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Geographical Names  
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Item 11 of the provisional agenda \*  
Toponymic Terminology**

**Publication of the Glossary of Terms for the  
Standardization of Geographical Names in Korea**

Submitted by Republic of Korea \*\*

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## Publication of the Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Korea<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

This paper informs of the publication of *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Korea* by the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) of the Republic of Korea in 2020. In 2012, NGII translated the *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names* into Korean, which was published by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) in 2002 and amended in 2007, and submitted it for an upload at the UNGEGN website. While this translated version was a useful reference for geographical names research and management in Korea, there has been a growing need for a glossary of terms specific to the toponymic usage in Korean. NGII in this regard initiated a project of publishing a Korean-specific glossary and motivated experts to participate. A broader search of terms used in the Korean toponymic research and administration was conducted with the assistance of a text-mining program *R*. Definitions were given, which were accompanied by examples when needed, in cooperation with toponymists, linguists, geographers and historians.

National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) of the Republic of Korea published *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Korea* (한국 지명 용어집, *Hanguk Jimyeong Yongeojip*) in December 2020. The book is targeted to government officials, either in the central or local level, academicians, researchers, students and even civilians in Korea. The initiation of this publication dates back to 2012 when NGII translated the UNGEGN Glossary into Korean.

### Translation of the UNGEGN Glossary versus the need for a Korean glossary

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) published the *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names* in 2002 and amended it in 2007. The 392 terms listed as the result of the amendment and their definitions and examples provided strong reference and knowledge for geographical names standardization. NGII included this glossary in its project of translating UNGEGN reference materials into Korean in 2012. The glossary in Korean with other translated materials was submitted to the UNGEGN Secretariat and uploaded at its website.<sup>2</sup> This translated glossary functioned as a useful guide for Korean readers to understand those terms used in English or in languages adopting roman characters, and coincide them with those used in Korean.

There has been growing recognition, however, of the need for publishing a glossary of terms specific to the toponymic usage in Korean which should be produced to fit to the Korean settings, e.g., language characteristics, history of research, administrative environment, and so on. In some more detail, the following points should be noted:

- Geographical names used in Korean have been largely influenced by the *Hanja* (한자, 漢字) writing system which borrowed and adopted Chinese characters, even after the invention of the Korean script *Hangeul* in 1443. Hanja characters are basically logographic in which every

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<sup>1</sup> This working paper pertains to the UNCSGN resolutions VIII/3 (Work Group on Terminology of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names) and I/4 (National Standardization).

<sup>2</sup> Its address is [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/documents/Glossary\\_final.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/documents/Glossary_final.pdf).

character and its parts have a meaning. Many toponymic terms have also been created in Hanja which may or may not be matched by those in roman-character languages.

- The Korean toponymic research has a long history of analyzing the etymology, evolution, and use of individual geographical names, and categorizing and generalizing them, based on the conventional use of Korean in the Korean social and cultural environment. This tradition motivated the invention of unique terms in Korean. Examples include 지명어(地名語, jimyeong-eo, *literally* geographical name with linguistic characteristics) and 종지명호칭(從地名呼稱, jong-jimyeong-hoching, *literally* a name calling a person to his/her hometown, suggested as geonymy).
- The management of geographical names in Korea is highly centralized, including collection, standardization and database maintenance, which has led to the creation of a number of legal and administrative terms. Examples include 행정지명(行政地名, haengjeong-jimyeong, *literally*, administrative name) and terms for sub-divisional administrative areas.

### **Editing process**

As NGII initiated a project of publishing a Korean glossary, a research team was organized with an advisory committee, composed of toponymists, linguists, geographers and historians. The first step was to collect toponymic terms from various sources including:

- UNGEGN Glossary of Terms, 2002, 2007 and a working draft processed by the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Terminology as of April 2019;
- All 210 journal articles published in the *Journal of the Place Name Society of Korea*, 1998~2019;
- 87 journal articles published in geography and cartography journals in Korea with the subject of toponymy, 1997~2020; and
- A book *Research in Korean Toponyms*, published by the Place Name Society of Korea in 2007.

