



**MEMORANDUM
OF
UNDERSTANDING**

between the

Tłıchǫ Government,

the

Yellowknives Dene First Nation,

and

Government of the Northwest Territories

for the purpose of

Advancing the Arctic Economic and Security Corridor

1. Preamble

The Tłıchǫ Government (“**TG**”), the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (“**YKDFN**”), and the Government of the Northwest Territories (“**GNWT**”) (the “**Partners**”), recognizing their shared interests in the promotion of the proposed development of an all-season road connecting the Northwest Territories to a deepwater seaport in Nunavut (the “**Arctic Economic and Security Corridor**” or “**AESC**”), come together in a spirit of respect, unity, and shared purpose to affirm and strengthen their collaboration on the AESC.

Rooted in Indigenous values and guided by our responsibilities to the peoples, land, water, culture, and wildlife, the Partners are committed to continuing the work of promoting and advancing this once-in-a-generation initiative. The AESC represents a transformative opportunity to build a resilient, connected, and prosperous North through an Indigenous-led corridor linking the Northwest Territories through Nunavut to an Arctic port.

This Memorandum of Understanding (“**MOU**”) reaffirms the Partners’ shared intention to work collaboratively, transparently, and constructively to promote and advance the AESC.

2. Purpose of the Agreement

This MOU is intended to:

1. **Affirm the ongoing collaboration** of TG, YKDFN, and GNWT in advancing the AESC.
2. **Recognize Indigenous leadership** as central to the vision, values, and governance of the AESC.
3. **Strengthen the unified messaging** of the Partners as we engage with other Indigenous governments and Indigenous organizations, communities, Canada, industry, and private partners, both domestic and international.
4. **Provide a high-level framework** for continued joint work on project promotion, federal engagement and investment.
5. **Establish a process for working together on immediate next steps** for the project.

3. Principles of Partnership

The Partners commit to work together based on the following shared principles:

1. **Respect and Trust** – honouring each government’s rights, legal requirements, authorities, and decision-making processes.
2. **Indigenous Leadership** – ensuring that TG and YKDFN have central roles in the process, and that Indigenous values and knowledge guide the development of the AESC.
3. **Transparency and Collaboration** – sharing information and coordinating communications, engagement, and technical work.

4. **Shared Benefit** – supporting long-term prosperity, economic opportunities, environmental sustainability and community well-being for the Tłıchǫ and Yellowknives, and businesses and residents of the Northwest Territories.
5. **Stewardship** – protecting the land, water, wildlife, culture and Indigenous way of life as a core responsibility.

4. Governance and Collaboration

To support the continued advancement of the AESC project concept, the Partners agree to:

1. **Collaboratively develop a shared governance framework** that outlines roles, responsibilities, and processes for project oversight and future decision-making. This may include the development of a formalized partnership framework for the advancement of the AESC.
2. **Work in partnership and collaboratively to promote the AESC with Canada**, including through the Major Projects Office, to advance the project under national frameworks such as “Projects of National Interest.”
3. **Engagement with other Indigenous Governments and Indigenous Organizations** to provide regular updates on the project status and receive feedback.
4. **Promote the AESC**, including at industry forums, public events, and intergovernmental tables, reinforcing the unified approach of the Partners.

5. Economic and Strategic Purpose

The Partners jointly acknowledge refinement of the AESC project concept must acknowledge that the successful development of the AESC will:

1. Drive significant economic activity for Indigenous and Northern residents and communities through responsible and environmentally sustainable critical mineral development.
2. Create pathways for economic benefits for Indigenous and northern residents and businesses through long-term revenue generation as well as employment and business growth.
3. Strengthen territorial and national resilience in a shifting geopolitical and climate environment.
4. Support improved energy security and a shift toward cleaner and more reliable energy systems.
5. Ensure a balanced and sustainable approach to development that recognizes the critical importance of calving grounds in supporting the long-term conservation of barren-ground caribou for generations to come.
6. Include collaboration with Inuit and government partners in Nunavut.
7. Build strong and prosperous communities in the NWT, including Tłıchǫ and Yellowknives communities.


6. Non-Binding Nature

This MOU reflects the goodwill and shared intent of the Partners. It is not legally binding, does not create enforceable obligations or financial commitments, and does not replace or displace any of the Partners' obligations related to the development of an AESC project concept. Future binding agreements will be developed and approved through each government's respective processes as required.

7. Signatures

Signed in Vancouver, British Columbia, this 26 day of January 2026.

For the Tłı̨chǫ Government:




Grand Chief Jackson Dafferty

For the Yellowknives Dene First Nation:



Chief Ernest Betsina

For the Government of the Northwest Territories:



RT SIMPSON, PREMIER

For: Minister Caroline Wawzonek
Minister Responsible for Strategic Infrastructure, Energy & Supply Chains