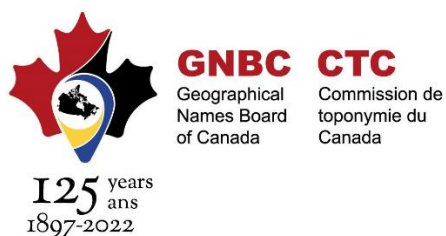


# Strategic Plan Geographical Names Board of Canada 2020-2025



**October 2020**

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## Message from the Chair of the Geographical Names Board of Canada

As the Chairperson of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC), it is my privilege to present the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. This plan was developed through the collaboration of federal, provincial and territorial GNBC members to define the direction, priorities and objectives of Canada's national naming authority.

Over the past five years, significant progress has been made towards meeting the objectives set out in our previous Strategic Plan (2014-2020). The conversations with Board members and the GNBC Secretariat during the preparation of this 2020-2025 Strategic Plan revealed a sense of pride in what has been achieved, as well as a desire for ongoing improvement of processes, data and services. The Strategic Plan has proven to be a useful tool to provide a 'road map' to direct the resources and advance the work of the GNBC as a multi-jurisdictional national body.

The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan identifies the implementation of four overarching priorities to drive the work of the Board. Working Groups drawn from GNBC membership will collaborate on the development of discussion papers to describe the status and identify next steps for our key priorities. One of the important opportunities pursued in this Strategic Plan is the continued adoption and promotion of Indigenous place names; indeed, this is a significant component of the Board's work, and is embedded in the four strategic priorities to be pursued over the 2020-2025 timeframe. We look forward to the appointment of Indigenous Advisors to the GNBC to provide the Board with cultural representation that supports a broader spectrum of views and interests.

This plan takes up where we left off with the previous strategic plan. Board governance remains a significant priority area of focus. Ongoing improvement of the maintenance and management of the national geographical names database has been identified as a priority of the GNBC, to ensure Canada has a consistent and authoritative collection of official place names. Another initiative will continue the refinement of undersea feature naming, building on the work of the Advisory Committee on Undersea Feature Names. A number of innovative ideas are being pursued relating to improving communication among GNBC members, as well as collaborative connections among different organizations and communities. These connections are anticipated to achieve operational benefits as well as broaden awareness of the importance of a modern and responsible geographical naming system. The Strategic Plan will also help to focus the celebration of the Board's 125th anniversary in 2022 by prioritizing communication activities to commemorate this notable milestone.

This document is the result of the engagement of all Board members over the past year. The Strategic Plan confirms the Board's commitment toward the future of geographical naming in Canada by highlighting the strategic priorities and objectives for the next five years. I extend my sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the creation of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, and to those who will ensure its successful implementation.

Sincerely,

Connie Wyatt Anderson, Chairperson  
Geographical Names Board of Canada

## The Importance of Geographical Names

Geographical names are an integral part of everyday life, essential to the scientific, commercial and economic world. They provide an easy-to-recognize and authoritative reference to places, locations and geographical features. Official geographical names are an important element of the infrastructure of society, and are used in many aspects of day-to-day work and communications, from public health and weather reporting, to environmental monitoring and emergency response, navigation, commerce and travel planning.

The members of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) are responsible for submitting Canada's official toponyms into the Canadian Geographical Names Database, which are then disseminated to the public in a number of formats. Geographical names approved by members of the GNBC provide a standardized reference system used for mapping, GPS devices, and an expanding collection of mobile applications, all advances that leverage geospatial data. Official geographical names are recognized by the United Nations as a Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Theme<sup>1</sup> and provide a common and standardized reference framework essential for all other fundamental geospatial data themes.

Geographical names are different from other forms of geospatial data. Not only do they provide a spatial reference, but they also record and embed a wealth of cultural and historical information about the people who inhabit or settled in a place or region. They are at the centre of a sense of 'place' and play a unique role in recording and preserving history, language, landscape knowledge and cultural heritage.

Geographical names are especially significant as they help to recognize, preserve and strengthen Indigenous histories, languages and cultures. Place names are specifically referred to in most modern treaties in Canada, as well as in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Long before Canada became a country, Indigenous societies were bestowing names on significant places and areas on their traditional homeland and beyond. Indigenous peoples usually maintained kinship-like relationships with the land, waters, flora and biodiversity from which they depended for sustenance, and as a result, place names were thoughtful, respectful and purposeful. Indigenous place names continue to serve as mnemonic devices recording and carrying important geographical, historical, ecological and cultural knowledge into the future.

A diverse group of stakeholders, ranging from government organizations and emergency services to the mapping and geomatics industry and the broader Canadian public rely on the work accomplished by the GNBC as Canada's national coordinating body for place names. For over 120 years, the members of the GNBC have worked to research, standardize, approve, record and promote the official geographical names of Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes adopted at the Seventh Session of the United National Committee of Experts for Global Geospatial Information Management: [http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/9th-Session/documents/Fundamental\\_Data\\_Publication.pdf](http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/9th-Session/documents/Fundamental_Data_Publication.pdf)

## The Geographical Names Board of Canada

### Context

Canada's national coordinating body for place names was initially established through an Order in Council in 1897 as the Geographic Board of Canada. At that time, the Board was a federal body dealing with difficulties arising from the duplication and misapplication of geographical names on maps, and worked to standardize their spelling and application.

In 1961, the national authority was reorganized as the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names. Since this time, the provinces have exercised full responsibility for naming within their boundaries, except on certain federal waters and lands such as national parks, Indian Reserves and military establishments. Yukon and the Northwest Territories assumed responsibility for naming geographical features within their own jurisdictions in 1984, a right extended to Nunavut when the territory was established in 1999. Provinces and territories have established naming authorities and processes, including boards, advisory committees and toponymy programs, as mechanisms to implement their mandate.

The current Order in Council, signed in 2000, establishes the Geographical Names Board of Canada as "*a national body coordinating all matters affecting geographical nomenclature in Canada*" (see Appendix 1 for Order in Council P.C. 2000-283).

### GNBC Membership

Board membership consists of a Chairperson appointed by the Minister of Natural Resources Canada, an official representative from each provincial and territorial naming authority, and official representatives from federal departments and agencies concerned with federal lands and waters, mapping, archives and related activities. The Ministerial appointment of Indigenous Advisors is in progress.

Jurisdictional members (i.e. members having the mandate to officially name geographical features within their jurisdiction) include each province and territory, Parks Canada, National Defence, Indigenous Services Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada through the Advisory Committee on Undersea Feature Names. Other federal members include the Translation Bureau, Library and Archives Canada, Statistics Canada, and Elections Canada, each with the responsibility of providing subject matter expertise and advice to support the Board. Geographical names approved by the appropriate federal, provincial or territorial naming authority become official decisions of the Board.

The GNBC meets in plenary session at least once each calendar year in a forum to exchange knowledge, discuss issues, and make decisions on geographical naming matters. During the year, working groups address specific topics prioritized through the strategic plan, and develop policies or initiatives to be considered and implemented by the Board.

### GNBC Secretariat

The Canada Centre for Mapping and Earth Observation (CCMEO) of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) provides coordination and support for the Board through the GNBC Secretariat. CCMEO manages the Canadian Geographical Names Database (CGNDB), the national database of geographical names, with data provided by GNBC naming authorities.

