STATISTICAL RELEASE

P6242.1

Retail trade sales (Preliminary)

January 2025

To convert retail trade sales at current prices to sales at constant prices, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) constructs deflators using the consumer price index (CPI) and weights calculated from the large sample survey (LSS) for the retail trade industry. Currently the weights are based on the 2018 LSS. With effect from the next publication (February 2025), the deflators will be updated with weights from the 2022 LSS.

This release provides an analysis of revisions. If you have any questions or comments, please send these to JP Terblanche, juan-pierret@statssa.gov.za.

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19 March 2025
13:00

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

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Sales at constant 2019 prices: results for January 2025

Table A – Key growth rates in retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices

	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	3,3	1,1	6,2	7,6	3,2	7,0
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	0,7	-0,6	1,8	1,0	-0,4	1,2
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted [1]	1,7	1,0	1,2	1,3	2,1	2,1

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

Measured in real terms (constant 2019 prices), retail trade sales increased by 7,0% year-on-year in January 2025. The largest contributors to this increase were:
- general dealers (8,4% and contributing 3,6 percentage points); and
- retailers in textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods (10,1% and contributing 1,6 percentage points) – see Table 5 and Table 6.

Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales increased by 1,2% in January 2025 compared with December 2024. This followed month-on-month changes of -0,4% in December 2024 and 1,0% in November 2024.

Table B – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices for the latest three months by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Nov 2023 – Jan 2024 (R million)	Weight (%)	Nov 2024 – Jan 2025 (R million)	% change between Nov 2023 – Jan 2024 and Nov 2024 – Jan 2025	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	139 241	43,2	148 987	7,0	3,0
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	24 478	7,6	25 537	4,3	0,3
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	21 565	6,7	22 465	4,2	0,3
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	63 751	19,8	69 740	9,4	1,9
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	14 487	4,5	15 538	7,3	0,3
Hardware, paint and glass	23 310	7,2	23 020	-1,2	-0,1
All other retailers	35 343	11,0	35 226	-0,3	0,0
Total	**322 175**	**100,0**	**340 513**	**5,7**	**5,7**

Retail trade sales increased by 5,7% in the three months ended January 2025 compared with the three months ended January 2024. The largest positive contributors to this increase were:
- general dealers (7,0% and contributing 3,0 percentage points); and
- retailers in textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods (9,4% and contributing 1,9 percentage points) – see Table B.

Table C – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices for the latest three months by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Aug – Oct 2024 (R million)	Weight (%)	Nov 2024 – Jan 2025 (R million)	% change between Aug – Oct 2024 and Nov 2024 – Jan 2025	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	132 500	45,0	135 615	2,4	1,1
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	22 482	7,6	23 073	2,6	0,2
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	21 785	7,4	22 023	1,1	0,1
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	51 494	17,5	53 548	4,0	0,7
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	13 256	4,5	13 231	-0,2	0,0
Hardware, paint and glass	21 594	7,3	22 146	2,6	0,2
All other retailers	31 077	10,6	30 798	-0,9	-0,1
Total	**294 187**	**100,0**	**300 435**	**2,1**	**2,1**

Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales increased by 2,1% in the three months ended January 2025 compared with the previous three months. The largest positive contributors were:
- general dealers (2,4% and contributing 1,1 percentage points); and
- retailers in textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods (4,0% and contributing 0,7 of a percentage point) – see Table C.

