Contribution to Society

While modern society is becoming increasingly diverse and dynamic, undergoing ever faster change and growth as globalization and the integration of information and communications technologies accelerate, it is also facing a long and varied list of economic, environmental, and societal challenges: climate change, food, energy, water, and other environmental and resource-related issues, problems with human rights, poverty, child labor, and educational inequality.

Our sustainable growth as a private corporation cannot be achieved without improvement in the sustainability of society as a whole. We believe that our duty as a member of society is to assist the local communities, nations, and international communities in which we operate as they take steps to overcome these challenges toward a better future.

Mitsui believes its corporate social responsibility is to continually contribute to society through its core business. As we launch businesses, create new value, and build interpersonal relationships, we hope to contribute directly and indirectly to the healthy growth of local communities—domestic and abroad—and the global economy, for better standards of living for everyone.

Mitsui’s Core Values: Origin in Its Founding Philosophy

The former Mitsui & Co., which was established in 1876, was disbanded at the time of the dissolution of Japan’s zaibatsu (industrial conglomerate) shortly after the end of World War II, bringing act one of the company’s history to a close. Today’s Mitsui was founded by employees sharing the same values as the former Mitsui & Co.—“Challenge and Innovation,” “Open-Mindedness,” and “Nurturing Human Resources”—employees who continue to contribute to the creation of new value for society.

The way we work and the way we think are still very much based on the values espoused by Takashi Masuda, the founder of the former Mitsui, and are reflected in our stance toward our work. The principles of Mitsui’s CSR have always reflected its founder’s values, a way of thinking unchanged to this day.

“Avoid infatuation with immediate advantage. For enduring prosperity, harbor grand aspirations.”

“I started Mitsui & Co. with the goal of realizing trade on a large scale, not in pursuit of money, but from the desire to work.”

“Mitsui has a pool of very talented individuals. This is Mitsui’s most important asset.”
For many years, Mitsui’s way of thinking and the values it holds in business and work were never articulated on paper. So in 2004 we systematically and clearly set forth in written form the implicit values we shared, and issued our “Mission, Vision and Values (MVV).” We believe that sharing this management philosophy is even more important than ever as we work to create true value around the world through our global activities.

In 2006, the year marking the 130th anniversary of the former Mitsui & Co.’s founding, we embarked on a company-wide initiative called “Yoi-Shigoto! Our Origins, Your Future.” This initiative encouraged each employee to look back on our history since the founding of the former Mitsui & Co. and ask him or herself the question, “What “Yoi-Shigoto” (good quality work) must Mitsui do for the future?” and “Can the work we are doing now really be considered good quality work?”

“Yoi-Shigoto” expresses the sense of the values that should be shared with every employee at Mitsui as it expands a broad-range of businesses globally. These values are (1) beneficial to society, (2) useful to and creating added value for our customers and partners, and (3) a worthwhile challenge for each employee. Mitsui’s social responsibility, and the core of CSR at Mitsui, is to continually deliver value to society—that is, to practice Yoi-Shigoto day after day, year after year—through our core business.

As the requirements and expectations of society change rapidly with the times and as various issues grow more serious, relationships between society and companies will also change. What roles should companies play, not just now but in the future? What is a company’s purpose in being as far as society is concerned? And what does society require of its companies? People working in companies must understand and be sensitive to these changing relationships between companies and society and continue to rethink their roles.

A vital process in striving to make Yoi-Shigoto a reality is the personal process of heightening one’s sensitivity to social and environmental issues, going beyond the minimum obligations that companies have of complying with laws and social ethics to ask the questions, “What significance does my work have in society?” and “How can I benefit society?” Of course, there is no one business or project that, in and of itself, represents Yoi-Shigoto or Mitsui’s CSR. Our social responsibility, rather, is to ensure that we do good quality work that delivers value to our customers and to society at large.

If society is not sustainable, the companies in society will not be sustainable. Also, if a company is not sustainable, it cannot fulfill its social responsibilities. We believe that Yoi-Shigoto, the core of our CSR approach, creates value in society, and profits will follow as a result of fulfilling our responsibilities to society. Our view is that it is important to think of these issues in this order and that practicing Yoi-Shigoto will lead to the sustainability of Mitsui’s activities.

Through Mitsui’s many years of development as a company, we have constantly sought to anticipate what the future will bring, how society and the nation will evolve, and understand how Mitsui should change. In parallel with this, we have also been constantly concerned about how Mitsui should wield its potential and best draw on its resources, and how it should further advance its functions and capabilities.

To help create a better world, we now need to look ahead to understand what Japan and the world will be like in the future, to think of what Mitsui can do to best contribute to this future by identifying impending issues as well as formulating a sound vision, and to plan steps to take in our day-to-day work to best contribute to this future. As we work toward making this vision a reality, creating new value through Yoi-Shigoto will enable us to contribute to the creation of a sustainable society as we put Mitsui’s CSR into practice.
1. We will fulfill our role in the economy and continually strive to improve our corporate value by engaging in conscientious activities giving full consideration to the social significance of Mitsui & Co.'s presence and a strong awareness of our ties with the environment.

2. We will raise the awareness of each employee with regard to CSR and solidify our management base for practicing CSR through strengthening corporate governance and fully reinforcing internal control. We will also make efforts towards actively contributing to society.

3. We will place importance on interactive communication with our stakeholders. We will fulfill our accountability with respect to CSR and continually work to improve our CSR activities based on the responses of our stakeholders.

Developing the CSR Promotion Framework

In 2004, Mitsui formed the CSR Promotion Committee as an advisory body to the Corporate Management Committee to develop Mitsui’s internal framework with respect to CSR and work to raise CSR awareness among employees. Mitsui also promotes CSR-related activities based on cross-organizational collaboration to meet the needs and expectations of society in relation to the company’s social values and initiatives.

Furthermore, with the objective of inculcating the importance of CSR-oriented management and Yoi-Shigoto throughout the Company and planning and promoting activities in an integrated manner with our business locations in the field, we have appointed CSR Promotion Officers in each of the corporate staff divisions, business units, overseas regional business units, and domestic offices, and are building our internal CSR network.
The CSR Promotion Committee submits proposals to the Corporate Management Committee on CSR-related management policies and business activities, inculcates the importance of CSR-oriented management throughout the Company, makes recommendations with respect to "Specially Designated Businesses", and conducts other related activities.

The committee’s chairman is the executive officer in charge of corporate staff divisions (oversees the Corporate Planning & Strategy Division), and its deputy–chairman is the executive officer in charge of corporate staff divisions, including the Human Resources & General Affairs Division and the Legal Division. The general managers of each corporate staff division—the Corporate Planning & Strategy Division (secretariat), the Investor Relations Division, the Corporate Communications Division, the Human Resources & General Affairs Division, the Legal Division, the Investment Administration Division, and the Environmental/Social Contribution Division—serve as its members. The committee has the following duties:

1. Develop fundamental policies on the management of the Company’s CSR and fundamental plans for activities promoting CSR
2. Configure and establish an internal corporate structure for the management of the Company’s CSR
3. Determine the key issues to focus on each year for activities to promote the CSR measures of the Company and ensure progress on these
4. Respond to issues related to CSR, both within and external to the Company
5. Decide whether to support individual proposals qualified as Specially Designated Businesses, and determine necessary precautions for projects that will be supported

Furthermore, the Environmental Advisory Committee has been established under the CSR Promotion Committee, with the objective of responding to various CSR related issues.

Mitsui’s Stakeholders

Mitsui closely monitors the effects of its diverse and global business activities on society and works to identify its stakeholders who are especially interested. Through interactive communication with our stakeholders, each of Mitsui’s employees and officers is endeavoring to acquire a firm understanding of what society expects from and requires of them. Based on this understanding they will strive to respond to changes in market environments, constantly develop themselves, and through Mitsui’s core business, create new value that is useful to society and befitting of the Mitsui name.

Stakeholder Dialogue (November 2011)

Mitsui grasps the demands and trends of society while furthering its business through a dialogue with various stakeholders. In FY2011, a stakeholder dialogue focusing on the real estate business field for consumers was held inviting Professor Idee from the Faculty of Economics at Seikei University and Chief Researcher Tsuchida from the Nippon Association of Consumer Specialists. Professor Idee discussed her perspective on the trends of politics and academia while Chief Researcher Tsuchida pointed out the various attitudes of consumers to members of the Mitsui Urban Planning & Development Division, Consumer Service Business Unit. The perspectives and attitudes addressed in this dialogue will be utilized in our future business activities.