

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600/4892/8390

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Key results for October 2011

Table A – Key figures for the month of October 2011

Actual estimates	October 2011	% change between October 2010 and October 2011	% change between August to October 2010 and August to October 2011
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	84 223	-15,4	-18,9
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	42 526	-22,0	-23,8
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	419,9	-24,9	-24,0

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

An 18,9% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt was recorded for the three months ended October 2011 compared with the three months ended October 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 15,4% was recorded in October 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 18,9% decrease were:

- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -9,2 percentage points);
- the 'other debts' category (contributing -5,4 percentage points); and
- the money lent category (contributing -5,0 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The three months ended October 2011 reflected a 23,8% decrease in the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt compared with the three months ended October 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 22,0% was recorded in October 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The main drivers behind the 23,8% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- the money lent category (contributing -11,4 percentage points);
- the services category (contributing -4,5 percentage points); and
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -4,1 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 24,0% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended October 2011 compared with the three months ended October 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 24,9% was recorded in October 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 24,0% decrease were the money lent category (contributing -13,9 percentage points) and the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -4,8 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During October 2011, 42 526 civil judgements for debt amounting to R419,9 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R419,9 million were:

- money lent (R103,0 million or 24,5%);
- 'other debts' (R77,2 million or 18,4%);
- services (R75,1 million or 17,9%); and
- goods sold (R72,4 million or 17,3%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

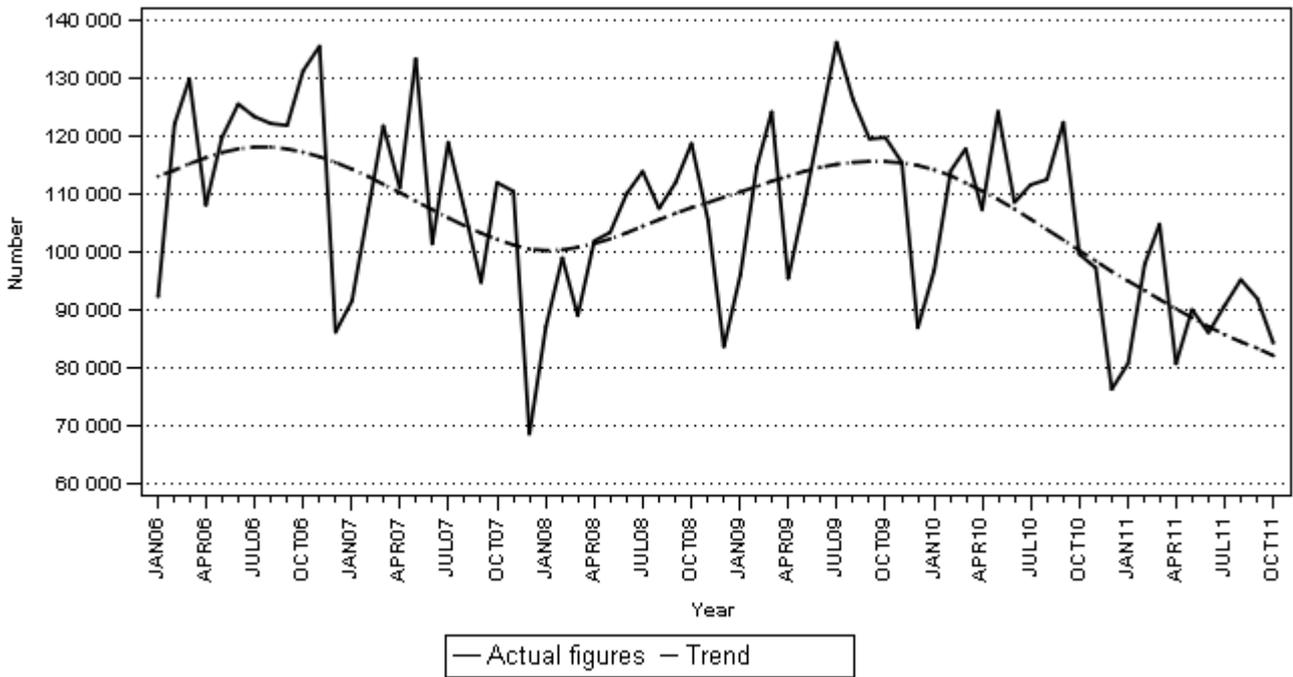
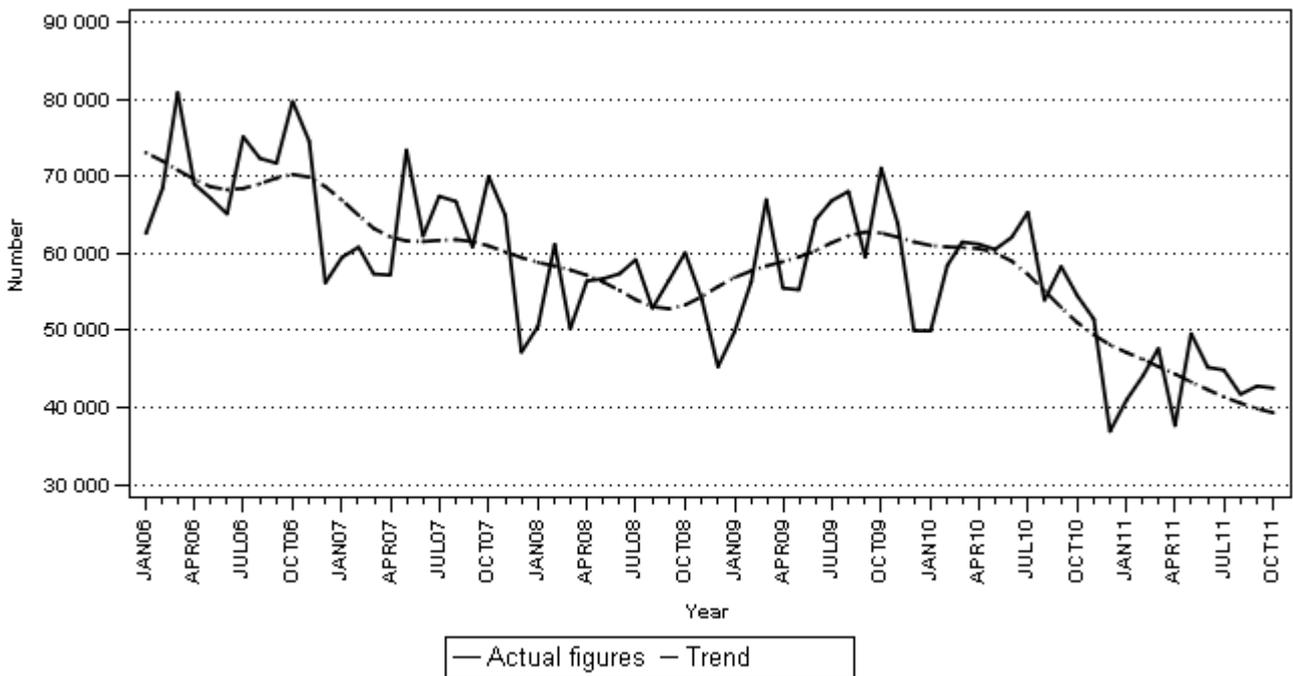


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

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

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2010	October 2010	1/ September 2011	1/ October 2011	2010	October 2010	1/ September 2011	1/ October 2011
Cases recorded	Actual figures	1 469 322	111 097	107 357	94 593	1 299 024	97 151	87 996	81 959
	Seasonally adjusted		109 017	101 977	93 903		95 558	87 080	81 717
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	108 884	7 475	8 675	7 829	87 313	6 124	6 757	6 509
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	31 736	2 218	2 669	1 697	27 418	1 907	2 144	1 491
	Services - Professional	147 619	12 216	11 538	9 562	128 120	10 403	10 079	8 014
	Services - Other	165 477	13 679	17 244	18 358	140 491	11 668	15 236	16 390
	Rent	52 683	5 237	4 860	3 238	43 261	4 447	3 886	2 689
	Money lent	314 868	21 074	20 085	20 978	298 470	19 612	18 188	17 536
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	230 272	19 901	11 453	10 521	214 984	18 963	7 743	9 181
	Other debts	236 788	17 782	15 381	12 040	190 156	14 189	12 077	10 695
	Total - Actual figures	1 288 327	99 582	91 905	84 223	1 130 213	87 313	76 110	72 505
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		95 896	86 483	81 792		84 116	72 693	70 535

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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, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton	Bloemfontein
2009	Year Total	134 632	43 416	18 080	8 026	21 618	91 171	260 137	54 501	38 110	152 361	24 302	40 531
2010	Year Total	118 066	37 136	15 823	5 246	22 836	90 782	256 134	54 366	33 988	138 594	17 342	64 259
	January	8 015	2 649	1 179	469	1 851	7 973	22 543	3 233	2 629	8 470	1 539	4 856
	February	10 123	4 177	1 516	647	2 069	7 669	19 618	7 236	2 819	11 258	3 699	3 991
	March	11 883	3 920	1 648	686	2 312	6 898	24 373	5 272	2 753	11 882	1 540	5 900
	April	11 127	3 180	1 802	413	1 944	7 668	19 616	4 276	2 849	10 033	1 066	6 000
	May	13 037	3 004	2 074	618	2 179	8 162	20 002	4 536	3 295	20 265	1 001	6 500
	June	13 991	3 375	1 325	360	2 148	8 055	17 263	4 381	2 841	12 186	881	6 000
	July	10 630	2 756	1 779	467	1 911	8 085	22 212	5 041	2 659	10 005	1 658	5 435
	August	10 970	2 904	1 205	353	759	7 540	22 301	4 559	3 114	10 765	1 574	6 200
	September	9 700	3 093	345	316	2 883	7 289	27 645	4 516	3 276	13 402	924	6 800
	October	6 673	2 689	939	465	2 019	7 278	16 794	4 676	3 102	12 802	1 759	5 925
	November	6 983	3 340	1 081	351	1 594	7 022	19 021	3 961	2 618	11 105	1 159	4 012
December	4 934	2 049	930	101	1 167	7 143	24 746	2 679	2 033	6 421	542	2 640	
1/ 2011	January	4 253	2 019	876	293	1 493	6 512	22 549	3 222	2 516	8 018	934	3 585
	February	5 379	3 184	1 197	344	1 805	6 343	28 740	4 472	3 473	9 927	1 563	2 946
	March	6 907	4 548	1 301	419	826	6 034	24 728	4 818	2 831	8 569	1 405	4 354
	April	5 317	3 823	1 423	290	1 581	6 031	19 903	3 398	2 711	7 212	1 016	4 428
	May	5 999	6 607	1 430	351	1 469	6 728	20 295	3 556	2 599	9 172	1 098	4 520
	June	7 480	5 207	975	374	1 325	5 738	17 516	3 829	2 459	8 132	1 368	3 855
	July	7 879	4 502	1 309	549	2 056	6 124	17 611	3 913	3 476	7 393	1 765	3 492
	August	7 482	6 460	1 137	680	1 268	4 909	15 940	4 581	3 251	6 977	1 448	3 982
	September	7 689	5 978	610	578	1 740	4 341	19 759	4 414	3 125	7 876	1 070	3 364
	October	6 112	5 131	588	244	1 141	3 976	12 013	5 438	3 187	8 655	924	2 893

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

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2010	October 2010	1/ September 2011	1/ October 2011	2010	October 2010	1/ September 2011	1/ October 2011
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	67 065	6 528	5 266	5 310	57 366	5 766	4 568	4 708
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	12 394	1 015	1 068	953	10 259	888	894	823
	Services - Professional	86 597	6 480	6 334	5 811	77 977	5 939	5 958	5 467
	Services - Other	77 202	6 186	5 102	5 232	68 837	5 562	4 409	4 547
