



United Nations
Group of Experts
on Geographical Names



**--- Update on the UNGEGN WGN Database ---
Concept for the creation of a unique identifier for cities**



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UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)

Chair, Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management

Content

- **UNGEGN's mandate and role**
- **Linked (Open) Data and data modelling** are topics of relevance for UNGEGN's Working Group Geographical Names Management
- The update on the **UNGEGN World Geographical Names Database**
- **Position Paper / Concept Note for the creation of a unique identifier for cities**

UNGEEN = United Nations Group of Experts On Geographical Names

- Worldwide standardisation of toponyms
- Founded in 1959 and, like the UN Statistical Commission and UN-GGIM, is a subsidiary body of ECOSOC
- Convenes Sessions every 2 years, the last one in May 2023
- Ten Working Groups
- The Working Group on Geographical names data management is responsible for:
 - Linked Data
 - Draft Position Paper on UUIDs for Cities

Decision 3/2023/18

Geographical names data management

The Group of Experts:

(a) Welcomed the information made available, the active participation and the efforts undertaken by Member States to inform about and enhance geographical names data management;

(b) Took note of the reports and affirmed the support for strategy 1, Technical expertise, of the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021–2029, outlined for the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management for the period 2023–2025, and the willingness of Member States to participate and contribute to the action items identified within the Programme of Work;

(c) Reaffirmed that linked data was another stage in the evolution of data management methodologies of the Group of Experts;

(d) Encouraged Member States:

(i) To consider linked data in their approaches to geographical names standardization;

(ii) To contribute further to the monitoring of the availability of free, easily accessible, and authorized data on digital geographical names;

(e) Requested the Working Group to continue to facilitate collaboration and workshops on technical issues between national names authorities and practitioners in order to provide practical guidance on organizational and technical issues and processes;

(f) Also requested the Working Group to further coordinate the monitoring of the availability of free, easily accessible and authorized data on digital geographical names;

(g) Further requested the Working Group to take action on the publication of the content and invite standardization bodies to provide input and comments on the ideas presented on:

(i) Geospatial information-sharing, accessibility and dissemination-related standards;

(ii) Specific issues related to geographical names data modelling.

UNGEEN-Webinar on Linked Data in 2022

- Four presenters
- Raise the question: What's in for UNGEEN and its experts?
- Evaluation Report available
- https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungeen/working_groups/webinars/30Sep2022.cshtml



UNGEEN WEBINAR SERIES



**LINKED OPEN DATA
DEVELOPMENTS –
WHAT'S IN FOR UNGEEN
AND ITS EXPERTS?**

**30 SEPTEMBER 2022
7:00 AM -8:30 AM EDT**

REGISTER

<https://forms.office.com/r/vcSSZwwfuD>

OUR SPEAKERS

- ✓ HENRIK ASKJER, UNIVERSITETET I BERGEN, DENMARK
- ✓ LEXI ROWLAND, NETHERLANDS
- ✓ FALK WURRIEHAUSEN, GERMANY
- ✓ PEDER GAMMELTOFT, NORWAY

UNGEGN World Geographic Names (WGN) Database

Why are we doing this?

-  UNGEGN is mandated by the Economic and Social Council as one of its nine Subsidiary Bodies – this is implementing UNGEGN Decision 2/2019/2
-  Position UNGEGN as the ‘go to’ for authoritative, comparable, and high-quality geographic names – aligned with its Strategic Plan
-  Provide a dramatically improved platform for managing geographical names data
-  Enhance visibility and use of geographical names data, irrespective of language, from across the UN system and globally
-  Focus on data to support evidence-based action
-  Increase visibility of UNGEGN, its intergovernmental role and its work



UNGEEN WGN Database --- System Components

Position the UNGEEN as a global leader in authoritative geographical names

- 1 WGN Dashboard - Publicly Accessible Dashboard
- 2 WGN API - Publicly Accessible, read-only geoJSON, API
- 3 WGN Administration System – User Interface for UNGEEN Secretariat



UNEGN World Geographical Names

Preferences | Toponym: Endonyms | Interface Languages: English

Search City, Country, Geography

- Capital city
- Cities over 100,000 inhabitants.
- No names available

mapbox

2

WGN API

The WGN API:

1. **An open access, RESTful API**, provides read-only access to the WGN database, through several API endpoints (Cities – via WGN Unique City ID, Countries – via M49 code, Languages, Romanization Systems, and other endpoints)
2. **Documented via Swagger's** Interface Description Language
3. **Provides Standardised GeoJSON**. Can be downloaded as a standalone file or be consumed into Excel or other GIS applications
4. Meets the highest requirements of the **SG's Data Strategy**, as data is available as Open Access, publicly, without restriction in machine readable formats.

