

Press release

GfK GeoMarketing releases new digital maps for Africa

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GfK GeoMarketing will release new postcode and administrative maps for all African countries this May, marking one of the most comprehensive map updates in recent years. In many countries, administrative sub-levels and two-digit postcodes are available for the first time. An even higher level of detail is available for some countries. The new maps reflect the latest boundaries and, in some cases, offer more recent information than officially available in the countries in question.

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GfK GeoMarketing is releasing completely overhauled and expanded digital maps for 56 African countries. This unprecedented new map edition provides comprehensive and detailed cartographic coverage of these countries' administrative and postcode boundaries, as well as topographic details.

One of the key challenges in producing maps of Africa is the lack of up-to-date and reliable cartographic data. "Some African countries do not have official bureaus of statistics or comparable organizations that we normally consult for data," explains Klaus Dittmann, head of cartography at GfK GeoMarketing. "Consequently, our cartographers had to do a lot of research. We were able to obtain relevant data from NGOs and the UN. We then had to piece together these fragments into maps that meet our high quality standards. The end result is a reliable cartographic basis for spatial analysis and planning of all types throughout the African continent."

It's essential that maps be up-to-date, because old boundaries result in errors when carrying out software-based regional analyses. Researching the boundary changes in Africa since the last map update was extremely labor-intensive, as the official boundary data available for the countries is usually several years old. Consequently, in some cases, details on boundary changes had to be pieced together from official decrees and provisions.

New additions

The new Africa Map Edition provides coverage of at least the two-digit postcode boundaries for all countries that have postal systems. In the case of Kenya, Swaziland, South Africa and several others, even more detailed postcode boundaries are available.

"In Africa, postcodes are not always used by the population," explains Dittmann. "Also, even in countries with functioning postal systems, desert regions are often not integrated into the postal system and therefore have no defined postal boundaries. Also, there are often double allocations due to the popularity of P.O. boxes and communal mailboxes. These are used instead of address-specific postcodes in many locations, including cities."

In the case of administrative boundaries such as states, provinces, districts and municipalities, the largest and second-largest administrative levels have been digitized for almost all countries included in the map edition. Using Senegal as an example, coverage is provided for the "regions" (largest administrative level) and "departements" (second-largest administrative level), which corresponds to 14 and 45 regions, respectively. Coverage of the third largest administrative level is available for South Africa, Morocco, Western Sahara, Congo, Egypt and Tunisia. In the case of Morocco, this equates to 1,509 "communes".

Topographic details were added for all countries, with expanded coverage of airports, main streets and bodies of water. The maps provide very detailed rendering of coastlines and bodies of water. This is particularly important for application in the insurance and reinsurance industries.

The new map edition provides coverage of over 180,000 cities, a four-fold increase over the previous edition. All cities included in the new maps are classified according to GfK GeoMarketing's worldwide city size categories.

More than 600 layers are included in the new Africa Map Edition 2011, a substantial increase over the 252 layers in the previous edition. This increase is due to the more detailed rendering of the administrative and postcode boundaries as well as the expanded topographic maps and city points.

Data basis

All countries have been completely redigitized, primarily on the basis of official data, satellite imagery and information from NGOs. The detail of the digital maps corresponds to a conventional map scale of at least 1:100,000. Coverage is even more detailed for many countries, such as South Africa and the countries along the Mediterranean.

Coverage, quality, format

The quality features of GfK GeoMarketing's maps are: comprehensive, gapless coverage, overlap-free boundaries as well as national and local attributions and infinite zoom capability.

The GfK Africa Map Edition is available in all standard digital map formats, including *.shp (ESRI), *.mid/*.mif (MapInfo), *.gdb (GeoDatabase) and *.lay (GfK GeoMarketing). The maps are also available in the Oracle (Spatial) database format for use in Oracle Business Intelligence applications.

GfK GeoMarketing offers the new maps of 56 African countries as stand-alone country editions and as a comprehensive continent edition.

Additional information

on the digital maps for Africa can be obtained at www.gfk-geomarketing.com/africa and from Thorsten Lauszus, +49 (0)7251 9295 145 or t.lauszus@gfk-geomarketing.com.

Print-quality illustrations

can be found at www.gfk-geomarketing.com/maps-africa.

About GfK GeoMarketing

GfK GeoMarketing is one of the largest providers of geomarketing services in Europe for customers and users from all branches of trade. Key business areas include:

-  Consultancy and reports
-  Market data
-  Digital maps
-  Geomarketing software RegioGraph

GfK GeoMarketing is a subsidiary of the globally active GfK Group. Ranked fourth among the world's market research institutes, the GfK is represented in 100 countries with over 150 subsidiaries and approximately 10,000 employees.