

BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

Strategic Transmission Corridor (EGI)

Environmental Sensitive Report, Request for registration and intent to comply with the standard for development and expansion of powerlines and substations within identified geographical areas revision 2 in terms of the national environmental management act, 1998 (act no. 107 of 1998), for the proposed deviation of two electrical pylon structures as part of new 20MVA 132/22kV OCHENI Substation in Maphumulo within Maphumulo Local Municipality in the Kwazulu-Natal Province.

June 2023



Table of Contents

(A) PURPOSE OF THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)	3
1.1. Environmental Studies.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.1.1 DFFE REQUEST	4
1.2. Web Based Environmental Screening Tool	5
1.3. Site Visit (Ground Verification).....	5
1.4. Receiving Environment	6
(B) LEGAL CONTEXT	7
B.1. Overview of Strategic Transmission Corridors (EGI)	7
(C) BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION.	8
(D) PROCESS AND TIMELINE;	9
D1. Public Participation	9
(E) THE SCREENING REPORT GENERATED FROM THE SCREENING TOOL FOR THE PRELIMINARY CORRIDOR AND/OR PROPOSED SUBSTATION SITE	10
(F) LOCATION OF THE PRELIMINARY CORRIDOR AND/OR PROPOSED SUBSTATION SITE	10
(G) CONTACT DETAILS OF THE EAP	Error! Bookmark not defined.
(H) I&AP REGISTRATION FORMS.....	12



(A) PURPOSE OF THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT (BID)

This document aims to provide you, as an Interested and/or Affected Party (I&AP), with background information regarding the application for Project Registration in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998: GN R. 982 as per the standard for the development of power lines and substation within identified geographical areas (Electricity Grid Infrastructure - EGI) for the proposed Ocheni 20MVA 132/22KV Substation site at Ocheni within Maphumulo Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal Province (See attached Map),. Any person, company, authority, or other entities that might be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed activity can register as an Interested or Affected Party (I&AP). This includes, but is not limited to landowners, tenants, municipal and provincial authorities, interest groups, Non-Government Organisations, and conservation groups.

This document outlines how to get engaged in the project, get information, and identify areas of interest and/or concern.. You have the chance to participate actively in the project right away through the information exchange that serves as the foundation of the public participation process. With collaboration from I&APs, we can make sure that the intended development is taken into account while addressing any environmental concerns.

1.1. Electricity Grid Infrastructure (EGI)

This process will be conducted in accordance with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2021 Standard for the development of Power Lines and substations within Identified Geographical Areas Revision 1.

When read in conjunction with as expansion of the Strategic Transmission Corridors published in Government Notice No. 113 under Government Gazette No. 41445 on 16 February 2018, as set out In the Schedule hereto. Eskom intends to be excluded through exclusions and/ or specific requirements of Basic Assessment Process. The EGI process is in accordance to Notice of identification in terms of Section 24(5)(a) and (b) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, of the procedure to be followed in applying for Environmental Authorisation for large scale Electricity Transmission and Distribution Development activities identified in terms of Section 24(2)(a) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 when occurring in geographical areas of strategic importance.

In this instance, the proposed Construction of a new 20MVA 132/22kV Ocheni Substation in Maphumulo within Maphumulo Local Municipality in the Kwazulu-Natal Province falls within the Strategic Transmission Corridors (EGI), Expanded Eastern Corridor.

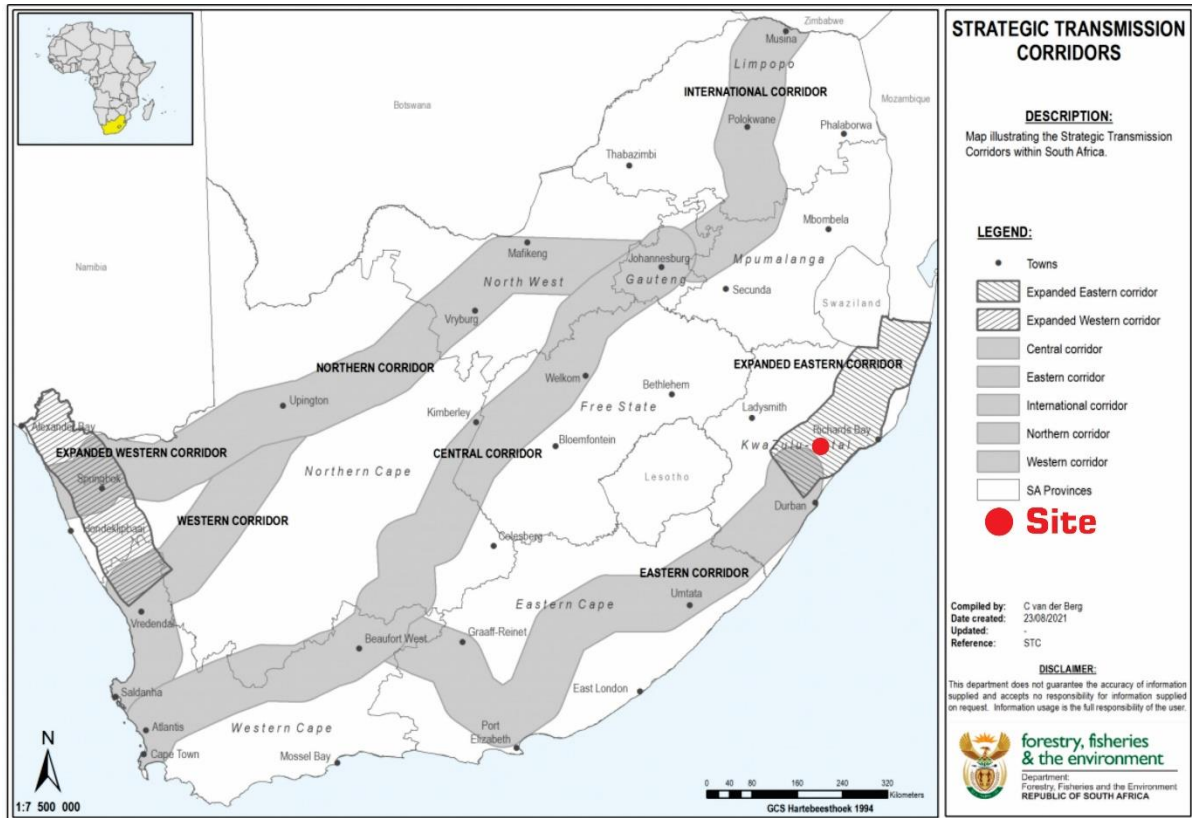


Figure 1: Showing the location of Ocheni substation within the Expanded Eastern Strategic Transmission Corridors

1.1.1 Process and outcome

To this effect, The following is considered, that:

- The Web Based Environmental Screening Tool to determine the sensitivity of the substation site.
- Eskom's Environmental Assessment Practitioner to conduct a ground truthing to confirm or contrast the sensitivity as shown by the National web based Environmental Screening tool.
- A feedback report be prepared and be subjected to a public participation period of 30 days and all comments be included and then be submitted to the DFFE for decision.

The final report to contains the site's various sensitivities as per National Web based Environmental Screening Tool, the ground truthing and specialist studies feedback and other measures as suggested by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP).



1.2. Web Based Environmental Screening Tool

The site's environmental sensitivities were identified using the web-based environmental screening program. Prior to the site inspection, the initial environmental screening was completed on February 15, 2023 and November 01, 2023. After the site visit, the final environmental screening report was created on March 4th, 2023, and November 08, 2023 simply to make sure the environmental sensitivity had not altered.

1.3. Site Visit (Ground Verification)

The site visit was conducted for 1 day in summer on **23 February 2023 and 08 November 2023**. The reason for the site visits were to confirm/verify or dispute the different environmental sensitivity themes that has been generated by the web-based environmental screening tool.

13.1. Methodology followed to assess all themes sensitivities:

1.3.1.1. Site sensitivity verification and minimum report content requirements

Prior to commencing with a specialist assessment, the current use of the land and the environmental sensitivity of the site under consideration identified by the screening tool has been confirmed by the undertaking a site sensitivity verification.

1.3.1.2. The site sensitivity verification was undertaken by an environmental assessment practitioner.

1.3.1.3 The site sensitivity verification was undertaken through the use of:

- (a) a desk top analysis, using satellite imagery.
- (b) a preliminary site inspection; and
- (c) any other available and relevant information.

1.3.1.4 The outcome of the site sensitivity verification was recorded in the form of a report this that:

- (a) confirms or disputes the current use of the land and the environmental sensitivity as identified by the screening tool, such as new developments or infrastructure, the change in vegetation cover or status etc.
- (b) contains a motivation and evidence (e.g., photographs) of either the verified or different use of the land and environmental sensitivity; and
- (c) is submitted together with the relevant assessment report prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental EGI Regulations.

