



SALDRU-ERSA December Workshop

Frontiers in applied economics for developing countries

14 – 15 December 2026, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Call for Papers

Economic Research Southern Africa (ERSA) and the **Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU)**, with co-sponsorship from the **African Centre of Excellence for Inequality Research (ACEIR)**, are pleased to announce the third edition of our annual two-day December Workshop. This workshop brings together leading local and international academics to present and discuss **frontier research in applied economics relevant to developing countries**.

The programme will include two keynote addresses:

- **Kaushik Basu** (Cornell University; Chief Economist of the World Bank, 2012-2016; Chief Economic Advisor to the Indian government, 2009-2012; President of the International Economic Association, 2017 to 2021).
- **Karthik Sastry** (Princeton University; Expertise in technology and development)

Workshop aims and focus areas

The aim of the workshop is to encourage overseas-based and local researchers to present and engage with frontier economics research in South Africa. The explicit criterion is empirical work on developing countries that is expected to be published in top international Economics journals (i.e. top field/disciplinary and general interest journals). We will also have a session for PhD students registered at South African universities to present work and receive feedback from participants.

There are no strict subject matter restrictions, but we particularly encourage submissions focusing on Southern Africa, Africa, and other developing regions. Work showcasing new data, new methods, or well-identified research designs is especially welcome. High-quality descriptive work on questions where credible evidence is scarce is also of interest.

Submissions

We invite submissions of papers that align to the workshop's theme. Full papers are preferred, but extended abstracts are acceptable when they include at least preliminary findings. The workshop offers a valuable opportunity for researchers to receive feedback and refine their work.

Submission deadline: 3 September 2026
Notification of acceptance: 15 September 2026
Submission link: [visit website](#)

Funding

International presenters are encouraged to use their university research or conference funding for travel. However, limited funding is available for those without sufficient support. Please indicate your funding requirements on the submission form.

For researchers based in South Africa, ERSA will cover travel, two nights' accommodation, dinner, and breakfast.

Contact

Please direct queries to:

Joshua Budlender joshua.budlender@uct.ac.za
cc **Fouché Venter** fouche.venter@econrsa.org

Organising committee

Workshop convenors

- Joshua Budlender (SALDRU, UCT)
- Ihsaan Bassier (University of Surrey; SALDRU)
- Fouche Venter (ERSA Director)

Scientific committee: Joshua Budlender (University of Cape Town), Ihsaan Bassier (University of Surrey), Robert Garlick (Duke University), Susan Godlonton (Williams College), and Steve Koch (ERSA Academic Director, University of Pretoria)