

Geographic Names Standardization Policy for Kyrgyzstan

United States Board on Geographic Names
Foreign Names Committee



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1. Introduction

This geographic names standardization policy has been prepared as an aid to those geographic names experts who are the working staff for the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) in the standardization of the geographic names of Kyrgyzstan for United States Government use. The BGN and its staff work to effect consistent treatment of geographic name spellings in U.S. Government databases, publications, maps, and charts, and are intended to satisfy the statutory requirements levied upon the BGN in Public Law USC 80-242 to develop principles, policies and procedures for geographic names standardization, and to promulgate decisions with respect to the principles of geographic nomenclature and orthography. This policy shall be applied to all Kyrgyz geographic names and features in the Geographic Names Database (GNDB) of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). This policy contains updates to the original version which was approved by the BGN in 2014.

2. Languages and Language Policy

a. Demographics

The population of Kyrgyzstan is estimated to be 6.5 million.¹ The largest single ethnic group is Kyrgyz, at 73% of the population. Minority groups include Uzbek at 14%, Russian at 5%, and Dungan at 1.1%. Ukrainians, Uighurs, Tajiks, Kazakhs and others make up the remainder of the population. The nation is approximately 90% Muslim, 7% Russian Orthodox, and 3% other.²

b. Languages

Kyrgyz³ (ISO 639-3 code kir) and Russian (ISO 639-3 code rus) are the official languages of Kyrgyzstan. Article 10 of the 2010 Constitution of Kyrgyzstan states that the official (state) language is Kyrgyz and that Russian, as a language of official use, can be used in both state and local government organizations. In 2004, the Law on Languages confirmed the status of Kyrgyz and Russian as official languages and stated that geographic names should be recorded in those languages. Maps and atlases are issued in Kyrgyz and/or Russian.^{4,5}

¹ The World Bank. <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=KG>>. Accessed 29 October, 2021.

² CIA World FactBook, Kyrgyzstan <<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/kyrgyzstan>> Accessed 29 October, 2021

³ The alternative spelling for this language is *Kirgiz*, sometimes also referenced as *Kyrghiz* or *Kyrgiz*, however, to remain consistent with the system of transliteration and the terminology used by the US Department of State, this paper will use *Kyrgyz*.

⁴ United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, Working Paper No. 23 <<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/docs/25th-gegn-docs/wp%20papers/wp23-divrep-eeenca.pdf>> 16 May 2012

⁵ There is also a series of Kyrgyz maps which are produced by the state authority in English. Please refer to section 3.c. *Geographic Names Standardization* for the proper treatment of names collected from these maps.

The BGN has approved a dual-language policy for Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz and Russian names, when available, are approved for all features in Kyrgyzstan, as recorded in the Geographic Names Database (GNDB). Kyrgyz names are to precede Russian names in dual-name entries, with Kyrgyz names taking on Name Rank 1 and Russian names taking on Name Rank 2.

c. Geographic Names Standardization

The geographic names authority in Kyrgyzstan is the State Cartographic-Geodetic Service (Goskartografiya) which is within the Ministry of Energy and Trade.^{6,7}

The State Service of Cartography and Geodesy issues maps and atlases in both Kyrgyz and Russian. The Service also issues some maps in English. On English-language maps, the specific terms in Kyrgyz names are transliterated and generics are listed in English, for example, as in *Torugart Pass*. The system of transliteration used in the making of these maps may also vary from the BGN/PCGN standard described in *Section 3.b Romanization* below. Though these maps are produced by an authoritative source, the user should not consider names on English-language maps of Kyrgyzstan as Approved Names, Anglicized Variants or Conventional names. If a name is only available on the English-language map source, it may be collected as an Unverified name. If a name listed on the English-language map source is also found on the native script source, it should be collected as a Variant name.

