

Statistical release

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Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

November 2011

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Results for November 2011

Table A – Key figures for the month of November 2011

Actual estimates	November 2011	% change between November 2010 and November 2011	% change between September to November 2010 and September to November 2011
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	89 631	-7,8	-16,0
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	39 717	-22,8	-23,8
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	405,0	-17,4	-25,1

The number of civil summonses issued for debt

A 16,0% decrease in the total number of civil summonses issued for debt was recorded for the three months ended November 2011 compared with the three months ended November 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 7,8% was recorded in November 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 16,0% decrease were:

- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -9,1 percentage points);
- the 'other debts' category (contributing -4,9 percentage points); and
- the money lent category (contributing -4,1 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt

The three months ended November 2011 reflected a 23,8% decrease in the total number of civil judgements recorded for debt compared with the three months ended November 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 22,8% was recorded in November 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The main drivers behind the 23,8% decrease were civil judgements relating to:

- the money lent category (contributing -11,6 percentage points);
- the services category (contributing -5,7 percentage points); and
- the promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt category (contributing -2,5 percentage points) (see Table 6).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt

There was a 25,1% decrease in the total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended November 2011 compared with the three months ended November 2010. A year-on-year decrease of 17,4% was recorded in November 2011 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 25,1% decrease were the money lent category (contributing -14,0 percentage points) and the services category (contributing -3,9 percentage points) (see Table 6).

During November 2011, 39 717 civil judgements for debt amounting to R405,0 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R405,0 million were:

- money lent (R97,9 million or 24,2%);
- 'other debts' (R82,9 million or 20,5%);
- services (R76,4 million or 18,9%); and
- goods sold (R60,4 million or 14,9%) (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

