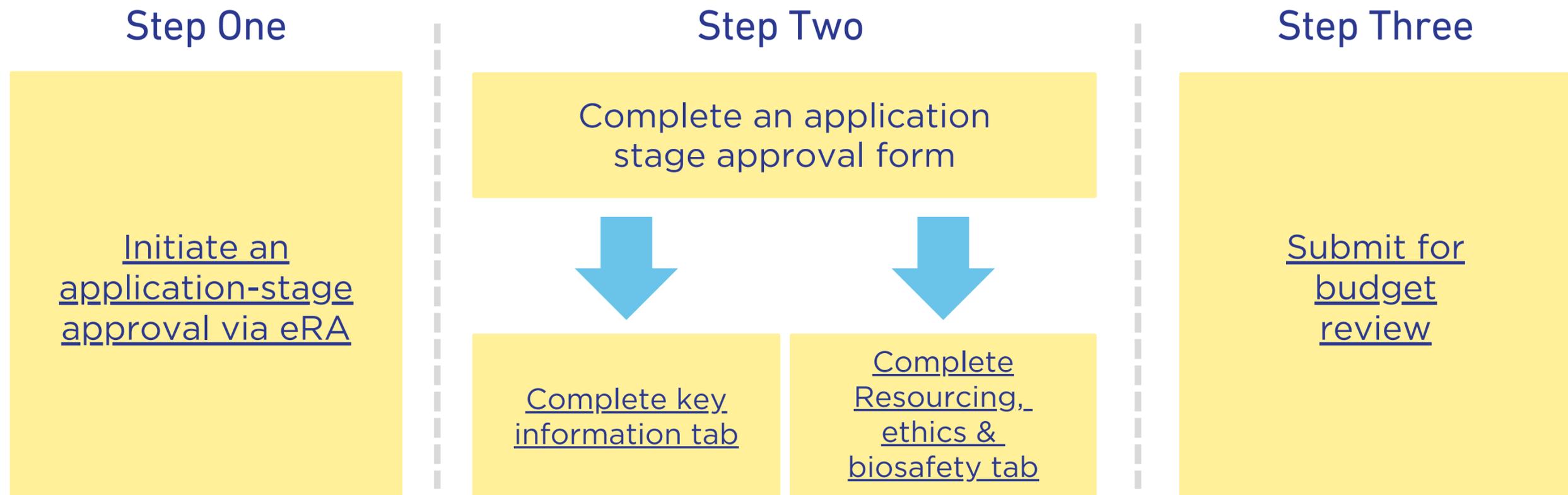# STAGE 2: Proposal Approval and Development

Application-stage approval process via UCT's electronic Research Administration system (UCT eRA)

This process flow outlines the steps a researcher must follow to log a pre-award internal approval via eRA. eRA pre-award internal approvals are divided into application and contract-stage approvals. This process covers the application-stage approval process. Application stage approval is required prior to applying for external funding.

Click here to see which funding opportunities require internal approval via eRA 🌐

Before you initiate an eRA application make sure you have completed all the necessary steps as outlined in Stage 2: Proposal Development & Approval of the RPN.

There are three key steps to logging an application stage approval via eRA

Step One	Step Two	Step Three
Initiate an application-stage approval via eRA	Complete an application stage approval form	Submit for budget review
	Complete key information tab / Complete Resourcing, ethics & biosafety tab	

Step One: Initiate an application-stage approval via UCT eRA

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Initiate an application-stage approval via UCT eRA

START

Ensure you are using your researcher role

1 Log in to UCT eRA

2 Navigate to "add new content"

3 Select "award management"

4 Select "project application/ approval request"

5 Navigate to "other funding schemes"

6 Select the appropriate application-stage approval form

7 Complete the form

Click for details about the six types of application stage approval forms

As the Principal Investigator (PI), you are responsible for completing the two tabs: (Click blocks below to jump to each section)

Key information

Resourcing, ethics and biosafety

Step One: Initiate an application-stage approval via UCT eRA

Types of application-stage approval forms and when to use them

Initiate an application-stage approval via UCT eRA

APPLY

Select the appropriate application-stage approval form

6

1. Proposal approval for non-clinical trials
This form is the one most used for research grant applications to external funders. It is suitable for research projects that do not involve clinical trials. Observational studies follow the non-clinical trials approval process.

2. Proposal approval for clinical trials
Use this form when your research project is classified as a clinical trial. Clinical trials involve participants receiving specific interventions based on a research plan/protocol.

3. Preliminary proposal approval
Complete this form when you intend to submit a letter of intent or preliminary application to an external funder. This is typically used for outline proposals or the first of a two-stage proposal process. If you are invited for a second-stage proposal, complete the appropriate proposal approval form.

Note: The forms listed in 4 and 5 below are only available on UCT eRA when the specific calls are open

4. South African Medical Research Council Self-Initiated Research (SAMRC-SIR) programme grants
This form is specific to SAMRC-SIR programme grants. These applications require you to develop your own budget and do not require faculty finance approval. Approvals go directly to the final faculty approver. This is only for SAMRC-SIR; other SAMRC grants follow the usual UCT eRA approval process apart from SAMRC postdoctoral fellowships which do not require UCT eRA approval.

5. Poliomyelitis Research Foundation (PRF) research grants and major impact project
This form is used for PRF research grants and major impact projects. These applications require you to develop your own budget and do not require faculty finance approval. Approvals go directly to the final faculty approver.
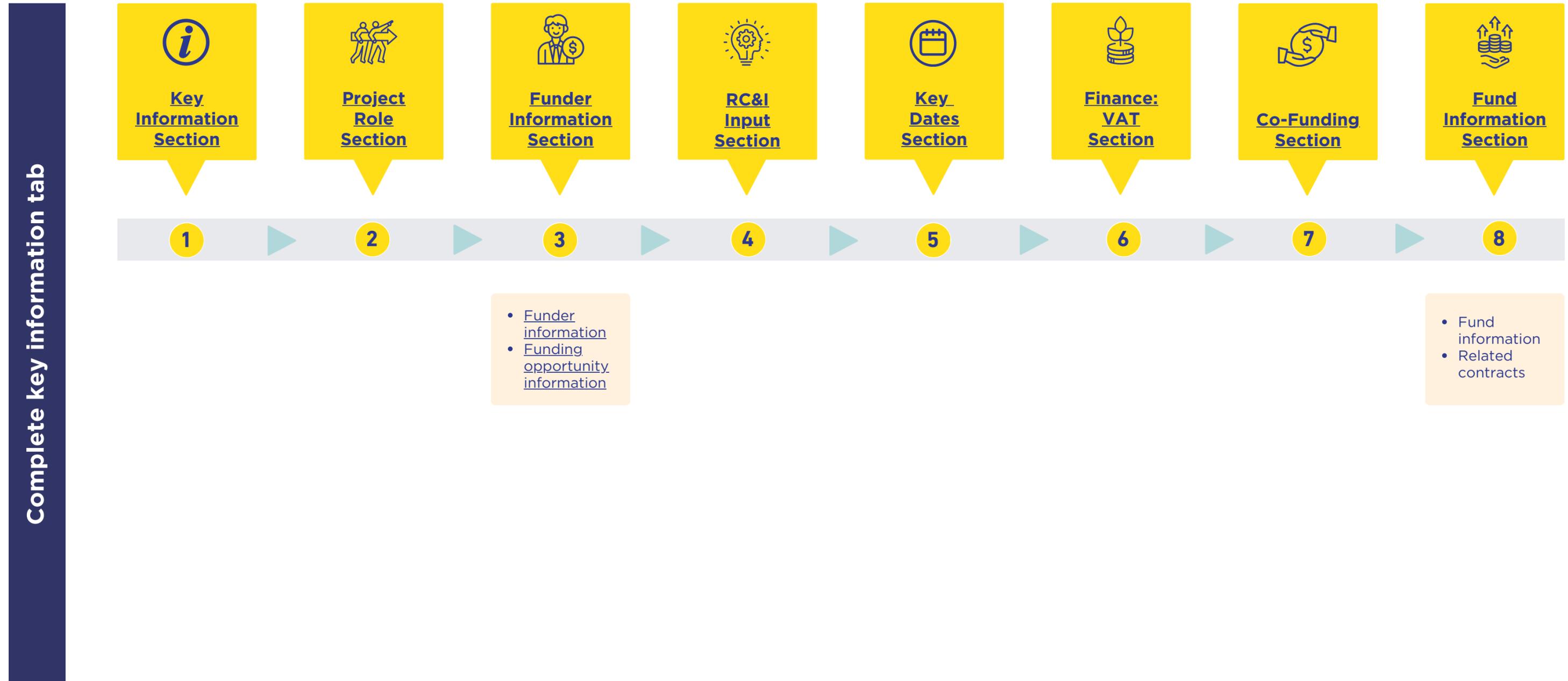
Step Two: Complete key information tab

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

There are eight key sections requiring completion on the key information tab
Note: Click on each section to view the instructions and process
Click on the icon alongside to view screenshots directly from eRA   🔍 **Click to view**

Complete key information tab

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Key Information Section	Project Role Section	Funder Information Section	RC&I Input Section	Key Dates Section	Finance: VAT Section	Co-Funding Section	Fund Information Section

Section 3:
- Funder information
- Funding opportunity information

Section 8:
- Fund information
- Related contracts

Step Two: Complete key information tab

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Key information tab

1. Key Information Section

START

1 — Select the **type of project** application from the drop-down menu

2 — Select the **approval type** from the drop-down menu

3 — Give your research project a **clear title**

4 — Upload your **project** proposal or protocol

Application stage approval

Select **application-stage approval** when applying for research funding in response to an open call/ request for proposal

Contract stage approval

Select **contract-stage approval** if:
- (1) you have been awarded a research contract through direct negotiation with the funder—such as commissioned, consultancy, or industry-led projects without a prior funding call OR
- (2) you previously submitted an application-stage approval, but the funder requests budget or contract changes after proposal submission

(1) New
(2) Supplement/ revision
(3) Amendment
(4) Costed extension
(5) Renewal

TIP: The definitions of each of these approval types are provided. Ensure you select the correct one

TIP: Ensure that your project title matches the project title given in the proposal

This doesn't need to be submission-ready but should include key cost drivers (e.g., participants, travel, personnel) for budget review and finalisation
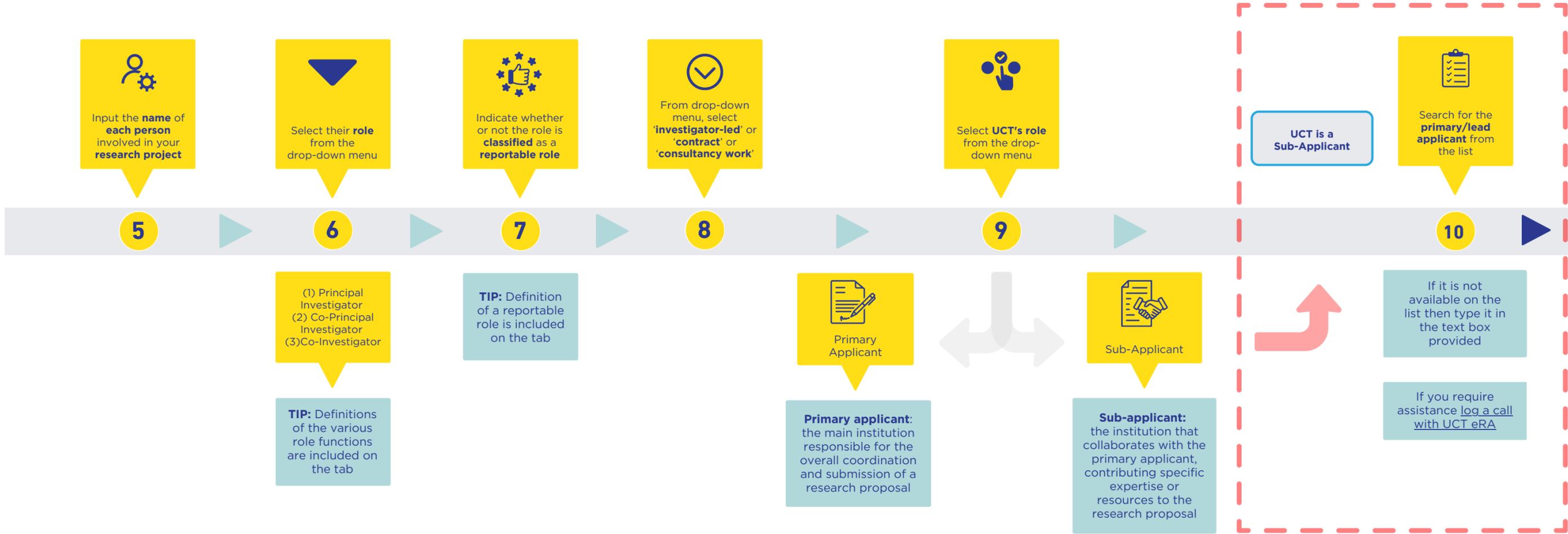
PROJECT PROPOSAL / PROTOCOL

🔍 **Click to view**

Step Two: Complete key information tab
Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

🔍 **Click to view**

Key information tab

2. Project Roles Section

5 — Input the **name** of **each person** involved in your **research project**

6 — Select their **role** from the drop-down menu

(1) Principal Investigator
(2) Co-Principal Investigator
(3) Co-Investigator

TIP: Definitions of the various role functions are included on the tab

7 — Indicate whether or not the role is **classified** as a **reportable role**

TIP: Definition of a reportable role is included on the tab

8 — From drop-down menu, select **'investigator-led'** or **'contract'** or **'consultancy work'**

9 — Select **UCT's role** from the drop-down menu

Primary Applicant

Primary applicant: the main institution responsible for the overall coordination and submission of a research proposal

Sub-Applicant

Sub-applicant: the institution that collaborates with the primary applicant, contributing specific expertise or resources to the research proposal

UCT is a Sub-Applicant

10 — Search for the **primary/lead applicant** from the list

If it is not available on the list then type it in the text box provided

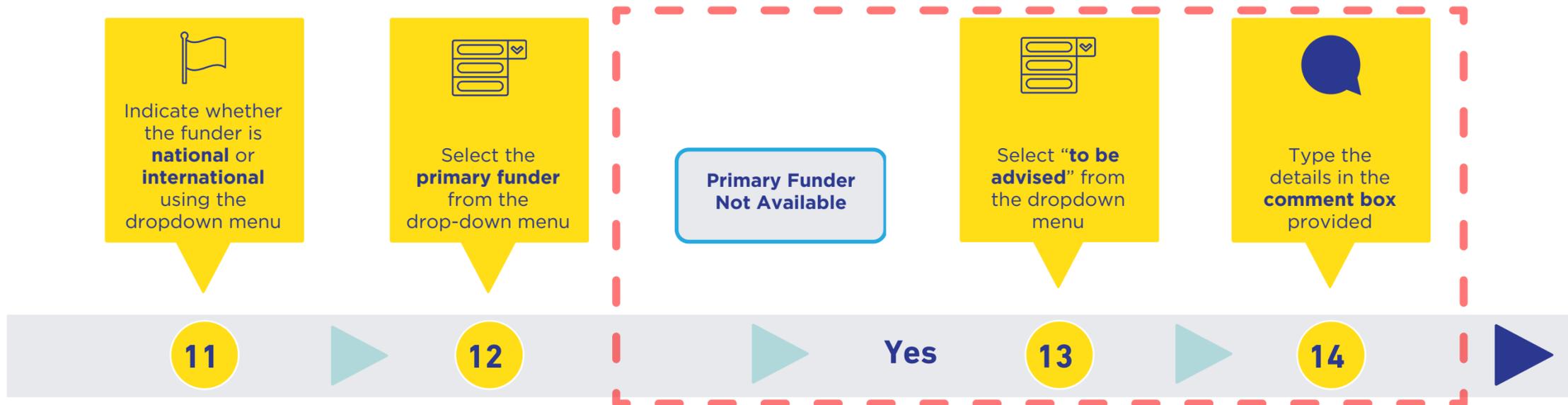If you require assistance log a call with UCT eRA

Step Two: Complete key information tab

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Key information tab

3. Funder Information Section

Indicate whether the funder is **national** or **international** using the dropdown menu

11

Select the **primary funder** from the drop-down menu

12

Primary Funder Not Available

Yes

Select "**to be advised**" from the dropdown menu

13

Type the details in the **comment box** provided

14

Primary funder: the main institution or entity that provides the largest portion of financial support for the research project

