

Evaluation of Environmental Projects and Programs

The Center for Healthy Environments and Communities (CHEC) employs the principles and approaches of conventional **program evaluation**, customized to the specific needs and challenges of environmental/ecological and occupational health program and project analysis and policy management. The discipline of environmental and occupational health program evaluation is in increasing use in the assessment of the effectiveness of governmental and non-governmental organizations and their projects, as well as academic interventions, programs and policies. CHEC employs the theoretical and applied methods necessary to systematically assess the process, implementation, inputs, outputs and ultimate outcomes of environmental and occupational health projects and policies. Specific tools used by CHEC investigators include; qualitative and quantitative evaluative designs, controlling for threats to **internal and external validity**; constructing natural experiments; benefit-cost analysis and managing evaluation projects. CHEC program and /or project evaluations can lead to continuous project or policy improvement through ongoing evaluative measurements (including management of Quality Assurance and Control); demonstration of the program actually impacting ultimate outcome goals; evaluating if the project has high external validity and to what specific other population groups it may apply to. Program evaluation is an absolute necessity to better inform management decisions regarding changes that should be made to environmental interventions to make them more efficient and also in decisions about the degrees of effectiveness of a project, including cost effectiveness.