



IGAD CLUSTER I

October - December (OND) 2026 SEASON FORECAST

STATEMENT FROM THE SIXTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT
(IGAD) SUB-REGIONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUM FOR THE OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2026
RAINFALL SEASON: 8–10 SEPTEMBER 2026, THE CRADLE HOTEL, LODWAR, KENYA



October–December (OND) 2026 SEASONAL FORECAST FOR IGAD CLUSTER I

1. The Forum

The sixth IGAD sub-Regional Climate Outlook Forum (sub-COF6) for the October–November–December (OND) 2026 rainfall season was held from 8 to 10 September 2026 at The Cradle Hotel in Lodwar, Kenya, under the theme “Harnessing Climate Services for Early Action and Resilience in the Greater Horn of Africa Region in the Face of a Strong El Niño.”

The forum focused primarily on the Karamoja cross-border region (IGAD Cluster I). However, the tailored OND 2026 forecast, climate risk assessment, and co-production discussions also covered the Moyale Cluster (IGAD Cluster II) and the Mandera Cluster (IGAD Cluster III). It brought together climate scientists, sector experts, planners, media, peace and security actors, development partners, and community representatives including women, youth, and government representatives from Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan. Participants also included representatives from ICPAC, ICPALD, IDDRSI, CEWARN and the IGAD Cross-Border Development Facilitation Unit (CBDFU).

This forum is the sixth in a series of IGAD cluster-based climate outlook forums aimed at strengthening the use of downscaled, co-produced and cluster-level tailored climate information for sector-specific planning and anticipatory action. The series began with the first forum in the Karamoja Cluster (IGAD Cluster I), held in Lodwar, Kenya, in February 2020, followed by the second and third forums in the Marsabit–Borana Cluster (IGAD Cluster II), convened in Moyale in March 2022 and March 2023, respectively. The fourth forum was held in the Karamoja Cluster (IGAD Cluster I) in Lodwar, Kenya, in February 2025, and the fifth forum was held in Moyale in February 2026.



2. Climate Risk Context

The impacts of climate change have become more apparent in the IGAD cross-border regions through increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather and climate events, mainly recurring and severe droughts, heat waves, and floods. For example, the communities experienced consecutive droughts from late 2020 to early 2023, resulting in widespread crop failure and the deaths of millions of livestock. This was a significant loss for the region, as livestock is a vital source of food, income, and transportation. Conversely, the El Niño event and the positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) in October and November 2023 brought heavy rainfall to these regions, resulting in flooding.

Communities in the cross-border areas of Karamoja have endured a poor June to September 2026 rainy season. The failed agricultural and pastoral season reduced crop yields and livestock productivity, heightening concerns over food insecurity. Conditions in the tropical Pacific have since evolved substantially: current sea-surface temperature patterns and the projected evolution of the Niño3.4 index identify 1997 and 2023 as the closest analogue years to 2026, both of which delivered exceptionally wet OND seasons across the Greater Horn of Africa.

The OND 2026 outlook presented below should therefore be read as a reversal from the conditions of the preceding season, with the dominant risk shifting from moisture deficit to excess water.



