



# 2025 Citizen Pulse: Views, Priorities, and Expectations of the Government in Zimbabwe



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## INTRODUCTION

The Citizens' Perceptions and Expectations (CPE) survey is designed to capture how Zimbabweans view the performance of government and what they expect from those leading them. It focuses on citizens' perspectives on service delivery, economic management, accountability, and participation, using a representative sample drawn from the country's 10 provinces. The findings from the 2025 survey aim to provide evidence that can inform public debate, guide policy dialogue, and support efforts by government and civic actors to strengthen governance in ways that reflect citizens' real priorities and concerns.

Citizens are an integral part of governance and should be at the centre of how public decisions are made, implemented, and reviewed. In 2025, Zimbabwe continued to face complex social and economic challenges and understanding how people experience government actions in their daily lives is essential for building responsive institutions.

## CONTEXT

Zimbabwe continues to grapple with socio-economic challenges despite headline growth driven largely by agriculture and mining. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant prices grew by 10% year-on-year in the third quarter of 2025, up from 2% in the same quarter of 2024 (Zimstat, 2025). However, this growth has not translated into widespread improvements in living standards. Poverty remains high, with the World Bank estimating that 9.9 million Zimbabweans were living below the international poverty line of US\$4.20 per day in 2025 (World Bank, 2025). The informal sector dominates, accounting for about 64% of GDP and the majority of business establishments.

The introduction of the Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) currency in 2023 brought some stability. Inflation, which peaked at 557% in 2020, fell sharply in recent years. Finance in Africa reported that, by January 2026, annual inflation had dropped to 4.1%, down from 15% in December 2025, the lowest rate since 1997 and celebrated by the government as a milestone in restoring macroeconomic stability (Orjiude-Ndibe, 2026).

At the same time, climate-related shocks, such as the 2024 El Niño-induced drought, constrained agricultural and hydropower output, limiting growth and disproportionately affecting rural households. Infrastructure gaps and limited formal job creation continue to compound the challenges faced by citizens.

## Overview of Highly Visible Government Initiatives

Considering the challenges mentioned above, the government pursued a wide-ranging programme of public investment, with a strong emphasis on infrastructure and key sectors of the economy. Road rehabilitation and the completion of the Trabablas Interchange in May 2025 aimed to ease congestion, improve safety, and support the movement of goods and people. To strengthen institutional and technical capacity, the Government, through the Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (RIDA), secured a US\$75 million loan facility with a private partner to acquire equipment, including 66 motorised graders, 34 dozers, 34 excavators, and 135 tipper trucks, among other machinery. As part of implementing this arrangement, the government made an initial deposit of US\$16 million in 2024 (Government of Zimbabwe, 2025).

In August 2025, the Cabinet approved the National Youth Empowerment [Strategy 2026–2030](#), presenting it as a key policy tool to tackle youth unemployment and marginalisation. Framed within the broader economic reform agenda, the strategy aims to create a more enabling environment for young people to participate in the formal economy. It places particular emphasis on targeted support for jobs and entrepreneurship, while also serving as an implementation instrument for the National Development Strategy 2 ([NDS2](#)) by mainstreaming youth issues into national development priorities.

In December 2025, the government procured and installed Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) equipment at public health facilities. This investment was presented as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen diagnostic capacity and reduce the need for costly referrals or treatment outside the country.

In the energy sector, the launch of the Zimbabwe Renewable Energy Fund (ZREF) at the end of 2024 signalled official recognition of the need to diversify the energy mix, support off-grid solutions, and attract private capital into solar and other renewable technologies.

At the local government level, new public–private partnerships also emerged, such as the agreement with Geo Pomona for waste management. However, many of these initiatives continue to face questions around transparency, affordability, and their tangible impact on citizens’ daily lives.

Previous editions of the CPE survey have highlighted a clear gap between what the government tends to prioritise and what citizens themselves view as most urgent. This mismatch often deepens frustration and erodes trust, as citizens expect those in leadership to focus on initiatives and policies that reflect their everyday needs and lived realities. In this context, citizens do not only judge government by the volume of activity, but by how closely that activity aligns with their own priorities.

The findings section will revisit these questions by comparing the 2025 results with earlier CPE surveys. It will explore whether there has been any shift in the alignment between government actions and citizen priorities since the 2024 CPE, and whether expectations have changed or remained consistent over time. The analysis will also look at how citizens view the country’s direction going forward, whether they feel more hopeful, more anxious, or unchanged as the nation moves ahead, and what they believe the government should focus on next.



## METHODOLOGY

The 2025 CPE Survey is the sixth one conducted in Zimbabwe, following the baseline conducted in 2018 and subsequent rounds in [2018](#), [2019](#), [2021](#), [2023](#), and [2024](#). To ensure comparability across years, the study has consistently applied the same methodological framework. A randomised sampling approach was used to select 2,006 respondents across Zimbabwe’s 10 provinces, with deliberate attention to maintain gender balance.

Enumerators underwent comprehensive training and were assessed before deployment to confirm their readiness. Once the survey instrument was finalised, fieldwork was conducted in October 2025. Daily monitoring reports enabled real-time adjustments to quotas and procedures, safeguarding data quality throughout the process.

