Korea Committee on Geographical Names
Achievements and Challenges

ICC pre-conference workshop
“Role and structure of national place-name boards”
Tokyo, 15 July 2019

Sungjae Choo
Kyung Hee University
sjchoo@khu.ac.kr

Hyo Hyun Sung
Ewha Womans University
hhsung@ewha.ac.kr
Standardization of geographical names in Korea

- natural features ⇒ NGII, local authorities
- maritime features ⇒ KHOA
- man-made features ⇒ NGII, local authorities
  (a part of)
- administrative divisions & streets ⇒ MOIS
- local authorities
- other man-made features ⇒ individual authorities

✓ NGII: National Geographic Information Institute (國土地理情報院)
✓ KHOA: Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency (國立海洋調查院)
✓ MOIS: Ministry of the Interior and Safety (行政安全部)
✓ KCGN: Korea Committee on Geographical Names (國家地名委員會)
### Standardization of geographical names in Korea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Features</th>
<th>⇒ NGII, local authorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maritime Features</td>
<td>⇒ KHOA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man-made Features (a part of)</td>
<td>⇒ NGII, local authorities, KCGN’s involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Divisions &amp; Streets</td>
<td>⇒ MOIS local authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Man-made Features</td>
<td>⇒ individual authorities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- NGII: National Geographic Information Institute (國土地理情報院)
- KHOA: Korea Hydrographic and Oceanographic Agency (國立海洋調查院)
- MOIS: Ministry of the Interior and Safety (行政安全部)
- KCGN: Korea Committee on Geographical Names (國家地名委員會)
Korea Committee on Geographical Names
(國家地名委員會)

- Merging two committees in 2010
  - Central Geographical Names Committee (中央地名委員會) (1958~2009)
  - Marine Geographical Names Committee (海洋地名委員會) (2002~2009)

- Act on the Establishment and Management of Spatial Information (formerly, Act on Measurement, Hydrographic Survey and Land Registration)
  (空間情報의 構築 및 管理 等에 關한 法律)
Korea Committee on Geographical Names
(國家地名委員會)

• composed of 30 members
  - 11 government, 19 non-government
• two sub-committees & two secretariats
  - natural/man-made features: NGII
  - maritime features: KHOA
• examine proposals and make final decisions on the names standardization
Tasks of national names authorities

- Setting principles and procedures of standardization
- Standardization: proposal, approval, announcement (including checking on errors and corrections)
  - 152,850 natural/man-made feature names by NGII (by 2018)
  - 1,091 marine feature names by KHOA (by 2018)
- Managing toponymic databases and gazetteers
- Toponymic research and publication

지명 표준화 편람

Guidelines for the Standardization of Marine Geographical Names (2nd ed., 2016)

해양지명 표준화 편람

2018. 12.
Achievements and Challenges

• Marine geographical names by KHOA (Sung)
• Natural/man-made feature names by NGII (Choo)
Natural/man-made feature names: bottom-up procedures of standardization

- Proposal for naming and renaming by city/county/district committees
- Approval by metropolitan/provincial committees
- Approval and final decision by KCGN, then officially announced through official gazette (官報)
Figure 1. The Flowchart of the Approval and Change of Geographical Names

- **Proposal**
  - Individual/group/local government
  - National Geographic Information Institute, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport

- **City/County/District**
  - Discussion
  - Committee:
    - Chairperson: local municipality head
    - Committee members: not more than 7 members

- **City/Province**
  - Discussion and Reconciliation
  - Committee:
    - Chairperson: administrative deputy governor/deputy mayor
    - Committee members: not more than 10 members

- **National Geographic Information Institute, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport**
  - Final Discussion
  - The Korea Committee on Geographical Names (KCON)
    - Chairperson: elected from among the committee members who are not government officials
    - Committee members: not more than 30 members

- Official Announcement
  - Contents of official announcement:
    - Geographical names that are approved or changed, location, coordinates

- Inform Results
  - City/province concerned

- Map Revision and Database Update

Achievements: Standardization

- 152,850 names (1958~2018)
  - 420 names (2012~2016)
  - 335 names (2017~2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>natural features</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>island</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peak</td>
<td>3(1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4(2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mountain</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1(1)</td>
<td>2(2)</td>
<td>3(2)</td>
<td>3(1)</td>
<td>11(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>3(1)</td>
<td>4(4)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>artificial features</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bridge</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intersection</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>park</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others**</td>
<td>3(2)</td>
<td>6(3)</td>
<td>3(2)</td>
<td>24(4)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>68(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24(4)</td>
<td>12(8)</td>
<td>16(6)</td>
<td>131(6)</td>
<td>237(1)</td>
<td>420(25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Numbers in the parenthesis represent name changes.
** Others include underpasses, tunnels, eco-bridges, etc.
Achievements: Principles of standardization

- Revision made in 2018 (formerly 2005, 2012)
- Composed of:
  - 3 grand principles,
  - 2 priorities of name choice,
  - 7 types of names to be avoided,
  - 2 rules of commemorative naming and
  - 3 procedural recommendations
Major principles of standardization

✓ One name for one feature
✓ Current names not be modified or discarded without valid reasons
✓ Names currently in local use, names reflecting local identity, history, cultural heritage, or sense of place be prioritized
✓ Names with derogative meanings, motivated by the context of commercialization, causing confusion by existing same names, using series of numbers be avoided
✓ Names of persons associated with the area and deceased at least ten years may be used, but no living persons.
✓ Names of features belonging to the jurisdiction of more than one local municipality shall be decided upon agreement between the relevant municipalities.
Challenges: controversies between municipalities

- Different name proposals for transboundary features
- Bridges, tunnels, mountains
- Agreement made:

  Seocheondaegyo (舒川大橋) vs. Gunsandaegyo (群山大橋)
  ⇒ Dongbaekdaegyo (冬柏大橋)
  * Dongbaek(동백, 冬柏) means camellia.

  Sinandaegyo (新安大橋) vs. Unnamdaegyo (雲南大橋)
  ⇒ Kimdaejungdaegyo (金大中大橋)
  * Kim Daejung was a president of Korea.
Challenges: controversies between municipalities

• Agreement NOT made, had to put in vote:

  Paryeongdaegyo (八影大橋) vs. Jeokgeumdaegyo (積金大橋)
  ⇒ Paryeongdaegyo (八影大橋)
  * Paryeong (八影) is the name of a mountain while Jeokgeum (積金) is
    the name of an island.

  Noryangdaegyo (露梁大橋) vs. 2nd Namhaedaegyo (第2南海大橋)
  ⇒ Noryangdaegyo (露梁大橋)
  * Noryang (露梁) is the name of villages in both sides while Namhae is
    the name of an island as well as of a local municipality.
Challenges: validity of principles

• All proposed names originated from neighboring features with local use based on cultural heritage

• In case there are common elements with no opposition, agreement is feasible, but otherwise, not.

• Strengthening the validity of principles?
Procedural recommendation
(new clauses in the 2018 edition of the Guidelines)

✓ Names of features belonging to the jurisdiction of more than one local municipality shall be decided upon agreement between the relevant municipalities.

✓ Attempts shall be made to find a name representing elements common to relevant local municipalities

✓ Names which can cause disputes by applying local elements exclusively belonging to just one local area shall be avoided

✓ In case of artificial features, names used temporarily during the construction period are not admitted as names currently in local use.
Challenges: legal validity of the Guidelines

• Currently no legal binding power
• Should be complemented by additional articles in the existing legislative framework or by establishing a new comprehensive law for geographical names
• A grand framework to manage geographical names in general which involves all government agencies should be considered.