Geographical naming for cartographic purposes also falls under the domain of the Inter-Department Commission on Geographic Names, with technical support provided by the State Service of Cartography and Geodesy. The Commission deals with the issues of administrative divisions of the country and proposals on naming or renaming geographical features in Kyrgyzstan. The Commission's final decisions have the status of laws approved by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Commission also participates in the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). It is active in the Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division.⁸

⁶ Ministry of Energy and Trade (Ministerstvo Energetiki I Promyshlennosti Kyrgyzskoy Respubliki) <http://www.gkpen.kg/index.php/2017-12-21-10-41-22> Accessed 9 September 2021

⁷ Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic. *Polozheniye o Gosudarstvennoy Kartografo-Geodesizcheskoy Sluzhbe pri Gosudarstvennom Komitete Promyshlennosti, Energetiki, i Nedropol'zovaniya Kyrgyzskoy Respubliki*. 30 July 2019. Accessible at: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/98742>

⁸ 23rd Session of the UNGEGN. <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/Authorities_listApr2011.pdf>. 15 May 2012

3. Toponymic Policies

a. Orthography

The Kyrgyz language is written in the Kyrgyz Cyrillic alphabet and the Russian language in the Russian Cyrillic alphabet. The Kyrgyz Cyrillic alphabet contains three characters that are not present in the Russian alphabet: Ө, Ү, and Ү.

b. Romanization

The Kyrgyz Cyrillic alphabet is romanized using the 1979 BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Kyrgyz Cyrillic and the Russian alphabet by the 1947 BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Russian. Russian-origin names that appear in Kyrgyz language sources are romanized in accordance with the Kyrgyz Romanization system when supported by map evidence. For example, the Russian-derived name *Калининское* found on a Kyrgyz-language map is romanized *Kalininskoe* in accordance with the Kyrgyz system, rather than as *Kalininskoye* as would be in appropriate if it were collected from a Russian-language map of Kyrgyzstan.

c. Diacritics

Diacritics are shown in standardized name forms as they appear on native sources and in accordance with Kyrgyz orthography. Capital letters in standardized name forms retain diacritics. In accordance with Kyrgyz orthography, the following diacritics are encountered in standardized name forms in Kyrgyzstan:

Cyrillic	Romanized Character	Character Name	Unicode Value
Ө	Ö	Capital O with dieresis	04E8
Ү	Ü	Capital U with dieresis	04AE
ө	ö	Lower case o with dieresis	04E9
ү	ü	Lower case u with dieresis	04AF
”	”	Right double quotation mark	042A
”	”	Right double quotation mark	044A
’	’	Right single quotation mark	042C
’	’	Right single quotation mark	044C

d. Generic terms

A generic is a term that describes a feature. Examples include words such as ‘river,’ ‘hill,’ and ‘lake.’ Except in cases in which the generic type does not identify the feature type, generics appearing in standardized name forms should be considered true generics. Otherwise, the term is considered to be a false generic and should not be collected as a generic. Generics are not collected for populated places in Kyrgyzstan.

In Kyrgyz, the generic term typically follows the specific name and is recorded in the nominative case. As an example, in *Talas Oblusu*, the final “u” indicates that the term *Oblus* is used in a grammatical construction and that the proper name *Talas* is the specific. The generic would be collected as *Oblus* (See 3.i., *Unique Linguistic Situations* for more details). No case distinction is made in Russian generic terms. A glossary of commonly found Kyrgyz and Russian generic terms used in Kyrgyzstan is available in Appendix A.

e. Hyphenation and Capitalization

In accordance with BGN policy, all romanized generic terms occurring as a separate name element should be capitalized, even if such terms occur uncapitalized in official romanized sources. For example, *Ак-Сай маданий борбору* should be collected as *Ак-Сай Маданий Борбору* for the Non-Roman script name and as *Ak-Say Madaniy Borboru* for the Approved Name, with *Маданий Борбор* and *Madaniy Borbor* collected as the respective generic terms. Hyphens are frequently encountered as part of the proper name and should be collected as they appear on the source, for example, *Беш-Бел-Чир* (*Besh-Bel-Chir*).