TIP: Please read carefully before selecting "to be advised"

Q **Click to view**

Step Two: Complete key information tab

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Key information tab

3. Funder Opportunity Information Section

Type the name of the specific **call/scheme** in the textbox provided

Upload the **funding opportunity document**

Include the URL for the **funding opportunity**

Indicate where you **found this particular call** using the dropdown menu

Upload copies of your **draft budget** (if used)

15 **16** **17** **18** **19**

NOTE:
This field is mandatory

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

This helps reviewers ensure your proposal meets all the call requirements and has the best chance of success

Completing this field allows UCT to assist you in finding the most appropriate funding opportunities

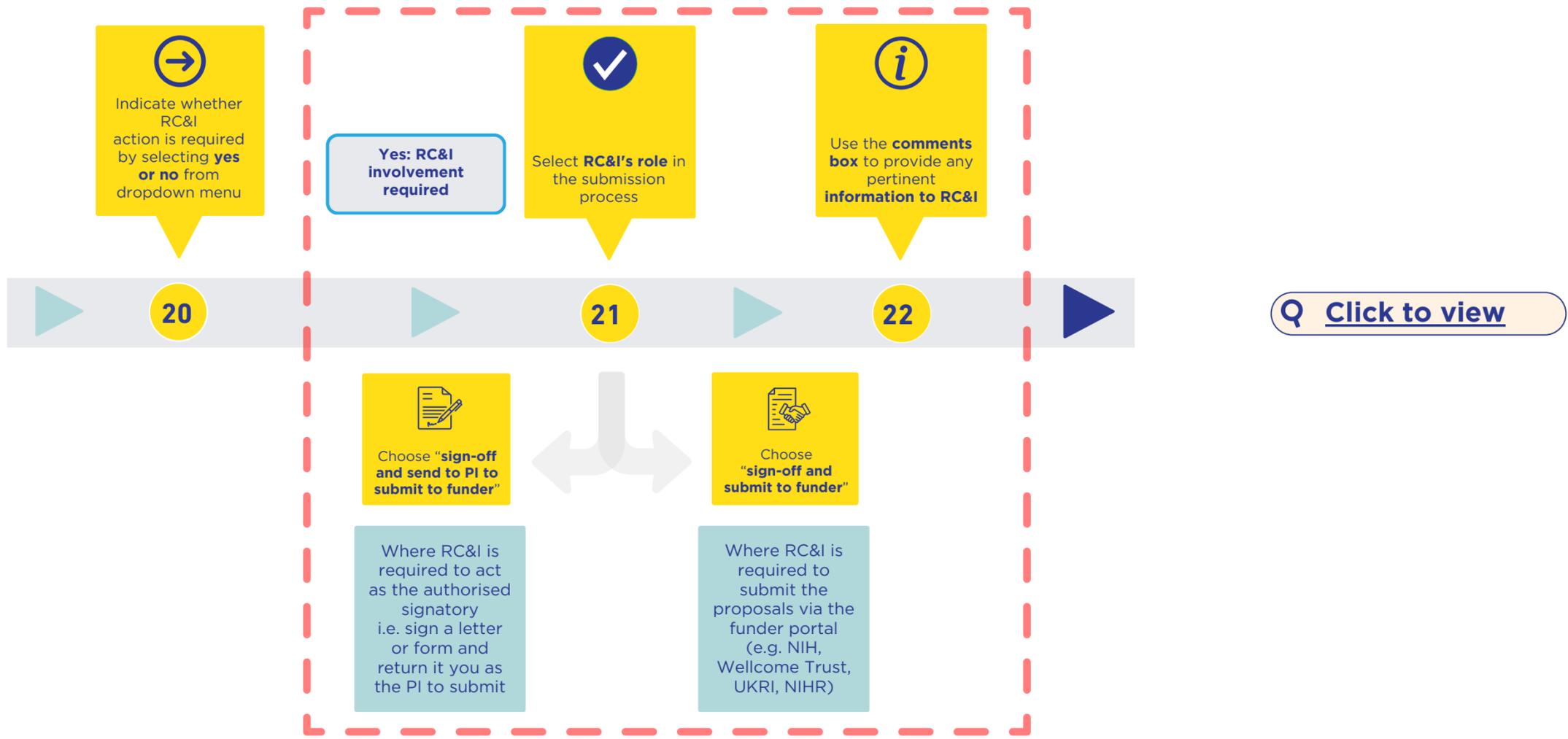**TIP:** If your funder has a budget template, use their template

TIP: Ensure that the link directs to the specific call and not the general funder website

DRAFT BUDGET

Q **Click to view**

Step Two: Complete key information tab

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Key information tab

4. RC&I Section

20 — Indicate whether RC&I action is required by selecting **yes or no** from dropdown menu

Yes: RC&I involvement required

21 — Select **RC&I's role** in the submission process

22 — Use the **comments box** to provide any pertinent **information to RC&I**

Choose **"sign-off and send to PI to submit to funder"**

Where RC&I is required to act as the authorised signatory i.e. sign a letter or form and return it you as the PI to submit

Choose **"sign-off and submit to funder"**

Where RC&I is required to submit the proposals via the funder portal (e.g. NIH, Wellcome Trust, UKRI, NIHR)

Q **Click to view**

Step Two: Complete key information tab
Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Key information tab

5. Key Dates Section

Select the **funder deadline** from the **calendar** provided

23

The **RC&I deadline** will **auto-populate** when you **save** the form

24

Take note of this deadline. As per UCT's internal deadlines, this date will be five working days before the deadline

