**Speaker Bio – Simon Woodland**

Simon Woodland brings over 30 years of experience in professional services, business strategy and financial leadership to his role as speaker for this year’s Africa Premier AI Conference. With a career spanning high-impact consulting at firms such as McKinsey (London and Johannesburg) and FutureForesight (Johannesburg), Simon has advised a broad spectrum of clients – from multinational corporates to grassroots start-ups – on strategic direction, business planning and capital raising.

A UK-qualified chartered accountant, Simon has held CFO roles in two telecommunications firms and a commercial Pay-TV operator. For more than a decade, he has specialised in business intelligence and strategic financial modelling, helping organisations identify key value drivers, design and refine KPIs, clean and structure data, and build insightful dashboards for data-driven decision-making.

In recent years, Simon has led a pioneering research initiative spearheaded by the African Leadership University and SAND Technologies, with support from Google, exploring the application of AI across key sectors in Africa, including agriculture, education, healthcare, and SME enablement. His work explores not only the challenges but also the transformative potential of AI in addressing some of the continent’s most pressing needs.

Simon lives in on a rural smallholding in the KZN Midlands of South Africa, with his wife and three children.