The project fresh-up

Working meeting to shape the next phase of your project

A project fresh-up, also called a project follow-up (PFU), is a working meeting in which the project team shapes the next phase of the project.

PURPOSE	Evaluating: what is going well, what could be better? Contracting again, so that everyone can take shared ownership of the coming phase; if the team, the sponsor or the project manager changes, you will need to contract again in any case. Concrete agreements: the activity plan for the coming phase, with schedule and division of tasks.
WHEN	As an interim meeting in the execution phase. Rule of thumb: if execution takes longer than four to five months, it is wise to organise one; longer projects often have several.
WITH WHOM	The project team in any case, including new team members and team members who are leaving. Optionally the sponsor, experts or advisers and a delegation of end users. Optionally (recommended) a process facilitator. Do yourself a favour as project manager and let someone else facilitate the meeting. Then your hands are free to think and work along.
HOW LONG	Half a day to a full day, depending on the complexity of the project and the issues at play.



HOW TO GO ABOUT IT

A possible set-up:

1. **Welcome** and purpose of the meeting by the project manager; explanation of the programme by the process facilitator.
2. **Check-in.** Ask all participants when the meeting will be a success for them and what they need to take part, for example with the scaling questions exercise.
3. **Looking back and looking ahead.** Evaluate, using the four dimensions of project success, how the project is going and what you want to do to make it go better. End with concrete agreements for the coming phase.

4. **Sharpening the project definition for the next phase.** Check with the team in particular the subdeliverables to be delivered in the coming phase, the scope demarcation (what not yet), the constraints (lead time, money, hours and quality requirements) and the users: which ones, and how do you involve them in this phase?
5. **Making the activity plan for the coming phase.** List the activities with the creative structuring exercise and put them on the timeline.
6. **Agreements for follow-up.** Who works out what, and how will the project meetings continue?
7. **Closing,** optionally with the sponsor, to discuss your actions and any questions or concerns.

OTHER EMPHASES

You can also give certain aspects more attention:

- If the project environment needs more attention, do a force field analysis with the team.
- If there are many disruptions, a risk analysis is a good starting point for planning, with more focus, the activities that will prevent those disruptions over the coming period.

Good luck!

NOTES