Shrinking confidence amongst South Africans that the government is doing its job well

Issued by Ipsos

11 Feb 2016

Only about half of adult South Africans (48%) are of the opinion that the National Government is doing its job well. This is ***down 8 percentage points from May 2009***, when President Zuma took office.

Over the same period the proportion of adult South Africans who were saying that the country was "going in the right direction" shrunk marginally:

	May 2009 %	May 2014 %	November 2015 %
"The National Government is doing its job very well / fairly well"	56	54	48
The country is going in the right direction	43	41	40

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These results are drawn from the Ipsos Pulse of the People study conducted by Ipsos.

"The Pulse of the People survey looks critically at the attitudes of South Africans towards significant policy areas," states Mari Harris, Director of Public Affairs at Ipsos South Africa.

"With Parliament opening on Thursday and the State of the Nation Address, it is worth having a look at how South Africans view Government's performance in various areas."

The results include views of performance in the areas of governance and administration, the economy and social issues.

Governance and administration

% saying the Government is handling the issue very well or fairly well	May 2009 %	May 2014 %	November 2015 %
Uniting all South Africans into one nation	54	54	48
Promoting access to land	53	49	42
Reducing the crime rate	31	40	36
Fighting corruption in government	30	39	35

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Governance and administration consists of four policy areas that have all been marked as "red light zones" (scoring below 50%) and this signals an urgent need for attention from government.

"In the case of nation-building (uniting all South Africans into one nation) and access to land the success rate dropped over time and registered below 50% in November 2015," comments Harris.

The other two elements, namely the crime rate and government corruption have always been rated below 50%. These ratings improved in May 2014, but currently the proportion of those who said that the government handled these issues very

or fairly well had declined again.

The economy

% saying the Government is handling the issue very well or fairly well	May 2009 %	May 2014 %	November 2015 %
Managing the economy	39	44	40
Controlling the cost of living	30	44	38
Controlling inflation	31	41	37
Reducing unemployment by creating jobs	25	38	36

Referencing the economy, it is clear that South Africans have been profoundly affected by difficult economic circumstances in the country and the government's handling of these issues.

"However, it is also important to note that the government had always rated low in their handling of economic issues – all economic issues are firmly in the red light zone," states Harris. In May 2009 South Africa was suffering from the effects of the major worldwide downturn in the economy which started in 2008 and it is clear that there had not been much easing of the economic pressures since then, in fact, a very low growth rate of only 0.7% is predicted for 2016."

Social issues

It is clear that the government fares best in their handling of social issues and some of the issues fall in the "orange light zone" – i.e. needing attention, but not a burning issue. However, marked decreases in scores are seen in the latest reading in November 2015.

% saying the Government is handling the issue very well or fairly well	May 2009 %	May 2014 %	November 2015 %
Addressing the problem of HIV and AIDS	61	63	60
Distributing welfare payments to those who are entitled to it	77	62	59
Improving basic health services	59	54	51
Promoting equality between men and women	69	57	51
Addressing the educational needs of all South Africans	64	54	50
Delivering basic services like water and electricity	61	56	48
Building houses	59	52	47
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"How well do you think your local authority/municipality is doing its job?"

Local government elections are coming up later this year and it will be interesting to note if changes in leadership are applied to municipalities. Currently, it is clear that South Africans have a fairly low opinion of their own local authorities:

"How well do you think your local authority / municipality is doing its job?"	%
Very well/fairly well	41
Not very well/Not at all well	53
Don't know	6



Technical detail

A total of 3,617 personal face-to-face interviews were conducted with randomly selected adult South Africans. The interviews were done in the homes and home languages of respondents. Trained quantitative fieldworkers from all population groups were responsible for the interviewing, which took place from 17 September to 19 October 2015. Interviews were done all over the country, from metropolitan areas to deep rural areas. This methodology ensured that the results are representative of the views of the universe and that findings can be weighted and projected to the universe – i.e. South Africans 15 years and older.

Interviews were conducted using CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) and all results were collated and analysed in an aggregate format to protect the identity and confidentiality of respondents.

All sample surveys are subject to a margin of error, determined by sample size, sampling methodology and response rate. The sample error for the sample as a whole at a 95% confidence level is a maximum of 1.63%.

The performance traffic light:

Red light zones: rating below 50%
Orange light zones: rating from 50-74%
Green light zones: rating 75% and above

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