cooperative governance

Department:
Cooperative Governance
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

National Joint Drought Coordinating Committee

Drought Status Update: October 2025

NJDCC | Dir: DRR&EW| 31 October 2025

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

1. Introduction
2. 24-month SPI (Monthly: July to Sep 2025)
3. Temporal Variance and Analysis: SPI (Sep 2025)
4. Overview of Vegetation Conditions: Percentage of Average Seasonal Greenness (PASG) (Not updated, due to US government shutdown.
5. Summary

INTRODUCTION

- The presentation's purpose is to provide the spatial extent of drought as denoted by the interpretation of SPI data and is a result of a cooperative agreement between various stakeholders involved in the NJDCC technical task team for early warnings.
- Analysis and mapping were performed by the NDMC with some data products being sourced from stakeholders and contributors.
- Contributors include
  - NDMC
  - SAWS
  - ARC
  - DWS

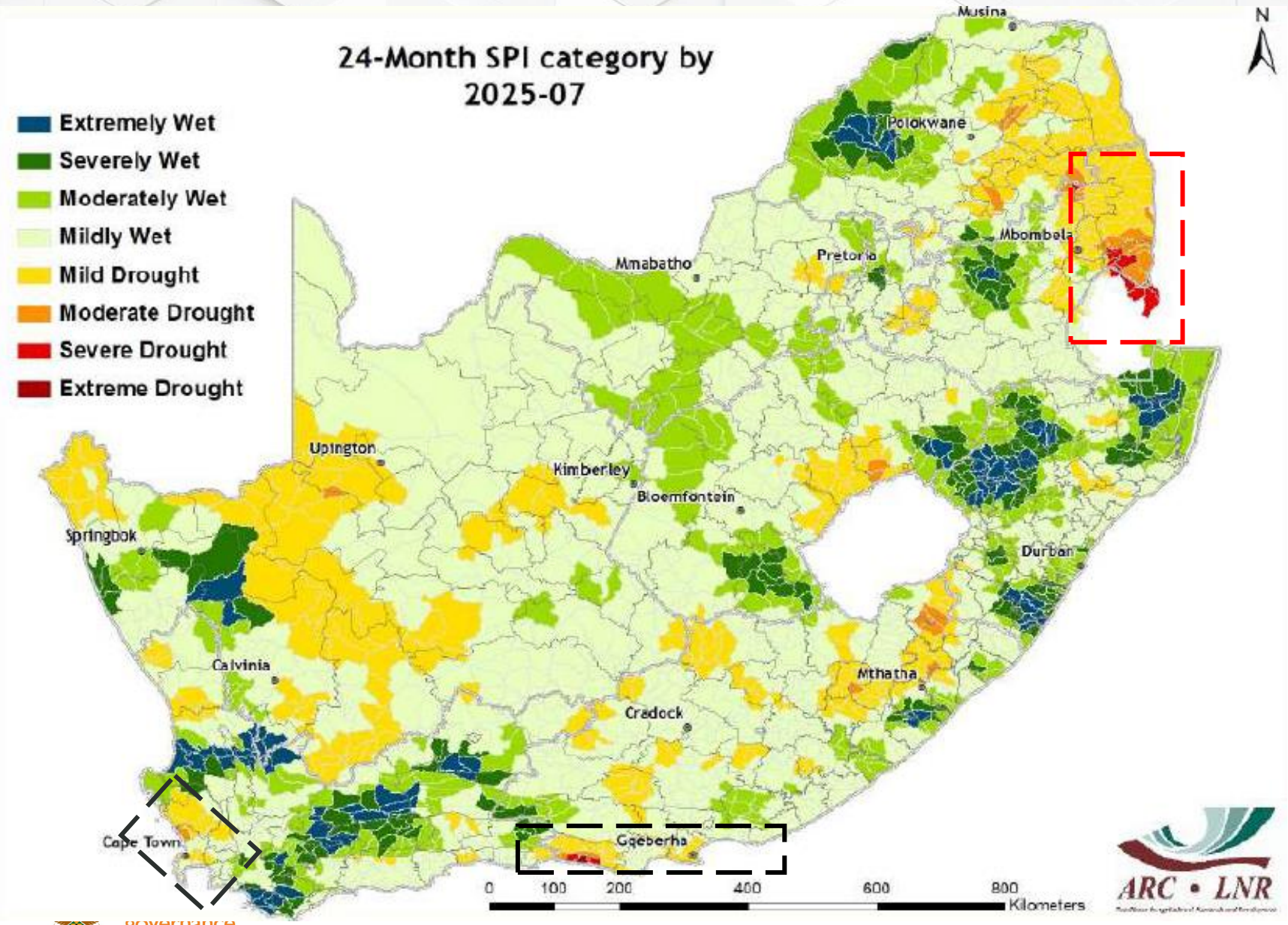
DROUGHT OVERVIEW

- Drought extent at longer time scales by the end of September 2025 is extremely limited.
- At the short to medium timescales, drought is limited to the Lowveld in the northeast, and in the southwest, the winter rainfall region, Garden Route and parts of the Karoo.

Dr J. Malherbe

31/10/2025

STANDARDIZED PRECIPITATION INDEX – JULY 2025 BASELINE

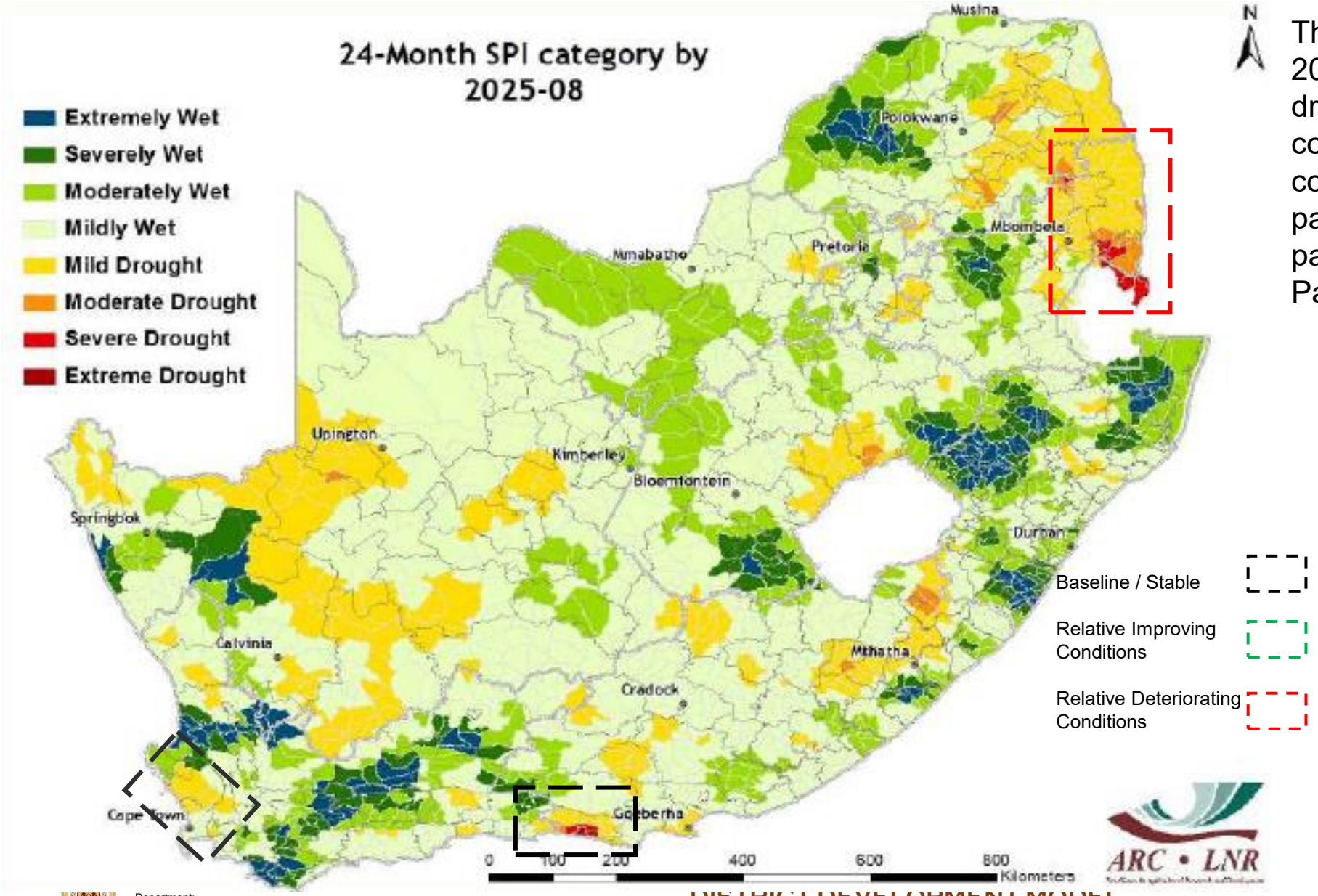


The 24-month SPI (by July 2025) indicates areas of deterioration drought (in Red) with moderate or more intense drought conditions expanding in the following Provinces:
Mpumalanga

Areas in black indicate limited to no change in drought conditions.

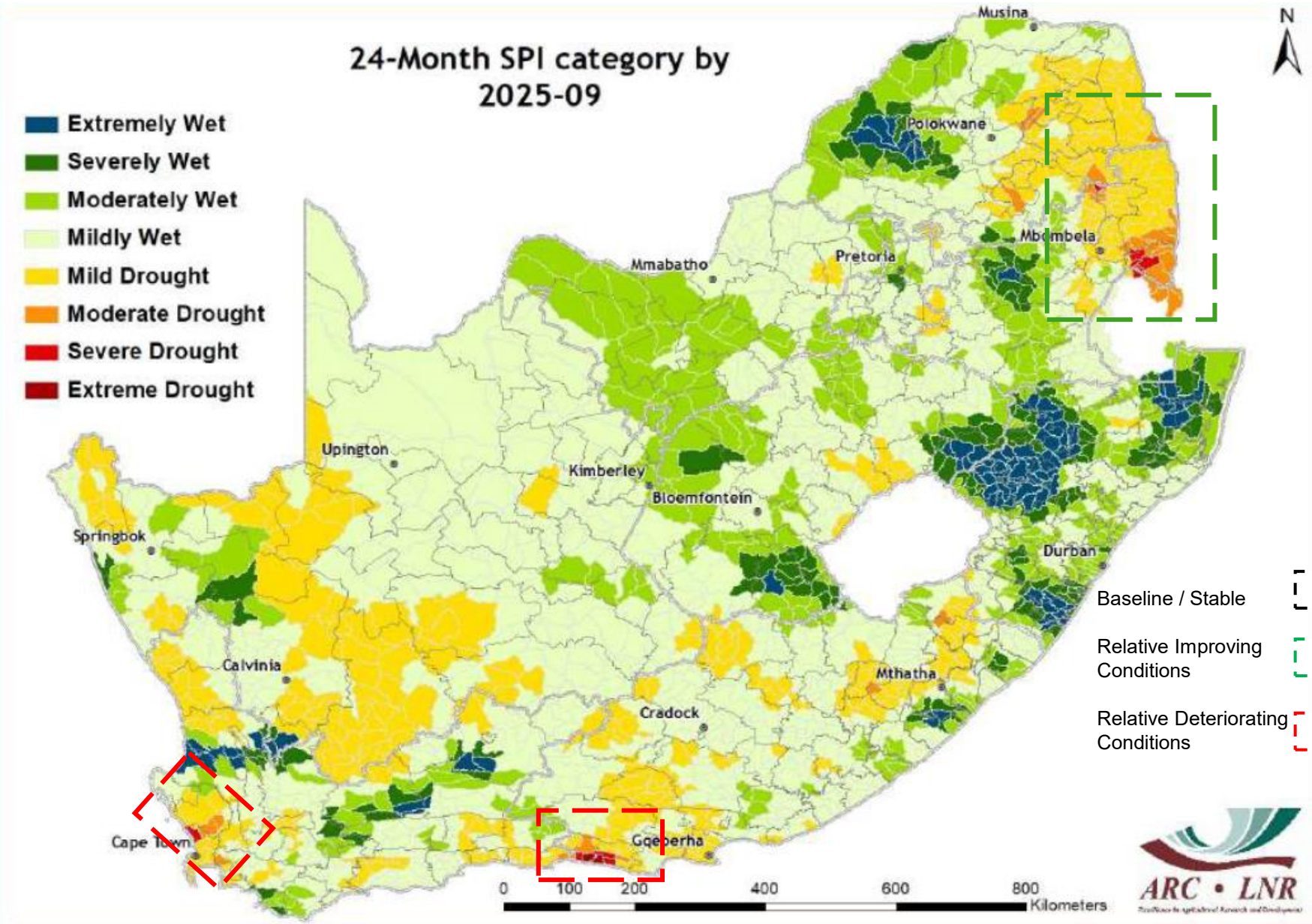
No areas experience improvement in drought conditions; otherwise, it would have been indicated in green.

STANDARDIZED PRECIPITATION INDEX – AUGUST 2025 BASELINE



The 24-month SPI (as of August 2025) indicates little to no change in drought conditions across the country. However, moderate conditions persist in the eastern parts of the Mpumalanga province, particularly in the Kruger National Park.

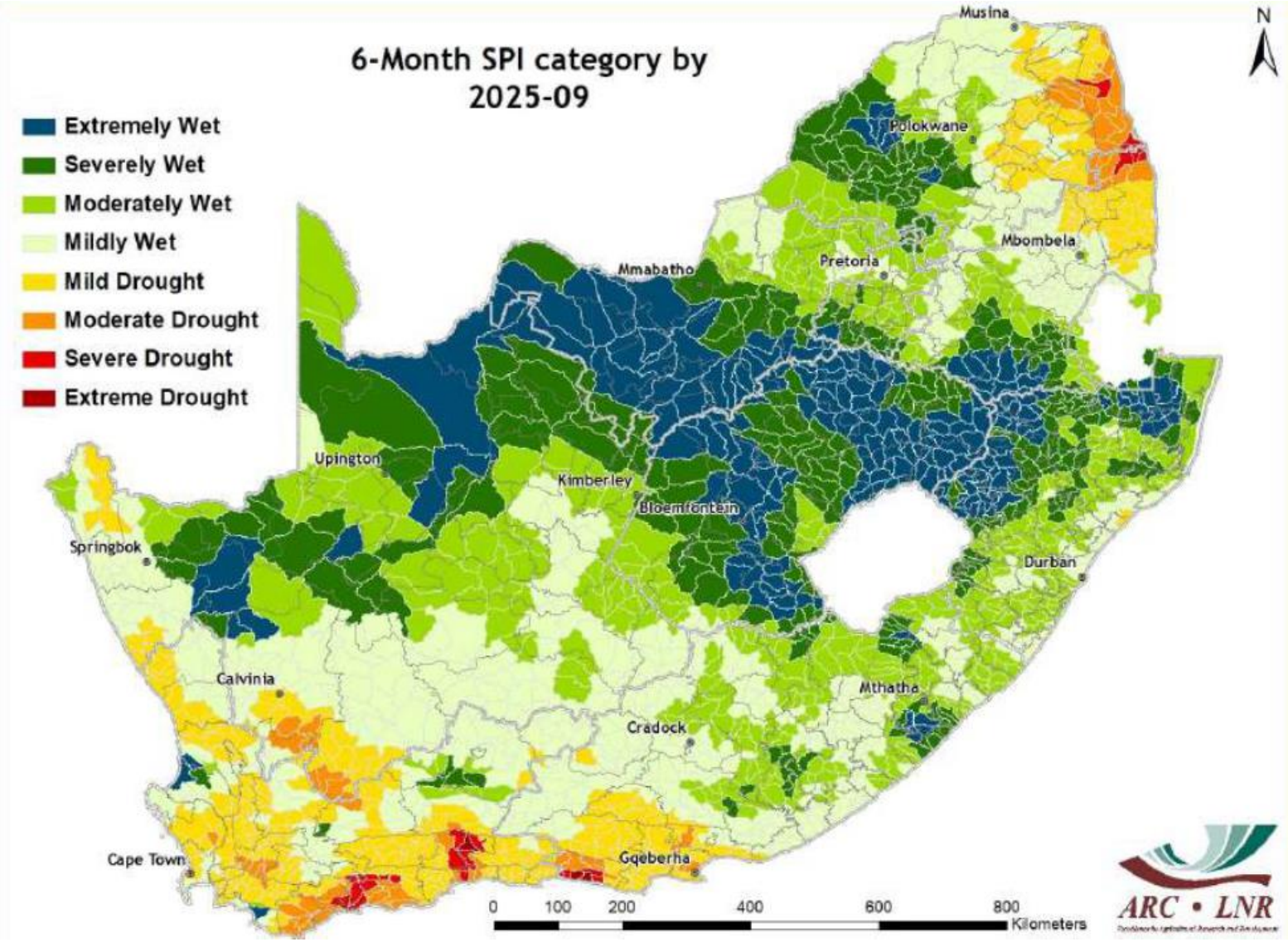
STANDARDIZED PRECIPITATION INDEX – SEPTEMBER 2025 BASELINE



The 24-month SPI (as of September 2025) indicates little deterioration in drought conditions from mild drought to moderate and severe drought in the Western Cape (Cape Town) and Eastern Cape provinces.

Although small pockets of severe drought conditions are still visible in Mpumalanga province, these conditions have since diminished to moderate drought conditions

