



stats sa

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) – Q4:2021

The QLFS Q4:2021 publication was scheduled for 22 February 2022. The change in methodology to Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) to adapt to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions has had its limitations to the data collected. Low response rates were observed with national rates declining from an average of 76,9% in Q2:2020 to a low of 44,6% in Q4:2021. Due to Stats SA subscribing to international standards in the production of official statistics, including labour statistics it had to conduct quality checks in order to provide the public with quality statistics. This process took longer than expected, resulting in the delay in the publication of the results for Quarter 4:2021.

The official unemployment rate was 35,3% in the fourth quarter of 2021.

The results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the fourth quarter of 2021 show that the number of employed persons increased by 262 000 to 14,5 million, and the number of unemployed persons also increased by 278 000 to 7,9 million in the 4th quarter of 2021 compared to the 3rd quarter of 2021. While the number of not economically active population decreased by 397 000 to 17, 4 million during this quarter. The number of discouraged work-seekers decreased by 56 000 (1,4%) and the number of people who were not economically active for reasons other than discouragement decreased by 341 000 (2,4%) between the two quarters.

These changes in the labour market resulted in the official unemployment rate increasing by 0,4 of a percentage point from 34,9% in the third quarter of 2021 to 35,3% in the fourth quarter of 2021 - the highest since the start of the QLFS in 2008. The unemployment rate according to the expanded definition of unemployment decreased by 0,4 of a percentage point to 46,2 % in quarter 4 2021 compared to quarter 3 2021.

Formal sector employment increased by 143 thousand jobs between Q3:2021 and Q4:2021, while the informal sector shed jobs by 48 000 in the same period. Between the 3rd quarter of 2021 and 4th quarter of 2021, a net increase in employment of 262 000, was mainly due to an increase recorded in Private households (129 000), Trade (118 000) and Community and social services (73 000). Decreases were observed mainly in Manufacturing (85 000), followed by Construction (25 000).

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