



MECHANISMS FOR IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF FINANCIAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND ALLOCATION IN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Toshpulatov Farrukhbek Asronbek ugli
Independent Researcher at the Research Center
“Scientific Foundations and Problems of the Development
of the Economy of Uzbekistan” under TSUE
ORCID: 0009-0008-2994-3308

ABSTRACT	KEY WORDS
This study examines how non-profit organizations can improve the efficiency of financial resource mobilization and allocation when funding is fragmented across public grants, private donations, sponsorship, membership-related receipts and own-source income. The article combines an international literature review with an institutional-financial analysis of Uzbekistan’s current civil-society funding architecture and administrative data from eight completed public grant competitions in 2026. The selected calls had a combined announced budget of UZS 7.065 billion, attracted 517 applications and supported 46 applications, producing an aggregate support rate of 8.9%. The dispersion across calls was substantial: support rates ranged from 4.6% in the national competition to 35.7% in Surkhandarya, while applications per UZS 1 billion of announced budget ranged from 19.3 to 172.5. These differences indicate that access to financial resources is shaped not only by the nominal volume of funding, but also by competition intensity, transaction costs, restrictions on use, and the organization’s capacity to combine different sources. To address this problem, the study proposes an integrated four-stage mechanism consisting of source screening, concentration control, transaction-cost adjustment, and allocation balance. A Net Resource Efficiency coefficient is introduced to distinguish nominal financing from the amount effectively available after resource-mobilization and compliance costs. Revenue concentration is monitored separately through the Herfindahl–Hirschman Index rather than treated as automatically harmful, reflecting recent evidence that diversification does not always increase financial capacity. The proposed mechanism is designed as a practical decision framework for non-profit managers and public funders and does not rely on forecasting assumptions.	Non-profit organizations; financial resources; resource mobilization; allocation efficiency; transaction costs; revenue concentration; public grants; operating reserves.

Introduction

Non-profit organizations occupy a distinctive position in modern economies because they combine public-purpose missions with financial structures that differ from both commercial firms and budgetary institutions. They do not distribute residual earnings to owners, yet they must continuously obtain liquid resources, cover operating costs, finance programmes, comply with donor restrictions and preserve sufficient flexibility to respond to shocks. This makes financial resource formation and allocation a central management problem rather than a purely accounting function. Financial resources that are nominally available can differ materially from resources that are effectively usable once application costs, reporting requirements, matching conditions, time commitments and restrictions on expenditure are taken into account.

Classical nonprofit finance research has long emphasized financial vulnerability, revenue stability and the consequences of dependence on a limited number of funding sources. Tuckman and Chang (1991) conceptualized vulnerability in terms of an organization's ability to maintain services when a financial shock occurs. Carroll and Stater (2009) showed that revenue diversification can reduce volatility, while Bowman (2011) distinguished short-term financial resilience from long-term financial capacity. Later research complicated the simple assumption that 'more diversification is always better'. Qu (2019), applying portfolio logic, found that concentration and portfolio risk are not mechanically identical, and Lu, Lin and Wang (2019) concluded from a meta-analysis that diversification has limited or context-dependent effects on vulnerability and capacity. These findings suggest that the quality, cost and usability of a source may matter as much as the number of sources.

A second strand of literature focuses on transaction costs. Grants and donations are not costless resources: organizations spend staff time on searching, applications, due diligence, contracting, monitoring, reporting and audit. Thornton (2010) demonstrates that grant restrictions are closely connected to contracting and monitoring costs. OECD (2024) similarly notes that flexible funding can reduce compliance and transaction costs for both funders and grantees, whereas highly earmarked funding may increase administrative burden and reduce the organization's freedom to reallocate resources to emerging needs. Thus, a resource that appears attractive in nominal terms may generate a lower net contribution to mission delivery than a smaller but more flexible source.

The institutional context in Uzbekistan has also changed rapidly. Presidential Decree PF-124 of 26 August 2024 strengthened the system of state support for civil society institutions, established a unified electronic platform for subsidies, grants and social orders, and temporarily reduced selected tax rates by 50% for projects financed from the Public Fund between 1 October 2024 and 1 October 2027. The same reform package expanded opportunities for ministries and agencies to commission social projects and promoted the digitalization of application and monitoring procedures. The unified platform now provides public information on grant calls, application volumes and award status, creating a useful administrative-data source for examining competition and allocation patterns.

