

24 March 2023

English

**United Nations Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
2023 session**

New York, 1 – 5 May 2023

Item 4(a) of the provisional agenda *

**Reports: Governments on the situation in their country
and on progress made in the standardization of geographical names**

Report of the Republic of Korea

Submitted by Republic of Korea **

Summary

This paper describes the national initiatives made by the two geographic information agencies, the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) and the Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency (KHOA), in managing and standardizing geographical and marine names in Korea over the past two years (2021-2022). The NGII conducted several toponym projects officializing 1,717 standardized names of geographic features, expanding qualitative toponymic data and information, providing standardized geographic information to domestic and overseas consumers, and holding international cooperation programs. The KHOA modernized and standardized the use of marine geographical names through the recently enacted Act on Marine Research and the Use of Marine Information. It also conducted a full-scale investigation of previously promulgated marine geographical names to reflect local indigenous cultural heritages. In addition, the KHOA established a roadmap to incorporate the marine geographical names curriculum in accordance with UNGEGN strategic plans. Both agencies also engaged in international cooperation and implementing UNGEGN's strategic plan to facilitate the standardization of geographical names.

* GEGN.2/2023/1

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Report of the Republic of Korea¹

This paper describes activities related to managing and standardizing geographical and marine names in Korea over the past 2 years (2021–2022). In the Republic of Korea, the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) and the Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency (KHOA) are responsible for managing geographical and marine names, respectively.

The NGII officialized 1,717 standardized names of natural and artificial geographic features over the past 2 years through the Korea Committee on Geographical Names (KCGN), the final decision-making body. In addition, the NGII formed a subcommittee within the KCGN to ensure in-depth and efficient reviews for naming. During this period, the NGII focused on reinforcing and expanding the qualitative data and information of geographical names in Seoul and its metropolitan area. Furthermore, online services such as “card news” and “naming” with the zodiac of the year were promoted to share the increased value and use of geographic information with consumers. Moreover, the NGII provided standardized geographic information to domestic and overseas consumers by publishing the Geographic Name Work Manual, the National Map of Korea (volume 3), and the revised youth edition of the National Map of Korea. For transnational cooperation related to the standardization of geographical names, the NGII established and internationally disseminated databases of the resolutions of United Nations Committee on Geographical Names (UNCSGN) and the recommendations of United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). Along the same lines, it held seminars and cooperation programs with 21 Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) member countries to make exchanges with Latin American geographic experts.

The KHOA took the initiative in enacting the Act on Marine Research and the Use of Marine Information to implement the UNGEGN Strategic Plans and established a legal system for investigation, standardization, and systematic management of marine geographical names in February 2021 (UNGEGN Strategy 1 and Strategy 3). Following the new law’s entry into force, it has conducted a full-scale investigation of the previously promulgated marine geographical names. This initiative seeks to modernize and standardize the use of marine geographical names through the discovery and recognition of indigenous geographical names, which are integral to intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the project aims to establish a roadmap to reflect the marine geographical names curriculum (UNGEGN Strategy 2, Strategy 4, and Strategy 5). To further international cooperation, the KHOA operates SCUFN operation Web Services to facilitate the international standardization of geographical names among marine toponymic experts (UNGEGN Strategy 2).

1. Standardization, operation, and management of geographical names by the NGII

1.1. Geographical name standardization achievements, 2021–2022

From 2021 to 2022, the Korea Committee on Geographical Names (KCGN) standardized 1,717 natural and artificial geographic names presented by the NGII. With this number put in sub-categories, 1,637 new names, 36 name changes, and 44 name abolitions were adopted over the 2 years. The newly adopted names are being used in official government maps and data. In addition, a subcommittee within the KCGN has been operating to improve the fairness and efficiency of the name review process. In 2022, a new *Geographic Name Work Manual* was also created and distributed to enhance the ability of those responsible for geographic name standardization.

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).

1.2. Expansion and promotion of qualitative information for geographical names

The NGII established the "Long-term Development Plan for Geographical Names Information Expansion and Geographical Names Operations" in 2020. This plan envisaged expanded compilation of qualitative information, such as origin and meaning of geographical names, for 6,200 geographical names in the Seoul metropolitan area in 2021. In 2022, information compilation for 5,200 geographical names in the northern part of the Seoul metropolitan area was also expanded, further enhancing the foundation for standardizing geographical names. In addition, the NGII expanded the sharing and promotion of various cultural heritage attributes of geographical names by disclosing information on 731 geographical names related to the 12 Zodiac signs of the Asian calendar in 2021 (the year of the cow). In 2022, the NGII continued to promote geographical names by creating card news containing geographical name information related to major events for each date, which were displayed via a pop-up window on the NGII website. Sharing geographical names and their associated attribute information promotes a greater understanding of the origins of these names and fosters stronger emotional connections to local regions among residents and users alike.

