Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS)  
Q1:2024  

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Statistician-General
Total employment increased by **22 thousand** to **16,7 M** in Q1:2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q4:2023</th>
<th>Q1:2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employed</strong> 16,7M</td>
<td><strong>Employed</strong> 16,7M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployed</strong> 7,9M</td>
<td><strong>Unemployed</strong> 8,2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not Economically Active (NEA)</strong> 13,4M</td>
<td><strong>Other NEA</strong> 13,1M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**22 000** More Employed between Q4:2023 and Q1:2024

**330 000** More Unemployed between Q4:2023 and Q1:2024

1 000 Fewer Discouraged work seekers between Q4:2023 and Q1:2024

214 000 Fewer Other Not Economically Active between Q4:2023 and Q1:2024
Employment increased by 22 000 in the first quarter of 2024, following a decrease of 22 000 in the last quarter of 2023.
The number of employed persons remains at 16,7M in Q1:2024 since surpassing the pre-COVID level of 16,4M in Q1:2020

Employment Q1: 2020 – Q1: 2024

![Graph showing employment levels from Q1:2020 to Q1:2024 with pre-COVID levels.]
The official unemployment rate stands at **32,9 %**, an increase of 0,8 of a percentage point in Q1:2024 compared to Q4:2023.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour force</th>
<th>Not Economically Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>25,0 million</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,2 million</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Discouraged work seekers</th>
<th>Other NEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16,7M</td>
<td>8,2M</td>
<td>3,0M</td>
<td>13,1M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA’s official unemployment rate stands at **32,9 %**, increased by 0,8 of a percentage point between Q4:2023 and Q1:2024.

ILO hierarchy – Employed first then unemployed and the remainder is NEA (including discouraged job-seekers). 3 mutually exclusive groups. Cannot be in two groups at the same time.
The number of **Not Economically Active** persons **decreased by 215 000** in Q1:2024 compared to Q4:2023

Characteristics of the not economically active, Q4:2023 vs Q1:2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Q4:2023</th>
<th>Q1:2024</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>36,9%</td>
<td>36,9%</td>
<td>▼ 1,1% points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged work seekers</td>
<td>18,8%</td>
<td>18,6%</td>
<td>▲ 0,2% point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-maker</td>
<td>14,3%</td>
<td>14,0%</td>
<td>▼ 0,7 % point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too old/young to work</td>
<td>10,8%</td>
<td>11,3%</td>
<td>▲ 0,5 % point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness/disability</td>
<td>10,2%</td>
<td>10,0%</td>
<td>▼ 0,2 % point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9,0%</td>
<td>10,3%</td>
<td>▲ 1,2 % points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to rounding numbers may not add up.

Q/Q Changes:
- 252 000
- 1 000
- 143 000
61 000
- 57 000
178 000
In Q1 of 2024, the labour force participation rate increased by 0.7 of a percentage point to 60.7%, while the absorption rate decreased by 0.1 of a percentage point to 40.7%.

**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 0.8 of a percentage point to 41.9% when comparing Q1:2024 and Q4:2023.

**Expanded Definition includes the following**
- Official unemployment (searched and available) 8.2 M
- Available to work but are/or
  - Discouraged work-seekers 3.0 M
  - Have other reasons for not searching 0.9 M

Q1:2014 - Q1:2024

Official vs Expanded unemployment:

- Official unemployment:
  - Q1:2014: 25.2%
  - Q1:2024: 32.1%

- Expanded unemployment:
  - Q1:2014: 35.1%
  - Q1:2024: 41.1%

10 year period

12.1 million unemployed

8.2 million unemployed

**Improving lives through data ecosystems**
NW (53.6%) recorded the highest expanded unemployment rate in Q1:2024, followed by EC (49.1%). Limpopo recorded the highest difference between expanded and official unemployment rates of 15.1 percentage points.
While the unemployment rates in **WC and KZN** have consistently been below the official unemployment rate in SA for the past ten years, the unemployment rate in **EC** has continuously exceeded it.
The unemployment rate increased in all provinces between Q4:2023 and Q1:2024. The largest increase of 2.4 percentage points was recorded in LP.

