Queensland Spatial Information Custodianship Guidelines
2016

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Version 1.06

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Queensland
Government

Version History

Version	Date	Description/Comments
These guidelines were originally developed as the QSIC Custodianship Standard in 2001 by a working party of the QSIC Data Custodianship Group consisting of representatives of state and local government and private sector representatives of the Queensland Spatial Information Industry Group. A review of these guidelines was performed by the QSIC Spatial Advisory Group in 2010. Minor amendments were made in 2012 and 2014 to reflect department name document template changes. A further review was undertaken in 2015 to align with national information policies published by ANZLIC.		
1.05	10/10/2016	Planned revision for accuracy and currency. Minor amendments to links and document template.
1.06	13/02/2018	Minor amendments to reflect new department name.

Approval

Position	Name	Date
Director, Cadastral and Geodetic Services	Russell Priebbenow	10/10/2016

Table of contents

SIG/2016/3330 Queensland Spatial Information Custodianship Guidelines
Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
SIG/2016/3330 Version 1.06   Page iv

1 Introduction

Custodianship of spatial information is about ensuring appropriate care in the collection, storage and maintenance of the information. Being the custodian of data does not imply ownership of that data.

The principles of custodianship are central to spatial information management because they provide accountability for spatial datasets, and identify authoritative sources that give users a measure of consistency and certainty in the data.

Custodianship principles cover all aspects of managing spatial information including data quality, metadata, pricing, licensing, and access.

Custodianship assigns an organisation certain rights and responsibilities for the collection and management of spatial information. The rights and responsibilities include the right to set conditions and fees for the use of the information, and responsibilities regarding the maintenance and quality of the information and the provision of metadata. It also ensures accessibility of the information and provides a recognised contact point for the distribution, transfer and sharing of the information.

2 Purpose

Spatial information is a valuable community asset.

The Queensland Spatial Information Council (QSIC) supports sound custodial practices as a necessary part of a spatial information management framework. The framework is based on applying consistent information management principles used for publishing, distributing, discovering and accessing spatial information.

Datasets should have designated custodians. These guidelines provide consistent custodial arrangements so that spatial information is managed to appropriate standards, clarifying obligations of a custodian organisation. Custodians provide the means to make the data discoverable and accessible.

The guideline is designed to be used by government, private sector, academia, or community groups. It recognises that custodians may have other standards to comply with, in particular state government agencies' requirement to comply with Asset Custodianship Standard - IS44. This guideline is consistent with Asset Custodianship Standard - IS44 and the ANZLIC FSDF Spatial Information Management Policy – Custodianship.

It is envisaged that the implementation of these guidelines will better enable the availability of and access to data and information for the benefit of the community. Implementation will also facilitate a better understanding of the comprehensiveness, consistency and quality of the data.

SIG/2016/3330 Queensland Spatial Information Custodianship Guidelines
Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
SIG/2016/3330 Version 1.06   Page 1

3 Principles

Custodianship consists of a number of important, interdependent characteristics. These characteristics are reflected in the following seven principles

3.1 Principle 1 – Trusteeship and Community Benefit

Custodians recognise the social, ecological and economic benefits to the Queensland community of the dataset for which they are responsible.

Under this principle, the emphasis is on cooperation in sharing information amongst organisations rather than competition. This does not mean that the interests of the custodian are subordinate to those of others, but that the custodian is required to consider the interest of all.

Recognising the community benefits that can result from the availability and access to datasets, custodians need to carefully consider any legal and commercial parameters that need to be observed in providing access. These may include intellectual property rights, privacy, security or commercial advantage limitations. Custodians, however, are only responsible for their data as it is supplied - not what happens to it afterwards.

3.2 Principle 2 – Standards and Metadata

Custodians must ensure that appropriate standards are defined and ensure accurate and comprehensive metadata are available.

Standards determine how the information will be collected, described and used. These include standards for access, collection, classification, description, accuracy, quality, format and structure of the information and attributes. Custodians should seek input from users to assist in defining appropriate standards.

Custodians have a responsibility to ensure potential users are informed about the standard/specification to which the dataset is being maintained. This should be provided through accurate and comprehensive metadata.

Custodians must ensure that they have authority to use the data entities in datasets. Custodians must ensure that the quality of individual data entities do not compromise the standard/specification of the dataset.

3.3 Principle 3 – Maintenance

Custodians must ensure that the dataset is maintained and plans for the collection, conversion and maintenance of data are in place.

Custodianship involves a responsibility for ensuring ongoing maintenance of the dataset to a standard specification. In preparing and implementing plans for the collection, conversion and maintenance of

data, the process for maintaining the dataset needs to be available to the users to provide clarity for the future use of the data. This must include plans for maintenance to the current standard / specification, as well as plans to improve or enhance the product. A key aspect of this principle is to ensure that over time, the dataset is not degraded.

The custodian is also responsible for negotiating the terms and conditions under which other organisations collect and maintain the spatial information on its behalf.

3.4   Principle 4 – Authoritative Source

The custodian is the authoritative source for the dataset in its care.

