

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary): April 2006

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Key figures for the month of April 2006

	April 2006	% change between April 2005 and April 2006	% change between February 2005 to April 2005 and February 2006 to April 2006
Actual estimates			
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	107 921	3,3	11,9
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	68 831	-1,5	4,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	512,7	-4,8	3,6

Key findings as at the end of April 2006

The number of civil summonses issued for debt increases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended April 2006 increased by 11,9% compared with the three months ended April 2005.

The major contributors to the increase of 11,9% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended April 2006 compared with the three months ended April 2005, were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (+6,0 percentage points), 'other' debts (+4,3 percentage points) and promissory notes and others (+3,1 percentage points). There was, however, a decrease of 1,6 percentage points with regard to civil summons of 'other services' (see Table 6 column 2 page 10).

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for April 2006 increased by 3,3% compared with April 2005.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended April 2006 increased by 4,1% compared with the three months ended April 2005.

The major contributors to the increase of 4,1% in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended April 2006 compared with the three months ended April 2005, were civil judgements in respect of money lent (+3,4 percentage points) and 'other' debts (+3,0 percentage points). However, this increase was partially counteracted by a decrease in judgements recorded for debt in respect of 'other services' (-3,1 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 3 page 10).

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for April 2006 decreased by 1,5% compared with April 2005.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended April 2006 increased by 3,6% compared with the three months ended April 2005.

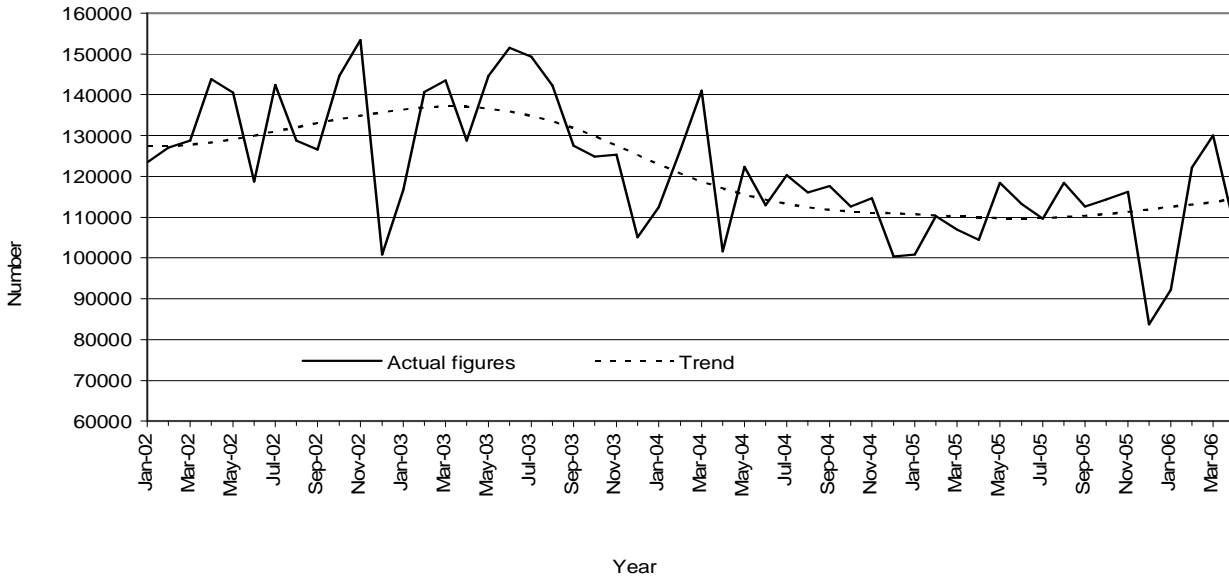
The major contributor to the increase of 3,6% in the value of civil judgements recorded for the three months ended April 2006 compared with the three months ended April 2005, was civil judgements recorded in respect of 'other' debts (+12,0 percentage points). However, this increase was partially counteracted by a decrease in judgements recorded for debt in respect of money lent (-6,3 percentage points), promissory notes and others (-1,0 percentage points) and goods sold (-1,0 percentage points) (see table 6 column 4 page 10).

During April 2006, 68 831 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R512,7 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R512,7 million were civil judgements relating to 'other' debts (R156,1 million or 30,5%) and money lent (R152,3 million or 29,7%) (see Table 4 page 9).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for April 2006 decreased by 4,8% compared with April 2005.

