STATISTICAL RELEASE
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Retail trade sales
(Preliminary)

January 2026

This release provides an analysis of revisions. If you have any questions or comments, please send these to Raquel Floris, raquelf@statssa.gov.za.

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ENQUIRIES:
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Contents

Sales at constant 2019 prices: results for January 2026

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

	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	2,2	3,0	3,0	3,6	2,5	4,2
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-1,4	0,0	1,0	0,7	-0,5	0,9
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted [1]	1,0	1,0	0,4	0,7	0,8	1,3

[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 4,2% year-on-year in January 2026. The largest positive contributors to this increase were:
- retailers in textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods (9,9% and contributing 1,6 percentage points);
- all 'other' retailers (10,3% and contributing 1,2 percentage points); and
- general dealers (1,7% and contributing 0,7 of a percentage point) – see Table 5 and Table 6.

Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales increased by 0,9% in January 2026 compared with December 2025. This followed month-on-month changes of -0,5% in December 2025 and 0,7% in November 2025.

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

Type of retailer	Nov 2024 – Jan 2025 (R million)	Weight (%)	Nov 2025 – Jan 2026 (R million)	% change between Nov 2024 – Jan 2025 and Nov 2025 – Jan 2026	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	148 370	43,3	152 319	2,7	1,2
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	29 618	8,6	28 392	-4,1	-0,4
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	22 222	6,5	23 380	5,2	0,3
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	69 481	20,3	71 669	3,1	0,6
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	14 778	4,3	16 258	10,0	0,4
Hardware, paint and glass	22 938	6,7	23 717	3,4	0,2
All other retailers	35 066	10,2	38 143	8,8	0,9
Total	**342 473**	**100,0**	**353 878**	**3,3**	**3,3**

Retail trade sales increased by 3,3% in the three months ended January 2026 compared with the three months ended January 2025. The largest positive contributors to this increase were:
- general dealers (2,7% and contributing 1,2 percentage points);
- all 'other' retailers (8,8% and contributing 0,9 of a percentage point); and
- retailers in textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods (3,1% and contributing 0,6 of a percentage point).

The only negative contributor was retailers in food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores (-4,1% and contributing -0,4 of a percentage point) – 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 2025 (R million)	Weight (%)	Nov 2025 – Jan 2026 (R million)	% change between Aug – Oct 2025 and Nov 2025 – Jan 2026	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	134 315	44,0	136 031	1,3	0,6
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	25 513	8,4	25 510	0,0	0,0
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	22 386	7,3	22 790	1,8	0,1
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	53 851	17,6	54 722	1,6	0,3
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	13 525	4,4	13 762	1,8	0,1
Hardware, paint and glass	22 801	7,5	22 914	0,5	0,0
All other retailers	32 881	10,8	33 445	1,7	0,2
Total	**305 272**	**100,0**	**309 170**	**1,3**	**1,3**

Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales increased by 1,3% in the three months ended January 2026 compared with the previous three months. The largest positive contributor was general dealers (1,3% and contributing 0,6 of a percentage point) – see Table C.