Cities

GET /API/GetAllCities

Parameters

No parameters

Execute Clear

Responses

Curl

```
curl -X GET "https://usddb.southeastasia.cloudapp.azure.com:800/geonames/API/API/GetAllCities" -H "accept: */*"
```

Request URL

```
https://usddb.southeastasia.cloudapp.azure.com:800/geonames/API/API/GetAllCities
```

Server response

Code	Details
200	<p>Response body</p> <pre>{ "type": "FeatureCollection", "features": [{ "type": "Feature", "geometry": { "type": "Point", "coordinates": [15.2841339528, -4.2467319779] }, "properties": { "toponym": { "nameShort": "Brazzaville", "nameRomanised": null, "nameLang": null, "language": "French", "isCapital": true, "isRomanised": true, "cityID": 28, "toponymType": "Endonym" } } }] }</pre> <p>Response headers</p> <pre>content-length: 1256885 content-type: application/geo+json date: Tue 08 Mar 2022 01:13:11 GMT server: Microsoft-IIS/8.5 x-powered-by: ASP.NET</pre>

Response

Code	Description	Links
200	Success	No links

Country Details- Bosnia and Herzegovina

M49 Code	Continent
70	5 - Europe
ISO2	Region
BA	16 - Southern Europe
ISO3	First Official Language
BIH	SKOS URI
ISO Standard	Visualization Order
ISO 3166-1 alpha-3	
Display	
UN Member	



Map location
15.7364,42.564522,19.619699,45.276901

Historical Progression

Event D890 : State Succeeded From	D...	Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia			
Event D70 : State Succeeded To			Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina		

FootNotes

Toponyms (Since 23-Nov-2021 - 08-Mar-2022)

Endonyms

Language	Short Name	Formal Name	Source
Bosnian	Bosna i Hercegovina	Bosna i Hercegovina	UNEGN Technical reference manual for the standardization of geographical names
Croatian	Bosna i Hercegovina	Bosna i Hercegovina	UNEGN Technical reference manual for the standardization of geographical names
Serbian	Босна и Херцеговина Bosna i Hercegovina	Босна и Херцеговина Bosna i Hercegovina	UNEGN Technical reference manual for the standardization of geographical names

United Nations Languages

Language	Short Name	Formal Name	Source
Arabic	البوسنة والهرسك	البوسنة والهرسك	UN terms
Chinese	波斯尼亚和黑塞哥维那	波斯尼亚和黑塞哥维那	UN terms
English	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	UN terms
French	Bosnie-Herzégovine (la)	la Bosnie-Herzégovine	UN terms
Russian	Босния и Герцеговина	Босния и Герцеговина	UN terms
Spanish	Bosnia y Herzegovina	Bosnia y Herzegovina	UN terms



Data Governance & Developments

Data Governance

- The Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management, as part of its work plan provides ‘day-to-day’ Member State governance for the WGN Database
- The Secretariat hosts the database and is responsible for its technical development and maintenance

Future Feature Improvement and Development

- The Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management has been requested to provide “guidance for a unique identifier for cities” to help respond to Recommendation 2 of UNGEGN’s 2023 Session, and other decisions pertaining to Linked Data



Data Governance & Developments

UNGEGN Data Integration Flow

- Member States
 - Request review of existing geographic names held within the WGN database
 - Request input (in defined format) of new geographical names
 - Interlinkages with national geographical names authorities and identify national focal point(s)
 - ...?
- Authoritative Data from the UN System
 - Short Term
 - UN Demographic Yearbook – Authoritative Member State provided statistical data
 - UNTERM
 - Long Term
 - UN Gazetteer

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- **Position Paper / Concept Note for the creation of a unique identifier for cities**

Concept Note --- DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities

Chapter 4 - Universal and Unique Identifier management considerations

- Using Uniform Resource Identifiers “URIs” as global resource identifiers
- Using Universal Unique Identifiers “UUIDs”
- Assumptions for the globally unique identifiers (either URIs or UUIDs) of the WGN DB

Summary

- This paper provides concepts for the creation of a unique identifier for cities and identifies URIs and/or UUIDs as suitable mechanisms for their creation.
- The WG GNDM requests the Secretariat to pilot a unique identifier based on the URI or UUID approach!



UNEGN World Geographical Names Database

DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities
By the UNGEGN Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management

Paper Structure

1. Introduction 2
2. The WGN DB and the Group of Expert's Mandate from the 2023 Session 2
3. Background and prerequisites of the World Geographic Names Database 3
4. Universal and unique identifier management considerations..... 4
5. Summary and Point of Decision 5
6. Annex 1: The (new) WGN DB model 6
- Acknowledgements 8

Timeline and Actions

#	Task/Action	Responsibility	Status
1	Discussion of ideas for a unique identifier for cities concept for the WGN DB with colleagues from DE (BKG) and NL (Dutch Kadaster)	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
2	DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a unique identifier for cities, version 0.1	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
3	Discussions about the WGN DB and the DRAFT Position Paper with UN SD / DESA and UNGEGN Bureau members, version 0.3	UN SD	Done
4	Exchange of the DRAFT Position Paper, version 0.4, with the WG GNDM	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
5	Update of the DRAFT Position Paper, version 0.5	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
6	Discussions about the WGN DB and the updated DRAFT Position Paper with UN SD / DESA and UNGEGN Expanded Bureau members, version 0.6-0.9	UN SD	Done
7	Circulate version 0.9 to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNEGN WG GNDM --- for information UNEGN Expanded Bureau --- for information and discussion at its next meeting in February 2024 Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (EG ISGI) 	Convenor WG GNDM	January 2024 (most probably)
8	Endorsement of the Position Paper by the bodies mentioned under #7	Convenor WG GNDM	Q1/2024

Done
In progress
Delayed

The WG GNDM seeks the review and comment of relevant groups on the concepts outlined within this paper. Please contact Mr Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Pier-Giorgio.Zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de) and Mr Mark

Concept Note --- DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities

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Questions



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