



**Statistics
South Africa**



your leading partner in quality statistics

Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

May 2013

**Embargoed until:
18 July 2013
09:00**

Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600

Forthcoming issue

June 2013

Expected release date

15 August 2013

Contents

Results for May 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 May 2012 and the three months ended May 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 May 2012 and the three months ended May 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 May 2013

Table A – Key figures for the month of May 2013

Actual estimates	May 2013	% change between May 2012 and May 2013	% change between Mar – May 2012 and Mar – May 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	72 696	-15,6	-20,8
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	33 378	-9,5	-17,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	426,1	3,0	11,4

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 20,8% in the three months ended May 2013 compared with the three months ended May 2012. A 15,6% decrease was recorded between May 2012 and May 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

Categories that contributed to the 20,8% decrease were:

- services (contributing -8,1 percentage points);
- money lent (contributing -6,3 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -4,9 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 17,2% year-on-year in the three months ended May 2013. A 9,5% decrease was recorded in May 2013 compared with May 2012 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The categories that influenced the 17,2% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -11,4 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -3,0 percentage points); and
- services (contributing -2,2 percentage points) – see Table 6.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 11,4% higher in the three months ended May 2013 compared with the same period of 2012. A year-on-year increase of 3,0% was recorded in May 2013 – see Table A and Tables 5 and 7.

The major contributor to the 11,4% increase was the 'other' debts category (contributing 11,2 percentage points) – see Table 6.

In May 2013, 33 378 civil judgements for debt amounting to R426,1 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R117,1 million or 27,5%);
- 'other' debts (R97,2 million or 22,8%); and
- services (R80,3 million or 18,8%) – see Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

