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Geographical names authorities

Introduction



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Why do we need authorities for names?

- Standardized names - benefits
- Can avoid –
 - Duplication of names
 - Poorly recorded names
 - Confused applications
 - Lack of quick and easy access to data



What sort of authority is appropriate?

The choice depends on the nature of the country:

- size; diversity; type of government; languages;
- population density and distribution; layers of history

Many arrangements are possible, including:

- (1) Default if no names board
 - (2) Centralized national names board
 - (3) Decentralized to regional names boards
 - (4) A combination of (2) and (3)
- *Is it a board, a council, a commission, a committee?*



(1) Standardization – central agency/agencies

**National
Mapping Agency**

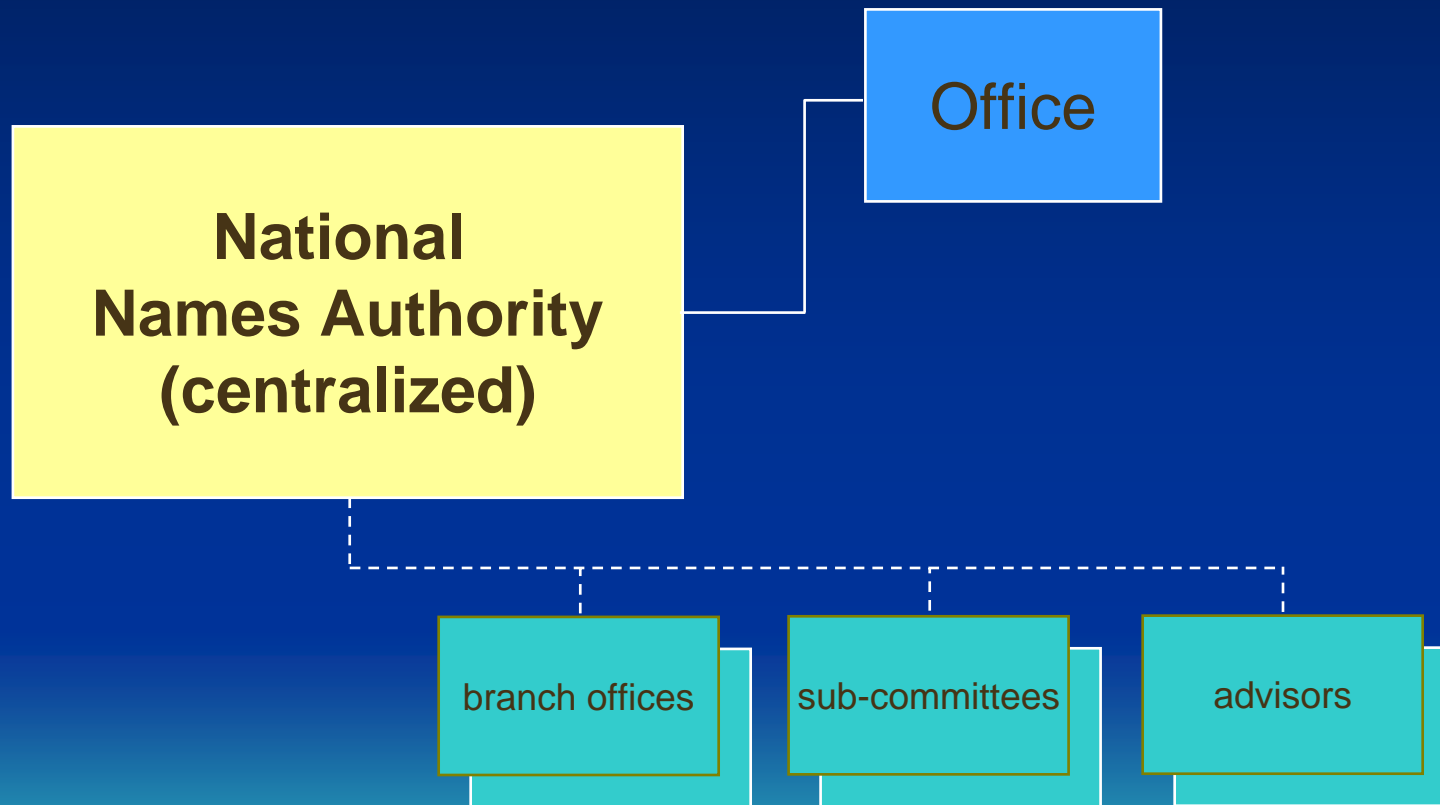
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graph TD; NMA[National Mapping Agency] --- M[Municipalities]; NMA --- NHO[National Hydrographic Office]; NMA --- MM[Military Mapping];
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Municipalities

