

Dehcho Process Negotiations

Between Dehcho First Nations, Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories

2025-2026 WORKPLAN

Dehcho First Nations	CIRNAC	Government of the Northwest Territories
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Please identify the stage that best applies to the negotiation table and aligns with the objectives outlined in the workplan.

- ☐ **Stage 1 - Preliminary-type agreement discussions:** a table has been established and the parties are engaged in initial talks to establish a foundational understanding, such as a memorandum of understanding (MOU);
- ☐ **Stage 2 - Co-development of a negotiation mandate:** the parties collaborate to develop a negotiation mandate for Cabinet approval;
- ☒ **Stage 3 - Negotiation of an agreement:** the parties now have an approved mandate and are negotiating a substantive agreement. This stage supports the negotiation process, including legal and expert consultations necessary to reach a final or incremental agreement;
- ☐ **Stage 4 - Ratification of an agreement:** the parties have concluded negotiations of an agreement and are in the process of ratifying the agreement;
- ☐ **Paused negotiations:** a table in pause of negotiation, with a co-signed workplan that outlines the internal actions required to move the negotiations forward.

Identify the overall negotiation stage of the table and any other relevant comments:

The signed a Framework Agreement in 2001 and are currently negotiating an agreement in principle, which will guide future final agreement negotiations towards a Dehcho Treaty that will include land, resources and self-government provisions (Stage 3).

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:

Ultimate goal: To negotiate a Dehcho Treaty that reflects the parties' agreement regarding land, resources and governance.

Current interim goal: The parties are negotiating towards a Dehcho Process Agreement-in-Principle, with a focus on completing a set of key chapters by June 2026 for consideration at the 2026 Dehcho First Nations Annual General Assembly. Following feedback the Assembly, the parties hope to complete the remaining work for an Agreement in Principle in 2026-27.

NEGOTIATIONS STAGE:

Negotiation of an Agreement

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COMPLETED CHAPTERS

As of October 2025, the parties have completed negotiations on the following matters in 2025-2026

OBJECTIVES	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	TIMELINES
The following chapters were completed by the Parties by October 2025 in 2025-26	The Parties have completed negotiations on the following chapters related to self-government: • Early Childhood Education (completed Sep 2025) • K-12 Education (completed Sep 2025) • Out of School Care (completed Sep 2025) • Post Secondary Education (completed Sep 2025) • Adult Education and Training (completed Sep 2025) • Social Housing (completed Oct 2025) • Income Assistance (completed Oct 2025) • Approval of AIP (completed Oct 2025)	Table negotiation of chapters completed	All Parties	October 2025
Key issues discussed by the Main Table to date	Parties have discussed key issues related to all chapters in the agreement up to October 2025.	Advanced key issues and identified areas for Final Agreement negotiations (pant language)	All Parties	October 2025
Communications Protocol	The parties signed the Communications Protocol in October 2025	Signed Communications Protocol	All Parties	October 2025

PRIMARY FOCUS: KEY CHAPTERS

Parties are aiming to conclude key components of the Agreement in Principle by June 2026.

OBJECTIVES	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	TIMELINES
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Negotiation of self-government jurisdiction AiP chapters	Parties to complete negotiations of the following AiP chapters related to self-government: • Dehcho Government • Dehcho Community Governments • Language and Culture • Jurisdiction on Dehcho Ndehe • Heritage Resources	Negotiated AiP chapters	All Parties	June 2026
Negotiation of Lands and Resources AiP Chapters	• Land Use Planning • Access • Water	Negotiated AiP chapters	All Parties	June 2026
Negotiation of structural AiP chapters	Parties to complete negotiations of the following AiP chapters which are structural to the agreement: • Recognition and predictability • Fiscal Relations (Fiscal Working Group) • Transition • Implementation	Negotiated AiP chapters	All Parties	June 2026

