

**COUNTRY REPORT MALAYSIA FOR
8TH DIVISIONAL MEETING OF
UNGEKN ASIA SOUTHEAST
27 OCTOBER 2020**

1. INTRODUCTION

This report from Malaysia covers the period from September 2019 until September 2020 since the last meeting in New York on 9 August 2017. The report includes all the activities relating to geographical names, the progress reports on the Working Groups, projects undertaken and other related matters.

2. BACKGROUND

The Malaysian National Committee on Geographical Names (MNCGN), established on 11 September 2002 by the Malaysian Cabinet, is responsible for coordinating the geographical naming activities in Malaysia. This committee is chaired by the Director General of Survey and Mapping Malaysia (JUPEM) with its members consisting of representatives from Federal and State agencies. One (1) Technical Committee and three (3) Working Groups were established to assist the MNCGN as follows:

- i. National Technical Committee on Geographical Names (NTCGN);
- ii. Working Group on Policy and Geographical Names Updating; and
- iii. Working Group on National Geographical Names Database and Gazetteer;

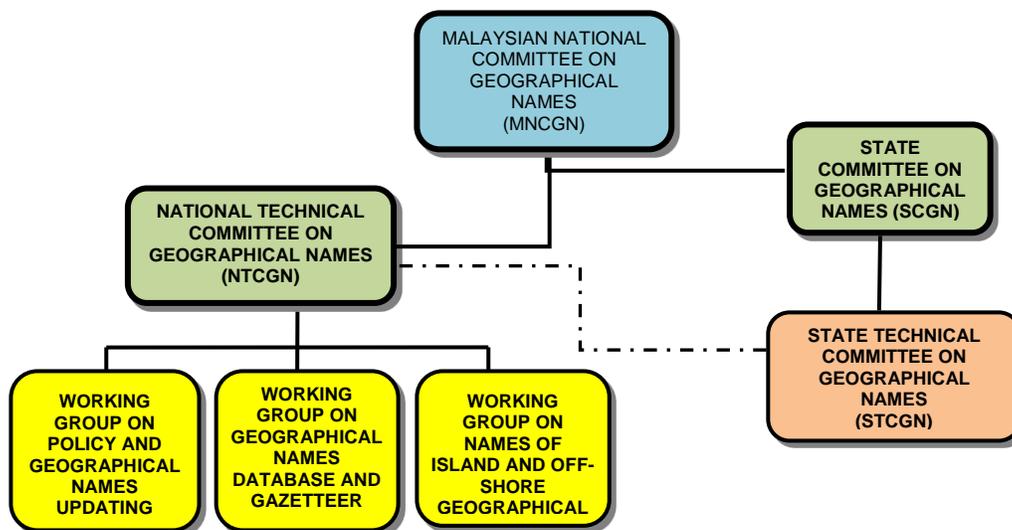
At the State level, the State Committee on Geographical Names (SCGN) was established to coordinate and implement the guidelines and procedures

formulated by MNCGN. This committee is chaired by the State Secretary or the Secretary General of Ministry of Federal Territories (for Federal Territories), and its members comprise of representatives from state or federal agencies. At the state level, the State Technical Committee on Geographical Names (STCGN) was also established to assist the SCGN.

The responsibilities of MNCGN encompass the following tasks:

- i. Formulating national guidelines for the determination of geographical names;
- ii. Developing the National Geographical Names Database and Gazetteer;
- iii. Promoting the use of official names; and
- iv. Coordinating the input of national nomenclature activities with those at the international level, including serving as liaison to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), particularly with the Regional Grouping.

The existing organizational structure of MNCGN is as shown below:



Terms of reference for MNCGN are as follows:

- i. To study and establish criteria used to determine official geographical names in the national interest;
- ii. To study and formulate the Guidelines for the Formation of the National Geographical Names Database;
- iii. To determine objectives, functions and output of activities are in line with the requirements of the government and country;
- iv. To study and establish the methodologies for the activities of the on-line Geographical Names, National Gazetteer, National Standard Document and other activities relating to geographical names; and
- v. To collaborate with the National Mapping and Spatial Data Committee, Technical Committee 2 (TC2) SIRIM and other committees connected with the formation of the national geographical information infrastructure.