f. Numbers

Cardinal and ordinal numerals that occur as integral parts in geographic names should be replaced by their word equivalents in main-entry names in the database, ensuring appropriate vowel harmony for the Kyrgyz numerals. Please refer to section 3.i. *Unique Linguistic Situations* below.

g. Optional Long and Short Forms

Short forms of geographic names in Kyrgyzstan are collected for such features as country name (PCLI) and first-order administrative divisions (ADM1). All first-order administrative divisions have short-form names in Kyrgyz only. Kyrgyz and Russian names of railroad stations that appear on official sources with the generic term *Stantsiya*⁹ are given both long- and short-form names as supported by official evidence.

⁹ The term “Stantsiya” is the same in Kyrgyz and Russian.

h. Abbreviations

The following is a list of abbreviations of generics and common terms which are regularly found in Kyrgyzstani cartographic products in Kyrgyz and in Russian. Named features with abbreviations will be collected with the full spelling of all abbreviated terms. For example, a feature listed on the source in Kyrgyz as *Ак-Бейит аш.* will be collected as *Ak-Beyit Ashuu* with *Ashuu* entered separately as the generic term, and a feature listed on a Russian language map as *Вост. Бол. Чуйский кан.* will be collected as *Vostochnyy Bol'shoy Chuyskiy Kanal* with *Kanal* entered separately as the generic term. Please note the below list is not exhaustive and refer to section 3i. *Unique Linguistic Situations* below for additional guidance on case structure in Kyrgyz.

<i>Kyrgyz abbreviation on source</i>	<i>Expanded Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Romanization</i>
ат.	атындагы	named after	atyndagy
аш.	ашуу	mountain pass	ashuu
бат.	батыш	western	batysh
кан.	канал	canal	kanal
ч.	чокусу	peak, mountain top	chokusu
чыг.	чыгыш	eastern	chygysh
түн.	түндүк	northern	tündük
түш.	түштүк	southern	tüshtük

<i>Russian abbreviation on source</i>	<i>Expanded Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Romanization</i>
а. а.	айылный аймак	Third-order administrative division	ayylnyy aymak
бол.	большой	greater, big	bol'shoy
вдхр.	водохранилище	reservoir	vodokhranilishche
вост.	восточный	eastern	vostochnyy

<i>Russian abbreviation on source</i>	<i>Expanded Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Romanization</i>
г.	гора	mountain	gora
г.	город	city	gorod
зап.	западный	western	zapadnyy
им.	имени	named after	imeni
ист.	источник	spring, source	istochnik
к.	колодец	well	kolodets
кан.	канал	canal	kanal
оз.	озеро	lake	ozero
пер.	перевал	mountain pass	pereval
род.	родник	spring	rodnik
с.	село	village, town	selo
сев.	северный	northern	severnnyy
сол.	солённое	salt	solënnoe
х.	хребет	range	khrebet
юж.	южный	southern	yuzhnyy

i. Unique Linguistic Situations

Kyrgyz has front/back and rounding vowel harmony.¹⁰ Whenever a suffix is added to a word, the vowel in the suffix has to agree (harmonize) with the last vowel in the stem. The suffix vowel used is determined by whether the preceding vowel is a front (e, i, ö, ü) or back (a, y, o, u) vowel and whether it is rounded (ü, ö, u, o) or not (i, e, y, a)¹¹. For example, the ending *-inchi* is added to numbers to form ordinal numbers. Applying vowel harmony, *bir* (one) becomes

¹⁰ Raymond J. Hebert and Nicholas Poppe, *Kirghiz Manual*. Indiana University Publications, 1961.

¹¹ An exception to rounding harmony exists in that 'a' does not round following 'u'.

birinchi (first), *üch* (three) becomes *üchünchü* (third), and *toguz* (nine) becomes *toguzunchu* (ninth).

