

Seasonal Climate Watch

July to November 2026

Date issued: 01 July 2026

1. Overview

The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) has just moved into a weak El Niño state; current predictions indicate that it will rapidly strengthen towards a Strong El Niño state within the next couple of months and continue to strengthen up to early summer and last at least until the end of the 2026/27 summer season. Current seasonal predictions for South Africa extend towards the transition from late winter to spring, so the impact on South Africa for the coming summer can only be estimated from typical El Niño events, which is for a drier and warmer summer season.

During the winter seasons, it is only the south-western, southern and eastern coastal areas that receive significant rainfall. The eastern coastal areas are expected to receive above-normal rainfall during late winter and spring, whilst below-normal rainfall is expected for the south-western and southern coastal areas during this late winter and the spring period.

Minimum and maximum temperatures are largely expected to be above-normal for most parts of South Africa during the winter seasons.

The SAWS will continue to monitor the weather and climate conditions and provide updates on any future assessments that may provide more clarity on the current expectations for the coming season.

2. South African Weather Service Prediction System

2.1. Seasonal Forecasts for South Africa From the SAWS Seasonal Prediction System

The CESM1 and COLA-RSMAS-CCSM4 systems (part of the North American Multi-Model Ensemble System) for South Africa, as issued with the Jun 2026 initial conditions, are presented below (district names can be seen in the appendix indicated in Figure A4):

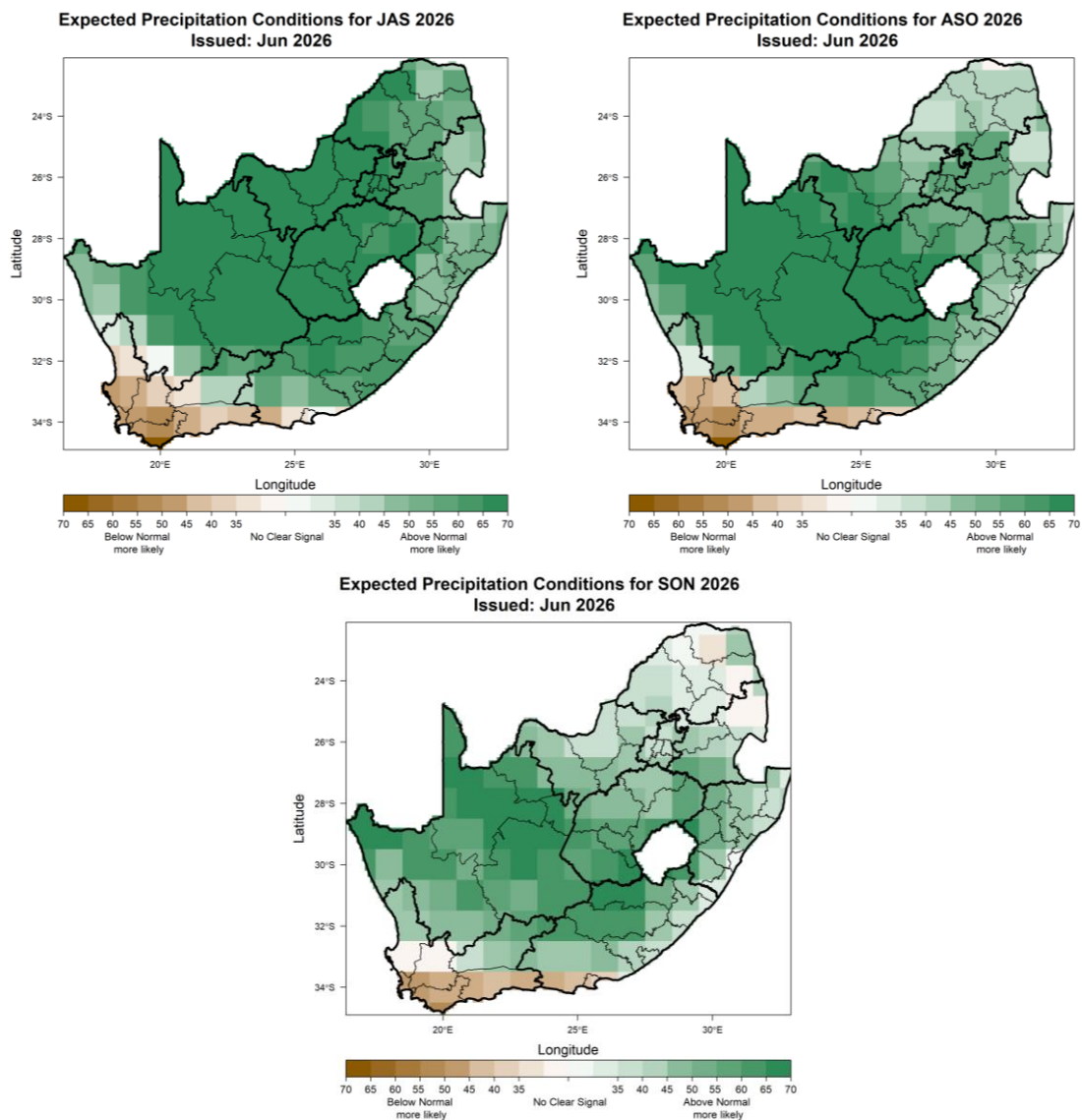


Figure 1: July-August-September 2026 (SJA; left), August-September-October 2026 (ASO; right), September-October-November 2026 (SON; bottom) seasonal precipitation prediction. Maps indicate the highest probability of the above-normal and below-normal categories. Please refer to the appendix, Figure A1 for forecast skill levels.

