



**Statistics
South Africa**



your leading partner in quality statistics

Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

July 2013

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

Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600

Forthcoming issue

August 2013

Expected release date

17 October 2013

Contents

Results for July 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 July 2012 and the three months ended July 2013	7
Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended July 2012 and the three months ended July 2013.....	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 July 2013

Table A – Key figures for the month of July 2013

Actual estimates	July 2013	% change between July 2012 and July 2013	% change between May – Jul 2012 and May – Jul 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	78 908	5,6	-9,1
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	32 217	-18,1	-17,7
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	411,5	-6,5	-4,7

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt reflected a 9,1% decrease in the three months ended July 2013 compared with the three months ended July 2012. A 5,6% increase was recorded between July 2012 and July 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

Categories that contributed to the 9,1% decrease were:

- money lent (contributing -3,2 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -3,1 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -2,5 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 17,7% in the three months ended July 2013 compared with the three months ended July 2012. A year-on-year decrease of 18,1% was recorded in July 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The categories that influenced the 17,7% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -7,7 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -5,2 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -1,9 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 4,7% lower in the three months ended July 2013 compared with the three months ended July 2012. A year-on-year decrease of 6,5% was recorded in July 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The major contributor to the 4,7% decrease was the goods sold category (contributing -5,4 percentage points) – see Table 6.

In July 2013, 32 217 civil judgements for debt amounting to R411,5 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- 'other' debts (R112,6 million or 27,4%);
- money lent (R104,9 million or 25,5%); and
- services (R76,4 million or 18,6%) – see Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

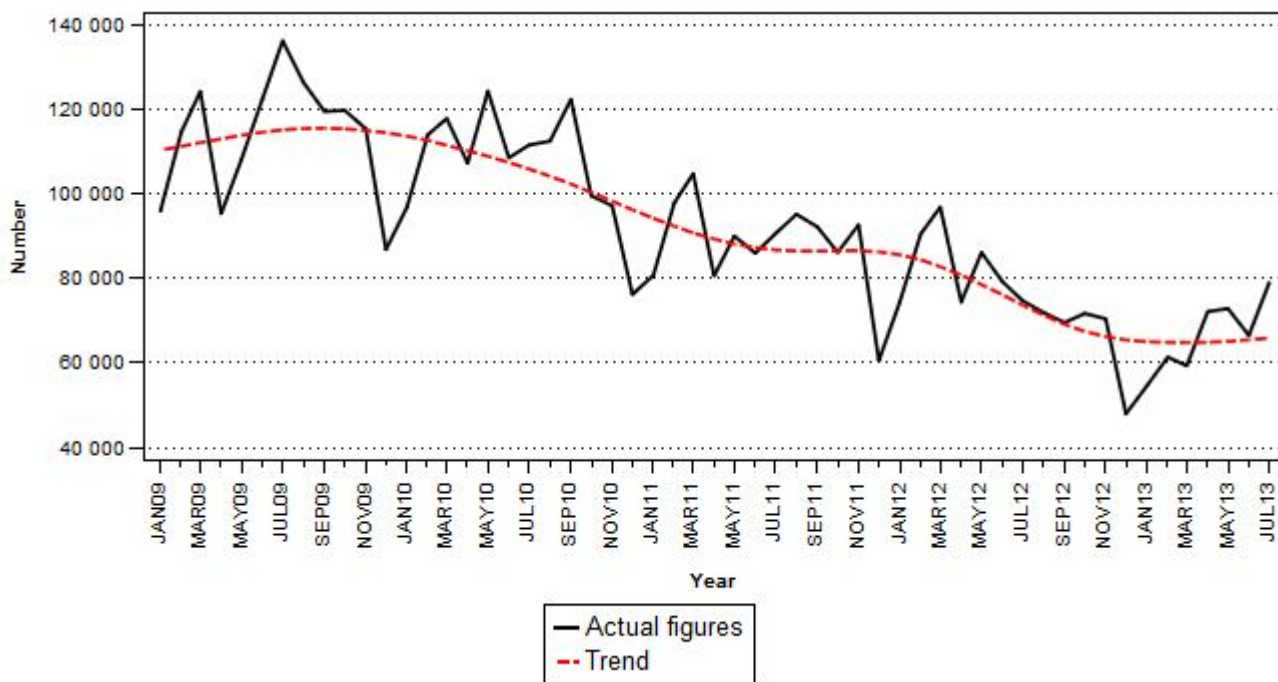
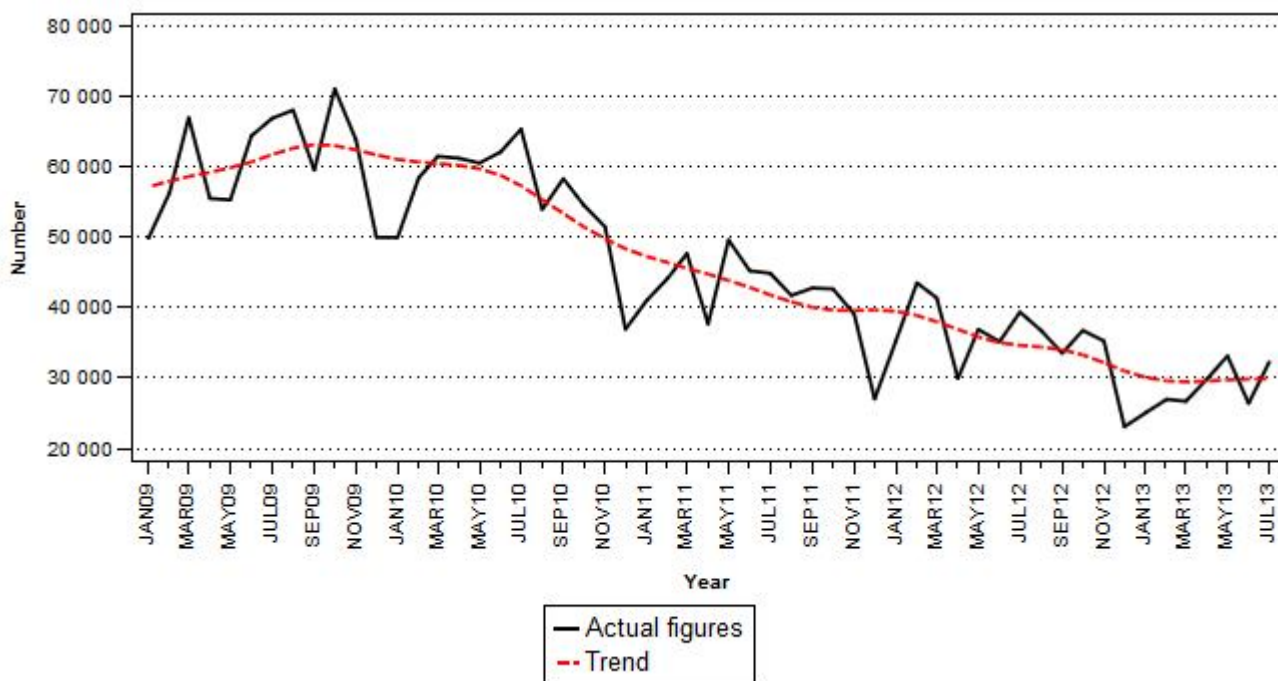


