

Zuma's performance evaluation remains fairly steady

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According to the latest poll by opinion and market research company, Ipsos, 60% of South Africans indicated that, in their view, the president was performing "well". This remains virtually unchanged from our last reading (61%) at the end of 2011, but has dropped from two-thirds (66%) in May 2011.

This is the most important finding from the Ipsos "Pulse of the People" poll of 3 565 adult South Africans conducted from 13 April to 18 May 2012 (prior to the latest controversy about the "Spear" painting). In the poll, randomly selected respondents were asked how they evaluated the performance of the president, the deputy president, national and local authorities as well as the leader of the opposition.

More than a third (36%) of eligible voters feel that the president is not performing well in his position. As would be expected, those evaluating Zuma's performance as "well" are more commonly found in his own political party: 73% of ANC supporters thought that he was doing a good job compared to only 38% of DA supporters. In the measure of "favour" amongst South Africans, Zuma was rated 6.06 out of 10 overall. "This score is not about the president's performance in his official role," states Mari Harris, Public Affairs Director at Ipsos. "It is simply a matter of how the public see him as an important political figure in the country.

Almost six in every ten South Africans of voting age (58%) believe that deputy president Kgalema Motlanthe is doing his job well with 29% disagreeing and the remainder (13%) undecided.

The leader of the official opposition - Helen Zille - has been described as doing her job "well" by 42%. Again this differs by party: four of five (80%) DA supporters have faith that she is doing a good job with only about a third (35%) of ANC supporters sharing the sentiment. Zille's "measure of favour" as a political leader currently stands at 4.08 out of 10 which indicates that she is well-liked beyond the boundaries of the DA and those voters that support it.

For the first time since 1994 the national government is perceived to be doing a better job than **any** of the government leaders (although the difference between the evaluation of the national government and the president is not statistically significant): 61% of South Africans are of the impression that the national government is performing well, while a third (34%) disagrees.

Local authorities (municipalities) have again yielded the lowest scores with only 45% perceiving them to be doing a good job, slightly more (51%) of the opinion that they are not doing well. Interestingly, both supporters of the ANC and of the DA agree on this- almost half of each party's supporters (48% of ANC supporters and 49% of DA supporters) say that local authorities are not doing their job well. "Local authorities are much 'closer to home' than the national or provincial governments," states Harris. "It could be expected that their scores would be lower since they affect lives directly. However, these scores leave a lot of room for improvement and highlight again that urgent attention should be given to prioritise delivery on the local level."

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