



Cooperation Agreement

between the

North Slave Métis Alliance

and the

Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT)

(each separately “Party”, known collectively as the “Parties”)

August 28, 2025

Whereas the Métis of the Great Slave Lake area have traditionally used and occupied lands in the Northwest Territories since prior to the effective imposition of European control over the Northwest Territories;

Whereas the North Slave Métis Alliance represents a sizeable and identifiable constituency of the Métis of the Great Slave Lake area;

Whereas the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories and the Federal Court of Canada have each recognized that the North Slave Métis Alliance has a good *prima facie* claim to the Aboriginal right to hunt caribou on the North Slave Métis Alliance's traditional territory;

Whereas the GNWT recognizes that the North Slave Métis Alliance has Aboriginal rights as affirmed under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*;

Whereas the GNWT recognizes that the North Slave Métis Alliance are an Indigenous peoples of Canada and that the inherent right of self-government is an existing Aboriginal right under Section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*;

Whereas the GNWT is committed to implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which affirms the rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination and self-government;

Whereas the North Slave Métis Alliance is the chosen government for its membership; and

Whereas the North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT acknowledge their unique and evolving bilateral relationship, and agree to work with one another based on mutual respect, recognition, responsibility, and reconciliation;

Now Therefore, North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT hereby wish to formalize and enrich their government-to-government relationship and facilitate the maturation of that relationship in accordance with the provisions of this document, which will be known as the *North Slave Métis Alliance / Government of the Northwest Territories Cooperation Agreement* ("Cooperation Agreement"), as outlined below.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Cooperation Agreement is to enhance the relationship between the North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT by providing a framework in which the Parties can work together.

The specific objectives of this Cooperation Agreement are:

- To cultivate the relationship and advance reconciliation between the North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT;
- To enhance the day-to-day interaction, cooperation and coordination between the North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT through a formalized communication process; and
- To raise issues and resolve concerns in a manner that addresses North Slave Métis Alliance and GNWT interests, and to formulate approaches to address those issues and concerns.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1. The North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT recognize and respect the diversity of cultures, history, and traditions among the people of the Northwest Territories and respect that different parties may have unique political and policy priorities.
- 2.2. The North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT welcome the opportunity to deepen their understanding of each other's views and commit to working together to make progress and achieve outcomes on matters of mutual interest.
- 2.3. The North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT agree to work together to achieve a respectful, strong, and meaningful bilateral relationship with effective communication and information sharing.

- 2.4. The North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT commit to constructive collaboration, in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, knowing that cooperation will help maximize the benefit for the people served by both Parties.
- 2.5. The North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT recognize that there may be different perspectives on various issues and that agreement on all issues may not always be achievable.

3. AREAS OF COOPERATION

3.1 The Parties agree that the areas of cooperation and discussion will include but are not limited to:

- 3.1.1 Métis Benefits,
- 3.1.2 Harvesting,
- 3.1.3 Economic and social development,
- 3.1.4 Caribou management,
- 3.1.5 Emergency management,
- 3.1.6 Capacity support and development,
- 3.1.7 Trilateral relationship among each of the Parties and the Government of Canada; and
- 3.1.8 Any other areas of mutual interest identified by the Parties.

4. MEETINGS OF ELECTED LEADERS

- 4.1. There shall be at least one meeting a year between the President of the North Slave Métis Alliance and the Premier of the NWT.
- 4.2. Where applicable, other Ministers of the GNWT and other Directors of the North Slave Métis Alliance may be invited to participate in the meeting.

- 4.3. The Parties may invite other officials, staff and advisors, including Elders, to attend the elected leaders' meetings as observers.
- 4.4. The Parties may permit persons described in Section 4.3 above to make submissions or presentations during the elected leaders' meetings, with agreement of the other Party.
- 4.5. Only the Directors of the North Slave Métis Alliance, the Premier and members of the GNWT Executive Council may sit at the meeting table.
- 4.6. Prior to the elected leaders' meeting, the Parties will reach agreement on an agenda that has been jointly developed by senior officials. Where applicable, lead notes, briefing materials, reports and other documents may be shared by the Parties.
- 4.7. At these meetings, the elected leaders will:
 - Chair the meetings on an alternating basis between a Director of the North Slave Métis Alliance and the Premier;
 - Make good faith efforts to address the matters set out on the agenda; and
 - Agree upon a joint summary of commitments and a joint communiqué.

5. MEETINGS OF SENIOR OFFICIALS

- 5.1. Meetings between the Parties' senior officials will be scheduled on an as-needed basis and is intended to support the work of the elected leaders.
- 5.2. Each Party will appoint a senior official and provide written notice of that appointment to the other Party and his or her contact information.
- 5.3. The senior officials will be responsible for the implementation of this Cooperation Agreement and for carrying out any other direction provided by the Parties' elected leaders.

