



**Statistics
South Africa**



your leading partner in quality statistics

Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

March 2013

**Embargoed until:
16 May 2013
09:00**

Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600

Forthcoming issue

April 2013

Expected release date

20 June 2013

Contents

Results for March 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 first quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 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 first quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 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 March 2013

Table A – Key figures for the month of March 2013

Actual estimates	March 2013	% change between March 2012 and March 2013	% change between January to March 2012 and January to March 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	59 437	-38,6	-33,4
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	26 679	-35,5	-33,1
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	393,5	8,2	4,6

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 33,4% in the first quarter of 2013 compared with the first quarter of 2012. A year-on-year decrease of 38,6% was recorded in March 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

Categories that contributed to the 33,4% decrease were:

- services (contributing -11,6 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing -10,9 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -6,6 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 33,1% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2013. A 35,5% decrease was recorded in March 2013 compared with March 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The categories which influenced the 33,1% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -21,3 percentage points);
- services (contributing -3,9 percentage points); and
- goods sold (contributing -3,5 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt increased by 4,6% in the first quarter of 2013 compared with the same period of 2012. A year-on-year increase of 8,2% was recorded in March 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The major contributor to the 4,6% increase was the 'other' debts category (contributing 18,3 percentage points). The increase was partially counteracted by decreases in the money lent category (contributing -7,6 percentage points) and the goods sold category (contributing -2,5 percentage points) – see Table 6.

In March 2013, 26 679 civil judgements for debt amounting to R393,5 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R393,5 million were:

- 'other' debts (R155,7 million or 39,6%);
- money lent (R82,2 million or 20,9%); and
- services (R58,1 million or 14,8%) – see Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

