



JULY 2023

# Bridge2AI Consortium: Teaming Core

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## Year 1 Evaluation Report



The Evaluation Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
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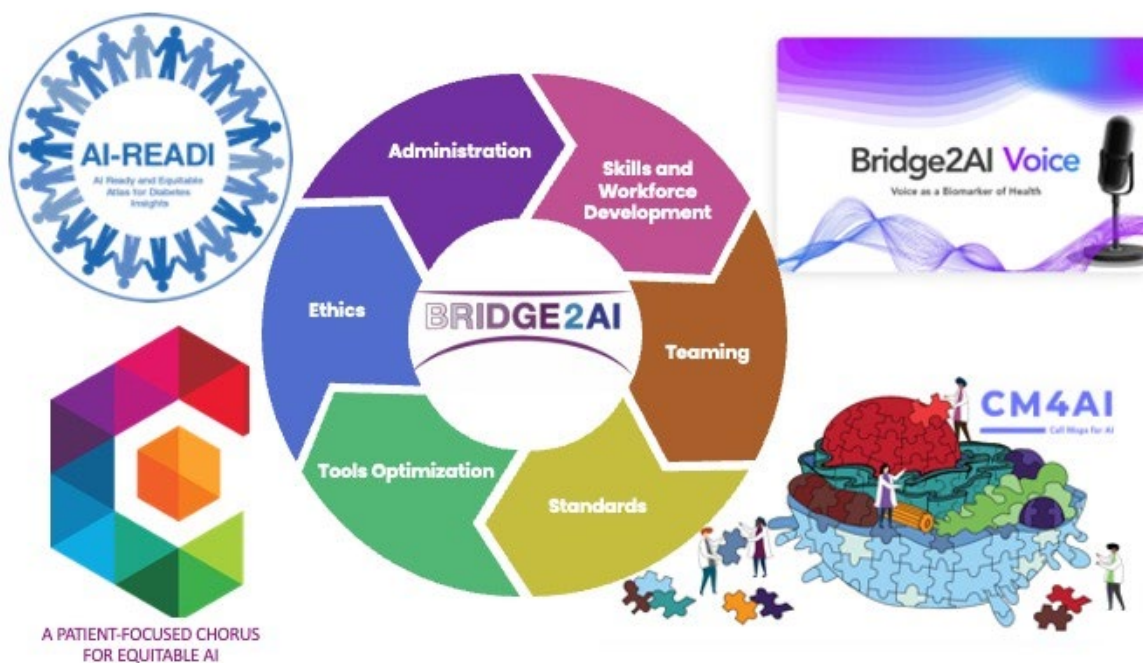
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## OVERVIEW

Funded by a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Common Fund initiative in 2022, the Bridge to Artificial Intelligence (Bridge2AI) Consortium was established to generate flagship datasets and best practices for the collection and preparation of Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning (AI/ML)-ready data to address biomedical and behavioral research grand challenges. Overall, the Bridge2AI Consortium consists of six cores and four Data Generating Projects (Exhibit 1). Altogether, the Consortium has over 300 members representing approximately 76 institutions nationally and internationally.

Exhibit 1. *Bridge2AI Consortium*



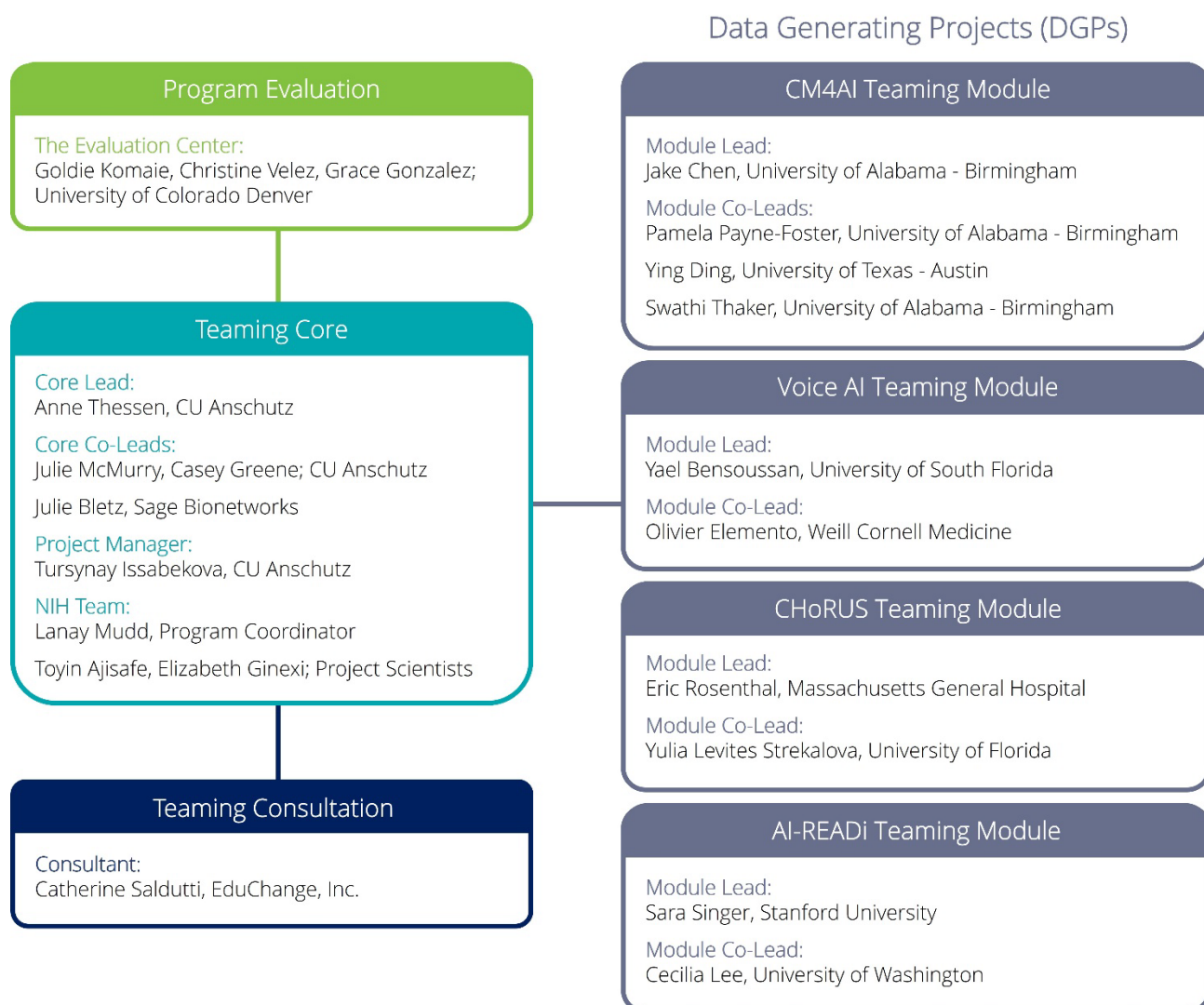
Each Bridge2AI Core actively engages corresponding Data-Generating Project (DGP) modules to develop, implement, assess, and disseminate an evidence-based suite of standards, practices, and training to realize trustworthy biomedical AI. Specifically, the role of the Teaming Core is to facilitate the development of a team identity and a shared mental model of how Bridge2AI will work across a diverse and inclusive Bridge2AI.<sup>1</sup> The Evaluation Center (TEC) has partnered with the Bridge2AI Teaming Core to conduct an evaluation of teaming across the Bridge2AI Consortium. This report provides a summary of the first-year Teaming Core activities, accomplishments, and evaluation findings.

