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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of October 2007

Actual estimates	October 2007	% change between October 2006 and October 2007	% change between August 2006 to October 2006 and August 2007 to October 2007
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	107 120	-18,4	-18,7
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	69 925	-12,3	-11,6
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	675,5	13,5	-0,4

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (OCTOBER 2007)

Key findings as at the end of October 2007

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended October 2007 decreased by 18,7% compared with the three months ended October 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 18,7% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended October 2007 compared with the three months ended October 2006 were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (-13,0 percentage points), 'other' debts (-5,0 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (-2,9 percentage points) and 'other services' (-2,3 percentage points). There was, however, an increase of 6,2 percentage points with regard to civil summonses issued for promissory notes and other (this category includes credit cards) (see Table 6 column 2, page 9).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2007 decreased by 11,6% compared with the three months ended October 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 11,6% in civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2007 compared with the three months ended October 2006 were civil judgements in respect of money lent (-5,2 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (-3,5 percentage points) and 'other' debts (-2,9 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 3, page 9).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2007 decreased by 0,4% compared with the three months ended October 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 0,4% in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended October 2007 compared with the three months ended October 2006 were civil judgements recorded in respect of money lent (-2,4 percentage points), professional services (-1,7 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (-1,1 percentage points) and 'other' debts (-1,0 percentage point). There was, however, an increase of 4,0 percentage points in the value of promissory notes and other (see Table 6 column 4, page 9).

During October 2007, 69 925 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R675,5 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R675,5 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R204,6 million or 30,3%) and 'other' debts (R200,3 million or 29,7%) (see Table 4, page 8).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from 2002 to October 2007 respectively. In figure 1 from January 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an upward increase until April 2003. The trend decreased from May 2003 to June 2005 but increased again to July 2006. Thereafter the trend decreased again until present.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

