

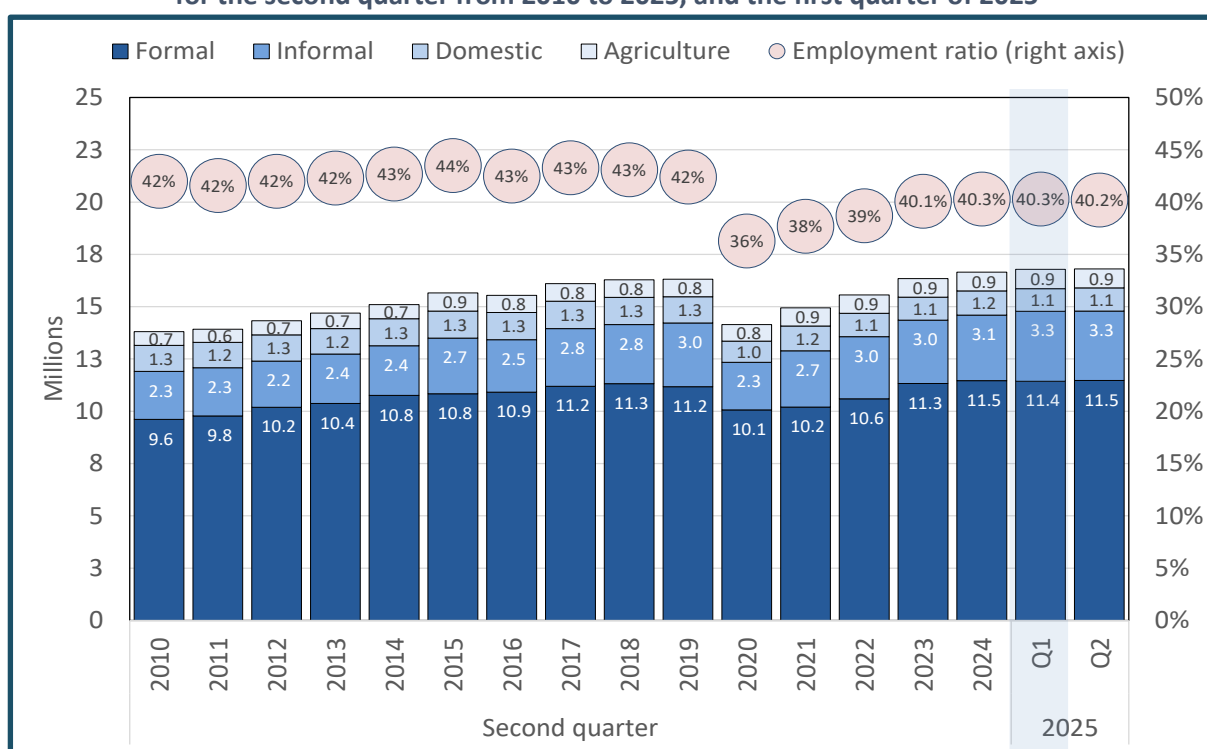
Employment

Employment edged up slightly in the year to the second quarter of 2025, adding 154 000 jobs (less than 1%), with gains in informal work dampened by sharp losses in domestic employment. By sector, business services, logistics, and construction drove growth, while retail and domestic work contracted. Manufacturing saw only a marginal net gain, with losses in petrochemicals, food, and clothing dampening overall growth. Mining employment continued to decline, shedding 14 000 jobs. Overall, employment now stands 3% above pre-pandemic levels, driven by strong growth in business and social services despite persistent weakness in retail and domestic work.

Total employment (Graph 5), increased by 154 000 (less than a percent) from the end of the second quarter of 2024 to the end of the second quarter of 2025. The yearly growth was driven by growth in informal employment, which added 197 000 jobs. It was largely offset by the loss of 54 000 domestic worker jobs. Formal employment was essentially unchanged from the second quarter of 2024.

