



# METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025

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NOVEMBER 2025 TO MARCH 2026

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## The Director's Remarks

This month marked a defining moment for the Meteorological Services Department as we charted the course for our 2026–2030 roadmap during the Strategic Planning Workshop in Bulawayo. The workshop reaffirmed our mission to provide accurate, timely, and actionable weather and climate services in support of national development and resilience.

Our collaboration with the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute under the SIM-BISO Project continued to strengthen, with the Data Processing Unit advancing data rescue and digitization efforts. These initiatives are building a solid foundation for modernized climate information systems.

The successful installation of an Automatic Weather Observing System at Grand Reef Airport demonstrated our commitment to aviation safety and service excellence. MSD personnel also showcased dedication through accurate weather support during major national events.

October also highlighted health and wellness. We joined the nation in observing Breast Cancer Awareness Month, promoting both environmental and personal well-being. The Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife's participation in the Inter-Ministerial Sports Festival further emphasized the value of teamwork, unity, and mental wellness in public service.

As we move forward, MSD remains focused on innovation and collaboration ensuring that our services continue to safeguard lives, strengthen national resilience, and contribute meaningfully to Zimbabwe's Vision 2030.

**Mrs. Rebecca Manzou, Director, Meteorological Services Department**

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### October 2025

# MSD HOLDS ITS STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP IN BULAWAYO

**20 to 31 October 2025**

The Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe held its Strategic Planning Workshop in Bulawayo. It marked a defining moment in shaping the national meteorological roadmap for the 2026 to 2030 period. The workshop represented a shift from ambition to action as the department built on the momentum gained under the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1).



**MSD Officers Posing For a Group Photo at The Strategic Planning Workshop in Bulawayo**

The event was graced by the Chief Director for Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Mr. Washington Zhakata, who recognized and commended the department's achievements. Among these were the installation of five cutting-edge Doppler weather radars and the nationwide expansion of automatic weather stations. These developments had significantly improved the country's capacity to monitor and forecast climate conditions with greater precision and reliability. The department's mission had been both technical and strategic. It was committed to positioning the Meteorological Services Department as a cornerstone in Zimbabwe's progress toward becoming an Upper Middle Income Society by 2030. Its work supported national development, safeguarded communities, and strengthened resilience to climate-related risks.

As Director of the Meteorological Services Department and Zimbabwe's Permanent Representative to the World Meteorological Organization, Mrs. Rebecca Manzou emphasized the importance of maintaining a robust and easily understandable early warning system. Reflecting on the tragic impact of Cyclone Idai, she reminded participants that timely and accessible warnings were essential to saving lives and strengthening national resilience. The department had achieved several notable milestones. Over 10 million US dollars had been allocated for the procurement of modern meteorological equipment. Officers had graduated from the University of Zimbabwe's Bachelor of Science in Meteorology and Climate Science program. Progress had also been made toward establishing the University of Zimbabwe as a World Meteorological Organization recognized regional training centre.

# MSD HOLDS ITS STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP IN BULAWAYO [continued]

While these achievements were celebrated, challenges remained. Staffing deficits and the need for modernization persisted. To address these issues, efforts were made to ensure that every station would be staffed by at least two officers to allow proper shift coverage and promote work-life balance. The department also began exploring public private partnerships and adopting technological innovations to improve service delivery and operational efficiency. With a clear strategic vision, dedicated leadership, and a growing network of skilled professionals, the Meteorological Services Department demonstrated its readiness to play a transformative role in Zimbabwe's climate resilience and sustainable development. The Strategic Planning Workshop was more than a planning exercise. It served as a reaffirmation of the department's mandate to serve the nation with excellence, foresight, and innovation.



## BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH OCT-2025

September was the purple month because of the Jacaranda blooms. October was the pink month as the colour is associated with the breast cancer awareness in that part of the year. According to the Cancer Association Zimbabwe cancer is a disease of the cells which are the building blocks of body organs and tissues. Normally cells divide, grow and multiply in an orderly and controlled way as the body needs them to keep the body healthy. When cells become old or damaged, they die and are replaced with new cells. However, sometimes this orderly process goes wrong. When this happens, cells do not die when they should, and new cells form when the body does not need them. When these cells continue multiplying, they result in a mass of tissue or growth, also called a tumour. Breast cancer is cancerous tumour which occurs in the breast(s). It is cancer originating from breast tissue, most commonly from the inner lining of milk ducts or the lobules that supply the ducts with milk.

