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Announcement & Call for Abstracts!

2nd Southern African Mountain Conference

SAMC2025



THE CONFERENCE

We are excited to share with you the first announcement of the [2nd Southern African Mountain Conference \(SAMC2025\)](#)!

SAMC2025 will be held from 17th to 20th March 2025 at Champagne Sports Resort, in the breathtaking Maloti-Drakensberg. The theme of SAMC2025 is: **“Southern African Mountains – Overcoming Boundaries and Barriers”**. SAMC2025 will be a fully face-to-face event, bringing together academics, researchers, early career professionals, practitioners, policymakers, postgraduate students and government officials, amongst others, to engage and exchange experiences, research findings, problem-solve and foster partnerships toward the transboundary and transdisciplinary sustainability of southern African mountains.

Southern African mountains comprise those situated south of the Congo Rainforest and Lake Rukwa and include the mountainous islands of the western Indian Ocean. Thus, SAMC2025 is targeting Angola, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo [southern mountains], Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, La Réunion, South Africa, southern Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The SAMC series is conceptualised by the [Afromontane Research Unit \(ARU\)](#) of the University of the Free State (UFS), in partnership with the [African Mountain Research Foundation \(AMRF\)](#) and [Global Mountain Safeguard Research \(GLOMOS\)](#); a joint initiative between EURAC Research and the United Nations University (UNU) Institute for Environment and Human Security), and implemented by the non-profit company, [The Peaks Foundation](#). UNESCO was the official Patron of SAMC2022 and will be approached in the same role for SAMC2025.

The SAMC series is purposefully multi- and trans-disciplinary, with a strong impetus to link science, policy and practitioner realms, and thus all approaches are encouraged.

SAMC2025 will build on the highly successful 1st Southern African Mountain Conference (SAMC2022) held in March 2022. This, the first of its kind in southern Africa, attracted 259 participants from 21 countries, with 168 papers delivered and four sponsored special sessions. SAMC2025 will include plenary sessions, parallel oral paper presentation sessions, poster sessions, panel discussions, and sessions for special interest groups – **with separate review tracks for abstract submissions from science, policy and practitioner sectors** that accommodate those sectors to the best of their advantage.

The programme will include an exclusive [Royal Mountain Indaba](#)¹, aimed at fostering dialogue that links customary law + mountains + the Sustainable Development Goals.

A first comprehensive **Student and Early Career Academic’s Summit** is planned, as a capacity development “boot camp” to contribute to strengthening a southern African mountain community of practice and help grow pipeline of future research expertise.

The social programme includes a “meet-and-greet”, networking events, a gala dinner and mid-conference excursions.

¹ Indaba is a widely recognised isiZulu word meaning an important meeting of leaders of a community to discuss matters of concern. It suggests ‘deep talk’ and a meeting of minds, acknowledging that all those present have something important to say.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

We are pleased to invite high-quality abstracts to be considered for presentation. We encourage researchers, students, practitioners, NGOs, officials, industry professionals and other stakeholders to submit abstracts for platform and/or poster presentations. Abstracts may be submitted for (i) full presentation (15 + 5 minutes); (ii) short presentation (10 + 5 minutes); (iii) postgraduate/postdoc presentation (10 + 5 minutes) and/or (iv) poster presentation – in the following categories:

- Science
- Policy
- Practitioner (including private sector – e.g. industry and business).

The submitted abstracts should address issues related to the SAMC2025 (working) sub-themes, which are:

- Agriculture and rural development
- Biodiversity
- Climate change
- Communities and livelihoods (including e.g. education and training, health, youth, services, crime)
- Economics and Investment
- Energy
- Geo-landscapes and geoscience
- Governance (including law and order)
- History, culture and heritage
- Indigenous knowledge
- International cooperation and inter-relations
- Natural and man-made risks
- Protected areas and conservation
- Social justice (including gender and inclusion)
- Tourism
- Water resources.

High-quality abstracts that speak to the overarching theme of SAMC2025 but do not necessarily fall within any of the sub-themes above, will be considered for a possible ‘open track’ conference session.

Abstracts should be submitted via the [online submission system](#) by the advertised deadlines (see Important Dates below). Each abstract will be reviewed through a double-blind online review process by the SAMC2025 Review Panels which form part of the SAMC2025 Scientific Committee.