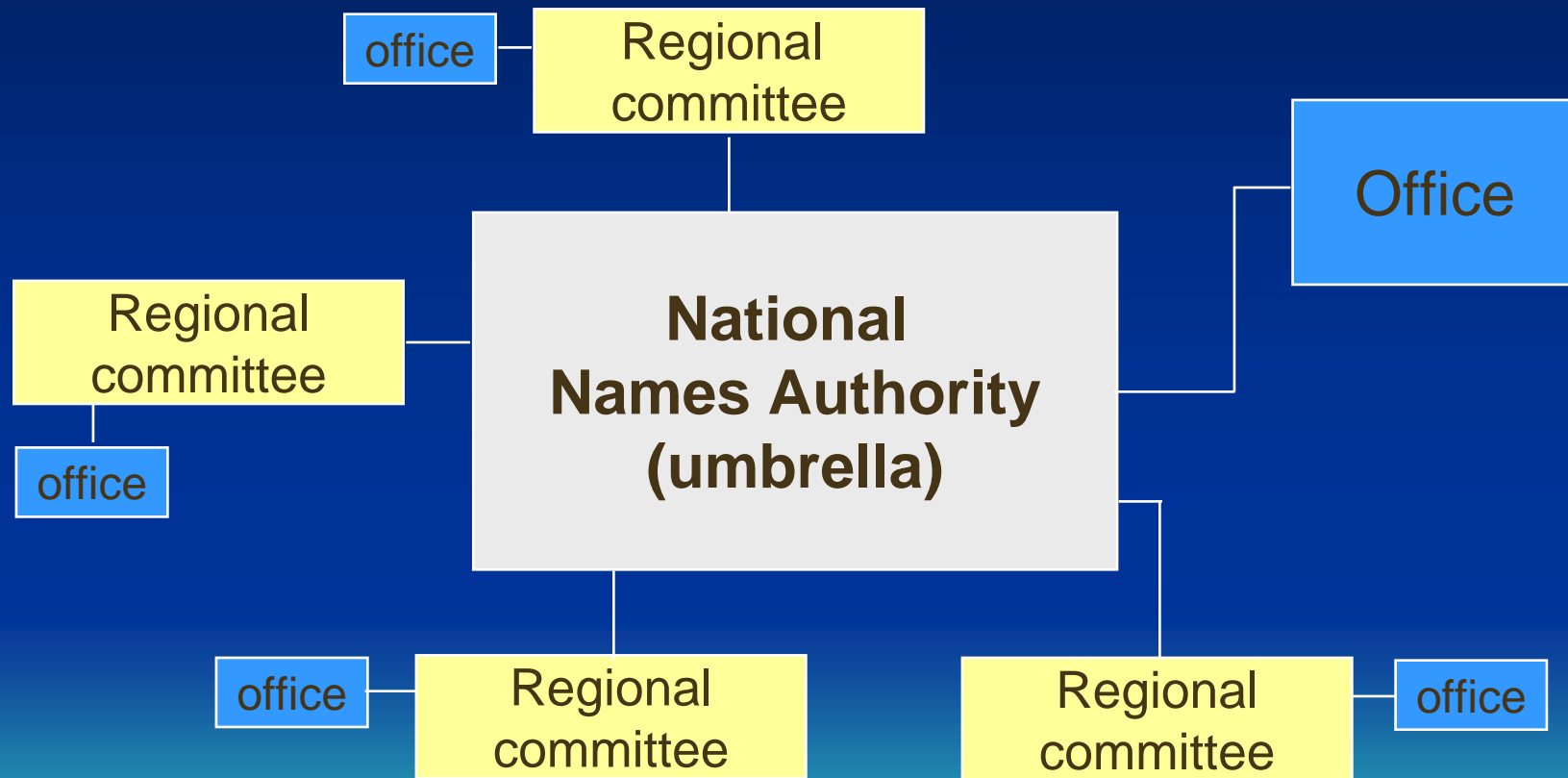
National
Hydrographic
Office

Military
Mapping

(2) Standardization – names authority (centralized)



(3) Standardization – names authority (decentralized)



(4) Standardization – names authority both centralized and decentralized

- Two levels of government make decisions
 - (a) province/regional (b) national/federal



Some considerations to discuss

- Mandate
 - For what types of names is the authority responsible?
 - Municipalities, less formal settlements, land features, hydrographic features, offshore features, streets, buildings, farms, parks, airports, docks, features outside the country, etc.
 - Final decisions or advisory?
- Legislation in effect
- Membership, meetings; policies and principles
- Problems faced? Who must use decisions?