Select the **faculty internal deadline** from the calendar provided

25

Note: This must be ten working days before the funder deadline if RC&I involvement is required, and five working days when it is not

Select the expected **start** and **end dates** of your research project should it be awarded

26

TIP: Ensure that the start and end date are aligned to your budget

TIP: Remember to check the funder requirements as they often specify the earliest possible start date

The system will **automatically calculate** the expected duration (in months) of your project
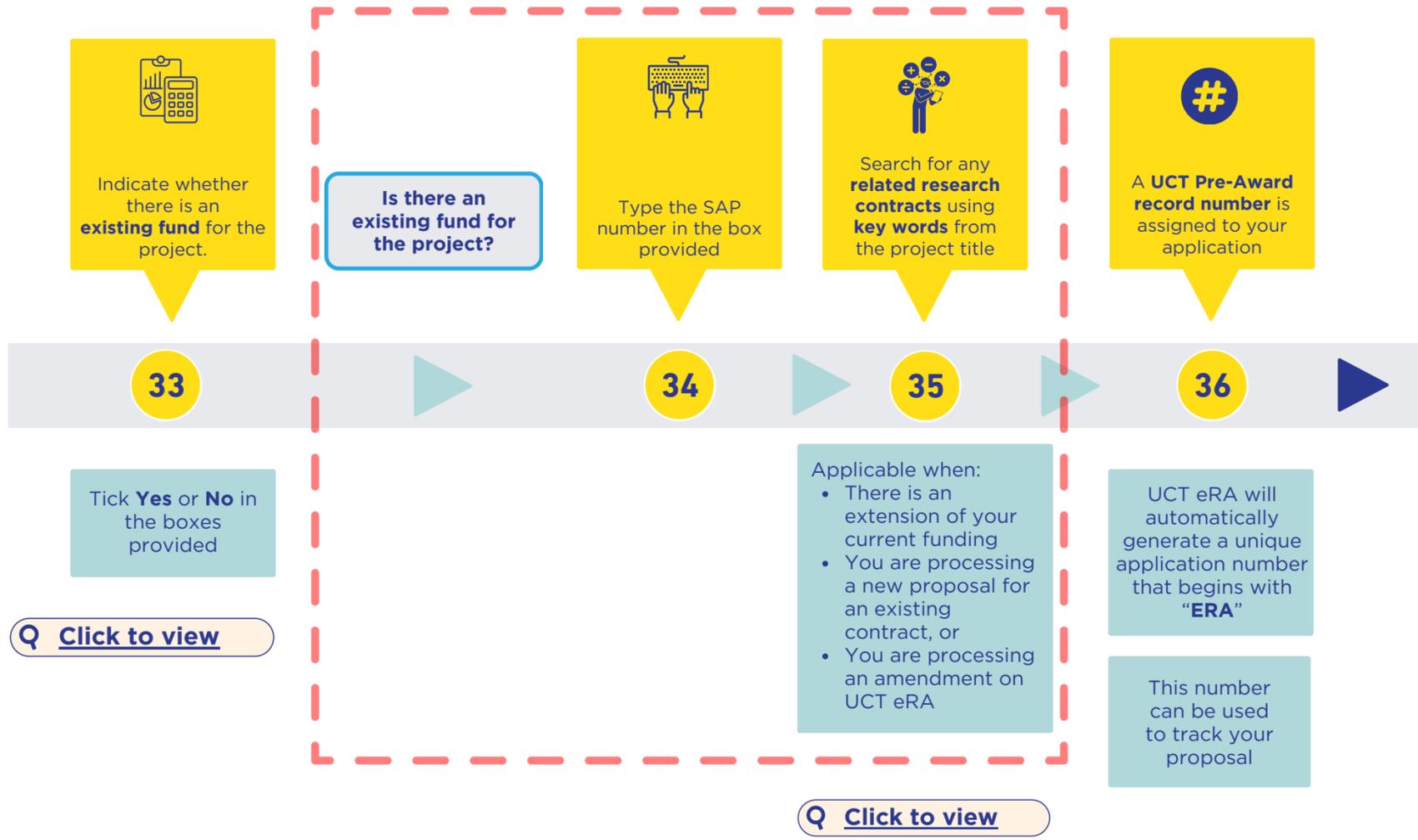
27

