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Wholesale trade sales (Preliminary)

February 2023

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Sales at constant 2019 prices: results for February 2023

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

	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	6,3	-1,0	-0,7	-2,2	-2,9	0,8
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	2,1	-1,4	0,9	-3,7	1,2	2,9
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	1,6	1,3	1,8	-0,5	-1,5	-1,9

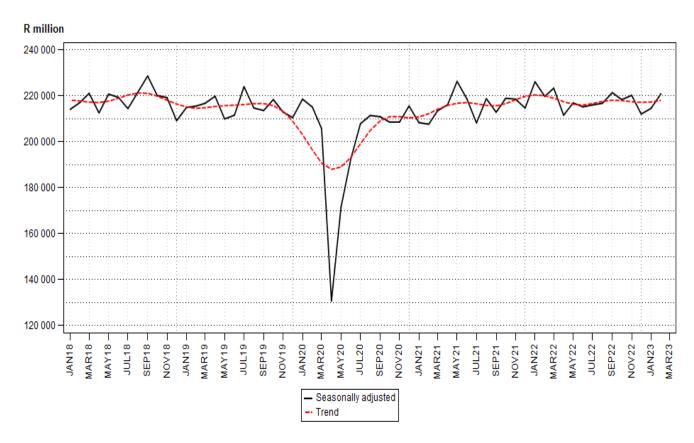
^{1/} Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2019 prices), wholesale trade sales increased by 0,8% in February 2023 compared with February 2022.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales increased by 2,9% in February 2023 compared with January 2023. This followed month-on-month changes of 1,2% in January 2023 and -3,7% in December 2022.

In the three months ended February 2023, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 1,9% compared with the previous three months.

Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices



Sales at current prices: results for February 2023

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

	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	28,2	19,6	17,0	14,1	11,3	14,0
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	4,3	-1,7	1,0	-3,4	0,4	4,1
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	7,4	4,4	4,3	0,4	-0,9	-1,7

^{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 14,0% in February 2023 compared with February 2022. The main contributors were dealers in:

- machinery, equipment and supplies (21,6% and contributing 3,1 percentage points);
- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (10,5% and contributing 2,7 percentage points);
- agricultural raw materials and livestock (37,9% and contributing 2,4 percentage points); and
- 'other' goods (27,2% and contributing 2,0 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 2021 – Feb 2022 (R million)	Weight (%)	Dec 2022 – Feb 2023 (R million)	% change between Dec 2021 – Feb 2022 and Dec 2022 – Feb 2023	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
Fee or contract basis	20 152	2,8	21 197	5,2	0,1
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	48 825	6,7	60 712	24,3	1,6
Food, beverages and tobacco	119 587	16,5	129 820	8,6	1,4
Textiles, clothing and footwear	12 238	1,7	14 149	15,6	0,3
Other household goods except precious stones	76 233	10,5	80 358	5,4	0,6
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	18 782	2,6	11 434	-39,1	-1,0
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	176 137	24,3	218 853	24,3	5,9
Metals and metal ores	18 875	2,6	20 413	8,1	0,2
Construction and building materials	30 318	4,2	35 621	17,5	0,7
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	48 796	6,7	46 327	-5,1	-0,3
Machinery, equipment and supplies	99 797	13,8	114 595	14,8	2,0
Other goods	54 700	7,6	66 317	21,2	1,6
Total	724 439	100,0	819 794	13,2	13,2

Wholesale trade sales increased by 13,2% in the three months ended February 2023 compared with the three months ended February 2022. The main contributors were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (24,3% and contributing 5,9 percentage points);
- machinery, equipment and supplies (14,8% and contributing 2,0 percentage points);
- agricultural raw materials and livestock (24,3% and contributing 1,6 percentage points); and
- 'other' goods (21,2% and contributing 1,6 percentage points) see Table C.

Risenga Maluleke Statistician-General

Tables

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

Month	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 1/
Jan	196 359	191 784	190 022	194 937	179 861	194 441	188 787
Feb	204 200	206 190	204 536	207 027	197 647	209 024	210 610
Mar	226 932	227 707	219 017	210 519	221 554	229 679	
Apr	200 998	194 667	204 372	117 669	197 773	190 186	
May	216 833	221 461	214 021	169 936	224 174	220 463	
Jun	224 709	220 959	206 634	198 698	222 296	217 774	
Jul	215 725	214 670	228 532	213 876	212 647	215 395	
Aug	222 964	227 202	218 154	208 070	220 053	220 999	
Sep	217 809	228 338	218 892	219 828	221 524	235 525	
Oct	234 477	241 801	239 168	229 512	236 243	233 921	
Nov	248 065	245 274	233 031	224 952	241 799	240 190	
Dec	214 175	199 957	205 051	208 940	209 793	205 171	
Total	2 623 246	2 620 010	2 581 430	2 403 964	2 585 364	2 612 768	

^{1/} Figures for the latest month are preliminary.

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

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023 year-to-date
Jan	-2,3	-0,9	2,6	-7,7	8,1	-2,9	-2,9
Feb	1,0	-0,8	1,2	-4,5	5,8	0,8	-1,0
Mar	0,3	-3,8	-3,9	5,2	3,7		
Apr	-3,1	5,0	-42,4	68,1	-3,8		
May	2,1	-3,4	-20,6	31,9	-1,7		
Jun	-1,7	-6,5	-3,8	11,9	-2,0		
Jul	-0,5	6,5	-6,4	-0,6	1,3		
Aug	1,9	-4,0	-4,6	5,8	0,4		
Sep	4,8	-4,1	0,4	0,8	6,3		
Oct	3,1	-1,1	-4,0	2,9	-1,0		
Nov	-1,1	-5,0	-3,5	7,5	-0,7		
Dec	-6,6	2,5	1,9	0,4	-2,2		
Total	-0,1	-1,5	-6,9	7,5	1,1		

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

Mandh		R m	illion			Month-on-mo	nth % change	
Month	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023
Jan	218 554	208 340	226 127	214 542	3,8	-3,4	5,3	1,2
Feb	215 097	207 651	219 725	220 852	-1,6	-0,3	-2,8	2,9
Mar	205 711	213 551	223 335		-4,4	2,8	1,6	
Apr	130 629	216 043	211 539		-36,5	1,2	-5,3	
May	171 462	226 277	216 897		31,3	4,7	2,5	
Jun	192 592	218 646	215 178		12,3	-3,4	-0,8	
Jul	207 826	208 183	216 017		7,9	-4,8	0,4	
Aug	211 454	218 763	216 764		1,7	5,1	0,3	
Sep	210 912	212 844	221 367		-0,3	-2,7	2,1	
Oct	208 539	218 939	218 333		-1,1	2,9	-1,4	
Nov	208 575	218 545	220 210		0,0	-0,2	0,9	
Dec	215 565	214 661	212 060		3,4	-1,8	-3,7	

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

Month	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 1/
Jan	171 527	178 058	183 631	197 732	185 748	228 997	254 763
Feb	180 829	190 533	197 880	210 007	207 142	249 449	284 440
Mar	201 421	208 035	214 863	212 675	235 239	283 576	
Apr	177 582	180 571	204 583	116 718	212 428	239 766	
May	193 708	208 465	215 628	166 140	241 537	285 346	
Jun	200 003	211 230	209 144	195 987	241 178	287 778	
Jul	191 834	207 460	229 989	214 925	233 100	291 330	
Aug	198 955	220 454	219 608	211 461	243 331	295 960	
Sep	197 100	222 633	220 702	223 402	247 984	317 870	
Oct	214 093	241 135	242 269	234 583	266 917	319 131	
Nov	228 926	245 534	235 480	229 852	278 620	326 103	
Dec	199 775	196 828	207 653	213 581	245 993	280 591	
Total	2 355 753	2 510 936	2 581 430	2 427 063	2 839 217	3 405 897	

^{1/} Figures for the latest month are preliminary.

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

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023 year-to-date
Jan	3,8	3,1	7,7	-6,1	23,3	11,3	11,3
Feb	5,4	3,9	6,1	-1,4	20,4	14,0	12,7
Mar	3,3	3,3	-1,0	10,6	20,5		
Apr	1,7	13,3	-42,9	82,0	12,9		
May	7,6	3,4	-23,0	45,4	18,1		
Jun	5,6	-1,0	-6,3	23,1	19,3		
Jul	8,1	10,9	-6,5	8,5	25,0		
Aug	10,8	-0,4	-3,7	15,1	21,6		
Sep	13,0	-0,9	1,2	11,0	28,2		
Oct	12,6	0,5	-3,2	13,8	19,6		
Nov	7,3	-4,1	-2,4	21,2	17,0		
Dec	-1,5	5,5	2,9	15,2	14,1		
Total	6,6	2,8	-6,0	17,0	20,0		

Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices

M (l)		R mi	llion			Month-on-mo	nth % change	
Month	2020	2021	2022	2023	2020	2021	2022	2023
Jan	223 700	216 140	263 857	291 320	4,9	-1,7	4,3	0,4
Feb	222 902	221 018	266 402	303 173	-0,4	2,3	1,0	4,1
Mar	206 344	227 263	272 594		-7,4	2,8	2,3	
Apr	128 507	229 199	263 193		-37,7	0,9	-3,4	
May	168 019	240 674	279 790		30,7	5,0	6,3	
Jun	190 595	236 287	280 815		13,4	-1,8	0,4	
Jul	210 652	229 492	291 877		10,5	-2,9	3,9	
Aug	211 162	240 354	290 018		0,2	4,7	-0,6	
Sep	213 733	236 863	302 453		1,2	-1,5	4,3	
Oct	214 245	248 600	297 306		0,2	5,0	-1,7	
Nov	211 682	253 537	300 371		-1,2	2,0	1,0	
Dec	219 965	252 899	290 300		3,9	-0,3	-3,4	

