

Statistics of civil cases for debt

November 2003

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Key figures for the month ended November 2003

| Actual estimates | November 2003 | % change between November 2002 and November 2003 | % change between September 2002 to November 2002 and September 2003 to November 2003 | % change between January 2002 to November 2002 and January 2003 to November 2003 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Number of civil summonses issued for debt | 124 337 | -18,9 | -11,1 | +1,1 |
| Number of civil judgements recorded for debt | 86 117 | -7,2 | -2,3 | +12,8 |
| Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million) | 728,0 | +33,6 | +26,7 | +2,7 |

| Seasonally adjusted estimates | November 2003 | % change between October 2003 and November 2003 | % change between June 2003 to August 2003 and September 2003 to November 2003 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Number of civil summonses issued for debt | 112 009 | -8,0 | -11,6 |
| Number of civil judgements recorded for debt | 80 530 | -8,0 | -8,6 |
| Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million) | 720,3 | -0,3 | +5,7 |

Key findings as at the end of November 2003

The number of civil summonses for debt decreases

The number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended November 2003, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 11,6% compared with the previous three months of the same year. Furthermore, the total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended November 2003 decreased by 11,1% compared with the three months ended November 2002. However, the number of civil summonses issued for debt for the first eleven months of 2003 increased by 1,1% compared with the first eleven months of 2002.

The major contributors to the decrease of 11,1% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended November 2003 compared with the three months ended November 2002 were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (-6,7 percentage points) and goods sold (-3,2 percentage points).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended November 2003, after seasonal adjustment, decreased by 8,6% compared with the previous three months of the same year. Furthermore, the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended November 2003 decreased by 2,3% compared with the three months ended November 2002. However, the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first eleven months of 2003 increased by 12,8% compared with the first eleven months of 2002.

The major contributor to the decrease of 2,3% in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended November 2003 compared with the three months ended November 2002 was civil judgements recorded in respect of money lent (-7,5 percentage points). However, this decrease was partially counteracted by an increase in judgements recorded relating to 'other' debts (+3,0 percentage points) and rent (+1,7 percentage points).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended November 2003, after seasonal adjustment, increased by 5,7% compared with the previous three months of the same year. Furthermore, the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended November 2003 increased by 26,7% compared with the three months ended November 2002. The value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the first eleven months of 2003 increased by 2,7% compared with the first eleven months of 2002.

The major contributors to the increase of 26,7% in the value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended November 2003 compared with the three months ended November 2002 were civil judgements recorded in respect of promissory notes (+8,3 percentage points); money lent (+6,8 percentage points), 'other' debts (+3,3 percentage points), goods sold (+2,7 percentage points) and 'other' services (+2,7 percentage points).

During November 2003, 86 117 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R728,0 million were recorded, the largest contributors to the R728,0 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R256,0 million or +35,2%) and 'other' debts (R163,6 million or +22,5%).