The questionnaire gathered insights on demographic characteristics, livelihoods, civic participation, and perceptions of both local authorities and central government. To protect confidentiality, no personal identifiers were collected. Responses were primarily recorded on digital devices, but in cases of connectivity challenges, paper forms were used and later digitised. Each paper-based entry was reviewed with the survey team before being uploaded, ensuring accuracy and consistency.

Fieldwork was carried out from 30 October to 17 November 2025, after which data cleaning and analysis began. Enumerators collected a total of 2,006 complete responses across all 10 provinces in Zimbabwe, which have been used to generate the results in this report.



## DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

### Gender, Location, Age and Marital Status

We interviewed a total of 2,006 respondents across all 10 of Zimbabwe’s provinces. The distribution is relatively balanced, and no province contributed less than 8% of the total sample. The distribution demonstrates a well-spread national sample with minor variations across provinces, thus not significantly affecting the validity of the findings. Of the 2,006 respondents surveyed, 51% (n=1,020) were women and 49% (n=986) were men.

Table 1: Overview of Respondents

Demographics	Variable	Respondents	
		#	%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2006</b>	<b>100%</b>
Gender	Male	986	49%
	Female	1020	51%
Location	Urban	1063	53%
	Rural/ Peri-urban	943	47%

The survey included responses from citizens across rural, urban, and peri-urban locations. A total of 53%

(n=1,063) of the sample was in urban areas, and 47% (n=943) in rural and peri-urban areas.

When disaggregated by age, respondents aged between 36 and 65 years made up 51% (n=1,014) of the survey population, followed by those aged 18 to 35 years, who made up 44% (n=888). A total of 5% (n=104) of the sample were 66 years and older (see Table 2).

Table 2: Age and Marital Status of Respondents

Demographics	Variable	Respondents	
		#	%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2006</b>	<b>100%</b>
Age	Youth (18-35)	888	44%
	36 – 65	1014	51%
	Over 65 years old	104	5%
Marital Status	Single	580	29%
	Married	1008	50%
	Separated	125	6%
	Divorced	131	7%
	Widowed	162	8%

In terms of marital status, 50% (n=1,008) of the respondents were married, 29% (n= 580) were single, 7% (n=131) were divorced, 6% (n=125) were separated, and 8% (n= 162) were widowed.

## Literacy and Education Levels

There were high literacy rates among the respondents. Most respondents (94%; n=1,876) indicated that they could read and write. The majority of respondents (53%; n=1,070) have attained secondary education, and a significant number of respondents (34%; n=690) had attained tertiary education (see Table 3).

Table 3: Literacy and Education Levels

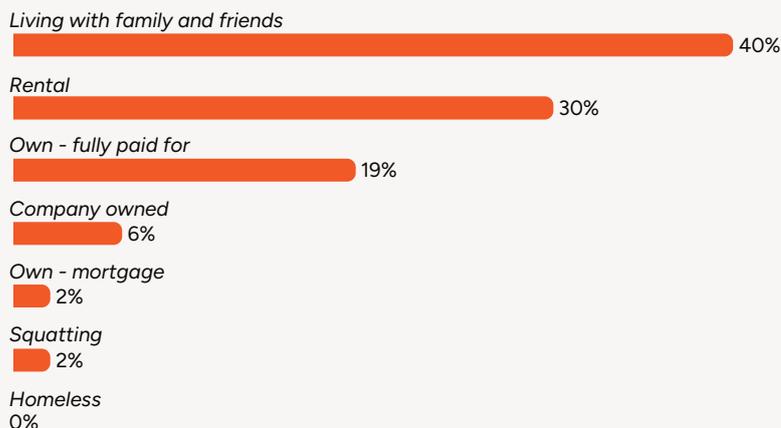
Demographics	Variable	Respondents	
		#	%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2006</b>	<b>100%</b>
Literacy	Can read & write	1876	94%
	Cannot	130	6%
Education	No formal education	104	5%
	Primary school	142	7%
	Secondary school	1070	53%
	Tertiary	690	34%

## Accommodation Arrangements

When asked about their living arrangements, a significant number of respondents (40%; n=797) indicated that they live with friends or family members. The second highest category was respondents who rented homes, who made up 30% (n=604) of the sample. A total of 21% (n=419) of the respondents own their homes either fully (19%; n=388) or through mortgages (2%; n=31). Survey results show that 6% (n=129) of respondents live in company-owned homes, while 2% (n=49) reported squatting. None of the respondents indicated being homeless.

Most respondents (33%; n=664) indicated that they lived in a full house, while 26% (n=512) indicated that they lived in a room(s) within a house, and 16% (n=311) were living in a rural homestead (see Figure 2).

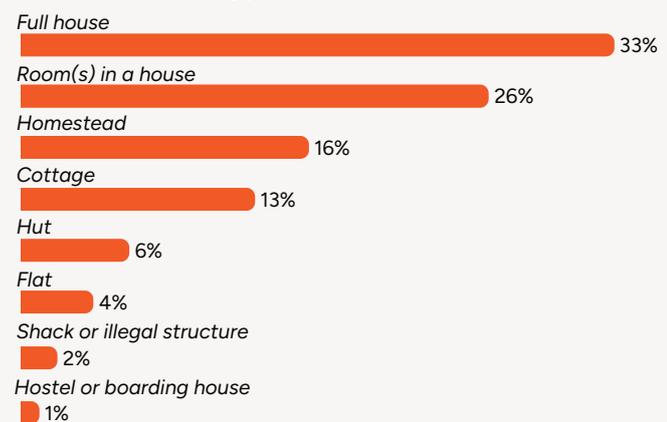
### Accommodation Arrangement



What best describes your accommodation arrangement?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 1: Accommodation Arrangements

### Accommodation Type



What best describes your type of accommodation?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 2: Type of Accommodation

## Employment Status

When it came to employment status, 44% (n=883) indicated that they were employed, while 35% (n=700) of the sample reported being unemployed. Meanwhile, 21% (n=423) of the respondents identified as self-employed (see Figure 3).

