# SOUTHERN AFRICA

## THE 2017-2018 SEASON



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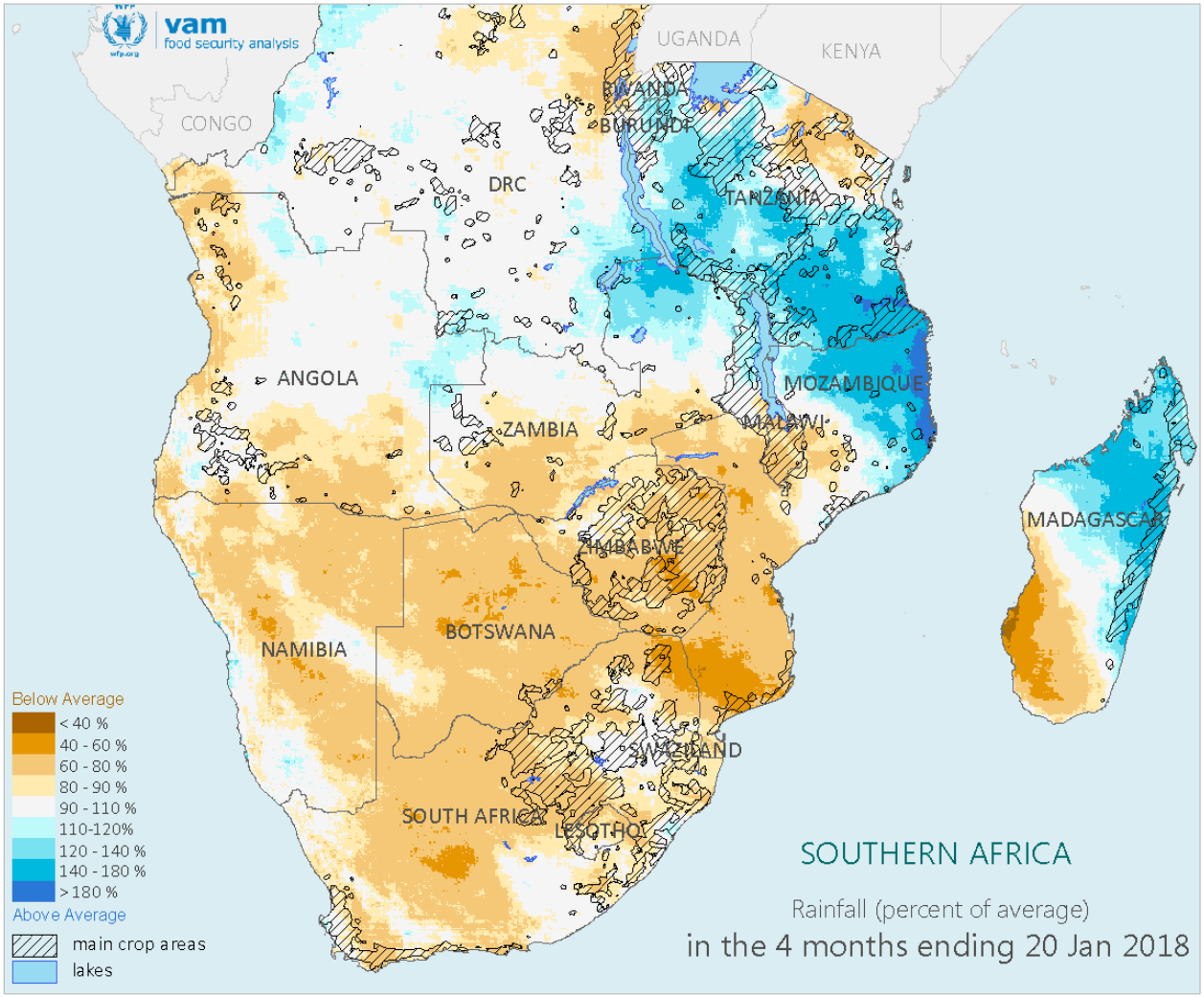
# HIGHLIGHTS



- Southern Africa is experiencing significant rainfall shortages virtually throughout the entire region.
- Zimbabwe, southern Mozambique, SW Madagascar are hit hardest. Despite a favourable start to the season, much drier than average conditions have persisted since mid December.
- Regional crop production is already affected. However, the magnitude of the losses could significantly increase if the dry conditions continue well into February.

# Current Seasonal Status




*Rainfall in the four months ending on 20 January 2018 as a percent of average (left). Blues/greens for above average, browns/oranges for below average.*

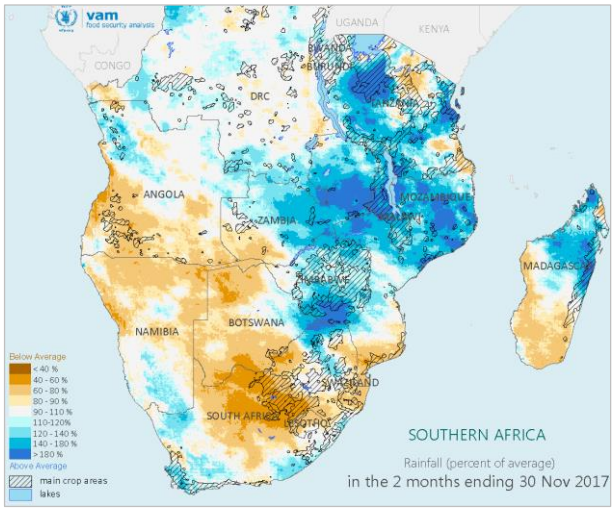
Significant rainfall deficits at regional scale are defining Southern Africa's current growing season.

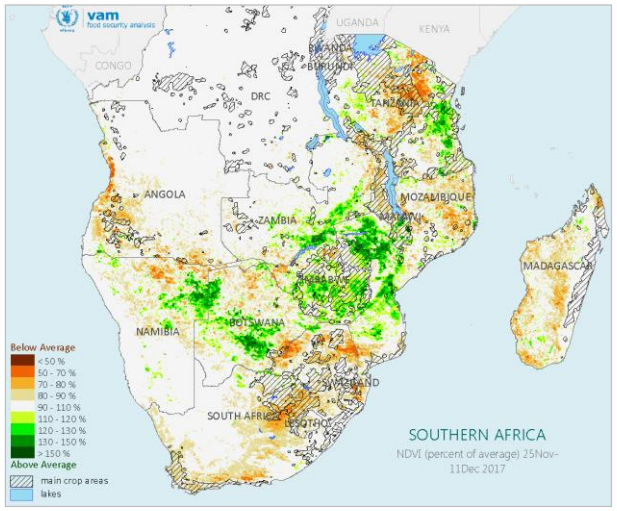
Except for northern Mozambique (Nampula and Cabo Delgado provinces), Tanzania and northernmost Zambia, seasonal rainfall across the region is about 30% below the long term average. Some areas of southern Mozambique and southwest Madagascar have received only half of the usual rains.

Currently, the region is at the mid-point of the growing season and approaching the most vulnerable stage in the development of the main staple crop (maize).

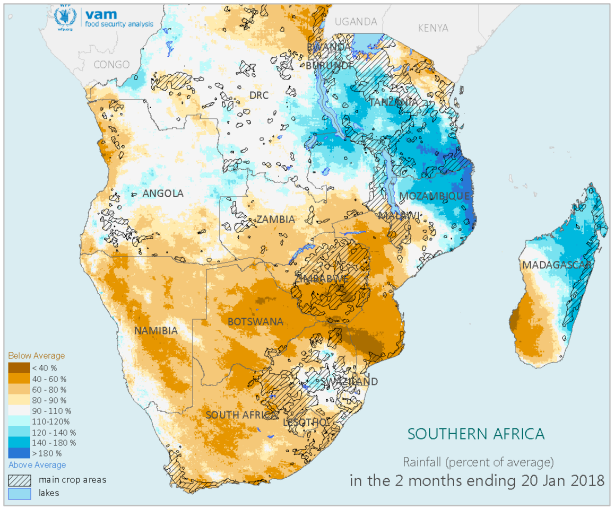
Above average and well distributed rainfall is needed for the next 6 weeks to minimize significant crop production losses at the regional scale.