October is the Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a time to emphasize early detection, support ongoing research, and reflect on all factors influencing health, including the environment. While genetics and lifestyle are well known contributors to breast cancer risk, emerging studies suggest that climate and weather patterns may also play subtle but important roles. As we observe the Breast Cancer Awareness Month, awareness should expand beyond individual health to include the broader environment we all share. Protecting air and water quality, adapting to climate change, and supporting accessible healthcare together form a holistic defence against diseases like breast cancer.

**“As we forecast and monitor the weather, we also encourage you to forecast and monitor your health, both are vital for a brighter tomorrow.”**

# DATA RESCUE AND DIGITIZATION TRAINING WORKSHOP AT SMHI

**20 to 24 October 2025**

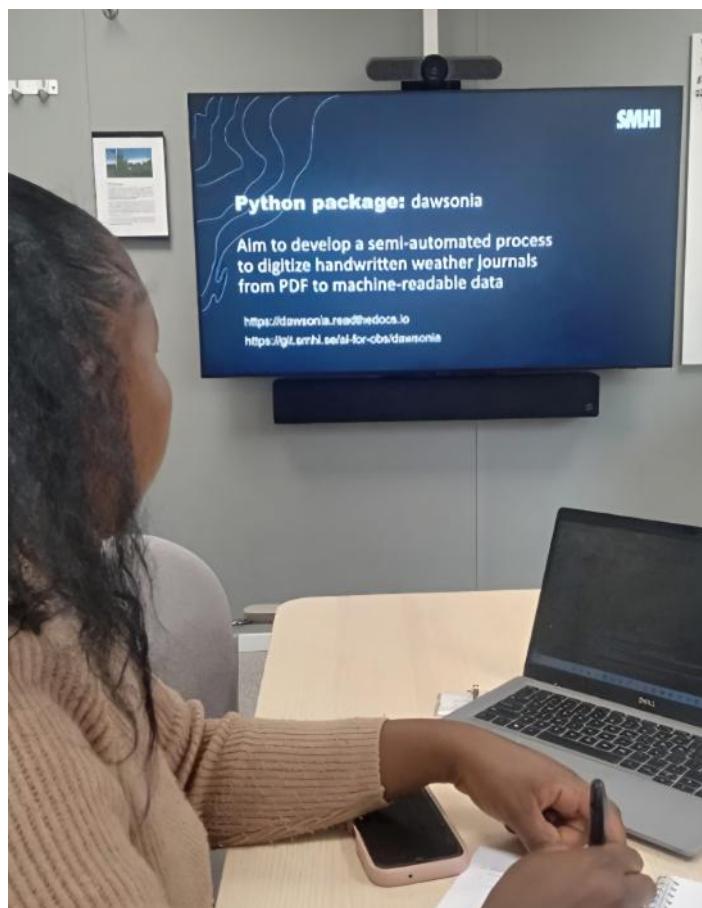
The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI), in collaboration with OXFAM in Zimbabwe, has been working closely with the Meteorological Services Department (MSD) to improve weather forecasting capabilities under the SIMBISO Project. The project is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Through this partnership, the Data Processing Unit at MSD has been actively involved in the Data Rescue and Digitization of all historical meteorological data. This is a vital step toward strengthening the department's capacity to provide accurate and timely information.

The project aims to enhance MSD's ability to generate and share reliable weather and climate information for farmers across Zimbabwe. It also seeks to improve access to sustainable IT infrastructure for forecasting. Data management systems and forecasting models are being operationalized. In addition, improved early warning systems and forecasting products are being co-developed with end users. During the training visit to SMHI, the MSD team was guided by Josefina Algotsson, a Scientific Programmer and System Developer at SMHI. She is the main developer of Dawsonia, a Python-based program that digitizes handwritten meteorological records. Her role was to train the team and ensure they gained practical knowledge in using Dawsonia for their own digitization program.

