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Wholesale trade sales (Preliminary)

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Sales at constant 2019 prices: results for October 2024

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

| | May-24 | Jun-24 | Jul-24 | Aug-24 | Sep-24 | Oct-24 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Year-on-year % change, unadjusted | -7,1 | -8,7 | -2,0 | -11,6 | -7,3 | 3,4 |
| Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted | -4,1 | 1,1 | -1,0 | -2,9 | 2,1 | 2,1 |
| 3-month % change, seasonally adjusted ¹ | 0,0 | 1,6 | -1,1 | -1,4 | -3,0 | -1,2 |

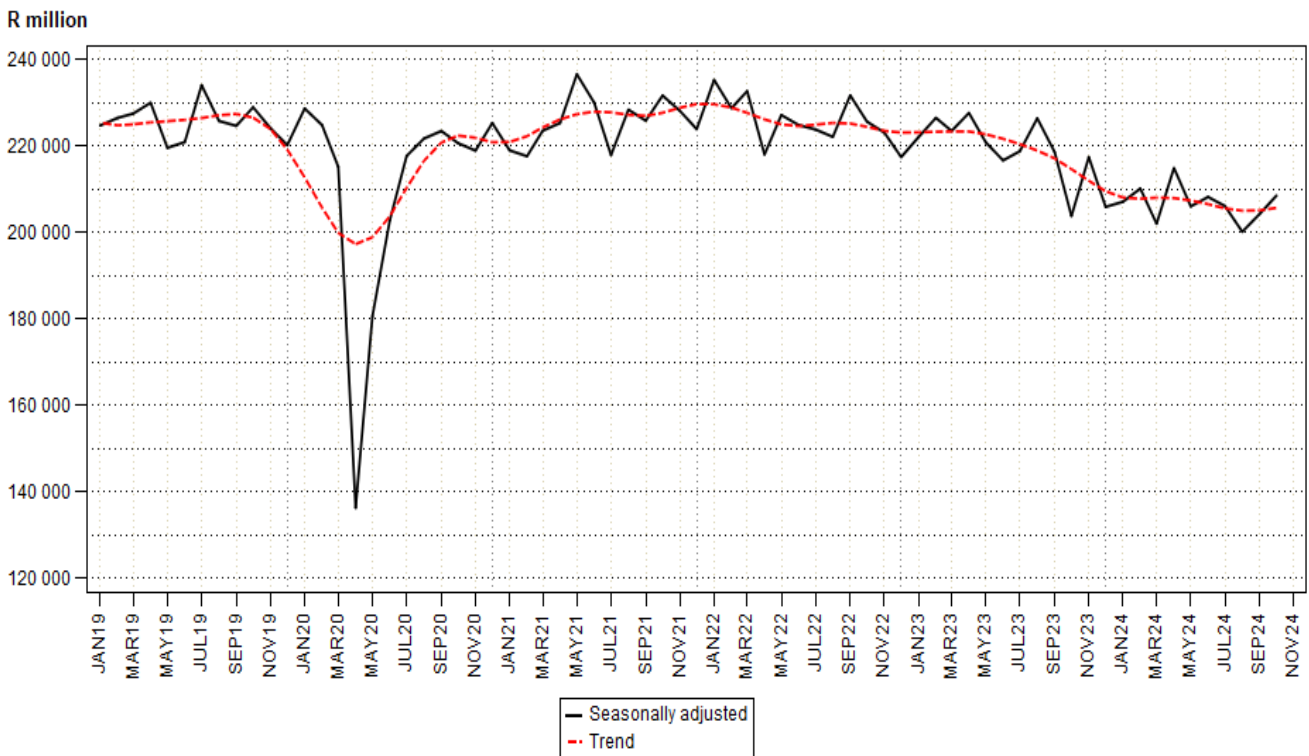
¹ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2019 prices), wholesale trade sales increased by 3,4% in October 2024 compared with October 2023.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales increased by 2,1% in October 2024 compared with September 2024. This followed month-on-month changes of 2,1% in September 2024 and -2,9% in August 2024.

In the three months ended October 2024, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 1,2% compared with the previous three months.

Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2019 prices



Sales at current prices: results for October 2024

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

| | May-24 | Jun-24 | Jul-24 | Aug-24 | Sep-24 | Oct-24 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Year-on-year % change, unadjusted | -1,8 | -3,9 | 1,7 | -9,6 | -8,2 | 0,2 |
| Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted | -2,2 | -1,2 | 0,9 | -4,2 | -0,1 | 3,4 |
| 3-month % change, seasonally adjusted ¹ | -0,2 | 0,1 | -1,4 | -2,2 | -3,4 | -3,0 |

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 0,2% in October 2024 compared with October 2023. The main positive contributors were dealers in food, beverages and tobacco (9,8% and contributing 1,3 percentage points) and dealers in 'other' goods (15,8% and contributing 1,3 percentage points).

The main negative contributor was dealers in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (-19,6% and contributing -5,1 percentage points) – see Table 8 and Table 9.

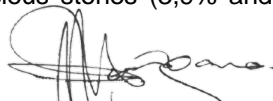
Table C – Wholesale trade sales at current prices for the latest three months by type of dealer

| Type of dealer | Aug – Oct 2023 (R million) | Weight (%) | Aug – Oct 2024 (R million) | % change between Aug – Oct 2023 and Aug – Oct 2024 | Contribution (% points) to the total % change |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Fee or contract basis | 31 522 | 3,3 | 32 060 | 1,7 | 0,1 |
| Agricultural raw materials and livestock | 60 512 | 6,4 | 59 330 | -2,0 | -0,1 |
| Food, beverages and tobacco | 124 162 | 13,0 | 129 903 | 4,6 | 0,6 |
| Textiles, clothing and footwear | 22 042 | 2,3 | 24 174 | 9,7 | 0,2 |
| Other household goods except precious stones | 95 308 | 10,0 | 99 038 | 3,9 | 0,4 |
| Precious stones, jewellery and silverware | 20 307 | 2,1 | 11 577 | -43,0 | -0,9 |
| Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products | 259 892 | 27,3 | 192 307 | -26,0 | -7,1 |
| Metals and metal ores | 28 152 | 3,0 | 29 135 | 3,5 | 0,1 |
| Construction and building materials | 49 090 | 5,2 | 47 148 | -4,0 | -0,2 |
| Other intermediate products, waste and scrap | 50 960 | 5,3 | 55 480 | 8,9 | 0,5 |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies | 136 034 | 14,3 | 136 656 | 0,5 | 0,1 |
| Other goods | 74 632 | 7,8 | 79 794 | 6,9 | 0,5 |
| Total | 952 613 | 100,0 | 896 603 | -5,9 | -5,9 |

Wholesale trade sales decreased by 5,9% in the three months ended October 2024 compared with the three months ended October 2023. The main negative contributors were dealers in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (-26,0% and contributing -7,1 percentage points) and dealers in precious stones, jewellery and silverware (-43,0% and contributing -0,9 of a percentage point).

The main positive contributors were dealers in:

- food, beverages and tobacco (4,6% and contributing 0,6 of a percentage point);
- 'other' goods (6,9% and contributing 0,5 of a percentage point);
- 'other' intermediate products, waste and scrap (8,9% and contributing 0,5 of a percentage point); and
- 'other' household goods except precious stones (3,9% and contributing 0,4 of a percentage point) – see Table C.


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 Statistician-General

Tables

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

| Month | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------|
| Jan | 201 235 | 199 296 | 204 279 | 188 921 | 203 348 | 196 580 | 186 119 |
| Feb | 216 419 | 214 596 | 216 993 | 207 448 | 218 504 | 217 676 | 208 917 |
| Mar | 239 259 | 229 671 | 220 773 | 232 455 | 239 796 | 232 176 | 202 032 |
| Apr | 204 397 | 214 086 | 123 642 | 207 355 | 197 411 | 199 833 | 199 730 |
| May | 232 234 | 224 124 | 178 893 | 235 070 | 230 940 | 227 348 | 211 316 |
| Jun | 231 451 | 216 334 | 208 997 | 233 100 | 226 603 | 221 442 | 202 114 |
| Jul | 224 716 | 239 451 | 224 623 | 222 873 | 223 125 | 216 475 | 212 047 |
| Aug | 237 847 | 228 628 | 218 447 | 230 524 | 227 853 | 231 176 | 204 387 |
| Sep | 239 035 | 229 370 | 230 827 | 232 006 | 240 072 | 221 483 | 205 360 |
| Oct | 252 813 | 250 531 | 241 108 | 247 372 | 239 775 | 221 533 | 228 988 |
| Nov | 256 397 | 244 130 | 236 364 | 252 907 | 244 884 | 237 794 | |
| Dec | 209 384 | 214 842 | 219 637 | 219 236 | 211 192 | 194 520 | |
| Total | 2 745 187 | 2 705 059 | 2 524 583 | 2 709 267 | 2 703 503 | 2 618 036 | |