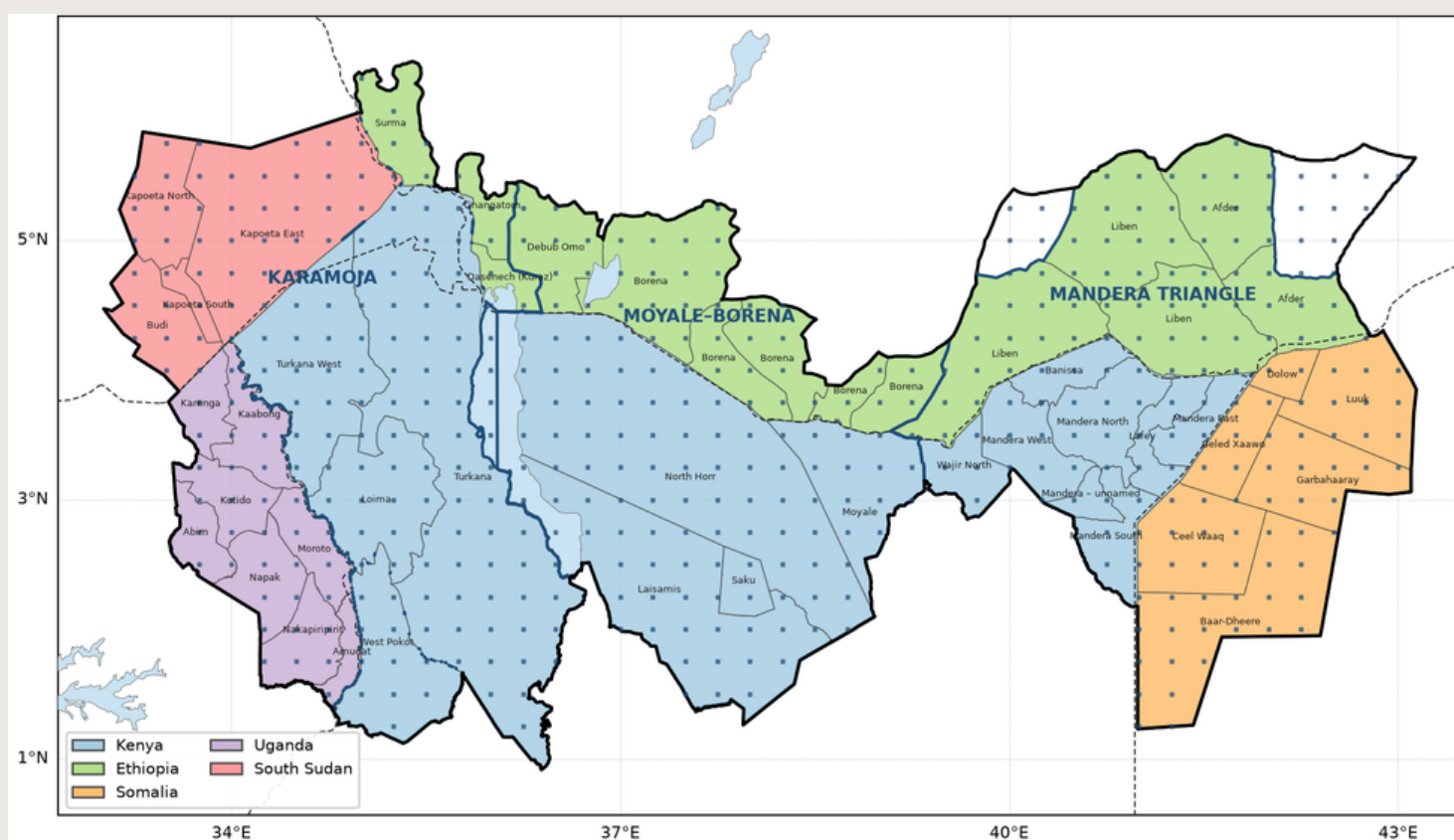


Figure 1: Map illustrating the spatial extent of the three IGAD clusters (Cluster I, Cluster II, and Cluster III).

3. Importance of the OND Season

The October–December season is the principal rainfall season for the eastern parts of the IGAD clusters and a secondary season in the west. Long-term climatology shows the season delivering broadly 100–200 mm across most of the Moyale and Manderia clusters, rising above 200 mm over the highlands of the Marsabit–Borana area, and falling below 50 mm in the dry corridor either side of Lake Turkana. Within the season, November is typically the wettest month, with October contributing moderately and December tailing across most of the domain.

The season’s contribution to the annual total varies sharply from west to east. Over most of the Karamoja cluster, OND supplies under 30% of annual rainfall, since the primary season there runs from June to September. Across the Moyale and Manderia clusters, the contribution rises to roughly 40–50%, making OND the decisive season for pasture regeneration, water availability and livestock conditions in those areas.

Local climatological thresholds define the near-normal range against which this season is assessed. Over the wetter northern and eastern parts of the clusters the near-normal band spans approximately 121–171 mm, while in the drier core around the Turkana corridor it falls to approximately 26–45 mm.

Seasonal totals below or above these bounds constitute below-normal and above-normal conditions respectively.

4. OND 2026 Climate Outlook

4.1 Rainfall Forecast

The downscaled IGAD Clusters 1, 2, and 3 OND 2026 objective forecast (Figure 2) indicates high chances of above-normal rainfall across all three clusters, with the strongest signal over the Mandera cluster. The probability of the above-normal category exceeds 90% across much of Somalia and eastern Ethiopia within Cluster III and remains above 65% across the great majority of the forecast domain. No part of the three clusters carries a dominant below-normal or near-normal signal.

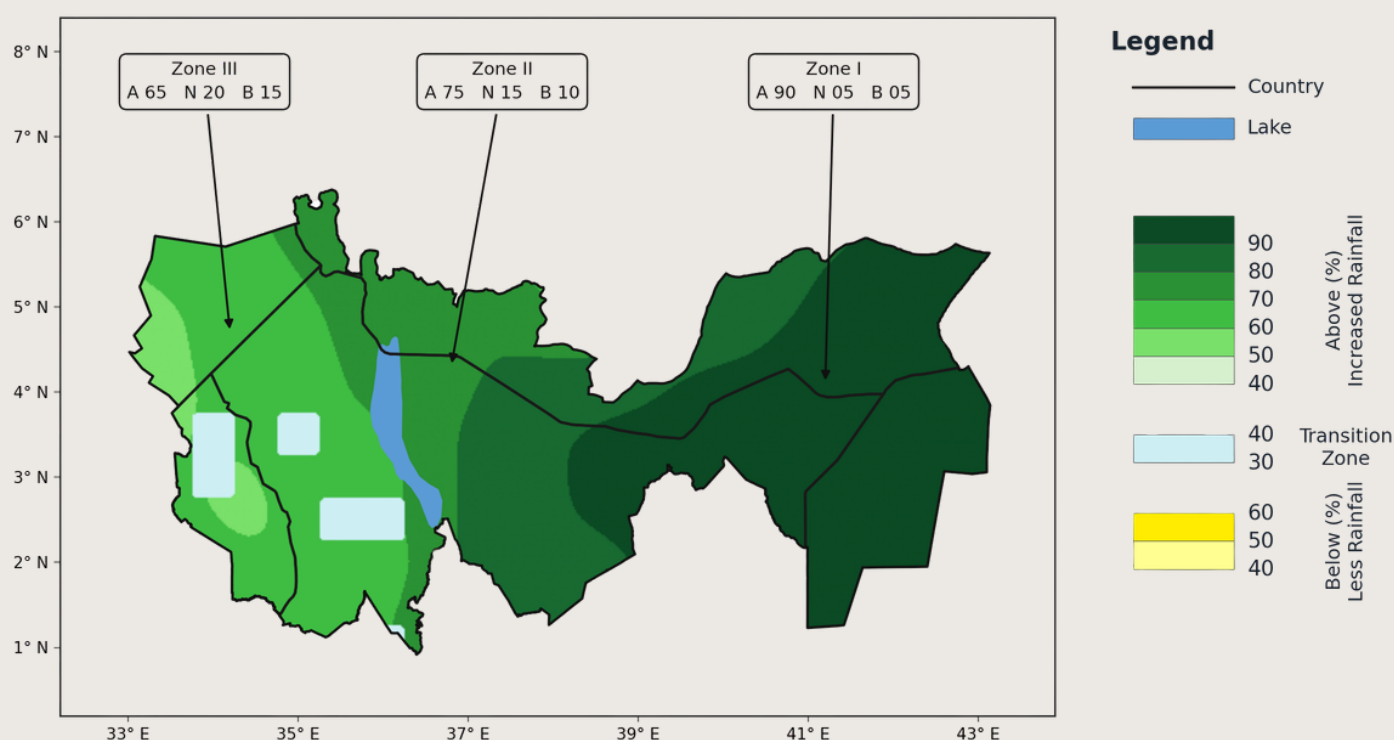


Figure 2: Objective Rainfall Outlook for the October to December 2026 Rainfall Season.

