



Western Cape
Government
FOR YOU



#KnowYourMunicipality: The 2023 Socio-Economic Profile

Bitou Municipality



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Bitou: At a Glance

Demographics

Population Estimates, 2022; Actual households, 2022



Population
65 240

(Source: Census 2022)



Households
18 082

(Source: Bitou Municipality)

Education

2022



Matric Pass Rate **85.8%**
Learner Retention Rate **69.4%**
Learner-Teacher Ratio **31.8**

Poverty

2022



Gini Coefficient **0.65**
Poverty Head Count Ratio (UBPL) **62.5%**

Health

2022/23



Primary Health Care Facilities
5
(excl. mobile/satellite clinics)

Immunisation Rate
63.5%

Maternal Mortality Ratio (per 100 000 live births)
72.2%

Teenage Pregnancies – Delivery rate to women U/18
0.0%

Safety and Security

Actual number of reported cases in 2021/22



Residential Burglaries
439

DUI
61

Drug-related Crimes
325

Murder
17

Sexual Offences
76

Access to Basic Service Delivery

Percentage of households with access to basic services, 2021

Water

80%



Refuse Removal

85.2%



Electricity

98.6%



Sanitation

97.3%



Housing

85.4%



Road Safety

2021/22

Fatal Crashes **42**
Road User Fatalities **46**

Labour

2022

Unemployment Rate (narrow definition)
30.9%



Socio-economic Risks

Risk 1 High Unemployment
Risk 2 Low learner retention
Risk 3 Low skills base (Labour)

Largest 3 Sectors

Contribution to GDP, 2021

Finance, insurance, real estate and business services

31%



Wholesale & retail trade, catering and accommodation

18%



General Government

11%



Provincial Treasury produces socio-economic profiles for each of the Western Cape municipalities on an annual basis. These profiles provide the Western Cape municipalities with data and analyses pertaining to their municipal area, which may assist in planning, budgeting and the prioritisation of municipal services.

The profiles include information on recent trends in GDP and labour market performance, demographics, education and health outcomes. It further unpacks per capita income, inequality and poverty, access to housing and basic services as well as crime levels.

The indicators reflect the socio-economic reality of municipalities. As such, valuable insight can be gained as to the developmental challenges faced by communities residing within a specific geographical area. While some developmental challenges are not within the municipality's mandate to address, these profiles also provide spatial information for other spheres of Government in order to improve the quality of lives of people within each municipal area.

This profile uses data primarily sourced from Statistics South Africa, administrative data from sector departments, the *Municipal Review and Outlook (MERO)*, *Global Insight Regional Explorer* and Quantec. The data sourced from sector departments are the most recent that is available. The Statistics South Africa 2011 Census and 2016 Community Survey contains the latest survey data available at municipal level.

The format of the profile allows for easy readability with the data being displayed in infographics, followed by the relevant trend analyses.

The information contained in this profile highlights information for the Bitou Municipality in relation to the broader Garden Route District.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population **65 240** 2022

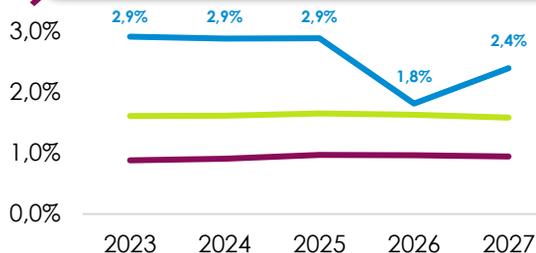


Estimated Population
80 628 2027

Estimated Average Annual Population Growth Rate 2023 - 2027
2.5%



Estimated Population Growth

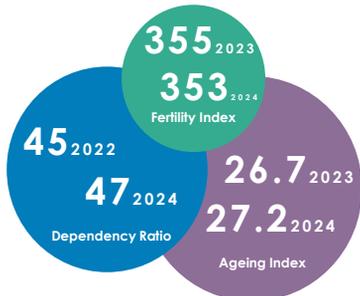


Western Cape
Garden Route District
Bitou

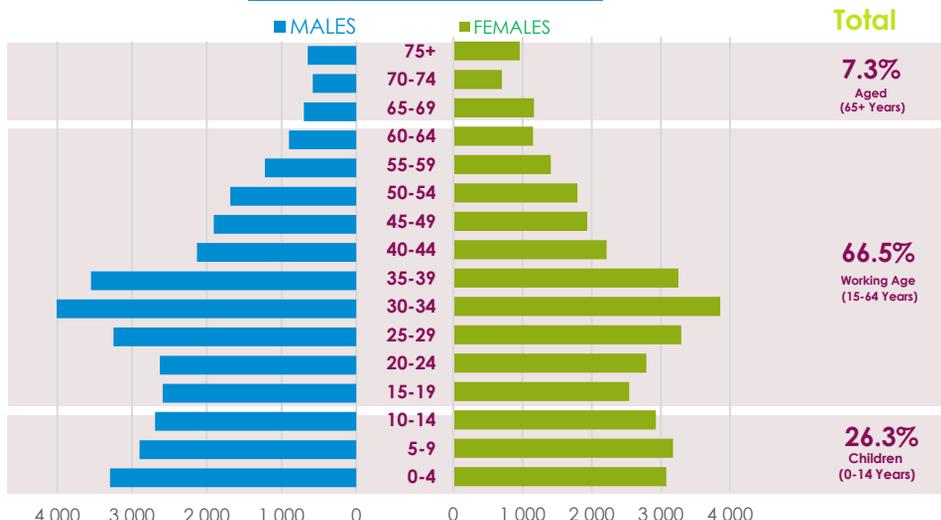
Gender and Age Dynamics



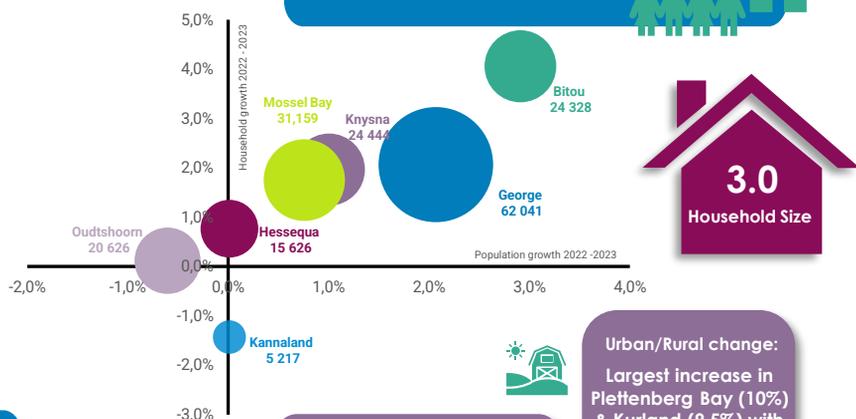
Female **51%** | Male **49%**



Population by Age 2022



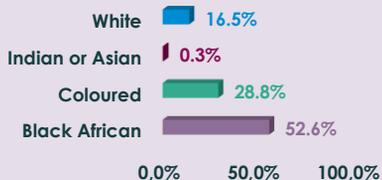
Population and Household Growth 2022



3.0
Household Size

Urban/Rural change:
Largest increase in Plettenberg Bay (10%) & Kurland (9.5%) with decrease in rural area of 15%
Density change:
Largest increase in Bossiesgert & Kurland, New Horizons

Racial Split

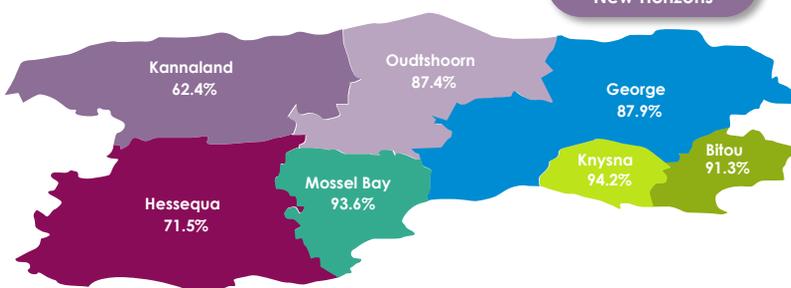


Level of Urbanisation 2021



2023 **73.7** people/km²
2024 **75.8** people/km²
2025 **78.0** people/km²

Largest Urban Settlement:
Plettenberg Bay (23.4%) & Kwanokuthula (20%)



Population Growth

In the context of the Census 2022 findings, Bitou Municipality's population totalled 65 240 individuals in 2022, positioning it as the third smallest municipal jurisdiction within the Garden Route District, following Hessequa and Kannaland. Projections indicate that this number is expected to rise to 80 628 by 2027, reflecting an average annual growth rate of 2.5 percent during this timeframe. This notable population expansion could potentially give rise to significant challenges in delivering essential services in the Bitou area, as the increased populace will lead to heightened demands for resources such as food, water, housing, energy, healthcare, transportation, and more. The adverse consequences stemming from this heightened consumption include ecological degradation, escalated conflicts, and an elevated risk of large-scale disasters, such as pandemics.

Gender, Age and Race Dynamics

In economic terms, the sex ratio (SR) provides a measure of the proportion of males to females in a given population. The available data suggests that in the Bitou municipal area, there is a lower representation of males compared to females, with a distribution of 49.0 percent for males and 51.0 percent for females. The sex ratio in Bitou has exhibited a gradual upward trend in the years leading up to 2025. This phenomenon may be attributed to diverse factors, including a potential rise in female mortality rates and the potential migration of working males into the area.

