

Checklist: Announcing program phase out in a firm and friendly way

Step 1: Prepare yourself

- Decide if you are going to inform the key stakeholders one-by-one or in a meeting.
- Make sure there are no **other points on the agenda**. People need to blow off some steam and might not be in the mood to go back to business as usual.
- Make sure you have all the details on **when and why** support is being phased out of this partnership.
- If you feel nervous to convey message practice it out loud before the meeting.

Step 2: Announce the phase-out

- Exchange short pleasantries such as greetings, social comments ...etc. depending on culture and past interactions.
- Express appreciation that time has been created to attend the meeting before presenting the day's agenda.
- Convey the news at the beginning of the conversation: *"I have some news you may not like: the project has decided to phase out support for your partnership this year/next month."*
- Explain the reasons for the decision concisely: *"the main reason for this decision is that the set goals and the agreements made in the partnership contract have not been achieved"* *"the main reason is that our budget has been reduced significantly and we cannot continue to support your partnership as before"*.

Step 3: Emphasize with the person

- Be silent and give the other space to react. Listen to their feelings actively: *"you are saying that it feels like you are being left alone?"*.
- Express that you understand that this news comes as a shock and disappointment.
- When requested, you might repeat the reason for the decision. Be friendly but firm.

Step 4: Discuss next steps

- Often the other party will need some time to let the news sink in. Schedule another meeting within a few days of the announcement to discuss and agree on the consequences and/or next steps: *"I suggest that in three days we meet again and discuss what the next steps will be"* *"I suggest that we meet again after the weekend to brainstorm what we can still do within the remaining timeframe."*
- You might consider discussing the next step in the same meeting if the other asks *"what does that mean in terms of your support?"* *What is next?"* Still, it is good to have short break first, to let emotions calm down.