## **GNBC Mandate, Vision and Values**

### **Mandate**

The mandate of the Board is drawn primarily from Order in Council P.C. 2000-283 establishing the GNBC. As the national body responsible for coordinating all matters affecting geographical nomenclature in Canada, the GNBC:

1. Provides and maintains a framework of principles, policies and procedures for geographical naming in Canada.
2. Provides advice to federal, provincial and territorial authorities on toponymic research.
3. Accepts all geographical place names approved by the appropriate federal, provincial or territorial authority as official decisions of the Board.
4. Provides information and expert advice on the use of Canadian and foreign geographical nomenclature to provincial and territorial authorities and all departments, agencies and Crown corporations of the Government of Canada.
5. Provides for the operation of any Advisory Committees, subcommittees and working groups deemed necessary to achieve the Board's mandate.
6. Approves pan-Canadian names, Antarctic names, and names of undersea and surface maritime features in areas of interest to Canada.
7. Represents Canada in international forums and activities related to toponymic standards and practices.
8. Meets in plenary session at least once every calendar year.
9. Maintains the Canadian Geographical Names Database, the national database of authoritative geographical names, and provides for the dissemination, access to, and promotion of accurate information on the location, delineation, and significance of Canada's geographical names.

### **Vision**

The GNBC sees a Canada where accurate geographical names reinforce an evolving connection with place, are a valued reflection of a diverse heritage, and are integral to Canadian society.

### **Values**

The GNBC's values are fundamental to the choices it makes and its performance as a uniquely collaborative organization. They guide how the Board operates and are the key to its success. The GNBC values:

- Knowledge and expertise
- Collaboration both domestically and internationally
- Diversity in all its forms
- Client service
- Having and sharing a passion for place names

## 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan identifies a number of initiatives that are intended to meet the challenges facing the GNBC and enhance the organization's ability to fulfil its mandate. Four Strategic Priorities have been established for the 2020-2025 period:

- Review Role, Mandate and Governance
- Enhance Internal Communication and Collaboration
- Improve Database Content and Management
- Enhance External Profile and Collaboration

The Working Group concept that was used in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for assigning implementation responsibilities was an effective approach and will be continued for this 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. However, it is recommended that the existing Working Groups be dissolved, and a new set of Working Groups be established based on the updated strategic priorities.

The GNBC is preparing to welcome Indigenous Advisors appointed by the Minister of Natural Resources Canada. These new members will join the Board at a key time, during a transition between two Strategic Planning periods, where Indigenous activities are increasingly central and embedded throughout the Board's work. Indigenous appointees to the GNBC will be given the opportunity to determine for themselves where they best fit in contributing to GNBC activities, based on their individual backgrounds, experiences and interests. The Indigenous Advisors will bring lived experience to the GNBC, and an outside perspective on Board activities. It is not anticipated that the Indigenous Advisors will be experts in toponymy; however it is envisioned that they will bring broader perspectives and innovative ideas to the Board, that are informed and aligned with key cultural and philosophical perspectives. Orientation materials will be prepared and briefing sessions held at the outset of the Indigenous Advisors appointed terms to help them determine where they best fit in the activities of the GNBC.

The precise operational and organizational structure to effectively continue with work and maintain the progress of the GNBC on activities related to Indigenous toponymy must be determined in further consultation with GNBC members. In the previous GNBC Strategic Plan, the Indigenous Geographical Names Working Group was responsible for *Strategic Objective 3: Improve Aboriginal Naming Policy, Partnership and Outreach*. To better reflect the reality that Indigenous names and concerns are integral to all aspects of the GNBC, this objective is incorporated into each of the Strategic Priorities to be addressed through new Working Groups.

The Strategic Plan identifies Objectives for each Strategic Priority, along with Actions and intended Outcomes. The responsibility for carrying out the Actions within a Working Group is discretionary and will likely vary depending on the nature of the tasks. In some cases, it may be advantageous to establish Task Teams or Subgroups within the Working Group to take on responsibility for a particular Objective. In other situations, the whole Working Group might be involved in a particular Objective. It would also be feasible to involve members from other Working Groups on a Task Team to augment the skills and/or experience associated with the nature of the Action. The membership of each Working Group is foreseen to be flexible and agile depending on the Objective and the availability and interests and of specific jurisdictions.

When the Strategic Plan is adopted, one of the first steps will be to establish the Working Groups for each Priority. The Working Groups will establish milestone completion targets for the Actions associated with each Objective.

The previous Strategic Plan contained a specific priority for establishing a process for undersea feature naming. The Advisory Committee on Undersea Feature Names (ACUFN) was established in 2015, and thus this priority was completed. ACUFN will continue to operate as an Advisory Committee of the GNBC, and the ongoing priorities of undersea naming will be considered and reflected throughout the Strategic Plan.

The 2020-2025 GNBC Strategic Plan outlines a broad set of aspirational objectives for Canada's national geographical names board. This document was developed through discussion and consensus by the federal, provincial and territorial members of the GNBC over a period of approximately one year. The objectives outlined in this document may be adjusted, modified or removed over the extent of this Strategic Plan. The GNBC Strategic Plan is non-binding upon any individual member of the GNBC.



## **Strategic Priority 1 - Review Role, Mandate and Governance**

The Order in Council establishing the GNBC allows the Board to decide on its rules of procedure and method of operation. A better-defined role and mandate for GNBC will provide an improved basis for developing strategic objectives and workable action plans to meet the challenges facing the organization.

Although the members of the Board are representatives from the individual jurisdictions, the Board as a national entity has limited authority relating to jurisdictional activities, except in relation to naming guidelines, principles and procedures. In several conversations during the strategic planning workshop, it was noted that the Board has the potential to “represent” all the naming jurisdictions on common issues or concerns that could benefit all jurisdictions. This national facilitation role could be applied in the context of raising awareness and support, as well as enhancing jurisdictional access to funding and other resources.

This Priority is organized to establish a reliable base of information on current activities and resources so that viable strategies can be pursued on the following Objectives:

- Objective 1.1: Develop Jurisdictional Profiles
- Objective 1.2: Develop National Indigenous Place Naming Principle
- Objective 1.3: Review and Update *Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming*
- Objective 1.4: Performance Evaluation of Fulfilling Mandate

**Objective 1.1: Develop Jurisdictional Profiles**

This will involve examining information from each federal, provincial and territorial GNBC member to establish a comprehensive overview of the activities and resources at the jurisdictional level used in managing naming requests and maintaining the associated jurisdictional databases, as well as activities related to GNBC. The comprehensive overview will be an internal document and will be available to all members.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Prepare Jurisdictional Profiles</b>                      Conduct analysis of each jurisdiction through a questionnaire to establish the status of each jurisdiction, and generate a profile summary including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● official mandate of department in the context of the GNBC</li> <li>● sources/origins of naming requests</li> <li>● annual volume of naming requests and decisions</li> <li>● number of internal databases using geographic names</li> <li>● internal database purposes, content, structure, search activity statistics</li> <li>● activities associated with transfer of data to CGNDB</li> <li>● current resources assigned to GNBC related activities (<i>people, operating budget, information systems</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Greater understanding of jurisdictional mandate, priorities and resources in order to define the mandate of GNBC.</p>
<p><b>Produce Jurisdictional Profile Compilation</b>                      Assemble and review all profiles and identify potential challenges and/or opportunities for enhancing GNBC collaboration.</p>	

