

STATISTICAL RELEASE

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Wholesale trade sales (Preliminary)

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Joyce Essel-Mensah
(012) 310 8255

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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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Sales at constant 2012 prices: results for March 2017

Table A – Key growth rates in wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices

	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	-0,1	2,4	3,9	2,1	-9,2	0,7
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-1,0	-0,9	3,3	-3,9	-3,5	2,2
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	-0,7	0,2	0,3	-0,1	-1,5	-3,7

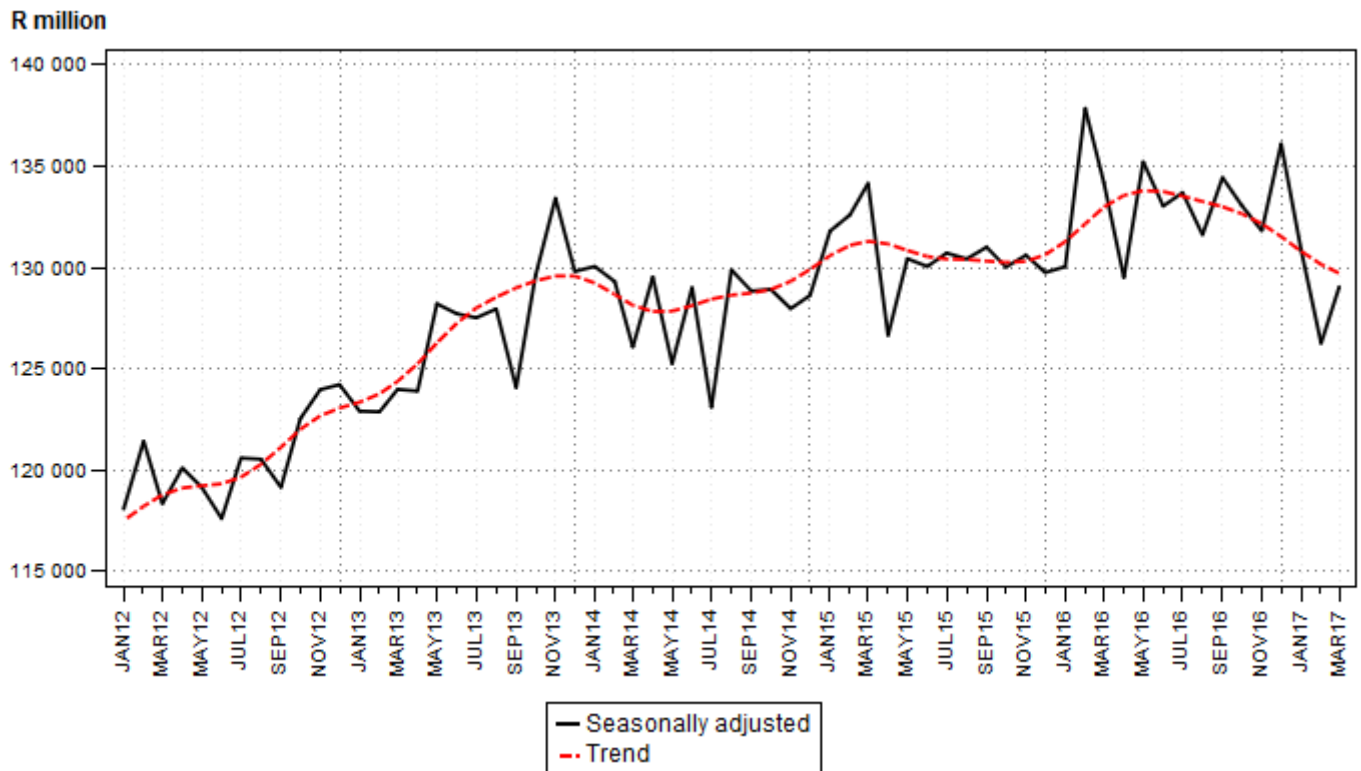
1/ Percentage change between the previous 3 months and the 3 months ending in the month indicated.

Measured in real terms (constant 2012 prices), wholesale trade sales increased by 0,7% in March 2017 compared with March 2016.

Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales increased by 2,2% in March 2017 compared with February 2017. This followed month-on-month changes of -3,5% in February 2017 and -3,9% in January 2017.

In the first quarter of 2017, seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales decreased by 3,7% compared with the previous quarter.

Figure 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices



Sales at current prices: results for March 2017

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

	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	4,9	9,1	10,9	6,8	-4,2	6,8
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-1,9	1,0	3,4	-2,5	-1,5	1,6
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted 1/	-0,6	0,3	0,7	2,0	1,2	-0,4

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 6,8% in March 2017 compared with March 2016. The main contributors to this increase were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (12,3% and contributing 2,2 percentage points);
- food, beverages and tobacco (7,6% and contributing 1,3 percentage points); and
- 'other' goods (14,5% 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	Jan – Mar 2016 (R million)	Weight	Jan – Mar 2017 (R million)	% change between Jan – Mar 2016 and Jan – Mar 2017	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
Fee or contract basis	16 999	3,8	16 971	-0,2	0,0
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	29 487	6,6	30 870	4,7	0,3
Food, beverages and tobacco	71 561	15,9	75 597	5,6	0,9
Textiles, clothing and footwear	10 345	2,3	8 338	-19,4	-0,4
Other household goods except precious stones	60 127	13,4	59 599	-0,9	-0,1
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	9 598	2,1	10 950	14,1	0,3
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	78 834	17,5	88 531	12,3	2,2
Metals and metal ores	10 160	2,3	11 696	15,1	0,3
Construction and building materials	27 243	6,1	29 205	7,2	0,4
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	20 001	4,5	21 902	9,5	0,4
Machinery, equipment and supplies	73 719	16,4	66 298	-10,1	-1,7
Other goods	41 145	9,2	42 409	3,1	0,3
Total	449 218	100,0	462 368	2,9	2,9

Wholesale trade sales increased by 2,9% in the first quarter of 2017 compared with the first quarter of 2016. The main contributors to this increase were dealers in:

- solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products (12,3% and contributing 2,2 percentage points); and
- food, beverages and tobacco (5,6% and contributing 0,9 of a percentage point) – see Table C.

PJ Lehohla
Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices (R million)

Month	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 1/
Jan	92 663	105 109	111 363	118 637	118 634	114 443	116 877
Feb	100 648	116 640	118 515	125 183	128 746	135 055	122 697
Mar	112 482	120 977	119 226	126 221	136 854	134 307	135 258
Apr	100 834	110 208	120 638	120 128	117 267	123 136	
May	107 913	119 774	129 326	124 611	126 921	133 689	
Jun	112 249	116 408	122 847	126 528	130 235	132 474	
Jul	107 921	119 090	128 360	123 522	131 801	129 938	
Aug	115 190	123 738	129 266	127 988	128 209	133 906	
Sep	118 765	118 391	126 283	134 558	136 407	141 495	
Oct	119 965	132 915	140 263	140 319	139 557	139 455	
Nov	127 767	139 155	146 900	136 909	142 364	145 730	
Dec	119 221	123 279	130 511	131 421	131 867	136 966	
Total	1 335 618	1 445 684	1 523 498	1 536 025	1 568 862	1 600 594	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

Table 2 – Year-on-year percentage change in wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices

Month	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2017 year-to-date
Jan	13,4	6,0	6,5	0,0	-3,5	2,1	2,1
Feb	15,9	1,6	5,6	2,8	4,9	-9,2	-4,0
Mar	7,6	-1,4	5,9	8,4	-1,9	0,7	-2,3
Apr	9,3	9,5	-0,4	-2,4	5,0		
May	11,0	8,0	-3,6	1,9	5,3		
Jun	3,7	5,5	3,0	2,9	1,7		
Jul	10,3	7,8	-3,8	6,7	-1,4		
Aug	7,4	4,5	-1,0	0,2	4,4		
Sep	-0,3	6,7	6,6	1,4	3,7		
Oct	10,8	5,5	0,0	-0,5	-0,1		
Nov	8,9	5,6	-6,8	4,0	2,4		
Dec	3,4	5,9	0,7	0,3	3,9		
Total	8,2	5,4	0,8	2,1	2,0		

Table 3 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at constant 2012 prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017
Jan	130 059	131 802	130 048	130 871	0,2	2,5	0,2	-3,9
Feb	129 311	132 606	137 852	126 266	-0,6	0,6	6,0	-3,5
Mar	126 086	134 156	134 185	129 035	-2,5	1,2	-2,7	2,2
Apr	129 540	126 658	129 513		2,7	-5,6	-3,5	
May	125 259	130 440	135 223		-3,3	3,0	4,4	
Jun	129 020	130 057	133 037		3,0	-0,3	-1,6	
Jul	123 111	130 720	133 698		-4,6	0,5	0,5	
Aug	129 887	130 430	131 622		5,5	-0,2	-1,6	
Sep	128 845	131 010	134 445		-0,8	0,4	2,1	
Oct	128 929	130 030	133 062		0,1	-0,7	-1,0	
Nov	127 978	130 610	131 818		-0,7	0,4	-0,9	
Dec	128 630	129 758	136 113		0,5	-0,7	3,3	

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

Month	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 1/
Jan	84 641	101 722	114 859	131 492	125 680	133 098	142 114
Feb	93 410	114 014	122 949	140 490	137 524	158 879	152 260
Mar	105 468	119 073	125 211	143 318	150 639	157 241	167 994
Apr	94 645	109 361	126 036	136 712	131 284	146 476	
May	101 573	119 758	134 739	141 686	142 464	158 850	
Jun	105 987	115 745	129 090	143 972	147 961	159 729	
Jul	102 947	117 927	135 770	140 908	149 629	157 523	
Aug	111 047	123 879	138 260	145 685	145 049	161 022	
Sep	115 687	119 307	135 648	153 350	154 014	169 430	
Oct	117 231	135 367	151 348	159 082	160 088	167 975	
Nov	125 308	142 970	158 916	153 742	163 571	178 458	
Dec	116 855	126 561	142 500	145 241	150 749	167 197	
Total	1 274 799	1 445 684	1 615 326	1 735 678	1 758 652	1 915 878	

1/ Figures for latest month are preliminary.

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

Month	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2017 year-to-date
Jan	20,2	12,9	14,5	-4,4	5,9	6,8	6,8
Feb	22,1	7,8	14,3	-2,1	15,5	-4,2	0,8
Mar	12,9	5,2	14,5	5,1	4,4	6,8	2,9
Apr	15,5	15,2	8,5	-4,0	11,6		
May	17,9	12,5	5,2	0,5	11,5		
Jun	9,2	11,5	11,5	2,8	8,0		
Jul	14,6	15,1	3,8	6,2	5,3		
Aug	11,6	11,6	5,4	-0,4	11,0		
Sep	3,1	13,7	13,0	0,4	10,0		
Oct	15,5	11,8	5,1	0,6	4,9		
Nov	14,1	11,2	-3,3	6,4	9,1		
Dec	8,3	12,6	1,9	3,8	10,9		
Total	13,4	11,7	7,5	1,3	8,9		

Table 6 – Seasonally adjusted wholesale trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2014	2015	2016	2017
Jan	146 568	141 816	153 849	161 680	3,7	-0,4	3,9	-2,5
Feb	147 043	143 783	160 586	159 259	0,3	1,4	4,4	-1,5
Mar	142 062	147 957	157 277	161 742	-3,4	2,9	-2,1	1,6
Apr	148 025	141 852	156 026		4,2	-4,1	-0,8	
May	142 337	145 360	159 658		-3,8	2,5	2,3	
Jun	145 566	147 209	159 305		2,3	1,3	-0,2	
Jul	141 763	149 799	162 052		-2,6	1,8	1,7	
Aug	146 173	145 465	157 758		3,1	-2,9	-2,6	
Sep	147 745	148 953	161 724		1,1	2,4	2,5	
Oct	146 283	148 539	158 673		-1,0	-0,3	-1,9	
Nov	140 974	147 468	160 331		-3,6	-0,7	1,0	
Dec	142 378	148 142	165 770		1,0	0,5	3,4	

