

## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

SARIMA invites you to contribute to the 2026 Annual Conference – it is an opportunity to present stimulating findings, best practices, case studies and the chance to make a difference to the future of research and innovation management in Southern Africa.

### — CONFERENCE THEME: **Resilient Futures:** Reimagining Research and Innovation Management for Impact and Inclusion

The committee will be selecting speakers that can bring a regional perspective to the topics, as well as inviting speakers from beyond the region to bring a global perspective. The programme comprises several sessions with different formats that are designed to stimulate and promote engagement and discussion. We welcome abstracts for the sessions outlined below. In addition to the sessions for which we are calling for abstracts, the committee is preparing certain sessions with invited speakers and well as panel discussions that will be included in the conference programme. Delegates are also invited to submit poster presentations relating to the session topics. Posters will be on display at the conference.

## INVITATION TO SUBMIT ABSTRACTS:

**Abstracts are sought for oral or poster presentations, under the following session topics:**

- Presentations are to be made in English.
- The Conference Organising Committee reserves the right to allocate abstracts to presentation sessions or formats depending on relevance and/or space availability and reserves the right to remove a particular session topic.

### Research Management (RM):

#### — **Reimagining Strategic Collaboration and Partnerships across Disciplines and Borders**

In an era of volatile funding and shifting donor priorities, research and innovation managers must rethink how partnerships are formed, sustained, and leveraged for impact. This session explores innovative models of interdisciplinary and international collaboration that unlock capacity building, foster equity, and drive global influence. We will examine how institutions can adapt to changing funding landscapes, negotiate resilient agreements, and cultivate long-term partnerships that thrive despite uncertainty. Contributions are invited on emerging strategies, governance frameworks, and practical tools that strengthen collaboration across borders and disciplines while ensuring sustainability and inclusivity within the African Research & Innovation Management ecosystem.

#### — **Supporting Responsible Research Practices: Navigating Assessment, Publishing, and Digital Transformation**

Responsible research practices are essential for maintaining integrity and trust in an era of rapid technological change. This session explores how research managers can support ethical publishing and responsible research assessment while adapting to AI-driven tools and digital transformation. We will examine frameworks such as DORA, narrative CVs, and impact-based models that move beyond traditional metrics, alongside strategies to combat predatory journals and promote open access. Contributions are invited on institutional policies, regulatory compliance, and practical approaches that embed transparency, equity, and accountability across the research lifecycle.

#### — **Enabling Research for Impact – Pathways, Partnerships, and Measuring What Matters**

Research managers play a critical role in supporting researchers to plan for and achieve real-world impact. This session explores how managers can facilitate pathways to impact through stakeholder engagement, alignment with government agendas, and capacity-building initiatives. We will discuss practical tools and frameworks for embedding impact considerations early in the research lifecycle, and approaches for measuring impact beyond traditional outputs like publications and patents—covering social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Contributions are invited on strategies that empower researchers and institutions to demonstrate relevance and societal value.

#### — **Building Capacity for Digital Transformation in Research and Innovation Management**

Digital transformation is reshaping how research and innovation are managed, tracked, and supported. For research managers, this shift brings opportunities to enhance efficiency, transparency, and strategic decision-making across the research lifecycle. This session explores how institutions and professionals can build capacity to adopt and leverage digital tools, platforms, and systems—from research information management and compliance tracking to analytics and AI-driven decision support. We invite contributions on practical strategies for digital readiness, skills development, and governance frameworks that enable research managers to lead transformation and future-proof their institutions in an increasingly data-driven world.

#### — **Equity, Inclusion and Indigenous Research Ethics and Integrity**

Advancing equity and inclusion within research ethics and integrity means directly addressing the structural inequalities that shape research participation, leadership, and benefit. Central to this is the respectful and ethical engagement with indigenous knowledge systems, ensuring that research involving communities is co-created, culturally grounded, and avoids historical patterns of extraction. Strengthening integrity in the African research ecosystem requires recognising indigenous epistemologies as credible and valuable, embedding them in ethical review processes, and ensuring fair access to opportunities, resources, and research outcomes. By centring equity and indigenous perspectives, African research governance can foster a more just, representative, and trustworthy scientific landscape.

## Innovation & Technology Transfer (I&TT):

### — Innovation Ecosystems and Technology Transfer: from Research Potential to Impact

Innovation is the bridge between research and real-world impact. This sub-theme explores how institutions can foster innovation ecosystems, support technology transfer offices, and build pathways for translating research into products, services, and societal solutions.

### — Strengthening IP Management and Commercialisation Strategies

Effective intellectual property (IP) management is key to unlocking the value of research. This sub-theme invites insights into IP policies, licensing models, spin-offs, and strategies for commercialising research outputs in diverse institutional contexts.

