

FCDO Research Commissioning Centre

Grant Management System
User Guide for Applicants

LAST UPDATED: APRIL 2025

Introduction

This guide is intended for applicants for grants and projects managed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) Research Commissioning Centre (RCC). Its purpose is to help applicants navigate the RCC's grant management system (SmartSimple).

The grant management system will enable users to, among other things:

- submit a proposal in response to a call for proposals or expressions of interest;
- review progress of their submission;
- manage their award if successful (including submission of progress reports).

The RCC will use the grant management system to

- facilitate the evaluation of submitted proposals, and
- manage grants awarded from project initiation to project conclusion.

Please ensure that you are acquainted with the following documents guidelines and policies:

- [FCDO Programme Operating Framework \(PrOF\)](#)
- [3ie Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [3ie Fraud & Anti-Corruption Policy](#)
- [3ie Transparent, Reproducible, and Ethical Evidence \(TREE\) Policy](#)
- RCC Accountable Grant Agreement

Key information

- ! To access the SmartSimple grant management system, please visit:
https://rcc.smartsimpleuk.com/s_Login.jsp.
- ! For updates on the RCC, including terms of reference current and past calls, please visit:
<https://www.grtd.fcdo.gov.uk/funding/>
- ! For further information and assistance with using the system, please contact: rcc@3ieimpact.org.

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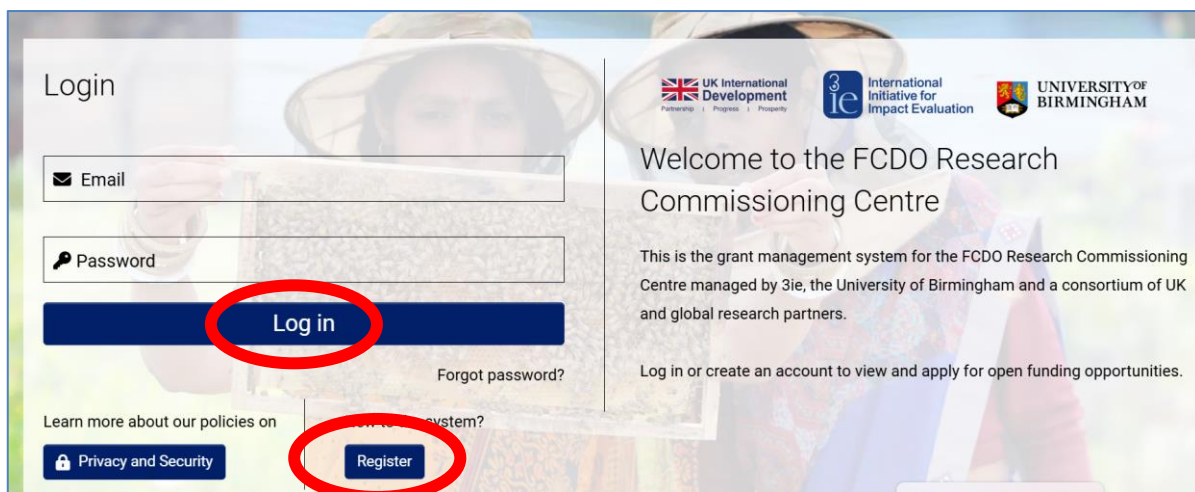
Before we begin

Please ensure that your browser settings permit pop-ups for the web site address:
https://rcc.smartsimpleuk.com/s_Login.jsp).

IMPORTANT: If you do not enable pop-ups when logged on to SmartSimple, some functions will appear not to work because the associated pop-up windows cannot be displayed.

Logging in

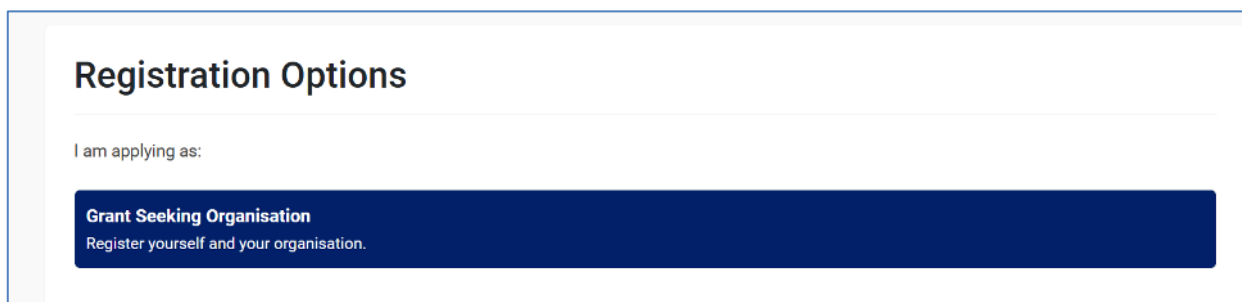
1. Go to the log in page: https://rcc.smartsimpleuk.com/s_Login.jsp
 - a) If you are new to the System, Click on '**Register**'.
 - b) If you already have an account, put in your email and password and log in.