Appropriate panels are set up for each submission type (science, policy, practitioner) in order to avoid applying an “academic” lens in reviewing contributions from other categories. The review process will be handled on an “as received basis” – thus the earlier the abstract is submitted, the earlier an outcome can be communicated and attendance planning by the delegate can begin.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR WORKSHOPS AND/OR PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Workshops provide an opportunity for researchers, policy-makers and practitioners to engage on topics that require in-depth extended interaction, or which seek a particular outcome through extended engagement. Workshop proposals (for full or half-day) are highly

welcomed and can be submitted [online](#). Workshop proposals will be reviewed and selected on the basis of their alignment with the overall programme, and interest to the SAMC community; further discussion and negotiation will be handled directly with each proponent. Each accepted workshop will be provided with a dedicated venue, for the account of the workshop organisers.

Panels provide an interactive forum for bringing together people with cutting-edge views on compelling issues and to stimulate wider collaboration. Panels involve participation from both the panellists and audience members in a lively discussion. Proposals for panels can be submitted online ([link](#)). Panel submissions will be reviewed and selected for their alignment with SAMC2025 and interest to the SAMC community. A discussion session (90 min) slot will be provided.

PUBLICATION OF SELECTED CONFERENCE PAPERS

We are in negotiations with the multi-disciplinary journal [Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa](#) for a SAMC2025 special issue of selected papers presented at SAMC2025. We anticipate that processes for the special issue will commence well before SAMC2025 is held, with the intention that the special issue will be available soon after SAMC2025 itself. Submissions will all be handled as per usual peer-reviewed journal best practice.

REGISTRATION

Registration will open on 1st March 2024. Prospective delegates should register using the [SAMC2025 portal](#) as soon as possible once registration opens.

All those whose abstracts have formally been accepted will qualify for the Early Bird Registration fee, provided that payment is made before the date communicated in the letter of acceptance.

It is not necessary to be presenting, or to have submitted an abstract, to register – we welcome delegates who are not presenting.

Registration fees

- **Early bird registration – payment (or proof of purchase order) before 30th November 2024**

Delegates based in southern Africa:	R4 500
Delegates based outside of southern Africa:	R5 000
Registered students:	R3 000
Postdoctoral Fellows:	R3 500

- **Registration and payment (or proof of purchase order) after 30th November 2024**

Delegates based in southern Africa:	R5 000
Delegates based outside of southern Africa:	R6 000
Registered students:	R3 500
Postdoctoral Fellows:	R4 000

- **Registration after 15 February 2025**

Delegates based in southern Africa:	R5 500
Delegates based outside of southern Africa:	R6 600
Registered students:	R3 850
Postdoctoral Fellows:	R4 400

(Note: Students who are in full-time employment (i.e. as lecturers etc.) are requested not to register as students but in the normal registration categories)

The registration fee for SAMC2025 includes refreshment breaks, lunches, a meet-and-greet, access to all abstracts, and participation in all programme events (except the Gala Dinner, events that are specifically by invitation only, and selected excursions).

Details of payment methods appear on the registration form.

STUDENT AND EARLY CAREER ACADEMIC'S SUMMIT (FRIDAY 21ST MARCH 2025)

In support of the next generation of academics and researchers, the Summit will include workshops, training and guidance on their professional development. Interested persons are urged to register soon and give an indication of intent regarding their possible participation.

IMPORTANT DATES

Registration opens: 1st March 2024
Abstract submission: Before 1st September 2024
Notification of abstract acceptance: By 15th November 2024

VENUE DETAILS

SAMC2025 will be held at the [Champagne Sports Resort](#), nestled in the picturesque Champagne Valley in the central Maloti-Drakensberg, in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This premier venue offers state-of-the-art conferencing facilities, a full range of accommodation options, a gorgeous golf course, and world-class leisure amenities. A block of rooms is reserved at a special conference rate. Additional details will be available soon.

FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLERS

- March marks the end of summer and the start of autumn (fall) in South Africa. Weather is variable, and rain can be expected. Day temperatures are cool to warm, but nights can be chilly.
- Friday 21st March is a public holiday in South Africa.
- While South Africa is one of the most accessible countries in the world for short-term visitors, and has limited visa restrictions, some international delegates may require a tourist or business visa to attend SAMC2025. For more information, see <http://www.dha.gov.za/index.php/applying-for-sa-visa>.

ENQUIRIES

Please feel free to contact the Conference Secretariat at secretariat@samc.africa. More details about the conference and information updates can be accessed from the [conference website](https://2025.samc.africa) (<https://2025.samc.africa>).