Q Click to view

Step Two: Complete key information tab

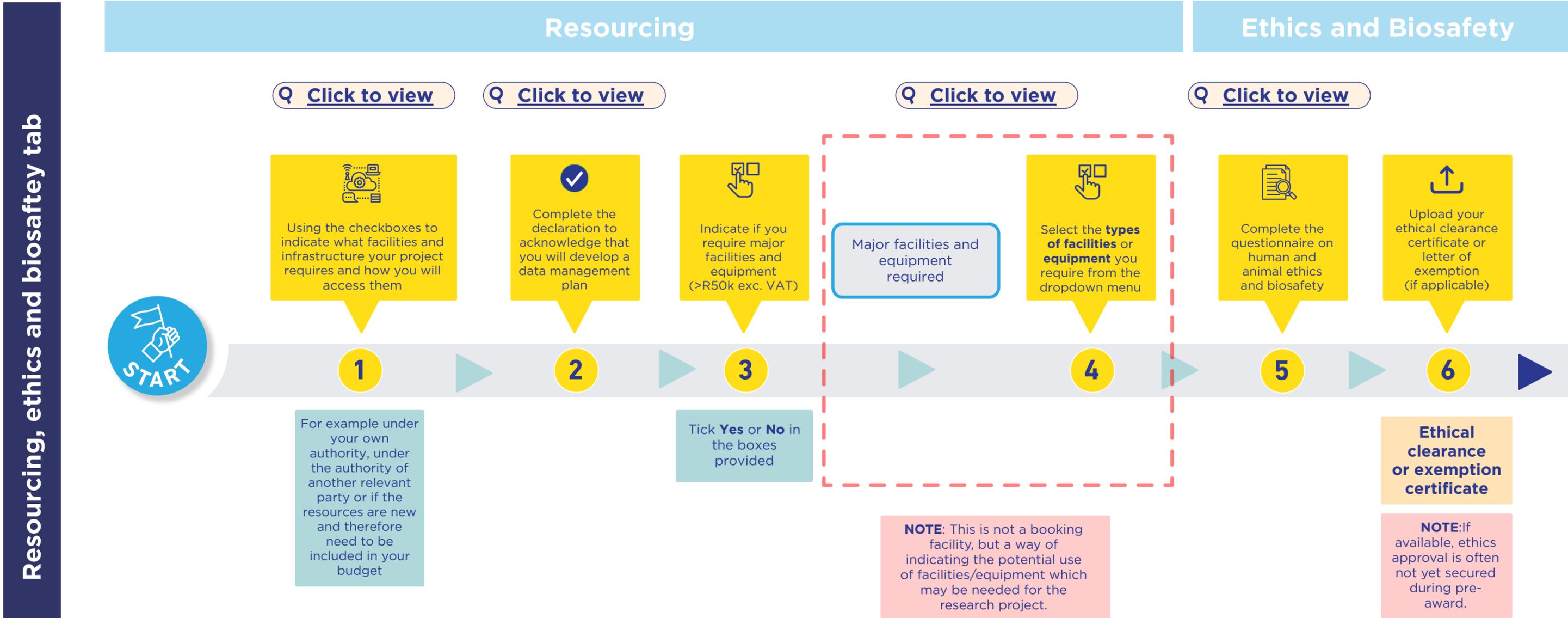## Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Key information tab

6. Finance VAT Section

Select the **correct SARS definition** for the research project

Select whether **students or postdoctoral fellows** (on tax-free stipends) will be included in the project by selecting the appropriate option from the drop down menu

28   29

Q **Click to view**

TIP: The definitions are available on the tab

Basic

Applied

Contract

Basic - systematic, original investigations undertaken to acquire new knowledge without a specific application in view

Applied - original investigations undertaken to acquire new knowledge with a specific practical aim or objective in view

Contract research - research activities conducted under the terms of a formal agreement on behalf of another entity, where the entity specifies the scope and nature of the research to be conducted

Step Two: Complete key information tab
Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Key information tab

7. Co-Funding Section

Indicate whether the funder requires a **financial co-contribution** or **co-funding** from UCT

30

Financial or in-kind resources contributed to a research project by parties other than the primary funder (in this case UCT)

Co-contribution or co-funding required

Provide the details of the **UCT institutional authority** who has agreed to provide the support

31

Upload any **supporting documentation** as proof/assurance

32

🔍 **Click to view**

Step Two: Complete key information tab

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Key information tab

8. Fund Information Section

33 — Indicate whether there is an **existing fund** for the project.

Tick **Yes** or **No** in the boxes provided

Q **Click to view**

Is there an existing fund for the project?

34 — Type the SAP number in the box provided

35 — Search for any **related research contracts** using **key words** from the project title

Applicable when:
- There is an extension of your current funding
- You are processing a new proposal for an existing contract, or
- You are processing an amendment on UCT eRA

Q **Click to view**

36 — A **UCT Pre-Award record number** is assigned to your application

UCT eRA will automatically generate a unique application number that begins with "**ERA**"

This number can be used to track your proposal

Step Two: Complete resourcing, ethics & biosafety tab
Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Resourcing

Ethics and Biosafety

Resourcing, ethics and biosaftey tab

Q **Click to view**

Q **Click to view**

Q **Click to view**

Q **Click to view**

Using the checkboxes to indicate what facilities and infrastructure your project requires and how you will access them

Complete the declaration to acknowledge that you will develop a data management plan

Indicate if you require major facilities and equipment (>R50k exc. VAT)

Major facilities and equipment required

Select the **types of facilities** or **equipment** you require from the dropdown menu

Complete the questionnaire on human and animal ethics and biosafety

Upload your ethical clearance certificate or letter of exemption (if applicable)

START

1

2

3

4

5

6

For example under your own authority, under the authority of another relevant party or if the resources are new and therefore need to be included in your budget

Tick **Yes** or **No** in the boxes provided

NOTE: This is not a booking facility, but a way of indicating the potential use of facilities/equipment which may be needed for the research project.

Ethical clearance or exemption certificate

NOTE:If available, ethics approval is often not yet secured during pre-award.

Step Three: Submit to budget reviewer
Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Resourcing, ethics and biosaftey tab

Budget

Q **Click to view**

Q **Click to view**

Q **Click to view**

Add your **budget reviewer**

Complete the **Preliminary declaration by principal investigator** section by checking the box provided

Click "**Save and close**" to submit your application to your budget reviewer

Select your **budget reviewer** from the popup box to move the application to the next step

Click '**done**'

Complete the **final declaration by principal investigator** section by checking the box provided

7 ▶ **8** ▶ **9** ▶ **10** ▶ **11** ⇢ ◯

Note: This is the person in your faculty that is assisting with formulating / reviewing your budget

Tip: Ensure that you select the **correct budget reviewer** and that the selected profile is **'active'**.

Your application now moves to the **budget reviewer** step in the workflow

Note: After the budget reviewer completes their steps, you review the Financial Information tab, ensure accuracy, and, if correct, check the "Final declaration by principal investigator" box.