Total employment is now 3% higher than pre-pandemic levels, having added almost half a million jobs since the end of the second quarter of 2019. Formal and informal employment saw the most growth over the period, while agricultural activities also added notably. Domestic workers, however, still have 145 000 fewer jobs than before the pandemic.

Graph 5: Employment by type of employer, and the employment ratio (a), for the second quarter from 2010 to 2025, and the first quarter of 2025



Note: (a) The employment ratio equals employed as a percentage of total the working-age population.

Source: Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS). Excel spreadsheet.

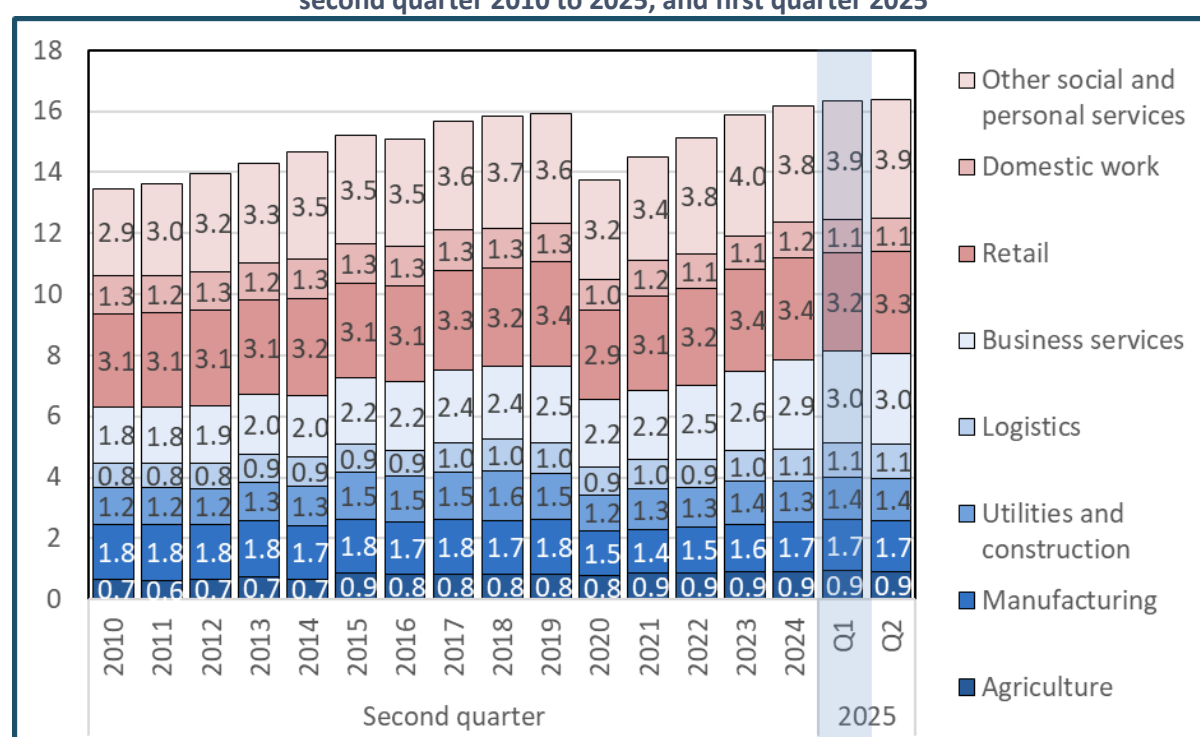
Downloaded from statssa.gov.za in August 2025.

By sector, most categories saw growth from the end of the second quarter of 2024 to the end of the second quarter of 2025 (Graph 6). Construction and utilities combined added around 80 000 jobs, as did business services. Logistics expanded by 50 000. The retail sector and domestic work shed 44 000 jobs and 54 000 jobs, respectively. That said, compared to pre-pandemic levels, manufacturing,

construction/utilities, retail and domestic work are all down by more than 100 000 jobs each. Business services, in contrast, is up almost half a million jobs, and other social and personal services has expanded by a quarter of a million.