Each of the UNGEGN terms was closely scrutinized for its validity for the Korean glossary. In order to analyze words contained in the articles and the book mentioned above, the project team adopted a text-mining program *R* which was evaluated as a strong tool for big data analysis with its visualization scheme. The program *R* enabled a frequency table to be produced from more than 1.1 million words contained in the materials. 397 words were selected and discussed to assess the validity as entries of the glossary. Through all these processes, 144 terms were finally selected.

For the second step of the editing, giving definitions and examples, a series of meetings were held with the research team, advisory committee and additional experts. Various Korean literature, dictionaries and encyclopedias were referenced, as well as definitions and examples of the UNGEGN Glossary. A final draft was also sent to attendants of local municipalities for their input.

144 terms are classified into six categories according to their characteristics and usage, which compose each section of the glossary. These are:

- Toponyms in general;
- Linguistic elements of toponyms;
- Various forms of toponyms;
- Classification of toponyms;
- Procedure of the standardization of toponyms; and
- Toponymic publication and management.

**Future development**

It is expected that *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Korea* serves as a useful reference for its target users including government officials involved in geographical names management, either in the central or local level, academicians, researchers, students and even civilians interested in geographical names. In order to realize this expectation, there should be a series of feedbacks from each of those user groups and subsequent revisions. NGII is planning to organize discussion forums for this purpose with the help of experts.

Publishing language-specific glossaries of terms could be a challenge in the standardization of geographical names which may be situated in some specific nature of each language and culture. It is suggested to take note of any development paths to facilitate this publication, e.g., adopting a recommendation/resolution or organizing a discussion forum in line with the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Terminology.

**Points for discussion:**

**The Group of Experts is invited to:**

- (a) Take note of the report and progress made by the Republic of Korea concerning its publication of glossary of terms; and
- (b) Express its views on the suggestion to consider development paths to facilitate the publication of language-specific glossaries of terms.

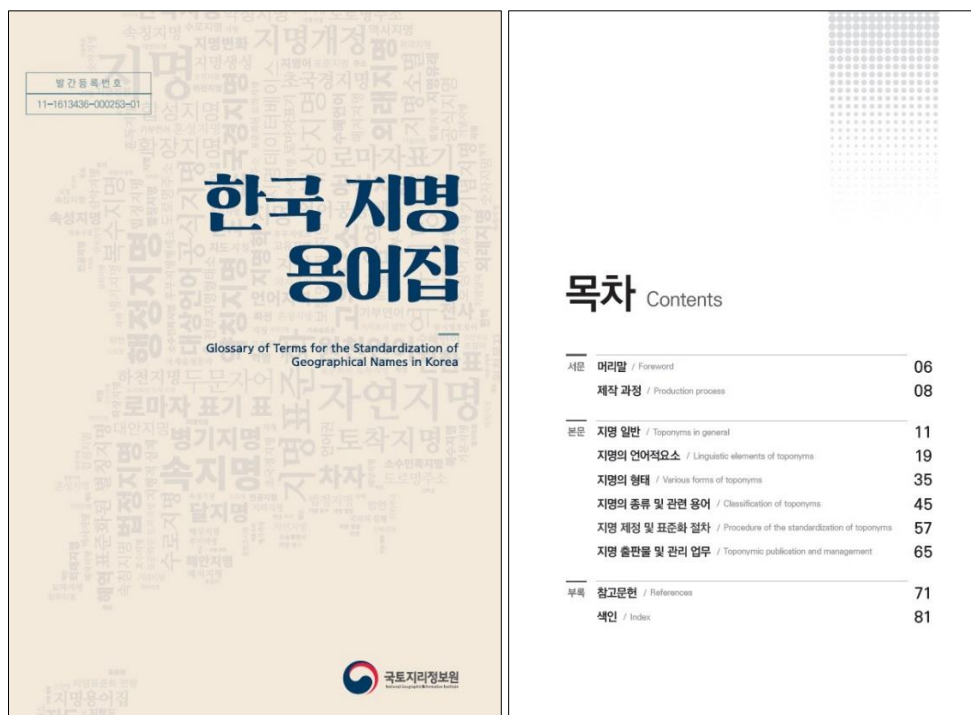


Figure 1. Cover and content pages of *Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names in Korea*