

STATISTICAL RELEASE

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Wholesale trade sales (Preliminary)

February 2019

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Sales at constant 2015 prices: results for February 2019

Table A – Key growth rates in wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices

	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	6,2	4,9	0,1	-5,4	-0,3	0,4
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	1,3	-0,3	-1,5	-7,7	3,0	2,0
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	2,9	2,4	1,6	-2,7	-5,4	-6,3

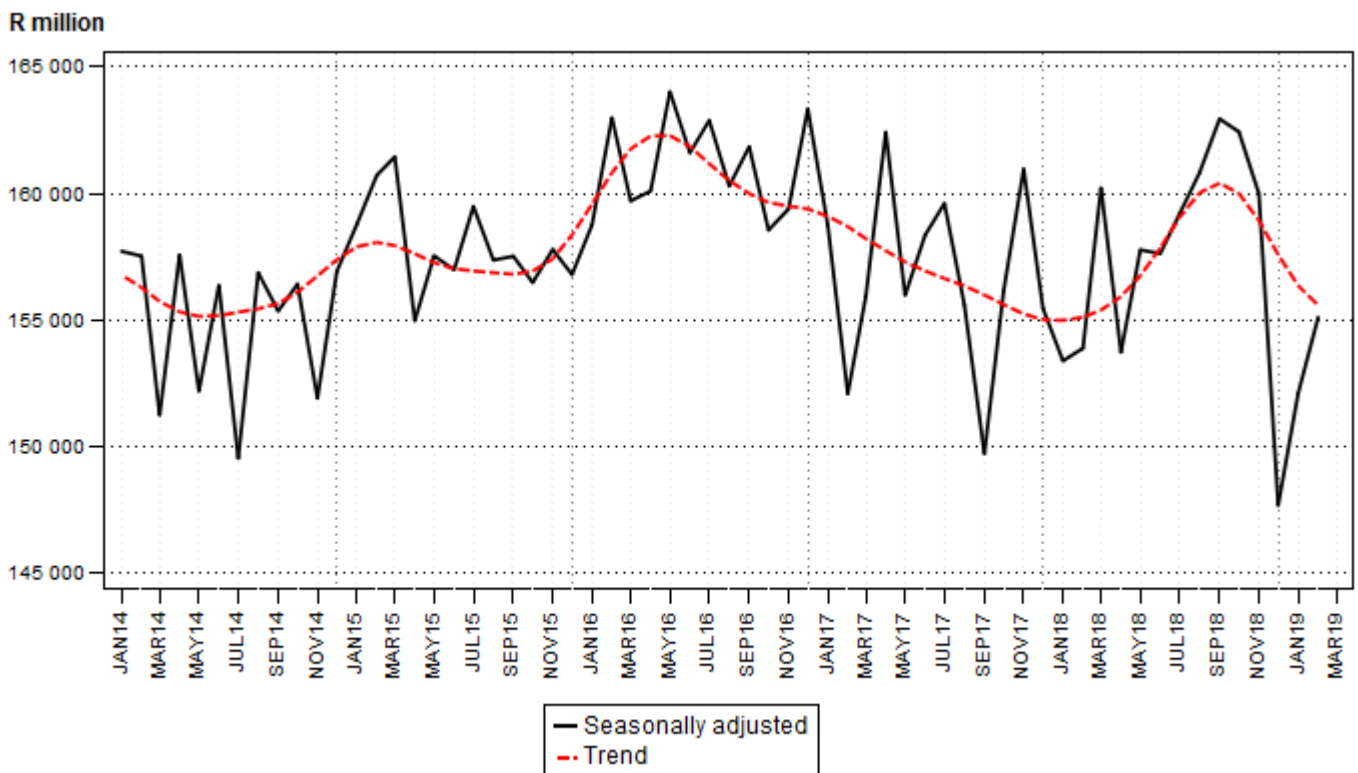
1/ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2015 prices), wholesale trade sales increased by 0,4% in February 2019 compared with February 2018.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales increased by 2,0% in February 2019 compared with January 2019. This followed month-on-month changes of 3,0% in January 2019 and -7,7% in December 2018.

