Enhancing Influenza Surveillance in Nigeria through FluNetNg: A Global Flu View (GFV) Initiative

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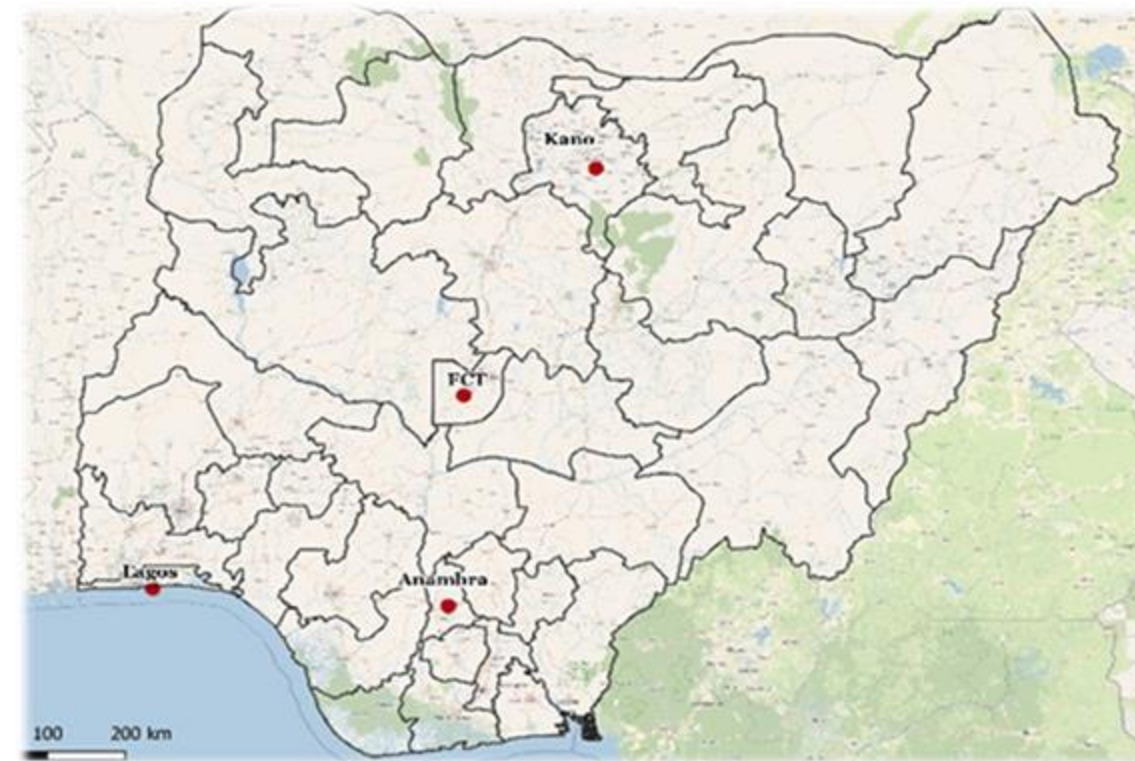
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Introduction

Global Threat of Influenza:

