

# Geographic Names Standardization Policy for Nicaragua

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 the working staff of the interagency U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) for the standardization of Nicaraguan geographic names as they appear in U.S. Government databases, publications, maps and charts. It also intends to satisfy the statutory requirement levied upon the BGN in Public Law 242 of the 80<sup>th</sup> Congress (approved 25 July 1947)<sup>1</sup> to develop principles, policies, and procedures for geographic names standardization, and to promulgate decisions regarding names, nomenclature and orthography. This policy shall be applied to all Nicaraguan geographic names and features in the Geographic Names Database (GNDB) of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA).

## 2. Languages and Language Policy

### *a. Demographics*

The estimated population of Nicaragua as of 2013 was 5,142,000 persons. The largest single ethnic group is of mestizo or mixed Amerindian and European heritage, consisting of approximately 86% of the population. The second largest ethnic group is white, constituting approximately 13% of the total population, and the rest are of Amerindian descent, comprising 1% of the overall population.<sup>2</sup> Almost the entire population of the Pacific lowlands and central highlands is either mestizo or white, while indigenous peoples and Creoles (English-speaking people of predominantly African or mixed African and indigenous ancestry) inhabit the east or Caribbean lowlands.<sup>3</sup>

### *b. Languages*

Nicaragua has 11 living languages, and Spanish (ISO 639-3 language code 'spa') is the official language of the country.<sup>4</sup> Three of the languages have developed to the point that they are used and sustained by institutions beyond the home and the community. Spanish, Miskito (ISO 639-3 language code 'miq'), and Mayangna (ISO 639-3 language code 'yan') fall under this 'developed' category. Nicaraguan Creole English (ISO 639-3 language code 'bzk') and Nicaraguan Sign Language (ISO 639-3 language code 'ncs') are in development, and six other indigenous languages are either threatened or outright dying.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Public Law 242-80<sup>th</sup> Congress. NGA GEOnet Names Server (GNS) website. URL: <http://earth-info.nga.mil/gns/html/gazetteers3.html> (Accessed 7 March 2013).

<sup>2</sup> *Central America and Caribbean: Nicaragua*. The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (Online). URL: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/es.html> (Accessed 27 March 2013).

<sup>3</sup> *Nicaragua: a country study*, Library of Congress (Online), URL: [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+ni0033\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+ni0033)) (Accessed 9 April 2013).

<sup>4</sup> *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Seventeenth edition*. Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.) 2013, Dallas, Texas: SIL International (Online), URL: <http://www.ethnologue.com/profile/NI> (Accessed 5 April 2013).

<sup>5</sup> *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Seventeenth edition*. Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.) 2013, Dallas, Texas: SIL International (Online), URL: <http://www.ethnologue.com/country/NI/status> (Accessed 5 April 2013).

**c. Geographic Names Standardization**

According to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), as of September 2012, Nicaragua does not have a national authority for geographic names.<sup>6</sup> However, in 1981 Nicaragua established the Instituto Nicaragüense de Estudios Territoriales (INETER) to replace the Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN) which had produced cartographic work to that date. The INETER was tasked to update and standardize the use of geographic names, draft a geographic dictionary to support cartographic work, and oversee development of standards and technologies for all geographic information systems in Nicaragua.

For more information, please visit INETER (Online), URL: <http://ineter.gob.ni/>.

### 3. Toponymic Policies

**a. Orthography**

Geographic names standardization policy will follow Spanish orthographic conventions. Please refer to orthographic reference sources such as *Ortografía Básica de la Lengua Española* by the Real Academia Española (2012) and *Ortografía y Ortotipografía del Español Actual* by José Martínez de Sousa (2004) for additional information.

The user of Nicaraguan geographic sources should be aware that variant place names in local languages other than Spanish may be found on native sources, as well as various spellings as a result of rendering indigenous place names in harmony with Spanish orthographic rules.

**b. Romanization**

Romanization is not required.

**c. Diacritics**

Diacritics are shown in standardized and variant names in conformance with native sources and Spanish orthography. Uppercase letters retain diacritics and, in accordance with Spanish orthography, these letter/diacritic combinations are found in standardized name forms in Nicaragua:

<b><u>Character Name</u></b>	<b><u>Letter+Diacritic</u></b>	<b><u>Unicode Value</u></b>
Capital A with acute accent	Á	00C1
Capital E with acute accent	É	00C9
Capital I with acute accent	Í	00CD
Capital N with tilde	Ñ	00D1
Capital O with acute accent	Ó	00D3
Capital U with acute accent	Ú	00DA
Capital U with dieresis	Ü	00DC
Small a with acute accent	á	00E1
Small e with acute accent	é	00E9

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<sup>6</sup> Summary List of Authorities, National Names Authorities, UNGEGN (Online), URL: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/Summary\\_Authorities\\_list\\_September%202012.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/Summary_Authorities_list_September%202012.pdf) (Accessed 9 April 2013).

