



**Statistics
South Africa**

Preferred supplier of quality statistics



Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

January 2007

**Embargoed until:
22 March 2007
08:00**

Enquiries:

User information services
Tel: (012) 310 8600 / 4892 / 8390

Forthcoming issue:

February 2007

Expected release date

19 April 2007

Contents	Page
Key findings as at the end of January 2007	2
Key figures for the month of January 2007	3
Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt	4
Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt	4
Tables	
Table 1 Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons	5
Table 2 Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices	6
Table 3 Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons	7
Table 4 Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons	8
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	9
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	9
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	9
Explanatory notes	10
Glossary	11
General information	12

Key findings as at the end of January 2007

The number of civil summonses issued for debt increases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended January 2007 increased by 8,6% (25 139 summonses) compared with the same quarter of a year ago.

The major contributors to the increase of 8,6% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended January 2007 compared with the three months ended January 2006 were money lent (+10,5 percentage points) and promissory notes and other (+4,2 percentage points). There was, however, a decrease of 2,4 percentage points with regard to civil summonses in respect of other debt (see Table 6 column 2 page 9).

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for January 2007 increased by 1,1% compared with January 2006.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2007 decreased by 6,0% (-12 197 judgements) compared with the same quarter of a year ago.

The major contributors to the decrease of 6,0% in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2007 compared with the three months ended January 2006 were civil judgements in respect of other debt (-3,8 percentage points), professional services (-1,4 percentage points) and rent (-1,3 percentage points). However, this decrease was partially counteracted by an increase in money lent (+1,6 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 3 page 9).

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

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended January 2007 increased by 5,9% (R86,1 million) compared with the same quarter of a year ago.

The major contributors to the increase of 5,9% in the value of civil judgements recorded for the three months ended January 2007 compared with the three months ended January 2006 were civil judgements recorded in respect of promissory notes and other (+3,9 percentage points) and money lent (+3,1 percentage points). However, this increase was partially counteracted by a decrease in judgements recorded for other debt (-4,7 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 4 page 9).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for January 2007 increased by 2,9% compared with January 2006.

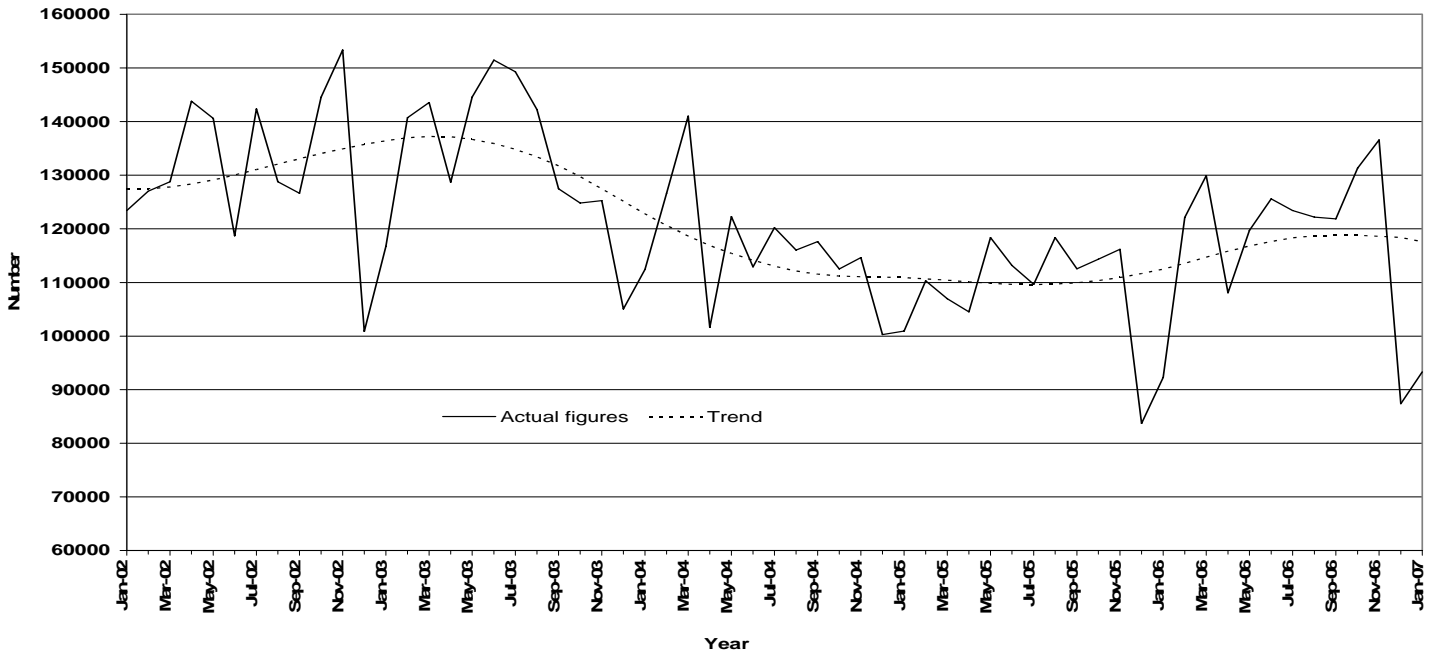
During January 2007, 59 827 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R459,0 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R459,0 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R145,0 million or 31,6%) and other debts (R115,4 million or 25,1 %) (see Table 4 page 8).