<sup>1</sup> <https://bridge2ai.org/teaming-core/>

## TEAMING CORE STRUCTURE

Led by Anne Thessen at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Center (AMC), the Teaming Core consists of a mix of co-Leads, co-Investigators, an NIH program coordinator, NIH project scientists, and a project manager. The Teaming Core is supported by a teaming consultant from EduChange, Inc. and TEC program evaluators. Exhibit 2 displays the entirety of the Teaming Working Group, which consists of the Teaming Core and the Teaming Module leads and co-leads representing the four DGP's. Overall, there are approximately 25 Teaming Working Group members representing at least 13 different organizations.

**Exhibit 2.** *Bridge2AI Teaming Working Group Members*



## TEAMING CORE AIMS

The Bridge2AI Teaming Core has four distinct Aims: 1) Design and implement collaborative agreements; 2) Realize inclusive, integrative team science; 3) Evaluate efficacy and impact; and 4) Respond to changing needs (see Exhibit 3). Activities within each of these aims are documented in Monday.com, a cloud-based project management software platform, by the Teaming Core project manager. Bridge2AI Teaming Core members track progress of milestones and deliverables, and they are routinely reviewed to ensure timely progress. Exhibit 3 displays key Teaming Core accomplishments that were achieved in Year 1.

**Exhibit 3.** *Bridge2AI Teaming Accomplishments*

| Aim  | Milestone   |
|--|---|
| Design and Implement Collaborative Agreement   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed first draft of conflict resolution guidelines and incorporated feedback</li> <li>Prepared Aim 1 deliverables for blockchain</li> <li>Completed and made available final draft of the data policy</li> <li>Developed first draft of attribution policy and publication committee charter</li> <li>Completed and made available final draft of collaboration process guide (including agreed processes for internal communication, roles and responsibilities, voting, etc.)</li> <li>Solicited feedback from Center via anonymous survey</li> </ul>   |
| Realize Inclusive, Integrative Team Science Across the Bridge Community and Beyond       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborated with Administration Core to establish B2AI communication and collaboration spaces (listservs, real-time communications, shared documents, GitHub)</li> <li>Collaborated with Administration and Ethics Cores to establish B2AI onboarding</li> <li>Set up Bridge2AI intranet and member directory</li> <li>Created Steering Committee governance and bylaws</li> <li>Drafted an outline for Bridge2AI Marker Paper</li> </ul>   |
| Evaluate efficacy and impact of teaming across Bridge2AI and communicate lessons learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed a staged process for interested Bridge2AI teams to co-create metrics for defining and monitoring team health</li> <li>Developed evaluation framework and evaluation metrics to measure to evaluate teaming across Bridge2AI</li> <li>Conducted onboarding and baseline evaluation survey with Bridge2AI consortium members</li> <li>Developed, socialized and iterated a Shared Science Framework based on NIH's three pillars for the Bridge2AI program</li> <li>Collaboration Framework based on the feedback from DGP needs and based on the NIH's three pillars for the Bridge2AI program</li> <li>Developed an anonymous feedback collection process (<a href="https://b2ai.org/feedback">b2ai.org/feedback</a>)</li> </ul> |
| Other Accomplishments  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized and executed the Consortium-wide in-person leadership meeting in Washington D.C.</li> <li>Held 'open house' meetings with DGP's</li> </ul>   |

- Completed and submitted Research Performance Progress Reports (RPPR) to NIH

## TEAMING CORE RESOURCES

In year 1, the Teaming Core established a full range of resources to enhance collaboration, communication, and knowledge sharing among Bridge2AI Consortium members. These resources have been instrumental in the first year of the project to orient new members to the project and provide multiple ways for members to securely communicate and share key documents. Each of the resources is described in Exhibit 4.