IN PARALLEL: ONGOING WORK ON BROADER KEY ISSUES				
Parties will continue internal work and tripartite discussions on key issues				
OBJECTIVES	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	TIMELINES
Self-Government Key Issues	Parties to discuss and advance resolution of key issues related to Eligibility and Enrollment, and Metis Equality.	Advancement of key issues	All Parties (Canada lead)	Ongoing
	DFN continues internal work and engagement including through Constitutional Working Group (CWG).	DFN reports back to table on results of internal work	DFN	Ongoing
Dehcho Land Mandate Clarification and Response to 2018 offer	DFN to engage leadership and conduct internal work to clarify direction on the 2025 assembly resolution to resume land negotiations and to respond to the 2018 joint offer from GNWT and Canada.	DFN identified and communicates positions regarding land-related negotiations	DFN	March 2026

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		DFN responds to 2018 offer	DFN	March 2026
Ongoing work on other chapters	Parties may continue to share information and continue internal work on these issues, as time allows, to support future negotiations. This will include discussions on Protected Areas and Economic Development chapters.	Foundational work to support further future negotiations	All Parties	Ongoing

OTHER/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS				
OBJECTIVES	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	TIMELINES
Side Tables and Working Groups	Parties to agree on path forward for terms of references for the following working groups: - Metis Working Group - Interim Lands Working Group - West Point First Nation Working Group	Agreed upon path forward	All Parties	March 2026
	Parties to continue to provide direction to Dehcho Land Use Planning Committee	Communications with Land Use Planning Committee	All Parties	Ongoing
Work planning and reporting	Development of 2025-26 workplan	2025-26 workplan	All parties	October 2025
	Preparation of 2025-26 funding submission	2025-26 funding submission	DFN	October 2025
	Preparation of 2024-25 financial reporting	2024-25 financial reporting	DFN	
	Development of 2026-27 workplan Parties to take stock of progress on activities in 2025-26 workplan and set a roadmap to complete the Agreement-in-Principle	2026-27 workplan	All Parties	March 2026

Main Table Negotiation Session Schedule 2025-26¹

¹ Federal participants' travel to meetings is subject to the availability of funds.

Federal negotiations support funding for DFN, including for travel related to negotiations is subject to the availability of funds.

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*Tentative Dates and Locations, Subject to Confirmation**	
Dates	Location
June 3, 2025 – negotiators call	Virtual
June 17-19 2025 – Main Table	Virtual + Yellowknife
July 2, 2025 – negotiators call (work planning)	Virtual
July 9, 2025 – negotiators call (work planning)	Virtual
July 16 2025 – assistant negotiators call (administrative items)	Virtual
August 15, 2025 – negotiators call	Virtual
August 19-21 2025 – main table	Virtual + Hay River
September 4, 2025 – travel planning call	Virtual
September 8, 2025 – travel planning call	Virtual
September 17, 2025 – negotiators call	Virtual
September 22, 24, 25, 2025 – main table	Virtual + Yellowknife
October 1, 2025 – negotiators call	Virtual
October 22 2025 – negotiators call	Virtual
October 28-30, 2025 – main table	Virtual + Sambaa K’e
November 17, 2025 – negotiators call	Virtual
November 24-27, 2025 – main table	Virtual + Ottawa
December 17, 2025 – check in call/mini main table	Virtual
January 12, 2026 – negotiators call	Virtual
January 26-29, 2026 – main table	Virtual
February 25, 2026 – negotiators call	Virtual
March 2-5, 2026 – main table	TBC
March 23, 2026 – negotiators call	virtual
March 30-April 1, 2026 – main table	TBC

“I am duly authorized to sign the co-developed negotiation workplan on behalf of the party involved.”

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X

Signature and Date
Authorized Representative

Georges Erasmus
Dehcho First Nations

X

Signature and Date
Authorized Representative

Manuela Haemmerli
CIRNAC

X

Signature and Date
Authorized Representative

Shannon Lyman
GNWT