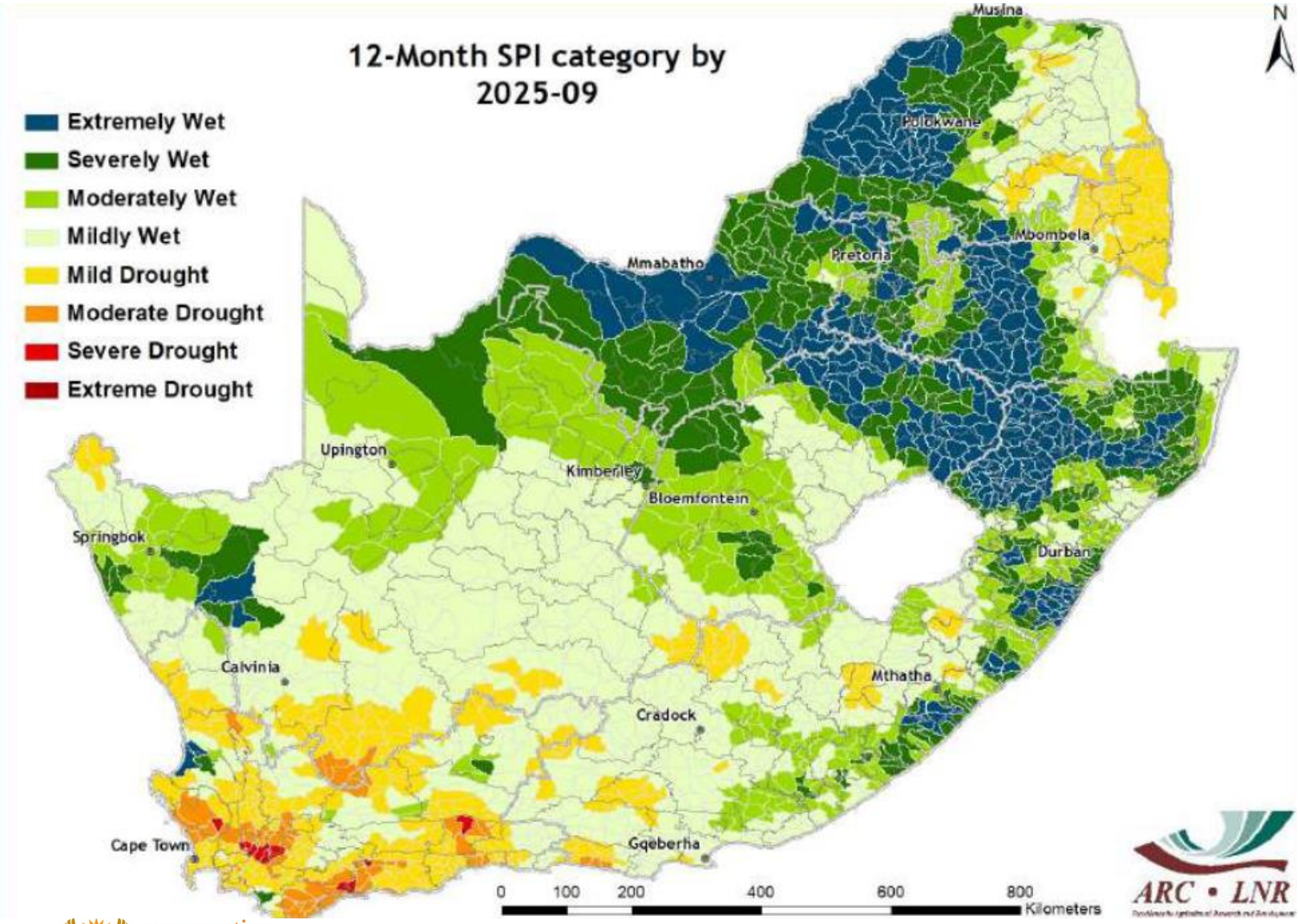
STANDARDIZED PRECIPITATION INDEX SEPTEMBER 2025 – 06 MONTHS



The short-term (6-month) Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) map, which ends in September 2025, indicates widespread wet conditions across most parts of the country. Extremely wet conditions prevail over most parts of the interior, as well as small areas of Limpopo.

Moderate to severe drought conditions are limited to the Lowveld of Mpumalanga and Limpopo, as well as the most of the Western Cape and southwestern parts of the Eastern Cape. These are the winter as well as all-year rainfall areas.