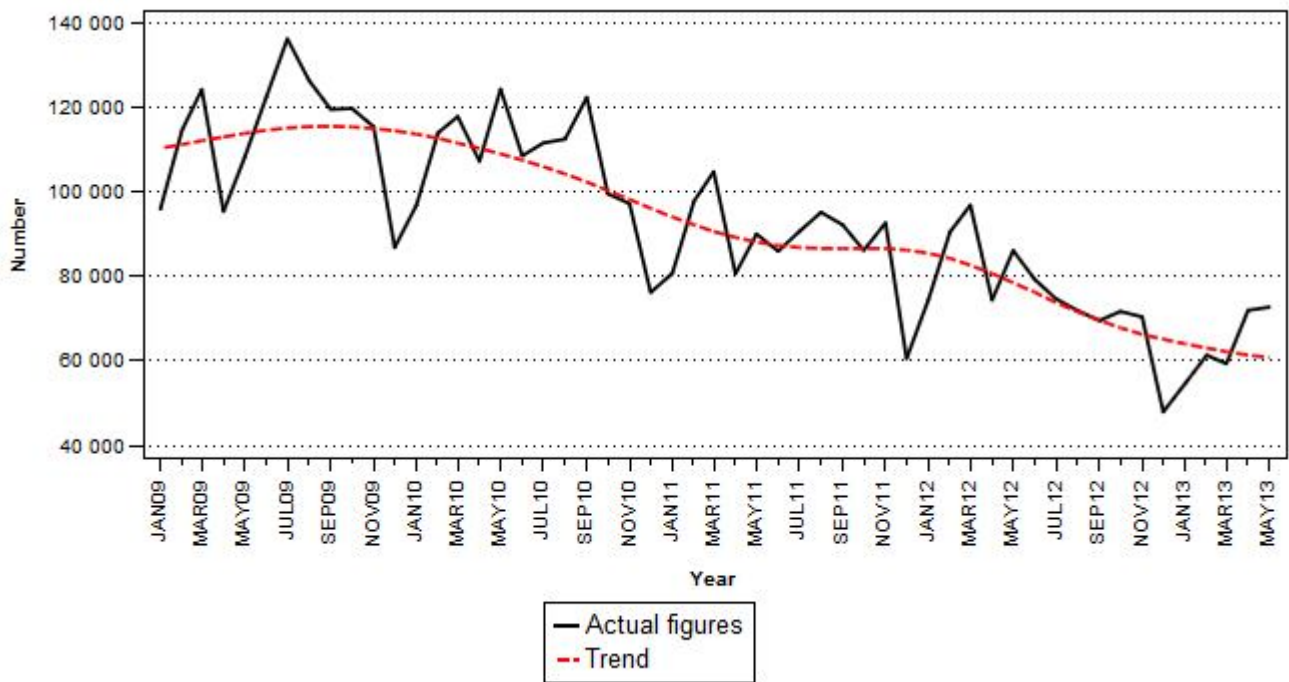
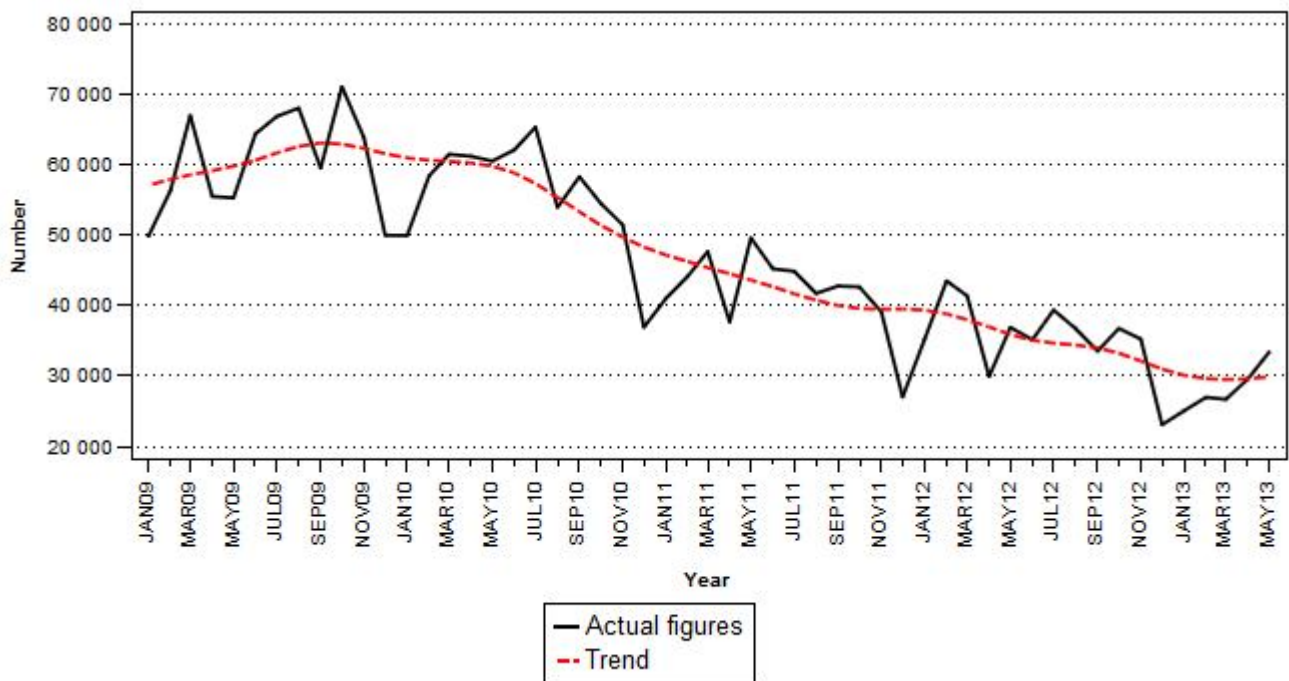


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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	May-12	1/ Apr-13	1/ May-13	2012	May-12	1/ Apr-13	1/ May-13
Cases recorded	Actual figures	977 066	91 247	79 264	82 616	847 341	80 520	69 076	72 370
	Seasonally adjusted		83 766	84 085	75 603		72 049	72 164	64 408
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	73 272	6 068	5 774	5 663	54 229	4 467	4 369	4 455
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	22 512	2 124	2 341	2 363	18 853	1 853	1 703	1 775
	Services - Professional	104 351	9 609	9 899	9 390	91 458	8 694	9 040	8 492
	Services - Other	161 543	16 172	11 465	12 312	143 468	14 593	9 882	11 179
	Rent	41 859	3 244	3 796	3 649	32 306	2 435	2 852	2 861
	Money lent	223 677	19 731	17 710	16 216	206 727	18 682	16 744	15 484
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	121 720	15 088	10 254	13 474	99 449	13 366	8 983	12 277
	Other debts	158 728	14 077	10 727	9 629	139 386	11 658	9 718	8 690
	Total - Actual figures	907 662	86 113	71 966	72 696	785 876	75 748	63 291	65 213
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		78 887	77 516	66 314		68 387	67 170	58 614

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
	1/ April	6 817	2 425	105	325	1 675	2 901	10 481	3 689	2 240	6 435	689	1 874
	1/ May	6 030	2 970	85	549	1 760	5 427	11 188	3 740	2 294	5 873	1 419	1 339

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	May-12	1/ Apr-13	1/ May-13	2012	May-12	1/ Apr-13	1/ May-13
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	44 082	3 856	2 585	2 894	36 413	3 026	2 050	2 352
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	9 214	895	563	637	7 711	758	431	526
	Services - Professional	59 721	6 008	4 732	5 296	53 796	5 385	4 319	4 837
	Services - Other	53 957	5 086	4 368	5 040	46 716	4 355	3 693	4 489
	Rent	24 403	2 210	1 751	1 698	19 245	1 707	1 431	1 401
	Money lent	133 396	10 171	7 532	8 808	127 428	9 704	7 128	8 392
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	39 428	2 792	2 677	3 301	34 512	2 338	2 324	2 880
	Other debts	62 463	5 873	5 354	5 704	56 788	5 433	4 919	5 273
	Total - Actual figures	426 664	36 891	29 562	33 378	382 609	32 706	26 295	30 150
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		35 017	30 018	31 485		30 984	26 739	28 320

1/ Preliminary.

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

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	May-12	1/ Apr-13	1/ May-13	2012	May-12	1/ Apr-13	1/ May-13
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	465 325	49 109	29 871	35 629	256 746	22 283	14 633	20 302
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	174 338	16 763	11 966	11 413	140 403	14 322	9 515	10 316
	Services - Professional	299 848	31 588	23 065	25 361	245 619	25 047	18 502	21 747
	Services - Other	508 675	47 141	71 877	54 925	398 310	34 196	64 494	45 804
	Rent	352 667	33 051	26 503	28 138	212 691	21 641	19 525	19 437
	Money lent	1 290 816	110 287	102 328	117 066	1 191 224	103 479	91 570	110 816
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	443 475	35 828	31 520	56 336	346 698	27 154	25 205	45 698
	Other debts	1 141 752	89 770	96 057	97 207	758 441	67 935	67 916	59 737
	Total - Actual figures	4 676 896	413 537	393 187	426 075	3 550 132	316 057	311 360	333 857
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		400 389	461 121	407 758		297 890	362 799	311 815

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 May 2012 and the three months ended May 2013

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Mar – May 2012	Actual estimates Mar – May 2013	% change between Mar – May 2012 and Mar – May 2013	Difference between Mar – May 2012 and Mar – May 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	257 384	203 972	-20,8	-53 412
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	108 173	89 611	-17,2	-18 562
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 089,6	1 213,3	11,4	123,7

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 May 2012 and the three months ended May 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	-0,5	-2,6	-2,4
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	0,4	-0,4	-0,6
Services - Professional	0,1	-1,5	-1,1
Services - Other	-8,2	-0,7	4,2
Rent	0,3	-1,2	-1,0
Money lent	-6,3	-11,4	0,2
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,6	0,5	0,8
Other debts	-4,9	0,2	11,2
Total	-20,8	-17,2	11,4

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 March to May 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 May 2012	Actual estimates May 2013	% change between May 2012 and May 2013	Difference between May 2012 and May 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	86 113	72 696	-15,6	-13 417
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	36 891	33 378	-9,5	-3 513
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	413,5	426,1	3,0	12,6

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 May 2013 was 89,4%. The improved collection rate for April 2013 was 92,1%.
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