

# INTERNATIONAL TRAINING ON TOPONYMY

# MODULES

DAY 1

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BALI, INDONESIA



United Nations  
Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names



BADAN INFORMASI  
GEOSPASIAL

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## MODULE 2a

### National Agencies, Models, And Procedures

#### Case Study: Geographical Names Standardization in Indonesia

*Ade Komara Mulyana*

##### 2a.1 The History of Geographical Names Standardization in Indonesia

In accordance with Law No. 4 of 2011, geographical names are considered integral components of the basemap. Moreover, the law designates the Geospatial Information Agency as the sole administrator responsible for managing geographical names. This authority was further solidified with the introduction of Government Regulation No. 2 of 2021, which focuses on the Standardization of Geographical Names (referred to as GR 2/2021). Article 6 of GR 2/2021 explicitly assigns the Geospatial Information Agency as the coordinating body for the standardization of geographical names throughout Indonesia. However, before the implementation of GR 2/2021, the standardization process for geographical names had undergone various changes (see Figure 1).

### TIMELINE

#### The History of National Names Authority In Indonesia

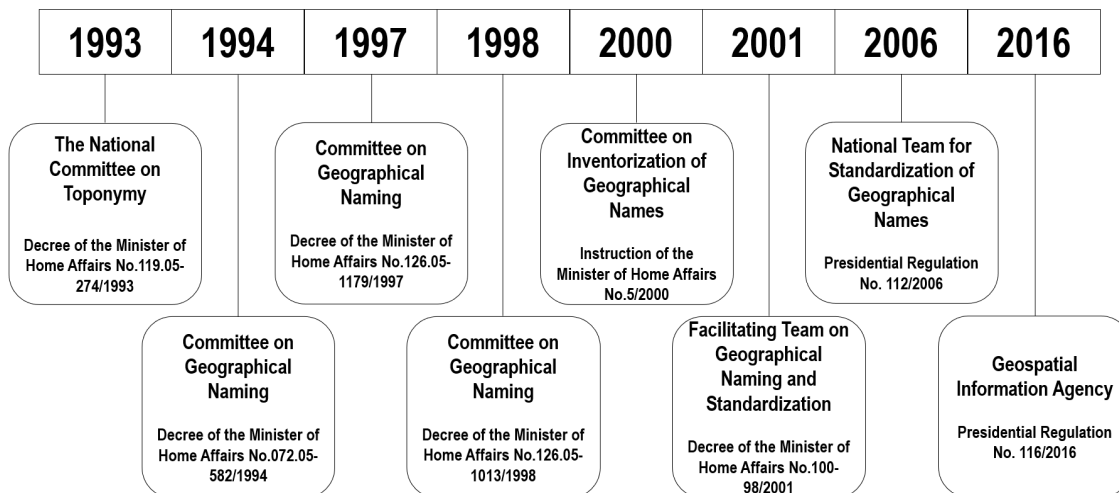


Figure 1. The history of national names authority in Indonesia

The National Committee on Toponymy (*Panitia Tetap Nasional Toponimi*) was established by the Government of Indonesia in 1993, in accordance with the Decree of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 119.05-274/1993. The following year, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued another decree, No. 072.05-582/1994, which dissolved the National Committee on Toponymy and replaced it with the Committee on Geographical Naming (*Panitia Pemberian*

*Nama-nama Geografi*). This committee operated for a period of four years until it underwent a transformation and became known as the Committee on Geographical Naming (*Panitia Pemberian Nama Geografis*), following the issuance of the Decree of the Minister of Home Affairs No. 126.05-1013/1998. In 2000, the Ministry of Home Affairs introduced the Minister of Home Affairs Order No. 5/2000, which changed the name to *Pemberian dan Inventarisasi Nama Geografis* (Committee on Inventorization of Geographical Names). Subsequently, in 2001, the Ministry of Home Affairs and Regional Autonomy issued a decree to rename it as the Facilitating Team on Geographical Naming and Standardization (*Tim Fasilitasi Pemberian dan Pembakuan Nama Geografis*). This team continued its operations until the enactment of Government Regulation No. 112/2006.

