



UNGEEN's Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management (WG GNDM)

**Side event: World Geographical Names Database
and a Unique Identifier For Cities
at UNGEEN, 1 May 2025**

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu, Convenor
Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG)

**United Nations Group of Experts
On Geographical Names (UNGEEN)**

Promoting the collection, standardization and dissemination of geographical names



Content

- Some words on the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management...
- The Concept of the global Unique Identifier for Cities



Work Plan and Actions 2023-2027

Statistics Division

TOPICS ▾

DATA ▾

METHODOLOGY ▾

EVENTS ▾

PUBLICATIONS

ABOUT ▾



UNGEGN

United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names

United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Working Groups > Geographical Names Data Management

Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management

Convenor

► Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Germany), E-mail pier-giorgio.zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de

Scope of work

To respond to UN resolutions and UN data needs, this Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management addresses various issues of geographical names data processing, including the creation, maintenance and outputs of geographical names data files (including gazetteer production) and aspects of data exchange formats and standards. Issues of providing geographical names information within national and international spatial data infrastructures (SDIs) through web (gazetteer) services and multipurpose database solutions in the context of SDIs as well as the utilization of volunteered geographic information and crowd sourced data are becoming more and more important.

UNGEGN

- Meetings
- Mandate
- Resolutions
- Divisions
- Working Groups
- Bureau and Convenors
- Liaison Officers
- Resources
- Events
- Links
- Contact
- UNGEGN/UN-GGIM Collaborative Project

https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/working_groups/wg2.cshtml

Work plan

Actions 2023-2027

Reports

Meetings

Suggested websites

[UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029](#)

ion of geographical names



Wiki

- Wiki will change the domain!!!
- <https://wiki.gdi-de.org/spaces/wgtdfg/pages/7569720/Working+Group+on+Geographical+Names+Data+Management+of+UNGEGN>
- <https://share.bkg.bund.de/spaces/wgtdfg/pages/55705885/Working+Group+on+Geographical+Names+Data+Management+of+UNGEGN>

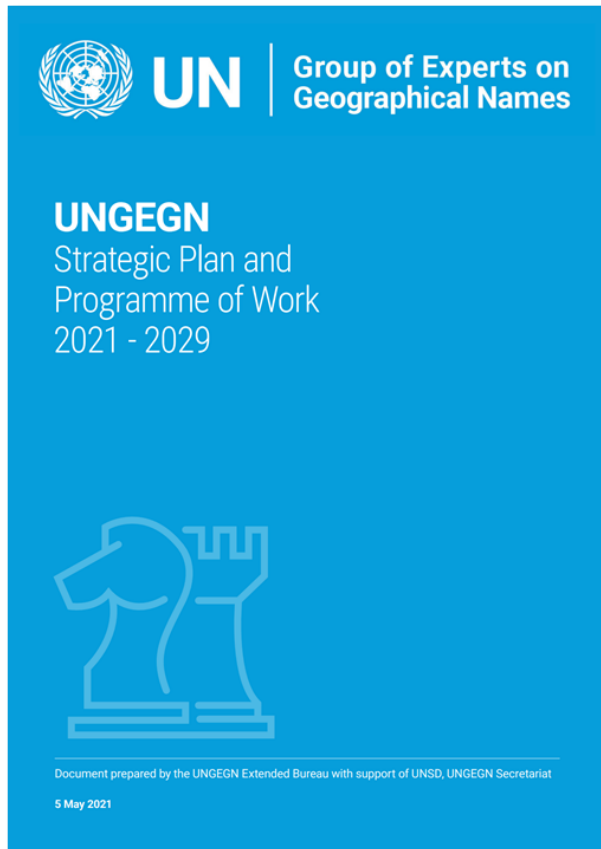
The screenshot shows the UNGEGN Wiki page. The header includes navigation links like 'Startseite', 'Interner Austausch', 'Arbeitskreise- und gruppen', 'Fachnetzwerke', 'Europäische Aktivitäten', 'Komponenten', 'GDIs', 'Netzwerk', and 'Projekte'. The main content area is titled 'Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management of UNGEGN'. It includes a brief description of the group's mission and a list of actions for 2020-2022. The sidebar on the left contains links to 'Seiten', 'Blog', 'Kalender', and 'BEREICHVERKNÜPFUNGEN'.