Before the trip, Josefina shared an agenda encouraging participants to install Python and Visual Studio Code in advance. This allowed the training to move quickly into hands-on work with Dawsonia. The first two days were spent on installation and practical use. The group skipped some of the general Python basics and focused on learning through real application. Josefina emphasized understanding rather than following the agenda strictly. She encouraged the team to focus on activities that would



**Josefina Algotsson the facilitator taking the participants through workshop**

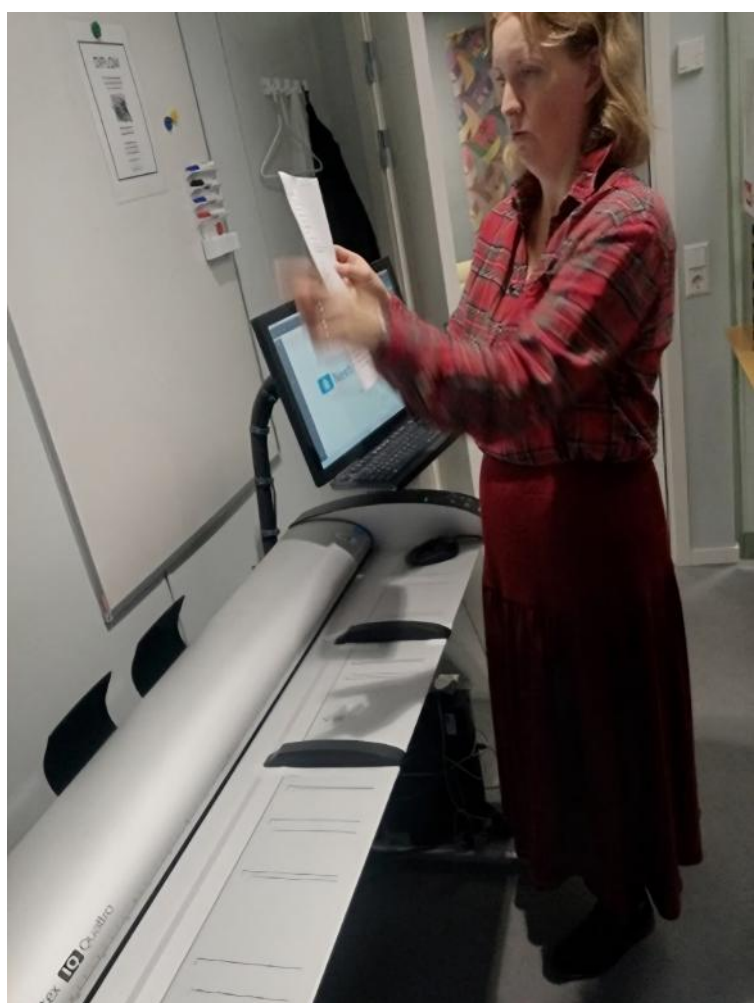


**Ms. Mavhiyiwa Following Through the Demonstrations**

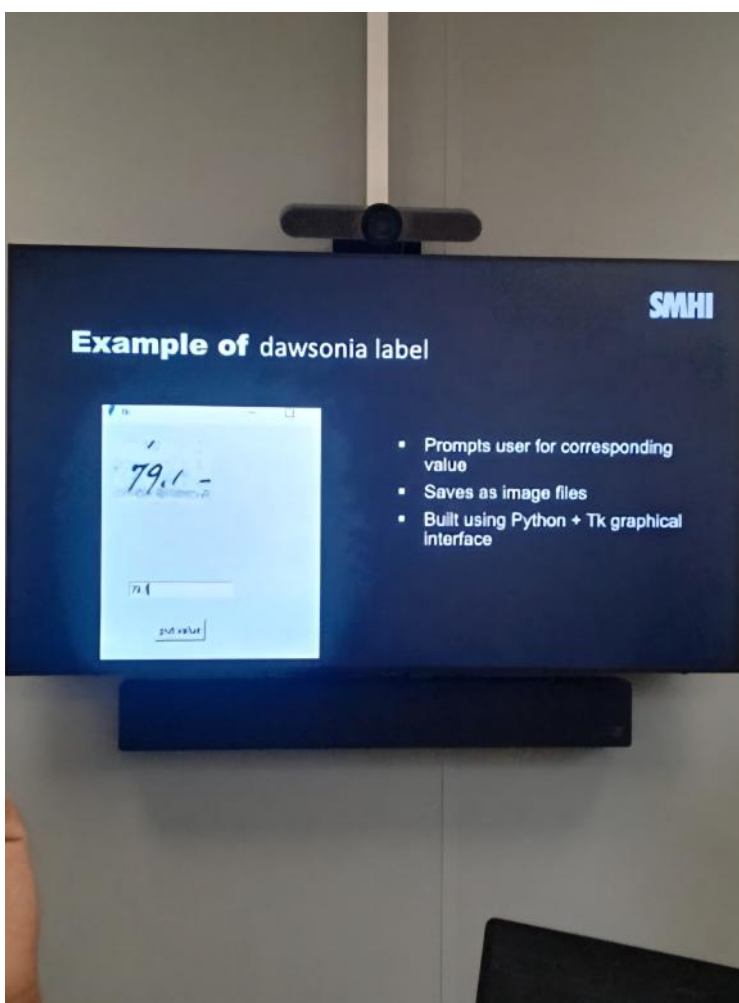
# DATA RESCUE AND DIGITIZATION TRAINING WORKSHOP AT SMHI [continued]