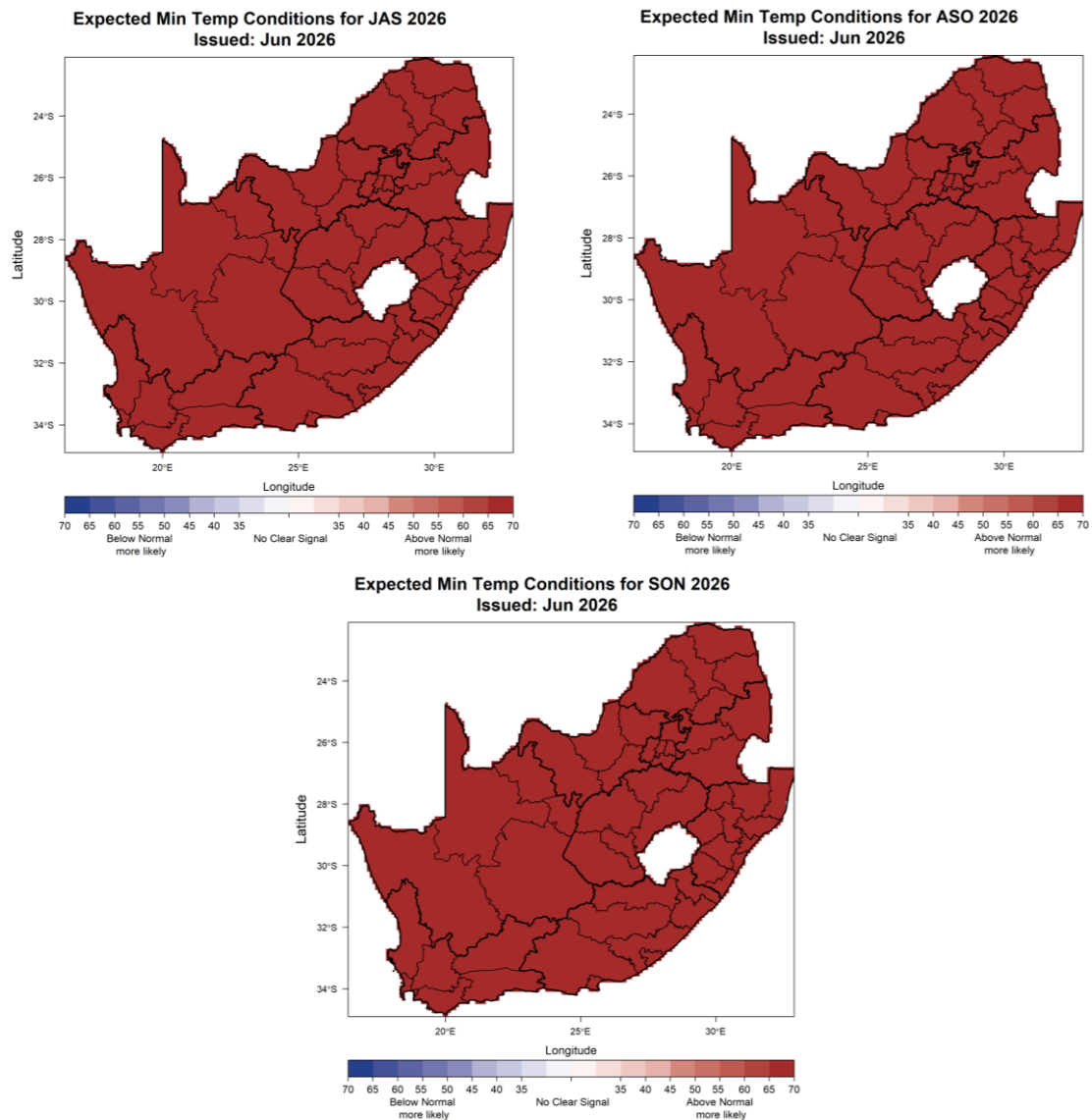


Figure 2: July-August-September 2026 (SJA; left), August-September-October 2026 (ASO; right), September-October-November 2026 (SON; bottom) seasonal minimum temperature prediction. Maps indicate the highest probability of the above-normal and below-normal categories. Please refer to the appendix, Figure A2 for forecast skill levels.

