

COUNTRY REPORT
Republic of the Philippines

I. Introduction

In the 17th divisional meeting held last 10 April 2010, in Sydney, Australia, the Philippines presented a brief background on the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA), the central mapping agency of government and an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Likewise, the history on the creation of the Philippine Standard Geographic Code (PSGC) way back in 1976 was presented. It was stated that due to rapid pace of development during that period, there was need for more comprehensive and reliable geographic classification for use in planning and assessment of regional programs, policies and projects that lead to formation of Inter-Agency Committee on Geographic Classification (IACGC). In 1977, the prescribed standard and classification systems were adopted by all government agencies.

II. The Barangay as Basic Political Unit

In that same meeting, there was intense interest displayed by participants about the barangay as the smallest political unit in the Philippines that comprise a town or city. Its head or chairman, is elected every three years in a simultaneous nationwide election. The importance of the role of barangay in the political system of the country was thoroughly discussed. As of June 30, 2010, there are a total of 42,025 barangays nationwide.

Most of the updates of the PSGC since 1977 were on barangay verification particularly on the cleansing of "ghost" barangays. Quarterly updates were being done by the National Statistical Board (NSCB).

However, due to the many modifications to be made and discrepancies of records of different agencies, a Technical Working Group on Geographic Classification (TWG-GC) was created in 1996 by NSCB, wherein NAMRIA is a member.

III. Recent Developments

Updates and revisions to the PSCG are performed semi-annually with an interactive website already available, making geographic queries accessible to the public. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) is mandated as official sources of updates.

The TWG-GC members regularly update the committee on the latest national laws, court decisions, certifications and local ordinances to update the PSGC.

These may include the following:

- A. Creation of new province, municipality or barangay;
- B. Transfer of barangay(s) to another municipality;
- C. Conversion of municipalities to cities;
- D. Transfer of province(s) from one region to another;
- E. Renaming, merging, abolition or division of LGUs;

IV. Current TWG-GC Activities

The last meeting of the TWG-GC was held on 21 January 2011 at the NSCB which tackled the following issues:

- A. Status of the Province of Dinagat Islands in Caraga Region after the Supreme Court declared as unconstitutional the laws creating the said province. However, the DILG is still waiting the release the SC Entry of Judgment that will declare the decision as final and executory.
- B. Boundary disputes between Davao Oriental and Surigao del Sur involving three barangays. A Certificate of Finality by the court recommends said barangays to be transferred from the municipality of Lingig, Surigao del Sur to the municipality of Boston, Davao Oriental. However, the TWG is waiting for the endorsement of the Regional Government where the three barangays are currently listed.
- C. Status of 16 new cities that will revert back to being municipalities after the Supreme Court declared as unconstitutional that elevated them to cities.
- D. Status of barangays with no elected officials. The Commission on Election (COMELEC) will check its records, and the National Statistics Office (NSO) to certify the population count. If found valid, the DILG will delist these

barangays and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) will exclude their Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA).

E. PSCG Updates for the 4th Quarter (October 1 – December 31, 2010)

The TWG agreed in the number of Local Government Units (LGUs), as follows:

Regions	-	17
Provinces	-	80
Cities	-	138
Municipalities	-	1,496
Barangays	-	42,025

V. Databasing of Geographic Names by NAMRIA

Last year, the NAMRIA started the process of developing its topographic database in GIS environment. Compiled vector data during map compilation and gathered attribute data from the field form part of the database. Technical personnel involved use templates containing feature classes where data from compiled vector file are loaded. Each feature class corresponds to a layer created during map compilation. Geographic Names are included in the Feature Class – Administrative Boundary. Feature classes are further subdivided into subtypes. Metadata is automatically created inside the dataset. This process applies to the production of both the 1:10,000 and 1:50,000 topographic base maps.

VI. The Gazetteer of the Philippines

The latest Gazetteer of the Philippines was derived from the topographic base maps at scale at scale 1:250,000.

It was published in May 1989 (second edition) by the Defense Mapping Agency of the United States upon approval of the United States Board on Geographic Names.

The gazetteer contains attribute table on: NAME, DESIGNATION, LATITUDE, LONGITUDE, AREA, UTM, and JOG NUMBER of places and ground features.