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## **IMPORTANCE OF CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING IN THE WORLD BANK ASSISTED PROJECTS - CASE STUDY OF SERBIA**

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## **Abstract**

Importance of capacity building in governmental institutions is recognized as a prerequisite not only for organizational, but also for infrastructural and social development. World Bank supports numerous projects worldwide. One of them is Real Estate Management Project in Serbia. Objective of the Real Estate Management Project is to improve efficiency, transparency, accessibility and reliability of Serbia's real property management systems. One of subcomponents within the Project is D4 - Training. Aim of this subcomponent is to improve Republic Geodetic Authority's operation in the long-term, influencing the work quality improvement, and to enhance the capacity of its staff. This paper describes undertaken training activities and institutional and governmental results achieved due to capacity building, as well as how they all together contribute to overall progress of Serbia as demonstrated by Serbia's improved ranking on the World Bank Doing Business list.

**Key Words:** Capacity building, Real Estate Management Project, Training



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## 1 Background

Republic Geodetic Authority (RGA) is a special governmental organization in Republic of Serbia, in charge of professional affairs and affairs of public administration related to state survey, real estate cadastre, utility cadastre, basic geodetic works, address register, topographic and cartographic activities, property valuation, geodetic and cadastral information system, the National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) and geodetic works in engineering-technical fields (Law on Ministries, 2014). In its Strategy of measures and activities to improve the quality of public services in the field of geospatial data and property rights registration in the official national register - Reform path of the RGA until 2020, enacted in 2017 - RGA set up its vision to provide reliable and up-to-date geospatial and property data, in a standardized and readily accessible manner, for the purpose of sustainable social and economic development of the Republic of Serbia (Republički geodetski zavod, 2017b). In order to achieve this vision, investing in capacity building of its staff is recognized as a prerequisite since a survey, done before enactment of this Strategy, showed that one of the weaknesses of the organization is age and educational structure of staff. Namely, the survey showed that the current average age of RGA employees is 57 and that it is necessary to rejuvenate the personnel, as well as to improve the knowledge of current and newly employed staff. At the same time, the World Bank (WB) loan and other government funds dedicated to the modernization of RGA, present an opportunity for RGA to achieve designated goals from the Strategy and to invest in capacity building.

## 2 Real Estate Management Project in the Republic of Serbia

Republic of Serbia and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) have signed Loan agreement for the Real Estate Management Project (REMP) in April 2015 with the objective to improve efficiency, transparency, accessibility and reliability of the Serbia's real property management systems. The REMP consists of four components: (A) Valuation and Property Taxation; (B) E-governance for Enabling Access to Real Estate Information; (C) Institutional Development of the RGA; and (D) Project Management and Support Activities. Republic Geodetic Authority is the institution in charge of project implementation with the support of the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure (MCTI), and for sub-component B6 (One-stop-shop for electronic issuing of construction permit) with the support of the MCTI and the Serbian Business Registers Agency (BRA) (The World Bank, 2015a).

REMP is an extension of the World Bank's decade-long engagement in Serbia's real property sector. Between 2004 and 2012, with the help of the Bank-funded Real Estate Cadastre and Registration Project (RECRP) (P078311), Serbia established the Real Estate Cadastre (REC), a single system for real property



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rights registration, which is under the authority of the RGA. The RECRP was rated “satisfactory” and played a pivotal role in the development of land and real estate markets in Serbia (The World Bank, 2015b). Although these improvements are significant, Serbia’s real property registration services remained below European Standards at the time of preparation of the REMP. RGA’s attempts to develop a new Information Technology (IT) system was not successful within the RECRP, the REC was not interoperable with other key government registries, online services were limited, and the backlog of registration requests was increasing (The World Bank, 2015b).

REMP recognized the need to make investments in geodetic infrastructure and to make RGA services more accessible to all, including vulnerable groups. The primary beneficiaries of the REMP would be the general population, particularly members of the public within Serbia, but also foreign investors and overseas Serbian nationals, who currently own real estate or who will acquire real estate in the future, with special attention provided to women and vulnerable members of society to ensure that the benefits are more equally distributed. Main focus of the REMP is to ensure accurate, complete and electronically available information for the improvement of services and greater transparency. Beneficiaries would also include the land market professionals (lawyers, surveyors, real property appraisers, public notaries, etc.); organizations associated with mortgaging, who would benefit from more accurate and accessible real estate data and who will be able to provide better services to the public; as well as the government agencies, such as the MCTI, Tax Administration, the Ministry of Justice and Local Government Agencies would benefit as they will be able to easily access information about real estate: for planning and property tax purposes; for providing social and other local government services; and through improvements in the use of the real estate that they manage (The World Bank, 2015b).

