



**Statistics
South Africa**



your leading partner in quality statistics

Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

January 2013

**Embargoed until:
19 March 2013
09:00**

Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600

Forthcoming issue

February 2013

Expected release date

18 April 2013

Contents

Results for January 2013	2
Tables	4
Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total 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: Total and private persons.....	6
Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R’000)	6
Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended January 2013 and the three months ended January 2012	7
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 three months ended January 2013 and the three months ended January 2012	7
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....	7
Explanatory notes	8
Glossary	9
General information	10

Results for January 2013

Table A – Key figures for the month of January 2013

Actual estimates	January 2013	% change between January 2012 and January 2013	% change between November 2011 to January 2012 and November 2012 to January 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	54 083	-27,3	-24,3
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	25 685	-27,1	-17,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	323,7	3,8	-1,5

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

A 24,3% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt was recorded in the three months ended January 2013 compared with the three months ended January 2012. A 27,3% year-on-year decrease was recorded in January 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

Categories that contributed to the 24,3% decrease were:

- services (contributing -9,7 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing -5,2 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -4,2 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 17,1% in the three months ended January 2013 compared with the three months ended January 2012. A year-on-year decrease of 27,1% was recorded in January 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The categories behind the 17,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -11,1 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,9 percentage points);
- services (contributing -1,8 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -1,7 percentage points).

The only positive contribution was recorded in the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing 1,1 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 1,5% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt in the three months ended January 2013 compared with the three months ended January 2012. A year-on-year increase of 3,8% was recorded in January 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The major contributors to the 1,5% decrease were the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -3,8 percentage points) and the goods sold category (contributing -1,7 percentage points).

The 'other' debts and money lent categories counteracted the 1,5% decrease and contributed 3,1 and 1,3 percentage points respectively – see Table 6.

During January 2013, 25 685 civil judgements for debt amounting to R323,7 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R323,7 million were:

- 'other' debts (R99,4 million or 30,7%);
- money lent (R74,0 million or 22,8%);
- services (R52,4 million or 16,2%); and
- goods sold (R41,1 million or 12,7%) – see Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

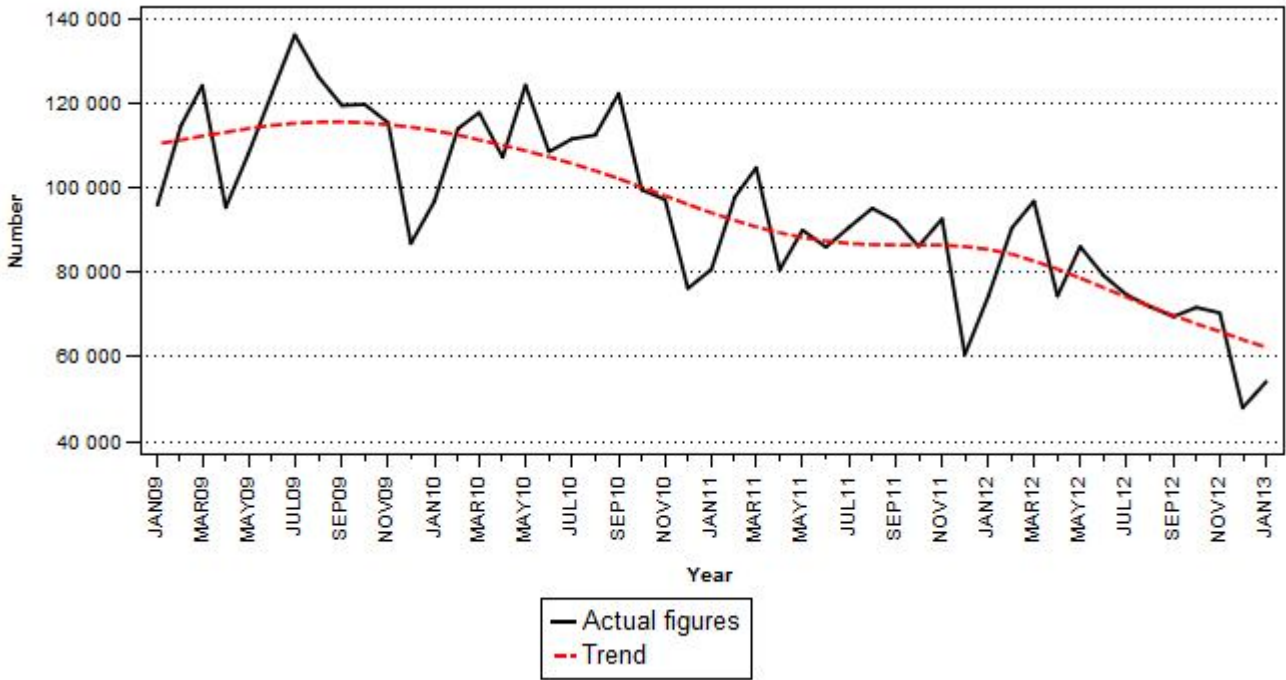
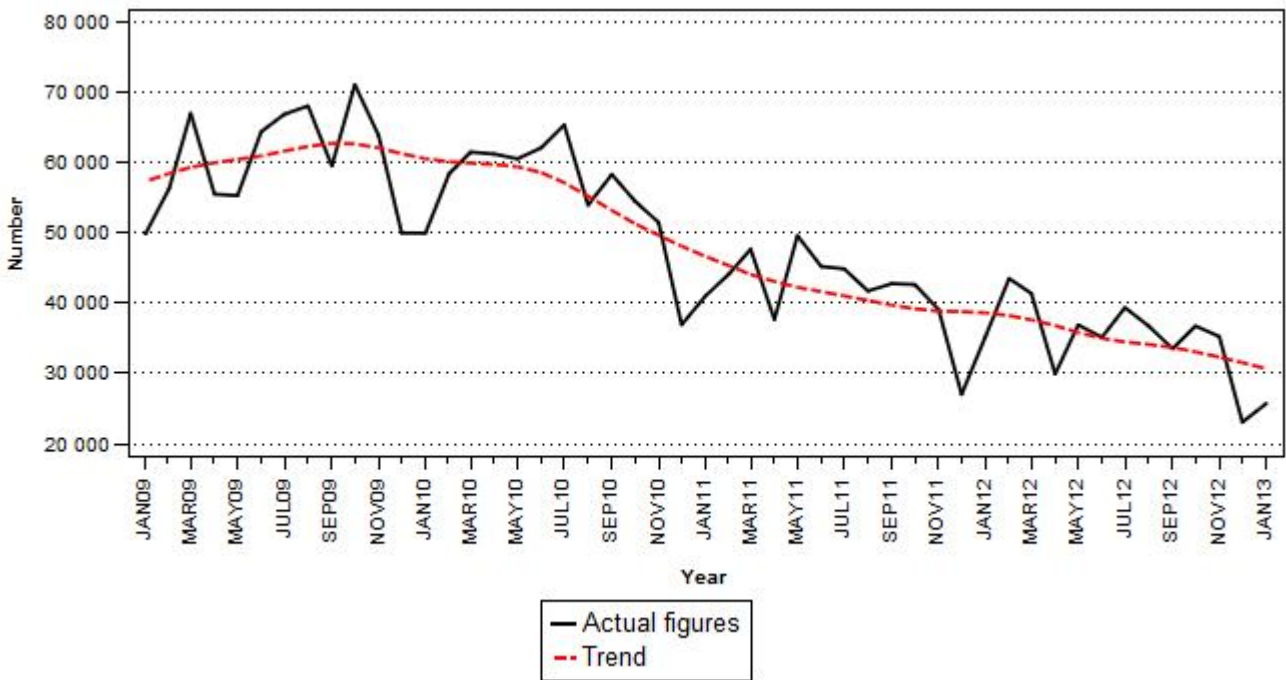