Despite these developments, the practical financial-management question remains unresolved: how should a non-profit organization select funding sources, control concentration risk, account for the real cost of mobilizing funds, and allocate the resulting resources between programme delivery, support functions and reserves? Existing research tends to address these elements separately. Studies of diversification focus on stability; studies of transaction costs focus on restrictions and contracting; studies of reserves focus on liquidity; and public grant systems primarily emphasize eligibility and

project selection. A practical framework that connects these dimensions can improve both organizational decisions and public funding design.

The purpose of this article is therefore to develop a financially grounded mechanism for improving the efficiency of resource mobilization and allocation in non-profit organizations. The study answers three questions. First, what does recent administrative evidence from Uzbekistan reveal about competition for public grant resources? Second, which financial indicators can help organizations distinguish nominal funding from effective funding? Third, how can source selection, concentration control, transaction-cost adjustment and internal allocation be integrated into one management sequence? The study does not forecast future funding volumes; instead, it focuses on current institutional conditions, observable grant competition data and scenario-based financial diagnostics.

Literature Review

Financial vulnerability research provides the first relevant analytical foundation. Tuckman and Chang (1991) proposed criteria related to equity balance, revenue concentration, administrative costs and operating margin. Greenlee and Trussel (2000) later used financial ratios to predict vulnerability. Bowman (2011) argued that capacity and sustainability should be examined across different time horizons: liquidity protects near-term operations, while long-term sustainability requires preserving the productive capacity of organizational assets. These approaches are useful for diagnosing financial health but do not directly answer how an organization should compare the effective value of alternative funding sources at the moment of mobilization.

Transaction-cost economics offers a second theoretical foundation. Thornton (2010) shows that grant restrictions create monitoring and enforcement costs and that the form of grant contracts responds to information asymmetry and expected opportunism. Paarlberg, Moulick and Van Puyvelde (2017) identify a two-stage allocation logic in grantmaking: organizations are first screened for legitimacy, mission and financial performance, and then allocation decisions differentiate among eligible grantees. OECD (2024) brings these ideas into current philanthropic practice by emphasizing the trade-off between control and flexibility. Its evidence from more than 180 private philanthropic donors in 32 countries indicates that flexible funding remained relatively uncommon during 2016–2019, while recent large-foundation practice shows a gradual shift toward more flexible support. The report explicitly recommends considering compliance costs and administrative burden when designing funding agreements.

The role of operating reserves forms a third strand of literature. Calabrese (2013) shows that reserves allow nonprofit organizations to smooth mismatches between revenues and expenses and maintain programme output during fiscal shocks. Calabrese (2018) further examines whether reserves stabilize spending, reinforcing the idea that liquidity is not simply idle cash but a risk-management instrument. Recent evidence also highlights a dual effect: liquidity improves resilience, but excessive cash can generate higher overhead or weak financial discipline if not governed appropriately (Elvira-Lorilla, 2026). Therefore, the relevant question is not whether reserves are ‘good’ or ‘bad’, but how to establish an organization-specific allocation rule that protects continuity without crowding out programme delivery.

These literature streams converge on a common gap. Source diversity, transaction costs, concentration, reserves and programme allocation are usually studied separately, while nonprofit managers must manage them simultaneously. The present article addresses this gap by treating resource mobilization

and allocation as a connected sequence. The proposed mechanism does not attempt to create a single universal financial sustainability index. Instead, it uses several transparent indicators—competition pressure, concentration, transaction-cost-adjusted resource efficiency and allocation balance—so that each financial problem remains visible and interpretable.

2. Material and Methods

The study uses a structured institutional-financial analytical design. It combines: (i) review of peer-reviewed research on nonprofit finance, diversification, transaction costs and operating reserves; (ii) analysis of Uzbekistan's regulatory and digital funding architecture; (iii) descriptive analysis of completed 2026 public grant competitions published on the Unified Electronic Platform for Supporting Civil Society Institutions; and (iv) scenario-based financial calculations used to illustrate the proposed mechanism. No expert survey or forecast model is used, and no unobserved organization-level data are presented as empirical facts.

