

The Nigeria Governors Forum's Coordination Role in the Containment of COVID-19 in Nigeria from 2020 – 2021

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 posed significant health, social, and economic challenges globally, with Nigeria experiencing profound disruptions across sectors. This study examines the strategic coordination role of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) in achieving a harmonized subnational response to COVID-19 and identifies key lessons for future health emergencies. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, drawing on secondary data from NGF communiqués, policy documents, coordination frameworks, and reports from the Presidential Task Force (PTF) and the NGF. The analysis was guided by the multi-level governance and collaborative action framework to explore how the NGF enhanced information flow, fostered policy coherence across states, and improved resource allocation during the pandemic.

Findings reveal that the NGF served as a critical coordination bridge between the federal government and the 36 states. Through its Secretariat, the Forum led the PTF's State Government Relations Pillar and established a COVID-19 Delivery Unit to support implementation tracking, state planning, and resource mobilization. NGF advocacy facilitated equitable allocation of ₦50 billion and \$100 million to states, while state-level implementation of Incident Action Plans ranged between 73% and 92%. The NGF also institutionalized accountability mechanisms via civil society monitoring and strengthened risk communication through engagement with state commissioners of information.

Nigeria's experience underscores that effective emergency response in federal systems is achievable through structured multi-level governance. The NGF's model demonstrates the value of trusted intergovernmental platforms in aligning state and national actions, ensuring equity, and promoting accountability in crisis coordination.

1 Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) on January 30, 2020, declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) after which it became a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, (1, 2). The first case of the disease in Nigeria was reported on the 27th of February 2020 (3, 4). Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in Nigeria, emergency response was activated at its highest level by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19, which was inaugurated on March 17, 2020, to oversee the country's multisectoral intergovernmental response to the pandemic (5, 6).

The Presidential Taskforce had nine functional pillars, each of which was led by a different government agency with mandate and oversight for their pillar. These pillars are epidemiology and surveillance, case management, point of entry, laboratory, infection prevention and control, risk communication and community engagement, state coordination and government relations, resource mobilisation and security, logistics and mass care.

Studies have explored the pandemic response strategies in different countries and socio-political settings (federal and unitary) and found that governments responded differently to the COVID-19 pandemic (7). Countries running single-party unitary governance systems like Vietnam were more proactive and had better results than countries running federal systems (e.g., Germany, Switzerland) that most times possess heterogeneity in their processes (8). Some scholars have identified federalism as an impediment to rapid, focused and coordinated crisis response (8, 9). Effective coordination ensures successful implementation when constituent units (states) implement federal decisions (10). Coordination is defined as strategies and instruments the government uses to coordinate organisations or programmes within the public sector (11).

However, Nigeria as a federal state, was able to achieve a coordinated response strategy across its 36 states, championed in part by the Nigeria Governors' Forum that ultimately saw the World Health Organisation ranking her fourth in global COVID-19 response (12). The Nigeria Governors' Forum is a non-partisan association of the elected governors of the country's 36 states to promote unity and good governance. The Forum is supported by a secretariat which is its technical and administrative arm. Staffed by a multidisciplinary team of technical experts working in several units, the Secretariat provides services around research, policy analysis and advisory, peer reviews, capacity building, knowledge management, and technical support to states. The Secretariat is also the collaborative organ of the Forum, and it maintains strategic relations with the legislature, federal ministries, departments and agencies, development partners and states (13). The non-partisan composition of the NGF and the multidisciplinary team of its Secretariat coupled with her overarching convening power across Nigeria placed the NGF in a strategic position to coordinate the COVID-19 pandemic response and intervention between the national and subnational levels (14). There are several publications on Nigeria's response strategies to the pandemic, but there is a paucity of information on the strategic role that the 36 States in Nigeria played in ensuring subnational coordination which contributed to the success of the nation's pandemic response strategy (4, 15, 16).

In this study, we aimed to describe the role of the NGF in Nigeria's COVID-19 response, demonstrate the successes recorded following the contribution of the NGF in Nigeria's COVID-19 response and enumerate the lessons learned from the NGF's role in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 in Nigeria. We used the multilevel governance and collaborative action framework to understand how the NGF's role in the COVID-19 response contributed to improving the information flow, harmonised state pandemic response strategy, and effective resource allocation which ultimately contributed to positive outcomes in Nigeria's COVID-19 response.