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

Type of dealer	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23 1/
Fee or contract basis	10 416	9 907	10 095	7 483	5 841	7 873
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	22 644	20 813	26 822	21 336	17 602	21 774
Food, beverages and tobacco	46 666	43 522	47 566	50 892	38 427	40 501
Textiles, clothing and footwear	8 422	7 673	7 001	3 779	4 091	6 279
Other household goods except precious stones	28 857	30 200	32 243	25 246	26 654	28 458
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	6 011	5 579	4 988	4 768	2 463	4 203
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	86 848	93 169	76 196	76 385	71 904	70 564
Metals and metal ores	9 464	9 528	9 915	5 161	6 814	8 438
Construction and building materials	15 028	14 306	16 033	10 442	11 057	14 122
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	22 916	21 280	21 540	15 872	14 937	15 518
Machinery, equipment and supplies	36 190	37 958	45 891	36 271	35 357	42 967
Other goods	24 408	25 195	27 812	22 957	19 616	23 744
Total	317 870	319 131	326 103	280 591	254 763	284 440

^{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-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23
Fee or contract basis	3,8	4,1	1,9	-13,9	20,7	18,9
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	53,3	30,4	40,5	3,6	41,3	37,9
Food, beverages and tobacco	16,2	8,0	10,8	9,0	7,6	8,9
Textiles, clothing and footwear	39,1	13,4	22,6	17,1	5,1	22,6
Other household goods except precious stones	3,6	7,9	4,9	-4,7	5,8	15,9
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	-25,1	-37,7	-25,2	-33,8	-61,6	-18,5
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	65,4	45,5	32,9	48,2	18,4	10,5
Metals and metal ores	28,9	43,0	8,6	-0,3	7,7	14,4
Construction and building materials	18,2	19,4	16,1	27,3	25,5	6,1
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	39,0	6,7	-1,5	-0,1	-9,1	-5,8
Machinery, equipment and supplies	9,7	9,9	16,1	10,3	11,9	21,6
Other goods	28,1	24,2	27,0	18,2	18,1	27,2
Total	28,2	19,6	17,0	14,1	11,3	14,0

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-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23
Fee or contract basis	0,2	0,1	0,1	-0,5	0,4	0,5
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	3,2	1,8	2,8	0,3	2,2	2,4
Food, beverages and tobacco	2,6	1,2	1,7	1,7	1,2	1,3
Textiles, clothing and footwear	0,9	0,3	0,5	0,2	0,1	0,5
Other household goods except precious stones	0,4	0,8	0,5	-0,5	0,6	1,6
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	-0,8	-1,3	-0,6	-1,0	-1,7	-0,4
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	13,9	10,9	6,8	10,1	4,9	2,7
Metals and metal ores	0,9	1,1	0,3	0,0	0,2	0,4
Construction and building materials	0,9	0,9	0,8	0,9	1,0	0,3
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	2,6	0,5	-0,1	0,0	-0,7	-0,4
Machinery, equipment and supplies	1,3	1,3	2,3	1,4	1,6	3,1
Other goods	2,2	1,8	2,1	1,4	1,3	2,0
Total	28,2	19,6	17,0	14,1	11,3	14,0

Survey information

Introduction

- 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey covering enterprises in the wholesale trade industry (see point 4 below). This survey is based on a sample drawn from Stats SA's 2022 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

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

- 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

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

The preliminary collection rate for the survey on wholesale trade sales for February 2023 was 69,4%. The improved collection rate for January 2023 was 71,4%.

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Statistical unit

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

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:
 - Stats in Brief issued annually.

Rounding-off of figures

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

Historical data

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

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

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Technical notes

Survey methodology and design

- 1 The survey is conducted monthly. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of 1 645 enterprises from a population of 19 390 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.
- A stratified random sample was drawn at the SIC four-digit level in April 2022 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:

$$nh = n * (Nh * Sh) / [\Sigma (Ni * Si)].$$

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 limit	Upper limit	
Very small	4	3 266 056	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

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 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 February 2022

Trend cycle

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:

- 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.

Relative standard error

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 – February 2023

	Lower limit (R million)	Sales (R million)	Upper limit (R million)	Relative standard error (RSE) %	
Wholesale trade sales	272 991	284 440	295 889	2,0	

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

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)

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

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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