

# Content of the discussion forum of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN


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## 1. Discussion forum

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers](#) / [Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN](#)

# Discussion forum

 Tools ▾

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified on Dec 18, 2012

Within the 10th UNCSGN (conference and side events) three new tasks/issues have been proposed to be added to the "Scope of work" and to the "Work plan" of the WG TDFG respectively:

**Forum 1 - volunteered geographic information (VGI)/crowd-sourcing**

**Forum 2 - definitions for gazetteers and data types**

**Forum 3 - general feature types/categories**

This discussion forum shall be utilized to commence investigations on these three issues mentioned before within the WG TDFG.

Therefore,three separate Wiki "rooms" / pages for these specific topics have been created and initial documents were uploaded to it.

Registered members will be able to start to comment on the initial documents and extend the content of the Wiki "rooms" / pages respectively.

It is obvious that tackling these new and quite complex issues needs a strong support and contributions by the WG members. Volunteers from the WG are most welcome to provide content and initial documents, besides the C.P.s submitted within the 10<sup>th</sup> UNCSGN. If WG members or other UNGEGN experts are interested in contributing to these issues, please contact the convener of the WG.





### **Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

Convener of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN  
email: [pier-giorgio.zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de](mailto:pier-giorgio.zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de)

[Tjeerd Tichelaar](#) likes this

No labels

## 4 Child Pages

-  [Forum 1 - Volunteered geographic information and crowd-sourcing](#)
-  [Forum 2 - definitions for gazetteers and data types](#)
-  [Forum 3 - General feature types and categories](#)
-  [Getting started](#)

## 1.1. Forum 1 - Volunteered geographic information and crowd-sourcing

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers](#) / [Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN](#) / [Discussion forum](#)

# Forum 1 - Volunteered geographic information and crowd-sourcing

⚙ Tools ▾

🗄 Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified on [Aug 08, 2014](#)

As our methods of accessing geographical information change and public interaction with such data becomes more dynamic, national mapping agencies and place-name organisations are looking to take advantage of the willingness of the local population to provide information on location and associated attributes (= Volunteered Geographic Information). The principal identifier of a location is its name and it is with this particular attribute that experts of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) are concerned.

Experts from several countries have related their experiences in collecting and utilising crowd-sourced geographical names data (see supporting documentation posted on this forum) and it is clear that there is no single established approach. For example in Sweden, the National Land Survey of Sweden – Lantmäteriet - has turned to crowd-sourcing as a new method of toponymic field collection. Using a specifically-designed mobile phone application, the public was asked to return names data over the city of Gävle which had been chosen as a pilot area. Some interesting initial findings were revealed in a paper "New method of field collection of Place-Names" [*see attachment 'Torensjo\_Background+information+on+crowd-sourcing'*]. In Great Britain, Ordnance Survey has been experimenting with several different means of making use of crowd-sourced names information. Collaboration with the English Project's Location Lingo scheme involved the use of a website to encourage public provision of unofficial or colloquial names; a separate initiative has been developed with the UK coastguard focussing on the collection of locally-used coastal names; and a further project using web-harvesting to extract information from websites through text analysis has also been investigated. Work is ongoing.

In order to assess the effectiveness and value of collecting names using volunteered geographic information, it would be useful to learn of experiences in other countries involved in such methods of geographical names collection.

The following [sub-sites](#) have been created within this forum in order to be able to monitor and streamline the discussions properly:

### F1.1 General discussion

### F1.2 Reliability

The discussions will be monitored and streamlined by two co-moderators.

### Moderation of Forum 1:

#### Ms Annette Torensjö (Sweden)

Initial papers do help to commence investigations within the WG TDFG. Some of them are uploaded to this side and can be commented.

File	Modified ^
›  120806_GGIM_Future Trends Background Document.pdf Background Document Prepared by Ordnance Survey, Great Britain on behalf of UN-GGIM	Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu

<p>&gt; <a href="#">Torensjo_Background information on crowd-sourcing.pdf</a> Short introduction to be added</p>	<p>Nov 22, 2012 by <a href="#">Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu</a></p>
<p>&gt; <a href="#">Presentation_Torensjo_10th UNCSGN.pdf</a> Short introduction to be added</p>	<p>Nov 22, 2012 by <a href="#">Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu</a></p>
<p>&gt; <a href="#">E_Conf.101_CRP16_Summary paper of VGI for UNGEGN.pdf</a> This Conference paper outlines the results of a six-week Churchill Fellowship undertaken by Laura Kostanski to study methods for integrating crowd-sourced top...</p>	<p>Nov 22, 2012 by <a href="#">Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu</a></p>
<p>&gt; <a href="#">NL_Crowdsourcing_online.pdf</a> UN-SPIDER-Newsletter with information on crowdsourcing mapping for disasters, October 2012</p>	<p>Nov 22, 2012 by <a href="#">Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu</a></p>

[Download All](#)

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## 2 Child Pages


- [F1.1 General discussion](#)
- [F1.2 Reliability](#)

### [1.1.1.](#) F1.1 General discussion

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 1 - Volunteered geographic information and crowd-sourcing](#)

## F1.1 General discussion

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified on Aug 08, 2014

 Tools ▾

Within this forum it shall be discussed how effective and valuable the collection of names data using volunteered geographic information currently is.

The following questions are to be discussed:

**F1.1-Q1: How are the crowd-sourced data being collected and processed in your institution/organization?**


**F1.1-Q2: How willing is the public to be involved in such a project and how is data provision encouraged?**


**F1.1-Q3: How can we as national place-names authorities "control" the information we get through this new method of field collection and how can we use it in our official maps?**

No labels

### 3 Child Pages

 F1.1-Q1: How are the crowd-sourced data being collected and processed in your institution/organization?

 F1.1-Q2: How willing is the public to be involved in such a project and how is data provision encouraged?

 F1.1-Q3: How can we as national place-names authorities "control" the information we get through this new method of field collection and how can we use it in our official maps?

### [1.1.1.1.](#) F1.1-Q1: How are the crowd-sourced data being collected and processed on your institution/organization?