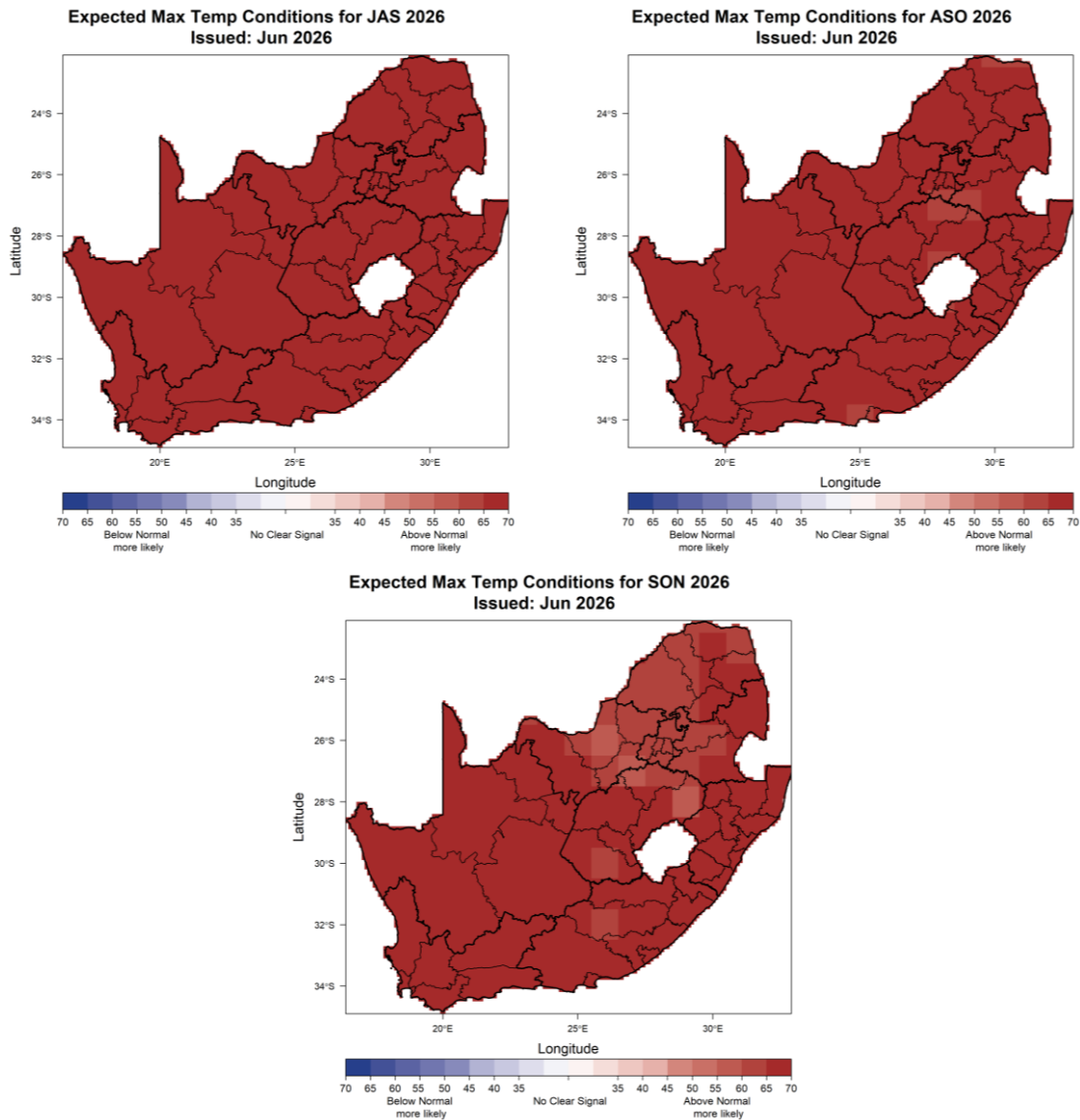


Figure 3: July-August-September 2026 (SJA; left), August-September-October 2026 (ASO; right), September-October-November 2026 (SON; bottom) seasonal maximum temperature prediction. Maps indicate the highest probability of the above-normal and below-normal categories. Please refer to the appendix, Figure A3 for forecast skill levels.

2.2. Climatological Seasonal Totals and Averages

The following maps indicate the rainfall and temperature climatology (minimum and maximum temperature) for the July-August-September, August-September-October and September-October-November seasons. The rainfall and temperature climates are representative of the average rainfall and temperature conditions over a long period of time for the relevant 3-month seasons presented here.

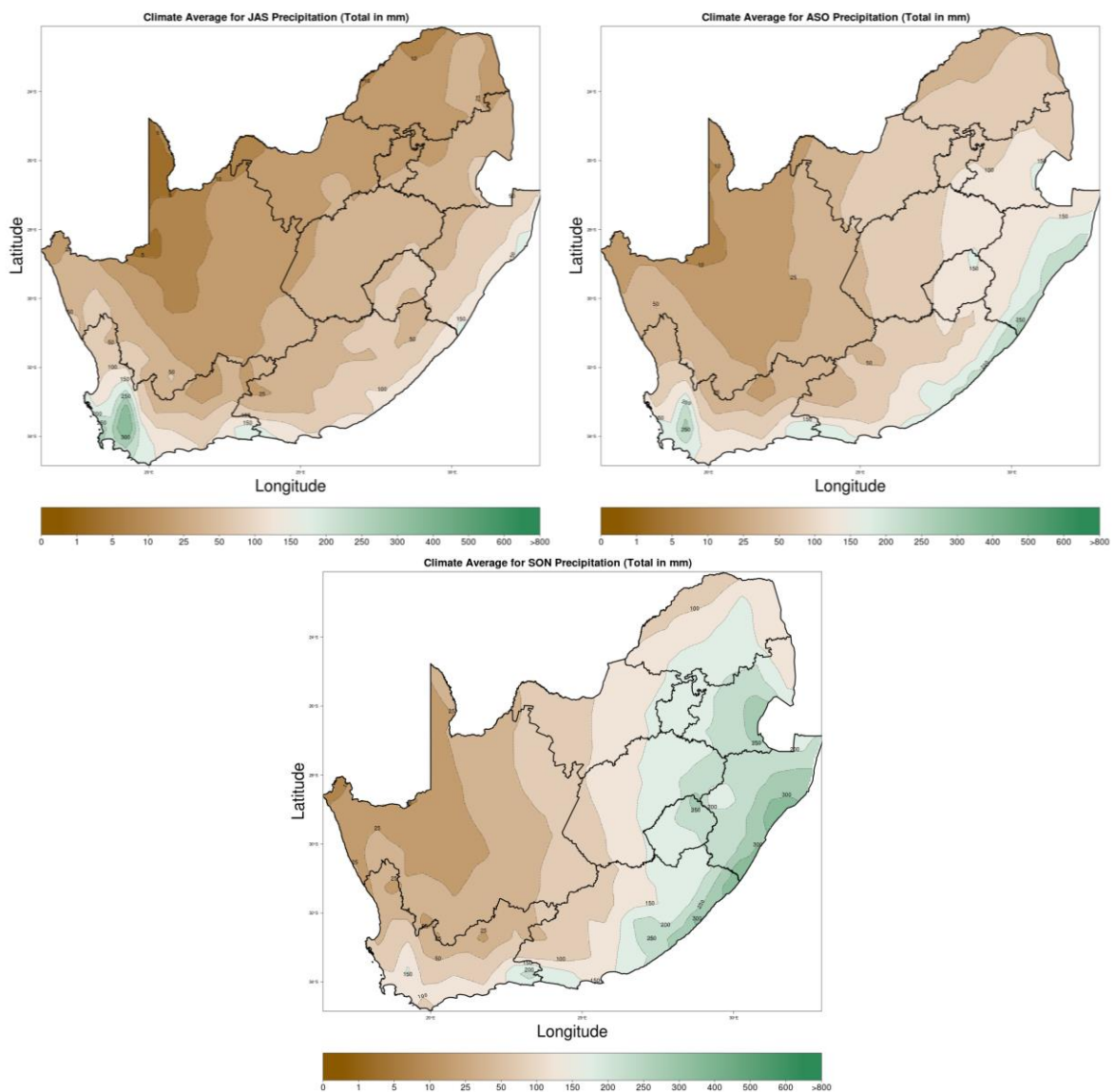


Figure 4: Climatological seasonal totals for precipitation during July-August-September (JAS; left), August-September-October (ASO; right) and September-October-November (SON; bottom).

