

# **LABOUR RESEARCH SERVICE**

## **INFLATION MONITOR**

**MARCH 2023**

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## The Consumer Price Index increased to 7.1% in March 2023

The term inflation means a sustained increase in the general level of prices of goods and services. It is measured as an annual percentage increase (for example, March 2022 to March 2023). Take note that a falling rate of inflation means that prices are rising at a slower rate.

The headline annual inflation rate increased to 7.1% in March 2023 from 7% in February 2023. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 1.0% month-on-month in March 2023.

**The food price** increased to 14.4% in March 2023 from 14% in February 2023

**Transport inflation** declined to 8.9% March 2023 from 9.9% in February 2023.

**Public transport inflation decreased** to 14.6% in March 2023 from 15.8% in February 2023. (Buses, trains, and other forms of transport that are available to the public charge set fares and run-on fixed routes.)

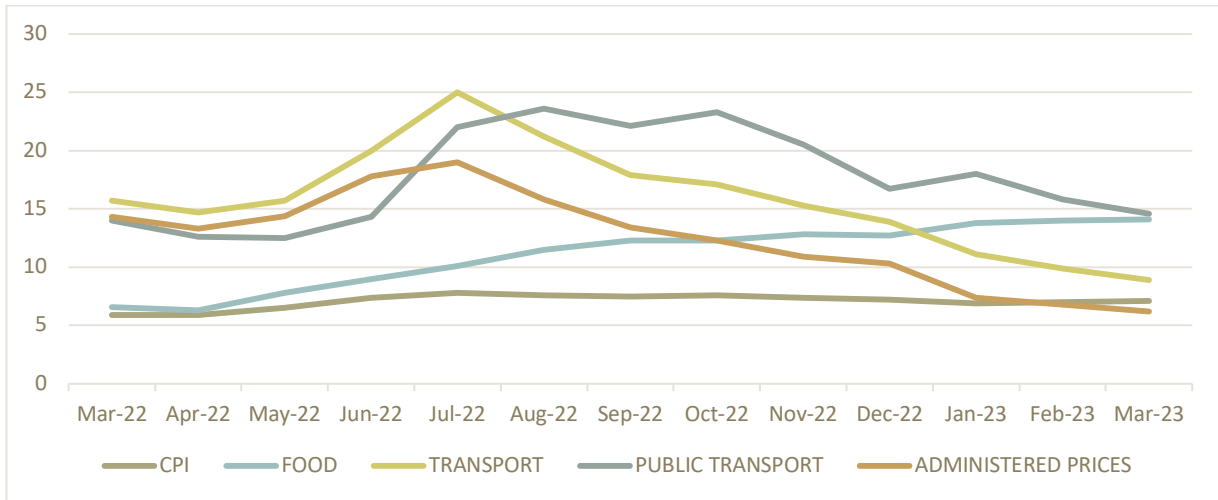
**The administrator's price** (school, telephone fees, electricity, trains, and petrol/paraffin) declined to 6.2% in March 2023 from 6.8% in February 2023.

**Table 1: The Annual Inflation Rate (CPI) and Selected Price Categories**

	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
<b>CPI</b>	5.9%	5.9%	6.5%	7.4%	7.8%	7.6%	7.5%	7.6%	7.4%	7.2%	6.9%	7%	7.1%
<b>Food</b>	6.6%	6.3%	7.8%	9%	10.1%	11.5%	12.3%	12.3%	12.8%	12.7%	13.8%	14%	14.1%
<b>Transport</b>	15.7%	14.7%	15.7%	20%	25%	21.2%	17.9%	17.1%	15.3%	13.9%	11.1%	9.9%	8.9%
<b>Public Transport</b>	14%	12.6%	12.5%	14.3%	22%	23.6%	22.1%	23.3%	20.5%	16.7%	18%	15.8%	14.6%
<b>Administration Prices</b>	14.3%	13.3%	14.4%	17.8%	19%	15.8%	13.4%	12.3%	10.9%	10.3%	7.4%	6.8%	6.2%