United Nations Group of Experts On Geographical Names (UNGEGN)

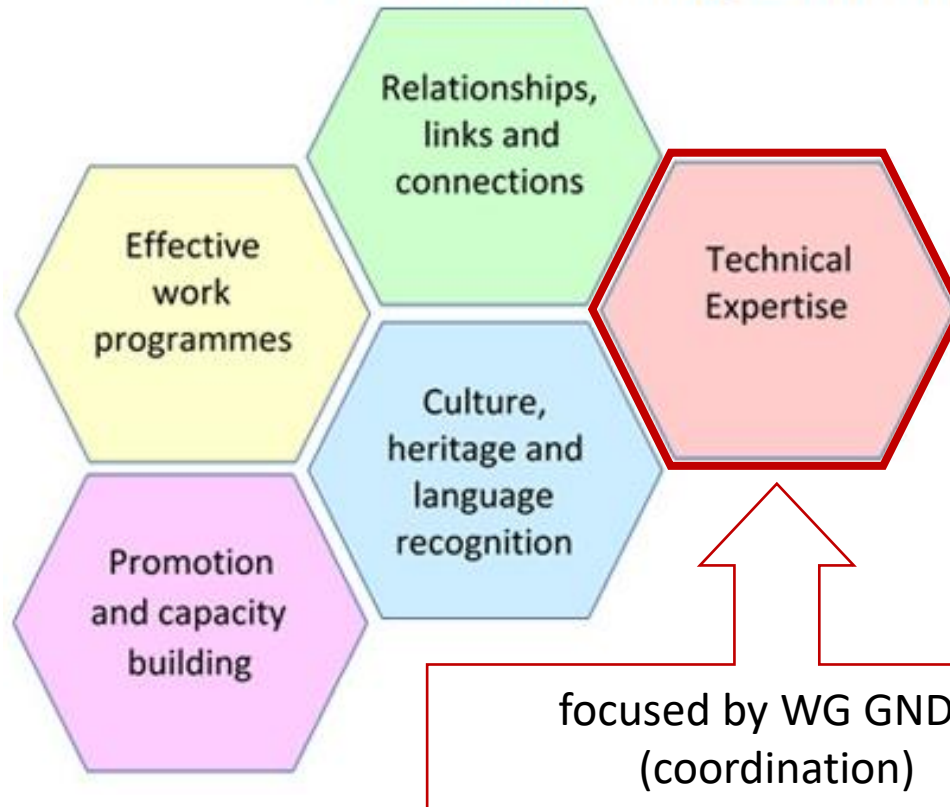
Promoting the collection, standardization and dissemination of geographical names



Strategic Plan and Programme of Work



The UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029



https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/documents/UNEGN_Strategic_Plan_2021_V4.pdf

Member States, Divisions and Working Groups are invited to begin the implementation of the UNGEGN Strategic Plan and Programme of Work 2021-2029.

**United Nations Group of Experts
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Strategic Plan and Programme of Work

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Strategy 1: Technical expertise

- Deliver technical expertise and advice to interested parties in Member States for geographical names standardization, including romanization and quality geographical names data and gazetteer management as well as interoperability;
- Develop, extend and share good data management practices of Member States; and
- Identify trends on developments and future direction for geographical names data management and encourage the use of innovative methods, integrated approaches and technological advances to further the aims of UNGEGN.



Strategic Plan and Programme of Work

No.	Action items	Actors/ responsibility	Output and time frame
1-i-1	Provide consultancy to the developments related to the UNGEGN database, UNCEA "UNCEA Africa GeoNyms database/gazetteer initiative", the INSPIRE initiative, the UN and European gazetteer projects, the GIS web-based World Geonames Application and other projects of developing countries.	Bureau, WG GNDM, Task Team of Africa.	Report on progress for each UNGEGN session to 2029 (if appropriate to be included in the report of the WG GNDM). Contributions to training courses on Toponymy to be assessed annually.
1-i-2	Evaluate and assess exchange standards for geographical names information and for web services (gazetteer, feature and mapping) for the provision of geographical names information. (comprising the review of Part II of the UNGEGN Technical Reference Manual).	WG GNDM.	Report on exchange standards in 2023.
1-i-3	Present geographical names data management topics at national and international conferences organized in the fields of geospatial information management.	WG GNDM.	Assess annually.
1-i-4	Promote, agree and disseminate romanization systems for national and global use.	WG GNDM, WG GNCH, WG RS.	Assess annually.
1-i-5	Promote and support the establishment of an authoritative international database/gazetteer of geographical names to be disseminated to the public through UNGEGN.	Bureau, WG GNDM, WG GNCH, WG RSs.	Report on opportunities for an international database/gazetteer activity in 2023.