- Acute respiratory infections, severe illness, mortality.
- Nigeria's influenza surveillance faces challenges in tracking and reporting influenza activity on a global scale.
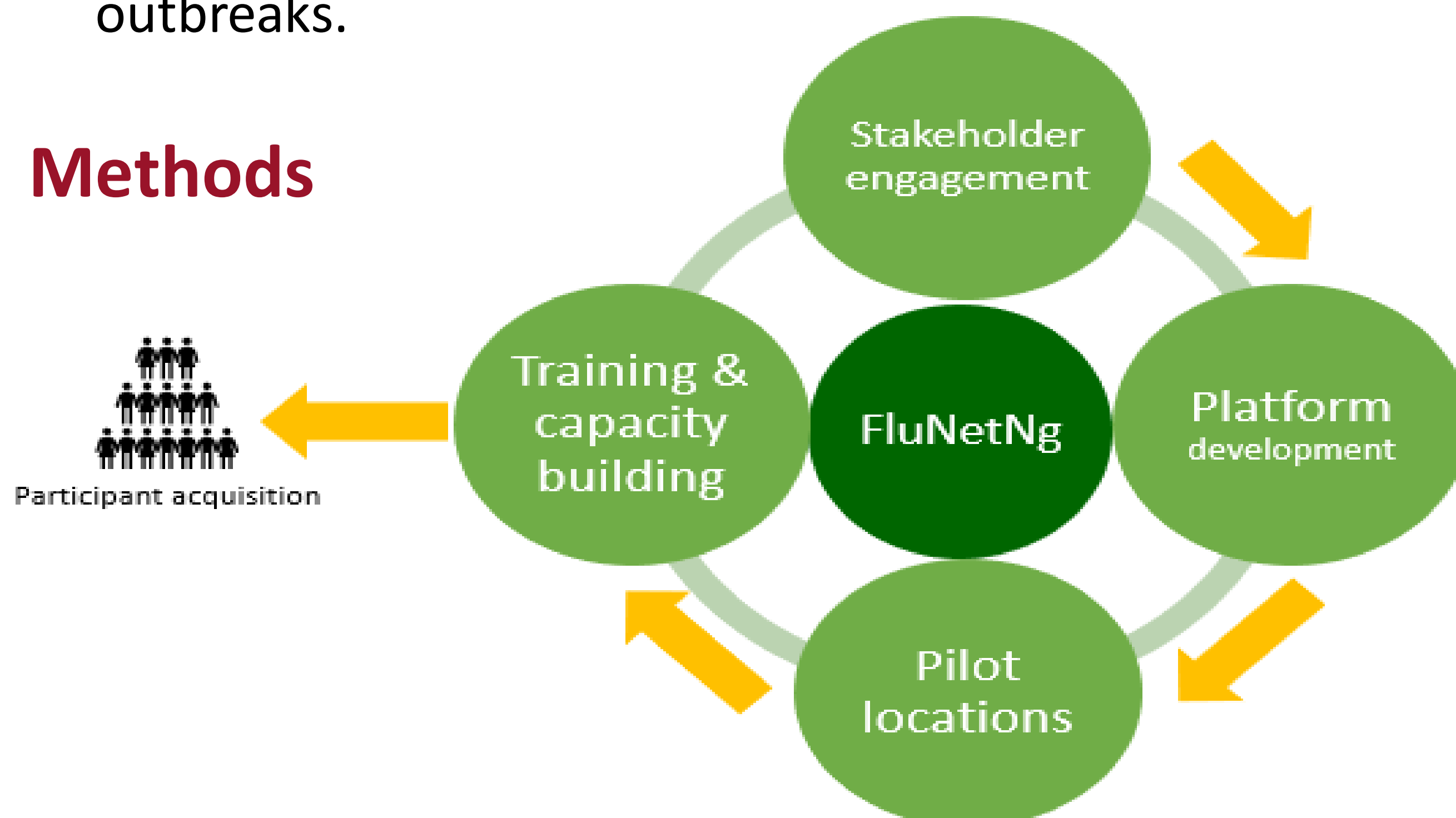
Mapped Flu Surveillance in Nigeria

GFV Initiative:

- GFV's online platform aggregates global influenza data to improve epidemic preparedness and decision-making.
- FluNetNg, Nigeria's participatory surveillance (PS) platform, is the first in Africa.
- ➤ The Growth Track of the GFV Spark Program (1st Cohort)

Objectives

- **Enhance Influenza Surveillance:** Implement PS to improve influenza monitoring in Nigeria, complementing traditional methods.
- **Leverage Existing Networks:** Collaborate with the Nigeria Center for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) and utilize the GFV platform to track Influenza-like Illness (ILI) cases.
- **Empower Public Health Officials:** Provide a robust, data-driven ecosystem to empower public health officials and researchers in monitoring and responding to influenza outbreaks.
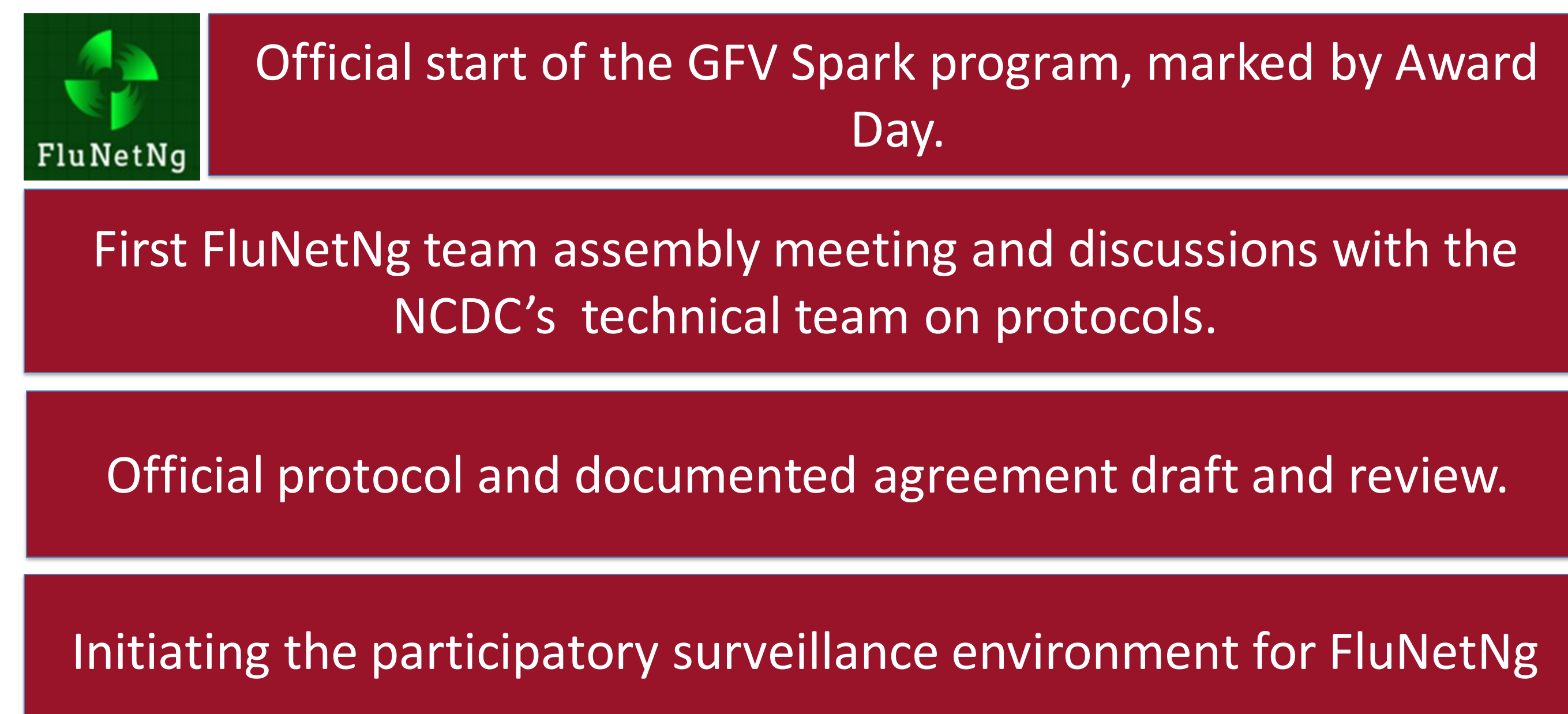
Methods

Stakeholder engagement

Platform development

Pilot locations

Training & capacity building

FluNetNg

Participant acquisition

Innovation

- **Participatory Surveillance:** A novel method that involves the public in real-time reporting of ILI symptoms, allowing early detection of potential outbreaks.
- **Integration with Global Surveillance:** FluNetNg links Nigeria's influenza data with GFV's global dataset using the GFV toolkit, enhancing epidemic and pandemic preparedness through advanced forecasting capabilities.
- **Digital Ecosystem:** The platform offers near real-time spatial and temporal visualization of ILI cases, compatible with multiple surveillance systems worldwide.

FluNetNg's Journey

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|---|
| **FluNetNg** — Official start of the GFV Spark program, marked by Award Day. |
| First FluNetNg team assembly meeting and discussions with the NCDC's technical team on protocols. |
| Official protocol and documented agreement draft and review. |
| Initiating the participatory surveillance environment for FluNetNg |

Challenges

Bureaucratic Sustainability: Overcome by institutionalizing FluNetNg through the NCDC.

User/participant acquisition and engagement over time: Funding for sustained user recruitment, awareness campaigns, and innovative engagement strategies.