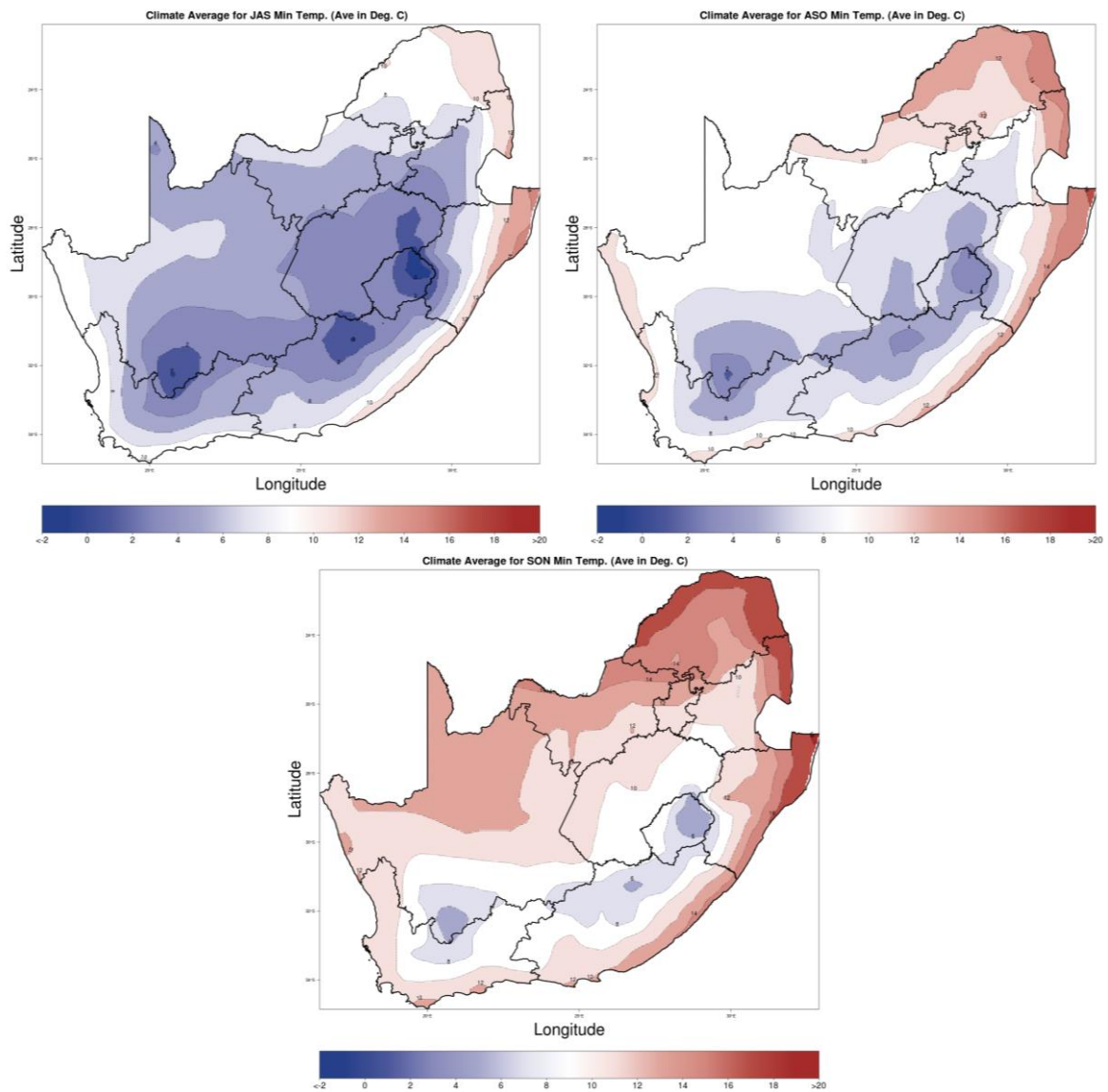


Figure 5: Climatological seasonal averages for minimum temperature during July-August-September (JAS; left), August-September-October (ASO; right) and September-October-November (SON; bottom).

