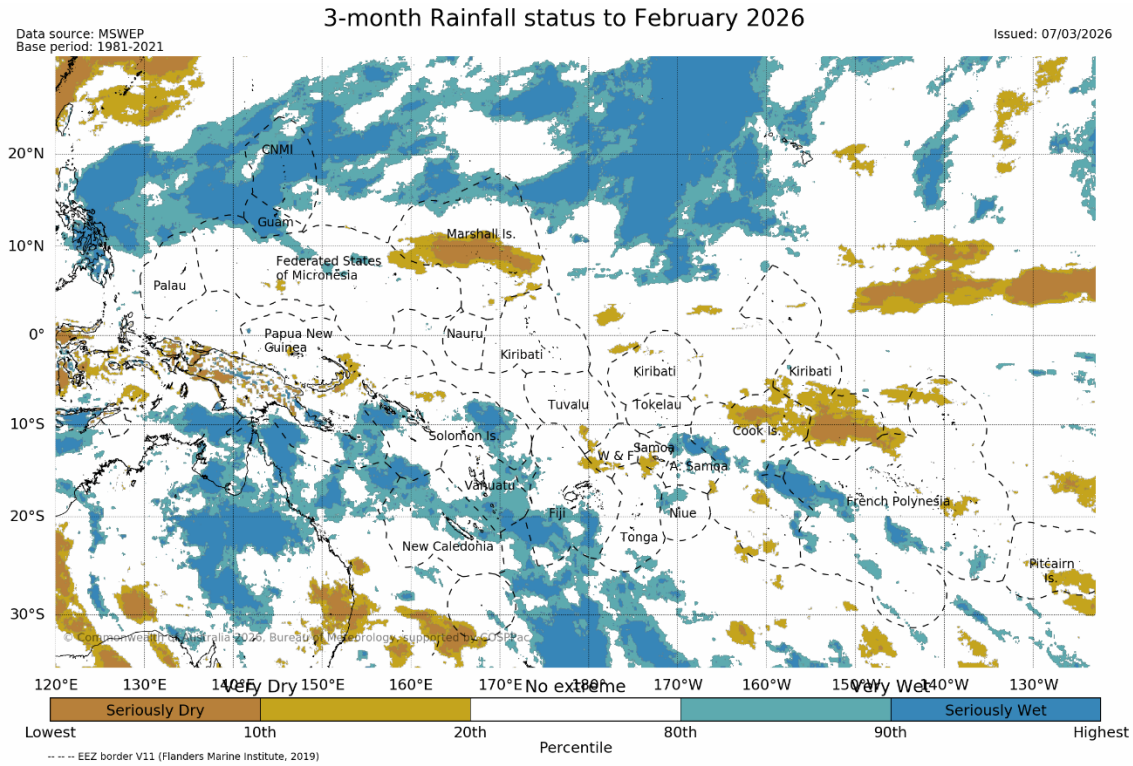
Pacific Islands Early Action Rainfall Watch
March 2026

El Niño-Southern Oscillation Status: as of 28 February 2026

The 2025–26 La Niña event is weakening and is expected to end soon, as ocean temperatures in the central tropical Pacific have been warmer than the La Niña threshold (−0.80 °C) for the past two weeks. While oceanic indicators of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) are steadily weakening, atmospheric indicators, such as trade winds, pressure and cloud patterns in the tropical Pacific remain consistent with borderline La Niña conditions. All climate models including Bureau's indicate a return to neutral ENSO conditions in early autumn, though there is some uncertainty about what may develop later in the year. The Indian Ocean Dipole is currently positive, but it is not expected to have much influence at this time of the year and is likely to weaken in the coming months.

Rainfall Status: as of 28 February 2026



The 3-month rainfall status for December 2025 to February 2026 was Very Wet or Seriously Wet over CNMI, Guam, central FSM, and far northern RMI in the north Pacific. Very Wet or Seriously Wet areas were also observed over parts of southeast PNG, western and easter Solomon Is., southern Vanuatu, New Caledonia, southern Fiji, northern American Samoa EEZ, Niue, and patches over French Polynesia, in the south Pacific.

The rainfall status was Very Dry or Seriously Dry for December 2025 to February 2026 over central RMI in the north Pacific. Very Dry or Seriously Dry areas were also observed over PNG mainland and parts of PNG Is., Wallis & Futuna, Samoa, northern and parts of southern Cook Is., Kiribati (southern Line Islands), patches over parts of central and northern French Polynesia, and Pitcairn Is., in the south Pacific.