Figure 1 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices
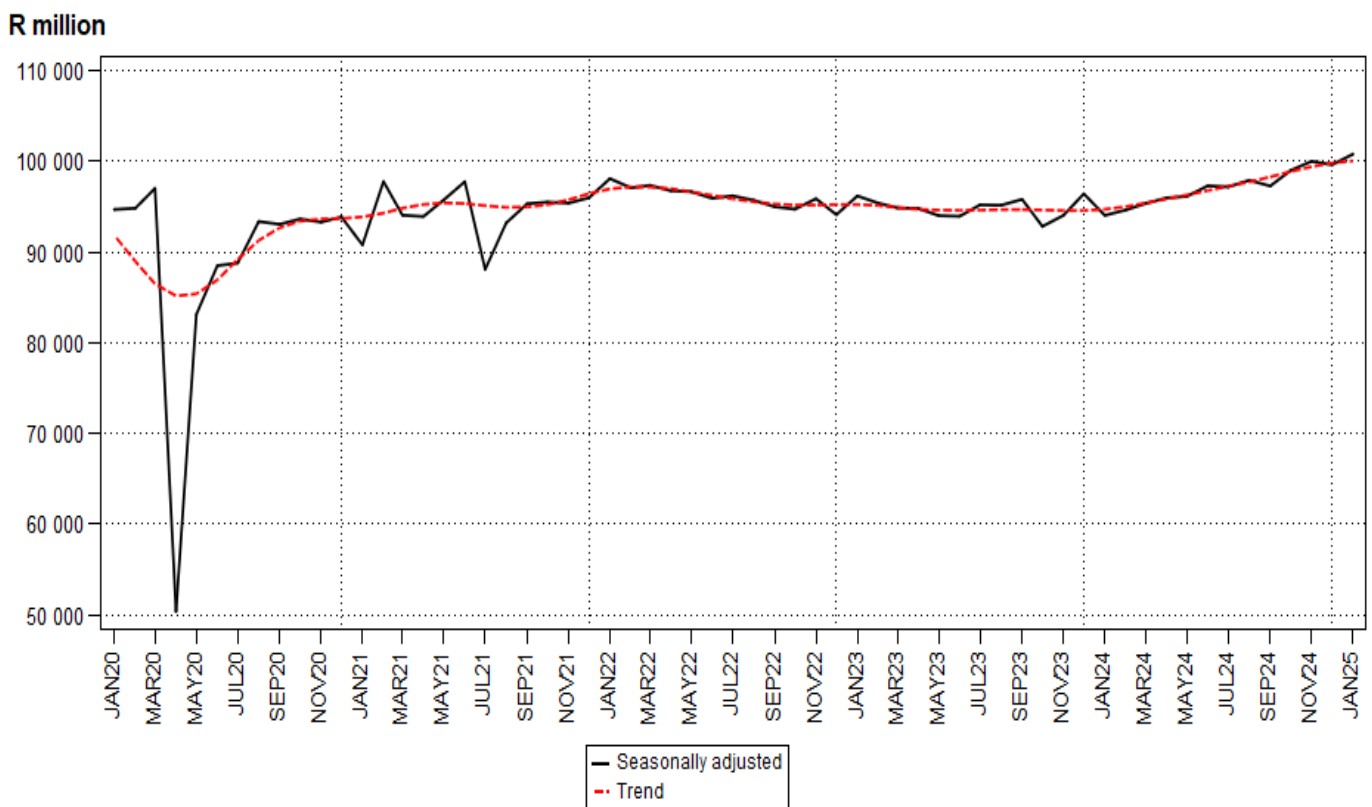
Figure 2 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices: year-on-year percentage change
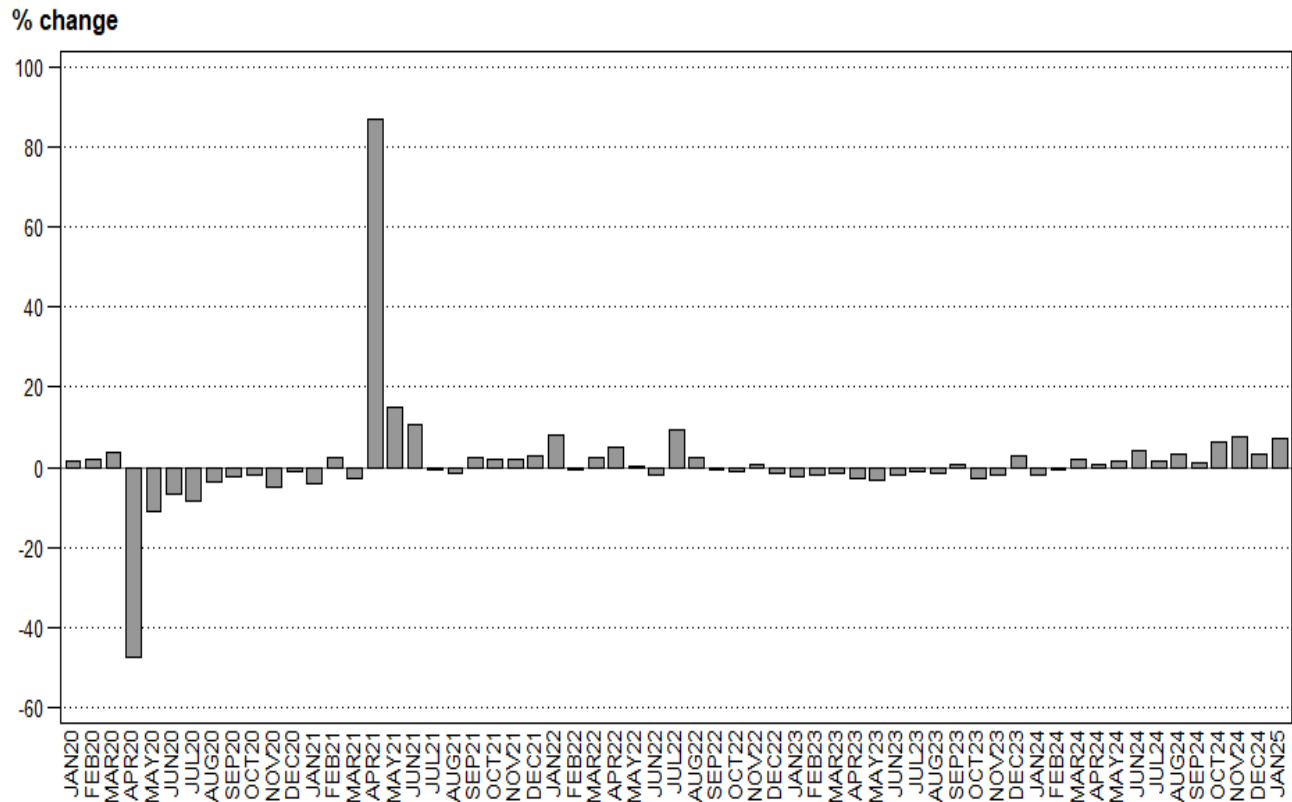
Sales at current prices: results for January 2025

Table D – Key growth rates in retail trade sales at current prices

	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	6,4	4,3	8,9	9,5	4,7	8,9
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	0,8	-0,1	1,4	1,3	-0,1	0,4
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted [1]	2,2	1,4	1,6	1,7	2,5	2,3

