

Droughts

Droughts are a normal part of the climate, and they can occur in any climate regime around the world, even deserts and rainforests. Droughts are one of the more costly natural hazards on a year-to-year basis; their impacts are significant and widespread, affecting many economic sectors and people at any one time. It is important to note that the impacts of droughts can be as varied as the causes of droughts. Droughts can adversely affect agriculture and food security, hydropower generation and industry, human and animal health, livelihood security, personal security (for example, women walking long distances to fetch water) and access to education (for example, girls not attending school because of increased time spent on fetching water).

The Handbook of Drought Indicators and Indices (Svoboda, et al., 2016) provides a good overview of indicators and indices. Following the handbook, some drought indices are implemented in Climate Insights, while others would be provided as an offline service. Current set includes Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI), Standardised Precipitation-Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI), and Aridity Index (AI) and the Keetch Byram Drought Index. Additional drought indices are under development.