

# Northwest

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|  | <b>North West</b>                                 |
| Capital:  | Mafikeng  |
| Principal languages:  | Setswana 65,4%<br>Afrikaans 7,5%<br>isiXhosa 5,8% |
| Population:   | 3 394 200   |
| Area (km <sup>2</sup> ):  | 116 320   |
| % of total area:  | 9,5%  |
| GDPR* at current prices (2004):   | R87 127 million                                   |
| % of total GDP**:   | 6,3%  |

\* *GDPR (Gross Domestic Product per Region)*

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North West, also known as the Platinum Province, is centrally located on the subcontinent with direct road and rail links to all southern African countries, and with its own airport near the capital city, Mafikeng. The province borders Botswana and is fringed by the Kalahari desert in the west and the Witwatersrand area in the east. North West is divided into the Central, Bophirima (towards the west), Southern, Rustenburg and Eastern regions. Most economic activity is concentrated in the Southern Region (between Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp), Rustenburg, and the Eastern Region, where more than 83,3% of GDPR of the province is generated.

The province offers several tourist attractions, including the internationally renowned Sun City, the popular Pilanesberg National Park, the Madikwe Game Reserve and the Rustenburg Nature Reserve.

The province recorded an economic growth rate of 4,9% in 2004/05, compared with 4,5% in 2003/04. The largest contributors to the GDP of the province in 2004 were the mining and quarrying industries (24,9%); finance, real estate and business services (13,6%); and the general government-services sector (12,1%). The lowest contribution to GDP was by the electricity, gas and water industries.

## The People

Of the 3,4 million people living in the North West, 65% live in the rural areas (*Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2007*). The official unemployment rate is 32% (*Labour Force Survey, March 2007*).

The province has the lowest number of people aged 20 years and older (5,9%) who have received HE. The literacy rate is in the region of 57%.

## **Mining**

One of the programmes of the Mafikeng Industrial Development Initiative is the establishment of the Mining Supply and Industrial Park that will result in the creation of a mining goods-and-service warehouse and delivery park for the convenience and benefit of most mining companies around Rustenburg.

This multiyear project envisages benefits being gained from local and Black Economic Empowerment preferential procurement opportunities offered by the Mining Charter.

Diamonds are mined at Lichtenburg, Koster, Christiana and Bloemhof, while Orkney and Klerksdorp have gold mines. The area surrounding Rustenburg and Brits boasts the largest single platinum-production area in the world. Marble is also mined here. Fluorspar is exploited at Zeerust.

## **Manufacturing**

Manufacturing contributes 7% to the province's GDP and 9% of its employment opportunities. It provides 2,6% of the South African manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP.

Manufacturing is almost exclusively dependent on the performance of a few sectors in which the province enjoys a competitive advantage. These are fabricated metals (51%), the food sector (18%) and non-metallic metals (21%) (*Provincial Economies, 2003*).

Industrial activity is centred in the towns of Brits, Klerksdorp, Vryburg and Rustenburg.

The Brits industries concentrate mostly on manufacturing and construction, while those at Klerksdorp are geared towards the mining industry, and those at Vryburg and Rustenburg towards agriculture.

The Platinum SDI, situated on the Coast-to-Coast Highway that links the Port of Maputo in Mozambique to Walvis Bay in Namibia, is expected to unlock further development. About 200 potential project opportunities in tourism, manufacturing, agriculture and mining have been identified.

# Agriculture

Agriculture is of extreme importance to the North West. It contributes about 2,6% to the total GDP and 19% to formal employment.

Some 5,9% of the South African GDP in agriculture and 16,96% of total labour in agriculture are based in the North West (*Provincial Economies, 2004*).

The province is an important food basket in South Africa. Maize and sunflowers are the most important crops, and the North West is the major producer of white maize in the country.

Some of the largest cattle herds in the world are found at Stellaland near Vryburg, which explains why this area is often referred to as the "Texas of South Africa". Marico is also cattle-country. The areas around Rustenburg and Brits are fertile, mixed-crop farming land.

## 2010 World Cup

Rustenburg is the official hosting city in the North West, with the Royal Bafokeng Stadium being the official match venue.

The stadium will seat 42 000 people. More than R400 million will be spent on road and traffic infrastructure in Rustenburg and Phokeng ahead of the 2010 World Cup.

Rustenburg Local Municipality received a R19-million grant from the Transport Department which will be used to help improve transport facilities in the city. The municipality, together with the Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, will in line with the North West Provincial Transport Master Plan, spend a further R400 million on major road-infrastructure projects ahead of the 2010 World Cup.

A western bypass is planned to link the N4 with the Sun City Resort and an eastern bypass will link the N4 with the Rustenburg airfield.

Source: [South Africa Yearbook 2007/08](#)

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