Lovech District

▶ Population (2020)	122,518
▶ Territory (sq. km)	4,128.8
▶ Number of settlements	110
▶ Share of urban population (%)	61.8

LUKOVIT
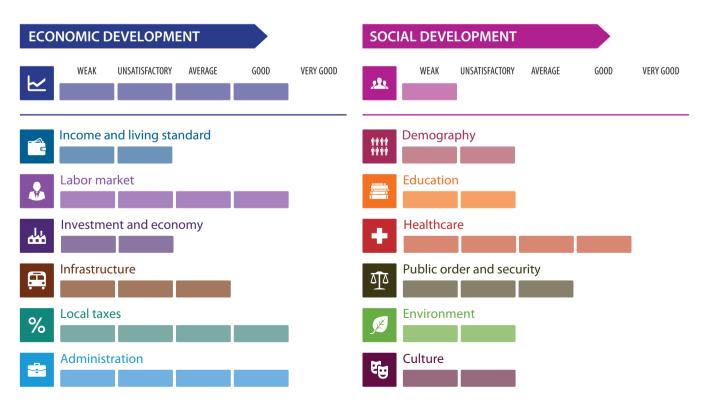LOVECH
YABLANITSA
UGARCHIN
Letnitsa
TETEVEN
TROYAN
APRILTSI

GDP per capita in Lovech district grew in 2019, but both its growth rate and its overall value continued to lag behind the national average. Salaries and incomes also registered an increase. The shrinkage of economic activity was accompanied by a decline in both employment and unemployment. Investment activity is not particularly intense. The number of enterprises remains relatively low. The volume of production in the district also remains limited. The share of households with internet access has registered significant growth. The average level of local taxes in the municipalities of Lovech district is relatively low. The transparency assessment of the local self-government bodies is declining, but remains higher than the national average.

Due to the strongly negative natural population growth rate, Lovech is among the districts with a high level of population ageing. The performance of the district in the field of education is unsatisfactory. The students' results are relatively low. The number of GPs has been declining in recent years, but remains higher than the national average. The number of beds in the local general hospitals remains relatively low. The average workload of the judges in Lovech district is equal to the national average, but the delivery of justice is significantly faster. The amount of generated household waste is relatively low, but the share of waste handed over for treatment and recycling remains extremely small. Cultural life in Lovech district is not very active.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WEAK | UNSATISFACTORY | AVERAGE | GOOD | VERY GOOD

Income and living standard

Labor market

Investment and economy

Infrastructure

Local taxes

Administration

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

WEAK | UNSATISFACTORY | AVERAGE | GOOD | VERY GOOD

Demography

Education

Healthcare

Public order and security

Environment

Culture

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ▪▪▪▪▪

Income and living standard ▪▪

In 2019, GDP per capita in Lovech district continued to grow, but at a rate lower than the national average and its value remained below the average one in the country. Salaries and incomes also registered an increase. The average gross salary of employed people reached 11,400 BGN per annum, compared to 15,200 BGN on average nationwide. The average income per household member amounted to 4,500 BGN per year, against 6,000 BGN countrywide.

In 2019, poverty rates in the district again remained higher than the national average. The share of population living below the poverty line was 25.3%, versus 22.6% in the country, and those living in material deprivation constituted 22.4% of the population, compared to 19.9% nationwide.

Labor market ▪▪▪▪▪

Over the past few years, economic activity in Lovech district has been rising at a fast and steady rate and has almost caught up with the national average. In 2020, however, economic activity decreased sharply – by 4.6 p.p., which is the largest decline in the country, and came down to 68.9%, compared to 73.7% in the country. This shrinkage in activity was driven by a decline in both employment and unemployment in the district. The employment rate decreased to 64.1%, versus 68.5% nationally.

A relatively high share of the population aged 25–64 in the district has secondary education – 64.6%, compared to 53.9% in the country, and the shares of both university graduates and those with primary or lower education are smaller than the respective national averages – 20.5%, against 29.2% in the country, and 14.9%, against 16.9% in the country respectively.

The demographic replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that aged 60–64 has decreased to 63.6%, compared to 67.1% nationally. This means that for every 100 people who are about to leave the labor market in the next few years, there are 64 young people who will join the workforce.

