



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



PROVINCIAL PROFILES 2025 NCOP PROVINCIAL WEEK

MPUMALANGA

**Building Viable Municipalities for
Enhanced Delivery of Basic
Services to Communities.**

November 2025



PROVINCIAL PROFILES: MPUMALANGA 2025 NCOP PROVINCIAL WEEK

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PROVINCIAL PROFILES: MPUMALANGA 2025 P PROVINCIAL WEEK

1. BACKGROUND

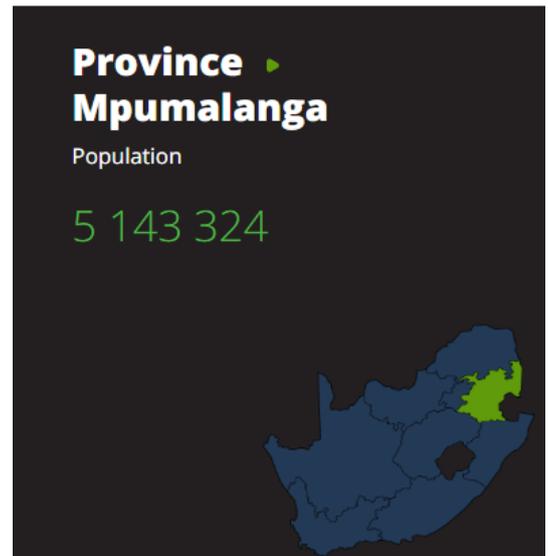
Mpumalanga is a province in the northeastern part of South Africa.

The name Mpumalanga means "Place of the Rising Sun," symbolizing its position in the east of South Africa. It borders the countries of Mozambique and Eswatini to the east and the South African provinces of Limpopo to the north, Gauteng to the west, Free State to the southwest, and KwaZulu-Natal to the south.¹

The capital city is Mbombela (formerly Nelspruit).

Mpumalanga is a diverse but predominantly African population with several dominant indigenous languages spoken widely across the province.

siSwati is spoken by about 30% of the population, reflecting cultural ties to neighbouring Eswatini.² isiZulu is spoken by approximately 26% of the population, isiNdebele speakers account for 10.3% of the population, and Sepedi and Xitsonga are spoken by roughly 10.2% and 11.6% of the population respectively.³



Source: Statistics South Africa, Census 2022

2. GEOGRAPHY

The province covers an area of about 76,495 square kilometres, making it the second-smallest province after Gauteng, but it has the fourth-largest economy in the country.⁴ Its major geographic regions can be divided into three main areas:⁵

The Highveld: This is the high-altitude plateau region in the western part of Mpumalanga, ranging between 1,200 to 1,800 meters elevation. It consists mainly of grasslands and savannas.

¹ Mpumalanga Provincial Government

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Mpumalanga Provincial Government. (2018).

The Drakensberg Escarpment: This mountainous region lies to the northeast of the Highveld, with elevations exceeding 2,000 meters. The escarpment is known for alpine grasslands, deep valleys, and pockets of Afromontane forests.

The Lowveld: Located east of the escarpment, the Lowveld is a bush-clad plain with low altitude. It slopes gently towards the Lebombo Mountains along the Mozambique border and includes the southern part of Kruger National Park.

3. DEMOGRAPHY

According to the official 2022 South African census, the Mpumalanga province had a total population of 5,14 million people.⁶ This is a notable increase from the previous census in 2011, when the population was recorded at 4,04 million.⁷ The 2022 census data reflect a growth rate of about 2.3% per annum between 2011 and 2022.⁸

The province is home to about 8.3% of South Africa's total population. Children aged 0-14 years make up about 28% of the province's population. In 2022, this totalled about 1.46 million children. This proportion has decreased from the 31.2% recorded in 2011.

About two thirds of the population (66%) is of working age (15-64 years), while about 5% of persons of retirement age (65+ years) reside within the provincial borders. The proportion of elderly persons increased from 4.7% of the provincial population, as recorded in 2011.

The provincial dependency ration (persons of non-working age as a proportion of the total population) has declined significantly between 2022 and 2011. In 2022, it stood at 50.6% of the population, compared to 56.0% in 2011. This is mainly due to a lower proportion of children under the age of 15 years. The provincial **dependency ration is slightly below the national rate** of 48.4%, but still far removed from that of provinces such as Gauteng (38.9%) and the Western Cape (42.4%).