Within manufacturing, seven industries registered growth in employment over the year to the end of the second quarter of 2025, shown in Graph 7. The largest increases were in machinery and equipment (+31 000), and wood and paper (+22 000), with transport equipment also adding notably (+17 000). In contrast, job losses were recorded in the petrochemicals (-34 000), food processing (-29 000), and clothing and textiles (-22 000) categories. These changes, in conjunction with smaller increases in other industries, translates into a net gain of 6000 jobs. Compared to the second quarter of 2019, however, most manufacturing industries have lost positions, and there are now 122 000 fewer manufacturing jobs than before the pandemic.

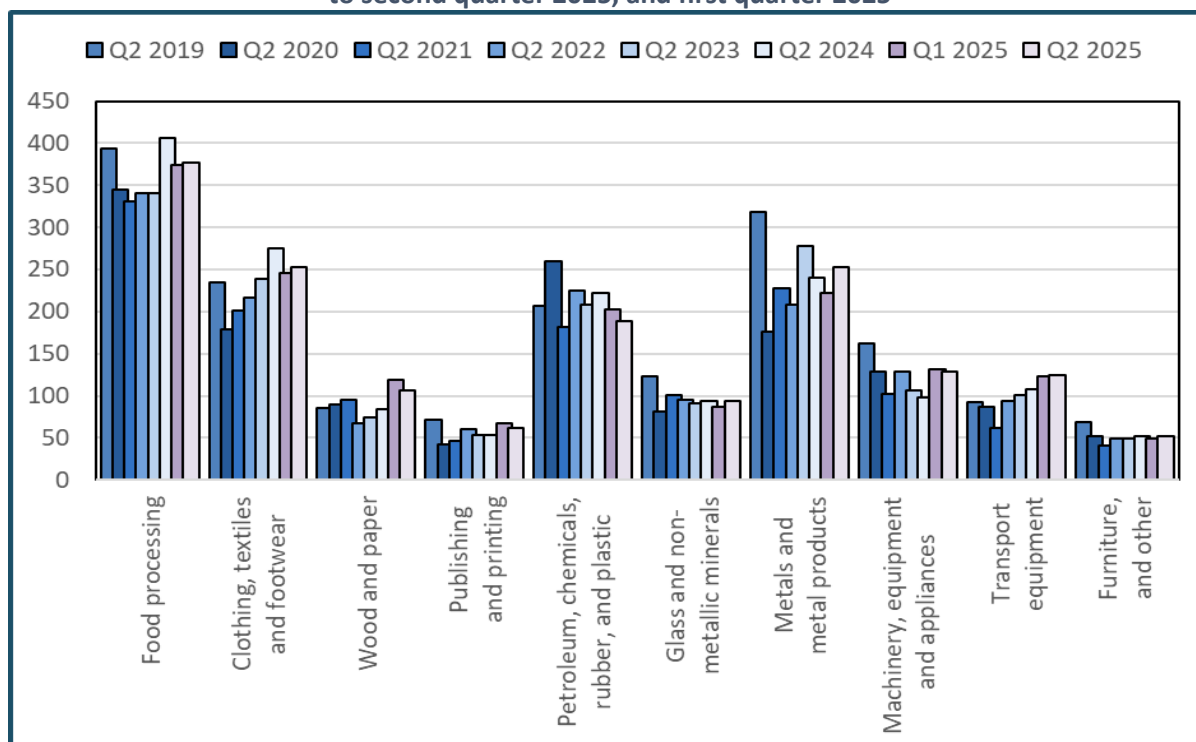
Graph 6: Employment by sector (excluding mining), in millions, second quarter 2010 to 2025, and first quarter 2025



Source: Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Labour Force Survey. Excel spreadsheet downloaded at www.statssa.gov.za in August 2025.

