REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

ZIMBABWE NATIONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK:

OCTOBER 2025 TO MARCH 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The upcoming 2025-26 rainfall season for Zimbabwe is projected to be heavily influenced by a strong trend towards a negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), while the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is expected to remain in a neutral state. This specific combination of global climate drivers creates a forecast of significant spatial and temporal variability. The season is anticipated to have a delayed and erratic start, with October and November likely to be drier than normal, particularly in across the country. This initial dry phase is expected to give way to improved rainfall prospects from December onwards.

A pronounced north-south split in rainfall distribution is forecast for the initial October-December period. Northern provinces, including the Mashonaland provinces, are likely to experience normal to below-normal rainfall accumulation during this time. In contrast, southern and western regions, including Matabeleland, Masvingo, and the bulk of Midlands, are anticipated to receive normal to above-normal rainfall. As the core season progresses from November through February, the likelihood of normal to above-normal rainfall increases for the majority of the country, although some northern areas may see a return to drier conditions during the last three months of the season January-March 2025.

Given the forecasted erratic nature of the season, stakeholders must implement proactive risk management strategies. The significant intra-seasonal variability also presents substantial risks, including prolonged dry spells after planting and extreme weather events such as violent storms and flash floods. Consequently, continuous monitoring of meteorological updates, implementation of water harvesting programs, and pre-positioning of resources for both drought response in the north and flood preparedness in the south are essential measures to mitigate risks and capitalize on the forecast rainfall

1.0 SUMMARY TERMINOLOGY

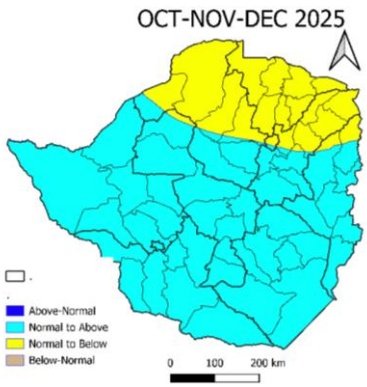
Table 1: Seasonal Forecast Terminology.

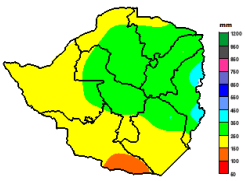
Tercile Category	Colour Codes	Percentage of Normal
Above Normal	**Above normal**	Above 125% of long-term average rainfall accumulation
Normal category	**Normal to above**	100-125% of long-term average rainfall accumulation
	Normal to below	75% - 100% of long-term average rainfall accumulation

Below Normal	**Below Normal**	Below 75% of long-term average rainfall accumulation

2.0 THE RAINFALL SEASON FORECAST

2.1 OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2025





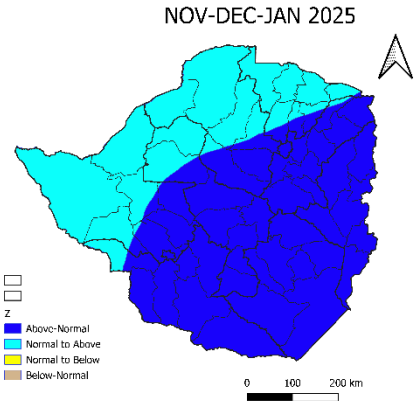
The rainfall forecast divides the country into two main zones:

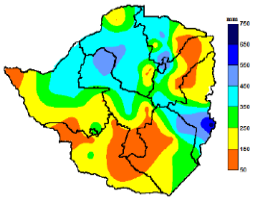
- The **northern and western parts** are expected to receive **normal to below-normal** rainfall.
- The **southern and eastern parts** are expected to receive **normal to above-normal** rainfall.

MONTHLY BREAKDOWN FORECAST: OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

A delayed onset of season is projected as the monthly forecasts indicates that below normal rainfall is expected during the month of October and November 2025. Increased chance of normal to above in the northern parts of the country is projected in December while the rest of the country is expected to have an increased chance of above normal rainfall.

2.2 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER-JANUARY 2025/26



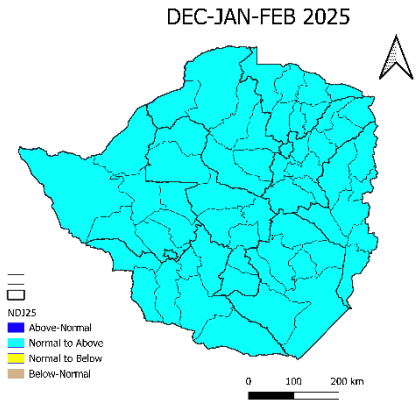


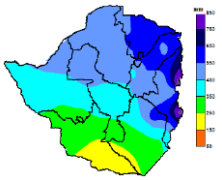
The forecast for November 2025 to January 2026 predicts that the entire country has a high probability of receiving **normal to above-normal rainfall**.

This outlook is divided into two main categories:

1. **Above-normal to normal rainfall** is expected for most of the country.
2. **Normal to above-normal rainfall** is expected for the northern and western regions.

