Conclusion

By establishing a balance with a broad investigation spectrum, an inventory can be set up of the sources of emissions related to the activity of an organization, with the guarantee that important direct or indirect emissions will not be forgotten. My experience has shown me that preconceived ideas about dominant sources of emissions are very widespread, with these being generally attributed to the transport of merchandise and the movement of people, and that they are often not valid. Thus, certain emissions resulting from chemical processes, anaerobic fermentation, gas leaks, or related to product end-of-life, go relatively unnoticed, but can, in fact, be considerably larger. The advantage of a balance is also the possibility to place the quantitative importance of emissions into hierarchical order, which allows targeted actions with a high reduction potential to be conceived, even though, on the other hand, the calculated uncertainty is high.

Establishment of a balance requires serious methodological rigor to apply correct reasoning, to avoid forgetting important aspects, to check coherence and pertinence of data, to avoid getting caught up in unnecessary calculations, to guarantee the traceability of reasoning and calculations and to operate with full transparency concerning hypotheses and approximations. The study requires collaboration between many people to provide data and co-construct an action plan: enthusiasm and teaching ability are essential to effectively encourage others to follow an ethical pathway.

The strategy that needs to be developed in an organization to set off an ambitious “low carbon” project would have something to gain from taking inspiration from acting/thinking in a complex manner, which can provide advice about designing a trajectory for change, fitting contexts together, then locally “disturbing” the system to encourage the expected pathway to be followed, and lastly to leave it to evolve without trying in any way to master or to control the transformation process [ROS 18].
Producing a greenhouse gas emission balance is intellectually stimulating, because the exercise is a real investigation into an activity where an expert’s route is marked out by the resolution of various problems. Routine is not the prerogative of greenhouse gas emission balances; instead this is the guarantee of discovering a system in its complexity, which requires wide-reaching culture covering many disciplines, and depends on many unknowns and on participation from third parties.

Producing a greenhouse gas emission balance is also and above all stimulating due to its purpose, which is to instigate actions that will lead to a reduction of the impact of the activity of an organization on the climate. A carbon dashboard is an essential aid to strategic and operational decision-making, at the service of organizations which seek to develop their environmental responsibility, to reduce their dependence on oil and their economic vulnerability to the increase in price of this resource. Lastly, through the contribution it makes to attenuating global warming, the approach serves the general interest and we can also justifiably expect to see a surge in social cohesion and economic benefits.