

— CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

SARIMA invites you to contribute to the 2025 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: Expect the Unexpected: Unlocking the Value of Research and Innovation Management

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):

1. **Navigating Disruption: Building Agile Research Management Environments**

Research management has evolved into a critical strategic support function that maximizes the value and impact of research institutions. By implementing intentional strategies, research managers can drive research focus areas, cultivate existing pockets of excellence, and enhance the capacity of researchers. But how do we determine the value and impact of these strategies and initiatives? This sub-theme invites abstracts for discussions on efforts by RMAs to add value and impact through strategies that support individual researchers and contribute to the overall success of institutional research initiatives.

2. **Research Ethics and Unexpected Challenges**

Research ethics is a cornerstone of responsible research conduct. It involves adhering to principles that protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of participants, ensure data integrity, and uphold transparency in research practices. Ethical research fosters trust among stakeholders, mitigates risks, and promotes societal benefit while minimizing harm. Research managers often encounter unexpected challenges that test these ethical frameworks, such as data breaches, shifts in regulatory requirements, changes in participant circumstances, cultural sensitivities, or managing interdisciplinary dynamics. Research managers must remain vigilant, adaptable, and proactive in resolving these issues, balancing ethical obligations with practical constraints. This sub-theme invites abstracts for methods and guidelines used by RMAs to navigate these challenges, ensuring ethical integrity and responsible research conduct.

3. **The Changing Face of Collaboration: Rethinking Networks in Research Management**

Achieving meaningful results and social impact in complex contexts, such as research and innovation, requires a strong capacity for collaboration. A truly integrated research environment depends on a holistic and equitable collaboration framework that spans both intra- and extramural levels, involving not only researchers but, crucially, research managers as well. This sub-theme invites abstracts that focus on governance practices addressing broader collaborative contexts and networks, facilitating the development of practical solutions to complex challenges that extend beyond knowledge exchange. Submissions proposing positive changes to foster a socio-relational climate of trust and inclusion, supporting integration, effective knowledge seeking, and research impact, are particularly encouraged.

4. **Research Information Management: The Constant of Strategic Decision-Making in a Dynamic Landscape**

Research Information Management (RIM) is a dynamic and essential pillar that supports the effective organization, collection, and dissemination of research data and outputs. In a rapidly evolving research landscape, RIM helps institutions adapt to unforeseen challenges and opportunities by providing the necessary framework for informed decision-making, fostering collaboration, and enhancing the visibility of research portfolios. With the constant changes in funding, regulatory requirements, and emerging research trends, RIM enables institutions to stay agile, respond to unexpected developments, and maximize the impact of their research. This sub-theme invites abstracts that explore how RIM practices can be leveraged to navigate the unpredictable landscape of research and innovation. Contributions may address strategies for managing uncertainty, enhancing data-driven decision-making, supporting collaboration in times of change, and ensuring that research outputs align with evolving global and institutional priorities and growth. Topics may include case studies, frameworks, and best practices for leveraging RIM to improve collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Innovation & Technology Transfer (I&TT):

1. Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the Research & Development Ecosystem

Academic and research institutions have the potential to become vibrant hubs for innovation and entrepreneurship by cultivating ecosystems that support the creation and growth of research-based startups and ventures. This sub-theme invites abstracts that explore strategies for translating research into sustainable, impact-driven innovations while addressing critical challenges such as conflicts of interest, social responsibility, and technology commercialization.

By fostering entrepreneurial efforts that align with societal needs and ethical standards, academic and research institutions can position themselves as key drivers of both economic growth and social progress. Abstract submissions are encouraged to present case studies, innovative models, and best practices for developing entrepreneurial ecosystems within academic and research institutions. Topics may include university-industry partnerships, funding and resource strategies, governance and policy frameworks, social innovation, and the commercialization of research outputs.

2. Celebrating successes and learning from failures in I&TT

The Innovation & Technology Transfer (I&TT) landscape is ever-evolving, requiring adaptability, resilience, and a commitment to learning from every experience. Learning is a collective endeavor, and this sub-theme provides a platform to share compelling case studies and stories that highlight both successes and setbacks in I&TT. These narratives aim to accelerate collective learning and contribute to a shared knowledge base.

This sub-theme invites abstracts on topics such as journeys of commercialization, building strategic partnerships, success stories, navigating legal and contractual processes, addressing challenges, adapting to obstacles, learning from setbacks, and developing and implementing pivot strategies.

3. Collaborative I&TT: Strategies and Structures

Collaboration among diverse stakeholders is crucial for maximizing the impact of research and technology transfer. Strategic partnerships between universities, industries, local and international organizations, and other innovation ecosystem actors play a vital role in fostering robust and effective innovation ecosystems.

This sub-theme invites abstracts that highlight models and practices promoting the co-creation of value, emphasizing the importance of internationalization, interdisciplinary, and the development of strong local, regional, and global networks. Contributions are also encouraged to address challenges in aligning the interests of diverse stakeholders and implementing collaborative structures that support sustainable, long-term outcomes.