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2012	January 2012	1/ December 2012	1/ January 2013	2012	January 2012	1/ December 2012	1/ January 2013
Cases recorded	Actual figures	977 066	77 483	51 481	57 957	847 341	68 770	43 709	51 965
	Seasonally adjusted		91 340	71 468	68 522		79 872	61 040	60 424
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	73 272	5 146	4 239	4 522	54 229	4 057	3 124	3 637
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	22 512	1 103	1 871	1 389	18 853	977	1 454	1 219
	Services - Professional	104 351	7 411	5 719	6 578	91 458	6 428	5 070	6 136
	Services - Other	161 543	12 693	7 318	8 200	143 468	11 521	5 937	7 193
	Rent	41 859	2 837	3 139	3 073	32 306	2 030	2 233	2 486
	Money lent	223 677	20 874	9 730	12 655	206 727	19 964	9 004	12 069
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	121 720	9 509	6 144	7 947	99 449	7 989	5 012	7 170
	Other debts	158 728	14 837	9 753	9 719	139 386	13 740	8 586	8 770
	Total - Actual figures	907 662	74 410	47 913	54 083	785 876	66 706	40 420	48 680
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		86 207	63 857	62 653		75 917	53 275	55 230

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
2011	Year Total	79 463	60 025	11 782	4 842	16 605	64 927	222 519	47 918	37 724	94 991	14 597	41 547
2012	Year Total	72 859	47 774	2 348	7 096	21 344	42 468	131 836	47 547	39 350	92 109	11 895	20 344
	January	6 626	4 188	264	321	1 251	3 717	9 405	3 477	4 217	7 230	838	1 590
	February	6 421	6 720	345	710	1 269	4 068	12 143	4 107	6 091	7 905	987	2 259
	March	6 674	11 178	160	423	2 006	3 799	10 661	5 089	6 182	7 524	1 115	2 006
	April	6 630	4 986	152	350	1 591	3 374	9 428	3 524	3 944	7 098	1 083	2 194
	May	6 931	4 543	159	537	2 411	3 355	14 658	3 973	2 492	7 892	1 041	1 891
	June	6 655	3 038	125	590	2 048	3 373	10 056	4 548	2 500	9 580	1 079	1 976
	July	5 643	2 626	268	297	2 685	3 332	10 834	4 596	2 144	11 884	911	1 520
	August	6 176	2 522	193	414	2 036	3 427	11 463	3 626	2 342	8 474	1 083	1 908
	September	5 865	1 845	159	649	1 831	3 407	12 486	3 593	2 282	7 439	1 289	1 516
	October	5 343	2 501	197	1 053	1 551	3 642	12 909	4 725	3 018	6 855	603	1 161
	1/ November	5 256	2 663	184	1 150	1 310	3 490	11 312	4 018	2 393	6 770	1 270	1 400
1/ December	4 639	964	142	602	1 355	3 484	6 481	2 271	1 745	3 458	596	923	
2013	1/ January	3 941	1 788	123	209	1 519	2 622	8 551	3 632	1 581	5 478	548	895

1/ Preliminary.

Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2012	January 2012	1/ December 2012	1/ January 2013	2012	January 2012	1/ December 2012	1/ January 2013
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	44 082	3 427	2 357	2 534	36 413	2 950	1 859	2 005
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	9 214	537	615	585	7 711	419	511	493
	Services - Professional	59 721	4 039	3 447	4 074	53 796	3 649	3 099	3 766
	Services - Other	53 957	4 108	3 114	3 614	46 716	3 585	2 595	3 148
	Rent	24 403	2 022	1 821	1 625	19 245	1 505	1 512	1 352
	Money lent	133 396	14 183	5 710	6 112	127 428	13 393	5 462	5 844
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	39 428	1 594	2 377	1 797	34 512	1 528	2 181	1 569
	Other debts	62 463	5 308	3 619	5 344	56 788	4 784	3 226	4 889
	Total - Actual figures	426 664	35 218	23 060	25 685	382 609	31 813	20 445	23 066
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		40 623	30 571	29 557		36 471	27 101	26 410

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2012	January 2012	1/ December 2012	1/ January 2013	2012	1/ January 2012	1/ December 2012	1/ January 2013
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	465 325	28 986	26 305	31 496	256 746	18 559	13 393	16 571
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	174 338	10 160	8 481	9 581	140 403	7 834	7 183	7 999
	Services - Professional	299 848	18 472	19 042	16 376	245 619	15 915	14 886	13 490
	Services - Other	508 675	40 343	29 887	36 019	398 310	33 418	25 240	30 197
	Rent	352 667	23 573	23 216	23 863	212 691	11 933	13 511	11 973
	Money lent	1 290 816	98 863	78 293	73 962	1 191 224	91 716	73 975	66 902
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 475	26 748	28 352	33 043	346 698	24 530	24 835	27 892
	Other debts	1 141 752	64 853	70 390	99 386	758 441	52 762	41 306	57 508
	Total - Actual figures	4 676 896	311 998	283 966	323 726	3 550 132	256 667	214 329	232 532
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		362 467	361 833	376 735		288 871	272 949	261 933

1/ Preliminary.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended January 2013 and the three months ended January 2012

Actual estimates	Actual estimates November 2011 to January 2012	Actual estimates November 2012 to January 2013	% change between November 2011 to January 2012 and November 2012 to January 2013	Difference between November 2011 to January 2012 and November 2012 to January 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	227 611	172 399	-24,3	-55 212
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	101 314	83 983	-17,1	-17 331
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 035,1	1 019,1	-1,5	-16,0

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 three months ended January 2013 and the three months ended January 2012 1/

	Contribution (% points) to the total % change		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-1,7	-2,8	-0,7
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,0	-0,1	-1,0
Services - Professional	-1,5	-0,8	-0,4
Services - Other	-8,2	-1,0	-0,1
Rent	-0,7	-0,7	-0,1
Money lent	-5,2	-11,1	1,3
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,7	1,1	-3,8
Other debts	-4,2	-1,7	3,1
Total	-24,3	-17,1	-1,5

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 November 2011 to January 2012, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

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 January 2012	Actual estimates January 2013	% change between January 2012 and January 2013	Difference between January 2012 and January 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	74 410	54 083	-27,3	-20 327
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	35 218	25 685	-27,1	-9 533
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	312,0	323,7	3,8	11,7

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.
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. <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 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.</p>
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for January 2013 was 86,8%. The December 2012 collection rate remained unchanged.
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; and • <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.

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 published in English only.

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, utilize, 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.

Advanced release calendar

An advanced release calendar is disseminated on www.statssa.gov.za

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 online services. For more detail about our electronic services, contact Stats SA's user information service at (012) 310 8600.

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

General enquiries

Telephone number: (012) 310 8407/ 2965 (technical queries)
(012) 310 8600 (user information services)
(012) 310 8358 (orders/subscription services)

Fax number: (012) 310 8664 (technical enquiries)

email: nthabisengt@statssa.gov.za (technical enquiries)
info@statssa.gov.za (user information services)
magdaj@statssa.gov.za (orders/subscription services)

Postal address: Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

Produced by Stats SA