

# Seasonal forecasts

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# Seasonal Forecast Worx



<https://tinyurl.com/ForecastProf>

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
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**Seasonal Climate Forecasts**

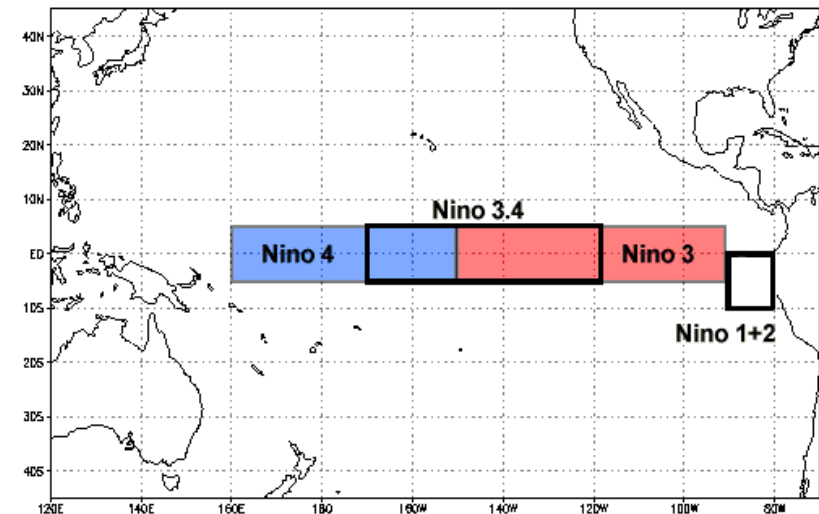
Latest Update: 15 August 2023

- The seasonal forecasts presented here by **Seasonal Forecast Worx** are based on forecast output of the coupled ocean-atmosphere models administered through the North American Multi-Model Ensemble (NMME) prediction experiment (<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/NMME/>; Kirtman et al. 2014). NMME real-time seasonal forecast and hindcast (re-forecast) data are obtained from the data library (<http://iridl.ldeo.columbia.edu/>) of the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI; <http://iri.columbia.edu/>).
- NMME forecasts are routinely produced and are statistically improved and tailored for southern Africa and for global sea-surface temperatures by employees and post-graduate students in the Department of Geography, Geoinformatics and Meteorology at the University of Pretoria (<http://www.up.ac.za/en/geography-geoinformatics-and-meteorology/>). Statistical post-processing is performed with the CPT software (<http://iri.columbia.edu/our-expertise/climate/tools/cpt/>).
- Why do we apply statistical methods to climate model forecasts?  
“...**statistical correction methods treating individual locations (e.g. multiple regression or principal component regression) may be recommended for today’s coupled climate model forecasts**”. (Barnston and Tippett, 2017).
- Why do we not use just a single model in our forecasts?  
“...**multi-model forecasts outperform the single model forecasts...**” (Landman and Beraki, 2012).
- For the official seasonal forecast for South Africa, visit the South African Weather Service website at <http://www.weathersa.co.za/images/data/longrange/gfcsa/scw.pdf>

# ENSO and Global SST Forecasts

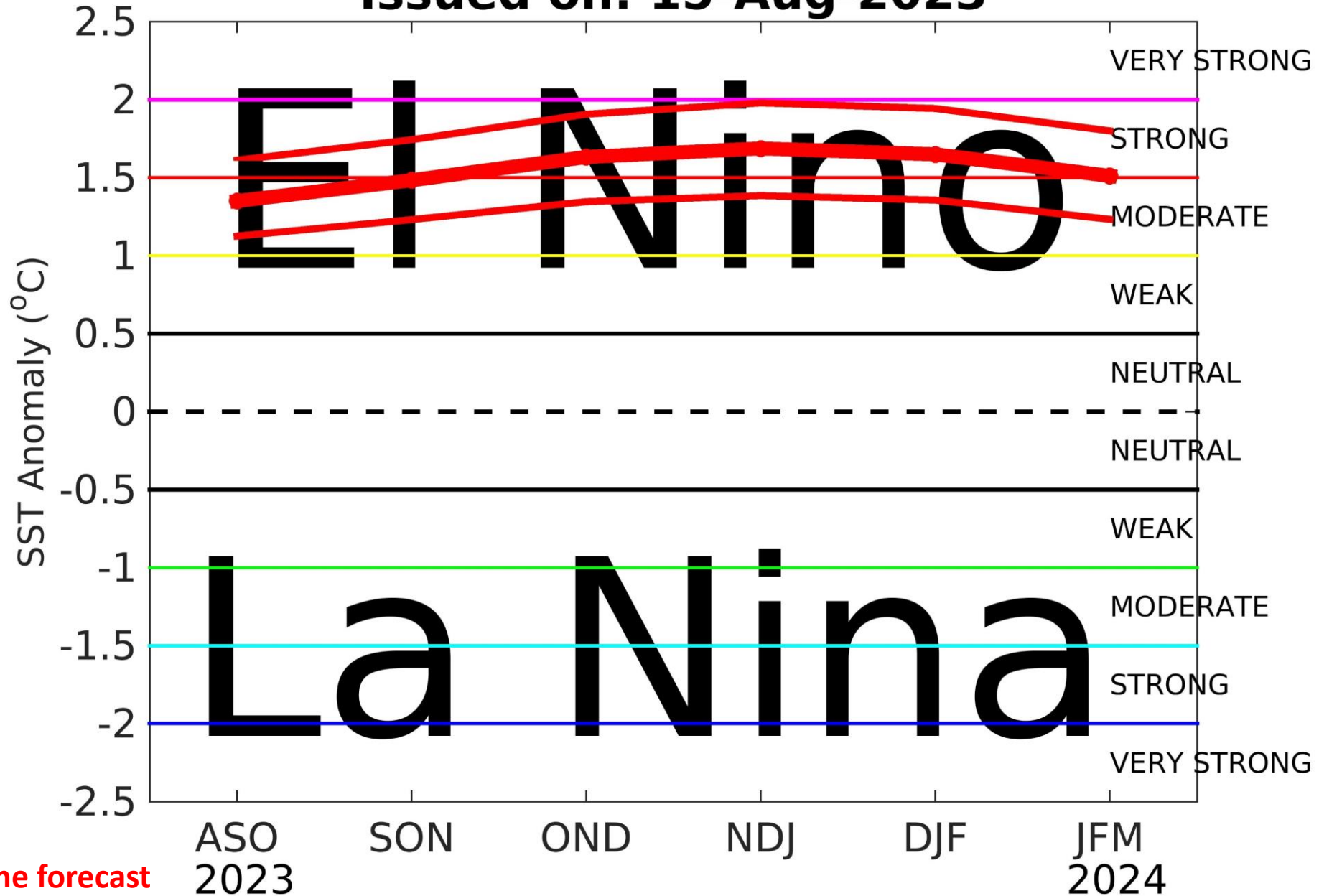
# Prediction Method

- Forecasts for global sea-surface temperature (SST) fields are obtained through a combination of NMME models and a linear statistical model, that uses antecedent SST as a predictor (Landman et al. 2011). Forecasts for the Niño3.4 area (see insert) are derived from the global forecasts.
- SST forecasts from the NMME models are variance and bias corrected.
- Three-month Niño3.4 SST forecasts are produced for three categories:
  - **El Niño:** SST above the 75th percentile
  - **La Niña:** SST below the 25th percentile
  - **Neutral:** Neither El Niño nor La Niña



# CSiriMM Nino3.4 SST Forecast

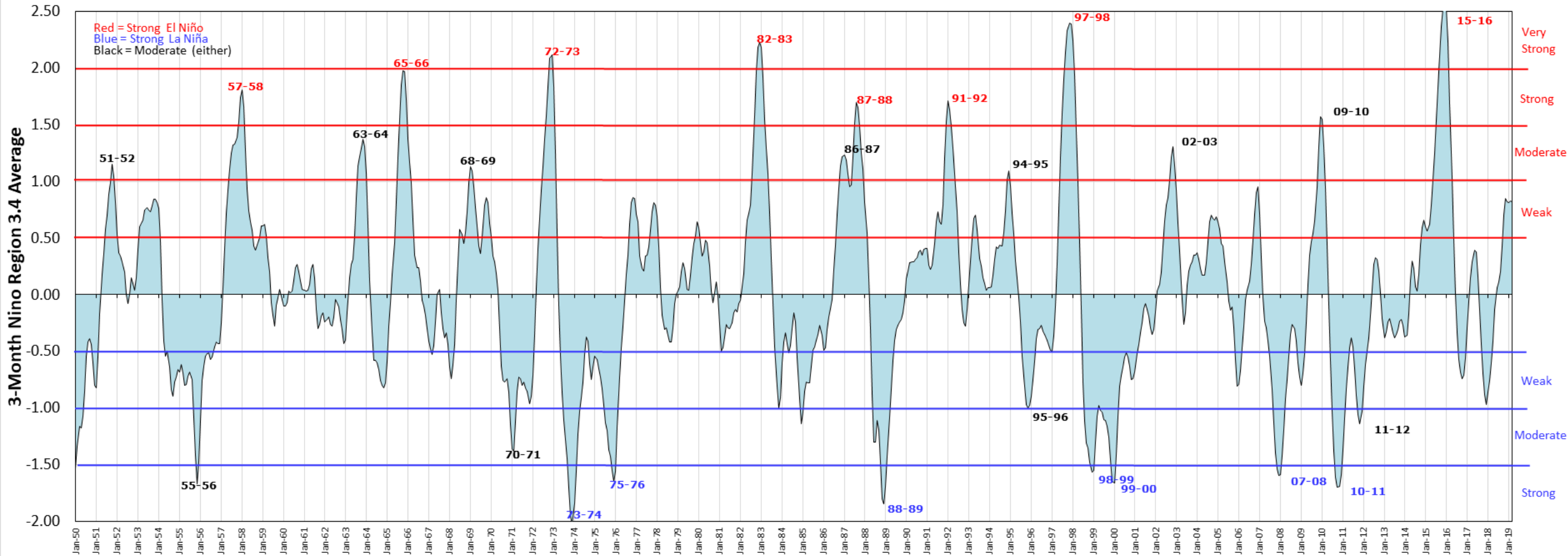
## Issued on: 15-Aug-2023



Middle red line: the forecast  
Thin red lines: 25% confidence levels

# Oceanic Niño Index (ONI)

[http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis\\_monitoring/ensostuff/ensoyears.shtml](http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/ensostuff/ensoyears.shtml)

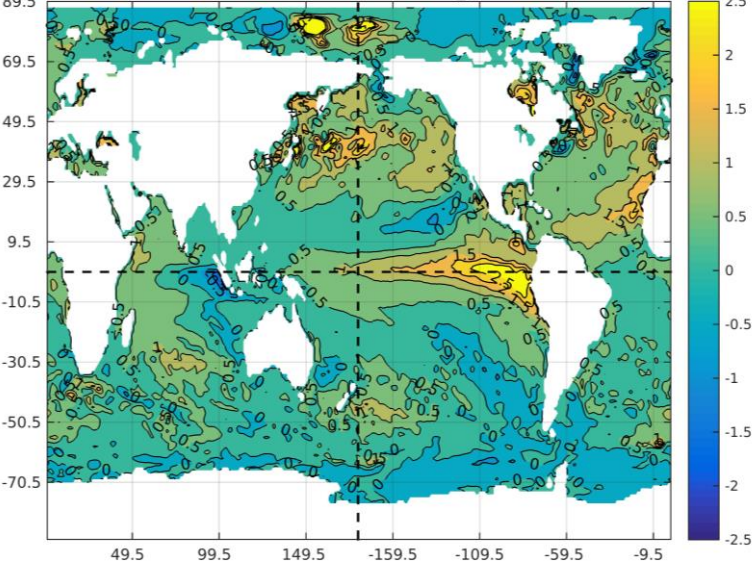




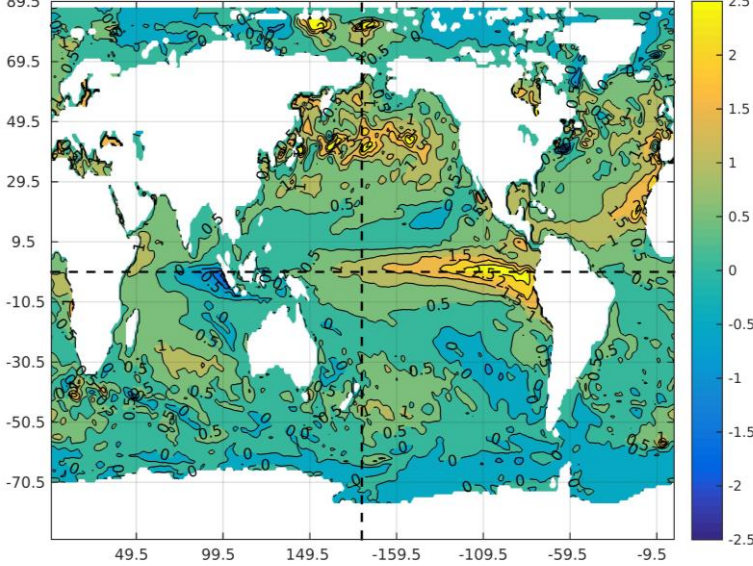
IC: the month in which the forecast was made

# SST anomalies (in °C, where blue is cooler and orange is warmer)

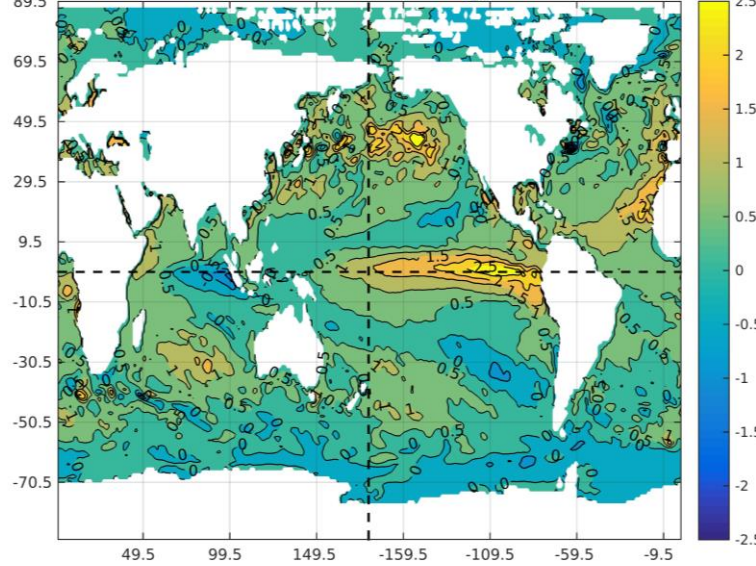
SST ASO IC:Aug2023



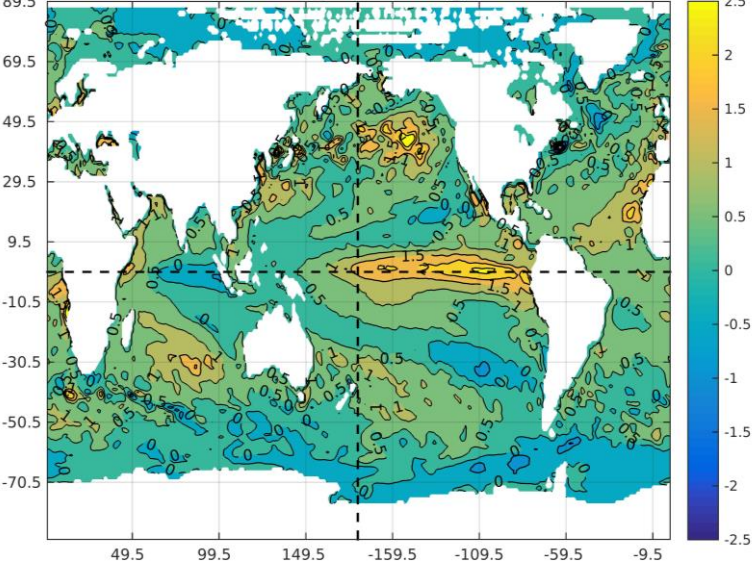
SST SON IC:Aug2023



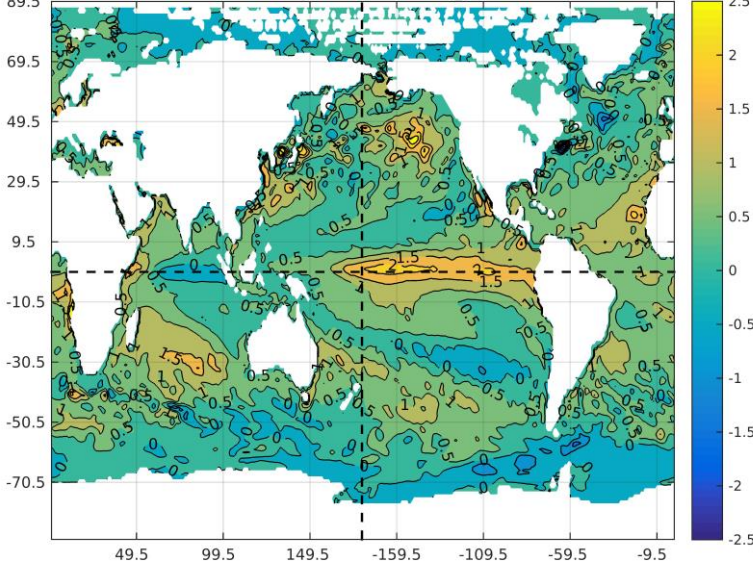
SST OND IC:Aug2023



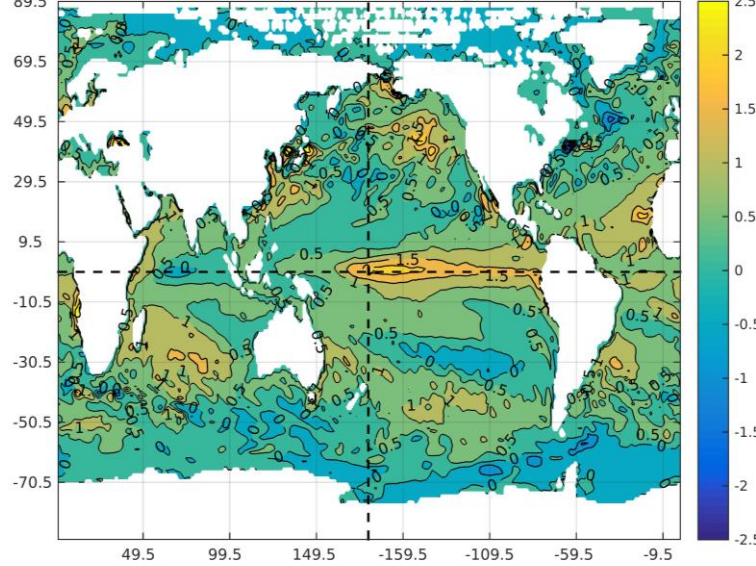
SST NDJ IC:Aug2023



SST DJF IC:Aug2023



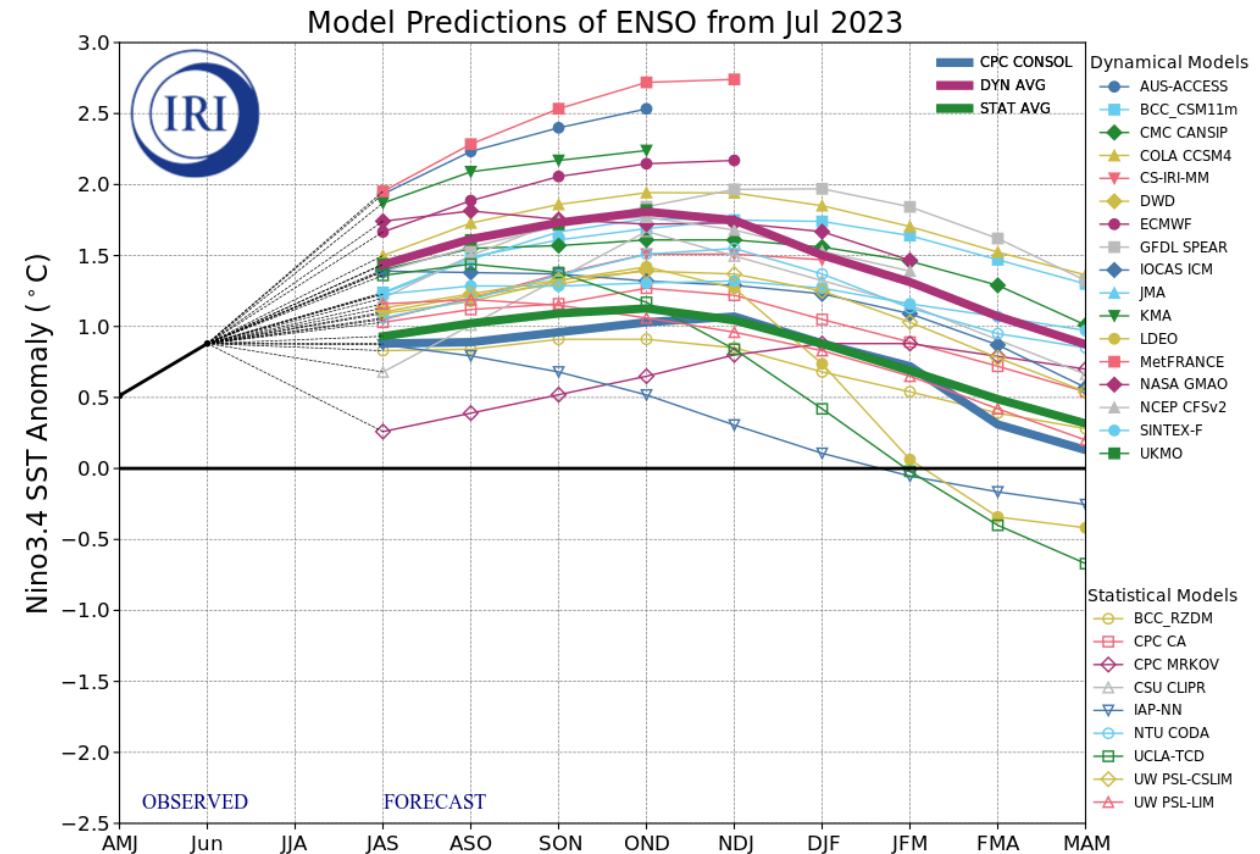
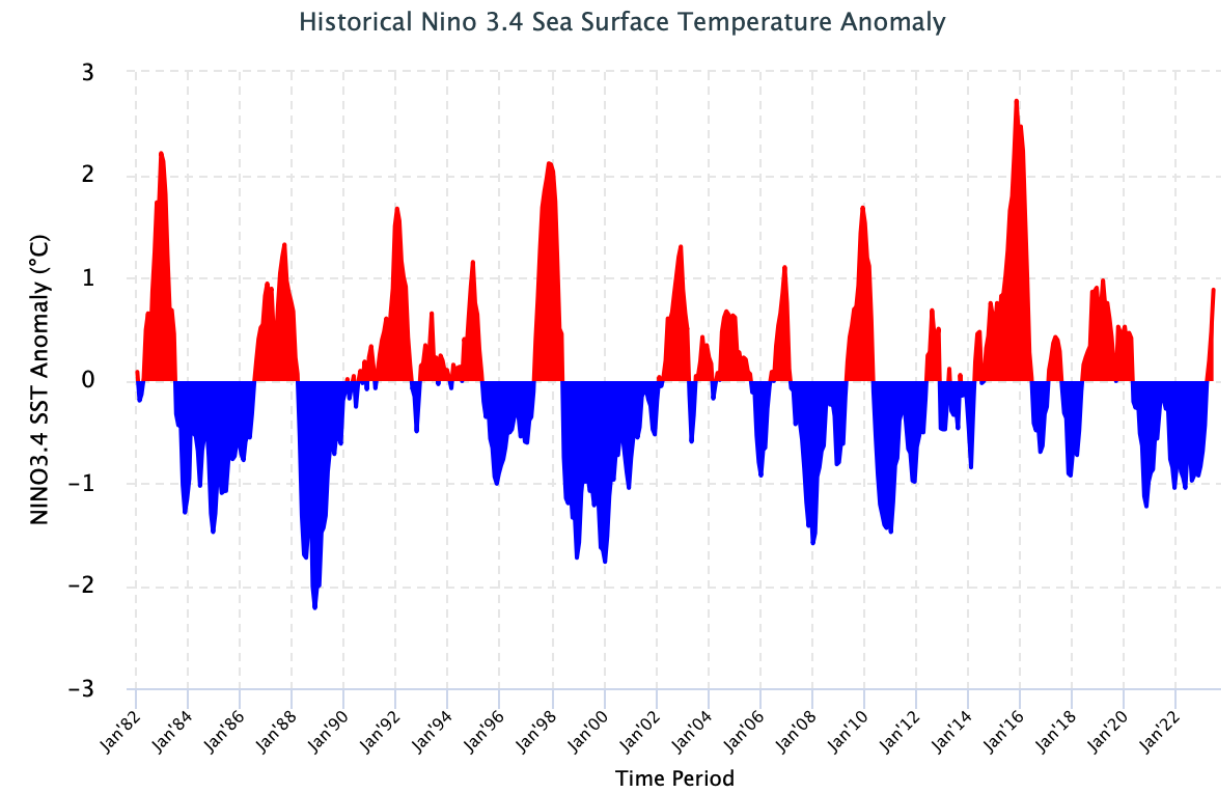
SST JFM IC:Aug2023





# Round-up: ENSO

- The UP model continues to predict a moderate to strong El Niño event during the Austral summer





Africa forecasts, south of 20°N

# Prediction Method

- Three-month seasons for seasonal rainfall totals and average maximum temperatures of NMME ensemble mean forecasts are interpolated to the Climatic Research Unit (CRU; Harris et al. 2014) grids ( $0.5^{\circ} \times 0.5^{\circ}$ ), by correcting the mean and variance biases of the NMME forecasts. Probabilistic forecasts are subsequently produced from the error variance obtained from a 5-year-out cross-validation process (Troccoli et al. 2008). Forecasts cover a 6-month period.
- Forecasts are produced for three categories:
  - **Above:** Above-normal (“wet” rainfall totals / “hot” maximum temperatures higher than the 75th percentile of the climatological record)
  - **Below:** Below-normal (“dry” rainfall totals / “cool” maximum temperatures lower than the 25th percentile of the climatological record)
  - **Normal:** Near-normal (“average” season)
- Verification of forecast performance:
  - ROC Area (Below-Normal) – The forecast system’s ability to discriminate dry or cool seasons from the rest of the seasons over a 23-year test period. ROC values should be higher than 0.5 for a forecast system to be considered skilful.
  - ROC Area (Above-Normal) – The forecast system’s ability to discriminate wet or hot seasons from the rest of the seasons over a 23-year test period. ROC values should be higher than 0.5 for a forecast system to be considered skilful.

# Forecasts are probabilistic

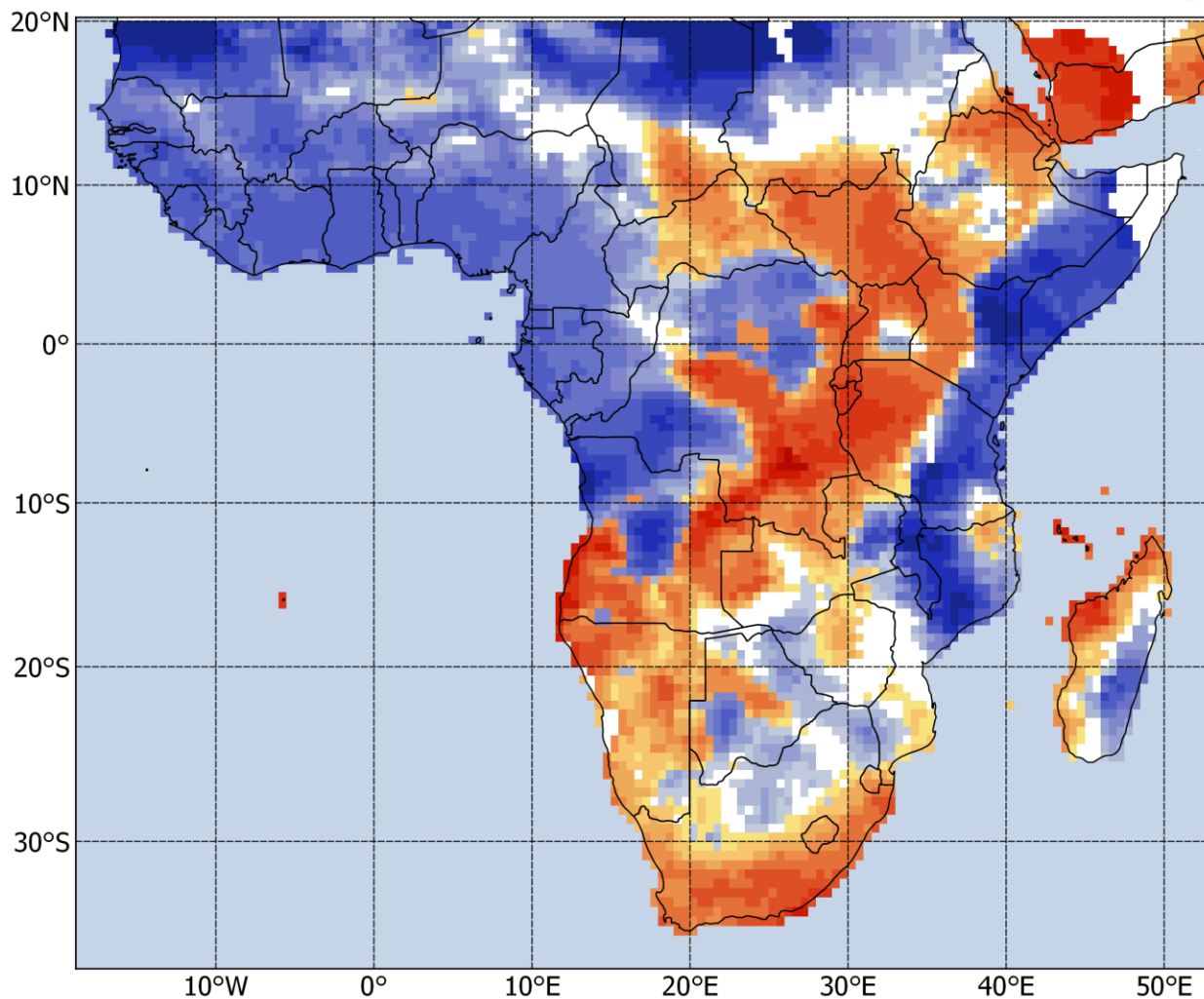
Probabilistic forecasts can help users understand risks and opportunities (forewarned is forearmed) in order to make more informed decisions.

The seasonal rainfall and maximum temperature forecasts to follow are expressed in probabilities, shown as the % chance of the most likely outcome of 3 categories. The colour of the scale reflects the most likely category and the % shows the probability of that outcome. Only ONE of the ROC area skill assessment maps should be consulted, depending on the category shown on the forecast map (Above- or Below-Normal), and the higher the value, the more skilful the forecast for that pixel is. The probabilities shown are always less than 100% - so there is no absolute certainty that the less favoured outcome will not occur. For example, if the forecast claims a 75% of below-normal rainfall totals for a season (i.e. drought), it means that 1 out of 4 times it will **not** develop into a drought.

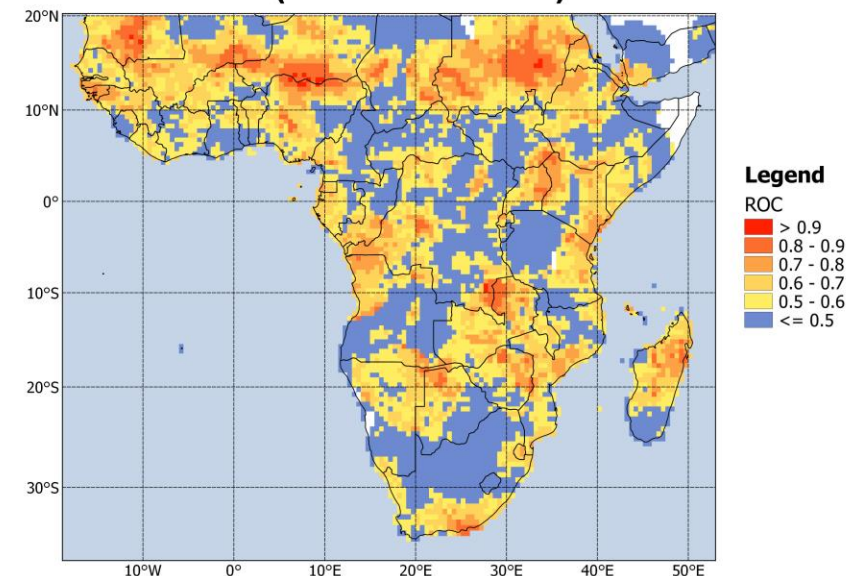
The nature of a probabilistic forecast implies that the less likely outcomes are always possible. In fact, for the probabilistic forecasts to be considered reliable, the less likely outcomes will and must occasionally occur.

Note: Probabilistic forecasts are considered reliable when the forecast probability is an accurate estimation of the relative frequency of the predicted outcome. In other words, forecasts are reliable if the observation falls within the category (Below-, Near- or Above-Normal) as frequently as the forecast implies

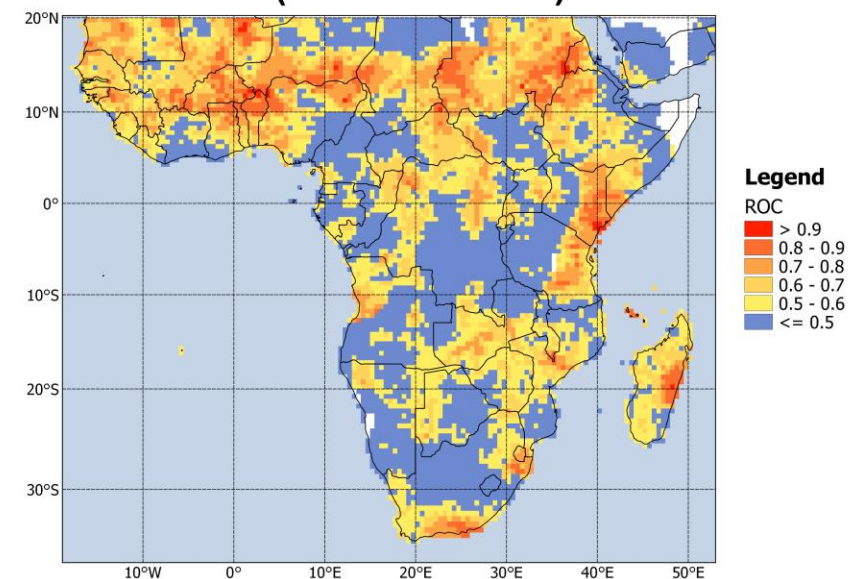
# ASO 2023 Rainfall; ICs: Aug



## ROC Area (Above-Normal): ASO Rainfall

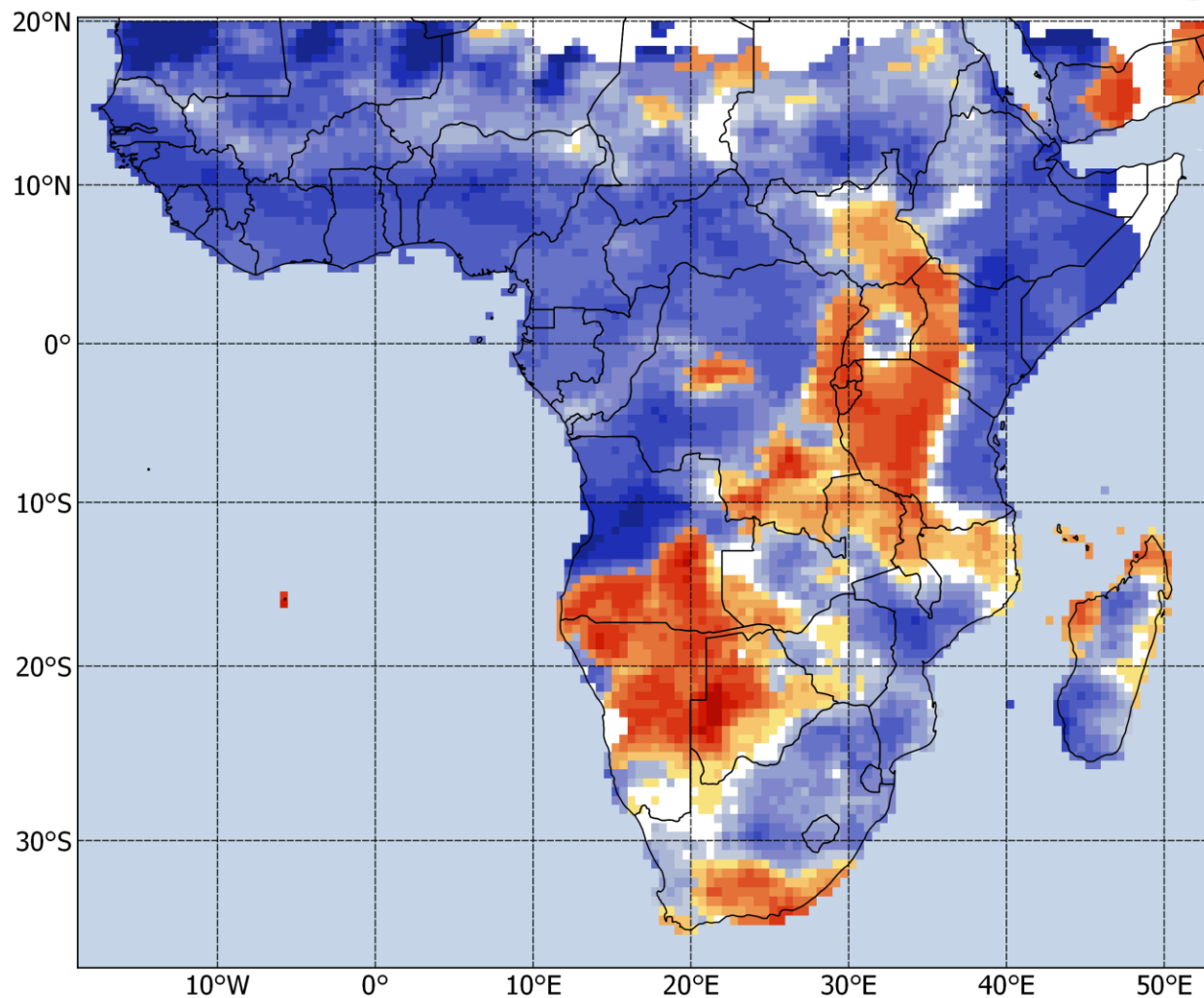


## ROC Area (Below-Normal): ASO Rainfall



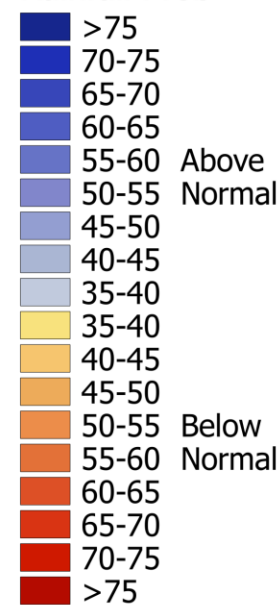


# SON 2023 Rainfall; ICs: Aug



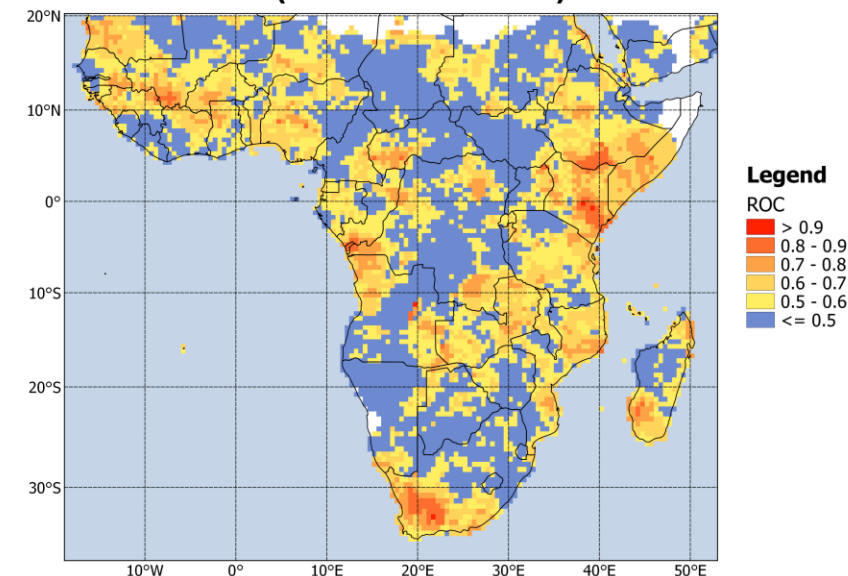
## Legend

### Rainfall Prob

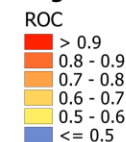


□ No forecast

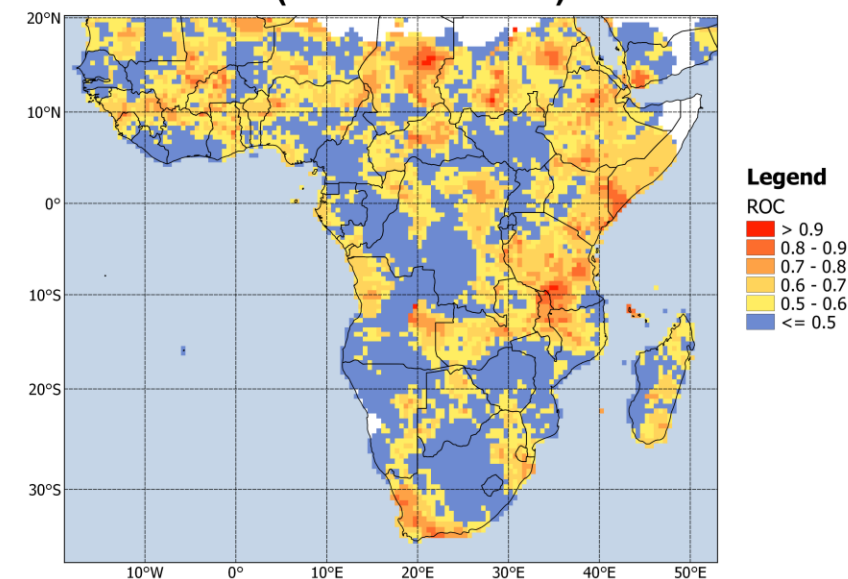
## ROC Area (Above-Normal): SON Rainfall



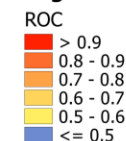
## Legend



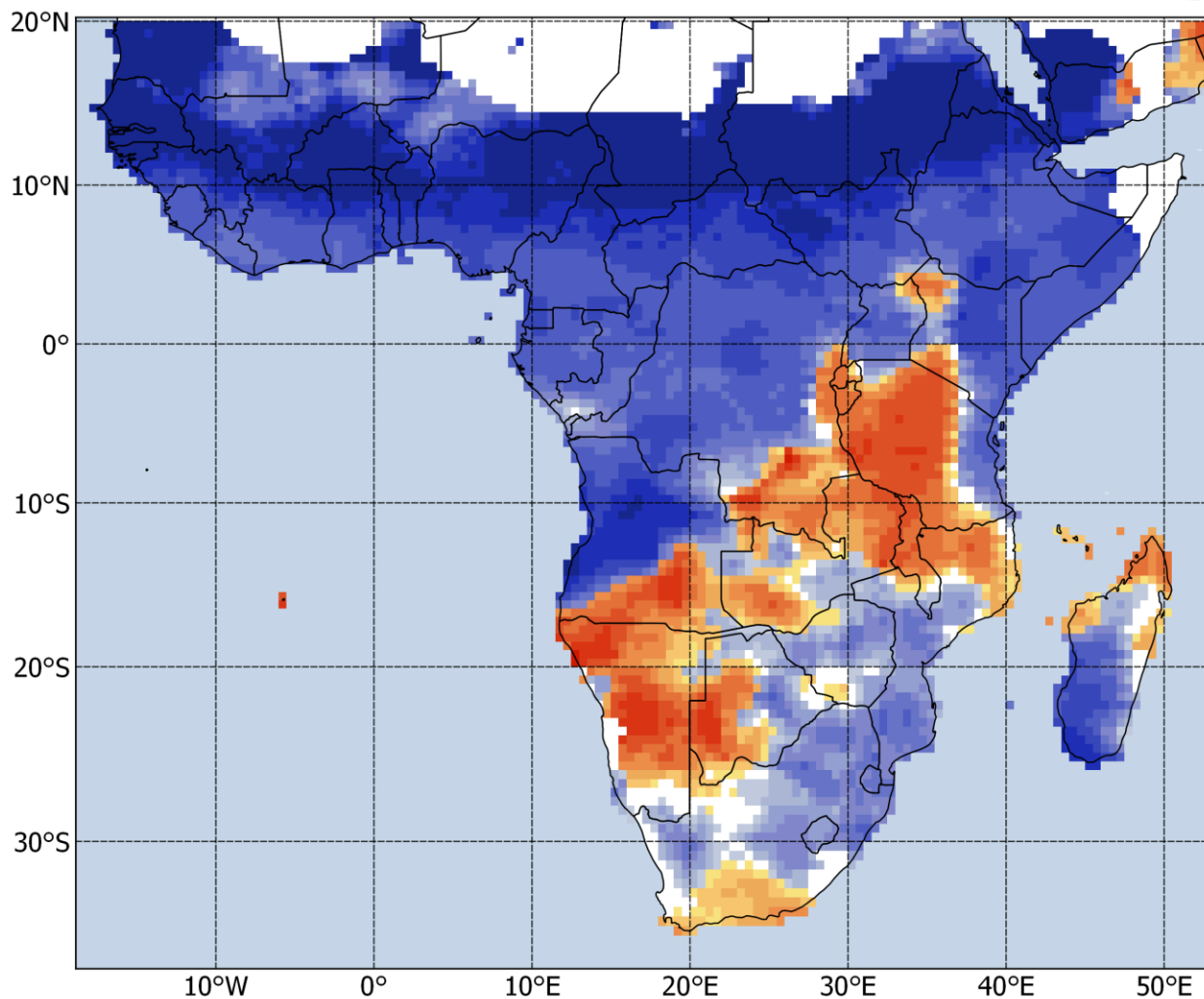
## ROC Area (Below-Normal): SON Rainfall



## Legend

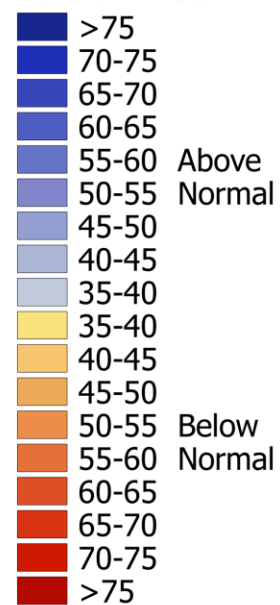


# OND 2023 Rainfall; ICs: Aug



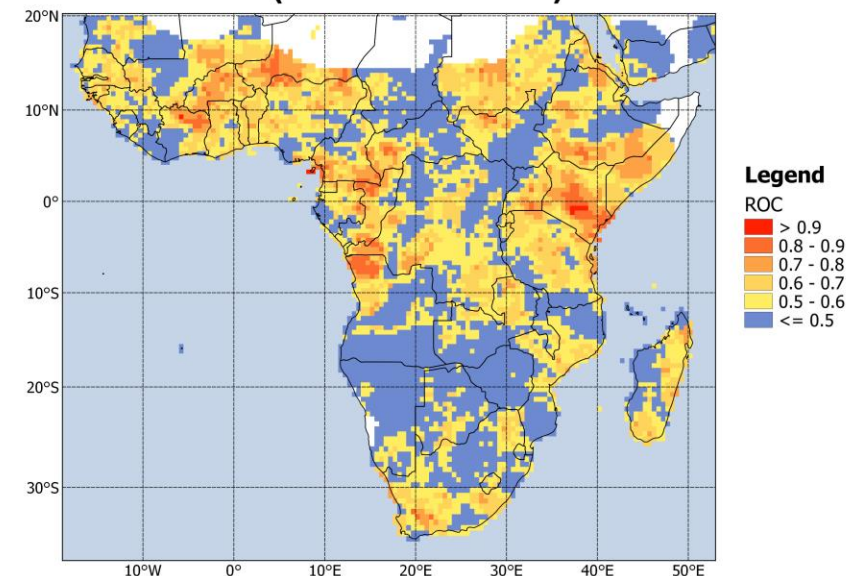
## Legend

### Rainfall Prob

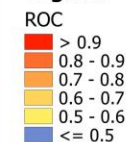


□ No forecast

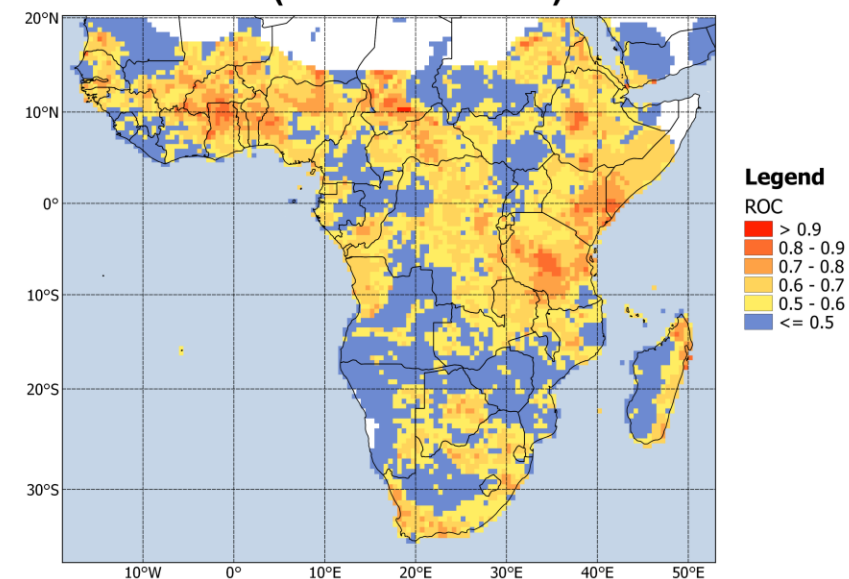
## ROC Area (Above-Normal): OND Rainfall



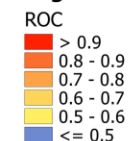
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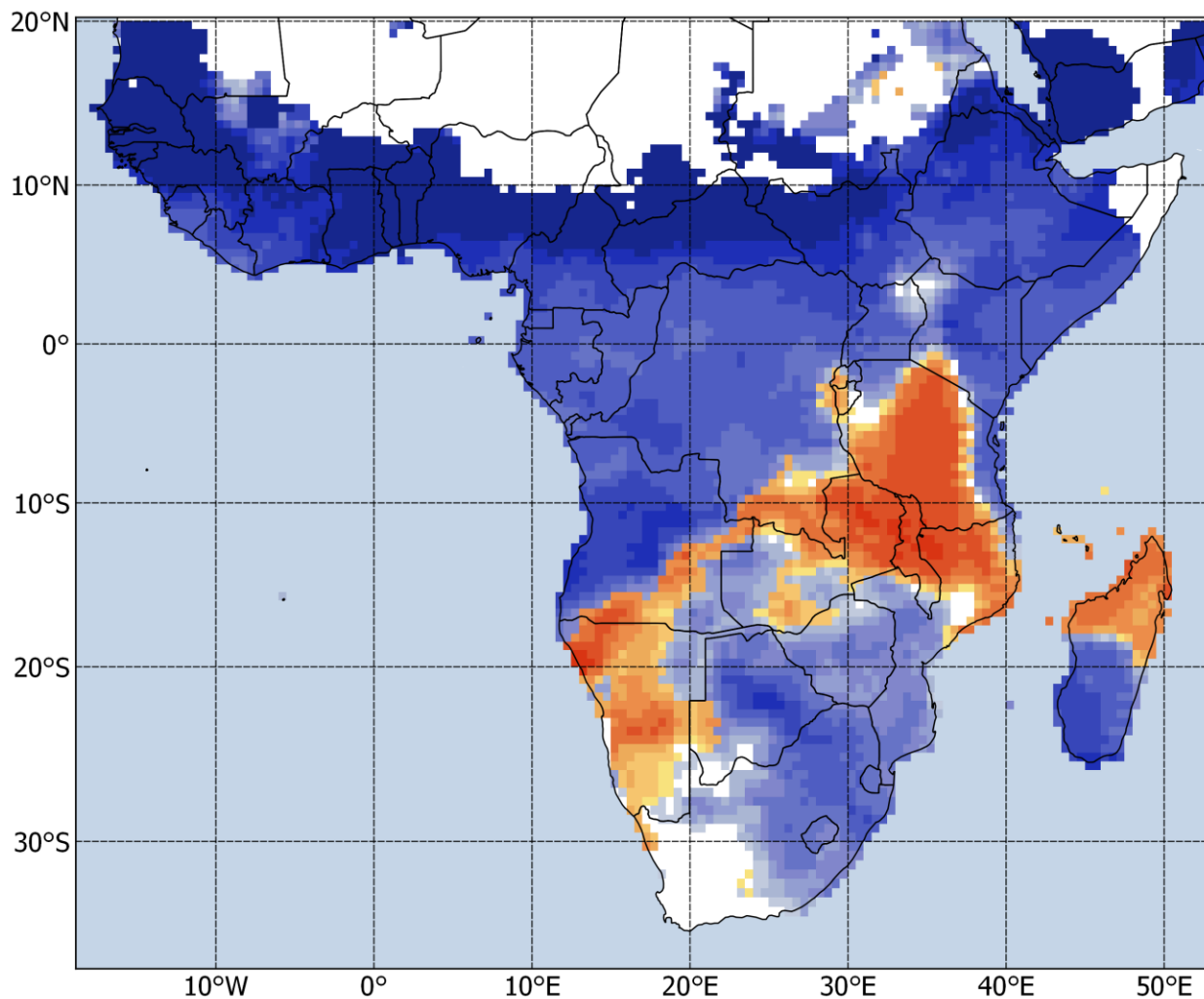
## ROC Area (Below-Normal): OND Rainfall



## Legend

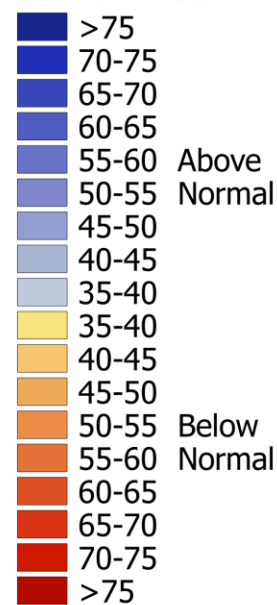


# NDJ 2023/24 Rainfall; ICs: Aug



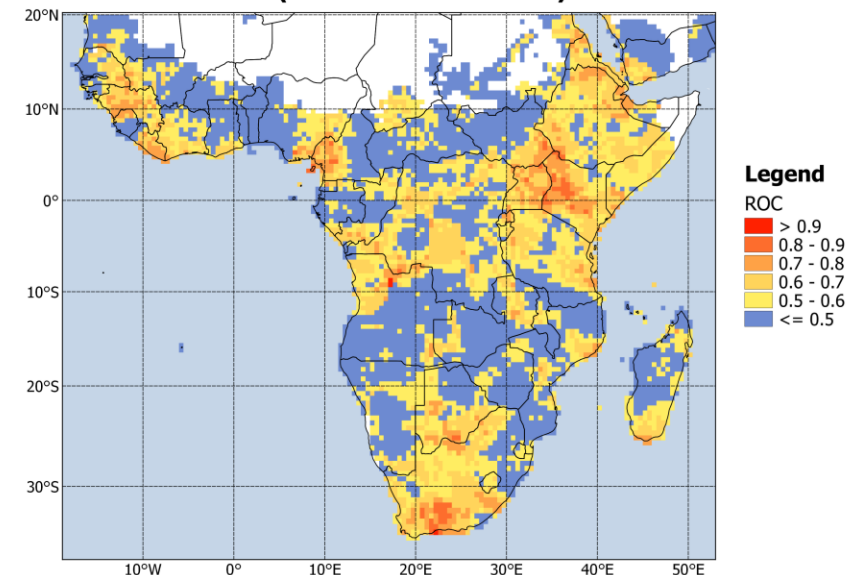
## Legend

### Rainfall Prob



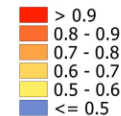
□ No forecast

## ROC Area (Above-Normal): NDJ Rainfall

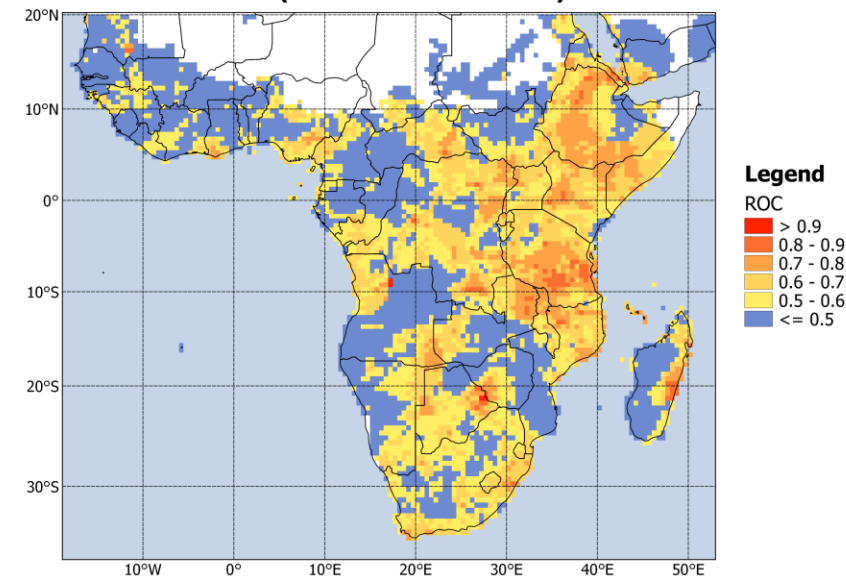


## Legend

### ROC

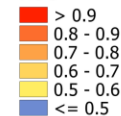


## ROC Area (Below-Normal): NDJ Rainfall



## Legend

### ROC



# Round-up: Rainfall south of 15°S

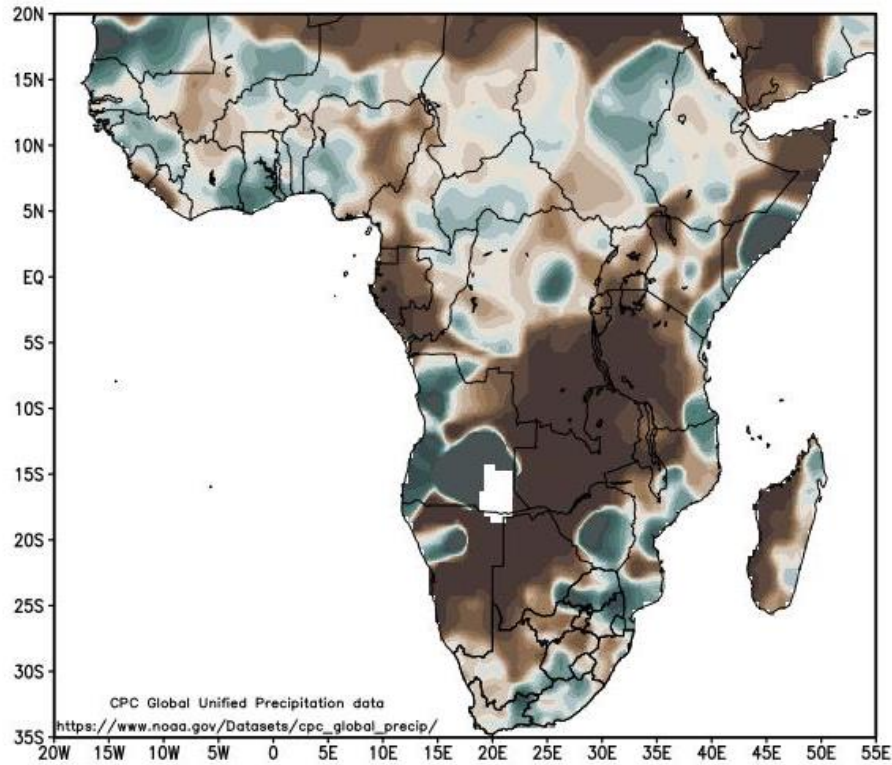
El Nino events are most often associated with below-normal rainfall totals over the summer rainfall region

- At the present time, the forecasts show that the southern coastal and adjacent interior are the most strongly linked with expected below-normal rainfall conditions up to the end of this calendar year
- The remainder of the area is not predicted to be as dry as is normally expected during El Nino events
- Owing to the uncertainty of the current forecasts for the larger area, it is strongly advised to follow updated forecasts
- The SW Cape is expected to have below-normal rainfall for the rest of the winter season

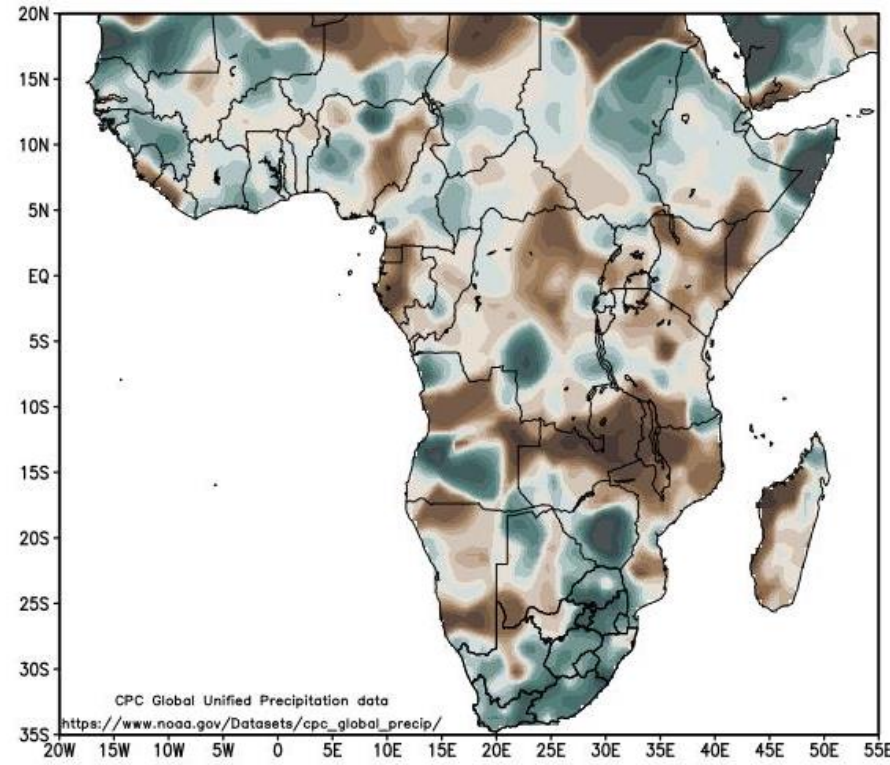


# Observed Rainfall

Rainfall (% of normal): July 2023  
July long-term mean: 1981–2010



Rainfall (% of normal): MMJ 2023  
MJJ long-term mean: 1981–2010

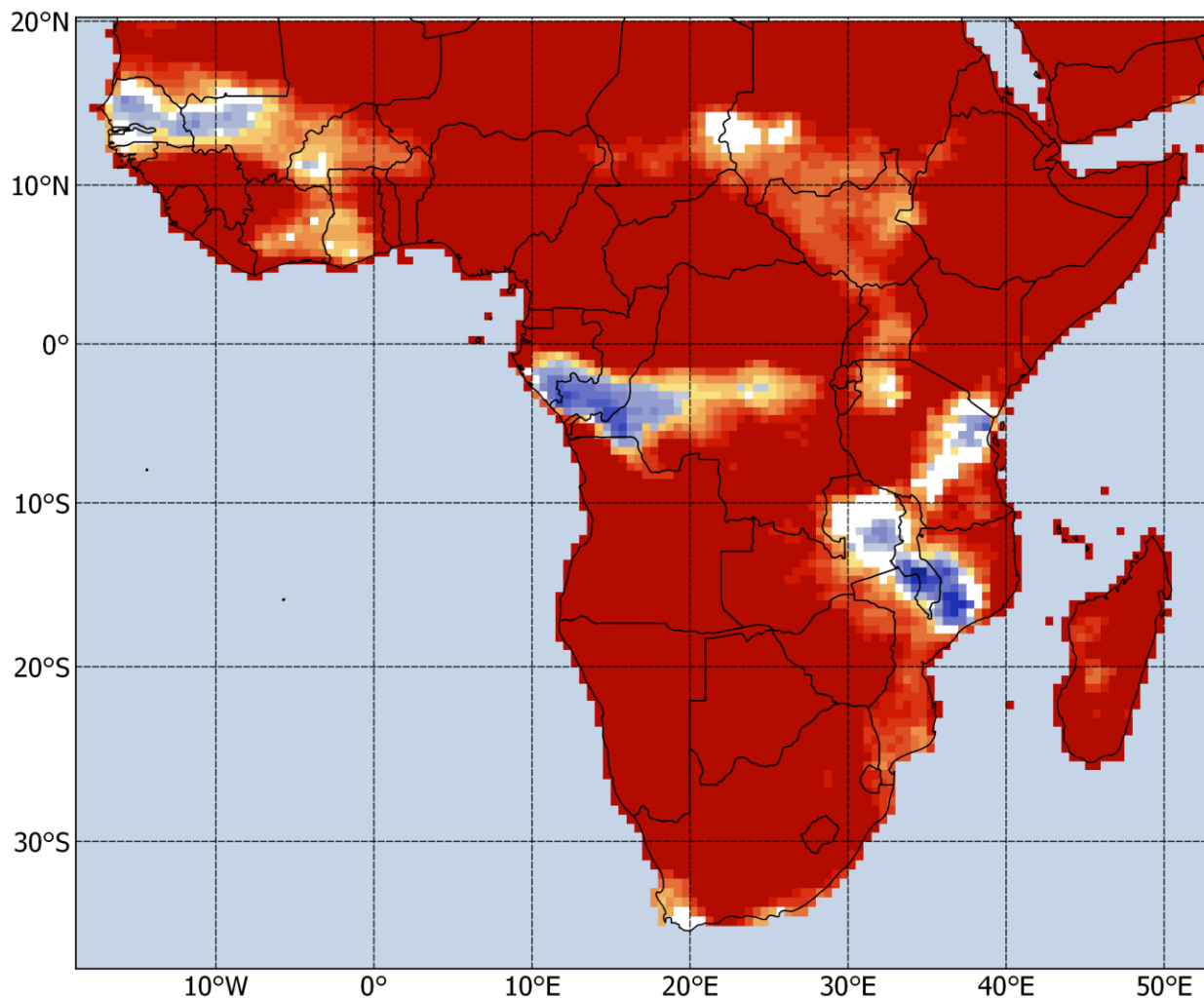


Recorded rainfall for July and the May-June-July season show below-normal rainfall over the brown areas and above-normal rainfall over the green areas

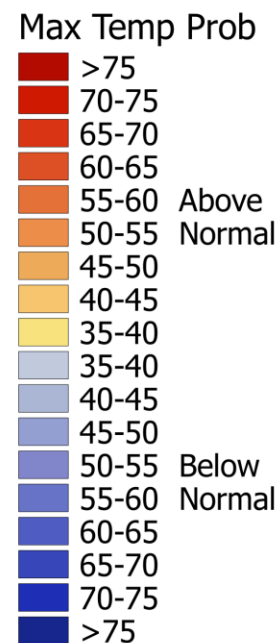
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 80 100 120 140 160 200 250 300 400 500 (%)

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 80 100 120 140 160 200 250 300 400 500 (%)

# ASO 2023 Max Temp; ICs: Aug

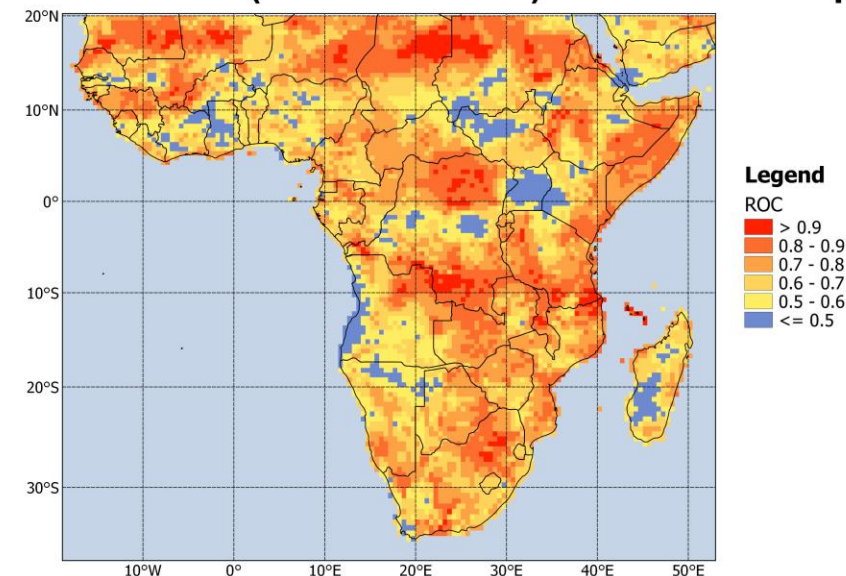


## Legend

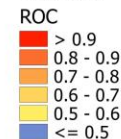


No Forecast

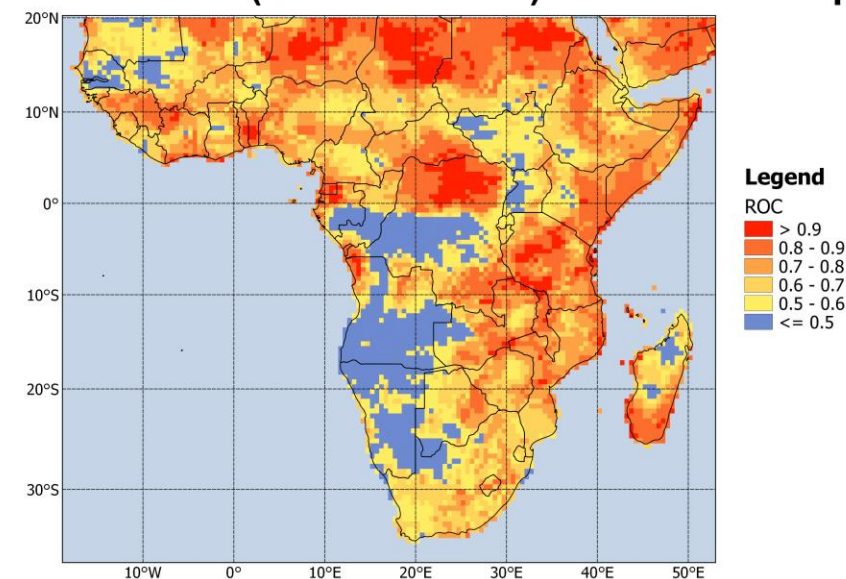
## ROC Area (Above-Normal): ASO Max Temp



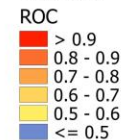
## Legend



## ROC Area (Below-Normal): ASO Max Temp

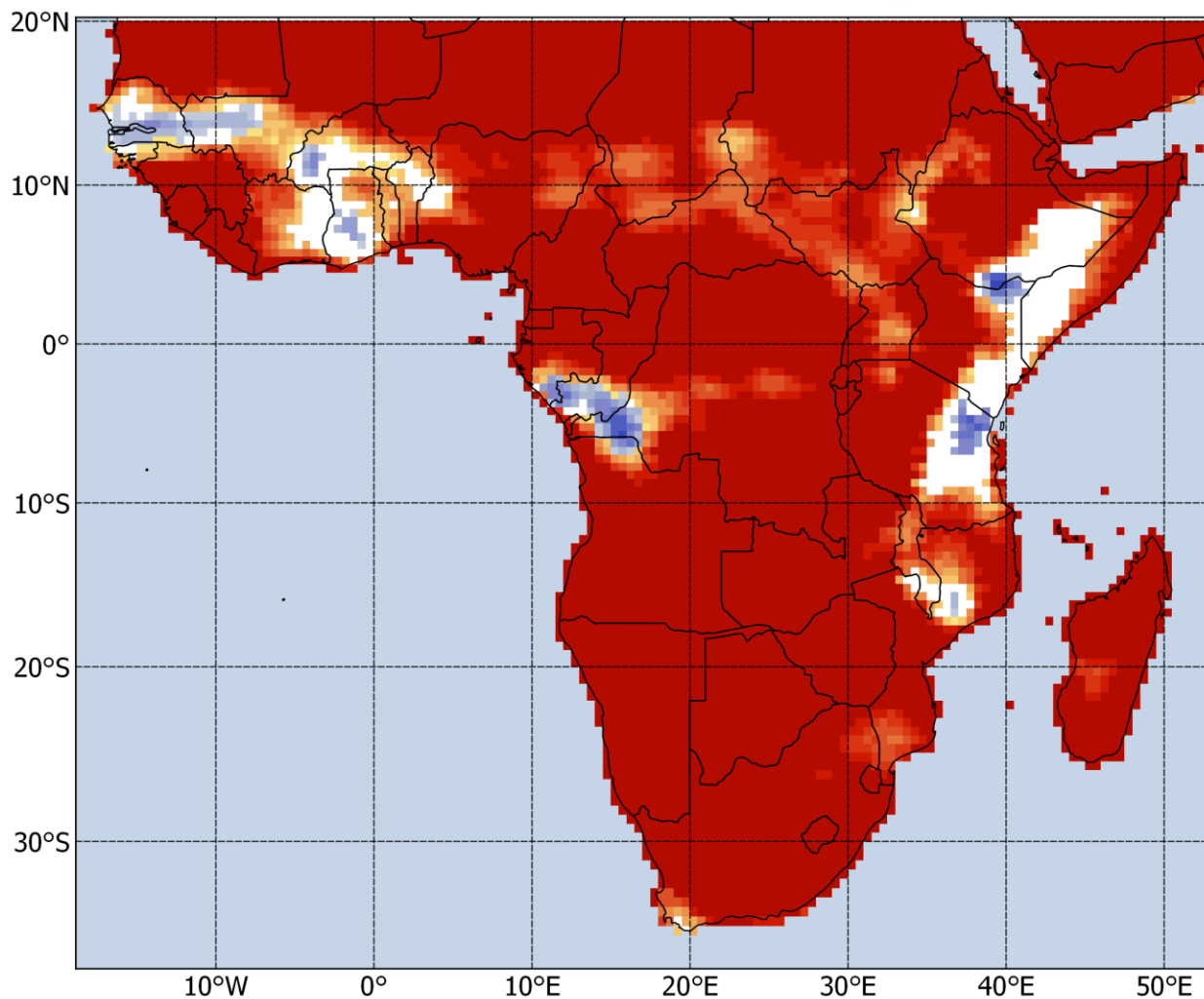


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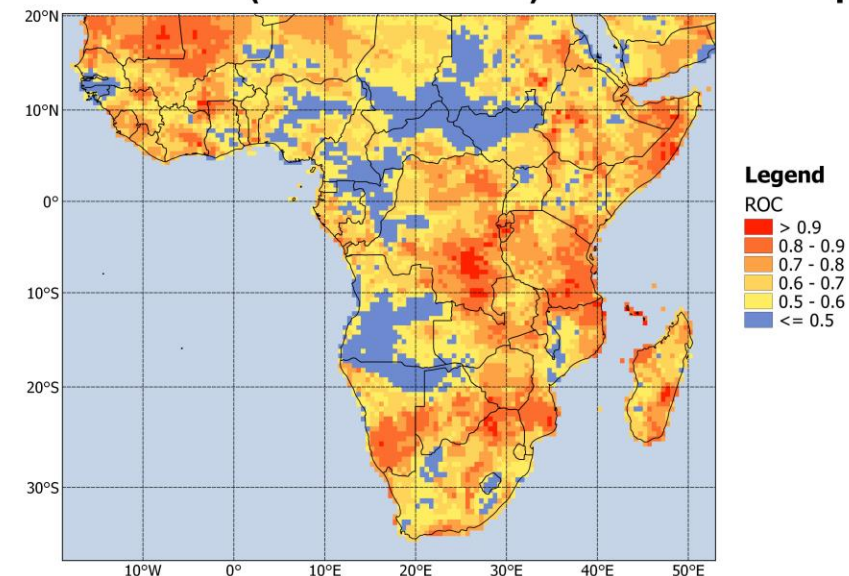




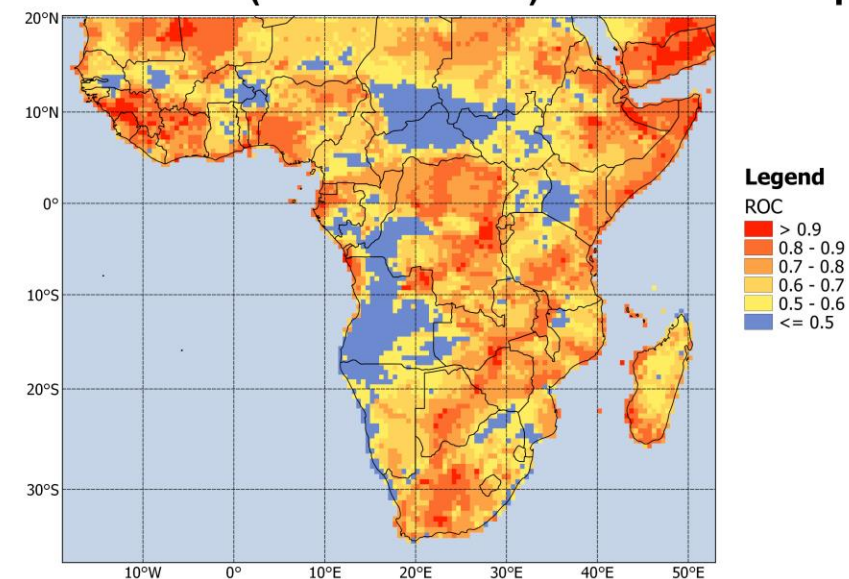
# SON 2023 Max Temp; ICs: Aug



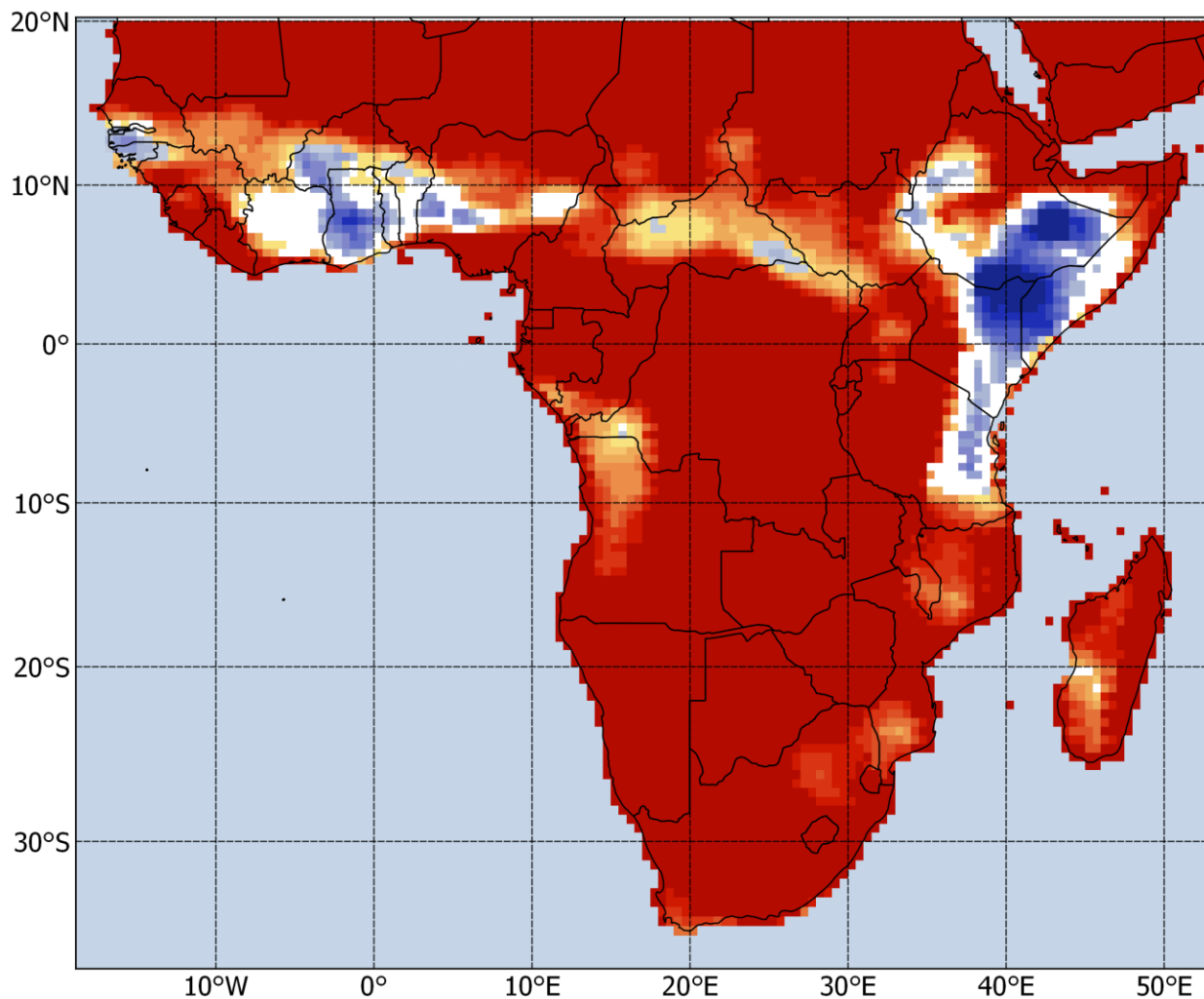
## ROC Area (Above-Normal): SON Max Temp



## ROC Area (Below-Normal): SON Max Temp

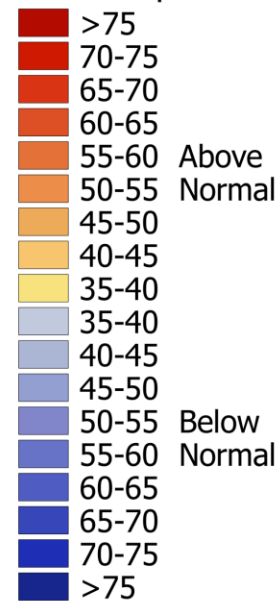


# OND 2023 Max Temp; ICs: Aug



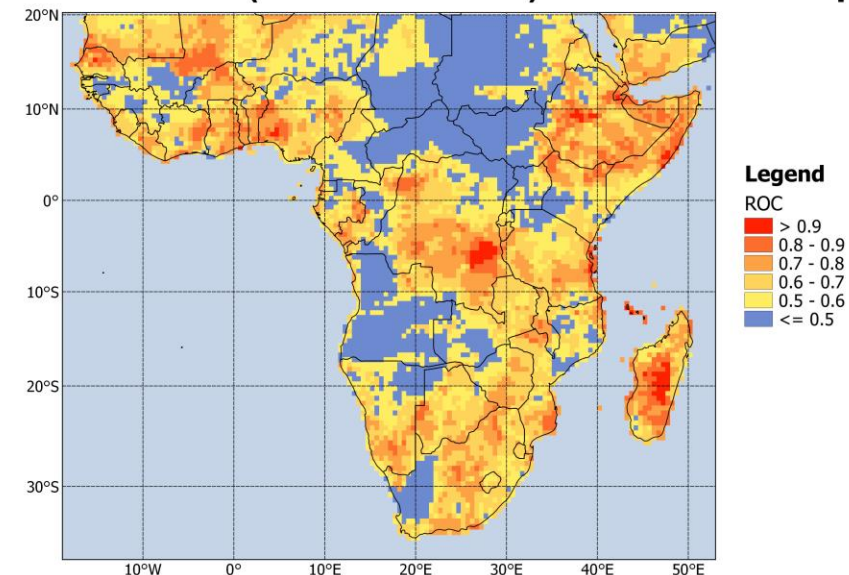
## Legend

Max Temp Prob

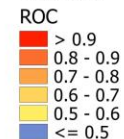


No Forecast

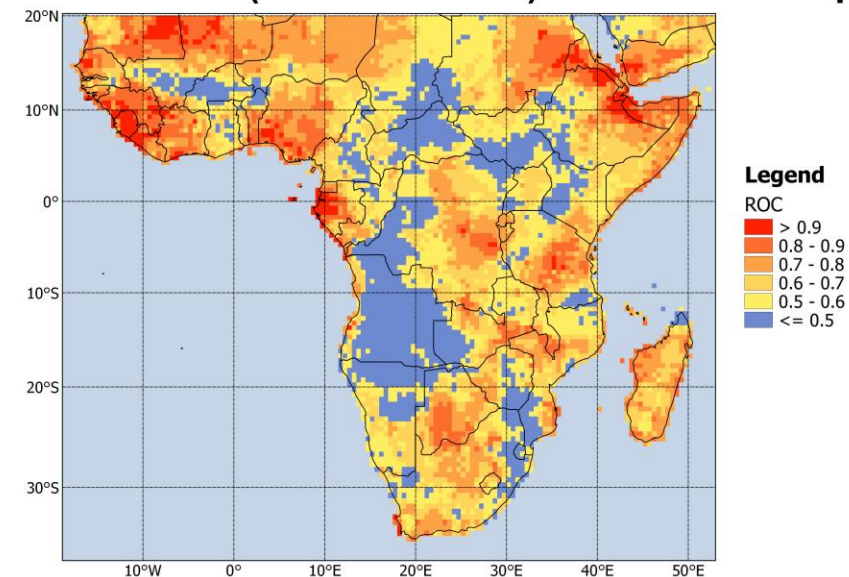
## ROC Area (Above-Normal): OND Max Temp



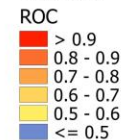
## Legend



## ROC Area (Below-Normal): OND Max Temp

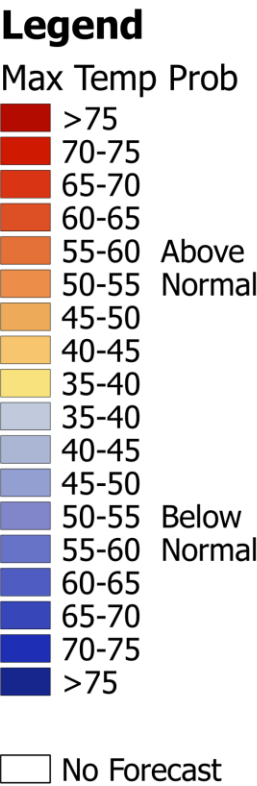
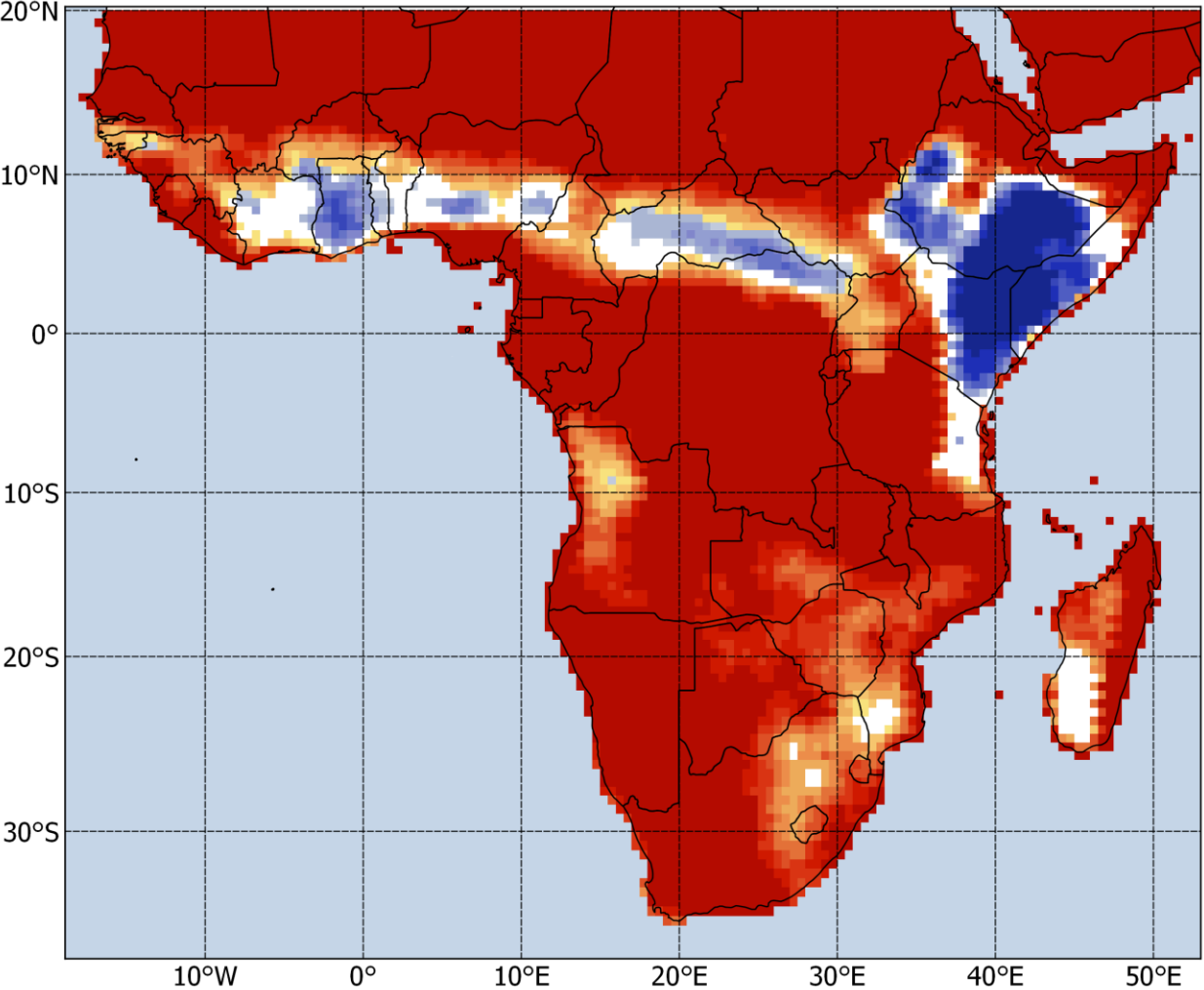


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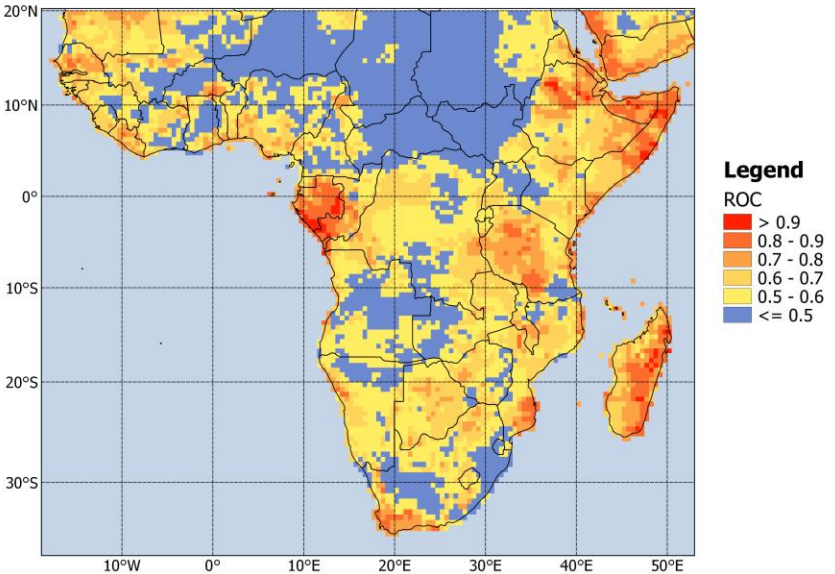




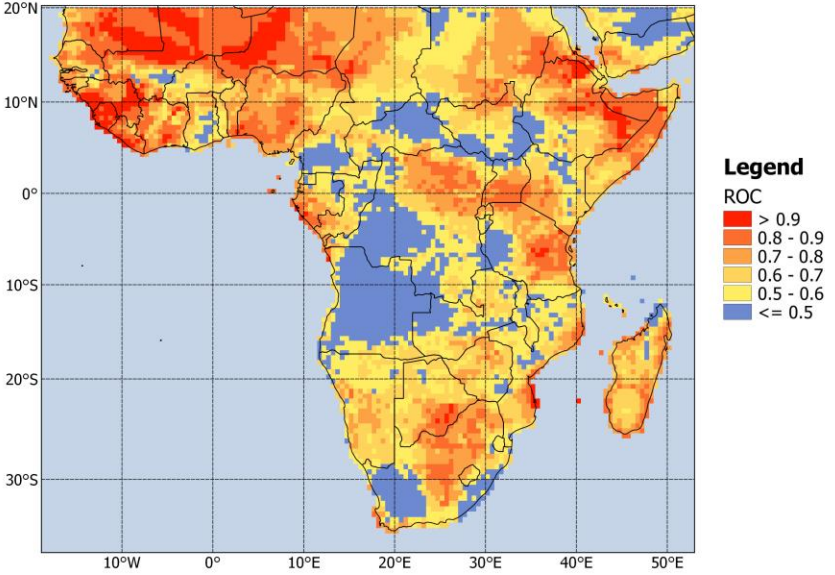
# NDJ 2023/24 Max Temp; ICs: Aug



## ROC Area (Above-Normal): NDJ Max Temp



## ROC Area (Below-Normal): NDJ Max Temp



# Round-up: South of 15°S Max Temp

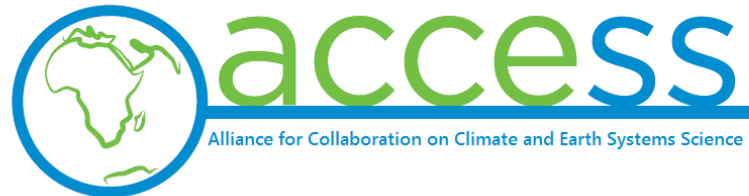
- Enhanced likelihood of above-normal maximum temperatures over almost the entire region are expected during the forecast period

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# Financial support from...

- The National Research Foundation
  - Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers (since 2017)
  - Project: Application of knowledge for the management of extreme climate events (APECX; 2022 to 2024)
- ACCESS (Alliance for Collaboration on Climate and Earth System Science) through the project “Investigating predictability of seasonal anomalies for societal benefit” (2018 to 2021)
- Water Research Commission through administering the international project “Research-based Assessment of Integrated approaches to Nature-based SOLUTIONS (RainSolutions)” (2020 to 2022)





The forecast is produced by Prof Willem Landman of the University of Pretoria, South Africa, and issued on or around the 15th of each month. Please feel free to contact me at [WALandman1981@gmail.com](mailto:WALandman1981@gmail.com)

Acknowledgments to Dr Peter Johnston of the University of Cape Town for professional comments and advice

Disclaimer: The author has compiled this forecast guidance as a service to users for application in appropriate sectors, but cannot be held responsible for inaccuracies contained therein

# Student participation in forecast system development



**Stephanie Hinze, BSc (Honours)(Meteorology):**

Statistical downscaling using large and high-resolution data sets, forecast displays for SADC rainfall and maximum temperatures, forecast verification



**Surprise Mhlongo, BSc (Honours)(Meteorology):**

Improving on SST forecast system through pattern correction, correlation vs covariance approaches, forecast output combination (multi-model approaches), mean and bias correction, and correct for skill



**Shepherd Muchuru, PhD (Meteorology):**

Statistical modelling to relate large-scale features to seasonal inflows into Lake Kariba in southern Africa. Two predictions systems: 1) using antecedent seasonal rainfall totals over the upper Zambezi catchment as predictor in a baseline model, and 2) using predicted low-level atmospheric circulation of a coupled ocean–atmosphere general circulation model as predictor.



**Pearl Gosiambe, BSc (Honours)(Meteorology):**

Development of hydro-climate predictions models for dam levels and downstream flows of the Vaal Dam. Predictors considered include historical rainfall over the catchment, SST and output from global climate models.



**Idani Mandiwana, BSc (Honours) (Meteorology):**

Seasonal rainfall forecast verification of real-time forecasts produced by SFW over the 5-year period from 2018 to 2022. Area is SADC south of 17° South.