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Statistics of civil cases for debt
(Preliminary)

June 2017

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Juan-Pierre Terblanche
Tel: (012) 310 2965

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www.statssa.gov.za
info@statssa.gov.za
T +27 12 310 8911
F +27 12 310 8500

Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001, South Africa
ISibalo House, Koch Street, Salvokop, Pretoria, 0002

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Key results for June 2017

Table A – Key figures for the month of June 2017

Actual estimates	June 2017	% change between June 2016 and June 2017	% change between April – June 2016 and April – June 2017
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	48 169	-16,7	-16,4
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	21 954	-10,5	-12,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	350,6	1,6	2,2

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt decreased by 16,4% in the second quarter of 2017 compared with the second quarter of 2016.

The largest negative contributors to the 16,4% decrease were civil summonses relating to:

- money lent (contributing -5,2 percentage points);
- services (contributing -4,7 percentage points); and
- 'other' debts (contributing -3,3 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreased by 12,2% in the second quarter of 2017 compared with the second quarter of 2016.

The largest contributors to the 12,2% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- services (contributing -6,8 percentage points);
- 'other' debts (contributing -3,2 percentage points);
- goods sold (contributing -1,9 percentage points); and
- money lent (contributing -1,6 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt increased by 2,2% in the second quarter of 2017 compared with the second quarter of 2016.

The largest positive contributors to the 2,2% increase were the value of judgements relating to:

- money lent (contributing 5,5 percentage points);
- promissory notes (contributing 3,0 percentage points); and
- rent (contributing 1,1 percentage points) – see Tables 4 and 5.

In June 2017, 21 954 civil judgements for debt amounting to R350,6 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the total value of judgements were:

- money lent (R104,4 million or 29,8%);
- services (R72,0 million or 20,5%); and
- 'other' debts (R71,5 million or 20,4%) – see Tables 2 and 3.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