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / F1.1 General discussion](#)

## F1.1-Q1: How are the crowd-sourced data being collected and processed in your institution/organization?

Tools ▾

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified on [Dec 13, 2012](#)

BKG Germany is currently starting actions to develop and evaluate methods on how to deal with VGI and crowd-sourced information. It has become obvious that the private sector and the VGI community will continue to have a significant role to play in providing the technologies and information required to maximise the opportunities available. I share GGIM's vision that VGI and crowd-sourcing "[...] are likely to provide valuable and in many cases unique elements of geospatial information and the technologies and services required to maximise it, in addition to offering a growing understanding of the end-user base for geospatial information."

No labels

### 8 Comments



#### **Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

F1.1-Q1: As the convenor of the WG TDFG I am planning to arrange a WG TDFG meeting in 2013 on the occasion of the ICC in Dresden. Within a WG TDFG meeting we might focus on any mid-term findings and outcomes related to specific topics. One of these topics could be "VGI and crowd-sourcing". The methods on how crowd-sourced data is being collected and processed in institutions/organizations could be an interesting agenda item?

• [Eman Oriebby](#) likes this • [Nov 22, 2012](#)



#### **Annette Torensjö**

In Sweden Lantmäteriet is the national place-name authority and as such we have started a work to develop and improve methods of collecting place-names. We have tested a method of crowd-sourcing with help of a cellphone-app and the result was gratifying - but there are still work to be done to evaluate the method. We are currently discussing how to incorporate crowd-sourced place-names in our national place-names register and at the same time guarantee quality and good place-name practice. This forum shall encourage everyone to take part in this discussion and I have hopes that it will be alert.

• [Dec 18, 2012](#)



#### **Caroline Burgess**

A recent project to collect unofficial or colloquial names used by the general public in the UK was led by the English Project with Ordnance Survey involvement. The project involved the launch of a web site to collect vernacular names for a period of two weeks with active promotion, followed by a period of several months to continue collecting names. The experiment was promoted by the *Daily Telegraph*, a national newspaper, including on their web site, and also through interviews with about 20 local radio stations, and indirectly through local papers when they picked-up on the story. OS has also been looking at web-harvesting names data, and also developing initiatives with professional and expert or amateur groups where either shared mutual interests or reciprocal benefits are perceived to exist. At the present time this involves a joint project with the UK coastguard focussing on the collection of locally-used coastal names.

• [Feb 20, 2013](#)



### **Douglas R. Caldwell**

The US Geological Survey's National Map Corps has been investigating crowdsourcing.

National Map Corps Home Page

<https://my.usgs.gov/confluence/display/nationalmapcorps/Home>

Volunteer Map Data Collection at the USGS

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2011/3103/FS11-3103.pdf>

They have been prototyping facilities data collection (with names) in Colorado.

OpenStreetMap Collaborative Prototype, Phase One

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2011/1136/pdf/OF11-1136.pdf>

Structures data collection for The National Map using volunteered geographic information

<http://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ofr20121209>

Have also found Dr. Kostanski's report 'To Study Methods for Recording Unofficial Place Names into Comprehensive Data Sets for Improved Knowledge Transfer' to be quite helpful.

[http://www.churchilltrust.com.au/site\\_media/fellows/2011\\_Kostanski\\_Laura.pdf](http://www.churchilltrust.com.au/site_media/fellows/2011_Kostanski_Laura.pdf)

Would be very interested in details from others work ... formal publications or informal publications would be very valuable.

• Mar 21, 2013



### **Annette Torensjö**

Thank you for your input to the discussion. I am sorry to say that there is not much written concerning this topic from a Place-Names authorities point of view. Lantmäteriet is for the moment working on a handbook with instructions for municipalities and how they should register unofficial Place-Names in our geographical database. We are at this time taking care of the crowd-sourced Place-Names in our regular work with decision making. We are also discussing how we are going to use the benefits of crowd-sourcing in a suitable way and for the moment our idea is to do it with help of our webservice "Mapsearch and Place-Names" <http://kso.lantmateriet.se/kartsok/kos/index.html>

• Mar 22, 2013



### **Teemu Leskinen**

Because the role of the NLS Finland is to maintain and publish only authoritative (names) data, the standardisation process would be the issue. This concerns both the collecting process and, especially, further processing and verification of the crowd-sourced data. We do have public www-channels for giving feedback on any information on our topographic maps, including place names, but for the present the NLS has been reserved concerning actual and active place names VGI projects. So we are very interested to learn about plans and experiences of other similar organisations on how to deal with normalising the collecting processes and standardising the crowd-sourced data itself.



At the moment the NLS Geographic Names Register (GNR) includes some 800 000 Finnish, Swedish and Saami names. In addition, the Names Archive (manual archive) of the Institute for the Languages of Finland comprises close to three million relevant records of standardised traditional place names, based on field collections (= controlled growd-sourcing...) in different times during the 1900s and 2000s . There have been plans to start supplementing the GNR data contents by using the Institute's collections. Because resources for re-checking the *current* use of the names are very limited, a web-based tool and VGI process for this purpose might be an option. There have also been thoughts on some restricted place names VGI projects, with an aim to result in a reasonable amount of relevant data, something like collecting names of springs.

• May 27, 2013



### Nivo Ratovoarison

Madagascar is a large country where some migrating people attracted by new site of mining resources or for some other reasons tend to create isolated villages without any infrastructure or communication at all. These villages are not yet figuring on the maps.

The national mapping institute, FTM, can't by itself make the update so a project of collaboration with the army was studied some months ago, based on the fact that groups of militaries are spread sent everywhere in the country to those places frequently subject of brigand attacks to maintain peace. They therefore could collect data (place name, location and number of population, ...), after a formation by the FTM .

Unfortunately, the project is still in standby after some discussion however, we (the FTM) are convinced that it is the best opportunity to fill the blank on the maps.

So, I will continue to participate in the other questions with the hypothesis that the project will be carried out.

• May 30, 2013



### Naima Friha

In Tunisia, the Centre National de Cartographie et de Télédétection (CNCT) / Minsity of defense became since 2009 the national mapping producer and supplier. For the production of its maps, the place names collection mainly rely on the field collection insured by CNCT' surveyors. Generally the surveyors refer to the municipality (the Ministry of interior , responsible of names for populated places) of the surveyed area to get the place names' data. For the rest, the surveyors refer to the inhabitants of the area to collect names.

Because of the lack of scrutiny and official processing tools to check the consistency of the data in the CNCT, the surveyors remain the source fiable of the data. To be as accurate as possible in their collection, two persons are consulted about the same name. For some cases, a third person is asked for check.

