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Management  
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# ReSPA

Regional School  
of Public Administration

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## CAF-FEEDBACK REPORT

### Effective CAF User

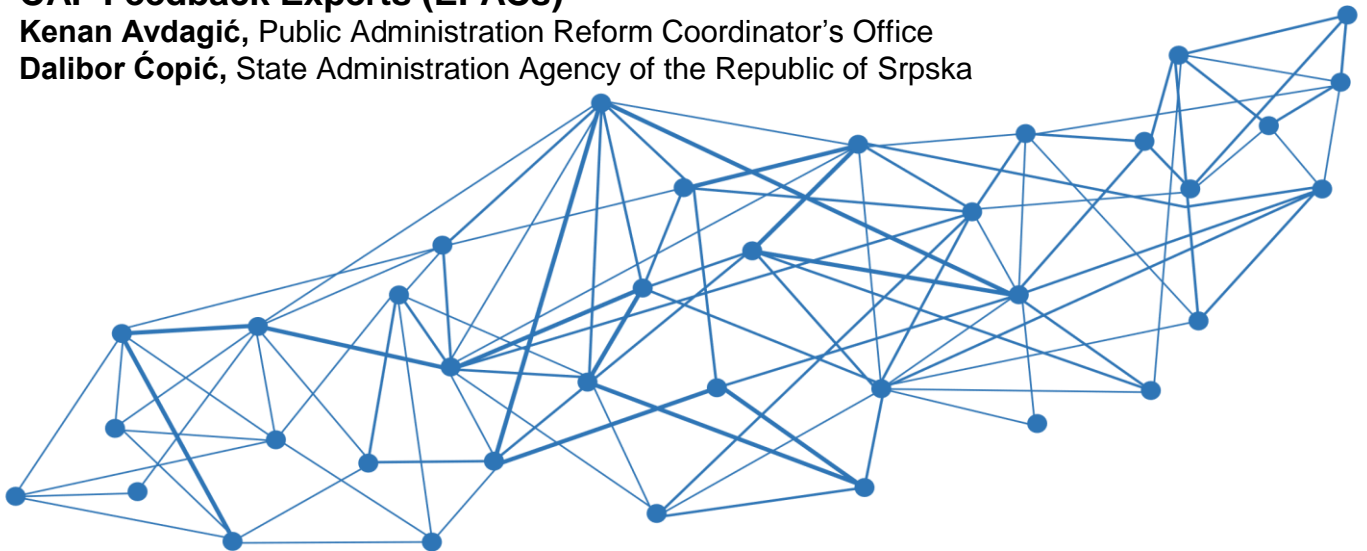
#### Republic Agency for Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes (Republic of Serbia)

24 October 2023

#### CAF Feedback Experts (EFACs)

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Table of contents

I    **Feedback Report .....3**

1    Part 1: General comments.....4

2    Part 2: Self-assessment process feedback.....8

3    Part 3: CAF Improvement Plan Feedback .....13

4    Part 4: Maturity feedback according to TQM principles .....16

5    Part 5: Evaluation Profile .....17



## I Feedback report

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## 1 Part 1: General comments

### Main topics of the Feedback Report

The Republic Agency for the Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes (hereinafter: the Agency) was established as a special organisation within the public administration system of the Republic of Serbia, its main task being work in the field of peaceful settlement of individual and collective labour disputes. The Agency is the first specialised public institution dealing with labour disputes.

As a specialised public administrative organisation in Serbia, the Agency continuously demonstrates elements of improvement in its work. Due to this fact and the desire of the whole organisation to improve its efficiency and effectiveness, to raise awareness of its existence and to assist all citizens who have difficulties in exercising their rights, in the first half of 2022 the Agency conducted the first cycle of self-assessment using the Common Assessment Methodology Framework – CAF. In accordance with the rules developed by the Regional School of Public Administration – ReSPA, the Agency made a timely request to evaluate its process in accordance with the elaborated PEF Guidelines. CAF feedback experts Kenan Avdagić and Dalibor Čopić reviewed and analysed the responses to all three submitted questionnaires and other documentation accompanying the application. In accordance with the PEF methodology, a visit to the Agency with a predefined agenda was carried out (13 June 2023).