### — Building Partnerships for Innovation

Collaboration fuels innovation. This sub-theme focuses on building strategic partnerships with industry, government, entrepreneurs, and civil society to support innovation, co-creation, and the scaling of research outputs and outcomes.

### — From Heritage to Enterprise: Approaches to Advancing IKS-Based Innovation

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) hold immense scientific, cultural and economic value, yet pathways to their responsible commercialisation remain complex. This topic invites case studies, models and lessons exploring how research institutions can ethically and sustainably translate IKS into market-ready products and services. Relevant submissions may address issues such as: community co-ownership and benefit-sharing structures; IP protection options beyond patents; navigating regulatory environments for natural products; funding models for IKS-based innovation; co-creation with traditional knowledge holders; and ensuring that commercialisation efforts uphold cultural integrity while enabling socio-economic upliftment.

### — The Impact of Valuation of IP to Spin-Outs

This session will explore the strategic impact of intellectual property (IP) valuation in the context of creating spin-out companies, structuring shareholder agreements, and shaping organizational frameworks. We invite abstracts on the role or implications of IP valuations in determining equity splits and shareholding and the risks and opportunities arising from valuation decisions in spin-outs. (This session is not about the technical process of conducting valuations)

## Combined - Research Management (RM) | Innovation & Technology Transfer (I&TT):

### — From Human Insight to Hyper-Intelligence: Rethinking Research, IP, and Tech Transfer in an Automated Age

AI isn't just a new tool; it's becoming a new collaborator. As automation accelerates, research managers, IP specialists, and technology transfer professionals find themselves at the frontier of an ecosystem where data, discovery, and decision-making merge in real time.

This session dares to ask: What does research and innovation management look like when intelligence becomes scalable, but must remain both trustworthy and accountable? We explore how AI can amplify human judgment, predict research trajectories, surface IP opportunities invisible to humans, and unlock new models of innovation, from autonomous prior-art discovery to machine-driven impact forecasting and AI-augmented tech transfer pathways.

Yet in this era of hyper-intelligence, reliability becomes the new currency, and human accountability becomes non-negotiable. No matter how advanced the system, responsibility for ethical decision-making, governance, and integrity cannot be delegated to algorithms. Humans must remain the stewards who question outputs, challenge biases, and ensure that automated insights are robust, reproducible, and aligned with societal values.

Join us as we reimagine the research and innovation lifecycle, not as a process to be managed, but as a dynamic co-creation between human expertise and intelligent systems. This is not about keeping up with AI; it's about shaping a future where acceleration, reliability, and human accountability coexist, and where excellence is engineered through conscious, responsible innovation.

### — Building Resilient and Adaptive Research & Innovation Ecosystems in Times of Disruption

From global pandemics to shifting regulatory frameworks, research and innovation managers across Africa face unprecedented uncertainty.

This session explores strategies for fostering resilience and adaptability within the African Research & Innovation Management ecosystem.

We invite contributions on practical approaches, institutional cultures, and policy responses that enable systems to thrive amid disruption and evolving compliance landscapes.

### — Leadership and Professionalisation in Research and Innovation Management: Building Resilient Futures

As the research and innovation management profession evolves, senior and advanced career professionals play a pivotal role in shaping its future. This session invites experienced practitioners to share insights on leadership development, strategic influence, and pathways for professional growth that position research management as a recognized and scholarly field. We will explore how strong leadership drives institutional resilience, navigates complexity, and fosters innovation in uncertain environments. Contributions may include reflections on effective leadership models, mentoring approaches, and strategies for embedding research and innovation management within institutional and national agendas. Abstracts will be considered for a panel format, creating a space for dialogue among thought leaders and change agents.

### — Creating Visibility for the Institutional Research and Innovation Portfolio

Visibility is key to driving recognition, collaboration, and funding. How can research and innovation managers effectively showcase institutional research and innovation portfolios beyond conventional metrics? We invite abstracts that explore communicating impact in multilingual contexts and digital environments; the role of Open Science in accessibility and trust; and strategies for presenting research outputs, innovation achievements, and societal contributions through digital platforms, science communication, and storytelling. Submissions should address approaches that engage diverse stakeholders and demonstrate value while navigating challenges such as commercialization, strategic branding, and responsible communication.