The largest population growth projection was recorded in the working age population (15 -64 years) aged cohort which grew at an annual average rate of 3.0 per cent between 2011 and 2022. This is an indication that the Bitou area is experiencing rapid population growth which will increase the demand for service delivery. These groupings are expressed as a dependency ratio which indicates those who are part of the workforce (Age 15 – 64) and those who are dependent on them (children or senior citizens). A higher dependency ratio implies greater pressure on social systems and the delivery of basic services. Growth in this age group is reflective of high fertility rates. A further 1 per cent growth per annum in the aged category will result in an overall increase in the dependency ratio towards 2026. The Bitou municipal area's dependency ratio declined from 48 per cent in 2022 and is expected to decline 47.9 per cent in 2024 and increase to 48.6 in 2026.

Level of Urbanisation

Despite Knysna being the most urbanised municipal area at the time of the study, it was Bitou that witnessed the most substantial estimated increase in urbanisation, with urbanisation rates rising by 15.0 per cent points between 2001 and 2021. A significant segment of Bitou's population is concentrated in the larger Plettenberg Bay region, covering Plettenberg Bay town, KwaNokuthula, New Horizons, and Kranshoek, contributing to the considerable urban population.

This surge in the urban population coincided with a 15.0 per cent decline in the proportion of the rural population between 2001 and 2021. Regions characterised by high population density during this period included Bossiesgif, New Horizons, and Kurland. These demographic shifts hold socio-economic implications, affecting factors such as infrastructure development, access to services, and the overall urban-rural dynamic in Bitou.

Population density

In the context of the Western Cape's ongoing urbanisation trend, population density data becomes a valuable tool for public sector policymakers. This information helps in addressing environmental concerns, individual health factors, and optimizing service delivery. In 2022, the population density in the Bitou municipal area was 72 individuals per square kilometre. This data provides critical insights into the socio-economic landscape and resource allocation within the region.

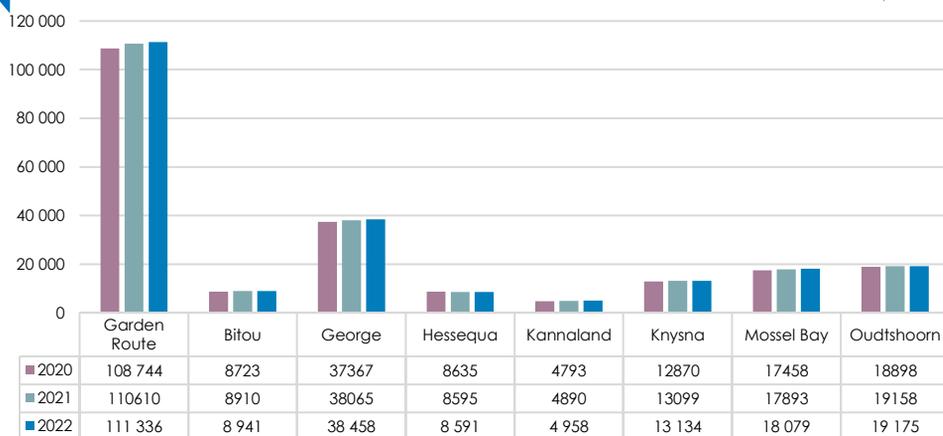
Garden Route 27 people/km²

Bitou 72 people/km²

EDUCATION: Bitou



Learner enrolment



Educational facilities 2022

11

Number of schools

81.8%

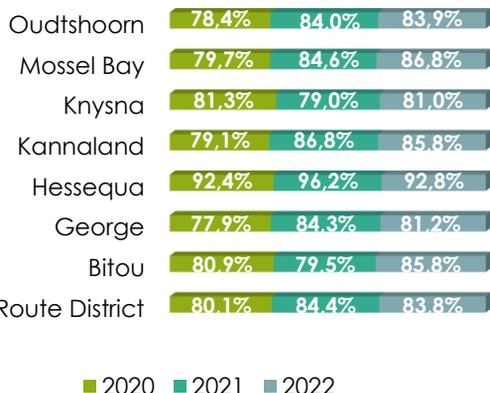
Proportion of no-fee schools

Number of schools with libraries

7

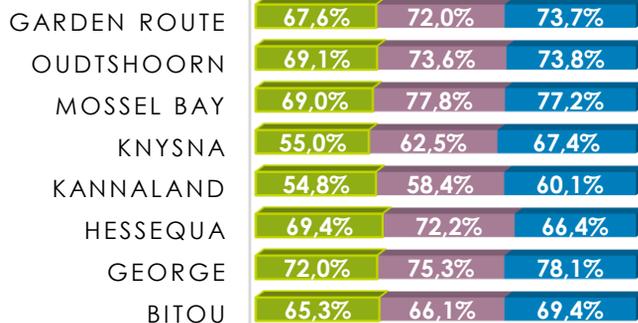


Education outcomes



Learner retention 2020 - 2022

2020 2021 2022



Learner-Teacher Ratio 2020- 2022

Garden Route District 30,1 | 30,2 | 29,82

BITOU 32,3 | 32,4 | 31,82

Mossel Bay 30,2 | 30,9 | 30,13

George 30,0 | 29,7 | 29,67

Hessequa 29,1 | 28,9 | 28,73

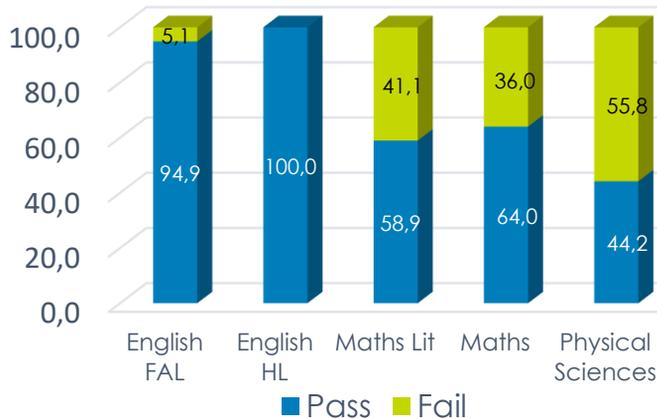
Knysna 30,1 | 30,3 | 28,99

Kannaland 30,9 | 31,7 | 31,18

Oudtshoorn 29,6 | 29,7 | 29,7



Subject Outcomes



Introduction

Education is one of the primary resources of change, a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace and stability. Its role is to help people acquire knowledge and skills, which can, in turn be used to acquire jobs, start businesses and produce goods and services.

Learner enrolment

From 2020 to 2022, Bitou witnessed a steady rise in student enrollment, with the pupil count escalating from 8 723 to 8 941, representing an annual growth rate of 1.2 per cent. Specifically, in 2020, 8 723 learners were registered within the Bitou municipal area, and this figure climbed to 8 910 in 2021, indicating an annual growth rate of 1.6 per cent during that timeframe. Failure to augment the teacher workforce in response to this growth could potentially lead to adverse consequences for the quality of education within classrooms.

Education infrastructure and facilities

Within the Bitou municipal area, there are a total of 11 educational institutions, of which an excessive 81.8 per cent operate as no-fee schools. This noteworthy statistic holds significant socio-economic implications, particularly in light of the fact that 24 per cent of students in 2021 cited financial constraints as the reason for discontinuing their education, as per the General Household Survey of 2021.

Furthermore, out of the 11 schools in the area, seven have been furnished with libraries. The provision of library resources within these schools plays a vital role in ameliorating the socio-economic disparity in academic achievements, as it affords students access to valuable information. This access, in turn, is directly correlated with enhanced educational outcomes.

Learner Retention Rate

The learner retention rate serves as a metric to gauge the proportion of Grade 12 students who were enrolled in Grade 10 two years earlier. Various socio-economic factors, student attitudes toward education, cognitive abilities, study techniques, and personal circumstances can all influence this rate, potentially hindering a learner's ability to remain engaged in their education. Additionally, the issue of overcrowded classrooms is frequently identified as a significant contributor to elevated dropout rates among students.

While it is noteworthy that the learner retention rate in the Bitou municipal area exhibited a gradual improvement, ascending from 65.3 per cent in 2020 to 69.4 per cent in 2022, it is essential to recognize that over one-third of learners either left school, relocated from the municipal area, or repeated a grade between Grade 10 and Grade 12. This underscores the persistent challenges and socio-economic complexities that continue to impact educational continuity within the region.

Learner teacher ratio

In the context of South African schools, the prescribed learner-to-teacher ratio typically falls within the range of 35:1 to 40:1; nonetheless, this standard is not consistently adhered to in the majority of Western Cape schools. It is worth noting that the learner-to-teacher ratio exhibited a slight decline between 2020 and 2022, falling below the recommended threshold. This positive shift has set in motion a ripple effect, encompassing reduced dropout rates, heightened academic performance, and other favorable outcomes.

Education outcomes

Education continues to serve as a pivotal channel through which the government participates in the economy. The policymaking and strategic determinations made in the realm of education carry significant weight in shaping the level to which forthcoming economic objectives and poverty alleviation initiatives can be actualized. Notably, Bitou experienced an enhancement in its matriculation pass rate, ascending from 80.9 per cent in 2020 to 85.8 per cent in 2022. This improvement underscores the potential socio-economic benefits of a well-performing education system.



