

Introduction: About the Manual

UNGEEN has offered training courses in the administration of geographical names since 1982. These courses have taken place on every continent and over the years the content has developed to address advances in technology and changing attitudes to the standardization of geographical names. As well individual courses have taken into account the particular interests and needs of the host country and associated UNGEEN divisions.

A second step was taken in meeting the needs of those countries looking for training opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge of staff responsible for the toponymic processes and records. A web course was developed in conjunction with the International Cartographic Association (ICA), and later with financial support from UN Statistics Division. The course, containing 20 modules of lessons and exercises, is designed for independent study and is freely available through the UNGEEN website (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEEN/docs/_data_ICAcourses/index.html). It was first released in 2012 after several years of development.

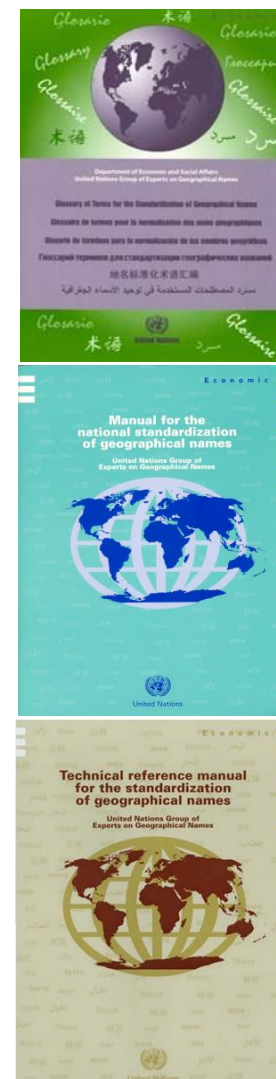
Following the 10th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in 2012, a decision was taken by the Convenor and members of the UNGEEN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy to follow a third approach to disseminating materials for training and capacity building purposes. This new venture was designed to gather together a collection of articles on a variety to toponymic issues – some of a more advanced nature, others covering subjects that

receive but a brief mention in a basic training course. And so the UNGEEN Toponymy Training Manual was started! Articles have been volunteered by individuals – working with geographical names within their governments, using the results of names programmes in geospatial information, or teaching the concepts of toponymy in higher education institutions. Some articles were completed by 2015, while others have been written as late as June 2017; consequently, portrayal of web pages, for example, may show differences.

The target audience for this new manual includes those working for national names boards and in names collecting and processing programmes. We have tried to make the chapters “friendly” for the reader. For example, the texts will not be too scientific, footnotes and endnotes are used sparingly. Some chapters start with objectives and the skills the reader may expect when they have made themselves familiar the chapter’s contents. We hope that the necessary theoretical background and practical approaches to realise particular processes has been provided. Realizing that it may be difficult for many readers to access libraries where toponymic literature can be accessed in person, references, preferably online, have been included in each chapter.

The manual has some 30 chapters, numbered sequentially in such a way that we start with national names programmes and their benefits, and their management, and then zoom out to regional and global toponymic activities and initiatives, technical aspects, cultural aspects, research, mapping, assessing the results through auditing, and

finally communicating geographical names to the media.



UNGEEN publications

We realise that the team of authors that voluntarily produced contributions for this book did not have the benefit of knowing in advance about the contributions of other authors – consequently, there might be some overlap, but the reviewers have made sure that there are no contradictory passages. There are large differences in background of authors, some more technical, other more theoretical or practical, and the readers will have to accustom themselves to the different styles of approach.

The range of the chapters is vast and we doubt that all readers will be interested in all topics. But the reviewers are most grateful for the efforts made to provide the wealth of material that is offered here.

All chapters can be freely downloaded from the UNGEGN website, as the authors have transferred the copyright of their work to UNGEGN. We hope that these chapters will be used, copied, and translated into other languages as well, with appropriate copyright credits given to UNGEGN.

The chapters have been organized into the following sections:

Section 1 General /strategic issues

In this first section, we highlight the eminence of the national toponymic database, and its benefits for administration, development, emergency mapping and preserving the cultural heritage, and we refer to the starting level of this manual: knowledge of the matter dealt with in the basic toponymy webcourse: fieldwork, names processing, role of UNGEGN, etc.

Section 2 Management of a national names programme

This section deals with the finances, administration, legal issues and human resources necessary for maintaining and publishing the geographical names database, with discussion on logistics, production time needed, necessary upkeep costs.

Section 3 Regional activities and applications

This section covers the collection of names for different purposes, such as for hydrographic or for tourist maps and also deals with organizing urban street naming programmes.

Section 4 Regional and global initiatives

The working of both institutional and commercial global name servers. We hope to extend this section in future with an example of a regional small islands naming project.

Section 5 Progress of toponymic names databases

Standardization of names for statistical enumeration areas and smoothing differences between statistical and topographical areal object names are dealt with here, as is the integration of crowd-sourced or volunteered geographic information, Open Street mapping and geographical names. A chapter on Open Street mapping is still expected.

Section 6 Technical issues: databases and pronunciation

Preliminary discussion on the structure and content of toponymic databases and gazetteers, with coverage of database design & management. A commercial example will show the requirements for school atlas names databases. As databases might also incorporate sound recordings, best practices for recording names pronunciation will be dealt with here as well.

Section 7 Technical issues: internet, web services infrastructure and applications

Here the issue of open source options vs commercial options will be dealt with, as will criteria for software selection.

Section 8 Websites

Here the functional evaluation of current national place name web services and of commercial name servers and their applications is dealt with.

Section 9 Cultural aspects

This section deals with place names as cultural heritage and includes the history of place names, and – in the near future - the collection of indigenous names.

Section 10 Toponymic research and documentation

This section introduces the science of onomastics and its relevant terminology, etymology and the study of linguistic and toponymic sources.

Section 11 Cartographic aspects

This section covers the updating of names sheets and the assessment of the optimal names density for map sheets, as well as multiple naming. In future we hope to extend this with a chapter on digital place name labelling.

Section 12 Auditing place name records

Auditing place name records in order to coordinate toponymic information from different parts of the country, from different survey periods or in order to coordinate names record from different national institutions is essential for quality control of the place name records.

Section 13 Media training

This section deals with the media as well as with the public (both as informants and as customers)

Hopefully the range of chapters will be extended over time, also leading to a process of renewal of the contents of this manual.

When the UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy, at the 10th UNCSGN conference in 2012, launched the proposal to produce this manual, and defined the topics to be included, Helen Kerfoot, Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu and myself were asked to act as reviewers for the incoming chapters. At BKG, Sabine Afflerbach applied the final layout. The UNGEGN Secretariat with Cecille Blake saw to the incorporation of the manual in the UNGEGN website, and had the UN design section develop the most appropriate cover, which will be displayed in the publications section of the UNGEGN website. The Working Group owes the team many thanks for the time and effort invested in this project!

Ferjan Ormeling

Convenor, UNGEGN Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy