



The South Africa I know, the home I understand

Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

October 2013

**Embargoed until:
10 December 2013
10:00**

Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600

Forthcoming issue

November 2013

Expected release date

16 January 2014

Contents

Key results for October 2013.....2

Detailed results: Tables.....4

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.....4

Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons5

Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)5

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended October 2012 and the three months ended October 2013.....6

Table 5 – 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 2012 and the three months ended October 2013.....6

Table 6 – 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....6

Explanatory notes.....7

Glossary8

General information.....9

Key results for October 2013

Table A – Key figures for the month of October 2013

Actual estimates	October 2013	% change between October 2012 and October 2013	% change between Aug – Oct 2012 and Aug – Oct 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	77 135	7,6	3,6
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	35 381	-4,7	-11,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	450,5	-1,5	-3,2

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt increased by 3,6% in the three months ended October 2013 compared with the three months ended October 2012. A 7,6% increase was recorded between October 2012 and October 2013 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main categories that contributed to the 3,6% increase were:

- services (contributing 2,8 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing 1,3 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing 0,9 of a percentage point) – see Table 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 11,2% in the three months ended October 2013 compared with the three months ended October 2012. A decrease of 4,7% was recorded year-on-year in October 2013 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 11,2% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -7,1 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -3,7 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -1,4 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 3,2% lower in the three months ended October 2013 compared with the three months ended October 2012. A year-on-year decrease of 1,5% was recorded in October 2013 – see Table A and Tables 4 and 6.

The main categories that contributed to the 3,2% decrease were goods sold (contributing -2,7 percentage points) and money lent (contributing -1,7 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In October 2013, 35 381 civil judgements for debt amounting to R450,5 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- 'other' debts (R129,4 million or 28,7%);
- money lent (R124,2 million or 27,6%); and
- services (R79,6 million or 17,7%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

