REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORESTRY

STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

KENYA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

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CLIMATE OUTLOOK FOR MARCH APRIL MAY 2026 SEASON IN LAIKIPIA COUNTY

HIGHLIGHTS

The expected March April May (MAM) season or the Long Rains for the year 2026 in Laikipia county is predicted to be Normal tending to Above Normal compared to the Long-Term Mean (LTM) amounts for the Season. The forecasting model indicates fair to good rainfall distribution patterns across the county. Warmer than the average temperatures are predicted over most places. The MAM2026 season forecast therefore comes as early warning/advisory to all stakeholders for decision making and resilience capacity within the social and economic spectrum.

REVIEW OF THE OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER (OND) 2025 RAINFALL PERFORMANCE

The analysis for the OND2025 rainfall indicates that most places in Laikipia county recorded **below average rainfall** compared with the **OND** climatology (1991 – 2020)

The Below Normal **(BN**) rainfall performance was mainly attributed to;

(1) Observed **Weak La Nina** conditions over the Central and Eastern Equatorial Pacific Ocean during the season
(2) Observed Negative Indian Ocean Dipole (-ve IOD) that persistent in the western equatorial Indian Ocean region

The weak La Nina coupled with the –ve IOD are mainly associated with depressed OND rainfall over parts of the Eastern Africa region

The **Distribution** of the OND2025 rains was poor. Most places experienced prolonged **dry spells** with interspersed episodes of isolated heavy storms especially in the month of November and December ***(Fig 1).***

Overall stations in Laikipia West performed better compared to the stations in Laikipa North and East. The highest season total of **485mm** was recorded in Ol Pejeta_Kamok station in Laikipia East. Kimanjo Primary School in Laikipia North ended up with a total of **22.7mm** in the entire season. This was probably because Kimanjo observed no **rainfall day** in the peak month November ***(Fig 2).***