In addition to the data collected for mapping, there are other projects where "volunteers" are involved. For example, the CNCT is building a national database of geolocation for the tracking fleet (in progress) . In this project, several teams of technicians NCTC have collected all data related to roads for the whole country, including names . The road names are taken directly from the roads and streets ` panels. When they are not available, the general public remains the last resort. But although this method of crowd -sourcing data is performed by "professional groups" , the lack of predefined guidelines for the collection of data, of clear rules and methods to control the quality of the returned data remain the cause of the data' reliability . We hope that such problems will be solved by the national commission of toponymy created in February 2013.


• Oct 14, 2013

- 1.1.1.1. F1.1-Q2: How willing is the public to be involved in such a project and how is data provision encouraged?
- 1.1.1.2. F1.1-Q3: How can we as national place-names authorities "control" the information we get through this new method of field collection and how can we use it in our official maps?

## [1.1.2.](#) F1.2 Reliability

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 1 - Volunteered geographic information and crowd-sourcing](#)

# F1.2 Reliability

 Tools ▾

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified on Aug 08, 2014

Within this sub-site the reliability issues of using VGI and crowd-sourced data in authoritative products and services shall be discussed.

The following questions are to be discussed:

**F1.2-Q1: Is the information received considered to be reliable and what are the main methods of quality control?**

**F1.2-Q2: What types of problems does this VGI data pose to your organisation?**

**F1.2-Q3: Have you developed any rules for using it?**

No labels

## 3 Child Pages

 [F1.2-Q1: Is the information received considered to be reliable and what are the main methods of quality control?](#)

 [F1.2-Q2: What types of problems does this VGI data pose to your organisation?](#)

 [F1.2-Q3: Have you developed any rules for using it?](#)

## 1 Comment



**Caroline Burgess**

As Moderator for this section, I should like to summarise the contributions so far to the deliberations about the reliability of crowd-sourced data.

The degree of reliability, sub-section1.2-Q1, has generated the most (only) discussion so far. Contributors acknowledge that the reliability of the data naturally depends on the source of the information and the collecting body having a disciplined approach to the analysis of the returned information. The advantages of having access to a large bank of freely-provided data need to be weighed up against the problems of managing so much information and ensuring its quality.

There are clearly some interesting projects in place out there and I would encourage you all to continue to contribute.

• [Jun 28, 2013](#)

## F1.2-Q1: Is the information received considered to be reliable and what are the main methods of quality control?

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified by [Caroline Burgess](#) on Dec 13, 2012

To start this discussion perhaps I can raise the point that the degree of reliability must surely depend on to the method of crowd-sourcing and the audience targeted. For example in the UK, when Ordnance Survey worked with the English Project (see F.1.1-Q2) to collect vernacular names from the general public, the data returned had to be very carefully scrutinised, despite clear rules having been laid down as to which informal names could be submitted. Some of the resulting names turned out to be too ephemeral, and some were considered too offensive for publication. It is difficult to quality-check such names, so Ordnance Survey and the English Project tended to consider names only where they had been submitted by 3 separate participants. Any such names were even then only collected as unofficial forms. A much more reliable and promising method of collection appears to be crowd-sourcing from professional groups, by eg collecting names information from the Ramblers' Association and the UK Coastguard. Both of these groups are currently being approached by Ordnance Survey.

No labels

### 6 Comments



#### **Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

Crowd-sourcing from professional groups sounds promising. Input could be retrieved from conservation associations and historical or cultural organisations, too. However, for establishing such cooperations personnel resources have to be allocated by the collecting body (very likely national mapping and cadastral agencies) and a good communication strategy has to developed comprising rules for procedures and quality checks.

• Dec 14, 2012



#### **Caroline Burgess**

This is true, but there are advantages for the collecting body which is given access to a large bank of names data which otherwise may be hard to gather. And often it will be given for free, as it could be said that professional groups had an interest in seeing their data collected for wider dissemination. A set of guidelines established before the collection takes place would help to ensure a level of quality was achieved.

• Feb 20, 2013



#### **Douglas R. Caldwell**

Caroline ... I would be interested in learning more about the verification process in the English Project. Who did the verification? Was it done by the 'crowd' or OS professionals? How much effort was it? Was there an estimate of the time required for each contribution? How much total time was involved. Would be interested in this type of information from others as well.

I agree that crowdsourcing can open up large resources that have previously been unavailable. However, as noted earlier, the potential issue with this approach is that crowdsourcing quality control by professionals requires organizational resources and these can be 'overwhelmed' given a significant number of contributions. This can lead to contributor dissatisfaction if they feel their work is not making a difference or being used. It is very important for folks to learn about 'best practices' for avoiding this problem.

See this article concerning the National Map Corps that is related to this topic.

The National Map Corps: The USGS' Volunteer Geographic Information Program Position Paper  
[http://www.ncgia.ucsb.edu/projects/vgi/docs/position/Bearden\\_paper.pdf](http://www.ncgia.ucsb.edu/projects/vgi/docs/position/Bearden_paper.pdf)

• Mar 22, 2013

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**Caroline Burgess**

You make a valid point, Doug. It is important to encourage participation by making the most of user-supplied data as far as possible. I would have to defer to my colleagues from Ordnance Survey to fill in the details about how the data were verified; there could be some valuable initial lessons to be learnt from their experiences.

• Mar 22, 2013

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**Nivo Ratovoarison**

Sorry for being so late!

In terms of the project (F1.1-Q1), it is intended that the FTM will provide data collection and GPS training to the militaries.

Added to the fact that these guys are serious, we can expect an interesting result.

In any case, the data are from an almost unknown area and let us affirm like Google that it is better than nothing at all!

The problem is that the brigade might last a long time and since there is no communication, the expected data will wait to come!

• May 30, 2013

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**Naima Friha**

There is no official processing and control quality tools to check the data consistency and reliability in national organisations, the surveyors remain the main source of a reliable data although despite their deployed efforts in collecting this data, discrepancies are sometimes recorded on the relevant produced documents (maps, atlases etc..).

It is interesting to know from this forum how the crowdsourcing technique is exploited in developed countries and to know from their experiences how to sensitize national organizations about the usefulness of crowd sourcing techniques especially when huge amounts of names need to be collected and stored in databases, how to deal with the collected data in parallel with standardization issues. The idea to involve the issue into the future tasks of the national commission of toponymy created in February 2013 (decree1299-2013: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/default.html>) should be developed and this method will for sure be adopted especially for building multi level toponymic databases.

