

# AGROMETEOROLOGICAL BULLETIN

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Significant rainfall received...**
- **Improvement in vegetation...**
- **More farming activity observed....**
- **Reduced rainfall forecasted.....**
- **Warm to hot temperatures anticipated.....**
- **Insignificant improvement in soil moisture expected.....**

## RAINFALL SYNOPSIS AND PROGNOSIS

### ➤ **SYNOPSIS - PAST TEN DAYS**

The strengthening of the tropical weather systems associated with the Surface high continued to promote rainfall with some heavy storms over some parts of the country during the reporting period. Temperatures observed were below long-term average.

### ➤ **PROGNOSIS - NEXT TEN DAYS**

The Upper high will bring in moisture in some parts in the beginning of the outlook period then clearing to partly cloudy and sunny conditions with a few afternoon thunderstorms in some parts. Temperatures will be warm to hot in

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## RAINFALL AND TEMPERATURES

### RAINFALL

Significant rains continued to fall during the dekad and still above the long-term average (**Figure 1**). Areas in the Highveld and some parts of the Middleveld continued to record above 80mm totals, with some areas in the Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau recording below 40mm (**Map 1**)

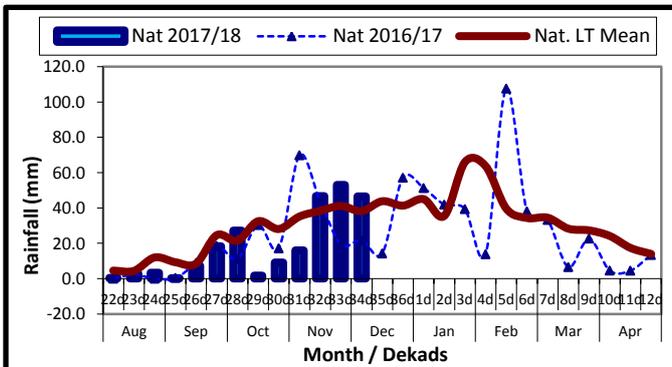
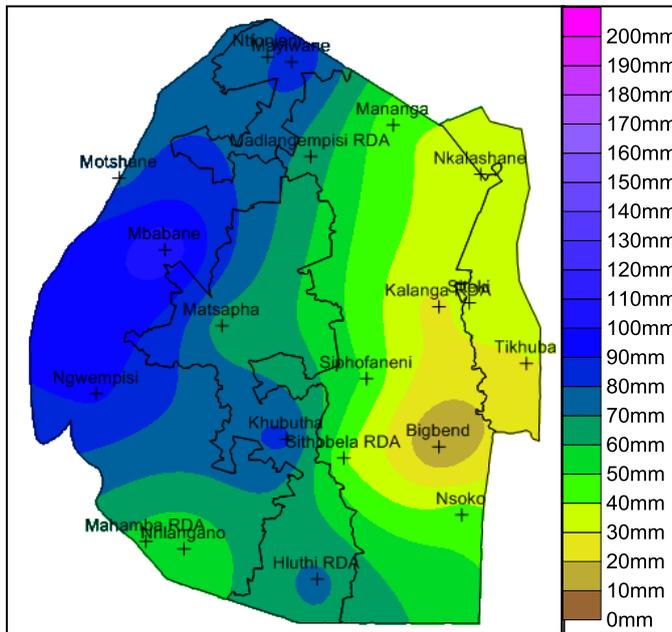