Investment and economy ▪▪

Investment activity in Lovech district was again not particularly strong in 2019. The relative number of enterprises in the district remained relatively low – 46 per 1,000 persons, versus the national average of 61 per 1,000 persons. FTA expenditures rose considerably – by 19%, but nevertheless remained low at 1,384 BGN/person, against 3,155 BGN/person. FDI in the district also went up to reach 1,201 EUR/person, against 3,655 EUR/person on a national level. Production value remained low –14,800 BGN/person, while the national average was 28,000 BGN/person.

Utilization of EU funds is relatively high. Payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs reached 2,328 BGN/person, versus 2,217 BGN/person on a national level. Within the district, the highest amounts were utilized by the municipalities of Troyan, Yablanitsa and Lukovit.

Infrastructure ▪▪▪▪

The railroad network density in Lovech district remained low in 2020. Although the road network density was slightly higher than the national average, the share of highways and first-class roads remained relatively small – 16.2%, versus 18.5% in the country. The share of road surfaces in good condition in 2019 was close to the national average – 41%, versus 41.4 in the country.

While it had previously been lagging behind as regards the relative share of households with internet access, in 2020 the figures were considerably higher and reached 77.2%, compared to the national average of 78.9%. The share of households connected to a gas supply was relatively high – 3.4%.

Local taxes ▪▪▪▪▪

The average level of local taxes in the municipalities of Lovech district remained relatively low in 2021. An exception was the tax rate on non-residential immovable property of legal entities. In Lovech district it was 2.25‰ on average, compared to 2.04‰ in the country.

Considerably lower than the national averages were the tax rates on motor vehicles – 1.28 BGN/kW, versus 1.52 BGN/kW in the country, and on non-gratuitous acquisition of property – 2.34%, compared to 2.73 nationally.

Administration ▪▪▪▪▪

Cadastral map coverage in Lovech district has traditionally been higher than in the country on average and in 2019 it reached 93.8%, against 91.4% nationally.

The local administrations' self-assessment ratings again show that the district is lagging considerably behind as regards the development of e-government, but is performing well in the provision of one-stop shop services.

The transparency ratings of the local administration dropped in 2021, but remained above the national average. Within the district, the highest transparency ratings (over 80%) were given to the municipalities of Troyan, Ugurchin and Teteven, and the lowest one (64%) – to that of Letnitsa.

🚍 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

🏛 Demography

The natural population growth rate came down to –14.5‰ in 2020 and remained considerably lower than the national average of –9.5‰. Like most other districts during 2020, Lovech managed to attract new residents and for the first time in at least twenty years the net migration rate was a positive value – 14‰.

Nevertheless, due to the extremely negative natural population growth rate, Lovech is among the districts with a high level of population ageing. The age dependency rate in the district, calculated as the ratio of the people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14, has reached 201.6%, compared to 150.6 in the country on average, and that of people aged 65+ to those aged 15–64 it is 45.6%, versus the national average of 34.1%.

A relatively low share of the district's population lives in urban settlements – 61.8%, compared to 72.9% in the country, and the population density of urbanized areas is considerably lower – 836 persons/sq. km, while nationally it is 1,506 persons/sq. km.

📖 Education

The district's performance in education is unsatisfactory. The shares of repeaters and dropouts from primary and secondary school have declined considerably, but they still remain higher than the respective national averages. Though the enrolment ratio in 5th–8th grade has declined to 86.7%, it still remains higher, albeit by a small margin, than the national average of 86.5%.

Students' results in the district are relatively low. The average score in the 2021 external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade was 29.5 points, versus 37.9 points in the country on average. At the same time, the average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was 4.13, compared to 4.21 in the country, while the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) rose to 8%, against the national average of 7%.

In 2020, the education system in Lovech district continued to suffer from a relative shortage of teachers. The relative number of teachers in primary and secondary education went up, but it still remained lower than the national average – 85/1,000 students, versus 87/1,000 students in the country.

The number of university students again remained relatively low in 2020, with 2 students per 1,000 persons, against 32 students per 1,000 persons nationally.

➕ Healthcare

The number of GPs in Lovech district has decreased over the past few years but in 2020 it again remained higher than the national average. The share of people with health insurance also declined to 90.4% but remained above the national average of 88.7%.

The number of beds in the local general hospitals remains relatively low – 4.17 beds per 1,000 people in the district, versus 5.52 beds per 1,000 people in the country.

The number of hospitalizations in the district – 137 per 1,000 persons – is practically equal to the national average of 138 per 1,000 persons. Infant mortality in the district is also equal to the national average.