Figure 1 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices
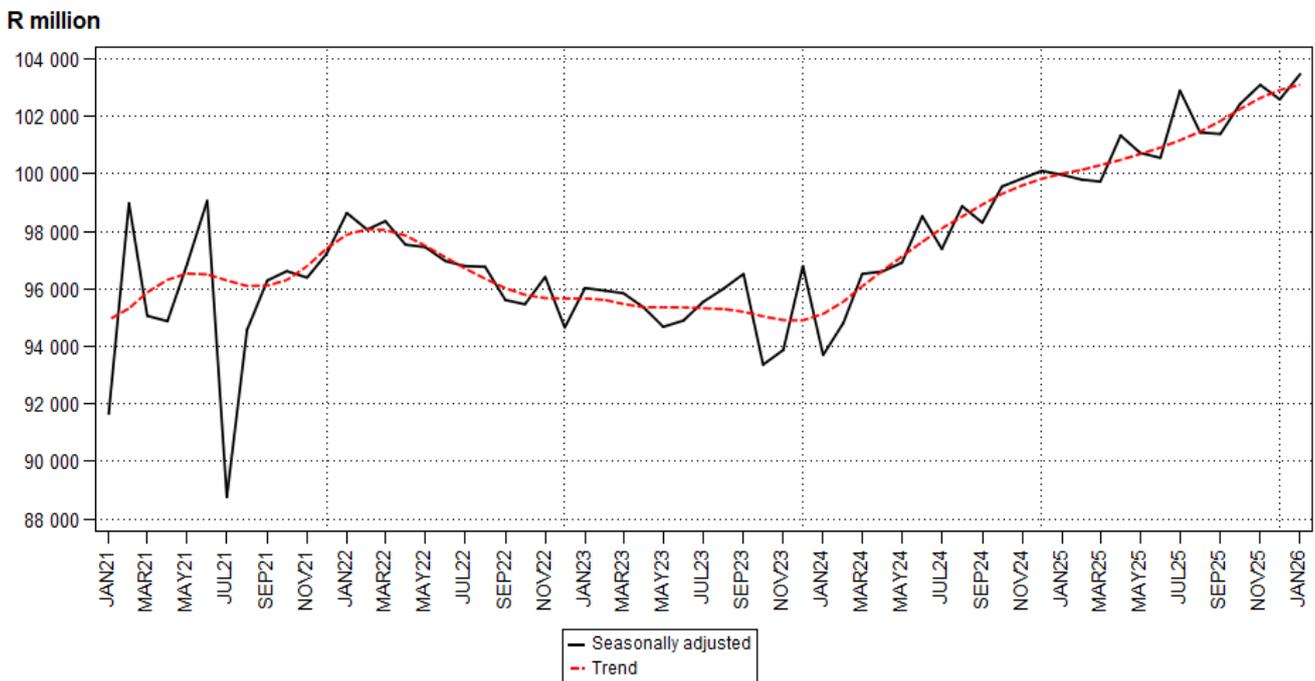
Figure 2 – Retail trade sales at constant 2019 prices: year-on-year percentage change
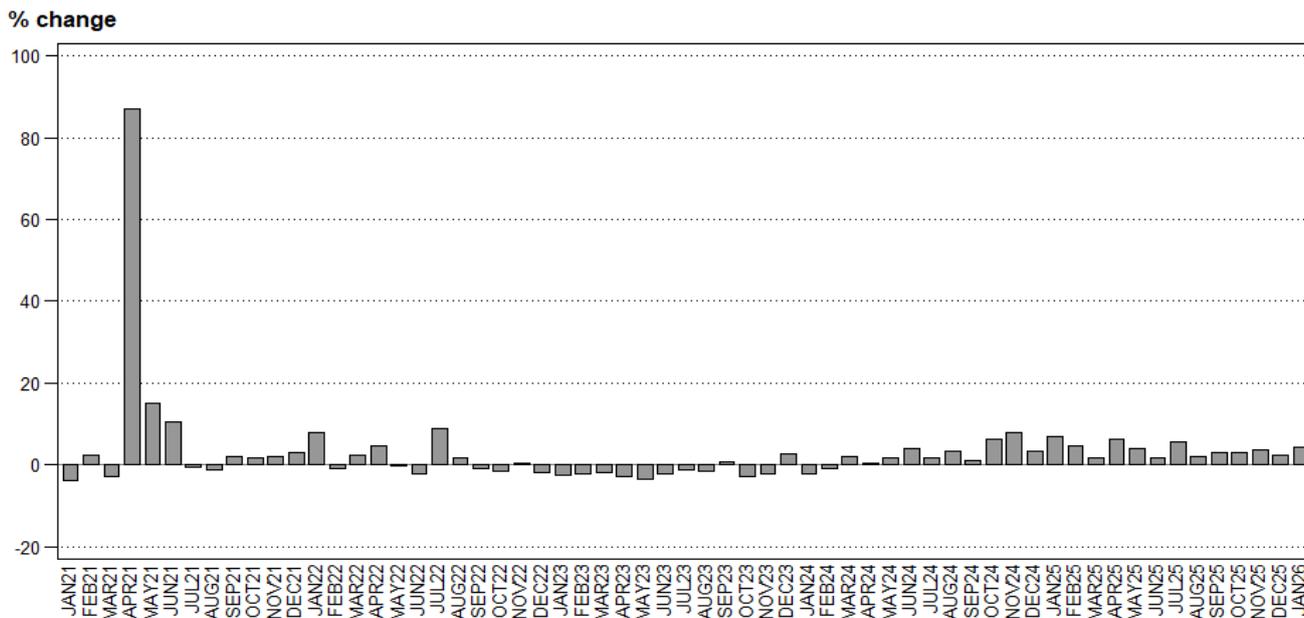
Sales at current prices: results for January 2026

