Report of the
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

Status of National Standardization of Geographical Names in the Philippines

19 March 2018
Manila, Philippines
The official languages in the Philippines are FILIPINO and ENGLISH.

There are other recognized languages in the Philippines called auxiliary languages.
The Philippines does not have a names board, committee or authority.

But the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) published a “Revised Guidelines on the Naming and Renaming of Streets, Public Schools, Plazas, Building, Bridges and other Public Structures”
Contents of the revised guidelines,
1. Who may name or rename
2. What may be renamed
3. The Character of names
4. Naming / renaming after persons
5. Historical significance
6. Aesthetic unity
7. Continuity
Contents of the revised guidelines,

1. Who may name or rename
   - All Public places: President of the Philippines or by Congress
   - Public places under local government units (LGUs): concerned LGU
Contents of the revised guidelines,

1. Who may name or rename
   • Changing names of local government unit: plebiscite
   • Changing names of public places: National Historical Institute
Contents of the revised guidelines,
2. What may be renamed
- political units
- National roads, public places/buildings
Contents of the revised guidelines,

3. The Character of names
   - Have historical and cultural significance;
   - Contribute to national pride
   - Indigenous names should always be preserved especially if the name is unique to the place
Contents of the revised guidelines,
3. The Character of names
- Hispanized and foreign terms: historically significant; legitimately used;
- Filipino words encouraged;
- Short and simple for practical and aesthetic reasons; nicknames or aliases discouraged;
- Natural features shall not be renamed unless reverted to their old indigenous names
Contents of the revised guidelines,

3. The Character of names

- Complicated and confusing names are discouraged;

- Schools, hospitals and other public structures named after the province of municipality shall not be renamed.

- Natural features such as islands, rivers, seas and other shall not be renamed unless reverted to their old indigenous names.
Contents of the revised guidelines,

4. Naming / renaming after persons
   - Allowed to honor a person or family who contributed to the welfare of the Filipino people;
   - Public places named after presidents or national heroes cannot be replaced with names of people of lesser importance
Contents of the revised guidelines,  
4. Naming / renaming after persons 
- Not named after a living person Roads can be named: 
  - Presidents and national heroes for primary roads 
  - Senator and congressmen for secondary roads 
  - Local officials for tertiary roads
How are geographical names decided for use on maps?

- For the names of political units, we use the Philippine Standard Geographic Code (PSGC) by the Philippine Statistics Authority;

- For natural features (mountains, rivers) we coordinate with the local government unit officials.
For the Philippines, a names authority will be useful.

In creating our maps, we had several problems with geographical names collection due to inconsistencies encountered.
At a national level, there is an old Philippine gazetteer published by the USGS based on 1:250,000 scale in the 1980s.

The names include approved names by the US Board on Geographic Names, unverified names cross-referenced with approved names and unverified names.
We are ongoing with geographic names collection at scale 1:50,000, which will be the basis for an updated gazetteer.