



Southern African Resilience Academy

“Building equitable resilience in southern Africa”

Call for Working Groups

Key points

- We invite proposals for working groups to synthesize understanding under the theme of “Building equitable resilience in southern Africa”
- Working groups need to develop at least one academic paper for a special issue and one non-academic knowledge product
- Support covers travel and accommodation for three working group meetings between now and the end of 2023, open access publication fees for the special issue, and funds for the development of non-academic knowledge products
- Proposals are short (2 pages max) and due on the 31st of January 2022. The first working group meeting is scheduled for 5-8 April 2022.

The Southern African Resilience Academy

The Southern African Resilience Academy is an initiative of the [Global Resilience Partnership](#) (GRP), with support from the [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#) (Sida). The GRP is an international network of organizations and institutes that work together to build resilience across scales, so that people and places can persist, adapt and transform in the face of shocks, uncertainty, and change. One of the GRP’s core strategies in this endeavour is to strengthen Global South research and practice networks through the establishment of “[South-to-South Resilience Academies](#)”. The aim of these academies is to support resilience- and development-related knowledge production and exchange across regions in the Global South, and facilitate knowledge transfer from the Global South to the Global North.

One of these academies, the Southern African Resilience Academy (SARA), was established in early 2021 and is coordinated through the [Centre for Sustainability Transitions](#) (CST) at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. SARA’s core role is to act as a convening and support space for inter- and transdisciplinary researchers and practitioners working across southern Africa to engage around pressing resilience and development challenges in the region. The academy’s goals are to strengthen and expand collaboration, and facilitate the co-production of policy and practice-relevant knowledge. As such, SARA’s activities align closely with the Southern African Program on Ecosystem Change and Society ([SAPECS](#)), an established research network that connects social-ecological systems researchers in southern Africa. Through its links with the GRP and other Resilience Academies, SARA aims to contribute directly and meaningfully to regional and global policy discussions around resilience and development, and elevate the southern African voice in international fora.

Call for Working Groups on “Building equitable resilience in southern Africa”

SARA invites proposals for collaborative working groups to pursue inter- or transdisciplinary research that synthesizes understanding under the guiding theme of “Building equitable resilience in southern Africa”. We are interested in working groups that synthesize insights from the region, with a focus on the challenges and opportunities of building systems that are both more resilient in the face of global change and address societal inequities. While southern Africa is the principal region of interest, we also welcome synthesis work that additionally draws insights from other Global South regions. SARA’s approach is inspired by the [SESYNC model](#) of supporting inter- and transdisciplinary groups to find solutions for complex social-ecological challenges.

Within the theme of “Building equitable resilience in southern Africa”, working groups are free to focus on their own topics or systems of interest, be it food systems, urban systems, stewardship initiatives, resilience measurement, protected areas, or similar. Working groups might address issues such as:

- Strategies for enhancing resilient and equitable outcomes in protected area management
- Reducing inequalities while building resilience to climate change in food systems
- Bridging resilience and equity through landscape stewardship
- The role of technology in strengthening resilience and equity across the water-energy-food (WEF) nexus
- Building equitable resilience through nature-based solutions in urban areas
- Enabling reflexive practices in resilience monitoring and evaluation
- Insights for equitable transboundary water governance
- And many more...

Working group composition and outcomes

We encourage working groups that are made up of a diversity of experts, including both research and practice expertise, as well as a mix of early- and mid- to late-career individuals. Working group members can be based anywhere in the world, but we require members to have at least some experience of working in the southern African context.

We encourage proposals that synthesize existing data or understanding. We may also consider proposals that gather data in new and innovative ways, or that combine qualitative and quantitative methods. We are especially supportive of a solutions- or interventions-focused framing that centers cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary knowledge co-production and connects clearly to a policy agenda.

Each working group is expected to produce at least two knowledge products:

- 1) an academic paper for a special issue, and
- 2) a non-academic product, such as a video, website, policy brief, or policy dialogue.

One of the key outcomes of the working group activities is a special issue (journal to be decided) on “Building equitable resilience in southern Africa”, coordinated and supported by SARA. This will provide a focus for the working group activities, and an opportunity to synthesize insights across the different groups. We anticipate including a thought piece that addresses the question “What is equitable resilience in southern Africa?” and identifies key knowledge gaps. Depending on the insights that emerge, we also aim to develop cross-cutting communication products, such as a website, short video, policy dialogue, and/or collection of case studies.

