



STATEMENT

SARS MEDIA RELEASE

UNDER EMBARGO – 2pm Wednesday, 31 January 2024

SARS releases the preliminary trade statistics for December 2023

Pretoria, 31 January 2024 – South Africa recorded a preliminary trade balance surplus of R14.1 billion in December 2023. This surplus was attributable to exports of R164.0 billion and imports of R149.9 billion, inclusive of trade with Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia (BELN).

The year-to-date (01 January to 31 December 2023) preliminary trade balance surplus of R61.0 billion was a deterioration from the R192.0 billion trade balance surplus for the comparable period in 2022. On a year-on-year basis, export flows for December 2023 were 0.9% higher compared to R162.4 billion recorded in December 2022, whilst import flows were 5.0% lower having decreased from R157.8 billion in December 2022 to R149.9 billion in the current period.

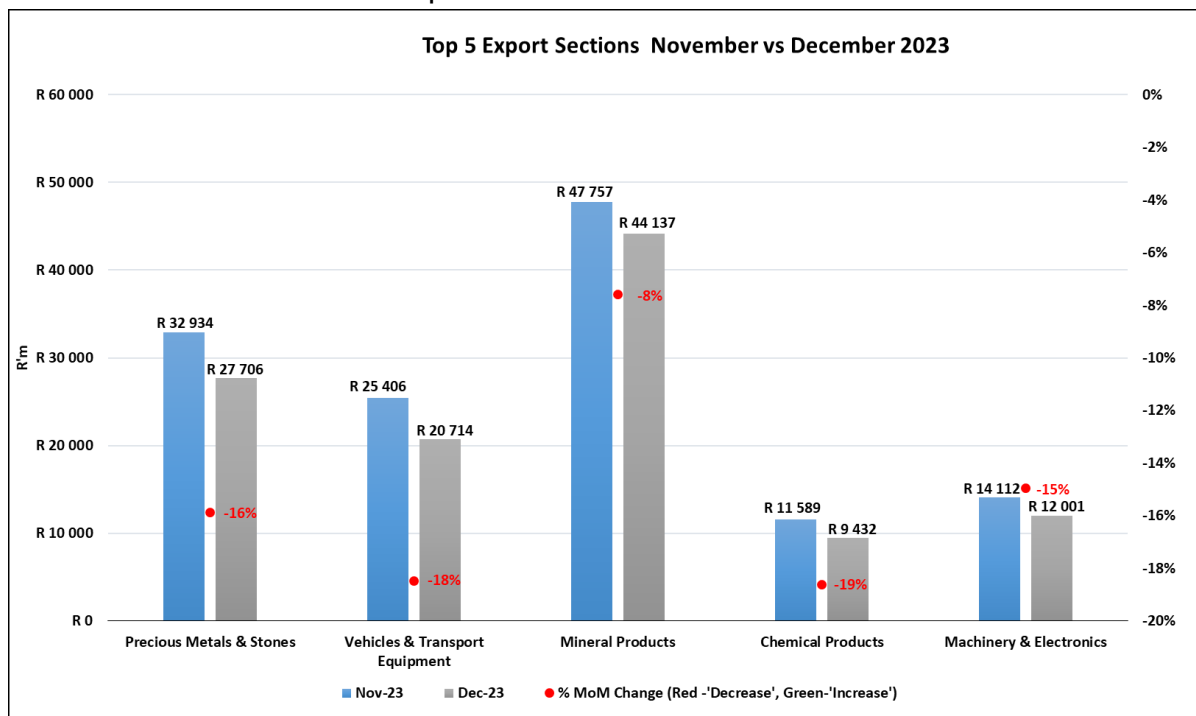
On a month-to-month basis, exports decreased by R21.4 billion (-11.5%) from R185.3 billion to R164.0 billion between November and December 2023, whilst imports decreased by R14.9 billion (-9.0%) from R164.8 billion to R149.9 billion over the same period. Export flows decreased in December, driven by Gold, Platinum, and Vehicles (Goods). Value of imports decreased on the back of sizable decreases in importation of Original Equipment Components, Crude Oil, and Wheat and Meslin.

Due to ongoing Vouchers of Correction (VOCs), the preliminary trade balance surplus of R21.0 billion announced for November 2023 was revised downwards by R0.5 billion, with the final number at R20.5 billion.

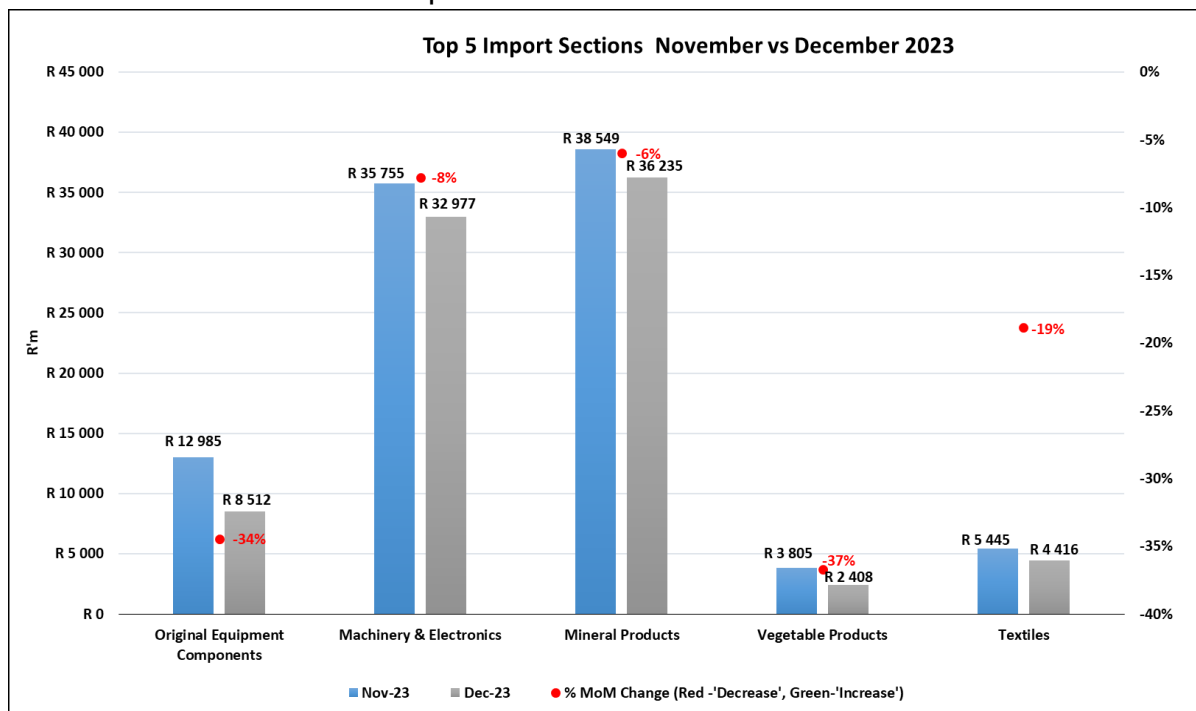
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Trade highlights by category

The main month-on-month export movements:



The main month-on-month import movements:



Trade highlights by world zone

The world zone results from November (revised) to December (preliminary) 2023 are given below:

World Zones (R' m)	The main month-on-month movements (R' m)				
	Trade Type	November 2023	December 2023	Variance	% M-o-M
Africa	Exports	51 296	44 816	-6 480	↓ -12.6%
	Imports	16 080	16 071	-8	↓ -0.1%
	Trade Balance	35 216	28 745	-	-
America	Exports	16 544	14 264	-2 280	↓ -13.8%
	Imports	19 684	18 451	-1 234	↓ -6.3%
	Trade Balance	-3 141	-4 187	-	-
Asia	Exports	55 685	57 724	2 039	↑ 3.7%
	Imports	84 478	76 203	-8 275	↓ -9.8%
	Trade Balance	-28 793	-18 479	-	-
Europe	Exports	45 678	35 752	-9 926	↓ -21.7%
	Imports	42 669	36 921	-5 748	↓ -13.5%
	Trade Balance	3 009	-1 169	-	-
Oceania	Exports	2 445	2 161	-284	↓ -11.6%
	Imports	1 463	2 022	560	↑ 38.2%
	Trade Balance	982	138	-	-
Other Unclassified	Exports	12 685	8 372	-4 314	↓ -34.0%
	Imports	397	238	-159	↓ -39.9%
	Trade Balance	12 288	8 133	-	-
Ship/Aircraft	Exports	1 001	883	-117	↓ -11.7%
	Imports	-	-	-	-
	Trade Balance	1 001	883	-	-

Excluding trade data with Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia (BELN)

South Africa's trade with the rest of the world (excl. BELN) for December 2023 indicate a preliminary trade balance surplus of R3.7 billion.