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

	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26
Year-on-year % change, unadjusted	4,7	5,2	4,6	5,5	4,4	5,8
Month-on-month % change, seasonally adjusted	-1,3	0,1	0,8	1,2	-0,7	1,8
3-month % change, seasonally adjusted [1]	1,7	1,4	0,5	0,8	1,0	1,9

[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 2024 – Jan 2025 (R million)	Weight (%)	Nov 2025 – Jan 2026 (R million)	% change between Nov 2024 – Jan 2025 and Nov 2025 – Jan 2026	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	198 391	46,9	208 974	5,3	2,5
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	39 260	9,3	40 991	4,4	0,4
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	29 138	6,9	31 784	9,1	0,6
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	76 156	18,0	78 878	3,6	0,6
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	14 536	3,4	15 230	4,8	0,2
Hardware, paint and glass	28 165	6,7	29 218	3,7	0,2
All other retailers	37 215	8,8	39 497	6,1	0,5
Total	**422 862**	**100,0**	**444 572**	**5,1**	**5,1**

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

Type of retailer	Aug – Oct 2025 (R million)	Weight (%)	Nov 2025 – Jan 2026 (R million)	% change between Aug – Oct 2025 and Nov 2025 – Jan 2026	Contribution (% points) to the total % change
General dealers	183 616	47,7	187 494	2,1	1,0
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	36 756	9,5	36 854	0,3	0,0
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	30 274	7,9	31 172	3,0	0,2
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	58 916	15,3	60 753	3,1	0,5
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	12 904	3,4	12 944	0,3	0,0
Hardware, paint and glass	28 080	7,3	28 321	0,9	0,1
All other retailers	34 396	8,9	34 739	1,0	0,1
Total	**384 942**	**100,0**	**392 277**	**1,9**	**1,9**

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Statistician-General

Tables

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

Month	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jan	88 360	84 894	91 575	89 196	87 319	93 239	97 137
Feb	91 047	93 226	92 448	90 366	89 587	93 708	
Mar	95 558	93 010	95 303	93 550	95 426	97 009	
Apr	47 167	88 199	92 258	89 579	89 987	95 554	
May	84 036	96 600	96 545	93 359	94 963	98 774	
Jun	85 667	94 722	92 610	90 673	94 174	95 753	
Jul	83 783	83 287	90 655	89 568	90 988	96 145	
Aug	91 789	90 585	92 283	90 927	93 952	96 004	
Sep	90 259	92 170	91 462	92 094	93 149	95 934	
Oct	91 867	93 589	92 181	89 542	95 283	98 115	
Nov	105 131	107 342	107 583	105 383	113 828	117 907	
Dec	126 021	129 796	127 315	130 770	135 406	138 834	
Total	**1 080 685**	**1 147 420**	**1 162 218**	**1 145 007**	**1 174 062**	**1 216 976**	