• Oct 14, 2013

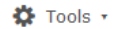
1.1.2.2. F1.2-Q2: What types of problems does this VGI data pose to your organisation?

1.1.2.3. F1.2-Q3: Have you developed any rules for using it?

## 1.2. Forum 2 – Definitions for gazetteers and data types

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers](#) / [Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN](#) / [Discussion forum](#)

### Forum 2 - definitions for gazetteers and data types



Created by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, last modified on Nov 28, 2012

During the first session of Technical Committee II (E/CONF.101/57 and Add.1) it was recommended that the WG TDFG may consider to commence investigations into defining appropriate definitions for gazetteers and data types as this is obviously an issue for the WG TDFG.

[...] *Within UNCSGN resolutions and UNGEGN recommendations and policies, and indeed within the wider research literature, there does not appear to be commonly accepted definitions for the terms 'official' and 'unofficial' as they relate to gazetteer data. Rather, there seems to be a proliferation of terminology used to define both the types of data which are incorporated into gazetteers, and the gazetteers themselves- ranging from official and authorised to unofficial and informal.*

*The need for the officially sanctioned gazetteers to be of a high quality in terms of accuracy and completeness of available data is increasing rapidly, and if we do not meet the needs of our communities, other unofficial providers will do so. We strongly encourage the member states of UNGEGN to commence the conversation on defining gazetteer and data types with the aim of developing robust definitions and increasing the relevance of the systems we currently maintain. There is potential to expand the scope of official data collection and name approval methods to allow for national gazetteers to incorporate both official and unofficial names which fulfil the information requirements of our communities. [E\_CONF.101\_57\_The Four Faces of Toponymic Gazetteers]*

The following [sub-sites](#) have been created within this forum in order to be able to monitor and streamline the discussions properly:

#### F2.1 Definition and content of gazetteers

#### F2.2 Differences between data types

The discussions will be monitored and streamlined by two co-moderators.

#### Moderation of Forum 2:

**Ms. Laura Kostanski (Australia)**

**Ms. Vita Strautniece (Latvia)**

File	Modified ^
>  E_CONF.101_57_The Four Faces of Toponymic Gazetteers.pdf	Aug 24, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
>  E_CONF.101_57_Add1_The Four Faces of Toponymic Gazetteers.pdf	Aug 24, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu

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## 2 Child Pages

[F2.1 Definition and content of gazetteers](#)

[F2.2 Differences between data types](#)

### [1.2.1. F2.1 Definition and content of gazetteers](#)

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 2 - definitions for gazetteers and data types](#)

## F2.1 Definition and content of gazetteers

Tools ▾

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified on [Aug 08, 2014](#)

This [sub-site](#) comprises the discussion regarding the understanding of different definitions of the term 'gazetteer'.

The term 'gazetteer' in an spatial data infrastructure (SDI) context might be considered as "**any geospatial dataset which contains 'spatial identifiers'**". These can be geographical names, postal codes or other indexes for indirect spatial referencing.

The intended use of 'gazetteers' in the European INSPIRE initiative (using 'geographic identifiers') followed ISO 19112. The schema from ISO 19112 was not used as-is to correct errors in that schema and allowed for a better integration in INSPIRE as a SDI. 'Gazetteers' here were simply intended as a channel to publish spatial data from the INSPIRE themes that allows others to use them in indirect spatial referencing.

It is obvious, that this technical SDI view on 'gazetteers' is different from the UNGEGN view on 'gazetteers' :

"**List of toponyms arranged in alphabetic or sequential order, with an indication of their location and preferably including variant names, type of (topographic) feature and other defining or descriptive information.**" (UN Glossary of the Terminology, 2002)

Within [E\\_CONF.101\\_57\\_The+Four+Faces+of+Toponymic+Gazetteers](#) it is suggesred that gazetteers can be reimagined to be seen as having four faces, being:

- A record of official place naming processes.
- A repository of unofficial place names.
- A reflection of the cultural associations of place names
- An information delivery mechanism.

The following questions are to be discussed:


**F2.1-Q1: What is your understanding about the term 'gazetteer'?**

**F2.1-Q2: How many faces have got your 'gazetteers' in your country/Institution? (Please provide short descriptions)**

No labels

## 2 Child Pages

 [F2.1-Q1: What is your understanding about the term 'gazetteer'?](#)

 [F2.1-Q2: How many faces have got your 'gazetteers' in your country/Institution?](#)

### [1.2.1.1.](#) F2.1-Q1: What is your understanding about the term 'gazetteer'?

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / F2.1 Definition and content of gazetteers](#)

## F2.1-Q1: What is your understanding about the term 'gazetteer'?



Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified on [Dec 13, 2012](#)

Here you can add a comment by using the 'comment' functionality, choose 'Add' > 'comment'

No labels

### 6 Comments



#### **Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

The European project EuroGeoNames (EGN) has been (and still is) considered to be a 'web (gazetteer) services infrastructure'. This view relates with the UNSDI view. The 'gazetteers' / spatial data sets connected through EGN were considered to be "authoritative" or "official" (e.g. Germany) provided by NMCAs. However, certain data types are indicated as "non-official" besides "standardized", "recommended", "proposed" (e.g. Norway). Thus, EGN did not proceed to find definitions indicating different types of the spatial data sets/gazetteers connected as the European situation appeared to be too heterogeneous and any assignment might have caused more ambiguity.

• [Nov 28, 2012](#)



#### **Caroline Burgess**

The number of data definitions available clearly cannot help standardisation and leads to further confusion among those attempting to collect names information. Such ambiguities however only reinforce the fact that geographical names are living, changing elements and can often be a subjective choice. A gazetteer should be a repository for all geographical names information and should be in a format which is easily searchable, with good cross-references, so all of the unofficial variants can be traced back to the official forms.

• [Feb 20, 2013](#)



#### **Vita Strautniece**

At first, due the technical SDI view on 'gazetteers' is different from the UNGEGN view on 'gazetteers' and the SDI view is wider (and quite widespread), it seems to be appropriate to suggest the change of the UNGEGN term "gazetteer". My proposal is to rename it on „toponymic gazetteer“

At second, view on toponymic gazetteers in Latvia and our gazetteer preparation practice is in accordance with the UNGEGN definition ("List of toponyms arranged in alphabetic or sequential order, with an indication of their location and preferably including variant names, type of (topographic) feature and other defining or descriptive information.").