Presidential Regulation No. 112/2006 is concerned with the establishment of the National Team for Standardization of Geographical Names (*Tim Nasional Pembakuan Nama Rupabumi*). This team, under the leadership of the Ministry of Home Affairs, consisted of members representing various ministries and government agencies in Indonesia. Additionally, the team received support from the Implementation Team and Expert Team. At the regional level, Indonesia had Provincial Committees and Regency/City Committees that collaborated in the standardization of geographical names throughout the country. The team was assigned several key responsibilities, which included: (1) developing standardized procedures for geographical name standardization; (2) conducting nationwide standardization of geographical names, encompassing spelling and pronunciation, resulting in the creation of the National Gazetteer; (3) proposing the National Gazetteer as a reference for government regulations; (4) providing guidance to local governments regarding geographical names; and (5) representing Indonesia in international events relating to geographical naming. In 2016, the National Team for Standardization of Geographical Names was disbanded following the ratification of Presidential Regulation No. 116/2016. Consequently, the responsibilities of the Tim Nasional Pembakuan Nama Rupabumi were transferred to the Badan Informasi Geospasial (Geospatial Information Agency), a non-ministerial government agency specializing in the field of geospatial information<sup>1</sup>.

In response to the dissolution of the Tim Nasional Pembakuan Nama Rupabumi, the Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) ratified BIG Regulation No. 6/2017. This regulatory framework encompasses the principles of geographical naming, procedural guidelines, and the organizational structure for standardizing geographical names. Recognizing the importance and complexity of geographical name standardization, the Government of Indonesia determined that relying solely on BIG Regulation was insufficient, leading to the enactment of Government Regulation No. 2 of 2021 (GR 2/2021). GR 2/2021 serves as a catalyst for further advancements in the standardization of geographical names in Indonesia.

The primary objectives of GR 2/2021 are to protect Indonesia's sovereignty, preserve cultural, historical, and customary aspects, and enhance good governance administration. It encompasses provisions addressing the general framework, principles of geographical naming, key stakeholders, procedural guidelines, usage of standardized names, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for geographical name standardization.

Indonesia's involvement in the standardization of geographical names spans nearly three decades, with an even longer history of participation in international communities (Figure 2).

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<sup>1</sup> Presidential Regulation number 116 of 2016, art 2

Historical records indicate that Indonesia hosted the UNGEGN Pilot Course in Toponymy in 1982, which took place in Cisarua, Bogor. Subsequently, the 2nd UNGEGN Training Course on Toponymy was conducted in Cipanas, Bogor, in 1989. In 2005, the 3rd UNGEGN Training Course on Toponymy was held in Batu Malang. Furthermore, in 2012, Indonesia organized another Training Course on Toponymy in Yogyakarta.

