ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Research ethics self-check

Last revised 14 February 2020, schi

This form helps you determine if your project at ETH Zurich needs ethics clearance or other kinds of authorisation. It also lists the responsible bodies.

In case an authorisation is required, please submit your application(s) for evaluation to the responsible body as soon as possible.

Principal Investigator (first name, last name):

Project title:

1. Ethics evaluation

Follow the decision tree on p. 3 to determine if your planned project requires an ethics evaluation.[1] Tick the matching box(es) below and follow the links to find out more about how to apply to the responsible authorities.

No ethics evaluation required

Evaluation by ETH Zurich Ethics Commission
http://www.ethz.ch/en/research/ethics-and-animal-welfare/research-ethics.html

Evaluation by Ethics Committee of the Canton of Zurich
https://kek.zh.ch/internet/gesundheitsdirektion/kek/de/vorgehen_gesuchseinreichung.html

Evaluation by Veterinary Office of the Canton of Zurich
https://veta.zh.ch/internet/gesundheitsdirektion/veta/de/tierschutz0/tierversuche/gesuche-und-bewilligungen.html

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[1] Relevant laws: Federal Act on Research involving Human Beings (SR 810.30), https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/20061313/index.html;
Federal Act on Data Protection (SR 235.1), https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19920153/index.html;
Statutes of the ETH Zurich Ethics Commission (RSETHZ 413), https://rechtssammlung.sp.ethz.ch/Dokumente/413.pdf

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2. Biotechnology clearance

Follow the decision tree on p. 4 to determine if your planned project requires biotechnology clearance.[2] Tick the matching box(es) below and follow the links to find out more about how to contact the responsible authorities.

No biotechnology clearance required

Notification to the Federal Coordination Center for Biotechnology
https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/en/home/topics/biotechnology/info-specialists/activities-in-contained-use.html

Licence by the Federal Coordination Center for Biotechnology
https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/en/home/topics/biotechnology/info-specialists/activities-in-contained-use.html

Licence by the Federal Office for the Environment
https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/en/home/topics/biotechnology/info-specialists/experimental-releases.html

3. International collaborations and Nagoya Protocol

Follow the decision tree on p. 5 to determine if your planned project is subject to additional regulations.[3] Tick the matching box(es) and follow the links to find out more about the guidelines you need to follow or how to contact the responsible authorities.

No special requirements

Study falls under the KFPE Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships
https://naturalsciences.ch/organisations/kfpe/11_principles_7_questions

Study requires due diligence as per Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage
https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19660144/index.html

Notification to the Federal Office for the Environment
https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/en/home/topics/biotechnology/info-specialists/nagoya-protocol.html#-476169514

