

Lovech district

► Population (2021)	119,780
► Territory (sq. km)	4,129
► Number of settlements	110
► Share of urban population (%)	61.8



GDP per capita, incomes, and salaries in Lovech district have been rising but still remain relatively low. Poverty, however, has decreased. Unemployment is close to the national average but economic activity and employment rates are low. The volume of production in the district has shrunk. Road surface quality in Lovech district is comparable to the country's average. The average level of local taxes in the municipalities of the district is relatively low. The local administrations' self-assessment ratings again show that the district is lagging considerably behind as regards the development of e-government.

Due to the strongly negative natural population growth rate, Lovech is among the districts with quickly ageing populations. Students' results are relatively low. The number of GPs has been declining in recent years, but remains higher than the national average. The availability of beds in the local general hospitals again remains relatively low. 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



Income and living standard



Labor market



Investment and economy



Infrastructure



Local taxes



Administration



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Demography



Education



Healthcare



Public order and security



Environment



Culture



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ■■■■

Income and living standard ■■

In 2020, GDP per capita in Lovech district registered considerable growth, yet remained relatively low – 10,900 BGN, against the average of 17,300 BGN in the country. Salaries and incomes also registered an increase but they still remain relatively limited. The average gross salary of employed people reached 12,600 BGN per annum, compared to 16,700 BGN on average nationwide.

In line with these trends, poverty rates in the district are on the decrease. The share of the population living below the poverty line, however, remains high – 28.1%, versus 22.1% in the country for 2021.

Labor market ■■■■

Economic activity and employment rates in Lovech district have been rising but in 2021 they again remained relatively low. The rate of economic activity reached 69.0%, compared to 72.0% in the country, and employment rates stood at 65.0%, versus 68.1% nationally. At the same time, unemployment rates continued to be close to the national average.

A relatively high share of the population aged 25–64 in the district has secondary education – 67.3%, compared to 53.8% in the country, while the shares of both university graduates and those with primary or lower education are smaller than the respective national averages – 17.5%, against 29.6% in the country, and 15.2%, against 16.6% in the country respectively.

The demographic replacement rate as a ratio of the population aged 15–19 to that aged 60–64 was 64.3% in 2021, compared to 69.4% 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 ■■

The relative number of enterprises in the district is 45 per 1,000 persons, versus the national average of 60 per 1,000 persons. A decrease in foreign and domestic flows was also registered in 2020, as well as a shrink in production value. FTA expenditures dropped to 1,200 BGN/person, against 3,300 BGN/person, and FDI in the district similarly decreased to 1,100 EUR/person, against 3,900 EUR/person on a national level. Production value shrank to 14,300 BGN/person, while the national average was 27,200 BGN/person.

Utilization of EU funds is relatively high. By 30 June 2022, payments made in the district to beneficiaries under EU operational programs reached 2,577 BGN/person. Within the district, the

highest amounts were utilized by the municipalities of Troyan and Yablanitsa – over 3,000 BGN/person.

Infrastructure ■■■

The railroad network density in Lovech district in 2021 again remained close to the country's average. Although the road network density is slightly higher than the national average, the share of highways and first-class roads remains relatively small – 16.2%, versus 18.5% in the country. The share of road surfaces in good condition is comparable to the national average – 40%, versus 42% in the country.

The share of households with internet access continued to rise in 2021, but remained relatively low – 78.1%, compared to the national average of 83.5%. The share of households connected to a gas supply is 3.9%, still below the national average (5.3% in 2020). The installed RES capacities relative to the population are twice as low as the national average.

Local taxes ■■■■

The average level of local taxes in the municipalities of Lovech district again remained relatively low in 2022. An exception was the tax rate on non-residential immovable property of legal entities. In Lovech district it was 2.22‰ on average, compared to 2.06‰ in the country. Considerably lower than the national averages were the tax rates on motor vehicles – 1.09 BGN/kW, versus 1.54 BGN/kW in the country, and on non-gratuitous acquisition of property – 2.34%, compared to 2.75% nationally.

Within the district, the lowest local taxes are levied by the municipalities of Ugarchin and Letnitsa, and the highest – by those of Yablanitsa and Apriltsi.

Administration ■■■■

Cadastral map coverage in Lovech district has traditionally been higher than in the country on average and in 2021 it reached 98.8%, against 97.4% nationally.

The local administrations' self-assessment ratings for 2022 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 further in 2022, but remained above the national average – 74.3% in the district, against 70.2% nationally.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ■■■

Demography ■■■

The natural population growth rate again came down in 2021 to reach -19.2‰ and remained considerably lower than the national average of -13.2‰. Lovech has also failed to attract new residents and the net migration rate is negative at -3.2‰.

These developments further deepen the trend toward population ageing in the district. This is clearly visible in the age dependency rates for 2021. The ratio of the people aged 65+ to those aged 0–14 was 199.68%, compared to 149.36 in the country on average, and to those aged 15–64 – 45.5%, versus the national average of 34.0%.

The share of the district's population living in urban settlements is relatively low – 61.8%, compared to 73.1% in the country, and the population density of urbanized areas is considerably lower – 818 persons/sq. km, while nationally it is 1,486 persons/sq. km.

Education ■■■

The district's performance in the education category is unsatisfactory. The enrolment ratio in 5th–7th grade registered a slight increase to 87.1% in 2021 and remained higher than the national average (85.9%). The percentage of repeaters has risen and continues to be considerably higher than the national average. The relative number of teachers in primary and secondary education has gone up considerably and has reached 113 per 1,000 students, versus 97 per 1,000 students in the country.

Students' results in the district are low. The average score in the 2022 external assessment in mathematics after 7th grade was 26.1 points, versus 35.3 points in the country on average. The average grade in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature was "Good" 3.82, compared to 3.97 in the country, while the share of "fail" grades (below 3.00) rose to 22.4%, against the national average of 17%.