1.4. Receiving Environment

Land cover: The preferred substation location is currently found amid grassland that the neighbourhood occasionally uses for animal grazing. The vegetation on the proposed substation site is dominated by grassland, with isolated shrubs and small indigenous trees (i.e. Sickle Bush, Sweet Thorn etc.) present. The grasses in this veld are palatable for the grazing of livestock, and areas of the proposed site have been noted to have been used by the local community for subsistence farming. The vegetation along the length of the proposed corridors is characterised by good quality grassland, shrubbery and small trees.

The substation site descends progressively from west to east while being placed on top of an escarpment, and a severe slope is located 500 meters away. Since the site's existing grassland will serve to reduce soil erosion and excessive storm water runoff, only vegetation that is directly impeding the substation's construction may be eliminated. The area that the proposed corridor servitude for the Ocheni substation runs through has a mountainous topography.

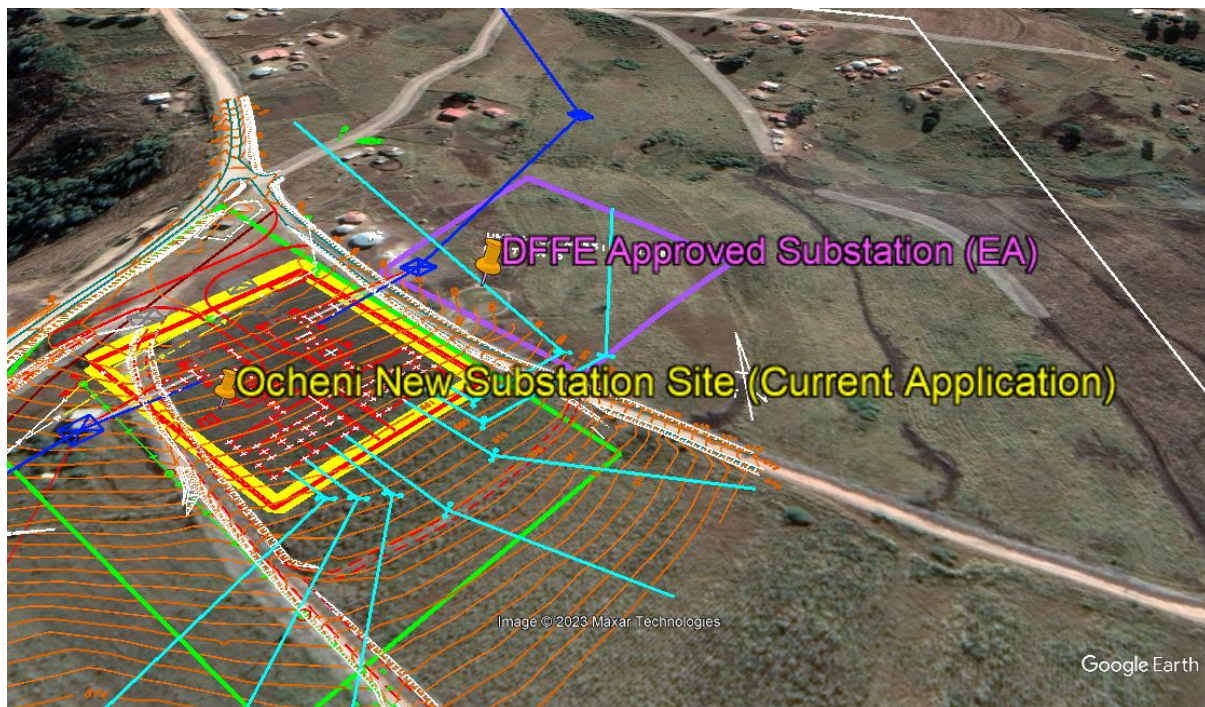


Figure 2: Showing the DFFE approved substation site versus the Eskom Current Application site.

1.5. New Substation Coordinates

North-West Corner	North-East Corner	South-West Corner	North-East Corner
S: 29°08'45.88" E: 31°00'49.46"	S: 29°08'49.09" E: 31°00'47.64"	S: 29°08'48.71" E: 31°00'52.79"	S: 29°08'51.22" E: 31°00'50.33"



(B) LEGAL CONTEXT

Activities likely to be triggered by the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998

An Environmental EGI for the proposed Ocheni 20MVA 132/22KV Substation site at Ocheni within Maphumulo Local Municipality in KwaZulu Natal Province is being undertaken in accordance with section 24(5) of the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998).

In terms of Government Notice No. 338282 of December 2014, the following listed activities are applicable, which may have an impact on the environment:

LISTING NOTICE	DESCRIPTION
Listing Notice 1	11. The construction of facilities or infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity – (i) Outside urban areas or industrial complexes with a capacity of more than 33 but less than 275 kilovolts.

The EGI application for the Ocheni Substation registration will be submitted to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment for review and approval. An EGI process would be followed based on the Environmental EGI Regulations 2014, in terms of chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998).

B.1. Overview of Strategic Transmission Corridors (EGI)

On the 16 February 2018 Minister Edna Molewa published Government Notice No. 113 in Government Gazette No. 41445 which identified 5 strategic transmission corridors important for the planning of electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure as well as procedure to be followed when applying for environmental authorisation for electricity transmission and distribution expansion when occurring in these corridors.

In March 2019, a generic Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) relevant to an application for Environmental Authorisation for substations and overhead transmission and distribution electricity transmission infrastructure was published in Government Notice No. 435 in Government Gazette No, 42323. The EMPr is relevant to substations or overhead transmission and distribution infrastructure when developed within or outside of the strategic transmission corridors.



On 29 April 2021, Minister Barbara Dallas Creecy published Government Notice No. 383 in Government Gazette No. 44504, which expanded the eastern and western transmission corridors and gave notice of the applicability of the application procedures identified in Government Notice No. 113, to these expanded corridors.

The transmission corridors and their expansion were identified through the undertaking of 2 Strategic Environmental Assessments as was the development of the generic EMPr for substations and overhead powerlines. The first Strategic Environmental Assessment was finalised in 2016 and second in 2019.

The Minister through Government Gazette Notice No. 383 of 21 April 2021 published an identification in terms of Sections 24(3), 24(5)(1) and 24(5)(b) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 of expanded geographical areas of strategic importance for the development of electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure and of procedures to be followed when applying for or deciding on environmental authorisations for large scale electricity transmission or distribution development activities identified in terms of section 24(2)(a) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 when occurring in geographical areas of strategic importance.

(C) BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION.

Eskom Distribution KwaZulu Natal Operating Unit (hereinafter referred to as Eskom) received an Environmental Authorization(EA) for the Construction of a new 20MVA 132/22kV Ocheni Substation in Maphumulo within Maphumulo Local Municipality in the Kwazulu-Natal Province in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998: GN R543, R544 and R546 on 22 August 2012. Due to a number of constraints Eskom was unable to construct the substation within the period specified in the EA and has subsequently applied for a number of amendments for the extension of the validity period of the EA which were approved on the 23 February 2015 and the 08 June 2017 respectively. The last amendment that was made on the project was for the change of the project name from Mt Elias to Ocheni Substation, and this was approved on the 29 August 2017.

Application of EGI Project registration

Eskom commenced with construction through the final survey and final tower positioning within the approved corridor for this project. Eskom discovered that the initial site approved for the substation is currently utilised by the community as a Shembe Church.



Eskom has appointed an independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), Ourbiosphere Environmental (Pty) Ltd to undertake an EGI application for the change in location of the Ocheni Substation. The new proposed site for the location of the substation was not one of the alternative sites assessed during the Basic Assessment phase of the project. However, the substation site will be located on the authorised powerline route 25 metres backward from the current authorised powerline.

(D) PROCESS AND TIMELINE.

D1. Public Participation

Public participation is the cornerstone of the EGI Process. The principles of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) govern most aspects of EIAs, including public participation. These include the ongoing provision of sufficient information (in a transparent manner) to Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs).

During the Public Participation Process, input from the proponent, technical experts, government authorities and the general public will be gathered to result in a better understanding of the project for all involved, and more informed decision-making throughout the process.

The key objective of public participation is to provide I&APs with an opportunity to provide comment and input in the planning phase of the project. Issues of concern and suggestions raised by I&APs will be addressed and responded to as required in the EGI Report.

I&APs will also be given the opportunity to comment on the findings of EGI (IA) Report during the specified comment periods I&APs will be provided with a **30-day comment period** in which to raise issues and / or concerns in response to the Background Information Document.