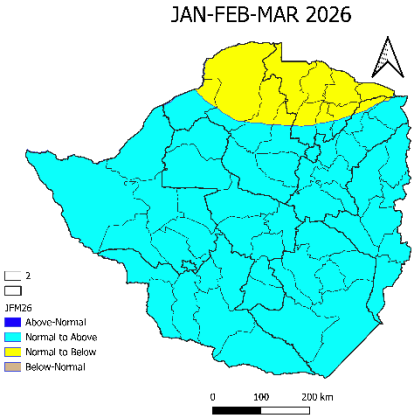
2.3 DECEMBER-JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025/26

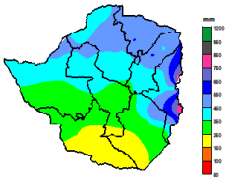




There is an increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall across the country during the December to February period

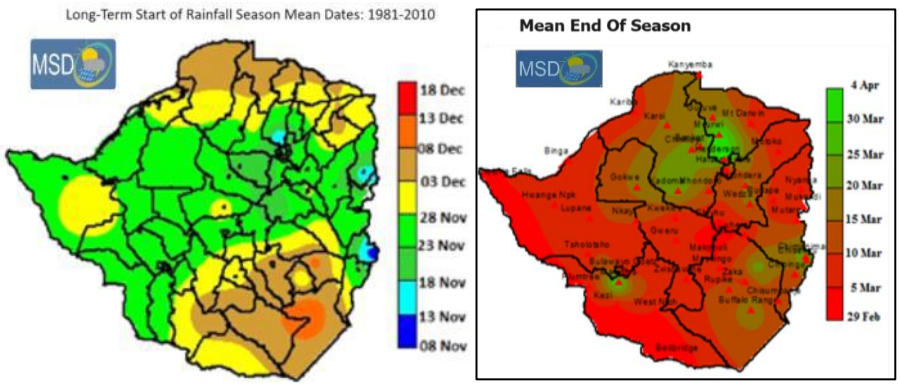
2.4 JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH 2026





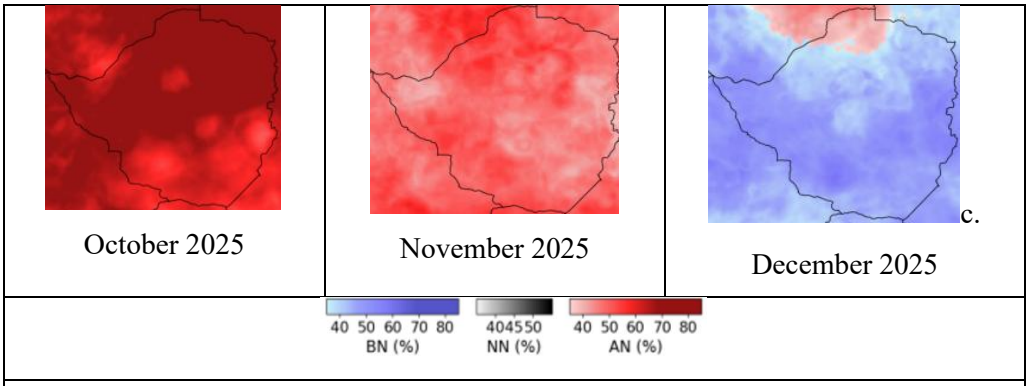
For the period January to March, rainfall forecast indicates an increased chance of **normal to above-normal** rainfall in **the bulk of the country**. Except for northern parts, covering the bulk of Mashonaland Central and northern parts of Mashonaland West and East, has an increased chance of **normal to below-normal** rainfall.

3.0 MEAN START AND END OF SEASON



The mean start of rainfall season in Zimbabwe is in the month of November into early December. The bulk of the country normally records the start of season between 10 November and 30 November. The extreme northern and southern parts of the country an average start of season between 01 and 15 December. The climatological end of season ranges between 01 March and 20 March except for few places where the season can stretch as far as 31 March.

3.0 THE TEMPERATURE FORECAST



Probabilistic for a) October b) November c) December

The temperatures are expected to be warmer than normal during the months of October and November, with October expected to be the warmest, and December is expected to experience cooler than average maximum temperatures.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The forecast is for cumulative rainfall for three-month periods: OND, NDJ, DJF, and JFM. The monthly forecasts for October, November and December indicate normal to below normal rainfall for both October and November while December shows a likelihood of above average rainfall of the season. Based on the forecast of an erratic rainfall season with a dry start and improved rains later, the following consolidated recommendations are proposed:

5.1 **General Preparedness:** Implement robust water harvesting, conservation programs, and irrigation strategies to manage prolonged dry spells.

5.2 **Extreme Event Contingency:** Develop plans for violent storms, flash floods, and tropical cyclones, including pre-positioning response resources, clearing drainage systems, and issuing early warnings.

5.3 ***Water Authorities:*** Conduct pre-season dredging and manage dam levels for flood control.

5.4 ***Health Services:*** Launch disease prevention campaigns and stockpile essential medicines.

5.5 ***General Public:*** Clear drains, weatherproof structures, use mosquito nets, and stay informed via official updates

The Meteorological Services Department will continue to monitor seasonal climate indicators which influence Zimbabwe's rainfall as they evolve. Thus, the seasonal rainfall predictions will be updated on a monthly basis. starting the end of October. In addition, there will be daily weather forecasts and 10-day weather bulletins that will take into account any changes. A seasonal forecast is a long-term planning tool and therefore it doesn't replace the need for short term forecasts which are key for capturing the occurrence of short-term weather events such as dry spells, actual onset of season which can not be captured in a seasonal forecast.