

WHEN THE SUN RISES
WE WORK HARD TO DELIVER

Gert Sibande District Socio-Economic Profile (SEP)

November 2025



**economic development
& tourism**

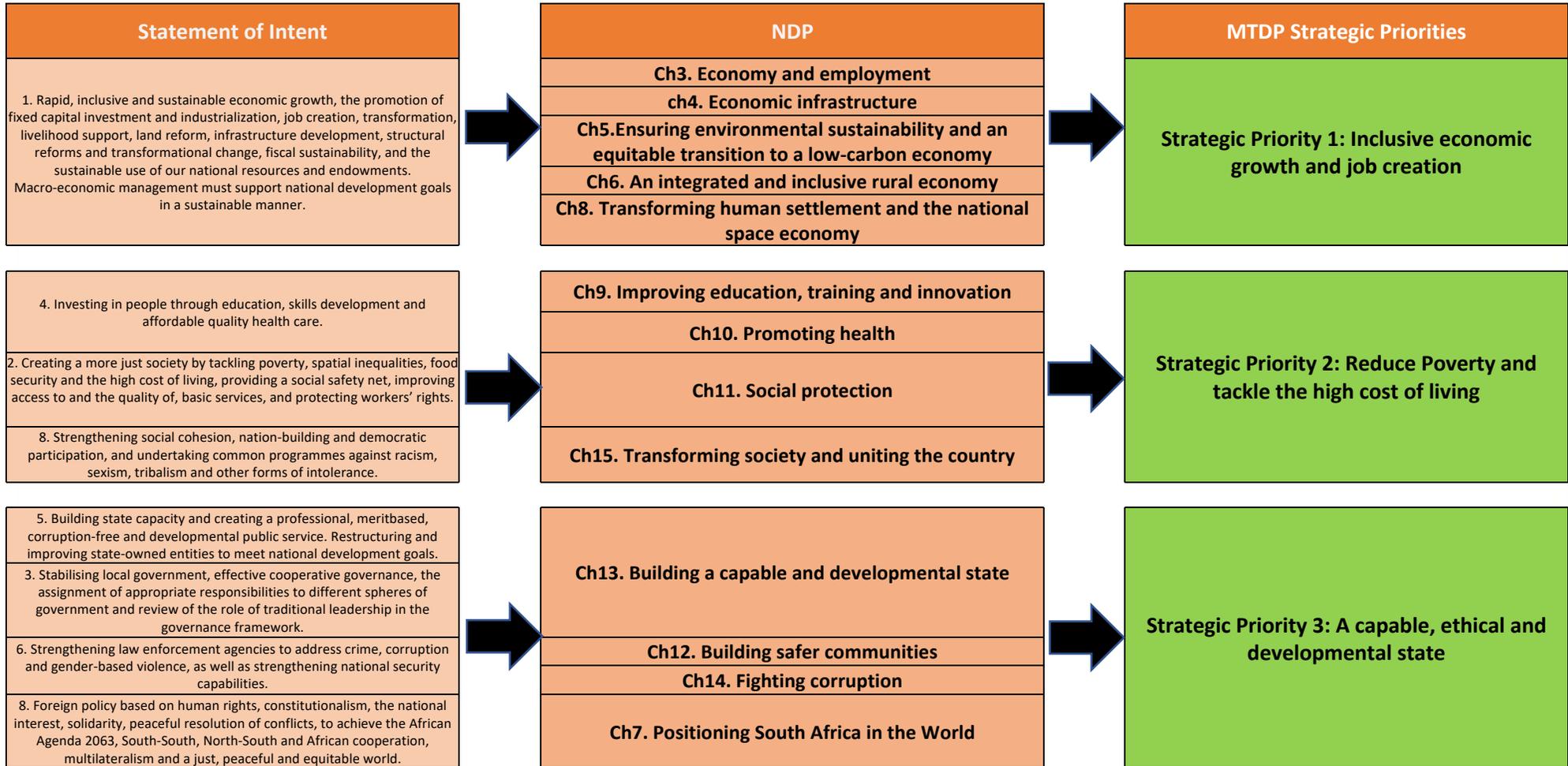
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





GOVERNMENT MEDIUM TERM DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MTDP) PRIORITIES & 2030 TARGETS

Approach to aligning the SOI, NDP & the MTDP priorities





MEGDP, Current Status, MTDP targets

2020

2024/25

2029/30

MEGDP Targets

- Growth of >5% pa
- Unemployment rate of 15%
- Poverty rate of 25%
- Improve inequality to less than 0.6 Gini-coefficient

Current Status

- 0.8% economic growth in 2022, 0.5% in 2023, 0.3% in 2024 & 2025 \approx 1%
- Unemployment rate 34.0% in Q3 2025
- Poverty rate (LBPL) of 38.4% in 2023 (latest Stats SA data)
- Income inequality: 0.54 Gini-coefficient in 2023 (latest Stats SA data) & poorest 40% of households only 7.7% of income in 2024

MTDP Targets

- Economic growth of \geq 3% p.a.
- Unemployment rate of 25% & 60 000 new jobs p.a.
- Poverty rate of 35% (consider reducing it to 30%)
- Improve income inequality: Gini-coefficient below 0.60 (consider reducing it to 0.50) & poorest 40% of households have \geq 10% of income



KEY DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOUSEHOLD SERVICES (RELATED TO PRIORITY 3)

Key Gert Sibande demographics

- The projected (moderate growth scenario) Mpumalanga population number in 2030 is around 6.1 million and in 2060 between 11 and 12 million people. Significant implications for the province and district in terms of infrastructure, basic service delivery, as well as economic/job opportunities.
- According to Stats SA's Census 2022, Gert Sibande's population increased from 1 043 195 in 2011 to 1 283 459 people in 2022 – smallest population among Mpumalanga's three districts in 2022, declining slightly since 2011 to 25% of the provincial population in 2022.
- The youth population (0-34 years) formed 64.3% of the district's population & the elderly population (60+ years) formed 8.2% of the district's population.
- In 2022, the female population's share was 51.7% and that of males 48.3%.
- The population increased by 240 264 between 2011 and 2022, a population growth rate of 2.0% per annum, which was higher than the corresponding economic growth of 0.9% p.a.
- The number of migrants from other provinces were 24 533 and 5 436 from outside South Africa.
- The number of households in Gert Sibande increased from 273 485 in 2011 to 378 182 households in 2022 – an increase of 104 697 households & a growth rate of 3.1% p.a.
- Gert Sibande's share of Mpumalanga's households increased from 25.4% in 2011 to 26.6% in 2022.
- The household size declined from 3.8 in 2011 to 3.4 in 2022.
- In 2022, the share of female headed households was 47.1% and the share of child-headed (12-17 years of age) households was 0.4%. 60+ headed households almost 20%.



Population number per district, 2011 & 2022

Local Municipal Area	Population number		Female population share	Youth (0-34 years) share	Elderly (60+ years) share	Average annual population growth	Average annual economic growth
	2011	2022	2022	2022	2022	2011-22	2011-22
Gert Sibande	1 043 195	1 283 459	51.7%	64.3%	8.2%	2.0%	0.9%
Nkangala	1 308 129	1 588 968	51.0%	61.8%	9.3%	1.9%	0.7%
Ehlanzeni	1 688 615	2 270 897	52.8%	66.0%	7.3%	2.9%	1.1%
Mpumalanga	4 039 938	5 143 324	52.0%	64.3%	8.1%	2.3%	0.9%



Population number per municipal area, Census 2011 & 2022

Local Municipal Area	Population number		Female population share	Youth (0-34 years) share	Elderly (60+ years) share	Average annual population growth	Average annual economic growth
	2011	2022	2022	2022	2022	2011-22	2011-22
Chief Albert Luthuli	186 010	247 664	53.2%	66.6%	8.7%	2.8%	1.1%
Msukaligwa	149 377	199 314	51.3%	64.1%	7.5%	2.8%	1.5%
Mkhondo	171 982	255 411	53.1%	68.3%	6.6%	3.8%	0.8%
Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme	83 235	115 304	52.0%	62.6%	9.9%	3.2%	3.5%
Lekwa	115 662	119 669	51.3%	60.1%	9.6%	0.3%	1.3%
Dipaleseng	42 390	35 980	51.0%	59.4%	9.9%	-1.6%	4.0%
Govan Mbeki	294 538	310 117	49.9%	62.1%	8.3%	0.5%	-0.2%
Victor Khanye	75 452	106 149	49.2%	63.9%	6.9%	3.3%	3.2%
Emalahleni	395 466	434 522	49.2%	62.4%	7.4%	0.9%	0.5%
Steve Tshwete	229 831	242 031	50.3%	59.9%	8.6%	0.5%	0.6%
Emakhazeni	47 216	50 165	51.6%	60.4%	10.1%	0.6%	1.6%
Thembisile Hani	310 458	431 248	52.2%	62.4%	9.5%	3.2%	1.6%
Dr JS Moroka	249 705	324 855	52.6%	61.2%	13.0%	2.6%	1.3%
Thaba Chweu	98 387	118 474	50.1%	60.7%	8.0%	1.8%	0.9%
Nkomazi	393 030	591 928	53.0%	68.4%	6.2%	4.0%	1.0%
Bushbuckridge	538 593	750 821	54.3%	67.0%	8.1%	3.2%	2.0%
City of Mbombela	658 604	809 674	51.7%	64.2%	7.2%	2.0%	1.0%
Mpumalanga	4 039 938	5 143 324	52.0%	64.3%	8.1%	2.3%	0.9%



Household number per district, 2011 & 2022

Local Municipal Area	Households number		Average annual household growth 2011-2022	Household size	
	2011	2022		2011	2022
Gert Sibande	273 485	378 182	3.1%	3.8	3.4
Nkangala	356 902	483 169	2.9%	3.7	3.3
Ehlanzeni	445 079	560 370	2.2%	3.8	4.1
Mpumalanga	1 075 466	1 421 721	2.7%	3.8	3.6



Household number per municipal area, 2011 & 2022

Local Municipal Area	Households number		Average annual household growth 2011-2022	Household size	
	2011	2022		2011	2022
Chief Albert Luthuli	47 705	63 303	2.7%	3.9	3.9
Mskaligwa	40 932	67 827	4.9%	3.6	2.9
Mkhondo	37 433	58 504	4.3%	4.6	4.4
Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme	19 838	32 972	4.9%	4.2	3.5
Lekwa	31 071	38 583	2.1%	3.7	3.1
Dipaleseng	12 637	13 129	0.4%	3.4	2.7
Govan Mbeki	83 869	103 864	2.1%	3.5	3.0
Victor Khanye	20 548	33 786	4.8%	3.7	3.1
Emalahleni	119 873	164 573	3.1%	3.3	2.6
Steve Tshwete	64 966	80 052	2.0%	3.5	3.0
Emakhazeni	13 721	19 613	3.5%	3.4	2.6
Thembisile Hani	75 633	110 563	3.7%	4.1	3.9
Dr JS Moroka	62 162	74 581	1.8%	4.0	4.4
Thaba Chweu	33 352	45 902	3.1%	2.9	2.6
Nkomazi	96 202	134 143	3.2%	4.1	4.4
Bushbuckridge	133 559	167 927	2.2%	4.0	4.5
City of Mbombela	181 966	212 396	1.5%	3.6	3.8
Mpumalanga	1 075 466	1 421 721	2.7%	3.8	3.6



Key household services backlogs in Gert Sibande, 2022

8.1%

- Share of households in informal dwellings (worst of the 3 Districts)
- Improved from 16.8% in 2011

6.0%

- Share of households without access to piped water (best of the Districts)
- Improved from 8.9% in 2011

2.0%

- Share of households with no toilet (2nd best)
- Improved from 5.0% in 2011

23.9%

- Share of households without flush/chemical toilet (best of the Districts)
- Improved from 32.9% in 2011

8.2%

- Share of households without electricity connection (2nd best)
- Improved from 16.4% in 2011