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

Type of dealer	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17 1/
Fee or contract basis	5 856	6 229	6 237	4 558	5 690	6 723
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	12 487	15 082	12 642	9 362	10 779	10 729
Food, beverages and tobacco	25 558	27 175	33 501	22 145	24 305	29 147
Textiles, clothing and footwear	3 607	4 056	2 431	1 982	2 861	3 495
Other household goods except precious stones	22 363	24 384	21 321	18 728	20 180	20 691
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	3 889	4 593	3 253	2 006	5 527	3 417
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	31 776	30 761	32 352	30 410	27 133	30 988
Metals and metal ores	3 810	4 613	2 534	3 122	4 137	4 437
Construction and building materials	12 095	12 868	7 119	8 071	9 815	11 319
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	8 795	9 588	7 414	7 280	7 392	7 230
Machinery, equipment and supplies	23 729	23 771	23 518	21 057	20 582	24 659
Other goods	14 011	15 339	14 873	13 391	13 859	15 159
Total	167 975	178 458	167 197	142 114	152 260	167 994

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	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17
Fee or contract basis	-11,9	19,0	9,9	-0,7	-18,6	24,0
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	67,7	43,5	20,7	6,6	6,8	1,1
Food, beverages and tobacco	-0,4	11,8	5,8	10,2	-0,2	7,6
Textiles, clothing and footwear	-29,1	-20,9	-2,6	-32,1	-16,3	-12,8
Other household goods except precious stones	2,5	2,2	17,8	4,5	-4,8	-1,5
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	33,6	35,1	51,7	-6,7	49,6	-9,0
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	0,9	-0,2	0,1	23,7	1,8	12,3
Metals and metal ores	-2,2	25,2	15,5	7,3	13,9	22,7
Construction and building materials	12,5	10,2	1,9	12,0	-3,1	14,3
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	14,1	25,3	24,4	14,1	3,1	12,1
Machinery, equipment and supplies	7,1	10,1	31,9	-5,5	-23,5	0,5
Other goods	-3,5	-2,4	-0,3	0,8	-5,2	14,5
Total	4,9	9,1	10,9	6,8	-4,2	6,8

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

Type of dealer	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17
Fee or contract basis	-0,5	0,6	0,4	0,0	-0,8	0,8
Agricultural raw materials and livestock	3,2	2,8	1,4	0,4	0,4	0,1
Food, beverages and tobacco	-0,1	1,8	1,2	1,5	0,0	1,3
Textiles, clothing and footwear	-0,9	-0,6	0,0	-0,7	-0,4	-0,3
Other household goods except precious stones	0,3	0,3	2,1	0,6	-0,6	-0,2
Precious stones, jewellery and silverware	0,6	0,7	0,7	-0,1	1,1	-0,2
Solid, liquid and gaseous fuels and related products	0,2	0,0	0,0	4,4	0,3	2,2
Metals and metal ores	-0,1	0,6	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,5
Construction and building materials	0,8	0,7	0,1	0,6	-0,2	0,9
Other intermediate products, waste and scrap	0,7	1,2	1,0	0,7	0,1	0,5
Machinery, equipment and supplies	1,0	1,3	3,8	-0,9	-4,0	0,1
Other goods	-0,3	-0,2	0,0	0,1	-0,5	1,2
Total	4,9	9,1	10,9	6,8	-4,2	6,8

Survey information

Introduction	<p>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 2016 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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Purpose of the survey	<p>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.</p>
Scope of the survey	<p>4 This survey covers wholesale enterprises according to the following types of dealers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>5 The 1993 edition of the <i>Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities</i> (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 <i>International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities</i> (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.</p>
Collection rate	<p>6 The preliminary collection rate for the survey on wholesale trade sales for March 2017 was 83,7%. The improved collection rate for February 2017 was 92,4%.</p>

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <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 1 257 enterprises from a population of 19 401 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 2016 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 7,0%.

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	2 201 028	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 July 2016](#)

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 apparatus and subcomponents.
- (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 apparatus and subcomponents; 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.	

Technical enquiries

Nthabiseng Sebeyi	Telephone number: (012) 310 8930 Email: nthabisengs@statssa.gov.za
Joyce Essel-Mensah	Telephone number: (012) 310 8255 Email: Joycee@statssa.gov.za

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General enquiries

User information services	Telephone number: (012) 310 8600 Email address: info@statssa.gov.za
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Postal address	Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001
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