape type or, on the other hand, a more historically defined landscape area. Furthermore, interrogation marks indicate where landscape boundaries are not sure. The line style also shows parts of greater landscapes, which have their own names. These parts are separated by dashed lines.

The new map contains 692 named and delimited landscapes including a list of 764 names, for several landscapes have two names. Those names which were less usual are shown in the annexed list of landscape names in brackets and refer to the main name, which is also the name used in the map. However, there are sometimes names of landscapes which were used really equally. Then it was necessary to claim one of the names to be the prominent one (e.g. Elbsandsteingebirge is given preference over Sächsische Schweiz).

510 geographic regions are situated in the western part, 182 in the eastern part of the Federal Republic of Germany. Geographic regions along the former inner-German boundary and along the boundary of former Berlin (West) are counted to the western part.

From 72 additional names 51 are located in the western part and 21 in the eastern part of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The names of landscapes normally follow the official orthography of the German language. There are some exceptions which were handled as proper names; the proper name has priority over the orthographic name (e.g. Thüringer Wald, but as an exception: Pfälzerwald).

The German title of the map attached to this paper is: "Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1 : 1 000 000, Landschaften: Namen und Abgrenzungen, 2nd edition 1994. It is published by the Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie (IfAG), Frankfurt am Main.