



REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

► NORTH SLAVE



The North Slave Region is in the central part of the NWT and is bordered by the Dehcho and Sahtu Regions to the west, Nunavut to the north and east, and the South Slave Region to the south. Encompassing the northern and eastern shores of Great Slave Lake, the region includes the East Arm of Great Slave Lake and extends northwest into the Slave Geological Province, a geographic area rich in mineral resources and a decades-long history of successful mining.

The North Slave is comprised of communities in the Yellowknife Area as well as those in the Tłı̨chǫ Area. The eight communities in the North Slave include: Dettah, N'dilǫ, Łutsel K'e, Yellowknife, Wekweèti, Whatì, Gamèti, and Behchokǫ. The population of the region is 25,535. Yellowknife is the economic, industrial, administrative and transportation centre for the region, and provides various services to the other regions within the NWT.

There is one modern comprehensive treaty in the region. The existing treaty is the Tłı̨chǫ Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement. The agreement is the first combined land, resources, and self-government agreement in the NWT. The currently unsettled land claim agreement is the Akaitcho Dene First Nations Agreement. A framework agreement was signed between the Akaitcho Dene First Nation, the GNWT, and the Government of Canada in 2000. Negotiations for the final agreement are ongoing.

The economy of the North Slave is the largest and most varied in the territory. This is a result of the large population base in Yellowknife compared to the rest of the NWT – a consequence of Yellowknife being the capital city benefitting from government job opportunities, a six-decade history of gold mining within the city limits, as well as mineral exploration and developments in the Slave Geological Province that have allowed for the development of an educated, trained, and diverse workforce and private sector. Most of the businesses in the region are situated in Yellowknife, with a relatively small number of businesses in the other communities that usually provide the basic necessities and services.

The major economic drivers are the public and mining sectors. The region derives most of its economic benefits from these two sectors, and unsurprisingly, they are also the two largest employers in the region. These two sectors are also major purchasers of goods and services from local suppliers in the region. Through procurement contracts, as well as the provision and purchase of goods and services, these two sectors spend millions of dollars annually, helping to support a well-diversified and vibrant private sector.

The Regional Economic Development Plans (REDPs) are a part of the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) mandate to diversify the Northwest Territories (NWT) economy. The profiles for each of the six NWT regions are designed to continue the discussion with key partners, invested northerners, and interested groups and organizations during the July to October 2022 engagement sessions.

These profiles are not complete. They provide basic overviews of initial research and conversations with Indigenous Governments and community leaders. We are looking for meaningful discussions and suggestions on additional opportunities and challenges as we work to finalize the profiles through the engagement sessions.

SECTORS WITH GROWTH POTENTIAL

Remediation and Site Reclamation

The extraction of minerals in the North Slave Region has been taking place since the late 1930s. Past producing mines have recently become a focus of both the federal and territorial governments for reclamation and remediation work.

- The current largest reclamation project is the Giant Mine Reclamation Project. This project is estimated to cost \$1 billion and is expected to be completed over the next decade.
- There are several sites scheduled for reclamation, including Rayrock, Discovery, Tundra and Colomac mine sites.
- There are also three producing diamond mines northeast of the Tłı̨chǫ Area that will need to be remediated once they cease operations, expected in the next few years.

Tourism

Tourism in the North Slave is well developed and is a jumping off location to all of the fly-in operations around the territory.

- There are many lakes and rivers, lands occupied by several types of different animal species, and Indigenous communities with rich cultural identities. The region's location within the Aurora Oval makes it a prime aurora borealis viewing location.
- There are also a number of territorial parks and campgrounds located in and around Yellowknife.
- The newly constructed Tłı̨chǫ Highway, which now connects Whatì to the NWT Highway network, will also see the region benefit from future growth in the tourism sector.

Construction and Related Services

Construction continues to play an important role in the Northwest Territories. Whether it is investments made in the mining industry, residential and commercial activities, or the construction of roads and bridges across the territory, construction remains an integral part of the economy.

- This is especially true with recent announcements made by all levels of government in the investment of housing across the region, and with the potential that exists for mining projects that may enter production in the near future.

Education | Research | Innovation

The North Slave Aurora College Campus in Yellowknife offers various programs including business administration, social programming, and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. Over the past few years, a review of the College's current operations and programming has been conducted and the College is currently undergoing a transformation to become a Polytechnic University.

- Through this review and transformation, numerous areas of focus have been identified which could position the Polytechnic as a specialist and leader in best practices. These focus areas include environmental science, climate change, traditional knowledge, and the reclamation of past development sites.
- There will likely be regional opportunities as the College continues to transition to a polytechnic model.

