

Delivering Reform Through Effective Governance

By Cooperation and Development Institute

The Reform and Growth Facility (RGF) is the newest EU financial framework supporting Albania, on its path for EU membership by 2030.

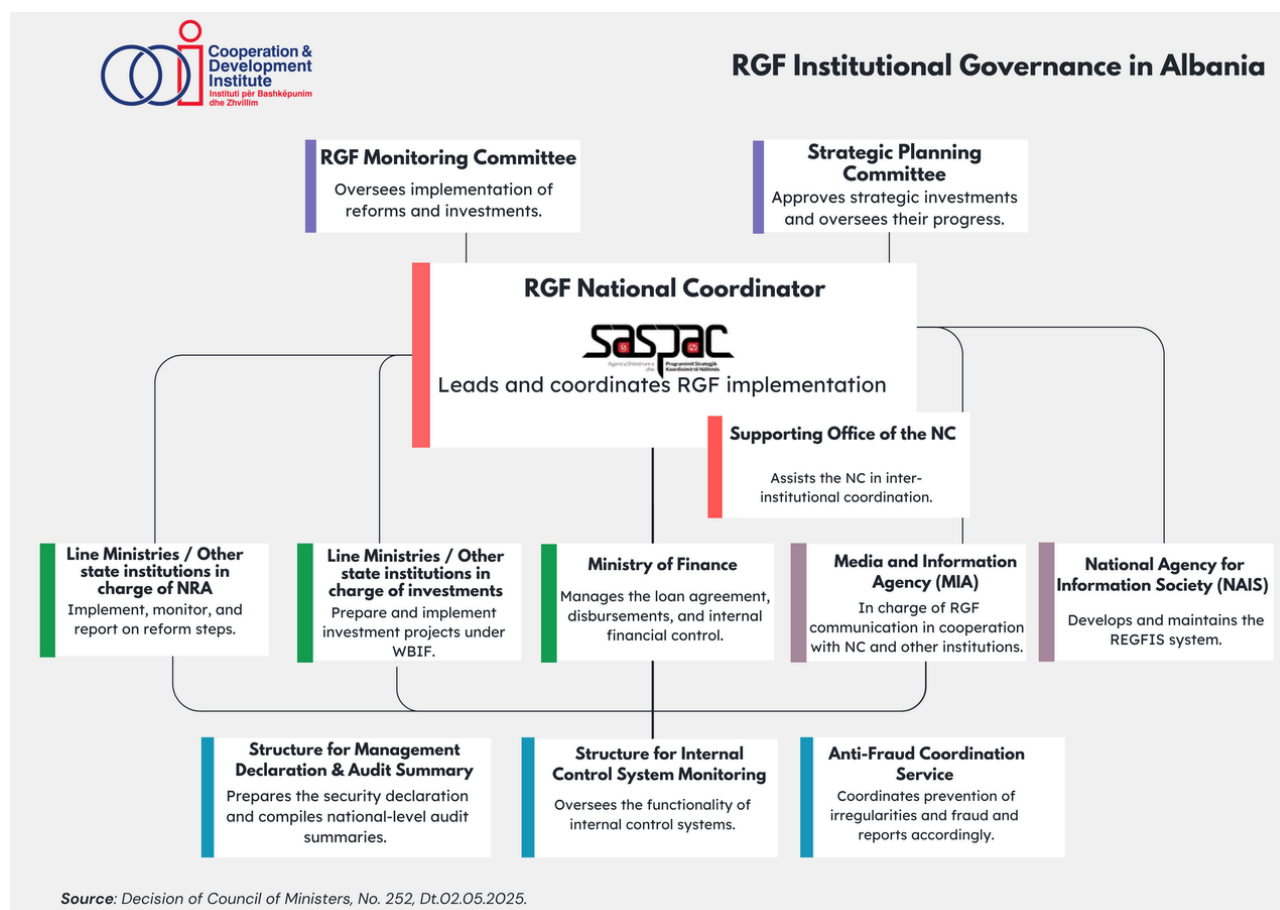
But the recently established Reform and Growth Facility is not solely about financial support – it's also a test of country's readiness when facing membership obligations. This is why more than its impact, what counts is how that RGF support is delivered, how the reforms and governance mechanisms are designed, and specifically how they are implemented. Differently from IPA, RGF prepares Albania's institutions, policymakers, and societal actors for what happens after EU membership.

