



stats sa

Department:
Statistics South Africa
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa, ISibalo House, Koch Street, Salvokop, Pretoria, 0002
www.statssa.gov.za, info@statssa.gov.za, Tel +27 12 310 8911

STATISTICAL RELEASE

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Wholesale trade sales (Preliminary)

May 2022

This is the first statistical release presenting wholesale trade sales at constant prices with 2019 (instead of 2015) as the base year.

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Keshnee Naidoo
(072) 310 3798

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Contents

Sales at constant 2019 prices: results for May 2022	2
Table A – Key growth rates in wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices	2
Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices.....	2
Sales at current prices: results for May 2022	3
Table B – Key growth rates in wholesale trade sales at current prices.....	3
Table C – Wholesale trade sales at current prices for the latest three months by type of dealer	3
Tables	4
Table 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices (R million).....	4
Table 2 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices.....	4
Table 3 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices	4
Table 4 – Wholesale trade sales at current prices (R million)	5
Table 5 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at current prices	5
Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices.....	5
Table 7 – Wholesale trade sales at current prices by type of dealer (R million)	6
Table 8 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at current prices by type of dealer	6
Table 9 – Contribution of type of dealer to the year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at current prices	6
Survey information	7
Technical notes	9
Glossary	11
Technical enquiries	11
General information	12

Sales at constant 2019 prices: results for May 2022

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

	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	0,3	7,2	7,6	2,9	-6,7	-2,8
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-1,6	4,9	0,5	-0,4	-7,0	3,2
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	1,4	0,6	1,9	3,7	0,4	-2,3

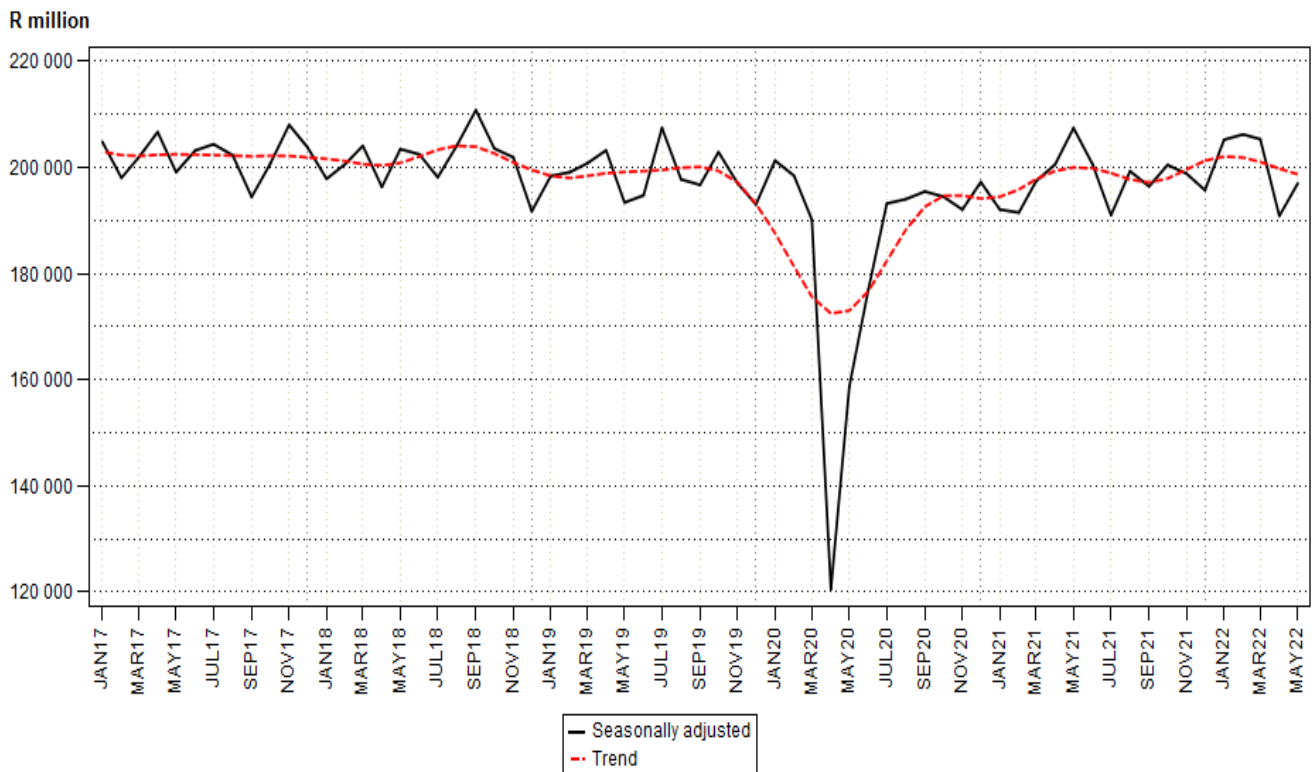
1/ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2019 prices), wholesale trade sales decreased by 2,8% in May 2022 compared with May 2021.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales increased by 3,2% in May 2022 compared with April 2022. This followed month-on-month changes of -7,0% in April 2022 and -0,4% in March 2022.

