

GUIDELINES TO THE VALIDATION OF ONLINE DATA AND INFORMATION JAMAICA CLEARING-HOUSE MECHANISM (JA CHM) WEBSITE

Background

The JA CHM in support of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) primarily collates, distributes and exchanges data and information on biodiversity and its conservation in Jamaica. It caters to national and international users of its online information products and services through its website www.jamaicachm.org.jm. As yet, no guidelines specific to the validation of online data and information accessible through the CHMs of Parties to the CBD exist. However, the JA CHM Steering Committee recognizing that the usefulness of a dataset depends on how well the quality of the dataset meets the user's needs, sees the importance of confirming that datasets are in line with acceptable standards and expected uses, and that users are alerted to limitations, uncertainties or errors that may affect the value of the dataset.

Data quality is defined here as the measure of a dataset's fitness for use (World Conservation Monitoring Centre 1996). Validation of data quality is especially relevant for the JA CHM considering that it receives datasets generated by a variety of data custodians who may or may not factor data quality into the production of their data.

What is Data Validation?

Data validation is the process of comparing data against criteria established for evaluating data and information quality and determining the acceptability of the data and information (Kennedy 1997).

Datasets and Information for Validation

The categories of data and information selected for evaluation by the JA CHM Steering Committee include but are not limited to:

- Taxonomic e.g. species lists, species descriptions

- Ecosystem e.g. descriptions
- Spatial e.g. species distribution maps
- Directories e.g. organizational
- Bibliographic e.g. publication catalogues
- Scientific primary data
- Scientific metadata e.g. for specimen collections
- Image data e.g. photos, drawings
- Video

Submissions of Data and Information

- Datasets/information for posting on the website are to be submitted to the Senior Research Officer – CHM.

Contact Senior Research Officer - CHM, Natural History Museum of Jamaica, Institute of Jamaica, 10-16 East Street, Kingston, Jamaica.

Email: chm@nhmj-ioj.org.jm

- Datasets/information will be considered acceptable for validation if the JA CHM Data/Information Provider Checklist (see below) is fully completed.

JA CHM Data/Information Provider Checklist
Date of submission:
Contact Name:
Contact Address, Email and Phone:
Title of dataset/document:
Source of dataset/information if different from provider:
Period of data collection/ date of document:
Geographic location covered (e.g. City, Parish/State, Country):
Short description of dataset/document: (including intended purpose, geographic coordinates if available)

- The JA CHM Steering Committee will be advised of all submissions for evaluation. However, the submissions will go directly to a technical group for validation.

Validators

- Technical expertise relevant to the dataset or information being evaluated will first be identified within the JA CHM Steering Committee.
- If this expertise is unavailable within the Committee then relevant persons will be approved by the Committee to act as validators.
- Depending on the size and scope of a dataset/information, one or more validators may be selected.

Validation Criteria

- Recognizing that different datasets may require different criteria to assess their quality, validator(s) must submit a list of the validation criteria and their weighting according to first priority and second priority as is relevant.
- Dataset/information providers will be informed of the validation criteria used to assess their dataset/information.

Validation Report

- A copy of each validation report is to be provided to the Senior Research Officer – CHM.
- Each validation that is conducted for the JA CHM will be circulated via email to the JA CHM Steering Committee.
- Each report will include a clear indicator of the criteria used for validation.
- Each validation report must provide the name(s) of the validators.

- A report of all validations will be presented at the next scheduled meeting of the JA CHM Steering Committee.

References

Kennedy, S. 1997. *Options in Data Validation: Principles for Checking Analytical Data Quality*. A Paper presented at the 13th Annual Water Quality Assurance Symposium, USA.

World Conservation Monitoring Centre. 1996. *Guide to Information Management*