Government of Canada   **Gouvernement du Canada**

Data reference standard on codes for current and past official names of countries, territories and geographic areas recognized by the Government of Canada

1. Preamble

1.1 This data reference standard provides a list of codes for current and past official names for Government of Canada (GC) recognized countries, territories and geographic areas. There are many coding systems for these names. Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Statistics Canada and international organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and United Nations (UN) have established standard classification codes for countries.

1.2 This list is intended to standardize the way countries, territories and geographic areas are described in datasets to enable data interoperability and improve quality. Included in this data reference standard are the past names and codes for countries, territories and geographic areas.

1.3 GAC manages the `GC_ID` and `GC_HIST_ID` and assigns a unique numeric code to each country, territory and geographic area. Each of these codes was chosen to maintain consistency over time.

1.4 The data reference steward will review this standard as required in consultation with the data reference standard custodian.

>   1.4.1 Data reference steward: Global Affairs Canada

>   1.4.2 Data reference standard custodian: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

2. Effective date

2.1 This data reference standard takes effect on January 29, 2024.

3. Requirements

3.1 This data reference standard provides details on the requirements set out in subsections 4.3.1 of the *Directive on Service and Digital*.

3.2 Service owners and data practitioners must:

>   3.2.1 Apply the data reference table (Appendix A) to describe countries, territories and geographic areas in datasets.

>   >   3.2.1.1 Use the codes in the table " `GC_ID` " or " `GC_HIST_ID` " columns when sharing data within the federal government and when publishing data to the Open Government Portal.

4. Application

4.1 This data reference standard applies to organizations described in section 6 of the *Directive on Service and Digital*.

4.2 This data reference standard applies to datasets and systems that are developed after the effective date of this reference standard.

5. References

5.1 This reference standard should be read in conjunction with:

- ISO Standard 3166, Country Codes: The International Standard for country codes and codes for their subdivisions, International Organization for Standardization
- M49 Standard, *Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use*, United Nations Statistics Division
- *Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming*, Geographical Names Board of Canada (2011)
- Standard Classification of Countries and Areas of Interest (SCCAI) 2022, Statistics Canada
- Reference Standard entry on the Open Government Portal (CSV, JSON, Data Dictionary and RSS Feed)

5.2 Related policy instruments:

- *Policy on Service and Digital*

6. Enquiries

6.1 For interpretation of any aspect of this reference standard, contact ServiceDigital-ServicesNumerique@tbs-sct.gc.ca.

Appendix A: Data reference table

This data reference standard is available in machine-readable formats. Machine-readable means that software can be directed to reference the table and automatically pull names and codes through an application programming interface (API).

- [CSV format](#)
- [JSON format](#)

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