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STATISTICAL RELEASE

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Wholesale trade sales (Preliminary)

August 2024

The results published today are based on a new sample. This is an annual procedure which typically affects the level of sales at both current and constant prices. To avoid breaks in time series and to minimise revisions to historical growth rates, historical sales levels were revised (i.e. they were linked to the estimates based on the new sample).

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Sales at constant 2019 prices: results for August 2024

Table A – Key growth rates in wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices

	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	-13,0	-0,1	-7,1	-8,7	-2,0	-14,6
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-3,9	6,4	-4,1	0,9	-1,0	-5,3
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted ¹	-1,5	-0,7	-0,1	1,5	-1,2	-2,3

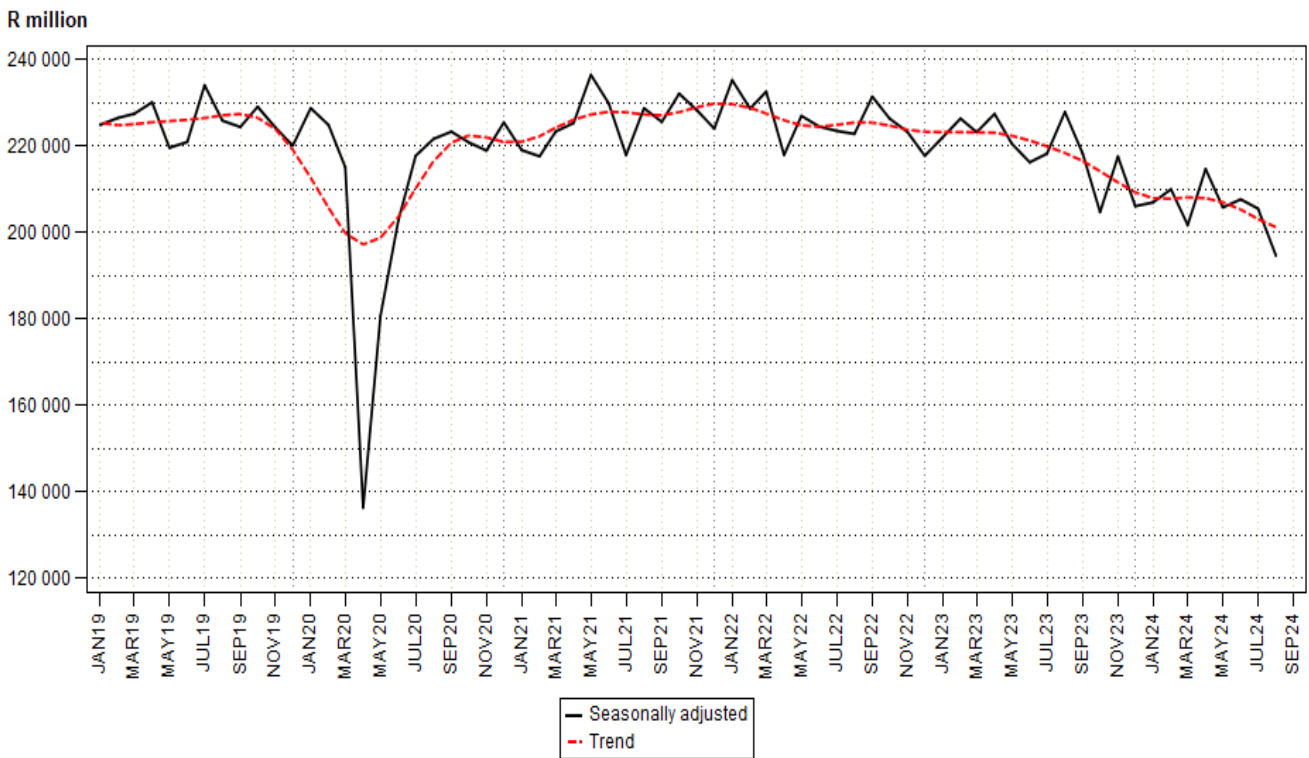
¹ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2019 prices), wholesale trade sales decreased by 14,6% in August 2024 compared with August 2023.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 5,3% in August 2024 compared with July 2024. This followed month-on-month changes of -1,0% in July 2024 and 0,9% in June 2024.