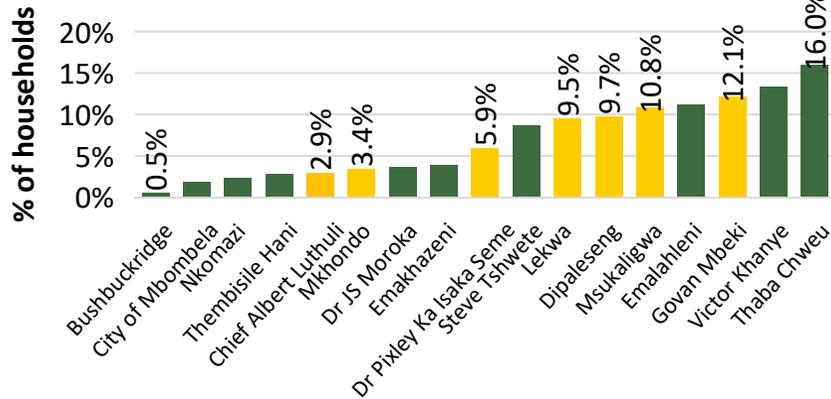
31.9%

- Share of households without refuse removal by a local authority (best)
- Improved from 35.3% in 2011

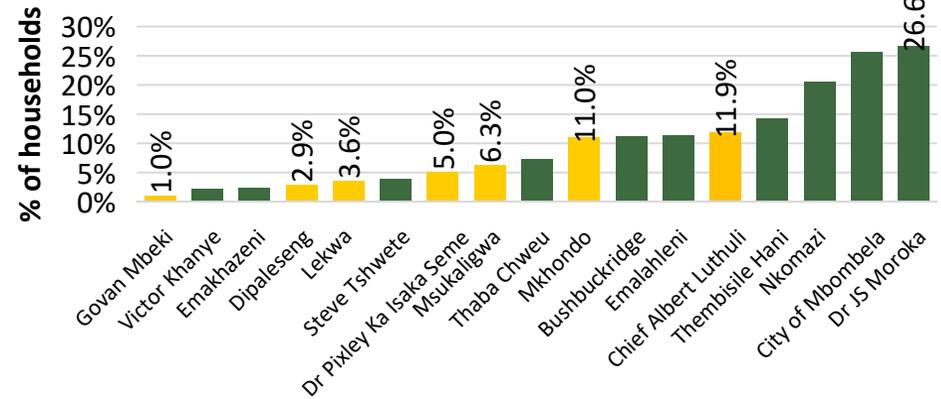


Household services backlogs of Local Municipalities

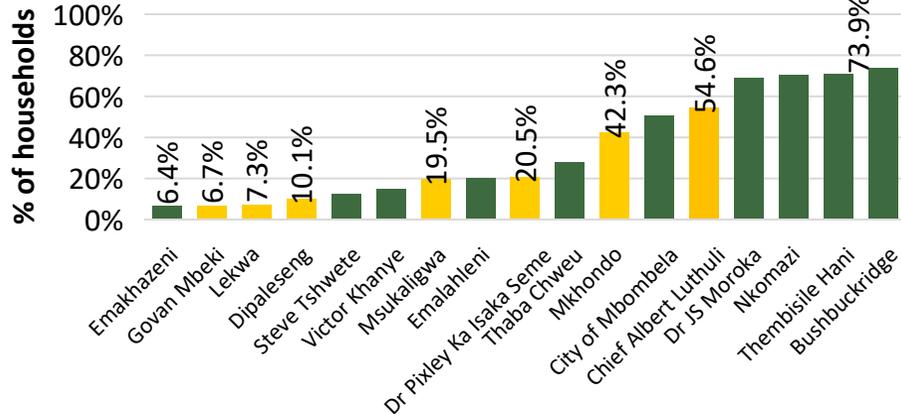
Households in informal dwellings



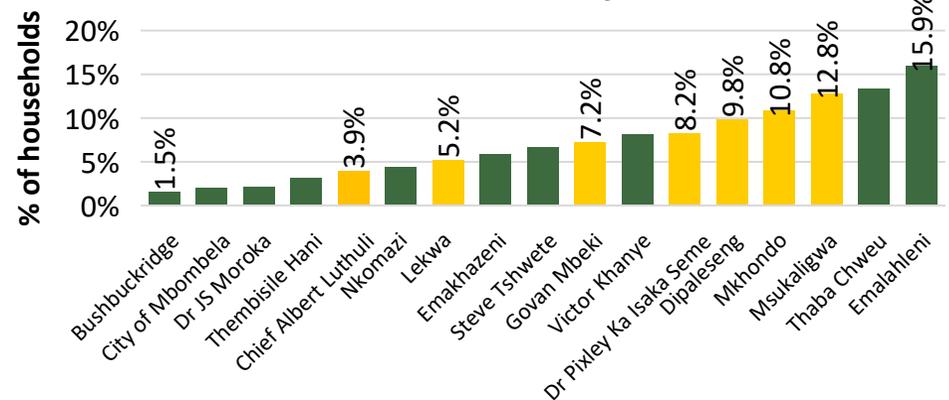
Households without piped water



Households without flush/chemical toilets



Households without electricity connections





Blue Drop, Green Drop, No Drop & Governance Performance

- According to the *Blue Drop Report 2023*, 2 of Gert Sibande’s local municipal areas received a “low” blue drop risk rating (BDRR), 1 received a “medium” BDRR, 3 received a “high BDRR & 1 received a “critical” BDRR. The BDRR of only 2 local municipal areas improved, whereas that of 5 regressed. Dipaleseng remains the biggest concern.
- According to the *Green Drop Progress Report 2023*, 2 of Gert Sibande’s local municipal areas received a “medium” cumulative risk rating (CRR), 2 a “high” CRR & 3 a “critical” CRR. The CRR of 3 local municipal areas improved, whereas that of 4 regressed.
- According to the *No Drop Report 2023*, 4 of Gert Sibande’s local municipal areas received a “critical” No Drop categorisation in 2021/22 & the other 3 a “poor” categorisation.
- In 2024, Gert Sibande ranked 8th out of 23 non-service authority districts in the Governance Performance Index by Good Governance Africa. Local municipal areas in Gert Sibande ranked as follows: Mkhondo 88th out of 205, Msukaligwa 111th, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme 117th, Chief Albert Luthuli 127th, Govan Mbeki 140th, Dipaleseng 184th & Lekwa 190th.
- Msukaligwa, Lekwa, Dipaleseng, & Govan Mbeki were also 4 of 6 Municipalities in Mpumalanga that featured in National COGTA’s dysfunctional municipalities as published in 2023.



Blue Drop Risk Rating (BDRR) per municipal area, 2022-23

Area	Year		Trend 2022-2023	Number of water supply systems per risk category 2023			
	2022	2023		Low risk	Medium risk	High risk	Critical risk
Chief Albert Luthuli	63.9%	78.5%	☹️	-	-	7	1
Msukaligwa	52.3%	76.3%	☹️	-	1	4	-
Mkhondo	37.9%	44.4%	☹️	3	2	-	-
Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme	59.1%	56.8%	😊	1	2	1	-
Lekwa	60.5%	80.9%	☹️	-	1	1	-
Dipaleseng	97.0%	100.0%	☹️	-	-	-	1
Govan Mbeki	40.8%	32.4%	😊	1	-	-	-
Victor Khanye	34.5%	30.4%	😊	2	-	-	-
Emalahleni	52.6%	54.2%	☹️	4	2	-	-
Steve Tshwete	33.4%	37.8%	☹️	5	1	-	-
Emakhazeni	40.9%	54.6%	☹️	2	1	1	-
Thembisile Hani	53.7%	42.5%	😊	3	1	1	-
Dr JS Moroka	37.2%	64.2%	☹️	-	1	-	-
Thaba Chweu	87.1%	86.5%	😊	-	-	3	1
Nkomazi	47.5%	46.3%	😊	13	3	-	-
Bushbuckridge	38.6%	36.4%	😊	12	-	-	-
City of Mbombela	95.2%	47.4%	😊	6	1	5	6
Mpumalanga	54.8%	54.0%	😊	52	16	23	9
South Africa	52.3%	47.2%	😊	577	184	102	95

BDRR categorisation

Low	Medium	High	Critical
<50%	50% - <70%	70% - <90%	90% - 100%



Green Cumulative Risk Rating (CRR) per municipal area, 2022-23

Area	Year		Trend 2022-2023	Number of waste water treatment works per risk category 2023			
	2022	2023		Low risk	Medium risk	High risk	Critical risk
Chief Albert Luthuli	94.4%	100%	🔴	-	-	-	5
Msukaligwa	93.7%	91%	🟢	-	-	3	4
Mkhondo	62.8%	67%	🔴	-	2	-	-
Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme	92.9%	83%	🟢	-	-	4	1
Lekwa	94.8%	84%	🟢	-	-	2	-
Dipaleseng	95.6%	100%	🔴	-	-	-	3
Govan Mbeki	60.7%	70.0%	🔴	1	1	4	-
Victor Khanye	81.4%	76%	🟢	-	-	2	-
Emalahleni	56.7%	74%	🔴	1	3	4	-
Steve Tshwete	45.2%	63%	🔴	2	2	-	-
Emakhazeni	77.9%	83%	🔴	-	-	4	1
Thembisile Hani	82.4%	97%	🔴	-	-	-	4
Dr JS Moroka	77.3%	96%	🔴	-	-	-	2
Thaba Chweu	94.1%	100%	🔴	-	-	-	4
Nkomazi	48.2%	75%	🔴	-	1	4	-
Bushbuckridge	71.5%	74%	🔴	-	2	4	-
City of Mbombela	62.0%	62%	🟡	-	3	4	-
Mpumalanga	74.1%	80.4%	🔴	4	14	36	24
South Africa	70.1%	76.5%	🔴	74	217	298	278

GDRR categorisation

Low	Medium	High	Critical
<50%	50% - <70%	70% - <90%	90% - 100%



No Drop Score per municipal area, 2021-22

Area	Water Conservation/Water Demand Management Strategy	Asset Management	Technical Skills	Compliance & Performance	Weighted No Drop Score 2021/22	Ranking
Chief Albert Luthuli	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Msukaligwa	17%	40%	40%	40%	35%	
Mkhondo	66%	0%	60%	20%	43%	
Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme	15%	40%	60%	0%	17%	
Lekwa	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Dipaleseng	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Govan Mbeki	15%	0%	60%	48%	35%	
Victor Khanye	60%	0%	80%	24%	53%	
Emalahleni	70%	40%	20%	42%	62%	
Steve Tshwete	45%	40%	0%	54%	43%	
Emakhazeni	10%	0%	0%	0%	5%	
Thembisile Hani	46%	0%	0%	34%	42%	
Dr JS Moroka	28%	0%	0%	20%	20%	
Thaba Chweu	15%	0%	50%	22%	19%	
Nkomazi	76%	40%	80%	49%	73%	
Bushbuckridge	24%	0%	20%	6%	15%	
City of Mbombela	80%	0%	80%	38%	67%	

No Drop categorisation

Critical	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
0% to <31%	31% to <50%	50% to <80%	80% to <90%	90% to 100%



INCLUSIVE GROWTH & JOB CREATION (RELATED TO PRIORITY 1)



Mpumalanga's economy – size, contribution & growth

R568 billion

- 2024 value of economy in **current prices**
- R344 billion in constant 2015 prices

5th largest

- In 2024, Mpumalanga's economy was the **5th largest among the 9 provinces in current prices** (latest Stats SA release). No 4 in the past

7.7%

- Contribution to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024

64.8%

- Contribution of 4 largest municipal areas in 2024
 - City of Mbombela
 - Emalahleni
 - Steve Tshwete
 - Govan Mbeki

