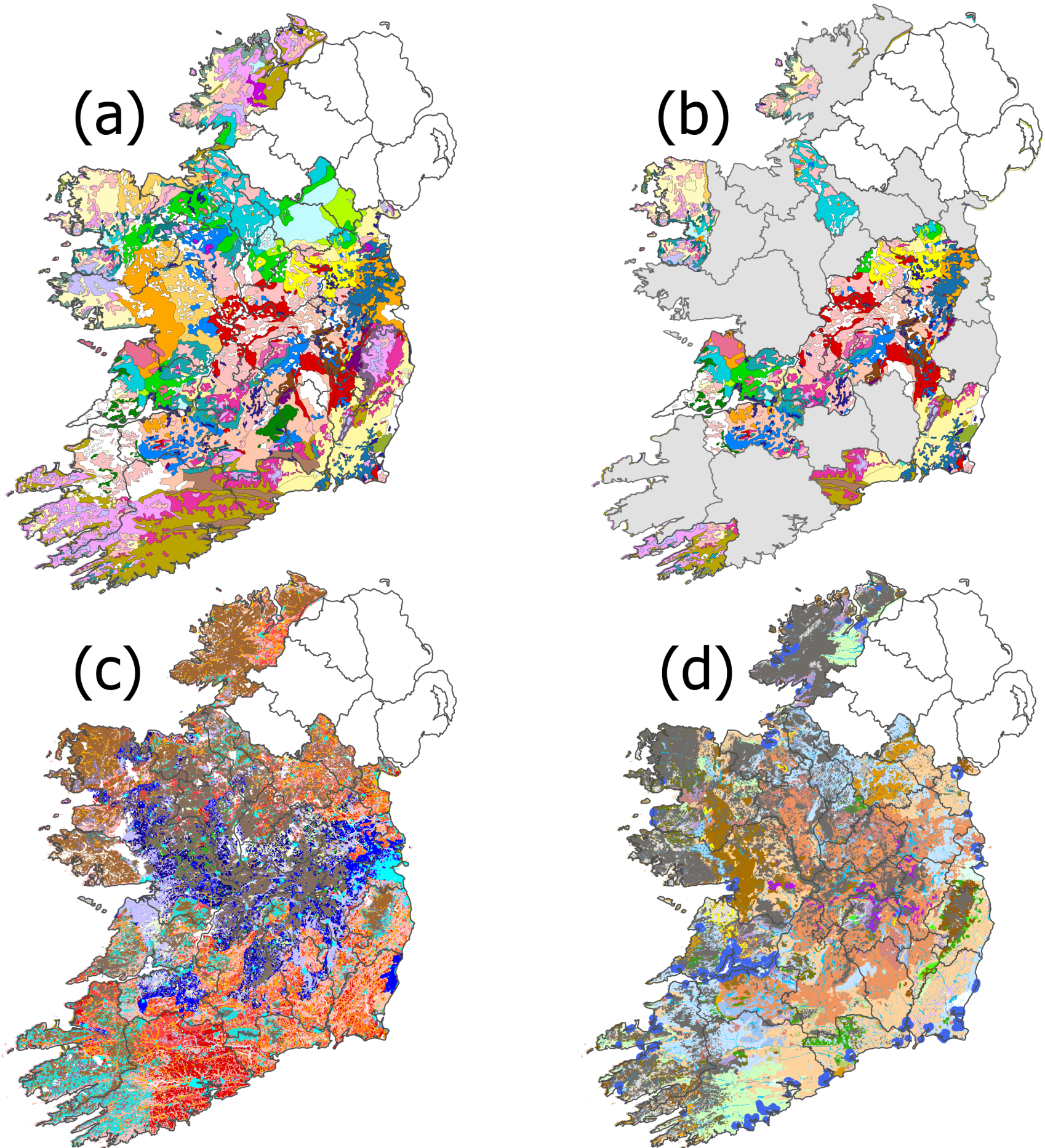


The development of soil mapping in Ireland



Soils are the interface between the geology and the living world. At its simplest soil is a material composed of minerals and organic components. But soils are a lot more than the sums of their components. Soils are habitats and processors, buffers and providers. Soil provide a living environment to all kinds of life from microbes to small mammals. They recycle and store nutrients such as carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus. They hold water in times of drought and excessive rain. And they are the substrate of our agriculture. Soils are also diverse, and especially fertility can vary by location. As such, mapping soils is crucial to understand and inform production systems across the world. In Ireland, multiple mapping campaigns have been undertaken in the past. In this month's map we look at the most well known soil maps produced for Ireland so far.

The first national map was the General Soil Map (a) created as part of the An Foras Talúntais National Soil Survey in 1969. The survey also aimed to create more detailed soil maps at county level but it was discontinued in 1989 with approx. 44% of the country covered (b). The first indicative national soil map was created by the Teagasc Spatial Analysis Unit as part of the Irish Forest Soils project, and published in 2006 (c). The most recent map was the national soil association map created as part of the Irish Soils Information System, and published in 2014 (d).

Projection: Irish Transverse Mercator

Datasets used:

- (a) General Soil Map (Second Edition, 1980) / Teagasc
- (b) National Soil Survey Status / Teagasc
- (c) Irish Forest Soils Indicative Map / Teagasc
- (d) National Soil Association Map / Teagasc

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