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THE “OUTLOOK FOR SHORT RAINS” (OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER) 2026 SEASON

1. HIGHLIGHTS

1.1 Outlook for October-November-December 2026

- *Above average rainfall is expected over the highlands upper and middle altitude zones i.e Kabare, Baragwi, Njukiini, Ngariama, Karumandi, Mukure, Kiine, Mutira, Kanyekini, Kerugoya, Inoi, and in the lower zones of the county namely; Thiba, Wamumu, Nyangati, Murinduko, Gathigiriri, Rukanga and Tebere*

1.2 Review of the rainfall conditions in June- July – August (JJA) 2026

- *The June–July–August (JJA) 2026 season in the county was marked by below-average rainfall.*
- *Temperatures were generally warmer than average, with notably elevated nighttime conditions.*

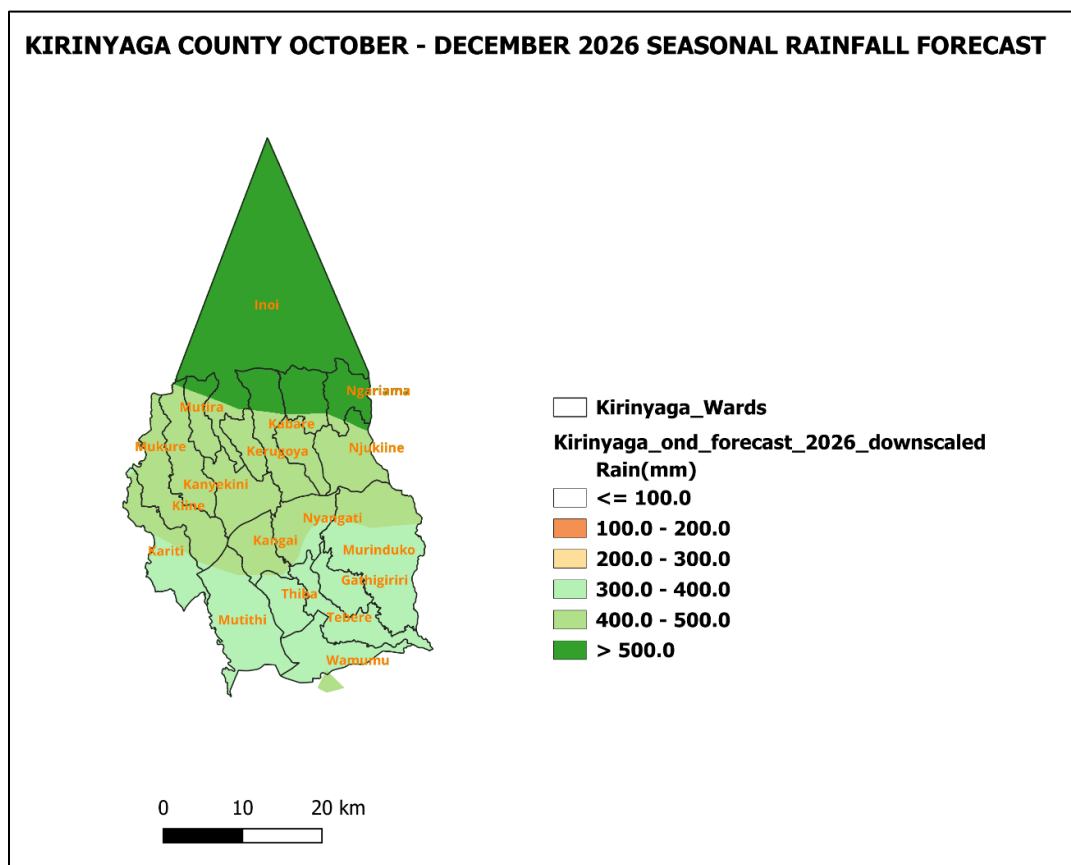


Fig 1: October-November-December 2026 rainfall forecast

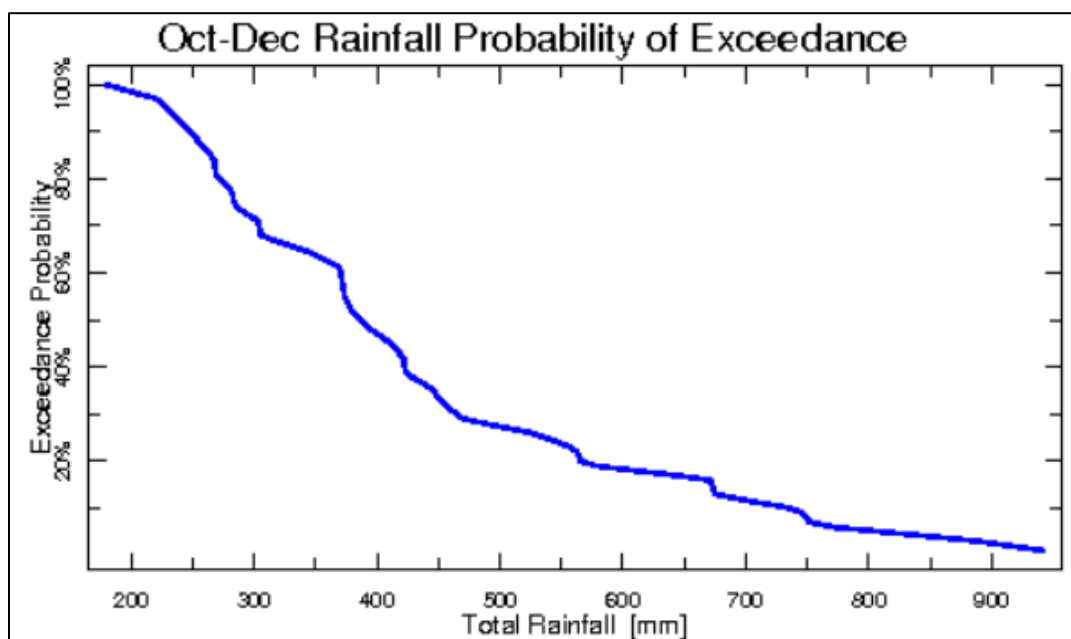


Fig 2: October-November-December probability of exceedance in %

2. FORECAST FOR OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER (OND) 2026 “SHORT-RAINS” SEASON

The “Short Rains” October to December (OND) season constitutes an important rainfall season in the entire Kirinyaga County. During OND 2026, it is expected that most parts of Kirinyaga County are likely to experience above average rainfall.