The gender distribution recorded in 2022, was 48% male and 52% female.

⁶ Statistics South Africa. (2022).

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

4. GOVERNANCE

Mpumalanga is divided into three district municipalities which are the Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala District Municipalities (DMs). These districts are further subdivided into 17 local municipalities, responsible for local governance and service delivery.

Ehlanzeni DM host the highest population (about 1.75 million people in 2022), followed by Nkangala DM (about 1.45 million) and Gert Sibande DM (about 1.14 million in 2022).

About 59% of Mpumalanga's population resides in rural areas, reflecting its predominantly agrarian and traditional lifestyle base. The remaining 41% live in urban centres and towns, with urbanisation increasing over recent years due to migration and development in local municipalities such as Mbombela, Ehlanzeni, and Emalahleni.⁹



Source: Statistics South Africa

5. ECONOMIC PROFILE

Mpumalanga Province is the fourth-largest economy in South Africa, contributing around 7.7% to the national GDP as of 2024.

The province's economy is diverse, with **key sectors including mining, manufacturing, agriculture (including forestry and fishing), energy, tourism and services.** Moreover, the province is **rich in coal reserves and home to South Africa's major coal-fired power stations.** **eMalahleni is the biggest coal producer in Africa** and is also the site of the country's second largest oil-from-coal plant after Sasolburg.

Most of the **manufacturing production in Mpumalanga occurs in the southern Highveld region.** In the **Lowveld sub-region, industries are concentrated around the manufacturing of products from agricultural and raw forestry material.**¹⁰

In 2023, sectors in Mpumalanga accounted for 40% of the provincial GDP compared to 27% at the national level. Mining is the largest economic sector in the province, accounting

⁹ Statistics South Africa (2022).

¹⁰ Mpumalanga Provincial Government.

for 20% of provincial output, followed by manufacturing with 14%. Agriculture accounted for 4% and construction 2%. The share of mining in Mpumalanga's GDP declined by 4% from 2021 to 2023.¹¹

Table 1: GDP growth rates per industry at market prices (constant 2015 prices), 2023-2024

| Industry | Year-on-Year | Quarter-on-Quarter – seasonally adjusted | | | | Year-on-year |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| | 2023 | Q1 2024 | Q2 2024 | Q3 2024 | Q4 2024 | 2024 |
| Agriculture ¹ | -4.8% | 14.1% | -3.4% | -19.7% | 17.2% | -8.0% |
| Mining ² | -0.5% | -1.2% | -0.7% | 0.8% | -0.2% | 0.3% |
| Manufacturing ³ | 0.3% | -1.2% | 0.8% | 0.3% | -0.6% | -0.5% |
| Utilities ⁴ | -4.0% | -0.2% | 2.3% | 1.3% | -1.4% | 3.5% |
| Construction ⁵ | -0.1% | -2.8% | 0.2% | 0.8% | -0.4% | -5.1% |
| Trade ⁶ | -1.8% | 0.5% | 0.7% | -0.6% | 1.4% | -1.4% |
| Transport ⁷ | 4.1% | -0.7% | -3.1% | -0.5% | -1.0% | -1.3% |
| Finance ⁸ | 1.6% | 0.1% | 1.7% | 1.2% | 1.1% | 3.5% |
| Government services ⁹ | 0.5% | -0.2% | 0.3% | -0.1% | -0.5% | -0.1% |
| Personal services ¹⁰ | 1.8% | 0.0% | 0.1% | 0.6% | -0.2% | 1.7% |
| Total | 0.7% | 0.1% | 0.3% | -0.1% | 0.6% | 0.6% |

Source: Statistics SA (Stats SA) – GDP, 2025

The **economic growth rate has varied significantly across different industries (Table 1)**. Finance was the only industry to avoid any quarterly contractions. In contrast, transport experienced four quarterly contractions, while mining and government services each recorded three quarters of contraction in 2024. GDP grew by 0.6% in 2024, which was even slower than the modest growth of 0.7% in 2023.

6. THE STATE OF MUNICIPALITIES IN THE PROVINCES AND DISTRICT

According to the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), municipalities are facing significant challenges, particularly regarding financial stability and service delivery. **Municipalities are under pressure due to underfunded mandates, unreliable revenue collection, weak economic conditions, and systemic barriers**, with some rural areas on the brink of collapse.¹² Also, as reported by COGTA, municipalities are characterized by significant challenges, including poor audit outcomes, financial mismanagement, collapsing service delivery, and high levels of irregular expenditure.¹³

In the case of Mpumalanga, local municipalities and district municipalities are dealing with **multiple governance and service delivery challenges**. This is evident through the five municipalities that are under Section 139 interventions indicating ongoing governance and financial difficulties. These municipalities that are under **Section 139 intervention in 2025**

¹¹ Provincial Review (2024).

¹² SALGA (2020) Municipal Support and intervention Model

¹³ Parliament of South Africa (20250).

are, Emalahleni Local Municipality, Govan Mbeki Local Municipality, Msukaligwa Local Municipality, Thaba Chweu Local Municipality and Lekwa Local Municipality.

These interventions have often been reactive and ineffective in achieving sustainable improvements, with municipalities caught in cycles of financial distress, poor oversight, and service delivery breakdowns.¹⁴

Table 2: List of Mpumalanga's municipalities with selected indicators

| Municipality | Local / District | District | Leadership * | Effective risk management ** | Audit outcomes | Going concern risk | Deficit for the year*** | Human resource capacity gaps |
|--|------------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bushbuckridge Local Municipality | LM | Ehlanzeni | Intervention required | In progress | Unqualified with findings | | | |
| Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality | LM | Gert Sibande | In progress | Good | Qualified with findings | | | YES |
| City of Mbombela Local Municipality | LM | Ehlanzeni | In progress | In progress | Unqualified with findings | YES | YES | YES |
| Dipaleseng Local Municipality | LM | Gert Sibande | Intervention required | Intervention required | Qualified with findings | | | YES |
| Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality | LM | Nkangala | Intervention required | In progress | Qualified with findings | | | YES |
| Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality (also called Pixley ka Seme Local Municipality) | LM | Gert Sibande | In progress | In progress | Unqualified with findings | | YES | YES |
| Ehlanzeni District Municipality | DM | N/A | Good | Good | Unqualified with no findings | | YES | |
| Emakhazeni Local Municipality | LM | Nkangala | Intervention required | Intervention required | Adverse with findings | | | |
| Emalahleni Local Municipality | LM | Nkangala | Intervention required | In progress | Qualified with findings | YES | YES | YES |
| Gert Sibande District Municipality | DM | N/A | Good | Good | Unqualified with findings | | | |
| Govan Mbeki Local Municipality | LM | Gert Sibande | Intervention required | Intervention required | Qualified with findings | YES | YES | YES |
| Lekwa Local Municipality | LM | Gert Sibande | Intervention required | Intervention required | | YES | | |
| Mkhondo Local Municipality | LM | Gert Sibande | In progress | In progress | Unqualified with findings | | YES | YES |
| Msukaligwa Local Municipality | LM | Gert Sibande | In progress | In progress | Qualified with findings | | | |
| Nkangala District Municipality | DM | N/A | Good | Good | Unqualified with no findings | | | |
| Nkomazi Local Municipality | LM | Ehlanzeni | In progress | In progress | Unqualified with findings | | | |
| Steve Tshwete Local Municipality | LM | Nkangala | Good | Good | Unqualified with findings | | YES | YES |
| Thaba Chweu Local Municipality | LM | Ehlanzeni | In progress | In progress | Unqualified with findings | YES | YES | YES |
| Thembisile Hani Local Municipality | LM | Nkangala | In progress | Good | Unqualified with findings | | | |
| Victor Khanye Local Municipality | LM | Nkangala | In progress | In progress | Qualified with findings | | YES | YES |
| TOTAL | 20 | 3 | | | | 5 | 9 | 11 |

Source: Statistics South Africa, 2016; Auditor General South Africa, 2022¹⁵

Steve Tshwete and Thaba Chweu LMs both regressed from unqualified with findings audit outcomes.¹⁶ While Ehlanzeni and Nkangala district municipalities sustained their clean audits.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Just Urban Transition

¹⁶ Auditor General (2022/2023)

The table indicates that 7 Municipalities including Bush Buckridge Local Municipality, Dipaleseng Local Municipality and Dr JC Moroka Local Municipality need leadership intervention.

Nkangala District Municipality

The **Nkangala District Municipality is a Category C** municipality located in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa, being the smallest of the three districts in the province, covering about 22% of its geographical area with 16,758 km². **It comprises six local municipalities:** Victor Khanye, Emalaheni, Steve Tshwete, Emakhazeni, Thembisile Hani, and Dr JS Moroka, with its administrative headquarters situated in Middelburg.¹⁷

The district population is approximately **1.3 million people**, constituting around 32.38% of Mpumalanga's population. It has a relatively **young population with about 27.3-28.5%** under 15 years old, and the **unemployment rate stands at around 30%**, with youth **unemployment notably higher at approximately 39.6%**. The district faces challenges of poverty and unemployment, especially in rural areas.

Catalytic development projects funded or planned include:

- Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme (R1.98 billion, 35% complete) and related water infrastructure to address supply challenges.
- Rehabilitation of critical coal haulage roads ranging from R133 million to R352 million, supporting mining logistics.
- Integrated human settlement upgrades with construction of thousands of housing units (R48 million budget for informal settlement upgrades).
- Investments in industrial hubs such as steel and metal fabrication, biogas, glass recycling, SME hubs, and fresh produce markets to diversify the local economy.
- Proposed establishment of the Nkangala International Airport and various green economy and manufacturing plants targeting innovation and job creation.

Emakhazeni Local Municipality

Emakhazeni Local Municipality is a Category B municipality located within the Nkangala District in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. It is the **largest of the six municipalities** in Nkangala, **covering about 4,736 km²**. The municipality is surrounded by Mbombela Local Municipality to the east and Steve Tshwete Local Municipality to the west. The municipality includes four main towns: **Emakhazeni (Belfast), Dullstroom, eNtokozweni (Machadodorp), and Emgwenya (Waterval Boven)**. Like many municipalities in South Africa, Emakhazeni faces challenges related to service delivery, including water, sanitation, and infrastructure maintenance.

Highlighted projects include:

¹⁷ Mpumalanga Provincial Government

- **Siyathuthuka Brick Plant Project:** A catalytic economic project with a budget of R10 million, currently 40% complete. It aims to stimulate local industrial growth.
- **High Altitude Training Centre:** Pre-construction phase with a budget of R1.2 billion, dedicated to sports and athletic development, potentially boosting tourism and youth engagement.
- **Water and Sanitation Upgrades:** Multiple projects such as reticulation and connection of yard meters (R30.4 million), construction and refurbishment of wastewater treatment work, and upgrading of bulk water supply schemes in line with the broader Nkangala District water projects (including the Loskop Regional Bulk Water Scheme with a budget of R1.98 billion).
- **Land Acquisition and Township Establishment:** Projects worth approximately R29.6 million for human settlements including land acquisition and township servicing to address housing needs.
- **Integrated Human Settlements in Rondebosch:** Planning phase with a budget of R20 million aimed at expanding housing and community facilities.
- **Road and Infrastructure Upgrades:** Betterment of roads and bulk sewer infrastructure alongside various public infrastructure investments.

7. HUMAN SETTLEMENT PROJECTS

The Department, through the Housing Assets Management Programme, managed to register 2 393 title deeds against an annual target of 3 700.¹⁸ Furthermore, the Mpumalanga Department of Human Settlements is actively engaged in several housing projects as part of their 2025/2026 plans focusing on delivering integrated, sustainable human settlements with various initiatives such as:

- The plan to deliver approximately 3,347 housing units and service 5,782 sites across the province in multiple towns including **Secunda, Mbombela, Victor Khanye, Nkomazi, Msukaligwa, and Steve Tshwete**. These projects include integrated human settlements and upgrading of informal settlements by installing bulk infrastructure and servicing sites in areas like KwaZamokuhle and eMalahleni.¹⁹
- The Department is launching informal settlements re-blocking programmes to improve access roads, pedestrian paths, and communal services such as taps and toilets. This will begin in Dipaliseng Municipality covering settlements like **Thembi Khumalo, Thembaletu, Joe Slovo, Mandela, and others**.²⁰
- There are also plans for smart city developments with housing opportunities such as Acorn City (450 units) and Hospital View (4,700 units) in Bushbuckridge, plus Nkosi

¹⁸ Department of Human Settlement. Annual Report (2023/2024).

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

City in Mbombela (3,471 units) and the proposed **SEZ Smart City** with 14,821 housing opportunities covering Nkomazi, Bushbuckridge, Mbombela, and Thembisile Hani.²¹

8. ROADS AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Department of Public Works Roads and Transport (DPWRT) is an implementing agent for all departments (except the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Department of Human Settlements, and Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs). The Department plans to complete a total of **two-hundred and sixty (260) projects in the 2024-2025 financial year**. This comprises **seventy-eight (78) projects** under planning and design, and **one-hundred and eighty-two (182) projects under construction** (both public and transport infrastructure)²²

The AGSA performed audit procedures on the performance information of the Department, and the results were as follows:

Table 3: Summary of the Mpumalanga Department's Performance per Programme

 = Achieved (100% and above)  = In progress (80-99%)  = Not achieved (0% - 79%)

| Programme | Targets in the APP | Targets Achieved | In Progress | Targets Not Achieved | % of Targets Achieved |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Administration | 9 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 78% |
| 2. Public Works Infrastructure | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 75% |
| 3. Transport Infrastructure | 12 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 58% |
| 4. Transport Operations | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 83% |
| 5. Community Based Programmes | 7 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 43% |
| Total | 42 | 28 | 4 | 10 | (67%) |

A total of **42 performance targets were set** in the APP, of which **28 were achieved as planned**. This translates to an overall performance achievement of 67% of the total planned targets for the 2023/2024 financial year.²³

It should be noted that the DPWRT in Mpumalanga has not recorded any projects that have been abandoned during the year 2023/2024. However, some **projects were delayed due to budget constraints and reported incompetency of contractors**. Meanwhile, **most of the projects have not been completed at the desired time frame due to varied reasons relating to insufficient budget, incompetent contractors, community unrest, and**

²¹ Ibid

²² Parliament of South Africa (2024)

²³ DPWRT Annual Report (2023/2024).

construction mafia and local road upgrades. There is a reprioritization of about R286.4 million aimed at roads and building maintenance services.²⁴

Through the public works programme, **130 building infrastructure** projects were completed on behalf of the following client departments: **education (101), health (6), social development (5) and culture sport & recreation (18).**

The provincial government's energy efficiency programme began in earnest in 2016 with the replacement of fluorescent light bulbs with LED lighting. In 2023/24, more renewables and efficient technologies were persuaded which included **installation of solar panels at Riverside Government Complex (RGC) and Mmamethlake Hospital.** Although both projects are multi-year, significant progress, **(95%) was recorded at the construction of solar plant at the hospital.** These projects are part of the provincial government's grand plan to develop a sustainable energy mix for state owned facilities.

Apart from social infrastructure, DPWRT is also responsible for the rollout of economic (i.e. roads) infrastructure. Over the past years, 11 capital infrastructure projects and several road maintenance activities such as patching of **potholes, reseal of surfaced roads, re-graveling and blading of gravel roads were completed across Mpumalanga.** These achievements include **3 bridges under the Welisizwe Rural Bridge Programme** which reflect government's balanced approach to ensure urban and rural development.

Table 4: Areas and reasons reported for underperformance

| Area of under-performance | Reasons for under-performance | Strategies to overcome area of under performance |
|--|---|---|
| Upgrading of gravel roads to surfaced roads (paving) | Project implementation was delayed due to budget cuts and/or limitations. | Paving of Road D567 in Moloto Village (Phase 4) was deferred to the 2024/25 financial year. |
| Construction of IRMA projects | Projects were not completed due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cashflow and rainfall challenges on Daggakraal Culvert (D282). ▪ Cashflow and resource capacity challenges on Gomora culvert (D2946). ▪ Theft of material and diesel on Wittenburg culvert. | Projects will be closely monitored to ensure achievement in the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daggakraal culvert is 85% completed and planned for completion in April 2024. ▪ Gomora Culvert is 98% complete and planned for completion in April 2024. ▪ Wittenburg culvert is 75% complete and planned for completion in August 2024. |
| Construction of Welisizwe bridges | Delays in assessments/ verification of bridge sites by the NDPW and SANDF. | The SANDF's construction team will commence in other municipalities once all 4 projects in Thembisile Hani is completed (3 of 4 completed). |
| Surfaced roads resealed | Contractor cashflow challenges. | Cession agreements between supplier and contractor and works to be completed in the next financial year 2024/25. |
| Blading of gravel roads | Shortage of grader operators. | Request to fill additional posts in the 2024/25 financial year. |

Strategies to overcome areas of under performance

The following key projects are underway or planned by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure Development in Mpumalanga:

²⁴ Ibid

- **Upgrading and construction** of several bridges including the bridge connecting **Driekoppies and Schoemansdal** (estimated cost R123 million) and the **eMalahleni Bridge** (estimated cost R87.5 million) designed to improve access, safety, and traffic flow.
- Construction and planning of major health infrastructure such as the **Linah Malatjie Tertiary Hospital in Emalahleni** with an estimated cost of R3.2 billion.
- **Completion of the Mpumalanga Parliamentary Village**, a construction project currently about 73% complete with a budget of about R481 million.
- **Road rehabilitation and upgrading projects**, including:
 - Rehabilitation of **Road D2950 from R571** past Mananga River Crossing in Nkomazi (6 km), with an 88% completion rate and budget of R138.7 million.
 - Upgrading of **Road D935 from Nokaneng through Katjibane** to the **Limpopo Border** (9.5 km), currently halted but planned in phases depending on budget availability.

9. BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY

9.1 Access to Basic Services

Water services

Census 2022 indicates that in Mpumalanga, **Gert Sibande (87.6%)** district reported the highest proportion of households that **had access to piped water in the province in 2022**, followed by **Nkangala and Ehlanzeni district at 82% and 70,9%** respectively. However, **Ehlanzeni district recorded the highest increase, from 57.8% in 2011 to 70.9% in 2022**, showing an **increase of 13.1%** in just over 10 years.

City of Mbombela, the largest local municipality by number of households reported the least proportion of households that **had access to piped water in 2022 at 66,8%** followed by **Dr JS Moroka local municipality at 67.9%**. On the other hand, **Emakhazeni, Govan Mbeki and Lekwa local municipalities** reported the highest access to piped water in the province at **over 93% on average**.

Sanitation

Access to flush toilets by households in South Africa increased by almost 11% between 2011 and 2022, from 60.1% to 70.8%.

Mpumalanga province had the **third lowest proportion of households that had access to a flush toilet in 2011 at 43.8%**, which was only higher than Limpopo (21.9%) and Eastern Cape (43%) and much lower than the national average that stood at 60.1%. Nevertheless, **the province recorded an 11,1-percentage point increase between 2011 and 2022 in the**

proportion of households that had access to a flush toilet. However, in 2022 the province had the second lowest proportion of households that had access to a flush toilet, the lowest was Limpopo at 35.2%.

At district and local municipality level for 2022, results indicate that over **half (54.9%) of the households in Mpumalanga** used a flush toilet, while **27.9% and 10.7% used pit toilet without ventilation pipe and pit toilet with ventilation pipe (VIP)**, respectively. **1.7% of the households in the province reported that they had no toilet facility**, while **1,3% reported using “other” types of facilities**. **The Gert Sibande district recorded the highest proportion of households that had access to flush toilets at 73.2%**, while the **Ehlanzeni district reported the lowest at 36,4%**. Furthermore, **Ehlanzeni district reported the highest proportion of households using pit toilets without ventilation at 39,5%** followed by Nkangala district at 26.3%.

When it comes to local municipalities, **Emakhazeni and Govan Mbeki reported the highest access to a flush toilet at 93% and 92%**, On the other hand, **Bushbuckridge and Nkomazi, both in the Ehlanzeni district, reported the lowest proportion of households using the flush toilet, at 23.4% and 26,7%**. Furthermore, **1.2% of the households in the province still used the bucket toilet, with the highest reported in the Steve Tshwete local municipality at 2.2% in 2022**.

Electricity

Access to electricity in Mpumalanga has improved significantly over the years, with statistics showing an increase from **86.4% of households having electricity in 2011** to approximately **93.7% in 2022**.²⁵ As of 2025, around **94% of households are connected to electricity** in the province, indicating a substantial majority have access to this basic service²⁶.

According to Census 2022, the majority (**93.7%**) of households in the province use electricity as their main source of **energy for lighting their dwelling**. A higher proportion of households in the Ehlanzeni (96.7%) district relied on electricity for lighting compared to Gert Sibande (91.8%) and Nkangala district (91.7%).²⁷

Table 5: Number of consumer units with free basic services, municipalities in Mpumalanga

| | 2022 | 2023 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Proportion of consumer units receiving free basic sewerage and sanitation services | 6.4% | 6.7% |
| Proportion of consumer units receiving free basic water services | 6.3% | 6.3% |
| Proportion of consumer units receiving free basic electricity services | 6.7%% | 6.3% |
| Proportion of consumer units receiving free basic solid waste management services | 10.2% | 10.8% |

Source: Non-Financial Census for municipalities, year ended 2023

²⁵ Mpumalanga Provincial Government (2025).

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Statistic South Africa (2022).

Municipalities distinguish between households and consumer units since one dwelling may have several households or include backyard shacks. For these reasons, consumer units are used and counted per site. In some instances, more than one household would be included in a consumer unit.

Mpumalanga generally records very low rates of free services, one of the lowest in the country. It should be noted that the portions indicated is only for consumer units that receive services from the municipalities and would exclude those that do not receive any related service. By 2023, only 17 out of the 20 municipalities had a free basic services policy in place.

9.2 Current Projects to Improve Basic Services

Mpumalanga province has implemented several significant water and sanitation projects focused on expanding and upgrading infrastructure to improve service delivery and ensure water security.

Projects and initiatives include:

- The Mountain View Regional Dam construction, with a budget of around R2 billion, scheduled for completion by 2030, intended to enhance bulk water supply capacity.
- The Nsikazi South Water Augmentation Scheme and the 20MI Regional Bulk Water Scheme Phase 2, with a combined budget of about R628 million, expected to improve water availability in multiple local municipalities by mid-2027.
- Construction of new raw water pumps in Hazyview and upgrading the Suidkaap bulk supply line in the City of Mbombela, both aimed for completion by March 2025 with operational expenditure allocated.
- Refurbishment of the Mkhuhlu Waste-Water Treatment Works and upgrades to sewer pipelines such as Phumula Outfall Sewer and internal sewer reticulation in Rooikoppen, with budgets ranging from R6.5 million to over R100 million and completion targeted in 2025.
- Rehabilitation of the Volksrust Water Treatment Plant (budget R400 million) and replacement of asbestos bulk supply lines in rural areas to improve water quality and safety.
- Bulk water supply schemes like Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply and Rust de Winter Bulk Water Supply are in various stages (construction or feasibility) with budgets near R2 billion and R667 million respectively.
- Strategic interventions include emergency water supply support through partnerships, exemplified by the donation of water tankers by Glencore Coal to eMalahleni Local Municipality to mitigate water shortages in 2024.
- Dam levels showed variable but generally stable and improving trends in districts such as Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande, and Nkangala in early 2025 but ongoing water conservation efforts remain critical due to environmental and climate risks.

10. FINANCING OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE PROVINCE

Mpumalanga infrastructure funding comes from various sources, including the provincial government's own budget, provincial and national grants like the Provincial Roads Maintenance Grant and the Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG), and private sector investment in large projects like energy and mining., while grants support basic services and bulk infrastructure.

The aggregate budget for **the 2025/26 financial year is R66.214 billion**. The provincial allocation is that **Equitable Share of R 52.486 billion** (80.3% of the total budget for 2025/26).²⁸ And **Conditional Grants R 10.479 billion** (16.4% of the total budget for 2025/26).

Provincial own revenue comprises of **R 2.492 billion** (3.3% of the total budget for 2025/26) which is the provincial own sources of revenue include fees, rates, taxes and interests, etc collected by departments and public entities.²⁹

Auditor General Findings

Audit outcomes

The Mpumalanga Department of Education, Health and Public Works have received unqualified audit opinions with findings for the past five years. The Departments of Human Settlements and Social Development shows an improvement from a qualified audit to an unqualified with findings.

Table 6: Audit outcomes for provincial departments, Mpumalanga, 2023/24 – 2029/20

| | 2023/24 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 | 2019/20 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Education | Unqualified with findings |
| Health | Unqualified with findings |
| Social Dev | Unqualified with findings | Unqualified with findings | Qualified | Qualified | Qualified |
| Human Sett | Unqualified with findings | Qualified | Qualified | Qualified | Unqualified with findings |
| Public Works, Roads and Transport | Unqualified with findings |

²⁸ Mpumalanga Provincial Government Budget (2025).

²⁹ Ibid

Infrastructure

The AG's 2023/24 Consolidated General Report on National and Provincial Audit Outcomes raises concerns over Mpumalanga's key service delivery departments of Education, Health, Human Settlements and Public works, Roads and Transport, which account for 82% of the provincial budget. The AG found that these key service delivery departments have failed to fully implement effective preventative controls and corrective action, effectively plan and manage infrastructure projects; and comply with legislation, especially as it relates to procurement and consequences. The consequence has been that service delivery has failed to improve over the years in these departments.³⁰

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