



SWISS TPH RULES OF ENGAGEMENT WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

Document Information	
Document Type	Internal policy
Document owner	Head of GRC
Document authors	Kaspar Wyss and Astrid Knoblauch
Document reviewers	Helen Prytherch, Peter Steinmann, Sabina Beatrice-Matter, Alexander Schulze, Elisabeth Reus, Vincent Bodenez, Christian Burri
Approval	Executive Team; 19 December 2025 (version 18)
Version	18.1
Amendments	Version 18: Overall revision and update of the 2017 version Version 18.1: Minor formal revisions (February 2026; MAT, ALE)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	II
GLOSSARY	III
1. PREAMBLE	1
2. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES	2
2.1 Scope	2
2.2 Goals of these Rules of Engagement.....	2
3. SUPERORDINATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS	3
4. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT	3
General pre-requisites considering a collaboration.....	4
Prohibited Non-governmental Sectors for Collaboration: Tobacco, gambling, alcohol beverage, and arms industries.....	4
Conflicts of interest	4
Public declaration of collaboration.....	4
Law and ethics	5
Good scientific practices	5
Transparency	6
Confidentiality agreements.....	6
Financial regulations	6
Documentation of processes and assessment of partnerships.....	6
Signatory regulations	7
Termination of collaboration	7
5. ASSESSMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT	8
Decision process for engagement.....	8
6. ENTRY INTO FORCE	14
7. REFERENCES	15

GLOSSARY

Civil society is the community of citizens, non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens, distinct from government and business.

Contract is a written or spoken agreement, concerning, e.g. employment, sales, services or research that is intended to be enforceable by law.

Contract research (as opposed to independent research) is the provision of research services based on a mandate, where the supporting partner has a decision-maker role.

Conflict of interest refers to collaborations or situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise or have the appearance of compromising a person's professional judgment in conducting of or reporting from research or service activities.

Confidentiality agreement (synonym: Non-Disclosure Agreement “NDA” or Confidential Disclosure Agreement “CDA”), governs the exchange of information between the contracting parties and its confidential treatment as well as rules on how the information may be used.

Collaboration refers to any kind of contractual agreement between Swiss TPH and an external entity, called partner, funder, sponsor, client or customer.

Corporate foundation is an independent legal entity which is nonetheless de facto associated with a company as it is funded by the latter.

Independent research (as opposed to contract research) is research that may or may not be supported by a partner, where the partner has no role in decision-making.

Intellectual property rights include all statutory registered rights, such as patents and trademarks, in respect of inventions, designs, topographies and brands, as well as copyright and related rights in computer programs, data and proprietary know-how relating to a substance, technology or process.

Mandate is an official order or commission to undertake a task.

Private sector encompasses all for-profit businesses that are not owned or operated by the government.

Public sector encompasses government bodies as well as companies and corporations that are wholly or predominantly government-owned.

Partner refers to any external legal entity collaborating with Swiss TPH, including but not limited to funders, sponsors, clients, customers, academic institutions, public bodies, and non-governmental organisations.

Third parties are natural or legal persons who are independent of Swiss TPH. Students not employed at Swiss TPH have the legal status of third parties.

Research is the systematic gathering and analysis of data and information for the advancement of knowledge of a topic or issue.

Service entails any work-related action for a Partner with a financial compensation.

Sponsor is an individual, company, institution, or organisation that takes responsibility for the initiation, management, and/or financing of a clinical trial.

Funder is an individual, company, institution, or organisation that provides financial resources, typically through grants or other funding instruments, to support specific programs or projects.

Fundraising refers to all activities undertaken to identify, solicit and secure financial or in-kind support, including grants, donations and sponsorships, from companies, organisations and private individuals in support of the institution's mission, programmes or projects.

1. PREAMBLE

The Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) is a world-leading institute in global health with a particular focus on low- and middle-income countries. Associated with the University of Basel, Swiss TPH combines research, education and services at local, national and international levels. 995 staff and students from 96 nations work at Swiss TPH (as of December 2025) focusing on climate change, environment and health, infectious and non-communicable diseases, societal and cultural context, and health systems and policies [1]. To help achieve its mandate, Swiss TPH collaborates with national and international Partners from the public, private, academic/research and civil society sectors.

Swiss TPH embraces the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda, and notes in particular goal no. 17 which seeks to “*Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries, in particular developing countries*” [2].

Moreover, Swiss TPH works in accordance with the general principles laid out in the UN Global Compact, a United Nations initiative that encourages companies and institutions worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies. The Compact is built around ten principles covering human rights, labour standards, environmental protection, and anti-corruption, and promotes actions that support broader societal goals such as the SDGs.

