



Work Permits Holders

Fourth Quarter 2023

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STATISTICS BOTSWANA

WORK PERMITS HOLDERS – FOURTH QUARTER 2023

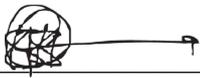
This stats brief presents a summary on characteristics of employee and self-employed individuals who held valid work permits as at the end of December 2023.

This brief is produced through a collaborative process with the Department of Labour and Social Security, which is responsible for issuing work permits. Copies of approved work permits are forwarded to Statistics Botswana for capture and analysis. However, the permits received by Statistics Botswana in a given quarter may not be fully representative of all permits approved during that period, as some applications may still be undergoing processing. Consequently, comparisons between quarters should be interpreted with this limitation in mind.

Information on work permit holders gives an indication of jobs and businesses which are held/run by foreigners for monitoring progress in localization. Presentation of statistics on work permit holders by occupation and industry gives an indication of jobs currently held by non-citizens which informs on the skills and sectors where expatriate recruitment continues to be needed, and to some extent human resource development gaps. The information is also useful to researchers, planners and policy makers in the country.

The results for the fourth quarter of 2023 showed that total work permit holders increased from 4,917 persons in September 2023 to 5,314 persons in December 2023, an increase of 397 persons (8.1 percent) over a period of three months. The majority of work permit holders were Zimbabwean nationals accounting for 55.0 percent of the total work permit holders. The Agricultural sector continued to attract the majority of work permit holders at 38.5 percent. In occupational categories, Elementary occupations recorded the highest percentage of work permit holders with 43.6 percent.

I thank you



Dr. Khaufelo R. Lekobane
Statistician General
February 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Work permits are issued by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship under the Ministry of Labor and Home Affairs. The work permits are primarily issued for employment related reasons. The analysis of permits in this brief is confined only to work permits, drawn from National administrative registers and databases.

The Department of Labour and Social Security issues work-permits, and copies of such work-permits are forwarded to Statistics Botswana to be analysed. Although all work permit forms received by Statistics Botswana for a specific quarter are processed and captured into the data base, others arrive after the publication of the stats brief, and are thus captured for analysis for the subsequent publication(s). Botswana issues different types of work permits for non-citizens. These include among others;

- Employment work permit – this type of permit is usually issued for long term employment, often renewable and it is usually valid for a specific period.
- Temporary work permit – issued for short period work assignments and it is usually up to 6 months.
- Emergency work permit – usually issued for emergency work assignments where a very urgent work needs to be attended to immediately.

For an individual to apply for a work permit, some of the documents required include the valid job offer letter, proof of qualifications and valid passport among other requirements.

The profile of work permit holder's level reflects the specific skills which may be in short supply among the Botswana nationals, as well as the prevailing economic and employment opportunities which attract foreigners in the country.

2.0 TOTAL WORK PERMIT HOLDERS

Total work permit holders for the fourth Quarter 2023 is presented in **Table(s) 1.1a & 1.1b**. There were 5,314 valid work permits holders as at the end of December 2023, of which 3,623 were males (68.2 percent) work permit holders and 1,691 (31.8 percent) were females. The total work permit holders increased by 397 persons between the third and fourth quarter of 2023, an increase on 8.1 percent. Among the work permit holders, 84 percent (4,462 persons) were employee work permit holders, while 16 percent (825 persons) were self-employed work permit holders. Comparison of the first and second quarter of 2023 showed that total work permit holders recorded a decline from 4,851 persons in the first quarter to 4,319 in the second quarter of 2023. **See table 1.7**

The results showed that the majority of work permit holders were Zimbabwean nationals constituting 55 percent (2,921) of the total work permit holders, followed by other African nationals with 10.0 percent. The Indian Sub-Continent was the third contributing 9.6 percent to the total work permit holders. The Indian Sub-Continent constituted the highest self-employed work permit holders with 27.2 percent followed by Zimbabwe at 17.6 percent. China and South Africa contributed 16.9 and 14.3 percent, respectively. For employee work permit holders, Zimbabwean nationals constituted 62.1 percent, followed by other Africa nationals with 10.1 percent. **See figures 1 and 2.**

Total work permit holders by industry is presented in **Table (s) 1.3a & 1.3b**. Agriculture & Forestry industry recorded the highest number of work permit holders with 2,048 persons, contributing 38.5 percent towards total work permit holders, followed by Education industry at 18.3 percent. Wholesale & Retail Trade contributed 6.4 percent towards total work permit holders in the fourth quarter of 2023.

