



UNITED NATIONS GROUP OF EXPERTS ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Advancing geographical names standardization through inclusive, culturally-informed and evidence-based solutions to support sustainable development

2025 Session | 28 April – 2 May 2025 | @UNSD_GEGN, #2025UNGEGN



National Dialogue Agenda item 4b

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



**United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**



indigenous websites pronunciation academia
strategicplan toponymist restoration collaboration
division policies placenamesacts training
toponymicguidelines urban ai minority datamanagement
standardization internationalnames principles international
romanization names geoportals legalframeworks multilingual
innovativetools innovation outreach procedures challenges culturalheritage linkeddata
preservation programmeplanning terminology promotion crowd boards language
workinggroups mappingprogrammes collection geographicalnames ungegn technology
gazetteers goodpractice exonyms ilm countrynames
maritime un-ggim sourcing cooperation workshops
legislation specialists antarctic meetings
achievements

Day 3

Theme: Technology, innovation and standards for geographical names data management

Topics:

- a. Various ways that national databases are being improved or expanded
- b. Use of AI, LLMs or other innovative tools in names work
- c. Links of geographical names standardization to mapping programmes and updates to mapping
- d. Online gazetteers; printed gazetteers; websites; geoportals and other names documents
- e. Updates to Toponymic Guidelines
- f. Names collection and crowd sourcing



3a. Improving & expanding national databases

National reports that consider this topic (44):

<i>Argentina</i>	<i>Czechia</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Russian Federation</i>
<i>Australia</i>	<i>Democratic Republic of the Congo</i>	<i>Kingdom of the Netherlands</i>	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>
<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>Latvia</i>	<i>Slovakia</i>
<i>Brunei Darussalam</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>Slovenia</i>
<i>Burundi</i>	<i>Estonia</i>	<i>Mauritania</i>	<i>South Africa</i>
<i>Cameroon</i>	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Spain</i>
<i>Canada</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>	<i>Sweden</i>
<i>Colombia</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Türkiye</i>
<i>Costa Rica</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>Peru</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>
<i>Croatia</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>United States of America</i>
<i>Cuba</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Republic of Korea</i>	
<i>Cyprus</i>			



THEME 3a: National databases: REGISTRY OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES OF MEXICO (CONTINENTAL, INSULAR AND UNDERWATER RELIEF FORMS)

MEXICO

ROBERTO LÓPEZ GARCÍA

Chair of the Latin America Linguistic/Geographical Division
INEGI, Deputy Director on Geographical Names

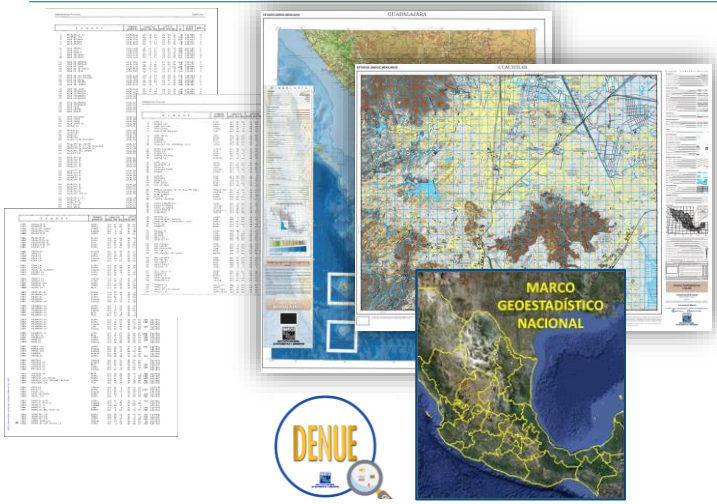
30th April 2025



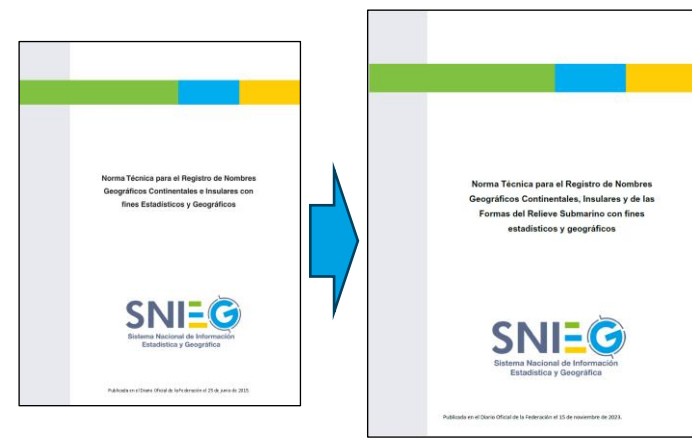
**United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