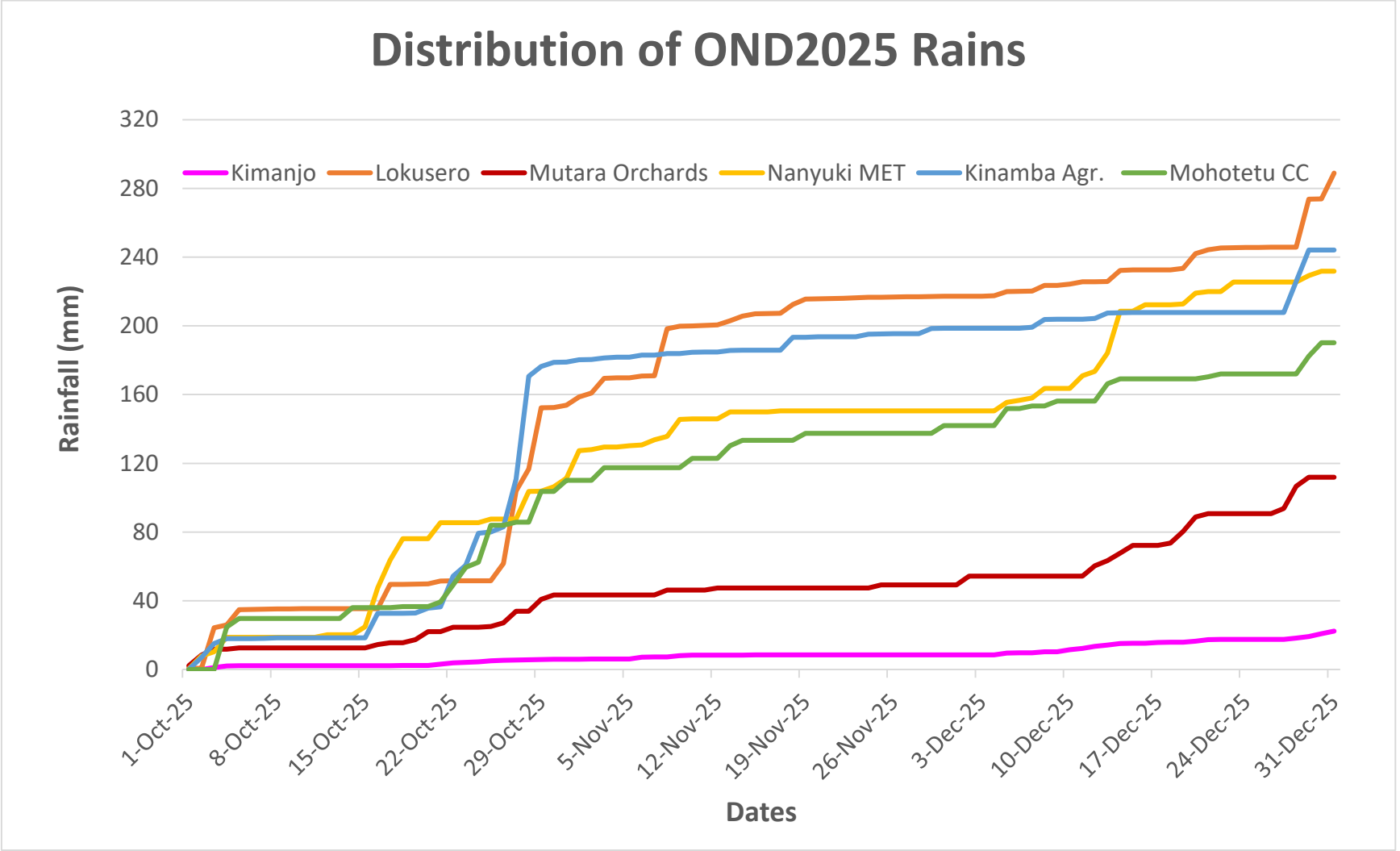


Figure 1: Observed Distribution, Onsets and Cessation of the OND2025 Rains

Fig 1; See the major onsets were observed between the 15th and 29th October. Most stations observed very little precipitation in November ***(flat curve)***. Note the rising curve in the last week of December indicating the rains that came after a very extended long dry spell.

