

World Bank Malawi Poverty Map — Testing Whether Satellite AI Can Target Social Cash Transfers

AI in the Public Sector · Good practice · Malawi

Quality score: 40/100

Evidence strength: Moderate

Summary

A World Bank study tested whether AI-processed satellite imagery can substitute for costly household surveys in targeting Malawi's social safety net, finding the machine-learning poverty maps track broad regional patterns well but are less reliable for pinpointing which specific

Key dimensions

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

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-08-22

[World Bank, with Malawi's National Statistical Office](#) — accessed 2026-08-22

[World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 10171 \(2022\)](#) — accessed 2026-08-22

[Journal of Development Economics \(2024\)](#) — [ScienceDirect](#) — accessed 2026-08-22

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