At third, in Latvia we use the term „ toponymic gazetteer“ mainly for toponymic products, comprising the minimum information proposed by UN (Resolution I/4(E) National gazetteers (National Standardization. Recommendation E.)). For products, including more sophisticated data the term „toponymic dictionary“ is in use. See Latvian examples of „gazetteer“ (Concise Gazetteer of Latvia, available at [http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=3&txt\\_id=89](http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=3&txt_id=89)) and „dictionary“ ("Latvijas ciemi." (Villages of Latvia. Names, Geographical Location), available from [http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=3&txt\\_id=96](http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=2&cPath=3&txt_id=96)).

• [Jan 03, 2014](#)



### Teemu Leskinen

Understanding that the integration of names data services into spatial data infrastructures and issues like that is the main theme in this Forum, yet a little language question to be considered. I am afraid that redefining the term "gazetteer" to be used in a very wide or "abstract" meaning may cause problems not only because there are existing (UNGEGN etc.) and well-established definitions for the term but also because "gazetteer" is an English word and may not, as such, always be adopted into other languages. For example in Finnish the term "gazetteer" is unknown but translated as "paikannimiluettelo", which literally means "list/catalogue of place names". So maybe a more self-explaining term/expression is needed for "non-traditional gazetteers"?

• May 27, 2013

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### Naima Friha

I do agree with you Caroline that it is very important that all names changes need to be recorded and saved because those changes constitute a part of the toponymic heritage and a witness on **its** history

• Oct 14, 2013

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### Naima Friha

The term "Gazetteer" is not used in Tunisia. In CNCT, other names were used to set "similar" documents:

- "Tunisia names listing", in which are recorded the toponymy at scale 1/200.000 of the entire country. It is a list of toponyms arranged in alphabetic order, in two transcription systems, with a designation/code, coordinates, area, project system and map sheet number.
- "Guide of military geographic terms" (in arabic and french languages) which is no other than a dictionary of terminology about the topographic and geographic terms used in all CNCT applications. This document was set up in response to the program of arabization launched by the government in 2001.

• Oct 14, 2013

1.2.1.2. F2.1-Q2: How many faces have got your 'gazetteers' in your country/Institution? (Please provide short descriptions)



## 1.2.2. F2.2 Differences between data types

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 2 - definitions for gazetteers and data types](#)

### F2.2 Differences between data types

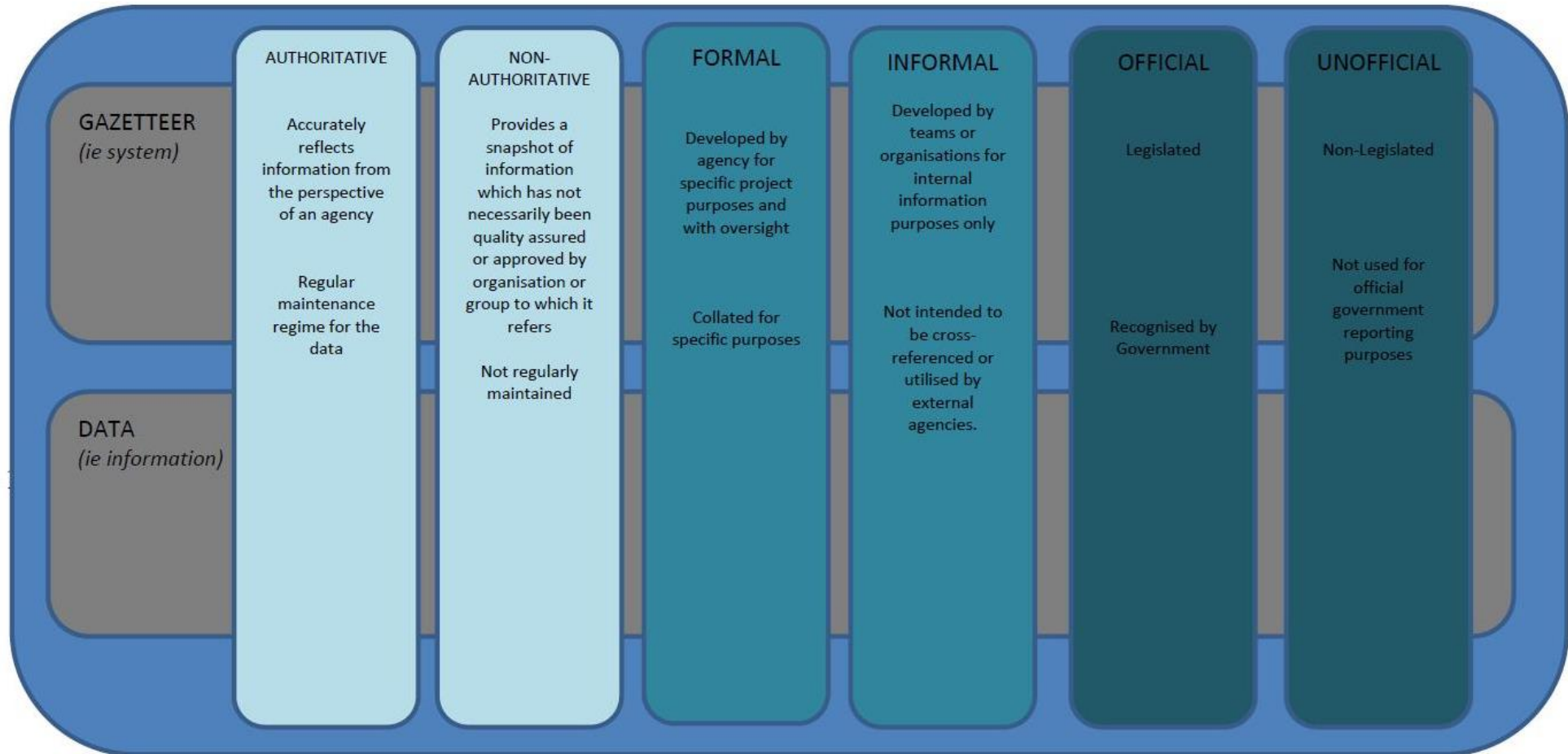
Tools ▾

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified on Aug 08, 2014

Within this [sub-site](#) the 'data types' issue shall be structured and evaluated. This can be done by comparing different **data types** provided through spatial data sets connected/linked through spatial data infrastructures or projects.

