The Canal area was chosen as the case study for the Brussels workshop because the public authorities are now engaging in a new phase of its development that will combine the renovation of its neighbourhoods with giving it a more metropolitan and international dimension.

The Brussels workshop is about collaborative planning, community participation and capacity building focusing on finding ways of “how to reconcile local expectations with international challenges” while organizing, financing and managing Cities. The challenging tasks to achieve Competitive and Sustainable Cities place great burdens to public authorities and institutions, developers, local communities and individual inhabitants. In short period of time they will have to move beyond the present pilot intervention schemes to comprehensive territorial governance actions that will need to become the “norm”. The necessary restructuring and upgrading of existing urban areas will be even more challenging than ever before.

The construction of a city has evolved from designing blueprints to strategic planning as a process, which introduces territorial risk and change management including good quality urban design based on changing needs and demands.

Inclusive and integrated urban development with a cooperative and human-centered approach is slowly finding its place in city planning and strategies. They include new forms of sociability, collective ownership, and self-organization. These new ideas, processes, concepts and proposals help US planners to demystify urban development and show a broad range of possibilities for approaching global challenges.