In order to efficiently manage implementation of REMP, RGA established a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) by employing highly skilled professionals to administer the project. Among the PIU staff RGA employed an experienced professional as a Training Specialist for the sole purpose to ensure that the relevant project objectives and targets of capacity building and training are achieved within the time frame and costs specified in the Loan Agreement and Project Appraisal Document and as agreed in the annual Work plan and Procurement plan.

## **2.1 Training as one of the sub-components of the Real Estate Management Project**

One of sub-components within the REMP is D4 - Training. Under this sub-component, a number of training activities were planned in order to: enhance the capacity of RGA staff; provide contract staff with the technical knowledge that they require to complete their activities; build the capacity of the staff in public



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institutions and private sector stakeholders involved in implementing One-stop-shop for construction permit; and educate land market professionals on new services.

Most of the Training within the REMP are planned to be conducted face-to-face through workshops, seminars, on-the-job training, and study tours. However, an online training for the use of new ICT software is planned. Training courses under the REMP would cover such topics as IT software and hardware, document management, NSDI, the INSPIRE Directive and training in valuation. Component D4 - Training funds are used to support organization of NSDI annual conferences, plus training and capacity building, including study visits to EU member states and participation in INSPIRE annual conferences and other relevant international and national events (The World Bank, 2015b).

With regard to training to be carried out under the project, RGA is supposed to submit a proposal for the training plan no later than December 1<sup>st</sup> each year for the following year, to the WB REMP supervision team. The proposal of the training plan for the following calendar year, is supposed to include: an overview of the scope and content of the training programs and/or activities; a brief explanation of how each training program or activity is expected to contribute to achieving the objectives of the project; the budget to be made available therefore, taking into account considerations of economy and efficiency; the criteria for the selection of the beneficiaries and the providers of training; and the schedule for implementation of the training. RGA carries out the annual training programs and activities in accordance with the agreed selection procedures, budget, and schedule, all under contractual or other arrangements satisfactory to IBRD. The first contract for training was signed on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and since then, until the end of 2018 there were a total of 58 training programs and activities undertaken under REMP. This paper will present several results achieved within the sub-component D4 - Training during this period. REMP closing date is December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, with high probability of extension due to the importance of the project goals and circumstances.

### **3 One-Stop-Shop Training for Electronic Issuing of Construction Permits**

One of the first and most important training activities within the REMP was to build the capacity of the staff in public administration and private sector stakeholders involved in implementing One-stop-shop for electronic issuing of construction permits in 2016. Provision of training and mentoring activities for the users of the newly introduced System for Electronic Issuing of Building Permits was a necessary step in implementing the reformed system for issuing building permits in Republic of Serbia, as one of the most challenging reforms introduced by the Government of Republic of Serbia and the MCTI in 2014-2015 period. Contract for this training assignment was signed with National Alliance for Local Economic



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Development (NALED) on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015, while the first contracted training started on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016. NALED is an independent, non-profit and non-partisan association of businesses, local governments and civil society organizations which work together to achieve the common goal of creating favorable conditions for living, working and doing business in Serbia.

During a period from January 12<sup>th</sup> until April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 a total of 106 two-day trainings, and 5 one-day trainings were completed for the total of 3181 current and future users of the System for Electronic Issuing of Building Permits (see **Table 1.**). The trainings were conducted in 21 different locations (spread around 14 cities in the Republic of Serbia). Two-day trainings were attended by a total of 3003 users, while one-day trainings (organized as a response to current “bugs” in the system) were attended by another 178 current users (NALED, 2016b). Gender structure of participants shows that 51% of the participants were women, and 49% were men, which is corresponding to the fact that women are more represented as employees in the public sector in Serbia.

After each two-day training, the participants were given questionnaires to evaluate the training they attended. Most participants evaluated the training as very useful in practice, with frequent praises of the professionalism, commitment and knowledge of the trainers.

