



REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

▶ BEAUFORT-DELTA



The Beaufort-Delta Region is the largest administrative region in the Northwest Territories by area. The northernmost area in the territory, the Beaufort-Delta is bordered by Yukon to the west, Nunavut to the east, the Sahtu region to the south and extends up to the North Pole. The Beaufort-Delta is perhaps the most diverse area in the Northwest Territories topographically, with a landscape comprised of tundra plains, the Richardson Mountains, Mackenzie River Delta, the Arctic Ocean and the Arctic Islands.

There are eight communities in the region: Aklavik, Fort McPherson, Inuvik, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tsiigehtchic, Tuktoyaktuk, and Ulukhaktok. In 2021, the population of the region was 6,846 and more than three-quarters of the population is of Indigenous descent. Inuvik is the administrative and transportation hub for the area, providing both goods and services to the other communities in the region.

There are two comprehensive modern treaties in the area: the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA, 1984) and the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement (GCLCA, 1992). Under the IFA, Inuvialuit communities include Inuvik, Aklavik, Ulukhaktok, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Tuktoyaktuk. The communities of Inuvik, Aklavik, Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic are identified as Gwich'in communities under the GCLCA.

The regional economy has historically been dominated by the public and oil and gas sectors. However, with the decline in oil and gas activity over the last two decades, economic activity has largely been dependent on government financial inputs. To spur economic activity, the region has been working to identify other areas of growth and has seen some benefit from these efforts. Government is still the main economic driver, but investments made recently in the region have presented new opportunities for residents and communities.

Two such investments between the GNWT and Government of Canada include the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link (MVFL) and the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility (ISSF) respectively. These projects have led to Inuvik's position as an ideal location to track, send and receive data to, and from, polar-orbiting satellites. Potential exists in other sectors of the local economy but similar investments and collaboration amongst stakeholders will be essential to stimulate further economic growth.

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 May 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 welcome deeper discussions and suggestions on additional opportunities and challenges to be identified throughout the engagements.

SECTORS WITH GROWTH POTENTIAL

Education | Research | Innovation

Inuvik has increasingly been recognized by academia as a location to conduct research into climate change and its impacts on the environment. Recent investments in the ISSF and the MVFL have increased the potential and opportunities in this area.

- The Western Arctic Research Centre is the research arm of Aurora College, supporting more than 3,000 research projects involving more than 1,500 researchers to date.
- The ISSF presents opportunities for researchers to access data from orbiting satellites and transfer large amounts of data to out-of-territory jurisdictions.
- The INNOVATE Center for Arts, Crafts and Technology merges traditional arts and crafts with modern technologies and production techniques to create economic opportunities for the region.
- The Tuk Makerspace has 3D printers, vinyl cutting, laser engraving and wood burning equipment for projects and collaborations.

Tourism

Prior to the pandemic, the Beaufort-Delta welcomed an increase in the number of tourists arriving and travelling on newly completed infrastructure.

- The Dempster Highway and Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway are the road links to the North American highway system. They provide access for tourists via the Dempster Highway to the Beaufort-Delta. The completion of the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway has led to greater numbers of tourists as they can now travel to Tuktoyaktuk and visit the Arctic Ocean.

SECTORS WITH GROWTH POTENTIAL

Telecommunications

Both the federal and territorial governments have made significant investments in the telecommunications sector over the last decade. These investments have created significant opportunities for growth in the Beaufort-Delta.

