

Ipsos Survey: Performance rating of national government declines

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According to the latest poll by opinion and market research company, Ipsos, just over half of adult South Africans (52%) indicated that, in their view, the national government was performing "well". Four provinces, namely the Western Cape, North West, Mpumalanga and the Free State outperformed the national government when their performances were evaluated.

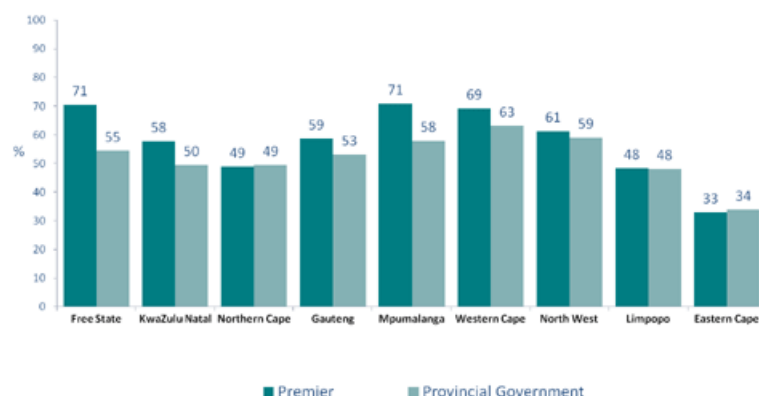
This is an important finding from the Ipsos "Pulse of the People" poll of 3,446 adult South Africans. Fieldwork was conducted between 26 October and 7 December 2012. In the poll, randomly selected respondents were asked how they evaluated the performance of various institutions and officials. The results are representative of the views of South Africans of voting age, i.e. 18 years and older.

Rating of the performance of the national government has dropped significantly since May 2012 when the previous evaluation was undertaken. "In May this stood at 61% which shows a marked decrease in public confidence that our government was doing a decent job in the latter part of the year" comments Mari Harris, public affairs director and political analyst at Ipsos.

Performance of the provincial structures and premiers

In view of regular discussions and news reports of the efficiency of provincial structures as well as opinions expressed about the number of provinces in South Africa, a brief look at the evaluation of the performance of provinces - as based on the first-hand experience of the voters living in each province - is relevant. "In most cases, the performance evaluation of the provincial government is closely tied to the performance rating of the premier" states Harris.

This is the case in most of the provinces with the Free State and Mpumalanga as exceptions, where the premiers have significantly higher ratings than the provincial governments. Premier Ace Magashule of the Free State enjoys a 71% percent vote of approval compared to the 55% of the Free State provincial government. Mpumalanga's provincial government has a 58% approval rate - third highest in the rankings of provinces. However the premier of Mpumalanga - David Mabuza - has achieved a much higher rating (71%) when citizens in Mpumalanga evaluated his performance as premier.



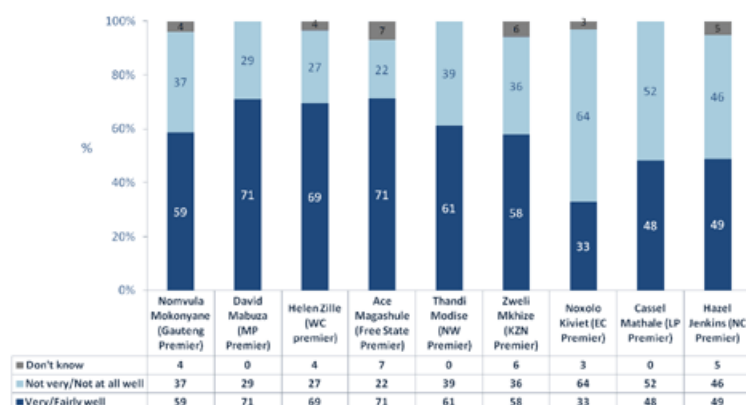
Asked only of respondents living in the applicable provinces

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The Western Cape provincial government boasts the highest ratings of all nine provinces, with 63% of its residents saying that the provincial authority is doing its job well. In addition, Western Cape premier, Helen Zille is also one of the three premiers ranked highest, with almost seven out of every ten voters living in the Western Cape saying that she is doing her job well.

Both Limpopo and the Eastern Cape experienced problems in 2012, with different departments being placed under administration from the national government. It is clear from the ratings of the premiers and the provincial governments that more attention should be focused on these two provinces. Two other provincial governments, the Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal also need to improve their performance as only half of the citizens in these provinces think they are doing their jobs well.

As the performance and efficiency of a provincial government seems to be rely heavily on the leadership and performance of the premiers, it is important to look in more detail at the evaluation of the premiers' performance. The graph below summarises the proportions of voters in each province who thought that the premiers were doing well or were not doing well. It is clear that the three most effective premiers, David Mabuza, Ace Magashule and Helen Zille receive negative feedback from less than three in every ten in their provinces - regardless of the political party supported by these voters.



Asked only of respondents living in the applicable provinces

These were the Premiers of each province at the time of fieldwork

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1. Respondents had to indicate their opinions on a scale of "very well", "fairly well", "not really well" or "not at all well".
2. Gauteng is essentially at the same level as the national government i.t.o. performance.
3. Another press release published today looks specifically at the different performance and policy areas involved.

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