

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

December 2010

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Contents

Key results for December 2010	2
Detailed results: Tables	4
Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.....	4
Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices	5
Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.....	6
Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000).....	7
Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the fourth quarter of 2009 and the fourth quarter of 2010	8
Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the fourth quarter of 2009 and the fourth quarter of 2010	8
Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year ...	8
Table 8 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between 2009 and 2010.....	9
Table 9 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between 2009 and 2010	9
Explanatory notes.....	10
Glossary.....	11
General information.....	12

Key results for December 2010

Table A – Key figures for the month of December 2010

Actual estimates	December 2010	% change between December 2009 and December 2010	% change between October to December 2009 and October to December 2010	Annual % change between 2009 and 2010
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	77 356	-10,9	-14,7	-5,5
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	37 592	-24,8	-22,5	-7,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	390,7	-18,2	-23,1	-8,9

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The year 2010 reflected a 5,5% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt compared with 2009. The fourth quarter of 2010 recorded a 14,7% decrease compared with the fourth quarter of 2009 (see Tables 5 and 8).

The major contributors to the 5,5% decrease were:

- the goods sold category (contributing -2,2 percentage points); and
- the other debts category (contributing -1,4 percentage points) (see Table 9).

A year-on-year decrease of 10,9% was recorded in December 2010 for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt (see Table A and Table 7).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 7,3% in 2010 compared with 2009. The fourth quarter of 2010 recorded a 22,5% decrease compared with the fourth quarter of 2009. A 24,8% year-on-year decrease was recorded in December 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5, 7 and 8).

The main drivers behind the 7,3% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- the money lent category (contributing -4,1 percentage points);
- the goods sold category (contributing -2,6 percentage points); and
- the 'other debts' category (contributing -1,3 percentage points) (see Table 9).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 8,9% in 2010 compared with 2009. A decrease of 23,1% was recorded between the fourth quarter of 2010 and the fourth quarter of 2009. A year-on-year decrease of 18,2% was recorded in December 2010 (see Table A and Tables 5, 7 and 8).

The major contributors to the 8,9% decrease in the value of civil judgements for 2010 compared with 2009 were:

- the money lent category (contributing -4,8 percentage points); and
- the goods sold category (contributing -2,3 percentage points) (see Table 9).

During 2010, 674 752 civil judgements for debt amounting to R6 577,1 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R6 577,1 million were:

- money lent (R2 204,7 million or 33,5%);
- 'other debts' (R1 095,5 million or 16,7%); and
- services (R1 067,2 million or 16,2%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

