



UNGEEN
Asia South-East Division



COUNTRY REPORT BHUTAN

The 9th
Divisional Meeting

UNGEEN

Asia South-East
Division

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OUTLINE

- **INTRODUCTION**
- **BACKGROUND**
- **ACTIVITIES**
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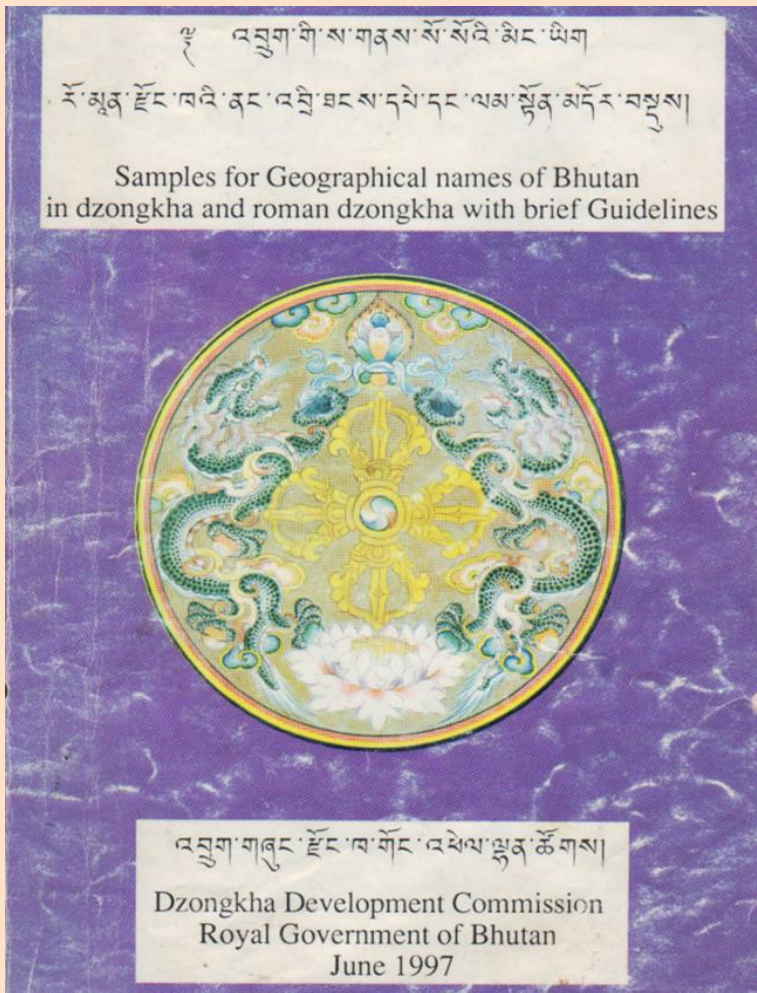
INTRODUCTION

This report covers the current status of the Romanization and Standardization of geographical names in Bhutan. This is submitted for the first time by NLCS to the UNGEGN, ASE Division on behalf of Technical Experts on Geographical Names

