

# Lock-up session

13 May 2025

**The session you are about to attend is a lock-up session.**

Any and all information disclosed remains confidential and embargoed until **(13 May 2025 at 11:30)** and must not be made public under any circumstances on any platform until the embargo has officially been lifted.

You are not permitted to leave the lock-up session until the time indicated on the media invite unless otherwise indicated by the programme director

**Please remember:** do not tweet, SMS, call, post on any social media platform, any of the information released in the lock-up session until the embargo has officially been lifted by the programme director. **The embargo also applies to any feed transmitted outside of the lock-up room.**



stats sa

Department:  
Statistics South Africa  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS



# Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1:2025

---

**Risenga Maluleke**  
Statistician-General



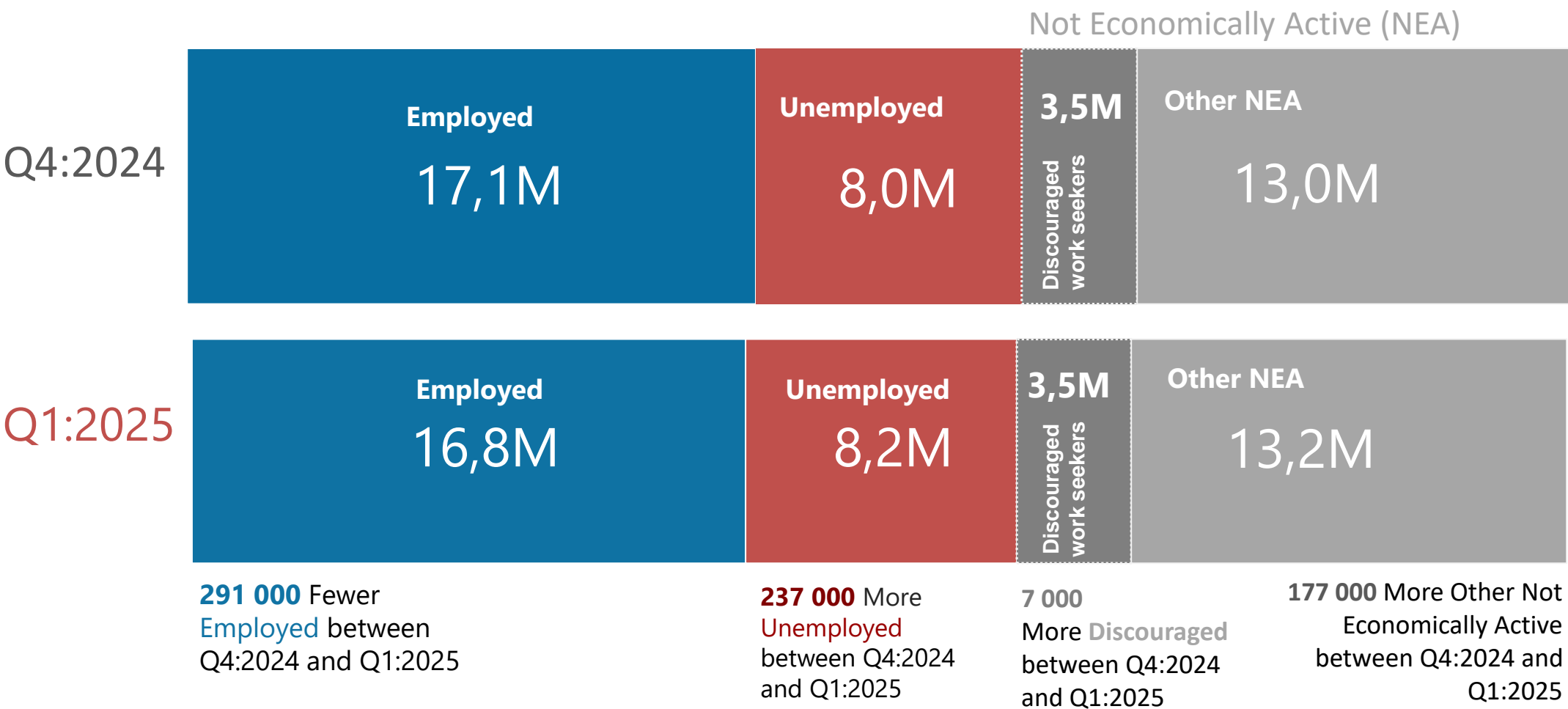
**stats sa**

Department:  
Statistics South Africa  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

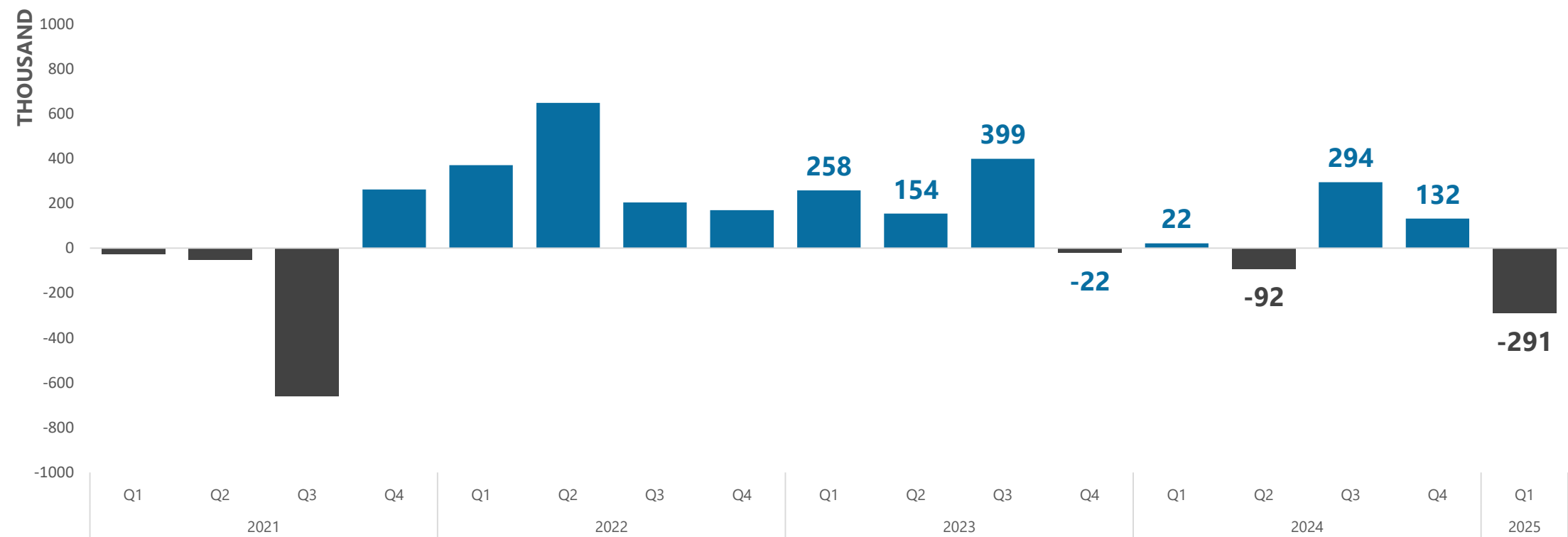


There were **291 thousand** fewer people employed in Q1:2025 than in Q4:2024.

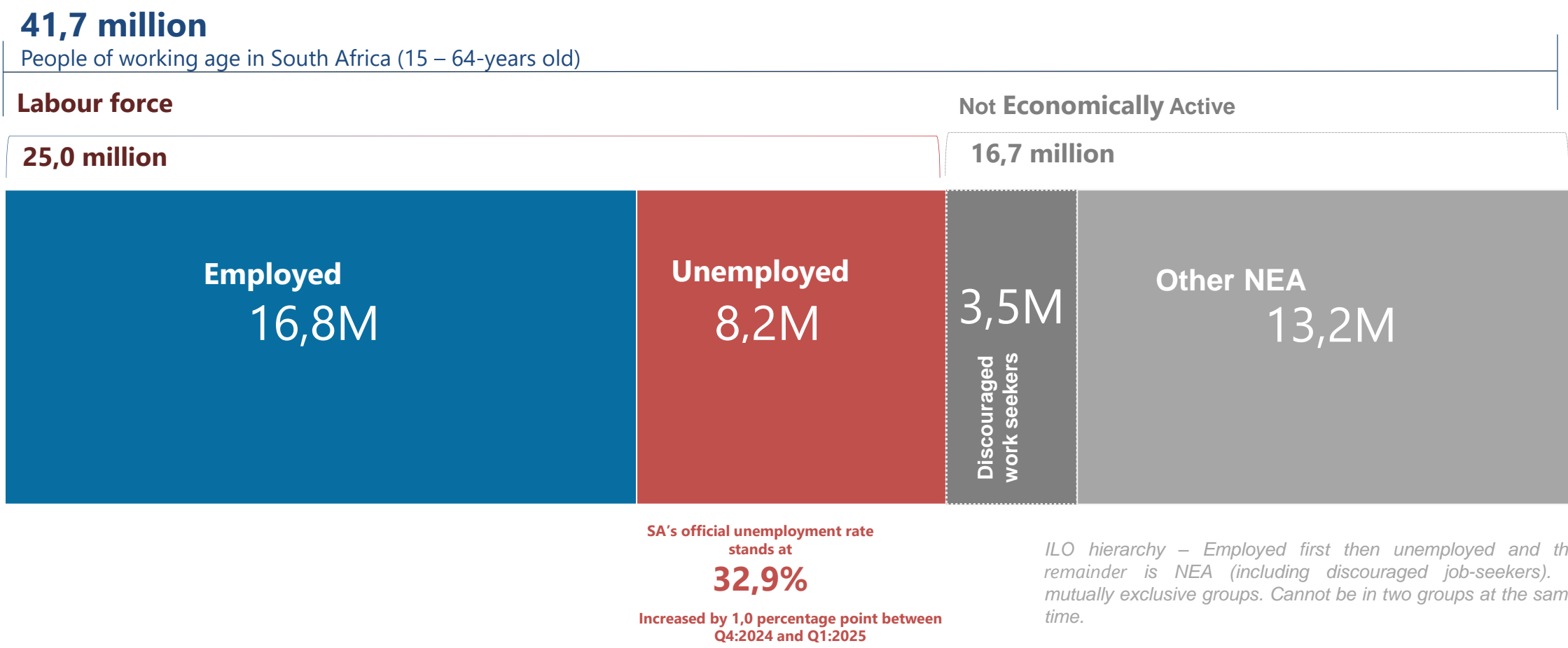


**Employment decreased by 291 000** in the first quarter of 2025, following an increase of **132 000** in the last quarter of 2024.

