



POST GRADUATE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

MDP 520: PROJECT LEADERSHIP

DATE: 30TH MARCH 2026

DURATION: 3 HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 60

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write your registration number on the answer booklet.
2. **DO NOT** write on this question paper.
3. This paper contains **FOUR (4)** questions.
4. Question **ONE is compulsory**.
5. Answer any other **TWO** questions.
6. Question **ONE** carries **30 MARKS** and the rest carry **15 MARKS** each.
7. **Write all your answers in the Examination answer booklet provided**

QUESTION ONE

Read the Case Study below carefully and answer the questions that follow:

CASE STUDY: TOTALENERGIES KENYA

TotalEnergies Kenya Limited is part of the global TotalEnergies Group and operates in fuel marketing, lubricants distribution, retail service stations, and energy-related services across Kenya. The company undertakes numerous internal projects aimed at expanding its retail footprint, upgrading service stations, integrating digital payment technologies, improving supply chain efficiency, and strengthening customer experience. These projects are typically cross-functional, involving engineering, operations, finance, procurement, safety, and customer service teams. As a result, project leadership is critical in coordinating diverse expertise, ensuring compliance with safety and regulatory requirements, and aligning project objectives with organizational strategy. Within Total Energies Kenya, project leaders are often drawn from technical and managerial backgrounds and are expected to balance operational demands with strategic project goals.

One of the most significant leadership factors influencing project performance has been emotional intelligence. Leaders who demonstrated the ability to understand team dynamics, manage conflict constructively, and respond empathetically to pressure were more effective in sustaining team motivation and commitment. In projects where leaders lacked emotional intelligence, teams experienced low morale, communication breakdowns, and resistance to change, which ultimately affected timelines and quality outcomes.

Motivation and team engagement also emerged as critical dimensions of project leadership at TotalEnergies Kenya. Effective project leaders clearly articulated the project vision and aligned individual roles with

broader organizational goals. By recognizing team contributions and involving members in decision-making, these leaders fostered a sense of ownership and accountability. In contrast, projects led through rigid authority without adequate motivation mechanisms often struggled with poor teamwork and limited collaboration. This highlighted the importance of transformational leadership practices in achieving high project performance.

Leadership influence and authority played a decisive role in managing cross-departmental dependencies. Successful project leaders were those who could effectively influence senior management, secure resources, and resolve interdepartmental conflicts. Given the matrix structure common in multinational organizations, some project leaders faced challenges due to limited formal authority over team members. Where leaders relied solely on positional power, projects encountered delays and coordination problems. However, leaders who exercised influence through communication, negotiation, and credibility were better able to mobilize support and sustain momentum throughout the project lifecycle.

Organizational culture and governance frameworks also shaped how project leadership was exercised at TotalEnergies Kenya. The company operates within a culture strongly oriented toward safety, compliance, and operational excellence. Project leaders were expected to uphold strict safety and environmental standards while delivering projects efficiently. Leaders who aligned their leadership approach with this culture enhanced compliance and reduced project risks. Conversely, weak leadership alignment led to compliance gaps, increased supervision costs, and strained stakeholder relationships.

The impact of effective project leadership at TotalEnergies Kenya was evident in improved project outcomes. Projects led by competent and emotionally intelligent leaders recorded better adherence to schedules, improved quality performance, and stronger stakeholder satisfaction. These leaders ensured clear communication of expectations, continuous

monitoring of progress, and timely resolution of emerging issues. Where leadership was weak, projects experienced scope drift, cost overruns, and delayed decision-making, underscoring the direct link between leadership effectiveness and project performance.

Several lessons emerge from the TotalEnergies Kenya experience. Strong project leadership is not limited to technical expertise but requires emotional intelligence, communication skills, and the ability to influence diverse stakeholders. Leadership development programs that focus on soft skills, teamwork, and ethical decision-making can significantly improve project outcomes. Additionally, organizations should support project leaders through clear governance structures, defined authority, and access to decision-makers.

Required:

- a) Critically evaluate the extent to which project leadership practices observed at TotalEnergies Kenya influence team motivation, stakeholder engagement, and overall project performance using transformational and situational leadership theories.

(8 Marks)

- b) Analyze how project leadership at TotalEnergies Kenya may have influenced the management of contracts and commercial relationships with suppliers, contractors, and internal departments.

(5 Marks)

- c) Evaluate the extent to which project leaders at TotalEnergies Kenya successfully navigated the project environment, including regulatory requirements, organizational culture, and operational constraints. **(7 Marks)**

- d) Examine the challenges of multicultural communication within the project teams at TotalEnergies Kenya which can influenced communication effectiveness, conflict management, and team cohesion. **(5 Marks)**

- e) Assess how project leadership at TotalEnergies Kenya contributed to or limited the achievement of project sustainability, including

safety, environmental compliance, and long-term organizational value. **(5 Marks)**

QUESTION TWO

a) A project manager is leading a cross-functional project involving team members from different departments and professional backgrounds. Previous meetings have been characterized by poor time management, unclear decisions, and limited participation. a) As the project manager, explain how you would plan, conduct, and follow up project meetings to improve effectiveness.

(10 Marks)

b) Stakeholder's Engagement leads to a successful community project.

Discuss

(5

Marks)

QUESTION THREE

An organization is implementing a major project intended to improve operational efficiency while operating in a socially and environmentally sensitive context. As the project manager, explain how you would integrate sustainability principles throughout the project life cycle.

(15 Marks)

QUESTION FOUR

a) A project manager is assigned to lead a project operating within a complex organizational and external environment. Using relevant project management concepts, explain how the project environment can influence project planning, execution, and performance, and how the project manager should respond to these influences.

(10 Marks)

b) A project manager is leading a project with diverse stakeholders and increasing coordination challenges. Explain how effective project communication can enhance project performance and reduce

misunderstandings during project implementation.

(5 Marks)