In a discussion with the management, staff and three stakeholders (*Jovan Protić from Serbia's International Labour Organisation, Miodrag Stešević from the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Serbia and Milan Pekić from the Office for the Fight against Drugs were interviewed during the visit to the Agency as representatives of the stakeholders*), it was found that the Agency, although being a small organisation, tries to raise awareness among all stakeholders, and especially among the citizens of the Republic of Serbia, that there exists the possibility of peaceful settlement of labour disputes. It uses a large number of digital tools in its work, both for solving problems within its competence and for informing about the procedure itself, i.e. by educating citizens, either individually or collectively, in cooperation with trade unions. During the discussion, it was particularly highlighted that the Agency is innovative, but also inspiring for public administration organisations in Serbia and has therefore encouraged five other public administration organisations to apply for the CAF model implementation (Office for the Fight against Drugs, Human Resources Management Unit, Accreditation Body of Serbia, Office for Kosovo and Metohija, Office for Coordination Affairs in the process of negotiations with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina).

The first three parts of this report contain the analysis the CAF feedback experts have made of the processes the Agency has undertaken in the self-assessment process and in the development and implementation of the Improvement Plan. This highlights the commitment of the Agency's management to be as results-oriented as possible, sometimes beyond the existing staff capacity, all with a view to becoming more efficient and effective in its work. The organisation's management was involved in all CAF self-assessment processes and the Agency, due to its size and the collaboration between its staff, did not have any problems in

internal communication. The head of the agency pointed out that the reason for him being involved in all stages of the CAF implementation was that probably not all employees perceived the mission, vision and values of the Agency in the same way, and in this manner he wanted to get a different perspective on the work of the organisation, which he felt would directly contribute to improving the organisation's performance. A professional approach was noted in all phases of the CAF model implementation, the self-assessment organisation, the writing of reports, the development and implementation of the improvement plan.

The last part of this report presents an analysis of the organization's maturity in relation to the principles of excellence, with two proposed principles of excellence having been analysed in some detail: focus on citizens/users and developing partnerships. It should be emphasized that owing to the CAF the Agency has established clearer two-way communication with its stakeholders (e.g. regular meetings and cooperation with the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Serbia), especially the communication with citizens as potential users of the Agency's services, whereby now they have the possibility to initiate the process online or via a mobile application, with the process being simplified for people with no internet or computer skills, and it can be initiated by simply filling in a form located at the entrances of the Agency. This demonstrates that the organisation is ready for change and is willing to simplify its services and bring them closer to the citizens.

The innovation shown by the Agency and the proactivity of its small, but professional team are an asset for this organisation and these changes that have taken place have been noticed and supported by the stakeholders.

The digitisation of public administration, one of the main topics in the EU at the moment, has been taken very seriously by the Agency, which has launched several processes to digitise its services, as well as to improve its work, i.e. its internal processes, by using a large number of digital tools. The use of a tool named Click-Up for project management purposes has proved to be very successful and the Agency should share this success story with others, thus setting a positive example for the modernisation of public administration in Serbia, but also in the region. A large number of activities have been initiated, apart from those in the Improvement Plan, but also many new ideas have been put in place. Therefore, the biggest risk for the Agency is that the small number of staff will be much more stressed in the coming period and will not be able to adequately fulfil all the activities they have planned. The CAF feedback experts advised the Agency to do several priority activities first, and when they are done, to focus on the next ones and so on, and not do all at once.

