Food Security & Food Culture:

The SDWG encourages projects and activities that promote the heritage and culture of Arctic communities, deepen global understanding of the region’s peoples, cultures and traditional ways of life, languages and values and promote traditional and local knowledge including knowledge about traditional diets and food security. During the United States Arctic Council Chairmanship (2015-17), the SDWG undertook work on the following food security and food culture projects:

The **Arctic as a Food Producing Region** project takes a multi-disciplinary approach in assessing the potential for increased production and added value of food from the Arctic, with the overarching aim of improving food security, and enhancing the social and economic conditions of Arctic communities. By focusing on biological, commercial, cultural and local, national and international market conditions, this project will indicate potential pathways for Arctic food production and distribution. The research aims to identify conditions for increased production, both to improve food security in northern regions, and to increase the added value of food originating in the Arctic for southern markets. The goals are therefore to enhance commercial food production ‘in the North and for the North’ and to develop North to South food production linkages. Together these aims will result in more sustainable food systems in the Arctic.

A comparative project involving the Arctic states will provide useful insight into common challenges as well as examples of successful product developments of foodstuff/species. Common case studies in participating Arctic states will strengthen the collaboration between areas and industries, create extensive networks and increase knowledge transfer. Comparisons will therefore be made within and across sectors nationally and internationally that will stimulate new models and ways of thinking about the requirement for a more sustainable Arctic food system for the future. A circumpolar assessment report will be produced under the Finnish Chairmanship in 2019.
The EALLU: Arctic Indigenous Youth, Food Culture and Climate Change project utilizes the food cultures and systems of Arctic Indigenous peoples as a foundation for adaptation to Arctic change. The project explores the opportunities of a changing Arctic for Indigenous peoples, based on their own knowledge and from within their respective cultures. The project has produced recommendations to the Arctic Council on how such systems and knowledge can best be leveraged for sustainable development. The active engagement of circumpolar Indigenous youth is at the core of the project which also documents Indigenous traditional knowledge on food, through education, training and outreach.

The SDWG will continue work on this project during 2017-19 and further develop sustainable and resilient reindeer husbandry in the Arctic in the face of climate change and globalization. The next phase of the project is envisioned to have strengthened educational components, the engagement of Indigenous trans-boundary knowledge institutions and explore new and innovative possibilities for local economic development from use of the northern sea routes.