1.3. Publications related to geographical names

Since publishing the first National Atlas of the Republic of Korea in 2007, the NGII has continuously updated information on the changing geography of the country, as well as its economic, social, and cultural activities. In 2021, the NGII published the third edition of the National Atlas of the Republic of Korea (in Korean and English), followed by a revised edition for youths (in Korean and English) in 2022. The NGII updated the *Geographic Name Work Manual* to help those responsible for naming tasks deal with changes in laws and systems, and distributed it to local governments throughout the country. This work improved the efficiency of geographical standardization tasks.

1.4. International cooperation on geographical naming

The NGII is actively contributing to international geographical standardization efforts by incorporating and implementing 211 resolutions from the United Nations Committee on Geographical Names (UNCSGN) and 9 recommendations from the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). To promote international cooperation on geographical standardization, the NGII has compiled and coded UNCSGN resolutions and UNGEGN recommendations into a database in five languages (Korean, English, French, Spanish, and Arabic) and provided it to UNGEGN. The database is publicly accessible on the UNGEGN website. The Republic of Korea aims to facilitate the readability of resolutions and recommendations to promote UNGEGN member countries' convenience and geographical standardization in the international community.

In 2019, the NGII joined as a permanent observer country of the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) and held an online "Seminar on Geographical Names and Spatial Information" in 2021. When hosting the "Geographical Names and Spatial Information Capacity Enhancement Program" in 2022, the NGII invited 18 experts and officials from 21 PAIGH member countries to share their accumulated knowledge of South Korea's geographical naming system operation and spatial information management capabilities, and expanded cooperation and exchange related to geographical standardization with countries in Central and South America.

1.5. Establishment of operational measures for UNGEGN's strategic plan

In 2022, the NGII prepared a response plan to analyze and evaluate the resolutions and strategic plans of the Second UNGEGN Session held in 2021. This process aimed to determine the direction and derive implementation strategies for the Republic of Korea's future domestic and foreign toponym standardization projects. To develop the response plan, the NGII analyzed the toponym standardization implementation plans and progress of UNGEGN member countries, which were linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on this analysis, the NGII developed a toponym standardization strategy for the Republic of Korea along with its implications. The NGII discovered 17 executable projects, categorized according to the characteristics of five strategies. The NGII then established priorities for these projects in conjunction with the Second Medium-term Plan for

Geographical Names (2021-2030) and summarized the 17 execution plans according to UNGEGN's strategic plan.

<Strategy 1> Technical expertise

- ① Development of strategies and policies for visualizing and integrating achievements related to the linkage, contribution, and integration of UN SDGs and toponymic data
- ② Researching the relationship between domestic toponymic data and the SDGs agenda, and identifying specific achievements of government activities
- ③ Establishment and service of toponymic database management and integration system previously constructed
- ④ Development of new technology and utilization methods for advanced use of toponymic data

<Strategy 2> Relationships, links and connections

- ① Analysis of Korea's contribution to linking UNGEGN and UN-GGIM, and implications regarding toponyms of interest
- ② Establishment of networks among UNGEGN participating government agencies, experts, and Korean National Commission for UNESCO
- ③ Promotion of geographical names as intangible cultural heritage and organization of seminars targeting the domestic public
- ④ Continued cooperation with the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) in the toponymic field

<Strategy 3> Effective work programmes

- ① Support for UNGEGN activities
- ② Research on toponymic standardization resolutions and operation of databases
- ③ Identification and training of toponymic experts

<Strategy 4> Culture, heritage and language recognition

- ① Establishing the database of geographical names as cultural heritage
- ② Development of the academic concept and educational foundation of geographical names as cultural heritage
- ③ Establishment of a toponymic-related WIKI

<Strategy 5> Promotion and capacity building

- ① Strengthening the international promotion of Korean geographical names and the toponymic database
- ② Developing online/offline toponym education programs for toponymic managers
- ③ Creating toponymic education modules through a website targeting the general public.

2. Standardization and management of marine geographical names by the KHOA

2.1. Standardization achievements and policy reform in marine toponymy (UNGEKN Strategy 1 and Strategy 3)

The KHOA conducted marine toponym surveys to establish standardized and correct marine nomenclature, as emphasized in UNGEKN strategies 1 and 3, and for systematic management. Research has been conducted to improve laws and systems to support smooth and systematic coordination and efficient operations between local residents, public officials, and toponym decision-makers.

