

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

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Key results for October 2014

Table A – Key figures for the month of October 2014

| Actual estimates | October 2014 | % change between October 2013 and October 2014 | % change between Aug – Oct 2013 and Aug – Oct 2014 |
|---|--------------|--|--|
| Number of civil summonses issued for debt | 75 466 | -2,2 | -3,8 |
| Number of civil judgements recorded for debt | 27 393 | -22,6 | -19,4 |
| Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million) | 377,1 | -16,3 | -21,3 |

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 3,8% in the three months ended October 2014 compared with the three months ended October 2013. A 2,2% decrease was recorded between October 2013 and October 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 3,8% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- services (contributing -3,6 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing -2,2 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing -0,8 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 19,4% in the three months ended October 2014 compared with the three months ended October 2013. A decrease of 22,6% was recorded year-on-year in October 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 19,4% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing -6,4 percentage points);
- services (contributing -4,7 percentage points); and
- promissory notes (contributing -3,1 percentage points) – see Table 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt was 21,3% lower in the three months ended October 2014 compared with the three months ended October 2013. A year-on-year decrease of 16,3% was recorded in October 2014 – see Tables A, 4 and 6.

The main categories that influenced the 21,3% decrease were the value of judgements relating to:

- ‘other’ debts (contributing -9,4 percentage points);
- services (contributing -3,3 percentage points); and
- money lent (contributing -3,3 percentage points) – see Table 5.

In October 2014, 27 393 civil judgements for debt amounting to R377,1 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- ‘other’ debts (R120,5 million or 31,9%);
- money lent (R96,6 million or 25,6%); and
- services (R69,5 million or 18,4%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