Three administrative indicators are calculated. The support rate (SR) is the number of supported applications divided by total applications. Competition intensity (CI) is the number of applications per UZS 1 billion of announced grant budget. Budget pressure per application (BPA) is the announced budget divided by the number of applications. These indicators do not measure project quality; they measure the financial environment in which organizations attempt to mobilize public resources.

SR = Supported applications / Total applications × 100

CI = Total applications / Announced budget (UZS billion)

BPA = Announced budget / Total applications

HHI = $\sum s_i^2$, where s_i is the share of funding source i in total financial resources

NRE = $(F - TC) / F$, where F is mobilized funding and TC is transaction and compliance costs

The Herfindahl–Hirschman Index is used only as a concentration diagnostic. A lower HHI indicates a more even distribution across funding sources, but the study does not assume that a lower HHI automatically means better financial performance. This is consistent with recent nonprofit finance research showing that diversification can lower volatility under some conditions while increasing complexity or producing limited gains in capacity under others (Qu, 2019; Lu, Lin & Wang, 2019).

The Net Resource Efficiency coefficient (NRE) is proposed to distinguish nominal funding from effectively usable funding. Transaction and compliance costs include the staff time and direct costs associated with searching for a funding opportunity, preparing an application, negotiation and contracting, financial reporting, audit, donor-specific monitoring, mandatory co-financing administration and other costs that arise only because the source is mobilized. If an organization receives UZS 100 million but spends resources equivalent to UZS 12 million to obtain and manage that funding, the NRE equals 0.88. The coefficient is intentionally simple so that organizations can apply it with internal accounting or time-cost estimates.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Competition for public grant resources in Uzbekistan

Table-1. Selected completed public grant competitions in Uzbekistan, 2026

Grant call	Budget, UZS bn	Applications	Supported	Support rate	Apps per UZS 1 bn
National 15/1-G/26	2.000	345	16	4.6%	172.5
Karakalpakstan 15/2-G/26	1.070	47	6	12.8%	43.9
Tashkent region branch 04/1-G/26	0.400	34	4	11.8%	85.0
Tashkent city 01/1-G/26	0.750	25	5	20.0%	33.3
Fergana 15/13-G/26	0.800	19	4	21.1%	23.8
Samarkand 07/1-G/26	0.540	20	2	10.0%	37.0
Surkhandarya 05/1-G/26	0.725	14	5	35.7%	19.3
Jizzakh 15/5-G/26	0.780	13	4	30.8%	16.7

Source: author's calculations based on the Unified Electronic Platform for Supporting Civil Society Institutions (ngo.gov.uz), application statuses accessed 11 September 2026. The eight selected calls had a combined announced budget of UZS 7.065 billion, 517 applications and 46 supported applications.

Table 1 shows pronounced differences in competition pressure across the eight selected calls. At the aggregate level, 46 of 517 applications were supported, producing an overall support rate of 8.9%. Support rates ranged from 4.6% in the national call to 35.7% in Surkhandarya; the corresponding rates were 30.8% in Jizzakh, 21.1% in Fergana, 20.0% in Tashkent city, 12.8% in Karakalpakstan, 11.8% in the Tashkent region branch and 10.0% in Samarkand. Competition intensity ranged from 172.5 applications per UZS 1 billion in the national call to 16.7 in Jizzakh. Figure 1 visualizes the same eight calls using the support-rate values reported in Table 1, making the differences in access conditions directly comparable.