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

Month	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	*2026 year-to-date*
Jan	-3,9	7,9	-2,6	-2,1	6,8	4,2	*4,2*
Feb	2,4	-0,8	-2,3	-0,9	4,6		
Mar	-2,7	2,5	-1,8	2,0	1,7		
Apr	87,0	4,6	-2,9	0,5	6,2		
May	15,0	-0,1	-3,3	1,7	4,0		
Jun	10,6	-2,2	-2,1	3,9	1,7		
Jul	-0,6	8,8	-1,2	1,6	5,7		
Aug	-1,3	1,9	-1,5	3,3	2,2		
Sep	2,1	-0,8	0,7	1,1	3,0		
Oct	1,9	-1,5	-2,9	6,4	3,0		
Nov	2,1	0,2	-2,0	8,0	3,6		
Dec	3,0	-1,9	2,7	3,5	2,5		
Total	**6,2**	**1,3**	**-1,5**	**2,5**	**3,7**		

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

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jan	96 032	93 700	99 975	103 471	1,5	-3,2	-0,1	0,9
Feb	95 940	94 815	99 802		-0,1	1,2	-0,2	
Mar	95 850	96 524	99 738		-0,1	1,8	-0,1	
Apr	95 355	96 609	101 342		-0,5	0,1	1,6	
May	94 682	96 919	100 735		-0,7	0,3	-0,6	
Jun	94 901	98 534	100 562		0,2	1,7	-0,2	
Jul	95 547	97 391	102 905		0,7	-1,2	2,3	
Aug	96 004	98 881	101 442		0,5	1,5	-1,4	
Sep	96 522	98 306	101 395		0,5	-0,6	0,0	
Oct	93 365	99 563	102 435		-3,3	1,3	1,0	
Nov	93 878	99 842	103 103		0,5	0,3	0,7	
Dec	96 792	100 109	102 596		3,1	0,3	-0,5	

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

Type of retailer	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26
General dealers	42 835	45 145	42 046	52 627	58 655	41 037
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	8 105	8 182	8 664	8 806	11 732	7 854
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	7 286	7 011	7 784	7 552	7 916	7 912
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	15 036	14 415	16 510	22 348	32 378	16 943
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 267	4 155	4 470	5 690	6 350	4 218
Hardware, paint and glass	8 104	7 521	8 081	8 562	8 059	7 096
All other retailers	10 371	9 505	10 560	12 322	13 744	12 077
Total	**96 004**	**95 934**	**98 115**	**117 907**	**138 834**	**97 137**

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

Type of retailer	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26
General dealers	0,7	1,8	0,7	2,0	4,0	1,7
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	-3,7	1,0	-2,3	0,2	-5,8	-6,3
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	5,2	4,0	2,4	9,8	1,5	4,8
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	1,0	4,4	5,8	3,0	0,0	9,9
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	6,7	11,4	11,3	8,1	11,3	10,7
Hardware, paint and glass	8,2	3,9	5,7	3,7	2,1	4,6
All other retailers	6,9	3,3	7,6	8,7	7,6	10,3
Total	**2,2**	**3,0**	**3,0**	**3,6**	**2,5**	**4,2**

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-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26
General dealers	0,3	0,9	0,3	0,9	1,7	0,7
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	-0,3	0,1	-0,2	0,0	-0,5	-0,6
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	0,4	0,3	0,2	0,6	0,1	0,4
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	0,2	0,7	1,0	0,6	0,0	1,6
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	0,3	0,5	0,5	0,4	0,5	0,4
Hardware, paint and glass	0,7	0,3	0,5	0,3	0,1	0,3
All other retailers	0,7	0,3	0,8	0,9	0,7	1,2
Total	**2,2**	**3,0**	**3,0**	**3,6**	**2,5**	**4,2**

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

Type of retailer	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Month-on-month % change
General dealers	44 498	44 862	44 955	45 256	45 358	45 417	0,1
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	8 548	8 501	8 464	8 638	8 336	8 536	2,4
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	7 469	7 421	7 496	7 787	7 352	7 651	4,1
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	17 768	17 842	18 241	18 228	18 291	18 203	-0,5
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 461	4 511	4 553	4 510	4 607	4 645	0,8
Hardware, paint and glass	7 715	7 440	7 646	7 547	7 570	7 797	3,0
All other retailers	10 982	10 819	11 080	11 138	11 084	11 223	1,3
Total	**101 442**	**101 395**	**102 435**	**103 103**	**102 596**	**103 471**	**0,9**