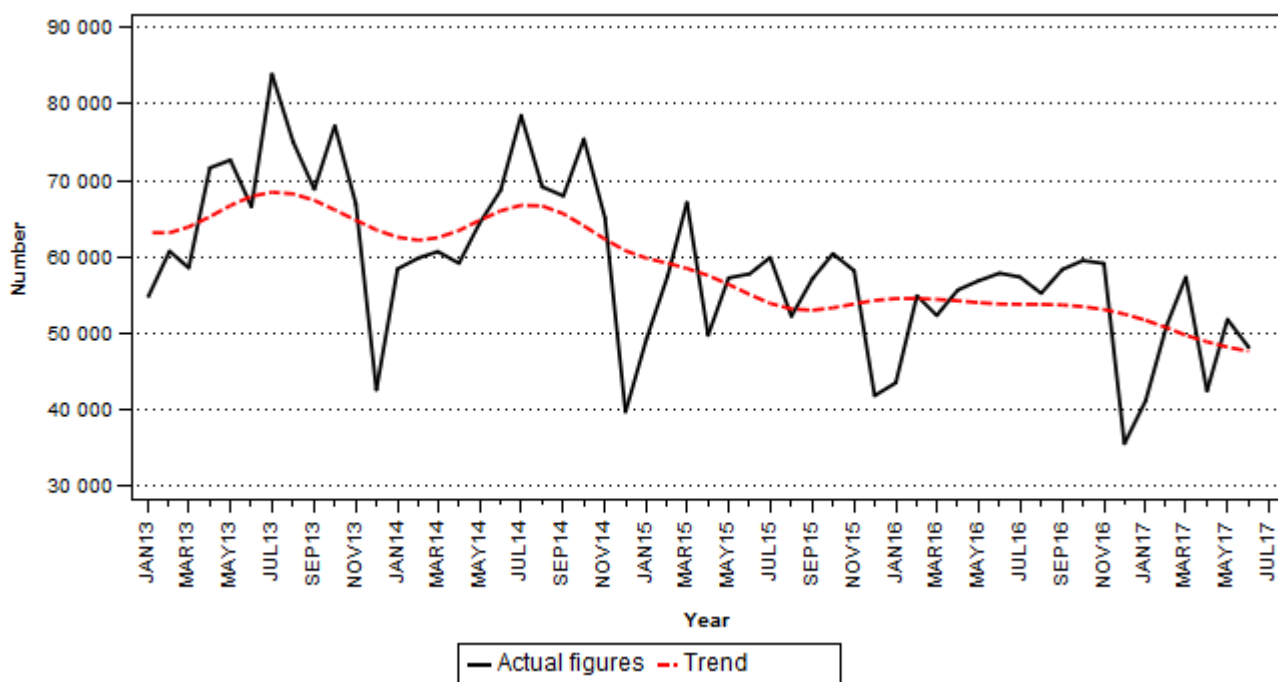
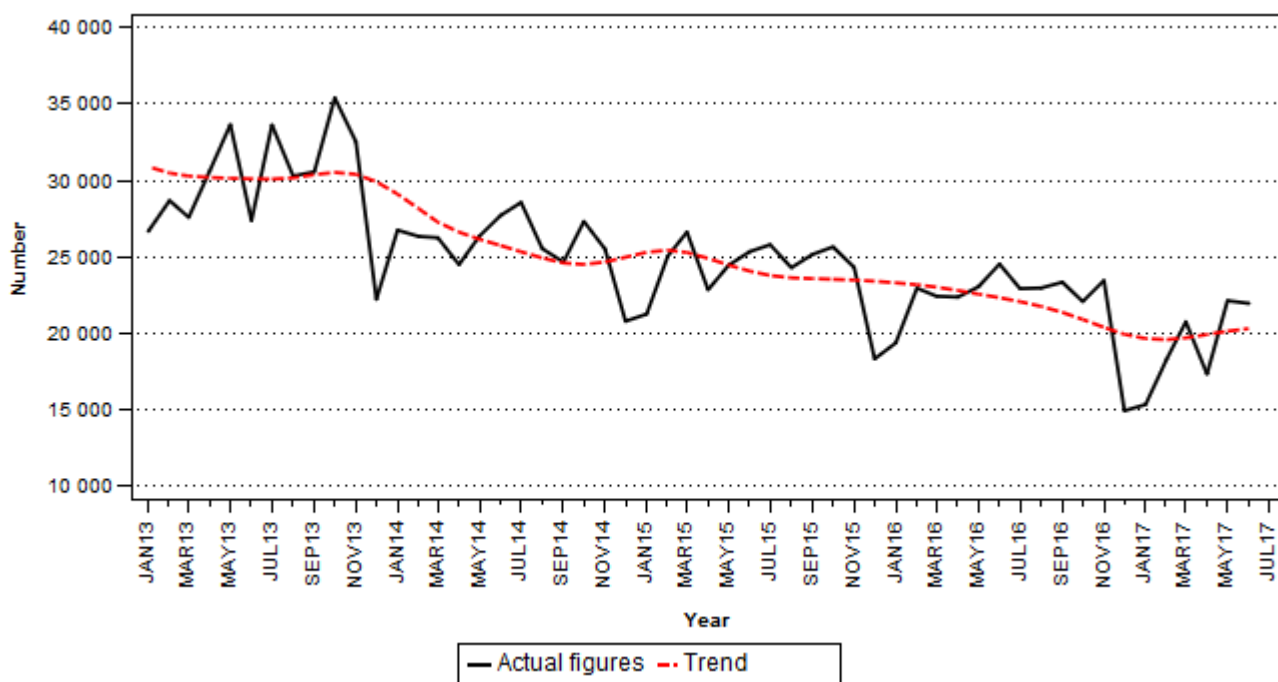


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables**Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt: Total and private persons**

Item		Total				Private Persons			
		2016	Jun-16	1/ May-17	1/ Jun-17	2016	Jun-16	1/ May-17	1/ Jun-17
Cases recorded	Actual figures	700 485	62 939	57 721	51 310	602 530	54 698	49 988	44 741
	Seasonally adjusted		58 680	52 892	48 815		50 392	47 099	42 600
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	39 656	3 943	3 245	3 275	29 919	3 101	2 379	2 483
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	21 886	2 216	1 891	2 004	16 506	1 715	1 509	1 538
	Services - Professional	83 019	7 083	6 514	5 903	72 241	6 096	5 717	5 236
	Services - Other	106 305	9 377	9 353	8 301	89 744	7 939	7 944	7 003
	Rent	31 195	3 018	3 014	2 618	24 197	2 447	2 260	1 904
	Money lent	155 809	14 008	11 464	10 431	145 604	13 303	10 820	9 868
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	90 564	8 153	7 108	7 139	84 008	7 538	6 431	6 482
	Other debts	117 781	10 054	9 222	8 498	103 779	8 817	8 139	7 674
	Total - Actual figures	646 215	57 852	51 811	48 169	565 998	50 956	45 199	42 188
Total - Seasonally adjusted		54 249	48 642	45 541		47 630	42 508	39 660	

1/ Preliminary.

