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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of April 2007

Actual estimates	April 2007	% change between April 2006 and April 2007	% change between February 2006 to April 2006 and February 2007 to April 2007
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	111 471	3,2%	-6,2%
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	54 921	-20,4%	-20,8%
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	483,5	-5,4%	-14,5%

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (APRIL 2007)

Key findings as at the end of April 2007

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended April 2007 decreased by 6,2% compared with the three months ended April 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 6,2% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended April 2007 compared with the three months ended April 2006 were civil summonses issued in respect of 'other' debts (-4,1 percentage points), goods sold on open account (-3,8 percentage points) and professional services (-1,0 percentage point). There was, however, an increase of 3,0 percentage points with regard to civil summonses issued for money lent (see Table 6 column 2, page 9).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended April 2007 decreased by 20,8% compared with the three months ended April 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 20,8% in civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended April 2007 compared with the three months ended April 2006 were civil judgements in respect of 'other' debts (-5,2 percentage points), money lent (-4,8 percentage points), 'other services' (-2,8 percentage points) and goods sold on open account (-2,7 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 3, page 9).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended April 2007 decreased by 14,5% compared with the three months ended April 2006.

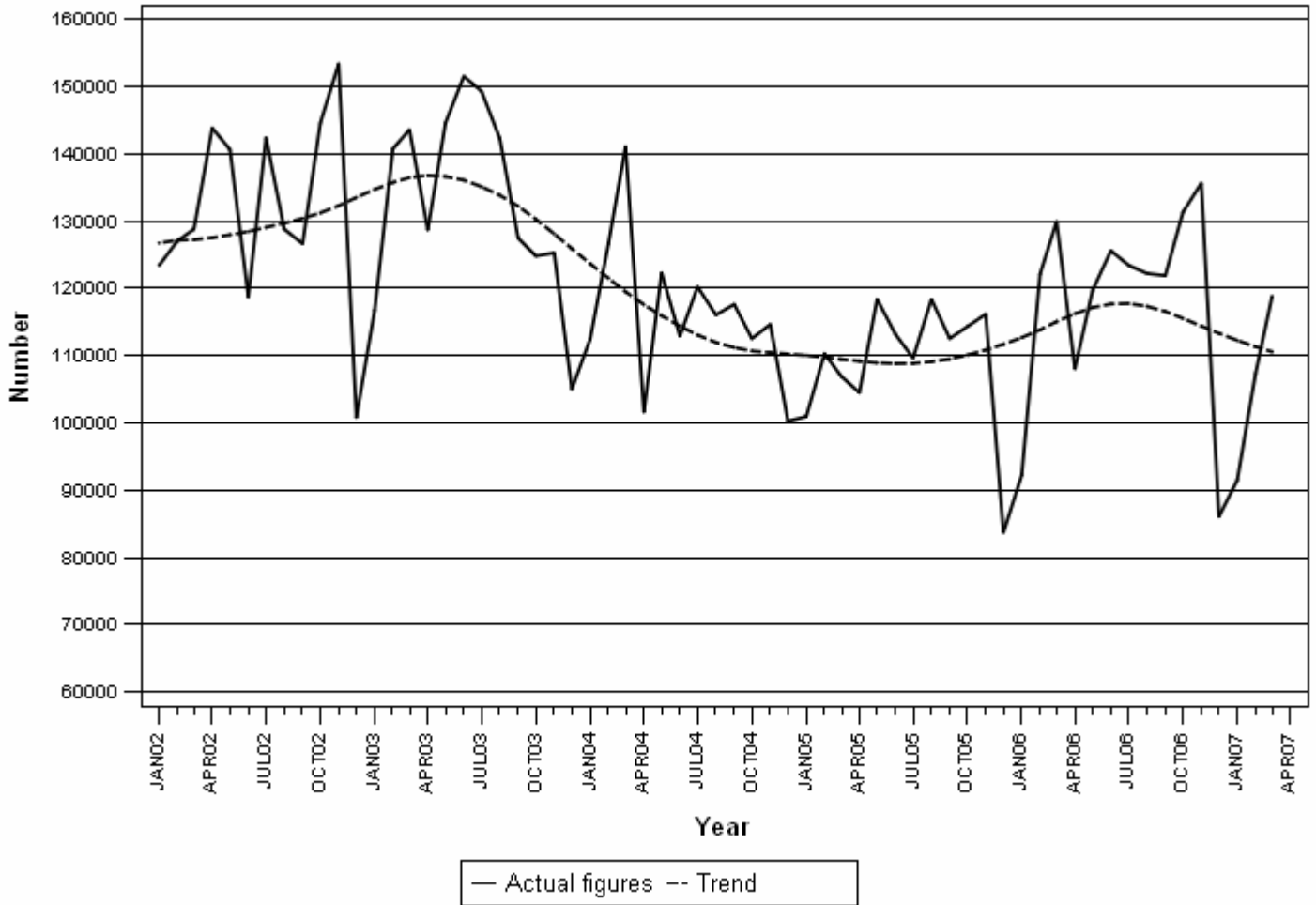
The major contributors to the decrease of 14,5% in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended April 2007 compared with the three months ended April 2006 were civil judgements recorded in respect of 'other' debts (-9,9 percentage points), money lent (-1,5 percentage points), 'other services' (-1,5 percentage points), promissory notes and other (-1,2 percentage points) and instalment sale transactions (-1,2 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 4, page 9).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for April 2007 decreased by 5,4% compared with April 2006.

