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NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

Toponymic guidelines for cartography - Iceland**

Paper presented by the Norden Division of the United Nations
Group of Experts on Geographical Names

* E/CONF.74/1.

** These guidelines have been prepared by the Icelandic Place-Name Institute in Reykjavík.

TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES FOR CARTOGRAPHY

Iceland
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I LANGUAGES

1 General remarks

Iceland is a unilingual country, Icelandic being the only national language.

2 National language

The national language is Icelandic, written in the Roman/Latin alphabet.

The Icelandic alphabet:

A a	G g	O o	V v
Á á	H h	Ó ó	W w
B b	I i	P p	X x
C c	Í í	Q q	Y y
D d	J j	R r	Ý ý
Ð ð	K k	S s	Z z
E e	L l	T t	Þ þ
É é	M m	U u	Æ æ
F f	N n	Ú ú	Ö ö

The letters c C, q Q, and w W are used in foreign names (e. g. in personal and family names) only. The use of z Z in Icelandic words was officially abolished in 1974, but it is still used by many.

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Spelling rules for Icelandic geographical names

There are no special rules for the spelling of Icelandic geographical names apart from rules regarding capitalization of place-names issued by the Ministry of Culture in 1974 for use in Icelandic schools. According to these rules a composite place-name is to be written in two capitalized words connected by a hyphen, only if the second part of the name does not exist as an appellative, e. g. Stóra-Giljá, Norður-Ameríka; else the name is to be written as one capitalized word, e. g. Stóridalur, Kyrrahafið (The Pacific Ocean).

Celtic elements in Icelandic place-names

Icelandic place-names are very homogeneous. Only a few traces of Celtic elements can be found, e. g. the mountain-name Dímon.

Icelandic dialects

The dialectal differences in Icelandic are insubstantial compared with other Nordic languages, e. g. Norwegian and Swedish. Different dialect forms of place-names are not to be found in Icelandic maps.

II NAMES AUTHORITIES AND NAMES STANDARDIZATION

Questions concerning the spelling and form of place-names can be referred to Örnefnanefnd (The Icelandic Place-Name Committee), Suðurgötu 41, 101 REYKJAVÍK, which serves as the official advisory authority on place-names.

Geographical names in official Icelandic maps are standardized by the Icelandic Geodetic Survey, which often sends its material to Örnefnastofnun Þjóðminjasafns (The Icelandic Place-Name Institute), Suðurgötu 41, 101 REYKJAVÍK, for consideration.

III SOURCE MATERIAL

1 Maps

The official maps of Iceland were formerly produced by the Danish General Staff and the Geodetic Institute in Copenhagen. Another series of maps were later produced by the Defense Mapping Agency in Washington. In 1965 Landmælingar Íslands (The Icelandic Geodetic Survey), Laugavegi 178, 105 REYKJAVÍK, took over the production of the national maps of Iceland. The chief series are

- (a) The Topographic Map produced by the Danish General Staff and the Geodetic Institute in Copenhagen in (1) 1:50 000 (Quarter Maps),

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- 117 sheets published, covering ca 1/3 of the country; (2) 1:100 000 (Atlas Maps), 87 sheets, covering the whole country; (3) 1:250 000 (General Maps), 9 sheets; (4) 1:350 000; (5) 1:500 000 and (6) 1:1 000 000.
- (b) The Topographic Map produced by the Icelandic Geodetic Survey, based on the abovementioned maps in 1:100 000; 70 sheets have been issued.
- (c) The Topographic Map (AMS SERIES C762) produced by the Defence Mapping Agency in 1:100 000, 297 sheets.
- (d) The Topographic Map (C761) produced by the Icelandic Geodetic Survey in 1:100 000, 10 sheets have been issued.
- (e) The Orthophoto Map produced by the Icelandic Geodetic Survey in 1:10 000, ca 160 sheets have been produced.

2 Gazetteers

There is no official Icelandic gazetteer. *Bæjatal á Íslandi*, issued by the General Directorate of Posts and Telecommunications, Reykjavík, is a publication containing the names and location of all farms and postal offices in Iceland, but it is not a normative list of geographical names.

