



Afghanistan International Marble Conference II

Afghanistan's Resource Advantage

April 12 – 16, 2010 – Herat, Afghanistan

Theme:

Afghanistan is the repository of a vast resource base of marble and stone. The country's minerals represent a resource base conservatively estimated by USGS to be worth \$1.2 Trillion. There are hundreds of varieties of marble and the quality of the stone is exceptionally high. Afghanistan's marble sector is poised to emerge on the world scene as a supplier of resources that are in high demand globally, regionally and locally.

International partners can benefit from the resource advantage offered by Afghanistan marble and the opportunity has never been more attractive. With support from key international investment partners already engaged with Afghan producers, and from international donors and lenders, Afghanistan marble is building its position as a premium brand. When the Afghanistan marble brand becomes internationally recognized for its quality, distinctiveness and value, the return on investment that investors can achieve will be significant.

While there are few quarry sites currently practicing advanced extraction methods, more than 65 quarry operators are in preparation stages for converting from explosive-based extraction to wire and saw block extraction. The conference represents a turning point for this emerging group who will be introduced to new training and equipment for implementing advanced quarrying techniques. This will greatly reduce waste and improve environmental protection and standards. As a result, the Afghanistan marble sector will soon move to significantly higher productivity, higher quality, and greater profit potential.

With a new policy orientation by Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines, the marble sector is reaching out to international partners to capture greater value from its resource advantage. This means that the improved enabling environment will open doors for international and local investors and create an important positive economic impact for Afghanistan and its partners.