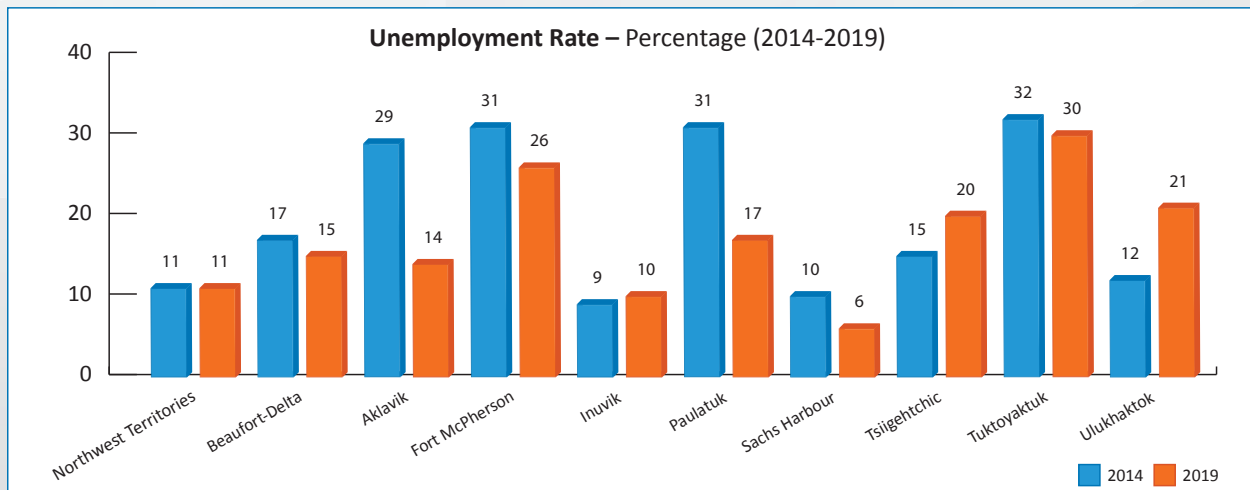
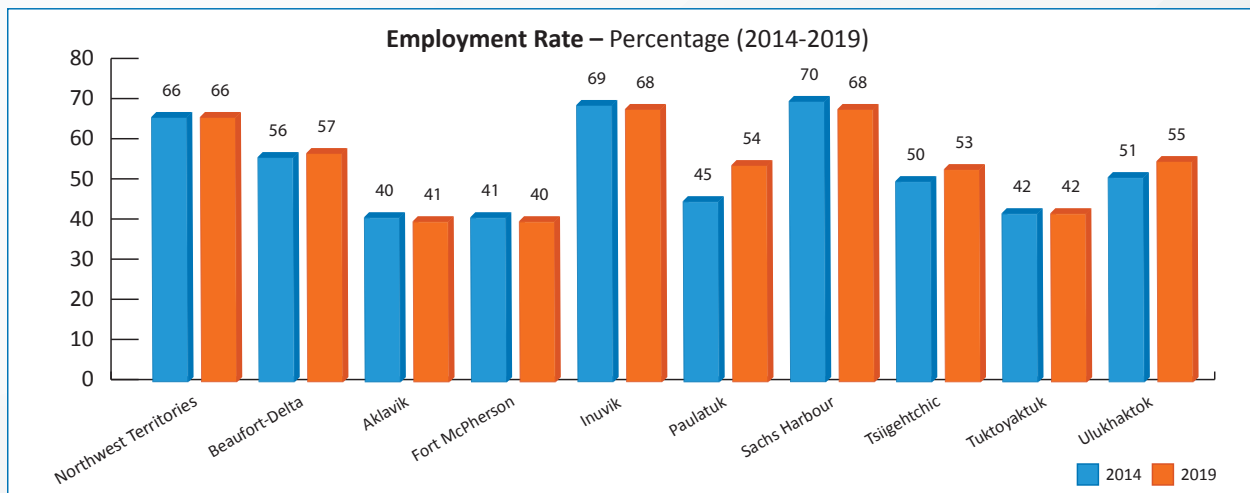
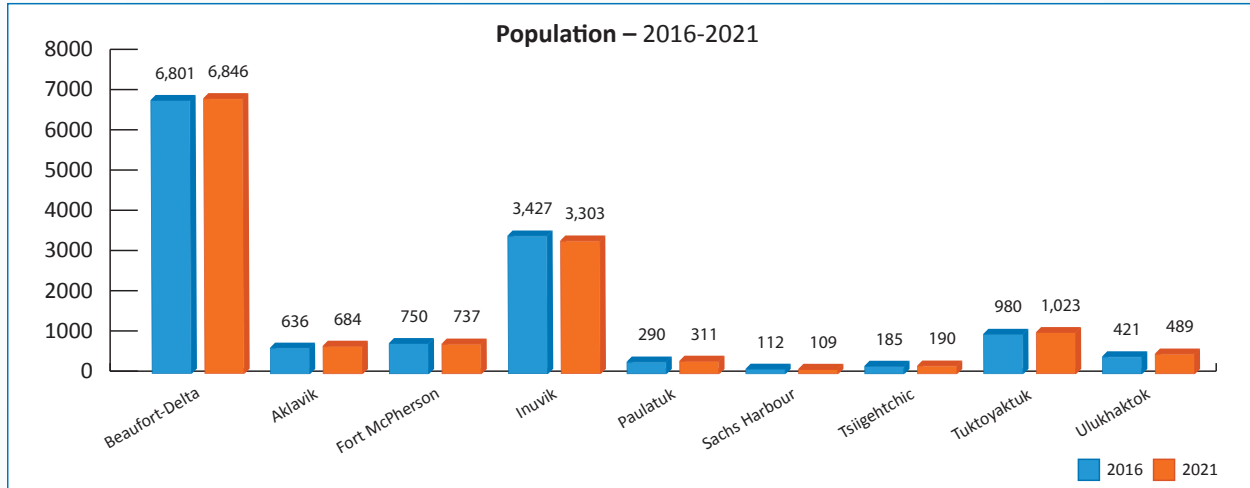
- The MVFL presents opportunities for data storage, redundancy, and the ability to quickly transfer large amounts of data to out-of-territory jurisdictions.
- The ISSF provides the ability to track, send and receive data to and from polar-orbiting satellites at very fast upload and download speeds. There is potential for expansion in both the size and operations of the ISSF.

Remediation and Site Reclamation

Preserving and protecting the environment is a priority of all levels of government. This means that the reclamation and management of past industrial sites have become a focus at all political levels. There is potential for remediation and site reclamation activities in the Beaufort-Delta from past industrial activity, including those related to oil and gas exploration and development.

- A number of onshore wells have been drilled within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR) since the 1960s, with sumps related to these wells.
- Tuk Island Remediation continues with Imperial Oil leading the work. Initially used as a storage and staging area for drilling offshore in the Beaufort Sea in the 1970s to 1980s.
- MACA solid waste cleanup after years of accumulated stockpiles of hazardous waste and scrap metal in Beaufort Delta landfills. The Federal Government is covering 75 percent of the expected costs.

BEAUFORT-DELTA REGION ECONOMIC INDICATORS



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