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

Table E – Retail trade sales at current prices for the latest three months by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Nov 2023 – Jan 2024 (R million)	Weight (%)	Nov 2024 – Jan 2025 (R million)	% change between Nov 2023 – Jan 2024 and Nov 2024 – Jan 2025	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	181 278	46,7	198 617	9,6	4,5
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	31 785	8,2	33 729	6,1	0,5
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	27 257	7,0	29 395	7,8	0,5
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	67 456	17,4	74 252	10,1	1,8
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	14 570	3,8	14 979	2,8	0,1
Hardware, paint and glass	28 264	7,3	28 335	0,3	0,0
All other retailers	37 726	9,7	37 803	0,2	0,0
Total	**388 335**	**100,0**	**417 113**	**7,4**	**7,4**

Table F – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at current prices for the latest three months by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Aug – Oct 2024 (R million)	Weight (%)	Nov 2024 – Jan 2025 (R million)	% change between Aug – Oct 2024 and Nov 2024 – Jan 2025	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	176 208	48,6	181 002	2,7	1,3
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	29 611	8,2	30 360	2,5	0,2
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	28 331	7,8	28 990	2,3	0,2
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	55 183	15,2	56 804	2,9	0,4
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	12 982	3,6	12 800	-1,4	-0,1
Hardware, paint and glass	26 602	7,3	27 372	2,9	0,2
All other retailers	33 321	9,2	33 149	-0,5	0,0
Total	**362 236**	**100,0**	**370 476**	**2,3**	**2,3**

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Statistician-General

Tables

Table 1 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices (R million)

Month	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Jan	86 114	87 331	83 922	90 666	88 692	86 898	93 024
Feb	88 268	89 985	92 172	91 532	89 755	89 078	
Mar	91 106	94 450	91 959	94 377	92 939	94 868	
Apr	88 969	46 619	87 209	91 380	89 027	89 465	
May	93 561	83 055	95 523	95 758	92 796	94 364	
Jun	90 965	84 677	93 655	91 883	90 163	93 793	
Jul	90 314	82 816	82 354	89 971	89 080	90 563	
Aug	94 316	90 730	89 583	91 623	90 362	93 348	
Sep	91 434	89 216	91 150	90 769	91 500	92 494	
Oct	92 712	90 816	92 565	91 504	89 092	94 631	
Nov	109 184	103 927	106 152	106 831	104 957	112 969	
Dec	126 145	124 589	128 372	126 545	130 320	134 520	
Total	**1 143 088**	**1 068 211**	**1 134 616**	**1 152 839**	**1 138 683**	**1 166 991**	

Table 2 – Year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices

Month	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	*2025 year-to-date*
Jan	1,4	-3,9	8,0	-2,2	-2,0	7,0	*7,0*
Feb	1,9	2,4	-0,7	-1,9	-0,8		
Mar	3,7	-2,6	2,6	-1,5	2,1		
Apr	-47,6	87,1	4,8	-2,6	0,5		
May	-11,2	15,0	0,2	-3,1	1,7		
Jun	-6,9	10,6	-1,9	-1,9	4,0		
Jul	-8,3	-0,6	9,2	-1,0	1,7		
Aug	-3,8	-1,3	2,3	-1,4	3,3		
Sep	-2,4	2,2	-0,4	0,8	1,1		
Oct	-2,0	1,9	-1,1	-2,6	6,2		
Nov	-4,8	2,1	0,6	-1,8	7,6		
Dec	-1,2	3,0	-1,4	3,0	3,2		
Total	**-6,6**	**6,2**	**1,6**	**-1,2**	**2,5**		

Table 3 – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2022	2023	2024	2025
Jan	98 096	96 189	94 043	100 797	2,2	2,2	-2,5	1,2
Feb	97 082	95 389	94 640		-1,0	-0,8	0,6	
Mar	97 351	94 877	95 347		0,3	-0,5	0,7	
Apr	96 758	94 799	95 974		-0,6	-0,1	0,7	
May	96 658	94 013	96 139		-0,1	-0,8	0,2	
Jun	95 922	93 948	97 306		-0,8	-0,1	1,2	
Jul	96 199	95 200	97 187		0,3	1,3	-0,1	
Aug	95 712	95 159	97 913		-0,5	0,0	0,7	
Sep	94 992	95 812	97 281		-0,8	0,7	-0,6	
Oct	94 727	92 827	98 993		-0,3	-3,1	1,8	
Nov	95 884	94 045	100 015		1,2	1,3	1,0	
Dec	94 116	96 426	99 623		-1,8	2,5	-0,4	

Table 4 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices by type of retailer (R million)

Type of retailer	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
General dealers	42 651	44 450	41 870	51 666	56 580	40 741
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	7 270	6 989	7 669	7 574	10 751	7 212
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	6 989	6 798	7 679	6 924	7 892	7 649
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	14 753	13 839	15 882	21 584	32 657	15 499
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 216	4 123	4 254	5 631	5 933	3 974
Hardware, paint and glass	7 540	7 282	7 621	8 372	7 916	6 732
All other retailers	9 929	9 013	9 656	11 218	12 791	11 217
Total	**93 348**	**92 494**	**94 631**	**112 969**	**134 520**	**93 024**

