

## Factsheet #1

# How the Self-Government Agreement was made

In the 1970s the Dene Nation worked on negotiating a land claim for all Dene regions. At that time, Canada did not recognize that Dene had a right to govern themselves. The Dene Nation disagreed, and insisted that their right to self-government existed. By 1990, Canada had been convinced that the Dene have a right to self-government. Canada agreed to include a chapter in the land claim promising to negotiate self-government after the land claim was signed. The Sahtu then signed its land claim in 1993.

In 1995, when the community of Délŋe decided to negotiate a self-government agreement, the Délŋe Elders had a vision. They believed that too many organizations were responsible for governing the community: a First Nation created by Canada's *Indian Act*, the Land Corporation created under the Sahtu Land Claim, and a Charter Community created by the GNWT. The Elders believed that the community could be governed better and that people would work together better if there was one organization. They also wanted to make sure that the one government would have more control over decision making in the community. This vision was supported by the community.

The community knew that to have one government, it would have to negotiate with Canada and the GNWT.

Chapter 5 and Appendix B of the Sahtu Land Claim described what could be negotiated for self-government. In 1995, the community started talks with Canada and the GNWT about self-government to work out the details of what they would negotiate. In 1996, they made an agreement about how they would do this, so that the three parties understood what they had to do and what they wanted to achieve. That agreement was called a Process and Schedule Agreement.

Then, between 1996 and 2008, Délı̄ne, Canada and the GNWT negotiated the Self-Government Agreement-in-Principle. The Agreement-in-Principle described the major parts of the self-government agreement: the new government model, its main responsibilities, and how its authorities would work with the authorities of the GNWT and Canada, but it did not include all the details.

After the Agreement-in-Principle was signed, Délı̄ne, Canada and the GNWT began to negotiate the Final Self-Government Agreement. This included discussions about how self-government would be financed, what the parties must do to make sure the agreement will work the way it is supposed to, and how the Self-Government Agreement and the Sahtu Land Claim will work together. At that time, the Délı̄ne Self-Government Team held a series of workshops where community members developed a community constitution.

The Self-Government Agreement is the way the self-government rights of all Délı̄ne beneficiaries will be put in place and respected by other governments. The negotiators always kept in mind that almost half of Délı̄ne's First Nation members and land claim beneficiaries live outside of Délı̄ne and most of them live in Yellowknife. In 2010, a Yellowknife office was established, which is responsible for making sure that Délı̄ne First Nation members and beneficiaries living outside of Yellowknife were aware of the agreement and could ask questions and get answers and information.

The Délı̄ne Final Self-Government Agreement (FSGA) was completed in September 2012. It will be voted on by all beneficiaries in March 2014. For the agreement to be accepted, 50% + 1 of all eligible voters must vote "yes" to the agreement in a ratification vote.