Any collaboration that Swiss TPH undertakes or formalizes must be fully aligned with the institution’s mission, namely, improving the health and well-being of people – locally, nationally and internationally – through excellence in research, education and services. Partnerships should also be consistent with the organization’s strategic orientation and core values. In this sense, Swiss TPH carefully evaluates potential engagements to ensure they do not create conflicts of interest, undermine institutional integrity, or compromise the scientific, ethical, and societal principles that guide its work.

While for all collaborators (including consultants) the ‘Swiss TPH Code of Conduct’ [3] is an integral part of contractual arrangements, the present **document outlines the rules and principles governing Swiss TPH’s engagement with non-governmental entities**. These Rules of Engagement with non-governmental actors apply to all contractual and collaborative agreements in all areas of activities (research, training and services) and are binding for all Swiss TPH employees as well as collaborators.

These **guidelines do not refer to engagement with governmental bodies** such as Ministries of Health and their sub-entities, which are subject to distinct legal, diplomatic, and accountability requirements that differ from those applicable to non-governmental entities.

The current rules emphasize structured and strategic collaboration with non-governmental entities, including associations and foundations, to support Swiss TPH in achieving its objectives, and they define the procedures required to design, implement, and oversee such collaborations. They are designed to provide a comprehensive organization-wide approach wherein Swiss TPH and the non-governmental entities are perceived as Partners that offer unique and complementary skills, knowledge, expertise and resources in order to achieve mutually desired outcomes.

2. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Scope

These Swiss TPH Rules of Engagement provide organization-wide guidance on the requirements and assessments to complete before entering into partnerships or collaborations with external parties. These rules provide the principles, procedures, and responsibilities for creating, implementing, and managing such relationships.

These Rules of Engagement apply to all Swiss TPH activities, whenever partnerships or collaborations are formed.

The non-governmental sector, for purposes of these Rules, is broadly defined as:

- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs);
- Foundations, including corporate foundations;
- For-profit and commercial enterprises of any size (whether privately held, publicly quoted, or wholly or majority owned by the state or local communities), and whether legally registered (formal) and unregistered (informal);
- Business associations, coalitions and alliances (including, for example, chambers of commerce, employer's associations, cooperatives, industry and cross-industry initiatives where the participants are for-profit enterprises).

2.2 Goals of these Rules of Engagement

These Rules build on the directives to strengthen partnerships with non-state actors and better utilize the potential of private sector partnerships reflected in the partnership and outreach strategy and the private sector engagement plan, and to ensure core standards are maintained in our engagement with the private and NGO sector as well as foundations.

The goals of these Swiss TPH Rules of Engagement are to:

- Protect public trust in Swiss TPH by ensuring that all engagements align with ethical principles and serve the public good.
- Protect institutional reputation and credibility through transparent decision-making and adherence to professional standards in all external engagements.
- Maintain the quality and integrity of operations by safeguarding rigor, secure data handling, and responsible delivery of research and teaching activities and services across all settings.
- Anticipate potential conflicts of interest and take proactive measures to identify, assess, and mitigate any risks that could compromise independence or objectivity.
- Avoid biased research, education and implementation priorities by ensuring that engagements are driven by evidence-based needs, rather than external pressures or hidden agendas.
- Support critical thinking about risks and benefits so that informed choices are made when entering partnerships, always considering long-term implications for communities, staff, and stakeholders.
- Fulfil self-governance and academic freedom by enabling Swiss TPH to operate autonomously, uphold scientific independence, and preserve its mission-oriented focus.

- Harmonize the internal approach to Swiss TPH mandates through consistent procedures, shared standards, and aligned expectations throughout headquarters and project offices worldwide.

3. SUPERORDINATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS

These Rules that guide Swiss TPH's engagement with actors in the private and non-governmental sectors, are grounded in **the UN Global Compact**. They emphasize the creation of meaningful and transformative partnerships that contribute to sustainable global health outcomes. Such partnerships must be built on a shared purpose and mutual benefit, while upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct. The UN Global Compact's ten principles guide organisations to uphold human rights, prevent abuses, support collective bargaining, end forced and child labor, eliminate discrimination in employment, embrace environmental responsibility, use sustainable technologies, and combat corruption, extortion, and bribery. They foster ethical governance, transparency, worker protection, climate action, pollution prevention, and respect for universal values across global operations and supply chains.

The rules are also embedded in broader principles of public-sector integrity and transparency, under Swiss law and administrative practice. As part of Swiss public-law tradition, interactions between public bodies and private businesses must respect fundamental norms such as fairness, good faith, impartiality, non-discrimination, transparency, and accountability.

