

2026 SARIMA Conference | WORKSHOP:



African Leadership Forum:

Leading Sustainable Institutional Transitions without Disruption

- Tuesday, 8 September 2026
- 13:00 – 17:00
- NH Hotel Johannesburg Sandton, South Africa

— **TARGET AUDIENCE:** Directors and Senior Leaders

Overview:

This proposed annual theme builds on the 2025 Directors Roundtable focus on resilient research and innovation leadership, integrated institutional practice, and succession planning, while recognising the strategic evolution from a Directors Roundtable to a broader Leadership Forum.

For 2026, the emphasis shifts from resilience as an outcome to leadership self-reflection as a strategic responsibility. Within the SARIMA Leadership Forum context, the central question becomes how university leaders examine their own leadership styles, decision-making habits, transition approaches, and governance choices so that institutions remain stable, adaptive, future-oriented, and trusted.

Across Southern Africa, universities are navigating leadership transitions, financial pressures, digital transformation, policy uncertainty, reputational scrutiny, and growing expectations for relevance and impact. In this environment, the challenge is not only to lead change, but to do so in ways that protect continuity, preserve institutional memory, strengthen systems, and avoid unnecessary disruption.

The proposed theme therefore invites Directors and senior leaders, through the Leadership Forum platform, to explore how steady, values-based, reflective leadership can coexist with agility, innovation, and dynamic institutional reform. It positions the Forum not merely as a closed dialogue among Directors, but as a strategic leadership space for deeper institutional reflection, shared learning, and collective stewardship of sustainable university transitions.

Programme:

Time	Item	Presenter / Lead
13:00–13:10	Welcome & Opening – Purpose of ALF and setting the tone for a candid, trusted leadership conversation.	Dr Anna Matros-Goreses , SARIMA President (Session Moderator)
13:20–14:30	Executive Leadership Panel: “What We Wish We Had Known: Leadership, Legacy and the Next Generation”	Three Panellists
14:30–14:45	Refreshment & Reflection Break – Prompt: <i>What should our generation of leaders stop, start and deliberately pass on?</i>	All Participants
14:45–15:20	From the Panel to the Room: An Open Leadership Conversation – Audience engagement with the panellists around lessons, challenges and questions raised by the conversation.	Moderator, Panellists & Participants
15:20–15:40	The Next Generation Responds – Emerging leaders reflect on what they heard, what they need from today's leaders and what responsibility they are prepared to assume.	Selected Emerging Leaders
15:40–15:55	STOP – START – PASS ON: Leadership Commitments – What will we stop doing, start doing and deliberately pass on to the next generation? Selected commitments from the room.	Facilitator & Participants
15:55–16:30	Closing Reflections	