The number of university students in Lovech district again remained extremely low in 2020, with only the Technical College, which is a branch of Gabrovo Technical University, on its territory.

Healthcare ■■■■■

Healthcare in Lovech district is at a relatively high level. The number of GPs has decreased over the past few years but in 2021 it again remained higher than the national average. Specialist physicians are also well represented. The share of people with health insurance remains above the national average – 90.6%, against 88.7% in the country.

The number of beds in the local general hospitals has gone up but remains relatively low – 4.27 beds per 1,000 persons in the district, versus 5.62 beds per 1,000 persons in the country.

The number of hospitalizations in the district – 137.8 per 1,000 persons – is below the national average of 222.6 per 1,000

persons, and it is highly possible that some of the residents choose to seek medical care in the hospitals in Pleven district.

Public order and security ■■■■

The workloads of criminal judges in 2021 were above the national average but the speed of delivery of justice in Lovech district again remained considerably higher. One local judge heard an average of 9.9 cases a month, versus 9.0 cases per judge nationally. The proportion of criminal cases closed within 3 months was 95%, compared to the average of 89% nationwide.

The relative number of registered crimes against the person and property in Lovech district went up to 11.1 per 1,000 persons and remained above the national average of 9.8 per 1,000 persons. However, the detection rate was higher than the national average – 59.5%, against 51.7% in the country.

Environment ■■■■

The share of waste generated by the households in Lovech district is relatively low – 325 kg/person per annum, compared to 409 kg/person, but the share of this waste handed over for treatment and recycling remains extremely limited – 13%, compared to the national average of 69.3% for 2020.

The share of the population with access to public sewerage networks has continued to lag behind the national average and in 2020 it reached 68.8%, compared to 76.3% countrywide. The share of sewerage networks connected to wastewater treatment plants is 56.4%, against 66.7% in the country.

The share of forest areas is close to the national average – 35.8%, compared to 33.1% countrywide, and that of disturbed areas is relatively limited at 0.16%, versus 0.42% nationally in 2021.

Culture ■■■

Cultural life in Lovech district has shown little intensity. Similar to the whole country, in 2020 the district suffered the negative impact of the pandemic and the restrictions on cultural events. In 2021 it revived somewhat, compared to 2020; however, this was insufficient to make up for the shrinking of the year before. Cinema visits went up to 145 per 1,000 persons, with 351 per 1,000 persons nationwide. Library visits rose slightly, reaching 143 per 1,000 persons, compared to the national average of 449 per 1,000 persons.

The number of museum visits registered a greater increase and remains above the country average – 738 per 1,000 persons, compared to 426 per 1,000 persons nationwide. From among the monitored indicators, only the number of theatre visits has registered a decrease and in 2021 it was a bare 30 per 1,000 persons, compared to the national average of 129 persons.

Key indicators for the district of Lovech

Economic Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita (BGN, current prices)	10,337	10,865	n.a.	17,299
Average annual gross salary per employed person (BGN)	11,365	12,594	n.a.	16,687
Relative share of people living below the national poverty line (%)	25.3	28.9	28.1	22.1
Annual average economic activity rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	71.8	67.3	69.0	72.0
Annual average employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 (%)	67.0	64.1	65.0	68.1
Annual average unemployment rate of the population aged 15+ (%)	6.5	(4.8)	(5.7)	5.3
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with primary or lower education (%)	13.5	14.9	15.2	16.6
Relative share of the population aged 25 to 64 with higher education (%)	19.1	20.5	17.5	29.6
Production value (BGN/person)	14,809	14,312	n.a.	27,213
Expenditures for acquisition of fixed tangible assets per capita (BGN/person)	1,384	1,151	n.a.	3,348
Foreign direct investment to non-financial enterprises, per capita (cumulative) (EUR/person)	1,201	1,136	n.a.	3,877
Relative share of households with internet access (%)	66.8	77.2	78.1	83.5
Share of roads in good condition (%)	41.0	40.9	40.1	42.0
Road network density (km/100 sq. m territory)	18.3	18.3	18.3	18.0
Active Transparency Rating of local government bodies (%)*	77.9	76.9	74.3	70.2

Social Development Indicators	2019	2020	2021	National average
Rate of natural increase (‰)	-13.1	-14.5	-19.2	-13.2
Net migration rate (‰)	-5.8	14.0	-3.2	1.9
Average grades in the State matriculation exam in Bulgarian language and literature**	4.19	4.13	3.82	3.97
Average grade in the National external examination in mathematics after 7th grade (points)**	29.8	29.5	26.1	35.3
Net enrolment rate of the population (5th to 7th grade) (%)	88.6	86.7	87.1	85.9
Number of teachers in primary and secondary schools per 1,000 students	89	97	113	97
Health insured persons as share of the population (%)	92.0	90.4	90.6	88.7
Number of people per general practitioner	1,476	1,531	1,556	1,734
Crimes against the person and property per 1,000 persons	11.2	10.5	11.1	9.8
Actual workload of penal judges in the district court (cases/month)	9.9	8.6	9.9	9.0
Share of population living in settlements with public sewerage systems (%)	69.3	68.8	n.a.	76.3
Household waste generated per capita of serviced population (kg/person/year)	328	325	n.a.	409
Share of household waste handed over for treatment and recycling (%)	13.0	13.0	n.a.	69.3
Number of visits to cinemas per 1,000 people of the average annual population	183	43	145	351
Number of visits to museums per 1,000 people of the average annual population	1,031	571	738	426

* The 2021 data are included in the 2022 study.

** The data refer to the 2021-22 academic year, while the State matriculation exams took place in 2022. The same is valid of the previous years.