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Artificial Intelligence Project, Nigeria

Factsheet on Artificial Intelligence in Nigeria



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Nigeria is one of the first countries in Africa to establish a National Centre for Artificial Intelligence:

Dubbed the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR), it was commissioned in Abuja on the 13th of November 2020 as a response to the directive for all agencies under the Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy to formulate practical strategies for enhanced implementation of the digital economy. NCAIR is now a digital laboratory for advancing skills development and innovation in AI. It is a special purpose vehicle under National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) to accelerate AI development in Nigeria

2

Cross River state is the first state in Nigeria to set up a ministry of Artificial Intelligence:

In 2019, the Governor of Cross-River state announced the creation of the Cross River State Ministry of Robotics and Artificial Intelligence to enable the state to empower and fully equip the youths to be players at the emerging Fourth Industrial Revolution and to create a new platform that will drive the future of Cross River with the advancement of the technology.

3

There are currently seven (7) major government ministries, departments and agencies that have mandates to advance and/or regulate the use of AI across Nigeria.

They Include;

- Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy
- Federal Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation
- National Information Technology Development Agency
- National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion
- Nigerian Communications Commission
- Securities and Exchange Commission
- Corporate Affairs Commission

4

Nigeria implemented the **Nigerian Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) in 2019** to provide a legal framework for the use and exchange of electronic data. (NDPR). The Regulation seeks to capture international best practices regarding safeguarding the rights of natural persons to data privacy; fostering safe conduct of transactions involving the exchange of personal data; preventing manipulation of personal data; ensuring that Nigerian businesses remain competitive in international trade through the safeguards afforded by a just and equitable legal regulatory framework on data protection; and, ensuring that the Nigerian data protection framework is consistent with global best practices. The Regulation applies to all transactions which require the processing of personal data irrespective of how the data is processed or intended to be processed in respect of natural persons in Nigeria; and natural persons residing in Nigeria or residing outside Nigeria but of Nigerian descent. **A Guidelines for the Management of Personal Data by Public Institutions in Nigeria was also introduced by NITDA in 2020.** These regulations have provisions that directly or impliedly extend to several aspects of the use of AI in Nigeria.¹

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- **As of September 2021, there are about seventy-five (75) private organizations** in Nigeria (businesses, start-ups, etc.) **that are using, creating, or adopting Artificial Intelligence** systems in their work.

¹ For instance, Rule 2.1a of the Guidelines provides for the processing of personal data. It generally provides that, public institutions are under a duty to protect personal data in the event of processing, whether by automated means or not. By implication, a public institution employing AI-enabled automation to process personal data in its care may be held liable for any harm occasioned. Rule 2.3f introduces the requirement of consent before a data controller can make a decision that affects a data subject significantly, based on an automated decision system. Rule 2.9d provides that the privacy policy of public institutions should describe technical methods used to collect and store information. Finally, Rule 3.1b provides that no person shall be subject to automated decision making without a law of the National Assembly or the person's consent.

