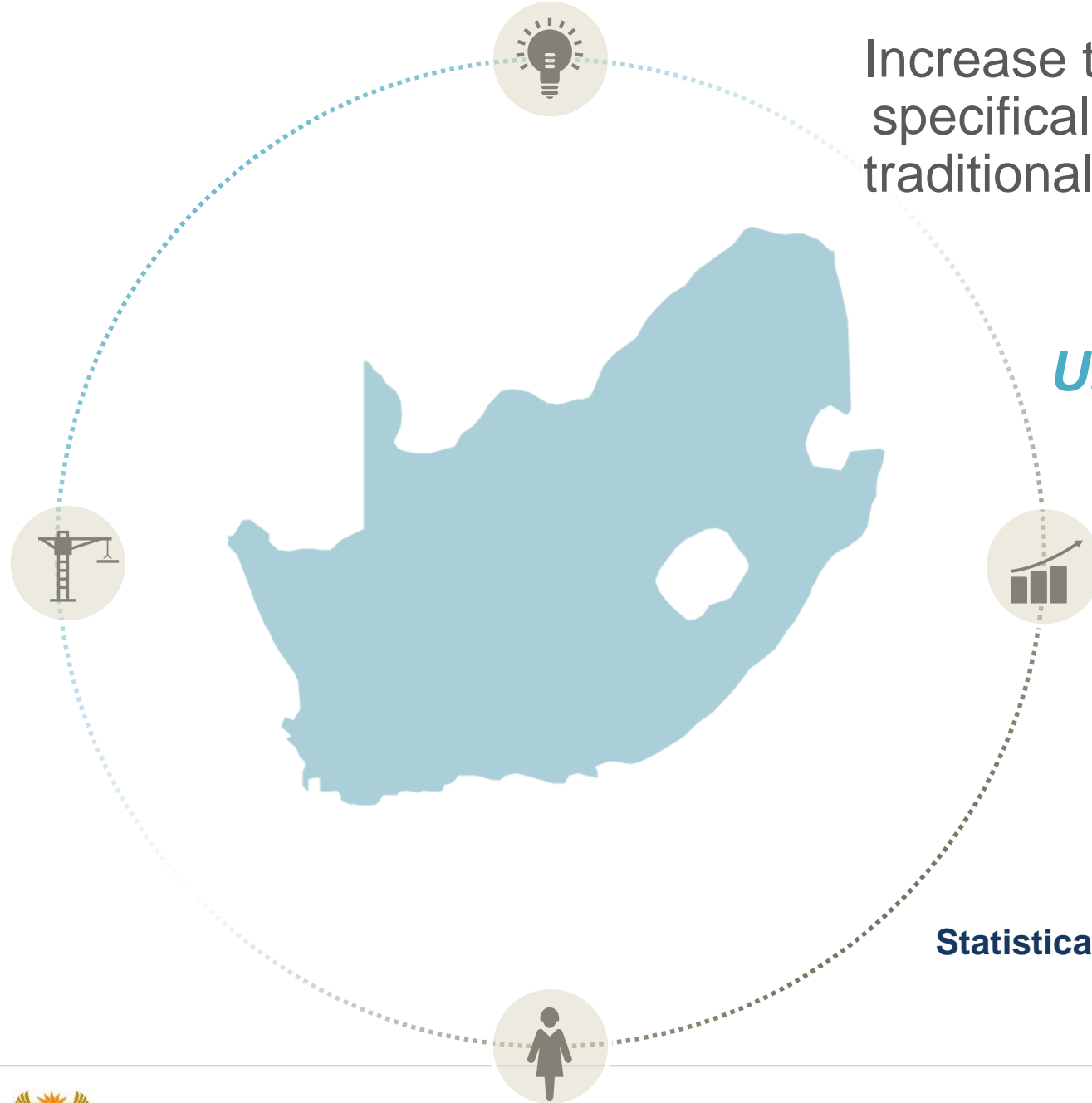Increase the use of statistics, specifically for story-telling in traditional and non-traditional media

