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# Statistical release

## P0041

# Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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## Key results for June 2014

**Table A – Key figures for the month of June 2014**

Actual estimates	June 2014	% change between June 2013 and June 2014	% change between Apr – Jun 2013 and Apr – Jun 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	68 693	3,2	-8,8
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	27 659	1,1	-14,3
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	327,0	-9,1	-18,3

### The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 8,8% in the second quarter of 2014 compared with the second quarter of 2013. A 3,2% increase was recorded between June 2013 and June 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 8,8% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- promissory notes (contributing -2,7 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,1 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -2,1 percentage points) – see Table 5.

### The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 14,3% in the second quarter of 2014 compared with the second quarter of 2013. An increase of 1,1% was recorded year-on-year in June 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 14,3% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -7,5 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -2,8 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -2,4 percentage points) – see Table 5.

### The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 18,3% lower in the second quarter of 2014 compared with the second quarter of 2013. A year-on-year decrease of 9,1% was recorded in June 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

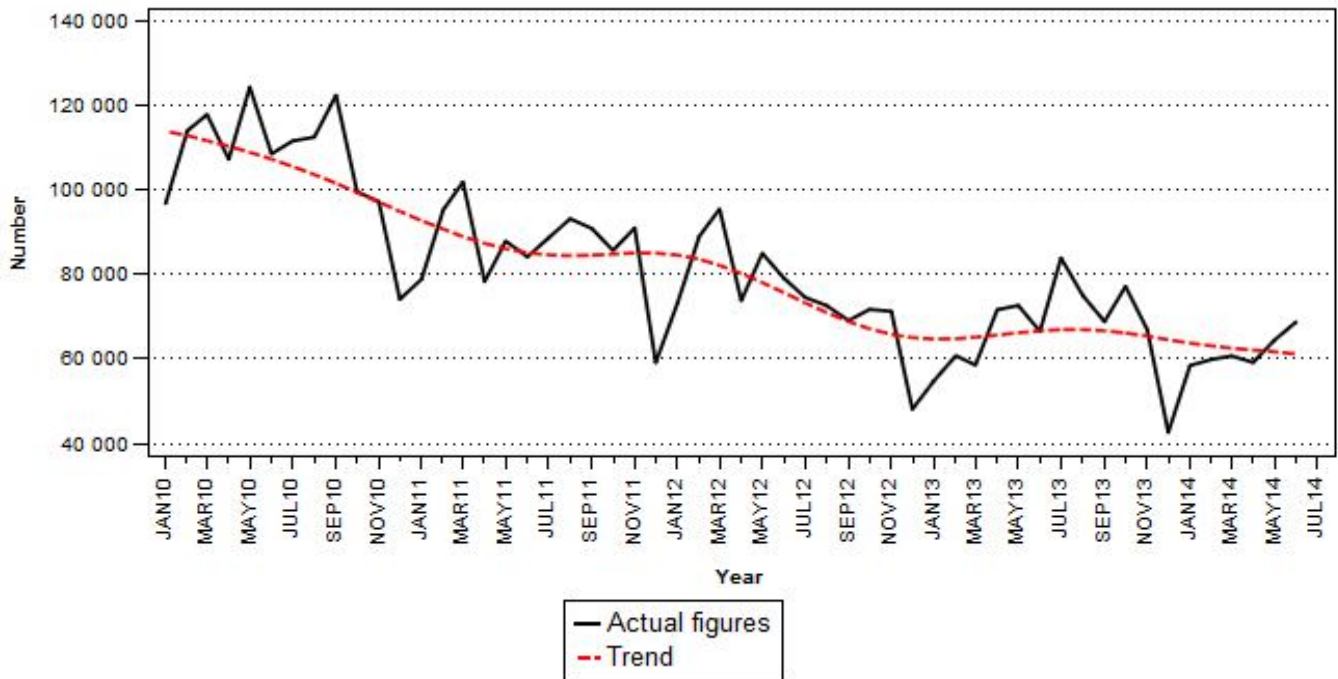
The main categories that influenced the 18,3% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -6,1 percentage points);
- services (contributing -5,4 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -2,5 percentage points – see Table 5.

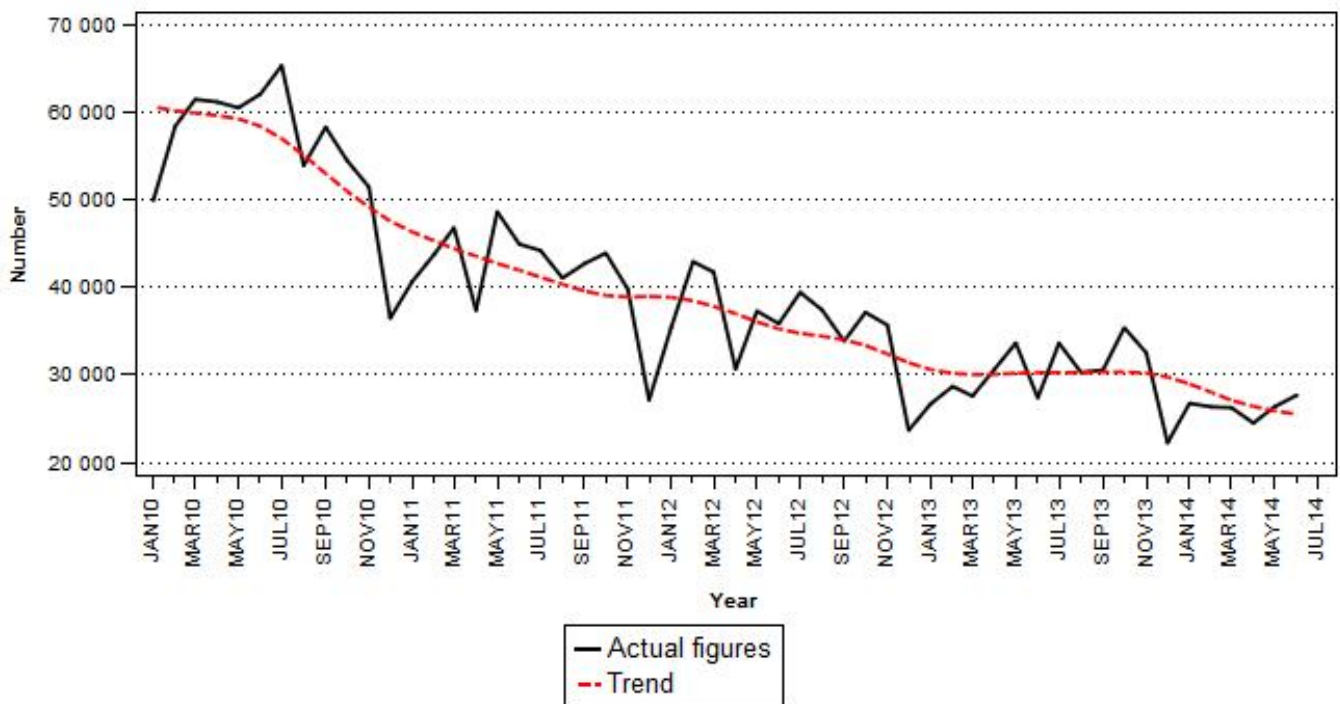
In June 2014, 27 659 civil judgements for debt amounting to R327,0 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R95,4 million or 29,2%);
- money lent (R86,7 million or 26,5%); and
- services (R59,7 million or 18,3%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

**Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt**



**Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt**



**PJ Lehohla**  
**Statistician-General**

**Detailed results: Tables**

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

Item		Total				Private persons			
		* 2013	Jun-13	1/ May-14	1/ Jun-14	* 2013	Jun-13	1/ May-14	1/ Jun-14
<b>Cases recorded</b>	<b>Actual figures</b>	<b>885 940</b>	<b>77 149</b>	<b>70 210</b>	<b>74 445</b>	<b>771 916</b>	<b>68 272</b>	<b>62 546</b>	<b>64 847</b>
	<b>Seasonally adjusted</b>		73 616	65 200	70 682		64 663	57 332	60 995
<b>Civil summonses for debt</b>	Goods sold - Open account	63 965	4 669	4 360	4 564	50 057	3 761	3 405	3 487
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	25 222	1 931	1 816	1 910	19 255	1 471	1 432	1 511
	Services - Professional	101 634	8 391	7 834	7 896	90 642	7 519	6 979	7 148
	Services - Other	136 153	10 928	11 321	11 942	119 189	9 736	9 919	10 481
	Rent	45 468	3 640	2 849	2 813	36 855	2 917	2 387	2 322
	Money lent	189 748	16 786	15 933	18 441	178 114	15 452	15 259	17 790
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	112 485	10 165	10 349	9 600	98 296	8 814	9 882	9 167
	Other debts	124 526	10 024	9 900	11 527	113 714	9 395	9 087	10 532
	<b>Total - Actual figures</b>	<b>799 201</b>	<b>66 534</b>	<b>64 362</b>	<b>68 693</b>	<b>706 122</b>	<b>59 065</b>	<b>58 350</b>	<b>62 438</b>
	<b>Total - Seasonally adjusted</b>		63 767	60 279	65 509		54 854	53 622	57 522

1/ Preliminary.

\* Revised.

**Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons**

Item		Total				Private persons			
		* 2013	Jun-13	1/ May-14	1/ Jun-14	* 2013	Jun-13	1/ May-14	1/ Jun-14
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	30 599	2 387	1 885	1 872	24 389	1 791	1 417	1 446
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 822	704	603	619	5 965	527	441	499
	Services - Professional	54 963	4 619	4 429	4 753	50 053	4 254	3 997	4 381
	Services - Other	54 737	4 046	3 953	4 612	47 396	3 410	3 412	4 157
	Rent	21 214	1 639	1 388	1 772	17 623	1 281	1 134	1 546
	Money lent	95 676	6 781	6 272	6 301	88 991	6 328	5 891	6 016
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	34 509	2 980	2 644	2 221	29 923	2 654	2 227	1 897
	Other debts	59 596	4 209	5 177	5 509	53 770	3 759	4 841	5 193
	<b>Total - Actual figures</b>	<b>359 116</b>	<b>27 365</b>	<b>26 351</b>	<b>27 659</b>	<b>318 110</b>	<b>24 004</b>	<b>23 360</b>	<b>25 135</b>
	<b>Total - Seasonally adjusted</b>		25 951	24 828	26 299		22 862	22 066	23 998

1/ Preliminary.

\* Revised.

**Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)**

Item		Total				Private persons			
		* 2013	Jun-13	1/ May-14	1/ Jun-14	* 2013	Jun-13	1/ May-14	1/ Jun-14
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	363 472	26 743	29 197	23 784	210 209	11 845	12 412	14 366
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	122 663	8 268	6 624	6 682	99 411	5 714	4 709	6 043
	Services - Professional	278 762	24 000	23 283	21 023	235 197	21 300	21 052	18 856
	Services - Other	591 013	36 762	39 163	38 702	472 533	28 109	33 132	32 438
	Rent	349 342	36 120	24 896	24 797	242 224	26 296	18 607	18 545
	Money lent	1 207 161	91 956	87 193	86 743	1 088 548	79 234	82 583	76 260
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 275	40 375	38 612	29 896	363 598	32 393	32 612	24 088
	Other debts	1 412 365	95 384	95 739	95 402	785 059	44 477	71 873	69 745
	<b>Total - Actual figures</b>	<b>4 768 053</b>	<b>359 608</b>	<b>344 707</b>	<b>327 029</b>	<b>3 496 779</b>	<b>249 368</b>	<b>276 980</b>	<b>260 341</b>
	<b>Total - Seasonally adjusted</b>		337 322	322 791	307 351		233 465	251 775	243 538

1/ Preliminary.

\* Revised.

**Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the second quarter of 2013 and the second quarter of 2014**

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Apr – Jun 2013	Actual estimates Apr – Jun 2014	% change between Apr – Jun 2013 and Apr – Jun 2014	Difference between Apr – Jun 2013 and Apr – Jun 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	210 781	192 203	-8,8	-18 578
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	91 628	78 497	-14,3	-13 131
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 179,6	964,2	-18,3	-215,4

**Table 5 – 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 second quarter of 2013 and the second quarter of 2014 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	-1,6	-2,6	-1,6
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,5	-0,2	-0,9
Services - Professional	-1,7	-1,5	-0,8
Services - Other	-0,4	-0,9	-4,6
Rent	-1,3	-0,4	-1,8
Money lent	-0,7	-7,5	-6,1
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,7	-1,6	-1,7
Other debts	0,1	0,3	-0,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>-8,8</b>	<b>-14,3</b>	<b>-18,3</b>

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 April to June 2013, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

**Table 6 – 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 June 2013	Actual estimates June 2014	% change between June 2013 and June 2014	Difference between June 2013 and June 2014
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	66 534	68 693	3,2	2 159
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	27 365	27 659	1,1	294
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	359,6	327,0	-9,1	-32,6

**Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province**

	Period	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2013	June	10 023	6 081	1 253	3 993	11 152	2 897	24 611	4 307	2 217	<b>66 534</b>
	July	10 855	7 397	1 512	4 265	11 718	3 260	35 868	6 361	2 630	<b>83 866</b>
	August	11 334	6 537	1 295	4 240	11 335	3 020	29 758	5 026	2 470	<b>75 015</b>
	September	9 595	6 688	1 202	4 026	9 322	3 477	28 280	4 053	2 181	<b>68 824</b>
	October	12 020	8 394	1 316	4 504	9 834	5 022	29 364	4 314	2 367	<b>77 135</b>
	November	10 440	9 898	1 341	3 661	8 806	4 012	22 530	3 632	2 567	<b>66 887</b>
	December	* 5 591	3 662	769	2 781	7 129	3 127	14 984	2 037	2 510	<b>42 590</b>
2014	January	* 8 017	5 024	1 022	4 103	8 597	3 600	22 977	2 552	2 519	<b>58 411</b>
	February	* 8 624	5 869	1 019	3 730	8 980	3 493	22 792	2 679	2 669	<b>59 855</b>
	March	* 9 531	7 131	1 222	4 121	8 488	3 166	20 725	3 218	3 075	<b>60 677</b>
	April	9 252	5 239	* 1 507	4 729	8 611	2 978	21 763	2 966	2 103	<b>59 148</b>
	May *	9 760	6 894	1 445	4 044	8 469	3 089	25 278	3 193	2 190	<b>64 362</b>
	June 1/	13 090	5 587	1 276	4 254	9 564	3 357	25 994	3 115	2 456	<b>68 693</b>

1/ Preliminary.

\* Revised.

**Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province**

	Period	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2013	June	4 730	3 033	806	2 969	4 722	1 578	5 453	2 127	1 947	<b>27 365</b>
	July	6 207	3 773	932	3 925	4 191	1 951	6 911	3 327	2 399	<b>33 616</b>
	August	5 295	3 685	714	3 140	4 026	1 805	6 548	2 847	2 216	<b>30 276</b>
	September	5 517	3 181	636	3 087	4 363	2 205	6 821	2 680	2 060	<b>30 550</b>
	October	6 934	4 688	787	3 761	4 852	2 049	8 480	1 668	2 162	<b>35 381</b>
	November	6 940	4 953	895	3 018	3 454	1 935	7 327	1 877	2 119	<b>32 518</b>
	December	* 3 103	3 049	454	1 976	2 834	1 708	6 076	1 096	1 928	<b>22 224</b>
2014	January	* 4 195	3 318	508	2 787	4 614	1 820	6 045	1 433	2 020	<b>26 740</b>
	February	* 4 753	3 348	737	2 911	3 924	1 662	5 903	1 145	1 946	<b>26 329</b>
	March	* 4 446	3 316	874	3 204	3 798	1 207	6 012	1 446	1 944	<b>26 247</b>
	April	4 062	2 877	* 697	2 410	3 858	1 357	5 682	1 526	2 018	<b>24 487</b>
	May *	4 095	3 686	812	2 586	3 629	1 161	6 519	1 907	1 956	<b>26 351</b>
	June 1/	5 315	4 102	766	3 401	3 595	1 518	5 413	1 589	1 960	<b>27 659</b>

1/ Preliminary.

\* Revised.

**Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)**

	Period	Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu -Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2013	June	98 333	33 353	9 398	25 685	47 257	20 047	90 254	27 175	8 106	<b>359 608</b>
	July	105 792	41 710	12 998	36 692	41 288	22 732	93 671	49 235	19 740	<b>423 858</b>
	August	122 733	40 579	8 300	28 319	38 692	23 111	119 218	56 016	8 938	<b>445 906</b>
	September	105 675	39 566	5 937	30 535	44 384	16 935	111 888	38 798	8 567	<b>402 285</b>
	October	111 222	53 381	8 146	35 366	49 516	20 792	125 777	34 525	11 810	<b>450 535</b>
	November	127 932	53 314	8 770	34 547	31 398	25 062	103 849	44 688	9 879	<b>439 439</b>
	December	* 56 313	33 514	4 047	19 776	39 281	17 039	98 680	25 380	12 177	<b>306 207</b>
2014	January	* 64 948	36 005	5 329	25 601	45 021	18 659	75 112	30 345	11 954	<b>312 974</b>
	February	* 117 751	38 391	6 810	36 414	34 787	17 569	81 162	49 647	19 968	<b>402 499</b>
	March	* 74 236	43 808	6 313	53 629	34 910	9 735	116 253	29 487	12 817	<b>381 188</b>
	April	75 403	37 097	* 6 648	22 227	30 140	13 181	70 563	27 186	10 045	<b>292 490</b>
	May *	72 011	43 019	9 208	22 471	36 772	11 295	95 198	45 389	9 344	<b>344 707</b>
	June 1/	91 053	43 723	5 073	32 985	34 968	12 856	72 497	21 824	12 050	<b>327 029</b>

1/ Preliminary.

\* Revised.



## Explanatory notes

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>	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.
	<b>2</b>	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.
<b>Purpose of the survey</b>	<b>3</b>	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.
<b>Scope of the survey</b>	<b>4</b>	This survey covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of civil cases recorded;</li> <li>• number of civil summonses issued for debt;</li> <li>• number of civil judgements recorded for debt; and</li> <li>• value of civil judgements recorded for debt.</li> </ul>
<b>Statistical unit</b>	<b>5</b>	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 are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The monthly survey of 203 magistrates' courts represents approximately 98% of all cases in South Africa.
<b>Survey methodology and design</b>	<b>6</b>	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.
<b>Collection rate</b>	<b>7</b>	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for June 2014 was 85,7%. The improved collection rate for May 2014 was 86,7%.
<b>Trend cycle</b>	<b>8</b>	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
<b>Publications</b>	<b>9</b>	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly.</li> <li>• <i>South African Statistics</i> issued annually.</li> </ul>
<b>Unpublished statistics</b>	<b>10</b>	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.
<b>Symbols and abbreviations</b>	<b>11</b>	R/D        Refer to Drawer Stats SA    Statistics South Africa *            Revised figures

## Glossary

<b>Acknowledgement of debt</b>	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.
<b>Bills</b>	Bills are statements of charges for services rendered or for amounts owed.
<b>Cases recorded</b>	Includes civil debt and non-debt cases recorded.
<b>Civil judgements</b>	Civil judgements are decisions taken in a civil matter or a dispute between two people or parties.
<b>Civil summonses</b>	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.
<b>Consent judgements</b>	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.
<b>Default judgements</b>	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.
<b>Instalment sale transaction</b>	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.
<b>Litigants</b>	Litigants are people who take part in court proceedings, usually against each other, like a debtor and a creditor.
<b>Litigants referred</b>	Litigants referred relates to a case where the parties have been referred to another instance/court.
<b>Open account transaction</b>	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.
<b>Other services</b>	'Other services' refers to municipal services (except outstanding assessment rates), plumbers, builders, mechanics, panel-beaters, and electricians.
<b>Other debts</b>	'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.
<b>Plaintiff</b>	Plaintiff is a person/party in a civil case who asks the court for judgement against another person.
<b>Professional services</b>	Professional services refer to medical doctors, dentists, advocates, attorneys, auditors, accountants, architects, engineers, hospital services etc.
<b>Promissory note</b>	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.
<b>Reference month</b>	Reference month refers to one calendar month.
<b>Refer to drawer (R/D) cheques</b>	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

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