



# Retail trade sales

## April 2004

**Embargoed until:  
14 July 2004  
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**Key figures as at the end of April 2004**

<b>Actual estimates</b>	<b>April 2004 R million</b>	<b>% change between March 2004 and April 2004</b>	<b>% change between April 2003 and April 2004</b>	<b>% change between February to April 2003 and February to April 2004</b>	<b>% change between January to April 2003 and January to April 2004</b>
Retail trade sales: current prices	22 810	-4,6	+4,4	+6,9	+7,5
constant (2000) prices	18 046	-4,9	+1,8	+4,0	+4,7

**Key findings as at the end of April 2004**

**Retail trade sales increase in real terms**

*Retail trade sales, at constant (2000) prices for the three months up to April 2004 increased by 4,0%, compared with the three months up to April 2003.*

Similarly, retail trade sales, at constant (2000) prices for the period January to April 2004 increased by 4,7% compared with the period January to April 2003. Furthermore, retail trade sales, at constant (2000) prices for April 2004 increased by 1,8% compared with April 2003.

Figure 1 below shows the trend cycle for the retail trade sales, at constant (2000) prices between January 1998 and April 2004. There was a slightly downward trend till mid 2000 and a gradual upward trend after that.



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# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Notes</b> .....	4
<b>Article</b> New monthly indicator series – feasibility of seasonal adjustment .....	5
<b>Detailed results</b>	
Table 1            Total retail trade sales at current prices (R million) .....	6
Table 2            Percentage change in total retail trade sales at current prices .....	6
Table 3            Total retail trade sales at constant 2000 prices (R million) .....	7
Table 4            Percentage change in total retail trade sales at constant 2000 prices .....	7
<b>Explanatory notes</b> .....	8
<b>Glossary</b> .....	10
<b>General information</b> .....	11

**Notes**

<b>Forthcoming issue</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Expected release date</b>
	May 2004	5 August 2004
<b>Purpose of the survey</b>	The results of the monthly retail 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.	

## Article: New monthly indicator series – feasibility of seasonal adjustment

As indicated in earlier discussions, since the beginning of 2003, Stats SA has been conducting its monthly indicator surveys (manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail trade, motor trade and land freight) using fresh samples of businesses drawn from its new business register, in parallel with the continued conduct of the surveys based on the established sample of businesses drawn from the old business address register. The parallel operation was designed to ensure that the new samples were well established, and that estimates could be constructed for an overlap period of one year between the old and new samples, to provide users with a comparability bridge of a reasonable number of observations on both the old and new bases.

The inadequacy of the old business register to accurately capture and represent the true business population across the economy is mainly due to the fact that the register could not be updated regularly or consistently across industry sectors. This has been rectified through access to information about VAT registrations from the South African Revenue Service. This source has been used to construct Stats SA's new business register.

**Manufacturing** was the most frequently updated sector in the old business address register, through special efforts to build up coverage for reasonably regular censuses of the sector, which in turn provided information for updating the business population for the sector, particularly for ceased businesses and changes in activity. Accordingly the industry structure of the sector was relatively well captured by the old business register, even though it under covered the number of businesses involved, mainly smaller businesses. The movements of the new manufacturing series track that of the old series very closely for 2003, and seasonal adjustment of the new series, including its backcast component, was found to be feasible using the seasonal factors from the old manufacturing series carried over to the new one.

The **wholesale** and **motor** industries remained relatively stable in structure in the old and new registers, and activities were dominated by the large enterprises, even though the old register under covered smaller enterprises. Again, the movements of the new series tracked that of the old series very closely for 2003, and seasonal adjustment of the new series using the seasonal factors from the old series, including their backcast components, produced seasonally adjusted series which were reasonably consistent with the pattern of the seasonally adjusted series from the old surveys. The addition of wholesale on a commission or fee basis in the wholesale survey and the expansion of coverage to wholesale activities in the motor trade survey, contributed to some of the differences noted in the monthly movements.