Table 5 – Year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
General dealers	4,5	4,9	11,4	11,6	2,2	8,4
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	5,7	-3,3	0,3	3,6	2,9	7,3
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	1,1	0,3	5,2	1,7	3,6	7,2
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	3,1	-5,5	2,7	11,6	7,7	10,1
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	11,6	12,2	15,8	8,3	5,5	8,5
Hardware, paint and glass	-3,9	-5,7	-3,2	-3,6	-1,5	2,1
All other retailers	1,1	-0,9	1,1	-1,0	-0,9	0,9
Total	**3,3**	**1,1**	**6,2**	**7,6**	**3,2**	**7,0**

Table 6 – Contribution of each type of retailer to the year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices (percentage points)

Type of retailer	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
General dealers	2,0	2,3	4,8	5,1	0,9	3,6
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	0,4	-0,3	0,0	0,3	0,2	0,6
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	0,1	0,0	0,4	0,1	0,2	0,6
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	0,5	-0,9	0,5	2,1	1,8	1,6
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	0,5	0,5	0,6	0,4	0,2	0,4
Hardware, paint and glass	-0,3	-0,5	-0,3	-0,3	-0,1	0,2
All other retailers	0,1	-0,1	0,1	-0,1	-0,1	0,1
Total	**3,3**	**1,1**	**6,2**	**7,6**	**3,2**	**7,0**

Table 7 – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices by type of retailer (R million)

Type of retailer	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	*Month-on-month % change*
General dealers	43 705	44 097	44 698	45 654	44 498	45 463	*2,2*
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	7 712	7 316	7 454	7 586	7 603	7 884	*3,7*
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	7 194	7 197	7 394	7 219	7 303	7 501	*2,7*
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	17 125	16 811	17 558	17 645	18 172	17 731	*-2,4*
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 417	4 448	4 391	4 403	4 399	4 429	*0,7*
Hardware, paint and glass	7 222	7 156	7 216	7 257	7 400	7 489	*1,2*
All other retailers	10 538	10 257	10 282	10 252	10 247	10 299	*0,5*
Total	**97 913**	**97 281**	**98 993**	**100 015**	**99 623**	**100 797**	***1,2***

Table 8 – Retail trade sales at current prices (R million)

Month	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Jan	84 941	88 492	86 936	97 282	102 223	105 380	114 714
Feb	87 343	91 485	95 854	98 818	104 805	108 823	
Mar	90 529	96 329	96 390	102 673	109 718	116 358	
Apr	88 534	47 750	91 603	99 738	105 374	109 625	
May	93 470	84 403	100 453	105 597	110 094	115 672	
Jun	91 029	86 199	99 007	102 251	107 424	115 472	
Jul	90 377	84 443	87 194	100 578	106 033	111 232	
Aug	94 666	92 852	95 292	103 567	108 130	115 075	
Sep	91 979	91 513	96 980	103 280	110 039	114 721	
Oct	93 178	93 606	98 846	104 464	107 479	117 024	
Nov	109 981	107 372	113 265	121 882	126 583	138 621	
Dec	127 060	128 769	136 942	144 283	156 372	163 778	
Total	**1 143 090**	**1 093 213**	**1 198 762**	**1 284 413**	**1 354 274**	**1 431 781**	

Table 9 – Year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at current prices

Month	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	*2025 year-to-date*
Jan	4,2	-1,8	11,9	5,1	3,1	8,9	*8,9*
Feb	4,7	4,8	3,1	6,1	3,8		
Mar	6,4	0,1	6,5	6,9	6,1		
Apr	-46,1	91,8	8,9	5,7	4,0		
May	-9,7	19,0	5,1	4,3	5,1		
Jun	-5,3	14,9	3,3	5,1	7,5		
Jul	-6,6	3,3	15,3	5,4	4,9		
Aug	-1,9	2,6	8,7	4,4	6,4		
Sep	-0,5	6,0	6,5	6,5	4,3		
Oct	0,5	5,6	5,7	2,9	8,9		
Nov	-2,4	5,5	7,6	3,9	9,5		
Dec	1,3	6,3	5,4	8,4	4,7		
Total	**-4,4**	**9,7**	**7,1**	**5,4**	**5,7**		

Table 10 – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2022	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Jan	105 153	110 671	113 739	123 760	1,8	2,1	-3,2	0,4
Feb	104 949	111 234	115 271		-0,2	0,5	1,3	
Mar	105 095	111 610	116 409		0,1	0,3	1,0	
Apr	105 747	112 106	117 605		0,6	0,4	1,0	
May	106 332	111 259	117 487		0,6	-0,8	-0,1	
Jun	106 758	111 753	119 761		0,4	0,4	1,9	
Jul	107 133	113 118	119 309		0,4	1,2	-0,4	
Aug	107 772	113 362	120 264		0,6	0,2	0,8	
Sep	107 701	114 821	120 148		-0,1	1,3	-0,1	
Oct	107 935	111 647	121 824		0,2	-2,8	1,4	
Nov	110 093	113 950	123 402		2,0	2,1	1,3	
Dec	108 426	117 541	123 314		-1,5	3,2	-0,1	

Table 11 – Retail trade sales at current prices by type of retailer (R million)

Type of retailer	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
General dealers	56 681	59 249	55 988	68 851	75 340	54 426
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	9 488	9 161	10 114	9 970	14 190	9 569
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	9 114	8 887	10 061	9 068	10 310	10 017
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	15 703	14 736	16 938	22 985	34 760	16 507
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 128	4 030	4 145	5 432	5 699	3 848
Hardware, paint and glass	9 285	8 970	9 390	10 287	9 743	8 305
All other retailers	10 675	9 689	10 388	12 028	13 735	12 040
Total	**115 075**	**114 721**	**117 024**	**138 621**	**163 778**	**114 714**

