

Rhetoric and Reality

An Analysis of the
Government's Performance

Sep 2023 – Aug 2024



Introduction and Context

Zimbabwe has faced a prolonged multifaceted crisis affecting the political, social and economic sectors leading to high levels of unemployment, emigration and failed social services. The government has implemented several strategies - TSP (2018-2020) and NDS1 (2021-2025) – to address the crisis and achieve the vision of being a middle-income country by 2030.

It is important to recognise that this crisis will not be solved by a silver bullet, or through the efforts of a single sector but will require a multistakeholder approach to development. Every citizen will have to take responsibility for their contribution (or lack thereof) towards achieving this vision.

This report focuses on the efforts that the government is taking to foster an ecosystem of inclusive development in Zimbabwe. SIVIO Institute has been tracking the central government since 2017 to understand where they are focusing their energy and resources.

Since the new presidential term (starting from the 4th of September 2023), we have been tracking these actions vis-à-vis citizens' expectations.

The period under review is shaped by the previous 2 decades which includes structural adjustment, emergency response to Cyclone Idai, COVID-19 and the ongoing effects of the El-Nino-induced drought.

The government has also been operating under austere economic instruments to limit its international funding. The government has often blamed sanctions for their economic failings, but this isolation has also granted the government policy autonomy.



Methodology

- ZIMCITIZENSWATCH is the platform that tracks the actions that the central government has taken since 2017. These actions are gathered from digital news sources, press briefings, and official statements.
- To give the actual score in the report, the actions are scored out of eight based on six indicators, including new strategies, legal frameworks, budget implications, ministry oversight, collaboration, and implementation. The actions are then classified using a Red, Amber, and Green (RAG) analysis to determine progress. Red indicates no progress, Amber indicates efforts need enhancement, and Green indicates successful completion.
- The government performance is evaluated across 21 priorities clustered into four thematic clusters: Economy, Governance, Social Services, and Rural Development. Each cluster's progress is an average of the actions recorded in that cluster.

Colour	Description	Score
Red	Red indicates that no progress or effort has been made towards addressing this sub-sector. This is still an area of concern.	0-33%
Amber	Amber indicates that the efforts being implemented must be enhanced and strengthened to address the concern.	34-66%
Green	Green indicates that the policy actions are working to address and mitigate the issues that citizens highlighted, and progress is heading in the right direction.	67-100%

Government Overall Performance

	# Priorities	# Promises	# Actions	Actual Score
Economy	9	95	45	56%
Governance	4	33	32	40%
Social Services	5	71	34	40%
Rural Development	3	29	14	35%
Total	21	228	125	46%

The report evaluates government performance through the thematic clusters of the ZIMCITIZENESWATCH platform. The performance of the government is around 228 policy promises (commitments) made in the NDS1.

Read the full report: [DOI: 10.59186/SI.5F6F649N](https://doi.org/10.59186/SI.5F6F649N)

Government Actions since September 2023

Economy

1

To address the economic sector the government has undertaken 45 actions to address the 9 priority areas. Some of the key actions taken are:

1. Establish Mutapa Investment Fund (**Sep 2023**)
2. Launch new road development program (**Jan 2024**)
3. Launch digital licensing system (**Feb 2024**)
4. Introduce ZiG (**Apr 2024**)
5. ZINARA clears debt with DBSA (**Jun 2024**)



Governance

2

Under governance, the government executed 32 actions to address the 4 priority areas. Some of the key actions include:

1. Consultations to introduce corruption studies to curricula (**Dec 2023**)
2. Zimbabwe & Angola sign 11 cooperative agreements (**May 2023**)
3. Appoint 11 high court judges (**Jun 2024**)
4. More than 160 people have been arrested since mid-June (**Aug 2024**)



Social Services

3

To enhance and improve social service provision, the government has commenced 34 actions. Some of the key actions are:

1. MRMI acquired for public hospitals (**Oct 2024**)
2. CALA replaced with school-based projects (**Feb 2024**)
3. State of Disaster declared over El-Nino-induced drought (**Apr 2024**)
4. Civil servant housing completed in Lupane (**Jun 2024**)



Rural Development

4

The rural development sector focuses on agriculture and improving rural infrastructure. There were no actions regarding land reform. Some key actions include:

1. Set aside US\$600 million for 2023/24 farming season (**Sep 2023**)
2. ZINWA drills 77 boreholes (**Jan 2024**)
3. Govt pays \$3.3 million for grain deliveries (**Jun 2024**)
4. Govt distributes 62 000 tonnes of grain (**Jul 2024**)



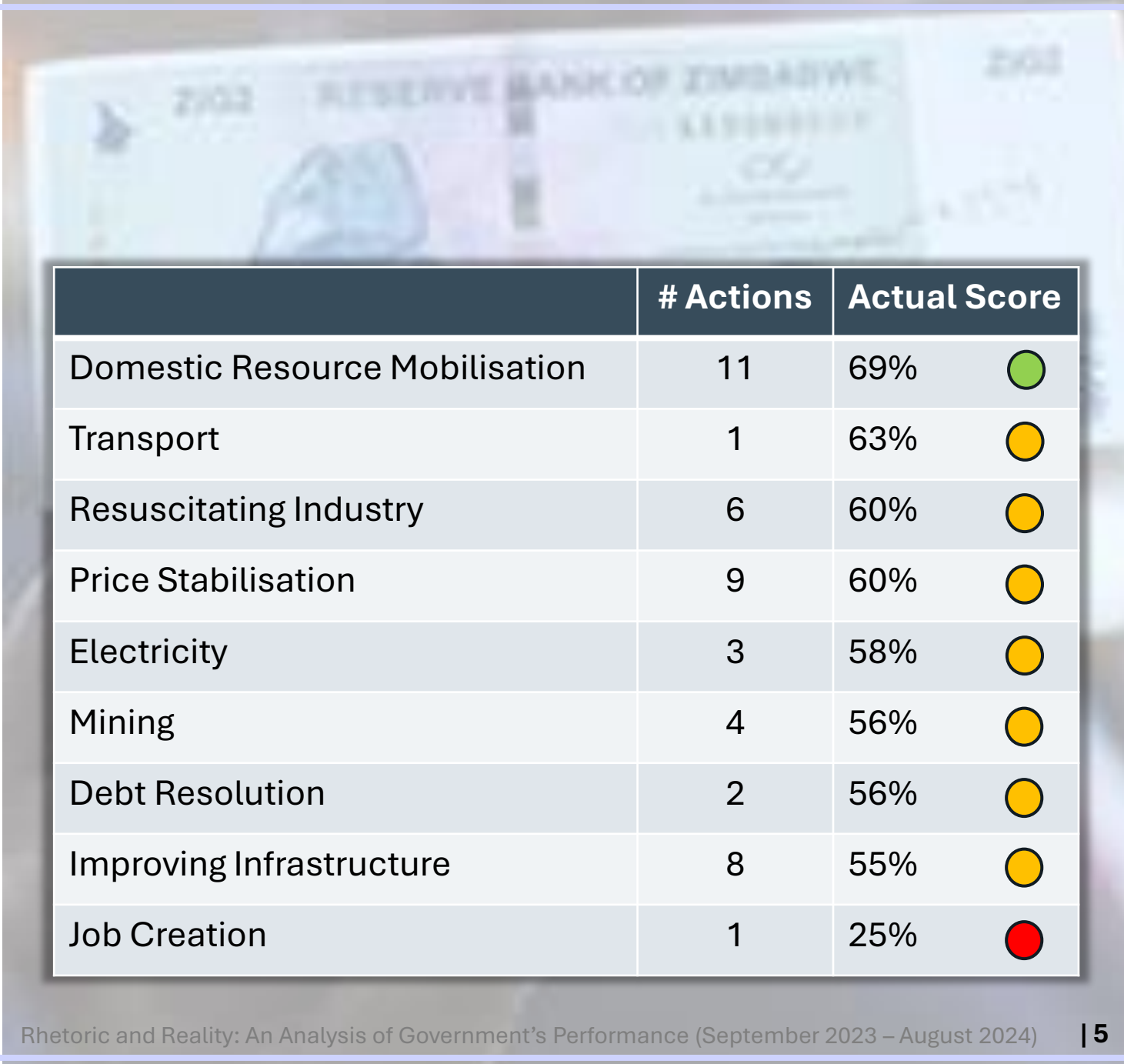
Economy

To date, the government mostly focused on domestic resource mobilisation, price stabilisation and improving infrastructure.