As an associated institute of the University of Basel, **Swiss TPH adheres to all relevant regulations of the University of Basel**, including the "Ordnung über Nebentätigkeiten, Vereinbarungen mit Dritten und die Verwertung von geistigem Eigentum im Rahmen der universitären Tätigkeit" (August 2004) and the „Reglement über die Entgegennahme von Zuwendungen und Sponsoringbeiträgen (Fundraising) an der Universität Basel“ (August 2016). Therefore, according to §10 "The Swiss TPH only enters into agreements with persons, enterprises and institutions which have legal means to achieve their objectives and which are in accordance with the principles of the Swiss legislation." [4].

Furthermore, these Rules of Engagement are in line with the guide for global research partnership from the Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnership [5], formerly the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE).

All Swiss TPH internal regulations available on the intranet (<https://intranet.swisstph.ch/en/>), including the Employee Manual, the Code of Conduct, Swiss TPH Safeguarding Policy (Sexual Exploitation, Abuse & Harassment (SEAH), Child Protection, Anti-Human Trafficking), and the Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) Chart (roles and responsibilities matrix, "Funktionenmatrix"), are applicable to these rules of engagement. Additional specific instruments, such as the Partner Risk Assessment tool, are available upon request through the Swiss TPH internal auditor.

4. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Swiss TPH expects all engagements with non-governmental entities, to reflect strong commitments to integrity, accountability, responsibility, and openness, ensuring that cooperation remains transparent, trustworthy, and aligned with Swiss TPH's mission and values.

General pre-requisites considering a collaboration

- §1. Collaborations and partnerships have to fit into the overall strategy of Swiss TPH and its departments.
- §2. Partners with whom Swiss TPH collaborates or who fund Swiss TPH projects have to be committed not to harm the health and well-being of the public.
- §3. The broad mission, public image and potential public health impact of the entity with whom Swiss TPH engages, should not go against Swiss TPH's mission, principles and values.
- §4. Work undertaken with Swiss TPH will not be exploited purely for public relations or marketing purposes, or for forwarding an agenda that is inconsistent with improving people's health and well-being.
- §5. For each new engagement, possible risks for the reputation of Swiss TPH will be systematically assessed according to these present Rules of Engagement and minimal requirements as outlined in section 5.
- §6. Swiss TPH is attentive to indirect¹ collaborations and will avoid them in case a direct collaboration or formal partnership with the entity would not also be acceptable.
- §7. The terms of any engagement should not conflict with or hinder Swiss TPH rules, guidelines and policies, and should not affect the independent governance and decision-making of Swiss TPH.

Prohibited Non-governmental Sectors for Collaboration: Tobacco, gambling, alcohol beverage, and arms industries²

- §8. Any kind of funding/sponsoring from Partners whose activities or products have by their nature adverse effects on health, hence contradicting §2 above, is not accepted by Swiss TPH.
- §9. Funding for any activity from the tobacco, gambling, alcohol beverage, and arms industries is not to be accepted under any circumstances.
- §10. Swiss TPH employees are required to turn down any requests for meetings with representatives of the tobacco, gambling, alcohol beverage, and arms industry.

Conflicts of interest

- §11. Project leaders are responsible to alert perceived or real conflicts of interest and declare in good faith if any threat to the present Rules of Engagement is identified.
- §12. Conflicts of interest with other Swiss TPH units, departments and institutional interests should be actively avoided.
- §13. Swiss TPH staff should declare and document any form of conflict of interest (e.g. financial, professional, organisational, reputational or personal) that exists or may be perceived to exist. This includes relevant interests of immediate family members³ and other parties with whom a substantial common interest exists that may affect, or may reasonably be perceived to affect, the staff's objectivity, independence and professionalism.

Public declaration of collaboration

- §14. All engagements with Swiss TPH shall be registered in the Project Database so that they can be disclosed in official Swiss TPH publications such as the annual report or website. Any such registration and disclosure must comply with the Act on Information and Data Protection of the Canton of Basel-Landschaft of 10 February 2011, as well as with the Federal Act on Data Protection (FADP) which is aligned with the EU General

¹ Indirect collaborations exist in cases where a partner of Swiss TPH is sub-contracting another individual or entity or, where Swiss TPH is sub-contracted by another individual or entity.

² Tobacco or arms industry refers to any entity involved in the production, manufacture, distribution or sale of tobacco or arms or any tobacco products or representing the interests of any such entity.

³ Immediate family members refers to the spouse (or partner with whom the concerned Swiss TPH staff has a similar close personal relationship) and the children of the concerned Swiss TPH staff.

Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Exceptions provided for under the relevant data protection legislation continue to apply.

