



September 25, 2026

Government of Canada
Government of the Northwest Territories
Town of Inuvik
Gwich'in Institutions and Organizations
Regulatory and Co-Management Authorities
Industry
Proponents
Businesses
Institutions
Other Parties Operating or Seeking to Operate within the Nihtat Homeland of Inuvik

NOTICE OF NIHTAT COMMUNITY SELF-GOVERNMENT MANDATE AND FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

Drin Gwiinzii,

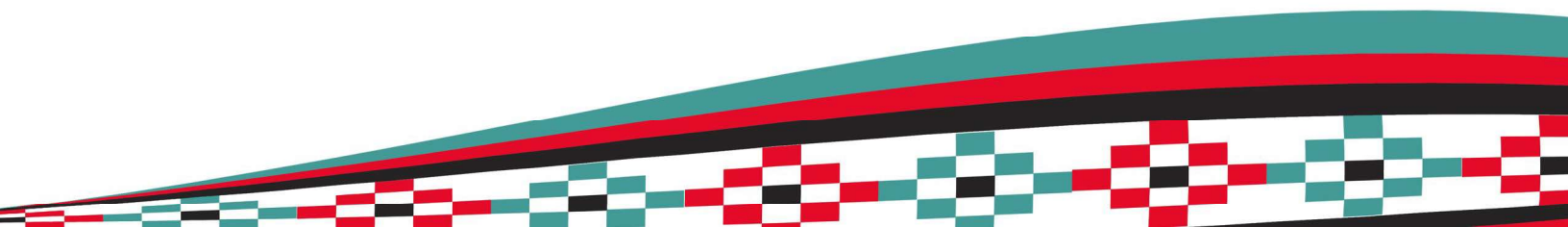
The Nihtat Gwich'in Council ("Nihtat") gives notice that the Nihtat Gwich'in have mandated our leadership to pursue community-based self-government negotiations and the establishment of a Nihtat Gwich'in First Nation Authority for Inuvik under the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement. As this mandate advances, Nihtat expects governments, Gwich'in institutions, regulators, industry, and proponents to engage Nihtat directly and early on decisions, projects, agreements, investments, and regulatory processes affecting the Nihtat Homeland.

Nihtat supports collaboration, responsible development, and investment certainty, but expects existing relationships and decision-making practices to evolve in a way that respects Nihtat's self-government mandate and our future role as a self-government in matters affecting our people, Homeland, and future, as explained in more detail below.

Mandate for Self-Government

At the 2026 Nihtat Gwich'in Annual Assembly, the Nihtat Gwich'in provided their Council with a clear mandate to pursue self-government negotiations with Canada.

This direction comes from the Nihtat Gwich'in and is consistent with the community-level pathway expressly contemplated in Chapter 5 - Self Government and further defined in Appendix B - Self-Government Framework Agreement of the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement ("GCLCA").





The GCLCA provides that government shall enter into negotiations with the Gwich'in with a view to concluding self-government agreements enabling the Gwich'in to govern their affairs and administer resources, programs and services appropriate to their circumstances.

The land claim contemplates the establishment of a "Gwich'in First Nation Authority" as a governing body for Gwich'in in any of Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic, Fort McPherson or Inuvik, with powers and responsibilities established through self-government agreements.

What This Means

Nihtat Gwich'in Council has been mandated to pursue the establishment of a Gwich'in First Nation Authority in Inuvik to implement self-government for Nihtat Gwich'in. Nihtat expects a meaningful role in shaping decisions affecting our people, Homeland, and future as we advance toward self-government.

Nihtat will be negotiating jurisdictions and authorities to pass laws and establish programs and services in a wide range of subject areas, including governance structures and accountability, legal status and capacity, membership, culture and language, housing, revenue raising and taxation, education and training, social services, health services, roads and traffic, local government infrastructure, programs and services, economic development including tourism, child welfare, administration of justice, implementation and financial arrangements, and other related matters.

These are all matters that directly intersect with decisions presently being made by governments, public institutions, Gwich'in organizations, industry and proponents within Inuvik and the Nihtat Homeland.

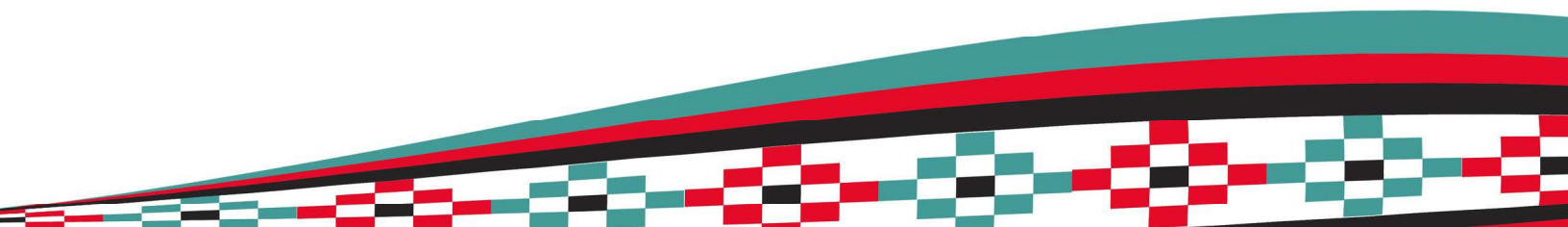
Direct Engagement is Required

Nihtat's mandate for self-government negotiations will necessarily affect our relationships with other governments, institutions and proponents in our Homeland.

Nihtat recognizes the continuing legal authorities, responsibilities and roles of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, public government, Gwich'in institutions and other organizations during this period, but notes that these relationships will significantly change as we advance and implement self-government.