In the three months ended February 2019, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 6,3% compared with the previous three months.

Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices



Sales at current prices: results for February 2019

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

	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	14,1	14,0	7,8	-0,5	3,7	4,9
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	2,2	1,5	-2,4	-7,9	3,4	1,3
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	5,5	5,4	4,5	-0,4	-4,9	-6,5

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 4,9% in February 2019 compared with February 2018. The main contributors were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (12,9% and contributing 2,7 percentage points); and
- machinery, equipment and supplies (8,8% and contributing 1,2 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	Dec 2017 – Feb 2018 (R million)	Weight	Dec 2018 – Feb 2019 (R million)	% change between Dec 2017 – Feb 2018 and Dec 2018 – Feb 2019	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
Fee or contract basis	16 349	3,2	18 006	10,1	0,3
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	34 868	6,9	37 257	6,9	0,5
Food, beverages and tobacco	84 704	16,7	80 055	-5,5	-0,9
Textiles, clothing and footwear	10 786	2,1	12 114	12,3	0,3
Other household goods except precious stones	64 257	12,7	66 034	2,8	0,4
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	11 930	2,4	13 015	9,1	0,2
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	109 890	21,7	123 544	12,4	2,7
Metals and metal ores	10 668	2,1	10 843	1,6	0,0
Construction and building materials	24 314	4,8	23 179	-4,7	-0,2
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	25 286	5,0	24 738	-2,2	-0,1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	67 856	13,4	72 001	6,1	0,8
Other goods	45 350	9,0	38 758	-14,5	-1,3
Total	506 258	100,0	519 546	2,6	2,6

Wholesale trade sales increased by 2,6% in the three months ended February 2019 compared with the three months ended February 2018. The main contributor to this increase was dealers in solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (12,4% and contributing 2,7 percentage points) – see Table C.

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Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices (R million)

Month	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 1/
Jan	134 041	143 034	142 539	138 846	140 448	137 143	136 720
Feb	143 389	151 842	155 566	164 555	146 484	147 509	148 062
Mar	144 045	152 980	165 584	163 058	162 923	162 541	
Apr	146 202	145 339	141 919	148 406	143 600	140 179	
May	156 662	150 801	152 881	161 143	155 519	158 379	
Jun	148 425	152 943	157 467	162 628	161 150	158 244	
Jul	155 238	148 901	158 784	157 994	154 198	155 987	
Aug	156 495	154 735	155 095	162 540	159 317	165 290	
Sep	153 623	163 211	164 854	170 558	155 726	165 350	
Oct	170 001	169 917	169 336	167 828	167 509	175 637	
Nov	178 306	165 686	172 758	175 926	177 455	177 664	
Dec	157 730	158 634	158 903	164 469	153 259	144 940	
Total	1 844 157	1 858 023	1 895 686	1 937 951	1 877 588	1 888 863	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

Table 2 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices

Month	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019 year-to-date
Jan	6,7	-0,3	-2,6	1,2	-2,4	-0,3	-0,3
Feb	5,9	2,5	5,8	-11,0	0,7	0,4	0,0
Mar	6,2	8,2	-1,5	-0,1	-0,2		
Apr	-0,6	-2,4	4,6	-3,2	-2,4		
May	-3,7	1,4	5,4	-3,5	1,8		
Jun	3,0	3,0	3,3	-0,9	-1,8		
Jul	-4,1	6,6	-0,5	-2,4	1,2		
Aug	-1,1	0,2	4,8	-2,0	3,7		
Sep	6,2	1,0	3,5	-8,7	6,2		
Oct	0,0	-0,3	-0,9	-0,2	4,9		
Nov	-7,1	4,3	1,8	0,9	0,1		
Dec	0,6	0,2	3,5	-6,8	-5,4		
Total	0,8	2,0	2,2	-3,1	0,6		