Key information tab

1. Key Information Section

This section of the form is to be completed by the principal investigator

The proposal approval process flow guide is available here.

For FAQs please click here.

Key Information *

Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Type of project application *

Proposal approval (non-clinical trials)

Approval type *

New: The first submission by a PI to a particular funding opportunity
Supplement/Revision: A submission to add an additional piece of work onto a current grant; this typically increase the scope of the project and involves submission of a new/updated project plan and budget
Amendment: A submission requesting a change to an aspect of a current grant (this may be a change to e.g. the protocol, the budget, the investigators involved)
Costed extension: A submission requesting a time extension to a current grant that will also involve a change in the budget (typically an increase)
Renewal: A submission to renew a current grant for a further period of time; this is typically invited by the funder and most often involves submission of a new/updated project plan and budget

Select approval type

Project title *

English (GB) *

0/512

Please attach the project proposal or protocol here*
Please note that the accepted file formats for uploads are: doc, docx, ppt, pptx, pdf, ps, rtf, txt, xls, xlsx, gif, tif, jpg, jpeg, png

Upload new file 📁

Step Two: Complete key information tab

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

2. Project Roles Section

Roles

UCT Principal Investigator *

Please make sure the correct work affiliation and role is attached to this record. If a student or postdoctoral fellow is the lead investigator, e.g. for a fellowship application, then a UCT academic staff member must complete this approval form on their behalf and be listed as the Principal Investigator. The student or postdoctoral fellow should then be added as a **co-investigator** under the "UCT Co-PI or Co-Investigators" section.
Role: If unsure, click here for definitions. **Reportable:** A reportable role is a **named** role on a grant (i.e. a role to be carried out by a specific named UCT individual) for which the role's percentage effort (e.g. % full-time equivalent salary or calendar months contribution) is reportable to the funder.

Name	Organisation	Role	Reportable		
Abrahams, Melissa	Research Systems (eResearch)	Principal investigator	Yes	✉ 🗑

UCT Co-PI or Co-Investigators

Only select the Co-Principal Investigator and/or Co-Investigator here.
Role: If unsure, click here for definitions. **Reportable:** A reportable role is a **named** role on a grant (i.e. a role to be carried out by a specific named UCT individual) for which the role's percentage effort (e.g. % full-time equivalent salary or calendar months contribution) is reportable to the funder.

[+]

Other Project Staff

Other project staff are roles included on the grant where the specific individual is **known**, but where the person is not the PI, co-PI or Co-I. For any roles other than "UCT sponsor", "Postdoctoral Fellow", "Postgraduate Student", or "Supervisor", select "Other Project Staff". Examples of other project staff may be: a clinical research manager, a chief medical technologist, a fieldworker, etc. Where a role is still 'TBC' (i.e. you don't yet know who the specific individual is), **do not** add that role to this list.
Role: If unsure, click here for definitions. **Reportable:** A reportable role is a **named** role on a grant (i.e. a role to be carried out by a specific named UCT individual) for which the role's percentage effort (e.g. % full-time equivalent salary or calendar months contribution) is reportable to the funder.

[+]

**Investigator-led or contract/consultancy *

Select investigator-led or contract/consultancy

**Is UCT the primary applicant institution or sub-applicant institution? *

Select Primary or Sub

If UCT is the sub-applicant please select lead applicant

[+]

If other lead applicant, please list here
If the organisation is not available on the list, please add it on the text box or log a call

Step Two: Complete key information tab

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

3. Funder Information Section

Funder Information

National or International

Select national or internatic ▼

Primary Funder *

The organisation that is the primary source of funds e.g NIH or WRC

[+]

If other, please list here

If the organisation is not available on the list,please select "to be advised" then add it on the text box or log a call

0/∞

Funding opportunity if applicable

Name of specific call/scheme. For example, Grand Challenges Explorations

0/1024

Upload funding opportunity

Upload new file 📁

URL of funding opportunity

Please add the full URL including http e.g http://www.rci.uct.ac.za/

0/100

Opportunity Source

To visit the Research Professional Africa website click here

Select opportunity source ▼

Please attach the budget as per the funder's template, if applicable

Before uploading your finalised budget (prepared by the PI through consultation with the budget reviewer), please note that the figures given in the budget uploaded here should match the figures in the budget to be submitted to the funder

Upload new file 📁

Please attach the budget as per the PI's template, if applicable

Before uploading your finalised budget (prepared by the PI through consultation with the budget reviewer), please note that the figures given in the budget uploaded here should match the figures in the budget to be submitted to the funder

Upload new file 📁

Key information tab

4. RC&I Input Section

RC&I (Research Contracts & Innovation)

To visit the RC&I website click here

Your application may require input from RC&I in one of two ways:

RC&I **signs off** as UCT's authorised signatory and returns to PI to submit to funder

RC&I **signs off** and **submits** to funder as UCT's authorised signatory

Does the application require signoff by RC&I?

Some funders require an authorised representative, not the PI, to submit the application. At UCT RC&I performs this function. Examples of funders that require RC&I to submit are NIH and Wellcome Trust. If you unsure, please check with the International Grants Hub [internationalgrants@uct.ac.za].

Select yes or no ▾

If applicable, what role do you need RC&I to play in submission of this proposal?

Select requirements from RC&I ▾

If yes, please elaborate on what you require from RC&I

0/1000

NOTE: Drafting of the actual contracts by RC&I will take place once the proposal is awarded by funder.

