



RESEARCH BRIEF – NOVEMBER 2011

CAN BETTER TRACKING OF ADAPTATION AID REDUCE CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITIES ON THE GROUND?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Identifying where international development aid resources have been effectively deployed is critical to addressing climate change vulnerability and building adaptive capacity in Africa. The CCAPS Program has partnered with the Ministry of Finance of Malawi, Development Gateway, and AidData to map adaptation aid in Malawi. Geocoding adaptation aid will help Malawi and its aid donors to coordinate their efforts, inform the public of their activities, and better assess how well adaptation projects target the particular climate vulnerabilities of the country. Ultimately, mapping aid provides a new tool to discern if adaptation aid effectively targets the regions where climate change poses a significant risk to the sustainable development and political stability of a country. The end product of this work is a comprehensive dataset and dynamic maps to inform policy making.

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TRACKING CLIMATE AID

The World Bank's 2010 *World Development Report* estimates that \$100 billion is needed annually from donors to help developing countries reduce their vulnerability to climate change. At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009, the advanced industrialized nations pledged \$30 billion in funding to developing countries over three years to jumpstart mitigation and adaptation programs. These resources would increase to \$100 billion per year by 2020. In order to avoid displacing critical aid for poverty alleviation, there is a demand to ensure that these climate funds are *new and additional* to the roughly \$150 billion given in official development assistance each year.¹

But what counts as climate aid? How can recipient and donor countries ensure pledges are met and funds are allocated to pressing adaptation projects?

The shortfalls in new and additional funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation are compounded by the absence of a rigorous method for tracking climate funds. The challenge is rooted in the complexities of international aid statistics. Aid data reporting systems suffer from a myriad of problems, foremost the lack of transparency and robust information on project-level activities. The task of identifying and tracking climate-related activities within aid projects is severely hindered by the fact that climate change adaptation and mitigation are not traditional sectors for donor reporting, and thus are not adequately captured in existing databases.

In 1998, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) adopted a policy to require multilateral and bilateral donors to

report on mitigation activities through the “Rio Marker” system. While certainly a step in the right direction, the system has been plagued by inconsistent and unreliable donor reporting.

More importantly, the Rio Marker only measures mitigation efforts, while neglecting adaptation activities that are far more relevant to poor and less industrialized developing countries. In response, the OECD Development Assistance Committee adopted a new Adaptation Marker (paralleling the Rio Marker) in 2010. The adaptation marker, however, is too poorly defined to ensure accurate donor reporting and too simple to capture the nuances in aid activities. These nuances are important for analysts and policymakers to assess whether aid is actually targeting the areas most vulnerable to climate change risks.

CCAPS aid research aims to map climate aid activities at the subnational level to assess whether aid is responding to specific climate change risks within countries.

TARGETING AID TO VULNERABILITIES

The Climate Change and African Political Stability (CCAPS) Program began work in 2010 to identify where international development aid resources have been effectively deployed to address climate change vulnerability and build adaptive capacity in Africa.² The objective of the CCAPS aid research is to map climate aid activities at the *subnational* level in order to assess whether aid is responding to specific climate change related risks within countries. Figure 1, for example, shows active World Bank broadly-defined adaptation aid projects on top of CCAPS’ map identifying the areas most vulnerable to climate change.

There are two central challenges to carrying out this work.

Accessing Aid Project Information

The first challenge in mapping aid is collecting robust information on aid project activities. The majority of donors of official development aid (ODA) publish little beyond very brief project descriptions. These short descriptions do not contain details on the specific geographical locations of various activities within a given project, nor do they provide sufficient information to assess whether a project’s activities explicitly or implicitly address climate change risks and resilience.

Collecting the project information needed for geocoding and climate coding often requires direct outreach to donors in the field. While this trend is beginning to change (for example, the World Bank and the African Development Bank have begun to post all project documents on their website), many donors are still unable or unwilling to produce project documents due to lack of capacity or bureaucratic and political resistance.

Defining Climate Aid

A second challenge to tracking climate aid is the lack of consensus on what counts as climate aid. Aid donors, partner countries, and climate specialists do not always agree on how to define adaptation aid, particularly within the context of development, thus complicating efforts to develop a rigorous and robust climate coding methodology.