2 Methods

2.1 Study Design and Setting

We conducted a descriptive study that described the role of the Nigeria Governors Forum in Nigeria's COVID-19 response in the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) between 2020 and 2021. In

addition, we demonstrated the successes, and the lessons learned from the NGF coordination role in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 in the country.

2.2 Data Sources

Data sources include National Economic Council Reports, communique from the teleconference meetings of the NGF held during the pandemic from March to December 2020, terms of reference for establishing the NGF's coordinating structures, the reports from review meetings of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 and other coordinating platforms of the NGF between 2020 and 2021, midterm and end term reports of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 Response 2021.

Assessment reports from the tracking assessment conducted by a Civil Society Organisation, the Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON) which assessed the level of implementation of activities in the state Incidence Action Plans of Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, FCT, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe, Zamfara were also reviewed.

2.3 Data Analysis

To describe the coordinating role of the NGF in Nigeria's COVID-19 response (National and sub-national levels) we evaluated the reports and guidelines for the establishment and operation of the coordination structures created by the NGF categorising them based on the multi-level governance and collaborative action framework's components of leadership and coordination, resource mobilisation and support, leadership and advocacy.

We developed the multi-level governance and collaborative action framework building on the collaborative governance framework outlined by (17). We synthesized findings from PTF reports and the communique of NGF teleconference meetings between 2020 and 2021.

We examine the role of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) in facilitating these crucial aspects during the crisis, analysing the NGF's initiatives through the lens of the "multi-level governance and collaborative action for effective response" framework. The framework helped us understand the structure, function and intersections across the multi-coordination platforms and emphasises the importance of collaboration between different government tiers (federal, state) and highlights key components like information sharing, joint decision-making, and resource mobilisation.

We analysed the trends in COVID-19 pandemic response coordination by evaluating the level of implementation of the state incident action plans, using this as an indicator for the achievement of one of the framework's outcomes which is the harmonised response strategy. This was to demonstrate the successes recorded following the contribution of the NGF in Nigeria's COVID-19 response. In addition, we analysed the PTF midterm and end-term reports, as well as programme reports of the NGF to enable us to gain insights into the lessons learned from the NGF's role and identify potential areas for improvement in future multi-level governance responses.

3 RESULT

The coordination role of the NGF in Nigeria's COVID-19 response

The coordinating role of the NGF during Nigeria's COVID-19 response is described below which shows the interconnectedness of the various coordinating structures and the strategic position of the NGF Secretariat COVID-19 Delivery Unit that served as the nexus between the other structures. (Fig. 2)

3.1 Leadership and Coordination

The NGF employed various strategies to foster coordination and communication between federal and state governments on response to the COVID-19 outbreak in the country. This was through the establishment of various coordination platforms. This section describes the various coordination platforms, their roles and responsibilities, interconnectedness and flow of information.

3.1.1 National Economic Council Subcommittee. The National Economic Council (NEC) which the vice president of the nation chairs has the mandate to advise the president concerning the economic affairs of the federation, and on measures necessary for the coordination of the economic planning efforts or economic programmes of the various governments of the federation. Other members of the NEC are all state governors and the honourable ministers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In June 2020, NEC set up an ad-hoc Sub-Committee for COVID-19 that interfaced/liased with the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 on the modalities and process of lifting the national lockdown as well as re-opening the economy.

The Governors of Delta, Lagos, Kano, Anambra, Bauchi, Plateau and the Hon. Minister of FCT served in this Committee chaired by the Governor of Delta State. The NEC committee on COVID-19 response met 17 times between the time of inauguration and December 2020. This exemplifies the framework's focus on multi-level governance by bringing together federal and state actors for collaborative decision-making.

3.1.2 The Presidential Task Force State Government Relation Pillar. To achieve a single national response for the control of the pandemic, the state coordination and government relations pillar was established in March 2020 when the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 Response was inaugurated. The objective of the pillar was to ensure alignment and synergy between the activities of the various State Task Forces and the national response driven by the Presidential Task Force. The NGF Secretariat was tasked with the responsibility of ensuring effective communication and synergy between the PTF and the States Task Forces led by the governors or their appointees. This was to facilitate the buy-in of states into national strategies and interventions to ensure a unified pandemic response in the country, through supporting states in revenue mobilisation and effective utilisation of funds and supporting the resolution of state-level implementation challenges raised by the other pillars. This pillar was led by the Senior Health Advisor of the NGF Secretariat. This initiative aligns with the framework's emphasis on

information sharing and collaboration. It ensured alignment between state task forces and the national response, promoting a unified approach.

