

# DANCING ON THE SAME SPOT

SURVEY REPORT ON  
**CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS  
AND EXPECTATIONS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# Introduction

This report presents the findings from the second nation-wide survey carried out by SIVIO Institute in November and December 2019, which sought to measure and understand citizens perceptions on governments (local and central) performance and what governments priorities should be. The survey conducted and report produced allows us as SIVIO to also ascertain and gauge citizens perceptions on how government is performing in converting the promises made during the campaign in the run up to the 2018 elections. The survey also sought to understand how government's priorities match citizens' expectations. The interviewed respondents were randomly selected from within and around urban, peri-urban and rural Zimbabwe across the 10 Provinces, targeting a balance between the sexes (i.e. male and female) as well as age groups above 18 years. A total of 2 665 respondents were interviewed for this survey.

The report has three main sections; the first part provides a broad overview of what is taking place at the national level in terms of government's initiatives, the second part discusses the findings from the field in a more detailed manner and the final part provides a conclusion and suggestions on what could be done to resolve the growing chasm between what government does and what citizens expect it to do.

Unfortunately, there is no good news coming out of Zimbabwe at the moment. The newspaper headlines are mostly focused on; allegations of corruption in high offices, rumours of squabbles amongst political leaders in the two major parties, collapse of social service delivery and a sense of despair. The bromance between citizens and the 'new' leadership in the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) seems to have quickly died down and, in its place, we have returned to high levels of mistrust and a gridlock on how to proceed.