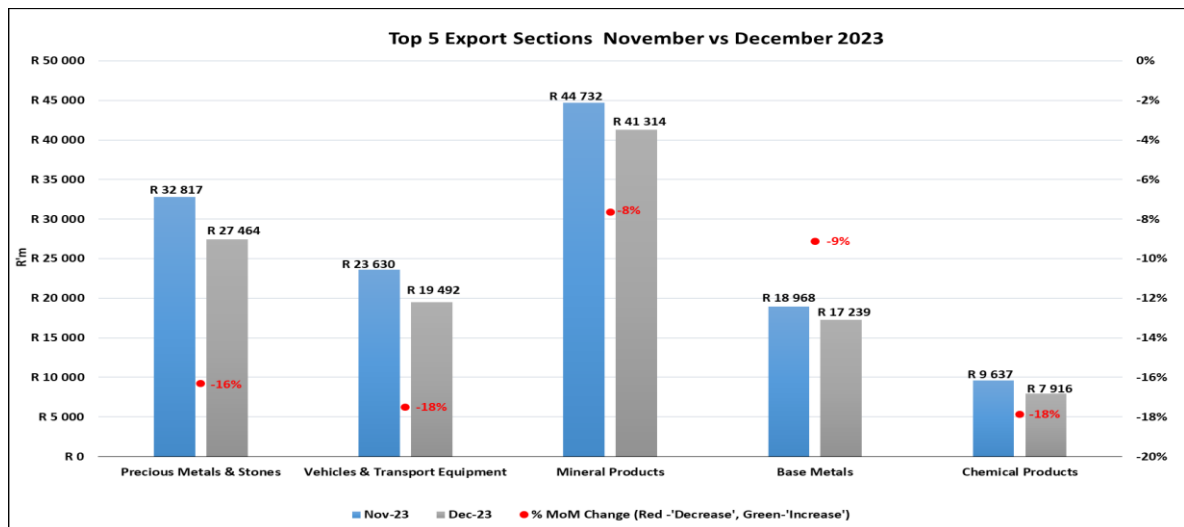
Summary

The R3.7 billion preliminary trade balance surplus for December 2023 was as a result of exports of R148.6 billion and imports of R144.9 billion. Exports decreased by R17.6 billion (-10.6%) between November and December 2023 whilst imports decreased by R13.7 billion (-8.6%) over the same period.

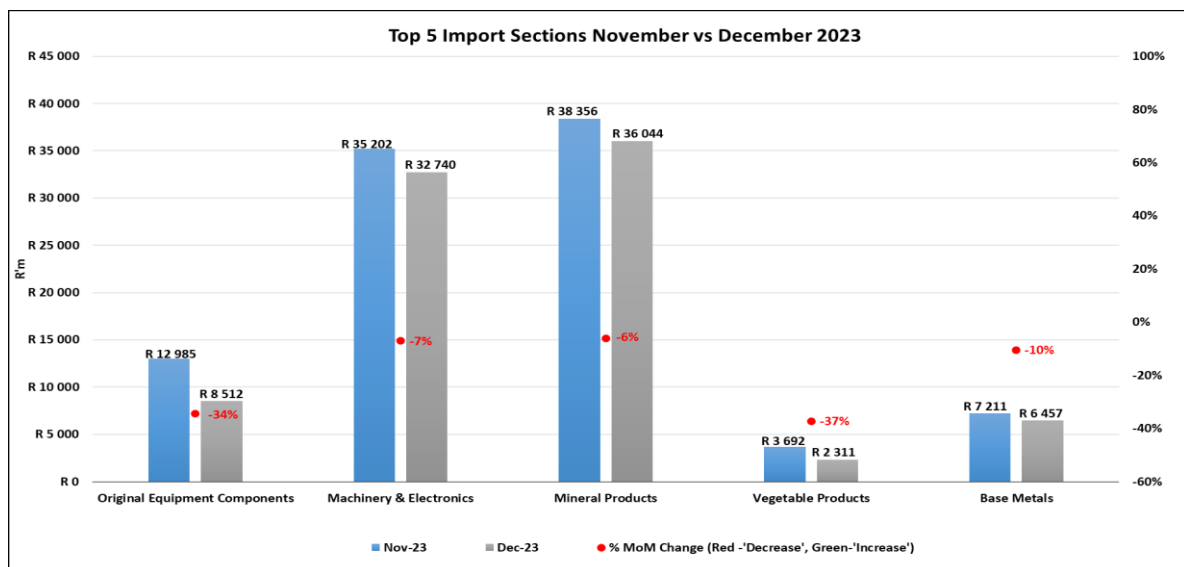
The preliminary cumulative trade balance for 2023 was a deficit of R69.1 billion, compared to R70.3 billion trade balance surplus for the corresponding period in 2022.