During April 2007, 54 921 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R483,5 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R483,5 million were civil judgements relating to 'other' debts (R157,4 million or 32,6%) and money lent (R147,7 million or 30,6%) (see Table 4, page 8).

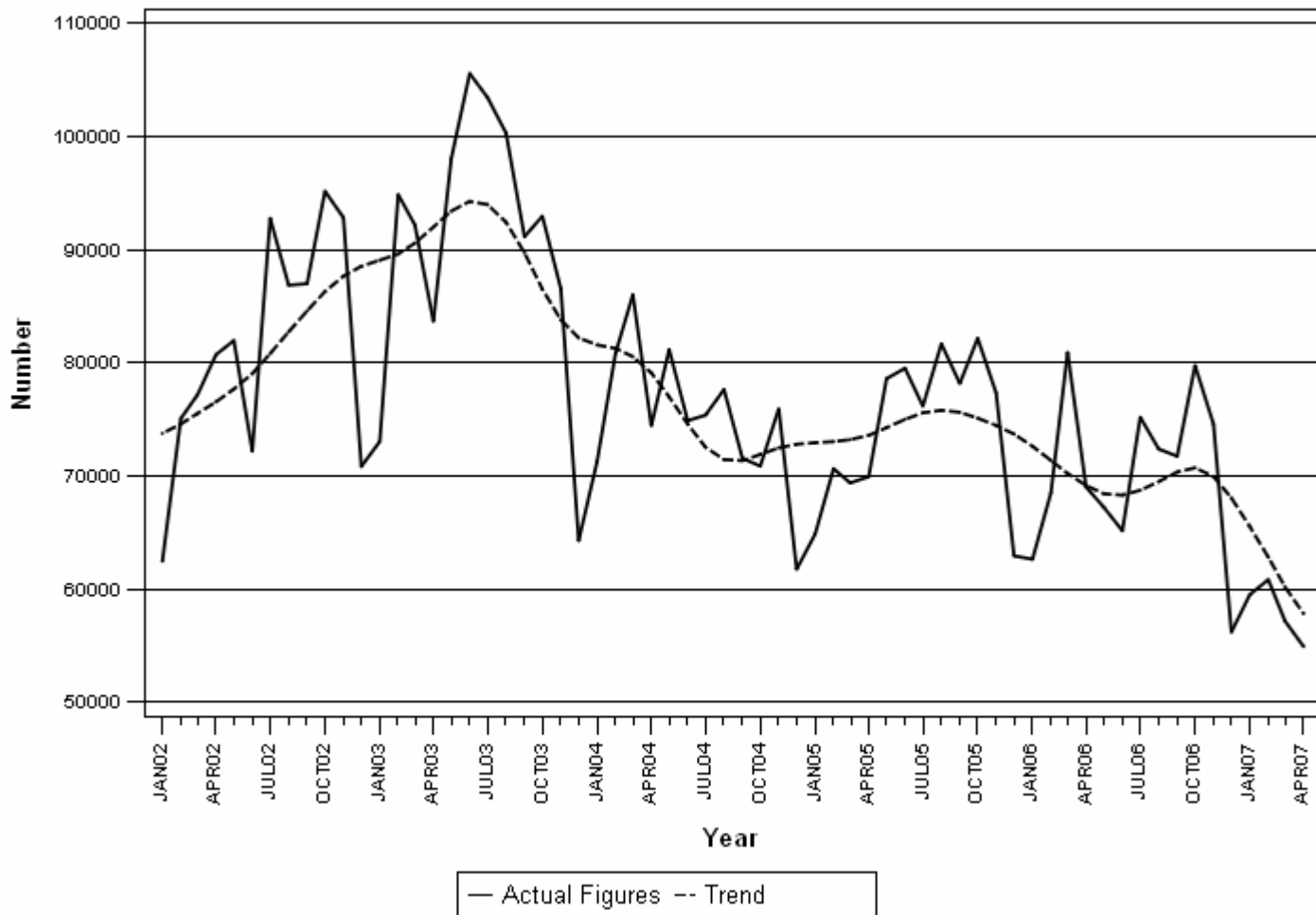
Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from 2002 to April 2007 respectively. In figure 1 from March 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an increasing trend until April 2003. The trend decreased from May 2003 to February 2005 but levelled off until October 2005. From November 2005 the trend increased once more but decreased from July 2006 until present.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt



In figure 2 from January 2002 the trend estimates for civil judgements recorded for debt showed an increasing trend until May 2003. The trend decreased from June 2003 to August 2004 but from September 2004 it increased slightly until August 2005. Thereafter it decreased until June 2006. From October 2006 the trend declined until present.

Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Detailed results: Tables

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		April	March	1/ April		April	March	1/ April
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 603 709	120 333	135 332	125 752	1 442 388	107 692	120 770	110 018
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		128 752	122 929	133 905		115 620	110 458	117 499
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 476	13 722	11 457	9 966	137 314	11 876	9 881	8 238
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 514	2 416	2 676	1 826	28 794	1 924	2 390	1 506
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	138 310	10 944	12 078	10 986	117 768	9 508	10 539	9 117
2.2.2 Other	200 992	15 256	19 751	18 918	178 084	13 682	17 838	16 852
2.3 Rent	50 894	3 708	3 604	2 896	39 914	2 703	2 866	2 420
2.4 Money lent	407 106	27 551	33 887	33 384	387 509	26 284	31 922	30 150
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	148 099	12 044	13 194	13 765	133 964	10 641	12 130	12 569
2.6 Other debts	277 740	22 420	22 167	19 730	242 332	19 335	19 214	17 060
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 418 131	108 061	118 814	111 471	1 265 679	95 953	106 780	97 912
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		114 465	106 566	117 534		101 291	96 241	102 843

1/ Preliminary.

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
2005	Year Total	165 535	69 776	38 487	9 248	20 091	77 468	156 641	58 486	58 984	138 300	27 437	59 361
2006	Year Total	147 564	69 334	50 557	5 922	18 095	69 501	181 787	64 780	59 891	142 102	39 909	60 344
	January	10 205	5 091	4 446	209	1 171	5 751	6 505	4 097	4 441	10 867	2 437	5 120
	February	11 387	7 860	5 785	756	1 751	5 751	13 143	4 652	7 231	12 266	2 492	5 117
	March	14 010	8 082	6 013	732	1 742	6 285	14 398	5 761	6 259	14 272	2 994	4 789
	April	11 657	5 239	4 285	311	1 290	6 364	12 046	5 658	4 454	8 127	3 028	5 191
	May	13 981	5 393	2 620	741	1 893	4 925	15 758	5 585	5 489	11 299	3 200	5 253
	June	13 359	6 628	5 688	555	1 254	4 999	16 849	5 418	4 411	10 018	5 307	5 244
	July	12 981	5 770	5 218	442	1 348	5 867	16 060	6 478	5 190	10 318	3 847	5 449
	August	11 196	3 824	4 814	480	1 348	5 796	15 146	6 702	5 147	8 550	2 712	5 513
	September	12 137	5 315	2 350	507	1 140	5 291	18 632	5 593	5 057	13 258	1 869	5 368
	October	13 397	6 537	2 616	532	1 577	5 291	19 761	6 699	5 199	14 758	5 172	5 174
	November	13 082	6 315	4 499	271	1 837	6 571	21 268	4 784	4 347	19 625	4 144	4 145
December	10 172	3 280	2 223	386	1 744	6 610	12 221	3 353	2 666	8 744	2 707	3 981	
2007	January	7 940	6 102	1 275	729	1 282	5 789	22 003	3 455	2 138	14 856	1 635	4 238
	February	9 788	5 904	2 832	581	1 452	6 018	18 368	4 228	5 791	11 214	954	3 922
	March	12 802	7 935	3 553	1 123	1 613	8 978	15 648	4 318	5 925	13 803	2 186	4 010
	April	9 347	5 013	3 167	1 123	1 748	8 978	15 648	5 091	4 826	12 558	4 822	3 652