SECTORS WITH GROWTH POTENTIAL

Agriculture

Growth of the agriculture sector in the North Slave region can support seasonal replacement of expensive food imports from southern Canada with locally grown, fresh and nutritious foods, as well as provide seasonal job opportunities. The agricultural activities in the North Slave region have increased dramatically over the last decade.

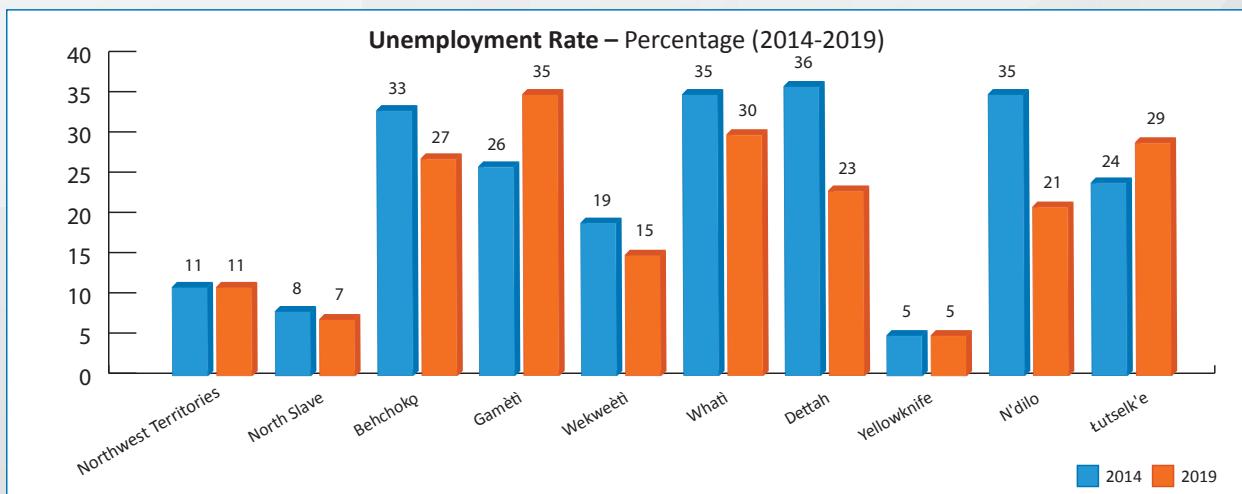
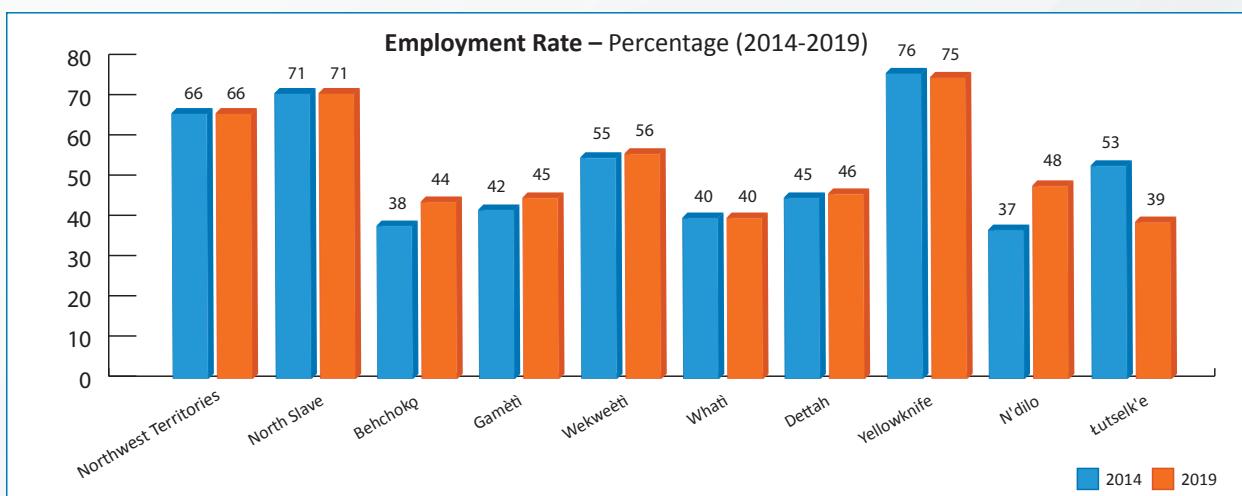
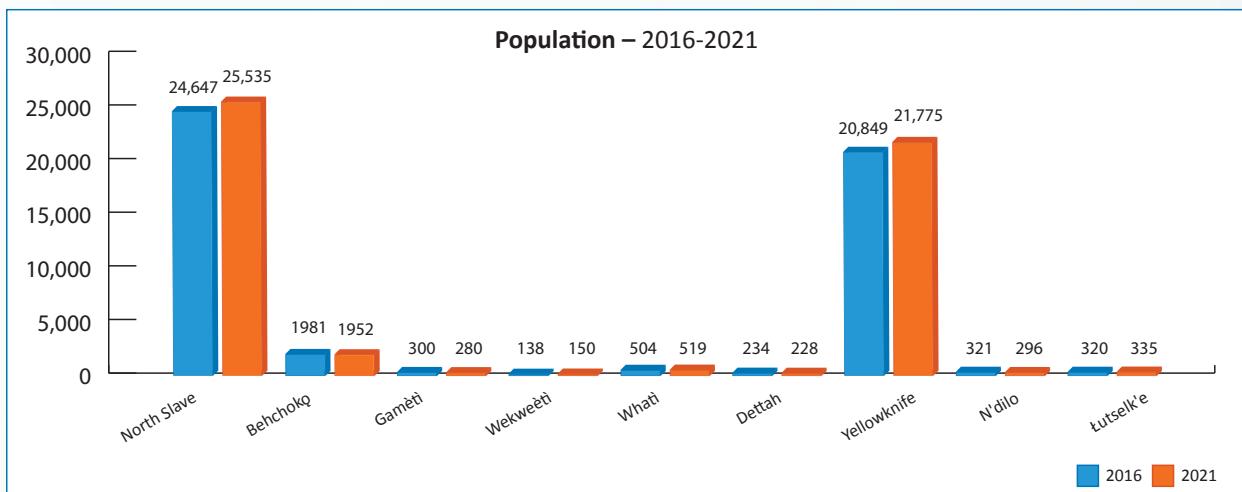
- The region has the highest number of producers with 22 in total: 16 in field/greenhouse crop production, two in animal production (apiculture), one mixed producer (field crops, chickens, pigs and apiculture) and three in forest products.
- This region also has at least 13 community and school gardens.