Seizing the opportunity: reforming for EU membership

Although the Reform and Growth Facility spans just over four years, it represents a strategic opportunity for the country to strengthen institutional governance – including the capacities, standards, and skills needed to effectively engage with EU performance-based instruments. This is not just about meeting short-term goals but about laying the groundwork for EU membership obligations. In this optic, raising domestic governance standards is not optional – it's essential.

The way the RGF budget is managed becomes particularly significant for the candidate country, as it directly shapes the domestic design, operation, control and anti-fraud mechanisms. All this cycle must be almost identical to EU's [RRE mechanism](#) before membership happens.

At the heart of the [organizational structure](#) for the implementation of the Reform and Growth Facility (RGF) in Albania is the RGF National Coordinator (SASPAC). SASPAC is tasked with leading and coordinating the implementation of reforms and investments under the RGF. This role mirrors the functions typically assigned to the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) coordinators in EU Member States, who are responsible for overseeing the strategic and operational aspects of the EU-funded Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).



The recently adopted Albanian framework includes a high-level political coordination through the Prime Minister's Office and from the Strategic Planning Committee. This format mimics the centralized RRF governance of many EU countries, where ministries or prime ministerial departments lead the RRF process ensuring coherence with national priorities.

Innovations in Albania's RGF: inclusive governance and digital monitoring

A key innovation in Albania's model is the RGF Monitoring Committee (RGF MC). Its role is to guarantee transparency, accountability, and stakeholder participation – a feature that varies widely in RRF governance across the EU. While some EU Member States have formalized civil society involvement in monitoring processes, others have opted for limited inclusiveness. Albania RGF MC includes civil society as fully-fledged actors.

The next innovation in Albania's Reform and Growth Facility is its integration of digital governance tools. Albania's RGF will rely on the REGFIS system (managed by National Agency for Information Society - NAIS) for electronic monitoring, mirroring the digital reporting tools used in EU Member States under the RRF. In comparison, the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance and the State General Accounting Office have developed the ReGiS system.

The Italian ReGiS, allows central and territorial administrations, offices and structures involved in implementation to fulfil the obligations of monitoring, reporting and control of the measures and projects financed by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). The System, in addition to representing a national hub of interoperability with institutional databases for the control and certification of data, has been defined to start a process towards a complete digitization of the entire process of management of public funds and investments. Albanian REGFIS will embed IA to the above.

Albania's REGFIS may boost institutional capacity, ensure transparency and alignment with EU norms, and serve as a training ground for future management of EU funds post-accession. The system is expected to deliver accountability, digitalization, and evidence-based policymaking – and be tailored to the country's institutional maturity.

To conclude, the Albanian RGF governance framework introduces a new "demand-driven and performance-based" governance design of an EU instrument implemented in Albania. It creates space for social actors to directly engage in the Instrument's Monitoring Committee. Compared to IPA, it emphasizes national ownership and commitment to the Reform Agenda by country's stakeholders. It is this increased ownership and commitment that has created a propice ground for all stakeholders allowing for the publication of the first [RGF Scoreboard](#) in the region by social actors.

This policy brief has been informed and supported by the project "Increasing Albanian Civic Engagement Footprint in the Growth Plan," implemented by the Cooperation and Development Institute and supported by the Dutch Embassy in Albania.

Through this initiative, CDI provides technical input, research, and policy recommendations to support the consolidation of the RGF governance and the RGF Coordinator. The project will contribute in the coming months to strengthening institutional capacities and ensuring a more transparent and inclusive implementation of the Reform Agenda.