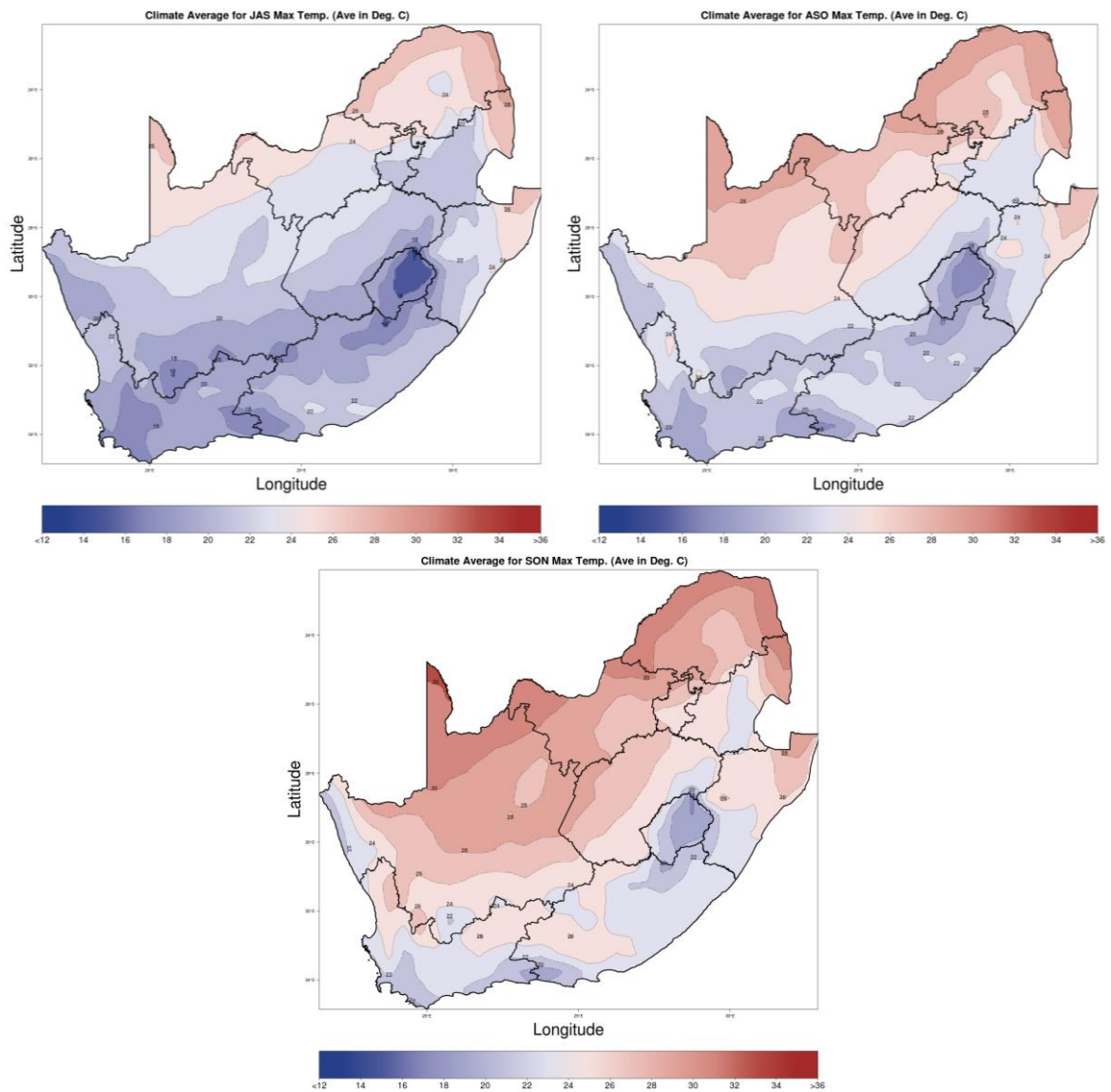


Figure 6: Climatological seasonal averages for maximum temperature during July-August-September (JAS; left), August-September-October (ASO; right) and September-October-November (SON; bottom).

3. Summary Implications to Various Economic Sector Decision Makers

Water and Energy

The anticipated above-normal rainfall conditions in the eastern coastal areas during late winter and spring are likely to boost surface runoff into dams and reservoirs, substantially increasing water storage capacity and availability for purposes such as household, industrial, and agricultural use. Such conditions are likely to benefit water-scarce regions, bringing relief to areas that receive rainfall during winter seasons. However, intensive rainfall may overwhelm stormwater and sewage systems, resulting in flash floods and flooding in areas prone to floods, including low-lying bridges. In addition, during this period, below-normal rainfall conditions are expected in the south-western and southern coastal areas. Such conditions, coupled with mostly forecasted above-normal temperatures for most parts of the country during the winter seasons, are likely to increase water loss, adding pressure on water-scarce regions. Additionally, the anticipated above-normal minimum and maximum temperatures across the country are likely to increase the cooling demand during the forecast period. Decision-makers should note these possible outcomes and communicate with affected businesses and communities.

Health

The July to November 2026 seasonal forecast indicates potential health risks associated with rainfall variability and above-normal temperatures across much of South Africa. Above-normal rainfall in parts of the eastern coastal areas during late winter and spring may increase the risk of localised flooding, poor drainage, contamination of water sources, waterborne disease, and water-related injuries, particularly in low-lying and flood-prone communities. Below-normal rainfall across parts of the south-western and southern coastal areas may place pressure on water availability, hygiene and sanitation if dry conditions persist.

Above-normal minimum and maximum temperatures across most of the country may contribute to increased ultraviolet exposure during clear-sky periods, with associated risks including sunburn and longer-term skin damage. Health authorities, municipalities and disaster management structures are encouraged to strengthen flood-risk communication in wetter eastern coastal areas, reinforce safe water, sanitation and hygiene messaging where dry or wet conditions may affect public health, and continue public awareness efforts on ultraviolet exposure.

Communities are encouraged to avoid flood-prone areas, maintain safe water and sanitation practices, and use appropriate sun protection during periods of increased ultraviolet exposure.

Agriculture

During late winter and spring seasons, only the southern, south-western, and eastern coastal regions of the country receive significant rainfall. The forecast indicates that above-normal rainfall is anticipated in the eastern coastal areas, which is likely to bring positive impacts for crop and livestock production. However, the south-western and southern coastal areas of the country, which normally receive

significant rainfall during winter and spring, are expected to receive below-normal rainfall during this period. Below-normal rainfall conditions in these areas are expected to have a significant impact on crop and livestock production. Therefore, the relevant decision-makers are encouraged to advise farmers in these regions to practice soil and water conservation, proper water harvesting and storage, and other appropriate farming practices.