In the three months ended August 2024, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 2,3% compared with the previous three months.

Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices



Sales at current prices: results for August 2024

Table B – Key growth rates in wholesale trade sales at current prices

	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	-8,7	5,4	-1,8	-3,9	1,7	-12,8
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-3,5	3,9	-2,3	-1,2	0,9	-6,6
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted ¹	-1,3	-0,6	-0,2	0,1	-1,5	-3,1

¹ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in nominal terms (current prices), wholesale trade sales decreased by 12,8% in August 2024 compared with August 2023. The main negative contributors were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (-33,6% and contributing -9,4 percentage points);
- construction and building materials (-21,8% and contributing -1,1 percentage points); and
- 'other' goods (-12,6% and contributing -1,0 percentage point) – see Table 8 and Table 9.

Table C – Wholesale trade sales at current prices for the latest three months by type of dealer

Type of dealer	Jun – Aug 2023 (R million)	Weight (%)	Jun – Aug 2024 (R million)	% change between Jun – Aug 2023 and Jun – Aug 2024	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
Fee or contract basis	29 038	3,2	26 448	-8,9	-0,3
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	59 609	6,5	56 924	-4,5	-0,3
Food, beverages and tobacco	125 499	13,7	128 633	2,5	0,3
Textiles, clothing and footwear	18 554	2,0	17 329	-6,6	-0,1
Other household goods except precious stones	87 287	9,5	92 053	5,5	0,5
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	15 956	1,7	10 628	-33,4	-0,6
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	250 244	27,3	193 803	-22,6	-6,2
Metals and metal ores	27 823	3,0	28 803	3,5	0,1
Construction and building materials	49 971	5,4	43 141	-13,7	-0,7
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	43 879	4,8	48 757	11,1	0,5
Machinery, equipment and supplies	134 878	14,7	145 384	7,8	1,1
Other goods	74 183	8,1	77 399	4,3	0,3
Total	916 922	100,0	869 303	-5,2	-5,2

Wholesale trade sales decreased by 5,2% in the three months ended August 2024 compared with the three months ended August 2023. The main negative contributor was dealers in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (-22,6% and contributing -6,2 percentage points).

The main positive contributor was dealers in machinery, equipment and supplies (7,8% and contributing 1,1 percentage points) – see Table C.



Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

Note: Changes to the survey and the impact on the statistical series

Statistical business register and samples

Today Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) publishes results for the monthly survey of wholesale trade sales from a new sample drawn in April 2024, which replaces the previous sample that was drawn in April 2023. The sample was drawn from a statistical business register of enterprises with an annual turnover of at least R7 097 892 and that are required to register with the South African Revenue Service for value-added tax.

Owing to the evolving nature of business, the statistical business register is maintained on a continuous basis. The maintenance process is aimed, amongst other things, at capturing changes related to new businesses, ceased businesses, merged businesses and classification changes. In addition, Stats SA undertakes quality improvement surveys related to the statistical business register, the primary objective of which is to capture up-to-date information about the structures and activities of large and complex businesses. This process enables Stats SA to review classification codes for these businesses. These changes are an essential part of the statistical architecture.

Comparison of sales between the previous (revised) and new samples for the wholesale trade industry

The reported level of total sales for the monthly survey of the wholesale trade industry for the months April to June 2024 based on the new sample was 1,6% (R13 565 million) higher than the level of total sales recorded for the previous sample (see Table D and Figure 2). The previous sample was drawn in April 2023 and was operational for the last half of 2023 and the first half of 2024.

Table D – Total sales for previous and new samples for the wholesale trade industry: April to June 2024

Wholesale trade industry	Previous sample (R million)	New sample (R million)	Difference (R million)	Difference (%)
	868 075	881 640	13 565	1,6

Figure 2 – Total wholesale trade sales: monthly levels of previous and new samples for April to June 2024