Mining

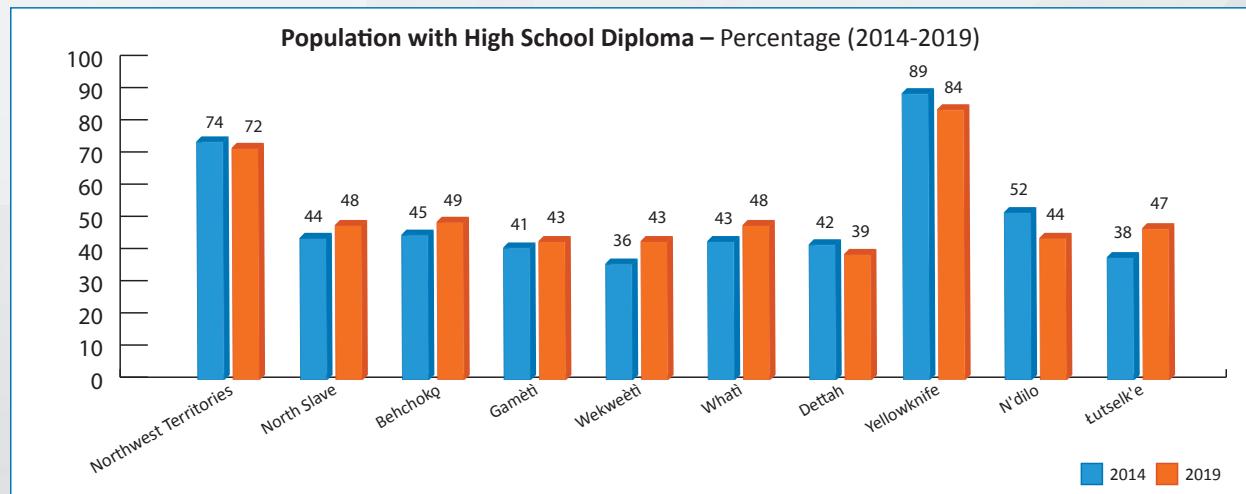
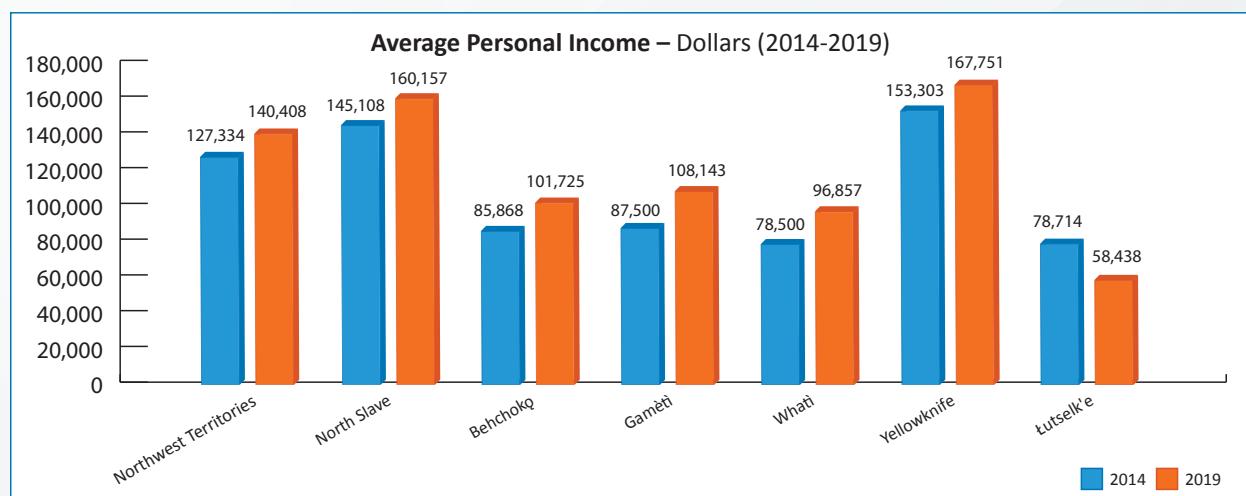
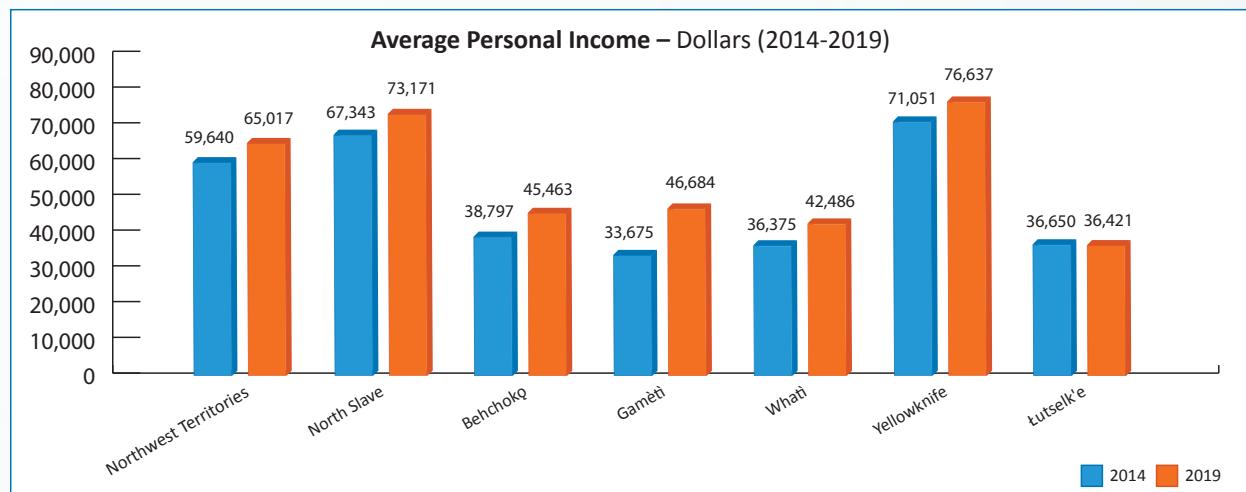
Mining remains the primary economic driver for the economy of the Northwest Territories outside of the public sector. The North Slave region has always been the busiest in the territory regarding mining activity, either in exploration or actual mineral production.

- Gold, silver, uranium, and diamonds have all been mined in the region.
- The Slave Geological Province is also included in the region's geographic scope, and hosts several other mineral showings including rare earths, lithium, cobalt, copper, bismuth, and vanadium.
- The region currently has three producing diamond mines – Ekati, Diavik, and DeBeers' and Mountain Province Gahcho Kué diamond mine.
- There are also several mining operations either in the very early stages of development, or advanced and ready to move to the next phase. These include Fortune Minerals' NICO project, which is a cobalt-gold-bismuth-copper project that has been approved for mine development and is currently working on financing for the project; Nighthawk Gold's Indin Lake property, a past producing gold property with significant potential to reenter production, and Cheetah Resources Nechalacho project, a rare earth minerals project in early stages of production. There are also additional diamond projects in various stages of exploration and development in the Slave Geological Province.
- There are numerous spinoff benefits with established mining activities across the NWT. Joint ventures between Indigenous Development Corporations and high-volume service providers are reaping the economic benefits with jobs created and substantial contract opportunities. These types of collaborations are becoming more common as groups recognize the potential rewards from innovative approaches and partnership.

NORTH SLAVE ECONOMIC INDICATORS



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