## Employment Status

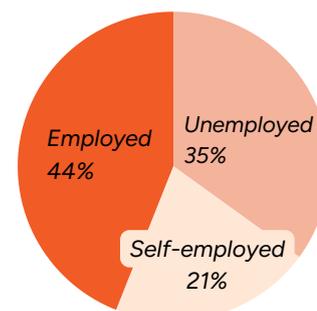


Figure 3: Employment Status of Respondents

Are you employed?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

When the 1,306 respondents who indicated that they were employed or self-employed were asked about their type of employment, 70% (n=915) indicated that they were employed full-time, and 28% (n=369) indicated that they were employed part-time (see Figure 4).

### Type of Employment



What type of employment is your source of income?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

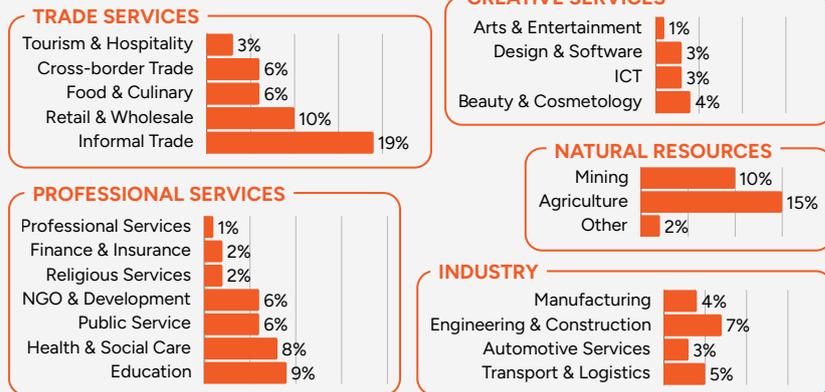
Figure 4: Level of Employment

The top four (4) sectors of employment for respondents who indicated that they were employed were: vending (19%; n=242); agriculture (15%; n= 193), mining and quarrying (10%; n=135), and retail and wholesale (10%; n=126) and education (9%; n=116).

Other notable sectors of employment included health and social services, 8% (n=106), NGOs/ Embassies/INGOs, 6% (n=77), civil service, 6% (n=82), and cross-border trading, 6% (n=75). Sectors such as technology, transport and logistics, catering, and manufacturing each contributed between 2% and 6% (see Figure 5).

The average monthly income over the last three (3) months for those who were employed was between US\$201 – 500 for 27% (n=534) of respondents. This was followed by US\$51–200 for 15% (n=309) of respondents, while 14% (n=280) indicated that their income was between US\$501 – 1,000. Very few respondents (3%; n=56) earned above US\$1,000 over the last three (3) months. A significant proportion of respondents, 38% (n=758), reported that they did not have a monthly income over the last three (3) months (see Figure 6).

### Employment Sector



Which sector do you work in?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 5: Sectors of Employment

### Monthly Income



Which bracket can you place your monthly income? (USD1:ZiG30)  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 6: Monthly Income of Respondents



## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

### Citizens and Community Engagement

#### *Citizens and Associational Life*

The survey explored the associational life of citizens, recognising its importance in shaping civic agency and the collective strength of communities in responding to shared challenges. A significant proportion of respondents (49%; n=984) reported belonging to a religious association. At the same time, 25% (n=500) of respondents indicated that they are not part of any association (See Figure 7).

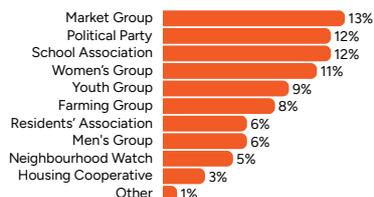
#### Associational Life

**25%** Of respondents do not belong to any association

#### Top Associations Represented

- 1** **49%** Of respondents belong to a **religious association**
- 2** **15%** Of respondents belong to a **burial association**
- 3** **15%** Of respondents belong to a **savings or lending club**

#### Other Associations



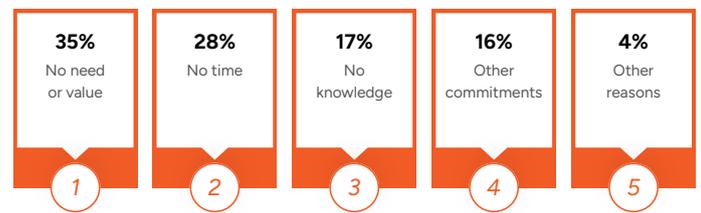
Which of these associations are you a part of?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 7: Associational Life of Respondents

#### *Reasons for Not Belonging to an Association*

The survey further explored reasons why some respondents indicated that they did not belong to any association. A third (35%; n=175) of respondents indicated that they did not see the need to belong to any association. Meanwhile, 28% (n=140) highlighted time constraints as the biggest barrier to participation, while 17% (n=83) reported not being aware of any associations. Another 16% (n=81) indicated that they have other commitments (see Figure 8).