Whereas spatial data sets or gazetteers might be considered to be "authoritative" (e.g. Norway) or "official" (e.g. Germany) and provided by official authorities (e.g. National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies), certain data types (e.g. geographical names) could be indicated as "non-official", "standardized", "recommended", "proposed" (e.g. Norway).

Experts from Australia have sketched an outline of the different terminology as an attempt to commence the conversation on how the gazetteers and their data can be defined (Figure 1 from the E/CONF.1 The Four Faces of Toponymic Gazetteers attached to the front page of the Forum 2)



The following questions are to be discussed :

**F2.2-Q1: What indications for data types are provided through your spatial data sets?**


**F2.2-Q2: Have users provided you with any any problems / difficulties / concerns using these data types?**

**F2.2-Q3: What is your opinion regarding the initial definitions, placed in the table above? Have you any additions, or other proposals? Questions?**

No labels

### 3 Child Pages

 [F2.2-Q1: What indications for data types are provided through your spatial data sets?](#)

 [F2.2-Q2: Have users provided you with any any problems / difficulties / concerns using these data types?](#)

 [F2.2-Q3: What is your opinion regarding the initial definitions, placed in the table above \(at F 2.2.\)? Have you any additions, or other proposals? Questions?](#)

[1.2.2.1.](#) [F2.2-Q1: What indications for data types are provided through your spatial data sets?](#)

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / F2.2 Differences between data types](#)

## F2.2-Q1: What indications for data types are provided through your spatial data sets?

 Tools ▾

Created by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, last modified by Vita Strautniece on Mar 28, 2013

In Latvia we often use only two terms: "official" and "unofficial" regarding the geographical names data. Official data are names (and associated to them information) derived from the decisions made by geographical names authorities (accordingly to the definition in the UNGEGN Glossary, term 223: "Official name =toponym sanctioned by a legally constituted (e.g. national) →names authority and applied within its jurisdiction"), "unofficial" - all other names (and information).

No labels

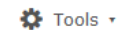
[1.2.2.2.](#) [F2.2-Q2: Have users provided you with any any problems / difficulties / concerns using these data types?](#)

[1.2.2.3.](#) [F2.2-Q3: What is your opinion regarding the initial definitions, placed in the table above? Have you any additions, or other proposals? Questions?](#)

### [1.3. Forum 3 – General feature types and categories](#)

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers](#) / [Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers of UNGEGN](#) / [Discussion forum](#)

## Forum 3 - General feature types and categories



Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified yesterday at 3:12 PM

Discussion Forum 3 - General feature types and categories - was initiated by conference paper *Feature Types for Global Gazetteers* (Laura Kostanski et al., Australia) submitted to the Technical Committee IV session of the 10th UNCSGN (see attachments).

The paper describes the many challenges of developing **global** classifications for named features and requests the WG TDFG to further discuss these issues thus feeding into the larger UN Spatial Data Infrastructure initiative (UNSDI) driven by the UN Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG).

The paper should provide a comprehensive introduction and basis for all discussions within this forum.

Four **sub-sites** have been created in order to better structure the discussions. Each sub-site has a short introduction and some initial questions/topics to be discussed. The sub-sites are:

#### **F3.1 General discussion**

#### **F3.2 Requirements and use cases**

#### **F3.3 Reference materials and classifications**

The discussions will be monitored and streamlined by two co-moderators.

#### **Moderation of Forum 3:**

**Mr. Teemu Leskinen (Finland)**

**Ms. Naima Friha (Tunisia)**




The conference paper *Feature Types for Global Gazetteers* (Laura Kostanski et al., Australia) helps to commence investigations within the WG TDFG. The paper and translated summaries in the 6 UN languages are uploaded to this site and can be commented.

File	Modified <sup>▲</sup>
>  E_Conf.101_56_Add1_Feature Types for Global Gazetteers_s.pdf Summary in Spanish	Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
>  E_Conf.101_56_Add1_Feature Types for Global Gazetteers_r.pdf Summary in Russian	Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
>  E_Conf.101_56_Add1_Feature Types for Global Gazetteers_f.pdf Summary in French	Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
>  E_Conf.101_56_Add1_Feature Types for Global Gazetteers_e.pdf Summary in English	Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
>  E_Conf.101_56_Add1_Feature Types for Global Gazetteers_c.pdf Summary in Chinese	Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
>  E_Conf.101_56_Add1_Feature Types for Global Gazetteers_a.pdf Summary in Arabic	Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu
>  E_CONF.101_56_Feature types for global gazetteers.pdf Full paper (in English)	Nov 22, 2012 by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu

⬇ Download All

No labels

### 3 Child Pages

-  [F3.1 General discussion](#)
-  [F3.2 Requirements and use cases](#)
-  [F3.3 Reference materials and classifications](#)

### 1 Comment



**Teemu Leskinen**


From a co-moderator: To join the discussions within sub-sites F3.1...F3.4, please click the sub-site link and you will find the initial questions/topics to be discussed.

- Dec 19, 2012

### [1.3.1. F3.1 General discussion](#)

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 3 - General feature types and categories](#)

## F3.1 General discussion

 Tools ▾

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified yesterday at 2:50 PM

This sub-site is for general discussion on the challenges and possibilities of developing harmonized named feature classifications for **global** purposes. Among other issues, paper E/CONF.101/56 lists the following challenges in the integration of multiple gazetteer sources:

- If a source gazetteer is classified using a coarser set of terms than the common list, any mapping is going to be ambiguous;
- Cultural and political sensitivities may result in difficulties in using a finely nuanced common term;
- The amount of effort required to reconcile and map many detailed source feature type lists to a common list may be large;
- As the common list evolves, for example a term is split into several related terms, the many mappings in use would need to be revisited;
- It will be difficult to develop and maintain a comprehensive multi-lingual aspect of a large common list; and
- Users would be overwhelmed by a comprehensive, finely nuanced and potentially overlapping set of reported feature types.

