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# Statistical release

## P6141.2

# Wholesale trade sales (Preliminary)

March 2012

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**Results for March 2012**

**Table A – Key figures for wholesale trade sales**

Actual wholesale trade sales estimates	March 2012 (R million)	% change between March 2011 and March 2012	% change between January to March 2011 and January to March 2012
At current prices	105 327	11,3	17,1
At constant 2000 prices	50 670	5,3	9,8

Seasonally adjusted estimates	March 2012 (R million)	% change between February and March 2012	% change between October to December 2011 and January to March 2012
At current prices	103 028	-5,1	5,1
At constant 2000 prices	49 524	-5,0	4,4

**Wholesale trade sales in real terms**

Measured in real terms (constant 2000 prices), seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 5,0% in March 2012 compared with February 2012. This followed month-on-month changes of 3,8% in February 2012 and 2,7% in January 2012.

Wholesale trade sales increased by 5,3% year-on-year in real terms in March 2012.

**Wholesale trade sales in nominal terms**

Measured in nominal terms (current prices), wholesale trade sales increased by 17,1% in the first quarter of 2012 compared with the first quarter of 2011. The three major contributors to this increase were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (29,1% and contributing 6,5 percentage points);
- machinery, equipment and supplies (19,8% and contributing 3,0 percentage points); and
- ‘other’ household goods except precious stones (19,9% and contributing 2,0 percentage points) – see Table B on page 3.

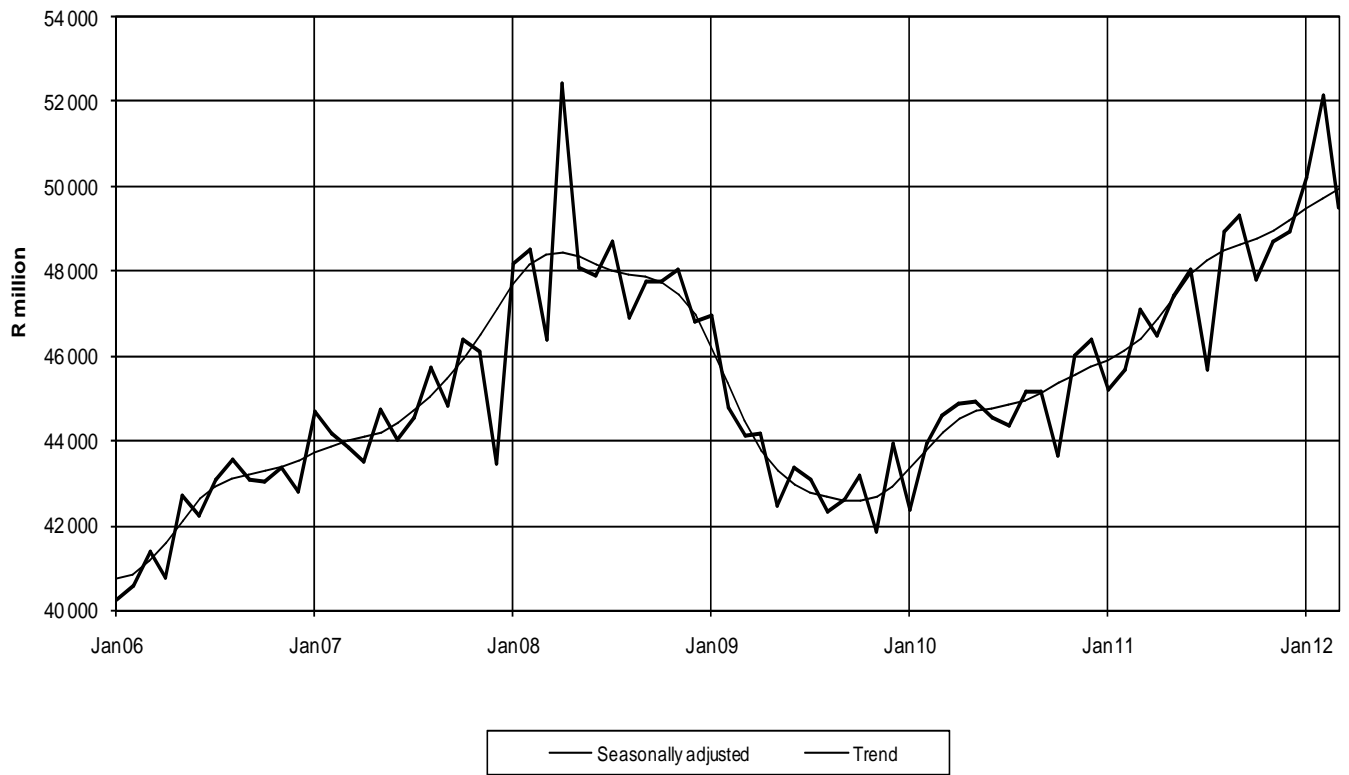
Wholesale trade sales increased by 11,3% year-on-year in nominal terms in March 2012.

**Table B – Contribution of each type of dealer to the percentage change in wholesale trade sales at current prices**

Type of wholesale dealer	Sales January to March 2011 (R million)	Weight 1/	Sales January to March 2012 (R million)	Difference in sales between January to March 2011 and January to March 2012	% change between January to March 2011 and January to March 2012	Contribution (% points) to the % change in total sales 2/
Fee or contract basis	15 323	6,0	16 339	1 016	6,6	0,4
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	12 074	4,7	14 529	2 455	20,3	1,0
Food, beverages and tobacco	40 762	16,0	44 200	3 438	8,4	1,3
Textiles, clothing and footwear	7 166	2,8	7 842	676	9,4	0,3
Other household goods except precious stones	25 320	10,0	30 366	5 046	19,9	2,0
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	1 514	0,6	1 831	317	20,9	0,1
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	57 068	22,4	73 670	16 602	29,1	6,5
Metals and metal ores	9 977	3,9	10 293	316	3,2	0,1
Construction and building materials	13 216	5,2	14 691	1 475	11,2	0,6
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	11 569	4,5	12 973	1 404	12,1	0,5
Machinery, equipment and supplies	39 188	15,4	46 957	7 769	19,8	3,0
Other goods	21 285	8,4	24 342	3 057	14,4	1,2
<b>Total 3/</b>	<b>254 460</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>298 034</b>	<b>43 574</b>	<b>17,1</b>	<b>17,1</b>

- 1/ Weight is the percentage contribution of each type of dealer to the total wholesale trade sales for the three months up to the current month of the previous year.
- 2/ The contribution to the percentage change is calculated by multiplying the percentage change of each type of dealer with its corresponding weight, divided by 100.
- 3/ The figures have been rounded off. Therefore discrepancies may occur between the sums of the component items and the totals.

**Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices**



**PJ Lehohla**  
**Statistician-General**

**Tables**

**Table 1 – Wholesale trade sales according to type of dealer at current prices (R million)**

Year and month 1/	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D	Type E	Type F	Type G	Type H	Type I	Type J	Type K	Type L	Total 2/	
2011	January	4 529	3 711	12 954	1 941	7 381	250	17 695	2 799	3 694	3 613	10 883	6 518	75 966
	February	5 032	3 984	13 461	2 316	8 498	420	18 388	3 344	4 491	4 086	12 846	6 971	83 836
	March	5 762	4 379	14 347	2 909	9 441	844	20 985	3 834	5 031	3 870	15 459	7 796	94 658
	April	5 615	3 763	13 084	2 578	8 884	526	20 145	3 051	4 217	2 878	12 670	7 239	84 651
	May	6 368	4 860	14 141	2 474	9 723	866	19 599	3 712	4 637	3 622	13 567	7 777	91 346
	June	5 344	4 919	13 833	2 164	10 456	1 025	21 819	3 703	4 968	3 873	15 536	7 596	95 235
	July	6 088	5 378	13 859	2 481	9 804	665	22 387	3 083	4 689	3 437	12 853	7 408	92 133
	August	5 999	5 561	15 835	2 899	10 304	729	22 117	3 814	5 108	3 959	15 589	7 864	99 778
	September	6 333	5 877	15 061	3 101	10 956	597	22 586	3 766	5 600	4 886	17 644	7 480	103 886
	October	5 992	5 686	14 889	3 397	11 486	600	23 177	3 854	5 413	5 004	16 166	8 324	103 988
	November	5 499	6 198	16 257	3 577	12 615	612	26 135	3 854	6 162	5 084	16 083	9 923	111 999
	December	6 381	5 827	18 303	2 382	9 909	956	25 205	2 170	4 318	4 110	15 449	9 055	104 065
<b>Total</b>	<b>68 942</b>	<b>60 143</b>	<b>176 024</b>	<b>32 219</b>	<b>119 457</b>	<b>8 090</b>	<b>260 238</b>	<b>40 984</b>	<b>58 328</b>	<b>48 422</b>	<b>174 745</b>	<b>93 951</b>	<b>1 141 541</b>	
2012	January	5 185	4 770	14 095	2 205	9 287	469	22 176	2 860	4 202	4 290	12 480	8 530	90 549
	February	5 198	5 063	14 163	2 759	10 132	814	26 788	3 762	5 000	4 505	15 984	7 990	102 158
	March	5 956	4 696	15 942	2 878	10 947	548	24 706	3 671	5 489	4 178	18 493	7 822	105 327

1/ Figures are preliminary.

2/ The figures have been rounded off. Therefore discrepancies may occur between the sums of the component items and the totals.

**Description of type of dealer included in a specific group type as indicated in Table 1 <sup>1/</sup>**

Group type	Type of dealers included in group type	Group type	Type of dealers included in group type
Type A	Wholesale trade on a fee or contract basis	Type G	Wholesale trade in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products
Type B	Wholesale trade in agricultural raw materials and livestock	Type H	Wholesale trade in metals and metal ores
Type C	Wholesale trade in food, beverages and tobacco	Type I	Wholesale trade in construction and building materials
Type D	Wholesale trade in textiles, clothing and footwear	Type J	Wholesale trade in other intermediate products, waste and scrap
Type E	Wholesale trade in other household goods except precious stones	Type K	Wholesale trade in machinery, equipment and supplies
Type F	Wholesale trade in precious stones, jewellery and silverware	Type L	Wholesale trade in other goods

1/ See note 4 on page 9 for more detailed specifications.

**Table 2 – Total wholesale trade sales at current prices (R million)**

Month	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 <sup>1/</sup>	2012 <sup>1/</sup>
January	43 364	48 134	59 473	71 107	74 908	68 579	75 966	90 549
February	45 391	52 787	63 791	77 980	76 282	76 538	83 836	102 158
March	48 472	57 132	68 300	81 364	80 764	84 241	94 658	105 327
April	49 848	51 753	62 658	85 056	73 272	77 592	84 651	
May	51 844	60 066	70 952	88 387	74 302	82 276	91 346	
June	53 756	60 785	71 058	89 782	76 383	83 938	95 235	
July	53 604	62 772	72 625	93 161	77 126	83 907	92 133	
August	55 219	65 187	75 081	90 390	75 847	85 721	99 778	
September	57 356	65 211	74 209	91 455	77 114	87 088	103 886	
October	59 279	69 468	81 932	95 706	81 995	86 919	103 988	
November	63 525	73 992	85 679	99 374	84 262	97 130	111 999	
December	54 966	64 317	72 340	86 541	81 536	90 541	104 065	
<b>Total</b>	<b>636 624</b>	<b>731 604</b>	<b>858 098</b>	<b>1 050 303</b>	<b>933 791</b>	<b>1 004 470</b>	<b>1 141 541</b>	

1/ Preliminary.

**Table 3 – Percentage change in total wholesale trade sales at current prices 1/**

Month	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
January	11,9	11,0	23,6	19,6	5,3	-8,4	10,8	19,2
February	3,7	16,3	20,8	22,2	-2,2	0,3	9,5	21,9
March	2,3	17,9	19,5	19,1	-0,7	4,3	12,4	11,3
April	17,8	3,8	21,1	35,7	-13,9	5,9	9,1	
May	1,5	15,9	18,1	24,6	-15,9	10,7	11,0	
June	2,2	13,1	16,9	26,4	-14,9	9,9	13,5	
July	6,4	17,1	15,7	28,3	-17,2	8,8	9,8	
August	7,4	18,1	15,2	20,4	-16,1	13,0	16,4	
September	10,3	13,7	13,8	23,2	-15,7	12,9	19,3	
October	5,3	17,2	17,9	16,8	-14,3	6,0	19,6	
November	5,9	16,5	15,8	16,0	-15,2	15,3	15,3	
December	6,2	17,0	12,5	19,6	-5,8	11,0	14,9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,5</b>	<b>14,9</b>	<b>17,3</b>	<b>22,4</b>	<b>-11,1</b>	<b>7,6</b>	<b>13,6</b>	

1/ The percentage change is the difference between wholesale trade of the relevant month of the current year and the corresponding month of the previous year expressed as a percentage.

**Table 4 – Seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at current prices (R million)**

Month	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
January	49 826	55 401	68 282	81 394	85 669	78 438	87 059	103 973
February	47 820	56 003	68 009	83 200	81 313	81 425	89 097	108 543
March	48 476	57 220	68 248	80 850	79 798	82 735	92 687	103 028
April	53 666	55 846	67 576	91 622	78 748	83 345	90 797	
May	51 504	59 823	70 879	88 792	74 972	83 492	92 990	
June	52 992	60 046	70 472	89 313	76 079	83 655	94 920	
July	53 309	62 033	71 528	91 628	75 902	82 742	90 954	
August	54 384	63 965	73 648	88 801	74 722	84 659	98 654	
September	56 121	63 826	72 736	89 659	75 553	85 130	101 398	
October	54 827	64 360	76 067	89 145	76 699	81 634	97 871	
November	56 331	65 609	76 158	88 792	75 468	87 154	100 565	
December	55 704	64 985	72 663	86 208	80 508	88 819	101 783	

**Table 5 – Total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices (R million)**

Month	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 <sup>1/</sup>	2012 <sup>1/</sup>
January	33 454	35 309	39 340	42 555	41 438	37 293	39 639	43 910
February	34 890	38 700	41 940	46 002	42 389	41 499	43 054	49 090
March	37 056	41 637	44 208	46 930	44 831	45 483	48 117	50 670
April	37 816	37 386	39 925	48 168	40 733	41 430	42 984	
May	39 145	42 811	44 610	47 560	41 792	43 920	46 255	
June	40 532	42 703	44 247	47 921	43 337	44 542	48 073	
July	40 030	43 420	44 949	49 155	43 501	44 726	46 034	
August	41 105	44 107	46 280	47 459	42 710	45 551	49 331	
September	42 393	43 880	45 636	48 769	43 610	46 469	50 832	
October	43 710	46 273	49 823	51 156	46 049	46 368	50 719	
November	46 600	48 878	51 907	53 878	46 892	51 450	54 428	
December	40 293	42 604	43 694	47 530	45 008	47 814	50 603	
<b>Total</b>	<b>477 024</b>	<b>507 708</b>	<b>536 559</b>	<b>577 083</b>	<b>522 290</b>	<b>536 545</b>	<b>570 069</b>	

1/ Preliminary.

**Table 6 – Percentage change in total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices 1/**

Month	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
January	8,9	5,5	11,4	8,2	-2,6	-10,0	6,3	10,8
February	1,2	10,9	8,4	9,7	-7,9	-2,1	3,7	14,0
March	-0,7	12,4	6,2	6,2	-4,5	1,5	5,8	5,3
April	14,5	-1,1	6,8	20,6	-15,4	1,7	3,8	
May	-1,5	9,4	4,2	6,6	-12,1	5,1	5,3	
June	-0,8	5,4	3,6	8,3	-9,6	2,8	7,9	
July	2,0	8,5	3,5	9,4	-11,5	2,8	2,9	
August	3,1	7,3	4,9	2,5	-10,0	6,7	8,3	
September	6,0	3,5	4,0	6,9	-10,6	6,6	9,4	
October	1,6	5,9	7,7	2,7	-10,0	0,7	9,4	
November	1,7	4,9	6,2	3,8	-13,0	9,7	5,8	
December	1,4	5,7	2,6	8,8	-5,3	6,2	5,8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,8</b>	<b>6,4</b>	<b>5,7</b>	<b>7,6</b>	<b>-9,5</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>6,2</b>	

1/ The percentage change is the difference between wholesale trade of the relevant month of the current year and the corresponding month of the previous year expressed as a percentage.

**Table 7 – Seasonally adjusted total wholesale trade sales at constant 2000 prices (R million)**

Month	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
January	38 174	40 249	44 686	48 205	46 975	42 348	45 192	50 228
February	36 461	40 591	44 150	48 523	44 796	43 939	45 661	52 135
March	36 822	41 399	43 855	46 369	44 119	44 590	47 078	49 524
April	41 104	40 778	43 527	52 420	44 162	44 857	46 462	
May	38 862	42 708	44 741	48 075	42 476	44 911	47 423	
June	39 934	42 245	44 034	47 887	43 371	44 565	48 060	
July	39 885	43 096	44 548	48 682	43 101	44 373	45 687	
August	40 668	43 541	45 722	46 925	42 310	45 167	48 936	
September	41 649	43 098	44 812	47 765	42 587	45 181	49 300	
October	40 611	43 050	46 401	47 759	43 164	43 625	47 811	
November	41 353	43 339	46 084	48 051	41 864	46 017	48 728	
December	40 725	42 780	43 475	46 836	43 924	46 366	48 919	



**Table 8 – Quarterly estimates and percentage changes**

Actual wholesale trade sales estimates	January to March 2011 (R million)	January to March 2012 (R million)	% change between January to March 2011 and January to March 2012
At current prices	254 460	298 034	17,1
At constant 2000 prices	130 810	143 670	9,8