No.	Action items	Actors/ responsibility	Output and time frame
1-ii-6	Examine processes and recommend good practice: a. on how single and multi-jurisdictional Member States record, store, disseminate and manage their geographical names. b. for the reuse and validation of volunteered geographic information, crowd sourced data and Linked Open Data (LOD) as part of national geographical names standardization work. c. for the use of standardized geographical names as fundamental data theme in national spatial data infrastructures (SDIs) within the monitoring of the SDG indicator framework in order to analyze and monitor the changes in a country.	WG GNDM, WG GNCH, WG RS.	Report on good practices for each UNGEGN session to 2029.
1-ii-7	Promote the use of the online discussion forum (Wiki) e.g.: a. on the relationship UNGEGN – UN-GGIM or SDG indicator monitoring. b. on data modelling and database design. c. on general issues in the context of data maintenance (like feature classifications). d. on geographical names data production and distribution in the context of national, regional or global Spatial Data Infrastructures (SDIs).	WG GNDM.	Assess annually.
1-iii-8	Monitor the availability of free and easily-accessible authorized digital geographical names data as it is seen as a key driver in encouraging the use of nationally-standardized geographical names.	WG GNDM.	Assess annually.
1-iii-9	Organize workshops and on innovative, research and/or technical issues/topics like e.g. volunteered geographic information, crowd sourced data, Linked Open Data or speech technology.	WG GNDM, WG GNCH.	Workshops in 2022-2025 (likely in conjunction with Division meetings).
1-iii-10	Evaluate and assess innovative methods to be used for Romanization, e.g. machine transliteration.	WG RS.	Report on innovative methods for Romanization for each UNGEGN session to 2029.

10 actions in total!

Work Plan until today has been integrated...

Cooperation with other WGs crucial!

the collection, standardization and dissemination of geographical names



New Strategic Plan and Programme of Work

Workplan for Working Group GNDM - based on UNGEGN's Programme of Work

Subtask Action Item	Subtask Action Items (#)	Actors / Responsibility	Output and Time Frame	Action Item WG Task Team	Caring Colleague for WG	Proposed Approach	Proposed Outcome/Deliverables	Proposed Deadline	Status (done, in progress, delayed)
Provide consultancy to the developments related to the UNGEGN database, UNECA "UNECA Africa GeoNyms database/gazetteer initiative", the INSPIRE initiative, the UN and European gazetteer projects, the GIS web-based World Geonames Application and other projects of developing countries	1-i-1	Bureau , WG GNDM, Task Team for Africa	Report on progress for each UNGEGN session to 2029 (if appropriate to be included in the report of the WG GNDM) Contributions to Training Courses on Toponymy to be assessed annually	Convenor	Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu	1. UNGEGN database: Discuss and provide feedback to new developments 2. UNECA: Contact UNECA (André Nouguierna) to get information on the progress on GeoNyms 3. Contributions to Training Courses on Toponymy to be assessed and reported 4. Open Regional Gazetteer for Europe: Report about the progress at each Session See results of 26.04.2022	Report (as part of the WG report) at each Session	05-2023	In progress
Evaluate and assess exchange standards for geographical names information and for web services (gazetteer, feature and mapping) for the provision of geographical names information (comprising the review of Part II of the UNGEGN Technical Reference Manual)	1-i-2	WG GNDM other members/countries	Report on exchange standards in 2023	Task Team of WG members: Roman Stani-Fertl, Peder Gammeltoft Teemu Leskinen, Peeter Päll, Convenor	Teemu Leskinen	Some preliminary thoughts for consideration (TL): 1. Compile a structured and annotated list on standards with relevance to GN data exchange, dissemination and integration and provide links to relevant sources on their GN data related properties 2. Invite countries, organizations and UNGEGN members to provide thoughts, examples as well as data providers' and users' experiences on the application of the standards (Comments 01.10.2021) See results of 26.04.2022	separate Report at the next UNGEGN Session	05-2023	In progress
Present geographical names data management topics at national and international conferences organized in the fields of geospatial information management	1-i-3	WG GNDM	Assess annually	Convenor and other WG members	Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu	1. Inform the Convenor about contributions / presentations (providing titles, authors) of relevant conference papers 2. Provide short summaries of the contributions /presentations to be included in a sub-Wiki-page "Representation" 3. use social media to support this action item by circulating upcoming meetings, presentation (notify the WG P&F) See results of 26.04.2022	Report (as part of the WG report) at each session	05-2023	In progress

