
United Nations Group of Experts on

Geographical Names

2021 session

New York, 3 – 7 May 2021

Item 4(a) of the provisional agenda *

**Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress
made in the standardization of geographical names**

Report of the Republic of Korea

Submitted by Republic of Korea **

* GEGN.2/2021/1

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Report of the Republic of Korea¹

Summary

This paper reports on the activities of the standardization and management of geographical names by the Republic of Korea's two government agencies for the past two years, the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) and the Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency (KHOA). During the period of 2019-2020, NGII and KHOA standardized and publicly announced 1,259 natural and artificial feature names and 100 marine geographical names, respectively, through the final decision of the Korea Committee on Geographical Names (KCGN). NGII has operated an online toponymic management system in order to enhance expertise and efficiency of the attendants of local municipalities. NGII's publication in this period includes *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Korea* and a revised version of the *National Atlas of Korea*, Volume 1, 2 in Korean and in English. NGII has also researched geographical names originating from various memorial days and the zodiac of the year, and released through media houses, booklets and SNS devices. NGII has been continuing to host the web-based database of UN resolutions for geographical names standardization.

For the standardization and systematic management of marine geographical names, KHOA published the IHO Publication *Standardization of Undersea Feature Names* (B-6) as an English/Korean version and the third edition of *Standardization of Marine Geographical Names* as well as updating the gazetteer of domestic marine geographical names. In addition, KHOA delivered training programmes for elementary school students and parents, and made a promotional video and teaching materials to educate and promote marine geographical names. Furthermore KHOA has been holding the International Symposium on Application of Marine Geophysical Data and Undersea Feature Names every year since 2006 to raise the awareness of marine geographical names to global marine experts. To support marine geographical name experts with their international activities, KHOA built and operates the SCUFN Operations Web Services which include the Generic Term and Definition, Submission and Review of Proposals, and a Gazetteer (SCUFN members only).

In the Republic of Korea, names of natural and artificial features are standardized and managed by the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) and those of marine geographical features by the Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency (KHOA). The Korea Committee on Geographical Names (KCGN) functions as the final decision-making authority that reviews and decides on the names reported or proposed by NGII. In February 2021, the task of reviewing and approving marine geographical names was transferred from the KCGN to the Oceans and Fisheries Promotion Committee.

1. Standardization and management of geographical names by NGII

1.1. Standardization of geographical names, 2019~2020

During the period of 2019~2020, KCGN approved the standardization and public announcement of 1,259 natural and artificial feature names reported by NGII. According to procedural rules, new names or name changes for natural and artificial features were proposed by the local committees on

¹ This paper pertains to the UNCSGN resolutions IX/7 (Dissemination of information concerning the origin and meaning of geographical names), I/4 (National standardization), and V/6 (Promotion of national and international geographical names standardization programs).

geographical names, belonging to metropolitan, provincial, city and county authorities, and reported by NGII. Among the 1,259 standardized names, 1,234 names were for new or unnamed features while 25 names were results of renaming existing features. The total number of standardized natural and artificial names reached up to 154,109. Newly standardized names were mostly chosen from those already used by local residents or in maps but not publicly announced, e.g., small islands and peaks, or created for newly constructed features, e.g., bridges, intersections and parks. KCGN operates sub-committees for in-depth and efficient investigation of proposed names, and maintains specialized rules for naming natural and artificial features to be referenced by local municipalities, both of which are expected to improve the procedure of geographical names standardization.

1.2. A comprehensive survey of geographical names and increasing awareness

NGII has been continuing the project of maintaining geographical names dataset, based on a series of comprehensive surveys. Major standards include classification system of geographical names, principles of standardization, e.g., one name for one feature policy. In 2019, errors found in more than 30 thousand names of Gyeongsangbuk-do (province) and Gyeongsangnam-do were corrected, changed or made obsolete, producing a renewed gazetteer and database. Hereby, the comprehensive survey conducted since 2015 to the five larger areas has been completed.

In order to increase awareness of the relevance of geographical names in every-day life of people, NGII has researched and excavated geographical names originating from various memorial days, e.g., March 1 Independence Day, Hangeul Proclamation Day, and the zodiac of the year. The results are released to the public through media houses, booklets and SNS devices.

1.3. Toponymic research and publication

NGII published *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Korea* in 2020, targeted to government officials involved in geographical names management, either in the central or local level, academicians, researchers, students and even civilians interested in geographical names. Toponymic terms were selected from various sources including 298 journal articles published in 1997~2020 with the assistance of a text-mining program *R*. For the definition of terms, various Korean literature, dictionaries and encyclopedias were referenced, as well as definitions and examples of the UNGEGN Glossary.

Another significant accomplishment of NGII in 2019~2020 was the publication of a revised version of the *National Atlas of Korea*, Volume 1, 2 in Korean and in English. The revision was necessary to provide updated information on the national territory of Korea which rapidly changed for the past five years. All the entire organization, images and contents were subject to revision.