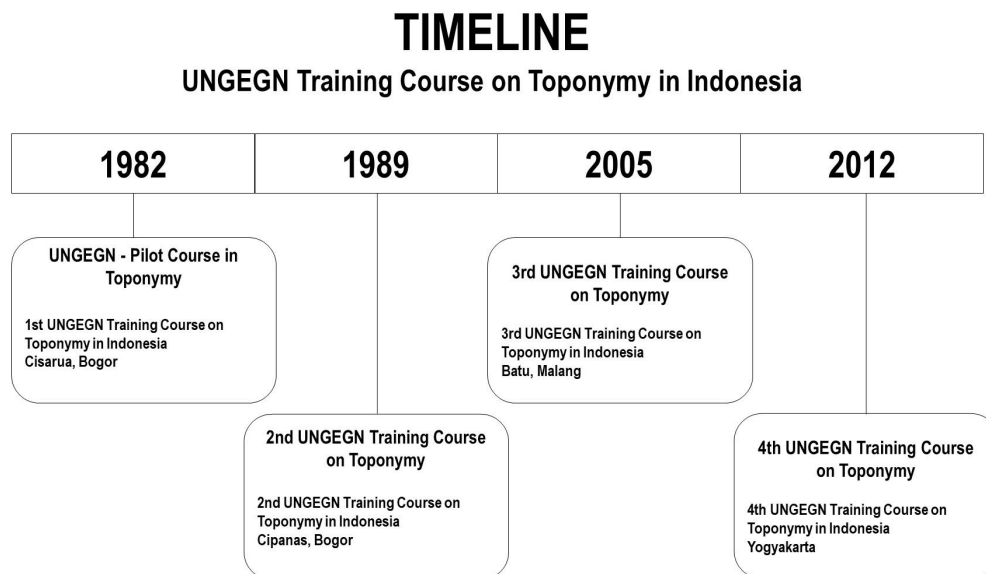


Figure 2. The history of UNGEGN Training Course on Toponymy in Indonesia

## 2a.2 Principles of Geographical Naming in Indonesia

The principles governing geographical naming in Indonesia are established through a range of regulations. Article 36 of Law Number 24 of 2009, which pertains to the National Flag, National Language, State Emblem, and National Anthem, specifies that geographical names should primarily be in the Indonesian language. However, the use of local languages and foreign languages is allowed if they possess historical, cultural, customary, or religious significance. Furthermore, it is mandated that each geographical feature be assigned an official name. This law also governs the use of the Indonesian language in public signs, road signs, public facilities, banners, and other informational tools utilized in public services, as outlined in Article 38. The Indonesian language may be used in conjunction with local languages and/or foreign languages.

To reinforce the implementation of these principles, the Government of Indonesia issued Government Regulation Number 2 of 2021 (GR 2/2021) on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Article 3 of this regulation articulates the principles that must be adhered to when assigning geographical names:

- 1) The use of the Indonesian language (Bahasa Indonesia) is mandatory;
- 2) Local or foreign languages may be utilized if a geographical feature possesses historical, cultural, customary, or religious significance;
- 3) The Roman script must be employed;
- 4) Each geographical feature must be assigned a single official name;
- 5) Respect for the diversity of ethnicity, religion, race, and social class is essential;



- 6) Geographical names should be limited to a maximum of three words;
- 7) The names of living individuals or deceased individuals should not be used for a minimum of five years following their passing;
- 8) The names of agencies or institutions should be avoided;
- 9) Names that contradict national and/or regional interests should not be used;
- 10) Compliance with the prescribed writing and spatial rules for geographical names is required.

All the aforementioned principles are encompassed in the central government regulations. Furthermore, the principles of geographical names in Indonesia are also governed by local government regulations. The following are examples of local government regulations that establish guidelines for geographical naming:

- 1) The Regulation of the Governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Number 39 of 2015, provides guidelines for naming man-made features.
- 2) The Regulation of the Governor of West Kalimantan, Number 111 of 2020, focuses on the standardization of geographical names.
- 3) The Regulation of the Mayor of Probolinggo, Number 59 of 2018, specifically addresses geographical naming.
- 4) The Regulation of the Regent of Sidoarjo, Number 14 of 2020, outlines guidelines for naming roads, tourism places, parks, housing areas, buildings, and building numbering within Sidoarjo Regency.

### 2a.3 Policies of Geographical Naming in Indonesia

The policies outlined below are universally applicable to all geographical names in Indonesia.

#### 1) Language

- Each geographical name should be determined in the Indonesian language (*Bahasa Indonesia*) or other appropriate languages. As the official and national language of Indonesia, this policy aligns with Resolution I/4 adopted at the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) in 1967, which emphasizes the use of official languages and other relevant languages for geographical naming.
- In addition to *Bahasa Indonesia*, Indonesia recognizes the utilization of local languages and foreign languages. Given the presence of 1,340 tribes and 718 local languages within the country, it is crucial for the naming process to prioritize the establishment and preservation of geographical names that encompass the rich diversity of cultures and local languages. These names should serve as benchmarks for both local and national contexts. When choosing between the official language and local languages, precedence should be given to the use of local languages. However, the inclusion of foreign languages is permissible only when the geographical feature holds historical, cultural, customary, or religious significance.
- The term "historical value" refers to the connection between the geographical feature and significant national events from the past, such as important buildings or monuments. "Cultural value" pertains to instances when a

geographical feature becomes a distinctive characteristic and identity of a particular community group. Additionally, a geographical feature possesses "religious value" if it is associated with specific religious teachings or beliefs, such as places of worship.