	Number of participants	Number of participants per event	Number of events	Number of training days per event	Number of training days	Number of events in Belgrade	Number of events out of Belgrade
<b>Two-days training</b>	3003	28.33	106	2	212	38	68
<b>One-day training</b>	178	35.6	5	1	5	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3181</b>	<b>28.66</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>/</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>70</b>

**Table 1.** *One-stop-shop training summary (NALED, 2016a)*

Training for use of the System for Electronic Issuing of Building Permits was a great challenge, not only for the governmental sector employees, who had a very short time to master the use of the System, but also for the staff organizing the training. Trainers employed by NALED, organization which undertook the challenge of organizing the countrywide training in cooperation with MCTI, RGA and PIU, managed to pave the road for further improvement of Serbia’s public sector in the area of land administration. The One-stop-shop training for public officials was needed to ensure that every authority in charge of issuing building permits, in all levels of the government had skills required to administer and implement its part of the e-permitting process. In **Table 2.** are presented estimated number of public officials planned to be trained, as well as the actual number of participants upon completion of the assignment (NALED, 2016a).



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Trainee category – Public official representative	Estimated number of participants as per assignments	Actual number of participants – Two-day training	Actual number of participants – One-day training
Mayor and head of Local Government (LG) administration	358	279	2
Permitting department		674	23
Archivist and a substitute	312	186	
LG IT person and a substitute	179	60	21
LG agriculture/environment department representative and a substitute	179	106	
Construction inspector and a substitute	179	214	
Local level system operators' staff	1857	1377	26
Central level system operators' staff	60	81	
MCTI, BRA and Province of Vojvodina	30	26	
Project designers	0		106
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3154</b>	<b>3003</b>	<b>178</b>
		<b>3181</b>	

**Table 2.** Training category with estimated and actual number of participants for the training as per Contract for the assignments (NALED, 2016a)

Results of these trainings were reflected in the productivity of the System which was officially recognized by WB Doing Business ranking. Serbia was ranked 186<sup>th</sup> in the 2015 Doing Business list in the area of issuing building permits, while after implementation of the System for Electronic Issuing of Building Permits, which included training users in the use of the System, there was a huge jump in ranking. On the 2018 WB Doing Business list Serbia is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the area of issuing building permits. Such a success would hardly be possible without investment in training of employees, considering that legal reform provided very short time frame for undertaking necessary technical and professional reforms and transition from a completely analog to the completely digital system of issuing building permits. Of course, this is only one of the indicators for the training results achieved on a very short notice, and made possible only through the REMP financing.

#### 4 Training for the Republic Geodetic Authority Representatives

The REMP has entered into its fourth year of implementation. Annual training plans for calendar years 2016 – 2019 were timely prepared and sent to the WB for comments and suggestions. Most of the training planned to be undertaken annually was done, but due to unforeseen circumstances some of the training had to be postponed or even cancelled. Things like this are reasonable and can happen during training plan implementation. In this paper will be presented only some of the major trainings performed, but it must be noted that plenty other courses were held, but will not be dealt with in this paper.



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## 4.1 ICT Training for System Administrators

RGA employs mainly surveyors and lawyers, but without ICT specialists regular daily work would be impossible. During the first three years of REMP implementation (2016-2018) several courses for system administrators, database and Web developers within RGA were organized using REMP funds. In total 178 participants were selected to attend at least two or more courses among:

- two Linux administration courses;
- six official Cisco courses for networking and network security;
- six Microsoft professional courses for Windows server installation, configuration, administration and implementation of network security;
- five Microsoft courses for administering SQL database infrastructure, and other courses for development and implementation of SQL databases and programming in C#;
- three official Microsoft courses for developing Web applications, Web services and programming with JavaScript.

These trainings were provided by certified trainers and students' overall satisfaction with the training was marked as excellent. Organizing ICT training in an institution such as RGA is very important due to the importance of data RGA is in charge of and amount of information in databases under its supervision. As of May 2018, with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data in EU member state (Official Journal of the European Union, 2016), Serbia enacted new Law on protection of personal data in November 2018 which is supposed to harmonize domestic regulations with GDPR. Considering that the adoption of the new regulation based on GDPR heavily affects data on property rights and a few other RGA's professional affairs, importance of improvement of knowledge of ICT experts in RGA is very high.