Generic terms are often displayed on native sources in the genitive case, but should be collected in the nominative case (See: 3.d, *Generic Terms*). If the generic term is preceded by an adjective, then the generic will be listed in the nominative case on the native source and no changes will be necessary when recording the generic. If the generic term is preceded by a proper noun, then the generic will be listed in the genitive case on the native source and will need to be recorded in the nominative case. The genitive case is typically indicated by the generic ending with a ‘-u,’ or ‘-y’ (an ‘s’ is added if the final letter of the stem is a vowel, and the final consonant of a stem may change due to assimilation with the vowel suffix). For example, the generic in *Qarasuu* (Black River) is *Suu*, while the generic for *Kaldama Ashuusuu* (Kaldama Pass) is *Ashuu* and the generic for *Naryn Korugu* (Naryn Reserve) is *Koruk*.

Plurals are formed by adding the suffix ‘lar,’ ‘dar,’ or ‘tar’ depending upon whether the word ends in a vowel, voiced consonant, or unvoiced consonant. (Note: vowel harmony also applies to plural suffixes, so ‘lar’ could become ‘ler,’ ‘lor,’ or ‘lör.’) For instance, ‘Suu’ (Stream) becomes ‘suular’ (Streams), ‘köl’ (Lake) becomes ‘kölder’ (Lakes), and ‘kuduk’ (Well) becomes ‘kuduktar’ (Wells).

4. Political Geography Policy

a. Country Name and Capital

Country name

Conventional Short Form	Kyrgyzstan
Conventional Long Form	Kyrgyz Republic
Kyrgyz Short Form – Non-Roman Script	Кыргызстан
Kyrgyz Short Form – Approved	Kyrgyzstan
Kyrgyz Long Form – Non-Roman Script	Кыргыз Республикасы
Kyrgyz Long Form – Approved	Kyrgyz Respublikasy
Russian Short Form – Non-Roman Script	Кыргызстан
Russian Short Form – Approved	Kyrgyzstan
Russian Long Form – Non-Roman Script	Кыргызская Республика
Russian Long Form – Approved	Kyrgyzskaya Respublika

Capital

Kyrgyz Non-Roman Script	Бишкек
Kyrgyz Approved	Bishkek
Russian Non-Roman Script	Бишкек
Russian Approved	Bishkek

b. First-order Administrative Divisions

Kyrgyzstan is divided into nine first-order administrative divisions, which includes seven *oblastu* (in Russian, *oblast'*) and two cities of administrative significance. The seven *oblastu* are further subdivided into 40 second-order administrative divisions, or *rayonu* (in Russian, *rayon*), and further still into 453 third-order administrative divisions, or *ayyl ökmötu* (in Russian, *ayylnyy aymak*)¹² The first-order administrative divisions (ADM1) and their seats (PPLA) are below:

<i>Kyrgyz Long Form / Kyrgyz Short Form</i>	<i>Russian</i>	<i>GEC</i>	<i>GENC</i>	<i>Seat</i>
Batken Oblusu / Batken	Batkenskaya Oblast'	KG-09	KG-B	Batken
Bishkek Shaary / Bishkek	Gorod Bishkek	KG-01	KG-GB	Bishkek ¹³
Chüy Oblusu/ Chüy	Chyskaya Oblast'	KG-02	KG-C	Chüy
Ysyk-Köl Oblusu/ Ysyk-Köl	Issyk-Kul'skaya Oblast'	KG-07	KG-Y	Karakol
Jalal-Abad Oblusu/ Jalal-Abad	Dzhalal- Abadksaya Oblast'	KG-03	KG-J	Jalal-Abad
Talas Oblusu/ Talas	Talasskaya Oblast'	KG-06	KG-T	Talas
Naryn Oblusu/ Naryn	Narynskaya Oblast'	KG-04	KG-N	Naryn
Osh Shaary/ Osh	Gorod Osh	KG-10	KG-GO	Osh
Osh Oblusy/ Osh	Oshskaya Oblast'	KG-08	KG-O	Osh