Law and ethics

- §15. Swiss TPH Partners are to comply with all relevant laws and regulations, including tax law, and data protection, including those applying to data and sample transfers. Similarly, laws and regulations of the Cantons Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft are to be adhered to.
- §16. Swiss TPH and its Partners must actively work to safeguard the human rights of all individuals affected by their activities, including employees and local communities. This includes preventing labour and sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH), and ensuring that the highest attainable standard of health and the right to access relevant information are fully respected and protected.
- §17. All authorisations required for any project activities are to be obtained from the respective authorities in accordance with applicable ethical and regulatory requirements (e.g. ethics committees, institutional review boards, regulatory authorities, animal testing commissions).
- §18. For all projects involving human participants that are conducted, including in low- and middle-income countries, in which Swiss TPH has a substantial role (e.g. as sponsor, principal investigator, or PhD/MSc supervisor), the best practice rule applies in accordance with the latest version of the Declaration of Helsinki, in particular Section 23 on research ethics committee approval. Accordingly, such projects must obtain prior clearance from the Ethikkommission Nordwest- und Zentralschweiz (EKNZ), or another appropriate Northern ethics committee if a partner institution leads the project, as well as approval from the relevant ethics committee(s) in the host country and, where applicable, from the internal review board(s) of the host institution(s). This is to go together with appropriate data sharing agreements that clearly define access, use, storage, transfer, and ownership of associated data.
- §19. Within partnerships and collaborations with non-governmental entities, Swiss TPH is committed to responsible data sharing and robust data protection practices. All Partners must adhere to applicable data protection laws and ethical standards, ensuring that personal, sensitive, and research data are collected, processed, shared, and stored in a secure, transparent, and purpose-limited manner. Data sharing arrangements shall promote scientific openness and equitable access while safeguarding confidentiality, respecting participants' rights, and protecting the interests of collaborating institutions and communities.
- §20. For all projects involving biological material, rules for the exchange of genetic resources according to the Nagoya protocol should be applied [6].
- §21. All projects involving animal health and animal health facilities, are to be implemented through national veterinary, animal welfare, biosafety, and research laws defining concrete requirements for animal health facilities and research projects.
- §22. Partners whose activities could have potential negative effects on human health and its determinants (e.g. society or the environment), should apply the highest ethical, environmental and social standards while pursuing their activities⁴ [7, 8].

Good scientific practices

- §23. The code of conduct and the integrity regulations of the University of Basel (<https://www.unibas.ch/de/Forschung/Werte-Ethik/Wissenschaftliche-Integritaet.html>) as well as the guide for global research partnership from the Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnership steer the operations of Swiss TPH (<https://www.swisstph.ch/en/research/research-governance>).
- §24. The financial support of Swiss TPH by Partners should not interfere with the freedom of research, expert advice (consulting), and teaching (including principles of open

⁴ For private sector industries, these include the ten principles of United Nations Global Compact Guide to "Corporate Sustainability – Shaping a sustainable future" and the International Finance Corporation's "Environmental and Social Performance Standards".

science) nor harm the reputation and prestige of Swiss TPH and the University of Basel. The autonomy of the institute or university should not be restricted [4].

- §25. Engagements must not limit or compromise the scientific independence or intellectual freedom of Swiss TPH or its employees or collaborators.
- §26. Swiss TPH must retain decision-making power over the design, implementation, data analysis and/or interpretation of its independent research and consulting activities. For contractual research and service activities, Swiss TPH should aim to maintain substantial influence and final approval over these aspects, and should only enter engagements in which its scientific independence and intellectual integrity are safeguarded.
- §27. Partners should consult on matters of mutual concern and agreed joint actions between Partners should be based on sound scientific evidence and moral principles.

Transparency

- §28. Swiss TPH strives to transparently and publicly communicate independent and contract research results towards the public, Partners, policymakers and other stakeholder groups in line with contractual agreements.
- §29. For independent research engagements, the control over publication of independent research results should remain with Swiss TPH.
- §30. For contractual research or service collaborations, Swiss TPH will strive to include the right to publish results into its contracts, but this must not be guaranteed.

Confidentiality agreements

- §31. Confidentiality agreements can be agreed mutually between Partners and will define the scope and objective of the exchange of specific information in a precise manner.

Financial regulations

- §32. In accepting contracts and grants from external sources, Swiss TPH expects that full direct and indirect costs of the activity are covered, including Swiss TPH overhead costs. This is a protection against the use of public and Swiss TPH funds for non-public gain.
- §33. In the case of not for-profit or organisational sponsored research or mandate, Swiss TPH may agree to share some costs, usually in the form of for example contributed effort or administration costs. In the case of grants from non-profit, non-governmental organisations, Swiss TPH may occasionally waive indirect costs as a form of cost sharing.