- All geographical names must be rendered in the Roman script, also known as the Latin script. Scripts other than Latin, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, and Balinese, should be transliterated into the Roman script. Regarding the use of public signs, facilities, banners, or other information tools employed in public services, it is recommended to display the original scripts alongside the romanized geographical names.

## 2) Variant Names

- To prevent confusion and disputes, it is strongly recommended to use a single official name for each geographical feature. In Indonesia, the principle of "One Feature, One Name" is adhered to, meaning that a geographical feature within an administrative unit is assigned only one official name. For instance, in West Java Province, there is a mountain known as Mount Salak (*Gunung Salak*). The name *Gunung Salak* should not be applied to any other geographical features within the province.
- In cases where a geographical feature has multiple names, one official name must be selected and standardized as the preferred name among various allonyms (variant names) for that particular feature. The other names are then recorded as 'variant names' in the database and national gazetteer. For example, the standardized name for a museum in Jakarta is *Sejarah Jakarta Museum*, but it also has a variant name, *Fatahillah Museum*.
- If a single name is used for multiple geographical features, the naming must be reorganized by incorporating articles and/or other linguistic elements as distinguishing factors. For instance, several train stations in the Pasarminggu area are differentiated as *Pasarminggu Station* and *Pasarminggu Baru Station*.

## 3) Limitation on the Number of Words

- A geographical name is composed of two elements: a generic element and a specific element. For instance, when referring to the mountain named Pangrango, the generic element is 'Mountain' and the specific element is 'Pangrango'. The limitation of three words applies only to the specific element. Imposing this limitation offers the advantage of enhancing the memorability of geographical names and ensuring their practicality for map usage, as they occupy less space.
- Nevertheless, if the specific element exceeds three words, there is no requirement to abbreviate or combine the words if these actions alter the intended meaning of the geographical name. Thus, the original writing of the specific element can be maintained even if it surpasses three words. For instance, *Hok Tek Ceng Sin Temple* can not be abbreviated or combined because it will alter the intended meaning of its original name.

- In cases where the specific element originates from a person's name, it should be written following the established spelling and writing conventions that accurately represent the individual's identity.

#### 4) Commemorative Names

- The consideration of commemorative names is possible when a minimum of five years has elapsed since the individual's date of death and when such names do not contradict other principles governing geographical naming. The person being commemorated should have made noteworthy contributions to the nation's culture and development, or have had a long-term association with the particular feature or location. Furthermore, these contributions must be widely recognized and acknowledged by the general public.

#### 5) Use of Agency/Institution Names

- The term "agency/institution" encompasses both governmental and private entities. It is discouraged to incorporate the name of an agency or institution into a geographical name in order to avoid the potential commodification or commercialization associated with naming rights. Additionally, agencies and institutions are subject to changes, mergers, or dissolution, which poses challenges to geographical names, especially those related to public utilities.
- Instead of employing the name of an agency or institution, it is recommended to prioritize the use of the local language that accurately reflects the specific geographical feature.

## 2a.4 Actors in Geographical Names Standardization in Indonesia

Government Regulation (GR) 2/2021 delineates the key actors engaged in the standardization of geographical names in Indonesia. These actors encompass:<sup>2</sup>

- 1) Government Agency;
- 2) Ministries/Agencies;
- 3) Provincial Governments; and
- 4) Regencies/Cities Governments;

The term "Government Agency" specifically refers to a government entity responsible for geospatial information management. In Indonesia, this agency is known as the Geospatial Information Agency (Badan Informasi Geospasial) and assumes the role of the national coordinator. The Provincial Government assumes the responsibility of coordinating the standardization of geographical names that encompass multiple districts and hold strategic significance within the respective province. Similarly, the Regency/City Government undertakes the standardization of geographical names within their district area, considering the strategic value associated with them. The mayor, regent, or governor appoints a regional apparatus to oversee the standardization process within their respective jurisdictions.

At the national level, various ministries/agencies are involved in the standardization of geographical names. These ministries/agencies assume responsibilities such as managing

<sup>2</sup> Government Regulation number 2 of 2021, art. 5-7



home affairs, foreign affairs, defense, national development planning, and other related aspects. Collaborating with the Geospatial Information Agency (BIG), these ministries/agencies coordinate the standardization of geographical names that span across multiple provinces and possess national strategic importance.