3.1.3 NGF Secretariat COVID-19 Delivery Unit. The NGF Secretariat created a COVID-19 delivery unit to provide coordinated support to state governors and their teams in the COVID-19 response. The mandate of the delivery unit was to track all coordination structures associated with the COVID-19 crisis response as they link to the sub-national level and map clear information flow channels and management of information, to enable decision-making to support state governments. The Delivery Unit was headed by the Executive Director of Strategy and Research with all heads of unit of the Secretariat as members. The Secretariat established a framework for interfacing with the subnational COVID-19 response teams (via the State COVID-19 Task Forces) and national structures particularly the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 (PTF), NEC Ad-Hoc Committee on COVID-19. The Secretariat leveraged the platform of the bi-weekly NGF meetings to engage with the governors and bring them up to date on COVID-19 response coordination efforts. In addition, the NGF Secretariat through the delivery unit provided support to states that required technical assistance in the implementation of their COVID-19 response plans across identified focus areas.

Aside from reaching out directly to senior government officials at the subnational level, the NGF Secretariat through its delivery unit also organised meetings between the PTF National COVID19 Response Coordination (NCRC) and senior stakeholders at the subnational level to reinforce implementation of pandemic response strategies at the subnational level. For instance, they organised series of meetings between the Incident Management Team of the NCRC with the honourable commissioners of health and their teams on the Hot Spot LGA strategy, which is a surveillance initiative conceptualized to identify areas with weak COVID-19 surveillance system, with the purpose of increasing the surveillance sensitivity. This aligns with the framework's concept of establishing clear communication channels to support informed decision-making at the state level.

3.2 Resource Mobilisation and Support

Through its multilevel governance approach, the NGF Secretariat played a crucial role in resource mobilisation for the states' COVID-19 response. Below are the key interventions NGF Secretariat put in place to achieve this.

3.2.1 Engagement with the federal government and World Bank to mobilise funding support for states.

After the release of COVID-19 support funds by the federal government to Lagos and Ogun states which were the epicentres of the outbreak, the NGF advocated to the then-president of the country and senior officials of the federal government to secure similar funding for the remaining states of the country. Ultimately, this advocacy led to the release of 50 billion naira across the 36 states. This showcases the framework's emphasis on collaboration between different government levels. The NGF's engagement with the federal government ensured a more coordinated approach to resource allocation, advocating for equitable distribution of funds beyond initial epicentres. The NGF also facilitated discussions with the

World Bank and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to secure funding support through the Regional Disease Surveillance Systems Enhancement REDISSE programme.

3.2.2 Support to states to develop costed Incidence Action Plans. NGF Secretariat provided technical assistance and guidance to all states to develop their Incidence Action Plans (IAP) and budgets in line with strict adherence to budget, fund utilisation and accountability guidelines provided by PTF. The NGF Secretariat also continuously followed up with the states to ensure timely submission of the costed IAPs to the FG. In addition, they continuously engaged with the FG, World Bank and other stakeholders to fast-track the release of the funds to states. The NGF Secretariat's technical assistance in developing costed action plans (IAPs) aligns with the framework's focus on resource mobilisation. By ensuring well-defined plans with budget allocations, the NGF facilitated a more targeted approach to resource requests from the World Bank and the federal government.

3.2.3 Engagement of independent civil society organisations to track the utilisation of funds. As part of the NGF's commitment to transparency and accountability, and in line with her mandate as the state government relations pillar lead of the PTF, they drive up mechanisms to track the utilisation of resources continuously and independently for the implementation of the COVID-19 IAPs at the subnational level. The NGF developed a tracking tool that assessed progress across the pillars of their incident action plan. It went further to engage the Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON), a civil society organisation with reach across the 36 states of the country, to conduct a tracking assessment of the level of implementation of the States Incidence Action Plan in the 36 states. This multi-level governance approach emphasises collaborative action and promotes transparency and accountability.

3.3 Logistics and Commodities Movement

As part of the coordination effort by the NGF during the pandemic, the forum collaborated with the Nigeria Police Force, state chapters of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and local government officials to ensure the smooth movement of essential commodities like vaccines and hospital consumables and borders surveillance during the pandemic lock-down.

3.4 Achievements following the contribution of NGF in Nigeria's COVID response

Coordinated National Response.