¹² Административно-территориальное устройство Кыргызской Республики (Administrative divisions of Kyrgyz Republic) Accessible at: <http://kg-eu.mlsp.gov.kg>

¹³ Bishkek is also the national capital (PCLI) of Kyrgyzstan

d. Conventional Names

The following Conventional names are found in Kyrgyzstan:

<i>Conventional Name</i>	<i>UFI</i>	<i>UNI</i>	<i>Designation</i>
Tien Shan	-3018330	-4230276	MTS
Turugart Pass	-3020120	-4237077	PASS
Fergana Valley	-2331758	-3218017	VAL
Kyrgyzstan	-2332413	14103786	PCLI
Kyrgyz Republic	-2334213	134714	PCLI

e. Unique Geopolitical Situations

For the latest country specific boundary dispute information, consult the U.S. Department of State’s Office of the Geographer and Global Issues at internationalboundaries@state.gov.

Delimitation of 130 km of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan border is hampered by disputes over the Kyrgyzstani exclave of Barak and four Uzbekstani enclaves within Kyrgyzstan (So’x, Shohimardon, Jangy-ayyl, and Qalacha.) As a result of these disputes, access to Uzbekstani and Kyrgyzstani enclaves is frequently limited. As of March 2021, border talks were ongoing.¹⁴

Kyrgyzstani exclave Barak, is in Uzbekistan at approximately 40°40’ N, 072°46’ E, and administered by Uzbekistan’s Kara-Suy Rayony, Osh Oblusu.¹⁵ Residents of the exclave are ethnic Kyrgyz, and as of August 2018, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan were in negotiations for exchanging the exclave’s territory for a territory of equal size in Uzbekistan’s Andijan province.¹⁶

There are also two Tajikistani enclaves within Batken Oblusy, Kyrgyzstan—Vorukh and Kayragach. Both of these enclaves are administratively controlled by Tajikistan’s Viloyati Sughd.

¹⁴ “Kyrgyz-Uzbek Talks on Border Open in Tashkent” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, March 24, 2021. Available at <https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-uzbekistan-border-talks/31167373.html>

¹⁶ “Бишкек и Ташкент Ведут Переговоры об Обмене Кыргызцкого Эксклава Барак.” 15 August 2018. Radio Azattyk. Original article in Russian, accessed 12 November 2021 Available at <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan-uzbekistan-barak/29434688.html>

The border demarcation around Vorukh has also caused tension between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.¹⁷

5. Source Material

a. Preferred Sources

The State Service of Cartography and Geodesy of the Kyrgyz Republic (Goskartografiya) is the preferred authority for Kyrgyzstani map and geospatial products, published in Kyrgyz, Russian, and English. Below is a list of available sources in Kyrgyz and Russian:

1:1,000,000 Series *Кыргыз Республикасы* (Kyrgyz Respublikasy) in Kyrgyz, Goskartografiya, 2002

1:500,000 Series *Кыргызская Республика* (Kyrgyzskaya Respublika) in Russian, Goskartografiya, 2004.

1:50,000 – 1:500,000 Multiple Series, Soviet General Staff maps

b. Other Sources

The Journal “Regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic,” issued twice monthly, contains all officially approved changes in geographic names.

The National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyz Republic, accessible at www.stat.kg produces detailed surveys for each first-order administrative division which include a listing of all populated places within the division.

¹⁷ “Small Exclave Spells Big Problems for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan” 16 January 2014. RadioFreeEurope <<https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-tajikistan-exclaves-vorukh-tensions/25232311.html>> Accessed 28 May 2020

Appendix A. Glossary of Generic Terms

Kyrgyz

<u>Generic Name</u>	<u>Designation Code</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Ayyl Ökmötu	ADM3	Third-order Administrative Division
Aryk	CNL	Canal
Ashuu	PASS	Mountain Pass
Bel	PASS	Mountain Pass
Bulak	SPNG	Spring
Bulung	BAY, COVE	Bay, Cove
Choku	PK	Mountain Peak
Daryya	STM	River
Ferma	FRM	Farm
Jon	RDGE	Mountain Ridge
Kanal	CNL	Canal
Kapchygay	GRGE	Gorge(s)
Kechüü	FORD	Ford
Ken	MN	Mine(s)
Koruk	RESN	Nature Reserve
Köl	LK	Lake
Kuduk	WLL	Artesian Well
Kyshtoo	CMP	Camp(s)
Oblus	ADM1	First-order Administrative Division
Öröön	VAL	Valley
Profilaktoriy	SNTR	Sanatorium
Rayon	ADM2	Second-Order Administrative Division
Stantsiya	RSTN	Railroad Station
Suu	STM	Stream
Suu Saktagyich	RSV	Reservoir
Too	MT	Mountain
Toonun Kyrkasy	MTS	Mountain Range
Shaar	ADM1	First-order Administrative Division

Russian

<u>Generic Name</u>	<u>Designation Code</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Aryk	CNL	Canal
Ayylnyy Aymak	ADM3	Third-order Administrative Division
Balka	RVN	Ravine(s)
Brod	FORD	Ford
Bugor	MT	Hill
Bukhta	BAY, COVE	Bay, Cove
Dom Otdykha	RSRT	Resort
Ferma	FRM	Farm
Geologicheskaya Partiya	STNB	Geological research station
Gidroelektrostantsiya	DAM	Dam
Gora	MT	Mountain
Gornyy Istochnik	SPNG	Spring(s)
Gorod	ADM1	First-order Administrative Division
Istochnik	SPNG	Spring(s)
Kanal	CNL	Canal
Khrebet	MTS	Mountains
Kladbishche	CMTY	Cemetery
Kolkhoz	FRM	Farm
Kollektor	DTCHI	Irrigation Ditch
Kolodets	WLL	Well
Koshara	SHPF	Sheepfold
Krepost'	FT	Fort
Kurort	RST	Resort
Lednik	GLCR	Glacier(s)
Lesnichestvo	STNF, FRST	Forest Station, Forestry District
Lesopilka	MLSW	Sawmill
Letnik	CMP	Summer camp(s)
Log	RVN	Ravine
Loshchina	VAL	Valley, Dale, Glen
Meteorologicheskaya Stantsiya	STNM	Meteorological Station
Mogila	TMB	Tomb(s)
Molochno-Tovarnaya Ferma	FRM	Farm, Dairy
Mys	PT	Point
Nasos Stantsiya	PMPW	Water Pumping Station
Oblast'	ADM1	First-order Administrative Division
Otdeleniye	FRM	Section of a Farm
Ovrag	RVN	Ravine(s)

Russian

<u>Generic Name</u>	<u>Designation Code</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Ovtsevodcheskaya Tovarnaya Ferma	FRM	Farm
Ozero	LK	Lake
Pamyatnik	MNMT	Monument
Pereval	PASS	Pass
Pionerlager'	CMP	Camp(s)
Pristan'	LDNG	Landing
Razvaliny	RUIN	Ruin(s)
Rayon	ADM2	Second-order Administrative Division
Rodnik	SPNG	Spring(s)
Ruchey	STM	Stream
Rudnik	MN	Mine(s)
Sanatoriy	SNTR	Sanatorium
Shakhta	MN	Mine(s)
Sopka	MT	Mountain
Sovkhoz	FRM	Farm
Stantsiya	RSTN	Railroad Station
Uchastok	FRM	Farm
Uchilishche	SCH	Vocational School
Urochishche	AREA	Area
Ushchel'ye	GRGE	Gorge(s)
Vodokhranilishche	RSV	Reservoir(s)
Zaliv	INLT	Inlet
Zimov'ye	CMP	Camp(s)

Appendix B. First-order Administrative Divisions of Kyrgyzstan



Appendix C. Enclaves and Exclaves Map