Use of Data Stories

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stats sa
Department:
Statistics South Africa
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NDP
2030

- Articles of interest written for the non-statistician, published on Stats SA's website
- Data stories are written to:
  - Summarise specific releases or reports
  - Cover specific themes or subjects, drawing from multiple publications
  - Contribute to conversations in the public sphere or to major news stories
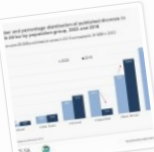
Examples of data stories

Economy disappoints in Q1 2018, contracting by 2,2%

After growing by 3,1% in the fourth quarter of 2017, the South Africa economy wobbled in the first quarter of 2018, shrinking by 2,2% quarter-on-quarter (seasonally adjusted and annualised). Agriculture, mining and were the main contributors to the slowdown, with the electricity, construction and trade industries negative growth. The 2,2% fall is

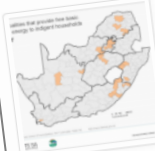Posted on June 5, 2018 Facebook Twitter Linkedin

Four out of ten marriages end in divorce before their 10th anniversary

The recent royal wedding between Prince Harry and Meghan Markle cast the spotlight on fairy of a young couple who are madly in love and vow to spend the rest of their lives together, filled perfect marriage, are what fairy-tale weddings are made of. The truth is that not

Posted on June 4, 2018 Facebook Twitter Linkedin

Energy and the poor: a municipal breakdown

In April, government reaffirmed its commitment to renewable energy. The Department of En with 27 independent power producers (IPPs), effectively unlocking R56 billion that will be i energy projects across the country, predominantly in rural areas. Jeff Radebe, the Minister importance of moving forward with renewable energy

Posted on June 4, 2018 Facebook Twitter Linkedin

An update to municipal spending and revenue (June 2018)

South Africa's 257 municipalities spent a total of R88,6 billion in the quarter ended June 2018, 18% more than the R75,1 billion spent during the quarter ended March 2018. Municipal revenue was down, however, falling by 6% over the same period, from R87,6 billion (March quarter) to R82,6 billion (June quarter).

Stats SA's latest *Quarterly financial statistics of municipalities* report provides an updated breakdown of municipal expenditure and revenue. The largest expenditure item in the quarter ended June 2018 was employee-related costs, contributing R24,1 billion (or 27,2%) to total municipal spending. Many municipalities buy electricity from Eskom that they then resell to various customers. Municipal purchases of electricity was the second largest expenditure item, contributing R18,2 billion (or 20,6%) to total spending

In terms of revenue, the largest source was sales of electricity, followed by government grants and subsidies. Property rates contributed 19,0%. Other revenue (which consists of fines, licences and permits, interest received and rental of facilities and equipment, public contributions and donations) accounted for 9,3%.

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What makes a data story unique?

A rumour wobbles an industry

Misinformation and hearsay have the power to influence an economy. Thousands of civil servants resigned from their posts in 2014 and early 2015 in response to rumours about proposed pension reforms. The economic effect was large enough to be seen in recent gross domestic product (GDP) data released by Stats SA.

The government services sector shrank by 0,8% in the first of quarter of 2015, largely as a result of the resignations. The quarter-on-quarter annualised contraction is unusual, as the sector has historically exhibited consistent positive growth. Since 2011, growth within the sector ranged from 1% to just over 5% quarter-on-quarter (annualised). The last quarter-on-quarter contraction experienced by government was in the first quarter of 2004.

The rumour mill
Misinformation over pension reforms prompts many civil servants to resign, reducing government's contribution to the economy in the first quarter of 2015
Quarter-on-quarter change in value added for general government services*

Government services ↓0,8%

*Seasonally adjusted and annualised
Source: Gross domestic product (P0441), First quarter 2015   http://www.statssa.gov.za

The unexpected rise in resignations within the civil service began in May 2014 and peaked in November of the same year, according to the Government Pensions Administration Agency (GPAA) [1]. Members of the South African Police Service and teachers in particular resigned in order to withdraw their pension contributions, wrongly believing that from 1 March 2015 government would no longer allow civil servants the option of a cash lump sum.