The following questions are to be discussed:

**F3.1-Q1: What are the biggest challenges in developing global classifications with respect to different feature aspects?**





**F3.1-Q2: With regard to feature identity and classification, how do named features (e.g. in gazetteers) differ from spatial objects in general (e.g. in GISs)?**

**F3.1-Q3: Who should be in charge of the development and hosting of a possible new global feature classification and which procedures should be followed in the development?**

**F3.1-Q4: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site General discussion?**

No labels

## 4 Child Pages

-  [F3.1-Q1: What are the biggest challenges in developing global classifications with respect to different feature aspects?](#)
-  [F3.1-Q2: With regard to feature identity and classification, how do named features \(e.g. in gazetteers\) differ from spatial objects in general \(e.g. in GISs\)?](#)
-  [F3.1-Q3: Who should be in charge of the development and hosting of a possible new global feature classification and which procedures should be followed in the development?](#)
-  [F3.1-Q4: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site General discussion?](#)

## 1 Comment

 [Teemu Leskinen](#)

From a co-moderator: To comment on a specific Question/topic F3.1-Q1...F3.1-Q4, please click the Question and then give your comment.

- yesterday at 12:15 PM

[1.3.1.1.](#) F3.1-Q1: What are the biggest challenges in developing global classifications with respect to different feature aspects?

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / F3.1 General discussion](#)

## F3.1-Q1: What are the biggest challenges in developing global classifications with respect to different feature aspects?

Tools ▾

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified yesterday at 2:38 PM

Here you can add a comment by using the 'comment' functionality, choose 'Add' > 'comment'

No labels

### 8 Comments



**Caroline Burgess**

The main challenge has to be the fact that different countries have different influences which affect their local toponymy. For example, the landscape in northern Europe is very different to that of north Africa and the naming will reflect the topographic situation. Cultural and linguistic influences must also come into play.

• Feb 20, 2013



**Vita Strautniece**

On my opinion- also the existing already ( sometimes quite deep-rooted) national and regional classifications!

There is also a big challenge - how to create a global classification somehow bringing them together in a rational way.

• Mar 18, 2013



**Teemu Leskinen**

I agree with Caroline and Vita and continue on the linguistic influences Caroline mentioned, for example the terms used for the natural and cultural features in one or different languages in different parts of the world. The original classifications by e.g. National Mapping or Names Authorities are typically developed in local languages (and local terms) rather than English, and even "general English translations" of these terms/words may depend on the local language and local natural and cultural circumstances. To create appropriate English terms (to be translated then into French etc...) and their definitions for "global feature classes" would be a very important but yet difficult task.

• Oct 07, 2013



**Naima Friha**

Also I think that there should levels of classifications according to the end-user applications .



**Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

Comment by Caroline Burgess (Feb 20, 2013): Following on from my comment in F.3-Q1, the natural features are those most likely affected by topographical variations across the world.

• yesterday at 2:42 PM

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**Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

Comment by Vita Strautniece (Mar 18, 2013): I agree with Caroline.

• yesterday at 2:43 PM

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**Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

Comment by Teemu Leskinen (Oct 7, 2013): It will be very difficult, maybe impossible to express quantitative aspects in a common global classification for natural features. For example the size of a "large lake" in Spain is very different from a "large lake" in Finland. On the other hand the rationale for including a feature in a "global gazetteer service" may depend on the local status and local importance of the feature. This is why classification by dimensions (length in kilometers, area in square-kilometers, height in meters) may not be satisfactory either. One solution has been to introduce as general terms as possible, such as "elevated area" to cover both the Himalayas and Danish hills.

• yesterday at 2:44 PM

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**Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

Comment by Teemu Leskinen (Oct 7, 2013): Similar problems exist with cultural features. The meaning of a "big city", "city", "town" or "village", or the size of an "important city" to be included in a "global gazetteer service", vary in different parts of the world. Sometimes the best solution has been to introduce just one class for settlements. Similarly differences in administrative area structures, systems of "administrative capitals" as well as related terms have caused problems when developing international classifications. Also an "airfield" in one country might be an "airport" in another and so on.

• yesterday at 2:47 PM

- 1.3.1.2. F3.1-Q2: With regard to feature identity and classification, how do named features (e.g. in gazetteers) differ from spatial objects in general (e.g. in GISs)?
- 1.3.1.3. F3.1-Q3: Who should be in charge of the development and hosting of a possible new global feature classification and which procedures should be followed in the development?
- 1.3.1.4. F3.1-Q4: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site General discussion?

## [1.3.2.](#) F3.2 Requirements and use cases

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 3 - General feature types and categories](#)

### F3.2 Requirements and use cases

 Tools ▾

Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified yesterday at 10:19 AM

This sub-site is for discussing use cases and requirements for appropriate **global** feature classifications and for introducing good practices and proposals for a classification that would meet the requirements set in paper E/CONF.101/56 and discussed here in this sub-site. The proposals may be based on existing classifications introduced in sub-site F3.3, or they may be new approaches, probably uploaded there, too. Because UNGEGN members typically represent national data providers, international initiatives (e.g. UNSDI Gazetteer Framework, UNECA African GeoNyms Project, other UN bodies) are invited to participate, too.

The following questions are to be discussed:

**F3.2-Q1: Can you list or describe use cases for an appropriate global classification for named features?**

**F3.2-Q2: What are the most important requirements for global feature classifications?**






**F3.2-Q3: There may be different requirements for different use cases. How should this be solved?**

**F3.2-Q4: Do you know good practices or have a proposal for a global feature classification that would meet (at least partly) the given requirements?**

**F3.2-Q5: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site Requirements and use cases?**

No labels

### 5 Child Pages

-  [F3.2-Q1: Can you list or describe use cases for an appropriate global classification for named features?](#)
-  [F3.2-Q2: What are the most important requirements for global feature classifications?](#)
-  [F3.2-Q3: There may be different requirements for different use cases. How should this be solved?](#)
-  [F3.2-Q4: Do you know good practices or have a proposal for a global feature classification that would meet \(at least partly\) the given requirements?](#)
-  [F3.2-Q5: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site Requirements and use cases?](#)

### 1 Comment

 **Teemu Leskinen**

From a co-moderator: To comment on a specific Question/topic F3.2-Q1...F3.2-Q5, please click the Question and then give your comment.