Table 12 – Year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at current prices by type of retailer

Type of retailer	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
General dealers	9,0	9,3	15,2	14,4	4,7	10,9
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	8,8	-0,4	2,6	5,3	4,8	9,1
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	6,1	5,3	9,7	5,7	7,0	10,8
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	4,1	-4,7	3,4	12,3	8,3	10,7
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	8,1	8,5	11,2	3,5	1,1	4,5
Hardware, paint and glass	-2,0	-3,9	-1,4	-2,2	0,1	3,6
All other retailers	2,3	-0,2	1,8	-0,6	-0,2	1,5
Total	**6,4**	**4,3**	**8,9**	**9,5**	**4,7**	**8,9**

Table 13 – Contribution of each type of retailer to the year-on-year percentage change in retail trade sales at current prices (percentage points)

Type of retailer	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
General dealers	4,3	4,6	6,9	6,9	2,2	5,1
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	0,7	0,0	0,2	0,4	0,4	0,8
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	0,5	0,4	0,8	0,4	0,4	0,9
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	0,6	-0,7	0,5	2,0	1,7	1,5
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,1	0,0	0,2
Hardware, paint and glass	-0,2	-0,3	-0,1	-0,2	0,0	0,3
All other retailers	0,2	0,0	0,2	-0,1	0,0	0,2
Total	**6,4**	**4,3**	**8,9**	**9,5**	**4,7**	**8,9**

Table 14 – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at current prices by type of retailer (R million)

Type of retailer	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Month-on-month % change
General dealers	58 090	58 771	59 347	60 459	59 703	60 840	1,9
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	10 119	9 673	9 819	9 997	10 064	10 299	2,3
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	9 278	9 412	9 641	9 507	9 635	9 848	2,2
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	18 262	18 126	18 795	19 213	19 471	18 120	-6,9
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 336	4 360	4 286	4 269	4 247	4 284	0,9
Hardware, paint and glass	8 896	8 810	8 896	8 946	9 160	9 266	1,2
All other retailers	11 283	10 998	11 040	11 011	11 034	11 104	0,6
Total	**120 264**	**120 148**	**121 824**	**123 402**	**123 314**	**123 760**	**0,4**

Analysis of revisions

Introduction

Preliminary monthly values for retail trade are published approximately seven weeks after the reference month, e.g. preliminary retail sales for March are published around mid-May. The preliminary values are revised the following month, using additional information received from respondents. This and other reasons for revising retail trade values from time to time are shown in the explanatory notes (see note 7, page 16).

Analysis

Revisions may be analysed in terms of several dimensions, namely rand values and/or growth rates (e.g. month-on-month percentage changes, year-on-year percentage changes); current prices and/or constant prices; seasonally adjusted and/or unadjusted data; totals and/or components; preliminary estimate compared with first revision and/or latest available revision; and various combinations of these options.

This analysis is confined to the following:
- Total retail trade, year-on-year growth rate, constant prices, unadjusted.
- Preliminary growth rates are compared with the latest available revised growth rates, where the preliminary growth rate refers to the first year-on-year growth rate published for the month in question.
- Time period: January 2012 to December 2024.

Figure 3 shows the preliminary and revised growth rates (line chart, left vertical axis) and the difference between them (bar chart, right vertical axis, where difference = revised - preliminary).

Table 15 provides key results relating to revisions.

