The mission of IAP is to promote discussion and analysis of critical issues facing the circumpolar region and its people and to provide educational opportunities and policy-oriented advice as northern peoples face the challenges resulting from rapid climate change.

IAP is initially focused on two objectives. The first is to improve public and private understanding of the policy implications resulting from circumpolar climate change and its human dimensions. IAP is holding a series of meetings on aspects of climate change requiring policy attention. These meetings bring together representatives of governments, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples, and scientists in order to discuss, identify, and prioritize issues and policy-related research and to help develop the agendas for governments to address pressing policy issues.

The Institute also plans to offer executive training and education to increase northern capacity to respond to the human dimensions of climate change.