## 4.2 ESRI ArcGIS Training

World wide spread ESRI ArcGIS platform for mapping and analytics is established in RGA for various purposes. Due to this fact, a several ArcGIS courses were organized for newly engaged employees in the Department for valuation and property value registration. Participants were trained to perform Basic ArcGIS working procedures, Data Analysis, as well as Spatial and Geostatistical analyst. Within the same contract for consulting services, six trainees from the Center for Management of Geospatial Information of RGA were trained for administration, configuration and implementation of ArcGIS Server. One extra Workshop in connection to spatial analysis of RGA's data was organized, too.



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Based on the knowledge of the participants before and after the course – see **Table 3**. (pre and post testing of the participant’s knowledge was done), it can be concluded that the participants had made a significant progress and gained the necessary knowledge to independently perform basic work processes and perform spatial analysis using ESRI software ArcGIS for Desktop ver.10.2 and ArcGIS for Server ver.10.2. (Gajovic, 2018).

Course name	Result [%]	
	Before training	After training
ArcGIS for Desktop II – Basic Working Procedures	21,82	72,27
ArcGIS for Desktop III – Data Analysis	22,50	85,63
Spatial Analyst	20,00	91,25
Geostatistical Analyst	22,50	100,00
ArcGIS Server – Advanced Level	20,00	88,33

**Table 3.** A tabular overview of the results achieved – Pre and post testing results of participant’s knowledge (Gajovic, 2018)

Each participant has filled evaluation questionnaire at the end of each training. Based on evaluations of each training, an overall total average grade for the whole set of ArcGIS courses was 4.84 (grade system used was from 1 – Poor; to 5 - Excellent). Total number of participants from RGA was 60, out of whom 24 were male and 36 were female employees.

### 4.3 Study Tours as Part of Institutional Development and Learning from Best Practices

The valuation and property taxation component within REMP is a new undertaking in the WB’s engagement with Serbia, but it has been successful and beneficial in other countries. In the same manner, other WB projects’ lessons in the areas of implementation of One-stop-shop for construction permit, reducing corruption, improving customer services and expanding e-services are also reflected in the REMP design. The REMP fund was planned to be used to learn lessons from other WB projects. In regard to this, at the beginning of the REMP implementations, in 2016 several study tours were organized as part of institutional development and learning from best practices.

RGA representatives, together with MCTI representatives visited: FYR Macedonia (host was Agency for Real Estate Cadastre of Macedonia) and Russia (Federal Office for State Registration, Cadastre and Mapping - Rosreestr), while only RGA representatives visited Dutch Agency for Cadastre, Land Registration and Mapping and took part in regional and international conferences such as: INSPIRE Conference 2016 in Spain, FAO (The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) Discovery



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Day 2016: Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) in support of Good Land Governance for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the 9<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference on Cadastre and SDI with theme: Geospatial data in the service of strategic projects and economic development held in Croatia. During the INSPIRE Conference 2016 in Barcelona, representatives of the RGA took the opportunity to also visit the Regional cadastral center of the Spanish Directorate for Cadastre where they had the opportunity to make themselves familiar with their organizational structure, operational system and business principles applied. It was great opportunity for RGA staff to become familiar with the system that applied tax free policy for the services it provides, effective system of cooperation among the national institutions and citizens and to find out that the cadastre is the main institution in Spain in charged for the mass property evaluation which serves as a base for the property tax payment.

In September 2016 RGA, along with WB and FAO, organized a conference on Satellite Data for Sustainable Development 2015 – 2030 – “SD4SD Conference”. The Conference was very well received by international guests and national representatives. International experts in the field of satellite technology use from the world-renowned institutions (World Bank, UN FAO, USA Digital Globe, UK NM Land Registry, UK Satellite Applications Catapult, European Space Imaging, etc.) had participated in the conference, together with numerous representatives from governmental institutions, public enterprises and private surveying companies. The main objective of the SD4SD Conference was to present the possibilities of the application of satellite data collected using satellite systems and contemporary technological solutions for spatial resources management through the aspects of international cooperation and sustainable development concept (World Bank team report, 2016).

The results of the SD4SD Conference, lessons learned from international experience done through study tours in 2016 and experience of the Republic Geodetic Authority regarding cooperation with national and regional institutions are the reason that the Republic Geodetic Authority had focused its Strategy (of Measures and Activities to Improve Quality and Services in the Field of Geospatial Data and Property Rights Registration in the Official Records – Reform Path of the RGA until 2020), adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in January 2017, towards the improvement of land administration, geospatial data quality and updating and increasing their value by utilizing their full potential. Also, as a direct result of SD4SD Conference, RGA organized a study tour to United Kingdom in the beginning of March 2017. RGA representatives were hosted by UK agencies: Catapult, Land Registry, Ordnance Survey and Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

All these activities resulted in new Rulebook on Internal Arrangement and Systematization of Workplaces of RGA, introduction of comprehensive strategy on RGA development which featured the strategy on how



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to attract and employ young professionals and how to modify and improve skills of current and future employees in accordance with the needs for future development of RGA (Republički geodetski zavod, 2017a).