One of the most significant actions was the introduction of the Zimbabwe Gold (commonly known as ZiG) as the new legal tender to address hyperinflation and stabilise prices.

Key points:

- Zimbabwe’s GDP has grown from US\$17.58 billion in 2017 to US\$26.54 billion by the end of 2023. The economy is expected to grow by 3.2% in 2024.
- The economy relies heavily on trade (wholesale and retail), agriculture, and mining. The economy remains heavily dependent on imports, with a significant portion of the import bill dedicated to consumer goods.
- Formal sector employment has increased from 24.4% in 2019 to 28.6% in 2024. However, a significant portion of the workforce remains in the informal sector, with high youth unemployment rates.
- The establishment of the Mutapa Investment Fund currently holds vested shares for 30 companies
- Significant investments have been made in infrastructure, particularly in road rehabilitation and construction. However, the energy sector continues to face challenges due to old equipment and low water levels at the Kariba Dam.



	# Actions	Actual Score	
Domestic Resource Mobilisation	11	69%	●
Transport	1	63%	●
Resuscitating Industry	6	60%	●
Price Stabilisation	9	60%	●
Electricity	3	58%	●
Mining	4	56%	●
Debt Resolution	2	56%	●
Improving Infrastructure	8	55%	●
Job Creation	1	25%	●

Governance

Efforts have been made to improve transparency, but challenges remain, especially in procurement processes. The Auditor General’s reports for 2023 highlight numerous issues. Allegations of corruption continue to tarnish the government’s reputation, with significant losses due to illicit financial flows and corrupt practices within government contracts. It is estimated that at least US\$1.8 billion is lost annually due to corruption.

The government has struggled to ensure justice for all, with the police arresting several political actors (including Jameson Timba – leader of the opposition party) since mid-June.

	# Actions	Actual Score	
Transparency & Accountability	14	57%	●
International Re-engagement	4	56%	●
Corruption	5	45%	●
Justice for all	9	0%	●

Social Services

There is an uneven provision of social services in Zimbabwe with disparity in the access and quality of education and health services. A lot of the attention for the government has been to respond to the food security crisis due to the El-Nino-induced drought which severely affected the 2023/24 farming season. This includes securing grain imports and distributing resources to affected communities.

Some of the key points:

- There has been a decline in the quality of health services, with many Zimbabweans seeking treatment in neighbouring countries. The shortage of essential drugs and medical equipment, along with poor remuneration for healthcare professionals, has worsened the situation.
- The education sector faces challenges such as high levels of teacher absenteeism, skills migration, and a shortage of textbooks. The quality of public education has not improved significantly.
- The government has since 2022 missed the targets for education, health and agriculture (food security). They allocated 18% to health (20% target), 11% to health (15% target) and 7% to agriculture (10% target)
- There is a weak supply of affordable housing, with an increasing number of families on housing waiting lists and living in informal settlements.




	# Actions	Actual Score	
Education	10	55%	●
Response to Disasters	13	52%	●
Health	6	48%	●
Housing	5	48%	●
Pensions	0	0%	●


Rural Development

The Government's commitments under Rural Development through the NDS1 include upscaling climate-smart agricultural practices, rural land delivery for rural housing, enhancing community water supply through the drilling of boreholes and the development of innovation hubs to aid rural industrialisation. The climate-smart practices are focused on the Pfumvudza/ Intwasa initiative.

