



Welcome to the first **Insight** newsletter produced by the GCIS Chief Directorate: Policy and Research. This informative newsletter provides a snapshot of important research results and media reporting month-on-month on a range of government programmes, initiatives and policies. Each issue is devoted to a single theme which will generally correspond to key national milestones and events. It provides unique insight into South Africans' perceptions and understanding of government policies and programmes, and rates their impact and subsequent communication initiatives.

Developing a nation through infrastructure

Infrastructure's Higgs Boson

This first issue reflects on research and media reporting on South Africa's infrastructure development programme, particularly the views of ordinary South Africans.

In 2012, South Africa started making key investments to secure reliable and advanced infrastructure to meet the future needs of our economy and society in the future.

A nation's infrastructure plans is one of the greatest indications of its likely prosperity in the future.

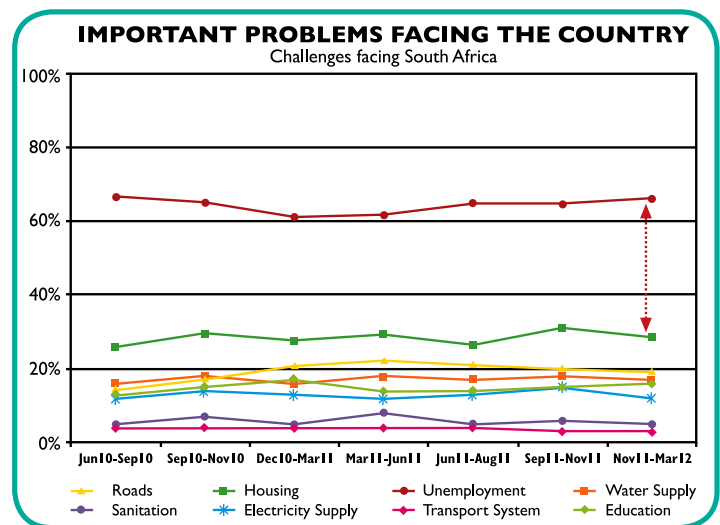
The 1933 infrastructure investment in America to counter the Great Depression showed that investment in infrastructure is a lever for greater economic activity and creates much-needed jobs in difficult times.

However, research conducted by GCIS to assess the mood of the nation and which is explored further in this newsletter highlights that while most South Africans are happy with government's infrastructure plans, there is a disjuncture in public and media perception on infrastructure as a creator of jobs.

Given our massive infrastructure investment, it should logically follow that South Africans are aware of its benefits.

Interestingly though, public perception shows that infrastructure is not linked as a solution to what people see as the country's greatest challenge, i.e. unemployment. Those who do make the link are discouraged because infrastructure jobs are viewed as not permanent.

The GCIS NationalTracker Research (2010-2012) showed that in spite of a general sense of satisfaction, South Africans do not necessarily rate infrastructure-related issues as among the most important problems facing the country.



Source: GCIS NationalTracker Research

The graph above indicates that South Africans rank infrastructure second to unemployment. Issues normally associated with infrastructure, namely housing, roads, education, water and electricity supply are only significant to less than a fifth of South Africans. The research results clearly show that even though there is an awareness of these issues, more pressing matters such as unemployment remain top of mind. Media coverage since the 2012 State of the Nation Address (SoNA) points to infrastructure as the biggest topic in South Africa, but its job creation potential is sidelined in favour of the big investment numbers.

“The massive investment in infrastructure must leave more than just power stations, rail-lines, dams and roads. It must industrialise the country, generate skills and boost much needed job creation.”
- President Jacob Zuma



government
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Infrastructure by numbers...



R844,5 billion budgeted over the next three years for infrastructure investment.



R262 billion being invested in transport and logistics.



R300 billion being invested in the energy sector.



2012 Budget Review lists 43 major infrastructure projects, adding up to R3,2 trillion in investment.

The missing link

The announcement on infrastructure development during the 2012 SoNA was well received by economists and analysts. However, quantitative analysis in the Post-SoNA Telephone Survey 2012 indicated that while public recall on infrastructure was significant, the link between infrastructure was significant, the link between infrastructure and job creation was not clear.

Among those surveyed, 23 per cent recalled infrastructure, while 5 per cent mentioned infrastructure development was important to improve the lives of people. Furthermore, almost a quarter (23 per cent) mentioned job creation as an issue that the President should have elaborated more on. The findings suggest that the link between infrastructure development and the potential for employment opportunities, or job creation is not spontaneously made.

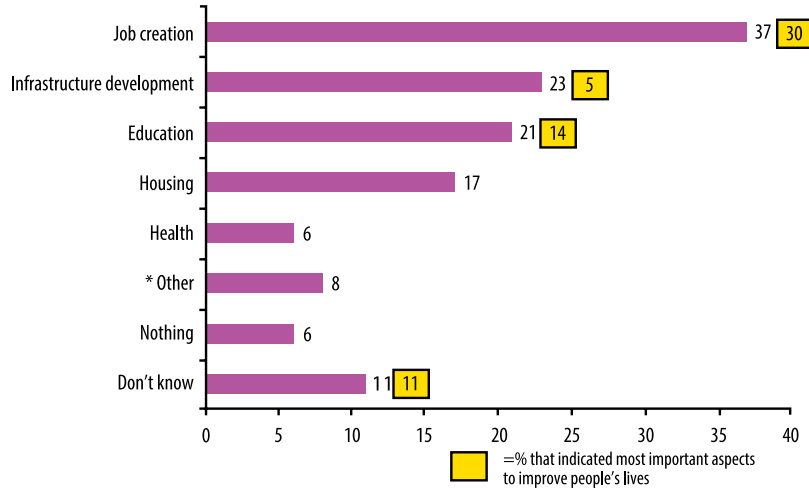
Findings from the National Qualitative Research (February-March 2012) on the other hand showed that those who did link job opportunities to infrastructure, were discouraged because they perceive these jobs as not permanent.