#### Reasons for not Belonging to an Association



Why are you not part of any of the previous groups?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 8: Reasons for not Belonging to any Association

### Positions Held in Associations

For most respondents who indicated that they belonged to an association, it was in the capacity of being a member (53%; n=803). While 13% (n=203) do not hold positions, 8% (n=122) indicated they were workers, 7% (n=109) were middle management, 5% (n= 72) were beneficiaries, 4% (n=55) were volunteers, 4% (n=59) were in executive leadership, and 1% (n=17) were founders (see Table 4).

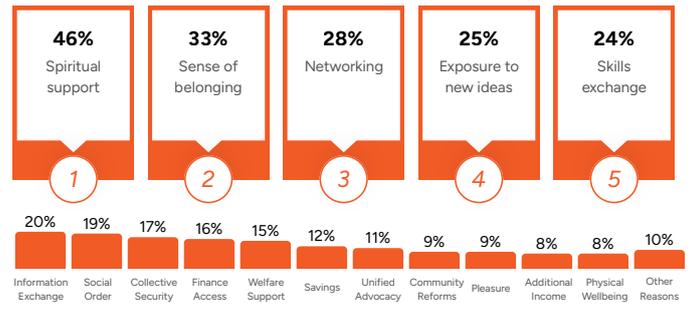
Table 4: Positions held in the associations

Variable	Respondents	
	#	%
Member	803	53%
No position held	203	13%
Worker/ Employee	122	8%
Middle management	109	7%
Beneficiary	72	5%
Senior management	66	4%
Executive leadership	59	4%
Volunteer	55	4%
Founder	17	1%

### Benefits of Belonging to an Association

Respondents who indicated that they were part of an association were further asked about the benefits they receive. Almost half (46%) (n=696) reported that they benefited through spiritual support, which corresponds with the fact that most respondents (49%; n=984) are part of religious groups. A total of 33% (n=500) highlighted a sense of belonging, suggesting that beyond spiritual needs, citizens value associations as spaces of inclusion and solidarity where they feel connected to others. Another 28% (n=422) pointed to networking opportunities, underscoring the practical dimension of associational life in which citizens leverage group membership to build relationships, exchange information, and access opportunities. Respondents also mentioned improved access to financing 16% (n=239), organising or receiving welfare support 15% (n=226), improved voice in engaging with office holders 11% (n= 162), and entertainment 9% (n=143).

### Reasons for Belonging to an Association



What are the benefits of being part of the group?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

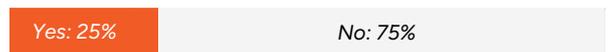
Figure 9: Benefits of Belonging to an Association

### Levels of Participation in Public Processes

#### Citizens' Participation in Policy Formulation

When asked whether they had ever participated in any policy formulation process, most respondents (75%; n=1,498) reported that they had never been involved. Only 25% (n=508) indicated participation in processes such as budget approvals, discussions on the performance of local authorities, and consultations on service delivery, among others (see Figure 10).

#### Participation on the Policy Formulation Process



Have you ever been a part of the policy formulation process?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

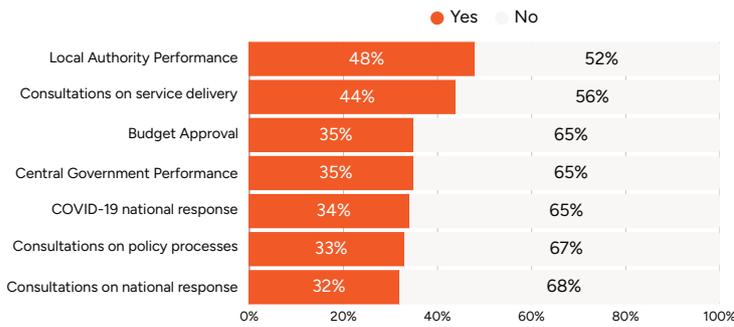
Figure 10: Participation in Policy Formulation Processes

#### Scope for Citizen Participation in Public Processes

Respondents were also asked if there was adequate room for them to make input on any of the following: budget approvals, consultations on national policy processes, consultations on service delivery, consultations on COVID-19 national response, discussions on performance of Central Government and discussions on performance of Local Authorities.

Most respondents (65%; n=1,304) believe that they have not had enough room to participate in budget reviews, while only 35% (n=702) believe there is space and room to participate. The survey findings suggest that citizens feel that there is reasonable scope for them to make input on the performance of local authorities, with 48% (n=967) believing that there is adequate scope (see Figure 11).

### Level of Expected Participation in Public Processes



Do you think there is adequate scope/room for you to make an input?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 11: Level of Citizens' Participation in Public Processes

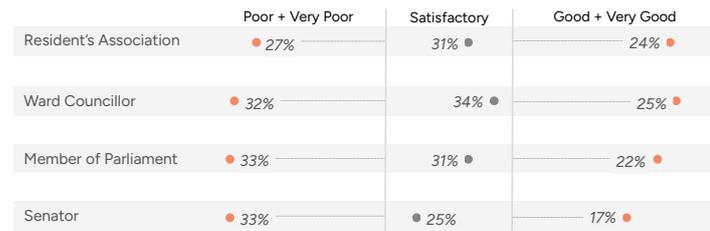
Most citizens felt that there was no room for participation in various public processes, particularly at the national level. Most respondents, 65% (n=1,279), feel that there is no room for citizens to input towards discussions around the performance of the central government. In the case of consultations on national policy processes, only 33% (n=655) of respondents felt that there was adequate scope to participate.

When it came to the scope to participate in public processes at the local level, the number of those who felt that there was adequate scope was slightly better, with 44% (n=888) of respondents feeling that there is room for participation in consultations around service delivery.

### Level of Satisfaction with Performance of Elected Officials

One objective of the CPE survey is to understand citizens' perceptions and expectations of their elected representatives at different levels of government, starting with the local to the national. Survey findings show that most citizens considered their officials' performance between satisfactory and very poor. Across the different levels, 34% (n=683) of respondents felt that their ward councillor's performance was satisfactory, followed by residents' associations (34%; n=656). Only 25% (n=506) of respondents felt that the performance of their senator was satisfactory. It was also important to note that 25% (n=506) of respondents indicated they did not know their senator. This could be related to the fact that senators are not elected directly by citizens but rather through proportional representation (see Figure 12).

### Rate the Performance of Elected Officials



Rate the performance of your representatives since the elections in September 2023  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 12: Levels of Satisfaction with Elected Officials



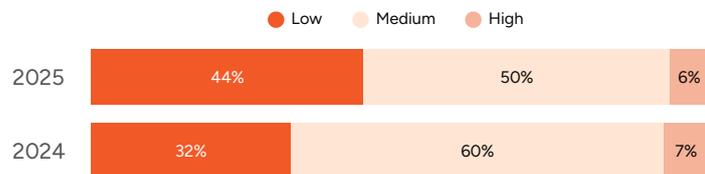
## CITIZENS' ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Another objective of the CPE survey is to understand citizens' perceptions and expectations of their local government, which consists of their ward councillors and their city/rural councils. We asked citizens about their perception of the performance of their local authorities since 2023.

### Overall Local Authority Performance Since 2023

Most respondents gave their local authority a medium score, with only a small minority seeing impressive performance. More than half (60%) of citizens (n = 1,210) rated local government performance as medium, 7% (n = 145) as high, and 32% (n = 651) as low. When we compare with the 2024 CPE, the share of medium ratings rose from 50% to 60%, while low ratings fell from 44% to 32%, suggesting a shift from dissatisfaction to more neutral views rather than growing strong approval (See Figure 13).

### Rate the Performance of Local Authorities



How would you rank overall local council performance since 2023  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 13: Performance of Local Government

When the data was further disaggregated and analysed across locations (rural, urban and peri-urban), the trends in terms of citizens' assessment of local authority performance remained the same, with a medium rating dominating across peri-urban with 58% (n=233), rural 60% (n=323) and urban 62% (n=654) (see Figure 14).

### Rate the Performance of Local Authorities



How would you rank overall local council performance since 2023  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 14: Local Authority Performance by Location

## Performance of Local Authorities on Key Issues

Citizens were asked to rate the performance of their local authority across 11 areas, including healthcare, road maintenance, and water provision. The overall trend indicates that service delivery by local authorities has largely remained the same. In education, 53% (n=1,069) of respondents felt that education delivery remained the same. There is a similar pattern across other sectors: 48% (n=954) of respondents felt healthcare quality remained unchanged, a sharp increase from 40% in the 2024 survey; Employment creation was rated at 42% (n=850); food security at 47% (n=948); and clean water and borehole provision at 42% (n=849). Compared to the 2024 survey, where 34% reported that water provision had remained the same, the 2025 figure nearly doubled, reflecting a consistent decline in clean water provision (see Figure 15)

### Local Authority Performance

	Non-existent + Decreased	Remained the Same	Increased + Increased a lot
Clean Water	26%	42%	29%
Road Maintenance	28%	42%	29%
Garbage Disposal	27%	38%	21%
Education	24%	53%	21%
Housing	30%	45%	20%
Healthcare	32%	48%	20%
Food Security	31%	47%	19%
Dip Tank Maintenance	22%	25%	17%
Sewer Reticulation	26%	42%	16%
Employment Creation	43%	42%	13%
Streetlight Maintenance	38%	34%	12%

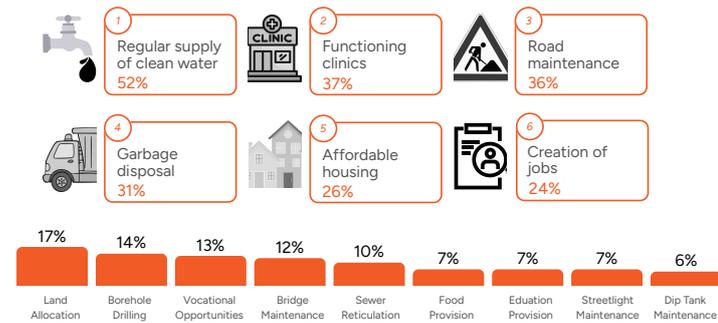
How would you rate overall local council performance since 2023 in the following areas?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 15: Local Authority Performances in Various Areas

## Citizens' Perception of Priority Areas for Local Authorities

The survey also asked citizens to identify the top priorities that local government should focus on. The five (5) areas most frequently mentioned were: (i) 52% (n=1,037) identified regular supply of clean water as a top priority (ii) 37% (n=735) identified functioning and well equipped clinics, (iii) 36% (n=715) regular road network maintenance, (iv) 31% (n= 615) garbage disposal, and (v) 26% (n=523) raised the need for the development of housing stands.

## Citizen Priorities for Local Authorities



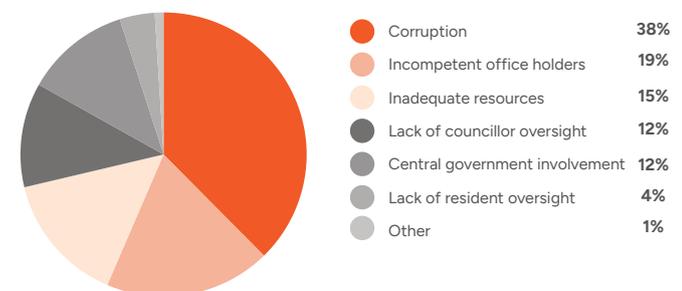
What should be the local council or municipality's top 3 priorities?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 16: Local Government Priority Areas

## Factors Affecting the Effective Operation of Local Authorities

As these scores suggest, citizens are not fully satisfied with the performance of their local government, and when asked what hinders their effective performance, a significant number of respondents (38%; n= 756) identified corruption as the main factor that has led to the poor performance of local authorities. This finding remains consistent with findings in the previous survey of 2024, where 36% (n=497) of respondents listed corruption as the top factor hindering the performance of local authorities. Other factors respondents highlighted as affecting the effective operation of local authorities included incompetence of officeholders, noted by 19% (n=376) of respondents; inadequate resources highlighted by 15% (n=293) of respondents and meddling by the central government, indicated by 12% (n=239) of respondents (see Figure 17).

### Top Factor Affecting Local Authority Effectiveness



What is the top 1 factor that affects the effective operation of local authorities?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 17: Factors Affecting Performance

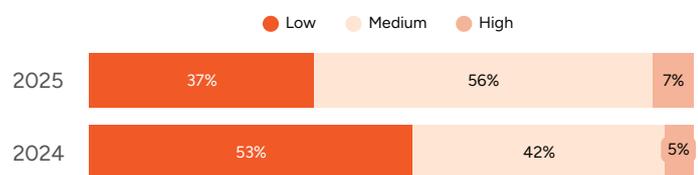


## CITIZENS' ASSESSMENT OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

### Overall Central Government Performance Since 2023

Citizens' assessments of the central government's performance highlight a shift toward more moderate views between 2024 and 2025. In 2025, 56% of respondents (n=1,123) rated performance as medium, 37% (n=146) as low, and 7% (n=137) as high. This marks an improvement from 2024, where low ratings dominated at 53% while medium ratings stood at 42% (with high still at 5%). The 10-point drop in low ratings and corresponding rise in medium assessments suggest growing tolerance or perceived stabilisation two (2) years after the elections, though strong approval remains rare and dissatisfaction persists among over one-third of citizens (see Figure 18).

#### Rate the Performance of the Central Government



How would you rank the overall government performance since the elections?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 18: Performance of the Central Government

### Performance of the Central Government on Key Issues

Findings from the survey show that citizens recognise infrastructure development as the most notable achievement of government efforts, with 26% (n=525) of respondents indicating that they had seen an increase in this area since 2023. This was followed by international re-engagement (19%; n=386), and then resuscitation of industry (17%; n=342). The data also reveals areas of concern for citizens. Several respondents, 31% (n=617), felt that there was a decrease in government efforts to address corruption.

A similar number, 31% (n=612), felt that the government's performance around healthcare delivery had decreased. The results suggest a mixed performance profile, while infrastructure and external relations have gained traction, citizens remain deeply concerned about the government's commitment to addressing corruption and strengthening social services.

### Central Government Performance

	Non-existent + Decreased	Remained the Same	Increased + Increased a lot
Infrastructure	30%	40%	30%
International Relations	33%	46%	22%
Resuscitating Industry	46%	35%	20%
Food Security	32%	51%	17%
Price Stability	30%	53%	17%
Cash Supply	33%	52%	16%
Education Delivery	28%	57%	15%
Dealing with Corruption	49%	38%	13%
Nation Building	38%	49%	13%
Affordable Housing	39%	48%	13%
Human Rights	41%	47%	13%
Healthcare Delivery	41%	48%	12%
Job Creation	48%	41%	11%

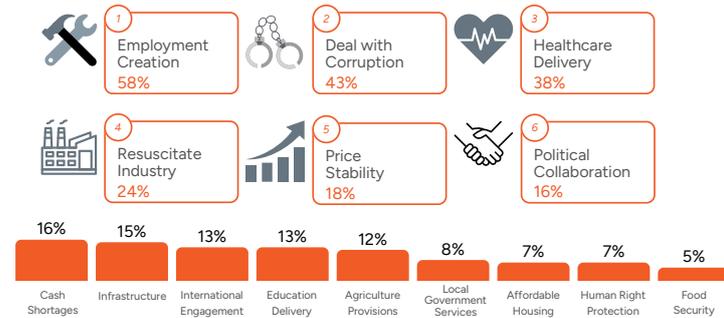
How would you rate overall central government performance in the following areas?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 19: Performance of the Central Government in Key Areas

### Citizens' Perception of Priority Areas for the Central Government

When citizens were asked what they thought should be the central government's top three (3) priorities, creating employment was the dominant priority, with more than half the respondents choosing job creation at 58% (n=1,156), highlighting a deep concern for the levels of unemployment and economic insecurity in the country. The second most sought-after priority was dealing with corruption, with 43% (n=869) indicating low public trust in the institutions and a strong demand for accountability, given that in the 2024 CPE, corruption was not in the top three (3) priorities at 20%. The third most critical issue that was raised for the central government to focus on was improved health service delivery at 38%, reflecting a continued dissatisfaction with health service delivery quality (see Figure 20).

### Citizen Priorities for Central Government



What should the central government's top 3 priorities be?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 20: Citizens' Top Priorities for the Central Government

Over the years, citizens have had various areas where they feel government should prioritise and a trend has been steadily forming that can easily be noticed. Employment creation has consistently remained the biggest concern among citizens, ranking first in every year since 2018 except for 2019. Corruption and health service delivery have also featured prominently across all years, showing an ongoing governance and service delivery concern. Notably, health delivery has progressively risen to the top three (3) priorities, highlighting a growing public dissatisfaction and worsening situation within the health sector. It is important to note that since 2021, the top five priorities, while ordered differently, have been consistent (see Figure 21).

### Citizen Priorities for Central Government Since 2018

2018	2019	2021	2023	2024	2025
Employment	Stabilising Prices	Employment	Employment	Employment	Employment
Stabilising Prices	Corruption	Corruption	Corruption	Health Delivery	Corruption
Cash Shortages	Cash Shortages	Industry	Health Delivery	Stabilising Prices	Health Delivery
Corruption	Industry	Stabilising Prices	Stabilising Prices	Industry	Industry
Industry	International Engagement	Health Delivery	Industry	Corruption	Stabilising Prices
Health Delivery	Health Delivery	International Engagement	Infrastructure	Cash Shortages	Political Party Collaboration
Infrastructure	Political Party Collaboration	Food Security	Education Delivery	International Engagement	Cash Shortages

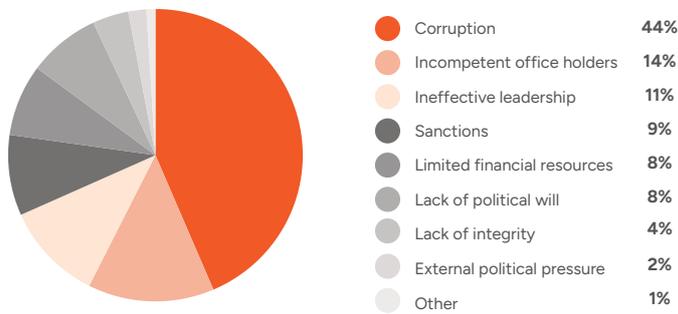
What should the central government's top 3 priorities be?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 21: Trends of Priority Areas for the Central Government Since 2018

## Factors Affecting the Effective Operation of the Central Government

Survey findings revealed that corruption is perceived as the most significant barrier to effective government performance, cited by 44% of respondents (n=874). Incompetence followed as a key concern, identified by 14% (n=288). Additional constraints raised by participants include economic sanctions, limited financial resources, lack of political will, absence of integrity, and external political pressure, all of which compound the challenges facing the central government (see Figure 22).

**Top Factor Affecting Central Government Effectiveness**

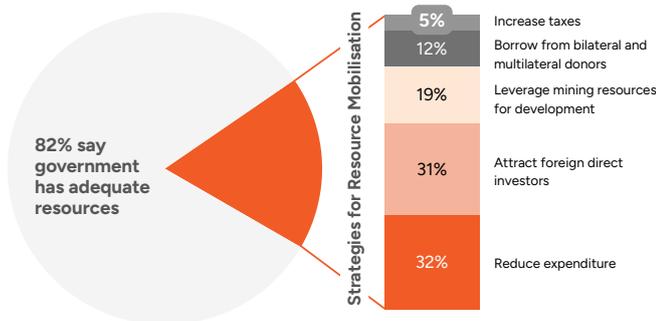


What is the top 1 constraint faced by the government in addressing the above-mentioned issues?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 22: Factors Affecting Government Performance

After assessing the performance of the central government, citizens were asked whether they believe the state has the resources to carry out its duties and address pressing national issues. The majority of respondents, 82% (n=1,645), expressed confidence that the government possesses adequate resources to implement policies and respond to challenges (see Figure 23).

## Government Resourcing Perceptions



Does the government have adequate resources to implement or address these issues?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

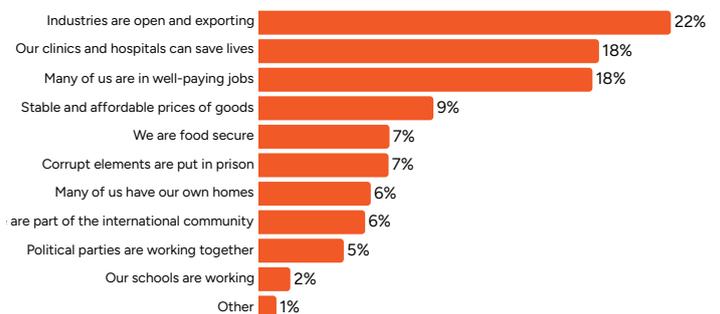
Figure 23: Does the Government have Adequate Resources?

Among citizens who believe that the government lacks sufficient resources to implement and finance key initiatives, the most preferred solution for the government to raise resources was by reducing government expenditure, with 32% (n=164) indicating that cutting unnecessary spending could be an effective way to mobilise resources. Foreign investment was seen as the second most viable option, supported by 31% (n=158) of respondents, who viewed it as a major opportunity for resource mobilisation. In addition, 19% (n=98) of respondents highlighted that Zimbabwe's mineral wealth could be better utilised to generate substantial revenues for the nation.

## CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT A SUCCESSFUL ZIMBABWE WOULD LOOK LIKE

The survey explored citizens' perceptions of what a successful Zimbabwe would look like. There was no majority agreement on the indicator of success for Zimbabwe. The top measure of success was a working industry (22%; n=441), followed by a functioning health sector (18%; n=364) and decent employment (18%; n=357). The data suggests that citizens equate government success with direct improvements in their daily lives, jobs, healthcare, corruption, and economic stability. Symbolic or institutional reforms matter less unless they translate into practical change.

### Definition of Success for Zimbabwe



How will you know if the central government has done well?  
Source: 2025 Zimbabwe CPE Survey (October 2025)

Figure 24: What Success Looks Like for Citizens



## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### What does this all mean?

Vending has become a defining feature of Zimbabwe's informal economy, serving as a primary source of livelihood for many. Its consistent ranking among the top three sectors in successive CPE surveys highlights both its accessibility and its resilience amid limited formal job opportunities.

Citizen participation continues to be a concern, as previous CPE reports consistently show limited participation, and the 2025 report is no exception. Historical trends show that an average of only 24% of citizens have ever taken part in a policy formulation process, leaving more than 75% excluded from such engagement. This pattern has persisted, with the 2025 findings again revealing that 75% of respondents have never participated in any policy formulation process. These figures highlight the continued limitations in citizens' access to, and freedom within, policymaking spaces at both the local authority and central government levels.

Despite the generally shrinking participatory environment, the data suggests comparatively greater openness in discussions related to local authorities. Participation in these spaces averaged 46%, with engagements such as discussions on local authority performance reaching 48%. This relatively higher level of involvement may be attributed to citizens' closer proximity to, and more direct interaction with, elected local officials, which can foster a more accessible and responsive environment for deliberating community issues.

For citizens, success for the government would mean operating industries (22%), functioning healthcare (18%) and well-paying jobs (18%). These areas reflect everyday struggles which directly affect livelihoods and welfare. Comparing with the 2024 CPE, the emphasis on well-paying jobs (26%) and industries exporting (17%) shows that citizens have consistently placed economic survival and livelihood security at the centre of their concerns. Welfare remains the key lens through which citizens measure progress. A striking shift is the return of corruption as a top three priority in 2025 (44%), up sharply from 6% in 2024.

This surge suggests growing frustration with governance and accountability systems. Citizens increasingly perceive corruption as a barrier to employment creation, service delivery, and equitable development. In other words, corruption is not seen as an isolated issue but as a systemic problem undermining all other priorities.

Citizens' expectations of local government are very clear: the regular supply of clean water (52%) is the top priority, followed by road maintenance (36%) and functioning, well-equipped clinics (36%). The data suggests that citizens measure local government success mainly by its ability to deliver basic services that directly affect their daily lives.

Another striking finding was that when citizens were asked about the constraints faced by local and central government in addressing national challenges, they pointed primarily to internal weaknesses—most notably corruption (43%). Far fewer citizens attributed government underperformance to incompetence (15%), ineffective leadership (12%), sanctions (10%), lack of political will (9%), limited financial resources (7%), or external political pressures (2%). This pattern suggests that, in the view of citizens, improving government performance is less about overcoming external pressures and more about addressing shortcomings within internal institutional systems. The majority of the respondents (82%) believe that the central government has adequate resources to implement and address challenges, compared to the 18% who believe that resources are not enough.

The survey highlights that religious groups continue to dominate associational life in Zimbabwe, with 49% of respondents indicating membership in such organisations. The strong presence underscores the enduring role of faith-based structures as the primary anchor of community engagement. However, participation in other associations such as women's groups, youth groups, and housing cooperatives remains consistently limited. The proportion of citizens disengaged from collective structures is rising. In 2024, 19% of respondents reported not belonging to any association (Jowah & Cross, 2024), compared to 25% in 2025. Could this be signalling a significant trend toward the growing unpopularity of associations among citizens? Or might it suggest that associations are evolving away from traditional forms, increasingly harnessing technology-based spaces for connection? This upward trend is concerning, as it may signal increasing individualism and a weakening of collective bonds that traditionally underpin collective problem-solving.

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## About SIVIO Institute

SIVIO Institute is an independent organisation focused on ensuring that citizens are at the centre of processes of socio-economic and policy change. It aims to contribute towards Africa'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. The Institute's work entails multi-disciplinary, cutting edge policy research, nurturing citizens' agency to be part of the change that they want to see and working with communities to mobilise their assets to resolve some of their immediate problems.

The institute has three centres/programs of work focused on: (i) civic engagement, (ii) philanthropy and communities and (iii) economic development and livelihoods. In the process, the Institute addresses the following problems:

- Inadequate performance of the 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