Healthcare Facilities



5 Fixed PHC Facilities
3 Mobile Clinics



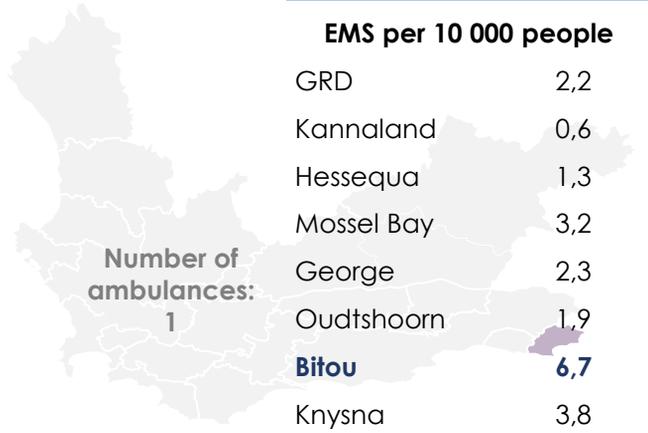
7 ART Clinics/
Treatment Sites
6 TB Clinics/
Treatment Sites



Zero Hospitals



Emergency Medical Services



Maternal Health

BITOU 2023:
Maternal Health Indicators

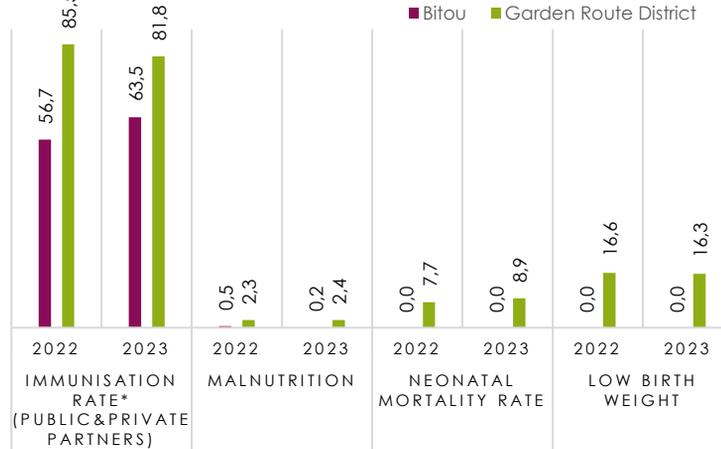
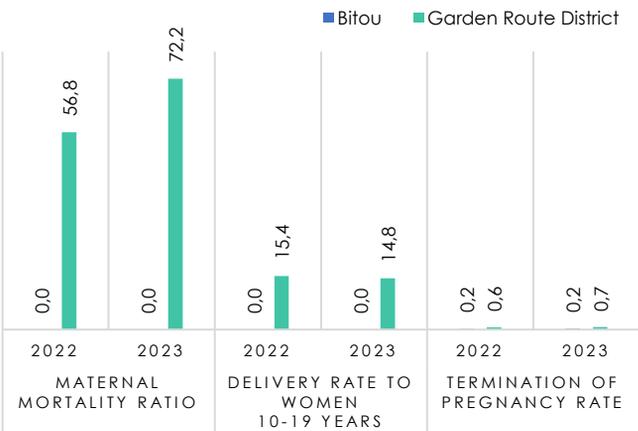
- Maternal deaths in facility : 0
- Deliveries in facility u19 years : 0
- Termination of pregnancy : 0.2



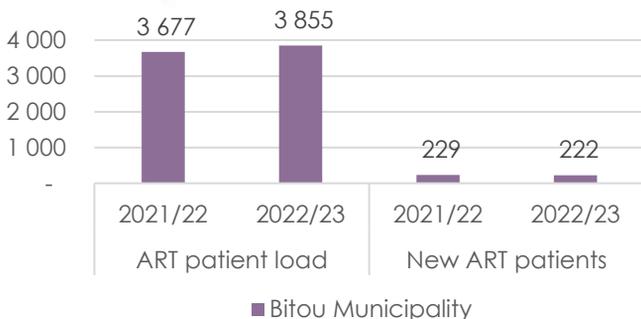
Child Health

BITOU 2023:
Child Health Indicators

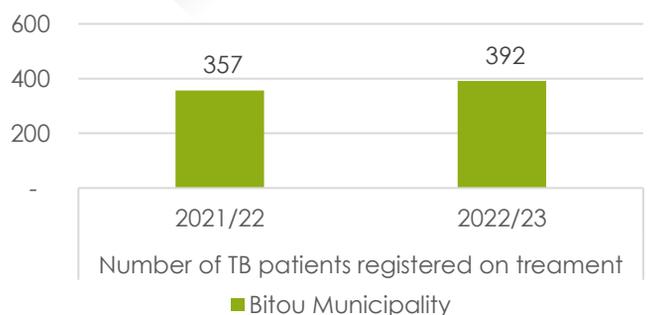
- Live births under 2500g (low birth weight) : 0
- Inpatient deaths 6-28 day : 0
- Immunisation u1 year : 765
- Severe acute malnutrition u5 years : 1



HIV/AIDS



Tuberculosis



Healthcare facilities

In 2022, the Bitou municipal area had a total of 5 primary healthcare facilities, which consisted of 4 stationary clinics and 1 community day centre. Moreover, the region boasted 2 mobile/satellite clinics, 7 sites dedicated to Antiretroviral Treatment (ART), and 7 clinics specifically designated for tuberculosis (TB) treatment. It's important to note that there were no district or regional hospitals in the municipal area. Bitou accounted for 7 out of the 82 healthcare facilities, representing approximately 8.5 per cent of the healthcare infrastructure within the broader Garden Route region. This distribution has socio-economic implications for healthcare access and services within the municipal area.

Emergency medical services

Increasing the availability of operational ambulances can expand the scope of emergency medical service coverage. In 2021, the Bitou municipal area had a total of 4 ambulances, while the Garden Route District had 28 ambulances during the same period. When considering the ratio of ambulances per 10,000 people, Bitou had 0.6 ambulances, whereas the Garden Route had 0.4 in 2021. It's essential to note that this calculation exclusively pertains to provincial ambulances and does not encompass the presence of private service providers. This difference in ambulance provision has implications for emergency healthcare accessibility in the respective regions.

Maternal health

In the economic narrative of the Garden Route district, the Bitou municipal area stood out as a beacon of positive statistics between 2021/22 and 2022/23. This region witnessed the remarkable achievement of having zero maternal deaths per 100,000 live births and a complete absence of teenage pregnancies, demonstrating a remarkable trend in maternal and adolescent health. Additionally, the rate of pregnancy terminations, which affected only 0.1 per cent of the female population aged between 15 and 55 years, showed no significant change during this time frame. Bitou's exceptional performance in these vital indicators reflects a bright spot in the economic story of the region.

Child health

There were significant shifts in key health metrics between 2021/22 and 2022/23 in . Immunization coverage for infants under one year improved modestly, increasing from 56.7 per cent to 63.5 per cent during this period. It's worth noting, however, that this rate remains considerably lower than the overall 85.5 per cent coverage in the Garden Route District. A positive trend was observed in the reduction of severe acute malnutrition among children under five in Bitou, with the rate declining notably from 0.5 to 0.2 per 100,000 people between 2021/22 and 2022/23. Conversely, the Garden Route District experienced a slight uptick in malnutrition rates, rising from 2.3 to 2.4 during the same timeframe.

Bitou's healthcare statistics in maternal and infant care were particularly remarkable. The neonatal mortality rate, measuring deaths per 1,000 live births within 28 days, remained impressively low at 0.0 between 2021/22 and 2022/23, the lowest in the entire district. Furthermore, the rate of low-birth-weight infants, those born under 2,500 grams, also remained steady at 0.0 during this period, maintaining the lowest rate in the entire district.

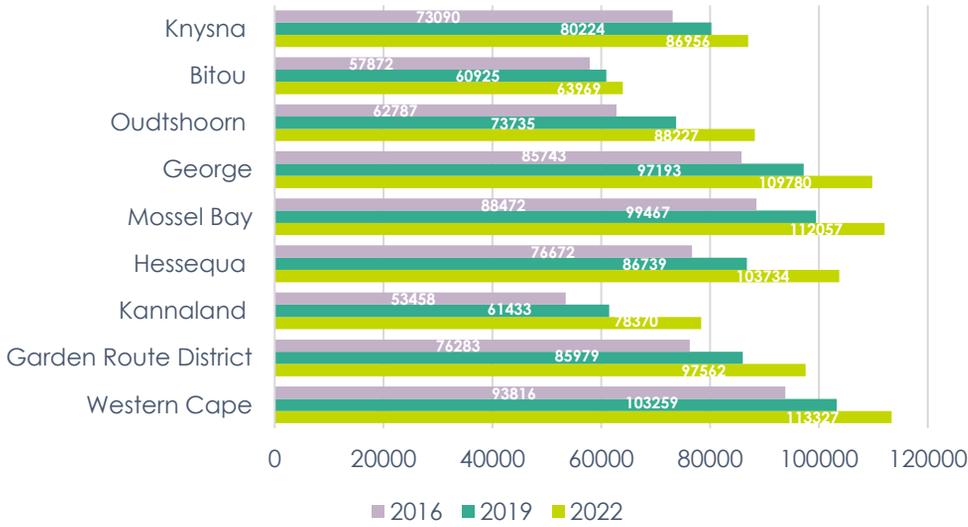
HIV/AIDS & Tuberculosis

The number of registered patients receiving antiretroviral treatment (ART) in the Bitou municipal area increased by 229 patients in 2021/22, down from an increase of 240 in the previous year. In total, 3 677 registered patients received antiretroviral treatment in the Bitou municipal area in 2021/22. There has been an average annual decline of 2.7 per cent between 2019/20 (357) and 2021/22 (338) in the number of registered patients receiving TB treatment in the Bitou municipal area.