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		April	March	1/ April		April	March	1/ April
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	120 554	9 778	8 455	6 777	109 368	8 714	7 565	6 108
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 254	1 006	835	743	10 582	876	747	604
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	78 747	6 101	6 059	5 597	69 974	5 317	5 476	4 996
1.2.2 Other	96 191	8 123	6 203	5 895	89 567	7 518	5 805	5 526
1.3 Rent	25 941	2 058	1 793	1 725	20 595	1 693	1 327	1 302
1.4 Money lent	297 379	23 114	18 355	21 635	289 631	22 575	17 377	21 234
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	75 440	5 944	5 340	4 487	68 753	5 515	5 004	4 207
1.6 Other debts	136 605	12 887	10 129	8 062	122 291	11 864	8 961	7 332
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	843 111	69 011	57 169	54 921	780 761	64 072	52 262	51 309
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		72 305	58 219	57 302		67 290	52 093	53 646

1/ Preliminary.

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		April	March	1/ April		April	March	1/ April
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	673 174	45 173	51 696	43 453	523 117	34 325	40 216	32 679
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	256 585	17 424	21 221	17 366	197 360	11 886	20 018	14 067
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	266 969	16 599	18 625	17 275	223 269	13 504	14 283	13 362
1.2.2 Other	579 439	56 119	47 977	36 623	464 798	46 238	34 266	27 962
1.3 Rent	222 568	16 590	16 749	16 671	153 995	13 173	12 212	12 654
1.4 Money lent	2 086 739	150 141	130 509	147 742	1 960 167	142 947	121 842	141 020
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	713 512	52 321	57 429	46 995	630 837	48 652	50 878	39 478
1.6 Other debts	1 784 255	156 530	142 227	157 408	1 271 309	106 429	92 881	144 710
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 583 241	510 897	486 433	483 533	5 424 852	417 154	386 596	425 932
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		540 559	482 172	507 115		432 359	388 821	436 564

1/ Preliminary

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 2006 to April 2006	Actual estimates February 2007 to April 2007	% change between February 2006 to April 2006 and February 2007 to April 2007	Difference between February 2006 to April 2006 and February 2007 to April 2007
Number of summonses for debt	360 086	337 652	-6,2%	-22 434
Number of judgements for debt	218 394	172 912	-20,8%	-45 482
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 696,7	1 450,1	-14,5%	-246,6

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.

	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	-3,8	-2,7	0,1
--Instalment sale transactions	-0,7	-0,9	-1,2
Professional Services	-1,0	-1,2	0,5
Other Services	0,4	-2,8	-1,5
Rent	-0,6	-1,0	0,2
Money lent	3,0	-4,8	-1,5
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	0,5	-2,3	-1,2
Other debts	-4,1	-5,2	-9,9
Total	-6,2	-20,8	-14,5

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 2006 to April 2006, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

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 2006	Actual estimates April 2007	% change between April 2006 and April 2007	Difference between April 2006 and April 2007
Number of summonses for debt	108 061	111 471	3,2%	3 410
Number of judgements for debt	69 011	54 921	-20,4%	-14 090
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	510,9	483,5	-5,4%	-27,4

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, ejection orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
Scope of the survey	3	This survey covers- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 magistrate' 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 measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail each month from approximately 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The response rate for the civil cases for debt for April 2007 was 82%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Publications	9	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics issued quarterly.</i> • <i>SA Statistics issued annually.</i>
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics, which are not published. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts, on diskette or CD. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	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 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 debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. 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 to 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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