Zone I (dark green, eastern Mandera cluster): the highest probability is for the above-normal category (90%). The probabilities for the near-normal and below-normal categories are 05% and 05%, respectively.

Zone II (mid green, central clusters): the probability of the above-normal category is 75%, while the probabilities for the near-normal and below-normal categories are 15% and 10%, respectively.

Zone III (light green, Karamoja cluster): the probability of the above-normal category is 65%, while the probabilities for the near-normal and below-normal categories are 20% and 15%, respectively.

4.2 Onset of the OND 2026 Season

Analysis of the start of the rainfall season (Figure 3) indicates a marked west-to-east contrast. Climatologically, onset over most of the central and eastern clusters falls between 11 and 25 October, while the western part of the Karamoja cluster experiences a continuation of the June to September season rather than a distinct OND onset.

Over the eastern parts of the Karamoja region, onset is normally expected in the last week of September. For OND 2026, the start of the season is likely to be early over the central to eastern parts of the clusters, by around 7 to 14 days, and delayed over the Karamoja cluster, by 21 days or more in the area west of Lake Turkana.

OND Onset Climatology

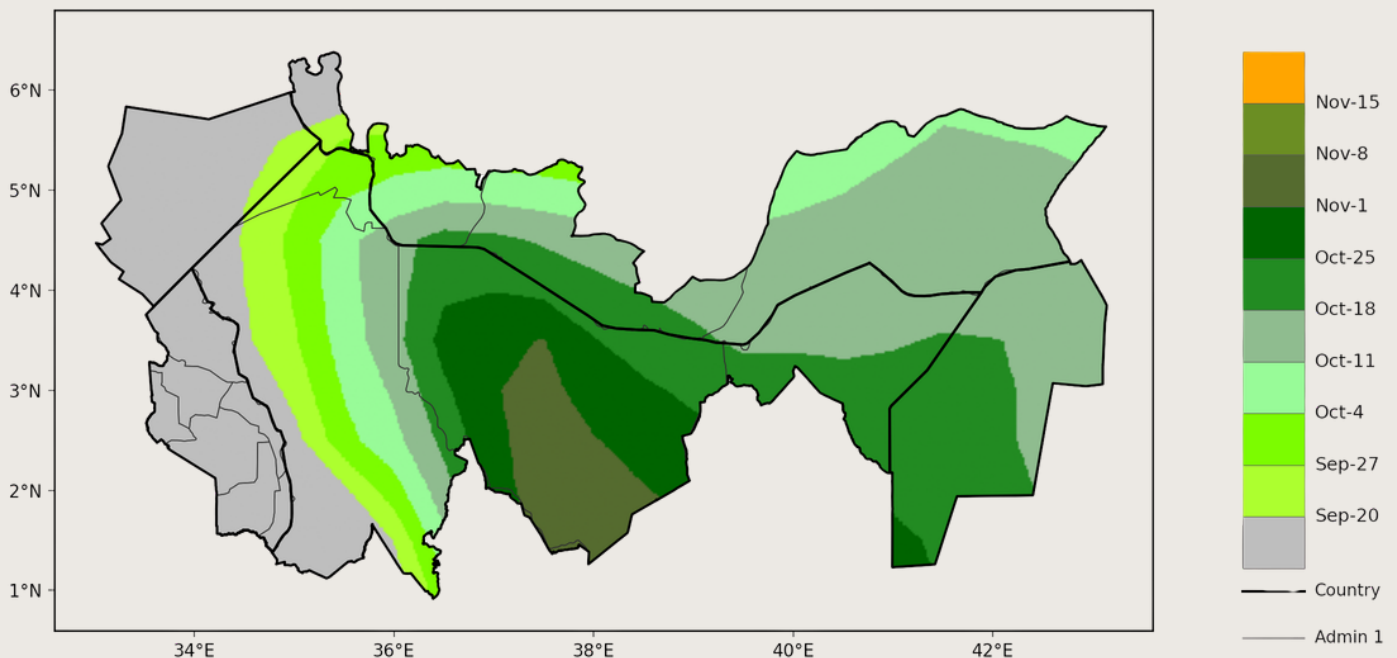


Figure 3a: Onset Forecast for the October to December 2026 season.