The regional maps are available via https://access-s.clide.cloud/files/project/EAR_watch/pacific/

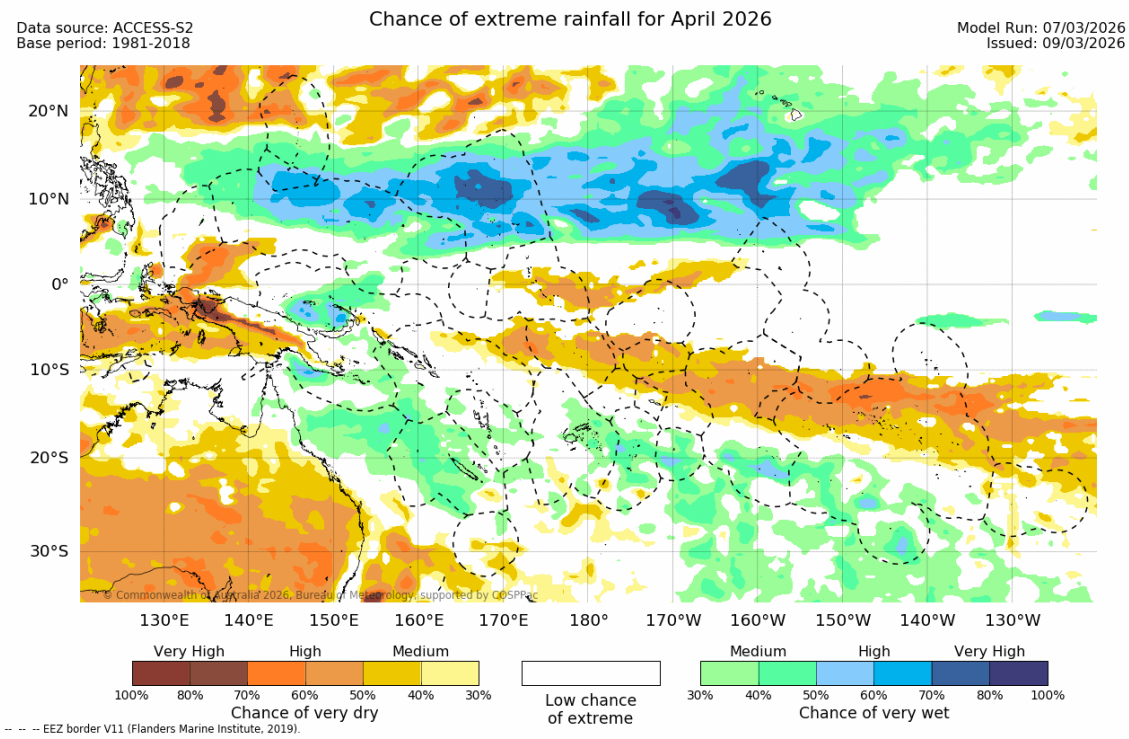
Three-month total rainfall is typically used for monitoring grasslands, shallow rooted plants and small water body (e.g. small water tanks, streams) mositure deficits. Allow for uncertainty associated with island size, topography, geology and soil type.

Rainfall Status

- Estimates of moisture/water stress are based on recent rainfall compared with historical observations using the Percentile (Decile) Index.

- Definitions: “Very Dry" = rainfall in the lowest 20% of the historical record for that location and season, “Very Wet” = rainfall in the highest 20% for that location and season, “Seriously Dry" = rainfall in the lowest 10% of the historical record for that location and season, “Seriously Wet” = rainfall in the highest 10% for that location and season.