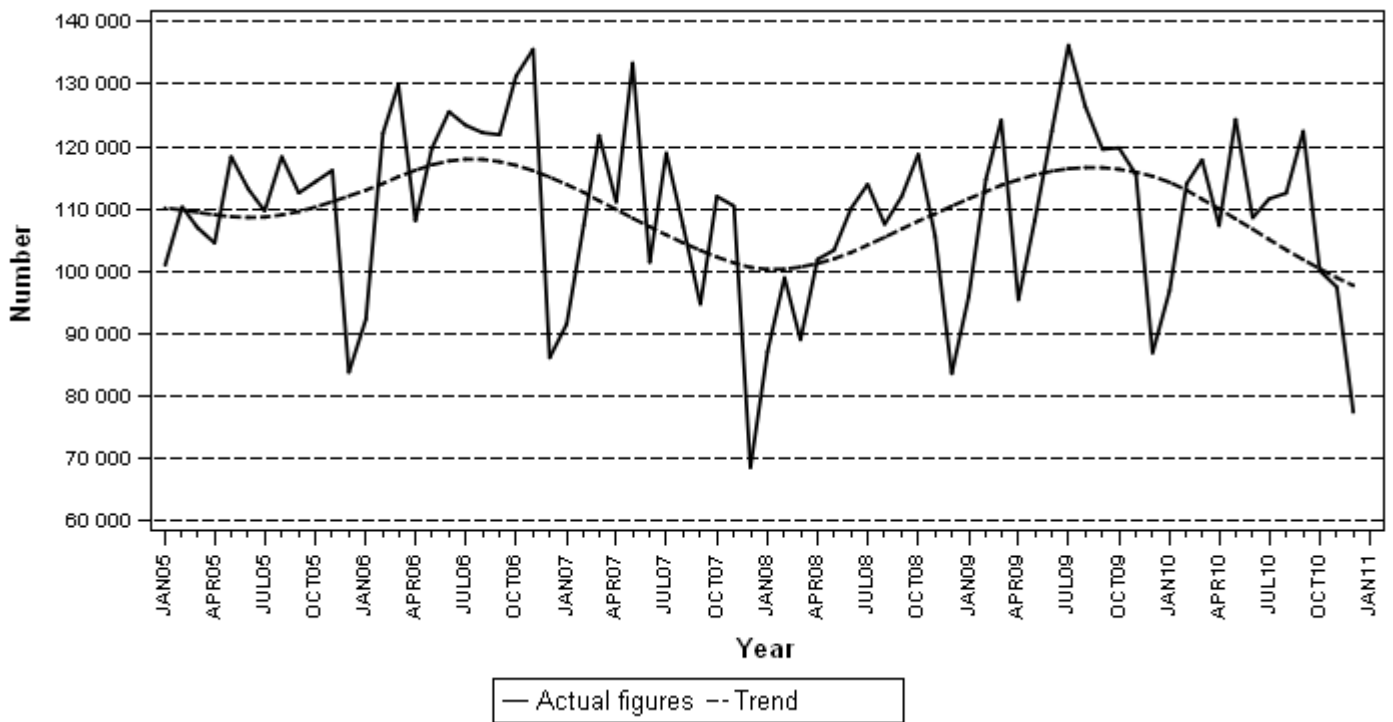
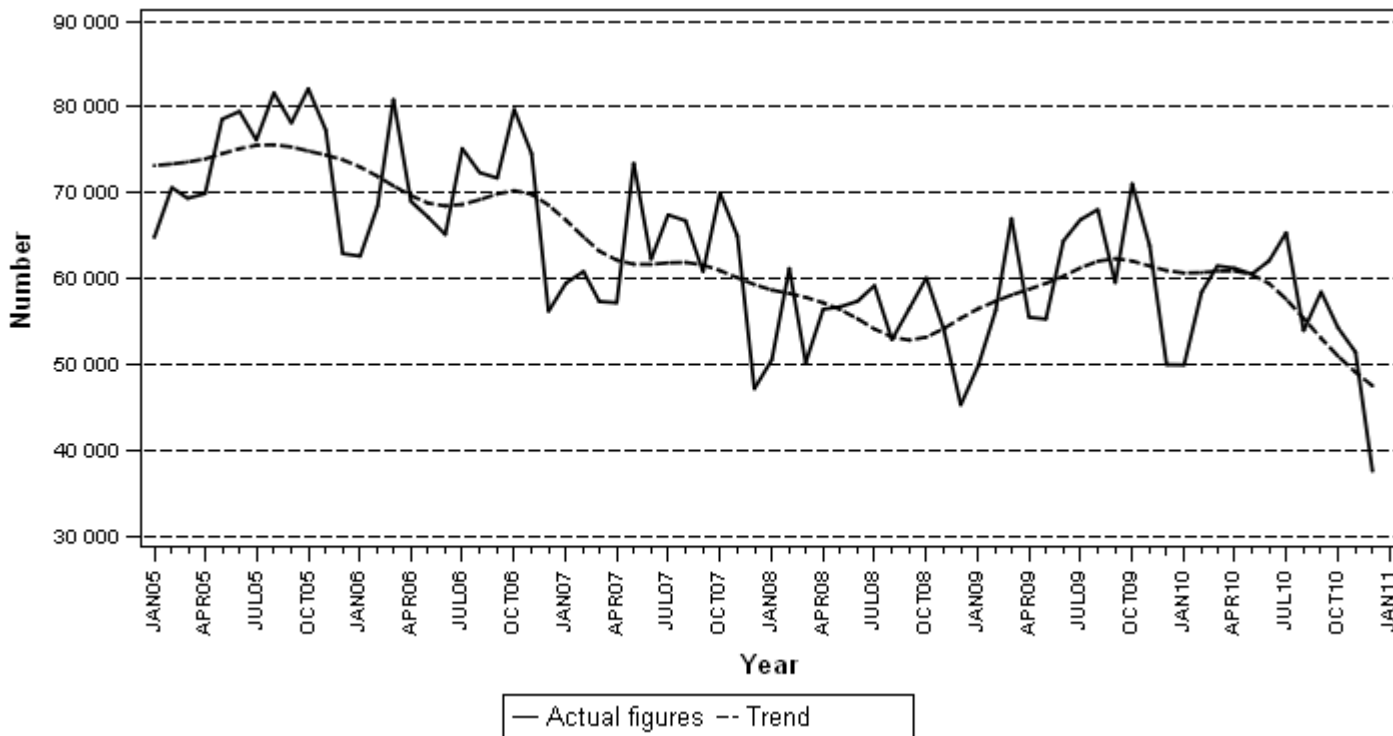


