Metal recycling and securing a stable supply of iron ore

Using our comprehensive capabilities to build strong, long-lasting partnerships

Vale S.A. is a diversified mineral resource company and also the largest producer of iron ore in the world. As a shareholder and a strategic partner, Mitsui is carrying out projects with Vale in 11 of 14 of our business units. We have promoted active human resources exchanges through Vale & Mitsui Exchange Program since 2003 (77 Mitsui and 89 Vale employees have participated so far), and are undertaking cross-departmental initiatives involving the entire company to build a solid partnership in terms of both people and goods. We strive through investment like these to secure mineral and metal resources and maintain stable supplies. At the same time, however, we also have expanded into the comprehensive recycling business with an awareness of the need to build a closed-loop economy and are committed to our mission of employing industrial solutions to environmental problems.

Human Rights Initiatives

Speaking out and taking action to protect human rights

Vale believes its mission is not only to respect human rights in the countries and regions where it conducts its business but also to help improve the living environment for people near its operations. Vale’s human rights policy, approved in 2009, applies to project development, operations, and the supply chain, and it respects and promotes human rights for a broad and diverse array of stakeholders, including employees, suppliers, partners, customers, local communities, governments, and the international community.

Based on this policy and in conjunction with Human Rights Day, the international day celebrating the UN’s adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (December 10, 1948), Vale launched its Human Rights Guidelines on December 10, 2010. These guidelines focus on such themes as diversity, bullying, and relations with communities, governments, and society, and are aimed at developing a comprehensive management system for the promotion of human rights. Vale plans to implement an employee exchange program in the fiscal year 2011 to make this comprehensive management more effective.

In addition, Vale, like Mitsui, has also declared their support for the United Nations Global Compact, is a member of the International Council on Mining & Metals (ICMM) and takes part in International Labour Organization (ILO) activities. In August 2010, Vale also joined the Campaign Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, drawn up by the Brazilian Men of the Earth Association and the Presidential Human Rights Secretariat.

Environmental Initiatives

Development that respects biodiversity

As a global company, Vale operates in over 30 countries worldwide and owns 4,000km² of land for its business. Included in its land holdings are Wilderness Areas (Key Biodiversity Areas), or what are sometimes called “hot spots.” Vale’s operating units are home to around 2,850 plant species and 3,400 animal species. Of this total, 174 are on the Red List of globally endangered species produced by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and 146 are on official lists of endangered species.

Vale recognizes the importance of biological diversity, evaluates biodiversity as an essential business theme, and strives to maintain rich and fluid ecosystem functions. Vale also takes on initiatives to reduce impact of business activities and aims for sustainable development.

- Water recycling and use reduction
- Developing initiatives to save plants and animals before rehabilitation of natural vegetation
- Improving and developing technologies and procedures to restore mined-out areas.

These activities include the selection of species that exist in project areas to be used in restoration programs for extraction areas.
Vale’s environmental protection activities are not limited to its operating units. For example, Vale’s Carajás Mine, the largest iron ore mine in the world, is situated inside the Carajás National Forest. While Vale’s operating unit takes up only 2% of the forest’s entire 3,960km² area, Vale’s environmental protection activities also include the remaining 98%. After mining, Vale also conducts a forest restoration program to restore trees and other plant life on the same area of land that it affected through development.

Initiatives for Community Relations and Development

Creating local employment and protecting local culture

Traditional communities are rich in culture. Brazil alone is home to some 240 tribes and 180 languages, many of which are struggling to survive. Vale takes responsibility for the environment and carries out initiatives to remove or at least compensate for the effects of its operations on these traditional communities. The company is also engaged in dialogue with the communities, expressing respect for local cultures and diversity. Early and continuous dialogue has led Vale not only to focus on the physical and social connections that tie traditional communities to the land they live on, but to respect even the cultural and spiritual connections, such as traditions related to the land. This in turn has created an active and constructive relationship of mutual trust. To strengthen these relationships, Vale has created guidelines and developed an exchange program to guide employees and contractors who have contact with these communities.

Vale also took part and cooperated in the creation of the “Good Practice Guide: Indigenous Peoples and Mining,” a document drafted by ICMM that defines relations between mining companies and indigenous peoples.

Initiatives for Consumer Issues

Stably supplying what the world needs

It is no exaggeration to say that modern civilization depends on minerals and metals, including iron ore, copper, nickel, and aluminum. In order to protect everyday lifestyles that, unbeknownst to most people, requires these resources, Mitsui makes bold investments in large-scale projects and major resource developers like Vale. Mitsui strives to secure stable and long-term underground reserves of metal resources and provide Japan and other national markets with a constant supply of these resources.

While Mitsui develops underground resources while taking care to conserve the environment, it is also active in recycling metal resources that are accumulating in our cities—also called “urban mines” or “aboveground resources”—with the aim to realize a closed-loop economy. In 2007, we acquired shares of stock in U.S. company Sims Metal Management, Ltd., the world’s largest ferrous and non-ferrous metal recycler. Sims runs a comprehensive recycling operation centered on metal scraps, including the recycling of consumer electronics, electrical and electronic equipment, and other resources. By taking an ambitious role in pilot programs carried out by government agencies and municipalities to recover and recycle rare metals contained in small consumer electronics (e.g., cell-phones), and by pursuing other activities through partnerships and collaboration with governments, Mitsui will continue to protect the living environment for consumers.