## TAKE NOTE OF THE BELOW BEFORE SUBMITTING:

- The Committee reserves the right to allocate abstracts to presentation sessions depending on relevance and space availability, and reserves the right to remove a particular session topic.
  - Each presentation must have one main presenter (the Presenting Author). The Presenting Author must submit the abstract and be the point of contact for that abstract. It is the responsibility of the Presenting Author to communicate with the other Co-presenters.
  - Only Micro Soft (MS) Power Point will be accepted for oral presentations.
  - Abstracts must be submitted online via [www.sarimaconf.co.za](http://www.sarimaconf.co.za). Please click on the **PROGRAMME | ABSTRACTS** tab – drop down select **ABSTRACT INFORMATION** tab.
  - Abstracts must be submitted in either English with a maximum word count of 300.
  - Presenters will be expected to cover the costs of their Conference registration, accommodation and expenses.
  - All presenting authors are requested to fully register for the conference by **Wednesday, 15 April 2026**. If registration for the 2026 SARIMA Conference has not been received by this deadline, the presentation cannot be listed in the programme.
  - All presenters are asked to present **IN-PERSON**.
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## QUESTIONS ASKED AS PART OF THE SUBMISSION:

1. **What is the preferred format of your submission?** *(Please note that the Programme Committee reserves the right to change the preferred format to fit the final programme)*
    - **Oral presentation:**
      - This category would be appropriate for submitters wanting to present a 15 minute oral abstract as part of a standard presentation session which will be included in either a plenary or a parallel session
      - Provide a motivation to indicate the relevance and novelty of the oral presentation (maximum 120 words)
      - Presenters may be required to participate in a Q & A at the end of their presentation.
      - Only MS Power Point will be accepted for oral presentations.
      - PowerPoint presentations must be saved as a .pptx file. 16x9 formats.
      - Video presentations (if applicable) are to be in mp4 format.
    - **Poster presentation:**
      - The poster boards are 2.45m high and 90cm wide. Posters should be printed in Portrait A1-size (841mm x 594mm).
      - Oversized posters can unfortunately not be accommodated.
      - Poster adhesive will be supplied by the Organisers for each poster.
  2. **What career level is your presentation aimed at?**
    - Early-Career
    - Mid-Career
    - Senior
    - Relevant to All
  3. **Is your presentation:**
    - An Overview
    - Detailed
    - Strategic
    - Technical
  4. **Is this the first time you are submitting an abstract for a SARIMA conference?**
    - Yes
    - No
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## ABSTRACT PREPARATION GUIDELINES:

- **PROFILE**

The presenting author should create and complete the online submission, and not the co-author. All communication will be sent to the author who created the profile. The biography is compulsory, as the Chairperson will use this to introduce each speaker.
- **TITLE | PRESENTATION TYPE**

Insert the full title of the proposed presentation. Title should not exceed **15 words**.

**Select the preferred type/format of your presentation:**

  - Oral presentation
  - Poster presentation

- Panel Discussion
- Demo Workshop
- Interactive Workshop

— **SESSION TOPIC**

Select the session topic under which you would like to present.

— **CO-AUTHORS**

Insert full names and affiliation details of all co-authors. Please note that co-authors must have approved of their inclusion of abstract submissions before final submission of the abstract to the SARIMA Programme Committee.

— **CO-PRESENTER**

Please select this function if another author will be co-presenting the paper with you at the conference (due to time limitations, as far as possible only a single author should present in an oral presentation).  
Co-Presenter biographies are required and can be included on submission.

— **TEXT**

Insert the text of the abstract. You will not be able to type additional words once the 300-word limit has been reached, so please check your abstract once submitted. Do not insert the title or co-authors in this text block. Check that special characters have copied correctly. Check that the full abstract has been successfully uploaded by logging out and logging in to your profile again before final submission.

**Text will be limited to 300 words. Your abstract should state clearly what your presentation will cover, how it will contribute to the particular session and be of benefit to the audience.**

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING DEADLINE DATES FOR PRESENTERS**

— **DEADLINE DATES UPDATED - 29 APRIL 2026**

Friday, 6 March 2026	Deadline for abstract submissions
Tuesday, 12 May 2026	Feedback in terms of whether your submission has been accepted
Tuesday, 19 May 2026	Deadline for presenter registration
Tuesday, 30 June 2026	Deadline for presenter registration payment

**PRESENTER REGISTRATION | PAYMENT TERMS**

- Registration and full payment is required in order to attend and participate within the conference programme. This applies to the main presenting author as well as the co-presenting authors.
- We are aware of the payment processes involved within certain organizations | institutions - therefore the payment deadline will be 6 weeks (Tuesday, 30 June 2026) after the presenter registration deadline date (Tuesday, 19 May 2026)
- Please note should you cancel after registering and confirming your participation you will still be liable for full payment of the registration.

**Programme | Abstract Queries Contact:** Kristy Muller | [kristy@confpartner.co.za](mailto:kristy@confpartner.co.za)