**Exhibit 4.** *Teaming Core Tools for Communication and Collaboration*

| Resource  | Description   |
|---|---|
| Onboarding; <a href="https://b2ai.org/onboarding">b2ai.org/onboarding</a>     | A process was set up to orient new members and collect basic information to describe the consortium. Once onboarded, members have access to Bridge2AI resources, communication channels, and receive news about consortium activities.  |
| Offboarding; <a href="https://b2ai.org/offboarding">b2ai.org/offboarding</a>  | Offboarding process is set up to help members of the consortium departing the program to inform of their leave and to allow Teaming core to maintain accurate list of members of the consortium.  |
| Google drives   | Google drives have been established for each of the Bridge2AI Cores and DGPs. Each group has their own protected shared drive to save and access essential documents.   |
| Slack Channels  | Slack offers real-time communication as an alternative to email. Numerous Slack channels have been created for various Bridge2AI groups to communicate (e.g., teaming; teaming-working group; teaming-evals; etc.).   |
| Bridge2AI Intranet; <a href="https://b2ai.org/intranet">b2ai.org/intranet</a> | The intranet hosts a variety of essential resources, such as links to consortium-wide policy documents, steering committee meeting minutes, event calendar, and Working Group/DGP pages. It serves as a centralized hub for all the information needed to stay up-to-date and informed about the project.           |
| Bridge2AI Member Directory  | Located on the Bridge2AI intranet, the member directory provides names, affiliations, institutions, and expertise of all onboarded Bridge2AI members.   |
| Google Groups   | Listserve in Google serve as an email forum for a particular group (e.g., core, DGP, leads) to communicate. There is a web-based message archive for each Google group but viewing messages is optional and available only to logged-in members of that group. Messages are delivered according to the subscription |

|  |  |
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|  | settings for each member (no email, digest, or every message). Messages themselves can typically only be sent by members of the group, but this can be adjusted as needed. |
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## PROGRAM EVALUATION

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TEC is tasked with designing and implementing a data collection plan that will help the Teaming Core and DGP Teaming Modules identify areas of strength related to teaming and provide information that will spark conversation and ideas to enhance collaboration.

With such a dynamic, multi-institutional collaboration as Bridge2AI, it is important to understand all the moving parts so that the evaluation can be both responsive and flexible. As such, the TEC team is not only embedded into the Bridge Center Teaming Core but also holds bi-weekly evaluation focused meetings with the Teaming Core leads and the Teaming consultant. This also ensures that the evaluation is collaboratively designed and meets the needs of the Teaming Core and Modules.

In this first year of the Bridge2AI Consortium, TEC developed a comprehensive and holistic evaluation plan based on a framework for transdisciplinary research developed by Klein.<sup>2</sup> The framework and a series of cross-disciplinary activities and collaboration scales also served as a starting point for co-creating a baseline evaluation survey. This Year 1 report highlights the baseline evaluation survey findings, as well as the data sharing and dissemination process that facilitated the Consortium to make data-driven decisions about communicating, sharing resources, leveraging strengths, and addressing teaming challenges.

### CONSORTIUM-WIDE BASELINE EVALUATION SURVEY

Baseline evaluation survey was intended to provide data on the initial state of collaboration within the Consortium and assess members' understanding of the project, its goals, and the Consortium as a whole. The survey also gauged utilization of existing teaming resources and interest in skill building for successful collaboration. These baseline data will be used as a point of comparison to evaluate changes in teaming skills and cross-disciplinary collaboration in future years.

### SURVEY METHOD

The survey contained two sections: a Consortium-wide section intended for everyone, including all BRIDGE Center Cores, DGPs, and NIH members, and a customized section tailored for specific DGPs. The development of the Consortium-wide section of the survey was a collaborative effort between TEC evaluation experts and members of the Bridge2AI Teaming Core. Consortium-wide questions were adapted

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<sup>2</sup> Julie T. Klein, Evaluation of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research: A Literature Review, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Volume 35, Issue 2, Supplement, 2008, Pages S116-S123, ISSN 0749-3797, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2008.05.010>.

from existing instruments, including the cross-disciplinary collaborative activities item and the interpersonal collaboration scale.<sup>3</sup>

DGP-specific questions were developed for this project from open-house conversations with and direct input from each DGP teaming module lead and their teams. This was an opportunity for each DGP to ask questions only of their members. In all, TEC developed, launched, analyzed, and reported on three DGP-specific surveys. These data were shared directly with each DGP. This report shares Consortium-wide results only.

The Bridge2AI baseline evaluation survey was created in Qualtrics and was available from February 23 to March 21, 2023. The distribution list was created using onboarding data available on the Bridge2AI Intranet, and the survey was distributed via email to 272 members of the Consortium. The survey is IRB-exempt. Individual responses are confidential; data are reported in aggregate form. The response rate was 50% ( $n=136$ ).

## **BASELINE SURVEY RESULTS**

The baseline survey results illustrated tremendous variation in Consortium-level involvement (FTE effort), career stage, prior involvement in multi-disciplinary research projects, and length of time on the project among respondents. Overall, about half of all Consortium members had no prior experience working on a multi-institutional project. In addition, nearly two-thirds of respondents estimated that their level of effort on the Bridge2AI project was 20% or less. There was also variation in the number of months that teams had been working together. Taken together, Bridge2AI teams have varying levels of experience, level of effort on the project, and time available to complete project work. As such, it will be important to account for and monitor this variation in team composition and capacity for multi-institutional project work as evaluation of teaming activities continues into future years.