Source: Statistics South Africa

**Figure 1: Consumer Price Index (CPI) and selected price categories | March 2022 to March 2023**



Source: Statistics South Africa

**Figure 2: Contributions of the different groups to the annual percentage change in the CPI headline in March 2023**

Group	Contribution	
	Feb 22	Feb 23
Clothing & Footwear	0.1	0.1
Housing and Utilities	0.1	0.1
Education	0.1	0.2
Recreation and Culture	0.2	0.2
Restaurants and Hotels	0.2	0.2
Household Content and Services	0.3	0.3
Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	0.4	0.4
Miscellaneous Goods and Services	0.9	0.9
Housing Utilities	1.0	1.0
Transport	1.4	1.4
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	2.3	2.3
All Items	7	7.1

Source: Statistics South Africa

Statistics South Africa divides household monthly expenditure into 10 deciles. The table below shows that the decile 10 expenditure was higher than the decile 1 expenditure, indicating a high level of inequality.

**Table 2: Annualised inflation by expenditure group | March 2023**

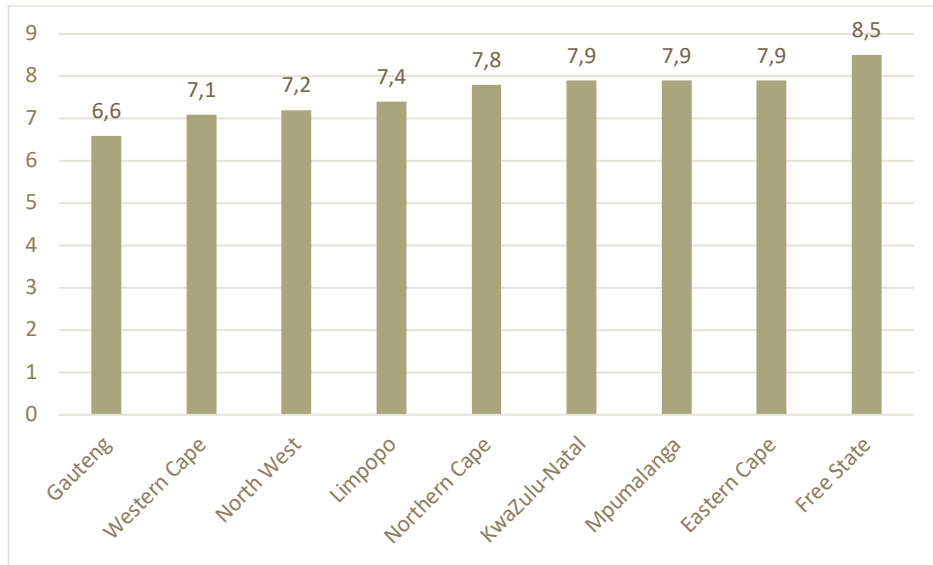
	Monthly expenditure	Inflation Rate Mar-23
<b>Average annual CPI</b>		<b>7.1%</b>
Decile 1	Up to R1 678 per month	11.3%
Decile 2	R1 678 up to R2 802 per month	10.7%
Decile 3	R2 802 up to R4 056 per month	9.2%
Decile 4	R4 056 up to R5 434 per month	8.2%
Decile 5	R5 435 up to R7 058 per month	7.9%
Decile 6	R7 058 up to R9 097 per month	7.4%
Decile 7	R9 097 up to R11 931 per month	7.3%
Decile 8	R11 931 up to R16 660 per month	7.2%
Decile 9	R16 660 up to R26 021 per month	7.1%
Decile 10	R26 021 and more...	6.4%

Source: Statistics South Africa

There is more than one inflation number. The inflation rate that is reported in mainstream media is the average inflation rate. Different groups, from the very poor to the wealthy, can experience different rates of inflation because they buy different things.

The very low group (Decile 1) experienced an inflation rate of 11.3%, which was higher than the headline annualised inflation rate of 7.1%, while the very high expenditure group (Decile 10) had an inflation rate of 6.4%, which was 0.7% lower than the inflation rate of 7.1% in March 2023.

**Figure 3: Annualised inflation rate (%) by province | March 2023**



Source: Statistics South Africa

The provinces with an annual inflation rate **lower than or equal to headline inflation** were Gauteng (6.6%). The provinces with an annual inflation rate **higher than headline inflation** were Western Cape (7.2%), Northwest (7.2%), Limpopo (7.4%), Northern Cape (7.8%), KwaZulu-Natal (7.9%) Mpumalanga (7.9%), Eastern Cape (7.9%) and Free State (8.5%).