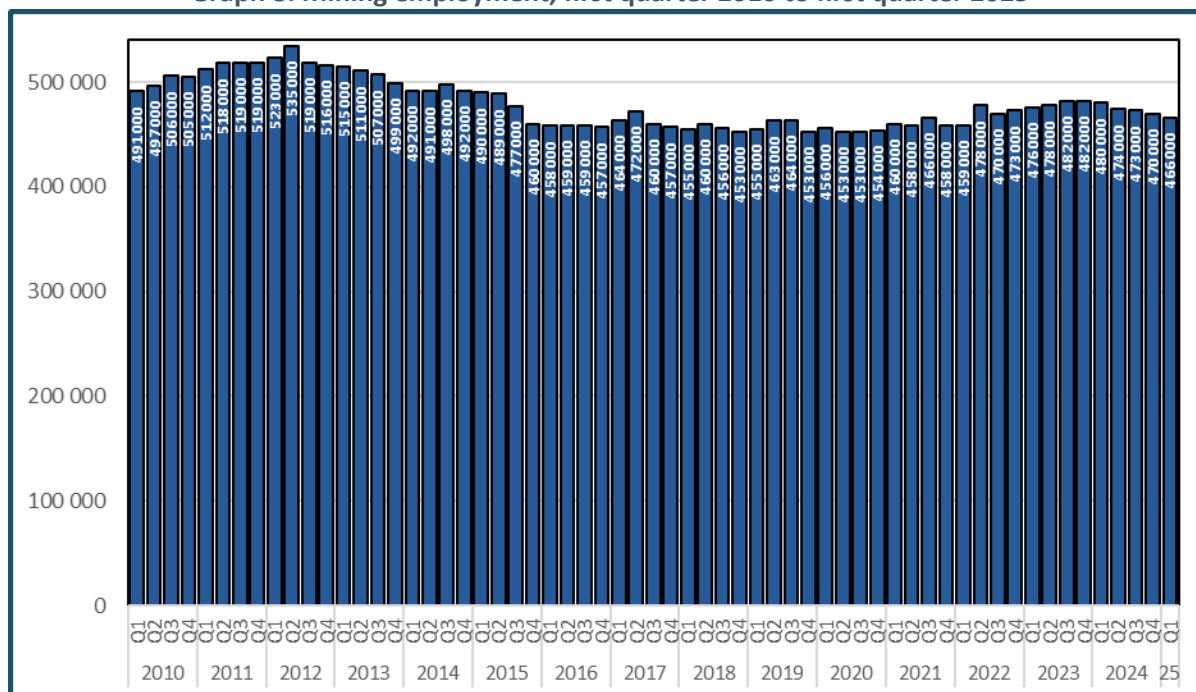
For data on mining employment, Statistics South Africa recommends the survey of formal businesses, the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES), rather than the QLFS, which samples households. The QES is published a quarter behind the QLFS. According to the QES, in the first quarter of 2025, the mining sector lost 14 000 jobs compared to the same quarter of 2024 (Graph 8). On a quarterly basis, mining employment has been on the decline since the first quarter of 2024. This contrasts with the gradual build up in the sector's employment from 2019 to the end of 2023, reflecting soaring international mineral prices. Employment in mining remained below its almost decade-and-a-half peak, of 535 000 jobs, reported in the second quarter of 2012, soon after the end of the last boom in mineral prices.

Graph 7: Employment in manufacturing industries, in thousands, second quarter 2019 to second quarter 2025, and first quarter 2025



Source: Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Labour Force Survey. Q2 2019 to Q2 2023 downloaded at nesstar.statssa.gov.za in August 2024 and Q2 2024 to Q2 2025 downloaded at isibaloweb.statssa.gov.za in August 2025.

