Concept Paper To Address the Potential Implications to the Geospatial Sector of the Developing Legal and Regulatory Framework on AI

Introduction

As governments worldwide develop and refine legal and regulatory frameworks for Artificial Intelligence (AI), it is essential to consider the impact of these regulations on the geospatial ecosystem. The increasing use of AI presents a significant opportunity to transform the geospatial sector, enhancing the collection, processing, distribution, and integration of geospatial data. However, regulatory measures without tailored consideration for geospatial-specific use cases could create unintended challenges.

The geospatial community has a unique role in contributing to the evolving discourse around AI regulation. To ensure that geospatial capabilities and needs are adequately represented, it is crucial for stakeholders from government, industry, and academia to actively engage in the regulatory processes shaping AI. This Concept Note aims to outline the necessity of a strategic framework that helps governments understand the implications of AI laws and regulation on the geospatial sector and supports active participation by geospatial stakeholders in the regulatory process.

Objective

The primary objective of this Concept Note is to outline the need for a strategic framework that identifies the implications of AI laws and regulation on the geospatial ecosystem. Specifically, the concept note aims to:

Raise Awareness: Highlight the critical importance of understanding how emerging AI legal and regulatory frameworks could impact the geospatial sector, both positively and negatively.

Facilitate Engagement: Encourage active engagement of geospatial stakeholders — including governments, private sector, academia, and civil society — in AI legal and regulatory discussions, ensuring unique aspects of geospatial information and use cases for geospatial information AI (GeoAI) are considered.

Support Policy Development: Contribute to the development of balanced legal and regulatory frameworks that support innovation in the geospatial sector while addressing the risks associated with AI technologies.

Capacity Building: Build capacity among geospatial stakeholders to understand and adapt to AI laws and regulations, ensuring they are well-equipped to leverage AI while complying with legal regulatory requirements.

Proposed Steps

Possible next steps include:

Mapping of Existing and Proposed AI Regulations: Begin by identifying and mapping existing and proposed AI-related laws and regulations at national, regional, and international levels. This step will provide a clear understanding of the regulatory landscape that could potentially impact geospatial AI applications.

Analysis of Regulatory Impact on Geospatial AI Use Cases: Conduct an in-depth analysis of how these regulations could impact proposed use cases involving geospatial AI. This includes understanding intellectual property rights, potential compliance requirements, privacy obligations, liability issues, and limitations on data usage that could impact the potential applications for GeoAI.

Identification of Key Use Cases: Identify critical GeoAI use cases that are likely to be affected by AI regulations. Highlight how specific aspects of these use cases may intersect with regulatory requirements, such as data sharing, AI transparency, and accountability.

Stakeholder Consultation and Feedback: Engage stakeholders from government, private sector, academia, and civil society to gather insights and feedback on the impacts of AI regulations on geospatial technologies. This collaborative dialogue will help refine the understanding of regulatory challenges and align stakeholders on priorities for addressing these challenges.

Guidance for Compliance and Adaptation: Develop practical guidance for geospatial stakeholders on how to comply with existing AI regulations, including creating best practice recommendations, legal checklists, and compliance tools.

Framework Development for Proactive Engagement: Establish a framework for proactive engagement with regulators and policymakers, aimed at ensuring that the specific needs of the geospatial community are taken into account as new AI regulations are developed.

Capacity Building and Training: Organize training sessions to educate stakeholders about the implications of AI regulations for GeoAI. Such sessions should focus on understanding regulatory requirements and mitigating risks.

Role of the UN-GGIM Policy and Legal Working Group

The UN-GGIM Policy and Legal Working Group can play a pivotal role in advancing the proposed steps to address the implications of AI laws and regulations on GeoAI. The group is

uniquely positioned to facilitate collaboration, drive policy development, and ensure that geospatial considerations are adequately reflected in AI legal and regulatory discussions. Potential measures include

- Leading efforts to map existing and proposed AI laws and regulations relevant to geospatial technologies, providing a comparative analysis across regions.
- Oversee an in-depth analysis of AI regulations' impacts on geospatial AI use cases and provide a comprehensive understanding of regulatory challenges and opportunities.
- Leading the development of practical guidance for geospatial stakeholders to ensure regulatory compliance while adapting AI use cases.
- Engaging with regulatory bodies and policymakers to advocate for tailored regulatory approaches that support geospatial innovation.
- Organizing training and knowledge-sharing initiatives to equip stakeholders with the necessary skills to comply with law and regulations.
- Establishing a mechanism to regularly update stakeholders on new AI legal and regulatory developments and their implications for GeoAI.

Conclusion

As AI continues to reshape industries globally, it is important to take into account the benefits of geospatial information and technologies when attempting to address the risks of AI through laws and regulations. The implications of AI legal and regulatory frameworks on the geospatial ecosystem are profound, potentially affecting everything from data collection and processing to privacy and liability, to national security and intellectual property rights.

This Concept Note has outlined the importance of proactive engagement from geospatial stakeholders in the regulatory discourse. By understanding and responding to both the challenges and opportunities presented by AI laws regulations, the geospatial community can ensure that it remains at the forefront of technological innovation while maintaining compliance with evolving legal standards.

The UN-GGIM Policy and Legal Working Group is well-positioned to facilitate this journey, providing leadership, expert guidance, and capacity-building support for stakeholders. By fostering collaboration and advocacy, the geospatial community can effectively contribute to developing balanced and informed AI laws and regulations that promote responsible growth in the