make them independent users of Dawsonia.

One important recommendation from the training was that every MSD station should have at least one thousand scanned PDF copies of meteorological records before starting digitization. Scanning was therefore made a top priority. The team visited the scanner room where Josefina demonstrated the process. She highlighted the level of precision required for quality results. The Senior Archivist at SMHI also shared useful insights. He explained that SMHI has digitized data from 1945 to 1960 and continues the process with great care. The MSD delegation, including Richard, observed the demonstration closely and gained a deeper understanding of the workflow involved.



A demonstration of the hardcopy records digitisation process in the scanner room



A demonstration of data labelling using the Dawsonia Software



**OXFAM**

**SMHI**

By: Cathrine Mavhiyiwa (Database Administrator) and Barnabas T. Mugadza (Quality Control Officer)

# THE SIMBISO PROJECT TO EMPOWER 100,000 FARMERS AND 20 SMES



**SMHI, OXFAM, ZINWA and MSD Group Photo at MSD HQ in Belvedere Harare**

**By Tapiwa Michelle Masawi - Meteorologist**

In the face of a changing climate that is increasingly disrupting rural livelihoods across Zimbabwe, a new beacon of resilience is taking root. The SIMBISO project, a comprehensive 36-month initiative running from October 2025 to September 2028, is poised to empower 100,000 farmers and 20 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to build a more secure and prosperous future. Coordinated by Oxfam and financed by the Swedish International Development Agency, SIMBISO is designed to forge a climate-resilient future through market-driven adaptation solutions, value addition, and crucially, better access to climate information.

At the heart of this endeavor is a unique collaboration designed to fortify the very foundation of agricultural decision-making: reliable weather, climate, and hydrological information. This is the focus of Workstream 3, a core component of the project led by the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI). Recognizing that knowledge is the first line of defense against climate variability, SMHI is spearheading an effort to

strengthen the capacities of two key Zimbabwean institutions: the Meteorological Services Department (MSD) and the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA).

The arrival of the SMHI team in Zimbabwe in October 2025 marked a significant step forward, building upon the foundation of previous initiatives. Under the guidance of Richard Alpfjord Wylde, International Programme Manager at SMHI, the project is fostering a new era of cooperation between MSD and ZINWA. The two agencies have begun mapping out their future collaboration, discussing vital areas such as seamless data sharing, the creation of consistent document formats, the development of unified dissemination channels, and the production of combined forecasting products that offer a holistic view of both weather and water resources.

This partnership is being brought to life through a practical, on-the-job working method that includes detailed mapping and assessment, hands-on training, and an agile, incremental development process.

# THE SIMBISO PROJECT TO EMPOWER 100,000 FARMERS AND 20 SMES [continued]



## **SMHI, OXFAM, ZINWA and MSD Personnel Conducting The Workshop**

For instance, the MSD team has already benefited from specialized training in the analysis of observational data conducted by SMHI meteorologist Magnus Asp. The support from SMHI is comprehensive, aiming to leave a lasting legacy through seven key pillars: establishing a sustainable IT infrastructure, digitizing climatology data, providing gridded historical reanalysis data, improving short to long-range forecasts, developing an operational national hydrological model, creating robust operational routines and forecasting products, and ensuring effective end-user engagement.

