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Wholesale trade sales (Preliminary)

February 2020

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The South Africa I know, the home I understand



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Sales at constant 2015 prices: results for February 2020

Table A – Key growth rates in wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices

	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	-3,7	-0,7	-5,1	2,5	2,6	-0,9
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	1,4	0,6	-2,9	-0,6	1,5	-1,9
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	2,5	-1,0	-1,3	-3,0	-2,0	-2,0

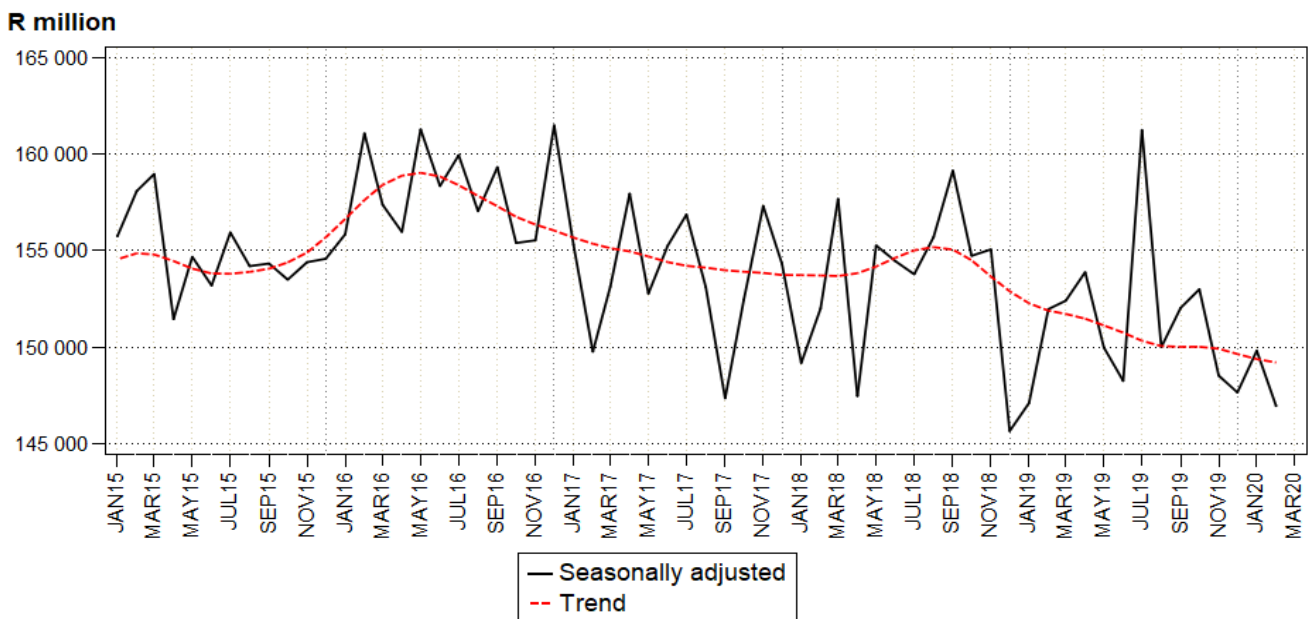
1/ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2015 prices), wholesale trade sales decreased by 0,9% in February 2020 compared with February 2019.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 1,9% in February 2020 compared with January 2020. This followed month-on-month changes of 1,5% in January 2020 and -0,6% in December 2019.

In the three months ended February 2020, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 2,0% compared with the previous three months.

Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices



Sales at current prices: results for February 2020

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

	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	-0,9	0,5	-4,1	5,5	7,7	3,8
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-0,4	2,8	-3,5	-1,9	6,0	-2,4
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	0,9	-0,6	-0,9	-2,0	-1,1	-0,2

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 increased by 3,8% in February 2020 compared with February 2019. The main contributor to this increase was dealers in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (8,7% and contributing 2,1 percentage points) – see Tables 8 and 9.

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

Type of dealer	Dec 2018 – Feb 2019 (R million)	Weight	Dec 2019 – Feb 2020 (R million)	% change between Dec 2018 – Feb 2019 and Dec 2019 – Feb 2020	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
Fee or contract basis	20 688	4,1	19 841	-4,1	-0,2
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	34 509	6,8	39 235	13,7	0,9
Food, beverages and tobacco	84 148	16,7	92 424	9,8	1,6
Textiles, clothing and footwear	8 981	1,8	7 654	-14,8	-0,3
Other household goods except precious stones	57 269	11,3	60 248	5,2	0,6
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	11 961	2,4	14 391	20,3	0,5
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	127 965	25,3	141 692	10,7	2,7
Metals and metal ores	10 495	2,1	9 758	-7,0	-0,1
Construction and building materials	22 345	4,4	23 417	4,8	0,2
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	25 200	5,0	25 680	1,9	0,1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	67 072	13,3	61 863	-7,8	-1,0
Other goods	34 437	6,8	37 127	7,8	0,5
Total	505 068	100,0	533 330	5,6	5,6

Wholesale trade sales increased by 5,6% in the three months ended February 2020 compared with the three months ended February 2019. The main contributors to this increase were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (10,7% and contributing 2,7 percentage points); and
- food, beverages and tobacco (9,8% and contributing 1,6 percentage points) – see Table C.

Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices (R million)

Month	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 1/
Jan	138 998	140 072	136 357	137 680	134 431	133 237	136 671
Feb	147 556	152 922	161 677	143 550	144 651	143 661	142 310
Mar	148 636	162 436	160 352	159 717	159 536	153 783	
Apr	141 316	139 052	145 691	140 879	136 514	143 745	
May	146 670	149 704	158 174	152 460	155 382	150 487	
Jun	148 766	154 044	159 454	158 058	155 273	145 369	
Jul	144 792	155 319	154 867	151 509	150 834	160 884	
Aug	150 604	151 976	159 571	156 465	159 676	153 354	
Sep	158 911	161 670	167 498	152 801	160 136	154 279	
Oct	165 663	166 035	164 736	164 298	169 544	168 419	
Nov	161 774	169 476	172 520	174 022	172 804	164 061	
Dec	155 228	155 912	161 392	150 131	140 494	144 045	
Total	1 808 914	1 858 618	1 902 289	1 841 570	1 839 275	1 815 324	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

Table 2 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices

Month	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020 year-to-date
Jan	0,8	-2,7	1,0	-2,4	-0,9	2,6	2,6
Feb	3,6	5,7	-11,2	0,8	-0,7	-0,9	0,8
Mar	9,3	-1,3	-0,4	-0,1	-3,6		
Apr	-1,6	4,8	-3,3	-3,1	5,3		
May	2,1	5,7	-3,6	1,9	-3,2		
Jun	3,5	3,5	-0,9	-1,8	-6,4		
Jul	7,3	-0,3	-2,2	-0,4	6,7		
Aug	0,9	5,0	-1,9	2,1	-4,0		
Sep	1,7	3,6	-8,8	4,8	-3,7		
Oct	0,2	-0,8	-0,3	3,2	-0,7		
Nov	4,8	1,8	0,9	-0,7	-5,1		
Dec	0,4	3,5	-7,0	-6,4	2,5		
Total	2,7	2,3	-3,2	-0,1	-1,3		

Table 3 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017	2018	2019	2020
Jan	155 302	149 176	147 099	149 812	-3,8	-3,3	1,0	1,5
Feb	149 765	152 003	151 965	146 948	-3,6	1,9	3,3	-1,9
Mar	153 133	157 683	152 407		2,2	3,7	0,3	
Apr	157 955	147 456	153 884		3,1	-6,5	1,0	
May	152 772	155 267	149 977		-3,3	5,3	-2,5	
Jun	155 256	154 451	148 246		1,6	-0,5	-1,2	
Jul	156 867	153 774	161 251		1,0	-0,4	8,8	
Aug	153 109	155 696	149 998		-2,4	1,2	-7,0	
Sep	147 346	159 150	152 030		-3,8	2,2	1,4	
Oct	152 464	154 732	152 995		3,5	-2,8	0,6	
Nov	157 316	155 062	148 522		3,2	0,2	-2,9	
Dec	154 328	145 647	147 649		-1,9	-6,1	-0,6	

