

What do metropolitan South Africans think about service delivery?

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RS, South Africa's leading marketing insights company, conducted a study in August 2005 amongst representative samples of 2 000 SA adults from the seven metro areas of South Africa, interviewing them face-to-face in their homes, to determine their reactions to various issues.

One of the issues RS examined concerned how people feel about their local service delivery organisations. People were asked to say to which of the following service organisations various statements applied:

- Municipal services
 1. Their local supplier of electricity
 2. Their local fire and emergency services
 3. The metro police in their area
 4. Their local public transport department
 5. The organisation that collects their rubbish
 6. Their local supplier of water
- Provincial services
 1. Government hospitals in their area
- National services
 1. The South African Police Service in their area
 2. Their local home affairs office
- Combination
 1. The roads maintenance department in their area (these could be national, provincial or municipal roads)

The selected provincial and national services were chosen on the basis of their everyday impact on people.

The 28 statements about which people were asked looked at people's perceptions of these departments in terms of customer service, service delivery orientation, speed and competence, complaints handling, access, integrity and corruption, fund mismanagement, innovation, environmental orientation, manner, level of admiration and whether they are felt to be good places to work.

On a total sample of 2 000, the margin of error at a 95% confidence level is under 2.5%

What are the overall perceptions of these service delivery organisations?

RS constructed two summary measures from the 28 statements. One is a **service delivery score**, encompassing customer service, service delivery orientation, speed and competence, complaints handling and ease of access. The other is an **image score** encompassing integrity and corruption, fund mismanagement, innovation, environmental orientation, manner, level of admiration and whether they are felt to be good places to work. Both are scaled to run from zero (terrible) to 100 (outstanding). The overall average is 50. The table below gives the scores for all metro areas.

It should be pointed out at the outset that none of the scores achieved is particularly good. A score of at least 70 would be needed to indicate that service delivery is reaching acceptable levels. Scores of 60 are fair; scores below 50 should be considered unacceptable.

	Overall	Service delivery	Image
	All areas	All areas	All areas
Municipal services (ave)	56	54	58
Electricity supplier	60	57	62
Fire and emergency services	61	59	63
Metro police	54	52	55
Public transport dept	49	47	51
Rubbish collection	53	51	55
Water supplier	58	56	59
Provincial services			
Hospitals	39	35	42
National services			
SAPS	43	41	44
Home affairs	44	41	47
Mixed			
Road maintenance	49	44	53
Overall average	51	48	53

Across the country, municipal services do better (they score an average of 56) than when selected provincial and national services are also included, when the average drops to 51.

Across the country, fire and emergency services consistently do the best on both measures. The next highest score country-wide is for the local electricity supplier, with the local water supplier a close third. In the municipal services arena, public transport is the least well perceived.

Hospitals, SAPS and Home Affairs do the worst on both measures nationally.

How do different areas fare?

The study was conducted in all main metro areas. The results for these areas are given in the first table in the Appendix. Note that the areas mentioned do not necessarily coincide exactly with official municipal boundaries:

- In Gauteng, the data has been divided into the East Rand (from Alberton, Kempton Park, and Bedfordview to Benoni, Springs, Nigel and Brakpan), the West Rand (from Roodepoort, Mogale City and places further west), South Rand/Vaal Triangle, Soweto, the remainder of Johannesburg and Pretoria (see detail in the Appendix).

The sample sizes in each area were as follows:

- East Rand - 305, West Rand - 80, South Rand/Vaal Triangle - 105, Soweto - 121, remainder of Johannesburg - 259, Pretoria - 235, Cape Town - 355, Durban - 330, East London - 55, Port Elizabeth - 115 and Bloemfontein - 40.
- The approximate margins of error at 95% confidence are -
 - o East Rand - three points
 - o West Rand - five points
 - o South Rand/Vaal Triangle - four points
 - o Soweto - four points
 - o Remainder of Johannesburg - three points
 - o Pretoria - three points
 - o Cape Town - two points
 - o Durban - three points
 - o East London - six points
 - o Port Elizabeth - four points
 - o Bloemfontein - seven points

For municipal services, most areas have similar overall scores. But these hide the fact that different areas have different

strengths and weaknesses:

- The **West Rand** has the poorest scores for municipal services, primarily because these areas score particularly poorly on the local electricity suppliers (poorest score of all metro areas except for East London), public transport, rubbish collection, and the local water suppliers.
- **Cape Town** is perceived to be better on fire and emergency services (this is one of the best scores in the study) but poorer on metro police and the local water suppliers.
- **Durban** does better on electricity but less well on fire and emergency services.
- **East London** is down on electricity, metro police and water.
- **Bloemfontein** does better than average on electricity and water.
- **Johannesburg** and **Pretoria** are somewhat lower on perceptions of the local electricity supplier.
- **East Rand** has a better perception of public transport.

Turning to other services, government hospitals are poorly perceived in general. However, on average, they do better in Cape Town, East London and Bloemfontein and worse in East Rand and Vaal.

The SAPS are higher than average in the Vaal Triangle, Soweto and the Eastern Cape, but poorer in the East Rand, Durban and Cape Town. Home Affairs do better in the West Rand, the Vaal Triangle and Cape Town, but less well in Durban and Port Elizabeth.

Finally, road maintenance is poorest in the Vaal Triangle and best in Pretoria and Durban.

Nonetheless, having said all this, it must be reiterated that scores should be over 70; scores over 60 are only fair and any score below 50 should be considered as unacceptable.

Specific hot-spots

There are some results of specific concern:

- 50% of people said that government hospitals had poor customer service (the highest response in the study), as did a third of people when it came to the SAPS.
- One in three people said that hospitals, the SAPS and Home Affairs "did not get things right".
- These three organisations are felt by between one in three and one in four people to be slow and cumbersome, and to be the most likely to be corrupt or to mismanage their funds

What are the success factors?

In deriving the summary scores, the contribution of each of the 28 factors included in the study to people's perceptions of service organisations was determined. From this, it is possible to rank the factors in order of importance. Service delivery organisations in general need to focus on the following, in order of priority:

- Service delivery
 1. Speed
 2. Customer service
 3. Getting things right
 4. Attending to complaints and queries quickly
 5. Keeping promises
 6. Efficiency
 7. Caring about their customers
- Image issues
 1. Friendliness and not being rude
 2. Corruption

3. Professionalism
4. Financial management
5. Technically up to date
6. Vibrancy

Summary

The overall scores in all metro areas are similar, indicating similar levels of discontent everywhere. However, this discontent is focused in different arenas in different areas.

Service delivery scores should be in the seventies, not the forties, fifties and sixties. There is no doubt that service delivery is one of the biggest challenges being faced by Government at all levels.

APPENDIX

[View Graph](#)

Note: Red circles indicate a poorer than average response; green circles a better than average response.

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