1.7%

- Average annual GDP growth between 1996 & 2024
- Slower than national rate

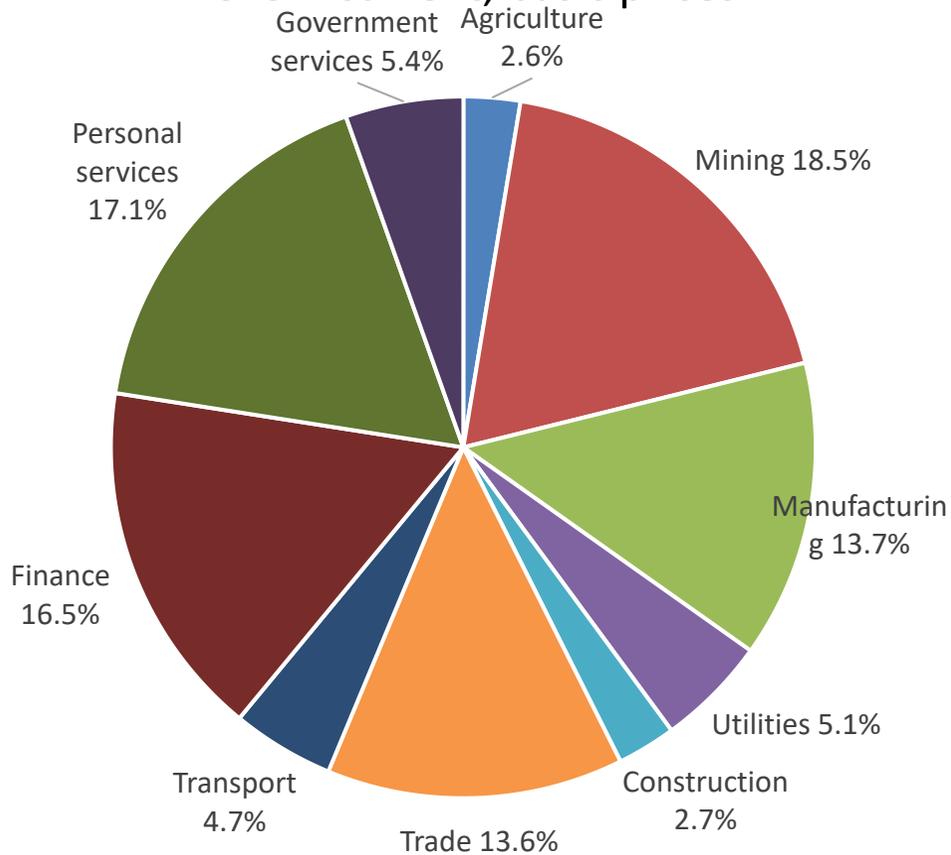
-5.3%

- Contraction in 2020
- 5.4% growth in 2021
- 0.8% growth in 2022
- 0.5% growth in 2023
- **0.3% growth in 2024**

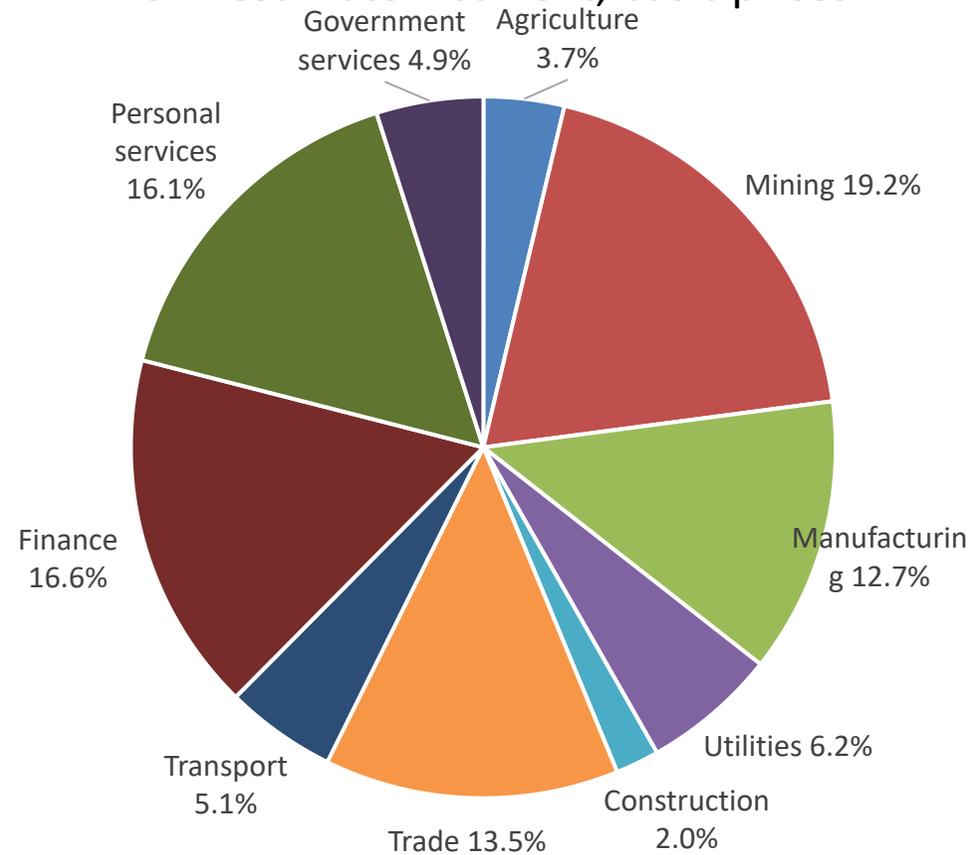


Provincial GDP size at current, basic prices, 2019 & 2024

2019 – current, basic prices



2024 estimate – current, basic prices





Share of and growth per provincial industry

Industry	2024 Contribution in current prices	Average annual change				Forecasted growth 2024-2029
		2014-2024	2019-2024	2023	2024	
Agriculture	3.7%	3.0%	3.6%	-4.1%	-6.6%	5.4%
Mining	19.2%	-0.7%	-2.2%	-0.1%	1.0%	0.5%
Manufacturing	12.7%	-0.5%	-1.0%	0.5%	-1.4%	0.9%
Utilities	6.2%	-1.8%	-1.5%	-4.9%	2.1%	1.0%
Construction	2.0%	-3.4%	-5.1%	0.2%	-2.8%	2.4%
Trade	13.5%	0.5%	0.8%	-0.4%	-0.5%	1.9%
Transport	5.1%	0.6%	0.2%	3.6%	0.9%	3.1%
Finance	16.6%	2.0%	2.0%	1.2%	3.4%	3.2%
Personal services	16.1%	1.6%	2.4%	2.0%	-0.1%	1.9%
Government services	4.9%	0.9%	0.1%	0.7%	0.8%	1.6%



Mpumalanga's economy – growth forecast & risk factors

1.6%

- Average annual GDP growth between 2024 & 2029
- Slower than national rate of 2.0% & slowest of the provinces

Highest growth

- Fastest growth between 2024 & 2029:
 - Transport & communication
 - Finance
 - Construction
 - Personal services

High growth potential

- Agriculture & agro-processing
- Manufacturing
- Tourism

Logistics gridlock

- Rail breakdowns, port congestion & road bottlenecks
- Crippling SA trade, raising costs & delaying exports

Cost, Capital, Skills

- Rising prices, weak investment & scarce skills
- Choking competitiveness & stunting growth

Global storm clouds

- Sluggish world growth
- Constant geo-political tension
- Shrinking markets due to tariff war?



Key economic indicators in Gert Sibande

26.0%

- Contribution to provincial economy in 2024 (constant prices)
- Smallest contribution among districts
- R150 billion economy

1.0%

- Average annual economic growth 1996-2024
- Lowest growth among districts

-0.4%

- Average annual economic contraction 2019-24
- Largest contraction among districts

1.5%

- Estimated average annual growth 2024-29
- 2nd fastest among districts

68.6%

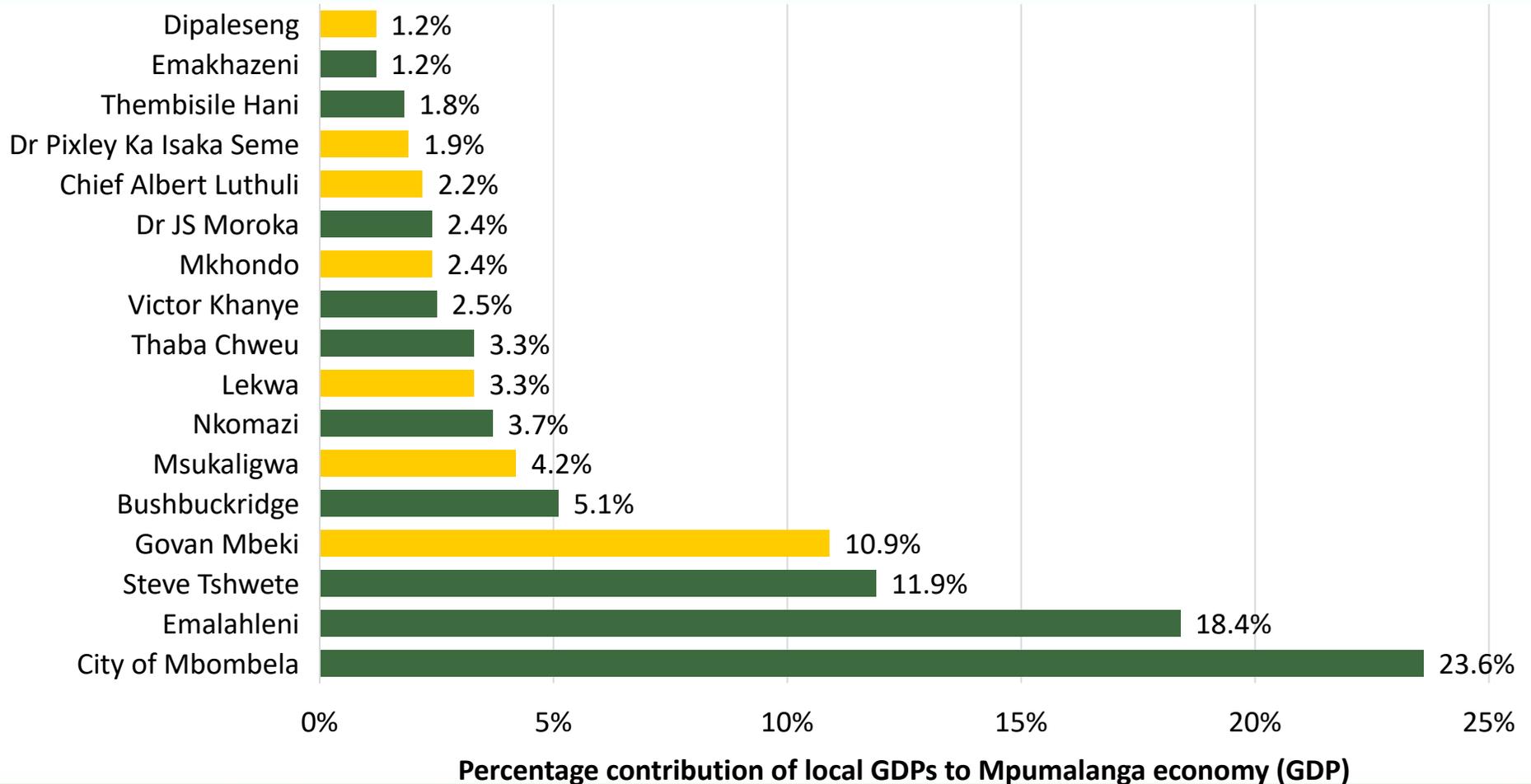
- Contribution by 4 largest industries in 2024 (constant prices)
- Less concentrated than the 69.7% share in 2019

4.4%

- Total tourism spend as % of GDP in 2024 (more than R6.6 billion)
- Declined from 4.7% in 2019