BACKGROUND

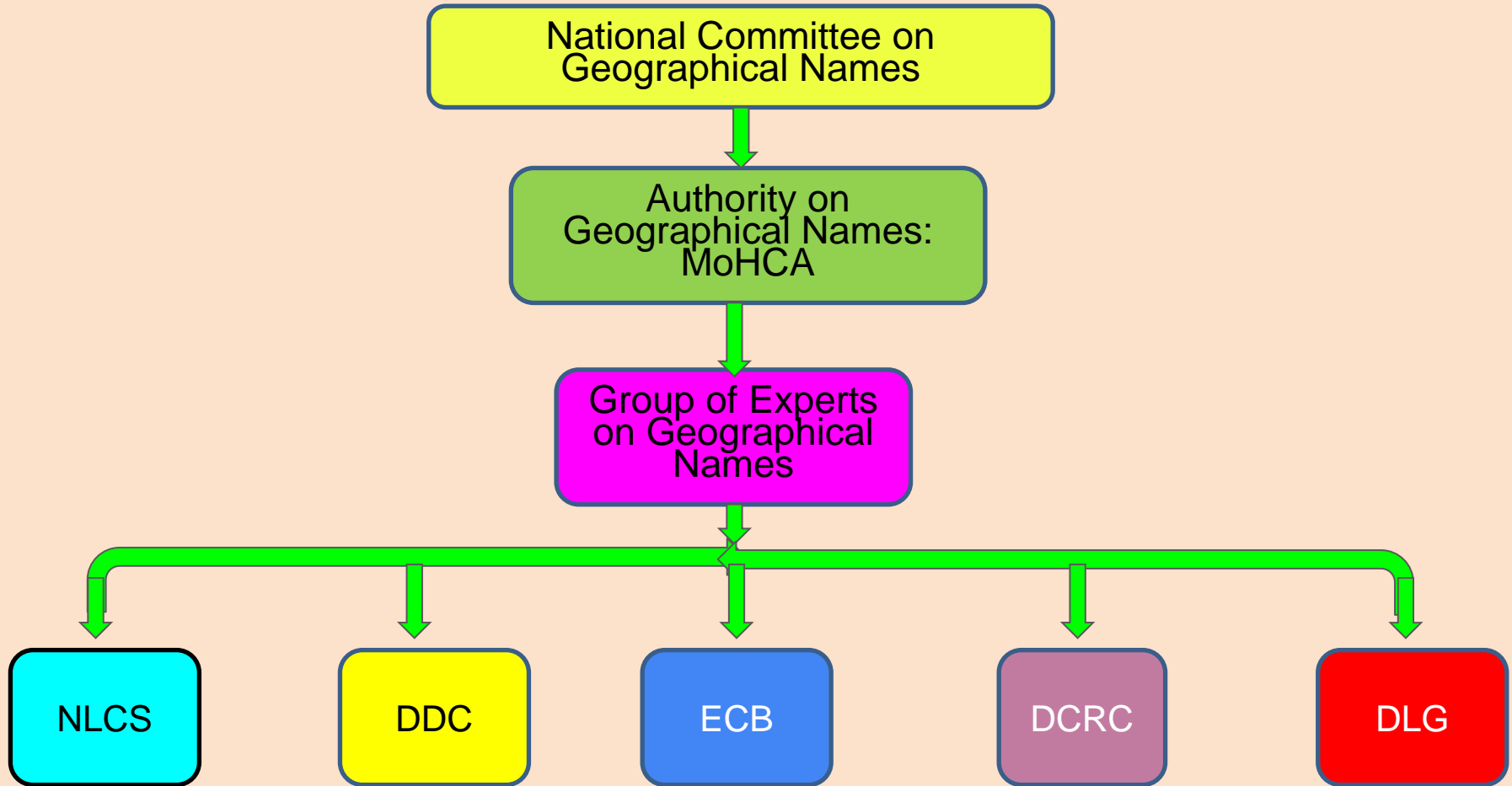
Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (MoHCA) is the authority on the Geographical Names. DDC is responsible for catering to the linguistic treatment.

The NLCS took the lead role to coordinate the Group of Experts on Geographical Names and prepare the Gazetteer. Also NLCS is responsible for collection of georeferenced names, updation and database maintenance



Based on the existing Guide to Dzongkha prepared by DDC, a robust draft based on the consensus of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names has been submitted on 10/05/2018.

Organizational Structure



*NLCS: National Land Commission Secretariat
DCRC: Department of Civil Registration and Census
DDC: Dzongkha Development Commission
Cultural Affairs*

*ECB: Election Commission of Bhutan
DLG: Department of Local Government
MoCHA: Ministry of Home and*

Responsibilities of the group

- Establishing national guideline for nomenclature of places
- Developing the National Geographic Names database and publishing the National Gazetteer
- Promoting the use of official names for places
- Collaborating with relevant agencies and committees
- Participating in in the regional and international UNGEGN