Documentation of processes and assessment of partnerships

- §34. The documentation and the assessment process can involve, besides the directly involved and responsible persons/units/departments, the Governance, Risk and Compliance Unit at Swiss TPH. The documentation assessment of a Partner may involve a partner risk assessment following Swiss TPH guidance in that respect. To ensure objectivity and avoid conflicts of interest, assessments should be conducted independently from any operational or financial interests in the partnership. If necessary, external or uninvolved internal experts may be consulted to secure impartiality.
- §35. Adherence to these rules is the responsibility of project and group leaders / head of units at Swiss TPH, in close consultation of hierarchical superiors and ultimately the Executive Team of Swiss TPH. Where independence of judgement is at stake, staff must disclose potential conflicts and request reassignment of the assessment task to maintain integrity and transparency.
- §36. Funding or engagement decisions that have no real or potential conflicts with the rules outlined in this document will be made within the respective departments. When actual or suspected conflicts with the present rules occur, the Executive Team at Swiss TPH will retain final decision-making authority.

Signatory regulations

- §37. Contracts are always executed on behalf of Swiss TPH. Swiss TPH entities such as units or departments, including local and project offices abroad, are not independent legal entities.
- §38. All contracts must adhere to the “two signature policy” and to the Swiss TPH Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed (RACI) Chart respectively functional matrix (“Funktionenmatrix”) where in any case, one signer must be a member of the Executive Team.

Termination of collaboration

- §39. After initial assessments at the beginning of the engagement new information can alter the viability of engagement. This will require a re-assessment of the engagement through a partner risk assessment under the lead of the Governance, Risk and Compliance Unit at Swiss TPH,
- §40. In line with the contractual agreements, Swiss TPH will terminate an engagement in case of violation of the rules listed in the previous paragraphs or any superordinate laws and regulations.

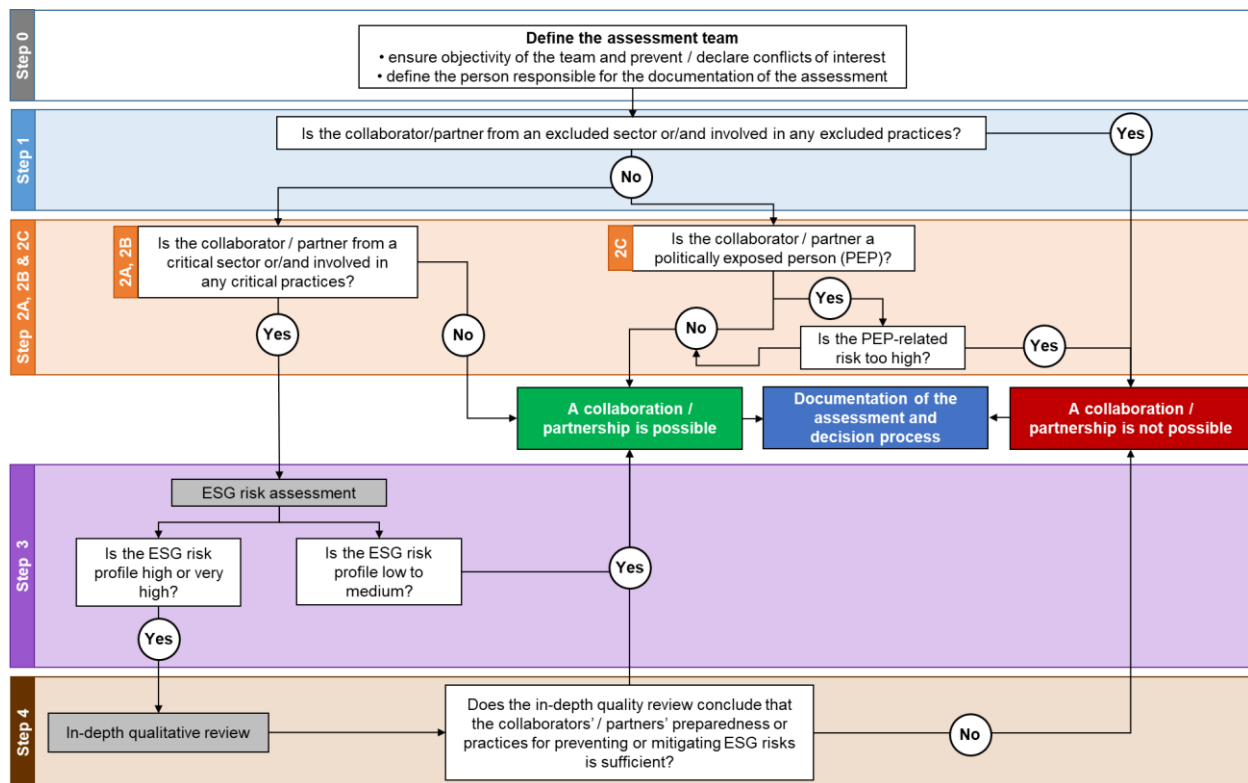
5. ASSESSMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT

The assessment of collaborations/partnerships engagement is inspired and based on the guidance provided in the ‘SDC Handbook on Private Sector Engagement’ with adaptations made for the Swiss TPH context [9]. Based on the rules outlined in the previous section, criteria for engagement and collaboration with the non-governmental sector shall be guided by the following:

- Relevant to Swiss TPH’s vision, mission, strategy as well as values;
- Consistent with the general policies of Swiss TPH;
- Empower Swiss TPH to implement its activities;
- Effective and results-based with concrete outcomes that can be measured;
- Efficient in the use of Swiss TPH resources as compared to alternative actions;
- Transparent in the sense of ensuring public access to information, while respecting institutional confidentiality, as appropriate, in accordance with Swiss TPH’s and the Partner’s disclosure policy
- Non-exclusive;
- Enhancing of the credibility and ensuring independence of Swiss TPH from the non-governmental sector.

Decision process for engagement

The below displays the decision process that shall be applied for decisions on engagement with potential collaboration and partnership. The individual steps are detailed in the following thereby the ESG risk profile describes how exposed an organization or business is to risks related to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues, and how well it manages them.



Step 0: Deciding on persons and teams involved

As outlined in paragraphs §32 and §33 above, the documentation and assessment of Partners at Swiss TPH may involve not only the directly responsible teams or departments, but also the Governance, Risks and Compliance Unit at Swiss TPH. Partner evaluations can include a dedicated risk assessment, carried out in line with Swiss TPH's internal guidance. For further information on guidance the internal and partner auditor of Swiss TPH is to be contacted and may be associated to the assessment.

To ensure objectivity and prevent conflicts of interest, these assessments must remain independent from any operational or financial involvement in the partnership.

Project and group leaders, or heads of units, are responsible for applying these rules, while consulting with their supervisors and ultimately the Executive Team at Swiss TPH. Whenever the independence of an assessment could be compromised, staff are expected to declare any potential conflict of interest and request that the evaluation be reassigned, safeguarding integrity and transparency throughout the process. The responsible project leaders need to document the assessment and the decision process.

Step 1: Excluded sectors and excluded practices

In a first step, all collaborations/partnerships must be screened against the following exclusion lists. Swiss TPH does not enter any collaborations/partnerships that is engaged directly in one of the following excluded sectors or practices.

Is the collaborator/Partner from any of the following sectors:

- Armaments, weapons, munitions and/or their components
- Alcohol beverages (except beer and wine)
- Tobacco
- Gambling, casinos and equivalent enterprises (except public lottery companies, e.g. of Swiss cantons)

Is the collaborator/Partner involved in any of the following illegal, banned or harmful activities:

- Production or trade in any product or activity deemed illegal under host country laws or regulations or international conventions and agreements, or subject to international bans, such as human trafficking, certain pharmaceuticals, certain pesticides/herbicides, ozone-depleting substances, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), wildlife or products regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);
- Production or trade in wood or other forestry products from unmanaged forests;
- Illegal and/or uncontrolled use of fire for forest clearance;
- Involvement in activities with adverse impacts on UNESCO World Heritage Sites;
- Prostitution or pornography;
- Production or trade in radioactive materials; however, this does not apply to the purchase of medical equipment, quality control (and measurement) equipment, and any equipment where the radioactive source is trivial and/or adequately shielded;
- Cross-border trade in hazardous waste and waste products, unless compliant with the Basel Convention and the underlying regulation;
- Other illegal, banned or harmful activities.

Step 1	If a collaboration/partnership falls under the exclusion criteria, a partnership with Swiss TPH is not possible.
	If none of the above exclusion criteria are met, Swiss TPH can potentially enter a collaboration and/or partnership. → Continuation with Step 2A, 2B & 2C

Step 2A: Critical sectors

Based on their business operations, services and products, several sectors are to be considered critical because of their potentially adverse environmental and social impact or because they face a high risk of being associated with specific controversial practices, even though their business operations and products are compliant with national regulations and international standards.

It is important for Swiss TPH to recognise the existence and extent of the risk exposure associated with a potential partnership and to address it systematically. A partnership with a collaborator/partner engaged in a critical sector is only possibly if:

- 1) the potential collaborator/partner adheres to relevant sustainability-related sectoral policies and principles (including the Global Compact) and/or actively engages in initiatives fostering sector-specific sustainability stewardship practices;
- 2) the engagement directly or indirectly addresses key negative impacts of the potential collaborator/partner, e.g. committing to community health initiatives and/or reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the case of the oil and gas sector.

Critical sectors are:

- Commodity trading
- Mining
- Oil and gas
- Timber, pulp and paper, soy, palm oil
- Garments and accessories
- Dams

Step 2A	If the above critical criteria are met, Swiss TPH can potentially enter a collaboration and/or partnership. → Continuation with Step 3
	If none of the above exclusion criteria are met, Swiss TPH can enter a collaboration and/or partnership.

Step 2B: Corporate foundations in excluded and critical sectors

A corporate foundation is an independent legal entity which is nonetheless de facto associated with a company as it is funded by the latter.

In the case of corporate foundations, if the founding company falls under the exclusion list, a partnership is only possible if the following governance rules are met:

- The purpose of the foundation is not excluded according to the exclusion list;
- There is an independent foundation board: board members are independent of the company;
- The foundation pursues its mission using approaches and practices so to ensure that its activities are planned and carried out in a manner that allow for efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainable impact;
- The foundation ensures that there is a balanced relationship between management and controlling for all key decisions and processes (checks and balances);
- The foundation maintains the highest possible degree of transparency with regard to its guiding principles, objectives, structures and activities;

- Grant-making decisions are made independently of the company.

Step 2B	If the above criteria are not met, a partnership with Swiss TPH is not possible.
	If the above critical criteria is met, Swiss TPH can potentially enter a collaboration and/or partnership. → Continuation with Step 3

Step 2C: Politically exposed persons and organisations (PEP)

Collaborations or partnerships with political parties or lobby organizations may present elevated integrity and reputational risks due to their potential influence over public decision-making and access to political power. Such entities may seek to leverage these relationships for political or financial advantage, which could compromise the independence, transparency, or neutrality expected in Swiss TPH activities.

A Politically Exposed Person (PEP) is defined as an individual currently or formerly in a high public office or who is closely associated with such an office through family or personal ties or as a result of business relations. The involvement of PEPs may represent an increased risk on account of the possibility of individuals holding such positions misusing their power and influence for personal gain or advantage, whether for themselves, close family members and/or close associates. Such individuals may also use their families or close associates to conceal funds or assets that have been misappropriated through the abuse of their official position or as a result of bribery or corruption. In addition, they may also seek to use their power and influence to gain representation and/or access to, or control of, legal entities for similar purposes.

Before entering into any collaboration or partnership with political parties, lobby organizations, or entities linked to PEPs, the responsible project or unit leader must collect relevant information through publicly available information (e.g. press articles, website, third party assessments), including due-diligence documentation and potential risk indicators. This assessment shall be coordinated with the Governance, Risks and Compliance unit to ensure objectivity.

Based on the findings, a recommendation is submitted through the hierarchical line, with final approval resting with the Executive Team at Swiss TPH. Should significant integrity, political influence, or reputational risks be identified, the Executive Team may decide to refuse or discontinue the partnership to safeguard independence and transparency.

Step 2C	If the PEP-related risk is too high, a partnership with Swiss TPH is not possible.
	If the PEP-related risk is acceptable and manageable, Swiss TPH can enter a collaboration and/or partnership.

Step 3: Relevant Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) risks

The purpose of the assessment of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) risks is not to exclude per se an actor with a potential collaborator/partner that has been directly or indirectly (i.e. through its partners in the value chain) involved in any instance related to such risks. An actor can be envisaged if the potential collaborator/partner clearly commits itself to avoiding or minimizing negative impacts, and if it has a credible system in place to identify, prevent and mitigate risks.

Collaborations or partnerships that proactively address and openly communicate how they manage important ESG issues, such as climate change, pollution, resource use, human rights, equality, and safe and fair working conditions, demonstrate a significantly lower risk than those

that simply comply with minimum legal requirements or take no action. Actively identifying and reducing negative impacts for stakeholders strengthens their ESG risk profile and makes them more suitable partners.

Sector-specific ESG risks and business-conduct issues of prospective collaborators or Partners must be carefully evaluated. For publicly listed companies, this assessment will draw on a free and publicly accessible ESG data source — for example, the open “Public Company ESG Ratings Dataset” published on Kaggle (https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/alistairking/public-company-esg-ratings-dataset?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

For other potential Partners, a preliminary desk review may be carried out, focusing on sector-relevant ESG topics. This research should examine environmental and social concerns relevant to the Partner’s operations or value chain, for example climate and pollution risks, resource management practices, labour conditions, human rights compliance, and corporate governance. In practice this may mean using a classification scheme such as Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) (<https://www.msci.com/documents/1296102/34424357/MSCI+ESG+Ratings+Methodology.pdf>) (or another recognized industry taxonomy) combined with a provider’s mapping of industries to ESG-relevant risk issues.