2025 Session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names National Dialogue

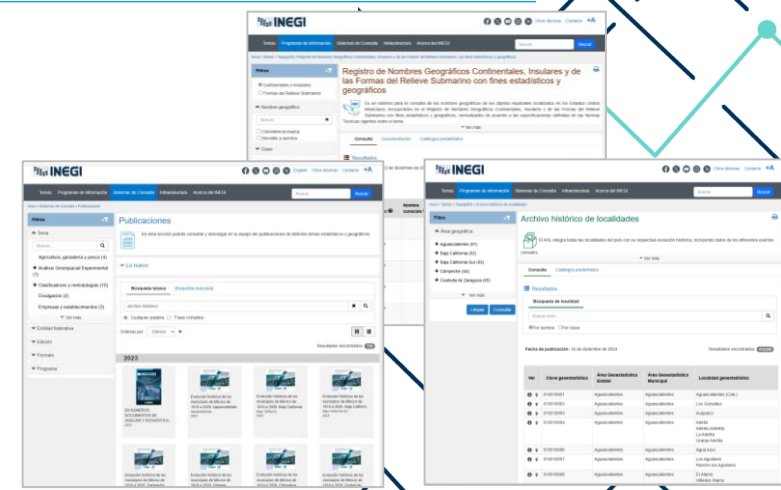
Registry of Geographical Names of México (Continental, Insular and Underwater relief forms)



Inputs



Technical standard



Final products

As of March 2025, the following were available:

Continental and Insular

2,035,318 standardized names

286 generic terms

7 classes:

- Natural and cultural reference areas;
- Human settlements;
- Coastal forms;
- National geostatistical framework;
- Hydrographic features;
- Orographic features; and
- Services and facilities

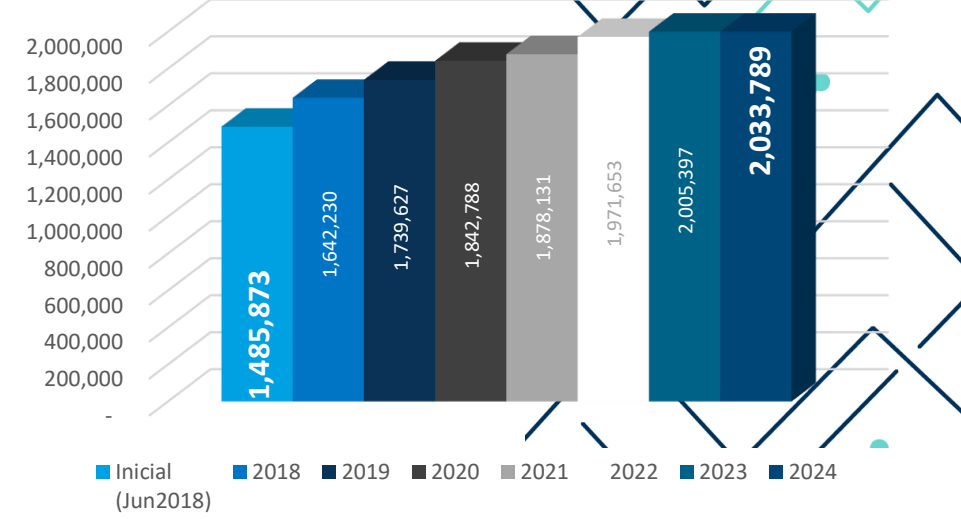
Underwater relief forms

192 standardized names

50 generic terms

1 class:

- Underwater relief



3b. Use of AI, LLMs or other innovative tools in names work

National reports that consider this topic (10):