Trade highlights by category

The main month-on-month export movements:



The main month-on-month import movements:



Trade highlights by world zone

The world zone results for Africa, excluding BELN, between November (revised) and December (preliminary) 2023 are given below:

World Zones	The main month-on-month movements (R' m)				
	Trade Type	November 2023	December 2023	Variance	% M-o-M
Africa	Exports	32 159	29 456	-2 702	-8.4%
	Imports	9 886	11 087	1 201	12.2%
	Trade Balance	22 273	18 369	-	-

[Click here for Merchandise Trade Statistics December 2023](#)

SA Trade Release Table (Including BELN)

Harmonised Sections		Cumulative Trade		Monthly Trade		Exports				Imports			
Roman Section	Description	Trade Balance (R'm)	Ratio ⁵⁾ (Exports/Imports)	Trade Balance (R'm)	Ratio Exports/Imports	Month % of total	Cumulative 2022 ³⁾ (R'm)	Cumulative 2023 ³⁾ (R'm)	Month Total 2023 (R'm)	Month % of total	Cumulative 2022 ³⁾ (R'm)	Cumulative 2023 ³⁾ (R'm)	Month Total 2023 (R'm)
I, Ch 1-5	Animals/Animal Products	(478 710 894)	0.98	(113 120 072)	0.94	1.03	18 482 404 976	20 403 341 545	1 682 997 669	1.20	21 228 255 476	20 882 052 439	1 796 117 741
II, Ch 6-14	Vegetable Products	93 540 986 159	3.28	5 220 210 234	3.17	4.65	115 852 399 825	134 567 854 726	7 628 494 864	1.61	33 555 272 728	41 026 868 567	2 408 284 630
III, Ch 15	Fats and Oils	(6 900 789 766)	0.51	(662 016 811)	0.41	0.28	8 560 482 262	7 284 418 662	466 203 409	0.75	19 382 737 942	14 185 208 428	1 128 220 220
IV, Ch 16-24	Prepared Foods	27 384 114 870	1.50	4 113 970 234	1.98	5.06	68 621 553 324	81 741 096 311	8 301 290 854	2.79	46 796 043 388	54 356 981 441	4 187 320 620
V, Ch 25-27	Mineral Products	106 613 632 033	1.25	7 902 235 941	1.22	26.92	562 502 799 139	528 858 134 185	44 137 353 433	24.17	418 316 362 100	422 244 502 152	36 235 117 492
VI, Ch 28-38	Chemical Products	(74 922 767 654)	0.62	(7 310 570 158)	0.56	5.75	127 367 872 580	119 779 780 207	9 431 695 779	11.17	207 451 361 970	194 702 547 861	16 742 265 937
VII, Ch 39-40	Plastics and Rubber	(37 642 608 135)	0.49	(3 330 581 690)	0.45	1.68	35 808 782 791	35 687 558 001	2 756 398 378	4.06	75 498 668 490	73 330 166 136	6 086 980 068
VIII, Ch 41-43	Hides, Skins and Leather	(649 586 236)	0.87	(91 971 966)	0.80	0.22	4 197 734 419	4 333 530 381	359 931 413	0.30	4 616 115 540	4 983 116 617	451 903 379
IX, Ch 44-46	Wood and articles thereof	2 996 769 447	1.43	127 487 814	1.26	0.38	10 072 547 897	9 974 931 578	627 174 107	0.33	7 176 702 067	6 978 162 131	499 686 293
X, Ch 47-49	Pulp and Paper Products	(23 038 498 159)	0.60	(1 935 029 277)	0.63	2.04	29 075 064 612	34 295 013 145	3 351 683 751	3.53	56 635 453 522	57 333 511 304	5 286 713 028
XI, Ch 50-63	Textiles and Clothing	(36 403 961 452)	0.39	(2 422 701 125)	0.45	1.22	20 830 713 774	23 159 405 376	1 992 967 821	2.95	60 152 478 264	59 563 366 828	4 415 668 946
XII, Ch 64-67	Footwear and Accessories	(13 795 684 796)	0.24	(962 390 982)	0.31	0.26	3 941 173 326	4 243 270 557	426 692 371	0.93	18 994 410 772	18 038 955 353	1 389 083 353
XIII, Ch 68-70	Stone, Plaster, etc	(9 643 531 364)	0.45	(622 582 387)	0.47	0.33	7 327 908 398	7 873 955 095	546 672 003	0.78	17 190 520 217	17 517 486 459	1 169 254 390
XIV, Ch 71	Precious Stones	344 912 022 723	13.74	25 631 547 402	13.36	16.90	437 878 873 821	371 980 810 858	27 705 544 824	1.38	24 636 303 415	27 068 788 135	2 073 997 422
XV, Ch 72-83	Base Metals	129 047 787 342	2.34	11 636 425 894	2.79	11.06	203 377 612 961	225 490 520 052	18 139 880 885	4.34	97 169 175 824	96 442 732 710	6 503 454 991
XVI, Ch 84-85	Machinery and Appliances	(312 473 888 123)	0.33	(20 976 342 535)	0.36	7.32	139 145 288 488	152 775 597 518	12 000 543 014	22.00	374 943 948 260	465 249 485 641	32 976 885 549
XVII, Ch 86-89	Transport Equipment	74 683 756 421	1.43	8 526 600 051	1.70	12.63	192 209 969 440	247 430 985 300	20 713 515 321	8.13	151 727 009 158	172 747 228 879	12 186 915 270
XVIII, Ch 90-92	Precision Products, etc	(33 272 678 833)	0.26	(2 653 155 816)	0.29	0.66	10 673 843 143	11 680 467 955	1 086 066 216	2.49	39 415 572 108	44 953 146 788	3 739 222 032
XX, Ch 94-96	Misc Manufactured Articles	(12 807 321 745)	0.45	(1 076 703 800)	0.45	0.54	9 586 798 976	10 613 656 431	880 109 956	1.31	22 796 101 818	23 420 978 176	1 956 813 756
XXI, Ch 97	Works of Art/Antiques	1 188 855 945	2.20	259 571 272	8.05	0.18	1 224 472 090	2 176 704 375	296 384 605	0.02	654 249 192	987 848 430	36 813 333
XXII, Ch 99	Other Unclassified ¹⁾	3 872 101 329	3.28	1 316 318 459	11.64	0.88	5 802 815 849	5 573 553 273	1 439 993 994	0.08	1 700 697 476	1 701 451 944	123 675 535
XXIII, Ch 98	Special Provisions ²⁾	(161 171 930 728)	0.00	(8 512 204 166)	-	-	13 210 634	4 903 023		5.68	120 470 027 233	161 176 833 751	8 512 204 166
Total	Total SA Rand	61 038 068 384	1.03	14 064 996 516	1.09	100.00	2 012 554 322 725	2 039 929 488 554	163 971 594 667	100.00	1 820 507 466 960	1 978 891 420 170	149 906 598 151