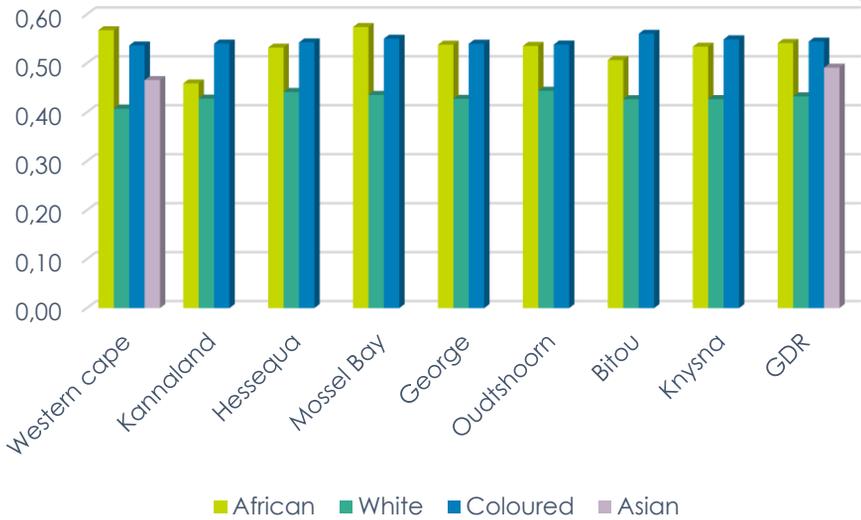
POVERTY



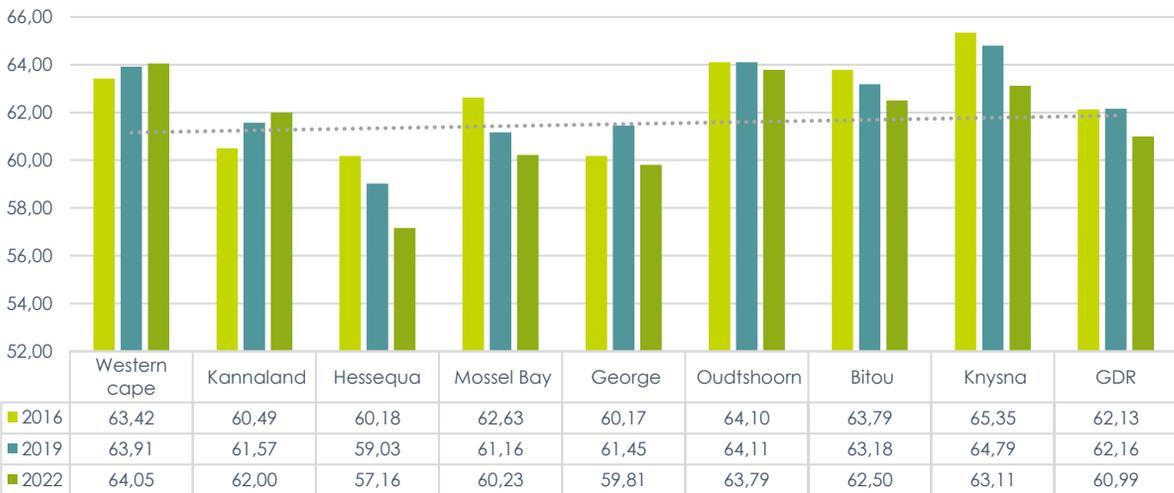
GDP per capita



Income Inequality



Poverty Line



GDPR Per Capita

The per capita Gross Domestic Regional Product (GDPR) only sees an increase when the rate of economic growth surpasses the rate of population growth. In 2022, Bitou Municipality had a real GDPR per capita of R63 969, which is lower than both the Garden Route District's figure of R69 165 and the Western Cape's R113 327 for the same year. The gradual increase in Bitou's GDPR per capita, from R57 872 in 2016 to R60 925 in 2019, and further to R63 969 in 2022, can be attributed to rapid population growth and the economic challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic-induced recession.

Income Inequality

South Africa grapples with some of the most severe levels of income inequality worldwide, as indicated by the widely utilised Gini coefficient index. This inequality is evident in a skewed income distribution, disparities in access to opportunities, and regional economic gaps.

The National Development Plan (NDP) has established a goal of decreasing income inequality in South Africa, aiming to reduce the Gini coefficient from 0.7 in 2010 to 0.6 by 2030. In the Garden Route District, income inequality slightly exceeds the national target, standing at 0.61 in 2022. Specifically, Bitou Municipality exhibits even higher inequality with a Gini coefficient of 0.65 in the same year. Notably, within Bitou, pronounced income disparities exist among different racial communities. Coloured communities in Bitou experience the highest level of inequality with a Gini coefficient of 0.56, followed by African communities at 0.51, while the lowest level of income inequality is observed among white communities at 0.43. These disparities in income distribution have far-reaching socio-economic implications.

Poverty Line

The Upper Bound Poverty Line (UBPL) head count ratio represents the portion of the population unable to afford an adequate standard of living, encompassing both essential food and non-food items. In South Africa, the UBPL is set at R1 227 per person per month (in April 2019 prices). Poverty exerts significant socio-economic consequences on communities, leading to reduced life expectancy, malnutrition, food insecurity, heightened vulnerability to crime and substance abuse, lower educational achievements, and substandard living conditions. The National Development Plan (NDP) aspires to eradicate poverty by the year 2030.

In 2022, 62.5 per cent of Bitou's population lived below the UBPL, marking a slight improvement from 63.7 per cent in 2016 and 63.1 per cent in 2019. Among the municipalities in the Garden Route, Bitou ranks as the third highest in terms of the proportion of people living in poverty, trailing behind Oudtshoorn (63.1 per cent) and Knysna (63.1 per cent). These poverty rates have far-reaching socio-economic implications, impacting the well-being and development of the region.

BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY

21 848

Bitou

255 977

Garden Route District

Total number of households

Formal main dwelling

85.4%

18 658

Bitou

227 812

Garden Route District

89.0%

0.4% Bitou
1.2% Garden Route
Traditional dwelling



14.0% Bitou
9.6% Garden Route
Informal dwelling

Informal dwelling

0.2% Bitou
0.2% Garden Route
Other/Unspecified

Other/Unspecified



Piped water inside dwelling/yard or communal/neighbor's tap

Bitou 80.0%
Garden Route 85.0%



Flush/chemical toilet

Bitou 97.3%
Garden Route 93.7%



Electricity (incl. generator) as primary source of lighting

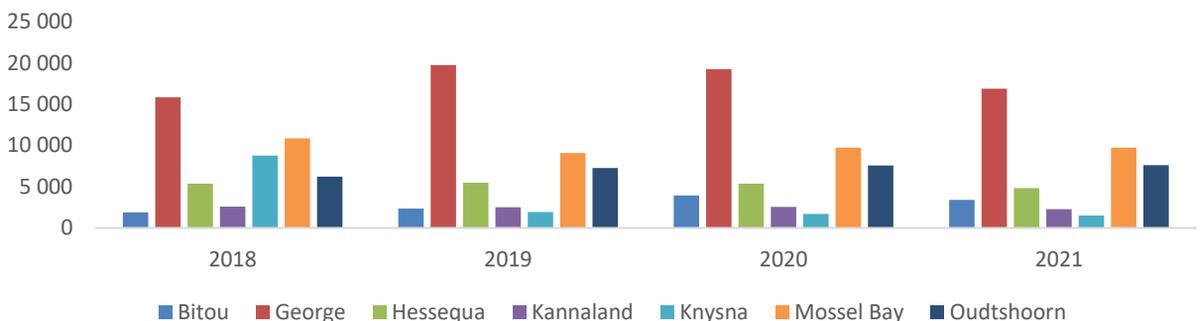
Bitou 98.6%
Garden Route 95.9%



Refuse removal at least once a week

Bitou 85.2%
Garden Route 88.8%

Indigent Households Garden Route Municipalities



The Constitution stipulates that every citizen has the right to access to adequate housing and that the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of this right. Access to housing also includes access to services such as potable water, basic sanitation, safe energy sources and refuse removal services, to ensure that households enjoy a decent standard of living.

This section considers to what extent this has been achieved by reflecting on the latest available information from Quantec Research for 2021. The latest official statistics was collected by Statistics South Africa for the 2016 Community Survey; the 2021 Census will provide the updated official statistics. The information on free basic services is obtained from Statistics South Africa's Non-Financial Census of Municipalities survey findings.

Housing and Household Services

Among the 21 848 households in the Bitou municipal area, 85.4 per cent had access to formal housing, which is lower than the Garden Route District's average of 89 per cent. In contrast, Bitou had a higher proportion of informal dwellings, totaling 14 per cent, whereas the District's average for informal housing was 9.6 per cent.