⚖ Public order and security

The workloads of criminal judges in 2020 were equal to the national average but the speed of delivery of justice in Lovech district remained considerably higher. One local judge heard an average of 8.6 cases a month. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 94%, compared to the average of 90% nationwide. Pending cases, for their part, amounted to below 8%, against over 11% nationally.

The relative number of registered crimes against the person and property in Lovech district dropped to 10.5 per 1,000 persons, but remained above the national average of 9.9 per 1,000 persons. However, the detection rate was higher than the national average – 55.2%, against 52.1% in the country.

🌿 Environment

Carbon dioxide emissioncs in Lovech district reached 669 t/sq. m in 2019. The amount of household waste generated in the district remained relatively low – 332 kg/person per annum, against 409 kg/person per annum as the national average. However, in 2018 the share of that waste handed over for treatment and recycling was still extremely limited – 11%, compared to the national average of 71%.

The share of population with access to public sewerage networks has been growing but at a very slow rate and in 2019 it was still lagging behind the national average, reaching 69.3%, compared to 76.4% countrywide. A rather low share (57%) of the population was connected to waste water treatment plants, against 64.6% in the country.

🎭 Culture

Cultural life in Lovech district has shown little intensity. Like essentially all other disteicts, in 2020 the district fell under the negative impact of the pandemic and the restrictions on cultural events. Cinema visits dropped by 77% to 43 per 1,000 persons, while nationwide they fell by 71% to 190 per 1,000 persons. The decrease was smaller as regards museum visits, which shrank by 45%, against 58% nationwide, and their number remained higher than average – 571 per 1,000 persons, compared to 322 per 1,000 persons nationwide. Library visits decreased by 41%, against 30% in the country, and were down to 134 per 1,000 persons, compared to 480 per 1,000 persons nationwide

Key indicators for the district of Lovech

Indicators of economic development	2018	2019	2020	National average
GDP per capita (BGN, current prices)	9,653	10,284	n.a.	**17,170**
Average annual income per household member (BGN)	4,303	4,454	n.a.	**6,013**
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	10,317	11,365	n.a.	**15,209**
Share of the population living below the national poverty line (%)	38.3	25.3	n.a.	**22.6**
Employment rate of the population aged 15–64 (%)	60.9	67.0	64.1	**68.5**
Unemployment rate of the population over 15 years of age (%)	9.8	6.5	(4.8)	**5.2**
Share of the population aged 25–64 with primary or lower education (%)	15.6	13.5	14.9	**16.9**
Share of the population aged 25–64 with higher education (%)	20.9	19.1	20.5	**29.2**
Production value (BGN/person)	14,666	14,809	n.a.	**28,027**
Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed tangible assets (BGN/person)	1,165	1,384	n.a.	**3,155**
Cumulative foreign direct investment in non-financial enterprises (EUR/person)	969	1,201	n.a.	**3,655**
Share of households with Internet (%)	67.8	66.8	77.2	**78.9**
Share of roads in good condition (%)	37.8	41.0	n.a.	**41.4**
Road network density (km/100 sq. km territory)	18.0	18.3	18.3	**17.9**
AIP active transparency rating of local government bodies (%)*	74.0	77.9	76.9	**73.2**

Indicators of social development	2018	2019	2020	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	−11.5	−13.1	−14.5	**−9.5**
Net migration rate (‰)	−5.0	−5.8	14.0	**4.4**
Average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.00	4.19	4.13	**4.21**
Average grade in the National external exam in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	29.7	29.8	29.5	**37.9**
Net enrolment of the population in 5th–8th grade (%)	90.6	88.6	86.7	**86.5**
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	79	86	85	**87**
Share of population with health insurance (%)	90.5	92.0	90.4	**88.7**
Population per one GP (number of people)	1,464	1,476	1,531	**1,727**
Registered crimes against the person and property per 1,000 people	12.7	11.2	10.5	**9.9**
Workloads of criminal judges in office (cases/month)	12.0	9.9	8.6	**8.6**
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage networks (%)	69.1	69.3	n.a.	**76.4**
Generated household waste per capita (kg/person/year)	332	n.a.	n.a.	**409**
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	11.3	n.a.	n.a.	**70.9**
Visits to cinemas per 1,000 persons	112	183	43	**190**
Visits to museums per 1,000 persons	906	1,031	571	**322**

* The data for 2021 are included in the 2021 study. The same also applies for the previous years.
** The data refer to the 2020–2021 academic year while the matriculation exam was held in 2021. The same also applies for the previous years.