**Objective 1.2: Develop National Indigenous Place Naming Principle**

As part of the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan, the GNBC Secretariat initiated domestic and international Indigenous naming policy scans, and launched an interactive map called *Stories from The Land: Indigenous Place Names in Canada* to raise awareness of Indigenous place names. A key priority of the GNBC under the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is to develop a guiding principle for Indigenous place naming activities in Canada for addition to the GNBC’s *Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming* document. The intent is to produce a high-level best practices statement that builds on the earlier policy scans and an environmental scan of Indigenous place naming activities in Canada. Our activities regarding Indigenous place names are informed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Identify National Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review domestic and international Indigenous policy scans and summarize results;</li> <li>● Conduct Environmental Scan of Indigenous naming activities;</li> <li>● Review current GNBC policy that may impact Indigenous toponymic practice;</li> <li>● Determine Indigenous Place Naming objectives;</li> <li>● Identify key issues, opportunities, and challenges;</li> <li>● Consult with GNBC Indigenous Advisors;</li> <li>● Prepare Discussion Paper on Indigenous Place Naming with action priorities.</li> </ul>	<p>National Indigenous place naming principles</p>
<p><b>Develop national guiding principle</b>                      Prepare a National Indigenous Place Naming Principle based on national/international best practices for review and adoption by GNBC.</p>	

**Objective 1.3: Review and Update Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming**

The GNBC document *Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming in Canada* addresses fundamental requirements surrounding toponyms and place naming. The intention is to ensure that the naming process respects established practices such as local usage and to make certain that when toponyms are included in official publications in either traditional or electronic forms, these established principles are consistently applied. The document was last updated in 2011. There have been discussions about the need to update the *Principles and Procedures* to reflect progress in practices relating to Indigenous place names in conjunction with a general review and update.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Member Survey</b> Solicit observations and suggestions from members regarding updates and additions to the “<i>Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming in Canada</i>”.</p>	<p>Updated <i>Principles and Procedures</i> for the GNBC that include Indigenous naming guidelines</p>
<p><b>Indigenous Place Naming Updates</b> Incorporate a section on National Indigenous Place Naming Principles / Guidelines.</p>	
<p><b>Updated National Naming Principles Document</b> Prepare final version of “<i>Principles and Procedures</i>” for Board adoption.</p>	

**Objective 1.4: Performance Evaluation of Fulfilling Mandate**

This will involve examining information on GNBC activities related to the roles set out in the mandate outlined in the Order in Council and a self-assessment by GNBC members to determine the degree to which the mandate is being fulfilled. This information will help to inform discussions of potential future roles and adjustments to the GNBC mandate in the follow-up Strategic Plan, post-2025.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Undertake Analysis</b> Compile questions and collect information to assess the degree to which GNBC is achieving its current mandate.</p>	<p>Better understanding of the performance of the GNBC in fulfilling its mandate</p>
<p><b>Conduct Evaluation</b> Draft a Discussion Paper and distribute to Working Group members and review the findings.</p>	
<p><b>Produce Final Discussion Paper</b> Develop an assessment to determine the degree to which the mandate is being fulfilled.</p>	

## **Strategic Priority 2 - Enhance Internal Communication and Collaboration**

Although the federal, provincial and territorial naming authorities normally operate as separate entities, the GNBC members who are responsible for handling naming requests in each jurisdiction face similar challenges. Opportunities for discussing variations in how each jurisdiction meets these challenges are often limited to the annual meeting and periodic teleconferences to coordinate Working Group activities. The general perception is that it would benefit operational effectiveness and the ability to achieve strategic goals if there were more frequent opportunities for members to connect.

Four key Objectives have been established to facilitate better communications:

- Objective 2.1: Increase Opportunities for Board Meetings
- Objective 2.2: Improve New Member Orientation
- Objective 2.3: Enhance Inter-Member Collaboration
- Objective 2.4: Increase Opportunities for Professional Development and Cultural Learning

**Objective 2.1: Increase Opportunities for Board Meetings**

Board meetings provide an opportunity for all members to interact, which offers a wider range of connection possibilities than interactions within Working Groups. It is difficult to foresee an increase in the number of in-person meetings due to the considerable effort and cost to arrange for venues and travel. Videoconference options are more feasible.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Establish Enhanced Board Meeting Program</b>                      Establish provisional schedule for three meetings in 2020 (quarterly videoconferences and an annual meeting), and prepare a draft schedule for regular teleconference meetings with annual in-person meetings in future years.</p>	<p>More frequent opportunities to meet will improve collaboration</p>

**Objective 2.2: Improve New Member Orientation**

While there is information available online regarding GNBC formal policies and procedures, new Board members have found it difficult to get a sense of the expectations regarding the role of a Board member. If they participate on an on-going Working Group, there may be limited time available for the GNBC Secretariat and other Working Group members to brief a new member. The idea of an “on-boarding kit” was approved in 2019 and is currently being developed.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Survey New Members</b>                      Solicit information on individual experiences in becoming familiar with Board roles and responsibilities. Obtain suggestions regarding information or procedures to improve the experience.</p>	<p>New GNBC members are well-briefed and able to fully participate in GNBC activities</p>
<p><b>Enhance On-Boarding Resources</b>                      Prepare concise package of information for new Board members including overall structure, policies and procedures, technical walkthrough of the CGNDB, as well as an introduction and Terms of Reference for each Working Group with designated contact information.</p>	

**Objective 2.3: Enhance Inter-Member Collaboration**

While members can remain in contact using email, this mode of communication is perceived as somewhat limiting in that ‘email overload’ is a relatively common phenomenon and timely communications can therefore be adversely impacted. It is also a cumbersome format when maintaining communication among a set of Working Group members. A range of collaboration tools have been proposed and tested, with varying success. An examination on the collaborative needs and abilities of the GNBC will facilitate conversations among GNBC members and within Working Groups, and enhance multi-jurisdictional collaboration.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Examine Collaborative Needs of the GNBC</b> Determine the collaboration needs of members. Include a technical review in terms of which social media technologies are available and permitted on member networks.</p>	<p>Enhanced communication tools and information sharing for improved collaboration between Board members</p>
<p><b>Develop Policy for Information Sharing</b> Formalize the Board’s approach toward information sharing through a policy outlining goals, protocols, content and use.</p>	
<p><b>Enhance GNBC Member Collaboration</b> Establish and promote the sanctioned collaboration tools for GNBC members.</p>	

**Objective 2.4: Increase Opportunities for Professional Development and Cultural Learning**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action 57 calls for *“federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Aboriginal-Crown relations.”*

Increasing the learning opportunities for the GNBC on Indigenous affairs ensures that the Board recognises and is open to adhering to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action. Following the recommendation of Call to Action 57 and others reinforces the Board’s commitment to positive relationships with Indigenous communities and demonstrates the willingness to be receptive and learn more. This objective will enable the regular sharing of information between the newly appointed Indigenous Advisors and GNBC members through a round table discussion format, a cultural learning speaker series, among other fora.

Actions	Outcome
<p>Establish a Board-wide discussion and learning forum, potentially held at each quarterly meeting, which creates a space for dedicated discussion on Indigenous toponymy.</p>	<p>Increased sharing of information among Board members and a greater understanding of Indigenous cultures</p>
<p>Provide an advisory function to all GNBC members and any other external interested party on any questions regarding Indigenous toponymy. When questions arise, the Secretariat will facilitate a discussion with all interested parties.</p>	<p>A focal point for Indigenous expertise and knowledge sharing.</p>

### **Strategic Priority 3 - Improve Database Content and Management**

An accurate, comprehensive, and accessible national database of geographical names is fundamental to supporting the role of the GNBC. NRCan maintains the Canadian Geographical Names Database (CGNDB) on behalf of the GNBC naming authorities: each province and territory, Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Indigenous Services Canada and National Defence. The perception of those involved in the survey, interviews and workshop to prepare the Strategic Plan was that there is considerable potential to improve the CGNDB and make it easier to maintain.