Figure 1: Percentage of Work Permit Holders by Country of Origin, Q4 2023

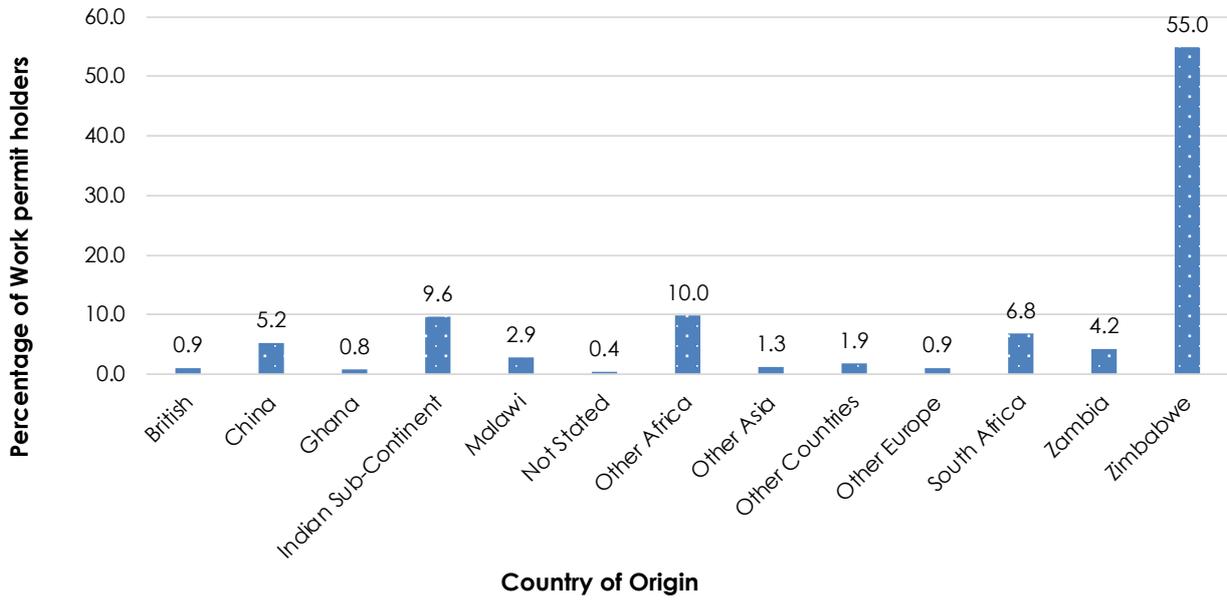
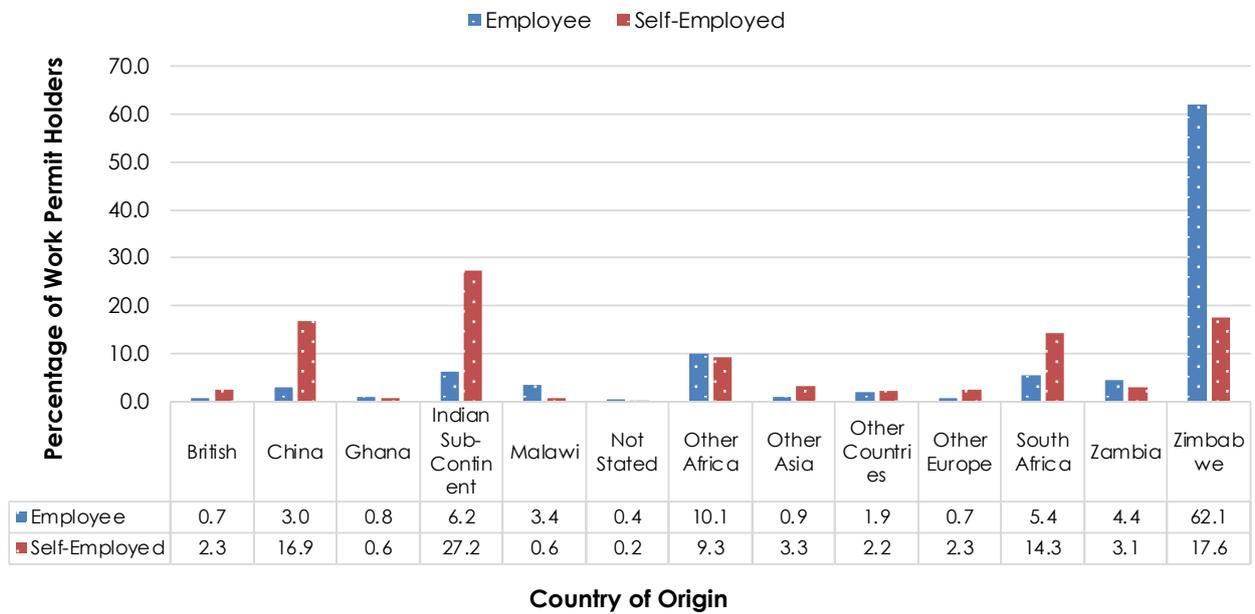


Figure 2: Percentage of Work Permit Holders by Employment Type and Country of Origin, Q4 2023



