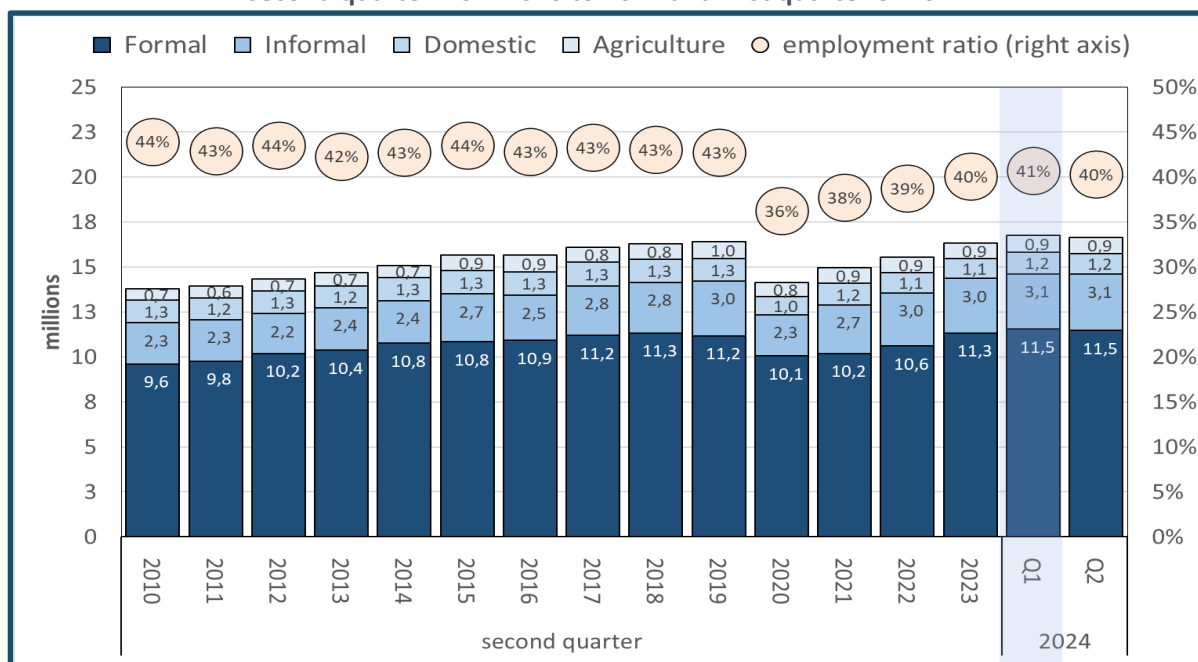


## Employment

In the year to the second quarter of 2024, employment reportedly expanded by just over 300 000 or almost 2% – far faster than reported GDP growth. The informal sector saw the most rapid growth, expanding by 3.3% compared to just 1.2% for the formal sector. As a result, the share of adults with paid employment stabilised at 40%, still well below pre-pandemic figures and far lower than the global norm of 60%. Manufacturing employment recovered from steep job losses in mid-2023, gaining 100 000 jobs year on year.

In the year to the second quarter of 2024, the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) found that total employment increased by 311 000 jobs, or 1.9%, to reach a total of 16.7 million (Graph 6) The QLFS is not seasonally adjusted, and quarter-on-quarter changes are largely seasonal. The formal sector gained 140 000 new positions, or 1.2%. In contrast, the much smaller informal sector expanded by 100 000, for growth of 3.3%. Domestic work gained 67 000 jobs, or 6.1%, increasing its total to 1.2 million compared to 1.3 million in 2019, before the pandemic. Agriculture remained essentially unchanged.

**Graph 6. Second quarter employment by type of employer, and the employment ratio (a), second quarter from 2010 to 2024 and first quarter of 2024**



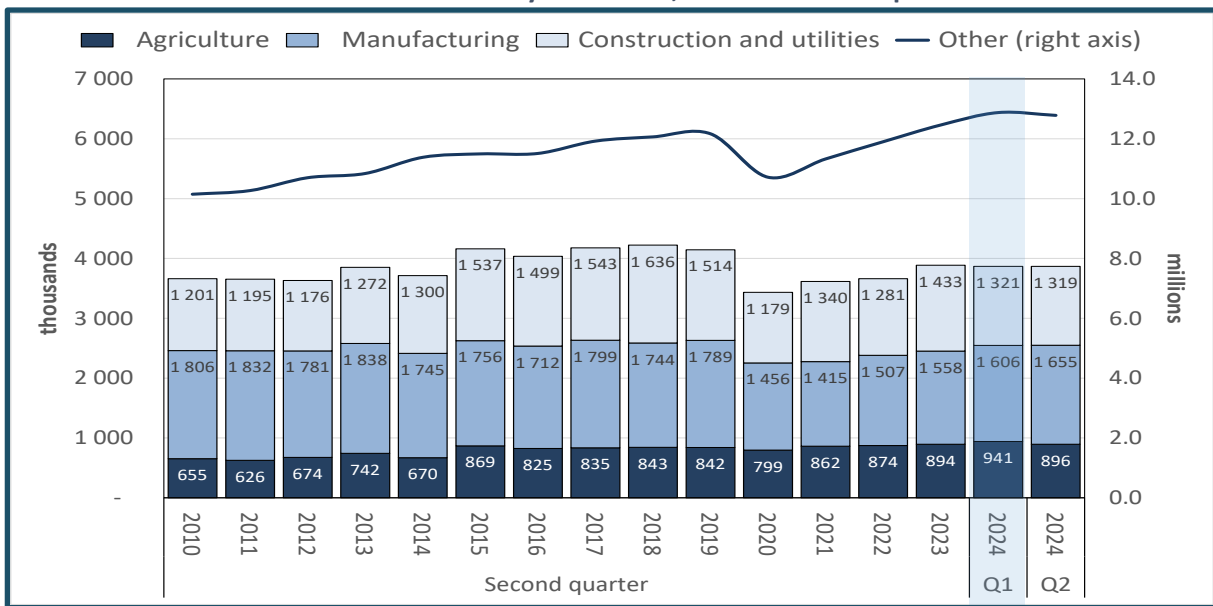
Note: (a) The employment ratio equals employed as percentage of total working aged population.

Source: Calculated from Statistics South Africa. QLFS Trends 2008-2024Q2. Excel spreadsheet.

Employment in the second quarter of 2024 was slightly higher than in the second quarter of 2019, before the pandemic, following the loss of 2.3 million jobs in the second quarter of 2020. The share of adults with employment reached 40%, 0.5% higher than a year earlier. That was the same as a year earlier, and still well below pre-pandemic rates, as job creation lagged the growth in the adult population since 2020.

Manufacturing gained almost 100 000 jobs in the year to June 2024 according to the QLFS. Construction lost the same number of jobs, however, for an 8% decline over the year. Together, these sectors employed approximately 300 000 fewer people than before the pandemic. In contrast, the rest of the economy, made up mostly of private and personal services, retail, logistics and social services, gained 320 000 jobs, or 2.6% in the year to June 2024.

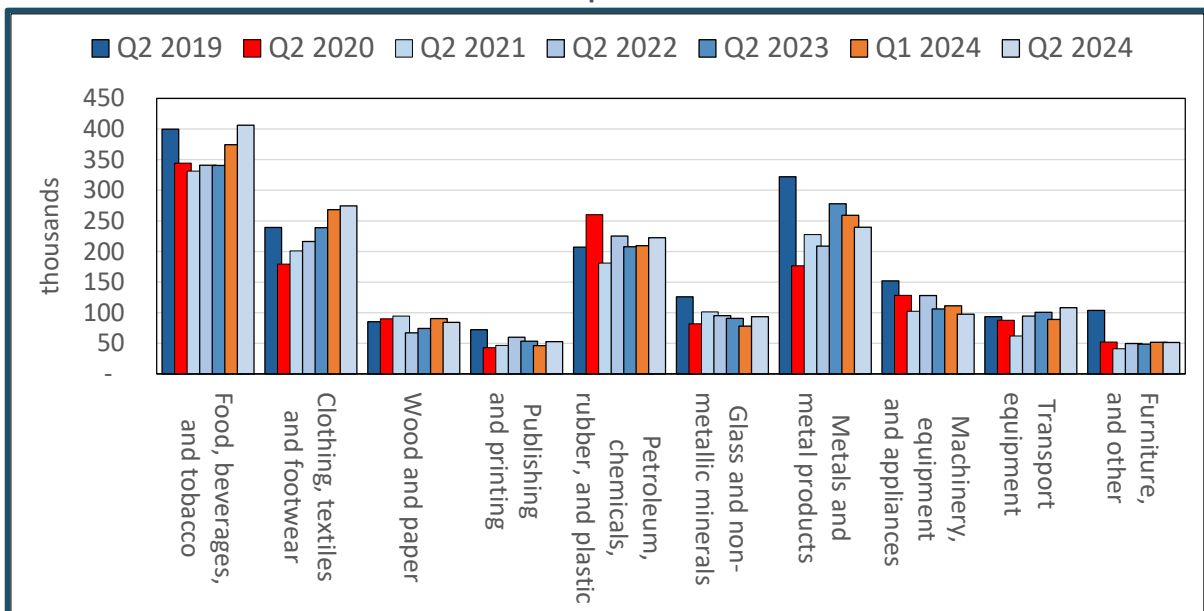
**Graph 7. Employment in agriculture, manufacturing and utilities and construction, in thousands, and in the rest of the economy in millions, 2010 to second quarter 2024**



Source: Calculated from Statistics South Africa. QLFS Trends 2008-2024Q2. Excel spreadsheet.

Within manufacturing, food processing accounted for two thirds of job gains in the year to the second quarter of 2024. Clothing and textiles made up most of the rest. In contrast, metals and metal products saw significant net job losses. Employment in machinery and equipment also shrank. Employment in most of heavy industry remains below pre-pandemic levels, but clothing and food processing have more than recovered from the lockdown in the second quarter of 2020.

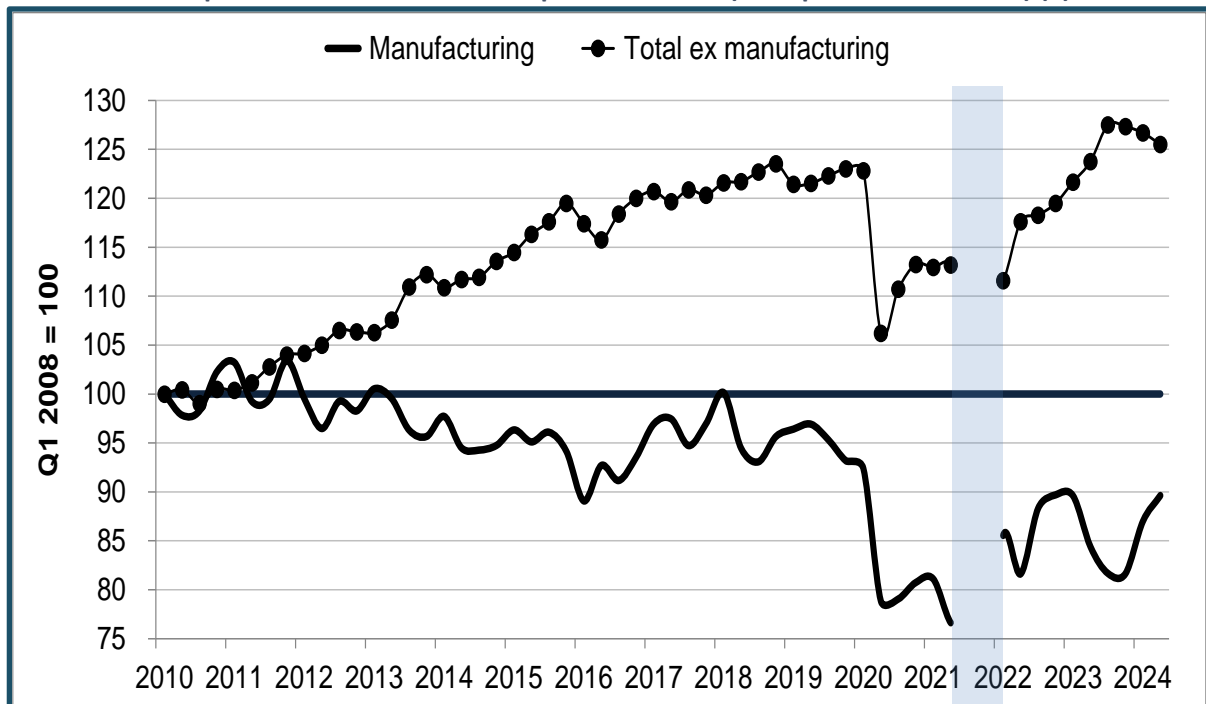
**Graph 8. Employment in manufacturing industries, second quarter 2020 to 2024 and first quarter 2024**



Source: Calculated from Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Labour Force Survey for relevant quarters. Electronic databases.

Although manufacturing recovered from a sharp dip in 2023 by mid-2024, it remained more than 5% below pre-pandemic levels. In contrast, the rest of the economy has lost jobs for the past four months, but it is still slightly higher than in 2019, before the pandemic downturn. Overall, manufacturing has lost jobs since 2010, while the rest of the economy has gained positions, mostly in services and agriculture. (Graph 9)

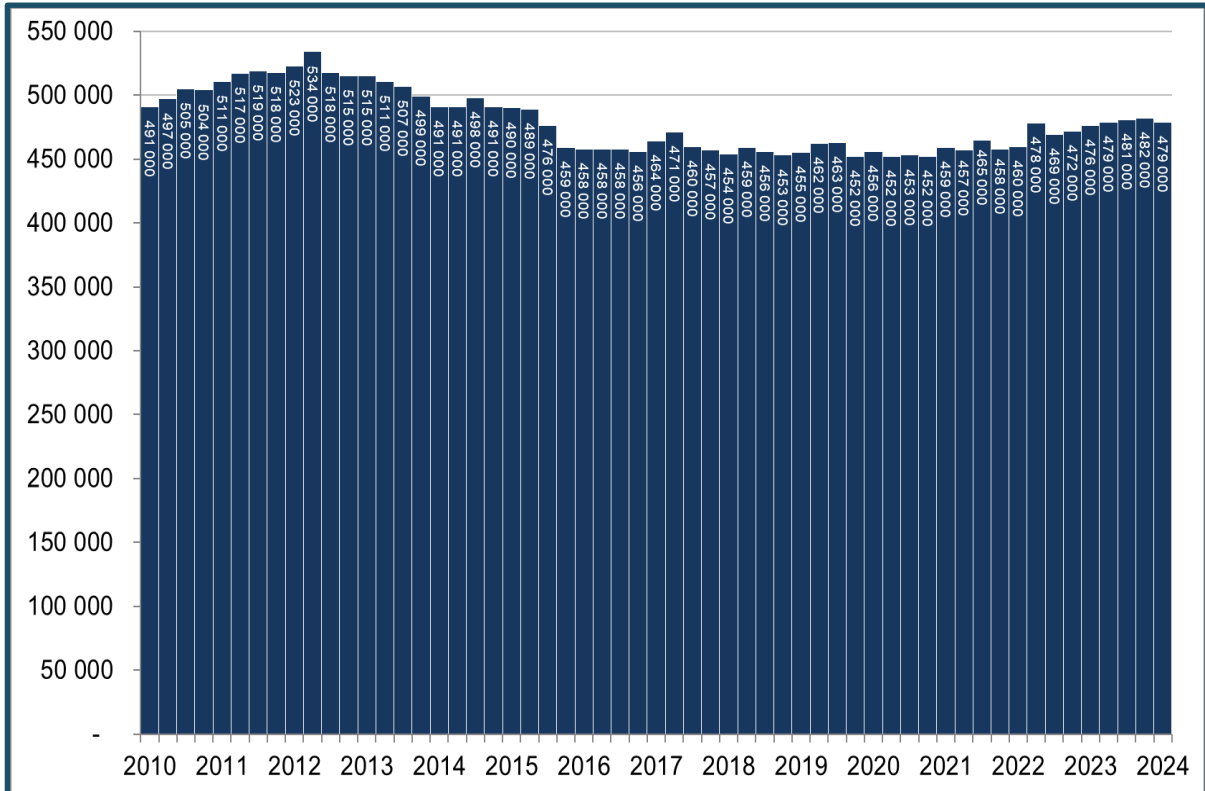
**Graph 9. Index of employment in manufacturing and the rest of the economy, first quarter 2010 to the second quarter of 2024 (first quarter 2010 = 100) (a)**



*Note: (a) Response rates for the QLFS were extremely low in the second half of 2021, and the figures for that period are therefore highly unreliable and excluded from the graph. Source: Calculated from Statistics South Africa. QLFS for relevant quarters. Electronic databases.*

For data on mining employment, Statistics South Africa recommends the survey of formal businesses, the Quarterly Employment Survey, rather than the QLFS, which samples households. However, the Quarterly Employment Survey is published a quarter behind the QLFS. It found that mining employment was essentially flat in the year to the first quarter of 2024, following a period of steady although slow expansion from 2020. (Graph 10) The flattening out in mining employment presumably reflected, at least in part, the fall in mining prices from mid-2023.

**Graph 10. Mining employment, first quarter 2010 to first quarter 2024**



Source: Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Employment Statistics. Detailed breakdown.  
 First quarter 2024 Excel spreadsheet.