Table 2 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2016	Jun-16	1/ May-17	1/ Jun-17	2016	Jun-16	1/ May-17	1/ Jun-17
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	17 058	1 566	1 539	1 337	12 948	1 206	1 200	1 015
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	7 068	770	616	447	6 039	682	531	374
	Services - Professional	44 011	4 124	3 292	3 433	39 091	3 724	3 059	3 199
	Services - Other	41 276	4 380	3 388	3 688	35 567	3 778	2 924	3 277
	Rent	18 296	1 639	1 725	1 583	15 162	1 372	1 443	1 343
	Money lent	60 447	5 631	5 246	5 066	55 379	5 174	4 860	4 727
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	25 021	1 969	2 356	2 368	21 461	1 718	2 062	2 054
	Other debts	51 152	4 446	3 966	4 032	45 458	3 972	3 714	3 749
	Total - Actual figures	264 329	24 525	22 128	21 954	231 105	21 626	19 793	19 738
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		22 310	20 974	20 060		19 433	18 719	17 893

1/ Preliminary.

Table 3 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt: Total and private persons (R'000)

	Item	Total				Private Persons			
		2016	Jun-16	1/ May-17	1/ Jun-17	2016	Jun-16	1/ May-17	1/ Jun-17
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	253 299	26 973	23 319	23 006	131 337	14 232	12 036	11 316
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	96 673	7 145	12 905	7 573	83 906	6 291	11 004	6 531
	Services - Professional	243 371	21 481	21 175	23 154	208 795	17 842	19 225	21 201
	Services - Other	542 398	49 370	49 945	48 811	432 972	39 314	40 937	41 369
	Rent	322 885	27 175	35 354	27 997	224 770	18 510	24 109	16 058
	Money lent	1 139 611	91 955	136 746	104 430	1 029 219	83 793	125 184	95 108
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	434 549	32 020	52 031	44 063	363 747	26 487	44 704	37 530
	Other debts	989 698	88 870	71 452	71 537	722 123	68 055	58 292	61 852
	Total - Actual figures	4 022 484	344 989	402 927	350 571	3 196 869	274 524	335 491	290 965
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		321 351	371 472	338 147		254 568	302 992	276 829

1/ Preliminary.

Table 4 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the second quarter of 2016 and the second quarter of 2017

Actual estimates	Actual estimates Apr – Jun 2016	Actual estimates Apr – Jun 2017	% change between Apr – Jun 2016 and Apr – Jun 2017	Difference between Apr – Jun 2016 and Apr – Jun 2017
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	170 365	142 438	-16,4	-27 927
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	69 924	61 414	-12,2	-8 510
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 005,8	1 028,2	2,2	22,4

Table 5 – Contribution of the different kinds of debt to the change in total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the second quarter of 2016 and the second quarter of 2017 1/

Item	Contribution (% points) to the % change in the total		
	Civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-1,2	-1,2	-0,6
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,1	-0,7	0,6
Services - Professional	-2,8	-3,4	0,3
Services - Other	-1,9	-3,4	-1,2
Rent	-0,2	0,1	1,1
Money lent	-5,2	-1,6	5,5
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-1,7	1,2	3,0
Other debts	-3,3	-3,2	-6,4
Total	-16,4	-12,2	2,2

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt by the percentage contribution to the total during April to June 2016, divided by 100. Due to rounding off, contributions might not add up to the total.

