



CONFERENCE PROSPECTUS



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INTRODUCTION

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) landscape is evolving rapidly in response to complex social, economic, environmental and technological changes. Across South Africa, governments, civil society, development partners, academia and the private sector are facing growing uncertainty, resource constraints, climate pressures, digital transformation and increasing demands for evidence-informed decision-making. These shifts require M&E systems and practitioners to be adaptive, innovative and responsive to changing realities.

At the same time, advances in technology, data science and artificial intelligence are creating new opportunities to generate, analyse and use evidence. Growing recognition of the value of local knowledge systems, participatory approaches and equitable development is also encouraging the sector to rethink whose voices are represented in evidence generation and decision-making. As the profession evolves, there is a growing need to strengthen future-ready competencies, foster collaboration across sectors and disciplines, and ensure that evidence contributes to meaningful and sustainable change.

"As a voluntary member-based organisation, the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association (SAMEA) is committed to strengthening monitoring and evaluation as a discipline and a tool for equitable and sustainable development."

Through its biennial conferences, SAMEA provides a platform for practitioners, researchers, policymakers, development partners, emerging evaluators and other stakeholders to share knowledge, exchange experiences and shape the future of the profession.

The SAMEA 10th Biennial Conference, to be held from 8–12 March 2027 in Johannesburg, South Africa, will bring together diverse voices from across South Africa and beyond to explore emerging trends, innovative approaches and transformative practices that are shaping the future of MERL.



THEME

The Future of MERL:
Innovation, Inclusion and
Impact



DATES

8–12 March 2027



LOCATION

Johannesburg, South Africa

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The conference is expected to result in improved understanding of contemporary monitoring and evaluation approaches, stronger professional networks, enhanced evidence-use practices, and practical commitments for applying learning after the event. It will also help position the monitoring and evaluation community to respond more effectively to complex social, institutional, and development challenges.

EXPECTED CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES ARE TO:

- 1 Strengthen shared understanding of inclusive, adaptive, and action-oriented monitoring and evaluation practice.
- 2 Identify practical approaches for improving the use of evidence in decision-making across sectors.
- 3 Build stronger connections between researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and emerging evaluators.
- 4 Generate fresh ideas, methods, and locally relevant solutions for responding to complex development challenges.
- 5 Support professional learning and mentorship, especially for emerging evaluators and early-career professionals.
- 6 Contribute to a stronger, more collaborative monitoring and evaluation community that can influence policy and practice in meaningful ways.
- 7 Produce evaluation research papers and other knowledge products for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, e.g., in the African Evaluation Journal (AEJ), and through other knowledge-sharing spaces.
- 8 Encourage and empower attendees to apply new insights and learning to drive meaningful change within their areas of practice.

CONFERENCE AUDIENCE



Government departments



NGOs and CSOs



Donors, foundations and development agencies



Researchers, academics and HEIs



Independent evaluators and private sector consultants



Students and emerging evaluators



African evaluation associations and regional networks



International evaluation associations, professional networks and development partners



SNAPSHOT OF THE 2024 CONFERENCE

The SAMEA 9th Biennial Conference drew a diverse, influential audience and a rich programme of engagement, a benchmark for the scale and impact partners can expect in 2027.



Figure: 9th Biennial Conference (2024) engagement summary.



NEED A REMINDER OF THE ENERGY, DEPTH OF ENGAGEMENT, AND SHARED LEARNING THAT DEFINED SAMEA'S LAST CONFERENCE?

Check out this recap video of the 2024 SAMEA Conference VUCA! VUKA!

CONFERENCE STRANDS & SUBTHEMES

In keeping with the conference theme, "The Future of MERL: Innovation, Inclusion, and Impact," SAMEA 2027 will explore the changing monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) landscape and the approaches, practices and systems needed to strengthen the relevance, inclusivity and impact of the profession.

The conference programme will be structured around five key strands, which will guide the submission of abstracts and provide a framework for discussion, learning and knowledge exchange.

01 INNOVATIVE METHODS

Explores creative, emerging and context-responsive approaches to monitoring, evaluation, research and learning. This strand will showcase new and evolving methods, tools and practices that strengthen the quality, relevance and use of evidence in complex and changing contexts. It welcomes contributions examining participatory and systems-informed methodologies, technology-enabled and data-driven approaches, as well as indigenous and locally grounded methods that challenge conventional practice and offer new ways of generating, interpreting and applying evidence.

02 INCLUSIVE PROCESSES

Explores approaches that advance meaningful participation, equity and shared ownership in monitoring, evaluation, research and learning. This strand will consider how participatory, community-led, co-created, accessible, gender-responsive and culturally grounded practices can ensure that diverse perspectives and forms of knowledge are recognised and valued. It will also explore how MERL can address power imbalances and strengthen inclusion, particularly in contexts of social, economic and environmental transition.

03 TRANSFORMING SYSTEMS

Explores how monitoring, evaluation, research and learning can contribute to meaningful change within complex and interconnected systems. This strand will focus on systems thinking, complexity-aware practice, collective impact and adaptive management, as well as approaches that examine the relationships, structures, power dynamics and underlying conditions that influence development outcomes. It will also consider the role of MERL in responding to major systemic challenges, including climate change, sustainability, resilience and just transitions.

04 BUILDING THE M&E PROFESSION (EMERGING EVALUATORS)

Focuses on the people who make up the monitoring, evaluation, research and learning workforce, with particular attention to emerging and early-career evaluators. This strand will explore mentorship, leadership development, experiential learning, peer support and professional networking as pathways into and through the profession. It will consider how emerging evaluators develop their professional identity, confidence and capabilities, and how communities of practice, professional networks and inclusive career pathways can support and nurture a diverse new generation of M&E practitioners.

05 PROFESSIONALISATION

Focuses on the systems, structures and mechanisms required to establish and sustain monitoring, evaluation, research and learning as a distinct, credible and recognised profession. This strand will explore competency frameworks, qualifications, accreditation and certification processes, ethical codes and standards, quality assurance, governance arrangements and other formal mechanisms that promote consistency, accountability and public trust. It will also consider how M&E is defined, regulated and supported at organisational, sectoral and national levels, and how these arrangements can strengthen the status, legitimacy and long-term sustainability of the profession.

DELIVERY MODEL

Monitoring and evaluation are being shaped by fast-changing social, political, environmental, and institutional conditions, which require flexible and responsive approaches. This conference theme speaks to both rigour and relevance, bringing together academic researchers, practitioners, government, civil society, and emerging evaluators.

This conference will convene researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and emerging evaluators to explore how evaluation can be more inclusive, adaptive, and useful in a complex world. Through dialogue, shared learning, and practical exchange, the conference will support a stronger evaluation community that is equipped to generate evidence for equitable and sustainable development.

LEARNING & REFLECTION

The conference creates space for shared learning, evidence use, and practical dialogue across sectors.

INTERACTION & CO-CREATION

Sessions are participatory and practical, with time built in for discussion, synthesis, and application, including an "evidence into action" track where delegates translate insights into policy, practice, or organisational change.



PARTNER WITH SAMEA TO EXPLORE THE FUTURE OF MERL

SAMEA has a strong track record of partnering with organisations across the public, private, academic, and development sectors to deliver impactful biennial conferences that respond to the evolving needs of the M&E community in South Africa and across the region. Partnering with SAMEA provides access to one of the largest and most influential MERL networks in the country, a platform to enhance brand visibility, showcase thought leadership, engage directly with sector leaders, and help shape the future of MERL.



CONVENING THE SECTOR

Government, development agencies, donors, academics, consultants, emerging evaluators, and private sector leaders in one dynamic environment.



POSITIONING & VISIBILITY

A platform to position your organisation at the forefront of evidence-driven innovation and transformative development practice across Africa.



WAYS TO PARTNER

Sponsorships, in-kind contributions, bursaries, and branded engagements — enabling an inclusive, accessible, high-quality conference.



LASTING IMPACT

Demonstrate commitment to the M&E profession, African-led evaluation practice, and emerging evaluators long after the conference closes.



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Multiple ways to partner as a conference sponsor, each tier built around a distinct value proposition, from headline co-branding to focused, high-value visibility.

PREMIUM HEADLINE CO-SPONSOR R650 000 (incl. VAT) / approx. \$39 000 Delivers a headline co-branding platform with speaking, exhibition, digital and full delegate benefits.	SELECT KEYNOTE SPOTLIGHT R400 000 (incl. VAT) / approx. \$24 000 Delivers prominent keynote-session visibility and thought-leadership input at a lower entry point.	CLASSIC RECOGNISED PRESENCE R200 000 (incl. VAT) / approx. \$12 000 Delivers strong brand exposure and a recognised presence within the M&E community.
THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & ENGAGEMENT ✓ Seat on the Conference Committee driving the conversation ✓ Deliver an inspirational keynote address, plus a Breakout Panel on the main stage ✓ Curate your audience in a dedicated conference strand ✓ Host a themed networking session ✓ Celebrate emerging evaluators through our Emerging Evaluator strand ONSITE PRESENCE ✓ Premium headline branding across conference venues and platforms ✓ Premium exhibition booth for the full 5-day conference and workshop week ✓ Branded pop-up banners at key venues and networking spaces ✓ Partner video showcase opportunities DIGITAL ASSETS & BRANDING ✓ High-visibility branding across SAMEA digital platforms and marketing collateral ✓ Social media and newsletter promotion to the broader M&E community ✓ Pre- and during-conference publicity reaching 500+ sector professionals ✓ Inclusion in the post-conference report shared with 600+ members and partners CONFERENCE REGISTRATION ✓ Five complimentary registrations with full access to sessions and networking events, with administrative support	✓ Named acknowledgement at keynote sessions, the most anticipated of the conference ✓ Opportunity to contribute recommendations that inform keynote discussion topics ✓ Standard exhibition booth ✓ Branding on select conference platforms, social media and newsletter mention ✓ 3 complimentary delegate registrations ✓ Recognition in the official post-conference report	✓ Strong brand exposure across conference platforms ✓ Direct networking access with delegates on the exhibition floor ✓ Co-branded visibility on selected conference materials, with prominent logo placement ✓ Recognised presence within the M&E community ✓ 2 complimentary delegate registrations ✓ Recognition in the official post-conference report

All amounts are approximate and subject to availability. Contact the SAMEA Secretariat to discuss custom packages aligned to your organisation's objectives.

SUPPORTER SPONSORSHIPS

STRAND SPONSOR

Sponsorship of a specific conference strand, thematic workshop, or panel discussion aligned to the sponsor's area of interest. Includes:

- ✓ Reviewing and selecting abstracts, and making recommendations to authors on presentation type and delivery model
- ✓ Ensuring that papers and posters follow guidelines
- ✓ Coordinating and mentoring presenters within your strand to enhance the quality of the presentation

NETWORKING EVENT SPONSOR

Support a networking session with branding opportunities at the event. Includes:

- ✓ Branded signage and naming rights for the session
- ✓ Coverage of venue, catering, prizes, and audio/visual costs
- ✓ Direct networking access with delegates at the event

YEE BURSARY / PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPONSOR

Funding support for emerging evaluators, employees, practitioners, or delegates to attend the conference to support their professional development. Sponsors will be acknowledged in the conference programme and will have the option to participate in the adjudication of bursary applications.

IN-KIND PARTNERS

Non-financial contributions supporting the conference. Includes:

- ✓ Venue, printing, technology, or media coverage support
- ✓ Branding materials or conference merchandise (bags, stationery, water bottles)
- ✓ Acknowledgement as an in-kind partner in conference materials

THANK YOU

We invite you and your organisation to partner with SAMEA in shaping the future of MERL, advancing innovation, inclusion, and impact in South Africa and across the region.

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Website www.samea.org.za

Conference www.sameaconference2027.co.za