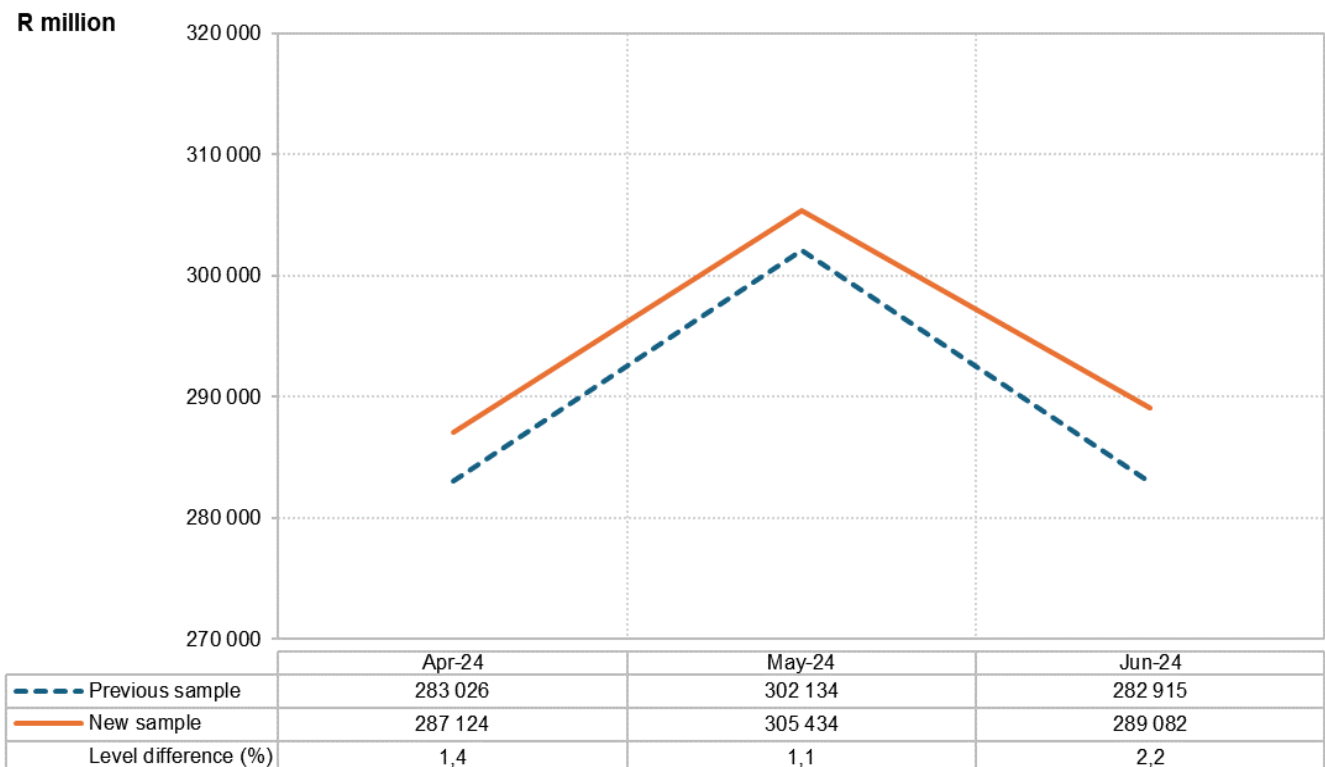


Table E – Wholesale trade sales for previous and new samples by type of dealer: April to June 2024

Type of dealer	Previous sample (R million)	New sample (R million)	Difference (R million)	Difference (%) ¹
Fee or contract basis	33 300	29 332	-3 968	-11,9
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	57 142	55 937	-1 205	-2,1
Food, beverages and tobacco	122 189	123 320	1 131	0,9
Textiles, clothing and footwear	17 107	16 021	-1 086	-6,3
Other household goods except precious stones	91 910	92 870	960	1,0
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	7 711	11 209	3 498	45,4
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	210 022	222 470	12 448	5,9
Metals and metal ores	35 520	28 883	-6 637	-18,7
Construction and building materials	48 165	45 009	-3 156	-6,6
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	40 819	41 195	376	0,9
Machinery, equipment and supplies	137 324	138 554	1 230	0,9
Other goods	66 864	76 840	9 976	14,9
Total	868 075	881 640	13 565	1,6

¹ The percentage difference is the new sample minus the previous sample, divided by the previous sample, multiplied by 100.