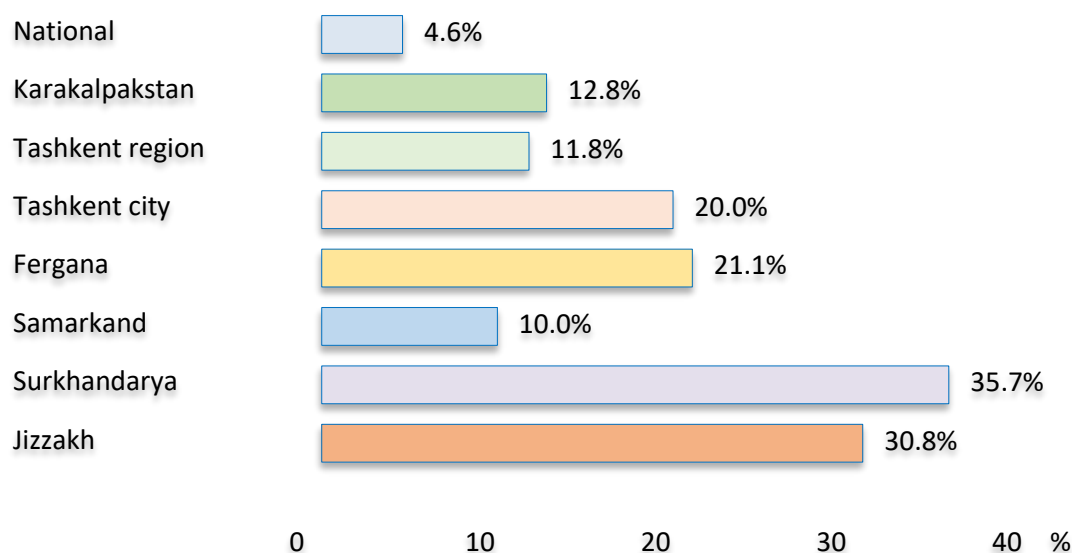


Figure-1. Support rates across the eight selected 2026 public grant competitions

The same pattern is visible in Figure 1: support rates vary substantially across the eight calls, indicating different levels of competition for available grant resources. This makes access and transaction costs relevant when evaluating the effective value of public funding. In this context, PF-124 is important in

two ways. The unified electronic platform can reduce search, document-submission and information costs through standardized procedures, while the temporary 50% reduction in specified personal income and social tax rates for projects financed from the Public Fund lowers part of implementation costs. Both measures increase the effective value of financing without increasing its nominal amount.

3.2. Source selection: from nominal availability to financial suitability

The first stage of the proposed mechanism is source screening. A nonprofit should not select a source solely because it offers the largest nominal amount. Each source should be assessed along four dimensions: stability, financial cost, accessibility and mission compatibility. Stability refers to the predictability and continuity of the source; cost includes explicit fees and implicit transaction costs; accessibility reflects eligibility, competition and application complexity; and mission compatibility reflects whether the source's restrictions allow the organization to finance its actual programme and organizational needs.

Table-2. Financial criteria for screening funding sources

Criterion	Financial meaning	Decision interpretation
Stability	Predictability of receipt and renewal; timing reliability	High score when cash flow is regular and contract duration is sufficient
Financial cost	Direct fundraising, compliance, reporting and co-financing costs	High score when total source-specific cost is low
Accessibility	Eligibility, competition, documentation and approval burden	High score when the organization has a realistic path to the source
Mission compatibility	Degree to which restrictions fit planned activities and real cost structure	High score when funds can be used without mission distortion

The screening approach is intentionally multi-criteria but not converted into a single universal score in this article. The reason is methodological: assigning one fixed set of weights to all nonprofit organizations would hide legitimate differences in mission, scale and operating model. A community organization with stable membership receipts may assign more importance to flexibility and local accessibility, while a capital-intensive organization may prioritize source size and duration. The recommended practice is to preserve each criterion separately and document management trade-offs rather than create an artificial precision that the available data cannot support.

3.3. Concentration control without mechanical diversification

After a source passes the screening stage, the organization should evaluate its effect on overall concentration. The HHI is useful because it summarizes the distribution of funding shares in one transparent measure. Yet the decision rule should not be 'minimize HHI at any cost'. A new funding source may lower concentration while increasing compliance burden, restricting programme flexibility or generating large matching requirements. Accordingly, HHI should be interpreted together with source-specific NRE and liquidity needs.

For illustration, a five-source structure in which one source accounts for 70% of total funding and the remaining four sources account for 10%, 10%, 5% and 5% produces an HHI of 0.515. By contrast, a

more balanced structure of 30%, 25%, 20%, 15% and 10% produces an HHI of 0.225. These examples are illustrative and are not estimates of the actual funding structure of Uzbekistan's NPOs.

The comparison shows why simply reporting the number of funding sources is insufficient. At the same time, a balanced mix is not automatically optimal: sources may be volatile, highly restricted or costly to administer. Concentration should therefore be treated as a risk signal that triggers financial review, rather than as an automatic rejection threshold.

