



MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES COMMITTEE
GUIDELINES ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES COMMITTEES

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| File Name | MPGNC: LGNC OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK – POLICY 2018 |
| Original Author | Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation |
| Review Date | 1 April 2019 |

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OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations formally established, in 1972, two permanent bodies as functions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) responsible for the coordination of international programs on the standardization of geographical names. These bodies are:-

- (i) The United Nations Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographic Names (UNGEGN)
This body is constituted by various experts from different countries responsible for advising the United Nations on this task and are also responsible for setting UN Guidelines on the standardization of geographic names
- (ii) The United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographic Names
This Conference, where UN member states report on the progress and challenges experienced in the execution of this task, is held every 5 years.

The UN asked all its member states to set up national bodies responsible for the standardization of geographic names in response to which South Africa established the South African Geographic Names Council (SAGNC) in 1998 as a successor to apartheid era place names committees.

The SAGNC then facilitated the establishment of provincial geographical names committees (PGNC) which in turn facilitated the establishment of the Local Geographical Names Committees (LGNC). For improved coordination and synergy, the MPGNC further encouraged and facilitated the establishment of Regional Geographical Names Committees to function at district level.

In short, the mandate to standardize geographic names is directly derived from United Nations resolutions and guidelines and the South African Geographical Names Council Act 118 of 1998.

2. BACKGROUND

The Local Geographical Names Committee (LGNC) is established as a subcommittee of Council responsible for jurisdictional activities on the standardization of geographic names. These activities require the LGNC to participate in the process of identifying features for possible renaming, act as the facilitator and preside over the process of standardizing geographic names across the municipality.

There are two models that are often followed in setting up the LGNCs by Council, i.e. as a section 79 or section 80 of the Municipal Structures Act. Based on the experience of following either of the two established models, the MPGNC proposes a middle ground where a model allowing sufficient flexibility in terms of composition and size can be adopted by the different municipalities where conditions require broader participation than allowed by the existing

formats. This format could be described as a **hybrid** allowing for more members than the total number of MMCs serving on the Mayoral Committee than permitted by the section 80 version whilst allowing for non-councillors to serve on the committee, not allowed by the section 79 version.

This document proposes that any of the three versions be explored and implemented, local environmental factors determining, but preference should be given to the hybrid model since it uniquely allows for a crossover model that accommodates the participatory nature of this process.

The following functions of a local municipality benefit directly from the work done by the LGNC:-

- **Emergency response services**
The LGNC ensures that all households in the municipality have addresses that are critical for use by the police, ambulances, fire-trucks and other emergency services in times of distress
- **Development planning**
When planning any new development, a municipality uses a map to identify the areas of development requiring resources allocation from its budget. Street names and names for suburbs are very critical in this respect.
- **Transportation planning**
The work of the LGNC will also help in the transportation planning process by identify clearly the areas through which route design, frequency and capacity planning should consider.
- **General services delivery**
Whether in the provision of refuse removal services, water or general infrastructure, the municipality requires addresses of the residents so as to do proper quantification of the task. The municipality will also be able to implement proper and effective billing for its customers
- **Infrastructure maintenance**
The maintenance of municipal infrastructure is an on-going task that requires forward planning and adequate resource allocation. The work of the LGNC is indispensable to the proper execution of the task as it increases accuracy in the projecting and the subsequent allocation of the requisite resources.
- **Zoning services**
The proper identification of the geographic landscape through the naming of places and streets provides the municipality critical information necessary to facilitate the process of industrial and tourism zoning as part of the local economic development process.

The following departments in a local municipality can better deliver on their mandate where the LGNC is effective and fully functional, *i.e. Town Planning, Community Safety, Local Economic Development, Communication, Infrastructure Planning etc.*

3. PURPOSE OF THE LGNC HANBOOK

- To provide a framework and guidelines on the establishment of Local Geographical Names Committees in all local municipalities in the province of Mpumalanga.