In the first year of the pandemic, a survey was carried out by Nigeria's PTF in December 2020, to obtain feedback on stakeholders' perceptions of the performance of the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 in managing the pandemic. There were 56 respondents drawn from state governments, donors, partners and others. PTF performance was categorised into eight key performance areas and answers to questions asked were rated on a scale of one to five with five being the highest. The result of the survey is presented in (Table 1).

Table 1
Survey of PTF's performance in Nigeria's COVID-19 Response

S/N	Performance Areas	Survey Rating
1	Coordinated national response	4.0
2	Working collaboratively with stakeholders	3.8
3	Providing preventive guidance and awareness	3.5
4	Providing adequate mechanisms to mobilise resources	3.3
5	Providing adequate mechanisms to mobilise resources	3.1
6	Communication, Testing, Contact Tracing, Isolation, Treatment, IPC, Social Support, Economic Support, Enforcing Preventive Measures.	3.1
7	Mitigating socio-economic impact	2.7
8	Providing guidelines on the different phases of response	2.6

According to the PTF term report of 2020, the performance area with the highest score was "Coordinated National Response" with a score of four and this was a core responsibility of the state government coordination pillar which the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat was responsible for (Table 1).

3.4.1 Harmonised Strategy and Quicker Resolution of Challenges. The coordinating role played by the NGF facilitated a harmonised strategy and catalysed the implementation of national strategies at the subnational level. This facilitated bidirectional information flow between states and the federal government and quick resolution of challenges that came up. For example, it was observed that Borno and Ebonyi states were not utilising the WORLD Bank REDISSE funds given to them. The Senior Health Advisor of the NGF Secretariat engaged with the Deputy Governors, who were the chairpersons of the states' COVID-19 task force, to find out what the issues were. In summary, they were not clear on what the expectations were concerning the utilisation of the funds. Following the engagement, in which proper guidance was provided, the states commenced the utilisation of the REDISSE Funds.

3.4.2 Resource Mobilisation and Accountability. The 36 states including the FCT were able to access COVID-19 support funds from the Federal Government and the World Bank to the tune of 50 billion naira and \$100 million respectively to implement activities in their states' Incidence Action Plans. An accountability mechanism was also used to track the use of these funds. All of these were possible, owing to significant technical and advisory support from the NGF.

3.4.3 Risk Communication and Community Engagement. The Risk Communication and Community Engagement pillar was weak at some point during the COVID-19 pandemic response. After a presentation was made to the NGF during their teleconference meeting held on the 22nd of July 2020, a

resolution was reached by the governors to increase the profile of the risk communication pillar of the State COVID-19 Task Forces for effective community awareness creation.

The excerpt of the resolution reads:

The Forum resolved to: *“Strengthen the risk communication pillar of the State COVID-19 Task Teams as proposed by the PTF National Coordinator and foster stronger collaboration with the National Orientation Agency, State Orientation Agencies, religious and traditional institutions, and civil societies. They will also step up the current efforts by taking key health and safety measures to the doorsteps of Nigerians in all 774 local government areas in the country”* (13th NGF Teleconference Meeting Communiqué, July 2020).

The NGF went further to support states by establishing a community of practice for all honourable commissioners of information, by building their capacity and equipping them with tools. This facilitated knowledge sharing, peer learning, sharing of best practices and utilising a harmonised risk communication and community engagement strategy. This provided the necessary impetus for communicating with the public so that communities could curtail the spread of COVID-19 in a sustainable approach using non-pharmacological methods. State governments were able to identify and engage with all the relevant multisectoral partners as the success of this strategy.

3.4.4 Implementation of State Incidence Action Plans. A high percentage level of implementation of states’ incidence action plans was also recorded. The proportion of activities implemented across the eight pillars of the pandemic response was good with the percentage completion ranging from 73% to 92% (Table 2).

Table 2
Percentage level of implementation of States’ Incidence Action Plan

S/N	COVID-19 Response Pillars	Percentage Success
1	State Level Coordination	86%
2	Surveillance	92%
3	Operational Support and Logistics	88%
4	Infection Prevention and Control	92%
5	Case Management	83%
6	Risk Communication and Community Engagement	73%
7	Laboratory	81%
8	Resource Utilisation	75%

4 Lessons Learnt

The experience of the Nigeria Governor's Forum during Nigeria's COVID-19 response undoubtedly came with some lessons for the country and especially for other African states operating a federal system.