## Key strengths

- The Agency's management has played a proactive role and has been very committed to the introduction of CAF (inspiring five other institutions to introduce CAF in Serbia);
- The Agency uses a large number of social networks where information is shared;
- The organisation, fully committed to the digitisation of its services, launched: SOS phone 24/7, website form for initiating an online procedure, developed a mobile application for initiating a procedure, established the option for making suggestions via the website, a

survey on satisfaction with the Agency's work is available on the website, online checking of the status of a case i.e. procedure, online training for services provided by the Agency, illustrated processes on the website of the Agency's services;

- Within the Agency, they are pro-active in digitising the work process and use Click-Up for project management, which is used as an intranet and is excellent for monitoring and evaluating plans (e.g. improvement plan);
- The Agency has demonstrated its commitment towards continuous improvement by introducing the CAF self-assessment and presenting its readiness to change;
- The organisation understands and applies the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM);
- The Agency develops partnerships (the Agency has signed three formal partnership agreements in the last year).

### Main improvement potentials

- Present to key stakeholders the achievements made through the CAF model implementation and highlight their effect;
- Avoid overloading the staff in the organisation, especially when priority activities have already been established and others are being acquired – the initial ones should be completed first and then the new ones should be implemented;
- Try to monitor the Agency's performance and results, look at international experience in this field;
- Involve a greater number of stakeholders in its research;
- Use verification indicators in the plans to accurately measure progress in plan implementation;
- Take a strategic approach in finding future partners;
- Try to create an evaluation of partnerships and improve processes of engagement with users and partners.

### Key recommendations

As a small organisation, the Republic Agency for the Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes of Serbia has shown how modest resources and an innovative approach can achieve good results and improve the organisation's work in delivering services to citizens. The analysis of the CAF feedback experts shows beyond doubt that a large number of activities have been initiated, not only those in the Improvement Plan, but also new ideas that have emerged during the implementation of the priority activities. The main recommendation is to implement the priority activities first, as the organisation is very small and staff-constrained, and existing staff would be very stretched if this pace of implementation of ideas were to continue.

Also, as a result of improving its services and working on a large number of activities, the impression has been created that the Agency has not adequately communicated all its improvements to its stakeholders, and in particular that a large number of them have been **gained through the use of the CAF model**. However, it is evident that the Agency has



generally focused more on raising awareness of its existence and the use of its services, i.e. the mechanism for peaceful settlement of labour disputes between citizens of the Republic of Serbia. It is therefore necessary that the Agency strongly promotes its achievements gained **through the use of the CAF model** to its key stakeholders through different communication channels.

The Agency has demonstrated its continued commitment to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its services and the application of the Total Quality Management (TQM), but it should improve the monitoring of the performance and results of its strategic objectives. To this end, the Agency is recommended to seek the relevant methodology in similar organisations in other countries.

The use of Click-Up application for project management has been a very good story for the Agency. It has proved to be crucial for the CAF implementation in this organisation, especially as a tool for monitoring, communication and delegation of tasks. The proposal is that this success story should not only remain in the Agency, but that the Agency staff, depending on their commitments, could present their work in the Agency first to the public administration staff of the Republic of Serbia, and then to the representatives of public administrations in the region through the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA).

The following points can serve as a proposal for discussion and recommendations for the next CAF cycle:

- **Verification:** use clear key indicators in all action plans to make it easier to monitor their implementation and to verify the success of the activities.
- **Solution focus:** Highlight the details of the CAF activity in terms of concrete steps to be taken, as well as the methodological approach, responsible persons, timeframe and internal resources needed in the improvement plans.
- **Partner analysis:** After a certain period of time, the Agency staff should carry out a formal assessment of the partnership by analysing it.
- **Training and competences:** The Agency's management should continue to support staff in acquiring new competences needed to better develop the Agency and improve its work.
- **Involvement:** In the coming period, the Agency should continue to involve its key stakeholders in the process of (re)designing the current and future services it will deliver. This applies in particular to the intensive cooperation with the sectoral trade unions.
- **Visualisation of social responsibility:** The Agency's services are in line with social responsibility, but further communication with key stakeholders would do well to emphasise this aspect.

