

10 March 2025

English

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

2025 session

New York, 28 April – 2 May 2025

Item 7 (d) of the provisional agenda *

**Effective work programmes: Toponymic guidelines for
international use by map and other editors**

Report of the Coordinator for Toponymic guidelines

Submitted by the Coordinator for Toponymic guidelines **

* GEGN.2/2025/1

** Prepared by Jasper Hogerwerf, Coordinator for Toponymic guidelines

Report of the Coordinator for Toponymic guidelines

Introduction

In 1982, the United Nations recommended that countries should be encouraged to publish and keep up-to-date Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors. The aim was to enable cartographers of other countries to correctly treat all problems of cartographic toponymy of the countries that produced such guidelines. A sample prepared by former UNGEGN chair Josef Breu and submitted by Austria to the Eighth Session of UNGEGN in 1979 served as the basis for the guidelines. This format has been updated and enriched over the years.

Toponymic guidelines include information about official, national and minority languages, names authorities, source material for toponyms, glossaries, abbreviations used on official maps and administrative division.

More information on Toponymic guidelines, including the template that can be used for new documents, is available on the UNGEGN website in the [Toponymic guidelines section](#).

Updated and new Toponymic guidelines

In the 2023-2025 period no new Toponymic guidelines were published. Updates on Toponymic guidelines were presented by the following countries:

- **Austria:** 8th edition. More information in [GEGN.2/2025/155/CRP.155](#).
- **Czechia:** 4th edition. More information in [GEGN.2/2025/152/CRP.152](#).
- **Estonia:** 5th edition. More information in [GEGN.2/2025/110/CRP.110](#).
- **Finland:** More information in [GEGN.2/2025/81/CRP.81](#) and [GEGN.2/2025/81/CRP.81/Add.1](#).
- **Norway:** More information in [GEGN.2/2025/12/CRP.12](#).
- **Poland:** 5th edition. More information in [GEGN.2/2025/30/CRP.30](#).
- **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:** More information in [GEGN.2/2025/27/CRP.27](#).
- **United States of America:** More information in [GEGN.2/2025/101](#).

Availability and dissemination

Currently, there are 41 countries with Toponymic guidelines. All Toponymic guidelines have been listed and made available through the UNGEGN website. The links in [this list of Toponymic guidelines](#) are monitored and updated regularly. Notifications from member states to the UNGEGN secretariat about changes in local web links to Toponymic guidelines are welcomed.

Promotion and invitation

Toponymic guidelines contain essential information for map makers and all other editors dealing with geographical names. Therefore it is important that more countries make Toponymic guidelines available, and that existing documents remain up to date. UNGEGN encourages countries to prepare Toponymic guidelines if they have not done so, and to check and update already available Toponymic guidelines if necessary.

Please know that it is not strictly mandatory to use the template for Toponymic guidelines on the UNGEGN website.

Nowadays part of the information present in many Toponymic guidelines can also be found on the internet. This may be helpful by preparing new Toponymic guidelines, as long as the information is checked and verified. As there are many unreliable sources and even well-known websites and applications do not always use the official geographical names as standardized by the responsible national or regional authorities, Toponymic guidelines remain essential in providing reliable information on national geographical names to map makers and other editors.

For any questions or further information related to Toponymic guidelines, please feel free to contact the Coordinator.

Points for discussion

The Group of Experts is invited to:

- (1) Take note of the importance of Toponymic guidelines for geographical names standardization on an international level.
- (2) Take note of the updates made to existing Toponymic guidelines by several countries in the past 2 years.
- (3) Consider the update of the Toponymic guidelines of their country if the document has not been updated in the past years.
- (4) Consider the preparation and publication of new Toponymic guidelines of their country, if no document for their country has been prepared and made available yet.