Use of the Wiki to discuss, start and monitor the actions!

Support by ,caring colleagues' to coordinate

Contributions by ,Task Teams'

<https://wiki.gdi-de.org/display/wgtdfg/Work+Program>

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Content

- Some words on the Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management...
- The Concept of the global Unique Identifier for Cities

Universal Unique Identifier “UUID”

UNGEGN’s Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities




UNGEGN has worked on the establishment of a Universal Unique Identifier (UUID) for the ‘city’, aligned with prevailing definitions (from UN-Habitat and country provided data).

Universal and Unique Identifier management considerations

- Using Uniform Resource Identifiers “URIs” as global resource identifiers
- Using Universal Unique Identifiers “UUIDs”
- Assumptions for the globally unique identifiers (either URIs or UUIDs) of the WGN DB

Endorsed by the UN Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information at its eighth meeting (Nairobi 2024) .

 **UNGEGN World Geographical Names Database**

DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities
By the UNGEGN Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management

Paper Structure

1. Introduction 2
2. The WGN DB and the Group of Expert’s Mandate from the 2023 Session 2
3. Background and prerequisites of the World Geographic Names Database 3
4. Universal and unique identifier management considerations 4
5. Summary and Point of Decision 5
6. Annex 1: The (new) WGN DB model 6
- Acknowledgements 8