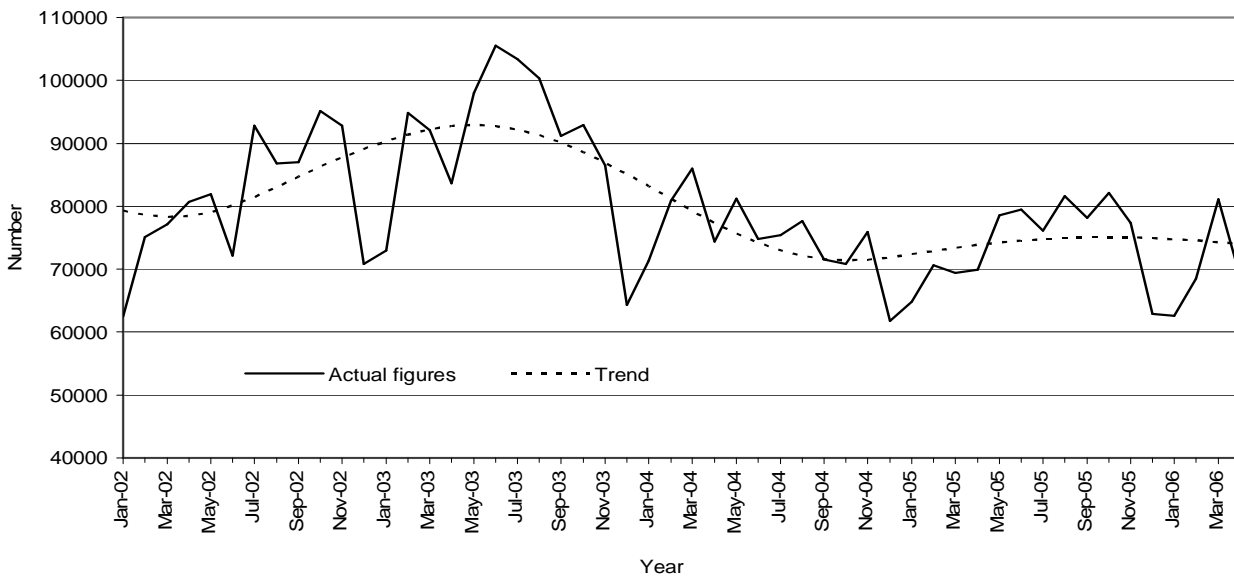
Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from 2002 to 2006 respectively. In figure 1 since February 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an increasing trend until April 2003. The trend started decreasing from May 2003 until February 2005. The trend has been rising slightly since March 2005.

Figure 1 - Civil summonses issued for debt



In figure 2 since April 2002 the trend estimates for civil judgements recorded for debt showed an increasing trend until June 2003. The trend has decreased since July 2003 until October 2004 but since November 2004 it has increased slightly until May 2005 and levelled off since then.

Figure 2 - Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Notes

Forthcoming issue	Issue	Expected release date
	May 2006	20 July 2006
Purpose of the survey	The survey of Civil Cases for Debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa, excluding the former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC states). This survey collects information regarding civil cases recorded, civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded in order to provide users with information on the extent of unpaid debt in South Africa. The results of the survey are used by the private and public sectors as an indicator of economic performance.	
Response rate	The response rate for April 2006 was 90,1%.	

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Table 1 - Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private persons			
	2005	2005	2006	2006	2005	2005	2006	2006
		Apr.	Mar.	1/ Apr.		Apr.	Mar.	1/ Apr.
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 514 116	121 981	147 227	120 328	1 373 027	112 702	132 384	107 767
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		132 952	131 651	131 369		122 576	118 212	117 305
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 679	14 646	17 457	13 874	138 886	12 987	15 232	12 052
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	51 566	3 995	2 966	2 423	46 903	3 619	2 502	1 933
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	152 858	12 154	12 865	10 877	133 286	11 546	11 063	9 433
2.2.2 Other	229 019	18 351	19 567	15 317	208 046	17 019	17 571	13 752
2.3 Rent	49 151	2 847	4 526	3 708	39 785	2 386	3 426	2 710
2.3.1 Money lent	296 341	23 723	32 131	27 542	277 400	22 321	30 779	26 303
2.3.2 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	128 403	10 709	14 639	12 057	118 238	9 997	13 334	10 651
2.6 Other debts	241 952	18 069	25 883	22 123	215 513	15 965	22 125	19 045
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 308 969	104 494	130 034	107 921	1 178 057	95 840	116 032	95 879
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		112 699	115 204	116 607		103 073	102 978	103 253

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Table 2 - Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices

Year or month	Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East-London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2004	143 146	81 408	37 375	13 044	19 321	121 484	169 721	87 621	51 872	128 803	25 498	55 835
2005	165 535	69 776	38 487	9 248	20 091	77 468	156 641	58 486	58 984	138 300	27 437	59 361
2005 - J	11 896	6 551	2 247	545	1 578	10 239	14 059	3 943	4 003	9 006	2 093	4 441
F	14 772	6 551	3 172	895	1 781	9 815	11 918	5 120	5 274	12 240	2 592	4 182
M	11 976	5 099	2 889	632	1 439	5 740	13 198	4 899	4 666	10 904	2 980	4 604
A	13 600	4 474	2 504	801	1 526	3 230	13 299	5 143	3 967	14 042	2 991	4 808
M	12 386	7 915	3 151	997	2 268	5 435	14 706	6 654	5 028	12 756	1 832	4 884
J	15 193	6 117	3 350	721	1 636	4 921	12 201	4 335	5 686	12 114	1 794	5 073
J	13 402	4 474	3 240	873	1 894	4 921	12 726	4 973	5 567	11 494	2 127	5 083
A	18 630	5 573	2 941	861	2 220	7 311	14 095	4 914	5 759	11 839	3 311	5 249
S	15 391	5 612	3 517	911	1 539	7 311	13 090	5 117	4 851	12 216	1 112	5 371
O	14 575	7 432	3 951	871	1 433	6 397	13 889	4 751	4 479	11 456	1 901	5 291
N	16 106	6 489	4 009	740	1 410	6 397	11 730	5 502	5 731	12 428	2 469	5 214
D	7 608	3 489	3 516	401	1 367	5 751	11 730	3 135	3 973	7 805	2 235	5 161
2006 - J	10 205	5 091	4 446	209	1 171	5 751	6 505	4 097	4 441	10 867	2 437	5 120
F	11 387	7 860	5 785	756	1 751	5 751	13 143	4 652	7 231	12 266	2 492	5 117
M	14 010	8 082	6 013	732	1 742	6 285	14 398	5 761	6 259	14 272	2 994	4 789
A	11 673	5 239	4 285	311	1 290	3 193	12 046	5 646	4 454	8 127	3 028	4 789

Table 3 - Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private persons			
	2005	2005	2006	2006	2005	2005	2006	2006
		Apr.	Mar.	1/ Apr.		Apr.	Mar.	1/ Apr.
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	114 109	9 049	10 655	9 724	104 472	8 361	9 559	8 672
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	16 620	1 058	1 872	998	14 927	956	1 731	869
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	83 017	6 498	7 209	6 122	77 613	6 258	6 750	5 350
1.2.2 Other	122 987	11 139	9 846	8 106	115 538	10 507	9 295	7 508
1.3 Rent	29 088	1 695	3 318	2 046	22 870	1 333	2 314	1 684
1.4 Money lent	309 063	24 234	27 899	23 330	304 434	23 731	27 253	22 791
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	82 229	6 835	7 906	5 972	77 741	6 497	7 433	5 549
1.6 Other debts	134 032	9 404	12 416	12 533	121 147	8 745	11 148	11 542
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	891 145	69 912	81 121	68 831	838 742	66 388	75 483	63 965
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		74 610	77 768	73 176		70 248	73 899	67 270

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Table 4 - Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private persons			
	2005	2005	2006	2006	2005	2005	2006	2006
		Apr.	Mar.	1/ Apr.		Apr.	Mar.	1/ Apr.
R'000								
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	661 352	57 182	54 704	45 226	540 967	47 280	45 067	34 454
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	273 731	22 420	36 355	17 411	227 774	17 219	28 759	11 872
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	258 691	14 733	14 573	16 612	219 341	12 581	12 122	13 564
1.2.2 Other	601 147	49 026	55 006	55 830	507 366	43 538	42 296	46 190
1.3 Rent	217 608	18 491	21 334	16 744	155 938	11 444	16 405	13 140
1.4 Money lent	2 152 458	210 261	178 530	152 328	2 028 303	198 732	170 562	145 135
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	822 425	60 324	58 369	52 459	729 677	55 000	50 945	48 798
1.6 Other debts	1 663 448	106 157	178 325	156 127	1 281 651	86 394	113 063	107 178
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 650 860	538 594	597 196	512 737	5 691 017	472 188	479 219	420 331
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		587 641	565 553	557 442		509 983	450 861	449 501

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Table 5 - Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

	Actual estimates February 2005 to April 2005	Actual estimates February 2006 to April 2006	% change between February 2005 to April 2005 and February 2006 to April 2006	Difference between February 2005 to April 2005 and February 2006 to April 2006
Number of summonses for debt	321 746	360 067	11,9%	28 321
Number of judgements for debt	209 897	218 446	4,1%	8 549
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 641,5	1 699,8	3,6%	58,3