If there are additional documents for RC&I, please attach them here

Upload new file 📁

Step Two: Complete key information tab
Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Key information tab

5. Key Dates Section

Key Dates *

Funder deadline *

RC&I deadline, if applicable

If application requires RC&I approval, this form needs to reach them **5 working days** before funder submission deadline excluding public holidays. This is automatically generated after "save" is clicked and is calculated from the funder deadline date.

Faculty internal deadline, if applicable

This may be a few days before RC&I deadline. Please check with your faculty for applicable internal deadlines.

Expected start date *

Expected end date *

Duration of project, in months

This will calculate automatically after clicking save

0/50

Key information tab

6. Finance VAT Section

Finance: VAT *

Is this project basic, applied or contract research, as per the SARS definition in determining VAT apportionment? *

Basic: Experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundation of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view.

Applied: A project which is primarily directed towards a specific practical aim or objective and should result in the application of new knowledge into a process, or the transfer of existing knowledge into a new process or product, for the benefit of the donor or for the immediate purpose of commercialising the product.

Select Basic, Applied or Co ⌄

Is there involvement of students or postdoctoral fellows (on tax-free stipends) in this project? *

Select yes/no/not yet known ⌄

Key information tab

7. Co-Funding Section

Does the funder require co-contribution or co-funding from UCT? *

[Select yes or no ⌄]

If yes, please explain the co-contribution required and who has agreed to provide it

[   ]
0/1000

Where applicable, please attach proof of co-contribution

Upload new file 📁

Key information tab

8. Fund Information Section

Fund Information

Is there an existing fund this project should be managed through?*

○ Yes   ○ No

SAP fund number

0/15

Related Contracts

[+]

Generated Contract

Application number

This is automatically generated after "save" is clicked

0/12

Resourcing, ethics and biosaftey tab

Infrastructure and Staff

Infrastructure and Staff

UCT has limited infrastructure and staff available and may not be able to accommodate the requirements of your proposed project with the current resources. Select all infrastructure/staff below that this project will require

	Existing and available to you for project under your own authority	Existing and confirmed available to you for project by other relevant authority	New (must therefore be included in your budget)	Not applicable
Analytical services	☐	☐	☐	☐
Research Staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
Computing infrastructure or Cloud computing	☐	☐	☐	☐
Data storage	☐	☐	☐	☐
Data management plan	☐	☐	☐	☐
Data protection impact assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Classroom or office space	☐	☐	☐	☐
Core facilities or equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Laboratory/Studio space	☐	☐	☐	☐
Storage space (e.g. for freezers, computing hardware or filing)	☐	☐	☐	☐
UCT animal research facility	☐	☐	☐	☐

Resourcing, ethics and biosaftey tab

Research data management plan section

Research Data Management

UCT seeks to support effective data sharing and the need for data to be FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable). Please ensure that you have indicated the availability of plans and funds, where applicable, for your research data on the checklist above. Click for more information on the Data Management Plan (DMP) and the Research Data Management Policy. Alternatively, contact eResearch here for support.

By checking the box below, I acknowledge that in the event this application is successful, I will develop a full Data Management Plan (DMP) prior to commencing the research, in compliance with the UCT Research Data Management policy and funder requirements.

☐

Resourcing, ethics and biosaftey tab

Major facilities and equipment

Major Facilities and Equipment

Another UCT research group may already house the major facility/equipment you need for your research. You can find this information on the eRA Facilities Database below and liaise with the group on its availability. This will not affect your approval submission, but aims to make best use of existing facilities, and could reduce unnecessary purchase of duplicate equipment. **Major facilities/equipment is that >R50,000 in value excl. VAT**

	Yes	**No**
Do you require major facilities or equipment?	☐	☐

If yes, please click below to search & select facilities/equipment that may be useful for your project

(this does not commit you or the facility owner to its use, just serves as a reminder to you of what is available and helps UCT understand need)

[+]

Note: If you require equipment not available through UCT or your collaborators, be sure to budget this appropriately.

Step Two: Complete resourcing, ethics & biosafety tab
Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Resourcing, ethics and biosaftey tab

Ethics & Biosafety

Human Ethics *

For more information about the Human Research Ethics Committee click here.

Does the research involve human participants, samples or data? *
○ Yes   ○ No

I confirm that the research will not commence without approval *
○ Yes   ○ Not required

If approval is required at proposal phase, please attach it here

Upload new file 📁

Animal Ethics *

For the forms that will need to be completed for ethical approval click here.

For more information about the Animal Research Ethics Committee click here.

Does the research involve animal experimentation? *
○ Yes   ○ No

I confirm that the research will not commence without approval *
○ Yes   ○ Not required

If approval is required at proposal phase, please attach it here

Upload new file 📁

Biosafety *

For the forms and committee information that you will need for biosafety approval click here.

Does research involve use of radio-isotopes or ionising radiation? *
○ Yes   ○ No

Does research involve recombinant DNA technology or use of genetically modified organisms? *
○ Yes   ○ No

I confirm that the research will not commence without approval *
○ Yes   ○ Not required

If approval is required at proposal phase, attach it here

Upload new file 📁

Step Three: Submit to budget reviewer

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Submit budget to Reviewer

Budget Reviewer

Please add the Budget Reviewer assisting with your budget requirements *

Please note that this is the person in your Faculty that is assisting with formulating and reviewing your budget.

+

Submit budget to Reviewer

Preliminary declaration

Preliminary declaration by Principal Investigator *

By checking the box below, I declare that the information in this application is complete and accurate (prior to Financial Information being completed by the Budget Reviewer) *

☐

Step Three: Submit to budget reviewer

Application-stage approval process via UCT eRA

Submit budget to Reviewer

Final declaration by Principal Investigator

Need screenshot here