OND 2026 Onset Ensemble-Mean Anomaly

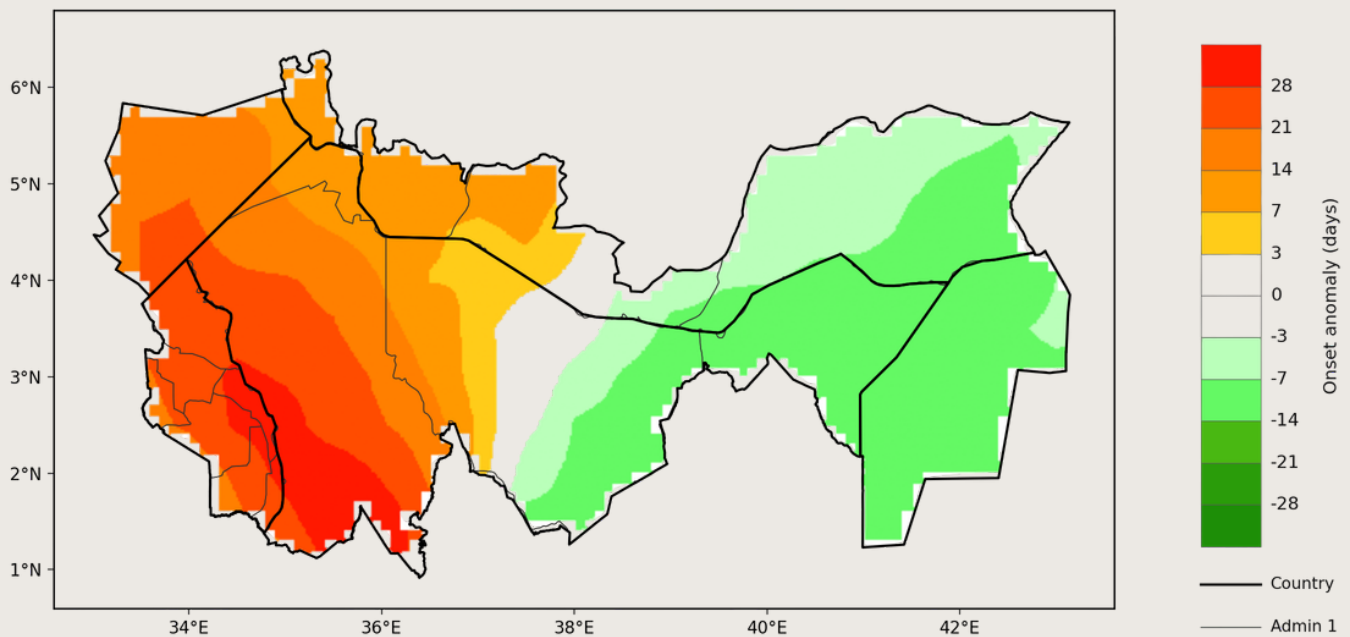


Figure 3b: Forecast onset anomaly for OND 2026, in days relative to climatology. Positive values indicate a later start and negative values indicate an earlier start.

4.3 Standardised Precipitation Index and Probability of Exceedance

The three-month Standardised Precipitation Index for the season (Figure 4) is positive across essentially the whole domain, averaging +0.76, with 71% of the area at or above +0.5 and less than 2% below -0.5. Moderately wet conditions dominate the eastern parts of the region covering Somalia and eastern Ethiopia, while the west around 33–35°E is the most mixed, with values close to normal.

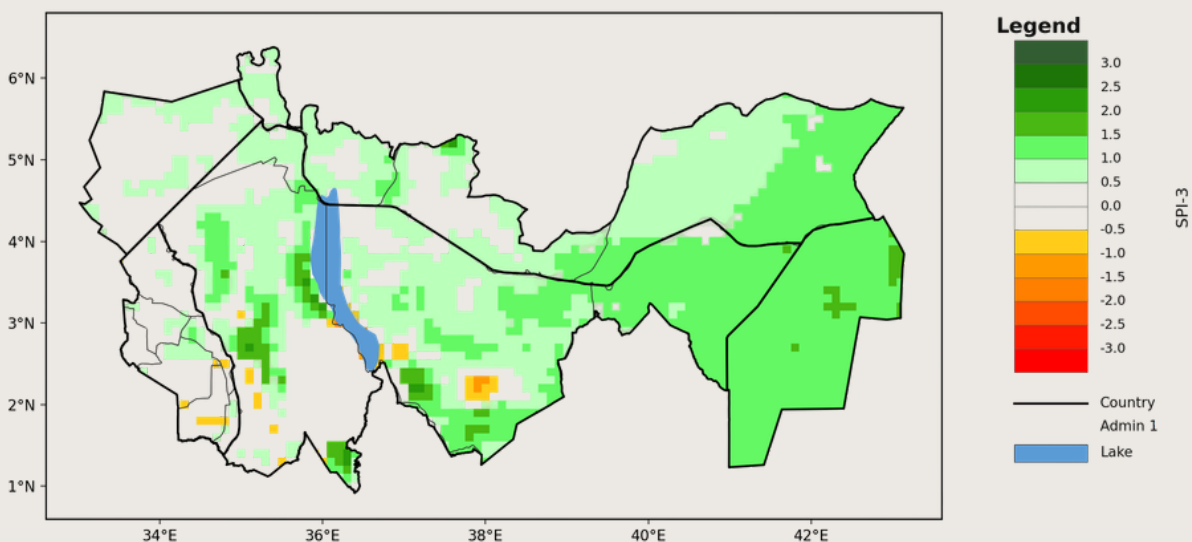


Figure 4: Three-month Standardised Precipitation Index for October to December 2026.

Probability of exceedance maps for fixed rainfall amounts (Figure 5) places the show a high chance of exceeding 150 and 200mm over most parts of the region. The chances of exceeding 300mm and 400mm are confined to the Moyale Borana cross- border areas and Mandera cluster in Somalia and Kenya. Southeastern Somalia, by contrast, holds above 90% even at 400 mm. The dry corridor either side of Lake Turkana is the clear exception, remaining close to zero at every threshold: although that area is forecast well above its own normal, its climatological totals are low enough that even 150 mm remains out of reach.

