

**Strengthening consumer protection - ASSURE Program for the testing of Diamond Verification Instruments is expanded**

**(27 September, 2021)** The Natural Diamond Council (NDC) has announced the expansion of the market leading ASSURE Program designed to protect consumers and safeguard the integrity of the natural diamond supply chain by supporting Diamond Verification Instrument manufacturers. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to maintain consumer confidence in the diamond jewelry industry.

The ASSURE Program was first launched in 2019 to offer reliable, third-party approved insights into the relative performance of Diamond Verification Instruments available on the market. Instruments are evaluated with stringent performance metrics to allow prospective buyers to compare devices from a variety of manufacturers and across a range of price points. The program received a positive welcome by the industry, and in just over a year it has tested around 80% of the commercially available and viable Diamond Verification Instruments.

Now, the ASSURE Program 2.0 builds upon the best practice of the original ASSURE Program. A second independent testing laboratory has been onboarded, located at the University of Antwerp in Belgium, in one of the world's key diamond hubs. This facility will operate alongside the founding ASSURE testing specialist, UL, located in Canton, Massachusetts, United States, with identical samples and testing procedures. Both laboratories will work simultaneously to enhance the long-term sustainability of the ASSURE Program, double the testing capacity and create a more geographically diverse landscape for submissions.

The ASSURE Program 2.0 has also evolved to include diamond-set jewelry testing, which adds further scope to the ASSURE Standard. Both open and closed-back mounted stones will be included in the testing regimen.

This latest iteration of the ASSURE Program also includes an updated ASSURE Sample of natural diamonds, synthetic diamonds and diamond simulants in a range of sizes. This ASSURE Sample has been carefully curated to reflect goods currently circulating in the market, as well as individual stones that anticipate future trends and pose some of the greatest challenges to Diamond Verification Instruments.

Diamond Verification Instrument manufacturers will also benefit from enhanced characterisation data to help them identify and address potential areas for improvement in the functioning of their instruments.

David Kellie, CEO Natural Diamond Council highlights that “integrity and consumer trust is critical to the success of the jewelry industry and I’d like to thank all our partners and the wider industry for their commitment to the ASSURE program and the verification of their products.

I'd also like to thank the many manufacturers of the diamond screening devices being presented for the role that their participation plays in ensuring trust throughout the industry”.

Raluca Anghel, Head of External Affairs and Industry Relations at the Natural Diamond Council, says: “By enhancing and improving the ASSURE Program we are taking even greater strides in protecting consumer confidence. Everyone is responsible for correctly disclosing the nature of the product they are selling, but to facilitate this we need robust Diamond Verification Instruments that are rigorously tested. With this latest iteration of the ASSURE Program, manufacturers will be presented with vital information to continue improving their devices and consumers can be assured of the vigorous steps taken to ensure their confidence.”

The ASSURE Program represents the ultimate regime for the testing of Diamond Verification Instruments, providing all the players of the diamond industry with objective data as they consider purchasing or using a specific DVI.

Starting with October 2021, manufacturers of Diamond Verification Instruments are invited to submit both new instruments and existing instruments that have already been tested but whose ASSURE Tested Certification is expiring post their 2-year validity mark.

A complete guide to ASSURE Tested devices, including the regime under which an instrument was tested, is accessible via the ASSURE Directory of Diamond Verification Instruments, here: [naturaldiamonds.com/assure](https://naturaldiamonds.com/assure).

Manufacturers interested in exploring bespoke projects with the ASSURE Diamond Verification team, whether to support their internal research, calibrate instruments or test new devices, are encouraged to contact [assure@naturaldiamonds.com](mailto:assure@naturaldiamonds.com).

### << Industry reactions >>

Iris Van der Veken, Executive Director of the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) says: “The ASSURE Program 2.0 is facilitating even greater pipeline integrity for the natural diamond industry. We need Diamond Verification Instruments at all stages of the diamond supply chain that can be relied upon for their accuracy and, crucially, a methodology that encourages manufacturers to continue innovating. I am confident this latest testing regime will achieve these aims and strengthen pipeline integrity for all.”