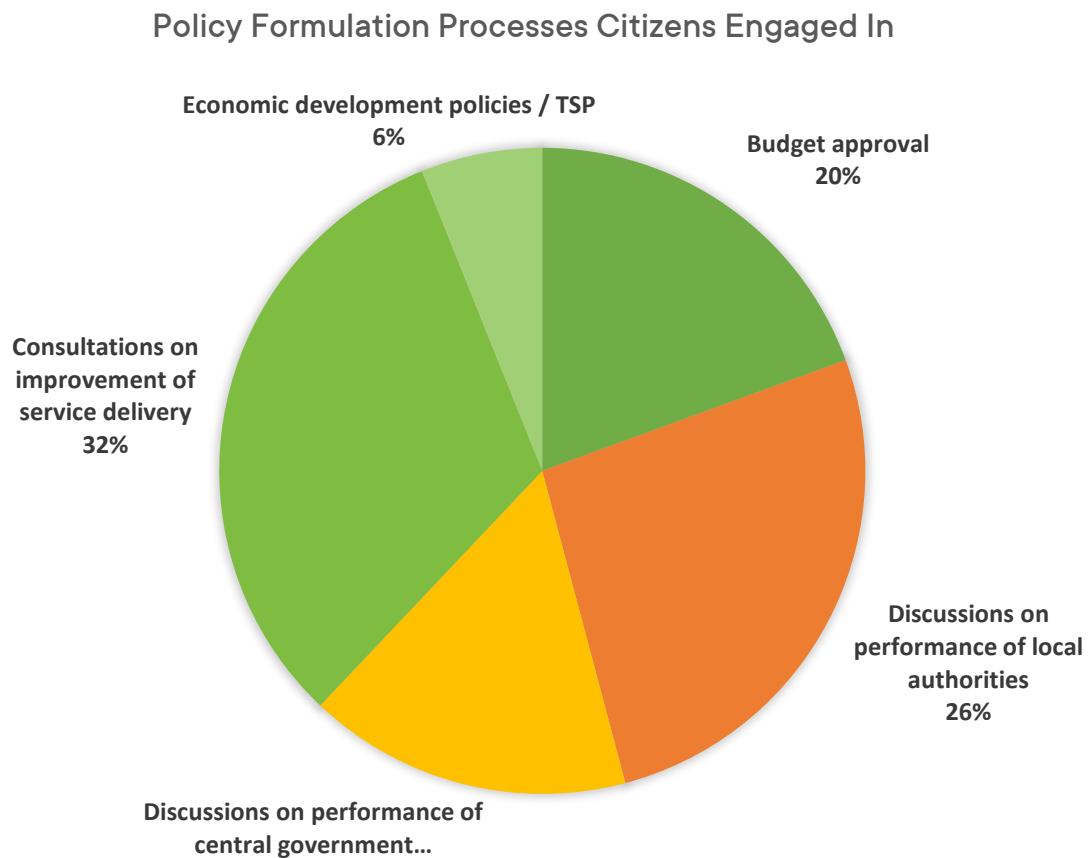
## Key Findings from the Survey

The key findings from the 2019 survey discussed in the report are:

### 1. Lack of citizen participation in public processes:

There have been limited opportunities and processes to engage citizens on how public problems relating to the socio-economic crisis can be resolved. Engagement and participation of citizens in public processes has mostly been reduced to processes of inviting citizens to discuss an already crafted document such as a budget or a new law. These measures are not necessarily adequate, but they provide scope and an appetite for citizens to

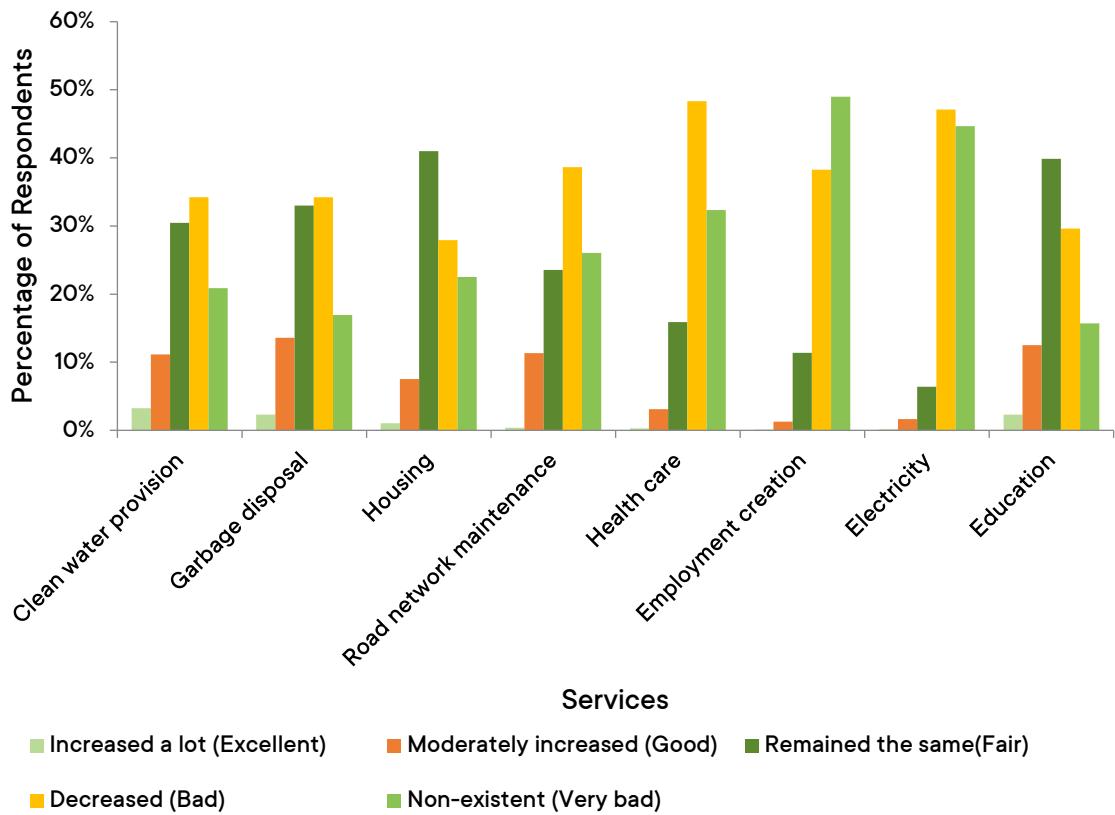
be more involved. The majority (60.18%) of the survey respondents indicated that they have never been involved in policy formulation process, whilst 39.82% confirmed that they have been a part of some consultation process, mostly around the performance of local government and consultations for improved service delivery. Only a fifth (19.43%) of those who have been involved in public policy processes before, have participated in budget consultations whilst only 6% were invited to make an input on the Transitional Stabilisation Programme (TSP).



