In February 2026 (Q1), the working age population (16 years and above) was estimated to be 8.7 million of whom around 5 million were employed, 615 thousand were unemployed, and 3.1 million were out of labour force.

The labour force which includes both the employed and unemployed population was 5.6 million. The labour force participation rate was estimated to be 64.3 % which increased by 1.3 percentage points as compared to the estimated value in February 2025 (63 %).

The rate of the population outside labour force decreased to 35.7 % in February 2026 (Q1) compared to 37 % in February 2025(Q1).

Employment

The employment-to-population ratio (EPR) increased to 57.2 % in February 2026 (Q1), up from 56 % in February 2025 (Q1). This increase was observed across both sexes, with a gain of 1 percentage point among females and 1.4 percentage points among males.

In February 2026 (Q1), the EPR remained higher among males (64.4%) than females (50.8 %). The gender gap in the employment-to-population ratio was 13.6 percentage points in February 2026 (Q1) and remained stable compared to February 2025 (Q1). Additionally, the EPR was higher among adults aged 31 years and above (61 %) than among youth aged 16-30 years (52.1 %).

The distribution of employed population by major economic activity revealed that the agriculture sector employs the largest number of the employed population in February 2026 (Q1). The employment in agricultural sector increased slightly to 44.4 % in February 2026 (Q1) compared to 43.7% in February 2025.

However, the share of employment in the industry sector remained almost stable compared to February 2025 (Q1). In contrast, the percentage of employed population in the services sector decreased by 1 percentage point in the same period.

Unemployment

In February 2026(Q1), the unemployment rate was 11 % indicating roughly one unemployed person for every nine persons in the labour force. This rate remained stable as compared to the same quarter in 2025.

The unemployment rate was higher among females (12.8 %) compared to males (9.4 %) and youth experience a higher unemployment rate (13.4 %) compared to adults (9.4 %). The unemployment rate was 11.7 % in urban and 10.7% in rural areas.

The gender gap in unemployment rate was 3.4 percentage points in February 2026 (Q1), and remained stable compared to February 2025.

Labour underutilisation

The unemployment rate alone does not fully reflect unmet employment needs. A more complete assessment requires consideration of other components such as time-related underemployment and potential labour force.

The labour underutilization rate stood at 55.9 % in February 2026 (Q1). This rate was higher among females (62.3 %) than among males (49.2 %) and was almost equal among youth (56.1 %) and adults (55.8 %).

The labour underutilization rate increased by 2.2 percentage points in February 2026 (Q1) compared to February 2025 (Q1).

Reference documents (PDF & Excel)

- LFS_Q1_2026_Report.pdf (pdf, 2.9 MB)
  LAST UPDATED: 25 Apr 2026
- RW_Quarterly_LFS_Tables_2026Q1.xlsx (xlsx, 343.87 KB)
  LAST UPDATED: 25 Apr 2026
- LFS Q1 2026 ENGLISH BOOKLET.pdf (pdf, 3.69 MB)
  LAST UPDATED: 25 Apr 2026
- LFS Q1 2026 KINYARWANDA BOOKLET.pdf (pdf, 3.67 MB)
  LAST UPDATED: 25 Apr 2026

Data source

Labour Force Survey 2026

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