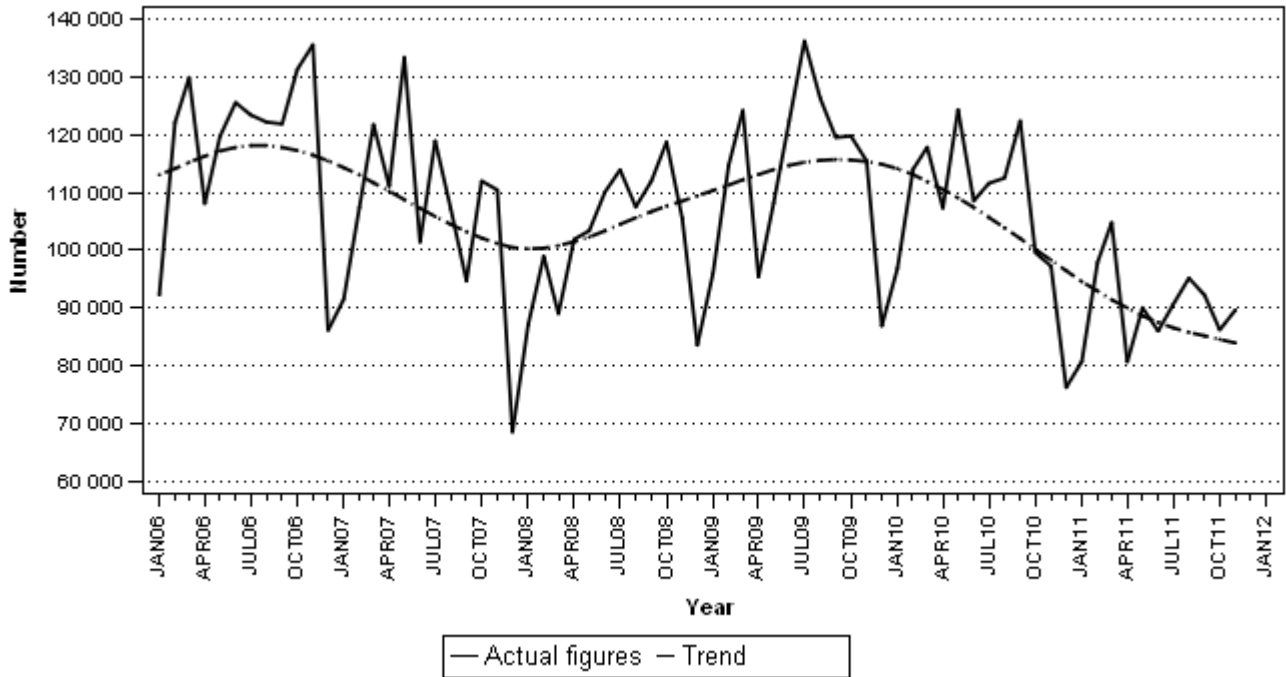
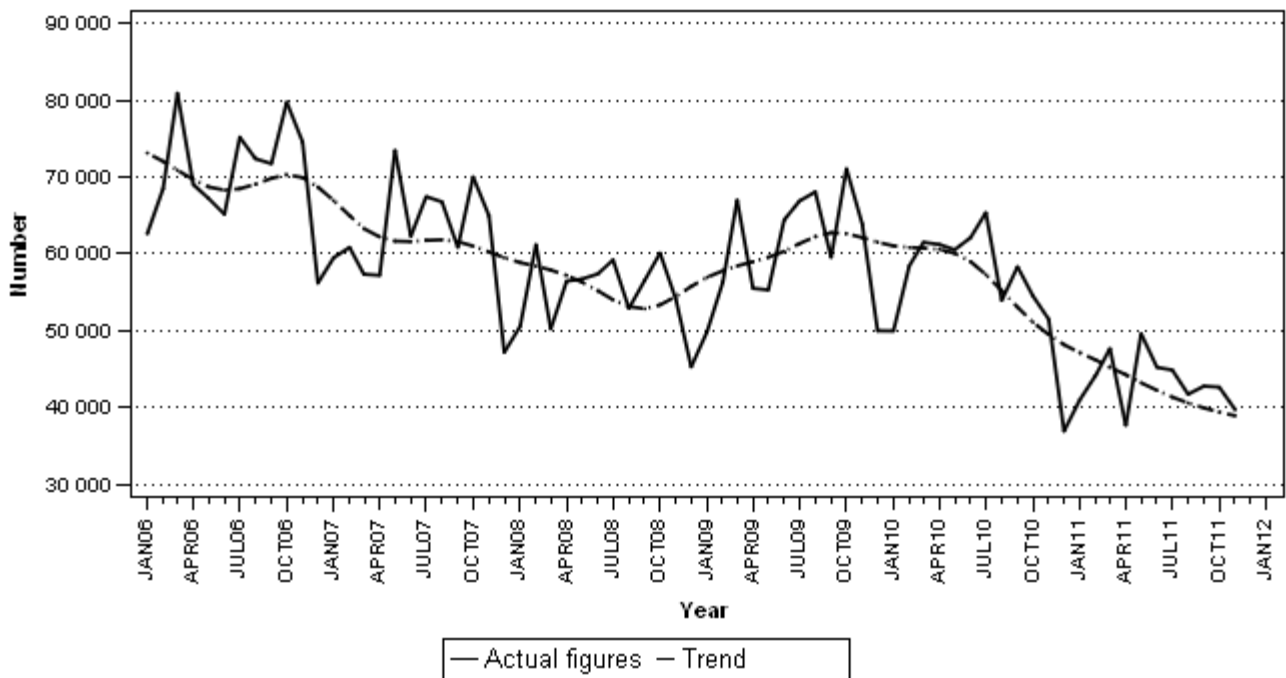


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2010	November 2010	1/ October 2011	1/ November 2011	2010	November 2010	1/ October 2011	1/ November 2011
Cases recorded	Actual figures	1 469 322	106 415	96 540	96 151	1 299 024	91 946	84 207	81 599
	Seasonally adjusted		106 561	95 353	97 029		92 088	83 189	82 562
Civil summonses for debt	Goods sold - Open account	108 884	7 324	7 840	7 346	87 313	5 717	6 507	6 075
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	31 736	2 002	1 712	1 658	27 418	1 683	1 499	1 313
	Services - Professional	147 619	10 538	9 776	9 601	128 120	8 695	8 217	8 182
	Services - Other	165 477	14 093	19 994	22 474	140 491	11 759	18 017	18 744
	Rent	52 683	4 353	3 202	3 959	43 261	3 525	2 660	3 224
	Money lent	314 868	22 060	20 905	18 945	298 470	20 878	17 462	17 125
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	230 272	18 793	10 715	11 152	214 984	16 991	9 400	9 040
	Other debts	236 788	18 051	12 032	14 496	190 156	14 129	10 695	12 396
	Total - Actual figures	1 288 327	97 214	86 176	89 631	1 130 213	83 377	74 457	76 099
Total - Seasonally adjusted		95 952	83 815	88 808		82 848	72 516	76 010	