Australia

Japan

Colombia

Kingdom of the Netherlands

Finland

Mauritania

India

Norway

Indonesia

Saudi Arabia



THEME 3b: Use of AI, LLMs and other innovative tools

NORWAY

PEDER GAMMELTOFT

30th April 2025

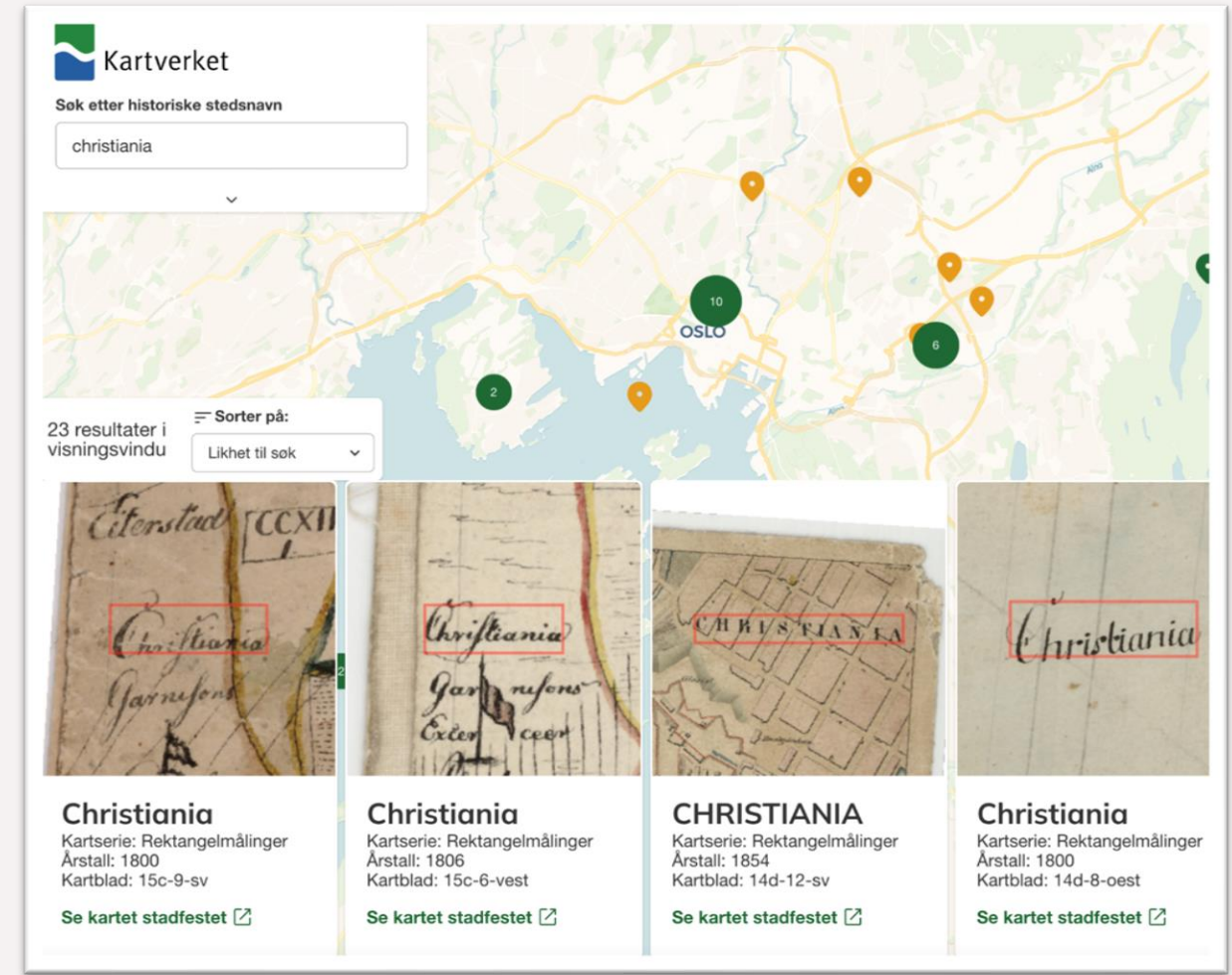


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Using Machine Learning to digitize geographical names

Proof of concept: *Can an ML-model identify and digitize geographical names in scanned maps?*

- **Input:** Georeferenced image files.
- **Model:** Pretrained model using Optical Character Recognition (OCR).
- **Output:** Geographical names identified and stored in a PostGIS database with metadata.
- **User interface:** Website with map and search functionality.
- **Result:** 4.4 million geographical names from 9425 scanned maps.