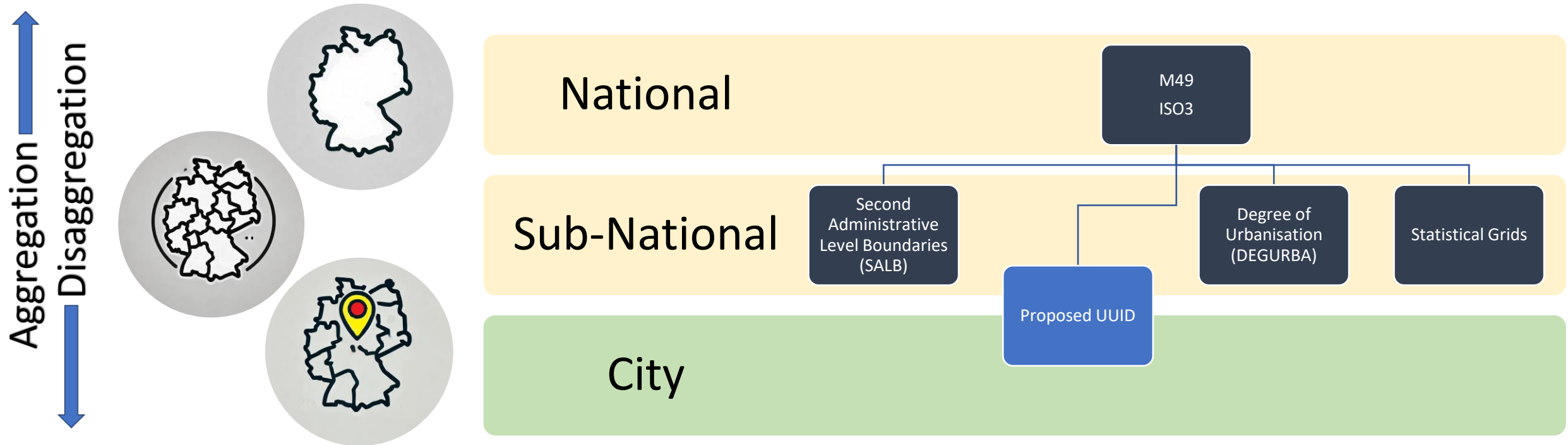
Timeline and Actions

#	Task/Action	Responsibility	Status
1	Discussion of ideas for a unique identifier for cities concept for the WGN DB with colleagues from DE (BKG) and NL (Dutch Kadaster)	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
2	DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a unique identifier for cities, version 0.1	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
3	Discussions about the WGN DB and the DRAFT Position Paper with UN SD / DESA and UNGEGN Bureau members, version 0.3	UN SD	Done
4	Exchange of the DRAFT Position Paper, version 0.4, with the WG GNDM	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
5	Update of the DRAFT Position Paper, version 0.5	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
6	Discussions about the WGN DB and the updated DRAFT Position Paper with UN SD / DESA and UNGEGN Expanded Bureau members, version 0.6-0.9	UN SD	Done
7	Circulate version 0.9 to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNGEGN WG GNDM --- for information• UNGEGN Expanded Bureau --- for information and discussion at its next meeting in February 2024• Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (EG ISGI)	Convenor WG GNDM	January 2024 (most probably)
8	Endorsement of the Position Paper by the bodies mentioned under #7	Convenor WG GNDM	Q1/2024

Done In progress Delayed

The WG GNDM seeks the review and comment of relevant groups on the concepts outlined within this paper. Please contact Mr Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Pier-Giorgio.Zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de) and Mr Mark Iliffe (mark.iliffe@un.org) with your comments.

Why is UNGEGN Proposing a UUID for cities?



At the national level, several statistical classifications exist to enable the integration and interoperability of data – such as M49 or ISO3. Sub-nationally there are several globally recognized ‘geographies’ (SALB, DEGURBA, or grids) for the dissemination of statistical data.

Within the monitoring and reporting frameworks for global agendas such as the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda, these technologies are deeply entrenched in the data needs, with at least seven (7) of SDG 11 indicators requiring some form of spatial data collection and analysis at local/urban level. Yet, there is no globally sustainable and consistent identifier for cities.

Thus, to support sustainable and consistent data integration and interoperability across a variety of use cases, including SDG localization and fostering better aggregation and disaggregation of data (in all forms, not just SDG indicators) UNGEGN is working to establish a UUID for the ‘city’, aligned with prevailing definitions (from UN-Habitat and country provided data).

Universal Unique Identifier “UUID”

UNGEKN’s Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities



Potential Benefits of a globally sustainable and consistent UUID for cities

1. Facilitates **better integration of data on cities** of all sizes, functions and types across geographies, countries and languages;
2. Supports **better management of geographical names** across languages and linguistic scripts;
3. Enables **more interoperability** of locally produced city indicators, in turn strengthening national monitoring (through data aggregation) and reporting (through disaggregation of statistics by geography);
4. Supports the production of **city-level and localized SDG indicators** (and other indicators aligned with the 2030 Agenda and national priorities);
5. Facilitates globally consistent systematic **disaggregation of information at the city level** along key SDGs indicators and other indicators of national priority;
6. Enhances the **regional and territorial perspective** on the monitoring and reporting of the SDGs.

Universal Unique Identifier “UUID”

UNGEGN’s Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities



Prospective Timeline and Milestones

UNGEGN

2025/Fourth Session in May 2025

- Promote the concept paper.
- Concept of UUID is to be **ADOPTED**

UN-GGIM

Fifteenth Session in August 2025

- As a background document to UNGEGN’s report, promote the concept paper and seek endorsement

Statistical Commission

57th Session in February or March 2026

- Collaboration with relevant bodies, including DEGURBA, UN-Habitat and other relevant parties
- Promote the concept paper. Seek endorsement
- Request the Secretariat to maintain the “Registry/Standard etc” of City UUIDs

Secretariat

Ongoing

- Establish collaboration with UN-Habitat, UNTERM and Library and to One UN Geospatial Situation Room
- Integrate Linked Open Data (LOD) of the WGN Database into the UN Data Ecosystem (and UNDATA)



Questions?

Contact

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