Some researchers argue that a project must explicitly include the terms *climate change* and *adaptation* to be defined as aid for adaptation. Others argue for a broader definition of adaptation aid that includes all activities that make people less vulnerable to climate shocks, based upon the notion that healthy and well-educated people are more

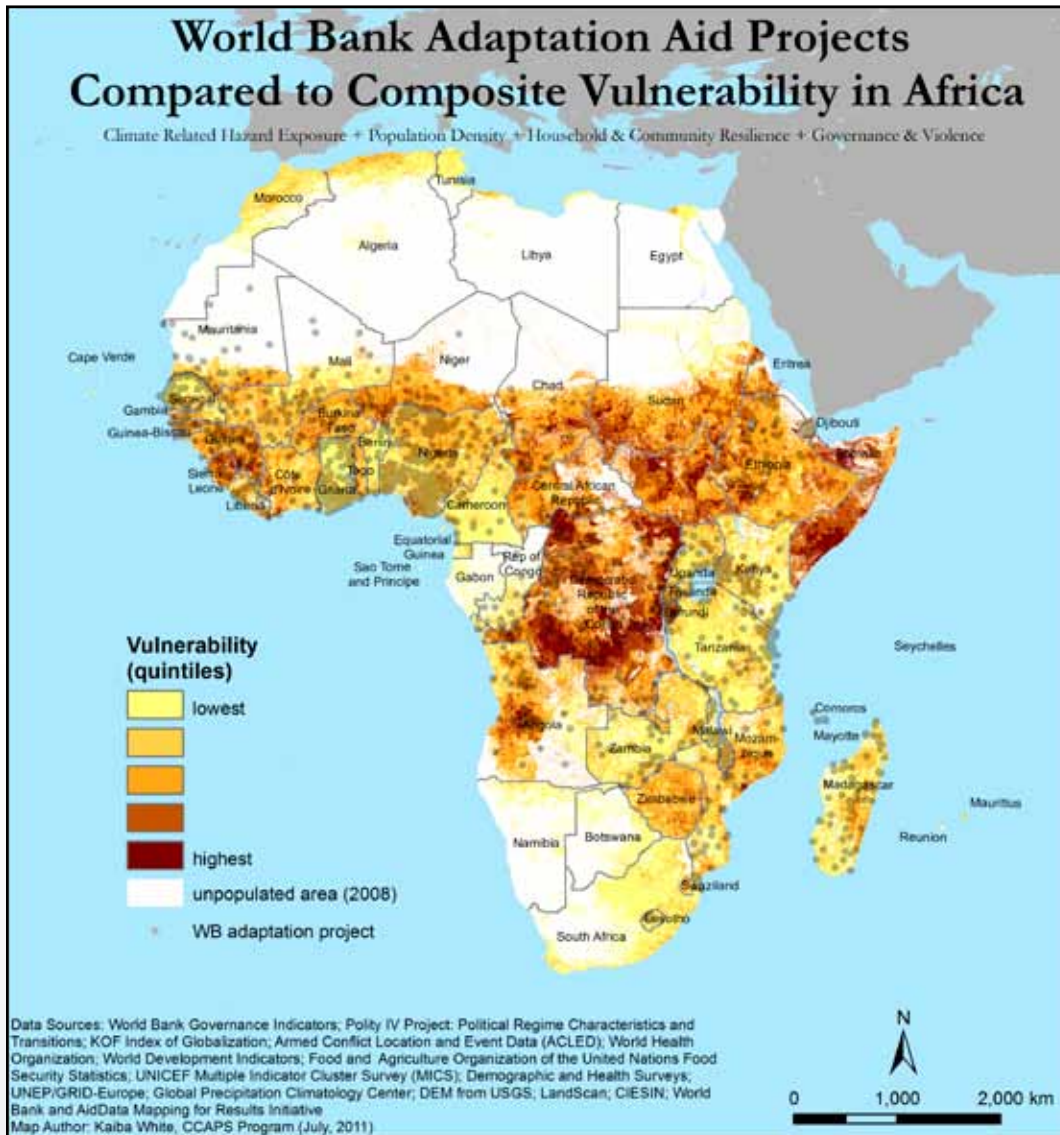


Figure 1. This map shows African countries' vulnerability to climate change, as well as the location of World Bank adaptation aid projects, to assess whether aid is directed to areas with specific climate change related risks. CCAPS assesses climate change vulnerability by the combined effect of environmental, population, socio-economic, and governance factors in order to better define the drivers of vulnerability and appropriate adaptation aid strategies.

resilient and better able to cope with the effects of climate change.

