



NWT Plain Facts

*On Land and
Self-government*

Dehcho Process Negotiations

What's it all about?

The Dehcho Process is a negotiation on land, resources and governance between the Dehcho First Nations (DFN), the Government of Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories.

The region and the people

The Dehcho region is in the southwest corner of the Northwest Territories and covers roughly 216,000 km². There are 10 communities involved in the Dehcho negotiations. Eight communities have largely Aboriginal populations and two a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents. The Dehcho region is home to the largest Dene population of any region in the NWT. The DFN membership includes 10 First Nations and three Métis locals.

The goal of negotiations

The parties have agreed to four key goals for their negotiations:

- To put in place a Dehcho public government that will be based on Dehcho laws and customs, as well as other Canadian laws and customs.
- To describe how the different levels of government will work together and how powers and responsibilities will be shared.
- To ensure rights related to land, resources and governance in the Dehcho territory are certain and clear.
- To describe how land, water and other resources like wildlife and fish in the Dehcho territory will be used, managed and protected.



Tessa MacIntosh

Progress so far

February 1998

Dr. Peter Russell is named Ministerial Envoy to the Dehcho by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Grand Chief of the DFN. He then travels to every community in the region, along with a team of Dehcho leaders, former leaders, Elders and federal officials.

Fall 1998

Dr. Russell proposes a two-staged approach to negotiations: first negotiate a Framework Agreement and an Interim Measures Agreement; then move on to negotiate an Agreement-in-Principle and a Final Agreement.

1999

Formal Dehcho Process negotiations begin.

May 23, 2001

The Dehcho Process Framework Agreement and Interim Measures Agreement are signed.

Framework Agreement – Sets out the basis for negotiating a final agreement, including the objectives and principles that will guide the negotiators; the roles of the three parties and an initial list of subjects for negotiations.



Interim Measures Agreement (IMA) – Clarifies the role of the DFN in resource management decisions in the Dehcho region while negotiations are in progress and provides guidance to affected stakeholders like industry until a Final Agreement is in place. It includes provisions for Interim Land Withdrawals, an Interim Resource Development Agreement and a Land Use Planning Committee.

2001

The Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee is established to manage a land use planning process in the Dehcho territory.

April 17, 2003

The Dehcho Process Interim Resource Development Agreement (IRDA) is signed. This interim agreement was designed to encourage oil and gas development in the Dehcho region in a way that allows the Dehcho to benefit directly from development in advance of a Final Agreement.

August 13, 2003

Following two years of negotiations and consultations, the Dehcho Process Interim Land Withdrawals come into effect. These place temporary restrictions on new development in some areas of the Dehcho territory while negotiations continue. Existing interests are not affected by the withdrawals. Outside of withdrawn areas, development may occur, in accordance with current legislation and regulations and the Dehcho Process Interim Measures Agreement (Effective until October 31, 2008).

September 2004

Dehcho Process negotiations are suspended when the Dehcho First Nations launch litigation challenging the federal environmental assessment and regulatory review processes established for the Mackenzie Gas Project.

July 2005

Out-of-court discussions lead to a settlement agreement between the Government of Canada and the Dehcho First Nations. This agreement provides direction and a financial commitment by Canada to help make progress in the negotiation of a Dehcho Process Agreement-in-Principle. It also provides funding to allow the Dehcho First Nations to fully participate in the Environmental Assessment and regulatory review of the Mackenzie Gas Project. Dehcho Process negotiations resume soon after.

May 2006

To advance Dehcho Process negotiations, Canada tables a settlement offer for the Dehcho First Nations' consideration. The federal offer is based on land selection and is comparable and consistent with other comprehensive claim settlements in the Mackenzie Valley and Canada.

June 2006

At the DFN Annual General Assembly in Kakisa, negotiators for Canada and the DFN sign maps with respect to an addition to the Interim Land Withdrawals in the Wrigley area. These withdrawals also facilitate a pipeline corridor for the Mackenzie Gas Project.

What is being negotiated now

Interim measures are temporary and will eventually be replaced by a Final Agreement. Now that these measures are in place, negotiations are focusing on getting an Agreement-in-Principle and then a Final Agreement.

For more information:

For more Plain Facts on land and self-government in the NWT, visit the website at www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/nt/pt

For general information on INAC policies, programs and services, visit the department's website at www.ainc-inac.gc.ca

To contact us:

Communications, Marketing and Consultation
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, NWT Region
P.O. Box 1500, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 2R3
Phone: (867) 669-2576 Fax: (867) 669-2715

Published under the authority of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians. Ottawa, 2007. www.ainc-inac.gc.ca
1-800-567-9604 TTY only 1-866-553-0554.
Print version: QS-Y280-000-EE-A1 Catalogue: R34-9E
Electronic version: QS-Y280-000-EE-A1 Catalogue: R34-9E-PDF
© Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada
Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : T.N.-O. Faits au point Territoire et autonomie gouvernementale

Plain Facts on Land and Self-government is produced by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in the NWT to help northerners understand these concepts, how they work, and what they mean in our day-to-day lives. It is not a legal document.