This forecast is updated monthly, and users are advised to monitor the updated forecasts, as there is a possibility for them to change, especially the longer lead-time forecasts. Moreover, farmers are advised to keep monitoring the weekly and monthly forecasts issued by the SAWS. Farmers are also advised to keep monitoring advisories from the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development and make the necessary adjustments accordingly.

4. Contributing Institutions and Useful Links

All the forecasts presented here are a result of the probabilistic prediction based on the ensemble members from the coupled climate model from the SAWS and two models from the NMME. Other useful links for seasonal forecasts are:

- <http://www.weathersa.co.za/home/seasonal> (Latest predictions from the SAWS for the whole of SADC)
- <https://iri.columbia.edu/our-expertise/climate/forecasts/enso/current/> (ENSO predictions from various centres)
- <https://iri.columbia.edu/our-expertise/climate/forecasts/seasonal-climate-forecasts/> (Copernicus Global forecasts)



**South African
Weather Service**



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 on 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.

From the figures there will be two ROC scores per season per variable, which indicate the score when a certain rainfall or temperature category is favoured. For example, if an area is favoured to receive above-normal rainfall, then the ROC score to look at would be the one calculated for the above-normal category (right side of the figures below). Also, make sure to look at the correct corresponding seasons indicated in the title of each map.

The aim of these maps is to add (or remove) confidence of a particular forecast over certain areas for specific seasons. Seasonal model skill over South Africa can be highly variable, highlighting the importance of knowing exactly where the forecasting system generally performs well or where it may struggle. It is important to note that the maps do not indicate where the current forecast will be correct or incorrect, but rather highlights confidence levels in the forecasting system.

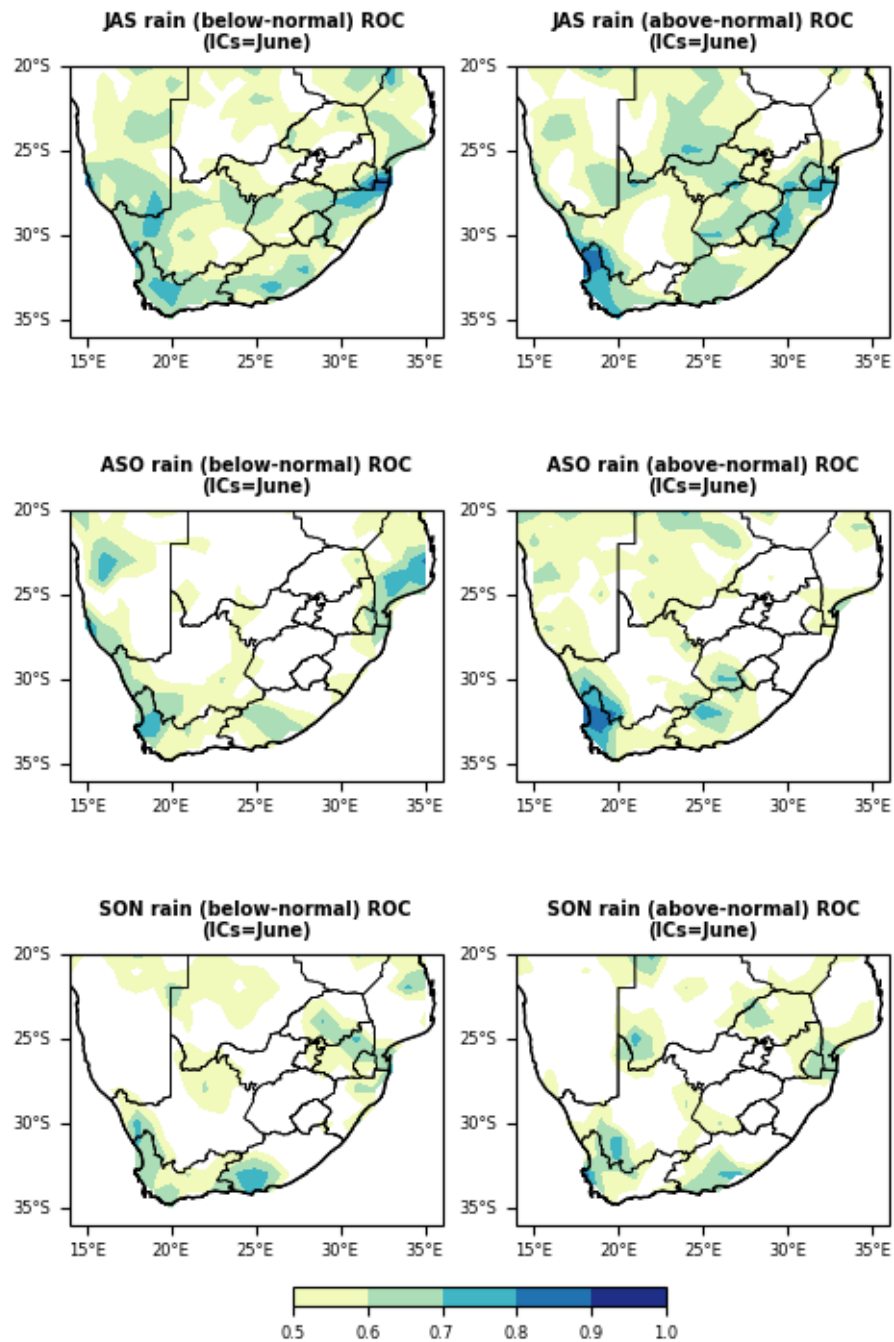


Figure A1: ROC scores for rainfall relevant to the current forecasts in Figure 1.