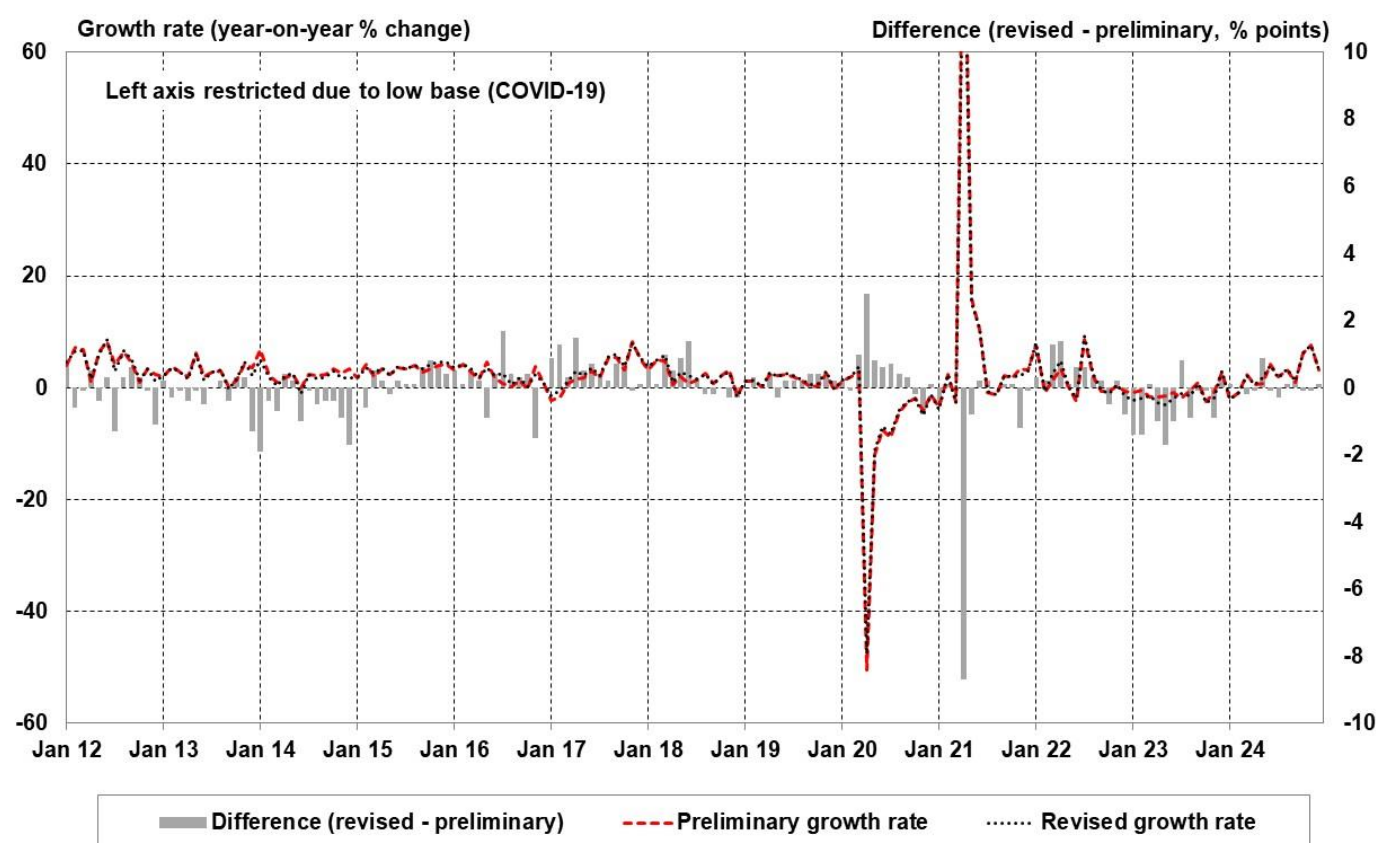**Figure 3 – Retail trade year-on-year growth rates: preliminary and revised**

Table 15 – Retail trade year-on-year growth rates: preliminary and revised

Description	Value / outcome	Comment
Average year-on-year growth rate over the whole period	Preliminary: 2,12% Revised: 2,12%	The average revised and preliminary growth rates are the same.
Mean revision	0,0 of a percentage point	This is the average of the revisions
Mean absolute revision	0,54 of a percentage point	Average of the revisions, but based on the absolute value of each revision (positives and negatives do not cancel each other)
Largest upward revision	2,8 percentage points	Preliminary -50,4% was revised up to -47,6% (April 2020; affected by COVID-19)
Largest downward revision	-8,7 percentage points	Preliminary 95,8% was revised down to 87,1% (April 2021; affected by COVID-19)
Range for all revisions	-8,7 to 2,8 percentage points	
Range within which 90% of the revisions lie	-1,3 to 1,0 percentage point	This may be regarded as the normal range for revisions, with revisions outside this range being outliers
Number of upward revisions	89 (or 62,2% of the total observations)	
Number of downward revisions	59 (or 37,8% of the total observations)	
Number of zero revisions	8 (or 5,1% of the total observations)	
Is the mean revision (0,0) significantly different from zero?	No	This indicates that there is no bias in the preliminary estimates – see Note 1 below
Standard deviation of the revisions	0,97 of a percentage point	Standard deviation is a measure of dispersion about the mean – see the row below
Percentage of revisions that lie within one standard deviation of the mean	85,3%	This is the percentage of revisions that lie between -0,97 and 0,97 of a percentage point; the higher the percentage, the lower is the dispersion about the mean – see Figure 4

Note 1: Is the mean revision significantly different from zero?

The formula for the test statistic is as follows:

$$test\ statistic = \frac{\bar{R}}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{n(n-1)}\right)\left(\sum_{t=1}^{n}\hat{\varepsilon}_t^2 + \frac{3}{4}\sum_{t=2}^{n}\hat{\varepsilon}_t\,\hat{\varepsilon}_{t-1} + \frac{2}{3}\sum_{t=3}^{n}\hat{\varepsilon}_t\,\hat{\varepsilon}_{t-2}\right)}}$$

