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Statistical release

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Wholesale trade sales (Preliminary)

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Sales at constant 2012 prices: results for March 2015

Table A – Key growth rates in wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices

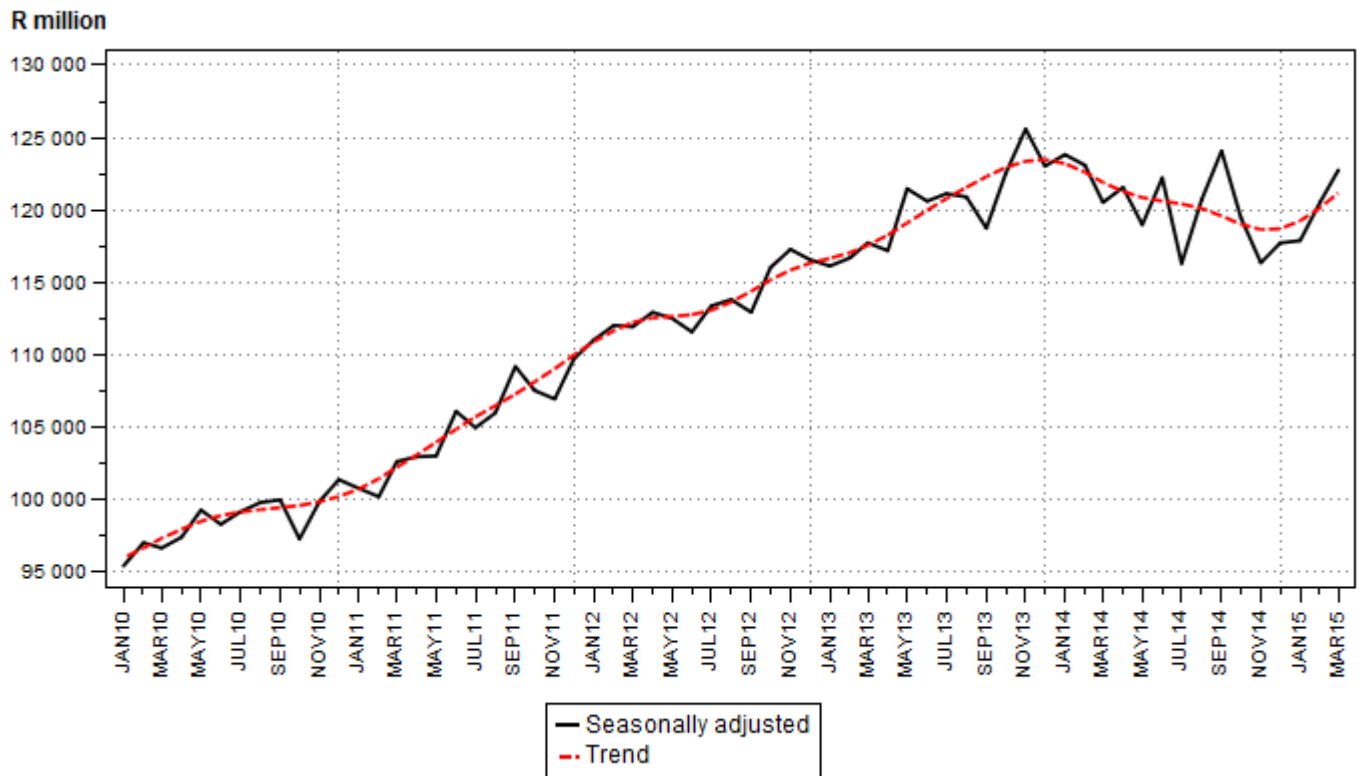
	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	-2,0	-8,4	-2,9	-6,7	-2,1	3,2
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-3,7	-2,6	1,2	0,1	2,3	1,8
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	1,9	0,2	-2,1	-3,4	-1,0	2,2

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

Measured in real terms (constant 2012 prices), wholesale trade sales increased by 3,2% year-on-year in March 2015. Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales increased by 1,8% in March 2015 compared with February 2015. This followed month-on-month changes of 2,3% in February 2015 and 0,1% in January 2015.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales increased by 2,2% in the first quarter of 2015 compared with the previous quarter.

Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices



Sales at current prices: results for March 2015

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

	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	3,9	-3,3	1,8	-5,1	-1,3	5,0
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-2,3	-3,1	-0,1	-1,0	3,7	2,7
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	2,4	0,9	-1,7	-4,2	-2,5	1,2

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 5,0% in March 2015 compared with March 2014. The major contributors to this increase were dealers in:

- food, beverages and tobacco (15,2% and contributing 2,4 percentage points); and
- ‘other’ household goods except precious stones (16,2% and contributing 1,6 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	Jan – Mar 2014 (R million)	Weight	Jan – Mar 2015 (R million)	% change between Jan – Mar 2014 and Jan – Mar 2015	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
Fee or contract basis	14 019	3,6	13 885	-1,0	0,0
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	25 179	6,4	24 616	-2,2	-0,1
Food, beverages and tobacco	59 899	15,3	64 111	7,0	1,1
Textiles, clothing and footwear	9 135	2,3	8 556	-6,3	-0,1
Other household goods except precious stones	38 015	9,7	40 790	7,3	0,7
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	8 926	2,3	8 232	-7,8	-0,2
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	90 003	23,0	76 309	-15,2	-3,5
Metals and metal ores	10 814	2,8	11 147	3,1	0,1
Construction and building materials	21 121	5,4	24 084	14,0	0,8
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	16 182	4,1	16 728	3,4	0,1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	66 595	17,0	64 468	-3,2	-0,5
Other goods	31 608	8,1	37 288	18,0	1,5
Total	391 496	100,0	390 216	-0,3	-0,3

Wholesale trade sales decreased by 0,3% in the first quarter of 2015 compared with the first quarter of 2014. The major contributor to this decrease was dealers in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (-15,2% and contributing -3,5 percentage points) – see Table C.

PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices (R million)

Month	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 1/
Jan	91 317	82 182	87 352	98 658	105 286	112 814	105 283
Feb	93 413	91 453	94 878	109 710	112 375	119 168	116 638
Mar	98 795	100 231	106 035	113 935	113 496	120 087	123 917
Apr	89 765	91 301	95 055	104 066	114 111	114 438	
May	92 097	96 789	101 729	113 140	122 066	118 051	
Jun	95 501	98 158	105 815	109 607	116 242	119 442	
Jul	95 864	98 563	101 735	111 576	121 397	116 344	
Aug	94 121	100 382	108 588	116 502	122 494	120 263	
Sep	96 104	102 402	111 958	111 845	119 464	127 315	
Oct	101 480	102 182	113 088	125 728	132 488	129 778	
Nov	103 336	113 380	120 443	131 605	138 614	126 904	
Dec	99 183	105 368	112 388	116 446	123 597	120 064	
Total	1 150 976	1 182 391	1 259 064	1 362 818	1 441 630	1 444 668	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

Table 2 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices

Month	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015 year-to-date
Jan	-10,0	6,3	12,9	6,7	7,2	-6,7	-6,7
Feb	-2,1	3,7	15,6	2,4	6,0	-2,1	-4,3
Mar	1,5	5,8	7,5	-0,4	5,8	3,2	-1,8
Apr	1,7	4,1	9,5	9,7	0,3		
May	5,1	5,1	11,2	7,9	-3,3		
Jun	2,8	7,8	3,6	6,1	2,8		
Jul	2,8	3,2	9,7	8,8	-4,2		
Aug	6,7	8,2	7,3	5,1	-1,8		
Sep	6,6	9,3	-0,1	6,8	6,6		
Oct	0,7	10,7	11,2	5,4	-2,0		
Nov	9,7	6,2	9,3	5,3	-8,4		
Dec	6,2	6,7	3,6	6,1	-2,9		
Total	2,7	6,5	8,2	5,8	0,2		

Table 3 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015
Jan	111 037	116 131	123 824	117 888	1,2	-0,4	0,6	0,1
Feb	112 042	116 688	123 090	120 541	0,9	0,5	-0,6	2,3
Mar	111 941	117 728	120 526	122 737	-0,1	0,9	-2,1	1,8
Apr	112 935	117 192	121 556		0,9	-0,5	0,9	
May	112 531	121 465	118 982		-0,4	3,6	-2,1	
Jun	111 584	120 614	122 217		-0,8	-0,7	2,7	
Jul	113 376	121 124	116 299		1,6	0,4	-4,8	
Aug	113 818	120 902	120 694		0,4	-0,2	3,8	
Sep	112 943	118 749	124 074		-0,8	-1,8	2,8	
Oct	116 035	122 516	119 472		2,7	3,2	-3,7	
Nov	117 280	125 589	116 356		1,1	2,5	-2,6	
Dec	116 578	123 029	117 722		-0,6	-2,0	1,2	

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

Month	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 1/
Jan	78 679	72 030	79 790	95 891	108 276	123 955	117 616
Feb	80 120	80 391	88 055	107 479	115 902	132 438	130 760
Mar	84 829	88 481	99 423	112 248	118 034	135 103	141 840
Apr	76 960	81 499	89 220	103 092	118 812	129 408	
May	78 041	86 418	95 752	112 893	127 015	133 515	
Jun	80 227	88 164	99 912	109 110	121 691	135 240	
Jul	81 009	88 130	97 046	111 168	127 989	131 992	
Aug	79 665	90 036	104 682	116 778	130 335	136 689	
Sep	80 996	91 470	109 056	112 468	127 873	145 019	
Oct	86 122	91 294	110 511	127 608	142 673	148 285	
Nov	88 504	102 018	118 125	134 776	149 807	144 862	
Dec	85 639	95 099	110 158	119 308	134 332	136 794	
Total	980 791	1 055 030	1 201 730	1 362 819	1 522 739	1 633 300	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

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

Month	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015 year-to-date
Jan	-8,5	10,8	20,2	12,9	14,5	-5,1	-5,1
Feb	0,3	9,5	22,1	7,8	14,3	-1,3	-3,1
Mar	4,3	12,4	12,9	5,2	14,5	5,0	-0,3
Apr	5,9	9,5	15,5	15,2	8,9		
May	10,7	10,8	17,9	12,5	5,1		
Jun	9,9	13,3	9,2	11,5	11,1		
Jul	8,8	10,1	14,6	15,1	3,1		
Aug	13,0	16,3	11,6	11,6	4,9		
Sep	12,9	19,2	3,1	13,7	13,4		
Oct	6,0	21,0	15,5	11,8	3,9		
Nov	15,3	15,8	14,1	11,2	-3,3		
Dec	11,0	15,8	8,3	12,6	1,8		
Total	7,6	13,9	13,4	11,7	7,3		

Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015
Jan	107 990	120 322	137 203	131 543	-1,0	1,6	3,8	-1,0
Feb	107 656	121 428	138 086	136 378	-0,3	0,9	0,6	3,7
Mar	109 780	121 447	134 297	140 069	2,0	0,0	-2,7	2,7
Apr	111 162	122 422	138 312		1,3	0,8	3,0	
May	113 407	127 594	135 156		2,0	4,2	-2,3	
Jun	110 382	125 296	137 632		-2,7	-1,8	1,8	
Jul	112 461	128 015	132 554		1,9	2,2	-3,7	
Aug	114 430	128 690	136 988		1,8	0,5	3,3	
Sep	112 081	125 796	140 605		-2,1	-2,2	2,6	
Oct	118 494	132 595	137 333		5,7	5,4	-2,3	
Nov	120 627	135 993	133 096		1,8	2,6	-3,1	
Dec	118 414	132 234	132 900		-1,8	-2,8	-0,1	

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

Type of dealer	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15 1/
Fee or contract basis	5 797	5 027	5 533	4 270	5 124	4 491
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	9 536	9 829	10 712	7 586	8 819	8 211
Food, beverages and tobacco	23 492	23 451	29 341	18 193	21 494	24 424
Textiles, clothing and footwear	4 055	4 007	2 629	2 056	2 920	3 580
Other household goods except precious stones	15 901	15 440	13 032	11 502	13 381	15 907
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	3 146	2 558	2 359	2 480	3 117	2 635
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	30 501	29 645	27 412	24 541	24 099	27 669
Metals and metal ores	4 728	4 189	2 156	3 264	4 001	3 882
Construction and building materials	9 582	9 665	5 552	6 768	8 324	8 992
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	6 877	6 685	5 949	5 630	5 594	5 504
Machinery, equipment and supplies	22 729	21 027	19 345	18 833	20 650	24 985
Other goods	11 941	13 340	12 774	12 492	13 236	11 560
Total	148 285	144 862	136 794	117 616	130 760	141 840

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	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15
Fee or contract basis	-0,9	-17,0	2,9	-6,8	11,1	-6,9
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	0,1	-4,9	7,1	-10,3	2,2	1,5
Food, beverages and tobacco	9,9	1,5	5,0	-2,0	6,8	15,2
Textiles, clothing and footwear	7,7	-14,1	-2,9	-24,7	4,0	-0,5
Other household goods except precious stones	6,9	0,6	14,2	-3,2	7,5	16,2
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	2,1	-31,0	17,4	12,3	-11,3	-17,7
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	-1,3	-6,0	-11,1	-18,3	-18,1	-9,5
Metals and metal ores	13,2	-2,1	-10,4	-4,6	0,7	13,6
Construction and building materials	3,6	15,7	-3,6	4,6	15,3	21,0
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	5,2	4,5	28,0	15,3	-10,5	9,0
Machinery, equipment and supplies	4,4	-9,0	2,0	-7,8	-7,8	5,2
Other goods	3,1	3,2	4,1	21,5	19,8	12,5
Total	3,9	-3,3	1,8	-5,1	-1,3	5,0

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

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

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 2014 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 March 2015 was 88,9%. The improved collection rate for February 2015 was 92,8%.

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 publications available from Stats SA: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly;• <i>Stats in Brief</i> issued annually; and• <i>South African Statistics</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: http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1849
Past publications	12	Past wholesale trade sales releases are available on the Stats SA website. To access the releases electronically, use the following link: http://beta2.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1866&PPN=P6141.2&SCH=5717

Technical notes

Survey methodology and design

- 1 The survey is conducted monthly. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of 1 090 enterprises from a population of 18 776 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 2014 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 6,0%.

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	1 913 788	27 000 000
Small	3	27 000 001	128 000 000
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, 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. 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 June 2014](#)

- 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 in three stages:
- (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 PPI for food products, beverages and tobacco.
 - (3) Deflate the remaining wholesale trade sales with the headline PPI (final manufacturing) excluding the PPIs for food products, beverages and tobacco; and transport equipment.
- Total wholesale trade sales at constant prices is obtained by aggregating (1), (2) and (3).
- 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 *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).

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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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 eleven official languages. Since the releases are used extensively, not only locally but also by international economic and social-scientific communities. Stats SA releases are published in English only.

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