Moreover, GR 2/2021 acknowledges the involvement of non-governmental entities in the standardization of geographical names. These entities comprise individuals, community groups, educators/scholars, professional/scientific organizations, businessmen/entrepreneurs, mass media, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders engaged in geographical name standardization efforts. GR 2/2021 encourages the active participation of non-governmental entities in the data collection of geographical names.

## 2a.5. Procedures of Standardization Process in Indonesia

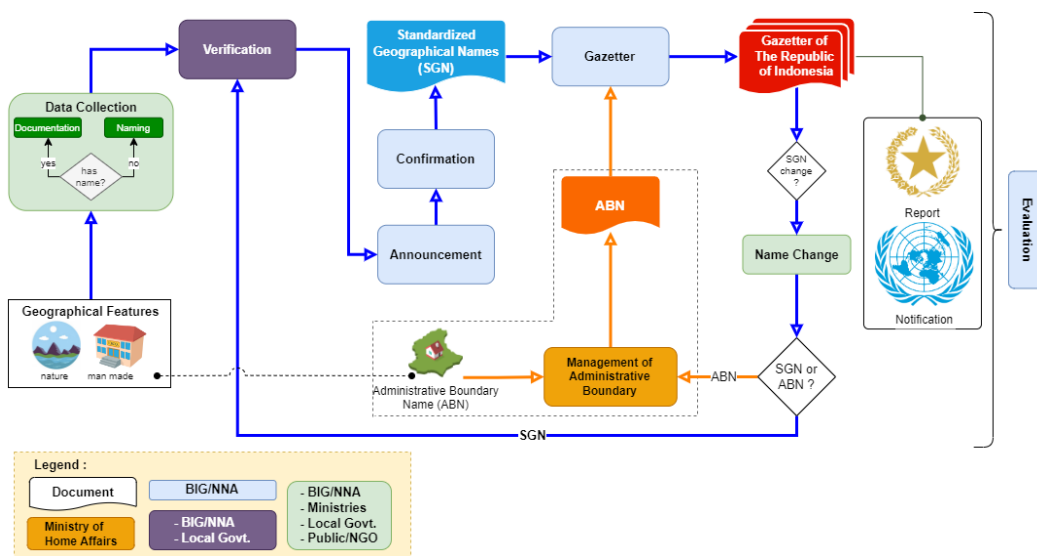


Figure 3. The flowchart of geographical name standardization according to Government Regulation No. 2 of 2021

The entire process outlined in Government Regulation (GR) 2/2021 can be summarized visually in Figure 3. The initial step involves the collection of geographical names data using two distinct methods: documentation for already named geographical features and naming for unnamed geographical features. GR 2/2021 allows for the utilization of four data collection methods: field survey, compilation of secondary data, participatory mapping, and crowdsourcing<sup>3</sup>. Field survey entails direct collection of geographical names in the field using the *Sistem Informasi Nama Rupabumi* (SINAR), toponymic data collection tool developed by Indonesia. Compilation of secondary data involves gathering information from diverse sources such as books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and the internet. Participatory mapping engages community groups or organizations in mapping activities and the collection of geographical names. Crowdsourcing involves active involvement of the community in contributing data and information for the compilation of geographical names.

<sup>3</sup> Government Regulation number 2 of 2021, art. 11.

Once the geographical name data is collected, the next step is data verification, which occurs in a phased manner, starting from the regency or city level and progressing to the provincial and national levels<sup>4</sup>. The verified data is announced for a period of 30 working days, allowing ministries/agencies, local governments, and citizens to provide responses or feedback. Any responses received during this announcement period are verified by the Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) within 14 working days after the announcement deadline<sup>5</sup>. Following the verification process, the data is enacted by the Head of BIG and organized in the form of the Gazetteer of the Republic of Indonesia<sup>6</sup>. This gazetteer encompasses not only standardized geographical names but also administrative unit names. Ultimately, the gazetteer is reported to the President of Indonesia and shared with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). The extensive journey involved in each stage of the gazetteer's creation is a testament to the collaborative efforts of all parties involved.