**Table 4: The Consumer Price Index**

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ave.
2019	4	4.1	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	4	4.3	4.1	3.7	3.6	4	4.1
2020	4.5	4.6	4.1	3	2.1	2.2	3.2	3.1	3	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.3
2021	3.2	2.9	3.2	4.4	5.2	4.9	4.6	4.9	5	5	5.5	5.9	4.5
2022	5.7	5.7	5.9	5.9	6.5	7.4	7.8	7.6	7.5	7.6	7.4	7.2	6.9
2023	6.9	7	7.1										

Source: Statistics South Africa

The Consumer Price Index is known as the headline inflation rate and is also referred to as the official inflation rate. The month-to-month prices of over a thousand goods and services go into the calculation of CPI.

**Table 5: The Food Price Index**

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ave.
2019	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.8	3.2	3	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.8	3
2020	3.7	4.2	4.4	4.6	4.8	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.2	5.6	5.9	6.2	4.8
2021	5.6	5.4	5.9	6.7	6.8	7	7	7.4	7	6.7	6	5.9	6.5
2022	6.2	6.7	6.6	6.3	7.8	9	10.1	11.5	12.3	12.3	12.8	12.7	9.5
2023	13.8	14	14.1										

Source: Statistics South Africa

The food price index shows the increase in the price level of food products only, every month. This rate is incorporated in the overall CPI inflation rate.

**Table 6: The Transport Price Index**

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ave.
2019	2.9	3.6	6.4	7.4	7.1	5.5	3	3.1	2.4	0.3	-0.3	3.3	3.7
2020	6.4	6.2	3.4	-3.5	-8.4	-5.9	0.0	0.2	0.3	-0.5	-1.3	-1.6	-0.4
2021	-0.4	1.2	3.8	10.6	15.3	12.3	8	9.9	10.1	10.9	15	16.8	9.5
2022	14.5	14.3	15.7	14.7	15.7	20	25	21.2	17.9	17.1	15.3	13.9	17.1
2023	11.1	9.9	8.9										

Source: Statistics South Africa

The transport price index indicates the increase in the price level of transport items in the basket of goods and services that make up the inflation index. This rate is incorporated in the overall CPI inflation rate.

**Table 7: The Public Transport Price Index**

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ave.
2019	9.6	8.9	10.1	10.5	9.5	8.3	7.6	9	3	2.5	2.8	3.7	7.1
2020	0.7	0.8	-1.7	-1.8	-0.7	-1.1	1.5	0.6	1.6	2.9	1.9	1.2	0.5
2021	1.5	1.2	4.5	5.1	4.3	6.9	3.7	5.3	6.7	6	8,3	9.9	5.3
2022	10	12.3	14	12.6	12.5	14.3	22	23.6	22.1	23.2	20.5	16.7	17
2023	18	15.8	14.6										

Source: Statistics South Africa

The public transport price index shows price increases in taxis, trains, buses, or other public transport that ferry passengers or goods. This rate is incorporated into the overall CPI inflation rate.

**Table 8: The Administered Price Index**

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Ave.
2019	5	5.7	7.9	8.3	8.2	6.9	4.7	4.9	5.2	3.5	3	5.9	<b>5.8</b>
2020	9.2	8.8	6.8	0.9	-3.1	-1.7	2.1	2.1	1.8	0.9	0.6	0.2	<b>2.4</b>
2021	1.1	2.7	4	9.2	12.5	10.4	9.1	10.3	10.4	11.2	14.1	15.6	<b>9.2</b>
2022	13.8	13.1	14.3	13.3	14.4	17.8	19	15.8	13.4	12.3	10.9	10.3	<b>14</b>
2023	7.4	6.8	6.2										

Source: Statistics South Africa

An administered price is defined as the price of a product which is set consciously by an individual producer or group of producers and/or any price, which can be determined or influenced by government, either directly or through one or other government agencies/institution without reference to market forces. For example, school fees, telephone fees, electricity, trains, petrol/paraffin, cell calls and public transport. This rate is incorporated into the overall CPI inflation rate.

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*The April 2023 CPI figures are expected on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023*

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