Progress

- Positive engagement
- FluNetNg onboarded
- Project uptake, local support
- Technical team training at the NCDC

Results (Expected)

Community Engagement

Enhanced Flu data access

Scalability

FluNetNg's success
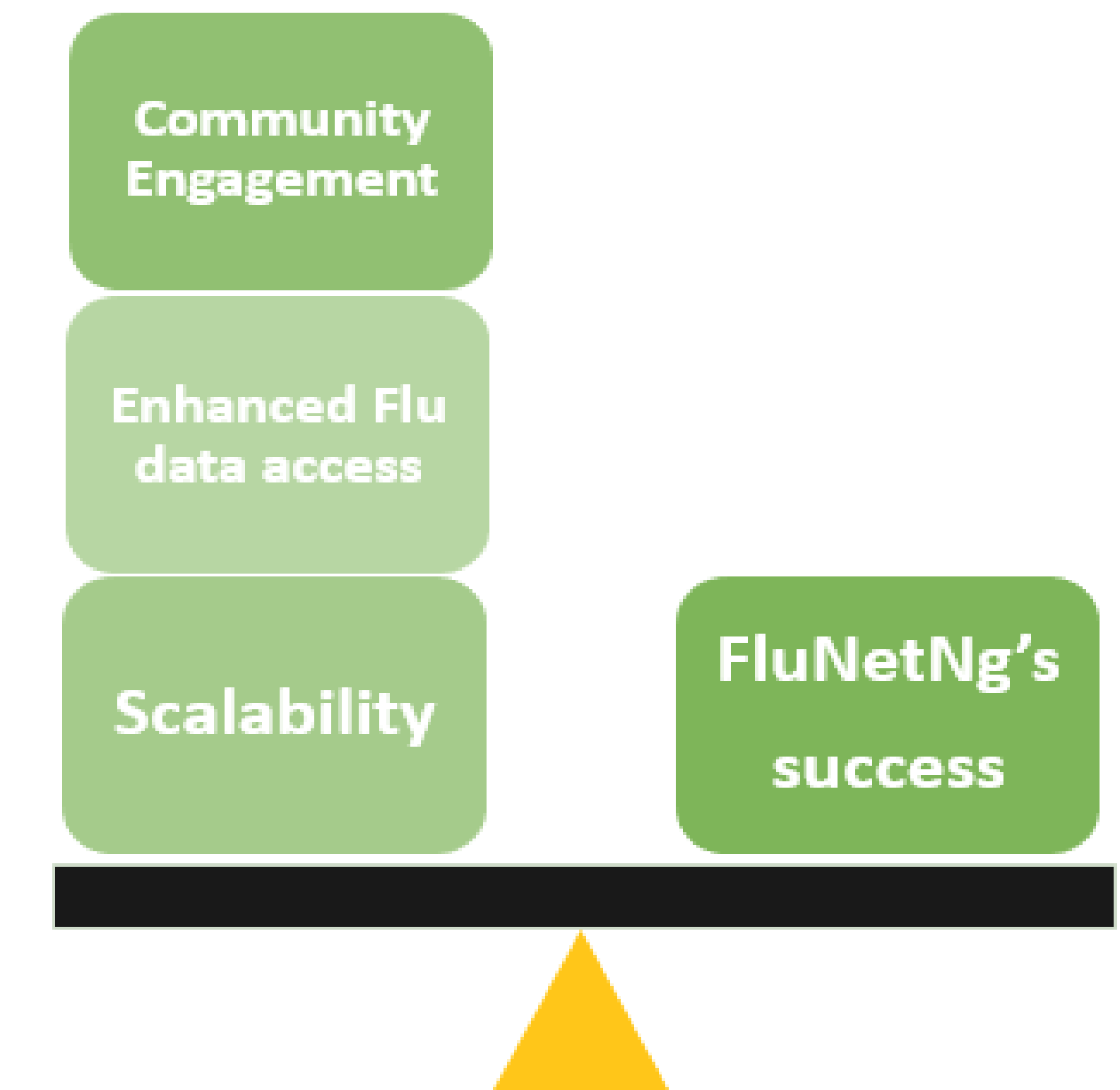
Discussion

Combining Systems: Yang et al. (2018) show that integrating PS with traditional systems provides a fuller, faster view of outbreaks.

Local Challenges: The success of GFV globally, as noted by Leal Neto et al. (2023), is predicated on local context.

Optimized Integration: Wójcik et al. (2014) and Leal Neto et al. (2023) argue that combining PS with traditional data boosts epidemic readiness, FluNetNg's goal.

Conclusion:

FluNetNg represents a significant leap forward in influenza surveillance in Nigeria and globally. By integrating with global surveillance networks, the project greatly enhances global influenza.

References

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