Table 6 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses and judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates June 2016	Actual estimates June 2017	% change between June 2016 and June 2017	Difference between June 2016 and June 2017
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	57 852	48 169	-16,7	-9 683
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	24 525	21 954	-10,5	-2 571
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	345,0	350,6	1,6	5,6

Table 7 – Number of civil summonses issued for debt by province

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2016	Jun	11 126	4 543	907	4 100	9 376	3 005	20 179	2 466	2 150	57 852
	Jul	10 303	4 898	824	3 822	8 730	3 498	20 196	2 783	2 291	57 345
	Aug	10 070	4 200	1 040	4 079	8 760	2 939	19 001	2 724	2 413	55 226
	Sep	9 301	4 234	816	3 942	10 863	3 267	20 526	2 811	2 579	58 339
	Oct	9 612	4 831	800	4 239	9 961	3 280	21 508	2 868	2 399	59 498
	Nov	10 398	4 717	899	4 411	10 014	3 276	19 791	3 151	2 467	59 124
	Dec	5 768	2 145	509	2 851	5 978	1 243	13 343	2 009	1 733	35 579
2017	Jan	6 630	3 224	554	3 356	5 507	2 178	16 203	1 541	1 969	41 162
	Feb	8 707	3 749	811	3 309	8 903	2 185	18 837	2 409	2 136	51 046
	Mar	10 515	4 635	1 040	3 941	8 972	2 538	20 565	2 661	2 479	57 346
	Apr	6 795	3 197	618	2 807	7 746	1 954	15 012	1 999	2 330	42 458
	May	9 102	4 100	808	3 355	9 295	2 358	18 167	2 530	2 096	51 811
	Jun	7 263	3 923	571	3 544	8 813	2 157	17 603	2 270	2 025	48 169

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Table 8 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2016	Jun	4 089	3 796	458	3 288	3 867	1 557	4 842	1 163	1 465	24 525
	Jul	4 380	2 719	441	2 940	3 702	1 673	4 525	1 090	1 449	22 919
	Aug	4 387	2 279	358	2 934	4 369	1 303	4 465	1 191	1 674	22 960
	Sep	4 222	2 286	397	2 488	4 611	1 174	5 323	1 241	1 594	23 336
	Oct	4 082	2 617	445	2 208	4 171	1 297	4 461	1 254	1 537	22 072
	Nov	4 165	2 613	254	2 676	4 208	1 493	5 309	1 148	1 584	23 450
	Dec	2 147	1 240	410	1 319	2 698	715	4 416	943	1 046	14 934
2017	Jan	2 541	2 201	226	1 657	2 034	659	3 922	1 048	1 054	15 342
	Feb	3 370	2 019	292	1 788	3 843	925	4 211	765	1 099	18 312
	Mar	4 019	2 876	539	2 175	3 577	1 001	3 999	1 265	1 300	20 751
	Apr	2 475	2 309	351	2 185	3 386	781	3 664	863	1 318	17 332
	May	4 442	2 732	480	2 594	3 954	1 006	4 610	1 048	1 262	22 128
	Jun	3 368	3 627	392	2 466	3 966	1 072	4 258	1 159	1 646	21 954

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Table 9 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt by province (R'000)

Period 1/		Western Cape	Eastern Cape	Northern Cape	Free State	KwaZulu-Natal	North West	Gauteng	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	South Africa
2016	Jun	58 989	50 694	3 018	33 334	49 813	12 863	81 022	42 028	13 228	344 989
	Jul	73 486	44 276	3 499	30 868	49 064	14 912	90 018	28 057	10 745	344 925
	Aug	61 855	45 098	3 643	35 048	55 705	14 182	86 036	26 621	17 503	345 691
	Sep	78 808	41 589	3 452	35 587	57 559	10 480	102 167	22 420	11 500	363 562
	Oct	73 547	54 538	3 721	27 805	47 126	11 085	86 080	23 224	13 072	340 198
	Nov	83 923	48 625	2 543	42 330	42 096	14 584	97 217	23 216	15 991	370 525
	Dec	42 778	34 684	3 662	18 302	38 753	10 860	73 189	24 034	5 811	252 073
2017	Jan	42 093	44 928	3 266	21 097	27 757	9 980	58 734	24 055	8 894	240 804
	Feb	67 812	35 384	3 094	19 788	39 303	14 398	81 496	15 697	6 533	283 505
	Mar	71 623	55 846	6 302	26 937	46 972	12 822	95 561	26 632	13 150	355 845
	Apr	50 854	43 565	3 289	25 210	40 619	11 248	68 299	18 608	12 992	274 684
	May	93 019	57 820	5 662	36 927	53 567	15 437	109 482	20 889	10 124	402 927
	Jun	66 175	42 752	5 229	35 392	42 387	16 898	100 206	27 212	14 320	350 571

1/ Latest two months are preliminary.