The tangible outputs of this collaboration are structured to create a seamless flow from infrastructure to actionable intelligence. Output 3.1 focuses on building the necessary IT backbone, operationalizing forecasting through World Meteorological Organization-supported systems and a cloud-based infrastructure for hydrological forecasting. This is complemented by Output 3.2, which concentrates on data modelling, and Output 3.3, which ensures these models are translated into reliable, operational forecasts that will be produced for the entire country. Underpinning all these technical efforts is Output 4, a cross-cutting capacity development initiative that includes funding for two PhD or MPhil students in collaboration with the University of Zimbabwe, ensuring that local expertise is cultivated for the long term.

Ultimately, the SIMBISO project represents a holistic and integrated approach to climate adaptation. By empowering national institutions to provide farmers with the precise, timely, and user-friendly information they need, the project goes beyond mere forecasting. It enables rural communities, particularly women and other vulnerable groups, to make informed decisions when to plant, which crops to select, and how to manage precious water resources. This fusion of strengthened institutional capacity, market-driven solutions, and enhanced climate intelligence is the cornerstone of SIMBISO's mission: to not only boost incomes but to fundamentally strengthen the resilience of Zimbabwe's agricultural heartland against the uncertainties of a changing climate.

● *Solarized*



**Meteorological Services Department of Zimbabwe 2025**

# FROM AIRSTRIP TO AIRPORT: GRAND REEF'S JOURNEY TOWARDS CIVIL AVIATION



**Grand Reef Airport In Mutare, Zimbabwe**

Grand Reef Airport, located near Mutare in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe, began as an airstrip during the colonial era. It was established in the 1950s primarily for military purposes. By 2015, tourism stakeholders in Manicaland were calling for the airstrip's conversion to civilian use, hoping to open the region to tourism and economic development. In April 2022, the government followed up on these calls by announcing plans to upgrade the Grand Reef Airstrip into a fully fledged airport. The initiative formed part of the national infrastructure development agenda, which supports Zimbabwe's Vision 2030 strategy aimed at stimulating regional growth and tourism. The Meteorological Services Department (MSD), which is responsible for aviation weather services in Zimbabwe, played an important role in the developments at Grand Reef Airport. The department provides essential meteorological support for aviation through weather data, takeoff and landing forecasts, METAR and TAF reports, and other critical information that ensures safe flight operations in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards.

In September 2025, a team of technicians and engineers from MSD headquarters in Belvedere installed an Automatic Weather Observing System (AWOS) at Grand Reef Airport and assisted in setting up the station. Since then, meteorological technicians have been deployed to the airport on a rotational basis. Their main responsibility is to operate the station and provide real-time weather data to aircraft crews.

Recently, MSD staff at Grand Reef demonstrated their expertise by delivering timely, reliable, and accurate forecasts during the ZANU PF conference held in Mutare, Manicaland. Their services proved invaluable to VVIPs and to airlines operating the Mutare–Harare route, confirming the department's key role in supporting aviation safety and efficiency in Zimbabwe's expanding air transport network.



**MSD Personnel Installing an AWS at the Grand Reef Airport In Mutare**

# THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE PARTICIPATES IN THE INTER-MINISTERIAL SPORTS FESTIVAL

The Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife proudly participated in the Inter-Ministerial Sports Festival organized by the Public Service Commission in conjunction with the Ministry of Sport. This annual event brought together government ministries from across Zimbabwe to promote wellness, unity, and teamwork through sport. For the first time in the history of the festival, the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife took part alongside its parastatals, ZIMParks, the Environmental Management Agency, and the Forestry Commission. The teams were composed of members from these organizations, reflecting the ministry's spirit of inclusivity.



**Men in Action in The Soccer Pitch**

The ministry participated in several sporting disciplines, including soccer, netball, volleyball, and tug of war. These activities highlighted the importance of teamwork, coordination, and cooperation, not only in the workplace but also in wellness initiatives. The ministry emphasized that physical activity contributes to mental well-being, and that strong, united teams foster both health and productivity. One of the festival's proudest moments came when the ministry's netball team advanced to the semifinals, a performance that truly lifted everyone's spirits. The soccer and volleyball teams also performed impressively, showcasing the dedication and enthusiasm of the participants. The ministry encouraged all staff and partners who support environmental, wildlife, and climate causes to take part in such activities, underscoring that a healthy environment begin with healthy, connected people.