The screenshot shows the 'Login' page of the RCC SmartSimple system. On the left, there is a login form with two input fields: 'Email' and 'Password'. Below these fields is a blue 'Log in' button, which is circled in red. To the right of the 'Log in' button is a link for 'Forgot password?'. Below the 'Log in' button is a link to 'Learn more about our policies on Privacy and Security'. To the right of the 'Log in' button is a link to 'Register', which is also circled in red. The page features logos for UK International Development, 3ie, and the University of Birmingham. The main heading is 'Welcome to the FCDO Research Commissioning Centre'. Below this, there is a paragraph: 'This is the grant management system for the FCDO Research Commissioning Centre managed by 3ie, the University of Birmingham and a consortium of UK and global research partners.' At the bottom, there is a link: 'Log in or create an account to view and apply for open funding opportunities.'

Figure 1: Screenshot of RCC SmartSimple 'Login' page, highlighting the 'Email', 'Password', 'Log in', and 'Registration' boxes.

2. If you have just registered, you will progress to '**Registration Options**'. Select applying as '**Grant Seeking Organisation**', then complete the '**Organisation Information**' and click '**Submit**'.



The screenshot shows the 'Registration Options' page. The main heading is 'Registration Options'. Below this, there is a section titled 'I am applying as:'. Under this section, there is a blue button labeled 'Grant Seeking Organisation'. Below the button, there is a link: 'Register yourself and your organisation.'

Figure 2: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Registration options' page.

Home page

Once you have logged in with your new password, you will be given access to your **'Home'** page.

All your applications that are in progress will be filed under **'Action Items'**.

All your completed applications will be filed under **'Completed Items'**.

Any time you wish, you can navigate back to this page by clicking **'Home'** in the top right corner of the screen.

