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Wholesale trade sales
(Preliminary)

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Sales at constant 2015 prices: results for May 2018

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

	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	-5,5	-2,5	1,8	-0,3	-2,6	0,5
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-2,1	-1,3	0,3	2,9	-3,0	1,1
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	1,7	1,6	-0,1	-1,1	-0,4	1,0

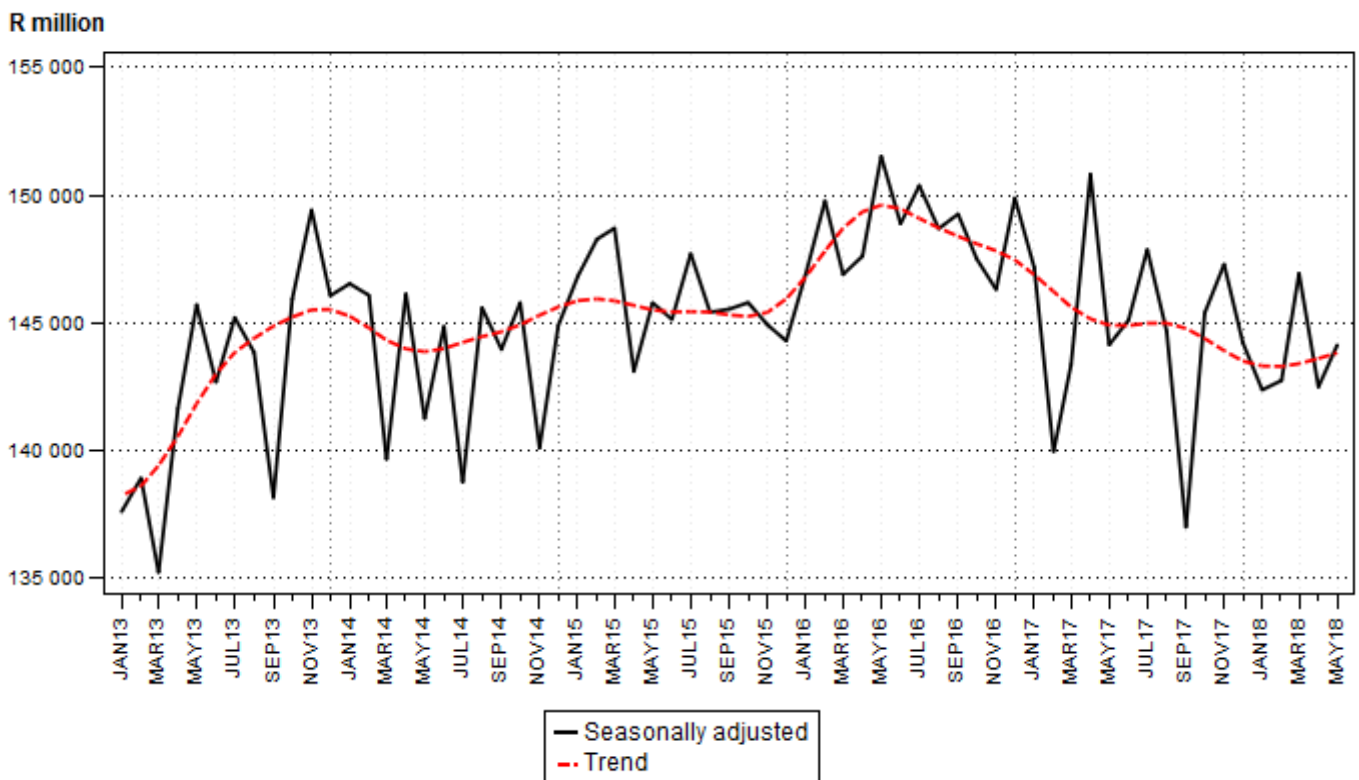
1/ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2015 prices), wholesale trade sales increased by 0,5% in May 2018 compared with May 2017.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales increased by 1,1% in May 2018 compared with April 2018. This followed month-on-month changes of -3,0% in April 2018 and 2,9% in March 2018.