<u>Character Name</u>	<u>Letter+Diacritic</u>	<u>Unicode Value</u>
Small i with acute accent	í	00ED
Small n with tilde	ñ	00F1
Small o with acute accent	ó	00F3
Small u with acute accent	ú	00FA
Small u with dieresis	ü	00FC

#### ***d. Generic Terms***

A generic is a term used to describe a geographic feature, such as ‘river,’ ‘hill,’ and ‘lake.’ If the generic term does not identify the feature, the term should be considered a false generic and should not be added to the generic field of the GNDB. Generic terms are not collected for populated places.

You may find a glossary of generic terms used in Nicaraguan authorized sources in Appendix A.

#### ***e. Hyphenation, Capitalization, and Spelling***

The definite article (el, la, lo, los, las) is generally shown in approved names similarly as in native sources. Often, the source shows a definite article capitalized as part of the proper feature name, in which case it will be entered as shown in the native source; as in, *Rápido Los Lagartos*. When source evidence regarding the capitalization of the definite article is inconsistent, names of associated features (if present) can assist in deciding whether to accept or reject a particular name. If a name is encountered in all capital letters, any definite article found beyond the initial position will be entered in lowercase when the standardized name form is derived; e.g., *RÍO GRANDE DE MATAGALPA* (on source) is entered *Río Grande de Matagalpa*. In the absence of conclusive evidence, definite articles found beyond the initial position are written in lowercase letters in the standardized name form; i.e., *Llanos de Butko* and *Laguna de Perlas*.

#### ***f. Numbers***

Names containing cardinal or ordinal numerals should be treated according to the following guidelines:

- Arabic numbers are generally expanded in Spanish; i.e., *Finca Huiscoyol Número 2* (on source) should be written as *Finca Huiscoyol Número Dos*; *Aramuaca Iero*. (on source) should be rendered as *Aramuaca Primero*.
- Roman numerals are retained throughout.

These guidelines apply to numerals in both initial and non-initial positions.

#### ***g. Optional Long and Short Forms***

Short forms are not added to long form variant names in the GNDB.

Administrative division names are accorded long and short forms; e.g., *Departamento de Nueva Segovia* [long form] - *Nueva Segovia* [short form].

Long and short forms of names of populated places are approved when supported by official evidence; as in, *Ojo de Agua de León* [long form] - *Ojo de Agua* [short form].

Where official maps show more than one populated place with the same name in the same *Municipio* (second-order administrative division), distinguishing long forms should be obtained from census lists and other official sources.

## ***h. Unique Linguistic Situations***

### ***Names Containing the Conjunction “o”***

Some sources may show a feature with two or more names joined by the conjunction “o” (or); e.g., *Laguna Karaslaya o Kokolaya* and *Río Colorado o Caño Madre*. For standardization purposes, only one name is selected as the official approved name, which will depend on the weight of the available evidence. In the absence of additional evidence, the first name shall be used and, according to standard policy, the other names will be considered variant names.

### ***Alternate Names***

Feature names in Nicaraguan sources often appear with alternate names in parenthesis. The alternate name may appear in English, Spanish, or any indigenous language; for instance, *Río Sanglaya (Great North Creek)*, *Islas del Nancital (Islas Jobos)*, and *Lago de Nicaragua (Lago Cocibolca)*. The name chosen as the official approved name will depend on the weight of the available evidence. In the absence of additional evidence, the first name shall be used as the official approved name, and other names appearing in parenthesis will be rendered as variants.

## ***i. Abbreviations***

The following is a list of abbreviations of generics which are commonly found on cartographic products of Nicaragua. Any abbreviations must be spelled out in the GNDB.