The "Effective CAF-User" label has been awarded:



The "Effective CAF-User" label has not been awarded:



DocuSigned by:

*Kenan Avdagić*

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*Dalibor Copic*

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## 2 Part 2: Self-assessment process feedback

### The self-assessment process general notes:

The Republic Agency for the Peaceful Settlement of Labour Disputes is a separate organisation in the public administration system of the Republic of Serbia, whose main task is to work in the field of peaceful settlement of individual and collective labour disputes and to raise awareness among citizens about this method of dispute resolution. The Agency's management proactively promotes quality management, not only in its own work processes, but also among other public administration organisations in the Republic of Serbia.

### Step 1 – Deciding on the manner to organize and plan the self-assessment

#### Strengths

- The CAF model was selected following a presentation organised by the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government of the Republic of Serbia (MDULS);
- The Agency's management played a proactive role and was very committed to the implementation of this tool;
- A detailed Decision regarding the CAF implementation was prepared (Decision No 119-01-3/2022-01 of 28.1.2022) – appointment of a working group for self-assessment, appointment of a CAF coordinator – Dragana Andonovska;
- The Decision was posted on the bulletin board for all staff;
- Agreement was signed between the Agency and the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government of the Republic of Serbia (28 January 2022) specifying the objective of CAF implementation in the Agency, the mentoring and support plan, the obligations and the duration of the self-assessment process. On the basis of this, the Agency has been supported in the CAF implementation by the European Union (EU) Public Administration Reform Project under the Sector Reform Agreement – EU4PAR;
- The CAF 2020 Guidelines and the traditional scoring method were used for the self-assessment;
- For the purpose of self-assessment, the above-mentioned project has created a web application for MDULS, which is used by all administrative institutions in Serbia wishing to implement CAF.

#### Improvement potential

Activities were carried out in: **[Mark in gray]**

very limited way	limited way	acceptable way	satisfactory way	extraordinary way
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## Step 2 – Informing about the self-assessment project

### Strengths

- The communication plan was made with very clear elements such as the message content, the target group, the responsibility/coordinator, the communication channel and the timeframe;
- The organisation is very small, having 9 employees in total, there have been no problems in internal communication, regular meetings are held (attended by all employees) where everyone is informed about everything;
- The information on the CAF self-assessment published on the Agency's website included three pieces of information, and the Agency uses a large number of social networks to communicate, where information is shared, including information on CAF;
- The Click-Up project management application was used as an intranet for CAF, through which all staff had all the information about the CAF implementation process;
- The Agency's Director was involved in the whole CAF implementation process and had all the information, while being proactive and supporting all staff in new ideas and in the implementation of the activities already undertaken.

### Improvement potential

- Stakeholders were not sufficiently informed about the CAF implementation processes, as well as about the activities that constitute improvements resulting from the CAF implementation, so in the new cycle, attention should be paid to this segment and better communication with key stakeholders should be ensured about introducing quality management tools through different communication channels.

Activities were carried out in: **[Mark in gray]**

very limited way	limited way	acceptable way	satisfactory way	extraordinary way
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### Step 3 – Create one or more self-assessment groups

#### Strengths

- The Agency has set up a self-assessment team, whose tasks were assigned in the Founding Decision and in the contract with MDULS;
- The organisation belongs to the micro-organisations group and all but the Director were members of the group, i.e. eight persons;
- The members of the group have the critical qualities to see the organisation from different perspectives, they know the organisation very well based on their work experience;
- The group was organised and coherent with all supporting documents – agendas, reports, etc.

#### Improvement potential

- The Director was present at the first two workshops (he was not a formal member of the working group), but did not participate in the third workshop (development of an improvement plan). The advice for the next cycle is that (if he/she wishes) the Director should also be a formal member of the self-evaluation working group.