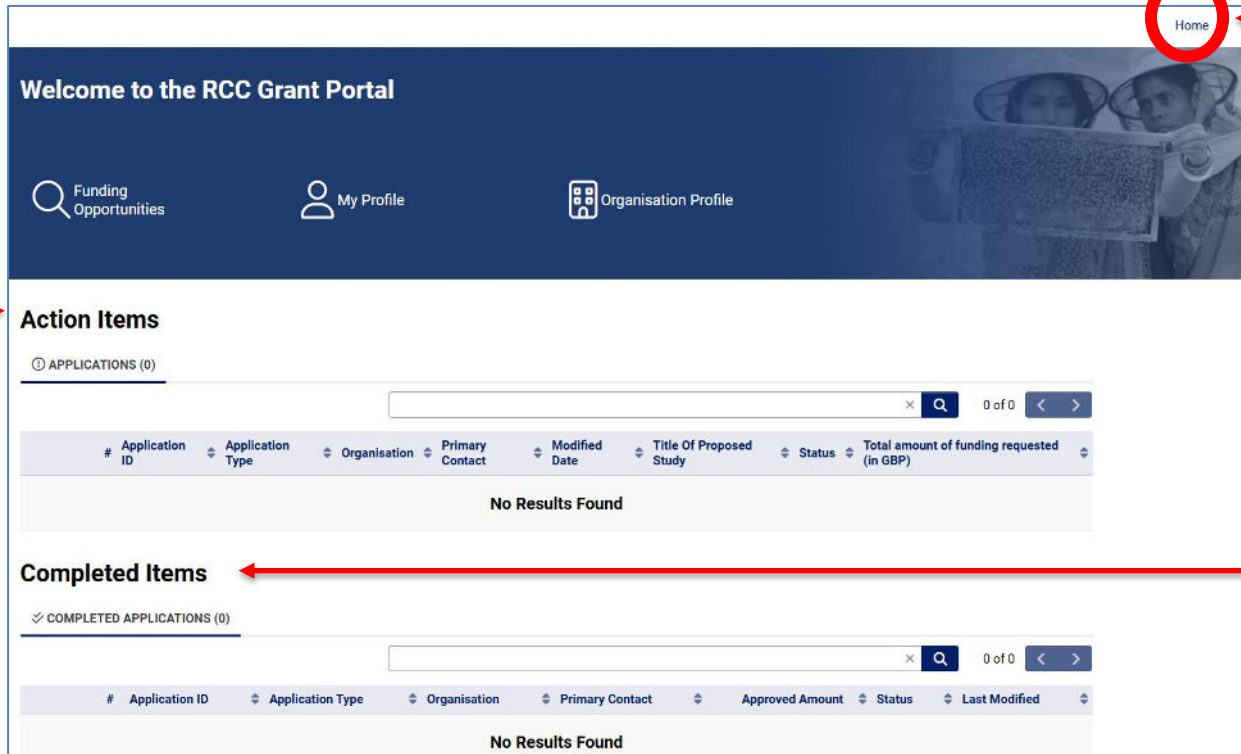


Figure 3: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Homepage', highlighting 'Action Items', and 'Completed Items' subsections.

Applying

1. To begin your submission, click on **'Funding Opportunities'** on your **'Home'** page.

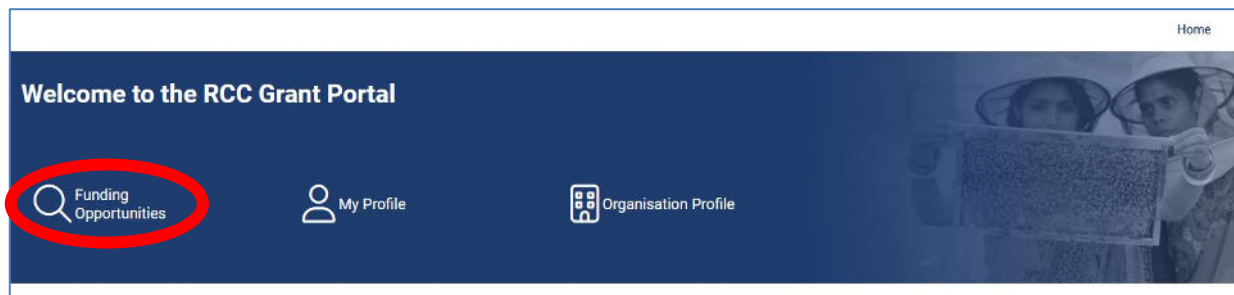


Figure 4: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Home' page, highlighting 'Funding Opportunities'.

2. Select the call you are interested in and click **'Apply Now'**.

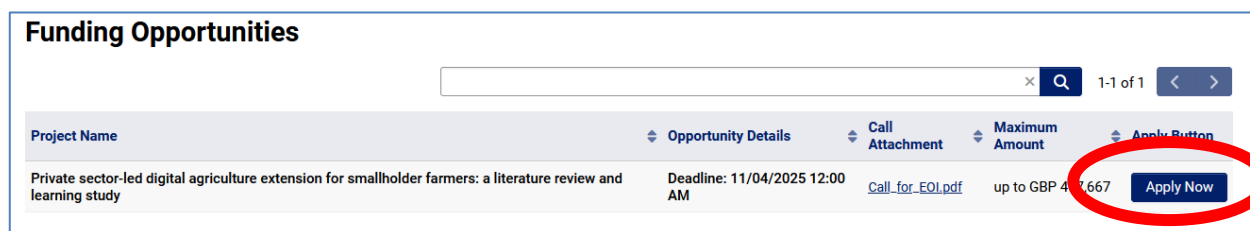


Figure 5: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Funding Opportunities' page, highlighting 'Apply Now' button.

Application form

1. Please fill out all the sections of the **'Application form'**. You can scroll through the sections by pressing these arrows:

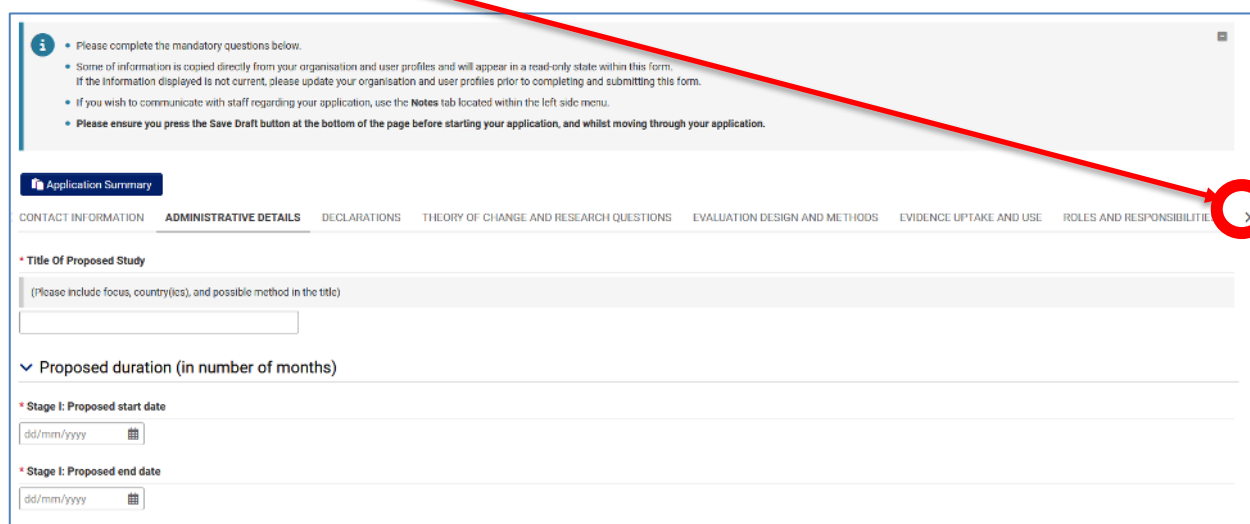


Figure 6: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, highlighting the next section arrow below the 'Application Summary' box.

2. Once you want to move on from one section to another, even if it is not fully complete, please click **'Save Draft'**.

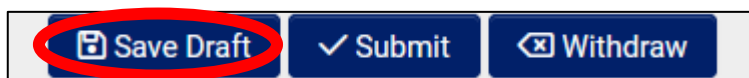


Figure 7: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, showing the 'Save Draft'- circled, 'Submit', and 'Withdraw' buttons.

3. You can return to your work in progress at any time from the **'Home'** page, under the **'Action Items'**:

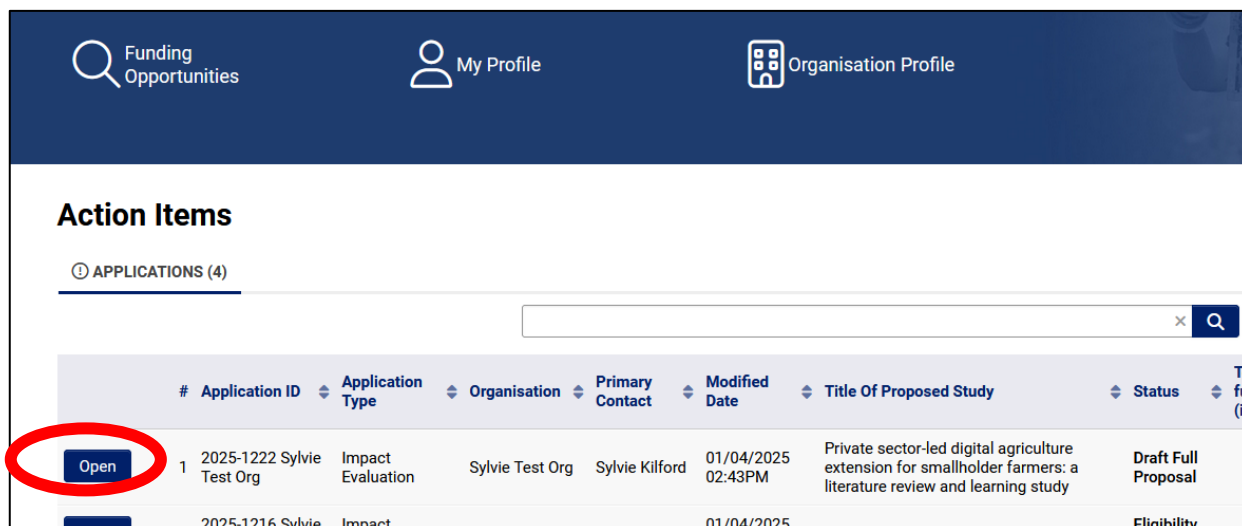


Figure 8: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Home' page, showing 'Action Items' subsection, highlighting the 'Open' button.

