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**(Preliminary)**

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**Sales at constant 2012 prices: results for May 2017**

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

|  | Dec-16 | Jan-17 | Feb-17 | Mar-17 | Apr-17 | May-17 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Year-on-year % change, unadjusted            | 3,9    | 2,1    | -9,2   | 1,2    | -2,7   | -4,1   |
| Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted | 3,1    | -3,8   | -3,8   | 3,0    | 2,3    | -3,6   |
| 3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/     | 0,3    | -0,1   | -1,6   | -3,6   | -2,6   | -0,6   |

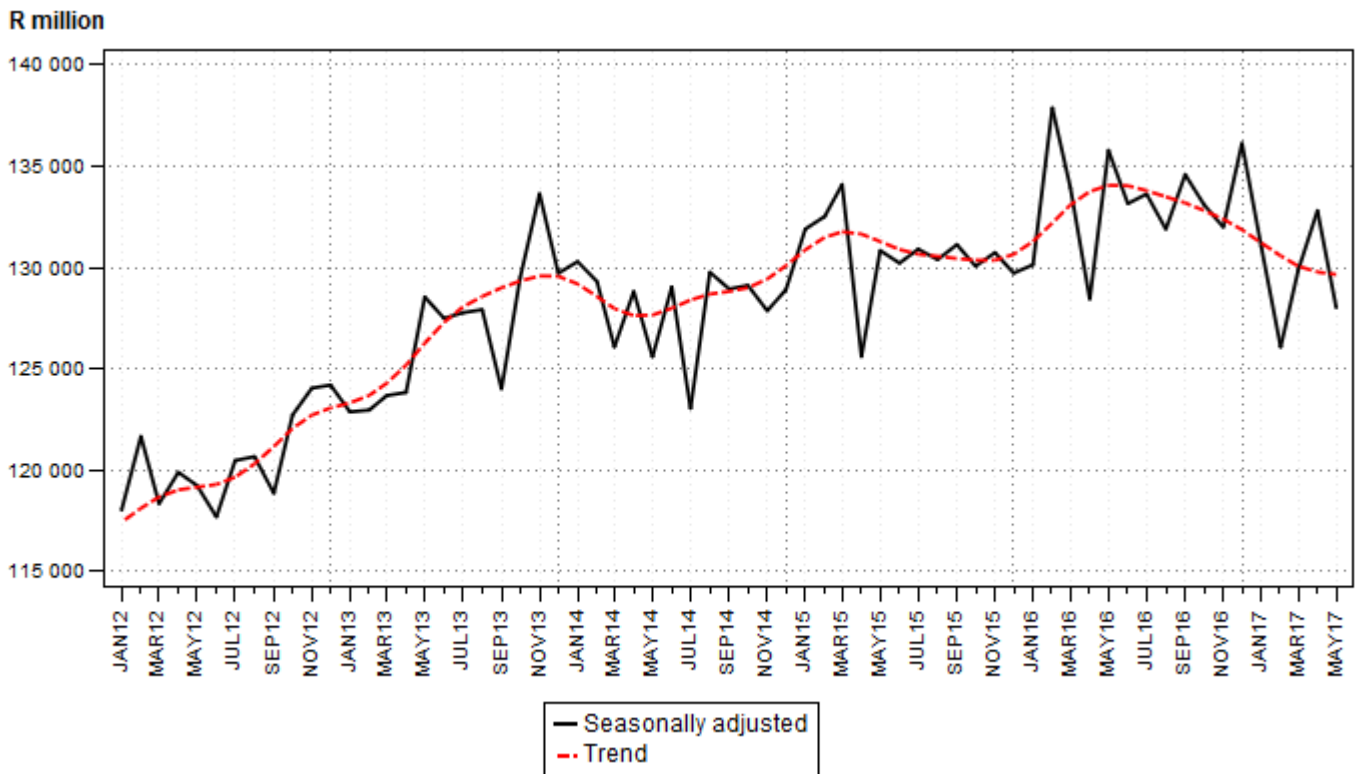
1/ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2012 prices), wholesale trade sales decreased by 4,1% in May 2017 compared with May 2016.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 3,6% in May 2017 compared with April 2017. This followed month-on-month changes of 2,3% in April 2017 and 3,0% in March 2017.

In the three months ended May 2017, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 0,6% compared with the previous three months.

**Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices**



## Sales at current prices: results for May 2017

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

|  | Dec-16 | Jan-17 | Feb-17 | Mar-17 | Apr-17 | May-17 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Year-on-year % change, unadjusted            | 10,9   | 6,8    | -4,2   | 7,3    | 0,9    | 0,9    |
| Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted | 3,4    | -2,4   | -1,7   | 1,9    | 1,9    | -3,3   |
| 3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/     | 0,7    | 2,0    | 1,2    | -0,4   | -0,4   | 0,0    |

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 0,9% in May 2017 compared with May 2016. The main contributor to this increase was dealers in 'other' goods (12,7% and contributing 1,1 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                                       | Mar – May 2016 (R million) | Weight       | Mar – May 2017 (R million) | % change between Mar – May 2016 and Mar – May 2017 | Contribution (% points) to the total % change |
|--|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| Fee or contract basis                                | 18 842                     | 4,1          | 19 541                     | 3,7  | 0,2   |
| Agricultural raw materials and livestock             | 33 490                     | 7,2          | 31 209                     | -6,8   | -0,5  |
| Food, beverages and tobacco                          | 74 279                     | 16,1         | 79 743                     | 7,4  | 1,2   |
| Textiles, clothing and footwear                      | 10 349                     | 2,2          | 8 982                      | -13,2  | -0,3  |
| Other household goods except precious stones         | 61 781                     | 13,4         | 61 105                     | -1,1   | -0,1  |
| Precious stones, jewellery and silverware            | 11 106                     | 2,4          | 12 689                     | 14,3   | 0,3   |
| Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products | 83 879                     | 18,1         | 91 030                     | 8,5  | 1,5   |
| Metals and metal ores                                | 11 227                     | 2,4          | 11 619                     | 3,5  | 0,1   |
| Construction and building materials                  | 30 813                     | 6,7          | 31 185                     | 1,2  | 0,1   |
| Other intermediate products, waste and scrap         | 19 051                     | 4,1          | 19 791                     | 3,9  | 0,2   |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies                    | 68 195                     | 14,7         | 66 802                     | -2,0   | -0,3  |
| Other goods  | 39 555                     | 8,6          | 43 202                     | 9,2  | 0,8   |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>462 567</b>             | <b>100,0</b> | <b>476 900</b>             | <b>3,1</b>   | <b>3,1</b>                                    |

Wholesale trade sales increased by 3,1% in the three months ended May 2017 compared with the three months ended May 2016. The main contributors to this increase were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (8,5% and contributing 1,5 percentage points);
- food, beverages and tobacco (7,4% and contributing 1,2 percentage points); and
- 'other' goods (9,2% and contributing 0,8 of a percentage point) – see Table C.

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

## Tables

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

| Month        | 2011             | 2012             | 2013             | 2014             | 2015             | 2016             | 2017 1/ |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------|
| Jan          | 92 663           | 105 109          | 111 363          | 118 637          | 118 634          | 114 443          | 116 877 |
| Feb          | 100 648          | 116 640          | 118 515          | 125 183          | 128 746          | 135 055          | 122 697 |
| Mar          | 112 482          | 120 977          | 119 226          | 126 221          | 136 854          | 134 307          | 135 889 |
| Apr          | 100 834          | 110 208          | 120 638          | 120 128          | 117 267          | 123 136          | 119 810 |
| May          | 107 913          | 119 774          | 129 326          | 124 611          | 126 921          | 133 689          | 128 225 |
| Jun          | 112 249          | 116 408          | 122 847          | 126 528          | 130 235          | 132 474          |         |
| Jul          | 107 921          | 119 090          | 128 360          | 123 522          | 131 801          | 129 938          |         |
| Aug          | 115 190          | 123 738          | 129 266          | 127 988          | 128 209          | 133 906          |         |
| Sep          | 118 765          | 118 391          | 126 283          | 134 558          | 136 407          | 141 495          |         |
| Oct          | 119 965          | 132 915          | 140 263          | 140 319          | 139 557          | 139 455          |         |
| Nov          | 127 767          | 139 155          | 146 900          | 136 909          | 142 364          | 145 730          |         |
| Dec          | 119 221          | 123 279          | 130 511          | 131 421          | 131 867          | 136 966          |         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1 335 618</b> | <b>1 445 684</b> | <b>1 523 498</b> | <b>1 536 025</b> | <b>1 568 862</b> | <b>1 600 594</b> |         |

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

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

| Month        | 2012       | 2013       | 2014       | 2015       | 2016       | 2017 | 2017<br>year-to-date |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|----------------------|
| Jan          | 13,4       | 6,0        | 6,5        | 0,0        | -3,5       | 2,1  | 2,1                  |
| Feb          | 15,9       | 1,6        | 5,6        | 2,8        | 4,9        | -9,2 | -4,0                 |
| Mar          | 7,6        | -1,4       | 5,9        | 8,4        | -1,9       | 1,2  | -2,2                 |
| Apr          | 9,3        | 9,5        | -0,4       | -2,4       | 5,0        | -2,7 | -2,3                 |
| May          | 11,0       | 8,0        | -3,6       | 1,9        | 5,3        | -4,1 | -2,7                 |
| Jun          | 3,7        | 5,5        | 3,0        | 2,9        | 1,7        |      |                      |
| Jul          | 10,3       | 7,8        | -3,8       | 6,7        | -1,4       |      |                      |
| Aug          | 7,4        | 4,5        | -1,0       | 0,2        | 4,4        |      |                      |
| Sep          | -0,3       | 6,7        | 6,6        | 1,4        | 3,7        |      |                      |
| Oct          | 10,8       | 5,5        | 0,0        | -0,5       | -0,1       |      |                      |
| Nov          | 8,9        | 5,6        | -6,8       | 4,0        | 2,4        |      |                      |
| Dec          | 3,4        | 5,9        | 0,7        | 0,3        | 3,9        |      |                      |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>8,2</b> | <b>5,4</b> | <b>0,8</b> | <b>2,1</b> | <b>2,0</b> |      |                      |

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

| Month | R million |         |         |         | Month-on-month % change |      |      |      |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------|------|------|------|
|       | 2014      | 2015    | 2016    | 2017    | 2014                    | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Jan   | 130 297   | 131 903 | 130 141 | 131 017 | 0,4                     | 2,3  | 0,3  | -3,8 |
| Feb   | 129 318   | 132 524 | 137 881 | 126 081 | -0,8                    | 0,5  | 5,9  | -3,8 |
| Mar   | 126 085   | 134 099 | 133 938 | 129 854 | -2,5                    | 1,2  | -2,9 | 3,0  |
| Apr   | 128 824   | 125 613 | 128 437 | 132 813 | 2,2                     | -6,3 | -4,1 | 2,3  |
| May   | 125 597   | 130 844 | 135 785 | 128 038 | -2,5                    | 4,2  | 5,7  | -3,6 |
| Jun   | 129 048   | 130 223 | 133 158 |         | 2,7                     | -0,5 | -1,9 |      |
| Jul   | 123 051   | 130 912 | 133 631 |         | -4,6                    | 0,5  | 0,4  |      |
| Aug   | 129 773   | 130 394 | 131 896 |         | 5,5                     | -0,4 | -1,3 |      |
| Sep   | 128 945   | 131 135 | 134 588 |         | -0,6                    | 0,6  | 2,0  |      |
| Oct   | 129 123   | 130 070 | 133 113 |         | 0,1                     | -0,8 | -1,1 |      |
| Nov   | 127 872   | 130 740 | 132 000 |         | -1,0                    | 0,5  | -0,8 |      |
| Dec   | 128 912   | 129 730 | 136 139 |         | 0,8                     | -0,8 | 3,1  |      |