Employment changes Q1:2021-Q1:2025 (Quarter-on-quarter)

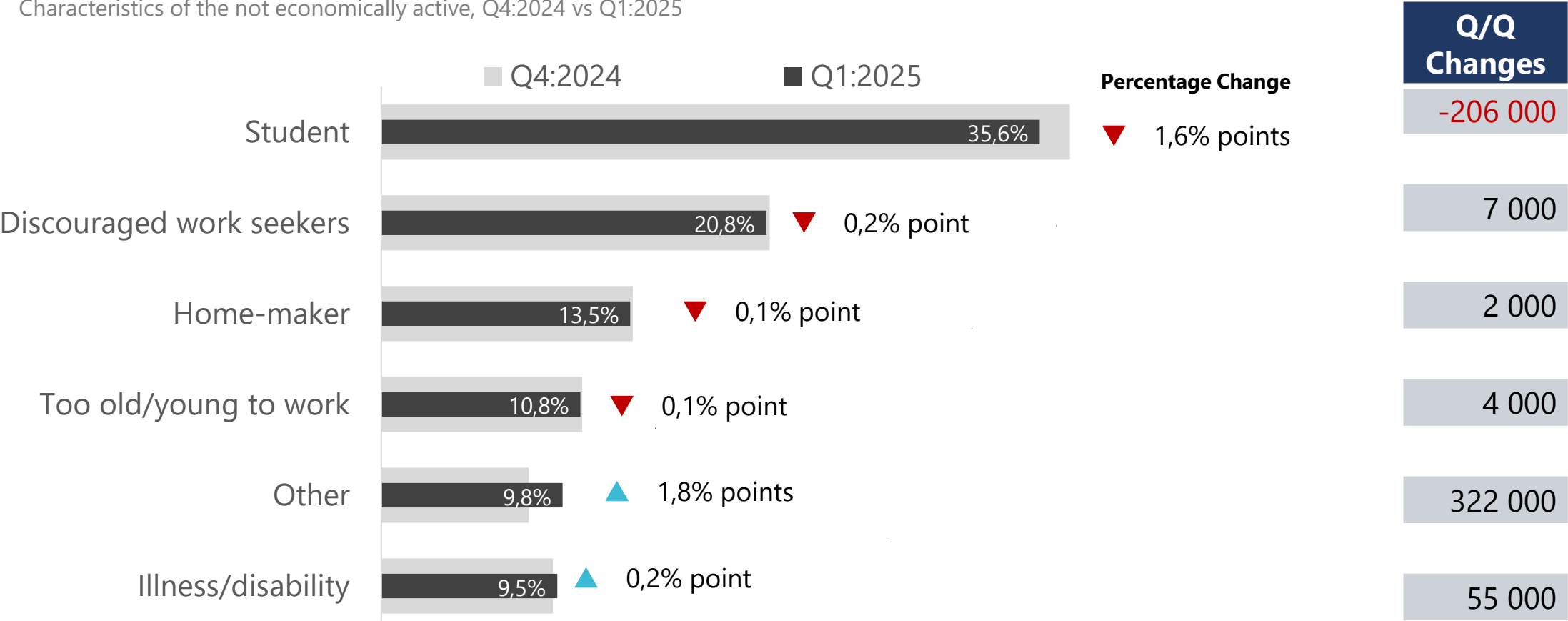


The official unemployment rate increased by 1,0 percentage point to **32,9%** in Q1:2025 compared to Q4:2024.



# The number of **Not Economically Active** persons **increased by 184 000** in Q1:2025 compared to Q4:2024

Characteristics of the not economically active, Q4:2024 vs Q1:2025



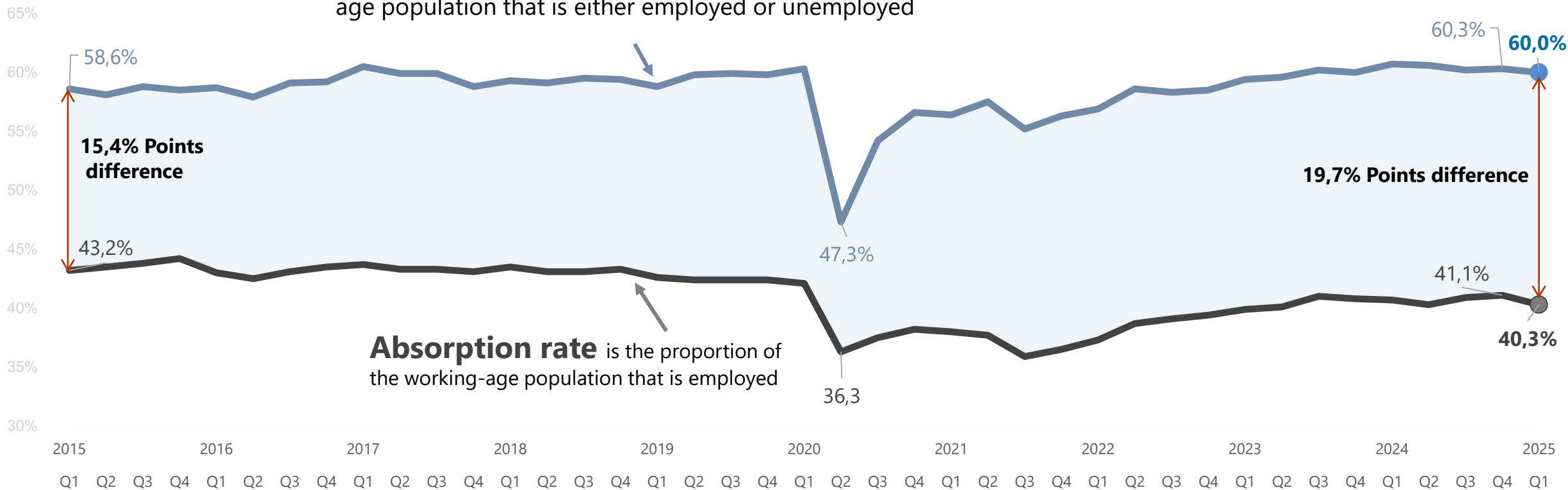
Due to rounding numbers may not add up

The **absorption and participation rates** decreased by 0,8 and 0,3 of a percentage point to 40,3% and **60,0%** respectively in Q1:2025.

Labour force participation and absorption rates Q1:2015-Q1:2025

**Labour force participation rate** is the proportion of the working-age population that is either employed or unemployed

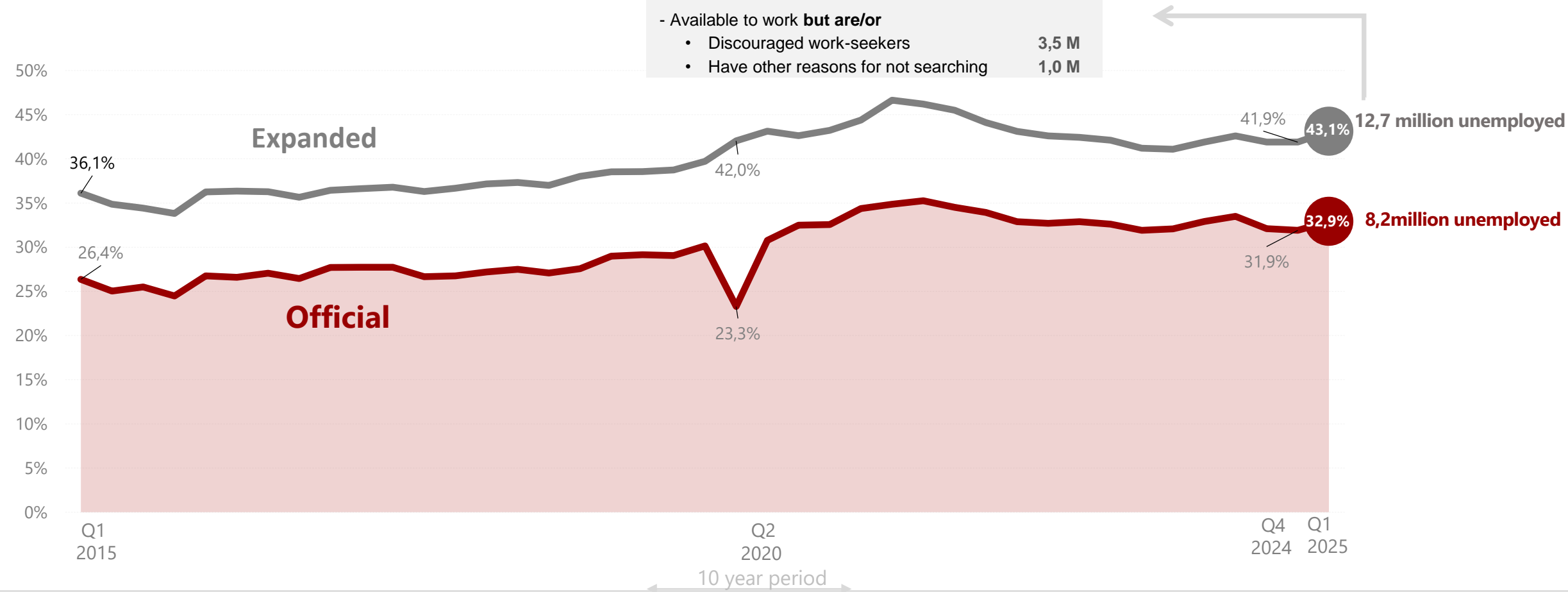
**Absorption rate** is the proportion of the working-age population that is employed