In the three months ended May 2018, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales increased by 1,0% compared with the previous three months.

Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices



Sales at current prices: results for May 2018

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

	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	0,8	3,6	6,5	3,2	2,1	5,9
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-1,9	-1,0	1,0	2,5	-4,6	3,6
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	4,3	3,7	1,2	0,2	-0,2	0,9

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 5,9% in May 2018 compared with May 2017. The main contributors to this increase were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (18,3% and contributing 3,5 percentage points); and
- precious stones, jewellery and silverware (88,0% and contributing 1,5 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 2017 (R million)	Weight	Mar – May 2018 (R million)	% change between Mar – May 2017 and Mar – May 2018	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
Fee or contract basis	18 782	4,0	20 401	8,6	0,3
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	36 172	7,7	35 911	-0,7	-0,1
Food, beverages and tobacco	79 286	16,8	77 574	-2,2	-0,4
Textiles, clothing and footwear	11 816	2,5	12 567	6,4	0,2
Other household goods except precious stones	61 571	13,0	64 212	4,3	0,6
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	12 877	2,7	14 814	15,0	0,4
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	91 579	19,4	106 401	16,2	3,1
Metals and metal ores	12 596	2,7	12 616	0,2	0,0
Construction and building materials	25 809	5,5	25 446	-1,4	-0,1
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	21 792	4,6	21 276	-2,4	-0,1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	61 180	13,0	60 754	-0,7	-0,1
Other goods	38 827	8,2	38 085	-1,9	-0,2
Total	472 285	100,0	490 055	3,8	3,8

Wholesale trade sales increased by 3,8% in the three months ended May 2018 compared with the three months ended May 2017. The main contributor to this increase was dealers in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (16,2% and contributing 3,1 percentage points) – see Table C.

Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

Tables

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

Month	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 1/
Jan	117 508	124 270	132 660	131 578	128 096	129 640	126 372
Feb	129 907	132 955	140 819	143 576	151 781	135 224	137 623
Mar	135 810	133 623	141 865	152 953	150 324	150 422	149 904
Apr	122 932	135 543	134 800	131 164	136 935	133 669	130 244
May	134 304	145 209	139 844	141 332	148 698	143 359	144 133
Jun	130 345	137 624	141 859	145 646	150 125	147 921	
Jul	132 989	143 935	138 140	146 857	145 855	143 270	
Aug	138 941	145 125	143 468	143 335	149 931	146 675	
Sep	132 692	142 417	151 282	152 302	157 303	142 977	
Oct	148 966	157 581	157 388	156 443	154 828	153 802	
Nov	156 364	165 231	153 348	159 531	162 344	163 632	
Dec	138 316	146 262	146 685	146 690	151 698	143 360	
Total	1 619 074	1 709 775	1 722 158	1 751 407	1 787 918	1 733 951	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

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

Month	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018 year-to-date
Jan	5,8	6,8	-0,8	-2,6	1,2	-2,5	-2,5
Feb	2,3	5,9	2,0	5,7	-10,9	1,8	-0,3
Mar	-1,6	6,2	7,8	-1,7	0,1	-0,3	-0,3
Apr	10,3	-0,5	-2,7	4,4	-2,4	-2,6	-0,9
May	8,1	-3,7	1,1	5,2	-3,6	0,5	-0,6
Jun	5,6	3,1	2,7	3,1	-1,5		
Jul	8,2	-4,0	6,3	-0,7	-1,8		
Aug	4,5	-1,1	-0,1	4,6	-2,2		
Sep	7,3	6,2	0,7	3,3	-9,1		
Oct	5,8	-0,1	-0,6	-1,0	-0,7		
Nov	5,7	-7,2	4,0	1,8	0,8		
Dec	5,7	0,3	0,0	3,4	-5,5		
Total	5,6	0,7	1,7	2,1	-3,0		

