



LESOTHO METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES

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SEASONAL RAINFALL OUTLOOK OCT-NOV-DEC 2026 TO JAN-FEB-MARCH 2027

Review of October 2025 to March 2026

Weather Synopsis (January-August 2026)

January to March was generally warm to hot with intermittent rainfall. January recorded high temperatures, occasional showers and thunderstorms, including hailstorms, prolonged dry spells, and heatwaves. Rainfall was frequent and widespread in February, including a notable event in February of high accumulation associated with tropical-temperate troughs, the ITCZ, and surface convergence. March continued to receive significant rainfall, although rainfall events became less frequent as the month progressed, while temperatures remained generally warm. April and May marked the transition from summer to winter, with decreasing rainfall and progressively lower temperatures, particularly at night over the Highlands and Foothills. These conditions became more pronounced in May, with snowfall and very cold temperatures affecting Lesotho and the surrounding Drakensberg region in early May.

June saw cold fronts and an upper-level trough bringing snowfall, while Cut-Off-Lows (COLs) assisted by the South Atlantic High brought rain and snowfall both early and late July. A strong COL in early August resulted in significant rainfall and snowfall.

Rainfall and Temperature Performance

Rainfall performance during the 2025/26 summer season was generally above the long-term average. The October to December (OND) 2025 period recorded widespread positive rainfall anomalies, with the strongest departures observed mainly over western parts of Lesotho. During January to March (JFM) 2026, rainfall remained above normal, but it was more spatially variable, with moderate positive anomalies dominating much of the country while parts of eastern Lesotho recorded near-normal conditions. Overall, the spatial pattern indicates the season was wetter than the long-term average, particularly during early summer.

October to December 2025 experienced generally below-normal temperatures across Lesotho, while January 2026 showed a clear shift to predominantly above-normal temperatures.

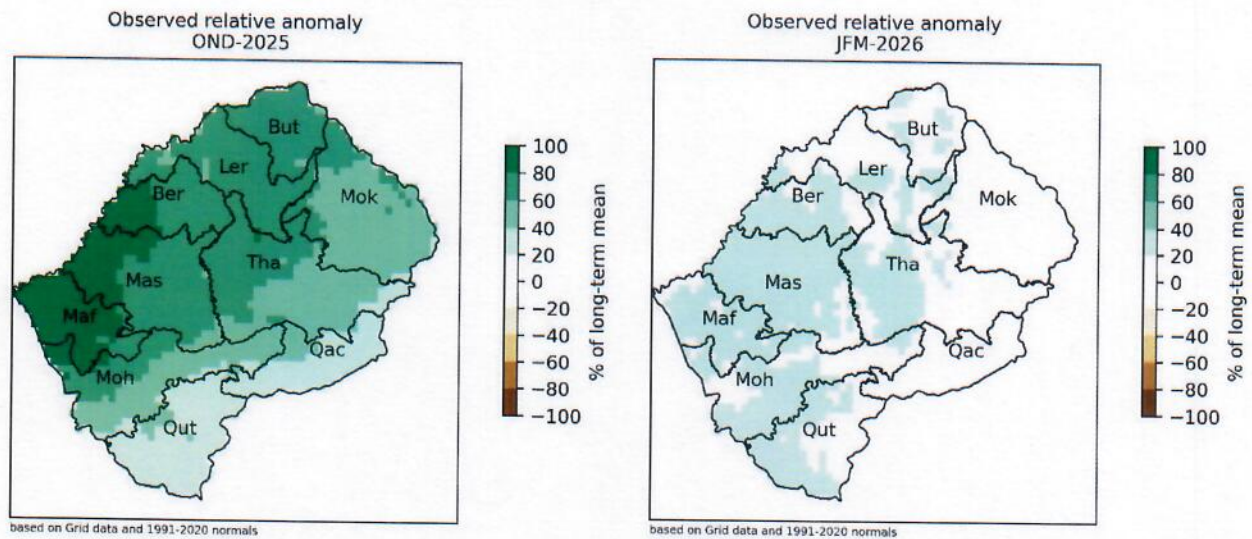


Figure 1. October-November-December (OND) 2025 (left) and January-February-March (JFM) 2026 (right) rainfall performance.

RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK FOR OCTOBER 2026 TO MARCH 2027

Rainfall outlook

The seasonal forecast for the upcoming 2026/27 rainfall season (October 2026 to March 2027) indicates a heightened probability of below-normal rainfall across the period. The forecast suggests a progression in drier conditions throughout the season. October-November-December (OND) 2026 (*Fig 2. top-left*), November-December-January (NDJ) 2026/27 (*Fig 2. top-right*) and December-January-February (DJF) 2026/27 (*Fig 2. bottom-left*) periods are most likely to experience below-normal rainfall for the bulk of Lesotho, while the eastern parts are expected to be in near-normal conditions. A slide shift is expected heading to the end of the summer, with wetter conditions becoming more probable during January-February-March (JFM) 2027 (*Fig 2. bottom-right*) period in the eastern and southern parts of the country.

