Step 1
Bottom-up selective analysis of existing applied studies:
Explication of relationship between empirical and ethical frameworks?
Addressing quality criteria for usage of empirical and ethical approaches?

Comparative, en-detail analysis of 10 publications on living organ transplantation:
3 quantitative studies [28-30]
4 theoretical studies [34-37]
3 qualitative studies [31-33]

Major findings:
• Relevance of empirical data for ethical analysis is often not made explicit
• Empirical studies tend to be crypto-normative in their conclusions
• Theoretical studies refer to empirical data, but without critically reflecting methodology, or often in a positivistic manner

Step 2
Top-down selective analysis of existing literature on quality criteria in applied ethics / EE

Sub-group 1:
quality criteria in philosophy/normative ethics research

Sub-group 2:
quality criteria in empirical social science research

Sub-group 3:
quality criteria in EE research

Steps 3&4
Clustering of findings in main categories (incl. mind map software) & consensus round along 3 standards: formal, cognitive and ethical norms (~200 criteria)

Step 5
Focusing on criteria specific for EE (~50 criteria) along 4 major categories:
summarize, systematize, elucidate (finding examples)

Primary research question, theoretical framework & methodology
Relevance
Interdisciplinary research practice
Research ethics & scientific ethos

Step 6
Formulating criteria into checklist questions & final consensus round (see tables 1-4)