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S07 Office processing, standardization

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The content of this module is based on teaching materials by Helen Kerfoot. These teaching materials are made available in the "[documents](#)" section.

The module contains the following chapters:

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When reading through the following pages, you will come across some uncommon terms. These terms are hyperlinked to the UNGEGN [Glossary of Terminology \(pdf\)](#). Behind each term a number (#) is given that corresponds to the numbering applied in this glossary, e.g. [toponymy](#) (#344).

For exercises and documents (and literature) on this topic see respectively the "[Exercises](#)" and/or the "[Documents](#)" section of this module.

The complete module can be downloaded [here](#).



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INTRODUCTION

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This term **office processing** describes the work and responsibilities of the support office of a national names authority and gives a general idea of the scope of the work of that support office.

What do we mean by "office processing"?

Task 1: Gathering names information

Task 2: Authorizing the toponyms

Task 3: Storing the data and maintaining records

Task 4: Disseminating the data

Overview

- National names authority is the focal point of the toponymic data processing in a country.
- Office must support the board, keep records and make the information generally available.
- Methods may change with technology, but emphasis in the work of the office is still on accuracy, and correct documentation procedures, especially documenting why specific decisions were made.

Literature:

- [Manual](#) for the national standardization of geographical names (UN - Ecosoc, New York, 2006 ST/ESA/STAT/SERM/88 Sales No. E.06.XVII.7 ISBN 92-1-161490-2, available in the 6 UN languages) / [pdf](#)



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1. TASK 1 - GATHERING NAMES INFORMATION

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- Identifying and recording written forms of names
- The purpose is to submit these names to the names board for possible approval
- These names should be collected in a consistent way
- This should be done thoroughly and carefully
- The type of approach should be consistent with resources
- Name sources can be broken down into five categories:
 1. Existing documents
 2. Government departments
 3. Public
 4. Telephone surveyes
 5. Fieldwork

Sources (1): Existing documents

- When the board first starts:
 - it will take names from existing maps and charts (.... how old?)
 - it will use existing paper / card records
- It will us archival and library references

Sources (2): Names from other government departments

- Integrate names (files) from other government records
 - census, statistics, national park authorities, postal authorities
 - regional governments
 - municipal governments
- forest authorities, local parks, etc.

Sources (3): Submissions of names from the public

- Proposals for naming features that are unnamed (on maps)
- Proposals for correction or change to names on maps
- For these purposes special name formssould be created

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1. TASK 1 - GATHERING NAMES INFORMATION - CONTINUED

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**Sources (4): Names surveys - telephone or postal**

- To follow up submissions or names problems
 - forms submitted to local offices, individuals

See the names form of South Africa on chapter 16 of Module 5 on Field collection systems.

- phone calls for information
- local visit, if close by

Sources (5): Field investigation

- Ideal method to obtain information on local use
- Considered in detail elsewhere in course
- Reveals names conflicts
- Can be expensive operation, so make it as effective as possible
- Pre-field preparations are very important
- Follow-up organizing results and preparing the names for the geographical names board

Names are checked against:

- Official spelling rules or orthography
- Existence of alternative forms (allonyms) or inconsistencies
- Suitability of the added generic elements
- Existence of homonyms (duplicate forms)
- Derogatory or offensive elements
- Name Length
- Other social/political or cultural concerns/ compatibility with other established policies
- Existing spelling of names with the same roots (in order to have a consistent spelling)

The same name element should be spelled the same

Names derived from Hoogezand should be spelled consistently.

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2. TASK 2 - AUTHORIZING THE TOPONYMS

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This is the task of the support office to prepare the names for authorization by the Names Board.

- **Before the meeting of the Names Board:**

- There should be a consistent preparation of documents for names board meetings highlighting the existence of variant names, names conflicts, map, etc.
- Before the decision to authorize the names is made, these names will likely temporary record in data base

- **After the meeting of the Names Board**

- The results of the deliberations of the names board (list of approved names) should be sent to Departmental Minister for approval or ratification, and then to the government newspaper/gazette or other newspapers.
- Signed decision list, and preferably also documentation of the reasons why specific decisions were made.