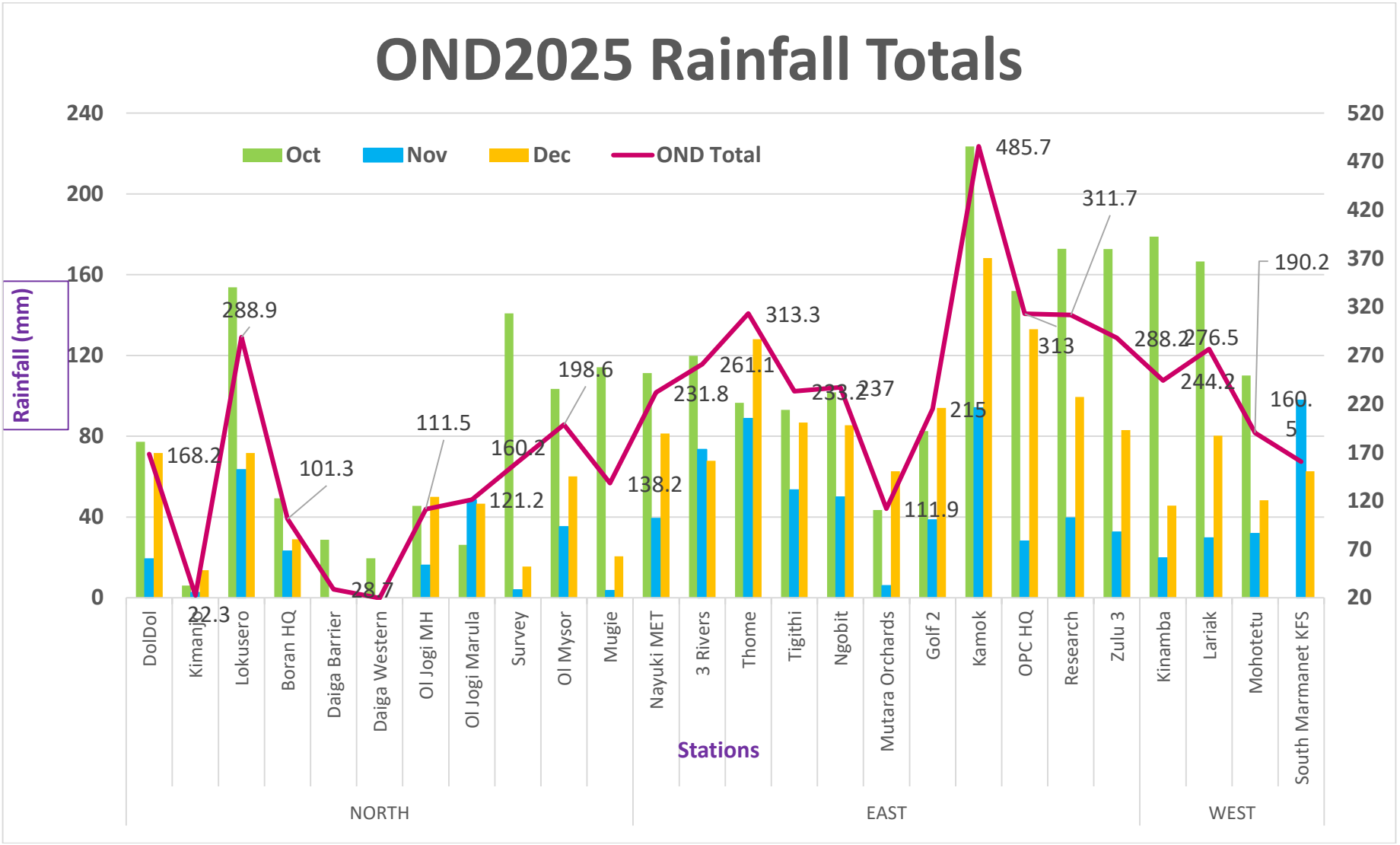


Figure 2: Observed Monthly Distribution with the OND2025 Station Total Rainfall amounts in Laikipia County

SUMMARY

- Stations that depicts a fairly good performance in the short rains 2025 compared with the LTM includes Ol Pejeta Kamok **485.7mm** & Nanyuki Meteorological Station at **231.8 mm** in Laikipia East, Kinamba Agriculture Office **244.2 mm** & Lariak at **276.5 mm** over Laikipia West.

- Lokusero station in Laikipia North recorded significant amounts at **288.8 mm** but which was below the stations Long Term Mean(LTM)

- Data indicates that most stations in Laikipia west performed better compared to stations in Laikipia North & East. In Laikpia West Rainfall continued from September with some positive impacts across the sector divide.

- Overall most stations in Laikipia County returned **Below Normal (BN)** rainfall for the **OND2025** compared to the LTM

- The **BN** amounts could be attributed to the poor distribution patterns with some station recording Zero amounts in the peak month of November

- **These results show that the Kenya Meteorological Service climate outlook for the OND2025 'short rains' including the Distribution, Onsets and the Cessation patterns were spot on.**

OUTLOOK FOR THE MARCH APRIL MAY 2026 RAINFALL SEASON

CLIMATOLOGY

The highest March April May (**MAM**) rainfall amounts (greater than 300mm) are mainly observed in Laikipia West and parts of Laikipia East. Currently the models output for the March April May 2026 rainfall indicates near average to above average rainfall is expected for Laikipia County compared to the **MAM** Long Term Mean (LTM) based on the (1991 – 2021) observation records. Models indicate warmer than average temperatures in the March to May season.

THE MARCH APRIL MAY 2026 SEASON FOECAST

The forecast for the MAM2026 'Long Rains season' was based on the prevailing and the expected evolution of the Sea Surface Temperatures Anomalies (SSTAs) over the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. Some other significant drivers were evaluated using various tools including the Ocean atmosphere models, statistical models, satellite-derived information and expert interpretations.