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

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018
Jan	146 818	146 907	147 175	142 388	1,3	1,8	-1,8	-1,3
Feb	148 286	149 780	139 975	142 755	1,0	2,0	-4,9	0,3
Mar	148 715	146 907	143 374	146 946	0,3	-1,9	2,4	2,9
Apr	143 116	147 622	150 830	142 502	-3,8	0,5	5,2	-3,0
May	145 794	151 527	144 151	144 136	1,9	2,6	-4,4	1,1
Jun	145 147	148 890	145 117		-0,4	-1,7	0,7	
Jul	147 716	150 380	147 880		1,8	1,0	1,9	
Aug	145 426	148 696	144 685		-1,6	-1,1	-2,2	
Sep	145 550	149 268	137 024		0,1	0,4	-5,3	
Oct	145 804	147 511	145 399		0,2	-1,2	6,1	
Nov	144 932	146 314	147 299		-0,6	-0,8	1,3	
Dec	144 304	149 897	144 236		-0,4	2,4	-2,1	

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

Month	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 1/
Jan	101 303	114 385	130 950	125 162	132 550	141 155	146 197
Feb	113 544	122 442	139 912	136 957	158 224	148 811	158 437
Mar	118 582	124 695	142 727	150 019	156 593	165 755	171 014
Apr	108 910	125 516	136 149	130 743	144 804	147 386	150 492
May	119 264	134 183	141 103	141 877	157 449	159 144	168 549
Jun	115 268	128 558	143 379	147 351	160 885	163 606	
Jul	117 442	135 211	140 326	149 012	157 707	159 029	
Aug	123 368	137 690	145 085	144 451	160 568	163 336	
Sep	118 815	135 089	152 718	153 380	167 590	161 291	
Oct	134 809	150 724	158 427	159 428	166 246	175 204	
Nov	142 381	158 261	153 108	162 898	176 328	188 144	
Dec	126 039	141 913	144 642	150 128	165 221	166 529	
Total	1 439 725	1 608 667	1 728 526	1 751 406	1 904 165	1 939 390	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

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

Month	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2018 year-to-date
Jan	12,9	14,5	-4,4	5,9	6,5	3,6	3,6
Feb	7,8	14,3	-2,1	15,5	-5,9	6,5	5,1
Mar	5,2	14,5	5,1	4,4	5,9	3,2	4,4
Apr	15,2	8,5	-4,0	10,8	1,8	2,1	3,8
May	12,5	5,2	0,5	11,0	1,1	5,9	4,3
Jun	11,5	11,5	2,8	9,2	1,7		
Jul	15,1	3,8	6,2	5,8	0,8		
Aug	11,6	5,4	-0,4	11,2	1,7		
Sep	13,7	13,0	0,4	9,3	-3,8		
Oct	11,8	5,1	0,6	4,3	5,4		
Nov	11,2	-3,3	6,4	8,2	6,7		
Dec	12,6	1,9	3,8	10,1	0,8		
Total	11,7	7,5	1,3	8,7	1,8		

Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018
Jan	140 549	152 694	160 088	164 538	-0,8	3,8	-1,8	-1,0
Feb	143 190	160 175	155 821	166 231	1,9	4,9	-2,7	1,0
Mar	147 300	155 830	159 555	170 359	2,9	-2,7	2,4	2,5
Apr	141 840	155 841	166 014	162 544	-3,7	0,0	4,0	-4,6
May	145 128	158 807	158 911	168 472	2,3	1,9	-4,3	3,6
Jun	146 167	159 326	159 894		0,7	0,3	0,6	
Jul	148 512	160 750	161 673		1,6	0,9	1,1	
Aug	145 160	157 771	160 709		-2,3	-1,9	-0,6	
Sep	148 892	160 614	157 313		2,6	1,8	-2,1	
Oct	148 155	157 897	164 393		-0,5	-1,7	4,5	
Nov	147 219	158 720	169 473		-0,6	0,5	3,1	
Dec	147 080	162 989	166 232		-0,1	2,7	-1,9	