**Ladies in Action in The Netball Court**

# THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE PARTICIPATES IN THE INTER-MINISTERIAL SPORTS FESTIVAL

The festival took place at the United College of Education in Bulawayo, where government ministers and their partners gathered for the sports gala. The event stood as a strong example of the “whole of government” approach to wellness. It provided an opportunity for ministries to interact in an informal, cooperative setting that strengthened bonds across departments. Wellness remained a central theme throughout the festival. The Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife recognized that sport not only improves physical fitness but also builds team spirit, unity, and social cohesion. After spending several days competing and celebrating together, participants returned to their workstations with renewed energy, stronger relationships, and a deeper sense of collaboration.

The festival concluded on a high note as the ministry’s soccer team clinched a gold medal, a proud achievement for both the team and the entire ministry. The event was celebrated as a success, reinforcing the value of wellness, teamwork, and togetherness within the public service.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A decrease in the temperature anomalies in the Nino 3.4 region in the Pacific Ocean has initiated a shift in the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) from a neutral phase to a weak La Niña phase, which is projected to persist until at least February 2026. Furthermore, the status of other key climate drivers is favourable for rainfall, with a negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) expected to last until at least January 2026 and a positive Subtropical Indian Ocean Dipole (SIOD) likely to remain until at least February 2026. The combined influence of these phenomena is to enhance the likelihood for normal to above-average rainfall in Zimbabwe. Consequently, the updated seasonal forecast indicates an increased chance of normal to above-normal rainfall from November 2025 to March 2026, with the important nuance that November alone is likely to see normal conditions leaning towards below-normal.

The season is anticipated to commence between mid-November 2025 and mid-December 2025. Temperature-wise, a warmer-than-normal November is expected to be followed by cooler-than-normal conditions from December 2025 through February 2026. Despite the promising rainfall outlook, the risk of dry spells, violent storms, and flash floods remains, necessitating proactive measures such as water harvesting, irrigation planning, drainage maintenance public health preparedness. The public advised to rely on continuous updates from the Meteorological Services Department for detailed short-term guidance as the department will continuously monitor the climate and weather systems throughout the season.

### 1.0 SUMMARY TERMINOLOGY

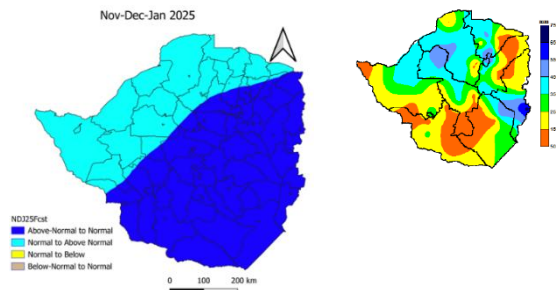
**Table 1: Seasonal Forecast Terminology.**

| 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

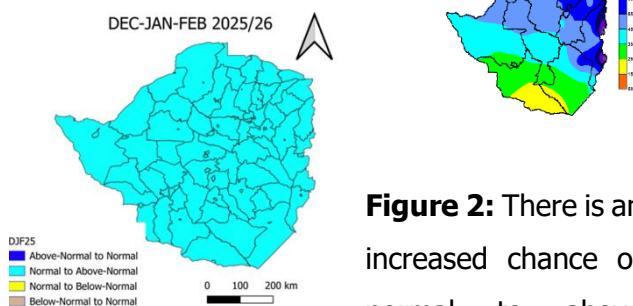
The seasonal rainfall forecast is probabilistic indicating the likelihood of receiving rainfall within, below or above the long-term average accumulative rainfall for the forecast period for each place across the country. The rainfall zones are dynamic. Places with same forecast signal in each forecast period will fall in same zone.