Table 6 - Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number and value of debts recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Different kinds of debts	Contribution percentage points to the percentage change in the total number of summonses for debt	Contribution percentage points to the percentage change in the total number of civil judgements for debt	Contribution percentage points to the percentage change in the total value of civil judgements for debt
Goods sold			
Open account	0,8	-0,4	-1,0
Instalment sale transactions	-1,0	0,4	-0,1
Professional services	-0,1	0,3	-0,9
Other services	-1,6	-3,1	1,3
Rent	0,4	0,4	-0,4
Money lent	6,0	3,4	-6,3
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	3,1	0,1	-1,0
Other debts	4,3	3,0	12,0
Total	11,9	4,1	3,6

The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the quarterly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during February 2005 to April 2005, divided by 100.

Table 7 - Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year.

	Actual estimates April 2005	Actual estimates April 2006	% change between April 2005 and April 2006	Difference between April 2005 and April 2006
Number of summonses for debt	104 494	107 921	3,3%	3 427
Number of judgements for debt	69 912	68 831	-1,5%	-1 081
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	538,6	512,7	-4,8%	-25,9

Explanatory notes

- Introduction**
- 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly sample survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued in South Africa. This information is obtained from selected magistrates' offices.
 - 2 Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejectment orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
- Scope of the survey**
- 3 This survey covers -
 - number of civil cases recorded;
 - number of civil summonses issued for debt;
 - number of civil judgements recorded for debt; and
 - value of civil judgements recorded for debt.
- Statistical unit**
- 4 The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrates' office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.
 - 5 The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa, which account for approximately 95% of all the civil cases in South Africa, are included in the monthly survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices is drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as the measure of size.
- Survey methodology and design**
- 6 The survey is conducted by mail each month from approximately 151 magistrates' offices.
- Trend cycle**
- 7 Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
- Publications**
- 8 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:
 - *Bulletin of Statistics* issued quarterly.
 - *SA Statistics* issued annually.

Unpublished statistics

- 9 In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not included in standard publications. The statistics can be made available in one or more of the following ways: computer printout, CD or diskette. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.

Symbols and abbreviations

- 10 R/D Refer to Drawer
CD Compact Disc
Stats SA Statistics South Africa
TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei.
* Revised figures

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor in which he admits that he owes money to an individual or a company or a bank.
Bills	Bills are statements of charges for services rendered or for amounts owed.
Civil judgements	Civil judgements are decisions taken in a civil matter or a dispute between two people or parties.
Civil summonses	Civil summonses are notices to appear before the court of law where a dispute between two parties or people has to be heard, i.e. not for a criminal offence.
Consent judgements	Consent judgements refer to where a debtor agrees to subject himself/herself to obey or accept a judgement of a court against him for a debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. a loan agreement.
Default judgements	Default judgements refer to where the court gives a judgement or a ruling against the defendant who is not present in court and was previously given a notice that was ignored, i.e. a judgement was given against a party or an individual while not present in court.
Instalment sale transaction	Instalment sale transaction relates to where a person buys goods on credit and pays for them in instalments, e.g. every week or month, until he/she settles the debt.
Litigants	Litigants are people who take part in court proceedings, usually against each other, like a debtor and a creditor.
Litigants referred	Litigants referred relates to a case where the parties have been referred to another instance/court.
Open account transaction	Open account transactions are revolving credit, i.e. where an account does not have a final payment date and a person can always take more goods and keep paying as long as he has credit.
Other services	“Other services” refers to municipal services (except outstanding assessment rates), plumbers, builders, mechanics, panel-beaters and electricians.
Other debts	“Other debts” refers to all other kinds of outstanding debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and sales, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect of television maintenance contracts and outstanding money in respect of flat levies.

Plaintiff	Plaintiff is a person/party in a civil case who asks the court for judgement against another person.
Professional services	Professional services refer to medical doctors/dentists, advocates/attorneys, auditors/ accountants, architects, engineers and hospital services.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written note, signed by one person, in which he promises to pay money to another person or to the bearer of such a note on a specific date or on demand.
Reference month	Reference month refers to one calendar month.
Refer to drawer (R/D) cheques	R/D cheques refer to dishonoured cheques. The drawer is the owner of the cheque. When a person issues a cheque and there is no money in the cheque account, the bank will refuse to pay the bearer. The cheque will be referred back to the drawer.

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Fax number: (012) 310 8332 (technical enquiries)

Email: juan-pierret@statssa.gov.za (technical enquiries)
info@statssa.gov.za (user information services)
distribution@statssa.gov.za (orders)

Postal address: Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

Produced by Stats SA