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[2] Relevant law: Ordinance on Handling Organisms in Contained Systems (SR 814.912), https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/20100803/index.html
[3] Relevant laws: Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage (SR 451), https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19660144/index.html#id-3c;
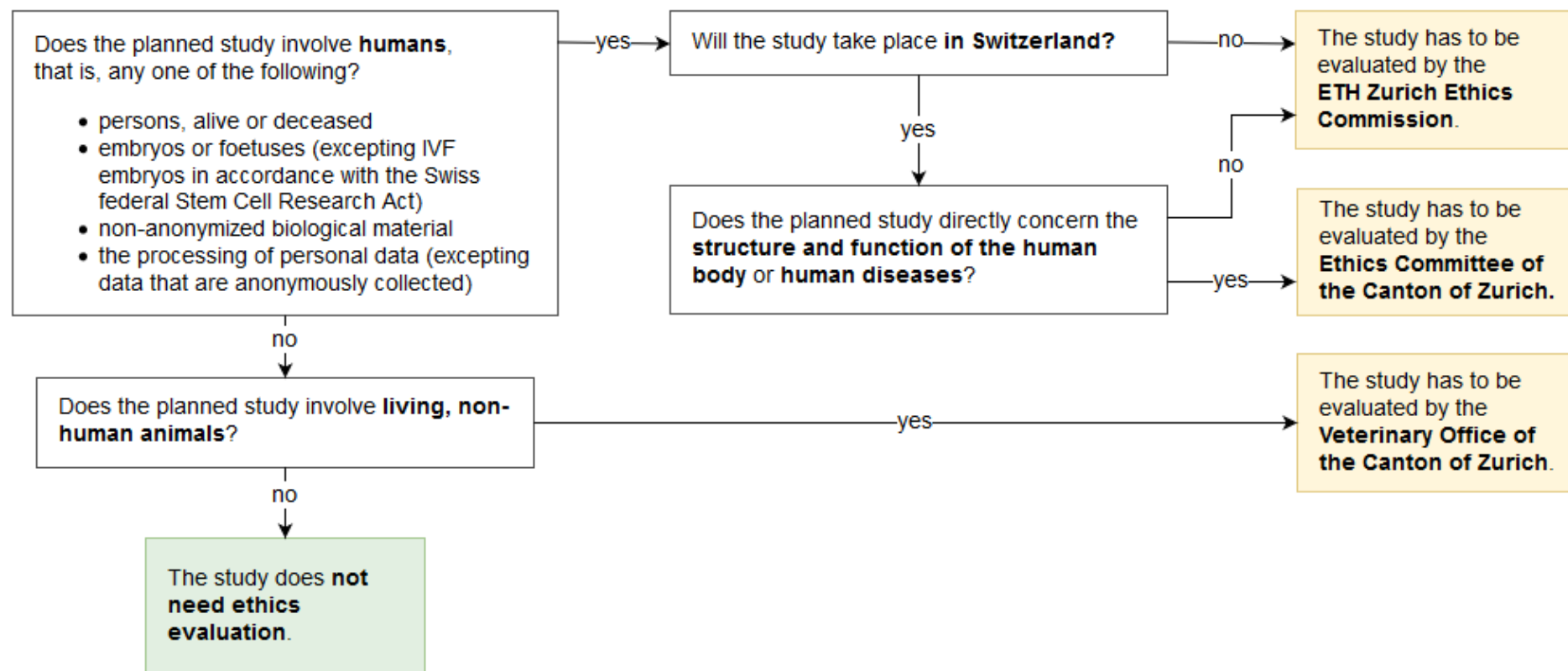Also note: sc|nat guide "Utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge in academic research",
https://naturwissenschaften.ch/organisations/biodiversity/abs/goodpractice

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐        ┌───────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Does the planned study involve  │──yes──▶│ Will the study take place │──no──▶ │ The study has to be │
│ humans, that is, any one of     │        │ in Switzerland?           │        │ evaluated by the    │
│ the following?                  │        └───────────────────────────┘        │ ETH Zurich Ethics   │
│                                 │              │         │                     │ Commission.         │
│ • persons, alive or deceased    │             yes        no                    └─────────────────────┘
│ • embryos or foetuses (excepting│              ▼                                   ▲
│   IVF embryos in accordance with│        ┌───────────────────────────┐            │
│   the Swiss federal Stem Cell   │        │ Does the planned study    │────────────┘
│   Research Act)                 │        │ directly concern the      │
│ • non-anonymized biological     │        │ structure and function    │        ┌─────────────────────┐
│   material                      │        │ of the human body or      │──yes──▶│ The study has to be │
│ • the processing of personal    │        │ human diseases?           │        │ evaluated by the    │
│   data (excepting data that are │        └───────────────────────────┘        │ Ethics Committee of │
│   anonymously collected)        │                                              │ the Canton of Zurich│
└─────────────────────────────────┘                                              └─────────────────────┘
              │
             no
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐                                              ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Does the planned study involve  │───────────────yes───────────────────────────▶│ The study has to be │
│ living, non-human animals?      │                                              │ evaluated by the    │
└─────────────────────────────────┘                                              │ Veterinary Office of│
              │                                                                   │ the Canton of Zurich│
             no                                                                   └─────────────────────┘
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ The study does not need ethics  │
│ evaluation.                     │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 1: Decision tree for research involving humans or animals
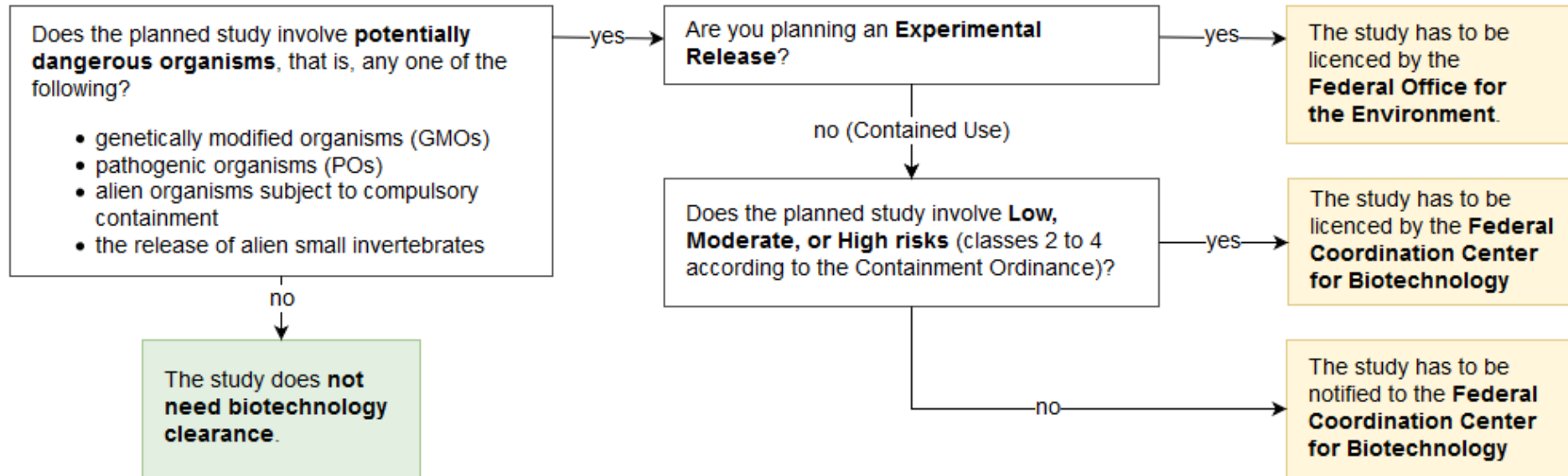
Figure 2: Decision tree for biotechnology clearance