Notes

1. In the **'sidebar'**, you can click **'Notes'** to send notes to the grant team as you progress through your submission:

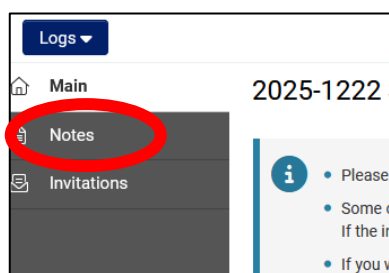


Figure 9: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, highlighting the 'Notes' section in the side bar.

2. You can add a new note by clicking the '+' button.

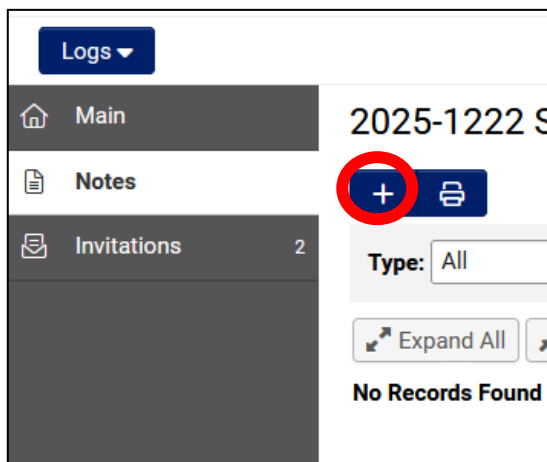


Figure 10: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, 'Notes' subsection, highlighting the '+' button.

3. You will then be able to write the note. By clicking **Save** the note will be automatically sent to the grant manager.

A screenshot of the SmartSimple 'Application form' page, specifically the 'Notes' subsection, showing the 'Message box'. The form has a 'Type:' dropdown menu set to 'Note to Staff', a 'Subject:' text input field, and a large 'Body:' text area. At the bottom right, there are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons.

Figure 11: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, 'Notes' subsection, showing the 'Message box'.

Collaboration

SmartSimple enables you to add collaborators to your project, allowing them to contribute to the submission. To invite collaborators, navigate to the '**Invitations**' function on the '**sidebar**':

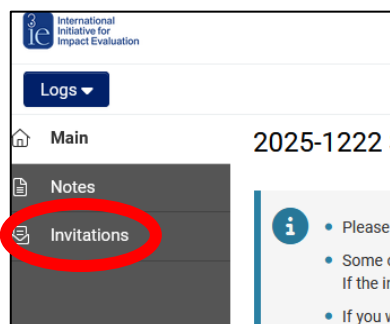


Figure 12: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, highlighting the 'Invitations' subsection.

Filling out the form

Word limits

The RCC application process does not include word limits. We want to encourage applicants to use this freedom to ensure that their answers are as long or as short as they need to be to convey their ideas. We encourage applicants to

Text boxes

You can resize the text box as necessary by clicking and dragging the bottom right corner of the box to the desired size.

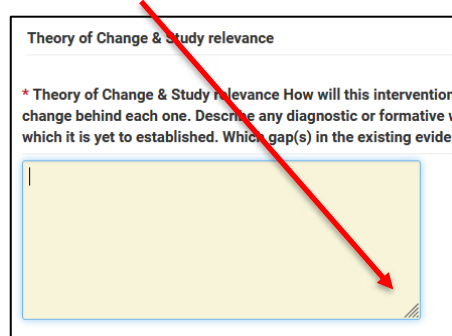


Figure 13: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, 'Theory of Change & Study Relevant' subsection, highlighting the bottom corner of the text box, used for resizing.

Mandatory fields

Mandatory fields are indicated by a red asterisk (*). You can leave a mandatory field blank while an application is in the 'Draft' stage.

If you submit without filling in every required field, you will receive a message stating '**Submission Failed**' listing the gaps that need to be addressed before you can submit.

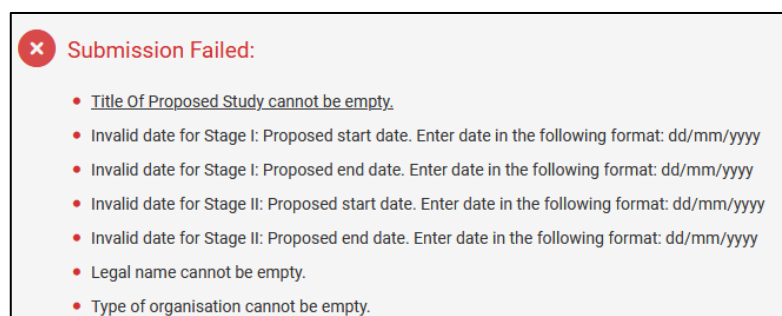


Figure 14: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, showing an example of 'Submission Failed' notification.