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

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			
	2010	2009	1/ 2010		2010	2009	1/ 2010	
		December	November	December		December	November	December
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 471 578	98 995	106 626	88 634	1 299 881	87 440	92 050	77 958
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		133 456	105 340	118 862		117 987	89 065	104 653
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	109 164	7 335	7 417	4 902	87 501	6 113	5 773	3 601
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	31 877	2 806	2 047	1 671	27 410	2 438	1 692	1 381
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	148 059	10 086	10 519	7 571	128 339	8 379	8 686	6 316
2.2.2 Other	165 935	9 893	14 195	9 652	140 721	8 278	11 842	7 728
2.3 Rent	52 613	2 944	4 363	3 248	43 104	2 344	3 523	2 768
2.4 Money lent	315 225	20 330	22 157	15 916	298 807	19 606	20 975	14 917
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	230 075	16 772	18 769	19 747	214 817	15 691	16 957	18 993
2.6 Other debts	237 268	16 684	17 954	14 649	190 433	12 950	14 032	11 522
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 290 216	86 850	97 421	77 356	1 131 132	75 799	83 480	67 226
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		115 626	97 462	102 428		100 610	83 685	88 871

1/ Preliminary

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

Year and month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton	Bloemfontein
2008	Year Total	117 171	54 474	17 553	7 236	19 284	78 092	205 869	59 060	33 410	138 384	26 859	33 374
2009	January	8 353	1 955	1 259	515	1 713	7 400	20 427	5 126	2 299	10 835	1 265	4 435
	February	10 331	3 211	1 619	795	1 557	7 766	22 126	5 592	2 742	12 559	1 449	3 645
	March	14 242	5 191	1 759	755	1 807	7 604	20 163	5 618	4 660	14 922	2 339	3 728
	April	9 791	3 286	1 384	538	1 403	7 336	18 223	4 108	2 668	9 863	1 671	2 494
	May	11 016	3 555	1 439	641	1 839	7 483	20 872	4 878	3 120	11 931	3 448	3 554
	June	14 060	3 298	2 364	639	1 537	7 470	24 521	4 495	3 063	12 165	2 698	2 670
	July	12 682	4 276	1 620	806	1 895	7 186	26 907	4 373	3 861	17 167	2 629	3 758
	August	10 659	5 756	1 721	871	1 693	7 967	22 448	3 667	3 181	21 921	2 034	2 971
	September	10 082	3 067	1 394	948	2 161	8 227	25 483	4 587	2 890	11 846	2 781	3 056
	October	12 376	3 973	1 349	542	2 478	7 429	20 819	4 981	3 420	11 304	1 589	3 200
	November	12 435	3 747	1 395	537	2 439	7 834	20 688	4 373	3 710	11 049	1 581	4 000
	December	8 605	2 101	777	439	1 096	7 469	17 460	2 703	2 496	6 799	818	3 020
	Year Total	134 632	43 416	18 080	8 026	21 618	91 171	260 137	54 501	38 110	152 361	24 302	40 531
2010	January	8 015	2 649	1 179	469	1 851	7 973	22 543	3 233	2 629	8 470	1 539	4 856
	February	10 123	4 177	1 516	647	2 069	7 669	19 618	7 236	2 819	11 258	3 699	3 991
	March	11 883	3 920	1 648	686	2 312	6 898	24 373	5 272	2 753	11 882	1 540	5 900
	April	11 127	3 180	1 802	413	1 944	7 668	19 616	4 276	2 849	10 033	1 066	6 000
	May	13 037	3 004	2 074	618	2 179	8 162	20 002	4 536	3 295	20 265	1 001	6 500
	June	13 991	3 375	1 325	360	2 148	8 055	17 263	4 381	2 841	12 186	881	6 000
	July	10 630	2 756	1 779	467	1 911	8 085	22 212	5 041	2 659	10 005	1 658	5 435
	August	10 970	2 904	1 205	353	759	7 540	22 301	4 559	3 114	10 765	1 574	6 200
	September	9 700	3 093	345	316	2 883	7 289	27 645	4 505	3 276	13 402	924	6 800
	1/ October	7 298	2 689	939	465	2 019	7 278	16 794	4 712	3 102	12 802	1 546	5 925
	1/ November	6 983	3 340	1 081	351	1 594	7 022	19 021	3 961	2 618	11 105	1 159	4 012
	1/ December	5 883	2 049	930	101	1 167	7 143	24 746	2 787	2 033	6 421	542	2 640
		Year Total	119 640	37 136	15 823	5 246	22 836	90 782	256 134	54 499	33 988	138 594	17 129

1/ Preliminary

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			
	2010	2009	1/ 2010		2010	2009	1/ 2010	
		December	November	December		December	November	December
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	67 230	4 581	4 917	3 095	57 413	4 002	3 881	2 463
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 442	837	882	776	10 240	748	719	643
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	86 957	7 317	7 093	5 281	78 325	6 701	6 632	4 785
1.2.2 Other	77 310	4 708	7 837	4 607	68 909	4 170	7 109	4 111
1.3 Rent	29 060	1 911	2 435	2 101	23 850	1 608	2 103	1 658
1.4 Money lent	244 143	19 988	17 286	12 300	236 706	19 700	16 919	11 859
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	71 657	4 604	3 353	2 688	64 520	3 920	3 002	2 230
1.6 Other debts	85 953	6 032	7 630	6 744	77 283	5 472	6 973	6 025
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	674 752	49 978	51 433	37 592	617 246	46 321	47 338	33 774
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		61 952	49 759	46 663		56 998	45 317	41 564

1/ Preliminary

Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2010	2009	1/ 2010		2010	2009	1/ 2010	
		December	November	December		December	November	December
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	614 216	45 988	47 209	34 297	393 732	30 912	25 816	19 323
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	355 696	23 965	27 855	22 986	274 959	19 205	22 093	18 988
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	352 790	23 547	33 969	23 513	282 322	20 568	28 481	19 806
1.2.2 Other	714 416	37 660	79 238	45 456	570 407	31 427	66 134	37 297
1.3 Rent	448 514	23 873	30 227	27 954	298 037	16 743	18 335	16 841
1.4 Money lent	2 204 683	190 799	134 163	116 665	2 060 946	179 178	119 926	107 321
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	791 317	52 632	41 070	42 722	646 413	41 181	33 706	33 736
1.6 Other debts	1 095 492	79 459	94 197	77 122	841 513	61 531	76 519	61 497
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 577 124	477 923	487 928	390 715	5 368 329	400 745	391 010	314 809
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		597 947	481 002	490 447		498 995	384 763	392 505

1/ Preliminary

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the fourth quarter of 2009 and the fourth quarter of 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates October to December 2009	Actual estimates October to December 2010	% change between October to December 2009 and October to December 2010	Difference between October to December 2009 and October to December 2010
Number of summonses for debt	322 075	274 829	-14,7	-47 246
Number of judgements for debt	184 897	143 298	-22,5	-41 599
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 871,0	1 438,8	-23,1	-432,2

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the fourth quarter of 2009 and the fourth quarter of 2010 1/

Item	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	-2,7	-3,1	-2,6
– Instalment sale transactions	-1,0	-0,4	-1,8
Services			
– Professional	-2,4	-2,2	-0,5
– Other	-1,0	-0,3	0,9
Rent	0,3	-0,2	-0,4
Money lent	-4,6	-10,4	-10,4
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-0,6	-4,9	-4,7
Other debts	-2,6	-0,9	-3,5
Total	-14,7	-22,5	-23,1

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during October to December 2009, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates December 2009	Actual estimates December 2010	% change between December 2009 and December 2010	Difference between December 2009 and December 2010
Number of summonses for debt	86 850	77 356	-10,9	-9 494
Number of judgements for debt	49 978	37 592	-24,8	-12 386
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	477,9	390,7	-18,2	-87,2

Table 8 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between 2009 and 2010

	Actual estimates for 2009	Actual estimates for 2010	% change between 2009 and 2010	Difference between 2009 and 2010
Number of summonses for debt	1 365 184	1 290 216	-5,5	-74 968
Number of judgements for debt	727 705	674 752	-7,3	-52 953
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	7 221,9	6 577,1	-8,9	-644,8

Table 9 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between 2009 and 2010 2/

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

2/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during January to December 2009, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

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.
Purpose of the survey	3	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.
Scope of the survey	4	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	5	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts. 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 for debt. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices was drawn using the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for December 2010 was 87,4%. Improved response rate for November 2010 was 88,7%.
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</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually.
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 or electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer 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 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 salaries, 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, hospital services etc.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written undertaking, signed by a person or party, 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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