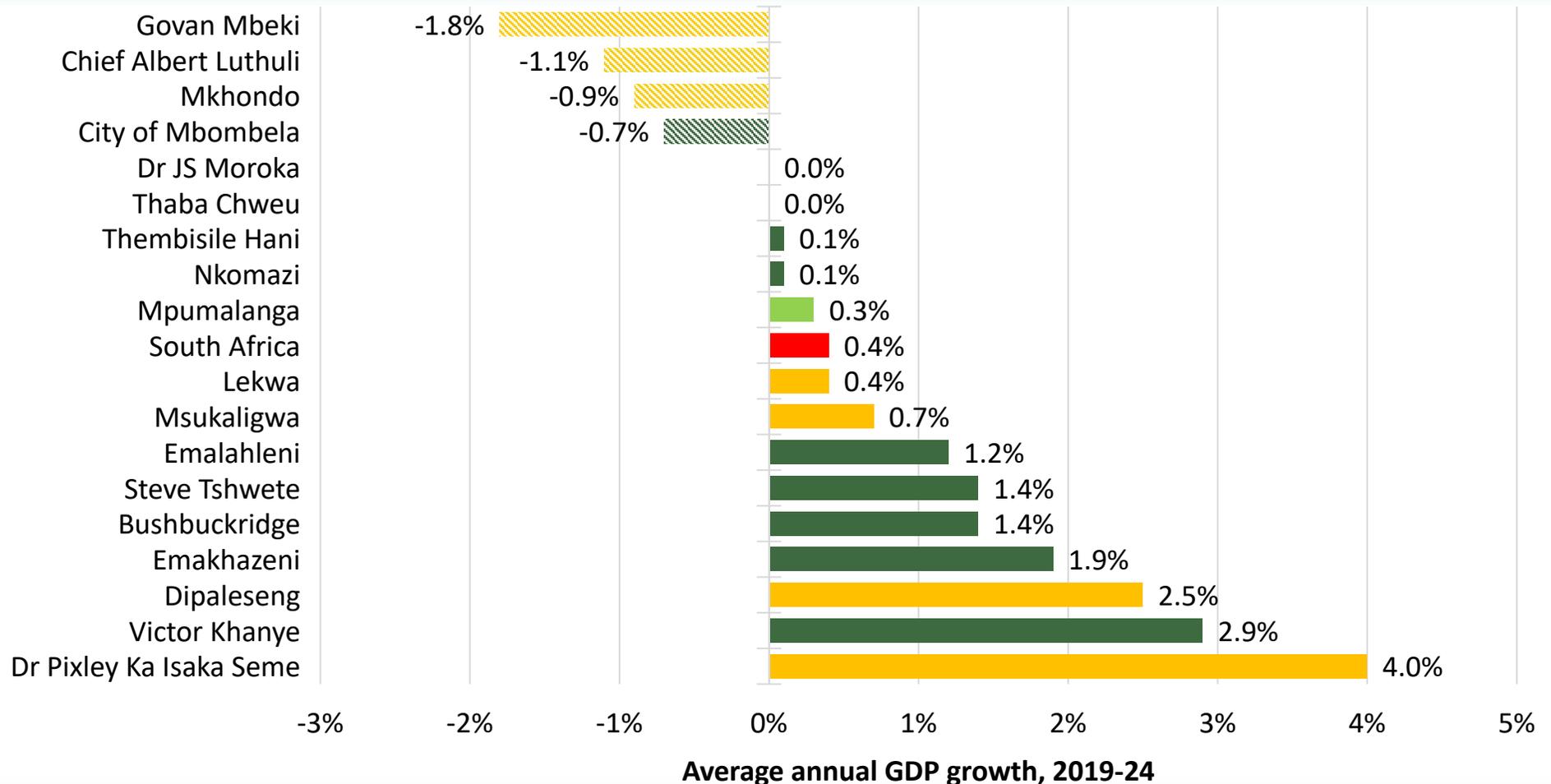


Contribution to Mpumalanga's economy by municipal area in constant 2015- prices



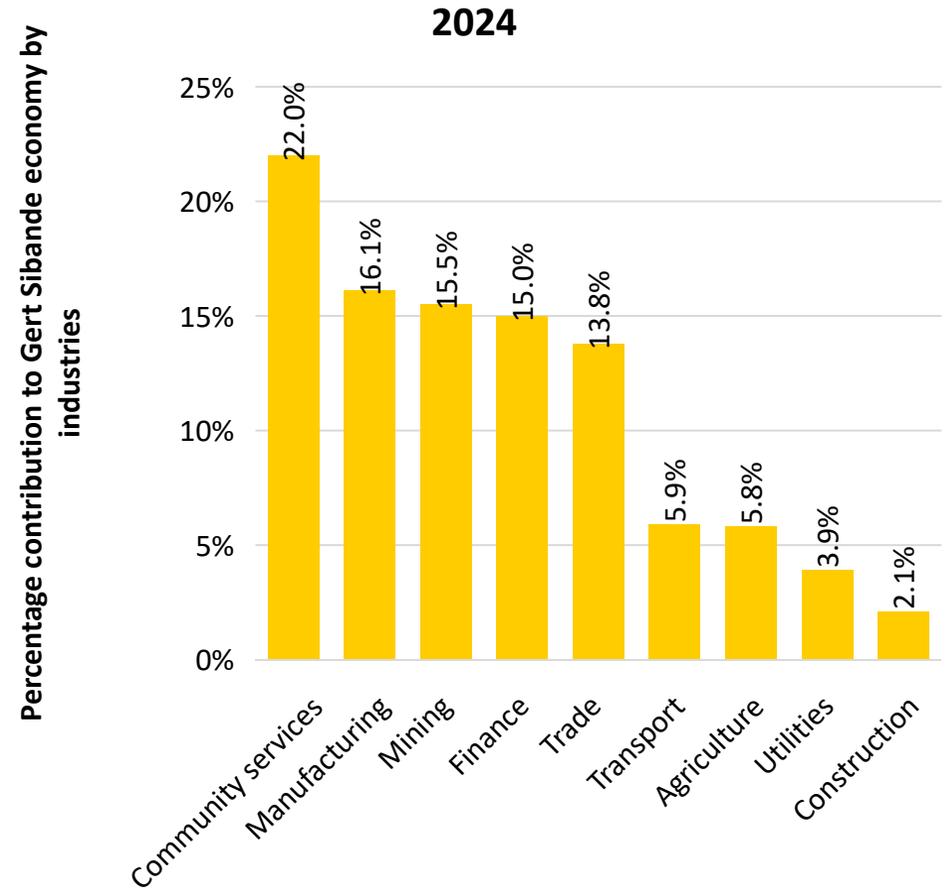
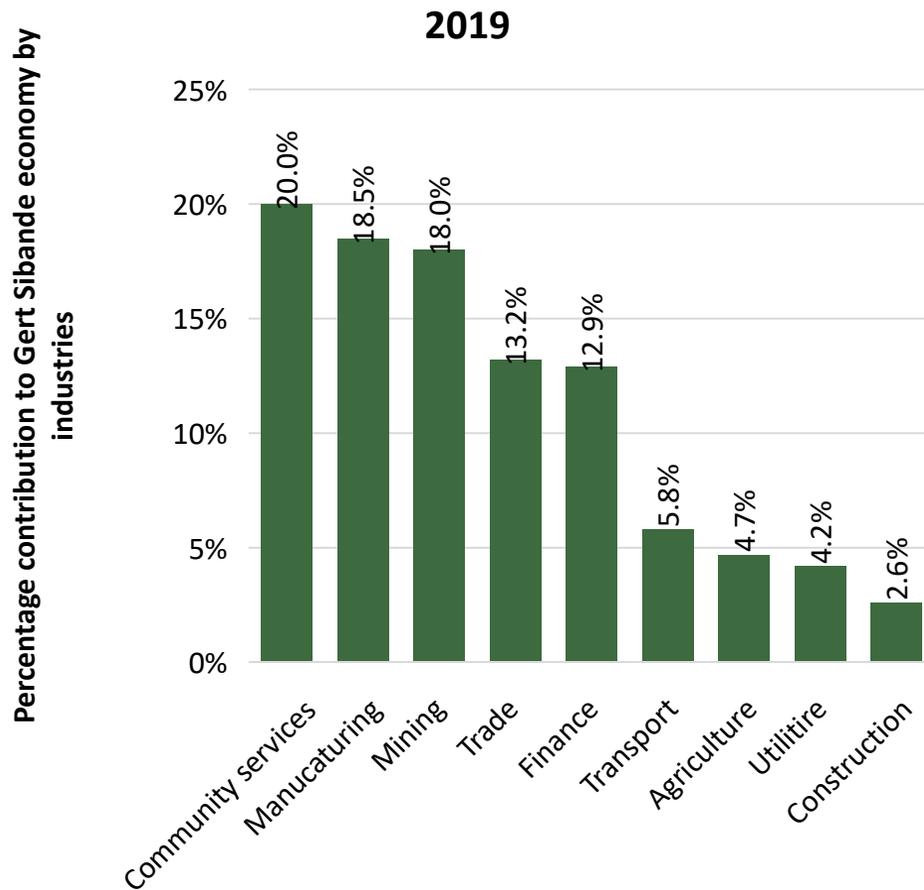


Comparative economic growth in Mpumalanga by municipal area, 2019-24





Structure of Gert Sibande's economy in constant 2015-prices





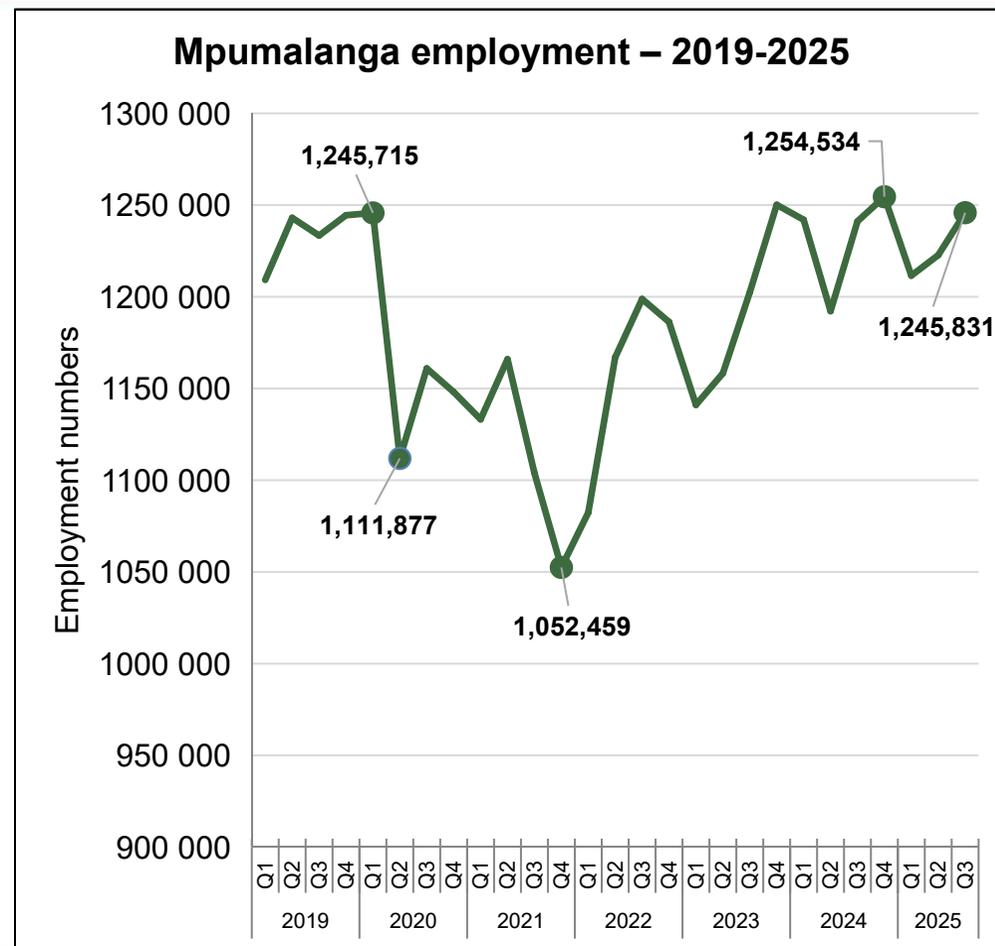
Key provincial tourism indicators, 2019-2024

Indicator	Year		Trend 2019 to 2024	Ranking 2024 High (1) to Low (9)
	2019	2024		
Share of international arrivals	16.7%	23.8%		2 nd most visited province
Share of international bed nights	15.0%	18.2%		2 nd highest number of bed nights
Foreign Spend	R12 billion	R7.2 billion		3 rd highest foreign spend
Total Tourism Spend in 2024	R27 billion	R33.5 billion (5.9% of the MP GDP)		6



Provincial labour market performance in brief (1)

- Due in part to the quarterly increase of 23 139 jobs in Q3 2025, the level of the provincial employment, was 4 699 higher/more than 12 months ago in Q3 2024.
- **Around 34 000 net job gains in Mpumalanga in the 6 months period (Apr-Sept 2025) – more than 50% of the annual job creation target of 60 000 new jobs.**
- The Q3 2025 provincial employment level of 1.24 million, was 117 jobs more than the number employed in Q1 2020 (before COVID).
- In Q3 2025, the unemployment rate was 34.0%, which was the same as the 34.0% recorded in Q2 2025 and lower than the 36.2% recorded 12 months earlier.