## 2. Citizens are generally unhappy with Government performance

Across the board the majority of citizens felt that government performance has either worsened or remained the same. At the local government level, respondents rated the performance of their local council around the provision of clean water, garbage disposal, housing, road network maintenance, healthcare, employment creation, electricity, and education. The largest cohort (36.5%) of respondents believe that the quality of service is bad and has declined from the pre-2018 standard. The second largest cohort (28.62%) of respondents stated that the service is very bad and close to non-existent. Slightly over a quarter (25.13%) of the respondents were of the opinion that service delivery at local government has remained the same.

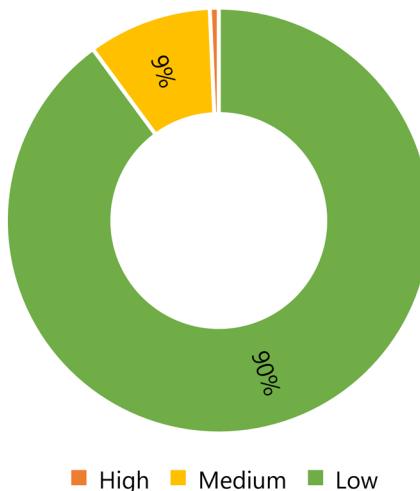
## Citizens' Perceptions Towards Local Council Delivery



The majority of the respondents (on average 89.93%) were disappointed by the quality of local service delivery. Only 10% of the respondents think that either the quality of service has moderately increased or increased a lot.

At the central government level, there is a general sense of disappointment with government performance amongst respondents. Ninety per cent (90%) of respondents felt that government performance was low (poor). In our previous survey carried a few months after the 2018 elections, 65% of respondents had ranked government's performance as low. The number of citizens who rated government performance as poor has gone up from 65% (in 2018) to 90% in December 2019. This increase suggests growing dissatisfaction with government performance. It is important to reiterate that the 'austerity for prosperity' policy coupled with drought induced food shortages did not endear many to the government.