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

| Month | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2024 year-to-date |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------|----------------------|
| Jan | -1,0 | 2,5 | -7,5 | 7,6 | -3,3 | -5,3 | -5,3 |
| Feb | -0,8 | 1,1 | -4,4 | 5,3 | -0,4 | -4,0 | -4,6 |
| Mar | -4,0 | -3,9 | 5,3 | 3,2 | -3,2 | -13,0 | -7,6 |
| Apr | 4,7 | -42,2 | 67,7 | -4,8 | 1,2 | -0,1 | -5,8 |
| May | -3,5 | -20,2 | 31,4 | -1,8 | -1,6 | -7,1 | -6,1 |
| Jun | -6,5 | -3,4 | 11,5 | -2,8 | -2,3 | -8,7 | -6,6 |
| Jul | 6,6 | -6,2 | -0,8 | 0,1 | -3,0 | -2,0 | -5,9 |
| Aug | -3,9 | -4,5 | 5,5 | -1,2 | 1,5 | -11,6 | -6,7 |
| Sep | -4,0 | 0,6 | 0,5 | 3,5 | -7,7 | -7,3 | -6,7 |
| Oct | -0,9 | -3,8 | 2,6 | -3,1 | -7,6 | 3,4 | -5,7 |
| Nov | -4,8 | -3,2 | 7,0 | -3,2 | -2,9 | | |
| Dec | 2,6 | 2,2 | -0,2 | -3,7 | -7,9 | | |
| Total | -1,5 | -6,7 | 7,3 | -0,2 | -3,2 | | |

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

| Month | R million | | | | Month-on-month % change | | | |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
| Jan | 218 992 | 235 293 | 222 059 | 207 119 | -2,8 | 5,1 | 2,1 | 0,6 |
| Feb | 217 643 | 228 738 | 226 522 | 210 165 | -0,6 | -2,8 | 2,0 | 1,5 |
| Mar | 223 543 | 232 703 | 223 491 | 202 037 | 2,7 | 1,7 | -1,3 | -3,9 |
| Apr | 225 324 | 218 039 | 227 642 | 214 929 | 0,8 | -6,3 | 1,9 | 6,4 |
| May | 236 601 | 227 176 | 220 861 | 206 051 | 5,0 | 4,2 | -3,0 | -4,1 |
| Jun | 230 008 | 224 854 | 216 671 | 208 224 | -2,8 | -1,0 | -1,9 | 1,1 |
| Jul | 217 909 | 223 832 | 218 822 | 206 126 | -5,3 | -0,5 | 1,0 | -1,0 |
| Aug | 228 419 | 222 122 | 226 415 | 200 178 | 4,8 | -0,8 | 3,5 | -2,9 |
| Sep | 225 858 | 231 717 | 218 606 | 204 293 | -1,1 | 4,3 | -3,4 | 2,1 |
| Oct | 231 672 | 225 640 | 203 807 | 208 524 | 2,6 | -2,6 | -6,8 | 2,1 |
| Nov | 228 131 | 223 099 | 217 447 | | -1,5 | -1,1 | 6,7 | |
| Dec | 223 900 | 217 449 | 205 925 | | -1,9 | -2,5 | -5,3 | |