	Rent	29 007	2 574	2 546	2 060	23 848	2 245	2 052	1 656
	Money lent	244 032	18 781	12 947	13 054	236 581	18 280	12 537	12 566
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	72 356	6 019	3 267	3 608	65 192	5 400	2 920	3 152
	Other debts	85 559	6 946	6 249	6 498	76 954	6 293	5 608	5 910
	Total - Actual figures	674 212	54 529	42 779	42 526	617 014	50 373	38 946	38 829
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		49 513	40 142	38 852		45 445	37 504	35 251

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Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2010	October 2010	1/ September 2011	1/ October 2011	2010	October 2010	1/ September 2011	1/ October 2011
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	613 287	56 669	45 486	45 569	394 335	38 396	31 480	30 374
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	354 943	22 456	24 151	26 863	274 906	17 582	19 061	20 721
	Services - Professional	351 311	21 734	28 736	25 758	281 299	16 685	25 620	22 655
	Services - Other	716 644	64 080	47 151	49 390	572 184	48 322	36 559	35 797
	Rent	448 323	43 457	38 082	31 528	298 711	29 730	23 661	19 700
	Money lent	2 202 708	181 581	102 775	102 998	2 059 059	162 487	95 617	96 551
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	792 214	92 829	46 586	60 603	646 469	82 046	40 181	51 039
	Other debts	1 098 153	76 549	76 597	77 160	843 748	61 647	59 510	60 618
	Total - Actual figures	6 577 583	559 355	409 564	419 869	5 370 711	456 895	331 689	337 455
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		497 341	401 790	373 712		404 437	332 600	298 982

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Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended October 2011 and the three months ended October 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates August to October 2010	Actual estimates August to October 2011	% change between August to October 2010 and August to October 2011	Difference between August to October 2010 and August to October 2011
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	334 490	271 293	-18,9	-63 197
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	166 769	127 026	-23,8	-39 743
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 663,4	1 264,8	-24,0	-398,6

Table 6 – 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 three months ended October 2011 and the three months ended October 2010 1/

Item	Contribution (% points) to the total % change		
	Number of civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-0,3	-2,1	-1,9
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,1	0,0	0,3
Services - Professional	-1,9	-1,8	0,5
Services - Other	3,5	-2,7	-2,5
Rent	-0,5	-0,3	-0,4
Money lent	-5,0	-11,4	-13,9
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-9,2	-4,1	-4,8
Other debts	-5,4	-1,5	-1,3
Total	-18,9	-23,8	-24,0

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 number or value of cases recorded during August to October 2010, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

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 October 2010	Actual estimates October 2011	% change between October 2010 and October 2011	Difference between October 2010 and October 2011
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	99 582	84 223	-15,4	-15 359
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	54 529	42 526	-22,0	-12 003
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	559,4	419,9	-24,9	-139,5

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.
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.
Response rate	7	The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for October 2011 was 87,4%. Improved response rate for September 2011 was 87,4%.
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. • <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.

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Fax number: (012) 310 8664 (technical enquiries)

email: nthabisengt@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