Moreover, GR 2/2021 recognizes the need for name changes in response to various factors, including natural circumstances, alterations in the status and function of geographical features, cultural considerations, regional and national interests, and as a tribute to individuals who have made significant contributions to the nation. Two types of name changes are acknowledged: changing the name of standardized geographical names and removing standardized geographical names. Any individual can propose name changes to the Geospatial Information Agency (BIG), which then conducts the necessary verification procedures in conjunction with other actors involved in geographical name standardization.

## 2a.6 The Gazetteer of the Republic of Indonesia

The dissemination of standardized geographical names in Indonesia is facilitated through the utilization of a gazetteer, which is made accessible in both printed and online formats. The printed version of the gazetteer provides valuable information pertaining to standardized geographical names, variant names (if applicable), feature types, geographical coordinates, administrative units, and map sheets (refer to Figure 4). On the other hand, the online version offers a comprehensive compilation of attribute data, encompassing geographical name unique identifier (ID), standardized geographical name, geometry type (point/polyline/polygon), Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) zone, map sheet, feature class, feature type, generic and specific elements, variant name, name meaning, history of naming process, former name, recommended name, pronunciation, spelling, geographical coordinates, elevation, accuracy value, administrative units, surveyor's name and code, submitted date, sources, remarks, and photo(s). The online gazetteer is conveniently accessible via the designated link: <https://sinar.big.go.id/gazeter>. Furthermore, it enables users to conduct searches for geographical names utilizing keywords and alphabets.

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<sup>4</sup> Government Regulation number 2 of 2021, art. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Government Regulation number 2 of 2021, art. 18-20.

<sup>6</sup> Government Regulation number 2 of 2021, art. 21-22.

| DAFTAR NAMA RUPABUMI        |                                |                          |                                   |                           |                   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| NAMA RUPABUMI               | NAMA LAIN                      | UNSUR RUPABUMI           | KOORDINAT                         | WILAYAH ADMINISTRASI      | NOMOR LEMBAR PETA |
| Kapuas Kuala, Kantor Camat  | Kantor Kecamatan Kapuas Kuala  | Kantor Camat             | 03°16'58.60" S<br>114°18'34.99" T | Kapuas, Kalimantan Tengah | 1712-423          |
| Kapuas Tengah, Kantor Camat | Kantor Kecamatan Kapuas Tengah | Kantor Camat             | 01°21'24.36" S<br>114°21'41.38" T | Kapuas, Kalimantan Tengah | 1714-423          |
| Kapuas, Kantor Bupati       |                                | Kantor Bupati            | 02°57'54.05" S<br>114°24'57.96" T | Kapuas, Kalimantan Tengah | 1713-122          |
| Kapuas, MA Negeri           |                                | Pendidikan Menengah Umum | 03°00'19.12" S<br>114°23'11.91" T | Kapuas, Kalimantan Tengah | 1712-444          |

Figure 4. The printed version of the Gazetteer of Republic of Indonesia

According to GR 2/2021, the publication of the gazetteer of the Republic of Indonesia is mandated to occur at least once per year, with the flexibility for more frequent releases if deemed necessary. The Geospatial Information Agency (BIG) is responsible for overseeing the preparation of the gazetteer, which is subsequently reported to the President of Indonesia on an annual basis or as required. Furthermore, the gazetteer is notified to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN).

Following the implementation of Government Regulation Number 2 of 2021, Indonesia released its inaugural gazetteer in December 2021. The initial gazetteer of the Republic of Indonesia for the year 2021 encompasses a comprehensive compilation of 21,430 standardized geographical names. This extensive collection includes 548 administrative areas, 3,685 land features, 17,000 islands, and 197 maritime features. Subsequently, the 2022 edition of the gazetteer of the Republic of Indonesia encompasses a total of 7,038 standardized geographical names. This comprises 6,480 names resulting from the verification process conducted in 2022, alongside 558 names that have been modified since the previous version of the gazetteer. As of December 2022, the cumulative count of standardized names in the gazetteer reaches 27,910, encompassing 548 administrative areas, 9,497 land features, 17,024 islands, and 841 maritime features.

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