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REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE

METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

ZIMBABWE NATIONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK UPDATE:

NOVEMBER 2025 TO MARCH 2026

Meteorological Services Department, P. O. BE 150, Belvedere, Harare, Zimbabwe
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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

2.0THE 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.

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2.1 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER-JANUARY 2025/26

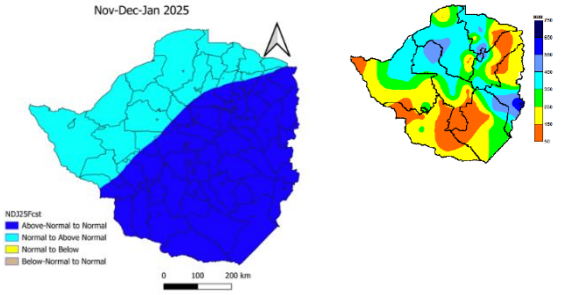

Figure 1: Increased chance of normal to above in the northern parts of the country (**in cyan**) is projected in December 2025 while the rest of the country (**blue**) is expected to have an increased chance of above normal rainfall.

2.2 DECEMBER-JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025/26

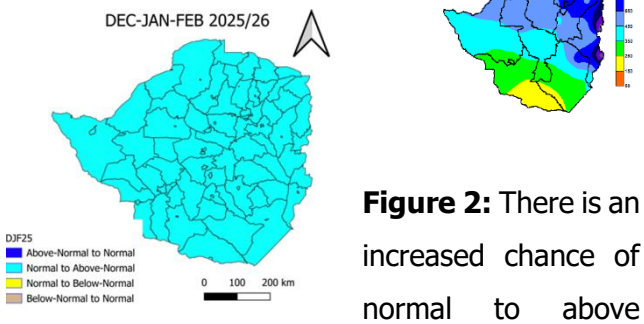

Figure 2: There is an increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall across the country during the December 2025 to February 2026 period.

2.3 JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH2026

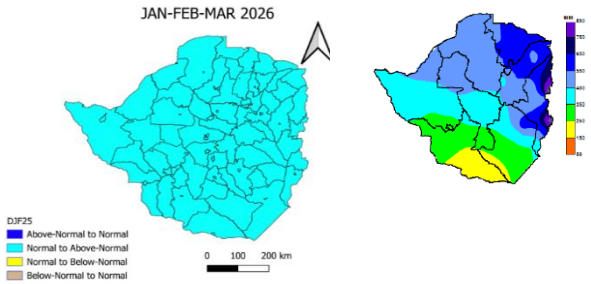

Figure 3: There is an increased chance of normal to above normal rainfall across the country during the January to March 2026 period.

3. MOTHLY RAINFALL FORECASTS

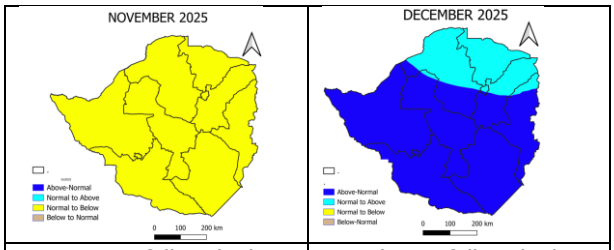

Fig 4a Rainfall outlook | *Fig 4b Rainfall outlook*

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).

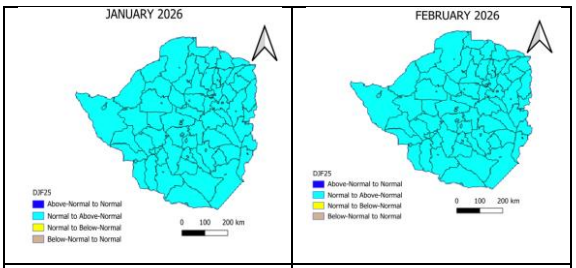

Fig 5a Rainfall outlook | *Fig 5b Rainfall outlook*

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

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4.0 MEAN START AND END OF SEASON

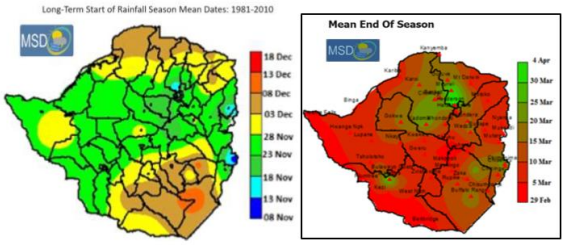

Fig 6a Mean start dates: Fig 6b Mean end dates

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 1st and 15th of December. The climatological end of season ranges between 1st March and 20th of March except for few places where the season can stretch as far as 31st 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

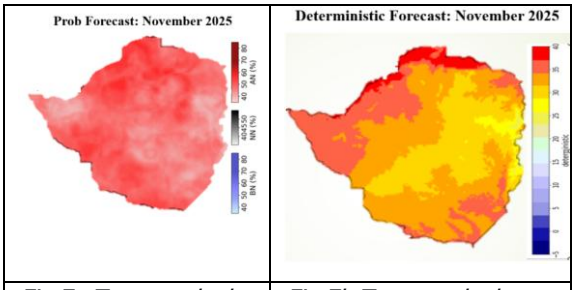

Fig 7a Temp outlook | *Fig 7b Temp outlook*

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

December 2025

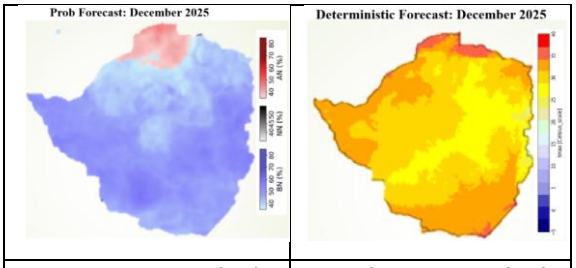

Fig 8a Temp outlook | *Fig 8b Temp outlook*

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

January 2026

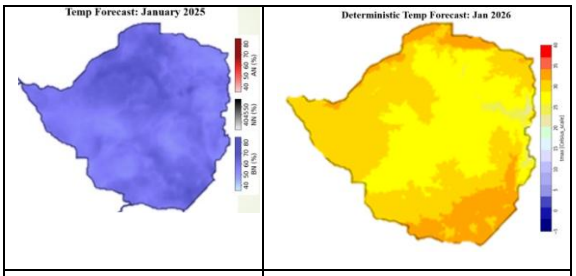

Fig 9a Temp outlook | *Fig 9b Temp outlook*

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

February 2026

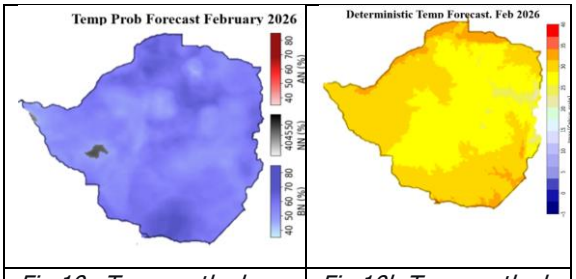

Fig 10a Temp outlook | *Fig 10b Temp outlook*

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.