The graphs on the right reflect the results of the Post-SoNA Telephone Survey 2012. Graph A shows that job creation was the most prevalent issue on the minds of respondents with no link still being made between infrastructure development and job creation.

Graph B shows that respondents wanted more to be said on job creation, but did not want to know more about infrastructure development. This again suggests that infrastructure is not translated to jobs in the minds of those surveyed.

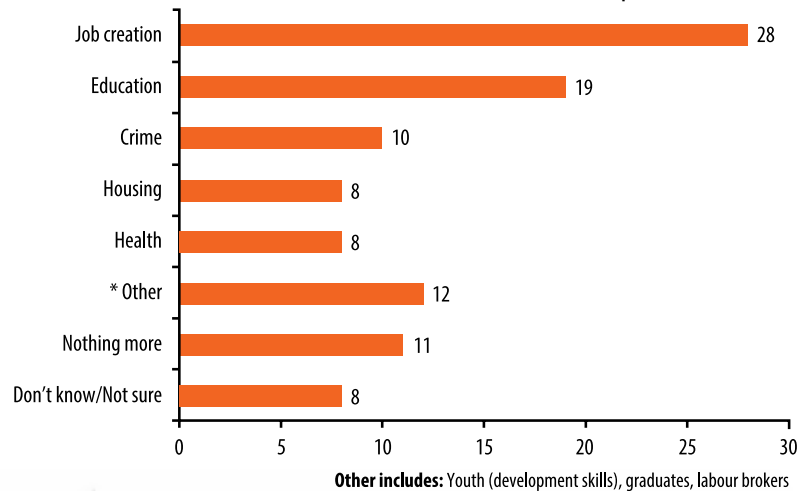
GRAPH A

SoNA recall and what was regarded as most important to improve lives



GRAPH B

What more should or could the President have spoken about



Some opinions expressed by South Africans...

"I would like to hear about jobs that would be created. ...create more opportunities of employment".
(Post-SoNA Telephone Survey, 2012)

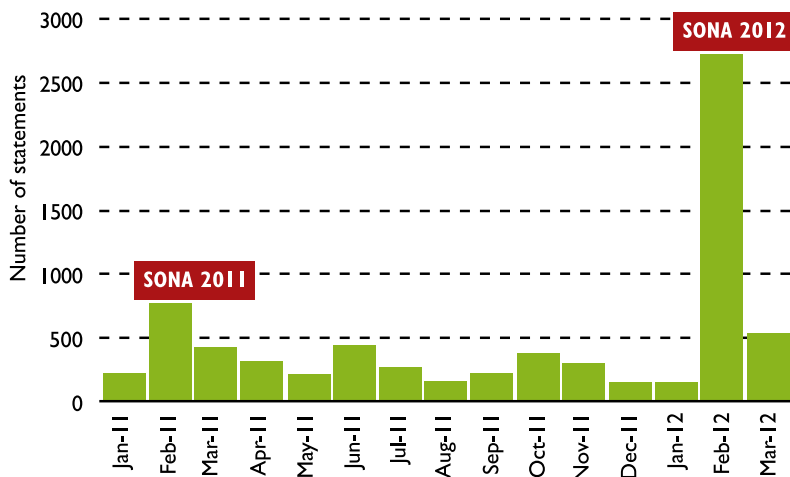
"Unfortunately there are no employment opportunities, the departments are not supportive at all". (Post-SoNA Telephone Survey, 2012)

"He did not meet mine because when he speaks about unemployment I don't know where he gets his figures on stats of improvements. And he does not state how he is going to address the issues".
(Post-SoNA Telephone Survey, 2012)

"...the jobs that are created are temporary jobs like construction jobs and when the construction project is done people go back to being unemployed". (Post-SoNA Telephone Survey, 2012)

What is the media saying about infrastructure in the country?

Volume of coverage on government for the issue of infrastructure: Jan 2011 - Mar 2012



Source: Media Tenor South Africa

Research obtained by GCIS shows that coverage on infrastructure prior to February 2012, as reflected in the graph on the left, was mediocre; it peaked after the 2012 SoNA and continued to remain on the media agenda.

The assessment of media coverage on job creation in February 2012, saw a surge, albeit unsustained, in coverage and topic. Of the 9 124 statements captured by Media Tenor South Africa in its 2012 analysis, job creation, the youth wage subsidy and the employment rate attracted the most attention from media.

However, the low volume in negative statements captured is overshadowed by the neutral statements in the same period.

Media views



POSITIVES:

- Infrastructure development programmes have been favourable and factual with government's voice dominating coverage.
- The focus was largely on the big numbers and major projects.
- Acknowledgement of the various strategic projects and that the infrastructure development programme is central to government's plan to create 5 million jobs by 2020.

NEGATIVES:

- Concerns over lack of clarity and delays in implementation of infrastructure projects.
- Private sector concerns over confusion about the role it will play and if it will indeed share in the infrastructure spend.

THE WAY FORWARD...



When communicating: Messages on infrastructure should always lead back to its impact on job creation.



Education drive: Information on the employment opportunities resulting from government's infrastructure development programme should target the unemployed, especially unemployed graduates and the youth.



Talking to media: The link between infrastructure and job creation must be made tangible through human interest angles, such as how communities have benefited from jobs.

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