The climate forecasting models returned a **35% chance of Above Normal, 40% chance for Near Normal and a 25% of Below Normal rainfall** scenarios in Laikipia County. This outcome therefore suggests the likelihood of **Near average to Above average** rainfall over most places as shown in **Figure 3**.

NB; The effects of the Intra-seasonal drivers of variability like the tropical cyclones and the Madden–Julian Oscillation (MJO) can significantly influence the expected seasonal outcomes. Unfortunately, the presence and impacts of these drivers are accurately predictable at shorter lead times. It is therefore important to follow up this seasonal forecast with the weekly and the daily forecasts updates for decision making across the respective social and economic sectors.

Figures 3 and **4** shows the downscaled forecast scenarios in Laikipia County**.**

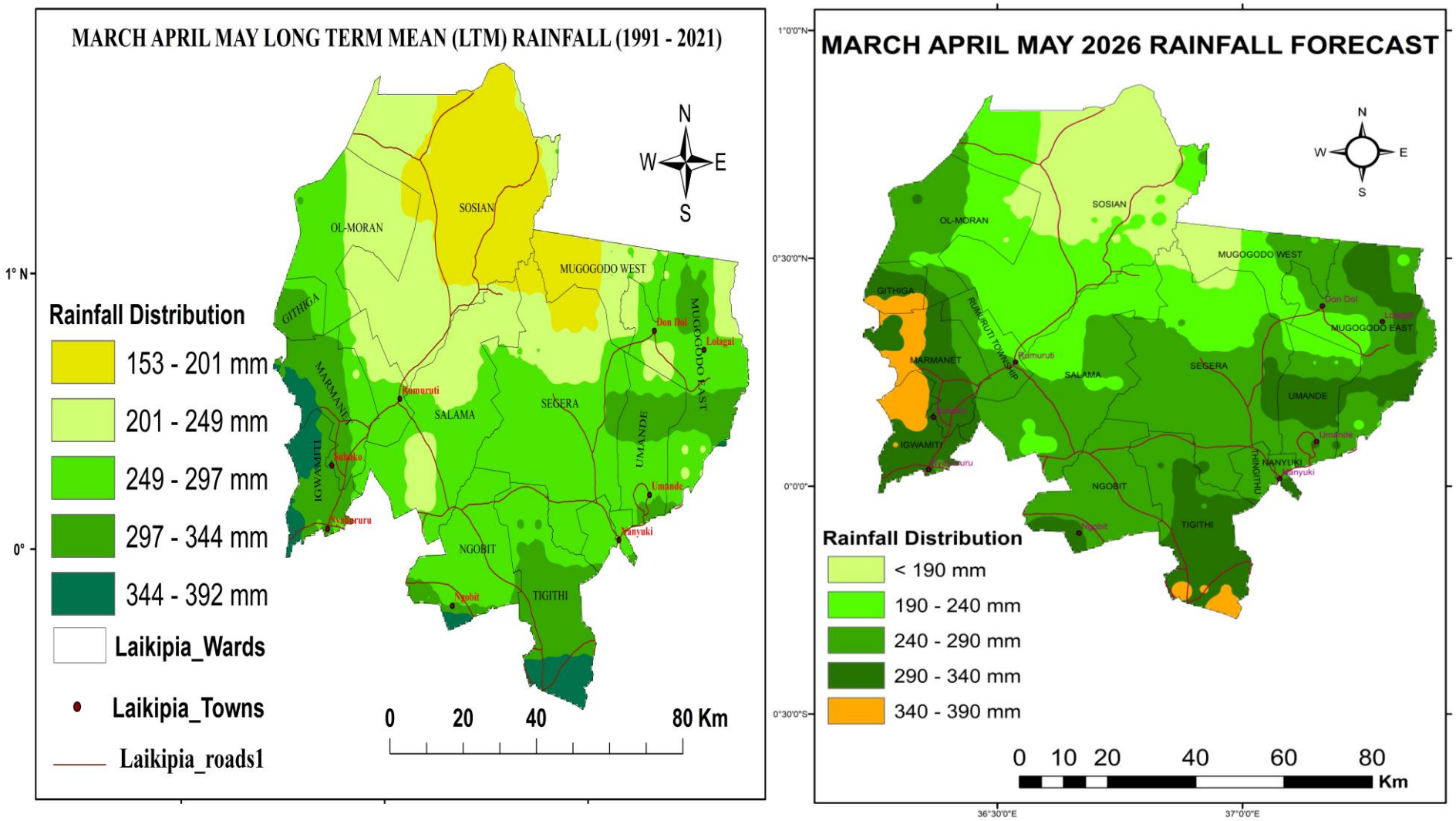


Figure 3: Long Term Mean for the Long Rains Season and the MAM2026 Season Forecast

Figure 3 comparing the LTM and the downscaled MAM2026 rainfall maps. The model output for the MAM2026 rainfall is likely to be slightly more than the long term mean over most places.