Yoram Dvash of the World Federation of Diamond Bourses (WFDB) adds: “We praise the ASSURE Program for its important role in protecting consumers and enabling them to feel confident in their diamond purchases. The global diamond industry needs to strive for full transparency in order to safeguard consumer confidence. I call on diamond manufacturers to submit their Diamond Verification Instruments to the ASSURE testing program, thereby contributing to the integrity of the natural diamond pipeline”

Gaetano Cavalieri, President of CIBJO – The World Jewelry Confederation, comments: “It is terrific to see how the ASSURE program is being enhanced and expanded. I would urge all manufacturers to submit their Diamond Verification Instruments for testing. Manufacturers

who commit to this process are part of an industry-wide effort to improve pipeline integrity and ensure consumer confidence in diamond jewelry.”

Ronnie Vanderlinden, President IDMA: "We echo the sentiments of our industry colleagues and praise the ASSURE Program for its role in helping develop Diamond Verification Instruments. All manufacturers should take part in this as it is only through accurate identification that we can correctly disclose our products, as well as ensure consumer protection and, just as important, consumer confidence. Diamond Verification Instruments will play an increasingly important role in this endeavour.”

Tiffany Stevens, President, CEO and General Counsel of the Jewelers Vigilance Committee (JVC) adds: “Ensuring the full disclosure of the products sold is imperative for the integrity of the jewelry industry. For this to happen, businesses of all sizes should diligently verify all of their merchandise and do so with performing equipment. With such a range of devices listed in the ASSURE Directory of Diamond Verification Instruments, there is a great deal of support in this process.”

David J, Bonaparte, Jewelers of America President & CEO adds, “the enhanced ASSURE Program 2.0 is great for jewelry retailers who are looking to invest in a Diamond Verification Instrument. With the ASSURE Standard now including jewelry testing, retailers will be able to give their customers even greater peace of mind. These tools are essential to businesses as companies of all sizes have a role to play in maintaining transparency and ensuring accurate disclosure in the diamond supply chain.”

Edward Asscher, President of the World Diamond Council also highlights, “The diamond jewelry sector must always have at its core a set of processes that ensure the absolute protection of the supply chain. The ASSURE Program helps do just that, by supporting the development of Diamond Verification Instruments and promoting clear product disclosure. This is the only way to maintain consumer confidence on the long term, and respect the efforts of each person and organisation that are part of our communities and our industry”.

Colin Shah, Chairman of GJEPC also acknowledges the importance of the ASSURE Program for helping the industry prepare for new requirements in customs export codes for laboratory-grown diamonds and natural diamonds, beginning on January 1, 2022. He says: “New customs regulations will require separate export codes for laboratory-grown diamonds and natural diamonds as of January 2022. Only through accurate identification can businesses correctly disclose their products and ensure a smooth customs process and the ASSURE Program's efforts to provide manufacturers with detailed characterisation data will lead to even greater levels of accuracy for exports.”

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## **Further Information:**

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **About the Natural Diamond Council (NDC)**

The mission of the Natural Diamond Council is to advance the integrity of the modern diamond jewelry industry and inspire, educate and protect the consumer. Together, our seven Members represent approximately 75% of the world's rough diamond production. With 35 operations in eight countries across four continents, NDC Members impact the lives and environments of millions of people.

Our Members are fully committed to supporting the sustainable development of communities, diamond-producing countries and the diamond sector from mine to market. They aim to provide safe, high-quality jobs and to locally source goods and services needed for their operations. As an organization, the Natural Diamond Council also convenes its members to collaborate, exchange information and share best practices.

[naturaldiamonds.com/council](http://naturaldiamonds.com/council)

### **About the ASSURE Program**

The ASSURE Program is a testing regimen for Diamond Verification Instruments, offering reliable, third-party approved insights to support purchasing decisions. A Diamond Verification Instrument is a device used to separate and/or identify diamonds from synthetic diamonds. They are also known as synthetic diamond screening or synthetic diamond detection devices.

The ASSURE Program assesses the relative performance of Diamond Verification Instruments available on the market and the results can be seen in the ASSURE Directory.