



January Review and Forecast for February-June 2026

Weather Synopsis

Most days in January were warm to hot with isolated to scattered thundershowers in the afternoons. These were mainly due to strong surface heating during the day, which resulted in afternoon thundershowers due to available and sufficient atmospheric moisture. On the contrary, there were many occurrences of strong surface heating with limited/insufficient atmospheric moisture which then led to much drier conditions on the surface, and this was more prominent in the lowlands. Episodes of interior low-pressure systems were also observed, even though they did not yield good rains due to the high pressure ridging inland. Some tropical cyclones did have some significant impact on the rains as they were pulling mid-level moisture from our region (Southern African region). The Tropical Temperate Troughs, which are linked to heavy rainfall, were frequent but did not bring in as much rain as usual. Generally, there were a recognizable number of days in which the conditions were “perfect” for good rains had there been sufficient atmospheric moisture.

Rainfall and Temperature Performance

Rainfall accumulation in January 2026 was relatively lower than normal, with some stations recording significantly reduced amounts (Figure 1). These conditions were accompanied by higher-than-normal temperatures nationwide (Figure 2).

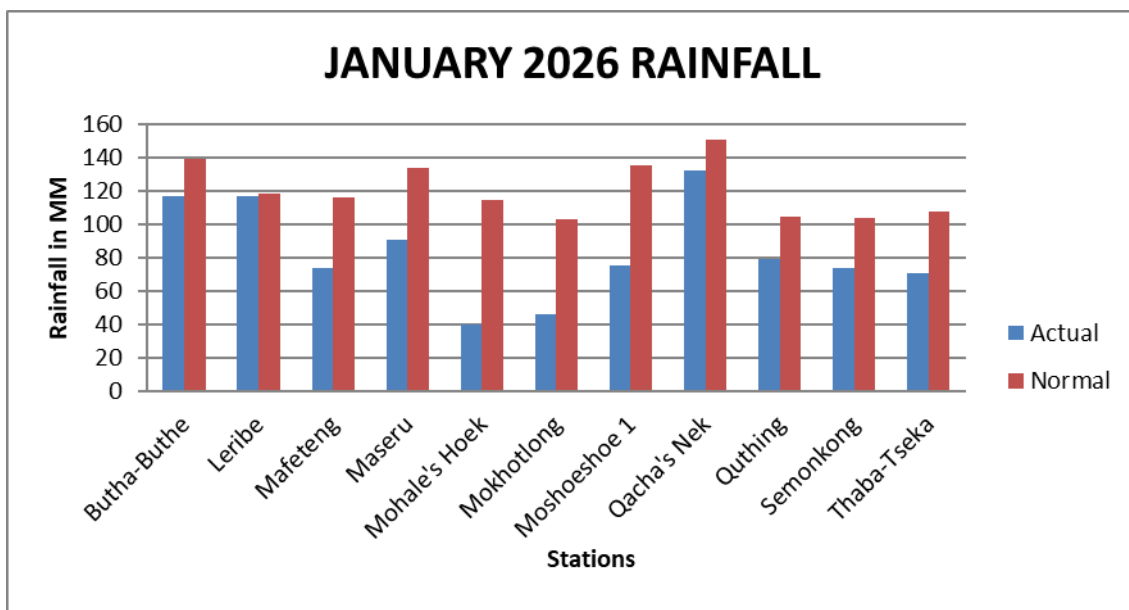


Figure 1. January 2026 Rainfall Performance against Long-Term Mean.