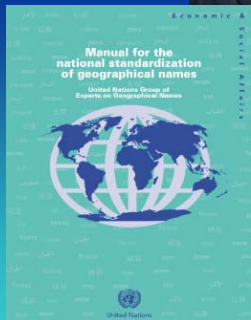


Names authorities ...

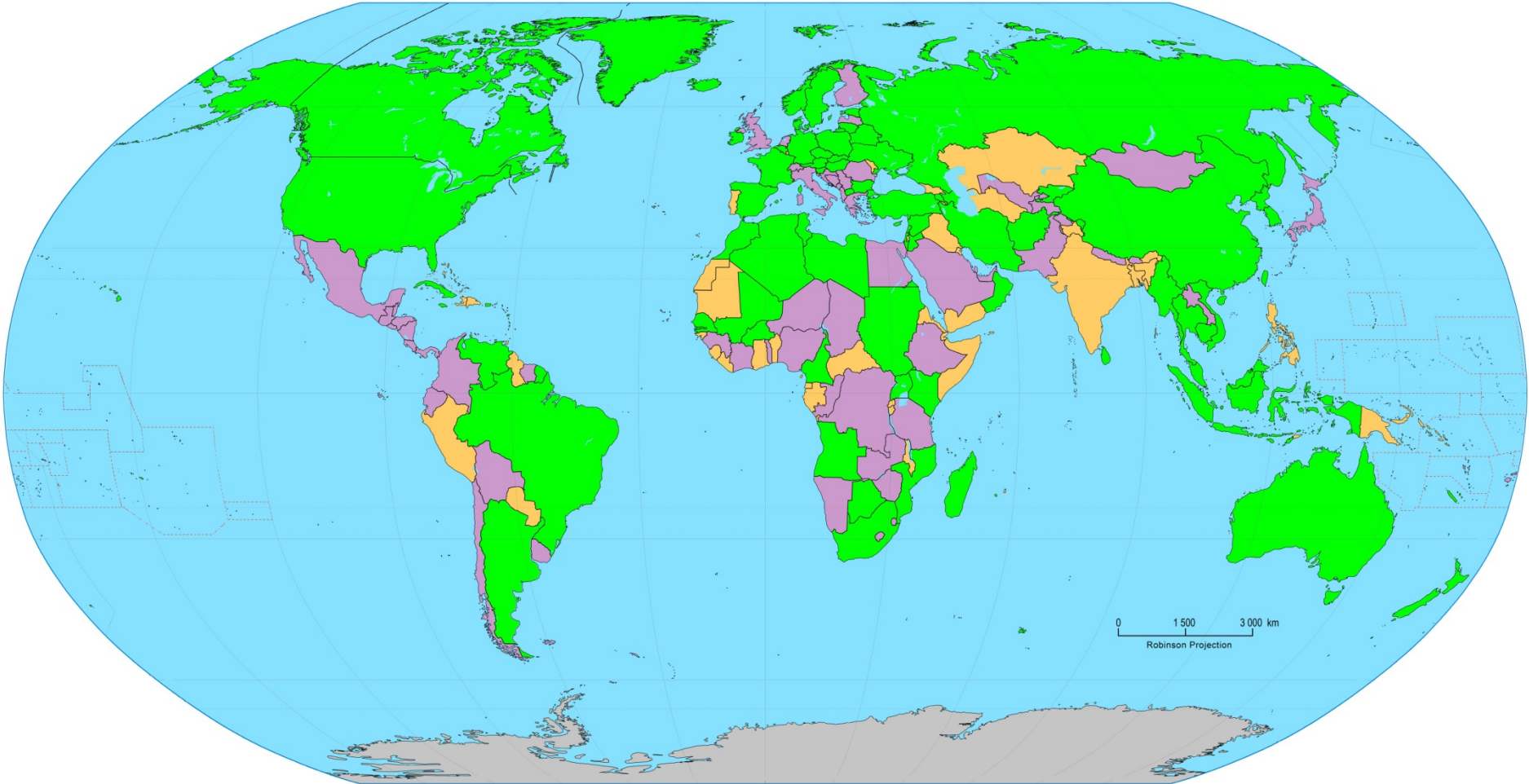
The people are the key!

Names discussions:

- A. Mongolia
- B. Canada – advisory committee
- C. Australia – NSW board



Geographical Names Authorities (May 2011)



■ With national names authorities

■ No national names authorities

■ Status unknown





Resources

- Fortunate to have UNGEGN experts
 - will indicate the variety in authorities
 - provide some best practices
- Also have UNGEGN website:
 - unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/
 - Manual for establishing authorities
 - Links to national authorities and databases
 - Documents from UN Conferences and UNGEGN
 - UNGEGN Information Bulletin