# The expanded unemployment rate increased by 1,2 percentage points to 43,1% in Q1:2025 compared to Q4:2024.

Official vs Expanded unemployment: Q1:2015-Q1:2025

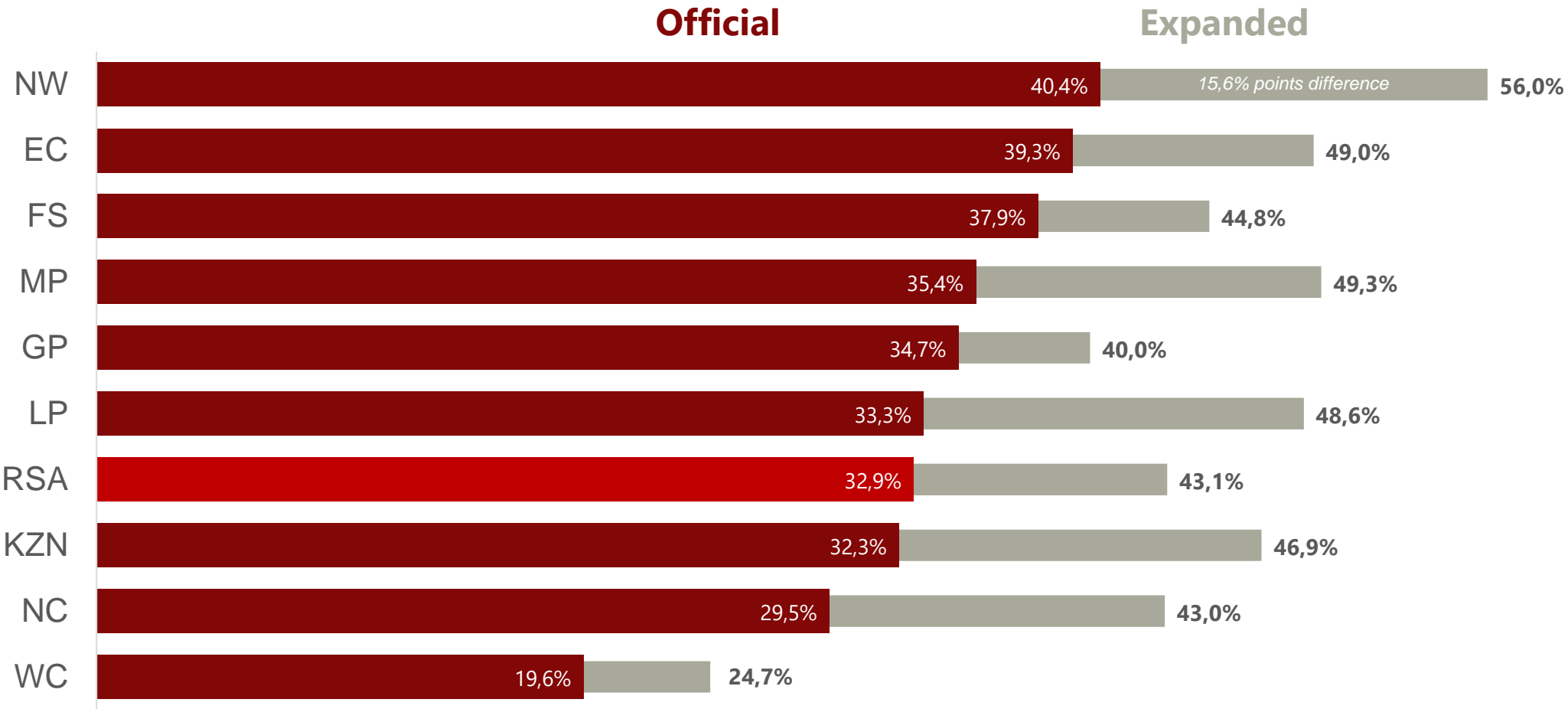
Expanded Definition includes the following	
- Official unemployment (searched and available)	8,2 M
- Available to work but are/or	
• Discouraged work-seekers	3,5 M
• Have other reasons for not searching	1,0 M





**NW** (56,0%) recorded the **highest expanded unemployment rate** in Q1:2025, followed by **MP** (49,3%). ***NW** recorded the highest difference between **expanded** and **official** unemployment rates of **15,6** percentage points.*

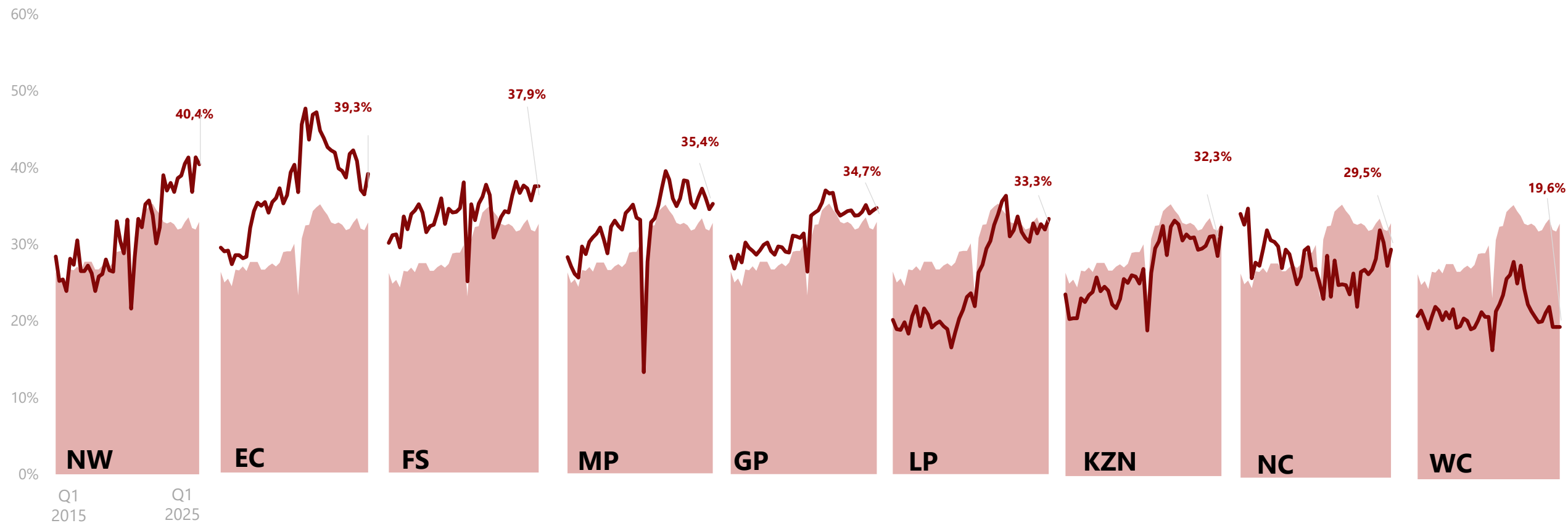
Provincial unemployment rates: **Official** vs Expanded Q1:2025



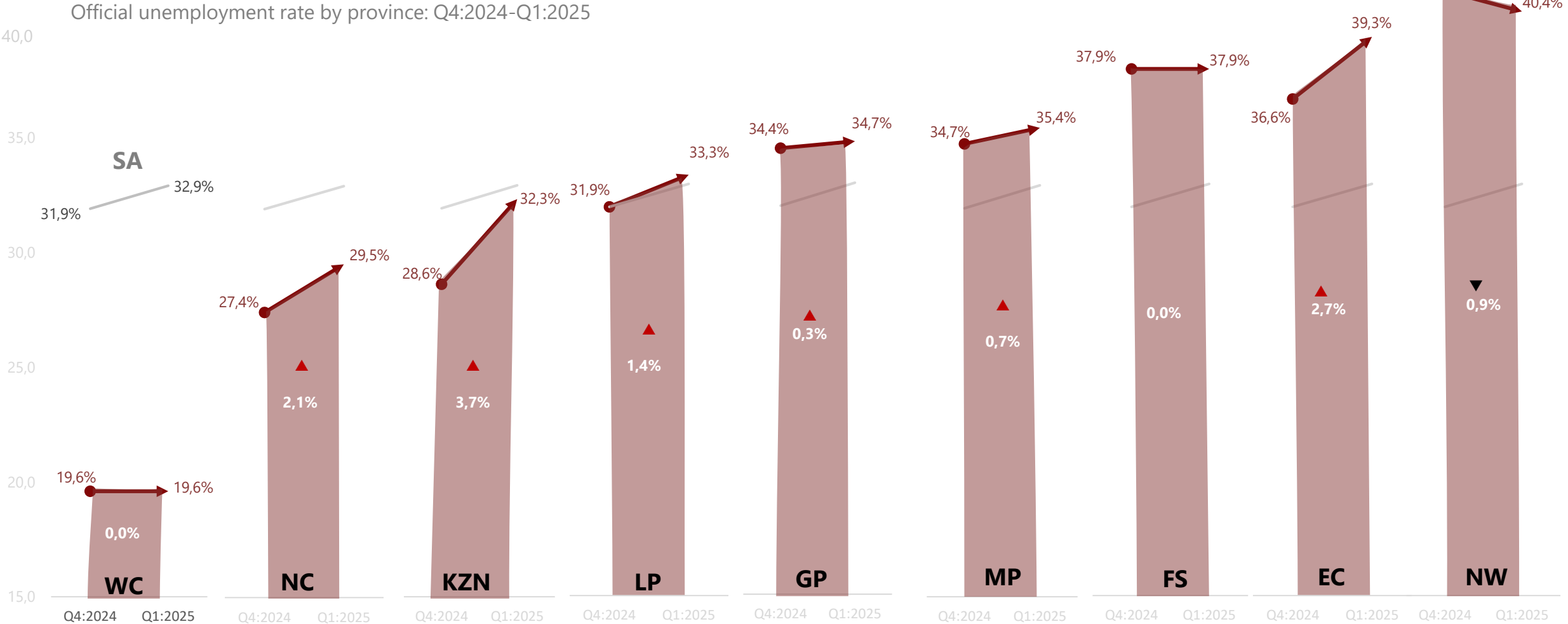
Over the past ten years, the unemployment rates in the **WC and KZN** have consistently remained below South Africa's national average, while the **EC** has consistently recorded unemployment rates above the national level.

Official Unemployment rate by province, Q1:2015-Q1:2025

SA Unemployment Rate Provincial Unemployment Rate

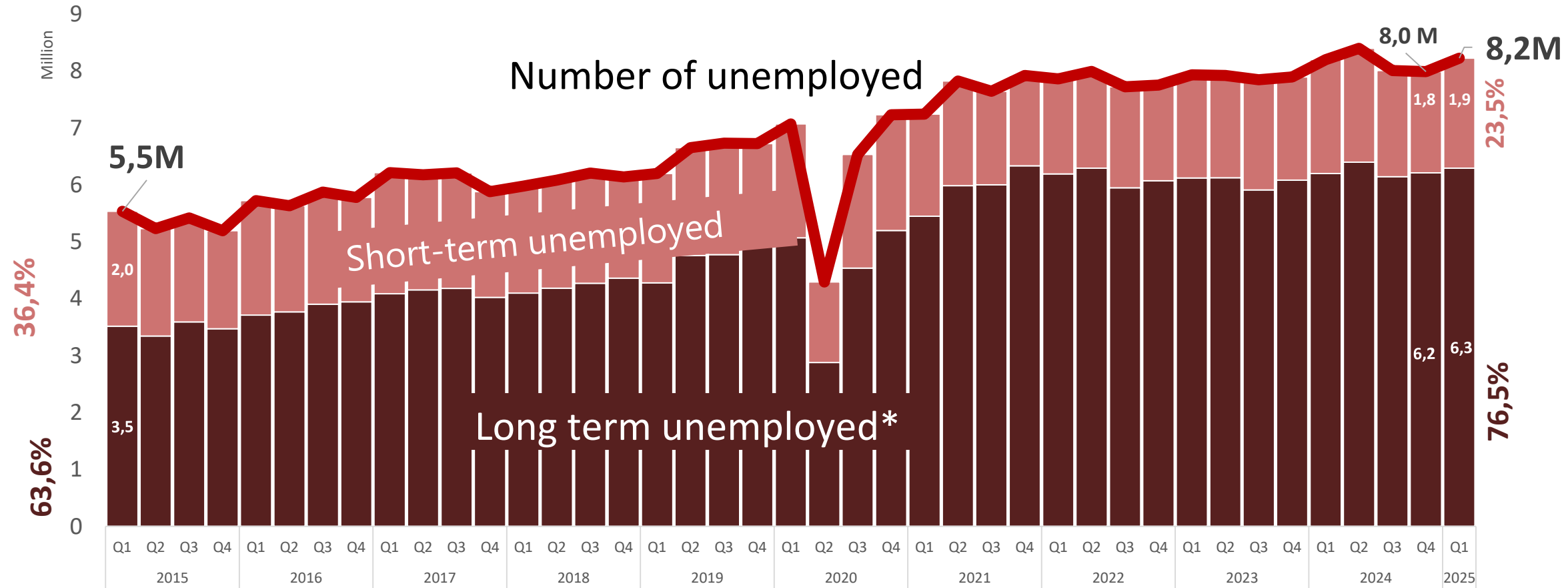


The **official unemployment rate** increased in six provinces between Q4:2024 and Q1:2025. *The largest increases were recorded in **KZN and EC**.*