The working groups supported by SARA will meet in person for a kick-off workshop on 5-8 April 2022, likely to be held in conjunction with a SAPECS meeting. The groups should aim to wrap up their projects within 18 months of that initial meeting, i.e. by late 2023. Within this timeframe, a total of three in-person working group meetings (including the kick-off meeting) will be held in the Cape Town/Stellenbosch region to allow groups to interact and learn from each other. An important component of these in-person meetings is a deliberate integration of practice perspectives and insights through workshop sessions and field trips that encourage research-practice exchange, as well as skills development. The final meeting will include a policy day where a wider set of key actors in the region will be invited to discuss the findings from the working groups. During the intervals between in-person meetings, working groups will be encouraged to stay in touch and advance their work through regular online engagements.

Support details

Support will be provided for three in-person meetings in the greater Cape Town/Stellenbosch area, South Africa. Support for working groups includes travel, lodging, and meals for participants in accordance with the CST’s travel policies.

SARA will lead the coordination of the special issue, and cover open access publication costs. In addition, a total budget of ZAR 250,000 is available to support the development of the non-academic knowledge products by the working groups. The amount available to each group will be determined by the final constellation of groups and their proposed products. In the proposals, working groups are required to outline initial ideas for their non-academic knowledge product(s), and a rough estimate of costs.

SARA will assist in the dissemination of knowledge products through the extensive communication channels of the GRP, the CST, and the Southern African Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (SAPECS). Crucially, the GRP will support the contribution and strategic dissemination of key insights from SARA into global policy discussions, for example through the Resilience Hub at the UN Climate

Change Conference. Limited support for travel to such events may also be open to SARA working group members, depending on the availability of funds.

SARA's support does not include working group members' salaries, per diems, fieldwork costs, or grants to other institutions.

Timelines

Proposal submission deadline: 31 January 2022

Decision communication: 07 February 2022

Kick-off workshop: 5 - 8 April 2022

Second workshop: October 2022

Third workshop, linked to policy day: August 2023

Project deliverables due: October - December 2023

Project eligibility

Working groups must meet the following criteria to be considered:

- Projects should have at least one designated working group lead.
- We encourage working groups of around five people, but there should be no more than 10 total participants per group, including the working group lead(s).
- Working group leads may not be leads for more than one group. In addition, working group membership in more than one group is discouraged. However, if two proposals in which group members overlap are successful, SARA will coordinate between working group leads to accommodate the overlap or find alternatives.
- While we acknowledge that working groups are likely to be made up in large part of researchers and academics, we encourage the inclusion of at least one group member who has some expertise in resilience or development practice.
- Working group members should be able to attend the working group meetings in South Africa (all travel and accommodation costs will be covered).
- Projects should result in at least one scientific paper for the special issue and one non-academic knowledge product.

Proposal criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of representatives from the GRP, CST, as well as the international Program on Ecosystem Change and Society ([PECS](#)).

Applications will be ranked with regard to the following:

- Focus on addressing the theme of “Building equitable resilience in southern Africa”
- A synthesis approach that combines research and practice perspectives and the co-production of knowledge across sectors and disciplines
- A clear link to a policy agenda relevant to the region, with the potential to inform decision-makers (the proposal should specify how project outcomes may inform decision-making)
- Novelty and creativity in approach or proposed outcomes (outcomes must include at least one academic and one non-academic knowledge product)
- Feasibility to produce meaningful knowledge products within the given timeframe (including identifying and showing ability to access appropriate data where needed)
- Qualifications, appropriate diversity of backgrounds (research and practice, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral), and range of experience of the proposed working group members
- A draft, high-level (i.e. not too detailed) budget for the non-academic knowledge product(s) (for this initial estimate, groups may plan on a budget of approximately ZAR 50,000, though the final amount available to each group will be determined once working groups have been selected)

Proposal format

Include the following in a single PDF document not exceeding **two** (typed, font size > 10) pages. Proposals that exceed the page limit or do not adhere to the requirements below may not be reviewed.

- Title of proposed working group project
- Name, titles, affiliations, and contact information for the working group lead(s)
- Project Summary (150 words)
- Keywords (up to five, different from those used in the title)
- Description of project: Clear and concise statement of the social-ecological challenge to be addressed or synthesized under the theme of “Building equitable resilience in southern Africa”, how the project aims to address this challenge (data required, methods used, details of knowledge co-production approach), what the key outcomes and knowledge products will be, how the project links to a regional policy agenda, and what is novel and creative about the proposed project.

- Information on working group members: Names, titles, and affiliations of proposed working group members, and a brief description of how their mix of backgrounds, expertise and experience contributes to the success of the proposed project, as well as an outline of how working group activities will be coordinated and advanced outside of formal in-person SARA meetings. Please also outline whether participation in the working group is confirmed (if proposal is selected), or whether proposed working group members are not yet confirmed.
- Initial (high-level) budget estimate for the proposed non-academic knowledge product(s)
- Short CV of the working group lead(s) (two pages max for each, does not count towards page limit of proposal)

Proposals are to be submitted via email to Maike Hamann at maike@sun.ac.za by 23:59 (SAST) on the 31st of January 2022.