- To set standards to be observed in the operations of the LGNCs
- To give a policy framework within which the LGNCs can execute their mandate in line with the process of standardizing geographic names.
- Encourage council to name all streets under its jurisdiction, rural or urban

4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LOCAL GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES COMMITTEE (LGNC)

The Local Geographical Names Committee shall be established by Council in terms of the Municipal Structures Act as part of all its subcommittees that are formed immediately after local government elections. The establishment will be made with the purpose of achieving the best possible mechanism, considering their unique local environmental factors, through which the local stakeholders can be coordinated in the process of standardizing geographic names.

4.1. Constituting the LGNC

The LGNC shall be constituted in the following way:-

4.1.1 Hybrid model

- Council can opt to establish a special model of a committee suitable for the task. This model can borrow elements from the section 79 and/or the section 80 council committees. It should also seek to accommodate as many primary stakeholders as required by the operational conditions whilst at the same time promoting effectiveness. It should however be properly managed so as to avoid it being used to force paralysis on the attempts to achieve the objects of the SAGNC including the transformation of geographic names
- It is preferable that the Committee be chaired by an MMC
- An official dedicated to, or whose primary responsibility is to the activities of the LGNC should be at the disposal of the Committee to serve as its secretariat/ administrator
- Officials from the following units of a municipality are viewed as critical to the success of the Committee and Council is strongly advised to include them in the composition of the Local Geographical Names Committee, i.e.
 - Town Planning
 - Local Economic Development
 - Geographic Information Systems
 - Integrated Development Planning
- Council may opt to include any other stakeholder as it may deem necessary for the promotion of inclusivity and representativeness of the process of standardizing geographic names.

4.1.2 Section 79 Committee

- The LGNC shall in this instance be constituted by the councillors of all political formations represented within the municipal council as per the established procedures as set out by Council.

- It is preferable that the LGNC be chaired by a councillor as per the applicable Council rules and procedure. The final choice therefore rests with Council but should be considerate of the demands of the task and the availability of the candidate chosen for the task.
- Depending on the demographics of a municipality, representation of the traditional leadership is highly recommended and suggested where they exist within the jurisdictional area of the LGNC.

4.1.3 Section 80 Committee

- The LGNC shall in this instance be constituted by the councillors of all political formations represented within the municipal council as per the established procedures as set out by Council.
- The LGNC shall be chaired by the MMC responsible for the portfolio dealing with Heritage and Arts & Culture. Some municipalities have however opted, with success, for the Speaker or the Executive Mayor as the chairperson of the LGNC. The final choice therefore rests with the municipality but should be considerate of the demands of the task and the availability of the candidate chosen for the task.
- Council may opt, which is recommended, to include in the formation of the LGNC, other primary stakeholders not represented within Council whom it views as critical for the success of the programme e.g. traditional leaders and other community based organizations or non-governmental organizations

4.1.1. Full Sitting of the LGNC

The Full Sitting of the LGNC is responsible for the overall process of standardizing geographic names in a municipality and is the Council committee vested with the sole responsibility of implementing the provisions of the SAGNC Act 118 of 1998, amendments thereto, SAGNC regulations, UN Guidelines, provincial legislation and regulations related to the function and the relevant municipal by-laws.

A full Sitting of the LGNC will be constituted as follows:-

- Chairperson
- Secretariat (municipal official)
- Councillors elected by the municipal council to serve on the LGNC
- At least one (1) official from each of the following units of the municipality, (a) town planning, (b) Integrated Development Planning, (c) Geographical Information Systems and, (d) Local Economic Development
- Any external stakeholder/s and/ or a representative of an organization/s as may be co-opted by Council to serve on the LGNC

4.2. LGNC Operations Committee

The LGNC shall establish a smaller committee to look after the day-to-day matters and will be constituted by up to 5 members approved by the Full Sitting of the LGNC. Key amongst the members constituting the operations committee will be the following members: -

- (i) LGNC Chairperson,
- (ii) Secretariat (municipal official)
- (iii) Town Planning
- (iv) Geographic Information Systems
- (v) , and any other member as may be chosen by the LGNC itself.