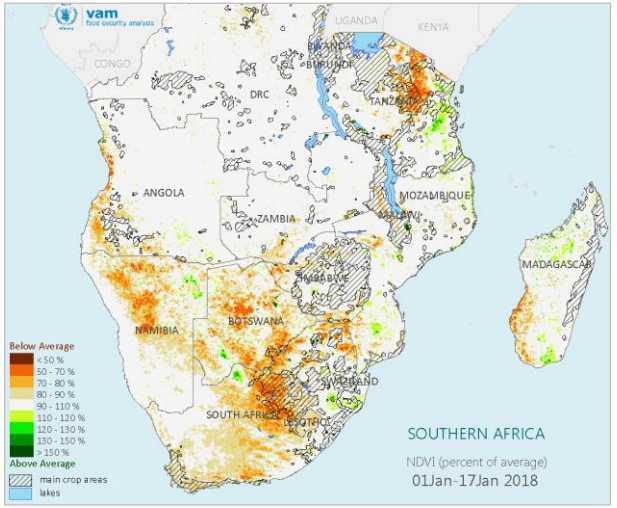
# How the Season Evolved




October – November: Dryness from Angola to South Africa




December onwards: Dryness spreads

*Above: Rainfall in the two months ending 30 November as a percent of average (left) and vegetation cover in early December as a percent of average (right).*
*Below: Rainfall in the two months ending 20 January as a percent of average (left) and vegetation cover in mid january as a percent of average (right).*
*Blue/green shades for above average, brown/orange shades for below average .*

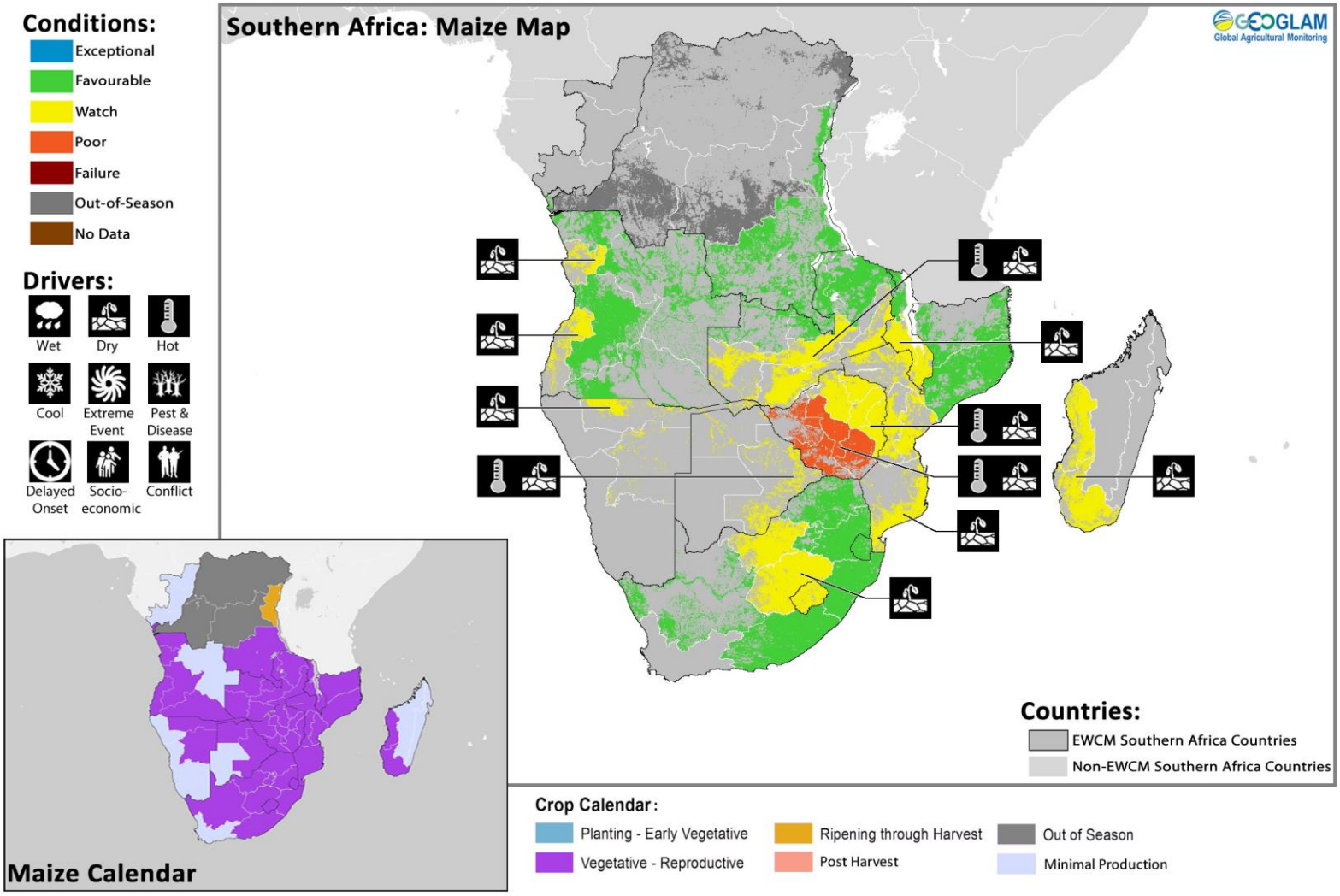
In the earlier stages from October to November, drier than average conditions spread from central South Africa across western Botswana to the Angola-Namibia border regions. Madagascar's southern regions were also affected.

In contrast, Zimbabwe, northern Mozambique, most of Zambia and Tanzania enjoyed favourable rainfall resulting in an earlier start to the growing season. However, since early December drier than average conditions have persisted across much of these areas—Zimbabwe, western and central Zambia, southern half of Mozambique and southwest Madagascar.

Vegetation cover is now well below average. Even areas which experienced a favourable early season are now in the grip of steady degradation.

Conditions remain wetter than average only in the northern Mozambique – southern Tanzania regions and northern Madagascar.

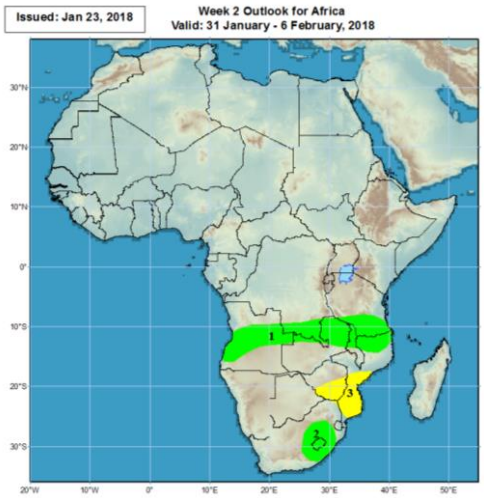
# Maize Production Perspectives

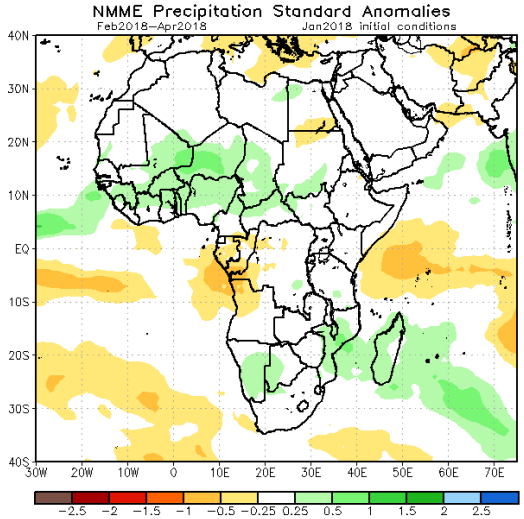


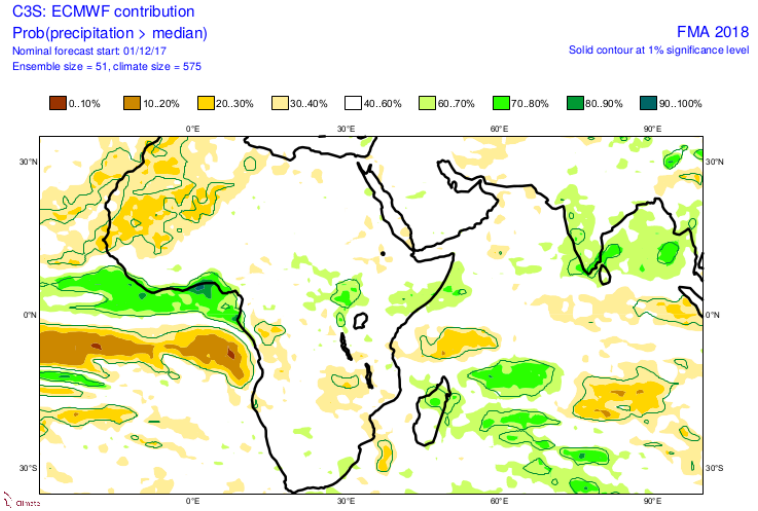

The GEOGLAM crop monitoring latest report shows areas of concern for maize production. Worst affected area is southern Zimbabwe with fairly poor production perspectives while many other areas highlighted in yellow, may still recover in case rainfall conditions improve significantly.

See https://cropmonitor.org/

# Seasonal Outlook



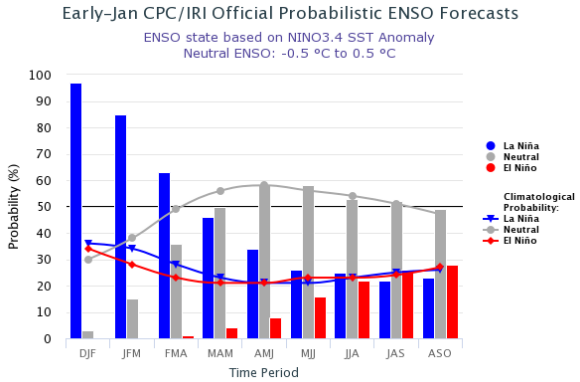




Short range forecasts indicate much improved rainfall during early February. However, this may be followed by a return of drier conditions, particularly in southern Zimbabwe and the southern half of Mozambique.

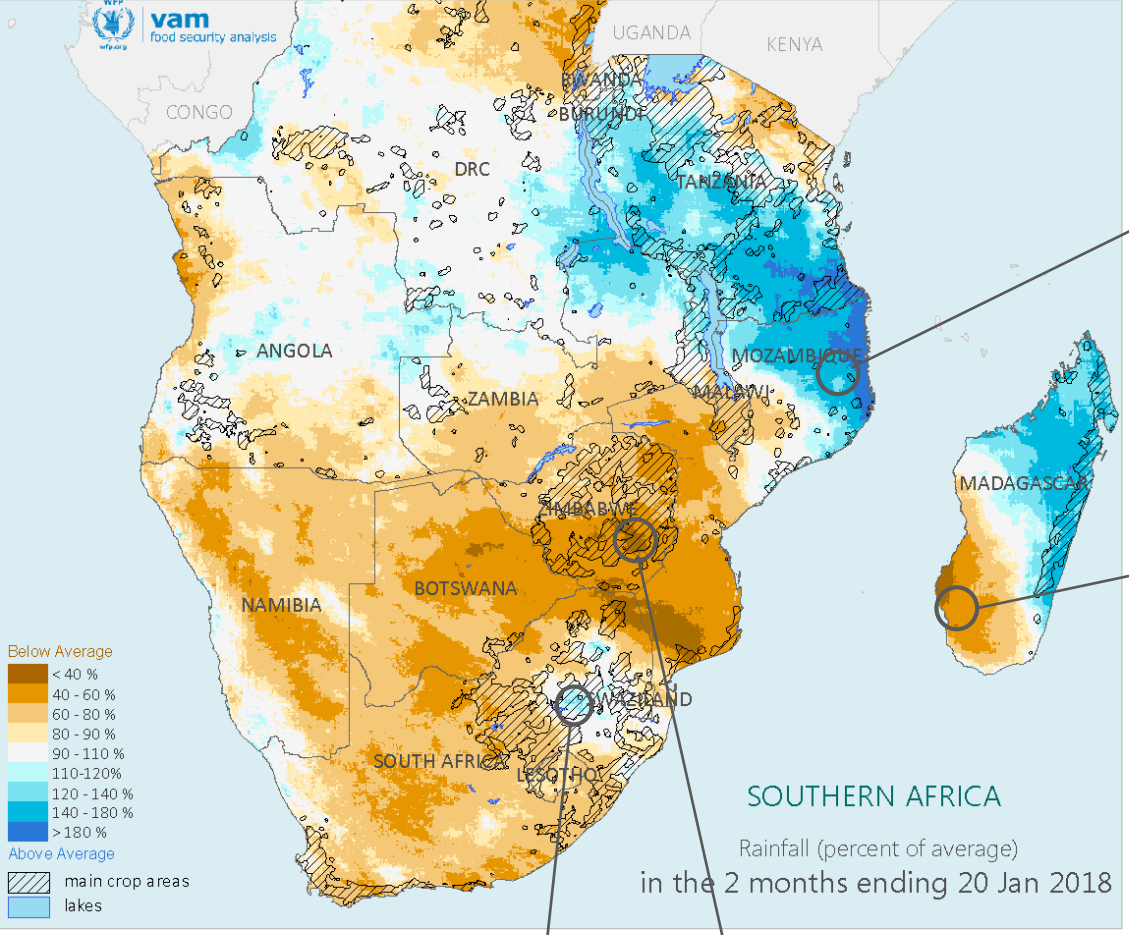
This may not provide enough respite to reverse negative impacts on crop production in Zimbabwe and possibly Zambia.

Taking a longer view, seasonal rainfall forecasts for Southern Africa region indicate broadly near average conditions in the coming February-April period. The forecasts are slightly more positive for Mozambique and Madagascar which may see an improvement in rainfall in the last stages of the season.

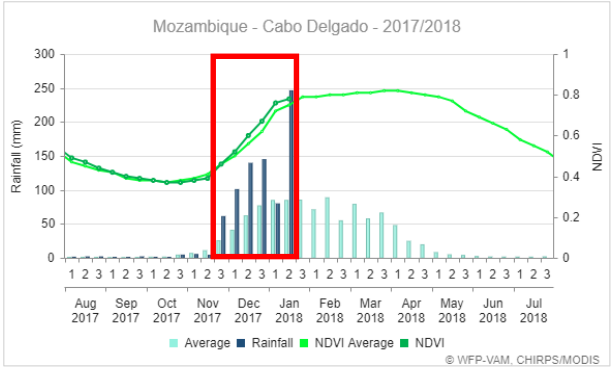



The current La Nina event is set to last until mid Spring (April). It has remained a weak and short lived event. Although La Nina seasons tend to be wetter than average, this has not been the case, highlighting the role of other climatic drivers in Southern Africa.

# Seasonal Charts




A

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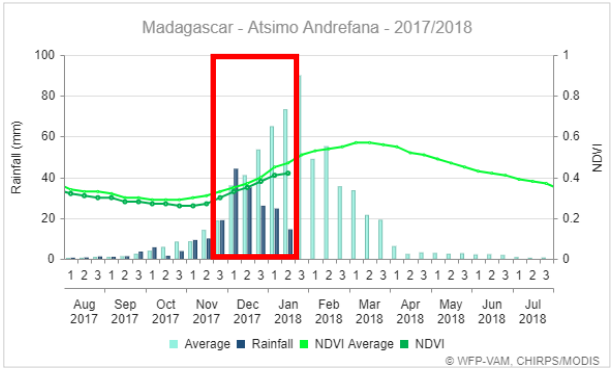


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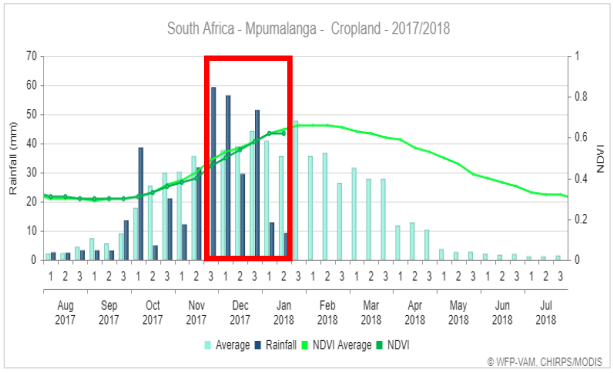
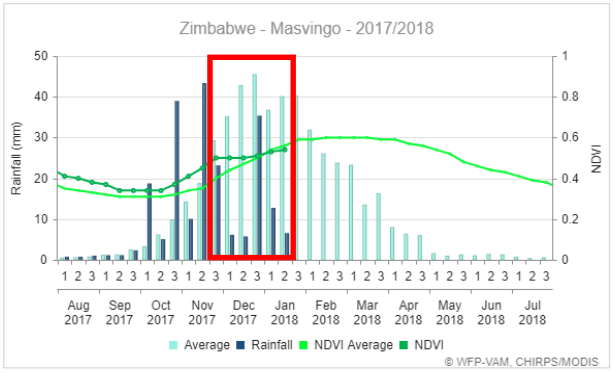
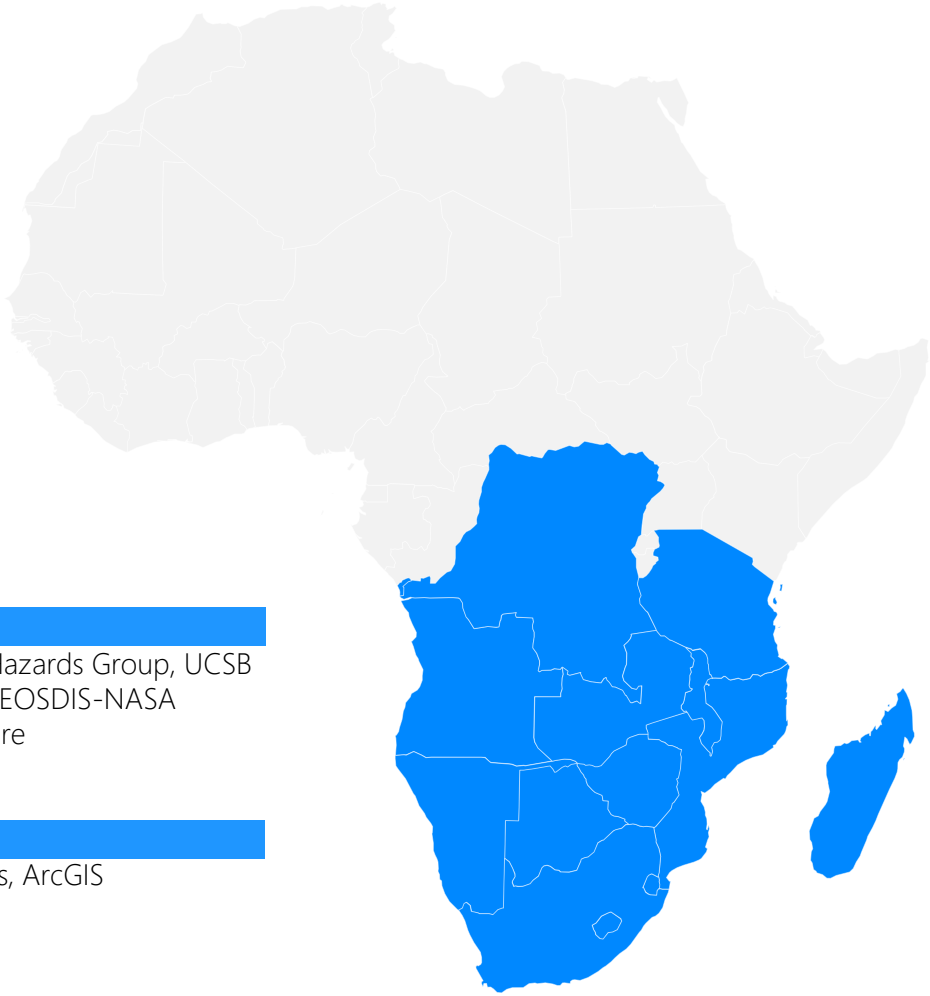



C




Charts show profiles for 2017-18 season :

- A: Continued wetter than average conditions in Cabo Delgado province, Mozambique
- B: Severe dryness from late December in SW Madagascar
- C: Dryness and irregular rainfall in Masvingo, Zimbabwe
- D: Irregular but overall on average rainfall in Mpumalanga, South Africa



## DATA SOURCES:

Rainfall: CHIRPS, Climate Hazards Group, UCSB
Vegetation: MODIS NDVI, EOSDIS-NASA
Land Cover: FAO GLC-Share

## PROCESSING:

VAM software components, ArcGIS

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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