3.0 WORK PERMIT HOLDERS BY AGE GROUP

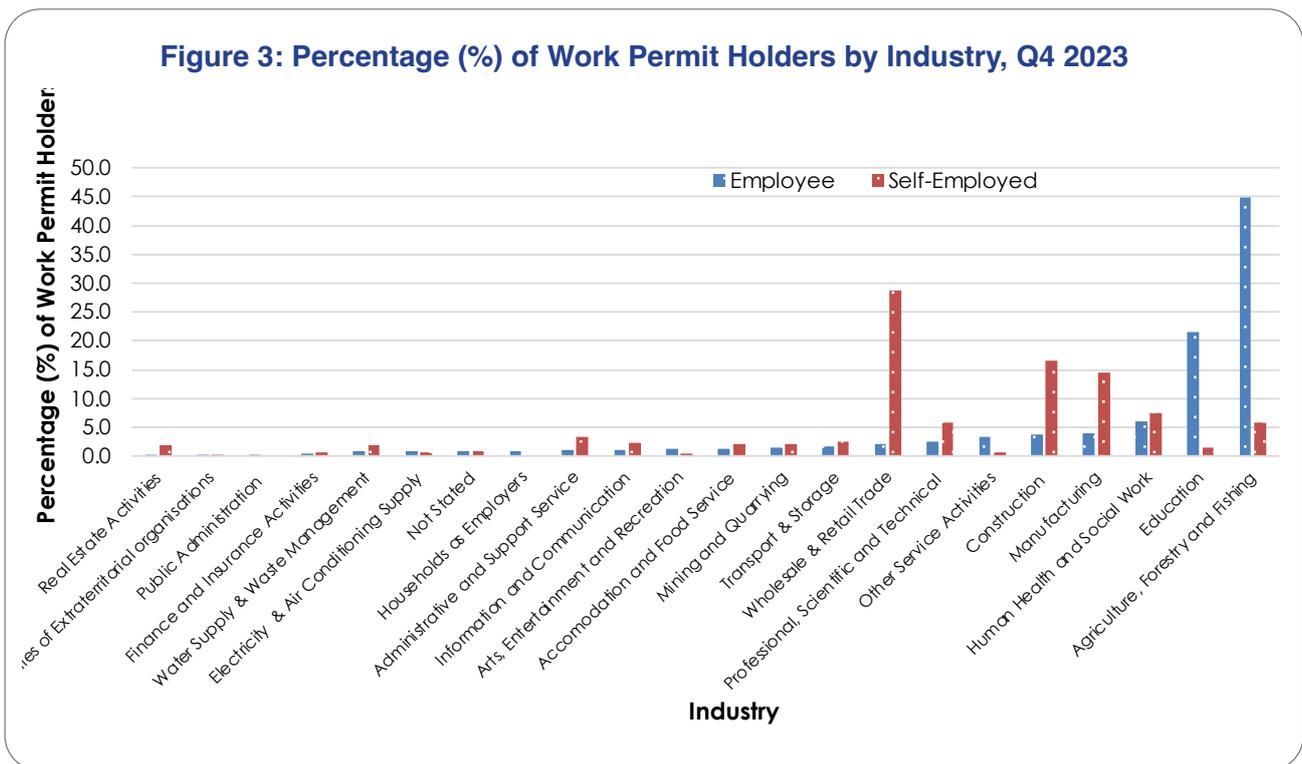
Tables 1.2a and 1.2b present work permit holders by age group and sex. The majority of work permit holders were in the age group 40 -44 years, contributing 17.1 percent towards total work permit holders, followed by age group 45 – 49 with 15.7 percent, and age group 35 – 39 at 15.5 percent. Female work permit holders were consistently lower than the male work permit holders in all age groups for both employee and self-employed work permit holders as a percentage of overall work permit holders. Male employee work permit holders accounted for 56.1 percent of overall work permit holders compared to 27.9 percent of females. In the self-employed work permit holder’s category, males contributed 12.1percent towards overall work permit holders compared with 3.9 percent for females. [See Tables 1.2a, 1.2b and 1.2c.](#)

4.0 WORK PERMIT HOLDERS BY INDUSTRY

Industry is categorized by main goods and services produced/provided. [Tables 1.3a, 1.3b, 1.7, 1.7a and Figure 3](#) present the distribution of total work permit holders by Industry. Agriculture & Forestry, Education and Wholesale & Retail Trade were the main contributors of total work permit holders in the fourth quarter of 2023. The Agricultural industry contributed 38.5 percent to the total work permit holders, followed by Education and Wholesale & Retail Trade at 18.3 & 6.4 percent respectively. During the third quarter of 2023, Agricultural industry had 35.6 percent of total work permit holders. Educational industry contributed 18.6 percent, followed by Wholesale & Retail Trade with 6.8 percent.