The fundamental obstacle to having a consistent national database is the lack of standardization between the 13 provincial and territorial databases. There are currently large discrepancies in the usage of generic codes by the naming jurisdictions, as well as inconsistencies in the types of features that each jurisdiction is responsible for naming. However, it must be stressed that there is no intention to change jurisdictional databases, only the national database.

While it is recognized that the database responsibilities of NRCan are different from those of the jurisdictions, a degree of alignment and synchronization is required to achieve optimal operations and outcomes. This Priority therefore proposes processes that involve on-going collaboration among the different federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions to improve the national database content. This Strategic Priority will involve the actions associated with the following six Objectives.

- Objective 3.1: Review and Harmonize Jurisdictional and National Databases
- Objective 3.2: Publish Authoritative Undersea Features
- Objective 3.3: Populate Indigenous Language of Origin Field
- Objective 3.4: Review all Generic Terms used in the CGNDB
- Objective 3.5: Incorporate Indigenous Cultural Generics
- Objective 3.6: Incorporate Audio Clips in the CGNDB

**Objective 3.1: Review and Harmonize Jurisdictional and National Databases**

Review the contents of the CGNDB with the objective of identifying inconsistencies between information collected from various jurisdictions, and develop a standardized, consistent and up-to-date national database. Initiate an implementation plan to: enter all relevant data from the jurisdictional databases into the national database, remove non-relevant data from the national database, and develop an ongoing approach to maintain synchronization of the national database with all jurisdictional databases. This will ensure the national database is built from authoritative data provided by jurisdictions, and contains a consistent core set of features that are common to all jurisdictions. There is no impact on jurisdictional databases.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<p><b>Conduct Content Review</b> Examine the content and terminology of all jurisdictional databases and compare to the content and terminology of the CGNDB. Identify common elements and inconsistencies, and establish a standard set of features. Meet with each federal, provincial and territorial naming jurisdiction to obtain a full understanding of the content of their database. Consult with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names regarding best practices for national databases.</p>	<p>An integrated and updated national geographical names database comprising standardized core data</p>
<p><b>Establish a Consistent National Core Dataset</b> Based on evaluation of jurisdictional databases, international best practises and user needs, develop a consistent national core dataset of geographical features that can be extracted from federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictional databases and incorporated in the national database.</p>	
<p><b>Remove Non-relevant Data from the National Database</b> Based on evaluation of jurisdictional databases, remove data currently stored in the national database that is not aligned with a national core dataset set of geographical features.</p>	
<p><b>Import Jurisdictional Data into National Database</b> Establish a viable transfer process with each jurisdiction for importing data. Complete import of data from all jurisdictional databases to ensure that the national database reflects jurisdictional databases. Establish ongoing interoperability and regular data transfer processes.</p>	



**Objective 3.2: Publish Authoritative Undersea Features**

There are over 3600 undersea feature names in the national database coded as Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) records. Of these records, approximately 1500 have a ‘duplicate’ provincial or territorial record. In recent years, DFO has been delineating and adding more precision to their coordinates, while the duplicate provincial or territorial record has not changed. This has caused confusion in the management of the data. The objective of this activity is to work with all jurisdictions involved to find a solution to effectively manage the data and eliminate duplicate records, as well as create a process on how to move forward with entering new undersea features that will be approved in the future.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Extract Duplicate Undersea Features from CGNDB</b> Database analysis to extract lists of duplicate names for each relevant jurisdiction for review.</p>	<p>Authoritative undersea feature list for Canada and process to update national database</p>
<p><b>Consultation for Adding new Undersea Features to CGNDB</b> Consultations between relevant naming jurisdictions with GNBC Secretariat and DFO to set an agreed-upon process.</p>	
<p><b>Review by Provinces and Territories to Verify Undersea Features</b> Consultations between relevant naming jurisdictions with GNBC Secretariat and DFO to verify validity of features.</p>	
<p><b>Publish Authoritative Undersea Features in CGNDB</b></p>	

**Objective 3.3: Populate Indigenous Language of Origin Field**

Many existing approved names in the CGNDB have been identified to be of Indigenous origin, however the specific language has not been determined for all of these names. This objective will build on toponymic research when names were originally entered in the database, and a 2016 survey by GNBC jurisdictions to identify Indigenous place names. The actions are to identify names that currently have an ‘uncoded’ language of origin, populate the Language of Origin field where possible, and follow-up with further research to identify the language.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Examine names from national database that are likely Indigenous in origin but with uncoded language</b> Data mine the CGNDB to generate lists of names for each jurisdiction for review.</p>	<p>A better understanding of the Indigenous languages of origin, and more accurate number of Indigenous place names in Canada</p>
<p><b>Update CGNDB</b> Populate the Language of Origin field for names when the information is readily available from the data mining, with the jurisdiction’s agreement.</p>	
<p><b>Establish Language of Origin</b> Research, identify and add Indigenous Language of Origin for existing approved names in the national database, with the agreement of the naming jurisdiction.</p>	

**Objective 3.4: Review all Generic Terms in the CGNDB**

The objective is to conduct a full examination of all the generic codes in the CGNDB, including their definitions, organization, and current relevance. Additionally, the last comprehensive CGNDB user manual was created in 2000 and needs to be updated to reflect the changes that will be implemented beginning in 2021. This objective is closely aligned with Objective 3.5, and needs to consider the related goals of establishing Indigenous cultural generics.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Review Generics in the CGNDB</b></p> <p>Working Group reviews and drafts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● generic code classification, concise code classification, category, sub-category and organization of both.</li> <li>● plurality of the generics (<i>e.g. Lake vs Lakes</i>).</li> </ul> <p>The Translation Bureau, in collaboration with NRCan will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review terminology used in the generic definitions.</li> <li>● Review variant definitions for identical generic terms (<i>e.g. Basin(1), Basin(2)</i>).</li> <li>● Examine feasibility of having a fully bilingual generic code list.</li> </ul> <p>The GNBC Secretariat will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● examine the impact on NRCan services, naming jurisdictions, general public.</li> </ul>	<p>A streamlined set of generic terms used in the CGNDB, and updated guidelines for the adoption and delineation of cultural generics</p>
<p><b>Establish Policies and Guidelines to Propose new Generics</b></p> <p>Establish policies and guidelines for GNBC members to propose new generic terms (to be included in CGNDB User Manual).</p>	
<p><b>Update CGNDB Manual</b></p> <p>Incorporate the framework and processes generated in the Actions associated with Project 3 into a new CGNDB User Manual to ensure that all users understand the fields within the CGNDB and how to populate them.</p>	

**Objective 3.5: Incorporate Indigenous Cultural Generics**

The objective is to extend the national database capacity to accurately record, store and disseminate unique aspects of Indigenous cultural generics using clear and well-documented guidelines.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Incorporate Indigenous Cultural Generics in the CGNDB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Validate present practices and review gaps in meeting database requirements for recording, storing and disseminating names that use Indigenous cultural generics.</li> <li>● Model and implement expansion of the national database to accommodate multiple official names for a single feature in multiple languages.</li> <li>● Finalize policy and operational mechanisms to store complex feature types not previously identified in the CGNDB feature and generic classification systems in the CGNDB (topocomplexes).</li> </ul>	<p>Database structure, extensibility, procedures, and terminology accommodate naming concepts that are specific to Indigenous naming</p>