Table 3 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at constant 2015 prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
Jan	158 763	158 751	153 398	152 113	1,2	-2,8	-1,3	3,0
Feb	162 998	152 098	153 897	155 109	2,7	-4,2	0,3	2,0
Mar	159 713	155 946	160 221		-2,0	2,5	4,1	
Apr	160 100	162 423	153 741		0,2	4,2	-4,0	
May	164 026	155 987	157 779		2,5	-4,0	2,6	
Jun	161 612	158 362	157 633		-1,5	1,5	-0,1	
Jul	162 891	159 613	159 205		0,8	0,8	1,0	
Aug	160 299	155 606	160 830		-1,6	-2,5	1,0	
Sep	161 851	149 735	162 951		1,0	-3,8	1,3	
Oct	158 561	156 177	162 441		-2,0	4,3	-0,3	
Nov	159 393	160 971	160 002		0,5	3,1	-1,5	
Dec	163 343	155 463	147 696		2,5	-3,4	-7,7	

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

Month	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019 1/
Jan	123 809	141 738	135 473	143 470	152 784	158 601	164 465
Feb	132 529	151 438	148 239	171 258	161 070	169 712	178 042
Mar	134 968	154 486	162 377	169 493	179 410	185 302	
Apr	135 856	147 365	141 513	156 733	158 178	161 936	
May	145 238	152 727	153 565	170 421	172 540	185 278	
Jun	139 150	155 191	159 490	174 139	178 149	187 456	
Jul	146 349	151 886	161 289	170 700	170 871	186 989	
Aug	149 034	157 037	156 351	173 796	177 214	198 828	
Sep	146 217	165 299	166 015	181 396	175 562	200 244	
Oct	163 141	171 478	172 561	179 941	190 698	217 478	
Nov	171 299	165 721	176 317	190 855	203 911	219 846	
Dec	153 603	156 558	162 496	178 832	177 945	177 039	
Total	1 741 193	1 870 924	1 895 686	2 061 034	2 098 332	2 248 709	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

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

Month	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019 year-to-date
Jan	14,5	-4,4	5,9	6,5	3,8	3,7	3,7
Feb	14,3	-2,1	15,5	-5,9	5,4	4,9	4,3
Mar	14,5	5,1	4,4	5,9	3,3		
Apr	8,5	-4,0	10,8	0,9	2,4		
May	5,2	0,5	11,0	1,2	7,4		
Jun	11,5	2,8	9,2	2,3	5,2		
Jul	3,8	6,2	5,8	0,1	9,4		
Aug	5,4	-0,4	11,2	2,0	12,2		
Sep	13,1	0,4	9,3	-3,2	14,1		
Oct	5,1	0,6	4,3	6,0	14,0		
Nov	-3,3	6,4	8,2	6,8	7,8		
Dec	1,9	3,8	10,1	-0,5	-0,5		
Total	7,5	1,3	8,7	1,8	7,2		

Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2016	2017	2018	2019
Jan	165 267	173 627	179 270	186 206	3,2	-2,5	-0,3	3,4
Feb	173 922	169 504	179 281	188 608	5,2	-2,4	0,0	1,3
Mar	168 671	173 041	184 813		-3,0	2,1	3,1	
Apr	168 875	178 189	175 509		0,1	3,0	-5,0	
May	172 185	172 860	185 787		2,0	-3,0	5,9	
Jun	173 038	174 983	186 860		0,5	1,2	0,6	
Jul	174 488	174 430	187 813		0,8	-0,3	0,5	
Aug	169 939	172 767	193 135		-2,6	-1,0	2,8	
Sep	172 826	169 855	197 382		1,7	-1,7	2,2	
Oct	169 456	176 787	200 437		-1,9	4,1	1,5	
Nov	170 952	182 615	195 675		0,9	3,3	-2,4	
Dec	178 023	179 875	180 141		4,1	-1,5	-7,9	