3. ACTIVITIES

There are eight (8) activities that have been done during the period from September 2019 to September 2020. Below are the related activities on geographical naming that were conducted during the period under review.

3.1 Malaysia National Committee on Geographical Names Meeting

The MNCGN holds its meeting at least once a year. The 15th Meeting of MNCGN was held on 10 December 2019 in Kuala Lumpur and the next 16th MNCGN meeting will be conducted on 3 November 2020 through a virtual meeting.

3.2 National Technical Committee on Geographical Names Meeting

National Technical Committee on Geographical Names held its 22nd meeting on 10 September 2020 in Kuala Lumpur. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Director General of Survey and Mapping Malaysia I. During this meeting, the Working Groups and States Technical Committee presented their activities.

3.3 Working Group on Policy and Geographical Names

JUPEM and its functions have administered the Working Group on Policy and Geographical Names Updating to assist in the deriving of principle, policy and procedure of geographic names updating and governance.

There are seven (7) meetings were held to address issues on policy and updating matters including the matter on the notification of geographical names of places in the government gazette were also deliberated.

The Working Group has published the Guidelines for Determination of Geographical Names Second Edition to be used as a reference to coordinate and standardize determination of geographic name activities.

3.4 Working Group on Geographical Names Database and Production of Web Gazetteer

The Working Group on Geographical Names Database and Production of Web Gazetteer has been established in 11 Mac 2003 and lead by The National Geospatial Center (PGN). One of the products that have been developed is The Malaysian Geographical Names Database (PDNG). The development of PDNG is based on data obtained from the JUPEM and the

National Hydrographic Centre (PHN) and subsequently, the geographical name will be verified by the state Economic Planning Unit (UPEN) before being uploaded into the PDNG

PDNG is using the MyGeoName, displays the geographical names, locations, histories and state magazines contained in the PDNG. The application also provides the geographic names in Jawi and audio that contains pronunciation in official Malay, and local dialects have been developed. It consists of amongst other local names, location, historical background, Arabic character, audio file and gazette notification that have authoritative records available for government and public use.

There are new features will be developed called Visualization Video Module. The module will be used to enhance and varieties existing database information in MyGeoName Application. The geographic names database benefits are:

- i. To ensure effective communication through consistent use of a proper name of places.
- ii. To support socio-economic development, conservation and national infrastructure;
- iii. To facilitate in locating various communities by establishing consistent use of geographical names
- iv. To preserve the rich heritage of places, whereby each name tells a story and provides a sense of place; and
- v. To identify and reflect culture, heritage and landscape associated with geographic names.

The verification of geographical names database using the digital topographical database at a scale of 1:25 000 for Peninsular Malaysia and

1:50 000 and 1: 25 000 for the states of Sabah and Sarawak Malaysia is almost completed. There are 63,100 geographical names in a database that have been verified by the states.

Malaysia is continuing verification of the geographical names using the digital topographical database at a scale of 1:5 000 and 1:10 000 and 1:50 000. At this moment, there are 67,827 for mapping scale 1:50;000 and 1,755 for mapping scales 1:5,000 and 1:10,000 existing Geographical Names that have been coordinated and updated in Malaysia.

Based on the development of National Geographical Names Database, the Working Group have finalized the State Gazetteer Document for eight (8) states in Malaysia. At the same time, six (6) states still in processing stages.

3.5 Working Group on Naming of Islands and Geographical Entities

The Working Group on Names of Islands and Off-Shore Geographical Entities was established on 20 June 2006 and is chaired by the National Hydrographic Centre (NHC).

The tasks of this Working Group are as follows:

- i. Carry out surveys and researches as well as identifying and proposing the naming of islands and off-shore geographic entities which has no names. The proposed names will have to relate to the characteristics of hydrographic entities.
- ii. Identify and collect all related information of islands and off-shore geographic entities including from charts, gazettes, maps, agreements and associated documents;

- iii. Document and update the list of islands and geographical entities; and
- iv. Propose new names for existing islands and off-shore geographic entities related to the characteristic of geographical entities under the guideline for the Standardization of Undersea Feature Names produced by the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO).