World Zones	Cumulative Trade		Monthly Trade		Exports				Imports			
	Trade Balance (R'm)	Ratio ⁵⁾ (Exports/Imports)	Trade Balance (R'm)	Ratio Exports/Imports	Month % of total	Cumulative 2022 ³⁾ (R'm)	Cumulative 2023 ³⁾ (R'm)	Month Total 2023 (R'm)	Month % of total	Cumulative 2022 ³⁾ (R'm)	Cumulative 2023 ³⁾ (R'm)	Month Total 2023 (R'm)
AFRICA	370 851 071 225	3.06	28 744 936 696	2.79	27.33	493 710 021 052	550 546 951 846	44 816 152 703	10.72	166 072 236 055	179 695 880 621	16 071 216 007
AMERICA	(40 896 192 655)	0.82	(4 186 830 811)	0.77	8.70	209 407 962 016	189 124 673 845	14 263 691 463	12.31	191 787 805 435	230 020 866 500	18 450 522 274
ASIA	(370 990 357 525)	0.64	(18 478 983 761)	0.76	35.20	640 846 712 719	645 770 887 582	57 724 222 512	50.83	976 615 331 575	1 016 761 245 107	76 203 206 273
EUROPE	(18 938 601 617)	0.96	(1 168 835 534)	0.97	21.80	553 476 302 378	503 614 924 848	35 751 960 685	24.63	452 994 124 653	522 553 526 465	36 920 796 219
OCEANIA	542 573 815	1.03	138 360 249	1.07	1.32	15 894 901 226	22 206 364 129	2 160 759 455	1.35	23 843 357 457	21 663 790 314	2 022 399 206
OTHER UNCLASSIFIED	109 591 830 912	14.37	8 133 051 837	35.11	5.11	87 912 165 690	117 787 942 075	8 371 510 009	0.16	9 194 611 785	8 196 111 163	238 458 172
SHIP/AIRCRAFT	10 877 744 229	-	883 297 840	-	0.54	11 306 257 644	10 877 744 229	883 297 840				
Total	61 038 068 384	1.03	14 064 996 516	1.09	100.00	2 012 554 322 725	2 039 929 488 554	163 971 594 667	100.00	1 820 507 466 960	1 978 891 420 170	149 906 598 151