<b><u>Abbreviated Form</u></b>	<b><u>Unabbreviated Form</u></b>
Bo.	Balneario, Barrio
C.	Cabo, Cerro
Cem.	Cemetery
Col.	Colonia
Depto.	Departamento
Fca.	Finca
Hda.	Hacienda
I.	Isla
L.	Lago
Lag.	Laguna
M.	Monte
Mun.	Municipalidad, Municipio
P.	Punta
Q., Qda.	Quebrada
R.	Río

## 4. Political Geography Policy

### a. Country Name and Capital

#### Country Name

Conventional long form: Republic of Nicaragua  
Conventional short form: Nicaragua  
Approved long form: República de Nicaragua  
Approved short form: Nicaragua

#### Capital (PPLC)

Approved name: Managua

### b. First-Order Administrative Divisions

Please see Appendix B for a map depicting first-order administrative divisions in Nicaragua.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Generic</u>	<u>Seat</u>	<u>FIPS 10-4</u> <sup>9</sup>	<u>ISO 3166-2</u> <sup>10</sup>
Boaco	departamento	Boaco	NU01	NI-BO
Carazo	departamento	Jinotepe	NU02	NI-CA
Chinandega	departamento	Chinandega	NU03	NI-CI
Chontales	departamento	Juigalpa	NU04	NI-CO
Costa Caribe Norte	región autónoma	Bilwi	NU17	NI-AN
Costa Caribe Sur	región autónoma	Bluefields	NU18	NI-AS
Estelí	departamento	Estelí	NU05	NI-ES
Granada	departamento	Granada	NU06	NI-GR
Jinotega	departamento	Jinotega	NU07	NI-JI
León	departamento	León	NU08	NI-LE
Madriz	departamento	Somoto	NU09	NI-MD
Managua	departamento	Managua (PPLC)	NU10	NI-MN
Masaya	departamento	Masaya	NU11	NI-MS
Matagalpa	departamento	Matagalpa	NU12	NI-MT
Nueva Segovia	departamento	Ocotal	NU13	NI-NS
Río San Juan	departamento	San Carlos	NU14	NI-SJ
Rivas	departamento	Rivas	NU15	NI-RI

<sup>7</sup> *VIII Censo de Población y VI de Vivienda: Municipios, Volumen IV. Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC), 2006* (VIII Census on Population and IV Census on Housing: Municipalities, Volume IV, National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC), 2006) (Online), URL:

<http://www.inide.gob.ni/censos2005/VolVivienda/Vol%20I/Vol.I%20Vivienda%20Departamentos%20Regiones%20Autonomas.pdf> (Accessed 29 APRIL 2013).

<sup>8</sup> *Departments of Nicaragua*. Statoids (Online), URL: <http://www.statoids.com/uni.html> (Accessed 29 APRIL 2013). <sup>9</sup> *Countries, Dependencies, Areas of Special Sovereignty, and their Principal Administrative Divisions*. Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS), Publication 10-4 (1995) (Online), URL:

<http://www.itl.nist.gov/fipspubs/fip10-4.htm> (Accessed 9 APRIL 2013).

<sup>10</sup> *Departments of Nicaragua*. Statoids (Online), URL: <http://www.statoids.com/uni.html> (Accessed 9 APRIL 2013).

### ***c. Disputed Territories***

For the latest country specific boundary dispute information, consult the US Department of State Office of the Geographer and Global Issues.

## **5. Sources**

The preferred authority for Nicaraguan map and chart sources is the INETER, and its predecessor the IGN (Nicaragua). Other preferred sources include those produced by Nicaraguan government agencies in addition to the U.N. and U.S. Government agencies. Other sources include academic institutions and commercial vendors; however, these sources are not authoritative unless they contain a caveat that they are produced for the Nicaraguan government.

### ***a. Preferred Sources***

The following list of preferred sources is not all-inclusive, but it includes those to be used for geographic name selection. Some maps series listed below have been produced jointly by the IGN (Nicaragua), NGA, and NGA's predecessor organizations NIMA and DMA.

1. 1:50,000-scale map, Nicaragua, Series E751, IGN (Nicaragua), 1960-1981
2. 1:250,000-scale map, Nicaragua, Series E503, IGN (Nicaragua), 1966-1972
3. 1:50,000-scale map, Nicaragua, Series E751, INETER, 1969-1989
4. Nicaragua, 1:50,000-scale Map Indexes, (Volumes 1 and 2), INETER, 1988
5. 1:70,000-scale maps, Thematic Maps (Nicaraguan Departments), INETER, 2001-2003 (Online), URL: <http://ineter.gob.ni/>
6. 1:750,000-scale map, Nicaraguan Maps (Administrative), INETER, 2011 (Online), URL: <http://ineter.gob.ni/>
7. 1:750,000 -scale map, Nicaragua, CIA, 1985 (Online), URL: <http://cluster3.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/images/nic-map.gif>
8. Country Handbook Nicaragua, U.S. Department of Defense, 2007 (Online), URL: <http://www.mcia.osis.gov/products/handbook/nichb/nichb.pdf>
9. 1:500,000-scale map, Nicaragua, U.N. Department of Field Support, 2011 (Online), URL: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/nicaragu.pdf>
10. Instituto Nacional de Informacion de Desarrollo (INIDE) (National Institute for Information on Development) (Online), URL: <http://www.inide.gob.ni/>
11. Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC) (National Institute of Statistics and Census) (Online), URL: <http://www.inide.gob.ni/censos2005/VolVivienda/Vol%20I/Vol.I%20Vivienda%20Departamentos%20Regiones%20Autonomas.pdf>

