

eThekwini's Satellite AI Leak Detection — Durban Tracks 1,000+ Suspected Leaks From Space, Yet Water Losses Keep Rising

AI in the Public Sector · Good practice · South Africa

Quality score: 53/100

Evidence strength: Observational / pre–post

Summary

eThekwini Municipality uses a satellite machine-learning system to flag suspected drinking-water leaks across Durban's network, tracking over 1,000 leaks. Despite the tool, non-revenue water rose to 65% by mid-2026 — a caution on detection without repair capacity.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of impact / measured public value	1/3
Transparency, fairness & accountability	2/3
Transferability / demonstrated replication	2/3
Scalability beyond pilot	1/3
Governance, capability & sustainability	2/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-09-23

[eThekwini Municipality \(Water and Sanitation Unit\)](#) — accessed 2026-09-23

[Daily Maverick — Durban turns to satellites to plug sky-high water losses](#) — accessed 2026-09-23

[IOL — eThekwini Municipality grapples with 65% water loss amid plumbing crisis](#) — accessed 2026-09-23

[IOL — This is how the eThekwini Municipality detects leaks in water network](#) — accessed 2026-09-23

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