Temporary Imports	January 2023	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023
Gold Imports ⁴⁾	9 693 056 442	8 587 553 552	11 670 735 407	10 030 505 291	10 906 615 120	12 284 053 946	10 425 339 173	12 326 767 333	12 623 793 235	10 841 239 699	15 231 009 548	14 064 244 455

Notes:

1) Other Unclassified: Military equipment, unknown countries, ships & aircraft stores & films

2) Special Provisions: Automotive Production and Development Programme (APDP)

3) Current month data is preliminary and all other data is revised

4) Temporary gold imports are not included in imports or export numbers for the trade balance calculation

5) The ratio is the value of total exports divided by the value of total imports

SA Trade Release Table (Excluding BELN)

Harmonised Sections		Cumulative Trade		Monthly Trade		Exports				Imports			
Roman Section	Description	Trade Balance (R'm)	Ratio ⁵⁾ (Exports/Imports)	Trade Balance (R'm)	Ratio Exports/Imports	Month % of total	Cumulative 2022 ³⁾ (R'm)	Cumulative 2023 ³⁾ (R'm)	Month Total 2023 (R'm)	Month % of total	Cumulative 2022 ³⁾ (R'm)	Cumulative 2023 ³⁾ (R'm)	Month Total 2023 (R'm)
I, Ch 1-5	Animals/Animal Products	(271 937 490)	0.98	(175 989 630)	0.89	0.92	14 488 125 349	16 302 316 038	1 360 458 835	1.06	16 236 255 843	16 574 253 528	1 536 448 465
II, Ch 6-14	Vegetable Products	82 495 677 751	3.08	4 294 468 259	2.86	4.44	104 954 356 227	122 114 926 351	6 605 270 166	1.59	32 289 366 979	39 619 248 600	2 310 801 907
III, Ch 15	Fats and Oils	(9 379 610 123)	0.34	(865 637 687)	0.23	0.18	5 743 220 039	4 789 553 355	261 371 883	0.78	19 361 071 068	14 169 163 478	1 127 009 570
IV, Ch 16-24	Prepared Foods	12 668 600 663	1.28	2 665 440 346	1.76	4.16	48 232 528 390	58 484 715 346	6 176 217 290	2.42	38 733 138 359	45 816 114 683	3 510 776 944
V, Ch 25-27	Mineral Products	75 877 744 957	1.18	5 269 306 463	1.15	27.80	531 669 158 985	495 612 631 085	41 313 752 932	24.87	416 419 938 561	419 734 886 128	36 044 446 469
VI, Ch 28-38	Chemical Products	(82 807 368 132)	0.55	(7 626 917 508)	0.51	5.33	110 017 736 677	101 252 345 330	7 915 519 687	10.72	198 121 922 959	184 059 713 462	15 542 437 195
VII, Ch 39-40	Plastics and Rubber	(45 443 668 586)	0.37	(3 913 654 863)	0.35	1.42	27 858 490 261	27 024 046 216	2 113 008 286	4.16	74 797 889 251	72 467 714 802	6 026 663 149
VIII, Ch 41-43	Hides, Skins and Leather	(1 159 820 761)	0.76	(150 999 168)	0.66	0.20	3 591 238 138	3 710 726 303	296 539 178	0.31	4 494 749 873	4 870 547 064	447 538 346
IX, Ch 44-46	Wood and articles thereof	3 234 064 082	1.75	83 262 514	1.24	0.29	7 667 194 270	7 551 079 185	434 261 757	0.24	4 696 633 460	4 317 015 103	350 999 243
X, Ch 47-49	Pulp and Paper Products	(26 936 719 703)	0.53	(2 308 066 357)	0.56	1.99	25 289 558 117	29 875 001 086	2 953 251 988	3.63	56 178 962 785	56 811 720 789	5 261 318 345
XI, Ch 50-63	Textiles and Clothing	(36 659 844 937)	0.28	(2 528 524 429)	0.35	0.92	12 014 817 451	14 105 986 486	1 363 424 199	2.69	51 757 972 676	50 765 831 423	3 891 948 628
XII, Ch 64-67	Footwear and Accessories	(16 079 854 902)	0.10	(1 182 043 597)	0.14	0.13	1 512 365 151	1 712 630 111	196 093 975	0.95	18 833 395 961	17 792 485 013	1 378 137 572
XIII, Ch 68-70	Stone, Plaster, etc	(11 694 014 080)	0.33	(779 444 096)	0.33	0.26	5 145 483 692	5 688 389 363	380 073 970	0.80	17 062 673 338	17 382 403 443	1 159 518 066
XIV, Ch 71	Precious Stones	355 240 525 586	30.41	26 826 537 378	43.05	18.48	428 075 668 778	367 321 170 870	27 464 495 317	0.44	12 624 450 557	12 080 645 284	637 957 939
XV, Ch 72-83	Base Metals	117 653 737 994	2.23	10 782 195 470	2.67	11.60	191 616 526 552	213 025 541 868	17 238 814 227	4.46	96 151 563 122	95 371 803 874	6 456 618 757
XVI, Ch 84-85	Machinery and Appliances	(334 271 619 841)	0.27	(22 828 442 052)	0.30	6.67	114 530 024 754	125 029 153 198	9 911 953 487	22.59	369 644 262 581	459 300 773 039	32 740 395 539
XVII, Ch 86-89	Transport Equipment	57 407 151 253	1.33	7 348 752 998	1.61	13.12	177 768 335 073	228 911 966 031	19 491 947 736	8.38	148 379 921 213	171 504 814 778	12 143 194 738
XVIII, Ch 90-92	Precision Products, etc	(35 566 984 071)	0.21	(2 835 002 237)	0.24	0.60	8 425 982 493	9 252 330 563	898 729 099	2.58	39 289 288 864	44 819 314 634	3 733 731 336
XX, Ch 94-96	Misc Manufactured Articles	(17 209 222 962)	0.26	(1 444 800 638)	0.26	0.34	5 275 565 387	6 082 696 203	507 145 428	1.35	22 664 151 217	23 291 919 165	1 951 946 066
XXI, Ch 97	Works of Art/Antiques	1 181 820 522	2.20	259 196 547	8.06	0.20	1 216 060 391	2 168 669 263	295 905 424	0.03	653 313 384	986 848 741	36 708 877
XXII, Ch 99	Other Unclassified ¹⁾	3 834 944 501	3.29	1 311 769 580	11.76	0.96	5 738 892 885	5 512 482 862	1 433 629 143	0.08	1 677 479 170	1 677 538 361	121 859 563
XXIII, Ch 98	Special Provisions ²⁾	(161 173 623 710)	0.00	(8 512 204 166)	-	-	9 070 493	2 850 276		5.87	120 469 984 776	161 176 473 986	8 512 204 166
Total	Total SA Rand	(69 060 021 989)	0.96	3 689 203 127	1.03	100.00	1 830 840 399 553	1 845 531 207 389	148 611 864 007	100.00	1 760 538 385 997	1 914 591 229 378	144 922 660 880