The largest differences were recorded for dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (R12 448 million or 5,9% higher in the new sample);
- 'other' goods (R9 976 million or 14,9% higher in the new sample);
- metals and metal ores (R6 637 million or 18,7% lower in the new sample);
- fee or contract basis (R3 968 million or 11,9% lower in the new sample);
- precious stones, jewellery and silverware (R3 498 million or 45,4% higher in the new sample); and
- construction and building materials (R3 156 million or 6,6% lower in the new sample).

Backcasting

To avoid breaks in the time series and to minimise revisions to historical growth rates, historical sales levels were revised (i.e. they were linked to the estimates based on the new sample).

Tables

Table 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices (R million)

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Jan	201 235	199 296	204 279	188 921	203 348	196 580	186 119
Feb	216 419	214 596	216 993	207 448	218 504	217 676	208 917
Mar	239 259	229 671	220 773	232 455	239 796	232 176	202 032
Apr	204 397	214 086	123 642	207 355	197 411	199 833	199 730
May	232 234	224 124	178 893	235 070	230 940	227 348	211 316
Jun	231 451	216 334	208 997	233 100	226 603	221 442	202 114
Jul	224 716	239 451	224 623	222 873	223 125	216 475	212 047
Aug	237 847	228 628	218 447	230 524	227 853	231 176	197 510
Sep	239 035	229 370	230 827	232 006	240 072	221 483	
Oct	252 813	250 531	241 108	247 372	239 775	221 533	
Nov	256 397	244 130	236 364	252 907	244 884	237 794	
Dec	209 384	214 842	219 637	219 236	211 192	194 520	
Total	2 745 187	2 705 059	2 524 583	2 709 267	2 703 503	2 618 036	

Table 2 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices

Month	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024 year-to-date
Jan	-1,0	2,5	-7,5	7,6	-3,3	-5,3	-5,3
Feb	-0,8	1,1	-4,4	5,3	-0,4	-4,0	-4,6
Mar	-4,0	-3,9	5,3	3,2	-3,2	-13,0	-7,6
Apr	4,7	-42,2	67,7	-4,8	1,2	-0,1	-5,8
May	-3,5	-20,2	31,4	-1,8	-1,6	-7,1	-6,1
Jun	-6,5	-3,4	11,5	-2,8	-2,3	-8,7	-6,6
Jul	6,6	-6,2	-0,8	0,1	-3,0	-2,0	-5,9
Aug	-3,9	-4,5	5,5	-1,2	1,5	-14,6	-7,1
Sep	-4,0	0,6	0,5	3,5	-7,7		
Oct	-0,9	-3,8	2,6	-3,1	-7,6		
Nov	-4,8	-3,2	7,0	-3,2	-2,9		
Dec	2,6	2,2	-0,2	-3,7	-7,9		
Total	-1,5	-6,7	7,3	-0,2	-3,2		

Table 3 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021	2022	2023	2024
Jan	219 052	235 246	221 999	206 968	-2,8	5,0	2,0	0,4
Feb	217 622	228 649	226 350	210 007	-0,7	-2,8	2,0	1,5
Mar	223 356	232 583	223 200	201 727	2,6	1,7	-1,4	-3,9
Apr	225 327	217 910	227 446	214 700	0,9	-6,3	1,9	6,4
May	236 464	226 982	220 538	205 796	4,9	4,2	-3,0	-4,1
Jun	229 832	224 497	216 243	207 673	-2,8	-1,1	-1,9	0,9
Jul	217 891	223 504	218 247	205 515	-5,2	-0,4	0,9	-1,0
Aug	228 741	222 802	227 880	194 664	5,0	-0,3	4,4	-5,3
Sep	225 591	231 432	218 218		-1,4	3,9	-4,2	
Oct	232 115	226 344	204 728		2,9	-2,2	-6,2	
Nov	228 257	223 256	217 583		-1,7	-1,4	6,3	
Dec	224 023	217 747	206 093		-1,9	-2,5	-5,3	

Table 4 – Wholesale trade sales at current prices (R million)