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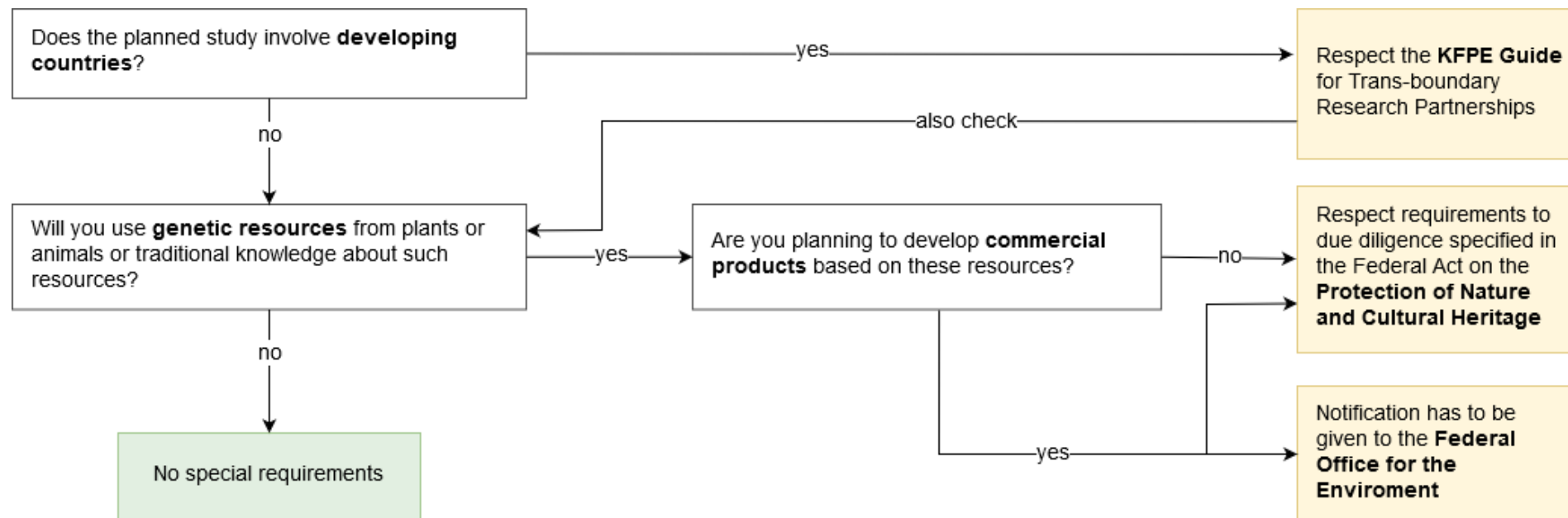Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Figure 3: Decision tree for international collaborations and the Nagoya Protocol