IV GLOSSARY OF APPELLATIVES, ADJECTIVES AND OTHER WORDS NECESSARY FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF MAPS

á	river
áll, pl. álar	channel
ás, pl. ásar	ridge
Aust-	east(ern)
bakki, pl. bakkar	bank; brink
berg, pl. björg	cliff
bjarg, pl. björg	cliff
Blá-	blue; black; morass
boði, pl. boðar	breaker
ból	farm; abode; lair
borg, pl. borgir	small dome-shaped hill; shelter
brekka, pl. brekkur	slope
brú	bridge
búð, pl. búðir	booth
bær	farm; village; town
dalur, pl. dalir	valley
djúp	deep bay; deep sea
Efra-/Efri-	upper
eiði	isthmus
engi, pl. engjar	meadow
ey, pl. eyjar	island
eyri, pl. eyrar	sandbank; tongue of land
Eystra-/Eystri-	east(ern)
fell	mountain
fjall, pl. fjöll	mountain
fjörður, pl. firðir	fjord
fljót	river
flói	bay

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flugvöllur	airport; airstrip
Forna-/Forni-	old
foss, pl. fossar	waterfall
Fremra-/Fremri-	farther (in or out)
garður, pl. garðar	fence; farm; park
gata, pl. götur	street
gerði	fence; field
gil	cleft
gjá	gorge; ravine
grunn	shallow water; shallow fishing-ground
hagi	enclosed pasture
háls	ridge
hamar; pl. hamrar	cliff
heiði	heath
hjalli	terrace
hlíð	slope
hn(j)úkur	mountain peak
hóll, pl. hólar	hillock
holt	stony height
hólmi/hólmur, pl. hólmar	islet; holm
hraun	lava field
hreppur	commune
hús	house
hvammur	small depression
hver	hot spring
Hvít-	white
hæð, pl. hæðir	height
höfði	high headland; promontory
höfn, pl. hafnir	harbour
Innra-/Innri-	inner
íþróttavöllur	stadium
jökull	ice field; glacier
kaupstaður	town
kirkja	church
klettur	rock
kot	small farm
land	land
laug, pl. laugar	warm spring
Litla-/Litli-	small; little
lón	lagoon
lækur, pl. lækir	brook
melur, pl. melar	gravel bank; gravel field
mið	fishing ground
Mið-	middle
múli	protruding part of a mountain
mýri, pl. mýrar	bog; swamp
Neðra-/Neðri-	lower
nes	peninsula
Norður-	north(ern)
núpur	protruding mountain
Nýi-/Nýja-	new
Nyrðra-/Nyrðri-	north(ern)
ós	mouth of a river

Rauð-	red
Reyk(ja)-	steam
reykir pl.	steam
sandur, pl. sandar	sand
sel	saeter
sjór	lake
skagi	peninsula
skáli, pl. skálar	shieling; hut; hall
skarð, pl. skörð	mountain pass
sker	skerry
skógur, pl. skógar	forest; wood
sókn	parish
staðir pl.	place; farm
staður	parsonage
steinn, pl. steinar	stone
stekkur	fold
Stóra-/Stóri-	big
strönd	shore; beach
Suður-	south(ern)
sund	sound; channel
Svart-	black
Syðra-/Syðri-	south(ern)
sýsla	district; county
teigur	strip of field
tindur, pl. tindar	mountain peak
tjörn, pl. tjarnir	small lake
tóttir pl.	ruins
tröð, pl. traðir	lane; path
tún	infield
tunga, pl. tungur	tongue of land
vað, pl. vöð	ford
vatn, pl. vötn	lake
vegur	road
Vest(ur)-/Vestra-/Vestri-	west(ern)
vík, pl. víkur	inlet; small bay
viti	lighthouse
vogur, pl. vogar	small inlet
völlur, pl. vellir	field
Ytra-/Ytri-	outer
Þjóðgarður	national park

V ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NATIONAL OFFICIAL MAPS OF ICELAND

As a rule, abbreviations are not used in the official maps of Iceland. There are a few exceptions, among them the following:

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Decoding</u>	<u>English equivalent</u>
Gh	Gistihús	Hotel
Ls	Landssímastöð	Telephone exchange office
Prs	Prestssetur	Parsonage
Þst	Þingstaður	Place of assize
Þrmst	Þríhyrninga- mælistaður	Trigonometric point

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These guidelines have been prepared at the Icelandic Place-Name Institute in Reykjavík. The Icelandic Geodetic Survey in Reykjavík has supplied information on maps.