Please note that communications regarding the process and the availability of reports will only be sent to registered I&APs. To register for the process, and thus receive further communications regarding this development, please register by sending the signed registration sheet at the back of this document, together with your contact details and nature of interest, to Ourbiosphere Environmental (Pty) Ltd on the details shown above.

(E) THE SCREENING REPORT GENERATED FROM THE SCREENING TOOL FOR THE PRELIMINARY CORRIDOR AND/OR PROPOSED SUBSTATION SITE

Kindly refer to Annexure 1 for the Web Based Environmental Screening Report.

(F) LOCATION OF THE PRELIMINARY CORRIDOR AND/OR PROPOSED SUBSTATION SITE

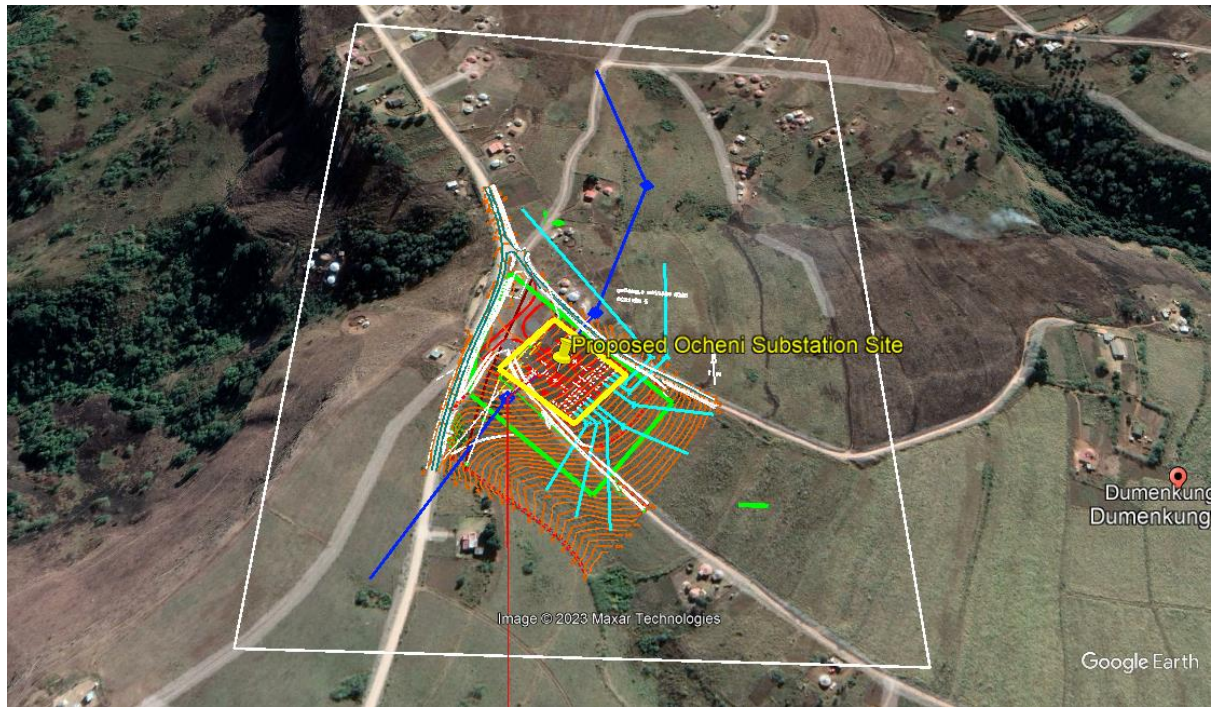


Figure 3: Showing the location of the proposed Ocheni Substation site

a) Substation Site size

The substation site is 100metres x 100 metres

**(G) CONTACT DETAILS OF THE EAP**

Herewith the contact details of the Environmental Assessment Practitioner:

Company Name:	Ourbiosphere Environmental (Pty) Ltd
EAP Name:	Musa Netshivhambe (EAPASA, SACNASP)
Telephone:	086 001 82 55
Cell:	073 977 94 14
WhatsApp Number:	064 744 69 43
Fax:	086 567 55 23
Email Address:	musa@ourbiosphere.co.za
Postal Address:	5228 Letsobe Close, Windmill Park, Boksburg, Johannesburg, 1459
Website:	www.ourbiosphere.co.za

9 Lords Lane Street, Northview Complex, Polokwane, Bendor Park, 0699

Tel: +27 86 001 8255
Cell: +27 73 977 9414
WhatsApp: +27 64 744 6943
Fax: +27 86 567 5523
Email: musa@ourbiosphere.co.za
www.ourbiosphere.co.za



OURBIOSPHERE
ENVIRONMENTAL

02 June 2023

REGISTRATION & COMMENT SHEET

Environmental Sensitive Report, Request for registration and intent to comply with the standard for development and expansion of powerlines and substations within identified geographical areas revision 2 in terms of the national environmental management act, 1998 (act no. 107 of 1998), for the proposed deviation of two electrical pylon structures as part of new 20MVA 132/22kV OCHENI Substation in Maphumulo within Maphumulo Local Municipality in the Kwazulu-Natal Province.

I wish to register as an Interested and Affected Party and/or bring to the attention of Ourbiosphere Environmental (Pty) Ltd the following comments (please use additional sheets of paper if required).

Attention : Musa Netshivhambe

Email: musa@ourbiosphere.co.za

(In order for your contact details to be captured on our database - Please fill out the sheet below)

I&AP Details:	
Name:	
Organization:	
Telephone Number:	
E-mail :	
Physical Address:	
Postal Address:	
Fax Number:	

COMMENTS:

9 Lords Lane Street, Northview Complex, Polokwane, Bendor Park, 0699

Tel: +27 86 001 8255
Cell: +27 73 977 9414
WhatsApp: +27 64 744 6943
Fax: +27 86 567 5523

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Closing Dates: 06 July 2023



ANNEXURE 1

Web Based Environmental Screening Report

**SCREENING REPORT FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORIZATION AS
REQUIRED BY THE 2014 EIA REGULATIONS – PROPOSED SITE
ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY**

EIA Reference number: 12/12/20/2271

Project name: Ocheni Substation

Project title: Construction of the new 132/22 kV Ocheni Substation and the associated 132kV powerline, Ref No: 12/12/20/2271.

Date screening report generated: 04/03/2023 13:29:08

Applicant: Eskom KZN Operating Unit

Compiler: Ourbiosphere Environmental (Pty) Ltd

Compiler signature:


.....

Application Category: Utilities Infrastructure | Electricity | Distribution and Transmission | Substation

