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Department:
Statistics South Africa
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Media statement

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Post and telecommunications industry, 2019

This periodic survey is conducted every three to five years and informs on the nature and structure of the post and telecommunications industry.

Income increases by 4,5% annually

The total income in 2019 (R352,2 billion) increased by 4,5% per year over the income reported in 2016 (R308,8 billion), with 'telecommunications' contributing 95,0% or R334,7 billion.

The capital expenditure on new assets in 2019 (R35,8 billion) increased by 1,5% per year over the expenditure reported in 2016 (R34,2 billion). 'Telecommunications' contributed the most to total expenditure in 2019 (R35,3 billion or 98,7%).

Lowest profit margin since 2010

The profit margin for the industry in 2019 (0,8%) fell to its lowest reading since 2010. In 2019, 'post and associated courier activities' and 'telecommunications' reported profit margins of -5,7% and 1,1%, respectively. Over this period, 'post and associated courier activities' recorded losses in 2013, 2016 and 2019. From 2010 to 2019, 'telecommunications' recorded its highest profit margin in 2010 (29,2%).

Courier services dominates 'postal and associated activities'

Income from 'postal and associated activities' in 2019 (R15,7 billion) increased by 7,9% per year over the income reported in 2016 (R12,5 billion). 'Courier services' (67%) was the largest contributor, followed by 'international, domestic and fast mail services' (17%) and 'post bank and other postal services' (10%).

Prepaid mobile lines contributes 50% of ‘telecommunications services’ income

The income from ‘telecommunications services’ in 2019 (R249,5 billion) was mainly from ‘pre-paid’ (50%), followed by ‘post-paid or contract’ (15%), ‘internet services’ (7%) and ‘fixed lines’ (5%). Voice and data contributed 41% and 23% respectively to ‘telecommunications services’ income.

The industry is employing fewer people

The total number of persons employed in 2019 (98 495 persons) decreased by 1 907, or by 0,6% per year, from the employment recorded in 2016 (100 402 persons). ‘Telecommunications’ recorded a loss of 5 498 jobs (from 69 692 in 2016 to 64 194 in 2019). The share of females employed increased from 39% in 2010 to 41% in 2019.

Employment numbers were at their highest in 2013 (103 455), representing a net gain of 15 966 jobs compared with 2010.

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