## **RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS**

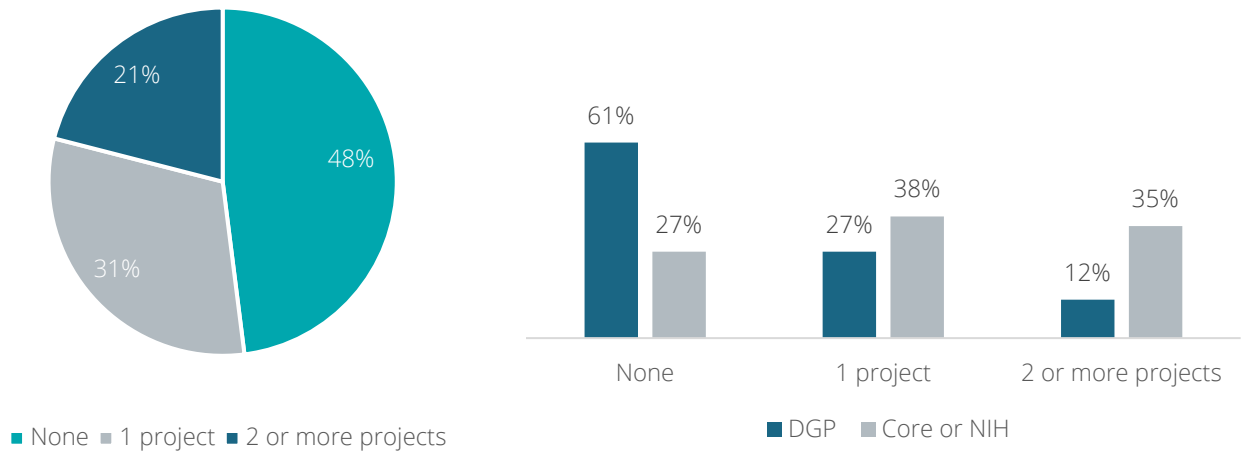
Nearly half (48%) of respondents shared that they had not previously participated in a multi-institutional research project like the Bridge2AI Consortium (Exhibit 5). Nearly one-third had been involved in at least one multi-institutional research project, while 21% had been involved in two or more projects. Broken down by membership in a DGP or Core, 35% of members of the Bridge2AI Cores had experience with two or more multi-institutional projects. In contrast, 61% of DGP members had no prior experience.

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<sup>3</sup> Hall, K.L., Stokols, D., Moser, R., Thornquist, M., Taylor, B., & Nebeling, L. (2008). The Collaboration Readiness of Transdisciplinary Research Teams and Centers: Findings from the National Cancer Institute TREC Year-One Evaluation Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 35, 2, S161-S172.

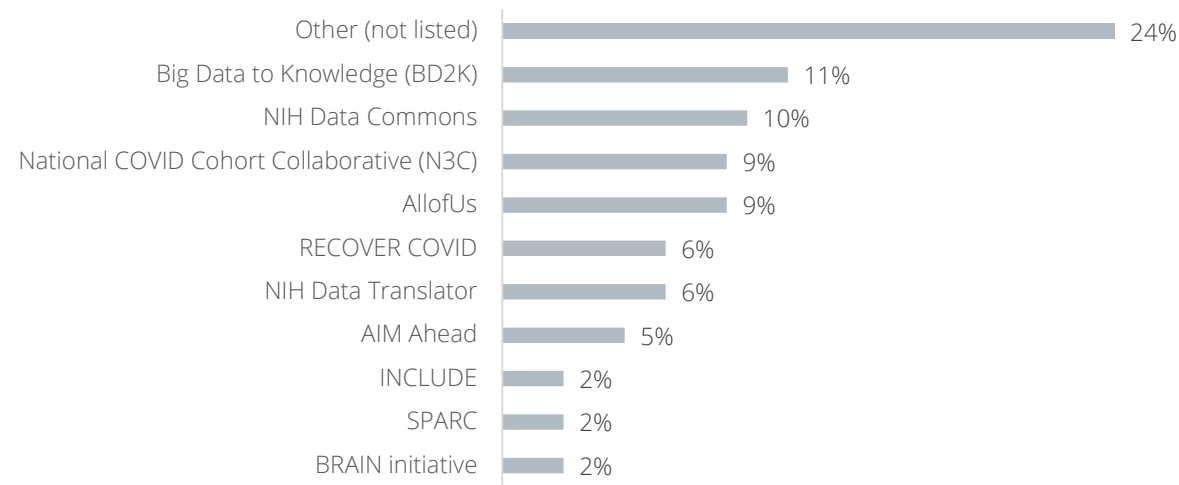


**Exhibit 5.** *Involvement in Multi-Institutional Research (n=125)*



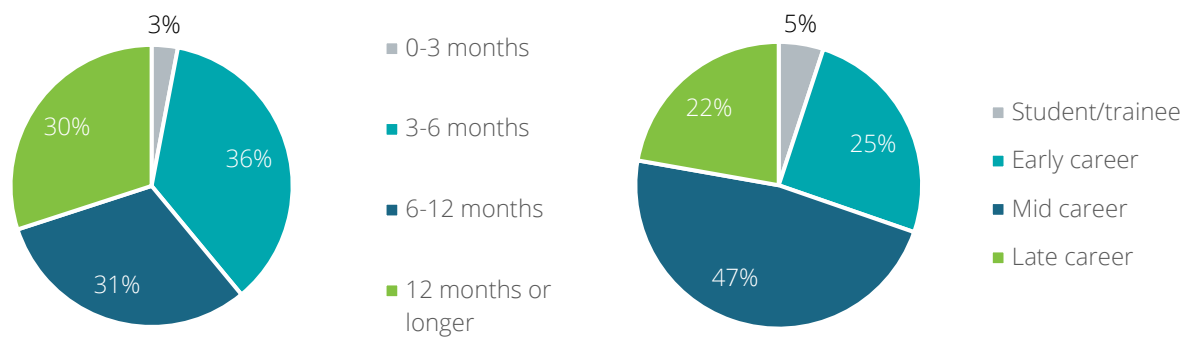
Overall, Consortium members listed a variety of projects they had previously worked on (Exhibit 6). Some of these projects included the Big Data to Knowledge, NIH Data Commons, National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C), and AllofUS. Of those who had been involved in multi-institutional research before, examples of “other” responses include the ACT Consortium, Cancer Research Data Commons, Clinical Sequencing Evidence-Generating Research (CSER) consortium, KidsFirst DRC, and Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx).