Study tour to Denmark, organized in 2018, had a purpose to introduce the Danish property valuation process and property valuation model to the representatives of Republic of Serbia, as well as to make them familiar with the Danish geodata acquisition and quality control approach, indirectly collected data and geographic variables to the participants. Delegation from Serbia consisted from the RGA and representatives of Serbian Ministry of Finance, while host agencies were: Danish Ministry of Taxation – Information Technology and Development Agency; Agency for Digitization within the Ministry of Finance; Danish Property Assessment Agency and Danish Agency for Data Supply and Efficiency within Ministry of Energy, Utilities and Climate. The Danish experience and lessons learned during establishment and maintenance of their registers will be used to contribute development of a more unified, comprehensive, efficient and less costly system in the Republic of Serbia.

## **4.4 Communication Skills Training**

REMP made it possible for RGA to intensively work on advancing the skills of its employees, not only in technical fields, but also in the field of communication skills. Through the REMP subcomponent D3 – Public Awareness, RGA is implementing activities to inform and educate the public on real property registration, proper procedures and rights and obligations of property rights holders. Public awareness campaign also provides information to the public on RGA operations and service provision with the highlight on new services (particularly e-services) that it provides for the real property sector in its broadest sense. Through the campaign, RGA management in cooperation with WB representatives recognized the need to improve communication skills of RGA employees, particularly those who are in daily contact with RGA clients and public in general.

In 2017, RGA organized a communication skills training for employees in a form of one-day workshops. The aim of the training was to improve communication techniques in telephone conversations, to learn about different types of persons with whom employees communicate on a daily base and to learn (through practical exercises) to improve communication skills that enable them to take charge of professional interactions with clients in an assertive and a professional manner. Lecturers devoted time to determine the type of challenges with which RGA staff encountered while performing their daily tasks and how it is possible to overcome the distractions that can lead to ineffective communication. During the period between April and October 2017, a total of 347 RGA employees were trained, out of whom 126 were male and 221



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were female (G.F.C. d.o.o., 2017). Again, it is noticeable that the gender structure of attendees leans in favor of women, but this time more noticeably.

Part of the training included the way of communication with people with different types of disabilities. Employees had the opportunity to watch a short movie with a lecture held by the Executive Director of the National Organization for Persons with Disabilities of Serbia (NOOIS), with the purpose of organizing "Mobile Services" in the REC. Participants of the training received a brochure entitled "Rules of behavior in dealing with persons with disabilities" as part of the working materials.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

Indicators for measuring of achievements of REMP development objectives, according to *Results Framework and Monitoring for the REMP*, are: "Number of persons trained" and "Level of satisfaction of trainees with training". "Number of persons trained" as indicator, measures the total number of people trained under the REMP. "Total number of female trainees" is a sub-indicator of the first indicator. The indicator "Level of satisfaction of trainees with training" measures level of satisfaction of people trained under the REMP with the training provided, disaggregated by gender (World Bank, 2015b). As already mentioned, during the training period, PIU also performs regular anonymous surveys on attendees' satisfaction with the quality of received training.

The analysis of gender structure for the trainings held until the end of 2018 from REMP funds, showed that 51% of training attendees were women and 49% men. This shows that there is an equal gender representation in the trainings, but it is also in accordance with the data that the gender balance in public sector is slightly in the women's favor. In-depth analysis of gender structure and presentation of satisfaction survey results, for some of the trainings financed from REMP, is shown in **Table 4**.

In June 2018, RGA Director received *Certificate of Appreciations* for his general contribution to Women, Business and the Law 2018. Women, Business and the Law 2018 is the fifth edition in a series of WB's biannual reports measuring the legal obstacles to women who engage in economic activity in each of 189 covered economies around the world, and Serbia received a score of 100 in Economy Table for the indicator called "Using Property". This indicator analyzes women's ability to access and use property based on their ability to own, manage, control and inherit it. It also examines whether legislation accounts for nonmonetary contributions, such as unpaid care for children or the elderly, in distributing assets upon the dissolution of marriage (World Bank group, 2018). This reward means that RGA and its management are paying attention to the fact that both women and men should fully participate in an economy to reach its full potential.



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Name of the training	Total number of participants	Gender structure of participants		No. of filled in Questionnaires	Percentage of participants that completed Questionnaires	Overall average grade of Trainees satisfaction <sup>1</sup>
		Male	Female			
One-stop-shop for electronic issuing of construction permits	3003 <sup>2</sup>	1481	1522	2493	83,11%	4.63
ICT trainings	178	133	45	175	98,31%	4.70
ESRI ArcGIS training	60	24	36	49	81,67%	4.84
Communication skills training	347	126	221	342	98,56%	4.67

*Table 4. Summary statistics – Listed trainings were financed from REMP fund*

Through REMP, within the period 2016-2018, a number of trainings in the area of ICT, customized training for users of the System for Electronic Issuing of Building Permits, as well as numerous workshops, study trips and attendances on international conferences pertaining to RGA spectrum of professional responsibilities, and others were financed and organized. All these activities resulted in new Rulebook on Internal Arrangement and Systematization of Workplaces of RGA that was enacted at the end of 2017, as well as an introduction of comprehensive Strategy on RGA development which featured the strategy on how to attract and employ young professionals and how to modify and improve skills of current and future employees in accordance with the needs for future development of RGA (Republički geodetski zavod, 2017b). Need for continual professional improvement and capacity building was recognized, not only by RGA but also by the Government, as one of the most important steps on the road to success of reforming public institutions into client-oriented companies. Achieved results in capacity building of RGA and training provided by REMP are an excellent example of good practice and can be guides for other countries in transition on how to improve knowledge and skills of public servants and how to improve its position on Doing Business list, thus encouraging new investments.

Serbia made the process of obtaining building permits significantly faster in 2016 by: implementing an online One-stop-shop system for Electronic Issuing of Building Permits and by simplifying property transfer process by introducing effective time limits due to changes in Law on state survey and cadastre.

<sup>1</sup> Mark 5 means: Excellent

<sup>2</sup> Only participants on a two-day workshop were count



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Those changes immediately affected Serbia's ranking on a World Bank Doing business list as shown in **Table 5**.

The Doing Business list is a good instrument for making comparisons and adopting best practices and solutions from the most successful countries. According to the Doing Business methodology, the adoption of even the best regulations does not lead to a progress, if it is not accompanied with proper implementation.

Area	DB2015	DB2016	DB2017	DB2018	DB2019
Construction permitting	186	139	36	10	11
Registering property	72	73	56	57	55

*Table 5. Serbia's ranking on a World Bank Doing business (DB) list per year (The World Bank, 2018)*

The new Law on the procedure of registration in the Real Estate and Utility Lines Cadaster of May 2018 stipulates the establishing of a unified electronic procedure and IT system called e-FrontDesk (or e-Counter), which will ensure easier trade of real estate for citizens and businesses (Law on the Registration Procedure with the Cadastre of Real Estate and Utilities, 2018). The new e-FrontDesk system was implemented on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 and link the activities of public notaries, Tax Administration, local tax administration offices, public enforcers and the RGA. This has brought Serbia to the point that the entire procedure for transferring the property rights, including the cadaster registration and the process of submitting application for absolute rights transfer tax and property tax, can be performed at a single spot - at a public notary's office. Pending changes to related laws, transfer of property rights will be provided at a One-stop-shop in public notaries' offices only. It is projected that by the end of 2020 all public institutions, public notaries, public enforces and registered private surveyors will be connected to the e-FrontDesk and use it exclusively for their daily work without the need for any analog paperwork.

The reform of cadastral registration, as one of the fundamental reforms whose application is awaited, will be the subject of a special project implemented by NALED and in the period November 2018 - April 2019, there will be numerous trainings organized for national and local public officers as an assistance in establishing a functional, unified e-FrontDesk for registering property, i.e. linking the activities performed by public notaries, Tax Administration, local tax administration offices, public enforcers and Real Estate Cadaster. During 2017 and 2018, government and RGA initiated systemic reforms in the Cadaster, whose full effects can be expected in 2019 and the years to come. REMP will give its full support to mentioned legal changes, as well as to capacity building of RGA staff, all other public officials and private sector when appropriate.



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