**I-GUIDE PRIMER ON THE EUROPEAN UNION ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ACT**

The European Union Artificial Intelligence Act (EU AI Act) is the world’s first broad regulatory framework for AI. It was enacted into law in August 2024. The Act classifies AI systems by risk to human rights, safety, and well-being, and imposes tailored obligations. Even researchers not based in the EU researchers may have to comply with the Act if:

* AI systems they develop are shared with researchers who deploy them in the EU;
* AI systems they use support policy- or decision-making that affects EU citizens.

AI models in geospatial science are often used in infrastructure planning, climate prediction, land management, and emergency response, which can fall under the Act’s definition of “High Risk”, making them subject to stringent requirements for documentation, transparency, and governance.

**EU AI Act Risk Levels**

The Act classifies AI systems at four risk levels, each with accompanying requirements.

1. **Unacceptable Risk (highest risk):** AI use that violates fundamental rights or that enables mass manipulation or social scoring

**Examples:** Tools used for unfair profiling of communities; covert biometric surveillance

**Obligations under EU AI Act:** Banned

1. **High Risk:** AI used in decision-making regarding the operation of critical infrastructure, education, employment, justice, or safety-related decisions.

**Examples:** Flood risk prediction systems used in public warnings; land use models used in zoning

**Obligations under EU AI Act: include:**

* Establish a **system to discern and manage risk**;
* Ensure training and testing datasets are representative and of high quality;
* Maintain technical documentation;
* Ensure the system achieves an acceptable level of performance

1. **Limited Risk:** AI systems that interact with humans, generate content, or pose low-level risks of misunderstanding or misuse.

**Examples:** Interactive dashboards using AI-generated maps

**Obligations:** Developers and operators need to disclose the use of AI to end users of the system and its outputs

1. **Minimal or No Risk:** Systems that do not fall into the other three categories

**Examples:** Visualizations using AI for aesthetics; simulations used in education

**Obligations:** No action needed to comply with the EU AI Act

**Learn more:** [**https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai**](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai)

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AI-generated content may be incorrect.