

## **Report on the Afghanistan Marble Promotion Showcase**

Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industries, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007

The Afghanistan Marble Promotion Showcase was held at the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industries (DCCI) on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007. It was attended by a large delegation from Afghanistan with the remainder from Dubai-based companies with an interest in the marble sector, the Afghan Business Council, the Afghan Consulate and DCCI.

The formal session was chaired by Clive Mitchell. The welcoming address was given by Omar Abdul Aziz Khan, Manager, Business Networking for DCCI; he welcomed the Afghan marble producers to the UAE and stressed the importance of promotional events for business development.



Association of Marble & Granite Processors of Afghanistan showcase banner



L to R: Bismillha Khan (AMGPA), Yahya Akhlaqi (EPAA); Sunirmal Ray (ASMED) Omar Abdul Aziz Khan (DCCI); General Amrullah Nazari (AMGPA)

Clive Mitchell outlined that the aims and objectives of the showcase were to highlight the quality of Afghan marble and to provide opportunities for making contact with potential buyers and investors in the UAE. In his presentation, Yayha Akhlaqi, Market Analysis Services Director with EPAA (Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan) outlined his agencies role in supporting and promoting the marble sector of Afghanistan.



Afghanistan Marble Promotion Showcase delegates

Sunirmal Ray, Senior Business Development & Management Services Advisor with USAID-funded ASMED (Afghanistan Small & Medium Enterprise Development) summarised the support available to the Afghan marble sector through several USAID initiatives in Afghanistan. ASMED provided funding (US\$16,000) to EPAA to cover the costs of the Afghan marble producers (including flights, accommodation, food and freight costs for the marble exhibits).

The president and CEO of the AMGPA (Association of Marble and Granite Processors of Afghanistan), General Amrullah Nazari described the formation of the association (which counts 103 marble factories amongst its members) and its previous efforts to promote Afghan marble. AMGPA were responsible for producing a newsletter and promotional brochures in support of the event; these were distributed to all delegates.



Association of Marble & Granite Processors of Afghanistan showcase newsletter



Two of the delegates at the marble exhibition

Antony Benham presented an outline of the marble resources of Afghanistan and the varieties that are currently available commercially. Attention was drawn to the Afghan minerals project commodity brochure 'Marbles of Afghanistan'; copies of which were given to all delegates.



Afghanistan Marble Promotion Showcase exhibition

### **Marble factory visits**

On the 12<sup>th</sup> September, the Afghan delegation were introduced to potential markets for their products in Dubai by taking them on a tour of two marble factories.

#### Ascon Marble and Granite

Ascon manager, Mr Renzo Baldo, described the operation and the marble market in the UAE. This was followed by a tour of the factory.



Ascon Marble & Granite factory



Ascon manager, Mr Renzo Baldo

#### Carrara Mid-East Industrial Co. LLC

Carrara executive manager, Jihad Samaha and his father, Nicolas Samaha (company founder and managing partner) held intensive discussions with the Afghan marble producers. This was followed by a tour of the factory



Carrara marble factory



Selection of Carrara marble product range

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The Afghanistan Marble Promotion Showcase (and marble exhibition) was the first step in promoting Afghan marble in Dubai. The Afghan consulate in Dubai has promised to support future marble promotion activities and enable Afghan marble to achieve even greater exposure to the Dubai market.

The most successful outcome of the event was the establishment of contact between AMGPA and the Dubai-based producers, where it is likely that the Afghans will be able to establish a trade partner in future.

Clive Mitchell  
Antony Benham  
19<sup>th</sup> September 2007