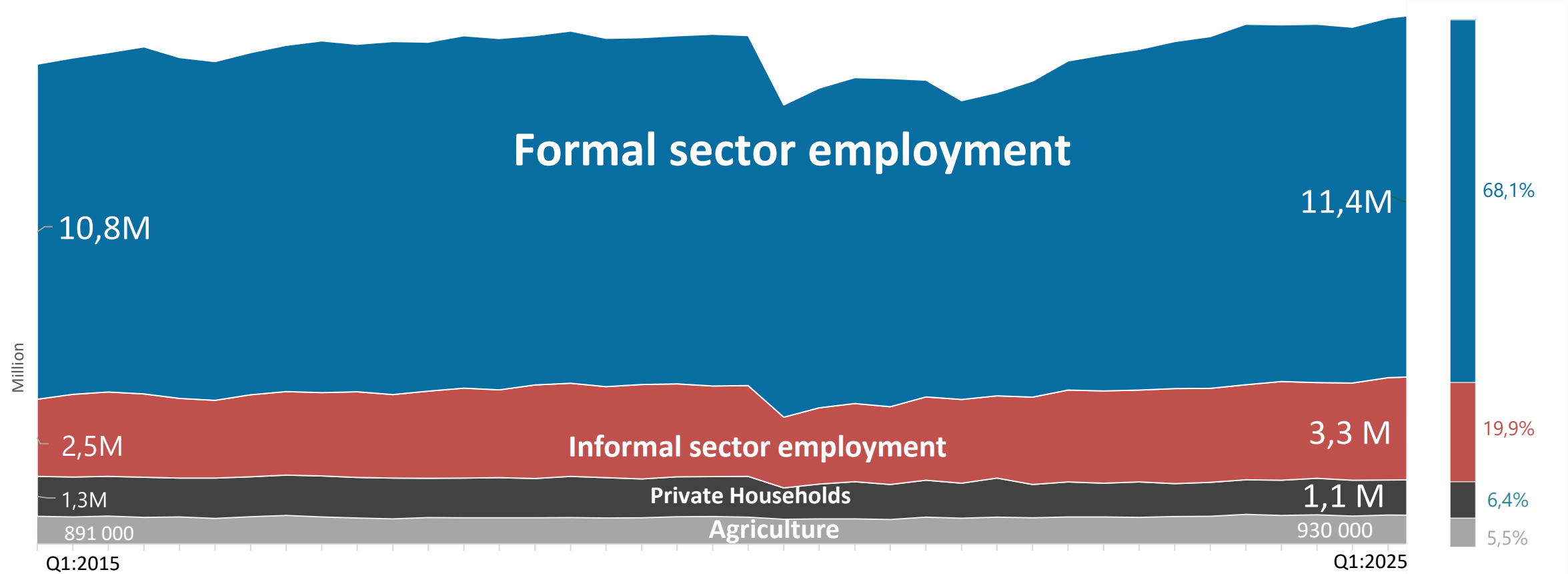
Between Q1:2015 and Q1:2025, the **number of unemployed** people in South Africa **increased from 5,5 million to 8,2 million**, with the proportion of those in long-term unemployment increasing from 63,6% to 76,5% over the same period.

\*Long term unemployment–unemployed for a year or longer



Over the past ten years, the **formal sector** has been the main contributor to total employment in South Africa, accounting for **68,1%** of total employment in Q1:2025.

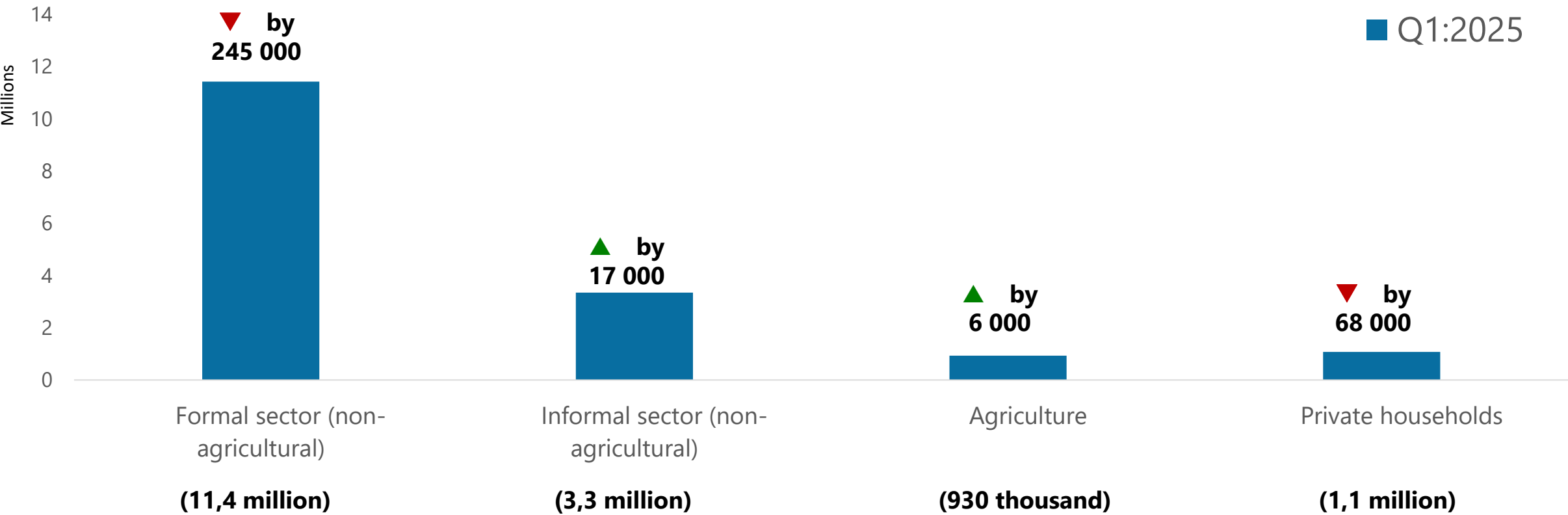
Employment share by sector, Q1:2015 to Q1:2025



Due to rounding numbers may not add up

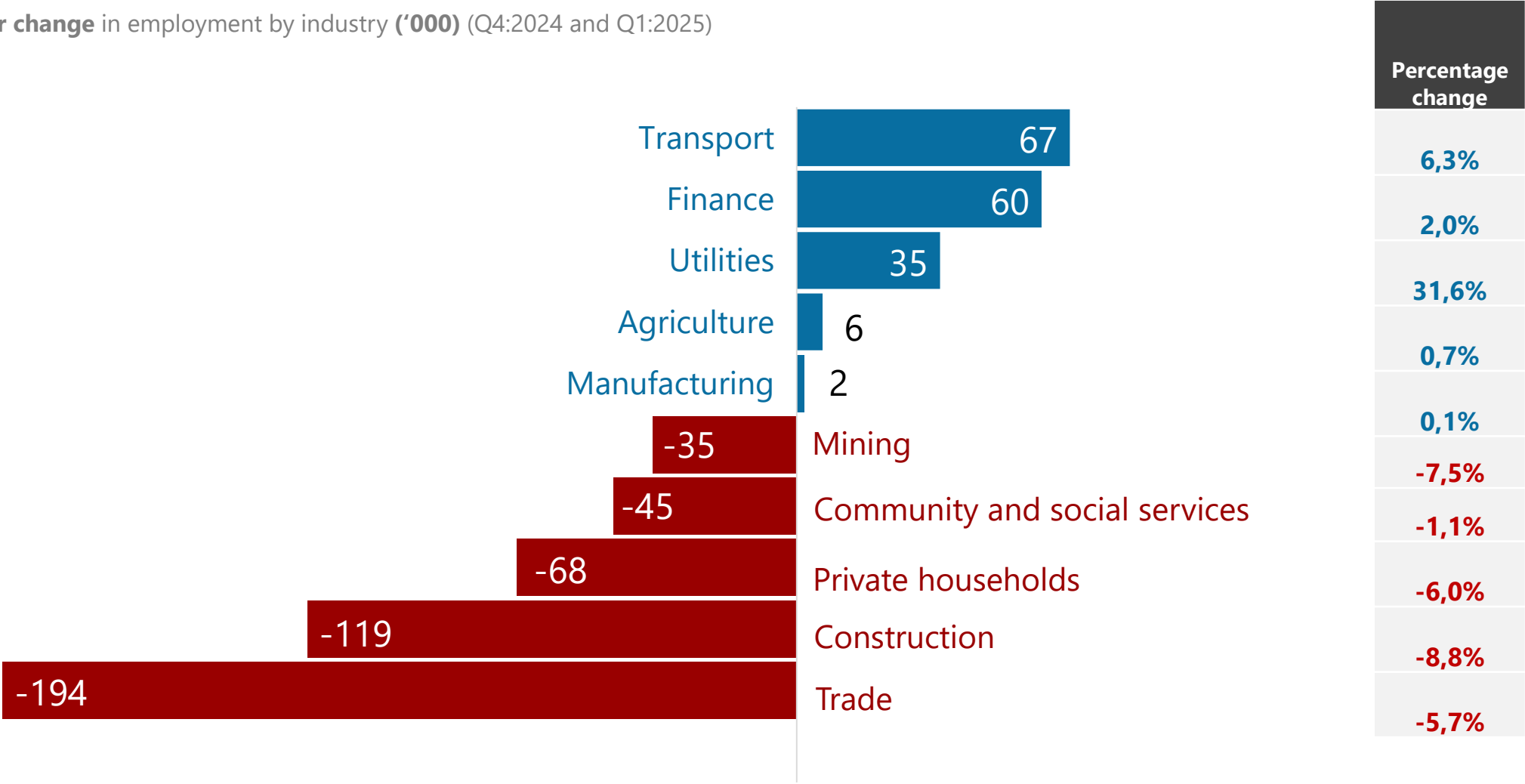
Formal employment decreased **by 245 000** jobs in the first quarter of 2025.