**Objective 3.6: Incorporate Audio Clips in the CGNDB**

The inclusion of audio files in the CGNDB would greatly enhance a user’s ability to understand place names by hearing the pronunciation of the name. This will aid in the preservation and promotion of the cultural richness of Indigenous languages contained in these place names. Once the ability to host audio files in the CGNDB is established, a formal policy surrounding cultural considerations and appropriateness, along with the collection, ownership, management and distribution of the clips needs to be developed. Discussions will need to occur between the naming jurisdictions and NRCAN for permissions to hold (or link to) the audio clips and future public dissemination through the website.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Research Addition of Audio Field in the CGNDB</b> Investigate best practices for audio clip usage and storage, implement the field in the development database. Test the new audio field in the development version of the public website. Examine WCAG accessibility compliance.</p>	<p>Audio pronunciations of Indigenous names are available to the public, aiding in the preservation of Indigenous languages</p>
<p><b>Develop Audio Files Policy</b> Investigate best practices for data sharing, ownership, and public usage. Investigate the current data sharing agreements between NRCAN and the naming jurisdictions.</p>	
<p><b>Collection and Dissemination of Audio Files</b> Develop inventory of existing audio clips. Develop processes to collect new audio clips. Add audio to the GNBC public search tool on the NRCAN website.</p>	

## **Strategic Priority 4 - Enhance External Profile and Collaboration**

During the 2019 Strategic Planning Workshop discussions, there was considerable support for the idea of enhancing awareness of the GNBC and the national geographical names database. This was perceived as a potential benefit, in that it will:

- promote public awareness of the historical and cultural significance of geographical naming;
- promote public awareness of the importance and value that geographical names bring to our day to day lives and activities.
- provide an overview of the kind of geospatial information associated with names available from the database as authoritative Open Data;
- reinforce and broaden public perceptions of the importance of the GNBC as the reliable and authoritative reference source for geographical names in Canada.

The GNBC will have a significant milestone to celebrate in 2022: the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Board. This offers an opportunity for raising awareness with senior officials, and broad outreach through public communication to promote and publicize the GNBC, its role and mandate, its data and products, as well as the network of naming jurisdictions that serve the public.

Along with raising awareness of the GNBC are the potential benefits to be achieved by seeking out collaboration with external stakeholders and like-minded organizations. One of the major opportunities to enhance external collaboration is the GNBC objective of advancing Indigenous place naming capabilities and content. This activity will involve community consultation by the naming authorities in many locations across the country and will likely involve all federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

This Priority will involve actions associated with the following Objectives:

- Objective 4.1: Develop Outreach Program
- Objective 4.2: Track Public Interest in GNBC Activities
- Objective 4.3: Communications Plan for 125th Anniversary
- Objective 4.4: Increase Engagement with Key Partners
- Objective 4.5: Enhance International Activities
- Objective 4.6: Expand Interactive Mapping Activities

**Objective 4.1: Develop Outreach Program**

Communication and outreach involve initiatives at the Board level, as well as at the provincial and territorial level and by federal departments. While the funding and priorities will be determined at the appropriate levels, coordinating the efforts to establish key messages and avoiding duplication and overlap is necessary. Examples of outreach initiatives may include promotion of the GNBC and the CGNDB as the preferred source for authoritative geographical names and related information, and promotion and use of GNBC thematic map series.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Identify Audiences and Develop Communications Approach</b>                      Discuss and identify the relevant target audiences for GNBC outreach activities. Discuss and design a communication plan for GNBC initiatives and establish frameworks for coordination and implementation. Establish dates for key deliverable milestone completion targets. Examples: Geographical Names Day, launch/relaunch of thematic maps.</p>	<p>A targeted communications plan is developed and implemented to raise general awareness of the GNBC</p>
<p><b>Develop Communications Products</b>                      Create a common suite of key messages and a communication narrative for use as briefing resources by jurisdictions across different platforms (fact sheets, infographics, media releases, emails, webpages, social media posts, events, etc.). These will explain the <i>who, what, when, why, and how</i> of the GNBC, and the importance of geographical names for targeted audiences.</p>	
<p><b>Undertake Communications Activities</b>                      Undertake actions as needed by jurisdictions for GNBC initiatives.</p>	

**Objective 4.2: Track Public Interest in GNBC Activities**

Develop a standardized set of metrics for naming jurisdictions and the GNBC Secretariat to measure and track over time to assess the impact of the GNBC. (Examples: naming proposals and information requests to jurisdictions, data downloads, pageviews, media coverage, etc.)

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Metrics Review</b>                      Prepare a Discussion Paper investigating and outlining possible metrics and analytics, and how they might be recorded and utilized to help achieve goals and objectives.</p>	<p>Impact of public interest in GNBC activities is measured and reported</p>
<p><b>Metrics Monitoring Initiative</b>                      Initiate a formal monitoring program to adopt a common set of data collection and reporting procedures.</p>	

**Objective 4.3: Communications Plan for 125th Anniversary**

At the mid point of this Strategic Plan (2022), the GNBC will have a significant opportunity for raising awareness by celebrating the 125th anniversary of the Board. This objective will establish a Sub-Working Group to capitalize on the opportunity to publicize the Board, its work and history.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>125th Anniversary Action Plan</b> Develop communications plan with announcements and event initiatives for 125th Anniversary of the Board. Review proposals with Board, adjust as required, and proceed with making arrangements.</p>	<p>The GNBC’s 125th Anniversary is broadly communicated through celebrations, programs and events</p>
<p><b>Develop Approach for Sharing GNBC Archival Resources</b> Review relevant archival holdings and determine when and how to make these available as Open Data to celebrate the 125th Anniversary.</p>	

**Objective 4.4: Increase Engagement with Key Partners**

Following up on an extended outreach plan are engagement initiatives designed to build partnerships with key external collaborators, stakeholders and like-minded organizations. The GNBC should continue to strive for strengthened relationships with Indigenous governments, agencies, communities and expert organizations, seeking opportunities to improve exchanges and highlight Indigenous place names. Additional engagement initiatives could include other government departments and organisations, academic institutions, spatial data users, and culture and heritage groups.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Identify Key Partners</b> Identify who and why certain groups are to be considered for collaboration, with a particular focus on Indigenous communities.</p>	<p>Successful engagement between the GNBC and external collaborators, stakeholders and like-minded organizations</p>
<p><b>Design Engagement Processes</b> Determine how and when to communicate with these key stakeholders (letters, meetings, etc.), and the goals of the relationship (special projects, joint events, research collaborations, etc.).</p>	
<p><b>Undertake Engagement Activities</b> Meet stakeholders and discuss key initiatives for future collaboration.</p>	

**Objective 4.5: Enhance International Activities**

International collaboration is one of the core values of the GNBC. There are opportunities for GNBC members to participate in international geographical naming forums such as the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) to highlight Canada’s leadership and expertise on toponymy. This may involve preparation of papers highlighting the activities of the GNBC or individual members for presentation at bi-annual conferences, or attending meetings as part of the Canadian delegation.