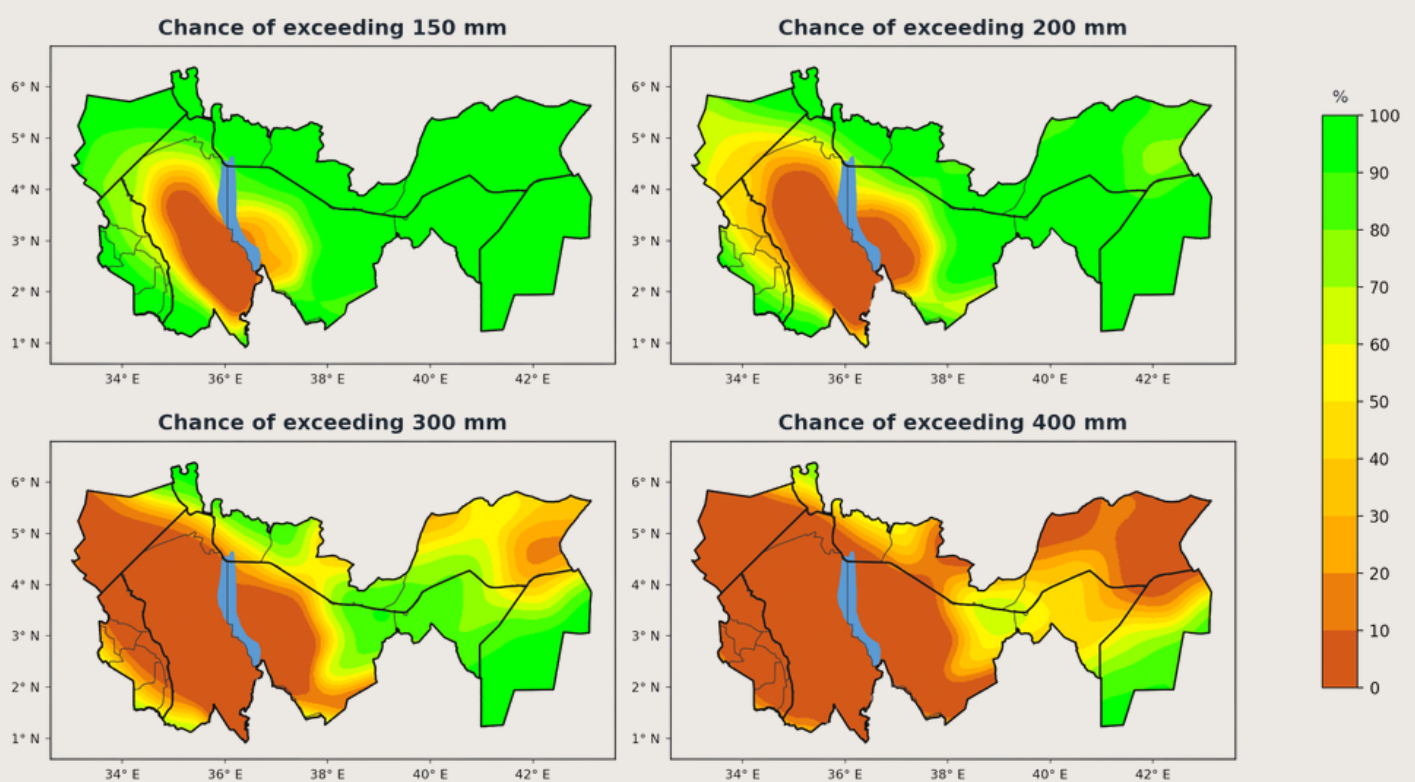


Figure 5: Probability of exceeding fixed seasonal rainfall totals, OND 2026.

4.4 Temperature

The seasonal temperature forecast for October to December 2026 (Figure 6) indicates an increased likelihood of warmer-than-average surface temperatures across IGAD Clusters I, II, and III. Probabilities of above-normal temperatures lie between 65% and 75% across the domain.

Elevated temperatures may increase evapotranspiration rates, exacerbate moisture stress, and heighten risks to water resources, livestock health, and human well-being.