Total work permit holders by sex and industry by showed that females were more than males in Education and Human Health & Social work activities. Females in Education sector contributed 30.3 percent of the overall work permit holders compared to 12.6 percent of males. In the Human Health & Social work activities, females accounted for 9.4 percent of the total work permit holders compared to 4.7 percent of males. Males were more than females in industries such as Construction and Manufacturing. [See table 1.7a.](#)

Figure 3 below shows that for the employee work permit holders, 44.8 percent of the total work permits were for the employees in Agriculture and Forestry industry and 21.4 percent were in Education. For the Self-employed, Wholesale and & Retail Trade was above other industries with 28.3 percent, followed by Construction and Manufacturing industries with 18.8 and 14.4 percent respectively.



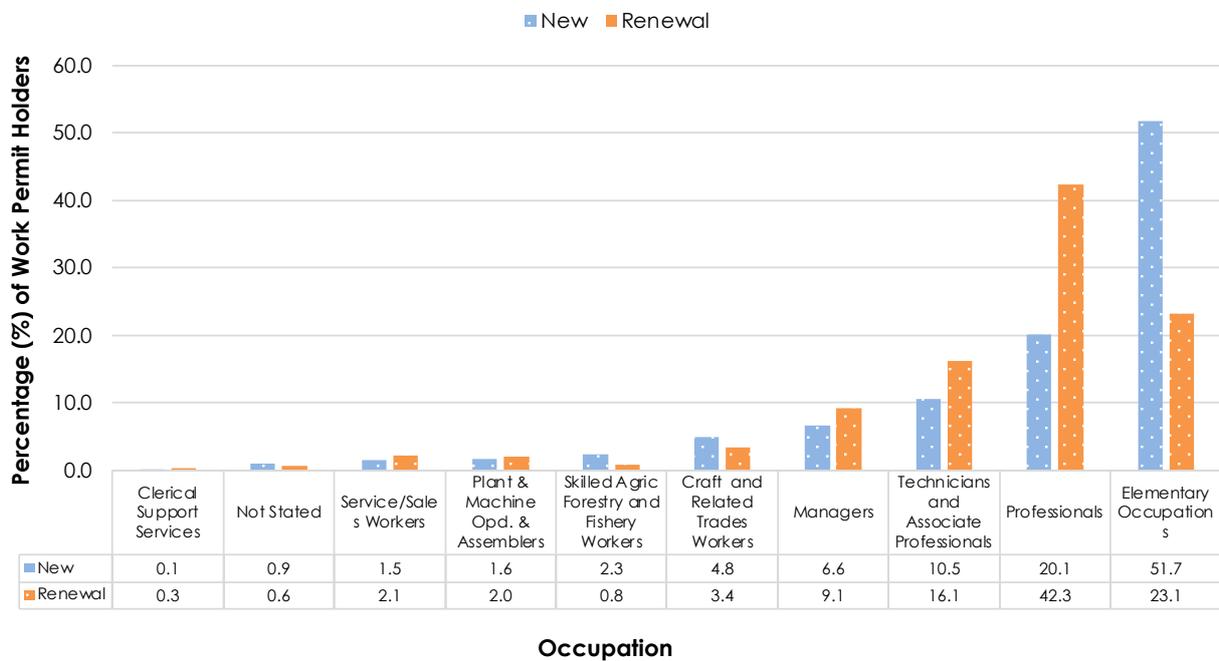
5.0 WORK PERMIT HOLDERS BY OCCUPATION

Occupation refers to task and duties assigned to an individual to perform.

Tables 1.4a, 1.4b present total work permit holders by occupation. Elementary occupations contributed 43.6 percent (1,944 persons) towards overall work holders, followed by Professionals at 26.4 percent (1,177persons). Technicians & associate professionals contributed 12.1 percent towards the overall work permit holders.

Figure 4 below shows new and renewed work permits holders. Elementary occupations contributed the highest proportion towards total new work permits at 51.7 percent, and 23.1 percent held renewed work permits. In the Professional's occupations, 42.3 percent were the renewals and 20.1 percent were the new work permits holders.

Figure 4: Percentage of New and Renewed Work Permit Holder by Occupation, Q4 2023