Recognition of those existing roles, however, should not be interpreted as acceptance that existing practices or relationships must remain unchanged while Nihtat advances its community mandate, nor interpreted as Nihtat's blanket approval of previous processes and decisions of government and other institutions and organizations, including other Gwich'in institutions, that impact the Nihtat Gwich'in. Nihtat has consistently maintained we are the party responsible for representing and protecting the rights of the Nihtat Gwich'in within the Nihtat Homeland.

All such parties should accordingly engage Nihtat directly and at an early stage where proposed decisions, policies, projects, agreements, investments, procurement, programs, services, regulatory processes or





economic arrangements materially affect the Nihtat Gwich'in or intersect with subject matters that Nihtat has been mandated to advance through self-government. Public governments may additionally have specific s. 35 consultation and Honour of the Crown obligations arising from the negotiations.

Existing agreements or arrangements made with other organizations should not be presumed to constitute the agreement or consent of Nihtat, unless Nihtat has been directly involved and has specifically provided our agreement or consent.

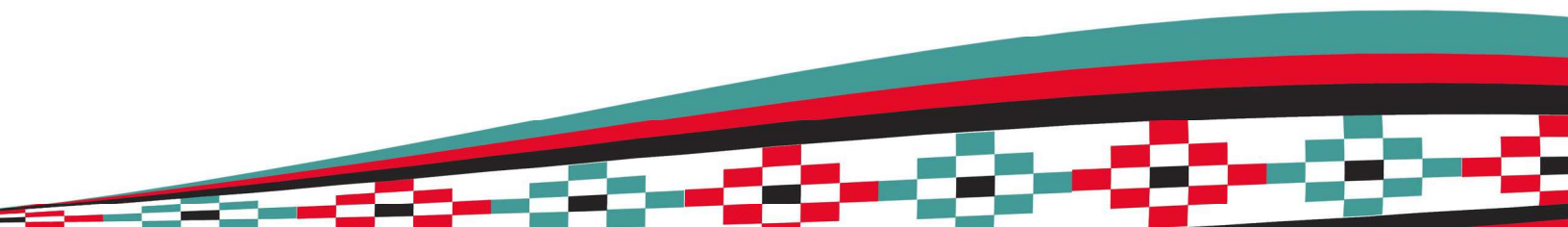
For greater certainty, no regional organization, Indigenous organization, industry representative, project proponent, business, institution or other third party is authorized to act for, speak for, represent, negotiate for, consult on behalf of, lobby for, advocate for, or otherwise represent Nihtat Gwich'in Council or its interests with Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, industry, project proponents, businesses, institutions or other parties, unless expressly authorized by Nihtat. This includes applying for, negotiating, receiving, administering or entering into funding arrangements specifically on behalf of Nihtat, as well as entering into discussions, negotiations, business alliances, partnerships, contracting, procurement, benefit arrangements or other economic relationships that purport to include, represent or advance Nihtat's interests or economic opportunities. In particular, where a regional or other organization enters into discussions or negotiations with industry, project proponents or businesses, that organization must not represent that it speaks for, represents, includes or has the support or participation of Nihtat unless Nihtat has expressly authorized that representation and is directly involved at the table in those discussions. Nihtat's name, participants, businesses, interests, economic opportunities or Homeland should not be used or represented as having Nihtat's support, approval, participation or authorization where Nihtat has not been directly involved and has not provided such authorization.

Most importantly, Nihtat expects that decisions and arrangements made during this period will not be structured in a manner that prejudices, constrains, circumvents or pre-determines the matters, authorities, responsibilities or relationships that Nihtat is mandated to advance through self-government.

Self-Government and Economic Development

Our mandate has particular significance for economic development within the Nihtat Homeland. The GCLCA expressly identifies economic development, including tourism, as a matter for self-government negotiations.

Nihtat supports responsible development, investment and economic growth. We want the Nihtat Homeland of Inuvik and the Western Arctic to prosper, and we welcome governments, industry and partners who want to build long-term relationships with Nihtat. But development within our Homeland must increasingly reflect a basic principle: Nihtat must be meaningfully involved in shaping the decisions and opportunities that affect Nihtat Gwich'in and our future. Nihtat will have a significant role in decisions about major infrastructure, transportation, defence, natural resource and critical mineral development,





procurement, contracting, tourism, and other significant public and private investments affecting our community and Homeland.

Creating Certainty for Investment

The GCLCA contemplates the evolution from existing Gwich'in institutions toward future Gwich'in institutions through self-government. The Nihtat Gwich'in have now directed their leadership to pursue a new future for our community. One of Nihtat's objectives is to create certainty for governments, industry and our partners within the Nihtat Homeland.

We remain committed to respectful relationships, collaboration and responsible development. We also expect those relationships to evolve alongside Nihtat. However, Nihtat will not accept decisions or agreements that disregard our right to self-government, diminish the meaningful role of the Nihtat Gwich'in in matters affecting our Homeland, or seek to preserve a status quo our people have directed us to change. Governments, institutions, industry and proponents should not assume that historical practices, relationships or arrangements with the Nihtat Gwich'in will simply continue unchanged.

Our message is simple, when decisions affect our people, our Homeland and our future, Nihtat expects to be at the table.

Our Future. Our Way.

Mahsi Cho,

Kelly McLeod, President
Nihtat Gwich'in Council

Chris Smith (Sep 25, 2026 14:43:31 MDT)

Chris Smith, Vice-President
Nihtat Gwich'in Council

CC. Nihtat Gwich'in Council