The senior officials will work together to plan and prepare for meetings of the elected leaders, including developing a joint agenda, shared lead notes and briefing materials, and a joint summary of commitments and a joint communiqué.

6. INFORMATION SHARING

- 6.1. The Parties recognize that in order to effectively make progress on areas of mutual interest, it is important that information be shared in an open and timely manner, subject to any constraints imposed by law, and that they will adhere to the protocols set out in Section 8 of this Cooperation Agreement for effective communication.
- 6.2. The Parties are committed to meaningful communication on initiatives that may have an impact on the North Slave Métis Alliance and its members, including the development or amendment of GNWT legislation, regulations, and policies. All communication will be consistent with and respect existing agreements and processes in place.

7. PROTOCOLS FOR COMMUNICATION

- 7.1. The protocols for formal correspondence include, but are not limited to:

GNWT formal correspondence addressed to the President of the North Slave Métis Alliance shall be copied to:

- Premier of the Northwest Territories
- Chief of Staff
- Senior Envoy to the Government of Canada
- Secretary to Cabinet, Executive and Indigenous Affairs
- Deputy Secretary, Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs, Executive and Indigenous Affairs
- Vice-President, North Slave Métis Alliance
- Lands and Culture Manager, North Slave Métis Alliance

7.2. North Slave Métis Alliance formal correspondence addressed to the Premier of the Northwest Territories shall be copied to:

- Chief of Staff
- Senior Envoy to the Government of Canada
- Secretary to Cabinet, Executive and Indigenous Affairs
Deputy Secretary, Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs,
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

7.3. North Slave Métis Alliance formal correspondence addressed to Ministers of the GNWT shall be copied to:

- Premier of the Northwest Territories
- Chief of Staff
- Senior Envoy to the Government of Canada
- Secretary to Cabinet, Executive and Indigenous Affairs
- Deputy Secretary, Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs,
Executive and Indigenous Affairs

7.4. Without altering protocols set out in the foregoing provisions, to facilitate the effective and efficient ongoing exchange of information for specific operational processes, the elected leaders may be asked to identify a senior official delegated to share communication on behalf of their respective government, if it is other than the elected leader.

Formal correspondence addressed to the properly mandated and authorized senior officials shall be copied to:

- President of the North Slave Métis Alliance
- Vice-President, North Slave Métis Alliance
- Premier of the Northwest Territories
- Chief of Staff
- Senior Envoy to the Government of Canada
- Secretary to Cabinet, Executive and Indigenous Affairs
- Deputy Secretary, Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs,
Executive and Indigenous Affairs
- Lands and Culture Manager, North Slave Métis Alliance

8. JOINT COMMUNICATION

- 8.1. Any request by either the North Slave Métis Alliance or the GNWT for the issuance of any joint communication, including the use of the other party's logo or letterhead on any materials whatsoever, shall be made at least 48 hours in advance, in writing, to the Lands and Culture Manager on behalf of the North Slave Métis Alliance and to the Chief of Staff on behalf of the GNWT.
- 8.2. The agreement of the North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT to the issuance of any joint communications shall be given in writing by the Lands and Culture Manager on behalf of the North Slave Métis Alliance and by Chief of Staff on behalf of the GNWT.
- 8.3.** No joint communication shall be issued unless it has followed the above protocol and been duly approved.

9. COSTS

Each Party will be responsible for the costs of its participation in the leaders' and senior officials' meetings.

10. EFFECT OF THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT

- 10.1. Nothing in this Cooperation Agreement creates or affects legal obligations.
- 10.2. Nothing in this Cooperation Agreement shall constrain either Party from exercising their powers, responsibilities, or rights; nor shall it impose any financial obligation.
- 10.3. Nothing in this Cooperation Agreement prevents the North Slave Métis Alliance and the GNWT from participating in other intergovernmental processes or agreements.

11. TERM

This Cooperation Agreement shall be in effect for a period of four (4) years from the date of signing.

12. RENEWAL

Upon written consent of the Parties, this Cooperation Agreement may be renewed for further terms as agreed.

13. TERMINATION

- 13.1. This Cooperation Agreement may be terminated by either of the Parties upon written notice to the other party at least 60 days in advance of the termination date.
- 13.2. If this Cooperation Agreement is terminated, it will not affect any other agreements or understanding in place between the Parties.

14. AMENDMENT

This Cooperation Agreement may be periodically reviewed and may be amended by written agreement of the Parties.

SIGNATORIES

The North Slave Métis Alliance – Government of the Northwest Territories Cooperation Agreement is signed by the North Slave Métis Alliance and the Government of the Northwest Territories on this **28** day of **August** 2025 at Yellowknife, NT.

**FOR THE NORTH SLAVE MÉTIS
ALLIANCE**



Marc Whitford
President

**FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**



Honourable R.J. Simpson
Premier