

Business Risks

The Mitsui Chemicals Group recognizes that management activities may be threatened by a wide range of conceivable and apparent risks. For this reason, the Group is dedicated to crafting initiatives able to prevent or minimize the escalation of these risks.

The items detailed below represent some of the risks that could potentially and adversely impact the Group's future operating performance and financial position. Readers are cautioned that this partial list does not constitute all of the risks faced by the Group.

Please note that the risks discussed below were those deemed relevant as of March 31, 2016.

(1) External operating environment

The Mitsui Chemicals Group businesses may be influenced by certain elements of the operating environment outside of the Group, including customer, market, and alliance partner trends as well as the business operations of rival firms. In the event that actual circumstances upon which the Group's business strategies are based change as a result of these environmental influences, the Group's ability to implement these strategies on schedule could be impaired, and anticipated results may not materialize. The Group takes into consideration risks posed by such unavoidable environmental changes. With respect to products, a variety of risks could conceivably result in a decline in profitability. These include, but are not limited to, an erosion of market demand, loss of customers, and deterioration in market conditions caused by oversupply due to increased production capacity at rival firms or the market entry of low-priced products. Profitability may also decline due to drastic changes in the cost of raw materials, as well as the impact of supply stoppages due to accidents or bankruptcies at raw material manufacturers. Other conceivable risks include an increase in the tax burden attributable to changes in legal systems. The occurrence of any or all of these risks could adversely impact the Group's business development as well as operating performance and financial position.

(2) Overseas activities (Country risk)

The Mitsui Chemicals Group is involved in a wide range of activities outside of Japan, from the export of products to production at overseas bases. These activities overseas are subject to various risks, including difficulties in securing personnel, deterioration in political and economic conditions, regulations regarding imports and foreign capital, deterioration in public safety and security, labor unrest, and the outbreak of terrorism or warfare. The occurrence of such risks could impair the Group's business activities overseas, which may adversely impact operating performance.

(3) Changes in laws and tightening of regulations

The business development of the Mitsui Chemicals Group is subject to a wide range of legal acts and ordinances, which include a variety of licensing and regulatory requirements. Consequently, the Group remains keenly aware that its continued survival as a corporation is contingent on strict compliance with laws and regulations. To this end, the Group has enacted training programs that incorporate examples of legal violations within and outside Mitsui Chemicals together with other initiatives aimed at promoting legal compliance.

Other risks faced by the Group are the prospect of major changes to or a tightening of laws relevant to the Group, or unexpected amendments to laws and regulations overseas. Restrictions placed on the Group's activities, as well as increased costs associated with compliance with amended laws or more stringent regulations, could impair the Group's business activities, thus adversely impacting operating performance and financial position.

(4) Causes of changes in segment operating performance

The Mitsui Chemicals Group engages in the manufacture and sale of a wide array of products led by health-care, functional polymeric materials, polyurethane, basic chemicals, petrochemicals, and food & packaging. Assumed risks for each key business are as follows.

i. Healthcare

Healthcare segment product earnings could be adversely impacted by price competition caused by the business expansion of rivals.

ii. Functional Polymeric Materials

Functional Polymeric Materials segment products are primarily produced from ethylene, propylene, and other naphtha derivatives. As described below, segment product earnings could be adversely impacted by temporary delays in passing higher raw material prices onto product prices in the event of a sharp increase in naphtha supply prices caused by circumstances in the Middle East or global economic conditions.

iii. Polyurethane

Polyurethane segment product earnings could be adversely affected by a rapid deterioration in market conditions caused by a temporary oversupply due to an increase in production facilities at rival firms.

iv. Basic Chemicals

Basic Chemicals segment products could be adversely impacted by a rapid deterioration in market conditions caused by an oversupply, as these products are vulnerable to fluctuations in this overcrowded market.

v. Petrochemicals

Petrochemicals segment products are primarily produced from naphtha. Naphtha supply volume and prices could fluctuate sharply due to circumstances in the Middle East or global economic conditions. In the event of a sharp increase or decrease in naphtha prices, segment product earnings could be adversely impacted by delays in passing such fluctuations on to product prices, the emergence of inventory valuation losses, or other factors.

vi. Food & Packaging

Performance films and sheets products are primarily produced from polyethylene, polypropylene and other naphtha derivatives handled by the Petrochemicals segment. As described above, those product earnings could be adversely impacted by delays in passing higher raw material prices on to product prices in the event of a sharp swing in naphtha supply prices caused by circumstances in the Middle East or global economic conditions.

Agrochemicals earnings could be adversely affected by such factors as changing global weather patterns, the appearance of harmful insects, and fluctuations in the cost of tests required for the development and registration of new products.