A previous CCAPS climate coding effort on over 4,000 projects in Africa discovered that the former, narrower definition of adaptation aid defined approximately three percent of all ODA as adaptation aid. However, the much broader definition of adaptation aid

indicated that over 70 percent of all ODA would be counted as adaptation aid.

The different definitions and strategies for tracking climate aid have thus led to widely varying estimates of how much climate aid exists. They have also resulted in incomparable data between agencies. Without data that enables coordination

or concrete estimates of current funding, this definitional disagreement has in turn hindered donors' efforts to properly respond to partner countries' adaptation needs. It has prevented partner countries from effectively planning aid requests and budgets to target the climate threats within their countries. This is made particularly difficult by donors' focus on different aspects of how to mitigate or adapt to climate change. This lack of consensus by the international community as to how to approach the climate-development challenge has hindered attempts to effectively support local populations in preparing for the adverse effects of climate change.

Combined with efforts to code activities in climate change projects, mapping aid allows stakeholders to determine if aid is going to regions where climate change poses a significant risk to the sustainable development and political stability of a country.

INNOVATIONS IN MAPPING AID: MALAWI PILOT PROJECT

To achieve the objectives of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and better prepare for present and future climate shocks, partner countries and other aid stakeholders must have full access to information on where donors are allocating aid and in what sectors. In 2011, in response to the demand for increased transparency and improved geographic funding information, the Ministry of Finance of Malawi partnered with the CCAPS program, Development Gateway, and AidData,³ to better identify aid efforts aimed at reducing poverty, addressing climate change, and increasing government capacity.

Geocoding, or mapping the locations of donor project activities, provides one of the most promising ways in which Malawi and its aid donors can coordinate their efforts, inform the public of their activities, and deepen country ownership of development programs. Mapping projects can both improve aid targeting by highlighting geographic funding gaps and improve budget planning and management. Combined with efforts to code projects for climate change adaptation and mitigation, mapping aid allows stakeholders to determine if aid is going to regions where climate change poses a significant risk to the sustainable development and political stability of a country.

This joint effort to track the allocation of aid in Malawi builds on the Mapping for Results initiative.⁴ Mapping for Results, the first effort of its kind, is a joint collaboration between AidData and the World Bank to map all active World Bank projects around the globe.⁵

While unprecedented, Mapping for Results represents only a starting point for the geocoding and open data movement by tracking the efforts of a *single* donor. While this is an important step, the returns from mapping *all* donors will be significant, as it will provide a more complete picture of development efforts within a country.

The CCAPS-AidData team, in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance of Malawi, is now leading efforts to geocode the aid activities of 27 donors in Malawi, as shown in Figure 2.⁶ In addition to geocoding the universe of ODA projects across Malawi, the research teams at CCAPS and AidData are collaborating to more precisely define the sectoral focus of each aid project, and to determine whether projects are targeted to help populations adapt to the growing threat of climate change. For example, Figure 3 illustrates where donors have committed aid for agriculture projects compared to the