THEME 3b: Use of AI, LLMs and other innovative tools

AUSTRALIA

RAFE BENLI

30th April 2025

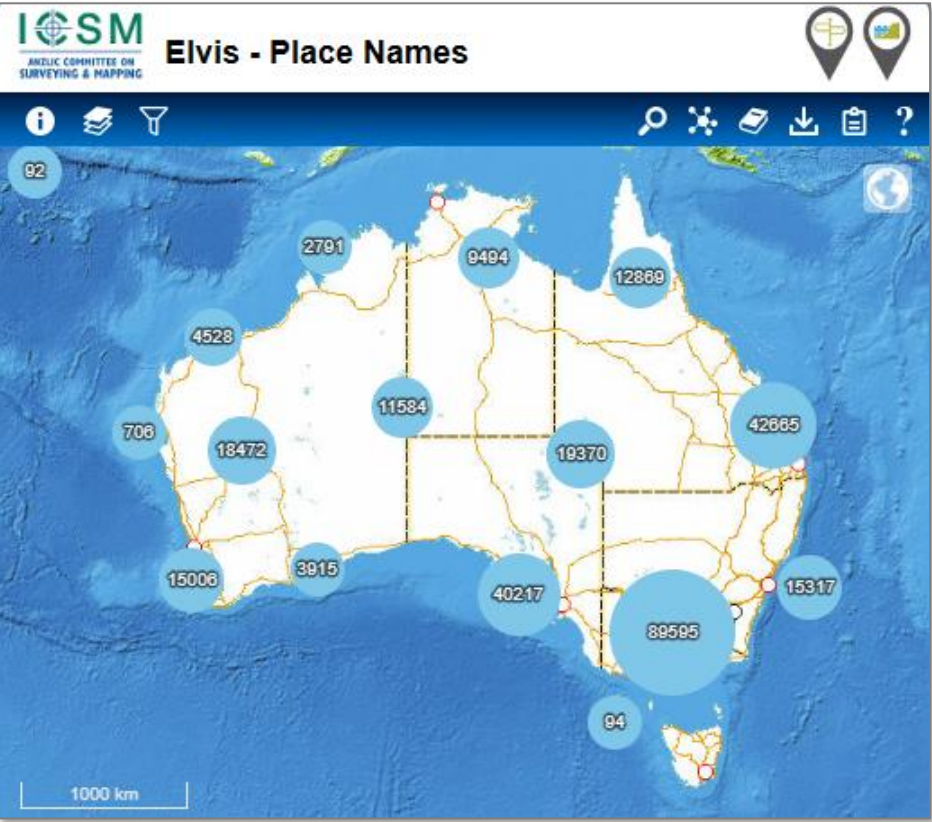


**United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

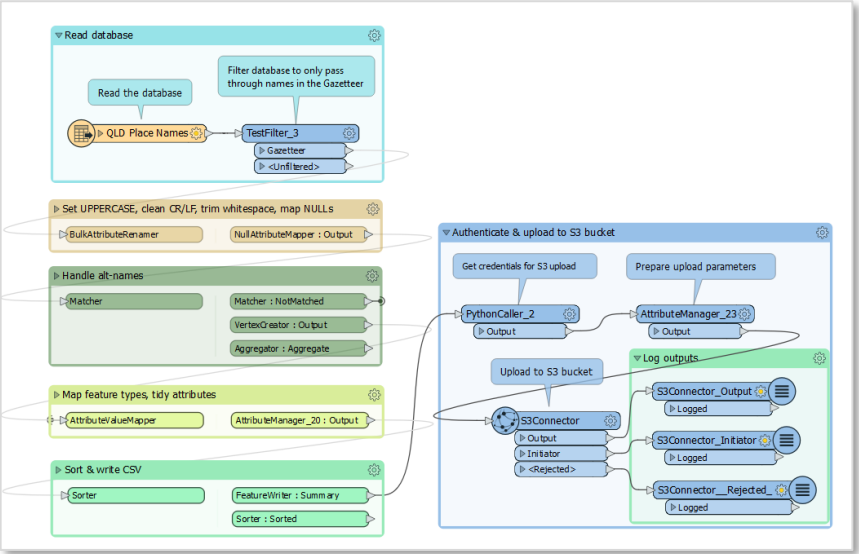
Automating Standardisation and Linked Data Methodologies

Composite Gazetteer of Australia – web application:

Presented by Rafe Benli, Australia



Example FME workspace:



Place type 'Island' represented in the controlled vocabulary:

Island

IRI <https://linked.data.gov.au/def/go-categories/island>

Type Concept

Hierarchy:
[Terrain Feature](#) > [Landform](#) > **Island**

type Concept

is defined by [Geographical Object Categories](#)

definition A tract of land completely surrounded by water.

history note Inherited from ICSM Place Names Working Group

is in scheme [Geographical Object Categories](#)

has narrower [Atoll](#)
[Cay](#)
[Clumps](#)
[Islet](#)
[Offshore Rock](#)
[Skerry](#)

preferred label Island

Scan to learn more:



Place type 'Island' represented in the spreadsheet-based feature catalogue:

GROUP	GROUP DEFINITION	CATEGORY	CATEGORY DEFINITION	FEATURE	FEATURE definition	Source	included terms
TERRAIN	Places that reflect the physical attributes of the land surface	LANDFORM	Natural features of the Earth's surface	ISLAND	A tract of land completely surrounded by water	VMLITE	Offshore rock(s), Atoll, Isle, Islet, Clumps, Skerry, Cay

THEME: 3b

Automated Tool for Names Collection: Facilitating Correct Place Names Capturing in Local Vernacular and Overcoming Past Challenges

Republic of India

Hitesh Kumar S. Makwana

Surveyor General of India, Survey of India

30-04-2025



**United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

COLLECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES



Traditional Method

Collected by the field surveyors (using forms)
as per the local pronunciation

Transliterated and Authenticated by Local
official in the vernacular script.

Transliterated to Roman and Devanagari
script by SoI officials.

Validated names are published in SoI maps.

A repository of **1.4 million** ground-
verified Geographical Names

Challenges

- Non-Comprehension of the local language by the field surveyor.
- Loss of phonetics upon successive transliteration
- No consultation with the linguistic experts for transliteration

Future Roadmap

Audio files are collected using app

Leveraging the capabilities of VLE* to
identify local speakers and confirm

Automated Transliteration to Roman & Devanagari
script with Linguistic Expert Interface

Final names are fed into the National
Geographical Name Information System.

*VLE – Village Level Entrepreneurs



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3c. Links of geographical names standardization to mapping programmes/updates to mapping

National reports that consider this topic (22):

Argentina

Finland

Mauritania

Austria

Hungary

Oman

Brunei Darussalam

India

Republic of Korea

Chad

Indonesia

Saudi Arabia

Colombia

Japan

South Africa

Cuba

Kingdom of the

Spain

Cyprus

Netherlands

Sweden

Estonia

Malaysia



THEME 3c:

Links of geographical names standardization to mapping programmes and updates to mapping