In acting as the authoritative source, the custodian organisation becomes the preferred supplier of this information. This lessens confusion for users and overcomes the accuracy and reliability problems that may be encountered when:

•   Identical information is held separately by several organisations

•   Several organisations contribute information to a common database

•   Information provided by different organisations is combined.

3.5   Principle 5 – Accountability

Custodians are accountable for the integrity of the data in its care.

A custodian may delegate any or all of its responsibilities for a dataset in its care to another organisation. A key aspect of custodianship is that a custodian is always accountable, even when they outsource or delegate functions. The custodian must ensure that through any delegation its full responsibilities can still be met. Where a custodian organisation has such an arrangement with another organisation it should draw up a formal agreement with the other organisation to ensure that no loss of data integrity occurs.

3.6   Principle 6 – Data Collection

Collection or conversion of information can only be justified in terms of a custodian's business needs.

Custodians are not expected to collect or convert information for which they have no business requirement. Collection must be justified in terms of their own needs. These will generally reflect either the organisation's priorities or statutory responsibilities.

3.7   Principle 7 – Access

A custodian must ensure access to the datasets in its care at the level agreed with users.

At all times, the custodian must ensure that appropriate information management arrangements are in place to maintain access and sharing of the data according to specifications agreed with users.

The custodian has the right to establish access conditions for the datasets in its care, including open access licences, formal agreements between custodians and value adding agencies, and royalty and revenue sharing arrangements. The custodian also has oversight in relation to feedback on data and information quality, copyright and intellectual property aspects.

4   Custodianship practices

The custodian is accountable for a range of activities. Three principles form the basis of sound custodian practices - informing clients, maintaining the dataset and providing the data:

4.1   Informing clients

- Publish a service charter.

- Publish the standard / specification to which the data complies, and where the custodian has determined the specification, publish full details of that specification.

- Publish a maintenance / improvement plan for the dataset.

4.2   Providing the data

- Provide licensing and pricing information and use licence agreements consistent with the Creative Commons model.

- Provide metadata with the dataset at the time of supply.

- Provide an appropriate level of security mechanism to protect the dataset and privacy of any personal data from unauthorised access or modification, or accidental loss or corruption.

- Provide the dataset on a non-exclusive basis.

- Facilitate access by clients and ensure there are appropriate access control mechanisms in place.

- Ensure that all rights needed for the dataset distribution have been obtained, including intellectual property rights.

4.3 Maintaining the dataset

- Maintain the dataset to the standard / specification published, throughout the lifecycle of the dataset.

- Maintain metadata for the dataset in accordance with the ANZLIC metadata guidelines including full and frank quality statements regarding source, reliability, accuracy, completeness and currency.

- Undertake regular integrity checks of the current version of the dataset to ensure that the dataset has not been modified without authorisation, or accidentally corrupted.

- Ensure an archiving regime is implemented.

- Recommended establishing and maintaining an information asset register

5 Related documents and references

- FSDF Spatial Information Management Policies – Custodianship 2014
  http://www.anzlic.gov.au/foundation-spatial-data-framework/documents-and-policies

- ANZLIC Metadata profile
  http://www.anzlic.gov.au/resources/anzlic-metadata-profile

- Right to Information Act 2009 and Information Privacy Act 2009
  http://www.rti.qld.gov.au/

- Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia License
  http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en

- QGEA Information Standard - Information Asset Custodianship (IS44)

- QGEA Information Standard – Metadata (IS34)

- QGEA Information Standard - Information Access and Use (IS33)
  https://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/products/qgea-documents

- Information Asset Custodianship Policy and Procedure (IMP 2013/110) – internal Queensland Government document

6 Definitions

Attribute

A characteristic inherent in a data entity or associated with that data entity

Authoritative Source

An organisation authorised under a contractual arrangement by the owner to supply the dataset sourced from the custodian.

Community

Any single or group of individuals and/or organisations present or future who benefit from the use of spatial information.

Community Benefit

A social, ecological or economic dividend that satisfies the unmet needs of the community.

Custodian

An organisation accepting the obligations for the collection, maintenance and provision of a dataset in accordance with a specified standard or specification A custodian may also be the owner.

Dataset

A collection of one or more related data entities which may be represented digitally or non-digitally.

Information Asset Custodianship Standard - IS44

IS 44 establishes the principles which is applied in implementing custodianship processes for information assets in Queensland Government agencies. https://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/products/qgea-documents

Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual property rights means all copyright, patent applications rights, patent rights, design rights, database rights, trade mark rights (whether registered or unregistered), trade secrets and confidential information, all know-how, and all other rights of intellectual property.

Metadata

Information that describes the content, quality, condition and other appropriate characteristics of the data.

Organisation

A community group, private sector business entity, or government or quasi government agency.

Owner

An organisation owning the intellectual property rights for the dataset. A state government department is the Owner on behalf of the State of Queensland.

Queensland Spatial Information Council (QSIC)

QSIC provides a strategic forum for the spatial information industry in Queensland.
https://www.dnrme.qld.gov.au/qsic

Specification

A description of the dataset published by the custodian including accuracy, format, quality and structure.

Standard

A standard published by a recognised international, national or state body.

User

An organisation or person receiving the dataset as an integral part of a product or service for own use but not for resale.