Key figures for the month of January 2007

	January 2007	% change between January 2006 and January 2007	% change between November 2005 to January 2006 and November 2006 to January 2007
Actual estimates			
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	93 324	1,1	8,6
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	59 827	-4,5	-6,0
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	459,0	2,9	5,9

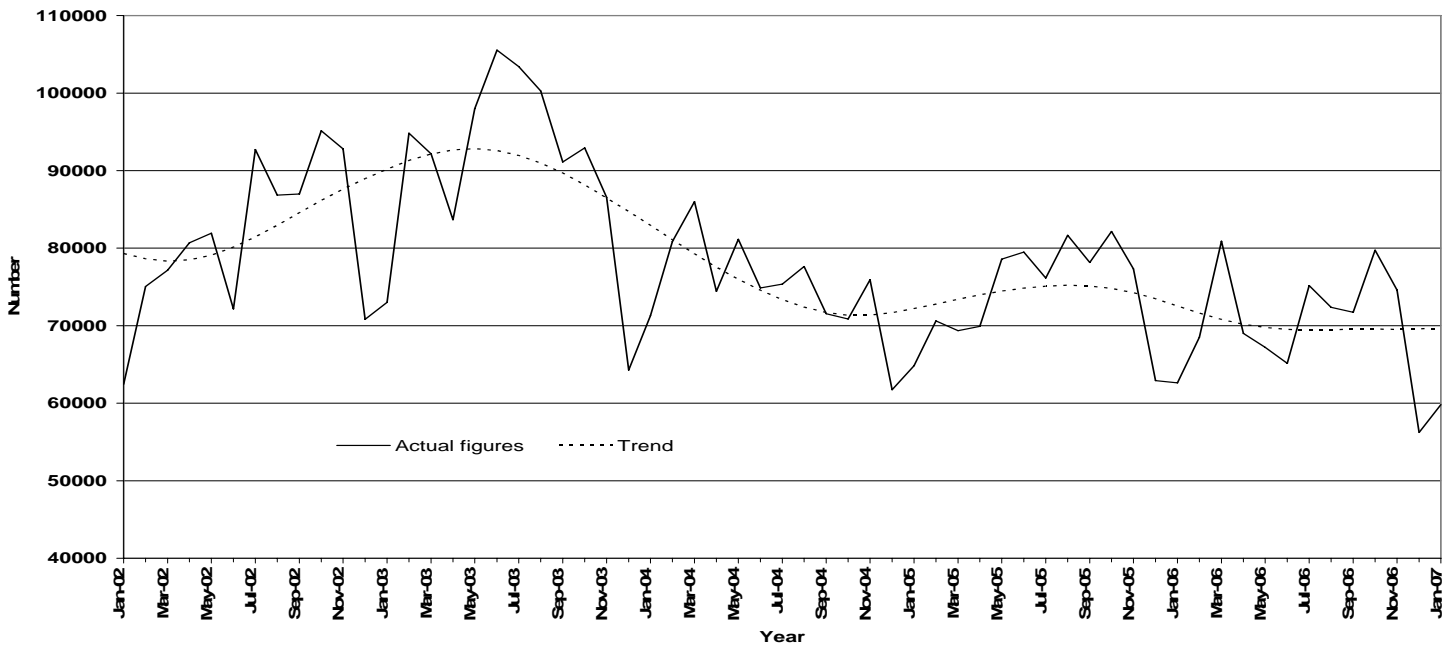
Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from January 2002 to January 2007 respectively. In figure 1 since March 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an increasing trend until April 2003. The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