## 2.1 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER-JANUARY 2025/26



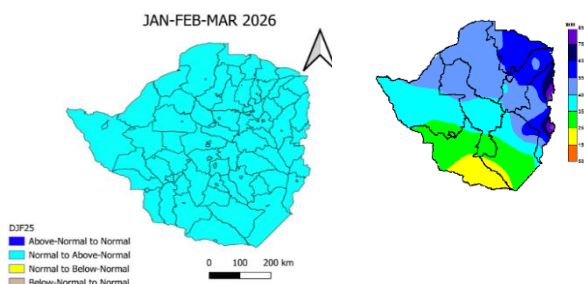
**Figure 1:** Increased chance of normal to above in the northern parts of the country (in cyan) is projected in December 2025 while the rest of the country (blue) is expected to have an increased chance of above normal rainfall.

## 2.2 DECEMBER-JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025/26



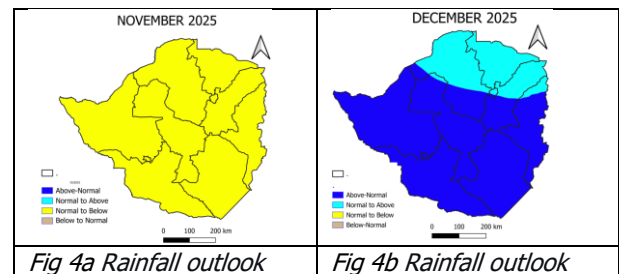
**Figure 2:** There is an increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall across the country during the December 2025 to February 2026 period.

## 2.3 JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH 2026

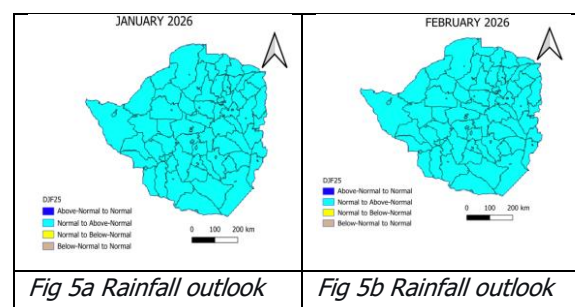


**Figure 3:** There is an increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall across the country during the January to March 2026 period.

## 3. MONTHLY RAINFALL FORECASTS

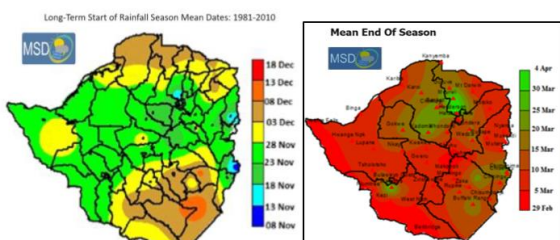


**Fig 4a Rainfall outlook** **Fig 4b Rainfall outlook**  
 In November 2025 there is an increased chance of normal rainfall with a bias towards below normal (Fig 4a). An increased chance of above normal to normal rainfall is expected in December 2025 in most parts of the country except for the northern parts where normal to above normal rainfall is anticipated (Fig 4b).



**Fig 5a Rainfall outlook** **Fig 5b Rainfall outlook**  
 Normal to above normal rainfall is expected during the month of January and February 2026 (Fig 5a, Fig 5b).

## 4.0 MEAN START AND END OF SEASON



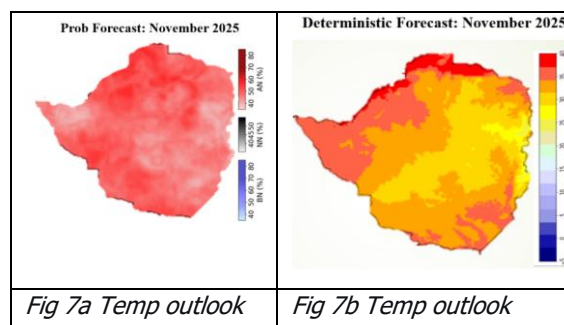
*Fig 6a Mean start dates: Fig 6b Mean end dates*

The mean start to the rainfall season in Zimbabwe is in the month of November into early December. The bulk of the country normally records the start of the season between 10 November and 30 November. The extreme northern and southern parts of the country have an average start of season between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of December. The climatological end of season ranges between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 20<sup>th</sup> of March except for few places where the season can stretch as far as 31<sup>st</sup> of March.

## 3.0 THE TEMPERATURE FORECAST

The probabilistic temperature forecast indicates the likelihood of condition within (normal), cooler (below normal) or warmer (above normal) than the long-term average conditions while the deterministic forecast shows the range of actual forecast temperature figures.