The NGF and its Secretariat are unique. Even though it is nongovernmental, state governors set it up to help coordinate their activities and set their priorities and agenda. Therefore, they have the legitimacy to engage with the governors and their teams. Furthermore, the NGF Secretariat's convening power gave them a platform and access for continuous engagement of the state governors during their bimonthly teleconference meetings. From our findings, we learnt that the unique position of the NGF Secretariat provided the legitimacy to engage with state governments, hold them accountable and effectively play a coordinating role for the 36 autonomous states.

From our experience especially in the context of a federal system, having a coordinating platform that serves as a nexus between the federal government and the constituent units (subnational government) is critical to achieving successful coordination and implementation of interventions during a crisis.

We also learnt that leveraging already established communication structures and platforms domiciled within the states' Ministry of Information is instrumental in reaching a wider audience at the subnational level.

5 Discussion

We described the coordinating role of the Nigeria Governors' Forum in the containment of COVID-19 in Nigeria through the multilevel coordinating platforms established by the Presidential Taskforce on COVID-19 and how they coordinated the state-level responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, we described how the coordination between the state COVID-19 response teams and the federal-level Presidential Task Force resulted in a harmonised strategy and facilitated quicker resolution of bottlenecks between federal and state governments.

We found that in the face of a humanitarian catastrophe, coordination is critical as the price of diversity is high and when there is coordination, national policies are better domesticated at constituent levels and state and local governments' disadvantages are reduced (18, 19). This agrees with the coordinating efforts of the PTF and the strategic facilitatory role played by the Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat that made states adopt the Federal Government response strategy which resulted in over 75% implementation of their Incident Action Plans aligned to the National Response Strategy. This PTF's and the NGF's coordination approach is similar to the strategy used by the Australian government, where the Prime Minister constituted a national cabinet that consisted of the Prime Minister, the state premiers, and territory first ministers. The cabinet met weekly to discuss, coordinate and work together to implement the national response to COVID-19 (20). Whereas Nigeria's PTF comprised technical leads, the NGF was the platform that brought together the political leaders and ensured coordination of the subnational units through their biweekly meetings where they discussed the implementation of the national response to COVID-19 in their respective states. The deployment of a multi-level governance

platform was imperative to ensure a harmonised national response strategy as described in the role of the PTF in Nigeria's COVID-19 response (5).

However, findings from other countries which run a federal system, such as the United States of America showed that the pandemic response was poor, and this was largely attributed to the fragmentation due to state partisanship (21). Another study in Brazil attributed the terrible outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic to intergovernmental incoordination due to the structure of its federal system (22).

The Nigeria Governors' Forum Secretariat is a unique entity. Though non-governmental, its role as the technical and administrative arm of the Forum of the 36 State Governors gives it the legitimacy to serve as a nexus between the federal government and the states in a federal system. We found show that an institution such as the NGF Secretariat can facilitate a harmonised and coordinated resolution of matters of national interest. This agrees with the finding of (8) in the study of federal and unitary systems. The study showed the example of another country where a coordinating structure helped mitigate fragmentation in a federal system during the COVID-19 pandemic. Initially, the Swiss cantons in Switzerland exercised considerable autonomy in their pandemic response, leading to a variety of subnational policies. However, the national government quickly centralized policymaking through emergency declarations, which resulted in more homogeneous and coordinated policies across the country. This centralization helped align cantonal actions with national objectives, ensuring a more unified and effective response, similar to the coordination observed in unitary systems like France and Italy (8).

Another key success recorded because of NGF's facilitatory role was the equitable distribution of resources across the 36 states in the country following the advocacy of the Chairman of the Forum to the President and other key officials. This shows that this coordination was critical in overcoming inequity in resource distribution which is a key concern in managing crises in federal systems as was the case in the United States of America (23). Furthermore, establishing a tracking and accountability system was also important to ensure that activities were implemented and funds judiciously utilised. According to (24), the lack of accountability mechanisms is a major gap that needs to be filled to ensure compliance with global health treaties. It recommends that there should be incentives and sanctions for countries complying with agreed treaties. Accountability mechanisms are safeguards that help parties remain answerable to their obligations (25). Even though the NGF established a tracking and accountability mechanism, it was not part of the initial response strategy for the nation. Furthermore, there were no incentives or sanctions for non-compliance. However, the tracking and accountability mechanism enabled the NGF Secretariat to identify and remove bottlenecks in the implementation of incidence action plans. Therefore, it would be helpful to have such accountability mechanisms properly institutionalised, and every stakeholder adequately informed about the established mechanisms.

