



UNITED STATES BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES
Foreign Geographic Names:
Standardization Policy:
Dual Names; Multiple Names

The BGN's Foreign Geographic Names Standardization Principles apply to foreign geographic names in general and form the basis for its foreign names decisions. Additional normative regulations must be developed to address specific geographic and linguistic phenomena peculiar to countries or regional areas. Special classes of geographic names, such as high seas features, may also require special analysis and treatment. For this reason, the Board develops supplementary standardization policy and procedure on a country basis, and to address specific standardization issues.

Policy: Dual Names; Multiple names:

A dual name (multiple name) is defined as two (or more) names for the same feature, usually, but not always, in different languages and having the approval of a names authority. In the NGA/BGN Geographic Names Database, a feature with a dual name (multiple name) will most commonly be captured with separate Unique Name Identifiers (UNI) within a single Unique Feature Identifier (UFI). However, in some cases, treatment will follow the precedent or standard set by the relevant national names authority, which may present the dual name (multiple name) in a manner that, for policy reasons, both/all names must be used in cartographic, reporting, or listing purposes. These names may be captured in a single UNI using appropriate indicators (e.g., slash mark (/), hyphen (-), etc.) to separate the names. The relevant country-specific standardization policies (country policy) should include detailed guidance.

Examples:

Recorded in a single UNI: Uluru / Ayers Rock (Australia); Stewart Island / Rakiura (New Zealand); Vitoria-Gasteiz (Spain)

Recorded in separate UNIs: Arbīl, Erbil, Hewlêr (Iraq); Brussel, Brussel, Bruxelles (Belgium); Lagoa do Mirim (Brazil), Laguna Merín (Uruguay)

Note: Geographic features with short-form names fall into a separate category and are therefore excluded from this policy. Short-form names are considered extensions of an approved name. Prior to the development and approval of the Name Selection policy, and name ranking procedures, short-form names were simply an attribute of a single UNI. In the current procedures of the FNC staff, all short forms are captured with a separate UNI. Furthermore, it is possible that some features with dual names would themselves have short-form names.