Activities were carried out in: **[Mark in gray]**

very limited way	limited way	acceptable way	satisfactory way	extraordinary way
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### Step 4 – Organizing the training

#### Strengths

- The EU4PAR project with international experts provided training for the Task Force and the Director;
- The training lasted three days,
- All members of the working group were present;
- Tihana Puzić (BiH) and Goran Paštrović were the main lecturers, having international experience in quality management, including the CAF model;
- The experts were also supported by Marko Novaković from the EU4PAR project.
- The experts at the training were experienced and professional.

#### Improvement potential

- -

Activities were carried out in: **[Mark in gray]**

very limited way	limited way	acceptable way	satisfactory way	extraordinary way
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## Step 5 – Conducting a self-assessment

### Strengths

- The CAF self-assessment was carried out in accordance with the CAF guidelines at all stages (input collection, input aggregation, consensus building, scoring);
- The members of the self-assessment team used the system developed for MDULS for CAF (on-line system) and individually prepared each entry of strengths, areas for improvement, improvement activities and evaluation proposal;
- The Consensus Workshop was prepared with high quality input documents;
- Consensus was reached and scoring was carried out;
- All necessary resources were provided to the staff;
- The workshop was organised during the weekend (non-working days) to avoid the Agency's service users being deprived of its services).

### Improvement potential

- In the next cycle, there could be a rotation of the CAF implementation coordinator to give the organisation a different perspective, but also to increase the competences of the staff.
- As the Agency is a micro-organisation, perhaps in the next cycle, before the self-assessment, they should adapt the questionnaire to their needs to make it useful in the Agency.
- In the self-assessment's next cycle, before the actual process, it is necessary to collect the basic documents and to provide them to the working group or to indicate in some way where these documents are located and to ensure their accessibility.

Activities were carried out in: **[Mark in gray]**

Very limited way	Limited way	acceptable way	satisfactory way	extraordinary way
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## Step 6 – Preparation of a report describing the results of the self-assessment

### Strengths

- The report is prepared in a very clear and understandable manner, i.e. in concise language;
- The structure of the document itself is clearly and accurately presented, and the whole self-assessment process is visible from the document itself;
- The results of the self-assessment are identified;
- The structure of the Report includes an introduction with CAF background information, the CAF Implementation Agreement with MDULS (defining the composition of the working group and the dynamics of the activities, an overview of the overall results (scores) by sub-criteria according to the consensus (scale from 0 to 100), tables presenting the strengths, improvement areas and improvement activities by each sub-criterion, a map of the key stakeholders (actors), as well as a summary and recommendations;
- All proposed improvement actions are clearly documented and obtained by consensus;
- The structure and transparency of the Report allow for easy comparison of scores, strengths, improvement areas and improvement actions with future reports from the CAF self-assessment process.

### Improvement potential

- In the second cycle, the Agency should better promote that the self-assessment is carried out as one of the steps towards improving the Agency's work. This should particularly be presented through the website or other communication channel to the key stakeholders.
- The management of organisation should not be able to comment on or change the results of the self-assessment (although this has not happened in practice).

Activities were carried out in: **[Mark in gray]**

Very limited way	limited way	acceptable way	satisfactory way	extraordinary way
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### 3 Part 3: CAF Improvement Plan Feedback

#### CAF Improvement plan general notes:

The improvement plan is designed in an understandable manner. However, there is sometimes a lack of clear articulation and detail of the activities to be carried out, clear responsibilities and the internal resources required. In particular, this could help to better prioritise and implement CAF activities without affecting daily tasks and procedures. The implementation of the Plan was monitored through the Click-Up application. Rapid achievements have been made, while most activities are in the final stages of implementation.

#### Step 7 – Development of the Improvement Plan based on the accepted self-assessment report

##### Strengths

- All activities allocated are divided into the following categories: monitoring and evaluation, training, partnership management, communication, strategic management, visibility;
- 11 quick achievements and 11 long-term activities were selected;
- The activities are linked, i.e. integrated into the Agency's medium-term planning;
- A special workshop was organised for the elaboration of the Action Plan, which was attended by all members of the working group – the Agency Director did not attend this workshop.

##### Improvement potential

- Involve the Agency's Director in the next self-assessment, in addition to the members of the self-assessment working group.
- Elaborate on the activities in more detail, giving concrete implementation steps, how to implement them, timeframe, responsibility and internal resource requirements (if it is not possible to know the exact budget needed for implementing an activity, then it should be deleted, and a recommendation to enter the necessary staff in man/day format, e.g. how long does it take for an Agency staff member to carry out an activity).
- In the next preparation of the Improvement Plan, it is recommended to enter indicators to monitor the implementation, i.e. to check what has been done, as there are none in the current Plan and it is not possible to see how a given step in the implementation has been completed. (E.g. if we are talking about a strategic document, the indicator would be a document produced/document adopted/document published on the site, etc.).

Activities were carried out in: **[Mark in gray]**

Very limited way	Limited way	Acceptable way	Satisfactory way	Extraordinary way
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## Step 8 – Informing about the Improvement Plan

### Strengths

- No written document has been produced for this process alone, i.e. the Improvement Plan, but the Communication Plan produced for the entire CAF cycle is generally used;
- Communication within the Agency is mainly managed through regular weekly meetings;
- As it is a micro-organisation, all staff attend the meetings;
- All staff are aware of the Improvement Plan;
- In addition to the meetings, all communication on the Improvement Plan is done via the "Click-Up" project management application, which is used by all staff;
- A person is designated to coordinate the work or administrative tasks in Click-Up;
- The entire Improvement Plan has been entered in Click-Up and the status of each activity is available to all in real time;
- Improvement Plan activities have been communicated to key stakeholders and are part of multiple projects (e.g. ILO, GIZ))

### Improvement potential

- 

Activities were carried out in: **[Mark in gray]**

Very limited way	Limited way	Acceptable way	Satisfactory way	Extraordinary way
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## Step 9 – Improvement Plan Implementation

### Strengths

- The Improvement Plan contains the persons responsible for implementation and deadlines;
- Quick achievements have been implemented (two activities have been merged into one), so that a total of nine quick achievements have been implemented in full, and one is of a continuous nature;
- One activity has been fully implemented, while the others are in their final stages, in particular the sub-activities identified;
- All staff members are involved in the promotion process, i.e. the names of the persons identified as responsible for the implementation of each activity in the Improvement Plan document are indicated in the Improvement Plan document;
- The Agency has used the Click-Up capabilities to measure and monitor the status of the Improvement Plan implementation and to communicate this to all staff and management;
- Meetings are held every 2 months to report on the implementation of the Improvement Plan.

### Improvement potential

- The Agency is a small organisation and it is noticeable that in the process of implementing the Improvement Plan, the staff have come up with more ideas (underlining their progressive innovation), which is good, but this results in a greater engagement of the Agency's human resources, which could lead to work overload and the phenomenon of "burn-out" among the staff. Therefore, the Agency is advised to focus on priority activities and, once these have been carried out, to pursue new ideas and projects.
- The lack of indicators for verification in the Improvement Plan, so in the next cycle, the verification indicators in the Improvement Plan should be highlighted in order to facilitate a more systematic monitoring of implementation.

Activities were carried out in: **[Mark in gray]**

Very limited way	Limited way	Acceptable way	Satisfactory way	Extraordinary way
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#### 4 Part 4: Maturity feedback according to TQM principles

Out of the eight principles of excellence, for the in-depth analysis of this report the Agency has chosen to focus on citizens/users and developing partnerships. The CAF feedback experts concluded that the Agency had identified a certain level of maturity in these two principles. In particular, clear communication with stakeholders stands out, while the emphasis is on communication with citizens as potential users of the Agency's services. The Agency also signs cooperation agreements with some partners and implements a large number of informal partnerships. As regards the other principles of excellence, the CAF feedback experts found that most of them (five principles) had reached the initiation level.

##### Focus on citizens/users

##### Strengths

- The Agency has launched more social media accounts as one of the ways to bring the Agency's work closer to citizens;
- A 24/7 SOS phone has been set up;
- As a result of the CAF, a suggestion form for improving the Agency's work has been published on the website, which can be filled in by any citizen – 20 suggestions for improvement have been made so far in the coordination process;
- One of the above suggestions is the launch of an online procedure on the Agency's website;
- A specific smartphone app was developed for initiating procedure in the Agency;
- An ongoing, open-ended survey on satisfaction with the Agency's work is being carried out;
- The possibility of on-line checking the status of a procedure initiated by a citizen is available on the Agency's website;
- The option of posting or sending questions to the Agency is available on the website;
- The Agency's procedures are highly illustrated on the website in order to explain its work to citizens;
- A video was produced and placed on the website as an educational tool for all citizens who wish to initiate procedures with the Agency;
- A survey on the satisfaction of key stakeholders with the Agency's services was carried out (eight organisations were contacted and all submitted their responses) and an action plan for this survey is being prepared;
- A number of meetings have been organised with key stakeholders, as well as with a wider circle of interested parties.

##### Improvement potential

- Communicate results with key stakeholders to the wider public;
- Involve more key stakeholders, such as trade unions, in surveys on satisfaction with service delivery.

The organization achieved:	Initiation level not achieved	Initiation level achieved	Realization level	The organization achieved:
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## Developing partnerships

### Strengths

- The Agency has signed three formal partnership agreements in the last year;
- Agreements have been signed with academia and NGOs;
- Online workshops with student collaborators have been organised;
- A large number of informal partnerships have been achieved;
- The Agency's management is proactive in seeking new partnerships, but often sticks to informal implementation of such partnerships;
- Meetings are held with a large number of partners;
- Each partnership and cooperation is discussed at the meetings.
- Important participation in international professional events,
- High level of cooperation with organisations of the same or similar jurisdiction in the Western Balkans region, especially through the ILO.

### Improvement potential

- There is a need to better define, as well as strategically decide in the coming period, who the Agency will seek as partners and focus on those entities;
- As no formal evaluation of partnerships has been carried out, it is proposed to analyse both formal and informal partnerships in order to get a clearer picture of the direction in which cooperation should continue in the future.;

The organization achieved:	Initiation level not achieved	Initiation level achieved	Realization level	The organization achieved:
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## 5 Part 5: Evaluation profile

Evaluation profile (columns 1 and 2)	1	2	3	4	5
The activities were carried out in ...	Very limited way	Limited way	Acceptable way	Satisfactory way	Extraordinary way
Step 1 – Deciding on the manner to organize and plan the self-assessment (SA).					x
Step 2 – Informing about the self-assessment project.			x		
Step 3 – Creating one or more self-assessment groups.				x	
Step 4 – Organizing the training.					x
Step 5 – Conducting a self-assessment.				x	

Step 6 – Preparing a report describing the self-assessment results				X	
Step 7 – Developing the Improvement Plan based on the accepted self-assessment report.			X		
Step 8 – Informing about the Improvement Plan.					X
Step 9 – Implementing the Improvement Plan.				X	
Minimum score (including 3 steps with 4 points) = 28	Points: 37				

8 principles of excellence (Column 3)	Maturity level			
	O	I	R	M
1. Result orientation		X		
2. Focus on citizens/users			X	
3. Leadership and constancy of purpose		X		
4. Processes and facts management			X	
5. Development and involvement of people		X		
6. Continuous innovation and progress		X		
7. Partnerships development			X	
8. Social responsibility		X		
All eight principles must reach at least the introductory stage (I).				



# ReSPA

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