




World Food Programme

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Seasonal Monitoring in Cambodia

January 2026



Short-term dryness emerged in January due to significantly below-average rainfall, particularly in the southwestern provinces, despite wetter seasonal rainfall conditions over the past three months.



Land Surface Temperatures (LST) were mostly cooler than normal, with only localized warm pockets. Brief heat-stress episodes (≥ 35 °C) occurred mainly in Stung Treng, posing localized heat-strain risks for humans and livestock.



River levels receded seasonally across all eight monitoring stations, with mixed deviations from long-term averages.



Soil moisture remained normal to above normal across most provinces, supporting favorable dry-season crop conditions. Localized deficits in Kampot, Takeo, and Kampong Speu may have increased irrigation demand for crop cultivation.



Vegetation conditions in January were slightly below average nationwide, with the strongest reductions in Tonle Sap lowlands affected by a combination of waterlogging, higher temperatures, and reduced January rainfall. **Most dry-season paddy-growing areas, however, remained generally healthy.**

Seasonal Outlook:



- Generally stable, near-normal conditions are expected in February–March, except for **drier-than-average conditions in the western provinces during February.**
- **Above-normal temperatures are likely to develop first in the west in April, then expand nationwide by May.** Rainfall is projected to remain near normal in April–May, but rising temperatures signal the onset of **a warmer-than-usual seasonal pattern.**

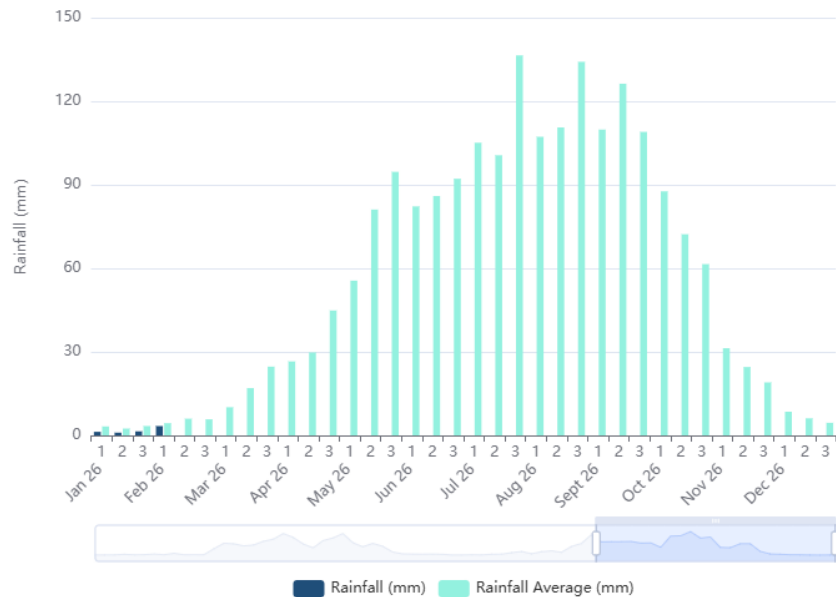


During the outlook period, continued monitoring [MoWRAM updates](#) is strongly advised to ensure timely awareness of **localized heat or dryness extremes.** Preparedness efforts should prioritize **water-resource management, heat-stress risk awareness and prevention for people and livestock,** and **soil-moisture management** in farming to mitigate the effects of increased evaporation as temperatures rise.

RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION

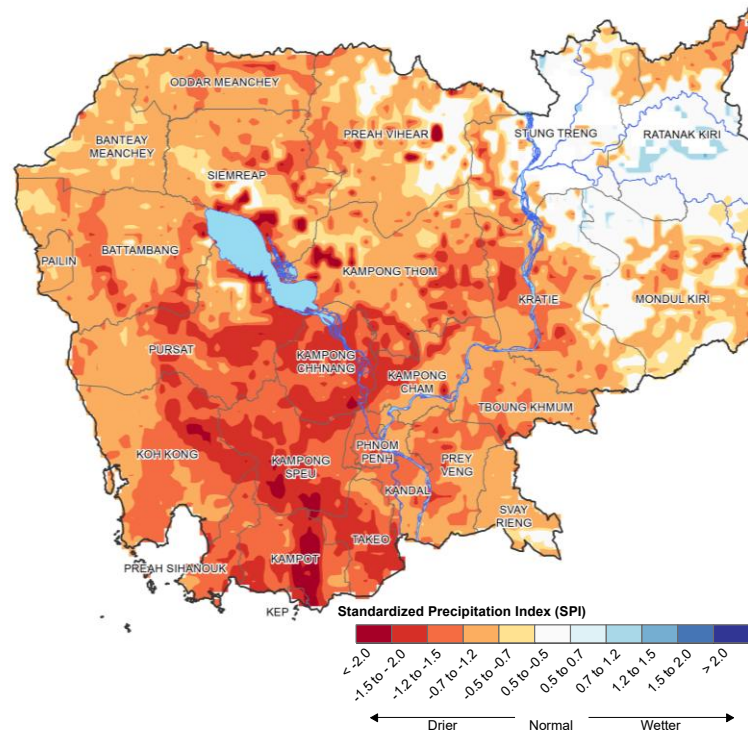
Near- to above-normal cumulative rainfall over the past three months (November 2025–January 2026) reflects generally wetter seasonal conditions (see SPI-3 map, below). By contrast, January saw much lower-than-usual rainfall (chart below), with the largest shortages in the southwestern provinces (see SPI-1 map, below). This sharp decline signals the onset of short-term dryness, which is likely to reduce soil moisture and increase water stress for dry-season crops during their early planting stage.

National-Average Rainfall Distribution
(From 1-31 January 2026)

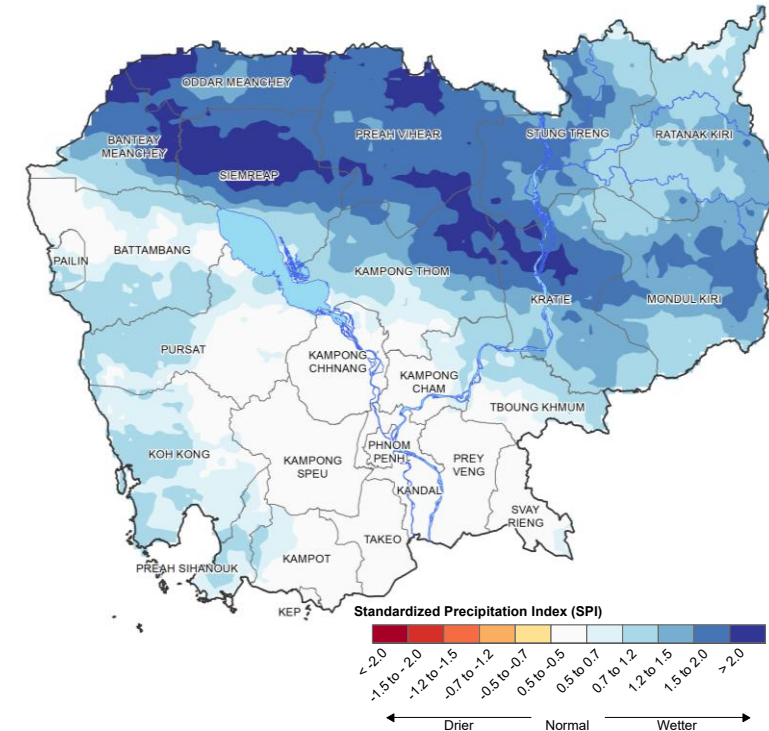


Source: Rainfall from CHIRPS and analysis by WFP.

1-Month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI-1)*
(1–31 December 2025)



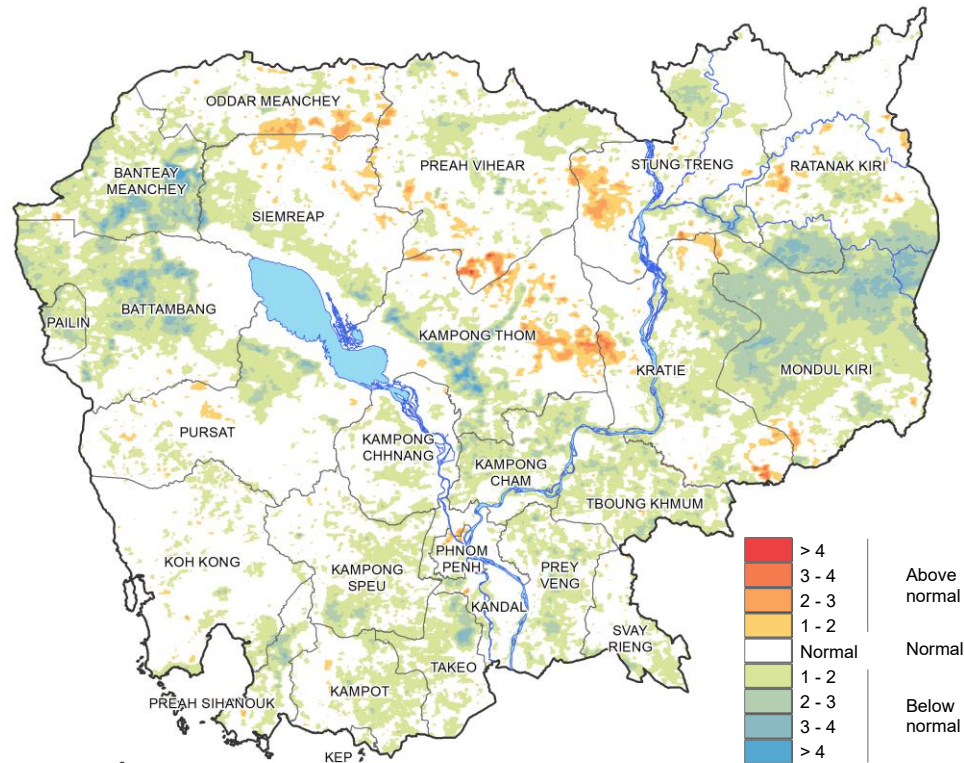
3-Month Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI-3)*
(November 2025 – January 2026)



* Note: The Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) is a gold-standard meteorological drought indicator. A 1-month SPI (SPI-1) identifies short-term rainfall anomalies impacting immediate soil moisture and crop stress, while a 3-month SPI (SPI-3) captures short- to medium-term moisture deficits and early water scarcity—both of which are critical for rainfed agriculture and rural drinking water access.

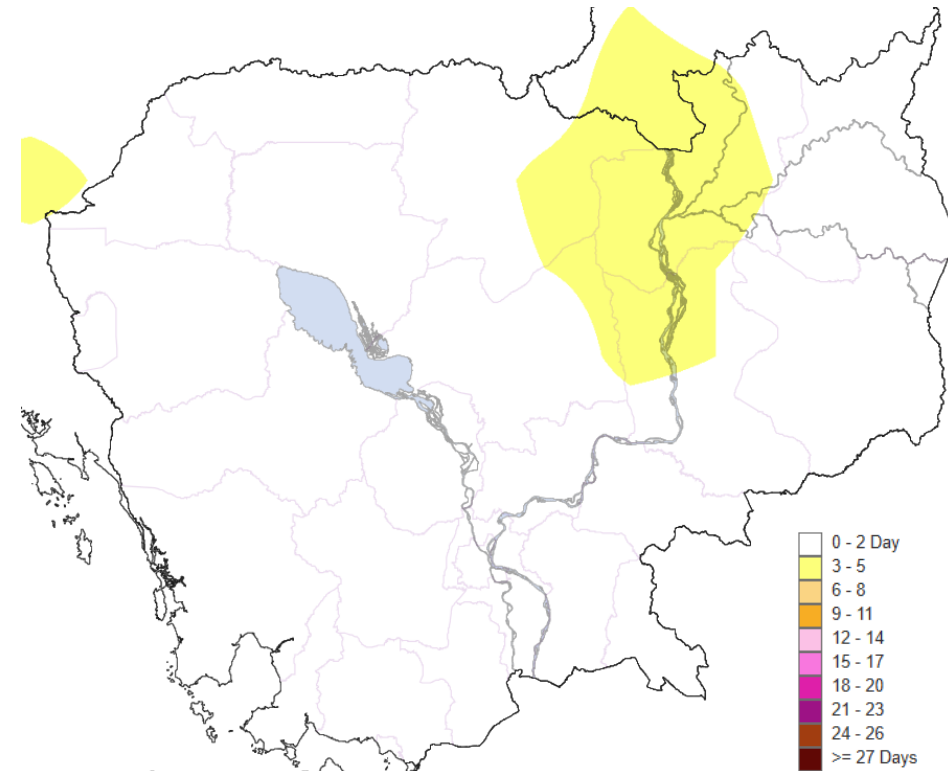
Land Surface Temperatures (LST) in January were generally cooler than normal across most provinces. Localized warmer-than-normal areas appeared in parts of Oddar Meanchey, Siem Reap, Kampong Thom, Preah Vihear, Stung Treng, and Ratanak Kiri (map below, left). Heat-stress conditions (LST $\geq 35^\circ\text{C}$) were detected mainly in Stung Treng, occurring on 3–5 days during the month (maps below, right). These short periods of heat stress may pose localized heat-strain risks for humans and livestock.

1-Month Land Surface Temperature (LST) Anomaly
(1–31 January 2026)



Source: LST from MODIS and analysis by WFP

Heat Stress Days ($\geq 35^\circ\text{C}$)
(1–31 January 2026)



Source: USDA (NOAA-CPC)

RIVER WATER LEVELS

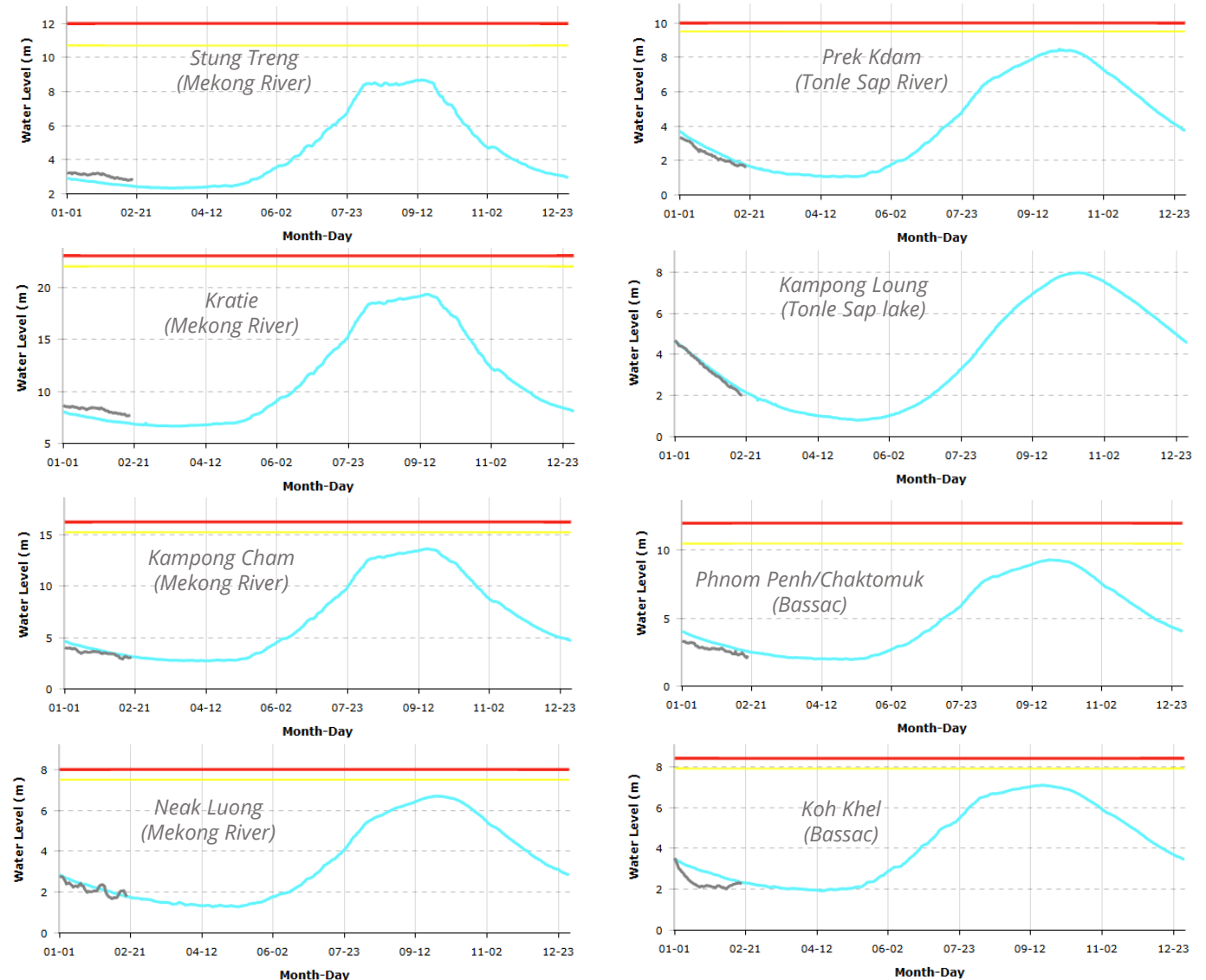
All eight river monitoring stations showed receding water levels throughout January, with mixed deviations from long-term averages.

Along the Mekong River, water levels were slightly above average in Stung Treng and Kratie due to higher rainfall in upstream catchments, but slightly below average in Kampong Cham and Neak Loung.

At the Tonle Sap Lake and Tonle Sap River stations (Kampong Loung, Prek Kdam), water levels were close to long-term averages, while the lake's total volume was about 4.15% higher than normal. This larger volume may have contributed to waterlogging in low-lying areas of dry-season paddy cultivation.

Along the Bassac River, water levels were below average at both the Phnom Penh and Koh Khel stations.

River water level observed in 8 monitoring stations in Cambodia
(by 18 February 2026)



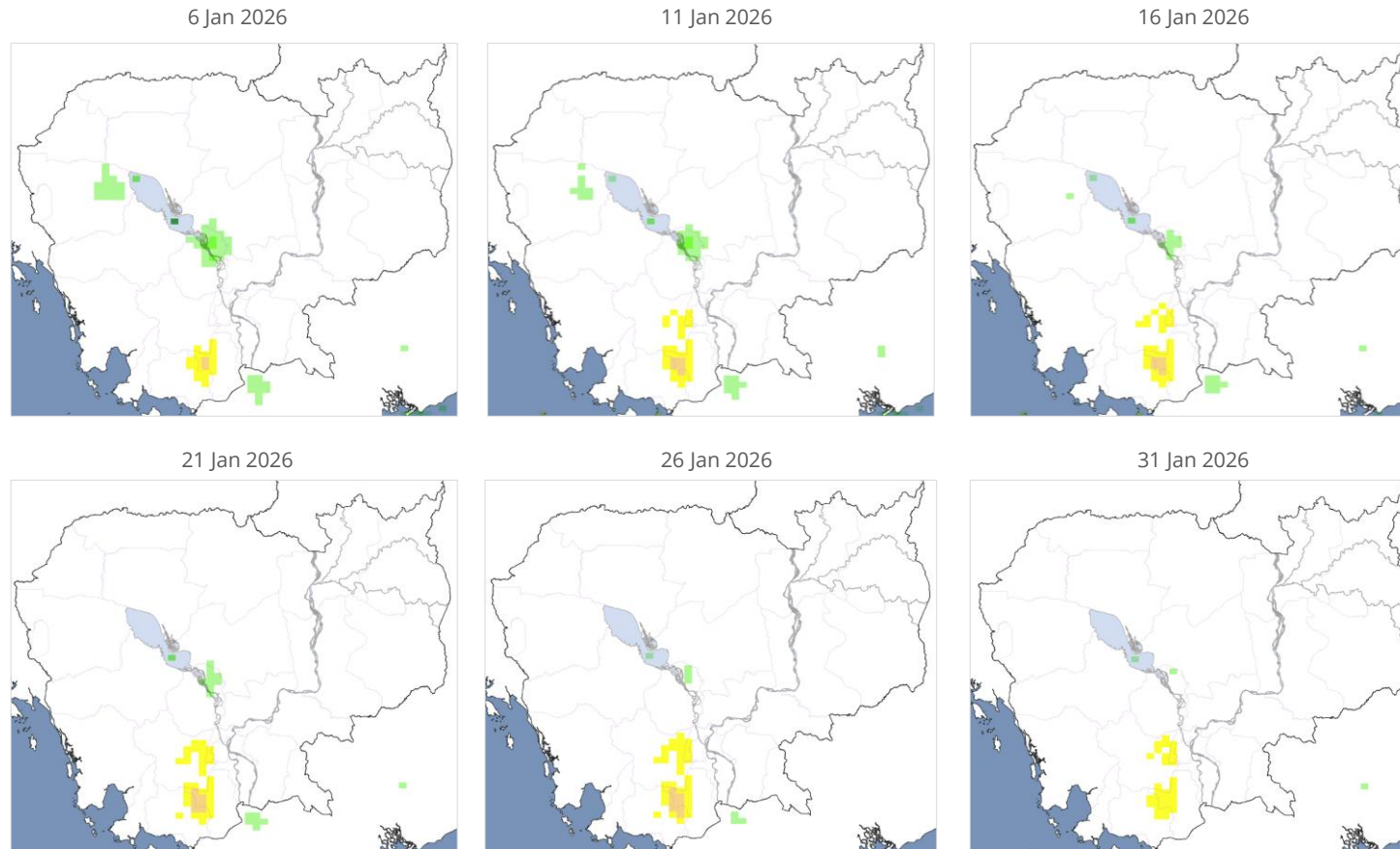
Source: MoWRAM's Department of Hydrology and River Works

■ flood ■ alarm ■ Mean ■ 2026

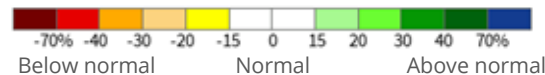
SOIL MOISTURE CONDITIONS

Slightly below-normal soil moisture was observed in parts of Kampot, Takeo, and Kampong Speu, where rainfall was exceptionally lower than normal in January (maps below). Crop cultivation in these areas may face higher irrigation demand. However, soil moisture remained normal to above normal across most of the country, providing generally favorable conditions for dry-season crop production.

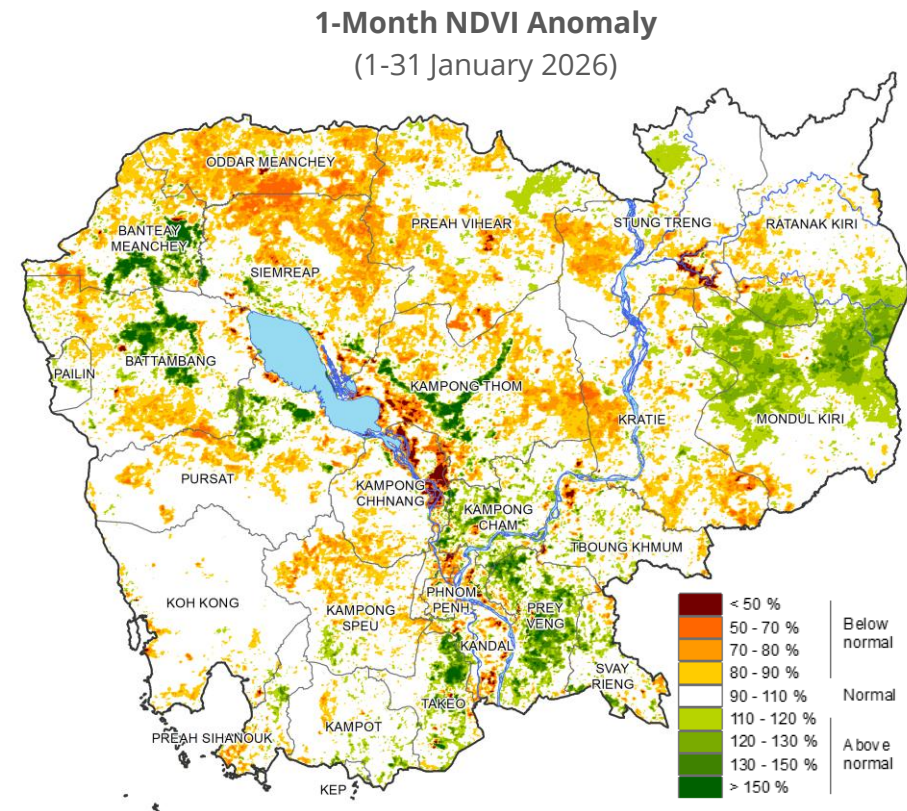
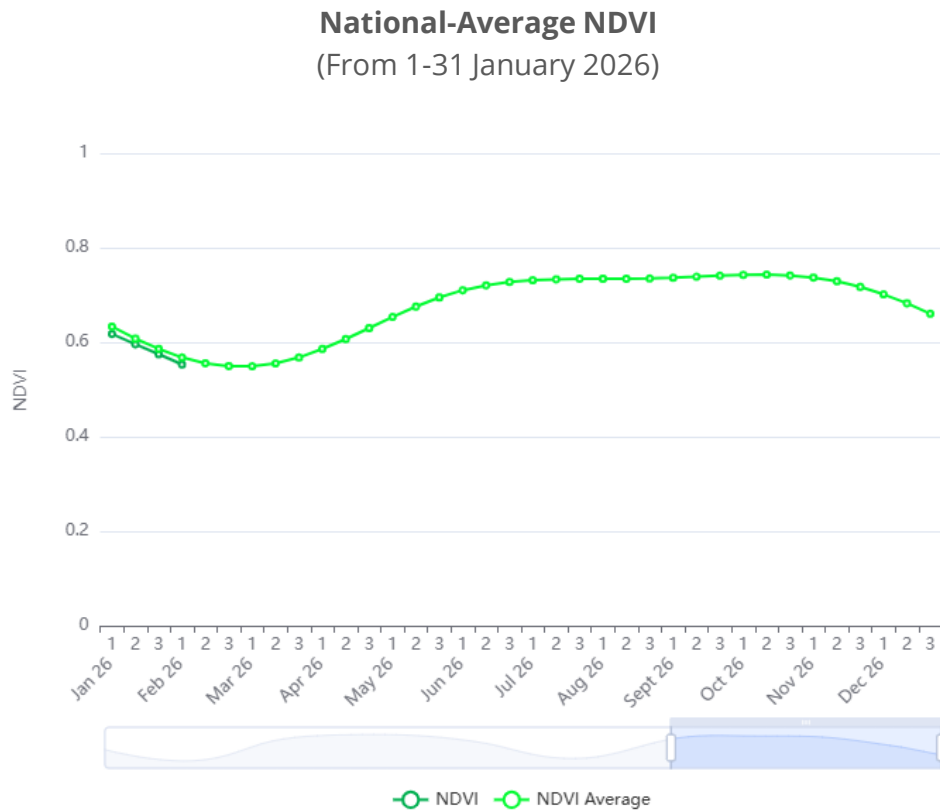
Soil Moisture (Root zone: 0-100 cm) Anomaly



Source: USDA (NASA/GMAO SMAP)



Vegetation conditions in January were slightly below the long-term average nationwide (chart below, left). The most affected areas were those experiencing higher temperatures and deficient rainfall, as well as zones affected by waterlogging around the Tonle Sap Lake, all of which contributed to reduced vegetation conditions (map below, right). Despite these impacts, most dry-season paddy-producing areas maintained generally healthy vegetation conditions.



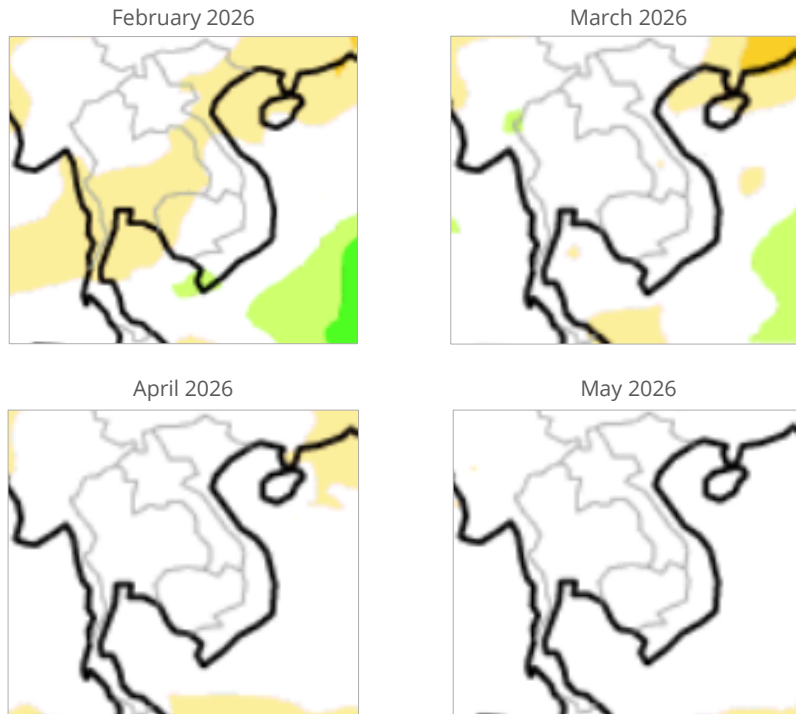
Source: NDVI from MODIS and analysis by WFP

SEASONAL OUTLOOK

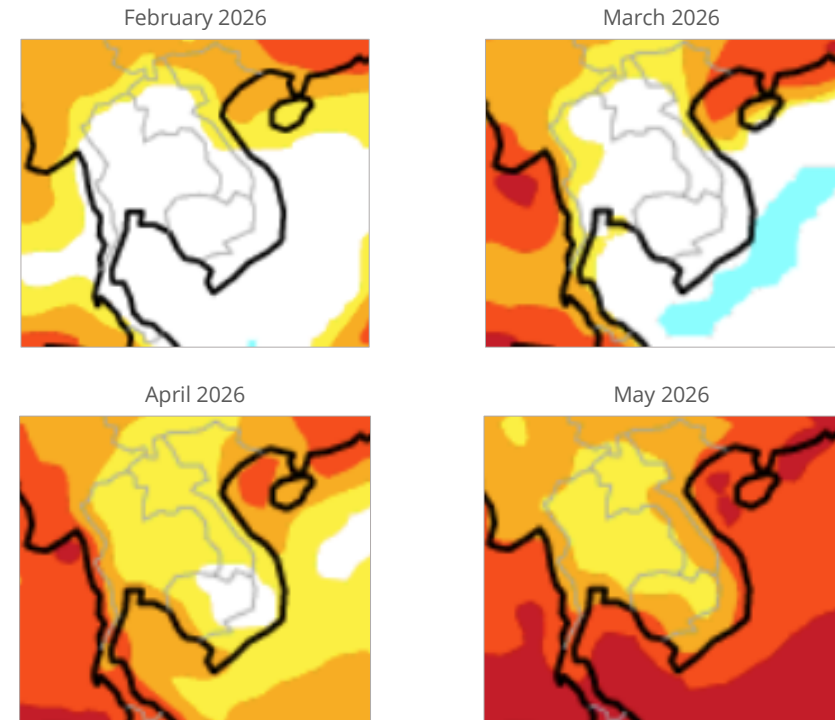
For the next two months (February–March), weather conditions are expected to remain generally stable and close to normal, with the exception of drier-than-usual conditions in the western provinces in February. However, as we move into April and May, temperatures are likely to rise above average—first in the west in April, then across most of the country by May. Rainfall is expected to remain near normal for this period, but the increasing heat signals the onset of a warmer-than-usual seasonal pattern.

During this period, continued monitoring is essential to anticipate localized or unexpected extremes related to dryness and heat. This will support timely preparedness, with a focus on strengthening water management, promoting heat-health awareness, and improving soil-moisture management in agriculture to reduce the impacts of increased evaporation.

Seasonal Rainfall Forecast



Seasonal Temperature Forecast



Source: ECMWF



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For further information:

WFP Cambodia - <https://www.wfp.org/countries/cambodia>

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