Employment by sector, (Quarter-on-quarter)



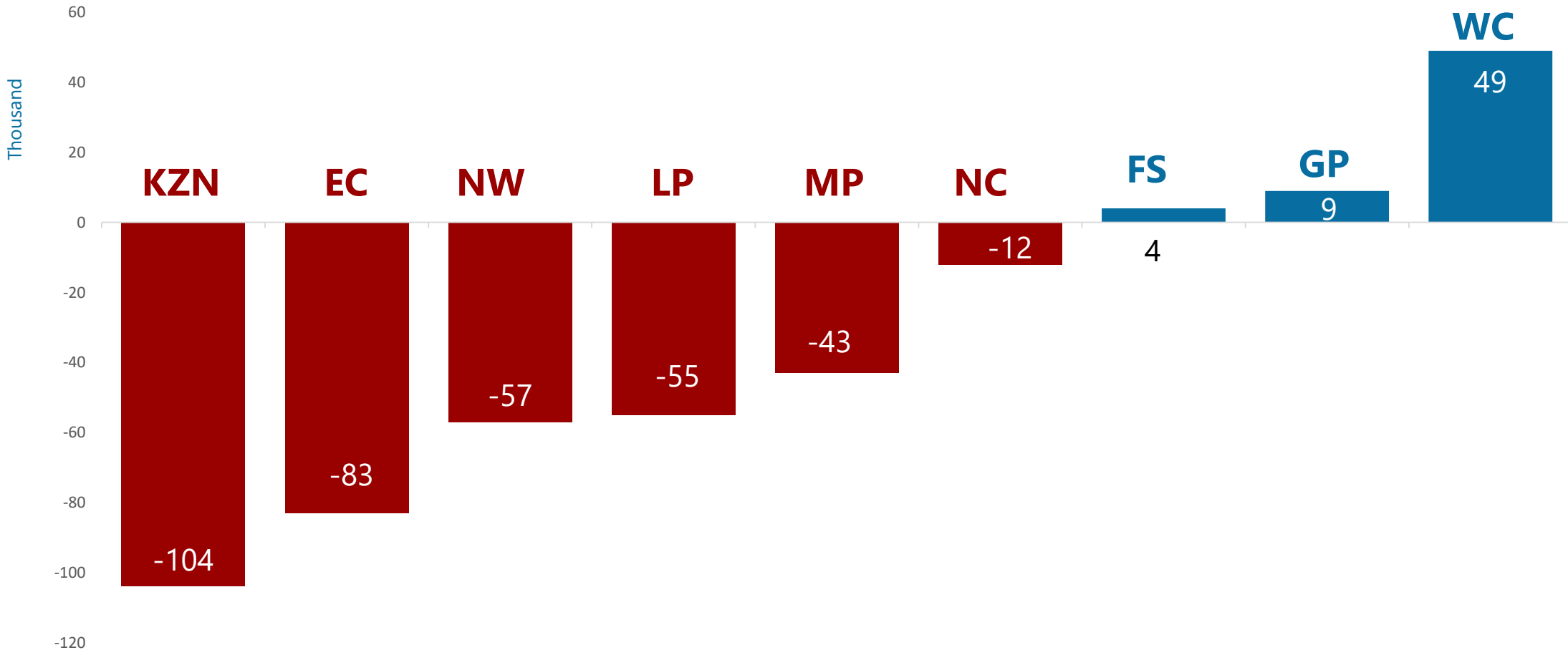
**Employment decreases** were mainly in the **Trade and Construction industries**. However, the largest **increases in employment** were recorded in the **Transport and Finance** industries.

Quarter-on-quarter change in employment by industry ('000) (Q4:2024 and Q1:2025)



**KZN and EC** recorded the largest decreases in employment in Q1:2025, while **WC** recorded the largest increase.

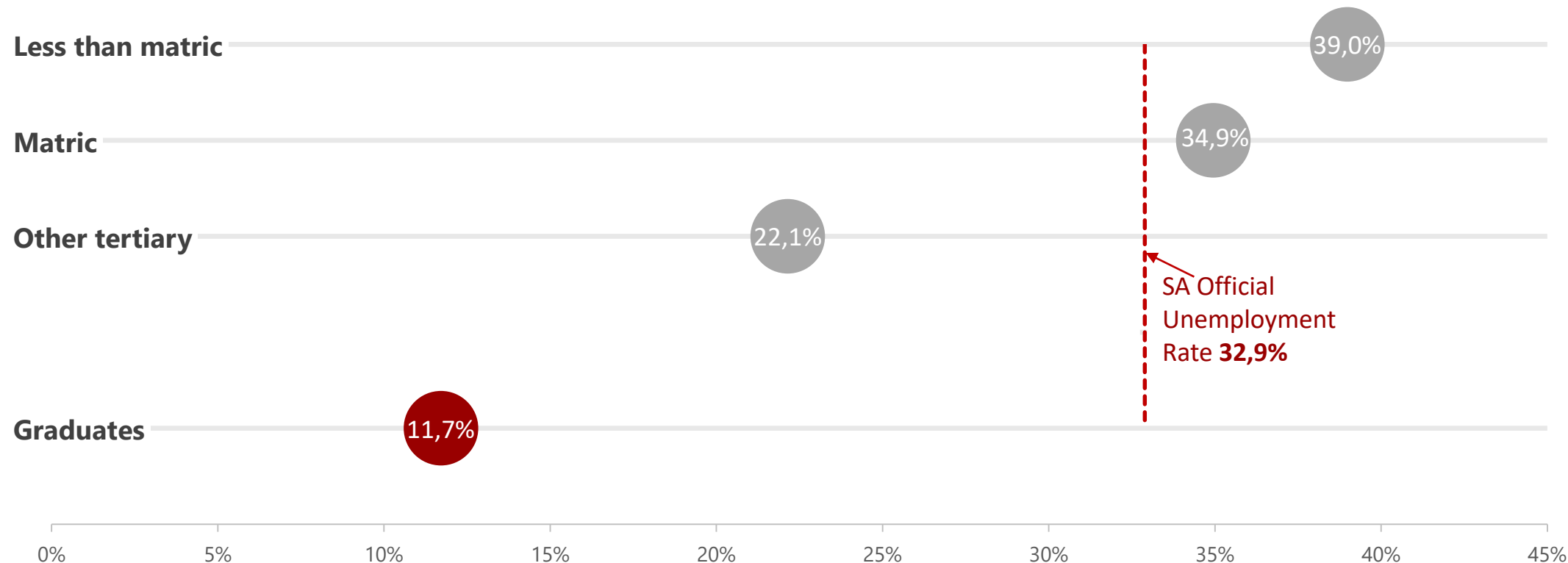
Quarter-on-quarter change in employment by province (Q4:2024 and Q1:2025)





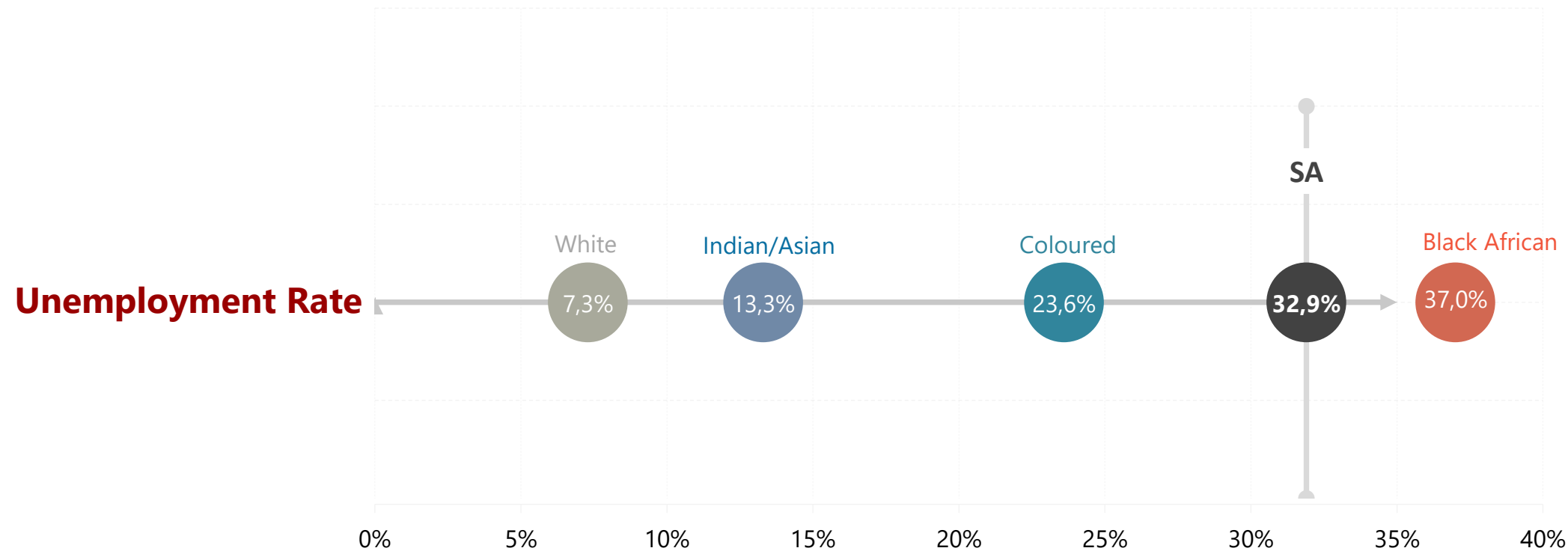
**The Graduate** unemployment rate increased by 3,0 percentage points from 8,7% in Q4:2024 to **11,7%** in Q1:2025. Those with **matric** and **less than matric** remain vulnerable with unemployment rates of 34,9% and 39,0% respectively.