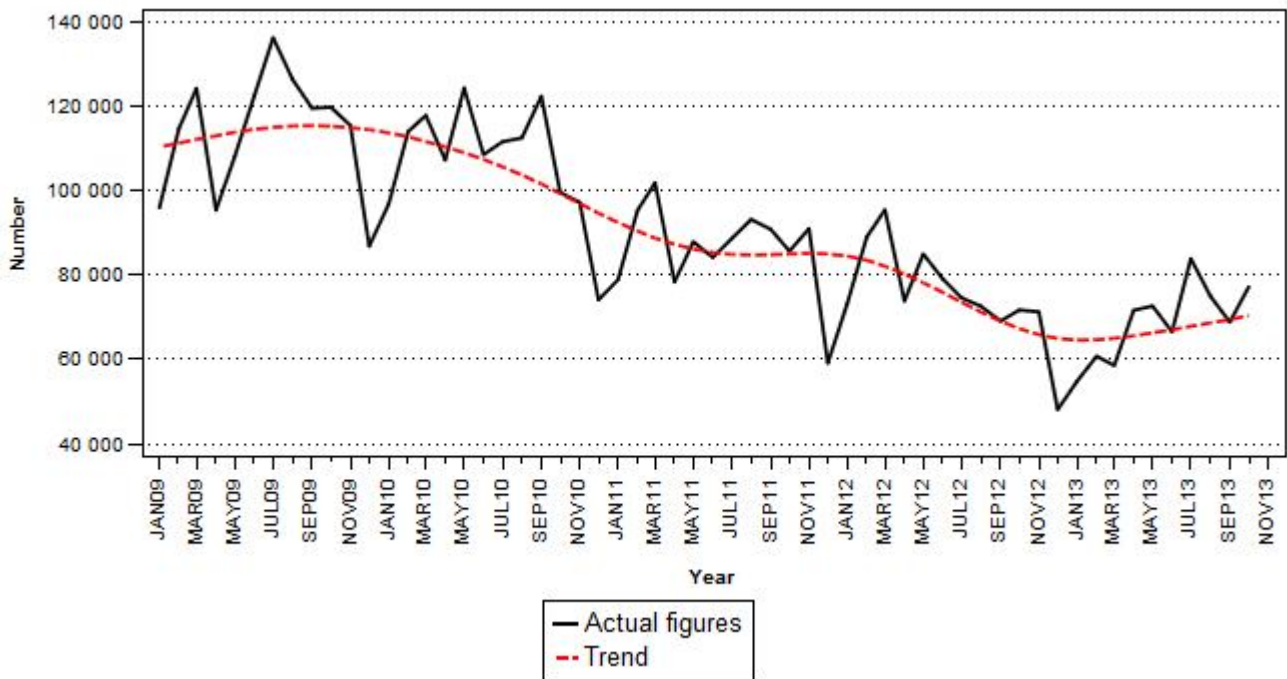
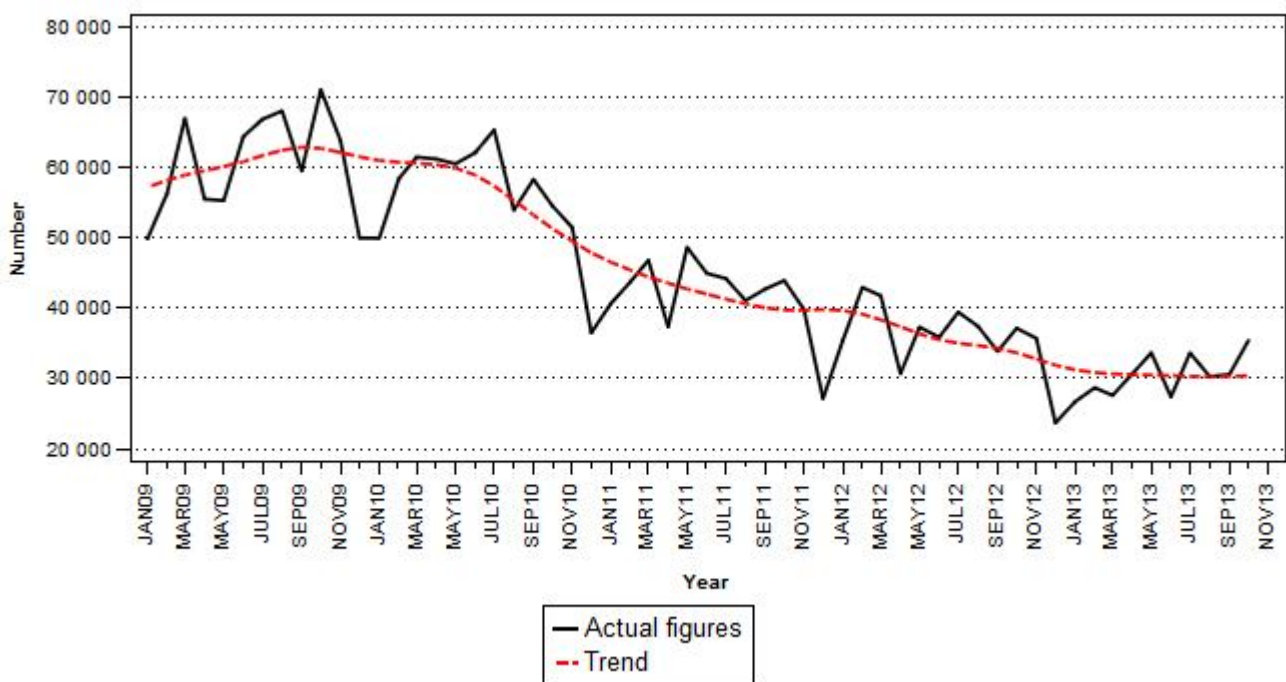


