

## 3. MAKING NAMES OFFICIAL

&lt;previous - next&gt;



The procedures of giving names the official status also deserve attention, as the practice here may vary quite significantly.

What is in a name decision?

Naming is a process of assigning names as verbal expressions to certain geographical features. Consequently, a name decision must:

- contain the geographical name to be applied,
- identify the feature that the name will be assigned to, and its extent

The name must be spelled out in full (in capitals and lower case letters), including generic terms if they are used, in order to avoid ambiguities.

How the named features will be identified in a name decision, depends on needs and possibilities. It is fairly typical to indicate the administrative affiliation of any features (which provinces or other administrative units the features belong to) and/or give coordinates. Sometimes maps or simple plans are attached to name decisions.

If these two criteria are met, we can speak of an unambiguous name decision. In practice, however, we see too often official decisions with long lists of names that have practically no reference to the features that they are applied to. It must be assumed that the named features are identified in sources outside the scope of the name decision. But this makes the task of using official names quite complicated.

A name decision is not just about giving names. Basically a decision can:

- give an official name to a feature previously unnamed or not having an official name,
- change the existing official name (renaming),
- delete the existing official name.

The last option may become necessary if the named feature has ceased to exist.

Other types of legal acts whereby official names are established usually deal with the features to be named from another point of view. For example, an act establishing a national park would also give the park an official name. There are many borderline cases, though, in dealing with such official sources: names are obviously often not the focus of such listings and their spelling might be casual.

[Home](#)  
|  
[Self study](#)  
:  
[Legal status of names](#)  
|  
[Contents](#)  
|  
[Intro](#)  
|  
[1. Notions of officiality](#)  
|  
[2. Naming competence](#)  
|  
[3. Making names official](#)  
|  
[4. Legislation](#)  
|  
[5. Can official names be wrong?](#)  
|  
[6. Topics of discussion](#)

&lt;previous - next&gt;