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Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices

Year and Month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark and Meyerton	Bloemfontein
2009	Year Total	134 632	43 416	18 080	8 026	21 618	91 171	260 137	54 501	38 110	152 361	24 302	40 531
2010	Year Total	118 066	37 136	15 823	5 246	22 836	90 782	256 134	54 366	33 988	138 594	17 342	64 259
	January	8 015	2 649	1 179	469	1 851	7 973	22 543	3 233	2 629	8 470	1 539	4 856
	February	10 123	4 177	1 516	647	2 069	7 669	19 618	7 236	2 819	11 258	3 699	3 991
	March	11 883	3 920	1 648	686	2 312	6 898	24 373	5 272	2 753	11 882	1 540	5 900
	April	11 127	3 180	1 802	413	1 944	7 668	19 616	4 276	2 849	10 033	1 066	6 000
	May	13 037	3 004	2 074	618	2 179	8 162	20 002	4 536	3 295	20 265	1 001	6 500
	June	13 991	3 375	1 325	360	2 148	8 055	17 263	4 381	2 841	12 186	881	6 000
	July	10 630	2 756	1 779	467	1 911	8 085	22 212	5 041	2 659	10 005	1 658	5 435
	August	10 970	2 904	1 205	353	759	7 540	22 301	4 559	3 114	10 765	1 574	6 200
	September	9 700	3 093	345	316	2 883	7 289	27 645	4 516	3 276	13 402	924	6 800
	October	6 673	2 689	939	465	2 019	7 278	16 794	4 676	3 102	12 802	1 759	5 925
	November	6 983	3 340	1 081	351	1 594	7 022	19 021	3 961	2 618	11 105	1 159	4 012
December	4 934	2 049	930	101	1 167	7 143	24 746	2 679	2 033	6 421	542	2 640	
1/ 2011	January	4 253	2 019	876	293	1 493	6 512	22 549	3 222	2 516	8 018	934	3 585
	February	5 379	3 184	1 197	344	1 805	6 343	28 740	4 472	3 473	9 927	1 563	2 946
	March	6 907	4 548	1 301	419	826	6 034	24 728	4 818	2 831	8 569	1 405	4 354
	April	5 317	3 823	1 423	290	1 581	6 031	19 903	3 398	2 711	7 212	1 016	4 428
	May	5 999	6 607	1 430	351	1 469	6 728	20 295	3 556	2 599	9 172	1 098	4 520
	June	7 480	5 207	975	374	1 325	5 738	17 516	3 829	2 459	8 132	1 368	3 855
	July	7 879	4 502	1 309	549	2 056	6 124	17 611	3 913	3 476	7 393	1 765	3 492
	August	7 482	6 460	1 137	680	1 268	4 909	15 940	4 581	3 251	6 977	1 448	3 982
	September	7 689	5 978	610	578	1 740	4 341	19 759	4 414	3 125	7 876	1 070	3 364
	October	6 220	6 621	588	244	1 141	3 976	12 013	5 438	3 187	8 655	924	2 893
November	6 482	7 447	627	461	1 171	4 410	10 968	3 987	4 811	8 658	1 435	2 488	