3.4. Transaction-cost adjustment and net resource efficiency

The third stage adjusts mobilized funds for the costs created by the funding process. This is where the proposed NRE coefficient adds practical value. Conventional grant reporting usually records the grant as revenue and then records eligible project expenditure. It may not fully identify the organization-wide cost of obtaining and servicing the grant, especially senior management time, pre-award work, repeated applications, internal coordination and donor-specific systems. Transaction-cost economics predicts that restrictive contracts increase monitoring and enforcement costs; OECD (2024) similarly emphasizes that flexible funding can reduce grantee compliance costs. NRE makes this issue visible in a simple ratio.

Table-3. Sensitivity of Net Resource Efficiency to source-specific transaction costs

Transaction and compliance costs as share of funding	NRE	Effective resources from 100 nominal units
0%	1.00	100 monetary units
5%	0.95	95 monetary units
10%	0.90	90 monetary units
15%	0.85	85 monetary units
20%	0.80	80 monetary units
25%	0.75	75 monetary units
30%	0.70	70 monetary units

PF-124 illustrates how public policy can improve NRE without increasing the nominal grant ceiling. The temporary reduction of specified tax rates decreases project implementation costs, while digital document exchange can reduce administrative time. From the perspective of financial management, both measures increase the amount of mission-relevant capacity generated by a given nominal grant. This is a more precise way to discuss support effectiveness than focusing solely on gross allocations.

3.5. Allocation balance: programme delivery, support costs and reserves

The fourth stage addresses internal allocation. Once resources have been mobilized, managers face a recurring trade-off between programme spending, organizational support costs and reserves. Public and donor systems often reward a high programme-expense share, but an excessively low allowance for support functions can weaken accounting, monitoring, staff development and infrastructure. Conversely, excessive overhead can reduce mission output. Operating reserves add a third dimension because current spending and future resilience compete for the same unrestricted resources.

The literature does not support a single universal 'correct' overhead or reserve ratio. Calabrese (2013; 2018) shows that reserves can stabilize programme spending, while Elvira-Lorilla (2026) shows that

excessive cash can also be associated with higher overhead. Therefore, the proposed mechanism uses an allocation corridor rather than a fixed normative percentage. Management should define a minimum liquidity reserve based on the timing and volatility of cash flows; calculate the full cost of programme delivery, including necessary support functions; and then allocate residual flexible resources between programme expansion and additional reserves. The corridor should be reviewed whenever source concentration or payment schedules change.

Table-4. Allocation components in the proposed mechanism

Allocation component	Content	Management rule
Programme resources	Direct mission activities and project delivery	Protect mission output; avoid underfunding full programme cost
Support/organizational costs	Finance, accounting, governance, IT, monitoring, staff support	Budget transparently; avoid hiding required support costs inside programme lines
Operating reserve	Liquid buffer for timing gaps, revenue shocks and continuity	Set a minimum target based on cash-flow volatility and payment timing, not a universal percentage
Unallocated flexibility	Resources not yet tied to a fixed line	Use for emerging needs, co-financing, or reserve replenishment under management rules

3.6. Integrated mechanism for resource mobilization and allocation

The proposed mechanism integrates the four analytical stages into a management sequence. Stage 1 screens funding opportunities before an application is submitted. Stage 2 evaluates how the source changes concentration and dependency. Stage 3 estimates effective resource value after transaction and compliance costs. Stage 4 allocates the resulting resources across programme delivery, support functions and reserves. The process is iterative: if monitoring shows that a source has become too costly, too restrictive or too dominant, the organization revises its future mobilization strategy.