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	<p>Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly sample survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued in South Africa. This information is obtained from selected magistrates' offices.</p> <p>2 Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejectment orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.</p>
Purpose of the survey	3	<p>The survey of civil cases for debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa. This survey collects information regarding civil cases recorded, civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded in order to provide users with information on the extent of unpaid debt in South Africa. The results of the survey are used by the private and public sectors as an indicator of economic performance.</p>
Scope of the survey	4	<p>This survey covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of civil cases recorded; • number of civil summonses issued for debt; • number of civil judgements recorded for debt; and • value of civil judgements recorded for debt.
Statistical unit	5	<p>The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.</p> <p>The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The monthly survey of 203 magistrates' courts represents approximately 98% of all cases in South Africa.</p>
Survey methodology and design	6	<p>The survey is conducted by email, fax and telephone each month from 203 magistrates' offices.</p>
Collection rate	7	<p>The preliminary collection rate for the civil cases for debt survey for June 2017 was 83,7%. The collection rate for May 2017 was 86,2%.</p>
Seasonal adjustment	8	<p>Seasonally adjusted estimates of all categories are generated each month, using the X-12 Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the US Bureau of the Census, 1968. 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 civil cases for debt is described in more detail on the Stats SA website: Click to download seasonal adjustment for civil cases for debt.</p>
Trend cycle	9	<p>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 estimate the underlying trend cycle.</p>
Unpublished statistics	10	<p>In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published.</p>
Symbols and abbreviations	11	<p>R/D Refer to drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa * Revised figures</p>

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor in which he admits that he owes money to an individual or a company or a bank.
Bills	Bills are statements of charges for services rendered or for amounts owed.
Cases recorded	Includes civil debt and non-debt cases recorded.
Civil judgements	Civil judgements are decisions taken in a civil matter or a dispute between two people or parties.
Civil summonses	Civil summonses are notices to appear before the court of law where a dispute between two parties or people has to be heard, i.e. not for a criminal offence.
Consent judgements	Consent judgements refer to where a debtor agrees to subject himself/herself to obey or accept a judgement of a court against him for debt he owes without defending the action.
Default judgements	Default judgements refer to where the court gives a judgement or a ruling against the defendant who is not present in court and was previously given a notice that was ignored, i.e. a judgement was given against a party or an individual while not present in court.
Instalment sale transaction	Instalment sale transaction relates to where a person buys goods on credit and pays for them in instalments, e.g. every week or month, until he/she settles the debt.
Litigants	Litigants are people who take part in court proceedings, usually against each other, like a debtor and a creditor.
Litigants referred	Litigants referred relates to a case where the parties have been referred to another instance/court.
Open account transaction	Open account transactions are revolving credit, i.e. where an account does not have a final payment date and a person can always take more goods and keep paying as long as he has credit.
Other services	'Other services' refers to municipal services (except outstanding assessment rates), plumbers, builders, mechanics, panel beaters and electricians.
Other debts	'Other debts' refers to all other kinds of outstanding debt such as salaries and wages, medical fund debt, sponsored debt, class and tuition debt, tax, assessment rates and property levies.
Plaintiff	Plaintiff is a person/party in a civil case who asks the court for judgement against another person.
Professional services	Professional services refer to medical doctors, dentists, advocates, attorneys, auditors, accountants, architects, engineers, hospital services, etc.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written undertaking, signed by a person or party, to pay money to another person or to the bearer of such a note on a specific date or on demand.
Reference month	Reference month refers to one calendar month.
Refer to drawer (R/D) cheques	R/D cheques refer to dishonoured cheques. The drawer is the owner of the cheque. When a person issues a cheque and there is no money in the cheque account, the bank will refuse to pay the bearer. The cheque will be referred back to the drawer.

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Technical enquires

JP Terblanche Telephone number: (012) 310 2965
Email address: juan-pierret@statssa.gov.za

Onica Mapimele Telephone number: (012) 310 4897
Email address: onicama@statssa.gov.za

General enquiries

User information services Telephone number: (012) 310 8600
Email address: info@statssa.gov.za

Postal address Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

Produced by Stats SA