World Zones	Cumulative Trade		Monthly Trade		Exports				Imports			
	Trade Balance (R'm)	Ratio ⁵⁾ (Exports/Imports)	Trade Balance (R'm)	Ratio Exports/Imports	Month % of total	Cumulative 2022 ³⁾ (R'm)	Cumulative 2023 ³⁾ (R'm)	Month Total 2023 (R'm)	Month % of total	Cumulative 2022 ³⁾ (R'm)	Cumulative 2023 ³⁾ (R'm)	Month Total 2023 (R'm)
AFRICA	240 752 980 852	3.09	18 369 143 307	2.66	19.82	311 996 097 880	356 148 670 681	29 456 422 043	7.65	106 103 155 092	115 395 689 829	11 087 278 736
AMERICA	(40 896 192 655)	0.82	(4 186 830 811)	0.77	9.60	209 407 962 016	189 124 673 845	14 263 691 463	12.73	191 787 805 435	230 020 866 500	18 450 522 274
ASIA	(370 990 357 525)	0.64	(18 478 983 761)	0.76	38.84	640 846 712 719	645 770 887 582	57 724 222 512	52.58	976 615 331 575	1 016 761 245 107	76 203 206 273
EUROPE	(18 938 601 617)	0.96	(1 168 835 534)	0.97	24.06	553 476 302 378	503 614 924 848	35 751 960 685	25.48	452 994 124 653	522 553 526 465	36 920 796 219
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OTHER UNCLASSIFIED	109 591 830 912	14.37	8 133 051 837	35.11	5.63	87 912 165 690	117 787 942 075	8 371 510 009	0.16	9 194 611 785	8 196 111 163	238 458 172
SHIP/AIRCRAFT	10 877 744 229	-	883 297 840	-	0.59	11 306 257 644	10 877 744 229	883 297 840				
Total	(69 060 021 989)	0.96	3 689 203 127	1.03	100.00	1 830 840 399 553	1 845 531 207 389	148 611 864 007	100.00	1 760 538 385 997	1 914 591 229 378	144 922 660 880

