

**Twenty-third Session
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**Item 16 of the Provisional Agenda:
Activities relating to the Working Group on the
Promotion of Indigenous and Minority Group Names**

Supplementary Field Collection of Saami Names in Finland

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Supplementary Field Collection of Saami Names in Finland

According to the agreements within the administration the responsibility of national mapping in the northernmost Finland was passed from the Finnish Defence Forces to the National Land Survey (NLS) in 2003. The area in question – 47.500 km² – is one-seventh of the Finnish territory.

The NLS is responsible for the National Topographic Data System, the core of which, the Topographic Database, comprises the most detailed and up-to-date general topographic information of Finland. The extension of the Topographic Database to the northernmost Lapland by 2007 is one of the most important national surveying and mapping objectives at the moment.

The project involves, among other tasks, a systematic supplementary collection of Finnish and Saami place names in the area. The three Saami languages spoken in Finland are North Saami (about 1700 speakers), Inari Saami (about 300 speakers) and Skolt Saami (about 300 speakers). North Saami is spoken in Enontekiö, Inari, Sodankylä and Utsjoki municipalities, Inari and Skolt Saami only in Inari municipality, and Inari Saami only in Finland.

The NLS Lapland District Survey Office carries out the supplementary field collection of place names. The names experts of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland check all collected Finnish and Saami names together with the existing names data from the period before 2003. The accepted names are included in the Topographic Database as well as the NLS's Geographic Names Register, and will be represented on national topographic maps to be published during and upon the completion of the project. In Saami areas, on national topographic maps, the possible Finnish name is always rendered first (on top), followed by possible North Saami, Inari Saami and Skolt Saami names – in this particular order. In Inari there are places that carry a name in up to four languages.

The existing names data from the area, prior to the project, include about 12,000 Finnish, 4,600 North Saami, 3,800 Inari Saami and 150 Skolt Saami names. The increase of the amounts, upon completion, are estimated roughly as: Finnish names 40 %, North Saami names 100 % and Inari Saami names 15 %.