Service access levels within the municipal area exceeded the access to formal housing significantly. Approximately 80.0 per cent of households had access to piped water either inside the dwelling/yard or through communal/neighbour's taps. An impressive 97.3 per cent had access to flush toilets or chemical toilets, and 98.6 per cent had access to electricity (including generators) for lighting. Additionally, local authorities removed refuse at least weekly for 85.2 per cent of households in the area. These disparities in housing and service access have socio-economic implications, impacting the living conditions and quality of life for the local population.

Free Basic Services

Municipalities offer a set of essential services at no cost to households facing financial hardship and difficulty in covering service expenses. In the Bitou municipal area, there has been a significant surge in the number of households receiving free basic services, rising from 1 891 in 2018 to 3 404 in 2021. Given the challenging economic conditions, it is anticipated that these conditions will place additional strain on household incomes, leading to a likely increase in the demand for free basic services and consequently, the number of households falling under the "indigent" category. However, it's important to note that this trend is specific to the region and contingent on the eligibility criteria applied.

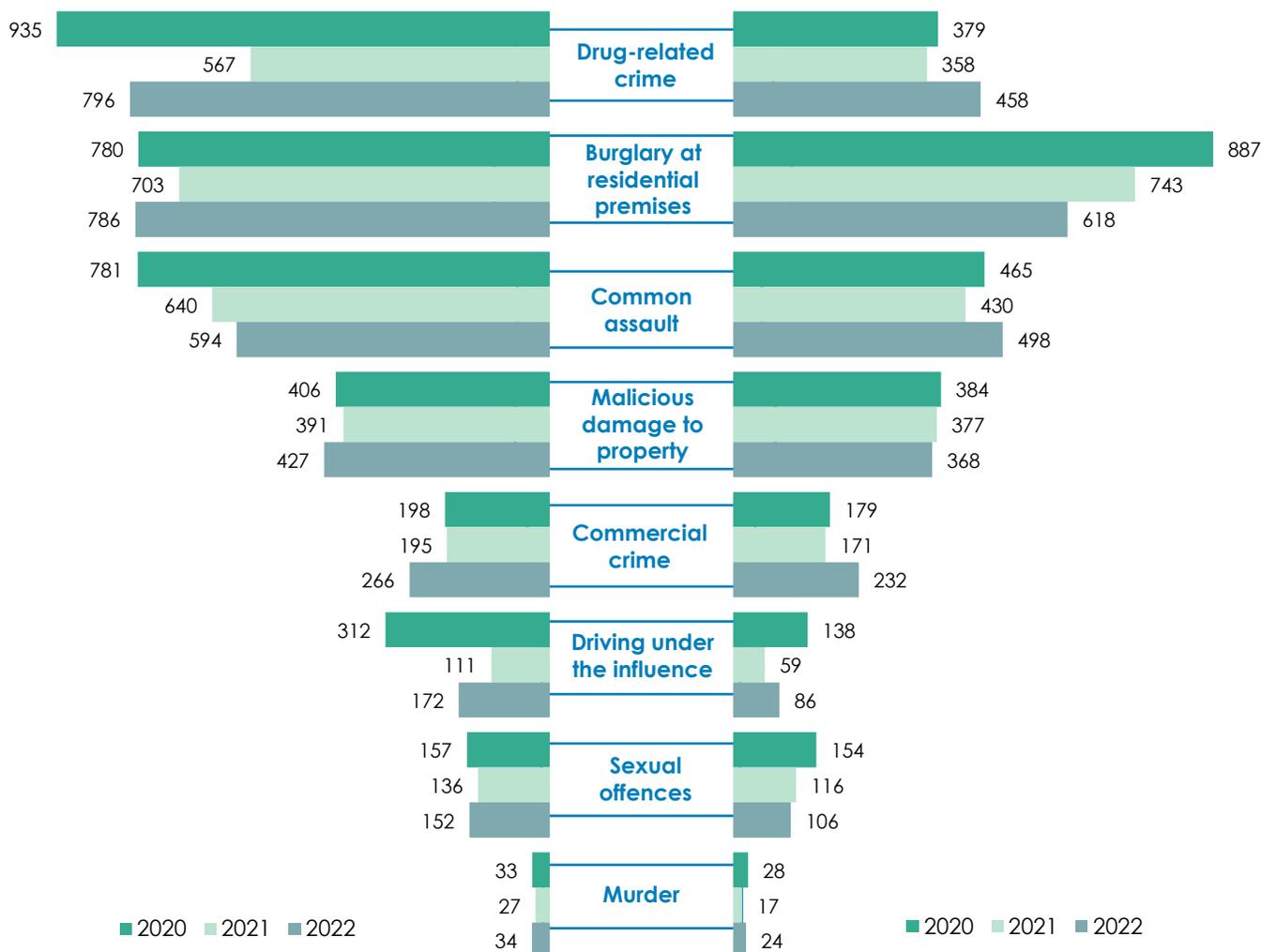
SAFETY AND SECURITY

GARDEN ROUTE

5 698 Total reported
crime per 100 000 people in the
Garden Route District in 2022

BITOU

4 233 Total reported crime
per 100 000 people in Bitou in 2022



Drug-related crime
247 (2021)
325 (2022)

Murder
12 (2021)
17 (2022)

Sexual offences
80 (2021)
76 (2022)

Driving under the influence
41 (2021)
61 (2022)



Residential burglaries
513 (2021)
439 (2022)

Common assault
296 (2021)
354 (2022)

Damage to property
260 (2021)
261 (2022)

Commercial crime
118 (2021)
165 (2022)

Murder

Murder is defined as the unlawful and intentional killing of another person.

In the Bitou municipal area, the actual counts of murder rose from 12 in 2021 to 17 in 2022. However, the murder rate in Bitou, measured per 100,000 people, decreased from 28 in 2020 to 24 in 2022, and this rate is lower than the Garden Route District's murder rate of 34 per 100,000 people in 2022. It's worth noting that, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2019, the global murder rate in 2017 stood at 6.1 per 100,000 people, significantly lower than both the District and the Municipality's reported rates.

Sexual Offences

Sexual offences include rape (updated to the new definition of rape to provide for the inclusion of male rape), sex work, pornography, public indecency and human trafficking.

In 2021, there were 76 sexual offenses reported in the Bitou area. The incidence of sexual offenses per 100,000 people in the Bitou municipal area (106) was lower than that of the District (152) in 2022. It's noteworthy that South Africa is among the top 5 countries globally in terms of reported rape cases, underscoring the magnitude of this issue, which necessitates addressing. In response, a National Strategic Plan on gender-based violence and femicide has been developed.

Drug-related Offences

Drug-related crimes refer to the situation where the perpetrator is found to be in possession of, under the influence of, or selling illegal drugs.

In the Bitou area, drug-related crimes increased from 247 cases in 2021 to 325 cases in 2022. When considering the rate per 100,000 people, Bitou had 458 drug-related offenses per 100,000 people in 2022, which is lower than the Garden Route District's rate of 796 per 100,000 population.

Driving under the influence (DUI)

A situation where the driver of a vehicle is found to be over the legal blood alcohol limit.

The number of DUI cases in the Bitou area increased from 41 in 2021 to 61 in 2022. This translates to a rate of 86 cases per 100,000 people in 2022, which is less than the Garden Route District's rate of 172 cases per 100,000 people.

Residential Burglaries

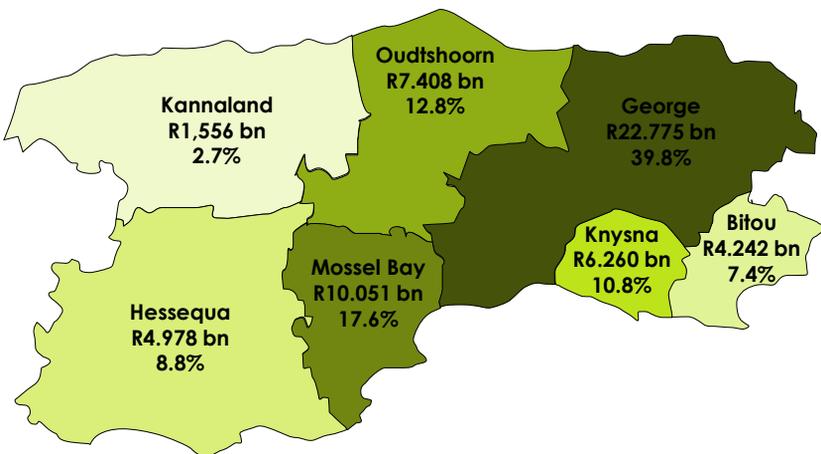
The unlawful entry of a residential structure with the intent to commit a crime, usually a theft.

The number of residential burglaries in the Bitou area decreased from 513 in 2021 to 439 in 2022. The Bitou municipal area's rate of 618 residential burglaries per 100 000 population is lower than the District's rate of 786 for 2022. These crime trends have significant socio-economic implications for the community's safety and well-being.

