

Large Scale International Boundaries

Version 11.3

Release Date: December 19, 2023



Overview

The Office of the Geographer and Global Issues at the U.S. Department of State produces the Large Scale International Boundaries (LSIB) dataset. The current edition is version 11.3 (published 19 December 2023). The 11.3 release contains updates to boundary lines and data refinements enabling reuse of the dataset. These data and generalized derivatives are the only international boundary lines approved for U.S. Government use. The contents of this dataset reflect U.S. Government policy on international boundary alignment, political recognition, and dispute status. They do not necessarily reflect de facto limits of control.

National Geospatial Data Asset

This dataset is a National Geospatial Data Asset managed by the Department of State on behalf of the Federal Geographic Data Committee's International Boundaries Theme.

Details

Sources for these data include treaties, relevant maps, and data from boundary commissions and national mapping agencies. Where available and applicable, the dataset incorporates information from courts, tribunals, and international arbitrations. The research and recovery process involves analysis of satellite imagery and elevation data. Due to the limitations of source materials and processing techniques, most lines are within 100 meters of their true position on the ground.

Attribute Structure

The dataset uses the following attributes:

Attribute Name
CC1
COUNTRY1
CC2
COUNTRY2
RANK
STATUS
LABEL
NOTES

These attributes are logically linked:

Linked Attributes	
CC1	COUNTRY1
CC2	COUNTRY2
RANK	STATUS

These attributes have external sources:

Attribute Name	External Data Source
CC1	GENC
COUNTRY1	DoS Lists
CC2	GENC
COUNTRY2	DoS Lists

The eight attributes listed above describe the boundary lines contained within the LSIB dataset in both a human and machine-readable fashion. Other attributes in the release include "FID", "Shape", and "Shape_Leng" are components of the shapefile format and do not form an intrinsic part of the LSIB.

"CC1" and "CC2" fields are machine readable fields which contain political entity codes. These codes are derived from the Geopolitical Entities, Names, and Codes Standard (GENC) Edition 3 Update 18. The dataset uses the GENC two-character codes. The code 'Q2', which is not in GENC, denotes a line in the LSIB representing a boundary associated with an area not contained within the GENC standard.

The "COUNTRY1" and "COUNTRY2" fields contain human-readable text corresponding to the name of the political entity. These names are names approved by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) as incorporated in the list of Independent States in the World and the list of Dependencies and Areas of Special Sovereignty maintained by the Department of State. To ensure the greatest compatibility, names are presented without diacritics and certain names are rendered using commonly accepted cartographic abbreviations. Names for lines associated with the code 'Q2' are descriptive and are not necessarily BGN-approved. Names rendered in all CAPITAL LETTERS are names of independent states. Other names are those associated with dependencies, areas of special sovereignty, or are otherwise presented for the convenience of the user.

The following fields are an intrinsic part of the LSIB dataset and do not rely on external sources:

Attribute Name	Mandatory	Contains Nulls
RANK	Yes	No
STATUS	Yes	No
LABEL	No	Yes
NOTES	No	Yes

Neither the "RANK" nor "STATUS" field contains null values; the "LABEL" and "NOTES" fields do.

The "RANK" field is a numeric, machine-readable expression of the "STATUS" field. Collectively, these fields encode the views of the United States Government on the political status of the boundary line.

Attribute Name	Value		
RANK	1	2	3
STATUS	International Boundary	Other Line of International Separation	Special Line

A value of "1" in the "RANK" field corresponds to an "International Boundary" value in the "STATUS" field. Values of "2" and "3" correspond to "Other Line of International Separation" and "Special Line", respectively.

The "LABEL" field contains required text necessarily to describe the line segment. The "LABEL" field is used when the line segment is displayed on maps or other forms of cartographic visualizations. This includes most interactive products. The requirement to incorporate the contents of the "LABEL" field on these products is scale dependent. If a label is legible at the scale of a given static product a proper use of this dataset would encourage the application of that label. Using the contents of the "COUNTRY1" and "COUNTRY2" fields in the generation of a line segment label is not required. The "STATUS" field is not a line labeling field but does contain the preferred description for the three LSIB line types when lines are incorporated into a map legend. Using the "CC1", "CC2", or "RANK" fields for labeling purposes is prohibited.