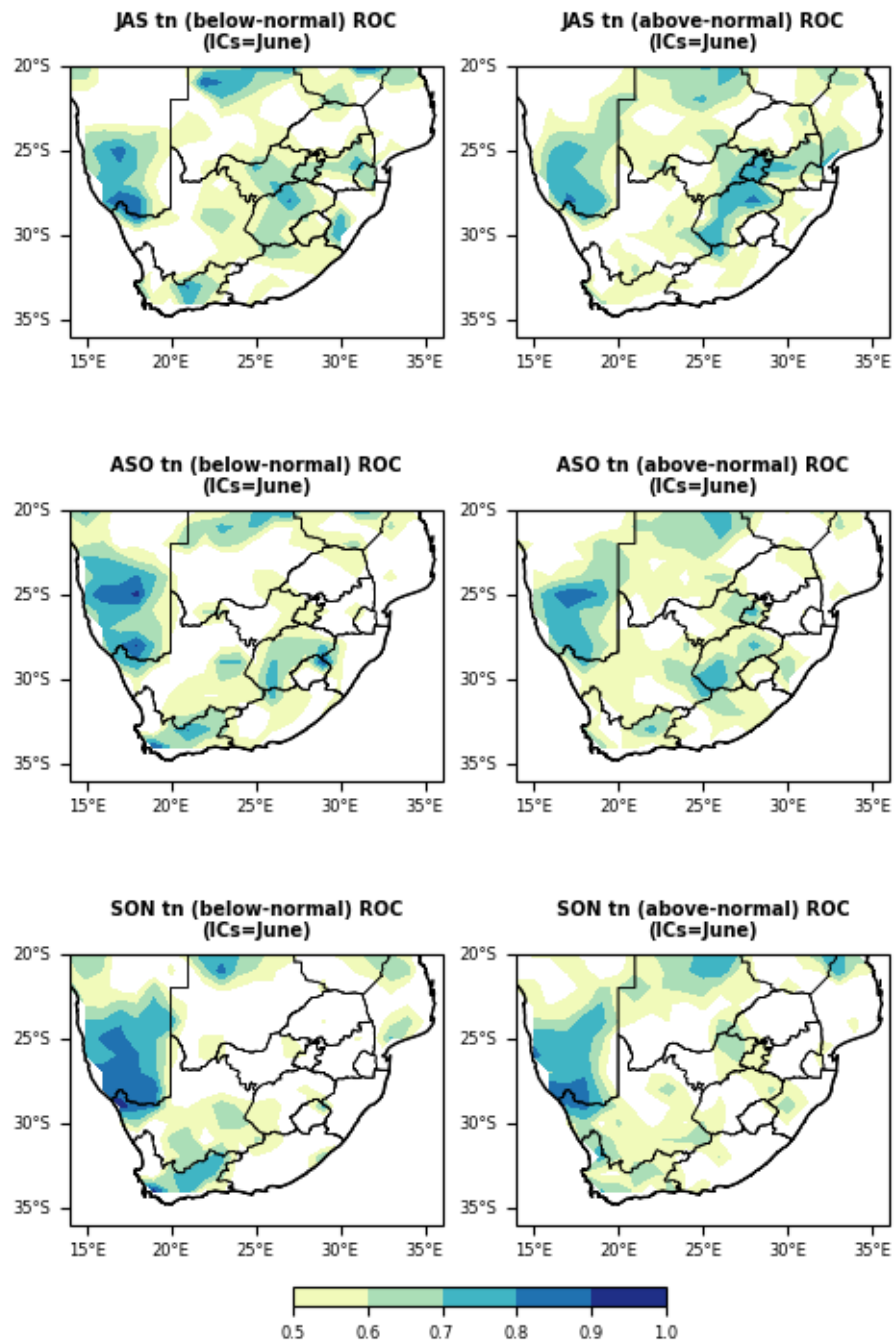


Figure A2: ROC scores for minimum temperatures relevant to the current forecasts in Figure 2.