The situation for **retail trade** was found to be more complicated. It is the sector where, on the one hand, the structure changed most frequently in terms of business starts, cessations, mergers and acquisitions, so that frequent updating of the business register to reflect these changes was the most important. On the other hand, the inadequacies of the old business register were greatest in this sector, and the sample drawn from it for the monthly retail trade survey was accordingly the most deficient for capturing both the level and movements in activity. While the movements of the new series track that of the old series reasonably well over most months of 2003, the growth shown from November to December 2003 differs quite significantly between the old and new series (the old series showed a current price growth of 40,7% whilst the new series shows a growth of 30,4%). It is the view of Stats SA that the growth from the new survey is more reliable.

Retail trade is more strongly characterised by strong seasonal fluctuations than other industry sectors. The seasonal factors from the old survey were built up over many years for that survey based on the performance of that series, which in turn was influenced by the long-standing inadequacies in the old business frame and sample. When those seasonal factors were applied to the new series, including its backcast component, it was found that the resulting seasonally adjusted series did not behave plausibly.

Stats SA has concluded that there is no option for retail trade but to stop publishing a seasonally adjusted series until enough data points are available to derive seasonal adjustment factors informed by the behaviour of the new series. Usually at least 36 data points are needed, and currently there are 16. However, Stats SA will show an estimated trend line through the original series (see figure 1, p.2).

**Detailed results**

Outlined below in tables 1 and 2 are details of the behaviour of retail trade sales over the period January 1998 to April 2004.

**Table 1 - Total retail trade sales at current prices (R million)**

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	14 422	14 716	15 862	16 732	18 628	21 214	23 154
February	13 592	14 253	15 515	16 496	18 498	20 334	22 455
March	14 830	15 570	16 695	17 947	20 229	22 536	23 917
April	15 222	15 858	17 248	18 532	20 437	21 843	22 810 1/
May	15 440	16 166	17 244	18 667	21 255	23 003	
June	15 292	15 730	17 599	19 304	21 813	22 297	
July	15 249	16 330	17 328	19 215	21 274	22 628	
August	14 919	15 821	17 059	18 873	21 524	22 478	
September	15 409	16 016	17 524	18 969	21 765	22 948	
October	16 077	17 084	18 146	20 031	22 634	23 650	
November	16 569	17 551	19 328	21 033	24 078	25 476	
December	23 840	25 314	27 468	29 808	33 576	33 211	
<b>Total</b>	<b>190 861</b>	<b>200 409</b>	<b>217 016</b>	<b>235 607</b>	<b>265 711</b>	<b>281 618</b>	

1/ Preliminary

**Table 2 - Percentage change in total retail trade sales at current prices<sup>2</sup>**

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	-	2,0	7,8	5,5	11,3	13,9	9,1
February	-	4,9	8,9	6,3	12,1	9,9	10,4
March	-	5,0	7,2	7,5	12,7	11,4	6,1
April	-	4,2	8,8	7,4	10,3	6,9	4,4
May	-	4,7	6,7	8,3	13,9	8,2	
June	-	2,9	11,9	9,7	13,0	2,2	
July	-	7,1	6,1	10,9	10,7	6,4	
August	-	6,0	7,8	10,6	14,0	4,4	
September	-	3,9	9,4	8,2	14,7	5,4	
October	-	6,3	6,2	10,4	13,0	4,5	
November	-	5,9	10,1	8,8	14,5	5,8	
December	-	6,2	8,5	8,5	12,6	-1,1	
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>5,0</b>	<b>8,3</b>	<b>8,6</b>	<b>12,8</b>	<b>6,0</b>	

2/ The percentage change is the change in retail trade sales of the relevant year compared with retail trade sales of the previous year expressed as a percentage.

Outlined below in tables 3 and 4 are details of the behaviour of retail trade sales at constant (2000) prices over the period January 1998 to April 2004.