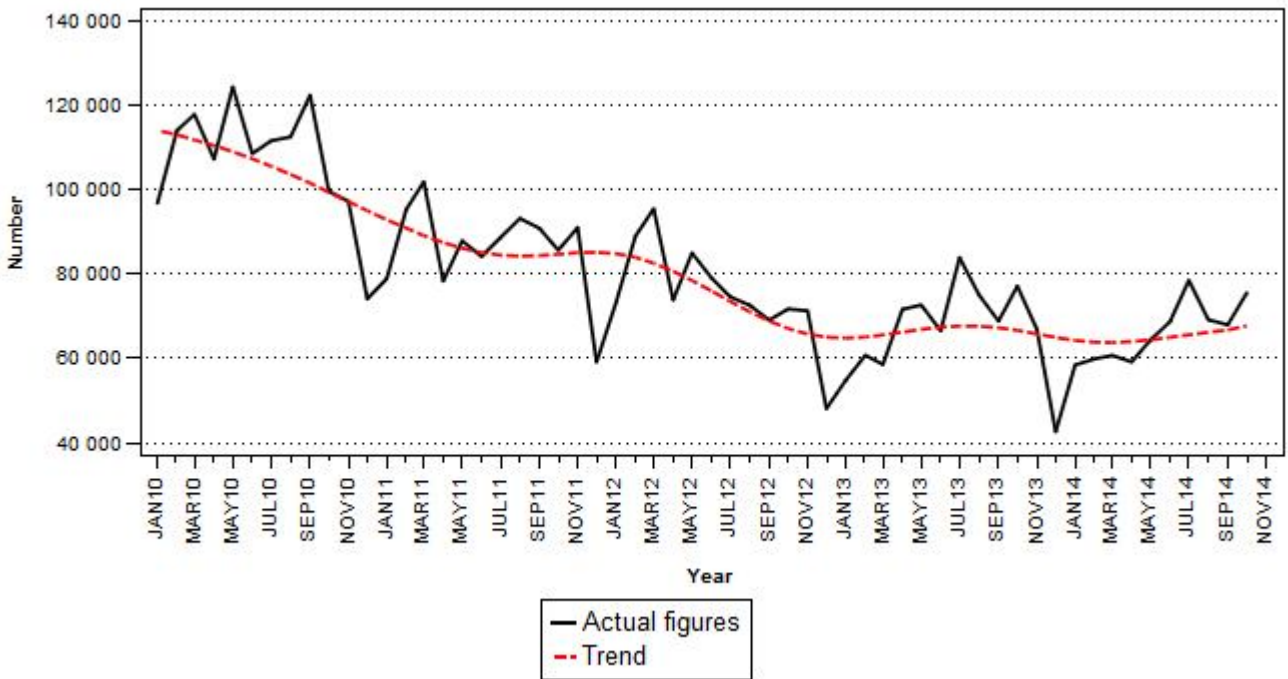
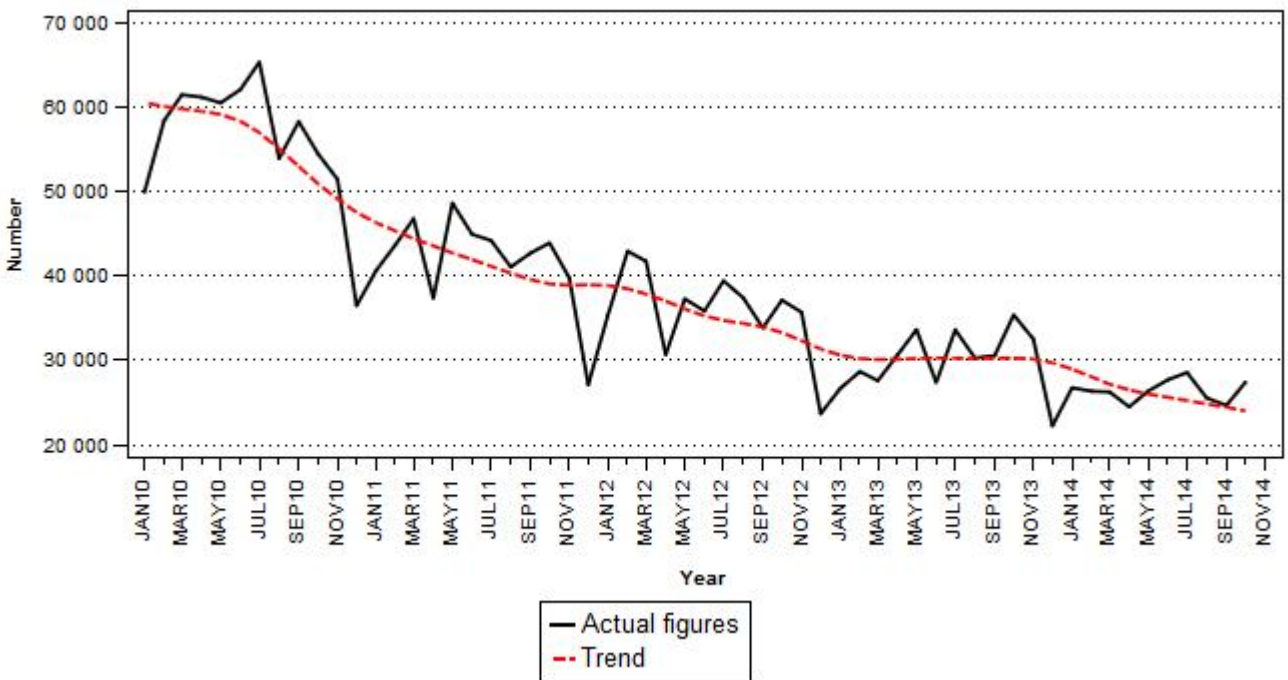


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons

| Item | | Total | | | | Private persons | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | 2013 | Oct-13 | 1/ Sep-14 | 1/ Oct-14 | 2013 | Oct-13 | 1/ Sep-14 | 1/ Oct-14 |
| Cases recorded | Actual figures | 885 940 | 84 001 | 72 950 | 83 951 | 771 916 | 73 751 | 62 503 | 75 538 |
| | Seasonally adjusted | | 77 063 | 71 089 | 76 285 | | 68 749 | 62 833 | 69 791 |
| Civil summonses for debt | Goods sold - Open account | 63 965 | 5 389 | 4 735 | 4 979 | 50 057 | 4 140 | 3 846 | 4 100 |
| | Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions | 25 222 | 1 878 | 2 883 | 3 291 | 19 255 | 1 457 | 2 396 | 2 865 |
| | Services - Professional | 101 634 | 10 992 | 7 236 | 9 573 | 90 642 | 9 824 | 6 527 | 8 679 |
| | Services - Other | 136 153 | 13 912 | 10 770 | 11 704 | 119 189 | 12 390 | 9 141 | 10 205 |
| | Rent | 45 468 | 4 083 | 3 713 | 4 257 | 36 855 | 3 233 | 3 014 | 3 782 |
| | Money lent | 189 748 | 19 552 | 17 327 | 19 513 | 178 114 | 18 672 | 16 308 | 18 383 |
| | Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | 112 485 | 10 231 | 7 849 | 8 246 | 98 296 | 8 974 | 7 267 | 7 638 |
| | Other debts | 124 526 | 11 098 | 13 436 | 13 903 | 113 714 | 10 028 | 12 208 | 12 580 |
| | Total - Actual figures | 799 201 | 77 135 | 67 949 | 75 466 | 706 122 | 68 718 | 60 707 | 68 232 |
| | Total - Seasonally adjusted | | 71 003 | 66 482 | 68 843 | | 64 831 | 61 334 | 63 907 |

