

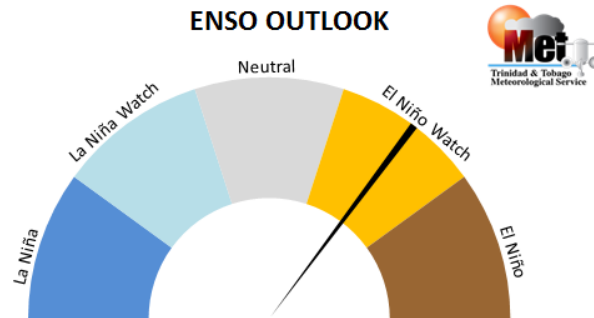
# El Niño/La Niña Watch



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ENSO Monitor Update (based on the NIÑO 3.4 index (120-170W, 5S-5N)) Issued: August 16, 2018

## El Niño Watch Continues: El Niño Conditions Still Possible During the 2018 Wet Season



The El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) continued in neutral state - neither El Niño nor La Niña - during July and early August but the development of an El Niño pattern during the late half of the local wet season still remains possible; even though sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the Niño 3.4 region cooled during July. At present, SST departures from average in the Niño 3.4 region are positive and are currently 0.2°C warmer than average, while positive sub-surface temperature departures also exist in the Niño 3.4 region. The chance of El Niño conditions during September to November is now at 60% but rises to 70% during December 2018 to February 2019 with most international climate models predicting warming to resume within the coming weeks. Accordingly, the TTMS’s ENSO monitor remains in El Niño Watch.

### What does this mean for Trinidad and Tobago?

El Niño during the late wet season and early dry season months typically mean suppression of rainfall in Trinidad and Tobago, leading to rainfall deficits during these periods, even though November rainfall during past El Niño events often exceeded the average. At the same time, daytime temperatures tend to be warmer than average, especially during the early dry season months. Generally, potential effects of El Niño on Trinidad and Tobago include: reduced rainfall, warmer temperatures, shift in temperature extremes, reduced tropical cyclone activity in waters east of Trinidad and Tobago, and increased incidences of bush fires.

**Guide:** El Niño is declared, when average SSTs in a region of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific known as the Niño 3.4 region 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. This must be in concurrence with the atmosphere in the Niño 3.4 region responding by weakening the trade-winds, while reducing rainfall and thunderstorm activity over the western equatorial Pacific Ocean and increasing it over the eastern half of the tropical Pacific Ocean. The TTMS El Niño/La Niña Watch is activated when the ENSO Outlook indicates a probability of approximately 50% chance or greater for development of El Niño or La Niña.