Official Unemployment rate by level of education, Q1:2025



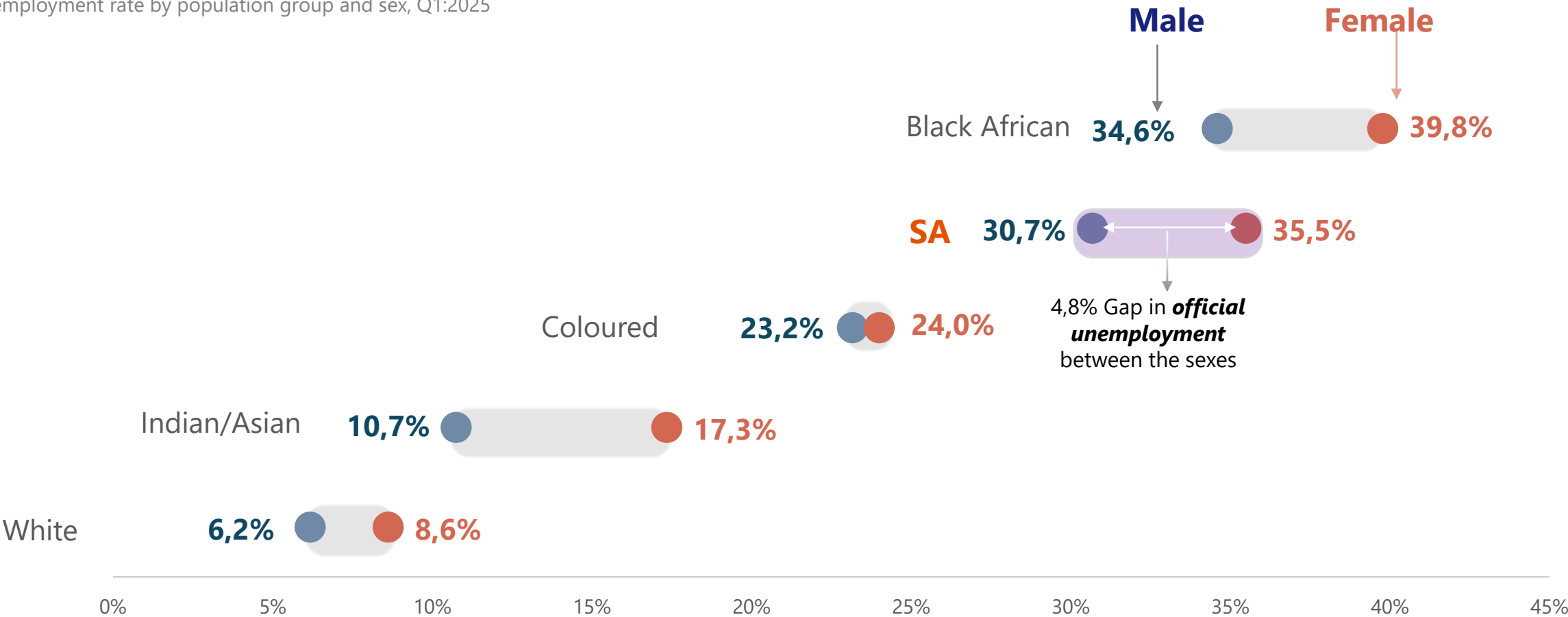
The unemployment rate among the **Black African (37,0%)** population group remains higher than the national average and other population groups.

**OFFICIAL** unemployment rate by population group, Q1:2025



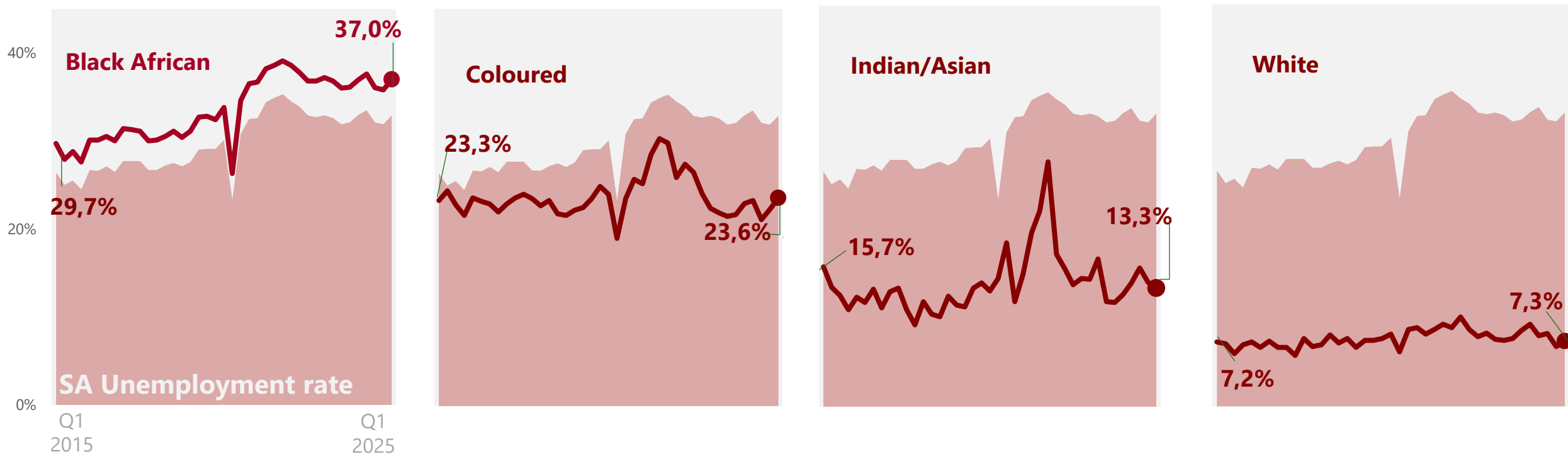
**Black African women** continue to be the most vulnerable with an unemployment rate of **39,8%** in Q1:2025. *This is 4,3 percentage points higher than the national average for women at 35,5%.*

Official unemployment rate by population group and sex, Q1:2025



Black African unemployment rate has consistently been higher than the national average and other population groups over the past 10-year period.

Official Unemployment rates by population group,  
Q1:2015-Q1:2025



stats sa  
Department:  
Statistics South Africa  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# Understanding Labour market outcomes among youth

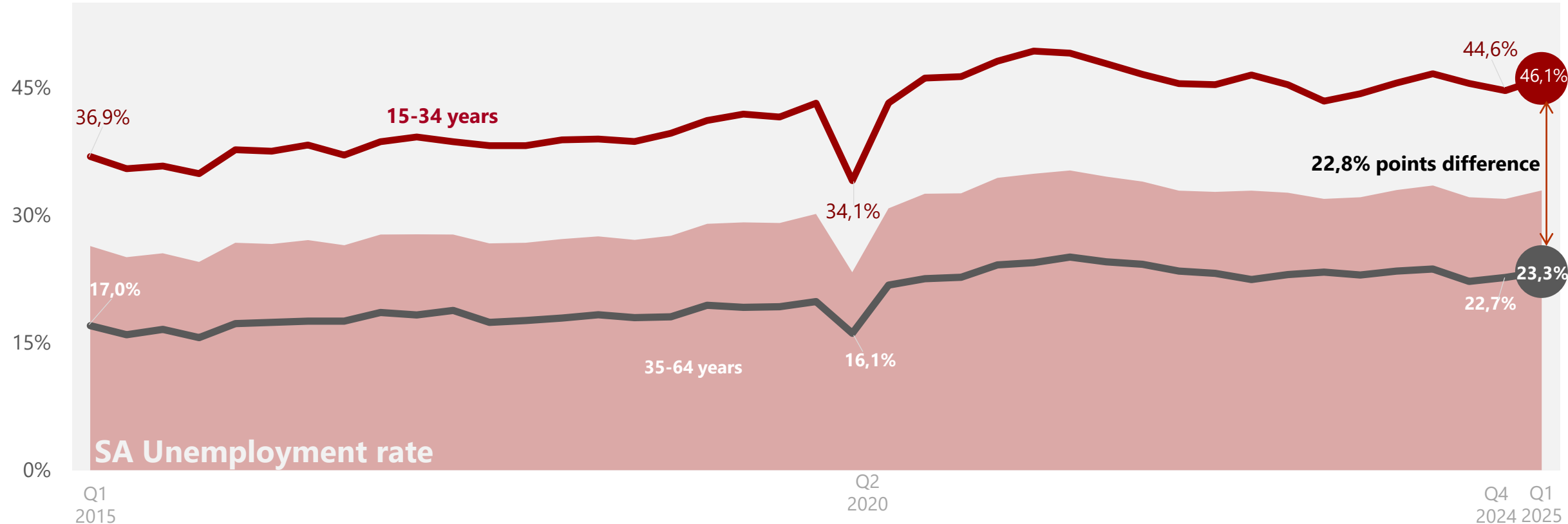


stats sa

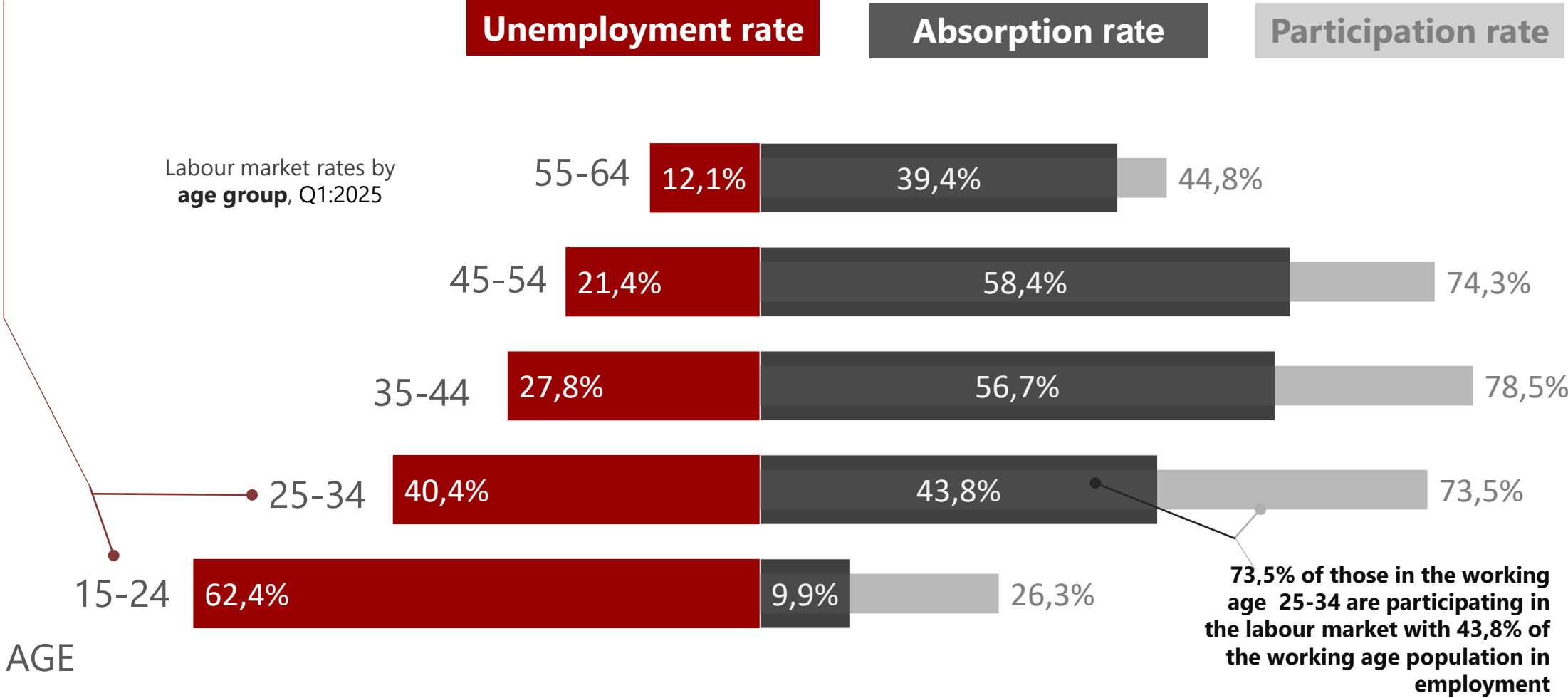
Department:  
Statistics South Africa  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Youth unemployment remained high over the past decade. Official unemployment rate among youth aged 15-34 years stood at 36,9% in Q1:2015 and a decade later, in Q1:2025, that figure increased to 46,1%; a 9,2 percentage points increase, **signaling worsening conditions for the youth**.

