



SAPRI
South African Polar
Research Infrastructure



Mahlaelela Mentorship Programme

Iteration I: **Webinar Series**

Learn how to communicate
your science with



Leila Nefdt
UCT-MARiS Science Communication Officer

Wednesday, 21 May 2025, 13:00 - 14:00 (GMT + 2)



science, technology
& innovation

Department:
Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



SAEON
South African Environmental
Observation Network



Leila Nefdt

Science Communication Officer

**University of Cape Town, Marine
and Antarctic Research centre
for Innovation and Sustainability
(UCT-MARIS).**

Leila is a Marine Offshore Benthic Ecologist with a deep-rooted passion for ocean conservation and community development, currently serving as a Marine Science Communication Officer at UCT-MARIS.

She has a BSc and BSc Honours in Biodiversity and Conservation Biology from the University of the Western Cape. Her recent research (Masters in Biological Sciences at UCT, completed in 2022) focused on Marine Ecosystem Classification and Conservation Targets along the Agulhas ecoregion on South Africa's South Coast, as part of the NRF-funded A.C.E.P Deep Secrets Project. This research contributed toward the management and conservation of South African marine ecosystems and setting conservation targets for these ecosystems.

Beyond research, she is dedicated to empowering youth and fostering environmental stewardship. As a marine mentor and Director of the #SeaTheBiggerPicture Ocean Initiative NPO, she co-leads their “Defenders of the Blue” Citizen Science Programme, working to build ocean awareness and water confidence among young people in surrounding local communities.

Her role at UCT-MARIS allows her to blend her research background with her passion for science communication, making marine science accessible and engaging for the public. In addition, she is also passionate about finding ways to advocate for equity, inclusivity and justice within the ocean research and conservation space.