There is also an opportunity to strengthen the relationship with the GNBC’s counterparts in the United States regarding cross-boundary naming issues. The agreement *Treatment of Names of Geographical Features Shared by Canada and the United States* was created in response to a United Nations resolution calling for “national geographical names authorities (to) establish joint or interrelated programmes with neighbouring authorities for the collection and treatment of names of features extending across their common borders” and has not been updated since 1989.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Develop GNBC Approach to UNGEGN</b>                      UNGEGN meetings will occur in 2021 and 2023, presenting opportunities for GNBC members to collaborate and participate in presenting unique aspects of Canadian toponymy.</p>	<p>Enhanced international recognition of GNBC</p>
<p><b>Collaborate with the United States Board on Geographic Names</b>                      Initiate regular relations and information sharing between the GNBC and the United States Board on Geographic Names. Review and update the transboundary naming agreement between Canada and the United States.</p>	

**Objective 4.6: Expand Interactive Mapping Activities**

As of the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the GNBC had successfully developed and launched two interactive thematic maps (*Canada’s Commemorative Map* and *Stories from the Land: Indigenous Place Names in Canada*), and started development of a third map on places named to commemorate women. These maps can and should be regularly updated with additional place names, based on an agreed-upon schedule, while other thematic maps can be developed to highlight various aspects of geographical names in Canada and showcase the significant archival resources of the Board.

Actions	Outcome
<p><b>Updates to Existing Maps</b>                      GNBC naming jurisdictions will collect and research a selection of place names for ongoing addition to <i>Canada’s Commemorative Map</i>, and the <i>Indigenous Place Names in Canada</i> interactive map, for periodic re-release according to a schedule to be determined.</p>	<p>A series of interactive maps highlighting various aspects of toponymy are available to the public to raise awareness of the role of the GNBC and the importance of place names</p>
<p><b>Research and Release New Interactive Maps</b>                      GNBC naming jurisdictions will collect and research a selection of places named to commemorate women for release as an interactive map, and discuss production of other thematic maps highlighting different aspects of Canadian geographical names, including a map incorporating historical archives of the GNBC to celebrate the 125th Anniversary.</p>	

## Preliminary Implementation Schedule

Figure 1 below provides an overview of proposed targets for deliverables in each Strategic Priority. It is intended to provide a framework for coordinating the activities and outcomes of the various priority initiatives that can be updated as needed to reflect the evolving project progress and conditions.

The completion targets proposed in the schedule take into account the limited time that Working Group members have available, given the demands of their positions in their jurisdictional settings. The timing and sequencing are based on the following logic:

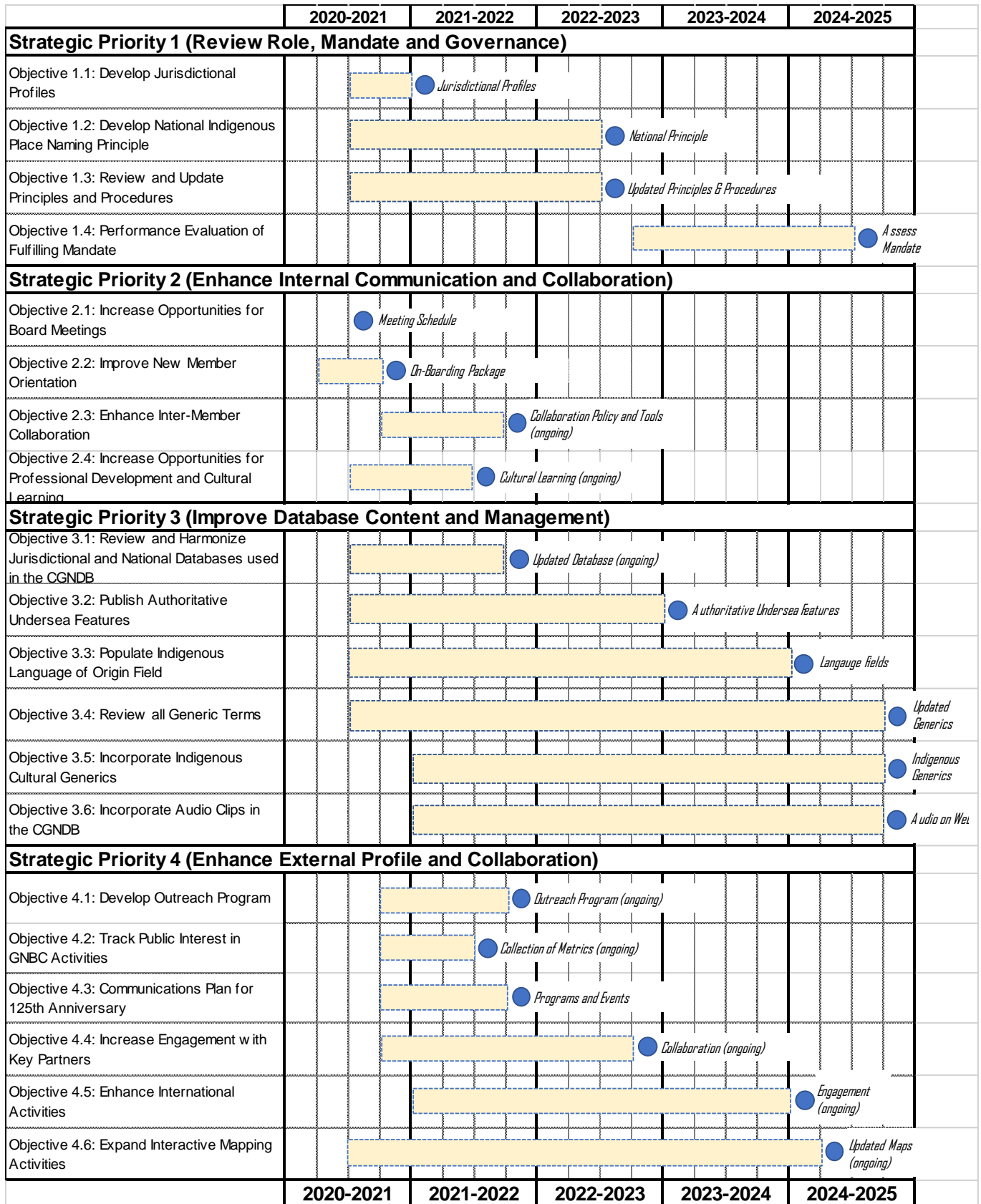
- **Strategic Priority 1 (Review Role, Mandate and Governance)** activities are focused on the medium to long term, recognizing that some of the initiatives may require additional time and effort to complete.
- The objectives in **Strategic Priority 2 (Enhance Internal Communication and Collaboration)** are intended to be achieved on the short to medium term, given that enhanced internal communication will benefit all objectives.
- Establishing an overall plan for improving database maintenance and management has been set as **Strategic Priority 3 (Improve Database Content and Management)**. Making the proposed changes could involve a series of projects extending over several years. Given the impacts of ongoing technology advancements, this will likely be an ongoing program.
- The objectives in **Strategic Priority 4 (Enhance External Profile and Collaboration)** will also be ongoing commitments. The schedule puts a priority on establishing the action plans and assumes that projects will be undertaken over the next few years.

A more detailed description of the Actions and Outcomes is provided within each Strategic Priority.

The overall schedule below provides a useful overview and can be used as a framework to update the status of each Strategic Priority at quarterly or annual GNBC meetings. Targets should be reviewed and adjusted as required after each meeting.



Figure 1: Preliminary Schedule



## **Summary**

The GNBC 2020-2025 Strategic Plan sets out an ambitious set of prioritised initiatives designed to modernize and enhance the effectiveness and operations of the Board. The efforts continue on the successful pathways established in the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan, and in some ways are a “back to basics” approach, emphasizing: an ongoing concentration on governance and mandate; enhanced communication and collaboration, both internally and externally; as well as solidifying management and update of the national geographical names database. A range of efforts have been organized as Priorities with Objectives and Actions that can be undertaken by designated Working Groups led by and composed of members of the GNBC, supplemented, supported and coordinated by the GNBC Secretariat.