Despite government's reassurances that the rumours were false and that pensions were safe, resignations continued into the first quarter of 2015.
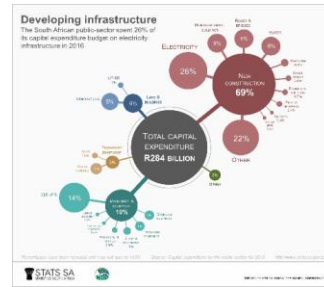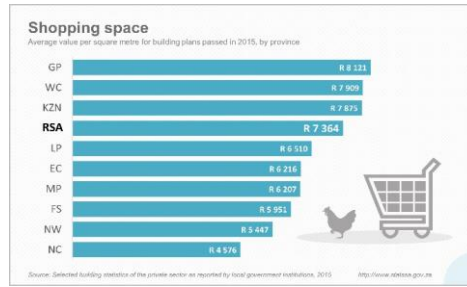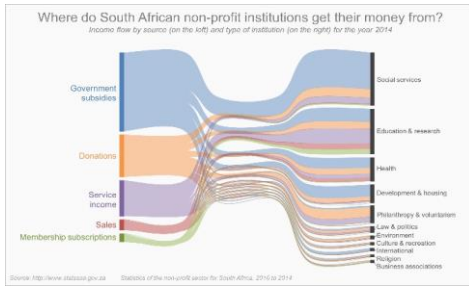
What impact did the resignations have on the economy as a whole? If government services had not contracted by 0,8% but had instead expanded by 2,0% (quarter-on-quarter and

- **Short: <700 words**

- The heading: catchy

- The hook: the first paragraph draws attention
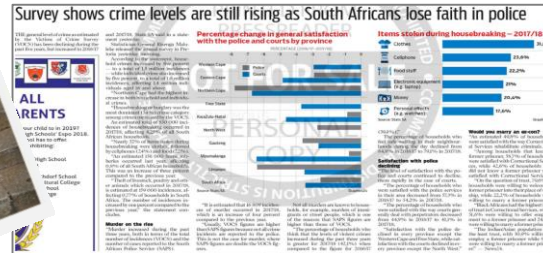
- The graphic: at least one is included

Moving beyond key results
- Trend
- Element within the publication that isn't discussed often
- Links to other publications
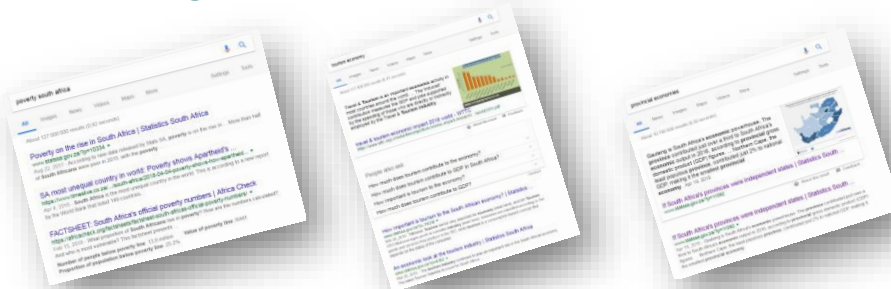- Links to current news in the media

Data stories are often accompanied by infographics and distributed on Social Media