**Table 3 - Total retail trade sales at constant 2000 prices (R million)**

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	17 027	14 716	16 454	16 292	16 919	17 403	18 568
February	16 009	14 253	16 061	16 031	16 725	16 708	17 892
March	17 365	15 570	17 123	17 307	17 997	18 366	18 982
April	17 638	15 858	17 440	17 734	17 943	17 730	18 046 1/
May	17 830	16 166	17 366	17 761	18 467	18 778	
June	17 556	15 730	17 599	18 245	18 772	18 336	
July	17 368	16 330	17 140	18 059	18 198	18 397	
August	16 915	15 821	16 824	17 771	18 272	18 172	
September	17 333	16 016	17 214	17 811	18 213	18 522	
October	18 023	17 084	17 755	18 703	18 706	19 135	
November	18 554	17 551	18 894	19 493	19 817	20 545	
December	26 577	25 314	26 824	27 447	27 635	26 783	
<b>Total</b>	<b>218 195</b>	<b>200 409</b>	<b>216 694</b>	<b>222 654</b>	<b>227 664</b>	<b>228 875</b>	

1/ Preliminary

**Table 4 - Percentage change in total retail trade sales at constant 2000 prices<sup>2</sup>**

Month	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
January	-	-13,6	11,8	-1,0	3,8	2,9	6,7
February	-	-11,0	12,7	-0,2	4,3	-0,1	7,1
March	-	-10,3	10,0	1,1	4,0	2,1	3,4
April	-	-10,1	10,0	1,7	1,2	-1,2	1,8
May	-	-9,3	7,4	2,3	4,0	1,7	
June	-	-10,4	11,9	3,7	2,9	-2,3	
July	-	-6,0	5,0	5,4	0,8	1,1	
August	-	-6,5	6,3	5,6	2,8	-0,5	
September	-	-7,6	7,5	3,5	2,3	1,7	
October	-	-5,2	3,9	5,3	0,0	2,3	
November	-	-5,4	7,7	3,2	1,7	3,7	
December	-	-4,8	6,0	2,3	0,7	-3,1	
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>-8,2</b>	<b>8,1</b>	<b>2,8</b>	<b>2,3</b>	<b>0,5</b>	

2/ The percentage change is the change in retail trade sales of the relevant year compared with retail trade sales of the previous year expressed as a percentage.



## Explanatory notes

- Introduction**
- 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey of the retail trade industry, covering retail enterprises (see 4 below). This statistical release contains the first results of a sample drawn from the new business register, with a significantly enhanced coverage of South African businesses. The release shows the monthly value of retail trade sales. It also provides information on the behaviour in terms of level and movement, of the sales series based on the old and new business registers for 2003. The new series have been backcast to the start of 1998, using the level of January 2003 whilst maintaining the movements of the old series, to help the users of the time series. Retail trade sales include value added tax (VAT).
  - 2 As is usual, information for the latest month has had to be estimated for respondents who have not reported by the cut-off date for production of results. These estimates will be revised in future statistical releases when their reported information becomes available.
  - 3 As indicated earlier, Stats SA developed a new business register, based on the VAT database obtained from the South African Revenue Service (SARS), which replaced the previous business register. All enterprises are legally bound to register for VAT when their turnover for a period of twelve months equals or exceeds R300 000. Enterprises that conform to these criteria are included in the new business register, and hence were given a chance of selection in the new sample for the survey.
- Scope of the survey**
- 4 This survey covers retail enterprises, i.e.
    - butchers;
    - general dealers;
    - bottle stores;
    - dealers in clothing, footwear and textiles;
    - dealers in furniture and household requisites;
    - bookstores and stationers;
    - jewellers;
    - chemists;
    - dealers in miscellaneous goods; and
    - repair of personal and household goods.
- 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. Statistics in this publication are presented at SIC division (two digit) level. Each enterprise is classified to the industry which reflects its predominant activity.
- 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.
- Survey methodology and design**
- 7 The survey is conducted by mail on a monthly basis. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of about 3 000 enterprises from a population of about 28 000 enterprises. Completed questionnaires are required to be returned to Stats SA within 10 days after the end of the reference month. Fax and telephone reminders are used to follow up non-respondents.
  - 8 The value of sales is obtained monthly from the sample of 3 000 enterprises (which was drawn in January 2003 at the SIC three-digit level) from a population then of about 28 000 retail enterprises. The retail industry is divided into four size groups. All large enterprises (size group one), which comprise about 11 percent of the enterprises in the current sample, are completely enumerated. Simple random sampling is applied to size groups two (medium sized), three and four (small) enterprises. 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.