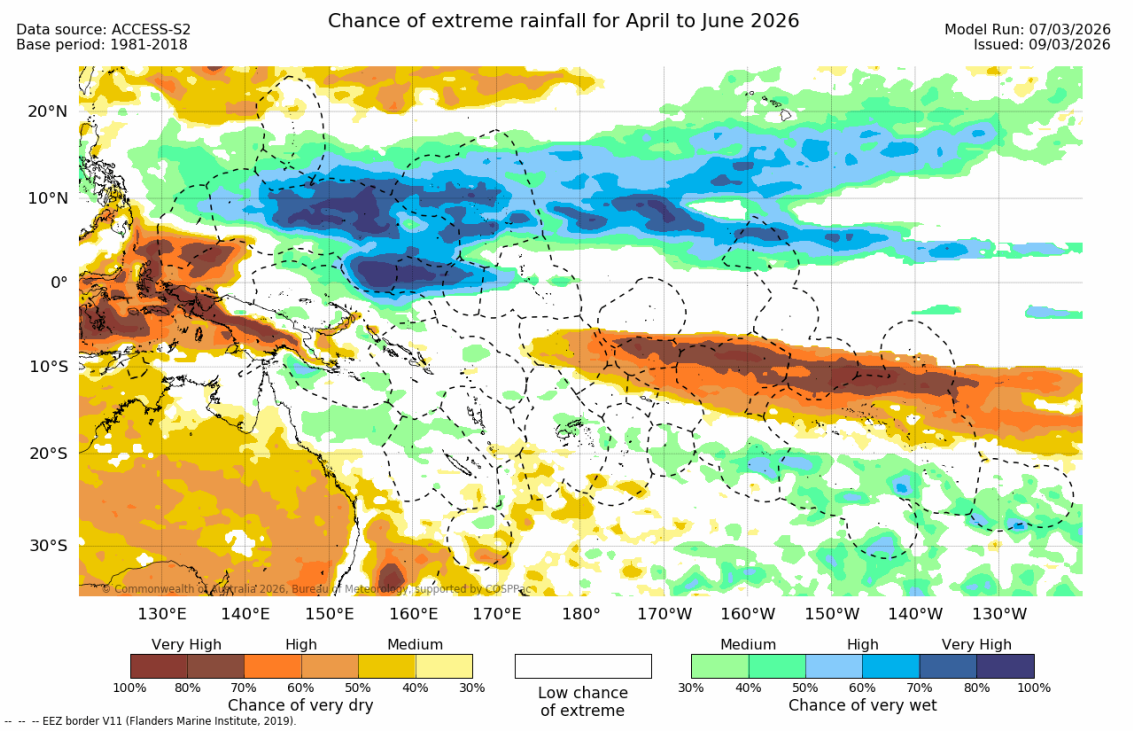
Monthly Rainfall Watch: April 2026



For April 2026, there is a medium to very high chance of rainfall in the Very Wet category (highest quintile, which includes the Seriously Wet category) over northern Palau, northern FSM, southern CNMI, Guam, and RMI in the north Pacific. There is also a medium chance of rainfall in the Very Wet category over parts of PNG Is., central Vanuatu, New Caledonia, most of Fiji, Tonga, Niue, southern Cook Is., and southern French Polynesia in the south Pacific.

There is a medium to very high chance that rainfall will be in the Very Dry category (lowest quintile, which includes the Seriously Dry category) over northern CNMI and southwest Palau in the north Pacific. There is also a medium to very high chance of rainfall in ther Very Dry category over Highlands and soethern regions of PNG, far northern Solomon Is., Tuvalu, most of Kiribati (Gilbert, far northern and southern Phoenix, and southern Line Is.), Tokelau, northern Wallis and Futuna, Samoa, American Samoa, northern and central Cook Is., central and northern French Polynesia, and parts of Pitcairn Islands in the south Pacific.

Seasonal Rainfall Watch: April – June 2026



For April to June 2026, there is a medium to very high chance of rainfall in the Very Wet category (highest quintile, which includes the Seriously Wet category) in a band stretching eastwards over northern Palau, Guam, southern CNMI, FSM, RMI and Nauru in the north Pacific. There is also another band of medium to high chance of rainfall in the Very Wet category (highest quintile, which includes the Seriously Wet category) over parts of PNG Is. EEZ, northwest New Caledonia EEZ, Fiji, central Tonga, Niue, southern Cook Is., southern French Polynesia, and parts of Pitcairn Islands in the south Pacific.

In contrast, there is a medium to very high chance of rainfall in the Very Dry category (lowest quintile, which includes the Seriously Dry category) over southern Palau and northern CNMI in the north Pacific. There is also a medium to very high chance of rainfall in ther Very Dry category in a band stretching southeastwards from Tuvalu, Kiribati (southern Phoenix and southern Line Is.), Tokelau, norrthern Wallis and Futuna, northern American Samoa, northern Cook Is., central and northern French Polynesia in the south Pacific.

Monthly and Seasonal Rainfall Watch

- Information provided has been interpreted on a divisional scale where possible as Pacific Island Countries can experience a high range of rainfall variability within a country. It is possible to have forecasts which simultaneously favour above and below normal rainfall in different parts of the one country.

- Definitions: “Chance of Very Dry" = percent chance of rainfall in the lowest 20% of the historical record for that location and season, “Chance of Very Wet” = percent chance of rainfall in the highest 20% for that location and season. Medium, High and Very High refer to the percent probability level where Very High has the highest confidence and represents the range 70% and above.

- Local Met Services should be contacted for detailed information and outlooks. This product is not to be distributed to the public or other organisations.

Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific