2nd Southern African Mountain Conference
17–20 March 2025

GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS

SAMC2025 welcomes contributions from individuals and organisations working or researching in fields relevant to southern African mountains. The contributions can take the form of oral or poster presentations. (For proposals for workshops/panel discussions, please select the appropriate item).

Please read these guidelines very carefully. Only abstracts and proposals which are submitted according to the guidelines and on time, will be considered. We do not accept abstracts via email or postal mail.

Authors may submit more than one abstract for consideration; however only up to two abstracts will be accepted per presenting author for inclusion in the programme. Presenters of multiple papers need only register for SAMC2025 once.

Presentation categories and types

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 welcome. Abstracts are thus invited in the following categories:
- Science
- Policy
- Practitioner (including private sector, industry and business).

Appropriate panels are set up for each submission type (science, policy, practitioner) in order to accommodate the different sectors and to avoid applying an "academic" lens in reviewing abstracts submitted in the 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.

Abstracts in each of the categories may be submitted in the following presentation types:
- Oral presentations (long [15 + 5 minutes] or short [10 + 5 minutes])
- Poster presentations
- Postgraduate student / Postdoctoral presentations (10 + 5 minutes).

Oral presentations may be long (15 minutes with an additional 5 minutes allocated for questions) or short (10 minutes with an additional 5 minutes allocated for questions).

Posters will form part of a permanent exhibit for the duration of SAMC2025. Posters will be presented via a 5-minute oral presentation (using a maximum of three PowerPoint slides),

followed by 2 minutes for discussion. Poster presentations are ideally suited for presenting projects that are at the proposal stage for which are "works-in-progress". Poster sessions will be part of the programme, during which the author must attend to her/his poster to answer questions. There will be ample time for discussion of posters built into the SAMC2025 schedule. SAMC2025 delegates will be asked to vote on the poster presentations, and a prize will be awarded for the poster receiving the most votes.

Postgraduate student / Postdoctoral presentations will be short oral presentations of 10 minutes plus 5 minutes allocated for questions. Doctoral and Master's candidates and Postdoctoral fellows are invited to submit abstracts describing their research. To be eligible the work must be the original work of the Doctoral/Master's student or Postdoctoral fellow. Supervisors/Promoters may be co-authors, but the student/fellow must be the lead author and must present the paper at SAMC2025. These abstracts will be subject to the same criteria and processes as abstracts submitted for oral or poster presentations; however, reviewers are aware that the abstract has been submitted as a Postgraduate student / Postdoctoral presentation, and thus the final results may not have been fully completed and interpreted. Prizes will be awarded to the best Doctoral, Master's or Postdoctoral paper presented in these specific categories. Postgraduate students / Postdoctoral fellows may, however, select the standard oral or poster presentation types (i.e. they are not restricted to the postgraduate student presentation type); in such cases they will, unfortunately not be eligible for any of the prizes.

> The organisers expect that there will be more abstracts submitted with preference for oral presentation than can be accommodated in the programme. Thus, after the review process has been completed, they reserve the right to move a presentation to another category, in order to accommodate as many papers as possible. Submitting authors will be informed whether the paper is scheduled for oral, postgraduate/postdoctoral or poster presentation and will aim to do so by 15 November 2024.

Review of Abstracts

All abstracts must be submitted via the online abstract submission process. This enables a secure double-blind review process. We do not accept proposals via email or postal mail. You can access this on the web portal by clicking on the "Abstract/Proposal" menu item.

For each abstract submitted, authors are requested to indicate their preference for *oral (long or short)* OR *poster presentation* OR *postgraduate student / postdoctoral presentation*. Abstracts that are submitted for oral presentation, but that are not selected for oral communication may be referred to the poster sessions. The decisions of the Scientific Committee are final.

All abstracts received that meet the guidelines, will be double-blind peer reviewed by members of the SAMC2025 Review Panels to ensure an adequate standard, that the proposed subject of the submitted abstract has been followed, that the paper is of a suitable length, the standard of English is acceptable. In some cases, revision might be required.

The full review process will take some time to complete and the **final outcome will be available by 15 November 2024**. However, you are encouraged to submit your abstract as soon as possible, so that the process can commence. Once a decision on a submitted abstract has been taken, the person who submitted the abstract (generally the submitting author) will be notified as to whether the abstract has been accepted or not or whether revision is required. The onus is on this person to inform the other authors.

During the abstract selection process, the following 10 points are used as a guide. We strongly recommend that authors ensure their abstracts address these points.

1. Does the abstract capture the interest of a potential conference delegate?
2. Is the abstract well-written in terms of language, grammar, etc.?
3. Does the abstract title describe the subject being presented?
4. Does the abstract make a clear statement of the topic of the presentation and the question/issue being addressed?
5. Does the abstract say how the study/investigation/topic/research was/is being undertaken?
6. Does the abstract indicate the value of the findings and to whom will they be of use?
7. Does the abstract describe the work to be discussed in the presentation?
8. Does the abstract give a concise summary of the findings and/or recommendations?
9. Does the abstract conform to the word limit of 500 words?
10. Does the abstract have up to 5 keywords that closely reflect the content of the paper?

The acceptable range for abstracts is between 400 and 500 words. The abstract should succinctly describe the work and results, as this is the only written record prepared for SAMC2025. Authors may, however, distribute any preprints or reprints to other participants during the conference

Authors must prepare their abstract for direct reproduction in the SAMC2025 Book of Abstracts; the abstract text will appear as the author prepared it. However, the SAMC2025 Organising Committee reserves the right to edit abstracts for clarity or correctness of language but will consult the author if any significant changes are needed.

For authors whose first language is not English, we request that you have your work proof-read prior to submission by a fluent English speaker.

Style guide for abstracts submitted for Oral or Poster presentations

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All abstracts must be submitted via the online abstract submission process. This enables a secure double-blind review process. You can access this on the web portal by clicking on the "Abstract/Proposal" menu item.

We kindly request you to follow the following guidelines for your abstract submission:

General:
- Language: UK English
- Maximum number of words of body of abstract: 500
- Maximum number of keywords: 5.

Order of presented information:
The abstract has a title, followed by authors, their affiliations and then the body of the abstract.

Title
- Type the TITLE of the abstract in <u>upper case</u> (caps) in the field provided
- Maximum 200 characters.

Author(s) names and Institutional Affiliation
- Author listings should reflect those who did the research and can take accountability for its conduct, and for the analysis and interpretation of the findings
- Provide the first name and initials then the surname
- Type the Main Author's name and her/his affiliation in the filed provided
- For additional authors, click the "Add a Co-Author" button and enter the name and affiliation (each must be entered on a separate field)
- For all authors (main and co-), you must indicate which one is the presenting author at the conference with a tick next to the author's name. Provide the first name and initials then the surname.

Institutional affiliation(s) of author(s)
- Some authors may have more than one institutional affiliation
- Provide name(s), town and country of the institution(s) with which each author is affiliated
- Separate institutions with a semi-colon should the author be affiliated to more than one institution.

Abstract text (minimum 400, maximum 500 words)
- This can be entered in free format in the field provided. Suggestion: Develop it as a Word document and cut and paste into the field, although all formatting will be lost.
- Abstract text (minimum 400, maximum 500 words)
- Single line spacing
- Do not use tabs
- Line drawings should not be included within the text but may be added as an attachment to the abstract. All attachments must be combined into a single PDF
- The body of the abstract does not contain any headings but should generally reflect several sections to ensure that informed review can be done, namely: Introduction; Theoretical framework (if relevant); Aims and Objectives; Key questions and/or Problem statement; Methods; Results; Discussion; and (Envisaged) Conclusion and/or Recommendations. Please address these issues, as appropriate for your type of abstract.

Acknowledgements
- This field is optional but may be used to include sponsor/funding source information and will be published with the abstract.

Keywords
- Maximum 5 separated by a carriage return
- All keywords begin with lower case unless they are a proper noun/name.

Conditions

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1. Submission of an abstract does not constitute acceptance for presentation nor registration for SAMC2025. Submission of an abstract implies the commitment that, if the oral or poster abstract is accepted after review, the author will present a paper or poster and the presenting author will attend SAMC2025. No financial assistance is available; the expectation is that financial resources to attend are available to the presenter.

2. If a submitted abstract is accepted for an oral or poster session, the presenter must pay the registration fee to present the paper; failure to do so by the stipulated deadline may result in the removal of the presentation from the programme and the abstract from the SAMC2025 Book of Abstracts. The main presenting author of accepted abstracts will automatically qualify for the early bird registration fee, provided payment is made before the date communicated in the letter of acceptance.
3. Presenters of multiple papers need to register only once. Please note: Authors must register and pay their fees by the stipulated dates, to have their abstract(s) included in the SAMC2025 Book of Abstracts and to be scheduled in the programme. A refund will be provided to authors who have pre-registered and paid but will not attend because their paper or poster presentation is not accepted.
4. By submitting an abstract for review, the author agrees that, if accepted, it will be published in the SAMC2025 Book of Abstracts if the final document is accepted.
5. The author assumes full responsibility for obtaining permission to reproduce any copyrighted or otherwise protected data and images in their conference paper.
6. We are in negotiations with the multi-disciplinary journal *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa* for a 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.

Other considerations with regard to formatting, style and technical details[1]

In order to assist with the finalisation of the SAMC2025 Book of Abstracts, it would be helpful if you could take note and apply the following points.

1. The metric system as defined by the International System of Units applies. Abbreviations of units of measurement should be non-caps, e.g. hectare = ha. The International System of Units should be consulted where uncertain and for exceptions: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_System_of_Units.
2. P-values and the like (*r*, *n*, etc.) should be written in lowercase and italics (*p*; html code <em>). Spaces should be included before and after the equal (=), less than (<), or greater than (>) signs, e.g. $p < 0.05$.
3. r^2 – i.e. also in italics.
4. A comma (,) should be used as thousand separator and dot (.) as decimal separator, e.g. 1,000,000 km² and 1.275 kg.
5. There are no commas in years, e.g. 2000's; 1930's; 1989.
6. A space should be included between values and measure units, e.g. 12 m; 17 km, 60 h; 250 kg; 16 °C. Exceptions are geographical coordinates (11°55'45"N) and angles (60°). No space should be included before percentage sign (15%, 17.5%).
7. Use proper symbols for multiplication (×) and intervals (–). Also notice that the unit measure should be placed after the figures when listing intervals and dimensions, e.g. 3 × 4.5–5.5 cm.
8. Use EN-dashes (–) when referring to geographic, temporal, or dimensional intervals and ranges, e.g. Zimbabwe–Mozambique highlands; June–September; 1–1.5 cm. There are no spaces on either side of EN-dashes.
9. The guideline of no more than three decimal places should be adhered to.
10. The Oxford comma should be used for lists, e.g. flowers, fruits, and seeds were measured.

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[1] *These technical guidelines have been compiled based on those used by the Grassland Society of Southern Africa (GSSA) and The Conservation Symposium, and are used with their permission. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.*

11. Common names may be included provided they are followed by the proper scientific name, e.g. quinine tree (*Rauvolfia caffra*). Authors of scientific names should be excluded as a space saving consideration both in the title and the body of the abstract.

12. Botanical family names should follow APG IV (Chase *et al*. 2016). Avoid the usage of informal names and outdated families (e.g. Asteraceae and not Compositae; Poaceae and not Gramineae).

13. The standard conventions for use of nomenclature of fauna, insects, etc. and other non-botanical disciplines should be adhered to as per those disciplines, but author names of genera and species should be omitted.

14. Levels of endangerment are capitalised (red data statuses), e.g. Threatened NOT threatened, Least Concern, etc.

15. For all species, common names are not capitalised ("I spotted a red-tailed hawk," not "I spotted a Red-Tailed Hawk"), except when an element of the name is a proper noun, as in "Steller's jay" and "Siberian tiger."

16. In abstract titles, the first word following a colon but not an EM-dash should be capitalised, e.g. Case study: Improving nitrogen fertiliser efficiency on pasture-based dairy farms OR Case study — improving nitrogen fertiliser efficiency on pasture-based dairy farms.

17. The first use of an acronym should be written out in full followed by the acronym in brackets, e.g. Protected Area Management Effectiveness (PAME), mean annual precipitation (MAP).

18. Acronyms such as KALARIVA, etc. can be considered as standalone words and can be used in titles without explanation providing explanation is included in the body of the abstract using the previous guideline (17).

19. Ampersands (&) should not be used; only "and" should be used.

20. Square brackets are permitted, but we encourage em-dashes rather than multiple hierarchies of parentheses; exceptions are mathematical formulae.

21. Province, district, river, etc. should be capitalised if part of a name, e.g. Limpopo River, Eastern Cape Province, Middelburg District, BUT river, province, district when not name specific.

22. After a genus name has been mentioned for the first time it can thereafter be summarised using the first letter and a full stop, e.g. *Themeda triandra . . . T. triandra.*

23. Temporal and other time-related items should be as e.g. annum^{-1} rather than 'per year' or '/year'.

24. Seasons: use lowercase for summer, winter, autumn, spring; use 'autumn' and not 'fall', given we are using UK English.

25. Points of the compass lowercase: north, south, east, west; also e.g. north-west, north-western etc. (hyphenated).

26. Versus should be abbreviated as vs (UK) not vs. (US).

27. Dates: Use e.g. 14th January not 14 January.

28. Latin terms should be italicised: *ad hoc*, *in situ*, *ex situ*, *sensu lato*, *sensu stricto* etc.

29. No citations or references in the Abstracts, unless citing founding research as part of sentence (but not citation at end of sentence).

30. Minus sign should be the minus symbol not just a hyphen before the number? E.g. -32 (used Word Symbols here for minus) not just -(hyphen)32?

31. Titles should not end in a full-stop, and should all be lowercase unless any of the other guidelines here apply.

32. Formally circumscribed Biome and vegetation unit usage should be in capitals, if part of a formal national or global vegetation classification – e.g. Karoo Escarpment Grassland vegetation unit, or Grassland Biome, or Fynbos Biome, etc., as per Mucina and Rutherford (2006) for South Africa. However, general use of 'grassland', 'fynbos', 'savanna' should be employed if not specifically referring to a formally described Biome or vegetation unit – e.g. 'grassland vegetation in the Kruger National Park'.

33. Use 'savanna' (or 'Savanna Biome') and not 'savannah'.