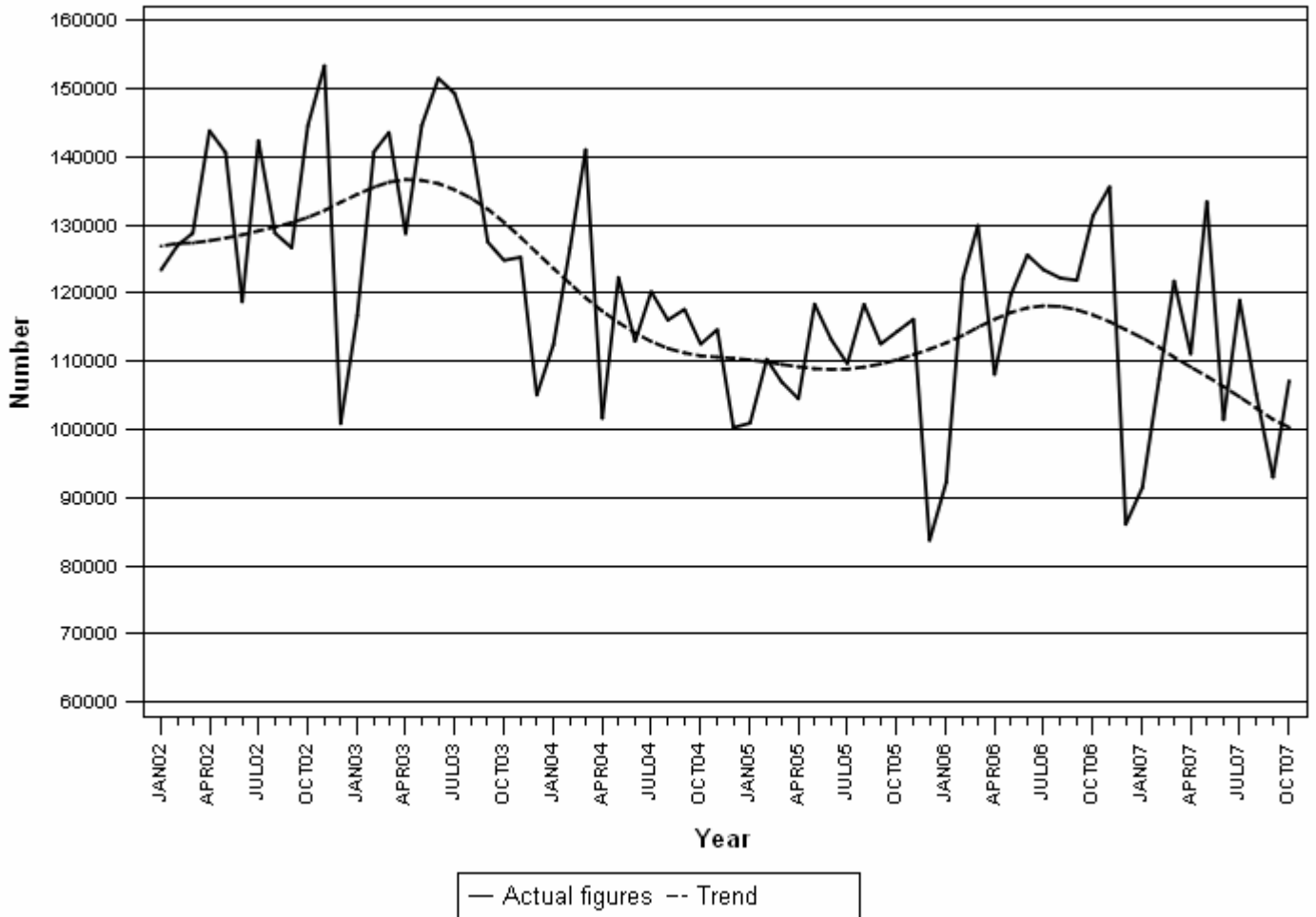
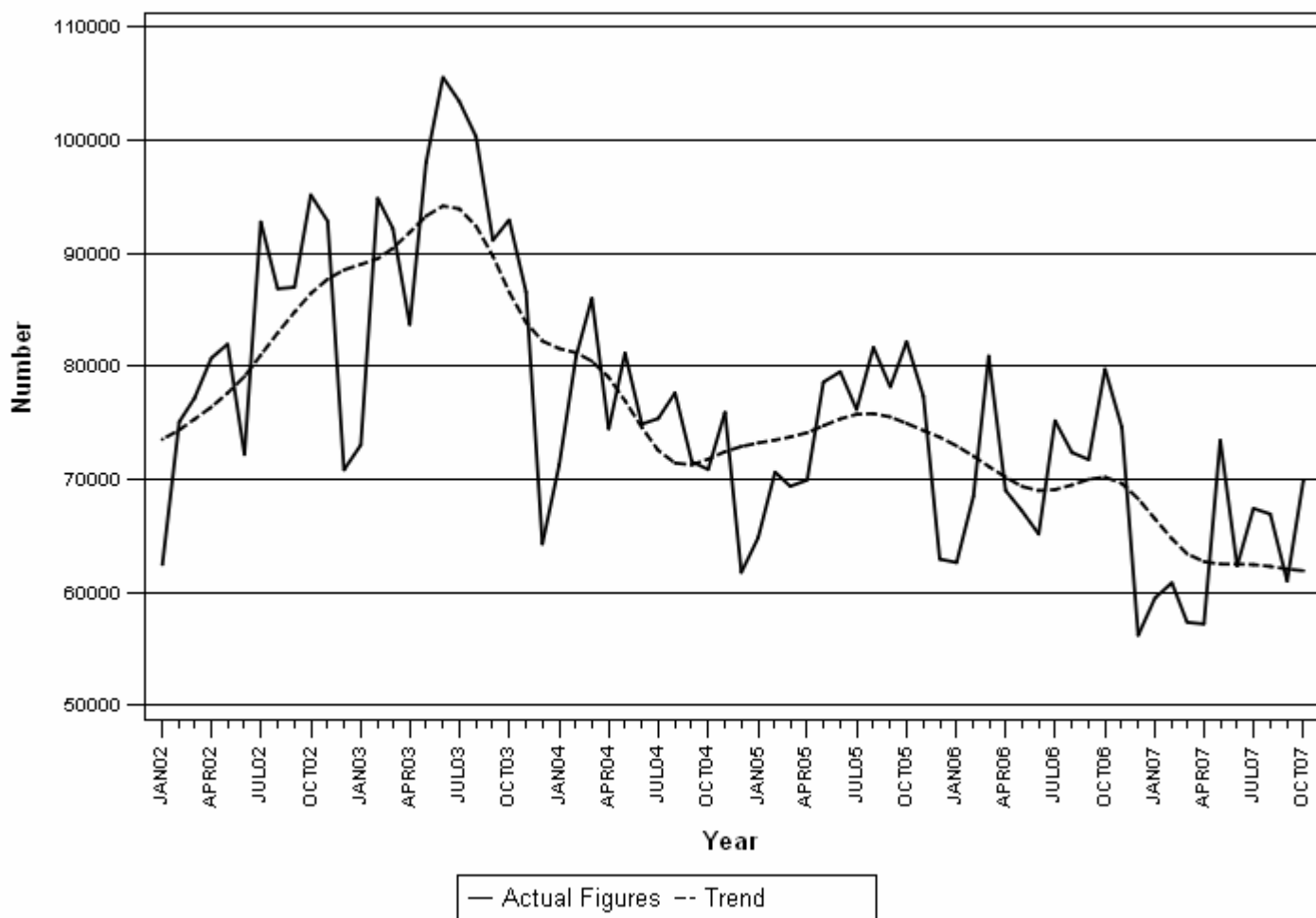


Figure 2 shows that the trend in civil judgements for debt generally declined from mid-2003 and this long-term decreasing trend has continued well into 2007.

Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		October	*September	1/ October		October	*September	1/ October
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 603 709	146 979	111 316	129 953	1 442 388	133 326	101 560	118 256
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		137 969	110 001	121 316		124 477	100 536	109 736
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 476	12 387	8 785	8 674	137 314	10 267	7 376	7 266
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 514	2 995	2 191	2 672	28 794	2 563	1 861	2 133
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	138 310	10 994	10 169	10 790	117 768	9 422	9 127	9 305
2.2.2 Other	200 992	19 303	12 960	15 723	178 084	16 889	11 538	14 054
2.3 Rent	50 894	4 729	3 721	4 585	39 914	3 927	3 300	4 003
2.4 Money lent	407 106	45 216	22 400	23 910	387 509	43 473	21 524	23 026
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	148 099	12 515	16 506	22 742	133 964	11 609	15 818	21 937
2.6 Other debts	277 740	23 172	16 251	18 024	242 332	19 991	14 422	16 018
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 418 131	131 311	92 983	107 120	1 265 679	118 141	84 966	97 742
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		124 217	92 014	100 458		111 000	84 523	91 068

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to 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
2005	Year Total	165 535	69 776	38 487	9 248	20 091	77 468	156 641	58 486	58 984	138 300	27 437	59 361
2006	Year Total	147 564	69 334	50 557	5 922	18 095	69 501	181 787	64 780	59 891	142 102	39 909	60 344
	January	10 205	5 091	4 446	209	1 171	5 751	6 505	4 097	4 441	10 867	2 437	5 120
	February	11 387	7 860	5 785	756	1 751	5 751	13 143	4 652	7 231	12 266	2 492	5 117
	March	14 010	8 082	6 013	732	1 742	6 285	14 398	5 761	6 259	14 272	2 994	4 789
	April	11 657	5 239	4 285	311	1 290	6 364	12 046	5 658	4 454	8 127	3 028	5 191
	May	13 981	5 393	2 620	741	1 893	4 925	15 758	5 585	5 489	11 299	3 200	5 253
	June	13 359	6 628	5 688	555	1 254	4 999	16 849	5 418	4 411	10 018	5 307	5 244
	July	12 981	5 770	5 218	442	1 348	5 867	16 060	6 478	5 190	10 318	3 847	5 449
	August	11 196	3 824	4 814	480	1 348	5 796	15 146	6 702	5 147	8 550	2 712	5 513
	September	12 137	5 315	2 350	507	1 140	5 291	18 632	5 593	5 057	13 258	1 869	5 368
	October	13 397	6 537	2 616	532	1 577	5 291	19 761	6 699	5 199	14 758	5 172	5 174
	November	13 082	6 315	4 499	271	1 837	6 571	21 268	4 784	4 347	19 625	4 144	4 145
December	10 172	3 280	2 223	386	1 744	6 610	12 221	3 353	2 666	8 744	2 707	3 981	
2007	January	7 940	6 102	1 275	729	1 282	5 789	22 003	3 455	2 138	14 856	1 635	4 238
	February	9 788	5 904	2 832	581	1 452	6 018	18 368	4 228	5 791	11 214	954	3 922
	March	12 802	7 935	3 553	1 123	1 613	8 978	15 648	4 318	5 925	13 803	2 186	4 010
	April	9 349	5 013	3 167	1 123	1 748	8 518	15 648	5 118	4 826	12 558	4 822	3 652
	May	10 792	6 650	5 105	1 332	2 346	5 245	25 094	5 655	2 760	16 251	2 714	4 242
	June	10 167	4 387	5 688	503	638	7 164	8 213	3 077	3 142	10 948	4 326	4 105
	July	13 170	4 784	1 799	983	2 173	7 164	20 470	5 734	2 865	14 144	3 004	4 110
	August	8 805	5 275	709	764	1 178	4 977	18 632	4 549	3 950	13 494	1 895	4 189
	*September	8 734	4 614	420	470	1 442	10 240	16 515	3 770	2 855	11 363	1 217	4 070
	1/October	9 056	6 584	218	469	1 558	10 240	23 806	4 444	2 559	13 617	1 515	3 261

1/ Preliminary

* Revised

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		October	*September	1/ October		October	*September	1/ October
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	120 554	14 600	9 316	9 257	109 368	13 857	8 568	8 400
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 254	968	616	754	10 582	789	546	667
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	78 747	6 660	5 801	6 365	69 974	5 909	5 326	5 773
1.2.2 Other	96 191	8 024	7 799	7 887	89 567	7 530	7 331	7 408
1.3 Rent	25 941	2 130	2 211	2 383	20 595	1 720	1 648	1 788
1.4 Money lent	297 379	30 132	21 156	26 247	289 631	29 762	20 849	26 013
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	75 440	6 178	6 079	7 795	68 753	5 770	5 773	7 486
1.6 Other debts	136 605	11 050	8 002	9 237	122 291	9 925	7 499	8 688
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	843 111	79 742	60 980	69 925	780 761	75 262	57 540	66 223
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		71 418	59 982	62 315		66 880	56 612	58 493

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

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			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		October	*September	1/ October		October	*September	1/ October
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	673 174	65 676	49 509	58 047	523 117	55 044	39 561	43 429
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	256 585	22 100	20 580	15 457	197 360	17 110	17 231	13 122
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	266 969	34 733	18 995	20 062	223 269	31 010	15 703	15 398
1.2.2 Other	579 439	42 748	56 053	51 507	464 798	34 294	38 317	41 925
1.3 Rent	222 568	21 544	20 333	24 074	153 995	14 833	14 666	17 697
1.4 Money lent	2 086 739	196 681	139 552	204 626	1 960 167	175 693	126 517	192 786
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	713 512	53 924	76 645	101 426	630 837	46 449	71 805	96 276
1.6 Other debts	1 784 255	158 033	96 519	200 319	1 271 309	128 608	83 428	168 723
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 583 241	595 439	478 186	675 518	5 424 852	503 041	407 228	589 356
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		504 165	451 171	569 720		436 359	374 097	508 699

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

	Actual estimates August 2006 to October 2006	Actual estimates August 2007 to October 2007	% change between August 2006 to October 2006 and August 2007 to October 2007	Difference between August 2006 to October 2006 and August 2007 to October 2007
Number of summonses for debt	375 386	305 247	-18,7	-70 139
Number of judgements for debt	223 831	197 818	-11,6	-26 013
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 683,6	1 676,9	-0,4	-6,7

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number and value of debts recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of summonses for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of civil judgements for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total value of civil judgements for debt
Goods sold			
--Open Account	-2,9	-3,5	-1,1
--Instalment sale transactions	-0,4	-0,2	-0,3
Professional Services	-1,0	-0,3	-1,7
Other Services	-2,3	-0,2	1,5
Rent	-0,3	0,4	0,7
Money lent	-13,0	-5,2	-2,4
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	6,2	0,4	4,0
Other debts	-5,0	-2,9	-1,0
Total	-18,7	-11,6	-0,4

The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the quarterly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during August 2006 to October 2006, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year.

	Actual estimates October 2006	Actual estimates October 2007	% change between October 2006 and October 2007	Difference between October 2006 and October 2007
Number of summonses for debt	131 311	107 120	-18,4	-24 191
Number of judgements for debt	79 742	69 925	-12,3	-9 817
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	595,4	675,5	13,5	80,1

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- <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	4	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate' 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 151 magistrates' offices is drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail each month from approximately 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The response rate for the civil cases for debt for October 2007 was 85,4%.
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 issued quarterly.</i> • <i>SA Statistics issued annually.</i>
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, on diskette or CD. 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 * Revised figures

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor 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 sales, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect to 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 and hospital services.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written note, 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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