1) *Standardization of marine geographical names (Strategy 1)*

The KHOA carried out marine toponymic surveys in Jeju waters and other areas in 2021, and developed a plan in 2022 to enhance the survey and management of marine toponyms with the objective of adopting a systematic management approach for previously surveyed and promulgated marine toponyms. The KHOA reorganized and integrated the existing marine toponym list by extracting and listing marine toponym information from data containing marine toponyms such as nautical charts, navigation routes, and local survey tables. It established a foundation of information by deriving 70 detailed management items from eight categories, including announcement information and topographic features. To ensure consistency and uniformity in each management item, the KHOA defined standards for each item, such as data format and writing conditions, and devised specific writing methods.

2) *Improvement to the existing framework (Strategy 3)*

The KHOA took the initiative in enacting the *Act on Marine Research and the Use of Marine Information*, which entered into force in February 2021 to standardize and systematically manage marine toponyms. This law stipulates marine toponymic surveys as a basic legal plan and clarifies its scope. It also establishes a legal framework for surveying and managing marine toponyms by changing the deliberation and decision-making body from the KCGN to the Marine Fishery Development Committee.

2.2. Updating and reinforcing the capacity for marine geographical naming through cooperation among toponymic stakeholders (UNGEKN Strategy 2 and Strategy 5)

The KHOA has worked on updating the designated marine toponyms and exploring ways to enhance the use of standardized toponyms as part of the emphasis on relationships, connections, and linkages in strategies 2 and 5. This work includes reflecting marine toponyms in the school curriculum of toponymic courses and seeking ways to share and link marine toponymic information.

1) *Enhancing standardization awareness by updating marine geographical names and encouraging communication among marine toponymic stakeholders (Strategy 2)*

In order to standardize marine geographical names, the first step was to update the existing names based on the latest marine survey results through an analysis of changes in the terrain. An investigation of errors in the names of unique and attribute features of marine geographical names within marine navigational publications such as charts and pilot books was also carried out, and these errors were corrected. Then, in order to propose modifications to this standardized and up-to-date marine geographical name information, ways to share information on marine geographical names with other map-related agencies were explored.

2) *Developing a roadmap for incorporating marine geographical names into the school curriculum as a capacity-building program (Strategy 5)*

To reflect ocean toponymy in the curriculum, the KHOA evaluated and analyzed the results of past studies on ocean toponymy education (2006–2007), teacher training programs (2009–2016), and marine exploration schools (2013–2019). The KHOA

also surveyed the current state of ocean toponymy education in Korea and developed a roadmap to promote ocean toponymy education by establishing a network between schools, educational institutions, ocean research and exhibition institutions.

2.3. Link with UN SDGs and research for preserving cultural heritage as endonyms (UNGEKN Strategy 4)

To preserve indigenous cultural heritage and language, the KHOA explored the correlation between indigenous place names and foreign place names to increase an understanding of indigenous place names. In line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, the KHOA also sought to reflect social issues and values such as human rights, respect for minority groups, and inclusivity in place names as intangible cultural heritage. The KHOA conducted foundational research to establish a continuous research basis for developing and disseminating indigenous place names and worked with local residents who were knowledgeable about place names to enhance an understanding of their importance in preserving local folk culture. Additionally, the KHOA identified eight foreign place names that may be considered for replacement with indigenous place names based on historical and geographical evidence and explored ways to make the changes.

2.4. Strengthening the standardization of marine geographical names through international cooperation (UNGEKN Strategy 2)

As part of the international cooperation and collaboration emphasized in Strategy 2, the KHOA analyzed the Cookbook recently under development by SCUFN to enhance international standardization and increase awareness of marine place names. The research focused on identifying the classification criteria for various submarine features, with a particular emphasis on ridges and guyots. Additionally, the study aimed to understand the morphological characteristics of the seafloor. The KHOA analyzed previously proposed international marine feature names and compared them with existing research to establish technical criteria for assigning valid attribute names to submarine features. Ultimately, this effort can contribute to ensuring uniformity and clarity in attribute naming for submarine features used worldwide. The KHOA compiled a list of candidate names to support the ongoing international registration of marine place names and established a systematic database to facilitate continuous improvement and management.

2.5. Plans

The KHOA will conduct research on the effective management of the marine geographical naming system, the role of standardized geographical names concerning the UN SDGs, and how to implement them. The KHOA will also publish the fourth edition of the *Guideline for Standardization of Marine Geographical Names* to further research on the standardization and promotion of marine geographical names and support capacity-building activities.

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 applicability of Korea's toponym standardization project and its implications for the strategic plans and objectives of UNGEKN.