4.2.1 Functions of the LGNC Operations Committee

The operations committee shall amongst its tasks perform the following:-

- Represent the LGNC in its official business between the full sittings
- Represent the LGNC at Integrated Development Planning (IDP) fora and processes and make the appropriate submissions in respect its of resource requirements
- Receive and present applications for possible name standardization to the full sitting of the LGNC
- Be responsible for all the administrative matters of the LGNC
- Organize and facilitate all activities of the LGNC including its meetings, public consultation programmes etc.
- Take minutes of the meetings organized and facilitated by the LGNC, compile and produce reports of all the work done by the LGNC for presentation all relevant fora and offices
- Develop and maintain a records system of the work done by the LGNC and make such records to available to all future LGNCs

4.3 Meetings of the LGNC

In order to adequately execute its functions, the LGNC shall hold its meetings at least **once a month**. The LGNC may, depending on its individual circumstances, decide to hold more than one meeting per month.

5. FUNCTIONS OF THE LOCAL GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES COMMITTEE (LGNC)

In executing its mandate, the LGNC shall perform the following day to day functions as part of facilitating the process of standardizing geographic names in its jurisdictional area:-

- 5.1. The committee shall help and/ or advise, the communities in identifying geographical names for possible standardization
- 5.2. Propose and facilitate the drafting of municipal by-laws necessary for the advancement of the objectives and effective implementation of the programme of standardizing geographic names in its jurisdiction
- 5.2. Receive and process submissions/ applications from individuals and or organizations regarding the standardization of geographic names
- 5.3. Conduct a public participation programme in which the proposed names will be discussed by the relevant stakeholders
- 5.4. Ensure that the standardization of geographic names takes place in its jurisdictional area in line with guidelines published by the MPGNC i.e. step-by-step process

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- 5.5. Create an atmosphere and mechanisms, including sub-structures, in its jurisdictional area, suitable for the participation of stakeholders including the public in the process of standardizing geographic names.
- 5.6. Conduct awareness activities about the programme of standardizing geographic names and ensure that the public is adequately informed about the process and any new changes that may relate to the geographic names in their jurisdiction.
- 5.7. Receive and strive to resolve any objection related to the process of standardizing geographic names in line with any policy developed for that purpose by the MPGNC. A local policy may be developed in line with the provincial guidelines for handling objections.
- 5.8. Prepare and submit reports on a regular-basis to Council, the Regional Geographical Names Committee (RGNC) and the Mpumalanga Provincial Geographical Names Committee. This will be done concurrently.
- 5.9. Monitor the implementation of standardized geographic names in the jurisdictional area and report failure to implement to Council and the MPGNC
- 5.10. Ensure that all the administration related to the process of standardizing geographic names in its jurisdictional area is properly addressed including correspondence with all parties concerned especially the applicants and identifiable objectors as per the applicable guidelines from the MPGNC.
- 5.11. Implement provisions of the SAGNC Act, SAGNC Regulations, Provincial policy and related provincial regulations on the standardization of geographic names as may be promulgated from time to time.
- 5.12. Interface with Town Planning, property developers and residents on the naming of any new settlements, streets, public spaces or any related geographic feature/s.
- 5.13. Develop a work-plan and submit to Council for approval and funding

6. ROLE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

In order to provide the necessary support to the activities of the Local Geographic Names Committee, Council shall take the following measures:-

- Consider and approve applications for the standardization of geographic names under its jurisdiction submitted to it through the LGNC in line with the letter and spirit of the SAGNC Act 118 of 1998 and the applicable provincial policy as may be published by the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation (DCSR) through the Mpumalanga Provincial Geographical Names Committee (MPGNC) from time to time.
- Require that all spatial development planning in the municipality has the input of the LGNC in so far as the geographic names used on all Council approved plans/maps and that failure to comply with this requirement will result in the affected development plans being invalid.
- Require that as proof of compliance, the plans tabled before is signed by the Chairperson of the Committee or any of its members duly authorized. Council should refuse to discuss any plans that fall short of this requirement
- Ensure that the Local Geographical Names Committee is at all times represented and fully participate in the Integrated Development Planning fora and processes

6.1. Funding for the LGNC

Council shall, using its discretion and considering available resources and the competing needs allocate and adopt a budget vote for the operational expenses of the LGNC through its established IDP processes.

The LGNC may, subject to Council approval and applicable legislation, raise funds from other sources with a view to augment its resource requirements.

7. PROCESS PLAN FOR THE STANDARDIZATION OF A GEOGRAPHIC FEATURE

7.1. Application

The receipt of an application proposing change to an existing feature or the naming of an unnamed geographic feature. The LGNC receives the application

7.2. Public Consultation

Public consultations about the possible change or naming of a geographic feature. This includes a public notice on the intention of the municipality to entertain any such proposals as may have been received and an invitation thereof. Public meetings take place during this phase in the relevant or affected areas.

7.2.1. Evidence of Consultations

The LGNC is required to keep either of the following forms of evidence with the attendance register being the most basic proof required that the consultation did indeed take place:-

- Attendance register
The register must have the following information:- *(i) meeting purpose, (ii) place where meeting is held, (iii) date, (iv) Name, Surname and Ward from which the person comes from, ID number and signature (v), and finally, a Council stamp*
- Minutes of the meeting
- Pictures and/or video

7.3. Municipal Council Resolution

The outcome of the public participation process is compiled by the LGNC and reported to Council for a decision. The decision of Council is communicated to the applicant by the LGNC.

7.4. Publication of the new Changes

The decision of Council on the new changes shall be announced through the established methods normally used by Council when communicating with the residents including public notices and media adverts. Council will also seek to address any possible dissent to the adopted changes.

7.5. Submission to the RGNC

The application is then referred to the Regional Geographical Names Committee, where such a structure exists, for verification of compliance and submission to the MPGNC. Should the RGNC

fail to process the application within 14 working days, the LGNC may make a direct submission to the MPGNC.

7.5.1 Role of the RGNC

The RGNC shall in the execution of its task, perform the following functions:-

- Check and verify applications received from the LGNCs for compliance to the MPGNC and SAGNC guidelines
- Ensure that proper consultation has taken place prior to the local municipal council adopting a resolution
- Advise the LGNC/ local council on necessary alterations to the initial process where such will ensure compliance with the MPGNC requirements
- Compile and submit reports to the MPGNC and the District Council
- Coordinate the work of the LGNCs under its jurisdiction and ensure that they function properly and consistently
- Provide support to the LGNCs and intervene to help improve their operational situation including the provision of material resources where possible and in line with their plans

7.6. Submission to the MPGNC

The application is then forwarded to the MPGNC for consideration and possible recommendation to the SAGNC. The MPGNC also seek to address any possible objections to the received applications and report to the affected parties. The MPGNC publishes the final list of names to be forwarded to the South African Geographic Names Council (SAGNC). The applications are then forwarded to the SAGNC

8. CONCLUSION

The LGNC shall in executing its mandate seek, at all times, to achieve social cohesion and to build sustainable communities through ensuring that the process is managed in a way that promotes the objects of the SAGNC Act 118 of 1998 and any amendments thereto. It shall further seek to build consensus and a shared and common identity for the communities within which the geographic name standardization process is taking place.

In pursuit of this overall vision, the municipal council will have to exercise reasonable discretion where called upon by circumstances and where such will result in the attainment of progress and furtherance of the objects of the SAGNC Act and guidelines on the standardization of geographic names.



MR GS NTOMBELA

HEAD: CULTURE, SPORT & RECREATION

DATE 01/04/2018