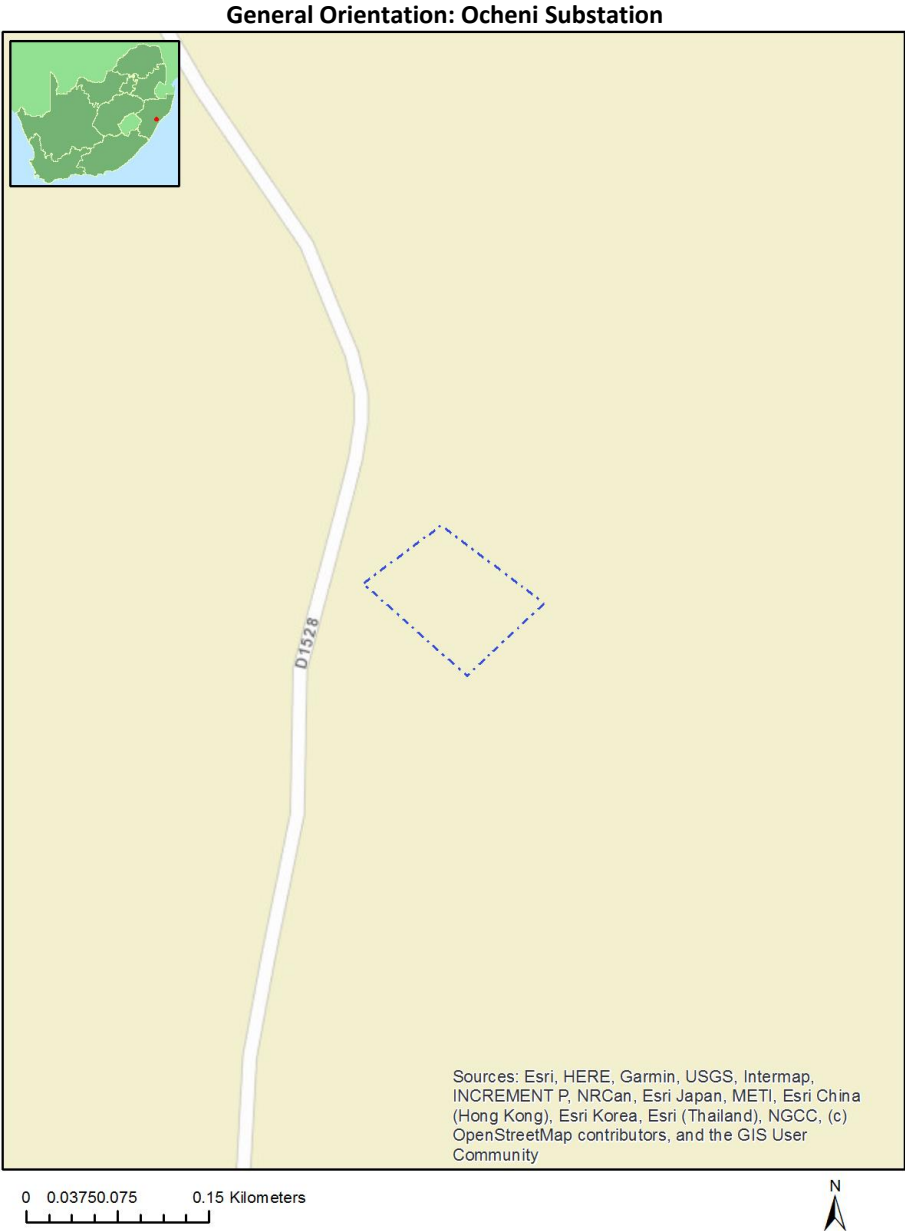


Table of Contents

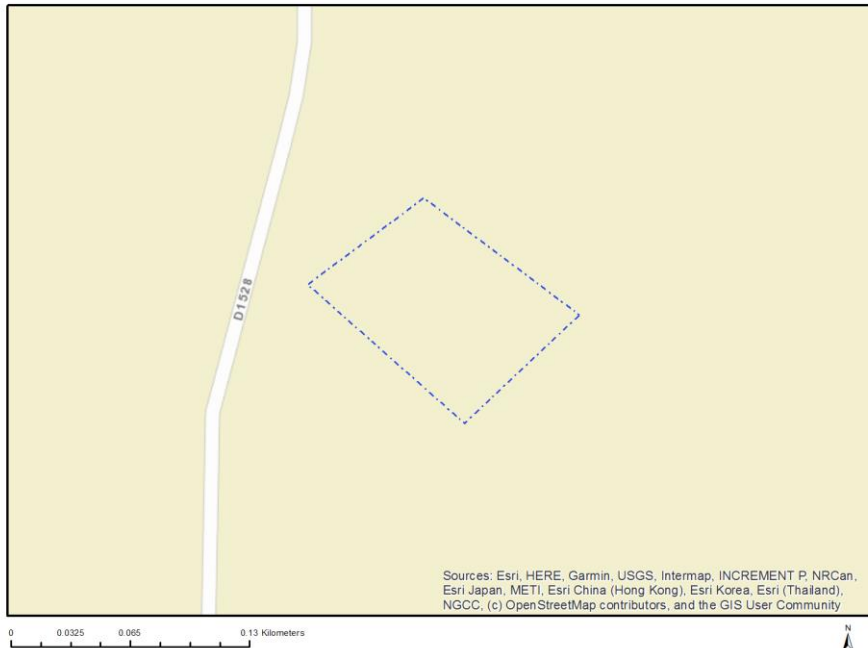
- Proposed Project Location 3
 - Orientation map 1: General location 3
- Map of proposed site and relevant area(s) 4
 - Cadastral details of the proposed site 4
 - Wind and Solar developments with an approved Environmental Authorisation or applications under consideration within 30 km of the proposed area 4
 - Environmental Management Frameworks relevant to the application 4
- Environmental screening results and assessment outcomes 5
 - Relevant development incentives, restrictions, exclusions or prohibitions 5
- Map indicating proposed development footprint within applicable development incentive, restriction, exclusion or prohibition zones 6
 - Proposed Development Area Environmental Sensitivity 6
 - Specialist assessments identified 7
- Results of the environmental sensitivity of the proposed area 9
 - MAP OF RELATIVE AGRICULTURE THEME SENSITIVITY 9
 - MAP OF RELATIVE ANIMAL SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY 10
 - MAP OF RELATIVE AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY 11
 - MAP OF RELATIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE THEME SENSITIVITY 12
 - MAP OF RELATIVE CIVIL AVIATION THEME SENSITIVITY 13
 - MAP OF RELATIVE DEFENCE THEME SENSITIVITY 14
 - MAP OF RELATIVE PALEONTOLOGY THEME SENSITIVITY 15
 - MAP OF RELATIVE PLANT SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY 16
 - MAP OF RELATIVE TERRESTRIAL BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY 17

Proposed Project Location

Orientation map 1: General location



Map of proposed site and relevant area(s)



Cadastral details of the proposed site

Property details:

No	Farm Name	Farm/ Erf No	Portion	Latitude	Longitude	Property Type
1	UMPOMULA MISSION RESERVE	8308	0	29°10'11.42S	31°0'57.09E	Farm
2	UMPOMULA MISSION RESERVE	8308	6	29°10'11.42S	31°0'57.09E	Farm Portion

Development footprint¹ vertices:

No development footprint(s) specified.

Wind and Solar developments with an approved Environmental Authorisation or applications under consideration within 30 km of the proposed area

No nearby wind or solar developments found.

Environmental Management Frameworks relevant to the application

¹ "development footprint", means the area within the site on which the development will take place and includes all ancillary developments for example roads, power lines, boundary walls, paving etc. which require vegetation clearance or which will be disturbed and for which the application has been submitted.

No intersections with EMF areas found.

Environmental screening results and assessment outcomes

The following sections contain a summary of any development incentives, restrictions, exclusions or prohibitions that apply to the proposed development site as well as the most environmental sensitive features on the site based on the site sensitivity screening results for the application classification that was selected. The application classification selected for this report is:

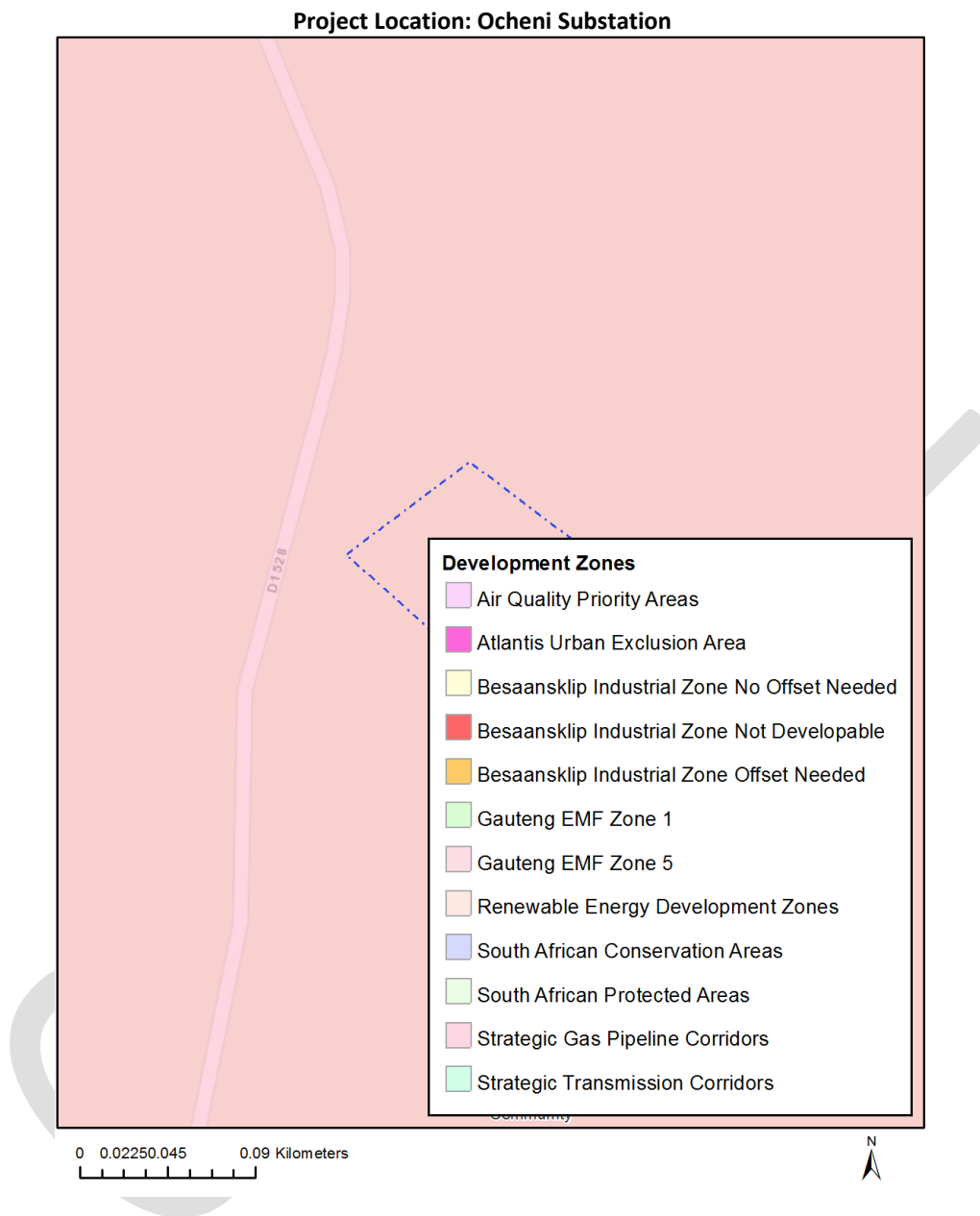
Utilities Infrastructure | Electricity | Distribution and Transmission | Substation.