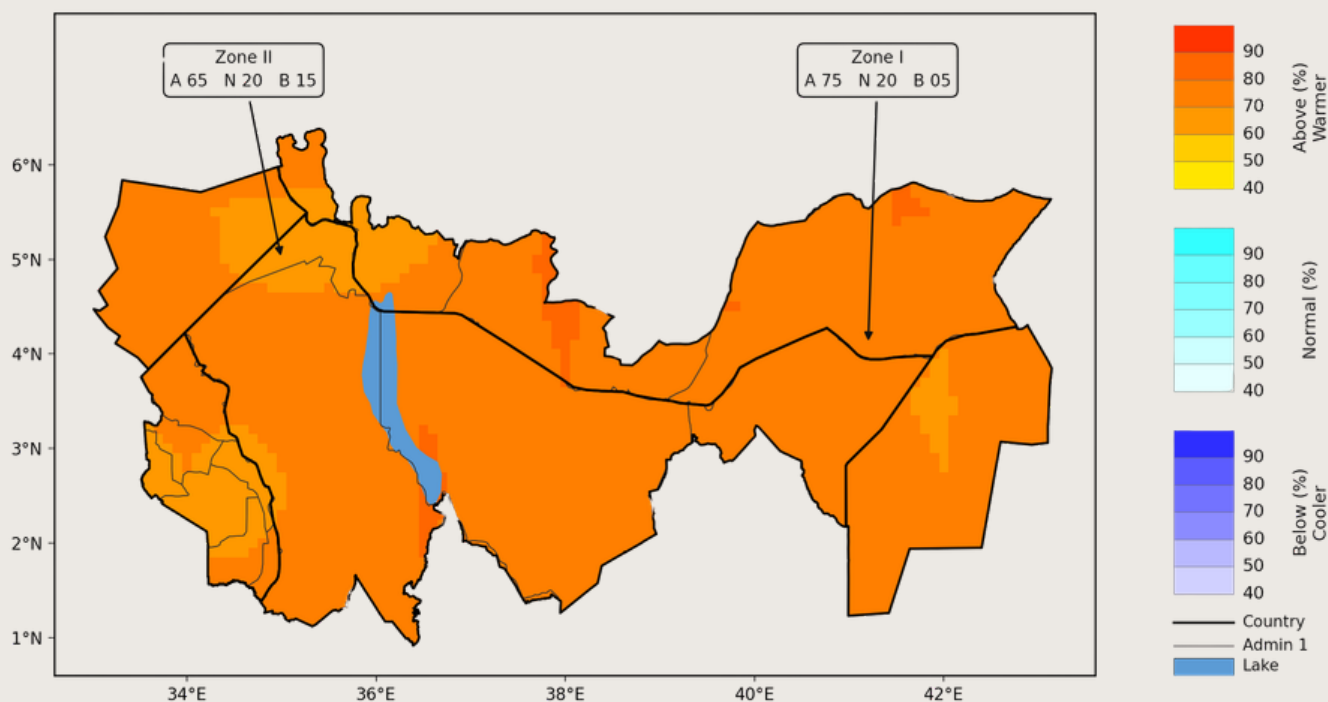


Figure 6: Probability forecast of mean surface temperatures for October to December 2026.

Zone I (orange) increased likelihood of above-normal (i.e., warmer) mean temperatures. The probabilities shown (above = 75%; normal = 20%; below = 05%) are valid for the corresponding shading interval.

Zone II (light orange) in this area the highest probability is also for above normal (65%). The probabilities of normal and below normal are 20% and 15%, respectively.

Note on interpretation

The numbers for each zone indicate the probabilities of rainfall and mean temperature in each of the three categories: above-, near-, and below-normal. For example, in Zone I of Figure 2 there is a 90% probability of rainfall occurring in the above-normal category, a 05% probability of near-normal, and a 05% probability of below-normal. In Zone I of Figure 6, the shading indicates a 75% probability of mean temperature occurring in the above-normal (i.e., warmer) category, a 20% probability of near-normal, and a 05% probability of below-normal (i.e., cooler).

Sector implication and advisories for the expected October to December 2026 rainfall season in IGAD cluster I



Agriculture and Food Security

Impacts

While October–December (OND) is not the main cropping season in most parts of the cluster, with the primary planting season generally occurring from March to September under a unimodal pattern, the expected El Niño-enhanced rains present an important opportunity for farmers. This is expected to improve soil moisture availability, support short-maturing and perennial crops, and replenish water pans, dams, rivers and other community water points. Improved pasture and forage will benefit livestock-dependent households and farmers relying on animal traction for land preparation, while regeneration of indigenous vegetation, traditional vegetables and wild fruits, and opportunities for water harvesting and storage are expected to strengthen household nutrition and food security. The season also opens opportunities for crop diversification and for expanding cultivated area where soil moisture and water availability permit — including cereals in Turkana and West Pokot, maize in Uganda, sorghum and vegetables in South Sudan, and irrigated production along the Omo River in Ethiopia.

However, the season also presents major risks. Waterlogging and flooding are expected in flood-prone agricultural areas, particularly Turkana South and Loima, swampy areas and locations along the Kanyangareng and Omo Rivers, and Kapoeta East, South and North. Landslides and soil erosion are likely in the highland areas of West Pokot, and hailstorms may cause physical damage to crops. Warm and humid conditions will increase the incidence of pests and fungal diseases, including blight and mildew. Additional risks include soil erosion and nutrient leaching from excessive runoff, increased post-harvest losses in the West Pokot highlands due to high humidity and drying difficulties, and disrupted market access from flooding and poor road conditions. Caution is also warranted where cereals are recommended, as seasonal totals in parts of the cluster are likely to remain around 150 mm with limited likelihood of higher amounts.

Advisories

- Promote soil and water conservation practices, including raised beds, contour planting, terracing, mulching, cover cropping, minimum or low-tillage practices, and other erosion-control measures to conserve moisture and limit nutrient loss.
- Encourage farmers to take advantage of the available rainfall using timely- and fast-maturing varieties suited to each area — maize (DH04, MM3 in Uganda and Kenya), early-maturing and traditional sorghum varieties (South Sudan), beans (Nyota), cowpeas and pigeon peas, and traditional or indigenous vegetables.
- Promote water harvesting and storage through farm ponds, water pans, zai pits, half-moons and bioswales, and desilt and maintain drainage systems to improve water flow and reduce waterlogging and flooding.
- Raise awareness on safe land-use practices, particularly avoiding cultivation along riverbanks, in flood-prone areas and on steep slopes, given the elevated flood and landslide risk this season.

Sector implication and advisories for the expected October to December 2026 rainfall season in IGAD cluster I



Agriculture and Food Security

Advisories

- Promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM), prioritising preventive and biological or organic control measures as the first line of defence against the pest and fungal disease pressure expected under warm, humid conditions.
- Encourage timely harvesting and proper post-harvest management, including adequate drying and storage in well-ventilated, elevated facilities such as silos and hermetic or PICS bags, to limit post-harvest losses in humid highland areas.
- Encourage the governments of Kenya, Uganda Ethiopia and South Sudan to invest in irrigation and water infrastructure to strengthen agricultural resilience to increasing climate extremes.



Sector implication and advisories for the expected October to December 2026 rainfall season in IGAD cluster I



Water

Impacts

The OND 2026 water outlook for the Karamoja cluster is dominated by positive recharge effects. Above-normal rainfall is expected to replenish seasonal rivers and other open water sources, recharge groundwater, and increase water availability across Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan. Improved availability should shorten trekking distances, lower the cost of water, and ease the social stresses associated with water scarcity, including resource-based tension and the time burden borne by women and girls. The recharge of groundwater, especially in Turkana County, will most likely reduce the salinity of water and lead to more palatable drinking water and hence reduce the need for de-salination.