**Table 9 – Seasonally adjusted monthly and quarterly estimates and percentage changes**

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales estimates	February 2012 (R million)	March 2012 (R million)	% change between February and March 2012	October to December 2011 (R million)	January to March 2012 (R million)	% change between October to December 2011 and January to March 2012
At current prices	108 543	103 028	-5,1	300 219	315 544	5,1
At constant 2000 prices	52 135	49 524	-5,0	145 458	151 887	4,4

**Explanatory notes**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>	Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey of the wholesale trade industry, covering wholesale enterprises (see 4 below). This survey is based on a sample drawn from the 2011 business sampling frame (BSF) that contains businesses registered for value added tax (VAT).
	<b>2</b>	As is usual, information for the latest month had to be estimated for respondents who have not reported by the cut-off date for production of results. These estimates will be revised in future statistical releases when their reported information becomes available. Published wholesale trade sales estimates exclude VAT.
<b>Purpose of the survey</b>	<b>3</b>	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.
<b>Scope of the survey</b>	<b>4</b>	<p>This survey covers wholesale enterprises according to the following types of dealer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in agricultural raw materials and livestock;</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in food, beverages and tobacco;</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in textiles, clothing and footwear;</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in precious stones, jewellery and silverware;</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products;</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in metals and metal ores;</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in construction materials, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies;</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in other intermediate products, waste and scrap;</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in machinery, equipment and supplies; and</li> <li>• Wholesale trade in other goods. This group covers general wholesale trade and other wholesale trade not classified elsewhere.</li> </ul>
<b>Classification</b>	<b>5</b>	The 1993 edition of the <i>Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (SIC)</i> , Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02, was used to classify the statistical units in the survey. The SIC is based on the 1990 <i>International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC)</i> 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.
<b>Collection rate</b>	<b>6</b>	The preliminary collection rate for the survey on wholesale trade sales for March 2012 was 84,7%. The improved collection rate for the survey on wholesale trade sales for February 2012 was 92,9%.
<b>Statistical unit</b>	<b>7</b>	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.
<b>Survey methodology and design</b>	<b>8</b>	The survey is conducted monthly. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of about 1 000 enterprises from a population of about 20 000 enterprises. Completed questionnaires are required to be returned to Stats SA within 10 days after the end of the reference month. Fax and telephone reminders are used to follow up non-respondents.

- 9** The value of sales is obtained monthly from the sample of about 1 000 enterprises (which was drawn in April 2011 at the SIC four-digit level) from a population of about 20 000 wholesale enterprises. The wholesale industry 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 size enterprises). 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.
- Weighting methodology** **10** 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, which are in line with international best practice, are described in more detail on the Stats SA website at <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/publicationsearch.asp>.
- Constant prices** **11** Stats SA compiles its monthly estimates of wholesale trade sales at current prices from a survey of wholesalers in the formal sector. To arrive at estimates of wholesale trade sales at constant prices, sales at current prices are deflated using the “all groups” producer price index (PPI) excluding ‘Electricity, gas, steam and water’.
- Seasonal adjustment** **12** Seasonally adjusted estimates are generated each month, using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the US Bureau of the Census, 1968. 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.
- Trend cycle** **13** The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimates of the underlying trend cycle.
- Reliability of estimates** **14** 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.
- 15** 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.
- Revised figures** **16** Revised figures are due to respondents reporting revisions or corrections to their figures and late submission of their data to Stats SA. Preliminary figures are indicated in the relevant tables. Data are edited at the enterprise level.
- Related publications** **17** Users may also wish to refer to the following publications available from Stats SA:
- *Bulletin of Statistics* issued quarterly
  - *SA Statistics* issued annually
- Rounding-off of figures** **18** Where figures have been rounded off discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and the totals.

**Symbols and abbreviations**

<b>19</b>	BR	Business register
	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
	*	Revised
	-	Figures not available

**Technical note**

**Neyman optimal allocation**

A stratified random sample was drawn from the population of enterprises on 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. The Neyman optimal allocation formula given below was used to allocate samples to each stratum.

$$n_h = \frac{N_h S_h}{\sum N_h S_h}$$

$N_h$  and  $S_h$  are the stratum population size and the stratum variance respectively.

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 did not exceed 5,6%.

**Class limits**

Enterprise size	Size group	Lower limits	Upper limits
Very small	4	0	24 000 000
Small	3	24 000 001	128 000 000
Medium	2	128 000 001	256 000 000
Large	1	256 000 001	

**Glossary**

- Enterprise** The 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, Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02 of January 1993 (SIC)*.
- Statistical unit** A statistical unit is a unit about which statistics are tabulated, compiled or published. The statistical units are derived from and linked to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) administrative data.
- 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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