Relevant development incentives, restrictions, exclusions or prohibitions

The following development incentives, restrictions, exclusions or prohibitions and their implications that apply to this site are indicated below.

Incentive, restriction or prohibition	Implication
Strategic Transmission Corridor- Eastern Corridor	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/DevelopmentZones/Combined_EGI.pdf
Strategic Transmission Corridor- Expanded Eastern Corridor	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/DevelopmentZones/Combined_EGI.pdf
Strategic Gas Pipeline Corridors- Phase 7: Coega to Richards Bay	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/DevelopmentZones/Combined_GAS.pdf

Map indicating proposed development footprint within applicable development incentive, restriction, exclusion or prohibition zones



Proposed Development Area Environmental Sensitivity

The following summary of the development site environmental sensitivities is identified. Only the highest environmental sensitivity is indicated. The footprint environmental sensitivities for the proposed development footprint as identified, are indicative only and must be verified on site by a suitably qualified person before the specialist assessments identified below can be confirmed.

Theme	Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
Agriculture Theme		X		
Animal Species Theme			X	

Aquatic Biodiversity Theme	X			
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Theme				X
Civil Aviation Theme			X	
Defence Theme				X
Paleontology Theme				X
Plant Species Theme				X
Terrestrial Biodiversity Theme	X			

Specialist assessments identified

Based on the selected classification, and the known impacts associated with the proposed development, the following list of specialist assessments have been identified for inclusion in the assessment report. It is the responsibility of the EAP to confirm this list and to motivate in the assessment report, the reason for not including any of the identified specialist study including the provision of photographic evidence of the site situation.

N o	Specialist assessment	Assessment Protocol
1	Agricultural Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Agriculture_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
2	Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Requirement_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
3	Palaeontology Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Requirement_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
4	Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Terrestrial_Biodiversity_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
5	Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Aquatic_Biodiversity_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
6	Geotechnical Assess	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_General_Requirement_Assessment_Protocols.pdf

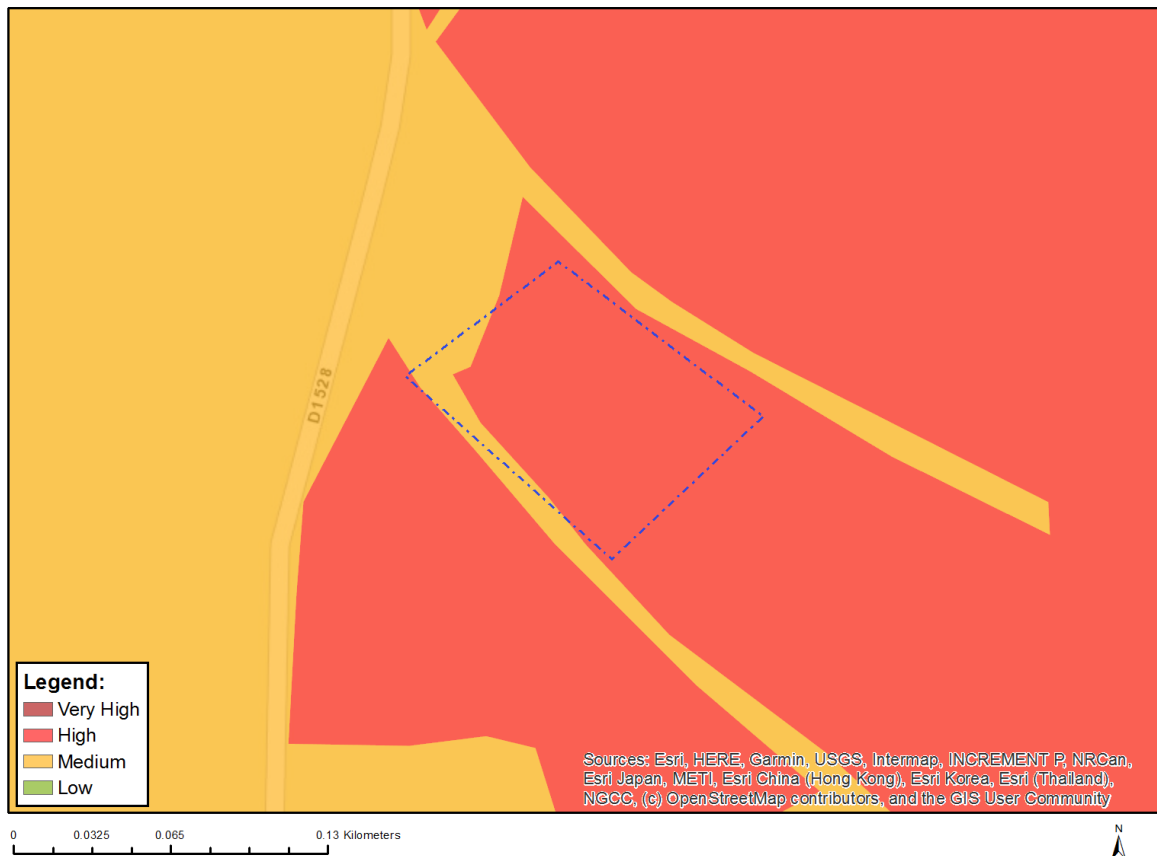
	ment	
7	Plant Species Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Plant_Species_Assessment_Protocols.pdf
8	Animal Species Assessment	https://screening.environment.gov.za/ScreeningDownloads/AssessmentProtocols/Gazetted_Animal_Species_Assessment_Protocols.pdf

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Results of the environmental sensitivity of the proposed area.

The following section represents the results of the screening for environmental sensitivity of the proposed site for relevant environmental themes associated with the project classification. It is the duty of the EAP to ensure that the environmental themes provided by the screening tool are comprehensive and complete for the project. Refer to the disclaimer.