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Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

| Item | | Total | | | | Private persons | | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | 2013 | Oct-13 | 1/ Sep-14 | 1/ Oct-14 | 2013 | Oct-13 | 1/ Sep-14 | 1/ Oct-14 |
| Number of civil judgements | Goods sold - Open account | 30 599 | 3 171 | 1 621 | 1 805 | 24 389 | 2 638 | 1 222 | 1 379 |
| | Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions | 7 822 | 716 | 596 | 708 | 5 965 | 507 | 446 | 548 |
| | Services - Professional | 54 963 | 5 349 | 4 173 | 5 095 | 50 053 | 4 954 | 3 728 | 4 602 |
| | Services - Other | 54 737 | 5 557 | 3 611 | 3 906 | 47 396 | 5 051 | 2 883 | 3 448 |
| | Rent | 21 214 | 2 113 | 1 544 | 1 186 | 17 623 | 1 766 | 1 254 | 892 |
| | Money lent | 95 676 | 8 985 | 6 416 | 6 428 | 88 991 | 8 393 | 6 077 | 6 034 |
| | Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | 34 509 | 3 218 | 2 141 | 2 257 | 29 923 | 2 741 | 1 812 | 1 846 |
| | Other debts | 59 596 | 6 272 | 4 551 | 6 008 | 53 770 | 5 692 | 4 256 | 5 571 |
| | Total - Actual figures | 359 116 | 35 381 | 24 653 | 27 393 | 318 110 | 31 742 | 21 678 | 24 320 |
| | Total - Seasonally adjusted | | 31 106 | 24 181 | 23 948 | | 28 009 | 21 554 | 21 340 |

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Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

| Item | | Total | | | | Private persons | | | |
|---------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | 2013 | Oct-13 | 1/ Sep-14 | 1/ Oct-14 | 2013 | Oct-13 | 1/ Sep-14 | 1/ Oct-14 |
| Value of civil judgements | Goods sold - Open account | 363 472 | 32 051 | 31 522 | 25 598 | 210 209 | 21 468 | 13 154 | 14 702 |
| | Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions | 122 663 | 11 148 | 5 969 | 8 484 | 99 411 | 8 613 | 5 031 | 7 193 |
| | Services - Professional | 278 762 | 28 855 | 24 613 | 23 881 | 235 197 | 26 255 | 22 213 | 21 281 |
| | Services - Other | 591 013 | 50 787 | 43 096 | 45 631 | 472 533 | 42 788 | 29 708 | 38 768 |
| | Rent | 349 342 | 31 401 | 28 159 | 21 664 | 242 224 | 22 479 | 22 306 | 12 390 |
| | Money lent | 1 207 161 | 124 223 | 95 255 | 96 582 | 1 088 548 | 117 111 | 90 487 | 91 851 |
| | Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | 443 275 | 42 704 | 34 543 | 34 772 | 363 598 | 35 907 | 29 968 | 27 099 |
| | Other debts | 1 412 365 | 129 366 | 70 269 | 120 472 | 785 059 | 80 211 | 59 966 | 70 628 |
| | Total - Actual figures | 4 768 053 | 450 535 | 333 426 | 377 084 | 3 496 779 | 354 832 | 272 833 | 283 912 |
| | Total - Seasonally adjusted | | 399 222 | 328 487 | 333 011 | | 317 009 | 269 795 | 253 487 |

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Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended October 2013 and the three months ended October 2014

| Actual estimates | Actual estimates Aug – Oct 2013 | Actual estimates Aug – Oct 2014 | % change between Aug – Oct 2013 and Aug – Oct 2014 | Difference between Aug – Oct 2013 and Aug – Oct 2014 |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Number of civil summonses issued for debt | 220 974 | 212 555 | -3,8 | -8 419 |
| Number of civil judgements recorded for debt | 96 207 | 77 578 | -19,4 | -18 629 |
| Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million) | 1 298,7 | 1 021,9 | -21,3 | -276,8 |

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 2013 and the three months ended October 2014 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 | -1,2 | -2,9 | -1,3 |
| Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions | 0,8 | 0,0 | -0,8 |
| Services - Professional | -1,3 | -0,4 | -0,5 |
| Services - Other | -2,3 | -4,3 | -2,8 |
| Rent | -0,8 | -2,4 | -2,3 |
| Money lent | 1,1 | -6,4 | -3,3 |
| Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt | -2,2 | -3,1 | -1,0 |
| Other debts | 2,0 | 0,0 | -9,4 |
| Total | -3,8 | -19,4 | -21,3 |

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 August to October 2013, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

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 2013 | Actual estimates October 2014 | % change between October 2013 and October 2014 | Difference between October 2013 and October 2014 |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Number of civil summonses issued for debt | 77 135 | 75 466 | -2,2 | -1 669 |
| Number of civil judgements recorded for debt | 35 381 | 27 393 | -22,6 | -7 988 |
| Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million) | 450,5 | 377,1 | -16,3 | -73,4 |

Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

| | Period | Western Cape | Eastern Cape | Northern Cape | Free State | KwaZulu -Natal | North West | Gauteng | Mpumalanga | Limpopo | South Africa |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|---------|------------|---------|---------------|
| 2013 | October | 12 020 | 8 394 | 1 316 | 4 504 | 9 834 | 5 022 | 29 364 | 4 314 | 2 367 | 77 135 |
| | November | 10 440 | 9 898 | 1 341 | 3 661 | 8 806 | 4 012 | 22 530 | 3 632 | 2 567 | 66 887 |
| | December | 5 591 | 3 662 | 769 | 2 781 | 7 129 | 3 127 | 14 984 | 2 037 | 2 510 | 42 590 |
| 2014 | January | 8 017 | 5 024 | 1 022 | 4 103 | 8 597 | 3 600 | 22 977 | 2 552 | 2 519 | 58 411 |
| | February | 8 624 | 5 869 | 1 019 | 3 730 | 8 980 | 3 493 | 22 792 | 2 679 | 2 669 | 59 855 |
| | March | 9 531 | 7 131 | 1 222 | 4 121 | 8 488 | 3 166 | 20 725 | 3 218 | 3 075 | 60 677 |
| | April | 9 252 | 5 239 | 1 507 | 4 729 | 8 611 | 2 978 | 21 763 | 2 966 | 2 103 | 59 148 |
| | May | 9 760 | 6 894 | 1 445 | 4 044 | 8 469 | 3 089 | 25 278 | 3 193 | 2 190 | 64 362 |
| | June | 13 090 | 5 587 | 1 276 | 4 254 | 9 564 | 3 357 | 25 994 | 3 107 | 2 456 | 68 685 |
| | July | 12 853 | 6 730 | 1 505 | 4 864 | 10 610 | 3 691 | 32 249 | 3 514 | 2 462 | 78 478 |
| | August | 8 714 | 6 089 | 1 282 | 3 903 | 10 645 | 3 754 | 28 346 | 3 988 | 2 419 | 69 140 |
| | September 1/ | 12 079 | 5 130 | 976 | 4 000 | 10 359 | 3 230 | 26 895 | 3 052 | 2 228 | 67 949 |
| | October 1/ | 11 293 | 6 285 | 1 250 | 5 457 | 11 448 | 4 725 | 29 319 | 3 402 | 2 287 | 75 466 |

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Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

| | Period | Western Cape | Eastern Cape | Northern Cape | Free State | KwaZulu -Natal | North West | Gauteng | Mpumalanga | Limpopo | South Africa |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|---------|------------|---------|---------------|
| 2013 | October | 6 934 | 4 688 | 787 | 3 761 | 4 852 | 2 049 | 8 480 | 1 668 | 2 162 | 35 381 |
| | November | 6 940 | 4 953 | 895 | 3 018 | 3 454 | 1 935 | 7 327 | 1 877 | 2 119 | 32 518 |
| | December | 3 103 | 3 049 | 454 | 1 976 | 2 834 | 1 708 | 6 076 | 1 096 | 1 928 | 22 224 |
| 2014 | January | 4 195 | 3 318 | 508 | 2 787 | 4 614 | 1 820 | 6 045 | 1 433 | 2 020 | 26 740 |
| | February | 4 753 | 3 348 | 737 | 2 911 | 3 924 | 1 662 | 5 903 | 1 145 | 1 946 | 26 329 |
| | March | 4 446 | 3 316 | 874 | 3 204 | 3 798 | 1 207 | 6 012 | 1 446 | 1 944 | 26 247 |
| | April | 4 062 | 2 877 | 697 | 2 410 | 3 858 | 1 357 | 5 682 | 1 526 | 2 018 | 24 487 |
| | May | 4 095 | 3 686 | 812 | 2 586 | 3 629 | 1 161 | 6 519 | 1 907 | 1 956 | 26 351 |
| | June | 5 315 | 4 102 | 766 | 3 401 | 3 595 | 1 518 | 5 413 | 1 628 | 1 960 | 27 698 |
| | July | 5 529 | 3 913 | 631 | 3 607 | 3 685 | 1 515 | 5 884 | 1 743 | 2 044 | 28 551 |
| | August | 4 491 | 3 117 | 721 | 2 783 | 3 699 | 1 281 | 6 266 | 1 228 | 1 946 | 25 532 |
| | September 1/ | 4 662 | 2 946 | 684 | 2 342 | 4 051 | 1 300 | 5 535 | 1 368 | 1 765 | 24 653 |
| | October 1/ | 4 828 | 3 861 | 691 | 3 496 | 3 795 | 1 815 | 5 578 | 1 572 | 1 757 | 27 393 |

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Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

| | Period | Western Cape | Eastern Cape | Northern Cape | Free State | KwaZulu -Natal | North West | Gauteng | Mpumalanga | Limpopo | South Africa |
|------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|----------------|------------|---------|------------|---------|----------------|
| 2013 | October | 111 222 | 53 381 | 8 146 | 35 366 | 49 516 | 20 792 | 125 777 | 34 525 | 11 810 | 450 535 |
| | November | 127 932 | 53 314 | 8 770 | 34 547 | 31 398 | 25 062 | 103 849 | 44 688 | 9 879 | 439 439 |
| | December | 56 313 | 33 514 | 4 047 | 19 776 | 39 281 | 17 039 | 98 680 | 25 380 | 12 177 | 306 207 |
| 2014 | January | 64 948 | 36 005 | 5 329 | 25 601 | 45 021 | 18 659 | 75 112 | 30 345 | 11 954 | 312 974 |
| | February | 117 751 | 38 391 | 6 810 | 36 414 | 34 787 | 17 569 | 81 162 | 49 647 | 19 968 | 402 499 |
| | March | 74 236 | 43 808 | 6 313 | 53 629 | 34 910 | 9 735 | 116 253 | 29 487 | 12 817 | 381 188 |
| | April | 75 403 | 37 097 | 6 648 | 22 227 | 30 140 | 13 181 | 70 563 | 27 186 | 10 045 | 292 490 |
| | May | 72 011 | 43 019 | 9 208 | 22 471 | 36 772 | 11 295 | 95 198 | 45 389 | 9 344 | 344 707 |
| | June | 91 053 | 43 723 | 5 073 | 32 985 | 34 968 | 12 856 | 72 497 | 21 943 | 12 050 | 327 148 |
| | July | 84 131 | 52 402 | 4 934 | 33 840 | 34 975 | 14 670 | 79 929 | 33 696 | 11 747 | 350 324 |
| | August | 56 977 | 41 055 | 5 043 | 27 985 | 38 151 | 14 280 | 97 007 | 19 280 | 11 649 | 311 427 |
| | September 1/ | 68 262 | 47 878 | 6 171 | 37 095 | 36 823 | 12 234 | 83 259 | 33 117 | 8 587 | 333 426 |
| | October 1/ | 73 833 | 41 426 | 8 712 | 49 026 | 43 394 | 20 149 | 87 208 | 44 660 | 8 676 | 377 084 |

1/ Preliminary

Explanatory notes

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Introduction | 1 | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Purpose of the survey | 3 | <p>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.</p> |
| Scope of the survey | 4 | <p>This survey covers:</p> <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 | <p>The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Survey methodology and design | 6 | <p>The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.</p> |
| Collection rate | 7 | <p>The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for October 2014 was 85,2%. The improved collection rate for September 2014 was 88,7%.</p> |
| Trend cycle | 8 | <p>Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.</p> |
| Publications | 9 | <p>Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>South African Statistics</i> issued annually. |
| Unpublished statistics | 10 | <p>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.</p> |
| Symbols and abbreviations | 11 | <p>R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa * Revised figures</p> |

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. |

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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