Figure 1 - Civil summonses issued for debt



In figure 2 since May 2002 the trend estimates for civil judgements recorded for debt showed an increasing trend until May 2003. The trend decreased from June 2003 to October 2004 but since November 2004 it increased slightly until August 2005. Thereafter it decreased until April 2006. Since May 2006 the trend started to level off until present.

Figure 2 - Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

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	2006	2007	2006	2006	2006	2007
		Jan.	Dec.	1/Jan.		Jan.	Dec.	1/Jan.
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 605 992	106 647	99 014	117 233	1 444 654	96 596	89 385	107 116
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		122 009	129 505	134 335		109 910	113 779	122 092
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 481	10 696	8 546	7 740	137 318	9 377	7 368	6 487
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 550	2 737	2 089	2 242	28 825	2 254	1 733	2 011
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	138 238	9 905	8 377	8 787	117 713	8 821	7 103	7 415
2.2.2 Other	201 196	14 315	11 572	10 526	178 244	12 777	10 161	9 131
2.3 Rent	50 898	3 557	2 999	2 702	39 918	3 040	2 293	2 170
2.4 Money lent	407 146	22 554	25 391	30 566	387 550	21 479	24 144	29 157
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	148 098	8 171	11 912	13 898	133 965	7 214	11 180	13 110
2.6 Other debts	279 807	20 333	16 506	16 863	244 414	18 144	14 496	14 781
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 420 414	92 268	87 392	93 324	1 267 947	83 106	78 478	84 262
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		107 481	116 017	109 209		95 866	101 577	97 540

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	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	147 564	69 334	50 557	5 922	18 095	69 501	181 787	64 780	62 057	142 102	39 909	60 344
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	11 657	5 239	4 285	311	1 290	6 364	12 046	5 658	4 454	8 127	3 028	5 191
M	13 981	5 393	2 620	741	1 893	4 925	15 758	5 585	5 489	11 299	3 200	5 253
J	13 359	6 628	5 688	555	1 254	4 999	16 849	5 418	4 411	10 018	5 307	5 244
J	12 981	5 770	5 218	442	1 348	5 867	16 060	6 478	5 190	10 318	3 847	5 449
A	11 196	3 824	4 814	480	1 348	5 796	15 146	6 702	5 147	8 550	2 712	5 513
S	12 137	5 315	2 350	507	1 140	5 291	18 632	5 593	5 057	13 258	1 869	5 368
O	13 397	6 537	2 616	532	1 577	5 291	19 761	6 699	5 199	14 758	5 172	5 174
N	13 082	6 315	4 499	271	1 837	6 571	21 268	4 784	5 278	19 625	4 144	4 145
D	10 172	3 280	2 223	386	1 744	6 610	12 221	3 353	3 901	8 744	2 707	3 981
1/2007 - J	7 940	6 102	1 275	729	1 282	5 789	22 003	3 314	3 918	14 856	1 635	4 238

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			
	2006	2006	2006	2007	2006	2006	2006	2007
		Jan.	Dec.	1/Jan.		Jan.	Dec.	1/Jan.
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	120 569	9 015	8 638	7 372	109 389	7 856	8 016	6 730
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 262	1 142	597	815	10 592	957	508	715
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	78 731	6 374	5 106	5 371	69 973	5 651	4 668	4 955
1.2.2 Other	96 243	7 053	6 963	6 635	89 623	6 359	6 567	6 241
1.3 Rent	25 983	2 044	1 844	1 816	20 638	1 631	1 469	1 367
1.4 Money lent	297 338	22 152	20 923	24 045	289 611	21 735	20 626	23 805
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	75 438	4 778	4 333	5 314	68 758	3 341	4 026	4 972
1.6 Other debts	136 628	10 066	7 813	8 459	122 314	9 067	7 092	7 743
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	843 192	62 624	56 217	59 827	780 898	56 597	52 972	56 528
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		72 151	67 419	68 598		65 551	64 492	65 238

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

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	2006	2007	2006	2006	2006	2007
		Jan.	Dec.	1/Jan.		Jan.	Dec.	1/Jan.
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	673 282	44 190	46 085	47 865	523 269	33 976	36 850	35 806
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	256 645	17 004	11 049	14 179	197 521	13 623	8 377	12 528
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	267 002	13 880	16 434	18 061	223 330	11 224	13 137	14 114
1.2.2 Other	579 391	36 809	42 449	41 537	464 751	28 137	35 180	35 560
1.3 Rent	222 603	15 289	16 796	15 330	154 032	10 377	10 032	9 786
1.4 Money lent	2 086 792	181 950	142 757	144 976	1 960 239	176 725	133 768	138 859
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	713 504	36 953	59 156	61 649	630 852	31 494	53 205	57 394
1.6 Other debts	1 784 762	100 162	96 566	115 388	1 271 763	74 214	80 210	85 756
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 583 981	446 237	431 292	458 985	5 425 757	379 770	370 759	389 803
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		528 078	557 179	542 882		445 655	464 848	455 568

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 November 2005 to January 2006	Actual estimates November 2006 to January 2007	% change between November 2005 to January 2006 and November 2006 to January 2007	Difference between November 2005 to January 2006 and November 2006 to January 2007
Number of summonses for debt	292 149	317 288	8,6%	25 139
Number of judgements for debt	202 857	190 660	-6,0%	-12 197
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 465,1	1 551,2	5,9%	86,1

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

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 November 2005 to January 2006, 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 January 2006	Actual estimates January 2007	% change between January 2006 and January 2007	Difference between January 2006 and January 2007
Number of summonses for debt	92 268	93 324	1,1%	1 056
Number of judgements for debt	62 624	59 827	-4,5%	-2 797
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	446,2	459,0	5,9%	12 ,8

Explanatory notes

Introduction	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Purpose of the survey	<p>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.</p>
Scope of the survey	<p>4 This survey covers -</p> <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	<p>5 The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrates' office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.</p> <p>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.</p>
Survey methodology and design	<p>6 The survey is conducted by mail each month from approximately 151 magistrates' offices.</p>
Response rate	<p>7 The response rate for the civil cases for debt for January 2007 was 85%.</p>
Trend cycle	<p>8 Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.</p>
Publications	<p>9 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually.
Unpublished statistics	<p>10 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.</p>
Symbols and abbreviations	<p>11 R/D Refer to Drawer CD Compact Disc Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei. * Revised figures</p>

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.

General information

Stats SA publishes approximately 300 different statistical releases each year. It is not economically viable to produce them in more than one of South Africa's eleven official languages. Since the releases are used extensively, not only locally but also by international economic and social-scientific communities, Stats SA releases are only published in English.

Stats SA has copyright on this publication. Users may apply the information as they wish, provided that they acknowledge Stats SA as the source of the basic data wherever they process, apply, utilise, publish or distribute the data; and also that they specify that the relevant application and analysis (where applicable) result from their own processing of the data.

Stats SA products

A complete set of Stats SA publications is available at the Stats SA Library and the following libraries:

National Library of South Africa, Pretoria Division
National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Division
Natal Society Library, Pietermaritzburg
Library of Parliament, Cape Town
Bloemfontein Public Library
Johannesburg Public Library
Eastern Cape Library Services, King William's Town
Central Regional Library, Polokwane
Central Reference Library, Nelspruit
Central Reference Collection, Kimberley
Central Reference Library, Mmabatho

Stats SA also provides a subscription service.

Electronic services

A large range of data is available via on-line services, diskette, CD and computer printouts. For more details about our electronic data services, contact (012) 310 8600/ 8390/ 8351/ 4892/ 8496/ 8095.

You can visit us on the Internet at: www.statssa.gov.za

Enquiries

Telephone number: (012) 310 8600/ 8390/ 8351/ 4892/ 8496/ 8095 (user information services)
(012) 310 2965 (technical enquiries)
(012) 310 8161 (orders)
(012) 310 4883/4885/8018 (library)

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