



United Nations
Group of Experts
on Geographical Names



Update on the UNGEGN WGN Database







Mr. Mark Iliffe

Global Geospatial Information Management Section
Statistics Division / Department of Economic and Social Affairs



Overall vision of UNGEGN World Geographic Names (WGN) Database

Why are we doing this?

-  UNGEGN is mandated by the Economic and Social Council as one of its nine Subsidiary Bodies – this is implementing UNGEGN Decision 2/2019/2
-  Position UNGEGN as the ‘go to’ for authoritative, comparable, and high-quality geographic names/toponyms – aligned with its Strategic Plan
-  Provide a dramatically improved platform for managing toponymic data
-  Enhance visibility and use of toponymic data, irrespective of language, from across the UN system and globally
-  Focus on data to support evidence-based action
-  Increase visibility of UNGEGN, its intergovernmental role and its work



WGN System Components

Position the UNGEGN as a global leader in authoritative geographical names

- 1 WGN Dashboard - Publicly Accessible Dashboard
- 2 WGN API - Publicly Accessible, read-only geoJSON, API
- 3 WGN Administration System – User Interface for UNGEGN Secretariat





The Dashboard

The WGN Database platform (but not the DATA) is now being extensively tested 'in the real world'

<https://ungegn.un.org>



Data Governance

- The Secretariat has revived WGN Database - 6,097 cities globally will be managed within the database.
- The Secretariat is working towards endonymic ‘completeness’ of this data across the six official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish), integrating authoritative linguistic data from the Demographic Yearbook and the UNTERM database. The positional accuracy of geographic coordinates will be assessed in cooperation with the UN Geospatial Information Section of the UN Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT)
- Geographic names of cultural heritage, maritime areas and other ‘geographies’ could be explored.
- The Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management (see report GEGN.2/2023/73/CRP.73), as part of its work plan Action Item 1-i-5 – “Promote and support the establishment of an authoritative international database/gazetteer of geographical names to be disseminated to the public through UNGEGN” provides ‘day-to-day’ Member State governance for the WGN Database



Future Feature Improvement and Development

Feature Improvement

1. The Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management is developing standardization/guidance for a unique identifier for cities to help respond to Recommendation 2 of UNGEGN's 2023 Session, and other decisions pertaining to Linked Data
2. Improved cartography
3. Other features to be defined (resources permitting)

Data Development

1. The Secretariat is collaborating with other members of UNSD, the UN Library, SALB and other sources of geographic data where geographic names are important to integrate and refine the data within the WGN Database.

This is expected to be completed by late November 2023

2. The Secretariat is working with the convenors of Working Groups on Geographical Names Data Management, Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage and on Romanization Systems to identify bugs and data issues, before initiating a wider consultation – which will be done with the guidance of the UNGEGN Bureau

Planned to be initiated in early 2024.



UNGEGN Data Integration Flow

Defining engagement with Member States to collect/update geographical names

– what are the potential process(es)?

1. Member States

- i. Request review of existing geographic names held within the WGN database
- ii. Request input (in defined format) of new geographical names
- iii. Interlinkages with national geographical names authorities and identify national focal point(s)
- iv. ...?

2. Authoritative Data from the UN System

Short Term

- i. UN Demographic Yearbook – Authoritative Member State provided statistical data
- ii. UNTERM

Long Term

- iii. UN Gazetteer


Concept Note --- DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities

Chapter 4 - Universal and Unique Identifier management considerations

- Using Uniform Resource Identifiers “URIs” as global resource identifiers
- Using Universal Unique Identifiers “UUIDs”
- Assumptions for the globally unique identifiers (either URIs or UUIDs) of the WGN DB

Summary

- This paper provides concepts for the creation of a unique identifier for cities and identifies URIs and/or UUIDs as suitable mechanisms for their creation.
- The WG GNDM requests the Secretariat to pilot a unique identifier based on the URI or UUID approach!



UNEGN World Geographical Names Database

DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a global unique identifier for cities
By the UNGEGN Working Group on Geographical Names Data Management

Paper Structure

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Timeline and Actions

#	Task/Action	Responsibility	Status
1	Discussion of ideas for a unique identifier for cities concept for the WGN DB with colleagues from DE (BKG) and NL (Dutch Kadaster)	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
2	DRAFT Position Paper on the development of a unique identifier for cities, version 0.1	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
3	Discussions about the WGN DB and the DRAFT Position Paper with UN SD / DESA and UNGEGN Bureau members, version 0.3	UN SD	Done
4	Exchange of the DRAFT Position Paper, version 0.4, with the WG GNDM	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
5	Update of the DRAFT Position Paper, version 0.5	Convenor WG GNDM	Done
6	Discussions about the WGN DB and the updated DRAFT Position Paper with UN SD / DESA and UNGEGN Expanded Bureau members, version 0.6-0.9	UN SD	Done
7	Circulate version 0.9 to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNEGN WG GNDM --- for information UNEGN Expanded Bureau --- for information and discussion at its next meeting in February 2024 Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (EG ISGI) 	Convenor WG GNDM	January 2024 (most probably)
8	Endorsement of the Position Paper by the bodies mentioned under #7	Convenor WG GNDM	Q1/2024

Done
In progress
Delayed

The WG GNDM seeks the review and comment of relevant groups on the concepts outlined within this paper. Please contact Mr Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu (Pier-Giorgio.Zaccheddu@bkg.bund.de) and Mr Mark