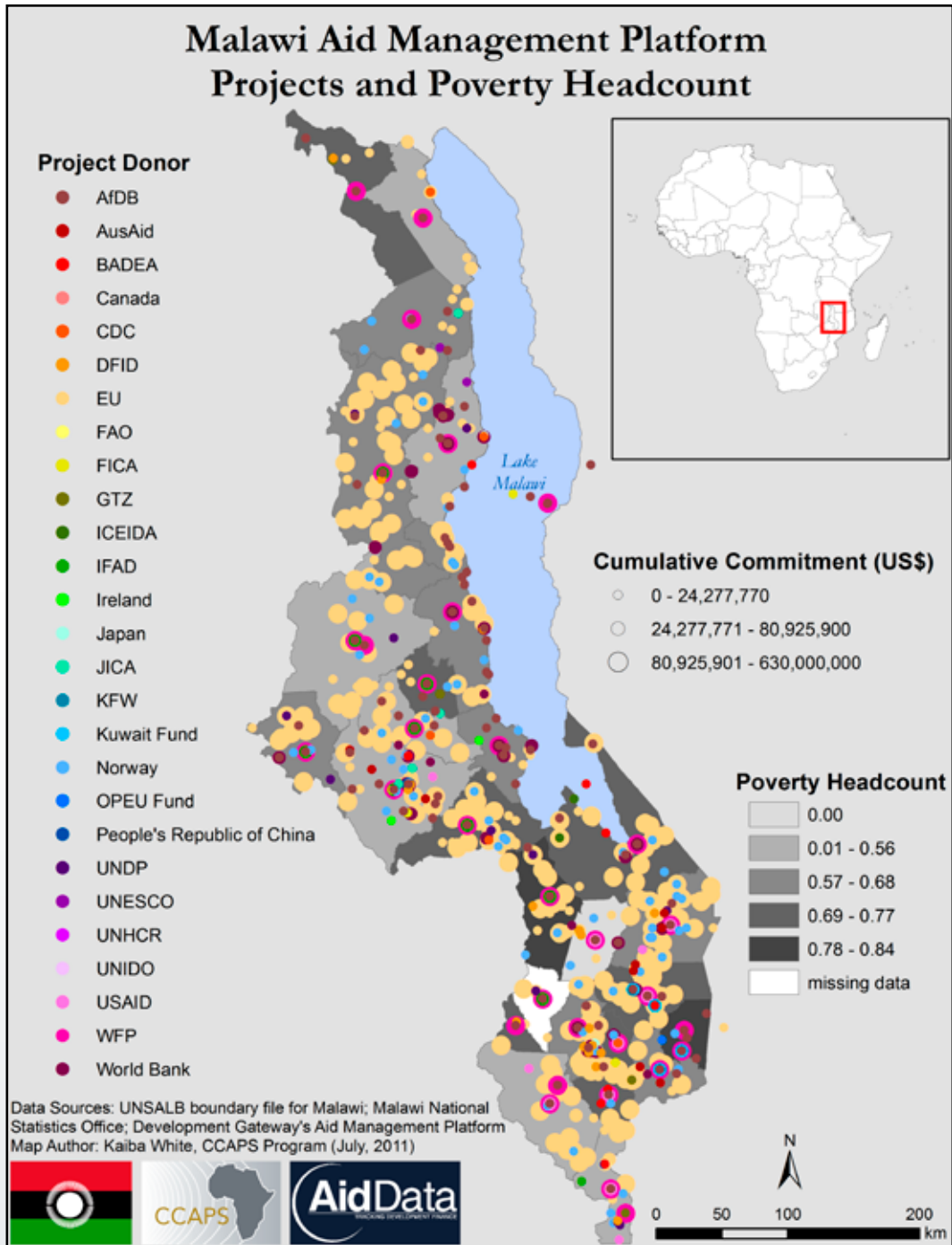


Figure 2. This map tracks the aid activities of 27 donors to provide a more complete picture of the development efforts within Malawi.