The season nevertheless carries significant downside risks. Heavy rainfall and runoff will increase sedimentation and siltation of open water sources such as pans and dams, reducing their storage capacity. Water infrastructure located along rivers is vulnerable to flood damage, and deterioration in water quality is expected, particularly in Uganda. Outbreaks of water-borne disease are likely where sanitation is poor and sources become contaminated. In Kenya, the continued backflow of Lake Turkana threatens water infrastructure, irrigation schemes and settlements in the lake zone.

Advisories

- Optimize water usage while availability is high and encourage rainwater harvesting at household, community and institutional levels to make full use of the season's recharge.
- Protect open water sources and restore storage capacity by desilting pans and dams and putting in place sediment management measures such as check dams and silt traps.
- Preposition borehole repair capacity by procuring and decentralizing fast-moving spare parts, activating borehole rapid response teams, and repairing broken-down boreholes before the peak of the season.
- Drill and equip alternative water sources away from rivers, and site new water infrastructure away from the flood zones of Lake Turkana to reduce exposure to flooding and back flow.
- Safeguard water quality and public health by procuring and decentralizing water treatment chemicals, increasing water quality monitoring, and sensitizing communities on proper hygiene and water purification, including treatment and boiling.
- Sensitize communities living along the shorelines of Lake Turkana to stay away during the OND season to avoid possible loss of life and livelihoods.

Sector implication and advisories for the expected October to December 2026 rainfall season in IGAD cluster I



Livestock

Impacts

The forecast above-normal rainfall across the Karamoja cluster is expected to deliver abundant pasture and browse, increased water availability, and a marked improvement in livestock condition — body condition scores of 4–5 out of 5, higher milk production, and improved lambing, calving and kidding rates. Livestock prices are expected to rise, mobility to fall, and resource-based conflicts to ease. Wetter conditions should also reduce outbreaks of certain diseases such as FMD, CBPP, CCPP and PPR, and create a favourable window for vaccination against transboundary animal diseases (TADs) and for restocking. The workload of women, girls and boys in fetching water and searching for pasture is expected to decline.

At the same time, excessive rainfall carries substantial animal health and rangeland risks. Increased outbreaks are anticipated for enterotoxaemia, tick-borne diseases, foot rot, anthrax, trypanosomiasis, PPR, worm infestations, Rift Valley fever, and respiratory diseases including CCPP and CBPP, alongside the possible emergence of new animal diseases. Livestock mortality from floods and lightning is likely, and waterlogging of lowland rangelands and pasture lands will reduce production and productivity, forcing migration to higher rangelands and increasing resource-based conflict. In the localised areas that receive near- or below-normal rainfall, livestock mortality, declining body condition, lower prices, increased movement and reduced milk production remain a concern, together with heightened disease risk from compromised immunity and from animal movement.

Advisories

- Strengthen livestock disease surveillance, vaccination campaigns and parasite control, including deworming, spraying, surveillance and advisory services, and mobilise resources for veterinary outreach ahead of the wet-season disease peak.
 - Promote pasture and fodder conservation and planting by agro-pastoralists, supported by the supply of pasture seeds and planting materials from government and development partners, and by irrigation-based fodder production, to build reserves for the subsequent dry season.
 - Rehabilitate and expand livestock water infrastructure, through rehabilitation and construction of water harvesting facilities, soil and water conservation of rangelands, and judicious use and protection of existing livestock water facilities.
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Sector implication and advisories for the expected October to December 2026 rainfall season in IGAD cluster I



Livestock

Advisories

- Support restocking taking advantage of the favourable pasture and water conditions, and promote the uptake of livestock insurance to protect against subsequent shocks.
- Encourage pastoralists and livestock traders to take advantage of improved livestock body condition and increased marketable animals expected during the favourable El Niño rains by strategically increasing domestic and export trade while market conditions remain favourable.
- Strengthen community awareness and early preparedness for the anticipated El Niño OND rains, including timely relocation of livestock from flood-prone areas, fodder production and conservation, vaccination and parasite control, rainwater harvesting, protection of livestock and water infrastructure, and preparedness for disease outbreaks, flooding and resource-based conflicts.
- Activate and strengthen rangeland management committees and facilitate peace-building and resource-sharing initiatives to manage grazing pressure and reduce potential resource-based conflict, particularly along migration corridors and in cross-border grazing areas.
- Sustain dissemination of meteorological information and alerts to pastoral and agro-pastoral communities so that herd movement, vaccination and destocking decisions are taken ahead of flood and disease peaks.



Sector implication and advisories for the expected October to December 2026 rainfall season in IGAD cluster I



Disaster Risk Management

Impacts

The OND 2026 Disaster Risk Management outlook for the Karamoja cluster is dominated by flood risk. Flash and riverine flooding is prioritised as the leading hazard across all four countries: in Turkana (Lapur and the Lake Zone, Lokichoggio, Nanam/Songot, Kakuma, Letea, Township, Kangatotha, Kerio, Katilu, Kaputir, Lobokat and Kapedo/Napeitom wards), in West Pokot (Kapchok, Riwo, Chepareria, Batei, Weiwei and Lomut), across Napak, Nakapiripirit, Kotido, Kaabong, Karenga and Abim in Uganda, and throughout the Greater Kapoeta counties of South Sudan (Lomuta, Nadapal, Nadapakele, Lopesia, Kodoukori, Rei, Lolipan, Kuron, Lomaret and Nateregat). Daily rainfall in excess of 20 mm, and rising water levels on the Nadapal River following rain in the highlands, are the operative early warning triggers. Continued backflow of Lake Turkana threatens Kerio, Kangatotha, Kalokol and the Lake Zone, affecting learning institutions, health facilities, businesses, roads, irrigation schemes and landing beaches.