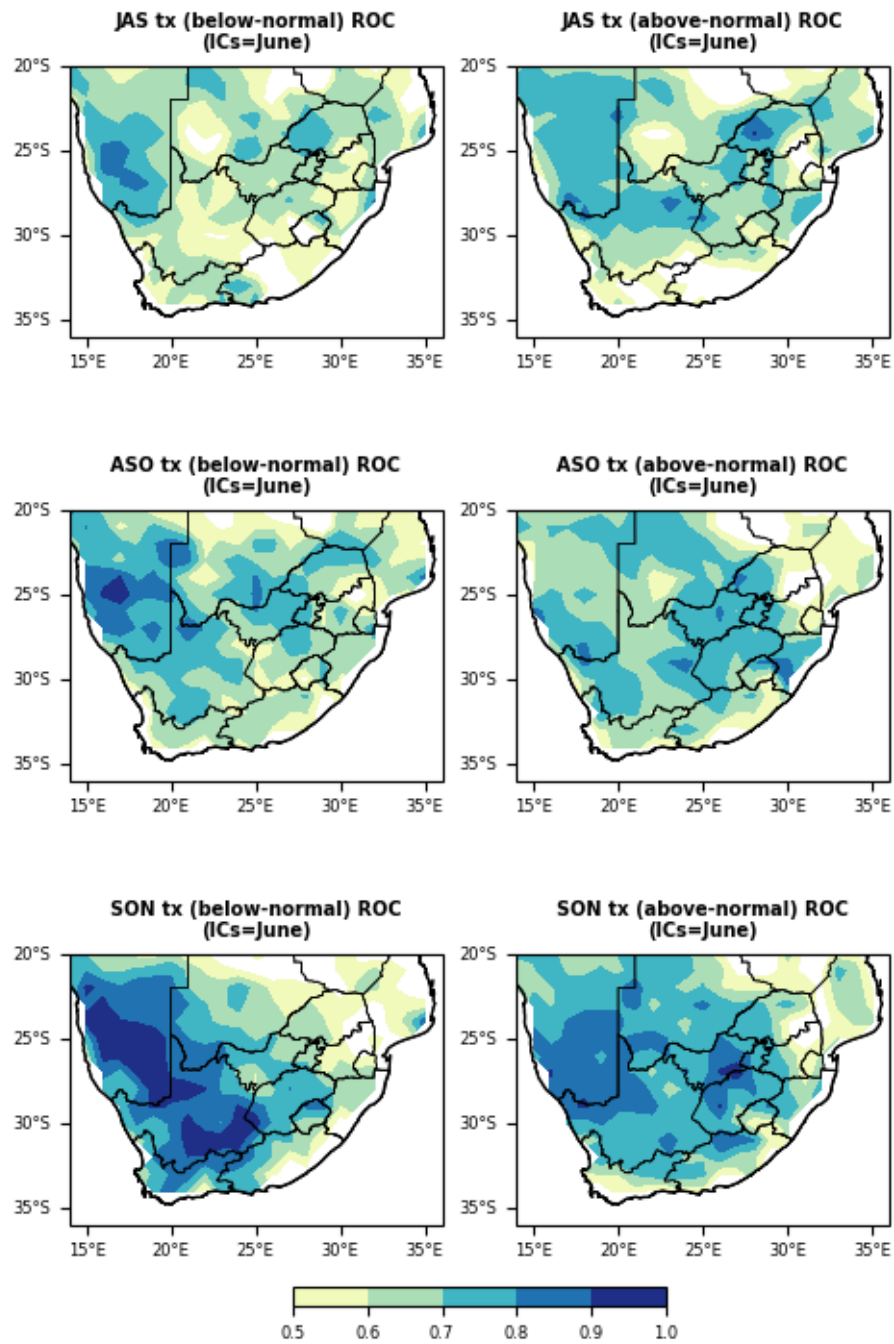


Figure A3: ROC scores for maximum temperatures relevant to the current forecasts in Figure 3.

Appendix – District Information

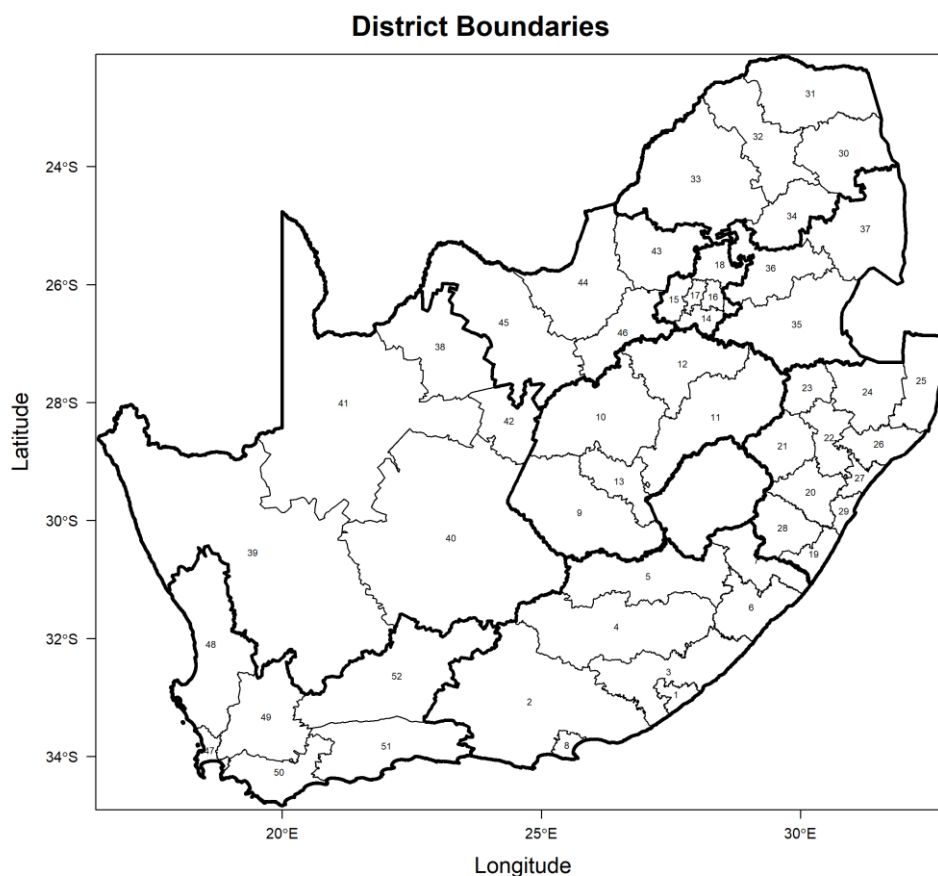


Figure A4: Local District Map with numbers corresponding to the table below with names.

Table with District Names and Numbers

Nr.	District Name	Nr.	District Name	Nr.	District Name	Nr.	District Name
1	Buffalo City	16	Ekurhuleni	31	Vhembe	46	Dr Kenneth Kaunda
2	Sarah Baartman	17	City of Johannesburg	32	Capricorn	47	City of Cape Town
3	Amathole	18	City of Tshwane	33	Waterberg	48	West Coast
4	Chris Hani	19	Ugu	34	Sekhukhune	49	Cape Winelands
5	Joe Gqabi	20	Umgungundlovu	35	Gert Sibande	50	Overberg
6	O.R. Tambo	21	Uthukela	36	Nkangala	51	Garden Route
7	Alfred Nzo	22	Umzinyathi	37	Ehlanzeni	52	Central Karoo
8	Nelson Mandela Bay	23	Amajuba	38	John Taolo Gaetsewe		
9	Xhariep	24	Zululand	39	Namakwa		
10	Lejweleputswa	25	Umkhanyakude	40	Pixley ka Seme		
11	Thabo Mofutsanyane	26	King Cetshwayo	41	Z F Mgcawu		
12	Fezile Dabi	27	iLembe	42	Frances Baard		
13	Mangaung	28	Harry Gwala	43	Bojanala		
14	Sedibeng	29	eThekweni	44	Ngaka Modiri Molema		
15	West Rand	30	Mopani	45	Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati		