

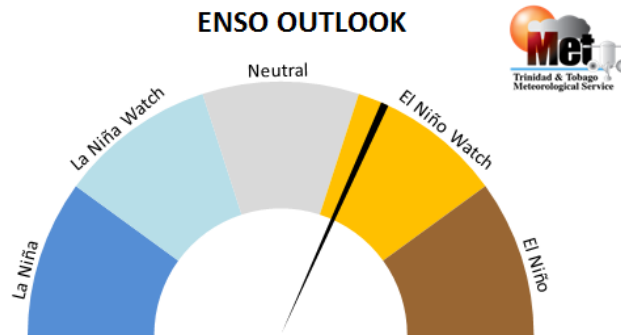
El Niño/La Niña Watch



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ENSO Watch Update (based on the NIÑO 3.4 index (120-170W, 5S-5N)) Issued: June 22, 2018

El Niño Watch Started: Moderate Chance of El Niño Conditions Developing During the Late Half of 2018 Local Wet Season



The El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) remains in neutral state - neither El Niño nor La Niña - but signs of a potential El Niño pattern developing by the late half of the local wet season are becoming more evident. The chance of an El Niño pattern during September to November is now at 50% but rises to 65% by December. Over the past four weeks water temperatures in east-central equatorial Pacific have been increasing and are now near to above average while temperatures in the eastern Pacific Ocean, even though currently neutral, have been slowly warming since April. Importantly, waters below the surface of the equatorial Pacific are now warmer than average and have strengthened and expanded across the equatorial Pacific over the past two months. This is typical, prior to the development of El Niño. In addition, most ENSO models indicate that El Niño conditions are most likely during the late half of the local wet season. Based on this, the TTMS’s monitor switches to El Niño Watch.

What does this mean Trinidad and Tobago?

If El Niño conditions were to develop, there are implications to the weather in Trinidad and Tobago. Typically, when an El Niño pattern is in place during the late wet season, November rainfall tends to exceed average totals and this has consequences for flooding. In addition, an El Niño pattern often leads to stronger-than-average upper-level winds, which tends to suppress tropical cyclone activity or tear apart storms when they form in our region. At the same time, El Niño tends to suppress rainfall in the dry season which follows the wet season, often leading to hotter weather and drought like conditions.

Guide: El Niño is declared, when average sea-surface temperatures in a region of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific known as Niño 3.4 become at least 0.5°C warmer than average in the preceding month and the warming is expected to persist for five consecutive overlapping three month periods and the atmosphere responds to the warming water by weakening the trade-winds and also shifting patterns of tropical rainfall eastward. The TTMS El Niño/La Niña Watch is activated when the probabilistic ENSO Outlook indicates approximately 50% chance or greater for development of El Niño or La Niña.