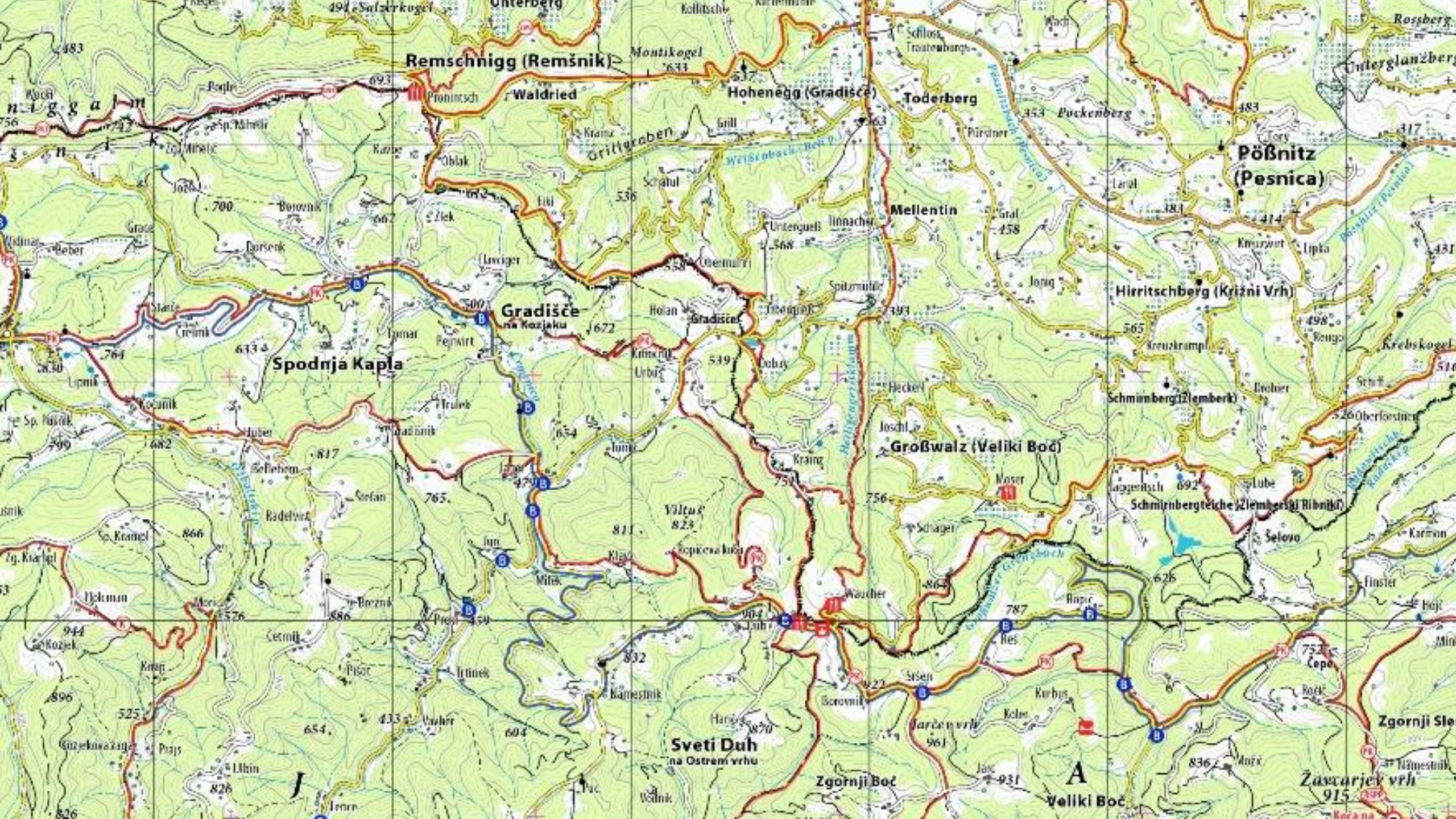
AUSTRIA

PETER JORDAN

30th April 2025



**United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**



3d. Online gazetteers; printed gazetteers; websites; geoportals and other names documents

National reports that consider this topic (35):

<i>Argentina</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Latvia</i>	<i>Slovakia</i>
<i>Brazil</i>	<i>Estonia</i>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<i>South Africa</i>
<i>Brunei Darussalam</i>	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Mauritania</i>	<i>Spain</i>
<i>Canada</i>	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>Sweden</i>
<i>Colombia</i>	<i>Iceland</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>	<i>Türkiye</i>
<i>Costa Rica</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Ukraine</i>
<i>Croatia</i>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<i>Republic of Korea</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
<i>Cuba</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Russian Federation</i>	<i>United States of</i>
<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>Kingdom of the</i>	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	<i>America</i>
	<i>Netherlands</i>		



THEME 3d:

Gazetteers, Geoportals and other documents

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

DIANA ISMAILOVA

30th April 2025



**United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**



NAMES OF HEROES ON THE MAP OF RUSSIA

Валерий



Valery Valentinovich Zamaraev, 45 years old

Rescuer, Deputy Head of the Search and Rescue Service of the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations

Died in the line of duty on September 3, 2004, saving children captured by terrorists in School No. 1 of the capital of North Ossetia

Mount Zamaraev and Mount Kormilin in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania

On September 1, 2004, in the city of Beslan, Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, terrorists seized School No. 1 during festive events. On September 3, an agreement was reached to evacuate the bodies of the deceased from the school grounds. Dmitry Kormilin and Valeriy Zamaraev voluntarily joined and led the evacuation team of rescuers. They died in the line of duty, saving children during the terrorist attack.



DIED ON SEPTEMBER 3, 2004 IN BESLAN, WHILE PERFORMING HIS DUTY.
KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF COURAGE - KORMILIN
Dmitry Ivanovich
ETERNAL MEMORY TO YOU, BROTHER!



ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВО РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
РАСПОРЯЖЕНИЕ
от 7 июля 2018 г. № 1395-р
МОСКВА

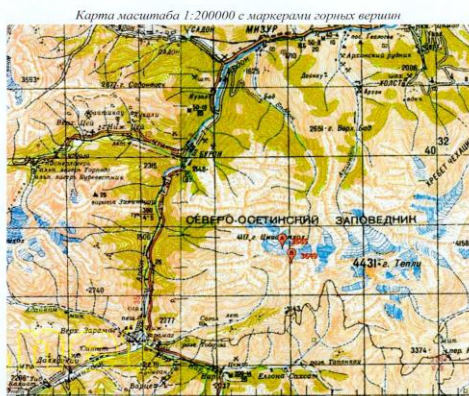
В соответствии с Федеральным законом "О наименованиях географических объектов" и на основании предложения Парламента Республики Северная Осетия - Алания, а также для увековечения памяти Героя Российской Федерации В.В.Замараева, внесшего значительный вклад в развитие спасательного дела в России, и кавалера ордена Мужества Д.И.Кормилкина, внесшего вклад в организацию и развитие спасательной службы МЧС России, присвоить следующие наименования безымянным географическим объектам, расположенным в массиве Телли Главного Кавказского хребта на территории Алагирского района Республики Северная Осетия - Алания:

Президент Правительства Российской Федерации



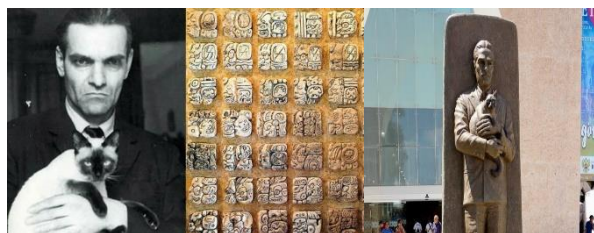
Д.Медведев

17.07.2018



Mount Budischev in Primorsky Region

Alexey Fedorovich Budischev was an outstanding explorer of the Ussuri taiga, the territories of Primorsky and Khabarovsk Regions. For his significant research, he was awarded a small gold medal by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society.



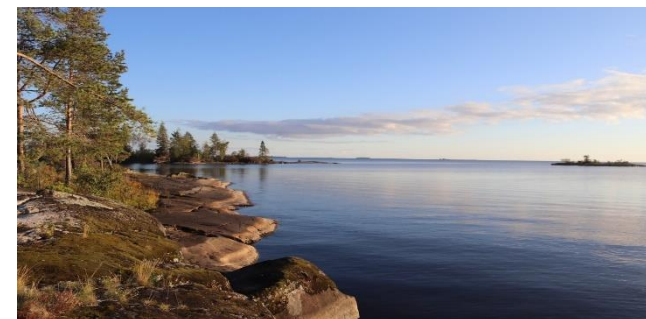
Knorozov Rock in Sakhalin Region

Yuri Valentinovich Knorozov achieved the impossible: without leaving the USSR, he deciphered the hieroglyphic codices of the Mayan Indians - accordion-folded, unbound manuscripts containing a calendar and mathematical calculations that became a scientific sensation.



Bekman Bay in Lake Onega

Alfred Andreevich Bekman was a Soviet naval officer and inventor who made a significant contribution to the exploration and study of Lake Onega.



Gromyko Island

Andrei Andreyevich Gromyko was a Soviet diplomat and statesman, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1957 – 1985), and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1985 – 1988). A.A. Gromyko was a Hero of Socialist Labor and a laureate of the Lenin and State Prizes. Gromyko participated in the preparation and conduct of the Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July 1945) Conferences, headed the country's delegation at the negotiations on the formation of the United Nations, and on behalf of the Soviet side, signed the UN Charter at the conference held in San Francisco (USA) in 1945.



3e. Updates to Toponymic Guidelines

National reports that consider this topic (9):

Austria

Norway

Cyprus

Poland

Hungary

Sweden

Kingdom of the Netherlands

United Kingdom

Malaysia



THEME 3e:

Updates to Toponymic Guidelines

HUNGARY

ANDREA BÖLCSKEI

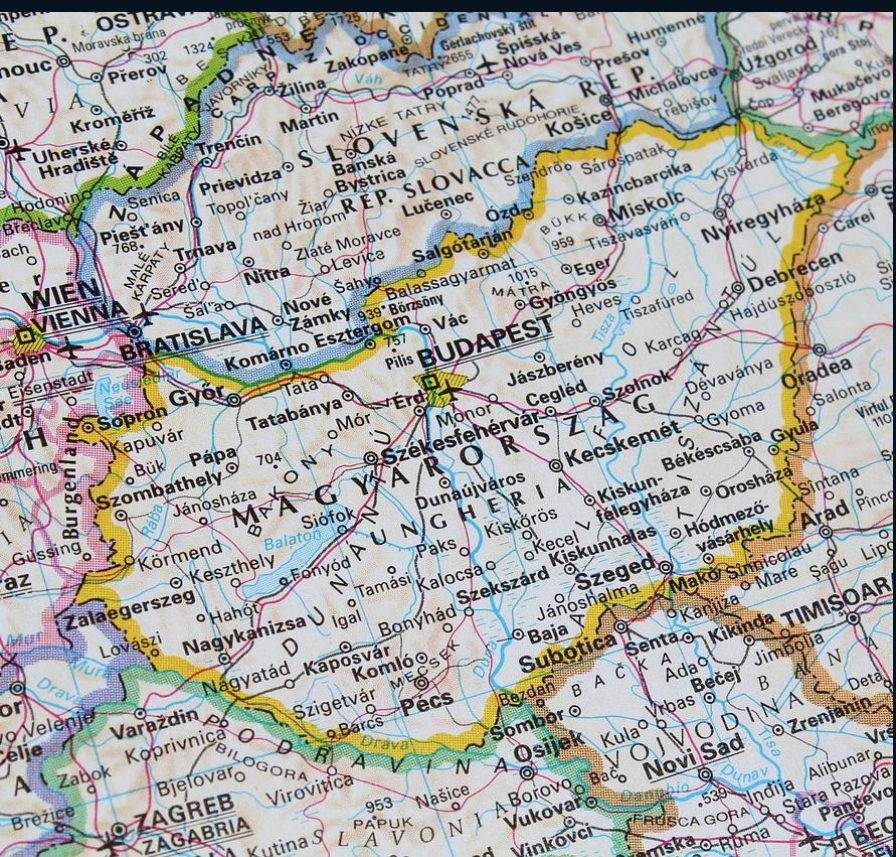
Linguist, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary

30th April 2025



**United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

Supporting local authorities in geographical naming practices in Hungary



1. Background

- Hungary has complex rules and regulations for establishing geographical names
- responsibilities of the Hungarian Committee on Geographical Names and those of the local authorities

2. HCGN assistance in problem areas

- clarification of basic concepts and terms
- assistance in naming processes
- determination of spelling of names

3. Key principles of our toponymic guidelines

- preserving cultural heritage
- ensuring the stability of names
- using distinct name forms
- promoting compatibility with the name system

Solutions to avoid:

- naming after a living person
- naming after companies
- applying names consisting of lexical elements from foreign languages
- using additions, prefixes to personal names (title, position, noble rank, etc.)

A Guide to the Establishment and Change of Geographical Names in Hungary:

<https://cdn.kormany.hu/uploads/sheets//6/63/63d/63d0d0b5b834114dc6be3d73a4bb388.pdf>

3f. Names collection and crowd sourcing

National reports that consider this topic (14):

Australia

Costa Rica

Latvia

Brazil

Finland

Mauritania

Brunei Darussalam

Iceland

New Zealand

Cameroon

India

Sweden

Colombia

Indonesia



THEME 3f: Names collection and crowd sourcing

BRAZIL

ANA CRISTINA RESENDE

30th April 2025



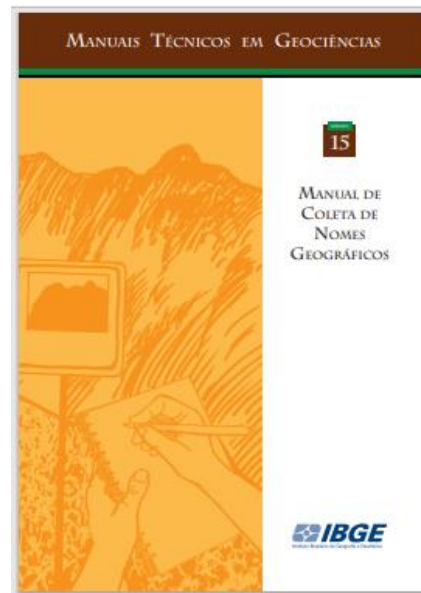
**United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names (UNGEGN)**

Manual for the Collection of Geographical Names

- Launched July 2023, available in Portuguese and in English at <https://www.ibge.gov.br/geociencias/metodos-e-outros-documentos-de-referencia/revista-e-manuais-tecnicos/15826-manual-tecnico-em-geociencias.html?edicao=37182&t=publicacoes>
- Based on Resolutions (UNCSGN) and procedures in UNGEGN's Manual for the National Standardization of Geographical Names
- Presents and details the 3 steps of the collection of geographical names

Purpose and importance

- documentation of institutional procedures
- provide uniformity in collection and processing of GN > reduction of inconsistencies in the Brazilian set of GN (Lack of a National Names Authority)
- incorporation of names of features that fall outside the cartographic scales used in the IBGE to the Brazilian Geographical Names Database
- **focus on stories behind the names > dissemination and promotion of cultural heritage**



Advantages

- independency of digital resources
- simple and direct language: allows its use by individuals with low levels of education
 - early toponymic education
 - minority groups communities: collect and process their own geographical names, thereby recovering their stories, regardless of the educational level of their members

Any Questions