Official Unemployment rates by age group,  
**Q1:2015-Q1:2025**

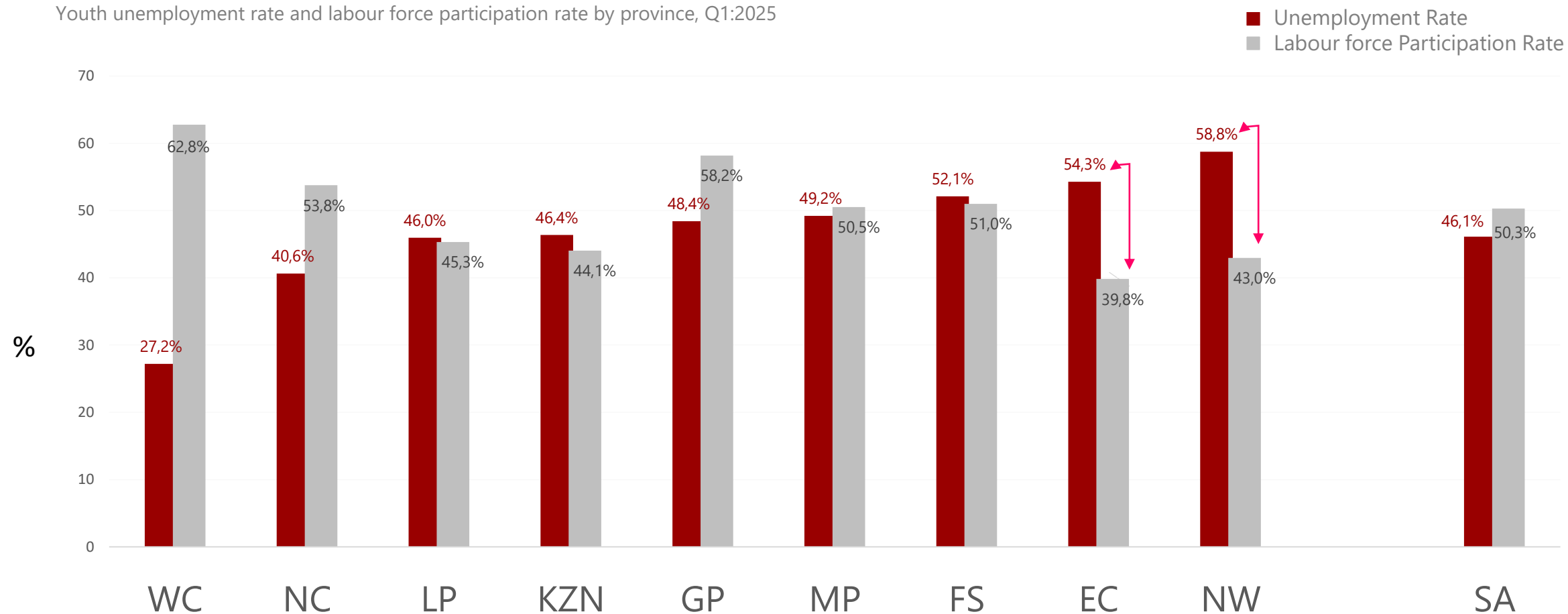


Youth aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years continue to have the highest unemployment rates at **62,4%** and **40,4%** respectively.



NW and EC showed both the *highest unemployment rates and the lowest participation* rates amongst youth(15-34 years).

Youth unemployment rate and labour force participation rate by province, Q1:2025

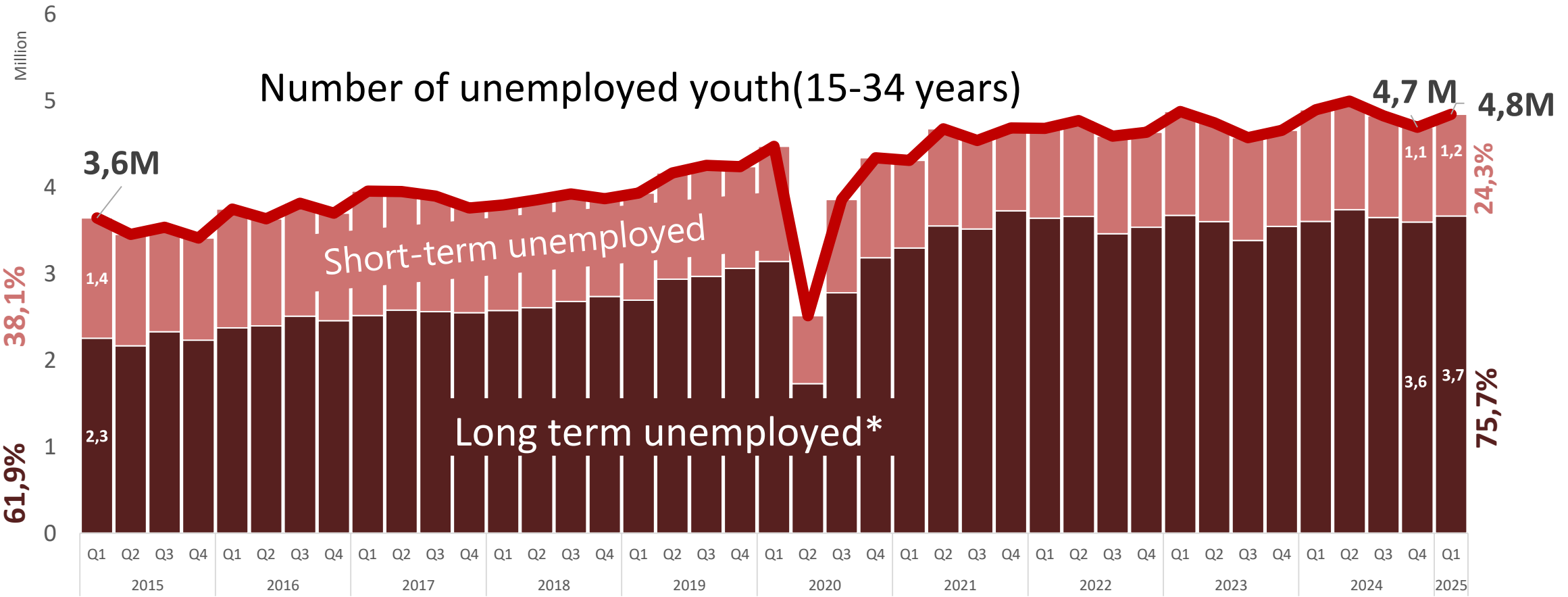


Due to rounding numbers may not add up

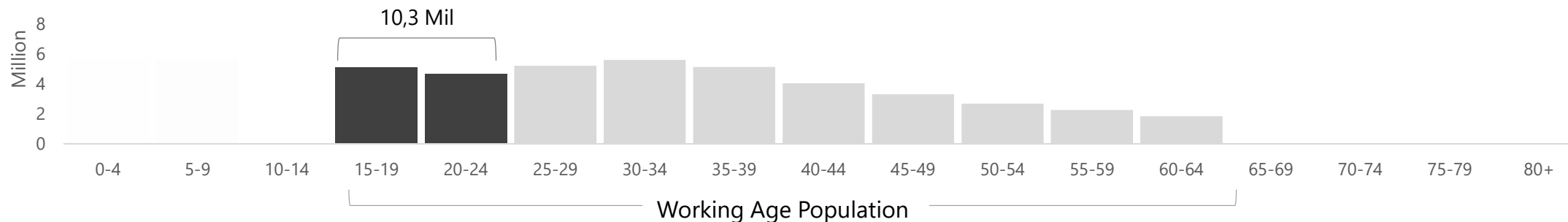


The **number of unemployed** youth in South Africa **increased from 3,6 million** in Q1:2015 to **4,8 million** in Q1:2025. *The proportion of those in long-term unemployment increased from 61,9% in Q1:2015 to 75,7% in Q1:2025.*

\*Long term unemployment–unemployed for a year or longer



Approximately **3,8 million out of 10,3 million (or 37,1%)** young people aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET).