6.0 EMPLOYEE WORK PERMIT HOLDERS BY TRAINING

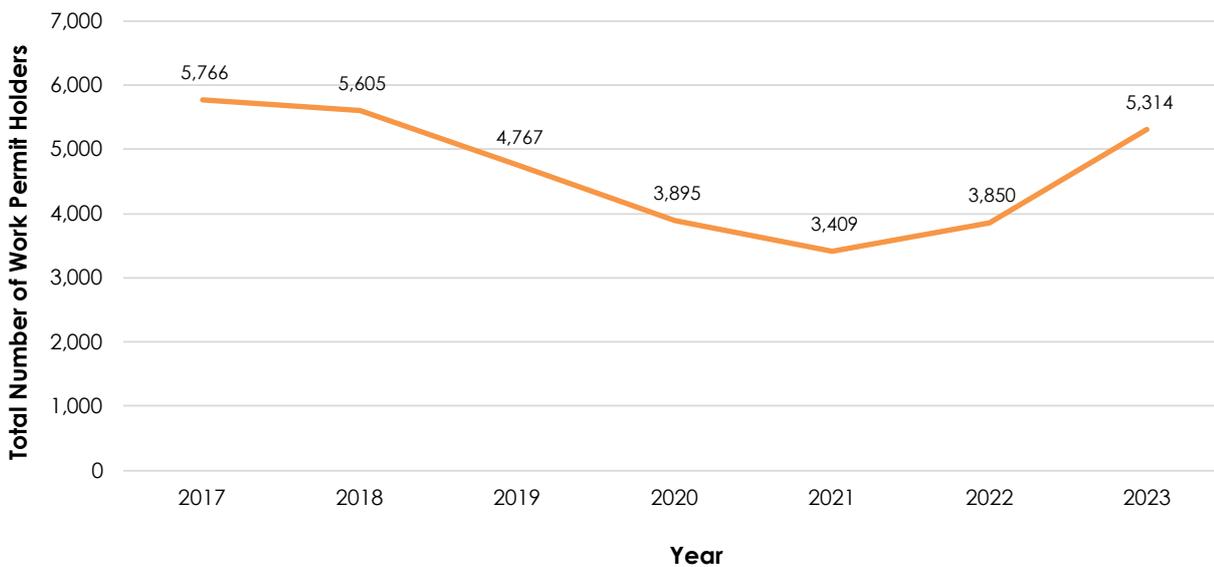
The distribution of employee work permit holders by training and sex is presented in **Table 1.5a** and **1.5b**. The fourth quarter of 2023 results showed that 54.3 percent of employees had no training. Degree holders accounted for 31.0 percent of the employee work permit holders and diploma holders were at 11.1 percent.

Employees with basic training programs accounted for 9.2 percent (409 persons) of the total employee work permit holders. Work permit holders trained in Health related programs constituted 6.9 percent (310 persons), with those trained in Business administration programs contributing 5.4 percent towards employee work permit holders. See tables **1.6a** and **1.6b**.

7.0 TREND OF TOTAL WORK PERMIT HOLDERS

The trend in total work permit holders showed that total work permits were generally declining. This may be due to skills transfer policies to empower citizens. Total work permit holders declined from 5,766 persons in 2017 to 5,314 persons in 2023. The major decline was recorded between the years 2019 to 2021, with year 2021 recording the lowest. The total work permit holders declined from 4,767 persons in 2019, to 3,409 persons in 2021. However after the decline, total work permit holders gradually began to record increase from 2022 to 2023. See [Table 1.8](#) and [figure 5](#)

Figure 5: Number of Work Permit Holders, 2017 - 2023



8. TREND OF EMPLOYEE WORK PERMIT HOLDERS

[Table 1.9](#) & [Figure 6](#) present the trend in total employee work permit holders from 2017 to 2023. The results showed that total employee work permit holders recorded significant declines from 2019 to 2021, which could be attributed to the COVID 19 pandemic. Total employee work permit holders declined from 4,187 persons in 2019 to 2,754 persons in 2021.