Another key approach in the NGF coordinating strategy was the resolution to strengthen the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) pillar by working actively with State Orientation Agencies and having the Honourable Commissioners of Information lead the RCCE pillar. This resolution

is in line with best practices which recommend that the RCCE pillar, which is critical to driving non-pharmaceutical interventions, should emphasise strengthening local structures and communities to ensure their active participation in interrupting disease transmission (24). Inasmuch as all state governors through their resolutions committed to strengthening this pillar, it will be recommended that in future, clear programme plans and guidelines and clear measures for reporting and documenting programme activities should be clearly laid down. Furthermore, attention should be paid to the community engagement aspect of RCCE which promotes ownership and citizen participation.

6 Conclusion

Our study brings a unique perspective on how to achieve coordination in a federal system during a crisis. It provides insight into how co-sovereign entities can be coordinated to achieve a unified strategy irrespective of the autonomy of constituent units. We understand that the Nigeria Governors' Forum is a unique entity and might not be present in other countries. However, countries can leverage similar platforms such as the National Governors Association of the United States of America and the Council of the Federation in Canada to achieve similar results. Findings from this study emphasise the critical role multi-level governance and coordination play in managing crises and ensuring equitable resource allocation in such times. It gives policymakers, researchers and multinational institutions insight into the activities of the Nigeria Governors' Forum and the Secretariat, her strategies in engaging with high-level decision-makers and some of the successes recorded in recent times. It also shows that multilevel governance and coordination influence how national governments and development partners, especially in federal systems, engage with constituent units (sub-national) in addressing issues requiring effective and swift coordination.

There is a need to carry out further studies and document lessons on how the institutionalisation of accountability mechanisms can help strengthen coordination during public health emergencies and nationwide crises in federal systems.

Declarations

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Ethics Statement

This study utilised exclusively secondary data available in the public domain containing no personally identifiable information; therefore, ethical approval was not required.

Competing Interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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Author Contribution

Conception or design of the work: AA (3), CO
Data collection: All authors
Data analysis and interpretation: CO, AA (1), DA, CW
Drafting the article: CO, AA (1)
Table preparation: CO
Figure preparation: AA (1)
Critical revision of the article: AA (3), DA, CW
Final approval of the version to be submitted- All authors