**Exhibit 6.** *Bridge2AI Consortium Members Prior Multi-Institutional Research Projects (n=125)*



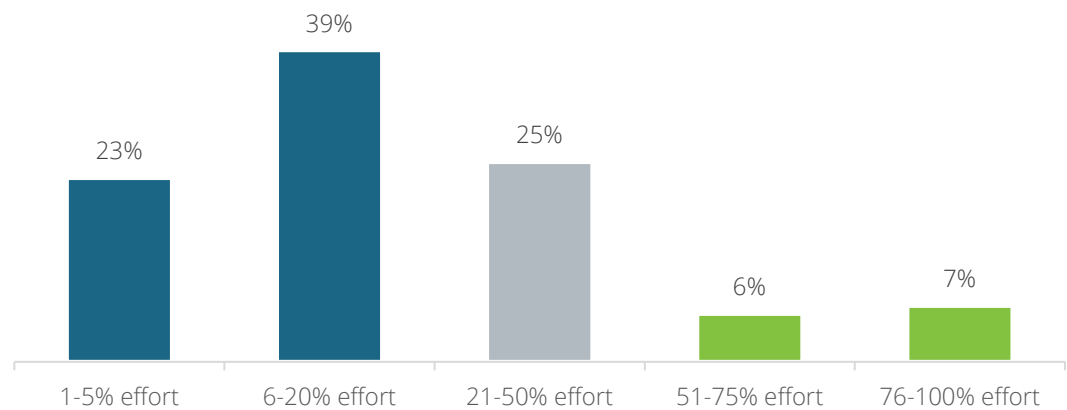
The baseline survey results also showed variations in length of time involved with Bridge2AI and career stage. For example, while 30% of respondents had been working together for a full year or longer, over one-third (36%) had been involved with the project for only 3-6 months. Additionally, almost half of respondents (47%) described themselves as mid-career professionals, while 25% described themselves as early career (Exhibit 7).

Exhibit 7. Length of Time involved with Bridge2AI Consortium and Members' Career Stages (n=135)



In addition, there was a wide range in members' reported level of effort to contribute to the Bridge2AI Consortium. Almost two-thirds of respondents (62%) estimated that their level of effort on the Bridge2AI project was 20% or less. In contrast, only 13% of respondents approximated their project effort to be greater than 50% (Exhibit 8).

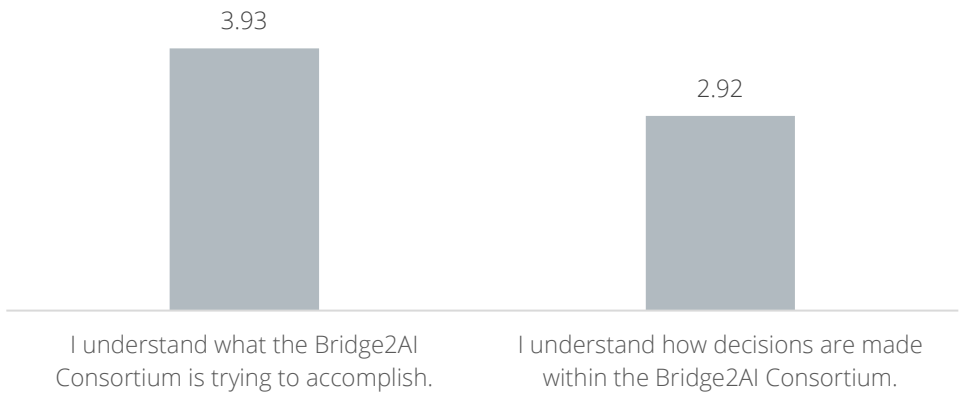
Exhibit 8. Estimated level of effort on Bridge2AI project (n=135)



UNDERSTANDING OF THE BRIDGE2AI CONSORTIUM

In general, respondents expressed some understanding of what the Bridge2AI Consortium is trying to accomplish but felt less clear about the Consortium’s decision-making processes.

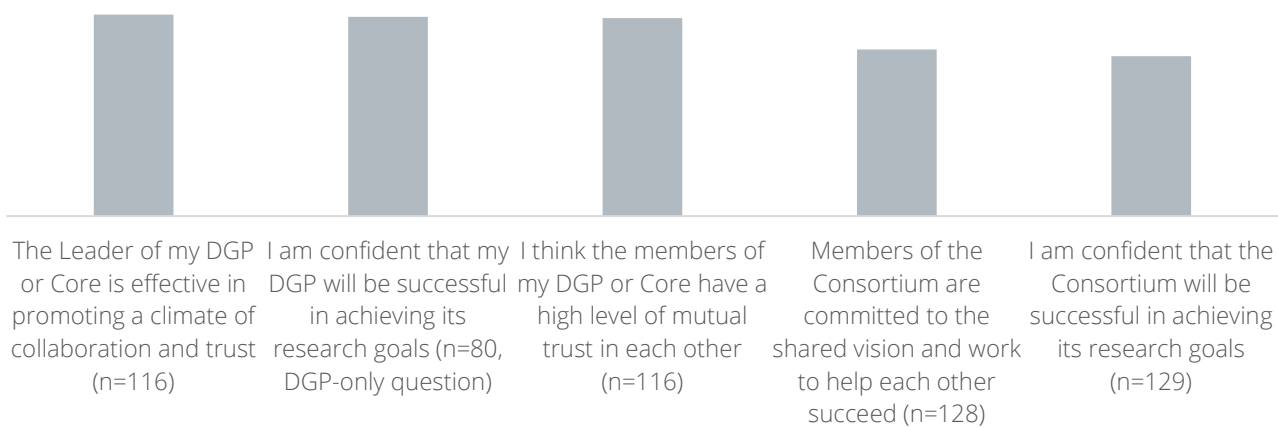
Exhibit 9. Understanding of the Bridge2AI Consortium (n=131); 5-point scale: 1-not at all, 5-completely