The Working Group has identified 1,518 of 1,698 the naming of islands and geographic entities. At the same time, 180 islands and geographic entities have no name. For the International Level, the Working Group has successfully identified seven (7) geographical entities in the South China Sea from the year 2014 till 2019. The entities have been presented and accepted by the Sub Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN).

The Working Group also has republished new format for the Listing Naming of Islands and Geographical Entities Book I covered Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan. Other versions will be published in the year 2021.

3.6 Workshop and Briefing

The objective of the workshop and briefing in MNCGN is to disseminate information on the Guidelines and to discuss the progress of validating the Geographical Names Database. Its were also intended to help participants understand the importance of coordinated geographical naming and to populate the Geographical Names Database. These efforts were expected to support the implementation of the Malaysian Geospatial Data Infrastructure (MyGDI) initiatives which are undertaken by the National Geospatial Centre (PGN). During the period from September 2019 until

September 2020, the list of workshop and briefing that has been conducted are:

- i. Geographical Names Database Workshop;
- ii. Briefing on National Geographical Names and Gazetteer Database for Town Map for Kuantan and Cyberjaya;
- iii. Updating Islands and Geographical Entities Names Book II
- iv. Conducting a discussion on Determination of Naming Islands and Geographical Entities exceeding three (3) nautical miles from the shoreline.

3.7 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in Updating the Geographical Names Database for Urban Area

JUPEM has managed to produce the SOP in updating the geographical names database for the urban area. The SOP has been distributed to all the related states under phase III of Updating the Geographical Names Database for Urban Area.

3.8 Toponymic Guidelines

During the 10th UNCSGN (United Nations Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names) and 27th Session of UNGEGN in New York in August 2012, Malaysia was requested to prepare the 'Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors for International Use'.

Malaysia has presented 'Toponymic Guidelines for Map and Other Editors for International Use' during '11th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names' held in New York, USA on 8 - 17

August 2017. The guideline has been used as the reference in MyGeoname Application in Malaysia.

4. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

In developing and implementing the standardized usage of geographical names throughout the country, there were some issues encountered by MNCGN, amongst which are as follows:

4.1 Verification of The Geographical Names

The estimation duration that has been taken to update geographical names database for 14 states in Malaysia were five (5) years where three (3) states were targeted in a year. As the effects of the long duration process, the list of geographical names in the database was not up to date.

4.2 Duplication in Updating Geographical Names

The Geographic Information System (GIS) has over the past decades advanced so much, from a concept of digitally creating maps and systems into an array of applications. In Malaysia, many applications have developed by multiple agencies such as MyGeoName, MyGeoServe, GeoJohor, Integrated Landuse Planning System, PeGIS, GIS9 and so on. The developments causing difficulty to standardize and updating the geographical names due to all the applications mentioned above are not centralized.

4.3 Lack of Management Spatial and Non-Spatial Data

At the moment, a total of 53,099 audio clips of official pronunciation, 57,753 audio clips of local dialect pronunciation, 57,205 images of Jawi writing and 28 video visuals were stored separately. Therefore, it is required to complete the task for updating both spatial and non-spatial data before migrating the data in the geographical names database.

5. CONCLUSION

Geographic names provide authoritative information relating to the location and spelling of geographical names which are gazetted in a consistent format for the official use of government, industry and the public. Consistent use of accurate place names is an essential element in effective communication worldwide, apart from supporting socio-economic development, conservation and national infrastructure. Standard geographical names can also identify and reflect culture, heritage and landscape.

There is an essential need to develop a comprehensive database containing names of official places. It would benefit trade and commerce, population census and national statistics, property right and cadastre, urban and regional planning, environmental management, natural disaster relief, security strategy and peace-keeping operations, maps and atlas production, automatic navigation, tourism, and communication including postal and news services. MNCGN plays a role in representing Malaysia to meet such needs locally and on a global scale.