Number of NEET for ages 15-24  
Q1:2025

**3,8 Million  
NEET**

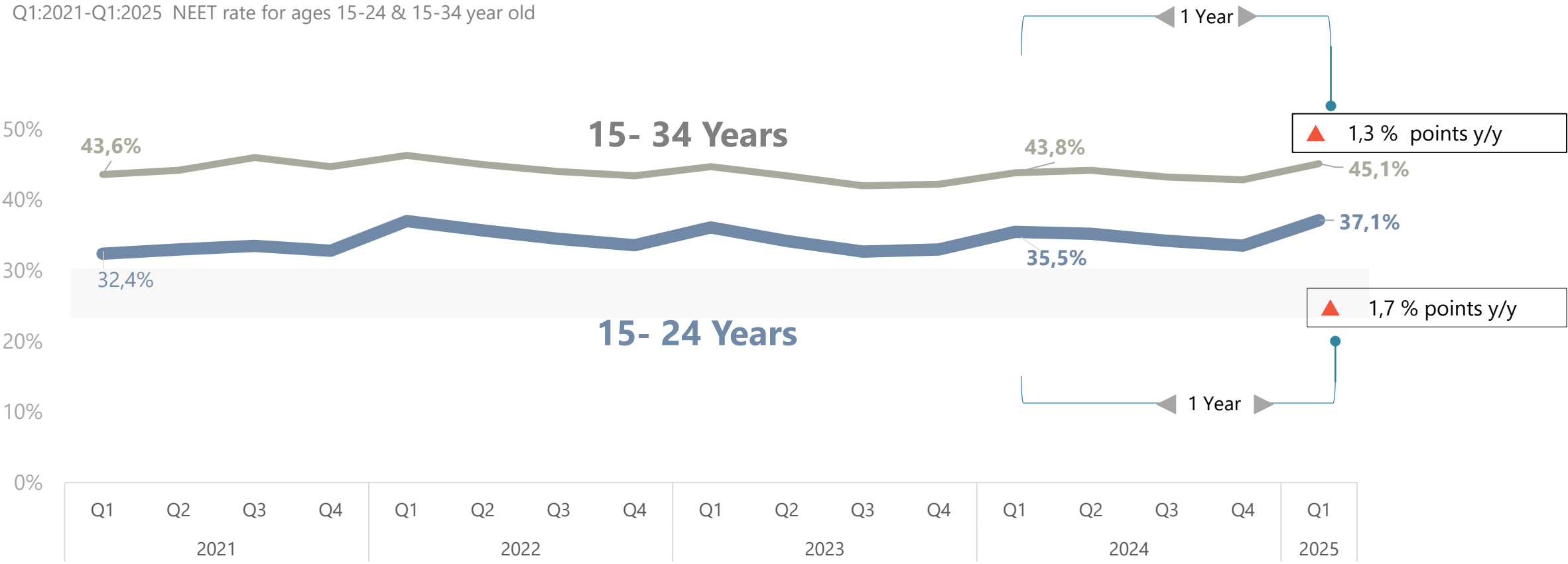
**6,5 Million**

**Employed or in  
Education or Training**

*Due to rounding numbers may not add up*

The overall NEET rate (15 – 24yrs) increased by 1,7 percentage points in Q1:2025 compared to Q1:2024.

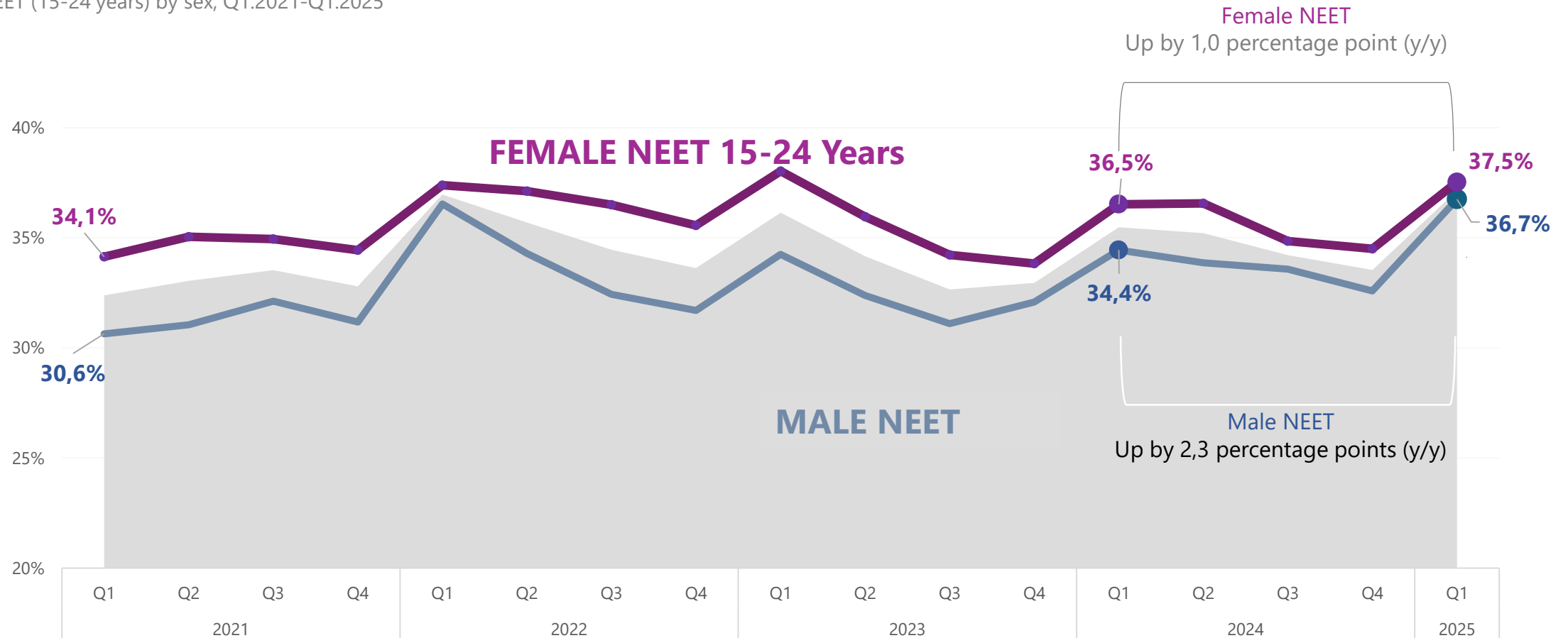
Q1:2021-Q1:2025 NEET rate for ages 15-24 & 15-34 year old



Due to rounding numbers may not add up

**37,5% of young females** aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Q1: 2025. This is a 1,0 percentage point increase compared to Q1: 2024.

NEET (15-24 years) by sex, Q1:2021-Q1:2025



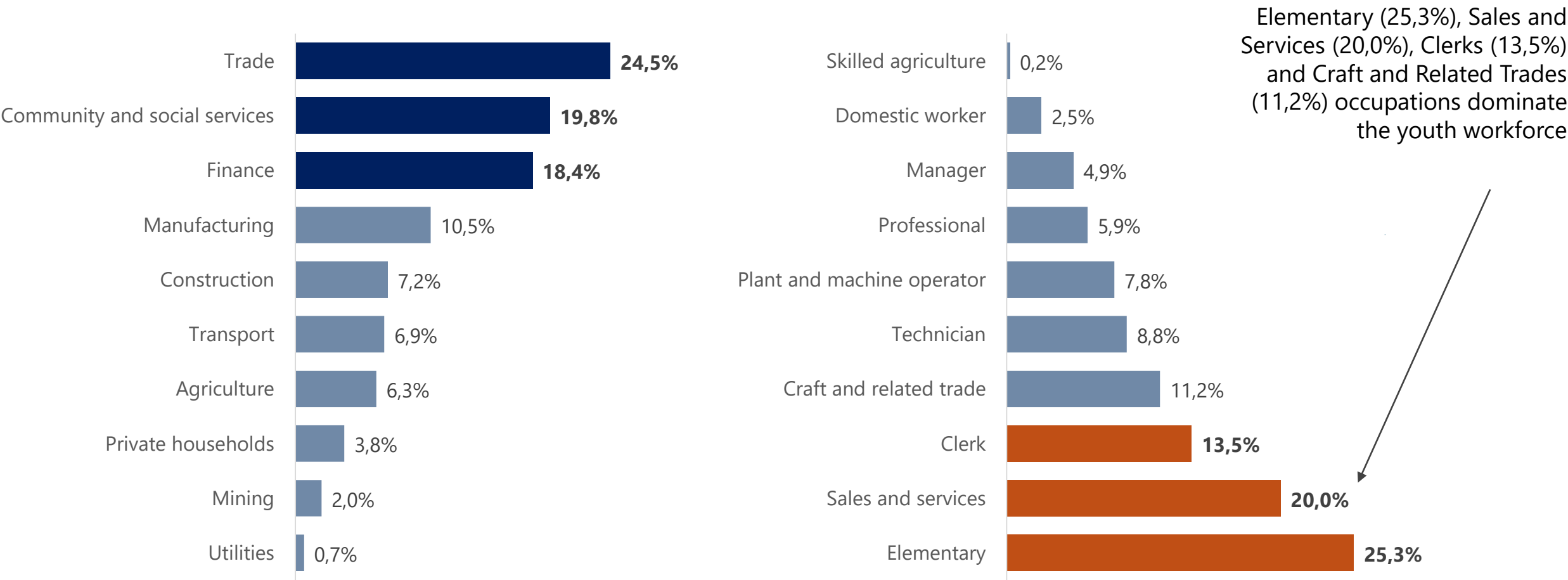
Approximately **2,0 million out of 3,5 million discouraged work-seekers, were young people** aged 15-34 years in Q1: 2025

Discouraged work-seekers by age-group, Q1:2025



More youth are employed in **Trade, Community & Social services, and Finance industries. Elementary, Sales and Services and Clerks** occupations dominate the youth workforce

Youth (15-34 years) Employment by Industry and Occupation Q1: 2025



# RECAP (QLFS, Q1:2025)

- ❖ Unemployment rate **increased** by 1,0 percentage point to 32,9% in Q1:2025. Both the absorption rate and labour force participation rate **decreased** in Q1:2025 compared to Q4:2024, decreasing by 0,8 and 0,3 of a percentage point respectively, to 40,3% and 60,0%.
- ❖ The number of employed persons **decreased** by 291 000 in Q1:2025 compared to Q4:2024, while the number of those who are unemployed **increased** by 237 000 in the same quarter.
- ❖ The largest **employment losses** were recorded in Trade (194 000) and Construction (119 000) industries. While the largest **employment gains** were recorded in Transport (67 000) and Finance (60 000).
- ❖ **Youth** aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years continue to have the highest unemployment rates at 62,4% and 40,4% respectively.



# THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

## NOW IN THE FIELD

**Geospatial Information Frame**

**Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (April 2024-March 2025)**

**Quarterly Labour Force Survey(Collected quarterly)**

**General Household Survey (January-December)**

**Domestic Tourism Survey (January-December)**

**Consumer Price Index (Collected monthly)**



stats sa  
Department:  
Statistics South Africa  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



QLFS  
Q1:2025

# Ndzi hela kwala!



[statssa.gov.za](http://statssa.gov.za)



[twitter.com/StatsSA](https://twitter.com/StatsSA)



[facebook.com/StatsSA](https://facebook.com/StatsSA)



**stats sa**

Department:  
Statistics South Africa  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA