

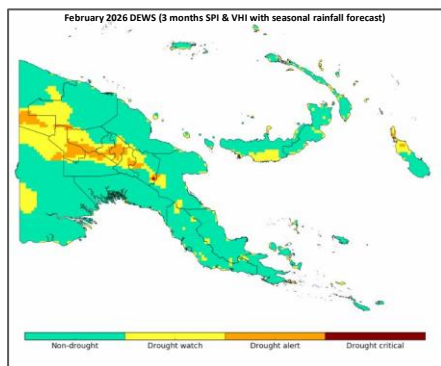
Key messages

Issued 23/02/2026

Jiwaka has transitioned into a drought alert status at a three months timescale whilst Chimbu, Enga, Hela, NCD, and Western Highlands are in drought watch. El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is in La Niña. However, the La Niña conditions are weakening and a transition to ENSO neutral is expected soon. Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is above the positive IOD threshold; however, IOD does not form during Dec to Aril. No event is expected but returning to neutral soon. The MJO is weak in the Indian Ocean; typically associated with decreased rainfall over PNG..

Drought Early Warning Status (DEWS)

Derived from observed 3-month rainfall and vegetation health, along with 3-month forecasted rainfall.



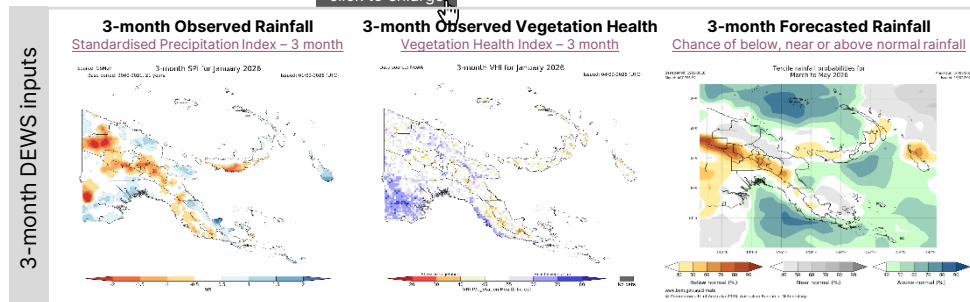
- Despite the wet season, Jiwaka has recently transitioned into a drought alert status at a three months timescale indicating an increased chance of drought conditions.
- Enga and Hela have shifted from an alert level in December 2025 to drought watch status in 2026.
- Chimbu, NCD and Western Highlands provinces are in a drought watch status at a three months timescale.
- The continued dry conditions, particularly in the Highlands, raise concerns for food security and water resources.

3-month timescale provincial summary

(A province's overall status is given by its majority status on the map and is presented in this [summary table](#))

Drought Watch	Drought Alert	Drought Critical
Below average rainfall or Stressed vegetation or Dry forecast	(Below average rainfall or Stressed vegetation) and Dry forecast	Below average rainfall and Stressed vegetation and Dry forecast
Chimbu, Enga, Hela, NCD, Western Highlands	Jiwaka	No Provinces

click to enlarge



Links to other timescales:

- [1-month Drought Early Warning Status](#)
Drought early warning status using 1-month rainfall, 1-month vegetation health and 3-month rainfall forecast.
- [1-month Standardised Precipitation Index](#)
Rainfall over the last month.
- [1-month Vegetation Health Index](#)
Vegetation health over the last month.
- [6-month Drought Early Warning Status](#)
Drought early warning status using 6-month rainfall, 6-month vegetation health and 3-month rainfall forecast.
- [6-month Standardised Precipitation Index](#)
Rainfall over the last 6 months.
- [6-month Vegetation Health Index](#)
Vegetation health over the last 6 months.

Provinces at Risk if Drought Occurs

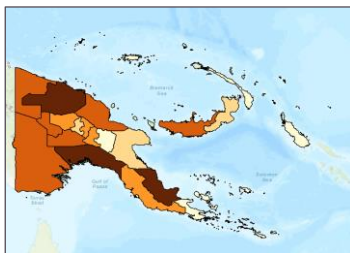
Contextualise drought early warning information with drought risk information.

Drought risk is the probability of harmful impacts resulting from interactions between drought hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. Hazard information is given by the Early Warning Status, with drought exposure and vulnerability levels shown in the maps below.

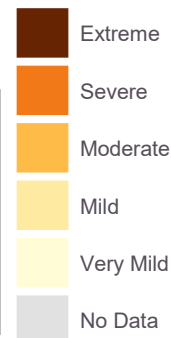
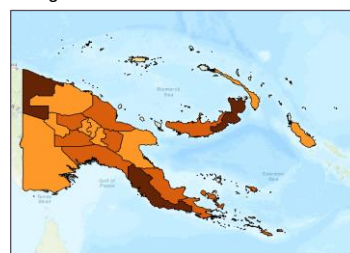
Provinces of concern:

- Jiwaka has a Drought Alert status with moderate exposure and vulnerability levels.
- Chimbu, Enga, Hela, NCD, and Western Highlands are at drought watch status with mild to severe exposure and vulnerability levels.

Exposure - Extent of exposed aspects of the total population and its livelihoods in an area which drought may occur.



Vulnerability - Likelihood of exposed factors to suffer negative impacts when drought occurs.



Climate Context

A summary of the relevant climate drivers affecting PNG over the coming months

- ACCESS-S rainfall outlooks for March, and March to May, shows below average rainfall over Highlands region and Western Province whilst most parts of PNG are forecasted to receive average to above average rainfall.
- El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is in La Niña. However, the La Niña conditions are weakening and a transition to ENSO neutral is expected soon.
- Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is above the positive IOD threshold; however, IOD does not form during Dec to Aril. No event is expected but returning to neutral soon.
- The MJO is weak in the Indian Ocean; typically associated with decreased rainfall over PNG..