Uploading files

When the system requests files to be uploaded, you can either drag and drop or select the relevant files by clicking the '**Browse Files**' option.

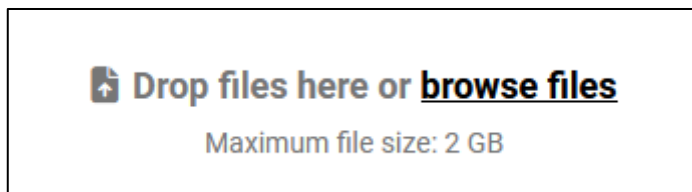


Figure 15: Screenshot of the 'Drop files here or browse files' upload box.

Once uploaded, you can rename or delete the files by clicking the '**three dots**' at the end of the file listing. You can download anything that is uploaded by clicking on the file icon, and then the download icon.

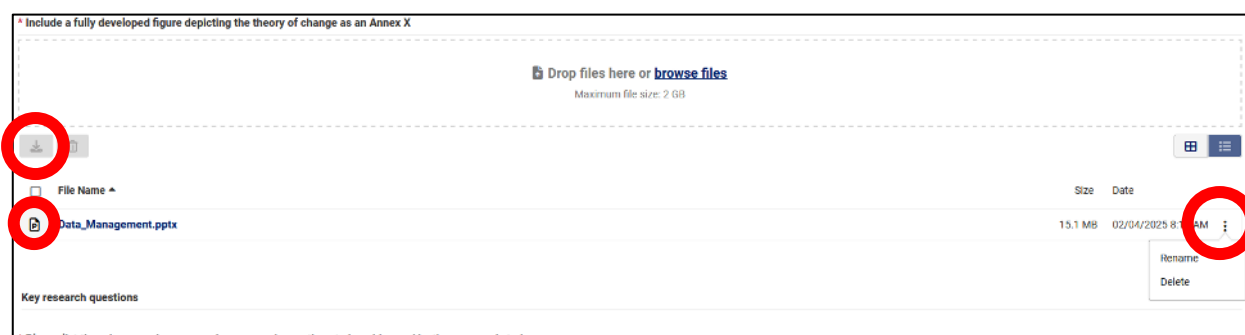


Figure 16: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, highlighting the three dots on the right-hand side of uploaded files, showing 'Rename' and 'Delete.'

Application summary

At any time during your submission, you can access a full summary of your application, by clicking the '**Application Summary**' box, which you can print and share with your colleagues in advance to ensure you are satisfied with the shape of your application.

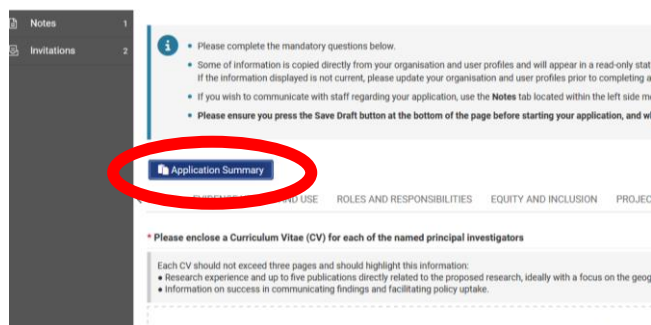


Figure 17: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, highlighting the 'Application Summary' button.

Submitting your application

Once you have reviewed your '**Application Summary**' to ensure accuracy, please submit your application by clicking the 'Submit' button at the bottom of the '**Application form**' page.

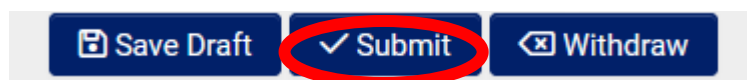


Figure 18: Screenshot of SmartSimple 'Application form' page, showing the 'Save Draft', 'Submit' - circled, and 'Withdraw' buttons.

After submission

Once you have submitted your application, you should receive an email confirming receipt of your application.

Your submission will then be forwarded for review by RCC-nominated peer reviewers, also using the SmartSimple system.