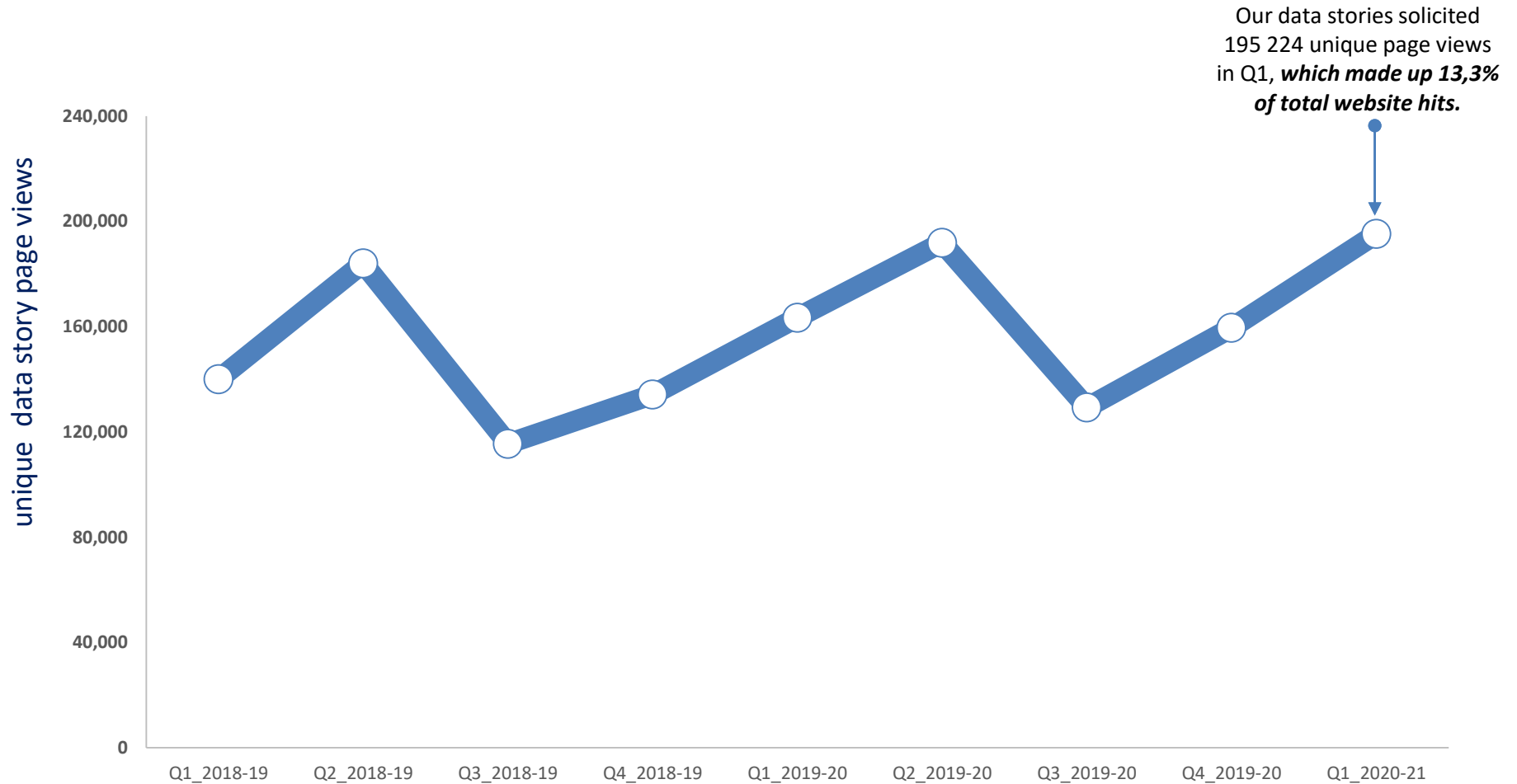# Data stories are also often picked up by Traditional media

Search engines: *Data Stories obtain top rankings* for certain search terms

In 2017 data stories made up 8,5% of unique page views by for the entire website.
For Q1 2020/21 this has increased to 13,3% (13 data stories published in Q1:20/21)

Our data stories solicited 195 224 unique page views in Q1, *which made up 13,3% of total website hits.*