



Environmental sensitivity data provide a strategic overview of the environmental and cultural assets in an area. This mapping technique has been developed to integrate numerous datasets into a single composite layer in a GIS. It provides the user with an easy to understand visual overview of the extent and density of a range of nationally-recognised environmental and cultural designations or assets.

Why use environmental sensitivity data?

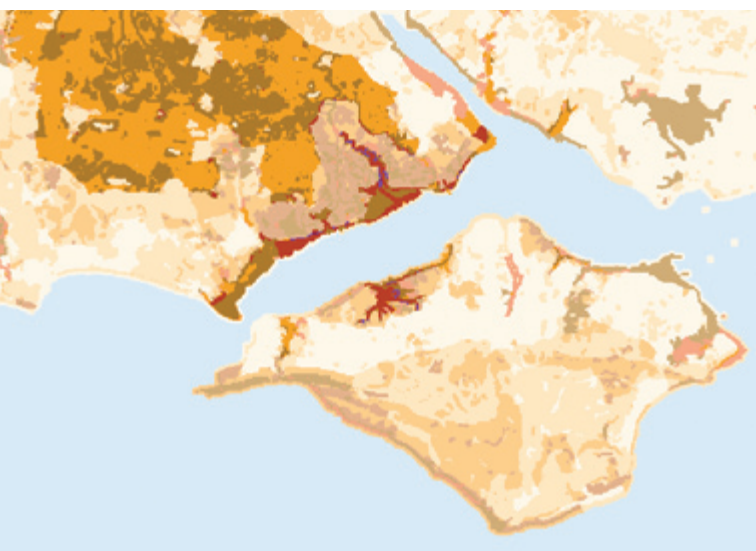
It is designed to be used at the strategic level to assist in the preparation of land-use development plans at the local, regional and national scale, as well as in Strategic Environmental Assessment of plans for sectors such as minerals and waste, housing and transport. Other uses might include linear route planning and site finding. In addition, it is useful in community consultation as the data provide an easy to understand, visual representation of often complex spatial information.

How is it done?

The technique uses GIS vector grids that generalise the data and enable the number of environmental and cultural assets per grid cell to be calculated and converted to a graduated colour for display. The result is a density map where the depth of the colour represents the density of environmental and cultural assets in the area.

Inherent in this mapping technique is the facility to create different spatial scenarios. For example, layers can be created showing only cultural assets or those which are internationally recognised. Alternatively weighted scores are applied to individual assets based on their significance or importance in current legislation, policy and guidance or to customer specification.





Within the GIS an index of all the environmental and cultural information at a specified location can be obtained. Contact details for each data provider are also listed. Examples of datasets currently used to calculate environmental sensitivity are listed below:

- Ancient Woodland
- Agricultural Land Classification/Land Capability for Agriculture
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/National Scenic Areas
- Heritage Coast
- Historic Parks & Gardens
- Local Nature Reserve
- National Forest/Central Scotland Forest
- National Nature Reserve
- National Park
- Ramsar
- RSPB Reserves
- RSPB Important Bird Areas
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Special Area of Conservation
- Special Protection Area
- Woodland Trust
- World Heritage Sites

Additional datasets can easily be added to meet customer requirements (subject to digital availability).

Availability

Digital coverage of the BGS environmental sensitivity data is now available under licence for England, Scotland and Wales based on a 1 hectare or 100 hectare grid resolution in ESRI shape file format, which are compatible with all major GIS packages. For further information or prices please contact us using the details given below.

For more information please contact:

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Geological Survey**

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

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