Figure 6: Total Number of Employee Work Permit Holders, 2017-2023

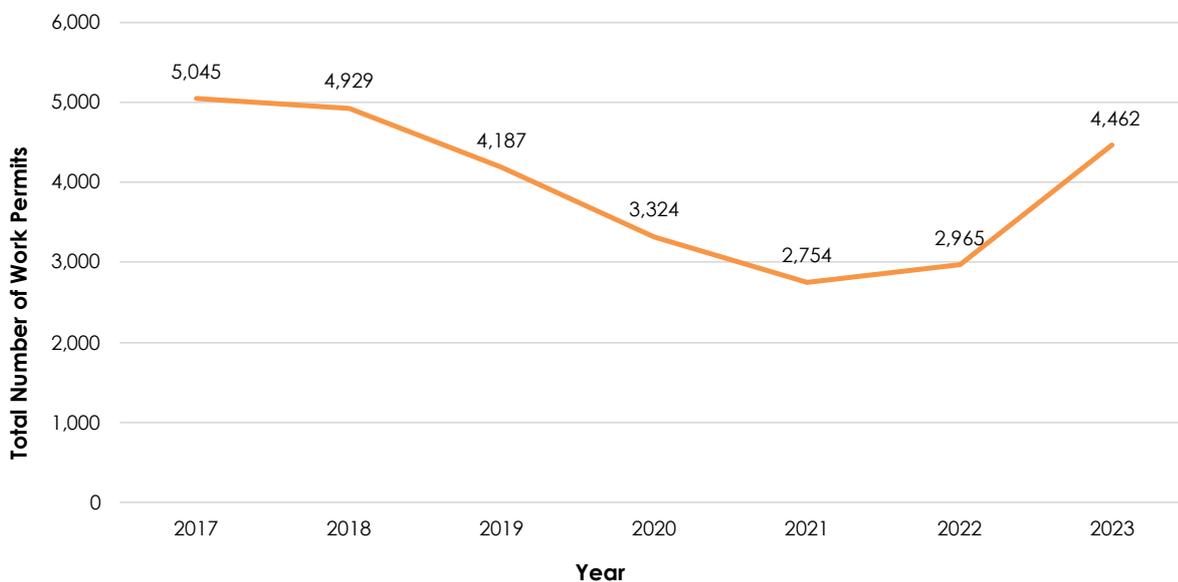


Table 1.2c: Percentage (Overall) of Work Permit Holders by Age Group, Type of Permit and Sex, December 2023

Age	Employees			Self-Employees			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Less than 25	2.4	1.0	3.5	2.6	0.6	3.2	2.5	1.0	3.4
25-29	6.3	2.5	8.8	5.6	2.3	8.0	6.2	2.4	8.6
30-34	8.3	4.3	12.7	7.0	3.3	10.3	8.1	4.2	12.3
35-39	10.7	5.6	16.3	7.3	3.9	11.2	10.1	5.4	15.5
40-44	11.6	5.8	17.4	12.3	3.1	15.4	11.7	5.4	17.1
45-49	9.8	6.1	15.9	10.8	3.8	14.6	10.0	5.7	15.7
50-54	8.0	3.9	11.8	11.3	3.2	14.4	8.5	3.7	12.3
55-59	5.0	2.2	7.2	9.2	2.5	11.6	5.7	2.2	7.9
60-64	2.4	1.1	3.4	4.2	1.1	5.3	2.7	1.1	3.7
65-69	1.1	0.3	1.4	2.8	0.4	3.2	1.4	0.3	1.7
70-74	0.4	0.2	0.6	1.4	0.2	1.6	0.6	0.2	0.7
75+	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.4	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.3
Unknown	0.6	0.2	0.9	0.2	-	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.8
Total	66.8	33.2	100.0	75.5	24.5	100.0	68.2	31.8	100.0

Table 1.3a: Total Work Permit Holders by Industry, Type of Permit and Sex, December 2023

Industry	Employees			Self-Employees			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1,383	616	1,999	38	11	49	1,421	627	2,048
Mining and Quarrying	64	3	67	15	2	17	79	5	84
Manufacturing	153	27	180	94	29	123	247	56	303
Electricity, Gas, & Air Conditioning Supply	35	1	36	5	1	6	40	2	42
Water Supply, Sewage, Waste Management & Remediation Activities	28	5	33	13	3	16	41	8	49
Construction of Buildings	157	13	170	121	20	141	278	33	311
Wholesale Trade, except Motor Vehicles and Moter Cycles	74	19	93	182	63	245	256	82	338
Transport & Storage	67	4	71	18	4	22	85	8	93
Accomodation and Food Service Activities	48	7	55	11	7	18	59	14	73
Information and Communication	43	6	49	15	5	20	58	11	69
Finance and Insurance Activities	16	5	21	3	2	5	19	7	26
Real Estate Activities	5	2	7	13	3	16	18	5	23
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	87	23	110	37	12	49	124	35	159
Administrative and Support Service Activities	38	5	43	20	8	28	58	13	71
Public Administration and Defence, Compulsary	3	9	12	-	-	-	3	9	12
Education	452	505	957	6	7	13	458	512	970
Human Health and Social Work Activities	134	132	266	37	27	64	171	159	330
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	49	5	54	4	-	4	53	5	58
Other Service Activities	113	37	150	4	2	6	117	39	156
Households as Employers	-	42	42	-	-	-	-	42	42
Activities of Extraterritorial organisations	7	3	10	2	-	2	9	3	12
Not Stated	24	13	37	5	3	8	29	16	45
Total	2,980	1,482	4,462	643	209	852	3,623	1,691	5,314
Percentage Overall	56.1	27.9	84.0	12.1	3.9	16.0	68.2	31.8	100.0

Table 1.5a: Employee Work Permit Holders by Training and Sex, December 2023

Training	Male	Female	Total
Certificate Holders	135	25	160
Diploma Holders	309	186	495
Degree Holders	875	510	1,385
No Training Stated	1,661	761	2,422
Total	2,980	1,482	4,462

Table 1.5b: Percentage of Employee Work Permit Holders by Training and Sex, December 2023

Training	Male	Female	Total
Certificate Holders	4.5	1.7	3.6
Diploma Holders	10.4	12.6	11.1
Degree Holders	29.4	34.4	31.0
No Training Stated	55.7	51.3	54.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 1.6a: Employee Work Permit Holders by Subject of Training and Sex, December 2023