STANDARDIZED PRECIPITATION INDEX SEPTEMBER 2025 – 12 MONTHS



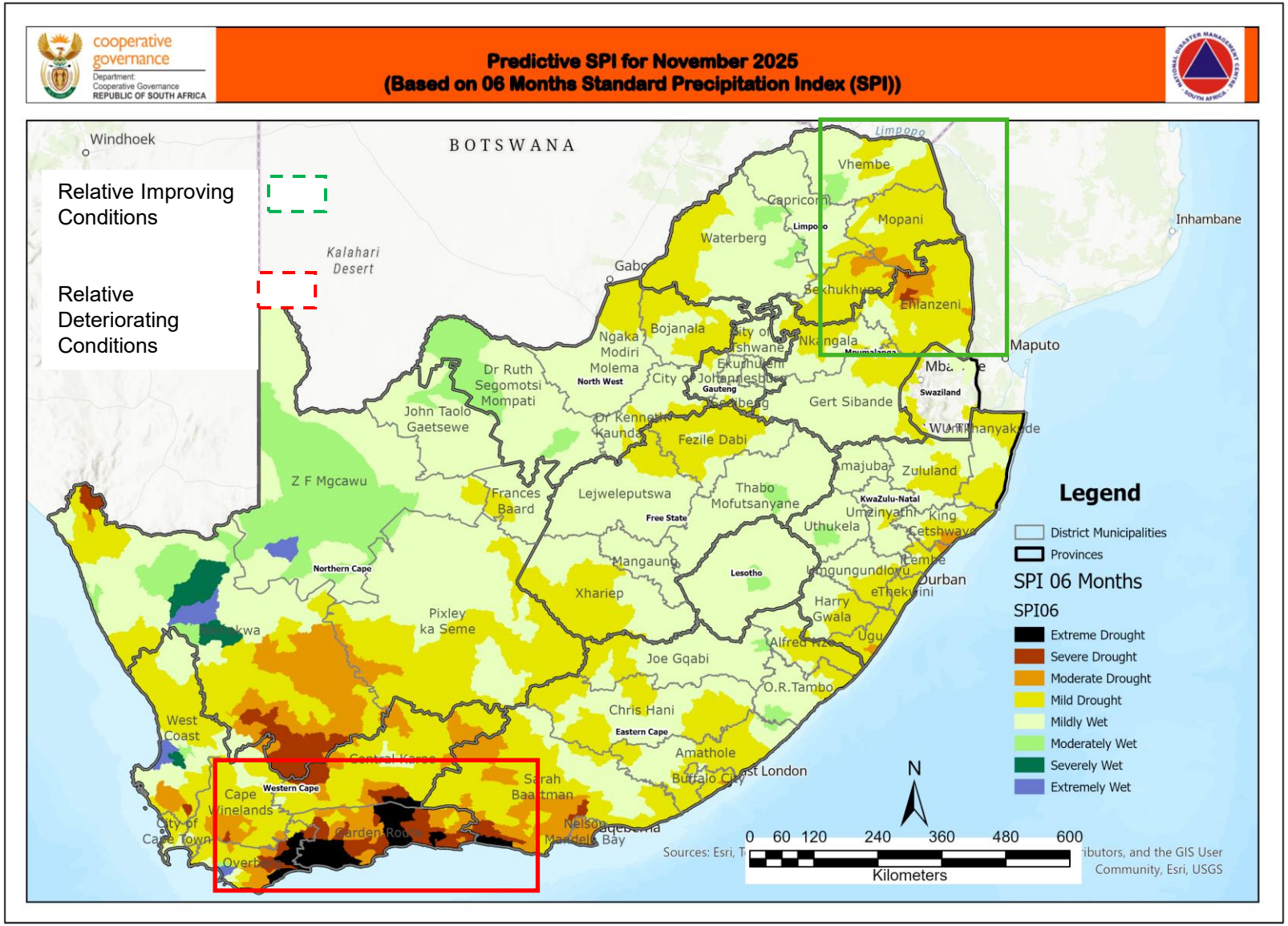
In the medium term (12 months), severely to extremely wet conditions are present in the northern parts of the country. This is attributed to the high rainfall received during the summer season.

Drought conditions are present in the south-western parts of the country, with moderate to severe drought visible in the Western Cape province. This can be attributed to below-average rainfall during the 2025 winter season.

PERCENTAGE OF AVERAGE SEASONAL GREENNESS (PASG) - VEGETATION CONDITIONS

Not updated, due to US government shutdown.

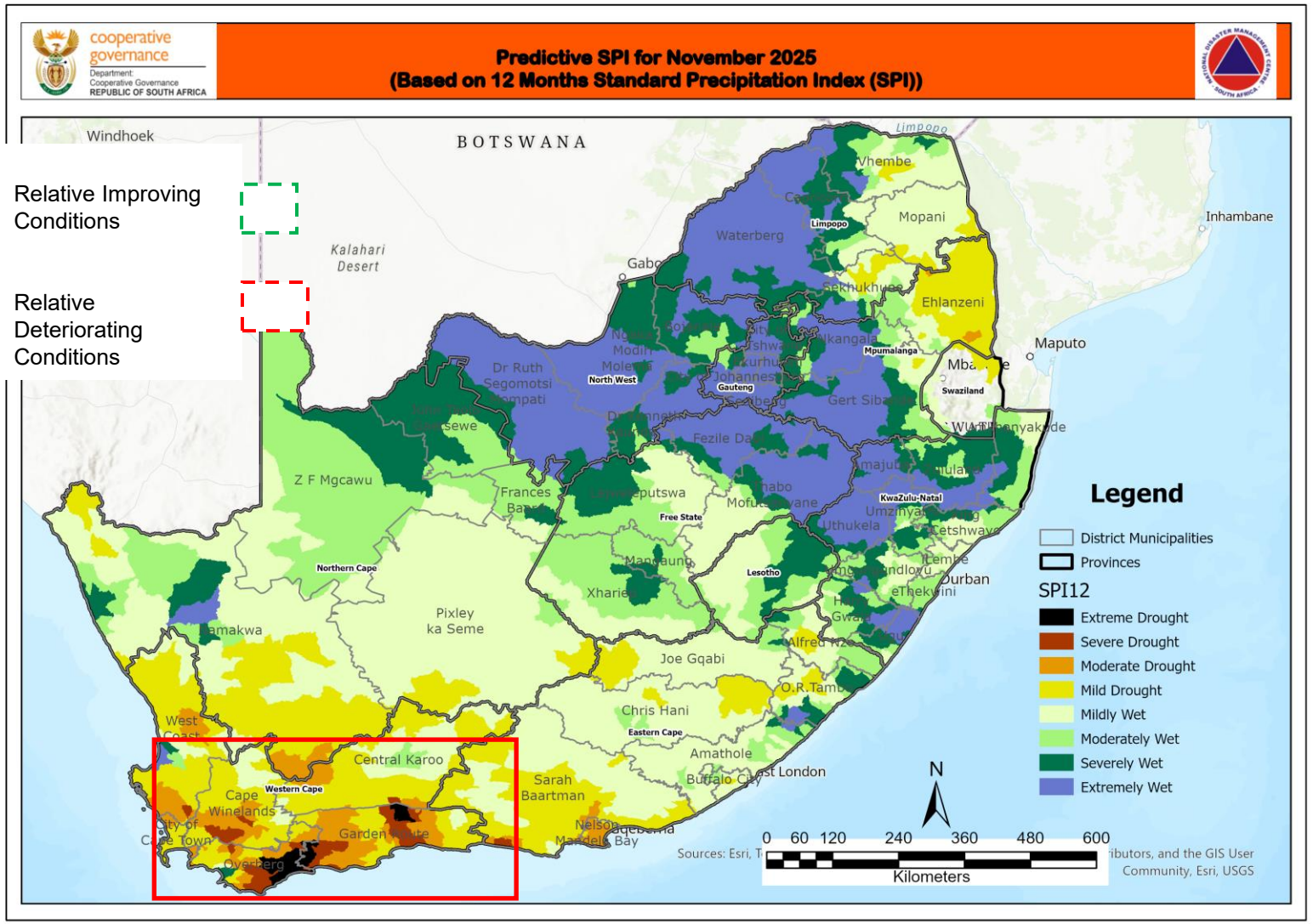
PREDICTIVE SPI BASED ON 06-MONTH DATA



A predictive 6-month SPI (for the expected situation by the end of October 2025) suggests an increase in drought conditions over the southern parts of the country. Severe to extreme drought conditions are expected to expand during this period in the Garden Route, Overberg, and Sarah Baartman Municipalities.

Moderate to Severe drought conditions that were previously visible in the north-eastern parts of the Limpopo and Mpumalanga provinces are expected to diminish in extent and severity.

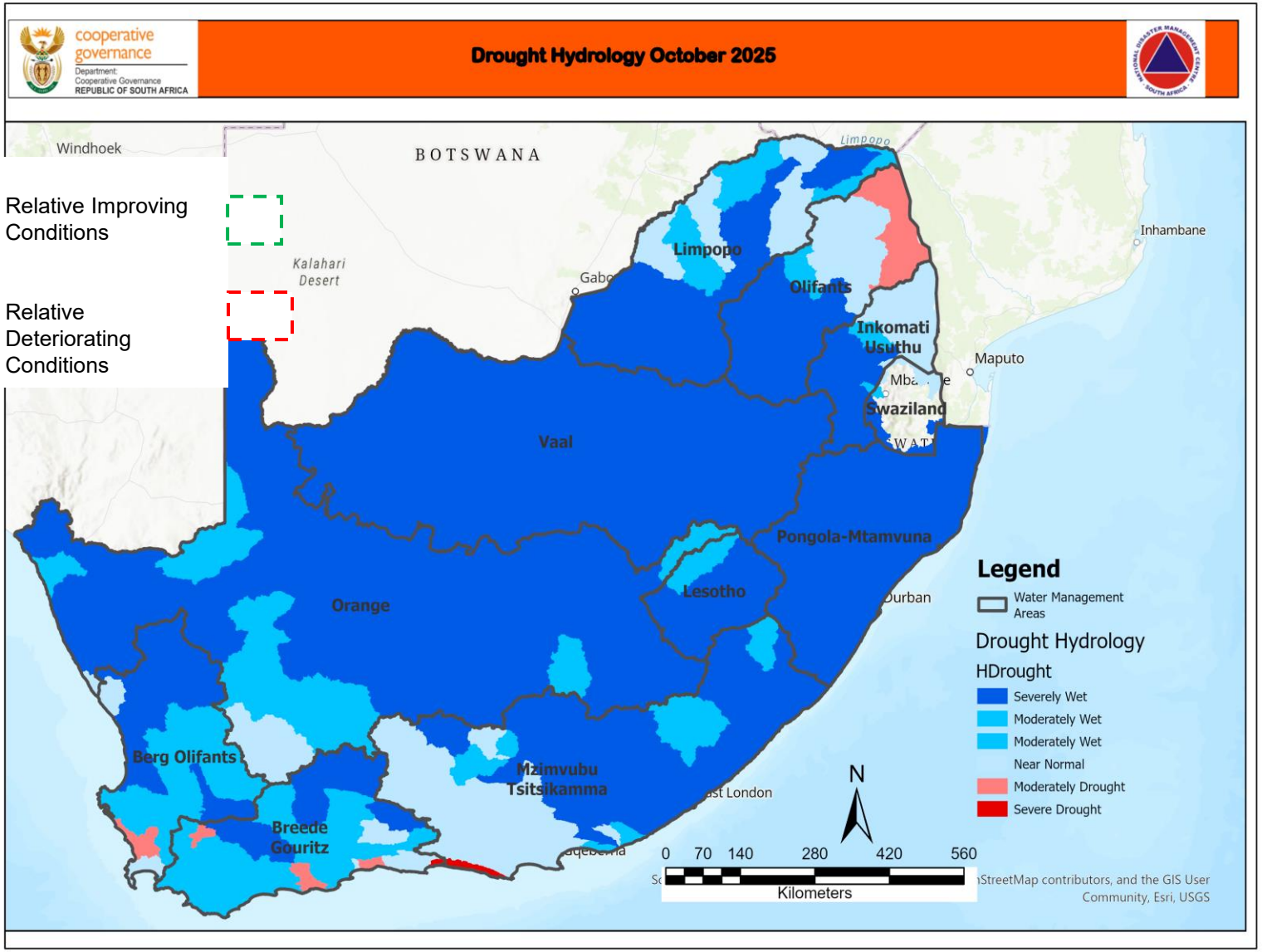
PREDICTIVE SPI BASED ON 12-MONTH DATA



The predictive 12-month SPI by the end of October 2025 indicates limited or no change in severely wet conditions over the north-eastern parts of the country.

Drought over the south-western parts of the country is expected to intensify.

DROUGHT HYDROLOGY



Following several years of above-normal rainfall, very isolated catchments show possible drought stress. Most river catchments have shown signs of improvement following the summer rainfall.

River systems in the winter rainfall region are not currently in drought.

SUMMARY

- Drought occurrence, especially at longer timescales, remains very limited over the country. Over the summer rainfall region, very much above-normal rainfall during the 2024/25 summer is responsible for favourable conditions at longer time scales.
- Drought is present over the south-western parts of the country at short to medium time scales, following below-normal rainfall since August. These are expected to intensify and expand according to the forward-looking SPI for October.
- The Lowveld is still experiencing drought on both long and short timescales, but drought conditions over the region are expected to benefit from rainfall during October, according to the forward-looking SPI.

Dr J. Malherbe

30/10/2025

THANK YOU

Ngiyabonga | Re a leboga | Ndo livhuwa | Nndza nkhensa | Ke a leboha haholo | Dankie | Enkosi

REFERENCES: STANDARD PRECIPITATION INDEX (SPI)

- The Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI - McKee et al., 1993) was developed to monitor the occurrence of droughts from rainfall data.
- The index quantifies precipitation deficits on different time scales and therefore also drought severity.
- It provides an indication of rainfall conditions per quaternary catchment (in this case) based on the historical distribution of rainfall.
- REFERENCE: McKee TB, Doesken NJ and Kliest J (1993) The relationship of drought frequency and duration to time scales. In: Proceedings of the 8th Conference on Applied Climatology, 17-22 January, Anaheim, CA. American Meteorological Society: Boston, MA; 179-184