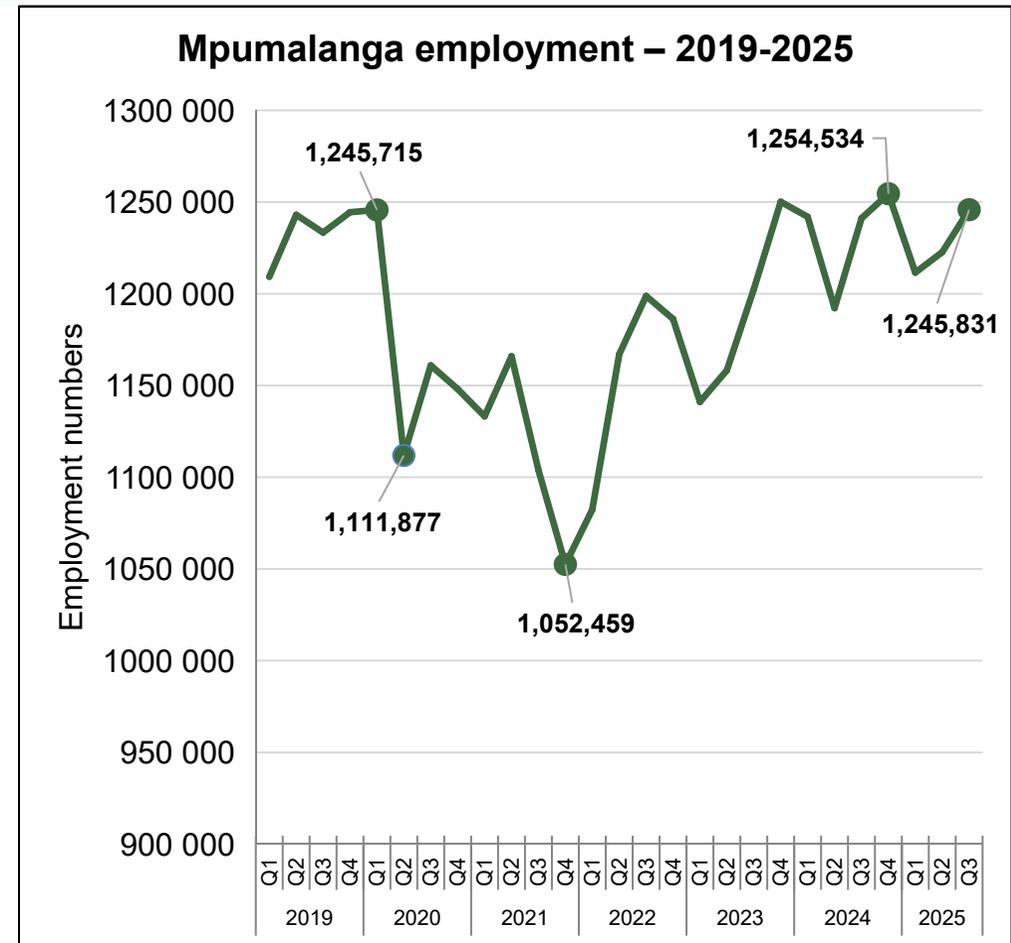




Provincial labour market performance in brief (2)

- Respective unemployment rates in Q3 2025:

- Female 39.9%
- Male 29.2%
- **Youth (15-34 years) 46.0%**
 - Female (15-34) 52.6%
 - Male (15-34) 40.6%
- Youth (18-24 years) 60.5%
 - Female (18-24) 67.5%
 - Male (18-24) 54.1%
- **Graduate's unemployment rate 14.2%**
 - **Female 19.9%**
 - **Male 6.0%**
 - **Youth (21-34) 22.7%**





Provincial job gains/losses per industry (last 1, 2, 5 & 10 years)

Industry	Q2 2025 employment level	10-year change (Q2 2015 to Q2 2025)	5-year change (Q2 2020 to Q2 2025)	2-year change (Q2 2023 to Q2 2025)	1-year change (Q2 2024 to Q2 2025)
Agriculture	126 125	37 711	18 366	25 555	-118
Mining	50 340	-7 647	-16 876	-16 157	-19 798
Manufacturing	98 895	-11 272	2 110	17 802	8 993
Utilities	33 443	3 751	14 208	4 400	6 395
Construction	96 740	4 364	27 428	-1 319	-3 002
Trade	223 027	-17 139	-26 209	-27 991	-14 045
Transport	66 999	4 575	-2 165	9 183	4 386
Finance	166 161	23 766	30 854	46 119	36 686
Community services	275 082	26 240	57 881	15 387	28 836
Private households	85 038	-22 791	4 378	-8 564	-18 666
MP net job gains/losses	1 222 693	42 401	110 816	64 409	30 508



Mpumalanga job gains/losses per industry – Q2 2024 to Q2 2025

Industry	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025
Agriculture	21 639	-16 871	21 522	-15 132	10 362
Mining	-2 361	-449	19	-15 189	-4 179
Manufacturing	-11 893	15 448	227	3 578	-10 261
Utilities	-2 074	-1 742	533	5 447	2 156
Construction	-6 940	13 181	-15 447	-7 396	6 661
Trade	-15 928	-1 882	5 689	-15 271	-2 581
Transport	15 669	-6 458	10 357	1 802	-1 314
Finance	-44 946	10 488	7 777	8 845	9 576
Community services	-14 109	45 984	-7 271	-7 082	-2 795
Private households	11 137	-8 752	-10 003	-2 589	2 679
Mpumalanga	-49 806	48 948	13 402	-42 988	11 147



Mpumalanga's labour market and more specifically job creation aspects

- The Mpumalanga employment level of 1.22 million in Q2 2025, was higher than the level recorded in Q2 2024 for Mpumalanga by Stats SA. That was 7.3% of the number of employed of South Africa
- The largest employment industries in the services sector according to the QLFS data. Community services (government and personal services) and the trade industry (wholesale & retail trade, many tourism & informal sector jobs) responsibly for 40.7% of employment in the province
- Net job gains in the province only 42 401 the last 10 years (between Q2 2015 and Q2 2025). Highest job gains in community services, finance and agriculture
- 11 147 net job gains the last quarter (Q1 2025 to Q2 2025), with significant job gains in agriculture, finance and construction in contrast to job losses in industries such as manufacturing, mining and community services
- Industries with high potential for job creation (due to relatively high economic growth, high labour intensity, projects implemented) in the next couple of years, include agriculture & agro-processing (MIFPM for example), manufacturing (roll-out of the Mpumalanga Industrial Development Plan - MIDP), construction (infrastructure projects), the trade industry (tourism, SMME's, including the informal sector for example) and finance
- Important to address the skills shortages among the young people to improve their employability



Reducing unemployment in Mpumalanga

34.0%

- Official (strict def) unemployment rate in Q3 2025
- Deteriorated from 33.3% in Q1 2020
- 4th highest/6th lowest among provinces

47.5%

- Combined Rate of Unemployment and Potential Labour Force (expanded def) in Q3 2025
- 3rd highest among provinces

642 861

- Number of unemployed in Q3 2025
- Deteriorated from 623 280 in Q1 2020

- Education and training systems are failing to meet the current and future needs of the labour market, particularly in terms of soft skills, digital skills and green skills
- The transition to renewable energy sources will require significant changes in skills development to support new technologies and ensure a just transition
- Role of DPWR&T with the EPWP, infrastructure projects
- Labour intensive and activation initiatives and public employment
- MSME support



Key data/perspectives on the MP informal economy/sector

- From DEDT's research study/project on the informal economy/sector before Covid-19, it was estimated (SAM modeling) that the informal economy in Mpumalanga contributes (direct, indirect and induced impact) 6.8% to the provincial GDP. Larger than industries such as agriculture, construction and transport
- The informal sector share of the total employment in the province was always around 25%. The latest figure is approximately 27%. Larger than any other employment industry. The potential for job creation in the informal sector is significant as it is highly labour intensive and has a very high employment multiplier
- With dedicated policy interventions in the informal sector, Government will be able to unlock growth and employment opportunities. The informal sector should form part of the Provincial Government's and Municipalities' economic policies and strategies. DEDT busy finalizing its informal sector policy
- The importance of the support and protection of this sector was pointed out clearly during the lockdown period – many of the provincial job losses in the informal sector, especially the almost 70 000 job losses in Q2 of 2020. Also more than 40 000 job losses in Q4 of 2021
- Between Q1 2020 and Q2 2025, the informal sector recorded combined job losses of 205 438 in 10 quarters and combined job gains of 222 889 in 11 quarters. Consequently, there was a net gain of 17 452 jobs in the informal sector in this period. Recovery in Q2 2025 of 1 115 after 35 054 job losses in Q1 2025.



Key labour market indicators in Gert Sibande

31.0%

- Official/strict unemployment rate 2024 (lowest among the 3 Districts)
- Deteriorated from 28.2% in 2019

36.4%

- Official female unemployment rate 2024
- Deteriorated from 33.0% in 2019

44.2%

- Official youth (15-34 yr) unemployment rate 2024
- Deteriorated from 39.6% in 2019

0.4%

- Average annual employment increase 2019-24
- Lower than the 1.9% p.a. increase 2014-19

29.0%

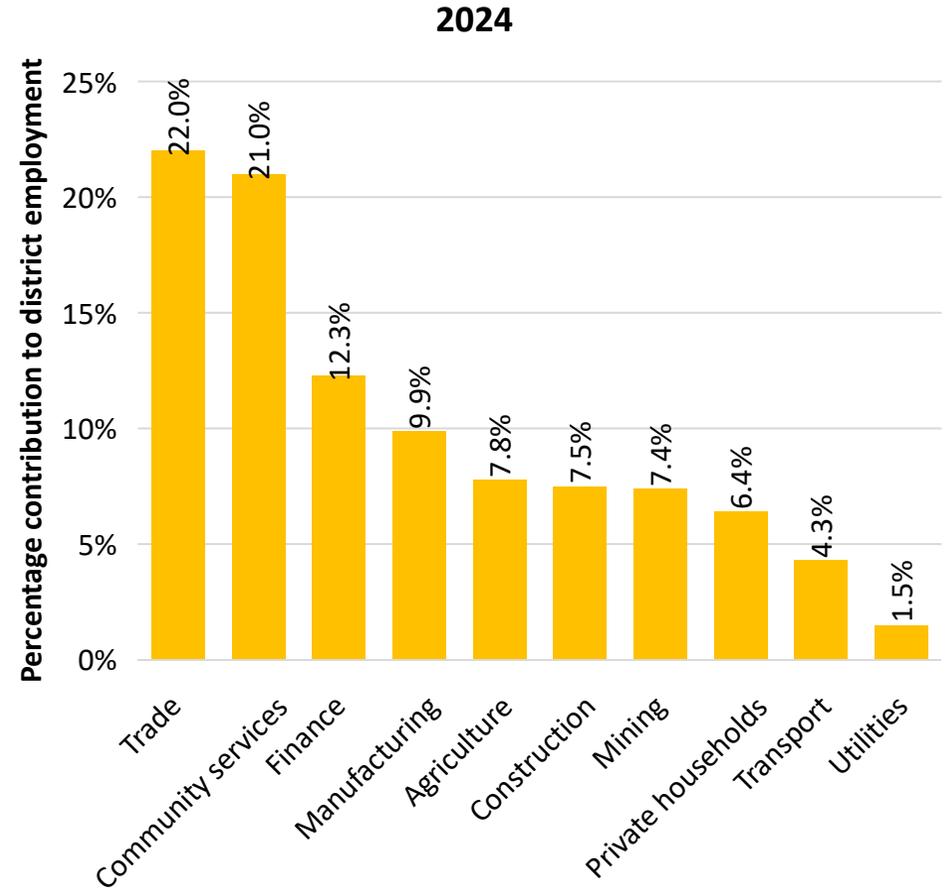
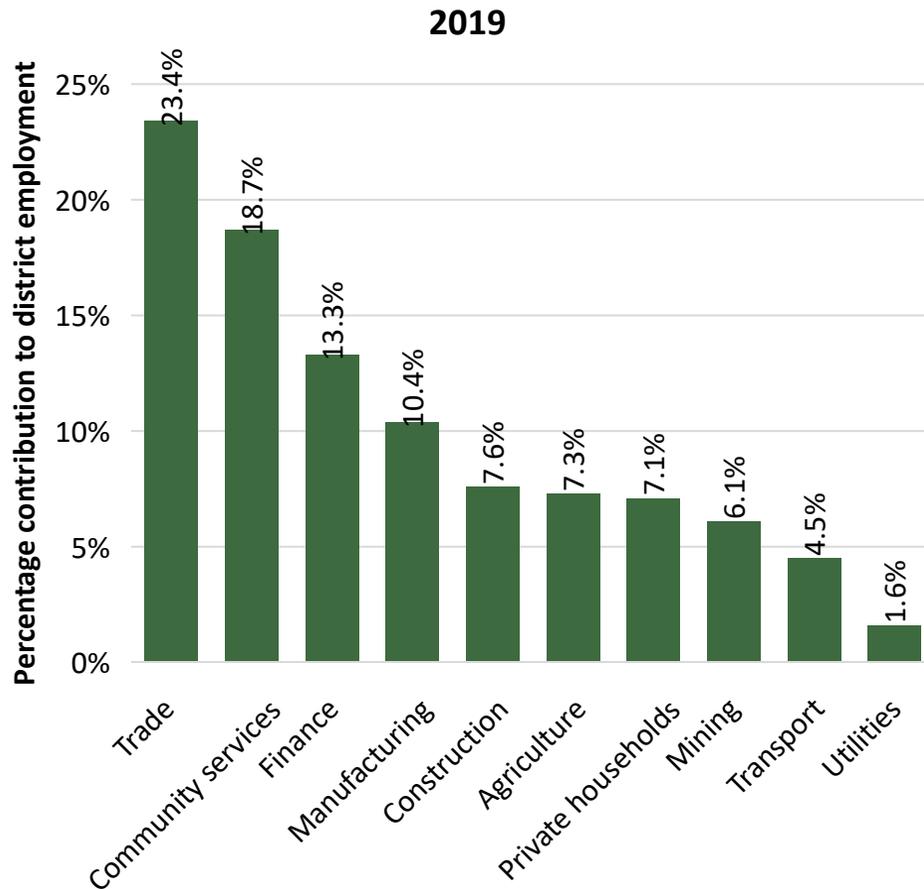
- Share of Mpumalanga's employment in 2024
- Should contribute to at least 17 500 new jobs in MP per annum

