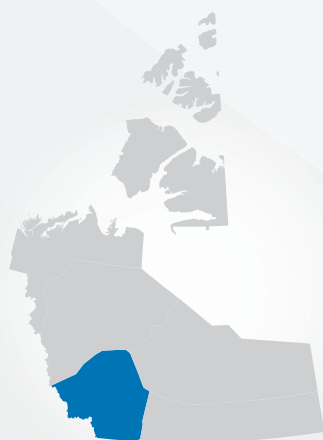




## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

# ▶ DEHCHO



The Dehcho Region is in the southwestern corner of the Northwest Territories, bordering the Yukon to the west, the Sahtu Region to the north, the North Slave Region to the east, and British Columbia and Alberta to the south. The Dehcho has a diverse array of geographical landscapes which includes the Mackenzie Mountains, the Liard and Mackenzie Rivers, Virginia Falls, wetlands, and boreal forest.

There are six communities in the Dehcho: Sambaa K'e, Wrigley, Nahanni Butte, Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, and Jean Marie River. There are 2,179 people living in the Dehcho, mostly Indigenous. Fort Simpson is the main administrative and transportation hub for the region.

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*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.*

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There are two modern comprehensive treaties currently in negotiations in the Dehcho. The Dehcho Process began negotiations in 1999 on both a Framework Agreement and an Interim Measures Agreement (IMA). In 2001, the parties signed the IMA and the Framework Agreement, which set out the subjects for negotiations to conclude a Lands and Resources Agreement-in-Principle and a Final Agreement. In 2019 it was decided to put the land and resources discussions aside to focus on self-government negotiations. Once finalized, the agreement will protect the rights of both First Nations and Métis people indigenous to the Dehcho.

For their Final Land and Resources Agreement, the Acho Dene Koe First Nation (ADK) in Fort Liard signed a Framework Agreement in 2008 and an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) in 2014. The Framework Agreement committed the parties to a two-phased negotiation approach: Phase One focuses on lands and resources, and Phase Two focuses on self-government.

The regional economy is dominated by the public sector; however, a small private sector exists mainly within the service industry. In the late 1950s and the early 2000s, oil and gas exploration and production were major contributors to the region's economy but all activity and production in the region has since ceased.

The Dehcho is connected to southern Canada by Highway 1, which runs from the NWT/Alberta border all the way to Wrigley; and by Highway 7, a gravel road which runs from the British Columbia border north through Dehcho for 254 kilometres, following the Liard River to Fort Simpson and from there southeast to the junction with Highway 1.

## SECTORS WITH GROWTH POTENTIAL

### Tourism

Tourism already plays a significant role in the economy of the Dehcho. With road access from British Columbia and Alberta, the potential for the tourism industry to expand is tremendous.

- The Dehcho has very attractive natural assets such as beautiful scenery, abundant wildlife, and the Mackenzie, Liard and Nahanni Rivers.
- There are territorial and national parks, including the Nahanni National Park Reserve (a world heritage site), Blackstone Territorial Park, Fort Simpson Territorial Park, and Smbaa Deh Territorial Park. The parks provide varying levels of service to visitors, from access to running water and electricity to just the bare camping essentials.

### Agriculture

The Dehcho, which once had large market gardens in Fort Simpson, has excellent soils and climate for production and vast amounts of arable land. Currently, there are two major producers and six community and school gardens in the region.

- The Smbaa K'e Community Garden has had major growth over the last two years, and Midnight Sun Growers is the only private market garden in the Dehcho and has grown significantly over the last three years.