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

| Month | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------|
| Jan | 186 586 | 192 425 | 207 201 | 194 644 | 239 964 | 266 587 | 260 856 |
| Feb | 199 657 | 207 358 | 220 064 | 217 063 | 261 395 | 295 265 | 294 290 |
| Mar | 217 997 | 225 152 | 222 860 | 246 505 | 297 156 | 315 526 | 287 920 |
| Apr | 189 218 | 214 381 | 122 308 | 222 601 | 250 052 | 272 527 | 287 124 |
| May | 218 449 | 225 955 | 174 097 | 253 105 | 300 386 | 311 052 | 305 434 |
| Jun | 221 346 | 219 159 | 205 373 | 252 729 | 301 380 | 300 947 | 289 082 |
| Jul | 217 396 | 241 003 | 225 218 | 244 262 | 303 709 | 296 098 | 301 164 |
| Aug | 231 011 | 230 126 | 221 587 | 254 984 | 307 311 | 319 877 | 289 108 |
| Sep | 233 295 | 231 271 | 234 101 | 259 859 | 326 261 | 314 373 | 288 645 |
| Oct | 252 683 | 253 871 | 245 817 | 279 701 | 328 443 | 318 363 | 318 850 |
| Nov | 257 293 | 246 757 | 240 859 | 291 962 | 335 052 | 341 163 | |
| Dec | 206 255 | 217 598 | 223 810 | 257 774 | 290 848 | 275 816 | |
| Total | 2 631 186 | 2 705 056 | 2 543 295 | 2 975 189 | 3 541 957 | 3 627 594 | |

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

| Month | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2024 year-to-date |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------|----------------------|
| Jan | 3,1 | 7,7 | -6,1 | 23,3 | 11,1 | -2,1 | -2,1 |
| Feb | 3,9 | 6,1 | -1,4 | 20,4 | 13,0 | -0,3 | -1,2 |
| Mar | 3,3 | -1,0 | 10,6 | 20,5 | 6,2 | -8,7 | -3,9 |
| Apr | 13,3 | -42,9 | 82,0 | 12,3 | 9,0 | 5,4 | -1,7 |
| May | 3,4 | -23,0 | 45,4 | 18,7 | 3,6 | -1,8 | -1,7 |
| Jun | -1,0 | -6,3 | 23,1 | 19,3 | -0,1 | -3,9 | -2,1 |
| Jul | 10,9 | -6,5 | 8,5 | 24,3 | -2,5 | 1,7 | -1,6 |
| Aug | -0,4 | -3,7 | 15,1 | 20,5 | 4,1 | -9,6 | -2,6 |
| Sep | -0,9 | 1,2 | 11,0 | 25,6 | -3,6 | -8,2 | -3,3 |
| Oct | 0,5 | -3,2 | 13,8 | 17,4 | -3,1 | 0,2 | -2,9 |
| Nov | -4,1 | -2,4 | 21,2 | 14,8 | 1,8 | | |
| Dec | 5,5 | 2,9 | 15,2 | 12,8 | -5,2 | | |
| Total | 2,8 | -6,0 | 17,0 | 19,0 | 2,4 | | |

Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices

| Month | R million | | | | Month-on-month % change | | | |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------|------|------|------|
| | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
| Jan | 227 104 | 276 612 | 304 671 | 296 194 | -1,2 | 4,4 | 1,1 | 1,2 |
| Feb | 231 037 | 277 835 | 313 099 | 301 959 | 1,7 | 0,4 | 2,8 | 1,9 |
| Mar | 237 430 | 286 568 | 304 232 | 291 217 | 2,8 | 3,1 | -2,8 | -3,6 |
| Apr | 240 140 | 273 873 | 301 854 | 302 398 | 1,1 | -4,4 | -0,8 | 3,8 |
| May | 253 086 | 295 232 | 301 403 | 295 789 | 5,4 | 7,8 | -0,1 | -2,2 |
| Jun | 249 905 | 298 261 | 295 847 | 292 319 | -1,3 | 1,0 | -1,8 | -1,2 |
| Jul | 241 224 | 305 053 | 297 061 | 294 999 | -3,5 | 2,3 | 0,4 | 0,9 |
| Aug | 250 647 | 299 164 | 311 049 | 282 521 | 3,9 | -1,9 | 4,7 | -4,2 |
| Sep | 248 808 | 312 881 | 306 142 | 282 335 | -0,7 | 4,6 | -1,6 | -0,1 |
| Oct | 262 360 | 307 910 | 295 572 | 291 825 | 5,4 | -1,6 | -3,5 | 3,4 |
| Nov | 264 243 | 305 687 | 311 838 | | 0,7 | -0,7 | 5,5 | |
| Dec | 264 861 | 301 248 | 292 655 | | 0,2 | -1,5 | -6,2 | |