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

Type of dealer	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19 1/
Fee or contract basis	6 634	6 775	7 677	6 518	5 507	5 981
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	12 019	13 398	16 087	13 274	12 139	11 844
Food, beverages and tobacco	28 657	28 659	29 543	31 959	23 091	25 005
Textiles, clothing and footwear	5 257	5 726	5 432	3 620	3 787	4 707
Other household goods except precious stones	27 771	26 774	27 943	21 826	21 143	23 065
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	6 563	6 688	6 020	4 335	4 599	4 081
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	47 787	55 270	49 166	42 954	40 237	40 353
Metals and metal ores	4 799	5 142	5 004	2 781	3 631	4 431
Construction and building materials	9 645	11 540	11 573	6 842	7 538	8 799
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	10 119	10 830	11 557	6 946	8 371	9 421
Machinery, equipment and supplies	25 591	29 016	32 720	23 371	22 459	26 171
Other goods	15 403	17 660	17 122	12 612	11 962	14 184
Total	200 244	217 478	219 846	177 039	164 465	178 042

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	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19
Fee or contract basis	7,8	9,6	24,1	8,5	23,9	1,5
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	8,1	13,8	-2,5	5,2	11,4	4,4
Food, beverages and tobacco	4,1	5,8	1,8	-11,5	-4,9	2,8
Textiles, clothing and footwear	-5,2	-7,2	5,0	2,8	25,9	10,6
Other household goods except precious stones	12,8	3,6	4,5	-0,2	2,6	5,9
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	41,0	2,0	-25,6	23,3	23,6	-13,0
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	33,8	38,4	21,2	11,6	12,8	12,9
Metals and metal ores	15,1	12,8	2,2	4,9	1,7	-0,3
Construction and building materials	-0,7	4,5	0,2	-3,0	-5,1	-5,5
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	10,4	-9,9	-7,9	-19,2	0,0	13,2
Machinery, equipment and supplies	17,3	22,7	29,8	13,1	-2,9	8,8
Other goods	0,3	11,3	-1,6	-25,1	-7,7	-8,8
Total	14,1	14,0	7,8	-0,5	3,7	4,9

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

Type of dealer	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18	Jan-19	Feb-19
Fee or contract basis	0,3	0,3	0,7	0,3	0,7	0,1
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	0,5	0,9	-0,2	0,4	0,8	0,3
Food, beverages and tobacco	0,6	0,8	0,3	-2,3	-0,7	0,4
Textiles, clothing and footwear	-0,2	-0,2	0,1	0,1	0,5	0,3
Other household goods except precious stones	1,8	0,5	0,6	0,0	0,3	0,8
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	1,1	0,1	-1,0	0,5	0,5	-0,4
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	6,9	8,0	4,2	2,5	2,9	2,7
Metals and metal ores	0,4	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0
Construction and building materials	0,0	0,3	0,0	-0,1	-0,3	-0,3
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	0,5	-0,6	-0,5	-0,9	0,0	0,6
Machinery, equipment and supplies	2,1	2,8	3,7	1,5	-0,4	1,2
Other goods	0,0	0,9	-0,1	-2,4	-0,6	-0,8
Total	14,1	14,0	7,8	-0,5	3,7	4,9

Survey information

Introduction

- 1 Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey covering enterprises in the wholesale trade industry (see 4 below). This survey is based on a sample drawn from Stats SA's 2018 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 February 2019 was 81,5%. The improved collection rate for January 2019 was 87,4%.

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: • <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 1 340 enterprises from a population of 20 372 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 2018 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	2 332 628	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 US Bureau of the Census. 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 August 2017](#)

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 <i>System of National Accounts</i> (SNA) in the same way as in the <i>Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities</i> (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.	

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General information

Stats SA publishes approximately 300 different statistical releases each year. It is not economically viable to produce them in more than one of South Africa's eleven official languages. Since the releases are used extensively, not only locally but also by international economic and social-scientific communities. Stats SA releases are published in English only.

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