BRIDGE2AI CONSORTIUM COLLABORATION

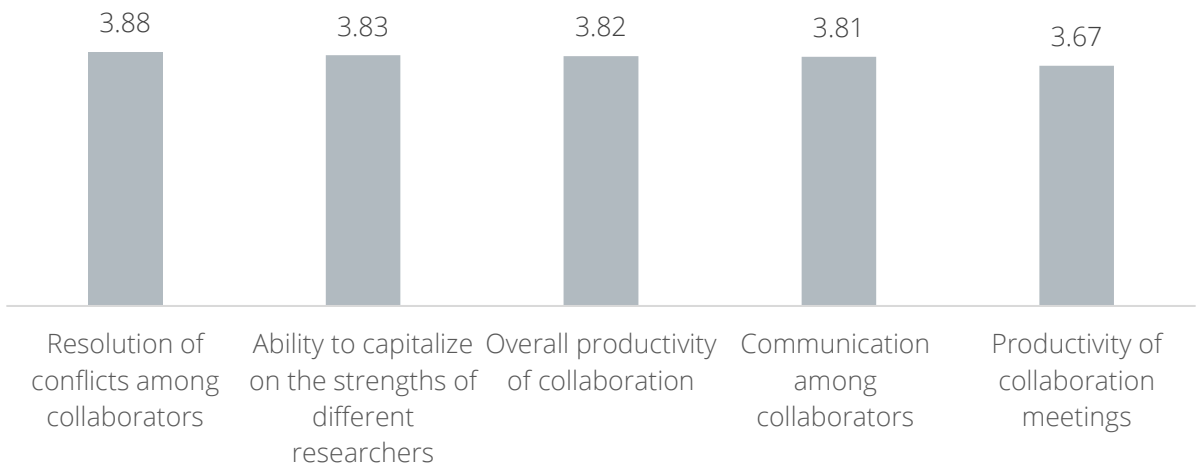
Respondents tended to feel more positively about collaboration within their own DGP or Core but less confident in the collaboration and success of the Consortium as a whole (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10. Interpersonal Collaboration Scale; 5-point scale: 1-not at all, 5-completely



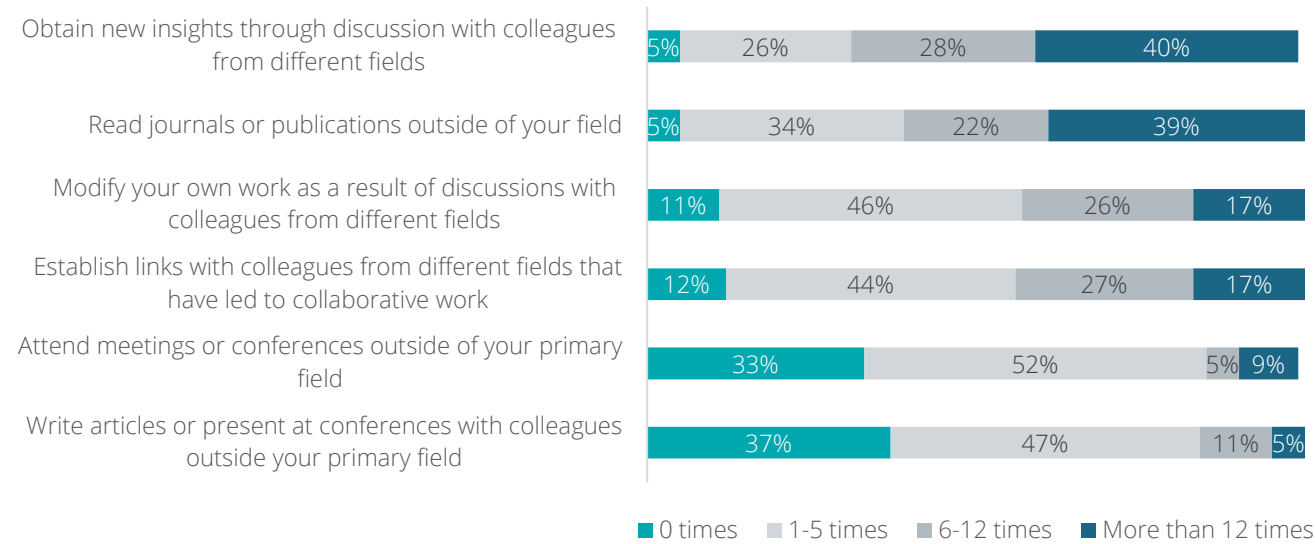
Within DGPs, respondents rated conflict resolution among collaborators most highly, while the productivity of collaboration meetings was rated slightly less favorably.

**Exhibit 11.** Collaborative Process within DGP (n=110); 5-point scale: 1-very poor, 5-excellent



In the past 12 months, respondents had more often obtained new insights from colleagues and read publications outside of their primary field compared to the other collaborative activities. On the contrary, several respondents had not written any articles or attended any meetings or conferences outside of their field in the past year.