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

Month	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 1/
Jan	138 966	132 824	140 664	149 796	155 500	160 366	172 681
Feb	148 477	145 340	167 909	157 920	166 393	172 810	179 304
Mar	151 465	159 202	166 178	175 902	181 678	187 642	
Apr	144 483	138 746	153 668	155 084	157 693	178 663	
May	149 741	150 562	167 088	169 166	182 054	188 309	
Jun	152 156	156 371	170 734	174 665	184 468	182 647	
Jul	148 916	158 135	167 361	167 530	181 177	200 851	
Aug	153 967	153 293	170 398	173 748	192 524	191 785	
Sep	162 066	162 769	177 849	172 129	194 427	192 740	
Oct	168 125	169 187	176 422	186 969	210 584	211 576	
Nov	162 481	172 870	187 122	199 923	214 427	205 646	
Dec	153 497	159 318	175 335	174 465	171 892	181 345	
Total	1 834 340	1 858 617	2 020 728	2 057 297	2 192 817	2 254 380	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

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

Month	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020 year-to-date
Jan	-4,4	5,9	6,5	3,8	3,1	7,7	7,7
Feb	-2,1	15,5	-5,9	5,4	3,9	3,8	5,6
Mar	5,1	4,4	5,9	3,3	3,3		
Apr	-4,0	10,8	0,9	1,7	13,3		
May	0,5	11,0	1,2	7,6	3,4		
Jun	2,8	9,2	2,3	5,6	-1,0		
Jul	6,2	5,8	0,1	8,1	10,9		
Aug	-0,4	11,2	2,0	10,8	-0,4		
Sep	0,4	9,3	-3,2	13,0	-0,9		
Oct	0,6	4,3	6,0	12,6	0,5		
Nov	6,4	8,2	6,8	7,3	-4,1		
Dec	3,8	10,1	-0,5	-1,5	5,5		
Total	1,3	8,7	1,8	6,6	2,8		

Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2017	2018	2019	2020
Jan	170 236	175 214	180 766	193 698	-2,5	-1,0	2,8	6,0
Feb	166 366	176 164	183 550	189 062	-2,3	0,5	1,5	-2,4
Mar	169 679	181 005	185 731		2,0	2,7	1,2	
Apr	174 149	169 912	193 893		2,6	-6,1	4,4	
May	169 059	182 431	188 495		-2,9	7,4	-2,8	
Jun	172 101	184 619	186 293		1,8	1,2	-1,2	
Jul	169 749	180 411	197 513		-1,4	-2,3	6,0	
Aug	170 541	188 247	188 417		0,5	4,3	-4,6	
Sep	166 606	192 368	187 662		-2,3	2,2	-0,4	
Oct	172 737	192 492	192 970		3,7	0,1	2,8	
Nov	179 273	191 262	186 289		3,8	-0,6	-3,5	
Dec	177 021	175 878	182 803		-1,3	-8,0	-1,9	

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

Type of dealer	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20 1/
Fee or contract basis	8 675	9 580	8 966	6 918	6 340	6 583
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	13 042	13 299	14 826	14 303	11 775	13 157
Food, beverages and tobacco	30 197	33 040	32 713	35 888	28 173	28 363
Textiles, clothing and footwear	4 172	4 933	4 055	2 436	2 572	2 646
Other household goods except precious stones	23 544	23 482	25 172	21 600	19 115	19 533
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	4 919	6 561	5 062	3 743	4 743	5 905
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	45 249	48 663	47 897	47 451	48 501	45 740
Metals and metal ores	4 361	4 613	4 351	2 366	3 516	3 876
Construction and building materials	9 199	11 176	10 996	7 181	7 205	9 031
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	10 534	12 592	11 213	7 592	8 826	9 262
Machinery, equipment and supplies	25 019	27 605	24 904	19 129	20 677	22 057
Other goods	13 830	16 032	15 489	12 738	11 238	13 151
Total	192 740	211 576	205 646	181 345	172 681	179 304

1/ Figures are preliminary.

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

Type of dealer	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20
Fee or contract basis	15,0	23,0	4,9	-5,3	-1,7	-5,1
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	15,6	4,0	-5,3	16,2	4,9	19,8
Food, beverages and tobacco	2,1	10,1	3,5	7,5	16,5	6,7
Textiles, clothing and footwear	2,8	11,3	-7,1	-14,3	-11,6	-18,0
Other household goods except precious stones	-3,7	0,3	3,8	14,3	4,0	-2,2
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	-15,1	15,9	-1,4	-3,0	7,7	59,6
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	-10,2	-14,9	-6,3	7,6	16,1	8,7
Metals and metal ores	-7,6	-9,4	-13,8	-12,3	-1,7	-8,2
Construction and building materials	-0,1	0,4	-0,6	10,5	0,1	4,4
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	2,8	13,4	-4,5	7,2	2,4	-2,5
Machinery, equipment and supplies	4,4	2,5	-18,9	-11,9	-1,2	-9,7
Other goods	4,8	6,7	1,8	13,7	4,9	5,1
Total	-0,9	0,5	-4,1	5,5	7,7	3,8

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

Type of dealer	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20
Fee or contract basis	0,6	0,9	0,2	-0,2	-0,1	-0,2
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	0,9	0,2	-0,4	1,2	0,3	1,3
Food, beverages and tobacco	0,3	1,4	0,5	1,5	2,5	1,0
Textiles, clothing and footwear	0,1	0,2	-0,1	-0,2	-0,2	-0,3
Other household goods except precious stones	-0,5	0,0	0,4	1,6	0,5	-0,3
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	-0,5	0,4	0,0	-0,1	0,2	1,3
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	-2,6	-4,1	-1,5	2,0	4,2	2,1
Metals and metal ores	-0,2	-0,2	-0,3	-0,2	0,0	-0,2
Construction and building materials	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,4	0,0	0,2
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	0,1	0,7	-0,2	0,3	0,1	-0,1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	0,5	0,3	-2,7	-1,5	-0,2	-1,4
Other goods	0,3	0,5	0,1	0,9	0,3	0,4
Total	-0,9	0,5	-4,1	5,5	7,7	3,8

Survey information

- Introduction**
- 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey covering enterprises in the wholesale trade industry (see 4 below). This survey is based on a sample drawn from Stats SA's 2019 business sampling frame (BSF) 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 BSF, which is linked to the SARS administrative data.
 - 2 In order to improve timeliness, some information for the latest month had to be estimated due to late response. These estimates will be revised in future statistical releases as soon as information becomes available. Published wholesale trade sales estimates exclude VAT.
- Purpose of the survey**
- 3 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**
- 4 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**
- 5 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 four digit level.
- Collection rate**
- 6 The preliminary collection rate for the survey on wholesale trade sales for February 2020 was 71,5%. The improved collection rate for January 2020 was 89,8%.

Statistical unit	7	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	8	Revised figures are mainly due to late submission of data to Stats SA, or respondents reporting revisions or corrections to their figures. Preliminary figures, as indicated in the relevant tables, are subject to change and when revised will not be indicated as such.
Related publications	9	Users may also refer to the following publication available from Stats SA: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Stats in Brief</i> issued annually.
Rounding-off of figures	10	Where figures have been rounded off, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and the totals.
Historical data	11	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	12	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 1 423 enterprises from a population of 19 570 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 2019 from Stats SA's business sampling frame (BSF). 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 5,8%.

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 group two, three and four to reflect the total value of sales.

Measure of size classes (Rand)

Enterprise size	Size group	Lower limits	Upper limits
Very small	4	2 656 495	27 000 000
Small	3	27 000 001	144 000 000
Medium	2	144 000 001	288 000 000
Large	1	288 000 001	

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 US Bureau of the Census. 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 which 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 August 2017](#)

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. For 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 is 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.
- Month-on-month percentage change**
- 10** 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**
- 11** 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)**
- 12** 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 <i>System of National Accounts</i> (SNA) in the same way as in the <i>Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities</i> (SIC), Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02 of January 1993.	
Symbols and abbreviations	BSF	Business sampling frame
	GDP	Gross domestic product
	ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
	SIC	Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities
	SARS	South African Revenue Service
	Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
	VAT	Value added tax
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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