





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

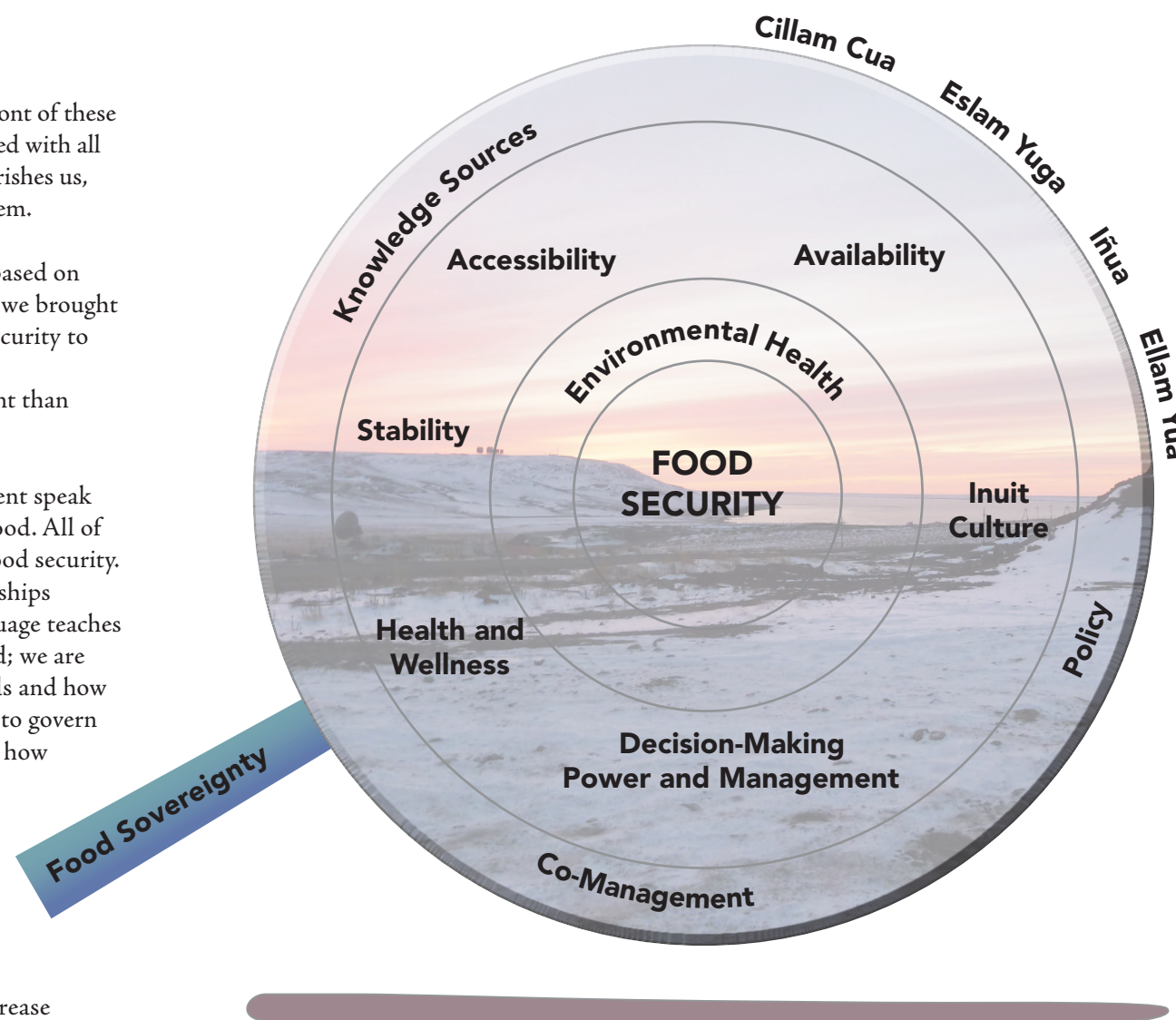
Drastic changes are occurring within our world. We are on the forefront of these changes. We have lived here for millennia and have grown and changed with all that is around us. All that is around us physically and spiritually nourishes us, and our culture reflects the Arctic because we are part of this ecosystem.

With these rapid changes comes the need for holistic information based on Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and science. With this understanding, we brought our concerns regarding the impact of Arctic changes on our food security to forums throughout the Arctic. Through these conversations, it quickly became evident that we were referring to something different than those we were holding the discussions with.

We have often heard people within academia, policy and management speak to us of nutritional value, calories and money needed to purchase food. All of this is important, but not what we are talking about when we say food security. We are speaking about the entire Arctic ecosystem and the relationships between all components within; we are talking about how our language teaches us when, where and how to obtain, process, store and consume food; we are talking about the importance of dancing and potlucks to share foods and how our economic system is tied to this; we are talking about our rights to govern how we obtain, process, store and consume food; about our IK and how it will aid in illuminating these changes that are occurring. We are talking about what food security means to us, to our people, to our environment and how we see this environment; we are talking about our culture.

From the realization that we need to fully share what our food security means within the Alaska Arctic, this project was born. There has been a lot of positive work completed and ongoing to increase academic and governmental understanding of food security. The outcomes of this project come directly from us, Alaskan Inuit, to share what our food security is, how to assess changes occurring and how to move forward in a way that will strengthen our food security.

The objectives for the project were clear from the beginning – define food security, identify what the drivers (or causes) of food (in)security are, create a conceptual framework and provide an assessment process to determine Alaskan Inuit food security. What resulted is something much more. As we came together through community meetings, one-on-one and group interviews, regional workshops and numerous conversations, we realized that the drivers of our food security are all the same and that what make up food security within each of our identities, villages and regions is the same.



### A Project Led by Alaskan Inuit

Over a three-and-a-half-year period, a group of IK holders, regional youth representatives and two cultural anthropologists acted as the Food Security Advisory Committee. The Committee guided ICC-Alaska through the development, implementation and analysis of information gathered. The final products of the project are the result of 146 Inuit contributing authors – a title fitting for those who provide all concepts, philosophies and recommendations that have come out of this project.

### Defining Alaskan Inuit Food Security

Alaskan Inuit food security is the natural right of all Inuit to be part of the ecosystem, to access food and to care-take, protect and respect all of life, land, water and air. It allows for all Inuit to obtain, process, store and consume sufficient amounts of healthy and nutritious preferred food – foods physically and spiritually craved and needed from the land, air and water, which provide for families and future generations through the practice of Inuit customs and spirituality, languages, knowledge, policies, management practices and self-governance. It includes the responsibility and ability to pass on knowledge to younger generations, the taste of traditional foods rooted in place and season, knowledge of how to safely obtain and prepare traditional foods for medicinal use, clothing, housing, nutrients and, overall, how to be within one's environment. It means understanding that food is a lifeline and a connection between the past and today's self and cultural identity. Inuit food security is characterized by environmental health and is made up of six interconnecting dimensions: 1) Availability, 2) Inuit Culture, 3) Decision-Making Power and Management, 4) Health and Wellness, 5) Stability and 6) Accessibility. This definition holds the understanding that without food sovereignty, food security will not exist.

From here on, this is what we are discussing when we say food security.

### Summary and Technical Report

A summary report and technical report have been created from this project. The summary report was created for those who are looking for a quick glimpse at what food security means to us, what it means to apply a food security lens to assessments, and recommendations for strengthening food security. For a deeper understanding and more in-depth discussion, a technical report has been created. Within both reports you will find: 1) recommendations, 2) key barriers, 3) the food security conceptual framework, and 4) drivers of food security and insecurity.

### Food Security Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is provided thru an image of a drum and explains that food security is characterized by environmental health, which is achieved through the stability of six dimensions: 1) Availability, 2) Inuit Culture, 3) Decision-Making Power and Management, 4) Health & Wellness, 5) Stability and 6) Accessibility. Three tools support the stability of the six dimensions: policy, knowledge sources and co-management. The drum is held together by the spirit of all (Cillam Cua, Eslam Yuga, Iñua and Ellam Yua). The drum is held up by food sovereignty – a requirement to have food security. The conceptual framework aids us in seeing the underlying issues, described as “drivers,” to explain actions, components or causes of food (in)security as they push food security in a particular direction. The six dimensions of food security are made up of 58 drivers. The technical report explains how the drivers are interlinked and categorized under specific dimensions and how the dimensions are connected.

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