SENIOR PROGRAM LEAD, STEP EAST AFRICA

Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda

November 2026

Full-time staff position

About ITDP

The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) is a non-profit organisation that works around the world to design and implement high-quality transport systems and policy solutions that make cities more liveable, equitable, and sustainable. ITDP Africa works across the continent, with its main office in Nairobi, Kenya, and country offices in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Egypt, Tanzania, and Uganda.

About the position

The Senior Program Lead will be a critical addition to ITDP Africa's programme team, serving as the overall Project Manager and Coordinator for Systems Transformation for Electric Public Transport (STEP) East Africa, a two-year learning and field-building programme supported by the IKEA Foundation in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. STEP East Africa aims to substantially increase electric public transport ridership and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by strengthening the policies, institutions, financing mechanisms, stakeholder ecosystems, and technical capacity required for the transition to electric and sustainable urban mobility. Implementation will take place primarily in Addis Ababa, Nairobi, and Kampala, with secondary cities including Bahir Dar, Hawassa, Kisumu, Mombasa, and Jinja.

The programme is structured around four pillars: ecosystem development, learning and narrative change; institutional and implementation readiness; and financing and investment preparation, each delivered through dedicated country workstreams and a regional cross-cutting learning and field-building workstream. The Senior Program Lead will translate this framework into an integrated, well-sequenced workplan, coordinate delivery across the three country teams, international ITDP experts, consultants, and sub-grantee partners, and ensure the programme delivers its committed outputs on time, within budget, and to a high technical standard. This is a senior delivery and coordination role that combines programme management, technical oversight, partnership management, and donor relations.

The Senior Program Lead will report to the Africa Regional Director, who serves as Program Lead for STEP East Africa. The position is established for the current grant period, which runs through 2028, with the possibility of extension subject to programme needs and funding availability. The role will oversee the STEP East Africa programme team (e-bus systems, charging and grid, finance, field-building and learning), together with the programme's strategic communications and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) functions, and will work closely with the Finance and Grants Management team and ITDP's global teams.

Responsibilities

Programme Management and Coordination

- Serve as the overall Project Manager for STEP East Africa, leading planning, coordination, and delivery across the Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda workstreams and the regional cross-cutting learning and field-building workstreams.
- Develop and maintain the integrated programme workplan, annual objectives and key results (OKRs), and country-level implementation plans, sequencing activities against the key outputs committed in the proposal and grant agreement.
- Coordinate the STEP East Africa team across East Africa and ITDP's international teams, assigning responsibilities, setting priorities, and resolving cross-country dependencies and resource constraints.
- Oversee programme budgets with the Finance and Grants Management team, tracking expenditure against plan, preparing forecasts, and ensuring compliance with IKEA Foundation and ITDP financial and grant requirements.
- Manage consultant and sub-grantee partners, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), industry associations, investment and financial advisory firms, multi-stakeholder consultative platforms, and academic institutions.
- Identify, monitor, and mitigate programme risks, including delays in cross-sector coordination, limited uptake of technical recommendations, and insufficient mobilisation of investment, escalating issues to the Africa Regional Director as needed.

Technical Oversight and Quality Assurance

- Provide strategic technical oversight across the programme's core areas, including electric bus deployment and operations, electric bus rapid transit (e-BRT), depot and charging infrastructure, transport–energy integration, public transport business and financing models, transit-oriented development, and active mobility.
- Support the quality and timely delivery of programme outputs, such as technical analyses, plans, guidance, financing approaches, and investment-readiness materials, as appropriate to emerging needs and priorities.
- Guide the establishment and functioning of coordination and dialogue platforms, helping embed them within existing institutional arrangements.
- Guide the design and delivery of practical capacity-building activities for government officials and technical staff, ensuring they respond to implementation needs and connect directly to programme work.

Monitoring, Learning and Reporting

- Work with the MEL team to establish and apply the programme's results framework and progress indicators, tracking learning and ecosystem development, political ambition and institutional capacity, and the enabling environment for financial investment.
- Lead the preparation of narrative reports to the IKEA Foundation, coordinate with the Finance and Grants Management team on financial reporting.
- Lead internal cross-country learning and reflection sessions, including with IKEA Foundation staff, and ensure lessons are captured in regional knowledge products, case studies, and technical guidance.