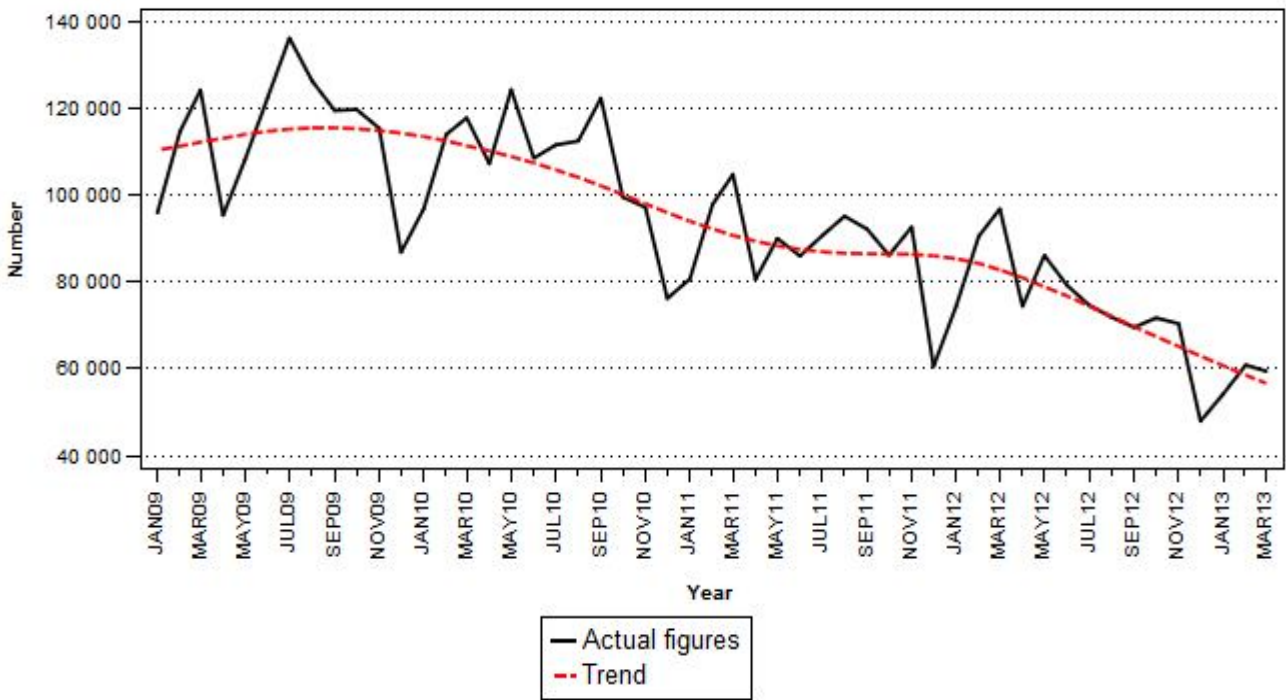
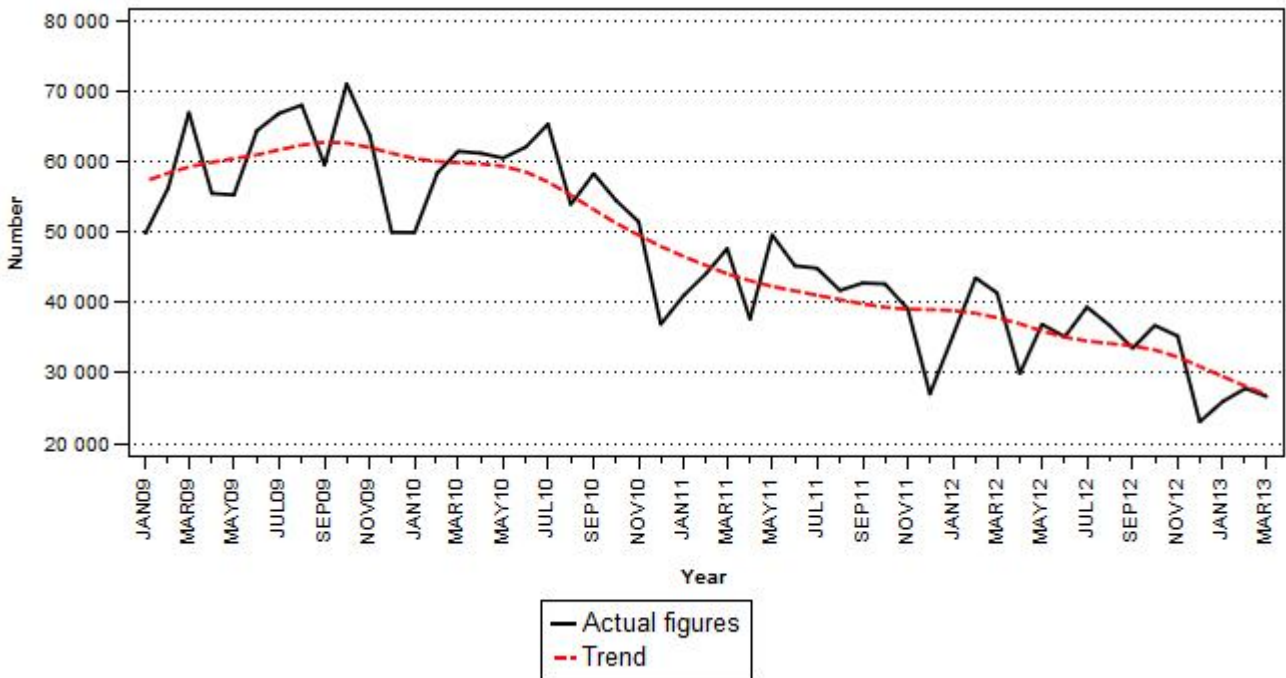


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	March 2012	1/ February 2013	1/ March 2013	2012	March 2012	1/ February 2013	1/ March 2013
Cases recorded	Actual figures	977 066	102 190	64 835	65 722	847 341	92 003	57 608	57 217
	Seasonally adjusted		92 177	62 202	59 192		81 661	54 168	50 683
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	73 272	6 281	4 898	5 303	54 229	4 670	3 971	4 079
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	22 512	1 952	1 199	1 929	18 853	1 687	994	1 406
	Services - Professional	104 351	9 670	7 390	8 096	91 458	8 754	6 704	7 230
	Services - Other	161 543	24 429	10 025	9 695	143 468	22 957	8 887	8 427
	Rent	41 859	3 609	3 448	3 112	32 306	2 954	2 767	2 549
	Money lent	223 677	23 596	14 773	14 139	206 727	22 607	14 142	13 087
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	121 720	11 404	8 301	8 263	99 449	9 638	7 528	7 260
	Other debts	158 728	15 932	10 810	8 900	139 386	14 625	9 624	8 301
	Total - Actual figures	907 662	96 873	60 844	59 437	785 876	87 892	54 617	52 339
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		86 817	57 760	53 128		77 538	50 800	45 978