- yesterday at 12:16 PM



[1.3.2.1.](#) F3.2-Q1: Can you list or describe use cases for an appropriate global classification for named features

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / F3.2 Requirements and use cases](#)

## F3.2-Q1: Can you list or describe use cases for an appropriate global classification for named features?



Created by Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, last modified yesterday at 3:05 PM

Here you can add a comment by using the 'comment' functionality, choose 'Add' > 'comment'

No labels

### 2 Comments



**Teemu Leskinen**

Besides the spelling and language of a name, the type of a named place is an important query term in practically any search use case or application. An appropriate and universally understandable feature classification helps in getting the hoped-for search results, places and/or their names.

Another prominent use case for harmonised feature types and possible feature type hierarchy is visualisation. Names of different kind of features may be portrayed differently: names of populated places and other cultural features in black, perhaps bold, regular upright typeface; names of natural terrain features in black italics; names of hydrographic features in blue italics and so on.

• Oct 07, 2013



**Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

Comment by Vita Strautniece (Mar 18, 2013): With focus on named features from the point of view of geo-names experts. But we should to avoid (as far as it is possible) a contradiction with the existing (professional) feature classifications.

• yesterday at 2:59 PM

[1.3.2.2.](#) F3.2-Q2: What are the most important requirements for global feature classifications?

[1.3.2.3.](#) F3.2-Q3: There may be different requirements for different use cases. How should this be solved?

[1.3.2.4.](#) F3.2-Q4: Do you know good practices or have a proposal for a global feature classification that would meet (at least partly) the given requirements?

[1.3.2.5.](#) F3.2-Q5: Do you have general or other questions or comments to this sub-site Requirements and use cases?

### 1.3.3. F3.3 Reference materials and classifications

[Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers / ... / Forum 3 - General feature types and categories](#)

## F3.3 Reference materials and classifications



Created by [Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu](#), last modified [yesterday at 3:10 PM](#)

In this sub-site WG TDFG members may introduce, upload and discuss related reference materials and classifications. Materials may be available on the web (links to documents, gazetteer services etc.) or they may be uploaded in this sub-site by WG members (e.g. national classifications).

For each entry, please include a short introduction ("Comment" in the table, e.g. the system/data set in question and some characteristics of the data/classification), and an identifier ("Labels" in the table, f3-nnn-yyyy-mm-dd) for referencing purposes.

File	Modified ^
> <a href="#">080208_EGN FEATURE CLASSIFICATION_3.0.pdf</a> Feature classification developed for the EuroGeoNames Project. It consists of 8 main classes and 27 sub-classes.	Nov 22, 2012 by <a href="#">Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu</a>
> <a href="#">090618_Specimen_DE_Enum_Translations.xls</a> Sheet/form for the translation of terms used in the EGN data model and the EGN feature classification. It comprises 6 folders including the respective information ...	Nov 22, 2012 by <a href="#">Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu</a>
> <a href="#">bt5mv20dic_04ca.pdf</a> ICC, Catalonia, Topographic database 1:5000 data specification (2011). Annex 2: Named feature classification, 18 main classes and some 250 sub-classes.	Nov 30, 2012 by <a href="#">Teemu Leskinen</a>
> <a href="#">DC_BDNYME_2.pdf</a> IGN, France, DB NYME data specification (2009), 2 themes, 8 main classes and more than 100 sub-classes.	Nov 30, 2012 by <a href="#">Teemu Leskinen</a>
> <a href="#">USGS-GNIS-Feature_Class_Definitios-link.pdf</a> U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Geographical Names Information System (GNIS) Feature Class Definitions (link), some 65 classes.	Nov 30, 2012 by <a href="#">Teemu Leskinen</a>
> <a href="#">NRC-Geographical_Names-Feature_Types_link.pdf</a> Natural Resources Canada, Geographical Names, Feature Types (link), 3 main classes and some 40 sub-classes.	Nov 30, 2012 by <a href="#">Teemu Leskinen</a>
> <a href="#">Getty_Thesaurus_of_Geographical_Names_link.pdf</a> Getty Thesaurus of Geographical Names, Place types (link), a vast, detailed classification.	Nov 30, 2012 by <a href="#">Teemu Leskinen</a>
> <a href="#">EDINA-Unlock_link.pdf</a> EDINA, Unlock, Feature types (link), a five-level hierarchy with 5 main classes.	Nov 30, 2012 by <a href="#">Teemu Leskinen</a>

- > [Maa-amet-PNR-search\\_link.pdf](#) Nov 30, 2012 by [Teemu Leskinen](#)  
 Maa-amet (Estonian Land Board), Place Names Register on-line search (link), in Estonian and English, a hierarchical classification with 6 main classes.
- > [GeoNames\\_Feature\\_Codes.pdf](#) Nov 30, 2012 by [Teemu Leskinen](#)  
 Geonames.org, Feature codes (link), a vast hierarchical classification with 9 main classes.
- > [090326\\_vTLE\\_Discussion paper\\_feature types.pdf](#) Nov 30, 2012 by [Teemu Leskinen](#)  
 Discussion during INSPIRE Geogr. names (GN) data specification (f3-005) process on the nature of named places as spatial objects. Included an alternative appro...
- > [ADL-Gazetteer\\_Feature\\_Type\\_Thesaurus\\_link.pdf](#) Nov 30, 2012 by [Teemu Leskinen](#)  
 ADL Gazetteer Feature Type Thesaurus (link), hierarchical (up to 5 levels) classification, 6 main classes, more than 200 sub-classes.
- > [INSPIRE\\_DataSpecification\\_GN\\_v3.0.1.pdf](#) Nov 30, 2012 by [Teemu Leskinen](#)  
 INSPIRE Data Specification for the spatial data theme Geographical names. Feature classification: chapter 5.2.2.3.3 (page 20). One-level classification, 9 classes, ...
- > [121107\\_vNaima\\_GN f type classification.doc](#) Dec 13, 2012 by [Naima Friha](#)  
 Features are grouped under themes Administrative units, Transportation, Hydrography etc...). To each feature is assigned an F\_Code, a Designation and a Defini...

[Download All](#)

No labels

## 1 Comment



**Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu**

R001-2012-11-22: The *EGN feature classification* has been developed separately as the existing pre-defined ones had been considered to be unsatisfactorily. To each location instance an EGN feature classification scheme describing the feature types is associated. It consists of 8 classes and 27 sub-classes. The EGN gazetteer model allows for different feature classifications to be used. However, the *EGN feature classification* is satisfactory for the purposes to which it is required (essentially, query filtering).

• [Nov 22, 2012](#)