where

$n = number\ of\ observations$
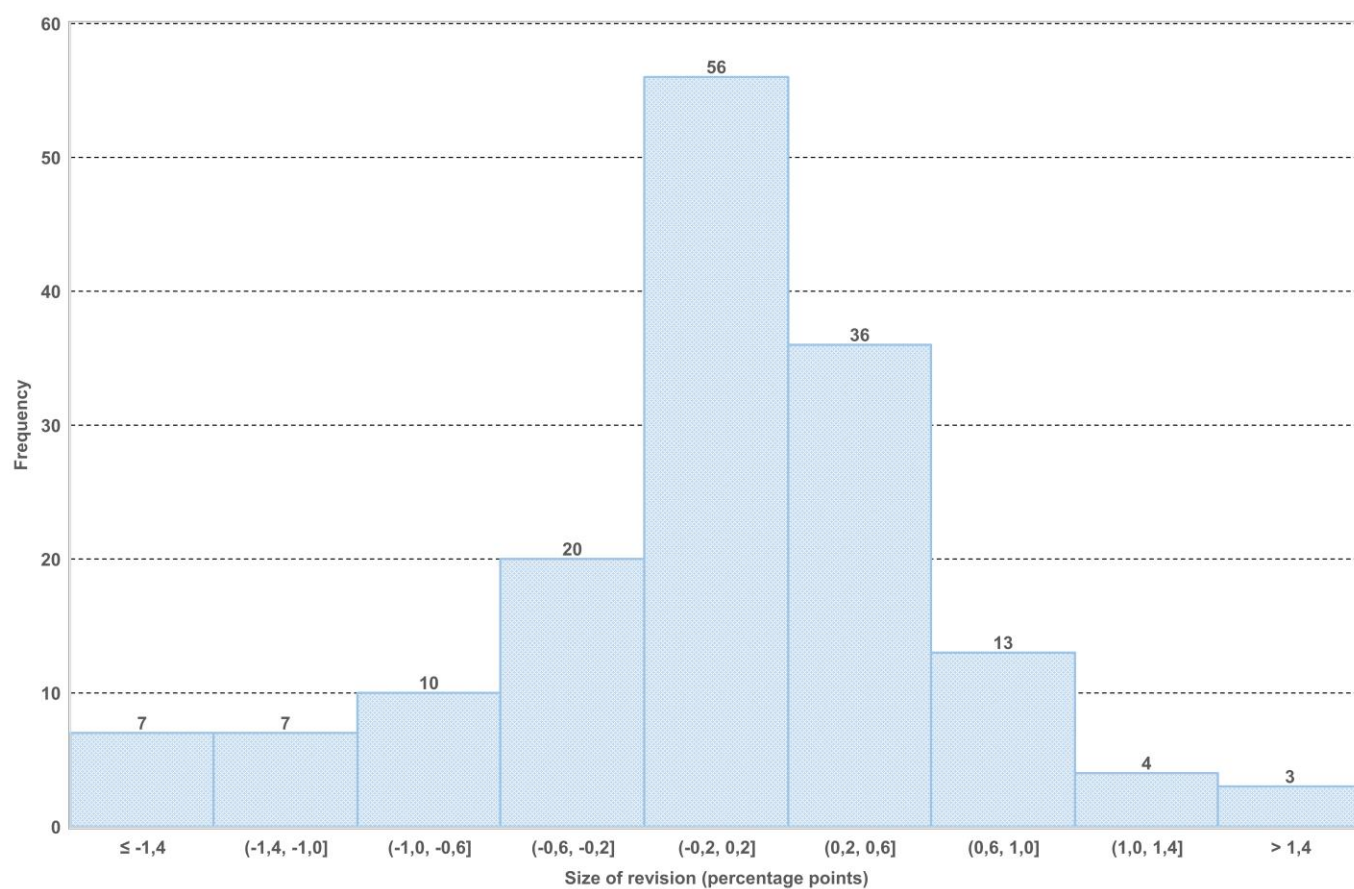
$\bar{R} = mean\ revision$

$\hat{\varepsilon}_t = R_t - \bar{R}, with\ R_t = revision\ in\ period\ t$

Note that if the test statistic shows that the mean revision (MR) is significantly different from zero, then there is bias in the preliminary estimates. Bias in a series suggests there is scope to enhance the compilation of that series in an attempt to remove or minimise the bias. MR > 0 (statistically significant) implies under-estimation of the preliminary estimates. MR < 0 (statistically significant) implies over-estimation of the preliminary estimates.

In this case the test statistic is -0,01, which lies below the critical value of 1,98, indicating that the MR is not significantly different from zero at a 5% significance level. Accordingly, no bias is detected in the preliminary estimates.

Figure 4 shows the revisions in terms of a histogram. There were 20 revisions between -0,6 and -0,2 (-0,6 < revision ≤ -0,2); 56 revisions between -0,2 and 0,2 (-0,2 < revision ≤ 0,2); and 36 revisions between 0,2 and 0,6 (0,2 < revision ≤ 0,6). Around 71,8% of revisions lie between -0,6 and 0,6 of a percentage point.

Figure 4 – Retail trade year-on-year growth rates: histogram of revisions

Explanatory notes

Introduction	**1**	Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly survey of the retail trade industry, covering retail enterprises (see point 3 below). This survey is based on a sample drawn from Stats SA's 2024 statistical business register (SBR) that contains businesses registered for value-added tax (VAT). Published retail trade sales estimates include VAT.
Purpose of the survey	**2**	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.

Scope of the survey   **3**   This survey covers retail enterprises according to the following types of retailers:

- general dealers:
  - ➢ retail trade in non-specialised stores with food, beverages and tobacco predominating; and
  - ➢ 'other' retail trade in non-specialised stores.
- retailers in food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores:
  - ➢ retailers in fresh fruit and vegetables;
  - ➢ retailers in meat and meat products;
  - ➢ retailers in bakery products;
  - ➢ retailers in beverages;
  - ➢ retailers in tobacco; and
  - ➢ retailers in 'other' food in specialised stores.
- retailers in pharmaceutical and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries;
- retailers in textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods:
  - ➢ retailers in men's and boys' clothing;
  - ➢ retailers in ladies', girls' and infants' clothing;
  - ➢ general outfitters; and
  - ➢ retailers in footwear.
- retailers in household furniture, appliances and equipment;
- retailers in hardware, paint and glass; and
- all 'other' retailers:
  - ➢ retailers in reading matter and stationery;
  - ➢ retailers in jewellery, watches and clocks;
  - ➢ retailers in sport goods and entertainment requisites;
  - ➢ retailers in 'other' specialised stores;
  - ➢ repair of personal and household goods;
  - ➢ retail trade in second-hand goods in stores; and
  - ➢ retail trade not in stores.

Classification	**4**	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 group (four digit) level.
Collection rate	**5**	The preliminary collection rate for the survey on retail trade sales for January 2025 was 68,4%. The revised collection rate for December 2024 was 70,7%.

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. The statistical units are derived from and linked to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) administrative data.
Revised figures	**7**	Revised figures are mainly due to late submission of data to Stats SA, or respondents reporting revisions or corrections to their figures. The reasons for routine revisions are outlined in the following schedule. Any unscheduled revisions will be promptly indicated in relevant tables to maintain transparency and accuracy. It is important to note that seasonally adjusted figures are revised monthly.

Statistical release	Reason for revision	Period subject to revision
Jan-25	Additional information from respondents	Dec-24
Feb-25	Additional information from respondents New weights for retail deflators	Jan-22–Jan-25
Mar-25	Additional information from respondents	Feb-25
Apr-25	Additional information from respondents	Mar-25
May-25	Additional information from respondents	Apr-25
Jun-25	Additional information from respondents	May-25
Jul-25	Additional information from respondents New sample	Jan-02–Jun-25
Aug-25	Additional information from respondents	Jul-25
Sep-25	Additional information from respondents	Aug-25
Oct-25	Additional information from respondents	Sep-25
Nov-25	Additional information from respondents	Oct-25
Dec-25	Additional information from respondents	Nov-25
New base year in 2027/28 - periodic, approximately four- to five-year intervals		

Related publications	**8**	Users may also refer to *Stats in Brief* available from Stats SA*.
Rounding-off of figures	**9**	Where figures have been rounded off, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and the totals.
Historical data	**10**	Historical retail 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	**11**	Past retail 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 on a monthly basis. Questionnaires are sent to a sample of 1 891 enterprises from a population of 19 052 enterprises. Completed questionnaires are required to be returned to Stats SA within ten days after the end of the reference month. Email 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 2024 from Stats SA's statistical business register (SBR). Strata were formed using a combination of the Standard Industrial Classification and the measure of size classes for enterprises (see point three below).

The Neyman optimal allocation formula given below was used to allocate samples to each stratum:

$$nh = n * (Nh * Sh) / [\Sigma (Ni * Si)].$$

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 did not exceed 6,0%.

Class limits	**3**	The retail sampling frame is divided into four size groups. All large enterprises (size group one) are completely enumerated. Simple random sampling is applied to size groups two, three and four (medium, small and very 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.

Measure of size classes (Rand)

Enterprise size	Size group	Lower limit	Upper limit
Very small	4	2 585 491	10 000 000
Small	3	10 000 001	47 500 000
Medium	2	47 500 001	97 500 000
Large	1	97 500 001	

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 Seasonal Adjustment Program developed by the United States Census Bureau. 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 recognised more clearly. 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 retail trade sales is described in more detail on the Stats SA website: [Click to download seasonal adjustment retail trade sales December 2022](#).
Trend cycle	**6**	The trend is the long-term pattern or movement of a time series. The X-12 Seasonal Adjustment Program is used for smoothing seasonally adjusted estimates to estimate the underlying trend cycle.

| **Constant prices** | **7** | For January 2002 to December 2007 retail trade sales at constant prices were calculated using the consumer price index (CPI) for goods, excluding petrol and purchases of vehicles, for all urban areas to deflate total sales at current prices. From January 2008 onwards total retail trade sales at constant prices are obtained by adding up the deflated sales by type of retailer. |

8 Retail trade sales at constant prices by type of retailer are obtained by deflating estimated sales at current prices by the relevant weighted price index. To obtain total retail trade sales at constant prices, estimates of the deflated sales for each type of retailer are aggregated.

Reliability of estimates **9** 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.

10 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.

Relative standard error **11** One measure of the likely difference is given by the standard error (SE), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of enterprises was used. The relative standard error (RSE) provides an immediate indication of the percentage errors likely to have occurred due to sampling, and thus avoids the need to refer to the size of the estimate.

Estimates of total retail trade sales within 95% confidence limits – January 2025

	Lower limit (R million)	Sales (R million)	Upper limit (R million)	Relative standard error (RSE) %
Retail trade sales	110 980	114 714	118 448	1,6

Month-on-month percentage change **12** 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 **13** 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) **14** The contribution (percentage points) to the year-on-year percentage change for any given period is calculated by multiplying the percentage change of each type of retailer by its corresponding weight, divided by 100. The weight is the percentage contribution of each type of retailer to total retail 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 *System of National Accounts* (SNA) in the same way as in the *Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities* (SIC)*,* Fifth Edition*,* Report No. 09-90-02 of January 1993.
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.

Symbols and abbreviations

CPI	Consumer price index
GDP	Gross domestic product
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SBR	Statistical Business Register
SIC	Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities
SNA	System of National Accounts
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
VAT	Value-added tax
*	Revised figures

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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 12 official languages. Since the releases are used extensively locally and by international economic and social-scientific communities, Stats SA releases are published in English only.

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