Overall Performance of Central Government



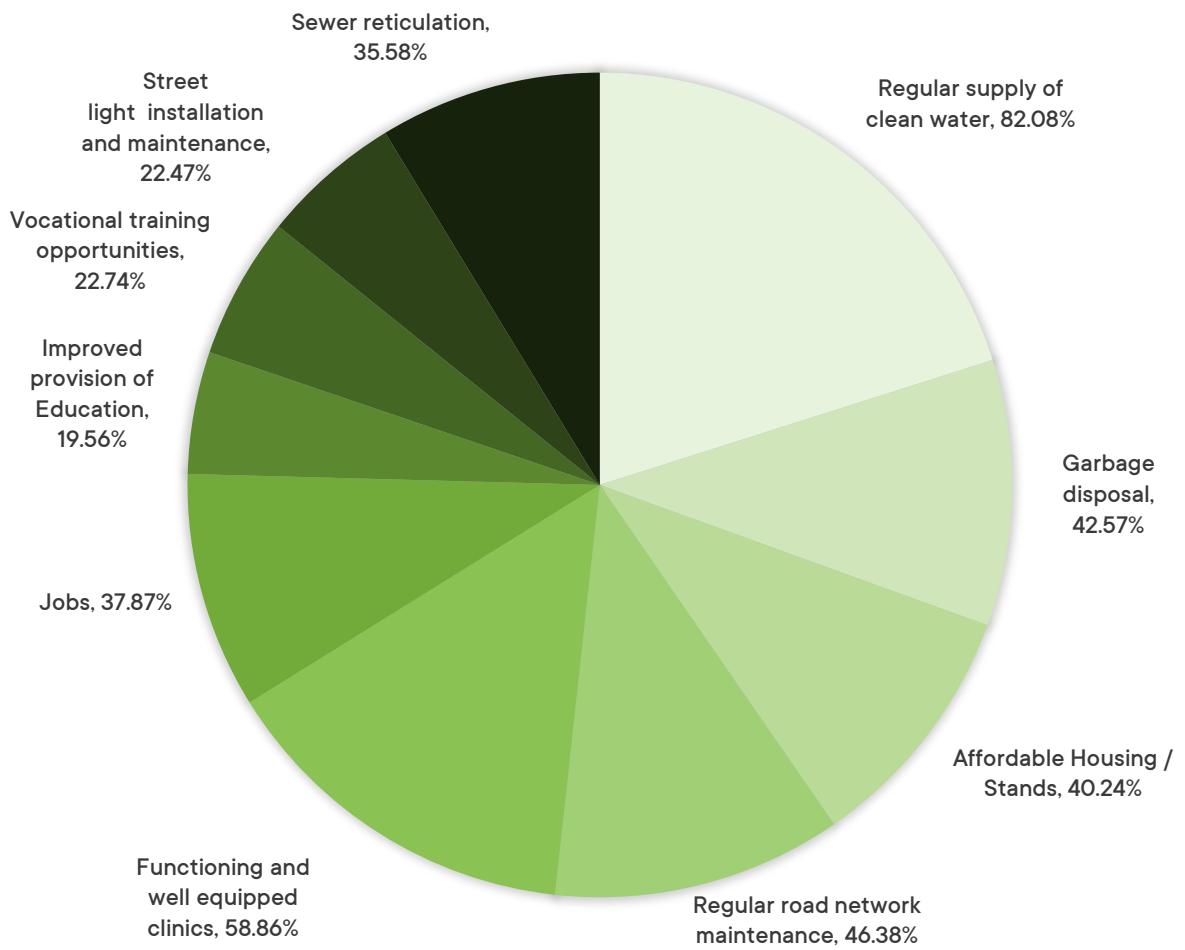
### 3. Corruption is inhibiting government performance

At both local and central government levels the majority of citizens feel that the major factor that is inhibiting government's effectiveness is corruption. In this instance the citizens agree with the head of state. On many occasions the President has also complained about the scourge of corruption and how it affects not only government but the moral fibre of society. But sadly, very little has been done to contain corruption. The findings also suggest that government's rhetoric against corruption has not yet yielded significant results. After corruption citizens cited ineffective leadership/incompetence by office holders as the next biggest cause behind government's ineffectiveness.

### 4. What do citizens feel that government should prioritize?

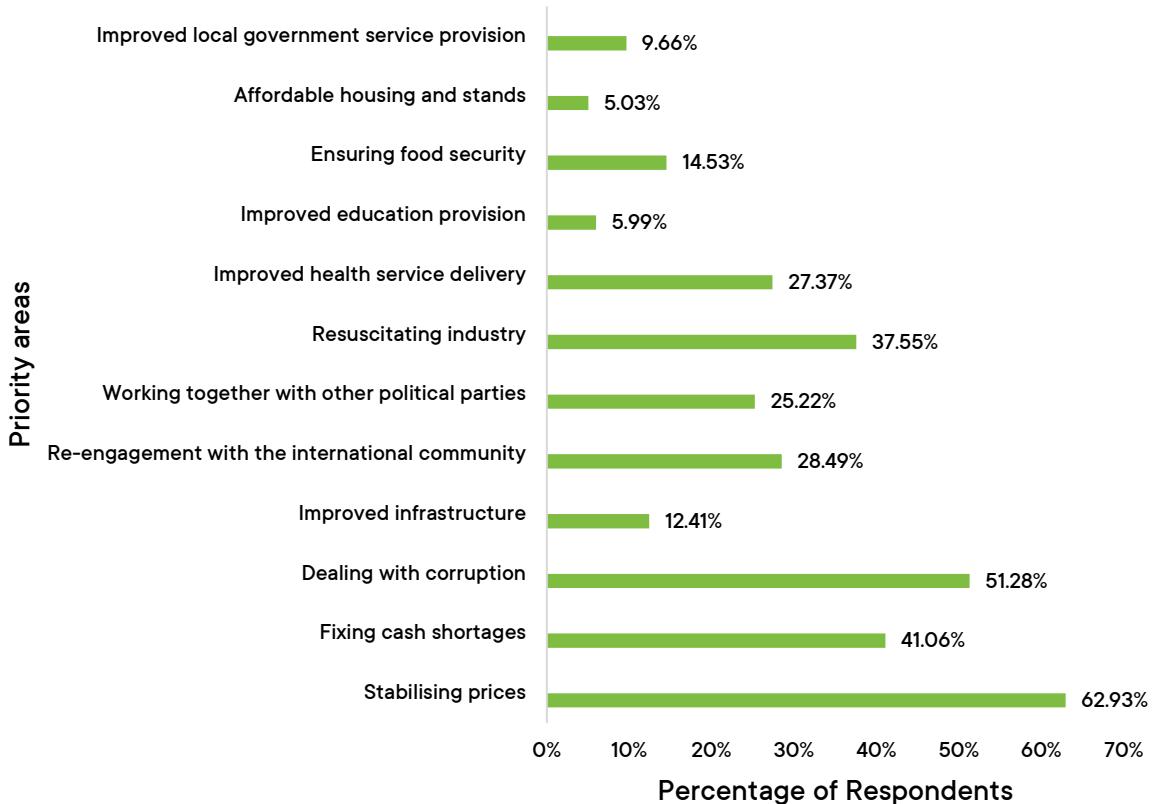
At the local government level, citizens feel that the biggest priority should be ensuring regular supply of water. The majority (82.08%) of respondents identified the need for regular supply of water as a priority followed by 58.86% of respondents who raised the need for councils to ensure that clinics are fully functional and well-equipped. This is similar to the 2018 survey, where the largest cohort also raised the need for the regular supply of clean water as a top priority.

## CITIZENS' SERVICE DELIVERY PRIORITIES



The majority of citizens in the survey feel that the top priority for central government should be coming up with measures to stabilise prices. The majority (62.93%) of the respondents identified this as a top priority. At the time of data collection inflation was in the region of +500% and in many instances' salaries had not increased in line with the inflationary pressures. The second largest (51.28%) cohort think that government should focus on dealing with corruption and the third priority should be on fixing cash shortages.

## Citizens' Suggestions On Government Priorities For The Next Six Months



The findings from the survey suggest a general sense of despondency and disappointment with both local authorities and central government. There is no single area that one can identify as possible cases of best practice. In the meantime, the socio-economic conditions have worsened across the country exacerbated by the poor rains which negatively affected agriculture. Government's measures have unfortunately proved to be insufficient to address the needs and concerns of citizens. For more in-depth discussion and to read our [full report here](#).

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## About SIVIO Institute

SIVIO Institute (SI) is an independent organisation focused on ensuring that citizens are at the centre of processes of economic-political-economic and policy change. It aims to contribute towards Zimbabwe's inclusive socio-economic transformation. It is borne out of a desire to enhance agency as a stimulus/catalyst for inclusive political and socio-economic transformation. SIVIO's work entails multi-disciplinary, cutting-edge policy research, nurturing citizens' agency to be part of the change that they want to see, working with communities to mobilize their assets to resolve some of the immediate problems they face.

SIVIO Institute has three centres/programs of work focused on; (i) public policy analysis and advocacy (ii) philanthropy and communities (ii) entrepreneurship and financial inclusion. In the process SI addresses the following problems:

- Inadequate performance of existing political and economic system
- Increasing poverty and inequality
- Limited coherence of policies across sectors
- Ineffectual participation in public processes by non-state actors
- Increased dependence on external resources and limited leveraging of local resources

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