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

Type of dealer	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18 1/
Fee or contract basis	6 181	4 381	6 319	7 247	6 933	6 221
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	12 587	10 473	11 204	11 469	10 303	14 139
Food, beverages and tobacco	35 906	24 412	24 196	27 962	23 798	25 814
Textiles, clothing and footwear	3 243	2 767	3 812	4 600	3 795	4 172
Other household goods except precious stones	21 521	19 125	20 516	21 811	20 656	21 745
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	3 000	3 296	5 070	6 201	3 446	5 167
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	34 097	31 369	32 042	36 432	33 872	36 097
Metals and metal ores	2 487	3 350	4 255	4 241	3 673	4 702
Construction and building materials	6 276	7 123	8 214	8 493	7 739	9 214
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	8 428	8 272	8 224	7 646	6 338	7 292
Machinery, equipment and supplies	18 612	20 829	21 639	21 866	18 378	20 510
Other goods	14 192	10 797	12 945	13 047	11 562	13 476
Total	166 529	146 197	158 437	171 014	150 492	168 549

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-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18
Fee or contract basis	8,1	0,9	16,6	18,5	24,9	-12,6
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	-14,4	-5,6	-12,5	-11,9	0,6	9,5
Food, beverages and tobacco	8,4	10,6	2,2	-2,4	-2,0	-2,0
Textiles, clothing and footwear	0,6	-2,8	2,1	7,1	-0,8	12,9
Other household goods except precious stones	0,6	1,7	2,6	3,2	7,3	2,7
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	8,0	65,9	3,7	83,5	-48,9	88,0
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	6,6	3,5	18,8	17,7	12,5	18,3
Metals and metal ores	-9,9	-0,9	-5,5	-13,0	2,7	13,4
Construction and building materials	6,2	6,6	0,9	-6,6	-1,6	4,1
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	3,9	0,2	2,2	-3,0	-1,4	-2,5
Machinery, equipment and supplies	-14,5	8,2	14,4	-6,6	6,5	-0,1
Other goods	3,1	-10,7	10,4	0,7	-5,4	-1,2
Total	0,8	3,6	6,5	3,2	2,1	5,9

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-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18
Fee or contract basis	0,3	0,0	0,6	0,7	0,9	-0,6
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	-1,3	-0,4	-1,1	-0,9	0,0	0,8
Food, beverages and tobacco	1,7	1,7	0,3	-0,4	-0,3	-0,3
Textiles, clothing and footwear	0,0	-0,1	0,1	0,2	0,0	0,3
Other household goods except precious stones	0,1	0,2	0,3	0,4	1,0	0,4
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	0,1	0,9	0,1	1,7	-2,2	1,5
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	1,3	0,8	3,4	3,3	2,6	3,5
Metals and metal ores	-0,2	0,0	-0,2	-0,4	0,1	0,3
Construction and building materials	0,2	0,3	0,0	-0,4	-0,1	0,2
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	0,2	0,0	0,1	-0,1	-0,1	-0,1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	-1,9	1,1	1,8	-0,9	0,8	0,0
Other goods	0,3	-0,9	0,8	0,1	-0,4	-0,1
Total	0,8	3,6	6,5	3,2	2,1	5,9

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 2017 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 responses. 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 2018 was 80,5%. The improved collection rate for April 2018 was 87,9%.

Statistical unit	7	The statistical unit for which information is compiled and published is the enterprise, defined as a legal unit or a combination of legal units that includes and directly controls all functions necessary to carry out its sales activities. The statistical units are derived from and linked to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) administrative data.
Revised figures	8	Revised figures are mainly due to late submission of data to Stats SA, or respondents reporting revisions or corrections to their figures. Preliminary figures, as indicated in the relevant tables, are subject to change and when revised will not be indicated as such.
Related publications	9	Users may also refer to the following publication available from Stats SA: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Stats in Brief</i>, issued annually.
Rounding-off of figures	10	Where figures have been rounded off, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and the totals.
Historical data	11	Historical wholesale trade sales data are available on the Stats SA website. To access the data electronically, use the following link: Click to download historical data
Past publications	12	Past wholesale trade sales releases are available on the Stats SA website. To access the releases electronically, use the following link: Click to download past releases

Technical notes

Survey methodology and design

- 1 The survey is conducted monthly. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of 1 275 enterprises from a population of 19 534 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 2017 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 6,4%.