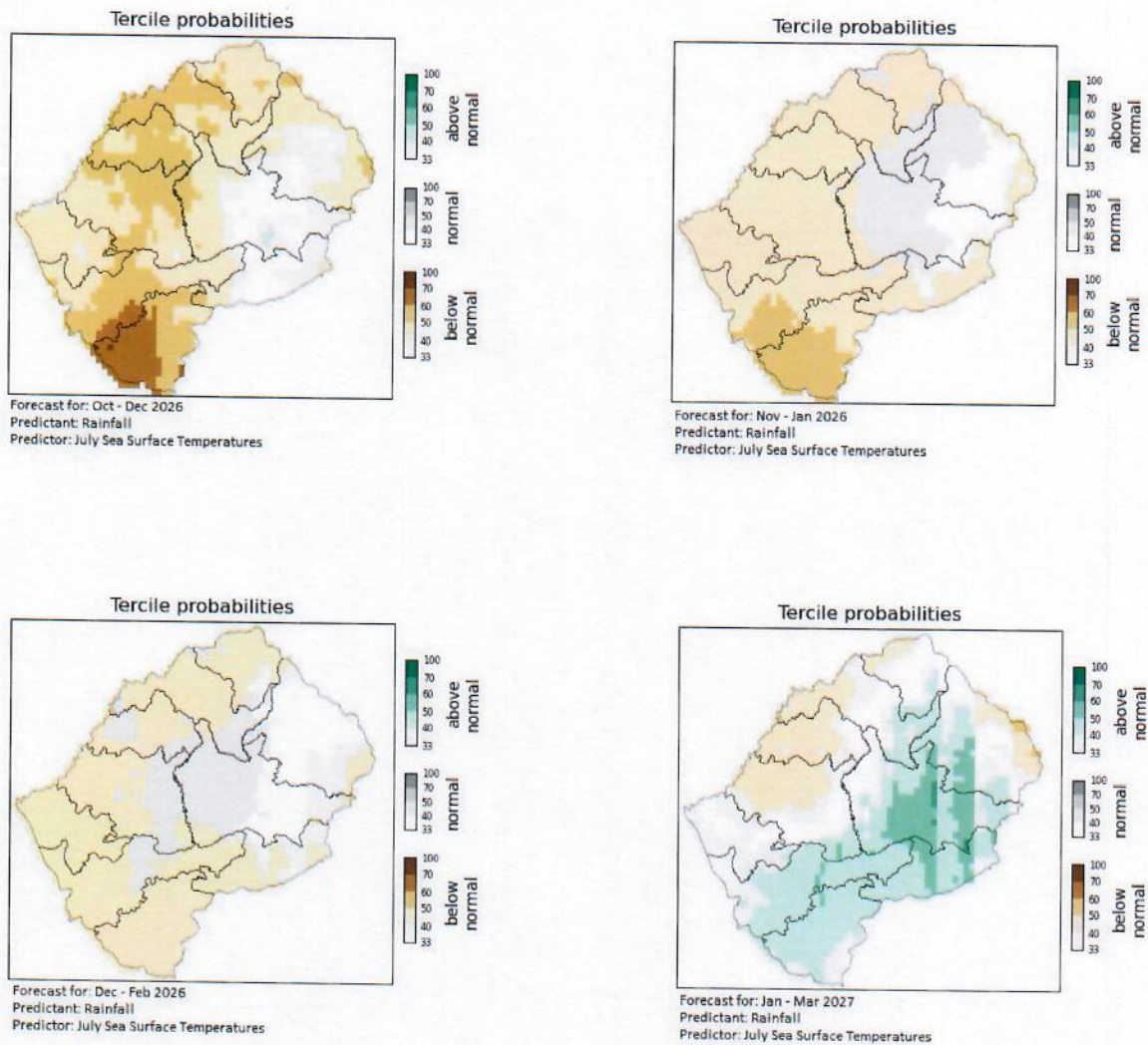


Figure 2. October–November–December (OND) 2026 (top-left), November–December–January (NDJ) 2026/27 (top-right), December–January–February (DJF) 2026/27 (bottom-left) and January–February–March (JFM) 2027 (bottom-right) probabilistic rainfall forecast

Maximum Temperature outlook

The forecasts indicate a strong likelihood of above-normal maximum temperatures across Lesotho during both October–December (OND) 2026 and January–March (JFM) 2027. The probabilistic forecast for OND 2026 shows a high probability of above-normal maximum temperatures across virtually the entire country. The deterministic forecast indicates maximum temperatures predominantly in the 20–30°C range, with relatively warmer conditions toward the western and northern parts.

The JFM 2027 signal for above-normal temperatures becomes even more pronounced. The deterministic forecast suggests maximum temperatures mainly around 25–35°C, with the warmer values occurring particularly over the western and southern lowlands.

Overall prediction of the seasonal forecast points to a warmer-than-normal summer period from October 2026 through to March 2027, with the strongest indication occurring during JFM 2027. This suggests an increased likelihood of hot spells and heat-wave conditions, particularly during periods of persistent high-pressure systems and reduced rainfall.

Climatological Seasonal Totals and Averages

The 1991–2020 climatological rainfall distribution shows a distinct seasonal cycle across Lesotho. Rainfall generally increases from October–December (OND) through November–January (NDJ), reaching its highest climatological totals during December–February (DJF), before declining somewhat during January–March (JFM). Spatially, rainfall is generally higher over the northern and eastern mountainous areas and lower toward the southwestern and southern parts of the country. This spatial pattern is broadly consistent across the four overlapping seasons.

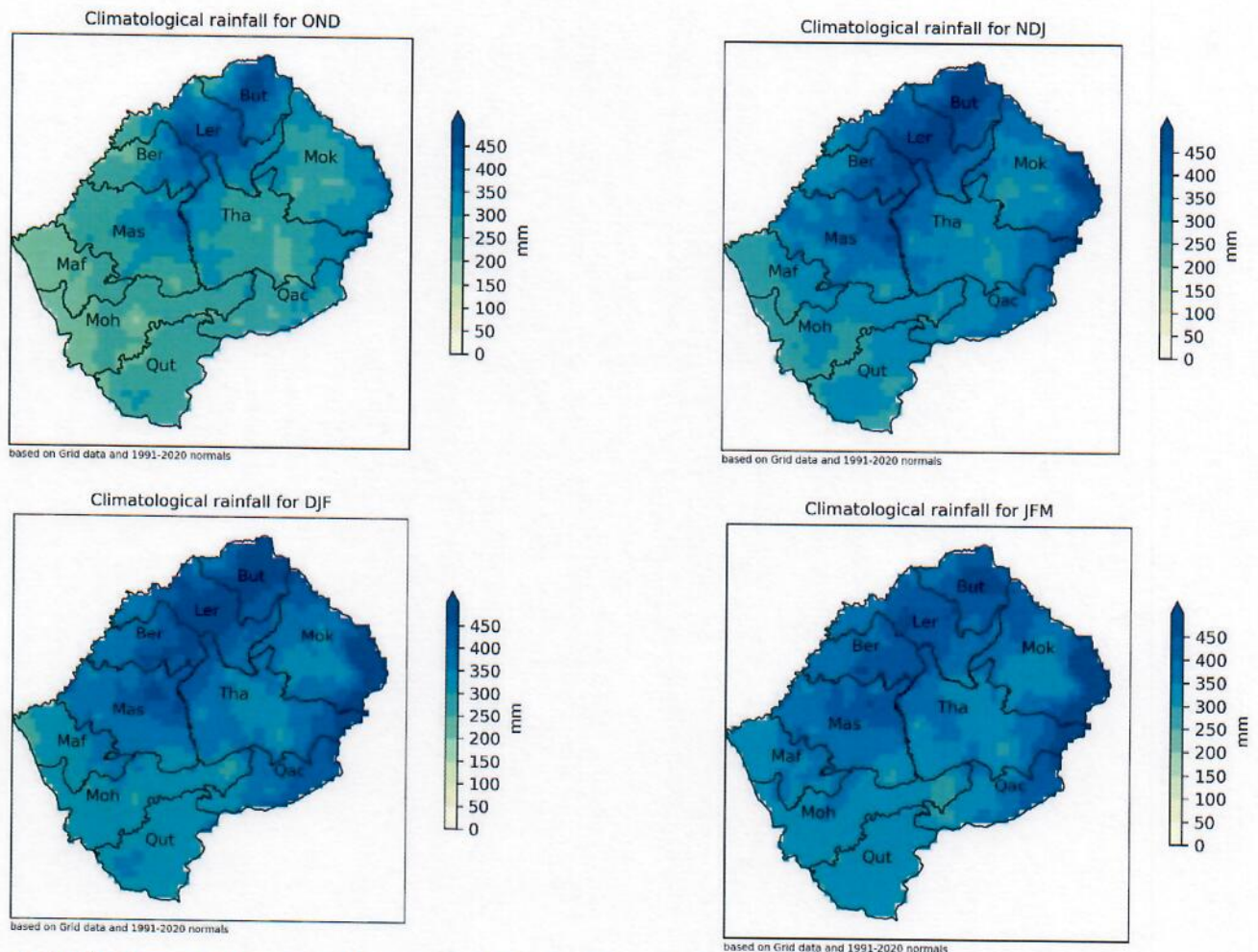


Figure 3. October–November–December (OND) (top-left), November–December–January (NDJ) (top-right), December–January–February (DJF) (bottom-left), and January–February–March (JFM) (bottom-right) climatological rainfall (1991 – 2020 period)

Yours sincerely,

For.....*Misaki*.....

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Appendix – Verification

The following four 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 chance, however, scores around and higher than 0.6 are considered to have significant skill to add confidence to the forecast.

The Generalized ROC (GROC) score indicates moderate to good discriminatory skill across Lesotho, with considerable spatial and seasonal variability. Forecast skill is comparatively weaker during October–December 2026, particularly over parts of eastern Lesotho, but improves progressively during November 2026–January 2027 and December 2026–February 2027. The January–March 2027 period exhibits the most widespread and comparatively higher GROC scores, particularly across central and southern Lesotho. These results indicate greater confidence in the probabilistic rainfall forecasts for the latter part of the 2026/27 rainfall season.

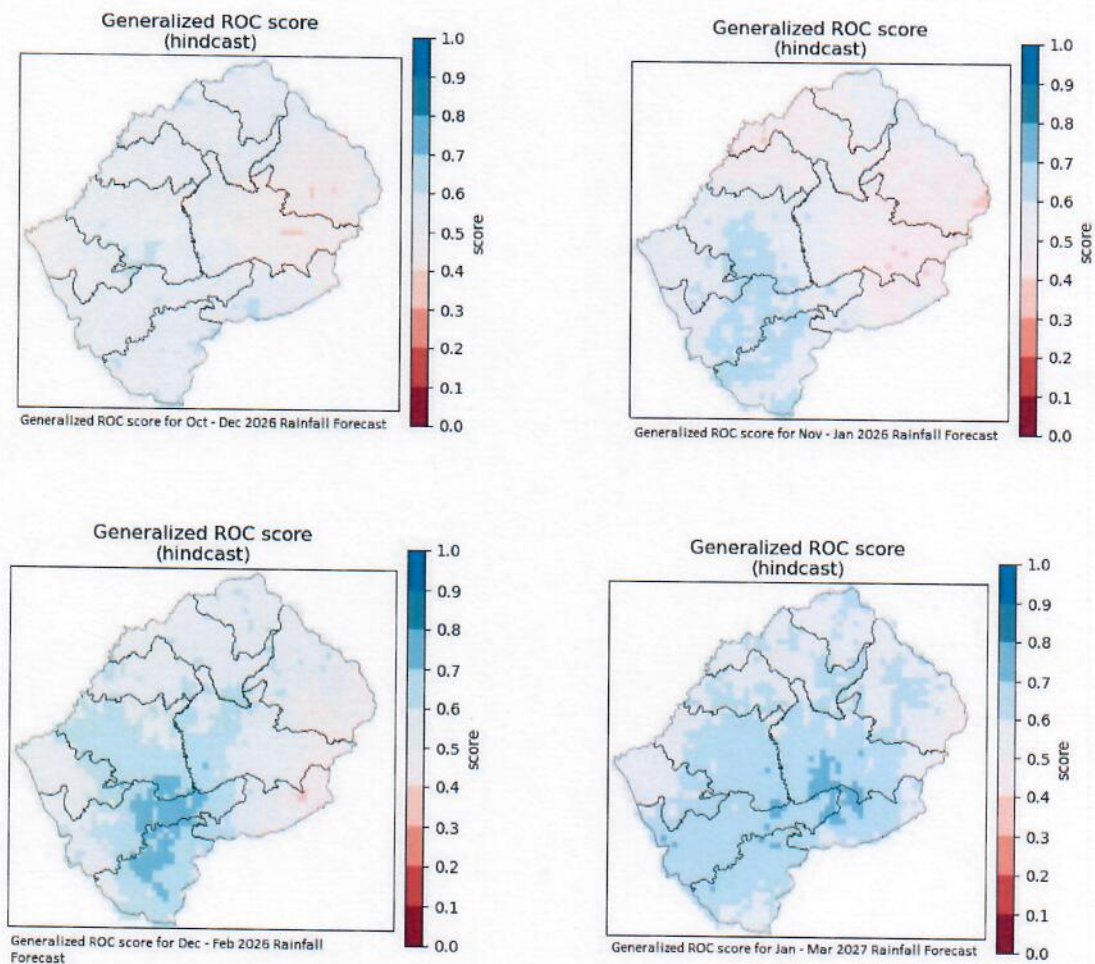


Figure 4. October–November–December (OND) (top-left), November–December–January (NDJ) (top-right), December–January–February (DJF) (bottom-left), and January–February–March Generalized ROC Scores