Graph 8: Mining employment, first quarter 2010 to first quarter 2025

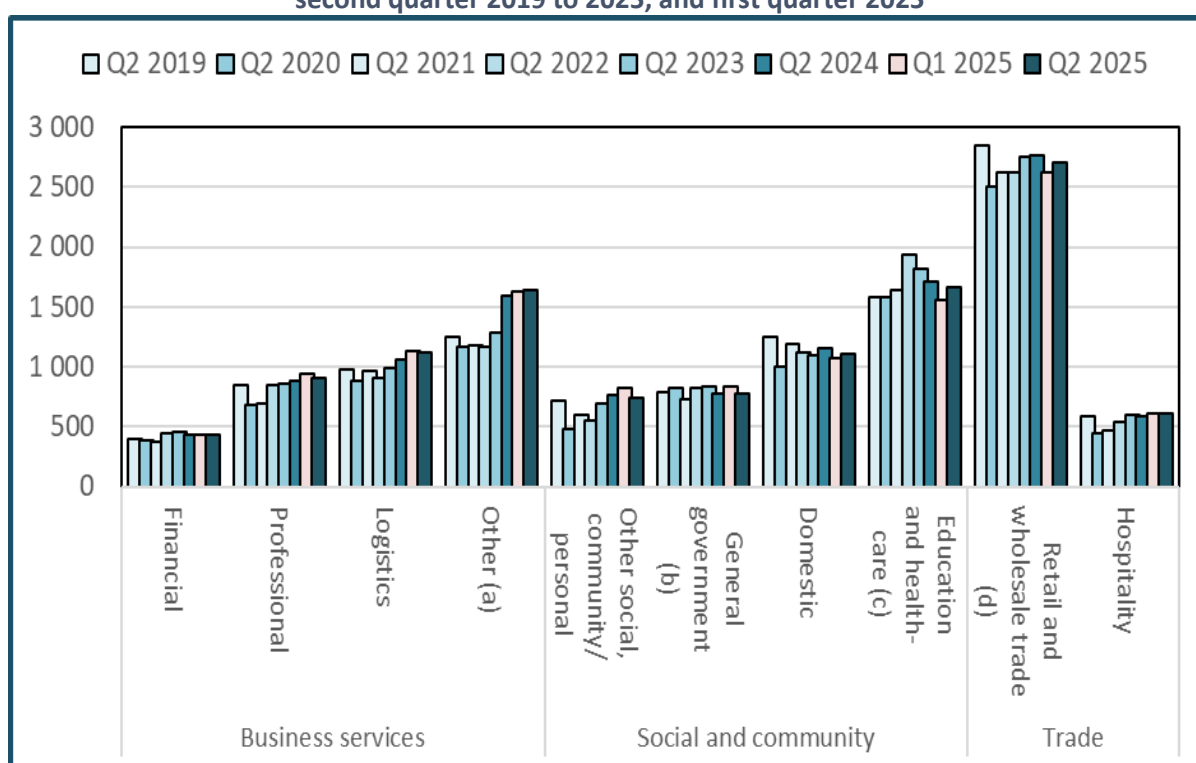


Note: Q4 2024 was revised. Source: Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Employment Statistics. Detailed breakdown. First Quarter 2025. Excel spreadsheet. Downloaded at statssa.gov.za in August 2025.

As a whole, the tertiary sector shed jobs over the year to the end of the second quarter of 2025 (Graph 9). The largest losses were registered in retail and wholesale trade, which lost 65 000 jobs, domestic work (as already noted above), and education and healthcare, which downsized by 54 000 or 3%. Other service industries saw significant gains. Logistics added 51 000 jobs, and professional services added 26 000. But these gains are too low to offset the losses.

Compared to pre-pandemic levels, domestic work and retail and wholesale trade remain significantly lower than before the pandemic, with 140 000 fewer jobs each than in the second quarter of 2019. However, significant increases in other industries means that there are almost half a million more services jobs currently than before the onset of the pandemic.

Graph 9: Employment in services industries, in thousands, second quarter 2019 to 2025, and first quarter 2025



Notes: (a) mostly cleaning and private security. (b) Includes public security services. (c) The reported figures do not match administrative sources on numbers employed, which indicates the need for research given the size of the divergence and the importance for national aims. (d) Including motor services. *Source:* Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Labour Force Survey. Q2 2019 to Q2 2023 downloaded at nesstar.statssa.gov.za in August 2024 and Q2 2024 to Q2 2025 downloaded at isibaloweb.statssa.gov.za in August 2025.