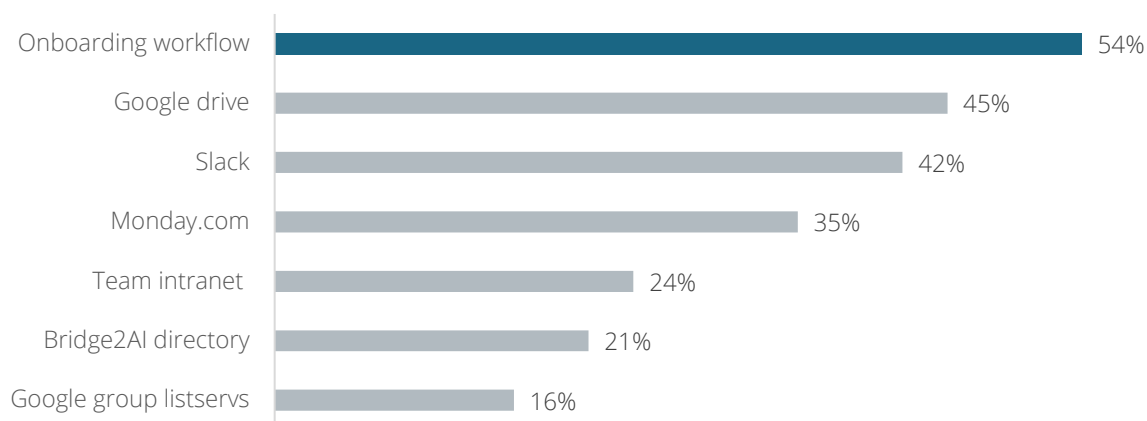
**Exhibit 12.** Cross-Disciplinary Collaborative Activities (n=130)



## UTILIZATION OF TEAMING CORE RESOURCES

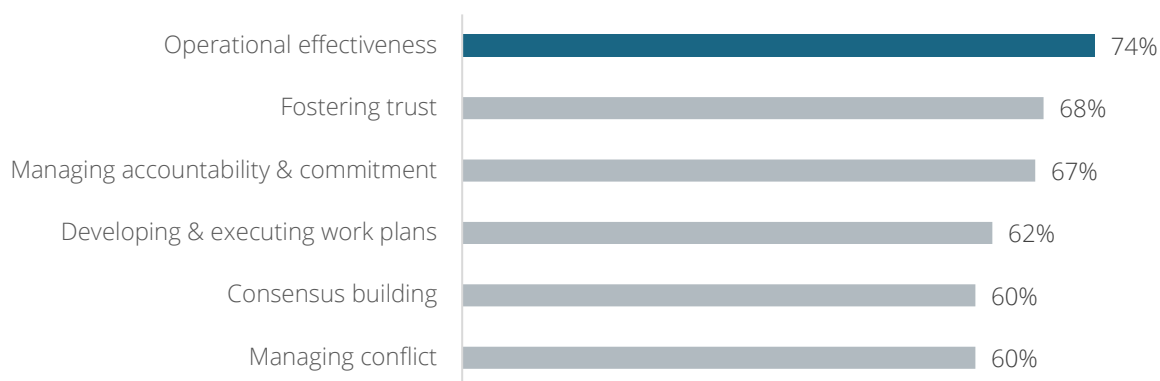
Of the resources provided by the Teaming Core, the onboarding workflow was the most used (by 54% of respondents). Respondents were also likely to have used Google drive (45%) and Slack (42%). Far fewer respondents utilized the Team intranet, Bridge2AI directory, and Google group listservs. More than a third (38%) indicated that they did not know the Team intranet existed.

**Exhibit 13.** *Utilization of Teaming Core resources (n=124)*



Respondents expressed interest in developing several individual and team capacity building skills, especially operational effectiveness (selected by 74% of respondents), fostering trust, and managing accountability and commitment. These are areas where respondents indicated that teaming resources would be most useful.

**Exhibit 14.** *Interest in Individual and Team Capacity-Building Skills (n=120)*



## DISSEMINATION OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

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Evaluators developed five Power Point slide decks for presentation at the face-to-face meeting.

One slide deck with Consortium-wide results was presented by TEC at the Bridge2AI Consortium in-person meeting in Washington D.C. on April 18, 2023. Each of the four DGPs also received a Power Point slide deck that contained:

- DGP survey results compared to consortium-wide results.
- DGP-only questions that they had co-developed with TEC.

In advance of the in-person meeting, evaluators met separately with each DGP teaming module group to discuss results, answer questions, and help them prepare for their April 18 break-out sessions at the in-person meeting to review the survey results with their respective groups.

### BRIDGE2AI CONSORTIUM LEADERSHIP MEETING

The inaugural Bridge2AI Consortium face-to-face leadership meeting was held on April 17-19 at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel in Arlington, VA. Approximately 150 people attended the meeting. During the meeting, there were at least two separate opportunities for Consortium members to discuss the baseline teaming evaluation findings. The key points from these discussions are summarized below.

#### DGP BREAKOUTS (SESSION 3)

The purpose of these breakout sessions was for DGP Teaming module leaders to come away with action plans that move team science forward more efficiently and that attend to issues that surface in their results of their teams' survey data. Afterwards, the Teaming Core could use these notes to create an action plan for cross-core collaboration.

During Session 3, as a group, each DGP reviewed and discussed their team's baseline evaluation data. Individual DGPs met in private to analyze their own survey results in the context of the science goals, taking time to ensure that all members' concerns were considered. They were asked to make specific action plans to repair or streamline workflows, timelines, and/or communication channels. Each DGP [summarized](#) several key takeaways from these private sessions. Exhibit 15 displays the takeaways (verbatim) shared by three of the four DGP's.