ACTIVITIES

1

National Committee on
Geographical Names
Meeting

2

Group of Experts on
Geographical Names
Consultation

3

Geographical Names
Database and
Production of Web
Gazetteer

4

Convention on Street
Addressing for Urban
Area

5

SOP in updating the
Geographical Names
Database

6

Toponymy Guidelines

7

Collection of
Geographical Names

8

Workshops and
Meeting

1

National Committee on
Geographical Names
Meeting

Proposed to convene

2

Group of Experts on
Geographical
Names Consultation

- **February 9, 2017: The first meeting of the stakeholders on Geographical Names**
- **March 8, 2017: Meeting on the location information collection and Romanization for standardization of spellings of Geographical Names**
- **September 9, 2017 : Work programme prepared and decided to deput 5 survey teams for about 3 months with four Dzongkhags for each team by NLCS**
- **December 21, 2017: The main point decided was on the Keys to romanization prepared in 19/06/1997 in a booklet on ‘Samples of Geographical Names of Bhutan in Dzongkha and Roman Dzongkha with Brief Guidelines’, few of which were incoherently followed.**
- **April 3, 2018: Field Reports of twenty Dzongkhags on Geographical Names collection were e-mailed to the Group of Experts for their Comments/Corrections. The deadline was 2nd May 2018.**
- **May 3, 2018 : The final Geographical Names for the twenty Dzongkhags, romanized based on the Dzongkha Romanization Key discussed on 21/12/2017 with the Expert Group were submitted to the Director, Department of Surveying And Mapping and relevant officers of Geo-Informatic Division and Topographical Divisions for further necessary action.**
- **May 10, 2018: The Draft of Guide to Dzongkha Romanization which was revised by the Expert Group on Geographical Names on 21/12/2017 was forwarded to the Hon’ble Secretary, DDC. It was learnt that DDC is still conducting research on the issue**

3

Geographical Names Database
and Production of Web Gazetteer

Initiated and in progress by NLCS

4

Convention on Street
Addressing for Urban
Area

Prepared by NLCS

5

SOP in updating the
Geographical Names Database

Draft stage

6

Toponymy Guidelines

Prepared by DDC in June 1997

7

Collection of Geographical Names

Collected for whole country in 2018. As of now we have
12700 GNs

8

Workshops and Meeting

Conducted several times

Data Collection

- Source of data: -
 - Existing annotation from 50k base map of Bhutan
 - Census data from DCRC, MoHCA
 - Election Commission name
 - Collection from field
- Geographical names maintained by DCRC, Election Commission of Bhutan and NLCS were compared and agreed the names maintained in civil registration records by DCRC to be the basis. Other than census names, extra annotations from topo maps were kept as it is.
- Field verification and collection of geo-referenced geographical names were carried out for three months by 6 surveyors
- Hands on training for data collection (for the field staff) provided
- Field verification and data collection program completed
- Field inspection completed
- Compilation of Field data completed
- The Dzongkha Romanization Guideline was strictly adhered to.
- After standardizing and Romanizing both in Dzongkha and English, proof reading was done
- A copy was printed and had over to the authority for approval
- Printing & publication ready

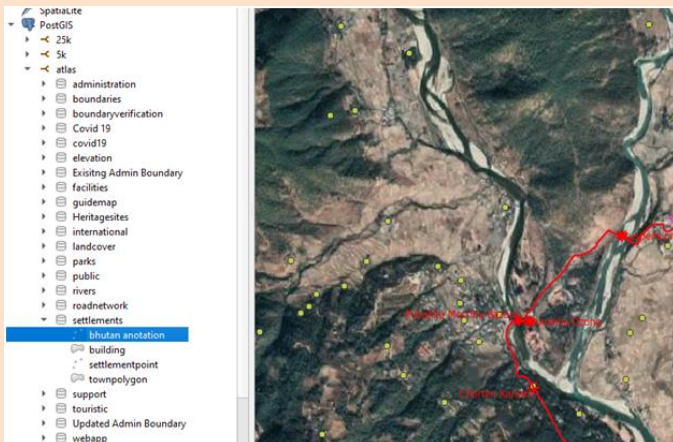
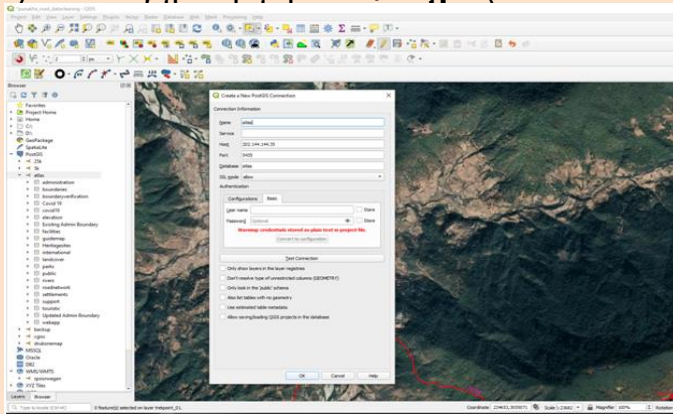
Street Addressing

- Thimphu Thromde (TT) initiated the first City Addressing in Bhutan in collaboration with Bhutan Post in 2008. The infrastructure such as signposts and building numbers were installed in part of the Southern and Northern part of the TT.
- Later in 2011, Samdrup Jongkhar Thromde (SJT) also carried out the City Addressing using the same convention used by TT.
- During the pandemic, CGISC office based in NLCS revamped and update the GIS based City Addressing piloting the TT and Debsi to serve the emergency service delivery. All standard naming and numbering convention were followed and the spatial database were created. The building numbering were done based on the cadastral map leaving the provision for future fragmentations and new building developments.
 1. About 2000 Street names completed
 2. 9,503 Building numbering done
 3. 25,299 Geocoded household info collected
- The GIS section of TT office is taking the responsibility to complete the GIS based City Addressing of TT.

Database Structure

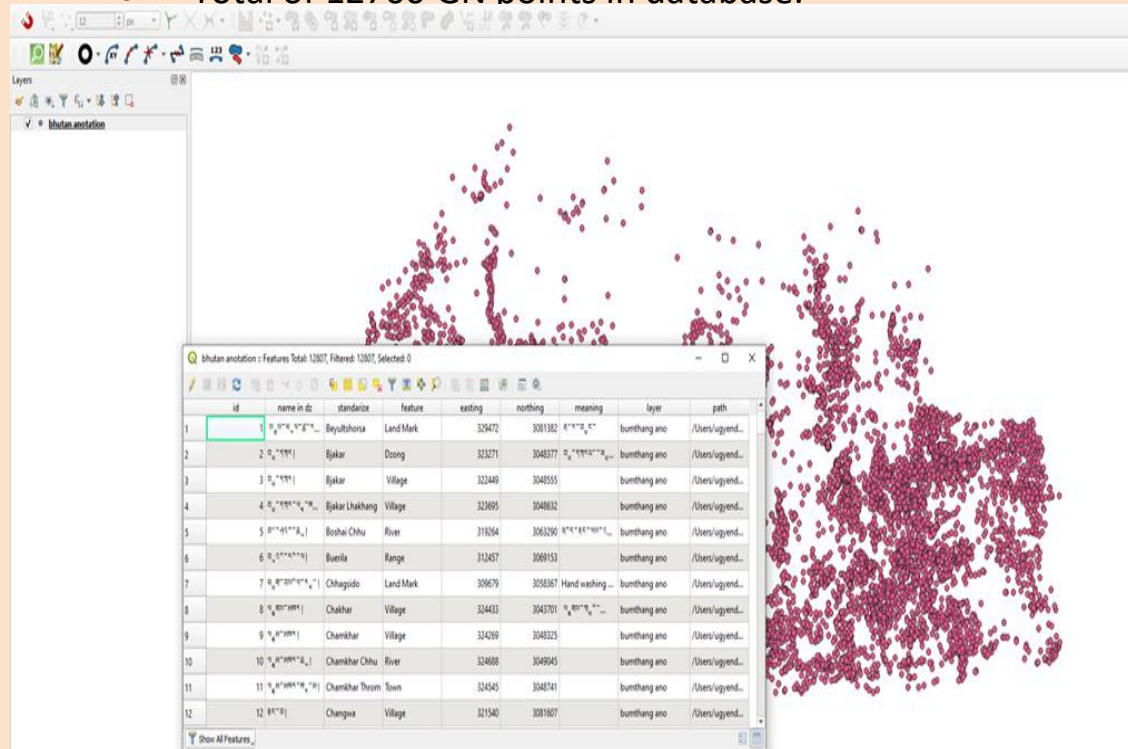
As of now, only the NLCS staff are able to access the geographical name spatial layer from the GID database. However, NLCS has already initiated to host the Bhutan Geo Portal through which datasets can be accessed by the user community.

Using the QGIS desktop, connect to the PostGIS database as shown below



Structure of the Data

- The geographical name collected as point geometry and
- The attribute data collected are: name in dzongkhag, standardize, feature, easting, northing, meaning.
- Currently stored in the PostGIS database.
- Total of 12700 GN points in database.



The name of the layer is **bhumon_anoation** under the **settlement** schema

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Lack of collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders
- Unreliable geographical names and database
- Lack of Management of Spatial and Non-Spatial Data
- Lack of exposure and inadequate Expertise

WAY FORWARD

- More collaboration meetings to be done with relevant agencies
- Publishing of gazetteer of Bhutan 2022
- Keep up-to-date Toponymic guidelines for maps and other purposes
- Integration of Geographical names in Geoportal
- Sharing and access to Geographical names through the web
- Toponymic education and research
- Involvement with UNGEGN, ASE- East Division for enhancement of knowledge and skill