

What are P-codes?

The P-code is a shortened term for 'Place Code'. P-codes are similar to postal codes and are used in data management systems as unique reference codes that identify specific locations throughout Sri Lanka. These P-codes identify thousands of locations and help to systematically link data or information common to these specific locations. This then provides a means to both exchange data among organizations who use these codes and to analyse the relationships between data in common locations.

Why are P-codes useful?

P-codes help resolve the issue of what we call a place. Using actual names of provinces, districts or divisions can lead to confusion over spelling, different languages or scripts as well as duplication. If agencies develop individual systems for naming or coding places this makes data sharing extremely difficult and potentially useful information go unshared. It may increase workloads if information has to be retyped or it may get filed and forgotten. Spatial data standards agreed by all agencies provide a single, unified system for referring to locations and facilitate free data exchange between participating organisations.

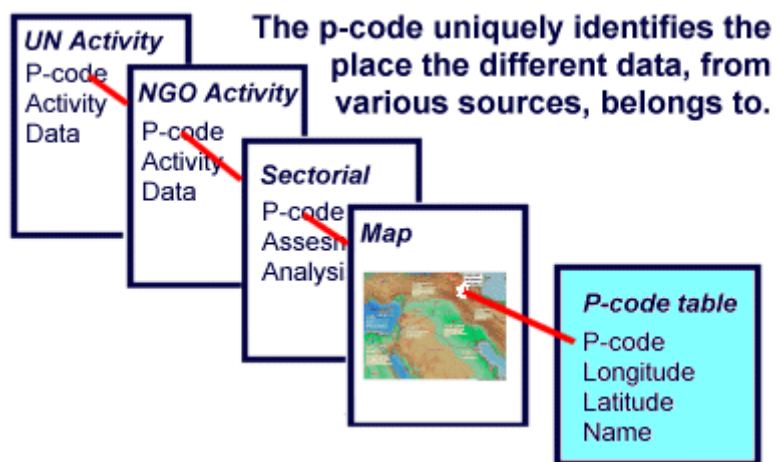
Why should my organization use P-codes?

P-codes promote cooperation and information sharing among agencies and make accessible to everyone the full range of information that has been managed in the P-code format. This can include information on population, particularly locations of tsunami affected populations, information on housing and infrastructure damage, areas of landmines, fisheries and assistance distribution. This information can help you to plan your own programmes and avoid repeating surveys already done by others. Agencies using the P-codes for their own data management will be able to combine this information with datasets from other participating organisations.

Spatial data standards include full geographic information systems (GIS) capability, allowing data linked to provinces, districts, divisions and smaller administrative units (GNs) to be mapped and geographically analysed. Data collected with Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment can also be used.

How can P-codes be used in my existing databases?

In most cases, adoption of P-codes requires only the addition of an extra column to your existing databases and spreadsheets. Over time it is recommended that any other naming or coding systems be phased out and that all new data collection use the P-codes.



By including the P-code into separate spreadsheets, data on different issues from different agencies can be linked and cross-analysed.

The P-codes are available in Microsoft Excel-format, and can by request be delivered in other formats.