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

**Report of the Republic of Korea**

Submitted by Republic of Korea\*\*

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## Summary

This paper reports on the activities of the standardization and management of geographical names by the Republic of Korea's two government agencies for the past two years, the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) and the Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency (KHOA). During the period of 2017-2018, the NGII and KHOA standardized and publicly announced 336 natural and artificial feature names and 121 marine geographical names, respectively, through the final decision of the Korea Committee on Geographical Names (KCGN). The NGII established an on-line geographical names management system in order to improve the expertise and efficiency of its activities. This system has been distributed to local municipalities and is now in operation. The NGII published the Third Edition of the *Guidelines for the Standardization of Geographical Names* and a student edition of the *National Atlas of Korea*, and now hosts the web-based database of UN resolutions for geographical names standardization. KHOA published a revised version of the *National Gazetteer of Marine Geographical Names*, based on a comprehensive survey of marine geographical names. This publication is expected to contribute to providing accurate and standardized information on marine geographical names. KHOA also conducted outreach activities, including training programs for elementary school students and their parents and organizing symposiums to enhance the awareness of marine geographical names.

## **Report of the Republic of Korea<sup>1</sup>**

In the Republic of Korea, names of natural and artificial features are standardized and managed by the National Geographic Information Institute (NGII) and those of marine geographical features by the Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency (KHOA). The Korea Committee on Geographical Names (KCGN) functions as the final decision-making authority that reviews and decides on the names reported or proposed by the NGII and KHOA.

### **1. Standardization and management of geographical names by the NGII**

#### **1.1. Standardization of geographical names, 2017~2018**

During the period of 2017~2018, the KCGN approved the standardization and public announcement of 335 natural and artificial feature names reported by the NGII. According to procedural rules, new names or name changes for natural and artificial features were proposed by the local committees on geographical names, belonging to metropolitan, provincial, city and county authorities, and reported by the NGII. Among the 336 standardized names, 328 names were for new or unnamed features while 8 names were results of renaming existing features. The total number of standardized natural and artificial names reached up to 152,850. Newly standardized names were mostly chosen from those already used by local residents or in maps but not publicly announced, e.g., small islands and peaks, or created for newly constructed features, e.g., bridges, intersections and parks.

#### **1.2. Improvements of the geographical names management system**

Since 2012, the NGII has implemented a masterplan for upgrading geographical names management activities, with a view to improving the efficiency of its activities and securing consistency in data management. This plan includes programs to establish a system enabling interactive communication with institutions relevant to geographical names, and to publicize national names standardization activities. According to this masterplan, a detailed action plan has been established each year which resulted in the implementation of several projects. For example, an on-line system of administering the activities of the national and local geographical names committees was established in 2018. Various types of materials are also serviced by topics, including reports of the international activities, e.g., participation in the UN meetings, legal references, e.g., acts, rules and guidelines, results of projects.

Major achievements of improving the geographical names management system can be summarized as follows:

- a) The NGII has the capability to operate a toponymic database composed of a total of 297,107 geographical names. This database is open to the public and available for diverse tracks of search.

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<sup>1</sup> This working paper pertains to the UNCSGN resolutions IX/7 (Dissemination of information concerning the origin and meaning of geographical names), I/4 (National standardization), and V/6 (Promotion of national and international geographical names standardization programs).

- b) An on-line system accommodating a series of procedures conducted at each level of geographical names committees has been established, including convening of meetings, reviewing and making decisions, reporting to higher level committees, confirming procedural status in progress, etc.
- c) The geographical management system has become more user-friendly by providing toponymic attribute data, such as origin of names, coordinates, four divisional map monitoring function, etc.

### **1.3. A comprehensive survey of geographical names**

The NGII has conducted a series of comprehensive surveys of geographical names in the country. This survey is expected to formulate a more precise set of standardized names by checking on errors and abolished or changed names, one standard name and other allonyms, accurate name types, and so on. A list of error corrections and changed or abolished names was produced in 2017 by surveying on twenty-thousand names in Incheon (metropolitan city) and Gangwon-do (province). In 2018, another survey was conducted on the names in Jeollabuk-do, Jeollanam-do and Jeju Special Self-governing City, which enabled the establishment of a precise database of twenty-thousand names.