**Strategic Priority 1 - Review Role, Mandate and Governance**

**Strategic Priority 2 - Enhance Internal Communication and Collaboration**

**Strategic Priority 3 - Improve Database Content and Management**

**Strategic Priority 4 - Enhance External Profile and Collaboration**

## Appendix 1: Order in Council Establishing the Geographical Names Board of Canada

P.C. 2000-283

March 2, 2000

CANADA

PRIVY COUNCIL

Her Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of Natural Resources, hereby revokes Order in Council P.C. 1990-549 of March 22, 1990, and makes the annexed *Order Establishing the Geographical Names Board of Canada*.

### ORDER ESTABLISHING THE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES BOARD OF CANADA

#### INTERPRETATION

1. The definitions in this section apply in this Order.

"Chairperson" means the Chairperson of the Board appointed under section 3. (*président*)

"Board" means the Geographical Names Board of Canada established by subsection 2(1). (*Commission*)

"Department" means the Department of Natural Resources. (*ministère*)

"Minister" means the Minister of Natural Resources. (*ministre*)

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF BOARD

2. (1) There is hereby established a national body coordinating all matters affecting geographical nomenclature in Canada, to be known as the Geographical Names Board of Canada.

(2) The membership of the Board shall consist of a chairperson and the following members:

(a) an Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department;

(b) a representative from the Mapping Services Branch of the Department;

(c) a representative from the Geological Survey of Canada of the Department;

(d) the Dominion Hydrographer of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans;

(e) a representative of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development;

(f) the Director of Aboriginal Claims and Property Information of the Department of National Defence;

(g) the National Archivist of Canada;

- (h) the Chief Executive Officer of the Translation Bureau, Department of Public Works and Government Services;
  - (i) the Director of the Historical Services Branch, National Historic Sites Directorate, Parks Canada;
  - (j) the Director of the Geography Division of Statistics Canada;
  - (k) a representative of the Canada Post Corporation;
  - (l) one representative appointed by each provincial and territorial government of Canada; and
  - (m) any additional members, including chairpersons of advisory committees established under section 9, that the Minister, may appoint.
3. The Chairperson of the Board shall be appointed by the Minister in consultation with the members of the Board.

#### FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE BOARD

4. The Board shall develop principles, procedures and guidelines for geographical naming in Canada and on questions concerning the use of foreign geographical nomenclature.
5. The Board shall advise the appropriate authorities on programmes and resources for research and investigation into geographical names and geographical terminology.
6. Geographical name decisions approved by the appropriate federal, provincial or territorial authority, according to its respective jurisdiction, shall become official decisions of the Board.
7. (1) All questions that arise in the departments, agencies and Crown corporations of the Government of Canada respecting Canadian geographical nomenclature, and respecting foreign geographical nomenclature except where specific binding international agreements exist, shall be referred to the Board for consideration.
- (2) The departments, agencies and Crown corporations referred to in subsection (1) shall accept and abide by the decisions of the Board with regard to Canadian geographical nomenclature, and shall apply, consistently with other international agreements of the Government of Canada, the principles, procedures and guidelines of the Board in the treatment of foreign geographical nomenclature.

#### ORGANIZATION

8. The Board shall decide on its rules of procedure and method of operation.
9. (1) The Board may establish subcommittees and advisory committees as required.
- (2) The Board may recommend the appointment of chairpersons members of subcommittees and advisory committees established under subsection (1).

10. The Board shall meet in plenary session at least once every calendar year.
11. The Board shall report to the Minister at least on an annual basis.
12. The Board shall be served by a Secretariat, provided by Department, with appropriate resources to carry out its functions.
13. The Executive Secretary shall be the head of the Secretariat.
14. The Executive Secretary shall be responsible to the Chairperson for the functional activity of the Secretariat.
15. The Executive Secretary shall present a report and a proposed activity plan for the Secretariat at least annually to the Board.
16. The Executive Secretary shall, in concert with the representative of the jurisdictions concerned, have the power to deal with and decide, in the name and on behalf of the Board, all routine matters of geographical nomenclature.

#### REMUNERATION AND ALLOWANCES

17. (1) The members of the Board, subcommittees and advisory committees shall serve without remuneration.  
  
(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the members of the Board, the subcommittees and advisory committees, as well as the Executive Secretary and the secretaries of the subcommittees and advisory committees, may be paid their travelling and living expenses necessarily incurred in connection with the business of the Board.
18. Funding for the activities of the Board shall be provided for in the estimates of the Earth Sciences Sector of the Department.

## **Appendix 2: Development of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan**

In the Fall of 2019, Cornerstone Planning Group was retained by Natural Resources Canada to produce a strategic planning document for the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) for the years 2020-2025.

The intention was to:

- Evaluate progress toward the objectives of the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan through an online questionnaire and telephone interviews with federal, provincial and territorial members;
- Facilitate a one-day workshop at the 2019 Annual General Meeting to obtain input from members to help determine a cohesive vision for the future for the GNBC;
- Prepare and deliver a strategic plan for the years 2020-2025, to be adopted at the 2020 Annual General Meeting of the GNBC.

The planning study was initiated in August 2019 and completed in December 2019. Telephone interviews were conducted throughout this period, and the Strategic Planning workshop was held on October 3, 2019 in Victoria, BC. The draft Strategic Plan was delivered to the GNBC Secretariat in February 2020.

## Appendix 3: Summary of 2015-2020 Strategic Plan Objectives

In 2014, a Strategic Plan was developed by the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) to strengthen the effectiveness of GNBC operations, refine policies and procedures, and encourage the use, exchange and promotion of authoritative geographical names.

The 2014-2020 Strategic Plan focused on five key overarching Strategic Objectives:

1. Enhancing the Effectiveness of the GNBC
2. Maintaining a National Database of Authoritative Geographical Names
3. Improve Aboriginal Naming Policy, Partnership and Outreach
4. Establish National Process for Undersea and Surface Maritime Naming
5. Raising awareness of the importance of authoritative geographical names.

During the research for the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, GNBC members were consulted (survey, interviews, workshop) regarding perceptions of progress made on these Objectives. The following notes reflect member comments and incorporate observations included in the 2014-2020 Strategic Plan Dashboard update generated by the GNBC Secretariat.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

#### Enhance the Effectiveness of the GNBC

**Lead Responsibility:** Governance Working Group

Objectives	Achievements (2015-2020)
Strategic Objective 1.1: Renew GNBC Governance	Rules and procedures were completed and documented as a <i>GNBC Governance and Operations Manual</i> in October 2015. It is currently under review and will be integrated with 2020-2025 initiatives.
Strategic Objective 1.2: Strengthen Policy and Research	<p>This Objective was removed by the Board at the 2017 Annual General Meeting, and actions combined with other objectives.</p> <p>Indigenous Policy Scans were completed in 2017 and 2018. Evaluations are underway.</p> <p>On the international front, GNBC Secretariat papers from all UNGEGN meetings are now available; however, a review has not been completed.</p> <p>Canadian representation at international events has been achieved.</p> <p>Online site with updates on current policies and practices affecting policy, research and analysis was completed in May 2016.</p> <p>Improvements to facilitate collaboration to be undertaken in 2020.</p>