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Data Availability

All data supporting the findings of this study are available within the paper

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Figures

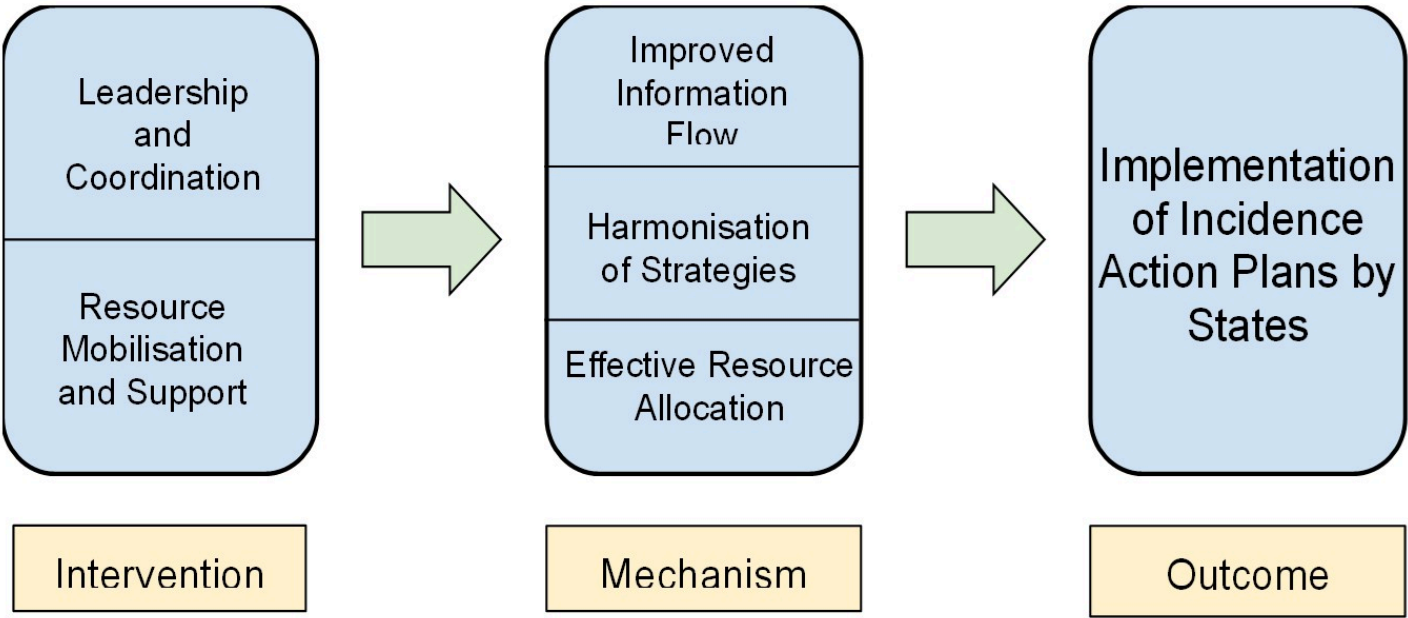


Figure 1

Multi-level Governance and Collaborative Action Framework

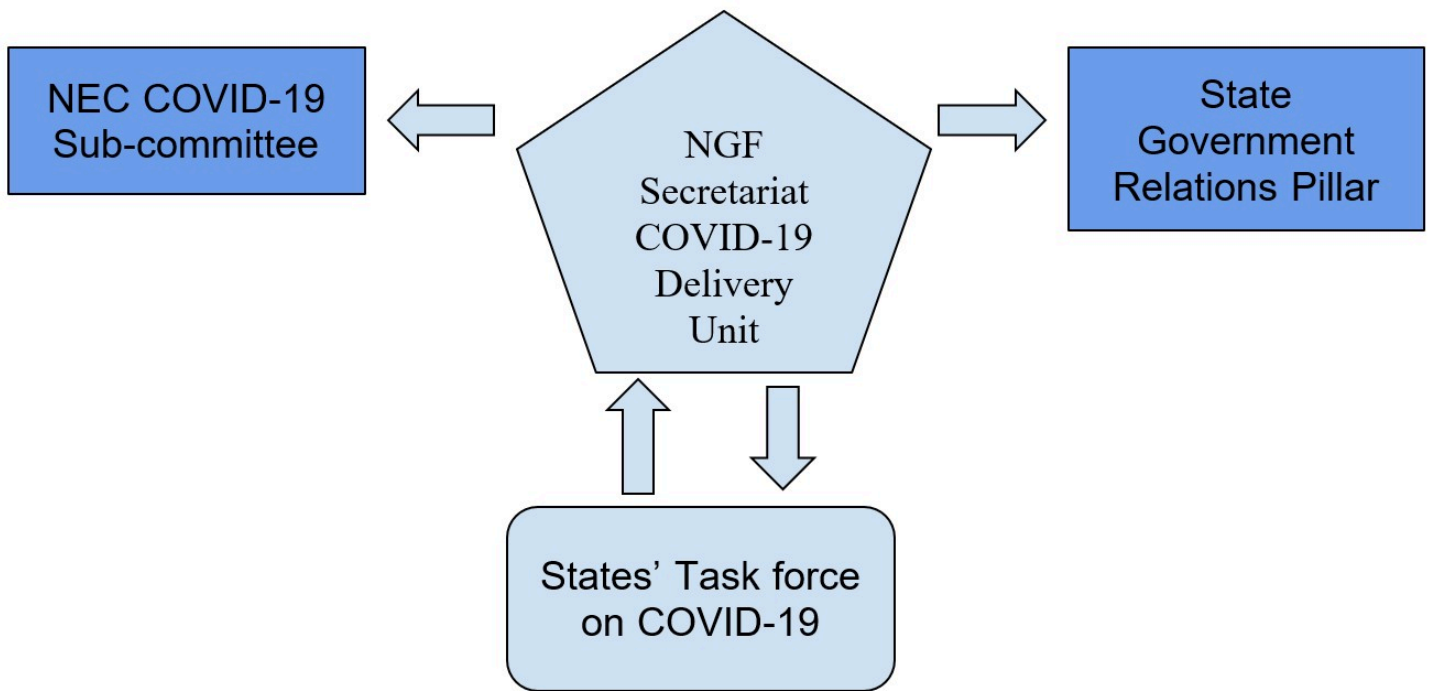


Figure 2

The Interconnectedness between the NGF COVID-19 Delivery Unit and other Coordinating Platforms.