Figure 1 - Civil summonses issued for debt

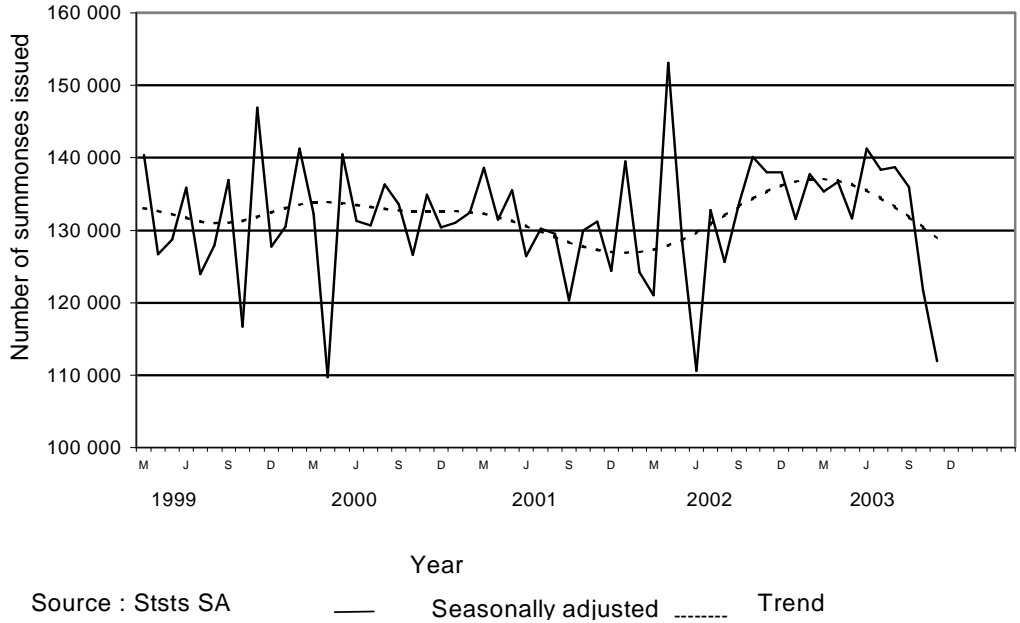
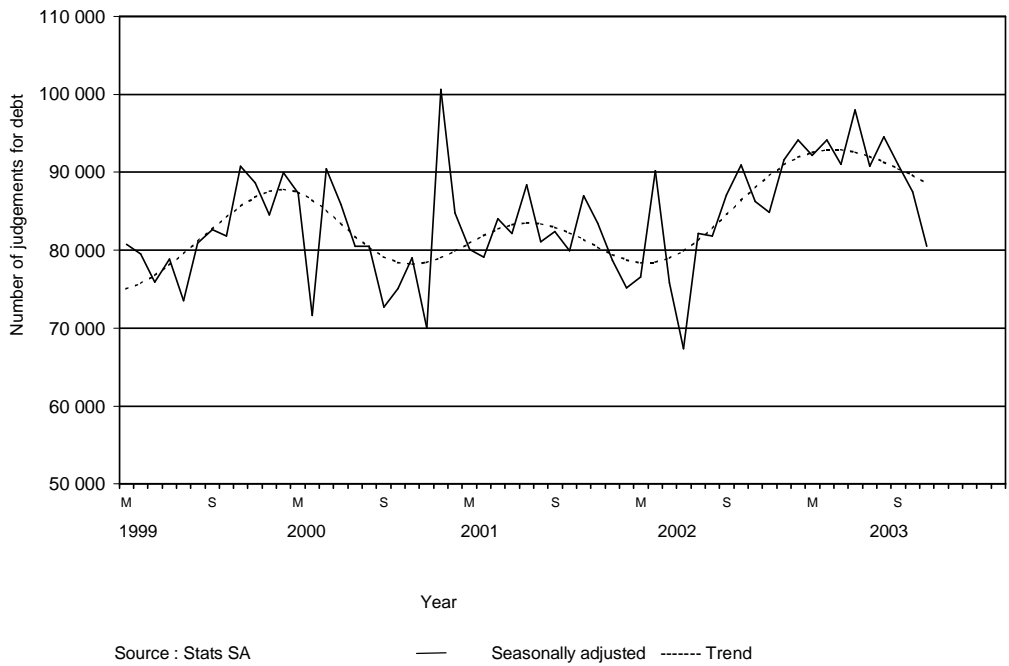


Figure 2 - Civil judgements recorded for debt



Statistician-General

Notes

| Forthcoming issues | Issue | Expected release date |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | December 2003 | 19 February 2004 |
| | January 2004 | 25 March 2004 |
| | February 2004 | 22 April 2004 |
| | March 2004 | 27 May 2004 |
| | April 2004 | 24 June 2004 |
| | May 2004 | 22 July 2004 |
| | June 2004 | 26 August 2004 |
| | July 2004 | 23 September 2004 |
| | August 2004 | 21 October 2004 |
| | September 2004 | 25 November 2004 |
| | October 2004 | 15 December 2004 |
| | November 2004 | 20 January 2005 |
| Purpose of the survey | <p>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.</p> | |
| Response rate | <p>The response rate for November 2003 is 73,4%.</p> | |