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
		2012	Oct-12	1/ Sep-13	1/ Oct-13	2012	Oct-12	1/ Sep-13	1/ Oct-13
Cases recorded	Actual figures	976 918	78 429	76 463	84 001	839 397	63 455	67 664	73 751
	Seasonally adjusted		76 242	74 487	81 516		63 353	68 933	73 629
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	74 860	6 071	5 778	5 389	54 822	4 488	4 600	4 140
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	22 701	1 967	2 679	1 878	18 705	1 635	2 210	1 457
	Services - Professional	103 025	9 284	8 457	10 992	89 379	7 208	7 720	9 824
	Services - Other	160 522	11 383	11 176	13 912	140 113	8 791	9 795	12 390
	Rent	40 863	3 727	4 636	4 083	31 578	3 040	3 856	3 233
	Money lent	227 228	18 286	14 877	19 552	207 208	13 861	13 923	18 672
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	117 405	9 447	8 788	10 231	96 001	8 555	7 642	8 974
	Other debts	156 110	11 529	12 433	11 098	137 121	10 042	11 463	10 028
	Total - Actual figures	902 714	71 694	68 824	77 135	774 927	57 620	61 209	68 718
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		68 708	67 308	73 726		57 101	62 988	68 089

1/ Preliminary.

Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	Oct-12	1/ Sep-13	1/ Oct-13	2012	Oct-12	1/ Sep-13	1/ Oct-13
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	44 323	3 664	2 136	3 171	36 403	2 872	1 657	2 638
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	9 904	822	713	716	8 083	669	554	507
	Services - Professional	59 439	5 253	4 008	5 349	52 796	4 690	3 695	4 954
	Services - Other	54 045	5 161	5 044	5 557	46 033	4 534	4 479	5 051
	Rent	23 821	2 159	1 912	2 113	18 714	1 756	1 636	1 766
	Money lent	140 381	11 370	8 594	8 985	132 018	10 748	7 814	8 393
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	38 588	3 660	3 371	3 218	33 790	3 231	2 930	2 741
	Other debts	60 535	5 045	4 772	6 272	54 852	4 533	4 229	5 692
	Total - Actual figures	431 036	37 134	30 550	35 381	382 689	33 033	26 994	31 742
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		33 422	29 653	31 815		29 684	26 383	28 529

Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2012	Oct-12	1/ Sep-13	1/ Oct-13	2012	Oct-12	1/ Sep-13	1/ Oct-13
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	468 565	42 122	30 811	32 051	260 678	22 730	19 763	21 468
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	170 861	13 022	11 365	11 148	136 433	9 660	9 259	8 613
	Services - Professional	297 868	23 016	20 279	28 855	240 087	18 356	17 836	26 255
	Services - Other	514 292	60 427	45 003	50 787	399 902	48 737	36 350	42 788
	Rent	346 466	33 175	36 669	31 401	207 105	21 501	19 766	22 479
	Money lent	1 394 203	105 405	100 735	124 223	1 272 156	97 941	90 695	117 111
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	428 523	41 652	35 706	42 704	335 860	32 389	28 803	35 907
	Other debts	1 106 276	138 773	121 717	129 366	734 641	63 561	67 855	80 211
	Total - Actual figures	4 727 054	457 592	402 285	450 535	3 586 862	314 875	290 327	354 832
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		409 873	398 764	405 661		282 559	293 924	320 729

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended October 2012 and the three months ended October 2013

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Aug – Oct 2012	Actual estimates Aug – Oct 2013	% change between Aug – Oct 2012 and Aug – Oct 2013	Difference between Aug – Oct 2012 and Aug – Oct 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	213 334	220 961	3,6	7 627
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	108 401	96 207	-11,2	-12 194
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 341,8	1 298,7	-3,2	-43,1

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

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 2012, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 6 – 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 2012	Actual estimates October 2013	% change between October 2012 and October 2013	Difference between October 2012 and October 2013
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	71 694	77 135	7,6	5 441
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	37 134	35 381	-4,7	-1 753
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	457,6	450,5	-1,5	-7,1

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.
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 are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The monthly survey of 203 magistrates' courts represents approximately 98% of all cases in South Africa.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.
Collection rate	7	The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for October 2013 was 85,7%. The collection rate for September 2013 was 88,7%.
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 * 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.
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.

Advance release calendar

An advance 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)

Produced by Stats SA