Temporary Imports	January 2023	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023
Gold Imports ⁴⁾	9 693 056 442	8 587 553 552	11 670 735 407	10 030 505 291	10 906 615 120	12 284 053 946	10 425 339 173	12 326 767 333	12 623 793 235	10 841 239 699	15 231 009 548	14 064 244 455

Notes:

1) Other Unclassified: Military equipment, unknown countries, ships & aircraft stores & films

2) Special Provisions: Automotive Production and Development Programme (APDP)

3) Current month data is preliminary and all other data is revised

4) Temporary gold imports are not included in imports or export numbers for the trade balance calculation

5) The ratio is the value of total exports divided by the value of total imports

Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia (Only)

South Africa's trade with the BELN countries for December 2023 show a preliminary trade balance surplus of R10.4 billion.

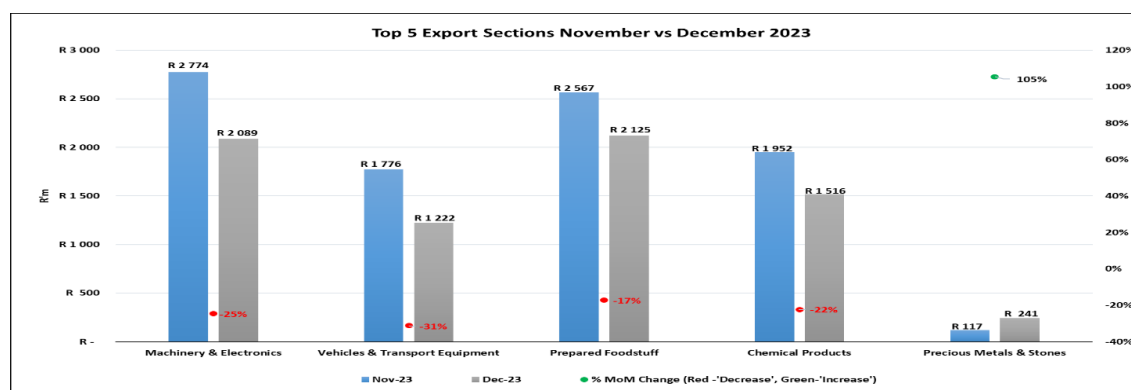
Summary

The R10.4 billion preliminary trade balance surplus for December 2023 was as a result of exports of R15.4 billion and imports of R5.0 billion. Exports decreased by R3.8 billion (-19.7%) between November and December 2023 and imports decreased by R1.2 billion (-19.5%) over the same period.

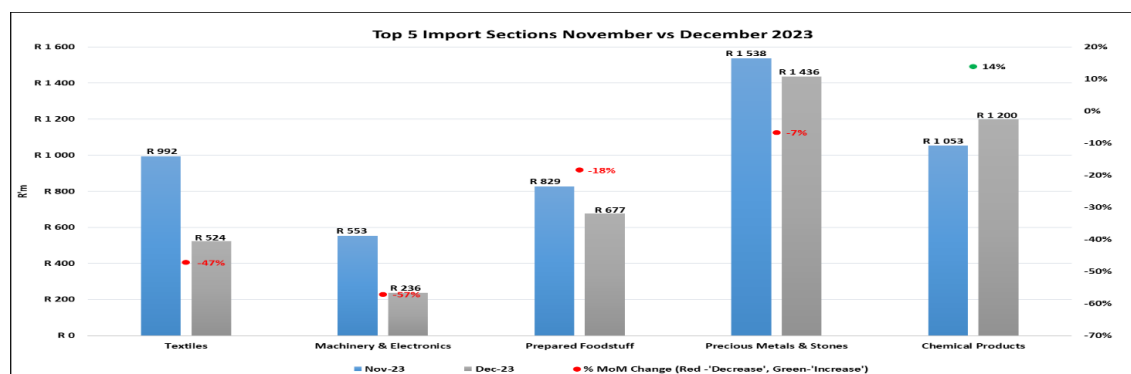
The preliminary cumulative trade balance for 2023 was a surplus of R130.1 billion, compared to R121.7 billion in 2022.

Trade Highlights by Category

The main month-on-month export movements:



The main month-on-month import movements:



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ENDS.

For any enquiries, please send your queries to SARSMedia@sars.gov.za or TradeStatistics@sars.gov.za