### **1.4. Toponymic research and publication**

The NGII published the Third Edition of the *Guidelines for the Standardization of Geographical Names* in 2018. This third edition was prepared to tackle the problems found in operating the guidelines of the second edition which had been effective since 2012, and thus provides local municipalities with more clearly applicable principles of standardization and procedures of proposing geographical names. Each principle of standardization is accompanied by explanatory notes including its background, related legal or procedural bases, and reference examples.

Publication by the NGII also includes a student edition of the *National Atlas of Korea*, which saw the first edition in 2007 and a revised three-volume edition in 2014 to 2016. The new student edition is expected to enable students to understand the geography of Korea and to identify geographical names that contain abundant information in an easier and more convenient way.

### **1.4. International activities related to geographical names**

The NGII currently hosts the web-based database of UNCSGN resolutions, which provides a useful engine to search 211 resolutions adopted up to 2017 by Conference, subject and key words (<http://www.ngii.go.kr/portal/ungn/mainEn.do>). Since the database was launched in English in 2009, the French version was added in 2012, the Spanish version in 2015, and the Korean version in 2017. As the Arabic version has recently been completed, the database is now available in five languages. The database is also accessible from the UNGEGN website at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/confGeneral.html>.

## **2. Standardization and management of marine geographical names by KHOA**

### **2.1. Marine geographical names approved by the KCGN and undersea feature names approved by SCUFN**

KHOA publicly announced 121 marine geographical names through the KCGN between 2017 and 2018. Among them 110 names are new, two are error corrections and changed names and nine are deletions.

Most new marine geographical names were not publicly announced although they were already being used in nautical charts. The generic features of two names were changed due to sea level rise thus were amended to fit their generic features in accordance with the *Guideline for the Standardization of Marine Geographical Names* published by KHOA. Names whose features were lost due to reclamation were deleted.

Since the Korea Committee on Marine Geographical Names was established in 2002 (later incorporated with the Central Committee on Geographical Names to form the KCGN in 2009) the number of publicly announced domestic marine geographical names is 1,107 and KHOA manages 1,091 names excluding amended and deleted ones.

Furthermore, KHOA conducted hydrographic survey in the Antarctic and the Northwest Pacific to discover new undersea features and standardize their names globally. KHOA analyzed seven undersea features, submitted the proposals to the Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) jointly run by the International Hydrographic Organization and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and obtained approval.

### **2.2. Reorganization of marine geographical names and publication**

KHOA conducted research on the standardization of marine geographical names to manage them more systematically. In 2017 KHOA reviewed all nautical charts and publications where marine geographical names are used. With the outcome KHOA reviewed the marine geographical names database to provide standardized marine geographical names in 2018.

In addition, KHOA published a new edition of the *National Gazetteer of Marine Geographical Names* so that the public can use standardized marine geographical names. This edition was published three years after the first edition in 2015 and is meaningful in promulgating updated marine geographical names.

### **2.3 Outreach activities**

KHOA carried out two main outreach activities to promote marine geographical names both domestically and internationally.

Firstly, four training programs were offered to elementary school students and their parents to enhance the awareness of marine geographical names. Three of them were attended by 64 students and one was attended by six families with a total of 83 participants over the last two years.

The programs focused on hands-on activities to increase the level of understanding and interest, such as creating undersea features and nautical charts and a treasure hunt for marine geographical names. A QR code was used with the treasure hunt which led to high participation. KHOA will continue to run various programs every year to expand understanding of the oceans and marine geographical names.

Secondly, KHOA has been hosting the International Symposium on Application of Marine Geophysical Data and Undersea Feature Names every year since 2006 which is attended by domestic and international experts to increase the standardization of marine geographical names.

The symposiums in 2017 and 2018 were held in conjunction with an academic seminar by the Hydrographic Society of Korea which resulted in a greater variety of research findings. There were a total of 23 presentations which covered various areas including the management of undersea feature names and acquisition/analysis/management/observation/use of marine data and led to active discussion. Participants from different countries shared common challenges experienced in the process of standardizing marine geographical names and contributed significantly to better standardization.