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

Month	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jan	89 551	87 977	98 447	103 447	106 642	115 801	122 572
Feb	92 581	97 002	100 002	106 060	110 127	116 843	
Mar	97 483	97 544	103 903	111 032	117 751	121 504	
Apr	48 322	92 700	100 932	106 636	110 969	119 606	
May	85 414	101 656	106 862	111 413	117 176	124 232	
Jun	87 231	100 192	103 476	108 710	116 706	121 322	
Jul	85 454	88 239	101 783	107 303	112 498	121 450	
Aug	93 964	96 434	104 807	109 425	116 517	121 981	
Sep	92 609	98 142	104 517	111 357	116 244	122 318	
Oct	94 727	100 030	105 715	108 766	118 648	124 151	
Nov	108 658	114 622	123 342	128 100	140 718	148 405	
Dec	130 311	138 583	146 011	158 246	166 343	173 595	
Total	**1 106 305**	**1 213 121**	**1 299 797**	**1 370 495**	**1 450 339**	**1 531 208**	

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

Month	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	*2026 year-to-date*
Jan	-1,8	11,9	5,1	3,1	8,6	5,8	*5,8*
Feb	4,8	3,1	6,1	3,8	6,1		
Mar	0,1	6,5	6,9	6,1	3,2		
Apr	91,8	8,9	5,7	4,1	7,8		
May	19,0	5,1	4,3	5,2	6,0		
Jun	14,9	3,3	5,1	7,4	4,0		
Jul	3,3	15,3	5,4	4,8	8,0		
Aug	2,6	8,7	4,4	6,5	4,7		
Sep	6,0	6,5	6,5	4,4	5,2		
Oct	5,6	5,7	2,9	9,1	4,6		
Nov	5,5	7,6	3,9	9,9	5,5		
Dec	6,3	5,4	8,4	5,1	4,4		
Total	**9,7**	**7,1**	**5,4**	**5,8**	**5,6**		

Table 10 – Seasonally adjusted retail trade sales at current prices

Month	R million				Month-on-month % change			
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2023	2024	2025	2026
Jan	112 724	115 858	125 534	131 987	3,2	-1,8	1,1	1,8
Feb	112 970	117 174	124 738		0,2	1,1	-0,6	
Mar	113 735	119 050	124 521		0,7	1,6	-0,2	
Apr	113 356	118 946	126 943		-0,3	-0,1	1,9	
May	112 776	119 263	126 460		-0,5	0,3	-0,4	
Jun	113 576	121 767	126 887		0,7	2,1	0,3	
Jul	114 050	120 044	129 636		0,4	-1,4	2,2	
Aug	114 596	121 786	127 902		0,5	1,5	-1,3	
Sep	115 857	121 523	128 026		1,1	-0,2	0,1	
Oct	112 987	123 495	129 014		-2,5	1,6	0,8	
Nov	114 517	124 010	130 625		1,4	0,4	1,2	
Dec	117 977	124 114	129 665		3,0	0,1	-0,7	

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

Type of retailer	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26
General dealers	58 837	61 978	57 725	72 200	80 359	56 415
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	11 651	11 737	12 416	12 646	16 898	11 447
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	9 872	9 510	10 582	10 255	10 745	10 784
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	16 624	15 906	18 202	24 604	35 587	18 687
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 082	3 978	4 243	5 355	5 896	3 979
Hardware, paint and glass	9 986	9 245	9 916	10 550	9 907	8 761
All other retailers	10 928	9 965	11 066	12 796	14 202	12 499
Total	**121 981**	**122 318**	**124 151**	**148 405**	**173 595**	**122 572**