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Jan	186 586	192 425	207 201	194 644	239 964	266 587	260 856
Feb	199 657	207 358	220 064	217 063	261 395	295 265	294 290
Mar	217 997	225 152	222 860	246 505	297 156	315 526	287 920
Apr	189 218	214 381	122 308	222 601	250 052	272 527	287 124
May	218 449	225 955	174 097	253 105	300 386	311 052	305 434
Jun	221 346	219 159	205 373	252 729	301 380	300 947	289 082
Jul	217 396	241 003	225 218	244 262	303 709	296 098	301 164
Aug	231 011	230 126	221 587	254 984	307 311	319 877	279 057
Sep	233 295	231 271	234 101	259 859	326 261	314 373	
Oct	252 683	253 871	245 817	279 701	328 443	318 363	
Nov	257 293	246 757	240 859	291 962	335 052	341 163	
Dec	206 255	217 598	223 810	257 774	290 848	275 816	
Total	2 631 186	2 705 056	2 543 295	2 975 189	3 541 957	3 627 594	

Table 5 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024 year-to-date
Jan	3,1	7,7	-6,1	23,3	11,1	-2,1	-2,1
Feb	3,9	6,1	-1,4	20,4	13,0	-0,3	-1,2
Mar	3,3	-1,0	10,6	20,5	6,2	-8,7	-3,9
Apr	13,3	-42,9	82,0	12,3	9,0	5,4	-1,7
May	3,4	-23,0	45,4	18,7	3,6	-1,8	-1,7
Jun	-1,0	-6,3	23,1	19,3	-0,1	-3,9	-2,1
Jul	10,9	-6,5	8,5	24,3	-2,5	1,7	-1,6
Aug	-0,4	-3,7	15,1	20,5	4,1	-12,8	-3,1
Sep	-0,9	1,2	11,0	25,6	-3,6		
Oct	0,5	-3,2	13,8	17,4	-3,1		
Nov	-4,1	-2,4	21,2	14,8	1,8		
Dec	5,5	2,9	15,2	12,8	-5,2		
Total	2,8	-6,0	17,0	19,0	2,4		

Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2021	2022	2023	2024
Jan	227 226	276 751	304 825	296 260	-1,1	4,5	1,2	1,3
Feb	230 727	277 478	312 720	301 595	1,5	0,3	2,6	1,8
Mar	237 641	286 668	304 273	291 006	3,0	3,3	-2,7	-3,5
Apr	240 308	273 927	301 746	302 363	1,1	-4,4	-0,8	3,9
May	253 125	295 065	301 117	295 443	5,3	7,7	-0,2	-2,3
Jun	249 856	298 016	295 511	291 907	-1,3	1,0	-1,9	-1,2
Jul	241 235	304 730	296 582	294 505	-3,5	2,3	0,4	0,9
Aug	251 305	300 692	313 626	275 139	4,2	-1,3	5,7	-6,6
Sep	248 220	311 873	304 628		-1,2	3,7	-2,9	
Oct	262 432	308 523	296 460		5,7	-1,1	-2,7	
Nov	264 310	305 740	311 913		0,7	-0,9	5,2	
Dec	264 721	301 183	292 554		0,2	-1,5	-6,2	

Table 7 – Wholesale trade sales at current prices by type of dealer (R million)

Type of dealer	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
Fee or contract basis	8 468	10 265	10 868	8 199	9 147	9 102
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	18 283	16 850	21 165	17 922	20 340	18 662
Food, beverages and tobacco	41 450	38 722	41 559	43 039	43 914	41 680
Textiles, clothing and footwear	6 009	6 573	5 305	4 143	5 912	7 274
Other household goods except precious stones	28 417	31 242	30 983	30 645	30 973	30 435
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	4 156	3 524	4 579	3 106	3 958	3 564
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	72 083	74 368	80 044	68 058	66 448	59 297
Metals and metal ores	8 847	8 654	10 368	9 861	9 827	9 115
Construction and building materials	13 992	15 569	15 225	14 215	15 872	13 054
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	13 308	13 653	13 294	14 248	17 462	17 047
Machinery, equipment and supplies	48 935	42 702	45 815	50 037	48 661	46 686
Other goods	23 973	25 002	26 229	25 609	28 649	23 141
Total	287 920	287 124	305 434	289 082	301 164	279 057

Table 8 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at current prices by type of dealer

Type of dealer	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
Fee or contract basis	28,7	40,0	17,3	-15,1	3,7	-13,8
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	-25,0	-0,9	-6,3	-12,7	1,7	-2,1
Food, beverages and tobacco	-7,4	6,1	1,6	-3,3	12,2	-0,4
Textiles, clothing and footwear	2,0	10,0	2,3	-30,2	0,3	8,3
Other household goods except precious stones	-6,2	12,1	4,3	7,5	15,5	-4,8
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	-42,3	-39,2	-36,1	-4,3	-36,1	-45,3
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	-7,7	-6,8	-4,2	-12,2	-20,4	-33,6
Metals and metal ores	-2,7	7,8	14,1	11,8	8,2	-8,1
Construction and building materials	-20,2	10,9	-10,3	-16,2	-2,7	-21,8
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	-17,7	22,1	-0,4	4,5	19,6	9,0
Machinery, equipment and supplies	-2,5	6,0	-2,4	4,7	16,2	3,2
Other goods	-5,5	33,4	-0,5	7,2	20,3	-12,6
Total	-8,7	5,4	-1,8	-3,9	1,7	-12,8

Table 9 – Contribution of type of dealer to the year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at current prices

Type of dealer	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24
Fee or contract basis	0,6	1,1	0,5	-0,5	0,1	-0,5
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	-1,9	-0,1	-0,5	-0,9	0,1	-0,1
Food, beverages and tobacco	-1,1	0,8	0,2	-0,5	1,6	-0,1
Textiles, clothing and footwear	0,0	0,2	0,0	-0,6	0,0	0,2
Other household goods except precious stones	-0,6	1,2	0,4	0,7	1,4	-0,5
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	-1,0	-0,8	-0,8	0,0	-0,8	-0,9
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	-1,9	-2,0	-1,1	-3,1	-5,8	-9,4
Metals and metal ores	-0,1	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,3	-0,3
Construction and building materials	-1,1	0,6	-0,6	-0,9	-0,1	-1,1
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	-0,9	0,9	0,0	0,2	1,0	0,4
Machinery, equipment and supplies	-0,4	0,9	-0,4	0,7	2,3	0,5
Other goods	-0,4	2,3	0,0	0,6	1,6	-1,0
Total	-8,7	5,4	-1,8	-3,9	1,7	-12,8

Explanatory notes

- Introduction** 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey covering enterprises in the wholesale trade industry (see point 3 below). This survey is based on a sample drawn from Stats SA's 2024 statistical business register (SBR) that contains businesses registered at the South African Revenue Service (SARS) for value-added tax (VAT) and income tax (IT). Stats SA continuously updates its SBR, which is linked to the SARS administrative data. Published wholesale trade sales estimates exclude VAT.
- Purpose of the survey** 2 The results of the monthly wholesale trade sales survey are used to compile estimates of the gross domestic product (GDP) and its components, which are used in monitoring the state of the economy and formulation of economic policy. These statistics are also used in the analysis of comparative business and industry performance.
- Scope of the survey** 3 This survey covers wholesale enterprises according to the following types of dealers:
- wholesale trade on a fee or contract basis – sales by commission agents, commodity brokers, auctioneers and 'other' wholesale trade on a fee or contract basis;
 - wholesale trade in agricultural raw materials and livestock;
 - wholesale trade in food, beverages and tobacco;
 - wholesale trade in textiles, clothing and footwear;
 - wholesale trade in 'other' household goods except precious stones. This group includes wholesale trade in household furniture, requisites and appliances, wholesale trade in books and stationery, wholesale trade in pharmaceuticals and toiletries and wholesale trade in 'other' household goods not elsewhere classified;
 - wholesale trade in precious stones, jewellery and silverware;
 - wholesale trade in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products;
 - wholesale trade in metals and metal ores;
 - wholesale trade in construction materials, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies;
 - wholesale trade in 'other' intermediate products, waste and scrap;
 - wholesale trade in machinery, equipment and supplies; and
 - wholesale trade in 'other' goods. This group covers general wholesale trade and 'other' wholesale trade not classified elsewhere.
- Classification** 4 The 1993 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities* (SIC), Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02, was used to classify the statistical units in the survey. The SIC is based on the 1990 *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities* (ISIC) with suitable adaptations for local conditions. Each enterprise is classified to the industry which reflects its predominant activity. Statistics in this publication are presented at SIC group four-digit level.
- Collection rate** 5 The preliminary collection rate for the survey on wholesale trade sales for August 2024 was 69,3%. The collection rate for July 2024 for the new sample was 75,4%.