Only when a Partner demonstrates a credible commitment to identifying, mitigating and transparently reporting on ESG risks — supplemented by a robust internal risk-management system — can the collaboration be considered acceptable despite past or potential exposures. In line with the approach used by RepRisk Analytics, the assessment of ESG risks should ideally take into consideration the following wide range of risks:

- Environmental: climate change, greenhouse gas emissions and global pollution; local pollution; impacts on landscape, ecosystems and biodiversity; overuse and wasting of resources; waste issues; animal mistreatment.
- Social and community relations: human rights abuses; corporate complicity; impacts on communities; local participation issues; social discrimination.
- Governance (corporate governance and employee relations): corruption, bribery, extortion, money laundering; executive compensation issues; misleading communication, incl. ‘greenwashing’; fraud; tax evasion; tax optimisation; anti-competitive practices; forced labour; child labour; freedom of association and collective bargaining; discrimination in employment, cases of sexual abuse and harassment; occupational health and safety issues; poor employment conditions.
- Crosscutting issues (always in combination with one of the issues mentioned under the previous bullet points): controversial products and services; products (health and environmental issues); violation of international standards, including involvement in activities which are in violation of international humanitarian law (as defined in treaties and customary law); violation of national legislation; supply chain issues.

Step 3	If the ESG risk profile is high or very high, a qualitative review of publicly available information needs to be conducted. → Continuation with Step 4
	If the ESG risk profile is low to medium, a partnership is possible.

Step 4: Quality review

A qualitative review of a private-sector Partner’s ESG preparedness uses the premises that partnerships are acceptable if a Partner shows clear commitment and credible systems to identify, prevent and mitigate risks along its value chain, not simply because it has no past incidents.

First, the Partner may be asked to provide qualitative information: ESG policies and codes of conduct, human-rights and environmental due-diligence processes, governance structures, whistle-blower and grievance mechanisms, stakeholder-engagement practices and examples of remediation. These documents may be cross-checked with independent sources (publicly available information, media analysis, etc.) to understand the Partner's track record and how it responds to controversies.

Second, Swiss TPH assesses whether ESG risk management is embedded in strategy and operations: clear responsibilities, board oversight, time-bound targets, transparent reporting and learning mechanisms. Particular attention is paid to how the Partner works with suppliers and local stakeholders in high-risk contexts.

Finally, the findings may inform a structured dialogue with the Partner to agree on safeguards or an improvement plan where gaps exist. A partnership proceeds only if there is evidence of genuine willingness and capacity to improve over time, and if regular monitoring, joint reviews and the possibility to suspend or exit are clearly defined in the agreement.

Step 4	If the qualitative review concludes that the collaborators' / Partners' preparedness and practices for preventing or mitigating the identified ESG risks are insufficient, a partnership with Swiss TPH is not possible.
	If the qualitative review concludes that the collaborators' / Partners' preparedness and practices for preventing or mitigating the identified ESG risks are sufficient, a partnership with Swiss TPH is possible.

6. ENTRY INTO FORCE

The Executive Team of Swiss TPH has responsibility for enforcing and monitoring these rules and has the right to grant exceptions to it.

These guidelines have been approved by the 206th Swiss TPH ILK on 19 December 2025.

For the Swiss TPH Executive Team:

06-Feb-2026 | 14:45:12 - 0E7B010FA4F4BA...

Signed by:

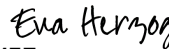


Jürg Utzinger

For the Board of Governors:

06-Feb-2026 | 17:27:25 - ME29FF129C6C01453...

Signiert von:



Eva Herzog

7. REFERENCES

1. Swiss TPH, *Swiss TPH Strategy 2025-2028*. 2023, Directorate, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute: Allschwil. Available from: <https://intranet.swisstph.ch/en/information-resources/vision-mission-strategy>.
2. UN, *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2015, United Nations: New York.
3. Swiss TPH, *Swiss TPH Code of Conduct*. 2025, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute: Allschwil.
4. Universität Basel, *Reglement über die Entgegennahme von Zuwendungen und Sponsoring-beiträgen (Fundraising) an der Universität Basel*. 2016, Universität Basel: Basel.
5. Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnerships / Swiss Academy of Science, *Guide for Global Research Partnerships*, Swiss Alliance for Global Research Partnerships, Swiss Academy of Sciences (Scnat): Bern. Available from <https://globalresearch.scnat.ch/en/grp-guide>
6. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Environmental Programme, *Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity*. 2011, United Nations Environmental Programme: Quebec.
7. IFC, *Performance Standards on Environmental and Social Sustainability*. 2012, International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group: Washington D.C.
8. UN Global Compact, *Guide to Corporate Sustainability – Shaping a sustainable future*. 2014, United Nations Global Compact: New York.
9. SDC, *SDC Handbook on Private Sector Engagement*. 2021, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC): Bern.