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Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2010	November 2010	1/ October 2011	1/ November 2011	2010	November 2010	1/ October 2011	1/ November 2011
Number of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	67 065	4 848	5 336	4 391	57 366	3 831	4 713	3 676
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	12 394	872	940	866	10 259	726	812	676
	Services - Professional	86 597	7 097	5 775	5 561	77 977	6 628	5 436	5 246
	Services - Other	77 202	7 843	5 323	4 787	68 837	7 128	4 616	4 182
	Rent	29 007	2 414	2 056	2 242	23 848	2 100	1 653	1 842
	Money lent	244 032	17 276	13 045	11 588	236 581	16 922	12 548	11 244
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	72 356	3 379	3 562	3 802	65 192	3 029	3 113	3 225
	Other debts	85 559	7 742	6 607	6 480	76 954	7 081	5 964	5 868
	Total - Actual figures	674 212	51 471	42 644	39 717	617 014	47 445	38 855	35 959
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		50 365	38 934	39 007		46 106	35 178	35 098

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Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item		Total				Private persons			
		2010	November 2010	1/ October 2011	1/ November 2011	2010	November 2010	1/ October 2011	1/ November 2011
Value of civil judgements	Goods sold - Open account	613 287	47 776	45 307	44 633	394 335	26 097	30 467	26 713
	Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	354 943	27 729	25 853	15 805	274 906	21 913	19 860	13 243
	Services - Professional	351 311	35 080	25 738	26 728	281 299	29 461	22 565	23 523
	Services - Other	716 644	80 381	50 188	49 708	572 184	67 348	36 432	37 441
	Rent	448 323	29 378	31 120	31 894	298 711	17 871	19 111	18 794
	Money lent	2 202 708	134 165	102 361	97 872	2 059 059	120 364	95 937	92 155
	Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	792 214	41 154	59 431	55 486	646 469	33 728	50 314	45 812
	Other debts	1 098 153	94 930	77 427	82 879	843 748	77 143	60 256	60 606
	Total - Actual figures	6 577 583	490 593	417 425	405 005	5 370 711	393 925	334 942	318 287
	Total - Seasonally adjusted		479 809	374 376	396 511		385 733	297 893	312 201

1/ Preliminary.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended November 2011 and the three months ended November 2010

Actual estimates	Actual estimates September to November 2010	Actual estimates September to November 2011	% change between September to November 2010 and September to November 2011	Difference between September to November 2010 and September to November 2011
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	319 197	267 987	-16,0	-51 210
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	164 306	125 129	-23,8	-39 177
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	1 645,0	1 232,2	-25,1	-412,8

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the change in total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the three months ended November 2011 and the three months ended November 2010 1/

	Contribution (% points) to the % change		
	Number of civil summonses for debt	Number of civil judgements	Value of civil judgements
Goods sold - Open account	-0,2	-1,6	-1,6
Goods sold - Instalment sale transactions	-0,3	-0,1	-0,9
Services - Professional	-1,7	-2,1	-0,1
Services - Other	5,0	-3,6	-3,8
Rent	-0,7	-0,3	-0,5
Money lent	-4,1	-11,6	-14,0
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	-9,1	-2,5	-2,6
Other debts	-4,9	-2,0	-1,6
Total	-16,0	-23,8	-25,1

1/ The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the three-monthly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during September to November 2010, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates November 2010	Actual estimates November 2011	% change between November 2010 and November 2011	Difference between November 2010 and November 2011
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	97 214	89 631	-7,8	-7 583
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	51 471	39 717	-22,8	-11 754
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	490,6	405,0	-17,4	-85,6

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	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.
	2	Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejection orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
Purpose of the survey	3	The survey of civil cases for debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa, excluding the former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC states). 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.
Scope of the survey	4	This survey covers: <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	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate's office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts. The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa, which account for approximately 95% of all the civil cases in South Africa, are included in the monthly survey of civil cases for debt. The smallest magistrates' offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices was drawn using the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail, fax and telephone each month from 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The preliminary response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for November 2011 was 88,7%. Improved response rate for October 2011 was 89,4%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Publications	9	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics</i> issued quarterly. • <i>SA Statistics</i> issued annually.
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics which are not published. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts or electronic versions. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * Revised figures

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.
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. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. loan agreement.
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 debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and salaries, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect of television maintenance contracts and outstanding money in respect of flat 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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