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

| Type of dealer | May-24 | Jun-24 | Jul-24 | Aug-24 | Sep-24 | Oct-24 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Fee or contract basis | 10 868 | 8 199 | 9 147 | 9 115 | 11 012 | 11 933 |
| Agricultural raw materials and livestock | 21 165 | 17 922 | 20 340 | 18 603 | 19 533 | 21 194 |
| Food, beverages and tobacco | 41 559 | 43 039 | 43 914 | 43 588 | 41 244 | 45 071 |
| Textiles, clothing and footwear | 5 305 | 4 143 | 5 912 | 7 559 | 7 591 | 9 024 |
| Other household goods except precious stones | 30 983 | 30 645 | 30 973 | 30 790 | 32 625 | 35 623 |
| Precious stones, jewellery and silverware | 4 579 | 3 106 | 3 958 | 4 261 | 3 506 | 3 810 |
| Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products | 80 044 | 68 058 | 66 448 | 65 385 | 60 027 | 66 895 |
| Metals and metal ores | 10 368 | 9 861 | 9 827 | 9 141 | 9 533 | 10 461 |
| Construction and building materials | 15 225 | 14 215 | 15 872 | 14 889 | 14 479 | 17 780 |
| Other intermediate products, waste and scrap | 13 294 | 14 248 | 17 462 | 16 081 | 18 213 | 21 186 |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies | 45 815 | 50 037 | 48 661 | 46 762 | 44 151 | 45 743 |
| Other goods | 26 229 | 25 609 | 28 649 | 22 933 | 26 731 | 30 130 |
| Total | 305 434 | 289 082 | 301 164 | 289 108 | 288 645 | 318 850 |

Table 8 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at current prices by type of dealer

| Type of dealer | May-24 | Jun-24 | Jul-24 | Aug-24 | Sep-24 | Oct-24 |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Fee or contract basis | 17,3 | -15,1 | 3,7 | -13,7 | 0,9 | 18,8 |
| Agricultural raw materials and livestock | -6,3 | -12,7 | 1,7 | -2,4 | -12,8 | 11,2 |
| Food, beverages and tobacco | 1,6 | -3,3 | 12,2 | 4,1 | 0,0 | 9,8 |
| Textiles, clothing and footwear | 2,3 | -30,2 | 0,3 | 12,5 | 5,5 | 11,0 |
| Other household goods except precious stones | 4,3 | 7,5 | 15,5 | -3,7 | 10,6 | 5,3 |
| Precious stones, jewellery and silverware | -36,1 | -4,3 | -36,1 | -34,6 | -47,0 | -47,0 |
| Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products | -4,2 | -12,2 | -20,4 | -26,7 | -31,3 | -19,6 |
| Metals and metal ores | 14,1 | 11,8 | 8,2 | -7,8 | 13,2 | 6,6 |
| Construction and building materials | -10,3 | -16,2 | -2,7 | -10,8 | -6,2 | 4,8 |
| Other intermediate products, waste and scrap | -0,4 | 4,5 | 19,6 | 2,8 | 11,2 | 11,8 |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies | -2,4 | 4,7 | 16,2 | 3,4 | -5,6 | 3,8 |
| Other goods | -0,5 | 7,2 | 20,3 | -13,4 | 20,9 | 15,8 |
| Total | -1,8 | -3,9 | 1,7 | -9,6 | -8,2 | 0,2 |