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

Type of retailer	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26
General dealers	3,9	4,7	3,2	4,7	6,7	4,3
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	5,8	10,2	5,8	9,0	2,5	2,5
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	9,1	7,7	6,1	13,7	5,3	8,7
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	2,2	5,2	6,2	3,5	0,3	10,5
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	2,5	7,3	6,4	3,4	5,5	5,7
Hardware, paint and glass	8,4	3,9	5,5	4,2	2,1	5,0
All other retailers	5,5	1,4	5,6	6,3	4,7	7,7
Total	**4,7**	**5,2**	**4,6**	**5,5**	**4,4**	**5,8**

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-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26
General dealers	1,9	2,4	1,5	2,3	3,0	2,0
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	0,5	0,9	0,6	0,7	0,2	0,2
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	0,7	0,6	0,5	0,9	0,3	0,7
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	0,3	0,7	0,9	0,6	0,1	1,5
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2
Hardware, paint and glass	0,7	0,3	0,4	0,3	0,1	0,4
All other retailers	0,5	0,1	0,5	0,5	0,4	0,8
Total	**4,7**	**5,2**	**4,6**	**5,5**	**4,4**	**5,8**

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

Type of retailer	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	*Month-on-month % change*
General dealers	60 827	61 302	61 487	62 149	62 417	62 928	*0,8*
Food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores	12 292	12 325	12 139	12 459	12 062	12 333	*2,2*
Pharmaceuticals and medical goods, cosmetics and toiletries	10 033	10 087	10 154	10 649	10 069	10 454	*3,8*
Textiles, clothing, footwear and leather goods	19 441	19 554	19 921	20 178	19 943	20 632	*3,5*
Household furniture, appliances and equipment	4 268	4 314	4 322	4 261	4 318	4 365	*1,1*
Hardware, paint and glass	9 518	9 144	9 418	9 340	9 356	9 625	*2,9*
All other retailers	11 522	11 300	11 574	11 589	11 500	11 650	*1,3*
Total	**127 902**	**128 026**	**129 014**	**130 625**	**129 665**	**131 987**	***1,8***

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 on 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 2025.

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.

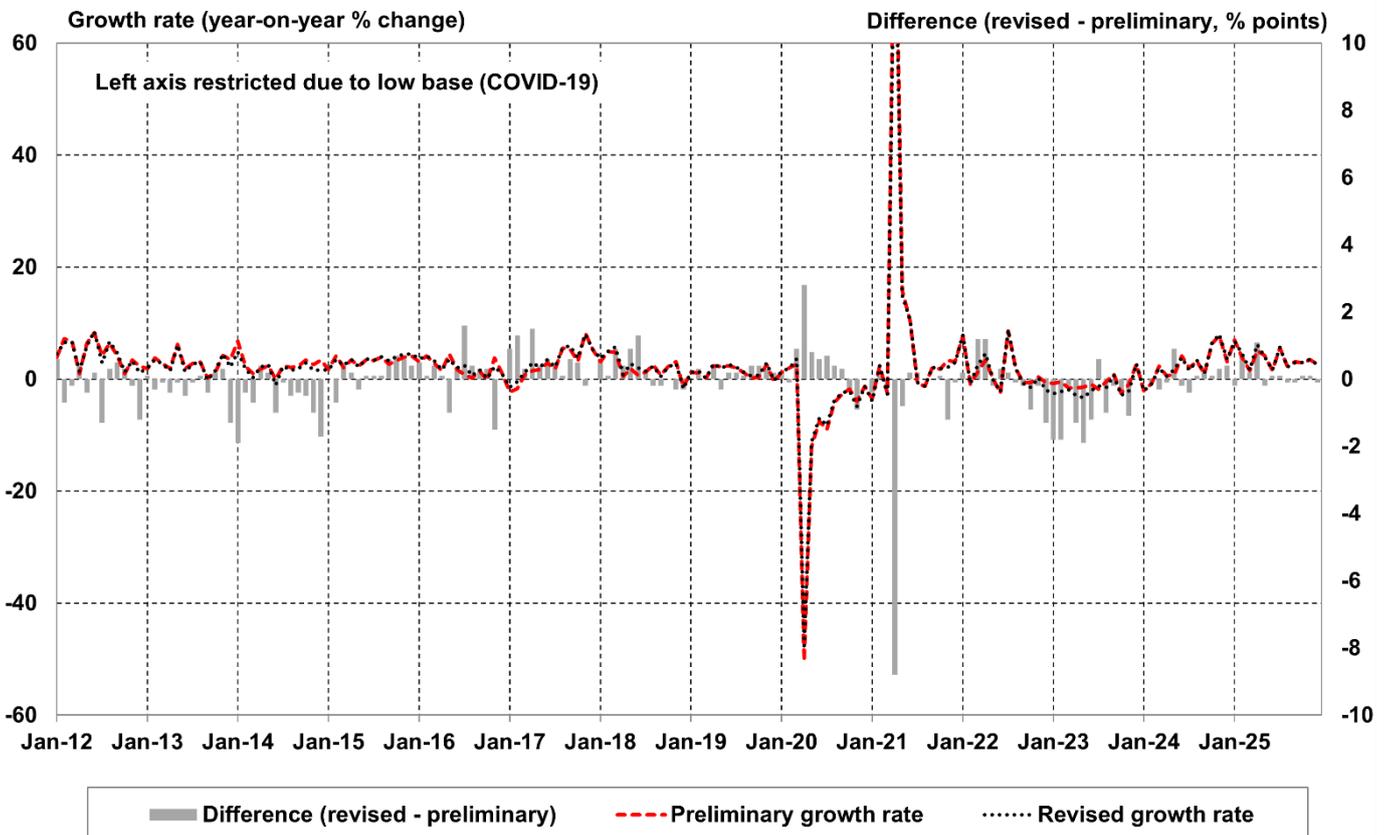**Figure 3 – Retail trade year-on-year growth rates: preliminary and revised**