The season occurs due to the southward migration of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ). Its duration and performance are influenced by the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which enhances rainfall when in the positive phase. The ongoing strong El Niño event also enhances rainfall when it occurs concurrently with a positive IOD. On shorter timescales, rainfall intensity is influenced by the Madden–Julian Oscillation (MJO) and the development of tropical cyclones over the Southwest Indian Ocean.

According to the most recent update, the 2026 El Niño event continues to intensify across the central-eastern equatorial Pacific. The traditional Niño 3.4 index shows a clear and sustained increase, with the most recent seasonal mean reaching +1.51 °C during May–July 2026. and the July monthly value rising to +2.03 °C. The latest weekly Niño 3.4 index, centered on 30 August 2026, reached +2.45 °C. These observations indicate that El Niño is strengthening further and evolving toward a very strong event.

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral. As of 30 August 2026, the weekly IOD index stood at +0.22°C which is below the positive IOD threshold (+0.4°C). Sustained values above this threshold are required for eight consecutive weeks before a positive IOD event is considered established. The current IOD value is expected to increase in magnitude and surpass the threshold from September 2026 although some uncertainty remains regarding its timing and strength. The maximum predicted IOD value for the season is +0.7, which is closer to the level observed in 2015 than to those recorded in 2023 or 1997. The Kenya Meteorological Service Authority (KMSA) will continue to closely monitor El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and IOD conditions.

3. EXPECTED SEASONAL RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION

The OND 2026 rainfall distribution both in time and space throughout the season is likely to be fair to good with a possibility of prolonged wet spells and occasional isolated storms.

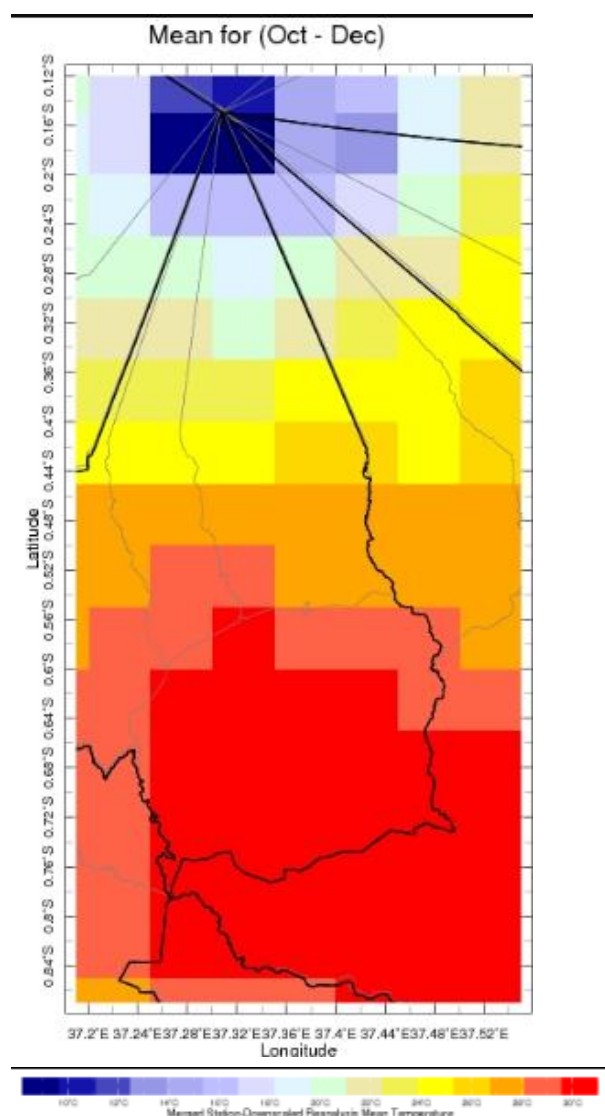
4. EXPECTED ONSET AND CESSATION DATES

The predicted onsets, cessations, and distribution of rainfall were derived from dynamical models and statistical analysis of the past years, which showed similar characteristics to the current year. The analogue (similar) year chosen was 2015. The rainfall outcomes for this analogue year are for reference only and should not be interpreted as part of the forecast. Rather, they provide a sense of the rainfall outcomes that can occur given broadly similar global climate conditions.

Region	Onset Dates	Cessation Dates
Kirinyaga County.	2 nd week to 3 rd week of October 2026	Continues into January 2026.

5. TEMPERATURE FORECAST FOR OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2026

5.1 October-November-December Temperature Climatology (1991-2020)



- The October-November-December season in Kirinyaga is generally warm.
- The warm temperatures are due to the southward migration of the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) that is associated with warm humid air. During this season, day-to-night temperature variations are generally small across much of Kirinyaga county.

Fig 3: October-November-December climatology

5.2 Temperature Forecast for October-November-December 2026

Mean temperatures are predicted to be warmer than average during the season.

NB: This outlook should be used with 24 hour, 5-day, 7-day and monthly forecasts and regular updates issued by Kenya Meteorological Department.

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County Director of Meteorological Services, Kirinyaga