Exhibit 15. *DGP Recommendations for Teaming Core*

| DGP                    | Recommendations  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b><i>CHoRUS</i></b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create some sort of newsletter, possibly with Bridge Center, to facilitate the communication across module breakdown.</li> <li>• Start opening up meetings and determining which be open and which are necessary for attendance.</li> <li>• Understand which Bridge Center can help create the synergy and where we need to use that.</li> </ul>  |
| <b><i>CM4AI</i></b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that several of our Modules have had no communication from their representative Cores (Tools and Skills and Workforce).</li> <li>• It would be great to better understand the Bridge Center, their role, and how we can know who to contact if we have questions.</li> <li>• Would love to be able to know what other DGPs are doing</li> <li>• Hopeful that the Bridge Center can help build synergy</li> </ul>   |
| <b><i>AI-READi</i></b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DGP encouraged Teaming to request of Teaming Core that data collection efforts next year be combined and that it occurs in time for our annual all-hands meeting (have already discussed this with Teaming Core)</li> <li>• DGP wanted to communicate that they regard its status as relatively young faculty and new to team science as an advantage and learning opportunity, rather than a negative.</li> <li>• DGP will review team charter/milestone comparison in preparation for the 1:1 module meetings on Wednesday.</li> <li>• DGP will review the teamwork and communication case study in preparation for its discussion on Wednesday.</li> </ul> |

### SMALL GROUP TABLE DISCUSSIONS (SESSION 14)

In session 14, the lead evaluator presented findings from the baseline evaluation survey. The goal of this session was for participants to gain a better understanding of the current experience of members across the 300+-person Consortium and have an opportunity to ask questions about the evaluation process. Following the presentation, each table was asked to respond to several discussion questions and type their notes. [Notes](#) were taken at twelve (of 19) meeting tables. Below is a summary of the key takeaways:

**Exhibit 15. Summary of Small Table Discussions**

| Prompts   | Themes   | Quotes   |
|---|--|--|
| What is the purpose of the Consortium?  | To create protocols/models/standards/best practices for creating, using, and disseminating AI datasets   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Preserve and perpetuate findings beyond the Consortium as we develop a gold standard model and protocol for project development, training, and data collection.”</li> </ul>  |
|   | To generate high-quality AI datasets that adhere to the FAIR principles  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Generating new flagship biomedical and behavioral datasets; producing high-quality, ethically sourced, and accessible datasets”</li> </ul>   |
|   | To facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration and use the Consortium structure to collaborate with other large-scale efforts                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“We have an opportunity to learn how large consortia like this can learn the science of science.”</li> <li>“Interdisciplinary collaboration to achieve large scale projects such as standardizing big data for machine learning”</li> </ul>   |
| What can be achieved as a Consortium that cannot be achieved as the DGPs alone?               | The development of standards/models across different datasets and groups   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“A consortium can facilitate the development and implementation of shared standards, guidelines, and best practices across the participating organizations, ensuring consistency and compatibility across projects. This, in turn, makes it easier for researchers to share, compare, and integrate data and results.”</li> </ul>   |
|   | Consideration of the needs of the end user   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“We should think about discussing this with the end users about what they think they would need out of that data, look at the ethics from that perspective.”</li> </ul>   |
|   | Awareness that the Consortium as a whole has more impact than any of its parts   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“A consortium can amplify the visibility and impact of the research carried out by its members. By pooling efforts and presenting a unified front, the consortium can more effectively advocate for policy changes, funding, and public awareness.”</li> </ul>  |
|   | Greater cross-disciplinary collaboration and diversity   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“A consortium promotes collaboration among researchers and organizations from various fields, fostering synergy that leads to innovative solutions and new perspectives that might not have emerged if they worked in isolation.”</li> </ul>  |
| Discuss the Consortium-wide data. How can assets be built upon? What improvements are needed? | It would be helpful to think about and strategize how to train and include younger/inexperienced professionals who have not worked in a large consortium before. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“With few people who have participated in these types of consortiums, building community will be critical.”</li> <li>“There is something to consider about the people who said that they don’t have experience working in a large consortium and how to integrate them into the flow of the more experienced people who have been part of large projects. Teaming opportunity for finding momentum around this. Focusing on the milestones alone will not deliver this.”</li> </ul> |



## CONCLUSION

In year 1, the Teaming Core accomplished key milestones including establishing communication and collaboration spaces for the Bridge2AI Consortium, collaborating with Administrative and Ethics Cores to establish onboarding to the Consortium, executing a Consortium-wide leadership meeting in D.C., holding 'open houses' with DGP's, and collaborating with evaluators to collect Consortium-wide baseline data to evaluate teaming across the Consortium.

In reviewing baseline evaluation survey data and written feedback from the leadership meeting, below are several takeaways for the Bridge2AI Program leadership to consider.

- ❖ Respondents suggested that roles and responsibilities of Bridge Center Cores, DGP Teaming Modules, and Working Groups be more clearly defined and explained. As one DGP member noted, "There is a lack of clarity around Bridge Center roles and responsibilities. It would be great to better understand the Bridge Center, their role, and how we can know who to contact if we have questions." In year 2, the Teaming Core has begun to provide "Teaming Tip of the Week" emails, which provides Consortium members with helpful information and resources. The Teaming Core has also led the development of the Teaming Working Group Charter, which clarifies roles and responsibilities.
- ❖ Survey respondents tended to feel more positively about collaboration within their own DGP or Core but less confident in the collaboration and success of the Consortium as a whole. Given the infancy of the Bridge2AI Consortium, this is not necessarily surprising or concerning. However, the Teaming Core can continue to monitor this at the six-month follow-up survey. The Teaming Core is planning learning and collaboration opportunities that will be offered in Yr2.
- ❖ Consortium members indicated a desire for more across-DGP communication. This is also evident from the baseline survey where respondents rated communication and productivity of collaboration meetings less favorably. Some ideas around improved communication included more communication to DGP Modules from their representative Cores, a monthly or quarterly newsletter, and receiving more information generally of updates and progress from around the Bridge2AI program.
- ❖ Two-thirds of Consortium members have not participated in a multi-institutional consortium prior to Bridge2AI. One potential challenge is that nearly two-thirds of respondents estimated that their level of effort on the Bridge2AI project was 20% or less. As one member stated, "With few people who have participated in these types of consortiums, building community will be critical." Attention should be paid to the mismatch in FTE effort on the project with the time needed to advance Bridge2AI aims and milestones.



## MISSION

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