MAP OF RELATIVE AGRICULTURE THEME SENSITIVITY

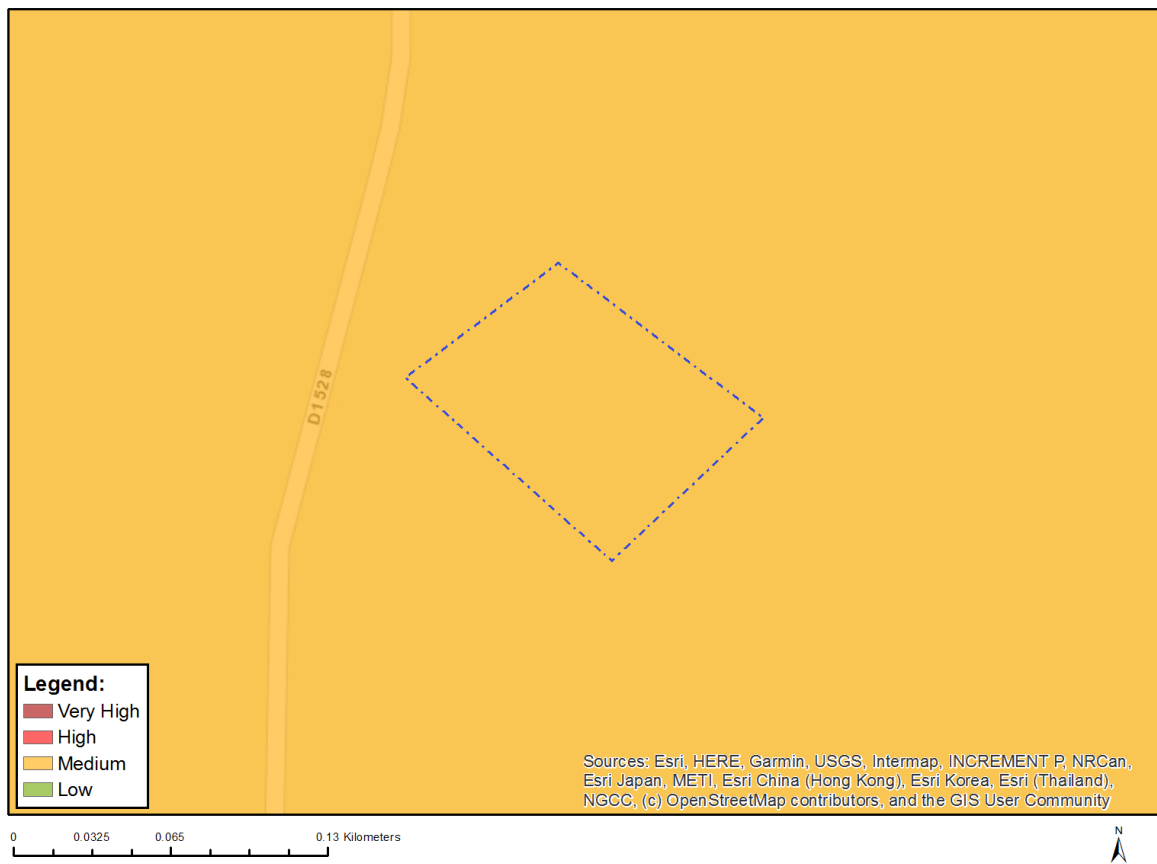


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
	X		

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
High	Subsistence Farming 1; Land capability; 06. Low-Moderate/07. Low-Moderate/08. Moderate
Medium	Land capability; 06. Low-Moderate/07. Low-Moderate/08. Moderate

MAP OF RELATIVE ANIMAL SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY



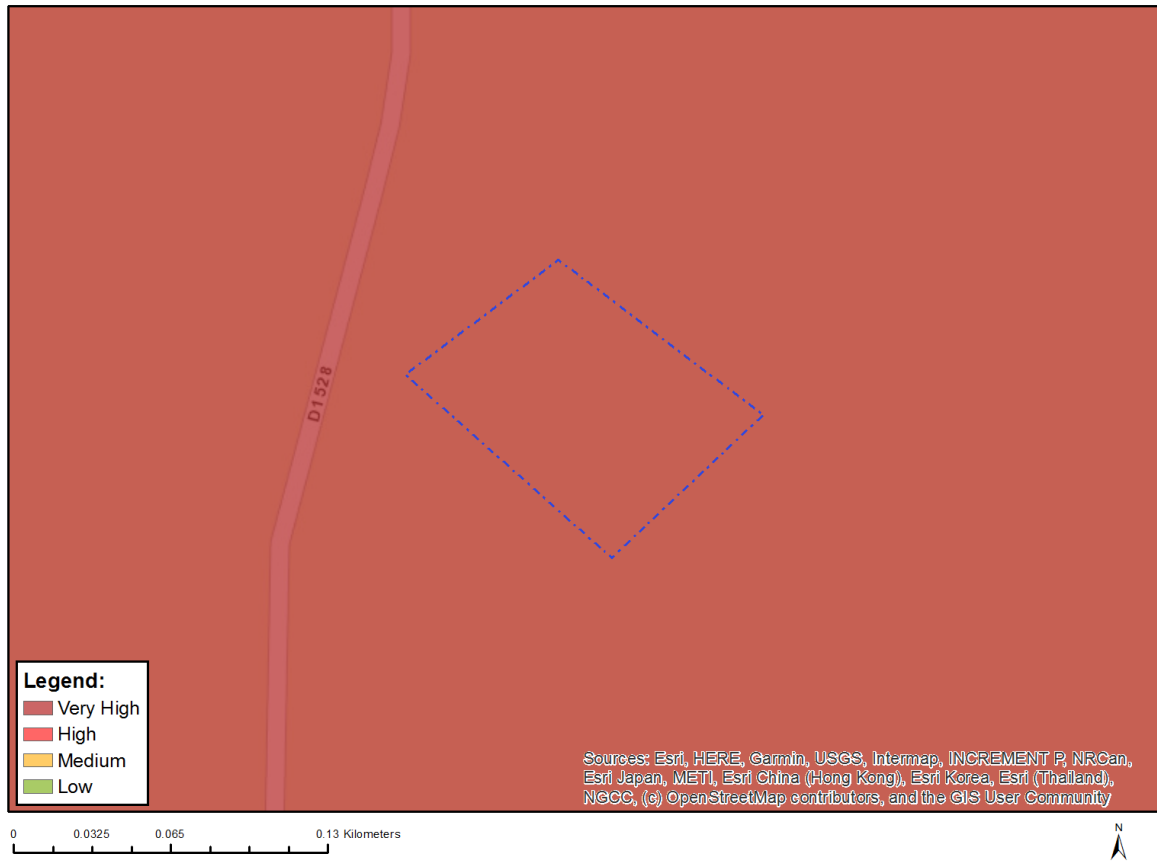
Where only a sensitive plant unique number or sensitive animal unique number is provided in the screening report and an assessment is required, the environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) or specialist is required to email SANBI at eiadatarequests@sanbi.org.za listing all sensitive species with their unique identifiers for which information is required. The name has been withheld as the species may be prone to illegal harvesting and must be protected. SANBI will release the actual species name after the details of the EAP or specialist have been documented.

Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
		X	

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Medium	Mammalia-Chrysospalax villosus
Medium	Mammalia-Ourebia ourebi ourebi
Medium	Sensitive species 8
Medium	Invertebrate-Arytropteris basalis

MAP OF RELATIVE AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY

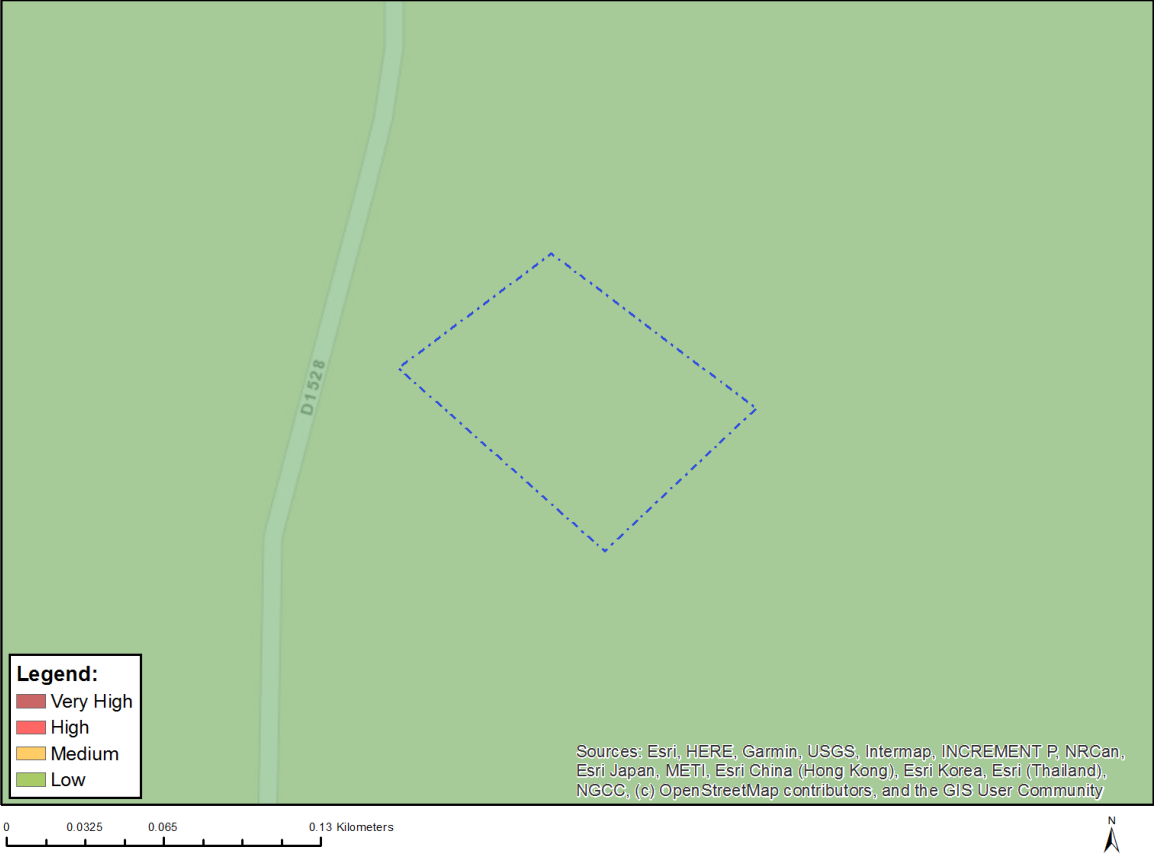


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
X			

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Very High	Strategic water source area

