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Geographical Names**
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Geographical names data management

Geographical names database of Saudi Arabia

Summary**

Geographical names provide cultural, historical and political orientation and identity to geographical places with one or more official or unofficial names. They are location identifiers for man-made and natural features of the real world, such as districts, regions, or any feature of public or historical interest. Geographical names can be used for mapping, gazetteers, and various services. Geographical names are usually collected through field surveys conducted by experienced surveyors, and they are stored in a geographical names database.

The General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information of Saudi Arabia focuses on surveying and mapping in the areas of topography, geodesy and hydrography. As the custodian of geographical names in Saudi Arabia, the General Authority strives to collect, store, manage and update geographical names with the help of innovative tools in the industry. Geographical names are stored in a geographical names database developed and managed by the geographical names department in the General Authority.

The geographical names database of Saudi Arabia was developed by the General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information in 2014, in alignment with National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency standards and contains the data available at that time as well as updates thereto with the names from projects carried out subsequently. Geographical names are collected in the field by surveyors using field geographical information system devices and software. The database includes about 140,000 names from all over Saudi Arabia.

The geographical names database stores all the information pertaining to a geographical name, such as the Roman name, classification details, alternate names, coordinates of the name, administrative area information, pictures of the feature and voice files providing pronunciation of the name. The geographical names database

* [GEGN.2/2023/1](#).

** The full report was prepared by Talal Rabee Al Shafaay, member of the National Committee for Geographical Names, General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information. It will be available under document symbol GEGN.2/2023/91/CRP.91, in the language of submission only, at https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/sessions/3rd_session_2023/.



also stores feature extents of a name, such as a polygon and a line by linking them with the name point using a unique identification system. Geographical names are represented as a point feature class, and the extent of the names are represented with a polygon and a line feature class. In the database, geographical names have been classified into eight major classes: administrative boundary name, area name, cultivation name, cultural name, hydrographic name, populated place name, relief name, and road and/or railroad name.

The geographical names database schema will be redesigned in the near future by adding new details to benefit a wide range of users, and it will also be linked with other major databases in the General Authority for Survey and Geospatial Information, such as the land use/land cover database and the Geospatial Information Centre database.
