

Ipsos poll measures public satisfaction with government performance in key policy areas

Issued by [Ipsos](#)

14 Feb 2013

The government has not significantly impressed the public in terms of their performance in *any* of the policy areas, according to the latest poll by market and opinion research company, Ipsos. "There has actually been a deterioration in public perception of how well the government is doing since this time last year," states Mari Harris, Director of Public Affairs at Ipsos South Africa. This time last year, 14 out of the 25 policy areas were rated below 50%. This year this has increased to 17 policy areas which the public rate as below the "pass mark". "There are definite improvements in the evaluation of some of the areas but overall, the picture is one of dissatisfaction with most of the key policy areas," states Harris.

This is the most important finding from the Ipsos "Pulse of the People" poll of 3,446 adult South Africans conducted from 26 October to 7 December 2012. In the poll, randomly chosen respondents were asked whether they thought the government was performing very well, fairly well, not really well or not at all well in 25 policy areas. These findings (summarised below) should be seen against the background that 52% of South Africans of voting age indicated in the same poll that they thought the national government was performing very well or fairly well.

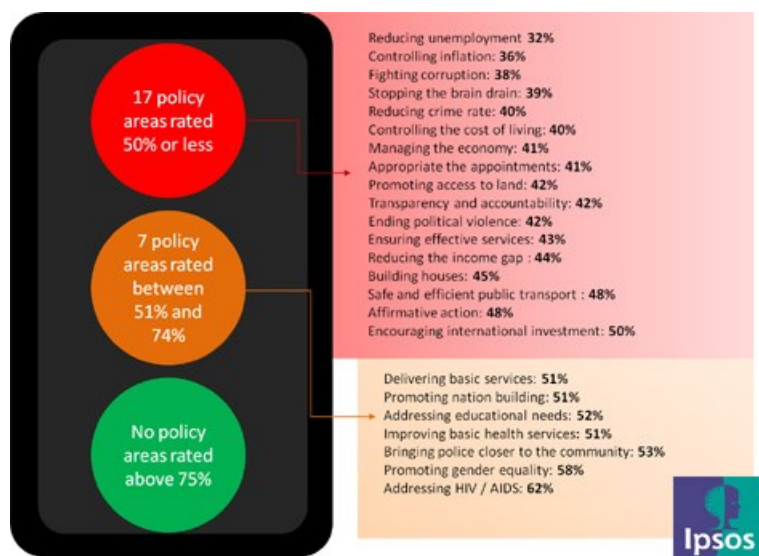
Another important indicator of the mood in the country is the question on whether the country is moving in the "right" or the "wrong" direction. In November 2011, less than half (45%) of South Africans said that the country was moving in the right direction. However, at the end of 2012 this dropped further and only about four in every ten (38%) said that the country was moving in the right direction. A larger proportion (43%) said it was moving in the wrong direction (up from 33% in November 2011). The rest (19%) was uncertain.

Thus, South Africans, at the start of a new year, would like to receive clear direction regarding the way in which the government will address these issues, build credibility, consolidate and deliver on the plans that exist and help to create some hope for the future.

Rated lowest was the issue of unemployment and finding ways in which to reduce the perpetual problem of unemployment. Only a third (32%) of South Africans believes that the government is doing a good job in this regard. Inflation is also a cause for concern and the government has been rated badly in its effort to control it (36%). Other areas that fall way below "acceptable" are efforts in fighting corruption (38%), stopping the brain drain (39%) and controlling the cost of living (40%).

The issue of maintaining transparency and accountability in government is also rated as rather unsuccessful. "This has perhaps been exacerbated by the very public criticism against the proposed secrecy bill" comments Harris.

The areas that have been rated as comparatively good - albeit far from excellent - are those regarding the promotion of gender equality (58%) and addressing HIV and AIDS (62%).



1. 44% agreed or strongly agreed that "I have faith that the ANC will live up to their election promises".

2. The results of these evaluations of policy areas are presented in the form of a traffic light: red light areas (50% and below) needing immediate attention; orange light areas (between 51% and 74%) needing urgent attention and green light areas (75% and above) to be maintained.

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Most improved

Although rated lowest, the bottom performer's i.t.o. key policy areas have improved the most compared year on year. Most improved includes reducing unemployment and keeping skilled people here. On the flipside, those with the greatest drop in ratings include ending political violence, bringing the police force closer to the community, addressing educational needs, promoting gender quality and efforts to address HIV and AIDS.

Key Policy Areas	Nov 2011	Nov 2012	
Reducing unemployment by creating jobs	23%	32%	↑
Controlling inflation	34%	36%	
Keeping skilled people here	34%	39%	↑
Controlling the cost of living	38%	40%	
Appointing the right people to lead government departments and agencies	39%	41%	
Maintaining transparency and accountability	41%	42%	
Fighting and corruption in government	41%	38%	↓
Promoting access to land	-	42%	
Transparency and Accountability		42%	
Narrowing the income gap	42%	44%	
Ensuring effective services by government departments	43%	43%	
Reducing the crime rate	43%	40%	↓
Managing the economy	45%	41%	↓
Promoting the economy	45%	-	
Building houses	44%	45%	
Implementing affirmative action in the civil service	49%	48%	
Ending political violence	51%	42%	↓
Delivering basic services such as water and electricity	51%	51%	
Encouraging international investment	53%	50%	↓
Improving basic health services	54%	51%	↓
Uniting all South Africans	56%	51%	↓
Bringing the police force closer to the community	61%	53%	↓
Addressing the educational needs of all South Africans	61%	52%	↓
Promoting equality between men and women	66%	58%	↓
Distributing welfare payments	71%		
Addressing the problem of HIV and AIDS	72%	62%	↓

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Technical aspects

- Fieldwork was carried out from 26 October - 7 December 2012 by trained and experienced fieldworkers
- Face-to-face in-home interviews were conducted with a randomly chosen sample of South Africans, 15 years and older, in the language chosen by the respondent.
- Results of South Africans of voting age (i.e. 18+) were filtered out - this press release is based on the views of possible voters
- The results were weighted and projected to the universe.
- The margin of error of the study is 1,67%

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