4. Measuring What Matters: Frameworks and Metrics for Evaluating Innovation Impact

How do we define and measure the true impact of innovation and technology transfer (I&TT)? This sub-theme examines efforts within technology transfer and innovation management to create meaningful frameworks and metrics, both qualitative and quantitative, for evaluating success. As the industry works toward consistent standards, measuring impact remains a complex and evolving challenge. The focus is on adaptable, context-specific approaches that reflect the diverse goals of academic institutions, industry partners, and society. Abstract submissions are invited to explore how impact metrics can align with global and regional development frameworks, such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Submissions may include case studies, novel frameworks or methodologies, lessons learned, and the challenges of aligning impact metrics with institutional, societal, and global objectives.

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

1. Cultivating Potential: The Impact of RMAs and I&TT Professionals on the Next Generation of Researchers

Early career researchers face the challenge of balancing competing demands such as teaching, supervision, administrative duties, securing research grants, conducting research, generating outputs, publishing, protecting intellectual property, and participating in commercialization. These responsibilities often leave little room for mentorship and career development.

This sub-theme invites abstracts exploring the role of Research Management Administrators (RMAs) and Technology Transfer Practitioners (TTPs) in alleviating these pressures. Key focus areas include mentoring programs, capacity-building initiatives, skills development, and support. Contributions should also highlight the impact of RMAs and TTPs on fostering the success of the next generation of researchers, including postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Submissions addressing incentives, support programs, and resources that enhance research capacity are encouraged.

2. Future-Proofing Research Management & ITT Professionals: Professionalisation, Incentives, and Career Development

As research management and innovation & technology transfer (ITT) continue to play pivotal roles in the success and sustainability of universities and research institutions, recognising these professions as essential and highly skilled is critical. Professionalising research management and ITT roles not only elevates the recognition of these positions within academic institutions but also aligns them with global trends, ensuring that international standards and expectations are met. By formally acknowledging these professions, institutions can attract and retain talented professionals with the requisite skills to navigate the increasingly dynamic research landscape.

This sub-theme invites abstracts that explore the strategies and initiatives for professionalising research management and ITT. Contributions may focus on the benefits of professional recognition, the development of clear career pathways, the importance of global skills standardisation, and the creation of professional credentials. Submissions that share best practices, challenges, and innovative solutions in these areas are highly encouraged, particularly those that address how professionalisation can enhance the capacity to meet the demands of the ever-evolving research and innovation landscape.

3. **Leveraging systems and emerging technologies for Research, Innovation & Technology Transfer Management**

Leveraging systems and technologies, including AI, in research management and technology transfer is essential for enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and innovation. These tools can automate administrative tasks, streamline data analysis and reporting, and provide valuable insights through predictive analytics. By integrating AI, research and technology transfer managers can better allocate resources, identify emerging trends, and facilitate collaboration across disciplines. This not only accelerates the research and technology transfer process but also contributes to higher-quality outcomes, ultimately driving scientific and academic advancements. However, certain risks must be considered, including those around data privacy and security, impacts on business processes, ethical concerns, over-reliance on technology, oversight challenges, critical thinking, and associated costs. This sub-theme invites abstracts that delve into these opportunities and challenges, exploring innovative applications, strategies, and frameworks for integrating AI and other advanced systems into research and technology transfer processes, while addressing the risks and ethical considerations involved.

4. **Fostering an Institutional Research and Innovation Culture for Sustainable Impact**

Universities and research institutions are at the forefront of driving innovation and societal transformation through research, technology transfer, and knowledge exchange. This sub-theme invites abstracts that explore how cultivating a robust culture of research and innovation within institutions enhances value creation, strengthens pathways for knowledge translation, and promotes societal engagement.

Emphasis should be placed on the evolving role of engaged universities in addressing pressing societal needs through interdisciplinary approaches, value-added research outputs, and innovative solutions. Submissions may explore how Research and Technology Transfer Offices (RTOs) contribute by enhancing institutional agility, leveraging technology transfer, creating partnerships that drive economic and social value, and aligning research strategies with trends such as sustainability, digital transformation, and inclusive growth.

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. 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 **Friday, 18 April 2025**. If registration for the 2025 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**.

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

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 uploaded as a PDF document.
- **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:

Saturday, 1 March 2025	Deadline for abstract submissions
Friday, 4 April 2025	Feedback in terms of whether your submission has been accepted
Friday, 18 April 2025	Deadline for presenter registration
Wednesday, 18 June 2025	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 60 days after the presenter registration deadline date (Wednesday, 18 June 2025)
- Please note should you cancel after registering and confirming your participation you will still be liable for full payment of the registration.

Queries Relating to SARIMA 2025 Abstract Submission Please Contact: Kristy Muller | kristy@confpartner.co.za