

## **IGI Dubai conducts Gemology workshop for Afghan Jewelers**

**Dubai, September 28, 2011:** IGI recently conducted a practical course for DAI / ASMED, a USAID project aimed at the future development of the Gemstone Industry in Afghanistan, at the IGI School of Gemology in Dubai.

For the first time ever, Afghan students travelled abroad in order to acquire improved gemological knowledge about colored stones. Afghan professionals want to develop a better understanding of the quality of the stones they extract in their country. The workshop was mainly attended by students who wish to become gemologists.

The gemology workshop focused on the identification of gem material treatments and synthralietic stones which are mined in the region. The workshop demonstrated usage of equipment like refractometer, polariscope, microscope and dichroscope to determine the characteristics of various gemstones.

"The workshop for the students and professionals from the gemstone industry in Afghanistan was extremely positive and productive. With sufficient investment in knowledge and equipment, Afghanistan has the potential to become a major supplier of gemstones in the region", said Mr Nico D'Haemer, managing director, IGI Dubai.

Afghanistan has been blessed with a wide variety of precious and semi-precious stones with 73 documented records of mines, deposits, and occurrences. Most operations today are small-scale, but the potential undoubtedly exists for the development of a significant precious stone mining industry in Afghanistan. Some of the stones discovered there are tourmaline, morganite, aquamarine, spodoumene, lapis lazuli and spinel

### **About International Gemological Institute**

IGI was established in Antwerp in 1975 and is the largest independent gem certification and appraisal institute worldwide, with offices in Antwerp, New York, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Tokyo, Dubai, Toronto, Los Angeles and Shanghai. In India, IGI has 3 laboratories in Mumbai and one each in Kolkata, New Delhi, Thrissur, Surat, Chennai and Ahmedabad. IGI is ISO 9001: 2000 certified in four countries.

### **About DAI / ASMED**

**DAI is Development Alternatives Inc., and is tasked with establishing and expanding the Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED).**

ASMED is a \$114m 5-year USAID-funded project to promote economic growth in Afghanistan through support for small and medium enterprises in the form of in-kind grants of equipment and training/education for capacity development. ASMED has put particular emphasis on supporting certain sectors, one of which has been the gemstone value chain. The aim is to establish permanent gemology institutes in Kabul that will help Afghans become educated in identification and valuation of precious/semi-precious stones and minerals.