***b. Other Sources***

1. Nicaragua Maps, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, The University of Texas at Austin (Online), URL: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/nicaragua.html>
2. Nicaragua, Frommer's Maps (Online), URL: [http://www.frommers.com/images/destinations/maps/jpg-2006/3872\\_nicaraguain1week.jpg](http://www.frommers.com/images/destinations/maps/jpg-2006/3872_nicaraguain1week.jpg)
3. Maps of Nicaragua, 1965-1987: a Cartobibliography by Claire Englander (Online), URL: <http://cluster3.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/nicaragua.html>



## Appendix A. Glossary of Generic Terms

The following is a partial list of common generic terms one may encounter in Nicaraguan geographic names sources:

<b><u>Spanish Generic</u></b>	<b><u>Generic Designation</u></b>	<b><u>Designation Code</u></b>
aluvión (río seco)	abandoned watercourse	STMQ
arrecife(s)	reef(s)	RF
arroyo	stream, intermittent stream	STM, STMI
bahía	bay	BAY
balneario	resort	RSRT
barra	bar, sandbar	BAR
barrio	section of populated place	PPLX
borde	levee	LEV
bosque(s)	forest(s)	FRST(S)
brazo	stream, intermittent stream	STM, STMI
cabo	cape	CAPE
campo	field	FLD
canal	canal	CNL
caño	stream, intermittent stream	STM
cayo(s)	island(s)	ISL(S)
cementerio	cemetery	CMTY
cerro(s)	hill(s)	HLL(S)
cerro(s)	mountain(s)	MT(S)
charco(s)	pond(s)	PNDS
ciénaga	swamp	SWMP
colonia	section of populated place	PPLX
comarca	region	RGN
cordillera	mountains, mountain range	MTS
cuesta(s)	slope(s)	SLP(S)
departamento	first-order administrative division	ADM1
ensenada	cove	COVE
estación	railroad station	RSTN
estero	estuary	ESTY
faro	lighthouse	LTHSE
fila	ridge	RDGE
finca	farm	FRM
golfo	gulf	GULF
hacienda	ranch	RNCH
huerto	orchard(s)	OCH
isla(s)	island(s)	ISL(S)
islote(s)	island(s)	ISL(S)
lago	lake	LK

laguna	lagoon	LGN
llano(s)	plain(s)	PLN
manantial	spring	SPNG
matorral	scrubland	SCRB
meseta	plateau	PLAT
montaña(s)	mountain(s)	MN(S)
monte(s)	mountain(s)	MN(S)
muelle	pier	PIER
municipio	second-order administrative division	ADM2
municipalidad	second-order administrative division	ADM2
pantano(s)	swamp	SWMP
parque	park	PRK
paso	pass, mountain pass	PASS
pista de aterrizaje	airfield	AIRF
plan(es)	plain(s)	PLN
plano(s)	plain(s)	PLN
playa	beach	BCH
poza	pool	POOL
pozo	well	WLL
presa	reservoir	RSV
puente	bridge	BDG
puerto	port	PRT
punta	point	PT
quebrada	stream, intermittent stream	STM, STMI
rápidos	rapids	RPDS
residencial(es)	section of populated place	PPLX
riachuelo	stream	STM
río	stream	STM
salina(s)	salt evaporation pond(s)	MFGN
saltos	waterfalls	FLLS
sierra	mountains, mountain range	MTS
sitio	area, locality	LCTY
tablazo	plain, plateau	PLN
vado	ford	FORD

## Appendix B. First-Order Administrative Divisions of Nicaragua<sup>11</sup>

*(graphic removed for web version)*

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<sup>11</sup> *Mapa de la División Política Administrativa-Instituto Nicaragüense de Estudios Territoriales (INETER), 2010* (Map of Political Administrative Divisions-Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies) (Online), URL: <http://ineter.gob.ni/> (Accessed 29 April 2013).