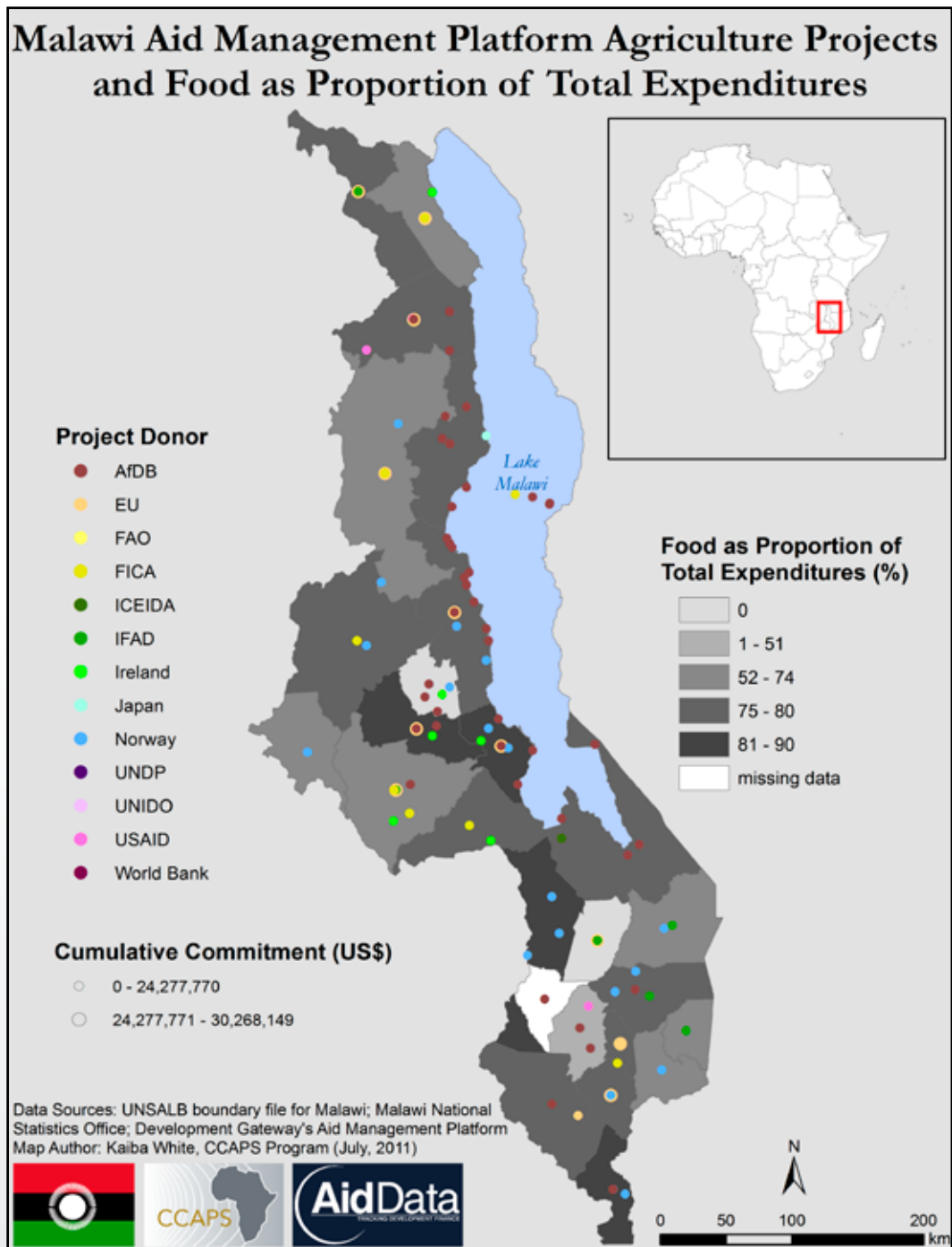


Figure 3. This map shows the locations of aid projects focused on agriculture, as well as the percentage of household expenditures spent on food across Malawi's districts.

proportion of total household expenditures spent on food for each of Malawi's districts. Identifying the sectoral focus of aid projects, and coupling the aid activities with sector-specific indicators, will shed light on whether adaptation aid targets climate change vulnerabilities on the ground.

The end product of this work is a comprehensive dataset and dynamic maps, in which users can view specific project details, combine aid data with other datasets, and overlay different maps to generate innumerable data visualizations to inform policy making. By displaying climate aid projects on top of climate vulnerability maps, users will be able to discern whether international aid resources are being effectively mobilized to reduce climate change risks and threats. The detailed and interactive information on climate aid flows promises to contribute to a stronger feedback loop between policymakers and citizens on the ground.

The Malawi pilot project represents a groundbreaking collaborative effort to demonstrate the power of multi-donor aid mapping with true country ownership and to explore the viability of innovative methods for tracking climate finance. It will enable the Malawi Ministry of Finance to generate aid reports and catalyze new conversations with its donor partners. Most importantly, mapping adaptation aid will improve the targeting and effectiveness of aid at the local level in helping populations prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change. 🌍

ENDNOTES

1. These aid figures reflect all donors commitments found within AidData, www.aiddata.org.
2. For more information about the CCAPS Program at the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law, see <http://ccaps.strausscenter.org>.
3. AidData is a joint initiative of Development Gateway, the College of William & Mary, and Brigham Young University. AidData.org offers a portal to access information on over a million unique development assistance projects between 1946 and 2011 from over 90 donors. For more information on AidData, see www.aiddata.org.
4. To learn more about the Mapping for Results initiative, see <http://maps.worldbank.org>.
5. The Mapping for Results project uses the georeferencing methodology developed by AidData, in collaboration with Uppsala University's Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). The UCDP/AidData geocoding methodology has become a key component of the geocoding standard being developed by the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). IATI was created to address the need for better aid information, and has worked to establish common data standards for information on aid activities across donors and partner countries.
6. The CCAPS-AidData research has worked first with data from donors participating in Malawi's Aid Management Platform (AMP). AMP is a system developed by Development Gateway to improve partner countries' capacities to share information and track development assistance efforts within their countries. For additional information about the AMP system, see www.developmentgateway.org/programs/amp.

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This material is based upon work supported by, or in part by, the U. S. Army Research Laboratory and the U.S. Army Research Office under contract/grant number W911NF-09-1-0077.

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