

FEES & DEADLINES

21 August 2026

- Early bird R5900
- Early student R4900
- Abstract submission
- Sponsorship applications

11 September 2026

- Workshop R500
- Registration R6900
- Student R5900

PRE-CONFERENCE

Monday 12 October 2026

Field excursion: An immersive experience of pastoralism

This field excursion offers participants an immersive experience of pastoralism across contrasting arid landscapes of the succulent karoo and renosterveld.

CONFERENCE

Tuesday 13 – Thursday 15 October 2026
NG Kerksaal, Kamieskroon

Themes:

1. Resilient Rangelands: Sustaining Life in Arid Landscapes
2. Shifting Sands: Drivers of Change in the Arid Zone
3. Living Futures and Landscapes: People at the Heart of Arid Zone Conservation
4. General Ecology: Foundations of Arid Zone Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science

Register here:



[AZEF 2026 Kamieskroon –
Conference Registration Form](#)

Student sponsorship

Post-graduate students are invited to apply for sponsored attendance. Sponsorship will include conference registration fees, lunch & dinner & accommodation. Travel to & from the conference is not included.



Kamiesberg - Katherine Forsythe

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP:

Field excursion: An immersive experience of pastoralism

Clement Cupido, Rangeland Ecologist
Researcher, Agricultural Research Council
Biodiversity and Conservation Biology Department,
University of the Western Cape

This field excursion offers participants an immersive experience of pastoralism across contrasting arid landscapes of the succulent karoo and renosterveld. The Leliefontein Communal Area spans approximately 194 000 ha with no internal fences, where livestock is actively managed by herders and navigated across the landscape using ancient grazing routes. The communal area consists of 10 villages, each associated with its own informal grazing areas. Participants will begin the excursion at stock posts to observe the herder's daily routine in checking animals before moving with livestock along grazing routes. During the walks, participants will gain insight into how herders blend indigenous and scientific knowledge to manage livestock in these arid environments. Palatable and poisonous plants, traditional medicinal plants, animal behaviour, and strategies used to direct livestock across the landscape will also be highlighted.

See article for more info:
<https://www.foodformzansi.co.za/walking-the-ancient-livestock-paths-of-namaqualand/>

CONFERENCE THEMES

Resilient Rangelands: Sustaining Life in Arid Landscapes

Arid rangelands support unique biodiversity, mobile pastoralism, cultural heritage, and livelihoods. In recognition of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, this theme highlights ecological processes, social–ecological resilience, pastoral knowledge systems, restoration approaches, and innovations in rangeland management.

We invite abstracts on: rangeland ecology, grazing dynamics, ecosystem services, indigenous and local knowledge, mobility systems, restoration, monitoring, and climate resilience in arid rangelands.

Shifting Sands: Drivers of Change in the Arid Zone

Arid landscapes are undergoing profound transformations driven by climate change, mining and energy expansion, land-use pressures, illegal trade in plants and animals, and biological invasions. This theme explores the cumulative and interacting impacts of these drivers on ecological processes, species distributions, and social-ecological systems.

We invite abstracts on: invasive species, climate impacts, mining ecology, socio-ecological drivers, illegal wildlife and plant trade, land degradation, cumulative impact assessment, and management responses.

Living Futures and Landscapes: People at the Heart of Arid Zone Conservation

Global and national conservation thinking is shifting toward inclusive, landscape-scale approaches that integrate biodiversity, livelihoods, and cultural values. This theme aligns with 30×30 targets and the growing recognition of OECMs. It positions people as partners and co-custodians in shaping thriving arid landscapes.

We invite abstracts on: inclusive conservation, co-management, stewardship models, OECMs, living landscapes, community-based approaches, indigenous leadership, participatory governance, and cross-boundary conservation initiatives.

General Ecology: Foundations of Arid Zone Biodiversity and Ecosystem Science

This session provides space for high-quality, fundamental ecological research that advances understanding of biodiversity patterns, ecological processes, and species interactions in arid environments. This session anchors the conference in rigorous ecological science and supports the integration of foundational knowledge into applied themes on environmental change, rangeland resilience, and people-centred conservation.

We invite abstracts on: species ecology, population dynamics, ecological modelling, community ecology, ecosystem functioning, long-term monitoring, trophic interactions, landscape ecology, behavioural ecology, and taxonomic or phylogenetic studies relevant to arid systems.