1.4. International activities related to geographical names

The NGII currently hosts the web-based database of UNCSGN resolutions, which provides a useful engine to search 211 resolutions adopted up to 2017 by Conference, subject and key words (<http://www.ngii.go.kr/portal/ungn/mainEn.do>). Since the database was launched in English in 2009, the French version was added in 2012, the Spanish version in 2015, the Korean version in 2017, and the Arabic version in 2019, so the database is now available in five languages. The database is also accessible from the UNGEGN website at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/confGeneral.html>.

NGII is considering how to accommodate new recommendations or resolutions adopted at the new UNGEGN sessions. NGII is waiting for the guidance of the UNGEGN Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation.

2. Standardization and management of marine geographical names by KHOA

2.1. Standardization and management of marine geographical names between 2019 and 2020

For the standardization and systematic management of marine geographical names, KHOA surveyed and standardized domestic and international marine geographical names between 2019 and 2020. During this period, a total of 100 marine geographical names including bay, creek, channel and rock were discovered through a survey in our jurisdictional sea area (Gangwon-do, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Gyeongsangnam-do, Jeollanam-do) and reported to the KCGN, which were then reviewed, voted and publicly announced. Furthermore, in order to name undersea feature names discovered while surveying in international waters, two naming proposals for Saenarae Ridge and Dolgae Hill were submitted to and reviewed by the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN), jointly run by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and are now listed in the GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names.

In addition, KHOA established the Act on Hydrographic Survey and Oceanographic Observation and the Use of Ocean Information to systematically acquire and leverage marine spatial information, and standardize and improve the management of ocean information. Therefore the body for reviewing and approving marine geographical names was changed from the KCGN to the Oceans and Fisheries Promotion Committee. It is expected that through this Act the management system of marine geographical names will be further reinforced, with the survey of marine geographical names specified as a basic legal plan and clarifying the scope of it.

2.2 Publication of *Standardization of Marine Geographical Names*

KHOA has published various publications for standardizing and promoting marine geographical names. As the IHO-IOC Publication *Standardization of Undersea Feature Names* (B-6) was revised to Edition 4.2.0 in 2019, KHOA translated and uploaded the English/Korean version to the IHO website so that it is easily understood and utilized by many Korean-speaking experts and the public (<https://iho.int/en/bathymetric-publications>). Moreover, in order to reflect latest international naming principles, the third edition of *Standardization of Marine Geographical Names* was issued. KHOA also published a gazetteer containing newly announced domestic marine geographical names to allow the public to easily search and utilize them widely. KHOA contributes to the standardization of marine geographical names by providing experts and the public with latest information and publications on international marine geographical names.

2.3. Outreach activities

KHOA carried out three outreach activities to promote marine geographical names domestically and internationally.

Firstly, two domestic training programmes were run for elementary school students and their parents to expand the awareness of marine geographical names, which was attended by 40 participants in 2019. The programmes focused on hands-on activities to increase the level of interest, such as making undersea features and key rings with nautical charts.

Secondly, KHOA made a promotional video and teaching materials to educate and promote marine geographical names. The video was produced to a level that can be understood from elementary school students to adults, focusing on what marine geographical names are and how they are used in our lives. A teaching material for marine geographical names was made in the form of a notepad to attract visual curiosity, and a paper model kit for undersea feature names was produced. Based on these activities KHOA looks forward to expanding the scope of education and participation. (link to the video:

<https://youtu.be/rxx9roqrU-w>)

Thirdly, for the standardization of marine geographical names, KHOA has hosted annual international symposiums and an experts' forum by inviting experts from home and abroad. KHOA has been holding the symposium every year since 2006 and has held the International Symposium on Application of Marine Geophysical Data and GEBCO Outreach Activities in 2019. Considering the pandemic situation, a forum in a hybrid format was organized in 2020 by inviting experts on marine geographical names. The forum consisted of five presentations for the advancement of marine geographical names and a discussion session. It was an excellent opportunity for the experts to understand the latest trends such as research on marine geographical names and seabed characteristics, and to discuss technologies related to marine geographical names even in this contactless era.

2.4. International activities

As part of its international activities, KHOA worked with the IHO Secretariat and SCUFN to build and operate the SCUFN Operations Web Services (OWS) which facilitate the activities of SCUFN, including the Generic Term and Definition page. The SCUFN OWS now has improved Generic Term and Definition page, an updated naming proposal template from the revised Publication B-6, and a manual for its users. Undersea feature names (UFNs) proposals can also be submitted and reviewed online even when face-to-face meetings are difficult due to the pandemic. (link to the SCUFN website: <https://scufn.ops-webservices.kr>)

Additionally, KHOA has continued to support the activities of the Outreach Working Group under the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) Guiding Committee. The Working Group has been recognized for the importance of outreach activities since 2018 and has been promoted to the Subcommittee on Communications Outreach and Public Engagement (SCOPE). KHOA has been working with SCOPE for the past two years to improve the functions, structure and design of SCOPE website to promote marine geographical names using GEBCO data. The newly designed website provides various contents such as world map puzzles and quizzes for educators and students, and posters and brochures related to GEBCO activities were produced for promotional activities. (link to the SCOPE website: <http://www.gebco-outreach.net>)

Points for discussion:

The Group of Experts is invited to:

- (a) Take note of the report and progress made by the Republic of Korea; and
- (b) Express its views on the issues raised in support of strengthening the operation and work of the Group of Experts.