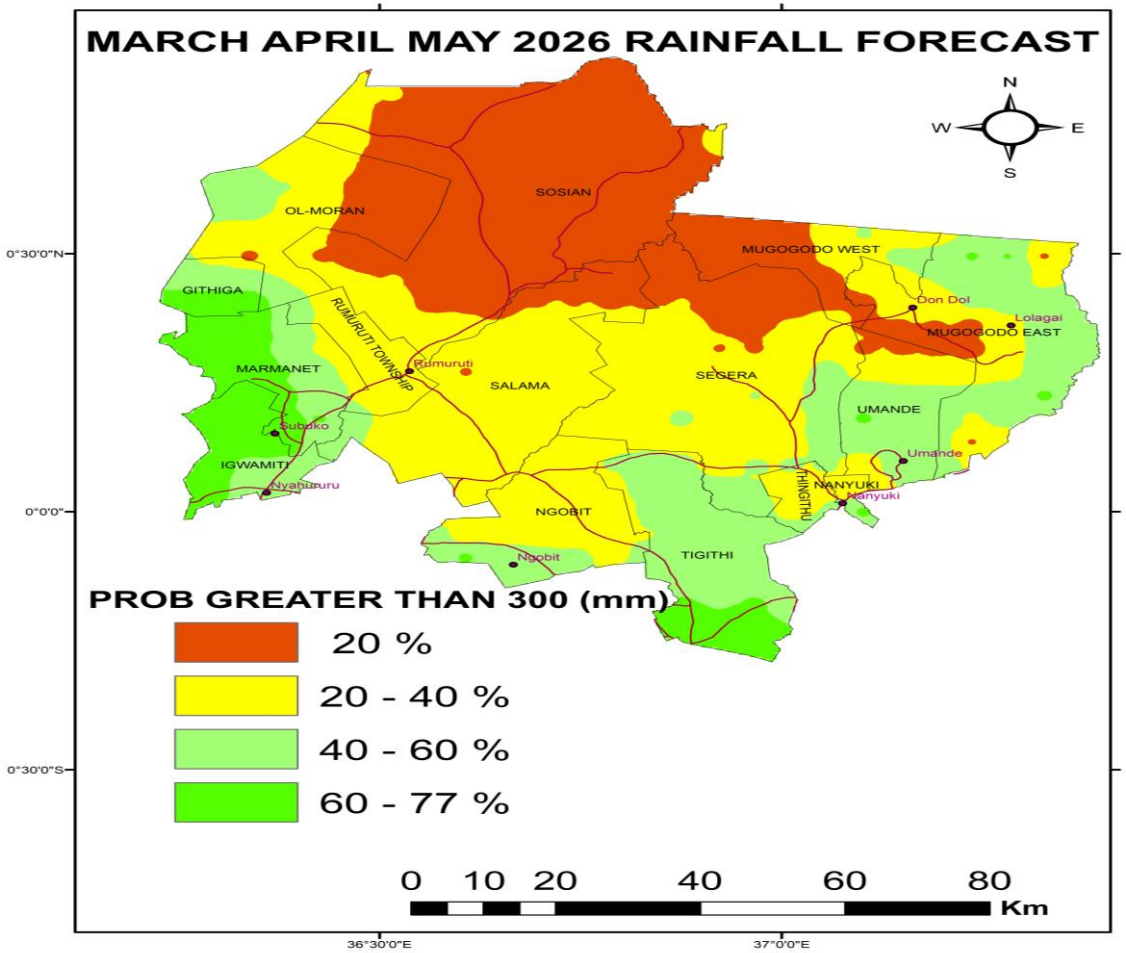


Figure 4: Probability of Observing More than 300mm in MAM 2026 Season

The probability of exceedance **Fig. 4;** indicates that regions in Sosian & Mkogondo West have the lowest chance of observing 300mm during the season. Igwamiti, Marmanet, Githiga and Parts Parts of Tigithi wards depicts more than 60% chance of recording 300mm cumulated in the March to May rains.

PREDICTED ONSETS, CESSATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF MAM2026 RAINFALL

The predicted Onsets, Cessations and Distribution of the MAM 2026 rainfall were derived from Global Climate Model (GCM) runs as well as the statistical analysis of past years with similar climate characteristics to the current year (Analogue years). The models depicted the likelihood for early to normal onsets with fair to good distribution patterns. Some models were indicative of early onsets and late cessations in parts of Laikipia West.

No	Region	Onset Dates	Cessation Dates	Distribution
1	Laikipia West	Rainfall to continue from February mainly in Igwamiti, Githiga and Marmanet wards	3rd to 4th week of May 2026	Fair to Good
2	All other parts of Laikipia (North, East, Central and the upper parts of Laikipia West)	2nd to 3rd week of March 2026	3rd to 4th week of May 2026	Fair to Good