GDPR PERFORMANCE



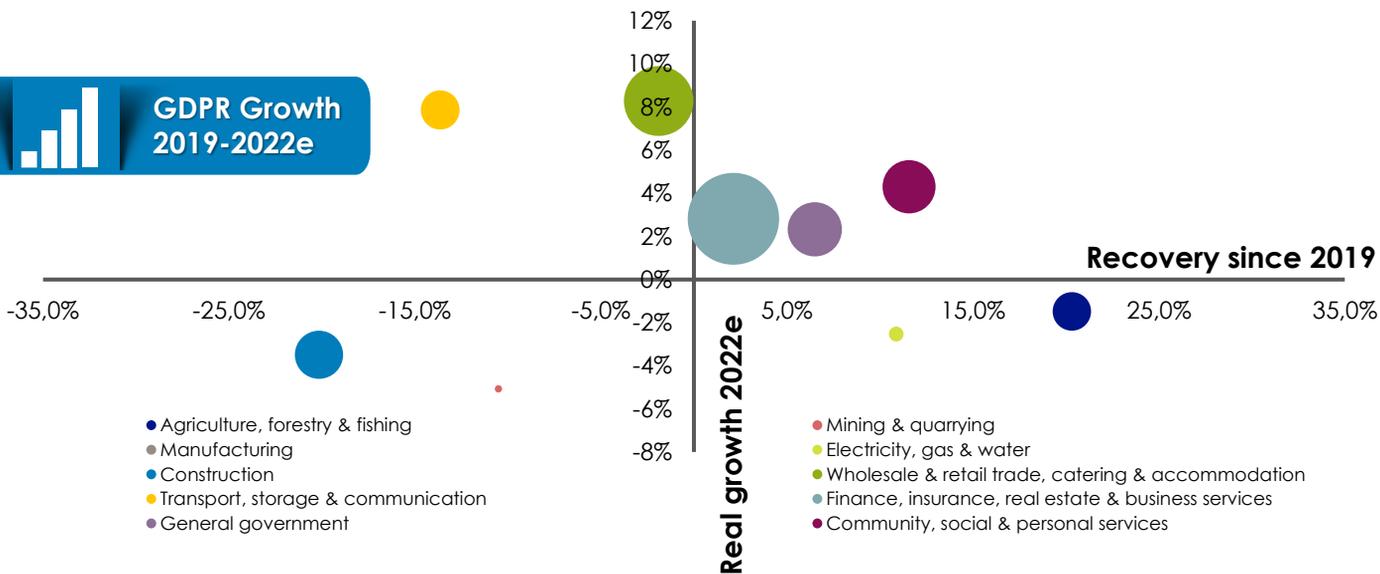
GDPR Contribution 2021



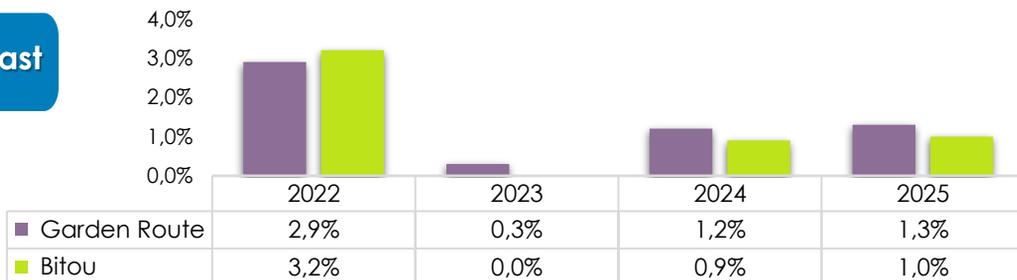
Sectoral contribution to GDPR 2021



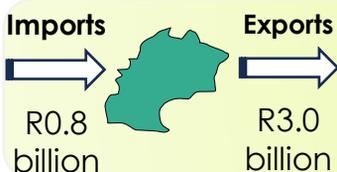
GDPR Growth 2019-2022e



GDPR forecast



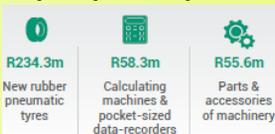
International Trade, 2022



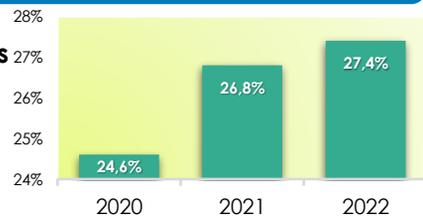
Top exported products



Top imported products



Tourism spend % of GDP



GDPR Performance

In 2021, the Gross Domestic Regional Product (GDPR) of the Bitou municipal area amounted to R4.2 billion. Key sectors driving this GDP included finance (31.2per cent), trade (18.0per cent), and general government (11.0 per cent). The finance sector was particularly diverse, encompassing activities such as accounting, research and development, property leasing, and insurance. The majority of economic activity was concentrated in Plettenberg Bay, with Bitou Municipality serving as a significant employer in the region. Residential real estate activities also added substantial value to the finance sector.

The substantial contribution of the trade sector in 2021 highlights the significance of tourism to the local economy. Accommodation services and restaurants played a pivotal role in employment within the municipal area. However, it's important to note that the tourism sector is highly seasonal, with peak periods occurring during school holidays.

The Bitou municipal area's economy faced significant challenges due to its reliance on tourism, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic led to a sharp contraction of 5.8 per cent in 2020. However, the economy began to recover, expanding by 2.8 per cent in 2021, with further growth estimated for 2022. This growth rate signifies a rebound from the economic downturn experienced in 2020. These economic fluctuations have substantial socio-economic implications, impacting local employment, income levels, and overall economic well-being.

GDPR Forecast

The Gross Domestic Regional Product (GDPR) of the Bitou municipal area is expected to remain relatively stagnant in 2023, with a modest increase of 0.9 per cent forecast for 2024. Notably, the finance sector, a substantial contributor to the GDPR, is anticipated to experience growth, projected at 2.0 per cent in 2023 and an additional 1.2 per cent in 2024. However, the positive impact of this growth may be offset by contractions in other major sectors. In particular, the trade sector is expected to contract by 3.1 per cent in 2023, as households need to tighten their spending due to elevated interest rates. This contraction is a result of reduced tourist activity, linked to the national economic downturn, which has placed constraints on household expenditures.

The maintenance of safe beaches for both tourists and local communities, through initiatives such as the Plett Shark Action Group following the shark attacks in 2022, plays a pivotal role in sustaining the tourism market. The relatively small but productive agriculture sector is also anticipated to contract in 2023 and 2024, by 2.7 per cent and 0.8 per cent, respectively. This contraction is influenced by declining global commodity prices, a weakening exchange rate, and rising input costs.

LABOUR MARKET PERFORMANCE

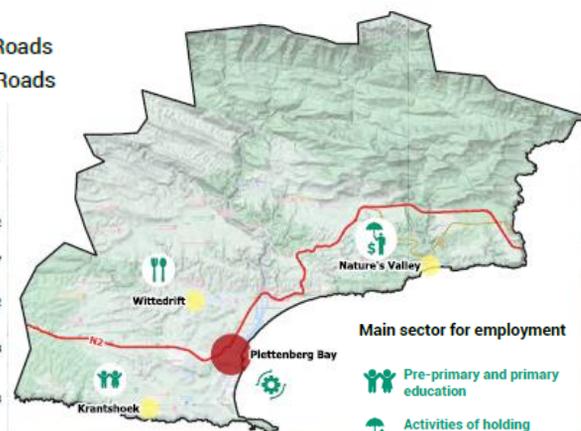
Formal Employment by Town, 2022

Roads

- National Roads
- Regional Roads

FTE numbers

- 31 - 1 176
- 1 176 - 2 322
- 2 322 - 3 467
- 3 467 - 4 612
- 4 612 - 5 758
- 5 758 - 6 903

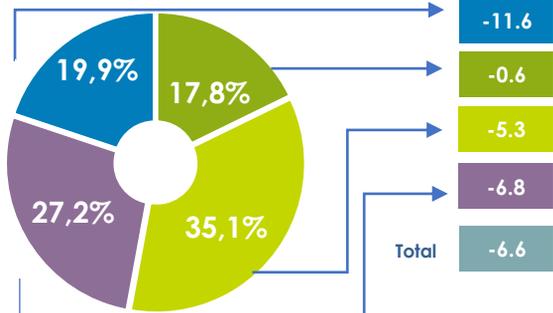


Main sector for employment

- Pre-primary and primary education
- Activities of holding companies
- General public administration at Local Government level
- Restaurants and mobile food service activities

Skill Level % Contribution, 2022

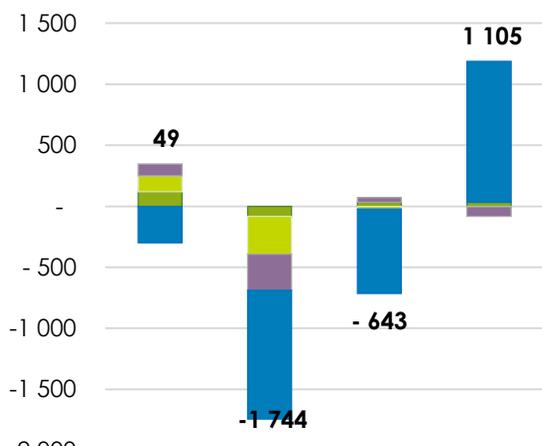
Recovery in Employment (%) 2019-2022



Total -6.6

Total Persons Employed 2022	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Low-skilled	Informal
	3 058	5 965	4 546	4 537

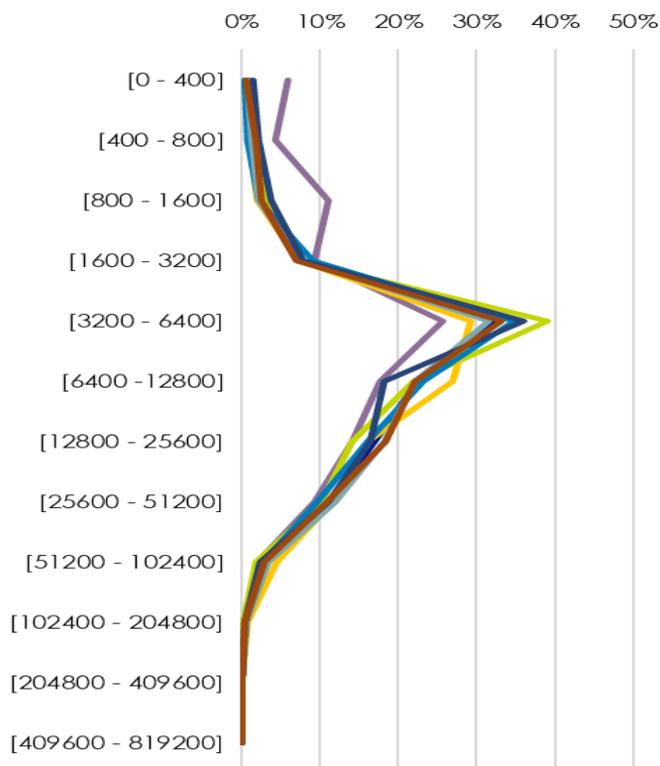
Net employment per sector, 2019-2022



Sector	2019	2020	2021	2022e
Total	49	-1 744	- 643	1 105
Informal	- 298	-1 057	- 693	1 154
Low skilled	98	- 294	39	- 78
Semi-skilled	129	- 311	- 22	- 3
Skilled	120	- 82	33	32



Wage Distribution per municipal area, 2022



- Garden Route
- Hessequa
- Bitou
- Oudtshoorn
- Kannaland
- Mossel Bay
- George
- Knysna

Sector

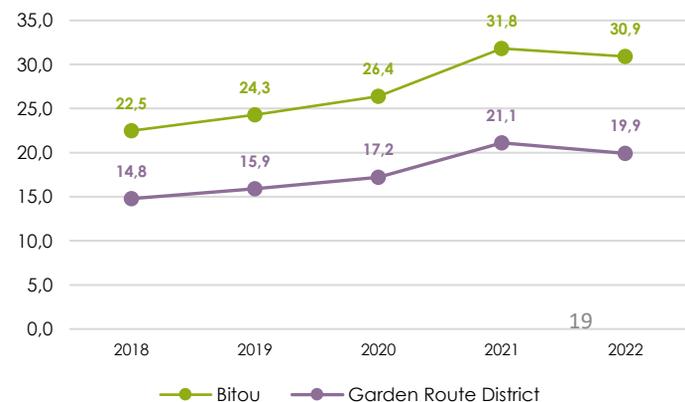
No. of FTE Jobs

Administration of the state and the economic and social policy of the community	1 052
Short term accommodation activities	451
Restaurants and mobile food service activities	444
Construction of buildings (for erection of complete prefabricated constructions from self-manufactured parts not of concrete, see divisions 16 and 25)	321
Retail sale in non-specialized stores	241

Top 5 Sectors



Unemployment rate 2018-2022



Labour Market Performance

Due to its heavy reliance on tourism, the Bitou municipal area's economy suffered a significant blow during the COVID-19 pandemic, but it has been gradually recovering. Following a substantial 5.8 per cent economic contraction in 2020, the economy rebounded by 2.8 per cent in 2021 and is estimated to have continued its expansion in 2022. This growth rate represents a rebound from the downturn experienced in 2020.

In parallel with the growth in Gross Domestic Regional Product (GDPR), employment saw an increase for the first time since 2020, resulting in the creation of 1 105 formal and informal jobs in 2022. Notably, with 19.9 per cent of workers engaged in informal employment, the informal sector has become a crucial source of employment in the Bitou municipal area. The job growth observed in 2022 led to a 1.0 percentage point reduction in the unemployment rate, bringing it down to 30.9 per cent. However, it's important to note that the unemployment rate in Bitou remains the highest in the District and surpasses the provincial rate of 24.5 per cent.

Given the significance of the trade, tourism, and general government sectors, there is an increasing demand for semi-skilled and skilled workers in these industries. This underscores the importance of targeted skills development initiatives to address the labor market's evolving needs and promote economic resilience.

Skills Distribution

It is projected that Bitou will have a total workforce of 17 001 individuals in 2023. Among them, 13 617 (80.1 per cent) will be formally employed, while 3 383 (19.9 per cent) will work in the informal sector. The informal economy was chiefly responsible for the significant job losses experienced in 2021, which is concerning, as the informal sector is typically expected to act as a buffer during economic downturns.

The majority of those in formal employment in Bitou were comprised of semi-skilled workers (35.1 per cent) and skilled workers (17.8 per cent), while the low-skilled category accounted for 27.2 per cent of the total formal workforce. However, from 2019 to 2022, all categories of skilled employment in Bitou exhibited a notably sluggish recovery as the economy recuperated from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Among these, the skilled category demonstrated signs of faster recovery, reflecting the rising market demand for skilled labor and emphasising the need for skills development initiatives, particularly in light of the growing tertiary sector in the Bitou municipal area. These workforce dynamics have significant socio-economic implications, affecting income levels, employment opportunities, and the region's overall economic resilience.

Wage Distribution

The wage distribution data of Bitou indicates high levels income inequality and the disparities within the socio-economic landscape within Bitou. In Bitou, 34.9 per cent of workers fall into the (R3 200 - R6 400) income range, and 23.2 per cent are in the (R6 400 - R12 800) bracket. However, there are no workers in the highest income brackets, such as (R819 200 - R1 638 400).

Compared to other municipalities in the Garden Route, Bitou has a relatively higher concentration of workers in the (3 200 – 6 400) income range. This data highlights the income disparities and distribution within Bitou, showcasing the concentration of workers in the middle-income brackets and the absence of extremely high-income earners in the region. These income distribution patterns have socio-economic implications for the area, including factors like living standards, affordability, and access to goods and services.

RISK AND VULNERABILITY FACTORS



VULNERABILITY*

Local municipalities are ranked according to their vulnerability relative to all 25 municipalities in the province (Rank). A higher ranking (out of 25) indicates the municipality is comparatively worse off.

An additional score (out of 10) is provided for vulnerability factors relative to all 213 municipalities in the country (Score).

Municipality	Socio-Economic		Economic		Physical		Environmental	
	The indicator shows the vulnerability of households living in the municipality with regards to the household's age composition, education and health status, access to basic services, and safety and security (2011 baseline)		Vulnerability of the municipality to external shocks is based on the economic diversity, size of the economy, labour force, GDP growth rate and the income inequality present in the municipality (2011 baseline)		Physical vulnerability addresses the physical fabric and connectedness of the settlements in the municipality. The more remote and/or structurally vulnerable, the higher the physical vulnerability score		Env. vulnerability represents the conflict between preserving natural environment & growth pressures associated with population growth, urbanisation, and econ development. It measures air quality, env. governance, & the competition between the ecology and urban encroachment	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Bitou	19	2.32	25	6.50	24	7.17	21	6.84
George	9	1.60	16	3.38	22	6.03	8	4.36
Hessequa	10	1.60	13	2.96	11	5.28	16	5.12
Kannaland	24	2.90	4	1.24	6	4.66	11	4.72
Knysna	14	1.92	24	5.66	19	5.93	23	8.13
Mossel Bay	5	1.26	11	2.82	13	5.40	19	6.10
Oudtshoorn	21	2.68	9	2.63	5	4.57	13	5.00



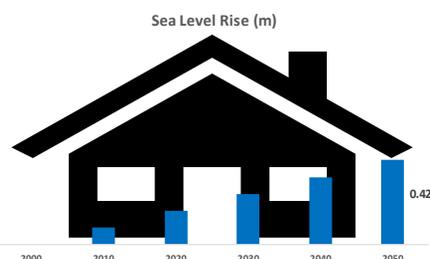
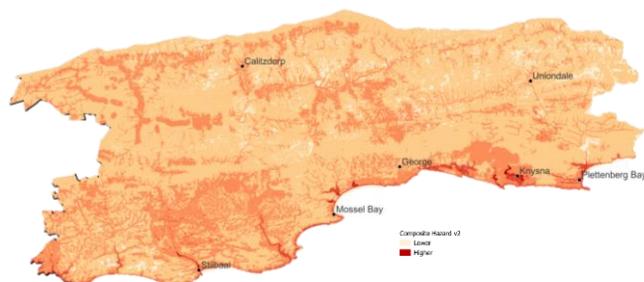
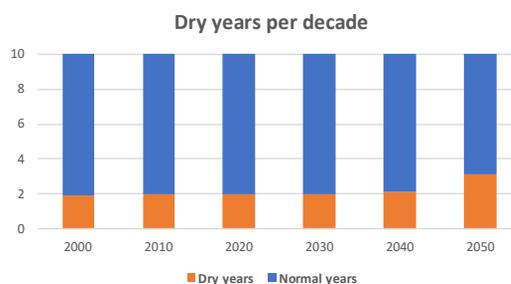
HAZARDS*

Bitou Overall Population Growth Pressure:
Continuous High to Extreme growth pressure in most settlements *

