

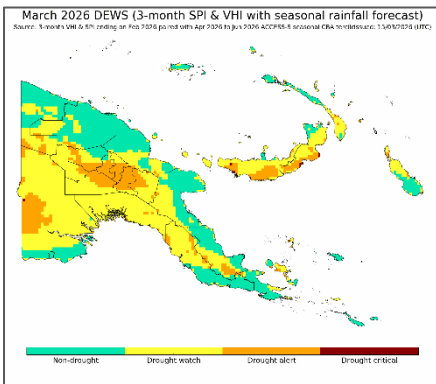
Key messages

Issued 20/03/2026

Jiwaka remains in drought alert since last month whilst a few provinces in Highlands region have transitioned to drought alert at the three months timescale. El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) shows La Niña conditions declining. ENSO is likely to return to neutral soon. Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is above the positive threshold. The IOD is likely to return to neutral soon. The Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO) is moderate in the Western Pacific. It is likely to increase rainfall around PNG.

Drought Early Warning Status (DEWS)

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

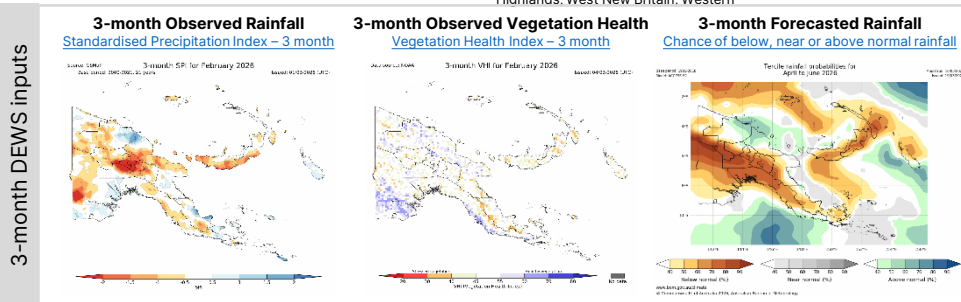


- At a three months timescale, Chimbu, Enga, Western Highlands provinces transitioned to drought alert status along with Jiwaka. These provinces will be monitored and information will be validated next month
- In addition, Central, East New Britain, Gulf, Manus, New Ireland, Southern Highlands, West New Britain and Western provinces have transitioned to drought watch along with Hela and NCD.
- Despite a long-range forecast of dry conditions for these provinces, daily weather conditions are likely to vary depending on the local conditions.

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
Central, East New Britain, Gulf, Hela, Manus, NCD, New Ireland, Southern Highlands, West New Britain, Western	Chimbu, Enga, Jiwaka, Western Highlands	No Provinces



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

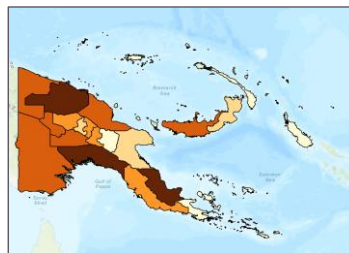
Contextualise drought early warning information with drought risk information.

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.

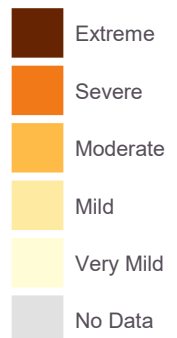
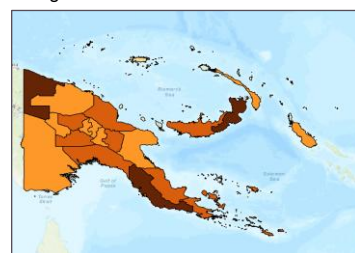
Provinces of concern:

- Chimbu, Enga, Jiwaka and Western Highlands are at drought alert, with moderate to severe exposure and vulnerability levels
- Central, ENB, Gulf, Hela, Manus, NCD, New Ireland, Southern Highlands, WNB and Western are in drought watch status with very mild to moderate exposure and moderate to extreme 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 outlook for April shows average to above average rainfall for northern parts of PNG, Milne Bay and parts of Central. Below average rainfall is forecasted for Highlands region, Gulf, Western, West Sepik, East New Britain and Bougainville. PNG is forecasted to receive below average rainfall over the next 3 months except East Sepik and Madang expected to receive average to above average rainfall.
- El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) shows La Niña conditions declining. ENSO is likely to return to neutral soon.
- Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is above the positive threshold. The IOD is likely to return to neutral soon.
- The Madden Julian Oscillation (MJO) is moderate in the Western Pacific. It is likely to increase rainfall around PNG.