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2**

**Maintain a National Database of Authoritative Geographical Names**

**Lead Responsibility:** Database Interoperability Working Group

<b>Sub Objectives</b>	<b>Achievements (2015-2020)</b>
Strategic Objective 2.1: Improve Functionality and Interoperability of the National Database	Standardized process and calendar have been established but integration among all jurisdictions is still in process. Integrate with 2020-2025 initiatives.  A process to review, examine, and evaluate current Status Code lists and definitions was completed in December 2017 and implemented in 2019.  Ongoing discussions with/between authorities and the Canadian Geographical Names Database (CGNDB) continues regarding issues of interoperability and data exchange.
Strategic Objective 2.2: Promote Use of Authoritative Geographical Names	Update of data provision model to improve use of authoritative geographical names by all users was initiated in October 2018. Status to be reviewed and Integrated with 2020-2025 initiatives as applicable.
Strategic Objective 2.3: Expand Database Capacity in the Context of Aboriginal Naming	The CGNDB has been expanded to accommodate multiple official names for a single feature.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3**

**Improve Aboriginal Naming Policy, Partnership and Outreach**

**Lead Responsibility:** Indigenous Geographical Names Working Group

<b>Sub Objectives</b>	<b>Achievements (2015-2020)</b>
Strategic Objective 3.1: Enhance Policy through Partnership	In January 2017 a letter from the Chairperson of the GNBC was sent to the leaders of each of the National Indigenous Organizations.  GNBC member consensus to request Ministerial appointment of three Indigenous members to be made in 2020.  The GNBC Secretariat has initiated domestic and international Indigenous policy scans. Reviews are pending.
Strategic Objective 3.2: Improve Collaboration	Engagement by naming jurisdictions with Indigenous communities is ongoing. Integrated with 2020-2025 initiatives.



**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4**

**Establish National Process for Undersea and Surface Maritime Naming**

**Lead Responsibility:** Advisory Committee on Undersea Feature Names

**Achievements (2015-2020)**

An **Advisory Committee on Undersea and Maritime Feature Naming** with a clearly defined mandate has been established.

A policy and procedural framework for handling naming proposals for undersea and surface maritime features has been completed.

Data review and quality control between Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Natural Resources Canada is ongoing. Will be integrated with 2020-2025 initiatives.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5**

**Raise Awareness of the Importance of Authoritative Geographical Names**

**Lead Responsibility:** Awareness Working Group

**Achievements (2015-2020)**

An Awareness Strategy has been completed and is currently being implemented. An assessment of audience engagement statistics, through surveys, social media traffic, and public feedback has not yet been fully implemented.

*Canada's Commemorative Map* launched in November 2018 to raise awareness.

*Stories from The Land: Indigenous Place Names in Canada* map launched in June 2019 to raise awareness.

## Appendix 4: Perceived Challenges for 2020-2025

The perceived challenges expressed by GNBC jurisdictional representatives in the October 2019 Strategic Planning workshop often reflected the provincial or territorial context of the members. While the jurisdictional context is different than the GNBC in the national context (i.e. different roles and funding sources), the members consider the GNBC and the individual jurisdictions as integral parts of an overall system that is responsible for ensuring that geographical naming in Canada is managed effectively and meets accepted standards. Although the responsibilities for operating budgets and establishing priorities are widely dispersed, it is useful to have a functional overview of the whole system.

Naming requests and proposals originate primarily with general public, and are submitted to the naming authority members. Most of the intake efforts are therefore funded and supported by the provincial and territorial members. When a naming proposal is received, the review and approval procedures vary depending on the jurisdiction, and often involve Ministerial sign-off. A provincial or territorial authority would generally investigate a name by consulting the residents in the area, and review historical documents and other sources.

A number of key challenges emerged from the survey, interviews, and workshop discussions.

### **a) Lack of resources**

Many workshop participants expressed concerns about the limited resources available at the jurisdictional level to deal with the consultation, research and processing of naming requests, maintaining databases, and participating in GNBC initiatives. It is recognized that this is a provincial/territorial resourcing issue and the GNBC as the national coordinating body cannot directly provide resources. Nevertheless, it is an important challenge given that all the inputs (naming requests) to the system rely on the intake functions performed by the jurisdictions. During the workshop conversations, there were a number of examples of initiatives and conditions that are likely to increase the volume of naming requests. For example:

- Anticipated advancements in undersea mapping capabilities is likely to increase the submission of names for undersea features.
- Some jurisdictions are proactively encouraging people to propose place names. They have also incorporated geographical naming into discussions regarding curriculum planning, with the intent of raising awareness at the student level.
- The GNBC commitment to adopting Indigenous names may increase the volume of naming approvals.
- Periodic special initiatives, either at the jurisdiction or board level, require dedicated research activities.

The combined impact on workload from such increases will tend to exacerbate the shortage of resources already being experienced. Finding some ways to alleviate this situation, without infringing on relative federal/provincial mandates, should be one of the objectives incorporated into the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

### **b) Communication limitations among members**

The GNBC members clearly enjoyed the opportunity to interact with their colleagues at the 2019 Annual General Meeting and workshop. The key benefits included a chance to compare notes on challenges and different ways of coping with them, and catching up on the progress made by the different Working Groups on the 2015-2020 Strategic Objectives. The general perception was that it would benefit operational effectiveness and the ability to achieve strategic goals if there were more frequent opportunities to get together. Recognizing that there are financial limitations on incurring the travel expenses associated with this idea, having quarterly Board meetings by conference call/video has been identified as a 2020 Action Item.

Another communication-related concern was the lack of information available to incoming new members. While there is background material on the GNBC website, it does not provide detailed guidance in relation to ongoing activities in the Working Group context. Given the limited time available for Working Group members to allocate for briefing a new incoming member, the period required to get a new member to a point where their potential contribution is maximized tends to be extended. It was suggested that a concise source for the GNBC overall structure, policies and procedures would be useful, as well as an introduction for each Working Group.

GNBC working groups conduct group teleconferences to coordinate team efforts. The frequency of the calls varies by group but on average it is approximately bi-monthly throughout the year. A number of members suggested that having some form of easily accessible online forum would make it much easier to maintain ongoing connections with the team and enhance progress.

#### **c) Database maintenance and management complexities**

Each jurisdiction with the authority to approve geographic names maintains a dataset of names for that province, territory, or department (except Newfoundland and Labrador, who use the CGNDB as their primary database). Each database is designed and structured to serve the needs of the agency that collects and utilizes the information, and therefore may be somewhat different than the databases of other jurisdictions and the amalgamated national database maintained by NRCan on behalf of the GNBC. When updated information is transferred from naming authorities to the GNBC Secretariat, it is adjusted as needed to be interoperable and compatible with the national database, which is publicly accessible as Open Data. During the workshop conversations, there was some discussion about the potential benefits of adjusting the frequency of updates to the national database. Changing information that is stored in provincial and territorial databases is not proposed nor intended. However, determining a consistent collection of data that should be in the national database and the frequency of update of this information has been identified as a 2020 Action Item.

#### **d) Indigenous geographic names approval processes**

Community input is critical in the process of establishing suitable geographic names. Indigenous communities can vary in terms of language spoken, family affiliations, and hereditary connections, which creates significant challenges in community consultation, particularly in situations where more than one group claim an intimate connection to a particular geographic feature or location. This challenge increases the amount of time and effort required at the jurisdictional level to review naming requests. While the GNBC, as a national board, cannot apply for and receive funding from other government programs, it was suggested that there might be ways for the GNBC to assist jurisdictions in identifying potential funding programs that jurisdictions could then pursue.