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

| Type of dealer | May-24 | Jun-24 | Jul-24 | Aug-24 | Sep-24 | Oct-24 |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Fee or contract basis | 0,5 | -0,5 | 0,1 | -0,5 | 0,0 | 0,6 |
| Agricultural raw materials and livestock | -0,5 | -0,9 | 0,1 | -0,1 | -0,9 | 0,7 |
| Food, beverages and tobacco | 0,2 | -0,5 | 1,6 | 0,5 | 0,0 | 1,3 |
| Textiles, clothing and footwear | 0,0 | -0,6 | 0,0 | 0,3 | 0,1 | 0,3 |
| Other household goods except precious stones | 0,4 | 0,7 | 1,4 | -0,4 | 1,0 | 0,6 |
| Precious stones, jewellery and silverware | -0,8 | 0,0 | -0,8 | -0,7 | -1,0 | -1,1 |
| Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products | -1,1 | -3,1 | -5,8 | -7,4 | -8,7 | -5,1 |
| Metals and metal ores | 0,4 | 0,3 | 0,3 | -0,2 | 0,4 | 0,2 |
| Construction and building materials | -0,6 | -0,9 | -0,1 | -0,6 | -0,3 | 0,3 |
| Other intermediate products, waste and scrap | 0,0 | 0,2 | 1,0 | 0,1 | 0,6 | 0,7 |
| Machinery, equipment and supplies | -0,4 | 0,7 | 2,3 | 0,5 | -0,8 | 0,5 |
| Other goods | 0,0 | 0,6 | 1,6 | -1,1 | 1,5 | 1,3 |
| Total | -1,8 | -3,9 | 1,7 | -9,6 | -8,2 | 0,2 |

Explanatory notes

- Introduction** 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey covering enterprises in the wholesale trade industry (see point 3 below). This survey is based on a sample drawn from Stats SA's 2024 statistical business register (SBR) 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 SBR, which is linked to the SARS administrative data. Published wholesale trade sales estimates exclude VAT.
- Purpose of the survey** 2 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** 3 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** 4 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 group four-digit level.
- Collection rate** 5 The preliminary collection rate for the survey on wholesale trade sales for October 2024 was 73,3%. The revised collection rate for September 2024 was 78,7%.

Statistical unit 6 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 7 Revised figures are mainly due to late submission of data to Stats SA, or respondents reporting revisions or corrections to their figures. The reasons for routine revisions are outlined in the following schedule. Any unscheduled revisions will be promptly indicated in relevant tables to maintain transparency and accuracy. It is important to note that seasonally adjusted figures are revised monthly.

| Statistical release | Reason for revision | Period subject to revision |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| Oct-24 | Additional information from respondents | Sep-24 |
| Nov-24 | Additional information from respondents | Oct-24 |
| Dec-24 | Additional information from respondents | Nov-24 |
| Jan-25 | Additional information from respondents | Dec-24 |
| Feb-25 | Additional information from respondents | Jan-25 |
| Mar-25 | Additional information from respondents | Feb-25 |
| Apr-25 | Additional information from respondents | Mar-25 |
| May-25 | Additional information from respondents | Apr-25 |
| Jun-25 | Additional information from respondents | May-25 |
| Jul-25 | Additional information from respondents New sample | Jan-98–Jun-25 |
| Aug-25 | Additional information from respondents | Jul-25 |
| Sep-25 | Additional information from respondents | Aug-25 |
| New base year in 2027/28 - periodic, approximately four- to five-year intervals | | |

Related publications 8 Users may also refer to the *Stats in Brief* publication available from Stats SA.

Rounding-off of figures 9 Where figures have been rounded off, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and the totals.

Historical data 10 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 11 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 1 673 enterprises from a population of 17 102 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 2024 from Stats SA’s statistical business register (SBR). 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 5,25%.

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 groups two, three and four to reflect the total value of sales.

Measure of size classes (Rand)

| Enterprise size | Size group | Lower limit | Upper limit |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Very small | 4 | 7 097 892 | 36 000 000 |
| Small | 3 | 36 000 001 | 192 000 000 |
| Medium | 2 | 192 000 001 | 384 000 000 |
| Large | 1 | 384 000 001 | |

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 that 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. From 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 are 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.

- Relative standard error** 10 One measure is the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of enterprises was used. The relative standard error (RSE) provides an immediate indication of the percentage errors likely to have occurred due to sampling, and thus avoids the need to refer to the size of the estimate.

Estimates of total wholesale trade sales within 95% confidence limits – October 2024

| | Lower limit (R million) | Sales (R million) | Upper limit (R million) | Relative standard error (RSE) % |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Wholesale trade sales | 307 431 | 318 850 | 330 268 | 1,8 |

- Month-on-month percentage change** 11 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** 12 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)** 13 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

| | |
|----------|---|
| GDP | Gross domestic product |
| ISIC | International Standard Industrial Classification |
| SARS | South African Revenue Service |
| SBR | Statistical Business Register |
| SIC | Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities |
| Stats SA | Statistics South Africa |
| VAT | Value-added tax |
| * | Revised figures |

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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