



**UN**

**Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names**

**UNGEGN**

Strategic Plan  
2021 - 2029

OVERVIEW



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



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# UN

## Group of Experts on Geographical Names



## Strategic Plan 2021 - 2029

### Vision

Every country to have a fully functioning and globally-aligned structure and policy framework, based on common principles for national standardization of authorized geographical names that identify location and respect the associated culture and heritage, and to have these names easily accessible for national and international use - facilitating consistent worldwide use of geographical names to foster communication and cooperation.

### Values

Inclusive, Collaborative, Respectful, Relevant, Influential:

- I. We will work inclusively and collaboratively, aiming at consensus-building and harmony;
- II. We will protect and uphold the integrity of our outcomes, demonstrating respect, expertise, professionalism and political neutrality;
- III. Our products and outcomes will be solution-oriented, relevant, user-friendly, innovative, and fully and equitably accessible; and
- IV. We will share our knowledge, offer education, plan for succession, promote good practices and make an impact with our strategic direction.

### Aims

- I. Raise awareness of the value and benefits of national and international geographical names standardization;
- II. Facilitate the creation or improvement of national geographical names standardization principles, policies and procedures;
- III. Recognize, respect and promote the value of geographical names as significant elements of cultural heritage, language and identity, including those of indigenous peoples and regional and minority groups;
- IV. Enhance, nationally, regionally and globally, the maintenance and dissemination of standardized geographical names data;
- V. Consider, contribute to and endorse a single standardized and scientific romanization system for each non-Roman script language; systems are proposed by donor countries, and intended for international use. Recommend methods of writing geographical names from non-written languages;
- VI. Provide an active forum for Member States to exchange information, discuss and learn of good practices on the standardization of geographical names, including their use in geographic information systems;
- VII. Provide leadership in the implementation of resolutions and recommendations adopted at the former United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names and at the sessions of the Group of Experts;
- VIII. Be recognized as the main source of expertise on a global level on standardization of geographical names for Member States;
- IX. Contribute geographical names expertise and advice to the work of other United Nations bodies, including those addressing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, taking note of their suggestions;
- X. Collaborate with relevant non-United Nations organizations; and
- XI. Involve relevant stakeholders to contribute to the standardization of geographical names and to promote their use.

### Strategies



#### Strategy 1: Technical expertise

- i. 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;
- ii. Develop, extend and share good data management practices of Member States; and
- iii. 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.



#### Strategy 2: Relationships, links and connections

- i. Strengthen UNGEGN's existing collaboration vis-à-vis other United Nations activities (including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and programmes of UNECA, UNESCO, UN-GGIM and UNPFII);
- ii. Collaborate with non-United Nations scientific, technical, and academic bodies to provide expertise on geographical names standardization and create synergy to promote the work of UNGEGN and UN Member States; and
- iii. Create new strategic partnerships with different stakeholders (both UN and non-UN bodies) to address the needs of UNGEGN as new challenges emerge.



#### Strategy 3: Effective work programmes

- i. Encourage active participation and promote compatible standards and methods in the work undertaken by Member States to contribute to UNGEGN's aims;
- ii. Deliver products, outcomes, policy guidance and advice that support coordinated activities at national, divisional and international levels, taking note of UNGEGN resolutions and recommendations and leveraging social media, mobile applications and web-based tools;
- iii. Ensure that UNGEGN's organizational structure is appropriate, efficient, relevant and impactful to deliver maximum value to Member States; and
- iv. Encourage exchange of knowledge, good practices and experience among Member States, aided by Divisions and Working Groups, to facilitate development of legislation and policies on geographical names standardization at the national level.



#### Strategy 4: Culture, heritage and language recognition

- i. Declare, promote, celebrate and demonstrate that geographical names matter because they recognize unique culture, heritage and language that connect people to physical locations;
- ii. Promote good geographical naming practices that acknowledge people's place in the world;
- iii. Recognize that geographical names are a source of identity, encourage recognition of heritage and equality, and support indigenous, regional and/or minority groups' language revitalization and preservation; and
- iv. Contribute to building technical capabilities, such as developing guidelines, legislation, communication tools and databases to enhance culture, heritage and language recognition.



#### Strategy 5: Promotion and capacity building

- i. Raise awareness of the importance of using standardized geographical names and their role as a crucial element of geospatial information;
- ii. Enhance the visibility of UNGEGN through its publications, improved communications, outreach, networking and partnerships;
- iii. Assist Member States in their capacity building and in the development and management of geographical names standardization; and
- iv. Develop funding strategies to enable UNGEGN to assist Member States in achieving national geographical names standardization.

### Implementation Framework



UNGEGN Bureau

Working Groups

UNGEGN Secretariat (UN Statistics Division)

Task Teams

Divisions

Liaison Experts

### Message from the Chair

Geographical names have a practical purpose, essentially by identifying locations and geographical objects, but they also have social and identity meanings as cultural heritage and reflections of human diversity. The way in which geographical names are treated and used must therefore take into account these considerations, all of which concern the United Nations. This Strategic Plan and Programme of Work is intended to guide the work of UNGEGN to achieve those purposes.