### November 2025

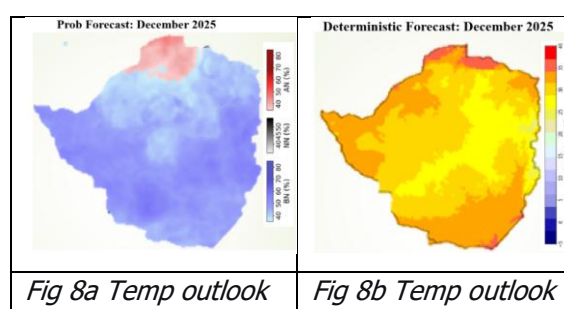


*Fig 7a Temp outlook*

*Fig 7b Temp outlook*

Warmer than normal conditions are expected in November across the country.

### December 2025

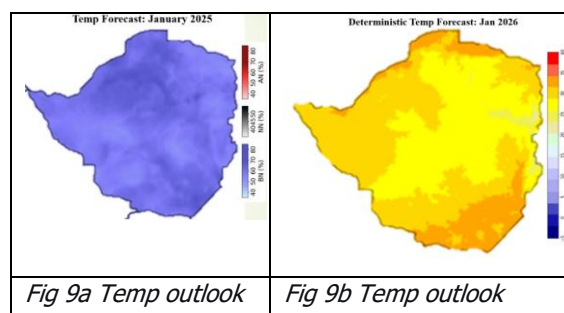


*Fig 8a Temp outlook*

*Fig 8b Temp outlook*

Cooler than normal conditions are expected in December except for the northern tip of the country.

### January 2026

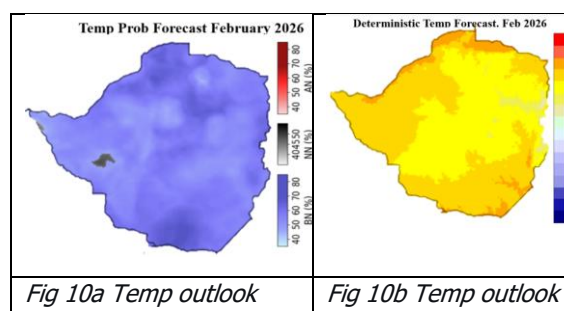


*Fig 9a Temp outlook*

*Fig 9b Temp outlook*

Cooler than normal conditions are expected in January across the country.

### February 2026



*Fig 10a Temp outlook*

*Fig 10b Temp outlook*

Cooler than normal conditions are expected in February across the country.

The temperatures are expected to be warmer than normal during November, and cooler than normal for the period until February. During December however, the northern tip of the country should be warmer than normal.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The forecast is for cumulative rainfall for three-month periods: NDJ, DJF, and JFM. The monthly forecasts for November, December, January, and February indicate normal to below normal rainfall for November while December to February show a likelihood of wetter than average conditions across the country.

It should be noted that although normal to below normal wet conditions are expected in November, chances of extreme conditions cannot be ruled out during the forecast period. Occurrence of dry spells remains probable during the month of December to February. The MSD propose the following recommendations to be considered among others that maybe proposed by the relevant sectors:

### 5.1 General

**Preparedness:** Implement robust water harvesting, conservation programs, and irrigation strategies

to manage possible 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 Health Services:

Launch disease prevention campaigns and stockpile essential medicines.

### 5.4 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 forecasts will be updated on a monthly basis starting the end of October 2025. In addition, there will be daily weather forecasts and 10-day weather bulletins that will take into account any changes and are useful for short-term planning. 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 cannot be captured in seasonal forecast.



ZIMBABWE

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

*'Where Science Meets The Sky'*



# Vision

A world class provider of meteorological, climatological and seismological products and services by 2025.



# Mission Statement

To provide customer and stakeholder driven quality seismological, weather and climate services for socio economic development.



# Core Values

- **Teamwork:** We value unity of purpose
- **Equality:** We offer equal status, rights and opportunities to all
- **Customer focus:** We prioritize and address customer needs.
- **Transparency:** We are open to scrutiny
- **Integrity:** We have strong moral principles
- **Creativity:** We focus on innovation and continuous improvement.
- **Accountability:** We take responsibility for one's own actions.



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