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	Jul-12	1/ Jun-13	1/ Jul-13	2012	Jul-12	1/ Jun-13	1/ Jul-13
Cases recorded	Actual figures	977 066	82 955	76 992	86 435	847 341	71 886	68 312	76 968
	Seasonally adjusted		75 166	75 175	78 414		63 850	66 425	68 307
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	73 272	6 345	4 547	5 944	54 229	4 458	3 694	4 735
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	22 512	1 376	1 928	2 305	18 853	1 198	1 481	1 758
	Services - Professional	104 351	9 008	8 550	9 617	91 458	7 977	7 699	8 624
	Services - Other	161 543	11 154	10 813	13 917	143 468	9 762	9 600	12 530
	Rent	41 859	3 195	3 484	3 385	32 306	2 527	2 744	2 685
	Money lent	223 677	18 756	16 470	17 130	206 727	17 607	15 198	16 250
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	121 720	11 862	10 590	14 101	99 449	9 947	9 170	12 659
	Other debts	158 728	12 996	10 111	12 509	139 386	11 711	9 484	11 655
	Total - Actual figures	907 662	74 692	66 493	78 908	785 876	65 187	59 070	70 896
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		70 609	65 781	74 973		60 241	57 729	65 971

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 and Vanderbijlpark	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
	November	5 256	2 663	184	1 150	1 310	3 490	11 312	4 018	2 393	6 770	1 270	1 400
December	4 639	964	142	602	1 355	3 484	6 481	2 271	1 745	3 458	596	923	
2013	January	3 941	1 788	123	209	1 519	2 622	8 551	3 632	1 581	5 478	548	895
	February	4 707	2 359	43	336	1 434	2 798	9 799	4 119	2 167	5 589	1 454	1 224
	March	5 088	2 289	205	260	1 374	4 442	7 800	3 360	1 782	6 092	1 033	1 407
	April	6 817	2 425	105	325	1 675	2 901	10 481	3 689	2 240	6 435	1 560	1 874
	May	6 030	2 970	85	549	1 760	5 427	11 188	3 740	2 294	5 873	1 419	1 339
	1/ June	6 039	2 696	116	350	1 888	6 665	9 217	3 425	2 401	4 473	1 623	994
	1/ July	6 054	3 572	390	539	1 622	5 838	9 930	4 714	2 473	7 890	1 465	1 557

1/ Preliminary.

Note

Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) proposes to discontinue the publication of Table 2 in the statistical release. The time series for these magistrates' offices will still be available for download on Stats SA's website. Should you have any comments or enquiries regarding this proposal please contact:

Juan-Pierre Terblanche
juan-pierret@statssa.gov.za
 012 310 2965

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	Jul-12	1/ Jun-13	1/ Jul-13	2012	Jul-12	1/ Jun-13	1/ Jul-13
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	44 082	4 642	2 289	2 503	36 413	3 988	1 696	1 955
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	9 214	822	652	668	7 711	706	500	541
	Services - Professional	59 721	5 504	4 597	5 020	53 796	5 022	4 234	4 642
	Services - Other	53 957	4 445	4 158	5 028	46 716	3 846	3 523	4 391
	Rent	24 403	1 846	1 649	2 195	19 245	1 411	1 284	1 801
	Money lent	133 396	12 197	5 696	8 173	127 428	11 572	5 284	7 547
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	39 428	3 715	3 045	3 477	34 512	3 048	2 701	3 074
	Other debts	62 463	6 182	4 310	5 153	56 788	5 626	3 843	4 621
	Total - Actual figures	426 664	39 353	26 396	32 217	382 609	35 219	23 065	28 572
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		35 616	25 576	29 210		31 978	22 521	25 972

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	Jul-12	1/ Jun-13	1/ Jul-13	2012	Jul-12	1/ Jun-13	1/ Jul-13
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	465 325	46 023	27 010	31 573	256 746	27 227	11 705	17 043
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	174 338	15 288	8 345	10 341	140 403	11 683	5 752	8 064
	Services - Professional	299 848	29 855	24 551	22 523	245 619	24 951	21 763	19 324
	Services - Other	508 675	43 759	37 101	53 876	398 310	34 837	28 784	46 349
	Rent	352 667	23 143	36 496	34 065	212 691	13 041	26 646	23 688
	Money lent	1 290 816	129 295	87 245	104 878	1 191 224	119 471	74 955	93 113
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 475	38 318	41 560	41 661	346 698	27 039	33 145	32 526
	Other debts	1 141 752	114 542	99 173	112 577	758 441	74 234	46 076	61 103
	Total - Actual figures	4 676 896	440 223	361 481	411 494	3 550 132	332 483	248 826	301 210
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		394 001	335 678	368 957		299 870	234 462	271 674

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 July 2012 and the three months ended July 2013

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May – Jul 2012	Actual estimates May – Jul 2013	% change between May – Jul 2012 and May – Jul 2013	Difference between May – Jul 2012 and May – Jul 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	240 041	218 259	-9,1	-21 782
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	111 384	91 724	-17,7	-19 660
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 257,4	1 198,2	-4,7	-59,2

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended July 2012 and the three months ended July 2013 1/

Item	Contribution (% points) to the % change in the total		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-1,2	-4,5	-3,7
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,6	-0,7	-1,7
Services - Professional	-0,3	-2,1	-1,4
Services - Other	-2,2	0,2	1,1
Rent	0,4	-0,6	0,8
Money lent	-3,2	-7,7	-2,1
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-0,2	-0,5	1,6
Other debts	-3,1	-1,8	0,7
Total	-9,1	-17,7	-4,7

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 during May to July 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 July 2012	Actual estimates July 2013	% change between July 2012 and July 2013	Difference between July 2012 and July 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	74 692	78 908	5,6	4 216
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	39 353	32 217	-18,1	-7 136
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	440,2	411,5	-6,5	-28,7

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. 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.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for July 2013 was 92,1%. The improved collection rate for June 2013 was 96,7%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the US Bureau of the Census, 1968.
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 * 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.
Cases recorded	Includes civil debt and non-debt cases recorded.
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, Mbombela
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 4897/ 2965 (technical queries)
(012) 310 8600 (user information services)
(012) 310 8358 (orders/subscription services)

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

email: onicama@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