1 276

- Number of job gains in 2024
- 18 549 job gains in 2023
- 38 828 job gains in 2022

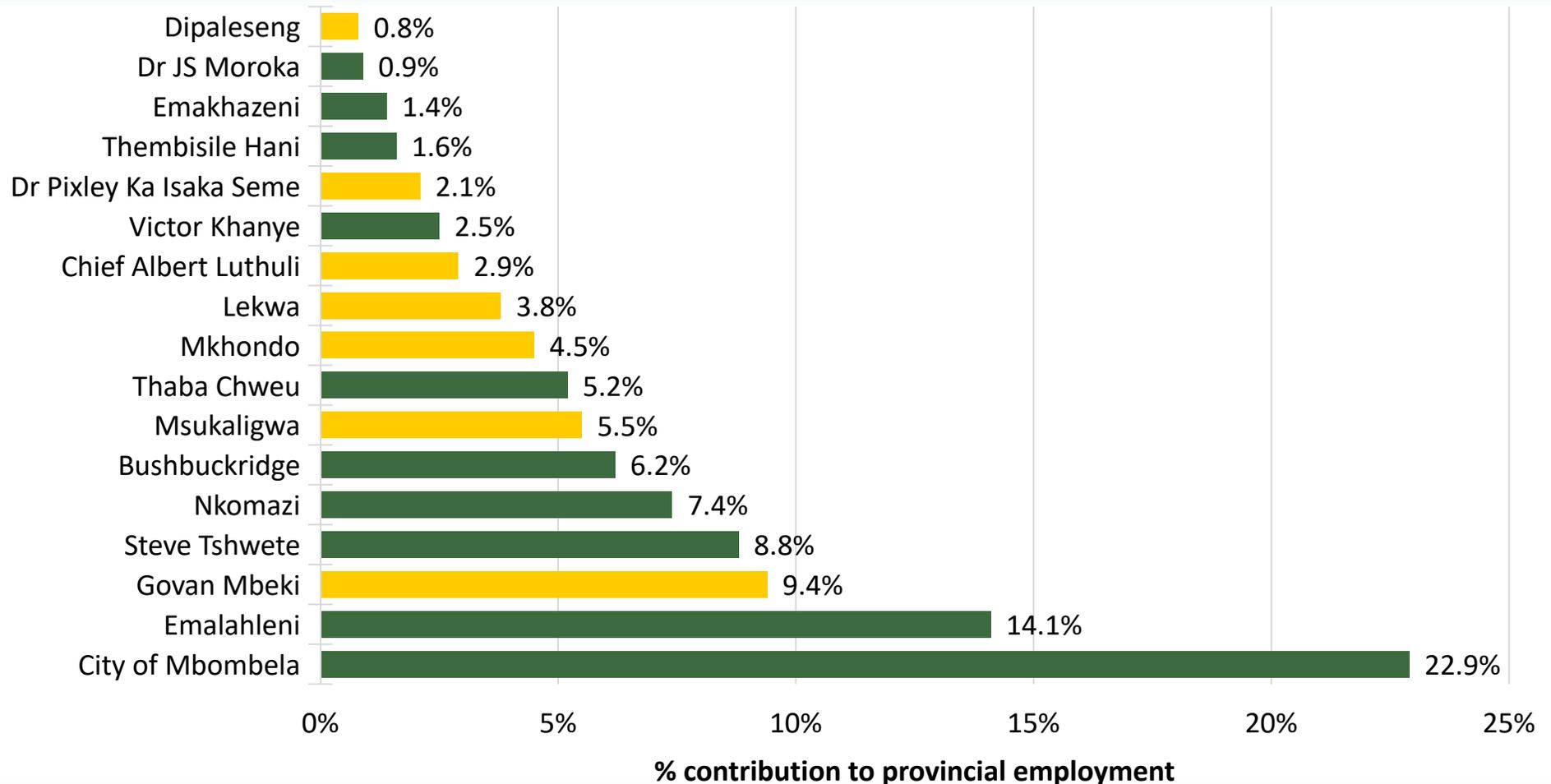


Employment by industry in Gert Sibande



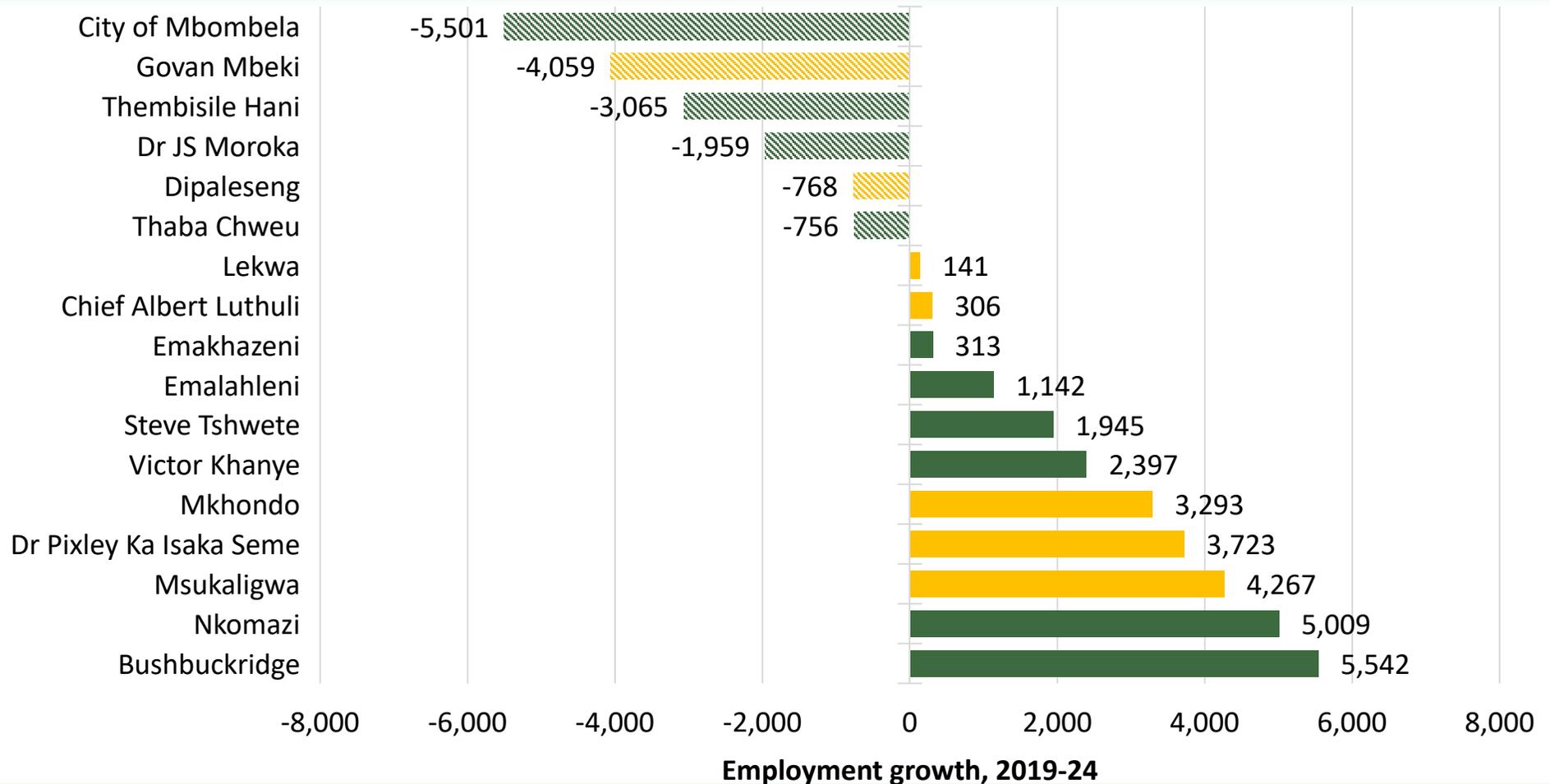


Contribution to employment in Mpumalanga by municipal area, 2024



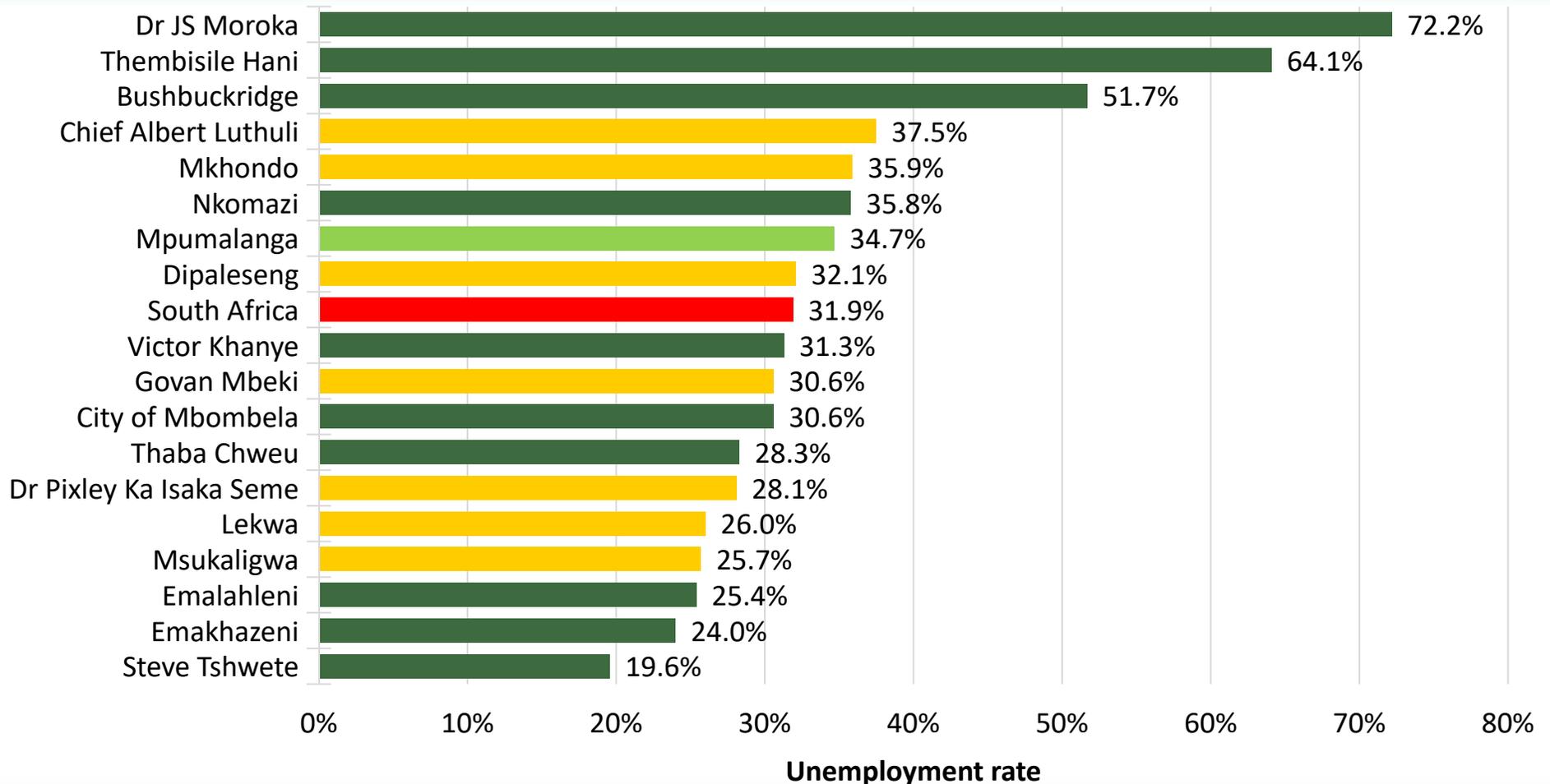


Employment growth (numbers) in Mpumalanga by municipal area, 2019-24





Comparative unemployment rate in Mpumalanga by municipal area, 2024





POVERTY, INEQUALITY & EMPOWERING PEOPLE (RELATED TO PRIORITY 2)