The "NOTES" field contains an explanation of any applicable special circumstances modifying the lines. This information can pertain to the origins of the boundary lines, any limitations regarding the purpose of the lines, or the original source of the line. Use of the "NOTES" field for labeling purposes is prohibited.

External Data Sources

Geopolitical Entities, Names, and Codes Registry: <https://nsgreg.nga.mil/GENC-overview.jsp>

U.S. Department of State List of Independent States in the World: <https://www.state.gov/independent-states-in-the-world/>

U.S. Department of State List of Dependencies and Areas of Special Sovereignty: <https://www.state.gov/dependencies-and-areas-of-special-sovereignty/>

The source for the U.S.—Canada international boundary (NGDAID97) is the International Boundary Commission: <https://www.internationalboundarycommission.org/en/maps-coordinates/coordinates.php>

The source for the “International Boundary between the United States of America and the United States of Mexico” (NGDAID82) is the International Boundary and Water Commission: <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset?q=usibwc>

Cartographic Usage

Cartographic usage of the LSIB requires a visual differentiation between the three categories of boundaries. Specifically, this differentiation must be between:

- International Boundaries (Rank 1);
- Other Lines of International Separation (Rank 2); and
- Special Lines (Rank 3).

Rank 1 lines must be the most visually prominent. Rank 2 lines must be less visually prominent than Rank 1 lines. Rank 3 lines must be shown in a manner visually subordinate to Ranks 1 and 2. Where scale permits, Rank 2 and 3 lines must be labeled in accordance with the “Label” field. Data marked with a Rank 2 or 3 designation does not necessarily correspond to a disputed boundary.

Additional cartographic information can be found in Guidance Bulletins (https://hiu.state.gov/data/cartographic_guidance_bulletins/) published by the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues.

Contact

Direct inquiries to internationalboundaries@state.gov.

Credits

The lines in the LSIB dataset are the product of decades of collaboration between geographers at the Department of State and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency with contributions from the Central Intelligence Agency and the UK Defence Geographic Centre.

Attribution is welcome: *U.S. Department of State, Office of the Geographer and Global Issues.*

Changes from Prior Release

The 11.3 release is the third update in the version 11 series.

This version of the LSIB contains changes and accuracy refinements for the following line segments. These changes reflect improvements in spatial accuracy derived from newly available source materials,

an ongoing review process, or the publication of new treaties or agreements. Notable changes to lines include:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • AFGHANISTAN / IRAN | • CAMBODIA / LAOS | • GREECE / NORTH MACEDONIA |
| • ALBANIA / GREECE | • CAMBODIA / VIETNAM | • GUYANA / VENEZUELA |
| • ALBANIA / KOSOVO | • CAMEROON / CHAD | • INDIA / Aksai Chin |
| • ALBANIA/MONTENEGRO | • CAMEROON / NIGERIA | • KAZAKHSTAN / RUSSIA |
| • ALBANIA / NORTH MACEDONIA | • CHINA / INDIA | • KOSOVO / MONTENEGRO |
| • ALGERIA / MOROCCO | • CHINA / NORTH KOREA | • KOSOVO / SERBIA |
| • ARGENTINA / BOLIVIA | • CHINA / Aksai Chin | • LAOS / VIETNAM |
| • ARGENTINA / CHILE | • COLOMBIA / VENEZUELA | • LATVIA / LITHUANIA |
| • BELARUS / POLAND | • CONGO, DEM. REP. OF THE / UGANDA | • MEXICO / UNITED STATES |
| • BOLIVIA / PARAGUAY | • CZECHIA / GERMANY | • MONTENEGRO / SERBIA |
| • BRAZIL / GUYANA | • EGYPT / LIBYA | • MOROCCO / SPAIN |
| • BRAZIL / VENEZUELA | • ESTONIA / RUSSIA | • POLAND / RUSSIA |
| • BRAZIL / French Guiana (FR.) | • French Guiana (FR.) / SURINAME | • ROMANIA / UKRAINE |
| • BRAZIL / SURINAME | | |

Versions 11.0 and 11.1 were updates to boundary lines. Like this version, they also contained topology fixes, land boundary terminus refinements, and tripoint adjustments. Version 11.2 corrected a few errors in the attribute data and ensured that CC1 and CC2 attributes are in alignment with an updated version of the Geopolitical Entities, Names, and Codes (GENC) Standard, specifically Edition 3 Update 17.

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