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3. TASK 3 - STORING THE DATA AND MAINTAINING THE RECORDS

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Approved names must be stored together with attribute information:

- On cards, or in toponymic data base, or GIS?
- Perhaps creating data base from existing cards?
- Must consider fields of data, and how structured
- Fields will vary from country to country - but some are "core" ("top ten")

Data fields (elements)

- **Toponym** spelling, hyphens, etc.
 - natural order as on maps, texts:

Rio Tejo

Rio Parana

Rio de Janeiro

- inverted order:

Tejo, Rio

Parana, Rio

Rio de Janeiro (not a river but a city)

- **Feature type** (river/cape/island/town/etc.)

- **Administrative unit**

- first level (state/province/county)
- second level

- **Geographical coordinates**

- What to record?

- latitude
- longitude
- height

- How to select coordinates? (of object or of name?)

- **Locational narrative**

"Situated in Naranja province 20 km SE of capital ... "

- Map sheet references: Sheet 28 K Series D 403
- **Variant names** (also minority names, popular names, abbreviated names)
- **Status of name** (approved, not approved, pending)
- **Date of approval of name** (by names board)
- **Record identifier**
- **Other fields?** Population number, size, historical information, etc

9 Mln, 200 km², Sunda Kelapa in the 12th century, Jayakarta from 1450 onwards, 1617 Batavia, 1949 Djakarta, 1960 Jakarta

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Example of datafiche, IGN France

Spécifications d'un Toponyme	
Identifiant toponyme du produit	Identifiant du toponyme pour la carte à l'échelle du 1 : 25 000.
Numéro de commune	Numéro INSEE de la commune à laquelle se rapporte le toponyme.
X, Y cartographiques	Positionnement du nom sur la carte. (coordonnées exprimées en kilomètres)
Nature	Il y a 6 thèmes: lieux-dits habités, lieux-dits non habités, orographie, hydrographie, communication et divers, comprenant 42 codes nature.
Code écriture	Correspond à la grosseur de l'écriture sur la carte. (Ce code est lié à la nature et à l'importance du toponyme)
Numéro de feuille	Numéro de la carte à l'échelle du 1 : 25 000. (Si l'information n'est pas disponible, c'est le numéro de la carte à l'échelle du 1 : 50 000 qui est fourni)
Date de validation	Date à laquelle la commission de toponymie a validé ce toponyme après la dernière enquête sur la zone.

Example of name record from IGN, France

Name history of all objects will be noted

- Unnecessary name changes should be avoided
- Names should be spelled as much as possible in accordance with orthographic practice
- No significant name elements should be suppressed
- Only one name should be selected as the official one

Storing the data and maintaining the records

- The Names Bureau has the responsibility for updating fields
- Following ISO standards as much as possible
- There should be a description of the records manual in which it is shown how it is operated
- It is necessary to show feature extents in graphic form

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4. TASK 4 - DISSEMINATING THE DATA

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- Names are important to communication
- Maps, reports, etc. need up to date names
- Names data must be distributed. It should not be "*best kept secret*"!
- Different ways of doing this

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4. TASK 4 - DISSEMINATING THE DATA - *CONTINUED*

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**Official maps, gazetteers, etc.**

- Prime way of distributing new names data
- Gazetteers and the UN
- What is in a gazetteer? What attribute information is needed apart from ID, name, feature code and co-ordinates?
- Paper copy or digital gazetteers?

Distributing digital data

- Digital files (standard/customized packages)
- Issues to take account of: cost of files, licencing, copyright
- Through a web site (but continuous updating is necessary)
 - [UN resolution \(pdf\)](#) / I/4 and II/32

Other publications

- Information about the board and about its procedures
- Tools for guidance of board (rules and regulations), researchers, etc.
- Publications on the history and origins of names
- Newsletters

A geographical names web site

- Once established, it allows to reach a wider audience
- It is easy to update
- It could include a names data base, many people would consult it
- Content suggestions:
 - show the composition of the board;
 - publications available (for sale or on the web)
 - bulletin board; e-mail contact
 - documents on names; links
 - gazetteer
 - forms for suggesting names
 - FAQ

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5. DISSEMINATING THE DATA

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**Enquiries and the media**

- The Names Bureau has the responsibility to provide information by:
 - phone
 - letters
 - e-mail
 - visits
- It should try to raise interest of radio and TV
- It should try to provide short items for local newspaper