Key Points:

- There have been efforts to support rural farmers through various agricultural programs, including the provision of inputs and training. However, challenges such as climate change, limited access to markets, and inadequate infrastructure persist.
- By October 2023, farmers had prepared 4.3 million Pfumvudza/ Intwasa plots.
- The government still owes wheat farmers about \$20 million for 2023 deliveries.
- Crop production has improved since 2017. The most dramatic has been the growth in the production of soya beans (200%), wheat (1438%) and sorghum (295%).
- The Gunguhwe Bridge was commissioned in the Gokwe North District.
- There have not been significant land tenure-focused reforms to create a property market which can attract funding

	# Actions	Actual Score
Improving Rural Infrastructure	3	58% 
Agriculture	11	47% 
Land & Agrarian Reform	0	0% 

A photograph of a construction site at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the foreground, the silhouettes of several construction workers are visible, standing on a complex network of scaffolding and steel beams. A large crane is positioned on the left side of the frame, its long jib extending towards the top left. In the upper right, a large, dark object is being lowered by a crane, suspended by several thick cables. The overall scene conveys a sense of active construction and industrial activity.

Where is Zimbabwe Headed?

What then shall we make of the
government's performance?



A Good Story to Tell

The Infrastructure Revolution

Before 2017 grand infrastructure projects were very few. The Second Republic has spent a lot of resources on constructing dams and rehabilitating the road network in Zimbabwe. So far, they have completed 4 dams and are working on an additional 8. The roads in Harare have benefitted greatly from the government's interventions. Beyond roads, there is another good story and that is the increase of land under irrigation. This is one of the strategies recommended by the AU to adapt to climate change and through private and public sector contributions, the land under irrigation has increased significantly.

Grand Rhetoric

“Zimbabwe is Open for Business”

Zimbabwe’s ‘open for business’ mantra is an effort to attract FDI. As is the use of Statutory Instruments and temporary measures to alter economic policy.

In the year under review alone,

- the government changed the local currency,
- introduced measures that bar manufacturers from trading with so-called ‘informal traders’ and
- changed the portion of foreign currency that exporters can retain.

It may be that the government, through ZIDA, has resolved the speed with which one can register a business but policy-related inconsistencies and constraints remain. The bureaucratic red tape remains intact and that has been Zimbabwe’s challenge in almost every sector



Grand Rhetoric

On Mega Infrastructure Projects

State-owned media is often confident that Zimbabwe is on its way to achieving middle-income status by 2030. Mega-infrastructure projects are often hailed as indicators of progress.

The government often boasts about 7,000 projects but this includes projects that have just been launched and not yet implemented.

The number of projects is often broken down into smaller projects. For example, each road is treated as a separate project rather than one project focused on road rehabilitation.



A Shrinking Space

- The report notes that there is a growing intolerance of dissent in Zimbabwe, leading to widespread fear among citizens regarding protests or demonstrations against the government.
- The wheels of justice move slowly with several political actors still awaiting trial for arrests made in June.
- The potential amendment to the Private Voluntary Organisation's bill has led to many civil society organisations self-censoring in fear of being de-registered.
- The government of Zimbabwe has probably missed out on the relationship between civil liberties and being 'open for business'. Civil society organisations are a huge contributor to a thriving economy through the creation of jobs, use of facilities and payment of taxes.

How about the multifaceted crises?

- Unfortunately, various dimensions of the crisis have mutated into new problems. Some of the crises include:
 - Food insecurity
 - Lack of international capital to revitalize the private sector
 - The debt issue remains
 - Not enough formal sector jobs
 - Professionals continue to emigrate
 - Constrained social services
 - No national compact to deal with rampant corruption



Recommendations

Effective resolution of Zimbabwe's crises requires:

- **Multi-Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaborative efforts between government, private sector and civil society
- **Policy Consistency:** Stable and transparent economic policies to attract investments
- **Enhanced Social Services:** Increased and effective budget allocations for health, education and rural development
- **Governance Reforms:** Stronger anti-corruption measures and respect for the rule of law

Read the full report

The full report with all the findings is found on the SIVIO Institute website (www.sivioinstitute.org/insights)

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ZIMCITIZENSWATCH is part of a larger ecosystem tracking the performance of governments in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Our main question in all this is “Do political parties take their commitments to voters seriously?”

African Citizens Watch

an independent platform that tracks the performance and effectiveness of African governments based on the pledges made in the manifesto and other important policy pronouncements.



Malawi
MCP
2019-24



Zambia
UPND
2021-26



Zimbabwe
ZANU-PF
2023-28

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