Subject of Training	Male	Female	Total
Basic, Literacy & Numeracy and Personnel Development Programs	169	240	409
Education Programs	24	20	44
Arts and Humanities	62	23	85
Social & Behavioural	27	22	49
Journalism, Information and Documentation	10	4	14
Business and Administration Programs	184	68	252
Programs in Law	14	10	24
Life and Physical Sciences Programs	69	21	90
Mathematics and Statistics Programs	14	10	24
Computer Programs	44	8	52
Engineering Trade Programs	131	13	144
Manufacturing and Processing Programs	64	14	78
Industrial Programs	78	2	80
Architecture and Building Program	77	23	100
Building and Construction Programs	64	54	118
Agric, Forestry & Fishery	42	14	56
Veterinary Programs	2	3	5
Health Programs	167	143	310
Social Services Programs	11	10	21
Personal Services Programs	47	17	64
Transport Services Programs	12	2	14
Environmental Protection Programs	2	-	2
Security Services Programs	5	-	5
Sub-Total	1,319	721	2,040
No Training or no Training Stated	1,661	761	2,422
Total	2,980	1,482	4,462

Table 1.6b: Percentage of Employee Work Permit Holders by Subject of Training and Sex, December 2023

Subject of Training	Male	Female	Total
Basic, Literacy & Numeracy and Personnel Development Programs	5.7	16.2	9.2
Education Programs	0.8	1.3	1.0
Arts and Humanities	2.1	1.6	1.9
Social & Behavioural	0.9	1.5	1.1
Journalism, Information and Documentation	0.3	0.3	0.3
Business and Administration Programs	6.2	4.6	5.6
Programs in Law	0.5	0.7	0.5
Life and Physical Sciences Programs	2.3	1.4	2.0
Mathematics and Statistics Programs	0.5	0.7	0.5
Computer Programs	1.5	0.5	1.2
Engineering Trade Programs	4.4	0.9	3.2
Manufacturing and Processing Programs	2.1	0.9	1.7
Industrial Programs	2.6	0.1	1.8
Architecture and Building Program	2.6	1.6	2.2
Building and Construction Programs	2.1	3.6	2.6
Agric, Forestry & Fishery	1.4	0.9	1.3
Veterinary Programs	0.1	0.2	0.1
Health Programs	5.6	9.6	6.9
Social Services Programs	0.4	0.7	0.5
Personal Services Programs	1.6	1.1	1.4
Transport Services Programs	0.4	0.1	0.3
Environmental Protection Programs	0.1	0.0	0.0
Security Services Programs	0.2	0.0	0.1
Sub-Total	44.3	48.7	45.7
No Training or no Training Stated	55.7	51.3	54.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 1.7: Quarterly Work Permit Holders by Industry and Sex, First Quarter 2023 - Fourth Quarter 2023

Industry	1st Quarter			2nd Quarter			3rd Quarter			4th Quarter		
	(March 2023)			(June 2023)			(September 2023)			(December 2023)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture and Forestry	877	322	1,199	882	364	1,246	1,201	549	1,750	1,421	627	2,048
Mining and Quarrying	98	8	106	83	5	88	84	5	89	79	5	84
Manufacturing	314	74	388	251	58	309	256	58	314	247	56	303
Electricity, Gas & Air Supply	53	5	58	38	3	41	39	2	41	40	2	42
Water Supply & Waste Management	12	4	16	69	8	77	41	8	49	41	8	49
Construction	428	33	461	262	38	300	290	36	326	278	33	311
Wholesale & Retail Trade	369	110	479	258	77	335	255	78	333	256	82	338
Transport & Storage	89	4	93	71	4	75	78	7	85	85	8	93
Accommodation and Food Service	73	24	97	49	13	62	51	14	65	59	14	73
Information and Communication	40	11	51	42	12	54	53	10	63	58	11	69
Finance and Insurance Activities	18	3	21	11	3	14	14	6	20	19	7	26
Real Estate Activities	21	8	29	18	5	23	19	5	24	18	5	23
Professional, Scientific and Technical	124	33	157	77	26	103	107	31	138	124	35	159
Administrative and Support Services	65	24	89	72	18	90	52	15	67	58	13	71
Public Administration	3	2	5	2	3	5	3	6	9	3	9	12
Education	413	461	874	406	435	841	427	490	917	458	512	970
Human Health and Social Work	218	187	405	184	171	355	173	152	325	171	159	330
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	66	5	71	46	4	50	45	4	49	53	5	58
Other Service Activities	106	40	146	112	40	152	112	40	152	117	39	156
Households as Employers	1	47	48	2	41	43	1	45	46	-	42	42
Activities of Extraterritorial organisations	11	5	16	10	4	14	8	3	11	9	3	12
Not Stated	29	13	42	29	13	42	30	14	44	29	16	45
Total	3,428	1,423	4,851	2,974	1,345	4,319	3,339	1,578	4,917	3,623	1,691	5,314