Official unemployment rate by province: Q4:2023-Q1:2024
The number of unemployed people in South Africa increased from 5,1 million in Q1:2014 to 8,2 million in Q1:2024. The proportion of those in long-term unemployment increased from 66,0% in Q1:2014 to 75,2% in Q1:2024

*Long term unemployment – unemployed for a year or longer
The **formal sector** in South Africa accounts for **68.9%** of total employment.
All employment sectors increased between Q4:2023 and Q1:2024, except for the informal sector which decreased by **100 000 jobs**.

Employment changes by sector, (Quarter-on-quarter)
Employment increases were mainly in the Trade, Manufacturing, and Private households industries. However, the largest decreases in employment were recorded in Services and Construction.

Employment changes by industry, *Quarter-on-quarter change* (‘000)
KZN and GP recorded the largest increases in employment in Q1:2024, while WC and NW recorded the largest decreases.

Quarter-on-quarter change in employment by province ('000) (Q4:2023 and Q1:2024)
Graduate unemployment rate increased by 2.3 percentage points to **11.8%** in Q1:2024 compared to 9.6% in Q4:2023. Those with **matric** and **less than matric** remain vulnerable with an unemployment rate of 34.5% and 39.1% respectively which are higher than SA official unemployment rate.
Youth aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years continue to have the highest unemployment rates at 59,7% and 40,7% respectively.

Labour market rates by age group, Q1:2024

- **15-24**
  - Unemployment rate: 59,7%
  - Absorption rate: 10,8%
  - Participation rate: 26,8%

- **25-34**
  - Unemployment rate: 40,7%
  - Absorption rate: 44,9%
  - Participation rate: 75,6%

- **35-44**
  - Unemployment rate: 28,3%
  - Absorption rate: 56,9%
  - Participation rate: 79,4%

- **45-54**
  - Unemployment rate: 20,8%
  - Absorption rate: 58,7%
  - Participation rate: 74,0%

- **55-64**
  - Unemployment rate: 11,9%
  - Absorption rate: 38,8%
  - Participation rate: 44,0%

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.
Youth aged 15-34 years are more vulnerable to unemployment when compared to older age groups.

Official Unemployment rates by age group, Q1:2014-Q1:2024
Approximately **3,6 million (35.5%)** out of **10,3 million** young people aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET).
The overall NEET rate (15 – 24yrs) decreased by 0,6 of a percentage point in Q1:2024 compared to Q1:2023.
The unemployment rate among the **Black African (36.9%)** population group remains higher than the national average and other population groups.

*OFFICIAL* unemployment rate by population group, Q1:2024
Black African women continue to be the most vulnerable with an unemployment rate of **39.2%** in Q1:2024.

Official unemployment rate by population group and sex, Q1:2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black African</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian/Asian</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2% Gap in **official unemployment** between the sexes
Black African unemployment rates have been consistently higher than other population groups over the past 10-year period.

Official Unemployment rates by population group, Q1:2014-Q1:2024
RECAP (QLFS, Q1:2024)

- Unemployment rate increased by 0.8 of a percentage point to 32.9% in Q1:2024. The absorption rate decreased by 0.1 of a percentage point to 40.7% and the labour force participation rate increased by 0.7 of a percentage point to 60.7%.

- The number of employed persons increased by 22 000 in Q1:2024 compared to Q4:2023. The number of those who were unemployed increased by 330 000 in the same quarter.

- The largest industry employment gains were recorded in Trade (109 000), Manufacturing (99 000), and Private households (44 000), while the largest industry employment losses were recorded in Community and social services (122 000) and Construction (106 000).
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)
Ndzi hela kwala!