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
	1/ February	4 707	2 359	43	336	1 434	2 798	9 799	4 119	2 167	5 589	1 454	1 224
	1/ March	5 088	2 289	205	260	1 374	4 442	7 800	3 360	1 782	6 092	1 033	1 407

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	March 2012	1/ February 2013	1/ March 2013	2012	March 2012	1/ February 2013	1/ March 2013
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	44 082	3 909	2 703	2 473	36 413	3 275	2 196	1 968
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	9 214	753	577	672	7 711	641	462	552
	Services - Professional	59 721	5 299	4 198	4 289	53 796	4 665	3 817	3 910
	Services - Other	53 957	4 727	3 756	3 717	46 716	4 078	3 227	3 215
	Rent	24 403	2 125	1 605	1 762	19 245	1 665	1 314	1 446
	Money lent	133 396	16 188	7 837	6 646	127 428	15 771	7 506	6 116
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	39 428	2 833	1 536	2 069	34 512	2 445	1 258	1 809
	Other debts	62 463	5 533	5 585	5 051	56 788	5 098	5 075	4 431
	Total - Actual figures	426 664	41 367	27 797	26 679	382 609	37 638	24 855	23 447
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		39 122	28 292	25 264		36 104	25 227	22 423

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	March 2012	1/ February 2013	1/ March 2013	2012	March 2012	1/ February 2013	1/ March 2013
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	465 325	39 571	27 764	30 923	256 746	20 515	15 477	15 051
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	174 338	13 422	8 844	13 996	140 403	11 361	5 519	12 311
	Services - Professional	299 848	26 696	22 616	19 602	245 619	21 396	18 733	16 049
	Services - Other	508 675	38 629	44 467	38 475	398 310	30 579	30 732	31 760
	Rent	352 667	29 694	31 133	24 572	212 691	17 091	20 652	16 784
	Money lent	1 290 816	107 714	94 628	82 173	1 191 224	98 873	88 227	74 162
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 475	38 266	26 423	28 009	346 698	29 173	21 000	22 907
	Other debts	1 141 752	69 738	156 150	155 732	758 441	56 857	78 809	59 696
	Total - Actual figures	4 676 896	363 730	412 025	393 482	3 550 132	285 845	279 149	248 720
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		345 889	397 277	376 680		280 589	270 598	246 228

1/ Preliminary.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the first quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 2013

Actual estimates	Actual estimates January to March 2012	Actual estimates January to March 2013	% change between January to March 2012 and January to March 2013	Difference between January to March 2012 and January to March 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	261 802	174 408	-33,4	-87 394
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	120 086	80 392	-33,1	-39 694
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 079,8	1 129,6	4,6	49,8

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 first quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 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	-1,3	-3,3	-2,0
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,1	-0,2	-0,5
Services - Professional	-1,3	-1,8	-1,5
Services - Other	-10,3	-2,1	0,0
Rent	-0,1	-1,1	-0,5
Money lent	-10,9	-21,3	-7,6
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-2,8	-2,6	-1,7
Other debts	-6,6	-0,7	18,3
Total	-33,4	-33,1	4,6

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 January to March 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 March 2012	Actual estimates March 2013	% change between March 2012 and March 2013	Difference between March 2012 and March 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	96 873	59 437	-38,6	-37 436
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	41 367	26 679	-35,5	-14 688
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	363,7	393,5	8,2	29,8

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. 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 March 2013 was 89,4%. The improved collection rate for February 2013 is 89,4%.
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 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