Table 1.7b: Quarterly Work Permit Holders (Percentage changes) by Industry and Sex, Second Quarter 2023 - Fourth Quarter 2023

Industry	2nd Quarter (Q2)			3rd Quarter (Q3)				4th Quarter (Q4)			
	(June 2023)			(September 2023)				(December 2023)			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	% Total	Male	Female	Total	% Total
Agriculture and Forestry	882	364	1,246	1,201	549	1,750	40.4	1,421	627	2,048	17.0
Mining and Quarrying	83	5	88	84	5	89	1.1	79	5	84	(5.6)
Manufacturing	251	58	309	256	58	314	1.6	247	56	303	(3.5)
Electricity, Gas & Air Supply	38	3	41	39	2	41	-	40	2	42	2.4
Water Supply & Waste Management	69	8	77	41	8	49	(36.4)	41	8	49	-
Construction	262	38	300	290	36	326	8.7	278	33	311	(4.6)
Wholesale & Retail Trade	258	77	335	255	78	333	(0.6)	256	82	338	1.5
Transport & Storage	71	4	75	78	7	85	13.3	85	8	93	9.4
Accommodation and Food Service	49	13	62	51	14	65	4.8	59	14	73	12.3
Information and Communication	42	12	54	53	10	63	16.7	58	11	69	9.5
Finance and Insurance Activities	11	3	14	14	6	20	42.9	19	7	26	30.0
Real Estate Activities	18	5	23	19	5	24	4.3	18	5	23	(4.2)
Professional, Scientific and Technical	77	26	103	107	31	138	34.0	124	35	159	15.2
Administrative and Support Services	72	18	90	52	15	67	(25.6)	58	13	71	6.0
Public Administration	2	3	5	3	6	9	80.0	3	9	12	33.3
Education	406	435	841	427	490	917	9.0	458	512	970	5.8
Human Health and Social Work	184	171	355	173	152	325	(8.5)	171	159	330	1.5
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	46	4	50	45	4	49	(2.0)	53	5	58	18.4
Other Service Activities	112	40	152	112	40	152	-	117	39	156	2.6
Households as Employers	2	41	43	1	45	46	7.0	-	42	42	(8.7)
Activities of Extraterritorial organisations	10	4	14	8	3	11	(21.4)	9	3	12	9.1
Not Stated	29	13	42	30	14	44	4.8	29	16	45	2.3
Total	2,974	1,345	4,319	3,339	1,578	4,917	13.8	3,623	1,691	5,314	8.1

Note: () negative numbers

Table 1.8: Total Work Permit Holders by Industry and Year, 2017 – 2022

Industry	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Agriculture and Forestry	1,826	1,610	1,315	930	859	861	2,048
Mining and Quarrying	141	103	94	86	78	96	84
Manufacturing	484	502	402	359	271	333	303
Electricity, Gas & Air Supply	63	100	93	59	56	57	42
Water Supply & Waste Management	15	18	13	11	6	12	49
Construction	751	653	577	498	520	402	311
Wholesale and Retail Trade	405	368	296	266	258	362	338
Transport & Storage	140	99	77	59	44	80	93
Accommodation and Food Service	178	154	132	122	101	87	73
Information and Communication	120	89	68	44	28	30	69
Finance and Insurance Activities	97	86	66	38	28	13	26
Real Estate Activities	29	33	27	34	29	25	23
Professional, Scientific and Technical	202	177	153	142	115	114	159
Administrative and Support Service	188	150	124	95	83	75	71
Public Administration	3	1	3	2	2	2	12
Education	607	880	747	604	471	660	970
Human Health and Social Work	211	278	299	281	276	363	330
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	71	82	79	63	42	63	58
Other Service Activities	133	130	118	97	64	117	156
Households as Employers	25	26	27	27	15	39	42
Activities of Extraterritorial organisations	22	18	14	17	9	8	12
Not Stated	55	48	43	61	54	51	45
Total	5,766	5,605	4,767	3,895	3,409	3,850	5,314

Note: Totals are as at end of December for each year

Table 1.9: Total Employee Work Permit Holders by Occupation and Year, 2017 – 2023

Occupation	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Managers	844	746	583	496	411	355	326
Professionals	1,067	1,176	1,04	854	701	822	1,177
Technicians	707	862	758	591	472	538	540
Clerical Support Services	8	9	16	12	8	9	8
Service/Sales Workers	102	103	86	86	59	74	74
Skilled Agriculture Workers	99	81	64	28	16	20	82
Craft and Related Trades	395	371	350	311	218	222	197
Plant & Machine Operators	144	104	81	64	49	59	77
Elementary Occupations	1,643	1,449	1,177	830	769	823	1,944
Not Stated	36	28	32	52	51	43	37
Total	5,045	4,929	4,187	3,324	2,754	2,965	4,462

Note: Totals are as at end of December for each year.



Work Permits Holders

Fourth Quarter 2023



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