Assessing Clean Energy Project Opportunities
– RETScreen ® International

The course was presented by Mr. Gregory Leng and Mr. Kevin Bourque from the RETScreen International Clean Energy Decision Support Centre of NRCan in Canada. The instructors gave a demonstration of the RETScreen software as a decision-making tool for evaluating the technical and financial viability of potential clean energy projects.

RETScreen is a software available free of charge; it can be downloaded at www.retscreen.net. This software seeks to build the capacity of planners, decision-makers and the private industry to implement renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, especially at the critically important initial planning stage. Projects are influenced by several factors such as available energy resources; equipment performance; initial costs; avoided costs of energy; financing; environmental characteristics and so on. RETScreen can help define whether the project is viable or not by facilitating the identification of relevant factors. RETScreen also provides clean energy technology models (from wind energy, to small-hydro, etc.); international databases (which provide meteorological and product data); and training materials (e-text books; slides and case studies).

Mr. Leng and Mr. Bourque presented some clean energy project examples facilitated by RETScreen. The effectiveness of the software was measured by four performance indicators: a) user savings; b) cumulative capacity; c) installed value; and d) GHG reduction.

Finally, the instructors indicated future goals for the RETScreen project, including:

- Development of new models for Energy Efficiency;
- Integration of Renewable Energy, Cogeneration Models and the new Energy Efficiency models into one software file;
- Expansion of the Climate Database and integration of the NASA Satellite Dataset;
- Creation of a new Project Database with expansion of the product and cost database;
- Dissemination to more than 300,000 users by the end of 2012 and
- Translation of the software into more than the current 21 languages to cover two-thirds of the world population.