Grade 12 pass rate & performance per district

Education district	Grade 12 Pass Rate				Trend	Admission to B degree studies
	2014	2019	2024	2025	2024-2025	2025
Ehlanzeni	82.9%	84.6%	88.4%	88.0%		45.2%
Gert Sibande	77.1%	79.3%	87.7%	87.1%		44.9%
Nkangala	78.8%	80.6%	85.2%	87.4%		42.2%
Bohlabela	76.8%	76.7%	78.6%	83.5%		37.8%



Grade 12 pass rate & performance per municipal area

Local municipal area	Grade 12 Pass Rate				Trend	Admission to B degree studies
	2014	2019	2024	2025	2024-2025	2025
Emalahleni	81.9%	81.2%	90.3%	94.0%		49.1%
Steve Tshwete	85.6%	89.0%	92.9%	92.4%		52.1%
Dipaleseng	81.4%	77.9%	91.6%	92.0%		43.3%
Msukaligwa	80.6%	83.9%	92.8%	91.4%		48.9%
Chief Albert Luthuli	80.1%	81.6%	89.4%	89.8%		51.2%
Thaba Chweu	81.1%	84.0%	90.5%	89.3%		46.9%
City of Mbombela	80.5%	82.7%	87.7%	88.1%		46.6%
Nkomazi	86.0%	87.1%	89.4%	87.8%		43.2%
Victor Khanye	74.6%	78.2%	83.2%	86.1%		35.9%
Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme	68.1%	75.7%	89.4%	85.5%		35.9%
Dr JS Moroka	73.8%	75.6%	85.5%	85.1%		38.9%
Mkhondo	70.9%	64.6%	81.2%	84.9%		45.6%
Lekwa	84.7%	85.2%	89.4%	84.5%		35.8%
Bushbuckridge	76.4%	76.0%	77.7%	83.0%		37.1%
Govan Mbeki	76.3%	83.2%	84.2%	82.8%		39.9%
Emakhazeni	85.7%	83.5%	69.6%	82.0%		35.7%
Thembisile Hani	77.1%	79.1%	79.2%	81.6%		35.2%



Reducing poverty in Mpumalanga

38.4%

- Share of population below LBPL in 2023
- Improved from 51.1% in 2015
- 4th lowest/6th highest among provinces

14.3%

- Share of population below FPL in 2023
- Improved from 23.9% in 2015
- 4th lowest/6th highest among provinces

71.5%

- Share of population below UBPL in 2023
- Improved from 77.3% in 2015
- 5th lowest/5th highest among provinces

- Lower bound poverty line (LBPL) was estimated at R1 300 per person per month in 2023, food poverty line (FPL) was estimated at R777 & upper-bound poverty line (UBPL) at R2 635.
- 2030 NDP poverty rate target for SA and the province 0%. Mpumalanga's MTDP 2030 target of 35% (considered to reduce to 30%).
- 1.64 million social assistance grants in MP – 72.6% child support grants (June 2025)
- Through education & training individuals become more employable & higher levels of education often result in better paying jobs – National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS)
- The cycle of poverty must be broken by enabling individuals to provide better opportunities for their children – Southern African Labour & Development Research Unit (SALDRU)



Reducing income inequality In Mpumalanga

7.7%

- Share of income by poorest 40% of households 2024
- Improved from 7.3% in 2018
- 3rd highest/best among provinces

0.541

- **Gini-coefficient level in 2023**
- **Improved from 0.625 in 2015**
- **Lowest/best among provinces**

6.38

- Palma ratio - for every R1 of total income that the poorest 40% received, the richest 10% received R6.38

- Share of poorest 40%'s MTDP target for 2030 target is 10%.
- Gini-coefficient's MTDP 2030 target is below 0.60 (consider reducing to 0.50)
- Improved education outcomes can play a crucial role in addressing income inequality through increased income potential which result in improved living conditions.
- Individuals must be empowered by enhancing decision-making abilities, enabling informed choices about family planning and finances – Human Sciences Research Council.



Poverty, inequality, HDI & crime indicators in Gert Sibande

45.8%

- Share of population below LBPL in 2024
- 2nd lowest/highest of the Districts
- Deteriorated from 43.8% in 2019

609 790

- Number of people below LBPL in 2024
- Deteriorated from 542 744 in 2019

232 121

- Number of poor households in 2024 as estimated by National Treasury
- >60% of households

7.4%

- Share of income by poorest 40% in 2024
- Improved from 7.2% in 2019

0.64

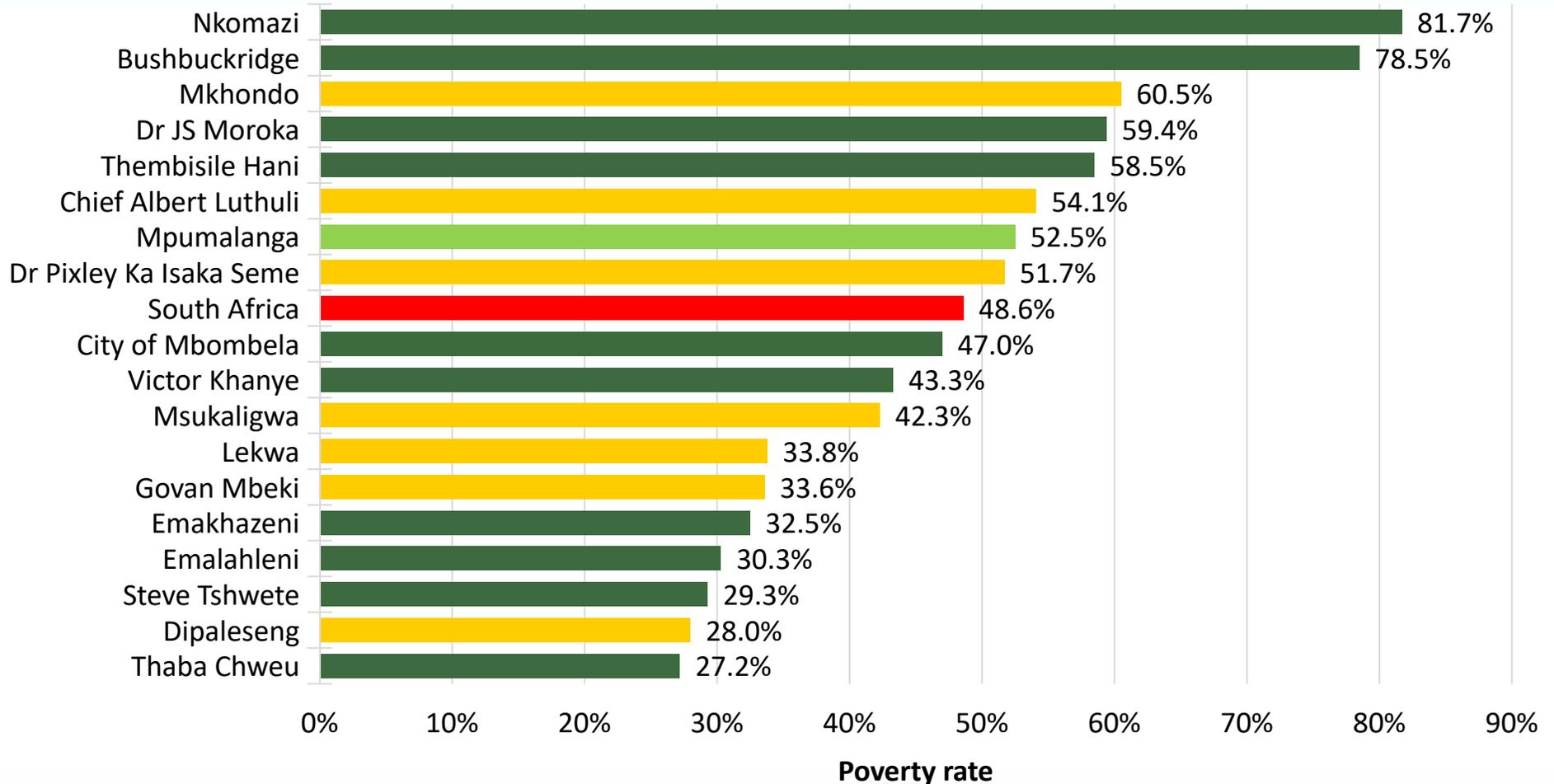
- HDI level in 2024
- Improved from 0.62 in 2019

19.5

- Number of serious crimes per 1 000 population in 2024/25
- 2nd highest/lowest
- Improved from 20.1 in 2020/21

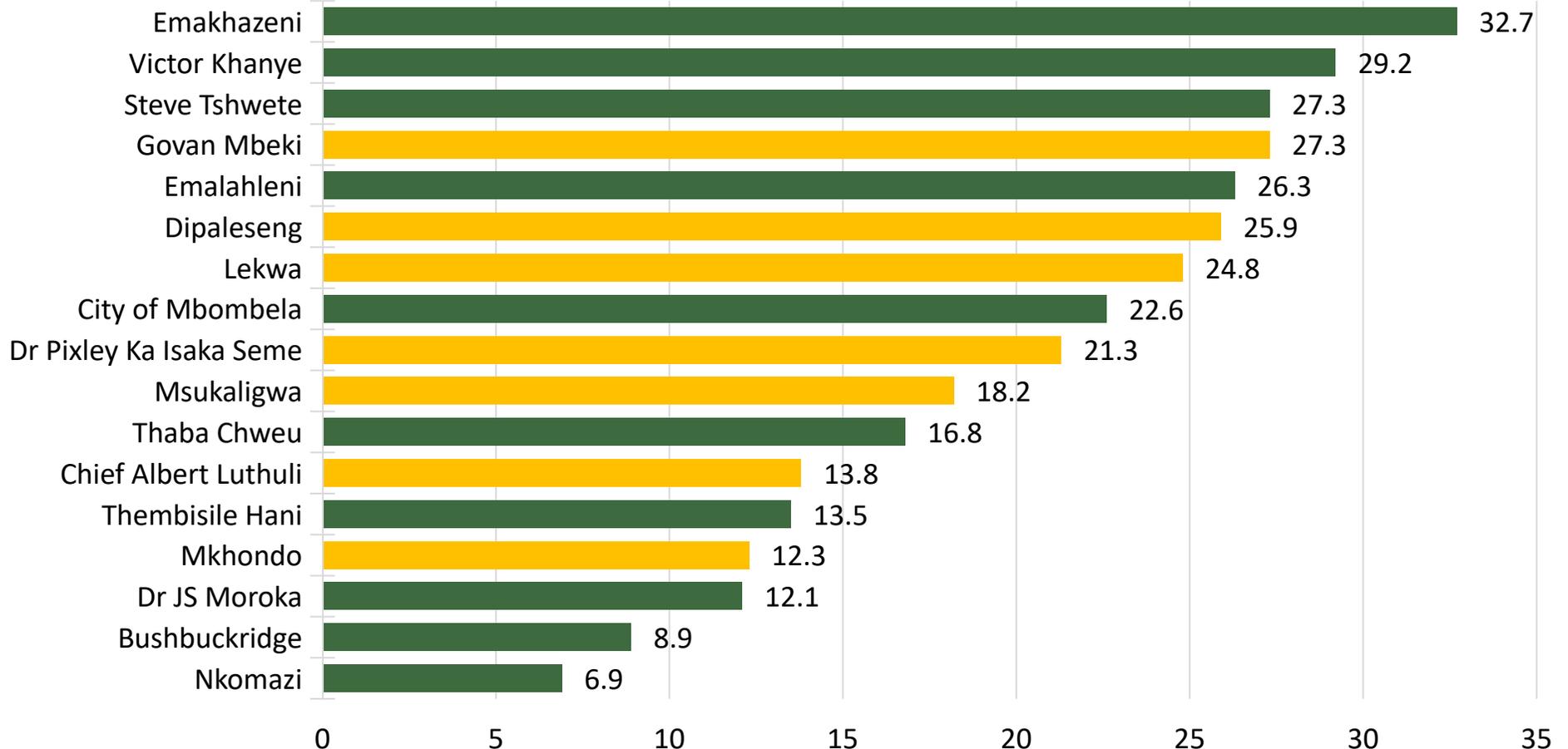


Comparative poverty rate in by municipal area, 2024





Number of serious crimes per 1 000 population by municipal area, 2024





Health indicators in Gert Sibande

140.0

- Maternal mortality in facility ratio per 100 000 live births
- Highest/worst in the province
- Mpumalanga = 109.4