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: 2,23% Revised: 2,17%	The average of revised growth rates is slightly lower than the average of preliminary growth rates
Mean revision	-0,05 of a percentage point	This is the average of the revisions
Mean absolute revision	0,53 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	-8,8 percentage points	Preliminary 95,8% was revised down to 87,0% (April 2021; affected by COVID-19)
Range for all revisions	-8,8 to 2,8 percentage points	
Range within which 90% of the revisions lie	-1,3 to 1,0 percentage points	This may be regarded as the normal range for revisions, with revisions outside this range being outliers
Number of upward revisions	94 (or 56,0% of the total observations)	
Number of downward revisions	74 (or 44,0% of the total observations)	
Is the mean revision (-0,05) 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	0,96 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	86,3%	This is the percentage of revisions that lie between -1,01 and 0,91 percentage points; 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 -0,64, the absolute value of which lies below the critical value of 1,97, 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 61 revisions between -1,0 and 0,0 (-1,0 < revision ≤ 0,0) and 80 revisions between 0,0 and 1,0 (0,0 < revision ≤ 1,0). Around 83,9% of revisions lie between -1,0 and 1,0 percentage points.

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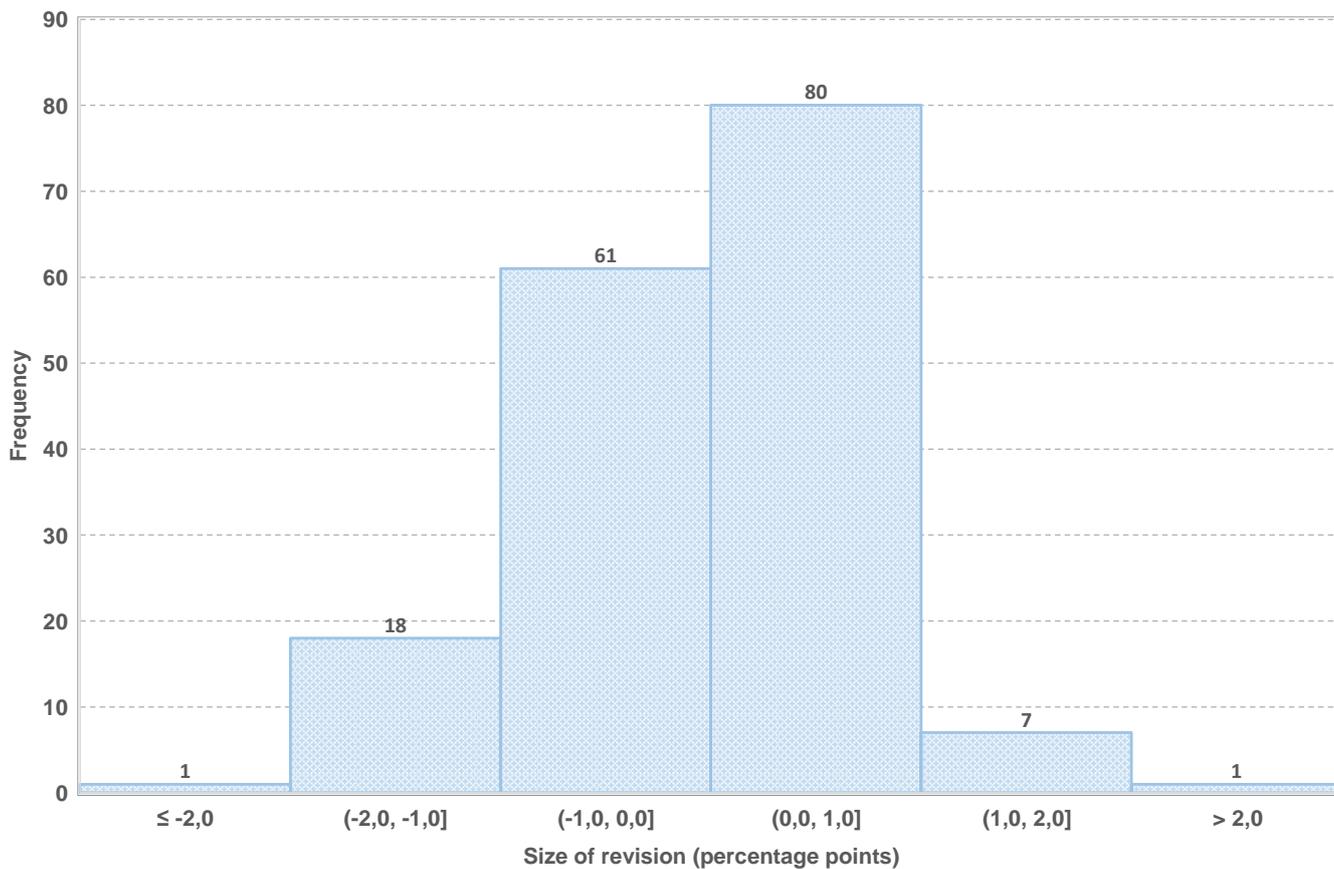
Explanatory notes

| 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 2025 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 2026 was 74,0%. The revised collection rate for December 2025 was 75,9%.

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-26	Additional information from respondents	Dec-25
Feb-26	Additional information from respondents	Jan-26
Mar-26	Additional information from respondents	Feb-26
Apr-26	Additional information from respondents	Mar-26
May-26	Additional information from respondents	Apr-26
Jun-26	Additional information from respondents	May-26
Jul-26	Additional information from respondents	Jun-26
Aug-26	Additional information from respondents	Jul-26
Sep-26	Additional information from respondents	Aug-26
Oct-26	Additional information from respondents	Sep-26
Nov-26	Additional information from respondents	Oct-26
Dec-26	Additional information from respondents	Nov-26
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 1 671 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 2025 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	2 692 651	12 000 000
Small	3	12 000 001	57 000 000
Medium	2	57 000 001	117 000 000
Large	1	117 000 001	

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 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 January 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 February 2002 to January 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 February 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 2026

	Lower limit (R million)	Sales (R million)	Upper limit (R million)	Relative standard error (RSE) (%)
Retail trade sales	119 245	122 572	125 899	1,3

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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