In the three months ended May 2022, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 2,3% compared with the previous three months.

Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices



Sales at current prices: results for May 2022

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

	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	15,3	22,5	22,6	20,1	9,9	17,1
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	0,9	4,4	3,6	0,3	-5,3	7,4
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	6,3	5,6	7,2	8,1	5,2	2,8

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 17,1% in May 2022 compared with May 2021. The main positive contributors were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (54,8% and contributing 12,2 percentage points);
- 'other' intermediate products, waste and scrap (48,7% and contributing 2,1 percentage points); and
- food, beverages and tobacco (10,4% 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 2021 (R million)	Weight	Mar – May 2022 (R million)	% change between Mar – May 2021 and Mar – May 2022	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
Fee or contract basis	20 596	3,2	19 792	-3,9	-0,1
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	51 872	8,2	57 151	10,2	0,8
Food, beverages and tobacco	97 753	15,4	106 115	8,6	1,3
Textiles, clothing and footwear	10 874	1,7	11 469	5,5	0,1
Other household goods except precious stones	78 766	12,4	84 590	7,4	0,9
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	11 581	1,8	10 701	-7,6	-0,1
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	141 152	22,2	205 839	45,8	10,2
Metals and metal ores	23 100	3,6	27 249	18,0	0,6
Construction and building materials	38 003	6,0	40 282	6,0	0,4
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	30 131	4,7	42 387	40,7	1,9
Machinery, equipment and supplies	83 792	13,2	77 473	-7,5	-1,0
Other goods	48 658	7,6	54 179	11,3	0,9
Total	636 275	100,0	737 227	15,9	15,9

Wholesale trade sales increased by 15,9% in the three months ended May 2022 compared with the three months ended May 2021. The main positive contributors were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (45,8% and contributing 10,2 percentage points);
- 'other' intermediate products, waste and scrap (40,7% and contributing 1,9 percentage points); and
- food, beverages and tobacco (8,6% and contributing 1,3 percentage points) – see Table C.

Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

Tables

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

Month	2016 *	2017 *	2018 *	2019 *	2020 *	2021 *	2022 1/ *
Jan	179 104	181 331	176 894	175 305	179 858	165 893	177 890
Feb	212 114	188 477	190 241	188 742	191 066	182 349	196 126
Mar	210 612	209 576	210 256	202 102	194 333	204 476	210 501
Apr	191 373	185 683	179 746	188 603	108 676	183 368	171 055
May	207 768	200 234	204 353	197 486	157 109	206 135	200 281
Jun	209 123	207 498	203 837	190 660	183 704	204 694	
Jul	203 015	199 168	197 981	210 901	197 572	193 932	
Aug	209 500	205 890	209 541	201 375	192 174	201 633	
Sep	219 880	201 076	210 584	202 063	203 007	203 953	
Oct	216 659	216 407	222 853	220 688	211 882	212 430	
Nov	226 307	228 765	226 026	215 016	207 580	220 075	
Dec	212 058	197 499	184 348	189 164	192 767	193 427	
Total	2 497 513	2 421 604	2 416 660	2 382 105	2 219 728	2 372 365	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

* Revised, 2019 is the new base year. Previously, 2015 was the base year.

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

Month	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022 year-to-date
Jan	1,2	-2,4	-0,9	2,6	-7,8	7,2	7,2
Feb	-11,1	0,9	-0,8	1,2	-4,6	7,6	7,4
Mar	-0,5	0,3	-3,9	-3,8	5,2	2,9	5,8
Apr	-3,0	-3,2	4,9	-42,4	68,7	-6,7	2,6
May	-3,6	2,1	-3,4	-20,4	31,2	-2,8	1,4
Jun	-0,8	-1,8	-6,5	-3,6	11,4		
Jul	-1,9	-0,6	6,5	-6,3	-1,8		
Aug	-1,7	1,8	-3,9	-4,6	4,9		
Sep	-8,6	4,7	-4,0	0,5	0,5		
Oct	-0,1	3,0	-1,0	-4,0	0,3		
Nov	1,1	-1,2	-4,9	-3,5	6,0		
Dec	-6,9	-6,7	2,6	1,9	0,3		
Total	-3,0	-0,2	-1,4	-6,8	6,9		