Displays, exhibits

- Visual material to interest government and public has to be pronounced in the form of:
 - photos, maps, posters, games, quizzes
 - videos
 - open house

Tours, education kits, training

- Office tours and demos of permanent exhibition
- In-house training programmes can be set up
- "kits" - of manuals needed by office or field staff
- Resolutions of UN regarding training

UNGEGN Information Bulletin

[Click here for bulletin archive](#)

- One or two each year since 1987
- Updates on significant name decisions, courses, publications, activities of national names agencies

UN contacts

Web: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/default.html>

E-mail: geoinfo_unsd@un.org

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6. CONCLUSIONS

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- We looked at 4 aspects of Office Processing
 - gathering; authorizing; storing; disseminating
- Main message: we must be careful, accurate
 - "get it right the first time"
- We must develop a system of operating that fits our needs and resources
- We must distribute the information, not only collect and store it!

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Exercise 1: Looking up data fields



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EXERCISE 1: LOOKING UP DATA FIELDS

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In [chapter 3](#) (task 3) of the self study part of this module, top data fields have been described as essential for names documentation. Check which of these fields (see below) are contained in a commercial names server like GeoNames <http://www.geonames.org/>. Check this also for other names servers.

- 1 Toponym
- 2 Feature type
- 3 Administrative unit
- 4 Geographical coordinates
- 5 Locational narrative
- 6 Variant names
- 7 Status of name
- 8 Date of approval of name
- 9 Record identifier
- 10 Other fields



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EXERCISE 1: LOOKING UP DATA FIELDS - ANSWERS

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Example Kota Batu, East Java, Indonesia:

- 1 Batu
- 2 Populated place
- 3 This should indicate to what larger administrative unit Kota Batu belongs
- 4 S 7°52'12" E 112°31'42"
- 5 This is a written description where the object is located in relation to larger or more important objects
- 6 Kota Batu, Batoe
- 7 This should indicate whether the (spelling of the) name has been officially approved
- 8 This should indicate when the official approval was given
- 9 GeoNameId 1649824
- 10 Population 75631 (when?), height 881 m.

Example Maputo, Mozambique (with additional information from Wikipedia):

- 1 Maputo
- 2 Populated place
- 3 Capital of Mozambique
- 4 S 25°57'55" E 32°34'59" or -25.96553/32.58322
- 5 This is a written description where the object is located in relation to larger or more important objects
- 6 Lourenço Marques (former colonial name), Can Phumo (first name after independence on 25 June 1975)
- 7 Yes, it is stated in the constitution
- 8 The name Maputo was given in February 1976
- 9 GeoNameId: 1040652
- 10 Population 1191613 (when?), height: 69m

DOCUMENTS AND LITERATURE



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Available documents:

- [D07-01](#): Kerfoot, H. (2003). *Office processing of geographical names*. Pp 85-91 in Ferjan Ormeling, Jörn Sievers and Hans Stabe (eds.), Training Course on Toponymy, Enschede, Frankfurt and Berlin 2002. Mitteilungen des BKG 28, Frankfurt am Main 2003.
- [D07-02](#): Zaccheddu, P.G (2010). *Managing a national names programme*. Proceedings UNGEGN toponymy course Yaoundé, 2010.

Literature:

- UNGEGN (2006). *Manual for the national standardization of geographical names* (UN - Ecosoc, New York, 2006 ST/ESA/STAT/SERM/88 Sales No. E.06.XVII.7 ISBN 92-1-161490-2 ([URL](#) / [pdf](#)))

Online resources:

The United Nations sell the following publications which also can be downloaded from the [UNGEGN](#) website:

- [Glossary](#) of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names (New York 2002) / [pdf](#)
- [Manual](#) for the national standardization of geographical names (UN - Ecosoc, New York, 2006 ST/ESA/STAT/SERM/88 Sales No. E.06.XVII.7 ISBN 92-1-161490-2, available in the 6 UN languages) / [pdf](#)
- [Technical reference manual](#) for the standardization of geographical names (New York, 2007) / [pdf](#)
- [Resolutions](#) adopted at the nine UN Conferences on the standardization of geographical names ([English \(pdf\)](#) / [French \(pdf\)](#))