Figure 1: Rainfall distribution for 1<sup>st</sup> dekad of December 2017



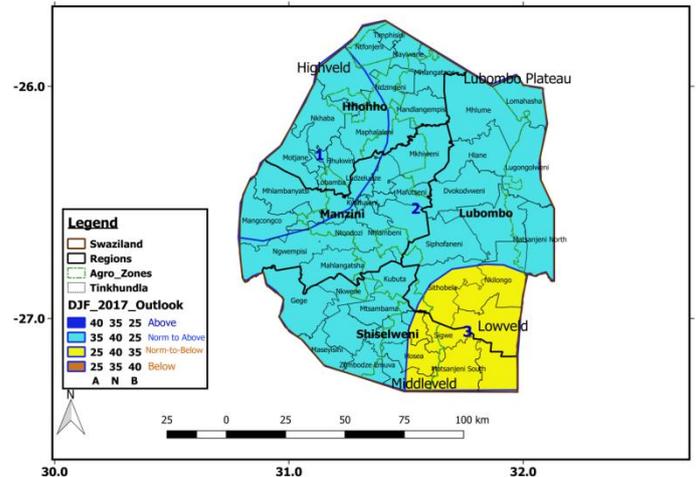
Map 1: Spatial rainfall distribution for first dekad December 2017

Agro-ecological region comparison shows that all the regions received above long-term average rainfall and much more than last season (2016/17) during the same period (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Rainfall (mm) for 1<sup>st</sup> dekad December 2017

	HV	MV	LV	LP
2016/17	38	24	14	12
Average	54	39	30	30
2017/18	66	52	35	34
Anomaly	12	13	5	4

The predictors used put most of the country in Normal-to-Above-Normal rainfall over the forecast period **December-January-February** (DJF) 2017, with the south-eastern part of the country receiving Normal-to-Below-Normal rainfall (**map 2**) below.



### TEMPERATURES

Day and night temperatures were lower than normal throughout the country as below average temperatures were recorded for both maximum and minimum temperatures (**Figure 2**) and (**Figure 3**).

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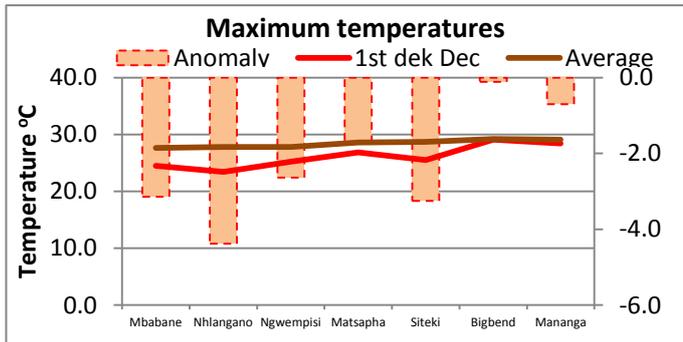


Figure 2: Minimum temperature as 1<sup>st</sup> dekad of December 2017

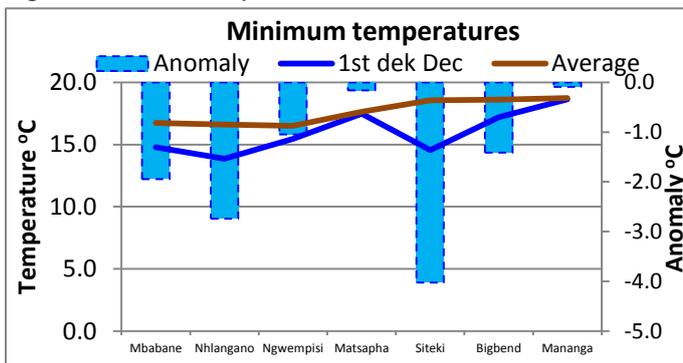


Figure 3: Maximum temperature as 1<sup>st</sup> dekad of December 2017

## MAIZE AND OTHER CROPS

### MAIZE CROP STAGE AND CONDITION

Most maize crops are at germination to early vegetative stage and in good condition (**Picture 1**). Few cases were reported of crop damage by the heavy storm that occurred on the 12<sup>th</sup> December.



Picture 1: Maize at Kukhanyeni in the Manzini region (courtesy of Vukani Ndimba-Luve RDA)

### OTHER CROPS

Few farmers reported to have planted potatoes and sweet potatoes.

### CURRENT FARMING ACTIVITY

Most farmers are busy with land preparation, planting and weeding. Due to the recent significant rains some of the activities in some areas were hindered as the fields were too wet to be worked on.

## LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES

Livestock is observed to be in good condition. Few cattle were reported to have been struck and killed by lightning during the heavy storm. Vegetation continues to improve due to continued significant rainfall (**Image 2**).

## WATER SITUATION

Most major reservoirs (dams) and rivers have improved as rains were quite significant in the past three dekads.

## MEDIUM-TERM OUTLOOK

### RAINFALL

Some afternoon thunderstorms expected in some parts during the reporting period with significant showers of more than 25mm anticipated on the 19<sup>th</sup> December in the Southern part of the country and some other parts towards the end of the outlook period.

### TEMPERATURE

Temperatures will mostly be warm to hot in the outlook period.

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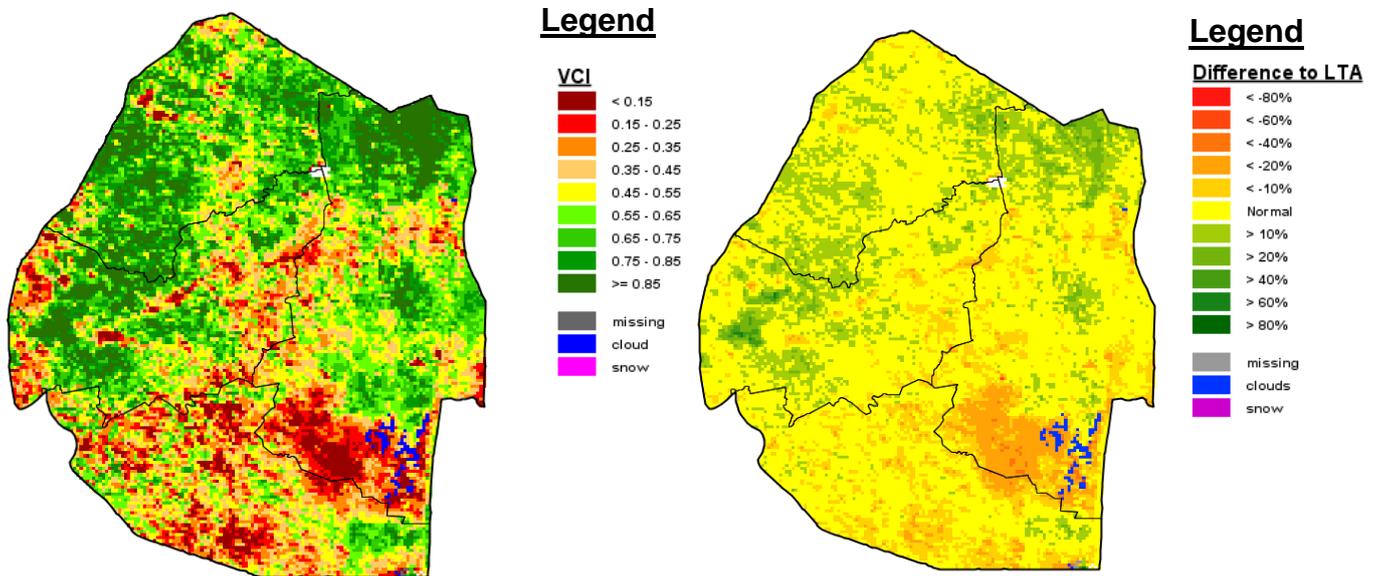
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## SOIL MOISTURE

Slight improvement in soil moisture expected.

## WIND SPEED

Light to moderate wind speeds are predicted during the outlook period.



**Image 1:** Vegetation Condition Index image (1<sup>st</sup> Dekad December 2017) Source: FAO-GIEWS

**Image 2:** Vegetation Anomaly image (1<sup>st</sup> Dekad December 2017) Source: FAO-GIEWS