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

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Jan	198 362	201 258	192 028	205 182	3,5	4,3	-2,6	4,9
Feb	199 065	198 398	191 465	206 186	0,4	-1,4	-0,3	0,5
Mar	200 710	190 123	197 370	205 288	0,8	-4,2	3,1	-0,4
Apr	203 186	120 492	200 532	190 816	1,2	-36,6	1,6	-7,0
May	193 352	158 704	207 385	196 945	-4,8	31,7	3,4	3,2
Jun	194 700	176 983	200 555		0,7	11,5	-3,3	
Jul	207 403	193 166	190 961		6,5	9,1	-4,8	
Aug	197 716	193 991	199 261		-4,7	0,4	4,3	
Sep	196 672	195 427	196 389		-0,5	0,7	-1,4	
Oct	202 864	194 472	200 436		3,1	-0,5	2,1	
Nov	196 986	192 020	198 787		-2,9	-1,3	-0,8	
Dec	192 992	197 224	195 682		-2,0	2,7	-1,6	

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

Month	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 1/
Jan	148 633	158 283	164 310	169 452	182 464	171 406	209 904
Feb	177 422	166 867	175 820	182 601	193 791	191 148	234 373
Mar	175 593	185 868	191 971	198 273	196 253	217 075	260 625
Apr	162 374	163 870	166 628	188 786	107 706	196 999	216 479
May	176 555	178 751	192 368	198 978	153 312	222 201	260 123
Jun	180 408	184 561	194 920	192 995	180 854	222 267	
Jul	176 843	177 022	191 441	212 230	198 330	212 763	
Aug	180 052	183 592	203 432	202 651	195 134	223 115	
Sep	187 925	181 881	205 443	203 660	206 153	228 477	
Oct	186 418	197 562	222 515	223 563	216 469	240 167	
Nov	197 724	211 249	226 575	217 297	212 103	253 881	
Dec	185 268	184 350	181 630	191 619	197 089	227 273	
Total	2 135 215	2 173 856	2 317 053	2 382 105	2 239 658	2 606 772	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

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

Month	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022 year-to-date
Jan	6,5	3,8	3,1	7,7	-6,1	22,5	22,5
Feb	-5,9	5,4	3,9	6,1	-1,4	22,6	22,5
Mar	5,9	3,3	3,3	-1,0	10,6	20,1	21,6
Apr	0,9	1,7	13,3	-42,9	82,9	9,9	18,6
May	1,2	7,6	3,4	-23,0	44,9	17,1	18,3
Jun	2,3	5,6	-1,0	-6,3	22,9		
Jul	0,1	8,1	10,9	-6,5	7,3		
Aug	2,0	10,8	-0,4	-3,7	14,3		
Sep	-3,2	13,0	-0,9	1,2	10,8		
Oct	6,0	12,6	0,5	-3,2	10,9		
Nov	6,8	7,3	-4,1	-2,4	19,7		
Dec	-0,5	-1,5	5,5	2,9	15,3		
Total	1,8	6,6	2,8	-6,0	16,4		

Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Jan	192 539	207 062	198 982	241 633	2,6	5,7	-1,4	4,4
Feb	194 177	205 151	203 580	250 412	0,9	-0,9	2,3	3,6
Mar	195 231	190 590	210 162	251 168	0,5	-7,1	3,2	0,3
Apr	205 406	118 587	212 667	237 761	5,2	-37,8	1,2	-5,3
May	196 024	155 438	221 327	255 274	-4,6	31,1	4,1	7,4
Jun	194 331	176 292	218 822		-0,9	13,4	-1,1	
Jul	208 081	193 749	208 199		7,1	9,9	-4,9	
Aug	198 288	194 587	219 809		-4,7	0,4	5,6	
Sep	197 373	197 732	218 910		-0,5	1,6	-0,4	
Oct	205 437	199 654	226 584		4,1	1,0	3,5	
Nov	198 841	194 410	229 388		-3,2	-2,6	1,2	
Dec	195 955	201 903	231 549		-1,5	3,9	0,9	