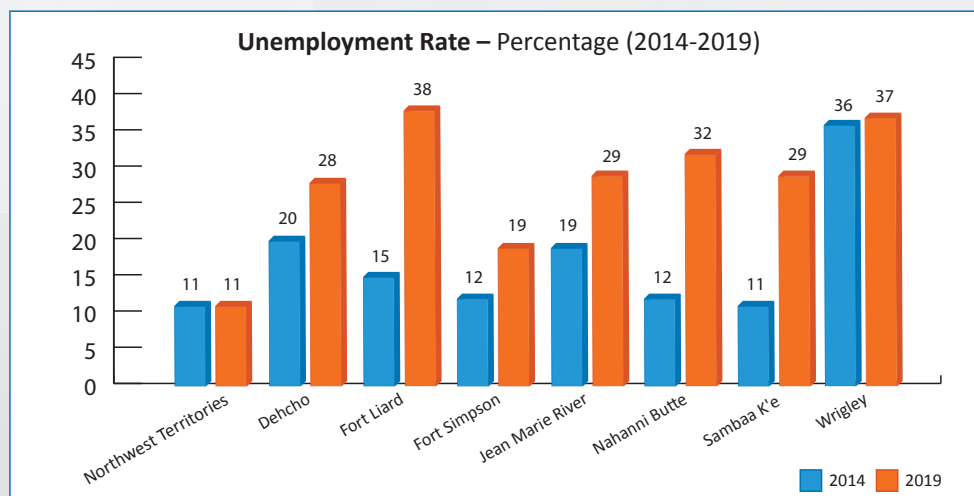
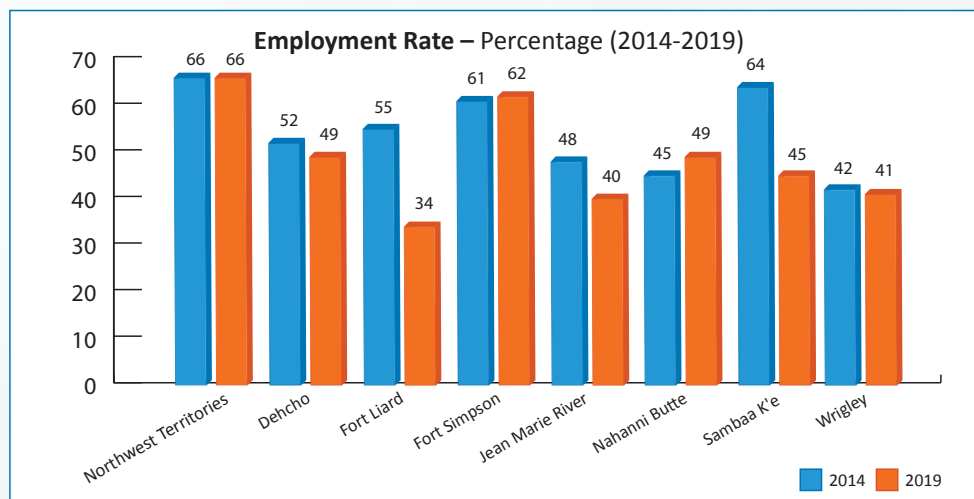
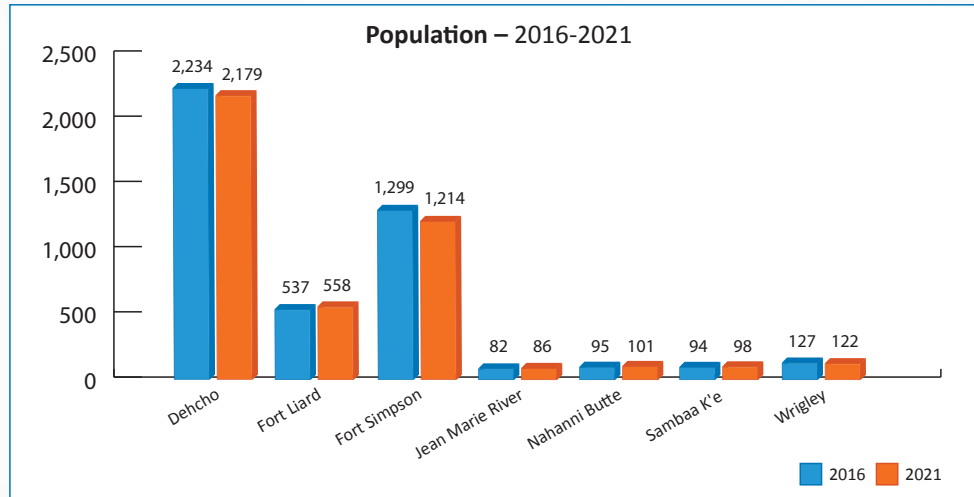
## SECTORS WITH GROWTH POTENTIAL

### Forestry

For centuries, people in the NWT have relied on the boreal forest to find food and the materials for shelter, to make clothing, and build boats and sleds. In the past, several communities had their own sawmills and harvested trees to meet local demand. The Dehcho is ideally positioned to benefit from a forestry industry.

- There are abundant forest resources and the transportation infrastructure to truck harvested wood to southern Canada.
- Wood could also be transported north via the winter roads and in the summer via the well-established tug and barge network. There is a growing market for wood pellets used for home and commercial building heating, which, if a pellet manufacturing facility was established in the Dehcho, would provide jobs, training, and economic development.

## DEHCHO REGION ECONOMIC INDICATORS



## DEHCHO REGION ECONOMIC INDICATORS