EXPECTED TEMPERATURE OUTLOOK FOR THE MAM2026 ACROSS THE COUNTRY

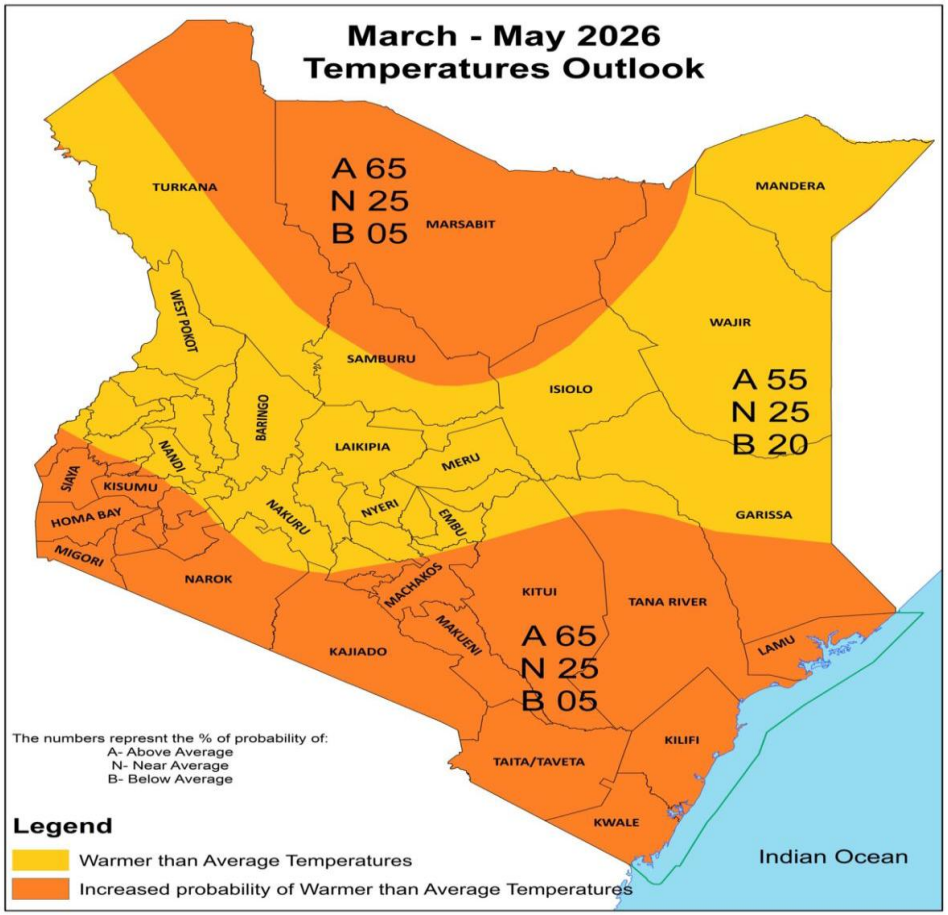


Figure 5: Predicted temperatures scenarios across the Country (Kenya)

NB; The daily temperatures are expected to be warmer than the average during the season with ranges between 20 – 25^{o}C in parts of Laikipia West and 25 – 30^{o}C in the other areas.

ADVISORY

Stakeholders are advised to look for the opportunities associated with the predicted **MAM2026** rains. All stakeholders need to **plan and take advantage of the opportunities** and **minimize the risks** presented in the predicted MAM2026 rainfall scenarios.

The risks include the certainty in the probability of observing Below Normal compared to the Near Normal to Above Normal as predicted. Decisions to optimize in the expected good performance for most of the climate sensitive sectors like agriculture crops, livestock, fisheries, irrigation/water and the other related social economic sectors. Plan also for the adaptation/mitigation activities in chances of extreme or below Normal scenarios.

Further to note is that the risks/impacts in the respective livelihood zones may vary therefore important to consult the local experts for decisions on adaptation and mitigation measures to enhance resilience and minimize the risks. The expected impacts include the risk to thunderstorms, flash floods, logging, extended dry spells, strong winds etc. High risk of people living in the river riparian's and the low lying areas.

MITIGATION

Therefore, stakeholders are advised on the following;

- On food security, identify suitable seed varieties that will match with the forecasted rainfall scenarios (***Note the minimum rainfall to sustaining a crop in the dry region is estimated at 250 – 350mm_Koe'ppe and Long 1958: also the minimum rainfall for producing a Grass crop is estimated at 50 – 100 mm***)
- Construct more systems like gutters, water pans and sand dams/dams to harvest and conserve water at households, schools and other institutions
- Allow measures for the prevention of soil erosion
- Plant more trees, stock pasture and fodder for livestock
- Increase surveillance for pest and diseases
- Authorities to watch over markets for free movement of goods and services
- Avoid sheltering from rains under trees, remove tree branches under power lines
- Design trenches and desilt the drainage systems to avoid water logging and flooding
- Repair & maintain the major & the rural access roads
- Enhance environmental management and conservation over all the livelihood zones
- Watch over the human wildlife conflicts
- Watch over encroachment of gazetted areas for farming
- Business community to stock climate sensitive materials for community use.

Key Scientific Terms Used in the Forecast

RAINFALL CATEGORIES	
< 5 mm	Light
5 – 20 mm	Moderate
20 – 50 mm	Heavy
> 50 mm	Very heavy
RAINFALL PERFORMANCE	
TERMs	**MEANING**
Below Normal (depressed rainfall)	Below 75% of the Long Term Mean (LTM)
Near Normal Rainfall	Between 75 % and 125 % of the LTM
Above Normal Rainfall	Above 125 % of the LTM

Note; ***It's important to follow up this seasonal forecast with the 24hr, weekly and monthly forecasts issued by the Kenya Meteorological Department.***



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