Southeast Asia eyes hands-off AI rules, defying EU ambitions

SINGAPORE/STOCKHOLM — Southeast Asian countries are taking a business-friendly approach to artificial intelligence (AI) regulation in a setback to the European Union's (EU) push for globally harmonized rules that align with its own stringent framework.

Reuters reviewed a confidential draft of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) "guide to AI ethics and governance," whose content has not previously been reported.

Three sources told Reuters the draft is being circulated to technology companies for feedback and is expected to be finalized at the end of January 2024 during the ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting. Companies that have received it include Meta, IBM, and Google.

EU officials earlier this year toured Asian countries in a bid to convince governments in the region to follow its lead in adopting new AI rules for tech firms that include disclosure of copyrighted and AI-generated content.

In contrast to the EU's AI Act, the ASEAN "AI guide" asks companies to take countries' cultural differences into consideration and doesn't prescribe unacceptable risk categories, according to the current version reviewed. Like all ASEAN policies, it is voluntary and is meant to guide domestic regulations.

With almost 700 million people and over a thousand ethnic groups and cultures, Southeast Asian countries have widely divergent rules governing censorship, misinformation, public content, and hate speech that would likely affect AI regulation. Thailand, for example, has laws against criticizing its monarchy.

Technology executives say ASEAN's relatively hands-off approach is more business friendly as it limits the compliance burden in a region where existing local laws are already complex and allows for more innovation.

"We are also pleased to see this guide aligns closely with other leading AI frameworks, such as the United States' NIST AI Risk Management Framework," IBM Asia's vice-president of government affairs Stephen Braim said, referring to voluntary guidelines developed by the US Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Meta and Google did not respond to request for comment.

BENEFITS VS HARM

The guide, which is meant to be periodically reviewed, urges governments to aid companies through research and development funding and sets up an ASEAN digital ministers working group on AI implementation.

Senior officials in three ASEAN countries said they are bullish on the potential of AI for Southeast Asia and believe the EU has been too quick to push for regulation before the harms and benefits of the technology are fully understood.

The ASEAN guide advises companies to put in place an AI risk assessment structure and AI governance training, but leaves specifics to companies and local regulators.

"We see it as putting 'guardrails' for safer AI," one official told Reuters. "We still want innovation."

The guide warns of the risks of AI being used for misinformation, "deepfakes," and impersonation, but leaves it to individual countries to work out the best way to respond.

Other Asian nations such as Japan and South Korea have flagged similarly relaxed approaches to AI regulation, casting doubts over the EU's ambition to establish a global standard for AI governance based on the rules that would apply to its 27 member states.

Driving the EU push are concerns in Brussels about the rapid pace of AI development and its effect on civil rights and security, which have put risk controls and enforcement at the center of the proposed legislation.

While ASEAN does not have any powers to make laws, its preference for member states to make their own policy determinations puts those countries on a distinctly different track to the EU.

The EU's struggles to create global consensus on AI regulation contrast with its mostly successful campaign last decade to establish data protection laws that have become a template for other major economies around the world. — **Reuters**

Artificial intelligence, data analytics to boost financial firms' cybersecurity

INTEGRATING artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics in banks' cybersecurity measures could help them better detect and combat potential threats.

"These technologies power vital cybersecurity capabilities, such as attack surface risk management (ASRM) and extended detection and response (XDR)," Trend Micro Philippines Country Manager Ian Felipe said in an e-mail to *BusinessWorld*.

"Real-time threat intelligence would make fraudulent and suspicious activities easier to detect while allowing organizations to respond to threats immediately, all from one consolidated platform. This would empower BFSI organizations to proactively combat cybercrime and contribute towards enhancing the overall safety of the sector," Mr. Felipe said.

ASRM provides continuous attack surface discovery and real-time risk assessment, while XDR enables endpoint controls and organization-wide data collection and correlation across the whole information technology infrastructure, he added.

"By combining ASRM and XDR in a unified cybersecurity platform like Trend Vision One, BFSI (banking, financial services and insurance) organizations can gain increased visibility and detailed insights into potential threats," Mr. Felipe said.

Trend Vision One is Trend Micro Philippines' real-time threat intelligence platform that BFSI organizations can use to mitigate risks, protect assets, and enhance security to help address some of the top risks these firms face.

These risks include negligent insiders, shortage of qualified personnel and organizational misalignment and complexity according to Trend Micro's Cyber Risk Index study for the second half of 2022.

The study showed that 80% of respondents said they are "somewhat to very likely" to experience a breach in customer data (82%), intellectual property (82%), or a successful cyberattack (87%) in the next 12 months.

Among the cyber threats expected by the respondents are ransomware, business e-mail compromise, botnets, watering hole attacks, and denial of service.

Addressing the Philippines' ongoing cybersecurity talent shortage could also help improve cybersecurity in the country, he added.

"Currently, the Philippines only has around 200 cybersecurity experts in the country and this number is insufficient to address even just the needs of the BFSI sector alone. Therefore, more needs to be done to upskill talent — both fresh graduates and mid-career professionals. Encourage them to take on the mantle of cybersecurity personnel," Mr. Felipe said. — **A.M.C. Sy**

Philippine Health Insurance Corporation

ADVISORY
No. 2023 - 0037

PhilHealth Your Partner in Health

BAGONG PILIPINAS

Application for Renewal of Accreditation of Health Facilities for Calendar Year 2024

Pursuant to PhilHealth Circular 2023-0012, the period for filing of applications for renewal of accreditation of health facilities (HFs) for CY 2024 shall be from October 1, 2023 to December 29, 2023. The following are the requirements:

Health Facility	Provider's Data Record	Notarized Performance Commitment	Payment of Accreditation Fee	Updated DOH License/ Certification	Updated GIS if partnership/ corporation	OTHERS
Hospitals & Infirmaries	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	1. Certificate of Good Standing from PHA 2. Updated DOH license if with Hospital Extension Facility:
Ambulatory Surgical Clinic	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Freestanding Dialysis Clinic	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Updated Business Permit for private FDCs providing Peritoneal Dialysis only
Primary Care Package Provider (Konsulta)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	If not licensed : 1. SDS for laboratory, diagnostic services and medicine 2. Self-assessment Tool 3. Business Permit (if private)
Maternity Care Package Provider	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
TB DOTS Package Provider	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Animal Bite Package Provider	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Freestanding Family Planning Clinic	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Outpatient HIV AIDS Treatment (OHAT) Package Provider	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
Cancer Treatment Facility	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	
SARS-CoV-2 Testing Laboratory	✔	✔		✔	✔	
Community Isolation Unit as COVID-19 Community Isolation Benefit Package Provider	✔	✔		✔	✔	Proof of SDS from an L2 and L3 Hospital or Selected L1 Hospital
Drug Abuse Treatment & Rehabilitation Center	✔	✔		✔		
Outpatient Malaria Package Provider	✔	✔		✔		
COVID 19 Home Isolation Benefit Package Provider	✔	✔		✔		Letter of Intent

The Provider Data Record (PDR) and the Performance Commitment (PC) can be downloaded from the PhilHealth website through this link: https://www.philhealth.gov.ph/downloads under the "Accreditation Documents" section. For complete accreditation guidelines, kindly refer to PhilHealth Circular No. 2023-0012 Omnibus Guidelines on the Accreditation of Health Facilities through this link: https://www.philhealth.gov.ph/circulars/2023/PC2023-0012.pdf .

For any clarifications, please coordinate with your respective PhilHealth Regional Offices.

(Sgd.) EMMANUEL R. LEDESMA, JR.
President and Chief Executive Officer (PCEO)