<b>Weighting methodology</b>	<b>9</b>	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 division estimates. These procedures, which are in line with international best practice, are described in more detail on the Stats SA website at <a href="http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/publicationsearch.asp">http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/publicationsearch.asp</a> .																
<b>Constant prices</b>	<b>10</b>	The constant prices for the new series are calculated using the price index for commodities for the metropolitan areas from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to deflate the current prices.																
<b>Seasonal adjustment</b>	<b>11</b>	Seasonally adjusted estimates will not be published until there are sufficient data points for the new survey (see the article on page 5).																
<b>Trend cycle</b>	<b>12</b>	The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimates of the underlying trend cycle.																
<b>Reliability of estimates</b>	<b>13</b>	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 retail industry in South Africa. Estimates are subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Figures for the latest month are preliminary.																
	<b>14</b>	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. Figures for the latest month are preliminary. Fluctuations may occur in consecutive months as a result of seasonal and economic factors.																
<b>Revised figures</b>	<b>15</b>	Revised figures are due to respondents reporting revisions or corrections to their figures and late submission of their data to Stats SA. Figures for the latest month are preliminary. Data are edited at the enterprise level.																
<b>Related publications</b>	<b>16</b>	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications available from Stats SA - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly.</li> <li>• <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually.</li> </ul> These will, in due course, be revised on the basis of the backcast series.																
<b>Rounding of figures</b>	<b>17</b>	The figures in the tables have, where necessary, been rounded to the nearest digit shown.																
<b>Pre-release policy</b>	<b>18</b>	Stats SA's pre-release policy may be inspected at its Website, <a href="http://www.statssa.gov.za">www.statssa.gov.za</a> .																
<b>Symbols and abbreviations</b>	<b>19</b>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">GDP</td> <td>Gross Domestic Product</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ISIC</td> <td>International Standard Industrial Classification</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SIC</td> <td>Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SARS</td> <td>South African Revenue Service</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stats SA</td> <td>Statistics South Africa</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VAT</td> <td>Value-added tax</td> </tr> <tr> <td>..</td> <td>Figures not available</td> </tr> <tr> <td>*</td> <td>Revised figures</td> </tr> </table>	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	..	Figures not available	*	Revised figures
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<b>Comparability with previously published information</b>	<b>20</b>	The levels of retail trade sales based on the new sample, are about 20% higher than the levels based on the old sample. The first results of the new sample were published on 2 June 2004.																

- 21** The higher values of sales from the new sample can mainly be attributed to the following:
- The greater currency of the frame now being used compared to the frame drawn from the previous business register;
  - The improved coverage particularly for smaller enterprises as a result of access to VAT registrations to update the new business register; and
  - The additional scope of the new series, which also includes repair of personal and household goods (SIC 626).

## **Glossary**

### **Enterprise**

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

### **Industry**

An industry is made up of enterprises engaged in the same or similar kinds of economic activity. Industries are defined in the *System of National Accounts (SNA)* in the same way as in the *Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, Fifth Edition, Report No. 09-90-02 of January 1993 (SIC)*.

### **Statistical unit**

A statistical unit is a unit about which statistics are tabulated, compiled or published. The statistical units are derived from and linked to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) administrative data.

### **Retail trade**

Retail trade includes the resale (sale without transformation) of new and used goods and products to the general public for household use.

### **Retailer**

A retailer is an enterprise deriving more than 50% of its turnover from sales of goods to the general public for household use.

## General information

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