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships

- Build and maintain senior-level relationships with ministries, city and metropolitan authorities, utilities, and regulators across the three countries, including the Ministry of Logistics and the Addis Ababa City Transport Bureau in Ethiopia, the Nairobi Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (NaMATA) and the Ministry of Roads and Transport in Kenya, and the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) and the Ministry of Works and Transport in Uganda.
- Work with ITDP staff to engage public transport operators, financial institutions, development partners, industry associations, civil society, and academia to align stakeholders around shared pathways for electric public transport.
- Oversee regional field-building activities, peer exchange, and partnership-building, creating opportunities for practitioners and institutions to share experience, strengthen collaboration, and advance sustainable public transport and e-mobility.
- Represent ITDP in senior government engagements, technical committees, conferences, and regional and international forums, including engagements linked to the 32nd United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP32) in Addis Ababa.
- Perform any other related tasks within the STEP East Africa programme assigned by the Africa Regional Director.

Qualifications

Education

- A Master's degree in transport planning, urban planning, civil or transport engineering, public policy, development studies, economics, or a closely related field.

Experience

- At least ten years of relevant professional experience in sustainable transport, urban mobility, or a related development sector, including at least five years leading complex, multi-stakeholder programmes.
- Demonstrated experience managing multi-country or multi-city donor-funded programmes, including workplans, budgets, sub-grants and consultants, and reporting to foundations or bilateral and multilateral donors.
- Proven experience leading and coordinating multidisciplinary teams, including teams working across different countries.
- Direct working knowledge of the policy, institutional, and governance context for urban transport in East Africa, normally gained through prior work in the region.

Skills required

- Strong programme and project management skills, including results-based management, risk management, and budget oversight.
- Sound technical understanding of public transport planning and operations, electric mobility, and the policy and financing conditions that shape them.
- Excellent writing skills, with the ability to produce and review high-quality reports, technical outputs, and donor documents.
- Proficiency in project management, budgeting, and collaboration tools.
- Fluency in English is required.

Competencies

- Strategic thinker who can hold the full programme picture while managing detail, keeping multiple workstreams moving towards shared outcomes.
- Strong leader and coordinator who builds trust, delegates effectively, and supports the growth of team members.
- Diplomatic and credible with senior government officials, financiers, and donors, with the judgement to navigate complex institutional and political environments.
- Strong commitment to advancing ITDP's mission and to environmental and social justice, including gender equity and social inclusion in transport.

Preferred

If you meet the requirements above and some of the following, we would still like to hear from you.

- Experience with electric bus deployment, e-BRT, charging infrastructure, or transport–energy integration projects in African cities.
- Familiarity with public transport business models and financing mechanisms and engagement with paratransit operators such as matatu savings and credit cooperative organisations (SACCOs) and taxi and boda-boda operators.
- Experience managing programmes funded by philanthropic funders.
- Experience designing or delivering capacity-building, peer-learning, or field-building programmes for government practitioners.
- Proficiency in English.

Other requirements

- Availability to travel frequently within Africa and occasionally internationally.
- Candidates must be willing and able to be based full-time in one of the countries listed at the top of this description.
- Applicants must already hold, or be able to obtain, the right to work in the country where this role will be based.

Equal opportunity and adjustments

ITDP is an equal opportunity employer. We consider every qualified applicant without regard to race, colour, sex, gender, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, tribe or place of origin, national extraction, ethnic or social origin, disability, HIV status, age, marital status, family responsibility or pregnancy. Qualified women and qualified persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply. We do not tolerate harassment or retaliation at any stage of recruitment or employment.

If you need an adjustment to take part in this process, including the interview and the written exercise, write to africajobs@itdp.org and tell us what would help. We will discuss it with you in confidence, and asking will not count against your application.

How to apply

Interested applicants can apply by sending the following information to africajobs@itdp.org with “Senior Program Lead, STEP East Africa” in the subject line:

- Resume and cover letter.

- A brief (three pages maximum) note setting out how you would structure the first six months of a multi-country electric public transport programme, including how you would coordinate country workstreams, partners, and reporting. We use this note only to assess your application.

Applications will be reviewed as they are received. To be considered, **apply by 01 December 2026**. The position will remain open until filled. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

How we handle your application

The information you provide as part of your application, including your resume/CV, cover letter, work samples, and any other supporting documents, will be used solely for recruitment purposes and to assess your suitability for this role. Your application will be handled confidentially by the ITDP Africa recruitment team and shared only with the relevant hiring panel. Application materials will be stored securely and retained only for as long as necessary to complete the recruitment process. Where appropriate, ITDP may retain your application for consideration for future opportunities.

ITDP does not charge a fee at any stage of recruitment. Any request for payment in connection with this vacancy should be treated as fraudulent.