MAP OF RELATIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE THEME SENSITIVITY

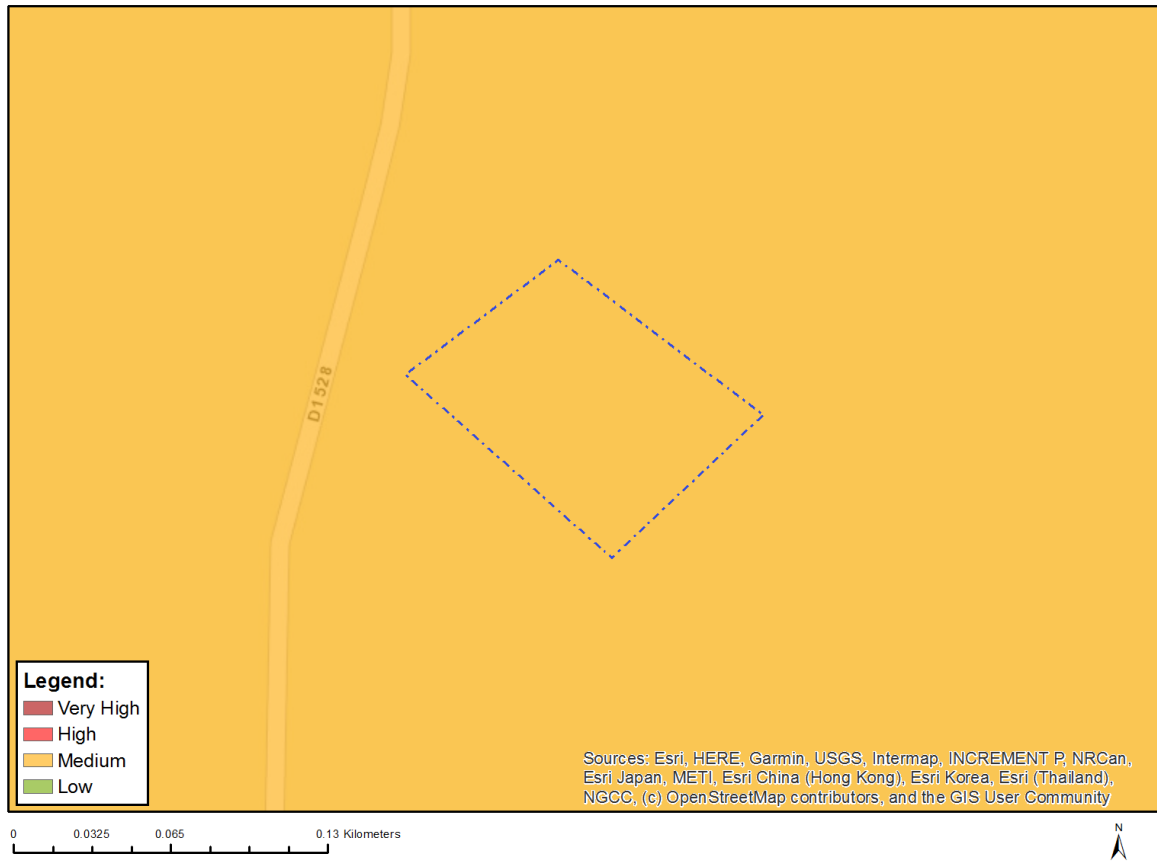


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
			X

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	Low sensitivity

MAP OF RELATIVE CIVIL AVIATION THEME SENSITIVITY

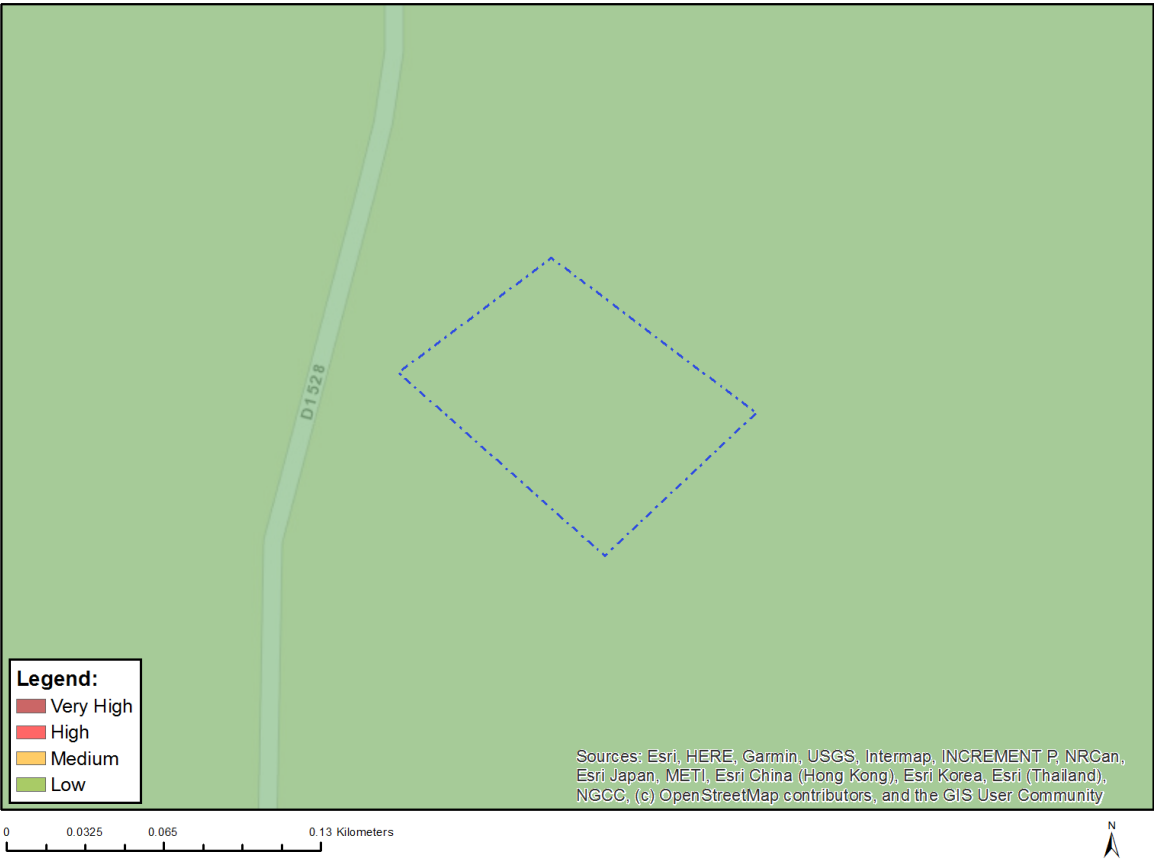


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
		X	

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Medium	Between 8 and 15 km of other civil aviation aerodrome