Six of the Top 10 Risks in the Garden Route are environmental in nature (Provincial Disaster Risk Register)	Bitou's identified Hydro-meteorological Hazards to settlements in as observed by the CSIR (The Greenbook *)
1. Human Diseases (Covid-19)	
2. Hazmat Incidents: Roads / Rail / Sea	
3. Alien Invasive Plants	An overall increased drought tendency.
4. Wildfires	Subject to possible wildfires occurring in wildland-urban interface with settlements, with very low to low potential increase in exposure to wildfires.
5. Coastal Erosion	Low increase in short-term coastal erosion exposure.
6. Sanitation/Waste Disruption	
7. Drought	Low potential increase in exposure to heat extremes, whilst having an overall increased drought tendency, with high potential increase in exposure of settlements to drought.
8. Electricity Disruption	
9. Floods (Stormwater/Riverine/Coastal)	Moderate increase in short-term coastal flooding exposure. Very low to low potential increase in exposure to flooding in settlements.
10. Severe Wind	

Garden Route no. of dry years per decade [†]						
	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
Dry years	1.9	2	2	2	2.1	3.1
Wet years	8.1	8	8	8	7.9	6.9

Temperature change (2050 compared to historic) [†]	
Mean temperature increase (District)	1.2 °C higher
Additional days per year with daily maximum temperature above 30 °C (Bitou)	19 days



* Le Roux, A., van Niekerk, W., Arnold, K., Pieterse, A., Ludick, C., Forsyth, G., Le Maitre, D., Lötter, D., du Plessis, P. & Mans, G. 2019. Green Book Risk Profile Tool. Pretoria: CSIR. Available at: riskprofiles.greenbook.co.za

[†] Jack, C., Van Aardenne, L., Wolski, P., Pinto, L., Quagraine, K. & Kloppers, P. 2022. SmartAgri: Updated Climate Change Trends and Projections for the Western Cape. Cape Town: University of Cape Town. Available at <https://www.elsenburg.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/SmartAgri-Climate-Change.pdf>

Sea-level rise and Storm Surges

Although we expect fewer storm systems to reach the Western Cape in future, increased sea temperatures could mean increased storm activity and slightly stronger winds. At the same time the thermal expansion of the oceans will result in 0.25m – 0.75m of sea level rise by 2050, with associated swash run up of roughly 3.0m – 3.5m above the mean sea level (excluding tidal influence). Sandy shores are most affected – some areas in the Garden Route have seen beaches retreat landward at a rate of 0.6 m per year. This directly affects infrastructure and detracts from the amenity value of the coastline.

Drought

According to the CSIR Green Book, Bitou has a High potential exposure to an increase in drought. Currently 1.9 years per decade are at risk of drought, and this will increase to 3.1 out of every 10 years by 2050. Water, and related sanitation services, is a key ingredient for socioeconomic development, food security and healthy ecosystems, and is vital for reducing the burden of disease and improving the health, welfare and productivity of populations. A deteriorating water catchment system, through ecosystem loss (transformation or land use change) and alien infestation, or watercourse and wetland modification, will lead to lower inputs into the water supply systems, and a lower overall water security due to lower natural retention and lower quality of water. During extended drought periods, even end users far from major source areas are likely to experience shortages as the overall system runs low.

Temperatures

Average temperature has been increasing since the 1900s. Projections indicate that Bitou can expect an additional 19 extremely hot days per year by 2050, which will affect food security, exposure to extreme heat, health and water quality.

Vegetation Fires

Although critical for a healthy ecosystem, fire is a significant threat to human lives, food security, socio-economic activities and livelihoods, as well as infrastructure and other assets. Furthermore, in many areas land has been converted from natural vegetation to other land-cover types - some of which significantly modify the fuel loads (e.g., the establishment of forest plantations and the spread of several introduced tree species such as pines, hakea, wattles and eucalypts). Fires in vegetation with high fuel loads increase soil erosion and run-off, which negatively affects ecosystem services and increases the impact of floods, among other factors. Where severe fires have occurred due to high fuel loads, resulting soil erosion leads to the sedimentation of rivers and dams and therefore declining water quality (and increased water treatment costs).

Floods

Floods result in millions or billions of Rands' damage to built structures or lost productivity, the loss of livelihoods and in some cases the loss of lives. A 2016 report calculated that four severe weather events between 2011 and 2014 caused more than R1.6 billion worth of damage in the Western Cape, and in the recent September 2023 severe weather event, flood-related infrastructure damage alone amounted to R2 billion. Flooding is also one of the main disaster risks affected by climate change. Changes in rainfall volume, intensity and timing will alter flood risk profiles, and necessitate a constant reconsideration of risks and risk reduction measures.

The substantial population growth in Bitou has the potential to pose significant challenges in delivering essential services, as the increased number of residents will place greater demands on resources such as food, water, housing, energy, healthcare, transportation, and more.

Bitou stands out as the area experiencing the most substantial estimated urbanisation, which, in turn, has resulted in increased dropout rates among students.

Furthermore, the absence of district or regional hospitals in the municipal area raises concerns about healthcare access.

Bitou Municipality also exhibits elevated inequality, with a Gini coefficient of 0.65 in the same year.

In the Bitou municipal area, there has been a noteworthy increase in the number of households receiving free basic services, rising from 1 891 in 2018 to 3 404 in 2021, which places additional pressure on the municipality's revenue sources.

The number of murders in Bitou increased from 12 in 2021 to 17 in 2022, which is concerning. Additionally, drug-related crimes in the Bitou area rose from 247 cases in 2021 to 325 cases in 2022.

The Bitou municipal area's economy faced significant challenges due to its reliance on tourism, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to a substantial contraction of 5.8 per cent in 2020. However, the economy began to recover, expanding by 2.8 per cent in 2021, with further growth anticipated for 2022.

Given the prominence of the finance, trade and general government sectors, there is a growing demand for semi-skilled and skilled workers in these industries. Wage distribution data in Bitou reflects pronounced income inequality and disparities.

1. Demographics

- Population: *Department of Social Development, 2023; Census 2022*
- Sex ratio: *Department of Social Development, 2023*
- Age cohorts: *Department of Social Development, 2023*
- Number of households: *Department of Social Development, 2023*
- Household size: *Department of Social Development, 2023*
- Urbanisation: *Department of Social Development, 2023*
- Population density: *Department of Social Development, 2023*

2. Education

- Learner enrolment: *Western Cape Education Department, 2021; Annual Survey of Public and Independent Schools (ASS), 2023*
- Learner-teacher ratio: *Western Cape Education Department, 2020; Annual Survey of Public and Independent Schools (ASS), 2023*
- Learner retention: *Western Cape Education Department, 2020; Annual Survey of Public and Independent Schools (ASS), 2023*
- Educational facilities: *Western Cape Education Department, 2020; Annual Survey of Public and Independent Schools (ASS), 2023*
- No-fee schools: *Western Cape Education Department, 2020; Annual Survey of Public and Independent Schools (ASS), 2023*
- Schools with libraries: *Western Cape Education Department, 2020; Annual Survey of Public and Independent Schools (ASS), 2023*
- Educational outcomes: *Western Cape Education Department, 2020; Annual Survey of Public and Independent Schools (ASS), 2023*

3. Health

- Healthcare facilities: *Department of Health and Wellness, 2023*
- Emergency medical services: *Department of Health and Wellness, 2023*
- HIV/AIDS: *Department of Health and Wellness, 2023*
- Tuberculosis: *Department of Health and Wellness, 2023*
- Child health: *Department of Health and Wellness, 2023*
- Maternal health: *Department of Health and Wellness, 2023*

4. Poverty

- GDP per capita: *Statistics South Africa, 2023*
- Income Inequality (Gini-coefficient): *Quantec Research, 2023*
- Human Development (Human Development Index): *Quantec Research, 2023*

5. Basic services

- Households: Quantec Research, 2023
- Access to housing: Quantec Research, 2023
- Access to water: Quantec Research, 2023
- Access to electricity: Quantec Research, 2023
- Access to sanitation: Quantec Research, 2023
- Access to refuse removal: Quantec Research, 2023
- Free Basic Services: *Statistics South Africa, Non-Financial Census of Municipalities 2020*

6. Safety and security

- Murder: *South African Police Service (SAPS), 2023, own calculations*
- Sexual offences: *South African Police Service (SAPS), 2023, own calculations*
- Drug-related crimes: *South African Police Service (SAPS), 2023, own calculations*
- Driving under the influence: *South African Police Service (SAPS), 2023, own calculations*
- Residential burglaries: *South African Police Service (SAPS), 2020, 2023 calculations*

7. GDPR Performance

- GDPR Sector Performance: *Quantec Research, 2023*
- GDPR Forecasts: *Quantec Research, 2023*
- *International Trade: Quantec Research, 2023*
- *Tourism spend: S&P Global, 2023*

8. Labour Market Performance

- Wage distribution: *Nell, A. Visagie, J. Spatial Tax Panel 2014-2022 [dataset]. Version 3. National Treasury - Cities Support Programme and Human Sciences Research Council [producer and distributor], 2023.*
- Formal Employment: *Nell, A. Visagie, J. Spatial Tax Panel 2014-2022 [dataset]. Version 3. National Treasury - Cities Support Programme and Human Sciences Research Council [producer and distributor], 2023.*
- Trends in labour force skills: *Quantec Research, 2023*
- Unemployment rates: *Quantec Research, 2023*