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Table 1 - Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

| Item | Business enterprises and private persons | | | | Private persons | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2002 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 | 2002 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| | | Nov. | Oct. | Nov. | | Nov. | Oct. | Nov. |
| 1. Cases recorded | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Actual figures | 1 768 056 | 170 956 | 150 746 | 141 552 | 1 621 463 | 157 487 | 140 327 | 132 453 |
| 1.2 Seasonally adjusted | | 149 147 | 144 448 | 123 955 | | 136 784 | 135 020 | 115 547 |
| 2. Civil summonses for debt | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Goods sold | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1.1 Open account | 223 915 | 22 251 | 16 796 | 15 697 | 199 118 | 19 679 | 15 347 | 14 214 |
| 2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions | 49 296 | 4 655 | 5 452 | 5 824 | 44 571 | 4 180 | 5 110 | 5 463 |
| 2.2 Services | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2.1 Professional | 160 952 | 15 130 | 14 541 | 13 413 | 153 189 | 14 572 | 13 903 | 12 872 |
| 2.2.2 Other | 279 149 | 22 703 | 21 610 | 23 164 | 261 533 | 21 370 | 20 272 | 21 792 |
| 2.3 Rent | 82 475 | 6 917 | 7 463 | 7 309 | 67 581 | 5 806 | 6 262 | 6 116 |
| 2.4 Money lent | 424 569 | 45 697 | 28 490 | 28 909 | 408 513 | 44 142 | 27 796 | 28 137 |
| 2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | 120 049 | 10 418 | 10 318 | 9 844 | 108 623 | 9 683 | 9 622 | 9 177 |
| 2.6 Other | 238 485 | 25 574 | 20 657 | 20 177 | 208 719 | 23 051 | 19 379 | 18 995 |
| 2.7 Total | | | | | | | | |
| 2.7.1 Actual figures | 1 578 890 | 153 345 | 125 327 | 124 337 | 1 451 846 | 142 483 | 117 690 | 116 766 |
| 2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted | | 138 017 | 121 736 | 112 009 | | 127 628 | 114 991 | 104 898 |

Table 2 - Number of civil cases recorded in selected magistrates' offices

| Year or month | Cape Peninsula | Port Elizabeth | East-London | Kimberley | Pietermaritzburg | Durban | Johannesburg | East Rand | West Rand | Pretoria | Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark | Bloemfontein |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|------------------|---------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 2001 | 200 575 | 126 257 | 30 998 | 19 520 | 42 098 | 109 605 | 116 694 | 85 965 | 43 278 | 186 626 | 38 956 | 48 186 |
| 2002 | 200 806 | 98 361 | 32 159 | 20 667 | 39 642 | 135 995 | 150 355 | 74 363 | 42 837 | 162 978 | 29 548 | 42 588 |
| 2002 - J | 12 399 | 9 395 | 1 684 | 1 657 | 2 947 | 6 618 | 10 413 | 5 931 | 3 111 | 13 571 | 1 503 | 2 627 |
| F | 12 156 | 10 065 | 1 899 | 769 | 3 301 | 13 463 | 10 413 | 6 028 | 3 003 | 12 691 | 1 858 | 2 939 |
| M | 15 356 | 9 855 | 2 118 | 3 325 | 3 393 | 9 628 | 11 519 | 5 847 | 3 371 | 12 756 | 1 751 | 3 640 |
| A | 20 988 | 9 796 | 3 344 | 3 325 | 3 624 | 13 563 | 16 691 | 5 208 | 3 013 | 14 853 | 3 492 | 3 726 |
| M | 20 483 | 9 796 | 2 664 | 943 | 4 174 | 12 811 | 14 247 | 5 682 | 3 144 | 13 848 | 3 142 | 3 751 |
| J | 14 132 | 6 109 | 2 386 | 943 | 3 340 | 10 140 | 10 951 | 6 295 | 3 116 | 12 321 | 2 187 | 3 947 |
| J | 17 194 | 8 335 | 2 747 | 990 | 4 818 | 9 948 | 13 946 | 6 850 | 4 010 | 12 357 | 4 442 | 4 297 |
| A | 14 614 | 7 400 | 2 926 | 990 | 2 900 | 10 487 | 11 742 | 6 044 | 3 351 | 14 219 | 2 552 | 4 266 |
| S | 17 873 | 6 999 | 3 184 | 990 | 2 724 | 10 283 | 13 822 | 5 584 | 3 480 | 11 698 | 1 984 | 4 417 |
| O | 19 587 | 10 551 | 3 184 | 990 | 3 579 | 13 578 | 13 822 | 6 869 | 4 539 | 18 602 | 2 241 | 2 810 |
| N | 22 178 | 5 970 | 3 466 | 990 | 2 501 | 16 979 | 13 822 | 7 732 | 4 881 | 15 955 | 2 880 | 3 005 |
| D | 13 846 | 4 090 | 2 557 | 4 755 | 2 341 | 8 497 | 8 967 | 6 293 | 3 818 | 10 107 | 1 516 | 3 163 |
| 2003 - J | 14 177 | 7 468 | 2 485 | 4 755 | 2 845 | 8 389 | 8 967 | 4 122 | 4 833 | 14 363 | 1 908 | 4 578 |
| F | 16 617 | 9 707 | 3 828 | 2 028 | 2 708 | 11 544 | 12 822 | 6 445 | 5 998 | 16 259 | 2 819 | 6 164 |
| M | 16 204 | 10 104 | 3 091 | 2 017 | 2 941 | 11 797 | 14 690 | 8 256 | 5 724 | 12 175 | 3 475 | 6 164 |
| A | 15 395 | 6 154 | 2 564 | 2 017 | 3 284 | 11 414 | 11 964 | 7 229 | 3 321 | 13 075 | 2 544 | 6 687 |
| M | 15 663 | 7 849 | 2 999 | 2 017 | 3 532 | 13 239 | 14 584 | 7 746 | 4 515 | 15 954 | 2 499 | 6 717 |
| J | 14 038 | 6 813 | 3 472 | 2 017 | 2 276 | 12 049 | 19 623 | 7 395 | 4 213 | 12 343 | 2 113 | 8 446 |
| J | 16 709 | 7 379 | 3 584 | 2 017 | 2 426 | 11 438 | 18 292 | 8 742 | 4 731 | 13 751 | 3 394 | 9 502 |
| A | 15 263 | 6 345 | 2 921 | 2 017 | 2 539 | 11 528 | 17 204 | 6 545 | 4 861 | 11 187 | 4 042 | 9 418 |
| S | 15 460 | 6 477 | 2 918 | 2 017 | 1 841 | 10 367 | 16 802 | 5 611 | 4 448 | 11 275 | 1 854 | 3 035 |
| O | 15 451 | 5 764 | 2 918 | 2 017 | 2 401 | 11 321 | 16 231 | 6 024 | 4 288 | 9 855 | 3 293 | 5 282 |
| N | 15 741 | 6 869 | 2 918 | 2 017 | 1 518 | 7 403 | 16 231 | 5 886 | 4 003 | 7 602 | 3 021 | 3 285 |

Table 3 - Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

| Item | Business enterprises and private persons | | | | Private persons | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | 2002 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 | 2002 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| | | Nov. | Oct. | Nov. | | Nov. | Oct. | Nov. |
| 1. Judgements | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Goods sold | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.1 Open account | 126 610 | 12 248 | 11 601 | 11 299 | 117 230 | 11 452 | 10 319 | 10 395 |
| 1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions | 19 195 | 1 758 | 3 161 | 3 515 | 17 499 | 1 630 | 2 915 | 3 256 |
| 1.2 Services | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.1 Professional | 87 469 | 7 535 | 7 829 | 6 872 | 84 702 | 7 304 | 7 372 | 6 455 |
| 1.2.2 Other | 141 994 | 10 666 | 13 993 | 13 722 | 134 442 | 9 973 | 13 229 | 12 913 |
| 1.3 Rent | 40 913 | 3 221 | 5 797 | 4 516 | 33 338 | 2 504 | 4 869 | 3 657 |
| 1.4 Money lent | 353 517 | 35 892 | 28 335 | 26 606 | 342 083 | 35 379 | 28 032 | 26 291 |
| 1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | 89 663 | 10 395 | 9 849 | 9 255 | 84 314 | 10 167 | 9 423 | 8 780 |
| 1.6 Other | 115 450 | 11 095 | 10 962 | 10 332 | 107 655 | 10 409 | 10 105 | 8 995 |
| 1.7 Total | | | | | | | | |
| 1.7.1 Actual figures | 974 811 | 92 810 | 91 527 | 86 117 | 921 266 | 88 817 | 86 264 | 80 742 |
| 1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted | | 86 242 | 87 486 | 80 529 | | 82 614 | 82 806 | 75 589 |

Table 4 - Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

| Item | Business enterprises and private persons | | | | Private persons | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2002 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 | 2002 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| | | Nov. | Oct. | Nov. | | Nov. | Oct. | Nov. |
| | R' 000 | | | | | | | |
| 1. Judgements | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Goods sold | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.1 Open account | 700 324 | 59 925 | 67 909 | 63 725 | 565 746 | 48 535 | 59 230 | 51 318 |
| 1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions | 372 719 | 20 893 | 29 227 | 28 232 | 319 888 | 17 180 | 23 953 | 23 475 |
| 1.2 Services | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.1 Professional | 198 577 | 14 929 | 30 649 | 29 347 | 178 994 | 13 329 | 21 417 | 20 186 |
| 1.2.2 Other | 704 882 | 47 216 | 71 367 | 70 687 | 634 912 | 41 981 | 64 135 | 65 549 |
| 1.3 Rent | 285 956 | 19 778 | 28 754 | 25 704 | 200 310 | 13 584 | 21 444 | 19 319 |
| 1.4 Money lent | 2 913 813 | 217 265 | 275 627 | 256 023 | 2 715 548 | 199 625 | 256 358 | 239 150 |
| 1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | 629 694 | 44 322 | 122 130 | 90 709 | 515 737 | 39 022 | 105 737 | 74 329 |
| 1.6 Other | 1 663 909 | 120 776 | 158 377 | 163 587 | 1 170 812 | 97 948 | 111 069 | 128 341 |
| 1.7 Total | | | | | | | | |
| 1.7.1 Actual figures | 7 469 873 | 545 104 | 784 040 | 728 014 | 6 301 946 | 471 205 | 663 342 | 621 668 |
| 1.7.1 Seasonally adjusted | | 542 184 | 722 272 | 720 284 | | 475 621 | 625 318 | 625 780 |

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, ejection orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
- Scope of the survey**
- 3 This survey covers -
 - 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**
- 4 The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.
 - 5 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 recorded and civil summonses for debt issued. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 152 magistrates offices is drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as the measure of size.
- Survey methodology and design**
- 6 The survey is conducted by mail each month for approximately 152 magistrates' offices.
- Seasonal adjustment**
- 7 Seasonal (variation) is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove irregular or non-seasonal influences which may be present in any particular month. Influences that are volatile or unsystematic can still make it difficult to interpret the movement of the series even after adjustment for seasonal variations. This means the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour.
- Trend cycle**
- 8 Smoothed seasonally adjusted estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
- Publications**
- 9 Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:
 - *Bulletin of Statistics* issued quarterly.
 - *SA Statistics* 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 in one or more of the following ways: computer printout, CD or diskette. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.

Symbols and abbreviations

11 R/D Refer to Drawer
CD Compact Disc
Stats SA Statistics South Africa
TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei.

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 a debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. a 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 transactions 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 sales, 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 refers to medical doctors/dentists, advocates/attorneys, auditors/accountants, architects, engineers and hospital services. |
| Promissory note | Promissory notes are written notes, signed by one person, in which he promises 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. |

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