MAP OF RELATIVE DEFENCE THEME SENSITIVITY

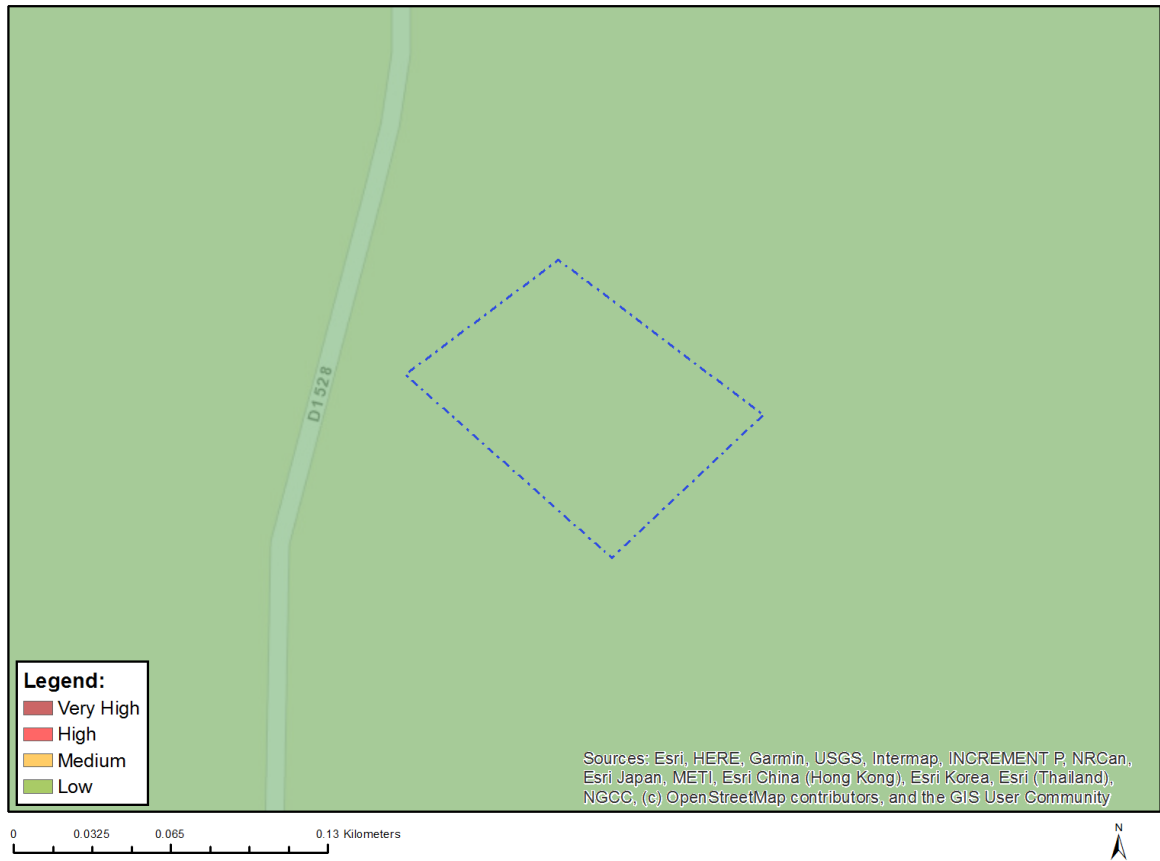


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
			X

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	Low Sensitivity

MAP OF RELATIVE PALEONTOLOGY THEME SENSITIVITY

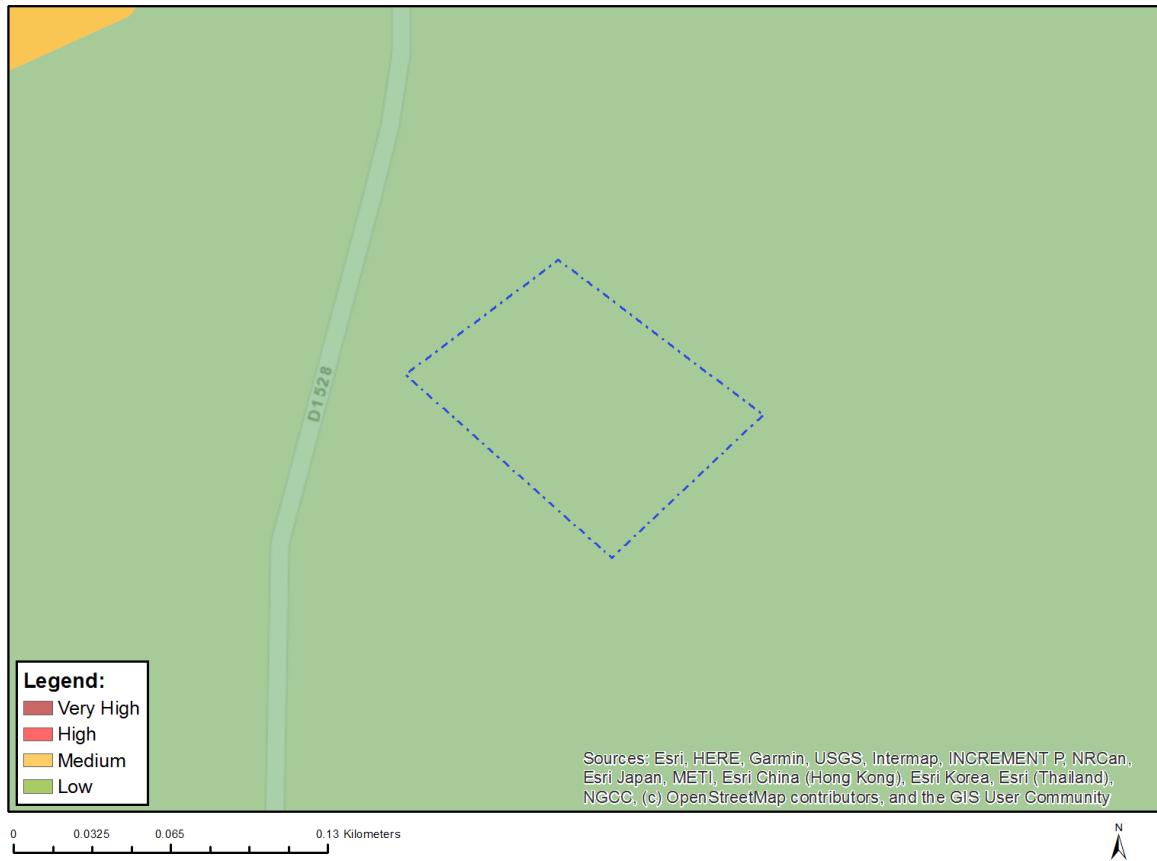


Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
			X

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	Features with a Low paleontological sensitivity

MAP OF RELATIVE PLANT SPECIES THEME SENSITIVITY



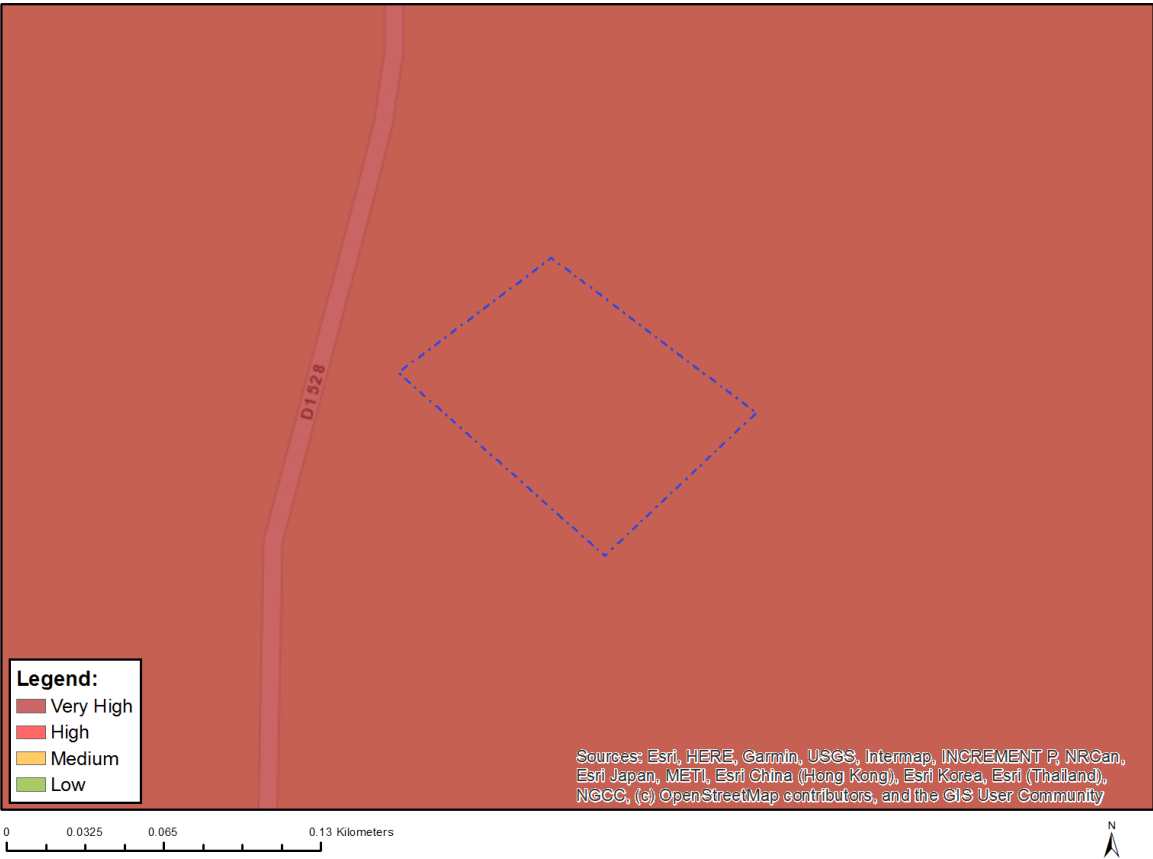
Where only a sensitive plant unique number or sensitive animal unique number is provided in the screening report and an assessment is required, the environmental assessment practitioner (EAP) or specialist is required to email SANBI at eiadatarequests@sanbi.org.za listing all sensitive species with their unique identifiers for which information is required. The name has been withheld as the species may be prone to illegal harvesting and must be protected. SANBI will release the actual species name after the details of the EAP or specialist have been documented.

Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
			X

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Low	Low Sensitivity

MAP OF RELATIVE TERRESTRIAL BIODIVERSITY THEME SENSITIVITY



Very High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
X			

Sensitivity Features:

Sensitivity	Feature(s)
Very High	Endangered ecosystem