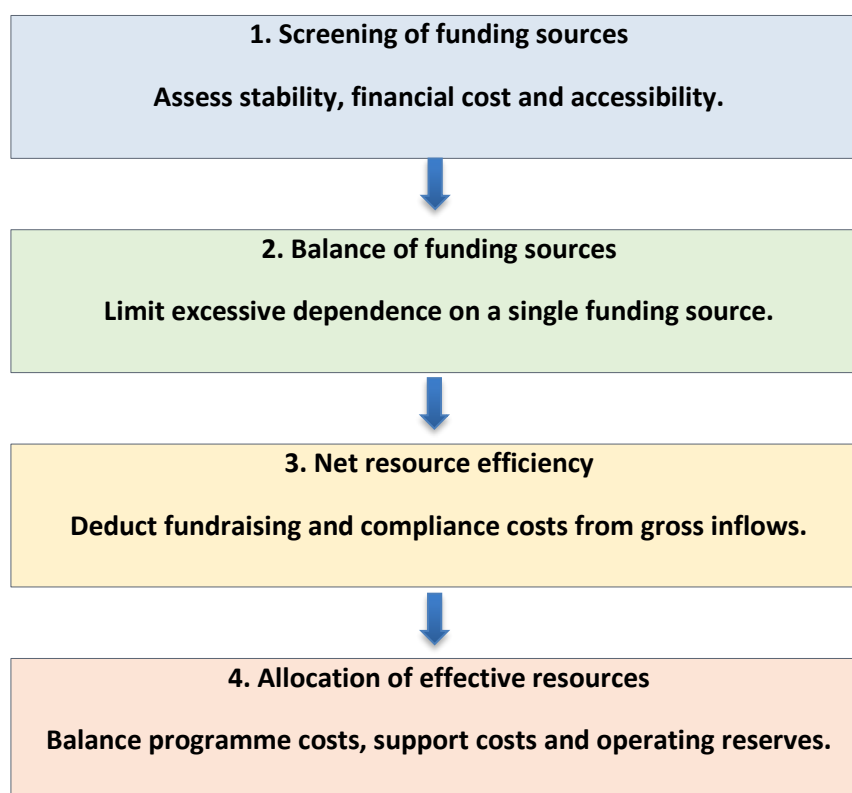


Figure-2. Proposed mechanism for mobilizing and allocating financial resources in non-profit organizations

The mechanism differs from a conventional diversification strategy in three respects. First, it begins with source suitability rather than source count. Second, it treats concentration as a diagnostic indicator rather than a universal target. Third, it recognizes that nominal funding can overstate financial value when compliance and mobilization costs are high. The framework therefore shifts the management question from ‘How much funding did the organization attract?’ to ‘How much usable financial capacity did each source create, how did it change dependency, and how was the resulting capacity allocated?’

For public funders, the same framework has implications for grant design. Competition intensity data show that some calls attract far more applications relative to available resources than others. Where competition is extremely high, repeated application costs can become a sector-level inefficiency. Digital pre-screening, two-stage calls, short concept notes, reusable organizational documents and multi-year funding for proven grantees can reduce unnecessary transaction costs. Paarlberg et al. (2017) provide evidence for the usefulness of staged allocation, while OECD (2024) highlights the value of streamlined applications and reporting in flexible funding arrangements. Uzbekistan’s unified platform creates the institutional infrastructure to apply such approaches more systematically.

4. Conclusion

This article examined the efficiency of financial resource mobilization and allocation in non-profit organizations through the combined lenses of competition, concentration, transaction costs and internal allocation. Administrative data from eight completed public grant competitions in Uzbekistan in 2026 show that UZS 7.065 billion of announced funding attracted 517 applications and supported 46, an aggregate support rate of 8.9%. Competition intensity varied sharply across calls, demonstrating that access conditions can materially change the effective cost of public funding for applicants.

The study proposes a four-stage mechanism: source screening, concentration control, transaction-cost adjustment and allocation balance. Source screening compares stability, cost, accessibility and mission compatibility. Concentration is monitored through HHI without assuming that maximum diversification is always optimal. The proposed Net Resource Efficiency coefficient distinguishes nominal funding from resources effectively available after transaction and compliance costs. Allocation balance then links programme expenditure, organizational support and operating reserves to mission continuity and liquidity risk.

The main practical implication is that nonprofit financial management should move beyond gross fundraising totals. A financially attractive source is one that is accessible, sufficiently stable, reasonably flexible, low enough in transaction cost, and compatible with the organization's resource structure. Similarly, public funding efficiency should be assessed not only by the amount disbursed but also by the sector-wide costs of applying, reporting and monitoring. Uzbekistan's unified electronic platform and the 2024–2027 tax preferences create favorable institutional conditions for reducing these costs.

The study has limitations. The grant-call sample covers selected completed competitions from one financial year and does not represent the full financing structure of all non-profit organizations. The transaction-cost calculations are scenario-based because organization-level time-cost data are not publicly available. Future empirical research should collect standardized organization-level information on application costs, reporting time, source shares, payment delays and reserve coverage. Such data would allow direct testing of how the proposed indicators relate to programme continuity and resource-use efficiency. Importantly, this extension would remain an evaluation exercise rather than a forecast of future funding volumes.

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