17.0

- Neonatal death in facility rate per 1 000 live births
- Highest/worst in the province
- Mpumalanga figure 13.4

89.0

- Immunisation under 1 year coverage
- 2nd highest/lowest in the province
- Mpumalanga figure 88.2

11.0

- All hospital beds per 10 000 population
- 2nd lowest/highest in the province
- Mpumalanga figure 10.9

150.0

- Professional nurses per 100 000 population
- 2nd highest/lowest in the province
- Mpumalanga = 156.3

3.0%

- Severe acute malnutrition case fatality under 5 years
- Lowest/best in the province
- Mpumalanga figure 5.0%



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES/PLANS AND GREEN/RED FLAGS

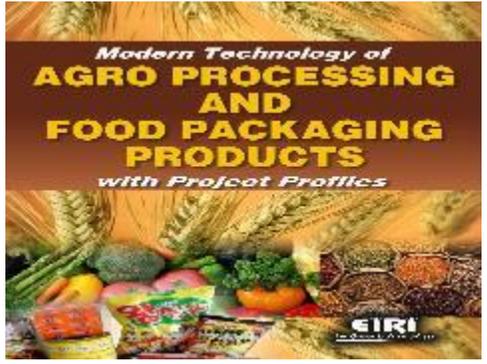


Mpumalanga economy opportunities/competitive advantages

Sector	Opportunities/Competitive Advantage
Mpumalanga Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 4th largest economy in SA and 2nd highest population growth of the 9 provinces. ❖ Advantages in key Mpumalanga industries such as agriculture (including forestry), mining (especially coal mining – not only for Eskom purposes, but also exports), energy and tourism. ❖ High labour intensive industries and projects for job creation on a large scale – agriculture, tourism, construction, informal sector and light manufacturing.
Agriculture and agro-processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Agriculture a champion industry and opportunities with agro-processing. ❖ Mpumalanga has more than 100 000 subsistence farmers - opportunities for small scale farming. ❖ Export opportunities with the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce/Food Market.
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Second most visited province in terms of international tourists.
Infrastructure Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ One of the few provinces with a Provincial Infrastructure Masterplan up to 2060. ❖ High GDP and employment multipliers of infrastructure investment. Infrastructure development a key economic and job driver .
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Industrialisation by leveraging the Mpumalanga Industrial Development Plan (MIDP) and focusing on strategic zones like the Nkomazi SEZ and relevant Industrial Technology Parks in each District.
Energy/Green Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Responsible for more than 70% of the countries' power generation. ❖ Green Economy/Renewable Energy opportunities in terms of projects and investments in the province. ❖ Finalisation and Implementation of a provincial economic diversification and short-term job creation strategy.

Priority sectors/industries to grow the economy

Agriculture & Agro-processing



Manufacturing



Mining



Tourism



Green Economy





Key economic clusters, centres & hubs

Municipal area	Innovation Clusters	Industrial Centre of Competence	Central hub/s
Emalahleni	Mining and Metals Innovation Cluster	Mining and Metals Industrial Centre of Competence	Mining and Metals Technology Park
Steve Tshwete	Metals Manufacturing Innovation Cluster		
Govan Mbeki	Petrochemicals Innovation Cluster	Petrochemicals Industrial Centre of Competence	Petrochemicals Industrial Supplier Park
City of Mbombela	Agriculture Technology Innovation Cluster	Agriculture and Forestry Industrial Centre of Competence	Forestry Technology Park
Thaba Chweu	Potential Forestry Innovation Cluster		International Fresh Produce Market
Nkomazi	Potential Agro-Processing Innovation Cluster	Nkomazi Special Economic Zone	Agro-Processing Technology Park



Objectives and priority areas of the MERRP

- The Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction & Recovery Plan (MERRP) seeks to address the negative impact of COVID-19 on the provincial economy and livelihoods of the Mpumalanga citizens;
- The MERRP aims at re-igniting the provincial economy through focusing on the following seven priority interventions:
 1. Planned 'massive' rollout of infrastructure;
 2. Growth through industrialisation, localisation and export promotion - roll-out of the Mpumalanga Industrial Development Plan (MIDP) i.e. establishment of 3 Industrial Technology Parks, Nkomazi SEZ & Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market
 3. Sufficient, secure and reliable energy supply and Green Economy initiatives.
 4. Employment stimulus - i.e. increased access to funding for SMMEs and Cooperatives.
 5. Growth and recovery of tourism.
 6. Agriculture and Food Security - increase in agricultural production (i.e. Phezukomkhono Mlimi & Zonda Indlala).
 7. Gender and economic inclusion.
- The MERRP assumes a project based implementation approach.

MERRP INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES *with potential of high returns*



Agriculture



Manufacturing



Green economy



Tourism



Project	Opportunities
Nkomazi SEZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agro-processing; Nutraceuticals; Meat processing Leather & footwear; Fertilizer.
Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of fruits, nuts and red & white meat for export; Market & Agri-hubs operators Logics, cold chain and handling management

Project	Opportunities
Petro-Chemical Industrial Technology Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of ethanol, ethylene plastic, styrene, ceramic membranes used in catalytic converters; Suppliers to Eskom, Mining & SASOL, including SASOL Downstream Beneficiation Opportunities
Ekandustria Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A host of diverse portfolio of manufacturers (eg. food, timber, leather and plastic products among others Available service stands ready for uptake

Area for investment	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Agriculture Water 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Non-Revenue water Bulk water infrastructure Decentralised WTW Energy water food nexus Soil Health Agri waste management Rangeland management Private sector RE offtake Public sector RE offtake Storage/Mobility Hydrogen

Project	Opportunities
Barberton Makhonjwa Mountain World Heritage Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning more about early surface processes, the making of continents, and the evolution of the primitive biosphere; Responsible nature based socio-economic initiatives to grow the tourism sector and more job opportunities
Railway Heritage Tourism project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green alternative to road transportation; Mass movement of tourists between tourism hotspots



MERRP High Impact Projects in Gert Sibande

CATALYTIC PROJECT	LOCATION	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
Rehabilitation of the Coal Haulage Network	District wide	To safeguard sustainable energy provision through rehabilitation and maintenance of the coal haulage road network
Improvement of tourism road infrastructure	District wide	To facilitate easy access to tourism attractions and heritage sites
Secunda West / Langverwacht Integrated Human Settlement	Govan Mbeki	Addressing spatial disparities and creating functional and sustainable human settlements
Emzinoni Ext 11 and Ext 13 Integrated Human Settlement	Govan Mbeki	Addressing spatial disparities and creating functional and sustainable human settlements
Establishment of Petrochemical Industrial Technology Park	Govan Mbeki	To unlock industrial development opportunities throughout the entire value chain of the chemical industry within the Gert Sibande district.
Growing the circular economy	District wide	To promote industrial symbiosis, closed mine rehabilitation and mine water reclamation initiatives for sustainable and clean environment
The Green Cluster 'Just Transition' Programme	District wide	Support the Carbon Capture and Utilisation Project in Govan Mbeki and Lekwa municipalities and intensify the industrial symbiosis and circular economy
Programmes to increase crop and livestock production	District wide	To intensify crop & livestock production; enhance agri-processing & fresh produce for export, including support to small scale agri-businesses owned by youth & women.
Light Industrial Hubs	Municipalities in the District	To renovate & convert old buildings to industrial workshops to accommodate artisans, auto mechanics & other skilled business traders in all seven local municipalities in the District
Digital Infrastructure development	Ermelo	To increase communications & inclusive growth of digital economy within the District
Siyathuthuka Enterprise Development Programme	District wide	To develop self-sustainable SMME's and co-operatives businesses that are able to create jobs for local communities



Relevant economic plans & opportunities for Gert Sibande

Importance and relevance of:

- The implementation of the Provincial Spatial Development Framework (SDF) by COGTA and of a Provincial LED strategy framework by DEDT. The importance of a functional and vibrant LED Forum and reviewed LED Strategy.
- The roll-out of the DDM, as well as the MERRP.

Linking with economic interventions in Gert Sibande:

- Enhancing the manufacturing sector in Gert Sibande through the planned Petro-Chemical Technology Park in Secunda as part of the Mpumalanga Industrial Development Plan (MIDP).
- Agriculture & agro-processing – *crop & livestock*. Forestry & furniture manufacturing.
- Coal mining and electricity generation.

Economic opportunities in Gert Sibande:

- Opportunities around manufacturing & mining, agriculture, agro-processing & tourism (work closely with the MTPA).
- Green Economy/Renewable Energy initiatives and opportunities.
- Importance of investment attraction and opportunities – cooperation with MEGA.
- The importance of a LED Forum to facilitate growth and job creation in this area.
- Support to SMMEs and Cooperatives and also the informal sector to promote job creation and develop the economy.
- Rejuvenation of township businesses with initiatives to transform townships and villages from labour and consumption reserves into thriving productive investment hubs.



Gert Sibande - Green and Red flags



1. Improvement in all household services and the no 1 of the Districts in a couple of indicators
2. Potential in developing key industries such as agro-processing & manufacturing (e.g. Petro-Chemical Technology Park)
3. Proximity to Gauteng and possible collaboration
4. Potential in developing Green Economy opportunities
5. The presence of a huge company like Sasol
6. Gas discovery in Mpumalanga (Kinetiko Energy and IDC)? Implications/impact?



1. Population growth far exceeds the economic growth between 2011 & 2022
2. High flush/chemical toilet and refuse removal backlog challenges
3. Logistical challenges (Transnet etc)
4. Increasing unemployment & poverty rates
 - Limiting revenue base
 - Adequacy of youth development strategy to curb high unemployment?
5. Low historical economic growth & low forecasted growth up to 2029. Low growth of mining and manufacturing?
6. Closing of some power stations and potential negative impact of employment and on the coal industry



The importance of LED Units, Forums and Strategies

- Make sure you understand what is LED and what is expected of Municipalities? It is supposed to be a top priority at Municipality with LED experts in the LED Unit
- Competent and capacitated LED Units at the District and Local Municipalities
- Working closely with the LED Units of CoGHSTA, DEDT and SALGA
- Functional, vibrant and representative LED Forums – Business must be on board
- Importance of the Executive Mayor and/or MM leading role in the LED Forum
- Importance of the attendance and participation of relevant sector Departments and Public Entities involved in economic plans/projects/initiatives in the respective municipal areas. Consult with the Planners to get the right Programmes and officials at your Forums
- Establish RED Forums if and when necessary
- The importance of relevant and revised LED strategies – guidance and assistance from the LED Unit from DEDT
- Utilise the SEPs (Socio-Economic Profiles) from DEDT to understand the socio-economic context of your municipal area
- Make a difference in and impact on the local people's lives

Concluding remarks

- Make sure that all local municipalities are on the radar screen of Provincial Government and Public Entities.
- Work closely with DARDLEA on agricultural opportunities.
- Work closely with MEGA/DEDT on agro-processing and manufacturing opportunities and also with MTPA on tourism opportunities and development.
- Partner with the Mpumalanga Green Cluster Agency in Green Economy opportunities in your area.
- The District should be actively involved in all local municipal areas.
- Work closely with DoE on the educational challenges and grade 12 pass rate.
- Support your informal sector. Very important in terms of job creation.
- Work with the relevant national and provincial Departments and Entities on SMME and township development.
- Partner with Public Works, Roads and Transport on infrastructure development.