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

Type of dealer	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22 1/
Fee or contract basis	8 344	4 056	6 237	5 697	6 457	7 638
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	22 106	13 446	17 089	18 595	14 768	23 788
Food, beverages and tobacco	41 234	30 760	33 324	38 113	33 158	34 844
Textiles, clothing and footwear	2 266	2 818	3 739	3 969	3 477	4 023
Other household goods except precious stones	27 223	26 464	24 716	30 109	26 604	27 877
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	4 794	4 269	3 435	5 807	2 198	2 696
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	48 534	57 062	60 051	71 196	58 354	76 289
Metals and metal ores	5 310	6 326	7 120	9 949	8 330	8 970
Construction and building materials	8 599	9 808	15 323	14 411	11 724	14 147
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	15 138	15 390	16 149	15 404	12 559	14 424
Machinery, equipment and supplies	27 130	25 030	30 181	28 101	22 669	26 703
Other goods	16 596	14 475	17 009	19 274	16 182	18 723
Total	227 273	209 904	234 373	260 625	216 479	260 123

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-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22
Fee or contract basis	37,8	17,7	11,0	-8,5	-3,1	-0,8
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	31,7	1,0	19,1	21,1	0,8	8,8
Food, beverages and tobacco	14,4	27,5	7,4	7,7	7,6	10,4
Textiles, clothing and footwear	-9,1	55,6	43,4	-9,6	7,6	23,7
Other household goods except precious stones	0,4	6,9	9,0	19,0	-0,7	4,5
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	623,1	166,5	94,7	52,1	-46,2	-26,6
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	22,1	51,3	57,8	49,9	31,5	54,8
Metals and metal ores	14,8	20,7	16,2	27,8	11,6	14,2
Construction and building materials	-9,8	-14,0	38,3	14,3	3,5	0,5
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	31,0	55,3	31,5	35,9	38,2	48,7
Machinery, equipment and supplies	2,0	-0,1	2,8	-10,8	-4,6	-6,4
Other goods	4,4	11,2	5,1	21,4	9,8	3,8
Total	15,3	22,5	22,6	20,1	9,9	17,1

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-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22
Fee or contract basis	1,2	0,4	0,3	-0,2	-0,1	0,0
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	2,7	0,1	1,4	1,5	0,1	0,9
Food, beverages and tobacco	2,6	3,9	1,2	1,3	1,2	1,5
Textiles, clothing and footwear	-0,1	0,6	0,6	-0,2	0,1	0,4
Other household goods except precious stones	0,1	1,0	1,1	2,2	-0,1	0,5
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	1,9	1,5	0,9	0,9	-1,0	-0,5
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	4,5	11,3	11,5	10,9	7,1	12,2
Metals and metal ores	0,3	0,6	0,5	1,0	0,4	0,5
Construction and building materials	-0,5	-0,9	2,2	0,8	0,2	0,0
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	1,8	3,2	2,0	1,9	1,8	2,1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	0,3	0,0	0,4	-1,6	-0,6	-0,8
Other goods	0,4	0,9	0,4	1,6	0,7	0,3
Total	15,3	22,5	22,6	20,1	9,9	17,1

Survey information

- Introduction**
- 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey covering enterprises in the wholesale trade industry (see point 4 below). This survey is based on a sample drawn from Stats SA's 2021 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 2022 was 70,0%. The improved collection rate for April 2022 was 79,8%.

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 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 1 469 enterprises from a population of 19 883 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 2021 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 5,8%.

Class limits

- 3 The wholesale sampling frame is divided into four size groups. All large enterprises (size group one) are completely enumerated. Simple random sampling is applied to the remaining size groups (medium, small and very small). The total value of sales of the large enterprises (size group one) is added to the weighted totals of size group two, three and four to reflect the total value of sales.

Measure of size classes (Rand)

Enterprise size	Size group	Lower limits	Upper limits
Very small	4	2 675 608	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 United States Census Bureau. Seasonal adjustment is a means of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the series so that the effects of other influences on the series can be more clearly recognised. Seasonal adjustment does not aim to remove irregular or non-seasonal influences which may be present in any particular month. Influences that are volatile or unsystematic can still make it difficult to interpret the movement of the series even after adjustment for seasonal variations. Therefore, the month-to-month movements of seasonally adjusted estimates may not be reliable indicators of trend behaviour. The X-12-ARIMA procedure for wholesale trade sales is described in more detail on the Stats SA website:

[Click to download seasonal adjustment wholesale trade sales February 2022](#)

- Trend cycle** 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.

Technical enquiries

Nthabiseng Sebeyi Telephone number: (012) 310 8930
Email: nthabisengs@statssa.gov.za

Keshnee Naidoo Telephone number: (072) 310 3798
Email: keshneen@statssa.gov.za

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You can visit us on the internet at: www.statssa.gov.za

General enquiries

User information services	Telephone number: (012) 310 8600 Email: info@statssa.gov.za
Orders/subscription services	Telephone number: (012) 310 8619 Email: millies@statssa.gov.za
Postal address	Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

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