(5) Financial risks

Major financial risks faced by the Mitsui Chemicals Group are increased concerns about customer confidence due to deteriorating economic conditions, currency exchange losses due to dramatic fluctuations in exchange rates, and rising interest rates and a reluctance to lend by financial institutions with respect to fund procurement. The occurrence of any one of these risks could adversely impact the Group's financial position.

(6) Impairment of fixed assets

The Mitsui Chemicals Group has adopted the accounting standard for the impairment of fixed assets. Looking ahead, any downturn in profitability due to a marked deterioration in operating conditions or other factors, or drop in the market value of fixed assets held by the Group, may cause impairment losses to be recorded and have an adverse impact on the Group's operating performance and financial position.

(7) Impairment of marketable securities

The Mitsui Chemicals Group holds marketable securities with fair values that are mainly from its customers and financial institutions in order to maintain and strengthen relationships with them. Any incidence of impairment attributable to a substantial drop in the market prices of marketable securities held by the Group may adversely impact the Group's operating performance and financial position.

(8) Deferred tax assets

The Mitsui Chemicals Group determines the collectability of deferred tax assets based on forecasts and assumptions related to future taxable income. Any change in the forecasts and assumptions related to future taxable income may adversely impact the operating performance and financial position of the Group. Any change in a key parameter that is significant enough to require a revision of deferred tax asset calculations, such as a shift in the income tax rate due to an amendment to the taxation regulations, may also adversely impact the operating performance and financial position of the Group.

(9) Retirement benefits plans

The retirement benefit obligation and retirement benefit expenses applicable to employees and former employees of the Mitsui Chemicals Group are calculated on an actuarial valuation basis that incorporates a variety of factors, including a wide range of basic rates and pension asset investment yields. Any fluctuations in retirement benefit expenses attributable to such factors as a drop in the market values of pension assets, a change in the interest rate, or a revision to the retirement benefit plan may adversely impact the operating performance and financial position of the Group.

(10) Corporate acquisition, capital alliance and business reorganization

Aiming for a transformation of its business portfolio, the Mitsui Chemicals Group engages in a variety of activities, including the acquisition of companies and the establishment of business alliances. Any failures to realize the growth synergy benefits or other expected merits due to such factors as a deterioration in the operating environment of the Group and the companies in which it is invested, may adversely impact the operating performance and financial position of the Group.

In addition, business reorganization, along with the withdrawal from unprofitable businesses and the liquidation of subsidiaries or affiliates, may also adversely impact the operating performance and financial position of the Group.

(11) Accidents and disasters

In an effort to ensure workplace safety, the Mitsui Chemicals Group vigorously promotes OHSAS 18001 certification of the occupational health and safety management systems used in its production activities at works. Business continuity plans have also been formulated to quickly reestablish the business chain of command in the event that head office functions are affected by a major earthquake in the Tokyo metropolitan area. Nevertheless, the Group faces risks from a variety of unforeseen events, including damage to production facilities caused by natural disasters such as major earthquakes and typhoons, plant accidents, and accidents during the course of product transport or storage at warehousing facilities outside the Group. The occurrence of these risks may not only impede plant operations or the supply of products to customers, thereby adversely impacting the Group's operating performance and financial position, but could also potentially undermine the social standing of the Group.

(12) Quality

To uphold its quality assurance system, the Mitsui Chemicals Group vigorously promotes efforts to obtain ISO 9001 certification of the quality management systems at each of its plants. Nevertheless, the Group faces risks from the discovery of unforeseen quality defects in its products and product liability lawsuits. Because many of the Group's products are used as raw materials in finished consumer goods, the appearance of large-scale customer recalls due to product defects could potentially result in massive damages. The occurrence of these risks may not only adversely impact the Group's operating performance and financial position, but could also potentially undermine the social standing of the Group.

(13) The environment

As a group that handles a wide range of chemical substances, the Mitsui Chemicals Group has made harmony with the environment one of its long-term management targets. In addition to ensuring compliance with environmental laws and regulations, the Group promotes initiatives for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and minimizing the amount of industrial waste sent to landfill for final disposal.

Environmental risks relevant to the Group include the incurrence of new social responsibilities due to tighter environmental regulations or changes in public sentiment regarding environmental protection, as well as the discovery of environmental pollution stemming from actions taken by the Group prior to the enactment of environmental laws. These and other situations could increase costs associated with legal compliance and environmental countermeasures and have other consequences, which could adversely impact the Group's operating performance and financial position.

(14) Intellectual property

Possessing a significant array of proprietary technologies and expertise, the Mitsui Chemicals Group manages information in accordance with strict rules. Nevertheless, information leaks could potentially occur due to unforeseen circumstances. In addition, the Group could potentially be subject to unfavorable court judgment in the event of a future legal dispute concerning intellectual property. The occurrence of such events could adversely impact the Group's operating performance and financial position.