Reading / EN

Progress needs an honest standard.

Climate, metrics, and the consequences left outside the accounts.

Progress needs an honest standard.

A falling number can show an improvement or a narrower view. A reading about climate reports, responsibility, and transparent comparisons.

The number has fallen

An organization reports that its emissions have fallen substantially. A closer look reveals that part of its activity has been transferred to another service provider. That part no longer appears in the previous accounts. Perhaps emissions have actually fallen. Perhaps it is mainly the scope that has changed. This example is fictional. Initially, it shows only why a number remains incomplete without its system boundary.

The question is not whether every smaller metric is suspicious. The question is what brought about the change. Which activities were counted in the baseline year? Which are counted today? Has the measurement method changed? Who can follow the comparison? Reporting becomes more informative when these transitions are carried along rather than silently disappearing into the result.

M. Selman Yildizhan: ADL – Anwendungsbeispiele, Version 1.0 · 14 July 2026 · Sections 1–14. The figures in the source are synthetic demonstration data.

What the WMO report for 2025 shows

The World Meteorological Organization published its report on the global climate in 2025 on 23 March 2026. According to it, 2015 to 2025 were the eleven warmest years since records began. For 2025, the report gives around 1,43 degrees Celsius above the 1850 to 1900 average and second or third place, depending on the dataset. The observation year, publication, and reference period are deliberately placed side by side here.

This global observation does not answer what share the fictional organization caused or which individual local measure works best. That requires suitable data and specialist methods. Nor does the report confirm ADL. For this reading, it instead illustrates why a metric should be read together with its period, reference, and uncertainty before a judgment about action is drawn from it.

WMO: State of the Global Climate 2025 · Published on 23 March 2026 · Observation year 2025, reference 1850–1900 · Checked on 21 October 2026.

Three kinds of change

The source manuscript distinguishes a movement in the system being considered, a change to the model, and a change to the assessment framework. In the organizational example, a more economical process could change the actual activity. More accurate data collection could reveal emissions previously underestimated. By contrast, a more narrowly drawn accounting boundary could lower the reported number even though the process concerned continues elsewhere.

This distinction is a working rule of the reading edition. It does not replace a professional greenhouse gas inventory. Its initial benefit lies in the precision of the follow-up question: what has changed, and what evidence substantiates it? A new method can be better than the old one and still create a break in comparison over time. That break should then be explained and, where possible, a comparable series provided alongside it.

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The average has no address

A shared metric can hide differences. When an organization combines several sites, some burdens can decrease while others increase. The source on aggregation therefore calls for information losses and minority structures relevant to decisions to be examined. Applied to our example, the question would be which sites, activities, and affected groups can no longer be identified individually in the average.

Even an effective environmental goal has distributional consequences. Who bears the costs of a transition? Who can switch to an alternative? Which restriction weighs particularly heavily on whom? These questions prescribe no finished political outcome. They establish that an overarching goal must be justified and that its specific implementation affects people differently. Professional assessment of effects and public justification belong together.

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A comparison that stands up to questions

For a small project report, a comparison record could be prepared beforehand: the period, activities

included, data source, known gaps, and unchanged comparison quantity are recorded. Later, changes to these specifications are explicitly added. Alongside the result, the record states what changed in the process and what only became visible through better recording. This preserves a transparent account of what the figures can support.

Such a record is an editorial proposal for working practice, not a new standard. It can rule out neither conflicts of interest nor false information. But it gives questions a specific place to go. Progress then means showing a real improvement under disclosed conditions while carrying the remaining burdens along. Even a corrected, less favorable figure can represent better knowledge when it describes the actual situation more accurately.

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Questions

What activities, periods, and consequences are missing from the metric you are reading?

Has the situation changed, has the measurement method improved, or has the accounting boundary shifted?

Which group or site disappears in the combined average?

About this edition

Adapted from “ADL – Anwendungsbeispiele,” sections 9 and 10 on shifts of framework and aggregation. The climate connection is a new editorial application of these distinctions. The observed climate data come from the WMO report for 2025, published in 2026, not from an ADL simulation.

Explains changes of framework and real changes without requiring formulas.

Adds a fictional organizational example with disclosed system boundaries.

Includes the WMO 2025 report with its publication year, observation period, and reference period; derives no local attribution of effects from global data.

An independent adaptation of selected passages with new examples and context. This is not a complete reprint of the source texts. Examples are fictional; ADL interpretations are editorial applications. External sources do not establish ADL’s effectiveness.

Sources

M. Selman Yildizhan: ADL – Anwendungsbeispiele,

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WMO: State of the Global Climate 2025

Published on 23 March 2026 · Observation year 2025, reference 1850–1900 · Checked on 21 October 2026.