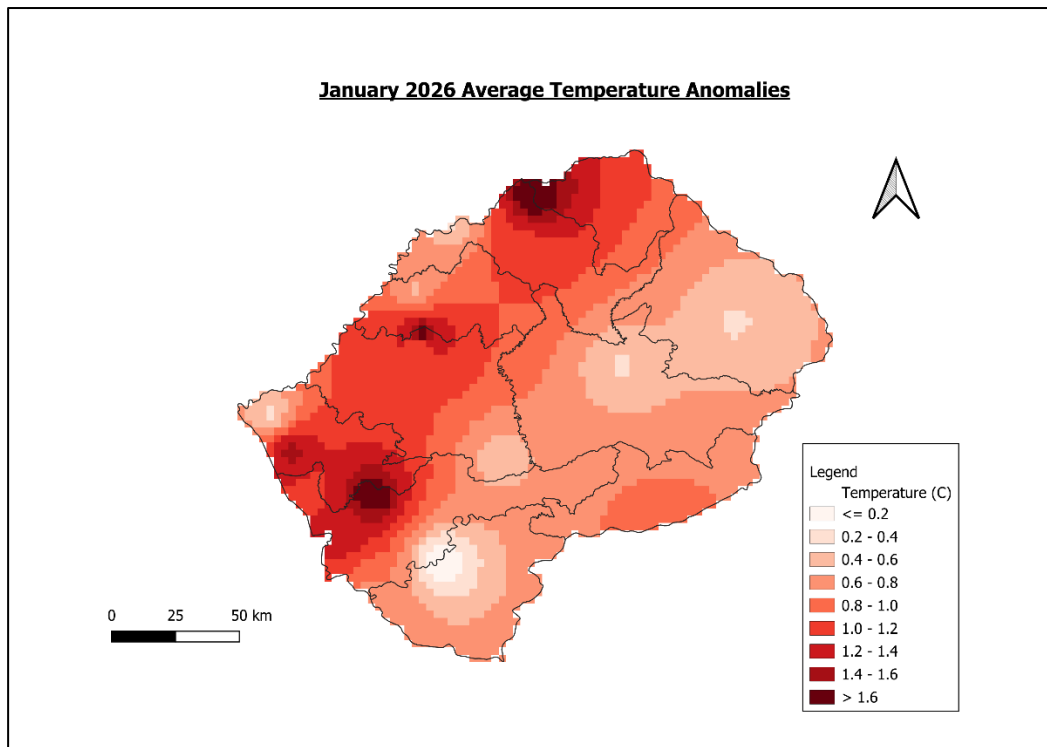


Figure 2. January 2026 Average Temperature Anomalies.

Rainfall Forecast for February to June 2026

The rainfall forecast for three consecutive rolling seasons from February to June 2026 indicates an increased likelihood of above-normal conditions (Figures 3 & 4).

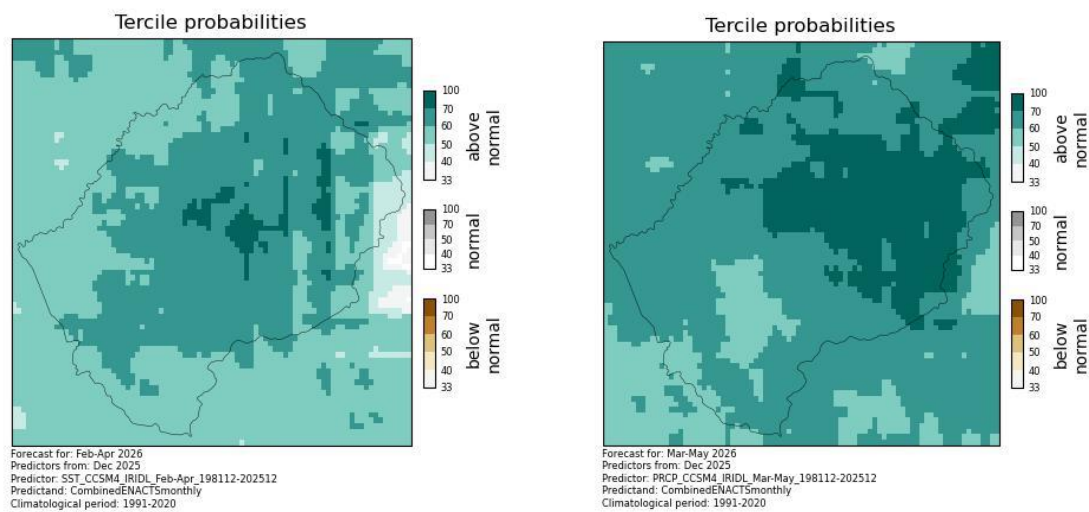


Figure 3: February - March - April 2026 and March-April-May 2026 seasonal probabilistic prediction for precipitation showing the highest probability of above-normal.

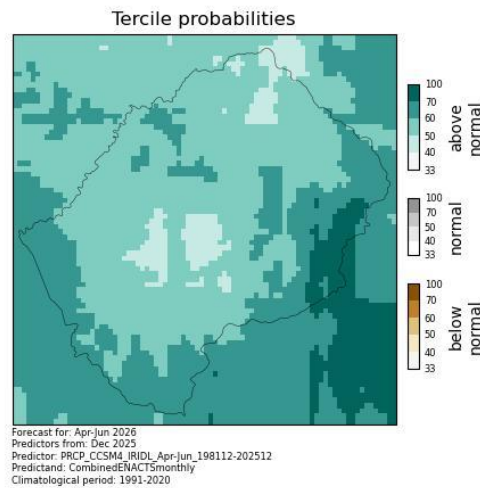


Figure 4. April-May-June 2026 seasonal probabilistic prediction for precipitation showing the highest probability of below-normal.

Based on Fig. 3 above, Feb-Mar-Apr and Mar-Apr-May 2026 are expected to receive above average rainfall while Fig. 4 shows that there is a likelihood of normal rainfall, during Apr-May-Jun season, with a slight incline of above normal towards the southern parts of the country. These forecast periods remain critical for the current and winter-based agricultural activities and thus, the public is advised to stay tuned to radio and all local media to keep abreast of latest developments with our weekly weather briefs and Agrometeorological bulletins that provide relevant and appropriate updates on the rainfall distribution, within the season, for their anticipatory actions aligned to the seasonal rainfall prediction. This is especially critical in consideration that our models seem to have a limited skill (as narrated in the appendix) over much of the country except the north-western to northern lowlands and parts of the foothills. The skill is relatively poor over the western through to the southern lowlands.

Yours sincerely,

For 

Teke Ramotubei, PhD

(Director: Lesotho Meteorological Services)

Appendix – Verification

The following three figures show the Relative Operating Characteristic (ROC) scores for the relevant multi-model forecasts in the main document. The ROC scores are commonly used in seasonal forecasts to determine the areas where the forecasts perform well, so that the user can make more informed decisions using the given forecast. As a general guideline, a score over 0.5 is technically better than a chance. However, scores around and higher than 0.6 are considered to have significant skill to add confidence to the forecast.

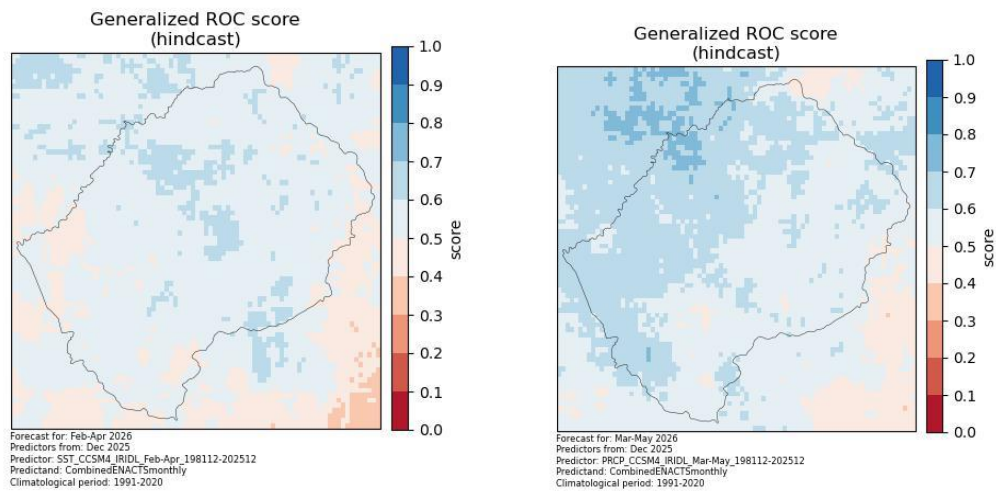


Figure 5: ROC score for rainfall relevant to the current forecast in Figure 3.

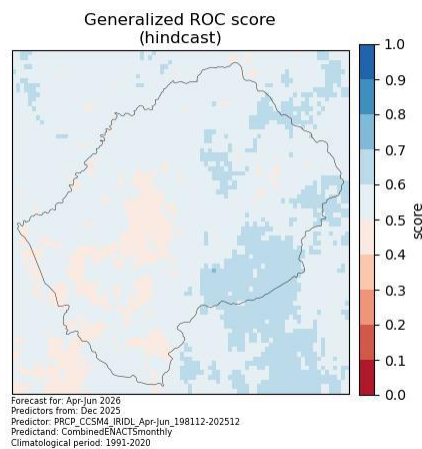


Figure 6. ROC score for rainfall is relevant to the current forecast in Figure 4.