SIXTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
THE STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL
NAMES
New York, 25 August-3 September 1992
Item 6 (e) of the provisional agenda*

TOPONYMIC DATA FILES: NATIONAL GAZETTEERS

Questionnaire on toponymic databases

COMMUNICATION, DATED 12 MARCH 1992, FROM HELEN KERFOOT, TEMPORARY
CONVENOR OF THE WORKING GROUP ON TOPONYMIC DATA FILES AND GAZETTEERS OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES, ADDRESSED TO:

(a) MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES;
(b) NATIONAL GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES AUTHORITIES;
(c) NATIONAL CARTOGRAPHICAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. The Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers convened in
Geneva in November 1991 during the meeting of the Group of Experts on
Geographical Names.

2. It was generally agreed by members present, that before the Working Group
could make major recommendations, it was necessary to know what types of
national toponymic databases already existed; what information they included
and how it was gathered and updated; and, if the databases were automated, how
the toponymic data were stored and disseminated. To gather that material, the
Working Group decided to initiate a questionnaire, which it was hoped could be
widely distributed in English, French and Spanish) and would be answered by as
many authorities as possible.

* E/CONF.85/1.
3. The information gathered should help the Group of Experts in various ways. It will enable them to:

(a) Assist those who need to develop automated toponymic databases;

(b) Cooperate on common data fields to be universally maintained (stored and updated);

(c) Collaborate to develop practical mechanisms for exchange of toponymic data between national databases;

(d) Work towards the acceptance and general use of international standards for data storage and exchange;

(e) Encourage the use of national toponymic databases for national gazetteer programmes.

4. The Convener thanks Ms. Anki Mattisson of the National Land Survey of Sweden for her leadership in creating this questionnaire. The completed pages should be returned to her by 1 May 1992. Her address and fax number are given on the last page of the questionnaire.

5. It is the intention of the Working Group to have, at least, a preliminary report prepared by 1 June, so that this summary information may be available to all who attend the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names when it meets in New York in late August 1992.

6. While it may not be possible for everyone to complete the questionnaire by May, a later response either sent by mail or brought to the Sixth Conference in New York, will still be valuable.

7. The interest and cooperation of members of the Group of Experts are greatly appreciated by the Working Group which looks forward to collaborating with all respondents in the near future.
United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

QUESTIONNAIRE ON TOPOYMIC DATABASES

(Note: A separate form should be completed for each database, digital or card system. If you do not yet have a geographical names database, please turn to section H below.)

A. IDENTIFICATION

1. Country

2. Title of the database

3. Manager/Owner (federal department, federal or local agency, university etc.)

4. Contact person(s)

Information submitted by

Name __________________________________________

Position ________________________________________

Department, agency, etc. __________________________

Postal address __________________________________

Phone _________________________________________

Fax ___________________________________________

Electronic access number: E-mail __________________
Second contact

Name

Position

Department, agency, etc.

Postal address

Phone

Fax

Electronic access number: E-mail

B. STATUS

1. Areal coverage

(a) Identify the geographic area which is or will be covered by the toponymic database

(b) Have you compiled at least some information for the entire area identified in (a)?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

If "no", indicate which areas are covered and which are not:

Areas covered: _______________________________

Areas not covered: ___________________________

(c) Is the coverage uniform?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

If "no", indicate why
2. Status of the geographical names
   (a) Are the geographical names officially treated by a national names authority?
      [ ] Yes
      [ ] No
      If the name is "yes", please provide the name of the authority

3. Is it a digital toponymic database?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No
   [ ] Partial
   If "no", are there plans for development of a digital database?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

C. DESCRIPTION

1. Collection (sources from which names are recorded)
   [ ] Official maps/charts Scale(s): ________________________________
   [ ] Field work (whether or not in connection with map production)
   [ ] Historical material
   [ ] Gazetteers
   [ ] Unofficial maps
   [ ] Text materials
   [ ] Other sources Specify ________________________________
2. What are the (main) fields of information in your database?

- Type of feature
- Source(s) of name
- Map(s)/chart(s) Scale(s): ________________
- Coordinates
- Status of the name
- Date(s) of standardization of name
- Administrative units
- Variant names
- Language(s)
- Population
- Extension of features
- Length (of rivers)
- Name origins
- Others Specify ________________

Total number of fields that might be recorded from one record: ______

II. UPDATING OF TOPONYMIC DATABASES

1. Updating process

- No updating
- Continuous
- Periodical updating
  Describe: ______
2. Sources of updates
   [ ] National names authority
   [ ] Published maps/charts
   [ ] Field work
   [ ] Other Specify __________________________

E. OTHER MATTERS

1. Is your toponymic database produced for
   [ ] Creation of a national gazetteer
   [ ] Map-making
   [ ] Research
   [ ] Other purpose(s) Examples __________________________

2. If your database is used for a national gazetteer, is the gazetteer created according to the recommendations given in the resolutions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on national gazetteers (I/4 (E) and III/2)?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

3. Have you published a gazetteer based on your toponymic database?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

4. Are your geographical names written in the roman alphabet?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No
If "yes", please address questions (a) to (d), if "no", move on to question 5.

(a) Are there any diacritical signs in your names?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

(b) If your answer to (a) is "yes", please give examples to indicate complexity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language(s)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Examples</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Can you input and store in your database all your geographical names that are written in the roman alphabet?

[ ] Yes Describe:

[ ] No Explain:

(d) If your answer to (a) and (c) is "yes", how have you solved the problems of

On-screen viewing

Printing

Exchange of data

5. What writing system(s), other than the roman alphabet, do you use for geographical names records?
(a) Are they computerized?

|__| Yes
|__| No

F. TECHNICAL MATTERS OF DIGITAL TOPONYMIC SYSTEMS

1. Hardware

(a) Input (terminal, digitizer, etc.)

(b) Processing and storage unit

(c) Output (printer, plotter, etc.)

2. Operating system

|__| VMS
|__| UNIX
|__| DOS
|__| OS2
|__| Other Specify ______________________

3. Database management system or other software

4. Is demonstration material (e.g. diskettes, tapes, etc.) available?

|__| Yes
|__| No

If "yes", is the demo available for a PC?

|__| Yes
|__| No
5. Have you arranged or would you be ready to organize a training course at your toponymic database?
   [ ] Have arranged
   [ ] Would be ready to
   [ ] No

G. DOCUMENTATION OF TOPONYMIC DATABASES

1. Is documentation available?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

   If "yes",
   (a) In what language(s)?

   (b) In which format?
       [ ] Hard copy
       [ ] Digital

   (c) What type?
       [ ] User manual
       [ ] Report

2. Is the information in your database available for sale?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No
If "yes",

(a) Have you established rules for acquisition and distribution of data?
    ■ Yes
    ■ No

    Comments:

(b) Are your products
    ■ Standard packages?
    ■ Customized packages?
    ■ Both?

(c) Do you have follow-up service with clients who have received your data?
    ■ Yes
    ■ No

H. TOPOYMYIC DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

What help do you need to establish/develop a toponymic database for your country?

■ Developing card and file system
■ Developing a PC-based system
■ Developing a mini-computer system
■ Deciding on appropriate international standards to use for computerized data storage and exchange
■ Other

Comments:
I. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please include any additional comments that you may wish to provide on your database:

Please send this form to: Anki Mattisson
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