

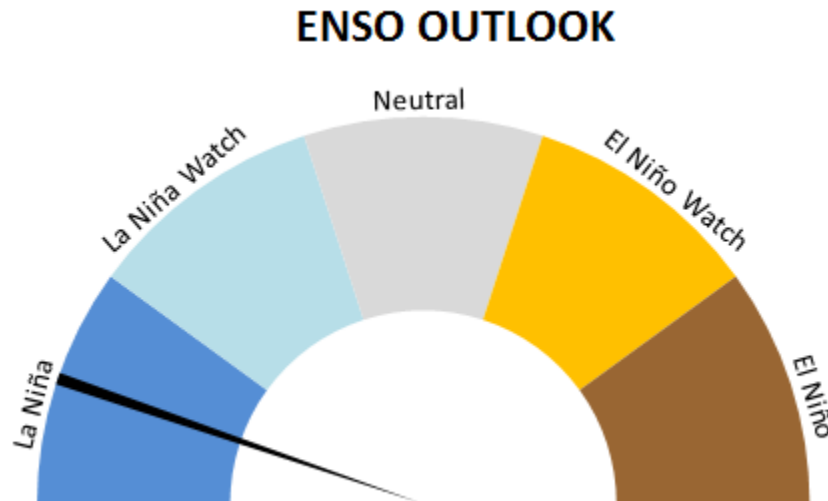
El Niño/La Niña Watch



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ENSO Watch Update (based on the NIÑO 3.4 index (120-170W, 5S-5N)) Issued: February 01, 2018

Weak La Niña continues but likely to transition to ENSO-neutral during March to May, 2018



A weak La Niña pattern continues in the tropical Pacific and has possibly peaked with most models suggesting La Niña will end during the March to May period. The consensus odds for La Niña conditions to persist into April are approximately 85-95%. Recent observations show warmer water beneath the surface continue to build-up in the western Pacific Ocean, which suggests that the event is likely decaying.

Why are La Niña conditions important for Trinidad and Tobago?

Historically, La Niña is typically associated with above average rainfall during the first half of Trinidad and Tobago's dry season. Given that the current La Niña is weak, it will likely have less influence on Trinidad and Tobago's rainfall than was observed with stronger events in the past. However, it is likely that the current La Niña played a role in the most recent wetter than usual December and January. This is because La Niña favours upward moving air in the Caribbean region and tends to be associated with reduced wind shear; thus making it easier for rain-producing clouds to form. The local atmospheric readjustments most often triggered by La Niña are an increase in the frequency of zones of low level moisture convergence and visits to our region by migrating fragments of, or decaying cold fronts, reaching as far as the southern Caribbean region. This often results in cooler conditions, especially colder nights.