

ARID ZONE ECOLOGY FORUM 2025
Hybrid Conference: 21– 23 October 2025



Guidelines for Presentations and Abstracts

All abstract submissions for this year's hybrid conference will be reviewed by the Scientific Portfolio. The purpose is to ensure a high quality and stimulating programme. The key criteria for acceptance whether in-person platform presentations or pre-recorded online presentations, is quality and relevance or interest to the audience.

Things we would like to see in presentations:

- Results of original research
- Reviews that include novel synthesis
- Clear explanations of why the work/results are important or interesting
- Implications for current practice/lessons learnt

Things we do NOT want to see:

- Lecture-style presentation on the current state of knowledge within a field
- Presentations which amount to research proposals or which do not present any data
- Presentations of data that do not lead to any useful conclusions
- Excessively long explanations of your methods or statistics – please focus on the interesting parts

If you are a student beginning a study and you do not yet have sufficient data to warrant a full presentation, then we suggest that you submit either a speed or poster (in-person delegate) or speed presentation (online delegate). Authors of posters will be on standby at their poster during the poster sessions to answer questions from delegates. Online delegates will submit short, pre-recorded speed presentations and must be available online to answer questions when their presentations are screened.

The Scientific Portfolio may encourage changes from poster/speed to full presentations and vice versa based on the content of the abstract. It is therefore essential that abstracts are as informative as possible about the aims and key findings of the study. Excessively brief abstracts make it difficult to judge whether a paper is suitable for a full presentation. When an abstract is

too brief to judge the scope of the work to be presented, authors of such abstracts will be requested to expand them or switch to a poster/speed presentation.

GUIDELINES FOR ABSTRACTS: (Full & speed/poster presentations)

Only abstracts using the following guidelines will be accepted:

The abstract should contain the title, three key words, names of authors, and co-authors where relevant, and their addresses. The text of the abstract should be **no more than 300 words**, prepared in Arial font, 11pt and 1.5 line spacing. **(See page 5 for an example.)**

PLATFORM (in-person) delegates

A data projector, laptop and microphone will be provided. Please advise (with abstract submission) should you need any other type of audio-visual aid.

Invited & keynote speakers – Platform

Keynote speakers and invited speakers have 25 minutes to present their papers, and 5 minutes for discussion. See full paper instructions (below) for further information.

Full paper (platform presentations):

1. Paper presentations will take the form of platform papers.
2. You have 15 minutes to present your paper and a 5 minute discussion period.
3. Digital presentations should be submitted as a PowerPoint presentation (.pptx).
4. The final slide must contain "a take home message" from your presentation.
5. Presentations should be no larger than 50 MB.
6. Presentations must be saved onto a flash disk. Please let us know well in advance so that we can try to accommodate you if the above does not suit you, and what your other requirements are.
7. Presentations should be uploaded onto the AZEF laptop before the start of the day on which you are speaking.

Speed paper (platform presentations):

1. Paper presentations will take the form of platform papers.
2. You have 3-5 minutes to present your paper using a maximum **4** slides consisting of the following:
 - introduction
 - brief methods

- results/findings
 - Conclusions/summary
3. Presentations must be saved onto a flash disk. Please let us know well in advance so that we can try to accommodate you if the above does not suit you, and what your other requirements are.
 4. Presentations should be uploaded onto the AZEF laptop before the start of the day on which you are speaking.

Poster presentations (in-person)

Maximum size: PORTRAIT A0: width = 841mm; height = 1189 mm.

1. Include your name and address information.
2. The poster must remain on the poster boards for the entire duration of the conference and should be erected and removed personally, or a person delegated by you.
3. Posters should be printed on suitable paper for posters (i.e., not newsprint).
4. A viewer should be able to read and understand the poster in less than two minutes and typeface should be large enough that it can be read from 2m away.
5. Posters will be presented informally to the audience during a special interactive poster session during the programme, allowing poster presenters to engage more directly with conference participants.

ONLINE delegates

Invited & keynote speakers

1. Title slide separate from the rest of the presentation (as per AZEF template that will be provided)
2. The final slide must contain a take home message from your presentation
3. Presented in a 25 minute pre-recorded narrated PowerPoint slide show
4. Speakers must be available to answer questions immediately after their presentation has been presented to delegates.

Full presentations

1. Title slide separate from the rest of the presentation (as per AZEF template that will be provided)

2. The final slide must contain a **take home message** from your presentation
3. Presented in a **10 - 12 minute** pre-recorded narrated PowerPoint slide show
4. Speakers must be available to answer questions (~**5 mins**) immediately after their presentation has been presented to delegates

Speed Presentations

5. Title slide separate from the rest of the presentation (as per AZEF template that will be provided)
6. Maximum **4** slides consisting of the following:
 - introduction
 - brief methods
 - results/findings
 - conclusions/summary
7. Presented in a **3 minute** pre-recorded narrated PowerPoint slide show.
5. Speakers must be available to answer questions (~**5 mins**) immediately after their presentation has been presented to delegates.

GUIDELINES FOR VIDEOS

A step-by-step tutorial for preparing narrated presentations will be sent to delegates whose abstracts have been accepted for online full or speed presentations.

1. Presentations must be PowerPoint slides with audio narrations, saved as a PowerPoint presentation (.pptx)
2. PowerPoint show file sizes should not exceed:
 - 100 MB for speed presentations
 - 600 MB for full presentations
 - 800 MB for keynote addresses
3. Presentations should be recorded using the "Record slide show" function in PowerPoint
4. Presentations must be submitted using WeTransfer (upload to WeTransfer & provide the link to gill@azef.co.za)

AN EXAMPLE OF AN ABSTRACT

FOR FULL & SPEED PRESENTATION:

(with permission from its author)

Cape Town: a Biodiversity Megadisaster

Key words: threatened ecosystems, conservation, development pressures

Surname, A.B.^{1*}, Surname, C.D.² and Surname, E.¹

¹ Biodiversity Management Branch, Environmental Resource Management Department,
City of Cape Town

² Threatened Biodiversity Programme, South African National Biodiversity Institute

*Your email address:

The City of Cape Town sits at the heart of the Cape Floral Kingdom. Although covering an area of only 2200km², it contains 9 of the 24 Critically Endangered ecosystems (as defined by the National Environmental Management, Biodiversity Act of 2004) in South Africa. In this area some 13 plant species are globally extinct (at least in the wild), out of a total of 47 in South Africa: Thus 3.4% of the world's 380 extinct plant species occur within Cape Town; only a few countries exceed Cape Town's figure. A further 152 threatened species (Red Data List: Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable) occur in the area. Although there are many initiatives to conserve and manage the biodiversity, critical areas are being lost at a faster rate than conservation measures can counter. Land transformation and invasive alien plant species pose the biggest threats. Severe pressure to provide land for upmarket suburban and coastal developments and low-cost housing for Cape Town's rapidly growing low-income sector, to obtain building materials (primarily sand), and to provide shaded landscapes for walking dogs are in direct conflict with national objectives to conserve representative ecosystems. Even within the Table Mountain National Park - established in 1997 as the largest conservation area in the city - it is evident that alien control is slipping behind and ecosystem conservation is being compromised by social pressures, for recreation. Without further international pressure and funding, efforts by local conservation officials will fail to slow the rate of degradation.