



Head of Innovative Financing – Africa

Job Announcement

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

Travel: Up to 30% travel across KickStart priority countries in Africa

Reports to: President & Chief Operating Officer

About KickStart International

KickStart International is a nonprofit social enterprise helping millions of smallholder farmers across Sub-Saharan Africa lift themselves out of poverty. We design and deliver innovative, low-cost irrigation pumps, tools, and training that enable farming families to grow year-round, earn more income, and build resilience against droughts and floods.

Position Overview

KickStart seeks a Financing Innovations Lead to spearhead the development, testing, and scaling of financing models that make irrigation technologies accessible to smallholder farmers. This role owns the end-to-end design of financing mechanisms—from early concept through field testing to strategic scale-up.

You'll work directly with MFIs, SACCOs, banks, cooperatives, agribusinesses, and last-mile extension agents to build a robust pipeline of financing pilots and translate evidence into an organization-wide financing strategy. This role requires strong financial product-design and testing skills, deep understanding of smallholder economics, and ability to work across diverse markets. As irrigation financing is an emerging field, we need someone with a creative, experimental mindset who can design solutions beyond conventional microfinance.

Key Responsibilities

1. Financing Strategy & Model Development

- Build KickStart's financing innovation roadmap for different farmer segments and value chains
- Design and structure diverse financial products: revolving funds, microfinance loans, value-chain financing, lease-to-own solutions, and blended-finance mechanisms
- Model customer economics, repayment scenarios, and partner incentives to ensure commercial viability and farmer affordability
- Apply creative problem-solving to build financing models that respond to farmer realities

- Guide leadership on strategic trade-offs, investments, and scale potential of different solutions
- Collaborate with Country Directors, Sales, Product, and Impact teams to integrate financing into strategies

2. Pilot Design, Testing & Iteration

- Lead full lifecycle of financing pilots across Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, and other priority countries
- Develop pilot concepts, budgets, implementation plans, risk frameworks, and learning agendas
- Support country teams through launch, implementation, and troubleshooting
- Synthesize evidence to refine models and inform scale-up decisions

3. Partnership Development & Ecosystem Engagement

- Build relationships with financial service providers, cooperatives, and market actors
- Co-create financing programs with partners and negotiate operational terms
- Embed financing into value chains and last-mile distribution systems
- Represent KickStart in agricultural finance and financial inclusion forums

4. Data, Evidence & Portfolio Economics

- Develop monitoring frameworks for financing pilots and partner portfolios
- Analyze repayment performance, default rates, customer behavior, and adoption dynamics
- Produce actionable insights that shape KickStart's financing strategy
- Document models with strong evidence bases and build replication toolkits

Success Metrics (12-24 months)

- Launch and manage multiple high-quality financing pilots across priority countries
- Establish strong partnerships with financial institutions and value-chain actors
- Produce evidence and economic models guiding KickStart's financing scale strategy
- Deliver roadmap for replicable, scalable financing solutions

Qualifications

Required:

- Minimum of Bachelor's degree in finance, economics, business, agricultural economics, or related field
- 7-10 years experience designing/managing financial products in emerging markets
- Direct experience with MFIs, SACCOs, banks, or agribusiness financial programs
- Demonstrated ability to design, test, and iterate inclusive-finance models

- Strong skills in financial modeling, unit economics, risk assessment, and portfolio analysis
- Rural market experience and comfort with field work
- Track record of launching pilots that generated actionable learning

Preferred:

- Master's degree in relevant field
- Experience in smallholder agriculture, value-chain finance, embedded finance, or climate-smart financing
- Experience working across multiple African markets

Key Competencies:

- Entrepreneurial thinker who enjoys testing, learning, and iterating
- Strong analytical and financial-design capabilities
- Ability to understand farmer cashflow cycles and design appropriate products
- Clear communicator across diverse stakeholder groups
- Skilled partnership-builder navigating complex institutions
- Strong project management and coordination abilities
- High integrity with commitment to farmer-centered financing

Compensation: Competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with experience

To Apply: Submit resume and cover letter to hr@kickstart.org