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

| Month        | 2011             | 2012             | 2013             | 2014             | 2015             | 2016             | 2017 1/ |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------|
| Jan          | 84 641           | 101 722          | 114 859          | 131 492          | 125 680          | 133 098          | 142 114 |
| Feb          | 93 410           | 114 014          | 122 949          | 140 490          | 137 524          | 158 879          | 152 260 |
| Mar          | 105 468          | 119 073          | 125 211          | 143 318          | 150 639          | 157 241          | 168 783 |
| Apr          | 94 645           | 109 361          | 126 036          | 136 712          | 131 284          | 146 476          | 147 832 |
| May          | 101 573          | 119 758          | 134 739          | 141 686          | 142 464          | 158 850          | 160 285 |
| Jun          | 105 987          | 115 745          | 129 090          | 143 972          | 147 961          | 159 729          |         |
| Jul          | 102 947          | 117 927          | 135 770          | 140 908          | 149 629          | 157 523          |         |
| Aug          | 111 047          | 123 879          | 138 260          | 145 685          | 145 049          | 161 022          |         |
| Sep          | 115 687          | 119 307          | 135 648          | 153 350          | 154 014          | 169 430          |         |
| Oct          | 117 231          | 135 367          | 151 348          | 159 082          | 160 088          | 167 975          |         |
| Nov          | 125 308          | 142 970          | 158 916          | 153 742          | 163 571          | 178 458          |         |
| Dec          | 116 855          | 126 561          | 142 500          | 145 241          | 150 749          | 167 197          |         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1 274 799</b> | <b>1 445 684</b> | <b>1 615 326</b> | <b>1 735 678</b> | <b>1 758 652</b> | <b>1 915 878</b> |         |

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

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

| Month        | 2012        | 2013        | 2014       | 2015       | 2016       | 2017 | 2017<br>year-to-date |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------|----------------------|
| Jan          | 20,2        | 12,9        | 14,5       | -4,4       | 5,9        | 6,8  | 6,8                  |
| Feb          | 22,1        | 7,8         | 14,3       | -2,1       | 15,5       | -4,2 | 0,8                  |
| Mar          | 12,9        | 5,2         | 14,5       | 5,1        | 4,4        | 7,3  | 3,1                  |
| Apr          | 15,5        | 15,2        | 8,5        | -4,0       | 11,6       | 0,9  | 2,6                  |
| May          | 17,9        | 12,5        | 5,2        | 0,5        | 11,5       | 0,9  | 2,2                  |
| Jun          | 9,2         | 11,5        | 11,5       | 2,8        | 8,0        |      |                      |
| Jul          | 14,6        | 15,1        | 3,8        | 6,2        | 5,3        |      |                      |
| Aug          | 11,6        | 11,6        | 5,4        | -0,4       | 11,0       |      |                      |
| Sep          | 3,1         | 13,7        | 13,0       | 0,4        | 10,0       |      |                      |
| Oct          | 15,5        | 11,8        | 5,1        | 0,6        | 4,9        |      |                      |
| Nov          | 14,1        | 11,2        | -3,3       | 6,4        | 9,1        |      |                      |
| Dec          | 8,3         | 12,6        | 1,9        | 3,8        | 10,9       |      |                      |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>13,4</b> | <b>11,7</b> | <b>7,5</b> | <b>1,3</b> | <b>8,9</b> |      |                      |

**Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices**

| Month | R million |         |         |         | Month-on-month % change |      |      |      |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------|------|------|------|
|       | 2014      | 2015    | 2016    | 2017    | 2014                    | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
| Jan   | 146 701   | 141 891 | 153 941 | 161 824 | 3,9                     | -0,5 | 3,9  | -2,4 |
| Feb   | 146 937   | 143 631 | 160 412 | 159 038 | 0,2                     | 1,2  | 4,2  | -1,7 |
| Mar   | 141 857   | 147 674 | 156 903 | 162 038 | -3,5                    | 2,8  | -2,2 | 1,9  |
| Apr   | 147 891   | 141 464 | 155 548 | 165 113 | 4,3                     | -4,2 | -0,9 | 1,9  |
| May   | 142 464   | 145 593 | 160 023 | 159 716 | -3,7                    | 2,9  | 2,9  | -3,3 |
| Jun   | 145 622   | 147 347 | 159 383 |         | 2,2                     | 1,2  | -0,4 |      |
| Jul   | 141 731   | 149 870 | 162 032 |         | -2,7                    | 1,7  | 1,7  |      |
| Aug   | 146 387   | 145 732 | 158 168 |         | 3,3                     | -2,8 | -2,4 |      |
| Sep   | 147 751   | 148 919 | 161 645 |         | 0,9                     | 2,2  | 2,2  |      |
| Oct   | 146 382   | 148 590 | 158 758 |         | -0,9                    | -0,2 | -1,8 |      |
| Nov   | 140 867   | 147 477 | 160 378 |         | -3,8                    | -0,7 | 1,0  |      |
| Dec   | 142 534   | 148 182 | 165 879 |         | 1,2                     | 0,5  | 3,4  |      |

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

| Type of dealer                                       | Dec-16         | Jan-17         | Feb-17         | Mar-17         | Apr-17         | May-17 1/      |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Fee or contract basis                                | 6 237          | 4 558          | 5 690          | 6 464          | 5 698          | 7 379          |
| Agricultural raw materials and livestock             | 12 642         | 9 362          | 10 779         | 11 223         | 8 809          | 11 177         |
| Food, beverages and tobacco                          | 33 501         | 22 145         | 24 305         | 29 320         | 24 696         | 25 727         |
| Textiles, clothing and footwear                      | 2 431          | 1 982          | 2 861          | 3 294          | 2 951          | 2 737          |
| Other household goods except precious stones         | 21 321         | 18 728         | 20 180         | 20 768         | 19 034         | 21 303         |
| Precious stones, jewellery and silverware            | 3 253          | 2 006          | 5 527          | 3 722          | 6 203          | 2 764          |
| Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products | 32 352         | 30 410         | 27 133         | 31 068         | 30 226         | 29 736         |
| Metals and metal ores                                | 2 534          | 3 122          | 4 137          | 4 464          | 3 202          | 3 953          |
| Construction and building materials                  | 7 119          | 8 071          | 9 815          | 11 265         | 9 159          | 10 761         |
| Other intermediate products, waste and scrap         | 7 414          | 7 280          | 7 392          | 7 206          | 5 554          | 7 031          |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies                    | 23 518         | 21 057         | 20 582         | 24 890         | 19 335         | 22 577         |
| Other goods  | 14 873         | 13 391         | 13 859         | 15 099         | 12 963         | 15 140         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>167 197</b> | <b>142 114</b> | <b>152 260</b> | <b>168 783</b> | <b>147 832</b> | <b>160 285</b> |

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                                       | Dec-16      | Jan-17     | Feb-17      | Mar-17     | Apr-17     | May-17     |
|--|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Fee or contract basis                                | 9,9         | -0,7       | -18,6       | 19,2       | -7,6       | 1,8        |
| Agricultural raw materials and livestock             | 20,7        | 6,6        | 6,8         | 5,8        | -17,2      | -8,7       |
| Food, beverages and tobacco                          | 5,8         | 10,2       | -0,2        | 8,2        | 10,6       | 3,5        |
| Textiles, clothing and footwear                      | -2,6        | -32,1      | -16,3       | -17,8      | -17,1      | -1,7       |
| Other household goods except precious stones         | 17,8        | 4,5        | -4,8        | -1,2       | -3,9       | 1,6        |
| Precious stones, jewellery and silverware            | 51,7        | -6,7       | 49,6        | -0,9       | 39,3       | -4,6       |
| Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products | 0,1         | 23,7       | 1,8         | 12,6       | 15,4       | -1,2       |
| Metals and metal ores                                | 15,5        | 7,3        | 13,9        | 23,4       | -12,6      | 0,1        |
| Construction and building materials                  | 1,9         | 12,0       | -3,1        | 13,7       | -11,7      | 2,2        |
| Other intermediate products, waste and scrap         | 24,4        | 14,1       | 3,1         | 11,7       | -9,7       | 9,0        |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies                    | 31,9        | -5,5       | -23,5       | 1,4        | -4,6       | -3,5       |
| Other goods  | -0,3        | 0,8        | -5,2        | 14,0       | 0,6        | 12,7       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>10,9</b> | <b>6,8</b> | <b>-4,2</b> | <b>7,3</b> | <b>0,9</b> | <b>0,9</b> |

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

| Type of dealer                                       | Dec-16      | Jan-17     | Feb-17      | Mar-17     | Apr-17     | May-17     |
|--|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Fee or contract basis                                | 0,4         | 0,0        | -0,8        | 0,7        | -0,3       | 0,1        |
| Agricultural raw materials and livestock             | 1,4         | 0,4        | 0,4         | 0,4        | -1,3       | -0,7       |
| Food, beverages and tobacco                          | 1,2         | 1,5        | 0,0         | 1,4        | 1,6        | 0,5        |
| Textiles, clothing and footwear                      | 0,0         | -0,7       | -0,4        | -0,4       | -0,4       | 0,0        |
| Other household goods except precious stones         | 2,1         | 0,6        | -0,6        | -0,2       | -0,5       | 0,2        |
| Precious stones, jewellery and silverware            | 0,7         | -0,1       | 1,1         | 0,0        | 1,2        | -0,1       |
| Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products | 0,0         | 4,4        | 0,3         | 2,2        | 2,8        | -0,2       |
| Metals and metal ores                                | 0,2         | 0,2        | 0,3         | 0,5        | -0,3       | 0,0        |
| Construction and building materials                  | 0,1         | 0,6        | -0,2        | 0,9        | -0,8       | 0,1        |
| Other intermediate products, waste and scrap         | 1,0         | 0,7        | 0,1         | 0,5        | -0,4       | 0,4        |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies                    | 3,8         | -0,9       | -4,0        | 0,2        | -0,6       | -0,5       |
| Other goods  | 0,0         | 0,1        | -0,5        | 1,2        | 0,1        | 1,1        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>10,9</b> | <b>6,8</b> | <b>-4,2</b> | <b>7,3</b> | <b>0,9</b> | <b>0,9</b> |

## 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 2016 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 May 2017 was 83,9%. The improved collection rate for April 2017 was 88,7%.



|                                |           |   |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---|
| <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. The statistical units are derived from and linked to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) administrative data. |
| <b>Revised figures</b>         | <b>8</b>  | 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.  |
| <b>Related publications</b>    | <b>9</b>  | Users may also refer to the following publication available from Stats SA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Stats in Brief</i> issued annually.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Rounding-off of figures</b> | <b>10</b> | Where figures have been rounded off, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and the totals.  |
| <b>Historical data</b>         | <b>11</b> | Historical wholesale trade sales data are available on the Stats SA website. To access the data electronically, use the following link:<br><a href="#">Click to download historical data</a>  |
| <b>Past publications</b>       | <b>12</b> | Past wholesale trade sales releases are available on the Stats SA website. To access the releases electronically, use the following link:<br><a href="#">Click to download past releases</a>  |

## Technical notes

### Survey methodology and design

- 1 The survey is conducted monthly. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of 1 257 enterprises from a population of 19 401 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 2016 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 7,0%.

### 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          | 2 201 028    | 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 July 2016](#)

### 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 apparatus and subcomponents.
  - (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 apparatus and subcomponents; 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 *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.

|                                  |                 |   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| <b>Symbols and abbreviations</b> | 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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