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	2 314 764	27 000 000
Small	3	27 000 001	144 000 000
Medium	2	144 000 001	288 000 000
Large	1	288 000 001	

Sample weighting

- 4 For those strata not completely enumerated, the weights to produce estimates are the inverse ratio of the sampling fraction, modified to take account of non-response in the survey. Stratum estimates are calculated and then aggregated with the completely enumerated stratum to form group estimates. These procedures are consistent with international best practice.

Seasonal adjustment

- 5 Seasonally adjusted estimates are generated each month using the X-12-ARIMA Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the US Bureau of the Census. Seasonal adjustment is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove irregular or non-seasonal influences which may be present in any particular month. Influences that are volatile or unsystematic can still make it difficult to interpret the movement of the series even after adjustment for seasonal variations. Therefore, the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour. The X-12-ARIMA procedure for wholesale trade sales is described in more detail on the Stats SA website: [Click to download seasonal adjustment wholesale trade sales August 2017](#)

Trend cycle

- 6 The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-12-ARIMA Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimates of the underlying trend cycle.

- Constant prices**
- 7** Stats SA compiles its monthly estimates of wholesale trade sales at current prices from a survey of wholesalers in the formal sector. For January 1998 to December 2011, wholesale trade sales at constant prices were calculated using the 'all groups' PPI for domestic output, but excluding electricity and other utilities.
- From January 2012, wholesale trade sales at constant prices are compiled as follows:
- (1) Deflate sales of dealers in agricultural raw materials and livestock using the PPI for agriculture.
 - (2) Deflate sales of dealers in food, beverages and tobacco using the final manufacturing PPI for food products, beverages and tobacco.
 - (3) Deflate sales of dealers in textiles, clothing and footwear using the final manufacturing PPI for textiles, clothing and footwear.
 - (4) Deflate sales of dealers in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products using the final manufacturing PPI for coal and petroleum products.
 - (5) Deflate sales of dealers in machinery, equipment and supplies using the final manufacturing PPIs for general and special purpose machinery; household appliances and office machinery; and electrical machinery and communication and metering equipment.
 - (6) Deflate the remaining wholesale trade sales using the headline PPI (final manufacturing) excluding the PPIs for food products, beverages and tobacco; textiles, clothing and footwear; coal and petroleum products; general and special purpose machinery; household appliances and office machinery; electrical machinery and communication and metering equipment; and transport equipment. The PPI for transport equipment is excluded because it measures producer prices of motor vehicles, which are not included in wholesale trade.
- Total wholesale trade sales at constant prices is obtained by aggregating (1) to (6).
- Reliability of estimates**
- 8** Data presented in this publication are based on information obtained from a sample and are, therefore, subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the data had been obtained from all enterprises in the wholesale industry in South Africa. Estimates are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors.
- 9** Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in reporting by enterprises and errors made in the collection and processing of the data. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as non-sampling errors. Every effort is made to minimise non-sampling errors by careful design of questionnaires, testing them in pilot studies, editing reported data and implementing efficient operating procedures. Fluctuations may occur in consecutive months as a result of seasonal and economic factors.
- Month-on-month percentage change**
- 10** The month-on-month percentage change in a variable for any given month is the change between that month and the previous month, expressed as a percentage of the latter.
- Year-on-year percentage change**
- 11** The year-on-year percentage change in a variable for any given period is the change between that period and the corresponding period of the previous year, expressed as a percentage of the latter.
- Contribution (percentage points)**
- 12** The contribution (percentage points) to the year-on-year percentage change is calculated by multiplying the percentage change of each type of wholesaler by its corresponding weight, divided by 100. The weight is the percentage contribution of each type of wholesaler to total wholesale trade sales in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Glossary

Enterprise An enterprise is a legal entity or a combination of legal units that includes and directly controls all functions necessary to carry out its sales activities.

Industry An industry is made up of enterprises engaged in the same or similar kinds of economic activity. Industries are defined in the *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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