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LEGAL REGIME OF REMOTE SENSING AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM IN
NIGERIA

Abstract

In the early times, the main rationale for the sensing of the Earth from space and other associated activities was the demonstration of technological superiority of the sensing state. Today, that trend has changed as nation states have come to recognise the economic values of such activities. Nigeria is no exception to this. Hence, the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA), was established in 1999 to take the lead in the area of space-based activities. Two of its operational centres – National Centre for Remote Sensing, Jos and Regional Space Application Laboratory (South/West), Ile-Ife - are charged with the responsibility of harmonizing research and development in space science and technology application for sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria, through engagement in space-based remote sensing and geoinformation system activities. Nigeria, in her adoption of national remote sensing regime, takes authority to control what she does by the use of the technology, and bestowed with the duty to authorise and supervise space activities over which she has jurisdiction. This paper, therefore, focuses on and reviews the laws and policies guiding the conduct of space-based remote sensing and geographic information system (GIS) activities in Nigeria. It traces briefly the history of remote sensing and GIS activities in Nigeria. It then, critically examines the laws and policies (past and present) in the area, especially the 2003 National Geoinformation Policy and the Copyright Act. It talks further on the increased participation by Nigeria in alliance with other space-faring nations in the development of national space laws, and in being a party to Conventions and Treaties dealing on remote sensing and associated areas. It concludes by giving recommendations and suggestions on how the country would have a comprehensive national legal regime of remote sensing and associated areas.