Statistical unit 6 The statistical unit for which information is compiled and published is the enterprise, defined as a legal unit or a combination of legal units that includes and directly controls all functions necessary to carry out its sales activities. The statistical units are derived from and linked to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) administrative data.

Revised figures 7 Revised figures are mainly due to late submission of data to Stats SA, or respondents reporting revisions or corrections to their figures. The reasons for routine revisions are outlined in the following schedule. Any unscheduled revisions will be promptly indicated in relevant tables to maintain transparency and accuracy. It is important to note that seasonally adjusted figures are revised monthly.

Statistical release	Reason for revision	Period subject to revision
Aug-24	Additional information from respondents New sample	Jan-98–Jul-24
Sep-24	Additional information from respondents	Aug-24
Oct-24	Additional information from respondents	Sep-24
Nov-24	Additional information from respondents	Oct-24
Dec-24	Additional information from respondents	Nov-24
Jan-25	Additional information from respondents	Dec-24
Feb-25	Additional information from respondents	Jan-25
Mar-25	Additional information from respondents	Feb-25
Apr-25	Additional information from respondents	Mar-25
May-25	Additional information from respondents	Apr-25
Jun-25	Additional information from respondents	May-25
Jul-25	Additional information from respondents New sample	Jan-98–Jun-25
New base year in 2027/28 - periodic, approximately four- to five-year intervals		

Related publications 8 Users may also refer to the *Stats in Brief* publication available from Stats SA.

Rounding-off of figures 9 Where figures have been rounded off, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and the totals.

Historical data 10 Historical wholesale trade sales data are available on the Stats SA website. To access the data electronically, use the following link:
[Click to download historical data.](#)

Past publications 11 Past wholesale trade sales releases are available on the Stats SA website. To access the releases electronically, use the following link:
[Click to download past releases.](#)

Technical notes

Survey methodology and design

- 1 The survey is conducted monthly. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of 1 673 enterprises from a population of 17 102 enterprises. Completed questionnaires are required to be returned to Stats SA within 10 days after the end of the reference month. Email, fax and telephone reminders are used to follow up on non-respondents.
- 2 A stratified random sample was drawn at the SIC four-digit level in April 2024 from Stats SA’s statistical business register (SBR). Strata were formed using a combination of Standard Industrial Classification and the measure of size classes for enterprises (see point 3 below). The Neyman optimal allocation formula given below was used to allocate samples to each stratum:

$$n_h = n * (N_h * S_h) / [\sum (N_i * S_i)] .$$

Neyman allocation formula not only allocates sample sizes to each stratum but also calculates the relative precision for each stratum as well as the relative precision for all strata. The relative precision for these strata was 5,25%.

Class limits

- 3 The wholesale sampling frame is divided into four size groups. All large enterprises (size group one) are completely enumerated. Simple random sampling is applied to the remaining size groups (medium, small and very small). The total value of sales of the large enterprises (size group one) is added to the weighted totals of size groups two, three and four to reflect the total value of sales.

Measure of size classes (Rand)

Enterprise size	Size group	Lower limit	Upper limit
Very small	4	7 097 892	36 000 000
Small	3	36 000 001	192 000 000
Medium	2	192 000 001	384 000 000
Large	1	384 000 001	

Sample weighting

- 4 For those strata not completely enumerated, the weights to produce estimates are the inverse ratio of the sampling fraction, modified to take account of non-response in the survey. Stratum estimates are calculated and then aggregated with the completely enumerated stratum to form group estimates. These procedures are consistent with international best practice.

Seasonal adjustment

- 5 Seasonally adjusted estimates are generated each month using the X-12-ARIMA Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the United States Census Bureau. Seasonal adjustment 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 that 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. Therefore, the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour. The X-12-ARIMA procedure for wholesale trade sales is described in more detail on the Stats SA website: [Click to download seasonal adjustment wholesale trade sales February 2022.](#)

Trend cycle

- 6 The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-12-ARIMA Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimates of the underlying trend cycle.

Constant prices

- 7 Stats SA compiles its monthly estimates of wholesale trade sales at current prices from a survey of wholesalers in the formal sector. From January 1998 to December 2011, wholesale trade sales at constant prices were calculated using the 'all groups' PPI for domestic output, but excluding electricity and other utilities.

From January 2012, wholesale trade sales at constant prices are compiled as follows:

- (1) Deflate sales of dealers in agricultural raw materials and livestock using the PPI for agriculture.
- (2) Deflate sales of dealers in food, beverages and tobacco using the final manufacturing PPI for food products, beverages and tobacco.
- (3) Deflate sales of dealers in textiles, clothing and footwear using the final manufacturing PPI for textiles, clothing and footwear.
- (4) Deflate sales of dealers in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products using the final manufacturing PPI for coal and petroleum products.
- (5) Deflate sales of dealers in machinery, equipment and supplies using the final manufacturing PPIs for general and special purpose machinery; household appliances and office machinery; and electrical machinery and communication and metering equipment.
- (6) Deflate the remaining wholesale trade sales using the headline PPI (final manufacturing) excluding the PPIs for food products, beverages and tobacco; textiles, clothing and footwear; coal and petroleum products; general and special purpose machinery; household appliances and office machinery; electrical machinery and communication and metering equipment; and transport equipment. The PPI for transport equipment is excluded because it measures producer prices of motor vehicles, which are not included in wholesale trade.

Total wholesale trade sales at constant prices are obtained by aggregating (1) to (6).

Reliability of estimates

- 8 Data presented in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample and are, therefore, subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the data had been obtained from all enterprises in the wholesale industry in South Africa. Estimates are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors.
- 9 Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in reporting by enterprises and errors made in the collection and processing of the data. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling errors. Every effort is made to minimise non-sampling errors by careful design of questionnaires, testing them in pilot studies, editing reported data and implementing efficient operating procedures. Fluctuations may occur in consecutive months as a result of seasonal and economic factors.

Relative standard error 10 One measure is the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of enterprises was used. The relative standard error (RSE) provides an immediate indication of the percentage errors likely to have occurred due to sampling, and thus avoids the need to refer to the size of the estimate.

Estimates of total wholesale trade sales within 95% confidence limits – August 2024

	Lower limit (R million)	Sales (R million)	Upper limit (R million)	Relative standard error (RSE) %
Wholesale trade sales	269 221	279 057	288 894	1,7

Month-on-month percentage change 11 The month-on-month percentage change in a variable for any given month is the change between that month and the previous month, expressed as a percentage of the latter.

Year-on-year percentage change 12 The year-on-year percentage change in a variable for any given period is the change between that period and the corresponding period of the previous year, expressed as a percentage of the latter.

Contribution (percentage points) 13 The contribution (percentage points) to the year-on-year percentage change is calculated by multiplying the percentage change of each type of wholesaler by its corresponding weight, divided by 100. The weight is the percentage contribution of each type of wholesaler to total wholesale trade sales in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Glossary

Enterprise An enterprise is a legal entity or a combination of legal units that includes and directly controls all functions necessary to carry out its sales activities.

Industry An industry is made up of enterprises engaged in the same or similar kinds of economic activity. Industries are defined in the *System of National Accounts (SNA)* in the same way as in the *Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (SIC)*, Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02 of January 1993.

Symbols and abbreviations

GDP Gross domestic product
 ISIC International Standard Industrial Classification
 SARS South African Revenue Service
 SBR Statistical Business Register
 SIC Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities
 Stats SA Statistics South Africa
 VAT Value-added tax
 * Revised figures

Wholesale trade Wholesale trade includes the resale (sale without transformation) of new and used goods and products to other wholesalers, retailers, agricultural, industrial, commercial, institutional and professional users either directly or through agents on a fee or contract basis.

Wholesaler A wholesaler is an enterprise deriving 50% or more of its turnover from sales of goods to other businesses and institutions.

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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 12 official languages. Since the releases are used extensively locally and by international economic and social-scientific communities, Stats SA releases are published in English only.

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