Secondary hazards are widespread. Landslides are likely in Upper Weiwei, Tapach, Lelan and Upper Batei; rock falls in Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Kaabong; hailstorms in Abim; lightning strikes across Lelan, Tapach, Kodich, Kapenguria, Siyoi, Alale, Weiwei and Sekerr as well as all districts of Karamoja; and strong winds and sandstorms in Turkana Central and East and across Karamoja. Disease outbreaks affecting both people and livestock are anticipated cluster-wide - malaria, pneumonia and water-borne disease across Karamoja, malaria and livestock disease in Dassenech and Nyangatom, and outbreaks driven by overcrowding at mining sites and cattle camps in Nadapal, Lomuta, Rei, Nakeke, Lokorumor and Nalemor. Heat stress is also effector to affect Kauto, Narus, Mogos, Jie, Kapoeta and Kuron, and county-wide in Turkana and West Pokot. Residual drought stress persists in IPC Phase 4 wards of West Pokot (Kodich, Suam, Riwo, Mnagei, Kapchok, Kiwawa and Batei) and poor forage remains a concern in parts of Turkana.

Vulnerable groups across all hazards include pregnant and lactating women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities or chronic illness, pastoralists and artisanal miners.

Advisories

- Assess and map flood hotspot areas and disseminate flood early warning messages to last-mile communities, advising households in identified hotspots to move to secure high grounds, to avoid crossing flooded rivers, and to drain stagnant water and clear waterways; advise pastoralists to avoid grazing within riverine zones.
- Preposition humanitarian supplies including non-food items, food, dignity kits, water treatment reagents, nutrition and hygiene supplies, at strategic locations such as Lokitaung, Kakuma, Lodwar, Lokichar and Lokori, and establish command centres, search-and-rescue and evacuation teams, and psycho-social support capacity.

Sector implication and advisories for the expected October to December 2026 rainfall season in IGAD cluster I



Disaster Risk Management

Advisories

- Protect and climate-proof critical infrastructure by opening clogged drainage channels, install lightning arresters at homes and institutions, reinforce buildings, and repair or replace damaged power poles.
- Prepare for disease outbreaks through disease surveillance and reporting, vaccination campaigns and prepositioning of drugs for both people and livestock, distribution of treated mosquito nets and water-guard tablets, maintenance of drug stocks, training of Village/Community Health Teams, and establishment of isolation areas where needed.
- Manage Lake Turkana backflow and displacement by identifying and mapping higher ground, relocating affected communities, diversifying and re-establishing lost livelihoods, siting infrastructure away from the flood zone, and re-establishing schools, health facilities and social services in relocated areas such as Dassenech.
- Sustain drought response in the residual drought and poor-forage areas through market-based livestock off-take, supplementary feeding, fodder distribution, water trucking, rehabilitation of strategic water infrastructure, pasture surveillance and migration-corridor monitoring.
- Issue heat advisories on hydration, remaining indoors and under shade during peak heat, wearing light clothing, and minimising outdoor working hours, and expand water access through borehole drilling and construction of water reservoirs.
- Strengthen DRM coordination by activating rapid response teams and contingency plans across water, health, infrastructure and peace and security, strengthening the cross-border early warning technical working group, holding continuous disaster coordination meetings, providing contingency funds, and sensitising responders on gender, protection and inclusion.



Sector implication and advisories for the expected October to December 2026 rainfall season in IGAD cluster I



Peace and Conflict Prevention

Impacts

The OND outlook for the peace and conflict sector portends a spike in conflict and insecurity incidents as well as human safety concerns for the most vulnerable groups. This follows the predicted above normal rains whose onset is expected in late September to early October. The current peace and conflict situation across the cluster sub ecosystems is categorized as moderate and contained with no major incidents reported following the prolonged drought that has compelled the pastoralist communities to embrace peaceful co-existence and sharing of depleted resources. However, tensions remain high among the hosting communities in the western and northern flanks of the cluster in Kaabong, in Uganda, Buya in South Sudan and as far as Surma in Ethiopia.

With the anticipated onset of the rains in October however, the migrating and pasture seeking kraals are expected to be returning to their native grazing areas. The return migration is usually characterized by theft of livestock from the host communities in retribution of stock losses inflicted by the host communities through theft during the extended stays, triggering a series of retaliatory incidents that will most likely characterise the better part of the onset season across the cluster. Other incidents anticipated include farmer -pastoralist conflicts between the farming communities who would have opened gardens for planting and the returning kraals. There is anticipated conflict among the fishers in lake Turkana between the Dassenech and Turkana as the lake water levels rise thereby reducing fishing spaces.

Advisories

- Organizations engaged in peacebuilding interventions are encouraged to step up their engagement with peace structures including local and cross-border peace committees to start peace dialogue processes. These should specifically target elders and youth in the age brackets of 17-15 years who are considered more conflict active.
- Critical areas for consideration include the Turkana and Dassenech communities and Turkana - Nyangatom.
- It is important to engage with the Beach Management Unit (BMU) of lake Turkana in Todonyang in Kenya and the fishing committee on the Ethiopian side with the aim of providing the Ethiopian communities with better fishing gear which they so much yearn for and regularly steal from the Kenyan counterparts.
- It is crucial to map out the critical conflict hotspots like around river Nakuwa along the border areas of Nyangatom and Turkana and Dassenech and to engage the communities and structures there in active dialogue.
- The formal and informal peace structures need to be revitalized especially in areas where the transition of the season is likely to present challenges in livelihood competition -farmer versus pastoralist and host against returning migrating communities like in Kaabong.



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Contributions and Partners

The Sixth Sub-Regional Climate Outlook Forum (Sub-COF6) for IGAD Cluster I (Karamoja Cluster) was jointly organized by IGAD's Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), the IGAD Centre for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD), CEWARN, IDDRSSI, the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD), South Sudan Meteorological Agency, Department of Meteorological Services-Uganda, the Ethiopian Meteorological Institute (EMI), and Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP),.





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